

March Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, March 2, 2009

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 March 2nd

- ❖ Mary Lou Serafine - Leafblower Discussion.
- ❖ It's My Park Day! - Volunteers Needed
- ❖ Sara Hensley - Director of Austin Parks & Recreation

See You There!

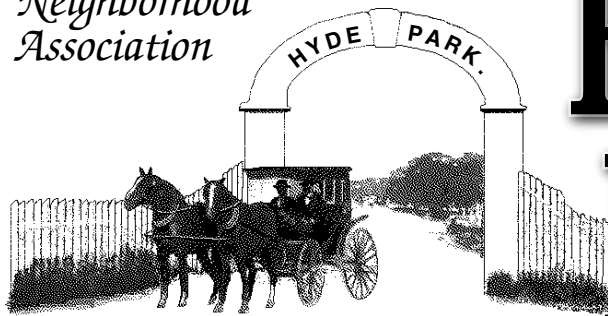


These signs have made a difference in our neighborhood. A new run of signs has been produced and are now available for a strategic location in your yard or garden. In an effort to cover the actual cost of producing the signs, HPNA will now charge Hyde Park residents \$6@ and non-residents \$8@. Each sign comes with a metal stand.

To obtain a sign, contact Ann S. Graham at <annsgraham@gmail.com> or 458-8096.

— Ann S. Graham

*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

March, 2009 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 35, No. 3

Why the Move Toward a Blower-Free Hyde Park?

Most people do not recognize — as I did not, until I started researching this — that the health risks caused by leaf blowers are very serious.

Surprisingly (at least to me), the danger of leaf blowers is not only because of the blowers' gas-powered motors and deafening noise. Rather, both electric and gas blowers raise lung and heart disease risk because of their very purpose: to aim a stream of air going up to 250 miles per hour at an area of turf, asphalt, or concrete. This moves leaves, but in so doing blows into the air pesticides, herbicides, fecal matter, any naturally-occurring asbestos in the soil and street, and—most harmful of all—literally pounds of fine particulate matter referred to as “PM” pollution. Particulate matter makes up the pollutant in smoke, smelt from metal processing, and exhaust fumes (think: one blower is equivalent to up to 17 idling cars). All leaf blowers --whether electric or gas--entrain into the air both 10-micron and 2.5-micron particles. Particulate matter inhalation has been implicated in coughing, restricted breathing; decreased lung function; aggravated asthma; chronic bronchitis; irregular heart-beat; nonfatal heart attacks; and premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Additionally, children, because of their smaller lung size, on-going development, and the fact that they like to run

around and play outside, are greatly more at risk than adults. The smaller particles are more toxic. They remain airborne for hours or days (sometimes weeks) and can travel up to 500 miles, by some estimates.

The problem with inhaling particulate matter is that the particles stick to the airways or can travel into the lungs. From there, potentially into the blood stream, heart, and other organs. Particle inhalation causes the airways to develop mucous and cilia (tiny hair) movement, in an effort to remove the particles, resulting in coughing, asthma, bronchitis, and other conditions. But if the particles cannot be removed (by coughing or swal-

Continued on page 4

Don't Forget!
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Sat, Mar 7 • 1-5 pm
Volunteers Contact
mlfishman@gmail.com
or 512-656-5505

From the President's Desk:

The State of Hyde Park

Hello and best wishes for early spring 2009! There are a few topics that will dominate the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association between now and into summer.

First of all, you must have noticed the Lodge on 45th Street (the white building behind the Ney) is being retrofitted by the city in order to protect it from vandalism and being used as temporary housing by vagrants. While city workers were doing this, they found syringes underneath the structure and precautionary measures and protocols were enacted to ensure the safety of the workers. I need to stress for park users

to be cognizant of the grounds when you walk and play on the neighborhood's open spaces. In addition, there appears to be daily chatter on the HPNA listserv about the rash of recent crimes in the neighborhood. The Austin Police Department is monitoring the situation, and neighbors are encouraged to monitor it as well. Historical preservation will also be a significant neighborhood priority over the next couple of months. The Local Historic District project is on schedule to take place. Hyde Park may be the second Local Historic District in Austin!

Definite plans for the 2009 Hyde Park Homes Tour are coming together under the leadership of Homes Tour Chairman Barbara

Gibson. Selected homes are being confirmed and the 2009 Homes Tour should be the best yet! As in the past and in the future, our viability and our strength are supported by our great relationship with the Austin City Council. The elections are coming up, so please do your democratic duty and go vote for your best candidate. See you at the neighborhood meeting!

— David Conner
 HPNA President
 <daypaycon@yahoo.com>

Pecan Press

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Editor

Grant Thomas 450-0464 <hgtomas@youthlaunch.org>

Associate Editor

Sarah Sitton 459-4530 207 E. 39th St.

Poetry Editor

Nancy Taylor Day 892-0127 <nancy@creativitymoms.com>
 4001 Duval (Salon) 78751

Crime & Safety Chairman

Carol Welder <cjwelder@msn.com>

Production Manager/Advertising Director

Robert M. Farr 731-0617 <bobfarr@austin.rr.com>

Mail Ad Payments to:

Carol Jackson, P.O. Box 49427, Austin, TX 78765

Mail Ad Artwork to:

Robert M. Farr <bobfarr@austin.rr.com>
 7500 Chelmsford Dr. Austin, TX 78736

Distribution Coordinator

Rimas Remeza • 4105 Ave. F • 371-3158
 <cuimas.remeza@yahoo.com>

Area Coordinators

North of 45th/West of Duval • Pam Dozler 458-8927
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Contributors

Glen Alyn, Candy Gray Becker, Cynthia Beeman, Laurence Becker, Deaton Bednar, Mary Collins Blackmon, George Bristol, Chris Brown, Sharon Brown, Lewis Brownlow, Kathryn Bryn, Mark Burkhardt, Amon Burton, Martha Campbell, Inga Marie Carmel, Josephine Casey, Nicole Caspers, Kitty Clark, Carol Cohen Burton, William Cook, Susan Crites Krumm, Celeste Cromack, Rob D'Amico, Herb Dickson, Avis Davis, Don Davis, Pam Dozler, Russell Duke, Cathy Echols, Carla Feldpausch Siegle, Mark Fishman, Merle Franke, Gregory Free, Larry Freitlich, Eugene George, Mary Carolyn George, Larry Gilg, Susan Gilg, Ann S. Graham, Carolyn E. Grimes, Rachel Hector, Ben Heimsath, Albert Huffstickler, Liz Jones, Barbara Kelly, John Kerr, Susan Kerr, Bo Kersey, Susan Kirk, Mike Kintner, Dennis Lensing, Karen McGraw, Sharon Majors, Jason Mann, Libby Malone, Alan Marburger, Peter Maxson, Brook Meggs, Elaine Meenehan, Fred Meredith, Susan Moffat, John Paul Moore, Jack Nokes, Jill Nokes, Wren Nokes Willeford, Wanda Penn, Cecil Pennington, Peter Pfeiffer, Dorothy Richter, Walter Richter, Kristen De La Rosa, Steve Sadowsky, Mary Lou Serafine, Sheree Scarborough, Jaime Shimkus, Cathy Short, Sarah Sitton, Thad Sitton, Clay Smith, Niyanta Spelman, Jenna Stephens, Julie Strong, Kathleen Strong, Debbie Trammell, Rollo Treadway, Lao Tzu, Jennifer Vickers, Katie Vignery, Sandra Villalaz-Dickson, Lorre Weidlich, Hanna Wiseman Jacobs, Joe Wiseman.

Hyde Park Neighborhood Association P. O Box 49427 • Austin, TX 78765 <http://www.austinhypark.org>

— HPNA Officers/Steering Committee —

President
 • David Conner • daypaycon@yahoo.com 627-0813
Vice President
 • Michelle Paris-White • michelle.pariswhite@gmail.com
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 • Denise Girard • dmgirard@grandecom.net
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Additional Steering Committee Members: • Dorothy Richter •
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 Meenehan • Mark Fishman

HPNA Committee/Task Forces (w/chairs)

AI&S • Ann S. Graham, 3815 Ave H.....458-8096
Alley Coordinator • Carol Burton, skywash@austin.rr.com.....
Austin Neighborhoods Council Rep. • Lisa Harris, ljharrisus@yahoo.com
Beautification VOLUNTEER NEEDED
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Church/Neighborhood Liaison • Niyata Spelman, 3802 Ave. F. 459-8349
Communications/Web • Robin Silberling, robin@wcook.org.....452-1783
Crime & Safety • Carol Welder, cjwelder@msn.com459-6205
Development Review
 Catherine Moore • chmoore@austin.rr.com569-1047
Finance • Nick Van Bavel, nvb123@yahoo.com
Graffiti Patrol VOLUNTEER NEEDED
Homes Tour • Barbara Gibson • bg@ghrdlaw.com
Membership • Jim & Eileen Genevro, jgenevro@earthlink.net... 401-3803
Neighborhood Planning • Karen McGraw, 4315 Ave. C459-2261
Local Historic District • Lorre Weidlich, lweidlich@mail2sevenses.com
Shipe Park • Mark Fishman, m.fishman@yahoo.com656-5505
Sidewalks • Andrew Shea, shea.andrew@gmail.com
Social • Deaton Bednar, deatonbednar@grandecom.net
Tree Preservation • JP Moore, johnpaulmoore@austin.rr.com ... 789-7025
Triangle Development • Cathy Echols, 4002 Ave. C206-0729
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It's My Park! Day Saturday, March 7th 1-5 pm

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Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> Cash Date _____		
All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.		
Bring to an HPNA meeting, or send to: HPNA Membership P.O. Box 49427 Austin, Texas 78765 Make checks payable to HPNA.		



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Blower-Free Hyde Park...

...cont'd from page 1

lowing the mucous), they can travel more deeply into the lungs. Exercise causes people to breathe faster and more deeply. Thus walking, jogging, and running through a particle-rich space is more harmful than sitting or driving in it. I have come to the opinion that everyone who believes they are suffering from "allergies" in Austin would do well to evaluate their exposure to leaf blowers anywhere within a few-mile radius of where they spend significant amounts of time. That would be most of us.

So what should we do? I think it is telling that government publications make these suggestions for how we can limit our exposure to airborne particulate matter:

1. stay indoors
2. keep your windows closed
3. run the air conditioning
4. reduce strenuous exercise
5. if you exercise outdoors at all, walk, don't jog or run

Taken seriously, these are limitations on daily life and health that few of us would accept. The better solution is to eliminate leaf blower use. For further information or to help on this issue, please contact me <sonata0516@yahoo.com> or John Kerr <JFK@gran-decom.net>, and check elsewhere in this issue for a list of blower-free lawn care service providers.

— Mary Lou Serafine

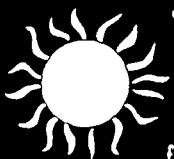
Hyde Park Poets



Parole, Pardon or Probation

I dreamed that the pressure was off and there was nothing left to prove and all my sins had been forgiven or those that weren't were put aside for the next incarnation and there was nothing really left to do and nothing left to be accounted for and nothing that I really needed except a cup of coffee and so, at that point, I woke up and I made myself a cup of coffee and drank it and then went back to sleep.

— Albert Huffstickler
December 2000



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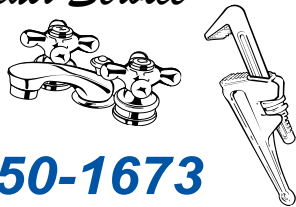
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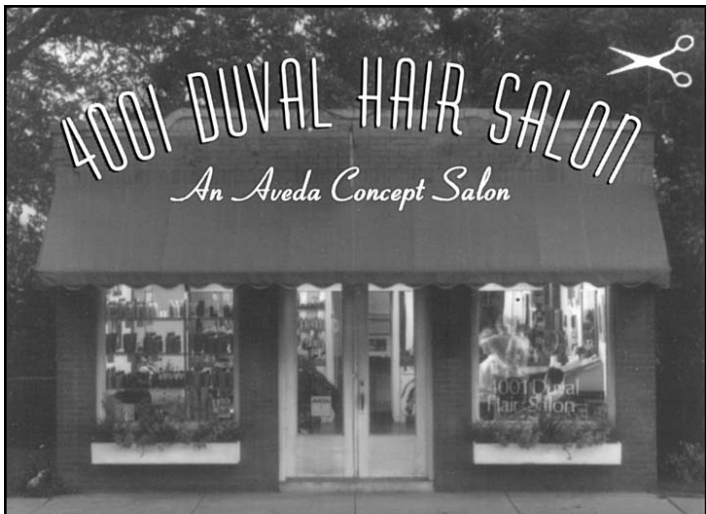


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The Local Historic District Corner

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@mail2sevenseas.com> or 300-2228.

Austinians interested in historic preservation are fortunate to have the support of the Heritage Society of Austin (HSA). In marked contrast to the lackadaisical attitude toward historic preservation exhibited by the City of Austin, the Heritage Society actively promotes preservation efforts, through a yearly homes tour (the month before our own), lectures, and meetings. It has been especially supportive toward the Local Historic District effort.

Meetings organized by the HSA, attended by those of us working on LHDs all over Austin, take place monthly. I've been attending those meetings since I was appointed to this position by former HPNA President Elaine Meenehan, and they have been supportive, enlightening, and occasionally frustrating. Hyde Park is one of nine neighborhoods in Austin attempting to achieve LHD status, and the approach and experience of each one is different. Some neighborhoods began with a survey of their houses and haven't yet embarked on drafting design standards. Others regard the design standards as relatively unimportant and would prefer to accept the standards of the Secretary of the Interior. Some neighborhoods are working with the support of their neighborhood associations; others are working independently. I've received recommendations for consultants and books; met people employed in relevant positions in the city, state, and university; and, most recently, been part of a discussion about what we need from the City of Austin to make our efforts successful. As a result, the Heritage Society is working for changes in the City of Austin Local Historic District ordinance, which includes requirements more stringent than those of any other city in the country.

An Update on Our Progress:

By the time you read this column, our survey of houses should be complete or close to it. In addition, I hope that by the time you read this, we will have an online database of survey information set up. Volunteers, some from Hyde Park and others from the Heritage Society, have agreed to help with data entry. I hope that others will step forward, especially if they can do the work at home over the Internet.

I am also working with our consultant, Terri Myers, on revisions to the draft of our design standards. All changes will be reviewed by the Hyde Park Development Review Committee and the Steering Committee, but I expect those standards to be in flux until they are ultimately approved by the City of Austin.

In the meantime, I still need block captains for a number of blocks, especially west of Speedway. If you're willing to help, please give me a call.

— Lorre Weidlich

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HPNA February Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm by HPNA President David Conner. First on the agenda was Mark Fishman discussing **It's My Park! Day for Shipe Park on Saturday, March 7th.** Mark asked those who attended the meeting for some volunteer help with organizing the event. Please refer to the HPNA listserv for details on how to get involved and/or contact Mark Fishman at <mlfishman@gmail.com>. Next on the agenda was Terri Green, Community Relations Manager for **Texas Gas Service.** Ms. Green talked about some **energy saving programs** and rebate programs available through Texas Gas Service, as well as through Austin Energy. Rebate programs are available for various residential upgrades like installing new high-efficiency gas water heaters, installing new tankless gas water heaters, and upgrading residential attic insulation. For more information and specifics on energy saving tips and the rebate and incentive programs, please visit <www.texasgasservice.com/conversation> or call 512-370-8243.

Next on the agenda was Matt Curtis with Capital Metro in the Passenger Rail Service division. Mr. Curtis discussed the upcoming opening on Monday, March 30th of the **Capital MetroRail "Red Line" commuter train.** The trains will run from Leander to downtown during morning and evening drive times, and will have an impact on the Hyde Park neighborhood. The closest stop to Hyde Park will be at Highland Station, across Airport Blvd from Highland Mall. The next closest stop to Hyde Park will be at MLK Blvd. and Alexander Avenue. The train will run along the existing rail lines on the fringe of the Hyde Park neighborhood, most notably near the intersections of 51st St and Airport Blvd., and 45th St and Airport Blvd, continuing south past the back of the Hancock Center shopping complex where it will cross the IH-35 feeder roads. There has already been an installation of quad gates where the trains will cross road intersections to prevent automobiles from trying to slip through the gates, and to keep train whistle noise at a minimum. For more information on the Capital MetroRail, please visit <www.capmetro.org> and click on "MetroRail."

The final item on the agenda was a discussion on pursuing a **Local Historic District (LHD) for Rowena Street.** Several residents of Rowena Street were in attendance to find out more information on what would be involved in putting together an LHD for their street. The reason for the Rowena Street residents' concern was a proposed home demolition by a local home builder, with proposed construction plans for a larger structure on the lot. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. We'll see you on Monday, March 2nd at the next meeting.

— John A. Williams,
 HPNA Co-Secretary
 <jawilli@grandecom.net>

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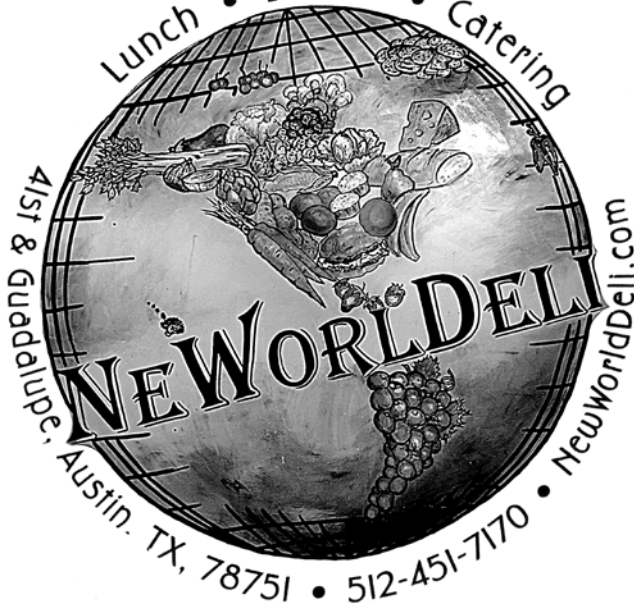
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Crime Report



by Carol Welder

Panhandling/Transient Problems Mount

Hello Neighbors! Spring is around the corner, which means more outdoor activity. As you begin to work in the yard, ride your bicycles, or trim your trees and shrubs, please remember to secure your belongings. It is in my role as Crime & Safety Chair to remind you that crimes of opportunity are increasing in our neighborhood. There have been reports of theft in backyards, so don't assume that your belongings are safe behind a fence.

The Neighborhood Watch Block Captains met with Officer Kelly LaHood, Central West District Representative for APD, on February 18th to have a dialogue about several issues that we are facing. Officer LaHood was very thorough in educating us on the “system.” The main focus of the meeting centered on transients. Officer LaHood told us that transients are different from the homeless. Transients do not want help and choose to live on the streets. Yes, most are alcoholics and some are mentally ill, but they do not want to go to a facility to get help. Officer LaHood said that panhandlers average \$10/hour and do not pay taxes. I bet many of our citizens in Austin wish that they could make that kind of money.

Last year, the City Council considered a ban on panhandling. Guess what, only the transients and their civil liberties representatives showed up against it. No one spoke in favor of the ban, so the City Council dropped it. Shipe Park (as well as other parks in Austin) is being overrun with transients. They sit on the benches all day long, drink alcohol covertly and, as was reported on the listserv, a man named William locked two people in the bathroom and set it on fire. It was discovered that transients were sleeping under a structure on the Elizabeth Ney Museum grounds. Syringes and trash were found under the structure, along with signs of a campfire. Mary Collins Blackmon, Ney Museum curator, is working with APD to have the house boarded up. We certainly do not want the museum to be destroyed as Mother's Restaurant was by a transient cooking in the alley.

Spring is a time of awakening, so let's wake up to the fact that we cannot tolerate behavior that is infringing on the rights of others. I feel sorry for people who are less fortunate and may not be well, but that doesn't mean that I will tolerate behavior that is disrespectful and harmful to others. Neighbors are reluctant to use the park because they are afraid. Officer LaHood said that Austin has a reputation of being liberal and accepting, resulting in an increase in

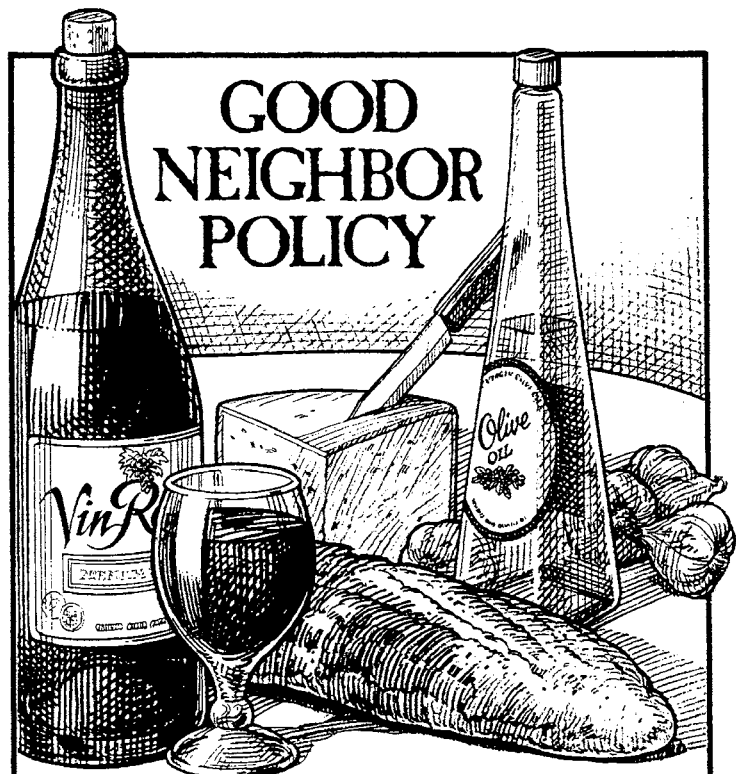
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the transient population. The transient population is having an effect on downtown as well as in our neighborhoods. I have lived in Austin for over 41 years and, for the first time, I am concerned for the safety and well being of all of us.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: It is time to speak to City Council members about tougher city ordinances against camping and panhandling. I will be getting with David Conner, HPNA President, and the Steering Committee to develop a plan of action to get a panhandling ban on the City Council agenda. In the meantime, you can email individual council members and set appointments with them to voice your concerns. There will be a candidates' forum on March 25th where you can ask questions of the candidates running for City Council positions.

I would like to thank Officer LaHood for attending our meeting. She initiated a project called Taking Back Our Parks. Let's help her by being the eyes and ears of the neighborhood and report any suspicious activity, no matter how insignificant it may seem. And please, don't give money to the panhandlers. Give it to organizations which help those who truly are in need.

If you are interested in becoming a Block Captain, send me an email at <cjwelder@msn.com>.



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Trees Gone, Trail Coming Along Hancock Golf Course



photo by John Paul Moore

City crews removed seven hackberry trees and one mesquite along Peck on the western edge of Hancock golf course this month, as Cash Construction Company workers improved the pedestrian trail along this same stretch. The trail, which will eventually encircle the entire golf course, is a project of the Hancock Neighborhood Association. The trees were first tagged for removal in January 2006. All were identified as potentially hazardous by a recent city parks department inventory.

Hyde Park residents and Hancock NA representatives argued for the past three years that these trees shaded and protected the walkers and joggers who use this stretch and served to deflect a fraction of the errant golf balls that routinely pepper the area of Hancock neighborhood immediately west of the course. While we had hoped that new trees could be planted to accomplish these protective functions before the old ones were removed, the parks department plans to plant 300 additional trees on the golf course and the Hancock NA has worked to ensure that this particular area will be amply planted.

The parks department forestry plan, and progress on the trail, will be the subject of Hancock NA's meeting May 20, at Hancock Recreation Center.

— John Paul Moore, Chair,
 HPNA Tree Preservation Committee



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Trowel & Error!

On April 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Mayfield Park will once again host Trowel & Error, the Spring event that annually attracts gardeners from all over Central Texas to hear experts give time-tested tips for beautiful gardens.

Sponsored by Friends of the Parks of Austin, Trowel & Error will feature Vicki Blachman, certified master gardener, food stylist and executive chef, whose topic is *Beyond Mince & Sprinkle: Using Culinary Herbs*; David Meeker of Gardens, who will discuss *Black Sheep in the Garden: Summer Blooming Bulbs*; and, rounding out the day is Jill Nokes, noted author and native plant specialist, lecturing on her most recent focus, vernacular gardens, in *Yard Art & Handmade Spaces: Stories that Gardens Can Tell*.

Ms. Noke's signed books will be available, and for those who arrive early enough, Mayfield's hard-to-find heirloom bulbs and perennials may be purchased for your April garden. Not to be missed will be the legendary raffle of "garden goodies". Everyone goes home a winner!

It's a wonderful way, rain or shine, to spend a morning learning how to add color into your landscape while relaxing among gregarious peafowl, towering palms, flowering trees, and ponds filled with lilies....and for only a \$5.00 donation!!

For more information contact <neenok@aol.com>, (512) 453-7074 or <www.mayfieldpark.org>.

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Letters Dept.

A Pedestrian's Plea

Dear Neighbors,

Gardens can be pretty, but they're a menace when they are used as weapons to drive pedestrians into the street. Many street blocks in Hyde Park have no sidewalks. In the space where the sidewalk would be if it existed, homeowners landscape the right-of-way so that no one can walk there. Then they park their cars along the curb. This leaves nowhere for people to walk.

The only people moving slowly enough to admire curbside gardens are people on foot. But people on foot need a place to stand, where they can look at plants without being threatened by cars.

By encouraging homeowners to make the right-of-way unwalkable, the city is giving homeowners a stake in opposing sidewalks. Austin has 3500 linear miles of missing sidewalk. This is nothing to be proud of. A city that treats pedestrians with contempt is neither friendly nor progressive.

Hyde Park is not an inviting place to walk. Most people here drive cars three or four blocks to the store, because there is no sidewalk and nowhere to walk in the right-of-way. The social hierarchy on the street runs like this:

1. people in cars
2. empty cars stored on the street
3. garbage cans
4. people on bicycles
5. plants
6. people on foot

Gardens can be pretty, but when they take over the scant pedestrian space they are a nuisance and a danger.

Yours truly,

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Hyde Park Poets

Black Birds

Two black birds
looking up
their long thin beaks
pointing to the sky
waiting
I look too.

-- Valerie Inman

Note: Our friend Robert Elzy Cogswell has advised us that the Austin Poetry Society will sponsor its regular Fourth Thursday Open Microphone Poetry Reading on at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 26th in the NeWorldDeli, 4101 Guadalupe. One of the featured poets will be Valerie Inman, a dear and long-time friend of the late and much-beloved Albert Huffstickler, who served for many years as the poetry editor of this newsletter.



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photograph by Blake Gordon

It's That Time Of Year Again - *floodlines!*

The penultimate performance of *floodlines*, the once-a-year-for-seven years, site-specific performance installation in Hyde Park, conceived and directed by Hyde Parker Jaclyn Pryor is just around the corner. Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 5th from 2-4 p.m.. *floodlines* literally and figuratively moves through the neighborhood as a funeral cortege in an exploration of memory and loss. It is a powerful and affecting work that can be watched from 'within', from the streetscape or as a performer.

Here are ways that you can get involved!

- Be a performer - no experience needed! Let us know you're interested in playing a role and attend the March 11th Actor Information Meeting at NeWorldDeli, 4101 Guadalupe. You'll need to attend one rehearsal before the event AND participate in the April 4th dress rehearsal. Email stage manager Marissa Flores at marisflor@hotmail.com if you are interested!
- Attend the third annual *floodlines* Garden Party & Benefit, Saturday, March 28th, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the home of Ann Graham & Arlen Johnson, 3815 Avenue H. Mingle with the actors, eat great food prepared by NeWorldDeli, partake in the live and silent auction of great items donated by area businesses, listen to music, keep good company. \$10@ suggested donation. Kids welcome. RSVP to <annsgraham@gmail.com>.
- Donate to the Garden Party & Benefit! If you have something to share for the silent or live auction, eg. a business gift certificate, fun item, donation of professional services, etc., contact Ann Graham at <annsgraham@gmail.com> and thanks!

Save the date for the performance - **Sunday, April 5th from 2-4 p.m.** Only 32 seats are available at \$30@. Tickets go on sale on March 9th at <www.jaclynpryor.com>

We look forward to seeing you in March and April!

— Ann Graham, Hyde Parker & *floodlines*
production coordinator,
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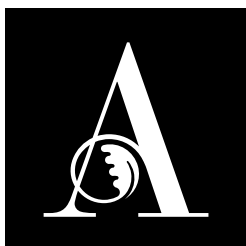


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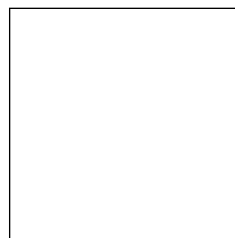
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