

September Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, September 11, 2006

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 September 11th

- ❖ Elisabet Ney Update - Mary Collins Blackmon
- ❖ Tree Trimming Task Force Update - John Paul Moore
- ❖ 2007 Officers and Steering Committee Nominations - The Nominating Committee will present candidates for Officers and six Steering Committee members. Voting for these positions will take place at the October meeting.

See you Monday!

August HPNA Meeting Minutes

August's was another short general meeting, as many neighbors were either out of town or sensibly under their air conditioners.

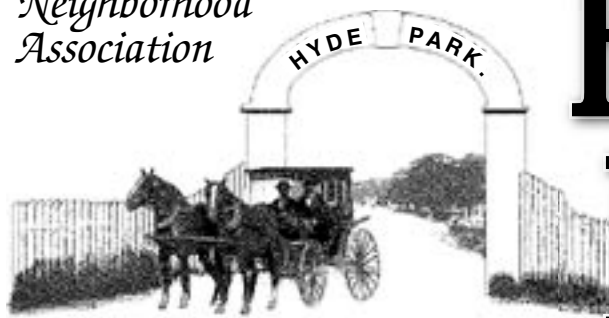
President John Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:05.

The Elisabet Ney Museum presentation was not ready at meeting time. It will be postponed until the September meeting.

John introduced the guest speaker, Clarissa Moore, donation representative with **SafePlace**. Ms. Moore explained SafePlace is the combination of two older organizations, Austin Rape Crisis Center and the Center for Battered Women, and assumed its present form in 1998. Ninety percent of their clients are women and children, but some men also receive services and assistance. The center's site in East Austin is not signed or marked, but it is no longer

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

September, 2006 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 32, No. 9

Council Joins Neighbors In Defense of Our Trees

There is important work left to be done, and plenty of need for your continued help to do it right, but at its August 24th meeting, the Austin City Council responded in true Austin fashion to our citizens' campaign with Austin Energy on behalf of our prized shade trees growing in proximity to AE wires.

As this issue goes to press, the ugly "extinct pink" and "obscene green" tags should by now be removed from our trees; all previous trimming plans and agreements voided; the cutting halted; and Hyde Park and Hancock Neighborhood Associations are to be the pilots for a new, citizen-directed tree trimming process, integrated as an amendment to our comprehensive neighborhood plans.

And when our trees are to be trimmed at all, many will be spared by a halving of minimum line clearances recommended by the City Manager and already due to be implemented by Austin Energy. This new standard is temporary, pending results of a regrowth study to be commissioned by the city.

(This step alone will save many of our finest trees from the saw. The day before the Council met, Asplundh representatives tagging trees along Avenue G were demanding 13-15 foot clearances from pecan limbs. That maximum will now be eight feet for pecans and other fast-growing tree species, and four feet for slower-growing species like oaks. Since regrowth is slower when trees are pruned less, we need to monitor the design of this regrowth study carefully and welcome neighbors with the expertise to help us do so.)

The Council has said, in effect, "We understand you don't like what we have been doing. Okay, show us a better way." With the talent and commitment so many neighbors demonstrated to bring us to this turning point, I am confident we can do just that.

Planning Chair Karen McGraw will be convening the neighborhood planning team, and if you live in Hyde Park you are a member of that team, whether you have previously participated or not. At this point, Austin Energy is anxious to restart the planning process and this time, you can help mold improved practices and closer examination of more enlightened approaches to trimming such as those the Task Force discovered in other cities.

A brief recap of the Tale of the Trees: The ongoing effort to save our trees started last January, when our neighbors in Hancock first sounded the alarm, and Councilman Lee Leffingwell stepped forward to demand a moratorium on the cutting, and to authorize creation of the Citizens' Tree Task Force of stakeholders to examine the process. The Task Force finished its work and delivered its recommendations and research in May. In June the report was referred to the City Manager for action.

Continued on page 4

Remembering Agnes Edwards

The structure of Hyde Park is human as well as architectural. But its location and houses are more appar- tent than its history and people. Yet these avenues and houses acquire meaning because of the people who lived here. It is possible to see and talk to people without knowing their story and what they have meant to the neighborhood. Such a one was Agnes Edwards, who died last year at the age of 70. She was one of the true builders of the neighborhood association. What follows are some of my memories of Agnes.

I owe my residence here to Agnes. When my wife and I were looking for a close-in house back in 1975, we almost rejected the inexpensive houses in Hyde Park because it appeared the whole neighborhood was being converted to cheap student housing. A friend suggested we call Agnes before making a decision. Agnes told us about HPNA and convinced us that we at least had a fighting chance of saving what was left.

Agnes was born in Berlin, the daughter of a Wehrmacht physician. She lived in Berlin during the war and once was blown across the room of her apartment by a British bomb. She lost a beloved younger brother to drowning when he was a child. She was philosophic about her loss, noting that had he grown to adulthood he would likely have been killed on the Eastern front. She was in Berlin when the Russians arrived and had vivid memories of the horror that ensued.

Agnes' husband, Forrest, was quadriplegic. She was terrified that her house might catch fire and she would be unable to carry him out. So when the Austin Fire Department announced in 1974 that they were closing the Hyde Park Fire Station #9, Agnes was among those who rallied vigorously and saved it. The victory is celebrated every October at our annual Fire Station Festival.

In August 1988, the city announced again that it was closing our fire station, and this time there would be no reprieve: the money simply wasn't there.

Agnes turned her considerable research skills to investigating the fire department and came up with some embarrassing finds. The fire chief had recently installed a new computer system and needed to show an improved response. So he simply redefined "response." Formerly it meant the time between the arrival of the alarm and the arrival of the fire truck at the fire. Now it meant the time between the dispatch of the fire truck and its arrival on the scene. Agnes found a case where one truck took more than nine minutes to be dispatched, while the trip to the fire took only three and a half minutes. She showed that the expensive new computer system was actually slowing down the fire department's response time. She also found several glaring examples of administrative bloat in the department bureaucracy.

She asked me to put her data into a letter, which was then signed by HPNA president James Allman and sent to Mayor Lee Cooke. It did our hearts good to read in the American-Statesman that Mayor Lee Cooke asked the fire chief about the questions raised by the letter. The fire chief was publicly embarrassed and it was a good many years before there was any further talk of closing our beloved Station #9.

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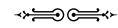
Pecan Press
The Pecan Press is published monthly by the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association in Austin, Texas.
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http://www.austinhdepark.org
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Agnes was a dedicated lap swimmer. Before the 1980's, Shipe Pool was one of the city's "drain and fill" pools. Every evening the pool was emptied, sending a torrent of water down Waller Creek. And all night long the pool would be filled with tap water so that in the morning it was full (sometimes overflowing) with crystal clear water clean enough to drink. When the lifeguards did not show up on time to open up, Dorothy Richter would climb over the fence, followed by Agnes, followed by the rest of us. This happened so frequently that the aquatics office finally gave Agnes the key to the pool. A lasting memory is of Agnes and Dorothy conversing as they sidestroked up and down the pool facing each other. When the city opted to chlorinate the pool, Agnes and Dorothy decamped to Barton Springs.

Agnes was trained as a physical therapist. Once when I developed a severe crick in my neck, Agnes insisted on treating it. She came to my house and had me lie down on the living room floor. She rolled three large towels into a funnel and poured a pot of boiling water into the top of it. She then vigorously massaged the painful area with the small end as she slowly unwrapped the towels. By the time she was through the pain was gone.

Like another notable Hyde Park resident, Elisabet Ney, Agnes loved children and had an extensive collection of children's books. As there are no benches on the Ney Museum grounds, HPNA has considered buying at least one memorial bench once the museum's renovation is complete. I would hope that Agnes will be among the first to be honored in this or some other appropriate way.



Anyone wishing to learn more about Agnes, or to make a contribution to one of the many causes she supported, should go to the *American-Statesman* web site, click on obituaries, and at the bottom of the page search the obituaries for August 9, 2006. And anyone with memories of this remarkable and unforgettable woman is invited to share them.



After the initial shock of our annual property tax appraisal, some of us wonder about what other neighbors are faced with. Basic tax information on Travis County tax appraisals can be found at: <www.traviscad.org/search.htm>

— John Kerr
451-3931 <jfkerr@yahoo.com>

Things Seen in Hyde Park



Photo by John Kerr

Texas Anchors

Sprinkled throughout old Hyde Park you will find reminders of an earlier day when most travel was accomplished with a one-horsepower engine.

The Texas Anchor Fence Company made hitching posts that were popular in Hyde Park and a few still remain. This one is on Avenue F.

Mark Your Calendar

The 32nd Annual Fire Station Festival begins at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, October 15th, 2006. The festival celebrates 32 years of community partnership between Fire Station No. 9 (Speedway and 43rd Street) and the Hyde Park Neighborhood. There will be activities for children, balloons, music along with food and drinks.

More information in our October issue.

Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Enrollment 2006-07 Membership

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

I wish to be notified via email of HPNA meetings and events.

Email _____

Membership Type: New Member Renewal

Individual: \$1/year Couple or Family: \$2/year

Dues paid by: Check Cash Date _____

All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.

Make checks payable to HPNA. Bring to HPNA meeting, or send to:
Doris Coward
HPNA
4810 Red River St.
Austin, TX 78751

HPNA Membership Info

All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.



Membership in HPNA is open to all residents aged 18 years or older who reside within the boundaries of Hyde Park or within 300 feet of the designated boundaries.



New members, and members who lapse in dues for over six months, are eligible to vote at HPNA meetings 30 days after receipt of dues.



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09/04

Tree Task Force...

...cont'd from page 1

Scores of Austinians in Hyde Park, Hancock, Eastwoods and North Shoal Creek neighborhoods joined in our quest, culminating in a strong community challenge to the proposed \$60 million, five-year renewal of the city tree trimming contract to Asplundh and Davey.

Days before the Council was due to act on the contract, City Manager Toby Futrell issued her response to the Task Force, most notably including the clearance reduction, as well as a number of other recommendations on issues including individual customer-directed trimming and more extensive mitigation tree plantings. She has agreed to pursue and refine these in further discussions with neighbors and task force members.

In his remarks at the opening of the contract discussion, Leffingwell showed the depth of his understanding of this issue and signaled he would support only a minimal extension of the tree contract because Austin Energy, having run out of funds for tree trimming, would be unprepared to restore power quickly in the event of storms. Further, Leffingwell said, "We can formulate the best policies in the world for controlling tree vegetation and line clearance...but if that policy isn't implemented at ground level, we've got a problem. That is what we really have to focus on addressing. We need a lot more supervision of this process and we need oversight."

As is clear to the many who have bravely withstood intense pressure, occasional rudeness, outlandish misrepresentations and ugly, irreparable damage of the full AE/Asplundh assault, what AE headquarters says is the case all too often is not matched by facts on the ground. Leffingwell seemed to be putting all on notice that both the management and customer/citizen/owners of Austin Energy must be continually vigilant to insure that what they say is what we get. Keep AE's and the Council's phone numbers handy, be ready to call, write, email them and alert your neighbors if you detect transgressions, before any more trees are needlessly lost.

In the end, Leffingwell's motion, seconded by Councilmember Sheryl Cole and unanimously approved by the Mayor and Council, prescribed that the tree trimming contract renewal be limited to two years; and that the city manager's recommendations, including the new pilot projects and integration of tree issues into the neighborhood planning process, be implemented with "a commitment to better communication, increased oversight of all



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Continued on following page

phases of the process with quarterly reports made to both the Environmental Board and the Urban Forestry Board.”

Next month, I want to try to list and acknowledge all those neighbors who helped in getting us to this point. For now, I can only express my heartfelt thanks to those who know full well who you are, who stood bravely and wisely against a threat to the tree- shaded beauty of our homes, our neighborhood, our city.

Thanks to the efforts of all these fine folks, I believe it is now becoming Conventional Wisdom at City Hall that our trees are every bit as important and valuable as our wires. This represents a major paradigm change, and it took all of you to make it happen.

– John Paul Moore
Citizens Tree Task Force
Hyde Park Representative

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Hyde Park's Girl Scout Cadette Troop 567 Donates to Elisabet Ney Museum, Establishes Museum as Letterbox Site

Girl Scout Cadette Troop 567 in Hyde Park has presented a check to the Elisabet Ney Museum for \$113 for the restoration of the museum. The funding was raised through a lemonade stand on the grounds of the von Boeckmann-Keeble House during the Hyde Park Homes Tour on Saturday and Sunday, June 17 and 18.



The Girl Scouts have also established the Ney as an international Letterbox site. Letterboxing is a form of treasure hunt enjoyed by young people the world over.

The members of Girl Scout Cadette Troup 567 are Sydney Bender, Dakotah Garza, Meg Hardick, Savannah Hillen, Angela Liu, Annie Long and Lindsey Pryor. The Elisabet Ney Museum would like to thank each member of Girl Scout Cadette Troop 567 for the generous contribution and their dedicated community spirit. Mayor Will Wynn will honor Girl Scout Cadette Troop 567 with a City of Austin Partners in the Arts award in October.



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For further information, contact Debbie Trammell at 419-2323 or email <debbie.trammell@dshs.state.tx.us>.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TRAINING</u>	<u>TIME</u>
09-23-06	Orientation-Please do not bring dogs	9:00a – 10:30a
09-24-06	CGC (<i>Canine Good Citizenship</i>) Training	1:00p – 4:00p
10-01-06	CGC Training	1:00p – 4:00p
10-08-06	Patient Preparation	3:00p – 4:30p
10-15-06	Patient Preparation	3:00p – 4:30p
10-22-06	Patient Preparation/CGC Final Testing	3:00p – 4:30p
10-29-06	Graduation	5:00p – 6:00p

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August Meeting Minutes...

...cont'd from page 1

a tightly held secret as in prior years. The site has security with a fence, barbed wire, and security guards.

SafePlace operates a 105-bed shelter 24 hours a day, and clients can stay up to three months if needed, in a 40-unit transitional housing apartment complex where clients can stay for up to 18 months with rent payments on a sliding scale, and a K-8 charter school on site for the families of clients. They also operate a 24-hour abuse hotline, offer sexual assault counseling and support services, and conduct assault prevention classes at middle and high schools to teach acceptable behavior boundaries. SafePlace is always in need of donations of new toiletries, gently used clothes, furniture and household items. They also have an auto donation program, which provides a large portion of their annual revenue. Anyone needing to contact SafePlace, whether in an emergency, to make donations, or to volunteer, can reach them through the hotline at (512) 267-SAFE, or on the Web at <www.austin-safeplace.org>.

Tree Trimming Task Force member John Paul Moore then gave the latest updates in the ongoing struggle with **Austin Energy**. Neighborhood representatives met at the end of July with City Manager Toby Futrell, who seemed to show a clear understanding that the central issue is how much clearance from their lines AE is demanding. John said that Austin Energy shows evidence of being an agency in disarray, with their forestry staff and contractors out of control. In one case, Juan Garza of AE said that John Kerr received a letter on June 28th from Cheryl Neely regarding proposed replacement of utility poles in the Hancock area, and seemed completely unaware that John was the president of HPNA and not HNA. In any case, John Kerr said HPNA has received no letter of this kind. HNA representative Carolyn Palaima said that AE and Asplundh personnel have been tagging trees again without having notified neighborhood associations in advance as recommended by the task force. The city manager agreed that Asplundh's past quality of work is an big issue, which will probably be examined during the contract award process which goes to City Council on July 18th. John Paul recommended that all neighbors continue to resist high-pressure tactics being used by Asplundh and AE personnel to get consent to chop away at our urban forest. He said that help is coming with adoption of the task force's recommendations. He presented a resolution to the meeting calling for an immediate moratorium on AE trimming and removal until AE has complied with its agreement to notify involved neighborhood associations before any planned circuit vegetation maintenance work planning has begun. Sam Waring moved and Lorre Weidlich seconded. The motion passed on a show of hands.

Carol Burton reported on the recent incident in which a Parks & Recreation crew completely cut down the mature rose bushes in the **traffic circle at 42nd and Avenue G**. The shrubbery was chopped down due to a communi-

Continued on page 10

Realty — Reality *Ask the Experts!* ? ? ? ? ?



Let Mark put his knowledge and experience to work for you! Next time you see him around the neighborhood, please don't hesitate to stop and ask that realty-related question that's been on your mind. After all- it's not just his job... It's his pleasure! Of course, your phone calls and emails are always welcome.

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August Meeting Minutes...

...cont'd from page 8

cation failure within PARD that has since been remedied. They have replanted the circle with small ground-cover plants to stop erosion and are watering on a five-day schedule. Once the extent of damage can be assessed, about the end of September, they will replant as required. Carol also noted that all traffic-circle vegetation in the neighborhood is showing drought stress, and asked for helpers to learn how to use the watering devices installed in the circles, which are tricky to use. She also suggested that for the future, HPNA might consider the options of an Adopt-a-Circle program, appropriating funds to hire someone to maintain the vegetation privately, or scheduling periodic maintenance days similar to the alley cleanup days. No action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

— Sam Waring

Hyde Park UMC Celebrates Open House Month in September

Highlights include: Sept. 10, Love Thy Neighbor, for all of our neighborhood friends; Sept. 17, Wee Worship, especially for kids; Sept. 24, Legacy Sunday: Honoring Our Roots. The name says it all -- HPUMC will soon be celebrating its 100th birthday! For more information, please visit <www.hydeparkmethodist.org>. For specific questions, call the church office at 453-4206

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Crime Report



by Carol Welder

Now that school is back in session, please remember to drive defensively and keep an eye out for the children. Our neighborhood streets can get crowded with parked cars and, if you are not paying attention, a child might walk out in front of your oncoming car.

I have checked with Officer Vargas and he reports that graffiti continues to be a big problem. There have been promises that the budget for graffiti abatement will be increased and now that Assistant Chief McDonald is retiring from APD and moving to the City Manager's office there is the expectation that this will happen. One of McDonald's top priorities will be to have stronger ordinances, a bigger budget for cleanup and a dedicated APD detective to put together cases for prosecution.

According to the Neighborhood Yahoo Group emails, several cars were spray painted with orange paint on August 14th on 49th St., between Ave. F and Duval. Officer Vargas said that only one incident had been reported and, after four days, the vehicle had not yet been cleaned. It is important that you report a crime when it happens. Having the information as soon as possible can make a difference in following up on evidence. Officers in the southwest area of town caught some "taggers" and were able to trace some of their "artwork" on a MySpace.com site which they hope to use in prosecuting the offenders.

Officer Vargas said that auto and residence burglaries are down overall, but do continue to be an issue. There were four arrests of homeless individuals, which has had an impact on the reduction of property crime. You can help by making sure that your cars are locked and parked off the street, your home doors and windows are locked and that you keep a watchful eye. Noise issues have been minimal this summer, but with the return of students, it may increase. If noise is a problem, call 911 if the violation is in progress and 311 if it is after the fact.

As always, be alert, get to know your neighbors and report any suspicious behavior.

— Carol Welder

HPNA Crime and Safety Chair

459-6205, <cjwelder@msn.com>

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Looking Back: The St. Johns Orphanage

by W. Eugene George



Annual gathering of the St. Johns Regular Missionary Baptist Association in the fields surrounding the orphanage. Photograph PICA 04421, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Exploring the environs of Austin on foot was one of my favorite pastimes during my first two years as a student at UT, beginning in the fall of 1941 and prior to WW II military service. From my lodgings on campus at Brackenridge Hall, I ranged widely, often heading north through Hyde Park. Where East 47th Street intersected the railroad track marked the city limits and beyond the development was sparse. In fact, coverage in the 1935 Sanborn's Fire Insurance Maps for Austin stopped at East 47th Street — apparently the last year these maps were published for Austin.

Imagine my amazement when I came upon the imposing structure which housed the St. Johns Industrial Home for Black Orphans surrounded by 300 acres of agricultural land. Today the locale is near Highland Mall on Airport Boulevard. The first orphanage was built in 1907 by the St. Johns Regular Missionary Baptist Association, a group of Black churches. Destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt in 1911 as designed by John Andrewartha, an architect and civil engineer who came to Austin in 1881 in the hope that

he would be chosen to design the new Capitol. When I first saw the orphanage, I kept my distance because it was still actively functioning. Sadly, the institution closed in 1942.

Every July throughout its history, members of the churches that comprise the missionary association would come together from near and far to camp on the grounds surrounding the orphanage. Those that came by train were advised to take the street car to the end of the line in Hyde Park, where they were met by wagons for the final leg of their journey. And all arrived bringing needed items for the orphanage — flour, clothing, all manner of goods.

During the war years in the early- and mid-1940s, there was a proposal that the building be used as a naval hospital. The powers-that-be in the city harassed the St. Johns community with continuous citations for minor infractions to force the sale to developers of this large tract of land in what was now a prime location. The St. Johns community was annexed by the city in 1951 and the building was destroyed by fire in 1956. The community then moved to a new location centered at 7500 Blessing Avenue at Buttermilk Creek, where they built schools, a community center and library, and a tabernacle where members of the St. Johns Regular Missionary Baptist Association continue their tradition of coming together every July.

— W. Eugene George

[The invaluable help of Karen Riles of the Austin History Center is acknowledged]



St. Johns Industrial Home for Black Orphans after closing in 1942. Photograph PICA 17163, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

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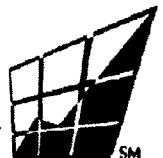
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The Wetland in Waller Creek

(Note: The author of this piece, now a senior at Sri Atmananda School, wrote this report in April of her junior year.)

Waller Creek is one of Austin's most distinct and precious waterways. The creek, which runs through much of historic Austin, including Hyde Park, the University of Texas campus, and downtown, provides an aesthetically pleasing vista for residents and tourists alike. Aside from its beauty, the creek is a home for plants, animals, and a mid-migration rest stop for ducks, egrets, and on rare occasions, a great blue heron.

For the past five months the students at Sri Atmananda Memorial School have been testing Waller Creek for pollutants. Our research was made possible by the Toyota Tapestry Science Grant our school received last year. We have learned much about the inner workings of the creek, thanks to our research and the guest speakers we have had throughout the year. One of the most fascinating discoveries was the fact that there are stretches of wetland that exist along the banks of the creek.

According to Mike Lyday, an employee of the City of Austin's Parks and Wildlife Organization, the type of wetland in the part of the creek stretching from just south of Park Blvd. to 41st street, where the Sri Atmananda Memorial School campus is, is an adjacent wetland. We ascertained it was a wetland by observing the vegetation present in the area.

For the purposes of wetland classification, plants are divided into five categories: Obligate Upland, Fac-

ultative Upland, Facultative, Facultative Wetland, and Obligate. Obligate Upland plants almost never occur naturally in wetland areas; Facultative Upland plants usually occur in non-wetland areas but can sometimes be found in wetlands; Facultative plants occur in wetlands 34-66% of the time; Facultative Wetland plants occur in wetlands most of the time, yet can be found in other environments; Obligate plants are found in wetlands over 99% of the time. When using botany as the sole determinant for whether or not an area is a wetland, over 50% of the vegetation must be Facultative, Facultative Wetland, or Obligate.

After surveying the stretch of Waller Creek that runs through the Sri Atmananda Memorial School campus, we found more wetland plants than expected; these include black willows, sedge, watercress, water speedwell, and water dock. These plants are all from the Facultative, Facultative Wetland, or Obligate categories.

Continued on page 18



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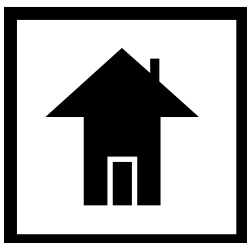
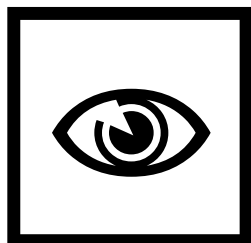
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Wetland in Waller Creek...

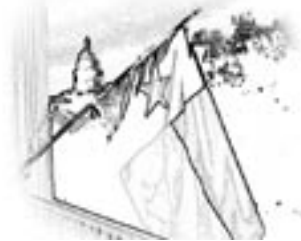
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It came as a surprise, after learning how endangered wetlands are, that there was one right on our school's campus. Wetlands have been under siege for many years and the situation is quickly reaching a point of no return as far as wetland conservation, preservation, and restoration are concerned. For many years, wetlands were considered as useless, so when possible they were filled in and used for farming and other agricultural purposes. In actuality, wetlands are invaluable parts of any environment. Not only do wetlands provide homes for countless birds, insects, fish, and plants, but they are also important as far as water and air purification are concerned.

Wetlands absorb excess nutrients like nitrate nitrogen and phosphate, from waterways. In very small amounts, nitrate nitrogen and phosphate are helpful to a creek; however, in excess they can have very negative effects.

Whether manifesting as an adjacent wetland, a marsh, or a cypress swamp, wetlands help to maintain a balanced ecosystem. The wetland in Waller Creek is vital to the creek's well-being. It is our responsibility, as a community, to preserve our wetland and our creek.

— Marianne Shea



Hyde Park Poets —

You're a Bit Overbearing

My cultural DNA drips from your fingertips.
No need to try. It's in your nature.
Wherever you go, whatever you do,
at every moment you skip stones across
the still water of my life, and at each impact
your pebbles spread a widening circle,
washing over me, defining what I mistook
for myself. You're in here with me,
and I blame you for every mistake I make.

— Robert Cogswell



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