

# February Meeting

**When:** 7:00 p.m.  
Monday, February 5, 2007

**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 February 5<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ **Vino Vino** issue. *(vote possible)*
- ❖ **Local Historic District** *(vote possible)*

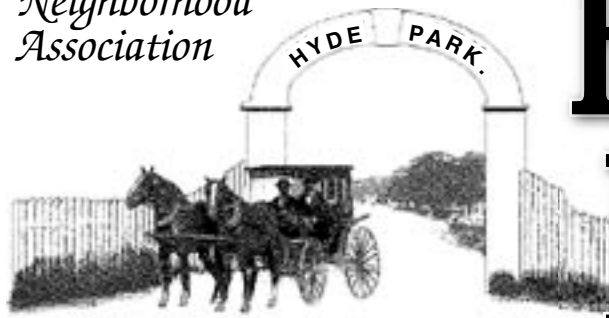
**See you there!**

## HPNA January Meeting Minutes

The January meeting of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association was brought to order by President Elaine Meenehan at 7:08 PM Monday the 8th. First up to present was Austin Fireman Eli Santiago, who gave a highly educational presentation on **general fire safety**. Eli offered many tips on preventing fires around your own home. He pointed out that although the Austin Fire Department is highly efficient, with a response time currently averaging 4 minutes from the time of a report, it is always important to take as many precautions as necessary in order to avoid a tragedy happening in your home. A few suggestions Eli offered were: always keep a fire extinguisher in your home; make sure you have a fire plan," and most importantly a designated meeting spot in case of a fire; and finally, if you call the Fire Department please send someone to wait and wave down the truck. All these items may seem like common sense, but in the event of an emergency it is easy to panic; and in light of the fact that fires double in size every 30 seconds, you can never be too prepared.

**Continued on page 4**

*The Hyde Park  
Neighborhood  
Association*



# Pecan Press

February, 2007 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 33, No. 2

## Local Historic District: Sounds Like a Plan!

Neighbors, let's stop fighting brush fires and create a plan that will protect our neighborhood from bulldozers.

Too often we have been threatened with the loss of Hyde Park's housing stock. In some cases, these were significant historic structures that could have been designated Austin landmarks. In others they were modest homes that contributed to the character and diversity that is Hyde Park.

The City of Austin has been slow to provide for local historic districts to protect our neighborhoods. Now that we have the opportunity, we must take advantage of it to preserve the fabric of this neighborhood that so many of us love. It will take work. Many neighbors such as Karen McGraw have fought long and hard to preserve Hyde Park. That work will provide a starting part for the work that still needs to be done.

Some have already stepped forward to offer their services to help with this project. We need more if we are to complete it in a timely manner. I'd like to have the advice of experienced architectural historians, urban planners and architects who can contribute their knowledge and experience to our effort. We also need neighbors who would be willing to do research work on houses. We need writers, researchers and photographers. Finally, we will need fund raisers. We will be honored to have contributions from

both individuals and businesses. Grande Communications has led the way by contributing \$250 to this project. There are so many talented people who have chosen to live in this neighborhood. We really need your time and expertise to make a local historic district a reality.

I've done research at the county courthouse and the Austin History Center and found it to be fascinating.

Some say that the modest houses are not worth preserving. I would argue that there are many advantages to preserving a wide variety of our homes, for several reasons:

- These modest homes are a part of our history. Austin was not always a city of large houses.
- They allow us to maintain the diversity many of us value.
- They offer relatively affordable housing to people who want to own a home in the central city.

If you would like to help in any way, please contact me. If you'd like to help with fundraising, we would welcome that too.

Feel free to call or email me.

– Sharon Majors, Chair, HPNA  
Local Historic Dist. Committee  
458-9067, 657-7137

<sharonmajors@grandecom.net>

# From the President's Desk:

## Getting Involved: Some Noteworthy Examples

Last month I described how the Association functions. But who makes up this group? This month, I thought I would describe a few members of the Steering Committee and how they came to get involved in the Association in the first place.

I moved to Hyde Park in 1999. I went to a few Association meetings. It quickly became clear to me that I had no idea what these people were talking about. So, I quit going. Over the next few years my friend and neighbor, (and former HPNA President) **Celeste Cromack**, would drag me to the occasional general meeting. By this time, I had lived here for a while and had picked up enough of the HP lingo to follow the conversations and agenda items. I went to the meetings on a fairly regular ba-

sis and never opened my mouth. I certainly wasn't going to volunteer for anything. These people were knowledgeable, capable and passionate. They didn't need me. Or at least, that's the way I saw it.

In March of '05, **John Kerr** wrote an article in the *Pecan Press* looking for volunteers to help combat the growing graffiti issue in our neighborhood. All I can say is that it must have been some article, because I volunteered to help. At the time, I thought I was volunteering to be part of a committee, and instead found myself in charge of the initiative. Five or six months later, I was asked if I would become the HPNA President. My answer: No! I didn't know enough, but I did agree to be Vice-President for 2006 and agreed to consider being President in 2007 - which apparently in HPNA-speak meant I would be President in 2007.

I am not the only new face in the HPNA. **Jennifer Berbas** is our new Vice-President. She moved here in 2000. One of the reasons she became involved was because she encountered a predatory development across the street from her home that threatened to place 8-16 students on a lot that previously housed 2 families. She found several people in the Association that were not only sympathetic but also helpful in navigating the city and informing her of the zoning ordinances that should have been enforced. After spending a great deal of time working on stopping this development, she thought that she too had information and experience to share with her neighbors, and the best way of giving back

would be to volunteer for a year.

**Wendy Taddia** is one of our new Co-Secretaries. Wendy moved to Hyde Park in 2006. She and her husband, Evan, searched for a year before deciding that Hyde Park was the perfect place for them to call home. They both came from suburban areas and Wendy has a strong real estate background. She had a strong but limited view of the power of our neighborhood association and wanted to educate herself on our issues and give back to the neighborhood in every little way that she could. She thought that becoming Secretary of the organization was the best place to start.

**William Cook** moved here three and a half years ago with his wife and son (Robin and Miles).

Continued on following page

### Pecan Press

The Pecan Press is published monthly  
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### Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

P. O. Box 49427 • Austin, TX 78765

<http://www.austinhdepark.org>

#### — HPNA Officers —

##### President

• Elaine Meenehan • elaine.meenehan@gmail.com ..... 323-9772

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• Wendy Taddia • wtaddia@cencorealty.com

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• Catherine Moore • PO Box 49427, Austin, TX 78765

##### HPNA Committee/Task Forces (w/chairs)

• AISD • Ann S. Graham, 3815 Ave H.....458-8096

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Austin Neighborhoods Council Rep. • Lisa Harris, ljharrisus@yahoo.com

Beautification • Larry Freilich, lmf@earthlink.net.....

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Development Review • Stan Kozinsky, 4604 Ave. G .....451-4455

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Triangle Development • Cathy Echols, 4002 Ave. C.....206-0729

Zoning • Dorothy Richter, 3901 Ave. G.....452-5117



His started participating in the neighborhood by moderating our listserv. He was recruited to be a member of the Steering Committee this year. He decided to accept the challenge because he sincerely liked his neighbors. He also hoped that he could make a difference in obtaining more sidewalks, supporting local businesses and preventing McMansions from moving into our community.

**John Paul and Catherine Moore** moved here in 1996. They



Kopperl House Palm Tree Under Ice.  
photo by Lorre Weidlich

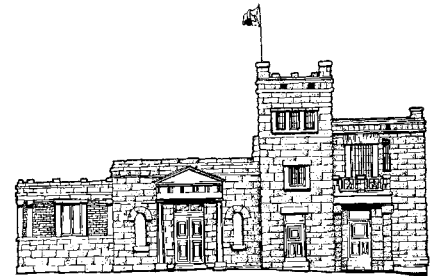
served as docents for several homes tours and eventually started attending HPNA meetings regularly about three years ago. Catherine was mobilized into getting involved in early 2006 when she saw some issues in our bylaws. After getting a new set of bylaws in place, she agreed to serve as one of our Co-Treasurers. John took up the call to save our trees from death and destruction shortly thereafter, and now serves as one of the members of the Steering Committee.

**Karen McGraw** has been here a little longer. She moved here in 1978. Karen has been involved in more activities in Hyde Park than I could list, although I will mention getting the NCCDs approved because that project took over ten years. However, she originally got involved because the city proposed to widen 38th Street and demolish all of the houses down one side of the street to make it happen. Karen is the chairperson of the planning team and one of the Steering Committee members.

This is only a small sampling of the leaders of the Association. It takes all kinds of people to make the HPNA

work with different skills, responsibilities and strengths. The faces change regularly, but one thing that doesn't change is each person's ability and desire to better the community in which he or she lives. I don't know how long any of us will be involved in this association. People move away, have children, and change jobs. What makes this association great is that it is a combination of new and old blood. Like most groups, you initially feel like an outsider because the group is focused on what they know - which is themselves. However, generally speaking as soon as you engage, you are embraced. If you have a similar story or would like one, I urge you to consider getting involved.

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



Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Enrollment		2006-07 Membership
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Address _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> I wish to be notified via email of HPNA meetings and events.		
Email _____		
<b>Membership Type:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
Individual: <input type="checkbox"/> \$1/year	Couple or Family: <input type="checkbox"/> \$2/year	
Dues paid by: <input type="checkbox"/> Check	<input type="checkbox"/> 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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\*Send your poems to:

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09/04

## January Meeting Minutes...

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The next presenter of the evening was Linda Cox with the **Austin Health and Human Services Pandemic Flu Division**. Linda started her presentation with a reading describing the possible devastating events an influenza outbreak could have on the world. She was quick to point out that the world has experienced an average of 3 pandemic outbreaks per century (in order to be considered a pandemic 30% of the worlds population must be infected) and with the last occurring in 1918, the government is working hard to prepare for the possibility of another. There are many simple ways to help prevent infection in your own life, but the easiest of course (and my Mom will love this) is simply to wash your hands! Germs can live on average for up to two hours on surfaces, so although you may have always been taught to cough or sneeze into your hands, it is actually preferable to sneeze into your elbow. If you are interested in learning more about pandemic flu, or how you can better prepare for the possible devastating affects please visit [www.cityofaustin.org/pandemicflu](http://www.cityofaustin.org/pandemicflu) where you can find a planning checklist as well as more interesting facts.

William Cook was next up with a quick update on his quest to keep **Shipe Pool** open for the entire summer. In that the current schedule has the pool closing on August 14, William, along with the support of many other Hyde Parkers shown in a recent poll, is pushing to keep the pool open until the 27th (the last day of summer vacation). The city only allots the pool a limited number of hours as opposed to a specific number of days to be open allowing for some negotiations. William's suggestions to the city were as follows and were sent on January the 8th:

In order to extend the main pool hours either: 1) close for 2 hours during the middle of the day (either 10-12 or 12-2); or 2) closing one day during the week (e.g. Wednesday or Monday)

In order to extend the wading pool hours: 1) opening an hour later (Note: people don't want to close a second day, I think).

Last up was Elaine with a quick announcement concerning the Hyde Park Planning Team meeting that is set to take place Monday January 15th concerning the **Zoning Request for the 4600 Block of Avenue A** to permit Hospital Limited Use. The meeting is open to anyone who is interested and will be held before the steering committee meeting at the HPUMC at 6:30 PM.

The final order of business was a proposal from Karen McGraw (who was unable to attend the meeting) read by Elaine concerning the neighborhood's actions on the **St. David's PUD** which sets precedence for other developments proposed in central city neighborhoods. The resolution requested that when such developments are proposed that the City:

1) Provide City staff to guide Planning Teams and Neighborhood Associations in dealing with developers seeking changes to adopted neighborhood plans for large developments.

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## January Meeting Minutes...

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2) Require that any new dense and/or mixed use development clearly enhance a neighborhood by ensuring that new uses are compatible with existing uses, providing pedestrian connections, providing services for area residents, keeping traffic manageable and ensuring that taller structures do not intrude on neighbors' privacy. Allow the use of PUD zoning only when the project will clearly enhance - rather than damage - surrounding family neighborhoods.

3) Require all projects to comply with compatibility standards

4) Do not consider variances from compatibility standards without Planning Team and neighborhood support.

The motion was approved unanimously by all those in attendance.

This concluded yet another highly informative neighborhood meeting.

– Wendy Taddia, HPNA Co-Secretary  
<[wtaddia@cencorealty.com](mailto:wtaddia@cencorealty.com)>

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Robey House in Wintry Trim. photo by Lorre Weidlich

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## Ooh, Baby!




Herewith, a hearty Welcome to Earth! to one Lucy Brittain Ervin – who, according to proud parents Jeff and Cori Ervin of 4115 Speedway, made her planetary debut at 2:16 p.m. on November 22, 1906, weighing in at 7 lbs. 4 oz., and featuring a grand total of 20 fingers and toes. Congrats, Mom and Dad, and welcome aboard, Ms. Lucy!



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## History of the Austin State Hospital

This year is the 150th anniversary of the construction of the Austin State Hospital. The Austin State Hospital, affectionately called "ASH" by those who are "in the know," was originally named the Texas State Lunatic Asylum. While construction began in 1857, the first patients were not admitted until the official opening on March 11, 1861. The Austin State Hospital administration building is the third oldest still-standing public building in the state of Texas.



Austin State Hospital Main Building in the 1860s.

During this period in history, there was a shift in beliefs surrounding mental illness. Whereas previously the mentally ill were believed to be afflicted by demons, and treatments included floggings and immersion in frigid water, this new movement believed that mental illness was curable through removal of the sufferer from the stressors of ordinary life. The champions of the asylum movement believed that rest, healthy diet, fresh air and a daily routine would provide a cure for mental illness. It was this belief that led to the building of the asylum on what was then the outskirts of Austin. The vision was a park-like setting where patients could recuperate by following a healthy routine which included useful work, fresh air and healthy meals.

The original building was three stories with a basement for administrative offices and patient quarters. Almost from the beginning, the need for mental health services outstripped the hospital's capacity. By the late 1890's, the patient population grew from the initial 12 admitted in 1861 to nearly 700. Additional wings and buildings were added to accommodate the growing needs of Texas counties.

The asylum functioned as a self-sustaining village, with patients and staff working side by side to tend gardens, weave cloth, prepare meals, launder, develop and maintain the grounds, and tend to the farm animals. Staff lived on the hospital grounds and children grew up around patients in the asylum. The grounds of the hospital included Japanese-style gardens, which were frequented by tourists and neighbors from nearby Hyde Park.

Continued on page 10

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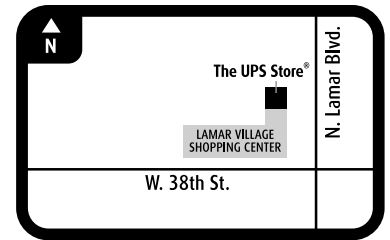
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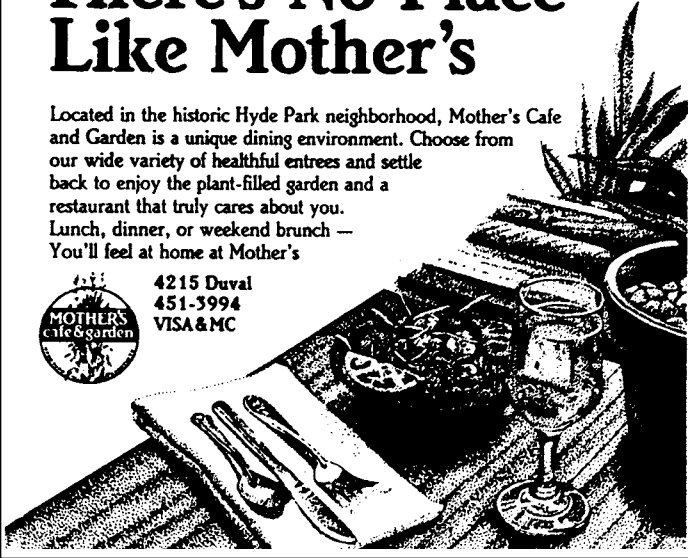



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## History of ASH...

...cont'd from page 8

The asylum was renamed The Austin State Hospital in 1925. At that time, the hospital provided many state-of-the-art services, including psychiatric medications. Therapies ranged from art and music to the rarely performed surgical lobotomy. Movies were also a feature at ASH from 1915, when the asylum purchased a projector. Other activities included band performances and dances, which were attended by staff and patients alike. Children from the Hyde Park neighborhood would come to the ASH campus to see films on Fridays. In the 1930s, the Asylum 9 baseball team played not only on campus, but also in the communities of Elgin, Kyle, Buda and Creedmore.

In 1925, the patient population of ASH was close to 6000. With the discovery of new medications to treat mental illness in the 1950s and 60s, as well as the advent of the Civil Rights movement, there began to be a shift towards providing more outpatient services for the mentally ill. Between 1966 and 1975, the population of Texas mental health patients dropped by half. Today the average stay at ASH is 16 days.

The Austin State Hospital admitted over 4300 patients in the year 2006, with about the same number of discharges, and has an average daily census of 290. The hospital provides services through three programs -- Adult Psychiatric Services, Specialty Adult Services and Child and Adolescent Services. ASH serves a 38-county area for adult services and 71 counties for child and adolescent services. The original building houses administrative offices, as well as a standing exhibit of photos, equipment and ephemera that spans the history of the hospital. The building is open to the public.

This year the Volunteer Services Council (VSC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit formed to enrich the lives of patients and staff at the Austin State Hospital, will provide clothing, program support and fund emergency requests with donations from individuals and groups from the community. Major fundraisers include the ASH Insights Art Show <[www.ashinsights.org](http://www.ashinsights.org)> held February 22nd at the IBC Bank Building, and the ASH Dash 5K run on May 5th. More information about the VSC and volunteer opportunities at ASH can be found at <[www.ashvolunteers.org](http://www.ashvolunteers.org)>. For questions regarding tours or potential fundraisers, please call Barbara Kelly at 419-2333.

— Barbara Kelly, Community Relations Director, Austin State Hospital

*Author's Note: Information for this article was gathered from informational brochures created by DSHS and ASH, as well as Sarah Sitton's wonderful history, Life at the Texas State Lunatic Asylum, Texas A&M University Press (available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)).*

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A full list of events is available at [www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut](http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut). For more information call the Office of Relationship Management and University Events at 512-471-7753.

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# Letters Dept.

## HPNA, "Sleepy"??

Dear Editor,

With all due respect to our current president of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association, I must disagree with one comment from her excellent column in the January issue of the Pecan Press, to wit: In the second paragraph she states, "Over the years, the HPNA has grown from a sleepy little organization (my italics) into a bustling small business."

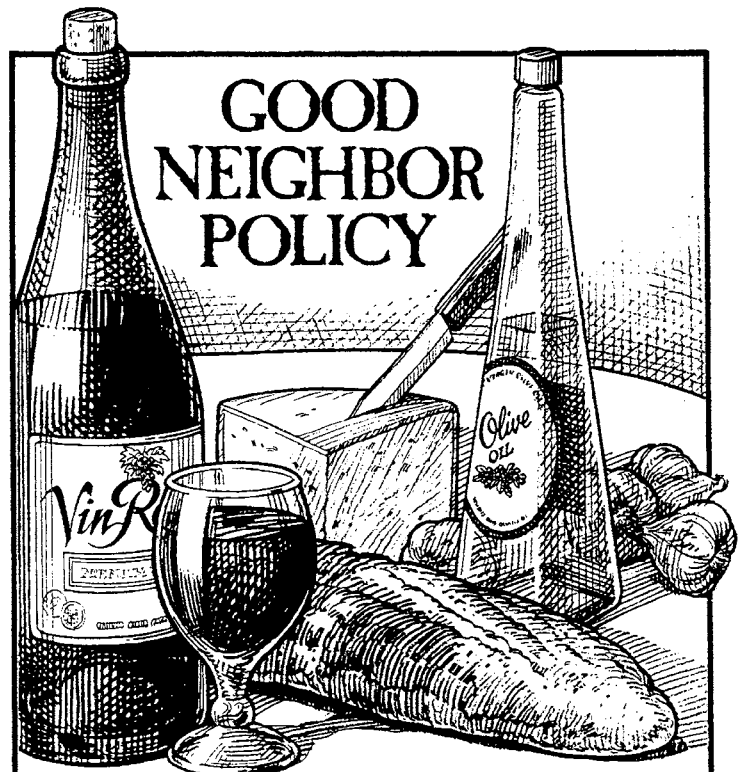
My wife and I were among the founders of the HPNA in the fall of 1974. I was the first president of the organization, serving in that office for three years. From day one HPNA was definitely not a "sleepy little organization." Perhaps littler than it is now, but never somnolent nor sleepy. At the organizational meeting in the fall of 1974, there were nearly 50 enthusiastic neighbors present. I was presiding at the meeting, and when we listed the various committees that needed volunteers, neighbors fairly jumped at the chance to serve. Furthermore, from the very beginning and for several years thereafter, HPNA representatives appeared at so many City Council meetings on a plethora of concerns that Council members routinely expected Hyde Parkers to be a vocal presence at Council meetings.

I make the above points simply to keep all of us aware of the fact that the wonderful neighborhood we have today is the result of a vibrant association that has existed for these 32 plus years, and hopefully will continue long into the future.

And I must close with profound thanks to our current president, other officers, and scores of other volunteers who continue to keep this neighborhood association the strongest (my bias) in the city of Austin.

— Rev. Merle G. Franke  
Hyde Park resident since 1971

(Editor's Note: Reverend Franke also served as editor of the Pecan Press for several years in the late 1970's.)



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## Demolition Threatens Rare Example of Egalitarian Second Phase of Hyde Park Development

The century-old house at 311 West 41st Street [Fourth Street before 1907] is a significant historical feature of Hyde Park and of the architectural inventory of Austin.

This "house of dignified presence" is designated as E 65' Lot 1-4 Blk 6 Hyde Park Addition no. 2. Nine years after the opening in 1891-92, Hyde Park was no longer advertised as "the most Aristocratic area in Austin." Instead, it was portrayed as a development for the working and middle class. Property could be acquired for the same price as "two beers a day." Hyde Park's architectural character changed and smaller frame houses were constructed. HP addition number 2 represented a scaling back of Monroe Shipe's original plan. More subdued in detailing than their high-style predecessors ...often with pre-cut and assembled trim and details...these unassuming dwellings have been dubbed "Folk Victorian" by architectural historian Virginia McAlester. Economic uncertainty was a factor in this trend. Local papers in 1899 reported "...the hardest times the world has ever known." The next building boom in Hyde Park would occur between 1924 and 1935, when the bungalow was the stylistic idiom. Karen McGraw's research revealed that the houses along the south side of 41st Street faced a large park-like space. Although this undivided tract was subdivided in 1903, most of the houses on these blocks were not constructed until the 1920s another evidence of a slowdown.

The first listing for this address was found in the Austin City Directory for 1910 with Adelbert F. Schenken in residence, subsequently joined by his sons, Adelbert, Jr. and Ralph. Adelbert was a printer and worked for a weekly German language newspaper, Texas Vorwaerts. Of course, the city directories represent a time lag of a year or two, so the date of construction can only be estimated as the first decade

Continued on page 16

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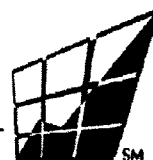
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## Demolition Threat...

...cont'd from page 14

of the 20th century. Schenken paid off a note on this property in 1901, according to Travis County records.

The house is a time capsule — enhanced by the absence of remodeling and/or additions — and documents a period of transition between 1890 and 1910 in materials and technology with regional variations. For example, one surviving crocket detail at the end of the central roof ridge bespeaks a striving for elegance. A floor plan with well-proportioned rooms opening off a central entry hall...once elegant interiors with high ceilings... this is a landmark awaiting new life!. The dignified presence of the house may derive from Adelbert Schenken's cultural background. Imminent artist, artisans and intellectuals of German heritage were numbered among his Hyde Park neighbors.

While not a contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register of Historic Places District because it is clad in synthetic siding, that shortcoming is easily rectified. The recent restoration of the VonBoeckmann-Keeble House at 4410 Avenue H — formerly clad in siding and recipient of the Heritage Society of Austin award in 2005 — is a case-in-point.

As noted in the January 2007 *Pecan Press*: At the December 18th session of the Historic Landmark Commission, consideration of the demolition permit sought by the executor of the estate which owns the property and recommended by HLC staff was postponed for sixty days by the commissioners while advocates for restoration devise plans for a rescue of the property.

— Gene and Mary Carolyn George

(Note: Several neighbors are working on ways to ensure that this property remains standing and is restored. If you are interested participating in this effort, please contact Wanda Penn via email at <wandapen@mac.com>.

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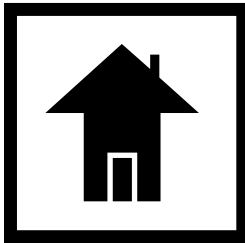
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## Hyde Park Poets —

### 2001 and Counting

It's a clear winter morning  
and I have my laundry in  
and am sitting over coffee at  
Dolce Vita writing a poem  
about my New Year's Day dream.

Not everyone is blessed with  
a New Year's Day dream so I  
am working very carefully,  
very reverently, trying to  
be aware of all the cosmic  
implications of this, my  
first dream of the new year.  
Who knows what will be revealed  
to me as the process completes  
itself, what secrets about  
myself, the universe?  
The coffee is good,  
the sun is warm  
and God is whispering in my  
ear this new day of the new year.  
If there's anything else I need,  
I can't name it.

— Albert Huffstickler, January 8, 2001

### Winter Dream

You were there. Now in this year  
a dream is the only place where you  
can come visit with me. And you were  
happy, your suspenders wide and tan,  
your gait the same, which I would have  
thought corrected in the hereafter. You  
carried a fiddle case, shiny black and new.  
That was odd: why would Huff have a  
new fiddle case? You told me you'd been  
playing with a group, a barbershop quartet.  
I liked that. I'm a barber. Maybe you  
were telling me to be more playful, to  
enjoy the music that is poetry.

Maybe you were telling me that after  
all these years, you're still fiddling  
around. I'm not sure what you meant  
in that visit, but it made me happy.  
So, keep fiddling, Huff, keep the music  
that is poetry lively in our dreams.

Visit any time; you're always welcome.

— Nancy Taylor Day, January 12, 2007

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Address: **4212 Avenue D**

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Address: **5305 Avenue H**

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Price: **\$299,000**

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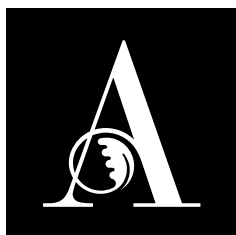
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