

continued from previous
plans to take over one of the MoPac highway lanes for an HOV lane. Commuter rail, which could travel over the existing MoPac rails, was also a still a topic of discussed at the meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Checking at \$1,621.15, Savings at \$3,178.52, Oak Wilt account at \$1,525.73, and paid membership presently standing at 297.

New Business

Susan Pascoe announced that she was recently appointed to the position of President of the Austin Neighborhood Council ("ANC").

Join WANG ➔

Happy Holidays from

M C C A R T H Y
P R I N T

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Take care of your neighborhood! Please take forms to your friends and neighbors and ask them to join WANG. An active membership will be a strong voice that's heard when critical issues are debated.

Yes, I want to join WANG.
 I want to renew my WANG membership.

I have enclosed:
 \$20 household membership
 \$10 student/senior membership

Date _____
Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____
Email _____

Make checks payable to WANG
and mail to:
WANG
P.O. Box 5722
Austin, TX 78763-5722

Please Check Mailing Label for Renewal Date
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Howson Branch Library
January 5th, 2004, 7:00 pm

West Austin Neighborhood Group
P.O. Box 5722
Austin, Texas 78763-5722



West Austin Neighborhood Group

Organized 1973

"To preserve our neighborhood and protect it from deterioration."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Cannatti
President

Erik Carey
President-Elect

Susan Pascoe
Past-President

Gwen Jewiss
Vice-President

Selina Serna
Treasurer

Erik Carey
Secretary

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Albert Almanza
Joyce Basciano
Joseph Bennett
Linda Neavel Dickens
Michael Falk
Jim Girardeu
Stephen Griffith
Hal Katz
Ken Pfluger
Blake Tollett

HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Arnold
Sinclair Black
Hon. Lloyd Doggett
Hon. Will Wynn

Background Photo of Lime Kiln #PICA24140, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

THE NEIGHBOR

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722

December, 2003

President's Message
November 2003

Howdy neighbor!

As you may have noticed, WANG's monthly newsletter has not been very "monthly" lately. After our August newsletter, we had our Annual Social on September 20, which was a rousing success (please read the enclosed minutes for the Annual Social), but since there was no formal board meeting that month, there was no September president's message. And for lack of a quorum at our October board meeting, there was no October president's message either. But please don't think I've been frittering away these months without thinking about neighborhood concerns.

To the contrary, I've been spending a lot of time looking into how "safe" we feel in our neighborhood and why it is we don't let our kids run around the neighborhood as freely as we did when we were kids. To gather information on this question, I've done some research about safety statistics to see if they've changed over the years, and to see how "real" these perceived risks are.

From what I can tell, America is actually a much safer place than it used to be, and God knows our little corner of West Austin is one of the safest places to live on this Earth. But you might never know it from reading the newspaper or watching the news. In fact, the tendency of the media to sensationalize the stories gives the impression that we live in dangerous times and places. For example, hyperventilated national coverage of a child abduction in Utah makes it seem as if potential abductors are lurking around every Tarrytown corner, just waiting to find a unattended child! But if we put aside the hype, the hard numbers show that the number of child kidnappings by strangers has actually been decreasing in recent years. According to published reports, only a small percentage (2%) of the children reported missing in 1999 were missing because of a non-family abduction, and the number of non-family abductions has been decreasing since 1998. If

these numbers tell the truth, the actual probability of a child being snatched and snuffed is about one in a million. See, www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/nismart/01. In contrast, a child is twice as likely to fall victim to accidental shooting, 10 times more likely to drown in a backyard pool, and 100 times more likely to be seriously injured or killed on a bicycle. See, www.uwire.com/content/topops081902001.html.

And the statistics relating to the broader category of deaths due to accidents show that the numbers have fallen from 87 per 100,000 people in 1903 to 38 per 100,000 in 1989, a decrease of more than half. Deaths due to accidents have declined in all categories, and the declines have become more pronounced recently, with the biggest declines coming in the 1980s. And according to the U.S. Dept. of Justice, serious violent crime levels have declined since 1993, and property crime rates have continued to decline. See, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance.htm.

Even the recent threat of "terrorism" can be put into perspective by comparing the number of deaths in 2001 from the September 11 attacks (approximately 3,000 casualties) to the number of deaths by the leading causes of death (heart disease - 699,697; cancer - 553,251; stroke - 163,601; chronic lower respiratory disease - 123,974; accidents - 97,707; diabetes - 71,252; pneumonia/flu - 62,123; Alzheimer's disease - 53,679; kidney disease - 39,691; blood poisoning - 32,275 and suicide - 29,423). Indeed, "nutritional deficiencies," "asthma," "peptic uclers" and "accidental drownings" caused more deaths than did the terrorist attacks. See, www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr52/nvsr52_03.pdf. While these observations are likely to draw howls of indignant protest, I think they illustrate that our fears about life are not realistically connected to the actual facts.

So what's the point of this message? To quote the Public Enemy lyric, "Don't Believe the Hype." I hope that people in our neighborhood understand that our little neighbor-

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Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.deepeddy.com/wang/>!

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hood is no more dangerous now than when we were kids. Not only are we much safer than the evening news suggests, but we live in a very stable neighborhood that has become more prosperous and educated as a demographic group over time. A comparison of the census data for 1990 and 2000 at the city's web site (ftp://issweb.ci.austin.tx.us/pub/GIS-Data/planning/census/pa_2000_2.htm) shows that the overall population for Planning Area 2 (bounded by the Colorado River, Shoal Creek, FM 2222 and Dry Creek) grew by only 6.8% between 1990 and 2000. The data also shows that there were significantly more households in 2000 with income above \$50K (including an increase of 150% for households making \$100K or more), and fewer households below the \$50K income number. The data also shows a significant increase in the number people obtaining a college or graduate level education. (Interestingly but not surprisingly, the data also shows that there were fewer residents in the "65 and Older" category in 2000 than in 1990.)

Having grown up in West Austin and attended the public schools here, I ran freely around the neighborhood and walked to Casis in fifth grade. As kids, we played unsupervised for hours in the creek behind Reed Park, and I expect my parents often had no idea where I was. Even so, now that I have kids and have been saturated by the scary news stories, I understand the reluctance to let your kids walk alone to school, though frankly I'm amazed to see the long stream of parents escorting their little ones not only to the Casis front door, but into the classroom! With a community of involved and engaged neighbors, our childhood assumption -- that the world was a safe place and that if we needed help we'd find it -- should still hold true.

TARRYTOWN SHOPPING CENTER NEWS

It has recently come to our attention that the owner of the Tarrytown Shopping Center may have made a promise to maintain a grocery store on the complex, in exchange for having the property on the west side of Exposition rezoned to its current commercial zoning. I understand that this commitment may have been made to the neighborhood in the early to mid- 1980s. If anyone out there has any information or recollection about such a commitment or knows who might know more about this, please give me a call.

ENFIELD TRAFFIC UPDATE

Beginning November 22, traffic on Enfield between Lamar and MoPac will be reduced to one eastbound lane only, weather permitting. Westbound traffic in that area will be detoured. Motorists should watch for detour signs and exercise caution. This phase of the project should take until late spring 2004. The contractor will perform utility work in the area followed closely behind by road reconstruction.

In addition to the traffic control change, you will observe crews laying a "leveling" course of asphalt to the southern-most lane between MoPac and Lamar. The "leveling" course is an interim fix to the deteriorated road surface, intended to give motorists a safe, smooth, temporary surface to use until that segment later goes under construction.

The work on the west end of the project is progressing. In early December, two-way traffic will be restored (one lane in each direction) to Enfield between MoPac and Exposition, where traffic is currently using one eastbound only. In January 2004, all work on the west end of the project between MoPac and Exposition is expected to be completed. At that time, all four lanes in the area will be returned to full service, and the area under construction will be reduced to the segment between Lamar and MoPac only. Got gripes? Call Project Manager Michael Curtis at 974-7056.

CITIZENS REPORTS TO CITY TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

If you feel you have want to report traffic and pedestrian problems or need to bring something to the attention of the City, submit a Citizen Request on-line at www.ci.austin.tx.us/roadworks/rwform.htm.

And as always, please feel free to contact me on matters of neighborhood concern.

Michael Rocco Cannatti
338-9100 or mike@hamiltonterre.com

Report of the 2003 Annual Meeting of the West Austin Neighborhood Group

Attending Board Members: Ken Pfluger, Gwen Jewiss, Susan Pascoe, Mike Cannatti, Steven Griffith, Blake Tollett, Linda Dickens, Selina Serna, Jim Girardo, Mike Falk, and Joe Bennett.

Approval of Directors

Michael Cannatti read the proposed slate of Directors, which were: Michael Cannatti, Albert Almanza, Joyce Basciano, Joseph Bennett, Erik Cary, Linda Dickens, Michael Falk, Jim Girardo, Stephen Griffith, Gwen Jewiss, Hal Katz, Susan Pascoe, Ken Pfluger, Selina Serna, and Blake Tollett. Mr. Watt motioned that the list be approved and Mr. Ike seconded the motion. Fifty-one persons of the membership approved and none were opposed. All proposed directors were approved.

Amendments to Bylaws

Susan Pascoe proposed various amendments to the Bylaw of WANG. She summarized the proposed changes as follows: A) there was a proposal that the treasurer now be in charge of the membership roles; B) there was a proposal that there was a change in the terms of board; C) there was a proposal to combine the positions of VP and president-elect, into Vice-President, with the Vice-President being the president's successor.

A motion was made to approve the proposed changes. The motion was seconded. All persons in attendance were in favor with none voting against. The Bylaws have been amended as proposed. A copy of the amendments are to be maintained by the Secretary.

Austin History Center

A presentation was made concerning the Austin History Center.

Landmark Preservation

A presentation was made by Ms. Lynn Team a local realtor concerning landmark preservation.

Susan Pascoe discussed the recent case concerning the house located on Jarratt in Pemberton Heights. She reported that the Old West Austin Neighborhood Association's ("OWANA") National Historic Register District was being blamed for the difficulty that the property owner had in obtaining a demolition permit for the Jarratt house. However, Ms. Pascoe pointed out that the City process is separate from the National Registry.

According to Ms. Pascoe, the City uses 13 criteria in evaluating demolition permits. Because the house on Jarratt was contributing to the national registry this was one reason, but there were many others. The house would have come up on the City's historic list anyway.

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Joe Bennett, WANG's Historic Designation chair, discussed the fact that WANG is presently talking about the possibly doing the same thing that Old West Austin Historic District did. First, Mr. Bennett has looked at potentially contributing homes. The homes on Mr. Bennett's map represent homes that are potentially contributing. Next, the houses would have to be looked at for individual historical or architectural significance. A draft nomination would then be prepared and submitted to the State board of review. Then, it would be submitted to the National Park service for review.

At this juncture WANG is attempting to determine whether we would be eligible for designation. Mr. Bennett is now looking at areas which might be historically or architecturally significant.

Ms. Team pointed out that the National Registry limits the ability of governmental authorities to spend federal money in the designated areas. Local and state authorities can still do it but they would have to do it without the use federal funds, which would severely constrain their ability to do so.

Michael Cannatti pointed out that there has been much discussion about whether National designation limits a property owner's ability to do remodeling on their own home. According to Mr. Cannatti, the federal program does not limit your ability to remodel. By contrast, however, City designation, which is done on a house-by-house basis, would limit your ability.

Tarrytown Shopping Center

A discussion was then had about the Tarrytown Shopping Center located at Exposition and Windsor and the animal rights stance that its owner has taken. Several suggestions were made about possible courses of action that the neighborhood could take relative to the closing of the Holiday House restaurant in our neighborhood. It was also discussed that a property owner can generally pick and chose their tenants, and can even discriminate in favor of animal rights.

WANG Executive Committee Meeting Minutes October 9, 2003

Attending Board Members: Michael Cannatti, Hal Katz, Ken Pfluger, Stephen Griffith, Blake Tollett, Gwen Jewiss, Erik Cary.

Guests - Dr. George Edwards, John Joseph Jr., Carrie Chambliss, Nikelle Meade, Lynn and Jim Eno.

Because no quorum was had, the Committee listened to zoning matters and took reports, but deferred all votes and subcommittee reports until the next meeting.

Zoning

1307 Elton Lane - Nikelle Meade representing the owner, Carrie Chambliss. The Applicant seeks to reduce the side setback to construct a garage. The Applicant went to the Board of Adjustment on Sept. 8. At that time, they were merely seeking a variance to construct a carport. The Applicant reports, however, that they are now seeking to place a garage along the property line. According to the Applicant, the reason the garage needs to be so close to the existing property line is that if the garage is located away from the property line, there will not be enough room on the existing lot to properly turn the cars without the risk of hitting the house. They are also trying to save a tree in the backyard.

2200 Stamford Lane - John Joseph, Jr. appeared on behalf of the Applicant, Morris Gottesman. The Applicant has been seeking a variance to maintain a concrete paver driveway. An agreement has been proposed by the Applicant to remove the existing concrete paver driveway and replace it with either a gravel or pervious concrete system.

2201 Bowman - The Applicants, Jim and Lynn Eno, have requested a variance to decrease the minimum rear yard setback from 10 feet to 5 feet in order to construct a two story accessory building / studio to replace an existing building. They do not want to remove an existing tree.

3208 Enfield - Blake reports that the Applicant's request for a variance (and the Applicant's request for reconsideration) to allow a nonconforming balcony was denied by the Board of Adjustment.

701 Norwalk - No update.

Good Shepherd Church Update - Church has obtained the variances. The request for zoning change was withdrawn by the Church.

All committee reports were deferred until the next meeting.

WANG Executive Committee Meeting Minutes November 3, 2003

Attending Board Members: Michael Cannatti, Joyce Basciano, Erik Cary, Linda Dickens, Stephen Griffith, Hal Katz, Ken Pfluger, Mike Falk, Selina Serna, Jim Girardo, Blake Tollett, Susan Pascoe.

Guests: Sara Madera, Kerri Chambliss, Nikelle Meade, Rick Steven Powell, Chris Kennedy, Sonia, and Marianne Nealy.

LCRA Expansion Presentation: Rick Luntzer, Marianne Nealy, Chris Kennedy, and Stephen Powell were in attendance on behalf of LCRA. Garage expansion project: The original garage was designed for a third level, but they have just now reached the critical point where they are in need of the new level. The erection itself will only take 10 days - barring weather issues - and is scheduled to take place over the Christmas Holiday time period. After the erection of the third floor, light construction, such as installing the electrical fixtures, lighting, and otherwise getting the garage ready for cars, will take place over the following months.

Chris Kennedy with LCRA also explained that they are also moving forward regarding their ten year plan. The improvements are to be built on the Brackenridge Tract. They will be doing renovations to their Emergency Operations Center which is located near the dam. They are also planning on opening up the center area to make it more like a park.

The Executive Committee annual retreat to discuss sub-committee assignments and planning issues for the next year was tentatively scheduled for November 18th at 5:30.

Zoning

1307 Elton Lane; John and Keri Chambliss, Nikelle Meade. The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum side yard setback requirement from 5 feet to 1 foot in order to erect a garage for a single-family residence. The Applicant made a similar presentation of issues from the last meeting where there was no quorum. After the presentation, the Executive Committee voted 6-3 (with 3 members abstaining) in favor of opposing the requested variance.

Transportation

MoNAC Meeting report: According to the transportation committee, Sinclair Black spoke at the MoNAC meeting about possible

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