

# Barton Hills News

Oct. 2008

The Publication of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association

## Presidents Message

I'm still praying for rain. Every plant in my yard needs it. I've done something different lately. I've started watering ten minutes per sprinkler location. I've read the recommendations to water less often and deeply, but that doesn't make sense to me because I just don't have the soil. I think my yard looks great on the 10 minute cycle. Maybe this fall I can get out and actually work the soil again instead of saving plants. I think October and November are my favorite months. The weather cools but doesn't get cold. I can stay outside longer. And, our family can get out and take some day trips. I love the Renaissance Festival and WurstFest, though I didn't attend either last year. The shows and food are fabulous. I love walking through Hill Country towns and visiting wineries. And, I love the World Series. October and November is definitely the most relaxing time of the year.

I knew from the beginning this year was going to end soon. There's a lot going on and next year is going to be even more busy. The president doesn't have to work too much to fill an agenda. There are a lot of organizations that contact us to speak to our residents. For our next meeting, that organization will be the Neighborhood Conference Committee, a community-based diversionary program for first-time juvenile offenders. Between those organizations and our concerns, the agenda can become quite a challenge. There has to be rules and one rule I set last December was that anyone needing time on the agenda would have to submit an article for the newsletter. The primary reason was so our membership would have some baseline information before coming to the meeting. I think it has worked out well. The meetings have flowed better than some of our past meetings. I haven't been able to finish a meeting by 8:30 but, I can say I tried. We have had some problems, too. There were problems with the changes and it was April before everyone was fully on-board. That's understandable. Change is hard and people are naturally suspicious. But people are also capable of cooperating and we must all find a way to make the rules work. Another rule I set was that all committee members would have a vote in an executive committee meeting. All things considered, I think the rules have worked well. But, I never got my dream meeting. I wanted to have a meeting about our homes, remodeling, and related money matters. It would have included discussions about remodeling to sell, remodeling to update, electrical work, landscaping, money, and anything else. I think it's doable. We just need to invite the talent. Where does that talent come from? We have the talent right here in our neighborhood and advertis-

ing in our newsletter. In the end it was decided that, that meeting was better scheduled as an extra meeting. The rule that was most problematic was the suggestion rule. I said very early that suggestions are ok, but I can't take a suggestion and assign it to an executive committee member. It just doesn't work. The president needs the executive committee. It is far easier and more efficient if the executive committee acts as the support staff and the association act as the financial backer. Indeed, it has been a quick year.

As for October's agenda, the we will have food at 6 for 6. We'll have some committee discussion regarding any changes to committee members and what can be expected next year. We'll try and get a new president and executive committee elected, and we'll have a City of Austin speaker discuss the work of the Neighborhood Conference Committee and how our neighborhood can be involved.

As always, the pleasure is mine,  
Eddie Torres  
2008 BHNA President  
matterhorneddie@yahoo.com

## Neighborhood Conference Committee

This committee initiative started in 1996. NCC is a collaborative, community-based diversionary program for first-time juvenile offenders (10yr-16yr) charged with Class "A" or "B" misdemeanor offenses. Youth who successfully complete the program, and do not re-offend within a two-year period can petition the court to have the case sealed. Partners include Travis County Health and Human Services, Travis County Juvenile Probation and the District Attorney's Office. NCC neighborhood-based design connects youth and their families to compassionate, caring adult volunteers that help restore youthful offenders back to their communities. NCC currently serves the following zip codes: 78702; (21); (23); (24); (27); (28);(41);(44);(45);(53);(58); 78660 & 78617. We are trying to expand the program into 78704 and we are looking for volunteers to participate on the committee that will creatively sanction youth in ways specifically tailored to the youth and the offense.

## ANC Roundup

A hot item at ANC the past few months is a proposed charter amendment to change the way city council members are elected. It does not appear that the proposed charter amendment will make it onto the ballot this year, but it will be back around. Here is a brief recap of the proposal and arguments:

The plan most discussed is referred to as the 8-4-1 Model (a super district model based on the system in Memphis). This proposed model for the charter amendment divides the city into 8 single-member districts with one 1 rep each, and two super districts (one east, one west) each of which would have 2 at-large reps. Voters would get to vote for the rep from their single-member district, plus the two at-large super district reps from their super district, and the mayor. City council would have 13 people under the proposed charter amendment, as opposed to 7 now.

The arguments for the proposed amendment focus on cost to run, access and participation. Running as a rep from a single member district would, in theory, be a lot cheaper than running at-large, since a candidate could focus his efforts on just one district as opposed to the whole city. Proponents argue that the single-member districts would also increase political participation in low-turnout areas since candidates would have to live in their district and could focus solely on their district. Proponents also assert that the single member districts would increase political access for neighborhoods since they would have their own rep to whom they could

turn on issues of importance for their neighborhoods. They also argue that the current council system and the informal "gentlemen's agreement" may run afoul of voting rights laws, so we should take charge and change the way we elect council members before such change may be mandated by the courts.

Opponents of the charter amendment question whether or not changing the way we elect city council members is the proper way to address low voter turnout, have concerns about the cost to the city and taxpayers of almost doubling the size of the council, worry that the single-member districts will promote "turf wars" between single-member districts, and question whether or not a change is even needed.

If you have any questions, or would like more information, just send me an email at [cl8y@yahoo.com](mailto:cl8y@yahoo.com)



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## Neighborhood Watch

The crime statistics for the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association area continue to be rather low when compared to other areas of the city. However, we continue to have problems with residential burglaries and burglaries of vehicles in particular. One crime is one too many for our neighborhood. Please take precautions and remove valuables from your car and lock it when not in use. Secure your home with dead bolts and place security devices on you windows to limit how far they will open. Don't make it easy for someone to enter your car or home

Officer Dwayne Kinley, APD District Representative to BHNA, has informed me that the Southwest Division of the Austin Police Department has initiated special operations targeting criminals committing vehicle burglaries in our area recently and have had an impact of this type of crime. Hopefully, our neighborhood will become too risky to the thieves operating in this area as a result of the increased police presence in Barton Hills.

If you would like a free security check of your home contact Office Kinley at 974-4281 to set up an appointment and APD will do a walk through of your home with you and offer suggestions for increased security measures.

The reported crime statistics in the five categories we routinely track, from January 1 thru September 20, 2008 are as follows:

### Crime Type

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Auto Theft	0	0	1	2	1
Burglary of Vehicle	1	1	0	0	2
Burglary of Residence	0	2	0	4	2
Criminal Mischief	2	0	0	0	1
Theft	4	0	3	1	1

### Crime Type

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Auto Theft	0	0	1	0
Burglary of Vehicle 2	6	2	0	0
Burglary of Residence	4	0	3	0
Criminal Mischief	0	2	2	3
Theft	0	1	6	2

**Remember, if you see anything or anyone in your neighborhood that causes you to be concerned about your safety call 911.**

**John Luther, BHNA Neighborhood Watch Chairman**



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## Greenbelt Guardian Report

We are happy to report a significant reduction in the Ligustrum population on the Homedale greenbelt trail. The word has spread about the ecological damage caused by these prolific invaders, and numerous groups are now joining our efforts on behalf of the greenbelt.

Between July 16 and 19, forces converged to eradicate some 275 Ligustrum. They are now lying horizontal, put to useful work as either shredded mulch or erosion windrows.

About 70% of the invasives were removed by American Youth Works E-Corps crews, and funded by the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) with proceeds from the City Austin Limits Festival. Over the past two years APF has been working with the Greenbelt Guardians to improve conditions on the Barton Creek greenbelt. On this occasion, APF funded the E-Corps crew for three days of work, and the Greenbelt Guardians selected the area to be cleared and funded the tree chipper rental. Thanks to these collaborative efforts, the Campbell's Hole area has 200 less dense-foliaged invaders abutting the hiking trail.

On Saturday, July 19, the Greenbelt Guardians held our quarterly work day. On this sauna-like summer day, 35 volunteers worked from 8:00 am to noon, tackling maintenance issues on the Homedale Trail. Bolstered by BHNA's contribution of Maria's Tacos and iced watermelon slices, we: weeded the entry area; raked and regraded the entry trail; removed 75 Ligustrums by every means available (hand pulling, weed wrenching, "rock and rolling", and sawing and stump herbiciding) and formed windrows; we identified native regrowth in our restoration tract (35 species of native plants were found in a single 10'x10' area!); we removed four large rolls of barbed wire (more to go); picked up trash from the surrounding creek and trail areas; and gathered GPS coordinates for Ligustrum management mapping.

Our GPS team (neighbors Ken Russell and Tim Steckler, plus Elisa Cervantes (COA Austin Energy, GIS services employee) did a great job mapping the Ligustrum trees at the base of the cliffs near the rock flats, which are legally on private property. Before we can clear invasives there, we must get permission from the owners on the cliffs above. We now have a map identifying the property owners we need to contact, and the location of the Ligustrum plants on their property. The GPS unit we purchased with the Stones grant funds was put to good use, and even out-performed the COA GPS unit in those dense canopied areas!

It was a diverse group, as always: BHNA-Greenbelt Guardian veterans, recruits from APF and Keep Austin Beautiful, Austin Ridgerrider members, Travis County Juvenile Probation students, and personal recruits. Neighbor Tim Steckler's four-year-old son helped the GPS team, and Nancy Koch's two young sons and husband all tackled Ligustrum together. All told, we contributed 140 volunteer hours to our greenbelt's well-being.

We also used Stones grant funds to purchase E-Corps services for two more days of Ligustrum clearing and chipping, on August 11 and September 3. Those two days resulted in hundreds more large Ligustrum being cut down and chipped into mulch. There are miles to go, but each effort brings a sigh of relief to a stressed eco-system.

We are collaborating with two more volunteer groups who are planning work days on the greenbelt: the Austin Ridgerriders, who will be clearing large seed-bearing Ligustrum upstream from our adopted area on the 26th of September, and the Hill Country Conservancy and Motorola, who will be doing an invasives clearing volunteer work day on October 15. We are collecting data on the number of invasives cleared by each group to add to a database we are creating to project a comprehensive plan and budget for restoration activities on the greenbelt.

We plan to plant some native trees in our recently cleared areas this fall or winter. They will have special significance. Two of them will be memorial trees to honor neighbors who died. One tree will be planted for Robin McKeever's husband, Mert Starnes, who died in mid-July - Robin was the President of BHNA when the Greenbelt Guardians were formed. The other tree will be planted to honor Janet Byers, who also died in mid-July - both she and her husband, Scott Byers have volunteered with the Greenbelt Guardians since we started in 2003.

### Upcoming Work Day

Our next Greenbelt Guardian Work Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 18, at Homedale Trail, from 9:00 - 1:00. It will be great to work in cooler weather. We hope to see a lot of our neighbors on the trail!

Glee Ingram  
Greenbelt Guardian Coordinator

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Please go to:

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to complete the survey. There is a big push to get survey results in by October 5th if you can, but the survey will be available for the next several months.

## BHNA Food Drive Results

280 lbs!! That is the total amount of our last two food drives here in Barton Hills. In July we were able to donate 105 lbs of food to the Capital Area Food Bank, and in early September, we collected 175 lbs for Caritas of Austin. This adds up to over 225 meals for those in need in Austin. Between these official BHNA drives and the many grass-roots food drives that we see on the listserv, it is easy to see that Barton Hills is a community that cares about others in Austin!

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**Sunday**

- 7:30 a.m.
- 9:00 a.m.
- 10:00 a.m. Christian Formation
- 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday**

- 6:00 p.m.



**Barton Hills News**

The newsletter of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is published quarterly and is supported by the advertisements of our generous sponsors. It is distributed in print to homes in Barton Hills in January, April, July and October.

# KALEIDOPROPERTIES

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