

BARTON HILLS NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter

July 2009

Shock and Roll, Baby!



Seven Barton Hills Elementary students travelled to Iowa at the end of May to compete in the international Odyssey of the Mind (OM) competition. Only 47 teams from around the world were invited to participate in their division's event. Shockwave, the team's name, placed 24th in their category.

Students choose one of five categories of competition. This team's challenge was to create a structure out of a few grams of balsa wood that would hold as much weight as possible. The students cheered because their tiny structure withstood 300 lbs! According to sources, they got great scores and verbal comments on their structure, play and overall style.

The neighborhood association supported the children by donating \$1,000 to defray the cost of their trip. They had fun visiting the sites in Iowa and meeting kids from the US as well as Mexico, Korea, China, Singapore, and Hong Kong. They especially enjoyed teaching their Polish "buddy team" how to play American football!

Congratulations to all the finalists: Abbey Preston, Angela Campbell, Devon Nelms, Joseph Williams, Sam Filleman, Seamus Quinn, and Theo Lavier.

OM is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve spontaneous and long-term problems. For more information visit: www.odysseyofthemind.com

NEXT MEETING

Tues. July 14th, 6-8 p.m.

Join us at St. Mark's Church (corner of Barton Skyway & Barton Hills Dr.).

Social hour at 6 pm

Italian dinner for \$6.

All are welcome!

Extra Special Summer Meeting! Bring Your Kids!

Agenda

- 7:00 Call to order / Welcome
- 7:05 Administrative Business
- 7:10 Fun Stuff
- 7:30 Greenbelt Guardians Update
- 7:40 Neighborhood Watch
- 7:50 Barton Springs Median
- 8:00 Adjourn



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President's Message



Happy Summer, Neighbors!

As I write this, my brother-in-law, born and raised in Tehran, is watching his country go through another potential revolution. Via satellite TV and updates from his cousins, he is proudly following his fellow Iranians and their intense fight for free and fair elections.

As we approach the July 4th holiday, let's all take time to remember our good fortune as Americans: voting is no longer limited to a certain race or gender, there is no poll tax or property requirement and we can festoon our cars with as many political stickers as we wish. We expect fair elections and we speak our minds publicly. These rights didn't just appear: thousands of men and women of every color and creed worked, fought and, yes, died so that we could enjoy such rights.

Cue awkward segue: Then what better way to honor America's independence than with a parade and picnic! Of course, it will be on July 4th and will begin at 9 am at the Barton Hills Market-please arrive by 8:30 a.m. with decorated bikes, wagons, children, dogs, clothing and faces. At the school, we will have games, cookies, watermelon and wholesome fun plus our very own Sara Hickman will lead us in the National Anthem.

Our needs: cookies, ice-cold watermelons and water balloons! Also: volunteers to decorate the playground and to help with games and food prep. There will be water jugs but bring your own water, just in case.

We will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Capital Area Food Bank again so bring what you can to the market or the school.

Please contact me with any questions: kimbearsays@yahoo.com. Looking forward to it!

Sincerely,

Kimberly White Erlinger

2009 Events Calendar

July 4	Neighborhood Parade
July 14	General Meeting
July 29	Kinder playdate, BHE playground 6:30-7:30 p.m.
August 8	Kinder playdate, Butler Park fountains 9:30-10:30 a.m.
August 20	Kinder meet the teachers
August 24	Back to School!!
September 7	Labor Day
October 20	General Meeting

Do you have a neighborhood event that you would like to see included in the newsletter? Send it to Wendy Papasan at wpapasan@kw.com at least one month before the next general meeting date.

Barton Hills News

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association newsletter is published quarterly and supported by advertisers. It is distributed to homes in the Barton Hills neighborhood of Austin, TX in January, April, July, and October. For more information on membership or affairs related to the neighborhood, contact the appropriate person below.

2009 Executive Committee

President - Kimberly White Erlinger
(kimbearsays@yahoo.com) or (512) 779-0827

Vice President - Sheila Stricker (sheila@shoehorndesign.com)

ANC Rep - Kay Killen (bhnaparade2007@yahoo.com)

Corresponding Secretary/Newsletter Ed. - Wendy Papasan
(wpapasan@kw.com) or (512) 297-9431

Secretary - Ken Russell (GISatHCCS@aol.com)

Treasurer - John Morgan (morgan78704@gmail.com)

Committee Chairs

Committee on Area Development - Peter Hess
(phess@mail.utexas.edu)

Greenbelt Guardians - Glee Ingram

Neighborhood Watch - John Luther (jluther@austin.rr.com)

Learn more about us at www.BHNA.net!

This newsletter was printed on 100% recycled paper.



Neighborhood Watch

By John Luther

Special kudos are in order for one of our Neighborhood Watch volunteers. Mary Campbell noticed a neighbor's garage door open recently and after attempts to phone the neighbors were unsuccessful, Mary kept a watchful eye on the open garage until late in the evening. After consulting with me, we notified the police and requested they come check the residence and secure the garage door. Mary maintained her watch until the police closed the garage door. The neighbor's valuables were safe and sound when they returned home the next day. Mary is a shining example of a neighbor watching out for a neighbor – the primary goal of the Neighborhood Watch program. Well done, Mary!

Mary is one of many volunteers participating in the our Neighborhood Watch program. Some give up an hour per month to patrol our neighborhood in the late evening hours. Some organize their blocks so that their immediate neighbors understand the value of the program. Others are alert to the activity on their street and know what to do when there is cause for fear or concern. All want to take positive action to reduce crime in

2009 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join or renew your membership in the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$10/household. Make checks payable to BHNA and mail them to: **PO BOX 2042 * Austin TX 78768-2042**. You can also pay dues online at BHNA.net. There is a \$1 service fee.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Names of additional household members 18 years or older:

☐ I am interested in getting more involved in neighborhood activities. Please contact me.

our neighborhood. I invite each of you to sign up and volunteer for Neighborhood Watch. We can make a difference.

The Austin Police Department is reporting that violent crimes have decreased in our city over the last several months. However, they are reporting an increase in lesser crimes such as home and auto burglaries, theft and criminal

mischief. The APD Crime Statistics for reported crimes in Barton Hills for the period April 1 to June 12, 2009 are as follows:

- * **Burglary of a Residence 10**
- * **Burglary of a Vehicle 7**
- * **Theft 5**
- * **Criminal Mischief 4**

Neighbors looking out for neighbors; a time tested formula for reducing criminal activity.

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Greenbelt Guardians Report

By Glee Ingram

The Barton Creek greenbelt got a dose of tender loving care on National Trails Day, with 286 volunteers working between the Gus Fruh access and the 360 access, up to Twin Falls area. The results of so many hands on deck resulted in many improvements: trail repairs, safer climbing walls, less weeds in the trails, huge piles of brush organized into windrows, and removal of many bags of trash and debris.

At Gus Fruh, a major ongoing project was completed - the stone retaining wall beside the Gus Fruh swimming hole. It is a beautifully crafted wall that fits naturally into the greenbelt setting, and serves to stop the erosion of the trail bank into the creek. Our volunteer artisans already envision expanding it further to protect more of the bank.

We had planned to do ligustrum and nandina removal, but

shortly before the work day, Willie Conrad, the director of the city's Balcones Canyonlands Preserve program, announced that no removal of any woody trees or shrubs would be allowed. This is because there was concern that the endangered Golden Cheek Warbler and the Black Cap Vireo fledglings might be harmed by falling trees or branches during nesting season.

Now invasives removal is only allowed when the birds are NOT here, August through February. This means that we need to rethink the way we organize ourselves in order not to lose our momentum. Removing invasives is necessary to restoring the greenbelt to ecological health, which has the potential to expand the endangered birds' habitat.

In security news, John Cook, our COA-PARD partner, told us that the reorganization of the Police Department means the Parks Police can no longer help with homeless

encampments removal and greenbelt trail monitoring. Recently, John and his helper removed three two-ton truckloads of "encampment village" materials.

Former Parks Police staff are being trained and tests to see if they qualify to join the regular Police force. We do not know if they will be assigned to do parks protection work.

One of our Greenbelt Guardians leaders, Scott Byers, developed a wonderful logo for the Greenbelt Guardians. It had its premiere on the t-shirts designed for the recent work day. You can see it posted on greenbeltguardians.org.

Our next quarterly work day is scheduled for Saturday, October 31. We plan to have some crazy fun!

Between now and then, we plan to work with John Cook and his summer E-Corps interns, to get the Homedale Trail resurfaced with the polymer/granite mix.

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Median Project Growing

By Wendy Papasan

Neighborhood residents, Austin Parks Department officials, and area garden club members have been meeting for several months to work out the details for an overhaul of the median on Barton Springs Road. If you're like me, I hadn't really noticed how bad it looks until I started attending meetings, but now that it's been brought to my attention, I can't help but notice!

Although the Parks Department generally does not maintain medians, because this area is seen

as the "Gateway to Zilker Park," it is an exception.

At the most recent meeting in June, Parks staff revealed plans to spruce up the median with native plants, decorative pavers and new grass. Currently, the committee is seeking donations of plants, soil, mulch, pavers and money. It is slated to be finished at the end of September in time for the ACL Festival on Oct. 2-4.

If you would like to donate your time or your "green" to this worthy effort, please contact Wendy Papasan at (512) 297-9431 or wpapasan@kw.com.

Remember...

Water restrictions are in place so please remember to water your lawns judiciously by following the city's watering schedule. Visit www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/summer.htm for more information.

Please make sure your outdoor pets have water and shade! Bring them inside when the heat gets too oppressive. Looking for a pet? Animal shelters are over-flowing with friendly dogs and cats so why not adopt one this summer?

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Did You Know?

The Spanish established three missions near Barton Springs in 1730-31, but soon abandoned them. In 1826, what is now Barton Hills was part of a large tract of land on "Spring Creek" in the Mexican State of Coahuila y Tejas. It was granted to Empresario Benjamin R. Milam and known as Milam's Colony. This is the same "Old Ben" Milam who led the Texan assault on San Antonio against Mexican regulars in December of 1835 and who died in that bloody house-to-house fighting.

This information was excerpted from the HISTORY OF BARTON HILLS by Dick Kallerman. More history of the neighborhood and lots of other fun stuff can be found on www.bhna.net.

Real Estate Update

By Wendy Papasan

If you're like me, you were a little shocked when you got your property tax appraisal. I immediately sent my form in to protest. I think it generated as much chatter on the listserve as that guy who called the police on Shady Grove. I've since heard from neighbors who were successful and some who could only get a few thousand dollars knocked off. Here are some real estate statistics for Austin and the area surrounding Barton Hills.

The Austin year to date average sales price through April was \$228,100. Compare that number to Area 7 (an area that encompasses Barton Hill and runs roughly from Town Lake to Lamar to Loop 360 to Barton Creek), where the average sales price in May 2009 was \$424,371! That is an increase of nearly 9 percent over May last year, when the average sales price was \$390,784. The number of homes sold in Area 7 during May of this year was 12. This is down from 22 sold in May of 2008.

For Austin overall, the average days on market for the year for properties that sold was 79. The average days on market for active properties (ones that are still on the market) is 104.

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