

# BARTON HILLS NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter

July 2009

## Getting to know...Dave Kemptner

By Sheila Stricker

The school building was a grass hut. The floors were "bare earth," covered with cow manure that was used to discourage insects and keep dust down. Looking up, the ceiling was slats of bamboo. The beds or cots were strips of cowhide woven together. This is the school where my neighbor Dave Kemptner spent the first nine years of his life in the early 1930s in Aba Africa (now Zaire) in the Belgian Congo. The following account can only slightly describe what has been an interesting and full life.

Dave was born the youngest of four children to missionary parents. He and his siblings were born in a grass hut. Dave chuckled when I asked if there was indoor plumbing. I took that chuckle to be a "no." His father taught the natives how to drain a swamp and use the water to irrigate fruits and vegetables. He was such a good gardener that Aba was one of the only places that had fruits and vegetables. Dave's mother taught him how to read. There were 10 children in the mission school.

Life was primitive and exciting. Mail took six months or more to come and go. Christmas packages had to be mailed in the summer. There were no paved roads. Travel was done on a pontoon boat pulled across rivers with no bridges or by oxcart or a motorcycle with a sidecar. Because he was the youngest, Dave would scoot to the front of the sidecar where there were a couple of air holes and that's where he would ride. (I'm guessing that car insurance wouldn't cover that in today's world.) There were pythons and monkeys and lots of birds. As a treat for his mother, the natives prepared a special meal. Part of that meal was a cooked monkey with its hand extended towards her. She politely declined the primate. It was special though. Another time, Dave's cousin was in bed one night and a leopard jumped right over her. The only thing ever to jump in my room was my brother trying to bug me.

When Dave was nine his family moved back to the States. But you didn't just jump onto a plane and fly home. It took about a month. They took a freighter from Mombassa to Tokyo. China and Japan were at war so when three Chinese fighter planes flew overhead, tensions were high on the freighter. Once in Tokyo there was a layover and sightseeing of a Buddhist Temple. The floors were squeaky and later Dave found out the squeaky floors were the burglar alarm for the Temple. The next leg of the trip was on a more luxurious ship but Dave's family, being of humble means, was accommodated below deck. A brass bar told them they could go no higher. The family lived in San Francisco and Los Angeles for a short period of time.

*continued on page 7*

### NEXT MEETING

**Tues. Oct. 20th, 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!

### Agenda



- 7:00 Call to order / Welcome
- 7:05 Approval of Minutes  
Treasurer's Report
- 2010 Officer Elections**
- 7:15 Proposal to support Barton Springs median project-vote
- 7:30 Capital Metro Update
- 7:40 Town Lake Animal Center Update
- 7:50 Central TX Zero Waste Alliance (composting program)
- 8:10 Committee Updates
- 8:30 Adjourn

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## President's Message



Happy Autumn, Neighbors!

As I sit here mulling over what to write for my final "essay", I realize that I don't have a specific topic in mind (rather, I have too many topics in mind!) so I am just going to jump in full-force and recount my personal reasons why Barton Hills is such a great neighborhood:

Because our neighbors jump into action when a beloved pet is hit by a car or an injured baby bird is found. Because our neighbors express their beliefs about street paving, tax appraisals, breakfast tacos and ACL parking issues with intelligence, humor and passion. Because our neighbors take charge when something isn't right. Because we have a terrific school with wonderful kids, faculty and staff and our neighbors support them with their generosity and time. Because our neighbors are loyal and always willing to support local and new businesses. Because our neighbors show up at city council meetings en masse. Because our neighbors show up to the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade en masse! Because our neighbors are so very kind and helpful to each other-no questions asked or reward expected.

So, thank you so much for the opportunity to serve as president this year. What a true privilege it has been. A huge thanks to the Executive Committee for working hard, asking questions and pushing back when necessary. Thanks also to our committees: Greenbelt Guardians, Neighborhood Watch and Area Development for all their work to make Barton Hills more verdant, safer and better protected.

Next year's Executive Committee will be a wonderful group of committed neighbors so please give them as much support as you have given us this year.

All the best and I look forward to seeing everyone around the neighborhood!

Sincerely,

*Kimberly White Erlinger*

## 2009 Events Calendar

October 11	Ice Cream Social - BH Elementary
October 14	Zilker Gateway Median Kickoff
October 20	BHNA Officers Elected for 2010
	General Meeting - St. Marks
October 23	Barton Hills Elementary Carnival
October 24	Inside Austin Garden Tour
October 31	Greenbelt Guardian Work Day
November 21	Greenbelt Guardian Work Day
November 26	Thanksgiving
December 18	AISD Schools Out

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](mailto: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  
([kimbbersays@yahoo.com](mailto:kimbbersays@yahoo.com)) or (512) 779-0827

**Vice President** - Sheila Stricker ([sheila@shoehorndesign.com](mailto:sheila@shoehorndesign.com))

**ANC Rep** - Kay Killen ([bhnaparade2007@yahoo.com](mailto:bhnaparade2007@yahoo.com))

**Corresponding Secretary/Newsletter Ed.** - Wendy Papasan  
([wpapasan@kw.com](mailto:wpapasan@kw.com)) or (512) 297-9431

**Secretary** - Ken Russell ([GISatHCCS@aol.com](mailto:GISatHCCS@aol.com))

**Treasurer** - John Morgan ([morgan78704@gmail.com](mailto:morgan78704@gmail.com))

### Committee Chairs

**Committee on Area Development** - Peter Hess  
([phess@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:phess@mail.utexas.edu))

**Greenbelt Guardians** - Glee Ingram

**Neighborhood Watch** - John Luther ([jluther@austin.rr.com](mailto:jluther@austin.rr.com))

**Learn more about us at [www.BHNA.net](http://www.BHNA.net)!**

*This newsletter was printed on 100% recycled paper.*



## Real Estate Rumors...

By Wendy Papasan

Rumor has it that CVS pharmacy is moving in with the Office Depot on S. Lamar and Oltorf. They are splitting the building in half. I wonder if they will be able to compete with Walgreens just down the street?

Ground-breaking is about to begin later this year when Amy's Ice Creams begins it's second "Austinville" at the intersection of Lightsey and South Lamar Blvd. It will have an Amy's of course and will be co-anchored by a Phil's Ice House, its sister burger restaurant. They are scheduled to open in March, along with several other businesses. It will feature a playscape, a place to get a glass of wine and will be designed by Uchi designer Michael Hsu.

After a few delays the Valero gas station has opened on the corner of Barton Skyway and South Lamar. If

you are wondering what happened to everyone's favorite pizza trailer, Giovanni's, it is now inside the gas station.

I and some other moms in the neighborhood paid a visit to Viva Day Spa, right on the corner of Riverside and South Lamar. It

## 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.

was a much needed 1/2 day break from our families, hectic lives, and everyday stress. It was incredible! I really felt like I was transported. We started our morning with a run along Lady Bird Lake, then jogged to the spa. After a cold glass of cucumber water, our royal treatment began with a sit in the sauna. After a good sweat, I got one of the best massages of my life.

Then a peppermint scalp massage, a citrus leg scrub and a little conditioning treatment for my hands. They have two locations in Austin, so they are definitely local. The best part - the little things - cold towels in the sauna, cucumbers on my eyes and really a beautiful, relaxing space. Viva la Viva Day Spa!

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# Greenbelt Guardians Report

*By Glee Ingram*

Our Greenbelt Guardians group went dormant during this summer's scorching heat and record drought. We're very grateful that we did our summer work day before the summer furnace was turned up. The greenbelt vegetation has suffered, with severe wilting and notable die backs of young Red Oak trees.

Good news - the resurfacing of the Homedale entry trail with polymer granite was completed early in the summer. Through our Stones grant funds we provided the materials for the work, and John Cook used some Environmental Corps volunteers to regrade the trail, and spread and pack the materials. These recent 5" rain episodes put the new swales and berms and canting of the path to the test, and it passed with flying colors - no more runnels and troughs etched down the center of the trail. It is also attractive now, since the trees planted alongside the trail several years ago are growing tall, providing a shaded corridor.

We are still following up on the policy for police presence on the greenbelt, since we no longer have Parks Police who specialize in surveillance of this area. There are two reports of police use of a four wheeler vehicle to respond to calls for help. These are noisy vehicles that are designed for on-road use, and there is evidence of damage to the earthen trail near 360. We have asked Council Member Martinez's aide to inquire about police policy using these vehicles on the greenbelt.

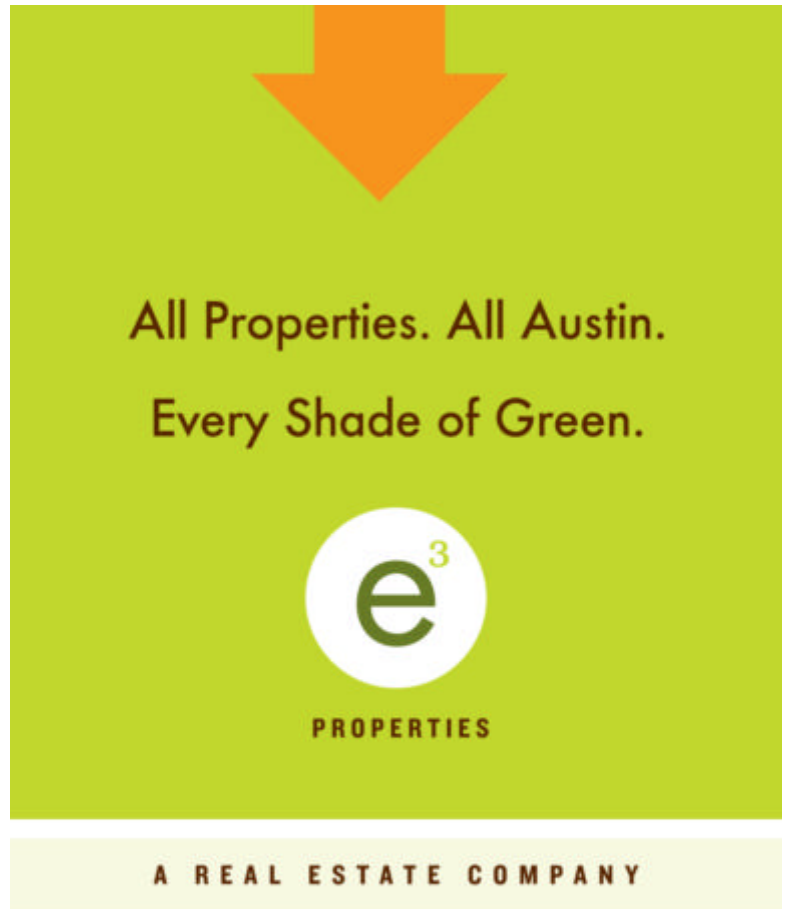
We are planning two work days this fall, to play catch-up in our

invasives removal work. The policy announced by the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve manager, of allowing invasives removal only during the months when the endangered birds are absent, is still in effect. We will be addressing ways to respond to this conundrum with a new local weed working group being organized under the auspices of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Hopefully we can come up with something effective, to avoid the irony of losing the integrity of the habitat that is meant to be preserved for these endangered birds. We are decades behind the invasives...

Our next quarterly work day will be Saturday, October 31, from 9:00 - 1:00 at Homedale Trail. We

hope to have lots of neighbors and other greenbelt fans show up to clear out ligustrum and nandina, extend the rock steps down a steep portion of the trail, do a major weeding of our trail entry area, cut up some large fallen limbs on a steep hillside and organize them to be useful in erosion control, and clean up trash along the switchback trail and the rock flats area. We will have some Halloween fun, so wear something to express the holiday spirit.

On Saturday, November 21, from 9:00 - noon, a group of our team leaders will guide the work of some Rotary Service group volunteers. We anticipate having 10-20 volunteers working with us on that day. Our major focus will be invasives.



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**Kimberly White Erlinger**

# Time to Refinance?

By Scott Fehrenkamp

Mortgage rates continue to hover around historic lows of 5%, largely due to support from the Federal Reserve, which will *not* last forever.

If you need money because of a life change - for college tuition or if you've lost your job, here are some things to evaluate.

How long is left on the term? What will the change in monthly payment be? How much are closing costs? How much cash do I have on hand? How long do you plan to live in your home?

While loan modifications can help those in serious trouble, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac now offer loan programs which allow higher loan-to-value ratios - good for those whose home price has fallen. If you have an adjustable rate or a minimum payment option mortgage, and plan on staying in your home, you may face large jumps in payment when your loan resets. Refinancing into current low fixed rates could be beneficial.

If you need to get equity out of your home, a cash-out refinance is easier to qualify for than a home equity line of credit and has a fixed interest rate. Current low rates could help protect the investment of a home and the ability to live in a great neighborhood such as Barton Hills.



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# A Privilege to Serve

By Wendy Papasan

I was at a leadership training session the other day and one of many nuggets I gleaned was this statement. "You'll never have a powerful big group until you have a powerful small group." I think the BHNA executive team is an example of a dynamic small group shepherding a powerful big one - our incredible neighborhood.

I have always found it a privilege to serve and am glad now that my children are a little older I can do more for others. If you are interested in joining a

great team, consider becoming a member of the BHNA executive committee in 2010. Elections will be held at the October meeting.

Here is a list of opportunities: President (in charge), Vice President (second in charge), Recording Secretary (meeting notes), Corresponding Secretary (newsletter editor), Treasurer (money, mail), Community Partnerships Coordinator (advertising, social events), and Austin Neighborhoods Council rep. For a description of any of these positions visit [www.bhna.net](http://www.bhna.net) or contact Kimberly White Erlinger at (512) 779-0827.

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## Kemptoner continued

Then finally they settled in Denver. Africa to Colorado is a whole world of change. Dave wasn't too happy about it but adapted.

He graduated from high school and visited a church in nearby

Englewood, where he met his wife Helen who played the organ. The church had a basketball and softball team that would let him play so he stayed. Helen said, "He was the cutest thing I ever saw." On November 5<sup>th</sup> they will be married 58 years. They have four children and six grandchildren. The love they have for each other and their family is obvious and inspiring.

Dave was in the Air Force and fully expected to be sent to Korea. He was sent to Albuquerque instead as a member of the 4925<sup>th</sup> Atomic Test Group. If a plane was going to be used to drop an atomic bomb then it went to Albuquerque first for testing. Once discharged from the army, Helen and Dave moved back to Denver, "never to leave again." They stayed two years.

They moved to Houston with two other families and started a company that made tuning forks for the oil business that was later bought out by Tracor, so the Kemptoners moved to Austin.

They bought a lot in NW Hills when it was completely undeveloped. They were not sure they would stay in Austin. After all, they'd just built a new house in Houston for their four children to live in until college. But as fate would have it, jobs worked out, the parade of homes in Barton Hills was happening and their real estate agent was willing to trade them the lot in NW Hills for the house where they now live on Briargrove Dr.

Forty-five years ago Barton Hills Dr. ended about where the Market is. All that was there was a gravel pit. There was no bridge on Barton Hills Dr. They remember their kids skiing on Briargrove one year when Austin had a great snowstorm. After living in Denver this must have been pretty funny. So much has changed since they first moved here. The only sad part of this story is that they will be moving soon to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. I just hope they come back and visit. They sure will be missed.

So, get to know your neighbors. You never know who's seen a python or leopard in Africa or had kids that skied down a hill in your own neighborhood in Austin, Texas.

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# Explore Your World

Get set for another adventurous event at Barton Hills Elementary School. If you've never been to the annual Carnival fundraiser - mark your calendars you're in for a treat! On **October 23rd from 6-9 p.m.** hundreds of neighbors, young and old will converge upon the elementary school to jump on bouncy houses, throw beanbags at their favorite teachers hoping they will get dunked, eat all sorts of delicious treats, play games, win prizes, run shrieking through a maze and generally have the best time ever! This year's theme is exploration - think maps, oceanic creatures, ice fishing, a chopstick challenge and food from every continent! For more information or to become involved either as a sponsor or a volunteer contact Suzanne Soares at [ssoares1@austin.rr.com](mailto:ssoares1@austin.rr.com).



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