

BARTON HILLS NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter

April 2010

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:

Successful & Growing

John Luther, Chair, Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch Program

I am very happy to report that the Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch program continues to add volunteers. Because of this we are able to provide increased security to our neighborhood, and the crime statistics are showing a dramatic drop. Neighbors are talking to one another and watching out for one another. The sense of community is growing around the common goal of mutual security. We are also increasing the number of hours that Neighborhood Watch Vehicle Patrols are on neighborhood streets day and night, making criminal activity a very risky undertaking in Barton Hills. All of this is a proactive approach to reducing criminal activity in our neighborhood. It is due to neighbors stepping up and saying, "We will no longer be idle victims to the criminal element within our city."

Our Neighborhood Watch program is a non-confrontational observation and reporting system that places volunteer safety as its first priority. Volunteers serve as eyes and ears only and never attempt to apprehend or confront a suspicious person. They simply call 911 and report their concerns to the Austin Police Department (APD). Most volunteers serve from their own homes and keep an eye on their immediate neighborhood. Others have volunteered for our highly effective Neighborhood Watch Patrol component and, after receiving initial training, patrol our neighborhood streets in clearly marked vehicles on hourly shifts. One person usually conducts day patrols, while our night patrols are always a two-person team. They are trained in appropriate response techniques and equipped with flashlights, street maps, and cell phones. These volunteers have given up an hour of their day or night once a week to increase the security of all residents. I am very proud to be associated with such a dedicated and dependable group of individuals.

An additional service provided by our Neighborhood Watch is checking deadbolts on front doors to make sure they are actually doing the job they are supposed to do. Many deadbolts use short screws to hold the striker plate in place. They are not long enough to go into the stud; instead, they only go into the soft pine framing around the door and can be kicked in. Volunteers can check this and, if needed, re-

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY, APR. 27 6-8 pm

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

Social hour at 6 pm.

Italian dinner \$6

All are welcome!



AGENDA

- 7:00 Call to Order/Welcome
- 7:05 Administrative Business
- 7:10 Update on Barton Hills Elementary Beautification Project: Clay Boulware
- 7:15 Neighborhood Watch
- 7:20 Creek Encampments: Melissa Hawthorne
- 7:30 Greenbelt Guardians Update: Glee Ingram
- 7:40 Oak Wilt Information
- 7:50 Fourth of July Parade
- 8:00 Adjourn

place them for you with effective three-inch screws for about a dollar!

The BHNA Neighborhood Watch is having a positive impact on our city well beyond our neighborhood boundaries. Other neighborhoods are requesting that we address their residents and tell how we do things and why we have been successful in reducing our crime rate. We are even receiving referrals from the APD to address neighborhood volunteer groups looking for answers to their crime problems by starting a Neighborhood Watch program. In April the BHNA Neighborhood Watch will speak

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to at least two other neighborhood groups. We have given these security talks to three others since January. Of course, the true secret to the success of our program is that residents of Barton Hills volunteer.

Joining the Neighborhood Watch is a simple process of completing the volunteer form and indicating your interest in becoming the eyes and ears of the APD and your fellow residents. You do not need to be a member of the BHNA. The only requirement is that you care about the security of our neighborhood and are willing to stand with your fellow residents to combat crime by being an alert neighbor. Volunteer sign-up forms are on the BHNA website and available at all BHNA meetings. You can also contact me at jluther@austin.rr.com. I encourage you to become a part of the solution to reducing crime in Barton Hills and sign up for the Neighborhood Watch. And if you see volunteers driving your street in one of our marked patrol cars, please wave and say hello. It is all the pay they will receive for this important service.

ED. NOTE: John and our Neighborhood Watch program were featured on KVUE April 7 in a story called "Barton Hills Residents Proactive on Crime."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hey neighbors,

I hope you've enjoyed this beautiful spring — our reward for a long, cold winter. A few weeks ago, my husband and I took our 4- and 5-year-olds down to the Flats and we climbed the trail to a cave that's nestled on top of the ridge. Like a lot of challenges, it seemed impossible, but after putting one foot in the front of the other, and a steady climb later, we were enjoying the view of Barton Creek and our beautiful neighborhood.

Beauty and our neighborhood is a theme this spring. The Greenbelt Guardians used neighborhood matching funds to clean up encampments along the trail. The City of Austin installed Art on the Way, an exhibit that provoked a lot of lively discussion. Plans to beautify the park at Barton Hills Elementary will kick into gear later this spring, and we have formed an Art Committee to discuss other ways to improve our neighborhood.

What I love about all this is that it means more and more neighbors are getting involved, steadily climbing with one foot in front of the other, to make our neighborhood a better place. Keep up the good work — I love the view.

Warmly,

Wendy Papasan

2010 EVENTS CALENDAR

April 27 Neighborhood Meeting

June 5 Greenbelt Guardian Work Day

July 4 July 4 Parade

July 27 Neighborhood Meeting

Oct. 26 Neighborhood Meeting

Do you have a neighborhood event that you would like to see included in the newsletter? Send it to Wendy 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 neighborhood affairs, contact the appropriate person below.

2010 Executive Committee

President - Wendy Papasan (wpapasan@kw.com)
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Committee on Area Development - Peter Hess
(phess@mail.utexas.edu)

Greenbelt Guardians - Glee Ingram
(gleeful@earthlink.net)

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

Learn more about us at www.bartonhills.org!

This newsletter was printed on 100% recycled paper.



GREENBELT GUARDIANS REPORT

Glee Ingram

Greenbelt Safety Grant

At our last meeting, we discussed safety issues on the greenbelt, particularly the chronic presence of illegal encampments with their fire and health threats and the evidence of theft and drug dealing activities. A group of neighbors along Deerfoot Trail, Foxtail and Foxwood Cove (aka the “denizens”) documented activities on the trail below them and presented a thorough report to Council Member Shade, requesting help in enforcing the park rules (no glass bottles, alcohol, drugs, fires, or camping).

Since our Greenbelt Guardians group had worked with the Parks Police, I joined the “denizens” group. As we walked the trail, it became obvious that the dense vegetative screening that offered hiding for the encampments was none other than the ecologically invasive plants that we have targeted for removal: ligustrum and nandina. It was a short step in logic to propose applying for a grant from the Austin Parks Foundation to improve both the safety and the ecological health of this portion of the greenbelt by removing the invasives. I got a bid of \$10,800 from Environmental Corps to remove the mature targeted plants from the pool dam upstream to the inlet below Foxwood Cove.

BHNA voted to contribute \$3,600 to the Greenbelt Guardians, as a match for an Austin Parks Foundation grant of \$7,200, for removal on this 19-acre area. Working around periods of rain, freezing weather and snow, E-Corps managed to finish their work by the deadline imposed by the Balcones Canyonland Preserve, which bans invasives removal throughout the nesting period of the endangered Black-Capped Vireo and Golden-Cheek Warbler.

This area now has an astonishing visual openness, allowing appreciation of giant pecan and cottonwood trees, native grasses and perennial plants. The tidy, tightly packed windrow of biomass extends for a full half mile. At last report, there are no encampments. A new camp was reported near the end of the project, and the police went out in the snow that day to remove it. The parks director has instructed her staff to check the area regularly. Council Member Shade’s alert to staff to address this safety issue is clearly being heeded.

It’s My Park Day Event

We had a productive work day on March 6, the annual It’s My Park Day citywide event that Austin Parks Foundation promotes. We worked three sites: (1) the Zilker entry trail near Barton Springs, (2) the trail where the invasives were cleared, and (3) the Gus Fruh trail. At the Zilker and Gus Fruh trails, we did trail repair and drainage improvements, removed invasives, blocked “rogue” trails, and picked up trash. The “denizens” group did follow-up weeding of seedlings and small invasives on the grant project trail, to avoid a repetition of the problem.

At the three sites, we had 92 volunteers, who provided 198 volunteer hours. At a \$10.60/hour volunteer wage rate that PARD uses, we contributed \$2,099 to the care of our adopted greenbelt. Many thanks to the volunteers, and to BHNA for providing them energy food!

YOUR NEW EDITOR



Jennifer ellen Cook fronts a rock band (jenniferellencook.com) and has performed as a solo singer/songwriter from Los Angeles to Paris. She also rides a horse and scuba dives. She’s lived in Austin since the age of 4, in a variety of neighborhoods; Barton Hills is her favorite. When not being loud, getting dirty, or working as a professional editor, she likes to move plants around her garden until they give up and decide to survive. Her cat, Mick the Skateboarding Cat, is a bit of a YouTube sensation.



447-3351 3003 South Lamar

BARTON'S BARRIERS: ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

www.ci.austin.tx.us/aipp/about.htm

Jennifer Cook

Barton's Barriers is the inaugural installation of what will be a series of "Art on the Way" pieces on unused city right-of-way property. The construction barriers erected on Barton Skyway certainly have generated controversy. Not just in John Kelso's *Statesman* article, but on our own neighborhood listserv. Neighbors offered a lot of interesting discussion and (mostly) good humor. Susan noted,

I am delighted with the Barriers, clunky as they look. They accomplished exactly what that the artist wanted: they got your attention. ... I am also delighted that they will go down in a few months because I don't think they are that well done.

A lot of people agreed with Julie's assessment: "This is an eyesore and a complete waste of money." Judy wrote,

If the "art" installation were merely a silly and ugly "Austin thing" it would be easy to just ignore it, if possible, and tolerate it until it finally disappears. But the really sad thing is that taxpayer/city money was used for it at all, no matter what additional amount of private funding it has.

I had to point out that the artist's website states that for a \$500 donation, you can get a signed, tiny replica of

one of those traffic barriers. A few people commented on the "nature of art" to spark controversy, to which Terrell responded,

1. It's self-congratulatory to suggest that this blitz of email is due to the stimulating nature of the art piece. ...To suggest that there may be some deep artistic meaning to this is the absolute height of naivete.
2. Once the artist set about to seek public funding for this [\$20,000 or so in public support plus in-kind donations], he lost the playfulness and curiosity about it that may have been generated.

The silver lining was neighborhood conversation. I'm sure a lot more people will be attending neighborhood meetings! As Kerstin noted, "How nice to see the community so engaged."

Note that the installation was a city project as part of the **Arts in Public Places program** and was erected on a city right-of-way. The BHNA did not have authority over the project. BHNA did not contribute funds. The Arts in Public Places program is partially funded by 2% of the city's construction budget. Please see the city website for more:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/aipp/about.htm>



A sign added anonymously. No, this is not part of the art installation.

PILOT SUSIE BAIN Awarded Congressional Gold Medal

In WWII, the Women Airforce Service Pilots served as the first female pilots to fly American military planes. These 1,102 women received little recognition until this March, when they received the Congressional Gold Medal for their wartime service during a ceremony at the U.S. Capitol. Among those pilots honored was our neighbor, Susie Bain of Foxtail Cove. Congratulations, Susie, for recognition of your service.



SHERIFF'S ALERT: Garage Door Openers

People have been robbed even while they're home asleep by thieves breaking into cars and using the garage door opener to access the house.

- Lock your doors, including doors that lead from your garage to your house, when you're asleep or not at home.
- Lock your car doors.
- Lock your garage door openers in your glove compartment or take them inside with you.
- Secure your garage doors from the inside when you are asleep so that they cannot be opened from the outside.



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BARTON HILLS ON FACEBOOK

Go to Facebook.com and you can do a quick search for any of these:

Barton Hills-Horseshoe Bend Neighborhood group

Barton Hills fan page

I'd Rather Be at Barton Springs group

These pages aren't associated with the BHNA; they're just created by neighbors who love the area.

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WHY JOIN THE BHNA?

I have to confess that I only recently paid my dues and became a member. For years I figured my \$10 would just get me access to a listserv that basically duplicated the information in this newsletter.

Wrong!

In addition to updates about park news and city council shenanigans, the listserv contains all sorts of useful tidbits from your neighbors:

- * lost and found pets
- * free furniture
- * crime alerts
- * free event tickets
- * contractor recommendations

You won't get a zillion emails, either. The listserv can send you a daily "batch," which is a single email with all the posts. Subject lines are listed first, so you can scan the first few lines of the email and delete if you don't see anything that interests you.

I encourage you to join; there is a wealth of information and good will out there from your Barton Hills neighbors.

Jennifer Cook

BARTON SPRINGS INFO

476-9044

Pool maintainance:

Closed Thursdays

Closed 10:00-11:00 a.m. the 2nd Weds. each month

Fees:

Senior, child (<11): \$1

Junior (12-17): \$2

Adult: \$3

Zilker \$3 parking fee weekends, Mar. - Sept.

Summer passes are \$60-180. They're regular fee x 60 and valid June 1-Sept. 6 (a good idea only if you're swimming over 60 days out of those 98 days). You'll need a photo ID to get one.

NEW WEBSITE:

bartonhills.org

Check out the new, constantly improving website, bartonhills.org (all info is still available at bhna.net). The site has neighborhood watch data as well as links to crime data, legislators, tax info, school links, parks, road closures, and city offices.

2010 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join or review your membership in the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$10/household. Make checks payable to BHNA and mail them to **Barton Hills Neighborhood Association, PO Box 2042, Austin TX 78768-2042**. You can pay dues online (with a \$1 PayPal service fee) at www.bartonhills.org/membership.html. If you pay online, send an email to barton_hills-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to be added the list server.

Your Name: _____

Other 18+ members of your household: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ **Sign Me Up!** I/we wish to receive email from the BHNA listserv.

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

WAR ON WEEDS!

I don't know what happened. Suddenly I had six trash cans' worth of weeds in my yard. Want to know what those sticky things are? These are the worst culprits:

- Cleavers or bedstraw (*Galium aparine*, at right) are those sticky, pale green, shallow-rooted things that spread like mad. They have shallow roots; you can rake them up.
- Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) looks like a dandelion on steroids, with yellow flowers. They have deep roots. They attract aphids, and therefore ladybugs, so you might keep one or two to attract beneficial bugs (or use that as your excuse if you miss a few).



Other weeds aren't so bad:

- Wild carrot or Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*) has a carrot- or fern-like leaf. The second year this biennial produces white flowers on tall stalks. They're rather lovely but be careful if you have pets, as after flowering they produce burrs.
- Henbit is a member of the mint family and has tiny purple flowers. If you don't like it, mow before it goes to seed.

It got too **DANG HOT** in the kitchen.

(and there was a bun* in the oven!)

Dear friends...

Once the temperature hit 105° in the shade last summer, I knew my family had to get out of our trailer and into Valero at Barton Skyway & So. Lamar. With a bigger kitchen, I have been able to expand my menu with several new specialty pizzas, tasty pasta dishes, a daily lunch special, and now – breakfast tacos! I hope you'll stop by and try my food again.

With (very) warm wishes,

*The bun,
Evelyn Mariel,
was born
Feb. 23, 2010



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“To Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street”

Do you or your neighbors do something extraordinary together? Block parties? For instance, I heard a rumor about a street where on Halloween kids get toothbrushes and parents get shots. Let me know:

Jennifer Cook,
jenncook@austin.rr.com