

BARTON HILLS NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter

January 2012

BHE fall semester in review

PTA monitors district facilities process

By Amy Moore

Barton Hills Elementary PTA President

Barton Hills Elementary has just finished a busy fall semester. There are over 375 students enrolled at BHE this year in grades K-6. We had a successful Old Fashioned Carnival on Nov. 4, which raised just over \$25,000 for the school. Our choir performed at the Austin City Limits Music Festival, KUT and other Austin venues. Students participated in different art and literary contests, and we have many students preparing for Odyssey of the Mind and Math Pentathlon competitions in the spring. In the midst of all this, our teachers continue to guide and inspire all of our students.

In addition to partnering with the excellent staff at Barton Hills, the BHE PTA continues to monitor the AISD facilities process. AISD has just completed its Annual Academic and Facilities Recommendation (AAFR) process.

This new process will begin in January of each year, with the goal of implementing changes at the beginning of the school year 18 months later. As the *Austin American-Statesman* reported, the process was shortened this year because AISD wanted to implement changes for the 2012-2013 school year.

Luckily, none of the AAFRs brought by the district this year affected our school. There were six recommendations for the 2012-2013 school year:

- Dual-language immersion programs in Doss, Blanton, Casey and Galindo

- Learning support center to replace Alternative Learning Center and Alternative Center for elementary students
- Address north central elementary overcrowding by creating a Pre-K center at Dobie Middle School; create a Pre-K-8 school at Webb Middle School
- Designation of a north central elementary from the 2008 Bond Program
- In-District Charter program with Responsive Education Solutions serving Travis and Lanier High Schools
- In-District Charter program with IDEA Public Schools to run a K-12 school at Allen Elementary and East-side Memorial High School. This begins with K-2 and 6th grade at Allen for 2012-2013; full K-12 would be available by 2018-2019

Some of these initiatives, such as In-District charters and Pre-K-8 schools, represent a major change in the way AISD delivers education to students. They will take time for the district to implement.

As 2012 begins, BHE looks forward to many more activities: Science Fair, song shows, star-gazing night, track and field day, and UIL competitions. The BHE PTA will continue to support our great school, and monitor any discussions the district begins for the next round of recommendations for academic programming and facilities. ♦

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, Jan. 24

6-9 p.m.



Join us at St. Mark's Church (corner of Barton Skyway and Barton Hills Dr.). All are welcome! Social hour 6 p.m. Pizza, salad and pasta from Rockin Tomato \$7.

Agenda

- 7:00 Call to order and announcements
- 7:10 Approval of Oct. 18, 2011 meeting minutes
- 7:15 Treasurer's report
- 7:25 Committee reports
 - Neighborhood Watch
 - Greenbelt Guardians
 - Membership Outreach
 - Area Development
 - Emergency Preparedness
- 8:30 Announcements related to BHNA membership event
- 8:50 Status of neighborhood improvement projects
- 9:00 Other business, as brought to the floor by membership
- 9:15 Adjourn

In this issue

- Being Firewise 3
- Greenbelt Guardians 4
- Cardio Coffee 5
- Neighborhood Watch 6
- July 4th parade planning ... 6
- 2012 BHNA officers 7
- Membership form 8

Barton Hills News

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association newsletter is published quarterly and supported by advertisers. It's distributed to homes in the Barton Hills neighborhood of Austin, Texas. To learn more about membership and neighborhood affairs, contact the appropriate person below.

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President's message

Many things to be thankful for when starting a new year

By Melissa Hawthorne
BHNA President

First, I'd like to say thank you to Craig Smith, our past president; Ellen Pitluk, our treasurer; Jeff Embree, our neighborhoods council delegate; and Jennifer Ellen Cook, our resident rock star and former newsletter editor. The positions are voluntary and sometimes thankless, but often so rewarding all at the same time.

I am proud to say this year's slate of officers is outstanding.

I know I live in Barton Hills for the sense of community, the proximity to the Greenbelt and town, and you people. There a lot of things to be proud of here — we are voters, we take care of each other and we pull together in the face of adversity.

Early last year, when I went to the Barton Hills Elementary Carnival, I was amazed. I had just volunteered to be a part of the neighborhood association and

three days in the school district's facilities task force committee announced the possibility of closing our school. Yet, there we all stood as a community. It was a beautiful sight.

As this year unfolds, after the events in Oak Hill, Steiner Ranch and Bastrop, I

am looking forward to us becoming a Firewise Community, knowing that we will have done what we could do to make our world a safer place. Many of you donated, collected and brought supplies, helped with animals, took people in, and showed your true colors during those catastrophes. I trust

you all will show that same commitment to each other as we go forward.

Being new at this, I hope you join me as we look ahead to the New Year.

Very blessed I am,
Melissa

*There a lot of things
to be proud of here
— we are voters,
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What Is the BHNA?

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association (BHNA) is a voluntary association made up of residents — home-owners and home-renters alike. It exists to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood for everyone.

Being a member has benefits. The listserv is a trove of information, recommendations, ideas and much more. Quarterly meetings give you a chance to meet other residents and voice your opinion about neighborhood issues. Dues are \$10 per year. The membership registration form is on page 8 of this newsletter. For more information, visit <http://bartonhills.org>.

Firewise: What it means to you

By Susan Donaldson

Chair, BHNA Emergency Preparedness Committee

Everyone here during the summer and late fall remembers the drought and the fear that a fire in the Greenbelt would cause terrible damage to our neighborhood. At the October BHNA meeting, the Austin Fire Department and the Texas Forest Service told us our neighborhood was a Wildland/Urban Interface. This means it is subject to wildfires that are harder to fight and that can cause more destruction than normal fires.

They also talked about a Firewise program that could help prevent a wildfire spreading thru the 'hood. We all agreed to start the Firewise process. One of the Firewise program goals is to help us create safer homes and a safer community.

We can achieve the status of a Firewise community by being aware of the hazards around each of our homes and working to reduce them. Remember: Embers from a wildfire can travel far and cause an

intense fire well away from their origins. A Firewise house on the Greenbelt is less likely to burn than a non-Firewise home blocks away.

As we each work to make our own homes Firewise, as a neighborhood, the BHNA Emergency Preparedness Committee (formerly the Disaster Preparedness Committee) is also working with city and state fire professionals to do hazard assessments, create action plans, and develop emergency access and evacuation plans. The Emergency Preparedness Committee meets regularly and is open to all BHNA members.

Becoming a Firewise community is an ongoing commitment by the homeowner. This article barely touches on the process. With our neighborhood Firewise certification we will have more specific information and opportunities to learn the ways fire can ignite and spread, and how to protect our homes and families. ♦

What makes a home Firewise?

A Firewise home is called fire resistant when it has reduced the fire hazards within 30 feet of the house. That means:

1. Keeping the gutters and roof clean.
2. Thinning out combustible vegetation (dead leaves, dead limbs and shrubs next to wooden siding or windows).
3. Keeping combustible construction (wooded fences, patio furniture, cushions and unskirted wood decks) away from the house.

Firewise landscaping creates a survivable space of 100 feet to 200 feet around your home.

1. Trees need to be pruned up so that the lowest branches are 6 feet to 10 feet from the ground.
2. Keep open spaces up in the tree canopies so that a crown fire (in the top of the tree) cannot spread directly from tree to tree or to your house.
3. Keep flammable plants (high resin, oily or waxy) away from your house.
4. Trim plants back from your driveway and the street.

Fire safety from the top down

Your roof can help protect your home from wildfires. It should be constructed of fire-resistant materials, such as metal, asphalt shingle or clay tile. Roofs made of wooden shingles or shakes, in contrast, can act as kindling. Roof maintenance is critical: Deteriorated shingles or cracked tiles do not protect your house in a fire. Under-eaves, soffits, vents and chimneys should be covered with fine mesh screens to prevent embers from blowing in.



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Greenbelt Guardians report 2011: A year for trail improvements

By Glee Ingram

Chair, Greenbelt Guardians

This was a bonanza year for Greenbelt improvements, due to multiple grants and donations that Austin Parks Foundation (APF) acquired.

Last fall, APF won a \$100,000 grant from Impact Austin to hire and train five Environmental Corps (E-Corps) youth to work on the Barton Creek Greenbelt for a year (January–December 2011). The Impact Austin funds were matched with contributions from Austin Parks Foundation, Hill Country Conservancy and REI to total \$240,000 invested to support improvements on the 8.5-mile Greenbelt trail. The funds supported the E-Corps crew and the organization of 30 different volunteer work events, as well as tools, materials and supplies.

The determination and oversight of the scope of work was a collaborative public/private venture, coordinated by Charlie McCabe of the Austin Parks Foundation. Group planning meetings and trail walks/surveys included APF staff, City of Austin Parks staff, E-Corps staff and our Greenbelt Guardians coordinators (Stan Ostrum and I). Our COA PARD partner, John Cook, had the opportunity to share his 15 years of experience on the trail to help determine the work priorities.

At year's end, acres of invasive Ligustrum and Nandina had been removed on the main trail, with a near clean slate from the Zilker entry all the way to the Gus Fruh swimming hole area. Numerous drainage improvements were made to

improve the long-term integrity of the trails, including substantial repairs at the steep Hill of Life trail entry. Ambitious stonework erosion and bank stabilization projects were completed at Twin Falls and the swimming-hole area near the 360 trail entry.

There are still "miles to go" to catch up with the long-deferred maintenance of the trails, but this year of improvements has been a big boost. ♦

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Cardio Coffee makes the most of natural surroundings

By Leah Golden

BHNA Newsletter Editor

Connecting with people through with exercise comes naturally to Teresa Carpenter. So when the personal trainer found herself in unfamiliar territory, she put the two together. The result was Cardio Coffee, a walk with neighbors has been going on for the better part of a decade.

Moving beyond the stop sign

Teresa started the walks about eight years ago, soon after she and her husband, Jim, moved to their home in the Horseshoe Bend area.

Though Teresa had been a neighborhood resident for almost 15 years (first at Barton Hills Park Place and later on Rockingham Circle), she didn't know anyone who lived beyond the stop sign at Barton Hills Drive and Barton Skyway.

Teresa thought putting together a walk would be a good way to meet people. She started putting up signs and Cardio Coffee was born. It was a natural combination for someone who loves fitness and socializing.



December Cardio Coffee walkers (left to right): Teresa Carpenter, Trisha Salcher, Bev Crozier, Mary Lou Bell, Amanda Gammage, Margie Holland and Mary Ann Neely. They were later joined by Liz Davis, Cherylann Campbell and Cathy Willmann. Photo by Leah Golden

"I've always been an athlete and loved fitness and loved getting people involved," she said.

For more than 20 years, Teresa's been involved in soccer and volleyball, both as a player and coach. She is a third-degree black belt in Taekwondo. She lifts weights. She and her husband participate in various bike rides around town, and she's run the Statesman Capitol 10K many, many times.

"I haven't found a sport I didn't like," she laughed.

But she didn't think she could make a living at it. Though she worked as a programmer right after college, she attended massage therapy school on nights and weekends to earn her massage certification. A year after she got married, she got laid off from her high-tech job and took the opportunity to switch gears, becoming a certified trainer. Her garage is now a

gym where she trains her clients.

"Now I'm doing my passion," Teresa said. "We all have a passion and a job. Sometimes, if we're lucky, they're the same."

Coffee with friends

Cardio Coffee takes off from the Barton Hills Elementary covered walkway at 7:45 a.m. the first Friday of every month.

"It's just been fun to get to know neighbors," Teresa said.

A few days before each walk, Teresa mentions it on the neighborhood listserv and sometimes posts signs around the neighborhood.

After a coffee at Flipnotics, the group returns to the school, arriving around 9:30. The walk is about 3.5 miles round trip, according to Teresa.

Anyone who likes a good walk and good company is welcome. ♦



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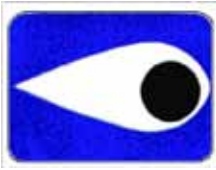


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Neighborhood Watch patrol growing

By John Luther
Chair, BHNA Neighborhood Watch

2011 was an outstanding year for the BHNA Neighborhood Watch Program. Our group received city, regional and state awards for outstanding service in neighborhood crime prevention.

Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch was also featured in a front-page story in the *Austin American-Statesman* in December due to the dramatic crime reduction in our neighborhood over the year.

The Austin Police Department referred several neighborhood associations to Barton Hills in response to inquiries about starting Neighborhood Watch patrol programs in their areas. At least four additional neighborhoods now have an active neighborhood patrol after receiving orientation and training from Barton Hills patrol volunteers. We should all be very proud of the neighbors who patrol our streets every day and many nights to bring an extra measure of security to us all. Be sure you wave to them when you see a volunteer on your street.

Now it's time to plan for this year and I'm very excited about it. We want to focus on:

- Adding additional patrol volunteers.
- Developing a walking and biking patrol component.
- Providing additional training in patrol techniques and suspect identification in conjunction with the Austin Police Department.
- In general, help Barton Hills maintain a safe, secure neighborhood.

The key to a successful Neighborhood Watch program and the reason the BHNA program is so outstanding is that we volunteer and we support our neighborhood. I invite you to join and become a part of the solution. One hour a week of your time can make the difference.

Contact me at jluther@austin.rr.com for details. The next time a neighborhood waves at a BHNA Neighborhood Watch volunteer they could be waving at you. ♣

4th of July parade planning begins

By Sunny Luther
Chair, Fourth of July Parade

No, it is not too early to begin planning for the biggest annual event in Barton Hills. Indeed, the planning already is underway. There are permits to get, games to organize, volunteers to find and sponsors to secure. And can you believe it? There is only one more BHNA meeting after January before the big day. The listserv is about to get a real workout.

If you would like to help plan this great event, contact me at ssluther@austin.rr.com.

Planning sessions will begin in February to allow plenty of time to complete the many tasks associated with the parade and events taking place at Barton Hills Elementary. We hope to divide the essential duties among several volunteers so that each job has a leader and no one person will be overburdened.

Remember, this day is for celebrating our county's birthday and for having FUN, FUN, FUN. This we can do in real Barton-Hills style.

I welcome your ideas. Let's begin building the biggest neighborhood birthday party ever!

Join BHNA or renew your membership!

Turn to page 8
for more details.

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Meet the 2012 BHNA Executive Committee

President: Melissa Hawthorne



Melissa and her husband, Glenn, moved into their home on Deerfoot in 2004. Melissa works in commercial development and has been an active participant in neighborhood planning and civic committees for the last 20 years. In their leisure time, Melissa and Glenn enjoy scuba diving and motorcycling all over the world. Quarterly, Melissa enjoys killing invasive vegetation, especially Ligustrum, in the Greenbelt behind her home.

Vice-President: Kay Killen



Kay is a native Austinite, and has lived in Barton Hills for more than 16 years. She has contributed to the neighborhood parade committee, serving as chair for two years. She also served as Austin Neighborhoods Council representative for two separate 2-year terms. She volunteers with the Greenbelt Guardians, helped implement the recent fire danger campaign and is a member of the BHNA Emergency Preparedness Committee. She's thrilled to be back in Barton Hills after eight months north of the river.

Recording Secretary: David Poisson



David is a 15-year resident of Barton Hills and lives on Forest Bend Drive. He works as a realtor for Sky Realty, a local Austin company. His interests include hiking and swimming at Barton Creek, waterskiing, listening to live music and cooking. He is a volunteer for Trees for Pease and Friends of the Forest.

Newsletter Editor: Leah Golden



Leah became a permanent resident of Barton Hills in 2009, and lives on Westway Circle with her husband and two children. She's a writer and editor for a public pension system, and enjoys commuting to work on her bike.

Treasurer: Kerry Price



Originally from St. Paul, Minn., Kerry moved to Austin in 1982. He and his wife, Carole, moved to their home on Deerfoot Trail with their two daughters in 1990. After more than 30 years in the corrugated box business, Kerry retired in February 2011, and now has his own independent packaging brokerage business.

Austin Neighborhoods Council Delegate: Tom Nuckols



Tom and his wife, Sherine Thomas, moved to Barton Hills 10 years ago. A lawyer, Tom practices land use, real estate and environmental law. He works for the Travis County Attorney's Office as director of the division that advises the Travis County Commissioner's Court on those issues.

Many thanks to outgoing officers Craig Smith, Jeff Embree, Ellen Pitluk and Jennifer Ellen Cook.

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2012 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Fill out this form to join or renew your membership in the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$10 per household, payable when you join (for a new membership) or every January (for renewal).

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.

Please send this form along with your annual dues to:

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association, PO Box 2042, Austin TX 78768-2042

Make checks payable to BHNA. You can pay dues online through PayPal at www.bartonhills.org/membership.html.

(PayPal service fee of \$1 will be added to your total.)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF BARTON HILLS NEWS

► Update on Barton Hills Elementary

► Cardio Coffee brings neighbors together

► July 4th parade planning begins

► Meet the 2012 BHNA executive committee