

Barton Hills News

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BARTON HILLS GARDEN CLUB

by Carol de la Torre

Established in 1960 the Barton Hills Garden Club (BHGC) provides a friendly and social forum to promote the advancement of gardening. The women only group meets the 4th Tuesday at 9:30 a m of each month September-May for an annual fee of \$25 and we meet at the Zilker Botanical Gardens on Barton Springs Road. Some of the topics have been on native plants, cacti and succulents.

Outside of our regular monthly meetings we also host a Girls' Night Out, a Holiday Coffee in December and we conclude the year in May with a beautiful luncheon. This is a fun loving group so please join us on April 26 at 9:30 for our monthly meeting.

For more information please contact Carol de la Torre, 512 750 9007, cdelatorre01@aol.com



NEXT MEETING

July 26, 2016 • 6 - 9 pm

Please join us at **St. Mark's Church** (corner of Barton Skyway & Barton Hills Drive)
All are welcome!

Social Hour at 6pm. Pizza, salad & pasta from Rockin' Tomato **\$7**

Neighborhood Meeting: 7-9pm

NOTE: 4th of July Parade begins at 8:30 am!



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. For more about membership and neighborhood affairs, contact the appropriate person below.

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<http://bartonhills.org>

Newsletter printed on 100% recycled paper.

President's Message

By David Poisson

BHNA President

Greetings Barton Hills Neighbors,

I thought I would introduce myself by giving you my journey that led me to Barton Hills. Little did I know 20 years ago when I moved into my house on Forest Bend that I would be president of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association.

While attending UT I lived across the creek in the Windridge Apts for 5 years (in the building next to Taco Deli), thus creating my love for the beautiful surroundings of Barton Creek that I visited often. My apartment had views of the Campbell's Hole cliffs and I always thought how great it would be to actually own a home on the creek. After graduating and then owning a Zilker home for two years, I found my dream home backing up to Barton Creek – thus bringing me into Barton Hills !!! I was the 'youngster' in my neighborhood at 28 years old, with the majority of my neighbors being the original homeowners. Thankfully they accepted me and I have since grown into my neighborhood.

I have really enjoyed my past five years in the neighborhood association, getting to meet all the residents of our great neighborhood and being actively involved with the Greenbelt Guardians, parade committee, and recently the park committee and traffic calming committee. All of the above really demonstrate the love and dedication that all our neighbors put into Barton Hills to make it the greatest neighborhood in Austin – biased opinion, but very true! I look forward to my future endeavors working for the good of the neighborhood. Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of any assistance or if you merely want to say 'Hi!'

Yours truly,
David
BHNA President



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UPDATE: BARTON HILLS COMMUNITY PARK

by Roy O. Smithers & Melanie Gantt
Executive Committee Chair & Chair of Playscape Committee



Since our last newsletter the spectacular jewel of Barton Hills, the Barton Hills Elementary School mural, has been completed. A dedication ceremony held in December was attended by the Mayor, Councilmember Ann Kitchen, and representatives of the City of Austin Parks and Recreation and AISD. In the morning with the sun rising in the East, it just SHINES!

The Committee is excited to announce that the landscaping of the hillside between the play scape and the play slab has been funded and the contractor has been retained. Meeting with Barton Hills School representatives, it was agreed that the work will begin on or about April 18. It will take several months; however, it should be ready before the 4th of July parade.

The project managed by Melissa Hawthorne is funded by a Austin Parks Foundation grant, which comes from a donation by Austin City Limits (C3). Matching funds will be provided by the generous donations obtained several years ago from Barton Hills residents, i.e. "Friends of Barton Hills Park". We hope to have a "Friends of Barton Hills" get together at the hillside once it is completed.

The next Park project is being spearheaded by Committee member, Teresa Carpenter, our neighborhood fitness trainer. Teresa has obtained many catalogs and visited parks in Austin and San Antonio to view exercise equipment in those locations. She, with the assistance of Liz Davis, is working to select and obtain approval for adult outdoor exercise equipment for the park. The funding for this project will come from Parkland Dedication Fees through the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department. Parkland Dedication Fees are funds required to be provided by developers to the City for park development in the area in which the development is located. Because of great number of the condos/apts. being built on South Lamar, there are developer Parkland Dedication Fees dedicated for our Park. We have already used such funds to upgrade the playground.

The Committee has discussed the possibility of installing a special sundial at the park. It would be unusual in that a person standing in a specified spot on the dial would cast a shadow that would tell the time. There is such a sundial at the Dallas Arboretum.

The Barton Hills Community Park has an account with Austin Parks Foundation (which is tax-deductible). You can always contribute any amount to our park at the following link: <https://www.austinparks.org/adopter-donations.html>. Make sure to designate the funds for the Barton Hills Community Park.

As always, the Committee truly appreciates all of the support from Barton Hills Elementary School folks, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, the Barton Hills PTA and every Barton Hills resident. Please continue to support our efforts in the future. If you are interested in keeping up with the latest Committee discussions, the minutes of Committee meetings can be obtained by emailing me at rosmith@aol.com.

DAY TRIPS

by Caroline Bhargava

Strawberry (& Pumpkin!) Fields Forever

Tucked away on a dusty farm road outside of Marble Falls lies Sweet Berry Farm, where rows and rows of ruby red strawberries traditionally abound in spring and await picking. The spring season is about to close at the farm, but the farm will be open again in September with pumpkins & gourds for sale, hayrides, the barrel train, a petting zoo, and homemade ice cream & popsicles.

Sweet Berry Farm opens at 8:30am most days (closed Wednesdays, opens late on Sundays), and it's best to get there before 10:30am during the busy seasons. It takes about 50 minutes to get there from South Austin. There is no charge for admission, parking or petting the animals. Rides are \$3.50 and under. CASH & CHECK ONLY, though there is an ATM. No pets allowed. Bring sunscreen, hats, closed-toe shoes and of course your camera. Only school groups need to make a reservation.

Lots of people get lost using Google/Apple maps, so be sure to follow Sweet Berry Farm's directions: Hwy 71 west out of Austin proper. From Oak Hill you will travel west on 71 through Bee Caves, past Spicewood and on to the intersection of 71 and 281. It is about 25 - 30 miles from Bee Caves to the intersection of 281 and 71. Exit off of 71 onto 281 North, travel about 5 miles into Marble Falls. After crossing the bridge, you will need to turn left at the 5th red light. This light is at the intersection of 281 and 1431. After turning left onto 1431, travel west out of town. About 1.5 miles out of Marble Falls you will come to a red light out in the middle of nowhere. Turn right onto Fm 1980 and travel about 1.2 miles to the berry patch.

Visit them online for up to date information: www.sweetberryfarm.com.

We'd love to hear about your favorite day trips!
If interested in sharing, email kierrabox@gmail.com



OUR NEIGHBOR, ST. MARK'S DAY SCHOOL

by Anne Wingler & Kierra Francis

St. Mark's is a little gem nestled in the heart of our quiet and beautiful neighborhood. You may have attended a BHNA meeting in the Parish Hall, and you have certainly passed it countless times. What you may not know is that St. Mark's has been serving the Austin community since 1963, and the day school has been an educational launching pad for many Barton Hills families.

Parents of St. Mark's appreciate the cultivation of their children's relationship with nature and the nurturing community of faculty and fellow families. Much like the seeds the children are planting in the garden boxes, they too are growing on the playground through socialization and imaginative development. The welcoming and diverse culture of St. Mark's fosters friendship, compassion and respect for others.

St. Mark's encourages children to connect with the natural world and become in awe of creation through discovery and free exploration via their vast playground and Greenbelt nature trail. Education extends beyond the classroom walls and onto the meditation trail with exploration lessons on plants, patterns, colors, math, history, and social responsibility.

This summer St. Mark's is offering 7 weeks of day camp. The children will be immersed in exciting projects and activities to increase their knowledge and ignite their imaginations through topics such as forensics, cooking as science, and moving through science and chemistry! The S.T.E.M program will introduce fun and science in everyday life. St. Mark's educators will engage the students by asking questions of "how and why" to promote higher levels of thinking!

If you are interested in learning more about summer camp or fall enrollment, please contact the director, Anne Wingler (headofschool.stmarks@gmail.com) or visit the school campus for a tour!



The next time you drive past preschoolers on their walk to school, take heart knowing these great kids are your neighbors and the future of Barton Hills!

If you are interested in learning more about summer camp or fall enrollment, please contact the director, Anne Wingler (headofschool.stmarks@gmail.com) or visit the school campus for a tour!



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CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE!

FOURTH of JULY in Barton Hills is a cherished tradition for residents of all ages. The parade gathers at 8:30 am in the parking lot of the Barton Hills Market. Adults, children and pets proudly display their patriotism and pride as they parade down Barton Hills Drive and convene at Barton Hills Elementary at 9:00 am.

This year we have the honor of welcoming District 5 City Councilmember, Ann Kitchen, as the Grand Marshall. Please join us for the procession and stay for watermelon, treats and games! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the BHNA President, David Poisson for additional details. (dpoisson@swbell.net)



TRAFFIC CALMING REPORT

by Vanessa A. Gonzalez



Hi Neighbors!

As your chair of the BHNA Traffic Calming Committee, I wanted to give you an update on our progress. For those who haven't heard, we have been working with the City of Austin to bring exciting changes to Barton Hills Drive.

The committee was originally formed in 2014. The committee enlisted the help of an urban design firm to analyze the options for the street. They formulated the idea of double bike lanes on the west side of the street separated from traffic by planters or a median. A picture of the idea was presented at a BHNA meeting during the summer of 2014. I was present at the BHNA meeting and was excited when I saw the presentation. What a great way to calm the traffic! I asked to join the committee and the following summer of 2015, I became the chair of the committee.

In the summer of 2015, I began to contact the city regularly and the committee met with the city to look at alternatives for traffic calming and look at what other streets and other cities have done. The city conducted traffic studies including traffic counts, traffic speeds and parking counts. Luckily, Barton Hills Drive was put on the list for resurfacing. At the same time, the city allocated funds for improvements to Barton Hills Drive and sidewalks on Homedale Drive and Briarcrest Drive around the school. With the funds in place, the city prepared a proposed plan for the new Barton Hills Drive.

The proposed plan included double bike lanes on the west side of Barton Hills Drive with planters or turtle bumps separating the bike lanes from the traffic lanes. The city held an open house at Barton Hills Elementary on March 8, 2016 to get feedback from the neighborhood on the proposed plan. After the open house, the city made revisions to their proposed plan and held a second open house at Barton Hills Elementary on March 30, 2016.

It was great to see so many neighbors working with the city planners at these open houses. Thank you for all that came and gave their feedback to the city planners. Thank you also to the city planners who listened to the feedback and continued to revise and update their plan to work with the concerns of the neighborhood. We are hoping the proposed plan will become final and the changes will come to Barton Hills Drive this summer when the new sidewalks are put in around Barton Hills Elementary.

The city representatives presented at our last BHNA meeting to answer questions and take additional feedback on the proposed plan. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your traffic calming committee chair.

GREENBELT GUARDIANS REPORT

by Glee Ingram



We are happy to report that we have been busy working on the Greenbelt. On Saturday, March 5, we celebrated the citywide It's My Park Day event with a volunteer workday at the Gus Fruh entry section of the greenbelt.

More than 65 people showed up to help repair erosion damage to the entry trail; mortar a stone wall to help support our bridge crossing over a stream flowing into the creek; repair trail erosion near the rock flats and construct steps and retaining walls for safe passage onto the flats; and yank hundreds of invasive *Nandia* and *Ligustrum* plants from the woodlands adjacent to Barton Creek. Lots of teamwork, and satisfied smiles as people left the trail.

This annual event has become a kind of rite of spring, promoted and organized through the Austin Parks Foundation, which recruits volunteers and facilitates improvements in parks throughout our city. Each year a new tee shirt is designed to celebrate the occasion and acknowledge the work of the volunteers who help improve the quality of our parks. A good number of our neighbors have earned these tee shirts for their work on our greenbelt – wave a “thanks” when you see them.

We were also given the green light to commence with the grant-funded removal of large *Ligustrum* trees and Chinaberry trees and *Nandina* along the greenbelt trail, from the Zilker entry to the Spy Glass entry. Through a grant funded by TCEQ (Texas Center on Environmental Quality), and matching funds from the Greenbelt Guardians (aided by funding contributed by our BHNA), we have contracted with the Texas Conservation Corps to remove many acres of invasive plants along our adopted areas of the greenbelt. Any contracted work we do on the greenbelt must now be reviewed and pre-approved by several city departments (Austin Parks Department, Watershed Protection, and Balcones Canyonland Preserve).

Our next workday will be held on National Parks Day in September. We will send out a notice and hope to see many of our neighbors out working on one of our adopted trailheads. We are so lucky to live so close to native Texas Hill Country land and water, right in the middle of our city. As our city grows, so does the pressure on this treasured strip of land and water, and we have the good fortune to help tend it.

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association
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Once you're a BHNA member, you can join the Barton Hills listserv.
Visit groups.yahoo.com/group/barton_hills/ for more information about how to sign up.

2016 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: _____

Please send this form along with your annual dues to:

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association P.O. Box 41206 Austin, TX 78704

Make checks payable to BHNA. You can pay dues online through PayPal at <http://bartonhills.org/about/membership/>.
(PayPal service fee of \$1 will be added to your total.)