

The Flea

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR.... TODAY A CHAIR, TOMORROW A SOFA

by Dave Westenbarger

It's an honor to be asked to serve as chair of the Cherrywood Steering Committee. I'm pleased to be working with such a talented group of folks who contribute in ways large and small.

When we moved to Austin from Washington, D.C., in 1999, to be closer to family, my wife Dolly and I knew we wanted to live in a centrally-located neighborhood. Little did we know how fortunate we would be to choose Cherrywood: an excellent location abounding in wonderful neighbors, where we can even walk to church on Sundays!

I was especially pleased to find Cherrywood to be a cycling-friendly neighborhood within cycling distance of my employer, a state agency. While Austin has a reputation as a cycling town, those of us who pedal regularly tend to disagree. Austin drivers are friendly and courteous, even to cyclists who don't behave themselves, but there are so many of them (drivers, that is) that a lack of safe routes keeps many less bike-crazy people from trying it.

Growing up in Ohio, I rode a bike to Little League and the comic book shop, and also rode in college, where I studied economics and politics. After graduate school at Ohio University (Bobcats, not Buckeyes), I did research for the federal government, where for eight years I commuted on Washington's bike trails, past monuments and museums. That experience spoiled me for street-only pedaling.

Here in Austin, I've been able to contrib-

ute to efforts to make cycling a realistic option for everybody, and Cherrywood neighbors have been there when their support was needed.

Besides working on traffic and cycling issues in Cherrywood, I've managed to meddle in all kinds of projects, including the recent Art Fair, parks, tree planting, film studio and church events, and helping to plan the future of the neighborhood. All these things are possible because of the efforts of neighbors.

Major projects Cherrywood will be pursuing in 2003 include:

- registration of the Neighborhood Association as a 501c3 non-profit, which will facilitate donations for projects and fix some tax headaches for our treasurer;
- designation of the neighborhood as an historic-eligible district, which could help our efforts against cut-through traffic and highway encroachment;
- trail building and other improvements in our parks, perhaps even including a beginning to the Upper Boggy Creek Bikeway.

Austin has great potential for a world-class trail network, and Cherrywood has the assets – location, routing, and demographics – to attract funding. Soon, we could have trails in our parks and maybe even along part of the railroad tracks. Envision a first segment of hike and bike trail, designed and built by us, along Clarkson Avenue, between Cherrywood Road and 38½ Street!

Now for a word on behalf of our sponsors. I started selling ads for The Flea



as a way to earn money for the association, so we could put trash cans in the parks or buy books for Maplewood. I've ended up meeting some great people and learning a lot about the area in the process. Plus, there's usually little

(continued on page 5)

**Cherrywood Neighborhood
quarterly meeting:**

**Wednesday
January 22
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Maplewood Elementary**

(Child care available!)

Updates on:

- Patterson Park playground & trails
- Neighborhood safety
- Traffic issues, Interstate 35
- Alley access in Duplex Nation
- Other upcoming events & MORE!

Volunteer Opportunities:
2 vacancies on Steering Committee

The **Steering Committee** meets **January 15 at 6:30 p.m.** at the **Taqueria Los Altos** at Interstate 35 and Edgewood. The meeting is open to all who want to come.

A NOTE FROM THE NEW FLEA EDITOR:

As I begin this volunteer gig as editor of the neighborhood newsletter, I am reminded of the phrase: "It takes a village..." We all can contribute to communication in our village, and The Flea is one way to do it.

I bring some dusty journalism skills to a committee that's been getting The Flea out for a long time. The list to the right shows you how to contact us.

The deadline for submitting articles for the April "Flea" is the first week of March. You can contact me or Dolly Ensey or Rebecca Schwarz with ideas for articles, Liz Hargrove for photo opportunities, or Rebecca Kohout or Dave Westenbarger for advertising.

— Sue Taylor

CHERRYWOOD *NeighborNet*

Cherrywood has two means of getting out the message electronically.

One channel is our Web page, for permanent stuff. Just open www.cherrywood.org for lots on information about the neighborhood and the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association.

The other channel is our "NeighborNet" e-mail list. Some 250 neighbors enjoy timely notices of local goings-on via e-mail. Through the CNA website, you can search the archive of past saved messages. For instance, you could only read postings mentioning "Mueller's BBQ," our delicious local eatery.

This past quarter you would have learned about:

- reminders of neighborhood meetings and events
- parents upset that art and music programs in elementary schools might be cut
- information for homeowners seeking help with insurance claims for hail damage
- local social service organizations seeking donations (much generosity displayed)
- the first annual CNA Art Fair
- a couple petty scams being run in the neighborhood
- improvements to Patterson Park energized by several neighbors
- cast call for Ron Howard's "Alamo"
- new trees planted in Cherrywood
- and much more!

To join us, e-mail your request to subscribe to NeighborNet-subscribe@yahoo.com or visit the CNA website www.cherrywood.org.

Cherrywood Neighborhood Association

<http://www.cherrywood.org>

Steering Committee

Chair	_____ Dave Westenbarger ('03)*	494-9905
Vice-Chair	_____ Stefan Schuster ('04)	322-0059
Secretary	_____ Meg Brooks ('04)	974-5581
Treasurer	_____ Rebecca Kohout ('03)	415-9876
Members	_____ Bree Buchanan ('04)	482-8468
	_____ Frances DeLaune ('03)	477-1986
	_____ Jeff Folmar ('03)	472-4535
	_____ Peter Ketter ('04)	473-2736
	_____ Girard Kinney ('04)	478-5042
	_____ David Menhard ('03)	478-0996
	_____ Lex Dale Owens ('04)	477-6555
		vacancy ('03) **
		vacancy ('04) **

* year term expires
** to be elected at the
January 22 meeting

Communications

NeighborNet & Website: _____ Gordon Bennett 477-7195

The Flea:

- **Editor** _____ Sue Taylor 476-1461
- **Assistant Editors** _____ Dolly Ensey 494-9905
- _____ Rebecca Schwarz 478-9618
- **Design & Layout** _____ Bethany Andrée 473-2841
- **Photography** _____ Liz Hargrove 478-5043
- **Advertising** _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876
- _____ Dave Westenbarger 494-9905
- **Distribution** _____ Jim Walker 499-0526

Committees

Hospitality: _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876

_____ Priscilla Boston 478-1867

Nominating: _____ Michael McClendon 482-0016

Parks:

- **Cherrywood Green** _____ Katharine Beisner 708-9407
- **Patterson Park** _____ Isabelle Headrick 499-0621

Pets: _____ Gale Greenleaf 474-6245

Planning & Zoning: _____ Girard Kinney 478-5042

Security: _____ Jules Vieau 495-9569

Transportation: _____ Stefan Schuster 322-0059

Welcome Wagon: _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876

Projects

Austin Film Society: _____ Dolly Ensey 494-9905

Blue Ribbon Yard: _____ Priscilla Boston 478-1867

Maplewood: _____ Jack Newman 476-6616

Mueller Redevelopment: _____ Jim Walker 499-0526

Tree Planting: _____ Mike Damal 478-9622

Upper Boggy Creek Planning: _____ Steve Kreger 477-4216

UBC photos, in this newsletter, are from the Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Planning Area collection.

I-35 DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

by Stefan Schuster

Although it is a never-ending saga, the lines seem to be repeating themselves. The North Central Interstate 35 Neighborhoods Coalition (NCINC) met November 16, with almost 20 people in attendance, for a lively and productive discussion. Topics ranged from personal experiences with transportation entities to effective lobbying efforts and strategies.

Will Bozeman, representing the Austin Neighborhoods Council, gave a brief review of the state's long-range plan, indicating that the Texas Department of Transportation would need approximately \$325 billion over the next 25 years to complete all planned projects statewide. Though it is a fluid number, about \$2 billion is earmarked for work on I-35 from Georgetown to Seguin.

General discussion at the meeting involved trying to document our failures and successes with TxDOT and plans to reach out to other coalitions, such as those in Houston or Fort Worth, to gain information and build additional rapport.

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), which decides

how federal transportation dollars are spent in the Austin area, also was discussed. Our meeting occurred before CAMPO decided not to expand to include all of Hays and Williamson counties.

NCINC decided that we would mount a concerted effort to educate people about the TxDOT Austin District office and its lack of planning, constant undocumented changes, and attempts to isolate the neighborhoods.

A schedule was drawn up with a goal of having a representative from NCINC attend the monthly CAMPO policy meetings. Volunteers are needed.

On the legislative front, we decided that several volunteers and members would need to keep us updated and give strategy advice. Will Bozeman will be our main source of information.

NCINC will continue to follow federal implications and requirements as well as any civil rights complaints that we could follow up on. It was suggested that we could ask that the Citizen Advisory Taskforce set up by TxDOT be reconvened on the basis of "changed conditions" due

to the alterations since the taskforce was last updated on the "current" design.

Another key objective is to get Capital Metro involved in the discussions with TxDOT and to help improve the proposed design for expanding I-35 through central Austin.

Several members mentioned that a new incarnation of the anti-light rail group is attempting to develop a "responsive transportation plan," i.e. a highway loop around Austin. They plan to challenge CAMPO's long-range transportation plan.

NCINC is still seeking endorsements, and the Downtown Austin Alliance and Austin Neighborhoods Council are nearing decisions on NCINC endorsement.

Since our meeting November 16, the City of Austin has been holding "air rights" workshops to gather public input on the idea of building something over some of the downtown sections of the proposed depressed Interstate 35. Bo McCarver, president of Blacklands Neighborhood Association, and I attended a workshop where we were two thirds of the audience. ■

Stefan Schuster represents our neighborhood association on the NCINC. He is also vice-chairman of the CNA.

DUPLEXES AND ALLEYS

by Jeff Folmar

One of Cherrywood Neighborhood Association's stated purposes is to promote open discussion of neighborhood issues and to pursue actions favored by our members. In keeping with that, the association voted October 16, at its quarterly membership meeting, to send a letter to all property owners of the duplexes on Maplewood, Ashwood, Kirkwood, and Wrightwood requesting assistance with the maintenance of the alleys serving their properties.

The letter will specifically request two things:

- 1) to please keep the alleys clear behind the duplexes
- 2) to provide input, if desired, on a possible centralized mechanism for their continued maintenance.

The duplexes were built in the late 1940s, and the alleys were created with a driveway easement when the subdivision was platted. The city doesn't own the alleys and has no responsibility for their upkeep. Without a centralized mechanism for their maintenance, it is the responsibility of the property owners of those duplexes to keep the alleys clear and passable. Over the years, many sections of the alleys have become inaccessible because of bamboo or brush.

The neighborhood association considers the alleys to be an important asset to

the neighborhood and would like to see them become usable by all residents and owners.

Reducing the number of cars parked on the street would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists while improving vehicular access for area residents, school buses and emergency vehicles. We hope to develop a long-term plan to provide for the alleys continued maintenance. The easement grants legal access rights, and those rights should be respected.

If you have any suggestions, please contact any of the Steering Committee members or post it to the NeighborNet. The more ideas we have, the better. ■

Jeff Folmar is an owner-occupant of a duplex on Maplewood Avenue.

ELECTRIC SUBSTATION WORK NEARS COMPLETION

by Judy Fowler

Work is expected to be completed this spring on a project that began about three years ago when Austin Energy and the Cherrywood neighborhood started discussing locating a substation in the area.

The Delwood Shopping Center (in front of Fiesta) was chosen as the site because it was already a commercial area adjacent to Interstate 35. The substation was necessary because of higher electrical loads due to new construction, neighborhood revitalization after the closure of the Mueller airport, and the age and condition of the substation at Grooms and 38th streets.

The wall that was being erected during the last months of 2002 is the result of much time spent in design. Although the substation began being used last April, the wall construction was delayed while the galvanized steel uprights were manufactured.

After the uprights are in place, the skin will be placed on them. The schedule calls for limestone to be installed on the skin by the end of February, and for landscaping to be completed in March with a completion date for the project in the first week of April.

Austin Energy is planning a celebration for the Delwood Substation and we look forward to seeing you then. We appreciate how much time and energy the neighborhood has invested in this project. Your input was invaluable. Cherrywood has become our model for future projects. ■

Judy Fowler is manager of public involvement and real estate for Austin Energy.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

by Dave Westenbarger

The Maplewood Elementary Safe Routes to School Plan application was submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation by the City of Austin in early December. A panel will review all applications received and make awards sometime in 2003.

Maplewood planners asked for:

- a sidewalk on the south side of 38½ St. across from the school,
- a sidewalk on the east side of Cherrywood Rd., from 38½ St. to 34th St.,
- a sidewalk on Lafayette Ave., from 38½ St. to Concordia Ave., and
- repainted crosswalks and curb extensions at the intersections of 38½ St., Cherrywood Rd., and Maplewood and Clarkson Avenues.

The grant seeks \$100,000 from TxDOT. If that is awarded, the city will provide another \$25,000 for the project. ■

2 STEERING COMMITTEE VACANCIES TO BE FILLED

by Michael McClendon

Seven people were elected in October to two-year terms on the Steering Committee of the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association, and two vacancies are expected to be filled by election at the January meeting.

Those elected in October are Meg Brooks, Bree Buchanan, Peter Ketter, Girard Kinney, Lex Dale Owens, Stefan Schuster, and Anderson Simmons. They join Frances DeLaune, Jeff Folmar, Rebecca Kohout, David Menhard, James Spanelli, and Dave Westenbarger whose terms expire October 2003.

Anderson Simmons (term expires October, 2004) and James Spanelli (term expires 2003) are unable to serve the remainder of their terms. The Nominating Committee seeks volunteers to fill these spots by election at the January 22 meeting.

The Steering Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, typically at 6:30 p.m., at the Taqueria Los Altos at Interstate 35 and Edgewood.

Please see the Cherrywood Web site (cherrywood.org) for more information concerning the role of a Steering Committee member or contact any Nominating Committee member.

Nominating Committee members are: Priscilla Boston 478-1867; Michael McClendon 482-0016; Lex Dale Owens 477-6555; Jim Walker 499-0526; and Dave Westenbarger 494-9905. ■

WELCOME TO CHERRYWOOD!

Priscilla Boston and Rebecca Kohout have been delivering welcome baskets to the neighborhood's newest residents. A warm welcome to the new homeowners who have moved to our neighborhood from September through November.

- Ashur Garber, 3209 Merrie Lynn
- Merrill & Rita Carlson, 3709 Werner
- Laney Catledge & Sean Callaway, 3401 Merrie Lynn

If you are a new homeowner in the 'hood and have not heard from the neighborhood association's Welcome Wagon, please call Rebecca at 415-9876 or Priscilla at 478-1867.

PATO'S RESTAURANT TO REOPEN THIS SPRING

by Dave Westenbarger

Look for construction activity at the Pato's site on East 38½ St. in January or February, according to Cherrywood resident and Pato's owner, Roldan "Randy" Ramirez. The landlord, the Giles family, plans to rebuild the 5,000 square foot structure that existed before the fire last year. The building will be completely enclosed and have central air and heat, making musical acts less intrusive to neighbors and providing a more comfortable experience for patrons.

Ramirez plans to retain the name "Pato's," which is Spanish for "duck," and add "La Super Rica," which means "the most delicious." Ramirez has also been developing a new menu, which could include burgers and chicken, in addition to their popular breakfast tacos. Gourmet coffee is also being considered.

Pato's will continue to serve beer and wine, and has applied for a liquor license to sell real (tequila) margaritas from a ma-

chine. There are also plans to make over the beer garden, where the palm trees stand, into a pleasant, tropical oasis.

Upon completion of the structure, the landlord will turn over finishing work to Ramirez. That will be when help from neighbors will be most appreciated. Painting, moving, and even decorating are all on the agenda for March. Neighbors are encouraged to help personalize the space with art, plants, tables, or other unique contributions to make Pato's a one-of-a-kind neighborhood gathering place. Interested volunteers, artists, and others can contact Dave Westenbarger at 494-9905 or daveintex13@yahoo.com for more information.

Look for the Derailers to perform at the Grand Reopening this spring. ■

The new Pato's sign, La Super Rica Taco Lounge
Photo: Bethany Andrée



UBC PLAN COPIES TO BE AVAILABLE

by Stephen Kreger

Bound copies of the final version of the Upper Boggy Creek Plan, which was passed by the Austin City Council in August, are expected to be available this month or next month.

Two years of hard work by the representatives of several neighborhoods and city staff resulted in a plan that was a compromise in some areas. But it is a significant first step in identifying some issues that need to be addressed and in creating a vision for the planning area.

There is, however, more to do. In January, the team meets to create a process to address action items in the plan, and to amend it where needed. As the neighborhoods change, the plan will need to be amended to reflect our wishes about how we want the planning area to change. It is hoped that the plan will help us control our destiny.

The city is scheduled to have bound copies of the plan available to us in January or February. There will be copies at Maplewood Elementary School and area churches, as well as copies for Steering Committee members and myself. If you have any questions about the plan or the process, please call me at 477-4216. ■

Stephen Kreger is chair of the Upper Bobby Creek Neighborhood Planning Team.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

(continued from page 1)

selling involved, just collecting checks, since our advertisers are generous contributors to the neighborhood. I want to express my gratitude to them for supporting what we do. **PLEASE patronize our advertisers!**

While volunteer labor makes The Flea go, our sponsors make possible the 1,750-copy circulation – at no cost to residents, I might add. All our sponsors are businesses that operate right here in Cherrywood; many of them are your neighbors. Having businesses so close by is one thing that makes this neighborhood exceptional. Let's make sure they stay here.

Another thing I've learned is that when all goes as planned, The Flea even makes a small surplus. This trickle of income, used wisely, could help us obtain numerous things we value, like benches for the parks, even hike and bike trails.

And remember: everyone's a "member" of Cherrywood just by living here – there are no dues! Got an idea for a neighborhood project? Something bugging you? Let us know about it. You're probably not alone.

Or just come to the next meeting and find out what's happening. Next chance: 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 22 at Maplewood Elementary School. We look forward to seeing YOU!

— Dave Westenbarger, 494-9905, daveintex13@yahoo.com

P.S.: Anyone who wants info on pedaling in Austin, to work or to grandma's house, feel free to call or drop me an e-mail and I'll try to help. ■ *Cover illustration: Dave Westenbarger*

PATTERSON PARK NEWS

by Isabelle Headrick

Autumn continued to be an exciting time for Patterson Park. In September, the City Council approved the budget for a new playscape. A few weeks later, Friends of Patterson Park was awarded a \$1,250 grant by the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) for park trail design. In October, the Upper Boggy Creek (UBC) Neighborhood Planning Team allotted Patterson \$7,500 in city funds to offset the cost of a trail system throughout the park.

Although the playscape's funding is already in place, the \$8,750 will cover only a part of the trail system. FoPP is discussing ways to combine our APF and UBC moneys with Americans with Disability Act funding to pay for "Phase 1" of our trail system: the leg from the west

side of the park (Wilshire Blvd.) up to the playground. Should this come through, that path will be constructed in the late summer or early fall.

On December 10, Friends of Patterson Park held a community forum with Marty Stump, a landscape architect with the Parks Department and the project manager for the playground improvements. Marty presented us with a preliminary design for the new playscape (summer, folks! summer!) and a proposed layout for a trail network.

The preliminary playscape design, (see diagram), features separate toddler and youth playscapes, a circular stone bench in the middle, a rubberized surface path leading up to the play areas surrounded by pea gravel, and the placement of the toddler playscape in a shaded area.

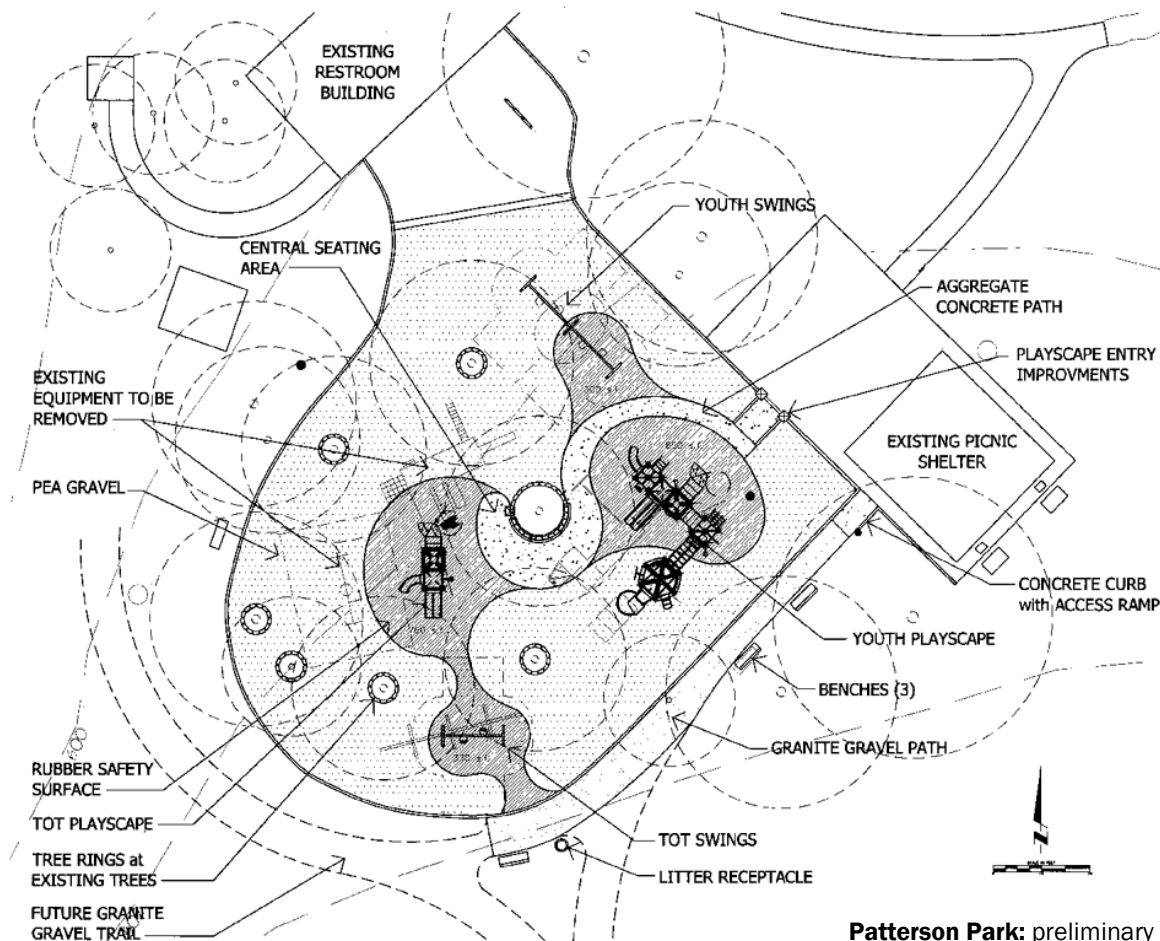
We discussed ways to make the play area more friendly and fun for children with disabilities in order to serve kids from the Open Door Preschool and Faith

Home as well as others. We suggested to Marty that we would like to keep the tire swing, which kids seem to love.

Marty had many wonderful aesthetic suggestions, ranging from placing two marker posts at the entrance to the play area to incorporating an oak leaf design in the rubber surface. As the playground was slightly over budget, we discussed ways to prioritize spending and contribute volunteer labor from the neighborhood to reduce some of the city's costs.

Donations to Friends of Patterson Park are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. You may send a check payable to Austin Parks Foundation with "Patterson Park" on the Memo line to APF at 815 Brazos St., Ste. 1001, Austin, TX 78701.

We welcome anyone with an interest in Patterson to come to our meetings, which are usually held monthly at Genesis Presbyterian Church. For more information about FoPP, call Isabelle at 499-0621 or e-mail pattpark@texas.net. ■



Patterson Park: preliminary playscape design

TREE PLANTING

by Mike Damal

November saw the continuation of a Cherrywood fall tradition with its 6th annual neighborhood tree planting.

Volunteers Priscilla Boston, Mike Damal, Alex Gerosalina, Jim McKay, Alejandro Reyes and Michael Sullivan planted 14 trees throughout the neighborhood on November 6. Recipients of the trees paid \$12 per tree.

An additional 15 trees were planted the previous week by the homeowners, bringing the total to 29 trees added to our neighborhood in this effort.

During the past six years of organized volunteer tree plantings, more than 170 trees have been planted in our neighborhood. These trees will help perpetuate the beautiful urban forest we enjoy.

You can still plant a tree — it's not too late. The best time to plant trees in Austin is in the fall or winter, when the root systems can become established to survive our hot, dry summers. ■

MAPLEWOOD'S RIF PROGRAM: "ROPING, READING AND REWARDING"

by Paul Andrews

Maplewood Elementary School's Reading Is Fundamental program, which provides every student at the school with three free books of his or her choice each school year, has been a big success, thanks to volunteers and Maplewood's new job-sharing librarians, Chris Ullmer and Meredith Osborn.

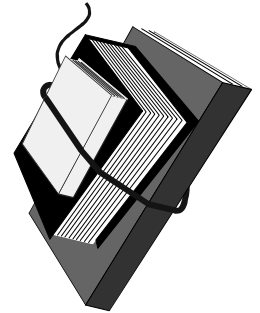
The \$2,800 annual cost of the RIF program was paid by the Maplewood PTA. The mission is "to give books to low-income children to motivate them to become lifelong readers."

On September 18 and 19, RIF volunteer readers "roped" students into the world of books with RIF Ranch, and on December 3 and 4, they showed students how to "cook up a good book" using the essential ingredients of words, illustrations, plot and characters.

RIF volunteers, who include parents at Maplewood as well as other residents of the Cherrywood neighborhood, were Jeanne Arbuckle, Dale Robertson, Bree Buchanan, Greg Nudd, Priscilla Boston, Judy Barre, Isabelle Headrick, Kris Light, Donnie Edwards, Alice Andrews, and some readers who wish to remain anonymous.

Save This Date: Next chance to read is April 8-9, 2003

Mark your new calendar and fulfill your resolutions to be organized, volunteer and read a good book in 2003. Contact: Jeanne Arbuckle (katenate@aol.com) or Paul Andrews (paul.andrews@juno.com) to join RIF at Maplewood in April. ■



FIRST CNA ART FAIR IS A SUCCESS

by Priscilla Boston

On Saturday November 23, Cherrywood's first social event showcasing the work of local artists and musicians was held. An estimated 150 people perused and bought the art of 10 eclectic neighborhood artists.

Artistic media varied, including fabric, paintings, prints, collage, jewelry, pottery, woodwork, and photographs. Joining in the creation of a festive atmosphere were 3 diverse musical groups and baked goods, including the best little homemade pumpkin pies you have ever sunk your teeth into.

Sponsorships by local businesses helped to fund the event, and by the end of the day a bit of money was made for the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association.

Aided and abetted by CNA's Hospitality Committee, the idea of local artist Kathy McTee took shape. A devoted planning team met over a three-month period to work out the details, and Asbury Methodist Church generously offered the use of its facility. Press releases, flyers, and notices resulted in coverage by the



Left: Rebecca Kohout, CNA Treasurer, sells refreshments and treats to help cover fair expenses. *Photo: Liz Hargrove* Right: Janna Newman contributes her artistic skills on the front sidewalk. *Photo: Dolly Ensey*



Statesman, the Chronicle and a television station.

As one of the organizers, I have to say that I've been to several other art shows this season, and the art this was the best overall. There were several pieces that I can't quit thinking about. I can't wait to use what we learned this first time around to plan an even better festival next year. ■

JULIE ALEXANDER: DIVING INTO LAW

by Carl Trominski

What is your connection to the neighborhood?

Almost a year ago, I bought and renovated the building at 1307 E. 38½ St., on the corner of Lafayette, which is now the home of my law firm, Alexander & Associates, Attorneys, P.C.



Alexander & Associates, Attorneys, P.C., in the renovated building at 1307 E. 38½ Street.
Photo: Bethany Andrée

Why did you choose to locate your office in Cherrywood?

I live in Hyde Park, so I wanted to office close to home. I moved my office from Tarrytown, and I am much happier here, where people actually stop in to say hello. Plus, I fell in love with the building, and my friends in the neighborhood were a great source of cheap labor for renovations.

Where were you born and raised?

I was raised in Bryan, Texas, but I defected to Austin to attend UT for undergraduate and law school.

Where would you live if you didn't live in Austin?

I attended the University College London for part of law school, so if I weren't so happy living in Austin, I would try London again. Of course, if they ever need Texas lawyers in Tahiti...

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up, and why did you choose a career in law?

I never imagined myself as a lawyer. In fact, as a child I wanted to be an archaeologist. In college, I studied humanities and wrote a thesis on modern art, but I soon realized that law was one way I could have a real impact on the quality of people's lives.

I started at a firm doing business litigation, then worked with appellate civil rights cases, where I assisted in writing briefs to the United States Supreme Court and the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans.

But, I missed working closely with individual clients, and having the freedom to help them creatively solve problems, so I started my own practice. We have

grown in size, and I now focus on family law, wills/estate planning and probate, and representing small businesses.

In addition to drafting wills, assisting clients with divorce and custody issues, and helping small business owners, I enjoy having the ability to take on clients and issues of special interest to me. For example, I help survivors of domestic violence and assist gay and lesbian clients with unique family law and estate planning needs.

What do you do in your free time?

I love to travel, and have recently been on a couple of scuba diving trips. Somehow the world and trivial annoyances come into perspective when you are watching a 12-foot manta ray swim overhead. I have a 2-year-old niece and a border collie who demand a lot of attention, both of whom you may see occasionally in the front office windows.

What are your favorite books?

"Naked" and "Me Talk Pretty One Day" by David Sedaris. They made me laugh out loud. Try to see him if he is ever at Book People or the Paramount.

Julie Alexander can be reached at 478-9770 or alexander@birch.net. ■

Carl Trominski, an intern architect, lives with his wife Debbie in Cherrywood. Julie helped him form his design company, Carl Trominski Design, LLC.

BLUE RIBBON YARD WINNERS

by Rebecca Kohout

The recipient of the Blue Ribbon Yard award for December-January is Jacqueline Powell Coffey at 2803 Lafayette. Jacqueline has lived in this home for about 14 years and works at the University of Texas. Go by and view the charming yard.

The winners for July-August were Chris Wise and Laura Cisneros at 3404 Werner. Their tropical plants and red rock home were inviting during the hot summer months. (They were inadvertently left out of the last Flea.) ■



Blue Ribbon Yard winners: Jacqueline Powell Coffey's home, 2803 Lafayette (left) and Chris Wise and Laura Cisneros' home, 3404 Werner (right). Congratulations!
Photos: Dolly Ensey



Photo: Chris Riley

Cherrywood resident Girard Kinney received the Downtown Austin Neighbor-

hood Association (DANA) 2002 Urban Light Award for his vision and work on the Pfluger Bridge, the new pedestrian bridge across Town Lake.

Presenting the award was Bennett Donovan, DANA president and a former Cherrywood resident who was the first Flea editor.

During the November 14 ceremony on the bridge, Donovan cited Kinney's work

on the Great Streets Master Plan and quipped: "Unlike so many architects who design for themselves, you always design for the citizens of Austin."

Kinney is president of Scenic Austin and serves on numerous neighborhood and civic committees. Kinney was instrumental in solving design and safety issues involving Austin Energy's building of an electrical substation at 38½ Street and Interstate 35. ■

CHRISTIE DRESCHER: A-PLUS FOR THE TEACHER

by Scheleen Walker

Education is the perennial priority of politicians, and most elected officials could take a lesson from Cherrywood resident Christie Drescher.

Drescher, an 8-year veteran of the Austin school district, was voted Teacher of the Year by her peers at Gonzalo Garza Independence High School for 2002. When you see her in the neighborhood, give her a pat on the back, because those are her only rewards for this honor. And that's just fine with Christie: "To get recognition feels so good. It's incredibly flattering because I work with some amazing teachers. It's very humbling."

Drescher has taught English language arts to students since Garza, a non-traditional public school serving about 450 students, opened on Chicon Street in 1998.

"Ever since I was in grad school I wanted to be at a school like Garza," she says. "The school focuses on reform and is relatively small — with lots of one-on-one attention for students with special needs. You get to know the kids — kids that aren't in any of your classes."

The ability to connect with students is important to Drescher. She began her career as a Peace Corps volunteer on Pohnpei, Micronesia, where she taught English as a second language at a middle school.

"I noticed that a group of kids that I was

working with . . . just wasn't catching on to even conversational English, so I . . . trained at the

community college to teach some extra reading classes with those kids, to work on phonetics and do some re-teaching. I found that I really liked doing ESL but I also really liked working with kids with special needs."

Drescher moved to Austin in 1993, earned a masters in education at the University of Texas and bought a house in Cherrywood in 1997.

Biggest frustration as a teacher living and working in Austin? Drescher says, "Our benefits aren't really very good, but we have benefits and a lot of people don't. Our pay is not really very good, but it's not awful. We can live. It's the feeling of inadequacy because there are so many kids that just really need a lot.

"You're supposed to be doing education, but a lot of time (teachers) find ourselves being a counselor as well. There is such a need for all kids to have one-on-one attention. You just can't do it. It's not humanly possible."

How does Drescher think politicians could help teachers educate more effectively? "Make sure that people are trained really well to go in and be teachers. It's easy to find people who know the subject matter they teach. In order to be a good teacher, however, they need to know a lot more.

"They need to know how to work with and write curriculum; they need to know how to work with diverse kids; they need to know how to work with parents; they need to know how to work within the

community. I'm a firm believer in (requiring) five years (of training).

"It's also important that new teachers be hooked up with good mentors. There are some amazing teachers in town, but the district needs to train teachers how to be mentors.

"Getting people through the first and second year of teaching; that's the chore. It's so exhausting — you're with kids all day and you're really responsible for a lot of stuff.

"Teachers can make it or break it for kids. You can really make a kid want to go to college, want to read or want to think differently. Or you can really make a kid hate reading, hate school, or want to drop out. (Teachers) have so much power. To use that power correctly is (hard) work."

"It's a constant struggle to feel rejuvenated in the classroom," she said. That's why Drescher is excited to be working on integrated curricula with fellow Garza teachers. "The best thing is meeting people in the education field who are really intelligent, interested and really passionate about what they do," she says. "That makes me more passionate about what I do."

All Cherrywood residents can help teachers in all schools by doing a couple of things, Drescher says: "Be aware of what the schools have to offer and get involved. (It) gives kids a sense of safety and security when everybody is connected." ■

Scheleen Walker works for Travis County. Last summer she expanded her responsibilities as mother to Jimmy Boone, first child with husband, Jim Walker.

SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 16 CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD QUARTERLY MEETING

Presiding: Bree Buchanan,
Steering Committee Chair

Recording: Gordon Bennett

November Election:

Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir, a resident of the neighborhood, reported on the new voting machines that were to be used in Precinct 131 (Asbury United Methodist Church) as a pilot project for the November 5 election.

Democratic Party get-out-the-vote rallies were scheduled at Cherrywood Green and Patterson Park for Sunday, Oct. 20.

Recognitions:

Bree Buchanan, outgoing steering committee chair, presented plaques to Isabelle Headrick and Katharine Beisner for contributions to Patterson Park and Cherrywood Green respectively, to Bethany Andr e for her design and layout work on the Flea, and to Gordon Bennett as a "Cherrywood Hero" for many contributions, including the Web site and NeighborNet.

Safe Routes to School:

A motion was approved that the neighborhood association should contribute a letter supporting Maplewood PTA's grant application. If successful, it will yield more than \$100,000 for sidewalks and crossings around the school. Isabelle Headrick expressed concerns that people across whose property a sidewalk would run might not be aware of such plans, and might not have an opportunity to negotiate landscaping issues, tree removal, etc.

Duplex Alleys:

A motion was approved for the neighborhood association to send a letter to residents and property-owners bordering

the alleys between Ashwood and Kirkwood, and between Maplewood and Cherrywood, advising the desirability of keeping these easements clear, well maintained, and accessible. Jeanne Claire van Ryzin observed that many duplexes host 3 or 4 cars, too many for the street to accommodate. Mark Lind said we all have an interest in solving this problem since clutter on nearby streets makes them more dangerous for pedestrians. Girard Kinney, chair of the neighborhood association Planning & Zoning Committee, said the committee should help members find a good, agreeable solution.

Friends of Patterson Park:

Isabelle Headrick reported that a grant from Austin Parks Foundation will pay for a trail and money from the Upper Boggy Creek planning effort will help pay for other improvements.

Cherrywood Green:

Katharine Beisner reported that funds from the Upper Boggy Creek planning effort will help pay for a trail, picnic table and mutt mitts with disposal. Katharine said she is threading her way through City of Austin requirements to get a water fountain and a permit to become a proper "park."

Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Plan:

Stephen Kreger said the next steps are (a) come up with an amendment process to keep the Plan current with neighborhood changes; (b) decide how the planning team and constituent neighborhood associations should relate; and (c) lobby for action items that are not likely to happen automatically. Of special interest is that 38½ Street, which the plan calls for downgrading to a neighborhood street, be eligible for traffic calming. The plan has been approved by the City Council.

Traffic Issues:

Stefan Schuster reported that the next encounter with the Texas Department of Transportation over the planned Interstate 35 upgrade design will be a hearing next spring by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Be-

tween now and then, lobbying was to continue.

Security:

Lex Dale Owens reported that the property at 3709 Vineland has been boarded up by the City and there are still a few steps left to make sure activities there are legal. Follow-up will be critical, he said.

Lex stressed the importance of writing down observations of potential police interest, such as descriptions, make and color of car, even parts of license numbers, etc. He said a written record yields better details and higher credibility.

Holiday Arts Festival:

Rebecca Kohout said plans were proceeding for the festival, November 23 at Asbury United Methodist Church. She said volunteers were still needed for food booths and other activities.

Delwood Substation:

Bree Buchanan said that Austin Energy promised to have it completely enclosed and landscaped by the end of 2002. Mark Lind has been working with the city utility on design issues.

Planning and Zoning:

Girard Kinney said that an information session will be organized, possibly before year-end, to explain what's allowed under the Upper Boggy Creek Plan and other City Land Development Code changes.

He suggested that since Friends of Patterson Park and Cherrywood Green projects are ably organized, it may be wise to merge the neighborhood association's planning and zoning and parks committees. Kinney said corridors connecting major green spaces remain a design goal.

Steering Committee Election:

A motion by Michael McClendon, chair of the Nominating Committee, was approved and these persons were elected to the neighborhood association Steering Committee: Meg Brooks, Bree Buchanan, Peter Ketter, Girard Kinney, Lex Dale Owens, Stefan Schuster, and Andy Simmons.