



The Flea

FRIENDS OF PATTERSON PARK

By Isabelle Headrick

More than a year ago, Friends of Patterson Park received the news that, in cooperation with PARD, we had been awarded a \$99,250 grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife for construction of a trail around the park. As you may have noticed, construction started this spring. However the trail began to show signs of erosion almost immediately, and portions of the trail were washed away in the heavy rains in March. On April 10, FoPP met with our contact from Parks and Recreation, Tony Arnold, who described measures PARD is taking to divert water flow over concrete low-water crossings and prevent the damage we saw from recurring.

In other news, we are pleased to announce that we will soon begin the process of developing a strategic plan for Patterson Park that will address these broad areas:

- Preservation of trees and erosion control on the west side of the park
- Connectivity (to Mueller, Delwood 2, and proposed hike-and bike trails)
- Capital improvement projects that

may require bond funding (e.g. pool expansion, a second pavilion, a skate park)

- Small projects (e.g. benches, gardens, new picnic tables)
- Community outreach and volunteer service, including trail maintenance
- Crime and graffiti prevention
- General park maintenance
- Community events (e.g. movie nights)

Our first step will be to generate a strategic plan from within FoPP and the community at our meeting on May 8. At the next meeting we will bring other players to the table, such as PARD, the Austin Parks Foundation, and possibly Public Works and Capital Metro. We hope the end product will be a living document that can guide community organizing around the park for the next five to 10 years and be incorporated into the Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Plan.

Keep in mind the great activities for school-age kids at the park this summer. Pharr Tennis Center offers a low-cost, part-time tennis camp and the Patterson Piranhas will continue to compete as our homegrown swim team.

As always, I wish to acknowledge the valuable partnership FoPP has enjoyed with Genesis Presbyterian Church. Genesis has been consistently generous in sharing its space for meetings, and its members lend great support to our efforts. If you are a member of Genesis, thank you. If you are not, please take the time to let the good people over there know how much we appreciate them.

The next Friends of Patterson Park meetings are Monday, May 8 and Monday, June 12 at 7:30 at Genesis Presbyterian Church. For more information on FoPP, contact Isabelle at 499-0621 or

isanews@texas.net. 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. Mail it to APF at 701 Brazos Street, Suite 170, Austin, Texas 78701. ■

Cherrywood Neighborhood quarterly meeting:

**Wednesday, May 17
6:30 - 8:00 pm
Maplewood School library**

**Open to ALL residents
of Cherrywood.
We need your input!**

Agenda:

- Call to order
- Minutes
- Budget
- Security update, Austin Police Department
- Announcements and requests
- Bond election
- McMansion, Redeemer church, Cap Metro, Mueller
- 38 ½ Street, graffiti cleaning
- Aggressive pets, Steering Committee considering CNA policy
- Steering Committee recruitment
- Neighborhood association and/or Steering Committee reorganization
- Round table discussion
- Meeting adjourned

Jack Newman,
Steering Committee chair,
presiding



CHERRYWOOD CALENDAR

MAY

- 8 7:30 p.m.** — Friends of Patterson Park, Genesis Presbyterian Church. (See Page 1)
- 10 6:30 p.m.** — CNA Steering Committee meeting, Taqueria Los Altos. Open to Cherrywood residents to share ideas/opinions.
- 16 6:30 p.m.** — Upper Boggy Creek Planning Team, Asbury United Methodist Church (See Page 4)
- 17 6:30-8:00 p.m.** — Cherrywood quarterly neighborhood meeting, Maplewood School library. (See Agenda Page 1)
- 24 7:00-9:00 p.m.** — Cherrywood Book Club. "The Feminine Mystique" by Betty Friedan and Anna Quindlen. For info, katenate@grandecom.net or 477-2684.

JUNE

- 12 7:30 p.m.** — Friends of Patterson Park, Genesis Presbyterian Church. (See Page 1)
- 14 6:30 p.m.** — CNA Steering Committee meeting, Taqueria Los Altos. Open to Cherrywood residents to share ideas/opinions.
- 28 7:00-9:00 p.m.** — Cherrywood Book Club. "The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner. For info, katenate@grandecom.net or 477-2684.

JULY

- 12 6:30 p.m.** — CNA Steering Committee meeting, Taqueria Los Altos. Open to Cherrywood residents to share ideas/opinions.

Wired: Stay Informed Electronically

By Gordon Bennett

To find our neighborhood Web site, open Cherrywood.org (nothing else needed). There's a convenient menu of useful topics. Select NeighborNet from the menu to subscribe to our listserv, which now includes 580 members, 40% of Cherrywood households. If you have a question, ask gordonb@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Subscribers post messages, post photos, and search the archive (5 years of content is saved). For reading you have three options: 1. read messages as they are posted (average of 12 per day) 2. read a daily digest (1 message posted after midnight) 3. read at the Web site (no e-mail).

If you were subscribed this past quarter, you learned of

- New east side pizza delivery service
- Missing pets (all were found)
- Willowbrook Reach concert/party
- New building regulations affecting remodels
- Decorative traffic islands on East 38½ Street
- Where to get your PC or Mac repaired

You can share your opinion... ■

Cherrywood Neighborhood Association

<http://www.cherrywood.org>
P.O. Box 4010, Austin, TX 78765-4010

Steering Committee

Chair	_____	Jack Newman ('07)*	476-6616
Vice-Chair	_____	Megan Woodburn ('07)	538-1329
Secretary	_____	Jennifer Elsner ('06)	692-7604
Treasurer	_____	Rebecca Kohout ('07)	415-9876
Members	_____	David Greene ('07)	828-7450
		Chris Kadas ('06)	478-7966
		Lex Dale Owens ('06)	477-6555
		Randall Terrell ('06)	451-0346
		Shani Snoddy ('07)	391-0254
		Heather Telo' ('07)	476-5764

*year term expires

Communications

NeighborNet & Web site: _____ Gordon Bennett 477-7195

The Flea:

- **Editor** _____ Sue Taylor 476-1461
- **Associate Editor** _____ Dolly Ensey 494-9905
- **Design & Layout** _____ Bethany Andrée 473-2841
- **Advertising** _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876
- _____ Dave Westenbarger 494-9905
- **Distribution** _____ David Greene 828-7450

Committees

Budget: _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876

Cherrywood Art Fair: _____ cherrywoodartfair@yahoo.com

Priscilla Boston 478-1867

Kathleen McTee 472-1128 (2002-2004)

Communications: _____ Jennifer Elsner 692-7604

Nominations: _____ Jennifer Elsner 692-7604

Parks: _____ Girard Kinney 478-5042

Planning & Zoning: _____ Girard Kinney 478-5042

Security: _____ Lex Dale Owens 477-6555

Transportation: _____ Stefan Schuster 322-0059

Welcome Wagon: _____ Rebecca Kohout 415-9876

Representatives

Austin Film Society: _____ Dolly Ensey 494-9905

Blue Ribbon Yard: _____ Leslie Vieau 495-9569

Book Club: _____ Jeanne Arbuckle 477-2684

Cherrywood Choices: _____ Dolly Ensey 494-9905

Maplewood School: _____ Kelli Kirk kkirk@grandecom.net

Mueller Redevelopment: _____ Jim Walker 499-0526

T-Shirts: _____ Frances Delaune 477-1986

Tree Planting: _____ Mike Damal 478-9622

Upper Boggy Creek Planning: Stephen Kreger 477-4216

More details and updates at Cherrywood.org,
click on committees.

FROM THE CHAIR

By Jack Newman

A lot has happened around here lately. Some of it you might be delighted with, some you may find hard to understand, and more is coming. Are you one who thinks that the traffic calming speed humps are really welcome? If so, great. It might surprise you, however, to learn that other neighbors find them atrocious road hazards, and find the circle "gardens" on 38 1/2 Street idiotic. Find 30 mph speed limits in our streets too fast? Too slow? Soon it will be 25 mph. We are the first neighborhood in Austin to take advantage of a law permitting such a change.

Do you cheer the ability of Neighbor-

Net to allow almost real-time, as-it happens, reports on crime along with descriptions of suspicious persons in the hood? Many of us do, but quite a few are wary of the potential for stereotyping along demographic lines. (If you aren't yet hooked up, there are more than 580 folks who know a lot more about your neighborhood than you do.) How about mass transit? It's coming to our neighborhood soon, and decisions are being made about station locations and routes. Do you have opinions on this, pro or con?

Hate the street and creek trash and the graffiti that seem to be increasing here? How about our support for music and art events? Is it enough, too much or just right? Is there anything that makes you want to speak up and be heard, to influence the outcome, im-

prove the results? Do you know more than others on a subject or cause and want to share your insight with those who can help you change influential minds and get them on your side? Would you like to be connected to the city power structure through proven channels? Want a real say in matters important to you?

Pick up the phone or send an e-mail to me, Jack Newman, or any other person listed under Steering Committee in this issue. Tell us what interests you, and we will put you in touch with others who care about that very same thing. You can make a difference as a member of the leadership of this neighborhood association. Nominate yourself, and you will be contacted by the people whose interest it is to find other people who care. ■

GET INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP

By Jennifer Elsner

The Cherrywood Neighborhood Association is not a spectator sport.

In a democracy where every voice counts and every vote counts, doing nothing is a political act. It is a vote for the status quo. Staying out of the process does not mean laws will not get passed. It just means they will get passed without reflecting your priorities and wishes. The same holds true for the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association, and fortunately, when more of us get involved, wonderful things can happen.

It's indeed an interesting time to be a part of the CNA Steering Committee. The degree of passion, involvement and action is at a heightened level, and this can make for a sometimes-heated, sometimes-satisfying meeting. Sometimes both.

This serves an early shout-out to all of you who care to step up to the plate. In the next few months, the Nominating Committee will be working hard to find a new slate of candidates for October's

election of Steering Committee members to serve two-year terms. But there is a need now for inspired individuals to help "steer" the neighborhood's business. So if your interest has ever been piqued (Don't tell me Jack's article didn't get you fired up), contact any of the Nominating Committee members: Pricilla Boston, Jennifer Elsner, Lex Dale Owens or Jim Walker, for more information about CNA Steering Committee.

Getting involved won't always yield results, but not getting involved never does. Besides, there is much satisfaction in just trying to make Cherrywood a better place. Consider joining the neighborhood association in a more formal role. Come and learn more about your neighborhood Steering Committee.

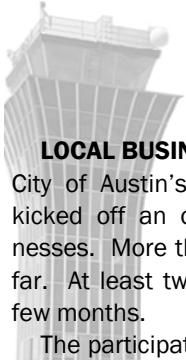
Steering committee changes

In March, the CNA Steering Committee accepted the ceremonial resignations of Maxwell McDaniel and Charlie Roadman. Also in March, Pauline Porter's self-nomination was unanimously accepted by the Steering Committee. Our newest SC member will be formally voted on at the May 17 quarterly meeting.



KOOP

KOOP Radio, Austin's community radio station, has a new home at 3823 Airport Blvd., just across Airport Boulevard from Cherrywood. Amy Wright, station manager, told Flea Associate Editor Dolly Ensey that the station has finalized a lease and expects to move in June after build-out is complete. The station's was knocked off the air after fires in January and February in a downtown building where it had studios. It has been back on the air since late February with help from other stations. ■



MUELLER UPDATE

By Jed Buie

LOCAL BUSINESS OUTREACH Catellus, working with the City of Austin's Small Business Development Program, has kicked off an outreach effort aimed at locally owned businesses. More than 60 people have attended two meetings so far. At least two more meetings will be held during the next few months.

The participation of these businesses at Mueller is critical to the overall success of the redevelopment.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE Groundbreaking for the Ronald McDonald House at Mueller is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9. The 28,242-square-foot facility will be adjacent to the Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. It is expected to open in early 2007 with 15 rooms for families and the capability to expand to 30 rooms. A \$9.5-million capital campaign kicked off this year.

PUBLIC ART PROJECT Four finalists have been short-listed to develop detailed proposals to create a public artwork for the Mueller redevelopment. The finalists are: The Art Guys (Houston), Dixie Friend Gay and Rey de la Reza (Houston), Mags Harries/Lajos Heder (Cambridge, MA) and Mel Ziegler (Austin). Thirty-seven artists expressed an interest in the project.

"We are thrilled with the response to the project and the quality of applicants," said Greg Weaver, senior vice president of Catellus Development Group, master developer for Mueller.

"This artwork is intended to serve as a signature landmark of the overall redevelopment."

Nominations for artists or teams were sought from local, state and national arts organizations and individuals. They were invited to submit qualifications to design, plan, permit, fabricate and install a large-scale work of art within a project budget of approximately \$500,000, a corporate donation by Catellus. Eligible artists must have completed a major public artwork.

The artwork is planned along the western border of the northwest quadrant of the Mueller redevelopment. The work will serve as a gateway to Mueller and will provide interest along the green space that connects the park system. Proposals by all four artists/artist teams will be on display for public input in early July.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE All construction at Mueller is on schedule. Construction will begin on the Lake Park as well as Mueller Central, the welcome and marketing center for the redevelopment. And, construction on the Northwest Greenway is expected to begin in July. Check www.muelleraustin.com for updates.

PROJECT CONTACTS For more information, please visit www.muelleraustin.com or contact Greg Weaver, Catellus senior vice president, 473-0400, or greg_weaver@catellus.com. Pam Hefner, City of Austin principal planner 974-3511, pam.hefner@ci.austin.tx.us. ■

Jed Buie is with TateAustin, public relations firm for Catellus, master developer of the former Mueller Airport land.

UBCPT

By Stephen Kreger

Officers were elected March 21: Chair, Jay Velgos; vice-chair, Ora Houston; secretary Stephen Kreger.

There was a discussion regarding how to get the actions items in the Upper Boggy Creed Plan completed. It was decided that each neighborhood association would e-mail a one-page letter with its top three or four action items to Jay. He will write a cover letter from the UBCPT supporting the neighborhoods' wishes and send it and the neighborhood letters to City Manager Toby Futrell and copy the City Council members.

Bo McCarver discussed a project that the Blackland Community Development Corporation is doing on 22nd Street behind the former Mueller's Barbecue restaurant. The BCDC will request a zoning change to CS/MU. The BCDC, which

owns the land, wants to combine four lots into one lot with four structures that will support seven families. Leslie Lawson asked that the BCDC request the most restrictive zoning to accomplish the project and Bo agreed.

Leslie expressed her neighborhood's concern about the remodeling being done at 4206 Bradwood as the construction indicates a possible commercial use. If the owner requests a zoning change, she will ask for the UBCP team's support in contesting the zoning request. She will e-mail the UBCP team copies of the letters she sends.

Bo asked for a "sense of the meeting" about the McMansion ordinance. Girard Kinney said that the ordinance might target specific areas as opposed to being citywide. It was noted that developers are already planning to go to the Legislature if the final ordinance is too restrictive. It was agreed to monitor the ordinance and send a letter in support

or not, depending on the final version.

An e-mail had been sent to the team outlining some pros and cons of the vertical mixed-use ordinance. It was decided that each neighborhood would e-mail Jay its stand on the ordinance. There was some discussion regarding how a neighborhood should respond to the ordinance.

Bo said that no update was available regarding the Redeemer Presbyterian Church zoning change, as there has not been any action on the project by the church. Gilberto Rivera of the Rosewood Neighborhood Planning Team said that there has been discussion of a light rail station on both ends of the property. It is thought that high-density development would be built around the station. It is unclear if this would affect the plans of the church.

The next meeting will be at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 16 at Asbury United Methodist Church. ■

51ST STREET WATER TOWER

By Priscilla Boston

Since our last Flea article on this topic (October 2005) the Project Advisory Committee on which Girard Kinney and I represent Cherrywood has completed its charge. The other neighborhoods and stakeholders include Delwood II, J.J. Seabrook, Pecan Springs/Springdale Hills, Windsor Park, the Austin Film Society and Catellus. The input process that we insisted upon forced the water utility, over its objections, to hire an architect for the first time, we think, in its history, resulting in the creation of an imaginative and monumental design.

The 51st Street Water Tower Project Advisory Committee (PAC) met four times: Oct. 3, Nov. 14, Jan. 9, and Jan. 30. At the Oct. 3 meeting, the PAC was introduced to members of Cotera and Reed, the architecture firm selected by the city to develop three possible designs. The PAC emphasized our belief that the 170-foot high, 2 million-gallon water tower will be a landmark and asked that Cotera and Reed bring to any ideas that they considered that may be outside of the project budget assigned by Austin Water Utility staff. Some amount of tension accompanied this project from its inception, as water utility staff operated under the assumption that the cost must be borne by their budget and that an expensive design would mean rate hikes.

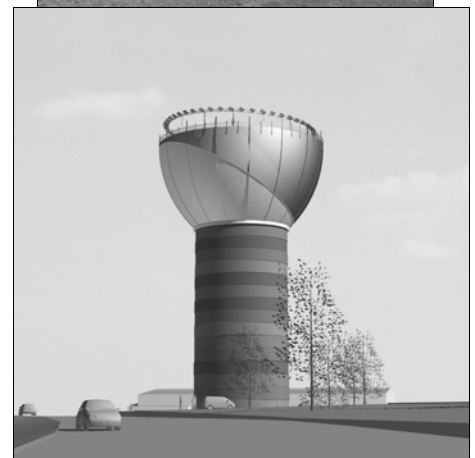
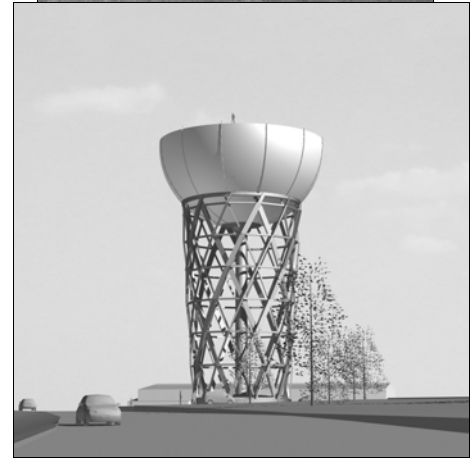
At the Jan. 9 meeting, Cotera and Reed presented three design alternatives, ranging in roughly estimated costs between \$2.8 million and \$5 million. The PAC had two weeks to take the designs back to the neighborhoods, and there was unanimous agreement that we prefer the design with the steel lattice column. The design elegantly expresses the function of a water tower while realizing its landmark status. Unfortunately, the preferred design will likely have the highest price tag. In the funding of the design, the PAC advocated that the City hold ratepayers harmless, not defer other utility projects and find alternative funding to ensure

the construction of the recommended design. There was hopeful discussion that a civic-minded investor could be found for a project as potentially noteworthy as our beloved moonlight towers have been.

Rick Krivoniak, chair of the PAC presented the PAC's recommendations to the water utility commission on March 1 to intrigued and favorable response. Chris Lippe, director of the Austin Water Utility, presented all four designs (the original off-the-shelf version and the three designs developed by Cotera and Reed) to the City Council on April 6 and recommended that engineering work proceed on the less expensive of Cotera and Reed's design alternatives. Jim Walker, Chair of the Mueller Neighborhoods Coalition, pushed for better cost estimates, and Council Member Brewster McCracken chastised the water utility for failing to secure that information. Additional monies were added to the water utility's contract with an engineering firm to get solid cost estimates on the two designs shown here, one recommended by the water utility and the other recommended by the neighborhoods, to include real estate appraisals that take into account the impact on surrounding property values. The PAC was disappointed that the animated presentation of the three design options developed by Cotera and Reed was not also shared with the Council as it succeeds in giving a real sense of the scale and features of each design alternative.

Whether the city will be able to muster the resources to support the neighborhoods' recommended design solution remains to be seen. Personally, we appreciated the opportunity to be part of a process that resulted in such an inspired design. ■

Pictured are two designs for the 51st Street Water Tower. The top images are of the neighborhoods recommended design and the bottom images are of the water utility's recommended design. *Images provided by Cotera and Reed.*



MAPLEWOOD NOTES



**Your Neighborhood School
3808 Maplewood Ave., 414-4402**

By Kelli Kirk

Did you know that your community school is amazing? As a Maplewood parent, faculty member, and Cherrywood neighborhood resident, my interaction and experiences with the school are multi-faceted.

What I discover again and again is that the people are what make this place so great. The foundation of the Maplewood community is in its families and teachers. Maplewood looks and feels like Austin and Cherrywood. As parents, it's normal to feel a sense of anxiety about finding an appropriate school setting or educational experience for our children.

We anticipate a "perfect fit" being somewhere out there for our child and our family. A place where he or she will be intellectually stimulated while experiencing the great social lessons of tolerance and compassion in a setting that mirrors real life. Choices for Austin parents include private school, charter school, home schooling, and transfer options within Austin In-

dependent School District beyond your neighborhood school. With all this in mind, we are incredibly fortunate to have Maplewood as our neighborhood school.

Maplewood's worth has nothing to do with the 60-year-old building or the property value or its TAKS scores. It is all about teachers, relationships, and a sense of community that draws families in and keeps them. The school's 30 percent transfer IN rate (7th highest in AISD) is a testament to this. Teachers place high value on relationships with students and their families. This relationship-based philosophy gives a genuine feeling of a village of people raising children with common values in mind.

Think about what you love about Cherrywood as a neighborhood, and why you choose to live here. Now, condense that into a microcosm of about 400 people—350 kids, 50 adults (220 Maplewood families). Add in some challenges and hard lessons learned, along with project-based, teacher-controlled curriculum by some of Austin's best, and you have Maplewood—your neighborhood school. If you and your family are interested in learning more, plan to attend Kindergarten Round Up at 9 a.m., Tuesday, May 2 in the Maplewood library. Call 414-4402 for more information. ■

Kelli Kirk is Maplewood counselor. You can reach her at 414-1086.

CHERRYWOOD GREEN AND CONCORDIA TRIANGLE

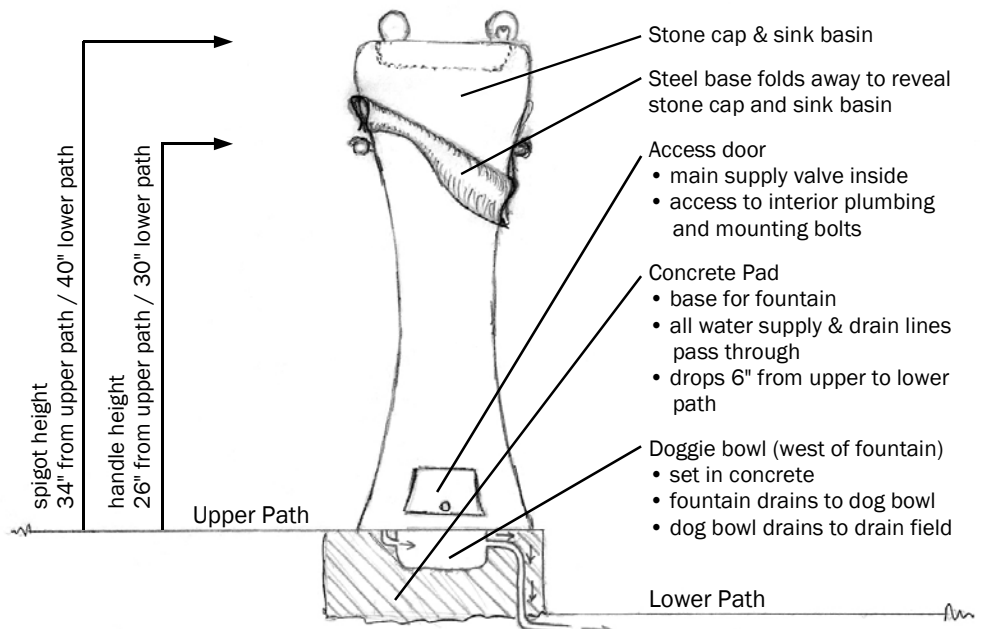
By Mike Damal

Neighborhood volunteers have continued to improve the quality of both Cherrywood Green and Concordia Triangle. This past winter has been one of the driest on record, and volunteers have been watering the trees planted on Concordia Triangle. Those trees are well suited for Austin, however to ensure their survival, they need to be watered through the summer. Special thanks to the neighbors who allow us to use their water spigots and to the volunteers who have been watering the trees. If you are interested in helping the watering brigade, or are a neighbor adjacent to the park and wish to volunteer your spigot for the watering, please contact me.

A design has been chosen for the fountain on Cherrywood Green. This

design was circulated for comments at the February quarterly meeting of the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association and posted on the NeighborNet. The design can be viewed at Cherrywood.org. Neighborhood artists/craftsmen Erik Haglund and Ken Casey are build-

ing the fountain, which promises to be a great creative addition to the Green. This has been an ambitious project, and has taken longer than anticipated; however, we feel it will be worth the wait. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact me. ■



TLC CONTINUES FOR 38½ STREET

By Pauline Porter

Four months ago, East 38½ Street was one of the dirtiest streets in Austin. In a community like ours, with residents who care about their environment, it is hard to imagine that we ignored this gateway to our community for so long. A growing effort to nourish this area has quickly gathered plenty of momentum. Initially, the task of cleaning up was so overwhelming that residents and businesses chipped in to pay one of our community's residents to maintain the first few blocks of 38½ east of Interstate 35. But since mid-February, clean up has been done weekly by volunteers, and concerned residents have taken the time to pick up litter as they take their walks.

Partnerships are also being developed with businesses. Austin Energy has done a terrific job with its property. The lawn has been reseeded, new plants

installed and mulched, plus Austin Energy has joined our efforts by cleaning its property weekly. Monarch Mart and Royal Touch Cleaners have locked their dumpsters to help the problems caused by overflowing trash. Chevron has asked for assistance from APD to stop the loitering and drinking on its property. Unfortunately, the no-open-container ordinance that went into effect for downtown has pushed the beer-drinking onto our doorstep. A resident on Robinson has had to endure drunks sleeping in her front yard and under her house. Her crawl space has even been used as a toilet. We are a live-and-let-live neighborhood, but I think we are at the point of agreement that something has to be done.

Planning has begun to landscape the city easement near the bus stop at Robinson and 38½ Street. We are trying to get this project completed before summer since it is a prime shady spot for loitering. If we cannot get the financial support in time, it will be done in the fall. Ideally, we would also like to brighten the bus stop itself with art of some kind. Your art ideas are welcome.

Did you know that every time it rains, runoff floods Boggy Creek, especially at 38½ and Lafayette, with litter and plastic bags? Bond elections are coming up and money has been allotted to deal with drainage and erosion problems on Boggy Creek. Filtering systems exist to deal with the pollution caused by storm drains designed in the '60s and '70s. The University of Florida tested systems offered by CDS Technologies and found them superior and effective in removing small sediment and waste from storm drainage. The City Council needs to know we are concerned and seek a viable solution. The waste created by the two shopping centers ends up in our back yards and creek. Please stay tuned and ready to lend your support to make sure Boggy Creek has a high priority rating for improvements.

Special thanks – February, Tadd Balfour and Monarch Mart contributed funds for cleaning 38½ Street. Neighbors' and businesses' willingness to give adds so much to our community. To find out how you can help, call Pauline Porter at 322-0717. ■

25 MPH COMING

By Gordon Bennett

City Council has approved a measure that will reduce speed limits in Cherrywood to 25 mph on most streets. We took advantage of a new state law to request the change.

The Texas Legislature in 2005 approved HB 87 providing for any urban street "... that is not an officially designated or marked highway or road of the state highway system, is 35 feet or less in width, and along which vehicular parking is not prohibited on one or both sides of the highway, may declare a lower speed limit of not less than 25 miles per hour, if the governing body determines that the prima facie speed limit on the highway is unreasonable or unsafe."

The CNA Steering Committee quickly requested the City of Austin to lower our speed limits as allowed. We were the first neighborhood to ask. Before responding, the city's Traffic Division had to decide on a procedure for deciding which requests to approve. But now that's done, and the new ordinance includes every residential street in our neighborhood except Cherrywood Road south of 38½ Street and 38½ Street.



Already other neighborhoods are lining up. Implementation will depend on how quickly new "Speed Limit 25 MPH" signs can be installed. Presently posted is 30 mph.

This continues a long CNA campaign that has included:

- Bike lanes for Manor Road
- Neighborhood Watch signs
- Downgrading 38½ from arterial to collector
- Design guidelines (street safety)
- Wilshire @ Airport intersection
- Selected STOP sign reversal
- Speed cushions
- Traffic islands (plus landscaping)
- Slower turn from 38½ onto Clarkson
- And now 25 mph speed limits

Next (hopefully) will be revision of the Land Development Code to require more off-street parking for multi-unit residences. And one day (hopefully) we will get more sidewalks.

No one measure alone can make our urban neighborhood completely safe for kids, pets, pedestrians and bicyclists. But cumulatively they are having a huge impact. This campaign is succeeding. ■

MOSAIC JAM

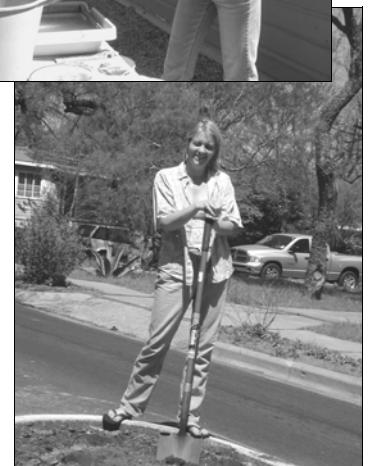
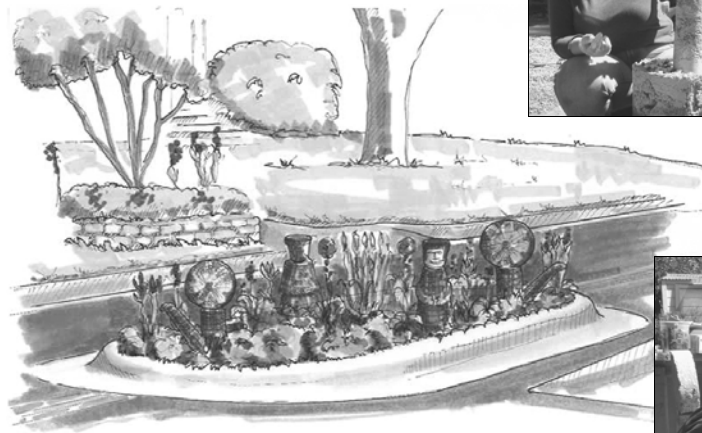
By Pascal Simon

How excited we were to see medians and speed bumps installed on East 38½ Street in February. Anyone living on our street will tell you that the reduction in speed due to these devices is quite noticeable. Praise to all involved in the traffic calming effort.

Upon joining NeighborNet, I read an invitation for people interested in helping populate the medians with plants. Fresh with enthusiasm for the new traffic calming devices, I volunteered. Suggestions of putting public art in these spaces flipped on the proverbial "light" in my head. In the past, I've created both traditional and unusual mosaic artwork, even tiled acoustic guitars. Because mosaic is composed of glass or tile bonded by concrete adhesives, it is very hardy, and superb for outdoor art installations.

What about larger-than-life mosaic flowers, I thought? No watering necessary – durable, bright and lively – just the thing to promote the creative funky vibe that drew me to east Austin, where I've made my home for almost 15 years since I arrived from Germany. So, I poured one concrete prototype flower, tiled it and showed photos to fellow volunteers during our first meeting. We decided to combine mosaic flowers with real greenery, "tended" by gnomes and nearby neighbors. A beautiful rendering of our idea, drawn by Heather Telo', was presented to City of Austin's Gordon Derr by Pauline Porter, who smoothed the way for our artwork installation.

A call for materials was generously answered by Travis Tile and neighbors, who donated tiles, glass, adhesive, gloves and more. Over two Saturdays in March and April, neighbors joined to populate these two islands. Four flowers bloomed and four gnomes came to life. Artists included Priscilla Boston, Aaron and Cara Choate, Denise de la Garza and son, Alex, Rebecca Kohout, Pauline and Robert Porter, Kristee Humphrey, Laurie Marder, Heather Telo', my husband, Thomas Blom and two of our children, Till and Tristan Simon.



Digging and planting were performed by Erika Albright, Cara and Aaron. Not only did Sallie and David Juvenal spread their generous donation of cypress mulch for both medians, they also donated plants, along with Jack Darby of the Cherrywood Green plant swap and a Govalle resident who frequently drives East 38½ Street. Special thanks to Billy Pringle, John Byers, Aaron and Cara for facilitating the installation of the heavy artwork. A tip of the watering can to neighbors Ty Van Aken, the John Byers family, Sallie and Cara for their continuing care and education about the unique micro-climate of these little villages.

My family and I met great neighborhood folks while working together to create great art. What fun it is to drive down our street and see art the community created in our driveway. ■

Pascal lives in the lime green house with the periwinkle trim behind the bright orange fence. Her artwork will be on display during East Austin's Studio Tour fall 2006.

Pictured from left: Pascal Simon; Cara Chaote; Laurie Marder and Priscilla Boston; Aaron Chaote; Pauline Porter; and Erika Albright. Photos: Dolly Ensey, Laurie Marder Drawing: Helo Telo'

PUTTING OUR ROOF TO WORK



By David Greene and Deb Palmer

Sure, the occasional hailstorm will give your roof a workout, but apart from that, sun-drenched roofs in Austin have had it easy until recently. That all changed in late 2003 when Austin Energy announced its goal of having 15 megawatts of solar electric generating capacity installed by 2007, and 100 MW by 2020. Currently AE owns more than 2,900 MW of generating capacity from all sources. Strategy to meet these goals includes an aggressive subsidy to encourage homeowners to install grid-connected photovoltaic (PV) systems on rooftops. Grid-connected systems provide power for the house first, and then send any excess power into the utility grid. A single residential rooftop system might be 1 to 3 kilowatts. Austin Energy is essentially building a whole renewable power plant one roof at a time. At 3 kW per roof, that's 5,000 roofs to reach 15 mw. Is your roof ready to go to work?

Initially Austin Energy's subsidy was \$5/watt for residential installations. That subsidy has been notched down – first to \$4.50, now \$4. The program has been very popular among homeowners, but it hasn't received any commensurate increases in funding. Even at \$4/watt, the subsidy – combined with a 2006 federal tax credit – can cover 75 per cent of the system cost. Given a typical system cost of \$20,000, you're looking at \$5,000 out-of-pocket and, at current electric rates, perhaps 15 years to recover the discounted expense. So it's not a strong economic investment, but then it's not all about economics.

We learned about the program soon after moving to Austin last year, and as

we proceeded to look for a house to buy, finding a good 'solar roof' was one of our priorities – along with moving into Cherrywood! In June we applied for Austin Energy's program online. (www.austinenergy.com). Although a backlog of applicants existed at the time, eventually an inspector visited us to confirm our roof had sufficient solar exposure and that our electrical service was adequate to support the system.

An ideal roof faces south-southwest (200°) with a 30° pitch, and has 120 square feet with at least 6 hours per day of full sun year-round for each kilowatt of PV panels to be installed. Pole-mounted systems are also an option if you can't – or prefer not to – use your roof. Also, you'll need 200 amp electric service to your house.

With AE approval in hand, we solicited bids from AE's approved solar installation contractors. You'll need to decide on the system size, location, whether to use adjustable PV panels (to better orient to the sun through the year), and whether to use a battery backup to actually store energy. We chose a 3 kW system mounted flush to the roof with no battery backup. After a quick two-day installation and final inspection a few weeks later, we were online. Since mid-January, our hard-working roof has generated 750 kWh, or about half our electricity use since we, um, installed a hot tub. Questions? Email dmgreene@igc.org. ■

David lives and soaks relatively guilt-free with his wife Deb Palmer, their daughter, and two non-soaking cats.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

By Gordon Bennett

Asbury United Methodist Church and Cherrywood have hosted a few experimental potluck suppers. We've been feeling our way. How often? What time? How to entertain kids? Topic? Invite a knowledgeable guest?

So far, it seems topics work better than mere socializing. We already have plenty of friends, it would seem. But interest in interacting on issues of local concern runs high. If the issue were Central American gangs moving into Austin, we could invite an officer from the APD Gang Suppression Unit. If it were a Cherrywood Internet network, we could invite UT Internet specialist Gary Chapman. Etc.

Dialogues are golden, but are hard to get going. Potlucks offer real promise, but format would seem to matter. Since potlucks can combine good food, socializing, and real discussion, we might be approaching a workable formula. When it finally gels, we will have created a new institution for collectively dissecting the likes of local crime, homelessness, education, mass transit, property values (and affordability), maybe even a philosophical hobbyhorse or two. Genuine communities have values in addition to committees. We have the brainpower.

By the next potluck the new corner sign should in place. Look for it. It's going to be graceful (thank you, Erik Haglund, blacksmith). It's going to be visibly positioned, and softly lit in the evening (thank you, Girard Kinney, architect). Asbury is hosting it and paying for more for more than half (thank you, Rev. George Holcombe, who first came up with the idea). The Asbury corner at Cherrywood Road and 38 ½ Street will become a message center. More neighbors will be reminded. Everyone interested in our Pot Luck topic *du jour* will know about it. Both church and neighborhood will have taken a big step.

BLUE RIBBON YARD

By Leslie Vieau

Our late spring Blue Ribbon Yard is the home of Paula Ruiz, 1410 Kirkwood. Paula's sister wrote a lovely description:

"I would like to bring some attention to 1410 Kirkwood. The owner (Paula Ruiz) is fairly new to the neighborhood (less than two years). She has made some wonderful improvements to the landscaping. Some of the additions are some pretty cool blooming trees called bottle brush trees, yellow yucca plants, white crepe myrtles, a variety of succulents and pink jasmine, which has a lovely scent. In the back yard she has planted a pink azalea, which appears to be thriving in its new location. The Burma is outlined with flat white rock, which is perfect to sit on and chat on a cool summer night."

Go by and see Paula's yard if you haven't. Congratulations to Paula, and thanks for contributing to the neighborhood. Paula will receive a \$25 gift certificate from Howard's Nursery. ■



OFFERING FRIENDSHIP TO CHILDREN

By Melanie Chasteen

When Cherrywood resident Steven Stanislav met Frankie, a 6th grader, in June 2005, they immediately hit it off. "Frankie is very creative, curious and inquisitive. He likes sports and video games. He is the typical 12-year-old boy," says Steven.

Steven is one of several Cherrywood residents who volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas. The agency, with offices off Airport Boulevard, is one of 460 in the United States that provides adult mentors or "Bigs" to children or "Littles." Bigs typically meet with their Littles a few times a month to do mutually enjoyable activities.

Outings range from playing catch, to renting a movie and popping popcorn to seeing a UT basketball game. Steven and Frankie enjoy walking dogs at Patterson Park and playing video games. "I like playing games the most, but we went rock climbing and that was fun too," Frankie says. "Oh, and the time we went to Dave and Busters was fun." Frankie is still working on a trip to Fiesta Texas; he might just get that opportunity on a special occasion such as his birthday.

The one-to-one relationships between the volunteer and the child are based on friendship. Bigs do not need to do anything out of the ordinary or spend a lot of money. It's about offering your friendship to a child. You can just incorporate the child into your every-day activities such as gardening, watching movies or walking dogs.

The agency has staff whose main function is to pair you with a child with mutual interests while providing support to the child, volunteer and family for the life of the match. Volunteers are asked to commit to one year in the program, but often have so much fun that the matches last several years.

Steven had participated in similar programs in other cities and found it rewarding. "When I was a kid, I was involved in the Boy Scouts which helped guide me through some childhood growing pains," he says. "It's very important for kids to have positive role models and participating in Big Brothers Big Sisters allows me to impact a child." Steven says volunteering as a Big Brother allows him to really see a kid evolve and grow and learn to trust. "It's nice seeing first hand the impact you are making on their life," he said.

The BBBS brand of mentoring, with friendship as its cornerstone, significantly increases the quality of life for participating children while significantly decreasing their chances of truancy, violence, and drug or alcohol use. With

a mission of helping children reach their potential through professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships, it's easy to see why.

BBBSCT serves children ages 6-16 in Travis, Williamson, McLennan and Brazos counties. At the end of 2005, BBBSCT served more than 1,300 children with a goal of serving 5,000 youth annually by 2010. For more information about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, visit www.bbbscentraltx.org or call 472-KIDS. ■

Melanie Chasteen is director of marketing for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas. She and husband Scott have lived in Cherrywood four years and both volunteer as Bigs.



Frankie and Cherrywood resident, Steven Stanislav. Photo: Melanie Chasteen