

April Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 6, 2009

Where: Hyde Park United Methodist Church
4001 Speedway

Who: YOU and your neighbors

Note: HPNA general meetings usually take place on the first Monday of each month.

HPNA General Meeting Agenda for April 6th

- City Staff from Code Enforcement
- Austin Police Dept - Officer LaHood
- Rowena/Hegman LHD (short discussion and possible vote)

See You There!

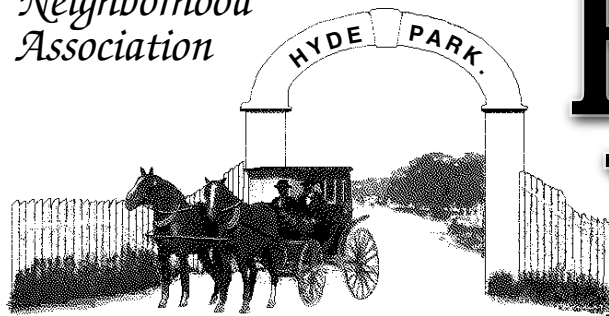
It's My Park! Day 2009: And What a Day It Was!

Saturday, March 7th was "It's My Park! Day" at Shipe Park (and more than 50 other parks throughout the City of Austin). The Austin Parks Foundation's biggest event of the year, IMPD is an annual community service day created to provide an opportunity to improve all City of Austin parks. The Foundation provided the tools, materials and supplies, and organizational support for this event. The City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department also provided services and assistance. Here at Shipe, at least 150 neighborhood volunteers, along with many local businesses, collaborated in making much-needed improvements to our park. Here are some highlights of what was accomplished:

- Invasive plant species & debris were removed from the banks & creek bed of Waller Creek.
- A large army of rakers picked up the pin oak leaves from the kid's pool & around the park & placed them at the base of our photinias.
- We aerated the soil & mulched around the bases of all our trees.

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

April, 2009 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 35, No. 4

'Comp Norm' Could Depress Central Austin Property Values

A few years back, a concern was expressed in the *Pecan Press* about the impact of Kelo vs. City of New London. The Supreme Court's decision in that case gave city governments the power to condemn the property of one private owner and sell it to another. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor noted in her dissent, "Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private property, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms."

The fear at the time was that a developer could sway the city council to condemn large chunks of Hyde Park, specifically the area north of 45th Street and west of Duval, and turn it into a zone of high-density housing. This would dramatically increase the tax base of the area as well as pack more people along the proposed light-rail corridor, a big draw for city politicians.

Fortunately, that nightmare never materialized. But now a new threat has emerged, and from a corner no one expected: state government. The story came to light



Bargain Hunters? Legislative aides cast an appraising eye on a choice Hyde Park property (names withheld by request).

in a recent email to the *Pecan Press* from long-time Hyde Parker Mary Alice Young, a 27-year veteran of the Legislative Budget Board. In her words:

"I was having lunch at the Capitol cafeteria. It was crowded, and a young woman asked if she could join me. As we talked, I learned she had just joined the staff of a legislator from West Texas as a secretary. She said she was looking for housing and asked where I lived. I said 'Hyde Park,' and she said, 'Oh, I love Hyde Park. I've got my eye on a little bungalow on

Continued on page 3

From the President's Desk:

Hello Neighbors -- spring is definitely here, and being outside is becoming enjoyable, to say the least! Speaking about being outside: On behalf of the HPNA, we want to thank Mark Fishman and the many neighbors, community support teams, and businesses on the outstanding job they did on the March 7th It's My Park! Day goings-on at Shipe Park!

The park is in great shape because of all the work that was done, and our favorite local park has more friends and supporters than ever. And since then, a lot of activity in North Hyde Park has occurred. Two groups have formed to begin creating Local Historic Districts within the North Hyde Park boundary. These include the Hegman subdivision and the Caswell/Ridgetop Annex subdivisions. They are formulating

action plans and performing research. Thanks to the outstanding job that the Hyde Park Local Historic District Committee and the Design Standards Committee performed, their efforts can serve as a model to meet North Hyde Park's specific needs. Much more to come! Meanwhile, the 2009 Hyde Park Neighborhood Homes Tour is in full gear. The Homes Tour Committee will be looking for volunteers for house captains and docents. So hopefully, with last year's sabbatical behind us, the

proud Homes Tour tradition will go on. If there is anything that the Steering Committee needs to address in the last six months of my 2009 Presidency, please contact me or any member of the 2009 HPNA Steering Committee. See you at the next HPNA meeting!

— David Conner
 HPNA President
 <daypaycon@yahoo.com>

Pecan Press

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'Comp Norm' May Compensate Elected Officials ...

...cont'd from page 1

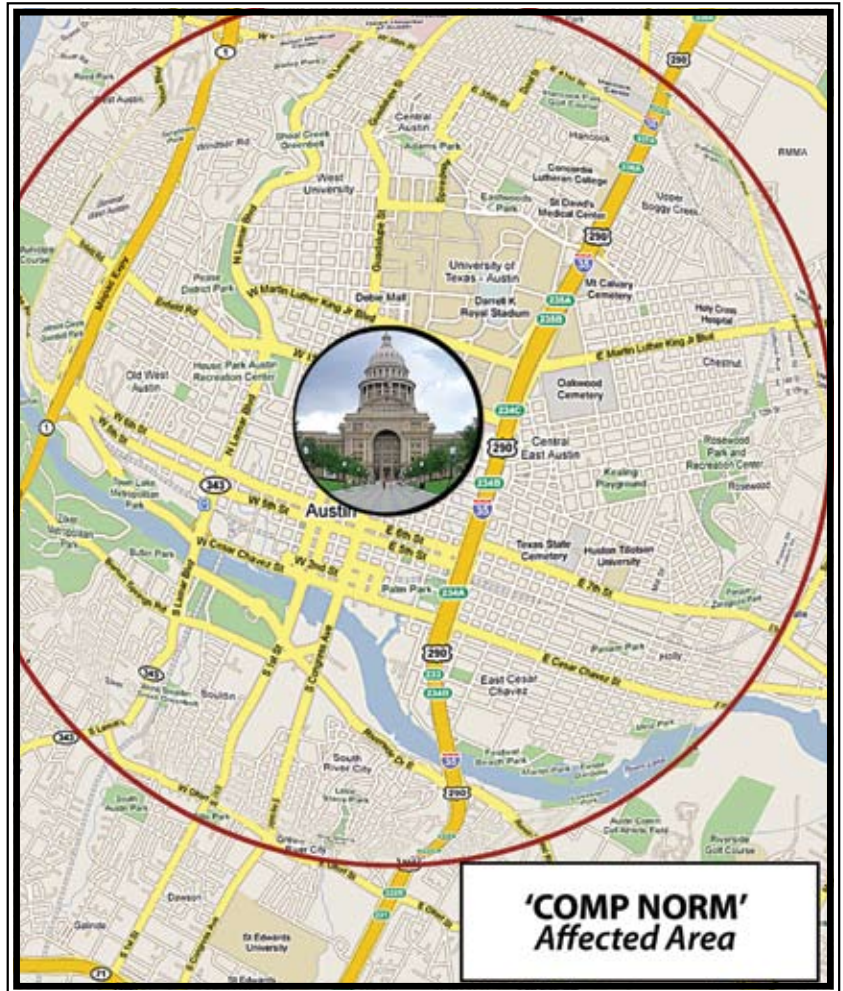
Avenue B. I'm going to snap it up as soon as we get Comp Norm."

"Comp Norm" is shorthand for the Compensation Normalization Act of 2009, a bill recently voted out of the House Appropriations Committee. The basic provision is that staff of elected state officials who are required to move to Austin to perform their duties may purchase any house within a four-mile radius of the state capitol for the same price as the average cost per square foot of houses sold in the past three months in the town where they are from. The area affected includes some of Austin's oldest neighborhoods, including Travis Heights, Tarrytown, and Hyde Park.

For example, the secretary Mary Alice Young spoke with hails from Kermit, in Winkler County in far West Texas. The average home price there is a little under \$23 per square foot. If the bungalow she plans on buying in Hyde Park has 1,850 square feet, she would be able to buy it for less than \$42,500. Actually, the state would buy it for that amount and then be reimbursed by the secretary. The current owner would have 30 days to vacate the premises after the title changes hands.

The measure has its roots in the frustration of a Texas Supreme Court justice who tried to bring his secretary from his hometown. She came to Austin, but left a few weeks later in tears at not being able to afford a decent house close in. The justice confided his annoyance to a senior member of the Senate Finance Committee, who said he had had a similar experience. They agreed that some equitable means of providing close-in housing for staff from small towns was needed.

But isn't Comp Norm a case of an unwarranted government taking, proscribed by the Fifth Amendment? Apparently not. According to Herschel Monblatt, the Edgar and Mamie Childers Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Texas,



"There is no way this can be called a government taking. Comp Norm is a plain vanilla case of eminent domain. The state has the power to expropriate a citizen's property with due monetary compensation but without the owner's consent." His advice was not to waste time and money trying to fight the measure in the courts, but to fight it politically.

But in a political fight, Austin would be at a severe disadvantage. W.T. "Rusty" Garrison, one of Austin's most prominent lobbyists, lived in Hyde Park while attending UT law school. He has retained his affection for the neighborhood and has advised the neighborhood association on a number of issues

Continued on page 4



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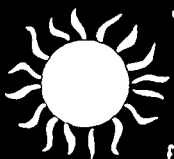
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'Comp Norm'...

...cont'd from page 3

over the years, always without charge. He explained, "You've got to understand the image Austinites have across the state. The average Texan sees us as a bunch of Birkenstock-wearing eco-Marxists with more education than sense. If they have the chance to stick it to us in the name of good government, you can bet your best boots they'll do it."

Events are proving Garrison correct. At the House Appropriations Committee hearing on the bill last month, Comp Norm's sponsor, Rep. Vernon "Buckshot" Wardell (R-Dumas) captured the feeling of many in the earthy language for which he is famous: "For too long," he said, "the residents of Austin have sipped the cream of state largesse while the country people of Texas have been stuck with the blue john. Comp Norm will help level the playing field. With this bill we are serving notice that we are no longer content to suck hind tit." Wardell said support for Comp Norm in his district was running 12 to 1 in favor. And indeed on April 1 it passed out of committee favorably, 22-6, and went to the Senate Finance Committee.

What now? HPNA will host a discussion of Comp Norm at its April meeting. Rusty Garrison will be on hand to help plan strategy. In the meantime, Hyde Parkers are urged to contact their legislative and Congressional representatives to protest Comp Norm, officially designated House Bill 4209. Please act quickly. The house you save could be your own.

— Rollo Treadway

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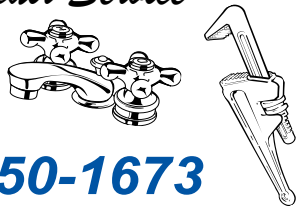
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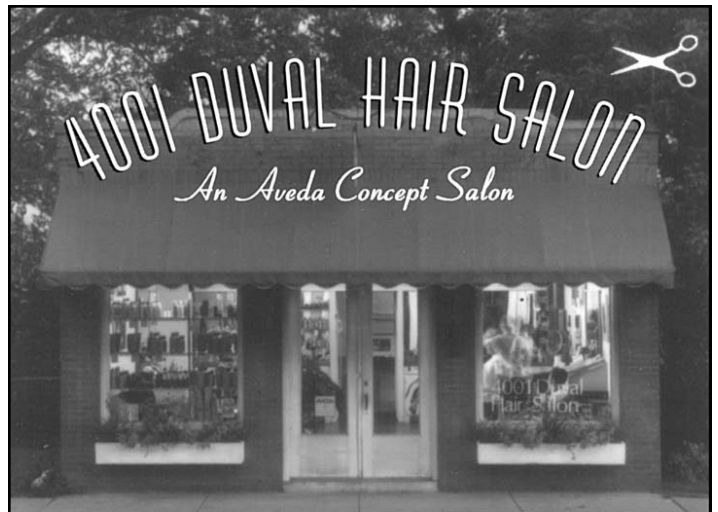


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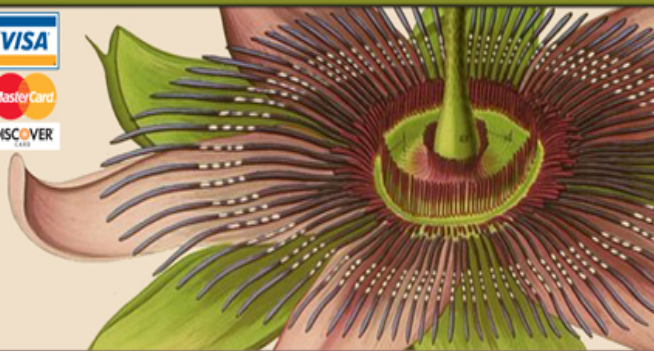
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It's My Park! Day 2009...

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• Dillo dirt was spread over the "playing field" (it will be roped off - probably for around a month - until the grass gets established).



Holding the Bag? Grande Volunteer Extraordinaire Libby Malone Doesn't Mind a Bit! photo by Mark Fishman

• Two concrete park benches were constructed, re-bar and all, and placed in the breezeway of the old historic structure next to the pool

• The footing for a new retaining wall at the northwest corner of the pool was constructed with the help of the City of Austin PARD (this will facilitate more usable area around the pool for sunbathing and relaxing).



Hyde Park Mayor-for-Life Dorothy Richter Doing Her Thing. photo by Mark Fishman

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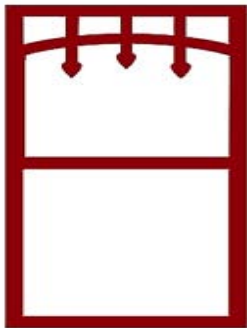
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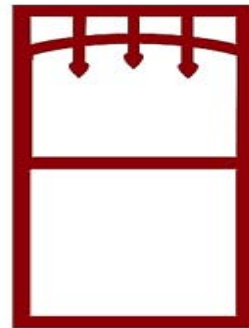
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It's My Park! Day 2009...

...cont'd from page 6



Every Little Bit Helps. photo by Mark Fishman

• Folks from Grande Communications, Quacks, Fresh Plus, Julio's, Daily Juice, The Griffin School, The First English Lutheran Church, a Girl Scout troop, a UT sorority, McCallum High School, Book Austin Music others worked hard on site and/or donated goods or services (THANK YOU)

• A performance by The Hudsons, a marvelous local group <www.thehudsonsmusic.com> kept us entertained with their inspiring music throughout the event.



The Hudsons Provide Audio. photo by Charlie McCabe

• 117 T-Shirts from the Austin Parks Foundation were distributed to 117 pre-registered volunteers, and lots of goodies from our sponsors were enjoyed by all.

Continued on following page



Wheel Done! Volunteer John Williams Barrows some Moves. photo by Mark Fishman

• And the efforts of many individuals (y'all know who you are) who organized the event and led the work crews.

As a major resurgence in use of Shipe Park has been observed over the past few years, it is important for us to know what opportunities exist for continuing improvements and maintenance at our park. We Austinites, the folks who live here and use our parks are responsible for helping to ensure that our local parks are vibrant and healthy. So if you haven't already....

• Join the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association <www.austinhypark.org>. (Contact the Shipe Park Committee, Mark L Fishman, Chair <mlfishman@gmail.com>)

• Join the Friends of Shipe Pool (Contact Adam Wilson <adam@griffinschool.org>)

• Thank the Parks and Recreation Department staff whenever you see them working on our park

• Join the Austin Parks Foundation <www.austinparks.org>

• Plan on participating in It's My Park! Day in spring of 2010.

• Keep Shipe Park clean: pick up trash whenever you see it

• Let members of the City Council know that parks are important to you and need adequate funding.

• Report maintenance needs to the Parks and Recreation Department (contact Jimmy Cone at: 927-8363) or <www.ci.austin.tx.us/connect/email_parks.htm>

Thanks again to all the volunteers & supporters who made this event such a success!

– Mark L Fishman, Project Leader for "It's My Park! Day" 2009 at Shipe Park
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HPNA March 2009 Meeting Minutes

The March 2nd, 2009 meeting of the HPNA was called to order by President David Conner at 7 pm. David introduced the first speaker on the agenda, Sara Hensley - Director of Austin Parks and Recreation (PAR). Ms. Hensley talked about the goal of the Parks and Recreation Dept. to work as one voice with park users on their comments, suggestions, and concerns. From there the PAR will voice these concerns with City Council. Currently there is no system in place to prioritize all park issues. At the time, calling 311 is the only way for park users to get information to the city on park issues. In the future, Ms. Hensley hopes a better system will be in place to help prioritize park issues that park users report. In the meantime, Ms. Hensley is a great contact for park users to report problems, or to make comments. She can be reached by email at <sara.hensley@ci.austin.tx.us> or by calling 512-974-6717.

Next on the agenda was former HPNA Co-President Ann Graham. She talked about **Floodlines**, the mobile theater project that will be playing in our neighborhood on Sunday, April 5th. Performers are still needed, and no experience is necessary. If you would like to be a part of the production this year, please contact Marissa Flores, Stage Manager, by email at <marisflor@hotmail.com> for more details.

Next on the agenda was Mary Lou Serafine to discuss **leafblowers** in the neighborhood. Ms. Serafine wanted to inform all residents that there are studies that suggest that leafblowers are harmful to the environment, and the particulate matter they kick up can cause breathing and respiratory issues. Also, the leafblowers are considered to be a general nuisance and noise disturbance by many in the neighborhood. At this time there is no way to enforce leafblower use in the neighborhood, other than to ask lawn maintenance companies, as well as individuals, to please not use them when doing yard work. John Kerr also spoke on this issue and wanted to urge neighbors to discontinue leafblower use, and to tell their lawn maintenance companies to rake leaves rather than blow them with gas and electric leafblowers.

Last on the agenda was Mark Fishman, discussing **It's My Park! Day**. This year the community gathering will be on Saturday, March 7th from 1-5 at Shipe Park.

We'll see you on April 6th for the next HPNA meeting.

— John A. Williams,
HPNA Co-Secretary
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The Local Historic District Corner

Writer's note: This column will appear regularly while the Local Historic District project is underway. If you have any questions or concerns about local historic districts that you would like addressed, please get in touch: <lweidich@mail2sevenseas.com> or 300-2228.

Where We Stand: Progress All Around the City

At the March meeting held by the Heritage Society of Austin for participants working on Local Historic Districts, students of Michael Holleran's UT class on historic preservation made a presentation. Michael Holleran directs the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation in the School of Architecture.

Michael assigned a student to each local historic district project willing to participate. I met with student Kelley Russell to provide her with information about the Hyde Park LHD project. Kelley and the other students in the class consolidated their results, and the comparison was enlightening. There are nine LHD projects; eight of them were represented in the presentation.

The students divided the project work into five parts: survey, design standards, deed research, fund raising, and collection of signatures of supporting property owners. Only two districts - Travis Heights and Hyde Park - had check marks in four categories. We have progressed in our survey, design standards, deed research (thanks to all those Homes Tour booklets), and fund raising. Only one neighborhood has actually begun the signature collection process, and their efforts have been slowed by the lack of completed design standards.

The discussion that followed was even more interesting. City government works in certain ways not only because of the way ordinances are written but also because of the procedures and ways of operating that develop around ordinances. Because the ordinance that supports local historic districts is new, procedures haven't developed. Those of us working on districts are pioneers; the way we do things is likely to have an effect far into the future.

An Update

Two areas in north Hyde Park, Caswell and the Hegeman subdivision (Rowena and Avenue F), have decided to pursue Local Historic Districts. At least one of them will probably request money from the HPNA to achieve that goal. I hope the neighborhood will support and vote to budget funds for those efforts. I would love to see as much of our 'hood as possible protected from the incursions of developers whose goal is to demolish and replace our historic resources.

— Lorre Weidlich

Vintage Properties Available



3913 Avenue G The 1893 Page-Gilbert House, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, was one of Austin's first houses to be zoned historic. It features 2 or 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, +/- 2000 sf, all faithfully restored with period finishes. A 1990 two-car garage has a workshop and an upstairs apartment. **\$649,000.**



508 E 38 ½ Street This 1930 Mission Revival house has splendid native plants on a 75 x 143' lot between Duval and Hancock Golf. Hardwood floors, 2 vintage tile baths; a bedroom on each side of the large living area, which has a wall of built-in cabinets; plus office/study with a built-in storage wall; and two sink areas in the kitchen. **\$429,000.**



2903 Beanna Across from UT Law School is this beautifully remodeled 1932 traditional house with huge trees and exquisite gardens enclosed by architectural stone walls; 2 bedrooms (one with sitting room), 2 baths, separated by a large living room w/ fireplace, dining room and eat-in kitchen. **\$449,000.**



4104 Avenue B - Turn this dear 1910 wing and gable Victorian cottage into a home worthy of its character and location under huge post oaks on one of Hyde Parks best streets. It needs everything but the lot is large enough for expansion and there is alley access. **\$275,000.**



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Anti-Leaf Blower Advocates Reverse Position

In a stunning reversal at an April 1 news conference, anti-leaf-blower advocates have capitulated to their better senses and embraced leaf blower use, setting aside anti-pollution advocacy and embracing the trendier Leafphobia Movement. New evidence suggests that the presence of leaves prevents full visualization of small segments of streets and sidewalks, so a move is on to make pavement 100 % visible by removing all leaves, grass blades, and specks of dust. "It's a tough order," said Mary Lou Serafine, "but we intend to blow every single particle into another galaxy."

A new group called the Hyde Park Blower Support Group will celebrate in Shipe Park on April 15th, seeking sales tax relief and income tax credits for blower purchases. (Blowers at 75 decibels, however, are slated to get only half credit, while those at 95 decibels get a full rebate.) "We are working with the City of Austin," said a spokesman for the group, "to eliminate the water-saving appliance rebates and instead give rebates for leaf-blowers, or better yet, for the gas-powered blowers to be handed out free at City Hall." The EPA has promised to install permanent, 24/7 blower machines on each corner, to prevent any leaves from blowing back onto the pavement after human hands have tried their best. Called "Breeze Defeat," the program is part of the new stimulus package and was declared "shovel ready" in the 80's, but languished until the present.

The Shipe Park celebration on the 15th, in line with theme of "Blow, Baby, Blow," will feature free backpacks for the kids, each with a small, detachable hose coming off the lower edge. Infants who cannot yet remain upright will sport T-shirts with tiny orange blowers embroidered on the back. "Blower in Chief" and "Born to Blow" are print options on the front. The Shipe Park event will culminate in a "Blow-A-Thon" in which adults will blow around the park simultaneously. Children under 10 will meanwhile parade through the dust on slow-moving bikes, without ear protectors..

Children under 5 will use trikes, but must first obtain a safety sticker for their helmets. Based on a note from their doctor, children with the most exposure to blower dust will lead the parade, but some clean-lung kids, if they feel unfairly treated, will be grandfathered in. (Contact author for application forms.) No styrofoam use will be allowed at the park.

To raise money, toy sales to spur awareness in future generations include the "Barbie-and-Ken Go Steady" series, with removable, matching blowers,

Continued on following page



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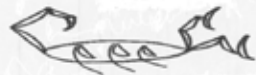
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multi-colored to match different outfits. Each mini-blower has a real trap door that can be filled with dust before the remote control button spews out the dust, and a drum-roll sound effect comes out the top of the little blower. The Barbie set has a rhinestone-studded blower for evening wear. Manufacturers are being criticized for failing to get the decibel level on these toys up high enough, according to a spokesman for the Hyde Park group, but the manufacturer's R&D department is said to be on the case.

Volunteers are needed for the event. Bring your own mask. To help, email Mary Lou Serafine at <sonata0516@yahoo.com>, and put "Blow, Baby, Blow" in the subject line.

– Mary Lou Serafine

HYDE PARK

Hyde Parker Headed for Air Force Academy



LBJ High School Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy Senior and Hyde Park resident Anthony Delgado has been nominated by Congressman Lloyd Doggett and will attend the US Air Force Academy. An active athlete and driven student, Anthony competed on the football, basketball and track teams, while also being a member of the National Honor Society. Anthony hopes to play football for the Falcons, as well as work hard to become a pilot. He is pictured here with his parents, Robert and Julie Delgado of Hyde Park (the Delgados live on Caswell). Robert Delgado works as a project manager for Agile TCP, while Julie is a realtor for Kelly Williams Realty.

– Jarratt Watkins
Office of Congressman Lloyd Doggett

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Date: April 23, 2009

Time: 5:30pm VIP Reception (\$50)

6:30pm General Admission (\$20)

Location: 816 Congress Ave, 15th floor - parking available. Join us for a preview of art on April 2nd, 5pm-8pm at Speakeasy, 412 Congress Avenue featuring music by Will Taylor & Strings Attached with Karen Mal.

– Barbara Kelly, Austin State Hospital
419-2333, 797-5399 (cell)

Letters Dept.

We Could Car Less!

Dear Editor,

I gave up my car in 1984, and have been a pedestrian for 25 years (12 years in Hyde Park). I see HP residents drive to the park and post office, drive to Fresh Plus and Walgreen's, drive to the Deli and Dharma – NOT because of lack of sidewalks, but because they are lazy and attached to their cars like a parasite. What is is going to take for people to get out of their cars? Most people need the exercise of cycling or walking to nearby/neighborhood errands.. Have you ever seen an overweight person who uses cycling or walking as their primary mode of transportation?

Stay safe,

– Cynthia Janis,
Avenue B neighbor



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May, 1905: Firemen Visit "Lunatic Asylum"

Dear Editor,

I was researching the old West Austin Hose Co. #7 on Blanco, and stumbled on something of possible interest to Pecan Press readers. I pass it on, perhaps for inclusion in the April or May issue.

— Peter Flagg Maxson



At the turn of the century, Austin had few parks, while the Austin State Hospital (then called Lunatic Asylum) administration believed in horticulture as excellent therapy. With the Hyde Park trolley line providing a link with the city, the beautifully landscaped grounds of the Asylum became a popular destination for both Austinites and out-of-town visitors alike. An Austin Statesman article, dated 11 May 1905, describes an excursion by the State Fireman's Association, then having their annual meeting in Austin:

Trolley Ride to Asylum

Promptly at 3:15, as arranged by the local fire department, the delegates, local firemen and guests repaired to the corner of Sixth street, where cars were waiting to take the party on the trolley rise to the insane asylum. Eight cars were crowded with the party. The Lone Star band took the first car and played continuously from the time they left until they reached the asylum grounds. The band is noted for wind, and it demonstrated that to a finish yesterday afternoon. The cars formed a train and paraded slowly to the asylum park. A loop was made around the Hyde Park grounds, and the first stop was made at the asylum gates. The band taking the lead, the party proceeded to the main entrance, where they were met by Dr. Maxwell. Several guides were on hand to show the party through the grounds. Every department of the institution was visited. The visiting firemen were delighted with the surroundings. Many were the compliments paid to the management of the asylum for neatness and, above all, the system used in the management of the place. The chronic department was most interesting to the visitors. The new Pasteur Institute and the rabbit farm were visited by the party. Quite an amusing incident is connected with the visit at the asylum. While the crowd was eagerly crowding close to the railing on the ground, some inmate in the upper story emptied a bucket of cold water on the heads of visitors below. On the return to the city, the party was taken around the belt line. At the end of the evening's program, all the firemen and visitors were lavish in their praises of the day's events.



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Letters Dept.

Coffee Guy Says Hi

Dear Neighbors,

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Did you know coffee is very healthful? (Google: "Coffee and health" - you will be surprised to find out how coffee helps fight certain diseases). But, coffee also loses 3/4 of its 900 flavor compounds in the two weeks after it's roasted. Most coffee sold at the store is over three months old and stale before you even buy it! That means a lot of people are missing the flavor and antioxidant value of coffee.

I am here to help! At our website - <www.pilothousecoffee.com> - you can shop our variety of delicious, freshly-roasted coffees. (And 10% of our proceeds benefit Hope House in Uganda - bonus!) Try the difference, you will be surprised and pleased. We love being your neighbor, and we love providing you with the best coffee experience, delivered fresh - and free - to your door.

— Robby Jones, The Coffee Guy
Pilot House Coffee, Austin TX

Then as Now: Hyde Park Residents Enjoy a Good Party



Taken July, 1930, Hyde Park kids at a birthday party at 409 Avenue D. Courtesy Mr. Roland Harrison of Oklahoma (shown here in the seat of honor, age 3)

Editor's Note: Thanks to Mary Lou Serafine of 4011 Ave. D (Mr. Harrison's former home) for passing this archival info on to us.



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Hyde Park Poets —

Good-bye Molly

Fortieth and Duval,
Her corner, no matter
what the tax records show.
First there mornings,
trotting beside us, greeting
us for work, the one
ear never erect.
Brindle, she carried her
own light and shadow,
looked comical atop the
play scape slide.
She challenged us to
stand tall, to move in
grace, be gregarious
and gentle. She gave
and gave, joy, loyalty.
Her memory floats in my
mind. Her afterimage will
float on her corner forever.

— Nancy Taylor Day
March 10, 2009

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this company and that firing,
laying off, while I hope to return
where my services are needed,
wanted as much as I am wanting
that cuppa with soy foam and a
hit of sweetness to fuel morning

— Nancy Taylor Day
March 5, 2009



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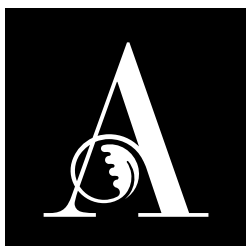


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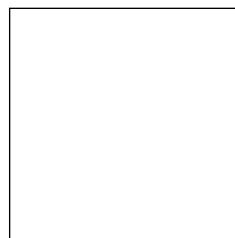
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