

August Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, August 4, 2008

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 August 4th

- ❖ All Pleasure, No Business - Let's Socialize!

See you there!

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@mail2sevens.com> or 300-2228.)

Calling All Volunteers!

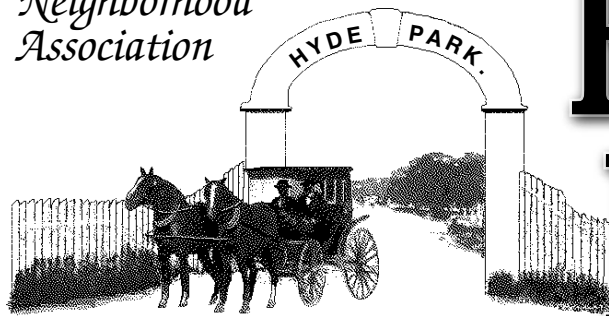
On August 25, the Design Guidelines Subcommittee will present its results to the Steering Committee and the Development Review Committee. Following that, in September, the suggested guidelines will be presented to the entire neighborhood. Read more details about that event in next month's column.

Because things are heating up and will be proceeding at a more accelerated pace during the second half of this year, this seems like a good time to ask for volunteers:

- During late August and early September, people are needed to distribute flyers door to door in the neighborhood and to contact absent landlords to spread the word about the September Local Historic District workshop. We are hoping for a large turnout, so we can educate as many people as possible and find out everyone's concerns and reservations.

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

August, 2008 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 34, No. 8

Rainforest Partnership: The View from Panama (*and Hyde Park*)

(This is the last of an ongoing series of reports by former HPNA Co-President Niyanta Spelman on her and her family's eco-adventures in Central and South America. We are grateful for her reportage, and pleased that the Spelmans are now back home on Avenue F.)

The beginning of my trip, in Costa Rica, was a short step into another world. In Ecuador and then Peru, I went deeper into the rainforest, but also deeper into a world view that is far from the one I live with. At the end of my journey, in Panama, I have come full circle, to a place where both the promise and the errors of North America and her culture are on full display.

The primary fact of Panamanian life is that the country began as a figment of Teddy Roosevelt's imagination. T.R. was having trouble convincing Colombia to let him build a canal across Panama, so he cooked up a "rebellion" in the isthmus to create a friendlier, more cooperative government. He succeeded, and until eight years ago, the central section of Panama - the old Canal Zone - was U.S. territory: home to American citizens who lived in American houses and spent American money in American stores.

Not surprisingly, this has left a mark on Panama's culture. All of the countries we visited had supermarkets and shopping malls, all of which resembled markets and malls in the U.S. But only in Panama was the local grocery store, El Rey, laid out exactly like the Hancock HEB, circa 1995. Here you could get ten kinds of apples, all of them exported from the U.S., but almost no tropical fruit. The markets of Lima and Quito usually used 100% biodegradable bags;

the markets of Panama used U.S.-made plastic bags, double-bagged, and filled them only half full.

On the other hand, Panama is a beautiful country. About the size of Maine, it is 400 miles long and only 40 to 110 miles wide, with the Atlantic Ocean to its north and the Pacific to its south.

Our base in Panama was Gamboa, a tiny hamlet thirty minutes north of the capital. Gamboa is right on the canal, in the midst of a lovely rainforest spared to feed the gargantuan fresh water needs of the canal's locks. Crossing the continental divide as a matter of course takes a whole new meaning as we crossed the divide between the two great oceans every time we went five miles south!

And, then there was the other divide. About 3 million years ago the South and North American continents were joined by the rising of the isthmus that is today Panama. This land mass has played a big role in our planetary climate, but it also resulted in great

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From the President's Desk:

HPNA Seeks New Slate of Officers

It's that time again! In October, it will once again be time for some of us to pass along the HPNA leadership baton to other residents of the neighborhood. The HPNA is currently looking for a Co-treasurer, Secretary, and Vice President, as well as a few Steering Committee members.

I'm pleased to report that the question about my successor as HPNA President may already be settled, as David Conner has agreed to run for President this year. David moved to Hyde Park about three years ago, and since arriving he has been an active member of the Development Review Committee, spending countless hours researching houses in the neighborhood. He will be a valuable asset for the HPNA as we continue to prevent our historic

homes from being torn down.

As for the other officer positions: The Vice-President is instrumental in setting the agenda for monthly HPNA meetings. The Co-treasurer spends about three hours a month on HPNA-related business. This includes sending out the bills to the *Pecan Press* advertisers and making deposits at the bank. The Secretary is responsible for attending the HPNA general meetings and writing the minutes in the *Pecan Press* each month. The Steering Committee members attend monthly meetings and help act as the board for the neighborhood association.

Any and all of these positions are a great opportunity for someone to get involved in the neighborhood and learn what is

going on - not to mention meeting your neighbors, and helping to chart the future of one of the most effective and highly regarded neighborhood associations in town.

Alan Marburger is heading up the Nominations Committee. If you're interested in learning more about what is involved in these positions, please contact him at <alanmarburger@earthlink.net>.

Officer elections will be held at the October general meeting.

— Elaine Meenehan
 HPNA President
 <elaine.meenehan@gmail.com>

Pecan Press

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All memberships expire on September 30th of each year.		

The View from Panama...

...cont'd from page 1

biodiversity from the Great American Exchange facilitated by migrations of species in both directions.

I saw some of this biodiversity in the Darién, the easternmost province of Panama that borders Colombia and is a UNESCO biosphere site. Darién's population is about that of Round Rock, spread out over an area the size of Massachusetts. Darién is so wild and remote that it's the only break in the Pan American Highway, which otherwise runs unbroken from the Arctic Ocean to Tierra del Fuego.

Our trip to a research station in Cerro Chucanti - four hours by car, then another four on horseback up 4,000 feet - was quite an experience for this non-rider. There was no more devastatingly disheartening experience for me in five months away than being on a horse all afternoon in a constant rain, with water sloshing back and forth in my hiking boots (a first for me) and seeing acre after acre of primary forest recently cleared for pasture. To make matters worse, no effort had been made to even salvage the wood before burning it. Each hectare (2 1/2 acres) may contain up to 500 different species of trees (that's right, not 500 trees, but 500 species of trees). A single bush may have housed more species of ants than live in Great Britain. Now each hectare provides pasture for a sin-

gle cow. It was hard to make sense of this, especially since darkness came sooner than our destination.

And, then we got to our research station and in the morning awoke in the middle of a lovely forest, amid the competing calls of birds and monkeys. Accompanying a primatologist recording primate vocalizations, the producer and the cameraman of a nature show that appears bimonthly on Panamanian TV, and Guido Berguido, conservationist and owner of an ecotourism company, I found a mountain full of unusual insects and birds and mushrooms, pearly iridescent seeds even, every step up unfolding treasures unique to that altitude.

While walking up, I stumbled upon the most beautiful mushroom: it was teal blue! None of us had ever seen anything like it. We filmed it every which way, took notes, and then found more: powder blue mushrooms, of a different color and shape. And, a little further up, we found pink and orange mushrooms and our status in Wonderland was confirmed. We were on the magical mountain of the blue mushroom.

In this magical place, saved almost single-handedly by Guido and his efforts, there is much yet undiscovered and unnamed. But looking down from

Continued on page 4

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The View from Panama...

...cont'd from page 3

the mountain, seeing the edges of deforestation, the line drawn by Guido's efforts, seeing the magical creatures of the forest, one has to have optimism that together we will learn to treasure and preserve the richness that lies in places like Cerro Chucanti.

Panama is, after all, much like the United States. Many Panamanians, like many of us, are sufficiently short-sighted and unimaginative to only pay attention to what is of immediate monetary value. In their place, many of us would likely burn down the trees, plant Johnson grass, move in a cow and make a little cash. But some, like Guido Berguido and many more like him that I met elsewhere in Latin America, take a longer view. They know that local farmers need to eat; they also recognize that the treasures of the rainforest are potentially vast but largely unknown. They're looking for ways to solve both the short-term and the long-term problems. And they know that taking the easy way out only leads to dead trees.

We are now back in Austin. Through my non-profit, Rainforest Partnership, I'm maintaining the connections with the people and communities in the countries that I visited, and working with them to make it more valuable for them to keep the trees than to cut them down. I expect to be doing this for the rest of my life.

In the meantime, I'm grateful to my Hyde Park neighbors for letting me share my perspective of what we saw, experienced and lived these few months. Putting it down on paper for you helped me understand the biggest lesson of my five-month journey: When we strip away the superficial details, Central Americans, South Americans, North Americans are all very nearly the same. I can see us making the same mistakes that Latin American farmers have made; I can see us making the same farsighted choices in saving as much of what remains as they can. There's nothing exotic about helping them get it right. It's just another way to help ourselves.

— Niyanta Spelman

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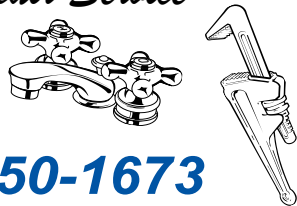


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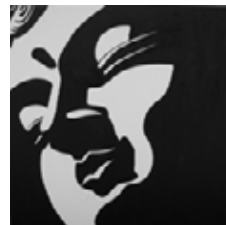
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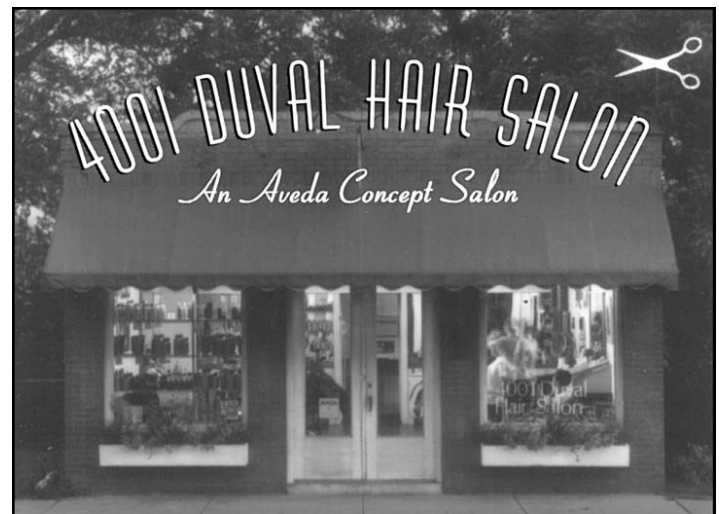


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LHD Corner...

...cont'd from page 1

- After the guidelines are revised in accordance with the feedback we receive during the September workshop, we need people to canvas the same group of people (all those who own property in Hyde Park) to obtain sign-offs on the finalized design guidelines.

- We need an inventory team. Each structure in the neighborhood will require a survey form and a photograph. Ideally, one person (someone careful and detail-oriented) should be in charge of this task, with a team of workers.

- We need researchers. A percentage of the contributing structures in the neighborhood will need to be researched. We are fortunate here in Hyde Park, because so much research has already been done for historic landmark houses and homes tour booklets. However, we need a lead researcher to take the responsibility for compiling this information, evaluating it, and seeing that any gaps are filled in, and a team of researchers to fill in those gaps.

Where do your talents lie? Do you have good people skills and enjoy talking to your neighbors? You would be ideal for the property-owner canvas team. Do you enjoy investigating historical records? We need you for the research team. Do you enjoy walking your dog through the neighborhood? Combine your dog walk with an inventory of the houses on your block. Even if you only have an hour to spare to distribute flyers, we can use you. This is a big neighborhood and a big project. Remember the old saying, "Many hands make the work light."

To volunteer, contact me at <lweidlich@mail2sevens.com>.

— Lorre Weidlich

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❖ **Welcome to Earth Dept.:** We are pleased to announce the arrival of Master Samuel Brendan Shea, who made his planetary debut on June 8th, 2008, weighing in at 8 lbs 14 oz., and measuring out at 21.75". Cosponsors of the debut are Andrew and Melissa Shea of 4108 Avenue G, who passed along this photo of our new(est) neighbor, settling in with Big Sister Sadie. Congrats to the Shea family, and welcome aboard, Sam!

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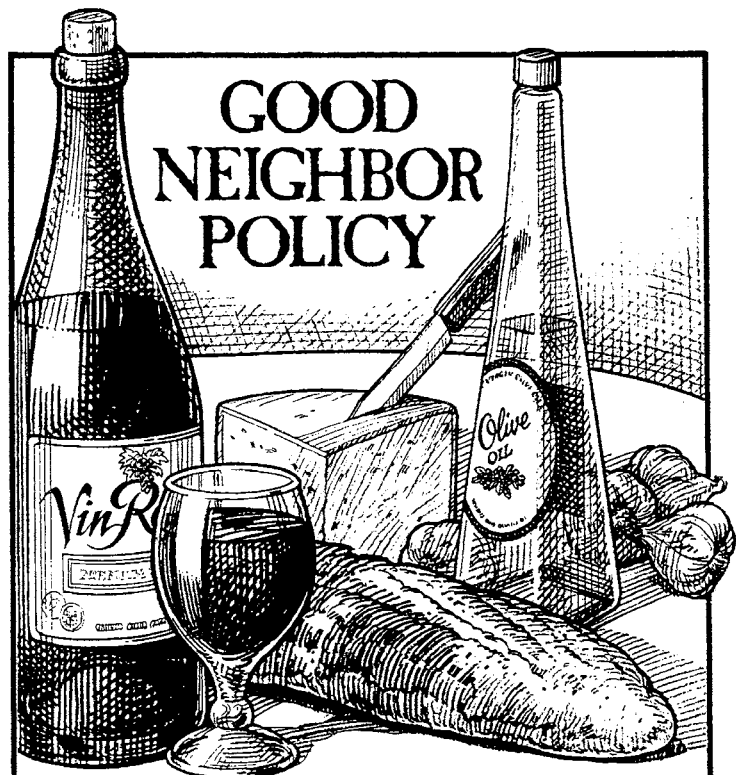


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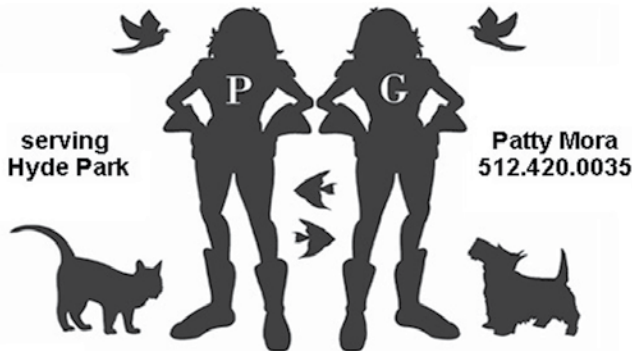
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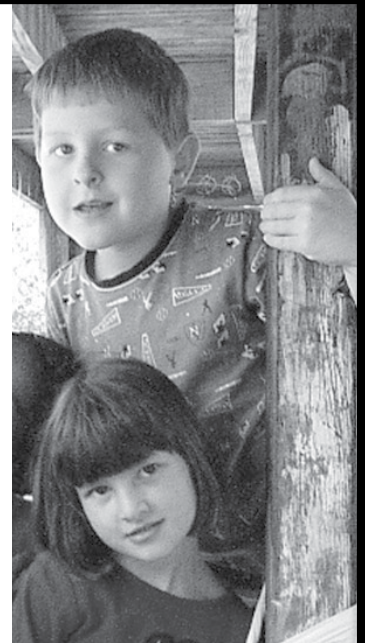
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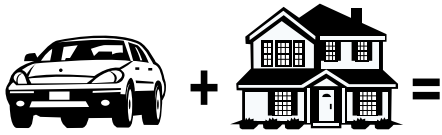
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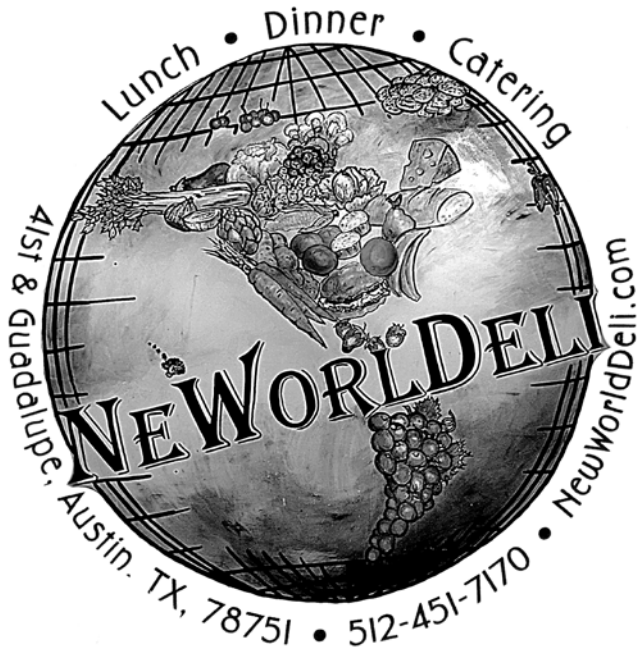
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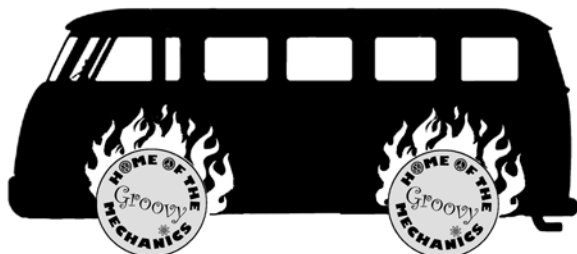
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Minutes of the July 2007 HPNA General Meeting

President Elaine Meenehan called the Monday, July 7, 2008 General Meeting of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association to order at 7 p.m. and introduced Kristen Turpin, MSW, Volunteer Services Coordinator of the **Graffiti Abatement Program** of the City of Austin. Kristen informed members about the program, noting that property owners are responsible for graffiti on their property and for cleaning up the graffiti within 30 days. In order for this requirement to be enforced, the City must provide assistance to affected property owners. She said that you should call 3-1-1 if you see graffiti you want removed and that it is especially important to make a police report when you call. The Austin Police Department uses the reports to track the graffiti and to prosecute the taggers. Call 9-1-1 if you see someone in the act of tagging. Kristen stressed the importance of keeping our garage doors closed because many of the taggers steal the paint they use.

The City program has 2 trucks that run Monday through Friday to respond to the 3-1-1 graffiti reports. With permission of the property owner, the City will enter onto the property and remove the graffiti at no charge. Or, the program can provide supplies, paint,

Continued on page 14

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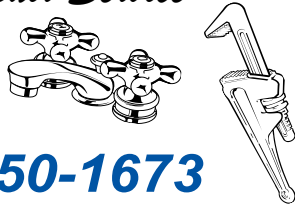
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July Meeting Minutes...

...cont'd from page 12

or other graffiti removal materials for you to remove the graffiti from your property. Call 3-1-1 to find out how to obtain the supplies and help. The program is always seeking volunteers to assist in the cleanup efforts. You can contact the program at 512-854-4591 or <graffiti@ci.austin.tx.us>. You can find more information at <www.ci.austin.tx.us/health/ys_graffiti.htm>.

On a related note, Libby Malone, Community Relations Director for our good neighbors at **Grande Communications**, noted that they provide paint to be used to cover graffiti on the Grande boxes and kiosks in our neighborhood. Contact HPNA President Elaine Meenehan if you are interested in getting this paint.

Next, architect and neighbor William Barbee presented the plans for the construction of new homes at the **View on Shipe Park** on the 4400 Block of Avenue F. After many HPNA members expressed concern to the owner and builder, Emrobrai Homes and Ray Lee, he contacted them to discuss a more appropriate project for the neighborhood. (For more background information on this issue, you can refer to the

Continued on page 16

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July Meeting Minutes...

...cont'd from page 14

February issue of the *Pecan Press*: http://www.austinydeparke.org/2008/pp_Feb_08_24pg_final.pdf.) Mr. Barbee worked with the Lees to develop a plan that, while using modern construction, is more in keeping with the neighborhood in size and scale. These plans were well-received by the members, and Mr. Lee and Mr. Barbee were thanked for their efforts.

Catherine Moore then presented the report from the Development Review Committee about the proposed demolition of the stucco home at **43rd Street and Avenue G**. The committee has completed a great deal of research about the historic nature of this home, and plans to give this information to the Historic Landmark Commission and the City Staff. The committee hopes that the Historic Landmark Commission will begin the process to grant historic zoning to the home and prevent demolition of this only example of neo-classical architecture remaining in the neighborhood.

Lastly, John Paul Moore, **HPNA Tree Preservation Committee** Chairman, and Joel Cryer of the Hancock Neighborhood Association presented plans to spend part of the mitigation money on trees and other landscaping on the City-owned lot on the northeast corner of 38th Street and Duval. The cost is estimated to be between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

Elaine then adjourned the meeting.

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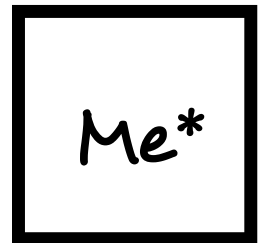
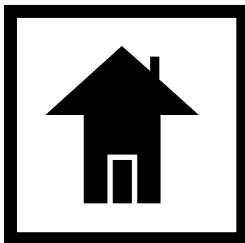
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Hyde Park Poets —

Porchlight

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We knew first hand about war

It was a time when parents would parent
Kids said, "yes sir" and "yes ma'am"
A time when high school was for learning
On how to join the family of man

And every evening the porch lights
On every house you'd see
Were on to say "welcome friend"
And not for security

— Eric Robertson
27 July 2002

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splashing with dogs
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You toss a ball in the water,
and the meaning of life gets rich
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We older monkeys worry more,
having forgotten how to play,
how to simply be in a moment
and leave the load behind.

A little laughter in my ear
brings me into sunlight
highlighting a stream, reminds me
to smile at the taste of right now.

— Nancy Taylor Day
4.29.2008

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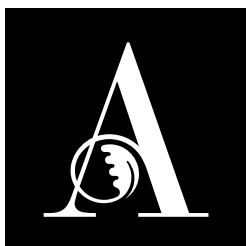


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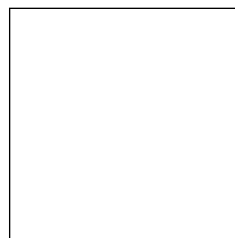
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