

March Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, March 7, 2011

Where: Trinity United Methodist Church
4001 Speedway

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

HPNA General Meeting Agenda for March 7th

- ❖ Noise Ordinance Discussion- Don Pitts from the City of Austin's Music Program
- ❖ Discuss AISD proposed school closures, facilities closures
- ❖ Discuss closing of Bruning Avenue north of 51st Street
- ❖ Crime and Safety update

Owls Coming

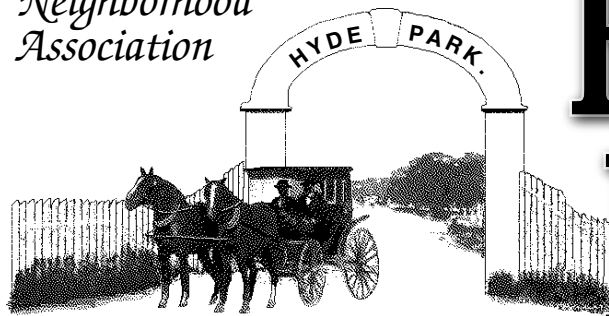


to the Ney

The Elisabet Ney Museum is pleased to announce nature programming for children, families and adults beginning in the month of March. The programs reflect Elisabet Ney's belief in the power of nature and art to uplift the spirit and her practice of living close to nature at her studio, Formosa, that is, today, the Elisabet Ney Museum.

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

March, 2011 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 37, No. 3

Cooperative Effort Succeeds: Tire Slasher Suspect Charged

After 16 years of tire vandalism, Central Austin may finally be nearing an end to tire puncturing woes.

The mass tire punctures which occurred in an area bounded by 32nd Street, Red River, Guadalupe, and 45th Street, caused an estimated \$25,000 in damages from November through January alone. Hyde Park and North University neighborhoods were especially hard-hit.

Recently, HPNA, residents, volunteers, property owners, property managers, the Austin Police Department, the District Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Office, City Council, the Citizen Led Austin Safety Partnership, and other groups began working cooperatively to focus attention and effort on this issue. The new Tire Vandalism Task Force was recently awarded a \$10,000 allotment by HPNA to purchase hidden video surveillance equipment to help end this crime spree. This equipment now may not be needed.

For 16 years APD had been unsuccessful in catching the perpetrator of these crimes. Circumstances frustrated local police, since the rare witnesses often proved reluctant to testify and since many of the punctures probably went unreported. Furthermore, it was difficult to pinpoint the actual time the crimes occurred because the small punctures often took 1-48 hours to flatten tires and sometimes longer. Much circumstantial evidence connected

Tommy Joe Kelley, also known as Tommy Joe Adams, to these crimes, such as his possession of tools thought to be capable of this type of damage, the pattern of his presence in the area around the times crimes were reported, and a few eye witness accounts. The complexity of this case required an investigator of the experience of Detective Eric Hoduski. It reportedly took only three to four weeks for Hoduski to build his case against Kelley, who now faces four felony charges for "unlawful use of a criminal instrument." Hyde Park residents may soon have their long awaited day in court.

The suspect was no stranger to the courts. He was arrested frequently for misdemeanors while in the area. These charges, often unrelated to vandalism, carried minimal sentences, as did the malicious mischief charges for the four times Kelley had been caught tire slashing since 1994. As luck would have it, the frequency of Tommy Kelley's arrests actually may have

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From the President's Desk:

A big thanks to Heather Freeman, Carol Welder, Teresa Griffin, George Wyche and everyone else in the neighborhood who has worked to bring the tire vandalism in our neighborhood to an end! Thanks also to the Austin Police Department and to the Travis County District Attorney's Office. Detective Hoduski at APD and Assistant District Attorney Claire Dawson-Brown have been particularly helpful. Let's hope the charges filed in February are the beginning of the end of this problem! In the course of investigating the tire damage Detective Hoduski found a possible linkage between the tire slashing suspect and many incidents in our neighborhood in which car windows were smashed so that problem may be reduced as well.

It's My Park Day is coming up soon and it's shaping up to be another great effort this year! Thanks to Rhonda and Phillip Baird for coordinating this year's effort and

to Mark Fishman for arranging live music for us to listen to while we work. Mark your calendar for March 5th from 1-5 PM. You can sign up for the effort by going to the Austin Parks Foundation website at <www.austinparks.org/itsmypark.html> and clicking on "volunteer."

Keep Austin Beautiful's Clean Sweep event is also coming up, on April 9th from 9-11 AM. I registered a project in Hyde Park (a cleanup of the part of Waller Creek near UT's Intramural Fields). If anyone would like to lead a Clean Sweep event elsewhere in the neighborhood (it could be another stretch of the creek, Shipe Park or whatever portion of the neighborhood that you define) you can register a project at <www.keepaustinbeautiful.org/cleansweep>. The deadline to register a project is March 25th. Volunteers will be able to sign up for the registered projects on that same website soon. You can sign up for the cleanup I registered either via the APF website or by contacting me and letting me know that you want to participate. If you register a cleanup elsewhere in the neighborhood and let me know I'll put an announcement about it on the HPNA website so neighbors know they can register for it. Everyone who participates in Clean Sweep gets a wristband that is his or her ticket to the Clean Sweep party which immediately follows.



Finally, some transportation news. The city is considering closing Bruning Avenue, immediately north of our neighborhood. The March meeting of the North Loop Planning Team will be dedicated exclusively to discussion of a temporary closure of Bruning. It will be held March 10th at 7 PM at 5501 Airport Blvd., in the Travis County election training room. The North Loop Planning Team has extended an invitation to interested neigh-

Continued on following page

Pecan Press

The Pecan Press is published monthly by the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association in Austin, Texas.

Note: Each month's ad and editorial deadline is the 15th of month preceding publication.

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bors to attend this meeting; it is not limited to people who live or own property in the North Loop planning area. Also, our transportation chair has resigned, but I have created a google group for HPNA transportation committee members to use. If you want to be on the HPNA transportation committee and I have not already sent you an invitation to join the google group, please let me know and I'll add you.

— Lisa Harris
 HPNA President
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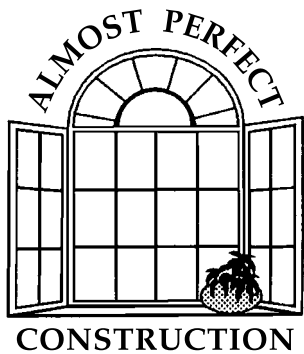
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Membership in HPNA is open to all residents aged 18 years or older who reside within the boundaries of Hyde Park or within 300 feet of the designated boundaries.



New members, and members who lapse in dues for over six months, are eligible to vote at HPNA meetings 30 days after receipt of dues.



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January 20th Meeting Regarding Changes on 51st Street

Participants: Mike Wong (Northfield Neighborhood Association, Ridgetop Elementary); Bryan Dore (Ridgetop Neighborhood Association); Doris Coward, Brent Adair and Jaree Freeman (Hyde Park Neighborhood Association); Stafford Gunning (Windsor Park Neighborhood Association); Betsy Hilton (Mueller Neighborhood Association); Council member Chris Riley; Tom Wald (League of Bicycling Voters); Cindy Black and Scott Johnson (Northfield Neighborhood Association); Gary Schatz, Assistant Director of Traffic Management, Ali Mozdbar, Safety/Traffic Engineer, Department of Traffic Management, Leah Fillion, Department of Traffic Management and Leah Bojo (City of Austin); James Hoskins, Safety Manager (Capital Metro) and an AISD School Safety representative.

Points of Discussion at our meeting with the Department of Traffic Management led by Gary Schatz, Assistant Director of Traffic Management:

1) Justification for installing the Clarkson light and not doing the same on 45th and Bruning which have the same scenarios of side streets and track sitting:

Complaints by residents and CapMetro drivers were numerous enough to warrant a light at Clarkson, but not enough people complained about the Airport intersections at 45th or Bruning/53rd to justify a light. The city wanted to improve safety by reducing the opportunity for cars to sit on the tracks at this intersection. They have fulfilled their goal with a reduction in accidents and view the Clarkson installation as successful. Traffic dismissed the option of "No Right Turn" signs since they would probably be ignored.

2) 311 call transcripts in relation to 51st between Avenue G and Airport and the lights on 51st at Duval, Clarkson and Airport since Clarkson light installation:

To be compiled by the city and given to the meeting participants to study.

3) Accident reports on or near 51st Street between Guadalupe and I-35 since the installation of these lights:

To be compiled by the city and given to the meeting participants to study.

4) Status on potential Bruning closure based on Northfield neighborhood plan:

Northfield's requested closure of Bruning at Duval and Clarkson to increase safety at these intersections. The city awaits reply from affected city entities including CapMetro and EMS to determine

Continued on following page

if closure of Bruning would be acceptable to them. If agreed on by these parties, the city will gather opinions from the community to see if enough residents desire the temporary closures. If so, temporary closure will occur over either 30, 60, or 90 days. Prior to closure, traffic studies will gauge traffic flow on various streets that would be affected by the closure. At the end of the temporary closure traffic studies would determine the effects. At that point a decision will be made to either remove the closure or permanently close Bruning at Duval and Clarkson intersections. No other intersection of Bruning will be closed. Prior to the outreach meeting a web site would be created by the city with information regarding the closure of Bruning.

5) Community outreach/discussion to determine if closure of Bruning is best for traffic flow through the neighborhood PRIOR to temporary closure:

See 4

6) Was a traffic study done on North Loop at Duval or anywhere else on North Loop? If so, please provide detailed report in relation to Duval at 51st traffic study.

Did not discuss

7) Future plans for 51st. Is it planned to widen 51st between Airport and Duval?


Continued on page 6



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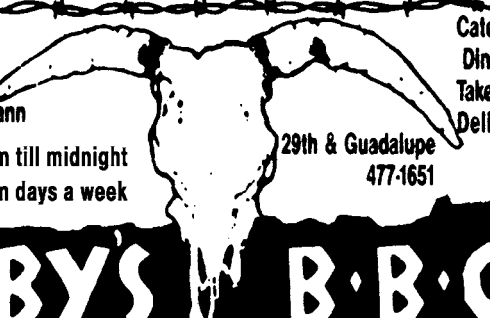
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RUBY'S B.B.Q

HPNA General Meeting Minutes - February 7, 2011

Presentation by Herb Evans on Sherrif's Dept and APD's field release or "cite and release" program.

Presentation by Crime Committee on how to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of theft as well as an update on the tire slasher.

Update by Transportation Committee on traffic lights and congestion at 51st/53rd/Bruning at Duval and Airport as well as the closing of Bruning.

Update by Rhonda Baird of Shipe Park Committee on "It's My Park! Day" and update on the pump house mosaic.

Update by Homes Tour Committee.

Update on neighborhood meeting signs.

Changes on 51st Street...

...cont'd from page 5

There are no current plans for widening 51st Street according to Mr. Schatz. Airport Redevelopment Commission hasn't begun work so they haven't gathered plans to change 51st at this time.

8) Duval/51st light

Discussion of a traffic circle/roundabout at Duval/51st followed. The area is not currently wide enough for a circle to accommodate large delivery trucks. If part of each adjacent property was utilized, a circle could be installed. The city will continue to implement signalization changes at this light to improve traffic flow. If the traffic circle is not installed, neighborhood associations would like sensors that can detect bicycles, mopeds and vehicles. Traffic is exploring "Rest and Red" at 51st/Duval. Rest and Red detects oncoming traffic and cycles from red to green for that traffic. Red encourages traffic to slow down, but doesn't require a stop if there is no other traffic.

9) Inquiry on studies at Airport/51st prior to Clarkson light installation and prior to Mueller build-out.

None

10) Clarkson Bike Boulevard

Clarkson is being considered for closure to vehicular traffic, and a rail trail for bikes next to the tracks could make Clarkson usable only to bicycles and pedestrians.

11) Traffic Signalization at Clarkson

The complexity of signal timing was explained.

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Several tweaks to the signal timing have occurred to improve the traffic routing through this intersection. Ali Mozdbar, City Signal Engineer, mentioned that all improvements to the intersection were done for safety. City ordered an additional signal control, which it feels is the safest configuration. It should arrive within two months. The new signalization removes the ability to turn right on red from 51st to Airport. Changes to signalization for traffic heading north on Airport, turning left onto 51st have been made in the last three weeks. Changes were required due to new safety issues since, after turning left onto 51st, the Clarkson light remained red for 1-12 sec before turning green, creating near rear-ends and vehicles stopping on the tracks. That timing has decreased to about three seconds of delay before the Clarkson light turns green. The safety issues still remain. Gates are engineered to allow cars to clear. Departure gates close after cars have cleared the tracks.

12) Traffic Patterns/Speed

Discussion of redirecting traffic away from 51st onto larger roads including Koenig. "NO TRUCKS" signage is ineffective and rarely enforced. Traffic Calming options such as roundabouts and speed humps would help redirect some traffic but are difficult to get approved. A process is in place for submission of such projects based on certain criteria and chosen based on highest priority needs. Studies are good for two years but then have to be redone. Projects are selected every six months so a project has five opportunities to be chosen before having to repeat the studies. Studies have shown changing the speed limit is ineffective in changing driver speed, though some participants disagree with this.

13) Of the eleven 51st Street safety issues presented to the city, only discussed the issue of accidents at Clarkson/51st/Airport intersections due to the non-synchronization of lights which can cause rear-end crashes.

Time was not available to continue discussion of other safety issues presented to the city. There was discussion about which safety issues take priority, the railroad tracks versus the other 11 issues created by the Clarkson light. Participants did not agree. The city suggested that to address the safety of the railroad tracks, there were tradeoffs such as the new safety issues created, and they deem this acceptable as a tradeoff. The neighborhood associations disagree, which is why we have combined efforts to discuss the issues and come to some resolution on removing them.

14) Child Safety Officer explained that Ridgetop Elementary has a traffic awareness/safety program for students.

– Lisa Harris
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Tire Slasher Suspect Charged...

...cont'd from page 1

helped provide some of the circumstantial evidence needed to charge him. Prior to Hoduski's assignment to the case, these arrests actually worked against proving Kelley's involvement, as most were unaware that it could take over 48 hours for tires to flatten after the characteristic small punctures. Because of this lag time, residents often reported vandalism of their vehicles one to three days after the events themselves, by which time Kelley had been jailed for other offenses. Investigators sometimes wrongfully concluded that this fact disqualified Kelley from being the perpetrator of the reported tire vandalism. Furthermore, other law enforcement officials who were unfamiliar with the suspect's careful nature as it related to potential felony charges (as noted by the nearly complete absence of eye witnesses and camera evidence collected in the last 16 years), did not implement measures which were sufficiently secretive and covert to obtain new and direct evidence of the crimes. The current charges levied against the suspect are cause for hope. Also, Detective Hoduski is still working on measures which can help protect the community when or if Kelley returns, so that we can hope for truly lasting and effective support from APD, whatever the outcome of the trial.

My personal thanks to all who cooperated and contributed in ways both large and small to this effort. Local officials are still hard at work on this case. Many thanks especially to several at APD, Claire Dawson at the District Attorney's Office, CLASP, and residents who actively reached out and shared vital information and generated the necessary focus to create more effective actions within the community.

— Heather Dozier Freeman
Chair, HPNA Crime and Safety
Task Force



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To the yard-owner,
In the case of the second,
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— J.R. Parlson



Constable's Notebook



March 2011

by Constable Bruce Elfant

When Sherri Tibbe checked her credit card statement last March she discovered some unfamiliar purchases including videos, wrinkle treatment and gas. Sherri was a victim of identity theft, and ironically, she is also the Hays County district attorney. Sherri is far from alone in having her identity stolen.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, an identity is stolen every three seconds. In 2009 more than 11.7 million Americans had their identities stolen, resulting in more than \$54 Billion in fraud. Twenty-eight percent of all identity thefts involve the fraudulent use of another person's credit card number followed by utility theft (18%), bank (17%) and employment (12%). Identity thefts have also spread to cell and landline phone service, internet payment services, home mortgages, auto, boat and other forms of financing. Identity theft is the top complaint received by the Federal Trade Commission which cost victims an average of \$2,000. Nearly three quarters of identity theft victims reported having difficulties getting false information removed from credit reports, about half said they had trouble obtaining credit, and 11% found obtaining employment to be more difficult.

The one factor that all types of identity theft have in common is access to our personal information. Identity thieves pick our pockets and purses, go through mailboxes and garbage, search public records, hack into computers, search for weak passwords, run phony ads, browse social networks and even cruise streets looking for unsecure Wi-Fi sites. The big credit card companies employ computer programs that can catch potential fraud almost as soon as it occurs but it is not foolproof. While we can't control all thefts of our personal information, preventing the most common methods used are about as simple as locking our doors at night and not leaving our keys in the car. Secure your mailbox (with lock or slot in door), shred discarded personal information, limit the number of credit cards you use, maintain adequate computer security and never provide personal information over the phone or online unless it is absolutely required and the internet site is known and trusted. Most of us who know

Continued on page 12

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Sense of Impending Doom

I feel like it's circling around the drain.
It feels like something's in the drain,
and I don't know what.
Maybe the centipede of anxiety, lurking.
A hundred whispery whiskery legs, drumming.

I think I left the stove on.
With a pot on the burner.
I think I left the dog out in the night.
Among the coyotes.
I think I left the sprinkler on.
Maybe I forgot to pay this month's note on life.
Maybe I should have that test done after all.
Maybe I don't want to know.
Maybe this is the week they come for me.
Did I close the refrigerator door?
I didn't say that in the email, did I?
Did I make someone mad enough, finally?
Was that stain up there before?
The floorboards shouldn't bow like that.
I should check my balances.

The world is lush and green, the hummingbirds buzz
and the fawns dance among the Mexican hats.
But that moving shadow back behind the lovely
lantanas
may be the puma come round at last.

— Barry Brummett

Constable's Notebook...

...cont'd from page 11

how to protect our personal information do but even so, identity theft increased 12% last year.

Identity theft should be reported immediately to the Austin Police Department's Financial Crimes Unit at 974-3000 or the Travis County Sheriff's Office at 854-9770.

Their websites <www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/fc-about.htm> or <www.tcsheiff.org> contain extensive information about preventing identity theft and what to do if you become a victim.

"Constantly check your account. If you see fraudulent activity, cancel the account immediately and notify law enforcement," said Hays County DA Sherri Tibbe. Her advice intended for others ended up serving her very well.



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Valerie Mansbendel Home Available



Last year's Hyde Park Homes Tour featured the home of Swiss Woodcarver Peter Mansbendel, on the corner of Avenue F and 39th Street. That same craftsmanship is evident in this house, built in 1934 for Valerie Mansbendel and her husband William T. Williams, Jr., as a wedding present from her father Peter Mansbendel and his wife Clotilde Shipe Mansbendel, who lived next door, and the bride's grandparents, Adele and Monroe Shipe, who lived a block away at Avenue G and 39th Street. Shipe had developed Hyde Park in 1891 as the first planned development in Austin and he named this particular area "Shadow Lawn," as marked by still-present concrete benches.

The interior of the home is enhanced by Peter Mansbendel's design and carvings. Perhaps the most unique feature of the home is the carved stone portraits of Valerie and Bill built into the facade of the home.

"This home holds within it a history of much fun and many happy memories, and the special feeling of knowing it was unique. Family next door and friends who came for short visits, and others for long ones, made it a very special place to grow up," said Mansbendel granddaughter Valerie Williams Brown.

The house is for sale for the first time outside the family. It has three bedrooms, two baths, formal living and dining rooms and a family room. For information, contact

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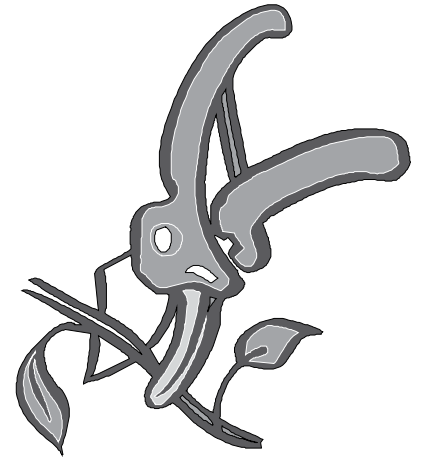
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Trowel & Error!

On April 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Mayfield Park will once again host **Trowel & Error**, the Spring event that annually attracts gardeners from all over Central Texas to hear experts give time-tested tips for beautiful gardens. Although lectures begin at 10:00, the event “opens” at 9:30 for those early birds who want to purchase Mayfield’s hard-to-find heirloom bulbs and perennials for their April gardens and to stroll the garden paths in early morning peacefulness.



Sponsored by Friends of the Parks of Austin, **Trowel & Error** will feature Renee Studebaker, designer, blogger and columnist for the *Austin American-Statesman*, lecturing on Renee’s Bucket Garden List (or How to Become a Container Gardener in Five Easy Steps), Meredith O’Reilly, wildlife authority and habitat steward, discussing The Wildlife Garden-Beauty and Function With Native Plants, and Cher Groody, master gardener and heirloom rose authority, whose topic is Antique Bloomers.

Not to be missed will be the legendary raffle of “garden goodies.” Everyone goes home a winner! It’s a wonderful way, **rain or shine**, to spend a morning learning how to add color into your landscape while relaxing among gregarious peafowl, towering palms, flowering trees, and ponds filled with lilies... and for only a \$5.00 donation!!

For more information contact <neenok@aol.com>, (512) 453-7074 or <mayfieldpark.org>.



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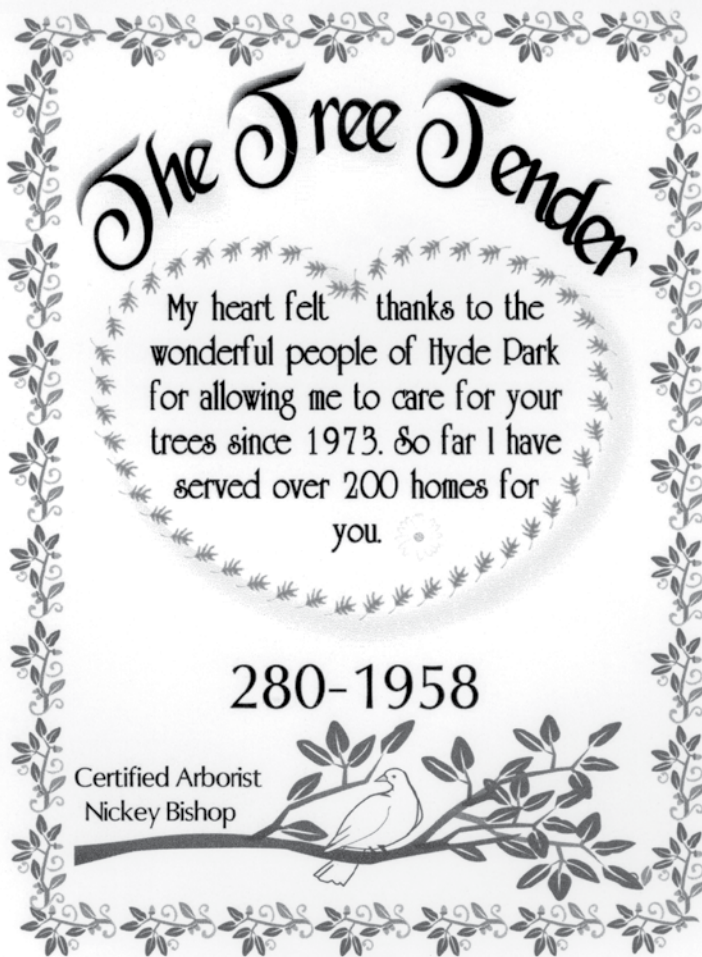


Hyde Park Poets —

Transitions: The past is never dead

The past is never dead
It is not even past
It is a hollow imprint of memories
A hologram, haunting in its endurance
Waiting to be replaced
By a dream, perhaps
Changing into reality,
Knowing, in its loving,
To be ever present,
Timeless, sans human frailties,
Full of love, life, and light;
Existing as a force unto itself;
Like Spring, after a dark, cold winter,
Bringing new beginnings to an old togetherness,
Injecting essence into the hologram,
Giving it life, the clear breaths of the universal kind,
Moving mountains traveling the beyond,
Bequeathing hope eternal.

— *Niyanta Spelman*



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HYDE PARK

Owls Coming to the Ney...

...cont'd from page 1

The Museum is a member of the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin which is devoted to encouraging children and families to interact more with nature. The Austin Nature and Science Center, with which the Elisabet Ney Museum works closely on new nature programs at the museum, was a 2010 recipient of the Austin Children in Nature Collaborative Award.

2011 Nature Programs at the Elisabet Ney Museum

- Celebrate Urban Birds, Saturday, March 12, 2011, 10 am to Noon, a program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology supported locally by the Travis Audubon Society. The Austin Nature and Science Center will present a program on the life and habitat of owls including a live, rescued Eastern Screech Owl, a species often seen in Hyde Park. <www.birds.cornell.edu/celebration>.

Continued on page 18

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Owls Coming to the Ney...

...cont'd from page 17

• Austin Nature Challenge 2011, April through July 2011, part of a state-wide program sponsored by the Texas Forest Service and Texas AgriLife Extension Service that challenges families to complete nature investigation missions as teams at more than fifteen different locations in Austin including the Ney. The challenge culminates in team scrapbooks vying for prizes. <<http://naturechallenge.tamu.edu/missions/central-texas/>>.

• Austin Nature Days, April 2011, Austin's own month-long celebration of nature organized by the many nature-based organizations in the capitol city. www.austinnatureday.org

• Elisabet Ney Museum History, Art and Nature Camp, June 2011, for children ages eight to ten to explore the natural world and the world of Elisabet Ney. The camp will include explorations of Waller Creek and the native Texas landscape, Ney's outdoor living style, and the lives of the Texas Heroes and the great men of Europe Elisabet Ney sculpted, among other activities.

Each program is free with the exception of the History, Art and Nature Camp. Specifics will be announced in coming issues of the *Pecan Press* and other news media. The programs will also be posted on area list serves.

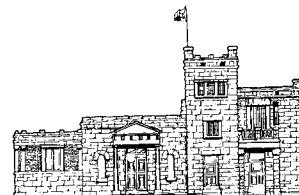
Other Related Programming

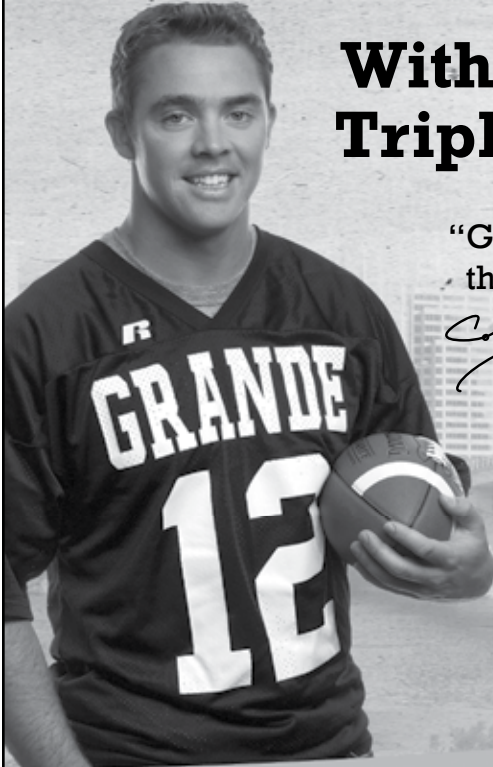
In other related programming, the Elisabet Ney Museum will soon offer nature-based lesson plans as part of its outreach program, Elisabet Ney and Three Texas Heroes, that brings approximately 1500 AISD third graders to the museum each year.

The Museum has been designated a Wildlife Habitat in the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Habitat program that, according to the NWF, "benefits the entire community of plants, wildlife, and people through the creation of sustainable landscapes that require little or no pesticides, fertilizers, or excess watering." The Museum is also being considered as a Best of Texas Wildlife Habitat.

We hope you can join us.

– Mary Collins Blackmon
Elisabet Ney Museum
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