

Z NEWS

FEBRUARY 2009

Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

Love Your Neighborhood, Love to Volunteer

A Message from Richard Gravois, ZNA Co-president

"It's eleven o'clock. Do you know where your children are?" Do you remember that commercial from the seventies? Try this version: "It's eleven o'clock. Do you know where your parents are?" A lot of us have moved into the other side of the caring equation and need to look for assisted living or a nursing home for our parents.

One way to make senior living a little more pleasant is to volunteer at the closest nursing home. You may not know anyone there, and your parents may be many miles away, but if we each spend a few hours a month visiting with these neighbors, each little bit helps. Barton Hills Assisted Living at Kinney and Nash has many volunteer tasks, and the staff is very *(Continued on page 10)*

Meet the New Parks Director

Sara Hensley began her parks career in Austin's lifeguard program, and she's been working her way back to Austin for the last, well, I'll let her tell you how many years it's been. Last year she was hired as the city's director of Parks and Recreation. ZNA's general meeting on February 23 will be our chance to welcome her home, and to talk with her about priorities for the parks budget.

There should also be time to continue our conversation about the management of the big four events (Trail of Lights, Kite Festival, Fourth of July, and Austin City Limits Music Festival) that affect so many Zilker neighbors.

Don't Miss These Park Events

March 7: Friends of Zilker Neighborhood Park, Spring Work Day. Last year the Friends of ZNP added 66 new trees to the City of Austin neighborhood park adjacent to Zilker Elementary School (known as Little Zilker Park). Unfortunately, those plantings coincided with the worst drought since the fifties. To provide some extra TLC for the trees, FZNP is organizing a mulch and water day for the citywide It's My Park Day on March 7. That's the first Saturday in March, from 9 AM to 1 PM. The main activity for the Little Zilker event will be to mulch all the trees on the City of Austin parkland. We will also give a good soak to the trees



Next ZNA Meeting

**Monday, February 23
6:30-8:45 PM**

Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet



Meet and Greet Social at 6:30

Business Meeting at 7



Meet Austin Parks Director

Sara Hensley



Crime Report

Meet Officer Dwayne Kinley
of APD Southwest Command



Zoning Updates



Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters, and
business owners

All Welcome



planted before last year, on both the city parkland and the school campus. The trees planted last year have been on a regular watering schedule, but the older trees are likely to need a boost. Volunteers will be encouraged to adopt one or more of these trees and learn how to water them once a month until the drought breaks.

We will need rakes, wheelbarrows, and shovels to move and spread the mulch. If you want to learn how to water a tree, bring a hose. All volunteers should wear work gloves and work shoes, and it's always a good idea to bring a water bottle and a hat. This is one event that we would love to see rained out, so if you have any tips for making it rain, bring those too.

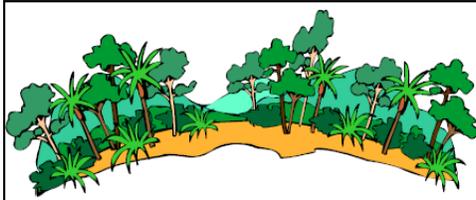
To sign up, e-mail littlezilker@gmail.com or call Gina at 413-3335; please let us know what equipment you can bring. Find out more about It's My Park Day from the Austin Parks Foundation Web site at austinparks.org/.

Feb. 19: Auditorium Shores Improvements, Parks and Recreation Dept. Community Input Meeting. This has gotten some news coverage, mainly about the leash-free dog zone. It also affects the Town Lake Park Master Plan, Phases 3 & 4, that many Zilker neighbors want to see completed. Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, 6 PM.

Feb. 28 and March 7: Barton Springs Pool Cleaning. Friends of Barton Springs Pool is sponsoring a volunteer pool cleaning event during the annual spring cleaning shutdown of the pool. The pool is

scheduled to be shut down from Monday Feb. 23 to Friday March 13. FBSP is organizing volunteers to clean the pool on two Saturdays, Feb. 28 and March 7. If you are interested, contact service@friendsofbartonspringspool.org. By the way, in connection with the master plan for Barton Springs Pool, surveyors and engineers are determining the condition of the pool infrastructure. Attention is currently focused on the problems of the bypass tunnel. Stay in touch with Friends of Barton Springs Pool for updates.

March 1: Zilker Park Kite Festival. See ZilkerKiteFestival.com or call 448-KITE.



Save our Trees!

March 7
9 a.m.

Zilker Neighborhood Park

RSVP: littlezilker@gmail.com or

Gina at 512.413.3335

Bring: Hoses, rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels

We will be mulching & watering trees to save them from the drought.

Volunteer for neighborhood park projects by contacting littlezilker@gmail.com or Kim McKnight at kimmcknight@austin.rr.com.

Donate toward future park improvements by sending your contribution made out to the Austin Parks Foundation (write "Zilker Neighborhood Park" in the memo line) at 816 Congress Ave, Ste. 1680, Austin TX 78701.

See the Little Zilker park master plan at www.main.org/znaweb/parks/index.html.

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Your Zilker Neighborhood Association Executive Committee for 2009

ZNA officers elected for 2009:

Richard Gravois, Co-president: resident 34 years, member 28 years, officer 7 years. Lives on Kinney, 441-3430.

Bobby Rigney, Vice President: resident 21 years, member 10 years, officer 7 years. Lives on Anita, 471-3758.

Steven Jennings, Vice President: resident 2 years, new member, new officer. Lives on Folts, 382-5805.

Ryan Stryker, Secretary: resident 3 years, member 3 years, officer 2 years. Lives on Goodrich, 431-4245.

Andy Elder, Treasurer: resident 6 years, member 4 years, officer 3 years. Lives on Treadwell, 428-9180.

Kurt Koegler, ANC Delegate: resident 2 years, member 2 years, officer 2 years. Lives on Bauerle, 288-0676.

Greg Shotwell, Social Chair: new resident, new member, new officer. Lives on Goodrich, 797-4376.

Lorraine Atherton, ZNews editor, co-president: resident 26 years, member 11 years, officer 11 years. Lives on Arpdale, 447-7681.

Unelected committee chairs:

Kim McKnight, Membership chair and ZNews Distribution coordinator: resident 6 years, member 4 years. Lives on Anita, 663-6422.

Dave Piper, ZNews Advertising coordinator: resident 5

years, member 4 years. Lives on Jessie, 916-9636.

Peggy Pfaff, Zoning chair: resident 10 years, member 3 years,. Lives on Oxford, 466-5043.

Gardner Sumner, Parks and Environment chair: resident 3 years, member 3 years. Lives on Treadwell, 468-6200.

Barbara Cossie, Holiday Family coordinator, founding member of ZNA, 447-4437.



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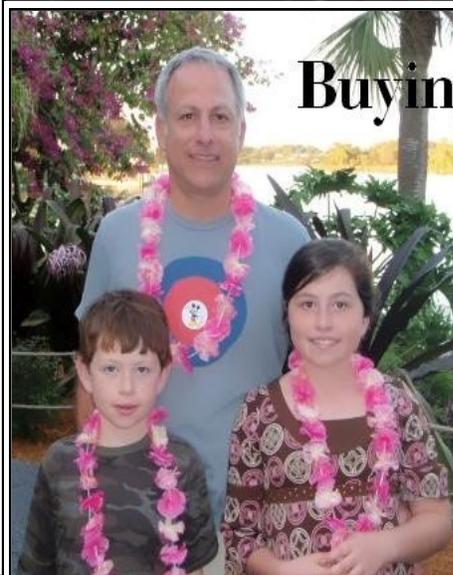
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Looking for Crime in Zilker

by Dave Piper

In response to numerous emails and conversations about home and car burglaries in the Zilker Neighborhood, the ZNA Executive Committee solicited volunteers and formed a crime subcommittee to look at the types of crimes, their location and frequency, and what could be done to reduce Zilker crime. The Austin Police Department keeps crime statistics, of course, but they are not necessarily focused on the area of our neighborhood. The best source of crime stats I could find was at SpotCrime.com. The SpotCrime Web site lists public crime reports by date, time, and type and displays them on a map.

Through SpotCrime, I was able to find Zilker data for the last eight months and organize it into reports on South Lamar and Barton Springs Road, separate from reports on the interior of the neighborhood. For both areas, burglaries of homes and businesses, burglaries of vehicles, theft, and assaults all seem to fluctuate month to month, but the overall trend shows that the rate of any of these types of crimes is relatively constant. There are some spikes (good and bad) at certain times. For a more detailed look, see the summary at www.main.org/znaweb/crime/. In the future, anyone can look at the Zilker Neighborhood area at SpotCrime.com and see how crime rates

compare to the last eight-month period.

The subcommittee has visited with APD, and Officer Dwayne Kinley has accepted our invitation to speak at the February 23 ZNA meeting. He will explain what we neighbors can do to reduce crime (including Neighborhood Watch), and he will answer questions. Also, APD has a statistician dedicated to the Southwest District, of which Zilker Neighborhood is a part. Whenever there is a hot spot, a special APD unit can be directed to the area for an investigative focus and to make their presence known. Hot spots are determined by citizen reports of crime or suspicions of crime, so it is important that we all report suspicious activity or persons by calling 311. These calls have their own special tracking code, which brings them to the attention of the APD statisticians who determine the hot spots. (If you see a crime in progress call 911, though, for an emergency response.)

Land Use and Zoning Update

The ZNA Zoning Committee is monitoring these developments:

- ❖ **1717 Toomey:** Revisions to a multifamily and commercial site plan to replace an RV park.
- ❖ **1713 Bluebonnet:** Site plan submitted for a multifamily development with associated improvements.
- ❖ **1303 Robt. E. Lee:** Proposed subdivision of a 1.5 acre lot into six single-family (SF-3) lots.

The executive committee is following other

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Zilker Park Kite Festival

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at
Zilker Park
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March 1, 2009

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See zilkerkitefestival.com

land use issues at city hall, including the progress of the recommendations of the Waterfront Overlay Task Force, rules changes at the Board of Adjustments, and changes to Austin's noise ordinances. Venues in the neighborhood that hold outdoor music permits are:

- ❖ Baby Acapulco, 1628 Barton Spgs (expires March 27)
- ❖ South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, 1516 S Lamar (April 4)
- ❖ Shady Grove, 1624 Barton Spgs (May 23)
- ❖ Paggi House, 200 Lee Barton (Aug. 7)
- ❖ Uncle Billy's, 1530 Barton Spgs (Aug. 7)
- ❖ Flipnotics, 1601 Barton Spgs (Sept. 10)
- ❖ Irie Bean Coffee Bar, 2310 S Lamar (Dec. 2)

Land use cases are regularly discussed at monthly meetings of the ZNA Executive Committee. If you are interested in a zoning case or other land use issues, please feel free to attend, first Mondays, 7-9PM, at Artz Rib House. *Peggy Pfaff*




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Chimney Swifts for Zilker *by Kim McKnight*

This spring, listen for high-pitched musical chip notes strung together into a rapid twitter. Then look up and try to find the “flying cigar.” These are Chimney Swifts, and the Zilker neighborhood is about to become an even friendlier place for these little birds. The chimney of an old incinerator building adjacent to Zilker Elementary School is being retrofitted to provide a Chimney Swift roosting site. The project has been spearheaded by the

Friends of Zilker Neighborhood Park and the Urban Habitat Committee of Travis Audubon. We are grateful for the support of the Zilker Elementary School principal, Randall Thomson. This project has also received extensive support from Paul and Georgean Kyle of the Driftwood Wildlife Association, a Chimney Swift habitat. For more information about this project, email kimmcknight@austin.rr.com or call 445-4323.

Why should I care about Chimney Swifts?

- ◆ Chimney Swifts eat nearly one third of their own weight in flying insect pests, such as mosquitoes, biting flies, and termites, every day.
- ◆ Chimney Swifts historically used large, hollow trees for nests and roosts. As the ancient forests were cut down, they learned to use chimneys and other built structures instead. Today, just like Purple Martins, Chimney Swifts rely almost entirely on human-built structures for their nest sites.
- ◆ Because they cannot perch like songbirds, Chimney Swifts must have deep shafts in which to raise



- their families and roost at night.
- ◆ Chimney Swifts are protected by State Wildlife Codes and federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916.
- ◆ Like all Neotropical migrants, Chimney Swifts are declining in numbers and need our assistance. Chimney Swifts winter in the Amazon Basin of Peru. They arrive in the continental United States in late March and are gone by early November.
- ◆ Like watching a beautiful sunset, the aesthetic value of observing Chimney Swifts' aerial acrobatics and interactions is a simple pleasure that nature has to offer.

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Don't Miss the Fun at Zilker Elementary School
❖ Two Great Events in February and March ❖

Are you ready for . . .
The Z?

The Z is the Annual Zilker Elementary Art Auction to be held the evening of February 21 at Zilker Elementary.

Each year the Z Art Auction raises money for the Zilker Arts in Education Fund, which supplements the school's academic framework with mind- and heart-expanding art programs like Circle of Light, performances by One World Theater, yoga classes, and much more.

You'll find art in many forms at the Z Art Auction: painting, photography, sculpture, glass, jewelry, textiles. It's wide open!

Help keep the arts in Zilker
Elementary at

Z Art Auction

Thursday, February 21, 2009

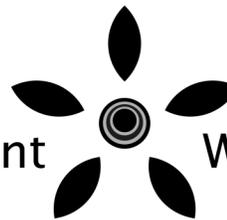
All money raised goes directly to the
Arts in Education Fund.

Zilker Elementary
OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT!
FRIDAY, MARCH 6!

This is a great community event, and inexpensive fun for the whole neighborhood! Come see Jerry Seinfeld's spectacular *Bee Movie* (PG), at Zilker Elementary on a huge outdoor movie screen! Bring a blanket or lawn chair.

\$8 (suggested donation), 12 and under FREE (must be accompanied by an adult). Refreshments available. Gate 6 pm, movie at 7. Benefiting Zilker Elementary School.
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Zilker Holidays Glow Brighter, Thanks to You

by Barbara Cossie, Holiday Family Program Coordinator

Eight families had a happier holiday this past December through ZNA's Holiday Family Program. Over the last eleven years, ZNA has sponsored 63 families through holiday programs. That record of generosity reflects a fundamental part of our neighborhood's character.

"This holiday program is a real blessing to the families the ZNA sponsors," said Kaye Trybus, one of the holiday helpers. "Without the help of the Zilker Neighborhood Association, these families would not have much of a Christmas. So I am glad we can all pull together to help them."

Making the program work takes many hands and many hearts. Thank you to all the Zilker neighbors who donated money, toys, clothes, and household items last year. The program raises about \$2,000 a year, which is used to buy gifts and gift cards for the sponsored families. Last year, said Kaye, "With the money donated, we were even able to buy a bunkbed for one family. The kids were sleeping on the floor."

All the families had children that attended Zilker Elementary School. They are selected by the school counselor, who keeps track of families in need in the school community and helps them put together their wish lists. She always knows more families who need help than ZNA can

sponsor with our two-month fall campaign.

In anticipation of even greater needs during tough economic times, the ZNA executive committee asks that you remember the Holiday Family Program throughout the year. You can help us build up the fund now by adding a donation when you renew your ZNA membership, or give a donation to honor a family member or a friend's birthday or anniversary. As always, your donations to the program will be used to purchase gifts and gift cards for the sponsored families in December, but donations made before November will also allow us to plan ahead with the school counselor to help as many families as possible. Just fill out the form below and send in your donation.

Thank you to Lorraine Atherton, Mike Meier, Bobby Rigney, Kaye Trybus, and Steve Weichert, our Zilker Santa's helpers who shopped, wrapped, and delivered presents. Thank you to Andy Elder, ZNA treasurer, who kept track of the financial donations. Thank you to Peggy at Austin Furniture Outlet on Oltorf Street, who made the bunkbed affordable for the Holiday Family Program. Most of all, thank you to the many neighbors who donated to the program. Without all of you, the program would not be the success it is.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

Contribution for Holiday Family Program: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Memberships, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704

Zilker Neighborhood Association: Frequently Asked Questions

How often does ZNA meet? Quarterly, in February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Who does ZNA represent? Directly: The membership of our association, which is open only to residents within ZNA's boundaries. Indirectly: A larger cross-section through neighbor-to-neighbor discussions and circulation of more than 2800 newsletters.

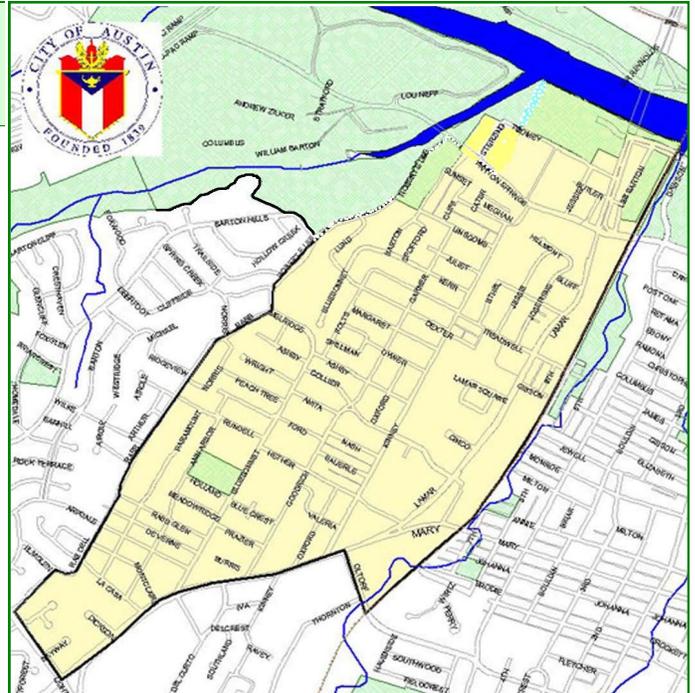
How many members does ZNA have? As of November, 145 members have paid dues or will be eligible to vote as soon as they renew.

Is Zilker@yahoo.com the official list serve for ZNA? No, but the Yahoo group is a useful communication vehicle. It is open to all residents, whether they are ZNA members or not.

How many people belong to the Yahoo group? 515.

How can I contact the association by e-mail?
ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.

How does the ZNA Executive Committee arrive at a position on an issue? The committee considers several factors in determining a position that is consistent with the sentiment of the neighborhood, beginning with the ZNA bylaws and including, depending on the issue, the ZNA neighborhood planning survey conducted in 2004, the City of Austin neighborhood planning survey conducted in 2005, ZNews surveys, input gathered from



The boundaries of ZNA include Zilker Park on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The southern boundary is Barton Skyway. The northern boundary is the lake.

discussions and resolutions adopted at our quarterly meetings, discussion on the list serve and e-mail input from neighbors, and political consultation with board and commission members and City Council members.

A new ZNA Web site is under construction. Meanwhile, the ZNA bylaws may be viewed in the files section of the Yahoo group or on the Web at main.org/znaweb.



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(Continued from page 1)

capable of matching volunteers and tasks.

Steve Barnick, a former ZNA officer, is organizing a way to volunteer on your own block: "Neighbors, anyone in need of help getting their blue recycling cans to the street or wanting to volunteer to help those in need of assistance please contact Steve Barnick at ding_dong_slb@yahoo.com or leave a message at phone number 444-0674. Our goal will be to pair up folks in need with neighbors willing to help so that Zilker is the leader in recycling." Staying in touch with older neighbors is an important part of Neighborhood Watch programs, according to our police district representative (see page 4), and helping with weekly trash and recycling pickups is one of the most common icebreakers in that regard. It works both ways: you can help out your older neighbor once a week, and your stay-at-home neighbor can keep an eye on your home while you are away.

The benefits of volunteerism spread far beyond the neighborhood's boundaries, but ZNA can't survive without it. The purpose of ZNA is "to seek to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city" (from the ZNA bylaws).

The association relies directly and entirely on neighbors who volunteer their time to research issues, craft recommendations, and represent our interests at city hall.

Over the last several years, most of that volunteer time has been consumed by zoning and land use issues. Now that the boom is over and we are facing tough economic times, we hope we can refocus on the charitable organizations and nonprofit efforts that are so important to Zilker's quality of life. To those of you who have been volunteering all these years, thank you for making Zilker such a neighborly place to live. If you are new to the neighborhood and want to join in the spirit of volunteerism, check out this partial list of volunteer opportunities:

- ◆ Zilker Elementary School: reshelving books, reading tutoring (see page 7)
- ◆ Little Zilker Park: tree planting and maintenance (see page 2)
- ◆ Friends of Barton Springs Pool: pool cleaning (see page 2)
- ◆ Meals on Wheels: delivering lunches from the distribution site at Faith United Methodist (www.mealsonwheelsandmore.org)
- ◆ Big Brothers Big Sisters: mentoring children (www.bbbscentraltx.org/Live/_index.shtml)
- ◆ Caritas of Austin: housing, food, and education services (caritasofaustin.org/volunteers/spoon.php)
- ◆ Barton Hills Assisted Living: bartonhillsal.com

This time of year, the ZNA treasurer usually gets a few questions about tax deductions and ZNA dona-

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tions (see page 9 for other Frequently Asked Questions). Dues and donations paid directly to ZNA are not deductible on federal income tax returns. Although ZNA is a nonprofit, it primarily represents its members in governmental and political arenas and therefore is not eligible for charitable tax deductions. Most of the fundraising efforts that we support, however, have separate accounts administered through groups like the Austin Parks Foundation, which do have tax-exempt status. If you plan on making a donation to a ZNA program and would like that donation to be tax deductible, please ask about making the donation directly to a charitable organization, rather than ZNA.

Zilker Gets Out the Vote

In the November election, voter turnout for Zilker precinct 332 was 75%, 10 points above the citywide turnout of 65%. Precinct 462 (east of Kinney) also beat the average, with 67% turnout. The best news is that both precincts, which already had a high registration rate, increased their number of registered voters by more than 5% between the May and November elections in 2008. The two precincts combined had 4428 registered voters in November. Of the 3197 votes cast, the Obama-Biden ticket won 80% in Precinct 462 and 83% in Precinct 332.

Your next chance to vote will be in the City Council elections in May. Turnout for last year's city elections was abysmal: 19% in 332, 9% in 462, and only 10% citywide.

Lorraine Atherton

Twin Oaks Branch Library Delay: A revised construction schedule provided by the general contractor in January has moved the planned opening of the new branch library at Mary and S. Fifth from August to October 2009. The Library Department will closely monitor the performance of this contractor. Work expected in the upcoming weeks includes site work, concrete work, retention pond and irrigation piping, concrete sidewalks, structural steel corrections, steel roof decking installation, steel angle and metal plate connections for the wood trusses, and replacement of the rejected north retaining wall. *ci.austin.tx.us/library/cip.htm*

The Law Office of Robin Theobald Cravey

Robin Cravey
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Z **NEWS**

Newsletter
of the Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

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2009 Arpdale St., Austin, TX 78704

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Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

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Distribution: Kim McKnight, 663-6422

2009 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

Co-Presidents: Richard Gravois, 441-3430, and
Lorraine Atherton

1st VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758

2nd VP: Steven Jennings, 382-5805

Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245

Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180

Social Chair: Greg Shotwell, 797-4376

ANC Delegate: Kurt Koegler, 288-0676

ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437

Membership: Kim McKnight, 663-6422

ZNews Advertising: Dave Piper, 916-9636

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 468-6200

Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, 466-5043

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