

# Z NEWS

Newsletter of the  
Zilker Neighborhood  
Association

JULY 2012

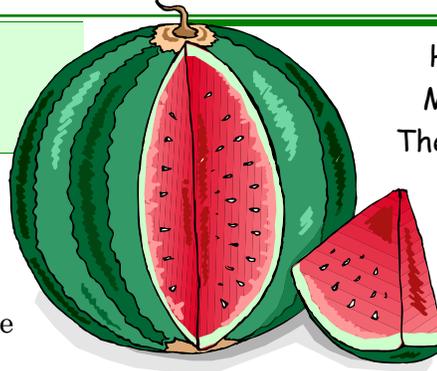
Austin, Texas  
Established 1981

## Creative Volunteering

by Dave Piper, ZNews advertising coordinator

SOME OF THE MOST BELOVED features of the Zilker Neighborhood emerged from the creativity and labor of people who believed they could make a difference. Do you remember walking down the Kinney hill before there was a sidewalk, as you cringed from passing cars? Do you remember Little Zilker Park next to the school before the dozens of new trees were planted and the playscape was built? One of the gems of the neighborhood is the purple martin sanctuary on Virginia Street. These features have something in common—they were born and maintained by the efforts of volunteers.

These projects energize the neighborhood through the contributions of a wide variety of people. Some work privately and some give their time via the Zilker Neighborhood Association; many do both. This issue of ZNews features just a few of them, neigh- *(Continued on page 8)*



Hey, Zilker folks,  
Mark your calendars  
The Zilker Neighborhood  
Association  
invites you to the  
**WATERMELON  
SOCIAL**

**Monday, July 30  
7-8:30 PM**

behind Zilker Elementary School  
1900 block of Ann Arbor



Meet your neighbors, eat watermelon,  
play games, win prizes,  
and celebrate Zilker



July is by tradition the time of the year when  
the only item on the ZNA agenda is fun.  
Neighbors meet and mingle and catch up on  
the latest news in the 'hood,  
while we all cool off with watermelon.

Look for kiddie water fun,  
a watermelon seed spitting contest,  
and prizes from local businesses.  
ZNA members are automatically eligible for  
prizes. Not a member yet? Anyone who joins  
ZNA or renews a membership on or before  
July 30 will also be eligible for free prizes to  
be given away at the Social.

*(See page 8 for more membership info.)*



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,  
business neighbors

❖ ❖ All Welcome ❖ ❖



## U.S. SENATE RUN-OFFS

There are run-offs in both the Republican  
and Democratic primaries this month, so get  
out there and vote again. No excuses. If you  
did not vote in a party primary at the end of

May, you can still vote in the run-off. Use it or lose it.

Early voting is July 23-27. Election Day is **Tuesday, July 31**

**Precincts 332 and 340:** Zilker School (1900 Bluebonnet)

**Precinct 342:** Barton Hills School (2108 Barton Hills Dr.)

Check your precinct through the Voter Name Search at  
[traviscountytx.org](http://traviscountytx.org)

*More election info on page 6*

## Inside this issue:

Page 2-3, *Park and Sidewalk Activists Unite!*

Page 4, *Lamar Plaza Business Update*

Page 6, *Elections Past and Future*

Page 10-11, *Parking, Residential and Musical*

## Little Zilker Park and Zilker Elementary Grounds Improvements

by Gina Diehl, Chair, Friends of Little Zilker Park

THREE MAJOR PROJECTS are under way around Little Zilker Neighborhood Park and Zilker Elementary School. See them for yourself at the ZNA Watermelon Social on July 30.

**Ann Arbor Sidewalk** The City of Austin has started the sidewalk construction along Ann Arbor, mentioned in previous *ZNews* reports. The concrete was recently placed for the length along the school property, including the corner at Rundell and Ann Arbor. As this newsletter went to the printer, work was beginning on the section along the park property.

**Bluebonnet Playscape** The reconstruction of the playscape next to the tennis courts has been delayed while the City Arborist evaluates the trees to be impacted by the new footings. The city's Parks and Recreation Department anticipates the work will be completed before school starts. They have indicated that a large elm tree will be removed due to the safety risk of falling limbs. This will be a tremendous loss of shade.

### Ann Arbor Drinking Fountain

The new drinking fountain is serviceable (see *ZNews* February 2012). The fountain project was accomplished within the original budget, with \$750 remaining to provide trash cans, seating, and landscaping. The balance of the vision (a decomposed granite node, a bench, and landscaping) will be subsequent projects for the FLZP,

and we are hoping new FLZP members can lead these efforts at future workdays.

### Future Projects

*Workdays:* Look for the fall workday date to be set for the second or third weekend in October.

*Tree maintenance:* The City of Austin's forestry staff have been swamped trying to care for trees in the drought, so the seasonal pruning anticipated for the newer trees in Little Zilker will be delayed.

*Park access:* The redesign of the Bluebonnet ADA ramp that provides access to the playscape was not included in the work currently under way. After recent discussions with the school's advisory committee, FLZP will be studying this east boundary area. The ZNA executive committee has decided to dedicate \$5000 of its Rolling Stones park funding to the ramp's reconstruction.

### Join the Friends of Little Zilker Park

In May, Kim McKnight handed off the responsibility of chairing this coalition of neighborhood and school volunteers to Gina Diehl. Thanks to Gina and Kim, FLZP has made great progress over the last year, but they need more members. To join, e-mail [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com). To make a tax-deductible donation, visit the Austin Parks Foundation Web site ([austinparks.org](http://austinparks.org)), and look for "Little Zilker."



**Take a Peek at What  
Southpaws Playschool  
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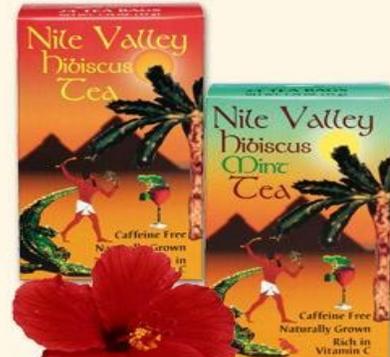
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**Calling all Zilker bike, pedestrian, and public transit activists**  
*by Eileen Nehme*

I'M STARTING a neighborhood group that's dedicated to increasing bike, pedestrian, and bus travel and reducing auto traffic in the Zilker area. We had our first gathering on July 19, at Gibson Bar and Luke's Inside Out, after this newsletter went to press, so we will most likely be announcing a clever acronym for the group's name by the time you read this.

We will target both individual and environmental change. We will promote walking, biking, and bus use among residents and visitors; and we will make it safer and more pleasant for nonmotorized travel.

Some ideas: regular social bus outings and bike rides to downtown and businesses on Lamar (for adults and families); lobbying the city for a ped/bike crossing light at Barton Drive to cross Barton Springs Road; working with businesses on South Lamar to have specials for bikers, walkers, and bus riders, increased bike parking, etc. Maybe we can help out the neighbors near South Lamar to get residential parking permits going (see page 10) or help promote biking and walking to Zilker Elementary. I've got lots more ideas and I'm sure others do, too!

Let's get creative, have some fun, and make some things happen!

E-mail me directly at [eileen.nehme@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.nehme@gmail.com),

or post a message on [Zilker@Yahoogroups.com](mailto:Zilker@Yahoogroups.com)

*Editor's Note:* Eileen Nehme is also a new member of Friends of Little Zilker Park

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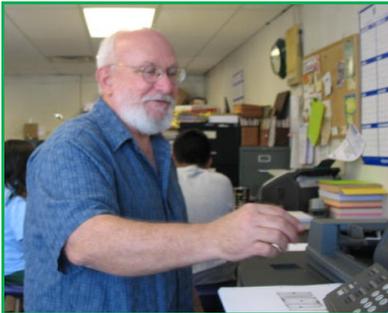
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# The End of an Era

by Lorraine Atherton, ZNews editor

WHETHER THE GREYSTAR redevelopment of **Lamar Plaza** is on again or off again, it's clear that South Lamar has passed the point of no return. Our fifties shopping center is no longer the hub for neighborhood business that it was in the twentieth century.

A quick inventory in mid-July found that the antiques shop **Let's Dish** had closed, Grace of **Bitch'in Threads** had reportedly retired and moved to Australia, **Sherri's** salon was ready to close, and **World Spirit Books** and **Heart of Texas Music** were both holding moving sales. **Southside Printing** is moving at the end of this month, to a space near Half-Price Books. **Lamar**



Harold, ZNA's printer, will likely have Southside Printing packed up and ready to leave Lamar Plaza by the time you read this.

**Plaza Drug Store** will be moving after Labor Day, to 1509 S. Lamar (where Slick Willie's used to be). Randy Palmer of **South Austin Gym** says he has a new location lined up on Manchaca, if necessary. Henry of **Big Bertha's Bargain Basement** is looking at a location in north Austin.



Steven and Leslie Fulton, owners of **Austin Vintage Guitars** in Lamar Plaza, are determined to stay open for loyal South Austin customers like Henry Fleming (left). They just don't know where.

Meanwhile, "For Lease" signs have sprouted on commercial properties up and down the Boulevard. Landmarks like **Artz Rib House** and the old **Kerbey Lane South** location sit vacant. (Art and Z are cooking, by the way, at Jax on 29th, across the street from the old Rome Inn



The old Kerbey South site, at Dickson and South Lamar, has been vacant six months.

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South Lamar vacancies: the anchor store in a shopping center (above) and a quirky hair salon in the 2300 block (below).



location, and Kerbey has moved a couple blocks south, to the Corners shopping center.)

The popularity of businesses near Manchaca, like the **Soup Peddler**, **Amy's Ice Cream**, and the new Kerbey Lane location, along with the announcement that **Wheatsville Food Co-op** is opening a new grocery store at 4001 South Lamar, in the Lamar Oaks Shopping Plaza, seems to be shifting the neighborhood's center to the south. (For Wheatsville updates, see [www.wheatsville.coop](http://www.wheatsville.coop).)

If you are interested in nurturing local businesses and neighborhood planning, ZNA has a place for you on our zoning and planning committee. See page 8 to learn how to volunteer.



More empty retail space, next door to the vacant Artz Rib House.



**Lamar Plaza Drug Store**  
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**Lamar Plaza Drug Store will be relocating to 1509 South Lamar Blvd (near Starbucks).**

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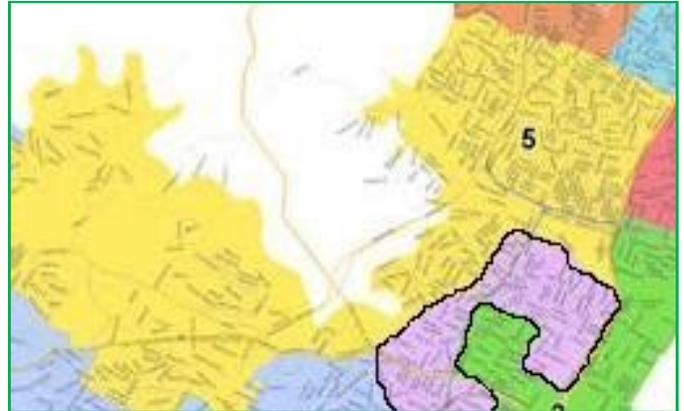
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**City Council Election Reform: Now Is the Time**

*by Lorraine Atherton, South Central Coalition*

THANKS TO EVERYONE who voted in the City Council elections on May 12, 2012. In Zilker precincts 332 and 340 combined, 927 votes were cast, for a turnout of 21.3%. That was about the same as our turnout for last year's runoff, almost double the citywide turnout, but still too low to maintain a healthy democracy. In the Mayor's race, the citywide turnout was only 10.6%.

Brigid Shea won 58% of the vote in Precinct 332, but that wasn't enough. Lee Leffingwell managed to avoid a runoff in the Mayor's race by winning just 25,446 votes citywide. Remember that number the next time the City Council and their political analysts argue that Austin voters



Zilker is now split between two AISD School Board districts. Precinct 332 has been moved to District 5 with West Austin and Oak Hill, represented by Mark Williams, who is up for reelection in November. Precinct 340 remains in the northwest corner of Lori Moya's District 6, outlined in black here.

**Zilker City Council Election Turnout, May 12, 2012**

	<b>Precinct 332</b>	<b>Precinct 340</b>
Registered Voters	2764	1593
Votes Cast	687	240
Turnout	24.9%	15.1%
<b>Zilker Combined</b>		
Registered Voters	4357	
Votes Cast	927	
Turnout	21.3%	

districts drawn by a commission that is independent of the City Council, with only the mayor elected citywide. AGR has delivered a petition with more than 30,000 signatures supporting the plan. The only council member with that much voter support is Sheryl Cole, who won 32,395 votes, or 71%, in May. And Cole supports the 10-1 plan.

will not approve the 10-1 plan reforming the election of council members. The plan, promoted by Austinites for Geographic Representation (AGR), would elect the council from 10 single-member

If you support City Council election reform, now is the time to contact the council and let them know where you stand. They are scheduled to vote to put a competing proposal on the November ballot at their August 2 meeting.

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**What do you want to vote for in November?**

THE AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOODS Council (ANC) will be considering at its July 25 meeting its own recommendations for a 2012 City of Austin bond referendum.

ANC believes that any capital improvements bond package must address neighborhood needs, such as those identified in neighborhood plans and by neighborhood associations, without imposing an unwarranted tax burden.

With the tax burden in mind, the ANC proposal takes as its starting point the lesser of the two alternatives offered by the Bond Election Advisory Task Force (the \$400 million package rather than \$575 million).

Exceptions to the Task Force recommendation include:

- ◆ A larger amount, \$100.5 million, for affordable housing, equitably distributed by city ordinance;
- ◆ \$30 million for sidewalks, ramps, curbs, and gutters citywide;
- ◆ \$27 million for improvement of the North Lamar and Burnet corridors;
- ◆ \$14.6 million for East 12th streetscape improvements;
- ◆ \$11 million for neighborhood plan parks improvements.

The total recommendation would be no more than \$457.3 million.

See the April 2012 ZNews for a summary of five projects that ZNA has proposed for inclusion in this or future bond packages.

**DO NOT MISS THE NOVEMBER 6 ELECTION.** Last day to register to vote is Tuesday, October 9. Early voting will begin October 22.

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(Continued from page 1) bors like Gina Diehl, who has made such a difference to the Friends of Little Zilker Park (page 2); Eileen Nehme, who is creating a new group for better transportation (page 3); and Garron Guszak, who is organizing his own block to apply for a city parking program (page 10).

If you're looking to make a difference in your own neighborhood, there are small and large tasks that occasionally pop up for ZNA. For example, this newsletter is hand-delivered by dozens of neighbors, who each volunteer to spend about an hour walking a few blocks every quarter. They are quite literally following in the footsteps of the handful of volunteers who first published and distributed the newsletter 30 years ago.

In much the same way, every sidewalk gap filled or park improvement completed in Zilker today began years ago when a few concerned neighbors got together to try and make things better. There are always meetings about sidewalks, bike routes, traffic flow, construction projects, and trees, just to name a few, and ZNA

is looking for ways to bring neighbors together and get the most out of our volunteer efforts.

If you're interested in contributing some time, either a little or a little more, please contact ZNA and we will try to match you up with a neighborhood group that suits your interests.

**Call for ZNA Officers**

JULY TO SEPTEMBER is traditionally the time to recruit new officers and committee chairs for the Zilker Neighborhood Association. The members of the ZNA executive committee have been worked hard over the last two years, and many of them have decided to refocus their volunteer efforts. They will still be active in and around the neighborhood, but ZNA will need to fill at least four elected positions on the 2013 Executive Committee and, we hope, lighten the workload for everybody. Specifically:

♦ Connie Temple has resigned as our **delegate to the Austin Neighborhoods Council** to concentrate instead on ZNA's membership committee.

♦ Steve McGuire resigned as ZNA second **vice president** but is continuing to represent us on the committee that plans the Austin City Limits

**BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY**

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

Membership affords you the opportunity to vote on important issues that are addressed at our association quarterly meetings. Please note that voting privileges are activated thirty days after membership dues are received. However, if you were a paid member last year, you can renew your membership anytime this year (prior to and including the general meeting dates) and retain voting privileges.

Be sure to note issues that are important to you in the comments section below.

**Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member name and email address below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional contribution: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:  
ZNA Memberships, 1115 Kinney Ave. #42, Austin, TX 78704  
or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting

Comments:

Questions? Please email: [membership@zilkerneighborhood.org](mailto:membership@zilkerneighborhood.org)

Music Festival.

♦Ryan Stryker has resigned as ZNA secretary but will continue as Web master for ZilkerNeighborhood.org. ♦And this fall, Matt Ditlow will be moving to the east side of South Lamar, just beyond ZNA's boundaries, so he will not be able to continue as our social chair or as wrangler for the ZNews route walkers.

Now is the time to think about what you can do for the neighborhood. Call Richard Gravois or any of the other executive members listed on the back of this newsletter, or e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com, or come to the Watermelon Social on July 30, to volunteer (or to nominate someone else).

Frequently Asked Questions

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 of residents through neighbor-to-neighbor discussions and circulation of about 2800 newsletters.

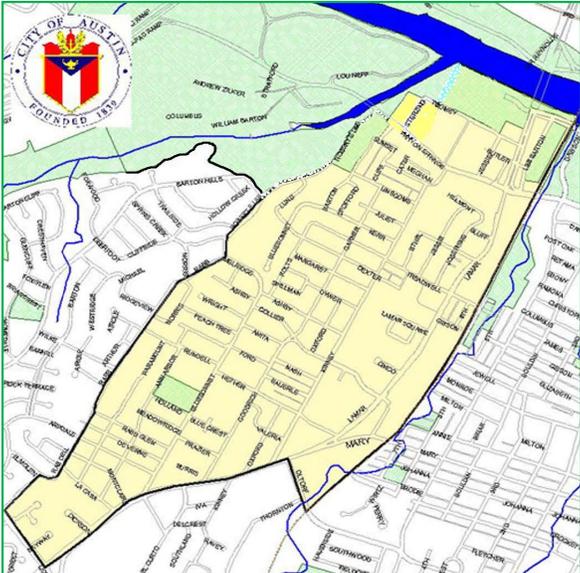
How many members does ZNA have? As of June 2012, 232 members had paid dues or would be eligible to vote as soon as they renewed.

Is Zilker@yahoogroups.com the official list serve for ZNA? No, but the Yahoo group is a useful communication vehicle. All residents are welcome, whether they are ZNA members or not. ZNA is also working to improve neighborhood communication through the ZNA Web site, ZilkerNeighborhood.org.

How many people belong to the Yahoo group? 928.

For more information, including the association's bylaws, visit the ZNA Web site at zilkerneighborhood.org

ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The south boundary is Barton Skyway, and the north limit is Lady Bird Lake. Residents on both sides of boundary streets are eligible for membership.



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## Residential Parking Permits Expand to Kinney Avenue

*by Garron Guszak, Kinney neighbor*

ON JANUARY 6, 2012, I applied for a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program for Kinney Avenue from South Lamar to Hether Street for the hours of 5 PM to midnight, seven days a week. With the opening of the restaurants near Kinney Avenue along South Lamar it had reached the point where this end of Kinney Avenue is on most nights filled with parked cars, making this area congested and at times dangerous. Our neighbors on Oxford Avenue (one street to the south) have had residential permit parking for two years now, and it has greatly improved conditions on their blocks (see *ZNews* July 2010).

I received the paperwork for the petition on March 3, and the City of Austin required me to seek signatures for the 20 properties along Kinney identified in the petition. Of the 20 properties, I was able to get in touch with 16 residents and secured “yes” signatures from all 16, which easily put us above the 60% threshold required by the City of Austin. At the end of May, I posted signs along Kinney Avenue notifying all passersby that the street is being considered for a residential permit parking zone. I also delivered notices to businesses bordering our street informing them that the RPP application would be reviewed at the June 11 meeting of the ZNA Executive Committee. At that meeting, the executive committee voted to support the petition. [*Editor's note:* Representatives of the



Overflow parking on Kinney Avenue, just off South Lamar, near the Black Sheep Lodge restaurant. This photo was taken in July 2010, shortly after residential parking permits went into effect one block to the south, on Oxford.

Black Sheep Lodge restaurant attended that meeting and expressed support for RPP.] I walked all the paperwork and signatures to Mario Porras (the City of Austin transportation staffer who has been guiding me through the process). At some point in all of this the City of Austin validated our petition and conducted a field check of parking conditions on our street during the hours specified in our petition.

So now we wait to hear back from the Austin Transportation Department.

*For more info, contact Garron Guszak at [garron.guszak@gmail.com](mailto:garron.guszak@gmail.com).*

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## Get Set for ACL Festival

THE AUSTIN CITY LIMITS Music Festival will be Oct. 12-14 this year.

At the first of the annual planning meetings between the event promoter, representatives of the nearest neighborhoods, and the City of Austin in mid-July, the main topic was the traffic and parking plan. Last year, ZNA requested temporary No Parking zones on one side of Kinney, Garner, Lund, and Meghan, to keep traffic moving through the neighborhood and to keep our narrow residential streets open for emergency vehicle access. The No Parking zones were successful enough that other neighborhoods are considering similar proposals, and they have been requested along Toomey and Sterzing.

Expect roads leading into the park area to close at midnight on Thursday and reopen midnight on Sunday. Access into the Zilker neighborhood is also usually restricted at Kinney and Virginia, at Sunset and Barton Springs Road, and at Lund and Rabb Road.

In the past, two or three Zilker neighbors have volunteered to monitor parking and traffic over the three days of the festival, phoning in problems to a special hotline. We need many more volunteers than that. If you live north of Collier, please volunteer to monitor your own block during the festival. For more information, contact Steve McGuire at the number on the back of this newsletter, or e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.

The event Web site continues to encourage people to use Capital Metro or other alternative methods of transportation, especially bicycles, and not to drive and park in the neighborhoods adjacent to Zilker Park. Check ACLfestival.com for the latest info.

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# **Z** Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood **NEWS** Association

[www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org)  
2009 Arpdale St., Austin, TX 78704

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## 2012 Executive Committee of ZNA

### **Elected Officers:**

*President:* Andy Elder, 428-9180  
*1st VP:* Richard Gravois, 441-3430  
*2nd VP:* Open  
*Secretary:* Open  
*Treasurer:* Skip Smith, 592-8038  
*Social Chair:* Matt Ditlow, 590-0929  
*ANC Delegate:* Open  
*ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

### **Committee Chairs:**

*ACL Festival:* Steve McGuire, 447-2928  
*Holiday Family Program:* Barbara Cossie, 447-4437  
*Membership:* Connie Temple, 592-8039  
*Parks and Environment:* Gardner Sumner, 468-6200  
*Sound:* Bill Neale, bneale15@yahoo.com  
*Web, ZilkerNeighborhood.org:* Ryan Stryker, 431-4245  
*ZNews Advertising:* Dave Piper, 916-9636

### 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, at Casa Garcia in Lamar Plaza, for now. Watch the Web site for updates.

**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.

*Advertisers:* ZNA reserves this newsletter's limited advertising space for businesses that are located or based within the boundaries of the neighborhood association.

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