

Speed, Bonds, and VMU

A Message from the President

by Jeff Jack, President, ZNA

As daylight saving time winds down and we prepare to set our clocks back for fall, things are supposed to slow down a bit, but not here in the Zilker neighborhood. Besides the traditional holiday cheer of the Zilker Zamboree (p. 7) and the ZNA Holiday Family Program (p. 8), the next few months will be crowded with many important issues. Just to mention a few:

Speed Limits on Zilker Streets

In the last legislative session, the Texas Transportation Code was amended to allow a city to set a 25 mph speed limit in residential areas under certain circumstances. Before implementing the new residential speed limit citywide, the Austin transportation department wants to try it out in a few pilot neighborhoods, including Zilker. Streets that are less than 35 feet wide, not a state highway, and where parking is not prohibited, are eligible for the lower speed limit. That should include most streets in Zilker, unless the residents decide, for instance, that parking restrictions trump speed limits on Kinney. The City is interested in what our neighbors think about this new program. At the ZNA quarterly meeting on October 23, we will have a list of streets that are eligible and those that are not. Don't miss this opportunity to share your concerns and comments with the City. (Austin City Limits Festival traffic report, p. 10. Expect more of the same for the Rolling Stones concert Sunday, Oct. 22.)

★ **Where Does Your Precinct Vote?** ★

- ✓ Precinct **332** votes at Zilker Elementary School, on Bluebonnet at Hether.
- ✓ Precinct **462** votes at the MHMR office at 1700 South Lamar, Suite 101, off Collier.
- ✓ Precinct **342**, which now includes the old Precinct 325, votes at Barton Hills Elementary School, at 2108 Barton Hills Drive.

Early voting for the November 7 election begins Monday, October 23, and ends Friday, November 3. Vote early at the Salvation Army Thrift Store in Lamar Plaza, 1120 South Lamar, Mon-Sat 10 AM-

Next Quarterly ZNA Meeting

Monday, October 23, 2006

**Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet**

Meet your neighbors.
Learn about issues affecting you and
the neighborhood you live in.

6:30 pm Happy Half Hour

7:00 pm Election of Officers

Holiday Family Program kickoff

New Residential Speed Limit

Neighborhood Planning and VMU

ACL Festival and Rolling Stones Report

Homeowners, renters, and business owners

all welcome.

November Bond Election

On November 7, Austinites will be voting on many local and statewide races. Also on the ballot will be seven City of Austin bond propositions. The ZNA Executive Committee has reviewed these proposals and found two of them to be particularly worthy of support. Proposition 2 includes \$95 million for drainage and water quality improvements and \$50 million to acquire environmentally sensitive open space to protect (Continued on page 3)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

7 PM (closed Sunday). Find more voter info at traviscountytax.org/goVoters.do.

Special Ballot Alert. The special election for our redrawn Congressional District 25 is separate from the general election. The Congressional candidates should appear on the instruction page at the beginning of the ballot. The general election races begin on the second page of the ballot. Voting a straight ticket in the general election will NOT include the Congressional race, so don't forget to vote for a Congressman before you go on to the rest of the ballot. As always, before you cast your ballot, check the summary page. ★

New ZNA Officers for 2007

The Zilker Neighborhood Association elects new officers every fall, at the October quarterly meeting. Below is the slate of candidates recruited by the current executive committee, but it is not too late for you to volunteer to serve (or to volunteer someone else). The ZNA bylaws allow the executive committee to accept nominations up to a week before the fall meeting. This year, the meeting date is October 23, so you have until Monday, October 16, to make nominations. Phone any of the executive committee members listed on the back of this newsletter, or e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.

Besides the elected officers, ZNA needs volunteers to chair committees. We need a neighbor who can keep track of a fairly simple spreadsheet to head up our membership committee, and someone to coordinate traffic issues, especially along Kinney Avenue.

The current executive committee of ZNA has nominated these neighbors to serve as elected officers in 2007:

President: Jeff Jack

First Vice President: Richard Gravois

Second Vice President: Bobby Rigney

Secretary: Ryan Stryker

Treasurer: Andy Elder

ANC Delegate: Robert Singleton

Z-News Editor: Lorraine Atherton

Social Chair: Rachel Elder

The following neighbors have agreed to serve on the executive committee in unelected positions in 2007:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie

Neighborhood Planning: Dave Piper

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner

Town Lake Park: Kaye Trybus

Zoning: Peggy Pfaff

CITY BOND PROPOSITIONS

The Austin City Council has approved the following ballot language for seven propositions on the November 7 ballot:

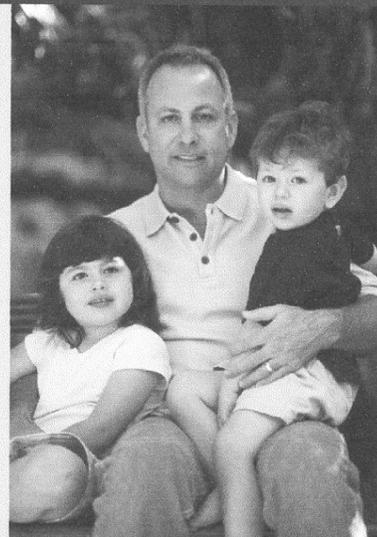
- 1. Transportation (\$103.1 million):** This proposition includes funding for reconstructing streets; constructing and reconstructing sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure; and improving traffic signal systems.
- 2. Drainage and Water Quality Protection (\$145 million):** This proposition includes funding to implement the Watershed Protection Master Plan.
- 3. Parks Facilities and Parkland (\$84.7 million):** This proposition includes funding for renovating and improving public parks, recreation services and other parks facilities and infrastructures.
- 4. Community and Cultural Facilities (\$31.5 million):** This proposition includes funding for constructing, renovating, improving and equipping community and cultural facilities.
- 5. Affordable Housing (\$55 million):** This proposition includes funding for rental housing development and home ownership programs.
- 6. Central Library (\$90 million):** This proposition includes funding for constructing and equipping a new central library facility.
- 7. Public Safety Facilities (\$58.1 million):** This proposition includes funding for constructing, renovating, improving and equipping public safety facilities.

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our water resources. These programs will help prevent flooding in neighborhoods, keep Austin green, and take another step to preserve the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer. Preserving both open space and our local water resources should be a top priority.

Proposition 3 includes \$20 million for new parks, \$10 million for new community recreation centers, and \$54 million for improvements to existing facilities. As Austin's population increases, we need new parks to take the pressure off our existing parks, especially Zilker Park, which is in danger of being loved to death! We also need new recreation centers to serve our families, youth, and seniors. As most citizens know, the Parks Department suffered the deepest budget cuts during the last economic downturn, Now is the time to catch up and put parks projects on the front burner.

The other five propositions are more complicated, with many potential benefits but also a few question marks. The Executive Committee urges everyone to review these proposals and assess whether they represent the wisest use of city resources—and whether bond debt is the best way to fund these priorities.

Remember, Zilker has always had a strong voter turnout. So mark your calendar and vote!

Zachary Scott Theater

Bond proposition 4 includes a project that will directly affect our neighborhood. Labeled the Creative Econ-

omy package, Prop 4 seeks to fund various cultural facilities, including the expansion of the Zachary Scott Theater on Toomey Road. This community theater is a wonderful organization and a real asset to our neighborhood. Since the early 1980s Zach Scott has wanted to build a larger theater to allow for a wider range of performances. Plans for a 400-seat theater were derailed by the business bust in 1989. Now voters are being asked to approve \$12 million to build a new 500-seat theater.

The ZNA Executive Committee is troubled that plans show the new theater taking up the entire park space at the southwest corner of Riverside and South Lamar, the open green area just east of the Parks building and north of Schlotzsky's. The new structure will also require a fly loft (for storage of scenery) almost 100 feet tall. A building of this size and height at this prominent site would be overpowering by itself, and it will be used by developers as a precedent as they try to get higher zoning all along the south shore of Town Lake.

The last Legislature also changed the law with regard to how a city can convert, or alienate, dedicated parkland to other uses, and that leads to another troubling aspect of the Zach Scott proposal. Previously it took a referendum of the voters to allow a private use of dedicated parkland. You may remember we voted on whether to allow the City to turn the old Palmer Auditorium, now being rebuilt as the Long Center, over to a performing arts group. A special bill slipped through the Legislature last session that made it possible for our city administration to give away dedicated parkland without voter approval. We think of Zach Scott as a community service, but it is still a private business, and granting it the use of this park space without voter approval will set another bad precedent for our park system.

There's more. The \$12 million proposal does not include any parking for the 500 more theater patrons. Like so many Austin projects, the public is being asked to invest in an idea, only to discover too late that completion of the project requires a great deal more. If this bond pro-



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posal passes, and the Zach Scott board does not change its plans, we can expect them to come back to the city asking for more money and additional parkland, probably in the area of the ball fields on Toomey, to build a parking garage right on the lake front.

Zach Scott represents 38% of the \$31.5 million in Prop 4. The other projects in Prop 4 are the Austin Film Studios, African-American Heritage Center, Mexican-American Cultural Center, Mexic-Arte museum, and Asian-American Resource Center. If this proposition passes on November 7, we will be dealing with the ramifications of the Zach Scott project for some time.

Holiday Family Fund

Though the Austin economy seems to be improving, many of us are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living in Austin. Many families with children who attend Zilker Elementary are barely making it. Economic pressures hit families especially hard during the holidays. Bringing a smile to the face of a child is pure joy, but the expression on the face of a parent who has been assured of a happy holiday for her child is a rare gift. That's what ZNA volunteers get from the Holiday Family Program. For seven years ZNA has collected toys and gifts, food, and household items for families selected through Zilker Elementary School. Last year we delivered the true spirit of our neighborhood to eight very appreciative families.

ZNA will continue this tradition and deliver to 9 or more families this year. There is a sign-up form on page 8, and Barbara Cossie will formally launch the effort at the meeting on October 23. Please bring your checkbook and be generous; we can always use cash contributions to buy items from the family lists that are not donated. Start the holiday season early in Zilker with a satisfying donation to the Holiday Family Fund.

Vertical Mixed Use

The city has passed a new set of development standards for commercial properties, including a new zoning category called Vertical Mixed Use (VMU). This new ordinance grants density bonuses to commercial properties that meet certain criteria. The *(Continued on page 9)*



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**NEW ON THE BOULEVARD:
SAZON AND
FLIP HAPPY CREPES**

by Fontaine Maverick



Neighbors flip crepes on the spot at Flip Happy Crepes on South Lamar.

Have you ever found yourself driving down South Lamar wishing you could find a nice bowl of Caldo Xochitl, with a side of Xni Pec? And perhaps a couple of Empanadas de Huitlacoche? You need look no farther than 1816 South Lamar, formerly Mexico Lindo, for the newly opened Sazon restaurant featuring dishes from all over Southern Mexico. **Sazon** serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner and has a full bar.

For those of you not in the know, Xni Pec is a spicy relish, and it means “nose of the dog” in the Mayan language. To find out more about the tasty treats available, go to www.sazonaustin.com, or just stop by. You won’t be sorry.

* * *

Near Oltorf and South Lamar, tucked into a shady corner of the parking lot next door to Floribunda, is another new place to get good stuff to eat. **Flip Happy Crepes** serves up, you guessed it, crepes flipped on the spot, from a gleaming travel trailer.

The crepes come in savory (with meat and without) and dessert styles. Check out the menu at www.fliphappycrepes.com. Hours are Wednesday-Saturday 11-2:30, with dinner on Friday 5:30-9. Last this reporter heard, the two houses on the front of this site (2041 South Lamar) are being converted to a new restaurant. This little corner of South Austin just keeps getting better.

L.A.

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Keeping Zilker Cool

by Richard Gravois

This is Central Texas, and next summer there will be many days of 100+ degrees. What can we do to keep Zilker cool? What things work? What are the things that seem to work but cause more problems than they solve? What things cost too much? What things cost a lot but have a short payback time?

Zilker has many housing types, and it would be good to know the best things that work for each type. Do you still have your utility bills from the summer? Were you comfortable with your inside temperature? Do you know how many kilowatt hours you paid for? Do you plan to use more kilowatt hours next year?

I propose that we start keeping track of our thermostat settings and our house temperatures and our kilowatt hours. We can use 2006-07 as a baseline and measure changes. Notice that I don't think we have to track the cost of a kilowatt hour, because it seems to go up no matter what source we use or whom we elect or whatever. Can we keep our kilowatt hours down?

On the Web site www.main.org/znaweb/cool, we will build a Keeping Zilker Cool list of ideas that are good, bad, or otherwise.

* * *

When the Allandale neighborhood was built in the fifties, there were just a few floor plans, but the houses were arranged in different ways to make it look like many more plans were available. I heard that there was an article about the air conditioning costs for each floor plan. I hope to find that article and use it as an outline for a similar article about Zilker.

Talking about Sustainability . . .

While our neighborhood planning process has become bogged down with efforts to secure more zoning entitle-

ments for real estate speculators (see the comments on the new Vertical Mixed Use ordinance in the President's column), your neighbors on the Zilker Yahoo group have been pondering much more interesting challenges facing our neighborhood now and for the foreseeable future. "Sustainability" is the word of the moment, but the topics have ranged from peak oil to "How can I avoid driving altogether?" From retrofitting a house to catch rainwater or recycle gray water to using solar power on a neighborhood scale. From disaster preparedness to growing your own food and back to community tree planting to mitigate the heat island effect. And as always, sidewalks.

As Suvi Aika put it, "I'm sure these issues are on other people's minds too. How do other people see us addressing the next 30 years?" Zilker neighbors have always been in the forefront on recycling, energy and water conservation, and environmental protection, trying to apply best practices to their daily lives. Suvi (suviayres@hotmail.com), Kate Walker (383-8693), Lauren Ross (lauren@glenrose.com), and Richard Gravois have invited Zilker neighbors to start a conversation on these topics and renew the neighborhood's commitment to sustainability. Give them a call, and start talking about a sustainable neighborhood plan.

Lorraine Atherton

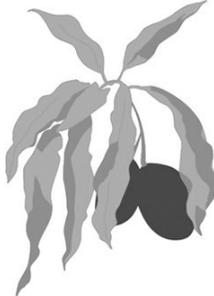
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ZILKER ZAMBOREE

by Zilker Elementary School Parents

Zilker Zamboree, a major fundraising event for Zilker Elementary School, is Saturday, October 28, noon- 4. It includes games, food, and a silent auction. All proceeds benefit Zilker Elementary School. Some energetic parents are gathering used books to sell at the Zamboree. If you would like to donate your used books (for children and adults), just place them in the marked box outside the school office between 7:30 am and 4 pm weekdays. If you need assistance, please contact Berit Kragas at berit@austin.rr.com or 707-9736, and we'll find a way to get the books to the school. Then, be sure to check out the used books on October 28 at Zamboree!

Thank you! *Berit Kragas and Megan Parke*

If you are a Soup Peddler customer, you can now enjoy the delicious soup while supporting your neighborhood school. Zilker Elementary is now part of the SoupShare program, whereby the local soup chef gives back to the community. To ensure that Zilker Elementary receives 5% of your purchase, you must order from www.souppeddler.com/zilker. You can also find out all you need to know about the Soup Peddler and his products at this Web site.

As the neighborhood grows more affluent, it may be easy to overlook the importance of Zilker Elementary's economic and ethnic diversity. Just under 50% of our students last year were considered economically disadvantaged, and only 55% were non-Hispanic white. TAKS scores are only one of many indicators of the strength of a school, but Zilker Elementary

just missed being rated Exemplary and did much, much better than schools with a similar demographic makeup. Zilker Elementary does a tremendous job educating a diverse student body and demonstrates what urban schools with diverse student bodies can do with strong community support. See ZilkerElem.Org for more info about Zilker Elementary and school events.

*Mary Christine Reed
Zilker Elementary PTA
Co-Vice President Programming
(585-8869, mcreedster@gmail.com)*

**ZILKER ZAMBOREE
SILENT AUCTION**

The Silent Auction is a large part of the Zilker Elementary fall fundraising effort and **We Need Your Help!**

Do you own or work for a business that could donate merchandise or gift certificates?
Does your business provide a service that could be sold at the auction? Just about anything you could sell, we can auction off to benefit Zilker Elementary School.

Toys, CDs, Books, Restaurant Meals, Haircuts, Massages, Movie or Theater Tickets
Are you an Artist, Musician, or Craftsperson who could contribute some of your work?

Would you like to donate items that you own or can purchase for the auction?

How about Antiques, Rugs, or Jewelry?

These items need to be in excellent condition and suitable for our silent auction.

This is an excellent way to advertise your business.

Zilker parents are loyal customers to those businesses that support the school.

We're sure all of you Zilker parents have your own creative ideas.

Remember that your contribution is tax-deductible and all proceeds go directly to your neighborhood school.

If you would like to make a donation, please contact us.

Amy Price, 657-2923

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Zilker Neighbors Light Up the Holidays

by Barbara Cossie

Since 1999, ZNA has kicked off the holiday season by announcing our Holiday Family Program at the October meeting. Over the years, Zilker residents have donated money, toys, clothes, household items, and food to help 28 families have a happier holiday season. ZNA wants to take on at least 9 more families this year. The families are selected by the counselor at Zilker Elementary School. A list of requested gifts will be given to the ZNA committee in November. Money donated by Zilker neighbors is used to purchase the gifts (or neighbors purchase items from the list and donate them), and volunteer elves wrap and deliver them to the families just before Christmas Eve.

If you would like to donate money, make your check payable to ZNA and mail it to 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704. Write "Holiday Family Program" on the memo line. If you would like to purchase toys, clothes, or other requested items to donate, call Barbara at 326-1222 (daytime number only) for more information. You can also use the form below to send in your contact information, or sign up at the ZNA quarterly meeting on October 23. Barbara and her ZNA elves will let you know when the gift lists arrive and the wrapping begins.

ZNA has always been delighted by the generous response of Zilker residents. The spirit of giving brightens the season for all of us. Caring, sharing, and compassion—that's the Zilker way!

Zilker Neighborhood Holiday Family Program Volunteer Sign Up 2006

Yes, I want to help make the holidays happier for 00000 Zilker families.

_____ I would like to purchase a gift from a family's gift list. Please contact me when the lists arrive.

_____ I would like to help with gift-wrapping. Please contact me when the gifts are ready for wrapping.

_____ I would like to help with gift deliveries. Please contact me when the gifts are ready for delivery.

_____ I would like to donate money to the program. I have enclosed a check for \$ _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
ZNA Holiday Family Program, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704.

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 special project (specify): _____

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

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

(Continued from page 4) density bonuses waive side and street setbacks, reduce parking requirements, and increase the number of residential units allowed. The ordinance does not allow taller buildings, nor does it exempt a project from compatibility standards if it abuts residential uses. To get these bonuses, a development must provide true mixed use, including residential units on site, and pedestrian amenities such as better sidewalks. This ordinance is intended to make it easier to add density mainly along Austin's major roadways, like South Lamar.

Features of the new ordinance can be tailored to fit individual neighborhood situations, and VMU can be applied on a lot-by-lot basis, but many consequences of the new rules are not yet fully understood. One thing is clear: granting additional entitlements will make some properties more developable and more valuable. As our neighborhood continues to work on the Future Land Use Map in the planning process, we need to pay careful attention to the effects of VMU along South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. At the October meeting we will make a presentation on VMU and seek your input on this important issue.

Alamo Draft House Movie Passes

For those of you who have persevered through to the end of this column, we have a little gift of appreciation. The first twenty neighbors who sign in at the October meeting will receive a free movie pass courtesy of the Alamo Draft House on South Lamar.

So come early, and bring a friend or neighbor!

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location,
location"
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Austin City Limits Festival 2006 Monitors' Report

by Bobby Rigney and Jeff Jack

Since the first Austin City Limits Festival in 2002, ZNA has met with the promoter (Capital Sports and Entertainment) and parks department, and with other neighborhoods, to suggest ways to lessen the unavoidable impact an event of this size has on our neighbors.

TRAFFIC

Each year the traffic management plan has changed a little, and after every festival there are different ups and downs to report. This year, the streets closest to the park were barricaded and parking was prohibited on one side of a few streets to maintain access for emergency vehicles. Our monitors report that the street closures were quite successful in preventing the worst parking clutter, especially when a police vehicle was present at the barricades.

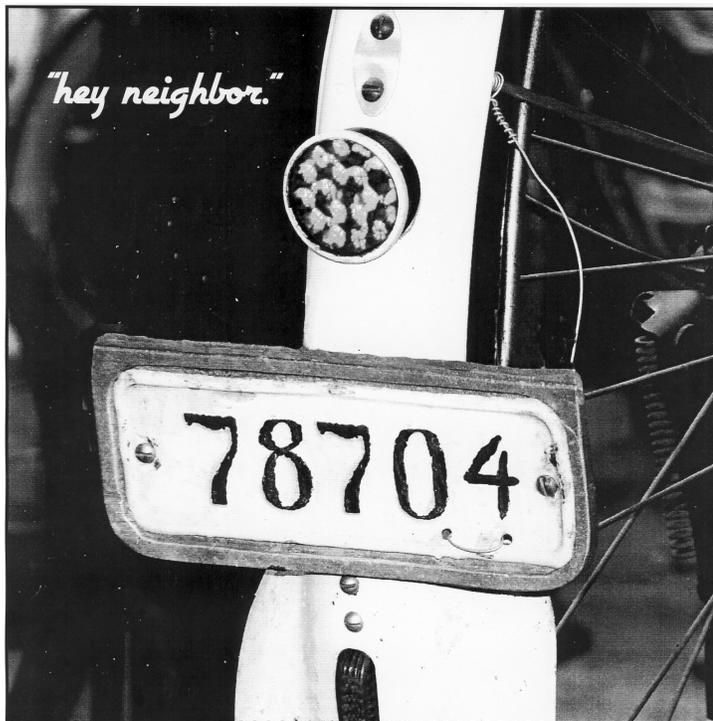
(The Barton Hills and Bouldin Creek neighbors reported substantial improvements in their traffic

situation, too.)

There was a trade off, however. As anticipated, some parking clutter was shifted from the Virginia-Linscomb area to streets south of Margaret, but none of that overflow parking farther south represented an access problem for fire and EMS vehicles. Also, the police presence seemed to reduce parking problems at corners, fire hydrants, and driveways.

Our monitors made some observations that may indicate improvements in future event traffic: More people seemed to be using the regular Capital Metro bus routes 3 (Manchaca), 29 (Barton Hills), and 338 (Lamar) to get to the festival. As usual, ever more people seem to be riding bikes to the festival. The use of Republic Square for the shuttle buses reduced travel time for the shuttles and wait times for riders.

Our monitors also noticed areas where the traffic plan needed improvement. The combination of the new detour south through Zilker neighborhood and the reliance on parking around Republic Square to serve the shuttle riders may be responsible for a significant increase in parking on residen-



"hey neighbor."

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tial streets farther south. The new detour directed traffic up Robert E. Lee to Bluebonnet and all the way through the neighborhood to South Lamar, instead of allowing cars to loop back through the pool parking lot and head north toward downtown and Republic Square. Apparently large numbers of drivers chose to peel off of Bluebonnet onto side streets, where they ended up parking as far south as Hether. Parks staff will be considering alternative routes.

Monitors also reported complaints from drivers who said they could not find parking at Republic Square, and so they tried to drive to the park, followed the detour south into the neighborhood, and so on. The Parks staff will be comparing the shuttle ridership numbers with past years as a first step in assessing the Republic Square shuttle site.

Other concerns that should be considered in the future were:

- Lund presents a major safety issue for pedestrians, cars, and emergency access. Parks staff is already attempting to address it in time for the Rolling Stones concert October 22.
- The rental of private yards for event parking may create problems.
- Reports of near-misses and confrontations with drunk drivers increased.

Noise was not a problem this year. The Tom Petty performance Sunday night was at first cut short because of rain and then allowed to continue about half an hour past 10 PM. That concert carried into the neighborhood somewhat, but it was not loud enough or long enough to generate many complaints.

The ZNA monitor's recommendations for next year's event include:

- Find another remote shuttle location, such as Toney Burger Center.
- Close off Lund completely.
- Reroute west-bound traffic on Barton Springs Road back downtown via a Toomey Road loop.
- Use marked police cars at barricades.
- Have more officers watching for drunk drivers as people leave the festival.
- Paint curbs yellow at corners, and post large educational signs noting fines for parking too close to corners, fire hydrants, and driveways.

ZNA monitors the effects of park events year round. To share information, contact Bobby Rigney at bobby.rigney@austin.utexas.edu.

Rolling Stones Concert Sunday, October 22

CS&E, the producer of the Austin City Limits Festival, is also bringing the Rolling Stones to Zilker Park, on October 22. The traffic plan for the Stones concert will be much the same as the ACL Fest, except that it will be in effect for only the one day, a Sunday. There should also be tighter restrictions on the use of Lund.

CS&E maintains an excellent Web site with pages devoted specifically to neighborhood news about traffic plans for park events and other information for park neighbors. Those of you who have asked what the ACL Fest contributes to the community—this is the place to look it up. Check it out at www.aclfestival.com/neighborhood.

On October 22, Zilker residents should be able to call or page Park Police to report *non-emergency* traffic and parking concerns, such as a parked car blocking a driveway, at (cell) 415-1037 or (pager) 802-9500.

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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.

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