

# The HPWBANA News

Volume 1, Number 3

## Perry Park Egg Hunt By Carolyn Robinson

Cold wintry conditions did not stop the Easter Bunny OR the children of the neighborhood when it was time for the Perry Park

Egg Hunt! Over 150 participants attended the event hosted by HPWBANA. The neighborhood association, area residents and Highland Park Elementary students donated over 1,250 candy-filled Easter eggs for the event.

Thanks to everyone that donated eggs, candy and time to help make the egg hunt so much fun. Special thanks to Megan Rankin of the Highland Park PTA, Nadene



Morning, Penny Snider, Heather Ruggero, Tara Blankenship, Stephanie Wilson, Rhett Robinson and the other volunteers who braved the early morning cold to help hide eggs.

Congratulations to Hailey Todd who won the jelly bean guessing contest. Welcome to new members Susan and John Groves and Heatherly and George Ayres who joined the neighborhood association at the egg hunt!

# **Calling all Musicians**

The events committee of the HPWBABA is considering a future event with music provided by area residents. If you are a professional or semi-professional musician willing to donate your time and talent to a neighborhood gathering, please make yourself known! Call Carolyn Robinson at 302-5417 or email at <u>carrob99@hotmail.com</u>.

View the Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Newsletter each month online at www.PEELinc.com

### **\*ROUND THE HOOD** By Jeanne M. Sievert

May 2005

#### What the Hail?

Who would have guessed that Mother Nature is a fan of Keep Austin Weird. But I don't know what else would explain the phenomenon that occurred in the neighborhood about 9:15 p.m. on Friday, March 25. Calmly watching TV, I was completely unprepared for the deluge—not of rain, but of marble-sized hail. It hammered the roof and rattled the windows. The dog was shaking. The strong winds blew over the patio table. For 5 minutes, we were at the mercy of the elements. And then it stopped. The aftermath was surreal, something out of a B science fiction movie. The entire front yard was white.

And by morning, the white was gone and in its place was green. The street was green. The driveway was green. The plants were green; even the red salvia and the blue potato bush were green. For the wind had not only dropped a yard full of hail; it had also stripped so many leaves from trees that as far as the eye could see was a sea of green. And in an odd way, that seemed most appropriate. It reminded me of the crinkly green grass that lives at the bottom of Easter baskets. And just in time too, because it was the day of the Perry Park Easter Egg Hunt!

#### When is a Rabbit not at Rabbit?

If you didn't make it to this year's Perry Park Easter Egg Hunt, you missed a delightful experience. Yes, it was unseasonably cold and awfully windy. But that did not daunt the hard-working organizers. They had carefully hidden dozens of brightly colored Easter eggs, in three discrete areas for three discrete age groups: 3-4, 5-7, 8 and up. They had set up a table where kids could make their best guess as to how many jelly beans were in that jar. And, best of all, they had arranged for the Easter Bunny to be there in person! Now some whispered that the bunny bore a very strange resemblance to board member and event organizer Carolyn Robinson's husband, Rhett, a rumor that did seem to be borne out by the fact that he was so short that we ran out of Rhett before we ran out of bunny feet. But, that rumor did nothing to dissuade the basket-toting kids from crowding around the bunny for a photo opportunity. Parents and grandparents pulled out cell phones, punched in the picture function and recorded all the action. Others used the more conventional cameras.

There was a general sense of chaos and pandemonium, not unlike an

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# **2005 HPWBANA Board of Directors**

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David Pharis	.davidpharis@yahoo.com, 453-2155
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The HPWBANA Board meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month except December. Meetings are held from 7:00 - 8:45 p.m. at the Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive. All neighbors are invited to attend. Upcoming meeting dates are April 25 and May 23.

HPWBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by  $35^{th}$  St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and  $45^{th}$  St.

# **Helpful Phone Numbers**

Austin Citywide Information Center	
Abandoned Vehicles	
Barking Dog Complaint	
Boats/Trailers in the Street	
Bulky Trash Pickup	
Coyote Sighting	
Dead Animals in the Street	
Downed Street Sign	
Graffiti Complaint	
Loose Dog Complaint	
Mosquito Infestation	
Oak Wilt Information	
Pothole Repair	
Rodent Control	
Street Light Repair	
Tall Weeds in a Vacant Lot	
Tall Weeds on City Property	
Water Conservation	
Wildlife Rescue 24 Hour Hot Line	210-698-1709

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### 'Round the Hood - (Continued from Page 1)

army amassing for battle. But eventually, kids found the appropriate age group and waited for the signal. When it was time, each group leader held his/her sign high and the kids marched behind, parents and grandparents bringing up the rear.

I followed the 3 and 4's, ostensibly to be sure none of them wandered away from their designated spot. Carrying baskets that were just about as big as they were, the kids ran onto the playground and then kind of looked around to their adult to see what they were supposed to do next. The white gravel surface was dotted with bright orange, green and purple—following the principle of hide it in plain sight. And when one of these little ones spotted an egg, and ran and picked it up, the smile was as bright as the egg itself!

### An Enterprising Idea

My call for help in last month's newsletter did not create a basketful of articles by interested readers (where are you people?). But it did generate an enterprising idea from a reader who is a newcomer to the neighborhood: why not have a buy/swap/sell column in the newsletter—to help neighbors exchange goods as well as ideas? So, the rules could be simple: a brief description of what you want to buy/swap/sell and an easy way for an interested party to contact you. No commercial dealers, please. If you're interested, email me (jsievert1@austin.rr.com) before the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and I'll get it in the next newsletter.



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# President's Message By Francis Allen

### MARK YOUR CALENDER FOR MONDAY, MAY 23.

HPWBANA General Meeting at 7:00 PM at the Yarborough Library Presentation by Greg Guetney, COA, Office of Neighborhood Planning

Mr. Guetney would like to discuss your questions about

- future rebuilding or adding to your home,
- tear downs in the neighborhood,
- garage apartments for you or your neighbor,
- how to find the zoning for your area,
- how to apply for zoning change,
- how and when to go before the Board of Adjustments,
- And your questions

This program is all in an effort to continue to be good neighbors in Highland Park West/Balcones Area. Send your questions but be sure to join us on Monday, May 23.

### **Business Classifieds**

Business Classifieds are \$45.00. Please contact Kelly Peel, kellv@PEELinc.com; 512-589-5471.

# Highland Park West Balcones Area

### **Covote Management Website**

At the last town hall meeting about the urban covote problem, we learned that the good news is that the covote management program is working and fewer complaints are being called in. But the problem is not completely gone.

Council Member Brewster McCracken agreed to assist by having a website created where people can access current information about this problem. As promised, there is now a Coyote Management website which can be accessed through the following link: http:// www.ci.austin.tx.us/animals/coyote 0205.htm.

The website includes information about coyote prevention and education, information about 311 and data outlining the number and geographic location of coyote calls to 311. There's also information describing where trapping is currently taking place and how many coyotes have been trapped to date.

We hope you find this website to be a useful tool and we encourage you to forward it on to your neighbors. Additional questions and concerns should be referred to: Karen Gross, Policy Director

Office of Council Member Brewster McCracken (974-2256) CouncilMember.McCracken@ci.austin.tx.us

The Crime and Safety Committee



# **HPWBANA-KAB 2005 Beautification Project**

By Sam Haddad

With the start of the Spring season, just as many families undertake springtime garden projects, the <u>Highland Park West Balcones</u> <u>Neighborhood Association</u> ("HPWBANA") is embarking on various neighborhood beautification and maintenance projects. Among the more ambitious projects, because of its size and the collaborative effort, is HPWBANA'S application for a grant from <u>Keep Austin</u> <u>Beautiful</u> ("KAB") to make improvements to the concrete median at the corner of Perry Lane and Highland Terrace.

This project will not be the first collaboration between HPWBANA and KAB. In fact, the HPWBANA Beautification Committee worked with KAB two years ago to landscape the Balcones/Parkcrest median. With KAB's assistance, HPWBANA was able to get the necessary City approvals to work in the public space.

According to their website (<u>http://www.keepaustinbeautiful.org</u>/), the mission of KAB "is **to empower the citizens of Greater Austin to take personal responsibility** for enhancing their community's environment." So far, so good, since the goal of HPWBANA and the Perry Lane and Highland Terrace neighbors is simply to improve the "community's environment" by removing a concrete median ("the eyesore") and beautifying the space through neighborhood efforts. But, where does a neighbor or neighborhood go to pursue an idea for a beautification project?

# How much do you PAY your realtor?

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For several years, neighbors have considered the concrete median an eyesore and in dire need of a beautification "makeover." When they brought their concerns to HPWBANA, the Beautification Committee enthusiastically considered the beautification idea. The first step was to examine whether it was a viable project for the organization. Basically, was it a project that was manageable for HPWBANA?

Having concluded that it was, the neighborhood and HPWBANA looked at funding issues. Because of the nature of the proposed project at Perry Lane and Highland Terrace, HPWBANA's Beautification Committee member Nadene Morning suggested that we look at obtaining partial funding from the KAB grant program. Money often stands in the way of making good projects happen, so we were fortunate to learn that KAB grants were an available source to help fund a portion of this project.

According to KAB, the organization awards **Neighborhood Beautification Grants** annually to support neighborhoods in their efforts to beautify and improve the community and take ownership of public spaces. In fact, KAB designed the program to help groups of residents and neighborhood organizations to "both beautify their local environment, and build a stronger community by developing and nurturing relationships among neighbors." KAB's Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program is fairly new and offers new funding options for communities wanting to improve public spaces.

KAB annually selects recipients for grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 to support physical improvements in the right-of-way or on public property including median landscaping, neighborhood signs, garden installations, murals, large-scale cleanups, graffiti removal and the development of community gathering spaces. KAB represents a wonderful resource in that it works with neighborhood groups to coordinate with City of Austin ("COA") Departments and provides technical assistance and training sessions to help neighborhood groups carry out beautification projects.

Because the grant deadline was Friday, March 25, 2005, we had only **two** weeks to get all of our ducks in a row. The Perry Lane and Highland Terrace area neighbors, with the help of HPWBANA, mobilized quickly. Neighbors were contacted, at least those willing to open the door to someone with a clipboard, who looked suspiciously like an encyclopedia salesman. Everyone who was contacted signed on the dotted line and agreed that the concrete median had to go. Some neighbors even expressed willingness to provide sweat equity and some funding, if we could get the City of Austin to remove the concrete and allow HPWBANA to undertake the beautification project.

The concrete median, at Perry Lane and Highland Terrace, serves no purpose: there is no sidewalk or handicap ramp through it and it provides no benefit to anyone in the neighborhood. The goal of the beautification project at the concrete median is to improve an unattractive area of our neighborhood through neighborhood and business sponsor involvement. By landscaping the space (in various shades of gray), we will provide a pleasant place for people to see when walking, bicycling and driving through the neighborhood. The

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### **Beautification Project -** (Continued from Page 4)

landscaped space will be a wonderful garden space for neighbors and a gathering place during special neighborhood events.

At this point, HPWBANA has submitted a timely grant application to KAB and we are waiting on their final decision to be made in mid-April 2005. Since the grant was submitted, KAB has sent an e-mail notification advising us of the review and selection process. HPWBANA and the participating neighbors are grateful for KAB's forward-thinking, proactive neighborhood-based grant program. We are hopeful that this program will allow us to turn the eyesore at Perry Lane and Highland Terrace into another example of a collaborative effort between the citizens and the government in order to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood.

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# Highland Park West Balcones Area

# Neighbors Encouraged to Call in Traffic "Trouble Spots" to New APD Tip line

Speeding and fatal traffic wrecks on Austin's roads have been an increasing problem over the last year, and APD thinks neighbors and motorists might have the key to finding the trouble spots. According to an April 5 article in the *Austin American-Statesman*, the Austin Police Department has set up a phone line so motorists can report speeding cars and other traffic hazards. Callers are asked to leave a message on the line by calling **974-4440**. Twice a week an APD officer will review the line's messages.

This is good news for neighbors who wish to report ongoing speeding and traffic problems along the roads in our neighborhood. Neighbors who live along busy streets like Balcones, Perry and Hancock can have their traffic concerns heard directly by Austin Police.

In the article, police Commander David Carter, who heads the department's newly formed highway enforcement command, states, "It is an opportunity for the public to give us direct feedback, perhaps to even tell us things we don't know. People can make a difference." APD will consider callers' information when planning where to conduct special initiatives, according to the *Statesman* story. All neighbors are encouraged to call the line often with their concerns. Trouble spots reported by a large number of callers are likely to receive higher consideration that areas reported by only one or two people.



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### **City Explains Sidewalk Policy**

By Jessica Winslow

Lino Rivera of the City of Austin, Public Works Department, attended the March 28 HPWBANA Board meeting to discuss how the City decides where new sidewalks will be built. In August 2004, the HPWBANA Board recommended to Mr. Rivera's office that sidewalks be built at three locations within our neighborhood's boundaries. These locations had been identified as high priorities by residents who responded to our 2002 Neighborhood Survey.

Mr. Rivera's department maintains a log of locations that are under consideration for sidewalks and each location is assigned a "need-based" ranking. The 300 projects currently on the City's sidewalk log rank from 102-320; the average ranking is 177. The three locations of interest to HPWBANA are currently on the sidewalk log and have the following rankings:

Balcones from Perry to fire station:143Perry from Balcones to Mopac:120Parkcrest from Balcones to 2222:105

Mr. Rivera described the City's ranking system for new sidewalks. In addition to looking at factors such as the number of nearby businesses, bus stops, etc., the City takes into account the concern expressed by residents through phone calls. This summer the City will adopt a new sidewalk ranking system that uses GIS technology to more accurately define the criteria for ranking sidewalk locations.

This year the City has funding from Capital Metro to install sidewalks at the sites Capital Metro had identified as having high need for new sidewalks. Very little other funding is available this year. However, in 2006 additional bond money will be available for new sidewalks.

During the meeting, Mr. Rivera agreed to the following:

- 1. This summer the 3 HPWBANA requested locations will be ranked using the new sidewalk matrix. Mr. Rivera will share the rankings with HPWBANA.
- Traffic counters will be installed on Balcones in the next thirty days. One will be between Hancock Drive and Perry Lane and a second counter will be north of 35<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 3. Mr. Rivera will provide the list of any sites that Capital Metro has identified in the HPWBANA area. HPWBANA can then appeal to the Capital Metro Board to include our locations on Capital Metro's priority list.

### A Heads Up From APD

I wanted to make everyone aware, as expected because of Spring Break, there has been an increase in Burglary of Vehicles (BOV's) in your area. There were 8 BOV's on one Sunday alone. Most were within the borders MoPac, Northland, 2222 and Mesa. Prior to Spring Break there were a few outside of this area. Please remind your neighbors and friends that when kids are out of school, there is an increase in thefts of all types, especially Burglary of Vehicles. Please take the extra time to take EVERYTHING out of your vehicle. Even the little things which you may not believe have value will probably have value to someone else. i.e. ashtray change, empty laptop cases (burglars do not know it is empty). This is always a good idea but especially when you know there is increased activity in the area.

Austin Police Department

Munguia, Dana [APD], District Representative

# Yard Art and an At Home Art Gallery in our Neighborhood

By David Pharis

Have you ever wondered who owns the house at 3401 Hancock Drive? You know, it's the one with the large sculptures in the yard across from Russell's Coffee Shop on the corner of Balcones and Hancock Drive? The home and the sculptures (hauntingly beautiful when they're lit at night) is owned by Jack Nichols— artist, realtor, poet, and 25 year resident of Austin. Among his many activities, Nichols is the exclusive Texas representative of sculptor Jeanfo, a Hot Springs, Arkansas artist, who is the creator of the stunning human-like forms that grace Mr. Nichols property. Jeanfo, now 73, has created hundreds of works of art over the last thirty years. His beautiful contemporary works of steel have been acquired for convention centers and many other buildings and by private collectors throughout the South. However, this is the first time in nearly ten years that his sculptures have been on display away from Hot Springs.

Our neighbor, Jack Nichols is a prolific, serious contemporary artist in his own right. His home is a live-in art gallery, filled not only with his own paintings, but also with sculptures from all over the world. Donald L. Weismann, past president of the National Council for the Arts, describes Mr. Nichols' work this way:

"In short, the paintings of Jack Nichols are Icons of energy - the energy of the man himself, and by inference, the pervasive energy of the universe.

Early on, Nichols - by nature bent, not by the same cool rationality, found himself in the crossroads and gale of abstract expressionism. He sensed a resonance with the works of Pollack to Franz Kline, and others of the "New York School" and was moved to find ways to give visual form to his own aesthetic experience.

The results, to date, have been rich and various - small and large paintings, mostly in acrylic of arresting quality. How to characterize these, is no simple task. Still, there are some things this writer can risk saying about them: They reflect the freedom of the autodidact; they document the direction of post-modern art; they exist as statements of a gifted man finding his way to exude the energy of his personal quest and they are beautiful records of that quest."

To visit Mr. Nichols' at-home art gallery contact: Jacknicholsart.com or call 512-762-7629.

### Become a Member!

The *HPWBANA News* is the official publication of the Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association. Your annual membership ensures that you receive the newsletter, plus provides funds for our free neighborhood events: Spring Egg Hunt, July 4<sup>th</sup> Picnic and Parade, Annual Meeting, and Candidates' Forums.

We need your support! Please renew your membership or become a new member of HPWBANA today. Send \$10 for one adult or \$15 for two adults in the same household to:

### HPWBANA, PO Box 26101, Austin, TX 78755.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Name of second adult \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_

You may also join online with PayPal at www.hpwbana.org.	
Questions about membership? Contact Carolyn Robinson at 302-541	7
or Susan Rauch at 419-9710.	

# Hancock Bridge Landscape Gets an Update

By Nadene Morning

Patrick Abbs, a freshman in our community attending McCallum High School, has been helping improve the Hancock Bridge landscape. Patrick volunteered to work with this neighborhood green space as part of a school project related to beautification and preservation in an urban Austin setting.

The grass on Hancock Bridge green space is mowed by the city, but depending on the mowing schedule, it sometimes grows to over three feet. In order to meet the city right-of-way codes, the landscape plants are limited to two feet in height. Thus, the high grass hides the native Texas plants and crowds the trees that were planted on the east side of the bridge last fall. To help overcome this problem and to define the space more appropriately, Patrick expanded the mulched area by moving the rocks that create the border, putting down weed block, and spreading many bags of mulch. Not only does it look great, but the new configuration means the trees and plants won't have to compete with the grass for water.

The beautification committee and neighbors greatly appreciate the hard work. Thanks Patrick!

Other updates in the Hancock Bridge area include the following: Hancock Bridge Footpath

The beautification committee is also talking with city departments to upgrade the footpath on the southeast side of Hancock Bridge with a sidewalk or finished trail. This footpath is widely used and neighbors mow it when the grass gets too high. So far the discussions with city departments sound promising.

### Hancock Bridge Bus Stop (Southeast Side)

The bus stop closest to Hancock Bridge on the east side also received a cleanup. This area was becoming a problem because trash was frequently tossed there. So the area was weeded, cleared of brush and cleaned up a bit. The native plants were left to grow and wildflower seeds were scattered. Thanks go to Sheryll Lewis for bringing the problem to our attention and helping to solve it!

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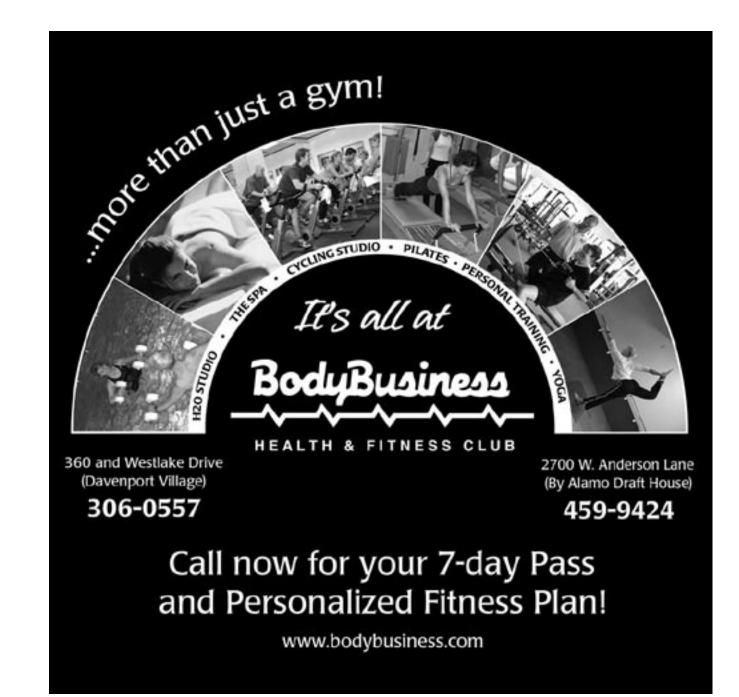
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