



# The HPWBANA News

Volume 1, Number 4

June 2005

## 'ROUND THE HOOD

By Jeanne M. Sievert

### Where the Wild Things Are...

What do woodpeckers, alligator lizards and Arkansas yucca have in common? Nothing you say. And you would be right. Except for the fact that this month they have been reminders to me of what a marvelously diverse and entertaining neighborhood we have the privilege to enjoy.

Not being real "birders," but the kind who like to sit on the deck and wait for something to spot the feeders, we were amazed the other day to see — not a blue jay, or a cardinal, or a chickadee — the regular visitors, but instead a **red-headed woodpecker**. He flew from a nearby tree — his normal dining area — to a long, slender feeder on the deck, a feeder designed to frustrate squirrels. You know the kind — if a squirrel lands on the bar, his weight closes the opening. Well, there Redhead was. Hanging onto the feeder and trying with all of his ingenuity to get his beak into a hole to get at that seed. And, nope we weren't hallucinating. In fact it occurred again a few days later. Is this a common phenomenon, or in fact, is this a very creative creature? Will one of you naturalists out there please solve this puzzle?

Another question we have is about Texas alligator lizards. Last summer we saw our first one. It had a cropped tail (they're usually up to a foot long) and so we named him Bob. He was very amenable to being looked at and hardly budged when we prodded him with a stick. We lost track of Bob, but then the other day we were out in the yard and saw what we thought might be Bob's cousin. Same general shape and size — with a longer tail. We called a neighbor over to confirm our suspicion. But then when we approached the lizard with an eye to getting a better look, he took off like a shot. Indeed, he scampered so quickly out of the garden, across the street and down the ravine, that we figured if he was Bob's cousin, he'd have to be named Speedy. However, on further reflection, we're wondering if he was not a Texas alligator lizard at all, but some kind of similar creature who is characteristically shy and fast on his feet. Anyone know?

The third example of the wonders of life in our neighborhood was presented by two interesting plants in our neighbor's yard across the street. They appear to be some kind of yucca that we had never noticed

until we saw that they'd developed long stalks with what appeared to be flowers at the top. Then we watched every day. And sure enough one day, a flower bowed its head and seemed about to open. And then tragedy struck. The next morning when we looked, there was nothing but stalk — the flower apparently the victim of one of the many deer that live under our neighbor's deck. Determined that the second flower would not suffer a similar fate, we employed the help of several other neighbors to construct a deer-proof cage for the plant. One provided the hog wire (chicken wire, or whatever). Another provided the tools and the person-power. After several false attempts we were finally able to combine two types of wire to make a two-tiered, circular cage that we placed around the still-about-to-bloom yucca. Realizing that deer are resourceful creatures, we attempted to make it fast with stakes — two different kinds. That didn't seem sturdy enough, so we tied the cage to a couple of trees. Now it was secure, but it was also a hazard. We wanted the deer to avoid the plant, but we didn't want to "clothesline" them. So, we found some white rags to tie to the string to act as warnings. To say that it adds a certain "rustic" look to the landscape is an understatement. But, so far, the bloom is safe. One of the neighbors participating in the venture looked up the plant and believes it is an Arkansas yucca. That seems a little unpatriotic to me, since this is Texas, after all. But I guess we won't know for sure until it blooms. Or until the deer manage to circumvent our efforts.

So there really is no relationship between woodpeckers, lizards and yuccas except that they present opportunities for us to marvel at the daily surprises that nature offers us. And they present opportunities for us to enjoy and enhance friendships with the wonderfully diverse and entertaining neighbors that share our 'hood.

If you've got stories of your own, your own snapshots of life in the neighborhood, email me ([jsievert1@austin.rr.com](mailto:jsievert1@austin.rr.com)). The alternative is, well, just more of mine. Think about it!

View the Highland Park West Balcones  
Area Neighborhood Newsletter  
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# Highland Park West Balcones Area

## 2005 HPWBANA Board of Directors

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 David Pharis..... davidpharis@yahoo.com, 453-2155  
 Carolyn Robinson ..... carrob99@hotmail.com, 302-5417

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 June 27<sup>th</sup> and July 25<sup>th</sup>.

HPWBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by 35<sup>th</sup> St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and 45<sup>th</sup> St.

## Helpful Phone Numbers

Austin Citywide Information Center .....	311
Abandoned Vehicles.....	280-0075
Barking Dog Complaint.....	974-4800
Boats/Trailers in the Street.....	280-0075
Bulky Trash Pickup.....	494-9400
Coyote Sighting .....	311
Dead Animals in the Street .....	494-9400
Downed Street Sign .....	457-4885
Graffiti Complaint.....	974-1028
Loose Dog Complaint.....	972-6060
Mosquito Infestation .....	972-5692
Oak Wilt Information .....	440-5195
Pothole Repair.....	974-8750
Rodent Control.....	972-5692
Street Light Repair.....	505-7617
Tall Weeds in a Vacant Lot.....	494-9400
Tall Weeds on City Property .....	440-5150
Water Conservation.....	974-2199
Wildlife Rescue 24 Hour Hot Line .....	210-698-1709

## APD Bait Vehicle Should Surprise Burglars

*According to SPO David Crowder, Jr.*

The bait vehicle is not a new concept. Our Auto Theft Interdiction Unit has had 2 bait vehicles. In those vehicles, there are cameras and tracking devices so that if someone steals one of the cars, the police can track it and can turn the vehicle off when officers are in position to take the suspect(s) into custody.

Our bait vehicle is a little different. We have several cameras providing 360 degree coverage inside and outside the vehicle. The cameras are linked to a transmitter so that officers can watch from a distance to see what goes on around the vehicle. Some items are placed in the vehicle as “bait” to attract would-be suspects into going inside the vehicle to steal the items (e.g., laptop case, cell phone, textbooks, etc). Once the suspects have stolen the item(s), we go in and apprehend them.

We will position the vehicle in “hot spots” around the Central West Area Command. What constitutes a “hot spot” will be determined by our crime analyst. So, it is imperative to report every crime to create an accurate picture.

SPO David Crowder, Jr. #4398  
 CWAC District Representative  
 Austin Police Department  
 (512) 974-5545

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*The Phoenicians and Romans made a purple dye from Murex sea snails. Cloth colored with this dye was more valuable than gold.*

# Highland Park West Balcones Area

## Perry Park Tennis Courts A Great Resource in our own Backyard

Did you know that the Highland Park neighborhood has one of the best public tennis courts in Austin? But it has not always been that way. The current nets, screens and court upgrades were provided five years ago as part of a major renovation donated by the Dick Roberson family. The courts have gradually deteriorated and are in need of ongoing maintenance if they are to remain a valued asset in our community.

On Thursday, May 5, the Highland Park PTA voted to buy new nets and windscreens for the Perry Park Tennis Courts. This new equipment will offer continued quality play to the community, but we can't stop there. The Neighborhood Association wants to work closely with the PTA and collaborate to raise money for future renovations. The PTA funds will be matched by a grant from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) through the Capitol Area Tennis Association.

There are other serious needs for the courts. Currently, two of the four lights do not work. During our hot summers, evening is the best time to play; this will be impossible without new lights. Having benches to sit on with a cover to provide shade would enhance the usability of the courts. In addition, the courts will need to be resurfaced in the future.

To address these needs, we have formed a Perry Park Tennis Committee that consists of David Seaton V.P. of the Neighborhood Association, Juan Carlos Martinez and Coach Woods, Highland Park P.E. Teacher. We hope to expand committee membership, raise contributions from the community for the USTA matching funds and keep the Perry Park Tennis Courts a wonderful asset to our neighborhood.

For more information or to get involved, please contact David Seaton at 512-371-1027 or email [ds@tc-tx.com](mailto:ds@tc-tx.com)

### Calling all Musicians

The events committee of the HPWBANA 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 [carrob99@hotmail.com](mailto:carrob99@hotmail.com).



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# Highland Park West Balcones Area

## It's My Park Day! —Success at Perry Park!

By Nadene Morning and David Seaton

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Austin Parks Foundation (APF) sponsored "It's My Park Day." Our Perry Park was one of about 30 parks/greenbelts throughout Austin that participated. APF sponsors this event annually to support Earth Day and to encourage people to get out and help make improvements in their local parks. APF generously provided snacks, water and supplies. It also provided "It's My Park" tee-shirts and volunteer packets for those who wanted them.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning and, although this time of year is the high season for sports, parties and city events, about 20 volunteers joined in the effort to make some great improvements to our local park.

During our initial cleanup in January, we had removed dead material and attacked the bamboo and ragweed. This time our main focus was on some of the ligustrum. Many of you will recognize ligustrum as an invasive, non-native plant that will take over an area and choke out native growth if it is not controlled. Unfortunately, it has become well established in many areas of the park. Consequently, many of the old-growth live oaks are hidden. Additionally, in one area that faces Highland Park Elementary, it is so thick that parents and teachers can't see into the wooded area and there have been recent incidents of vandalism. By focusing on this area, we hope to alleviate some of those problems.

To give you some idea of how much we accomplished with our hard work, when we finished there were four **huge** brush piles that are now waiting for the City to munch up in the chipper. We also moved the picnic table back into the wooded area so people can enjoy the new look. If you decide to have a picnic there, please have the courtesy to remove your trash.

But removing ligustrum isn't all we did! The wooden outdoor learning center

was starting to rot and was becoming a popular spot for graffiti. We owe a special thanks to Reed Thomas and Collin Gaskell for their help in its demolition. Reed and Collin tore it down and hauled it off – everything, even the cement posts!

Austin Parks Foundation is a strong supporter of our park system and has a great number of programs available. One such program is the Neighborhood Park Grant Program; our neighborhood received a grant two years ago. APF also supports events such as the Farmers Market, Giant Chess and Movies and Yoga in the Park. Check out the website at [www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org) for details and please consider joining to support our local parks.

Thanks to everyone for helping out!

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## President's Message

by Frances B. Allen

**Become a Member!** Rather than write it all again I will simply ask you to check page 7 for the membership application. After you read the association goals and read all about the association activities as highlighted in the newsletters, we know you will want to clip the membership form and send it in today! We have an active energetic board that is eager to work on neighborhood projects. Let's support them.

## Welcome New Members Who Joined in the Previous Months!

### February

Martin Allday  
Dawn and James Allen  
Sue and John Anderson  
Gale and Harold Blundell  
Judy Matetzschk-Campbell and Frank Campbell  
Helena and John Colyandro  
Suzy and Robert Conley  
Alexandra Crane  
Beth and Harry Deans  
Nancy and Melvin Eckhoff  
Nina and John Faulkner  
Betty and Denton Gossett  
Maralyn Hare  
Melissa and Brian Hovey  
Rita Sherbenou and Wayne Hresko  
Duwayne Kemmet  
Karen and Robert Kileen  
Linda Litzinger and Tom Kittleman  
Eileen and Alan Luecke  
Lauren and Steven Meyers  
Robin and Ken Moore  
Marjorie Mae Ramsey  
Austen Fox Riggs  
Barbara and Findlay Shearer  
Tom Shelton

### March

Heatherly and George Ayres  
Maya Charrad and Michael Brenner  
Cela and Wayne Edwards  
Steve Erspamer  
Susan and John Groves  
Julie Hall  
Amy and Paul Hoffman  
Dewayne Naumann  
Ellen and Mark Ray

### April

Christine and Eric Freedman  
Juanita and Jesus Lopez

## Paper Wasps & Yellowjackets

Wasps are beneficial predators of insects and pollinators of plants. Wasps can be dangerous though; female wasps are capable of stinging multiple times with a modified egg-laying structure.

There are various kinds of wasps found around or near the home. Paper wasps are usually reddish-brown with yellow markings. Their nest is made from chewed wood fibers and hangs from a single filament. Nests have a single layer of hexagonal cells in which young develop. Paper wasp nests usually have 20-30 adults.

Yellowjackets are often confused with paper wasps. Yellowjackets are yellow with black markings. Their nest is constructed from paper-like material and is completely enclosed except for a single opening. Typically yellowjacket nests are located within the ground, but can sometimes be aerial. Yellowjacket nests can have 10-20,000 workers depending on the size and maturity of the nest.

Mud daubers come in a variety of colors, from black with yellow markings, to iridescent blue-black. They have a very slender, thread-like waist. Mud daubers are solitary and build nests out of a mud-like substance.

### Control Hints:

- Only control wasps that are a threat; if they are nesting away from the structure, leave them be as they are beneficial.
- Paper wasp nests can be treated with a contact kill pesticide; treat nest in the evening when wasps have returned from foraging; remove nest once wasps are dead.
- Underground nests are best treated using a dust; dust the opening lightly and let the wasps carry the insecticide into the nest and disperse it; be careful, yellowjackets can be aggressive.
- Mud dauber nests can be scraped off with a putty knife and disposed of; mud daubers will not defend the nest.

For more information, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas Cooperative Extension agent - IPM at 512.854.9600.

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## "You're a Grand Ol' Flag..."

Mark your calendar for the Annual HPWBANA 4th of July Parade and Celebration. The celebration will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, July 4. Come see the fire truck and join in the parade. Enter the costume contest! Also, new events are planned for this year's celebration, and we need volunteers to help with the activities. Please contact any of the committee members listed below to volunteer or to offer suggestions.

Susan Rauch, 419-9710, srauch@austin.

rr.com

Carolyn Robinson, 302-5417, carrob99@hotmail.com

David Seaton, 567-1704, ds@tc-tx.com

Sam Haddad, 454-8286, haddads@io.com



# Highland Park West Balcones Area

## City Approves New Sidewalks on Balcones Drive, Studies Traffic in Area

By Jessica Winslow

The City of Austin, Public Works Department, worked very quickly to respond to HPWBANA's requests for sidewalks and traffic studies. In August 2004, HPWBANA recommended three locations for new sidewalks based on our Neighborhood Study. Balcones Drive was one of the three.

On March 28, Mr. Lino Rivera of Public Works Department attended the HPWBANA Board meeting and listened to neighbors' concerns. He promised to review the requests for new sidewalks and to install traffic counters along Balcones Drive.

By April 4, multiple traffic counters had been installed along Balcones Drive and on the Hancock bridge.

According to Mr. Rivera, the results were:

"The highest daily traffic count occurred in the 5200 block of Balcones and it registered just below the 6,000 mark. We did not, however, take a count on a day when there were problems on MoPac that would have diverted the cut-through traffic onto Balcones as you had mentioned. We also collected speed data that you may be interested in; however, the results are not out of character for a neighborhood collector like Balcones."

Within two weeks of attending the board meeting, Mr. Rivera reported that new sidewalks will be built on Balcones Dr between Perry Lane and Northland Dr. Construction should begin sometime

in June.

City staff has conducted a preliminary engineering site visit to assure that there are no constraints to building the sidewalk. The staff assessed such things as right-of-way obstacles, handicap (ADA) required criteria, conflicting utilities (i.e. telephone poles and shallow underground utilities) and drainage issues. The City did not see anything that would hinder progress on the project and it is in queue to do within the next 30-60 days, depending on the contractor's completion of current projects.



*The City of Austin will construct new sidewalks along Balcones Dr. to replace footpaths such as this one at the corner of Hancock Dr. and Balcones Dr.*

Except for unavailable or out-of-town owners, City staff will contact every resident in person to assure the least impact. Staff will even work with homeowners to accommodate existing plants and trees. For more information or questions, please contact:

Michael Curtis, Program Manager  
Public Works Pedestrian & Bike Program Team  
974-7056 (office) • 974-7005 (fax)

And, finally, to respond to neighbors' concerns about pedestrian safety when crossing Balcones Drive at Parkcrest, the City will set up new traffic counters in this area within two or three weeks. Then the City can analyze traffic patterns and take appropriate action.

### Classified Ads

**Personal classifieds** (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail to [jsievert1@austin.rr.com](mailto:jsievert1@austin.rr.com).

**Business classifieds** (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$45, limit 40 words, please contact Kelly Peel @ 512-5879-5471 or [Kelly@PEELinc.com](mailto:Kelly@PEELinc.com).

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# Highland Park West Balcones Area

## Literacy Austin BookFest 2005 is Coming!

Literacy Austin's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual BookFest is coming to downtown Austin, June 3, 4, 5, 8 and 11<sup>th</sup> at Ballet Austin's Box Office and Administrative Center, 501 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (San Antonio & 3<sup>rd</sup> St – near Austin Music Hall and Republic Square Park). More than 100,000 terrific books, new or gently used, will be offered at bargain prices. Every penny you spend goes to teach adults in Austin to read and write.

## Advertising Information

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## 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](http://www.hpwbana.org).

*Questions about membership? Contact Carolyn Robinson at 302-5417 or Susan Rauch at 419-9710.*

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