



The Jester Warbler

Official Publication of Jester Homeowners Association, Inc.

May 2011

Volume 6, Issue 5

Jester Spring Garage Sale

**Saturday,
May 14th
at 8:00 am**

Register
your location
for maximum
exposure.
Maps with lists
of garage sale
addresses will be
available at the
entrances to Jester.

To Register Your Location Contact:

Teresa Gouldie
751-8000
tgouldie
@gmail.com

Hearing Rescheduled for Controversial Left Turn on RM 2222

by Glen Brown

The owners of the tract at the southeast corner of RM 2222 and Loop 360 have filed a request with the City to allow left turns from westbound RM 2222 into their planned shopping center. That left turn would be located halfway between the new signal at Lakewood Drive and the intersection of the two highways, aligned with the driveway at Bull Creek Market.

When the zoning for the tract was approved in 1992, the owners signed a restrictive covenant with the City of Austin which required access from RM 2222 to be a right-in/right-out only driveway, with a solid median installed to prohibit left turns into or out of the property. The covenant was a condition of the approved zoning, and was recommended by the Planning Commission and City staff and supported by the surrounding neighborhoods. It was considered a matter of public safety at the time.

Fast-forward twenty years: traffic on RM 2222 is worse than had been anticipated and plans to widen RM 2222 east of Loop 360 have been jettisoned. Left turns into the property would be at least as dangerous today as envisioned in 1992.

TxDOT will be installing a median on RM 2222 east of Loop 360 as part of the Bull Creek bridge project. They will install a solid median unless the City agrees to amend the restrictive covenant to allow left turns. If the covenant is amended, TxDOT will install a left-turn cut in the median to accommodate the owners.

According to the most recent traffic counts available from TxDOT, approximately 27,000 vehicles travel eastbound on RM 2222 daily past the tract. The safety of those vehicles will be put at risk by vehicles crossing eastbound RM 2222 to turn into the shopping center, which is planned to be constructed and in operation by 2015. The left turns would also conflict with vehicles exiting from northbound Loop 360 onto eastbound RM 2222.

Vehicles waiting to turn left from westbound RM 2222 will stack up as they wait for a break in the eastbound traffic flow. If more than 3 or 4 vehicles are waiting to turn, the queue will block the left lane of westbound RM 2222 and possibly block the intersection at Lakewood Drive, especially during rush hour traffic.

Concerned that this left turn would create unnecessary traffic conflicts and decrease traffic safety, many area residents have sent emails to the Zoning and Platting Commission and the City Council, voicing their opposition. 2222 Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, Northwest Austin Civic Association, Courtyard Homeowners Association, and other area homeowner and neighborhood associations are also in opposition.

The case was scheduled to be heard by the Zoning and Platting Commission and City Council in March, but has been postponed. The City Council hearing is scheduled for May 12.

Area residents and anyone who travels on RM 2222 can still voice their opposition to this change. **The easiest way to do so is to send an email expressing your opposition to the requested amendment to the City Council before their hearing.** Below are the email addresses and case information which should be referenced:

(Continued on Page 2)

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Interested in submitting an article? You can do so by emailing
diana0777@att.net or by going to:

www.peelinc.com/articleSubmit.php.

All news must be received by the 9th of the month prior to the issue.

Hearing Rescheduled - (Continued from Cover Page)

Case # C14-91-0015(RCA), Champion Commercial Development
- restrictive covenant amendment

- City Council members and link to group email form: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/groupemail.htm>

The following public hearing is currently scheduled but is subject to change or postponement:

City Council, Thursday, May 12, 2011

For up-to-date information on hearing dates, visit www.2222cona.org or call Carol Torgrimson at 338-4722.



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before



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before



Bull Creek District Park to Remain an On-Leash Park

By Glen Brown

Bull Creek District Park has been the subject of a debate which has raged for the past few years about the source of bacterial contamination in the creek near the off-leash area of the park. It began after a sewage spill in August 2007 upstream of the park, when health officials received complaints of illness from park patrons who had been swimming in the creek. An intensive investigation found high levels of bacteria near the off-leash area, and concluded that park use and not the sewage spill was the most likely source of the on-going fecal contamination.

A public education campaign and volunteer clean-up activities were not enough to bring the bacterial levels below Texas health safety standards. In July 2009, temporary swimming and wading bans were put in place to discourage human contact with the contaminated areas, and monitoring of bacteria levels was intensified. The drought exacerbated the problem, as the creek dried up and left stagnant pools both at 360 and in the off-leash area downstream.

The park was closed for restoration work from December 2009 until June 2010 to improve vegetation and soil conditions near the creek at the off-leash area, as well as continue water quality testing. The park reopened in June 2010 as an on-leash facility for a 6-month evaluation period while water testing continued, during which period the bacteria

levels declined. In January 2011, public meetings were held to present the results of the water quality testing at Bull Creek Park since 2007.

The study concluded that the source of fecal contamination appears to be localized within the park, and that the contamination is not of human origin. While it is possible that birds and other wildlife may be contributing to the contamination, they were not responsible for increasing bacteria above contact recreation standards. There is no evidence of an on-going sewage leak to Bull Creek near the park. Based on the results, the Watershed Protection and Health and Human Services Departments recommended that dogs in the park remain on-leash only and that water quality monitoring continue.

In February, the Parks and Recreation Department announced that Bull Creek District Park will continue as an on-leash facility, stating that "the weight of evidence and data from multiple approaches concludes that park use and specifically the dog off-leash use is the most likely source of elevated fecal bacteria within the park." The Department committed to locating another off-leash site in close proximity to the park.

A possible off-leash area has been identified at Yett Creek Park, off Parmer Lane just west of MoPac. The City is evaluating its suitability while continuing to seek opportunities for more off-leash areas in and around northwest Austin.


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Since the last Warbler the Welcome Committee delivered only 2 new welcome packages. Although there were 8 that we could potentially deliver, we found only a few people home, and noticed a lot of construction going on at newly purchased residences. Deliveries were to

- Art and Sara on the 7800 block of Lakewood, and
- Steve and Colleen with their sons Zach and Sam on Pampas Cove

If you're interested in joining us, please contact JoAnn Welles at 512.346.0349 or joann-welles@sbcglobal.net. Also contact JoAnn if you've moved to Jester lately and we haven't welcomed you officially. We may have tried to deliver a package but not found you home!



*Art and Sara on the
7800 block of Lakewood*




*Steve and Colleen with their sons
Zach and Sam on Pampas Cove*

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NatureWatch

by Jim and Lynne Weber



Avian Aerobats



Small to medium-sized songbirds with long, pointed wings, forked or squared tails, and inconspicuous legs and feet, swallows are characterized by their adaptation to aerial feeding. Unlike other groups of birds, swallows have a streamlined body shape that has evolved to efficiently hunt insects on the wing, allowing for great maneuverability, endurance, and frequent periods of gliding. When not performing their avian acrobatics, swallows are often seen perching in long rows on branches and wires.

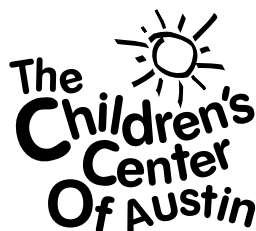
Spending most of their waking hours hunting for flying insects, swallows have short bills, strong jaws, and a wide gape. They feed at speeds up to 25 miles per hour and are selective about their prey, tending to choose the larger insects rather than scooping up every insect around them. Swallows also use aerial flights to attract a mate, and are monogamous breeders. While they can be territorial, most form at least loosely aggregated colonies with both the male and female jointly constructing their nests, made primarily with mud and sometimes added bits of dried vegetation.

Swallows migrate to Central and South America for the winter and three species of swallows return to the Austin area in late March and April, with breeding occurring soon after. The most common is the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), with a dark slate blue back, reddish brown throat, cinnamon or buffy chest, and deeply forked tail. They prefer to nest in suburban areas, often building their mud structures under the eaves of porches and overhangs. Males have 18% longer tails than females, and females generally choose a mate by the length of its tail. Barn swallows begin hawking for insects an hour or so before dawn, accompanied by their liquid, energetic chattering.

Found mostly flying around overpasses and bridges where they prefer to build large mud nest colonies, Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) have a squarish tail, buffy rump, dark chestnut throat, and a pale forehead. Normal flights follow a rollercoaster path, with rapid ascents on quick wingbeats, followed by downward glides. Courtship flights in the spring are followed by copulation on the ground.

Cave Swallows (*Petrochelidon fulva*) look quite similar to Cliff

(Continued on Page 7)



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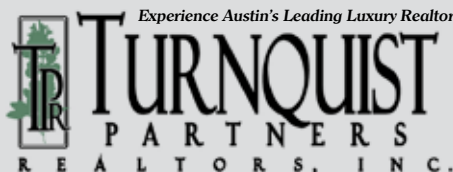
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Nature Watch- (Continued from Page 6)

Swallows, and are distinguished by their buffy throat and cinnamon forehead. Locally common and increasing their range to the north and east, Cave Swallows historically occurred only in dimly lit interiors of caves or sinkholes, but over the past few decades have begun utilizing man-made structures such as low bridges and culverts. When returning to the location of their mud nests, they fold their wings and plunge in at a high speed, then circle around inside the cave/structure to lose momentum before landing.

Adept aerialists, swallows do many things on the wing, including drinking and bathing. The next time you witness their swooping flight and distinctive chattering, take a moment to appreciate these avian acrobats!

*Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our book, *Nature Watch Austin*, to be published by Texas A&M University Press in 2011.*

Cliff Swallow



Barn Swallow



Cave Swallow



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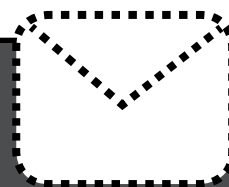
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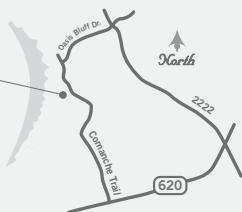
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PLAYGROUPS

Parents of Newborns - 3

Kate Murdock - KFM.associates2005@
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Parents of Children 3 – 5

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serve as a contact person for this group
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Hill Fall 2010 Kindergarten Group

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BUNKO - If you'd like to join or be put on the list as a sub, contact Elaina Griffiths at emgriff@joseph-bolton.com or 512-343-1113. They are a lively group and play on the 1st Thursday of every month at 7 pm.

CYCLING - Want to join a Jester road biking group and participate in organized rides? Contact Troy Reish at troy.reish@gmail.com or call 241-0592.

DINNER CLUB - Join our new dinner club. Meet friends and enjoy great food! Contact Diana O'Connell at 767-0573 or dianaconnell@yahoo.com

HILL KINDERGARTEN YAHOO GROUP - This group is helping connect Jester families with others who also have children entering Hill Kindergarten in the Fall 2010. Email JesterHill2010-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to subscribe.

JESTER DOG LOVER'S GROUP - Put a smile on your dog's face and a wag in his tail — sign up now to be a founding member of the Jester dog lovers group. Contact Carol Powell at 340-0321 or email her at carolpowell@austin.rr.com

JESTER KIDS YAHOO GROUP - This group is helping Jester parents connect with other parents who have children with similar ages or interests! Email jesterkids-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to subscribe.

JESTER PAGE TURNERS - Check out the Jester Page Turners, a neighborhood book group that meets the second Wednesday evening of each month. Contact Valerie Walley at vwalley@randomhouse.com. 372-4077

JESTER UNCORKED - Wine lovers of Jester, unite! Join our ever-growing group of wine lovers. Contact Tonya Andrien at (512) 795-0086 or tandrien@yahoo.com.

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WELCOME COMMITTEE - Darla Rowan and JoAnn Welles are co-chairs of this committee, which is designed to welcome new residents to Jester, including newborns. Volunteer to help by emailing JoAnn at joann-welles@sbcglobal.net or call her at 346-0349

WOODWORKING GROUP - Join our woodworking group to share knowledge and techniques! Contact John Parker at 345-6991 or JParker84@austin.rr.com

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May Events

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May 7	Gardens on Tour <i>Visit fabulous private gardens, the perfect Mother's Day gift!</i>	LBJ Wildflower Center 292-4100 wildflower.org
May 5 - 7, 12-15, 19-22, 26-29	Austin Shakespeare Festival's "Love's Labours Lost" <i>"Love's Labour's Lost" is often thought of as Shakespeare's most flamboyantly intellectual play</i>	Zilker Hillside Theater 477-5335 ci.austin.tx.us/zilker
May 5 - 8	Ballet Austin's Production of "The Magic Flute" <i>Wrought with mythical creatures, this inspiring ballet conspires to turn the most stubborn skeptic into one who believes in anything.</i>	Long Center 476-2163 balletaustin.org
May 5 - 8	Old Pecan Street Spring Arts Festival <i>A lively street affair with over 400 arts, crafts, food & live music</i>	6th Street (East) oldpecanstreetfestival.com
May 8	Austin Symphonic Band's Mother's Day Concert <i>A musical evening you and your mom are sure to enjoy!</i>	Zilker Hillside Theater ci.austin.tx.us/zilker
May 13	Wildflower Center Gala and Silent Art Auction <i>The best garden party in town! Mrs. Laura W. Bush will be honored for her many contributions to conservation.</i>	LBJ Wildflower Center 232-0100 wildflower.org
May 13 - 15	Austin Auto Show <i>Consumers to compare styling and pricing of virtually every major vehicle line under one roof in just a few short hours</i>	Austin Convention Center 479-0425 autoshowaustin.com
May 20	Nature Nights: Butterflies and Moths <i>Learn how butterflies and moths behave, what they eat, and create your very own butterfly mask.</i>	LBJ Wildflower Center 232-0100 wildflower.org
May 21	O'Henry Pun-Off World Championship <i>One of the funniest events in Austin</i>	O. Henry Museum punpunpun.com
May 22	Celtic Woman - Songs from the Heart <i>A true celebration of Ireland, unforgettable signature style</i>	Frank Erwin Center uterwincenter.com

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