

Highland Park Elementary Bond Construction

Highland Park Elementary is a lovely school in a beautiful park-like setting. But it is over 60 years old, and that means periodically major maintenance is needed. Fortunately, the school received bond money from the district to fix 2 key issues: improving the drainage on the property so that water is channeled away from the building instead of collecting underneath it, and to make related structural improvements. At the same time, we'll gain some exciting new improvements to the school: a brand new building that will house our computer lab and a complete renovation of our library. Demolition and construction began the second week of June, after school finished for the year.

FINAL RESULTS:

- New 1000 square foot building, a multipurpose room that will be used as a computer lab
- Library renovation, including adding previous computer lab space, new book casing, furniture, carpet, HVAC, and overall layout
- Rebuilt and upgraded south gym wall with corridor attached
- Rebuilt exterior main hallway walls and roof
- Creation of extensive underground drainage system and drip irrigation system
- Repaved staff parking lots
- Addition of pavers with bike racks

INFORMATION FOR THE COMMUNITY:

- Safety is of the highest importance!
- All construction workers have completed background checks and drug tests.
- Access to the park and playground will likely be limited through Highland Park campus during all bond work through the summer.
- All construction work during next school year will be completed after school hours, but all machinery and fencing will be there, as needed.

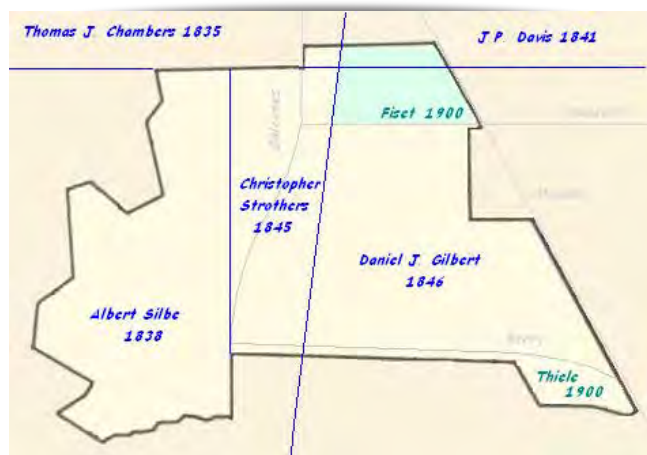
A History of Highland Park West

by Leo W. Little

The Republic of Texas era (1836-1845) recognized five land grants for property that would one day become Highland Park West. The land went through a series of owners in the 1800s, and the Int'l and Great Northern Railroad was granted a right-of-way in 1876.

In 1900, Charles Thiele bought all of the land that would later become Highland Park West except for a small tract owned by Franz Fiset. Fiset sold his land in 1928 to Lawrence McCarty, who built a small store near the present-day Randalls.

Thiele owned the "McGary House", built in 1859, which still stands on Bull Creek Rd. His farm grew corn and cotton, and



*A map of the original Texas land grants in the
Highland Park West area*

provided pasture for cattle. Thiele briefly ran a failed "silk plantation" in 1918.

Mount Bonnell to the east was a popular spot in early 1920s with folks driving their Model T's to the summit for weekend picnics.

(Continued on Page 2)

Highland Park West Balcones Area

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HWPBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by 35th St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and 45th St. Mail your membership dues to HPWBANA, P.O. Box 26101, Austin, Texas 78755

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(Continued from Cover Page)

During the Prohibition Era (1920-1933), the Austin-Burnet Road (now Hancock Drive) provided access to moonshine stills in the hills northwest of Austin. A thriving cedar yard graced the south side of the Austin-Burnet Road in the 1920s and the Austin Memorial Cemetery started with a handful of graves about 1925.



The Austin-Burnet Road (now known as Hancock) in 1944. The road entering from the left is Bull Creek

Much of the land was leased in the 1920s for a dairy, with Swedish, Italian, Hispanic, and African-American families living on the property. From 1939 to 1944, Thiele's son leased five acres just south of the cedar yard for a quarry that provided millions of tons of crushed stone to a growing Austin. The Jimmie Burr Riding School and Horse Stables operated just north of Hancock and west of the railroad in the late 1940s.

By 1945, Mr. Edgar Howard Perry, Jr. bought the land in the area, and incorporated the Highland Park West Development Co., which divided the land into the present configuration.

Home building started near Hancock and Valley Oak in 1948, with prices in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range. In 1952, Balcones was cut through to 38th St.

Highland Park Elementary school was started in 1952, followed by the park that now bears Edgar H. Perry's name.

The Highland Park shopping center started in the mid-50's with a grocery store, pharmacy, dry cleaners, Winns, and a hamburger joint called "Keko's". Mopac was built in 1976, and Crenshaw's came to Fairview Drive in 1984.



The Conoco gas station on the corner of Balcones and Hancock in 1966. Note the price of gas was 28.9 cents per gallon.

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Importance of Buyer Representation

By Rebecca Wolfe Spratlin

If you are able to find a home you want to buy...why in the world would you need a Realtor to represent you in the purchase of that home? Seems like a logical question, until you consider the many ways a Realtor can help you.

Your buyer's agent can help you find the best home, even if it's not on the market. Agents who work in your neighborhood know the neighbors and have inside knowledge of the community, and almost ALWAYS know of homes that are coming on the market soon...and also those homes that people are thinking about selling, but are just waiting for the right offer to come along.

The help of the buyers' agent will rarely cost you a dime because your agent's commission is paid by the seller. Some buyers think that instead of paying the buyer's agent commission, the seller will reduce the price by the typical commission rate. This may be true in some rare cases, but in many cases the buyer's agent commission is kept by the selling agent. Why? Because if the buyer has no agent, it falls on the selling agent to do most of the work that would typically be done by the buyer's agent.

Have your own agent show you homes. The selling agent is representing the seller and is REQUIRED to pass along to the seller any information and impressions they gather from you. In other cases, seller agents won't show their own listings, unless they know the buyers, due to security issues.

Many times buyers think they know the value of homes in an area of interest, but in most cases they are getting only part of the information, inaccurate information and don't have access to the same data as Realtors have. There is real value in having a Realtor provide a professional price opinion.

Finding the right home to buy is really just the beginning of the home buying process. From that point on the Buyer's agent's work really begins, including:

- Advising buyers on the offer price, as well as recommending other terms that will be attractive to the sellers. This is CRITICAL when you are competing with other buyers in multiple offer situations.
- Preparing offers, contracts and all the addenda and amendments required based on the transaction terms, age of home, location of home and numerous other details.
- Negotiate the original sale price as well as subsequent amendments and changes in terms that are most beneficial to the buyer.
- Work with buyers to get the general inspections and any subsequent inspections done prior to the end of the buyers' option periods.
- Preview the final closing statement to ensure it is accurate and complies with the contractual terms.
- Attends the closing with the buyer to ensure all goes smoothly and the ownership transfers without incident.

The more competitive the housing market is, the more buyers need representation. If you don't know of a really good, experienced agent in your neighborhood, ask your neighbors for referrals and interview two or three Realtors. Ask each Realtor for referrals from clients they have represented as their buyers' agent. When investing in one of your largest assets, it is always advisable to have an experienced professional on your side.

July Nature Notes

Birds in the Summer Heat

By Peter English

If you are bird flying around in the hot Texas sun, you better have a good way to stay cool. Even if you're just sitting under a bush you still better have some tricks up your sleeve because like many animals, birds cannot sweat.

Birds have some really special problems when it comes to staying cool. At normal body temperatures of right around 110 degrees, they are especially susceptible to heat damage. If their body temperature goes up just another 5 to 8 degrees, they can be killed by the heat.

So why would birds have such high body temperatures? Because it gives them an advantage in staying alive, and that advantage is that their muscle strength is about 3 times that of animals with lower body temperatures and their nerve conduction is just under twice as fast. And birds need both of these things to be able to fly! Birds are really strong and also really quick to react, both of which are necessary if you are going to fly around at anywhere from 30-280 mph (and remember that bird that you thought almost flew into you while you were walking down the street - the bird was totally in control and to the bird you looked like you were moving in slow motion).



So what about a bird flying around Austin in the summer sun? Think of a dark colored Turkey Vulture out flying above your house in full sunlight. It is putting its muscles to use, which generates heat, yet keeping its body temperature relatively constant. Even though birds cannot sweat on the outside, they can still use evaporation to cool on the inside and that is how they solve their heat problem. Air sacs are scattered throughout the bird's body, in some cases located within large muscles and in some larger birds even the inside of wing bones. These are strategically placed not only to aid in respiration, but also to take away heat by allowing internal cooling in all the places generating heat.

So that vulture is doing just fine with the heat, but if you want to think of it sweating on the inside as much as you are sweating on the outside that would be just fine. Got a question? Drop me a note at hpwbana.birds@gmail.com



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Highland Park West Balcones Area

TENNIS COURT UPDATE

The Friends of Perry Park worked with PARD and our local tennis community to resurface the two tennis courts this summer at Perry Park. The work was completed in mid-June by CourTex Construction.

These courts were last resurfaced in early 2000 so this was a very much needed project. The surface will be for medium speed play and faint blended quickstart lines will be added to the courts for our younger tennis players. We are glad to report that the Friends of Perry Park was awarded an Austin Park Foundation Austin City

Limits grant to fund a major part of the work. The community has fundraised for the matching \$2000.

Many thanks go out to Dave Woods for all his hard work on this project. He brought the project to the Friends of Perry Park last summer and was the real point of contact for making it happen, including gathering all the data for the grant applications, fundraising, and working with the contractor. Thank you so much, Coach Woods!



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MOUNT BONNELL MONUMENT RESTORATION

The on-site phase of the Frank Covert, Sr. monument restoration atop Mount Bonnell began June 10th and was scheduled to be completed by July 3rd. The existing cage was replaced by a fence during that phase of the work. The work was done by Catherine Williams, Silver Lining Art Conservation, and Matthew Johnson, Bartlett Stone Company.

The project so far has been a huge success.

The conservation team has assembled all the pieces of the monument and was on site in June mortaring cracks and carving replacement pieces. The project is funded in part through a grant from the Texas Historical Commission.



The restoration team works on repairing the Covert Monument on top of Mount Bonnell.



The Covert Monument restoration team.

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