

SLNA Sentinel

Publication of the South Lamar Neighborhood Association

August 2008, Volume 2, Issue 8

www.southlamar.org

From the Prez

I hope you all are managing to stay cool – or maybe even get away for a vacation in a little bit cooler climate.

I hate to bring up the dreaded topic of gasoline prices, but here is a Web site that you might find useful – www.AustinGasPrices.com. As part of gasbuddy.com, this Web site tells you the lowest gasoline prices around Austin (also the highest, but that's not really so helpful, is it?). They rely on members to report the prices they spot and they let you select by area. Handy service. As I am writing this in mid-July, the price spread between highest and lowest is 20 cents. Wouldn't you like to know where to get that cheaper price?

Also, August is the time of the Perseid meteor showers, so named because they appear in the vicinity of the Perseus Constellation, which rises in the northeast around 11 p.m. In the way early morning hours of Tuesday, Aug. 12, the showers should be at their peak. Fortunately, the moon sets around 2 a.m. so maybe the skies will be darker. The better to see those showers. You don't need binoculars to see these "shooting stars." In fact, binoculars will restrict your vision so just rely on your own peepers.

See ya around the 'hood!
Nancy Maclaine

Next Meeting:

Thursday, Aug. 21

7:00 p.m.

Location to be announced.

The Importance of Reporting Criminal Mischief and Unusual Activities

During a previous neighborhood association meeting, we learned from our Austin Police Department District Representative, Officer Robert Barboza, that the kind of events of which we've seen a wave in our neighborhood do not get reported to him, because they are classified as "criminal mischief." So cars being broken into, graffiti tagging or suspicious behavior are flying under his radar. While the neighborhood association plans to voice its concerns about that, anybody who is concerned with the standard process that eliminates "criminal mischief" from the daily reports to the district commands is welcome to contact APD directly. Meanwhile, Officer Barboza said the best way to let him know about these incidents is to send him an e-mail at Robert.Barboza@ci.austin.tx.us or call him at (512) 974-8246 (if there is no answer, you can leave a message about the event or ask for him to call you back). You should still call 3-1-1 to report the problem, but alerting Officer Barboza gets him in the loop.

Also be aware that a specific individual recently was back in our neighborhood going door to door with hard-luck stories asking for anything from gas to money to food to work. Not that there is nothing wrong with people going door-to-door when they are genuinely looking for work, but this man has "worked" our neighborhood for at least the past two years as there are online conversations about his tactics from 2006 on our neighborhood association Web site. Some of our neighborhood residents also have alleged that he opened doors to enter their homes when the doors were not locked. When these incidents occurred previously, APD provided us with his name and criminal history, which reportedly includes drug issues. He is an African-American man in his 40s, about 5 feet tall and small-boned with a very close haircut. He typically wears an oversized shirt, blue jeans and a dark baseball cap. He is known by our area police officers who have responded to neighbors' calls about him by following him while he is going door-to-door throughout our neighborhood.



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View the current issue of the SLNA Sentinel

Newsletter on the 1st day of each month at

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Teenage Job Seekers

Name	Age	Baby Sit	Pet Sit	House Sit	Yard Work	Phone
Doe, John	15					111-1111

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Attention Teenagers

The **Teenage Job Seekers** listing service is offered free of charge to all South Lamar NA teenagers seeking work. Submit your name and information to kumscheid@austin.rr.com by the 9th of the month!

Newsletter Information

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SLNA Membership Statement

Membership in the Association shall be issued on the basis of residency (including renters) or residential property ownership and timely payment of dues or waiver request.

SLNA boundaries: North-Oltorf, South-Ben White, West-South Lamar/Manchaca, East-Union Pacific Railroad

Persons meeting this criteria may request a reduction in dues or a waiver when submitting the membership application.

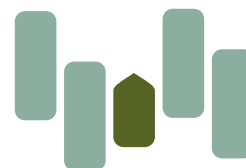
The privilege of introducing motions and voting shall be limited to those who have joined the Association at least ten (10) days prior to any scheduled meeting. Complete bylaws and links to other useful SLNA related information are available at www.southlamar.org

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Online Trackers Provide Local Crime Information

Two online trackers give the public in-depth looks at crimes taking place in their neighborhoods. Austin residents can see area crimes at www.spotcrime.com/tx/austin, which uses information from police records and news sources to show crimes on a Google map. The Web site lets you filter crimes over a certain date, range or time period. Clicking on an icon brings up more details about the crime committed. The Web site provides a visual representation of reported criminal activity.

You also can visit the Austin Police Department's crime viewer page at www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/currentcrimeinfo.htm. That link accesses the past 18 months of crime information through an interactive mapping program called the Crime Report Viewer. The crime information comes from a database of official police reports. Searches on the APD site can be performed using geographic boundaries like neighborhood associations, police sectors or districts, zip codes, census tracts and a rectangle search tool that can search anywhere in the city. Additionally, individual addresses can be entered and crime information searched within 500 or 1,000 feet of that address. Updates to the crime information database occur daily and go back the last 18 months from each day.

Austin Police Offer Monthly Neighborhood Watch Training

District representatives of the Austin Police Departments South West Area Command host Neighborhood Watch training programs monthly on Tuesdays. Currently, a training program is scheduled for Aug. 12. Training takes place from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Clinton Hunter Substation, 404 Ralph Ablandado (between Congress Avenue and South First Street, one block north of Slaughter Lane). For more information, call Sally Becerra at (512) 974-5903.

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SLNA General Meeting Minutes June 19, 2008

7:10 p.m. Meeting called to order.

7:11 p.m. Tour of Skyline Terrace – 100 units for lower-income folks, already 70 percent occupancy. Looks very nice! Security desk, clean and nice, gardens, common areas, and a beautiful terrace overlooking downtown skyline. Thus, the name: Skyline Terrace.

7:38 p.m. Presentation on crime in the neighborhood by Kim Rossmo, neighbor on Del Curto Road. He has a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice and is an all-around nice guy. He taught us all about basic criminology statistics and terminology, and then presented his analysis of SLNA crime based on Austin Police Department statistics for the past five years. Summary: when compared with national, midsize city averages, SLNA crime rate compares favorably and has been stable over the past five years, with a slight uptick in 2008. The obvious hot spot in neighborhood crime is the southeast corner along Southridge Drive. There was some discussion of strategies for dealing with the same, then we mostly just shrugged and moved on. No volunteer stepped up.

8:22 p.m. Treasurer Report from John Bissell. We have \$4,575 in the bank.

8:26 p.m. Zoning Report from Nancy MacLaine. Good News: we won our exclusion effort on vertical mixed use (VMU) Tract 4, which is South Lamar Boulevard between Kinney Avenue and Del Curto Road. Bad News: we lost (badly) our fight on multiple family (MF-2) upzone on Clawson Road. But the City Council did insist on low-flow toilets! Toilets over people! Clawson Road resident Jeff Twining brought up a resolution for vote regarding SLNA opposition to a single-family (SF-3) to Limited Office (LO) or General Retail (GR) upzone at 4209 Clawson Road. Unanimous vote to support the opposition. President will request postponement of hearing before Planning Commission (currently scheduled for June 24).

8:50 p.m. Discussion of possible Fourth of July party. (Crickets).

8:51 p.m. Roberta Leahy resigned from sign duty, asked for volunteer to replace her. (Crickets).

8:55 p.m. Adjourn.

Capital Metro Gets Public Input For New Rapid Bus Proposal

One of the things they are planning is a new rapid bus route from South Lamar Boulevard to Burnet.

Capital MetroRapid
Community Meetings

Capital Metro has been working on a revised rapid bus proposal that could earn some federal funding. Capital Metro hosted three public meetings in July to hear what customers and the community had to say.

Routes being discussed include Bus Routes 1L/1M, 3, 5/26, 7/27, 9/14, 15/16, 17, 10/20, 30, 101, 5, 350, 16 and 328, as well as Orange 'Dillo, Red 'Dillo, Gold 'Dillo and Silver 'Dillo.

Capital Metro's proposal for its MetroRapid system includes amenities such as transit signal priority. That could mean a traffic light that stays green a little longer just for you or one that changes from red to green a few seconds early as the bus approaches.

The plan calls for an initial service that will include two routes: North Lamar Boulevard/South Congress Avenue and Burnet Road/South Lamar Boulevard. This is the first phase in a plan to have as many as 10 routes in the next 20 years. Capital MetroRapid is a part of the All Systems Go Long-Range Transit Plan that includes expanded local and express bus service, MetroRail service, and new and improved park and ride lots.

Features of the Capital MetroRapid system would include multi-door boarding, far-side stops, real-time passenger information at bus stops, a pre-pay fare system to speed boarding and 10-minute frequency during peak and all-day service. It's a type of limited-stop service utilizing technology aimed at providing reliability, user comfort, and rapid transit service. A key objective of MetroRapid service is to reduce travel time by 20 percent as compared to other regular bus service in the same corridors. Capital Metro also says MetroRapid stops will be close to local service bus stops and connect to two MetroRail stations for quick and easy connections.

Capital Metro plans to submit a formal proposal for federal funding later this summer. For more information on MetroRapid, look online at <http://allsystemsgo.capmetro.org/capital-metrorapid.shtml>.

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Neighborhood Cleanup Aug. 23

Our Keep Austin Beautiful (KAB) coordinators for the South Lamar Neighborhood Association, Wendy Brennan and Link Davidson, have scheduled the next neighborhood cleanup for Saturday, Aug. 23, beginning at 9 a.m. We will meet at the usual cleanup start corner – Doolin Drive and Clawson Road. Also as usual, Brennan and Davidson will supply the trash bags, gloves and sunscreen. Alanna Reed, our KAB contact, graciously provided us a permanent reserve of some “pick-up” sticks. And while we hope we will not need them, she also gave us a first aid kit and supplies of pre- and post-contact controls for poison ivy. We will bring some Starbucks coffee, some water and some snacks. Looks like all we need now is you!

Our neighborhood cleanups provide us all with a great opportunity to meet and work with our neighbors. After only an hour and a half or two, the results are obvious and the payoff is immediate: our streets are clean and we know our neighbors and our neighborhood all the better. More often than you might imagine, we also garner the praise of onlookers, who thank us for our efforts. It’s an overall great way to start a Saturday.

If you need additional information, please contact Link Davidson at 326-2379. You also can send e-mail to Davidson at osouthaustin@aol.com or Wendy Brennan at wenbrennan@aol.com. They would be glad to talk with you and to answer your questions. See you Aug. 23!

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Recipe of the Month:



Chicken Apple Salad

Ingredients

- 1 cup cubed chicken
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1/3 cup chopped celery
- Juice of one lemon
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup cubed apple, do not peel
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans

Directions

Combine first 6 ingredients in large mixing bowl. Add just enough mayonnaise to moisten. Cover and chill at least 1 hr. before serving.

Note:

Small can crushed pineapple(draind) can also be added.

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