

SLNA Sentinel

Publication of the South Lamar Neighborhood Association

February 2009, Volume 3, Issue 2

www.southlamar.org

From the Prez

Well, the City Council and mayor races are starting to ramp up, even though the election itself is not until Saturday, May 9. On March 25, the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) will host a Candidates Forum for this year's mayor and City Council elections. The format will be similar to last year's Candidates Forum. The ANC Executive Committee will put together a questionnaire to send to all candidates and it is currently soliciting questions from its members for the questionnaire. The ANC Resources page on the ANC Web site (www.ancweb.org/resources.htm) has the questionnaire used last year along with the candidates' responses. Please look over this questionnaire and suggest revisions to questions and/or new questions to be used for this year's forum. You can send questions to Carol Gibbs, our ANC representative, at cgibbs1@austin.rr.com so she can pass them along to the committee.

February's regular South Lamar Neighborhood Association meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 19. We will meet at Skyline Terrace again. BUT this time, owing to the tax workshops going on in the downstairs meeting room, we will meet on the sixth floor in the Club Room. I look forward to seeing you there. (For the April meeting, we will be back in our normal meeting room.)

See ya around the 'hood.

Nancy Maclaine

City Solicits Public Input For Community Programs

Help prioritize housing and community development needs in Austin

The City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office invites you to provide feedback on the Fiscal Year 2009-2014 Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan will be used to identify community priorities to fund housing, community development, economic development, and public service needs.

The City encourages you to participate in one or all of the opportunities listed below to have your voice heard.

Public Hearings: The City of Austin invites you to provide feedback at any upcoming public hearings. For a list of public hearings, visit the City's Web site at www.ci.austin.tx.us/housing/conplan_09-14.htm.

Send written comments to:

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Attn: Kate Moore

P.O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767

Send comments by e-mail to kate.moore@ci.austin.tx.us

Fill out an online survey at www.cityofaustin.org/housing. Surveys are also available at Consolidated Plan public hearings and all Austin libraries.

Neighborhood Changes

One of our SLNA officers looked into what's happening at the corner of Kinney Avenue and Lamar Boulevard, where the used car lot Down Under Auto Sales recently vacated.

She went to the City's GIS map on its Web site and located the Site Plans display for the area, found the location number SP-07-0034C for the specific site and then plugged that number into the database of development projects in Austin.

When you search for SP-07-0034C in the development project database, it brings up four items. The most informative is 2007-000034 SP - click on it and scroll way down to the list of Attachments. Apparently, all the pages of the site plan itself are there. It looks like the plans are to put a building toward the corner of the intersection and another toward the side that abuts the first house on Kinney Avenue. You can look at other attachments, too, but this one provides a good "big picture."

Anyone who is remotely interested in this stuff is encouraged to look at these files. This particular case may be beyond the point of us having input on the design, but we need more bodies in our neighborhood to be familiar with the "development world" in preparation for the next development boom. Let's learn on a smaller one such as this, so we can be prepared for the next big one.

This case might be a good one to discuss at our February neighborhood association meeting. There may even be time to discuss with the developer the types of retail we would like to see there if he has not already decided on his tenants.

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Stork Report in South Lamar



Baby Boy:

Derek Anthony Barry
7 lbs. 5 ounces
21 inches long

Born:

January 2, 2009
7:39 pm

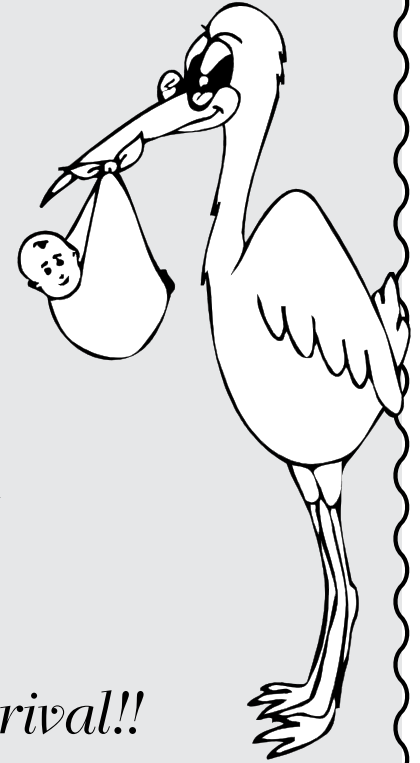
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Abigail



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² Incidentals include foods/beverages, over-the-counter remedies, gas, parking, child care, etc.

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2009 South West Area Command Neighborhood Watch Training

Learn more about how to set up a neighborhood watch program in your neighborhood.

2nd Tuesday of each month

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Clinton Hunter Substation
404 Ralph Ablanado Drive

(Between Congress Avenue and S. First Street,
one block north of Slaughter Lane)

Feb. 10	March 10	April 14
May 12	June 9	July 14
Aug. 11	Sept. 8	Oct. 13
Nov. 10	Dec. 8	

2009 Membership Dues

Beat the rush and send in your dues today. This is good for all of 2009 and entitles members to:

- 1) Introduce Motions, 2) Vote, 3) Finance the operational costs of this critical voice to Austin City Council.

Cost per household is **\$10** (the same price since the beginning of this neighborhood group more than eight years ago). Better yet - in the spirit of the season - become a **Star Contributor for \$20**. This helps the association plan for future events and covers those being impacted by today's economy and requesting hardship waivers.

Remember: For new members to vote, they must join the association at least 10 days prior to the next meeting, which is scheduled for Feb. 19, 2009. Prior year members, however, are allowed to pay their dues and vote that same day for just the first meeting of the year (a perk of long-term participation).

This year's goal is to beat the record enrollment of 85 members. A large group is harder to ignore when it comes to making requests before our elected officials, so send in your membership form today!

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*Annual Percentage Rate. All rates expressed are "as low as". **Austin Telco will pay all standard closing costs on Home Equity loans below \$100k. Additional non-standard fees will be the responsibility of the member. ***Rate applies to 1st lien commercial real estate loans with a loan to value of 80% or less; construction/development loan rates/terms may be different. No Pre-payment penalty. Please call for details. ****Annual Percentage Yield. Penalties for early withdrawal may apply. Actual rate may vary depending on credit qualifications. All APRs, APYs and terms are subject to change without notice. This credit union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration.

14 METRO LOCATIONS




Texas Hill Country Gardening

One-inch watering soaks winter soil

With continued dry conditions in the forecast, your landscape might need some extra care.

November through February in Central Texas is usually a time of cool temperatures and rainfall more than adequate to provide the water needs for our sleepy winter landscapes. This winter, however, you may need to drag out your sprinklers. Most established plants and Texas natives are well adapted to dry conditions, but recent plantings, turf grass and evergreen plants might require one thorough soil soaking in February and again in March.

If your soil is dry four inches below the surface, consider watering your yard. About one inch of water is the right amount to saturate the root zone in Central Texas soils. To figure out how long to run your sprinklers, set straight-sided cans or cups in your yard and run your sprinklers until the cups are filled to one inch. If your yard is on a slope, you may need to break your watering into two or more separate sessions, allowing time between sessions for water to soak in rather than running off.

Mulch Time.

Now is also a great time to mulch your beds. A two- to three-inch layer of mulch around your perennials, shrubs and trees supports

plants through both winter and summer extremes by keeping the soil moist and moderating soil temperatures.

Avoid pruning your plants and do not fertilize now. Pruning and fertilizer stimulate growth, which can stress plants during drought. New growth is also very susceptible to freeze damage, should temperatures plummet again this winter. Wait until late February to bring out your pruning shears.

Be sure to avoid over-watering this winter. Even if we do not get any significant rainfall, wait until your plants begin growing again in late March or April before you resume a warm-season irrigation schedule.

Consider waiting for better conditions to plant.

If our dry weather continues, this spring will not be an ideal time to do a lot of planting. New plants thrive best with natural rainfall and mild conditions. Without adequate rain, a new landscape will struggle to get established.

Consider this a year to make other types of yard improvements. You may consider adding a cooling arbor, laying a gorgeous walkway or building an artistic new fence.

Elizabeth Drozda-Freeman is a conservation landscape specialist.



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Echoes of the Drought from the 1950s

LCRA meteorologist Bob Rose reflects on 2008 and shares his 2009 weather predictions

“During the long Texas drought of the 1950s a joke, probably already as old as the state, was told again and again about a man who bet several of his friends it would never rain again, and he collected from two of them.” This line is from Elmer Kelton’s famous book, “The Time it Never Rained”, a chronicle of the terrible record-setting drought of the 1950s in West Texas. In the book, Elmer states that drought, by Texas definition, is a period of severely deficient moisture that laps over from one year into another. “It often lasts two to three years duration. Anything shorter, though it may be serious, is termed a dry spell, as if more annoyance than hardship.”

There’s no doubt the long drought of the 1950s is one of the worst on record for Texas. During that period, many cities set records for all-time lowest rainfall in a month and in a calendar year. For example, Austin’s rainfall in 1954 was only 11.42 inches, the driest year on record, dating back to 1856. But very dry weather in 2008, although not long enough in duration to qualify as a drought, is matching, if not exceeding, some of the bad drought years of the 1950s. From the Hill Country to the middle Texas coast, rainfall through late December has been roughly 25 to 50 percent of normal. Data for Austin and San Antonio indicate 2008 was the fourth driest year for Austin and the third driest year for San Antonio, as well as the driest year for both cities since the mid 1950s! In reality, the dry weather of 2008 has not just been a dry spell but rather a very serious drought!



Bob Rose,
LCRA meteorologist

The cause of this drought, like most droughts, is not fully understood. It appears to be the result of many different elements in the oceans and atmosphere that have influenced the weather pattern over the central part of Texas most of the year. But in some ways, this drought also seemed to happen by chance, with several large rain storms just missing our region in one direction or another while other storm systems weakened and fell apart just before they moved through. In how many years do you find much of West and deep South Texas wetter than Central Texas?

Scientifically speaking, we’re currently in a period caused by a very long-term weather pattern that favors more dry years across Texas than wet ones. So having a fairly dry year right now is not all that surprising. But what is surprising is just how dry this year has been, especially following the very wet year in 2007.

Like the two-year droughts of 2005-2006 and 1998-1999, the drought of 2008 still may continue for another six months to a year, possibly longer. No one knows for sure. But I have some hope the drought may back off some later this winter and going into spring. Looking back at the weather from other years with somewhat similar ocean and atmospheric conditions, specifically 1950, 1974 and 1989, dry weather continued into January of the following year, but some fairly generous rains began to develop February into March in each of those years. If 2009 is similar, we might indeed see more rains across our region late winter and into spring. But will this be a true change in the pattern or just a temporary break? Will the dry spell of 2008 turn into the drought of 2008-2009? Let’s certainly hope not.

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Please complete the following. Print Name(s) (Couples, please use both first names): _____

Mailing Address: _____ City, State, Zip Code: _____

Area Code and Phone Number: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

☐ Check here if you want to join SLNA's Yahoo Email Group.

If you live outside SLNA's borders, the address of the SLNA property that you own: _____

Annual Membership: \$10.00 per household (due in January of each year)

OR be a "Star Contributor" for \$20 (or more) per year.

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ ☐ Check here if you are making a request for Hardship Waiver of Membership fee. Make check payable to "South Lamar Neighborhood Association". and mail to: **Sally Merritt, P.O. Box 142666, Austin, TX 78714.** Also check out the SLNA Web site at www.southlamar.org.

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