

# SLNA Sentinel

Publication of the South Lamar Neighborhood Association

August 2009, Volume 3, Issue 8

[www.southlamar.org](http://www.southlamar.org)

## Letter from the Prez

Things are starting to hop on the subject of the new park (as yet unnamed, but keep those ideas coming). There is a whole column on what's happening with the park elsewhere in this newsletter.

Wow! I just discovered a great resource on the Austin Public Library website -- [http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/library/rg\\_downturn.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/library/rg_downturn.htm). It's a research guide entitled "Consumer Help for the Economic Downturn". It has links to information on all kinds of subjects: Shopping, Saving Energy, Investments, Health Insurance, Credit Cleanup, Creating a Budget, and more, including The Financial Crisis 2009 (uh-oh it's bad news when they have to tag the year into the title! I hope we don't need a new one for The Financial Crisis "2010"). A gateway to quite a lot of information -- what a great library page!

I went to a gardening class the other weekend. It was all about container gardening -- growing vegetable crops in containers instead of in the ground. You might want to do this -- even if you have plenty of yard -- to make your garden movable -- so you can move them into or out of the sun. Anyway one of the points they made was when planting in containers you should always use "potting soil" rather than just the regular dirt from your yard. Apparently our local dirt is full of clay and when the clay gains or loses moisture it expands or contracts -- which will play havoc with your containers AND the contents which need lots of air and soft growing medium. The whole class was interesting, maybe even inspiring -- although let's face it anybody who waits until JULY to take a gardening class in Texas is a superior procrastinator and is not getting a garden in THIS year.

Well I hope you enjoy the rest of this newsletter and everyone gets all excited about the new park and the projects related to it. AND I hope to see you at the next meeting. Artz Rib House. Business starts at 7pm but you are encouraged to come early (6 or 6:30 or so) to eat and Socialize with your neighbors.

See ya round the 'hood!

*Nancy*

## "Pocket Park Update"

Our park planning has begun! Our Keep Austin Beautiful Grant Application was submitted in time for consideration. Thanks to Ariel and Thomas Bleich for completing the final draft. Our first goal is to outfit the park with benches, picnic tables and barbeque pits. The Park Committee will be researching and applying for more grants in the near future. Volunteers interested in joining the committee are welcome! Please bring your hopes and wishes for the park to the August meeting.

Marty Stump, our City of Austin Park Development Coordinator, is working on the installation of a fence around the park. Getting everything "buttoned down" so that our new space isn't used as a parking lot!

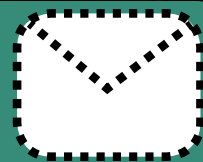
The dialogue concerning our park's name has been fun and interesting. Let's put the quest for a proper name on our agenda for the August meeting at Artz Rib House on the 20th at 7:00 p.m.. A date for the Design Charette with PARD must also be decided on.

Once we receive our funding we will need to put in many man hours "sweat wise" to beautify the park area. Your ideas and offerings of talents are much appreciated. This is the first Public Park our neighborhood has ever had. Let's give it as much attention as we can so it can grow into being a sweet spot for everyone!

*Amy Zamarripa*



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## OFFICERS & CONTACTS

### PRESIDENT

Nancy MacLaine..... nmaclaine@sbcglobal.net

### VICE PRESIDENT

Krista Umscheid-Ramirez..... kumscheid@austin.rr.com

### SECRETARY

David Ansel..... david@souppeddler.com

### TREASURER

Sally Merritt..... s.j.merritt@earthlink.net

### WEBMASTER

Bill Stoughton..... bill@southlamar.org

### ANC/SCC REPRESENTATIVE

Thomas Bleich..... thomas.bleich@hotmail.com

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Amy Zamarripa..... amyjoeda@gmail.com

Julie Smith..... julie.smith3@gmail.com

### SLNA-KAB COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Wendy Brennan..... wenbrennan@aol.com

### SLNA-KAB COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Link Davidson,..... osouthaustin@aol.com

*To join the yahoo! e-list send an email to  
SouthLamarNA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com*

## NEWSLETTER INFO

### EDITOR

Amy Zamarripa..... amyjoeda@gmail.com

Julie Smith..... julie.smith3@gmail.com

### PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc..... www.PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

Advertising..... advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

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## Next Cleanup Date

SEPT. 13TH 9AM-10AM

The current meeting location for the Sunday cleanup is the parking lot of the former Unity Church at 9 a.m. to pick up all the cleanup tools—trash bags, gloves, etc. The cleanup has been shortened to make participation more manageable for folks. The number of volunteers has increased making the job easier and quicker! Thanks to everyone for lending a hand. For more information, contact Link Davidson by sending e-mail to osouthaustin@aol.com or by calling (512) 326-2379.

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**15 AUSTIN METRO LOCATIONS**

## Your Home's Air Conditioning Efficiency

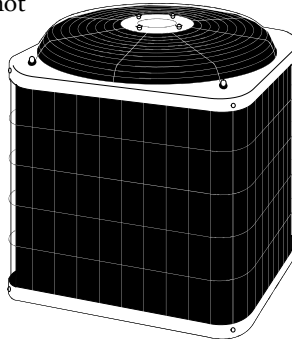
*Submitted by Robert Lee*

Over the previous six months there has been more discussion on Air Conditioning efficiency and home efficiency than any other time in recent years! Since manufacturers, local utilities and the Federal Government are offering rebates people have a better understanding of SEER and EER (efficiency ratings) of air conditioners. Overall this is a good thing, but it only addresses half of the problem!

The air distribution system (air ducts) are the other half of the equation and have nothing to do with the published SEER or EER ratings! The only way to know if your system is even close to running at capacity is to test it after it is installed so that the entire system, including the ductwork, is tested.

Have you spent good money on a new system but still have hot spots, cold spots or uncomfortable rooms; or maybe you haven't seen your energy bills reduced? Are you thinking about taking advantage of the Federal Rebate by purchasing new high efficient equipment? If your answer is yes to any of these questions then please think about the whole system! Efficient new equipment on old, inefficient ducts is a recipe for discomfort, or worse, failure!

Call to have a certified professional test your entire system today; stop throwing money away every month and have a more comfortable, and efficient, home.



## Next South Lamar Neighborhood Association Meeting:

"Eat & Meet!"

Thursday August 20th at 7 p.m.

Artz Rib House

South Lamar Boulevard at

Bluebonnet Lane

### Don't want to wait for the mail?

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at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com).



## COLIN'S HOPE

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### FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DROWNING

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in children ages 1-4

### DROWNING WILL AFFECT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW



Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury-related death ages 1-14.

For more information, check out our website at

[www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org)

### DROWNING CAN STILL OCCUR EVEN IF YOU KNOW HOW TO SWIM

NO ONE is "drown proof" – no matter their level of swimming ability.

Falls, entrapments, and injuries lead to drowning regardless of swimming level.

A majority of people overestimate their own and their child's ability to swim, especially in a panic event.

### DROWNING IS QUICK AND SILENT



Drowning occurs in as little as 2 minutes.



Irreversible brain damage occurs in as little as 4 minutes.



Most children are out of sight or missing for less than 5 minutes and usually in the presence of 1 or both parents.



Most children die who are submerged for as little as 6-10 minutes.

Children who drown do not **scream, splash, or struggle**. They silently slip beneath the water, even with adults & lifeguards present.

## Happy Home with Essential Oils

*Sarah Oakley Smith*

It's time to throw out your old chemically-laden household cleaning products in exchange for non-toxic, inexpensive, and homemade solutions. As we enter into a much needed era of "green," we are all more inclined to recycle our waste, seek out unrefined and organic foods, use "all



natural" products on our bodies, and support sustainable organizations. One of the simplest ways to help the environment and protect your body is to use essential oils in and around the home to clean and disinfect, all the while creating a fragrant and pleasing atmosphere.

I know you've heard it a million times, but many, if not all, of the products you normally buy at the store to clean your windows, shower, carpet, and countertops are toxic for you, your family,

your home, and the environment. Many products that read "all natural" or "organic ingredients" on the label can still be harmful. It's best to take this into your own hands and use 100% pure essential oils mixed with a few basic ingredients you can find at the grocery store to replace traditional cleaning products. The majority of essential oils are antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, and antiviral, and when combined together to form a synergistic blend, they can be even more powerful.

Make a countertop spray to be used in the kitchen, on appliances, and in the shower and bathroom in a matter of minutes. Choose the oils you like best or use one of the blends I've recommended below and start cleaning! The ingredients below will make up about 16 oz. of cleansing solution. Adjust as necessary to fit the size of your spray bottle.

### BASIC COUNTERTOP SPRAY

- 1 tablespoon vegetable glycerine (found at most HEB's and all health food stores)
- 1 big squirt of castile soap such as Dr. Bronner's (found at most HEB's and all health food stores)

*(Continued on Page 5)*

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## Essential Oils- (Continued from page 4)

- 10-20 drops of essential oils
- 15 oz. warm water or enough to fill container

Add vegetable glycerine and castile soap first, and then add essential oils. Mix well. Fill remainder of bottle with warm water and shake vigorously. Spray and enjoy the clean and safe scent of your new cleanser! Always shake before use.

### COUNTERTOP ESSENTIAL OIL BLEND #1

- 3 drops clove
- 5 drops basil
- 5 drops lavender or geranium
- 7 drops tea tree

### COUNTERTOP ESSENTIAL OIL BLEND #2

- 3 drops cinnamon
- 5 drops lavender
- 5 drops bergamot
- 7 drops lemon

Disinfect easily by adding a drop or two of any oil on a damp cloth used to clean kitchen or bathroom surfaces. To mop the kitchen and bathroom floors, I add a few generous squirts of castile soap and 10 drops of essential oils to the bucket, then fill with hot water. I'm hooked on this carpet cleaning idea: Before vacuuming mix several

drops of peppermint oil with a cup or two of baking soda. Sprinkle all over carpet and vacuum. Your home and carpet will smell fresh and minty!

Add a drop or two of lemon essential oil to the dishwashing detergent or lavender essential oil to the laundry detergent. Add a few drops of thyme, lavender, and peppermint to a warm bottle of water and use as an uplifting and purifying room spray (always shake before use).

You can basically use any oils of your choice, but here is a list of some of the essential oils that are known for being all of the 4 A's: antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, and antiviral.

- basil, bergamot, cedar, chamomile, cinnamon, clove, eucalyptus, frankincense, geranium, lavender, lemon, myrrh, orange, oregano, patchouli, peppermint, rose, rosemary, tea tree, thyme

Always remember to check for contraindications before using any essential oils (<http://learnaroma.com/pdf/aromatherapy.pdf>). Use only 100% pure essential oils from reputable sources. Even if you despise cleaning, keep in mind that almost all of the oils have some kind of mental or emotional benefit and will help to uplift your spirits!

**We recommend an even higher level  
of protection this summer.**

## Great Hills Baptist Church

### Sunday Schedule:

**9:30 & 11 am** - Bible Life Groups (all ages)

**9:30 am** - Celebration-Connection  
(Worship Choir & Orchestra)

**11:00 am** - Life-Connection  
(Worship Band)

### Classes Beginning September 20:

#### Hot Topics

Topics include: teen purity, empty-nesters, financial stability, parenting for greatness, defending your faith

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or seriously dating



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## Austin Habitat for Humanity: Changing Lives through Affordable Housing

by Julie Smith

There are simply some things in life that are unacceptable. Austin Habitat for Humanity knows that living in poverty housing is one of those things. More than 60,000 working families in Austin live in substandard, overcrowded or cost-burdensome living conditions. Through the power of home ownership, Austin Habitat works tirelessly to end this cycle of poverty housing in our community.

"Owning a home changes everything," says Executive Director, Michael Willard. "Affordable housing is needed now more than ever, and with the help of our donors and volunteers, we're working hard at Habitat to change lives and improve communities every day."

Austin Habitat serves low-income families who make between 25 and 50 percent of median family income. Once accepted into the program, Habitat Partner Families must contribute 400 hours of "sweat equity" and attend 24 units of homebuyer education. Homes, made possible by sponsors in the community and constructed by volunteer labor, are then sold to the families with a zero interest mortgage. The average price of a Habitat home in Austin is \$60,000 with an average monthly mortgage payment of \$500. Compared to the \$800 average rent of a two-bedroom apartment in Austin, the

affordability of these homes is amazing. In addition, the homeowners are building equity for themselves, creating stability for their children and becoming active members of the community.

Children of low-income homeowners see dramatic improvements in their lives. With the stability of a home, these children are 33 percent less likely to give birth as unmarried teenagers, 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school, 62 percent more likely to acquire post-secondary education and will earn 24 percent higher incomes as adults.

This is the power of home ownership, and according to Austin Habitat for Humanity, the end of poverty housing begins here. To find out more about Austin Habitat and how to get involved, visit [www.austinhabitat.org](http://www.austinhabitat.org).



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# Is Your Home an Internet Broadcaster?

## *(It might be and you don't even know it)*

*Submitted by Laurie Scott*

Laptop computers have made computing mobile and very convenient. Wireless routers in our homes have made it possible to use our computers anywhere in the home, and not just where the connection comes into your home.

If you have a wireless router at home, then you are using one of three possible levels of security, 1) none, 2) poor and 3) what you SHOULD be using. "None" is real simple, open the box, plug in the router, connect to the Internet. With this connection, ANYONE within range, meaning your neighbors, passersby and that annoying teen-age kid down the who likes to hang around your house in the evening can use your wireless network to access the internet or worse, access your computers at home. Also, any illegal activity over the Internet is going to be traced back to your home, not to the person or computer that may have done it.

I often tell the story of the time I moved to Austin from Sacramento 4 1/2 years ago over the Thanksgiving holiday. I stayed overnight with a friend in Flagstaff, Arizona at her parents' home. Lots of relatives were there and they all smoked (and smoked a lot). Even though it was 35 degrees outside, I went and sat in my car for an hour just to breath fresh air. While in my car I powered up my laptop and discovered a completely unsecured network within range. I connected to it and took the opportunity to check my email and do some web surfing. Then the good Samaritan in me decided to do them a favor. I figured they hadn't changed the default password on their router, and sure enough I was right. I logged onto their router and took a screen shot of it. Since they were also using the default name for their computer network, I changed mine to match and could see that they had a computer turned on with one of their hard drives shared (no, I didn't peek at it.) I also saw that they had an Epson printer connected to it, so I downloaded the printer driver and installed it on my laptop, opened Microsoft Word and pasted the screen shot of their router into it. I also included instructions on how to keep prying eyes out of their network, thanked them that I was able to check my email, and then I PRINTED the document out on their printer. Keep in mind I have no idea which house I had connected to. I imagine if they were home that they were a little shocked to have their printer start all by itself and print a note from a complete stranger. Lucky for them I wasn't someone who wanted to copy their files,

plant a virus or lock them out of their own network.

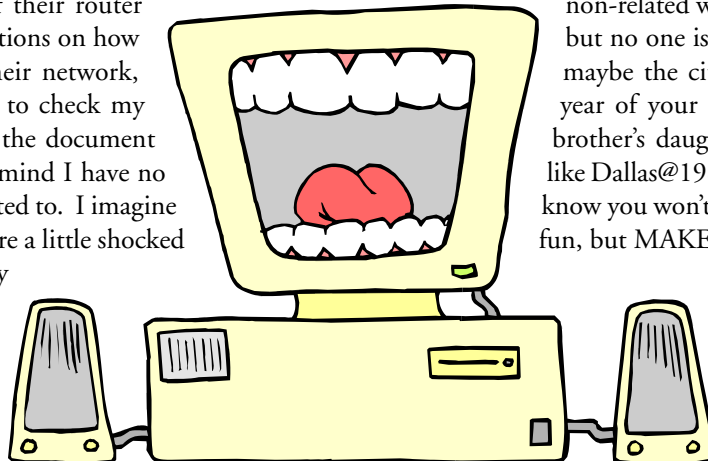
The two levels of security that are usually displayed with a padlock symbol are WEP and WPA. WEP falls into the "poor" category of security. WEP will keep honest people out of your network, and will prevent someone from accidentally getting connected to your network, but WEP was "cracked" several years ago, and nowadays it only takes a laptop and 60 seconds to break into a network secured with WEP.

What you should be using is WPA (or WPA2) to provides a connection that (with a good password) can't be cracked in a comfortable lifetime. Log into your router (usually at <http://192.168.0.1> or <http://192.168.1.1>), go to the wireless security settings and set it for WPA. Then change your laptops and other wireless devices to match.

There are many different routers on the market, but there are a few standard rules to follow: Changing the security settings on your router should always be done with the computer attached to the router via a network cable - don't change it over a wireless connection. If you make a mistake, you won't be able to get back in to fix it. In the wireless security settings on your router, you will see WEP and SHOULD see WPA as options. If you don't see WPA as an option, your router is probably several years old. Go to the manufacturer's support page on their web site and look for updated "firmware" to download. Download the firmware and update the router per the instructions provided by the manufacturer. If the latest firmware doesn't provide WPA encryption, then it's time for a trip to Best Buy or Fry's for a new router. ANY new router will provide WPA encryption. Next use a strong password. A strong password should be at least 12 characters long, feel free to make it a lot longer - the longer the better. Be sure to use upper and lower case letters, use numbers AND use special characters like # \* ( \ } [ @ ! & . Write it down and put it in a safe place. If it helps, use 2 or 3

non-related words or numbers that you know but no one is likely to guess. Something like maybe the city you got married in with the year of your first car and the name of your brother's daughter. It might look something like Dallas@1989!Samantha#. Even people you know you won't guess this. Be creative and have fun, but MAKE IT STRONG!

Next month I'll talk about keeping your information secure when you're online both at home and away.



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