

Mesa Park MESSENGER

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February 2009

City Responds with Safety Improvements on Spotted Horse

Author: David Crowley, MPNA/Quarries Liaison

The city recently responded to two residents' requests to improve the safety of our neighborhood. Bill and Emilie McVay were pleased with the work the city workers did to fix the sidewalk in front of their home at 11724 Spotted Horse. Additionally, the city responded to several residents in the Spotted Horse cul-de-sac requests to make the stop sign at Mesa Woods and Spotted Horse more visible.

The sidewalk in front of the McVay's home was so dangerous that a woman walking in front of their home tripped and broke her ankle. Their beautiful live oaks were to blame. Over the years, the tree roots had up heaved the sidewalk and created up to four-inch "steps." After the victim told Bill about her injury, he immediately contacted the city. Although sidewalk maintenance is the owner's responsibility, the city said it would help if there were available funds. After being on the waiting list for about a year, the city finally came out and did a great job fixing the sidewalk. They ramped and rerouted the sidewalk to go around the trunks, even backfilling and adding sod. Bill and Emilie were very satisfied with their work, and now it is safer for pedestrians.

It is not uncommon to see cars blow through the stop sign at full speed at the corner of Spotted Horse and Mesa Woods Drive. This causes great danger for cross-traffic and pedestrians going into the HPBC Quarries park. The residents on the cul-de-sac at the southern end of Spotted Horse worked together to make several requests to the city to have a stop bar and "STOP" letters painted before the stop sign. The city workers came out about eight weeks after the requests were made. The city also added a crosswalk at the intersection of Santa Cruz and Mesa Woods during their trip out. Although there are still some stubborn drivers, the stop sign is being more respected and our neighborhood streets are safer.

If you have a problem that needs the city's attention, you can contact them through the city's 3-1-1 info center. You can call 3-1-1 or 974-2000 or make a request through the web at http://coa311web.ci.austin.tx.us/web_intake/Controller.

Need Volunteers for "It's My Park Day"

March 9

Author: David Crowley, MPNA/Quarries Liaison

We are looking for volunteers to help improve and maintain our neighborhood's most valuable asset, Schroeter Park, on March 9. We have support from the Austin Parks Foundation and are working to get the Parks Department approval of the following project ideas:

- Complete and repair nature trails. We propose to add decomposed granite ground cover to connect incomplete trails.
- Clean up trash throughout the park.
- Spread mulch around the base of some of the newly planted trees around the park's perimeter.
- We would also like to create a fenced in leash-free dog area in the park.
- Remove ball moss from trees to improve their health.

The city and Austin Parks Foundation will provide the materials, t-shirts, and equipment; we just need to supply the volunteers. Come out on March 9 from 9am-1pm and help improve our wonderful park and get to know your neighbors. Please contact David Crowley at 586-9583 or mesapark@crowley-home.net for information on registering or to submit additional project ideas.



Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, but they have the heart.

—Anonymous

Holiday Decorating Contest

Here are the winners for the holiday yard decorations. Congratulations to the winners, there were lots of wonderful decorations and the neighborhood looked great. It was very difficult to select the winners.

1st Place: 5020 Dull Knife
2nd Place: 4201 Red Cloud
3rd Place: 11723 Running Fox

Honorable Mentions:
11702 Santa Cruz
11700 Spotted Horse

MPNA Crime Reports from APD

December 1, 2008 - December 31, 2008

| Crime | Address | Date | Location |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| ASSAULT W/INJURY-FAM/DATE VIOL | .116xx BIG TRL | 12/14/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| ASSAULT W/INJURY-FAM/DATE VIOL | .117xx RUNNING FOX TRL | 12/22/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| BURGLARY OF RESIDENCE | .115xx CATALONIA DR | 12/24/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 12/08/2008 | .PARKING LOTS / GARAGE |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .43xx ZUNI DR | 12/14/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .116xx SHOSHONE DR | 12/23/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .49xx BIG TRAIL CIR | 12/23/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| CRED CARD ABUSE/OTHER | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/31/2008 | .GAS / SERVICE STATIONS |
| CRIMINAL MISCHIEF | .116xx SANTA CRUZ DR | 12/29/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| CRIMINAL TRESPASS | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/06/2008 | .OTHER / UNKNOWN |
| DEATH DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES | .116xx FAST HORSE DR | 12/11/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| DWI | .115xx ANGUS RD | 12/20/2008 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| FAMILY DISTURBANCE | .116xx SANTA CRUZ DR | 12/05/2008 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| FAMILY DISTURBANCE | .117xx RUNNING FOX TRL | 12/21/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| HARASSMENT | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 12/16/2008 | .RESIDENCES |
| POSS MARIJUANA | .115xx ANGUS RD | 12/02/2008 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| POSS MARIJUANA | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/08/2008 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| POSS MARIJUANA | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 12/30/2008 | .PARKING LOTS / GARAGE |
| POSS OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/08/2008 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| POSS OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/28/2008 | .PARKING LOTS / GARAGE |
| PUBLIC INTOXICATION | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/27/2008 | .PARKING LOTS / GARAGE |
| THEFT | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/05/2008 | .GAS / SERVICE STATIONS |
| THEFT | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/10/2008 | .CONVENIENCE STORE |
| THEFT | .115xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 12/24/2008 | .RESTAURANTS |

January 1, 2009 - January 31, 2009

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| BURGLARY OF COIN-OP MACHINE | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 01/23/2009 | .HOTEL / MOTEL |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .115xx PYRENEESE DR | 01/08/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| BURGLARY OF VEH | .49xx POWDER RIVER RD | 01/01/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| CRIMINAL MISCHIEF | .117xx SANTA CRUZ DR | 01/07/2009 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| CUSTODY ARREST TRAFFIC WARR | .xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 01/16/2009 | .STREETS/HWY/ROAD/ALLEY |
| DEATH DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES | .117xx RUNNING FOX TRL | 01/01/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| DOG ORDINANCE VIOL | .117xx BIG TRL | 01/10/2009 | .FIELD/WOOD/ENTERTAINMENT |
| FAMILY DISTURBANCE | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 01/20/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| FORGERY/OTHER | .117xx SPOTTED HORSE DR | 01/11/2009 | .BUSINESS / OTHER |
| HARASSMENT | .115xx PYRENEESE DR | 01/02/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| HARASSMENT | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 01/16/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| HARASSMENT | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 01/18/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| STRUCTURE FIRE | .116xx NATRONA DR | 01/07/2009 | .RESIDENCES |
| THEFT | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 01/01/2009 | .CONVENIENCE STORE |
| THEFT | .116xx RESEARCH BLVD SVRD NB | 01/21/2009 | .CONVENIENCE STORE |
| THEFT | .52xx THUNDER CREEK RD | 01/23/2009 | .PARKING |

Helpful Numbers

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Police Headquarters Main Switchboard | 512-974-5000 | Auto Theft tip line | 512-974-5096 |
| Homicide tip line | 512-477-3588 | Abandoned Vehicle tip line | 512-974-8119 |
| Robbery Hotline | 512-974-5092 | Northwest Area Command | 512-974-5591 |
| Sex Crimes tip line | 512-974-5095 | | |

BALL MOSS

Source: Texas Forest Service

Ballmoss (*Tillandsia recurvata*) is a small, nondescript plant commonly found in southwest Texas. This plant actually benefits the environment by "fixing" atmospheric nitrogen and adding it to the soil, much like alfalfa and clover; however, it is a much despised plant and is aggressively eradicated. Ballmoss is not a moss, but a true plant with flowers and seeds. It is a member of the Bromeliad family, which also contains the pineapple. Most members of this family, including ballmoss, are epiphytes. Epiphytes attach themselves to limbs, tree trunks, power lines, fences and many other structures with their pseudo-roots. These are not true roots because they do not absorb water and minerals; they merely attach the plant to an aerial structure. Since ballmoss does not take nutrients and water from the host, it is not a parasite.

Ballmoss survives by absorbing water and nutrients from the surrounding atmosphere through its leaves and stem. Consequently, ballmoss prefers sites with little air movement, low light, and high relative humidity. The growth habit and thick canopy of the live oak provides the ideal habitat for ballmoss.

Live oaks develop a crown which is very thick on the exterior but quite open in the interior. This results in a low light, high humidity situation which is ideal for ballmoss. As a result, ballmoss is most often found on the dead interior branches of older live oaks. These interior branches do not die as a result of the ballmoss, but for the same reason the ballmoss is growing there in the first place—lack of sunlight. Likewise, branches which seem to be smothered by ballmoss would, in all likelihood, die as a result of changing light intensity due to the development of a thicker canopy forming above.

For those who simply cannot stand the thought of ballmoss growing on a live oak, you can substantially reduce a ballmoss population by

pruning all of the deadwood out of the tree and by thinning the canopy every five years. This pruning regime is consistent with proper tree maintenance. One word of caution due to the threat of oak wilt, prune during the hottest or coldest times of the year and paint all pruning wounds immediately (saw in one hand, paint in the other). By cutting out the deadwood, you will remove 70+ percent of the ballmoss in that tree. If the remaining ballmoss is still a problem, you can spray the tree with Kocide 101 or use a baking soda mixture that will kill the ballmoss. If using baking soda, the mixture recommended is 1/2 pound of baking soda to 1 gallon of water or 50lbs soda to 100 gallons of water. You can buy 50 lb sacks of baking soda at various feed stores. If using Kocide 101, follow the label instructions. The recommended time of the year to spray either mixture is early Spring when the live oaks are dropping their leaves. Because the canopy is thinnest at this time, more moisture actually comes in contact with the ballmoss, thus getting a better kill. The equipment used for spraying needs to be able to get a high volume of mixture spread over the entire tree; therefore, a high mixture sprayer is the most effective. Another word of caution—when using a high pressure sprayer, take precautions not to damage the tree by breaking smaller limbs and blowing bark off the tree. Also, if renting the sprayer, make sure the tank was thoroughly cleaned. It would be a disaster to accidentally spray the tree with an herbicide that was used in the sprayer prior to your use. The ballmoss will shrivel up and die in roughly 5 to 7 days, but it will remain in the tree until the wind or rain knocks it out. For this reason, it is recommended to prune the tree first. In doing this, you kill two birds with one stone—you actually remove the ballmoss from the tree and you practice proper tree maintenance. Neither pruning nor spraying will remove all of the ballmoss from the tree, but they will benefit the tree and certainly make you feel better.

To place an ad in the *Mesa Park Messenger*, please contact Cindy at TreeTopProperties@prodigy.net or 346-2232.

C.P.A.

Barbara Mitchell

11716 Natrona Dr.
Austin, TX 78759

Cell – 512-415-4362
Fax – 512-342-0890
Email – bmitchellcpa@sbcglobal.net



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- Resident of Mesa Park
- 26 years as a Realtor in Austin, TX
- 19 years with Coldwell Banker United Realtors

*Market report for Mesa Park: Between 7/15/08 & 10/15/08,
9 properties have sold; average price of \$198,306; avg. price per sq.ft. \$140.89;
average of 20 days on the market.*

*It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life,
that no man can sincerely try to help another without
helping himself.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thank you for your Donations!

MPNA Board of Directors continues to work for you on a volunteer basis—looking out for your safety and encouraging positive community relationships.

All residents of Mesa Park Neighborhood are members of Mesa Park Neighborhood Association, whether you rent or own your home. If you receive this newsletter delivered at your door, you are a member. Mesa Park Neighborhood does not charge annual dues, unlike most neighborhood associations, but we do accept your donations.

Donations pay for gift cards for the Holiday Lighting Contest, organization of the neighborhood garage sale, it's "My Park Day" and other events. Your donations also help pay for the Newsletter. We want to keep the newsletter going, but we need your help.

We want to continue to provide Mesa Park residents with information that helps our neighborhood.

We appreciate any donation you would like to contribute. Just complete the form below and include your check. A minimum amount of \$5.00 would be greatly appreciated.

Donation for MPNA \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Mail check to MPNA, PMB 104, P.O. Box 200255, Austin, TX 78720

Do you have an announcement to share or neighborhood news? Is there something you would like your neighbors to know? Please send us your news or stories and we will publish them in the next issue of the *Mesa Park Messenger*.

Classifieds:

Ingrid, 16 year old high school Sophomore, lives in Mesa Park, Red Cross Certified baby-sitter. Call – 586-8496

*Nobody made a greater
mistake than he who did
nothing because he could
do only a little.*

—Edmond Burke

Neighborhood contacts:

Volunteer Coordinator:

Susan McVicker
susanmcv@att.net.

Board Members:

Cindy Lindsay, 346-2232
TreeTopProp@prodigy.net
Gina Mattiza,
mattiza@austin.rr.com
Terry Tevis, 736-8469
mpnapres@yahoo.com

Claudia Ullrich
claudia.mpna@gmail.com
Lynda White
lynda@texas-star.net

Quarries Representative:

David Crowley
mesapark@crowleyhome.net or 11621 Spotted Horse Dr., 78759

Emergency: 911

Police Non-Emergency: 311

NW Austin Police District Representative: SPO Mike Dunn, mike.dunn@ci.austin.tx.us, 974-5553

Reminder: The MPNA is not an HOA (Homeowner's Association). If you have a complaint or need to report a violation, please contact the appropriate city official for assistance. Thank you!