

BRYKER WOODS
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION



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Bryker Woods

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NEWSLETTER OF THE BRYKER WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR !

DECEMBER 1991

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD . . .

As the year comes to a close, we wish all our neighbors a happy and safe holiday season. Our Bryker Woods neighborhood saw several changes in 1991, namely the opening of a new business on W. 34th Street, the creation of a bike lane (sidewalk still pending) on the north side of W. 29th between Lamar and Harris, increased recycling by area residents including a Bryker Woods Elementary recycling project, and unfortunately, an increase in neighborhood crime.

On the crime issue, a small wave of vehicle burglaries has occurred this past fall. Cars and trucks/vans have been broken into while parked on driveways and the street along Bryker, Beverly, Glenview, Harris and W. 34th Streets over recent months. We are investigating the possibility a crime prevention seminar for neighborhood residents to be sponsored by the BWNA Neighborhood Association sometime next year. In the interim, please keep alert and do not hesitate to call police for any suspicious activity.

On a lighter note -- The BWNA Executive Committee voted in its November meeting to form a goal of increased support for Bryker Woods Elementary School through the Adopt-A-School program. Specifically, during 1992, BWNA will match contributions to the school made by association members through BWNA. The 1992 annual dues form at the end of this newsletter includes space for much appreciated Bryker Woods Elementary Adopt-A-School contributions. Thank you for your support of your neighborhood association throughout the past year, and again, best wishes for the holidays.

Greg Chico



BLUE SANTA NEEDS BRYKER WOODS HELP

Lee Jones



There will be more children than ever this year whose parents will have a hard time providing Christmas toys, and even food, so our Neighborhood Association is encouraging everyone to participate in the Blue Santa program. To make it easier, there will be two drop-off points across the street from Bryker Woods School, both on the corner of 33rd and Kerbey Lane. Lee Jones, at 3214 Kerbey Lane, is the BWNA Council member responsible for collecting neighborhood contributions; but if she is not at home, her daughter, Shirley Williams at 3300 Kerbey Lane usually is, and will get them across the street.

Please bring unwrapped gifts for all ages of boys and girls, as well as cash to either address before December 18th, when

In 1987, the State Legislature passed Senate Bill 478 which authorized the sale or lease of State land for non-governmental purposes as a way of generating additional funds for the State. As a result, the General Land Office (GLO) as an agent for the Texas Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR) began a process to declare surplus and allow for private development of approx. 38 acres of land located on the southwest corner of the Austin State Hospital site.

Over an 18 month period from 1987-1989, the GLO met with neighborhood groups, MHMR advocates, architectural consultants, City government representatives and others to discuss and set goals for the development. These goals included such things as urban design, pedestrian access, appropriate land use and the preservation of the park-like quality of the tract. In 1989, final presentations were made to neighborhood and community groups and the City approved the development ordinance which now governs the site.

In 1990, 38th St. Ltd., with Pat Oles (26 Doors) and Sam Barshop (La Quinta) as major partners, applied for and were approved by the MHMR board as the surface developers. Their responsibility as ground lessee includes the infrastructure -- drainage, roadways, utilities, etc. HEBCO, the real estate development arm of H.E.B. Grocery, signed the first lease as a "vertical" developer of the retail portion of the site. Current plans call for a H.E.B. grocery store of approx. 70,000 square feet as the anchor store of the retail development. The retail portion of the site is limited to a total buildable area of 120,000 square feet. The remaining commercial space on the entire site is planned to include medical office, hotel, hospital or retirement living facilities, but no leases have yet been negotiated.

The current status of this development is that H.E.B. just presented their site plan for approval to the Site Plan Review Committee. This committee, created by the ordinance, is composed of 2 GLO reps, 3 MHMR reps, 1 person from CP Oles Co., 1 person from H.E.B., and 2 neighborhood reps. The neighborhood representatives found some issues which they feel are not in compliance with the ordinance, and expressed those concerns to the committee. The vote for approval was held Friday, December 6, 1991. Seven approval votes were cast with 2 dissenting votes cast by the neighborhood representatives.

OWN NEIGHBORHOOD PROPERTY ? - TAX UPDATE

* The following was provided by Travis County Tax Collector office *

Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector Nelda Wells Spears advises homeowners to look closely at their 1991 property tax bill. In addition to the county, school, city and community college tax there is a new entity called County Education District: or C.E.D. Created by the Texas Legislature as the heart of the new school finance plan, C.E.D.s are brand new taxing entities that exist to help equalize funding of education in the State of Texas.

Each county in Texas has a C.E.D. governed by a board of trustees and each trustee represents a school district. In Travis county the seven member board includes representatives of Austin, Del Valle, Eanes, Lago Vista, Lake Travis, Manor and Pflugerville school districts. All property tax dollars collected by these school districts remain in Travis County.

Property taxes levied by the C.E.D. will be combined with State aid to fund the total cost of the foundation school program. Most taxpayers wonder whether or not they are paying more school taxes this year than in the past. The best way to begin to answer that question is simply to compare the 1990 school tax amount to the 1991 total for school districts and C.E.D. taxes. Here is the comparative amount for property within the Austin Independent School District. Per \$100.00 value, the tax rate is:

Exemptions lower the value of property before the tax rate is applied and decreases the tax amount due. For example, the law allows all homeowners a \$5,000 regular homestead exemption on school taxes; over age 65 owners receive an additional \$10,000 exemption and \$24,000 if you live in Austin ISD. Exemptions must be filed between January and April of the tax year with the county appraisal district office.

Property values do not usually show a dramatic change from one year to the next. If your property value increased significantly from 1990 to 1991, you may pay a greater amount in taxes. If the value decreased, you may pay less. Travis County homeowners should report property value changes, such as water damage due to fire or a cracked slab, to the Travis Central Appraisal District (834-9138). Such reports may lead to a reduction in the appraised value of your property.

Special tax payment options are available to those aged 65 or more. "We know senior taxpayers are going to find it very difficult to pay," says Tax Assessor-Collector Spears. "Fortunately, relief is available to those who wish to break their tax bill into installments." The plan allows seniors to make four equal payments spread over the year. In addition to the installment plan for seniors, the tax office will escrow tax payments monthly for next year's taxes. This plan is available to all taxpayers.



SHOAL CREEK PROJECT

Kim Valentine

The "Shoal Creek/Seiders Springs Project" is now four months old. A "citizen's project," it has already attracted the assistance and support of specialists who work with the Texas Water Commission, Friends of the Parks, EarthKeepers, Community Education, the National Wildflower Research Center, Parks and Rec, the Austin History Center and PARD's Urban Forestry Division. Amy McKinney, Water Commission intern, acts as Project Coordinator. Bill Edelbrock, formerly of Urban Forestry, and Kim Valentine, of EarthKeepers, co-chair the Project. Friends of the Parks, Inc. is fiscal administrator.

The Project's purpose is "to demonstrate individual responsibility for public land by engaging students, environmentalists, park users, and specialists (from botanists to engineers) in a detailed investigation & restoration of Shoal Creek Park between the 38th Street bridge and 31st Street." Participants will examine water quality and creek erosion; controls for litter, vandalism, and graffiti; native/invaser

DAVID BOENISCH,
your neighborhood Realtor,
wishes you
the Best of Holidays for '91.

Thanks for a great year.

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species; pre- and post-settlement social and ecological history; tree repair and replacement; park administration and maintenance; soils and geology. The Project will assist and administer study, documentation, and restoration. Activities now underway include:

Monitoring - Amy McKinney, honors student in UT's Geography Dept. is monitoring creek water quality on a regular basis, using biological and chemical tests. Because of the intermittent flow of the creek, the biological tests are still incomplete. The first chemical tests made by Amy with Dave Buzan of the Texas Water Commission on Nov. 4, show the levels of oxygen in the water to be well above the standard of 5 ml/liter. Levels of salts and pH were all normal. Some sediment accumulation was observed on rocks, which can smother insects and plants living on the creek bed. Monitoring will continue through the winter and spring of 1992. Changes in the creek and in other park areas are being observed twice weekly and are logged and photographed.

A "master plan" - Bonnie Crozier, resource botanist, and Alison Hill, community ecologist, of the National Wildflower Research Center are working on a long-range "master plan" or Project outline to propose guidelines for a long-term investigation of the park. This investigation should reveal much of the park's history as well as its present state, and is intended to provide the framework for its eventual ecological restoration. ("Not really restoration," says Bonnie. "Assisted recovery is more accurate.")

Tree repair - Private funds will be raised to prune & repair trees, especially the elms/pecans shading the school's outdoor classroom.

Shoal Creek Project organizers urge Bryker Woods and park neighbors to join in project activities and planning discussions. There will be something for everyone from zoologists to historians. At present there are two "job openings" for volunteers:

Weather logger - to keep an accurate daily log of temps, wind and rainfall for the Project's researchers.

Historical researcher - to locate photos and descriptions of the park, and people who knew the area 1960 and are willing to be interviewed.

For information about Project activities and meetings, call 472-2803.

* ADVERTISING NOTE *

The BWNA newsletter is distributed to over 750 homes, and accepts paid advertising. Any local businesses may help defray publication costs by placing ads. If you would like to place an advertisement in a future issue, please call David Boenisch at 453-0304 or 472-3336.

Advertisement Rates:	Half page	\$49
	Quarter page	\$29
	Business card	\$19

1992 BWNA MEMBERSHIP FORM Annual dues \$5.00

____ Yes, I would like to become a member/renew membership (1992) in the Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association. Enclosed is my \$5.00 (per household) annual dues fee. (Checks payable to Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association)

____ I would also like to contribute to Bryker Woods Elementary School through BWNA and Adopt-A-School. Amount \$ _____.

Address

Name (please print)

