

President's Report August 2007

by Bill Bednar

Steamy midsummer! Here's a hodgepodge of NUNA stuff: First congratulations and many thanks to Carol LeClair and her doughty band for what must surely be the best 4th of July Parade ever! The fire truck, the water slide, the thronging multitude-it was spectacular! Thanks to Doug Plummer for getting truly organized for a membership drive. Read his letter, and please join. And kudos to Kimberley Renner for going right out and doing something about settling finally our debt to the stalwart and faithful Rick Iverson. That was Kimberley at her card table twisting arms at the Hemphill Park cleanup last April, too.



At the NUNA Executive Committee meeting on July 2, we heard from Chris Dolman, City Arbors, about a small oak wilt infestation, probably insect-borne, that has cropped up in the SE quadrant at East 32nd and Tom Green. The bad news is that three great old oaks are gone and will have to be removed. The good news is that the infection may be contained just to that area because of the considerable distances to other oak trees. Trenching, which can be prohibitively expensive, will probably not be necessary. Some neighboring trees are at risk, though, and need to be injected. I am trying to identify and contact all of the affected property owners. For more information, contact Chris Dolman at 974-1881, chris.dolan@ci.austin.tx.us.

The Executive Committee also adopted five goals to be accomplished before next April:

1. Increase NUNA membership by 30%.
2. Settle our debt to Rick Iverson -already been accomplished in July 2007

National Neighborhood Night Out

August 7, 2007

Hemphill Park (at the bench!) 7 pm

Meet your neighbors & support your neighborhood organization!



3. Support City Council enforcement letter to the landlords of noisy or out-of-compliance rental units by identifying and reporting such properties in NUNA and following up with the city offices involved.

4. Form a steering committee to apply for Historic District designation for NUNA- a goal in the Neighborhood Plan 2004.

5. Break ground for Sparky Park.

We'll keep you posted on how we are doing with our goals.

Finally, put August 7 on your calendars now! It's National Night Out, which we will celebrate at Hemphill Park starting at 7 PM. Fire truck will be there for the kids. That will be the NUNA membership meeting for August. See you at the bench!



Police Protection Information For Residents

By Mary Ingle

The Austin Police Department (APD) recommends that if there is a problem or an offense "in progress," call 911 and make a complaint. In order to have this complaint followed through, the caller must also request an officer come and speak with him/her. For all other calls or complaints 311 is the number for something which has already occurred and is not an emergency. APD strongly recommends that if you feel that a call to 311 is not satisfactory, by all means, call 911. Assistant City Manager over APD, Chief Michael McDonald, has requested that the word get out about the operator's response to a call; if a caller feels that the operator's response at 911 is inappropriate in any way, he/she should ask to have the operator's supervisor call back immediately. Hang up and wait for the supervisor's call.

NUNA is fortunate to have an assigned district representative from APD, Officer Ricardo Vargas. Officer Vargas is responsive and has innovative ideas about how to help with quality of life issues. He may be reached at 974-5801 or the email address: ricardo.vargas@ci.austin.tx.us



A Tribute To Ralph B. Hudson, Jr.

November 14, 1950 - June 17, 2007

By Carol Journeay

Ralph Hudson, a former NUNA resident, had deep Texas roots. He delighted in sharing his family history as well as his extended knowledge of history with friends, family, and neighbors. A descendant of the Hudson family who settled on a bend of the Colorado River in 1854, Ralph was born in Austin and grew up in South Austin. When he wasn't in school (Travis High, UT, and UT Law School), or on the lake, he worked at his parents' café, Hudson Café, also known as The Avenue, on Congress, until he was 33 years old. The Avenue appeared in one of Willie Nelson's movies; Ralph was once an extra in a movie with Peter Fonda! The Avenue later changed hands and is known currently as Las Manitas. Following his time working at the café, Ralph worked for Hogan Demolition.

There was a Hudson settlement on the Colorado that decreased to nearly half its original size when Mansfield Dam was completed in 1940. Remains from the

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Schedule of 2007- 2008 Meetings (until the next officer elections):		
8/7/2007	NUNA Membership	
9/3/2007	Executive Committee	
10/1/2007	NUNA Membership	
11/5/2007	Executive Committee	
12/3/2007	NUNA Membership	
1/7/2008	Executive Committee	
2/4/2008	NUNA Membership	
3/3/2008	Executive Committee	
4/7/2008	NUNA Membership	

old family cemetery were exhumed and moved to Teck Cemetery off 620. The present community of Hudson Bend, located on Lake Travis, is named after the pioneering Hudson family of which Ralph was a member. Ralph is buried with his family at Teck Cemetery. He was a good NUNA neighbor on 34th Street for more than ten years. We will miss his blue truck parked out front, his stories, his knowledge of history and his concerns for water conservation. We'll miss you, Ralph. Vaya con Dios. 

NUNA Kicks Off Membership Drive

By Doug Plummer

The NUNA Executive Committee will be launching NUNA's membership drive at this year's National Neighborhood Night Out on August 7. The Executive Committee plans to increase membership by 30% this year; it is one of NUNA's top five goals for the year. Douglas Plummer, Secretary of the Executive Committee, has been tasked to head the drive. While a 30% increase seems like quite a stretch, it is obtainable and important. More members not only make us more fiscally sound, but provide us with the volunteer support that we need to get specific tasks completed within the various NUNA projects. Currently, NUNA has a low number of members. Increasing membership by 30% would mean doing the following activities:

- Having a regular sign-up sheet at all neighborhood meetings in order to identify potential members.
- Sending a solicitation letter to all nonmember attendees.
- Asking local neighborhood members to display a "Neighborhood Meeting Next Monday" sign on their lawns to increase attendance at the every-other month meetings.
- Conducting door to door neighborhood walks by volunteers to solicit more members.

For those individuals or families who would like to join, they can bring a check made out to "NUNA" for \$10 (individual) or \$20 (family) to the Membership table run by Kimberly Renner in Hemphill Park at the Neighborhood Night Out. For those unable to attend but still wanting to join, they can send a check made out to "NUNA" to Douglas Plummer at 301 East 35th Street, 78705 or to the NUNA Treasurer, Charles Hibbetts, 110 W 33rd Street, 78705. If you would be willing to help with the membership drive in any of the ways listed above, please contact Doug at:

Douglas_plummer@hotmail.com



Sparky Park Update

By Mary Ingle

It might appear as though nothing is happening at Sparky Park, the site of the former North Austin Substation; this partly is true. But, behind the scenes, the Sparky Park Committee along with other members of the NUNA executive committee have been making "noise" to the Parks Board and the Parks Department with letters and public statements. The substation building was recently broken into; vandalism and graffiti is proliferating on the building. NUNA requests that if anyone- a neighbor or someone walking by, who sees any suspicious activity, to call 911. After the substation break-in, an official sign naming the park, Sparky Park, mysteriously appeared from the Parks Department. This is a small but necessary step forward towards the future development of this park. We do hope that the Parks Department will move more quickly towards the construction of this park than they have in the past. We intend to keep pressure on the Parks Department for the start and the finishing of this small pocket park. Ground breaking for the park design phase is now scheduled for Spring 2008. Hope springs eternal.



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Historic House- Here Today, Gone Tomorrow- Call for Local Historic District?

By Mary Ingle

NUNA is in the process of losing another potentially historic house in the Grooms subdivision- a house listed on the 1984 map of contributing historic properties. In fact, the house located at 206 E. Speedway is the oldest extant house in this subdivision, and the second oldest house in the neighborhood. It had various additions that impeded the untrained eye to decipher the original structure. At this very moment, the house is being dismantled piece by piece. To some with historical sensitivities, this is sad; once a structure is removed, a neighborhood loses some of its history.

Here is some background history to this ninetieth century structure. This house was built in 1886 by John McQuiston, a very skilled carpenter (after all, the house was still standing 121 years after construction!). At the behest of Judge Alfred Grooms who owned the land in the present day Grooms subdivision, Mr. McQuiston built a small house on the corner of 30th Street and Speedway. He and his wife, Mary, raised 4 children there. McQuiston worked as a foreman for John A. Greathouse, a prominent builder in Austin particularly in Travis Heights and the West End.

The removal of this old house has ignited a cinder which has kindled a spark- an idea for NUNA to create a local historic district! In the past and during the Neighborhood Planning Process of 2004, a common refrain throughout the neighborhood was to make NUNA as an historic district; as recently as 2006, the City just allowed the formation of local historic districts. In fact, the second goal and second priority in our Neighborhood Plan was to create local historic districts to protect and preserve the historic neighborhoods. NUNA still has a stockpile of historic housing stock, which reflects the 20th century, but only one house remains intact from the nineteenth century (on 34th Street).

Historic status for a property owner has many benefits, including a property tax reduction. Property owners would also be eligible for certain grants for upgrading air-conditioning systems, etc. Historic status usually brings with it elevated property values (esthetic and monetary) that aid in the resale of a property. With all of the growth in Austin at this moment, it is refreshing to visit an area which has preserved some of the architecture from times gone by.

It would be great to recommence the historic work we tried to get going during the neighborhood planning process, but the onerous workload of the NCCD caused volunteers to become weary. If there is anyone in the neighborhood who is still interested in having and helping with a local historic district, please contact Mary Ingle at 320-8449.



Carol Justus

Scholar of Indo-European Studies in the Classics Department and longtime resident of NUNA, Carol Justus died August 1, 2007. Carol was a participating member of NUNA for many years; she served as the secretary of the organization. She will be very much missed.



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