



WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 • February - March, 2010

Organized 1973

*"To preserve our neighborhood and
protect it from deterioration."*

**The next WANG Board meeting will occur on
Monday, April 12, 2010 (7:00 pm) at Howson Branch Library!**

Board of Directors

August "Happy" Harris III
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Background Photo of Lime Kiln #PICA24140,
Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

February President's Message

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

Before talking about Neighborhood Planning that is at a critical juncture, I thought I would digress and talk about the great outdoors. They, after all, are such an important part of what makes West Austin special. Between manicured landscapes and delightful gardens, parks, nature preserves, and to quote Cooper Robertson – the urban meadow that is Muny, we are incredibly blessed in this part of town. We multiply those blessing because we have the gift of people that really and passionately care.

One thing that is great about February is that it is the time that we begin preparing for the coming of Spring. Mid February is when we prune roses. It is still a great time to get trees and shrubs in the ground, a gentle reminder for each of you to diversify your tree stock! There are a myriad of bulbs and perennials that can be planted for Spring color and soon will be the time to plant annuals, herbs, and summer fruits and vegetables. The grey, murky days of winter will soon be behind us.

I am very excited because I am planting a new hybrid avocado that should survive the cold. In two years, I hope to have a boundless stock of guacamole....um, I mean avocados. Sustainable avocado production!! I also hope to put in a vegetable garden this year. My extended family always had gardens. My father and his siblings each had 4x4 plots and they could plant anything that they wanted but they had to take care of the plots. I am sure my grandmother used that opportunity to teach life lessons

about personal responsibility as well as respect for nature. We used to have a vegetable garden and my sister and I spent many happy hours there and both of us are active gardeners to this day. I think of all of the lessons learned about the world around us and our connection to and appreciation for it through gardening. I mention this because it has been said that our youngest generation is also the least connected with nature. Those of you that have children might consider showing your children and grandchildren opportunities like this that may exist.

For the rest of you, even those of you that disdain yardwork, there is a great way to support our parks and nature preserves, some of which you use, and use frequently. Saturday, March 6, is "It's My Park Day." We all know about the fiscal constraints that Austin's Parks and Recreation Department is under. From a purely practical perspective, the parks cannot be maintained as they should nor as we expect them to be. And we have high expectations! So the parks need your help to reach their potential in terms of beauty and functionality. Whatever your reason for involvement, our parks and preserves need you. March 6 will be a great big community-wide work day. So where can you get involved now that I have you chomping at the bit, work gloves in hand? Go to the Parks pages at www.WestAustinNG.com and look for updates on your particular park of interest.

As I have mentioned before, we are at a critical juncture in Neighborhood Planning. Contact Team By-Laws and

Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.WestAustinNG.com>

the various sections of the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan are being revised and edited in advance of submission by City staff to the Planning Commission and ultimately to City Council. The Final Open House for the Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan will be on Thursday, March 4 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the LCRA Red Bud Center (3601 Lake Austin Blvd). We as a planning area currently are establishing the By-Laws for the contact team of stakeholders that will ultimately execute the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan when it eventually is approved. We have made edits and recommendations that we feel will better serve the neighborhood. We are also recommending that there be one Contact Team instead of two, one for the area east (Windsor Road Planning Area) and other for the area west (WANG) of MoPac. We believe and have believed all along that we share interests and concerns, even though there are different characteristics between the two areas, but that we are stronger together. We also have

made recommendations to City staff on the Neighborhood Plan itself that underscore the values that neighbors have expressed at all of these meetings over the last few years. We have found that City staff occasionally made interpretations that were not reflective of the dialogue and resulting outcomes of the various meetings. City staff is reviewing those edits as we speak. We want to make sure that you understand that our edits do not represent the final say on the Plan. You still have opportunity for input but deadlines are fast approaching. We encourage you to participate in the upcoming Open House. After that, it will be increasingly challenging to make any changes.

Now, more than ever, in the history of West Austin and WANG, is it critical that you renew your membership and encourage friends and neighbors to join WANG. Please go to our NEW website, www.WestaustinNG.com. And as always, let us know of any suggestions that you might have! Happy Holidays to all!

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 1, 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, February 1, 2010 at the Whole Foods North Lamar office.

I. Call to Order (7:14 pm): The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: August Harris, Selina Serna, Joyce Basciano, Blake Tollett, Michael Cannatti, Gwen Jewiss, and George Edwards. Cathy Kyle, Susan Pascoe, and Mary Arnold joined the meeting shortly thereafter.

II. Committee Reports (Part 1):

A. Zoning (7:15 pm)

(1) 09-127345PR – 3311 Clearview (Applicant: Jay Corder 495-1556): The applicant has requested a modification to allow a FAR (Floor-To- Area Ratio) increase from the maximum development permitted in the LDC from the allowable 40% (2730 square feet) to 42.8% (2922 square feet) on order to build a new two story single family residence with attached garage. The additional modification request is 192 square feet.

• **Board Action:** There was no presentation by applicant or further action by the Board. Blake noted that most of the neighbors had withdrawn their objection to the request, but there was still some opposition. The Board had previously conducted an email to oppose the requested modification (based on the presence of neighbor opposition to the request), and to request that

Applicant postpone the hearing to allow for further discussion with the neighbors in opposition).

III. Approval of Minutes (7:25 pm): The minutes from the January 2010 board meeting were unanimously approved by a vote of 8 to 0 by the directors in attendance.

IV. Neighbor Communications (7:25 pm): None

V. Committee Reports (Part 2):

B. Communications

(1) Newsletter (7:26 pm) – Gwen reported on the bid results from AlphaGraphics and Bartlesby printers to handle our newsletter printing requirements, with a breakdown of prices for color copies, black and white, and printing of the Annual newsletter. Selina noted that the most recent bills from McCarthy seemed to be more expensive.

• **Board Action:** On a motion by Cannatti that was seconded by Serna, the Board voted to print black and white copies of the newsletter to save monthly newsletter costs, though the Annual might be printed in color.

C. Infrastructure

(1) Brackenridge Tract Update (7:46 pm) – Mary reported that it is not yet known whether the feasibility study by UT Austin about moving the graduate student housing off the Brackenridge Tract to the Gateway tract has been completed, but the UT Grad Student housing folks have been told that because of the current

financial situation, it is not contemplated that such a move will be attempted in the short term. Grad students are continuing to be given leases at the Colorado and Brackenridge Apartments, as well as at Gateway, and waiting lists are being maintained."

August noted that the City of Austin needs to be convinced to pursue more aggressively an accommodation with the UT Regents that would provide "certainty" – beyond 2019 – for the Field Lab and the golf course remaining on the Brackenridge Tract. Meetings are being scheduled with City Council members for representatives from WANG, the Golf Advisory Board, Save Muny, and the Sierra Club, to discuss ways in which the City and the University of Texas might work in cooperation with regard to future needs of UT, the viability of the Faculty Council proposals with regard to expansion of the Brackenridge Field Lab, and implications for the CWA Neighborhood Plan with regard to the Brackenridge Tract.

(2) Neighborhood Planning (8:00 pm) -- The next neighborhood planning meeting will be the Final Open House meeting during which the draft Transportation; Parks, Open Space and the Environment; Community Life; and Neighborhood in Context chapters will be presented for public review and input. The Final Open House is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2010 (6:00pm to 9:00pm) at LCRA Red Bud Center (3601 Lake Austin

Boulevard), and notices will be sent to the neighborhood. The new website for the Central West Austin neighborhood plan is posted at www.ci.austin.tx.us/planning/neighborhood/cw_austin.htm.

(a) **Chapter Review:** Cannatti reported that he has received comments on the "Community Life" chapter, and has prepared and circulated revisions to the "Transportation" chapter, but has received no input on the other chapters. Blake and Cannatti agreed to meet to review the "Land Use" chapter and provide

comments. (A meeting with Blake, Cannatti, Cathy Kyle and Michael Curry was subsequently held to review the "Land Use" chapter).

(b) **Contact Team Bylaws Draft Discussion:** On February 16, there will be a meeting at Brykerwoods School (6:30 - 7:50) to begin drafting bylaws for the Central West Austin Contact Team. The Board discussed various concerns with the draft bylaws provided by the City, including the desire to have a single Contact Team for the planning area. Cannatti, Blake, and

Cathy will work on drafting appropriate contact team bylaws.

VI. Treasurer's Report – Selina reported that the operating account had a balance of \$1725.36, and that the oak wilt account had a balance of \$1204.29.

VII. Old Business -- No report.

VIII. New Business -- No report.

IX. Adjournment: At 9:00 sharp, the lights went out and the meeting was adjourned. The next WANG Board meeting will occur on **Monday, March 1, 2010 (7:00 pm) at a LCRA Redbud.**

March President's Message

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

We have at last made it to Spring! I commented the other day how beautiful everything was and a good friend reminded me that there were lots of weeds to be pulled now. I was looking up and he was looking down. But there are weeds in the garden that need to be pulled.

West Austin is in the middle of the weeds, whether it is the Brackenridge Tract, Neighborhood Planning or Elm Terrace. While it has been a very quiet period for the Brackenridge Tract since the Regents voted to spare the Field Lab for the next 10 years – if not longer, nothing further of note has occurred. UT's Student Housing folks resumed leasing the Brackenridge and Colorado Apartments but that is far from an indicator as it would be foolish to clear the land without a plan much less without architectural and engineering work having been done. The Regents had a feasibility study prepared in regard to the possibility of implementing Cooper Robertson's recommendation to relocate all of the student housing on the Brackenridge Tract to the Gateway tract at Campbell and West Sixth Street. While we are not privy to the report at this time, though we are still trying, there has been some indication that it is not feasible.

There are so many moving pieces to the Brackenridge Tract. We have always strongly advocated for the retention of Muny, WAYA and the Field Lab. Of course saving Muny is not just about saving a golf course. It is so many things to so many people. It is about recreation and critical urban open space, heritage trees, parkland and preservation, family, friendship, the environment and history. It is also about the potential for a decline in your property values, the livability of West Austin and an increase in congestion, pollution and crime.

We have had ongoing dialogue with City staff and with Council. Council, and to a lesser degree, City staff understand these issues and concerns and they are sympathetic and supportive to a point. However, they have been cautious about getting into

an adversarial position with UT and UT Systems. Austin is in a symbiotic relationship with the University of Texas and the playing field should be level but certainly it and UT Systems have flexed their muscle under the precept that they are effectively a state agency. Some issues such as zoning and land use for NON university development will remain highly contentious. However, we have stressed to the City that this need not be adversarial though we do see several roadblocks and hurdles ahead. The two biggest challenges are convincing the Regents that it is in their interest to convey the land to the City of Austin and then coming up with a way to acquire it.

Why should UT keep the Muny and WAYA tracts? It is utter nonsense that the terms of the Brackenridge grant require that the University retain ownership of the land. The Stratford Tract was part of the grant and the Regents made a strategic decision to sell the land. The precedent was established. Further, that the land be retained for future expansion of the University is wholly unnecessary. The University has been trying to cap enrollment for years. Faculty will tell you that there is a desperate need for classroom space but there has been a staggering increase in both the size and number of buildings on campus for a relatively

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static student population over the last ten to fifteen years. One might question how effectively and efficiently existing facilities are being used. The University actually still has land available on the main campus that could be more effectively utilized as well. Increasing on-campus facilities would also be far more proximate and thus efficient to the rest of campus, the student body, faculty and staff than any growth on Brack, other than at the Field Lab. The University is starting to update its campus masterplan and that should be quite revealing. The takeaway is that the University is neither required nor does it need to keep the Muny and WAYA tracts.


So it comes down to dollars. We have long held that the Cooper Robertson masterplans are not feasible because of a host of site constraints. There has been longheld speculation that these were worst case scenarios. It is still incumbent upon all of us to see that the University adopts neither of these. Cooper Robertson suggested that the total cost would be in the 3 billion dollar plus range. But that is assuming logistics permitted what they contemplated. Many of us resolutely believe that it cannot. Such a project, whether undertaken utilizing one of the Cooper Robertson masterplans or one of the other 18 or so submitted masterplans lurking in the dark, would require a significant source of both public and private dollars with perhaps little return for an extended period on parts of the project. We as the impacted citizenry would have ample opportunity to exert leverage as it pertains to public funds.

We have been distressed that the City has taken the position in Neighborhood Planning that we could do little more than opine on the Brackenridge Tract. Within the neighborhood, there is a conundrum on how to handle the tract. On the one hand, it is critical that we stand resolutely firm and united that Muny and WAYA be excluded from development and that any show of acquiescence would signal sufficient weakness to the University and the City to errantly rationalize development of those sites. On the other hand, it is foolhardy not to contemplate a "what if" scenario. There is a false belief in this community (and others) that infill development will slow or mitigate sprawl. I have long held that as long as there is available land, financing to build and buy, builders and willing buyers, sprawl will continue unabated. If we exclude that hollow rationalization and peel back the ambitions of certain sectors of the development community, what sort of appropriate redevelopment are we left with and what would be most desirable? Would a continuum of the existing neighborhood and street grid be appropriate with provisions for ample open space and retail? Would a denser development be suitable and if so, what height and what density? In such a project could there be accommodations for a golf course and recreation area? These are questions and not answers or suggestions. And unfortunately the City's Neighborhood Planning process has fallen far short of allowing us to answer any of these questions.

The Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan is reaching its conclusion. This is supposed to be OUR neighborhood plan and what we desire and want for our neighborhood. City staff has taken it upon themselves to make certain changes that fall more in line with their policies and beliefs. We have objected vigorously and have been involved in

lengthy discussions on edits. While it is true that certain part of the Plan need to be broad and circumspect, there are details that must be addressed. In both cases, we have had disputes with City staff. The Plan largely guides future development, save specifics on Brack and the State School, and if these are not clarified, there are those who would use those loopholes to develop and build what they want rather than follow the shared vision of the West Austin community. WANG has worked closely with the Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association and Pemberton Heights Neighborhood Association on a host of edits. As we move forward to Planning Commission and to Council for Plan approval over the next few months, it is imperative that we have your active support.

Now, more than ever, in the history of West Austin and WANG, is it critical that you renew your membership and encourage friends and neighbors to join WANG. Please go to our NEW website, www.WestaustinNG.com. And as always, let us know of any suggestions that you might have! Happy Holidays to all!



1605 PEASE

If you live in Central Austin i.e. the 03 zip code and you are now or soon could be thinking about downsizing but can't ever imagine leaving the neighborhood, you need to consider a condo at
1605 Pease Road.

5 units, 3 2BR/IBA and 2 1BR/IBA units will be available this spring. The units are under renovation and landscape improvements are under way.

For preliminary information, call 512-474-1632 and ask for information on 1605 Pease or call 512-731-4471, or 512-218-1300.

MINUTES FOR MARCH 1, 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, March 1, 2010 at the LCRA Redbud Facility.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: Erik Cary, Cathy Kyle, August Harris, Gwen Jewiss, Joyce Basciano, and Blake Tollett. Somewhat tardily, Michael Cannatti slunk into the meeting after being detained at his daughter's birthday party, as did Susan Pascoe after successfully navigating the entrance barriers, such as the closed driveway gate.

II. Approval of Minutes: Approval of the minutes from the February 2010 board meeting not addressed due to lack of quorum.

III. Neighbor Communications:

A. 2010 Census: Judy Johnson presented information on the 2010 Census and the related part time employment opportunities available for 1600 jobs in Travis County for 5-10 weeks. Additional information at www.2010censusjobs.gov.

B. Coyote Encroachment (7:20 pm): Judy Coker recounted the loss of two pet cats to coyote predations and her unsuccessful efforts to get help from the City of Austin to remove the coyotes. While private trapping is permitted, she reported that UT does not allow trapping on the Muni golf course, and requested that WANG write a letter to help with the trapping effort. After reviewing the previous history of coyote intrusions in the neighborhood, August agreed to write a letter to UT and the City requesting assistance with addressing the coyote threat, particularly as it pertains to possible risks to residents.

C. O. Henry Student/Neighbor Concerns (7:28 pm): August briefly summarized the recent student assault between two students that occurred at an abandoned property on Norwalk and that caused some concern with neighbors about property damage and safety for the students. In KXAN television coverage of the situation, August was interviewed about the previous safety concerns by neighbors and the ongoing efforts to address same, but only the safety concern statements were included in the report. While many efforts have been made to

address the problem of unsupervised students waiting for bus rides home, including meetings with School Board and O. Henry administration and security officials, this remains a challenging and ongoing problem. Board members recommended that neighbors report criminal activity using 311/911 to obtain APD support, and also looking into a mentor program with Camp Mabry.

D. Howson Reopening (7:49 pm): Our library branch is scheduled to open on April 10, 2010 with a small ceremony at 9-11 am. WANG will revisit the proposal to help purchase a new audio-visual system after seeing what the equipments needs are. Additional info at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/library/news/nr20091102.htm>.

E. 2206 W. 11th Street (7:52 pm): A code enforcement proceeding is underway concerning excessive impervious cover at this property. There is no action required by WANG at this time.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Zoning (7:55 pm)

(1) C8-2009-0091.0A -- 2107 Woodmont Avenue (Owner: Kathryn Schulze Moser, Applicant: Jim Bennett Consulting, Hector Avila 791-0517): This resubdivision case was to have been heard by the Planning Commission on the 01/23/2010. A request for postponement was withdrawn by consent, and Applicant has agreed to include plat language preventing duplex on back (Forest) lot, and restricting front (Woodmont) lot to single family residence and one two-family dwelling as defined in the Land Development Code.

• **Board Action:** No further board action taken at this time, other than to appreciate Blake's work on this matter.

(2) C15-2010-00262206 -- Townes Lane (Owner: Roxan Coffman 750-6666 Applicant: Jim Bennett 282-3079): The applicant has requested a variance to decrease the minimum rear yard setback requirement from 5 feet to 2.9 feet and the side yard setback requirement from 5 feet to 2.5 feet in order to maintain a detached accessory structure for a single-family residence, and has also requested a variance to increase the maximum impervious coverage requirement from 45% to 56% existing in order to maintain the existing impervious coverage for a

single-family residence. Mr. Bennett explained that the landscaping portion of the impervious cover represented a hardship. In response to concerns about the excessive impervious cover, Mr. Bennett agreed to provide a copy of the 1986 plat map to show the grandfathered impervious cover.

• **Board Action:** The Board will vote by electronic motion to allow for additional information to be provided.

(3) Proposed LDC Ordinance C2O-2009-021 -- Blake reported that the Planning Commission met on Feb.23 to consider the proposed ordinance amending the Chapter 25-2, Subchapter E (Design Standards and Mixed Use) of the City Code as implementing the first phase of proposed changes to Subchapter E. The proposed ordinance does not apply to our neighborhood as we do not have any mixed use properties. A draft ordinance of the proposed amendment can be found at: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/codeamend.htm>. Cannatti noted that the proposed "remodel" ordinance is also being considered by the Planning Commission's Codes and Ordinances Subcommittee on March 16, 2010 as a way to limit the application of the "remodel" loopholes in the LDC, and agreed to circulate information to the Board with specifics on the proposal, including any limits on the number of remodel permits for a project. The remodel ordinance proposal is posted at http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/downloads/09_005_res_remodel_regs.pdf.

• **Board Action:** No further board action taken at this time.

(4) SPC-2009-0066C -- 1600 West 38th Street Rehab Hospital: The Board discussed the recent City Staff decision to accommodate applicants who want to build a rehab facility on this site by undertaking a code change to create a new use definition that is tailor-made for rehab hospital. This will enable this site and others to become eligible for construction of this rehab hospital or others like it, with no CUP required, no public input needed. The underlying case is in the Ridgelea Neighborhood and they and the owner of Jefferson Square have been fighting vigorously as it abuts

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a residential neighborhood.

• **Board Action:** Susan and Joyce were asked to draft a letter for WANG's submission to Council and the Planning Commission stating our objection to changing the LDC to accommodate specific projects like this, and to investigate obtaining ANC input on the issue.

B. Communications

(1) Newsletter (8:36 pm) – Gwen reported that bids for handling our newsletter printing requirements are still being collected and will be circulated to the Board.

• **Board Action:** The Board decided to print the February and March newsletters together as a single issue.

C. Infrastructure

(1) Brackenridge Tract Update (8:41 pm) – August reported on the Parks Department memo from Sara Hensley which concluded that “no alternative funding sources were available” for funding the lease payments for Lion's Municipal Golf Course other than the Gold Enterprise

Operating Fund, and WANG's efforts to challenge and correct this conclusion.

(a) Council Meeting Review
– August reported on the meetings conducted with City Council members wherein Council members were asked to confirm that their views on the Brackenridge Tract were consistent with City Staff's views. The preference at the City is that there should not be an adversarial dynamic between the City and the University of Texas

(2) Neighborhood Planning (8:49 pm)
– The neighborhood planning meeting on March 4, 2010 will be the Final Open House meeting during which the draft Transportation; Parks, Open Space and the Environment; Community Life; and Neighborhood in Context chapters will be presented for public review and input. Cannatti reviewed the various differences between the Vision Statements from the stakeholders and from City Staff, and agreed to circulate a draft recommendation to the Board for circulation to the neighborhood by email

and WANG's website, where the message will provide WANG's recommendation on the results of the planning process.

(3) It's My Parks Day (8:59 pm) -- Neighbors were encouraged to participate in the “It's My Park” day program on March 6, 2010. V.Treasurer's Report (9:00 pm) – August reported that the operating account had a balance of \$1976.51, and that the oak wilt account had a balance of \$1204.29.

VI.Adjournment: At 9:00, the meeting was adjourned. The next WANG Board meeting will occur on **Monday, April 12, 2010 (7:00 pm) at Howson Branch Library!**

AUSTIN HIGH RED JACKETS SPRING SHOW

By Susan Bell

After earning top awards and being named the Grand Champions at several contests this season, the Austin High Red Jackets have been hard at work preparing for their annual Spring Show. This year's show, entitled “A Bit of History”, will take place at 7pm April 15th-17th in the Austin High PAC. The show this season will showcase a dance each evening by the Red Jacket alumni, and the Thursday performance will feature a dance by the Austin High teachers! All Red Jacket alumni are invited to the Spring Show as well as a meet and greet reception before the performances on Friday and Saturday night.

Recently, the Red Jacket alumni gathered for a reunion

photo on the steps of the old Austin High (presently the ACC Rio Grande campus) where the dance team was represented as far back as 1935! Tickets for the Spring Show are \$8 in advance and can be purchased during lunch at Austin High April 14th-16th or preordered from any Red Jacket, or may be purchased for \$10 at the door. The Austin High Red Jackets are under the direction of Stephanie Braden and this year will mark her 10th year of teaching at Austin High. This is also the 25th anniversary of the Red Jacket's Spring Show and it promises to be grand – don't miss it!

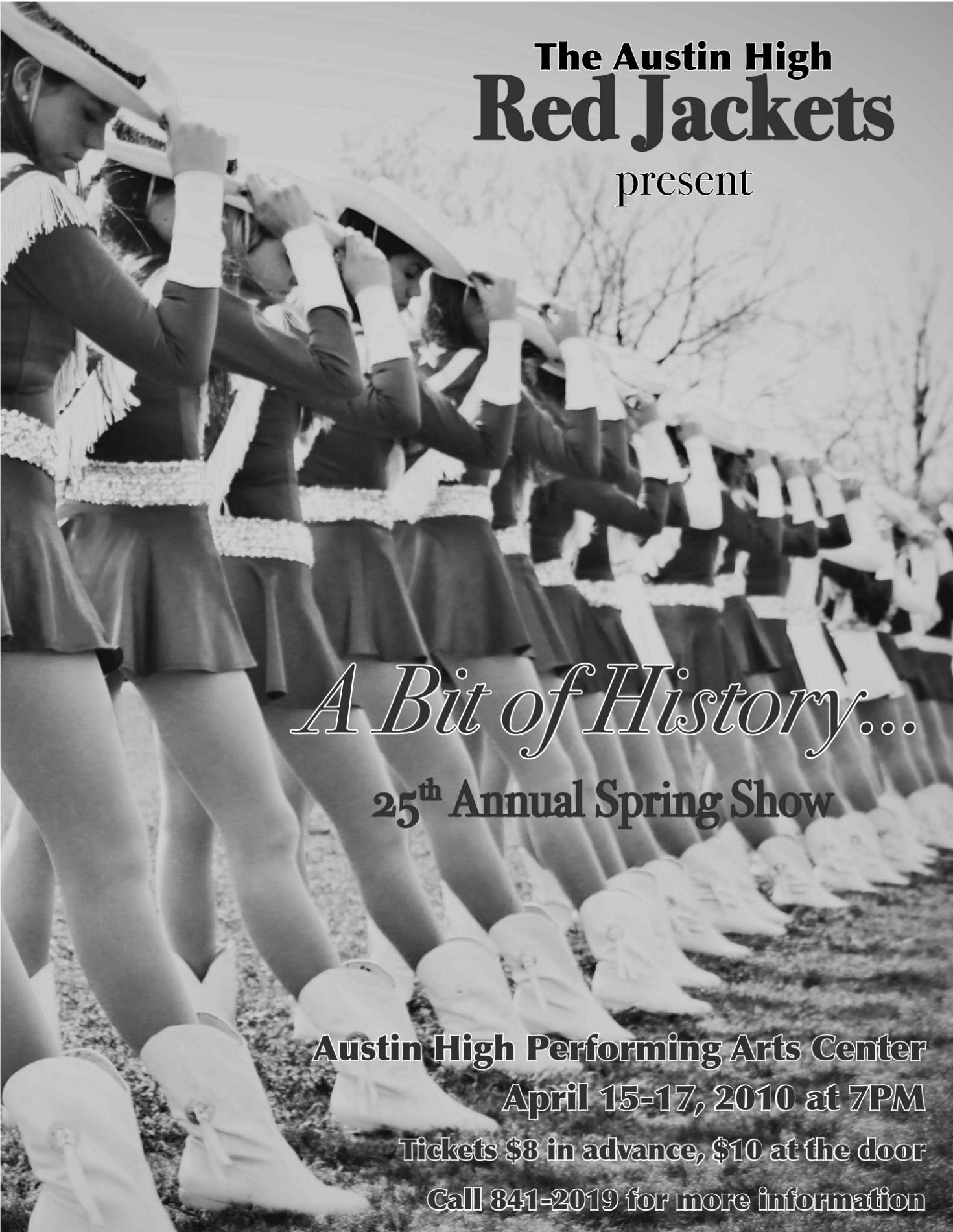
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Scott Ferguson - Chief Operating Officer, West Austin Native



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