



# WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 • May, 2012

Organized 1973

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

**The next WANG Board meeting will occur on  
June 4, 2012, 7:00 Howson Library**

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## MAY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

Happy May Neighbors! What a great spring it has been. We have gotten ample rainfall and everything is lush and green. Our creeks are flowing and everything seems filled with life. I took the snapshot below a couple of years ago at this time of year and thought I would share it with you.



### Pools

The good news is that Reed Pool is NOT on the pool closure list. In fact, there wasn't one this year so we have made an impact. There are no programming cutbacks either. However, long term sustainability for pool operations is still a major hurdle. Most of our neighborhood pools operate free of charge while district and metropolitan pools like Deep Eddy and Barton Springs charge a very nominal fee. With the strains on City coffers, we face some real challenges in the years ahead to make sure that all of our Austin neighbors have convenient access to public pools.

There are improvements ahead for Reed Pool. In 2005, Austin Water Utility (AWU) installed a new sewer line through Reed Park. In order to provide mitigation, AWU agreed to provide mitigation funding to help renovate Reed pool. However, the funding was never transferred to PARD. PARD and AWU eventually agreed that AWU would provide \$87,746 in mitigation funding to help perform work at Reed pool. The funding was transferred in fiscal year 2012 but will not be available to utilize until fiscal year 2013 according to City staff.

They added that PARD's Aquatics Division has scheduled renovations to begin in the spring of 2013 prior to opening the pool for its summer season. The goal of the renovation project at Reed pool is to tie in the gutter system to a sarge tank in order to create a closed circulation system. Currently, the gutter system is plumbed to the creek and does not allow for a closed system. The total cost of this project to date is \$175,000.00. The mitigation money from AWU will be applied to this project along with 2006 bond fund to supplement the remaining amount. The renovations of the pool systems should lower the cost of its operation. As you know, Westenfield Pool will be completely rebuilt after this swimming season and a major overhaul of Deep Eddy has been completed.

In other pool news, Reed and Westenfield Pools will open on June 4th and close far too early on August 17th. Splash pads opened May 19th and will close on September 9th. For those concerned, PARD will return the port-o-potty to Reed Park shortly to meet the needs of our busy park. Truly a highlight to end my discussion of the pools.....

### Neighborhood Crime

Crime, crime, crime. We seem to hear a lot about that in the neighborhood. There is a growing sense of frustration in the West Austin community that the Austin Police Department is nonresponsive to property thefts yet we still are considered to be one of the safest cities in the country. It is true that violent crimes are relatively low. But property crimes are not considered violent. And the number of property crimes are staggering. Yet these property crimes violate each of us either because we or a neighbor are victims. I have been a victim 4 times in the last decade and only once even received a follow-up call from APD upon reporting the theft. Now of course, I always dutifully report crimes because I know we need statistics to justify any requests that we might make. That said, statistics show that APD has an incredibly low rate of solving any of these property crimes.

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

## Presidents Message, *continued from page 1*

For the sake of perspective, compared to other parts of inner Austin, we are fractional in terms of aggregate property crimes. Most home burglaries are, perhaps startlingly, happening in broad daylight during working hours. On the other hand, burglaries of cars tend to happen in the evening. So let's look at the numbers by zip code. I have just focused on home burglaries and car break-ins.

	78703 Greater West Austin	78704 South of the Lady Bird lake	78702 Central East Austin	78705 UT North
2009	73 / 339	435 / 1290	304 / 727	128 / 887
2010	78 / 339	422 / 1110	225 / 729	153 / 770
2011	89 / 364	326 / 890	200 / 695	116 / 349
2012 to Date	21 / 110	111 / 254	62 / 217	41 / 151

West Austin is divided up primarily among 2 police sectors identified as Baker 2 and Baker 4. Baker 2's APD District Representative is Officer William Harvey (512)-974-8123. It includes Bryker Woods, Pemberton, Old Enfield, parts of Old West Austin and West Campus. Baker 4's APD District Representative is Officer Darrell Grayson (512)-974-5242. It includes all of Tarrytown north to 2222 as well as parts of 360.

Each sector has 7 shifts and 2 patrol officers per shift. Sometimes shifts might overlap so more officers are available. This, to me, was a surprisingly low number of officers given the geographic size of our sectors. Patrol officers are supplemented by officers from specialty units like burglary, auto theft, domestic violence and narcotics as needed. As burglary is a significant concern of West Austinites, note that APD's Burglary Unit is comprised of a Sergeant, 8 Detectives, an Administrative Specialist and a Crime Analyst who is shared with the Auto Theft Unit.

You need only look at the numbers above to see how overwhelmed they are. I suspect it is not necessarily that there is insufficient manpower but perhaps it is more a function of how those resources are allocated or utilized. It also may be reflective of how our society has changed that we now have to cope with things like gangs, narcotics, career criminals etc. It is important to recognize before suggesting that we need an increase in the size of the police force that APD eats up 96% of all ad valorem taxes paid and is getting more and more of our scarce tax dollars every year.

### Municipal Bond Development

In June, the Austin City Council will receive the recommendations from the Bond Election Advisory Committee (BEAC) in advance of November's bond election. As I have mentioned before, the City can maintain the same tax rate relative to debt service by authorizing up to \$400 million in bonds. As one neighbor astutely pointed out, if they issued fewer bonds, the tax rate could go down. Unfortunately all that does is bump even more problems down the road. On the other hand, wouldn't it be nice if we could get everything that needed fixing repaired and improvements done now! Alas, there is neither the capacity nor the will.

In advance of the BEAC meetings, City staff went through the process of determining a capital needs assessment department by department for projects that could be undertaken within 5 to 7 years. The Council issued a series of guiding principles to assist staff in their evaluation. Those fell into broader categories including infrastructure, new initiatives, mobility, sustainability, cost effectiveness and balance. Under these constraints, staff identified \$1.493 billion in projects. They and BEAC continued and continue to whittle the numbers down through a very painful process and have been instructed to get to \$400 million.

For the latest updates, go to [www.austintexas.gov/department/bond-development](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bond-development). You may send your support, concerns and comments to [bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov](mailto:bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov). We would certainly like to hear from you as well.

### MoPac Managed Lane Project & Mobility

As most of you know, I also currently serve as president of the MoPac Neighborhood Associations Coalition (MoNAC), a federation of neighborhoods adjacent to MoPac. The next critical hearing for the MoPac Improvement Project was May 22 at O.Henry. This was for the benefit of the Federal Highway Administration. MoNAC supports the Preferred Alternative that is being recommended as it meets the goals and objectives first established by MoNAC.

MoNAC's three overriding objectives were the installation of sound walls, the prohibition of elevated lanes and no taking of additional private property for right-of-way. These essentially all were achieved through the Preferred Alternative. As noted before, some got sound walls who didn't want them and others didn't get sound walls who really did want them. But for the most part, the adjacent neighborhoods will be getting sound walls. That determination was made during a very lengthy public process. Except for one flyover to connect to 5th Street, which will only be used for extraordinary circumstances for the time being, there are no elevated lanes included in the Preferred Alternative. Lastly, barring some unexpected engineering complication regarding the placement of the footings for a portion of the sound wall, there will be no additional taking of right of way from private property owners. Each neighborhood has its own unique concerns. The Preferred Alternative answers many of them, perhaps most, but certainly not all and that is recognized.

Our north/south corridors – Hartford, Jefferson, Harris, Exposition, Pecos are being used as MoPac bypasses by increasing numbers of cars looking for alternative routes. While the Preferred Alternative doesn't remove those cars from our neighborhood streets, the express lanes may encourage some drivers to remain on MoPac and perhaps give the impression to others that traffic is moving. The MoPac Improvement Project, after all, is about mobility.

Bike/ped enhancements are certainly part of a multimodal transportation solution as is mass transit. It is required that funding be allocated for such projects. To that end, we support a bike/ped shared use path in the MoPac corridor from Parmer to 2222 but not from 2222 south to the Johnson Creek trailhead at Enfield for a host of reasons, not the least of which is the narrow width of that part of the corridor coupled with all of the on and off ramps. We also support east/west bike/ped enhancements at certain MoPac crossings. I have been reminded that many bicycle advocates want to see the MoPac Improvement Project completed with or without this shared use path the length of the corridor. Furthermore, I have been assured by folks involved in the Project that their desire to have this continuous bike/ped route should not interfere with the project going forward.

I think of your friends and neighbors who have worked for years and years with several TxDOT regimes and through a few governmental cultural shifts to fight for these protections for our neighborhoods. MoPac or Loop 1 for those who haven't been around long enough to remember the blue livery of Missouri Pacific trains running through the corridor has gone from a very pleasant drive to a parking lot in 20 years. When it opened, it carried 39,000 cars a day. Now it carries 180,000 cars a day as Austin has continued to grow and as MoPac has been extended. Were it not for those who fought so hard and worked tirelessly for years on this issue, we might have a far less desirable outcome. MoNAC's objectives are within sight. Please join us in supporting the Preferred Alternative for the MoPac Improvement Project.

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting is Monday, June 4 at 7:00PM at Howson Library. We look forward to seeing you! Please join us. And speaking of joining us...

### Membership

WANG has committed to more than double its membership and we need YOUR help. Please don't forget to renew your membership and encourage your friends and neighbors to join! You may renew at [www.WestAustinNG.com](http://www.WestAustinNG.com). For your convenience, we have enabled recurring billing that will automatically charge your credit card on an annual basis so that you don't have to worry about your membership status. If you do have questions about your membership, please contact [membership@westausting.com](mailto:membership@westausting.com).

### CRIME REPORTING

Here's how to send your anonymous tip via text message.

1. Text "APD" and your message to 847411 (Tip411).
2. Austin PD may reply to your message asking for additional information.
3. Text "STOP" to end the dialogue.

The

# Lloyd Morrison

## Junior

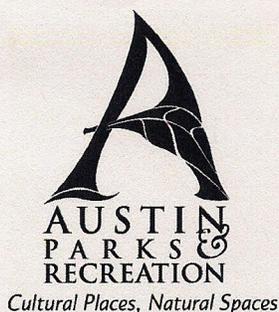
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Kick off the 2012 Season with the 3rd Annual Lloyd Morrison Junior sponsored by:



[www.savemuny.com](http://www.savemuny.com)

**WHEN: Thursday, May 31, 2012**

**FORMAT: 4-person Scramble**

**DIVISIONS: 12 & Under, 18 & Under**

**TIME: 12&Under - 7:30AM Tee Times**

**18&Under - 8:30AM Shotgun**

**\*Team based on oldest player in 4-some**

**Sign up today at the Lions Pro Shop  
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# West Austin Neighborhood Group

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## **Pill Bugs**

*By Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist at Texas AgriLife*

Pillbugs, or roly-polys, are crustaceans, closely related to crayfish and shrimp. These terrestrial creatures must live in moist environments to be able to survive on land. While they may sometimes invade homes in large numbers, they are a nuisance pest and do not bite, sting, transmit diseases or cause physical damage to the home or its contents.

Pillbugs are 1/4- 1/2" with dark grey coloring. Their oval bodies are convex above and either flat or concave underneath. Pillbugs have seven pairs of legs and two pairs or antennae and roll up into a ball when disturbed.

Pillbugs are scavengers, feeding mainly on decaying organic matter. They may occasionally feed on young, tender plants, but damage is typically not significant. They can be found under mulch, flower pots, compost, stones or other items resting on the ground.

They often invade crawl spaces and homes at ground level with common points of entry being door thresholds and expansion joints. When these pests are seen indoors, there is usually a large population breeding on the outside of the home near the foundation. Since pillbugs require moisture, they do not survive indoors for more than a few days unless there are very moist or damp conditions.

To manage infestations of these home invaders, rely on sanitation and exclusion techniques. Repair or replace door thresholds and seal expansion joints where pillbugs may be entering the structure. Move any piles of debris away from the foundation of the home. If there are flowerbeds by the foundation, turn the mulch to allow it dry out to make the area uninhabitable. Any leaky faucets or air conditioning units should be repaired to eliminate moisture buildup near the foundation.

Pesticides are not usually needed indoors to manage these occasional invaders. They soon die on their own from lack of moisture. The pests can be swept up using a broom and dustpan or a vacuum and disposed of. Outdoors, you may choose a pesticide to treat mulched areas or other areas that may be harboring large populations. Look for products labeled for pillbugs, sowbugs or isopods.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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