

WLCA NEWSLETTER



Woodlawn Lake Community Association

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San Antonio, Texas

DA's OFFICE DISCUSSES ELDER FRAUD & ABUSE ON JUL 30th

Derek Hilley, a prosecutor in the Elder Fraud Unit of the Bexar County District Attorney's Office (DA), will be the featured speaker at our July 30th meeting. A 2008 graduate of St. Mary's School of Law, he has been with the DA the past four years. In three of those years, he was with the Family Justice Unit, prosecuting assaults and sexual abuse cases. A few months ago he was appointed as one of two prosecutors in the Elder Fraud Unit by DA Susan Reed.

The purpose of the Elder Fraud Unit is to prosecute those accused of financial fraud against the elderly and to make awareness presentations to the community and to law enforcement agencies regarding elder fraud. The Unit was created in 2004 from a grant awarded to the DA's Office from the State. The County added the Elder Fraud Prosecutor position to the DA's budget in 2006. Because of a substantially increased case load, a second prosecutor was added in 2008. A Victim's Advocate was added to help facilitate communication with victims and to manage the mounting caseload.

Even if we are not yet of senior age, we hope to someday reach that status. Many of us also deal with older family members and friends. This meeting should provide valuable information for all of our members, regardless of age.

TJHS FIXES & DONALDSON AVE.

Construction funded by the 2010 SAISD Bond is set to begin at Jefferson High School. To fix foundation problems, parts of the school will be vacated. SAISD has bought 2.4 acres across Donaldson Avenue from Jefferson United Methodist Church. It will use the land for portable classrooms for about two years until work at the campus is complete. The land will then be converted to practice fields for athletic programs.

Students will be crossing Donaldson during the school day to go to and from classes. There will be a designated crossing area and a crossing guard. Drivers are asked to slow down and watch for students when driving on this stretch of Donaldson. Also, remember, no cell phone use while driving in a school zone.

STATE REP ON AUG 27th 2013 Controversial Sessions

Trey Martinez Fischer, District 116 State Representative, will be the featured speaker at our August 27th meeting. Each year Trey brings us up to date on the actions at the State Capitol. This year in its regular session and two special sessions the Legislature took up controversial issues as redistricting, women's health, voting rights, and education funding. Trey is a leading spokesman in many of these issues and is candid, expressive, and engaging in presenting his analyses and views of events.

Trey was first elected as our State Representative in 2000 and is now in his seventh term. The committees on which he sits include House Natural Resources, Ways & Means, Transparency in State Agency Operations, and Redistricting. He is also Chairman of the Mexican-American Legislative Caucus. Texas Monthly magazine named Trey the "Bull of the Brazos," recognizing him as among the best in the Legislature. The Houston Chronicle and the San Francisco Chronicle recently named Trey as one of the 20 Latino political rising stars of 2012. The Classroom Teachers Association recognized him as a "Legislative Star" for fighting legislation harmful to the state's children.

Trey graduated from Holmes High School, received his BA in Political Science from UTSA, MBA from Baruch College of Public Affairs (CUNY), and JD from the University of Texas School of Law. He and his wife Liz Provencio are practicing attorneys and the parents of two daughters. They reside in our neighborhood and long-time WLCA members.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out 2013 (NNO) is on Tuesday, October 1st. This is the nation-wide observance for neighborhoods to organize and fight crime. We want to start making plans for WLCA's participation. Block parties rather than a large gathering may be the best way to get to know our neighbors and promote safety on our blocks. We will discuss NNO in our upcoming meetings.

Area Retail Construction - see page 2

Back-to-School Drives - see page 3

New Life for Landmarks - see page 4

WLCA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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WLCA ONLINE

WLCA is at neighborhood.com and on facebook. There are two facebook sites for our association. The “official” one was begun in 2013 and has the logo seen on this newsletter. Visit WLCA online, tells us your thoughts and concerns, read about our events and community happenings, and give us a “like.”

LOCAL RETAIL CONSTRUCTION

The shopping center at W. Woodlawn and Bandera is being readied for construction of a new Walmart. The Gonzaba Medical Clinic building has been enlarged. EZ Pawn will relocate to this new site and its current building will be demolished. A new Family Dollar will be built at the former site of the pawn shop. The current Family Dollar will then be demolished to make way for Walmart’s parking lot. All current construction is in support of a Walmart store, with no plans for other retailers at this time. The work should be done by the end of next year.

Independent of Walmart, a new McDonald’s restaurant is being built along the Bandera frontage of the shopping center.

The former La Fiesta grocery at 919 Bandera is being remodeled for a new retail center. Plans are for the center to be ready by the end of the year. There have been discussions with certain retailers, but no firm commitments have been made as yet.

This past June, rezoning was sought for the area of Culebra-Carter-Elmendorf next to Walgreens to allow for construction of two family restaurants. We have asked for a progress report on this project. The owner/contractor is GFR Construction.

WLCA Birthdays

July: flower - larkspur; birthstone - ruby

Victor Almaraz, Angela Angel, Mark Banasau, Bodil Beanland, Bruce Bronstad, Martha M. Kwan, Lee Mason, Diana Prado, Manuel Sandoval, Rebecca Tadea

August: flower - gladiolus; birthstone - peridot

Gloria Bolick, Joseph Castellano, Efraim Diaz, Michael Jones, Elizabeth Provencio, Cory Retherford, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Barry Schafer, Peggy Selden, Alejandro Soto, Loretta Valdez

DETAILS, DETOURS, DEMERITS

Alejandro Soto, WLCA President

In our last newsletter I mentioned the \$1 million dollars coming to Woodlawn Lake Park from the 2012 bond. A public meeting was held on June 18th to discuss possible improvements. The much-used trail remains the priority. Some test borings are being done around the path to guide engineers on designing a stable and long-lasting trail. Other suggestions that came up were expansion of the Almaguer Dance Studio, a UV light water filtration system for the pool (to lessen the need for chemicals), soil erosion control, repair of the docks, and a wood floor for the gym. Although well-attended, the meeting was on the evening of a Spurs championship game. There will be more meetings that I hope more of our members will attend. In the meantime, we can discuss our wishes for our park at our WLCA meetings.

W. Woodlawn is now closed because of work on the Seeling Channel. This will go on for another nine months. As told to us at our May meeting, the original plan was to keep traffic flowing in one direction on W. Woodlawn to complete work on one side of the road, and then to change directions to work the other side. It was then decided to close W. Woodlawn completely, first from Lake Blvd to Kampmann, and then to Wilson, to work on the entire project at once and accelerate its completion.

Road barricades are up and detours have been posted. We experienced many construction vehicles coming through our residential streets. The City told us that drivers to the channel project will avoid our streets whenever possible. We then found that several of the trucks were actually Walmart workers going from IH 10 to their work site. We asked GFR Construction, the contractor, to instruct drivers to access the work site by taking Culebra and Bandera from IH 10. The City agreed, explaining that the detours are meant for local, and not for through traffic. It has posted directional signs directing vehicles accordingly.

For all its popularity (see “Contest” on page 3), there are those who disrespect our park. On the 4th of July, I saw a young boy toss some trash into the grass. His father just laughed. Days later I still see where grillers dumped used charcoal. I am sure that they do not do this at home. (See “Fourth” on page 3.) After Perrito Grito (Bark in the Park) this past March, dog poop was present on park grounds. The purpose of the event was to promote responsible pet ownership. That has to include picking up after your dog. Besides, it’s the law. The park was littered after Easter Sunday, including being strewn with yellow tape that campers use to claim their areas but fail to pick up afterwards. On Monday mornings I find our park with litter from weekend picnickers. Also, graffiti continues to be a problem.

Often blame for litter is placed on lack of trash cans, but trash and recyclables can be carried to a nearby usable container or taken home for proper disposal. The harm may not be by area residents who see the park as an extension of their homes. We should see to it that all visitors help keep our park clean.

COUNCIL OFFICES' BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVES

DISTRICT 1

District 1 (D1) will be hosting three Back to School events:

- August 3rd, 9 am to 2 pm, the Annual Back to School & Wellness Fair for families of District 1 at Edison High School, 701 Santa Monica St.
- August 17th, 10 am to 1 pm, Operation Backpack, Northside Community Church, 1407 West Ave., to benefit the children of Franklin Elementary School and Whittier Middle School.
- August 24th, 10 am, Frank Garrett Back to School Fair, 1226 NW 18th St., to benefit the West Side of the District.

All three events will offer backpacks, school supplies, haircuts, immunizations, family and health services, educational support services, and other resources for District 1 families.

D1 needs volunteers to help set up and manage the August 3rd event. They will stuff backpacks on Saturday, July 27th, from 10 am to 1 pm at the District 1 Field Office, 1310 Vance Jackson. On Friday, August 2nd, from 12 N to 3:30 pm, they will set up tables and chairs and unload backpacks at Edison High School. At the Fair at Edison High School on Saturday, August 3rd, work shifts from 7 am to 10 am, 9:45 am to 1 pm, and 12:30 pm to 3 pm, will help direct attendees, distribute backpacks, support the information tables, and distribute sealed food.

D1 is also accepting donations of new backpacks, spiral notebooks (wide ruled), pocket folders, crayons (8 count), No.2 pencils, and loose-leaf notebook paper. These donations can be delivered to the District 1 Field Office. More information is available at the Field Office at 210-207-0900.

JULY FOURTH - PLUSES & MINUSES

Our annual Fourth of July celebration had its hits and misses. The SA Police Department did an excellent job in controlling traffic and parking. Despite road closures and detours, traffic lanes were kept open and moving. "No parking" signs were posted early and were enforced. Tow trucks were busy throughout the day, removing cars parked where they were not allowed.

On the downside, litter and beer drinking continue to be a problem. The City's clean-up crew did a great job the next morning in making our park tidy once again. Bicycles were dangerously on the crowded footpath. We could have used more Park Police patrolling the park grounds. We could have also used extra trash and recycling cans and more well-spaced port-o-potties. In the end, however, the fireworks were great as usual.

Next WLCA meeting: Jul 30 at 7 pm

Peacock Center, 2810 W Ashby, Bldg 2

Other 2103 meetings: Aug 27, Sep 24, Oct 29, Nov 26

DISTRICT 7

District 7 (D7) is currently seeking donations for school supplies and money. They have reached out to some businesses and will be making a major blitz soon. The items D7 is asking for are based on the school districts' supply lists. These include items as paper, pencils, glue, folders, binders, and so on.

D7 is planning for a distribution event on August 20th. The site has yet to be determined. School supplies will be distributed on a first-come first-served basis with some restrictions which include one supply bag per child and the child must be present and accompanied by a parent or other adult. The bags will be given only to the child or student.

Donations can be delivered to the District 7 Field Office at 4414 Centerview #160. To volunteer in this effort or for more information, call the Field Office at 210-207-0870.

FAVORITE PARK CONTEST

We recently completed our participation in a Coca-Cola's "Take It To the Park" contest. This was a nation-wide search for America's favorite park sponsored by the soft drink giant. San Antonio's entry was Woodlawn Lake Park. It was chosen to represent our City because of its many amenities and its high visitation. The entry came too late for our last newsletter, but we hope everyone was able to learn of the contest and to get in their votes. Voting was from June 6th to July 15th.

The winning park will receive \$100,000, second place receives \$50,000, and third place receives \$25,000. There will be a random pick from the next top 25 vote getters for \$15,000. The winnings are to help restore, rebuild, or enhance activity where people can play and be active, winners determining their own needs. As a bonus, at the campaign kickoff on June 13th, Coca-Cola gave our Parks Department a check for \$10,000.

The votes are being tallied. At last count, the leader is Veterans Memorial Park in Moore, OK. That town was ravaged by a tornado last May 20th. Woodlawn Lake Park was at about number fourteen. We will let you know of the final results.

HISTORIC HOMEOWNER FAIR

The Fifth Annual Historic Homeowner Fair is being planned for September of this year. Sponsored by the City's Office of Historic Preservation, the purpose of the free event is to give citizens and professionals an opportunity to interact and discuss issues related to caring for older homes. Held at historic Thomas Jefferson High School the three previous years, current construction at that school requires that this year's venue be changed. We will update our members of date and location as soon as this information becomes available.

**Woodlawn Lake
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UNOFFICIAL TRASH COLLECTORS

Most of our area will experience the City's semi-annual bulky item collection beginning July 29th. This is when we set out in our yards those items too large for our weekly trash collection. It does not include yard prunings or other green cuttings, which are subject to their own semi-annual collections. It also does not include leaves, which are picked up on the resident's request.

A lot of the bulky items we set out do not make it to the City's Solid Waste trucks. Just ahead of the City workers, our streets are visited by free enterprising treasure seekers who go through our debris and pick out items which they feel they can use or sell. This practice is illegal.

Municipal Code Section 14-1 defines "scavenging" as "an unauthorized partial or total removal of contents of trash or recycling containers or any other item set out by a resident with the intent of collection by the city." Section 14-45(e) makes it "unlawful for any person to scavenge or salvage refuse, recyclables, or organics without written consent of the director [of Solid Waste Management] or without written consent of the generator [us] of the solid waste or recyclables."

The prohibition includes the sifting through of the trash and recycling containers we set out by the curb each week. We do not know if anyone has actually been cited for this type of violation, or even stopped from the practice, but the law is on the books.

AREA LANDMARKS REVIVED

Cool Crest. Cool Crest Miniature Golf at 1402 Fredericksburg Road reopened this past June 30th. Our Sep-Oct 2012 WLCA Newsletter covered the plans of the new owners to bring back the site. Opened as a single 18-hole course in 1929, it expanded to two courses in 1959, and closed in 2008. The two 18-hole courses retain the nostalgia of the facility, with shade-giving banana trees and other vegetation, running brooks and fountains, and gently terraced slopes. In 2009, the City rezoned Cool Crest as a historically significant property.

International & Great Northern Train Depot. The former train station on N. Medina by W. Commerce will be the focal point of VIA's Westside Multimodal Transit Center. The depot was built in 1907. VIA bought the property a few years ago and has renovated it as a customer service center. Although substantially complete, its opening scheduled for this month has been delayed to allow for some finishing touches.

VIA has also purchased the Cattleman Square block across N. Medina and will develop it as a transit plaza with cafes and shops. The Transit Center will serve as a hub for VIA buses, the future street car system, taxis, and possibly an Austin-San Antonio commuter rail. It could also serve travelers on AMTRAK and Greyhound. The Center will lessen bus congestion in the core of downtown and encourage redevelopment in the area.