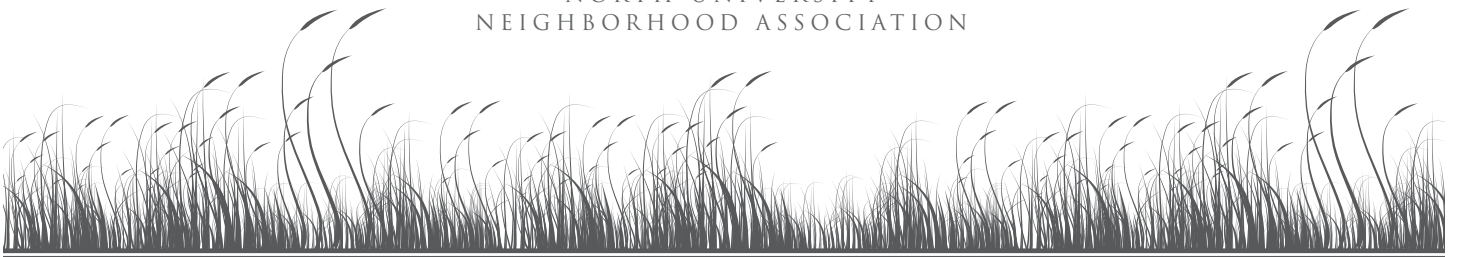




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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



New Editor's Note

Alas, the ever-generous and committed editor of the NUNA newsletter, Judy Willcott, has retired from her post-- and two people have stepped in to fill it (as Michael Riley said at the last meeting, it takes two to fill your shoes, Judy. Thanks for all of your hard work.) With much pleasure (and some coaxing over coffee) Julie Willis is taking over ad sales, and I, Clayton Maxwell, am diving in to editorial. But we are not alone—we are so pleased that this issue includes a piece by new(ish) NUNA neighbor and journalist Beth Goulart Monson about life on the Xmas light street, an inspiring account of Doug Plummer's efforts to save a historic cottage, plus several snappy updates on important things happening here with Wheatsville, the parks (Hemphill, Adams, and Sparky) and parking permits. And, in case you've temporarily forgotten how fortunate we are to call NUNA home, we start this issue with a winsome tale of cool kids, big dogs, and donuts by our ad wiz, Julie. Come to the meeting on Monday to hear more about what's happening.

Editorial contact: nunanews@gmail.com and for sales: Julie_willis@outlook.com.

Finding the Meaning of Neighborhood at the Local Donut Store

By Julie Willis

Our five-year old preschooler got his first "homework" assignment just after Halloween. To kick off "community week," he was to draw, to the best of his ability and with limited help, a map of his neighborhood. What Luke came up with – and what his effort resulted in – surpassed my wildest expectations. Not necessarily for the rendering (his looked like

a map most five-year-olds would draw), but for the chain of events his map set in motion which reinforce the meaning of "neighborhood" in an urban setting.

Like so many things we choose so carefully for our children, never knowing if they'll fully appreciate it, we chose North University very intentionally less than two years ago, when we moved to Austin from Katy (via Washington, DC via Chicago – but that's another story.) In Katy, we lived in one of those classic suburbs that seems to characterize today's American Dream: A gated community of brand new homes, where garage doors go up, cars go in, doors go down, and families retreat into private oasis of game rooms and Sam's Club Playscapes in the backyard, without much need to interact with their neighbors.

This is not how my husband and I grew up and not what we wanted for our two boys. We wanted a neighborhood with lemonade stands and kick-the-can, full of kids on bikes and dogs on leashes and neighbors borrowing cups of sugar. When we found North University, we believed we found the right place for our family, and committed ourselves to reinforcing the notion of "neighborhood." We've made friends of many

Next NUNA General Membership Meeting

Monday

December 3, 2012

6:30 p.m.

First English Lutheran Church

NEXT NUNA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

First English Lutheran Church
Monday, December 3, 2012
6:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Guests:** Officer Griffin, NUNA District Rep from APD
- III. **Reports:**
 - CANPAC - Mary Ingle
 - Residential Parking Permit - Doug Plummer
 - Sparky Park- Doug Plummer
 - Parks - Bill Bednar/Julie Willis
 - Treasurer - Jan Moyle
 - Quadrant Leaders' Reports -
Dick Holland, Mary Ingle, Rick Iverson and Laurie Marchant
 - Other reports: Noise – Bob Kaler
- IV. **Items for Action:** Vacancies - Nominating Committee
- V. **Old Business:**
- VI. **New Business:** NUNA 2013 - Neighborhood Events
- VII. **Adjourn**



All Saint's preschoolers's rendering of Ken's Donuts and Tank the Labrador

and admire their beautiful garden. So it was not surprising to me that Luke captured Mr. Gene and Tank's house on his map, along with Ken's Donuts and the "secret shortcut" to preschool.

What did surprise me was the reaction Luke's map got at school, where it turns out one of his teachers – the beloved "Ms. Mo" -- and several of classmates are also Ken's Donuts groupies and had long been curious about the identity of the kindly man sitting in the front window enjoying a cup of coffee while his dog waited patiently outside, accepting a scratch behind the ears or shaking paws with passersby. Mr. Gene and Tank, it turns out, are minor celebrities among the All Saints/Ken's Donuts set, and Luke's status went up a notch that day, by association.

The culmination of "community week" was a Friday morning walk to Ken's Donuts, where each child would practice ordering and paying for his or her own donut in support of a community business. Ms. Mo asked me if I thought Mr. Gene and Tank might make a guest appearance, which seemed only fitting. But – for all my grand talk here about getting chummy with neighbors – I worried this might cross a line. It's one thing to share friendly conversation with a neighbor you run into from time to time; it's another thing to ask him to willingly put himself and his pet in the grimy hands of a small army of preschoolers.

I didn't have any contact information for Mr. Gene except for his street address, and there was no answer when I knocked on his door. So I left a polite letter telling him Luke's story and asking him – with many caveats and polite ways to say no – if he might make an appearance at Ken's on Friday at 10:45.

Fantastically, he and Tank showed up. Unfortunately, the

class was late. Very late. So late that Mr. Gene and Tank finally had to leave. But the story doesn't end there.

The proprietor of Ken's Donuts, Mr. Ashvim Patel, took Mr. Gene's phone number and called him when the class finally arrived. He and Tank graciously came back to the store, where they were given a round of applause by a delighted preschool class. Pictures were taken, paws were shaken and Mr. Patel treated everyone to free donuts.

The class put together a collection of thank-you art for Mr. Gene, and I am grossly abusing my position as Ad Sales manager for this newsletter to give Ken's Donuts a free ad and a heavily biased plug for the best pink sprinkle donut in town (according to our boys, who – I shamefully admit – are qualified to know.) But, mostly, I share this story of our boy's map, his caring teacher, a good-hearted neighbor, a well-trained dog and a generous bakery proprietor to illustrate everything we chose this neighborhood for, and still could never have imagined.

Minutes

NUNA General Membership Meeting

October 8, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

New president Michael Riley called the meeting to order and first asked for approval of the minutes from the October Membership Meeting. It was noted that Zivley, in the Martha Zivley Typing Service that was once located at 2707 Hemphill, had been misspelled. Minutes were approved.

The guest at this meeting was Colin Clark from the Sierra Club's Austin Beyond Coal campaign. He gave an overview of what their Beyond Coal campaign is about, namely, to prompt Austin to divest from the Fayette Coal Plant that is burning coal from Wyoming Powder River Basin and pumping health-threatening pollutants into the air. The coal plant is owned by the City of Austin and the LCRA. Sierra Club's goal is to phase it out by 2016, and is trying to create more community awareness and support. Colin suggested visiting www.austinbeyondcoal.org and sign a petition or get involved. Contact ryan.rittenhouse@greenpeace.org to learn more.



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In the reports, Mary Ingle said that there is an open action for the Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC). She cannot be an ANC representative because she is already on the CANPAC (Central Austin Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee) team, a planning team of seven central Austin neighborhoods collaborating on the Central Austin Combined Neighborhoods Plan. Canpac has voted not to support the up-zoning for the 34th Street medical facilities. They are currently waiting for final documents and hoping to get them in time.

In Development Review, Steven has been in touch with a representative from Trudy's about their parking lot. They need a final word on that project, but you will see landscaping soon. The DRC has also been working with the Fiji's who called and asked if they could make changes, move a door. They were told to send in their plan for review. All the cases the DRC is working on have reached some final resolution. The Fijis are going to planning commission on Tuesday; the Planning Commission is supporting historic zoning.

Bob Kaler also reported some new business for the DRC. Steven Pressler's home is for sale. The DRC would like to encourage some real mixed use on that property (on 30th behind Crown and Anchor). It is the main historic house next to some cottages. It was discussed that while we don't want him to not get a good deal on the sale, it would be good to see if we could encourage him to develop it in a manner that could be beneficial to the neighborhood.

Doug Plummer reported that The Man Who Planted Trees, the play at Sparky Park, was very well received and well attended. President Riley concurred. Doug also organized a Sparky Park charette on how to use the building that is there, what kind of features we would like, etc. The Parks department has promised to create an accounting system; the city gets \$51,000 a year from renewed cell phone contracts from the Sparky Park cell phone tower.

Bill Bednar reported for Parks. He said that he and Julie Willis outlined a plan for the year for both Hemphill Park and Adams. He said that Hemphill was overdue for cleaning out the brush from the middle of the park and has been in touch with Rick Iverson, about it. Volunteers will do it for \$3000. Kimberly Renner suggested having various NUNA residents call 311 on different days and report how the mounting brush was a safety hazard—she believes that was what got the job done last time. Various attendees volunteered to call in on assigned days.

Parks is organizing a clean up for the It's My Park Day in March. Trudy's will donate breakfast tacos. They are also working

on a comprehensive landscaping plan for Hemphill and Adams. They are losing trees, the pecans are getting old, and we have to think about what to replace or we will lose a lot of neighborhood beauty. They have received a lot of materials from Mark Fiest. It was agreed that one specific tree-planting plan might not find wide acceptance in the neighborhood; it would alter that character of the park too much. Laurence has volunteered to help—they want to get together at some point before Xmas and review what work has been done, find out where the levers are in the city and come up with a comprehensive plan for the parks along with a fundraising plan.

Darian mentioned that the city has money to reline the basin of the concrete liner of creek; someone has earmarked money for that. Bill said that he will do some snooping, and the moment for that is coming up with sewage line repair.

As for parking, Mike Riley said that a lot of people are working on RPPs for Grooms, Tom Green to Duval, and 34th from Helm to Grooms as well.

For the Treasurer's Report, the treasurer was in New Zealand. But Laurence reassured us that we are solvent—our money is good and well.

As for noise, Bob Kaler said that the Mary Lin team and Mike Riley went to a city meeting to let them know that we

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are doing sound statement. Questions were asked. If we are so far away from the Blind Pig, why are we hearing it? Blind Pig's permit came up for renewal and they somehow snuck it by us. Who approved it? Can we find out? That should be public info. We are trying to meet with Bob Woody, owner of Blind Pig. One person at the city who is very helpful is Carol Gibbs—she's trying to help stay on top of this issue for us. But remember, we were reminded, she works for Guernsey. Also, people need to know about the 311 call information. It was agreed to discuss that at the November meeting. President Riley recounted how we was interview by a local TV Station about neighborhood issues with noise.

We need to get Gary from APD at the December General Membership meeting to review policy for reporting.

Michel adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Clayton Maxwell

Christmas on 37th Street

By Beth Goulart Monson

It's not every house that comes with a bassinet full of baby flamingos in the crawl space. But if you know our block of

37th Street, you won't be surprised to hear that ours did. In fact, keeping watch over the babies as they lay under the house were a couple of adult flamingos and a forest of tomato-cage Christmas trees, too. It's a good thing they were there. When we first moved here two years ago, we were excited to participate in the renowned 37th Street lights spectacle, but overwhelmed by moving during the holidays with a baby who didn't sleep much. That first year, we planted those light-up birds and trees in the front yard and declared ourselves decorated.

We had some inkling of what was to come. While we were going through the process of buying our house, my husband, Kris, and I found videos of the lit-up street on YouTube. After closing, we crossed our new threshold and found a guidebook to holiday lights around the country - featuring our block, naturally - and a pair of 3D glasses bequeathed to us by our home's previous owners.

Then, one day when I arrived with yet another carload of boxes, I found a document on the porch titled, "Words from a Long-time Member of the 37th Street Light Association." In two stapled-together pages printed in black ink on both sides, the author of this little guide explained the "highly simplified" history. "This all began years ago," wrote our anonymous historian, "when a highly creative artist... began decorating his

house in a rather thinking-outside-the-box kind of way. After several years, he asked a neighbor across the street if they could hook up lights together across the street in a symbolic gesture of peace." I was charmed. And grateful. Following the history, our anonymous neighbor had included a list of guidelines: Lights out at 10:30 on weekdays; don't use the electric poles, but feel free to use the phone poles; park at the end of the block if you're out after dark; use creative materials as much as possible.

That first winter, Kris and I got in the habit of wandering onto the front porch in our slippers, glass of wine or eggnog in hand, after we'd put baby Henry to bed. I've always loved people-watching, and was happy to do so from the comfort of my own glider. I was astounded. I'd heard that there would be traffic. But I had no idea it would be like this: Every night, from dark until past my bedtime, a steady stream of cars crept down the street - always with a stretch limo or two tucked in among the minivans, sedans, and pick-ups. The pedestrian traffic was just as impressive. Walkers processed by at an admiring pace, many singing or taking pictures as they went. Our flamingos turned out to be a hit with children, and a favorite photo op - children came up into the yard to pose with them while their parents immortalized them all with their phones. People

called out their thanks, and we wished them merry holidays. I delighted to see them enjoy our very simple display.

Not everyone on 37th Street enjoys the tradition, though. Most of the residents who were here when it all started have moved on. Among those who remain, some tell us that it was fun at first, but things got out of control. They tell of vomit in their front yard and trash everywhere. They warn that if the tradition amps back up to its former height, we can expect the same. I believe their account, and fear the scenario they describe. Rationally, I understand that the short-term thrill of the lights might not be worth the long-term unpleasantness they could bring. And yet, there's something about anything Christmas I just can't resist. Thus far, the good outweighs the bad in our experience-- plus we've seen no vomit. We'll light up our yard again this year.

Last year, we adopted a Paris theme in our lights display. Kris constructed replicas of the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe. The flamingos became tourists. This year, we intend to add a third Paris landmark to our front yard scene. I'm not telling what it is, though. You'll have to come see.

Beth Goulart Monson is a freelance journalist who has written for *Old-House Journal*, *Babble*, *AARP*, and the *Austin American-Statesman*.




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Residential Parking Permits

By Doug Plummer

NUNA neighbors to the east of Speedway are working hard to add additional streets to the Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program in order to help combat the worsening parking problems on many streets. NUNA volunteers plan on going house to house in the next few weeks to solicit signatures on individual petitions that will hopefully add RPP for the following blocks:

- Grooms/33-34th (Michael Riley)
- Grooms/34th-35th (Douglas Plummer)
- 35th Street Duval to Tom Green (Daphny Ainsle)
- 400 block of E 33rd and the 3300 block of Tom Green (Susan Pryor)

If 60% of the residents on those blocks endorse the plan then the City Transportation Office will take the requests to City Council. All NUNA residents can ask questions and hear more details on these efforts at the December NUNA General Meeting.

Sparky Park

NUNA's Sparky Park had a busy month this past October.

For three weekends, The Exchange Players held a play in the building and on the grounds of Sparky Park. The play, "The Man Who Planted Trees," was amazingly beautiful, both for the play's message about individuals' ability to cause positive environmental change in the world and for the stunning lighting design and overall staging of the play. For those of you who missed this thought provoking piece, we hope that you will get the chance to see other art events like this in the near future.

To that end, efforts continue on plans to renovate the Sparky Park building and make it a structure that will be inhabitable (and rentable) in the future. Fifteen neighbors participated in the design and brainstorming session on the building renovation that was held at Sparky Park on Saturday, October 6th. The meeting covered: an overview of Sparky Park history and examples of other similar PARD facilities/buildings.

A brainstorming session that had attendees suggesting possible uses and features of the building. To hear about next steps in the renovation process, please come to the General Membership meeting on December 3rd.

Park Planning Effort Underway

By Julie Willis

The Adams/Hemphill Parks Committee celebrated a small victory in October and is laying the groundwork for bigger ones in the months ahead. Thanks to its head, Bill Bednar, and several persistent neighbors who reached out to the city, Hemphill Park – including the creek -- was finally cleared of the weeds and overgrowth that were slowly taking over our commons. The committee's attention now turns to the larger issues of irrigation and trees.

A bit of history for newcomers: There is apparently an ancient and non-functional irrigation system in Hemphill Park, but no one seems to know how it got there, where the pipes and heads are, how to get it to work, or if it even still can. On a mission to find out, the committee is currently exploring options for having the system inspected and asking anyone with leads or ideas about uncovering our "irrigation mystery" to contact one of us.

Sourcing water will be critical to the committee's concurrent effort to replace our parks' trees, many of which are dying of age, neglect and drought conditions. The committee is currently staging an effort to develop a new master plan for the parks with trees as the centerpiece, but also addressing

additional neighborhood interests including:

- A light-protected pedestrian walk across E. 30th between Adams and Hemphill
- Play equipment in Adams, Hemphill or both
- Channeling foot traffic with walks and occasional benches
- Identifying and securing funding for the above

The committee is pursuing potential public and private resources for developing a master plan with the aim of getting proposals in front of the neighborhood during the first half of 2013. Once again, we invite anyone who has ideas, concerns or resources to please reach out to or us or – better yet – join the committee! You can reach Bill Bednar at 512-587-3504 or wbednar@bednarlaw.com; Laurence Miller at (512) 750-7852 or lmiller@fluentcollab.org and Julie Willis at 240-893-9963 or julie_willis@mac.com.

Wheatsville is Growing

Steven Tomlinson

Every time you shop at our beloved neighborhood grocery, you're helping Austin's cooperative economy grow: Wheatsville Co-op's second location, at 4001 South Lamar will open by next summer. The new store will be larger (and

include a bakery) but otherwise provide the same healthy, friendly experience that we enjoy in our 'hood. All of us who are owners (members) of Wheatsville help finance this new location (and other new stores planned for the coming years) every time we buy groceries. Our patronage creates well-paying jobs and makes it easier for more Austinites to get nutritious food. If you haven't been to Wheatsville lately, stop by for a smoothie, a breakfast taco or some popcorn tofu — and enjoy knowing that your visit is spreading the love to South Austin.

Doug Plummer's New/Old Cottage

By Bob Kaler

In November of 2010, time seemed to be running out for the little house, then known as the Callan/Boswell cottage, at 408 East 33rd Street. A rare example in Austin of a Cumberland, or two-pin cottage, this little house's history was evidently too humble for landmark status and preservation. The City Council granted a demolition permit. Then enters Doug Plummer who could see another life for the tired old cottage. Doug spoke with Mary Ingle and Susan Prior about assistance with an introduction to the owners, Christine and Charles Boes,



to explore the possibility of relocating the cottage to his home at 301 East 35th Street. This was not the first time Doug had an interest in trying to save a little cottage hit by a demo permit. One of the two Pressler cottages on East

30th Street had previously caught his eye as a possibility for preserving a small but significant part of our neighborhood history by moving a structure slated for demolition to his property. Despite his interest, both Pressler cottages were unfortunately demolished. At the eleventh hour when demolition once again seemed eminent, the Boes's responded positively to the idea of Doug saving the 33rd Street cottage by moving it to his back yard. They invited him to visit and get his first look at the interior in order to help him make the significant decision as to whether preservation was in order for this old well-worn structure. The visit encouraged him to at least investigate the possibility of taking on such a questionable project. No contractor Doug spoke with recommended that he

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attempt the project. All said that it would be less expensive to build new, but Doug's commitment to the neighborhood and historic preservation tipped the scales and he entered into an agreement with Christine and Charles to relocate the cottage.

The first challenges were the variances that were needed from the City in order to relocate the structure on his lot. Doug prepared a very sophisticated power point presentation with photos and drawings and, assisted by Mary Ingle, submitted them for review before the Planning and Development Review Board. The meeting was nearing the midnight hour when Doug approached the podium and the Chairman, seeing Mary, simply asked her if the variances had neighborhood support. Mary said "yes." The Chairman called for a vote and it passed by consent, sans power point.

Plans for upgrading and restoration were drawn and approved. The contractor and mover were selected. All Doug needed was \$85,000.00. No bank was interested because it was 2010, and even new construction loans were hard to come by. "You want to move an old house and RESTORE IT? Sorry." Doug came up with plan "B," calling and e-mailing family and friends whom he offered an investment opportunity. Minimum \$10,000.00 loans@ 6% interest for 5 years. The offering was fully subscribed in 45 minutes. The only reluctant investor was his dad who hemmed and hawed, until Doug said "Dad, who do you think is most likely to be living in the cottage in a few years?" His parents saw the relative benefits of cottage living over the alternative, and quickly ponied up their part of the funds. His investors were happy to get repaid one year later when Doug refinanced the house, but it was sadly agreed that no other investment in anyone's portfolio was paying that much.


Moving day arrived and the cottage severed its roots to 408 East 33rd Street, it's home for possibly the last ninety plus years, and began its journey west. The move happened at midnight and progress was as slow as a wagon train with workers standing on the roof of the house in order to lift branches and telephone wires. Neighbors and friends came out to watch the house turn the corner at Duval and roll west on 35th Street and they gathered to welcome it to its new home. The kitchen and dining room led the parade followed by the living room and bedroom. The old bath and front porch were too tired to make the trip and were left in ruins at their old home. The movers skillfully reassembled the remains of the cottage on the very small space available on the first try and the little cottage sighed in relief that it was in Doug's garden and not the county dump. It was facing west now, not south like in the old days, but the land sloped west just like its old home. This is

going to be ok. The cottage had been moved at least once before and survived, so it knew what to expect and was ready for its next facelift. The trucks, neighbors and friends left, the lights were turned off, and the night was quiet again.

Dawn light revealed the reality of the challenge. A new foundation, electrical and utility service, front porch, roof, and deck, not to mention a complete renovation of the interior including a new kitchen, bath, closets, lighting and air conditioning were ordered up and just for good measure the site was to be enhanced with dry stacked limestone retaining walls and new landscape planting. As the work progressed Doug took on more of the daily management of the work in order to keep the project on target.

Now the new/old cottage needed tenants. Doug's Craig's List posting generated 10 responses. Five of those visited the cottage and three applied within 2 days of the listing. Doug knew he had done the right thing. The 3400 block of Grooms has never looked better. We all owe Doug a standing ovation for a stellar performance.

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Schedule of NUNA Meetings

Executive Committee

1st Monday of the Month
209 East 34th Street
6:00 p.m.

January 7

General Membership Meeting

1st Monday of the Month
First English Lutheran Church
6:30 p.m.

December 3

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