

**Balcones Civic Association  
P.O.Box 26864  
Austin, Texas 78755-0864**

**www.main.org/bca**

## ***Winter 2006 Newsletter***

### **FIRE DANGER**

As the statewide drought continues, signs remain posted on highways reminding us that a statewide fire emergency exists and burn bans are in effect.

Well before this drought, Austin was ranked third in the U.S. for its urban forest fire potential, just behind southern California and parts of Colorado. Those of us who live in or near forested canyons need to clear out the ground cover, dead branches, and dead trees from around our houses. We also need to prune any overhanging trees from our houses. Our neighbors need to do the same. All of us need to have what is known as "defensible space" around our homes. The Austin Police Dept. cannot, and will not, put its firefighters and equipment in danger by trying to fight a fire in and around a house that they feel is not "defensible."

The Austin Fire Dept. has distributed a bulletin entitled "Living in the Urban-Wildland Interface," which describes "defensible space" and gives a formula for determining what that space should be for a structure of a specific height. Defensible space needs to increase if a home is built on a hill, because fire travels more rapidly uphill than on flat land. This bulletin can be found at <http://www.tamu.edu/ticc/uwi%20release.pdf>. We urge you to read this bulletin carefully and apply the suggestions given therein so that our urban homes in beautiful forested terrain can be saved in case of wildfire.

#### **Here are some tips that may save you, your family and your home in the event of a wildland fire:**

- Any LPG tanks should be far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire. Keep area around the tank clear of flammable vegetation.
- Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from occupied buildings.
- Keep all combustibles, such as firewood, wooden picnic tables, boats, stacked lumber, etc., away from structures.
- Clear roof surfaces and gutters regularly to avoid build-up of flammable materials such as leaves and other debris.
- Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet or more.
- In rural areas, clear a fuel break of at least 3 times the fuel length around all structures.
- Have fire tools handy such as: ladder long enough to reach your roof, shovel, rake, and a bucket or two for water.
- Place connected garden hoses at all sides of your home for emergency use.
- Assure that you and your family know all emergency exits from your home.
- Assure that you and your family know all emergency exits from your neighborhood.

## Mark your Calendar!

### BCA Monthly Meetings

Bank Building at 7800 MoPac,  
NW corner of MoPac & Spicewood Springs  
First floor east conference room  
Third Wednesday of each month

**Feb. 15, 2006**            **7:00 PM**  
**March 15, 2006**        **7:00 PM**  
**April 19, 2006**         **7:00 PM**

#### BCA Officers 2005-2006

President	Tom Arbuckle	454-9003
Vice President	Stanley Moos	345-4594
Secretary	Rotating position	
Treasurer	Jack Jennings	231-1032
Past President	Mary Tannahill	343-1573

#### BCA Executive Committee Representatives

##### Sector 1

Tony Aterno	346-3437
Belinda Herrera	346-6126
& Ann Trentin	346-6974
Elizabeth Gunter	343-1218
Susan Joiner (Editor)	340-9943

##### Sector 2

Joe Makeever	345-0800
John Rhodes	345-0778
Carol Stapper	342-1865
Amy Welborn	351-9391

##### Sector 3

Tom Arbuckle	454-9003
Watson Howell	346-6042
Jack Jennings	231-1032
Rahel Kahlert	345-4704

##### Sector 4

Cecil Jones	346-1819
Stanley Moos	345-4594

#### At-Large Representatives

Thomas Hudson (webmaster)	527-9972
Dixie Sims-Turnbow	346-6089
Gwynn Carpenter	231-0869

#### Advisors

Jim Hooser	345-0817
Bill Pierson	343-9122

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

### AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

<b>Non-Emergency number</b>	<b>311</b>
Main Switchboard	974-5000
WebSite	<a href="http://www.cityofaustin.org/police">www.cityofaustin.org/police</a>
Northwest Area Command	974-5500
Abandoned Vehicles	280-0075
Auto Theft Info (H.E.A.T. & VIN etching)	974-5713
Crime Stoppers	472-8477
Graffiti Removal	974-1028
Community Liaison Office	974-4700
Traffic Office	974-5789
Victim Services	974-5037

### CITY OF AUSTIN

Main Switchboard	974-2000
WebSite	<a href="http://www.cityofaustin.org">www.cityofaustin.org</a>
Animal Control	972-6060
Dead Animals (Solid Waste Services)	494-9400
Dogs running loose	972-6060
Flooding Complaints	974-3355
Garbage Pickup (Solid Waste Services)	494-9400
Handicapped Curb Ramps	974-6426
Home Chemicals Collection	974-4343
Illegal Dumping	494-9400
Mosquito Infestation	972-5692
Night Watchman Lights Installation	505-7617
Noise Complaints	311
Pothole Complaints or obstructions in roadway	440-8444
School Sidewalk Safety	974-7240
School Zone Light Malfunction	457-4851
Stop Signs	457-4885
Street Light Installation	505-7617
Street Light Repair (Austin Energy)	505-7617
Street and Bridge Repairs	440-8444
Street Signs Down	457-4885
Traffic Signal Malfunction	457-4850
Weeds & Trash on private or city property	972-5600

**Watershed Protection Dept. 974-2550**

Call to report environmental spills or deliberate dumping  
(e.g. dumping of used motor oil, etc.)

## Austin Police Department Northwest Area Commander's Forum

Police Dept. management discusses recent crimes & arrests, and solicits input from attendees regarding neighborhood crime and quality of life concerns. Interesting and informative.

**Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2006, 7:00 PM**  
**Town & Country Optimist**  
**9100 E. Meadow Drive**

## STREET NUMBERS

Can your street number be seen from the street while sitting in a vehicle in the middle of the night?

This may sound like an odd question, but if your street number can't be seen clearly, then those who could help you in the event of a fire, illness or other emergency probably can't find you.

Here are some recommendations for your home's street number from the Austin Fire Department:

- Your house number should be at least 4" tall.
- Your house number's color should be different than the color of your home.
- Your house number should be visible for up to 150 feet, from all angles.
- Your house number should be clearly visible at night.
- Fire trucks sit up higher than other vehicles. Make sure that your house number isn't obstructed by plants, shrubs and low-lying limbs.

## CRIME REPORT, NW Austin (Jan. 1 through Sept. 30, 2005)

### VIOLENT CRIME

Murder: 1

Rape: 15 (most involved known suspects; no serial rapist)

Robbery: 24 (a 50% reduction from same period in 2004; includes businesses and individuals)

Aggravated Assault: 54 (21% reduction from same period in 2004; many cases were domestic violence)

**Total**: 94 (28% reduction compared to 2004)

### PROPERTY CRIME

Burglary: 444 (many were by acquaintances; e.g., ex-girlfriends, ex-boyfriends, ex-roommates)

Theft: 2573

Auto Theft: 176 (up 21% compared to same period in 2004)

**Total**: 3193 (9% increase from 2004)

## Assistance Needed

The BCA is seeking a volunteer to **help with the printing & distribution of the neighborhood newsletter**, published three to four times a year. For specifics, please email Susan Joiner: [suzaj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:suzaj@sbcglobal.net). This is an easy way you can give a lot in a little amount of time!

We also need volunteers to **serve in Sector 4 and "At Large," as well as volunteers who would like to help oversee neighborhood zoning**. For information, please email Tom Arbuckle: [Arbuckletom@aol.com](mailto:Arbuckletom@aol.com)

## The Balcones Civic Association

The BCA is a neighborhood organization which encourages orderly community development and growth, and seeks to preserve and improve the quality of life in our area. The organization was founded in 1967. The first BCA President was **Jack Kelley**, who still resides in our area. Thanks, Jack!

## Upcoming Austin-Area Events

Got family or friends coming in from out of town, or just looking for something fun to do? Austin has plenty of activities. Check out the following through March 2006:

**Mid-Winter Music Festival** — Feb. 4. Austin Friends of Traditional Music celebration of traditional, folk, ethnic and international music and dance. Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs Road. 476-3991, .

**Austin Shakespeare Festival** — Call for dates. Performance of Shakespeare's plays. Austin Playhouse, Penn Field, 3601 S. Congress Ave. 454-2273.

**Zilker Kite Festival** — March 5. Contests, stunts and kites galore. Zilker Park, 2201 Barton Springs Road. 647-7488.

**South by Southwest** — March 10-19. A conference for film, multimedia and music. Includes showcases, discussion panels and vendors. Austin Convention Center, 500 E. Cesar Chavez St. 467-7979.

**Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo** — March 11-25. Livestock show, PRCA performances, barbecue cook-off, carnival, commercial exhibits and entertainment. Travis County Exposition Center, 7311 Decker Lane. 919-3000.

**FACET (Fine Art Creative Expressions of Texas) Show** — March 11-12. Fine-art exhibit and sale to benefit school art programs and other art projects. Palmer Event Center. Pamela Shepard, 302-5029.

### BALCONES CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

January 1– December 31, 2006

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my \$10 residential dues payment \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my special donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support traffic calming & other projects

What community subjects interest you? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in helping to address them? \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail this form and your check to: Balcones Civic Assn., P. O. Box 26864, Austin, TX 78755-0864*