

# Monticella Park NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



MPNA is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization

June - July 2020

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

by Jan Peranteau

Neighbors, there was no General assembly on Monday, June 1st per the previous schedule. Your health and safety continues to be your Board's priority. Watch for yard signs, social media posts, or the next newsletter for the upcoming meeting date.

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Meeting neighbors in the midst of a pandemic is a bit of a challenge, but Theresa and Rob Hill eagerly accepted the offer to share their story, speaking from the front porch of their home on Mary Louise Dr. They moved in May 3, 2020, smack-dab in the middle of San Antonio's Covid-19 city shut-down. Coming from Glenburnie, MD, Rob said, "I worked for the government for 35 years. We thought about several places to retire." Theresa added, "We wanted to be near our families, but I am from Michigan and that seemed too cold, " Rob is a native Texan. He lived a lot of places but grew up in Nacogdoches. " He said they moved to San Antonio where he graduated from Churchhill HS in 1981, and Texas A.&M. in 1985. And how have they been spending their time??"With the city shut down, we have been unpacking. Usually we would be going out to restaurants in the evening, but with everything closed we've focused on the house. We've met a few neighbors — Orlando across the street and Andy Reyes on Club." They look forward to neighborhood meetings and getting to know more people.



Bicyclists ride daily with their children on smaller bikes behind or in front them. The Herrera family regularly bikes from 702 Texas Ave. to the Original Donut Shop. Riders included Liam, Elizabeth, Dinorah, Levi and Richard Herrera. Richard attends Thomas Jefferson High School and runs cross country for the school. His mom said, "He is third in the district. " Riding with them, Jess Rodriguez and baby Emmy pulled by mother in a cart completed the procession. It looked like a fun morning activity and a good source of exercise.

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## President's Message

We are people who need people. If that paraphrase of a popular song from the 1960s doesn't ring true from what we've experienced over the past three months, I'm not sure what else does. As this newsletter is going to print, we're a city living in a Stay Home—Stay Safe environment but, we are also a city that is gradually re-opening its doors to the world. Yet, it is not the same is it?

Almost every space of our lives has been transformed. From every home turning into an office, a school, a bakery and sewing room to our eateries becoming drive-thrus and our free libraries into food pantries, we've changed. And, even now, we are still finding ourselves adapting almost constantly. And those who are unable to adapt are shutting their doors forever or delaying their projects as we all wait for better, healthier times.

Through we be separated physically, we call out to one another thru car windows, from front porches, the curbside check-out line or the cell phone hoping to find everyone well and safe, perhaps even bored. Boring is good these days, right?

Thanks to all the neighbors who continue to look after the stressed-out Moms and Dads, the isolated elderly, our co-workers, those with compromised immune systems and the introverts among us. I love it that the teachers who live in Monticello Park offered their help and provided tips when our neighborhood became a little city filled with instant home schoolers. And, those who are our "new front line," the health care providers, continuing to fight against the ravaging effects of a virus we still don't understand. I wish I could hug each of you...I really do! If love is sacrifice then, you must really love us all and that's humbling to those of us who watch you leave early and come home late in scrubs knowing that both acts involve a process that must be weary. And yet, you do it and keep doing it because it is a process that saves lives.

We will not have a General Assembly for the foreseeable future. Gatherings, even as modest as our quarterly meetings, are forbidden for very sound reasons. Planned activities such as Pink Flamingos, and our Annual Fourth of July Kiddie Parade are all on hold. But, we are adapting, as you will read later in this newsletter.

**President:** Cathy Teague  
**Vice President:** Gary Hudman  
**Secretary:** Pamela Carpenter  
**Treasurer:** Larissa O'Connors

### **Board Members:**

James Davis  
Drea Garza  
David Guerrero  
Len McClure  
Tom Simmons  
Tony Sanchez

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MPNA

Mail to: 501 Club Drive  
San Antonio, Texas. 78201

### **HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS**

District 7 Council Office	210-207-7044
SAWS	210-424-7097
CPS	210-353-2222
Officer Vincent Cano	210-207-0803
	(Cell) 210-394-1398
SAPD, West Substation	210-207-7420
SAPD, Non-emergency	210-207-7273
SAISD Truancy Office	210-223-2360
VIA Transit	210-362-2020
Code Compliance	311
Animal Control	311
Office of Historic Preservation	210-215-9274

Historic Building Enforcement Officer  
[report@sapreservation.com](mailto:report@sapreservation.com)

We're in it for the long haul and while we can feel sorry for ourselves, we are more connected than our parents, our grandparents and our great grandparents were during the days of gas and food rationing, slow war mail correspondence, mandated blackouts, curfews and radio-only entertainment. Their sacrifices were profound and lasted for years.

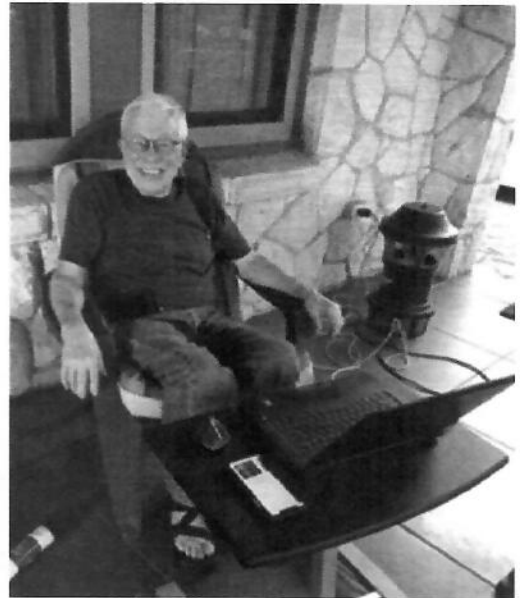
Following WW II there were changes, such as the rise of GI Bill and new ways of living, such as the rise of the suburbs, that enabled the middle class to grow and thrive. While the last recession was brutal, it did spark innovation and creativity in the workforce. So, I choose to believe that there will be blessings that will come out of this terrible time of pandemic and uncertainty. What dreams are you dreaming these days?

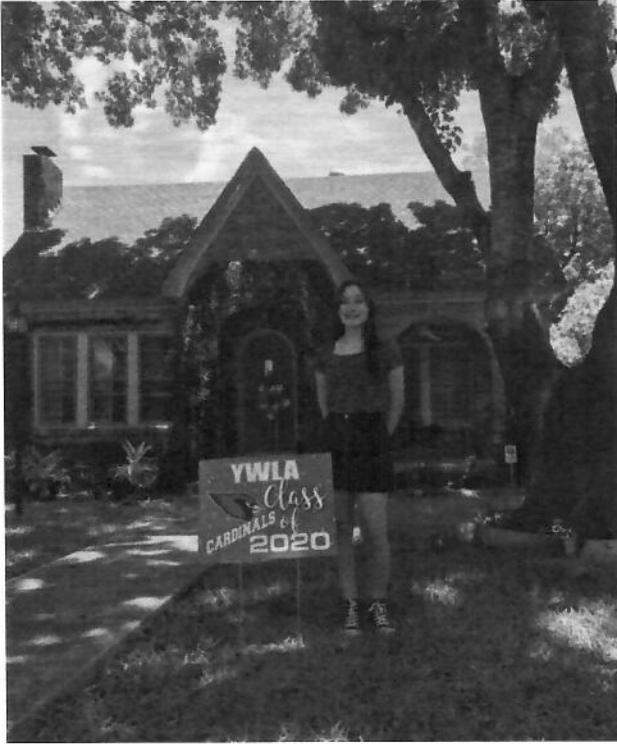
Cathy Teague  
President  
Monticello Park Neighborhood  
Association

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Joe Simpson, a psychiatrist, can be found some mornings and many evenings sitting on his front porch meeting with clients by telephone. He does make hospital visits but often works from home.

Kristen and Dylan Harrison gave their son, Judson, a novel birthday celebration. They named it "Taco Twosday. Kristen said, "His birthday was on Tuesday this year." Judson frolicked on the front lawn amid a blowup-up cactus sprinkler, balloons, a taco pinata, a kiddie pool, a fake palm tree, beach chairs and umbrella. Music played. The family ate build your own tacos and watermelon cooled palates in the hot afternoon sun. "Of course, the only thing missing was grandparents and friends. But Judson clearly had a blast," his mother said. Thank goodness for cell phones.





Isabel Orozco likes to sleep late like most teenagers. Passing by her house on Donaldson on a Saturday morning, the YWLA class of 2020, caught this reporter's eye. Knocking on the door, Sergio Orozco came to the door, cup of coffee in hand. "Could the young graduate take a picture beside her sign?" He smiled and said, "She is still asleep and won't get up right now to take a picture." We both agreed that coming back between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. seemed a more reasonable plan. Returning at 1:30 in the afternoon, Isabel was ready for a photograph. She talked about her plans for college. I will be going to Texas State University at San Marcos." She expressed concern about whether classes will be online or in person. Her mother, Paula said, "We know the orientation will be online." And will there be any graduation ceremonies? "Graduation for the Young Women's Leadership Academy will be held later this summer at Alamo Stadium," her mother said.

A Meet Your Neighbor would not be complete without a report of the usual suspects out helping other neighbors in need. Gail Collins moved from Club Dr. to North a few years back in an effort to downsize. She inherited a thriving xeriscape yard complete with limestone boulders, century plants, prickly pear cactus, giant agaves and cenizo plants. Plants must be hardy and require little to no watering to survive in Collins yard. Survive and thrive they did along with a volunteer ash tree as well as two Holly bushes that have been trimmed into small trees. Also thriving in the yard, critters of various sorts including bugs, birds, and cats, and debris from passersby. Plants continued to grow to gigantic proportions spilling over into the street and blocking a view of the house. From time to time Collins would say, "I have got to get that cleaned up." But the job seemed so immense that somehow it was put off. With brush pick-up right around the corner, Ressie and Charlie O'Connors decided to get neighbors together and help Gail. Ressie telephoned Mike and Vicky Owen, David and Mary Guerrero, Tony Sanchez, Tom Simmons, Gary Hudman, James Davis and Jefferson minister, Olivia Walker and her husband, Robert Walker. Saturday, May 9 at 8:00 a.m. the crew of volunteers showed up with the necessary equipment. By noon the job was completed, the crew exhausted, and felled cactus plants and other debris piled high on both sides of the street. Collins said, "I was delighted when neighbors decided to tame my giant cactus bushes. Ten people showed up to work 4-5 hours in the morning sun. And the result is amazing. Thank you, neighbors."

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD!



*Neighborhood crew. Left to right: Ressie O'Connors, Charlie O'Connors, Gary Hudman, David Guerrero, Mike Owen, Tony Sanchez, Gail Collins, Tom Simmons*

## **COVID-19 Information and Other Resources**

### **Critical Services Continue to Operate**

While the posts frequently begin with the words "I have a friend who's a doctor or this is a post from Italy, etc." Facebook and its feed is one of the most unreliable social media sites to find accurate, timely information relating to the pandemic. Critical services in San Antonio continue to operate and the 3-1-1 Call Center can route you to a COVID-19 hotline (210-207-5779) for specific questions and requests. There are also sites opening almost daily for COVID-19 testing. No symptoms or a doctor's note are required.

If you didn't do so during Hurricane Harvey, you can still download Ready South Texas app which is available and free via iTunes or the Google Play store. It is also a reliable resource for updates on COVID-19 in the San Antonio-area. Need more? How about follow@COSAGOV on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Thanks District 7 for the great list of resources.

BTW, if you can foster, adopt or help rescue animals, please reach out to Animal Care Services at [www.saacs.net](http://www.saacs.net). If you are healthy and can donate blood, please contact the South Texas Blood & Tissue Center by making an appointment at 210-731-5590. And, you may have missed the news that H-E-B has launched a phone line for seniors 60 and above to process orders over the phone. The Senior Support Line is 1-833-397-0080. The orders can be called in seven days a week between the hours of 9:00a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

**Birdie's Nook Gets  
Temporarily Repurposed**  
A Little Free Library Becomes A Little  
Free Food Pantry

If you've ever been to Monticello Park (444 Club) in recent years, you've undoubtedly seen Birdie's Nook. This little free library is one of several in our neighborhood (another is at 222 North) and, for the time being, it has been repurposed. In March, as the reality of the pandemic took hold Nook founders: Carlos Maestas; along with Jenny and Ben Rosas, temporarily removed most of the books and stocked it with simple canned goods and paper products for those who can't make it to the store. Others began to add to it and within hours of the change, more donated evidence of the generous hearts that live among us was on the shelves ready for the taking.

Birdie's Nook was established as a little free library to honor Bertha Tamez, a Jefferson area neighbor and the beloved grandmother of two of its founders. It was designed by Overland Partners, a local architecture firm of some renown, and dedicated on May 13, 2017.

**Neighborhood Clean-Up Day**  
March 7th was our first but not  
our last event

With gray skies, low clouds and a few sprinkles here and there, a group of approximately 20 Monticello Park neighbors worked together to tackle easements and other eyesores in and around our community. Two neighbors tackled the stone planter at the corner of Club and Fredericksburg Road yielding four very full bags of grass and weeds. Others went back a few days later and cut down a number of low-hanging palm fronds at the triangle intersection of Fredericksburg, Voluum and Quentin.

These great volunteers were not to be outdone and in May, just before the neighborhood's brush collection week began, they cut back cactus in a neighbor's yard that had become so unruly and wild no one could park near it. We will also be helping Jefferson United Methodist Church remove some junk trees. Thanks to all who volunteered. We're going to spend a month recovering, hopefully add to our volunteer numbers and try it again in June.

**Holiday Home Tour 2020**  
Some Things Get Better With Age

For everyone who looks forward to the Holiday Home Tour, we're sorry to share that the MPNA Board has reluctantly decided to postpone this year's tour. These uncertain times (a cliché everyone now hates) and the understandable reluctance of neighbors who would love to share their homes but not during a pandemic, means clicking on the pause button for our neighborhood's primary fundraiser.

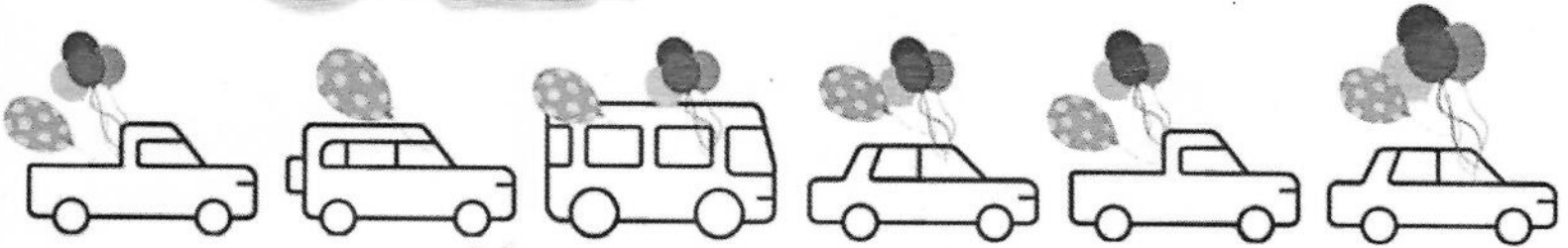
In addition, with most of our local businesses struggling to stay open or re-open, we don't want them to feel pressured into financially supporting an event that would likely mean much smaller crowds. We all deserve the best our Home Tour can be!

The Holiday Home Tour and Christmas Market is a wonderful opportunity to show all the qualities that make Monticello Park unique—it's historic homes with original floors, appliances, thoughtful renovations and character in a caring environment in the 7th largest city in the United States. While you're "Staying in Place," consider restoring your old windows, adding landscaping, or repainting your home to get it ready for our next Home Tour, a date and time still to be determined.

# Monticello Park Neighborhood Association



# Car & Bike Parade



COVID 19 is causing all of us to modify our plans, and this year, we are transforming our kids' parade into a car & bike parade! We hope you will join us.

## Morning of 7/4/2020

- 8:30 am Redeemer Lutheran Church Parking Lot, corner of Fredericksburg and Quentin. Bring plenty of decorations for your car or bike.
- 9 am Parade starts. Route proceeds through Quentin, Kampmann, North, Vollum, and Mary Louise, ending at Monticello Pocket Park. Don't want to drive? Please cheer the parade on from your front yard!
- End COLD PALETAS passed out by gloved and masked volunteers to all participants at the Pocket Park.

## **A Day Spent Setting Goals MPNA Board Retreat Brings Focus**

By Cathy Teague

It is never easy to ask volunteers to take an entire Saturday to brainstorm, share priorities and set annual goals for a diverse, historic, urban neighborhood. Yet, in January your newly elected board came together in a working session to establish priorities for 2020. We hoped that by reviewing our neighborhood's challenges, assets and needs, we could identify resources and develop a plan to accomplish our goals. I am condensing the results of our efforts for brevity and clarity. Thank you to my fellow board members for your contribution and time.

### Neighborhood Observations:

1. A beautiful collection of historic homes can be over-looked and under valued when signs of neglect: graffiti, trash, untidy spaces, vacant buildings, loitering and public drinking form the gateways to our neighborhood.
2. Preserving our neighborhood means understanding current and future TCI and IMP Projects and determining the next infrastructure priorities and funding sources for Monticello Park. Unused money identified for MP improvement projects need to stay in our neighborhood.
3. Fostering relationships through social activities, volunteerism, increased communication, recognition and support for our youth, newcomers, our honored elders and neighborhood artists contributes to making Monticello Park a desirable place to call home.
4. Develop a variety of activities ranging from our Pink Flamingo socials to neighborhood clean ups, July 4th in our pocket park, community garden days, garage sales, new neighbor welcome efforts and volunteer projects to help our senior neighbors, as needed.

Updating our website, our newsletter and even the use of our Facebook page to better inform and share information with one another is an on-going need as is working with local businesses, law enforcement and District 7 to reduce the loitering, public drinking and homelessness for effective solutions.

As always, if you have a special talent (hello writers, techies, gardeners, etc.) we can use your talent. Please raise your hand to the nearest board member and share your interest.

## **2020 Kiddie Parade Becomes Car Parade Saluting the 4th of July Pandemic Style**

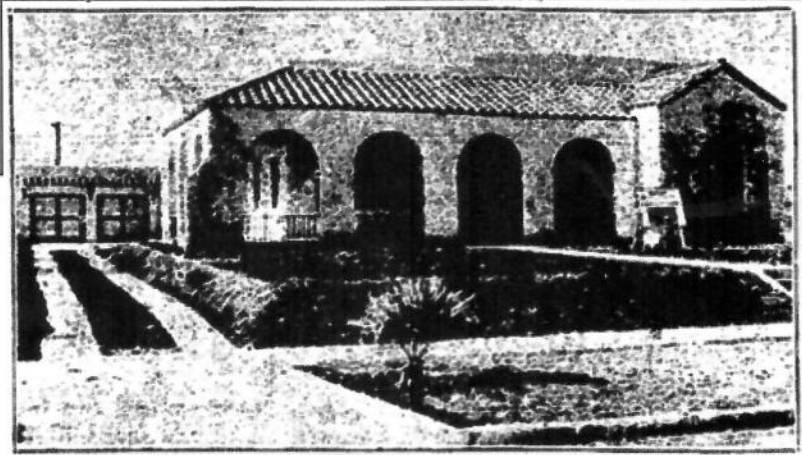
Few things have made the community smile more than seeing a new generation of bright neighborhood boys and girls dress in their 4th of July finest and salute our country's founding during the annual Kiddie Parade at Monticello Park! Yet, COVID 19 concerns have all of us reluctant to gather and the parade, which began again after a long absence in 2018, brought out the crowds.

So, plans are in the works for a car parade! We hope that families will have just as much fun decorating their cars (we know there are some classics in several MP garages) and caravanning through the neighborhood on the morning of the 4th! We will even have a SAFE way to hand out paletas to participants at the end of the car parade! Look for details later in a flyer delivered to your doorstep!



## HISTORY CORNER

by Gary Hudman



*San Antonio Express, Sunday Morning, May 6, 1928*

The gorgeous home at 310 Mary Louise Drive was featured in the *San Antonio Express* on May 6, 1928, during the height of the building boom in our new neighborhood. Below is a portion of a feature story, featuring the Busby Building Corporation, which discusses the magnificent details inside this beautiful Spanish Revival home.

Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Sebermann moved into their new home at 310 Mary Louise Drive during the past week. It is typical Spanish, and although a home of few rooms, it is declared to be one of the largest one-story homes in the city, according to L. S. Busby, president of the Busby Building Corporation, who designed and built the home for Mr. and Mrs. Sebermann.

The ceilings in this home are from 10 to 11 feet in height, and the walls are plastered throughout on metal lathe. The sun-room has a solid marble floor in several colors, and the floor of the large covered terrace in front and on the east side is of slate tile. The kitchen and bath are tiled up to a height of 5 feet or more, and the installation of the finest materials was carried out in all of the rooms, the living room and dining room being finished in special run trim. Special moulding plaster lends an air of distinction, and makes the living room and dining room especially attractive. This home is just across from the attractive home of H. J. Shearer at Mary Louise Drive and Montrose Boulevard [edit: now named Vollum], and is next door to the home of J. P. DeLandermar, and is one more addition to a group of fine homes that is making Mary Louise Drive in Woodlawn District one of the most attractive home places in San Antonio. Mr. and Mrs. Sebermann came to San Antonio from Chicago and were attracted to our city by its excellent climate.

The Busby Corporation has several other choice Woodlawn District houses which are open to interested parties, most notable of which is a one-story Spanish type stucco house at 237 Donaldson Avenue. It has three bedrooms, and embodies all of the fine features usually found in the quality homes this firm is specializing in.



## HIDDEN CORNERS

You pass them everyday: architectural features that make our neighborhood unique. But you might not notice them because you're driving. Can you locate this image? Don't search for it while driving – pay attention to the road. Instead, take a walk around our neighborhood and enjoy looking at all the unusual architecture. The answer will be given in our next newsletter.

## Gentle Reminders About Living in an Historic District Check Before Making Changes

Whether you're repainting the trim on your home or have grand designs for a new addition to your home, remember that there's more than a city permit to secure before the hammers and paint brushes swing into action. All exterior home improvements, especially those which can be seen from the street, must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) or approval from the city's Historic Design and Review Commission (HDRC) BEFORE the work begins.

Nothing is worse and potentially more expensive than finding yourself reading a Cease and Desist message from Code Enforcement because of your failure to follow the rules. The color of our street signs (brown as opposed to blue) is a sign that you live in a historic district. Such information is also a part of the listing information you received when you bought your home.

Please contact the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) at 210-207-8316 and discuss your plans. The application takes minutes to fill out and you will need a scanned copy of your property survey as well as the types of materials you will be using (images help) to share with the reviewer.

You can also [visit www.sanantonio.gov/historic](http://www.sanantonio.gov/historic) and there are a variety of resources such as the Rehabber Club and the Application Portal making a drive downtown, in most cases, unnecessary.

Keep in mind that if caught, you and your subcontractor can be fined for failure to secure the necessary permits prior to beginning your home improvement project. Preserving the exterior charm and character of our homes is something the city and your neighbors take seriously so please, just do the right thing and get that COA!

## New Art Is In The Hood MP Artist Donates Work to Triangle

If you've ever had a chance to walk through the yard and workshop of local artist David Guerrero, you've seen the talent that he employs to bring new life to found objects. Whether it's the chain off an old bicycle or a glass insulation knob out of an attic, Guerrero, also an MPNA Board member and veteran, puts these pieces together in whimsical ways. His wife Mary is an artist too.

After first working with neighbor Charlie O'Connor to clear out the debris and decay from the stone triangle, located off Fredericksburg Road at Voluum and North, David had an idea. Using a stone "well" as the base, Guerrero installed an original piece during the pandemic.

We hope you enjoy his donation. It reminds those who pass by that creativity is alive and well in Monticello Park and the artists among us contribute to our world in their own wonderful ways. Thank you David Guerrero for showing us another way to make Monticello Bello!



## Monticello Park's Pocket Park A Light At The End Of The Renovation Tunnel

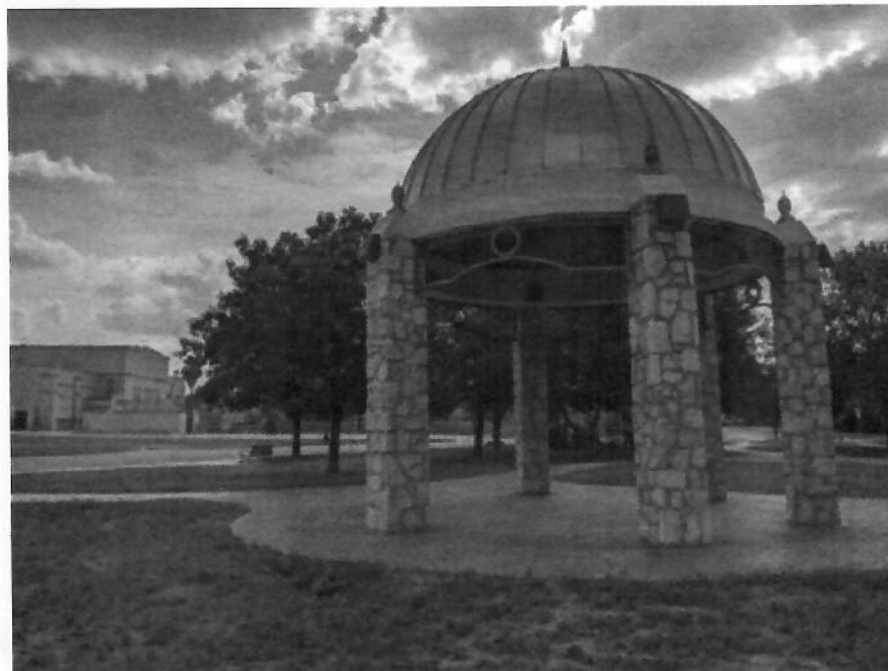
On the excuse that we could all use fresh air these days, can we offer a walk around our almost finished pocket park, located at Kampmann and Club? We hope you'll notice the positive differences that have taken shape while we've all been more homebound.

Voters in 2017 approved the use of bond money to renovate this aging park to make it more user friendly. The path toward the improvements has been slow and rocky but, most of the major improvements are now complete. The original crushed granite sidewalk has been removed and in its place is a wider, stamped concrete walking path. Based upon user feedback that the path was slick after rain, the city is looking for an application to address that problem. Some grading issues were also fixed, the gazebo (honoring one of the architectural features on nearby Thomas Jefferson High School) received a power wash and paint job, new finials over each column and decorative ironwork too.

When the MPNA Board began discussing plans for the park more than two years ago, the goal was to take the original early 2000s vision of the board and a local designer and see it fully realized during the park renovation. The decorative ironwork and additional finials on the gazebo were part of those original park plans and we hope you like the results.

You might have also noticed that the tree canopy is now in great shape following recent work completed by the city's Parks and Recreation Department to remove low hanging branches. There were some dead and dying trees removed during the renovation and we expect those to be replaced with the arrival of cooler weather in the fall. We also expect for existing and new benches to be returned to the park once they've been repainted.

There is a bit of unfinished business. The existing signage for the park is beat up and indistinctive. The original park plans called for a deco-inspired sign that the current Board approved and shared with the city last year. We are pushing for that design to be used so our park is more reflective of the neighborhood that loves it.



## **SAISD CONNECT**

### **A New Way for MPNA to Support Students**

One of society's gaps that has emerged during the Pandemic is what we've long called the digital divide. Those who can afford home-based Wifi and technology products which need an internet connection and those who live among us in urban San Antonio and cannot. Arming students for their home-school experience was one challenge for the San Antonio Independent School district (SAISD) yet giving those students access to reliable internet service has proven to be another.

This gap has given rise to the SAISD Connect scholarship effort. Funds raised for this campaign will be used to support internet access for SAISD aimed at helping disadvantaged students engage in learning. The goal of this campaign is \$1 million. Every \$25.00 that is donated provides one student one month of internet access.

Since MPNA is unable to issue individual student scholarships this year due to the closed schools and social distancing constraints, the Board voted in April to direct what would have been our scholarship dollars (monies raised during our Holiday Home Tours) toward the Connect Campaign. This summer \$1500.00 is being donated by MPNA to support five students to have access to a mobile phone or WiFi capabilities via SAISD's HotSpot initiative.

We all recognize the benefit in having high caliber schools for neighborhood children to attend. If we want to be a neighborhood that believes quality of life is as essential as pothole repair, we hope you'll agree that supporting the SAISD Connect program is one way to achieve that goal. In making this donation, Monticello Park continues its mission, as stated in our by-laws, to support educational success and it meets the requirement of our 501c3 designation.

## **Shout Out to Local Businesses**

### **We're So Glad to Call You Neighbor**

We took you for granted for far too long! Whether you did it with fresh baked goods, chicken on a stick, and an expanded liquor aisle or by searching for hard-to-find sanitizer and toilet paper for us, the Monticello Park neighborhood is grateful to you.

When we saw your lights off, we mourned. When we saw the lights return, we cheered. We stood in line and tried to follow the new rules. Thanks for your patience. Your smile at the door (and a disinfected cart) lifted our spirits, and your customer service reminded us that our world could still be civilized.

We can't list all of you--the realtors and the insurance agents, the tax preparers and antique store owners, the handymen and the landscapers--but we know you not only work among us but you too call Monticello Park home. While struggles continue and recovery remains a dream for many, I hope you know that you too play a role in the health and vibrancy of the Deco District.

Find somewhere  
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