

# Monticello Park NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



MPNA is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization

January - February 2020

Please attend the  
Monticello Park  
Neighborhood  
Association **General  
Assembly Meeting**

**MONDAY**  
**February 3, 2020**  
**7:00 PM**

950 Donaldson,  
Grace Presbyterian  
Church

## PROGRAM

**Transportation and  
Capital  
Improvements**

**5-year  
Infrastructure Plan  
for Monticello Park**

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

by Jan Peranteau

Enthusiasm defines these two new neighbors. James and Brenda Davis purchased the Emilio Torres house on Mary Louise Drive about six months ago and have been hard at work ever since making it their own. Their inspiration is making the house more open and a place where they can entertain guests as well as have separate workspaces. They both work from home. The front dining room has been converted into James's office and the garage apartment will be the office for Brenda, otherwise known by the couple as her "She-Shack." She works with Guardian Insurance in the employee benefits department. James said, "I work with Oliver Wines out of Bloomington, Indiana. When asked if his wines are in San Antonio, he replied, "Yes, they are at HEB, Costco and Spec's." Does he have a favorite? "I like the cherry Moscato as well as the blueberry Moscato"



*James and Brenda Davis are enjoying  
their home on Mary Louise Drive.  
James is a new Board Member of the  
MPNA*

The tour continues to a very large room with a huge wine rack at one end and freshly painted wood casement windows across the east side of the house. Panes sparkle in the afternoon sun. "These came out of a house in Seguin, Texas and the large, square, many-paned picture window is from Paradise Pickers on Fredericksburg Road." Newly installed hardwood floors match other hardwood floors in the house. James said, "This room was a mess with cheap aluminum windows and laminate flooring. The couple removed some French doors and made the opening wider from the breakfast nook to this large living space. Outside, the entire backyard has been cleaned and a large patio off the back will be a great place for a neighborhood Flamingo Party. At the back of the property, an outdoor kitchen is being built. Work has been steady, however James talked about the difficulty of finding good workers. One contractor moved on before finishing the job. James said, "I painted these windows myself."

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# President's Message

Whew! Finally, the illegal fireworks are all thankfully spent, and we are full speed ahead into a new year living in Monticello Park! We have newly elected neighbors who are contributing their talents by providing leadership on this year's MPNA Board. Thanks Pamela Carpenter, James Davis and David Guerrero for your willingness to serve your neighborhood. The veteran board members: Gary, Drea, Len, Tony, Tom, Ressie and I welcome you and your participation.

As this newsletter is being delivered, the Board will have held a retreat to talk about 2020 and set our neighborhood goals. There's nothing wrong with being reactive and responding to matters as they happen. This retreat, however, is providing the Board the opportunity to get to know one another better, to brain-storm and, most importantly, to set goals and priorities for the MPNA. While operating from the seat of our pants is not a totally bad thing, we all feel better with a plan—a road map to help us reach our destination. During our next General Assembly and in the March newsletter, we'll be able to share details about the Board's plans for MPNA in 2020.

One primary reason why neighborhood association exists is to plan opportunities for families to get to know one another, to create a sense of community. Establishing a calendar filled with activities for those of all ages will help us build a deeper sense of community. We in Monticello Park also want to be a strong resource for elected officials. They need to know our concerns and our priorities to muster the resources needed to help us meet the challenges of living in an inner-city neighborhood. I see it as our responsibility to press for information we need to know to be informed citizens and make good decisions and to also keep them informed on the matters that are important to us.

There are new opportunities to work with local entrepreneurs to ensure the Fredericksburg Road corridor is filled with the kind of businesses we want to patronize and support. This can be a mutually beneficial relationship in 2020 as much as it was when the corridor was filled with bakeries, delis, restaurants, clothing stores and Mom and Pop shops in our neighborhood's heyday. Later this year, we'll invite a new organization, the Fredericksburg Road Merchant's Association, to share with us their ideas on how to bring back the shine to our business district.

Finally, in the coming newsletters you'll see other changes. First, we're adding a column written by Tom Simmons (501 Club) for those of us who want to learn a thing or two about landscaping. Like Gary Hudman's History Corner, I think it's something you will look forward to reading in every edition. So, read on! Enjoy! And help Monticello Park become the best community we can be in 2020

Cathy Teague  
President  
Monticello Park Neighborhood Association

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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[Facebook.com/groups/MonticelloParkNA](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MonticelloParkNA)

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## MPNA

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CPS	210-353-2222
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<a href="mailto:Vincent.cano@sanantonio.gov">Vincent.cano@sanantonio.gov</a>	
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)

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How did they choose the house? James said, "I found it online. Brenda was out of town at the time. I thought we should look at it." They did look and liked the house. It had hardwood floors, a colorful old tile floor in the informal dining area, and a little yellow tiled powder room underneath the staircase. James and Brenda liked the history of the neighborhood and especially the history of Mary Louise Drive. James told of a competition in the 20's among architects to build homes on Mary Louise Drive. Brenda added, "We like that it is near downtown, and we are meeting people every day. We can commute to various places in the inner city quickly. Also, with our children grown, we don't worry about schools. We have two daughters, the oldest graduated from Oklahoma State University and the youngest is at UTSA and lives on campus."

What about getting on the Monticello Neighborhood Association Board so quickly? James spoke, "I want to find out what's going on in the neighborhood. I want to make this neighborhood great again. Gary Hudman talked with me about investing in this neighborhood." He laughed, "People aren't painting houses purple. They are keeping the integrity of the neighborhood." He did say others also want to make this neighborhood one with more amenities--such as good restaurants and bars. "We need more public places where people can gather with their neighbors and enjoy an evening."

They both seem to be concerned about the obvious eye-sores--the bus-stop on Mary Louise and the number of people loitering about HEB and other near-by corners. He said, "I do see VIA over there very often cleaning the area."

This reporter couldn't resist talking about the Monticello Park Home Tour and telling these new neighbors how much fun it would be to put their house on tour. The immediate response was not this year, but maybe in the future. "Well", the reporter continued, "It is a great way to get a lot of work done quickly. There is a huge motivation factor with the prospect of several hundred people traipsing through your house on a given day." They smiled and said, "We'll think about it."

## CHANGE OF DATE

# General Assembly Moves To 2/3/2020

While our General Assemblies are typically held the last Monday of every other month, our first General Assembly this year will be held on Monday, February 3, 2020. Why the change? Well, work duties mean several Board members will be out of town at the end of the month. We, therefore, felt it was important to reschedule the meeting rather than cancel it. Thank you for being flexible and for understanding about the need to make such a change.

BTW, we'll need to do something similar in May when the General Assembly is currently scheduled for May 25th, Memorial Day. Rather than keep the meeting on the holiday, we're moving it to **Monday, June 1, 2020**. Again, we appreciate the neighborhood for going with the flow.

## **MORE CHANGE IS IN THE AIR**

### **The Search for A New Editor and Web Guru**

Ferne Burney, an incredible neighbor (former board president) and the editor of our current newsletter, is much in demand in our city. In addition to traveling the world and helping others enjoy the best of scenic San Antonio, Ferne is the new president of The Woman's Club of San Antonio. What a responsibility!

These time-consuming duties present a new opportunity for someone from Monticello Park to take over the responsibilities of serving as editor of the MPNA newsletter and website. As Ferne herself suggested, it's also time to create a new look for both. Could this "someone" be you? Reach out to a board member if you're interested. Ferne is more than happy to help train her replacement.

And, on behalf of the Board and all neighbors, a BIG thanks to Ferne for her 15 years of dedication to the neighborhood in ensuring the newsletter was reviewed and ready for printing. We were lucky to have someone of her caliber overseeing the operation for so long and wish her well in her leadership role with The Woman's Club.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

### **Newsletter Delivery in Select Areas Needs Help**

If you're reading this newsletter then chances are someone has delivered it to your front door. We need more like-minded people who don't mind walking their block to deliver our newsletter in several key areas of Monticello Park. We need volunteers to deliver in the following areas:

- 1) 200 block of Donaldson
- 2) 500 block of Donaldson
- 3) 400 block of North Drive
- 4) Leming Street

Please reach out to Board member Tony Sanchez at 210-269-2886 and help the MPNA by delivering the newsletter to your neighbors. Thanks!



## **MONTICELLO PARK WAS LIT IN DECEMBER**

### **Holiday Decorating Contest Winners Announced**

While the winter night sky is among the prettiest you'll ever see in a typical year of star gazing, Monticello Park neighbors put the sky to shame during the month of December. There was more than one resident who felt that the yard and home decorations were among the best efforts they'd seen in recent memory.

As you may recall from the previous newsletter, the MPNA Board had announced a holiday decorating contest. Three out-of-area residents toured the neighborhood beginning at dusk on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. They loved the creativity and magical appeal of many of this year's decorated homes and yards noting that three awards were simply not enough! In explaining their results, they said they wanted to recognize homes that appealed to the "holiday child" in all of us and felt that even a simple, well executed, holiday decoration plan or theme was as wonderful as those with grand appeal.

The winners will be recognized and awarded their prizes at the Feb. 3 General Assembly. Those winners are the homeowners living at: 302 Club Drive, 231 North Drive and 311 Donaldson. Congratulations to these winners and everyone who participated! We truly had one of the most decorated neighborhoods in the city this year. We're already looking forward to the 2020 entries.



## **NEW FREDERICKSBURG ROAD MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION**

### **First Event in Planning Stage**

In late 2019 and with the support of District 7, local Fredericksburg Road business leaders met to discuss the corridor. Among those attending this meeting were representatives from DeWeese's Tip Top Café, H-E-B, Deco Pizzeria, Jefferson Bank, and Jewel of Art Dance Studio, among others. Monticello Park's Neighborhood Association attended since homeowners patronize many of these businesses. We also support improvements to the corridor.

While this organization is new, there's plans underway for an inaugural event to bring awareness to all that Fred Road, as we call it, offers to the community at large. Mark your calendars and be ready to support "Deco Days, a Quarterly Celebration" to be held roughly in the area around the 1800 Block of Fred Road. Free music, food, and other vendors will set up and be ready to bring the fun to our neighborhood's business district on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am to 7pm.

This is a first step in raising the awareness among others that Fredericksburg Road past and future are worth preserving. We hope you'll consider inviting friends to join you in support of this neighborhood event.



## Bond Project: Furr Drive

The Furr Drive reconstruction is kicking off in early 2020! In early December, the city's Department of Transportation and Capital Improvement, along with District 7 Council woman Ana Sandoval, met with homeowners to share final details. The project includes complete reconstruction of Furr Drive, which means we will be receiving not just a new street surface, but curbs, sidewalks, and driveway approaches. The road will not be widened as part of this project.

The first phase of the project is anticipated to begin on or about January 27<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting) and will start at the 500 block of Furr from Kampmann to Shearer. You'll notice that tree preservation is already underway. The work will begin with the demolition and reconstruction of sidewalks, followed by street excavation, reconstruction of the road, driveways, and new curbs. The project will continue block-by-block and end at the 100 block at Furr and Fredericksburg Road. Once the last block work is completed, the final two inches of asphalt will be added to the street base to ensure the street is smooth and uniform throughout its length. The entire project is expected to take 300 days, but as we all experienced when Club Drive was reconstructed, weather delays happen!

Furr Street neighbors, there will times when access to driveways will be limited while work on your block is underway. You will, however, receive advance notification so that you can plan accordingly. Once your new driveway is poured, please expect to park on the street or at a neighbor's home in another block for two to three days while the concrete sets and hardens.

If you have sprinklers located in the easements or near the right of way, please make sure your system is up-to-code and has backflow valves installed. The contractors will be cutting and capping the lines at the right-of-way and are not responsible for bringing them back into service if they do not meet City Code. If you do have backflow valves installed, the contractor will work with you to ensure the sprinklers are back in service as soon as possible. Please start planning now for any relocation or code updates to avoid any delays in getting your sprinklers back in running order.

Sidewalk and curb form boards require about a foot of clearance on either side of the current sidewalks and curbs are located. Any landscaping along the edge of your property or within the easement may be damaged. Damaged landscaping will be replaced in-kind, but consider relocating any plants, pavers, or rocks now that are unique to avoid damage. Retaining walls will not be relocated and any digging within a foot of a retaining wall will be done by hand.

These improvements are the result of the 2017 Bond Project approved by voters and will provide a much needed more than a face-lift to Furr Drive. The improved sidewalks and access platforms and curbing at each intersection will increase the walkability of our neighborhood and that's a great asset for all of us.

For any questions or concerns, please contact Richard Casiano at (210) 207-8218 or [richard.casianosr@sanantonio.gov](mailto:richard.casianosr@sanantonio.gov).



*Concerned residents met with each other and District 7 Councilwoman, Ana Sandoval to discuss the plans for Furr Drive.*





**History Corner**  
**By Gary Hudman**

## **Roots of Neighborhood Citrus Date to 1927**

Each Fall, hundreds of citrus trees throughout our neighborhood bear seemingly millions of oranges, grapefruits, and lemons. In fact, some trees can produce several hundred pounds of fruit, and that bounty brings out the best generosity in neighbors, where many share their abundance with friends along with goodies made from the fruit. I am personally very thankful for several neighbors who have given me some amazing desserts, including lemon cookies and lemon meringue pie. I also came home several years ago to find a bag of grapefruit on my porch, and I have reciprocated by sharing my homemade Limoncello during several neighborhood parties!

But why do we have so many very mature citrus trees throughout Monticello Park? I may have unearthed the genesis. As it turns out, early developers in our neighborhood led a city-wide campaign to plant 25,000 citrus trees and that campaign began on Furr Drive in 1927!

Here is a portion of an article from *The San Antonio Express*, dated January 30, 1927, with details of this fascinating campaign.

Excerpts from *The San Antonio Express*, January 30, 1927

### **Citrus Fruits Tree Planting Campaign Proves Effective**

Marked success is attending the campaign of the San Antonio Real Estate Board to bring about the planting of a minimum of 25,000 citrus trees in San Antonio in the next five years, as part of that organization's program for the beautification of the city and the advancement of the citrus fruits industry.

The campaign ... is having the desired effect even before the organization's program has been launched.

Members of the board are [also] carrying out tree-planting programs. This group includes C.M. Furr, head of the C.M. Furr Company, developers of Furr Drive, Woodlawn district. [note: Woodlawn district includes the current Monticello Park neighborhood.]

Furr announced Saturday that he had ordered a supply of trees through a local nursery and that the planting of 150 orange trees on the parkways of Furr Drive is scheduled to be underway Monday. Those trees will bear next year.

Furr said that grapefruit trees will be planted in the yards of Furr Drive properties, and that he had made arrangements to have orange and grapefruit trees supplied to a large number of Woodlawn district residents.



L.S. Busby, chairman of the citrus development committee of the realty board, which is arranging the campaign, is also among the early planters. He has planted 21 orange and four grapefruit trees at the permanent demonstration home which his firm is opening Sunday.

"We are now more than ever convinced of the untruth of the statement that citrus fruit cannot be grown successfully in San Antonio," Busby said.



*Artist's concept of how San Antonio's residential district thoroughfares will look when the trees commence bearing. Mary Louise Drive, looking West from Fredericksburg Road.*

## **ONE GREAT REASON TO WATCH TV MP Neighbor and Board Member to Appear on Public TV**

Chance encounters call lead to something wonderful. On Saturday, January 25, a little, whimsical piece of Monticello Park will be featured on the show, Central Texas Gardener on KLRN, our local Public television station. If you have cable, KLRN is Channel 10. Guerrero reports that his yard art—the sculptures he creates from found metal—and his native landscaping will be featured in a segment within this popular program.

David and his artist wife Mary have created a relaxing, private sanctuary on their North Drive property. Their home, studio and yard were featured in the 2018 Monticello Park Holiday Home Tour and are often among the highlights of the annual On-Off Fredericksburg Road Art Tour. As a matter of fact, it was during last year's tour that David noticed someone taking photos of his yard art and that encounter has led to what we are sure will be a delightful segment on the program. So, set your DVR and enjoy the show!

## Keep Monticello Bello

Above is the title for a new feature in the newsletter that will address landscaping in the Monticello Park neighborhood. Each Newsletter will contain information on what action you need to take and the timing of that work to keep your landscape looking good year-round. So, let's start at the beginning.

Who am I, and what credentials do I bring to this endeavor? I am Tom Simmons (Sparks) and reside at 501 Club Drive. I purchased this property ten years ago this coming August 30. Included is a picture of how it looked when the property was for sale. To be polite, the grounds were in a condition of extended decline. The picture (Spring 2010) does say it all. I have no formal education in landscaping or design. I am, however, one of those people who are referred to as having a "green thumb." That and ten years of trial and error (experience) are my only credentials. Before you get the impression that I did it all, I must tell you, I did not plant the Zoysia turf grass. The turf was laid and the beds were established to my design by a landscape company (with which I still regret doing business). More of that at a later time.

As I will refer back to information provided in subsequent articles, you may wish to start keeping the Newsletter for reference.

**For me, it all started with a program on HGTV at least 30 years ago.** This program dealt with providing new landscapes for established properties and is long gone. Many homes, even new ones, suffer from the "cheap and easy" treatment. Neither one of these concepts will accomplish the long-term goal of a beautiful yard.

For a house to look good, it should look as if it was lifted from under its environment. This look does not have straight lines or hard edges. If you look at the photo you will see the plants that still existed in 2010 were planted too close to the house and did nothing to conceal the long hard horizontal lines of the front porch. Over-powering vertical lines can be masked by planting small trees or tall shrubs at least six feet from the corners of the house. I will add, when you are envisioning your landscape you should try to see it as it would look in five years. Enough conceptual aspects of landscaping, I will add others as I expand your vision.

### Getting Started:

You will need a scaled drawing of your lot. The easiest--but not the best source--is your plot plan. There is a copy in the mortgage paperwork you signed when you bought your property. The plot plan is not ideal because it is normally of such scale that the whole lot fits on one standard sheet of paper. You get the best outcome if the scale is greater than  $\frac{1}{4}$ " per foot. Instead, the lot should fit on 4 sheets of paper. Another reason to use a scaled drawing is so your plans can be submitted to the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). Providing a plan to the city to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) is required **prior to** performing work on your home or your yard when living in a designated historic district, like Monticello Park. The application process can take as little as 15 minutes in person at the City of San Antonio's Development Services Department, located at 1901 S. Alamo Street, or it can be done online.



You must submit a drawing showing what you are going to do on your property. Photos of your current yard are helpful. A list of plant materials, the size of flower beds, new locations for trees...all are necessary so the reviewer understands what you want to accomplish in your yard. There are computer programs for less than \$100.00 that will solve most of your "getting started" issues but, the city will accept a hand-drawn plot plan with measurements. This approval is particularly important if you are going to remove or add hardscape.

More on hardscape in the next newsletter.





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