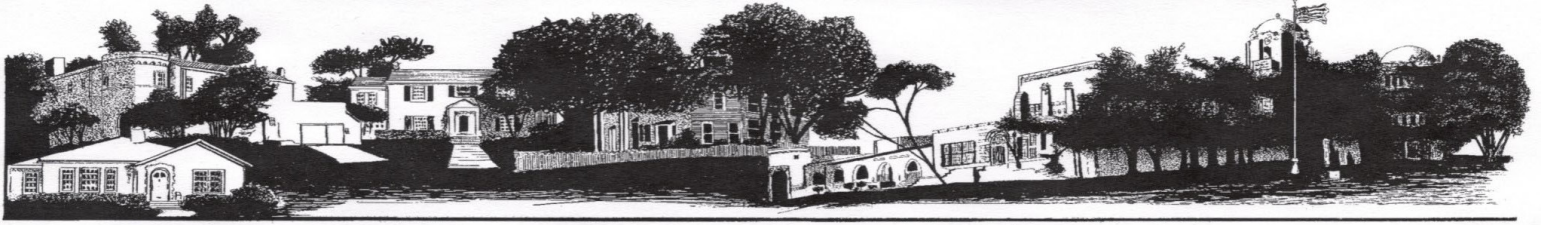


Monticella Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



MPNA is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization

May - June 2022

Neighbors, there will be a Zoom General Assembly on Monday, June 6th at 7:00 PM as per the annual schedule. It will be held online because your health and safety continues to be the Board's priority.

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Meet the Neighbors

by Jan Peranteau



Some neighbors create quite the ruckus when they move in. Such is the case with our newest neighbors—the great horned owl and her baby, who lived at the corner of Furr and Shearer Drive. Mother showed up probably in February and could be seen in March perched on the top of a dead palm tree. Her cameos usually occurred near sunset when she peaked out over the top of the nest with her ears fluttering in the spring breezes. But before she was seen, she and her mate were heard. Hoots wafted between the trees, with two distinct tones—possibly the male and female courting each other. One

could listen to them hooting around evening time and in the wee hours of the morning between 3-4 a.m. Unlike neighbors with noisy parties and garage bands, these newcomers sounded soothing coos back and forth, lulling the body gently back to sleep.

Identifying the Great Horned owl seemed easy with pictures from 'Birds of Texas' A Field Guide 'by John H. Rappole and Gene W. Blacklock and the night sounds of "ho-hoo hooo hoo." Long tufted ears and mottled brown, gray, buff, and white above, below barred with brown, yellow eyes, a rusty facial disc, and a white throat set this owl apart. The Texas Breeding Bird Atlas states that the Great Horned Owl is one of the largest, most powerful, and widespread raptors in North America. Its breeding range extends from central Alaska to Newfoundland, south throughout the Americas to Tierra del Fuego. (A.O.U. 1983) It is common throughout the state of Texas. It often uses the abandoned nest of a hawk or other large bird. It is so adaptable it can nest in urban areas such as vacant lots and, in this case, a dead palm tree. Though nocturnal, it can often be found hunting in the daytime, usually on cloudy days.

Watching the owls from night to night, Kathy Hernandez commented to

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President's Message

Memorial Day is a period of reflection and gratitude for the freedoms that some gave all for us to have. To our veterans, active military, and Gold Star families, a heartfelt thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Neighbors,

I hope you had an opportunity to read the Express News article on the value of neighborhood associations. It was a great to be able to share what makes Monticello Park unique and our very own Pam Carpenter was quoted for the story! The article is still available on their website at expressnews.com or mysa.com. To all the neighbors who attended the Historic Homeowner Fair and also stopped by the MPNA booth – thank you! You helped make Monticello Park one of the most represented neighborhoods at that event. It was fun to visit with long-time neighbors and especially wonderful to meet all the recent additions to this wonderful community. Welcome and I hope we all get to see more of each other at upcoming neighborhood events, such as the Fourth of July parade.

Community meetings regarding the SAISD-related bond improvements at the Young Women's Leadership Academy continue. Updated conceptual design plans were presented during the May 25th meeting. Although there was some debate on the exterior design and its reflection, or lack thereof, of the school's original architecture and we can all agree that the students are deserving of a campus that better meets the needs of its students and programs, now and well into the future. Questions remain as to the feasibility of the traffic flow, queuing, and parking plan that was presented and we look forward to future meetings and continued discussions on these life/safety matters.

Furr Drive residents, I am disappointed to report that four of the five blocks on our street require at least some warranty work from last year's street/sidewalk/curb bond restoration project. The scope of rework is focused primarily on driveways, but will also address cracks, chipping, and trip hazards on the sidewalks. Ponding at the ADA ramp at Furr/Kampmann will also be addressed. Although reported many times over the last year, we have not received a response as to whether the ponding that has been reported at the ADA ramp on Furr/Lake will also be repaired. Work will begin May 31st.

A general reminder that we tend to see more crimes of opportunity during the summer months. Please do not leave valuables in your car; consider parking in your driveway if possible; and do not leave equipment unattended. Also please remember to lock doors or keep your gates closed. Officer Cano will be providing an update on recent activity that is of concern during our next meeting.

Please join us for our next General Assembly via Zoom on June 6th at 7:00 pm.

Drea Garza

President, Monticello Park Neighborhood Association

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Vice President: Gary Hudman
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MPNA

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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

continued from page 1 neighbors out for an evening walk. “I began hearing it in February and seeing it in March. I noticed the nightly ritual of the mother flying off, and an owlet was confirmed during that time frame.” She took pictures of Mama and Baby on March 23, 2022. Hernandez worked each day in her garden during February and March. As she worked, she looked up often, and as people passed, she pointed to the palm tree, and the sentence always began with “Have you seen our newest neighbors?” Word spread from neighbor to neighbor, and soon cars were stopping by to take pictures.

An employee at H.E.B., Sylvia Vasquez, often walked through the neighborhood after getting off work. Speaking with her one day at the Deco store, she said, “Kathy told me about the owl. So I passed by every day while walking. She also told me about the baby. Then, sometime in March, I could see its little head peeking up –so cozy in the palm tree.” Vasquez said she passed by 3-4 times a week and always looked up. And then, one day, the Mama and Baby were gone. Vasquez has been an employee for 35 years at H.E.B., living on nearby Rosewood Ave. Had she ever seen this before? The answer was, “No, this was the first time I had seen a mama and baby owl in the tree.”

Another neighbor, David McLemore, walks his dog Rex frequently in the neighborhood. “I was going on a walk with Rex. We stopped by to talk with Kathy. I only saw one owl then. I didn’t realize there was a baby.” Then later, when he checked, he saw the little fuzzy head. When asked about seeing wildlife in the neighborhood, McLemore laughed, “We’ve seen raccoons, possums, hawks, skunks, and squirrels. It seems like Wayne Ehrisman used to get an owl in his backyard. And I remember, down near Woodlawn Lake, we saw white egrets. He said he had seen egrets near the Knoll Dairy, along Alazon Creek.



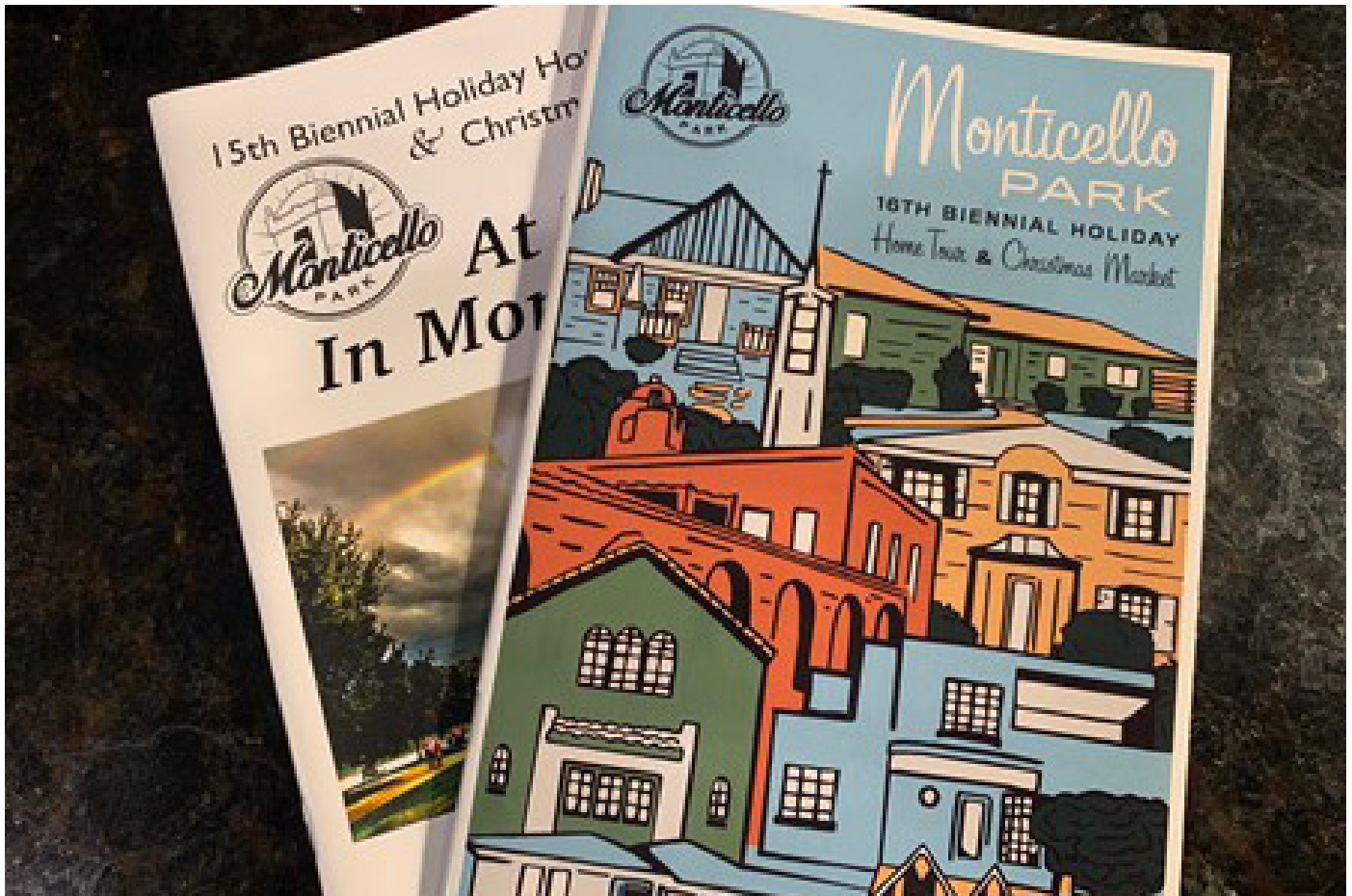
Neighbors gathered in groups around sunset to watch mama and baby. This reporter watched as the mother flew to a nearby pecan tree and hooted for Baby to join her. The baby had grown taller and perched at the edge of the nest and looked toward Mom. He flapped his wings but then settled back down. Still feeling timid, the training session seemed to be over for the day. A few days later, both Mother and Baby were gone from the Palm tree. Humans below mourned the loss of our newest neighbors. Hernandez expressed a bit of nostalgia after observing no activity for a few days. “I felt a bit down. I couldn’t see the baby anymore.”

Nevertheless, she expressed enthusiasm at sharing her discovery with neighbors. So I shared the owls with our book club, neighbors, and people from Wales who had rented an Air B&B down the street. “I thought owls were only in the movies, in the forest, or somewhere wild—not in a neighborhood,” the visitor said.

Great horned owls are one of the slowest to develop and stay in or near the nest for 6 weeks or longer. The owlets fly when they are 7-8 weeks old. Owls are dedicated parents and do not abandon the owlets, even if handled by humans. The owlet in the tree gave the neighborhood joy, just as the stork in anyone’s front yard usually puts a smile on the passerby’s face. We all got to look and see as the owlet grew into a young adolescent.

Home Tour '22 Needs Your Help!

by Gary Hudman



Neighbors, the Monticello Park Holiday Home Tour is our only major neighborhood fundraiser, and it allows us to sponsor college scholarships, provide neighborhood beautification grants, and hold neighborhood social events to help us build an even stronger community.

Please contact Gary Hudman (210-920-5526 or garyhudman@gmail.com) if you would like to participate in any way. We need the support of our neighbors to continue this tradition and allow us to fund projects to beautify the neighborhood.

Please help us! We are looking for eight homeowners to showcase their homes on this year's tour, slated for Sunday December 4, 2022. Please consider allowing us to feature your home. This is a great way to help us raise the funds needed to support our neighborhood initiatives. It is also a very good incentive to make those last-minute upgrades before the Holiday season. We would love to have your house on the tour.

One of the best ways to build our community is to participate as a builder. Please contact me at 210-920-5526 if you would like more information on how you can help us!

Thanks neighbors!

Zoom into the General Assembly Without Leaving Home

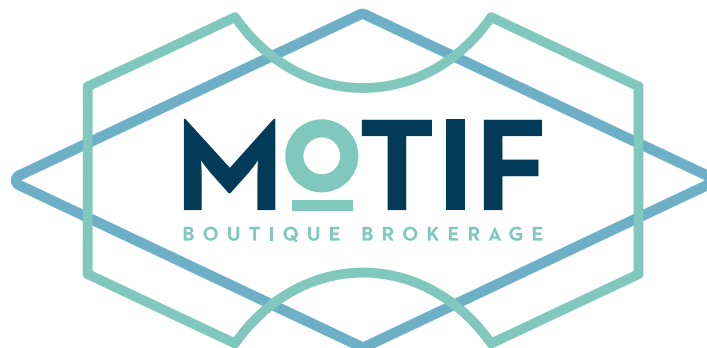
General Assembly Meeting is on for Monday, June 6th, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Safe Distancing Means Time to Zoom Again

Our Monday, March 28th meeting will be held again using the Zoom platform. Anyone with a smart phone, a computer, laptop, tablet, or a hardline phone will be able to access the meeting by following the instructions below.

1. Open your Internet browser and go to www.zoom.us.
2. Look in the upper right corner for "Join a Meeting" and click on it.
3. A screen will ask for your **Meeting ID (862 2874 9445)** and then a **Passcode (676293)**.
4. If you would like, join with both audio and video.
5. Please enter your name when prompted so we know who is attending.
6. If you want to use a cell phone or landline (wired home phone) you may do so by using the phone number 1(346) 248-7799. Please follow the prompts and enter the Meeting ID and Passcode when asked to do so.

Even though the meeting will begin at 7:00 PM, please join the meeting a few minutes early. If you have questions regarding Zoom, please reach out to a Board member for assistance.

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The Story of the Castle, Part 2



*Pillar of the community: a Toltec Warrior
Toltec warrior statue from the collection of
Morales family*

When In March, I covered the first 40 years, and three owners, of the history of 250 Mary Louise, known by many as “The Castle.” This month, I will review the next 50+ years, to the present day. I hope many of you will find this of interest.

Dr. Max Morales and family bought the house in 1967 and, like earlier owners, made modifications to the floorplan. They added an arched opening between the family room and living room and added the famed elevator which many neighbors remember to this day. Mrs. Morales had a difficult time using the stairs, and the elevator gave her easy access to the second-floor bedrooms.

Perhaps their most interesting addition was a large Toltec warrior statue in the courtyard. This was one of about a dozen sculptures Dr. Morales made for a restaurant which he never completed. He kept one statue for his back yard and sold the rest to his friend and neighbor, Ralph Karem, who used them to decorate the Karem’s Restaurants on South Zarzamora and Callahan. This sculpture stood for the next 25 years, but eventually collapsed during a rainstorm. If there is interest I’ll write a future column with this full story!

The next two owners made few changes to the house, but tragedy struck them both, when untimely deaths occurred, including one attributed to spontaneous combustion! These deaths, plus that imposing statue overlooking the house, soon spawned legends about ghosts and mysterious happenings

in the house. I have heard versions of ghost stories from many neighbors but can honestly state that I have never seen nor heard anything out of the ordinary, unless you count raccoons making scratching noises in the attic.

In 1985 Dale Wilson and his wife Jamie purchased the house. They replaced many of the windows, made significant changes to all three bathrooms, and completely remodeled the original kitchen to reflect a “1950s vibe.” The Wilsons were devoted collectors of juke boxes and coke memorabilia, and the remodeled kitchen looked like it could have been part of TV’s Happy Days. It featured red, sparkly dining stools and booth seating, neon lights, and glass blocks. Longtime neighbors fondly remember the large collection of neon signs and jukeboxes throughout the house.

By the time I purchased the house in 2009, there had been eight prior owners, and almost none of the original interior details remained, except for a small number of doorknobs.

It took me several years, but I put together a history of the house, with help and records from Bexar County, The Conservation Society, the City of San Antonio, the Texana Room at the downtown library, and hundreds of hours scouring newspaperarchive.com, Google, and Ancestry. Through those searches, I was able to meet family members of many previous owners, who shared pictures, blueprints, and home movies. All of this influenced my restoration plans which were approved by the Historic Design Review Commission.

To date, much of the progress is not very visible. I have replaced all electrical, plumbing, and HVAC. The Ludowici tile roof was restored along with the Fenestra steel casement windows. I added new membrane roofing to the flat roof areas and made major foundation repairs, including adding a water dam across the

front of the house to prevent future water damage. I also added back several steel casements and wood windows removed during earlier remodels.

In the interior, I removed most of the changes added in the 1950-90 eras and will be replacing many 1928 details. And I'm using every clue possible from my research. For example, I have a family photo from the 1940s which shows just a tiny part of a cabinet, but that gave me the design for all of the new cabinetry!

And in areas where I don't really know what the house looked like in 1928, I'm doing what would be period appropriate. For example, I have collected 9 chandeliers and 18 sconces from the same family of 1920's light fixtures. I'm almost finished restoring them and I'll use them throughout the house to be as authentic to the period as possible.

I hope you have enjoyed learning a little about the history of "The Castle" and perhaps this story might inspire you to research your own house. There are plenty of resources out there to help on your journey. Also, if any of you have some interesting stories about "The Castle" please reach out and share. I'd love to learn even more!



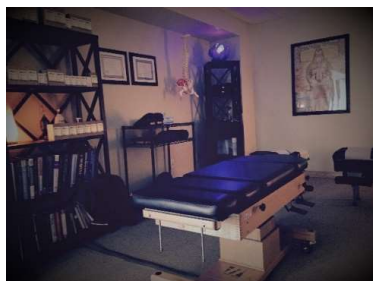
Red dining booth designed with a 1950s theme, Photo by author

Lonestar Health Group

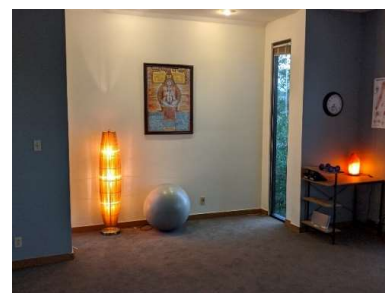
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