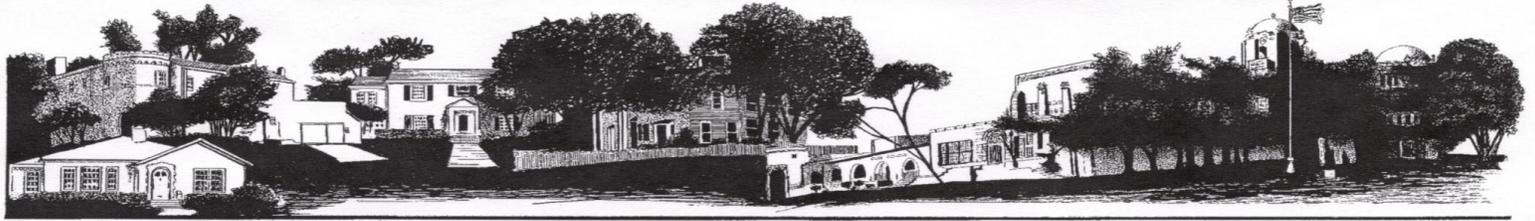


Monticella Park NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



MPNA is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization

November - December 2020

Neighbors, there will be a General Assembly on Monday, November 30th, 2020 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. meeting date.

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MEET THE NEIGHBORS

By Jan Peranteau

The Furr Drive sidewalk, curb and street facelift is a work in progress. We seem to be at the bandage stage. Just as facelifts require cutting and taking out the old sagging skin, the street has been gutted and scraped and old sidewalks plowed up along with sprinkler systems. A fair amount of vegetation and roots from established trees and shrubs was disturbed in the general demolition process. As Covid raged, masked neighbors walked up and down Furr looking at progress and comparing what was done on their property to the neighbor next door. It has been an altogether unsettling period of time.

Richard Casiano, the project manager at the time said, "The project began in January with a projected end date of mid-November. But we are behind schedule." I was taken off the project and now Sean Beauvais is in charge."



Eve Bryant, Furr Drive Resident

Trucks arrived around February and the actual destruction of old sidewalks, curbs and street began in the 500 block of Furr by Jefferson High School. A water main broke at the corner of Furr and Shearer and a huge pool of water accumulated. Workers came each day and parked along Shearer. With coffee and tacos in hand, they waited for David Plata to issue orders. Casiano said D. Plata Construction was in charge of the entire street from Kampmann to Fredericksburg Rd. Workers spoke with residents and often ate lunch sitting under

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President's Message

Friends, it has been a tremendous, memorable, and humbling time for me serving as the Monticello Park Neighborhood Association's Board President for the past two years. The rewards have far exceeded the headaches as we, as neighbors, moved through a time of unforeseen change and challenge for our community.

I want to first thank all of the Board of Directors whom I have served with for their encouragement, support, talent and knowledge that helped us make better decisions and chart a positive course for the community. It is certainly an unappreciated role you play, except perhaps to others who have previously served the neighborhood. People have no idea the time and effort you dedicate to a multitude of demands. I felt like I never knew enough to help us progress on projects large and small. I also want to thank the neighbors who are not board members, but who host Pink Flamingo parties, decorate the park, participate in clean up events, attend city meetings, serve on boards and commissions, and whose spirit of volunteerism and commitment to our neighborhood inspires me.

To our District 7 neighborhood liaisons and Councilwoman Ana Sandoval, I am grateful for your responsiveness, your advocacy for neighborhood involvement, and for helping us navigate the winding and sometimes dark halls of city government. It can be daunting and at times frustrating but, the legacy of neighborhood activism and involvement is puro San Antonio and should never be taken for granted. Our voice...the voice of MPNA... is vital to the health and prosperity we all wish for our growing city.

I am glad we in Monticello Park are known for standing up for our neighborhood's needs before city, county, school, and state leaders. Staking a position, sharing an opinion, seeking consensus, and sometimes standing our ground is never easy but, that is the core of what your neighborhood leaders do because they care about the welfare and future of Monticello Park.

In a few days we will gather via Zoom for the last General Assembly of 2020. I want to wish the new 2021 MPNA Board officers and directors who will be elected that evening the very best. The Nominating Committee took its work seriously.

We will be presenting a slate of candidates whom we believe will set aside their own personal interests and ambitions to selflessly promote the needs of those who

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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Editor: Scott Wm. Carpenter

Article and event submission, please call
210-241-7490

For ad pricing information,
call 210-734-2445
or visit monticelloParkNA.com

MPNA

Mail to: P.O. Box 100315
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 210-2159274
Historic Building Enforcement Officer
report@sapreservation.com

make up Monticello Park, from the young singles and growing families all the way to our creative artists, local business owners, educators, veterans and honored elders. They, like prior Boards, will need your on-going support as they continue to lead our neighborhood through the pandemic with an eye toward recovery and the day when all can truly gather again---mask free--as a community to celebrate a safe and secure place called Monticello Park.

Cathy Teague
President, Monticello Park Neighborhood Association

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Kristel Puente, Furr Drive Resident

the trees along the easements. They left a few water bottles and fast food wrappers behind, but neighbors seemed pretty patient in picking up after them.

As the work progressed neighbors came out to visit one another. Now this is no neighborhood Flamingo Party, but it is a chance for neighbors to meet other neighbors on the street. Eve Bryant bought and moved into a 1929 brick cottage in the 300 block of Furr Dr. in September of 2019. She described how she got here, sitting on her side porch one October afternoon. “Laura Reid wanted me to move into this neighborhood. I lived in Austin at the time, but Laura and I have been friends for 17 years, meeting at a cycling club in Mancke Park. Laura found this house on Furr and I fell in love with it. “As a young girl, we lived in San Antonio while my dad helped to build Sea World. I went to UT at Austin.” She said, “I am a pharmacist at Walgreens near Fox Tech High School. Soon I will be moving home to work as a Health Outcomes Pharmacist counseling seniors with issues relating to Diabetes, immunizations, Covid, and other conditions.

When asked about street construction, she said, “I’m glad I had a jeep. Sometimes getting in and out of my driveway was tough.” She showed this reporter how the original steps down to the sidewalk do not meet. She talked with workers on the street and asked, “Is this your best work? Would you be satisfied if this were your mother’s house?” When this reporter looked at the area, it seemed to be a real toe stumper. But when asked about how she feels about the neighborhood, she gave a most enthusiastic seal of approval. “I have been in new homes, old homes and houses in between. I am endeared to this house and the relationship I have with it. Referring to the house in the female gender she said, “She just needs some loving care”, and that is what Bryant is giving. Maybe one day, neighbors will get to peek inside during a Monticello Park Tour of Homes.

A neighbor in the 400 Block of Furr, Kristel Puente, stood in her front yard on Nov. 1 putting the finishing touches to an altar for Día De Los Muertos. The altar featured the family’s beloved relatives who had passed on. She mentioned the stairs leading out to the sidewalk and thought they should have been replaced too. She said, “I love the new sidewalks. They are so much safer. Before it was dangerous to walk at night.” She did express disappointment about the grass. They only laid a single row of grass squares around her young oak tree. She looked at her neighbor’s easement which had been entirely filled in. “Why didn’t they do that in my yard?”

Richard Weik, at the corner of Furr and Lake, had a few comments on the street construction. “I was so excited about the project and have been patiently waiting for it to reach the 300 block of Furr.” He started by saying, “I have had good communications with Richard Casiano, the project manager. Weik served on Monticello Park Neighborhood Association Board for many years and still is quite active as a volunteer in the

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KEEP MONTICELLO BELLO

by Tom Simmons

More on Drip Irrigation

In my last article, I provided the basics of Drip Irrigation (DI) and shared that when the temperature was above 100 degrees, my water bills were over \$300.00. It was called to my attention this figure was not consistent with the water and cost-saving usually associated with DI. **You are right.** Seventy-five percent of that figure is used to keep Zosya grass green and not brown (dormant). The grass is not watered by the drip irrigation system. I still wonder if planting Zosya was a good idea...

And now, more on DI.

The big concept of DI is to just give the plants enough water to keep them happy, not saturate the ground. Best economy is achieved by installing your DI system before your plantings and you should not set up your DI system without knowing how the layout of your landscape will look. This way you can make the most from the lowest cost item, the 1/2" dia. spaced emitter hose. Remember these are available with emitters spaced from 6" to 24".

For my layout, I have a lot of room so I use a three tier approach: low plants 12 to 18 inches, medium plants 24 to 36 inches and, and high plants 36 inches and above. I like to give approximately two feet of distance between rows. This means the front of many of my beds are at least 6 foot from the house. I end up with at least three rows of irrigation in a six to eight foot deep bed.

The larger your system, the more time is required to deliver water to your plants. It takes a week or so to work out how long to water and how often. There is no magic formula since each system is custom, but this is what I use. The larger system is twice the size of the smaller system; the larger system is watered ten minutes longer than the smaller system. I water every day during 100 degree weather; every other day in fall and spring; and twice a week in winter. My timers start at 6AM and activate in 30 minute intervals so only one zone is on at any given time.

Plants need water in the winter. Most of my landscape is made up of perennials or evergreens. Perennials are those plants that die off above the ground and grow back from the roots each year. If you want them to come back, you need to water them. Before I started DI, I was losing established shrubs over the winter due to lack of water. The winter watering schedule will also give you an opportunity to introduce granulated plant food before the growing season starts. If you plant a lot of seasonal color (annuals), you may want to have a separate DI system for those areas.

DI systems do require some maintenance. The battery life of timers varies from one season to three years. My timers have low battery notifications, but they still need to be monitored. Screens also need to be inspected at least twice a year for sand, rust, and other sediments, and cleaned.

DI and xeriscape? I recently embarked on my first experiment with xeriscape. This bed consists of a Fan Palm, Pride of Barbados, Red Yucca, Flax Lilly, Lantana, Asters, some Succulent I pulled out of a neighbor's front yard, and a lot of native rock. I installed DI to get these plants through the winter, then will see if they can make it on their own.

Other landscape questions? Have a topic you want covered? You can contact me (Tom) at 501 Club Dr. or call me at 210 701 4300.

...continued from page 3

neighborhood. Weik described the moving of the fire hydrant from one side of the street to the other side with some puzzlement. He is not sure why that was done. But in the process, his established crate myrtle roots were cut and a sprinkler system destroyed in order to make a handicapped sidewalk entry. Looking to a burned out bare spot, he explained how his front lawn caught on fire. "Workers were cutting some rebar and a spark flew onto the dead grass. Workers had walked on down the street and someone driving by saw the lawn on fire. According to Weik, "Workers ran back and stomped out the fire." Oh my, the excitement we've had.

Now work is centered in the 200 block of Furr with one more block beyond that to go before Fredericksburg Rd. is reached. Also the entire street has bumpy areas that must be smoothed out. Cross street intersections are quite uneven. Will the end be reached by Christmas? Sean Beauvais, Public Coordinator, answered the question of the project's completion. He said, "We anticipate the street being finished in the early part of next year. It might be completed by the end of this year but because we have had some issues with the installation of various aspects of the project, we aren't setting a particular date. We want to make sure that all problems are addressed and meet our expectations." He said that

Plata had hired a licensed irrigation specialist who would take care of damaged sprinkler systems. The city arborist has been called in to assess damage to trees and shrubs and make recommendations. He said, Kathryn Otto is the project manager and she is holding D.Plata Construction Co. responsible until the job is finished and to the satisfaction of both the city and Furr residents.

For now the key seems to be patience. Remember the renovation of Club Dr? That took some time and a few headaches from homeowners, but we finally have a street that welcomes all to the neighborhood. A little meditation and visualization of our lovely street may be in order to get through these last months.



Richard Weik, Furr Drive Resident

**"I'm your Seniors
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Your 2021 Slate of MPNA Board Candidates

Leadership is not merely a position or a title. It is sacrifice. It is action and reaction. It is almost never boring. And, when leadership comes from those who live among us, our neighbors, we always hope that their work will be appreciated and supported.



This year, the Nominating Committee has carefully chosen a slate of candidates from among those who put their names into consideration that we believe best reflects our community. They all come with a spirit of collaboration, with ideas and with a demonstrated willingness to roll up their sleeves and make our neighborhood a great place to call home. Nominations from the floor may also be made.

Per our community By-Laws, while all residents, landowners, and businesses within MPNA boundaries are considered members of MPNA, only those neighbors who paid their 2020 dues have voting privileges. Officers and board members will be elected during the November 30th General Assembly by voting-eligible members.

MPNA By-Law Change Up-dating Efforts to Continue

During the September 28th General Assembly (conducted via Zoom), members were presented with and approved a change to the MPNA governing documents or By-Laws. The change impacts Article V, Section 2 by clarifying that members are eligible to vote in general assembly meetings if dues are paid in full by January 31st of each calendar year.

Section 3 was also updated allowing the board of directors to determine annual member dues and announce them at the January General Assembly. Unlike the old By-Laws, no minimum amount for annual dues was recommended in the updated Section.

The effort to revise our community By-Laws is expected to continue following the election of the new Board. You may recall that the 2020 MPNA Board conducted a retreat last January to set priorities and identified the need to modify the document. A reminder, you do not need to be a dues-paying member of the MPNA to attend general assemblies, participate in volunteer activities or neighborhood parties. Failure to pay dues by January 31st of each calendar year, however, would preclude you from exercising your voting privileges.

Zoom into the General Assembly Without Leaving Home

General Assembly Meeting is on for Monday, November 30, 2020
Safe Distancing & A Surge Means Time to Zoom Again

Our Monday, November 30 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 (825 6241 9085)** and then a **Passcode (212251)**.
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 p.m., please join the meeting a few minutes early. If you have questions regarding Zoom, please reach out to a Board member for assistance.

Time To Untangle The String of Lights Monticello Park’s Holiday Decorating Contest Is On

Following the success of last year’s event, it’s time again to let your holiday spirit and creative juices flow for one of our neighborhood’s latest traditions, the Holiday Home Decorating Contest. In 2019, a team of “out-of-neighborhood” judges had a hard time choosing 1st, 2nd and 3rd place award winners. This year, we want to make it even harder!

Homes large and small, quaint and creative are all eligible. We want to make this December one to remember for all the right and bright reasons. Remember, if you expect to be among the contestants, please make sure your home address can be seen by drivers. It will help the judges and those who want to make an evening out with their families looking at our neighborhood shine in the best possible way. The judge’s results will be announced by December 23rd with modest gift card prizes for the winners. Please join in the fun!



HISTORY CORNER

by Gary Hudman

Jane Withers's *High School* Movie Set at Thomas Jefferson High School

The architectural crown jewel of Monticello Park, Thomas Jefferson High School, gained national attention several times soon after it opened in 1932. In 1938, Life Magazine called it "the most outstanding high school in America" in a featured cover story. This caught the attention of 20th Century Fox, who decided to feature one of its young stars, Jane Withers, in a coming-of-age movie set at the school. Titled *High School*, the movie debuted on January 26, 1940 to good reviews from several critics and was intended to help Jane Withers move beyond her status as a child star.



In the movie, Jane Withers plays Jane Wallace, a young ranch girl sent to the "big city" Thomas Jefferson High School, where her uncle is principal, to become a more polished young lady. At first she alienates herself from her classmates, but by the end of the movie has charmed her way into being friends with students throughout the school.

In multiple scenes, the beautiful Spanish/Moorish exterior of the school is featured prominently, along with storylines about the ROTC and the Lassos. However, most of the movie was actually shot on the backlot and in studios in Hollywood, with several scenes of Jane Withers shot in front of a rear screen projection of the high school.

Several years ago, neighbors gathered at my house on Mary Louise for an evening at the cinema, featuring hot dogs, popcorn, vintage cartoons, and of course *High School*. We all had a great time and enjoyed

seeing the scenes featuring the majestic architecture of Thomas Jefferson High School. Once the pandemic has slowed down and my house renovations are complete, I hope to recreate this special night and let even more neighbors experience this fun comedy from the past.



Source: Lobby card from the author's collection.

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. In most cases, simple routine maintenance work can be approved immediately by OHP staff without having to attend an HDRC hearing.

You can also visit 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!



You pass them every day; architectural features that make Monticello Park unique. Enjoy looking for these unusual elements as you walk or bike through our streets. Do you know where to find this one?

(Last Hidden Corners Answer: The finial on top of the newly cleaned and painted gazebo at our pocket park located on Club Drive at Kampmann)

Business In the Time of Pandemic One Couple's Efforts to Thrive in Difficult Times

By Cathy Teague



It seems like a distant memory now but, last Spring there was a mad scramble taking place around our neighborhood. Businesses along Fredericksburg Road and throughout San Antonio had to think fast and pivot hard as orders came down from local authorities to shut their storefronts in the face of rising COVID-19 hospitalizations.

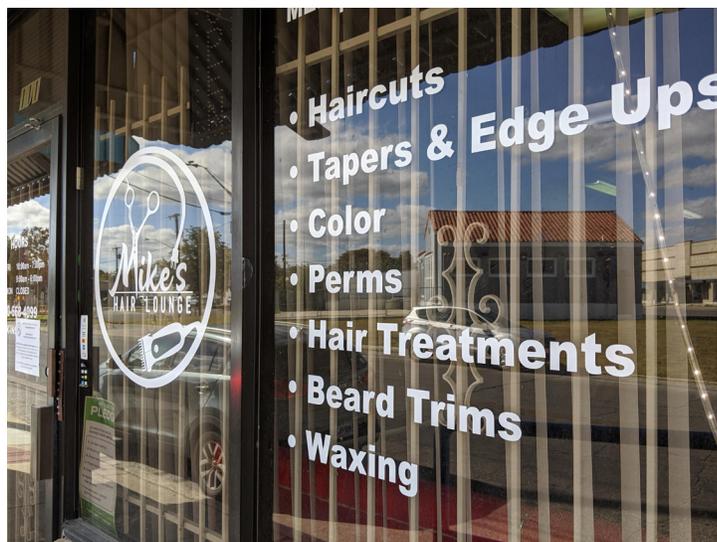
For Mike and Robert Salcido of Mike's Hair Lounge, 1933 Fredericksburg Road, Suite 111, it was not what they had envisioned when they opened their place in November 2019. Mike, a former manager of another salon, says he "had always wanted his own place." Together with his partner (now

husband) Robert, they found a location near their Jefferson neighborhood home and began the work of turning the space into a place local men and women and families could utilize. Robert recalls, "It was definitely a risk but, a reward as well."

During the closure, Robert's work as a community engagement manager for Equality Texas helped pay the bills and they continued to dream and rely on the support of the close-knit business community around them. By early June, they could open their doors again—with masks, temperature checks, and social distancing requirements in place—asking their clients to call ahead or book online (Mikeshairlounge.genbook.com) because walk-ins just aren't possible during these times of caution.

As they gain clientele, Mike continues to sharpen his skills by studying barbering with a goal of welding a straight edge by January. Someday, they want to offer facials and waxing, eventually becoming a full-service salon within walking distance of Monticello Park.

But we all know that salons are not just places to get a haircut. There are serious social aspects to a good salon. For some, it is the place to learn the latest gossip, and for others, it is a retreat and a place for pampering. Mike and Robert hope that with time, Mike's Lounge becomes an essential part of our neighborhood, an LGBT-friendly spot where young people can find a listening ear, and families will use for their children's "first" haircuts and prom preparation. Having made it through the business's first anniversary and nine months of working during a pandemic, they are optimistic that their decision to strike out on their own was the right one.



Monticello Park Bond Activities Furr Drive Street Work Continues

Nearly one year ago, residents of Furr Drive gathered during a public meeting to hear the plan for re-constructing the street, sidewalks, driveway approaches, and curbs in this corner of the neighborhood. Their good fortune was the result of work to include Monticello Park needs within a citywide Bond approved by voters in 2017.

Yet, within months after the work began in late January, sharp-eyed neighbors began to question the quality of the work underway. The MPNA Board pushed city hall for a response and even gathered a list of irrigation mishaps, sloppy concrete work, grading issues and damage done to historic steps, private property and retaining walls. A big thanks to Pam Carpenter, MPNA's Board Secretary, for assembling a spreadsheet of construction issues to show the city and District 7 the depth of the problem with the private contractor.

After roughly six weeks of inactivity and a Zoom meeting with Furr Drive neighbors in late October, the new Public Works Department began door-to-door canvassing of residents and adding to the list of repairs for each property. They also added new city oversight and leadership to the project and vowed better communication with the neighborhood.

Street work has now moved to the 300 and 200 blocks of Furr Drive while another team is set to begin correcting contractor mistakes in prior blocks. The entire project is still on tap for completion by the end of the year. If you received a door tag asking for information by the Public Works group, please respond as soon as possible.

Growth and Change Keeps MPNA On Its Toes New Proposed Complex in Adjacent Neighborhood Presented

In spite of the pandemic, housing needs in San Antonio and South Texas continues to be a growing issue. People are still moving to San Antonio daily, keeping the need for safe, affordable housing a priority for the city. Established historic and conservation districts are finding increased interest by developers in the vacant corners and blocks within Loop 410. Proposed zoning changes, architectural plans, and density issues are consuming more and more time of volunteer boards as members work to ensure their neighborhood priorities, character, and sense of community are protected.

Earlier this month, representatives from the Jefferson, Woodlawn Lake and Monticello Park neighborhood associations joined D-7 Councilwoman Ana Sandoval, her staff and Terramark™ Urban's Ricardo Turiabiates to learn more about a proposed development at 1731 W. Gramercy. The .32 acres in question is currently vacant, yet TM owns the property and has a goal of building 11, three-story townhomes for sale. The development would be in the Jefferson Neighborhood Association. The one-and-two-bedroom properties (9450-1500 sq ft) includes a common area or small park for owners' use and street parking.

Terramark Urban has built 20 infill projects in areas such as Southtown, Dignowity Hill, Denver Heights, Cherry Street, Tobin Hill and other San Antonio near-downtown locations. Pricing for the townhomes has not been finalized nor has the architectural style of the proposed complex. The intersection of Gramercy and Elmendorf already has two apartment complexes. More discussions are expected between Terramark and the neighborhood groups in the coming weeks. No zoning changes are needed for the property to be used for high density housing as currently planned.

THOSE WHO LIVED AMONG US



A New Tradition Begins: An Introduction

Beginning with this edition and moving forward, our neighborhood newsletter will include a new segment called "Those Who Lived Among Us." It is an opportunity for families to tell the personal story of a loved one who is no longer with us and give us a sense of their life in Monticello Park. Choosing a place to call home is deeply personal. We hope that by allowing a loved one to share something about a neighbor who is no longer with us it will help us gain a new appreciation for our neighborhood and its history from those who lived among us. If you'd like to share the story of a loved one who found Monticello Park a special place too, please reach out to us.

Virginia "Ginny" Messec McLemore

By her husband, David McLemore

An hour after we married on April 1, 1979, Ginny and I came into the neighborhood to celebrate. Friends Joan Bray and Carl Hoagland had offered up their big, comfortable home on Mary Louise for a reception. Ten months later, we moved into our first house, a sweet limestone place on Furr. We had a bed, a dining table and four worn chairs and a couple of love seats from Pier 1 and some hand-me-down furniture. We were home.

It was known then as "The Jefferson District." Monticello Park Historic District came later. And we fell in love with the place. We took long walks around Woodlawn Lake, hiked around the neighborhood, and began a long relationship with the joys and ache and pains of home ownership. After we brought two sons into the world, the Furr house grew smaller and Ginny began looking for another place. One day in November in 1996, she found one on Mary Louise. She called me at work and said, "I want this place."

And so, we bought it -- a large two-story place with a horrible interior paint job and a pool that needed work. In January 1997, we moved in. It became Ginny's work of art. She had innate design sense and the ability to see patterns in things, to make diverse elements work together. We scraped, sanded, repainted, shopped at antique auctions and slowly the house reemerged as our home.

There were of course bad days. Not long after we moved onto Furr, Ginny developed rheumatoid arthritis, a crippling disease she dealt with for more than 30 years. It did not slow her down. She left her job as an editor at the San Antonio Express News. We traveled with our sons, saw Paris and London, spent holidays together, and explored America.

Then, in the Spring of 2018, we learned Ginny had leukemia. Over the next 20 months, Ginny underwent chemo and 120 days of hospitalizations. Over time, we both knew it would not end well, but Ginny began each day with her mantra: "You live until you don't." We still took walks around the neighborhood with our dogs Rex and Rosie. We went to see our sons and daughters-in-law in Houston and Portland, Ore. And our home and neighborhood always remained our refuge.

In November 2019 during her last hospitalization, Ginny told her doctor she would not die in the hospital, that she wanted to spend her last days at her home with me and her dogs. On November 14 that year, Ginny went into hospice at home. On November 27, one day before Thanksgiving, Virginia Messec, 64, left the neighborhood for good.

Well, not really. She is deeply missed. Rex occasionally still paces around the house, looking for her. But Ginny's touch is still present in the color schemes of the house, the carefully planned front yard of drought-tolerant plants she worked out on graph paper, the feel of place that she gave it. There is always work to do. Houses are always works in progress. But her presence is still here. And I am thankful for that.