



HERITAGE
SOCIETY OF
AUSTIN

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www.heritagesocietyaustin.org
information@hsaustin.org

➔ HSA CALENDAR OF EVENTS ➜

July 30 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

August 27 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

August 15 – **Explore Austin's Landmarks at the Travis County Courthouse** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Tickets \$15.

September 24 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

Tickets to Events available at www.heritagesocietyaustin.org or 474-5198.

PRESERVATION

AUSTIN

Summer 2012, Volume 16 No. 3

New Name – Same Mission

Heritage Society of Austin becomes “Preservation Austin”



The Heritage Society of Austin (HSA) has been our city's leading voice for the preservation of historic buildings and places for almost 60 years. In recent years, we have led successful efforts to improve and sustain Austin's Historic Landmarks program, protect the historic character of the Governor's Mansion, help to institute Local Historic Districts, and advocate for the preservation of Capitol View Corridors. These actions accompany our ongoing vigilance of protecting treasured historic assets like the Driskill Hotel and the Paramount Theatre.

In December 2011, the HSA Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan to build on our past successes and guide our organization's direction for the future. An important component of the plan is to increase community awareness and support for our organization's work on behalf of preservation. The Board believes that HSA needs to provide greater clarity on the work we are doing, and engage new audiences and a broader basis of support for our mission.

Toward that end, we are pleased to announce that the Board of Directors has voted to change the organization's name to “Preservation Austin”. This decision was made after extensive consultations with leaders of important HSA stakeholder groups and leading public relations professionals in Austin. We are confident that “Preservation Austin” will convey more clearly our mission to preserve and protect the historic places of Austin. This new name will better convey our values of inclusivity and a progressive approach to embracing change while protecting the unique character of our city.

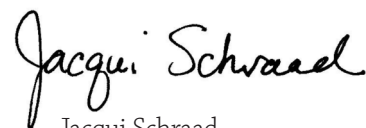
Our name may soon be different, but our organization, mission, staff, board and our membership will remain the same. We will adopt the new name in the fall as we launch a new website and graphics identity. We are very optimistic about the positive effects of these changes and look forward to sharing them with you.

More than ever, the Heritage Society of Austin stands as the guardian of our city's precious heritage and the leader in introducing positive preservation programs to our community. We thank you for making these successes possible through your generous support. If you have any questions regarding this announcement, please contact Jacqui Schraad, Executive Director at 615-7728 or jacqui@hsaustin.org.

Sincerely,



John Rosato
President



Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director





Travis County Courthouse ca. 1940

Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse Tour – 1000 Guadalupe St., 78701

Texas Courthouses were recently named to the “11 Most Endangered Places” list by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Join us as we stroll the halls and courtrooms of the HMS Travis County Courthouse to reveal the bold geometric Art Deco features in wood, limestone, concrete and steel as well as the numerous elegant Greco-Roman inspired details. The Hon. Judge David Phillips of the County Court-at-Law No. 1 will speak on the exciting social history of the building, particularly the landmark Sweatt vs. Painter case in which Heman Marion Sweatt contested his denial of admission to the University of Texas School of his Law. This case was argued all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and played an important role in overturning segregation in education.



Wednesday, August 15, 2012

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Members-only admission fee is \$15 per guest. Free for Advocate level and above. Please RSVP in advance to rsvp@hsaustin.org or call 512-474-5198. Make payment online, at the door, or by mail to P.O. Box 2113, Austin, TX 78768-2113. Use metered street parking or paid lots. ∞



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Call For Nominations

2012 Preservation Merit Awards


The Heritage Society of Austin annually presents awards to honor individuals and organizations for their visionary approach to preservation and commitment to maintaining Austin's unique architectural, cultural, and environmental heritage. By creating more recognition for outstanding preservation projects and people engaged in preservation, we hope to inspire others to carry on the important work of safeguarding Austin's heritage. Projects must be located within the City of Austin and completed on or after January 1, 2010 and prior to the date applications are due.

Preservation Awards

The Preservation Awards recognize local contributions to the preservation and enhancement of Austin's architectural and cultural heritage. Award categories include the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or adaptive use of a historic buildings; infill in the form of new construction or sympathetic additions that enhance the existing historic fabric; preservation of a cultural landscape; protecting buildings from the recent past; and sustainability initiatives undertaken that are respectful of the historic character of properties.



Download the 2012 Awards Nomination Form at heritagesocietyaustin.org.

Nominations must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Monday, August 13, 2012. Packages may be mailed to Heritage Society of Austin, ATTN: HSA Awards, P.O. Box 2113, Austin, TX 78768; hand delivered to our office at 500 Chicon Street in Austin; or sent to information@hsaustin.org. 

Stewardship Awards

Understanding that preservation does not end when a project is completed, the Stewardship Awards are for people, organizations, businesses, and institutions, to recognize their efforts to care for, manage, and maintain historic resources.


Special Recognition Awards

These awards are intended to recognize people, organizations, businesses, and institutions for leadership in preservation. Special recognition is given to outstanding public service through advocacy, public projects, neighborhood preservation, or research; the craftspeople who maintain, build, and restore our important historic resources; preservation education programs, curricula, or informational tools that focus on preservation and history; and outstanding media coverage of preservation issues by reporters, writers, publishers and publications.



Austin Historical Survey Wiki

— Officially Launched at City Hall —

he Austin Historical Survey Wiki was officially launched with great fanfare on Monday, June 4, 2012 at noon, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The Wiki is an interactive web tool for identifying and sharing information about Austin's historic places. It was developed at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture with the assistance of faculty and graduate students from the UT School of Information. The Heritage Society of Austin played an essential role in supporting the development of the Wiki. After years of planning, development and testing the Wiki has gone citywide and is now available for Austinites to help document Austin's history!

At the official launch, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer Alyson McGee described the background for the project and thanked funders, including the Texas Historical Commission, the National Parks Service, and the City of Austin.

In her speech, Council Member Laura Morrison emphasized the importance of the Wiki. She explained how the Wiki helped fulfill the need for a comprehensive survey of historic resources, which had been identified in the City of Austin's Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan as an important city priority for planning for the future. She described how the Wiki will be transferred from UT-Austin to City of Austin servers this fall. She noted that additional funding was being sought to support maintenance and enhancement of the Wiki.

Council Member Morrison noted that the launch event was well-attended. The audience included Council Member Chris Riley, representatives from the the Heritage Society of Austin, the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office, the Landmark Commission, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, the Austin History Center, the Texas Historical Commission, and Preservation Texas, among other key organizations. Neighborhood volunteers who had helped test the Wiki were in attendance. There were also present and former project team members who had helped to develop the Wiki over the years.

Michael Holleran, Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation and lead on the Wiki project, spoke

about the significance of the Wiki. He said that he had just returned from an important heritage conference (the US/ ICOMOS conference in San Antonio), where there had been considerable discussion about the need to include citizens in deciding what places should be preserved and in interpreting their history. He pointed out that Austin is already doing that with the Wiki. He thanked the rest of the Wiki Project Team, including Jenni Minner, the project manager and researcher on the team, and Josh Conrad, the Wiki programmer.

Josh gave a demonstration of the Wiki. He showed how historic places can be searched according to criteria such as construction date, historic designation, architect, keyword, among other search terms. He navigated to a historic building on E. 1st and demonstrated how to attach a photo. He described how the Wiki keeps official, professionally-reviewed information available and distinct from the information that has been submitted by users and hasn't been reviewed yet. This allows for comparison between official records and newly contributed information. Other features of the Wiki, such as moderation and the ability to view the name of the contributor and source of their information makes the Wiki a sophisticated platform for searching and sharing history.

Isaac Kremer, the Heritage Society's Preservation Program Manager, has been leading efforts to make photos of all City of Austin Landmarks available on the Wiki for the launch. Through his efforts, volunteers who have considerable professional photography experience have been helping to represent Austin's historic places.

The Wiki team will continue to work over the summer to add information from previous professional historical surveys east of IH-35. In addition, Heritage Society of Austin volunteers are adding photographs of landmarks. Even with the addition of additional professional historical surveys information, the UT-Austin team believes that a substantial amount of valuable and timely contributions will come from Heritage Society members and other Wiki users, who will contribute up-close knowledge of their neighborhoods

Continued on page 5



Council member Laura Morrison speaks to the importance of the Wiki to city preservation efforts at the launch event.

and favorite historic places. This will make the City of Austin's information systems a living database with the contributions of Austinites in consultation and concert with the preservation professionals.

Explore and help share Austin's history at **beta.austinhistoricalsurvey.org**. Heritage Society members are welcome to volunteer on the project. This can be done as a regular user, or if you have some spare time you can become

Call for Wiki Volunteers

HSA has partnered on this project by assisting in securing funding and providing volunteer support in adding content to the Wiki. There are two primary ways to assist with this project:

1. Take photographs of City of Austin Landmarks. A description of how to do this is in the "Wiki Photo Project" section below.
2. Help with gathering and uploading other data including historic narratives of landmarks, other historically significant properties, and previous Heritage Homes Tours and other HSA events.

These tasks can be done at the HSA offices or offsite.

To volunteer, or for more information about either of these tasks, please contact Isaac@hsaustin.org or 474-5198, ext. 7724.

an official Heritage Society/Wiki Volunteer. Contact Isaac Kremer at Isaac@hsaustin.org for more details.

Inherit Austin

By Stacie Rychlik, Chair

Inherit Austin is excited about the events we're planning for this summer and fall.

Join us for a late-July movie at one of our best-known local landmarks and example of Classic Revival architecture, the Paramount Theatre. We'll be enjoying a 37-year Austin tradition – the Summer Film Series. And, we'll add our own Inherit Austin twist by including a behind-the-scenes tour and cocktail party.

Plans are also underway for our trolley tour in September. Relax and enjoy a BYO beverage while you are driven around downtown guided by a local historian. We'll be announcing the theme soon!

We look forward to celebrating Austin's history and culture with our members at fun, social events like these throughout the year.

INHERIT AUSTIN BOARD

2011-2012



Stacie Rychlik, Chair

Brandy Agnew	Luisa Mauro
Susan Armstrong	Michael McGill
Bergan Casey	Michelle Slattery
Anne Hebert	Edward Tasch
Sara Maffey	Caroline Wright



Please call the HSA office or check out the website and to join Inherit Austin. Memberships: \$65/individual, \$80/couple-dual.

The purpose of Inherit Austin is to cultivate a new generation of HSA members by hosting social, cultural and educational events that appeal to singles, married couples and families roughly ages 20-45.

JOURDAN-BACHMAN
PIONEER FARMS

AN UPDATE ABOUT ALL THE GOINGS-ON AT AUSTIN'S PREMIER LIVING HISTORY PARK.



**DONATION OF EARLY-NATIVE
TEXANS' COLLECTION SETS STAGE
FOR A NEW EXHIBIT**

An historically significant collection of arrowheads, flints, pots and working stones from early-day Texas has been donated to Pioneer Farms. The assemblage of Austin collector Steve Ashley features a variety of artifacts from the Tonkawa Indians and their predecessors in Central Texas. Plans are being made to put the collection on display, and use it as a way to deepen the learning experience about our authentic Tonkawa campsite along Walnut Creek. Ashley said he decided to donate the items for display because of Pioneer Farms' growing reputation as a regional history center. Kate Van Cleef, our curator, said the collection contains significant items that visitors will find interesting and enlightening.

**EAGLE PROJECT RESTORES
JOURDAN CEMETERY;
STATE LISTING SOUGHT**

A two-weekend project by Eagle Scout candidate Jared Williams and other Boy Scouts in Troop 68 has restored the historically significant Jourdan-Giles Family Cemetery near Pioneer Farms. The work included repair and restoration of original fences, clearing of trees and maintenance of the site where Pioneer Farms settlers are buried.

The cemetery dates to the 1850s, and includes more than a dozen graves of Jourdan and Giles family members.



**1859 BELL HOUSE TO GET A
MAKEOVER WITH GRANT**

The centerpiece of our 1886 Cotton Planter's Farm will get a makeover in coming months, thanks to a Heritage Grant from the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau. As part of the work, the James Bell House will have its windows repaired to correct an original design defect that causes the sashes to deteriorate and leak. The exterior of the house will get a paint job, in period colors, and wood repairs will be made to porches and railings. Inside, we'll use Pioneer Farms funding to upgrade exhibits and furnishings, including new signage so visitors can know more details about the people who once lived there.

**RESERVATIONS NOW OPEN FOR
SUMMER SCOUT PROGRAMS**

Pioneer Farms has lots to offer your Scout group this summer. There are Saturday and Sunday classes for Cub Scouts, by reservation, for seven different belt loops and pins: Heritages, Wildlife Conservation, Geography, Weather, Geology, Collecting, Map & Compass and Cultures. We also offer the Texas Badge. We also have classes for Brownies and Girl Scouts, including

Girls of Grit, a special program for moms and daughters. There are five Boy Scout Merit Badge classes. We have a list of projects for Eagle Scout candidates. Campouts? We have secure outdoor camping sites for groups small and large. See PioneerFarms.org for more details.



**HELP NEEDED TO MOVE REAL TEXAS
DANCEHALL TO TOWN SQUARE**

We're trying to raise \$45,000 in the next 30 days to save an historic Texas dance hall. Can you help us? The endangered building is in the community of West Point, southeast of Austin. The frame building has been donated to Pioneer Farms by the family of the two brothers who built it a century ago. They want to see it moved to Sprinkle Corner and preserved, rather than eventually be torn down or fall into ruin in its present location. The building is structurally sound, and would be used in historical programs and for events. Beginning in the years before the Civil War, dance halls were a social center of many small communities – a perfect complement to our small-town entrance village made up of historical buildings in their original context. To contribute, go to PioneerFarms.org and contribute on the Join & Support tab. Or you can send a check to the fund at 10621 Pioneer Farms Drive, Austin TX 78754. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible. ~

Fun and Easy Ways to Help HSA

HSA already greatly appreciates your support as a member. If you'd like to help us increase our effectiveness in saving the unique character of Austin, please consider some ideas below. Contact Jacqui Schraad, Executive Director, with any questions at jacqui@hsaustin.org or 615-7728. Thanks for considering!

- 1 Recruit your friends, colleagues and neighbors to join HSA.** If you'd like, you can send their contact info to information@hsaustin.org, and we'll send them an invitation to join.
- 2 Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/HeritageSocietyAustin>.** Re-post our event announcements to help us sell more tickets.
- 3 Set up a challenge campaign.** Send out an email to your contacts or post on Facebook that you'll give \$5 to HSA for every new member that joins before the end of the day. Let us know, and we'll track the results for you.
- 4 Buy HSA memberships as gifts for birthdays, Christmas, thank-yous, etc.**
- 5 Help us secure silent auction items for events throughout the year.** Hotel stays, airline tickets, massage certificates, and more would be appreciated!
- 6 Hold a garage sale or purge your unwanted on Craig's List and donate proceeds to HSA.**
- 7 Host a cocktail party, dog party, progressive dinner party or other gathering and charge small admission to donate proceeds to HSA.**
- 8 Host a house party to recruit HSA members.** Do not charge admission and invite as many people as you can. During the party, HSA representative can give a short talk and ask everyone to consider joining. Either pass out envelopes and ask people to give then, or after the party contact everyone individually who came and ask them to join.
- 9 Make HSA the beneficiary of your company's organized run, car wash, etc.**
- 10 Invite people to your birthday party and ask that in lieu of gifts they give money to HSA.**
- 11 If you own a retail shop, donate a percentage of a day's profits to HSA.**
- 12 Link to HSA's website from your company's website or your Facebook page or blog.**
- 13 Sell your frequent flyer miles to friends or donate them to HSA.** Watch the rules of the airline on this, but some airlines let you give away miles.
- 14 Make HSA a beneficiary in your will.** Read more at <http://heritagesocietyaustin.org/PlannedGiving.html>

HSA was recently the happy recipient of a donation from Give Realty. When you buy or sell a home, 25% of Give Realty's commission is donated to a nonprofit. Thanks so much to new Waterloo Society member Kris Umlauf who made HSA her designated charity after buying her new home in a Central Austin neighborhood that she wants to see protected.

Pictured: Laurie Loew of Give Realty, Kris Umlauf, HSA Board member, August Harris, and HSA Director, Jacqui Schraad.





Pease Park right gate attributed to Giesecki and Harris Architects

Just a few years ago, Pease Park was difficult to see as the remarkable place of beauty that was once evident in the mid-19th Century. How did one of Austin's favorite green spaces come full circle to be once again a place of pride? History is always a good place to start.

On January 17, 1856, Texas Governor E.M. Pease's wife Lucadia wrote a letter to her sister in Connecticut describing the property that her husband "Marshall" had just purchased west of Austin for their new plantation as the prettiest land in the vicinity. She said it had "a commanding view of the town, and is diversified with hills and dells, and brook..." The couple felt so strongly about the beauty of one particular part of this land, the acreage along Shoal Creek, that they wanted to share it with posterity. So, they formally deeded it to the citizens of Austin "for use as a park" in 1875.

Renewal *and* Remembrance at Pease Park

By Joshua Lang



In 1875 Shoal Creek marked the western boundary of the city. Most of Austin's modest subsequent development went east and the old Pease tract largely remained in a natural state. It was not until the 1920's that Niles Graham, the grandson of Governor Pease, set events in motion that would result in the formal development of a park on the property. A subtle hint to Austin city leaders was the spark; the family intimated that if the terms of the deed for use of the property as a park were not met, the Pease descendants might decide to take it back and develop it along with adjacent property that was to become "Old Enfield." The Austin Kiwanis Club came to the City's rescue and started raising money for the project.

By 1926, the park was a reality, equipped with picnic tables, lighting, and a bandstand. A whimsical Tudor style brick restroom building (believed to have been designed by the first dean of the U.T. Architecture Department, Hugo Kuehne) graced the hillside. Niles Graham pitched in and contributed the funds for construction of the stone entrance arches. During the Great Depression in the 1930's, the Federal Works Progress Administration replaced the park's old wooden picnic tables and benches with concrete structures and built a low stone retaining walls around the park's periphery.

Pease Park was wildly popular from the start, used for family gatherings,

reunions, children's birthday parties, and festivals. The infrastructure of the park remained essentially the same over the years, relying on the original solid construction financed by the Kiwanis Club or added later by the WPA. Little was added or, it seemed, repaired. The lack of park funding by City government in the late 1970's and 1980's began to show. The park's signature graceful cedar elm grove began to die off. Its man-made elements also badly showed wear and tear. Surprisingly, as Austin boomed and prospered, the City's park funding became ever more pinched. Maintenance workers were not hired to keep up with the rapidly increasing amount of park acreage. As a result, Pease, as one of the oldest and most overused parks in town, was in particular need of rescue. Mrs. Pease would not have been pleased with what had been allowed to happen to this cherished portion of her plantation.

A Change Was Needed

In 2008, a group of neighbors and friends headed by Richard Craig got organized (with the help of the Austin Parks Foundation) to arrest the park's decades long decline. Originally called "Trees for Pease," they focused on the immediate planting of several hundred large shade trees to make the park functional once again as a green space. But, the group soon realized that much more than the park's tree canopy was in need of help. The old Tudor Cottage rest room, the park's

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iconic fairy tale-like structure, needed a new roof and re-pointing of mortar. The WPA concrete picnic tables were crumbling with exposed rebar and jagged edges that were safety issues. Niles Graham's historic stone arches were in similar poor condition with missing mortar around their keystones and vacant niches that once held commemorative plaques.

Trees for Pease changed its name to the "Pease Park Conservancy" to more accurately reflect its broadened mission. The Conservancy partnered with Ash Masonry Masterworks of San Antonio to handle many of these restoration projects. Conservancy Board member Charles Peveto was familiar with Brian Ash's work through his job at the Texas Historical Commission. He knew of their outstanding restoration craftsmanship employed on numerous courthouses across Texas, the Spanish missions in San Antonio and the Texas Governor's Mansion.

Following Secretary of Standards' procedures for historic preservation, the Ash firm's masons have repaired all of the picnic tables and carefully matched the 1926 mortar color in their re-pointing of the Tudor Cottage. New bronze commemorative plaques reading "Pease Park" and "1875" have been ordered for the flanking arches' niches at the park entrance. Supportive park neighbors and local businesses have helped fund this work along with grants from the Austin Parks Foundation and the Moody Foundation of Galveston.

Kim McKnight, Austin Parks & Recreation Department's (PARD's) Preservation Planner and Cultural Resource Specialist, is pleased with the results of this restoration activity. She believes that the Conservancy's



Photo: Charles Peveto

Tudor Cottage design attributed to Hugo Franz Kuehne.

work at Pease Park will serve as a model in setting preservation standards for PARD as it partners with other groups to preserve the many other historic structures in parks across the city.

The Pease Park Conservancy's work has not ended at the park's southern entry arches. The Conservancy established a permanent financial endowment at the Austin Community Foundation for Pease Park, as was announced at a press conference on Valentine's Day 2012 attended by Austin City Council members Chris Riley and Laura Morrison. Austin philanthropist Bill Dickson gave a \$50,000 Valentine's gift to the endowment to kick it off amid much fanfare and the applause of a large crowd of the park's fans.

A walk through the park today shows evidence of incredible transformation in just four years' time. There are 462 new trees and an automated irrigation system, masterfully restored masonry, a freshly painted and roofed Tudor Cottage, heritage trees tended by private arborists, and flower beds maintained by a private landscaper.

The countless man-hours of volunteer labor on scores of Saturday mornings and the generous donations of Austin's citizens have had an impact. The Conservancy's momentum and enthusiasm for Pease's renewal can be seen everywhere.

Today, Pease Park still has "a commanding view of the town" and is still "diversified by hills and dells." The "brook" (Shoal Creek) still flows passed ancient Live oak trees covered with Spanish moss. The Pease's legacy gift of green space to Austin is intact and once again prospering. After the last four years of the Conservancy's efforts, it's likely that if Lucadia Pease came back today, she would think that her old property is "the prettiest place" in Texas, not just the "vicinity." Let's hope that it is always so.

For more information about the Pease Park Conservancy, please go to www.peasepark.org or to "Trees for Pease" or the "Pease Park Conservancy" on Facebook or contact Richard Craig at richardcraig2004@yahoo.com or Charles Peveto at <mailto:cmp78701@yahoo.com>. ☺



Lori C-Renteria

Preservation Champions

LORI C-RENTERIA

By Liz Carmack

East Cesar Chavez neighborhood advocate **Lori C-Renteria** moved to Austin in 1978 from her hometown of Detroit. She and her husband, Sabino Pio, bought a home in his native East Austin in 1979. C-Renteria consequently fell in love with her new community and has for decades worked to preserve the character and culture of the neighborhood in the face of increasing development pressures. She works as a volunteer and is known as a community agitator.

How did you get started in neighborhood advocacy and preservation work?

My husband grew up very poor in the Guadalupe Neighborhood. Improving, preserving, and creating new, safe and affordable housing has been his passion and he served many years on the City's Housing Commission. My support of his efforts and my own experience of buying an older home and moving to a block with great low-income neighbors who I wanted to help, led me to love this neighborhood and dedicate my energy to help our neighbors and save our homes and local businesses.

What are a couple of the most important projects you've worked on?

The most important project we did as the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Planning Team was to create the Tejano Healthy Walking Trail. The

trail includes the Austin Latino Music Association's Tejano Music Legends Trail which is also in the adjacent Holly Neighborhood. We thank the HSA for its help and support. It continues to help us preserve our precious places, many highlighted on the trail, which just won national designation as a "National Recreation Trail."

We've also had some small victories on the historic preservation front because we have a small but mighty Local Historic District Committee and a passionate chairperson, Amy Thompson. The Austin Historical WIKI project started with our neighborhood and will have an even more long-lasting historical preservation impact than the trail guide.

Considering the constant pressures to redevelop East Austin, please describe the top threats facing your neighborhood.

With rising property taxes and downtown experiencing explosive growth, gentrification has raised its ugly head. I thank God we have a neighborhood plan respected by the Austin City Council and City Planning Commission. So while the work is much harder now, we are keeping our heads above water as far as limiting the scale of development and preserving the character and diversity of our neighborhood.

As the economic crisis and access to

credit eases over the next few years, our battle to ensure affordability and diversity for all types of families by preserving our existing stock of affordable but older homes will continue to be our biggest challenge. Our biggest fear is that the vacant 10-plus acres the city gave Capital Metro known as the Saltillo Redevelopment Master Plan project will create more property tax increases than our existing neighbors and small business owners can bear.

We want the Cap Metro Board to respect the recommendations put forth by the Community Advisory Group for the Saltillo Redevelopment Master Plan. The Saltillo Tract and its impact on our historical and cultural history will be the death of our area if it does not develop more organically with local developers who love and respect our neighborhood.

Why is it important to try to preserve this community?

You know our neighborhood is in trouble when people who moved here 20 years ago because they loved the flavor and character of our area and wanted to raise their children in a diverse community are feeling like we're losing our identity and assets.

It's also important to provide or preserve affordable worker housing in and near downtown. In cities concerned with sprawl, speculators aren't allowed to destroy truly affordable existing housing without providing replacement housing nearby. Our town is nowhere near meeting those goals. The fee-in-lieu rates charged for new development is paltry and should embarrass our town. In addition, close-in ethnic neighborhoods contribute to a healthy

Continued on page 11

Many Thanks

to our New and Renewing Members

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Preservation Champions, cont. from page 10

tourism industry because they attract more travelers and provide the city with a diverse cultural identity.

You've been working in this area for decades. What are some of the key lessons you've learned that others working in the area of neighborhood preservation could benefit from?

Persistence pays and compromise is not a dirty word. You have to be open

to change and push for negotiated and mediated solutions when newcomers to your area want to make drastic changes. Learn how to appreciate small victories.

Working with your eager neighbors and keeping all stakeholders who live, work or play in your neighborhood informed is critical to any effort. Also, try to be inclusive and transparent in all your dealings with developers, city staffers, planning commissioners, and

City Council members and their aides. Over time, your honesty will buy you great respect for your integrity – even if they think you and your little army are a bunch of loose cannons.

One other tip, never attend a meeting alone when asking something of a major policy maker or elected official. You may need a witness to ensure promises are kept and misinformation can be refuted. I learned that one the hard way!