

PRESERVATION

AUSTIN

Winter 2013, Volume 17 No. 1

HSA to Launch as Preservation Austin



The Heritage Society of Austin has some exciting plans for the New Year! After much effort by many members of our fifty-nine year old organization, we will be making a major announcement regarding our name, and our brand identity as well! We are all very excited about this important step to emphasize the importance of preservation across our community.

To celebrate our pending news, we are planning a festive announcement party! Heritage Society Board Member Nancy Nichols, General Manager at Neiman Marcus, has graciously offered to host the event at Neiman Marcus at the Domain.

Please mark your calendars for the evening of January 24th, and plan to be among the first to see our new name, new look, and new website. We hope to see you there!

Neiman Marcus

AUSTIN

invites you to the

PRESERVATION AUSTIN LAUNCH PARTY

Tuesday, January 24, 2013

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Designer Sportswear • Second Floor

Enjoy a champagne reception as the Heritage Society of Austin re-launches its esteemed organization as "Preservation Austin". Be the first to see the new graphics identity and website as they officially assume their new name and bridge their honored past with the bright future.

Neiman Marcus at the Domain
3400 Palm Way Austin, 78758

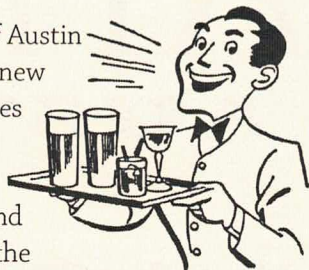


RSVP by January 17 at
rsvp@hsaustin.org or 474-5198

SAVE THE DATE

House Cocktails

The Heritage Society of Austin is pleased to launch a new series of cocktail parties with a unique twist. Join us as we gather in beautiful historic homes and enjoy hand crafted cocktails that match the house's era, served up by Alamo Drafthouse's award winning mixologist, Bill Norris.



Thursday, February 21, 2013

Goff-Radkey House (1913)

Home of Karrie & Tim League
1305 W. 22nd St.

Featuring cocktails from the classic
"Jack Straub's Drinks" (1914)

Thursday, June 13, 2013

The Granger House (1952)

Home of Jeff Harper & Mark Seeger
805 W. 16th St.

Featuring Mad Men cocktails!

Thursday, October 10, 2013

Millbrook (1850)

Home of Nancy Whitworth
1803 Evergreen, 78704

Featuring classic punches and sherry cobbler



FOLLOW HSA ON TWITTER

Want instant notification of important votes on historic preservation cases being considered by the City, the latest on HSA events, and other timely updates?



Sign up to get our tweets at:
<http://twitter.com/HSAustin>



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Preserving Our Heritage



Tere O'Connell, AIA

We've been hearing that some people think that the Heritage Society of Austin (HSA) is only concerned about preserving tax breaks for the wealthy in West Austin. This view does not recognize the depth and breadth of HSA's programming. As you read this newsletter and our website, you will see that the public policy initiatives, events, and educational programs of HSA are carefully planned to represent and celebrate the history of all of Austin, not just a particular subset.

Despite these exciting programs and initiatives, our city is facing a crisis in the court of public opinion regarding the designation of individual and collective historic resources, and once again may be facing litigation over the landmark tax abatement policy.

Contrary to information disseminated by the program's detractors, West Austin landmarks are but one piece of a larger collection of both recognized and unrecognized treasures that add depth and character to the city we love.

If we define West Austin as the 78703 zip code, the landmarks in this area comprise 18% of all the designated landmarks. Downtown (78701) properties comprise 24% of the collection, and these are primarily in commercial use. Hyde Park and West Campus (78705 and 78751) comprise 20% of the collection, and are primarily in residential use. South and East Austin landmarks make up 8% and 10% of the whole, respectively. The remaining landmarks are tax exempt. In terms of property values, downtown landmarks comprise 49% the total, while West Austin homes comprise 23%.

Caps were placed on abatements for all owner-occupied residential properties

that were designated or sold after December 2004. They were further tightened in January 2012. These caps will continue to decrease the financial commitment to preservation of these landmarks as properties sell, yet the requirements for maintenance and restrictions to development remain unchanged. Landmark abatements comprised 0.19% of general revenue or 0.047% of the City's overall budget in 2010-2011, demonstrating a reasoned commitment to preserve landmarks throughout our City. They have resulted in higher than average maintenance of landmarked properties, and few, if any, landmarks have been lost to demolition. But this investment in preservation is just one important piece of a larger puzzle.

After losing numerous beautiful homes, churches, and commercial buildings to demolition in the late 1960s and early 1970s, preservation of historic properties was identified as a top priority in the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan (1980) and the Austin Historic Preservation Plan (1981), and reinforced in recent plans including the Downtown Austin Plan (2010) and Imagine Austin (2011). In fact, the Austin Historic Preservation Plan stated "The Historic Landmark Commission has been highly effective in designating a large number of the most significant 19th century buildings in Austin as landmarks. At the same time the Commission has taken a narrow view of its charge, concerning itself overwhelmingly with 19th century structures and never with districts... such an approach has limited the long term effectiveness of the program by leaving important aspects of the city's heritage exposed and by creating a false

impression of the scope and potential of historic preservation." Part of the plan's primary recommendation was to begin creating Local Historic Districts as a vehicle for representing and interpreting all of Austin's history, beyond landmarks. Unfortunately, no provisions were made for districts until 2004, when a stringent enabling ordinance was created. Designation of individual landmarks continued through 2011 as the principal means of preserving our historic fabric.

By ordinance, private citizens bear the responsibility for the survey, historic research, and even writing the design standards for proposed Local Historic Districts. On top of that, these volunteers are tasked with proving majority affected property owner support before the Landmark Commission will consider the nomination. Since 2004, only three districts have succeeded in finalizing a nomination and receiving Local Historic District designation. We need to take a hard look at this process and encourage the City to re-examine the LHD designation process.

One of the greatest challenges for preservation in Austin is change in the character and extent of historic resources that comes with every demolition. The concentrations and integrity of potential historic resources are largely undocumented at this juncture, and central neighborhoods and our downtown core are under constant pressure to redevelop. Both the Downtown Austin Plan and Imagine Austin Plan include recommendations to update historic

Continued on page 9

Inherit Austin

By Stacie Rychlik, Chair

Looking back on 2012, Inherit Austin experienced another year full of interesting events centered around a rich past in our growing city. Each event was special in that we were able to reconnect with those who have long been involved in preservation as well as meet those who are new to the city or Inherit Austin. The common interest is an appreciation of the culture and architecture that make up Austin's historic fabric. Over the year, we've visited a renovated 6th St. bar, showcased Art Deco public buildings downtown, and had a traditional night at the Paramount.

Our annual traveling fundraiser, Somewhere in Time, was held on November 4th. Each year we choose a location that highlights a significant era of Austin's history, and this year we all enjoyed an insider's view of Camp Mabry. Prior to a candlelight dinner amongst 100 years of artifacts at the Texas Military Forces Museum, guests were treated to a walking tour of the WWI era facility. Tours were guided

by Cultural Resource Manager, Kristen MtJoy and Architectural Historian, Chantal McKenzie, both with Texas Military Forces, which was 2012 Preservation Merit Award recipient for restoration of two of the buildings. The work of Lisa Sharik, Assistant Director of the Texas Military Forces Museum and our event committee: Bergan Casey, Caroline Wright, Chase Martin, Faye Hoffman and Eileen Gill is very much appreciated.

Inherit Austin wrapped up 2012 with a festive Cookies with Santa event on December 9th. Many thanks to Inherit Austin members Brandy and Richard Agnew for opening their historic home to Santa and many excited children. Children and adults alike enjoyed visiting with Mr. Claus, partaking in holiday treats and socializing on the back lawn while enjoying the unseasonably nice weather.

The Inherit Austin board is looking forward to another great year celebrating Austin's history with our members. We welcome new board members Killy Scheer and Jennalie Lyons.

We'll kick off the new year with a happy hour in mid-January at the Continental Club – a past Preservation Award



Emily & Scott Sharp enjoy the exhibits at the Texas Military Forces Museum

recipient and landmark of Austin's musical legacy. Follow us on Facebook for updates.

And, mark your calendars with the 2013 Inherit Austin Easter Egg Hunt, a not to be missed Austin tradition at Laguna Gloria. Please contact event chairs Liz Lawrence and Ashley Washman (ashleywashmon@yahoo.com) for information on how you can get involved.

Inherit Austin Easter Egg Hunt

Laguna Gloria • March 23rd, 9 am
\$100.00 for a host family
\$250.00 for a corporate sponsor
\$15.00 for an individual ticket

Please call the HSA office or check out the website for information or to join Inherit Austin. ☺

Heritage Quiz

By Melanie Martinez

The Heritage Society of Austin presents a monthly on-line Heritage Quiz. The first Friday of every month, we post on our Facebook page an image of an historic site in Austin. The first responder to identify the site wins a gift certificate to Cenote coffeehouse. Don't miss this opportunity for public glory and a gratis caffeine fix. Like us now at <https://www.facebook.com/HeritageSocietyAustin>.

Congratulations to our recent winners to date, who correctly identified the following properties:

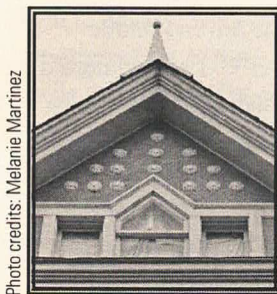
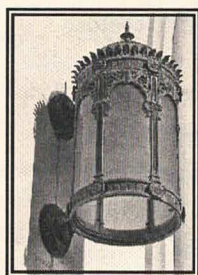


Photo credits: Melanie Martinez

Central Christian Church
1110 Guadalupe St.

Winner: **Amy Ruthrauff McWhorter**

One of the oldest churches in Austin, Central Christian is a fine example of Romanesque architecture. It was founded in 1847 by ten members of the Disciples of Christ Brotherhood and was first known as The Christian Church of Austin. Early records are scarce, but it's known that services were held in a local school building by 1852. Their first property was at 8th and Colorado until this property was built in 1929. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.



Austin History Center
810 Guadalupe.

Winner: **Lisa Cruces Welty**

The History Center holds the local history collection of the Austin Public Library and the city's historical archive. Opened as the official Austin Public Library in 1933, it served as the main library until 1979, when the newer John Henry Faulk Library was built next door. The site overlooks one of four public squares platted in Austin in 1839. An example of Italian Renaissance architecture, completed in 1933, the building is considered the most prominent public work of Austin native Hugo Kuehne, founding dean of the University of Texas School of Architecture.

The building also contains work by several Austin craftsmen, including ironworker Fortunat Wiegl, wood-carver Peter Mansbendel, and fresco artist Harold "Bubi" Jessen. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

PIONEER FARMS

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

WESSELS HALL FUNDRAISING PUSH

The grassroots preservation project to restore our historic Wessels Hall is well on its way, and we need your help to get the structure fixed up and back in service next year. So far, we've raised enough to move the building from near West Point to Pioneer Farms and have started the restoration. Now, we're working hard to raise the \$100,000 needed to completely refurbish the dance hall and open it again to the public — with exhibits highlighting Texas' incredible music history, for new historical programming and for special events. To contribute to our Save the Dance Hall Fund, go to **PioneerFarms.org** and contribute at the Join & Support tab. Or send a check to the fund at 10621 Pioneer Farms Drive, Austin TX 78754. Contributions are tax deductible. The hall was generously donated by the family of the two brothers who built it.

AS SPRINKLE CORNER BUILDS OUT, BOOKINGS NOW OPEN FOR 2013

With our Sprinkle Corner entrance village slated for completion of its first phase this fall, we're now taking reservations for special events and receptions beginning in 2013. Sterling Affairs Events and Catering is our partner that is handling bookings for your special occasion at Central Texas' newest and most unique venue. Already, there has been great interest from prospective renters. "A facility like this filled with historic Texas buildings is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for an extra-special event, whether it's a wedding or a reunion or a corporate event," said Larry Kille, Sterling's CEO. "It's unlike any place else in Texas." For information and reservations, please call Sterling Events at 261.0142.



RECENT ACTIVITIES AT THE BUSY FARMS

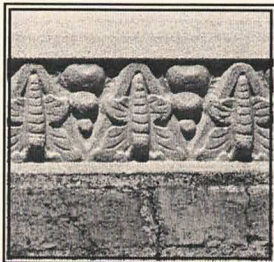
WINE & SWINE: More than 600 guests feasted on wine, spirits and pork delicacies prepared by more than 15 prize chefs at the Nov. 4 Wine & Swine event held in Sprinkle Corner by the Austin Wine & Food Alliance.

WEBELOS MAGIC: More than 600 Scouts and their families enjoyed Webelos Woods, Central Texas' largest Scout show, on Nov. 9-11 on our Town Square. Twenty troops camped out for the weekend and enjoyed an Indian fire show by chief blacksmith/native Shawnee Indian Robert Swim.

EAGLES SOAR: Three Eagle Scout projects were completed during October: Alex Smith of Troop 145 installed a picket fence around the Jarmon House; Joseph Voss, Troop 3, put in a rainwater collection system in Sprinkle Corner, and Cameron Martinez, Troop 145, built a cedar-post fence at our front gate. Many thanks for their hard work.



Heritage Quiz continued from page 4



Daniel H. Caswell House
1404 West Avenue

Winner: **Lauren 'Byrd'
Flowers**

This Victorian home is owned by the Austin Junior Forum, which hosts events there, including the annual Christmas at the Caswell House shopping extravaganza. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Austin Historic Landmark. Daniel H. Caswell came to Austin from Nashville about 1895. He purchased a cotton oil manufacturing company, bought and sold cotton, and in 1899 built a cotton gin. When completed for his family in 1900, this location was considered the far northwest corner of the city. The Caswell house, which exhibits influences of late Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Chateausque style, features a corner turret and porches supported on rusticated piers.



You Can't Take it With You— Options for Planned Giving

By Susan Armstrong of Armstrong Law,
and Inherit Austin Board Member

We've all heard the old adage..."You can't take it with you." But have you planned ahead to support causes after your death that are important to you now? Leaving a legacy of charitable giving after your passing not only ensures the continued vitality of the organizations and programs you care about, but also provides tax relief to your estate. Bequeathing these gifts can be easy to do, but requires active planning now. Below are several key ways to achieve your goals of leaving a legacy of support for your favorite causes.

Preferable Tax Treatment

The IRS eliminates the value of gifts to charity from your taxable estate at your death. This is particularly helpful if your estate is seeking to avoid taxes, such as income taxes, estate taxes, or gift taxes.

Gifts in Your Will

Gifts through a will, known as a bequest, are one of the easiest ways to make a planned gift. You have several choices when structuring the gift: You can leave a flat monetary amount or a percentage of your estate. You can leave money or a specific asset. You can gift it for general purposes or select a specific program. While you are not required to tell the charity of this future gift, it is helpful to consult a staff person to ensure the organization can actually use your gift, whether your designated program will exist into the future, and if you would like to receive recognition from your gift. Be sure to allow some flexibility for your Executor to work with the charity in providing the gift, but it is okay to include

some basic instructions on making the gift in your will, if applicable.

Naming the Charity as Beneficiary

You can also name the organization as a beneficiary of your accounts. This includes your retirement plans, life insurance policies, checking account, or brokerage accounts. If you're not ready to give all of the account to your charity of choice, you can name several beneficiaries and the percentages that go to each. For example, 50% to daughter, 30% to niece, 20% to ABC charity.

Charitable Trusts

If you are comfortable making a current donation of assets now but would like to receive a regular payment stream for the rest of your life, there are additional options.

A Charitable Gift Annuity is a contract with an organization to pay you and/or your designated beneficiary a fixed annuity for life. At the end of the contract term, the remainder will be distributed to the organization to be used for the purposes you designate. **A Charitable Remainder Trust** is a legal trust that provides regular payments to you and/or other designated beneficiaries designate for life or a selected term of years with the principal going to the charity at a specified time. Finally, a **Charitable Lead Trust** provides a current payment stream to the organization and a remainder interest to you or a designated beneficiary.

As always, consult your estate planning attorney for more information about any of these options.

— Legacy —
Preservation Partners



PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM
OF THE
HERITAGE SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

The Heritage Society of Austin is pleased to present a Planned Giving program to support our mission. The Planned Giving program will create a secure financial future to allow the Society to focus more time and attention on the preservation of Austin's shared heritage and less on fundraising obligations.

We hope you will name the Heritage Society of Austin as a beneficiary of your estate plan and be recognized as a charter member of the Legacy Preservation Partners. This esteemed group of donors pledge planned gifts of \$5,000 or more to the Society.

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New Preservation Program Manager Takes the Stage: *Greetings from Angela Reed*



Angela Reed

As the new Preservation Program Manager for the Heritage Society of Austin, I am excited for this opportunity to introduce myself to our members. Having been an active member of the Heritage Society since 2006, I consider myself fortunate to now work daily in this office toward Austin's preservation goals.

As a Heritage Society member, I attended the parties, volunteered for committees, signed up for workshops to learn tips to restore my own historic house, and felt the thrill of stepping into an historic building that was otherwise off-limits outside of an Explore Austin's Landmark Tour. However, I learned through the course of my membership, that the Heritage Society is much more than parties and tours. While the events are highlights of membership, the Heritage Society also takes on the hard work of preservation – what I call the “meat and potatoes” of the organization – with generous guidance and support from our board members and the Preservation Committee in particular. We take a stand to save Austin's historic resources even when it is not popular to do so; we meet with property owners, City Council members, developers and planners and we offer our informed, collective opinions on development issues that affect our city's historic

fabric. We win some and, sadly, we lose some, and the Heritage Society often takes the heat when no one else can.

I am an Austinite since 1993, a graduate from NYU in the field of urban and public history, and worked in the historic preservation field while with the Historic Sites Program of Texas Parks and Wildlife. I am immensely proud to be a staff member of the Heritage Society, working toward goals I believe in, in the city I call home. My promise to you – our members – is that I will strive for excellence in my part with the Heritage Society to make Austin a great place to live; for its beauty, its history, its culture and its livability. I promise to continue to engage and empower our membership through volunteer and committee opportunities. And I promise to continue throwing fabulous parties in unique historic buildings so we can all take a step back now and then to celebrate our city's treasures.

I hope to meet you all soon at one of the special events we have in store! ~

Planned Giving continued from page 6

Making a planned gift to the Society bequeaths the legacy of Austin's unique and cherished character to future generations. Your support will ensure our ability to maintain constant vigilance over major threats to Austin's heritage. A gift will empower us to prevail on future challenges, as we have on maintaining tax abatements for City Landmark properties, the adoption of a Local Historic Districts program, strengthening Austin's Preservation Plan, and the ongoing effort to preserve the Capitol View Corridors.

The current and future work of the Heritage Society of

Legacy Preservation Partners

Austin depends upon your goodwill. To that end, there are a myriad of planned giving options from which you can choose – from naming us as a beneficiary in your will to a gift of stock. Planned gifts are popular because they can provide valuable tax benefits and/or income for life.

You can visit our website at www.heritagesocietyaustin.com/PlannedGiving to learn more about specific giving options. To make a gift or receive more details, please contact Executive Director Jacqui Schraad at 474-5198 ext. 7728 or Jacqui@hsaustin.org. ~

Fascinating History of

Rosewood Neighborhood

By Gilberto Rivera and Jane Rivera

Rosewood, a neighborhood east of IH35 in Austin, whose boundaries lie roughly between East 7th Street and Manor Road, takes its name from Rosewood Avenue, which runs through the middle of the area. Rosewood was first settled by Europeans in the late 19th century, but from around the 1910s on, this neighborhood was settled by African American residents after the City of Austin adopted a policy that in effect segregated African Americans to East Austin.

Gilberto Rivera, a Rosewood native, and his wife, Jane, both Rosewood residents and neighborhood activists, co-authored a book about the history of Rosewood, titled *Austin's Rosewood Neighborhood*. Gilberto selected the best photos from his personal collection to form the basis for the book and they have added images and interview materials from their neighbors and local collections to document the transformation of Rosewood from those early days to the present. The book highlights the neighborhood's African American history, how that history is expressed today, and the current pressures that threaten the community.

Gilberto and Jane Rivera begin their Rosewood story by pointing out that it was in the Rosewood Neighborhood that Austin African American residents celebrated the original Emancipation Day, or Juneteenth, which commemorates June 19, 1865 as the day slavery was announced

abolished in Texas (two years after the announcement was made in Northern states). Emancipation Day still remains a major neighborhood annual event.

Even after slavery was abolished, segregation in Austin continued to increase. By 1928, the City Council hired a Dallas firm to create the City of Austin Master Plan, which formally established East Austin as the residential area for African Americans. The Master Plan recommended that facilities and conveniences for African Americans be limited to the east side of the city, close to then-Anderson High School, "the negro high school," named for Mr. L.C. Anderson, son of former slaves who later served many years as principal of Prairie View College.

Rosewood was a strong, vibrant community through the 1940's and '50s, continuing through the 1980s. Key institutions that served Rosewood during its heyday included local neighborhood-serving businesses, schools, Huston-Tillotson University, churches, and even a hospital, which closed in 1989. The schools and hospital were segregated when they were developed, with the hospital being the only one where African American physicians were permitted to practice.

In Austin's Rosewood Neighborhood, the Riveras point out many little-known facts about Rosewood's African American history

Did You Know That:

- ✱ Austin's first African American Council member, Henry Green Madison, appointed to Council in 1871, built a log cabin in 1863 that is standing today in Rosewood Park? It was originally built on East 11th Street in Rosewood and served as the home for Mr. Madison, his wife, and their eight children. The cabin was hidden for over a hundred years when Mr. Madison enclosed it with a frame house in 1886. It remained hidden until a razing crew found it in 1968. The log structure was donated to the City of Austin that year, dismantled and reassembled on its current site in 1973.
- ✱ In 1906 Rosewood residents successfully boycotted an ordinance that required African Americans to enter and sit at the back of public trolleys, fifty years prior to the famous Rosa Parks case in Alabama? In response to the ordinance, African Americans who had depended on the trolleys to get to their jobs, instead accepted rides offered by citizens who owned horses and wagons. After a year of the trolley boycott, city leaders rescinded the ordinance.
- ✱ The Doris Miller auditorium was dedicated to serve the recreational needs of local African American servicemen and their families during World War II? It was named in honor of Mr. Doris "Dorie" Miller.

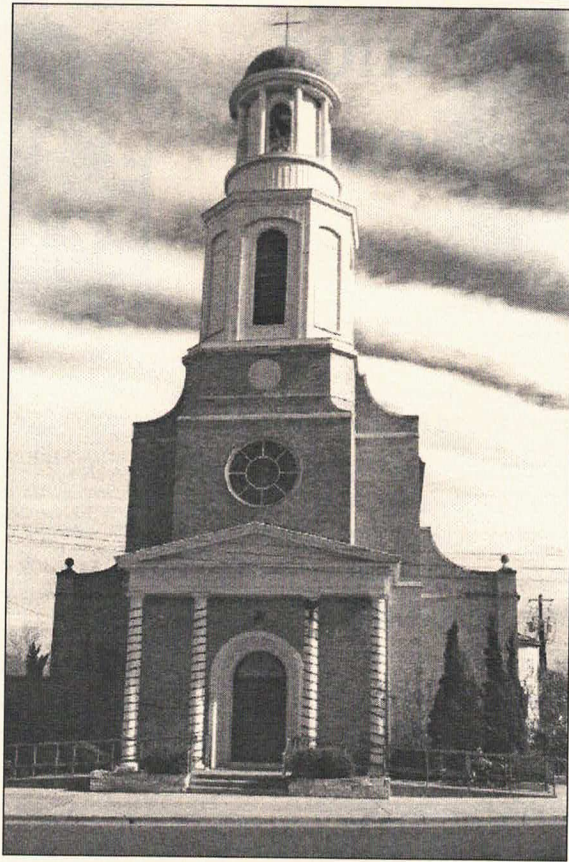
Continued on page 9

✱ Mr. Miller was born in Waco, Texas and heroically lost his life serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Mr. Miller was the first African-American to be awarded the Navy Cross. He was played by actor Cuba Gooding, Jr. in the 2001 movie Pearl Harbor.

✱ Sam's Barbeque, located at 2000 E. 12th Street and founded 65 years ago, is still in operation by the same East Austin family? It was founded by Mr. Sam Tasbe, who sold it to Mr. Sam Campbell, who sold it to Mr. Dan Mays, and all of the owners have been related to each other through each generation.

✱ There was a movie theater called Harlem Theater, opened in 1935 by Mr. George H. Jones, located in the business corridor in Rosewood, which was filled with neighborhood residents for every show? From the 1930s through the 1950s, Rosewood residents recall that at the Ritz Theater on East 6th Street there was segregated balcony seating for African Americans, while at the Harlem Theater they could sit comfortably in general seating.

✱ Rosewood resident Mr. Louis Herrera, Sr. founded Herrera Ornamental Iron Works in the late 1940s, which is now owned and operated by his son, who designed and built the ornamental gate at the Austin Nature Center? Mr. Herrera's daughter, Dr. Sylvia Herrera, co-founded the Austin organization, People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER), which addresses social and environmental issues affecting communities in East Austin.



Shortly after the 1928 Master Plan was adopted, the Catholic Diocese of Austin re-located this parish which offered mass in Spanish from its downtown location to an area of East Austin later known as the Guadalupe Neighborhood just west of Rosewood. This is the current main building and chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe church, at 1206 E. Ninth St.

✱ Mr. Herrera Sr. and other residents worked with U.S. Congressman Jake Pickle to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers channelize Boggy Creek, which runs north-south straight through Rosewood? Before Boggy Creek was channeled, many residents would have to be rescued from their homes by rowboat during major storms.

✱ The McKinley Heights Neighborhood in Rosewood was built in the 1950's as a subdivision designed for middle-class African Americans?

✱ Rosewood resident Mr. Richard Vogt, a local home building contractor, was "Richard from Texas" in the book *Eat, Pray, Love* featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show?

✱ Read *Austin's Rosewood Neighborhood*, and learn more about this unique, historic community. ☺

President, continued from page 3

resource surveys, yet funding for this long overdue work has not been secured. Further, the historic preservation plan for the City has not been updated since 1981. We need these holistic planning and policy efforts to move forward with a strong, deliberate pace to benefit the City as a whole. The Heritage Society will continue to focus our efforts on achieving these goals, and thank you, our membership, for your ongoing support for this vital work.

Best Regards,

Tere O'Connell, AIA
President

Preservation Champions

MICKIE SPENCER

By Liz Carmack



Mickie Spencer

Mickie Spencer arrived in Austin in 2007 with a personal mission to open a restaurant/bar that would showcase her interior design skills and creativity. Out of this, East Side Show Room was born.

Her drive and creativity spawned three additional projects – Swan Dive, Hillside Farmacy and Banger's. Each of these popular destinations bears Spencer's signature style by featuring found and antique objects cleverly repurposed to create one-of-a-kind experiences for patrons. Hillside Farmacy was awarded a Merit Award from the HSA in 2012.

Spencer briefly studied interior design and industrial design in Denver at the Colorado Institute of Art before moving to Barcelona and New York City. There she waited tables and tended bar to pay the bills while developing her skills working with metal and lighting. Before leaving NYC she studied woodworking at the Craftsman League, received her welding certification from Apex Tech and worked with furniture designer Farah Salehi in their shared shop in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

How have you been involved in East Side Show Room (ESSR), Swan Dive, Hillside Farmacy and Banger's?

I moved to Austin with the plan to open ESSR, which I own with my mom, Trudy Spencer. I built many pieces in my shop in Brooklyn. The rest, such as the bar and lighting, I

built here to accommodate the space. Then I designed and built out Swan Dive, which I co-own with Harvey Graham and John Gardner. Next I designed Hillside Farmacy, which I built out with my mom and partners Greg and Jade Mathews and Sonya Cote. I do not co-own Banger's, but I built the lighting and consulted on interior design for owner Ben Siegel's concept.

You work with a lot of found materials and antiques. Why?

I have always loved to work with salvaged material and antiques. They not only have a story but also present details that just aren't made anymore. Finding new uses for old things is definitely challenging since I don't usually use them the way they were intended or even have all the parts of them to do so if I could. So rebuilding something to accommodate them can be difficult but fun. I think it's important to find creative and new uses for old pieces even if it's a cast iron piece of junk because they most likely will never be made that way ever again.

How would you describe the experiences you're trying to create with these interiors?

When I design one of my places, I want the entire concept and design to become one. I think it's important to create a room that gives people the experience of being in another place and time that they have only dreamed about or seen in old movies. With ESSR, I wanted an experience

that made people feel like they were in some bustling cafe/bar in someplace like Eastern Europe or NYC dating back to pre WWII. So repurposing doors and building lighting from old found pieces was the only way to create that feel. To accent that experience, silent films and live music from that time period help remind people of that golden era. Swan Dive was meant to feel like an over exposed silent film with no color – just white, grays, and black. I created the layout of a dance floor in the middle in front of stage with booths around the perimeter to feel like the old ballrooms and dancing cafes of the early 20th Century.

Hillside Farmacy, which the HSA has recognized with a Merit Award, not only uses salvaged materials from a 1920s Elgin pharmacy, the building in East Austin that houses Hillside Farmacy was once a pharmacy. How did that project evolve?

Finding the pharmacy cabinetry allowed us to find a new home and use for them that became a new story of its own. Finding a building for Hillside Farmacy that was once a pharmacy was just pure luck. We knew we had to find a use for all the cabinetry so the decision was made to make it a local grocery with a restaurant and bar and fill the shelves that once held medicine with local groceries and pastries. I rebuilt and arranged the pieces to make it feel as if they were original to the new location. The back bar shelf that was original to the new location I faced with leftover wood from the Elgin cabinetry to make it match the rest. I then built lights from old dough mixing bowls, old copper heaters and old lighting parts. Great finds such as an antique scale, the original prescriptions that are now framed on walls and original medicine from the shelves on display helped create the idea that it was always the Hillside Drug Store. Without these repurposed items and cabinetry I do not believe

Continued on page 11

Many Thanks to our New and Renewing Members

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Thank you



Preservation Champions, cont. from page 10
 we could have pulled off the same atmosphere.

The building's owner, Mrs. Turner, is in her 80s and is the daughter of "Doc" Young, who apparently was the first black pharmacist in Austin, according to Mrs. Turner and to documents I found at the Austin History Center.

Although patrons come for the cocktails and food at these venues, might they unintentionally walk away with a better appreciation for history and historic preservation through the environments you've created?

I absolutely believe people become interested in history when they can see and feel these environments that rarely exist except in a time past or on film. Whether a space is completely

designed and housed with historical pieces to bring someone that full historical experience or if it's just a few historical features to accent a modern space, I believe people become fascinated by these artifacts when they see them used in beautiful and creative ways. I really hope my patrons who may not have cared for history before, walk away from one of my spaces with a new found love for old things and want to save them.

What creation can we expect to see next?

My next project, with partners Stephen and Lauren Shallcross, will be a Mid-century Modern style diner. We have purchased the old Arkie's Grill off East Cesar Chavez that opened in 1948 and closed this past summer. It will be called Sawyer's & Company

after the diner's original owner, "Arkie" Faye Sawyer. We intend to keep the diner layout the same and add onto it. We are re-upholstering the original booths, exposing brick walls and the original ceiling, rebuilding the bar in its original place and re-facing the walls to bring it back to the era it was built. We are adding a new roof design and front facade to celebrate the Mid-century Modern era.

I will build all the lighting to play off the famous light fixture designs from that time, such as the star burst chandelier and '50s drafting lamps. I spent some time this summer touring '50s diners mostly in LA and NY to find inspiration that I think will bring people back to that classy era. We hope to open this spring. ☺



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⇒ HSA CALENDAR OF EVENTS ⇐

January 24 – **Preservation Austin Launch Party**, Neiman Marcus at the Domain. 5:30-7:30 p.m., RSVP by Jan. 17 at rsvp@hsaustin.org or 474-5198.

January 28 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

January 29 – **Windows Restoration Workshop**, 6:00-8:00 p.m., location to be determined, Save the Date.

February 21 – **House Cocktails at the Goff-Radkey House**, 1305 W. 22nd St. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Tickets \$35. Save the Date.

February 25 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

March 23 – **Inherit Austin's Easter Egg Hunt at Laguna Gloria**, 3809 W. 35th St., 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Save the Date.

March 25 – **Historic Landmark Commission Meeting**
7:00 p.m., Austin City Hall. Please call 512.974.3530 for more information.

April 6 – **Heritage Homes Tour "Historic Homes & Gardens"**
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Save the Date.

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