

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

I intended to begin this letter with a list of our accomplishments. 2012 was a busy year, and we did a lot. And I may yet get to that. But the truth is, I'm reluctant to create the impression that everything is under control, that things are being handled effortlessly, that someone else is doing the heavy lifting. There is no one else. There is only us, and us includes you.

Sometimes I argue that volunteer work is the most rewarding way that a person can spend their time -- that it is nobler than watching T.V. or surfing the net. It may be though that I just like to argue. Having said that, a handful of our neighbors created a Neighborhood Watch program this year, and because of them you may still have your T.V., or your computer, or the peace of mind that the folks whose houses were broken into last year don't have right now.

Here's what's true: Our meetings start on time. They open with a song from a local artist you've most likely heard about. We don't let bullies dominate the conversation or hog the floor. We're civil to one another whether you're an old-timer or a first-timer, a developer or an activist. We focus on solving problems and making things better. An average meeting lasts an hour and a half and is attended by 20 people. We have a decent amount of money in the bank.

Here's what's real: We all want mostly the same things. We want to feel safe. We want to take care of those who depend on us, get ahead a little, keep some privacy, maintain our dignity, and to be heard every now and then. I know that if you participate we'll get more done.

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NEW MEETING LOCATION IN 2013!

The GENA membership meetings will be moving to a new location in 2013. We are excited to announce that our meetings will be held in the **South Austin Recreational Center (SARC)** in the heart of our neighborhood beginning this January. SARC is located at 1100 Cumberland.

Mark your calendars with this year's meeting dates.

January 28
March 25
May 20
July 22
September 23
November 25

Neighbors gather at 6:45 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7 p.m.

See you there!

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KEEPING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SAFE

Here is a short list of things we can all do to help keep our neighborhood safe:

- Get to know your neighbors and the cars they drive. Get acquainted the old fashioned way, by stopping and introducing yourself or get to know neighbors via the Yahoo Groups page or Facebook Group.
- Break your routine when leaving and coming home. Make note of any suspicious activity, pull over and call the police.
- Volunteer an hour a week or once a month for our Neighborhood Watch: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4CABAD2BAB9-neighborhood> If you do not have internet access, please call Janet Mash (512)917-3540 and she will assist you in signing up.
- Call 911 if you see anything suspicious. It is better to be safe than sorry.
- Report all theft, burglary, graffiti, house alarms, reckless driving or speeding to the police (311 or 911). Our patrol officers are very busy. If they know there is a problem, they will investigate. The only way they know is if we tell them.
- Report door to door salespersons to the police. Often burglars canvas the area to see who is home or if there are dogs in the home. Barking dogs, alarm systems, cameras and neighborhood watch signs are theft deterrents.
- Replace exterior door "throw" plate screws with 3" screws to prevent the likelihood that your door will be busted in. More info: <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs041/1102675608768/archive/1105225850790.html#LETTER.BLOCK13>

NEIGHBORHOOD REMINDER

South Austin Park is a great spot to exercise your dog. Please remember to scoop the poop! Mutt Mitt bags and trash cans are conveniently located in the park.

GENA's MISSION

is to seek to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters such as land use, traffic control, social functions, environmental protection, public services, and other matters of neighborhood concern.

GENA OFFICERS 2013

President: Kirk Smith
Vice President: Marianne Shivers Gonzalez
Treasurer: Marshall Davis
Secretary: Bob Price
Zoning Chair: Kathryn Kawazoe
Communication Director: Cassie Melendez

WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ANYWAY?

A neighborhood association is a group of residents who meet regularly to accomplish specific goals in their neighborhood. Neighborhood associations help identify challenges and concerns, support change and improvement efforts, help resolve conflicts, provide volunteers for community initiatives, represent the neighborhood as a whole to elected officials and find resources to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

GENA LOGO CONTEST

GENA will be conducting a logo contest. Look for details coming soon at our January meeting and on our yahoo group and Facebook pages.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SIGNS

Neighborhood Watch Signs can be purchased from GENA. They are only \$5 and there are only a few left. Come by January's meeting and get one. . .while supplies last!

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA?

Host a neighborhood Critical Mass?...Start a neighborhood kickball team?...Start a neighborhood playdate?...Get a covered bus stop at Cumberland & S 5th?

Get involved and share your ideas, issues and solutions:

- Attend neighborhood **meetings** and contribute your ideas
- Join the neighborhood **yahoo group**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GalindoNeighborhood/>

- Start a conversation on **facebook** www.facebook.com/groups/GalindoNA/

GENA is an all-**volunteer** organization and we can use your ideas, times and talents!

NEIGHBORHOOD REMINDER

The speed limit on most of our streets is 25 mph. This helps to maintain a neighbor-hood feel and to insure the safety of cars, bikes & pedestrians. Help create calm traffic: driving 25!

IN THE 'HOOD, DID YOU KNOW?

South Austin Recreational Center (SARC) hosts a Saturday yoga class as well as a lot of other programs for adults and kids. There is a lot happening in our park. Check it out:

<http://austintexas.gov/department/south-austin-recreation-center>

Cars 2 Go expanded its territory this year to include our neighborhood. It is a useful service when you need an extra set of wheels. www.car2go.com/en/austin/

GENA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Association is working to preserve and improve our neighborhood. We address topics like traffic, crime, environmental issues, etc. The success of our Neighborhood Association relies on participation from as many neighbors as possible. Your voice and ideas are important in shaping the future of our great neighborhood. **General Meetings** provide a forum for public officials to visit with us about neighborhood-specific issues. The meetings are

also great ways to meet and visit with your neighbors.

Membership in GENA is open to all residential property owners and residents residing within the Galindo Elementary Neighborhood boundaries; Oltorf St.; Ben White Blvd.; S. 1st St. and the Union Pacific Railway Line.

The Association's operating budget is funded by member dues. Annual dues are \$10 per household. Anyone may request a dues waiver by contacting the executive committee. To be a voting member at a General Meeting, the neighbor must have

paid dues, or had their waiver granted, at least 10 days prior to that meeting.

There are several ways to become a paid member:

- Send a check to Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Assn:
GENA
PO Box 41232
Austin, TX 78704
attn: Treasurer
- Bring your dues to a General Meeting (our next meeting is Jan. 28)
- Contact our treasurer to make other arrangements; treasurer@gena.org

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If you show up you will make a difference. After many years of work we have traffic calming on our streets. Like it or not, some people pitched in and got it done, well almost done. We still lack a median here and a roundabout there. But we got bike lanes on Banister, had a great Neighborhood Night Out party, and made a positive impact on several new residential developments – at least according to those who were there, or rather, because of those who were there.

Here's more: We added a new position on the Executive Committee, a Communications Director, who will continually improve how we share relevant information. We've developed a closer, more functional relationship with the South Austin Recreation Center, where we'll hold General Meetings in 2013. The list goes on.

Here's what I want for us this year: a stronger relationship with City Council, sidewalk connectivity on S. 5th St., another volunteer for the Executive Committee, 2 more folks on the Neighborhood Watch, 3 more at every meeting, 4 neighborhood wide events, 5 good pieces of art to choose a new logo from, and 6 of the finest singers, players or poets, to open our 2013 meetings. Let me know who you are.

Kirk Smith
GENA President
President@gena.org