

Galindo Neighborhood Association News



Hi Neighbors!

Have you ever wondered how things get done in the neighborhood? Or about those problems that never seem to get fixed? Like the speed bumps* along S. 5th that weren't replaced last year when the street was repaved? GENA has been fighting to improve our neighborhood since the 90's, working hard for safer streets and park improvements like the walking trail in South Austin Neighborhood Park. We've been advocating for years for development that is in scale, provides a community service or need and is environmentally sound.

Lately I have wondered what motivates people to take action about an issue or problem in their neighborhood. My own aha moment came in 2003 when I read a story in the Austin American Statesman about an 18 court regional tennis tournament center slated to be built in South Austin Neighborhood Park. I canvassed my Southwood neighbors and asked everyone to show up at the next GENA meeting which incidentally, I was not a member and had never even attended a meeting! Lots of people showed up at that meeting and the Parks subcommittee was formed. The project was in the advanced planning stages when we found out about it; city staff said it was a done deal. We all worked together and didn't give up!

Today we are faced with an unwanted, incompatible 8 story building in the site plan review process at the intersection of Cumberland Road and S. 1st St. GENA has tried unsuccessfully to be in the loop on this project over the years but the development tools used to increase affordability deny any stakeholder input even from the property owners who live right next to it! GENA emails to council members and city staff have been largely ignored.

To bring awareness to this issue, Van Wilson and I spoke at the August 26, 2025 city council meeting during Citizen Communication which allows one to speak on any issue not on that day's agenda. Those presentations, your calls and emails to his office finally got our councilmember's attention. I am happy to say I received a call from CM Velásquez who promised to help. We are finally being heard! Keep writing those letters, stay informed, speak up and DON'T GIVE UP! And please join GENA, we are so much stronger together.

Please attend our September 22, 2025 general membership meeting at 7:00pm to learn the latest on this and other issues. **GENA needs you!**

Thanks for reading our Fall 2025 newsletter. We appreciate it!
Patty, GENA President

*we are waiting to see if this expenditure made it into this year's budget cycle.....

Upcoming Meetings

September 22nd
November 17th

7pm, South Austin
Recreation Center

About GENA

The Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Association ("GENA") seeks to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, representing residents and property owners within the boundaries of Oltorf St (N), Ben White (S), the Union Pacific Railway (W) and S 1st St (E).

Find out more at:

www.gena.org



Above: Oak wilt presentation from Keith Babberney, Education Forester for the City of Austin, at the July GENA meeting.

Meet Your New SARC Site Supervisor, Clay Shelton

By Madyson Russell

Clay Shelton recently joined the South Austin Recreation Center (SARC) as its newest Site Supervisor! The previous supervisor, Marcos Nates, will now serve at Dittmar Recreation Center. We wish you luck Marcos!

Madyson Russell reached out to Clay to get to know him a little better.

Q: Please describe your role at SARC and how you interface with the neighborhood/community.

A: As the Recreation Program Supervisor at South Austin Recreation Center, I oversee the planning, coordination, and implementation of a wide range of recreational programs and services for youth, adults, and seniors. My role involves managing facility operations, supervising staff and volunteers, and ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all participants. I also act as a bridge between the City and the South Austin community—building trust through consistent communication, inclusive programming, and responsive service.



Clay Shelton, Site Supervisor at South Austin Recreation Center.

Q: How long have you worked at the city/in the parks department?

A: I have worked in the Austin Parks and Recreation Department for more than 13 years. I spent 10 years as the Recreation Program Supervisor at Dittmar Recreation Center and 3 years in the same position at Northwest Recreation Center before coming over to SARC.

Q: What is the biggest goal you hope to accomplish while at the SARC?

A: My primary goal at South Austin Recreation Center is to upgrade the facility to make it more accessible, functional, and welcoming for all who use the space. I aim to ensure that the physical environment supports a wide range of needs—regardless of age, ability, or background—while also cultivating a sense of belonging and ownership among the community. By involving residents in the improvement process and listening closely to their input, I hope to transform the center into a truly inclusive hub where everyone feels seen, supported, and empowered to participate.

Welcome, Clay! You can find Clay's contact information on the South Austin Recreation Center website at austintexas.gov/department/south-austin-recreation-center.

In Case You Missed It: Oak Wilt

Galindo is adorned with beautiful oak trees, with some parts of the neighborhood even bearing their name. At our last GENA meeting in July, we learned from Education Forester Keith Babberney about how Oak Wilt disease, a contagious fungus, can devastate these trees.

If you suspect your tree or a tree in your neighborhood has been affected, you can start by calling 3-1-1 for help!

Learn more about oak wilt: texasoakwilt.org

Signs to watch for

Live oaks: Yellow/brown leaf veins (veinal necrosis), defoliation in 3-6 months

Red oaks: Sudden death in 4-6 weeks, sweet-smelling fungus under bark in spring

When in doubt, call a certified arborist!

Voices of Galindo: Spotlight On Otto and Margret Hofmann

By Paul Dietz

Galindo is a neighborhood of interesting people who do fascinating things. Otto and Margret Hofmann were Galindo originals who exemplified this vibe: Otto was Texas's leading craftsman of artisanal church organs and Margret was the Austin Councilwoman who established legal protection of Austin's trees. The personal stories behind their work reveal their colorful, humorous and steadfast personalities.

Otto and Margret made their home on a two-acre lot atop a hill at 610 Cardinal Lane, not far from the hum of South First Street's traffic. All that remains are oak trees surrounding a lonesome staircase that led to the entrance of the now demolished home where they raised five children. They were an eclectic couple (even by Austin's standards), who were intellectually serious and held high standards for themselves. Both were of German descent;



Margret & Otto in Front of the Stairs (1960s). Courtesy of Barbra Yerby

Otto was born on a farm in Kyle, Texas to German immigrants, and Margret emigrated in 1946 from war-torn Germany where she tragically lost her mother in a concentration camp. Their life's work reflected their core values of strengthening the community, advancing world peace, and improving human rights. Otto cherished music's role in the community and dedicated himself to a career of designing and building artisanal, Old-European style, church organs. He believed their aesthetic sound quality increased the spirituality of church service and strengthened emotional bonds with the congregation. Margret had multiple careers; homemaker, world peace writer/advocate, and an Austin Councilwoman. Her experience as a girl in Nazi Germany gave her wisdom that guided her advocacy. Her

frequent public utterance, stated in the 2013 *Friends Journal* and many other publications, was "If you don't speak up when you have a concern, soon you may no longer be able to make your voice heard."

Otto's business consumed most of his time and pulled him away from home quite often. He spent a great amount of time on-site in churches and sometimes slept on the floor beside the organ. During construction, full attention was given to ensure the organ was perfectly integrated with the church's interior — physically, architecturally, and acoustically. Nearly every church in Austin has had a Hofmann Organ. But his favorite was the one at Trinity University Church in San Antonio which took two-and-a-half years to complete. He had high customer satisfaction as evidenced by multiple thank-you-notes from church leaders. St. Mary's Cathedral in Austin wrote of their Hofmann Organ on their website, "Its tonal style is eclectic, a fit instrument for the task of preserving the full range of sacred music." Otto kept strong relationships with churches to ensure their organ's quality was maintained. To wit, one can almost hear Otto sobbing in a letter, preserved in the Austin Historical Center, which was sent to an Austin church imploring them to not install seat cushions as they will "deaden" the acoustics of their sacred music and destroy "the mystery of the worship" and that "soon people will stop coming!"



The Vacant Lot at 610 Cardinal Lane and its Lonesome Staircase. Photo by Paul Dietz (2025)



Otto Sitting on the Stairs. Photo by The Austin Chronicle, June 8, 2001

Such was his passion for artistic quality. His reputation resulted in many organ requests across North and South America. Yet he declined most business outside Texas and its surrounding states due to the small size of his company. Still, his global notoriety grew, and in 1980, at age sixty-two, he was not only elected President of the International Organ Builders Association in Amsterdam but was also the first American to serve in that role. In 1994, after a 50+ year career with over 100 organs installed, Otto decided to retire from organs. A few years later he played a role in the movie *Waking Life* which was a surreal story about the meaning of life. Otto's sense of humor prevailed in age. He asked a friend to build him a simple pine coffin. He stored it for years in his house under piles of books and blankets. During one of Barbara's visits, she asked, "Daddy, what is this?" Otto smiled and said, "It's my coffin... but it's too short, so I'll have to pull my legs up a little bit!" The room erupted in laughter. He always brought a smile to others.



Councilwoman Margret Hofmann (1975).
Courtesy of Austin Historical Society

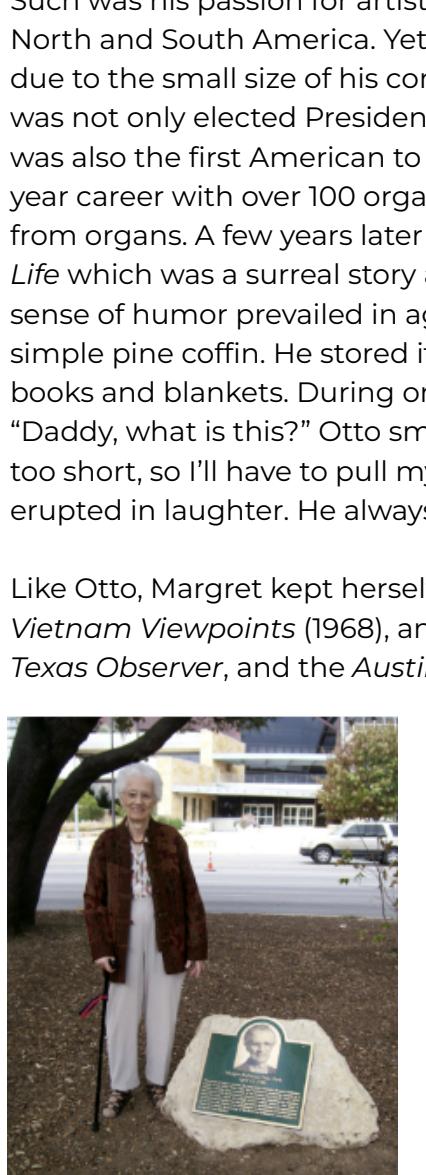
Like Otto, Margret kept herself busy. As a young mother, she wrote books; *A Key to Survival* (1962), *Vietnam Viewpoints* (1968), and opinion pieces for news publications such as *Saturday Review*, *Texas Observer*, and the *Austin American-Statesman*. Most of her writing outlined the avoidable

causes of wars and their destruction to humanity. As the kids got older, Margret served in many Austin-based leadership positions but most enduringly as chairwoman for the Austin-Area UNICEF for 25 years. Her start in Austin politics was ignited when her children couldn't safely walk to Dawson School. Barbara explained "When we walked to Dawson, there were no sidewalks along South First Street, and we'd have to walk in the street while avoiding morning rush hour traffic." Fed up with this, Margret petitioned City Hall for sidewalks — only to be laughed at and called "Sidewalk Lady" as told by the *Texas State Historical Association* (February 2018). This inspired her to run for City Council in 1975, and win, as the first foreign-born naturalized citizen to do so. While serving, she advocated for the preservation of urban trees in Austin and was called "Tree Lady." Her efforts led to Austin's 1983 *Tree and Natural Area Protection Code* and the dedication of a memorial park to her in 2010 called the "Margret Hofmann Oaks," the island of trees across

from City Hall. After serving as Councilwoman Margret continued her focus on peace advocacy. In 2006 the Church Women United (a national women's advocacy for peace) presented Margret the "Human Rights Award" for her lifetime achievements.

Otto and Margret, two of Galindo's finest, passed away on May 12, 2001 and February 2, 2012 respectively. Plans for the vacant lot at 610 Cardinal Lane are unknown. I will reach out to its current legal owners to request that a memorial honoring Otto and Margret be erected where, hopefully, those stairs can be preserved. Special thanks to Barbara Yerby (first Hofmann daughter), Heidi Veselka (third Hofmann daughter), and to the Austin Historical Society for giving timely access to the "Margret Hofmann Papers."

Margret Hofmann Standing in the Margret Hofmann Oaks Park (2010).
Courtesy of Barbra Yerby



Read more about Otto and Margret at gena.org/hofmann-spotlight.

Other News

Tax Rate Election Coming this November

Austin City Council voted in August to adopt a \$6.3 billion budget for FY25-26, leading to an approximately \$33 million deficit next year. In order to make up the difference, residents will be asked to **vote on a tax rate increase** ("Proposition Q") in November's election cycle, which is expected to increase the average homeowner's taxes by \$300 annually.

Proponents of the tax rate increase point to the need to fund essential city services such as public health and safety programs, homelessness services, and parks and public facilities.

Opponents say that the tax rate increase will only further burden residents dealing with the high cost of living in Austin, and instead have called for an audit into the city's spending.

We will have two speakers at the September 22nd meeting to present both sides. Come on by to learn more and ask questions!

Garden Villa Pipeline Repair Project

You may have noticed some construction happening around Garden Villa Ln, Cardinal Ln, etc. This work will repair aging water lines as part of the Renewing Austin initiative.

Work is expected to last around 18 months. During the project, you can expect disruptions to traffic and planned water outages (note: *48 hr notice will be given to affected residents*) in the area. Trash pickup is not expected to be impacted. If you have any issues with services you can contact Gabriel Hernandez, Construction Inspector, at (512) 299-2148.

If you'd like to find out more, head over to this link which also includes a presentation and video recording of the public hearing held on July 24th: austintexas.gov/gardenvilla.



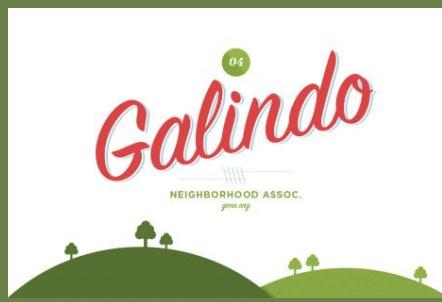
New ARC Medical Facility Coming Soon

The Austin Regional Clinic (ARC) surgery center on South 1st (see photo below) is expected to open in 2026. The two-story 65,000 sq. ft. medical building near its existing South 1st clinics will feature an ambulatory surgery center, expanded specialties, lab and radiology services as well as ARC Medical Aesthetics. The specialties will include:

- Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT)
- General Surgery
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Orthopedics
- Podiatry

Keep an eye on the ARC Newsroom (austinregionalclinic.com/blogs) for updates.





Meetings

General Member Meetings are open to the public and held every other month at **South Austin Recreation Center**, 1100 Cumberland Rd.

Dues are \$20 per household per calendar year to be a voting Member. You do not need to be a voting member to attend.

Upcoming Meetings:

- September 22, 2025
- November 17, 2025

GENA Officers (2025)

Board

President: Patty Sprinkle
Vice-President: Marshall Davis
Secretary: Paul Dietz
Treasurer: Lori Perry
Communications: Heather Nelson
South Central Coalition:
Lisa McGiffert
Zoning: Ryan McCarthy

Committees

Parks: Sev Coursen
Communications: Madyson Russell

Contact

Let's get in touch! To share input, ideas, or feedback:
W: www.gena.org
E: newsletter@gena.org
A: PO Box 41232 Austin TX 78704



Scan the QR code to join the neighborhood Facebook group!

www.gena.org

Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, September 21st:** Free Museum Day, various locations. Here's your chance to visit multiple Austin museums for no cost, along with special programming at most locations. Learn more at austinmuseums.org/this-years-amd.
- **Monday, September 22nd:** GENA General Meeting, 7PM, South Austin Recreation Center. We will be discussing the 8-story high rise planned for Cumberland Rd and S 1st, and have two special guests presenting on the upcoming Tax Rate Election.
- **Saturday, November 1st:** It's My Park Day, various locations. Although we will not be hosting an event at South Austin Neighborhood Park this fall, there are many other places to volunteer! Learn more and find opportunities at austinparks.org/impd.
- **Tuesday, November 4th:** Election Day, South Austin Recreation Center. Your last day to register to vote is October 6th; early voting will run from October 20th-October 31st.
- **Monday, November 17th:** GENA 2026 Board Elections, 7PM, South Austin Recreation Center. We will be electing our board for next year at the November 17th general meeting. If you are interested in serving, please contact Patty at president@gena.org.

Renew or Start Your Membership Today!

Membership in GENA is open to all residents within the Galindo Elementary Neighborhood boundaries for \$20 per household per calendar year.

We can't do it without your support! We rely entirely on member dues to fund essential operational costs such as our website, PO Box, newsletter and signage, and more.

You may join on our website at gena.org or by scanning the QR to the right. Alternatively you may bring cash or check to a GENA meeting, or mail a check to PO Box 41232 Austin TX 78704. Questions may be directed to treasurer@gena.org.



Let's Stay in Touch

Do you want to stay up to date on what's happening in the neighborhood? We keep neighbors updated through our website at **gena.org**, our Facebook group (see left), and our **e-mail list** (send an e-mail to newsletter@gena.org to be added or subscribe at gena.org).

See You in the Neighborhood!