

Heritage Newsletter



Heritage Neighborhood
Association

September 2025



Graffiti abatement team members left to right: Jeff Squires, Jay Farrell, Dan Mottola, Lisa Squires, Jill Parrish, and Jeff Webster.

Graffiti Be Gone!

By Jeff Webster

Upon returning to the Heritage neighborhood after spending 2021 in Australia, Jay Farrell noticed an uptick in graffiti “tagging” on his familiar streets, something that many of us barely registered, so incremental was the rise. Not one to idly watch the deterioration of his surroundings, Jay looked for ways to address the problem through the strength of community.

Graffiti is far from a local problem. According to the [Arizona State University Center for Problem Solving Policing](#), graffiti is “widely found in jurisdictions of all sizes” and its cumulative effect is costly, resulting in an

estimated \$12 billion in annual cleanup costs in the US. Graffiti can also be associated with negative social behaviors such as shoplifting, gang activity, property destruction, and forms of public disorder including loitering, public urination, and littering.

Interestingly, gang-related graffiti has been declining in the U.S. as [gang members increasingly turn to social media](#). Gang graffiti in Heritage is rare and simple “tagging” -- a stylized graffiti that functions as a personal signature -- is more prevalent. Yet tagging also creates a perception

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Steering Committee

Jenny Carlson
John Foxworth
Betsy Greenburg
Laura Grim – President
Jolene Kiolbassa
Rebecca Marcus – Secretary
Dan Mottola
Jill Parrish
Jeff Webster – Treasurer



Newsletter Contributors

Jeff Webster
Brenda Bell
Susan Van Haitsma
Jay Farrell
Dena Houston



Heritage Calendar

Sep 4 – Neighborhood Happy Hour
@ 614 W 31st and ½ ST, home of Beth
Plevich and Max Stinchcombe (6 pm)
Sep 11 – City Council Meeting
Oct 7 - National Night Out
@ Laura and Bob Grim's house
3001 Washington Square (6-8 pm)



Sign Up for Neighborhood Listserv

Send an e-mail to:

heritage-na+subscribe@googlegroups.com

You will begin to receive emails once you accept your invitation. To post content or update your settings, create a Google Groups account by following instructions [here](#). Note that you can create an account without a Google email address.



Heritageaustin.org

HNA Update

The neighborhood met on August 26. Police Officer Marlon Goodloe and Code Enforcement Officer Su provided insights into recent trends in graffiti, noise, neglected buildings, burglaries, and unhoused encampments. They urge neighbors to stay vigilant, report emergencies to 911 and less urgent issues to 311. Late summer can be particularly active for mischief.

Other business: After decades of service, Betsy Greenberg has stepped down from her post as Treasurer, but will continue to serve on the Steering Committee. Jeff Webster was voted the new Treasurer. Rebecca Marcus was voted the new Secretary.



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of disorder and neglect that reduces a community's sense of security. The resulting economic damage is in the form of decreased property values and neighborhood disinvestment.

Jay learned that communities can help deter graffiti by reacting swiftly. He recruited neighbors to promptly paint over graffiti tags in Heritage neighborhood public places like utility poles, street curbs, and retaining walls. The first graffiti abatement expeditions started with team members meeting for coffee at a neighborhood café followed by a trip to Jay's garage where they collected paint and brushes. Thus armed, groups walked through Heritage painting over graffiti with grey and rust colored paint that was either donated to or purchased by the neighborhood association.

Because successful graffiti abatement relies on quick action, many team members now store their own supplies and strike out on their own. Jay says that their efforts seem to be paying off in less frequent tagging. He's noticed that a few of the taggers have shown “graphic suave” and hopes that one day their talents may turn toward more worthwhile -- even marketable -- ends.

But community remains crucial. Jay envisions periodic gatherings of neighbors to swap intel, rejoice in our accomplishments and restock abatement supplies. All are welcome. Look for announcements of gatherings on the Heritage Listserv and this newsletter's calendar.



Steps to Reduce Graffiti

1) Keep the neighborhood clean and neat – Litter patrols, such as those led by Evy Grace and Laura Grim in Heritage, contribute to the appearance of a secure neighborhood with eyes on the street. Trim landscaping, proper lighting and well-maintained fences and outbuildings signal that homes are occupied, which deters graffiti. These measures are especially important for owners of unoccupied dwellings.

2) Remove/paint over graffiti promptly -- Experts say removal within 48 hours is most effective.

3) Report graffiti -- Report graffiti online via the Austin 3-1-1 online [portal](#) or dial 3-1-1. If the number 3-1-1 isn't working for you, try [512-974-2000](#).

Calling All Swifties

By Susan Van Haitsma

Calling all Swifties! We're entering migration season, when our friendly high-altitude/good attitude/part-time residents of Heritage prepare for their long journey to points south. As neighbors have witnessed, groups of Chimney Swifts have traditionally chosen a chimney at the Austin Zen Center on Washington Square for overnight migratory roosts. There are probably other roost sites in our neighborhood or nearby, as Central Texas is on the flyway for Chimney Swifts and other migratory species from North America heading for Central and South America.

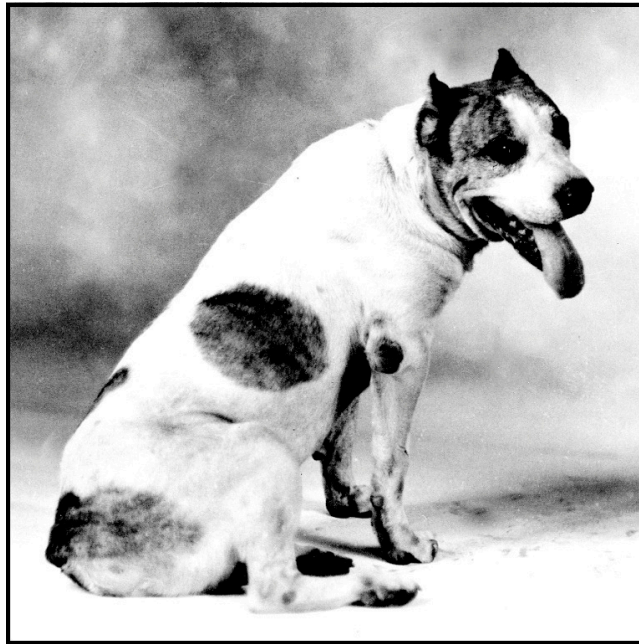


Migratory species can be remarkably consistent in their arrival and departure times. On April 1st this spring, I first noticed Chimney Swifts arriving from the south and circling above our neighborhood. Looking back at notes from 2024, April 1st was the same date I first noticed them here as well! In Spring, the swifts choose mates and nesting sites, one pair per chimney. I saw a pair of swifts enter the Zen Center chimney on several occasions this spring and am hopeful that they successfully nested there and raised fledglings ready to join the fall migration.

On average over the last 5 years that I have taken notes, beginning about mid-September Chimney Swifts from Heritage and beyond have formed overnight roosts in the Zen Center chimney, staying two to three weeks before continuing south. Neighbors have gathered in front of our house at dusk to watch, and on peak nights

we've counted as many as 100 Chimney Swifts enter the chimney. Somewhat similar to the Purple Martins' aerial acrobatics that entertain Austinites in late summer when martins gather and roost in a small grove of trees in Round Rock, Chimney Swifts perform their own ballets at dusk as they circle above the rooftops in a pattern of their own design and then funnel one by one into the chimney.

So, keep your eyes on the skies and your ears tuned for the friendly chatter of our high-flying, bug-eating Heritage neighbors. I'll send a notice when I first see the swifts' Fall meet-ups in the Zen Center Chimney. Come watch with us! To learn more about the fascinating lifeways of these special birds, I recommend the book written by Travis County's longtime Chimney Swift specialists, Georgeann and Paul Kyle, published by Texas A&M University Press.



Our Most Famous Neighborhood Dog: Pig Belmont

by Jeff Webster

Most any early evening in Heritage one witnesses a procession of dogs pulling their obedient but distracted owners about the neighborhood, enjoying fresh air, relief from the confines of home and office and perhaps a bit of neighborly interaction. How many realize that they're walking in the paw prints of an Austin canine legend?

Some may be familiar with Theo Belmont, the first Director of Athletics at the University of Texas who helped form the old Southwest Conference and who initiated the tradition of playing the Oklahoma-Texas game in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas. Enrollment at UT was just over 2,000 students when Theo moved to Austin in 1914. In 1915, Theo moved into the house he had built at 810 W 31st Street where he lived with his wife, Frieda, and two children. Theo had a masonry hobby, and one can still see his stone pillars at the traffic circle at 31st Street and West Avenue and along Grandview.

Theo was also the owner of a pit bull humorously named "Pig" -- so called for his bowlegged stance resembling that of Gus "Pig" Dittmar, a two-sport star athlete from 1913-1917 and a future member of the UT Athletics Hall of Fame. Before Bevo the Longhorn became a logo, Pig Belmont was the university's first live mascot.

Pig (the dog) was born in Houston, Texas on February 10, 1914 and after weaning was delivered to an eager Belmont household that March. The pup loved people and followed Theo to campus where Pig quickly won over the students and faculty, but not the librarians. Pig's inability to stifle his enthusiasm and expressions of love for his "fellow" students earned him expulsion from the University Library, then located in Battle Hall. A stern editorial in The Daily Texan defended Pig's freedom to roam the entire campus, including the libraries,

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“Pig Belmont” continued

claiming the reprimand was an arbitrary form of discrimination. Nevertheless, Pig continued to make friends all over campus, proudly patrolling the grounds and other buildings.

Pig was particularly happy at crowded sporting events, indoors and outdoors, where he reigned as the school's

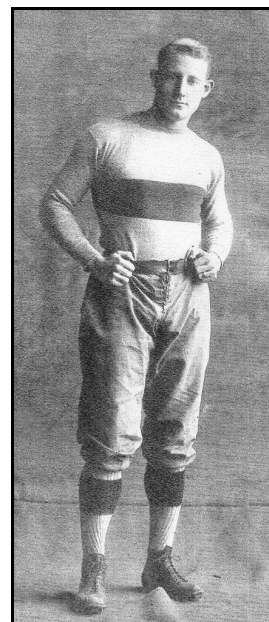
Building. Being a Big Dog on campus, his trips back home to the Bellmonts became less frequent. And then Theo Belmont entered the military during World War I.

UT became a training ground for three separate military operations including the new School of Military Aeronautics, the prototype for what would become



mascot. For those keeping score, this position predated Texas A&M University's canine mascot, Revielle, by 17 years. Students trained Pig to jump up and down and bark at the mention of "Texas" and to feign death if someone said "A&M" or "Aggie".

While Heritage neighborhood was Pig's official home, he was welcomed at cafeterias, food shacks and boarding houses west of campus, especially those whose food was to his liking. He often napped under the steps to the old University Co-op, then located in the Main



the US Air Force Academy. The rush of marching and drills excited Pig, who was quickly adopted by the recruits. He even joined officers on troop inspections. The air force training occurred in six-week intervals after which the troops completed their instruction in Dallas. Twice Pig traveled to Dallas with the soldiers only to be shipped back to Austin by train.

When the war ended, Theo returned to Austin and found Pig roaming the now deserted army barracks on

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campus where he was soon mingling with new students. On occasion he joined the women’s hiking club on their 20-mile hike to San Marcos. But as the mascot got older, he started slowing down, especially after losing vision in one eye. On New Year’s Day 1923, the partially blind Pig was injured by a Model T Ford at Guadalupe and 24th Street near the Texas Theater. He died three days later at his old haunt beneath the University Co-Op steps.

While all dogs die, few are memorialized as was Pig. On January 5, Pig lay in state in front of the Co-Op in a specially built casket with a glass viewing window. A flag flew at half-mast. Hundreds of people paid their respects and joined or watched the slow procession along Guadalupe Street and then on 21st Street to the old law school building, where the Graduate School of Business is now located.

The duty of pallbearing fell to a new student group called the Texas Cowboys. The dean and founder of the Engineering Department, Thomas Taylor, eulogized Pig with lines quoted from the English poet Lord Byron’s ode to his own beloved dog. After a pause,

in what the Texan described as a “trembling” voice, Taylor added:

“*I do not know what joys await Pig Belmont on the Other Side. But I do know this: that if there is a place of Elysian happiness for dogs, Pig will join that great dog of Lord Byron. Certainly, no dog was ever more deserving of such a reward as he.*”

The Longhorn band played “Taps.” A men’s quartet sang. Pig was laid to rest behind Meze Hall, named for the college president who hired Theo Belmont. Some students crafted a marker that read “Dog Dead. Dog Gone”. Later a tombstone read, “Only a dog, but true to Texas.”

The solemn ceremonies were reported in newspapers across Texas and throughout the country.

As students familiar with Pig graduated and younger ones took their place, memories of Pig dimmed. Every ten or so years, Pig’s name reappears in local papers, typically as a lament for those lively days when the university was much smaller and dogs roamed freely in Austin neighborhoods and on our university campus.



Big Change to Recycling in Austin!

By Dena Houston

The City of Austin has now expanded recycling collection to include cartons and coated paper products thanks to new equipment that can process the materials. These products can now go in the blue curbside recycling bin. Cartons, also known as aseptic or gable top containers, are often used to

package items like milk, juice, protein drinks, soup and creamers. Coated paper products include cups used for hot coffee and other beverages, paper plates and takeout food containers. Ice cream cartons and boxes for meat and vegetable broth are also now recyclable.



Some important recycling guidelines:

- Similar to cans, jars, and bottles, these items must be empty and clean. A quick rinse or wipe clean should be enough!
- Remove straws or utensils before recycling.
- Leave the cap/lid on. It helps keep the container's shape, making it easier for recycling machines to sort.
- Do not flatten or crush any items.
- Do not place items containing leftover food or liquid in the blue cart.
- Plastic-coated paper plates that are not clean go in the regular trash.
- Uncoated paper plates (clean or dirty) go in the green compost cart.

Editor's note: We are grateful to publish this excerpt from a recent article on recycling in Austin by Dena Houston, a noted educator and recycling expert. To subscribe to Lettuce Recycle!, her popular newsletter on recycling in Austin -- or if you have questions or recycling ideas -- please write her at **denahouston3309@gmail.com**.



Dog Parade!

Neighbors came out to celebrate National Dog Day, August 26, with a parade of our favorite pups. Thanks for coming out!



Glossary

Tagging:

Experts have developed an elaborate taxonomy for classifying "tagging" and other forms of graffiti. It is believed that tagging often stems from anger and hostility towards society. Vindictive tagging can arise from despair, resentment, failure and/or frustration. More artistic or elaborate forms of tagging can bring satisfaction and notoriety to the tagger. That leads to a high volume of tags in well-traveled corridors, often strategically placed in difficult to erase spots.

Heat Index:

The heat index is what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature. There is a direct relationship between the air temperature and relative humidity and the heat index; as the air temperature and relative humidity increase, the heat index increases. When the air temperature and relative humidity decrease, so does the heat index. This relationship is shown in a mathematical formula.

Heritage Index – September 2025

In years, the average lifespan of a Chimney Swift : 4.6

Number of tail feathers of a Chimney Swift : 10

Weight in number of fly-sized insects consumed daily by a pair of Chimney Swift parents : 5,500

Estimated global population of Chimney Swifts, in millions : 7.7

Number of Athletic Directors that UT Austin has had : 10

Number of Bevos : 15

Number of Revielle mascots Texas A&M has had : 10

Minimal number of fire hydrants in Austin, TX : 30,000

Percentage of collected waste in Austin that goes to landfills : 60

Percentage of items placed in Austin's blue recycling bins that are recyclable : 80