

# THE AHNA Advocate

October 2009

Volume 1, Issue 4

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMO HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has!" Margaret Mead (1901-1978)

## Board Nixes \$10.3 Million

On Nov. 3 the Board of Directors of the Alamo Heights Neighborhood Association urges you to vote **NO** on **Proposition 1**, which calls for the demolition and total reconstruction of the entire City Hall complex. Our carefully considered reasoning for this recommendation is as follows:

- While the bond issue in Proposition 1 is for \$10,300,000, the real cost of the project is in excess of \$20 million when interest and all other expenses past, present and future are included. This amounts to over \$7,500 per household.
- The \$10,300,000 cost of the Proposition 1 bond issue divided by the 27,300 square feet of project construction yields a total cost per square foot of \$377.
- Taxes will go up by an estimated 15.5%, although the exact tax increase won't be known until 2010, when the election is long over with.
- By the time the bonds are retired at maturity, the cost of this tax increase for the average property owner may have ballooned to more than \$1,000 per year as property appraised values increase annually.
- Each incremental tax increase makes Alamo Heights even less affordable.
- In spite of these expenditures, the level of services will not increase substantially.
- The proposal requires tearing down City Hall/Police Station, Council Chamber, the "Tin Man" water tower, Fire Station and all the other buildings on the existing property. These structures have been part of Alamo Heights history for more than 80 years and they deserve a greater measure of respect.
- This proposition requires tearing down three houses on Henderson Street, one which involved city threats of eminent domain.
- The total cost is almost \$1 million to acquire these three houses which

(Continued on Page 2)

Alamo Heights  
Neighborhood  
Association

P.O. Box 91192 • Alamo Heights, Texas • 78209



## Founder's Corner

John Joseph, President

*If you missed the first three issues, The AHNA Advocate is the Alamo Heights Neighborhood Association's official newsletter which is mailed monthly at no cost to every home in the City of Alamo Heights (CoAH). There is no connection between AHNA or The AHNA Advocate and the CoAH or AHISD.*

*If you have thought about joining AHNA and haven't yet, this month it just got easier. By popular request we have included a membership application on Page 15.*

### IS LUNCH FREE?

There is no such thing as a free lunch, especially in the real world of municipal bonds. Some think if the \$10.3 million bond issue passes on Nov. 3 that it will not cost the people of Alamo Heights anything. Nothing could be further from the truth.

If the voters of Alamo Heights approve Proposition #1 on Nov. 3 the people and banks who buy those bonds do not just fork over \$10.3 million to the city because they are altruistic. No, they loan the city that amount at an agreed upon interest rate for a fixed period of time and the city must repay the full amount borrowed plus interest, generally in 20 years, sometimes less.

Our city, in turn, must get its money from the property owners and taxpayers. CoAH is currently projecting that if Prop. 1 is approved property taxes will increase 5.5¢ per year for every \$100 of property appraisal. That 5.5¢ is on top of the regular property tax rate, which was just approved for 2010 at the rate of 35.5¢ or a total of approximately 41.06¢ per \$100 of your home's appraised value. That 5.5¢ amounts to 15.46% of 35.5¢. Thus if Prop. 1 passes our property tax will have to increase roughly 15.5% for up to the next 20 years.

Proponents of Prop. 1 say taxes are "only" going up about 5.5¢ annually, which doesn't sound like much until you look at the above math. They usually only discuss that 5.5¢ figure. Rarely,

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Board Nixes \$10.3 Million - (Continued from Cover Page)

- will eventually be bulldozed to provide land for the construction of a 52-car employee parking lot at a total cost of almost \$20,000 per car.
- The City is not setting a good example regarding home demolitions and the proliferation of McMansions in Alamo Heights.
  - The most cost-effective approach would have been to adaptively reuse the existing buildings, bringing them up to code and making additions as necessary.
  - The City never *seriously* considered renovating or adaptive reuse of any of the existing buildings, in spite of a study which showed this approach to be feasible and 17% cheaper than tearing everything down, throwing it into the landfill and building anew.
  - Moving the police and/or fire functions to a nearby site would have allowed for more flexibility to save City Hall, Council Chambers, the Tin Man and the three Henderson homes.
  - City officials have publicly stated that the City did not *seriously* consider moving any functions to a new location.
  - There is no consideration for the incorporation of solar energy, solar hot water heating or many of the other possible conservation features.
  - The project is being promoted as a "public safety" facility, but the plans reveal that other city services make up a very significant portion of the proposed complex.
  - West-facing glass will drive up building energy costs as do double height volumes.
  - The proposal is out of scale for Alamo Heights and not representative of the residential nature of our community.

We believe it is important to address the needs of our first responders and provide a better working environment for all city employees, to get far more out of our tax dollars, and to better satisfy the sustainability goals of the City's new Comprehensive Plan. To do so, we urge the City to not go ahead with this project as currently designed, but instead to develop a more appropriate solution by reusing the existing facilities in whole or part, retrofitting those buildings and artfully adding new construction to maximize our commitment to a greener, more sustainable world. This will respect the existing buildings and the history they represent, enable resource conservation and provide fiscal savings that could be reinvested in strategies to make this project a comprehensive model of the best practices today.

(Please refer [www.myalamoheights.com](http://www.myalamoheights.com) for a detailed substantiation of the issues related to Proposition 1)

## Teenage Job Seekers

Name	Age	Baby Sit	Pet Sit	House Sit	Yard Work	Phone
Boatman, Jai.....	16.....	•.....	•.....	•.....	•.....	241-6910
		*-CPR Training		+First Aid Training		

### Attention Teenagers

The **Teenage Job Seekers** listing service is offered free of charge to all The AHNA Advocate teenagers seeking work. Submit your name and information to [alamoheights@PEELinc.com](mailto:alamoheights@PEELinc.com) by the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month!

## New Olmos Park City Hall



Photo by Hans Rohl

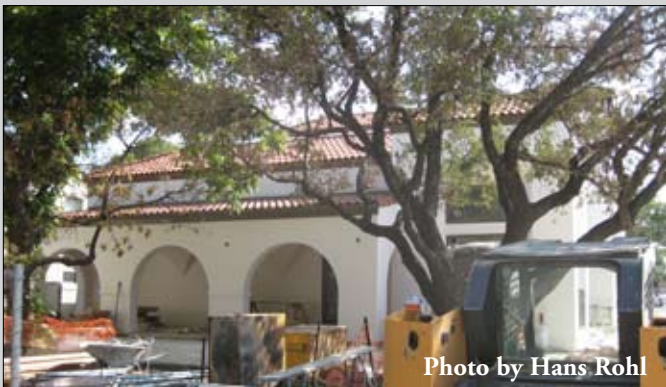


Photo by Hans Rohl

The above photos show the new Olmos Park City Hall. Originally we had intended to run two photographs of the proposed new Alamo Heights City Hall complex, but, unfortunately, we were not granted permission by the City of Alamo Heights to reproduce the copyrighted pictures of Lake/Flato's architectural renderings. Instead, the City suggests that you look at its website [www.alamoheightstx.gov](http://www.alamoheightstx.gov) to view the drawings of the complex's exterior. Apologies to those citizens who do not have Internet access. At press time *The AHNA Advocate* was told no detailed interior plans have been received yet.

### Founder's Corner - (Continued from Cover Page)

if ever, do they mention the 15.5% tax increase. People aren't stupid. While there are those who always want you to believe it is "only 5 1/2 pennies" per \$100 of home value, that translates to a 15.5% tax hike. Prop. 1 proponents should face facts and tell people the whole truth, not just a series of half truths.

There are those who say \$10.3 million is doable for a nice, new, shiny City Hall, but they forget the INTEREST or mistakenly believe it is included in the \$10.3 million! Depending on market conditions, if the bond passes, sometime in Jan., 2010 the city will set the term (length) of the bonds, plus the interest rate. No one can accurately predict what will happen between now and early 2010, but most indications are that interest rates will be in the 4.5% to 5.0% range. If it is 5% and the city takes 20 years to pay the bondholders back, the interest will total \$7 - \$8 million plus the original \$10.3 million borrowed. Take a look at the photos on Page 3. Does that really look like an \$18 million building to you?

### AD HOMINEM

As the bond election heats up, it seems someone at the City continues stooping to lower and lower lows every day. They are engaging in the politics of personal destruction rather than sticking to talking about the facts. Council and their "Friends" should remember this is a bond election, not a Presidential election, not even a City Council election. It appears some are acting like personality will determine whether the bond will pass or fail. Perhaps they have forgotten that the past can, indeed, be a very sharp, double-edged sword.

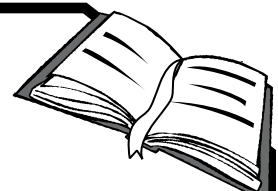
In a small city with a small City Council it only takes one bad apple to discredit the entire group, even if the rest are squeaky clean. Erratic behavior has no place on this or any City Council. Casting aspersions on private citizens is not ethical behavior for elected officials. Does *The Advocate* need to run the Alamo Heights Code of Ethics to remind everyone how they are *supposed* to behave? Badmouthing residents who disagree with you by branding them as "radical" to anyone who will listen is counterproductive. Likewise, it is pretty bizarre and unorthodox for an official in this city or anywhere to gloat that he maintains *dossiers* on private citizens who disagree with him. This sounds more like the KGB or Gestapo than Alamo Heights. Continuous back-stabbing and character assassination is not ethical conduct for elected officials. In fact,

(Continued on Page 4)



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**Founder's Corner** - (Continued from Page 3)

it almost suggests a much deeper problem. I always remember what my third grade teacher at Cambridge, Mrs. Breeden, used to say. "If your opponent resorts to name-calling, he's already lost the race." At this rate the bond election of 2009 is already over with.

**C.A.V.E. PEOPLE UNITE!**

Some around City Hall in the past have referred to the citizens of Alamo Heights as "C.A.V.E. people". That acronym stood for Citizens Against Virtually Everything. At first many who knew about it were offended by the term until it was decided that in "The City of Beauty and Charm" the term C.A.V.E. people really means CITIZENS ADVANCING VOTER EFFECTIVENESS. Come November perhaps everyone may have a little more respect for the C.A.V.E. dwellers. All we want is for the public officials we elect and the staff members whose salaries we pay to start being more responsive to our needs. Is that really asking too much?

**THE LAST WORD: THANKS!**

So many people really deserve enormous thanks for their special contributions to the October edition of *The AHNA Advocate*, especially **Kathy and Vernon Friesenhahn** whose very generous gift helped underwrite the added expense of this special expanded issue. As always, I'm profoundly grateful to **Chief of Police Rick Pruitt, AHPD's Criminal Investigations Division** and **Dr. Dan Kirby**, all of AHNA's Board members particularly **Laura and Martine Theurer, Marcia Goren Weser, Carol Duganne, Kathy Ingle, Peggy Day, John Hertz, Hans Rohl, Tom Harmon, Margaret Spencer, Nancy Dunson and Erich Menger**. Alamo Heights' newest resident, **Denise DeGeare**, has already lent a helping hand and then there are contributing members **Suzanne Bettac, Maddie Highsmith** (sometimes I wonder if her last name really isn't Highoctane), **Maggie Houston, Banks Smith and Pete Turnbull**, plus countless others who have done so much to make *The AHNA Advocate* a reality. None of this would be possible without **Jonathan and Kelly Peel** and their top notch design team in Austin. AHNA remains indebted to **Robert Ruggiero**, owner and WebMaster of [www.MyAlamoHeights.com](http://www.MyAlamoHeights.com), for his never ending cooperation and dedication. Robert continually impresses us with his technical prowess and his California "chill" attitude which helps make both AHNA and [MyAlamoHeights.com](http://MyAlamoHeights.com) the successes that they have become today.

**AH Profile: ERICH MENGER, III**

*Marcia Goren Weser*

It's a jungle out there! At least that is what a very young Erich Menger III once imagined. "I remember 'granny' (a close neighbor and friend) who lived on Ogden Lane and had a sleeping porch, so when I slept out there on summer nights, I could hear the roar of the lions from the zoo," he reminisced.

"I grew up in Alamo Heights and went all through school here and graduated from AHHS. My cousins lived a few blocks of us, and we played in the Olmos Basin floodplain when it rained. I remember the old Red and White grocery, walking to Handy Andy and my dentist on Broadway. I even have a picture of Cambridge in the woods."

His grandparents built a home on Ogden Lane for Erich's father, where Erich's 92-year old mother still lives. It was one of the first to be built on that street. Erich inherited "granny's" home just after he went to Trinity University; it became his fraternity house. Eventually he renovated the 700-square foot structure, maintaining its architectural integrity and style. He lives there today.

Erich graduated from Trinity in 1966 with a major in sociology. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the Army's Medical Service Corps. During his three-year tour of active duty, he served 1½ years as a hospital registrar in the northern-most surgical hospital in Vietnam, coordinating admissions and mass casualties. Later Erich was accepted into the Peace Corps, but never got to serve. He is now a retired Lt. Colonel from the Army Reserves.

"I began to work with Jack McGregor at the Witte Museum, where I organized receptions and special events, including the San Antonio Museum of Art's grand opening," he recalls. Erich then formed his own company, Menger and Associates, now known as one of San Antonio's premier catering companies.

"If you want great food and service, presented with impeccable style and panache, call Erich Menger," said one of his clients recently. "He can do anything, do it grandly, and do it for a party of 10 people or hundreds."

Trinity University presents two annual awards for outstanding alumni, one of which was bestowed upon Erich-- the 2007 Spirit of Trinity Award. He has served two terms on Trinity's National Alumni Board, and is still actively involved, plus he is a alumni director of Trinity's Chi Delta Tau.

In his rare spare time Erich volunteers for the All Can Ski program, now under the auspices of the San Antonio Sports Foundation. "This program is not only for veterans at the Center for the Intrepid (a world-class rehabilitation facility for amputees and burn victims adjacent to Brooke Army Medical Center)," Menger explains. "But it is also for children and adults with physical disabilities to learn adaptive waterskiing. Sea World closes to the public, while its Ski Team helps them launch, often for the first time, onto skis. It is a very rewarding project."

Erich donates his time, talent and treasure to the community. "I care about Alamo Heights, and the continuity of our neighborhood. I want people who live here to preserve and respect what we have, especially the Cottage District." He currently serves as AHNA's Vice President of Social Events.



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## Caring for Your Pet

### Stem Cell Therapy in Your Dog

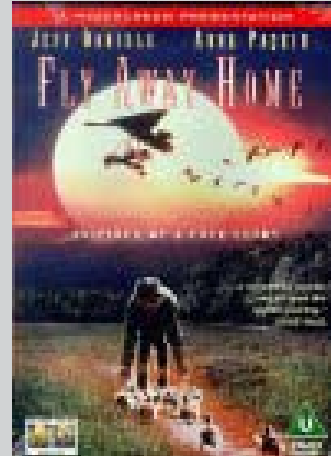
Dan R. Kirby, DVM

There are a number of well established, appropriate treatment options for arthritis in dogs. Now we can add regenerative stem cell therapy to that list.

As you may know if you have an older dog (sometimes even younger ones), they can develop arthritis just like humans do. Now in addition to medications, surgery and acupuncture veterinarians can harvest the fat cells from your dog and have those cells filtered and concentrated. Stem cells have the potential to develop into much needed cartilage. Cells are then injected at a specific joint or intravenously. These cells will not be rejected because they are your dog's own cells. So far the results in my clinic have been very good and other clinics report the same results. The pain of joint disease is relieved considerably.

This procedure costs between \$3,500 and \$4,000, while hip replacement can cost \$5,000 or more. These dogs must be evaluated carefully for any other existing diseases.

I find that this procedure is truly exciting because it is may be just the first of many exciting possibilities to repair other organs, including the liver, lungs, heart and kidneys. Using dogs' own cells to treat their illnesses and pain is, indeed, a major breakthrough.



## First Cinema Under the Stars Features "Fly Away Home"

All residents of Alamo Heights are invited to the first ever free Cinema Under the Stars on Saturday, Oct. 17 when the family-friendly, PG-rated movie "Fly Away Home" will begin at 7:00 P.M. at Alamo Heights High School's Practice Field on Castano, between the high school and the stadium. This film is equally inspiring for adults and children.

Co-sponsored by the Alamo Heights Neighborhood Association (AHNA) in collaboration with the Alamo Heights Chamber of Commerce and generously underwritten by Grande Communications, the movie stars Jeff Daniels as the father and Academy Award-winner Anna Paquin as his 14-year-old daughter who can't seem to get along. But when she takes on the responsibility of raising abandoned Canadian geese, relations between father and daughter improve. After she bonds with the geese, the two of them must teach the birds to migrate, thanks to him and his ultralight airplane. The airborne adventurers rediscover their affection for each other while overcoming many difficulties before finally arriving safely at the gosling's winter home.

"Fly Away Home" also features Dana Delany who currently stars in the hit tv show "Desperate Housewives". Previously she had a leading role in the popular television series "China Beach".

Bring your favorite lawn chair and cushion or a blanket and enjoy Alamo Heights Cinema Under the Stars with your family, friends and neighbors. It's fun for all ages and best of all, it's completely free. Please do not bring your own food and beverages.

"Two thumbs up – way up! This is truly something special," said Siskel and Ebert. "Spectacular! An amazing story that will steal your heart!" according to NBC-TV's Mike Wilber.

The film runs 110 minutes. In case of rain, the movie will be shown at 7:00 P.M. Saturday, November 14.

*Special thanks to AHISD! What a joy to work with...zero redtape, no hurdles to jump or obstacles to overcome. Hats off to the school district for their cooperative, friendly, can-do spirit. Without the district this event would not have been possible.*

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**CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS NEW MUNICIPAL FACILITIES  
CURRENT COST ESTIMATING RECAP**

**I. CONSTRUCTION COST**

A. Base Estimate	\$9,734,352
B. Value Engineering	<u>(\$1,543,267)</u>
Total Construction	\$8,191,085

**II. SOFT COST**

A. Design, FF&E, Property Acquisition and Contingency	\$2,598,915
Total Hard and Soft Cost	\$10,790,000
Plus Bond Issuance Cost	\$156,000
Less Current Funding	<u>(\$600,000)</u>
Total	\$10,346,000

***Brief Detailless City Hall Cost***

The above brief document, which is surprisingly undetailed, is the main and apparently only hand-out the City has given the public to describe how they intend to spend \$10.3 million if Proposition 1 passes on Nov. 3, 2009. For that amount most people would have rightfully appreciated and expected a few more details. We don't believe the taxpayers are intentionally being kept in the dark, however, it is hoped that City staff provided City Council with more information than this. People get more details when they buy a bicycle than the citizens of Alamo Heights received for the complete city complex.

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## Advocate Opinion Page

### HAVE YOUR SAY

*These are all the Letters to the Editors received as of our publication deadline, Sept. 20, 2009. These writers represent a wide variety of viewpoints; we welcome a healthy, civil difference of opinion. This is our fourth issue and we have recently received criticism for not publishing opposing views. We cannot publish what we do not receive, subject to cut-off dates and space limitations! It is a daunting task to start a monthly publication of this size with no budget, no paid staff and no stories except what we write. This page is entirely dependent on you, the residents of Alamo Heights, for copy. Help us improve The AHNA ADVOCATE each month. And if you can help on the other pages too, please let me know ...we would more than welcome your assistance. --John Joseph*

#### MAGGIE URGES CAUTION

On Nov. 3 residents of Alamo Heights will vote Yes or No on a bond issue to fund construction of a completely new City Hall complex, which will be the costliest expenditure in our city's history – OVER \$10 MILLION, PLUS INTEREST OF UP TO \$8 MILLION.

My question is: Do we have the right plan at the right price so every homeowner can afford it?

Each taxpayer in Alamo Heights will pay a portion of this cost. The anticipated tax increase will most directly affect taxpayers under 65. Most residents already feel “pocketbook pain” every time the City of Alamo Heights adds a new fee, hikes a rate or comes up with some new way to collect additional revenue to feed the very hungry “spend monster” at City Hall. With the City's seriously poor track record of project cost overruns, the generous salary and retirement package of the departing city manager, and the ever-expanding administrative staff, are residents prepared to let go of even more of our hard-earned tax dollars?

The city budget is so tight for fiscal year 2010 that the people who ensure the quality of life in Alamo Heights (police officers, firemen, dispatchers, street maintenance workers, solid waste collectors, water, park department employees, etc.) will all have to share a one-time pool of \$100,000 to receive merit pay compensation for doing their jobs well.

It is crucial that our firemen, police officers and city employees have the equipment and facilities they need to effectively do their work and to be safe. Their well-being enhances the safety of every resident in the community. While acknowledging the time spent by our elected officials to bring forth this proposal, I urge every voter to think carefully about the increased, long-term property tax obligation before casting a vote that will cost all of us IN EXCESS OF \$10 MILLION, PLUS AS MUCH AS \$8 MILLION IN INTEREST!

*Margaret Tips Houston*  
Aug. 20, 2009

#### ARB UNHAPPY WITH “DOWAGER MAUREEN DOWDY”

I was very disappointed with the “Op Ed.. In Her Own Words: Save Our City Hall!” featured in the August 2009 issue of *The AHNA ADVOCATE*. This was only the second issue of the newsletter and “contributors” are already resorting to using pseudonyms? If the piece deserved the attention of our members, why did the writer conceal his or her identity?

From the vague reference to ARB decision process, it is obvious that Dowager Dowdy-whom I prefer to call “Anon”, was not in attendance the night this project was approved and is not in full command of the facts. While I do not speak for the ARB Board as a whole, as a member of the Board who approved the so called “Metal Shed” that is our temporary fire station, I want readers to know exactly what I was thinking when I voted to approve the project.

This project was presented to the ARB Board as a *temporary* building. Several Board members, including myself, repeatedly asked for, and were given, assurances that this fire station was not permanent. It is not the role of the ARB to consider the cost or need of a project – just the design, which in this case, was described as “bare bones” due to its temporary nature.

Would Anon have preferred that ARB demand a great deal of architectural detail, at considerable cost to the taxpayer, on a temporary building that would be torn down in 2 or 3 years? Something tells me that Anon would have certainly showered his or her wrath on the ARB Board for that course of action.

I hope that in the future The AHNA ADVOCATE will be more selective when deciding what to print. AHNA should play a role in holding our elected and appointed officials accountable, but a rant from someone unwilling to own up to his or her ideas lacks credibility and will only diminish AHNA's effectiveness.

*Suzanne (Suzy) Bettac*

Aug. 21, 2009

*(Editor's Note: ARB stands for Architectural Review Board)*

#### AH DESERVES NEW CITY HALL COMPLEX

I was chosen by City Council to serve on the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) to independently review the need for a new City complex. Other CAG members were Blackie Bolduc, Ruth Chislett, Barbara Dreeben, Michael Imber, Al Honigblum, Bill Shown and Troy Jessee. We met many times with City department heads, architects and construction consultants. We inspected the facility in minute detail. I would like to share my insights.

Whether to build a new City complex is primarily an issue about people: how we wish to treat our City employees and we wish to treat ourselves. Everyone is proud of the services of City employees. Policemen, firemen, EMS technicians, sanitation workers, public works employees who operate our water and sewer system, street maintenance men—all give

*(Continued on Page 8)*



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**Advocate Opinion Page - (Continued from Page 7)**

exceptional service. They are on the job now and they will be on the job in the middle of the night when we need them. They are loyal and have longevity. All begin and end their work shifts at our City complex.

The current City complex is a warren, a result of 50 years of patchwork and making due, that inadequately serves our City employees. The failures of our City complex are manifold. A few examples include:

Police Department and Dispatch. The offices are scattered in different buildings. With only one retention cell, if two suspects are detained at one time, one suspect would be shackled to the wall of the police activity room exposing the police and staff to danger. No secure area exists for loading and unloading prisoners from police cars which endangers officers, staff and the public. At least one suspect broke free and tried to escape through the community service corridor.

Fire Department/EMS. The facilities are cramped. One shower must serve all after fighting a fire. Since there is no separate shower or dorm room for women no women firefighters can be hired, a travesty and an embarrassment. Firefighting equipment is stored in many different locations.

City Complex Wide Problems: Office space is cramped and inconveniently dispersed in four buildings. Lack of file storage undercuts proper record keeping. The City complex, including the council chamber, does not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act.

Parking is inadequate. The 104 employees and over 100 visitors a day struggle to find a way to park with many having to do so away from City property. Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church leases four parking spaces to the City but these must be vacated on short notice during funeral services.

The superb work and loyalty of our City employees is noteworthy given the challenges of their workplace.

The CAG thoroughly analyzed whether to build only a new police station and fire station, on site or offsite. We found this alternative impractical, more patchwork than solution and substantially the same cost as building an entire, new and cohesive City complex. We reviewed architectural, construction and financing plans. Lake/Flato will insure a quality architectural design. Any construction contract would include a guaranteed maximum price so that the contractor bears responsibility for cost overruns. Construction costs are lower now than during the business boom so the timing is right.

The City would retain Project Control to oversee and manage the construction. Project Control has managed many projects and is tenacious in bringing in construction on time and on budget.

Financing would be through general obligation bonds. Bond rates are at historic lows. The amount, \$10,300,000.00 plus interest, would be repaid over 20 years from ad valorem taxes. The projected tax increase for a house valued at \$400,000.00 would be \$18.00 a month. Even with that increase, the tax rates for Alamo Heights are less or equal to sister cities. Senior citizens (65+) would have no increase in taxes.

We have little choice but to build a new City complex. We owe it to our City employees and we owe it to ourselves.

**Banks M. Smith**  
**Aug. 27, 2009**

*(Continued on Page 9)*



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**Advocate Opinion Page** - (Continued from Page 8)

**MATH DOUBLE CHECKED**

On Sept. 13, 2009 I attended the general membership meeting of AHNA where Mayor Cooper, Councilman McCormick and Interim City Manager McGlone discussed the need to build new buildings for the fire and police departments, City Hall and City Council Chambers. They said we needed 27,300 square feet total.

Excuse me, Editor, I had better check with my veteran seventh grade math teacher-calculator-wife...\$5,292,000 to build 27,300 square feet? When all the other costs including demolition, architectural fees, landscaping, etc. are added in the total cost is \$10,300,000 or over \$375 per square foot! There is no doubt that these facilities need updating, but not at such a high cost to the taxpayers. By the way, interest of up to \$8 million is not included in these figures. Fiscally responsible entities always factor interest expense into their capital expenditures, but the City of Alamo Heights cavalierly dismisses interest as negligible and unimportant.

It is time for city officials to stop dancing around and to get on the same page as the citizens regarding these new buildings and their costs. In addition, the new design with all the west-facing glass is only going to increase the cost of utilities.

*Peter M. Turnbull*  
Sept. 14, 2009

Please e-mail Letters to the Editor to [AHNAadvocate@gmail.com](mailto:AHNAadvocate@gmail.com) (put "Letter to the Editor" in the subject field). Alternatively, fax them to (210)828-6588 or mail to Editor, AHNA, PO Box 91192, Alamo Heights TX 78209. AHNA Advocate reserves the right to edit or not publish any submissions it receives. Letters received after the 19th will be held till the following month's edition. Letters must be single spaced in Word format and no more than 500 words.

**AHNA Mission Statement:**

To encourage and secure the preservation of the distinctive and unique beauty of the Alamo Heights community by being an active force in the planning processes and problem-solving efforts of the city while promoting community education and safety in a cooperative, progressive manner.

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## WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

### *Less, After Prop. 1*

***\$10,300,000 ÷ 27,300 Sq. Ft. = \$377 per Sq. Ft.***

***(Not \$196 per Sq. Ft. as Promoted)***

The undersigned residents of Alamo Heights fully support addressing the workplace needs of our first responders, staff and elected officials.

However, the poorly conceived proposed City Hall complex at a **cost of \$377 per square foot** is not a good value and will not substantially improve city services.

As the "City of Beauty and Charm," we plan for our future, but at the same time treasure our past. Unnecessarily tearing down the entire existing municipal complex--City Hall/Police Station, City Council Chambers, Fire Station and the iconic "Tin Man" water tower--instead destroys our very history.

Proposition 1, the proposed bond issue **requires borrowing \$10.3 million to fund the new facility, plus up to \$8 million in interest. This money must be repaid within 20 years by the taxpayers of Alamo Heights and will result in an estimated 15.5% increase in your property taxes. Prop. 1's tax increase will have a multiplier effect as property values increase over time.** For some this may become unbearable in these uncertain times when our families and businesses are economically stressed.

We urge our fellow citizens to reject Prop. 1 on Nov. 3. Furthermore, we urge City Council to consider a more appropriate, alternative solution that is ecologically-sound by respecting the existing buildings, is more cost-effective by maximizing return on our investment, and is more consistent with the City's recently approved Comprehensive Plan, instead of defying it.

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JoAnn Fielden	Jim McGrath	Major Ted Woolley
Freda Flax (Hur)	Kathy & Mike McMahon	Phillip A. Yochem, Jr.
Pat & Bill Furst	Mark L. Medley	<b><i>Name list as of Sept. 28, 2009</i></b>

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## POLICE BLOTTER: 8/14-9/17/09

OFFENSE	DATE	LOCATION
<b>Burglary of Vehicles Felon in Possession of Firearms; Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle</b>	<b>8/15/2009</b>	<b>100 blk. Morton</b>

AHPD officer patrolling the business district observed a suspicious male in a parking lot. Officer attempted to make contact with the subject who began running from the officer discarding a backpack while attempting to flee. Subject apprehended and backpack recovered. When officers searched suspect for weapons a wallet and large amount of change was found in suspect's pockets. While subject was being interviewed a second subject was located nearby. Owner of the wallet was contacted and verified his vehicle had been broken into. He stated his wallet, cash and a pistol were stolen. Officers later located the pistol near where the backpack was found. Investigation revealed both subjects were working together and had committed 3 vehicle burglaries on Morton, Jasmine and Patterson. Vehicle they were using was reported stolen out of Houston.

**Update:** AHPD Detectives successfully developed fingerprints from a recovered handgun stolen from one of the vehicles burglarized by the pair. Fingerprints developed on the handgun matched those of one of the suspects who is a convicted felon. Additional charges will be filed by Dept. of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms in the US Attorney's Office for federal prosecution. AHPD Detectives continue to locate owners of stolen recovered property in multiple cities where the suspects committed crimes.

<b>Burglary Building</b>	<b>8/18/2009</b>	<b>100 blk. Montclair</b>
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A resident reported that his garage door was pried open and several items stolen including musical instruments, sound equipment and power tools. Investigators are attempting to identify the suspect(s) and locate stolen property.

<b>Evading Arrest, DWI 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; Possession Narcotics</b>	<b>8/17/2009</b>	<b>6000 blk. Broadway</b>
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AHPD officers attempted to stop a male found driving the wrong way on Broadway. Subject led AHPD officers on a slow speed pursuit through several jurisdictions. It was later discovered that subject did not want to stop for officers because he was in possession of several different types of narcotics and was intoxicated. Subject reportedly ingested a large quantity of the narcotics while evading arrest in a failed attempt to destroy evidence. Subject transported to University Hospital's jail ward by AH EMS and AHPD and was subsequently charged with multiple offenses.

<b>Evading Arrest</b>	<b>8/22/2009</b>	<b>4900 blk. Broadway</b>
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Male subject driving his mother's car fled the area for no apparent reason when he spotted an AHPD officer. Officer attempted to stop the vehicle but driver refused. After short pursuit through neighborhood streets driver crashed into a tree. AH EMS transported driver to the

hospital for his injuries and a case was filed at Bexar County DA to be presented for felony indictment. Driver advised officers he thought he could outrun them to avoid being ticketed.

<b>DWI &amp; Public Intoxication</b>	<b>8/22/2009</b>	<b>100 blk. E. Castano Av.</b>
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An off-duty fireman called 911 after observing a vehicle strike a parked car and attempt to leave the scene. Fireman pursued and contacted driver who stopped a short distance away. Fireman found all of the vehicle's occupants to be intoxicated and aggressive toward him for witnessing the incident. Driver then fled the area and fireman reported driver's location until AHPD officers could arrive and stop the vehicle. AHPD officers arrested driver for DWI and the passenger for public intoxication.

<b>Burglary Vehicle</b>	<b>8/29/2009</b>	<b>200 blk. E. Oakview</b>
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Resident reported finding a cell phone in their unlocked vehicle, plus pry marks to a side door of the residence. Nothing reported to have been taken in the incident. AHPD Detectives working to locate phone's owner.

<b>Burglary Bldg.</b>	<b>9/1/2009</b>	<b>6100 blk. Broadway</b>
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AHPD officers took a report for a burglary of a vacant business. Unknown suspect is believed to have entered an enclosed patio and attempted to steal building equipment that was left there. Nothing was reported missing in this incident, but damage was reported to a screen where suspect was believed to have entered.

<b>Criminal Mischief</b>	<b>9/2/2009</b>	<b>5300 blk. Broadway</b>
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AHPD Officers responded to a call for a male who had reportedly damaged surveillance cameras attached to a building's perimeter. AHPD officers located the suspect nearby and arrested him after he admitted causing the damage. AHPD officers issued subject a criminal trespass warning barring him from the property and booked him into jail.

<b>Burglary</b>	<b>9/6/2009</b>	<b>300 Blk. Wildrose</b>
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AHPD officers took a report for a burglary of a residence. Unknown suspect(s) is believed to have entered through an unlocked downstairs window. Residents were in upstairs bedrooms asleep while the suspect rummaged through 2 rooms downstairs. Suspect left the residence, undetected, with several electronic items including a laptop computer. AHPD Detectives continue investigating this burglary.

<b>Possession Narcotics</b>	<b>9/9/2009</b>	<b>5100 Blk. Broadway</b>
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AHPD officers received a tip regarding possible drug transaction in progress between 2 individuals. Responding officers observed a drug transaction take place. Officers placed a subject under arrest for possession of narcotics with intent to distribute and recovered a shotgun and small quantity of heroin from arrested subject.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

**Police Blotter** - (Continued from Page 12)

**Possession Narcotics 9/16/2009 200 Blk. W. Fair Oaks**

AHPD officer stopped to check 3 individuals loading objects into the back of a truck from an open garage. One individual was found to be wanted and when searched subsequent to arrest was found in possession of marijuana. Second individual was found in possession of drug paraphernalia and methamphetamine. Third subject was released at the scene after it was determined they were at the residence legitimately.

**UPDATES ON PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CASE/S:**

**Burglary of a Building 8/6/2009 11 St. Luke's Ln**

Using photos developed from a digital surveillance system AHPD Detectives created an intelligence bulletin and distributed it across a local intelligence network. Subject in the photo was recognized by SAPD Patrol Officers who provided suspect's identity. Alamo Community College District Detectives also had surveillance video of the same suspect involved in campus burglaries. Multiple charges for burglary are being prepared or filed with Bexar County DA.

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**CHEESE SOUP**

- 1/2 stick butter
- 2 grated carrots
- parsley flakes (a few)
- salt to taste
- coarse ground pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons cooking sherry
- 2 10 3/4 oz. cans of chicken broth
- 3 10 3/4 oz. cans of potato soup
- 3 stalks celery, chopped, with some leaves
- 3 chopped green onions
- 8 ozs. yellow cheese
- few drops Tabasco sauce
- 8 ozs. sour cream

Melt butter over low heat and sauté onions, celery and carrots. Add chicken broth and cover. Simmer 30 minutes. Add potato soup, cheese, parsley, Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper. Stir in sour cream. Simmer 15 minutes. Add sherry and stir. Makes 10 cups. Can be refrigerated and reheated.

Email Your Recipes to [valorie227@hotmail.com](mailto:valorie227@hotmail.com)  
(Please put "Recipes" in the subject).

**CHILLED AVOCADO SOUP**

- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- chopped fresh chives or tarragon, for garnish
- 4 small avocados (enough to yield 1 1/2 cups puree)
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon or to taste (take care, as tarragon can easily dominate the flavor of avocado)
- 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Mash the avocado with a fork, then add to the bowl of a blender or food processor along with the chicken broth, dried tarragon, Tabasco and lemon juice. Blend until smooth, then cover and refrigerate until mixture is well chilled. When mixture is chilled add heavy cream and sour cream and blend well. Chill thoroughly before serving.

Serve, garnish with either chives or tarragon. Makes 1 quart soup, about 4 to 5 servings.

Choose the pebbly skinned, purplish-black Hass avocados for the richest flavor, and make sure they are at the right point of ripeness when it is time to make the soup. Ripe avocados will yield to slight pressure.

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If yes, please check the information you want to include in the roster:

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