

A Cautionary Tale

Amid our green-building boom, why neglecting the old in favor of the new just might cost us dearly

By Wayne Curtis

Editor's note: The following article is reprinted with permission from the January/February 2008 issue of Preservation, The Magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Due to its length, we have chosen to print it in two parts. This is the first half. The entire article can be found at www.nationaltrust.org/magazine

Show me the person who doesn't love a green, environmentally responsible building.

Green buildings are good for you and good for society, and they're absolutely everywhere these days—you can't open an architecture publication without seeing a splashy spread touting some new sustainable project. The green building movement has even added to our vocabulary, albeit with ungainly expressions like carbon footprint and FSC-certified wood.

In just a few years, the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council (which administers the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program) has become surprisingly influential in shaping how new commercial buildings are constructed. Like the Good Housekeeping Research Institute, with its seal of approval, the council puts a sort of ecostamp on buildings via a menu of points, adding another new term to the lexicon: LEED certified.

More than a handful of local and state governments have passed laws requiring that new public buildings be LEED certified. (Structures meeting basic requirements are deemed certified; those that go beyond the minimum can receive silver, gold, and platinum ratings.) In Seattle, new city buildings must achieve a silver rating, which is also true in Dallas for new construction of more than 10,000 square feet. Companies like Royal Caribbean, Nike, and Adobe have all touted their LEED buildings. When Armstrong, maker of flooring and cabinets, unveiled its impressive LEED-platinum building last summer in Pennsylvania, government

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The Newsletter

OF THE KING WILLIAM ASSOCIATION

KWA Newsletter Volume 4, #2 March 2008 kingwilliamassociation.org

The Twelve Mathis Houses: The Chabot House

There are twelve houses in King William which are here today because of the foresight and thoughtfulness as well as understanding of architectural history which Walter Mathis demonstrated. These twelve houses helped to spur the restoration of many more houses in King William and across the city of San Antonio.

I have been working since April on a series of sketches of these twelve houses which Mr. Mathis rescued. They will be completed by the opening date for the Villa Finale Visitor Center and will be exhibited at my home. Over the next twelve months, I will attempt to write a short narrative or give some historical information for each of the twelve houses, beginning with the Chabot House.



Henry Rayburn



The Chabot House - 403 Madison - built 1876

The Chabot House is one of the richest in detail and has been on my drawing board for several months. Curtis Johnson and Leland Stone provided me with a letter from Walter Mathis to the Texas Historical Commission for the marker application.

In Mr. Mathis' application for a marker, he made these comments about the house. I have condensed his comments for the newsletter.

"I have been unable to locate any records indicating the architect and contractor.

The main part of the house is of extremely hard and well cut limestone. The left side and detached kitchen are of the soft stone used so frequently and cut in this area. All interior walls are plastered directly to the stone and ceilings are plaster on wood lath. The walnut front doors and walnut main stair form the only use of this wood visible. All floors are wide cut pine, rear stair is pine, all porch floors are cypress. Some

of the detail on galleries is of pine and some of cypress, a mixture of these woods was used and then all painted.

The house after removal of later addition but before restoration clearly showed the quality of wood used, but all indications were that the walnut, pine and cypress materials were of local origin. In restoration these same woods were used where needed.

The original front fence was repaired and replaced including the double entrance gate which had been removed by a daughter of the Chabots and taken to New Mexico. It was purchased by Mr. Mathis and replaced."

Thanks to Curtis Johnson and Leland Stone for sharing this letter with us.

Henry Rayburn



Remembering HemisFair '68

This is a significant anniversary for HemisFair – forty years. I know that there are some of you in the neighborhood who worked at the fair – Robin for one. Many more of you attended. I'd like to have your stories so I can compile them into a newsletter article. Just short bits and pieces from your memory of the event.

Please don't procrastinate or you'll be left out. This will be fun!

Bill Cogburn
billfcogburn@msn.com

Stories Galore: Irish Tales with Jane McDaniel

Stories Galore, a free story-swap hosted by Elder Stone for experienced and beginning storytellers and listeners, continues on Sunday, March 9, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the Commander's House, 645 S. Main. Stories must be suitable for families with children and must not be derogatory to any race or belief.



This month's "Stellar Teller", a person of some renown as a talespinner, is Jane McDaniel. Jane's storytelling is very personal arising from her childhood in Ireland surrounded by the great Celtic myths and romances. Don't miss the opportunity to see and hear this daughter of the "Auld Sod."

For more information, call Elder Stone at 673-4468.

Out in the Garden with Alan Cash

Alan is busy trimming bushes in the garden this month. Out in the Garden will return with spring gardening tips and tree planting updates in April.



The Guenther House and the Food Bank

Have you ever noticed the San Antonio Food Bank truck parked behind the Guenther House restaurant? Since I live right across the street, I've seen it there many times. I asked Donna Vaughan, Director of The Guenther House, about their participation in this project and she tells me that they have been partnering with the Food Bank for twenty years.

The Food Bank truck is there every afternoon after closing to pick up all remaining prepared biscuits, rolls, pastries, soups and specials which were not sold that day. The Guenther House is very proud of their association with the Food Bank and rightly so. We are privileged to have these thoughtful and generous folks as neighbors.

Bill Cogburn

Help Raise Funds for Bonham's ArtSmart Program

With your participation in the Box Tops for Education program, Bonham Elementary School PTA/PTO can raise up to \$60,000 per year for their ArtSmart Program! There are three easy, everyday ways you can help earn cash for Bonham:



Clip Box Tops from favorite brands from General Mills, Betty Crocker®, Pillsbury®, Ziploc®, Kleenex® and more. Each coupon is worth 10¢ to our school, up to \$20,000! You can either drop them off at the school, my house at 331 Adams (there is a basket by the front door for collection) or call me and I'll pick them up!

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Visit www.boxtops4education.com for participating product and store lists. If you have any questions, please contact me at 212-6671 or nancynoblesprice@mac.com.

Nancy Price



King William Park Renewal Update

At Agnes Bain's memorial service in May 2003, Walter Mathis announced that a memorial fund was being established to honor his sister. It would be a fund specifically for maintaining and improving our neighborhood parks. The fund now has a balance of \$1880. The KWA finance committee made a recommendation to the board that this money be transferred to the King William park renewal project. The board approved this recommendation at their January meeting.

Bill Cogburn

San Antonio Homestay

Have you heard foreign accents spoken around the neighborhood recently?

There are five young people from Taiwan, Brazil and Germany studying English at Incarnate Word University and staying in King William with San Antonio Homestay hosts Nancy Price, Chris & Nancy Nobles Price and Anne Alexander. Our neighborhood is an ideal place for them to stay, being on the bus line and close to downtown.



KW Homestay Students Ting, Trixie, Sara, & Felipe

skills in exchange for a stipend of \$630.00 a month. Ask the Prices and/or Anne A. about their experiences and the interesting new friends they have made. To learn more about becoming a host family, call Jerry Lee Gomez at 601-3276 or visit www.sanantoniomestay.com.

Anne Alexander



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officials there proudly proclaimed their state second only to California in LEED certifications. And last fall, the Green Building Council launched a new rating system for houses, joining the National Association of Home Builders and Energy Star.

This rush toward ecofriendliness was wryly dubbed "conspicuous conservation" by Wired magazine a decade ago. Green, it seems, is the new Gehry. Of course, green is more than a style. It's an imperative. Henry Moss, an architect with Bruner/Cott in Massachusetts, recently suggested in a talk to the Boston Preservation Alliance that "sustainability has taken the moral high ground from preservation." Old is nice, but green is essential. It's something society needs to do now. And like most medicines, green might taste a little bitter. And it might involve a small sacrifice or two.

One might be tempted to compare the recent green wave with the rise of modernism more than a half-century ago. Planners and architects back then didn't just want buildings to look different; they also wanted to change the direction society was headed. The old ways of thinking were outmoded. Yesterday's buildings solved yesterday's problems; new buildings were needed to solve the problems of today—and tomorrow. Of course, many people will recall what happened to America's historic fabric the last time we undertook a nationwide revamping of the built landscape. The result was urban renewal, and it left many of our best urban areas in tatters and many of our historic buildings in piles of rubble. And though hardly anyone would argue against the need to reduce our consumption of dwindling resources, one other word might come to mind when listening to those who envision a brave new world filled with environmentally friendly new buildings: Uh-oh.

"We in the preservation business have always been about sustainability and stewardship," said Mike Jackson, chief architect with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, at the Traditional Building Exposition and Conference in New Orleans last fall. "But it's a message that's not getting out."

Preservationists and environmentalists have long shared many values. For starters, there's the drive toward stewardship and conservation of resources, whether cultural or environmental. Both

groups subscribe to the precautionary principle, in which minimal intervention is always preferred to major overhauls.

Yet when it comes to green, the gulf between the two may be broadening. New green buildings, brimming with the latest in modern technology, are perceived to be on one side; the old buildings, full of quaint, inefficient technologies and drafty windows, are on the other. Which leads one to ask: Just how "ungreen" and energy inefficient are those older buildings?

Not very, it turns out. The reputation of older structures as energy sieves, in short, is simply not justified by the data. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, commercial buildings constructed prior to 1920 have an average energy consumption of 80,127 BTUs per square foot. For the more efficient buildings built since 2000, that number is 79,703 BTUs. (The energy efficiency of buildings constructed between these years was less enviable—reaching around 100,000 BTUs—reflecting the cheap oil and electricity of the thermostat age.)

Older homes may not have been as stout and efficient as commercial buildings, but they were green in their own way. "The original buildings had no choice but to be green," said Florida architect Steve Mouzon, founder of the New Urban Guild, at last fall's traditional building conference. "Otherwise, you'd die of heat stroke in the summer, or freeze to death in the winter." Houses in the South had high ceilings and louvered shutters; in the North, they featured thick walls and smaller windows. Sleeping porches provided coolness in summer, and woodstove-centered kitchens gave off warmth in winter. Today, new houses tend to be largely interchangeable wherever you live. Shutters, for instance, have become vestigial, totems from the past screwed into the sides of new houses that do nothing against the wind or sun.

"People often tend to think that historic buildings are inherently energy inefficient," writes Walter Sedovic, a preservation architect in Irvington, N.Y. "The opposite, though, is more likely to be true: that many historic buildings are inherently very energy efficient." As he put it when I contacted him: "Before sustainability had a name, traditional builders incorporated sustainable elements into buildings. Working in sync with the environment was the norm, including siting, local materi-

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A Cautionary Tale

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als, natural ventilation, shading, reflective roofing, cisterns, indigenous plantings—the list becomes long, and in many ways mirrors 'new' standards espoused today."

Consider one curious example: prismatic glass blocks, which can still be spotted above the doorway of the occasional early-20th-century storefront. These glass blocks, invented in the late 19th century, were cast with prisms along one side to redirect sunlight deep into long and dark rooms, magnifying available light between five and 50 times. The Luxfer Prism Co., the leading manufacturer, once held 162 patents related to these glass blocks, and a young architect named Frank Lloyd Wright served as product designer for a year. Some 300 buildings featured the prisms in the first year of production. By 1906, the number of buildings employing them swelled to 12,000. Then they fell out of fashion. Cheap electricity became available, lighting even the dimmest recesses of a shop or office with the flip of a switch. Manufacturers ceased producing prism blocks by the 1930s. The existing blocks were painted over or blocked by drop ceilings.

Now, the whole idea of moving daylight deep into buildings is back in fashion. The term currently in vogue is "daylighting"—that is, maximizing natural light in a building with reflective tubes or fiber optics. "Good daylighting creates beautiful, appropriately lit spaces while saving energy," reports the Daylighting Collaborative of the Energy Center of Wisconsin.

Old windows, of course, aren't often associated with "green" these days. Quite the opposite. Ancient, paint-flecked panes are pulled out every day, with new vinyl windows inserted in their stead by homeowners seduced by newspaper ads promising that you can "Save Energy Now!" for impossibly low prices, including installation. The aesthetic result? A building that had long worn elegant wire-rimmed frames suddenly switching to clunky, Clark Kent glasses.

It's a sacrifice, of course. But it's for the greater good, because replacement windows make sense for environmental reasons, right? Not so fast. It turns out that windows—even old single-pane windows—are responsible for relatively minor energy loss in most buildings.

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What's Happening: KWA Neighborhood Calendar

March 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Visit our online Events Calendar for more details at www.kingwilliamassociation.org					1	2
3	4 Blue Star Brew: Crimson Jazz Orchestra	5 KWA March General Mtg	6	7 ***** Jump-Start: The Case of the Neon Twins / Irish Chicano Southtown: First Friday Beethoven: Ragety Cats Blue Star Brew: Live Music Filling Station: Humble Blues All-Stars Gemini Ink: FF Reading	8 Southtown: Second Saturday Artwalk Beethoven: Stiftungsfest	9 <i>Daylight Saving Time Begins</i> Chicano ***** Stories Galore: Jane McDaniel
10	11 Blue Star Brew: River City Big Band	12 KWA April Newsletter Deadline Blue Star Brew: Mixed Emotions Big Band	13	14 ***** Jump-Start: The Case of the Neon Twins / Irish Chicano *****	15	16
17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>	18 Blue Star Brew: San Antonio Jazz Orchestra	19 KWA March Board Meeting	20	21 Filling Station: Humble Blues All-Stars	22	23 <i>Easter Sunday</i>
24 KWA April Newsletter Mail Prep	25 Blue Star Brew: Primetime Jazz Orchestra	26 Jump-Start: W-I-P	27	28 ** Jump-Start: Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest **	29	30
31	KWA Adv. rates 1/12 page \$40; 1/8 page \$60; 1/4 page \$80; 1/3 page \$120; 1/2 page \$160; Full page \$320					

Beethoven Maennerchor

422 Pereida, 222-1521,
beethovenmaennerchor.com
Ragety Cats, First Friday 3/7
Stiftungsfest, Saturday 3/8, 7:30pm

Blue Star Brewing Co.

1414 S. Alamo, 212-5506,
bluestarbrewing.com
Big Band Jazz, Every Tuesday, 8-10pm
Live Music, First Friday 3/7, 7-11pm
Mixed Emotions Big Band, Wednesday 3/12, 8-10pm

The Filling Station

701 S. St. Mary's, 444-2200
Humble Blues All Stars, Friday 3/7 &
Friday 3/21, 7-10pm

Gemini Ink

513 S. Presa, 734-9673, geminiink.org
First Friday Reading, First Friday 3/7,
6:30-8pm

Jump-Start Performance Co.

108 Blue Star, 227-JUMP, jump-start.org
The Case of the Neon Twins / Irish Chicano, 3/7-3/9 & 3/14-3/16, 8pm
W-I-P, Wednesday 3/26, 7pm
Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,
3/28 & 3/29, 8pm

Southtown First Friday

226-0888, southtown.net
First Friday Artwalk, Friday 3/7, 6-10pm

Southtown Second Saturday Artwalk

476-8801, southtownartwalk.com
Second Saturday Artwalk, Saturday 3/8,
2-4pm

Stories Galore

Commander's House, 645 S. Main,
673-4468
Jane McDaniel, Sunday 3/9, 5-7pm

King William Association

Monday-Friday, 10am-2pm
1032 S. Alamo, SA TX 78210
227-8786 (phone), 227-8030 (fax)
king.william@sbcglobal.net
www.kingwilliamassociation.org
www.kwfair.org

- 3/5 **March General Meeting**,
7pm at Blue Star Brewing Co.
- 3/12 **April Newsletter Deadline**
- 3/19 **March Board Meeting**,
7pm at KWA office
- 3/24 **April Newsletter Mail Prep**,
6pm at KWA office

Looking Ahead...

- 4/2 **Fiesta Edition Newsletter Deadline**
- 4/2 **Spring Social**, 7pm
- 4/14 **Fiesta Edition Newsletter Mail Prep**, 6pm at KWA office
- 4/16 **April Board Meeting**,
7pm at KWA office
- 4/26 **KING WILLIAM FAIR 2008!**

You Must Be an Old-Timer If You Remember...

Compiled by Bill Cogburn

...when we'd walk from our house on Mission Street to St. Mary's to catch the street car. That was the Hot Wells line which crossed over to Presa Street then ran south out to the Hot Wells Hotel. That was a very popular place years ago, up to the 20's and 30's – maybe even later. Many famous people went there to take the hot sulfur baths. Back then, St. Mary's was called Garden Street. We'd also ride the streetcar on Mill Street which is now South Alamo.

Selma Nuessle

...the ruckus that was caused in the neighborhood when the Father Hidalgo mural suddenly appeared in the early 1980's without benefit of proper approval. It depicted Father Hidalgo leading the Diez y Seis de Septiembre revolt and was prominently displayed on the south wall of the old A&E Food market (now Tito's) at the corner of South Alamo and Beauregard.

Originally painted as a backdrop for a Budweiser advertising poster, it showed, in vivid color, the Father literally ripping apart the chains of oppression. Some say that Walter Mathis, arbiter of neighborhood decorum, turned the color of plum jelly when he saw it.

It remained a controversial subject among several of the neighborhood folks for a long time but eventually the opposition either got used to it or lost the will to fight. It was still on the wall until about five or six years ago when new tenants decided to whitewash over it. By then, it had become such a neighborhood icon that many of us were bitterly disappointed to see it gone.
Bill Cogburn

...when Bonham Elementary had only one large pecan tree and three bushes out front –the rest of the campus was asphalt and gravel.

Carolene Zehner

Neighbors – help me out with this column. I'm running out of material. bc

- 20 years in the downtown area and King William neighborhood

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A Cautionary Tale Continued from Page 5

"Only 10 to 12 percent of the total air infiltration in a building is through the windows," said Sedovic. "The cold isn't being transferred through the glass. It's through openings in and around the sash. The energy loss is mostly through the roof and through the sill." He suggested that "replacement walls" or "replacement fireplaces" would make more sense for the energy conscious. So why are we bombarded with ads for replacement windows? "It's because windows are easy to construct, easy to transport, and easy to sell," he said. "But they're the wrong idea."

According to the Whole Building Design Guide, for instance, an older single-pane window has an insulation factor of R1. A modern double-glazed window offers R3 insulation. Yet if the walls of a historic building have an R-value in the teens, "taking a window from R1 to R3 will not provide sufficient energy savings to offset the cost of replacement windows and associated waste," according to the guide.

What's more, if your goal is to reduce overall resource consumption, restoring and maintaining old windows make sense in another way. "We call them replacement windows because you keep replacing them," said Sedovic, invoking the words of his colleague John Seekircher.

When modern windows, with their high-tech seals, eventually fail—and they will—the result tends to be catastrophic failure. You don't repair them. You replace them. Anyone who doesn't see something amiss in replacing century-old windows with "environmentally responsible" windows that will be junked and replaced every decade or two is suffering from an irony deficiency.

To be continued next month....

MISSION STATEMENT

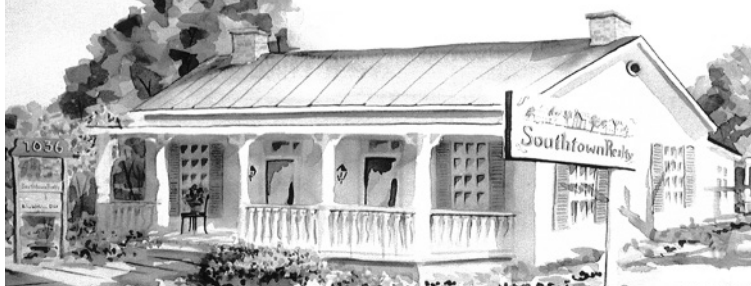
The Mission of the King William Association is to preserve and maintain the residential nature and historic characteristics of the King William Neighborhood and the diversity of its people; to intercede on behalf of the neighborhood with issues affecting the community by all civic avenues available including advocating for residential status with city; to improve quality of life by building community, promoting cultural endeavors, and providing scholarships and growth opportunities for deserving recipients. (approved 3/19/97)

DECLARACION DE LA MISION

La misión de la Asociación King William es preservar y mantener la naturaleza residencial y las características históricas del vecindario, así como la diversidad de sus residentes; interceder a favor del vecindario en asuntos que afectan a la comunidad por todos los medios disponibles incluyendo abogar con la Ciudad para conservar el estatus residencial del zona; mejorar el nivel de vida mediante el desarrollo de la comunidad, promoviendo actividades culturales y proporcionando becas y oportunidades de superación a quienes lo ameriten. (aprobado 3/19/97)

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King William Neighborhood Crime Statistics
First Friday Reports December '07 – February '08

December 7, 2007

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Street</u>	<u>Notes</u>
70941082	Disturbance	Alamo/Guenther	loud party
70941139	Traffic Violation	500 blk Madison	truck blocking driveway
70941184	Suspicious Person	500 blk Adams	suspect claiming to sell newspaper subscriptions
70941260	Disturbance	Alamo/Johnson	loud band
70941294	Traffic Violation	Alamo/Guenther	male riding on top of vehicle
70941329	Disturbance	Alamo/Guenther	loud band
70941319	Disturbance	Guenther/Madison	loud argument
70941426	Disturbance	Adams/Alamo	loud music

* Also, 100 parking tickets issued by the SAPD.

January 4, 2008

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Street</u>	<u>Notes</u>
80009775	Disturbance	1200 blk Alamo	loud argument, intoxication
80010175	Disturbance	1100 blk Alamo	loud band
80011026	Ordinance Violation	1200 blk Alamo	open containers w/ alcohol

* Also, 120 parking tickets issued by the SAPD.

February 1, 2008

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Street</u>	<u>Notes</u>
80079754	Disturbance	Alamo/Beauregard	loud music
80079750	Disturbance	300 blk King William	loud music
80079843	Traffic Violation	100 blk Forcke	vehicle illegally parked
80079968	Disturbance	100 blk Blue Star	loud music
80079970	Disturbance	1200 blk Alamo	suspect w/ knife hitting vehicle
80080060	Disturbance	1000 blk Alamo	20 motorcycles blocking bus stop
80080200	Disturbance	900 blk Alamo	loud music
80080336	Burglar Alarm	1200 blk Alamo	false alarm
80080223	Criminal Mischief	100 blk Johnson	on Johnson St. bridge
80080374	Burglar Alarm	1200 blk Alamo	false alarm
80080438	Assault	Alamo/Barrera	no one there

* Also, 130 parking tickets issued by the SAPD.

Top Call-in Reports December '07 – January '08

December 2007		January 2008	
<u>Nature of Call</u>	<u># of Calls</u>	<u>Nature of Call</u>	<u># of Calls</u>
Burglary Bldg/House	4	Burglary Vehicle	11
Burglary Vehicle	4	Burglary Bldg/House	5
		Auto Theft	1

These lists were compiled by SAFFE Officer Erik Doyle, SAPD.

SAFFE Officer Doyle can be reached Mon.-Fri., 7am-3pm, at 207-7413

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"The greenest building is one that is already built." See "A Cautionary Tale" on page 1.

**Lavaca Neighborhood
Association Newsletter
Enclosed**



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The King William Newsletter

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Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion(s) of the Board of Directors of the King William Association.

**KWA March General Meeting:
King William Fair 2008 Artwork Unveiling, Noise Meter Demonstration with
SAFFE Officer Doyle, Plus Special Offers from Downtown Health Clubs!**

Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.

Blue Star Brewing Co., 1414 S. Alamo

Please join us for these special presentations:

See the KW Fair 2008 artwork created by SAY Sí student Jonathan Hodge

Hear a Noise Meter demonstration with SAFFE Officer Doyle

Enjoy special offers for King William & Lavaca residents from three downtown health clubs: Spectrum Athletic Club, YMCA, and Strive Fitness Studio

Basura Bash 2008 on March 29th

Join the King William/Brackenridge High School "River Rats" in cleaning up our side of the riverbank between the Alamo St. Bridge and Brackenridge High School.

Meet at Blue Star Parking Lot at 9:00 a.m.

Mandatory Gear: Work Gloves & Sturdy Shoes

This annual city-wide cleanup is part of the Adopt-A-River Project, and reaches all the way down to Mission Concepcion

More info: call Robin at 224-4541 or email
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