



Bear Briefs

The Newsletter of the Heart Of Texas Bears

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DECEMBER 2007

From the President's Den



OK, I admit it. I love the holiday season. Happy Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and Winter Solstice to all of you, your families, and your pets. Even if I don't watch all the regular movies, I still like seeing ads for them: It's a "Wonderful Life," "Charlie Brown Christmas," "A Christmas Story," Rudolf, Frosty, and all three black and white versions of "A Christmas Carol." I like seeing a nightmare—before-Christmas in the aisles of Target and Big Lots. Moving from up north 4 years ago, icicle lights in Austin are particularly fascinating to me. Images of Santa, along with menorah and dradle are good childhood memories. In the pagan tradition, I decorate a tree every year and hang ornaments that are family heirlooms, created in

childhood art classes, or were given as gifts from friends in my adulthood. All hold memories- good and bad (great grandma = good, ex-boyfriend = bad,). I love the songs we sing and the gathering and charity of people at this time of year. Whether or not we really want too, we are forced to share and help those who are less fortunate (a good thing). To me, celebrating and practicing the charitable sentiment at this time of year is an important prelude to the turning of the new year; when we take stock of ourselves and create goals for the next 12 months. For those of you who hate the holidays, I wish you all good cheer and a pox on any negativity you may possess. I raise my glass to you and wish you better times. If I see you out, I will buy you a beer or coffee to help it go away. If the refreshment helps, please pass it on with a little positive energy to the next guy. Be banished and gone 'o bad Bah-humbug!

— Peter

Sponsors

The HOT Bears are grateful for the continuing support of the following people and companies. Please support those who support us.

TapeLenders

TapeLenders Video — Outlines — Skivvies
1114 West 5th Street (78703)
(512) 472-0844
www.TapeLenders.com
10% discount with HOT Bear membership card (Sale items excluded)

Chain Drive

504 Willow Street (78701)
(512) 480-9017

Midtowne Spa of Austin

5815 Airport Blvd. (78752)
(512) 302-9696
www.midtowne-spa.com/austin

Phil Nelson

Registered Massage Therapist
(512) 301-3376

HOT Bears Holiday Party

This year, the HOT Bears will have their annual holiday party on December 15 at Leonard's home. Please bring a side dish or dessert; the HOT Bears will provide lots of meat (and vegetarian lasagna!) as the main course. Also, please bring one new, unwrapped toy for a teenager to give to Austin's Child Protection Services. They have over 4,000 clients in the Austin area and seem to be one of the more neglected agencies compared to other places. Teenagers (ages 13-21) are the most in-need group of their clients. This translates to watches or soccer balls for boys and earrings, pedicure kits, or make-up for girls. A big

thing for both sexes is clothing of all sizes that has the UT logo on it. Games of any sort are also great since they can be used in their drop-in centers. We have been asked, specifically, not to donate any stuffed animals; however non-Caucasian dolls are also very desirable for the younger crowd. The officers will be collecting donations at the party and delivering them to the agency the next day. Thanks to all of you in advance for your generosity.

— PR

Texas Pie Kitchen

Over this last weekend, a small group of HOT Bears made pie crusts for the Texas Pie Kitchen. It's a great Austin-based, non-profit organization that benefits and trains people that have barriers to employment and brings economic development to impoverished areas of Austin. They sell pies here: www.TexasPieKitchen.com.

If you are in need of a pie for your holiday festivities, I encourage you to order now. Thanks to Eric Miller, our secretary, for suggesting and organising this event

— PR

Upcoming Events

Saturday, December 1

Bears Day Out breakfast at 10am at **Trudy's North Star Restaurant & Bar**, 8820 Burnet Road, Austin, TX 78757, (512) 454-1474. Join us at Trudy's for their great breakfast buffet!

Tuesday, December 4

HOT Bear Board Meeting. Join the officers for their monthly board meeting at 7:15pm. Your input will help make the Club better!

Sunday, December 9

Monthly Bear Beer Bust at the **Chain Drive** (504 Willow Drive, Austin, TX 78701) from **4pm — 8pm**. Join the Bears for **\$0.50** draft beer. Come on down and end your weekend enjoying the afternoon with your Bear Brothers... and with Santa!

Santa BearClause will be at the Beer Bust! You can have your picture taken (a

Polaroid) with Santa for a small charitable donation.

Saturday, December 15

The annual HOT Bear Holiday Party. This year Leonard is hosting the event in his wonderful home. The fun begins at 7pm. Please bring something with you. See Peter's article on page 1 for details!

Wednesday, December 19

Coffee With Da' Bears! Join your Bear Brothers for some friendship, fun, and caffeine (if you like). Plus, after Bear Coffee this month we're headed down to Zilker Park to see the **Trail of Lights**!

This month Bear Coffee is just off MoPac at Anderson Lane. We're headed to Starbucks (2900 West Anderson Lane at Rockwood). Join us and then head down to the Trail of Lights with us for a Happy Holiday Adventure!

Saturday, December 22

2nd Bear Breakfast at 10am at **Austin Diner**, 5408 Burnet Road, Austin 78756, (512) 467-9552. Join us for some great breakfast cooking and lots of Bear Brotherhood!

Thursday, December 27

Bears Night Out dinner this month is at a Bear favorite... **Hoover's Cooking** on Manor Road. See you at 7pm (Bear Time) for some very tasty down-home cooking. [2002 Manor Road, Austin, TX, 78722 (512) 479-5006]

Friday — Tuesday, Dec. 28 — Jan 1

Fire and Ice at the TCC Landsite. See the article below for details.

Saturday, January 5

Bears Day Out breakfast at 10am at **Trudy's North Star Restaurant & Bar**.

New Years Event

If you are still looking for something to do to celebrate New Year's, why not go to Fire and Ice at the Texas Conference of Clubs? This run is a small in number and the food is the main feature; however, they will have a show, a bonfire, and fireworks with champagne to ring in the New Year. The bunkhouse will be open for those who do not want to pitch a tent. Go here: TexasConferenceOfClubs.com and look at the events for more information.

— PR

Den Demographics

In order to better plan events that are close to our members, Jonathan Sofley has put together a map that helps to answer the question, "Where do the HOT Bears live in Austin?" On page 3 you'll find a map, using our membership roster, that charts where our members live by zip code.

Each spot indicates one or more bears within that immediate area. Currently at 150+ members, keep in mind that we do have members who live outside of these boundaries (as far away as West Virginia), so this is not everyone.

The map shows that we are clustered around Austin. One surprise to me was the large number of bears who live on the



southwest side of Austin and a second was how few members reside downtown.

Since the mission of the board is to serve all of our members, this map will help the board plan events at locations near you. Please send us ideas (info@heartoftexasbears.org) for day -trips, restaurants, and activities we can do in the southwest side. We will make sure to get them into the calendar.

Thanks, Jonathan!

— The HOT Bear Board

December Birthday Bears

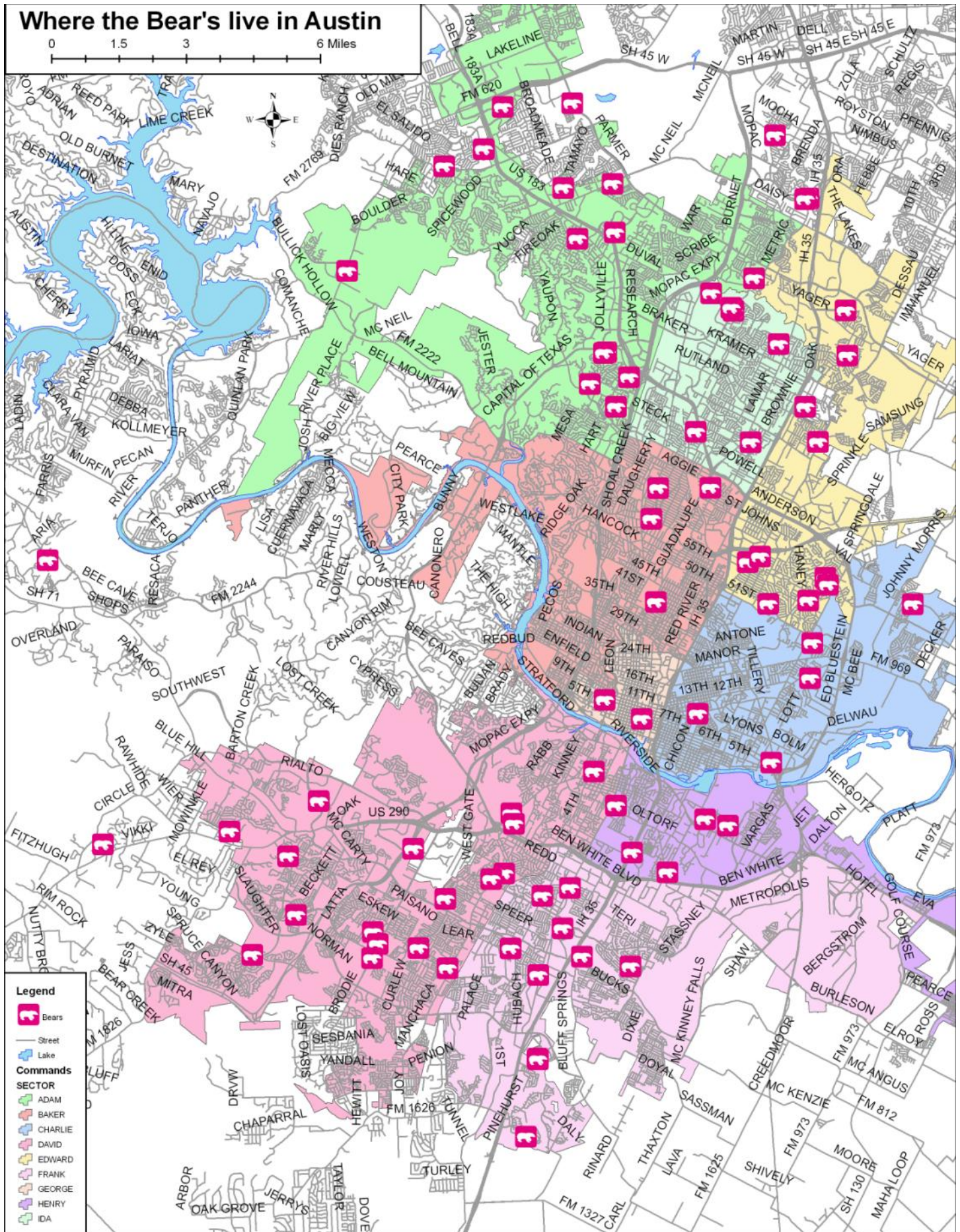
Robert Downey	12/3	Rick Davis	12/11
Thom Sloan	12/4	Steven Virostko	12/16
Richard Turner	12/7	Raul Caez-Roman	12/18
Kirk Sinclair	12/7	Joseph Smith	12/19
Roger Olien	12/8	Robert Blessitt	12/22
Steve Hales	12/9	Simon Wheatley	12/29
Phil Nelson	12/9	Paul Habibi	12/30
Ron Redder	12/10		

H.O.T. B.S. (Survey) Results

What Do We Want, When Do We Want It... It's Not Figgy Puddin'!

Well several months have gone by since the HOT BS survey closed its doors, for which I must apologize. The survey response rate was astounding, with 72 respondents. 93% of the responders were members of the club and these represented approximately 50% of the current membership.

(Continued on page 4)



H.O.T. B.S. (Survey) Results

(Continued from page 2)

I have now generated graphical summaries of the responses and collated the free responses. This was initially a little daunting, as there were over 700 free response comments to organize. In collating the results I have tried to put comments of a similar nature together, in an ordered fashion, but have NOT removed or changed any comments: other than to capitalize comments and to remove duplicated short comments. Where I have removed short duplicate comments, I have noted in parentheses how many people also expressed the same comment.

The results of the survey are very much more heartwarming and informative than anyone could ever have hoped for or wished. So many of you kindly participated and expressed your views of and wishes for the club. I think it is vital and constructive for everyone, to have free access to the complete report of the results and comments. They make very interesting reading, indeed.

As there was so much information collected in the survey, I will summarize the results in the next 3 or 4 issues of the Bear Briefs. In addition the collated results are available online to members. By handling things in this fashion, everyone can see the summaries to all of the questions in each section and while also viewing the complete views of all of the survey respondents.

After all of the results have been discussed in the Bear Briefs, I will publish an extensive report to the web for everyone to review at their leisure. Assembly of the collated result summary has been no mean feat – the summary results currently occupies 40 pages, including all of the summary graphs and free responses. However, I think it is important for everyone to have the opportunity to appreciate the factors which unite us, both as a community and a club. I also think it is vital that the views of the whole membership regarding management issues and growth of the group be accessible by all club members. This information represents a vital and unique opportunity for everyone to get to know the heart and mind of the membership. This information will also offer a great opportunity to spark communication within the group and encourage your active participation in shaping and uniting our group.

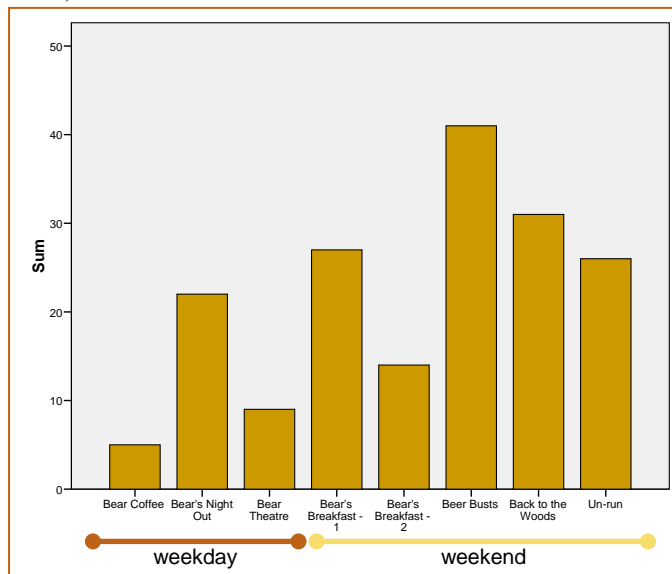
In the first few Bear Brief articles I will summarize the more practical issues raised in the survey. For instance, 'which events are the most popular', 'what can be done to improve the current events' and 'what new events would the membership like to see'. After this I will publish the more subjective section of the survey – 'why members joined the club', 'how satisfied are the membership with the club', 'what the membership derive from the club', 'how would the membership like to see their club grow and develop'.

The survey responses were exceptionally positive and constructive on the whole and hugely supportive of the group and our community. However, a number of concerns and criticisms were raised. I will do my best to highlight these and address them in each article, as they arise within each section. Again, everyone can view all of the comments and obtain an sense of the context of any criticisms by reviewing the collated results on the web along with the bear brief articles.

So without further ado, lets have a look at some of the results from the survey. As mentioned 93% of the survey respondents are HOTB members, 64% of which are active in the club. The average number of events attended per month is 1.3, with 32% of respondents attend one event per month, 24% attend two events per month and 10% attend three events per month. The major

encumbrance to attendance was assessed from the free responses and was identified as time limitations; due to work constraints and not being conveniently located within Austin.

67% of respondents expressed interest in weekday events, while 90% of respondents expressed interest in weekend events. Again one of the primary limitations for interest in weekday events was the lack of free time during the week and work constraints. The lower interest of respondents in weekday events was also demonstrated in the attendance rate of each individual event. There was generally lower attendance of events which are scheduled during the week, compared to the weekend (figure below).



Interest in bear events, either on week days or weekends did not appear to be strongly seasonal. Only 26% of respondents felt that interest in weekday events was seasonal and 29% of respondents felt that interest in weekend events was seasonal. Again the chief reason cited for lack of interest in events, can be summarized by time limitations. There was, however, interest expressed in scheduling outdoor activities in the spring, fall and winter; when the weather is pleasant. This will be worth bearing in mind by the board, as there is strong interest from the membership for more outdoor actives and these may best be scheduled during the more clement times.

The best days and times for activities was examined and the best days for weekday events was shown to be Wednesdays and Friday evenings starting around 6.00 to 7.00 pm. The best days and times for weekend events was shown to be either Saturday (45% of respondents) afternoons (64% of respondents) or all weekend (30% of respondents). Additionally respondents felt that Friday (20%) evenings around 6.00 – 7.00 pm (62%) would be a good time for events. This information can certainly be used to help optimize event timing and planning in the future.

As the next section would be most fairly handled together, I will finish with the summary for now. We will continue in the next Bear Brief with an breakdown of the individual current events and members views of those events. This will be very helpful for improving the already warmly received offerings.

For now the only thing left for me to do is to wish each and everyone of you a very Merry Christmas.

Please don't hesitate to offer any comments or feedback to treasurer@heartoftexasbears.org.

— James

December

www.HeartOfTexasBears.org

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Have a Happy And Safe Holiday and Joy and Peace in the New Year

1

10a: Bears Day Out Breakfast
Trudy's North Star,
8820 Burnet Road,
Austin, TX, 78757
(512) 454-1474

2

3

4

7:30p: HOT Board Meeting
Central

5

6

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8

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4-8p: Bear Bust
The Chain Drive
504 Willow Street
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 480-9017

10

11

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14

15

7p: HOT Bears Holiday Party at Leonard Schlueter's Home

16

17

18

19

7p: Bear Coffee Starbucks
2900 W. Anderson Lane
Austin, TX, 78757
(512) 467-1548

20

21

22

10a: 2nd Breakfast
Austin Diner
5408 Burnet Road
Austin, TX 78756
(512) 467-9552

23

24 Christmas Eve

25 Christmas Day

26

27

7p: Bears Night Out
Hoovers Cafe
2002 Manor Road
Austin, TX 78722
(512) 479-5006

28

29

30

31 New Years Eve
TCC Fire & Ice

View the latest calendar information for this month and future months on the HOT Bears web site - www.HeartOfTexasBears.org

2007