



Bear Briefs

The Newsletter of the Heart Of Texas Bears

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JANUARY 2008

From the President's Den



Happy New Year to y'all! Hope your holiday celebrations were enjoyable—whether that was with family, friends, or pets. Personally, I was in Montana -

celebrating in the snow with my dog Mook and good friends. Being from the cold north, I still miss the snow during this time of year- so I get a fix of it by going to Montana for snow hiking, snow mobile, snow skiing, and snow eating (ever try it with real maple syrup? yum!)

I am happy to report that our club made 97 teenagers happier at Christmas. With the money we raised at the Sunday beer bust and the donations from our Christmas Party, we accumulated that many gifts for Child Protective Services of Austin. Eric and I delivered them to the agency the Sunday after the party. While we were sorting them out, we were given some background of CPS. They serve over 4000 foster, abandoned, and/or orphaned kids from infants to age 21. They provide everything from diapers to beds. Everything they give to their clients is new: clothing, toys, toiletries, blankets, shoes, etc. All are donated by individuals or by companies. What I was surprised to find out is

that although it is a state sponsored facility, there are only 2 full-time employees. The rest is handled by volunteers. Sadly, they are one of the less “glamorous” agencies, so tend to get less funding. Recently, they lost funding from the United Way due to cuts to that agencies funding and gift giving. Times are hard, so it was great that the club could make a difference.

Speaking of making differences, we are starting off the new year by looking for and promoting volunteer opportunities for our members. We are on the look-out for 1-2 day projects that we can do as a volunteer and social event. Ideas so far are Habitat for Humanities, AIDS Services Austin grounds clean-up, and park clean-up. If there is a cause close to you- and you would like our club to help, please email officers@heartoftexasbears.org.

Speaking of officers, our January Quarterly meeting is just around the quarter. Why not plan to attend? We have an exciting agenda and a new meeting space- one of the new libraries. Look for details in the HOT Happenings and on the yahoo group. Come on out and support your club!

Woof
-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

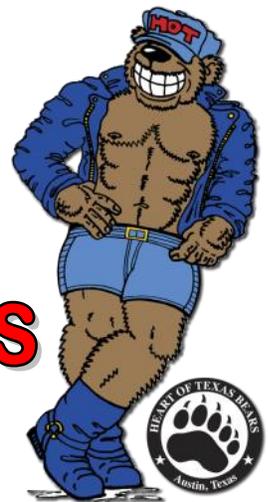
504 Willow Street (78701)
(512) 480-9017

Midtowne Spa of Austin

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

Phil Nelson

Registered Massage Therapist
(512) 301-3376



Quarterly HOT Bears Business Meeting January 20th



Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 5

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, January 8

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

Friday, January 11

Guerilla Queer Bar from 6pm to 9pm. See SmokingBanana.com for details.

Sunday, January 13

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.

Friday — Sunday, Jan. 18 — 20

Activity Weekend at the TCC Landsite. Camp out and help work on some improvements for the Landsite. The **TCC Fall Quarterly Meeting** will be held on Saturday at 1pm in the Pole Barn.

Sunday, January 20th

The **HOT Bears Quarterly Business Meeting** will be at **2pm**. The meeting will be held at a new location: the Austin Library, Carver Branch, room #1. The library is located at 1161 Angelina, Austin 78702; which is a few blocks east of IH-35 on 11th Street. Their phone number is (512) 974-1010. See the HOT Bears website for a map. Join us, hear about upcoming club events, and share your ideas. Remember, it's **your** club.

Wednesday, January 23

Coffee With Da' Bears! Join your Bear Brothers for some friendship, fun, and caffeine (if you like). This month Bear

Coffee is at **Central Market Westgate** (South Lamar / 290 / Westgate). Hope to see you there!

Saturday, January 26

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, January 31

Bears Night Out dinner this month is another Bear favorite... **Pok-E-Jo's BBQ**. We're headed to their North location at 183 and Great Hills Trail. See you at 7pm (Bear Time) for some very tasty BBQ. [9828 Great Hills Trail, Austin, TX, 78759 (512) 338-990]

Saturday, February 2

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

New Years Ponderings from the Vice President

Happy New Year!!! I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season, and you haven't broken too many of those New Year's resolutions...yet! As we get ready to focus on a whole new year, let's take a look back at the highlights of a busy 2007.

In March, the H.O.T. Bears threw one of their famous TBRU poolside cocktail parties, serving over 800 drinks, and taking home the honor of winning best cocktail party. We also said congratulations to Harry Boudreaux for being voted Spirit Bear by the TBRU contestants. In April we were extended a very gracious invitation to Steve Rison's TOGA party, shouted hallelujah and amen with the Austin Baptist Women and the Oso-Premes, and celebrated our 9th anniversary with BBQ and a new club T-shirt.

Continuing the fun in May, the club hosted another cocktail party at Lonestar, and also took home the best campsite award. As the weather was heating up, the club continued its busy activity schedule by marching in the Pride parade, serving up cold beer at the Community Unity celebration, hosting a new members social, and Dive-In-Movie at Ed Burlison and Marcus's Montemayor's home in June, playing in the pool at Steve Rison's Midsummer Splash in July, and eating ice cream and sundaes at Bud McMullen's home and winning trophies for wearing funny hats at ACE in August.

WHEW! And don't think the activities stopped there. We had a very busy September attending another Dive-In-Movie at Joe Smith and Tom Strauch's home, celebrating the Hot Dawg Daze of Summer at Leonard Schlueter's new pad, volunteering with the Capital City Rodeo, and throwing yet another cocktail party for thirsty cowboys and cowgirls.

And if all that wasn't enough we finally camped out underneath the Texas skies at Back 2 the Woods 3, squeezed in just one more cocktail party at the Central Texas boys of Leather annual run, and carved a dozen jack-o-lanterns in October. We also volunteered to make pies for the Texas Pie Kitchen in November, celebrated the holidays at Leonard Schlueter's house, and rang in the New Year with Chris Fuller and Simon Wheatley this past month.

Add the monthly beers busts, theater trips, breakfasts, coffees, dinners, and various other activities on top of all the above, and you can see we had a very full and active 2007, with 2008 looking to be just as busy, and just as much fun.

It is my wish that we continue to thrive as a club with the same energy and enthusiasm as we have experienced this past year, and continue to do so for many, many more. And knowing you as I do, that is a guarantee.

*Best Wishes, and many WOOFs and GRRRS
Kelly Stephens*

Planning Ahead for February... LUEY

Can't afford to make it to Mardi Gras this year???? Or perhaps you are looking at making the party last even longer? Well, we have a suggestion that won't break the bank and will have you partying till the cows come home.

Why not attend **LUEY 35** February 7-10th in Houston this

year? You can check out all the details at lueyweekend.com to learn more about this annual event. You can even register there too.

The H.O.T. Bears will be making our presence known this year, so be sure to check it out!

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

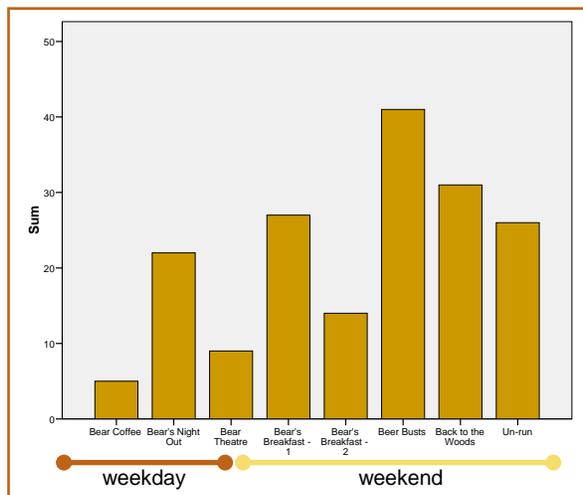
Reflections & Reminiscences in the New Year!

Christmas is now over & we are embarking upon a new year. So what better than to continue our reflection of last years survey results & to use the results to help shape our new years resolutions, for the club. As mentioned in last months Bear Briefs, the response to the survey was great with over 72 respondents; with 50% of the current membership responding to the survey & offering a huge variety of comments.

The summary results & over 700 resoundingly positive free response comments can be found on the HOT Bears web site (Please follow the emailed link). The survey results represent a unique opportunity for all of us to get to know the heart & mind of our club & its membership. This information will offer a great opportunity to spark communication within the group & encourage active participation in the continued development & uniting of our group.

In this the second of the Bear Brief articles discussing the survey results, we will further explore the tangible results of the survey & gain an insight into the events that the membership are interested in & the reasons for any lack of interest in specific events.

As mentioned last month, the average survey respondent attends 1.3 events per month. The main limitation upon attendance was described as being due to time limitations. 67% of respondents expressed interest in weekday events, while a whopping 90% of respondents expressed interest in weekend events. In addition there was also generally a lower attendance for weekday events, compared to the weekend events (figure below). The primarily reason offered for the lower interest & attendance of week day events was due to time constraints.



Weekday events

Survey results showed that the best days for week day events was Wednesday (30% respondents) & Friday (25% respondents) evenings at around 6.00 to 7.00 pm (60% respondents). Week day events were rated as being either very good or good by 34% of respondents, while 39% of respondents felt neutral about week day events. From the comments section, it was revealed that the main reasons for the lower positive response to week day events was attributed to time constraints & a lack of knowledge about week day event offerings.

Some of the common suggestions for future week day events involved activities & exercise; such as, walking (such as around town lake), dog walking, work out evenings, & bowling. Other suggestions for future week day events included movie nights, bear bar crawls, happy hours & Friday night gatherings at the Chain Drive. There were several suggestions for culture, intellectual, music & art events.

Weekend events

Results showed that the best days for weekend events was either Saturday (45% respondents) afternoons (60% respondents) or over the whole weekend (30% respondents). Weekend events were rated by 64% of respondents as either very good or good, while 24% of respondents rated weekend events as neutral. From the comments, weekend events were described as representing some of the best events offered by the club.

The comments offered regarding weekend events included: offering more information about specific events; such as the TCC weekends, providing more variety of events, more events on Saturday afternoons & evenings, Saturday morning trip through the farmers market. It was also felt that without another organized offering that guys just left after meeting for the bear breakfasts, which were very well received.

Suggestions for future weekend events included more active events such as; visiting parks, hiking, canoeing, golfing, picnics in the park (be sure to go in disguise) & bear hiking. Trips to museums, zoos, guest speakers, arts & craft nights, bowling, live music venues, trips to the movies, movie nights & game nights are members homes, bar gathering where people can come & go were suggested.

Beer Busts

Beer busts were overwhelmingly well attended by respondents, with 74% of respondents attending beer busts. Interestingly the Beer busts, in addition to being the most popular events offered by the group, also had the lowest rate of respondents commenting that they had not heard of the event; with only 4% of respondents having not heard of the beer busts.

Some of the things that were liked about the beer busts included, that it is easy to get to and park, there is cheap beer, the small scale of the event (without raffles or shows), there is a casual atmosphere at the events, people enjoy the good times, bar tending and talking to everyone and the food when served.

It was typically felt that the beer busts were a one venue type of event and some expressed the view that the Cock Pit just didn't feel as correct as the Chain Drive. Some people felt that the beer quality could be increased. Other venues which were suggested included; Bout Time, Chain Drive, DJ's, Oil Can Harrys, Rainbow Cattle Company, and other bars in Austin; like the Black Star Co-Op beer social on Saturday nights. Also private homes and club houses were suggested.

Bear Breakfasts

Bear breakfasts were reported as being attended by 60% of survey respondents, while only 8% of respondents had not heard of the breakfasts. The second breakfast was also less well attended than the first breakfast, which may be reflected by the event being newer and some people not liking Austin Diner.

Ironically, although well attended, there were a fair number of negative comments about the breakfasts, which included that it

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

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can be too expensive, some people don't like being placed together on a single large table, some didn't like the group billing and the food variety was sometimes deemed to be limited.

However, people generally appreciated getting together and being in a large group of handsome guys, with a constant location (at Trudy's), people also liked the buffet and its constant price. Some people felt that Austin Diner just didn't offer good food

Some of the venues suggested for the breakfasts included: Austin Diner, Denny's, Furr's, Golden Coral, Hoovers, Ihop, Kerbey Lane Café, Manny Hattan's, Nutty Brown Café, Omletry, Rudy's, Ryans, Tien Hong (Dim Sung), and Trudy's.

Some other suggests regarding the breakfasts included; primarily the restaurant should know we are coming, a common venue which makes knowing where to go simpler and active events after breakfast, such as, walking, hiking, biking.

Bears Night Out

56% of respondents had been to Bears Night Out, with about 15% of respondents not having heard of the event.

Some of the negative comments which were offered for this event included: not liking the disorganization that occurs at the event, not knowing anyone, not liking the all at one table nature of the event, which makes seating logistically tricky. People also didn't like the nature of the billing with a party of 20 and it was felt that it would be helpful to remind everyone through the Briefs that tips and any additions to peoples order, such as drinks should be included in the amount people contribute for the meal.

People did enjoy; the opportunity to try new places, the diverse cuisine, the good food & conversation with friends.

Other suggested venues included: Amaya's Taco Village, Bennihana, Buca de Pepo, Captains Seafood, Clay Pot, Chuy's, Din Ho, Fonda San Miguel, Fudruckers, Green Mesquiste BBQ, Golden Wok, Hill's Café, Hoovers, Nutty Brown Café, Shandeez Grill, Star of India, Sushi at Mikado and Trudy's. It was however, strongly felt that the restaurant should be informed that we were coming and that they were confirmed to be in business and could cater to the number of people attending. Smaller venues were felt to present a problem for seating. People enjoyed that restaurants were chosen by attendees. People also felt that it would be nice to do something together before or after we eat, such as hiking around the lake or downtown together. Other restaurants which cater to Hispanics or offered higher prices were also suggested.

Un-runs

The unruns were attended by 51% of survey respondents, while about 25% of respondents had not heard of the event. The higher rate of respondents not having heard about the event was also reflected in the comments, which included that people were not sure what the event was, that the event could be better advertised and could also be advertised the community at large, with show info and photos from previous events.

The personal touch of this free, smaller, cozy event where people can come and go as they please was appreciated. It was also appreciated that the events have been held in members homes, and it was proposed that more events in peoples homes be offered, along with trips around the city.

It was felt that Chain Drive may be a bit small for this event and parking can be a problem. People also felt that the contest could drag on a little and some felt uncomfortable with the crowds during the contest. People generally enjoyed the contest

and raffles, but some felt that the way that tickets were sold was a little off-putting.

BTTW

Back to the woods were attended by 50% of survey respondents, while 18% of respondents had not heard of the event. People enjoyed camping, good food and relaxing in a friendly atmosphere with hairy men, cool weather and peeing on the ground. The cocktail parties were well received, although the games and show were a little less well received, with some people expressing a desire to limit the drag acts.

It was felt that it was important to keep an eye on the cost of this event and to limit the size of the event, so that the atmosphere of the event was not spoiled. It was also proposed that we focus on non-members for this event.

Outdoor activities and events were proposed frequently and included hiking and swimming. It was also suggested that fewer brownies be served, which I have no problem with.

Bear Coffee

Bear coffee's were attended by 33% of respondents, with 22% of responders reporting that they had not heard of the bear coffees. The coffees tend to be smaller events which people felt could be positive as it allowed people to chat and get to know each other more readily, in a comfortable and intimate setting. However, people also felt that this was initially difficult, due to the lack of a known friendly face. I would like to add here that as a board at least one of us tries to attend the events, however, given the number of events and time constraints this is not always possible.

It was felt that the bear coffees could be the prelude or ending to other events, such as movie nights or walks around town lake. A small number of venues which also serve food and which were rotated were proposed. It was felt that this format would make planning and attending simpler. Proposed venues included: Austin Java, Café Mundi, Halcyon, Mozarts, Progress Café (east Austin), Rutamaya, Texpresso. It was also felt that options over the whole of Austin should be explored.

Bear Theatre

Bear theatre had the lowest attendance rating by survey respondents, at 32%. Bear theatre also had the highest rate of respondents reporting that they had not heard of the event, with 38% of respondents commenting that they had not heard of the event. This was mirrored in the comments, in which people noted that they were unaware of the event and wished for more information regarding the event; for instance having some mention of the event on the web site.

It was commonly felt that Rob did a great job organizing the event and his efforts were appreciated. It was felt that movies could also be added to the offerings.

Summary:

If you have read this far, you can see the survey has generated a wealth of practical information, which can readily be used to improve the offerings of the group. It can be seen, from the survey results, that the long standing events, which people are aware of and that have a consistent venue tend to be the most popular events. Newer events and events which occur during the week tend to be less popular; due to time constraints and that people just aren't as readily aware of the events and venues.

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

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In my opinion it may be worthwhile choosing a smaller number of event locations and keeping times of events constant for the newer events, so that people can become more aware of these events and where they will occur.

In next month's final article we will review the comments which address the issues of how satisfied people are with the club and where members would like to see the club grow and develop. I'm not giving the game away too much by saying that members

and survey responders were very positive about their club. However, there were a number of issues and concerns which will need to be discussed by all of us, so that the club may maintain and surpass the high standard which it already meets.

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

— James



Holiday Bear Beer Bust



Holiday Party at Leonard's



January

www.HeartOfTexasBears.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	31 New Years Eve TCC - Fire & Ice	1 New Years Day TCC - Fire & Ice	2	3	4	5 10a: Bears Day Out Breakfast Trudy's North Star, 8820 Burnet Road, Austin, TX, 78757 (512) 454-1474
6	7	8 7:30p: HOT Bear Planning Meeting North	9	10	11 6-9p: Guerilla Queer Bar Location TBA See HOT Bears Web Calendar for more info	12
13 4-8p: Bear Bust The Chain Drive 504 Willow Street Austin, TX 78701 (512) 480-9017	14	15	16	17	18 TCC Activity Weekend	19 TCC Activity Weekend 1p: TCC Winter Mtg
20 TCC Activity Weekend 2-4p: Quarterly Membership Meeting	21	22	23 7p: Bear Coffee Central Market Westgate 4477 S. Lamar Blvd. Austin, TX, 78745 (512) 899-4300	24	25	26 10a: 2nd Breakfast Austin Diner 5408 Burnet Road Austin, TX 78756 (512) 467-9552
27	28	29	30	31 7p: Bears Night Out Pok-E-Joes 9828 Great Hills Tr. #310 Austin, TX 78759 (512) 338-1990		

Quarterly Membership Meeting: Austin Library – Carver Branch, Room #1, 1161 Angelina, Austin, TX 78702 (512) 974-1010
View the latest calendar information for this month and future months on the HOT Bears web site - www.HeartOfTexasBears.org

2008