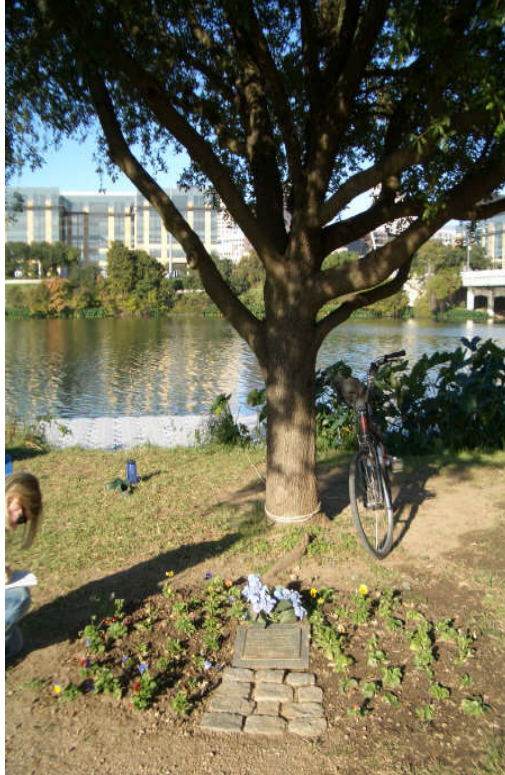


Local Memorial Service Held for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Day

By Julie Solomon

Here is a story about a man and his fiancée, or a little ditty about Jim and Diane. Jim Tiennan and Diane Brische Malloy were a loving couple who lived in Austin. Looking at them, they appeared to be an average couple, except for one thing. If you ask them for their address, they will tell you about the arroyo (dry creek bed) near Town Lake that they call home. Jim and Diane made up part of the homeless population of Austin. Diane once worked for MCI, but after missing too much work after she became ill, she was fired, and eventually landed up on the street. She and Jim attempted to find shelter at the Salvation Army, but were told that they would be separated. It seemed that the only place they could be together was in the arroyo. However, one day the creek flooded and subsequently so did the place they called home. While Jim scrambled to collect their few belongings, Diane tried to escape the flood. Jim went to find her, but could not. Upon reporting her missing, Jim received little assistance in his search for his missing fiancée because they were homeless. After searching through Diane's belongings, he discovered that she had a meeting with Richard Troxell, Director of Legal Aid for the Homeless. Jim met with Richard and asked for his help. Together Jim and Richard kayaked on Town Lake where they eventually found Diane's body. Diane Brische Malloy met an early death because of unfortunate circumstances due to her homelessness.

After this ordeal, Troxell was left feeling very disturbed. Diane was among the 24 homeless individuals that he personally knew who had passed away. This led him to become an activist for the cause. In 1992, soon after Diane's tragic death, Troxell planned a march on the State Capital in which a candlelight vigil was held in Diane's honor. The march was to spread the word about the people dying on the streets of Austin. The procession then marched to Town Lake where they told stories about those who died. The group had the sprinklers turned on them. Over the next year, they raised money to make a plaque and plant a tree. In 1993 they erected a memorial near where Diane was found. The memorial consists of a plaque at the base of a tree of remembrance at Auditorium Shores overlooking Town Lake.



At the base of the tree are 15 cobblestones brought over from Europe that were used by slaves to construct Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia. The cobblestones serve to represent the economic slavery of homelessness. The site is peaceful and offers a serene place for visitors to come and reflect about those who they have lost. The plaque at the memorial site reads:

Homelessness

It is the essence of depression.

It is immoral.

It is socially corrupt.

And it is an act of violence.

In memory of those who have lost their lives on the streets of Austin.

House the Homeless, Inc.

1993â€



Since 1993 Troxell has planned a memorial service each year during the week of Veterans Day to remember those who died. This year's memorial will take place on November 14th, which is National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Day. The service will begin at sunrise (6:57 AM) and will be presided over by Troxell with Mayor Pro-Tem Jackie Goodman serving as the keynote speaker. Sara Hickman will sing and Troxell will read the names of the 83 people that have died each year. The Hyatt Regency will provide food and Troxell's wife and daughter will help serve food at attendees. House the Homeless (an organization made up of homeless and formerly homeless persons which Troxell founded in 1989) sponsors the Memorial. House the Homeless will be honoring Detective Lisa Morrill who has brought to justice a man accused of beating to death Curtis Ray Wilson, a man experiencing homelessness.

Troxell is saddened by the fact that there continues to be a need to revisit the memorial each year. This, he says, is the cost of not resolving the problem of homelessness.