

Missing Austin man's family still mourning his loss after year of little hope

Written by Marty Randall

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It will soon be a year since Paul Graupe disappeared from his neighborhood in Austin.

Paul is the 50-year-old, slightly built, dark-haired man who was last seen near his home in the early afternoon of Tuesday, November 24, 2009. Neighbors later reported seeing him walking his little dog on English Avenue. Graupe told one person that he planned to go visit a neighbor who owed him some money that day.

He was never seen again.

In the search conducted by Austin police and other agencies, his cell phone was traced to an area around Terry and Cutshall Roads southeast of Austin, but it was never recovered. Graupe did not drive and never had a license. He was employed at Morgan Foods Inc. and was known as a good, reliable employee who lived frugally. His happiest moments were spent with his extended family. Those family members have posted a monetary reward for information regarding Graupe's disappearance. During the months following his disappearance, they hired a private detective to collect any and all information that could hint to where his remains may be.

Through his relatives' diligence, signs advising of his disappearance are still posted around Austin and Scott County, again in hopes that someone will come forward with the knowledge needed so that his remains can be recovered.

"It would be a blessing for the family if we could just bring Paul home for burial. We realize he is dead. We need to know where he is and how he died and, if possible, the person or persons responsible for his death," a relative commented recently.

She sadly added, "We miss him so much."

The public is being invited to a vigil planned by family members at 2 p.m. this Sunday, November 21, at the Jennings township Volunteer Fire Department. Attendees are encouraged to bring signs or banners expressing their feelings about Paul and his disappearance.

Noted one relative, "We encourage everyone to come out and help us remember Paul and help us find some answers that we desperately need." The fire department is at the corner of North Second Street and West Main Street (State Road 256) in downtown Austin.

The family also expressed its appreciation to the fire department for allowing them to have the event at the fire station and for "...all of their efforts searching for Paul."