



A Letter from the President by Susan Teich

About this time last year, the newsletter celebrated the planting of many new trees in Old Braeswood, funded by residents through Trees for Houston’s Old Braeswood Fund. Most of those trees survived and are thriving. But we lost more than we expected. Although we had paid the extra charge for watering, Trees for Houston was overwhelmed during two dry summer months inserted into the middle of one of the wettest Texas summers on record. The heat and the lack of rain during that dry period overtaxed the ability of Trees for Houston to do all of the watering they were obligated to do. Now, they are replacing our lost trees at no charge to us. That is good news. Even better news is that our loss of trees could have been much worse and was not, because so many Old Braeswood residents took it upon themselves to water the new trees planted in the right-of-way along their property lines. They saw trees in trouble and they went out and applied water. We don’t know what kind of summer we will have this year. A Texas summer can be formidable. I invite everyone to adopt the trees planted along their property by ensuring that they receive enough water. Trees cool our neighborhood, clean the air and provide an ambience of civility. We owe it to them.

There is another summer topic I want to address. Mosquitoes. Every summer they separate us from our spacious gardens, even after the sun goes down and the humidity is tolerable. There was a time when Old Braeswood made use of a private service to spray late at night for mosquitoes. That service was discontinued when some residents voiced environmental concerns. Since then, mosquitoes have become a greater health threat to Houston residents, bringing: St. Louis encephalitis, West Nile virus, Chikungunya virus and, now, Zika. The option to spray for mosquitos, during summer rainy periods and at night when pollinating insects are at rest (along with people), is being revisited by the Board. If you wish to be heard on this subject, please contact me directly at steich1@comcast.net.

I look forward to seeing you at the Spring POA meeting on April 26th !

*Old Braeswood POA
Members Meeting*

7 p.m. Tuesday

April 26, 2016

7319 Greenbriar

All residents are invited to Old Braeswood’s Spring POA meeting on Tuesday, April 26th at 7:00 pm at 7319 Greenbriar. The location gives us an opportunity to see an original Section 1 house newly remodeled for its new owners, Adam Miller and Dr. Michelina Cairo. They have graciously opened their home to us for this meeting. Come join your neighbors. Our special guest will be Council Member Ellen Cohen who will give us an update on city affairs and projects in our area. Ms. Cohen is an advocate for our neighborhood to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for her generous assistance with the recent neighborhood signage and pillar project.



7319 Greenbriar

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The first house to be constructed in Old Braeswood sits at 2115 Glen Haven Blvd., an English manorial designed by Harry D. Payne and built in 1929. At the end of that year, it was purchased by one of the most famous residents to live in OB, Governor William P. Hobby. In 1929, he not only was a former governor of the State of Texas (1917-1921), editor and publisher of the *Houston Post-Dispatch*, but also a director of the Braeswood Corporation. Hobby had friends who sat with him on the Braeswood Board – George R. Christie (Hobby's partner in an insurance company), John H. Kirby (a former partner of Hobby's father-in-law) and George F. Howard (a former Texas Secretary of State on Hobby's appointment).

Hobby's purchase in Old Braeswood followed by only a year the completion of Ima Hogg's residence, Bayou Bend, in River Oaks. Just as Miss Ima (a Texas Governor's daughter) gave River Oaks cachet and more marketability, Hobby lent prestige to Old Braeswood.

Sadly, Hobby's wife Willie died in the same year he purchased the house. He lived there alone until 1931, when he married Oveta Culp. He was 53 and she was 26. Both of their children were born during their time in Old Braeswood - William P. Hobby Jr. in 1932 (on Oveta's 27th birthday) and Jessica in 1937 (on her 32nd birthday). William Jr. would grow up to serve as Lieutenant Governor of Texas (1973-1991). A picture of him and Jessica, seated on the floor of the Glen Haven house with their father, appears on this page.

Oveta became even more prominent than the Governor. She was named by President Eisenhower to organize and head the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). She had attended Eisenhower's cabinet meetings even earlier when he named her to organize and head the Federal

Security Agency. Although the FSA was not a cabinet level agency, Eisenhower even then included her in his cabinet meetings. At HEW, she made the decision to approve Jonas Salk's polio vaccine. During WWII she was the first director of the Women's Army Corps (WAC). She chaired the Board of the *Houston Post* and became its Publisher.

She was the first woman to receive the Army's Distinguished Service Medal. She received many other honors, including honorary degrees from 17 colleges and universities, Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania among them. President Eisenhower suggested that Oveta run in 1960 for the Presidency of the United States but she declined. She and the Governor are buried in Glenwood Cemetery.

In 1945, the Hobbys moved to Shadyside at 2 Remington Lane. They were followed in

the Old Braeswood house by Frank and Flora Champion. Frank was president of Spartan Tool and Service Company, a tool manufacturer at 1711 Old Spanish Trail.

Then, in 1959, the house became home to Al A. and Marjorie Brown. Al listed himself as an "oil producer" and officed at various locations over the years (Prudential Building, Gulf Building, Esperson Building). Ben Brown, their son, appears with them in the City Directory 1988-1992.

David M. and Jean M. Frazier followed in 1995. She was CFO for Hermann Hospital and served with Paul Hobby, grandson of Governor Hobby, on the Board. Her husband worked for Exxon.

In 2004, the house welcomed Bryan and Aliza Dutt. Bryan was a managing partner in Ironman Energy Capital, an energy hedge fund headquartered in Houston.

The current owners, as of 2014, are Bal and Rita Saareen. Bal is president of the Brask companies, which design, manufacture and repair heat exchangers and pressure vessels for the oil industry.

The name "Brask" is an acronym for Bal, Rita, Amy (their daughter-in-law), Sangeeta (their daughter) and Kevin (their son). The first Brask company was opened in Lake Charles, LA, in 1999. In 2011, Bal added Brask, Inc./IEE [Industrial Equipment & Engineering] in Pearland, with Kevin as president. A third company is in the



2115 Glen Haven Blvd..



Gov. Hobby with Bill Jr. and Jessica at home at 2115 Glen Haven Blvd.

works, Brask, Inc. – NEELA (named after Kevin’s children Neela and Lila). Sangeeta’s husband, Dinesh, also works in the family business.

With Kevin and Sangeeta both living in the Houston area with their families, it was grandchildren that drew Bal and Rita here. At first, they had a Houston condo for frequent visits. But visits weren’t enough for Rita. She wanted to see her grandchildren more often. Then began a house hunt on this side of town, an easy departure point for Bal’s commutes. Given the lifestyle of the Hobbys, it is likely that they entertained often. The Sareens do too. When they saw the layout of the Hobby House, they recognized it as a “party house” that would serve their needs.

One goal in renovating the house before they moved in was to keep as much of the original house as possible. In addition to the architects featured in the last newsletter, Dennis Britt at Pintail Construction receives credit from the Sareens for making that possible. He retained the fine interior wood paneling and the resplendent chandeliers and wall sconces. A Murano glass chandelier from Venice lights the dining room. In another room, the chandelier is ceramic Limoge.

The house was originally built with an elevator that was removed during the Browns’ ownership because their children liked to play in it, running it up and down continually. The Sareens put it back, but new code required that it be bigger to accommodate wheelchairs. Where bricks or roof slate had to be replaced, the items came from the demolition of houses from the same era.

The sale of vintage building materials is an industry in itself. The Sareens were told that the Hobby House, with its wealth of fine old materials, would be highly marketable dismantled and sold as salvage. Fortunately, they were not inclined to use it in that way.



Rita & Bal Sareen in Gov. Hobby’s den holding the Gov’s picture taken at the same spot.

The final happy piece of their restoration is that the original landscaping is being restored. In the garage, the Sareens found two large blueprints of the original landscaping, as approved by Braeswood Corporation, framed in polished wood. It is not surprising that the Hobbys framed the plans. The landscape architect was Allen Myers, a former associate of Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed New York City’s Central Park. In Houston, Myers worked with John F. Staub and other noted architects to provide the finishing touch to many fine houses. Today, the brick perimeter walls are restored to exactly where they stood during the Hobbys’ historic occupancy. In spirit, the Governor and Oveta have returned to Glen Haven.

[This is the 40th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]



Original plans for Gov. Hobby’s garden

National Trust Recognizes Old Braeswood

Old Braeswood has received an extraordinary invitation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It will feature our neighborhood during its upcoming national conference in Houston (November 15 - November 18, 2016).

Recognizing the architectural significance of OB and its unusual grouping of architectural styles, due to its staggered stages of development, the Trust has asked the Board for permission to make an Old Braeswood neighborhood tour an “add-on” for conferees. Although the conference will host 1500-1800 people, the number touring the neighborhood will be capped at 200-250, arriving in groups of 50 by tour bus over a period of 3 hours.

The Trust has a wish list of houses it would like to present, with 8-10 houses being the ideal number. A house tour might consist of a full tour, an “exterior only” tour or a garden tour. The Trust, with POA approval, will contact homeowners for permission. (The owners of two wish list houses have already given approval: the Lords at 2329 Blue Bonnet and the Steves at 2337 Blue Bonnet.) Anyone wanting their house added to the Trust’s list may ask to be considered by contacting the Chair of OB’s Preservation Committee, Joe Manca (manca@rice.edu). Joe will act as our contact for the Trust.

The Trust will supply docents for the tours through its field office in Houston. HoustonMod, working with the Trust, will supply volunteers. Some volunteers from Old Braeswood will be needed.

How will this benefit the neighborhood? Old Braeswood will receive no monetary benefit, unless generated from ticket sales to residents. We may also set up tables to sell copies of *Braeswood: an Architectural History* by Stephen Fox. The greatest benefit to will be the honor and recognition conferred by the Trust and by the publicity that Old Braeswood is an historic neighborhood. We can be proud that we have been asked to do this.

Author Visits Book Club

Old Braeswood resident Kathy Lord hosted the March Book Club meeting with writer Katherine Center as the featured guest. A graduate of Houston's St. John's School, Katherine is the author of five novels and was a speaker at the 2007 Houston Chronicle Book and Author Dinner.

Join the Book Club by showing up at the April 12th meeting to discuss *The End of Your Life Book Club* by Will Schwalbe (336 pages), or the May 10th meeting to discuss *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (487 pages).



Author Katherine Center with hostess Kathy Lord



Old Braeswood Book Club

For location and time, contact Nancy Eisenmenger, nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com

Garden Club at Centennial Garden

The Old Braeswood Garden Club met in March at the Centennial Garden in Hermann Park and was treated to a tour of all 8 acres by its Director of Horticulture, Jane Curtis. Jane originally came to Houston in 1993 to join a team of designers writing the first Master Plan for Hermann Park. Following the tour, club members ate lunch in the entrance pavilion, designed by Apple store architect Peter Bohlin. The next Garden Club event is the annual flower show and dinner, this year on April 24th. Join now to be included by contacting Annette Brown, netteyduplechain@yahoo.com.



Old Braeswood Garden Club at Centennial Park

Meet Marilyn Archer

This issue of the newsletter highlights Marilyn Archer, Chair of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and an active ARC volunteer for over 10 years. She lives at 2409 Glen Haven with her husband, Jack Eby, Director of Design at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

Marilyn is more than able to head ARC. She is a partner in the Gensler architecture firm, where her studio provides commercial design. She served on the Board of the Rice Design Alliance for 20 years, and currently is on the Advisory Boards of both the Gerald Hines School of Architecture and the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas.

Considering Marilyn's professional commitments, it might seem surprising that she is willing to volunteer large amounts of time to reviewing blueprints for construction and remodeling in OB. Sometimes, she has to tell people that their plans are out of compliance, not a pleasant task. She does it because Old Braeswood is her home and, as a design professional, she cares about the look of the neighborhood.

There are several points at which property owners and their agents should become aware of the deed restrictions. The real estate agent selling the property is under a duty to disclose the deed restrictions. Then, any builder or architect who is retained by the property owner has a duty to go to the OB website and familiarize himself with the deed restrictions, which are posted there. Finally, applications for City of Houston permits require an affidavit that the project has the approval of the POA. If that application is "fudged" and construction begins, ARC asks for the construction plans. If they are in violation of deed restrictions, the City of Houston can red tag the project and shut down construction until the violations are resolved.

Without deed restrictions, our neighborhood could become dotted with multifamily dwellings and commercial development. We owe Marilyn many thanks for her contribution of time and expertise in keeping Old Braeswood looking like Old Braeswood.



Marilyn Archer

NEWLY PLANTED TREES NEED WATER NOW!!!

Trees for Houston was behind schedule and street trees were planted a bit late this spring. Their survival will depend on whether or not residents supply the water they need. We cannot rely on Trees for Houston to do this. So please water your trees! Or, notify us if you see trees that are not receiving water at 713-807-1787 or info@oldbraeswood.com.

The grower recommends that new street trees receive water every couple of days in the amount of 2-4 gallons, not too much, but just enough to ensure they thrive though our hot weather.

The street trees benefit us in many ways, and we encourage you to support our program by visiting our website and making a donation to our Fund through Trees for Houston. Donations to the fund are fully tax-deductible.

Pillar Party and Thank You to Joe!

Joe Manca, Chair of the Preservation Committee, was successful in raising funds for sign toppers and entrance pillars and in getting them installed. He deserves a very large thank you for all his efforts. The neighborhood never looked better. Those donating to the signs and pillars will celebrate his success with him at a Donor Party this month. The invitations have been sent! If you did not receive one and think that you should have, please contact Susan Teich, steich1@comcast.net. If you have an invitation, please rsvp to help those planning food and drink.



Joe Manca

Trash & Recycling Schedule

Recycling	Every other Tuesday
Dates	March 8 & 22 April 5 & 19 May 10 & 24
Household Trash	Tuesdays (in city provided bins)
Yard Waste	Tuesdays (in biodegradable bags)
Tree Limbs & Debris	3rd Monday (in Odd months)
Junk Waste	3rd Monday (in Even months)



Place your household garbage in the city provided automated bin or recycling containers, and set them on the curb no earlier than 6 p.m. the evening preceding pick up and no later than 7 a.m. the day of pick up, and remove it no later than 10 p.m. on collection day. Bins left on the street beyond these times are subject to city fines. Bins must be accessible to the automated collection truck (not blocked by vehicles, trees, etc).

Yard waste must be bagged in city approved biodegradable bags, weighing no more than 50 pounds, and placed at the curb at least 3' away from automated bins. Yard waste mixed with paper, plastic or any other type of waste will not be collected. Small branches may be put in bundles (no more than 4 ft. x 18 inches in diameter).

2016 OBPOA

Officers & Chairpersons

President	Susan Teich
Vice Pres.	Andrea Lapsley
Vice Pres.	Joe Manca
Vice Pres.	Buddy Steves
At-Large	G.G. Hsieh
At-Large	Courtney Steves
Treasurer	David Leathers
Secretary	Dawn Gervais
Past President	John Eldridge
Block Captains	Christine Manca
Enforcement	John Eldridge
Flood Control	Kathy Lord & Len Teich
Garden Club	Laurie Eckman & Dee Murray
Newsletter	Zack Liu
Park	Annette Eldridge
Plan Review	Marilyn Archer
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Susan Teich
Social Events	<u>TBA</u>
Trees	Carroll Shaddock & Molly Khalil
University Place	Susan Teich
Welcome	Dawn Gervais

Palms for Palm Sunday

Every year Len Teich cuts 40-50 fronds from the giant Chinese fan palms in his yard for donation to Christ the King Lutheran Church on Rice Blvd. The church uses them in its Palm Sunday service. After Palm Sunday, the fronds are burned and used to make ashes for Ash Wednesday the following year. One reason the Teichs moved to Old Braeswood was to be closer to their church.





PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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 www.oldbraeswood.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Old Braeswood
 Special 2010– 2016 Real Estate Report**

*by Dawn Gervais, Realtor® Consultant * Greenwood King Properties*

2016

	<u>Active</u>	<u>Sold</u>
Home Inventory	9	1
Minimum List/Sales Price	\$549,000	
Maximum List/Sales Price	\$2,390,000	
Avg. sales price /sq ft	\$332	

**New Neighbor Coffee
 Appreciation**

Special thanks to GG. Hsieh for opening her beautiful home on April 2nd to welcome new neighbors to Old Braeswood. Thanks also to co-hostess Dawn Gervais. The coffee was well attended and everyone had so much fun that no one remembered to take pictures.

OLD BRAESWOOD	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
HOMES sold	14	10	17	14	19	12
Min. sold price	\$560,000	\$465,000	\$369,000	\$560,000	\$439,000	\$349,500
Max. sold price	\$2,220,000	\$2,150,000	\$1,700,000	\$2,220,000	\$3,075,000	\$1,725,000
Avg price per sq. ft.	\$258.28	\$275.70	\$256.51	\$258.28	\$228.19	\$222.82
Avg Days on Market	113	50	51	113	111	98
Avg sales price	\$1,144,678	\$1,060,060	\$914,447.51	\$1,144,678	\$873,298	\$855,408