



## A Letter from the President *by Susan Teich*

It's summer and everything seems to slow down with the heat. The newsletter too will slow down with a shorter issue.

A number of residents have asked if the ballot initiative is still ongoing, and, if so, when it will conclude. The next newsletter will announce a date for a general meeting of the POA to take place in the Fall. All absentee ballots (and there are many outstanding) will need to be in before that meeting if they are to be included. If you need an absentee ballot, you may print one out from the Old Braeswood website ([www.oldbraeswood.com](http://www.oldbraeswood.com)). Those at the meeting who have not voted may do so then. The final results of the campaign will be announced both at the meeting and through the newsletter. Hearing from each resident through a ballot is the best way to assure that the final result is in keeping with the wishes of the neighborhood. **Please vote!**

Although the comments and questions about the ballot initiative have quieted, the amount of feedback received initially was evidence of the high level of interest that residents have in OB. This is your open invitation to translate your interest into a volunteer effort on the Board or on a Committee. Ideas about how to improve the neighborhood are best presented at the outset of an initiative rather than after the initiative is well underway. You can do that by assuming a volunteer position and being present. Your interests and skills will be matched to available openings, and there are always positions not filled. You would be most welcome.

The ballot initiative has been a central focus for months, but the neighborhood has moved forward in many other ways. The park looks wonderful and continues to get frequent use. The sign toppers give the neighborhood the distinctive look we had hoped for. SEAL continues to be highly visible when on patrol and is providing much needed Vacation Watch when requested to do so.

Be safe this summer. Stay cool. Enjoy your neighborhood.

## Signage Project Donor Party This Fall!

The sign toppers are installed and the additional brick pillars are in production. Our neighborhood grows more beautiful every day, and now Houston knows where we are on the map!



Many thanks to all who donated to make this enhancement to Old Braeswood possible. As promised, those donating \$100 or more will be invited to a party celebrating the success of the campaign. The party will be sometime this Fall, with the date to be announced after the Summer.

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From its beginning, the house at 2307 Blue Bonnet Blvd. had celebrity status. It was built in 1955 for attorney Gerald S. Gordon and his wife, Lilliann, and they went all out. Their chosen architects were none other than Howard Barnstone and Preston M. Bolton. Yale trained Barnstone counted Dominique de Menil among his patrons and was instrumental in bringing the modernist style of Mies van der Rohe to Houston. Barnstone would later work with Mark Rothko in designing the Rothko Chapel. Bolton, son of a Texas A&M president and himself trained at A&M, co-founded Houston Ballet, and led the Alley Theatre (president of the Board) and Theatre Under the Stars (chair of the Board). Together, they earned 16 IAI Houston awards. Like many of their projects, the Blue Bonnet



house was showcased in national magazines, appearing on the covers of *Architectural Record* (Mid-May 1956) and *House and Garden* (January 1958).

That was just the outside of the house. For the interior, the Gordons used architect Florence Knoll, a student of both Mies van der Rohe and Eliel Saarinen. Her furniture was an expression of their minimalist, rationalist design theories. Landscaping was not forgotten. They hired Harvard trained Thomas Church, who practiced out of San Francisco. A pioneer of the “California Style” of gardens, he was renowned for “outdoor rooms,” areas for outdoor living within the landscape as a whole.

Rice University professor Stephen Fox has written repeatedly about the Gordon house, extensively so in his book *Braeswood, an Architectural History*. For Fox, the Gordon house is a key contribution to Old Braeswood’s

tradition of architecturally important houses.

Happily, the Gordons were able to enjoy their extraordinary house for many years. Lillian remained until her death in 1991, and Gordon, whose legal career in Houston spanned 60 years, remained in the house until a couple of years before his death in 2003. Their daughters Stephanie and Leslie grew up there. Like many of their neighbors, the Gordons were members of Temple Beth Israel.

Following the Gordons in 2001 were Diane Tanking and Blanten Filak, who remain in the house today. Diane, whose career has been in health care executive search, was raised in Kansas and Nebraska. Blanten, whose work has been in telecom sales and real estate development, was raised in Dallas. They met on an airplane and became engaged at the top of the Eiffel Tower, so, of course, their first home in Houston had to be in a highrise. They might still be living in the sky but for a comment made by Blanten’s then 7-year-old son, “Why can’t we live in a ground house?” A search began and Old Braeswood came into the picture. They chose the Gordon House without even knowing its illustrious history. Its stunning design was preserved intact, without the awkward modifications that marked so many of the houses they had seen in Southampton and Southgate. Their story is another example of how the architecture in Old Braeswood draws people to our neighborhood.



[This is the 36th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]

## *Three Original Old Braeswood Houses Are Preserved*

Preserving the character of the neighborhood by preserving its original houses is always an ongoing effort. Currently, three exceptional houses are in the process of renovation. You may have passed them. If not, be sure to enjoy watching the progress on:

7319 Greenbriar Dr. (the subject of an article in the July/August 2011 newsletter), 2115 Glen Haven Blvd. (the former home of Governor William P. Hobby and his wife, Oveta Culp Hobby, first secretary of the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, first director of the Women's Army Corps, and a chairperson of the board of the Houston Post), and 2215 Glen Haven Blvd. (the subject of an article in the June/July 2014 newsletter). In each instance, the new owners are modernizing inside, but allowing the exterior to retain its historic Old Braeswood look.



If you live in an Old Braeswood ranch house and are thinking of remodeling, take a look at an article appearing on the front page of the Business Section of the Houston Chronicle on Sunday, June 28, 2015. It is subtitled "Time capsule houses can thrive if new owners have a love for an old style."



2115 Glen Haven Blvd.



2215 Glen Haven Blvd.

## *Old Braeswood Garden Club*

The Old Braeswood Garden Club had its last meeting of the year on May 26<sup>th</sup>. This was a celebratory meeting held at the beautiful home of Dawn Gervais. It was also the day after the Memorial Day flood.

The last meeting is always an induction of Officers and a celebration of those who have served over the past year. The new President for 2015-16 is Annette Brown and Maribel Reuter will be the new treasurer. Other officers will carry on for one more year. The Club also celebrated the long serving treasurer Ruth Kosieraki. She has served for 32 years and kept perfect track of the Club's money for that long time. Old Braeswood Garden Club is so appreciative of her service. She was given a silver necklace with a rose design and a painting to memorialize her dedication.

The next meeting will be in September for the Barbeque Kick-off party. All are invited. More details will follow in a future edition of the newsletter.



## Board Member Spotlight: Sally Miller

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Sally Miller, a marriage and family therapist, is the Old Braeswood Board member being introduced in this issue of the newsletter. She lives with her husband, David, an internist, at 7516 Morningside Drive.. Sally has served Old Braeswood in many roles since they joined the neighborhood in 1983. She has been president of the POA, a Vice President of the Garden Club, and headed the Directory/Block Captain Committee for many years. You may have spoken to Sally on the phone. She has been tireless in rounding up sponsors for the directory and in soliciting both food and host houses for the POA meetings. Sadly, the Miller's house is now on the market. And we hope that like so many Old Braeswood residents that move away, the Millers will stay connected to the neighborhood in one way or another.

## Report Street Light Outrages

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Well-lighted streets contribute to the security of the neighborhood. Please report any streetlight that is not functioning. As a reminder, 311 is NOT the correct number to dial when making a streetlight report. It is CenterPoint Energy that maintains streetlights throughout our electric service territory.

Before making your report, look for a pole number on the streetlight and write it down. If it does not have one, then note the exact location of the streetlight. Then make the report either by telephone (713-207-2222) or online at <http://www.centerpointenergy.com/services/electricity/residential/reportastreetlightoutage/>

You will be asked to provide:

- a pole number(s) for the non-functioning light(s) you want to report, or their physical address
- contact information (in case more information is needed to locate a streetlight)
- an e-mail address (if you want feedback regarding your repair request)



## Old Braeswood Real Estate Report

By Dawn Gervais, Realtor ® Consultant \* Greenwood King Properties

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We are officially in the heat of summer, and fortunately the real estate market heated up in June from the May cool off. However, buyers are still being cautious and making offers on homes only if they are a “good value” or an exceptional home.

We are still seeing price drops all over Houston as buyers remain on the fence due to uncertainty on where prices will go with the slump in oil prices.

Finding that “sweet spot or number” when pricing your home is the key to getting the best offer, multiple offers, and going over list price.

### Old Braeswood Real Estate Statistics: July 2015

Total Homes & Lots for Sale	8	Total Homes sold since 1/1/2015	5
Minimum List Price	\$1,065,000	Mini. Sales Price	\$619,000
Maximum List Price	\$2,350,000	Max. List Price	\$2,220,000
Homes under contract	3	Avg sales price per sf	\$275.88
Avg Days on Market	89		

All statistics are based on properties listed on MLS and Houston Association of Realtors

## *New Directory Volunteer Needed*

The current Old Braeswood POA Directory is dated 2013-2014. Since its publication, there have been changes in property ownership and we want to include all of our new residents in an updated directory. In the past, the cost of publishing the directory has been covered primarily by local sponsors purchasing ads. Old Braeswood past president and frequent volunteer, Sally Miller, has been very successful in talking to local businesses and getting those ads. Sadly, Sally's house is on the market and she eventually will be leaving Old Braeswood. She has offered to accompany a new volunteer on visits to businesses nearby with introductions and a demonstration of her successful approach to soliciting ads. Getting to know your extended neighborhood is actually fun, and Sally has enjoyed her contact with these businesses. Would you be willing to facilitate the printing of a new directory by becoming our new solicitor of sponsors? If so, please call Sally at 832-452-0113 or email her at [sallyeisenmiller@yahoo.com](mailto:sallyeisenmiller@yahoo.com).

## *Volunteers Needed for Neighborhood Socials*

Chairpersons and workers are needed for the Social Events Committee. There are several events scheduled during the year, most notably the Spring New Neighbor Coffee, the Park Party in May, and Night Out in early October. Volunteering is an excellent way to get to know your neighbors and to become involved in your community. For information, please contact us at 713-807-1787 or send a message to [info@OldBraeswood.com](mailto:info@OldBraeswood.com).

## *Trash & Recycling Schedule*

<b>Recycling</b>	Every other Tuesday
<b>Dates</b>	July 14 & 21 Aug. 11 & 25 Sept 8 & 22 Oct. 6 & 20
<b>Household Trash</b>	Tuesdays (in city provided bins)
<b>Yard Waste</b>	Tuesdays (in biodegradable bags)
<b>Tree Limbs &amp; Debris</b>	3rd Monday (in <b>Odd</b> months)
<b>Junk Waste</b>	3rd Monday (in <b>Even</b> 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).

## **2015 OBPOA**

### **Officers & Chairpersons**

President	Susan Teich
Vice Pres.	Molly Khalil
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
Manager	Evalyn Krudy

## ***Block Captains***

Old Braeswood is revitalizing its Block Captain program. The duties of Block Captains include facilitating communications between the Old Braeswood POA Board and the residents of your block. Block Captains are also encouraged to organize occasional social events such as block parties or get-togethers.

If you are interested in serving as a Block Captain or for more information, please contact your neighbor, Christine Manca, at [christine.manca@att.net](mailto:christine.manca@att.net).



**PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION**

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Email: [info@oldbraeswood.com](mailto:info@oldbraeswood.com)  
[www.oldbraeswood.com](http://www.oldbraeswood.com)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Street Trees Need Watering During Hot Summer Months**

The beautiful allee of street trees planted down Morningside this past spring are in need of regular watering. The recent hot temperatures in the first half of July and lack of rain have been a shock to their systems.

If you have a new tree that is turning brown, please water it immediately. The tree will often drop its leaves to conserve water and will sprout new leaves once regular watering and/or rains resume.

The young trees that were just planted would benefit from daily watering of 1-2 gallons in this heat. Water can be applied directly to the root ball mound near the trunk. If using a garden hose, test the water temperature to ensure no scalding water is hiding in the garden hose.

**Join Old Braeswood's Yahoo Group**

This is a real time group where you can send messages to other members without delay. The Yahoo group has been very helpful for tracking down lost pets and has even been used to help the Patrol track down thieves. Please note that the Yahoo group is not related to the eNews and crime alert service.

Visit this link to get started:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OldBraeswoodNeighbors/>.

**Sign up for Old Braeswood eBlasts & Crime Alerts**

Would you like to receive up to the minute news and crime alerts electronically? To subscribe, call the Old Braeswood office at 713-807-1787 or send your email address to [info@OldBraeswood.com](mailto:info@OldBraeswood.com).

**WELCOME**

**New Neighbors**

*Simon Coronado III*  
2310 N. Braeswood

*Margaret & Tanner Franks*  
1 Braeswood Court

*Antonio McDyess*  
2330 Gramercy Blvd.

*Gordon Morrison*  
2330 Blue Bonnet Blvd.

*Dileep P. & Purnima I. Rao*  
2417 Maroneal Blvd.

*Liping Wei*  
2331 Dorrington Blvd.