

A Letter from the President by Andrea Lapsley

Dear Neighbors,

Spring has definitely sprung in our neighborhood. As I walk around the streets, I am greeted by the birds singing and an abundance of flowers and trees budding out. The park is filled with children playing and adults visiting. Congratulations to Jay Plotkin for having his yard selected as the Garden of the Season. Your azaleas are spectacular.

The Garden Club has created a mug with a beautiful tulip on it and the tagline, "Making our Neighborhood a Community Since 1939." The design is by our neighbor Dee Murray. See the article on page 4 and learn how you can get your very own Garden Club mug!

Our New Neighbor Coffee is scheduled for April 22 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at GG Hsieh's home at 2322 Maroneal. GG and Krista Heidersbach are hosting. All adults are invited to come and meet our new residents. Again, more information is in this newsletter on page 6. Special thanks go out to Krista who is now chair of the Social Committee.

We are pleased to report that our membership drive is underway and collections are relatively good for this time of year, but we are about half way to our annual budget goal. If you have not already done so, please send in your dues and patrol subscriptions. Please check your mailing label to find out if you have paid this year.

If you would like to volunteer or participate in some capacity with our neighborhood activities, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at andrealapsley@msn.com.

I look forward to seeing each of you throughout the year and at next Member's meeting on April 26 where we will share neighborhood updates and have time to socialize.

You're Invited: OBPOA Members Meeting
7 p.m. Wednesday, April 26, 2017

2330 N. Braeswood Blvd.

All residents are invited to Old Braeswood's Spring POA meeting on Wednesday, April 26 at 7:00 pm at 2330 N. Braeswood. Parking is available on Braeswood Ct.

This gracious hand-crafted home by noted architect Joseph Finger (c. 1933) is steeped in history and lavish detail. It is one of the best examples of elegant early 20th century architecture in historic Section 1. Special thanks to owners, Tony & Jean Edmundson, for graciously opening their home to us.

Our special guest will be ***Marilyn Brown*** from ***Coalition for the Homeless*** who will talk about this complex issue and offer solutions.

OLD BRAESWOOD
PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Old Braeswood News

**Save the date for the
2017 Old Braeswood
Park Party**

**4 - 6 p.m.
Sunday, May 7th**

Please join us for fun and refreshments. This annual event is for everyone. There will be activities for children, refreshments.

Volunteers and sponsors are needed. Please contact us at info@oldbraeswood.com for more information.

All neighbors welcome!

In this issue

Your House Has a History	2
Gold Brick Award	3
Outdoor Lighting Reminder	3
Brays Bayou Construction Update	3
Garden Club & Book Club	4
Rice Village News	4
Garden of the Season	5
Real Estate	5
Trash and Recycling	5
More Invitations & Welcome	6
Submit your Photos	6

Families sometimes move to Old Braeswood because they need a larger house to accommodate a growing family, but if they later need an even larger house, they most likely will not leave the neighborhood. People who move here do not want to leave. That was the case for Dr. Norman and Joy Speck.

Norman and Joy were native Texans with an infant son, Pat, when they bought their first house in Houston, shortly after Norman completed training as an orthodontist. Two more sons, Don and Mark, came along and they bought a house at 2201 Maroneal in about 1954 to have more room. A fourth son, Eric, arrived and soon they began to wish for even more space, so long as it was in Old Braeswood. They found their bigger house at 7506 Morningside, which they purchased in about 1965. And they have lived there ever since.

The Specks are only the third owners of the Morningside house, designed by architect William Fred Gray.

The first owner was Leo M. Levy and wife Selma, who first appeared in the Houston City Directory at that address in 1937. Leo was listed as a representative for the Spanish American Trading Company. A maid, Elva Stewart, lived in the garage apartment. Soon Leo became a representative for The Edwin D. Shepherd Agency, general agents for the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut. He officed in the Esperson Building.

Leo died in 1944. Page one of the February 20, 1947 issue of *The Thresher*, a student weekly publication of the Rice Institute, announced a Leo M. Levy Memorial Fund established to make interest free short-term emergency loans to students in need. Selma remained in the house until 1948, and apparently assumed his position as representative for the Shepard Agency because she is listed that way in the City Directory.

The second owner was William H. Levy and his wife Edna, no relation to the first owners. They are first listed in the house in 1949, with their maid Bertha Jury in the garage apartment. Bill Levy had founded the first Rice Food Market on the then unpaved Rice Blvd. in 1937, naming it *Rice*

Boulevard Food Market. At the time, the only other store in what is now Rice Village was an ice house at Rice Blvd. and Kirby. A photograph of the entire Levy family taken in the den of 7506 Morningside was displayed in the Rice grocery store after they purchased the house from Leo Levy's widow.

When the Specks bought the house from the Rice Food Market Levys, they noticed that it had some unusual features. Like other

houses in Old Braeswood, it had a very small front porch. The reason, they learned, was that the founding vision for Old Braeswood was of an upscale neighborhood, one where people did not loiter around on the front porch for all to see. The small porches made sure that no one did that. The house also had a basement, unusual for Houston. The walls are metal lathe and plaster rather than the wooden lathe and plaster common at the time. Air conditioning added in the 1950s came via a wooden cooling tower. The wooden tower, twice restored, is used by the Specks to this day.

The Rice Market Levys had been world travelers and they left behind some of their souvenirs. The tile fountain from India and the African light fixtures of copper and animal hide are gone today, victims of storms and humidity, but the crystal chandelier from Austria still hangs in the dining room.

Pat, the oldest son, now lives again with his parents to manage their care. Having first lived in Old Braeswood when he was about 5 years old, he can recall changes in the neighborhood.



Dr. Pat Speck with the Levys' crystal chandelier.



The Specks and the house at 7506 Morningside.



"Your House" continued from Page 2

In the 1950s, the area that is now Old Braeswood Park was undeveloped and there was some disagreement as to how it should be used. The neighborhood children wanted it as a ball field and the Braeswood Garden Club wanted it as a flower garden. Actually, there were many places to play ball, because OB had numerous vacant lots, especially on South Main. The two small triangles, one on Glen Haven at Morningside and one on Greenbriar at Blue Bonnet, both had goldfish ponds. Don Speck had a newspaper route and made one especially onerous delivery each day, bicycling Glenlee's long driveway to deliver a newspaper to Glenn and Faustine McCarthy on their estate.

No description of Old Braeswood in that era is complete without mention of the Shamrock Hotel. It was the place to be. Pat had his Lamar High School senior prom there.

Everyone remembers the Shamrock's swimming pool, big enough for water skiing demonstrations, but another unusual feature was its fallout shelter in the basement, complete with water and food in case of nuclear attack. During the Cuban missile crisis, the Speck children became alarmed. Their father reassured them that in case of attack they would all find shelter at the Shamrock. After that assurance, the stray cat the children hoped would be included in the shelter was dubbed "Cuba."

The Specks are a family of doctors. Don followed his father into orthodontics. Mark became a dentist. Pat became a physician in general practice. Only Eric followed a different path, becoming a vice president of American Airlines. That path began at the Shamrock. As a child, he retrieved discarded flight schedules and ticket envelopes from a travel agency operating in the hotel. He used them to concoct games to play with his brothers. By the time he was about 12 years old, his father decided to put Eric's knowledge of flight schedules to use and allowed him to plan the family's annual trips, always an adventure. Under Eric's young leadership they traveled to Hawaii, Guadalajara, Majorca, Mexico City, Rome and Paris.

Last year, the Specks celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary, noted at the time in this newsletter. Their life here has been a typical Old Braeswood story.

[This is the 45th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]

Errata

Correction to *Your House Has a History* as that column appeared in the Jan./Feb. 2017 issue: Dr. Mark Bonnen was mistakenly identified throughout as Dr. James Bonner. James Bonnen is the brother of Dr. Mark Bonnen.

A Light Shines in Old Braeswood

Please be aware of how your outdoor lighting affects your neighbors. If it shines into their house, perhaps you could be a good neighbor and adjust its direction.

Your neighbors will be grateful to you for doing so.



Gold Brick Award

Congratulations to Rita and Bal Sareen for receiving a 2017 Gold Brick Award for their restoration of the 1929 Governor William P. Hobby House at 2115 Glen Haven Blvd. (*below*).



Preservation Houston gives the awards to people and organizations that restore older homes and buildings in Houston. The awards for 2017 were announced in February and included, besides the Hobby House, 2 historic fire stations, a Fifth Ward Theater, a high school and 6 other private homes. The winners will be honored at the non-profit's annual dinner in March at the River Oaks Country Club. Thank you Rita and Bal for preserving a piece of Old Braeswood history!

Brays Bayou Construction Update

The Federal Projects Manager for the Harris County Flood Control District has communicated to the POA that the concrete sidewalk along North Braeswood west of South Main will be reduced to 8 feet from 10 feet in width. This will allow about 7 feet to plant trees in the area between the curb and sidewalk. Once the tree planting plans are prepared he will share them with our neighborhood.



Garden Club Calendar

Tuesday, March 28 at 10 a.m.

Lesson in Ikebana Flower Arranging at the School of Ikebana, 3637 W. Alabama, #380. Lunch follows.

Sunday, April 23 at 6 p.m.

Annual Flower Show: a dinner meeting that includes spouses and significant others.

Tuesday, May 17

Lunch and the induction of new officers.

Contact co-president Nancy Eisenmenger (nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com) or co-president Dawn Gervais (Dawn@DawnGervais.com) for more details.

New Garden Club Mugs

Need a new mug for your morning coffee? Want to support the neighborhood garden club's beautification efforts? The OBGCC is selling mugs with the lovely artwork of Dee Murray for \$15.00 each. The profits from the sale of the mugs will be used to support Garden Club donations to make the neighborhood a beautiful place to live.

Member Krista Heidersbach inspired the wording on the mug: "Making our Neighborhood a Community Since 1939."

Reserve your Old Braeswood Garden Club mug for \$15.00!



To reserve your mug(s), contact Nancy Eisenmenger (412-427-4644, nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com) or Annette Brown (713-667-9187, netteyduplechain@yahoo.com).

Rice Village Changes

RICE VILLAGE is undergoing a transformation and is bringing in a lot of new stores and restaurants. Unfortunately, this means that some favs like La Madeleine will be closing after 3/26. But Starbucks will reopen on the Amherst side of the same building in the former Chico's location in September. Shake Shack will reopen in the La Madeleine space in November.

On Morningside, parking spaces were removed to create an open-space plaza that stretches the length of the three restaurants on Morningside in front of D'Amico's Cafe, Nao Ramen, and Hopdoddy Burger Bar, and serves as a public gathering spot. Benches and public art now grace a spot on Kelvin. We are told that more pedestrian oriented changes are coming later in the year.

In late February, Rice Village also launched a paid parking program to improve access to favorite stores and eateries by way of parking meters. For those looking to shop, dine and stay for an extended period of time, you can park for up to two hours for free in the garage off Morningside (upper levels only). A portion of the proceeds from the parking meters will benefit Roberts Elementary. You can pay for the meters with a credit card. Rates are \$1.00-\$2.00 per hour. The good news is that suddenly there is plenty of available parking around the Village.

Book Club

The Book Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The books for April and May are:

April 11—*All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr, Awards: Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

May 9 - *The Devil in the White City*, by Erik Larson, Awards: Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime

For details, contact president Annette Brown (netteyduplechain@yahoo.com).



Garden of the Season

This Spring, the Old Braeswood Garden Club presented Jay Plotkin **The Garden of the Season** award. Jay Plotkin's front garden at 2335 Maroneal is full of flowers with a preponderance of every color of Azalea – it is eye popping. These Azalea bushes were planted years ago by Jay's deceased wife. It is a special reminder of her love for her yard.

What a beautiful neighborhood we have, especially now with the spectacular blooming Azaleas in many yards in Old Braeswood. Be sure to get out and view these lovely yards before the blooms drop! We also wanted to mention the Seff family at 2340 Blue Bonnet, and our new neighbors, the Gilani family at 2345 Glen Haven. The Azaleas are glorious! In addition, Linda Joekel at 2420 Bellefontaine deserves special mention for a beautiful assortment of spring flowers. Thanks, neighbors!



Old Braeswood Real Estate Report

by Dawn Gervais, Old Braeswood Neighbor, Realtor © Associate ©, Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

Things are looking good for the Houston real estate market; single-family home sales and pricing are both climbing. The luxury market (\$750,000 and above) saw a fourth consecutive month of positive sales. There was a 4.0% increase in homes sold in Feb. 2017 compared to this time last year. Total dollar volume for all types of properties sold is up 13.1%.

Single-family home inventory is up 7.6% from this time last year. Old Braeswood is looking good as usual with one home already sold since January 1st. Total number of homes sold in our neighborhood in 2016 was 9 (listed on MLS).* With one sale already in our neighborhood we are off to good start.** It's great to see all the renovations going on. I think it shows residents love living here and want to stay.

Old Braeswood Real Estate Statistics

Total Number of Homes for Sale	3
Minimum List Price	\$679,000.00
Maximum List Price	\$2,499,900.00
Homes sold since Jan. 1, 2017	1

* Average Days On Market was 60 in 2016.
** All statistics based on properties listed on MLS and Houston Association of Realtors.

Trash & Recycling Schedule

Recycling	Every other Tuesday
Dates	Apr. 4 & 18 June 13 & 27
	May 2, 16, & 30 July 11 & 25
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).

2017 OBPOA Officers & Chairpersons

President	Andrea Lapsley
Vice Pres.	Joe Manca
Vice Pres.	Buddy Steves
Vice Pres.	Courtney Steves
At-Large	John Eldridge
At-Large	David Leathers
Treasurer	Bill Marchbank
Secretary	Julie Cohn
Past President	Susan Teich
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Advisory Board	Dee Murray
Block Captains	Christine Manca
Directory	Sally Miller
Enforcement	John Eldridge
Flood Control	Kathy Lord & Len Teich
Garden Club	Nancy Eisemenger
Newsletter	Evalyn Krudy
Park	Annette Eldridge
Plan Review	Marilyn Archer
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Andrea Lapsley
Social Events	Krista Heidersbach
Trees	Carroll Shaddock Paul Sanders
University Place	Andrea Lapsley
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Manager	Evalyn Krudy



PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 541346
Houston, TX 77254-1346
Phone: 713-807-1787
Email: info@oldbraeswood.com
www.oldbraeswood.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

New Neighbor Coffee: 4/22



All are invited to the new neighbor welcome coffee! You will have a chance to meet Old Braeswood's new residents and perhaps meet some old ones for the first time on Saturday morning at the home of G.G. Hsieh and Mark Hausknecht, 2322 Maroneal, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

This event will be for adults only. Children will not miss out. The Park Party on May 7 is an event planned with them in mind.

Kirby Mansion Event: 3/29

John H. Kirby played a key role in the formation of our neighborhood. Stephen Fox, in his book *Braeswood, An Architectural History*, writes that in 1927 the new Braeswood Corporation acquired the land on which our houses are built by buying 456.26 acres from John H. Kirby for \$733,731. Fox further writes that Kirby was one of the twelve directors of Braeswood Corporation. The rest, as they say, is history.

This month on March 29th from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. there is a rare opportunity to walk through John Kirby's 17,000 sq. ft. mansion built for him in 1926 at 2000 Smith St. The occasion is a fundraiser for The Houston Area Youth Council on Service, a non-profit service organization for high school juniors and seniors in the greater Houston area. Tickets at the door are \$60.00. In addition to a tour of the mansion, admission includes food, drink and music. For more information call (832)309-5474.

Welcome New Neighbors

Vanessa & Charles Ames

2336 Gramercy

Aziz & Sania Gilani

2345 Glen Haven

Lynn & David Rizzo

2327 Maroneal

Share your Photos !

Do you have a photo taken in Old Braeswood that you would like to share in the newsletter? Please submit to info@oldbraeswood.com or mail to our PO Box.

