

VOL. 16, ISSUE 1

JANUARY
2020



OLD BRAESWOOD
PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Old Braeswood News

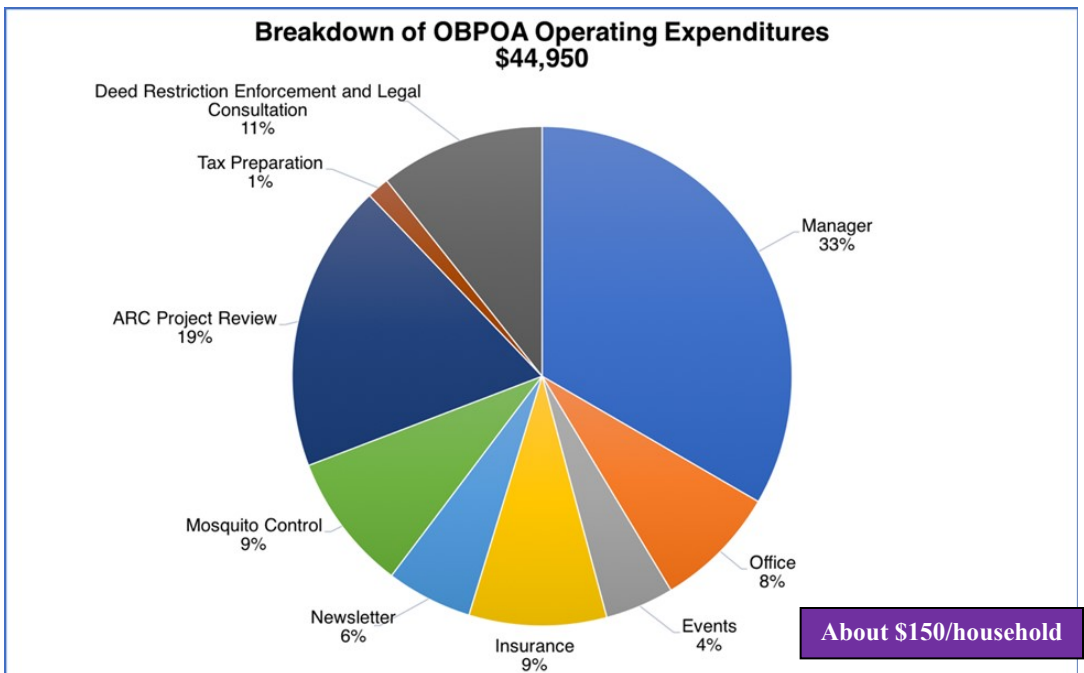
Letter from the President by Julie Cohn, President

Happy New Year to Old Braeswood! My kick-off message of 2020 concerns the state of the neighborhood – in financial terms.

Those of you who were able to attend the annual membership meeting in November heard a presentation about the financial status of the Old Braeswood POA (OBPOA). Here is a brief recap and update on increases in dues and patrol subscription fees.

While historically the Association's finances have been quite stable, 2018 and 2019 saw significant shortfalls, due to three major initiatives - defense of deed restrictions against a proposed townhome development project, preparation of new Architectural Review Guidelines, and two deed restriction amendment initiatives. It should be noted that the cost of the 2019 amendment project was mostly offset by generous donations from our neighbors. Many, many thanks to you!

Only 60-65% of us pay annual POA dues. Nonetheless, we've gotten a lot done! On a very slim budget of about \$45,000 per year, OBPOA provides architectural project review, deed restriction enforcement, mosquito control, regular communications (newsletters, listserve blasts, and website), social events, membership meetings, and constituent services to all residents in Old Braeswood. Here's how that breaks down:



Last summer the Executive Committee voted to increase ARC fees in order to meet the cost of project reviews. This month the Executive Committee voted to increase our Regular annual dues (by \$25) to \$150 per household to match our expenditures and to rebuild our deed restriction defense fund. The Committee also increased Sustaining level dues to \$200 and Patron level dues to \$300. While the dues are voluntary, you can see that full participation by every neighbor will result in a balanced budget. *See "President's Letter continued on Page 4"*

In this issue

Sponsor the Old Braeswood Newsletter — A great way to promote your business!

There's no better place to reach the Old Braeswood community with your ad than in the newsletter. Consider becoming a sponsor to help us offset printing and mailing costs. Sponsors will be acknowledged in newsletters throughout the year: first with an image, followed by regular recognition in each subsequent edition. The newsletter is mailed to 400 homes. Sponsorships begin at \$75 for a business card size image, \$150 for a quarter page, and \$250 for a half page. Discounts available for sponsoring multiple editions. For more information contact info@OldBraeswood.com.

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“President’s Letter”

from Page 1

If too many households fail to participate, we will have to reduce services, which will undermine all the things we love about Old Braeswood.

We pay for the excellent patrol service staffed by S.E.A.L. Security entirely with voluntary subscription fees. For the past seven years, S.E.A.L. charged us \$22/hour for patrolling, which barely covers the cost of the officer’s salary and is significantly below the amounts paid by other neighborhoods.

We have benefited from 60-hour/week patrol coverage and, as we learned at our annual meeting, we have had very little crime in our neighborhood in recent years. S.E.A.L. requested an increase to match the market and cover their expenses and we have agreed to an increase to \$28/hour in 2020 and \$32/hour in 2021.

In accordance with this, a majority of the Executive Committee voted to increase the voluntary patrol subscription fee from \$300/year to \$400/year, which is in line with, or below, the fees paid in other neighborhoods. Nonetheless, we are challenged to meet the full expense of 60-hour/week coverage because only 60 to 67% of us pay subscription fees. If we do not collect enough subscription fees to cover S.E.A.L. patrolling 60 hours per week, we will cut back patrol hours.

To those of you who regularly participate in paying your dues and subscription fees, please accept a huge THANK YOU!

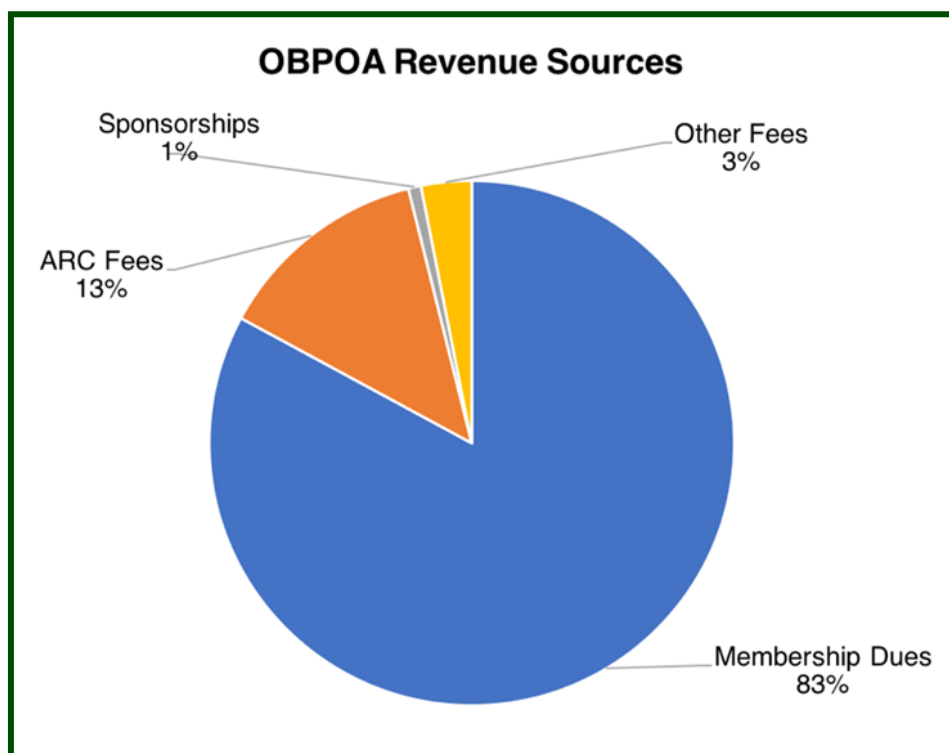
To those who have not yet been able to do so, please reflect on the value of services you receive – if you contribute, we will be able to maintain Old Braeswood as the welcoming and attractive residential community we so enjoy.

The Executive Committee approved the 2020 spending plan shown here, to be adjusted as needed according to actual revenues.

Our goals for 2020 are:

- 1) 75-80% Participation in Membership Dues and Patrol Subscription Fees
- 2) ARC fee income to cover ARC expenses
- 3) Sponsors for parties, newsletters, etc.

You can help! Volunteer to work on these projects! Send your ideas for increasing our revenues to info@OldBraeswood.com.



OBPOA Spending Plan for 2020

Approved by Executive Committee on January 14, 2020

Revenue

Total Membership Revenue	\$35,550
Total SEAL Revenue	\$90,800
Total Architectural Review Revenue	\$5,100
Other Fees	\$1,200
Event Sponsorship	\$300

Total Revenue

\$132,950

Expenses

Operating Expenses	
Manager	\$15,000
Manager's Expenses	\$3,600
POA Member Reimbursements	\$2,000
Insurance	\$4,000
Printing	\$2,500
Mosquito Control	\$4,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$31,100

Professional fees

Architectural review	\$8,400
Tax	\$650
Legal	\$4,800
Total Professional fees	\$13,850

Total SEAL costs @ 60-hours/week

\$87,360

Total Expenses

\$132,310

Net Revenues - Expenses

\$640

Learn to Love the Deed Restrictions #4 by Julie Cohn

In this edition of our slow walk through the deed restrictions, we are going to focus on some very specific provisions about how buildings look in Old Braeswood. There are not many details, but there are a few, and they relate to the height, exterior materials, value of buildings.

For properties in Braeswood Section 1, there are a few provisions to keep in mind. Article 4 specifies that all residences shall be a full two stories tall and the exterior material shall be of stucco, masonry, or something similar that is satisfactory to OBPOA. The provisions are similar for Braeswood Addition and Braeswood Extension (within the restrictions for both, see Articles (f) and (g)). BUT, note that in the latter sections of our neighborhood, the value of the residences may not be less than \$7,500! (I'm feeling a little bit nostalgic for the good old days of \$7,500 homes right about now, how about you?)

"Wait a minute," you may say, "there are many one-story homes throughout our neighborhood!" Yes, this is true. In all three sections, the deed restrictions provide for exceptions, but **only** when permission is obtained in writing from OBPOA first.

When you are ready to build, remodel, or update any part of a property in Old Braeswood, your first step should always be to consult with the Architectural Review Committee (email ARC@OldBraeswood.com) and take a glance at the deed restrictions, ARC Guidelines, and Plan Review Application, which are available here: <http://OldBraeswood.com/wp/deed-restrictions/>.

Quick Response by SEAL Patrol on Jan. 12 by Dee & Bill Murray

On the evening of January 12, 2020 at about 7:15 pm, a disheveled man knocked on our door. I asked him to leave and immediately called SEAL. After my call to the SEAL dispatcher, we watched as he approached two other houses across the street. Within five minutes a SEAL officer was at our door to report that he had located the man and had escorted him out of the neighborhood. The incident was reported to HPD by SEAL. The officer reported back quickly to all of the other neighbors who had also called about this man. We remain so pleased with this service!

Some neighbors are unaware that SEAL officers carry guns and are trained law enforcement personnel, with many years of experience. Although they cannot officially make arrests, they work closely with HPD when an arrest is needed. More often than not, their proactive response and investigations of suspicious activity prevent crime before it can occur and their presence drives criminals out of the neighborhood. SEAL's highly visible presence and fast response rate is a major crime deterrent. Won't you help keep the SEAL officers here 7 days per week with your Patrol Subscriptions?!

Please call the SEAL dispatcher at 713-422-2770 whenever you encounter suspicious activity in the neighborhood or need to request vacation watch service.

Executive Committee Welcomes New Members by Julie Cohn

Welcome to Mike Kelly and Ann Garnett, who were both elected at the Annual Meeting on November 14, 2019.

Mike Kelly takes over as Treasurer from Bill Marchbank. (Thank you, Bill, for your years of volunteer service!) Mike is Manager of Process Safety Audits for Chevron and has lived in the neighborhood with his wife, Krista Heidersbach, since 2011. The year after they arrived, they hosted a POA Members Meeting in their home. Mike is a familiar face at Park Parties as he assists Krista, our POA Social Chair. He and Krista are also known for the Husky dogs they rescue and that greet us from behind the gate when we pass their house.



Ann Garnett takes over the office of Secretary that was previously filled by Samia Khalil, who was elected Vice President.

Ann and her husband Joe, who is a former OBPOA officer, are both attorneys, and have lived in Old Braeswood since 1992. Ann is Assistant General Counsel for MRC Global Inc.

She has already served in many capacities, but she and Joe are best known for hosting the Garden Club's annual BBQ Kickoff each September. Ann is a Garden Club past president. Also, for many years Ann has served as our Republican Precinct Judge.

From time to time, depending on how the political winds have been blowing, Old Braeswood balloting is done in Ann's carport on Gramercy.



2328 Underwood Blvd.



Ellen & Robert Wagnon

The house at 2328 Underwood Blvd. first appeared in the *Houston City Directory* in 1939 and the owners were names well known to Houstonians - Harry Isaac and

Trudy (Gertrude) Battelstein. The house was designed by architect Eugene Werlin, who also designed Mecom Fountain. (*Braeswood, An Architectural History*, by Stephen Fox, page 27.)

Harry was Secretary-Treasurer of Battlestein's Inc. but he would rise to become Chairman of the Board in 1956.

The company was founded in 1897 by Harry's father, Philip, a Lithuanian immigrant who opened a tailor shop at 618 Main St. in a 12' by 12' space in the Prince Theater building. The company grew from there.

Harry joined his Dad in 1919 and men's ready-to-wear was added. Over time, he and brothers Abe and Ben added women's ready-to-wear, a boy's and young men's shop, and a millinery shop. The term "ready-to-wear" distinguished clothing that was not, like many clothes at that time, tailored to order. The millinery shop catered to the necessity of wearing a hat when appearing in public.

In 1950 Battlestein's opened in a new, 10-story building at 812 Main St, designed for it by architects Joseph Finger and George Rustay. For decades that building was a downtown landmark.

In 1954 Battlestein's expanded with a store in River Oaks and shortly thereafter suburban stores at Sharpstown, Almeda, and Northwest Malls. (In 1967, the Battlestein family sold the stores to Manhattan Industries, which later

operated them under the Frost Brothers name. Frost Brothers was liquidated in 1989.)

In 1959 Harry and Trudy moved to a highrise at 1400 Hermann Drive and their nephew Bernard I. Chotiner and his wife Betty moved in. Bernard was the son of Harry's sister Tobie and was a Vice President at Battlestein's. After Bernard's death in 1965, Betty remained for two more years and then moved to Lamar Tower.

Buying from Betty were Harold S. and Jean Gilbert. Harold was Vice President of Coastal Bag & Bagging Corp., a privately owned company started in 1954 and still in operation today making bags for agricultural and industrial packaging. They stayed until 1971.

The next two owners were drawn from the Houston Medical Center.

First there was Dr. Alexander Romagnoli and his wife Nancy, arriving in 1972. Dr. Romagnoli completed his medical degree at the University of Florence, Italy, before serving residencies in England and Canada. He was Professor of anesthesia at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, for 16 years. In Houston, he was Professor of Anesthesiology and staff physician at The Texas Heart Institute for 30 years, not all of them while living in Old Braeswood.

The Romagnolis sold in about 1976 to Dr. Aubrey E. Boyd III and his wife Nancy. New to Houston, Aubrey (Chris) was professor of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and Chief of endocrinology at Ben Taub Hospital. In 1990 Nancy, then widowed, sold to Arlen Melbourne Driscoll and his wife Julie Davis Driscoll.

Arlen was an attorney who began practice with Bracewell and Patterson, and then, after a couple of moves, opened his own law firm, The Driscoll Law Firm. Julie was a realtor for Greenwood King. They stayed through 1995.

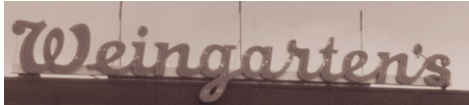
The next (and current) owners are Robert H. and Ellen (Weingarten) Wagnon. Robert is CEO of Republic State Mortgage Co., which he founded in 1994. It is privately held and operates from 30 offices across 13 states. He is the great-great-grandson of wildcat oilman T.P. (Thomas Peter) Lee. T.P. and his brother William Ellsworth Lee started the second Spindletop boom.

The Lees have been a presence in Old Braeswood from its beginning. T.P.'s niece Faustine Lee was married to Glenn McCarthy. [Their estate, Glennlee, was at the southwest corner of the original Braeswood subdivision.] See "Your House" continued on page 5

"Your House" cont'd from Page 2

Old Braeswood resident W. Howard Lee was T.P.'s nephew [Spring 2011 article on 2330 Blue Bonnet.] T.P.'s friend Evalyn Davis lived at 2330 North Braeswood. [Fall 2013 newsletter article]

Ellen's family is also part of Houston history. Her great-grandfather Harris Weingarten, a Polish immigrant, opened a grocery store in downtown Houston in 1901. Her grandfather Joe Weingarten joined the business and pioneered self-service and cash-and-carry shopping.



In 1948, Joe founded Weingarten Realty, which initially built grocery stores and later developed shopping centers. When the family sold the grocery business in 1980 to increase its focus on real estate, the downtown grocery store had grown to a chain of 104 grocery stores in five states.

Grandfather Joe enjoyed his success by commissioning an architect to design a home for his family in Riverside Terrace. That architect was Joseph Finger, designer of the Battlesteins' landmark department



store. He used Gene Werlein, architect of the Battlestein's house, to design Weingarten grocery stores.

Ellen's father, Bernard Louis Weingarten, was Joe's son. Ellen's parents bought Joe's Riverside home when he and wife Malvina joined the Battlestein's at 1400 Hermann Drive. Ellen spent her early childhood there.

The Battlesteins, the Lees, and the Weingartens. The history of Old Braeswood is the history of Houston and many makers of that history intersect at 2328 Underwood.

[This is the 60th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]

Old Braeswood POA Meeting on Nov. 14

All residents of Old Braeswood are automatically members of the Property Owners Association, which held its annual Members Meeting on November 19th, hosted by Jessica and Ethan Phillips in their beautiful home. Reports were given, food and wine shared, and residents elected a new Executive Committee for 2020. Those officers, along with Chairpersons of the POA's committees are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Thank you, Jessica and Ethan, for welcoming us to your home!



Book Club

The Old Braeswood Book Club met in January for its annual brunch at Hotel ZaZa followed by an MFAH tour.

Start reading for the February meeting, which will discuss *Erotic Stories for*



Punjabi Widows, by Balli Kaur Jaswal. It was the Reece Witherspoon Book Club pick for March 2018.

To join or ask questions about Book Club, contact Krista Heidersbach, krista_rust@yahoo.com, (713) 667-5391.



Garden Club Holiday Party

The Garden Club's annual Holiday Party becomes more popular year by year and this year 64 members attended! Dee and Bill Murray opened their spacious home to accommodate everyone with a sit-down dinner followed a keyboardist and caroling.

Thank you, Dee & Bill, for hosting! To GG Hsieh for the music and song sheets! To Alicia von-Greisman for bartending! And to the many who donated time and food. Everyone brought an appetizer or dessert (an incredible array), but special thanks go to those who provided food for the main course: GG, Alicia, Maribel Reuter, Elayne Kouzounis, and Susan Teich.



Party Hosts Dee & Bill Murray.



Dee with Program Chair Susan Teich

The next Garden Club event is the Flower Show on April 19. Don't miss out. Join Garden Club by contacting Maribel Reuter, GardenClub@OldBraeswood.com, (713) 668-4366.

February 18th Program: Guest speaker ElMatha Wilder covers the topic "What to Wear? What to Pack?"

Picnic Garden Tour of the McCoy Garden on Kelving

Deborah McCoy graciously opened her extraordinary garden to the Old Braeswood Garden Club on November 20th. As lovely as her landscaping is in front, it is the garden behind her house that sets her grounds apart and earned her the Club's Garden of the Season award. The garden is sprinkled with areas for sitting and enjoying the beauty and Deborah has made sure that each cluster of chairs is surrounded by fragrant plants. Her garden not only looks good, it smells good! Other tips: Deborah keeps a "plant hospital" for plants in distress and needing extra care. Also, she recommends planting verbena, not only for its fragrance, but also to enhance tea. Thank you for sharing, Deborah!



Welcome Home, Spider Cow!

Buddy and Rowena Steves at 2320 Blue Bonnet have restored the Spider Cow sculpture that has been an Old Braeswood landmark for years. The artist who did the restoration work, Jonathan Clark, documented the process from start to finish with high resolution photographs. Spider Cow is once again pawing their front lawn and staring down dog walkers that pass. Thank you, Buddy and Rowena!



Welcome New Neighbors

Joel Arechiga & Kenny Kelley 2435 Gramercy Blvd.
Paige Foster & Austin Taylor Jones 2424 Bellefontaine Blvd.
Mark A. Stewart 2412 Glen Haven Blvd.

Trash & Recycling Schedule



Recycling Every other Tuesday (B)

Dates Jan. 7 & 22 Feb. 4 & 18
 Mar. 3, 17 & 31 Apr. 14 & 28

Household Trash Tuesdays (in city provided bins)

Yard Waste Tuesdays (in biodegradable bags)

Junk & Tree Limbs 3rd Monday of each month

Junk Waste (& tree limbs) in Even months

Tree waste only in Odd months

Recycling or household garbage should be placed at the curb in the city provided automated bins no earlier than 6 p.m. the evening preceding pick up and no later than 7 a.m. the day of pick up. Remove bins no later than 10 p.m. on collection day. Bins left on the street beyond these times are subject to city fines. Please ensure bins are accessible and not blocked by vehicles, etc. [Note: glass recyclables may be placed in the green City recycling bins.]

Yard waste must be contained in city approved biodegradable bags and placed at the curb at least 3 feet from bins. Tie small branches into 3 to 4 foot bundles.

Sign up for Old Braeswood eNews & Crime Alerts

Sign up to receive breaking news, invitations, and crime alerts by subscribing to our listserve.

Send your email address to
info@OldBraeswood.com or
 call 713-807-1787.

2020 OBPOA

Officers & Chairpersons

President	Julie Cohn
Vice Pres.	Joe Manca
Vice Pres.	Samia Khalil
Vice Pres.	Paul Sanders
At-Large	John Eldridge
At-Large	Jean Boisaubin
Treasurer	Mike Kelly
Secretary	Ann Garnett
Past President	Andrea Lapsley

Arch. Review	Paul Sanders
Advisory	Dee Murray David Leathers
Block Captains	Christine Manca
Directory	Sally Miller
Enforcement	John Eldridge
Flood Control	Len Teich
Garden Club	Alicia vonGreisman
Newsletter	Susan Teich Evalyn Krudy
Park	Annette Eldridge
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol /Security	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Andrea Lapsley
Social Events	Krista Heidersbach
Trees	Carroll Shaddock Paul Sanders
University Place	Andrea Lapsley
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Executive Director	Evalyn Krudy

Bears on Greenbriar Celebrate the Season: Dec. 2019



Thank You 2019 Park Corp Donors

The support of the generous neighbors listed below funds the maintenance of Old Braeswood Park, Katy's Corner, and various monument signs and sign toppers throughout the neighborhood. The Park Corp is a 501c3 charitable organization and donations are fully tax deductible. You can participate by mailing your donation to OBPC, PO Box 541346, Houston TX 77254, or make a donation on our website under the "Park" tab.

Nancy Beren
 Gilbert & Ildiko Bulter
 Julie Cohn & John Connor
 Kolbrun Helgason
 Demo & Elayne Kouzounis
 Brenda & Sheri O'Leary
 Jay Plotkin
 Don & Barbie Schaffer
 Amanda Seaburg
 Susan & Len Teich
 Melissa & Oliver Tuckerman
 Sherri & Garrett Walsh
 Marcella & Dan Watkins
 Chad & Anthanette Wilson

Thank you Tree Fund Donors

Our appreciation to the neighbors listed below who have donated funds to the Tree for Houston/Old Braeswood fund over the past year. Your support allows us to complete the neighborhood tree planting plan on Dorrington in the next couple of months, and will help ensure the young trees receive water to become fully established.

Johnny Acorn (\$500+)

G.G. Hsieh (In Memory of Mark Hausknecht)

Tree Lover (\$250+)

Christi & David Bowden
 Helen & James Davenport
 Friends @2515 Glen Haven
 Raghu & Anna Kalluri
 Barbie & Don Schaffer
 Mollie & Randy Schaffer
 Amanda & John Seaburg
 Susan & Len Teich

Forester (\$100+)

Ian & Patricia Butler
 Mike & Fran Feltovich
 Heather & Del Manning
 Bonnie & Eric Nelson
 Dr. & Mrs. Ashwin
 Viswanathan

Hugger (\$150+)

Charles & Vanessa Ames
 Michiaki Imamura
 Carrie & Austin Stanton

Friend (\$50+)

Pat & Mike Inselmann
 Barbara & Jacob Leon