

Letter from the President by Samia Khalil, M.D.

Dear Neighbors,

I hope that you and your family are healthy and doing well, and I wish you a safe, and prosperous 2021.

My family and I moved to our home at 2418 Maroneal Blvd. in 1978. Thus, we have resided in Old Braeswood for forty-two years. My husband, Kamal Khalil M.D., is a cardiovascular surgeon who retired many times. Our four sons grew up in this house, and we are blessed to have one of them, Samy, his wife Molly, and our four grandchildren, living behind us on Bellefontaine.

I got involved with OBPOA three years ago, after I retired from a busy, demanding and satisfying career as a pediatric anesthesiologist at UTMS for forty years.

It is a privilege to serve you as president this year. My goal is to work together with all property owners to make our neighborhood a better and safer place. As neighbors we should strive to make this community as friendly, welcoming and inclusive as possible. If there is a problem with a neighborhood matter, please let us discuss it and find solutions. All of us are volunteers trying to improve our neighborhood and care for each other.

I am happy that a good number of our neighbors volunteered to serve on our committees. Visit our website for a list of committees and activities for which you can volunteer.

I would like to take a moment to thank Julie Cohn, PhD, immediate past-president, Andrea Lapsley, past president, and Joe Manca, vice president, for their guidance, vision and hard work. I also welcome Fred Steves, vice president, and Erica Hittner, secretary, who are joining the Executive Committee this year.

In 2021, we have a few issues to work on:

1. Neighborhood Patrol: due to the pandemic and economy, crime in Houston is on the rise. The OBPOA Patrol is staffed by SEAL Security. In keeping with the contract negotiated with SEAL two years ago, the hourly rate is increasing from \$28 to \$32 per hour. Unfortunately, we have had to decrease coverage from 60 to 52 hours per week to balance our budget.

2. Appreciation: I would like to thank our Block Captains who communicated with our neighbors reminding them to pay their Association dues and Patrol subscription in October. Thanks to their efforts, the number of subscribers increased to 234, the highest in five years. I would also like to thank our neighbors who paid their 2021 dues and Patrol subscriptions in December 2020, to help with the current invoice.

Still, the number of neighbors who do not participate in funding these efforts is nearly 30%. In order to have better Patrol coverage, I am asking that all neighbors pay their membership dues and Patrol subscriptions for 2021 soon. Extra Patrol donations are also welcome.

3. Bylaws Review: my sincere thanks to our Vice President, Ann Garnett, who will be heading an Ad Hoc committee to review and update our bylaws. She will also be working with our manager to apply for state sales tax exemption.

4. Speeding cars on Maroneal Blvd.: the number of speeding cars and trucks which cut through Maroneal from Kirby to Greenbriar is high. Maroneal is the only street in our neighborhood without speed bumps. Speeding cars are also commonly noticed on Morning-side at Bellefontaine and Maroneal. These areas are close to the park, where children visit and play regularly. We plan to initiate requests for speed humps with the city - which involves a lengthy public input process - and also make a request for another stop sign close to the park, to encourage caution.

5. Feral cat colonies: We are lucky to have a volunteer group to address the feral cat problem in several parts of the neighborhood. Currently, this group, aptly named the "Cat Squad," needs our help. Please see page 7 for more information about how to volunteer with the group and how to donate to cover surgical and medical expenses. My appreciation and thanks to Julie Cohn who has agreed to be our liaison with the Cat Squad.

I am looking forward to working with all of you with one goal in mind: to make OBPOA one of the best communities to live in. During these difficult times, we need each other more than ever!

Samia

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2402 Glen Haven Blvd., home of The Hitters

Sometimes a house is not itself historic, but is made with historic materials. Old Braeswood has one at 2402 Glen Haven. Its Italianate roof tiles were nearly 100 years old when the house was built. The tiles, salvaged from an old Houston home that has not been identified, had a connection to Walter W. Fondren, co-founder of Humble Oil Company (later Exxon).

After Fondren's marriage to Ella Cochrum in 1903, the couple moved to Houston, living at 401 Westmoreland until moving into 3410 Montrose Blvd. (now La Colombe d'Or) in 1923. Both houses are still standing, but it is the roof tiles of the Montrose house that match those of 2402 Glen Haven. Ludowici Roof Tile, Inc. has verified that it made the tiles on both houses. In business since the 1600s, the Ludowici family of Rome, Italy, established a factory in Chicago in 1888. Today it continues its U.S. production of roof tiles in New Lexington, Ohio.

Besides the roof tiles, the house is distinguished by its doors – those to the master bedroom, to the bar, and to the front entrance of the house itself. All carry a centuries-old patina. The first two doors are from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, the other from New Orleans.

The house was the project of a couple who already were residents of Old Braeswood, Louise and Larry Glenn.

Their architect was Larry's Rice University-trained brother, Carvel Glenn of Texas Four Architects. Louise Glenn recalls that they wanted their house "to be true to the heritage of the neighborhood."

Their inspiration was taken from the Hermann Park Golf Course clubhouse, built in 1933, contemporaneous with the first houses being built in Old Braeswood. And, in fact, stucco was an approved building material for Old Braeswood from the start.

The Glenns had been in Old Braeswood since 1981, the year they bought the house at 7309 Greenbriar. At that time, Greenbriar was a two-lane road with a lane of parking on either side. When Greenbriar became a busy "through street," they decided to move deeper into the neighborhood with their three young children. The ranch house at 2402 Glen Haven, a rental property in poor repair, was on the market. They started from scratch and in 1989 completed what we see today, a Spanish Colonial Revival home with high ceilings and tile floors - a structure that embraces the garden in back.

Both Louise and Larry are lawyers, board certified in oil and gas law. This was a natural for Larry, whose father, Wayne Glenn, had been Vice Chairman of Conoco Inc.

(Continued on next page)

House continued from page 2

Besides her work as a lawyer, Louise was instrumental in transforming Old Braeswood's big triangle into Old Braeswood Park. She also served as president of the Garden Club in 1988-1989, the year she led the Club on a trip to Hong Kong!

In 2003, with children grown, the Glenns downsized to a house outside Old Braeswood and sold the Glen Haven house to Liz Alhand and Ross vanWassenhove. Liz, a CPA and RN, provided consulting services to a variety of healthcare organizations. Ross was an economics professor both at the University of Houston and at Houston Community College.

That couple was succeeded in 2020 by Erica and George Hittner, the current owners. Repeatedly the story of Old Braeswood has been the story of residents who returned here after growing up in the neighborhood. George Hittner's parents were Old Braeswood residents on Gramercy when he was born. They soon moved just west of Kirby, but George's ties were back in Old Braeswood, playing in the park and maintaining friendships. In fact, two of those friends became law school classmates who also returned to the neighborhood to raise their families - Josh Schaffer living on Maroneal and Samy Khalil living on Bellefontaine.

While George was known to many in Old Braeswood, his parents were known to many in Houston. His father, David Hittner served as District Court Judge before being appointed to the federal bench by President Reagan. His mother, Helen A. Mintz-Hittner, is known as a pediatric ophthalmologist.

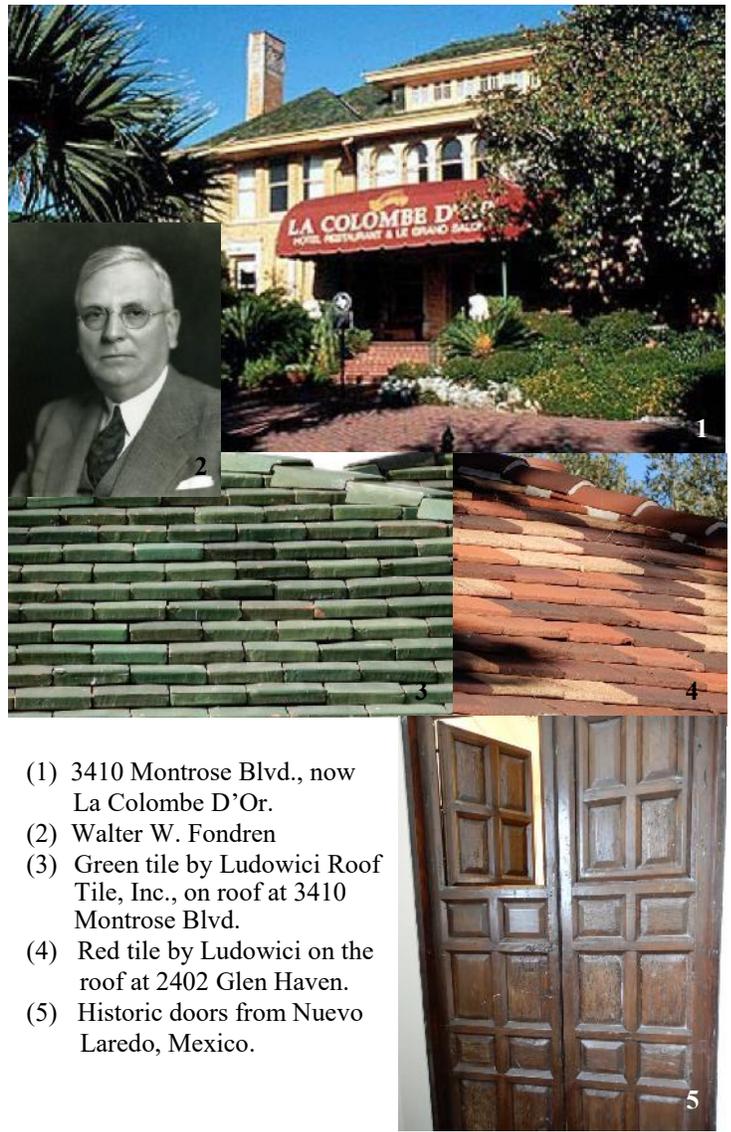
After following his father into the law, George managed campaigns for Texas Chief Justice Tom Phillips and managed the reelection campaign of Governor George Bush. He worked again for then President Bush in Washington D.C. He now heads The Hittner Group, practicing law and providing political consultation. He recalls his unsuccessful race for Houston City Council in 2005, and that the loss was a victory of sorts. He married his campaign manager, Erica!

The Hittners remodeled and restored the entire house. Many roof tiles were broken, but the Hittners replaced them with matching, newly made tiles purchased from Ludowici.

Then there is the outside curb. Their corner lot sports a total of four blue tile street signs embedded in the curb. Such tile signs were installed throughout Houston beginning in the 1920s and ending in the 1960s. Two tile signs were badly damaged and the Hittners restored them to their original appearance.

Truly, the house at 2402 Glen Haven honors Houston's past from roof to curb.

[This is the 64th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]



- (1) 3410 Montrose Blvd., now La Colombe D'Or.
- (2) Walter W. Fondren
- (3) Green tile by Ludowici Roof Tile, Inc., on roof at 3410 Montrose Blvd.
- (4) Red tile by Ludowici on the roof at 2402 Glen Haven.
- (5) Historic doors from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

Book Club Meets Virtually by Julie Cohn

Old Braeswood Book Club Holiday Tea was held December 12, 2020 in the afternoon via Zoom. Lovely tea and goodies were provided by McHugh Tea in Bellaire, with the heroic efforts of Adrian Melissinos, aided by Andrea Lapsley, in picking up and delivering the orders.

The event included a discussion of *Christmas in Paris*, a novel co-authored by Hazel Gaynor and Heather Webb.

The Book Club welcomes new Members. Contact: Krista@OldBraeswood.com.





The BBA met by Zoom this month, the first meeting in over a year. Gary Zika (Harris County Flood Control District) and Trent Rondot (Houston Parks Dept.) reported on the Brays Bayou Project. All the deepening is done. The hike and bike trails along the bayou will be mostly replaced with 10-foot concrete sidewalks instead of the 30-inch asphalt walks we have now. So far 50,000 trees have been planted along the 31 miles of widened bayou and more are coming. Electric lights and drinking fountains are not going to happen any time soon. All the bayou work should be completed by end 2021.

Bridges

1-Of all the bridges over the Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to the reservoir, 31 miles, only one is not yet in the planning stage - the 75th Street bridge.

2-Another two, South Rice and Chimney Rock, have not yet started but may begin as early as February.

3-One bridge, Buffalo Speedway, will close briefly in mid January to move utility lines, but otherwise will be open for the duration of its replacement, approximately one year, with one lane open in each direction. Buffalo Speedway at No. & So. Braeswood intersections will have to be raised 6-10 feet to accommodate the traffic off the new bridge, so the area will be torn up for some period.

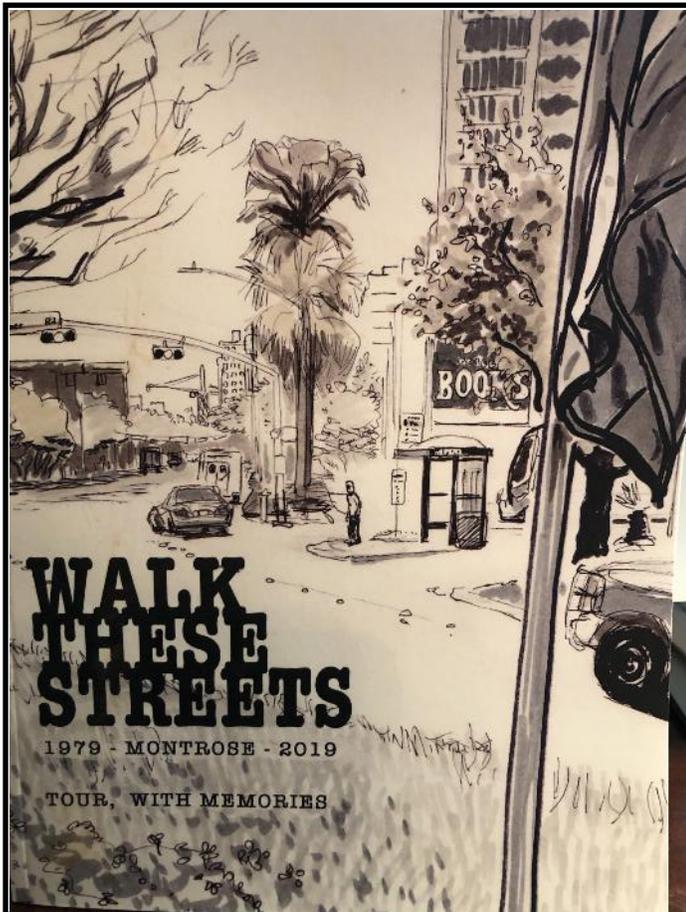
4-The Greenbriar bridge is open to traffic but there is a little yet left to do on it.

Buffalo Speedway Construction

Buffalo Speedway will be closed for two years between Holcombe and Bissonnet starting early this year for rebuilding, so we are all going to need to avoid Buffalo Speedway for quite some time. Roadwork won't be done until the end of 2023, or later.

Flood Insurance

The overall height of flood waters along the length of the Bayou will be lowered 2 feet by project finish. However, many of us won't see a lowering of our flood insurance rates. That's because the recent flood plain survey moved a lot of area from the 500-year flood plain into the 100-year flood plain. So, the 2-foot lowering of the Bayou will just about offset the new definition of "flood damage threshold." At least rates won't go up for most of us.



Walk These Streets.

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historic Montrose.

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alive in words and pictures.

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Order your copy today at
tinyurl.com/walkthesestreets

All profits go to Preservation Houston.

Your POA Executive Committee for 2021

Please meet your Executive Committee (EC) for the year 2021. They are pictured and introduced below. Each of them can be reached using their contact information in the Old Braeswood Directory or by emailing them through the office at info@OldBraeswood.com. You can also send messages directly to most of them through the website under the Executive Committee tab.

Their length of residence in Old Braeswood attests to the stability of our neighborhood. People move to Old Braeswood to stay. At the same time, newcomers are welcome. The longest residing EC member has lived in Old Braeswood 43 years. The newest has been here 1 year.

Each year a couple of members rotate off the Executive Committee to give others a chance to serve. New EC members to the are drawn from those interested regardless of their longevity in Old Braeswood. Serving on a committee is a good way to learn more about the neighborhood in advance of service on the EC. All are welcome!



President **Dr. Samia Khalil** is a retired pediatric anesthesiologist who has lived here since 1978 with her husband Dr. Kamal Khalil.



Treasurer **Mike Kelly** is a process safety engineer for Chevron and has lived here with his wife Krista Heidersbach since 2011.



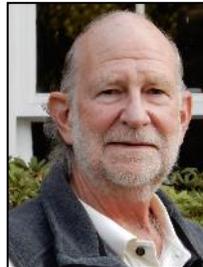
VP **Ann Garnett** is an Assistant General Council for MRC Global Inc. and has lived here with her husband Joe since 1992. Ann has served as Republican Precinct Chair and Election Pct. Judge in Old Braeswood since 1999.



At-Large Member **Jean Boisaubin**, who teaches second grade, has lived here with husband Eugene for 33 years.



VP **Paul Sanders**, after a full career as an architect, now is CEO of a private foundation providing grants for facility repairs to small evangelical Protestant churches. He and his wife Janet have lived here for 7 years.



At-Large Member **John Eldridge** is an attorney for Haynes and Boone and has lived here with wife Annette since 2005.



VP **Fred Steves**, after many years as Board Chairman of Myron Steves Company, a brokerage insurance company, is now a senior vice president of its purchaser, RT Specialty. He and his wife Courtney moved here in 2000. Courtney has been dearly missed by all since 2019.



Past President **Julie Cohn**, an independent historian with affiliations both at Rice University's Baker Institute and the UH Center for Public History, has lived here with husband John Connor since 1993.



Secretary **Erica Hittner**, who has worked at the city and federal levels in policy and constituent relations, also volunteers in planning and fundraising for nonprofits. She moved here in 2020 with husband George and their two children.

Save-the-date for the OBPOA Membership Meeting

7 p.m. Wed. April 20, 2021
via Zoom

Strong Start to 'Adopt-a-Drain' Thanks to the OB Garden Club

by Alicia vonGreisman, Old Braeswood Garden Club



The Adopt-a-Drain program, sponsored by the City of Houston, was launched in Old Braeswood last Fall and the Garden Club responded!

Garden Club members and a few others who joined them are now acknowledged. Naming the drain you adopt is all part of the fun of "owning" a drain!

- *Annette Brown* adopted drains Olive Brown and Ralph Brown, grandparents who farmed. (NE and SE corners of Maroneal & Greenbriar)
- *Margo Elgohary* adopted Byzantium (SW corner of Morningside & Gramercy). The name reflects her husband's interest Greek Orthodox Church history and Byzantium's (Constantinople's) role as the capital of the Christian Roman Empire for over 1000 years.
- *Sania Rahim-Gilani* and *Aziz Gilani* adopted The Gilani Drain. (SE corner of Glen Haven & Kelving)
- *Krista Heidersbach* adopted George, named after a line in a Daffy Duck skit where the Abominable Snowman names Daffy "George." (NW corner of Greenbriar and Blue Bonnet)
- *Gayle and Scott Hoffer* adopted Un"drain"iably Keepin' It Clean! (2343 Underwood)
- *Samia Khalil* adopted The Khalil's Drain. (SW corner of Morningside and Bellefontaine)
- *Kathy Lord*, longtime Old Braeswood resident and Garden Club member now living on Hermann Drive, adopted The Lord Drain. (1701 Hermann Dr.)
- *Christine Manca* adopted Molly, named after the family dog, who recently entered doggy heaven after many faithful years. (2318 Blue Bonnet)
- *Bonnie and Eric Nelson* adopted The "Rock" Johnson, named by their children for actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. (SW corner of Glen Haven & Kirby)
- *Chris Robins* adopted Missy, named for the family dog. This drain is across the street from Missy's departed friend Molly, who also has a drain. (2317 Blue Bonnet)
- *Laura Pang* adopted The Yun Pui Drain and The Louis Drain, named for her father and her mother-in-law, both gardeners. Debra Balthazar joins her in maintaining these drains. (Gramercy at Greenbriar)
- *Susan Teich* adopted Lobenstein, named for the Teich family's ancestral town in Germany. (SE corner of Glen Haven & Greenbriar)
- *Alicia vonGreisman* adopted The Von J. Drain. (Corner of Morningside & Main)

- *Sherri Walsh* adopted Athena, for another beloved dog entering doggy heaven this year, and Oreo, for a cat that became the Walsh family's first pet and is still on the job. (East entrance to Braeswood Court)

How to Make Your Street Flood

by Susan Teich

[Follow these simple instructions.]

1. Encourage yard crews to use leaf blowers to blow leaves into the street.
2. Ignore stray newspapers and other trash in the street.
3. Wait for rain or for winds to blow everything into the storm drains.
4. Watch as leaves and other debris block rainwater from the drains.
5. Put a kayak purchase on your To-Do list.

How to Adopt a Drain

by Susan Teich

1. Visit: www.HoustonAdoptaDrain.org
2. Go to the column on the far right and enter your email address in the space provided.
3. Go to your email In Box and read the welcoming email from the City of Houston.
4. Click on the link provided in the email, taking you back to www.HoustonAdoptaDrain.org
5. As before, that site displays a map of Houston with the location of each storm drain indicated in either orange or blue. Blue drains are available for adoption. Orange drains are adopted already.
6. If you have a particular location in mind (e.g., your house), enter the address you have in mind in the upper left corner labeled "Zoom to Address," and the map will take you there.
7. Click on the available drain that you want to adopt.
8. A green box appears around that drain location. On the right side of the screen you will now see a box inviting you to provide a name for the drain. The name you give becomes publicly available. Enter a name.
9. Email Alicia at GardenClub@OldBraeswood.com and notify her of your adoption so we may acknowledge you and make a strong showing for the neighborhood.

The City's storm drain map may not be accurate, and we are working with the City to update the map for Old Braeswood. If the drain you want to adopt does not appear on the map, name it anyway, and send a message to Alicia to let her know of the omission.

The Adopt-a-Drain Commitment

- Adopt at least one storm drain and keep it clear of leaves & trash.
- Clean 10 feet on both sides of the drain (especially before rains) at least four times per year, and compost or dispose of leaves and trash properly.
- Notify the City if you can no longer support the drain, so it can be adopted by someone else!

Cat Squad Needs Our Help

Many thanks to the neighborhood volunteers who have been working since last summer to bring the feral cat colonies in Old Braeswood under control. Since July, the self-styled “Cat Squad” has trapped, fixed, and released 26 adult cats; and has trapped and adopted out 9 kittens and 2 other, more tame adult cats. They’ve also inadvertently trapped (and released to the same location) about 10 possums.

The Squad makes a point of coordinating their efforts with neighbors on whose properties the cats spend time. They take most of the trapped cats to All Cats Veterinary Clinic on Stella Link for spaying/neutering and health interventions.



Here are the discounted costs:

- an uncomplicated neuter package is \$47
- an uncomplicated spay package is \$60

Both packages include the spay or neuter, rabies vaccination, shot of Ivermectin for ear mites and worms, Advantage for fleas (if needed), and an ear notch to mark the cat as fixed.

You can help by making donations to the Old Braeswood Cat Squad account by calling Jean at All Cats at 713-664-2287. Or, to join the volunteers, please contact Adam Gottlieb at agottlieb27@gmail.com.

We ... and the cats ... are grateful to you! — *The Cat Squad!*

Trash & Recycling Schedule



Recycling	Every other Tuesday (B)
Dates	Jan. 5 & 19 Feb. 2 & 16 Mar. 2, 16 & 30 April 13 & 27
Household Trash	Tuesdays (in city provided bins)
Yard Waste	Tuesdays (in biodegradable bags)
Junk / Tree Limbs	<u>3rd Monday of each month</u> Junk Waste (+ tree limbs) in Even months Tree waste only in Odd months

Place household garbage or recycling at the curb in the city-provided automated bins no earlier than 6 p.m. the evening preceding collection and no later than 7 a.m. on the day of pick up. Remove bins from curb no later than 10 p.m. on collection day. Bins left on the street beyond these times are subject to city fines. Ensure bins are accessible and not blocked by vehicles. Space bins a minimum of 3 feet apart.

Yard waste must be contained in city-approved biodegradable bags and placed at the curb. Branches must be tied into 3-4 ft bundles.

Visit www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste for more information.

2021

OBPOA Officers & Chairpersons

President	Samia Khalil
Vice Pres.	Ann Garnett
Vice Pres.	Paul Sanders
Vice Pres.	Fred Steves
At-Large	Jean Boisaubin
At-Large	John Eldridge
Treasurer	Mike Kelly
Secretary	Erica Hittner
Past President	Julie Cohn
.....	
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	Dee Murray
Social Events	Krista Heidersbach
Trees	Paul Sanders
University Place	Andrea Lapsley
Welcome	Maribel Reuter
Executive Director & Manager	Evalyn Krudy

Welcome, New Neighbors!

Yann Dufour
2211 Maroneal Blvd.

Karen & William Kline
2529 Gramercy Blvd.

**Lois Veguilla &
William Garcia**
2335 Maroneal Blvd.

**Christine & Craig
Shenkman**
2527 Gramercy Blvd.

Remembering Jay Plotkin (1931-2020)

Old Braeswood lost its longtime resident, friend and benefactor Jay Plotkin. Jay created “Katy’s Corner” park, the triangle at the intersection of Kelving, Morningside and Glen Haven. The park was dedicated in memory to his wife Katheryn Grossman Plotkin.

Katy enjoyed her childhood in the neighborhood so much that she and Jay chose to raise their family here. Leaving the home they had shared together was never an option for Jay. His creation of Katy’s Corner earned him an honorary membership in the Old Braeswood Garden Club. It made him the only gentleman to be a Garden Club “member.”

Jay was interviewed in 2019 for the Old Braeswood newsletter about his years in Houston and his creation of Suitmart. [*Old Braeswood Newsletter*, July/August 2019, page 2.]



Thank you, Jay!

You are greatly missed!

Thanks to our sponsor, Daniel Parker!



DANIEL PARKER

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