

A Letter from the President

by Susan Froehly Teich

Last spring voting began as to whether or not to make POA dues mandatory. The mandatory dues would have provided money to support extended coverage by the Old Braeswood patrol service. Voting ended on November 19 at the conclusion of the annual POA meeting. Thank you to everyone who voted either at the meeting or by absentee ballot.

Although most households that voted approved the initiative, the initiative lacked approval by 60% of all households in Old Braeswood, a percentage that would have met the requirements of our By-Laws.

The initiative failed by only 30 votes. Had those not voting cast their ballots in the same proportion for/against as those who did vote, the initiative would have passed.

Here are the numbers:

- 306 properties in Old Braeswood
- 184 yes votes needed to pass the initiative
- 154 "yes" votes cast (62% of those voting)**
- 93 "no" votes cast**
- 59 properties not voting**

This means that POA dues and patrol subscriptions will remain voluntary. The Board will continue to engage SEAL Security to patrol our neighborhood for however many hours per week we can afford to do so. The amount of coverage Old Braeswood receives will be wholly dependent on the number of subscriptions paid and coverage may vary from time to time, depending on the funds available. Currently, we have coverage about 33% of the time.

There will be a special meeting of the POA to solicit ideas from residents as to how we can provide funding for increased neighborhood patrol hours. All are invited to attend and to offer suggestions. It will be held at 7 pm on Tues., January 12, 2016, at 2240 Glen Haven Blvd.

I urge everyone to support the neighborhood by paying both Old Braeswood dues and the Patrol subscription. Many thanks for doing so.

Old Braeswood POA Special Meeting

7 p.m. Tuesday

January 12, 2016

2240 Glen Haven Blvd.

There will be a special meeting of the POA on Tuesday, January 12, at 7:00 pm at 2240 Glen Haven Blvd., home of Susan and Len Teich. The purpose is to discuss ways of funding increased coverage by our neighborhood patrol. The ballot initiative did not pass, leaving us with coverage 33% of the time given our current level of voluntary contributions. New ideas are needed and anyone interested in making suggestions and discussing this issue is invited to attend. Drinks provided. Please bring a snack to share.

Pillar Update

There is progress to report. Holes have been dug and metal anchors have been installed in preparation for the pillars themselves. The many people listed in the last newsletter as donors making this enhancement to OB possible inadvertently omitted longtime OB boosters Vicki and Bob Birenbaum. Thank you Vicki and Bob! The party date will be set once construction is completed.



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An architecturally important house highlighted by Stephen Fox in his book on Old Braeswood sits at 2118 Glen Haven Blvd. It was built in 1936, designed by Claude Edgar Hooton Sr., known for his “regional modernism” style, exemplified throughout Houston and New Orleans in a multitude of houses, schools, churches, courthouses and office buildings. He is described as one of Houston’s “first generation of architects.”

As a student at Rice University, Hooton was mentored by the famed architect William Ward Watkin (who oversaw construction of the original Rice buildings), and won a fellowship to study in Europe. Later, Hooton himself taught at Rice (1931-1941). There are other parallels. While Watkin laid out Southhampton and Broadacres, Hooton made his influence known in Southgate, where in the 1930s he designed houses for its developer, R. W. Gillette, and for private clients, shaping the architectural look of that area. His best known house in Southgate is at 2245 Dryden, built for the noted interior decorator Virginia West and her husband, contractor Randolph West. It was featured in *Architectural Digest*. On the same street, at 2207 Dryden, a house (now demolished) that Hooton designed for his parents was once the home of Old Braeswood residents Christine and Joe Manca.

Hooton also designed for River Oaks. The house at 3619 Knollwood was built for Walter W. Fondren Jr., son of Spindletop oilman Walter W. Fondren Sr. Other projects in Houston are too many to enumerate, but they include Allen Parkway Village and Sharpstown Mall. That he was chosen for the Sharpstown project is not surprising given that his son, Claude Edgar Hooton Jr., married the daughter of developer Frank Wesley Sharp, after whom Sharpstown is named.

An interesting sidelight is that Hooton’s son became active politically, running for the U.S. Congress from the 22nd District of Texas, serving on John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign staff, sitting in Kennedy’s presidential box at the inauguration and serving both as a groomsman and honorary pallbearer for Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

The Glen Haven house was designed for Chester F. Lee, who first appears in the Houston City Directory at that address in 1937, along with his wife (Mary Arredondo Lee). Lee is listed as a stenographer and clerk for the Humble Oil and Refining Company, at a time when men worked their way up from entry level jobs rather than advancing their careers with MBAs. By the 1946 Directory, he was chief clerk. By 1955, he was advertising and public relations manager. In the mid-1960s, Lee left Humble to open a business with his wife, Southwest Record Distributors, specializing in Latin and American labels. The business was short lived. Mr. Lee died,

and his widow lived on Glen Haven alone from 1973 to 1978.

Paul and Sherry Vickery then bought the house and turned a porte-cochère into a sun parlor. Paul was an oil trader for Koch and the Vickerys stayed two years before selling the house to buy a larger house on Maroneal. It was easy to find a buyer. They called Eric Batchelder and his wife, Rita Saylor. Eric was Paul’s counterpart at Shell, and the families had dined together on Glen Haven. Rita



Rita & Thorpe Butler’s home at 2118 Glen Haven Blvd. was built in 1936 and was remodeled in the 1990s.



says she agreed to the purchase without ever having been upstairs.

She remembered that every room had windows on three or four walls, giving the house a “magical” quality.

Rita remarried in 1994 to Thorpe Butler, a 15-year colleague in the English Department at Texas Southern University. They too made some changes, turning a second floor deck into a walk-in closet.

In 2012, Rita and Thorpe both retired from TSU, giving them even more time to enjoy the house. One day, children of the first owners came by and asked to see the rooms where they had grown up. Later, they returned to give Rita and Thorpe the original blueprints.

[This is the 38th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]

University Place Security Breakfast by Dee Murray

The quarterly breakfast meeting of neighborhood patrol and police agencies in our Super Neighborhood, which includes Rice University, was held December 9. Attending were private neighborhood patrol officers, HPD, Rice Police, West U Police, Harris Co. Constables, SEAL Security, and representatives of the area neighborhood associations. The purpose, as usual, was to discuss and coordinate security issues in the neighborhoods.

Discussion this time centered around the increase in crime over the last quarter. Nearby neighborhoods have experienced an increase in home invasions, car thefts, and auto

Congratulations

Congratulations to the 2016 POA Board, elected at the neighborhood meeting on November 19th. A special welcome to Andrea Lapsley from the 2400 block of Glen Haven, who joins the Board as a vice president. Please see the Board listing in this newsletter on page 5.

Mail Misdelivered

There have been repeated reports from Old Braeswood neighbors that mail is delivered to the wrong address. This seems to be a problem in other neighborhoods as well. A post office on Richmond actually has an indoor mail slot labeled "Mail in Wrong Box." If the mail is addressed to your neighbor, do them the courtesy of delivering it to them. If the mail is addressed to someone who is not a neighbor, drop it into a mail box the next time you mail something. We can only hope that others will do us the same courtesy.



burglaries. The officers attribute this to organized groups of criminals coming into the area. Here in Old Braeswood, we have been very fortunate to have had only one burglary and a few auto break-ins. Home alarms and security cameras have helped with investigations.

The consistency and visibility of SEAL officers driving up and down Old Braeswood streets is a deterrent to criminals. SEAL officers on patrol speak to anyone appearing new to Old Braeswood, and that has discouraged trespassing and more.

Love Your Trees

Old Braeswood is distinguished by its trees, arching over our streets and providing shade and beauty. It is important, when hiring tree services, that you hire a service with expertise. All of us have seen trees needlessly removed on the pretext that they were too stressed by drought to leave them safely in place or have seen trees pruned within an inch of their lives. Fortunately, there is a standard for expertise in this area. It is certification by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). The ISA credential is available to candidates with at least three years of full-time experience in the field plus: 1- an associate degree in arboriculture and two years of experience; or 2- a bachelor's degree and one year of experience. Candidates must pass a certification exam. Your trees will thank you.

By the way, it's not too late to contribute to the Trees for Old Braeswood program. A solicitation was mailed in November and funds will be used to extend the street tree plantings throughout the neighborhood. Visit our website for more info at www.OldBraeswood.com, or call us at 713-807-1787.

Board Member Spotlight: Dawn Gervais

Dawn Gervais is the Board member being highlighted in this newsletter. She is a realtor with 11 years of experience, the last three with Greenwood King.

Dawn serves as Secretary of the POA Board and is Chair of the Welcome Committee. As a Realtor, she knows before anyone else who has just become a new homeowner and needs a welcoming visit. Dawn supports the neighborhood in every way. She is a member of the Garden Club, the Book Club, volunteers for Park Parties, and brings food to every neighborhood event.

Nine years ago, Dawn and her husband, dentist Richard Gervais, were living in Braes Heights. Their house was on Glen Haven, which may have been an omen. That year, Dawn showed a client the Blue Bonnet house. Although the client didn't choose the house, Dawn fell in love with it during the showing. That night she actually dreamed about the house. When she told Richard, he decided to take a look for himself, and he too fell in love with it. They bought it, even though they had not intended to move, still had to sell their old house, and had a resistant teenage daughter.

In addition to being an Old Braeswood booster, Dawn helps to preserve the character of the neighborhood. While some realtors listing an older home will market the lot and not the house, expecting a tear down, Dawn honors the history of the neighborhood by giving the house a chance to find a loving buyer.



The Garden Club Celebrates

On December 12, the Old Braeswood Garden Club did what it does best – have a good time. It was the annual Holiday Party, held at the Pioneer Log House Museum. The evening included wine, dinner and musical entertainment, concluding with a special tribute to Dee Murray for her many contributions to the success of the club.

Interested in joining Garden Club? The next regular meeting is Tuesday, January 19th, at 10:00 am, home of Nancy Eisenmenger, 2522 Blue Bonnet. The program will be given by a speaker from Amazing Place with the topic “Memory Preservation Nutrition Program.” The next evening meeting will be the annual Flower Show on April 24th. Contact president Annette Brown for details, netteyduplechain@yahoo.com.



Old Braeswood Book Club News



In December, the Old Braeswood Book Club met for its annual Holiday Cookie Exchange. Join the Book Club on January 12 when it meets at the home of Kathy Lord.

The January meeting will feature guest speaker Katherine Center, a Houston grown writer whose novels spotlight love and family with a humorous twist. Her novels include: *The Bright Side of Disaster* (2006), *Everyone is Beautiful* (2009), *Get Lucky* (2010), *The Lost Husband* (2013) and *Happiness for Beginners* (2015). She describes her books as "bittersweet comic novels." New members are welcome. For more information, please contact Nancy Eisenmenger at nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com.



Trash & Recycling Schedule

Recycling	Every other Tuesday
Dates	Dec. 1, 17 & 29 Jan. 12 & 26 Feb. 9 & 23 Mar. 8 & 22
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) 12/21/15



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 -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	Annette Duplechain
Newsletter	Zack Liu / E. Krudy
Park	Annette Eldridge
Plan Review	Marilyn Archer
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Susan Teich
Social Events	GG Hsieh
Trees	Carroll Shaddock
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.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Old Braeswood POA Newsletter— December 2015 Real Estate Report

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

A recent article in the *Houston Chronicle* stated that home prices dropped 10% in Houston, bringing them back to a more normal level of appreciation. I believe many people have been waiting for a Buyer's Market, and we are heading in that direction.

I'm often asked by neighbors why some homes in Old Braeswood sell within a few days while others sit on the market for months or even years. There are many factors such as location, lot size, age, style and condition of the home. Pricing a home competitively is imperative in this market. Making sure your home shows well is also a key to success.

Our neighborhood is known for its eclectic architectural styles dating back as far as the late 1920s. There is now an increased demand and appreciation for homes built from 1920 to the 1960s. The quality and craftsmanship that is seen in these older homes makes them especially desirable. Owning a home in Old Braeswood is a solid investment that will continue to appreciate over the years.

Old Braeswood Real Estate Statistics: December 2015

<u>Total Homes & Lots for Sale:</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Total Homes sold since in 2015:</u>	<u>13</u>
Minimum List Price	\$599,000	Minimum Sales Price	\$619,000
Maximum List Price	\$2,249,000	Maximum Sales Price	\$2,220,000
Homes under contract	2	Avg. sales price /sf	\$265.66
		Avg. days on market	121
		Lots sold	3
		Avg price /sf	\$48.76



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