



Your House Has a History *by Susan Teich, OBPOA Historian*

In 1948, North Braeswood westbound from South Main ended at Kelving, a cul de sac. That was the year Harry Pepper moved into his house at 2314 North Braeswood. His neighbors regaled him with stories about how the cul de sac had been a lovers' lane before houses were built and it became less secluded. Old Braeswood children used it as a play area.

Mr. Pepper bought the house, built in 1930, for \$31,500. During his ownership, the air conditioning has progressed from an attic fan to window units to a water tower and, finally, to compressors.

At the end of the cul de sac was Glenn McCarthy's estate—his colonial style house, acreage, and horses. (The tile curb signs for Glen Haven Blvd. use "Glenn" instead of "Glen," because the street was named for him. McCarthy, who was played by James Dean in the movie *Giant*, owned the Shamrock Hilton Hotel.)

Eventually, the City of Houston exercised its right of eminent domain to extend North Braeswood through to Kirby. Later, Harold Farb bought the remaining McCarthy estate and built apartments.

Mr. Pepper can provide such details about Old Braeswood, because, at age 96, he is its oldest and longest residing resident. *(Continued on Page 3)*

Old Braeswood Park Renovation *by Christine Robins*

Old Braeswood Park Corporation is kicking off 2008 with a fundraising effort for the renovation of Braeswood Park and nearby triangular esplanade. Your help is vital to the success of this endeavor.

Working with the Houston Parks Board, Old Braeswood Park Corporation has commissioned the design of a new play structure to replace the current non-compliant central timber play structure. The total cost for this renovation project is just over \$70,000.

The specific project goals are as follows:

- Demolish existing non-compliant wooden-play structure; *(Continued on Page 4)*



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SAVE THE DATE

Old Braeswood Spring Meeting

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

7:00 pm

2330 Bluebonnet Boulevard

Home of Sally and Bill Russ

Street Reconstruction Update *by Evalyn Krudy*

Neighbors have been complaining for years about the condition of our streets and infrastructure. To address these concerns, last summer our block captains went door to door to collect signatures on petitions calling for the replacement of our streets and failing infrastructure with new state of the art concrete roadways, curbs and gutters, storm sewers and sidewalks.

Although quite a few signatures were collected, more are needed to qualify the 20 interior blocks of Old Braeswood for reconstruction. Volunteers are needed to help complete the petition drive to request that the City of Houston rebuild our streets, storm sewers, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Interested volunteers should contact either Sally Miller (832-452-0113) or the OBPOA office (713-807-1787), info@oldbraeswood.com.



Most of our streets have the original pavement covered by several layers of asphalt. Curbs and gutters are heaving and collapsing in a number of locations and some sidewalks are cracked and dangerous. Street construction standards have changed since the roadways were first laid and

roads are now much thicker and contain more rebar to prevent settling and cracking.

Although asphalt topping can provide a smooth surface, it is really a temporary solution with a life expectancy of 5 to 7 years and does not address the problem with the original underlying roadbed. Further, adding more asphalt negatively impacts drainage *(Continued on Page 5)*

Unified Neighborhood Action *by Dee Murray*

In December, a few Old Braeswood residents initiated a petition to benefit many of our neighbors. The petition was based on Houston's Solid Waste Department informing residents that trash would no longer be picked up on side streets. The new City policy requires residents on corner lots to place their trash bins in front of their houses.



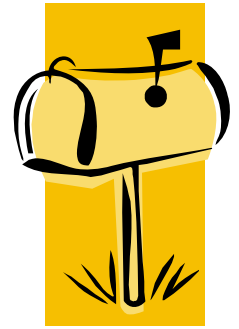
This policy was forcing people on corners with driveways in the rear part of their lots to drag their trash out to the front street. Obviously, this did not make residents along Morningside or Kelving happy. After discussions with OBPOA Board members, Roger and Sharon O'Neil put together a petition requesting reconsideration of the policy. They went door to door, talked to neighbors and collected signatures of 40 residents opposing the policy.

The petitions were then submitted to Council Member Anne Clutterbuck (District C), Harry Hayes (Director of Solid Waste Mgmt.) and Mayor Bill White.

Anne Clutterbuck responded to the letter and is working with Harry Hayes to attempt a resolution.

A GREAT EFFORT BY GREAT NEIGHBORS

A Helpful Response



...about Mail Holds

Dear Old Braeswood POA:

In response to the article in the recent newsletter by Charles T. Bruner regarding mail holds at the post office, I'd like to report that I've had good success, with one exception, using the Postal Service website to arrange mail holds. The service is available at <http://www.usps.com/>.

By following the links to "Household" and then "Your Mail Delivery," I have been able to enter my home address, mail hold and resume dates, and any detailed notes regarding mail delivery. This has worked very well almost every time.

On one occasion, when we were traveling for several weeks during the summer, our regular mail carrier was also traveling. The mail hold started several days late — and, worse yet, the held mail was delivered several weeks late. This was not a good result, but our mail carrier apologized for the error and noted that it happened when he was not there to take care of the mail hold properly. No mail was permanently lost.

I hope this information is helpful to other residents of Old Braeswood.

Julie Cohn

2350 Underwood

[Thanks, Julie, for sharing this information with Old Braeswood neighbors!]

Your House Has a History (Continued from Page 1)

Mr. Pepper recalls that Braes Bayou was narrow and unpaved. Sometimes it overflowed. Once, water came to the door of the Peppers' house. A friend came in a boat and took the Pepper children (3 girls) to the Shamrock Hotel and safety.

Mr. Pepper had neighbors whose names are still familiar: Brochstein (makers of office and store fixtures); Battlestein (downtown department store); Gordon (jewelers); Rausch (makers of steel pipe).

Mr. Pepper moved to Texas from Providence, RI, at age 13, and supported himself by selling newspapers in the Old Cotton Exchange Building. After graduating from Sam Houston High School, he went to UT Austin on a football scholarship. Unfortunately, serious injuries to his father in a car accident required that he drop out during his first semester to support the family.

By the time of his marriage to Esther Goldberg in 1938, Mr. Pepper owned a rendering business. During WW II, housewives saved their cooking fat and brought it to the grocery store to exchange for stamps toward the purchase of meat. The fat went into 55-gallon drums which Mr. Pepper took to his rendering plant, and, after reprocessing, pumped the fat into heated tank trucks for sale to Proctor & Gamble in Dallas (for soap) or to auto manu-

facturers (to lubricate motor block castes to prevent bubbles on the surface of the cast metal). He sold the plant in 1957, and thereafter devoted himself to real estate investment and development.

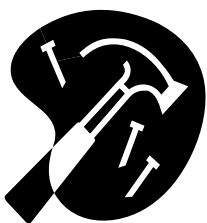
Mr. Pepper has a multitude of awards. Last year, he was the starter for the calf scramble event at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo during its tribute to him as its oldest volunteer. In 2003, he was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. He cycled yearly in the National Special Olympics until he found that he was the only person remaining in his age class.

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



Since 1948, the stately house at 2314 North Braeswood (built in 1930) has been the home of our oldest Old Braeswood resident, Mr. Harry Pepper.

Call for Architectural Review Committee Volunteers



The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is a vital committee that ensures that plans for construction comply with the deed restrictions.

Due to the recent spike in remodeling and new construction projects, more volunteers are needed to help ensure projects compliment the neighborhood and comply with the

restrictions.

If you are an architect or design professional, please volunteer to help. ARC chairman Marilyn Archer would love to hear from you.

To sign up or for more information, please contact the OBPOA office by calling 713-807-1787 or e-mailing info@oldbraeswood.com.

An Invitation from Our Social Committee by G. G. Hsieh

Dear Neighbors,

After being at the helm of the self-created “Social Committee” for the past year, I’d like to explain the goal. It is: to get to know and enjoy more of our fellow neighbors. I am convinced there are wonderful people living in Old Braeswood who are a repository of talent, expertise, and experience. In a time when we are more “virtually” connected, yet more isolated than ever, I’d like to promote more old-fashioned “neighborliness”.

We can be a community united by more than just physical proximity. Old Braeswood can be a place where we not only belong, but look out for each other—a place where we can find support, friendship and fun; a place where we can grow up and grow old, and also grow better. To that way of thinking, anything (legal) that gets us up, out, and interacting is a good thing.

My personal philosophy about neighborhood events is:

- They should be open to all residents (not just dues paying members, but we do need you in the POA);
- They need not be fancy, expensive, or perfect;



- With everyone helping a little, things are easier and more fun; and
- Some fun is better than no fun!

Since realistically no one needs to be on another committee, so far, this “committee” of one plus friends, has managed two coffees per year—one in the fall and one in the spring. Many thanks to all who helped with the recent welcoming coffee on March 8th. Special thanks goes to Dawn Gervais, chairman of the Welcome Committee; to Jordana Slawin for the coffee; and to everyone who came and contributed.

We can generate great ideas (cooking club, wine and appetizer parties, progressive dinners, annual neighbor’s night out, backyard BBQ cook off, home tours, July 4th party, etc.), but we need help with the organization and implementation. So, calling all cheerleaders, retirees, empty-nesters, gourmet cooks, socialites, and fund-raisers, ... this is your chance to start a neighborhood tradition, and what could be more convenient?

Respectfully your neighbor,

G. G. Hsieh

713-660-9520, gghsieh@gmail.com

OB Park Renovation (Continued from Page 1)

- Install new large play structure;
- Refurbish existing play structures;
- Repair irrigation system as a whole; and
- Install new landscaping and park bench created by Old Braeswood Garden Club in the triangular esplanade.

The renovation is scheduled to begin in May 2008, so donations are needed as soon as possible.

Old Braeswood Park Corporation would deeply appreciate your con-

sideration of a tax deductible contribution for the current renovation project. You should have already received a packet in the mail regarding this exciting project.

If you have not received the packet that was recently mailed to all residents of Old Braeswood, please e-mail christinerobins@hotmail.com so that one can be mailed to you.

Please help Old Braeswood Park Corporation reach its goals by contributing what you can to this project.

March 8th New Neighbor Coffee at G. G. Hsieh’s home



Karen Bernstein, Susan Teich, G. G. Hsieh, and Vicki Birenbaum [Thanks, G. G.]

With Sincere Sympathy to . . .

*Old Braeswood neighbors
and friends want to give our
heartfelt condolences*

- to Jay Plotkin and his family in the passing of his wife, Katy;
- to Tom and Kathy Lord in the tragic loss of their son, Forrester; and
- to the family of Edward Stool.

Street Update *(Continued from Page 2)*

patterns by raising the grade of the street surface. The City of Houston will asphalt streets once a decade, but this work does not include replacement or repair of curbs, gutters, storm sewers or sidewalks.

The Neighborhood Street Reconstruction Program (NSRP) will replace streets with concrete including curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and storm sewers. The only way to upgrade city streets and infrastructure permanently is through this program. Although the work can be a little disruptive, it adds value to our homes and is funded by taxpayer dollars. Qualifying requests are usually funded within 5 to 7 years. Afton Oaks and Braeswood Place have both gone through this process and the results speak for themselves.

Last summer and fall, our block captains spent countless hours meeting with neighbors to explain the program and collect signatures, but it was often a challenge to find neighbors at home; and, as a result, only a few blocks achieved the required 75% support. We will continue to collect signatures, but more volunteers are needed to help with this effort.

Several owners have expressed concern that signing the petition would obligate them to pay for the improvements out of pocket. However, no one has been assessed by the City since 1991. Assistant City Attorney Don Cheatam says, "the City has not collected assessments for street reconstruction in over a decade and does not plan to do so again." A certain percentage of the City's annual budget is set aside each year for this program and projects are approved on a first come, first serve basis. The City Engineer in charge of this program reports that the wait for reconstruction is growing because of the popularity of the program. Please do your part to help get our streets replaced and sign the petition for your block. Contact info@oldbraeswood.com or call 713-807-1787 for more information.

Committee Opportunities . . .



Tree Committee Chairman, Carroll Shaddock, and Directory and Block Captain Chairperson, Sally Miller, invite you to become members of their committees.

2008 Officers & Chairpersons

President	Dee Murray
1 st Vice Pres.	Buddy Steves
2 nd Vice Pres.	Bob Birenbaum
3 rd Vice Pres.	Becky Pivec
At-Large	G.G. Hsieh
At-Large	Sam Bernstein
Treasurer	Liz Alhand
Secretary	Dawn Gervais
Past President	Agelia Pérez
Architectural Review	Marilyn Archer Colleen Elliot Matthew Kelly
Directory & Block Captains	Sally Miller
Historic	Susan Teich
Flood Control	Carroll Shaddock
Newsletter	Sharon O'Neil
Park	Christine Robins
Enforcement	Sam Bernstein John Eldridge David Robins
RACS rep	Ryan Maierson
Social	G.G. Hsieh
Trees	Carroll Shaddock
University Place	Kathy Lord
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Manager	Evalyn Krudy

Old Braeswood Directory

The Old Braeswood Directory is published in even years and the 2008 edition is underway. If you haven't already sent in your annual dues and directory update form, please do so by April 15th.

If you are willing to help with this important project, send a note to info@oldbraeswood.com or call 713-807-1787. Sally Miller has coordinated the publication of the past four directories and she would like to train a new crop of volunteers to help with future editions.

Sponsors are also needed. You or your business can sponsor the directory for a mere \$50 or up to \$500. For more information, contact Sally at 832-452-0113.

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