



A Letter from the President by Susan Teich

Dear Neighbors,

This newsletter marks the start of a campaign to collect signatures to make Old Braeswood Property Owners Association dues mandatory, so that every household shares equally in the cost of protecting and maintaining our neighborhood. By signing the enclosed ballot and returning it by mail in the envelope enclosed and addressed to PO Box 541346, Houston, TX 77254, you will spare our volunteers the task of contacting you directly. A FAQ column in this newsletter will answer most of your questions, and other questions may be emailed to me (steich1@comcast.net) or to our Old Braeswood Manager Evalyn Krudy (info@oldbraeswood.com).

Because mandatory dues will not become payable until 2016, Old Braeswood will continue to operate in 2015 with voluntary dues and voluntary Patrol Subscriptions. You have received requests for these payments. Please support your neighborhood by responding promptly.

I want to stress that most of the work done to keep our neighborhood operating as a neighborhood is done by resident volunteers. The amount of time spent by them to make Old Braeswood a better place is very substantial and goes largely unacknowledged. There are some services, however, that require payment, and you may not be aware of what they are. Your mandatory dues will cover, among other things, the cost of: 1) SEAL patrol protection with expanded hours of coverage; 2) our professional neighborhood Manager; 3) newsletter printing and mailing; 4) refreshments at Park parties; 5) a paid architect to assist our volunteer architects on the Architectural Review Committee [ARC]; 6) outside counsel at the law firm of Roberts, Merkel, Weinberg, Butler and Hailey; 7) nominal membership fee in University Place Association; 8) post office box rental and postage.

The need for a security patrol was made more than obvious by the surges of burglaries in 2014. Evalyn Krudy, our Manager, is the repository of our institutional memory (while Board members come and go), is our interface with city and state government and with neighborhood umbrella organizations, and is our in-house expert on deed restrictions and other areas directly relating to our neighborhood. She has a unique skill set that is invaluable and we share her with nearby Boulevard Oaks and several other neighborhoods. The newsletter and the Park party refreshments are minor expenses relative to their value in connecting us to one another as neighbors. Applications to the ARC have sometimes taken too long because of the increased volume of applications in recent years. The addition of a paid architect to our volunteer team should provide applicants with a more timely response. Our outside counsel law firm specializes in deed restriction enforcement and other community association issues. Their assistance is essential to using every legal means in maintaining the character of Old Braeswood. Networking with other neighborhoods in the University Place Super Neighborhood gives us a combined voice when appealing to local authorities. While we rely increasingly on the Internet for communication within the neighborhood and between the neighborhood and other entities, snail mail is still a necessity and hence the postal box and postage.

There are other miscellaneous and one-time expenses that occur, but the list above covers the major recurring expenses. The overall cost of our POA services is small relative to that of other neighborhoods (ask your friends) because of our extraordinary volunteers. Not only are mandatory dues more equitable than voluntary dues, but also they give us a firmer financial footing by making our funding more predictable. Please support this important effort.

— Susan Teich

No resident of Old Braeswood changed the face of Houston more than the original owner of 2336 Underwood. Edmond A. Fretz, founder and president of Fretz Construction, built the house for \$15,000 in 1935 and moved in with his wife, Bernadette, and sons Edmond Jr. and Robert R. the following year. The house was designed by architect Maurice J. Sullivan, with whom Fretz often worked.

Edmond Fretz began as a City of Houston Engineer (1913-1923), and then founded Standard Construction Company in 1923. "Standard" changed to "Fretz" in 1932. The company built much of modern Houston, and certain structures are now historic. They include Houston's first shopping center, River Oaks Shopping Center. Other landmark construction includes the Art Deco Tower Theater (1201 Westheimer Road) and the now demolished Corbin J.

Robertson Stadium. ["The Rob" was built in 1942 by Fretz as a joint project of HISD and the Works Progress Administration. It was called "Public School Stadium" before it became the University of Houston's first stadium.]

The steeple of historic Annunciation Catholic Church (1618 Texas St.) was blown down in a hurricane in 1943, and two years later, repaired by Fretz. [He needed permission from the War Production Board because building materials were rationed during World War II.] Fretz's company also built entire religious buildings, more than any other company on the Texas Gulf Coast. Ones that Old Braeswood residents might pass often include Temple Emanu El (1949, 2009) and St. Anne's Catholic Church (1930, 1939, 1998, 2008).

True to its record of historic preservation, Fretz Construction is currently a contractor renovating the 1910 Sunset Coffee building (Main and Allen's Landing). Fretz is also renovating another 1910 structure, Houston Fire Station #2 (Sampson and Preston) for use as a residence.

Appropriately, the company first headquartered in

the historic Niels and Mellie Esperson building (808 Travis St.), and then, after some years on the South Loop, returned to downtown, renovating for its offices the long vacant 1932 Wilson Stationery and Printing Company Building (500 Fannin). Edmond Fretz died in 1967, leaving his company in the hands of his sons



Jordana & Kevin Slawin live at 2336 Underwood Blvd. This gracious home was designed by noted architect Maurice J. Sullivan and was built in 1935.



and the house in the hands of his widow. Today, the company is run by his grandchildren.

In about 1982, a Dr. H. V. Towell and wife, Betty, moved into 2336 Underwood for one year. He was an anesthesiologist at Methodist Hospital.

They were followed by Barnett L. and Klair Michael Gershen for two years. Now living on Rice Boulevard, Barnett is president of the Gershen Family Foundation and founding president of Gershen Consulting. He is a past Director of the YMCA of Greater Houston.

Attorney John Fitzhugh Rhem and his wife, Georgia, were next (1987-1991) and then another attorney, Steve Bryant, and wife, Maureen (1991-1996).

The current owners are Dr. Kevin M. Slawin and wife, Jordana. Dr. Slawin is a urologic oncologist and founder of Bellicum Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Maureen, a graphic designer who now focuses on her children and home, is a trustee of both the Emery/Weiner School and the Beth Yeshurun Day School.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

The Slawins moved to Houston in 1992 for Kevin's two-year fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine. They rented an apartment, sure that they would return soon to their native New York. The Houston lifestyle won them over.

Once they made the decision to stay, they needed a house for a growing family that now includes sons Jeremy and Eden and daughter Bailey. Old Braeswood was their target neighborhood because of its proximity to the Medical Center and because Jordana favored older houses. She grew up in a 1940s house on Long Island and tagged along with her mother, who liked shopping at estate sales.

Every time a house in Old Braeswood went onto the market, it sold before Kevin had time to see it. After four misses, a house and Kevin's timing came together. Jordana likes to cook and hoped she could redo the kitchen to her liking. The house was in move-in condition except for the kitchen. Perfect. Making it even better, the house came with the original 1935 hand drawn plans and with later plans from remodelings (1984, 1988). Not surprisingly, given that Fretz Construction built the house for its founder, the beams and studs are commercial grade. It is a house to last.

[This is the 34th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome and should be directed to the attention of Susan Teich care of info@oldbraeswood.com.]

Real Estate Report by Dawn Gervais, REALTOR, Greenwood King

2014 was a great year for Old Braeswood with 14 homes sold (three were private sales not on MLS). Homes sold at higher prices due to lack of inventory and strong buyer demand. There is a lot of remodeling going on within the neighborhood and five new homes are currently under construction. The neighborhood trend seems to be toward updating and remodeling, staying put rather than moving. The lack of inventory and resultant bidding wars have taken their toll on many homebuyers this past year.



The average price per square foot is up \$30 from 2013. The maximum sales price for 2013 was \$1,700,000.

Statistics for 2014

	<u>Min. Price</u>	<u>Max. Price</u>
Total Properties Sold: 14	\$465,000 (lot)	\$2,202,000
Avg. Price per SF: \$286.31		
Avg. Days on Market: 56		
Sold at or above list price: 50%		
Under contract in 21 days or less: 60%		
Lot sold @ 2355 Kelving / 31,400 SF for \$1,108,233		

2015 Report

Homes for sale	4	
Currently under contract	3	
List/Sale Price	\$699,999	\$2,295,000

*(*all statistics based on properties listed on MLS & Houston Assn. of Realtors)*

Quarterly Police Breakfast Meetings

The neighborhood coalition University Place Association sponsors quarterly breakfast meetings with area law enforcement officers that include: SEAL Security, HPD, Rice PD, Med Center PD, RACS, Houston Metro PD, and the Southampton/Boulevard Oaks Patrol. Information is exchanged on neighborhood issues stemming from crime and homelessness. Occasionally, none of Old Braeswood's usual representatives is available to attend. If you have an interest in being on a list of substitute attendees, please contact Evalyn Krudy at 713-807-1787.

Save the date for the 2015 Old Braeswood Park Party!



Sunday, May 3rd
4:30— 6:00 p.m.

@ Old Braeswood Park

Volunteers are needed to help set up, serve, and take photos at the event. Contact info@oldbraeswood.com or call 713-807-1787 if you can help.

Club Meetings Ahead

Old Braeswood Garden Club - The Club is making a field trip to the River Oaks Flower Show on Tuesday, April 28th. The Club has its own Flower Show on April 19th. If you have an interest in either event, contact Annette Brown at 713-667-9187 or at netteyduplechain@yahoo.com

Old Braeswood Book Club - The Club meets at Krista Heidersbach's, 2302 Blue Bonnet, on **Tuesday, March 10th, at 7:00 p.m.**, for a discussion of *100 Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez Bryce (417 pages).

New members are always welcome at either club!

Should homeowners in Old Braeswood support their neighborhood and its security patrol with mandatory annual dues of \$500?

Yes. Mandatory dues are the only equitable way to increase our security patrol presence from 40 hours per week to 80 hours per week. Experience over many years shows that only about 60-65% of OB households regularly pays dues. Making those households pay even more for the security that benefits all is just not fair.

Who votes and how many votes are needed?

Each house or lot gets one vote. The amendment passes with the support of 60% of all homeowners/lot owners. [Article XVI. Section 1(c).]

When will the mandatory dues start?

Mandatory dues start in 2016. Payment for the year 2016 will be due on January 1, 2016 and payable by January 31. [Payments for POA dues and SEAL coverage are still voluntary in 2015 and are necessary to continue the level of service we have come to expect.]

Why will mandatory dues be \$500 instead of some lesser number?

Currently, regular dues (\$100) plus the SEAL patrol fee (\$300) amount to \$400 annually. Because of demands by residents, we began increased SEAL coverage in 2014 by dipping into the POA's reserve fund. We cannot sustain that level of coverage without higher payments by residents. An annual mandatory payment of \$500 per household will allow us to sustain, and even increase, current SEAL coverage, rebuild our reserve fund and keep us on a sound financial footing.

I think \$500 per year to maintain our neighborhood and provide security is reasonable, but what limits are there on future increases?

The proposed amendment specifically limits any future increases in the mandatory dues to a hard cap of 5% in any calendar year. Further, there can be no increase in dues for the first two years.

What if I can't pay the mandatory dues?

Few in a neighborhood such as ours are unable to comfortably make this payment, but there already is a hardship provision in the By-Laws that allows the Board to grant an exemption to those in need. [Article XI. Section 4.]

Will unpaid dues result in a lien on my house?

No. The responsibility to pay is personal to the homeowner and will not run with the land.

Why not continue to rely on voluntary payments?

About 60% of homeowners annually pay both POA dues of \$100 or more and the security subscription of \$300. With demands from residents for greater services and increased security coverage, it is both necessary and equitable to spread the costs across the entire neighborhood rather than ask higher payments from those already paying.

What has changed?

Our neighborhood is no longer the quiet, bucolic suburb of the 1930s and 1950s. We sit next door to a rapidly expanding Medical Center and next door to land slated for high rise residential/commercial development. Crime waves hit every couple of years and threats of burglary are constant. Without a strong security presence and POA to enforce our deed restrictions, our neighborhood could fall to either or both of these forces. Increased traffic through our neighborhood also presents added risks to safety, because we become more visible as an affluent enclave vulnerable to burglary.

If dues are mandatory, will I be asked for money in addition to the dues?

Most of the mandatory dues will simply cover the security patrol -- and increase coverage from 40 hours per week to 80 hours per week. During patrol coverage hours, response time is 1-3 minutes. Operational expenses of Old Braeswood would also be covered by the dues. Any special assessment to cover an extraordinary, one-time expense would occur only with the approval and vote of two-thirds of the POA Board and be capped at \$100 in any one year. There will continue to be opportunities, wholly voluntary, to enhance Old Braeswood with tax deductible donations to improve the park (Old Braeswood Park Corporation) and to add trees to our streets (Trees for Houston/Old Braeswood). Currently, a campaign is underway by the Old Braeswood Park Corporation to raise money for street sign toppers and additional entrance pillars. Donations to this campaign are also fully tax-deductible. All tax deductible donations for Old Braeswood are wholly voluntary and are in addition to the mandatory dues.

Annual Dues Rates for Nearby Neighborhoods of Similar Size			
Southampton:	\$500.00	Avalon Place	\$850.00
Lynn Park	\$550.00	Oak Estates	\$850.00
Afton Oaks	\$600.00	Royden Oaks	\$1,220.00
Glendower Court	\$600.00		

Continued on page 5

Dues Ballot Questions continued from page 4

The Bylaws for the Old Braeswood POA and the Articles of Incorporation can be accessed on the Old Braeswood website (www.oldbraeswood.com). Questions about the ballot and mandatory dues should be directed to info@OldBraeswood.com or 713-807-1787.

Report on January 2015 meeting of the Brays Bayou Association

Currently, Houston has two "signature" parks, Hermann Park and Memorial Park. And it is about to get a third, Willow Waterhole, the only park to double as a flood control asset. Like Hermann Park, it will be easily accessible from our neighborhood. Located just a mile or two southwest of the southwest corner of Loop 610, the park covers 292 acres in six not quite contiguous parcels. When finished, it will have a lake in each parcel, ranging in size from 10 acres to 109 acres. The area has ecosystems ranging from coastal prairie to wetlands to freshwater lakes, including 192 species of birds and 300 species of plant life, several of which are on the endangered list. In future there will be a music bandshell like the Miller Outdoor Theater, but on a larger scale. The vision is to have one free event per week year-round, with seating for 5000 and a sloping lawn beyond of 120,000 square feet. Parking will be offsite with shuttle service.

Directions: The best way to see the progress to date is to take Chimney Rock south past Westbury High School, then turn left on Dryad and take it all the way to the gazebo, from which you can see the outline of the largest lake on its initial fill stage and the beginning of the landscaping.

Trash & Recycling Schedule

Recycling	Every other Tuesday
Dates	Feb. 10 & 24 Mar. 10 & 24 Apr. 7 & 21 May 5 & 18
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).

Thank You! Tree Fund Donors

Each year Trees for Old Braeswood raises funds for our street tree planting project inside the neighborhood and on the perimeter streets. We are excited that trees will soon be planted thanks to the generosity of the following donors who have contributed to our fund over the past 3 months.

Johnny Acorn (\$500 & up)

Janet & Walid Attisha
Joseph & Eileen Brewer Corriere
Helen & Tony Davenport
Mark Hausknecht & GG Hsieh
Jay Plotkin
Susan & Len Teich
Sherri & Garret Walsh

Tree Hugger (\$250 & up)

Guilio & Marina Draetta
Ann & Berkeley Glass

Tree Lover (\$150 & up)

Janet & Charles Bruner
Fran & Michael Feltovich
Aviva Presser Aiden & Erez Lieberman
Emil & Josh Schaffer
Pam & John Strasburger

Forester (\$100 & up)

Patricia & Ian Butler
Dr. & Mrs. Louis Daily
Susan & Paul Danziger
Annette & John Eldridge
Christine & Jeffrey Hollinden
Anna & Raghu Kalluri
Samia & Kamal Khalil
Marcella & Bryant Manning
Sally & David Miller
Dee & Bill Murray
Bonnie & Eric Nelson
Eric & Bonnie Nelson
Sharon Plon & Jed Nuchtern
Ginger Cathey & Carols Ramos
Keila E. Torres & Jason M. Reed
Dorry & Carroll Shaddock

Friend (\$50 & up)

Nadia Pervez & Matthew Foster
Maureen Glancy & Wamique Yusuf
Melissa Marschall
Dr. Barbara Sachtel-Green &
Dr. Louis Green
Donald McDonald
Connie & Bud Pollon
William Russ

More information about the Trees for Old Braeswood program can be found on page 6.

2015 OBPOA Officers & Chairpersons

President	Susan Teich
Vice Pres.	Molly Khalil
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	Sally Miller
Enforcement	John Eldridge
Flood Control	Kathy Lord & Len Teich
Garden Club	Laurie Eckman & Dee Murray
Newsletter	Zach Liu / E. Krudy
Park	Annette Eldridge
Plan Review	Marilyn Archer
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Susan Teich
Social Events	<u>Volunteer Needed</u>
Trees	Carroll Shaddock & Molly Khalil
University Place	Susan Teich
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Manager	Evalyn Krudy

Connect with Old Braeswood's eNews and Social Media Options

Sign up to receive up to the minute news and crime alerts electronically. Simply send a message to info@OldBraeswood.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

Send messages to neighbors without delay using the **Old Braeswood Yahoo Group**. This list has been helpful for tracking down lost pets and helping the Patrol catch thieves. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OldBraeswoodNeighbors/> to get started.

Nextdoor.com/OldBraeswood is a fledgling list that may be of interest. This site is not managed by OBPOA and we are not responsible for its content. Visit <https://oldbraeswoodtx.nextdoor.com> for more information. Be sure to note the privacy policy before joining this site.

Trees for Old Braeswood Update by Susan Teich

Each year the tree committee is led by Carroll Shaddock, co-chair of Trees for Old Braeswood, in pruning the young trees planted through our program that are most in need of attention. This year Carroll pruned the trees while neighbor and tree committee volunteer Mark Hausknecht hauled away the debris.

Street tree pruning is an annual committee activity begun by Carroll upon moving to Old Braeswood in 2005. Carroll, with the help of co-chairman Molly Khalil, inventoried the neighborhood's street trees and determined that a total of about 1900 trees would bring our streets into a fully planted pattern. Half that number

were already in place, meaning that about 950 trees were needed. Since then, some trees have died due to age, drought, and other factors. Your tax-deductible donations paid for replacing dead trees and adding additional trees. During drought years, expenditures were focused on watering trees instead of planting them. (As a result, none of our young street trees were lost!) Money not needed for watering was reserved for the time when the drought was ended, and that time is now.



Dorry & Carroll Shaddock live on Underwood Blvd.

About 125 trees will be planted in the coming weeks with reserved funds, that were collected from approximately 75 neighbors over the past 5 years. We then will need only about 475 trees to meet the goal set in 2005. With your continued generosity, we expect to reach that goal by 2025 or sooner!

Carroll's passion for trees goes back to 1983, the year he co-founded Trees for Houston, which plants trees in partnership with the Trees for Old Braeswood committee (Trees for Houston is a 501c3 charitable entity and all donations are fully tax deductible).

In Houston, Carroll is known not only for adding trees, but also for removing billboards. He is the founder of Scenic Houston and Scenic Texas. Now retired as a partner in the law firm of Locke Lord, Carroll is Music Director of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded in 1851 in downtown Houston. His wife, Dorry, is church organist, as well as a frequent Old Braeswood volunteer. They live at 2310 Underwood.

[Future newsletters will introduce other Board members and Committee Chairs.]

Traffic and parking dominated discussion at the Quarterly Community Luncheon hosted by Rice University in February. Old Braeswood was represented.



At the meeting, representatives from Houston Public Works and Parking Management made presentations about the upcoming Greenbriar street reconstruction from Rice Blvd to Holcombe, and about plans for a Parking Benefits District for Rice Village.

Besides the predictable disruption that drivers will face from the Greenbriar reconstruction, the project has the potential to imperil many stately street trees. Currently, Greenbriar has lanes that are 10 feet in width. The current City standard for traffic lanes is 11 feet in width (and recently, even 12 feet), for reasons of safety. In principal, the City's policy is to minimize "impervious cover" (e.g., asphalt) and to support trees. As to this Capital Improvement Project (identified as FY 2017), a tree survey was done. The City is aiming for community consensus before a final design is determined, and every email address provided with public comment will receive a reply.

With over 150 mature oak trees at issue on Greenbriar, public response has already been enormous. The City has responded by modifying its original plans for 12' lanes and for a greater number of lanes. What can you do to ensure that street trees are protected on Greenbriar between Rice Blvd. and Holcombe?

- 1) Make comments to Carol Haddock (Sr. Asst. Dir. Public Works and Engineering) by emailing her at: carol.haddock@houstontx.gov (When you do, copy Evalyn Krudy at info@oldbraeswood.com)
- 2) Make comments to City Planning and Development by using an email address set up specifically for public feedback regarding the Greenbriar project: pweplanning@houstontx.gov
- 3) Sign an online petition at <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/keep-greenbriar-green-safe-and-slow.html>
- 4) Attend the Greenbriar Reconstruction Town Hall Meeting in late March (date TBA)

The City of Houston has developed a list of its 8 most parking challenged areas. Not surprisingly, Rice Village ranked as number 1. The Kinder Institute for Urban Research has been enlisted to explore possible solutions. Moreover, Rice Village will be the focus of a class study by the architecture school at Rice. Additional data will be gathered by students and solutions will be proposed beginning in late spring. Also, the area has been identified as the next Parking Benefits District for Houston. This means that funds raised from city operated parking ventures will go back into streetscape improvements and parking management tools for the area. Solutions that may be employed include shared parking, wayfinding and signage for available parking, and an app for finding a parking spot, just to name a few.

Subscribe to email notices of public events at Rice University at www.rice.edu/signup before June 1st and become eligible for a drawing for a new iPad mini.

Neighborhood Signage Project Report

The response has been fantastic for Old Braeswood street sign toppers and additional brick pillars. The sign toppers are now paid for and you will see them in place soon. We also have funds in place for a number of new brick pillars, but not sufficient funds to get pillars for all the key entry points to Old Braeswood. If you have thought of making a tax deductible donation, but have not done so, this would be a good time to make out your check payable to the *Old Braeswood Park Corporation*, with "Signage Project" in the memo line. Please include information for obtaining employer matching funds should that apply. When we meet our goal of \$25,000, there will be a celebratory party for donors of \$100 and up. We want to see you there!




The neighborhood Signage Project will put new pillars at key intersections providing entry to our neighborhood. It's not too late to make a tax-deductible donation to this project!

Garden Club Holiday Party on Dec. 14, 2014



Pictured clockwise from top left:

(1) Ann & Joe Garnett, Bill Wheeler, Steve & Lynn King, Laura Pang (2) Michael Kelley, Krista Heidersbach and Dorry Shaddock; (3) Annette Eldridge & Simone Westmoreland; (4) Dawn Gervais, Helen Henson (Ruth's daughter), Shirley Cooper, Ruth Kosieracki; (5) Teryle Morrow, Janice Gregory, Kathy & Tom Lord; (6) Gene Boisaubin, Christine & Ernesto Enfante; (7) Sabina Huh, Fred & Courtney Steves, Billy Huh; (8) Garret Walsh, Rose Pu, Sheri Walsh, Lee Ann Cislo, Sally Miller.



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PROPERTY OWNERS ASSN.

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