

VOL. 14, ISSUE 1

January - February  
2018



OLD BRAESWOOD  
PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

# Old Braeswood News

## *A Letter from the President* by Andrea Lapsley

Happy 2018 to all residents of Old Braeswood. It is a time of new beginnings and fresh starts. I wish each of you a year filled with continuing successes and good health.

A new year is like a blank book, and the pen is in your hands. It is your chance to write a beautiful story for yourself. And, a chance to continue your support of our neighborhood. Webster defines a neighborhood as "a section of a city lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics." That truly defines Old Braeswood: unique architecture, beautiful trees, large lots, a park within our boundaries, an active property owners association, households of all ages and sizes, safe and secure, and so much more. We all enjoy the benefits of living in this neighborhood.

Having these benefits and privileges are not without a price though. And, a small one it is for what we get in return. I urge everyone to respond to the request for the annual membership dues and patrol subscription. Please return your payment and renewal form in the envelope enclosed in this mailing. Help keep our neighborhood strong and safe. We all need to join together in this effort.

I look forward to seeing you throughout the year at our membership meetings, park parties and other neighborhood activities.

## *Old Braeswood Annual Meeting Recap*

Rita and Bal Sareen hosted the POA's Annual Meeting on November 8<sup>th</sup> in their historic home, often referred to as "the Hobby Mansion" because its early residents were Governor William P. and Oveta Culp Hobby. Rita's offer to give tours of the house both before and after the meeting brought an unusually high turnout. Our sincere appreciation goes to the Sareens for a festive evening and for their exceptional hospitality.

President Andrea Lapsley presented candidates for the 2018 Board and they were elected by acclamation:

President	Andrea Lapsley
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Julie Cohn
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Joe Manca
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice President	Buddy Steves
At Large	John Eldridge
At Large	Kellie Kwokedi
Secretary	Samia Khalil
Treasurer	Bill Marchbank
Past President	Susan Teich



*Event Hosts Bal & Rita Sareen*

President Lapsley also addressed ongoing issues of timeliness and communication regarding the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). She announced the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee chaired by John Eldridge to review Old Braeswood's process for conducting architectural reviews, to investigate how other neighborhoods conduct architectural reviews, and to hold at least two open forums that allow Old Braeswood residents to share their views. Additional committee members will be chosen from residents not currently serving on the Executive Committee of the POA. The committee will complete its work by June 2018.



*Left: **Beadie Lewis**, our celebrated 101-year-old resident, poses with **Maribel Reuter**. Right: incoming Executive Committee member **Kellie Nwokedi**.*

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The house at 2351 Blue Bonnet first appears in the Houston City Directory of 1932-1933. Oddly, the Harris County Appraisal District dates its construction to 1938. It stood on a double lot, since subdivided. The builder apparently ran into financial difficulties because there was a lien on the property in 1931. Two owners of the house were to preserve American history significantly, as will be shown later.

The house was first owned by Thomas H. Shartle and his wife Ruth. Jessie Durham, listed as a domestic, lived in the garage apartment. Her services were later replaced by Richard Parrish.

Thomas was President of Texas Electric Steel Casting Co., Inc. (TESCO). Vice President was Charles W. Shartle, apparently related. During World War II, there was a shortage of civilian labor and reputedly Tom worked in the foundry himself, among men who often were unaware that he owned the company.

Tom came to Houston from Ohio and started his foundry business on Spring St. in 1926. He moved it to Bringham St. in 1940 and set up the office in an old house on nearby Gillespie St. where the office stayed until 1962. By the 1980s, the Shartles had sold TESCO to one of its customer's, Gray Tool, a company that produced oil wellheads.

Tom had decided that the future was in plastics. In 1951, he and a TEXCO associate founded Tex-Trude, a company that initially made plastic pipe and fittings for commercial irrigation.

Tom did not forget his native state of Ohio, and he found a way to connect its history to that of his adoptive state of Texas. During the Texas Revolution, despite U.S. neutrality, the people of Cincinnati sent two cannons to Texas as their contribution to the cause of the Texans. The cannons became known as *The Twin Sisters* and figured prominently in the battle of San Jacinto. Tom Shartle, an honorary member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, funded Lone Star Pavilion in Cincinnati in 1974. It displays "replicas" of the cannons and tells their story with a plaque. Lone Star Pavilion can be found at Burnet Woods, a park near the University of Cincinnati.

In 1985, "replicas" of the Twin Sisters were again made, this time for the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site. The Cincinnati foundry that made the original cannons was still in existence. It was consulted, but had no records to aid in duplicating their appearance. Reputedly, Tom Shartle donated plaques for the display of these cannons.

Other tidbits about Tom from a blog among the children of his former employees is that his company donated parts for the restoration of the Elissa. Also, that Tom counted George Brown and Gov. John Connally among his friends, and the three were known to go big game hunting together in Africa.

Tom did well enough in his businesses to purchase over 9,000 acres of timber and pastureland near Crockett, Texas, in the 1950s to form Hickory Creek Ranch. After his death in 1997, the cattle business and much of the acreage was sold. In 2007, his great-granddaughter converted an old hay barn on the remaining property into a rustic wedding venue and that business is still active under the name *The Barn at Hickory Creek Ranch*.



Right: Annette & John Eldridge, current owners of 2351 Blue Bonnet

The Shartles' last year on Blue Bonnet was 1941. The house sat vacant for a year and then welcomed Mrs. Julia K. Timmins, owner of Avenue Floral Co., with shops at several locations. Her daughter lived in a separate house built on the same double lot. Julia remained through 1982, taking a cab to and from work each day.

Next came George R. Nelson, a lawyer for the firm of Foreman

& Dyess, and his wife Mary. Mary, with a background at IBM, designed and taught computer courses at St. John's School. They moved here from Chicago, and rented 2337 Underwood for two years while they totally remodeled 2351 Blue Bonnet, more than doubling it in size.

The Nelsons were followed in 2000 by Mary and Wyman H. Herendeen, who stayed only a couple of years. Mary taught at Awty International School. Wyman was chair of the English Department at the University of Houston and much published in the areas of English and Continental Renaissance literature. Despite those being his areas of interest, he made news in 2017 for a contribution to American literature. He approved use of English Department funds to scan and digitize a sensational literary find by a graduate student at the University of Houston, a previously unknown novella by Walt Whitman. The novella, *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, originally appeared in six installments in 1852 in the *Sunday Dispatch*, a three-penny Manhattan weekly.

*Your House... continues on page 3*



This is a progress report on Project Brays. Harris County has 22 separate watersheds, 2500 miles of channel to drain water into Galveston Bay, and 200 detention basins to hold water temporarily. Old Braeswood is in the Brays Bayou watershed which is one of the largest in Harris County, measuring 31 miles long from the ship channel to Barkers Reservoir. It has a population of 700,000 people which has been stable for at least 20 years. There has not been much new development to make flooding worse, as the case in West Houston. The Brays Bayou Channel Widening Project, which has been ongoing for over 30 years, is the largest in Harris County at \$480 million. Project Brays has spent \$350 million to date and is on track to finish by 2021. That does not count landscape beautification projects which will add another \$220 million. The project comprises 21 miles of channel widening from the ship channel to Fondren; 4 detention basins; and 32 bridge replacements, extensions, and/or modifications.

The Project is essentially done in the Old Braeswood area. The bayou widening is finished to Stella Link with only some sod to be laid on the north side of the bayou downstream of the bridge. The bridges have been completely rebuilt on South Main and Kirby.

Willow Waterhole is the detention pond nearest Old Braeswood. It is a work in progress but it has already become a recreational site for families. This year the annual Willow Waterhole Musicfest will be held April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. At some future time, events like the Musicfest will perform in a pavilion similar to Miller Outdoor Theater. It is to be constructed off Post Oak South with partial funding from the Leavitt Foundation and named *Leavitt Pavilion Houston*. It will hold 5,000 people and present 53 musical events yearly, helping to make Willow Waterhole Park one of Houston's "signature" parks.

When complete, the Brays Project is likely to make a big difference in watershed flooding. It will not save Meyerland in another "Harvey" event. Houses there will still be 4' to 6' below the top of Brays Bayou at project completion, but Meyerland is an exception. In the last Harvey event areas in Harris county around Simms Bayou and lower Braes Bayou, where work was completed, were not nearly as badly flooded as areas where work was not completed. The project is apparently doing its job.

*(Len Teich serves as Old Braeswood's official Representative to Brays Bayou Association and attends meetings related to the bayou and flood control throughout the year.)*

## *Greenbriar Reconstruction Update*

The reconstruction of Greenbriar is getting underway. The project was given the green light for January 2018. However, Pubic Works tells us that the contractor is getting organized and is working to take care of preliminary site work including utility line relocations. Crews should be on site digging in the coming weeks.

The Old Braeswood Garden Club is one of the oldest garden clubs in Houston and now its history will be preserved. Scrapbooks documenting its activities and dating back to 1939 have been found by Pat Speck, son of Joy Speck, a former secretary of the club. Pat returned to his parents' home in Old Braeswood to manage their care and found 7 Garden Club scrapbooks.

Those scrapbooks have now joined the archives of the HMRC (Houston Metropolitan Research Center), located at the Julia Ideson Library. Some of the scrapbooks are fragile and need to be digitized so that they can be used without damaging them.

The library staff is small and so Garden Club volunteers are being trained on the library's equipment and will digitize all 7 of the books. The years covered by the books are: 1939-1956, 1960-1963, 1978-1988.

If anyone learns of the location of books for 1957-1959 or 1964-1977 please contact Club President G.G. Hsieh (713-660-9520 or [gghsieh@gmail.com](mailto:gghsieh@gmail.com)).



*Garden Club president GG Hsieh (left) and members Dee Murray (center) and Susan Teich (right) met in December with the lead archivist at HMRC and the HMRC general manager to arrange for HMRC to take charge of preserving the scrapbooks.*

## *"Your House...." Continued from page 2*

The current owners of 2351 Blue Bonnet are Annette and John Eldridge, long time Old Braeswood volunteers. John, a partner with Haynes and Boone, served as POA president from 2010 to 2014. Annette, also an attorney, is president of the Old Braeswood Park Corporation. The Eldridges are boosters not only of Old Braeswood, but also of neighboring Rice University, alma mater to John and sons Graham and Will.

*[This is the 50th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]*



## Old Braeswood Garden Club Holiday Party on Dec. 10, 2017

The Garden Club's annual holiday party was hosted on December 10<sup>th</sup> by Laura Pang and Bill Wheeler at their home on Gramercy. Thank you Laura and Bill! There was a large turnout and the food was lovely, but the pictures speak for themselves! Much credit goes to Garden Club President GG Hsieh for planning a great evening and to everyone who brought food. Join Garden Club before the next evening dinner event, the April Flower Show, by contacting GG ([gghsieh@gmail.com](mailto:gghsieh@gmail.com) or 713-660-9520).





## Garden Club Program for 2018

- February 27 Tuesday Evening at 7 p.m.  
History of Old Braeswood Program.  
Spouses welcome.
- March 27- Tuesday Daytime at 10 a.m.  
President's Choice Field Trip.  
Tour and lunch at the Asia Society
- April 22 Sunday Evening at 6 p.m.  
Annual Flower Show and Dinner  
Members submit flower arrangements.  
This year's theme: "My Favorite Art."  
No flower arrangement entry to submit?  
Pay a nominal fine. Spouses welcome.
- May 22 Tuesday Daytime at 10 a.m.  
New Officers elected and then we Lunch



Not a member? Want to join?  
Contact: GG Hsieh at 713-660-9520; [gghsieh@gmail.com](mailto:gghsieh@gmail.com)  
Annette Brown 713-545-3126;  
[nettyduplechain@yahoo.com](mailto:nettyduplechain@yahoo.com)  
Nancy Eisenmenger 412-427-4644  
[nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com](mailto:nancyeisenmenger@gmail.com)

## Home Tour a Success

The First Annual Old Braeswood Home Tour on November 12<sup>th</sup> was a great success with many neighbors visiting the five houses. A big Thank You goes to those who hosted the Tour: Dawn and Richard Gervais, Christine and Joe Manca, Andrea and Bob Lapsley, Susan and Len Teich, and Dee and Bill Murray. The Tour lasted 2 hours and the only complaint was that it did not allow enough time to see all five houses. A longer timeframe is likely for the upcoming tour in the Fall of 2018. The Preservation Committee, which initiated the Tour, is open to further suggestions for improving this annual event. If you have a suggestion, please contact Committee Chair Joe Manca, 713-349-9237, [manca@rice.edu](mailto:manca@rice.edu).



2318 Blue Bonnet was featured on the first OB Home Tour.

## Book Club News



The Old Braeswood Book Club met at Hotel Za Za for brunch, followed by a docent led tour of the MFAH. Book club discussion was about *Kiss Carlo*, by Adriana Trigiani



### Book Club Calendar

The Book Club invites all residents to join. Contact president Annette Brown for more details at [nettyduplechain@yahoo.com](mailto:nettyduplechain@yahoo.com).

February 13 - Evening discussion of *O Pioneers*, by Willa Cather

March 13 - Evening discussion of *Pachinko*, by Min Jin Lee

## Barking Dogs in Old Braeswood Park



There have been complaints that people bring their dogs to the Old Braeswood Park as early as 6:00 a.m. and allow them to run around in the park barking and disturbing those living nearby. It is a violation of Park rules to take a dog off leash in the Park. It is a violation of common courtesy to create loud

noise early in the morning in our neighborhood.

Should you witness this occurring, call the Old Braeswood Patrol (SEAL Security) at 713-422-2770.

## Attention Park Users: Dog Waste Only in Dog Waste Station

Please help us keep the dog waste station from overflowing. Lately park goers have been placing regular trash in the pet waste station. We ask that neighbors please place trash in the trash receptacles and reserve the pet waste station for dog waste only. This will keep the park smelling better and will reduce the number of times per month the station must be emptied. As you can imagine, emptying the station is not a pleasant task. Let's keep our volunteers and landscape crew happy by cutting down on the number of times the station must be emptied.

## Old Braeswood Real Estate Report

by Dawn Gervais, Realtor ® Consultant \* Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

We ended 2017 with a bang after being hit with Hurricane Harvey. Unfortunately, the market did not rebound as we had hoped it would the three months following Harvey.

Houston's real estate sales have picked up and home sales did surge in some areas after the hurricane. Investors have been scooping up flooded homes while other homes remain on the market. I am optimistic that our market will continue to revitalize Throughout the year.

Wishing you a Happy & Healthy New Year!

### Old Braeswood Real Estate Summary for 2017:

Total homes sold in 2017	7
Minimum Sales Price	\$580,000
Maximum Sales Price	\$1,762,500
Average Sales Price Per Square Foot	\$333
Average Days on Market	211
Total Number of Homes active (Jan. 2018)	8
Minimum List Price	\$750,000
Maximum List Price	\$2,180,000
Lots for Sale	1 @ \$749,000

Currently, there are two homes under contract and sale pending as of the date of this publication.

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

## Don't Feed Wild Animals

While those of us who are animal lovers may be tempted to feed wild animals, especially in winter, doing so is an unsafe practice. When a wild animal is accustomed to receiving food from humans it will approach people rather than running from them.



There have been reports of raccoons aggressively approaching residents in their own yards at night. In addition, raccoons and possums carry leptospirosis, a disease which can be devastating or fatal to humans. Transmission is

normally via feces which can be tracked indoors on shoes etc.



If you have cats, please feed them indoors so that you are not inadvertently providing food for wild animals or stray cats.





# Tree Planting Program Completing First Pass Through All Streets

TREES FOR OLD BRAESWOOD is a project to perfect the allees and groves of trees which line our streets. Such plantings not only enhance property values, but also strengthen bonds of neighborhood identity and unity. The attractiveness of our neighborhood depends not only upon the efforts of individual homeowners, but also upon the beauty imparted to our streets by well-planned street tree plantings.

The overall plan comprises some 1,800 trees, of which over half were in place before the current project began in 2005, when we kicked off our campaign to plant the remaining 900 trees needed. Through our program's efforts approximately 610 trees have been planted throughout the neighborhood, including our border streets. It is remarkable how Kirby has been transformed by these trees, in the decade since they were planted, signaling the leafy character of our neighborhood. This effect will continue to grow on our perimeter and interior neighborhood streets. We will begin planting on Dorrington this year. Next year we will return to streets that have been planted in locations where trees were turned down.

Your continued support is essential to the success of this project that has transformed the neighborhood. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to our program please visit the Old Braeswood website for instructions, or just mail your check to the OBPOA office payable to "Trees For Houston." Our thanks to all of the wonderful neighbors who have contributed over the years. This year we would like to acknowledge contributions from the following neighbors:

## Johnny Acorn (\$500 & up)

Mark Hausknecht & G.G. Hsieh  
Jay Plotkin  
Barbie & Don Schaffer

## Tree Lover (\$250 & up)

Julie Cohn & John Connor  
Friends at 2515 Glen Haven  
Meredith & Ryan Maierson  
Jesse Rodriguez  
Paul & Janet Sanders  
Mollie & Randy Schaffer  
The Seff Family  
Susan & Leonard Teich

## Tree Hugger ( \$150 & up)

Janet & Charles Bruner  
Dr. Patrick McNamara & José Vazquez

## Forester (\$100 & up)

Patricia & Ian Butler  
Giulio & Marina Draetta  
Eugenia Georges & Robert H. Etnyre, Jr.  
Kolburn Helgason  
Marcella & Bryant L. Manning  
Eric & Bonnie Nelson  
Liping Wei & Dong Dong

## Friend (\$50 & up)

Ernestina Melicoff & Robert Adachi  
Emily & Brent Stoller



## 2018 OBPOA Officers

President	Andrea Lapsley
Vice Pres.	Julie Cohn
Vice Pres.	Joe Manca
Vice Pres.	Buddy Steves
At-Large	John Eldridge
At-Large	Kellie Nwokedi
Treasurer	Bill Marchbank
Secretary	Samia Khalil
Past President	Susan Teich

## Committees & Liaisons

Advisory	Dee Murray
Block Captains	Christine Manca
Directory	Sally Miller
Enforcement	John Eldridge
Flood Control	Len Teich
Garden Club	GG Hsieh
Newsletter	Susan Teich Evalyn Krudy
Park	Annette Eldridge
Preservation	Joe Manca
Patrol	Dee Murray
Rice U Liaison	Andrea Lapsley
Social Events	Krista Heidersbach
Trees	Carroll Shaddock Paul Sanders
University Place	Andrea Lapsley
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Manager	Evalyn Krudy

## Trash & Recycling Schedule

<b>Recycling</b>	Every other Tuesday (B)
<b>Dates</b>	Jan. 9 & 23      Feb. 6 & 20 Mar. 6 & 20      Apr. 3 & 17
<b>Household Trash</b>	Tuesdays (in city provided bins)
<b>Yard Waste</b>	Tuesdays (in biodegradable bags)
<b>Junk &amp; Tree Limbs</b>	Collection suspended



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).

Visit [www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste](http://www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste) for more information.

*Some funny white stuff was evident throughout Old Braeswood on December 8, 2017. It came back on January 15, 2018.*



## *Old Braeswood Park Corp. Appreciation*

Special thanks to neighbors who gave generously to the annual Park Maintenance fund and to the special signage fund for the park. Your generosity allows the Park Corp. to keep the park beautiful and welcoming for all.

Names denoted with (\*) are also Park Patrons who have also pledged to make a \$100 donation each year for at least 3 years. All donations to the Old Braeswood

Park Corp. are fully tax-deductible as charitable donations to a 501c3 corporation.



### PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2018

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#### \$400 & up

G.G. Hsieh & Mark Hausknecht\*  
Old Braeswood Garden Club

#### \$200 & up

The Attisha Family\*  
Gene & Jean Boisaubin\*  
Our Friends at 2515 Glen Haven\*  
Raghu & Anna Kalluri\*  
Andrea & Robert Lapsley\*  
Bill & Dee Murray\*  
Jay Plotkin\*  
Lynn & David Rizzo\*  
Chuck & Jan Bruner  
Fran & Tom Callahan  
Julie Cohn & John A. Connor\*  
Helen & Tony Davenport  
Marina & Giulio Draetta  
Helen B. Segall  
Susan & Leonard Teich

#### \$150 & up

Michael & Pat Inselman\*  
Anna E. Stool & Linda Prinz  
Sheri & Garrett Walsh

#### \$100 & up

Ann Schutt-Aine & Rubin S. Bashir  
Patricia & Ian Butler  
Fran Callahan\*  
Louise Coretti  
Joseph & Eileen Brewer Corriere  
Biman & Bhagvanti Das  
Marilyn Archer  
Sybil & Gary Eknayan  
Annette & John Eldridge  
Kolburn Helgason  
Marcella B. & Bryant L. Manning  
Dr. Patrick McNamara &  
José Vazquez  
Matthew Nicklos & Kristin Roshelli\*

#### (\$100 & up continued)

Connie & Bud Pollon\*  
Maria Isabel Rueter  
Janet & Paul Sanders  
Emily & Josh Schaffer  
Linda Williams  
Jordan Fred Worth

#### \$50 & up

Dr. Milton & Gail Klein  
Demo Kouzounis  
Adrian Melissinos  
Bonnie & Eric Nelson  
Judy & Jim Schwartz  
Wei Shen