

VOL. 17, ISSUE 3

SUMMER
2021



OLD BRAESWOOD
PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Old Braeswood News

OBPOA

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Letter from the President

My Dear Neighbors,

I hope that you and your families are well, and that you celebrated and enjoyed the Fourth of July festivities with your families and friends.

As of today, there is an increased participation in our financial commitments, but we still have about a hundred members who have not yet paid either the POA dues or the patrol subscription. It is important to all of us that we increase the patrol hours to help reduce crime. I encourage all neighbors to pay their share. My thanks in advance go to our block captains for asking non-paying neighbors on their blocks to pay.

I am happy that George Hittner together with The Old Braeswood Parks Corporation Board are working to upgrade Old Braeswood Park to make it safer, prettier and enjoyable for a larger number of neighbors of all ages. George invited an experienced and knowledgeable park architect (Carmen Posey) who met with Annette Eldridge, Bob Birenbaum, four other neighbors, myself and George at the park to explore needs and possible improvements. Currently we are waiting to hear from the City Parks Department regarding whether or not we may proceed to bring them options to upgrade the park at our own expense. When the city agrees, I hope that we join hands, give our input, contribute to the project and work together to have a wonderful park that all of us can enjoy. I am looking forward to celebrating that day.

The Old Braeswood Cat-Squad funds are low, and they need our help. They are doing an excellent job and deserve our support. To donate directly to their account (# 1135) please call the Vet's office at 713-664-2287 and ask for Jean.

Dr. Peter Hotez gave an outstanding presentation to our members at the May 13 membership meeting, which was held via Zoom. Here is a photo of our gift to him.

Sincerely yours,

Samia Khalil MD

OBPOA President

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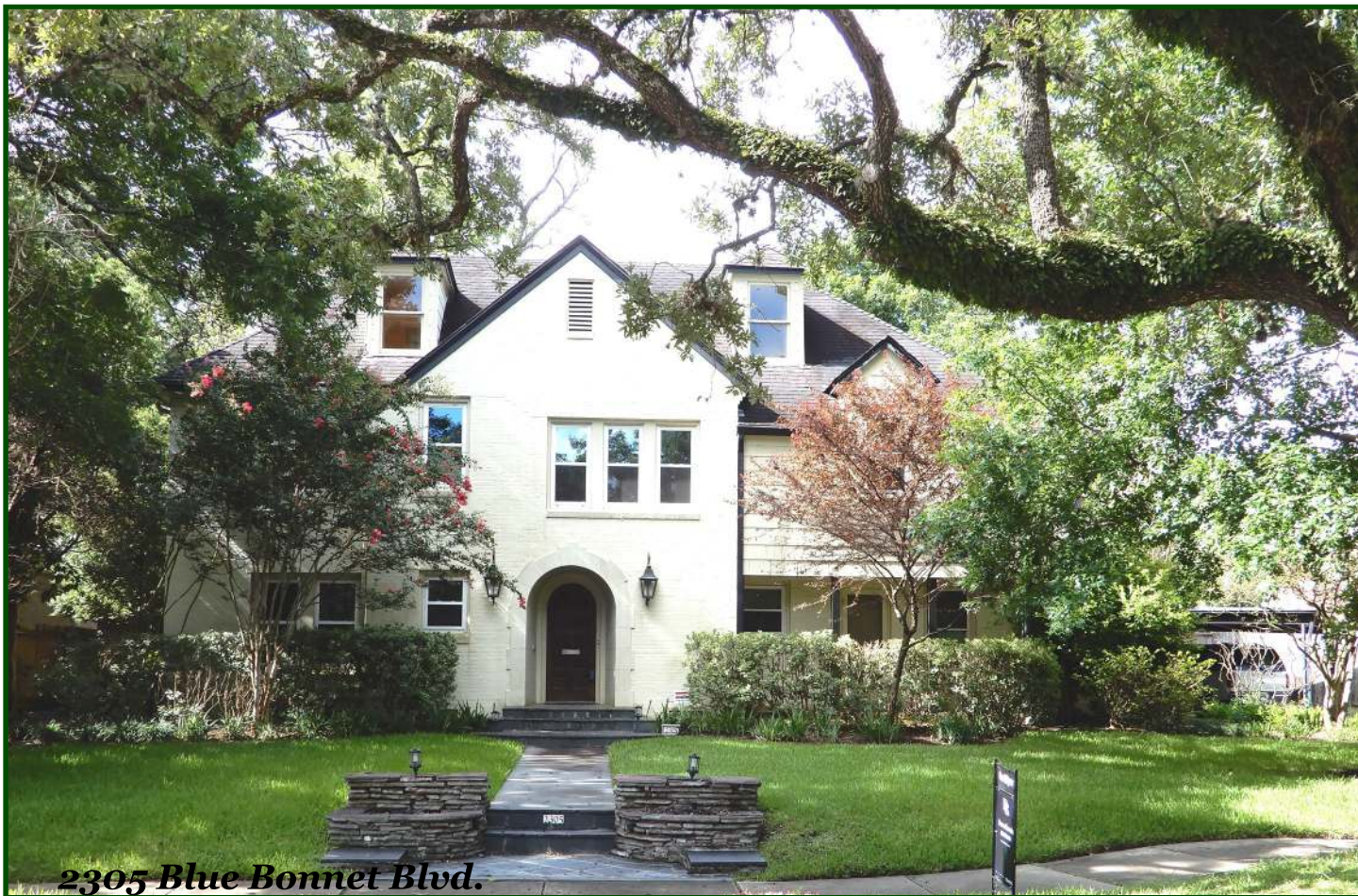
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Remembering Beadie Lewis (1917-2021)

Old Braeswood lost one of its early residents, and a delightful and thoughtful neighbor on July 2nd with the death of Beadie (Beatrice) Lewis. She was still living in the house that she and her husband built in 1953 at 2511 Maroneal. And despite her age of 104 years, she remained active with two book clubs and a Mahjong group. Beadie was interviewed about her life and her house for the April/May 2013 issue of the Old Braeswood newsletter.





The house at 2305 Blue Bonnet is first listed in the Houston City Directory in 1937, the home Donald Wynn Crosby. He was initially listed with his first wife, Hazel, and then later with his second wife, Mildred (Millie). A maid, Anna Mae Trumb, lived in the rear.

Donald grew up in the oil business. His father was pioneer Texas oilman Allen Wynn Crosby, founder of Wynn Crosby Drilling Company, vice president of Navarro Oil Company, vice president of Texas Iron Works Sales Corporation, and General Superintendent of Sinclair Oil. After his death in 1945, son Donald became president of Wynn Crosby Drilling and founded Don Crosby Drilling Company. Don outlived his father by only four years.

The deaths of the two Crosby men set in motion a series of lawsuits that entertained Houstonians with sensational headlines for several years.

The first lawsuit was filed to contest Don's 1944 will disinheriting his children and leaving his estate to wife Millie. A "lost" will executed in 1949 was alleged. It would have left all but \$10,000 (out of an estate of \$282,109) to the children of Don and his first wife. Millie denied existence of the will and it was never produced. Presiding in that case was County Judge Glenn A. Perry.

Family history soon repeated itself with another will contest after the 1950 death of Don's mother (Wynn Crosby's wid-

ow), Helene. She had remarried, to Frank A. Simmons, but was seeking a divorce from him at the time of her death.

Helene's 1950 will left the bulk of her \$3M to \$4M estate to Baylor College of Medicine for a needy-student fund. The will stated that Frank Simmons had refused to return an earlier will so that she could destroy it. Helene's family obtained an injunction barring Frank from attending her funeral. During probate, a handwritten will from 1949 was produced, leaving Helene's estate to Helene's siblings. Frank contested both wills and produced a 1946 will leaving Helene's estate to him. Adding to the confusion, Don Crosby's first wife filed a 1949 will on behalf of her children. The lawsuit lasted two years and was settled in the court of Judge Clement McClelland with Frank Simmons receiving \$500,00 cash, a \$250,000 house in Pacific Palisades (California), a diamond ring, and three late model Cadillacs. Helene's four siblings and Baylor each received \$1M. The Crosby oil companies were dissolved by court order so that their assets could be distributed. The final distribution to Baylor from Helene's estate was ordered in 1956, and deposited by Baylor in The Crosby Estate Student Loan Fund.

There's more. In 1952, the IRS filed a lien against Frank Simmons for \$437,351, almost the entire amount of his cash from Helene's estate. The IRS accused Frank of underreporting the income of the two Crosby drilling companies in

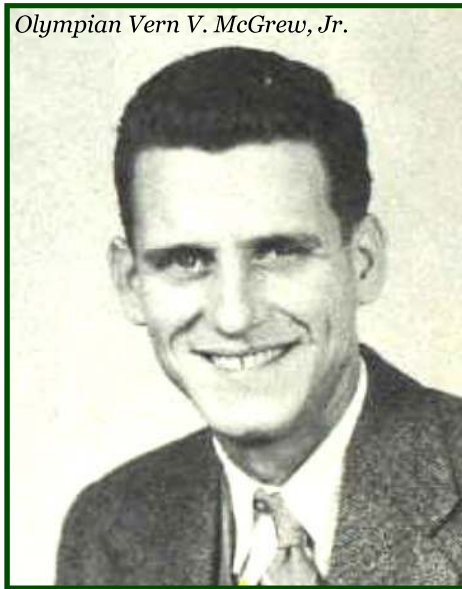
(Continued on page 3)

1945-1947 while he served as an officer of those companies. It also accused him of underreporting income on his joint return with Helene at that time. This claim appears to have been settled.

The fireworks in the Crosby family postdated their residence in Old Braeswood. By 1940 ownership of the Blue Bonnet house had passed to Lillie Marie (Perlitz) and James Pascal Hamblen. Jake was president of Southern Electric Supply Company and Chairman of the Board of Fannin Bank. His philanthropic works are too extensive to enumerate, but during WWII he was a “dollar a year” man for four years as Chairman of the War Production Board Advisory Committee, and he later was fond of noting that “they still owe me four bucks.” Jake’s success in raising funds for Roman Catholic charities earned him the title of Knight of St. Gregory, bestowed in 1948 by Pope Pius XII.

Jake died in 1972, but the house stayed in the Hamblen family. Jake and Lillie’s daughter Martha Ann had married Vern V. McGrew, Jr., and they became the new owners. Vern was a local hero. His senior year at Lamar High School (1946), he set the Texas State Record in high jump. Then at Rice University, he won the 1950 NCAA high jump title with a jump of over 6’7”. He competed in track and field for the USA at the 1948 Olympics in London, the youngest on the team at age 18. He was the first Olympian from a Houston high school, and the second Olympian from Rice. His career best clearance was 6’ 8 1/4 “ using the western roll technique. He received a law degree from the University of Texas and worked for Humble Oil for 30 years.

Olympian Vern V. McGrew, Jr.



Neill Parrish Davis and wife Ruth followed in about 2000 as owners of the Blue Bonnet house. Neill was a Trustee of Strake Jesuit College Prep and on the Board of the Alley Theatre. He worked in the clothing industry serving as CFO of Men’s Wearhouse, Inc., CEO of Francesca’s and as a co-founder of FOUND.

The current owners, Denise J. and Edwin L. Thomas, bought the house from the Neill family in 2012. Like her predecessors Lillie Marie Hamblen and Martha Ann Hamblen McGrew, Denise was active in the Old Braeswood Garden Club. Ed is a materials scientist and mechanical engineer who was a department head at M.I.T. before being recruited by Rice University to serve as Dean of the George R. Brown School of Engineering. Denise and Edwin left Houston for College Station and Texas A&M and their house is now on the market, awaiting its next chapter in Houston history.

[This is the 66th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]

Spring POA Meeting with Dr. Hotez

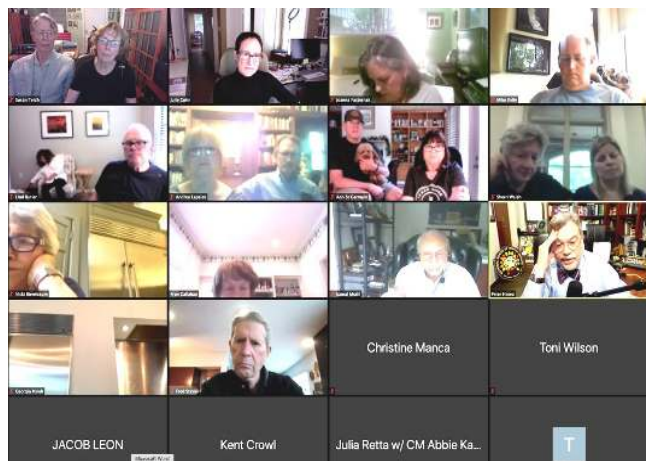
The General Meeting of the POA on May 13 was heavily attended in its Zoom format. The large turnout (or tune in) can be attributed to President Dr. Samia Kahlil’s success in persuading internationally known epidemiologist Dr. Peter Hotez to be our guest speaker. Dr. Hotez presented an update on the battle against Covid 19 and then answered questions by residents with Past President Julie Cohn moderating. Thank you to Dr. Kahlil and to Julie Cohn for choreographing a most informative time with Dr. Hotez.

Following Dr. Hotez, Julia Retta from the office of district C City Council Member Abbie Kamin reported both on the Maroneal sewer reconstruction and on the anticipated reconstruction this summer of the Sunset Blvd./Rice Blvd. intersection to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. Residents expressed concern about speeding cars at Old Braeswood Park. Ms. Retta will bring those concerns to the attention of the Council Member.

Treasurer Mike Kelley reported on Old Braeswood’s finances. At the current level of SEAL subscriptions, Old Braeswood continues to receive at least 52 hours of patrol time weekly. Residents who have not subscribed are urged to do so. Please see the mailing label for the status of your membership and patrol subscription.



Pictured top to Bottom: Peter Hotez MD, Julie Cohn PhD, and Samia Khalil MD.



University Place Association

What is the University Place Association (UPA)? And what does it have to do with Old Braeswood?

In 1989 a group of neighboring entities with common interests came together and established UPA. Old Braeswood is one of those entities and its representative sits on the UPA Board with reps from other neighborhoods, commercial establishments and institutions within the boundaries of Kirby Drive, US 59, Main Street, and North Braeswood.

Currently, our rep is Andrea Lapsley. She welcomes your input relating to UPA's goals. Those goals, primarily, are:

- Obtain and share information of importance to the broader University Place community
- Provide advocacy and support for the residents, businesses, civic organizations and institutions in University Place and help them resolve issues of common interest
- Foster coordination and communication between area police and security agencies to keep our community as safe and secure as possible
- Request, monitor and work with the City of Houston, TXDOT and METRO on traffic, transportation and public works projects
- Maintain close and effective working relationships with city, state and U.S. elected public officials and government agencies on behalf of our community organizations
- Maintain ongoing relationships with city, state and U.S. elected public officials and government agencies and interface with city departments, METRO, the Texas Department of Transportation, H.P.D., T.A.B.C., and other agencies on behalf of community organizations
- Share information and work closely with adjacent entities such as the Museum District, Museum Park Super Neighborhood, Upper Kirby District, Hermann Park Conservancy, and others
- Preserve the character and charm of our unique community

Our thanks to Andrea for her service!

In the News

Neighbor Rowena Young's essay *Scaled-down Wedding a Result of the Pandemic* appeared on the Op Ed page of the Houston Chronicle on June 11. Congratulations to Buddy Steves, Rowena, their son, and their new daughter-in-law.



Ask Elayne by Elayne Kozounis, OB Gardener

We have had a lot of rain so far this summer, but during most summers, July and August are not only hot, but dry. We may still be in for that kind of weather.

I cannot urge too strongly that all trees planted last season be given plenty of water during hot, dry periods throughout the summer and late into fall. Also, young trees will be much happier during hot, dry months if they are given heavy mulch of straw or leaves.



A little background about trees: A tree is a woody plant with a single erect stem, growing to a height of 10 feet or more. While shrubs also are woody, they are usually smaller than trees and tend to have many stems growing in a clump. One reason that many of us fail to understand trees is that they live on a different time scale than we do. One of the oldest trees on Earth, a spruce in Sweden, is more than 9,500 years old. That is 115 times longer than the average human lifespan. Creatures with such a luxury of time can afford to take things at a leisurely pace. The electrical impulses that pass through the roots of trees move at the slow rate of 1/3 of an inch per minute. Why do trees pass electrical impulses through their tissues at all? The answer is that trees need to communicate, and those impulses are just one of their many means of communication. Trees also use the senses of smell and taste for communication. If a giraffe starts eating from an acacia, the tree releases a chemical into the air that signals other trees that a threat is at hand. The other trees may then release chemicals into their leaves to make the leaves taste bitter.

Understanding trees is an essential part of our learning to be good stewards of the Earth.

SANTIAGO TRUJILLO

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Neighborhood References Available

832-741-3720



Garden Club's New Member Party

Garden Club President Alicia vonGreisman hosted a party on May 25 to introduce new members of the Club. Beautiful day! Beautiful garden! Beautiful food! And a beautiful time for all!



Pictured this page:
(1) (Above) New Members (left to right) Ann Blackwood, Renee Miles, Susan Schneider, Dr. Keila Torres, Sari Torres, and Dr. Eileen Brewer

(2) (Left) Hostess Alicia VonGreisman
Remaining pics of Garden Club Member attendees.



Ice Cream Party in the Blue Bonnet Triangle Park

Old Braeswood's Social Chair Krista Heidersbach arranged an ice cream party on behalf of the POA for April 25 in the Triangle Park. Mike Kelley, who is both OB's Treasurer and Krista's husband, served the treats. Who doesn't like ice cream on a warm, sunny, Spring day? Thank you, Krista and Mike!



Cat Squad Update *by Julie Cohn*

With the support of Old Braeswood residents, the Squad has been able to Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) 64 adult cats. It also has rescued over 40 kittens and provided fostering for them. Special thanks go to Alicia vonGriesman-Jackson for giving air-conditioned space and care to kitties recovering from their TNR appointments!

The Squad always appreciates donations of supplies, and through your generosity current supplies will last through the end of summer. What is most needed now are:

- 1) Volunteers to foster friendly cats and kittens while they wait for processing by a rescue organization leading to their adoption. All it takes is a guest bathroom. The Squad provides medical treatment and transportation when needed.
- 2) Funding for TNRs. Males run \$80 and females \$120, if there are no complications. To donate directly to our account at All Cats, call (713) 664-2287 and ask for Jean. Our account is #1135 under the name of Shari Esquenazi.

Questions/comments/ready to help? Contact esquenazishari@gmail.com.



Trash & Recycling Schedule

Recycling	Every other Tuesday (B)
Dates	July 7 & 20 Sept. 14 & 28 August 3, 17, 31 Oct. 12 & 26
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!

Sarah & Thawda Aung
2311 Glen Haven Blvd.

**Andrew Zimolzak &
Elizabeth Moulton**
2249 Maroneal Blvd.



PROPERTY OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

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Thanks to our sponsor, Daniel Parker!



DANIEL PARKER

YOUR NEIGHBOR AND
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