



Celebrate “Night Out” in the Park, Tues., Oct. 4th

Turn on your porch lights and take to the streets for Texas Night Out on October 4. This statewide event officially runs from 6-9 p.m. We encourage you to have a party on your block during this timeframe. As usual, **we'll be serving ice cream in the Park from 6 -8 p.m. This year we'll also have a balloon artist on hand.** Constable patrolmen and HPD officers assigned to our police beat have been invited to make an appearance. Bring the whole family! Thanks to Dawn Gervais with, Keller Williams Realty for generously sponsoring this event.

Changes to High Density Ordinance Likely

Earlier this year, Mayor Parker commissioned a task force of City of Houston Planning Commission members, members from her transition team, and the Planning and Development Department to develop a new ordinance that would create setbacks for high rise development adjacent to residential properties and establish performance standards applicable to commercial development adjacent to residential properties, regardless of height. Referred to somewhat misleadingly as the “High Density Ordinance,” one of its purposes was to prevent another Ashby Highrise situation, where a soaring tower was proposed to be built at the site of a small apartment complex only a few feet from adjacent homes. The draft ordinance was the result of many hours of meetings by the task force.

A public hearing on the ordinance was held on July 21 before the Houston Planning Commission. Afterward, the Commission made recommendations for revisions to the proposed ordinance. To review the Commission recommendations, read a draft of the proposed ordinance revisions, and examine other related documents, please visit the Planning and Development Department’s website at www.HoustonPlanning.com.

The Planning Commission's recommendations substantially water down the intent of the ordinance so that it would have little or no effect on most high rise development adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The administration is currently considering the changes recommended by the Planning Commission. Whatever version of the ordinance is forwarded to City Council for its consideration will first go through another public hearing before the Development and Regulatory Affairs Committee chaired by Council Member Sue Lovell. If the original intent of the ordinance is to be preserved, it will be important that views of Houston’s residents be presented at this hearing. We will keep you advised of the status of the proposed ordinance as it moves forward.

Nominating Committee Seeks Nominees

The OBPOA Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to determine a slate of officers for the 2011 term. The committee will present a slate of officers to stand for election at the Annual Meeting in November (date tba).

If you are interested in being involved or know someone who would be a great addition to the Board, please contact a nominating committee member by September 24. Committee members include: Dawn Gervais, Lisa Cohen, Bob Birenbaum and Dee Murray. The Executive Committee positions to be filled are: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large Positions #1 & #2.

Also, if you are interested in serving as the chairperson of a committee, please notify a Nominating Committee member. Chairpersons are selected by the new President at the beginning of each year. A full list of committees can be found on page 7.

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This article is different from my others in two ways. The “house” is a schoolhouse. And instead of my writing the article, I’m asking you to end up doing it.

The Oran M. Roberts Elementary School, named for a governor of Texas, opened its doors in 1936, the year on the cornerstone. The earliest houses in Old Braeswood were built in the 1930s. That effort was well underway in 1936. OB residents began sending their children to Roberts.

This year, Roberts Elementary is preparing a celebration of its 75th anniversary, and it is time to uncover the details of its history. Some things are known. The original building, still standing, still fronts onto Greenbriar. Originally, there were only four classrooms for grades one through six, and even the principal taught a class. That first principal was Helene Wilson, who retired in 1944 (replaced by Carrie Lou Smith). A fifth room served both as a lunchroom and a gymnasium.

There are some artifacts. A silver tea set used by Ms. Wilson for her afternoon tea. The original bookcases (now used as display cabinets). The bench that was outside Ms. Wilson’s office.

Wings were added to the original building in 1942. Then a major remodeling inside was done in 1992 (“Project Renewal”). Sixteen temporary classroom buildings on site were used during that remodeling. A final addition, in back, was built in 1993.

That first day of school in 1936 fell on Monday, September 21, 1936. (This year, school began on August 22!) The *Houston Post* reported some numbers that day, starkly different from the current ones given on the HISD website:

HISD Stats: 1936 v. 2011	1936	2011
# of Students	Approx. 65,000	202,773
# of Teachers	1,800	12,829
# of Public Schools	112	298

Newspaper accounts also inform us that the school was built on a five-acre site purchased early in 1936 for \$20,000. The school was designed by architect J.W. Northrop, Jr., and built over the summer at a cost of \$50,705 by contractor W. E. Woodruff. Funding was provided by a school bond issue and by the Public Works Administration.

Now, it’s your turn. The story of Roberts Elementary’s early years are undocumented. The HISD archives include annual reports of each school up to about 1930 and then after about 1970.

That’s a forty year gap. The Houston Metropolitan Research Center (the archival branch of the Houston Public Library) has a similar gap. Rice’s Fondren Library has nothing to add. Therefore, to the extent that we can learn anything about the school’s beginnings, we must rely on the communities that sent their children there. Like Old Braeswood. Information about the school’s history in more recent years is also welcome.

Please contact Old Braeswood resident Zoe Thompson with anything you might have. She is at zoeklt@yahoo.com or (832) 567-5615. (Also, there is a Facebook page for Oran M. Roberts Alumni, where information may be added.) Anecdotes would be wonderful. Photographs would be even more wonderful. Have a favorite teacher? Have an old report card? A detention slip? An old gym suit? Anything.

[This is the 19th article in a continuing series on houses and people in Old Braeswood. Suggestions for future columns are welcome.]



This is Roberts Elementary in 1936 facing Greenbriar



Display case of historic items and photos at Roberts Elementary.

Praise for Restoration of 2429 Blue Bonnet Blvd. by Susan Teich

Occasionally, the newsletter recognizes Old Braeswood residents for their extraordinary efforts in preserving an OB house. This issue recognizes Zoe and David Thompson, owners of 2429 Bluebonnet Blvd. Zoe is a partner with Accentura, a business consulting company. David is a co-owner of ttweak, a communications firm.

The Thompsons were seasoned renovators even before moving to Old Braeswood, having already renovated their home in Montrose, a 1919 bungalow. They wanted to move to Old Braeswood so that their three children - Gus (9), Henry (8) and Phoebe (5) – could attend Roberts Elementary. David started knocking on doors to introduce himself and ask if anyone knew of a house coming onto the market. That's how they found their 1955 ranch house on Bluebonnet without its even being listed. The elderly owner had raised three children in the house. Zoe could feel that it had been a happy place to raise a family, that the house "had a soul." The Thompsons told the owner to take what he wanted out of the house and to leave the rest.



Dave & Zoe Thompson at home with Phoebe, Gus, and Henry

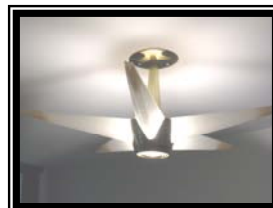
Bavarian ornamentation. The original sofa and bar stools, refinished and recovered, are in place. The original drink glasses are behind the bar. The room opens onto a huge flagstone patio.

Zoe points out that the architecture reflects the lifestyle of the decade. "It was a happy time. The War was over, and Americans devoted themselves to making babies, having parties and going shopping." Correspondingly, the house has 5 bathrooms in vibrant tiles (one bathroom in peach, one in turquoise, one in green, one in yellow, and one in pink). A bathroom for every member of a large family. For entertaining, there are the living room bar/soda fountain and the patio. Closets are everywhere (the master bedroom has 4), for all those things people were buying. (A postscript regarding the pink bathroom: There is a website <http://savethepinkbathrooms.com>. On it, you can find the Pink Bathroom pledge, which Zoe has taken.)

What is a 1955 house without built-ins? Besides the TV, there are: an intercom; stainless steel wall cabinets for plastic wrap, tin foil, and paper towels; bin drawers for onion and potatoes; a bread drawer with lid; laundry chutes in bathrooms; dressers and shoe shelving built into bedroom closets; and a vanity table in the master bath.

The two car garage is fronted by a generous carport with room for 4 cars, no need to maneuver into a garage to unload out of the weather. The covered walkway between the garage and the house also leads back to a large bedroom and bath for the maid, now guest quarters.

The Thompsons are truly providing the care that the former owner's family had wished for this house.



Restored light fixtures grace 2429 Bluebonnet



They would handle cleanup (to the great relief of his grown children). One of his sons wrote a long letter to the Thompsons' children, asking that they "take care" of his house. He also left them all of his childhood toys, including a vintage Lionel train set. David recalls that purchasing the house was "a magical transaction."

There was a lot to do. The house had never been updated, but was solidly built and state-of-the-art for 1955. The Thompsons hired an architect and a contractor for a 12-week high speed renovation, renting quarters in Southgate until it was completed. They insisted on keeping what was original to the house wherever possible, and on using period appropriate materials where it was necessary to replace anything. (Linoleum tiles in the living room were replaced by terrazzo tiles.)

The heart of the house is its living room, distinguished by a stone fireplace and a curved stone drink bar with soda fountain. The original walnut wall panels and light fixtures remain. A concealed television pulls out of the wall and swivels for easy viewing. Speakers are encased in period

Candidate Forum set for Oct. 20

University Place Super Neighborhood #28 (which includes Old Braeswood, Southgate, Morningside Place, Southampton and Blvd. Oaks) will host a Candidate forum for Houston City Council District C. Five candidates are running: Ellen Cohen, Brian Cweren, Randy Locke, and Josh Verde. The Forum will be held at First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd., at 7 p.m.

Workers for the November 8th Election Needed

The polls will be open on Tuesday, November 8th from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. at 2347 Underwood in the garage area. Election workers are needed. Please call Joanne Brodsky at 713 666-4772 to volunteer.

Sponsor a Page in the Old Braeswood Directory

Sponsors are needed for the directory. This is a wonderful way to promote your business and to support your neighborhood. Family sponsorships are also welcome and encouraged. Help spread the word to your favorite contractors and area businesses too. Rates are \$50 for a business card size ad; \$100 for a half page; \$150 for a full page; \$300 for the inside covers. The back cover is available for \$500.

Use the new Houston311.org for Fast City Service and Information

The City of Houston has launched a redesigned **Houston 311 Help & Info** website, <http://www.houston311.org/>. The new customer friendly website is easy to use. Users can place more than 100 Service Requests online, and more are being added every day. Additional information is just a click away. While citizens may still call **Houston 311 Help & Info**, submitting requests online is much faster and can be done anytime -- day or night, weekday or weekend.

Houston311.org visitors will find City services organized by functional area. The site features an index of City services, conveniently located on the left-hand side of the home page, where service information can be located under several logical headings. For example, a site visitor that would like to learn more about dog parks could search the index entries under "A" for animals, "D" for dogs, or "P" for parks.

Houston residents can familiarize themselves with the new houston311.org by clicking on "[How to Use This Site](#)" link on the left-hand side of the home page. For more information, email 311@houston.tx.gov.

Crime Prevention Corner

Explore HPD Online Crime Map Tool

If you wish to have the most currently available information on any given day, please visit HPD's interactive crime map online at <http://mycity.houstontx.gov/recentcrime/index.html>. Click the icon resembling a policeman and select "Crime by Area." Select the type of crime, the period (i.e. 30 days), and to view by either zip code or police beat. We are in beat 10H80. Then move your mouse over each icon to view the details of each incident.



RACS Vacation Watch

Members of RACS may request Vacation Watch by calling the RACS dispatcher at 713-755-7628. Homes on the vacation watch list are visited by the RACS officer a couple of times a day during your absence.

Free HPD Home Security Assessments

HPD offers in-home security assessments by trained HPD officers at no charge to citizens. The goal of the security assessment is to point out weaknesses and to let owners know what they can do to enhance their home's security. Schedule your assessment by calling Officer Sanchez at 713-315-6440, Mon. through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

HPD monthly PIP Meetings held every 3rd Tuesday at 7 p.m.

The city's Positive Interaction Program, "PIP", is an educational program put on monthly by HPD and also serves as a forum for residents to address their concerns directly to local police. Monthly PIP meetings feature speakers from different divisions (Burglary and Theft, Homicide, K-9, Helicopters, etc.) and explain how their division operates. These meetings are held at the local substation at 2202 St. Emanuel (corner of US59 North and W. Gray) in the Roll Call Room. Their telephone number is 832-394-0200.

Each meeting features a presentation from a different police division or law enforcement agency. You may hear what a judge, district attorney, state prison warden, or a county boot camp director has to say about what they are doing to fight crime.

You'll also get a chance to meet the officers that patrol your neighborhood and get to know them on a first name basis.

Each month a different person is chosen to ride with a police officer on an actual tour of duty. At the next month's meeting, you'll get to hear from the "citizen-rookie" about his or her experience.

Crime statistics are given out at the end of each monthly meeting. There are seven categories of crimes listed, each including the date, time, block address, and type of location where the crime occurred. [The PIP Crime Statistics are also available on the Internet.](#)

Thank You!
2011 Old Braeswood
POA Members! *

Patron—\$250

Wendy & Mark Bonnen
 Sally & Steven Burkett
 Jordan Jones & Dylan Seff

Sustaining (\$150 & up)

Jean & Eugene Boisaubin
 Susan & Stanley Schneider
 Melissa Thomas & Ajay Vargheese

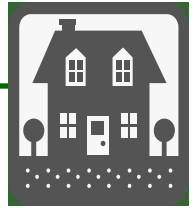
Regular (\$100 & up)

Evelyn Berkowitz
 Fran & Tom Callahan
 Lisa & Charles Cusack
 Lynne & Steve King
 Michael H. Mann
 Sally & David Miller
 Christine & David Robins
 Denise & Edwin Thomas'

(*This list reflects memberships received after July 20th. If you joined prior to this date, your name was included on the listing in the July issue.)

Old Braeswood Real Estate Report

by Dawn Gervais, Realtor® Consultant



Here are eight tips from the IRS to keep in mind when selling your home.

- 1) In general, you are eligible to exclude the gain from income if you have owned and used your home as your main home for two years out of the five years prior to the date of its sale.
- 2) If you have a gain from the sale of your main home, you may be able to exclude up to \$250,000 of the gain from your income (\$500,000) on a joint return in most cases.
- 3) You are not eligible for the exclusion if you exclude the gain from the sale of another home during the two-year period prior to the sale of your home.
- 4) If you can exclude all of the gain, you do not need to report the sale on your tax return.
- 5) If you have a gain that cannot be excluded, it is taxable. You must report it on FORM 1040, Schedule D, Capital Gains and Losses.
- 6) You cannot deduct a loss from the sale of your main home.
- 7) Worksheets are included in Publication 523, Selling Your Home, to help you figure the adjusted basis of the home you sold, the gain (or loss) on the sale, and the gain that you can exclude.
- 8) If you have more than one home, you can exclude a gain only from the sale of your main home. You must pay tax on the gain from selling any other home. If you have two homes and live in both of them, your main home is ordinarily the one you live in most of the time.

Homes sold since April 1, 2011.....11	Total # of Homes For Sale..... 11
* Minimum Sales price \$439,000	* Min. Asking Price \$369,000
* Maximum Sales price \$3,075,000	* Max. Asking Price\$1,249,000
* Average Sales Price \$1,002,772	

2011 Old Braeswood Park Donor Appreciation

Recent contributors to the Old Braeswood Park Corp. include the following. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Vicki & Bob Birenbaum
 Roger Brown
 Joe & Margaret Clegg
 Helen Dreyfus
 John & Annette Eldridge
 June Ferbrache & Leonard Goldberg
 Kolbrun Helgason
 Matthew & Rebecca Kelly
 Brian & Martha Long
 Angela & Erik Mazur
 (on behalf of The Altobelli Family)
 Bill & Dee Murray
 Richard & Grace O'Brien
 Jay Plotkin
 Maria Reuter
 Don & Barbara Schaffer
 Tony Wood
 William & Janna Taylor
 Leonard & Susan Teich
 James & Carol Tindall



Above: Neighbors Rose Pu, Ruth Kosieracki, and Eleanor Thomas enjoy an afternoon in the Park..



Right: Andy Fusilier and Gus Thompson race to the finish at Old Braeswood Park..

New
WELCOME

Neighbors

Catherine & Chris O'Neill

2426 Blue Bonnet

Regina Duarte Brito &

Rolf Schmitz

2321 Maroneal

Denise & Edwin Thomas

2305 Blue Bonnet

Dyann E. Whittaker

2341 Glen Haven

Crime Report

3-Aug 2500 Bluebonnet
Residential Burglary

8-Aug 2300 Bellefontaine
Residential Burglary

9-Aug 2300 Underwood
Residential Burglary

Visit www.houstontx.gov/police for more information and to view the new interactive crime map.

Sign up for Old Braeswood eBlasts and Crime Alerts

Would you like to receive up to the minute news and crime alerts electronically? To subscribe to eNews and Crime Alerts, call the Old Braeswood office at 713-807-1787 or send your email to info@OldBraeswood.com.

Tree Committee /Call for Volunteers

Have a green thumb or want to develop one? Newbies and Johnny Appleseeds alike are needed to ensure that our arbor of street trees remains healthy and vibrant. There is a job for everyone, from helping to oversee the implementation of Old Braeswood's Tree planting Plan to semi annual tree pruning events to coordinating watering arrangements. Don't like to get dirty? We also need observant neighbors to notify us when street trees are looking stressed or have been damaged in the esplanades by traffic and vandalism. Please contact the Old Braeswood office at 713-807-1787 to volunteer.

Please water your trees!

Although the city's watering restrictions apply to sprinklers and automated systems, you may still hand-water your trees with a bucket or hose at any time. It is best to water in the evening or early morning for maximum absorption. One of the best ways to water young trees is by placing a 5-gallon bucket with a small hole in the bottom at the base of the tree's trunk. Watering close to the trunk will ensure the root ball receives the bulk of the moisture.

Watering Tips from Trees for Houston

- * On the days you are able to water your trees, remember to water deeply to a depth of about 12 inches below the soil surface and slowly to disperse the flow of water to get down into the roots.
- * Saturate the soil around the tree within the "dripline" (the outer edges of the tree's branches) to disperse water towards the roots.
- * Do not dig holes in the ground in an effort to water deeply. This dries out roots even more. A soil needle or deep root feeder attached to a hose is acceptable to insert into the ground if it isn't too hard and compact.
- * Do not spray water on the canopy of the tree, this is inefficient and should be avoided during the drought.
- * Judicious watering. Trees need a deep, thorough soaking once a week during the growing season. A watering schedule that is adequate to maintain a lawn will not maintain a tree. A rule of thumb during a drought is to give small, one-year old trees 28 gallons of water per week, two-year olds 56 gallons a week and three year olds 112 gallons.
- * Remove weeds and grass, which compete for water, beneath trees and replacing with a two or three inch cover of mulch.
- * To reduce moisture loss, mulch around your trees with 4 inches of organic mulch such as wood chips, shredded bark, leaves or evergreen needles. Avoid the use of stone or rock near trees as this increases air temperatures and moisture loss from leaves and stems. Pull back mulch 6" from the trunk.
- * Do not fertilize a tree that is under drought stress. Salts in fertilizer may burn roots when there is not sufficient water. Fertilizers may also stimulate top growth resulting in too much leaf area on the plant for the root system to maintain during periods of limited soil moisture.

Tree Watering Funds Needed for Holcombe, Kirby, Main & N Braeswood

Young trees planted on Kirby and Holcombe by our neighborhood are being watered by Trees for Houston. To contribute to this important effort, please send your check c/o OBPOA, PO Box 541346, Houston, TX 77524. Note "OBPOA Fund" in the memo. Thanks in advance for your help keeping Old Braeswood's trees alive and healthy!

Submit plans for review before beginning construction or any exterior alteration



Old Braeswood's deed restrictions require that all alterations to homes be approved in writing prior to construction or implementation. Not only must plans for new construction of homes, garages, fences and other outdoor structures be reviewed, but changes such as window replacement, new siding, addition of solar panels, garage door replacements and new fences, must also be approved. In a nutshell, anything that impacts the exterior of your home in any way must be reviewed and approved prior to construction. For a plan review application, please contact info@OldBraeswood.com or call the office at 713-807-1787. Construction projects that begin without approval will be assessed a fee of \$500.

Join the Old Braeswood Yahoo Group

This is a real time group where you can send messages to other members without delay. The Yahoo group has been very helpful for tracking down lost pets and has even been used to help the RACS Constables Patrol track down thieves.

The Yahoo group is not related to the eNews and crime alert service. Visit this link to get started:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OldBraeswoodNeighbors/>.

Join the Old Braeswood Garden Club!



Don't like to garden? That's ok - we do a lot more than just garden. The Club meets monthly and hosts both daytime and evening meetings/gatherings. Did you know we installed and maintain the Poop Station in the park? Did you know we keep Katy's Corner looking beautiful? Did you know we choose a yard of the season for Old Braeswood? Some of our gatherings this year will include: a speaker from the Holocaust museum; why the rose is the herb of the year; a visit to The Woman's Home; and a BBQ dinner. If you have been thinking about joining, now is a great time. And it is so easy to do - just contact Margo Elgohary at 713-664-4630 or at smaro@sbcglobal.net.

Recycling & Trash Schedule



Household Trash	Tuesdays
Yard Waste	Tuesdays
Tree & Limb Debris	1st Monday (odd months)
Junk Waste	1st Monday (even months)
Recycling	every other Tuesday
	(Sept. 13 & 27, Oct. 11 & 25, Nov. 8 & 22)

In accordance with Chapter 39 of the City's Code of Ordinances, trash may not be set on the curb for collection before 6 p.m. of the day preceding pick up. Please remind your yard service not to leave bags on the curb during the week. Please also remind crews not to blow leaves or other debris into the storm sewers, as this clogs the system and creates the perfect conditions for mosquitoes—and is against the law. For more trash rules, visit www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste.

Old Braeswood Night Out

6 – 8 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 4, 2011



Join us
in the Park



Unite against crime!
Visit with neighbors and local
law enforcement officers. Ice
cream & balloon magic for all!

2011 OBPOA

Officers & Chairpersons

President	John Eldridge
1 st Vice Pres.	Susan Teich
2 nd Vice Pres.	Buddy Steves
3 rd Vice Pres.	Ryan Maierson
At-Large	Sam Bernstein
At-Large	G.G. Hsieh
Treasurer	Brent Whiteley
Secretary	Dawn Gervais
Past President	Dee Murray
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Block Captains	Sally Miller
Historic	Susan Teich
Newsletter	<u>VACANT</u>
Park	Matthew Kelley
Enforcement	Sam Bernstein John Eldridge David Robins
RACS Rep	Ryan Maierson
Rice U Liaison	Bob Birenbaum
Social	G.G. Hsieh
Trees	Carroll Shaddock
University Place	Kathy Lord
Welcome	Dawn Gervais
Manager	Evalyn Krudy

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Lifetime of Living*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED