

GARDEN OAKS GAZETTE

VOLUME 33

ISSUE 7

AUGUST CIVIC CLUB SPEAKER

Heidi Sheesley, Treeseach Farms

by Brenda deAlba

The August civic club meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 4 will feature Heidi Sheesley, owner of Treeseach Farms.

Hurricane Ike took a toll on our beautiful trees in Garden Oaks. You may now have more sun than shade and could benefit from learning about great replacement trees and shrubs for our area. Sheesley is a much sought-after speaker in the Houston area due to her vast experience, and her talks reflect a genuine enthusiasm and love of nature. This strong, independent woman has changed the landscape of Houston gardening. She has dedicated her business life to growing out-of-the-ordinary plants that do well in Houston. Sheesley co-authors a gardening column that appears in the Sunday real estate section of the Houston Chronicle.

My relationship with Heidi began in 1997 as the Garden Oaks Boulevard project was taking shape. Every major Garden Oaks beautification undertaking since then has benefited from plant material obtained from Treeseach. Her relationship with our neighborhood goes back to 1991 when Treeseach donated 24 fruit trees that were planted in the community garden when it was moved from Garden Oaks Elementary School to 4405 Alba.

Heidi had a vision 26 years ago when she created Treeseach Farms to promote better ecology through introducing organically grown native and well-adapting plants to the landscape trade. Her specialty is native plants, along with hummingbird and butterfly plants, Texas citrus and water-smart plants. Heidi is the professional

landscaper's source for anything unique and unusual. She is active in many national plant societies and has been a strong supporter of our region's master gardener programs by opening the nursery and growing facilities to them for educational tours and classes.

Treeseach Farms is a wholesale nursery and a premier provider of organically grown plant material for the Gulf Coast area. If you've purchased plants at Buchanan's, Another Place in Time or Joshua's Native plants, you most likely purchased a plant originating from Treeseach.

Heidi grew up not far from the Heights and attended Kinkaid School. She received her degree from University of Texas in Austin and spent many years as a professional photographer before her lifetime passion for horticulture brought her the dream of her own farm. Professionals would call her a horticulturist, but she prefers the term "plant nut."

If you are able to come to the August civic club meeting, I guarantee you will learn something and be entertained along the way.

**DAYTIME CIVIC CLUB CONSTABLE
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See form & article enclosed

JULY 2009

CIVIC CLUB MEETINGS

Join us for the July 7, 2009 Civic Club Meeting

Meetings are held at Garden Oaks Elementary on the first Tuesday of the month at 7p.m.

REMINDERS

Garden Oaks 2009 Red, White, and Blue Parade, Saturday, July 4th, beginning at 10 a.m. at Rick Englert SPARK Park on Sue Barnett, with pre-registration at 9:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gazette Block Captain needed for the 200/300 block of W. 31st. If you can help out, please call 713.691.6505 or email Dian at fallingwaterT@yahoo.com.

Send in your ideas for the 2010 Home Tour theme! \$100 gift card to the winner! See page 4 for more details.

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HEARD UNDER THE OAK TREE

by Terry Jeanes

Welcome new neighbors

Congratulations on joining our community. We hope to see you at a civic club meeting soon.

935 West 42nd 831 West 42nd
1526 Sue Barnett

320 West 32nd 818 West 43rd

1030 Lamonte 922 West 42nd

4219 Apollo 3102 Lawrence

232 West 33rd 807 West 41st

327 West 34th 971 West 42nd

July Birthdays

Caroline McLean 1st

Matthew Knauth 2nd

Claire Elizabeth Balance 2nd

Clare Foley Bell 10th

Kaplan Martinez 12th

Sterling & Sean Walden 16th

Jason Cunningham 27th

Sally McDaniel 27th

Out and About

Terry Jeanes just returned from a fabulous trip to San Pedro, Belize,

joined by friend Patrick Kelley, daughter **Becky Jeanes** and her new fiancée Tray Toungate. Tray proposed to Becky at sunrise on the pier overlooking the beautiful ocean. After the announcement, the party of ten celebrated with fun-filled adventures, fishing, cave tubing, zip lining and snorkeling. San Pedro is the home town of civic club Treasurer **Phil Ramirez**. They even ran into some of Phil's friends while there.

Special thoughts and concerns

Condolences to **Marlene Caldwell** whose father, Robert Caldwell, passed away June 7.

To highlight an event, celebration or other tidbit, contact Terry Jeanes at 713.812.9154 or terry@terryjeanes.com.

Please support our advertisers who in turn support our neighborhood. Tell them you saw their ad in the *Gazette!*

Garden Oaks Gazette

The Garden Oaks Gazette is the official publication of the Garden Oaks Civic Club and is published on a monthly basis. Submission deadline is the 15th of each month for publication the next month unless otherwise noted.

No exceptions.

Publication of any article not related to the Civic Club does not imply endorsement by the Garden Oaks Civic Club and is solely the opinion of the author.

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AD-HOC MEETING FOR SPARK PARK

June 11, 2009 4:05p.m.

The goal of the committee is to involve the community in the enhancements of the Garden Oaks SPARKs Park.

Introductions were made by all those present. At the request of the GO Civic Club, another participant was added to the committee, Mr. Tatum, as he has an architectural design background. Principal Pollock reviewed the purpose of the committee and reminded the members of the upcoming meeting date on July 2 at 5:30pm followed by the GO Civic Club meeting on July 7. Folders and handouts were distributed to all and Ms. Pollock began with a review of the minutes from the last ad hoc meeting held on May 27, 2009. The committee discussed the status of the QuickStart tennis court.

Garden Oaks civic club agreed to accept the generous donation of the QuickStart tennis court at their last meeting. Installation of the court is pressing as stated by Toni Lawrence as her budget ends soon. Miss Kori Catlin gave her recommendation of the location of the tennis court. The SPARK plans were reviewed as to the precise location of tennis court. There was a recommendation to review the master plan of SPARK Park. Mr. Tatum suggested that the Pavilion be "re-sited" and he agreed to work on the plans. Time schedule for installation of the tennis court is a concern because the general contractor is ready to install otherwise, as Toni Lawrence stated at the civic club meeting, the tennis court will be taken to Oak Forest Elementary SPARK Park.

The committee reviewed the civic club decision which stated that the court location was made with the recommendation of Kori Catlin, GOE Physical Education teacher and that there would not be lights installed on the court.

There is a sense of urgency for installation of the specialized tennis court because we do not want to lose this opportunity. Ms. Harmon stated that it would be a shame for the community to lose this \$30,000 upgrade for the park. Since the tennis court is on a raised slab, Ms. Catlin stated that the USTA rep said a perimeter 4' chain link fence was required to prevent safety incidences from children falling off the slab and to prevent balls from rolling out of the court. The ad-hoc committee did not like the idea of a silver chain link fence and recommended a black vinyl cover fence which will be considered an "upgrade" in the construction of the tennis court.

The cost of tennis court is \$ 30,000 which is being entirely donated by Toni Lawrence and USTA. The court size that was quoted by Toni Lawrence at the meeting and by the USTA representatives was 18' by 36'. When Ms. Catlin met with the USTA representative the dimensions were larger. Ms. Catlin and any other committee member who is available will double check specifications Monday when the general contractor and Harold Gramm of USTA comes out to finalize the location of the court. A change order request for a black vinyl fence will be requested in lieu of a regular chain link

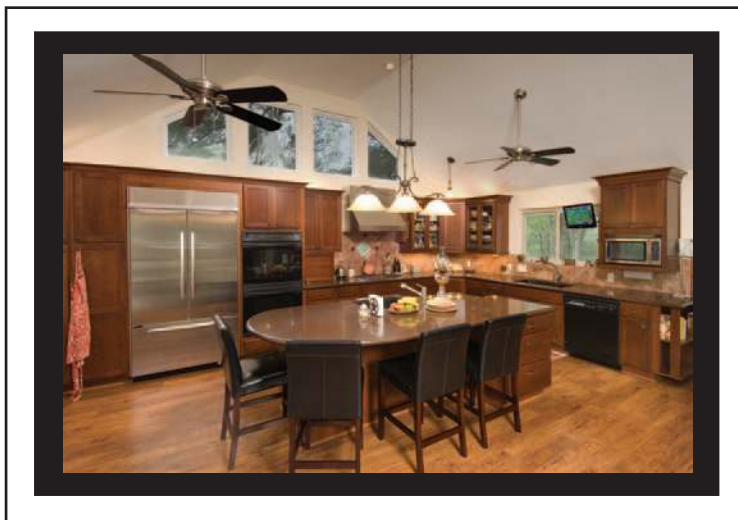
fence. Brenda deAlba volunteered to donate the cost of the upgrade up to \$1,000. Ms. Pollock also volunteered to personally help with the cost.

The committee reviewed the two courts included in the QuickStart brochure and unanimously agreed that the smaller tennis court layout for children 8 and under is the one they are interested in having at the park. Ms. Catlin reviewed that HISD will be responsible for the maintenance of the court as they are for the rest of the SPARK *cont. on page 10*

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Terms expire October of year in parentheses.

2010 HOME TOUR IS STARTING UP!

by *Dian Austin and Sue Schmidt*

No, it's definitely not too early to get things in motion for the 2010 Garden Oaks Home and Garden Tour. The date has been set for Sunday, April 25, 2010, from noon to 6 p.m. Put that on your calendar! Home and garden selections are now underway; the six homes and three gardens to be featured on the tour will be announced in the fall.

First, we need a theme for the home tour, so we're offering a \$100 gift card to the person who sends in the winning idea. Last year's theme was "Beyond the Garden Gate." The previous tour was called "Pathways Thru the Oaks." The theme phrase or wording should lend itself to describing a facet of Garden Oaks; if you've got any accompanying ideas for graphics, please submit those too.

The Home Tour, organized every two years, is the primary money maker for the civic club and the proceeds benefit all activities in the neighborhood. In previous years the tour netted between \$20 and \$30K, and it is one of the most enjoyable ways to give back to your community, to meet new folks and to showcase our fabulous neighborhood. There will be a Preview Party and Live Auction the night before the tour to honor sponsors and home and garden owners. There will be an Online Auction prior to the tour. And on the actual tour day, there will be a large catered After Party to celebrate and to thank the many volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, we will need lots and lots of them! There is a spot for every kind of talent, interest, and skill. Docents for both homes and gardens are needed on the day of the tour (three hour shifts). We need trolley captains to ride the buses and entertain our customers as they travel around the neighborhood. Volunteers are needed to help set up the tables/ chairs at each home tour house, and to sell tickets and t-shirts on the day of the tour and we need people to help with the Preview Party, and at the Volunteer After Party. Help is needed manning the live auction at the Preview Party and we definitely need auction items for both

the online and live auction! If anyone has any auction items or services to donate, please let us know. Additional volunteer opportunities include help with concessions, finding florists for each of the homes, and house captains for each of the homes and gardens. All volunteers get a free home tour ticket, and an invitation to the catered After Party.

There are also opportunities at all levels to be a sponsor for the home tour. What better way to advertise your business and to show your support for Garden Oaks than by being a sponsor? You'll get lots of good PR, signage and your name/business name will be on all the tickets.

If you have nominations for a home or garden to be considered for the tour, please send us the address, owner's name(s), and some info as to why it should be considered.

Send your ideas for the home tour theme to us at Fallingwatert@yahoo.com or Sueschmidt1@comcast.net. Also, if you have any interest in being a sponsor, florist or any kind of volunteer, please email us and we'll get back with you ASAP.

GARDEN OAKS SISTERHOOD

by *Dea Larson*

It's summer. Let's celebrate! Our July meeting will be July 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Alisha Cunningham, 950 West 41 St. In the patriotic spirit of the month, celebrate the summer with stars and sizzle! Please bring a beverage or a snack to share.

All Garden Oaks women are invited to attend. We meet the third Thursday of the month, and every meeting we have newcomers. Come meet your neighbors and make new friends!

Questions? Send an email to dealarson@aol.com or call me at 713.695.3634.

CITIZENS PATROL PROGRAM

by Carl Waters, Jr.

At the April Positive Interaction Program (PIP) meeting, North Division Commander Captain Rodriguez reported crime was down throughout the division. He reported violent crimes were down 9 to 10 percent for the first quarter of the year and nonviolent crimes were down 11 percent for the year. These numbers appear consistent with what the neighborhood is experiencing. For 2008 through April 19 crimes had been reported. Only 17 crimes have been reported this year through the HPD Web site.

April crime statistics: 4

Burglary of a motor vehicle: 3

- 3200 block of N. Shepherd Dr. on Thursday, April 2 at 2:00 p.m. (discount store)
- 700 block of W. 31 St. on Sunday, April 12 at 11:00 p.m. (driveway)

- 3100 block of N. Shepherd Dr. on Thursday, April 23 at 4:30 p.m. (restaurant parking lot)

Driving while intoxicated: 1

- 1000 block of W. 43 St. on Sunday, April 5 at 12:13 a.m. (location listed as unknown)

Inquiries about joining the Citizens Patrol Program or other community safety issues can be directed to me via the neighborhood Web site at GardenOaks.org or to the COP email account at GOCOP77018@AOL.com or by phone at 713.864.1992. Evenings only, please.

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GAZETTE BLOCK CAPTAIN OF THE MONTH
by Dian Austin



First things first. We say farewell to two block captains and welcome two others.

Thank you James Flowers (200/300 blocks of W. 31st) and Liz Whitsitt (800 block of Lamonte). We really appreciate you delivering Gazettes on these respective blocks. Both James and Liz have work obligations that require they turn in their block captain hats.

We welcome Gale Gorman, who temporarily added the W. 31st route to his other route, and Lynn Sievers, who now is delivering the 800 block of Lamonte. Thanks, Gale and Lynn, for filling out our team.

July's Gazette Block Captain of the Month is Gale Gorman. Gale delivers to the 200/300 block of W. 30th and temporarily the 200/300 block of W. 31st even though he lives in Section 2.

You may see Gale in the neighborhood on one of his many motorcycles when he's not on the GO Listserv. Gale works from home, so he's available to comment and he always has an opinion!

Gale and his wife, Robin, bought their house in the 700 block of Sue Barnett in 2002 and have spent a lot of time working on it, replacing and redoing major things. The initial attraction was the huge lot to accommodate a large garage for motorcycles and cars, and Robin had family ties to GO. Gale has yet to rebuild the garage, but it's moving higher on the to-do list.

As best as I can tell, Gale and Robin have four dogs, all of which are rescue dogs: two pugs, a blue heeler and a sheltie. The last two

were rescued together right here in Garden Oaks.

Gale and Robin are both civic club members and constable supporters. For Gale's continued Gazette delivery help, he wins a \$25 gift certificate to Starbucks, courtesy of Oscar Ochoa of OD's Printing. Thanks, Gale, for all your service. We really appreciate you stepping up to help once again.

If anyone wants to join the Great Gazette Delivery Team, call Dian at 713.691.6505. If you'd like to nominate your block captain for the monthly prize, call or email me at fallingwatert@yahoo.com. And if you don't get your Gazette on time, please let me know.

Classified Ads are \$20 per run for residents, and are for personal services only (help wanted, items for sale, infant care needed, etc.). Contact the Gazette Advertising Director for more information.

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a classified listing

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Parents remember to bring your children to the Civic Club meetings for fun activities and child care with Hannah Stanchi.

The Recording Academy Texas Chapter *Recording the Beatles* July 11 event update: for more information visit http://www.grammy.com/Recording_Academy/Chapters/Texas/Events/Default.aspx?eventID=1819

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Scott Easterly

As president I want to extend a very sincere and appreciative thank you and welcome to the many neighbors who have joined or attended the June civic club meeting. We reached a new membership milestone: 345 members at last count!

It is great to see so many people who care about our neighborhood. My evening walks have gotten longer as I get to speak with more people and learn new faces and names.

The minutes from the last civic club meeting and the June 11 SPARK Park ad hoc committee are in other columns. The ad hoc committee has been blessed with the addition of Jay Tatum, an accomplished architect who brings much knowledge and talents to this committee. His inclusion was a direct result of the comments and concerns expressed at the June civic club meeting.

I had no idea that as president of the Garden Oaks Civic Club I would be involved with City of Houston politicians and HISD administrators. Our last meeting included Toni Lawrence, City Council Member District A; HISD Board Member Natasha Kamrani; HISD Central Regional Superintendent Adriana Tamez; HISD Executive Principal Marilyn Cruz; GOES Principal Lindsey Pollock; and GOES Assistant Principal Moses

Diaz. When our neighborhood speaks, people listen and respond.

I am pleased with the quick and open response to the concerns expressed by our community and the cooperative spirit that Pollock and the HISD administrators have demonstrated. Please take the time to read the excerpts and educate yourself with the statutes of the SPARK Park Agreement.

The program brought together the City of Houston and HISD with a goal of increasing the amount of green space and recreational opportunities within the city by utilizing HISD playgrounds and land when not in use by the schools as city parks.

The agreement is very specific and clearly defines several things not widely known previously. Included are several items for clarification and a better understanding of this unique agreement.

After learning the terms of the agreement, it is obvious that Pollock has been quite welcoming and generous to allow neighbors to sign in and use the SPARK Park during school hours, in the absence of students, when the agreement states that the park is to be closed to the public.

I also appreciate her forming the SPARK Park ad hoc committee and inviting some community members and the Civic club representatives to be involved in deciding how best to respond to the teachers' request to make the park safer for school

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use. There is no intention of putting up a chain link fence or locking the public and neighborhood out during park hours.
cont. on page 10

Kristin K Jordan
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GARDEN OAKS OLD FASHIONED PICNIC 2009

OLD-FASHIONED PICNIC A SUCCESS

The first Garden Oaks Old-fashioned Picnic, held last month, was a rousing success. Terry Jeanes, 30-year Garden Oaks resident and Realtor, sponsored and coordinated the event, and Becky Jeanes helped coordinate and call the races for all participants. Approximately 200 Garden Oaks neighbors of all ages claimed a spot in the SPARK Park, spread out their picnics and participated in the event. Games included egg races, sack races, balloon races, orange pass, chubby bunny marsh mellow stuff, washer, tether ball and a special games area provided by Kathryn Noser of Razzamatuzz Children's Parties.

Winners from the dessert contest were Sara Heath and Cindy Jorgensen who tied and shared in the gift certificate donated by David Heiland of Chocolate Du Monde. In addition to the dessert submissions, Terry Jeanes provided ice cream and dessert. Leftovers were donated to Garden Oaks Elementary Kindergarten classes for graduation celebrations.

Additional thanks go to Tina Sabuco and Arts Alive for the sound system; GoKids for the moonwalk bounce; Brandy Stoez for photography, Precinct One deputies for fingerprinting; and Garden Oaks Elementary Lindsay Pollock and Kori Catlin for use of the play equipment. Look forward to the second annual event May 2010.

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CONSTABLE PROGRAM Shortage of Funds for Daytime Deputy May Result in Cancellation

by Terry Jeanes & Susan Love – Saranie

The civic club contract is short funds to keep the constable program's daytime deputy. Some funds are trickling in but not quickly enough. A few postings on the Garden Oaks listserv with regards to deterrence and burglaries emphasize the need for our daytime deputy. These postings are from neighbors who support the constable program.

"They were handing out flyers but yet still stopping at each home to ring the doorbell. There was one man on each side of the street. I was a little nervous at first when the man rang my doorbell until I saw the constable following them. I motioned through my glass door that I was not interested and the man walked away. I was glad to see the constable keeping an eye on them."

"I called 911 and they asked if I wanted to file an online report! The constable was here in five minutes, stayed with me, called for backup and they did a full search of the house, guns a blazing. If you don't contribute to the Constable Program ... It's about the only coverage you are going to get unless you are dead ... based on my experience today."

"The recent break in Section 3

underscores the need to keep our constable patrols. As most of you should know, we are in danger of losing a daytime constable because we are short of funds. As [a recent victim of an afternoon break-in] said, the constable was there in five minutes! They are going to catch these thieves sometime soon if we all work together. I urge everyone, even if you have already contributed, to dig a little deeper and mail in a few more dollars. And I know there are some folks lurking on the listserv who haven't paid at all."

Please use the constable supporter form in this issue. If you are not a member, please join immediately. Urge your neighbors to sign up. Garden Oaks crime statistics have been declining since our program's existence and with the increased coverage of our deputies. For the safety of the community please join us today. Your support will make a difference.

The form can be found at www.gardenoaks.org/Resources/ContributorForm2009.pdf.

Welcome our new afternoon constable, Deputy Ed Sharpe, who joined the Garden Oaks deputy patrol. He replaces Aaron Munoz who moved to the Heights patrol. See next month's Gazette for an article about Deputy Sharpe.



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May 2009 Statistics

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Court Citations.....60
Alarm Responses....4
Written Warnings....3
Vacation Watches....7
Suspicious Vehicles....37
Park checks... 181
Criminal Offenses...0
Arrests....5

SPARK PARK Meeting Notes cont. from p. 3
Park. Estimated cost of a replacement net is \$100.

In reviewing the minutes of the last meeting, the committee had asked that bids be secured for "black" fences. The fence construction bids were viewed by the committee.

The committee discussed other fence options such as concrete, brick, stone or wood. Ms. Pollock will ask Ms. Bush to secure a bid for a stone fence for the next meeting.

Funds still have to be secured in order to install any fence. Ms. Pollock stated that since the bond was specifically designated for facilities upgrades in the area of safety and security, there was a possibility some of the financing might be available from the HISD bond. She stated that she has never wanted a chain link fence around the SPARK Park and would continue to work with the committee to ensure that an attractive option is secured. Security cameras will be installed at the school as a part of the bond.

Sarah Heath presented a synopsis of comments and questions she has received from GO Kids Yahoo group members. While the majority of the 55 respondents did not like the idea of the fence, there was unanimous agreement among respondents that a 4 ft wrought iron fence would be ideal should a fence be installed.

Ms. Pollock shared that the results of a GO faculty survey was taken and 18/21 teachers who responded indicated that a fence for the SPARK Park was a high priority. Ms. Pollock and Ms. Catlin reiterated the teachers' requests for help in installing a fence.

Neighbors who responded to Ms. Heath indicated the worry they will be locked out of the SPARK Park. Principal Pollock assured members that was never the intention. The intent is to provide a safe environment for our students and teachers and to adhere to the intention of the SPARK Park agreement. She reminded the group that the space is the school playground and instructional space for the PE teacher. Ms. Pollock and the group agreed that the fence would not be locked.

Ms. Heath requested that an 8 X 11 drawing of the SPARK Park plan be provided to the committee members and to the public. At this time large architectural plans are the only copies available.

Committee members received a copy of SPARK Park contract by email and copies were available at the meeting. Clarification:

The SPARK Park is Houston Independent School District's property. The upkeep and maintenance of the park is HISD's responsibility.

Ms. Heath asked if we were going to have a fence or not. Ms. Pollock stated that the staff has requested a fence numerous times over the course of the current school year and correspondence from parents dating to 2005 indicates that this has been a concern for years. Ms. Catlin stated that she has asked repeatedly for the situation to be addressed. Ms. Pollock reminded the committee of the input of the teachers and the SPARK Park plan that includes a perimeter fence. She asked for input from the committee regarding the reasonableness of the decision to install a fence and if anyone in the room had any questions about why the teachers felt having a fence was vital to their use of the school playground/SPARK Park. Ms. Johnson stated that she could not understand how anyone could put aesthetics over the value of a child and that if the teachers are asking for this, why wouldn't the parents support the teachers? The committee then turned their attention to fence options as the next step of the committee process.

Ms. Knauth mentioned that parents sometimes park on the street and walk their children into the school. These parents have to negotiate the ditch and may find access to the walking track difficult with a fence.

Recommendations to have the gates aesthetically pleasing were discussed. Committee members talked about decorative tiles and brick archways leading into the park as a possibility as long as funds are available.

Plans will be created by Mr. Tatum to specify the precise location of the proposed fence in order to safeguard the trees on the park.

Principal Pollock mentioned that Vena Golt had distributed a message by email to the committee members and to other members of the community clarifying her perceptions of events that were included in the Ad Hoc minutes on May 26. Copies were made available to anyone interested.

Committee walked the SPARK Park to view the placement of the QuickStart tennis court.

The next meeting will be held July 2 at 5:30p.m. at Garden Oaks Elementary. The committee will review the plans from Mr. Tatum and the fence options. They will make recommendations as to what type of fence will be installed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm

Ad hoc Committee Members:

Lindsey Pollock, GOE Principal
Helle Johnson, GOE PTA Past-President and GOE Parent
Kori Catlin, GOE PE Teacher and GOE Parent
Scott Easterly, Garden Oaks Civic Club President
Sarah Heath, Garden Oaks Kids Coordinator
Brenda de Alba, Garden Oaks Civic Club Beautification Chair
Jay Tatum, Garden Oaks Civic Club member, GOE Parent and architect

Guests:

Gary Harmon and Joan Harmon, GO Residents and member of Re-SPARK committee
Tonya Knauth, GO Resident, GOE Parent and member of Re-SPARK committee
Kirk Coppes, GOE teacher
Mr. Diaz, Assistant Principal and scribe

*** Meeting notes were subject to final review and approval at time of publishing.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE cont. from p.7

Community involvement, a financially strong civic club, GOMO, no involuntary homeowner's association and cooperative efforts between neighbors, HISD and local government still serve the most people best. This the type of community spirit led to the creation of the SPARK Park agreement that gives us rights and access to what could otherwise be a locked off school yard.

Constable Program

We currently enjoy three 40-hour shifts of Harris County constable patrol to supplement the protection provided by HPD. The daytime shift, when most criminal activity seems to happen, is paid for by voluntary contributions of neighbors at approximately \$5,400 per month.

If we had a homeowners association with mandatory dues, the cost per household would only be about \$46.00 per year or \$3.85 per month. Instead we rely on the generosity of a few people to pay four times that amount so that everyone is protected whether they contribute or not. When houses sell in sections, I, II, III and V, a fee of .75 % of the sale price (in most cases) is paid to the Garden Oaks Maintenance Organization (GOMO), which is separate from the civic club. For the past couple of years GOMO has released what are deemed as excess funds collected and households in these sections voted in favor of hiring two additional 40-hour shifts of constable patrol with those funds. Availability of excess funds for future constable support is not guaranteed.

Please reconsider your decision to not

contribute to the extra protection and improved response time that our constable patrol provides. Their response time is usually minutes, not hours, like many neighboring communities experience.

SPARK Park agreement excerpts:

Witnesseth:

Whereas, the City and the District (HISD) are each legally authorized to provide and operate park and recreational facilities; and Whereas, SPARK (a Texas non-profit corporation) became a corporate entity for the purpose of creating neighborhood parks on public school grounds; and Whereas, the City and SPARK desire to increase the availability of park facilities within the boundaries of the City; and

Whereas, the District is willing to improve and operate portions of certain school playgrounds as public parks and recreational facilities; and Whereas, the funding provided under this Agreement is a community development activity undertaken by the City and authorized under Chapter 373 and/or Chapter 374 of the Local Government Code; NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants, benefits and premises contained herein, the City, the District and SPARK (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties") agree as follows:

I.

DEFINITIONS

D. "Park Hours" shall be those hours designated by the District for each SPARK School and SPARK CDBG School in which the applicable portion of such SPARK School Grounds are to be open and available for park use purposes by the public, but shall not include those hours when schools are in

session or used for school purposes.

II.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The District agrees to review and approve or disapprove, through the District Representative, plans developed and submitted by SPARK School and SPARK CDBG School personnel, parents and members of the neighboring community, all as designated by the SPARK School or SPARK CDBG School Principal, for improvements to such SPARK School grounds for park and recreational uses, and the District agrees to forward one copy of all such approved plans to the Coordinator. All approved plans shall conform to the state requirements for Architectural Barriers set forth in Article 9102 of Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes.

D. During the term of this Agreement, the District agrees to keep SPARK School Grounds open to the general public as public parks for park and recreational purposes during all Park Hours. It is agreed that during non-Park Hours or at times when school activities are occurring at a SPARK School that require the exclusive use of the SPARK School Grounds, the general public may be excluded from the SPARK School Grounds.

The regular hours of operation of SPARK School Grounds at SPARK CDBG Schools may be altered by the District Representative. The District further agrees to maintain the SPARK School Grounds throughout the term of this Agreement, including mowing, edging, trimming and litter removal to the same extent as performed on similar Non-SPARK School Grounds.

E. All improvements made on District property to develop SPARK School Grounds as public parks shall be and remain the property of the District. The District shall be solely responsible for their operation and maintenance.



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CRITTER CORNER

by Casey and Mau Mau Farris

Happy July! If you plan on attending a firework display on July 4, please leave your pets at home because they don't like the noise. If you go out that day or that night leave the TV or a radio on in case of fireworks near your home.

Critters 101: Is your pet right-pawed or left-pawed?

People are either right- or left-handed and that goes for dogs and cats too. If you watch your pet enough you probably can determine a paw preference. An easy test is to place a treat or toy just under a sofa within reach and see which paw your pet uses to grab it. Or, put a treat or toy on the floor centered between the paws in front of him. Do the test several times. Some pets will be ambidextrous, using both paws equally.

Left-handedness in humans often is associated with creativity and a natural musical ability. If your pet appears to be left-handed, maybe he has hidden talents!

Right-handedness in humans often is associated with language ability and a logical mind. Some evidence indicates that right-handed animals can be better at remembering and using words. So if your pet appears to be right-handed, maybe your pet understands more of your conversation than you had thought!

Pets of the Month

Our Pets of the Month are a trifecta of felines. One is smart and sleek; one is feral turned friendly; and the other is as slow and smooth as a southern drawl. Mr. and Ms. July are Lexi (Korat mix) and Travis (gray Tabby) Seale. They live in Section I with their parents, Karen and Robert Seale, along with an outside cat, Gunter (brown Tabby). Lexi is six-years old and silver blue. She was adopted from the SPCA as a kitten. Her eyes sparkle, and she is very inquisitive, agile and talkative. She likes to play with toys and loves to watch the birds and squirrels from her windows. Lexi is truly ambidextrous. We still are testing Travis because he is a little more laid back.

At six months old, Travis adopted the Seales one week before they moved away from the Heights. Travis is now

12-years old and his favorite things are treats and women. He is the biggest ladies' man you ever saw; he pours on the charm, love and affection and, well, he is just captivating. He wasn't talkative until he discovered fish flake treats and likes them for dessert right after breakfast. He has found that his most effective maneuver is to get on top of the fridge and holler for treats.

Gunter was a big mean feral that fathered a few litters until the Seales trapped and neutered him. While still a little rough around the edges, he is a love bug.

The Seales are great folks and are always helping the neighborhood cat population. Lucky is the animal that meets the Seales and lucky is the person who meets the Seale's animals. Love and laughter all Sealed with a kiss!

See photos of the Seales and others on our Web site under Garden Oaks Pet of the Month.

Casey Farris is owner/operator of Bone Voyage Pet Sitting Services and Go Dog USA. Mau Mau is owner/operator of Casey. Please forward your questions and pet news to Casey@GoDogUSA.com or call 713.688.6363.

 <p>Oak Forest Veterinary Clinic</p> <p>Monday - Friday: 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM By appointment only</p> <p>Saturday: 7:30 - 11:30 AM Walk-in's welcome</p> <p>2120 West 34th Street (Between T.C. Jester & Ella)</p> <p>(713) 682 - 6351</p> <p>www.oakforestvetclinic.com</p>	<p>Come meet our new doctors</p>
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SPACE AVAILABLE AT GOES MONTESSORI PROGRAM

Garden Oaks Elementary School announced that spaces remain open for second grade in its renowned Montessori school-within-a-school program.

"We would like to fill these slots for the fall semester so that we have a full classroom and to ensure that any student within HISD who wants to benefit from this program has that opportunity," said Lindsay Pollock, Garden Oaks Elementary School principal.

First developed in the early 1900s by Italian educator Maria Montessori for the mentally challenged, the teaching method has proven to be successful for children of all socioeconomic, learning and ethnic backgrounds and is well suited to ESL, at-risk and low-income students as well as Vanguard and gifted and talented students.

The method is characterized by an emphasis on self-directed activity on the part of the child. It stresses the importance of adapting the child's learning environment to his or her developmental level, research rather than rote learning, and the role of physical activity in absorbing abstract concepts and practical skills.

"One indicator of the success of this program is demand," said Tonya Knauth, Garden Oaks Chapter President of Friends of Montessori, a nonprofit organization that supports and helps guide and fund the program. "Over the last three years we have opened two new classrooms for ages 3-5, and this year we added a class for students ages 6-9," she said.

The Friends of Montessori organization supports approximately 800 students annually at four HISD schools including Whidby Elementary, Garden Oaks Elementary, Woodrow Wilson Montessori School and Los Ninos Community Center Charter School. Students at all four schools outscore their peers on standardized tests and demonstrate advanced social cognition and executive control.

For more information, contact Garden Oaks Elementary School at 713.696.2930 or visit www.fomhouston.org.

GO KIDS

by Sarah McGee Heath

School's out and GO Kids has been having lots of fun this summer. Join us for one, or all, of these great activities!

Come play at our all-ages GO Playgroup on Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the SPARK Park. Summer school will no longer be in session starting July 2 so we can all take a little break from signing in at the office for the rest of the summer.

Kids home from school driving you crazy? You need a Moms' Night Out! We will meet at the Spaghetti Western, 1608 Shepherd Dr., Thursday July 2, at 7:00 p.m. Contact Maricela Pina at pinamaricela@yahoo.com for more information.

Do you know an overwhelmed new parent? Are you a sleep-deprived parent? Take heart because help is on the way. We are happy to provide new families with meals during those stressful first few weeks. If you are expecting or know a neighbor who is, please let our GO Dinner Drop coordinator, Amber Berend, know by contacting her at amber.berend@yahoo.com. Sign up and help deliver food to a family in need. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and see some cute little babies!

GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

President

Chris Lindsay 713.819.8412

1st Vice President

Janet Cones 713.822.2532

2nd Vice President

Trish Merkhham 713.688.4008

Treasurer

Robert DeVeau 832.659.7797

Co-Secretaries

Cathy Wahren 713.686.8686

Mary Lynn Porter

GARDEN CLUB MEETING

The Garden Club will be meeting at Red Balloon Cafe at 7:15p.m. on Thursday, July 9. We will be touring the 'Trees For Houston/Carolynn Wolfe Urban Arboretum', in front of the Cafe. The Cafe features food, drinks and live music till 9. 4410 Westway Park Blvd # 300 Houston, TX 77041

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GARDEN OAKS CIVIC CLUB MEETING MINUTES

June 2, 2009

by Cindy Bartos, Secretary

Welcome

President Scott Easterly called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Scott introduced Councilwoman Toni Lawrence who presented her offer to have a Quick Start Tennis court created at the Garden Oaks Elementary SPARK Park. She described the Quick Start program as one that has been popular in England and enjoyed by children at the most recent River Oaks Tennis Tournament. The court is about half the size of a regular tennis court, played with foam balls and a smaller racquet. Ms. Lawrence and the United States Tennis Association will provide funding for installation. Tennis lessons will be provided courtesy of the Houston Tennis Association and/or the USTA. Ms. Lawrence's responses to questions included: She will check into availability of funding to landscape the area around the court and will help raise additional money if necessary; no funding is available at this time for lighting the courts; there will be one court; the HTA will maintain the court; the court surface is asphalt based; and there is no plan to have a fence around the court, however, an option in the plan is to have a net but that has not been determined at this time.

Brenda de Alba checked the location of the proposed site of the court with the original SPARK Park plans and said it will not impact current plans for the park. The location would be the area between the "Rick Englert SPARK Park" sign and the picnic tables. Concerns from the attendees and Ms. Catlin, GOES physical education teacher, were expressed as to how close the location of the planned court is to the street.

Terry Jeanes made a motion that was seconded, then amended and seconded to move:

"To approve supporting the Quick Start Tennis court according to Councilwoman Lawrence's proposal and offer of funds — subject to the placement of the unlit court." The motion passed.

President Scott Easterly recognized 15 new attendees to the Civic Club meeting.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the May minutes as they appeared in the *Gazette*.

Treasurer's Report

Phil Ramirez presented the current income

and expense report for the Civic Club and had detailed copies available at the meeting. Phil called the amount of funding in the Constable's Program dangerously low without enough money to continue the daytime patrol after July 2009. He encouraged more people to join the program immediately.

Standing Committee Reports:

Constable Program: Terry Jeanes supported Phil's concerns over the lack of members and asked attendees to take a sign up form with them tonight to share with a neighbor not currently a member of the Constable Program. Terry reported on recent house break-ins and reminded residents to check with their security alarm companies to make sure they have the phone number for the constable dispatch.

Beautification: Brenda de Alba had no report.

Gazette: Jessica Jarvis introduced and thanked the *Gazette* advertising manager, Tim Merritt.

Garden Oaks Citizen's Patrol Program: Carl Waters reported the neighborhood had five crimes last month; 18 crimes to date for the year.

Garden Oaks.org Web site: Joe Muscara had no report.

Membership: Dian Austin reported that prior to tonight's meeting we had a membership of 331 family members with 10 to 15 additional members added tonight. Jessica Jarvis won the raffle prize, a \$25 gift certificate to Tony's Restaurant.

Garden Oaks Garden Club

Chris Lindsay announced the next meeting will be June 11 at the Kroger's Community Room, 7:00 p.m. The program will be on organic pesticides. Guests are invited.

Garden Oaks Maintenance Organization (GOMO)

Ed de Alba met with the attendee who had review plans to avoid having to stay after the civic club meeting due to the possible late hour close of the meeting.

Announcements

President Scott Easterly announced and thanked the 2010 Garden Oaks Home Tour Committee Co-chairs: Sue Schmidt and Dian Austin. The home tour will be April 25, and a contest will be held to determine a theme for the tour. A volunteer signup sheet was passed around, and they urged anyone interested in volunteering to contact them.

Reminder of the July 4 Bicycle Parade;

contact Deanna Zugheri (Deanna@GardenOaksHomes.com or 281.658.4514) if interested in helping with the parade.

Due to the move of National Night Out to October in Texas, we will have an August Civic Club meeting. The speaker will be Heidi Sheesley of Treeseach Farms. We will not have an October civic club meeting.

GOES SPARK Park fence discussion

President Easterly introduced Garden Oaks Elementary principal, Lindsey Pollock, who introduced Natasha Kamrani, HISD School Board member; Adriana Tamez, HISD Central Region Superintendent; and Ms. Cruz, HISD Executive Principal. Pollock announced that GOES was named a TEA recognized school and discussed summer school opportunities available to students. Pollock gave a presentation on the history and mission of the SPARK park program, details on the hours and photos of the park at GOES. She stated her primary concern being the safety of the students. She had information about the SPARK Park, the Quick Start tennis courts, letters from teachers and minutes from the committee meeting.

Pollock said she selected members to serve on an ad hoc committee to discuss the details of a fence she would like to have installed around the SPARK Park. The members are Scott Easterly, Brenda de Alba, Sarah Heath, Kori Catlin and Helle Johnson. Ms. Pollock's responses to questions included:

The ad hoc committee met on May 27 and discussed: the original plans of the SPARK Park and her concerns for the safety of the children; the ad hoc committee was formed by the school and not by the civic club; no crimes have been committed against children at the school; the main goal is to both keep the children in and keep people out as her main concern is the safety of the children. She recognizes the need for clear communication and has learned a lesson in the process.

Catlin, GOES PE teacher, spoke of teachers feeling they are not trusted by community to determine the need for a fence, the distraction to her classes caused by dogs and concern over the short amount of time it would take to snatch a child from the playground.

When asked about the articles in the *Gazette*, Tamez said they realized they needed to get better teacher/student/parent/community feedback. She stated that the principal will make the final decision after the committee makes a recommendation.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Another Neighbor and Art Car Parade Winner



Garden Oaks resident Abby Kvinge, standing on the right, (in the photograph) and her "Sonic Flyer" art bike won the second-place award in the cycle category of the 2009 Houston Art Car Parade. The 16-year old, daughter of Nathan and Debbie Kvinge, conceived and designed the project, which she based on the Buck Rogers era sci-fi rocket ships. She worked with her art instructors, Sam and Nancy Jones, for several months to complete the bike, and now looks forward to riding it in the Garden Oaks July 4th Parade.

The ad hoc committee met on May 27 and June 11 and will meet again on July 2, 5:30 p.m. at GOES. The meetings are open to the public. The committee will present a recommendation the July 7 civic club meeting.

Tamez said no money is available now or in the immediate future and the committee will determine how to raise funds if a fence is to be built.

Pollock said a custodian will lock and unlock the gate, and it will stay unlocked Friday evening until Monday morning. By definition of the SPARK Park, the school is not authorized to lock out access to the community.

Pollock answered additional questions by saying: the school pays for improvements and the source for funding varies; the idea of reconfiguring the school grounds to allow a playground area would be up to the committee; she would still follow sign-in procedure and allow parents with small children to visit the park during school hours; it is yet to be determined if the park is getting a fence; the committee would determine the fence's height, description and number of entrances. Pollock said her

number one consideration is the safety of the children. Pollock gave no verbal response when asked if professionals such as a designer or a safety person could be on the committee.

An attendee expressed concern over the poor communication in initial stages of the fence plan and wondered why people who had signed up at the last civic club meeting weren't notified of the meeting on May 27. Pollock said that it wasn't workable to have 20 to 25 people on a committee. Terry Jeanes said the people who signed up at the meeting would act as a branch of the ad hoc committee, serving as a go between for the ad hoc committee and the community.

HISD board member Kamrani thanked all the residents who emailed her concerning the issue of the fence and encouraged continued involvement. She suggested that the issue was less about the fence and more about the process in which it was handled, which she thought could be corrected. She thanked the civic club members for their time and the devotion from parents and teachers.

Tamez said if the community doesn't want a fence then they won't be involved in

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fundraising. When asked if enough money isn't raised for a nice fence, would there be a chain link fence, Tamez said she couldn't answer for sure, she wouldn't want a chain link fence and assumes Pollock would not want one as well. Pollock nodded in agreement.

Brenda de Alba said the committee discussed opposition to a chain link fence and a tall fence.

A neighbor whose property aligns the park asked the fence not be placed so an alley is between his fence and the park fence and suggested his fence serve as the fence along that side. He added a light to his property on the park side due to cars driving through the park at night and other activity.

Meeting adjourned: 9:20 p.m.

Attendance: 78



JULY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 GO Kids 7pm, Chatter's Cafe 140 S. Heights Blvd.	3	4 4th of July Bicycle Parade 10am
5	6	7 Civic Club mtg 7pm 	8	9 Garden Club mtg Red Balloon Cafe 7:15pm	10	11 <i>Recording the Beatles</i> Event Hard Rock Cafe 2pm
12	13	14	15 GOMO mtg 7:30pm	16 GO Sisterhood Cunningham Home 950 West 41st 7:30pm	17	18
19	20	21 	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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