

# GARDEN OAKS GAZETTE

VOLUME 35

ISSUE 04

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION, PROGRESS AND PONTIFICATION

by GOCC President Mark Klein

## APR 2011

Preventing crime is one of the cornerstones of the Garden Oaks Civic Club mission. Tuesday, April 5, at your next Civic Club gathering, you have the opportunity to hear about the Houston Police Department efforts to fight crime in our area, as we host Officer Chuck Bertels from HPD's North Division.

Officer Bertels will also talk about one of any neighborhood's best programs to deter criminal activity: Citizens on Patrol.

Carl Waters, Jr., who heads up GOCOP, arranged Officer Bertels' visit. This is a great opportunity to hear how a few volunteer hours a month as a Citizen on Patrol keeps criminals at bay. Few programs work better.

Carl has a small, but dedicated group of volunteers who keep their eyes open for unusual activity, efforts that have been instrumental in preventing crime in Garden Oaks. Still, more COP volunteers are needed if we want to be more effective. I urge you to attend the next GOCC meeting, hear about crime trends, take the opportunity to ask questions of Officer Bertels, and learn how just a few volunteer hours a month can protect a neighborhood far better than you might imagine.

In other GOCC news, thanks to local builder Harry James we are making progress on building a bigger, better, and more functional gazebo surrounded by azaleas off Sue Barnett.

Harry has graciously volunteered his time and his crew's efforts to help us build the gazebo to replace the venerable one that hosted so many visits from Santa Claus. A design is being finalized and construction should begin in April. If you run into Harry or Brenda de Alba, our former and tireless beautification chair, please pass along your thanks for their efforts in making this happen.

Finally, as I think about the inspirational volunteer efforts that are keeping Garden Oaks a great place to live, I ask you to consider contributing to the neighborhood. The more volunteers we have the less burden it places on the veterans and the more opportunity you have to shape your neighborhood to your vision. Please take time to join the Civic Club, attend our monthly meetings and have a say in the future of a Houston gem. You'll find it rewarding.

### CIVIC CLUB MEETINGS

**April 5, 7 p.m. Civic Club Meeting**  
Garden Oaks Elementary School

### UPCOMING EVENTS

April 24 - GO Easter Egg Hunt - 3 pm  
SPARK Park

### SAVE THE DATE

May 22 Old Fashioned Picnic - SPARK Park

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## HEARD UNDER THE OAK TREE

by Terry Jeanes

### Welcome New Neighbors

We hope to see you at a civic club meeting soon.

**939 Althea**  
**511 West 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**879 West 41<sup>st</sup>**  
**919 West 41<sup>st</sup>**  
**871 West 42<sup>nd</sup>**  
**982 West 42<sup>nd</sup>**  
**975 West 42<sup>nd</sup>**  
**1522 Sue Barnett**

### April Birthdays

**Kylie Elyse Salch** - 7  
**Keith Kostelecky** - 9  
**Melissa Neiser** - 10  
**Linden D'Amico** - 11  
**Lily Claire Bowman** - 18  
**Leslie Waters** and  
**Robert DeVeau** - 21

### Happy Anniversary

**Tina Sabuco & Shellye Arnold** - 15 years - 6  
**Melissa & Trey Kuchar** - 16

### Out and About

**The McLean Family** enjoyed a trip to Durango, Colorado. **Tina Beddow** enjoyed a weekend with daughter and grandson in San Marcos. **Mel Johnson** finally got her trip to Australia. **The Salches** attended the 96th Momus Ball. **Carol Smith** spent a week in "cold, rainy" Seattle visiting her daughter.

The **Shaughnessys, Bill, Amy** and **Clair** spent time at Disney to celebrate Clair's birthday. Then they were off for spring break in Chicago. **Michael Beard** visited Boulder, Colorado. **Kenneth Santos** and **Robert DeVeau** had a lovely trip to Paris. The men and boys of the

**Heath Family** spent a week in Harlingen.

### Congratulations

To **Barbara Dawson Smith**, on the release of her latest book, *Scandal of the Year*, penned under the name Olivia Drake.

### Save the Date

**The Garden Oaks Old Fashioned Picnic** date has been set for **Sunday May 22.**

To highlight an event, celebration, or other tidbit, contact Terry Jeanes at [terry@terryjeanes.com](mailto:terry@terryjeanes.com) or 713.812.9154.



## 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Gazette Contacts

**Jessica Jarvis—Editor**  
 1551 Sue Barnett 713.446.6440  
[gazette@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazette@gardenoaks.org)

**Dian Austin—Delivery Coordinator**  
 733 W. 42nd 713.691.6505  
[gazettedelivery@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazettedelivery@gardenoaks.org)

**Kristin Strange—Advertising Director**  
 832.651.0831  
[gazetteads@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazetteads@gardenoaks.org)

### Proofreaders

**Carol Smith** and **Dian Austin**



## Civic Club Officers

**Mark Klein—President**  
 231 W. 34th 281.536.6063  
[president@gardenoaks.org](mailto:president@gardenoaks.org)

**Dea Larson—Vice President**  
 823 Lamonte 713.695.3634  
[vicepresident@gardenoaks.org](mailto:vicepresident@gardenoaks.org)

**Phil Ramirez—Treasurer**  
 975 Lamonte 832.794.1221  
[treasurer@gardenoaks.org](mailto:treasurer@gardenoaks.org)

**Heather Leverett—Secretary**  
 319 W. 31st 832.455.6254  
[secretary@gardenoaks.org](mailto:secretary@gardenoaks.org)

## Standing Committee Chairs

**Kimberly Horowitz—Beautification**  
 1006 Sue Barnett 713.824.0435  
[beautification@gardenoaks.org](mailto:beautification@gardenoaks.org)

**Carl Waters Jr.—Citizen Patrol**  
 821 W. 31st 713.864.1992  
[gocop@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gocop@gardenoaks.org)

**Joe Muscara—GardenOaks.org**  
 750 Sue Barnett 713.691.6833  
[webmaster@gardenoaks.org](mailto:webmaster@gardenoaks.org)

**Dian Austin—Membership**  
 733 W. 42nd 713.691.6505  
[membership@gardenoaks.org](mailto:membership@gardenoaks.org)

**Terry Jeanes—Constable Program**  
 922 W. 41st 713.812.9154  
[constable@gardenoaks.org](mailto:constable@gardenoaks.org)



**CITIZENS' PATROL PROGRAM**

by Carl Waters, Jr.

As I have been writing the past several months, our neighborhood crime has been down for the past several years. At last month's Citywide Positive Interaction Program meeting it was reported that violent crime was down in the City of Houston last year by 18 percent and property crime was down 19 percent. Crime in the neighborhood for the first two months of 2011 is down as well.

Year to date three crimes have been reported on the HPD website as compared to seven for the first two months of last year.

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

**February Crime Statistics: 2**

*Burglary: 1*

900 block of Sue Barnett Dr. on Thursday, February 3 at 9:29 p.m. (school)

*Theft: 1*

3400 block of N. Shepherd Dr. on Thursday, February 10 at 2:30 p.m. (street)

**Emergency Numbers**

Emergency Services 911  
 HPD Non-Emergency Services 713.884.3131  
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**Terry Jeanes**  
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Sheila Briones (2011)  
412 W. 34th  
Home: 713.861.8091  
Cell: 281.685.8133  
sbriones@hotmail.com

Mark Saranie (2012) **Vice President**  
235 W 33rd  
Home: 713.861.7994  
Cell: 713.724.1271  
msaranie@comcast.net

Melissa Haselden Zepeda (2013)  
320 W. 34th Street  
713.459.5339 or 713.426.6413  
melissahaselden@gmail.com

**Section 2:**

Adrian Berry (2011) **Secretary**  
737 W. 42nd  
Home: 713.692.0408  
adrian.berry@yahoo.com

Ed de Alba (2013)  
744 W. 43rd  
Cell: 713.628.7008  
ferrocem@yahoo.com

Gale Gorman (2012)  
742 Sue Barnett  
gale\_gorman@mac.com

**Section 3:**

Jerry Butler (2011)  
871 W. 41st  
Home: 713.822.3175  
jbutler1982@att.net

Daniel Horowitz (2012)  
1006 Sue Barnett  
dhorowitz@abrahamwatkins.com

Kelly Mathews (2013) **Treasurer**  
855 Lamonte Lane  
Home: 713.640.5225  
rkmathews1@gmail.com

**Section 5:**

Tim Weltin (2011) **President**  
1567 Sue Barnett Drive  
Home: 713.540.5315  
timweltin@mycase.info

Luke Fatheree (2012)  
1034 W 43rd St.  
713.888.4743

Teresa Coleman (2013)  
1003 Gardenia  
713.686.7728  
teresa.coleman@pobox.com

Terms expire October of year in parentheses.

**GO CIVIC CLUB MEETING MINUTES****March 1, 2011**

Garden Oaks Elementary School  
by Heather Leverett, Secretary

**Welcome:** President Mark Klein called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

A motion was made and carried to accept the February minutes as published in the *Gazette*.

**President's Announcements: City of Houston Capital Improvement Plans (CIP):**

With a major Garden Oaks-area drainage improvement project in the city's future CIP plans, President Klein attended a District 1 meeting hosted by Council Member Brenda Stardig at Spring Woods High School. This was part of several meetings held recently by Mayor Annise Parker, Council Members, Chief Development Officer Andy Icken and Public Works Department Director Dan Krueger to review CIP projects and explain the new drainage and street fees being implemented under the Rebuild Houston program, formerly known as Proposition 1.

**ReBuild Houston** creates a "pay as you go" program to rebuild aging street and draining infrastructure.

**Gazette:** An assistant editor is needed to help; please contact [gazette@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazette@gardenoaks.org).

**Old Fashioned Picnic:** Scheduled for May 22 at the Garden Oaks Elementary School Spark Park. The rain date is May 29.

**Vice President:** Dea Larson was recommended as a candidate. A motion was made and carried to accept Dea Larson as the civic club

vice president.

**GO DAT Technology Initiative:**

Secretary Heather Leverett reported that a project name had been selected, Garden Oaks Data Access Tool (GO DAT!). An assessment of technology options has been completed. Three third-party solutions were compared with three to four custom bids. The third-party alternatives lacked important functionality. The custom development bids varied significantly, from 250 to 550 hours. A custom option, where the developer is willing to partially donate time and to fix bid a portion of the project, was selected. The next phase of the project will include database design, technical design documentation and a finalized project plan. The existing project budget is \$5,000. A motion was made and carried to allocate another \$5,000 to the project, anticipated to take three to four months to complete. Significant testing will be required.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Phil Ramirez reported that donations in February were low, with only about a \$2,000 change from January. A new line has been added to the Budget P&L for Gazebo repair. The GO Constable program is funded for the next three months. The *Gazette* continues to fund itself. There have been additional complaints about lack of recognition in the *Gazette* when supporting the GO Constable program. Some ideas were discussed about how to resolve, including GODAT providing a solution. There was discussion about allocating additional funds to support rebuilding the Gazebo.

**Standing Committee Reports:**

GO Citizens Patrol: Carl Waters Jr. reported two crimes in February.

There are three crimes year to date, compared with seven at this time in 2010. Criminal activity around the Kroger on 43<sup>rd</sup> continues to be reported. Remember to lock your car and hide your valuables. An HPD police captain said crime overall in the North division is down. New volunteers, 18+ years old and residents of the area, are needed for the citizen patrol. Volunteers can set their own schedules and only need one hour of training. Please contact [gocop@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gocop@gardenoaks.org) to volunteer.

**Constable Program:** No update.  
**Membership:** Dian Austin reported 289 paid members to date. A lucky member at the meeting won a Tony's gift card.

**Beautification:** A local chair or co-chairs is needed. Mark Klein will follow up with a named builder on the Gazebo work to determine next steps.

**Gazette:** No update.

**GardenOaks.org Website:** No update.

**GOMO Update:** Tim Weltin reported that the GOMO has a good board in place for the year. He encouraged everyone to attend the Black Middle School tour, hosted by a group of parents, teachers and others as part of an effort to encourage support of the middle school.

**Garden Oaks Elementary School Update:**

**Crime:** Principal Lindsey Pollock reported that the school suffered vandalism in February, Some children melted the Plexiglas door

**GOMO Review Meetings**

take place prior to Civic Club meetings at 6:30p.m.

window and accessed the computer lab to play on the computers.

**Budget Cuts:** GOES elementary school is preparing for significant state education budget cuts. The majority of the existing budget is personnel, so budget cuts will impact staffing. In preparation of the cuts, some supporting GOES staff has already been cut, with numerous other HISD personnel. The final amount and impact of the cuts is unknown. You can reference [houstonisd.org](http://houstonisd.org) for additional information. There was discussion around impact to class size, costs of materials, impact of the federal magnet grant and the types of roles cut. Concerned attendees referenced a rally in Austin, overall impact to the economy and questioned the decision process.

**North Area Business Association:** Harry Durham, a representative from the North Area Business Association, announced that 30 to 40 businesses have joined to support the beautification and a reduction in crime in the commercial areas along N. Shepherd. The group started an email list to begin working together. His contact information is [harry@arkconcrete.com](mailto:harry@arkconcrete.com).

President Mark Klein adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

**VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

GAZETTE ASSISTANT EDITOR  
 Interested in putting your own personal touch to the *Gazette*? Assistance in editing, layout and publication is needed on an occasional basis. Training will be provided as needed. For more information, contact [gazette@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazette@gardenoaks.org)

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## BEAUTIFICATION UPDATE

by Kimberly Horowitz

In March Brenda de Alba stepped down as Beautification chair for the neighborhood. She has held this position for the last 14 years and done a flawless job. Together, she and her husband, Ed de Alba, have worked tirelessly to keep Garden Oaks' green spaces beautiful and well maintained. It takes a lot of time, toil and resources to keep our neighborhood looking its best and, although it has been a communal effort, we all owe deep gratitude to both Brenda and Ed de Alba for leading the charge.

I realize that following in Brenda's footsteps will require a great deal of commitment and effort. I look forward to getting to know my neighbors better and recruit new volunteers to form an active Beautification Committee.

We need volunteers to serve as park captains for the Randall Berm (30<sup>th</sup> and Durham, opposite Sonic), Garden Oaks Boulevard, (between Shepherd and Sue Barnett) and the Gazebo Park (Sue Barnett and 42<sup>nd</sup>). It would be a great first step in forming an active Beautification Committee. Captains do not need to be master gardeners, have paint or landscaping knowledge. They do need to be willing to check on and report issues in their green space, no matter how small, and be enthusiastic about keeping the neighborhood looking great. Please contact me at [K\\_Baughman@yahoo.com](mailto:K_Baughman@yahoo.com) if you are interested in being a park captain.

Thank you to Joan and Gary Harmon for cleaning up and mulching the flowerbeds around the SPARK Park sign.

## PLANT SURVIVAL

by Chris Lindsay, GOGC

How many times have you planted shrubs and plants in the spring and early summer that look absolutely great only to have them curl up and die when heat, drought or heavy rains do them in? All that time and money spent to spruce up your yard wasted. Well, we have the answer for you!

The guest speaker at the Garden Oaks Garden Club meeting on April 14, 7:00 p.m. at Kroger's Community Room, Mezzanine Level, is going to give us the low down on plants and shrubs that can weather the extremes of our Houston climate. Just think of it, planting these tried and true garden survivors means you may never have to plant replacements again! Think of all the time, effort and money you can save.

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dent of Garden Oaks. You do not have to be a member of the Garden Club to come to our meetings. The usual agenda for our meetings is as follows;

- 7:00 - 7:15 p.m. Social time
- 7:15 - 8:00 p.m. Guest Speaker
- 8:00 - 8:15 p.m. Break
- 8:15 - 9:00 p.m. Business Meeting

Refreshments are brought by members to be shared during the social time.

If, after a visit or two to our meetings you decide you would like to join, dues are just \$25 for the year.

Come try us out, you may learn some gardening tips that will enhance your landscape and save you money.

## GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

### President

Cathy Wahren 713.686.8686  
catalinaw2@yahoo.com

### Vice President/Communications

Chris Lindsay 713.819.8412  
Chris.Lindsay@sbcglobal.net

### Treasurer

Robert DeVeau 832.659.7797  
RobertDeVeau@sbcglobal.net

### Secretary

Mary Lynn Porter

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW

by Lindsey Pollock, GOES Principal

Spring is a great time of year for getting out in the yard with family and sharing in the wonder of nature. We can help children learn to appreciate this special time of year and the importance of taking care of our environment through gardening!

**Birth – 4 years.** There are many ways to help young children participate at all ages. For the very young, remember the importance of sunscreen, bug spray and close supervision. Children need time outdoors for physical and mental health. Time spent with parents makes this experience even better. Explore the yard with your children through touch and smell. The textures of grass, flower petals, soil and rocks offer many opportunities to introduce vocabulary and parts of speech such as prepositions. Olfactory (smell) elements often are cited by brain researchers as enhancing long-term memory so explore the scents of the outdoors such as rosemary, pine and flowers to enhance the memories of this special time together.

**5 – 9 years.** If you have space, tree houses, forts and separate children's gardens give children a connection to home and give them a sense of ownership in care for the environment. When planting, define a plant bed for your children and work together to create a plan for planting. Follow the lead of your children and explore the world through their eyes as they learn from your guidance. Planning a garden space is also a great way to introduce math concepts such as measurement and budgeting. Be sure to include your child in the trip to the nursery and talk to your child about native vs. non-native species, growing cycles and the importance of caring for living things.

**10 – 13 years.** As children mature, discussions around food sources and making healthy choices become increasingly important. Children at this age take great pride in planting and harvesting fruits, *continued on page 23*



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## BLOCK CAPTAIN OF THE MONTH

by Dian Austin

April's Block Captain of the Month is Caroline McLean, who lives in and delivers *Gazettes* to the 1000 block of W. 42nd. Caroline has delivered *Gazettes* on her route for several years, most often with the help of daughter Lucy (age 9) and son Josh (age 7).

Caroline and her husband, Sean, are both from Edinburgh, Scotland, and moved to Houston for Sean's IT job. They found Garden Oaks through a realtor who told them about our fabulous neighborhood. They came to check out GO and fell in love with it. Caroline says they basically bought their first house in GO 11 years ago for their dog Alex (English Springer Spaniel) who needed a large yard. Alex recently went to the Rainbow Bridge after being a beloved pet for 13 years, but Princess (Brittany Spaniel) now rules the McLean household.

Caroline says that they love all the trees, the diversity in the styles of houses, *not* having sidewalks and our great location. But most of all they love their neighbors.

Caroline and her family are civic club members and constable supporters. Caroline has been active in previous home tour committees; their former house was featured on the Home and Garden Tour in 2001.

When not delivering *Gazettes*, Caroline enjoys refereeing high school and middle school girls' lacrosse in Houston and beyond. Caroline and Sean take their family back to Scotland at least once a year for some local culture, so that they know there is another life beyond freeways and new buildings.

Our neighborhood is so appreciative of Caroline and others who volunteer their time. For Caroline's *Gazette* delivery dedication, she receives a \$25 gift card to Octane, our local wine and coffee bar, courtesy of neighbor Oscar Ochoa (OD's Printing). Thanks Caroline and family!

If anyone else wants to join the *Gazette* Delivery Team, call 713.691.6505 or email FallingwaterT@yahoo.com. And if your *Gazette* is not being delivered timely, please let me know too. But also remember, if you don't volunteer, don't complain too loudly!

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**AN ABUNDANTLY DELIGHTFUL GETAWAY**

By Jessica Jarvis

Leave it to a Garden Oaks resident to transport and build upon the charm of our neighborhood to create a perfect nearby vacation getaway. Neighbors and faithful Garden Oaks supporters Tina Sabuco and Shellye Arnold have done just that with their delightful and enchanting property, Abundance, in Wimberley, Texas.

A hill country river retreat, established by the ladies in 2004, Abundance boasts two lovely guest houses. Sundance lodge, named appropriately for its bright and sunny interior, is a luxurious and nicely designed, spacious log home that brings the natural beauty of the outdoors inside to you. Moondance cabin, rustic and romantic, is a cozy and well-appointed three-room log cabin.

Both are situated on a peaceful park-like property located on spring-fed Cypress Creek, providing a great feeling of seclusion while being within walking distance of town.

While we have been long-time frequent visitors to Wimberley, a convenient three hours away, we'd yet to encounter a property that so thoughtfully and completely provides anything and everything you could want or imagine to enhance your stay and facilitate your complete relaxation.

Tina and Shellye, Garden Oaks residents since 1994 and known for their creative touch, have had both their home (1997) and garden (2006) featured in Garden Oaks home and garden tours. With Abundance they have managed to impart their personalities and personal styles in a way that allows you to feel right at home and taken care of in every way.

We recently had the pleasure of staying in Sundance with my mom, visiting from Ohio. Every space both inside and outside Sundance was so inviting that we set out to deliberately enjoy each area during our brief stay. It was as if anything we could want, need or enjoy was right at our fingertips before we could even utter the words "wouldn't it be nice if." From deer feed, to wildlife books and binoculars, art supplies, anti-gravity chairs, canoes and other creek amenities, Abundance is aptly named and definitely best experienced in person.

If you're looking for a relaxing getaway, be sure to consider Abundance. We certainly look forward to our next opportunity to enjoy Tina and Shellye's home away from home.

[www.abundanceretreat.com](http://www.abundanceretreat.com)



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**JUNIOR  
ACHIEVEMENT  
VOLUNTEERS AT  
GARDEN OAKS**

*By Catharine Perry*

On March 11, through Junior Achievement, volunteers from the accounting firm Ernst and Young volunteered once again to teach all day at Garden Oaks Elementary School. Junior Achievement provides grade specific curriculum with manipulatives like fake money, game cards and consumable booklets.

Volunteers are trained, but teachers stay with the classes. Ernst and Young has paired with Garden Oaks for some time, usually coming once a year. The young professionals are paid by Ernst and Young but donate their energy and time away from their tasks to work with kids from three years old to sixth grade.

The students and faculty look forward to what has come to be known as JA Day!

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## FRANK BLACK MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

3-2-2-1-1: Marked the launch of a really great school  
by *Tim Weltin*

The positive transformation continues to accelerate at our neighborhood middle school. With more than 250 tour participants, Le Tour de Black, a series of neighborhood open-house nights, was exceptionally successful and helped spread a wave of enthusiasm regarding Frank Black Middle School throughout our community.

The Friends of Frank Black Middle School then promoted a series of events on Tuesday, March 22 (3-22-11) billed collectively as "3-2-2-1-1: The Launch of a Really Great School." The day was filled with activities celebrating the ongoing renaissance at Frank Black Middle School. A ceremonial groundbreaking was held in front of the school and marked the



official beginning of the \$6 million bond renovations that have begun on campus. The event featured the school color guard, a display of student artwork, a show of community support, remarks by the principal, Meilin Jao, and a traditional shoveling of dirt.

At lunch, there was a roll out of the Dream Team, an innovative student component of the transformation efforts. The Dream Team project includes t-shirting, highlighting and supporting more than 225 model students at the school. A special thanks goes to Billy and Eileen Hartman of Hartman & Associates (both alums of FBMS) for underwriting the entire cost of the Dream Team roll out. If you see the Hartmans, please thank them on behalf of the community for their







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our area – especially our children – for years to come. Continue to support the project and help spread the word: great things are happening at Frank Black Middle School. More information is available at [www.Facebook.com/FrankBlackMiddleSchool](http://www.Facebook.com/FrankBlackMiddleSchool) or by contacting us at [FriendsofFrankBlack@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofFrankBlack@gmail.com).



exceptional generosity.

A short community celebration followed at Plonk in the Oak Forest shopping center as faculty, staff, parents and community members gathered to toast the school's past and future successes. The day concluded with a meeting of the Friends of Frank Black Middle School in the school library, an event where the core workgroup for the effort has now tripled in size.

More institutional improvements are on the way as part of this increasingly enthusiastic movement to will benefit





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**AIR CONDITIONING TIPS FOR THE SPRING**

by Mitch Weigand

**Tip No. 13: Mini Splits - Creating Ideal Comfort One Room at a Time**  
*Part One*

Everyone wants to get the best use out of their home. Perhaps you want to convert the unused space over your garage into a home office, man cave or hobby room. No matter what you have in mind, mini-splits can help you achieve ideal comfort in that room.

**The history of mini-splits**


At the end of World War II, Americans introduced ducted, central air conditioning systems and window units to Japan. These were not suitable because of limited interior space and close proximity of

the buildings. With Japan's densely populated urban areas, a more compact, noiseless A/C system was required. It had to be very efficient because the Japanese spend about five times as much for energy as we do in the United States.

Japan's answer to these limitations is a split-type, ductless system that is quiet, powerful and space conscious. This form of air conditioning provides an energy efficient way to cool or heat a home one room at a time. Mitsubishi Electric began producing air conditioners in 1954, and in 1968, it introduced the wall mounted, split-type ductless design known now as Mr. Slim.

The term ductless means that no duct work is involved. The system is comprised of two units

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- a lightweight, slim-line outdoor condenser and an indoor air handler. The condenser supplies freon to the air handler through lines which run through a three-inch opening in the wall and into the back of the unit. The air handler draws in air from the room through the grill at the top and disperses newly cooled air back into the room through the bottom grill. Some models provide special filters that promote additional humidity control and filtration.

Mini-splits are perfect for spaces where duct work is impossible to install or noisy window units are not practical. As a general rule, one ton of A/C (12,000 BTU) can satisfy about 500 square feet of space.

**Be in the zone**

Zone control is one of the main

benefits mini-splits offer. They are much more efficient than traditional HVAC systems and deliver ideal air quality while using only a small amount of energy. Mini-splits are up to 40 percent more efficient than standard window units. Why pay to heat and cool your entire home all year long when you live and play primarily in only one or two rooms?

*Part Two in next month's issue of the Garden Oaks Gazette*

*Mitch is the owner of Air Wise™ and a member of the Garden Oaks Civic Club. You can email Mitch any A/C questions at [mitch@airwisehouston.com](mailto:mitch@airwisehouston.com) or write to 1590 Sue Barnett Drive, 77018.*



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**“I love my Mitsubishi mini-split!”**  
*Penny L., Oak Forest*

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## GO KIDS UPDATE

by Sarah Heath

Hippity-Hoppity Easter's on its way! Go Kids has several fun events planned to welcome spring and Easter.

Mark your calendars for the annual **Garden Oaks Easter Egg Hunt**. Deanna and Will Zugheri are once again graciously underwriting this fun event. The kids look forward to this every year and we always have the best time. Hop on over to the Garden Oaks SPARK Park on Saturday, April 24, at 3 p.m. Don't forget to bring your Easter baskets!

Speaking of the Easter Egg Hunt, the Easter Bunny needs some help stuffing all those eggs. Please join us for a very fun **Moms' Night Out** at Deanna's house on Tuesday, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. Bring a snack or a drink to share so we don't eat all the candy before the kids have a chance to get to it! Deanna's address is 1054 Gardenia. Please contact Brandy Groth (brandy.groth@yahoo.com) or Jessica Padilla (needhamjessica@hotmail.com) for more information.

GO Kids hosts several playgroups throughout the month. GO Baby is for the little bits up to age three and GO Buddies is for all our "big" kids. Check out our BigTent calendar for dates and join in on all the fun. For more information, please contact Kristin Jordan (kriki@me.com), Emily Garcia (emigarcia13@hotmail.com) or Morgan Shields (morganbshields@gmail.com).

Are you or someone you know an overwhelmed, sleep deprived new parent? Don't worry because help is on the way! We are happy to provide several meals to new families during those stressful few weeks. If you are expecting or know a neighbor who is please contact our Dinner Drop coordinator, Amber Berend, at amber.berend@yahoo.com and she'll set you right up.

GO Kids was started by a group of parents who wanted to build a family friendly neighborhood where children and parents know each other and grow together. All Garden Oaks families are welcome. Not on the GO Kids list serve? Want more information about GO Kids? Contact Sarah Heath at 832.724.3325 or sarahmheath@gmail.com.

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The three perfect eggs hatched into three very hungry chicks. For two weeks the Jarvis family watched as mom and dad robin worked diligently to feed these swiftly growing chicks. They were so dedicated to their task that they would fly, bugs and worms in beaks, right over our heads as we sat on the porch and watched them grow. While they have long since left the experience continues to bring a smile.

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*-Hebrews 3:4*



**GOOD MORNING VIETNAM**

by Dea Larson

In February, I had the good fortune to travel to northern Vietnam on a photo workshop. We began our trip in Hanoi, the bustling capital city. For several days we enjoyed eating wonderful food, shopping in the silk markets and day tripping outside the city to small villages known for making pottery and sculptures or farmers growing flowers and vegetables.

The days start early in Hanoi, Vietnam, as the rooster near my hotel window reminded me each morning around 4:30 a.m. Soon the streets filled with motorcycles buzzing along with total disregard for pedestrians and traffic lights. Everyone always seemed to be in such a hurry to get to the next stop. But then, so was I! Midway through the trip, we took an overnight cruise through Halong Bay on a Chinese junk. Days later,

we boarded an overnight train bound for the mountain regions near the Chinese border. We stayed in a town called Sapa which is known as an economic center for the many Hmong ethnic tribes living in the surrounding countryside. The women still dress in traditional clothing and pride

themselves on their elaborate embroidery and silver jewelry. We worked with several non-governmental organizations who serve abandoned children, teens in crisis and schools in remote, sometimes desperately poor, mountain communities. All the Vietnamese people we



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# GARDEN OAKS

encountered throughout our trip welcomed this small band of American and Canadian photographers. Children everywhere flashed bright smiles as well as the peace sign and wanted to practice their modest English.

Hotels, transportation and food are remarkably cheap. Although we traveled in this beautiful country in the winter season, the terraced

mountainsides promised abundant crops in the spring and summer months. Should you have any desire to travel to Southeast Asia, go now as this is a great time to explore this truly remarkable country!



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**CRITTER CORNER**

by Casey and Dorothy Dan Farris

April is here which will bring spring, Easter and more than likely, rain and humidity. Rain, pet experts say, tends to bring out snakes and toads, and pets in the backyard can run into more than they anticipated.

**Critters 101: Snakes in the Rain**

When rain comes things begin to surface and that can mean problems for wet noses of furry friends that poke into bushes or under porches. Snakes and toads really come out after it rains and this increases the chances of pets getting close to them while on a walk or let out in the yard. Snake bites can lead to severe swelling, bleeding disorders and even death.

Texas is home to more than 100 species and subspecies of non-venomous snakes that are, for

the most part, beneficial and harmless. They are carnivorous and eat mostly rodents and insects. However, four species of venomous snakes are found in the U.S. and they are all in Houston and our surrounding areas. They are the rattlesnake, cottonmouth, copperhead and coral snakes.

Snakes usually are more afraid of humans than you are afraid of them. The best policy is to leave them alone as they will most likely move on. Most people and pets are bitten by snakes when they try to get a better look at them. If you see a snake, it is most likely looking for a place to hide, build a nest, food or a mate. Do not attempt to handle a snake without expert identification. You can minimize the risk of snakes and contact with them on your property by removing old woodpiles, trash piles, rock piles and animal food that may attract

rodents.

TexasSnakes.net is a good resource for information on living with and identifying snakes in the Texas area.

**Pet of the Month:** Our Pet of the Month Family is the Murphys from Section I. Kristy and Kevin Murphy, along with Liam and Leighton, share their home with three dogs. Soda (white Schnauzer) is the boss of the bunch and is 14 years old. Beau Jacques (Dogue de Bordeaux or French Mastiff) is five years old. This is the breed of dog made famous in the movie *Turner and Hooch*. Last is Hazel (chocolate Schnauzer) who is six months old. Beau Jacques and Liam have grown up together and are the best of buds. Beau Jacques weighs in at 145 pounds and sleeps, or rather snores, at the foot of Liam's bed every night and loves to chase Liam on the bicycle. Hazel with her big

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green eyes loves to give hugs and tugs. She tugs on Leighton's flip flops and then wants hugs. Soda is extra busy these days rearing little Hazel. Cheers to the Murphy's! May your home always be too small to hold all your friends and furry pets!


Casey Farris is owner/operator of Bone Voyage Pet Sitting Services, and Go Dog USA, Garden Oaks companies offering many services and products dedicated to the welfare of our pets and the people who love them. Dorothy Dan Farris is owner/operator of Casey. Please forward your questions and pet news to Casey@goDOGusa.com or call 713.688.6363.

**HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW**  
continued from pg 8

vegetables or herbs. These give children the opportunity to feel the sense of accomplishment and contribution to the family. Harvesting the plants and then cooking together create more opportunities to work with your child and strengthen the parent-

child bond at an especially critical stage in adolescence when children are often struggling with identity and independence.

**14-18 years.** Adolescents are busy, busy, busy and usually can't be bothered when on the phone talking to friends or texting! The activities you propose must compete with these temptations so it is best to get them interested by soliciting the input of your young adults. These are years of tremendous opportunity to work together with your children on outdoor projects. Encourage participation in community gardening, building projects in the yard with their input and growing produce to sell at local markets. Take time to enjoy your teenagers and create family moments that they will carry with them to college and beyond! Happy gardening!



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					1	2
3	4	5 Civic Club mtg 7:00pm, GOES 	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 MNO 1054 Gardenia, Easter Egg Hunt Prep, Zugheri home, 7pm	13	14 Garden Club mtg 7pm	15	16
17	18	19 	20 GOMO mtg 7pm	21	22	23
24 Easter Egg Hunt, 3pm, SPARK Park	25	26	27 Central Northwest Super Neighborhood Council, 6:30 pm, 1245 Judiway	28	29	30 Classic Car Show, 10 am - 2pm, 4610 N. Shepherd



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