

# GARDEN OAKS GAZETTE

VOLUME 36

ISSUE 03

## MAR 2012

### 2012 Home Tour Update

#### 45 Willing Souls Needed to Help Home Tour Succeed

by Mark Klein

One hundred-thirty. That's a pretty big number. It's also the number of volunteers it takes to pull off the bi-annual Garden Oaks Home Tour.

We still need 45 volunteers to make this Tour work.

One hundred-thirty. Volunteers that are part of that number are an amazing lot. They help make the Home Tour what it is: a huge contributor to our Constable and Beautification programs. And those programs help make Garden Oaks amazing.



Home Tour 2012

## GARDEN OAKS

*footprints & blueprints*

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### Home Tour Preview Party

Saturday, April 21

Self-guided tour 5 - 7:30p.m. followed by dinner at the Bell Tower on 34th

##### Home Tour

Sunday, April 22, noon - 6p.m.

6 homes, 2 gardens

#### UPCOMING CIVIC CLUB MEETING

##### March 6, 7 p.m. Civic Club Meeting

Garden Oaks Elementary School

It takes 130 willing souls to work the home and garden tour locations; drive and ride the buses; set-up and breakdown; run the Command Center; do the printing, publicity and poster distribution; organize the Preview Party; manage the auction (both solicitation and the actual auction); plus a host of other needs. Speaking of the auction, we need an auction chair. The auction will be one of the highlights of the Preview Party at The Bell Tower, Saturday evening, April 21. And if you have an auction item to donate, please email [president@gardenoaks.org](mailto:president@gardenoaks.org). The Preview Party auction is a great way to introduce your products or services, while supporting neighborhood protection and beautification.

We're even looking into child-sitting services for tour volunteers for a nominal cost per child, *if* there is enough demand. *Continued on page 6*

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## CITIZENS' PATROL PROGRAM

by Carl Waters, Jr.

The Civic Club invited the Houston Police Department (HPD) and the Constable's office to the February Meeting to discuss neighborhood crime. HPD acknowledged non-violent crime in the area (burglary, robbery, theft and auto theft) is up 28% from 2010 to 2011. They also reported violent crimes (murder, rape and assaults) were down 29% for the same time period. Constable Berry and Sergeant Escobedo, who represented HPD, stated both departments were concerned about the rise in non-violent crime and were dedicating additional man power to the area in an attempt to catch the persons responsible for it.

HPD reported the arrest of one the black males driving the black Toyota Camry in area burglaries and had leads on his partner whom they expected to arrest soon.

All of this seems to be of no avail as through the middle of February home burglaries continued to be reported with some frequency. Three occurred in the 200 block of W 31st in just one afternoon.

### January Crime Statistics: 8

#### Burglary: 5

400 block of W. 30th St. on Thursday, January 19 at 7:15 p.m. (residence).  
 300 block of W. 30th St. on Friday, January 27 at 6:00 a.m. (residence).  
 300 block of W. 30th St. on Friday, January 27 at 2:46 p.m. (residence).  
 300 block of W. 30th St. on Monday, January 30 at 7:30 a.m. (residence).  
 200 block of W. 34th St. on Tuesday, January 31 at 11:53 a.m. (residence).

#### Theft: 3

400 block of W. 30th St. on Friday, January 6th at 1:00 a.m. (residence).  
 1000 block of Althea Dr. on Monday, January 9th at 8:00 p.m. (driveway).

500 block of W. 31st St. on Thursday, January 19 at 6:00 p.m. (vacant lot).

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](mailto:GOCOP77018@AOL.com) or by phone at 713.864.1992.

## Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services 911  
 HPD Non-Emergency Services  
 713.884.3131  
 Constable Dispatch  
 713.755.7628  
 All Other City Services 311

## 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.

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**HEARD UNDER THE OAK TREE**

by Terry Jeanes

**Welcome New Neighbors**

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

**1543 Sue Barnett**  
**1006 Althea**  
**879 West 41<sup>st</sup>**

**March Birthdays**

**Sydney Grace Null** – 3  
**Lori Kennedy** – 5  
**Taylor Crownover** – 8  
**Dodie Davis** and **Jeff Martin** – 11  
**George Appling** – 13  
**Kenneth Santos** - 14  
**Curtis Hall** - 15  
**Marshall Heath** - 18  
**Will Zugheri** –30

**Happy Anniversary**

**Jeff & Gaylynn Martin** celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> - 21

**Mark & Susan Saranie** – 24  
**Sean & Caroline McLean** - 27

**Well Wishes**

To **Sandy Altman** on her recent knee surgery and **Linda Sparks** on her eye surgery.

**Congratulations**

To **George Appling** and **Brian O’Leary**, as their Sherwood Forest Faire was voted Best New Renaissance Festival in the Nation!

**Out and About**

Check it out. Stop by the **Farm Stand at Petrol Station**. Saturday mornings 8am to 1pm at the corner of Wakefield and Golf.

**Condolences and Special Thoughts**

To **Becky McCullough** on the loss of her mother.

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



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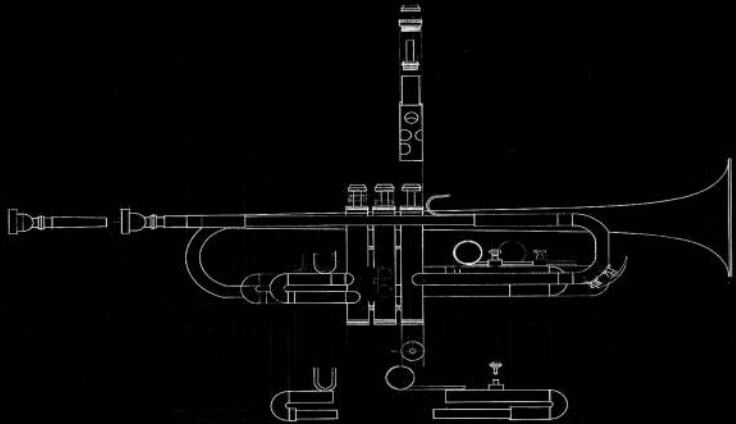
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Terms expire October of year in parentheses.

## GO CIVIC CLUB MEETING MINUTES

*by Secretary Heather Leverett*

Garden Oaks Elementary School  
February 7, 2012

**Welcome:** President Mark Klein called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. President's Announcements  
**Garden Oaks Elementary School Annual Community Pancake Breakfast:** A tremendous success with some 850 plates of pancakes served. Thank you to all of the volunteers.  
**Houston/Galveston Regional Plan for Sustainable Development:** On the city website, there are notices about three upcoming meetings that welcome public input for a plan to successfully manage an increase of four million people expected over the next three decades in our area.

**Home Tour:** The logo is completed. An auction chair is still needed. Ed and Brenda de Alba's garden was nominated as a tour addition by President Klein in early January.

### Special Guests

Carl Walters introduced Constable Berry, Sergeant Escobedo and Officers Bertels and Johnson from HPD's North Division. The officers were here to speak about neighborhood and personal safety.

Constable Kenneth Berry came out of retirement in January 2012 to replace ex-Constable Abercia. Constable Berry reported that Precinct One is alive and well despite recent budget cuts and the issues surrounding Abercia. The Constables are successfully and consistently serving the community, Berry said. He encouraged residents to call the constable to report crimes and suspicious activities.

Sergeant Escobedo explained that the North Division covers over 300,000 people across 52 square miles. Recent burglaries are primarily between the hours of 6am to 5pm. Wednesday is the most common day. He reported that one of the suspects in the recent burglaries in Garden Oaks had been arrested and they expected to have

the second suspect arrested soon. Sgt. Escobedo also reviewed crime statistics across 2010 and 2011 which reflected a decrease in violent crimes but an increase in non-violent crimes.

Sgt. Escobedo also highlighted the importance of supporting the Citizens Patrol program. Started over 20 years ago, the program in HPD's North Division area now has 400-500 volunteers and covers over 22 neighborhoods.

Officer Bertels gave a presentation on personal safety and identity theft. Key themes included awareness of surroundings, acknowledging strangers at your door but NOT opening the door, and calling the constable or HPD when suspicious of anyone in the neighborhood.

Officer Johnson spoke about preventing vehicle burglaries by removing the opportunity. Nothing should be in sight in your car, including gym bags, loose change, or a GPS. All belongings should be taken in the house, even if the car is in your driveway.

Additional discussion included recent crimes in the area, including an assault, participating in groups to get more information about crimes, and how to log vacation watches to protect your home.

### Garden Oaks 2012 Home Tour

Brenda de Alba reported that the tour will include six homes and two gardens. Tickets are for sale at \$17.00 in advance and \$20.00 on the day of the tour. A fee of \$6.00 will be charged for entry to a single home. The logo is completed and publicity has started. There is already \$13,750 in sponsorships. Suggestions have included food trucks. The Garden Oaks Shopping Center will be the site for the command center. Babysitting services are being investigated. The preview party is on April 21st and individual tickets are \$100/ticket. This year there will not be an online auction and there will not be an after-tour party for volunteers. Needs include an auction chair, donations for the auction, docents,

and people to help with set up on tour day. We also need volunteers to help put out posters.

**Standing Committee Reports**

The official committee reports were tabled until the March meeting given the time. Dian Austin (membership) announced that Francisco Diaz won the door prize, a \$25 Starbucks gift card.

The minutes for January 2012 were tabled until the March meeting.

**Additional Announcement/Discussion**

Alex Martinez (Section One) brought up a concern about the gas station at the corner of Yale and 30th selling alcohol and being in violation of deed restrictions. The issue was identified in December and there was concern about GOMO addressing the violation. Mark Saranie (VP of GOMO) responded that legal counsel was looking into the violation and the GOMO has contacted station management to discuss their policy. It was noted that Exxon Mobil used to own the station and did not sell beer or wine, but new owner TimeWise now manages the station.

Lindsey Pollock, Principal of Garden Oaks Elementary School, announced that the school – as part of the MSAP (Magnet Schools Assistance Program) Award – is looking at ways to partner to expand the scope of its environmental curriculum and renewable programs. Neighbors are welcome to participate in the Site Based Decision Making Committee (SDMC) to help with decisions.

Terry Jeanes reminded everyone to support the new Farmers Market near the Petrol Station at Golf and Wakefield.

Vice President Seghers adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

**GOMO Review Meetings**  
 take place prior to Civic Club meetings at 6:30p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month and on the third Wednesday of the month.  
 Meetings are open to anyone interested in attending. Additional information about the Garden Oaks Maintenance Organization is online at GardenOaks.org. Property owners in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 are all members of the Garden Oaks Maintenance Organization.

**Terry Jeanes**  
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## 2012 HOME TOUR UPDATE

*continued from page 1*

So be amazing. Help keep Garden Oaks amazing. Volunteer for the 2012 Home Tour by emailing Brenda de Alba, the Home Tour Co-Chair, at [brenda.p.dealba@exxonmobil.com](mailto:brenda.p.dealba@exxonmobil.com).

### Preview Party

Tickets for the Preview Party at The Bell Tower go on sale March 5 through [www.gardenoaks.org](http://www.gardenoaks.org). Prices are \$1,250 for a reserved table of 10 or \$100 per individual ticket.

### Home Tour 2012 – April 22

Tour tickets will go on sale March 15 at several locations throughout the Heights and Garden Oaks for \$17 in advance and online at [www.gardenoaks.org/hometour](http://www.gardenoaks.org/hometour). Day of tour tickets are \$20, available at the Command Center to be set up at the Garden Oaks Shopping Center, 3800 N. Shepherd. Tickets for individual homes are \$6 each.

## LAST CALL FOR HOME TOUR SPONSORSHIPS

*by Susan Kostelecky*

We have had a tremendous response from area businesses supporting the upcoming Garden Oaks Home & Garden Tour by sponsoring the home tour through their donations of either \$250, \$500, \$1,000 or \$2,500! The generous sponsors are listed below. Many of these sponsors have donated repeatedly for the tours, and we are happy to include new participating businesses as well.

If your business offers a product or service that you would like to promote prior to, during and after the Home Tour, please consider sponsoring the event. Your company will receive recognition in the Garden Oaks Gazette (1400+ distribution) in March, April and May, as well as printed advertising on the day-of-tour ticket, signage at the Preview Party and Command Center, on the GO website and more. I know that I have specifically selected service providers

for my home because they have sponsored the tour and supported our neighborhood.

Companies such as realtors, contractors, designers, landscape designers, lighting and plumbing fixture suppliers, and area attorneys are just a few of the types of businesses that are 2012 event supporters.

The benefits of and fees for underwriting the Tour are featured in detail on the Garden Oaks website: [www.gardenoaks.org](http://www.gardenoaks.org). The deadline for commitment and payment as a sponsor is March 15, so don't miss out on this opportunity to promote your business to the entire GO neighborhood and all of the event attendees!

For more information, please contact Susan Kostelecky at [skdesigns@mindspring.com](mailto:skdesigns@mindspring.com) or 713-697-4110.



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## 2012 GARDEN OAKS HOME AND GARDEN TOUR AND GARDEN TOUR PREVIEW PARTY

by Sue Schmidt

Excitement grows as we prepare for the upcoming 2012 Garden Oaks Home and Garden Tour aptly named, *Blueprints and Footprints*. The fun will begin Saturday, April 21 with the Preview Party once again hosted at the fabulous Bell Tower on 34th. The 2010 Preview Party and Auction were such a rousing success and crowd favorite, the party committee had no choice but to follow it up with an updated, unbelievable 2012 encore!

The evening of April 21st will start with a leisurely, self-guided tour of the six unique and interesting homes and at least one of the beautiful gardens selected to represent Garden Oaks, 2012 style! One of the benefits of volunteering during this major fundraising event for the

neighborhood is the opportunity to take a relaxing stroll through the homes or gardens. Many times the owners, who proudly share the stories of *their* home and design adventures, are on hand to meet and greet all who attend.

Rarely does a neighborhood have such loyal and dedicated residents! Folks don't leave Garden Oaks; they just move within the neighborhood or remodel...and this tour proves that point! Two of the owners recently moved within the neighborhood. One lovingly restored an original residence with a *very* special contemporary twist, and three have just completed renovations that provide that extra space for growing families.

After the 5 to 7:30 p.m. preview of the homes wraps up, preview party attendees will make their way over to one of Houston's top event venues, The Bell Tower on 34th.

The gorgeous setting has become a sought after wedding venue and corporate event location. We are so fortunate to again have the wine cellar rooms, The Foundry, and the outdoor lighted water wall area as the location. Let the party begin! I think anyone who attended the 2010 Preview Party honoring our generous sponsors and home/garden owners will agree that the event was a night to remember. The Tuscan feel of the building and magnificent elegance of the courtyard with music provided by the jazz department of HSPVA was just the perfect setting for friends and neighbors to mix and mingle. Chef Gilbert of the Bell Tower, is once again planning a fabulous dinner menu for the evening. Three drink tickets will also be included with each preview party ticket and valet parking will be provided. It will definitely be a magical evening.

During the party, the auction will





be in full swing! Put your game face on and bring your shoulder pads though! We have a competitive bunch here in Garden Oaks! Bidding was fast and furious over the fabulous weekend getaways, wine dinners, homemade Mexican dinner *including* margaritas by local residents, a year of divine desserts, one of a kind art, and so much more! A rousing live auction for the most coveted items will follow dinner.

All of the proceeds raised during this fun event go back into our community. The Garden Oaks Home and Garden Tour not only showcases our wonderful neighborhood, but provides benefits throughout the years to come. The Spark Park, beautification of our parks and green spaces, the *Gazette*, Garden Oaks Elementary and the Constable Program have all benefitted from funds generated by our largest fundraiser, the Garden Oaks Home and Garden Tour. And what a fun and unique way to give back to the community by attending and supporting the

party and silent/live auctions!

Seating for this year's event is limited to 200 in the beautiful wine cellar/water wall areas of the Bell Tower. Tickets will go on sale March 5th. An order form for party tickets is included in this edition of the *Gazette* and online at | [www.gardenoaks.org](http://www.gardenoaks.org). It is not too early to plan to attend the preview party, Saturday, April 21st and have a delightful evening celebrating all that Garden Oaks has to offer!



*The 2012 Home Tour promises to delight with 6 unique homes and two beautiful gardens. Be sure to join us April 22 from noon to 6 pm and at the Preview Party on April 21 at 7:30 pm. The Garden Oaks Home Tour is held every two years and is the neighborhood's largest fundraiser.*



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Cathy Wahren's note, in the "A Bit of History" section indicates that Garden Oaks was a "country club" community, and boasted a "nine hole golf course" located "east of Shepherd".

I have heard the "golf course in the neighborhood" story before, but without confirmation.

What is known is that Pine Forest Country Club, which was founded by returning WWII veterans who wanted a club, but did not see themselves gaining membership to River Oaks, Houston, or Lakeside Country Clubs, was indeed established at the location of the current Pine Forest industrial park, behind the strip centers (and Sears) that line the east side of Shepherd between the railroad and Crosstimbers. In that the Country Club was a post-war development, and Garden Oaks was established pre-war, it casts doubt on the concept that Garden Oaks was founded as a "country club" community.

Pine Forest was a high quality 18 hole course, and in fact hosted the Houston Open in 1949, which was won by Palmer – no, not Arnold, but John Palmer. By the early 1970s, development pressure in the area was strong, and Pine Forest finally succumbed to temptation and accepted an offer for the purchase of the property, leaving Garden Oaks with industrial warehouses with only the "Pine Forest" name surviving. (The very old members of Pine Forest can point out a couple of places within the industrial park where a tee box, or green mound, still exist, however.)

The club then moved to its current location on Clay Road (which is actually West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, extended many miles west) between Highway 6 and Barker-Cypress Road. With the sales proceeds, the Club was able to build 27 golf holes, a large modern clubhouse, swimming pool, and arched wooden beam tennis dome – and open debt free.

Aerial photos show the old course layout. If interested, go check out [www.historicaerials.com](http://www.historicaerials.com) and enter a Garden Oaks address in the search, then select the 1957 photo option.

But interesting questions remain. Was there indeed a 9 hole course in the neighborhood at any point? The most likely scenario, if the answer is yes, is that the veterans bought it, and expanded it to 18 holes when Pine Forest was built. But I have no evidence for that. There is nothing on the 1957 photo, the oldest one of the area on that website, that would hint of such a course at any other location in or near the neighborhood.

Just thought I would give you and Cathy a follow-up on the golf mysteries of Garden Oaks.

Regards,

Al Thomas

Alvin L. Thomas  
823 Lamonte

## YARD OF THE MONTH

### 821 West 30th St.

The Garden Oaks Garden Club yard of the month selected for February is 821 West 30th Street. This beautiful garden reminds me of being in the Cotswolds. It is very water efficient, due to the fact the St. Augustine grass is very limited, thus improving drainage. There is a huge variety of plantings, varying height, texture, and color. And the architectural accent of the fence further reminds me of a country garden, but the splash of bright purple is just the right contemporary touch.



## GARDEN OAKS NEWS

Timely information about information and events can be found on the Garden Oaks Yahoo group which can be found at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Houston\\_GO](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Houston_GO).

Also join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/35914307130/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/35914307130/)

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**GAZETTE TEAM PLAYER OF THE MONTH**

by Dian Austin

For March, we highlight the contributions of Lynda Spinks, who is the Section Delivery Coordinator for Section 1 and 1A. Each month she delivers the bundled *Gazettes* in a very timely manner to all the block captains in her section. (Thanks also to Mark Saranie and Robert and Lindsey Gabriel for helping out during Lynda's recent foot surgery.)

Lynda has lived in Garden Oaks almost all her life. She grew up in Section 1 and attended Garden Oaks Elementary, Hamilton, and Waltrip schools. Lynda left the neighborhood for awhile, but the pull to return was just too much, so in 1973 she moved back into Section 1 (different house), and has lived in Garden Oaks ever since.

Lynda taught fourth grade in HISD, and has recently retired after 40 years. In her spare time, she still does volunteer tutoring at Stevens Elementary and also volunteers with the First Baptist

Church. Lynda is a long time Garden Oaks Civic Club supporter.

For Lynda's diligence, she receives a \$25 Starbucks gift card from neighbor Oscar Ochoa (OD's Printing). Thanks so much, Lynda.

This month we also welcome Ronda Kelly, our newest *Gazette* block captain. Ronda lives in the 800 block of W. 43<sup>rd</sup>, but volunteered to fill the vacancy for the block captain in the 900 block of that street. Thanks for your willingness to volunteer, Ronda.

If anyone else wants to join the great *Gazette* Delivery Team, call me at 713-691-6505 or email me at [FallingwaterT@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

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

KIM ELLIS  
**Redesign**

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## WET AND WONDERFUL GOES PANCAKE BREAKFAST

by *Tonya Knauth*

A flash flood watch on Saturday morning, February 4 was not enough to keep hundreds of parents, students, and dignitaries away from the 18th Annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction at Garden Oaks Elementary School (GOES).

Event chairman Steve Pittman said that the volunteer dads and granddads flipping pancakes in the kitchen served nearly 850 breakfasts, and that residents turned out like ducks to purchase classroom art projects and thousands of dollars in merchandise and services.

"What inspired us most was the number of new parents that came to visit," said Pittman. "We were well over capacity at the parent orientation and had to quickly schedule a second session to accommodate all the people wanting to learn more about the school. It tells me that our principal, Ms. Pollock, her exceptional teaching staff, and thousands of parent volunteer hours over the years have created a very special learning environment here."

Among the notable attendees were Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia; HISD School Board Trustees Anna Eastman, Mike Lunceford, and Rhonda Skillern-Jones; Houston City Council Member (District C) Ellen Cohen; and former Houston City Council Member (District A) Toni Lawrence.

This year's event theme, "Growing Up Together" was a nod toward significant changes on campus resulting from the award of a U.S. Department of Education Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant for approximately \$2 million last year. The grant helped establish GOES as a Montessori Magnet School with Environmental Sciences. Enrollment has since increased by more than 20 percent in the 2011-2012 school year alone. The number of applications for next Fall has more than doubled the number received last year.

Sponsored by the GOES Parent Teacher

Organization (PTO), the annual breakfast helps cover funding gaps that the grant and other public agencies cannot. Key among the school's funding needs are enhanced technology in the classroom, student field trips, and ancillary arts and enrichment programs.

For more information about Garden Oaks Elementary School visit <http://schools.houstonisd.org/Domain/1872> or call (713) 696-2930.



### Thank you to the following supporters of the 2012 Pancake Breakfast Silent Auction!

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 Heidi Lozano, PTO Store  
 Ashley Lu, Coffee Bar  
 Cheryl McCosh, Slideshow  
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 Houston Fire Department, Station #31  
 The Garden Oaks Cheerleaders  
 Wonderwild featuring Tom's Fun Band

## A Special Thank You To...

Anna Eastman, Trustee, HISD Board of Education  
 Lindsey Pollock, Principal  
 Garden Oaks Elementary Teachers & Staff  
 Students of Garden Oaks Elementary  
 Parent Volunteers for class projects

## The Pancake Breakfast Team Leaders

Steve Pittman, Event Chair  
 Kelly Chapin, Childcare  
 Laura Childs, Event Planning  
 Hospitality & Entrance Table  
 Eden Craig, T-Shirt/Cap Sales & Exit Table  
 Lori Doran, Classroom Auction Items  
 Cindy Falschlehner, Volunteer Coordinator



*Garden Oaks dads Ted Moon, Chris Pharis and Mark Sarmiento were among the hard-working cooks who flipped pancakes for 850 during the annual breakfast. Shown to the left: Interested parents stood in line to learn more about Garden Oaks Elementary at the prospective parent orientation, which was so crowded an extra session was added.*



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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Notable guests at the GOES Pancake Breakfast included from left to right, HISD Trustee Anna Eastman with son Daniel, Garden Oaks parent Shana Tatum, HISD Trustee Rhonda Skillern-Jones, HISD Trustee Michael Lunceford, and Garden Oaks PTO President Erin Hasbrouck.



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**AIR CONDITIONING TIPS FOR THE SPRING**

by Mitch Weigand

**Tip No. 22: Preventative Maintenance is the Key**

Preventative care check-ups are the key. That's why we go to the dentist on a regular basis so small problems can be located and handled before they become big, expensive, painful ones.

**It's that ounce of prevention**

The same is true for your home's air conditioning system. Preventative maintenance is the way to make sure that the system continues to function the way it's supposed to. As a homeowner, how do you know that your heating and cooling equipment is operating correctly and efficiently? Obviously, if the temperature inside your home is too hot or too cold or unusual noises emanate from your A/C in the middle of the night, you would know something's wrong. But what if the amperage draw (amount of electricity in wire) is too high on one of the system's motors? Or your compressor is running low on freon which would lead to overheating? Or worst of all, how would you know if your

furnace is leaking carbon monoxide into your home? That's where a Preventative Maintenance Agreement (PMA) comes to the rescue.

**What's a PMA?**

Preventative Maintenance Agreements (PMA's) are a great way to make sure that your A/C system performs properly. The PMA is purchased for a fixed fee and includes a number of scheduled inspections. At this time of year, the Spring maintenance tune-up includes checking freon levels, inspecting compressor contactors and wiring, lubricating all moving parts, checking belts and adjusting their tension, calibrating and adjusting the thermostat, plus much more.

The primary advantage of this type of agreement is that it's less expensive than a full-service call and provides the homeowner with a contract that focuses on quality preventive maintenance. With a PMA, two inspections are done each year. The cooling system check-up is performed in the Spring while the heating system check-up is done in the Fall. In addition, there's a discount on air conditioning and heating parts, and you do not have to pay extra for emergency

repairs or Saturday service calls.

**What about my warranty?**

Occasionally, a customer will ask why he or she needs a PMA since the A/C system is covered under the manufacturer's warranty? Most HVAC companies require you to keep a maintenance history on your system in order for the warranty to be valid. If you don't, the warranty can be voided for failure to properly maintain the heating and cooling equipment.

Want to learn which is the best air filter for your system and get one installed for FREE? My company, Air Wise, will install a pleated air filter at no charge during a Spring A/C check. This offer is exclusive to Garden Oaks residents only and lasts until May 31, 2012. One free air filter per household please. Just let us know what size filter you will need when you schedule an appointment.

Mitch is the owner of Air Wise™ and a member of the Garden Oaks Civic Club. You can email Mitch with any A/C questions at [mitch@airwisehouston.com](mailto:mitch@airwisehouston.com) or write to 1590 Sue Barnett Drive. All of his previous columns from the *Garden Oaks Gazette* can be found at [www.airwisehouston.com](http://www.airwisehouston.com).

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**GO KIDS UPDATE**

by Kristin Jordan

Thank you all for the warm welcome to the group! We are really excited about this year's events and activities. We hope to see many of you out and about, and are looking forward to

many new discussions, therapy, and advice online.

**Upcoming Events**

**Mom's Night Out – March 8, 7:30pm**

**The Boom Boom Room**

Join us for a fun ladies night out at The Boom Boom Room on Yale - 2518 Yale Street, Houston, TX 77008. It's a wine and panini bar, pretty tasty and kind of girly. See you there!

**Friday Fun Day – March 30**

**Hermann Park Railroad**

Choo Choo, all aboard! Come join us to ride the train at Hermann Park and play at the Buddy Carruth Playground. Please bring something to eat so we can have a picnic before riding the train back and heading home. Tickets are \$3 per person, adults and children 1 year and older. An all day pass is \$6 per person, adults and children 1 year and older. Email [ashleymariehenke@gmail.com](mailto:ashleymariehenke@gmail.com) for more information.

**Playgroups**

**GO Babies - March 9, 10am – 12pm**

Jami Siddiqui's Home  
919 Fisher St. #D, Houston Tx 77018

GO Buddies will be scheduling playgroups during March. Watch your emails for dates and times. **All-Ages Playgroup**-Saturday March 3, 10am at the Garden Oaks Elementary Spark Park.

GO Buddies is still looking for a wonderful volunteer to coordinate monthly playgroups for the 2-5 year old age group. If you are interested in taking on this role, please email us at [kriki@me.com](mailto:kriki@me.com)

**Website / Communication**

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

We have a new website as a front page to our bigtent.com group. It gives a snapshot of events and activities on bigtent, and an easy way to get access to your account. Please share this link with any neighborhood parents that would like to join the group.

**Updates to BigTent.com**

We have added additional area daily activities to the big tent calendar. Many of these are free or have a minimal fee. Checkit out to find fun activities for your whole family. We have also been compiling many of your recommendations into an easily accessible list under the files tab.

**Dinner Drops**

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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, Angelica Sullivan, at [angelicapuerto@hotmail.com](mailto:angelicapuerto@hotmail.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 Kristin Jordan ([kriki@me.com](mailto:kriki@me.com)) or Ashley Henke ([ashleymariehenke@gmail.com](mailto:ashleymariehenke@gmail.com)) for all the details.*

## HEALTHY HABITS TO SAVE OUR HOME

by Lindsey Pollock, Principal, Garden Oaks Elementary

Garden Oaks Elementary is home to our Montessori Magnet program emphasizing Environmental Sciences. This dynamic program not only offers children the opportunity to thrive in

a Montessori school, but also to learn about and practice habits that will save our planet. Environmental Sciences focus on ways in which we can remediate and reduce the impact that we humans have on our home planet and ensure a sustainable future. Dr. Maria Montessori realized the importance of this aspect of education long before it was evident to the general public that we would someday face many of the challenges we have today. As part of the \$3 million federal Magnet School Assistance Program grant, Garden Oaks Elementary will benefit from the installation of the following renewable and sustainable features on campus to help educate our children and improve the sustainability features on campus:

Wind Turbine - Approximately 60 feet tall with the feature to fold down in severe weather. The Wind turbine's 11 foot wind blades will generate power into the electrical grid at the school. This natural and renewable energy source will reduce the electrical load of school.

- Water catchment system - Installed

in two locations on campus to irrigate the gardens and maintain the level of the water in the school's wildlife area pond

- Solar panels to reduce the electrical load at the school
- Solar panels and wind feature in the pond to provide aeration
- Ornithology observation deck on campus for nature observation
- Outdoor classroom

These features, together with the tireless efforts of parent volunteers on the campus, create an inviting and exciting outdoor learning environment for our children and families. Today, the U.S. leads the world in waste generation (245 million tons annually) with a record 4.5 pounds per day. These installations and efforts on our campus are a step in the direction of saving our planet, our home. By investing our time and efforts in reducing our human footprint on the world, together we can make a difference for our children's future!

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## HOMELESS CHILDREN DESERVE TO READ

by Emily K. Roberts, Section 1 resident

A 12 year old boy is in the fourth grade here in Houston. He has learning disabilities and has failed multiple times. He has experienced harsh environments while living with various relatives, in foster homes and even in a car. This boy cannot read and does not have direct access to books. This boy has me thinking about homelessness beyond the homeless man on the corner.

I am a 13 year old 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Alexander Hamilton Middle School. I have grown up in Garden Oaks and am a Cadette Girl Scout. I am only one year older than the homeless boy. What started out as a school research project for me has grown into a community service project. I originally expressed my interest in the homeless by requesting money, instead of gifts, for my 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. I collected enough money to make 47 full meals which I delivered to homeless men and women around Houston. My friends and I witnessed firsthand how grateful the homeless are for the simple things in life. From this initial project I have worked events helping the homeless like the Big Feast and annual Girl Scout service projects.

This issue of homelessness became more important to me when my cousins found themselves having to live in a homeless shelter in Minnesota. This caused my cousins' education to be interrupted resulting in my oldest cousin having to be retained in school. As a result of this ordeal, reading is still quite difficult for this child.

In my research, I have found that for every 135 children in the United States, three will become homeless.

According to The National Center on Family Homelessness, 1.6 million children are living with relatives, in homeless shelters, motels or on the streets as defined by the McKinney Act Definition of homelessness. The Harris and Fort Bend counties accounted for 11,000 of these children. Nationwide, this is a 33% increase from 2007. Among these children, the number of preschool children has increased 43%. Homeless children in public schools increased 41% between 2008 and 2009. Locally, as of January 2011, the number of homeless in Harris and Fort Bend counties had increased by 25% in a year's time. These statistics show there are a reported 3,904 homeless students attending HISD schools this year alone.

Stress, aggressive behavior, and depression are twice as likely to occur with homeless children compared to their peers with homes. Many homeless children face physical, emotional, social and behavioral problems in addition to educational problems. Homeless children are at higher risk of having poor health and

even lead poisoning due to the environments in which they live with no health care. Many of these children experience stressful events for which they are too young to understand. At least one quarter of homeless children have seen or been victims of violence. Educationally, homeless children fall behind four times the rate than their peers. Their test scores are often below grade level and they suffer from undiagnosed learning disabilities. All of this only helps to contribute to the continuation of the circle of homelessness in their future.



Emily Roberts, a 13 year old 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Alexander Hamilton Middle School, Garden Oaks Resident and Cadette Girl Scout, is collecting new or gently used children's and young adult books to help establish or improve a library for children at one of the local area homeless shelters.



I have personally toured local homeless facilities. I visited The Covenant House and SEARCH where I interviewed the directors. I also conducted a telephone interview with a representative from The Star of Hope. I plan to visit IMPACT soon to interview its director and assess its needs. With the exception of The Star of Hope, I have found there is a great need for books and better equipped libraries. The books in these facilities are often out of date or in poor condition.

I have also worked in a very low income elementary school reading to children. This is where I learned of the 12 year old 4<sup>th</sup> grader who lived in a car. I have learned firsthand these children do not own books.

The State of America's Children states that "poverty impacts education." With books, the homeless children will have better equipped learning

abilities which will improve their test scores. With these accomplishments, more will be able to find jobs and possibly go to college. One of these children may very well be the next great inventor. Greater access to books may make all the difference.

I want to make an impact. I am currently collecting new or gently used children's and young adult books to help establish or improve a library at one of the shelters I have visited. I hope to collect enough books to also create book bags to give to individual children. Now is the time for our community to care and help by making donations because these children deserve to read.

If you would like to make a donation of any kind, please contact me at [jameroberts@comcast.net](mailto:jameroberts@comcast.net). On behalf of all the children you are about to impact, I want to say "thank you".



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With the new advancements in our community's technology (GODAT project), we will be able to provide you with emails about CRIME and NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES so that you are easily and quickly informed.

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**CRITTER CORNER**

by Casey and Dorothy Dan Farris

Forty one million Americans claim Irish as their primary ethnicity. That is the second largest ethnic group in America and more than eight times the population of Ireland itself. So this month get your Irish on! If you go looking for four leaf clovers you will surely notice the joys of a clover patch; the smell, the coolness, the thickness. This month Dorothy and I talk about clover lawns as an alternative to grass – less water, less mowing, and no fertilization. Our pet of the month family are of German descent (the largest ethnic group in America) but we can teach them to be a little Irish with a toast -Sláinte (pronounced 'slawn-cha') and means "Health" in Gaelic.

**Critters 101: Coming Up Clover**

Clover is a better lawn than grass is. It requires less water, requires less mowing, and it requires no fertilization; ever. It fixes nitrogen in the soil and is beautiful. It also aerates and enriches heavy soils. It will not urine scald when dogs urinate on it. A heavy over planting of a clover suitable for your area will gradually choke out any and all weeds. You can mow your clover lawn, or let it bloom. Mowing will favor the clover over grass, as it encourages it to spread out instead of up. In the deepest drought, a clover lawn will be fresh and cool and green, while all around, the grass

is brown and parched. Clover is NOT a weed. Most American lawns used to be full of, or even primarily, clover. The only reason we now consider it a "weed" is that so-called "weed and feed" products require the narrow blade of a grass plant to function.

In the book *Redesigning the American Lawn*, the authors challenge gardeners to abandon what they call the "Industrial Lawn," with its enormous chemical dependency and its water-hogging ways. Clover in particular, when seeded into a new or existing lawn, will help fix nitrogen in the soil and eliminate the need for most fertilization.

The simple act of cutting a bit more often, but cutting less of the plant, and leaving the mulched clippings on the lawn, can literally supply all the food your lawn needs. This is a valuable consideration, as home lawn



**Advertising Rates, Sizes, and Submission Guidelines**

Size	Single	Six Months	Twelve Months
2 ¼ W x 2 3/8 H	\$60.00	\$300.00	\$580.00
2 1/4 W x 4 1/4 H	\$90.00	\$450.00	\$870.00
Half Page 7 ½ W X 4 ½ H	\$110.00	\$550.00	\$1065.00
Full Page 7 ½ W x 9 ½ H	\$180.00	\$900.00	\$1745.00
Half Page Back Cover	\$150.00	\$750.00	
Full Page Back Cover	\$225.00	\$1125.00	

Inserts (full page only, single sided) \$180.00  
 Inserts (double sided) \$225.00

1. Placement of the ad is at the discretion of the editor.
2. Camera-ready artwork must be submitted by the 15th of each month for publication the following month and emailed to: [gazette@gardenoaks.org](mailto:gazette@gardenoaks.org)
3. Artwork must be emailed in the following formats: PDF, JPEG (.jpg) or GIF (.gif)



care accounts for more pesticide and herbicide use than all agricultural and golf course use in this country.

Never iron a four leaf clover as you do not want to press your luck!

**Pet of the Month:** March pets are Bud, Roscoe and Ruby. They live in Section II with their parents Dr. Denise Schatte and Keith Fredrickson. Bud is a 15 year old Doberman mix, rescue dog. Bud was adopted at one year old and he came with heart worms, malnutrition, and had been shot under his jaw and through his palette. After several surgeries and treatments, Bud became the soft spoken leader of the pack.

Roscoe is 12 years old and is a Rottweiler mix. He was also rescued from the streets and has become the clown in the family. Roscoe has been through all levels of positive obedience and agility training but he never excelled in agility because he liked to show off to the crowd. The more the crowd laughed and cheered the more he goofed off by repeating the stations where he received the most applause, always looking back at the crowd. Roscoe would also run over to

children in the crowd to be rewarded with their affection.

Ruby is the newest addition to the family. She is a three year old German Shepherd that was adopted at 3 months old. Ruby has also been through positive obedience and agility training. Ruby loves to swim in her kiddie pool and in the pond at the stables with her barn friends. She is great around horses, dogs, cats and children. You will rarely see Ruby without a ball in her mouth.

This family believes that a rescue dog always remembers just a little of their previous life and they appreciate a good loving home even more. Adopt a new family member when you can! This family is O'Terrific!

*Casey Farris is owner/operator of Bone Voyage Pet Sitting Services and Go Dog USA. Dorothy Dan is owner/operator of Casey. Please forward your questions and pet news to [Casey@GoDogUSA.com](mailto:Casey@GoDogUSA.com) or call 713-688-6363.*



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## HOME TOUR CHILDCARE

by Mel Johnson

Are you interested in group babysitting for the upcoming Home and Garden Tour in April? There are two options.

### PREVIEW PARTY

Saturday evening April 21st  
The YMCA on 34th St will host an exclusive kids' night out *if we can meet the minimum* commitment of 15 kids! The cost for this would be \$10 per child for the **WHOLE** night. The start and finish time is yet to be confirmed, but it most likely would be from 5-11pm, if sufficient families are interested in touring the homes and gardens prior to attending the preview party. Otherwise drop-off will be 7pm. The YMCA can accommodate up to 50 kids. I forgot to check minimum age, but would assume they will

require that all kids be potty trained.

### DAY OF THE HOME TOUR, FOR KIDS OF VOLUNTEERS ONLY

Sunday April 22nd  
Ms. Pollock at Garden Oaks Elementary School has kindly offered us the use of the multi-purpose room for the children of volunteers. If we get enough interest your kids could enjoy a group play-date while you do a good deed for our neighborhood. We would need to charge a nominal fee, but it'll be cheaper than hiring a sitter!

- Earliest drop-off would be 11:45, latest pickup 6:15pm. The early session would be from 11:45-3:15, the second session would be 2:45-6:15pm; this aligns with the timing for the 3 hour volunteer shifts.
- Folks who volunteered before the event could use whichever

timeslot they prefer and choose to tour the homes and gardens kid-free.

- Your child(ren) will be in the school playground from drop-off to snack time, with an option to watch an age appropriate movie towards the end of each period.
- If the YMCA cannot staff this service I will be looking for additional volunteers to assist with watching the kids. Many of the YMCA employees have other commitments on Sundays.
- Your child would need to be potty trained and comfortable being left in a group setting.

Please contact me at 713-692-8806 or [igjohnson@yahoo.com](mailto:igjohnson@yahoo.com) if you are interested in either or both of these services.

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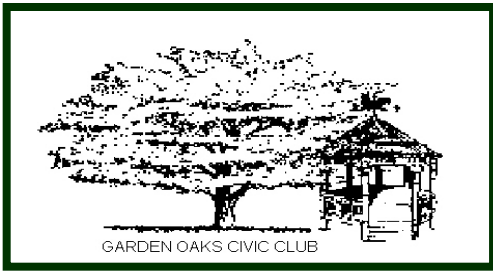


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**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES STATEMENT**

**GARDEN OAKS CIVIC CLUB**

**January - December 2012**

DUE DATE: January 1, 2012	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ _____
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Membership is open to all residents whether you own or rent. Please choose the level you feel most comfortable supporting. **While all memberships are voluntary, you must contribute a minimum of \$25 (or \$5 for Seniors 65 years+)** in order to be eligible to vote on civic club matters. Membership dues are for the calendar year.

Fill in Amount

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ CREPE MYRTLE: \$25.00 (\$5.00 for Seniors)  
 • Basic Household Membership

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ THE MAGNOLIA: \$50.00 (\$10.00 for Seniors)  
 • Intermediate Level – Household Membership

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ THE GOLDEN OAK: \$75.00 (\$15.00 for Seniors)  
 • Patron Level – Household Membership

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP: \$50.00 (non-voting membership)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRIBUTION TO BEAUTIFICATION (area green spaces)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRIBUTION TO GARDEN CLUB

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

Membership dues support all Garden Oaks Civic Club Activities: Beautification, Citizens' Patrol, the *Gazette*, Home Tour, Membership Committee, and Website.

**Please mail this completed form along with your check payable to:**  
 Garden Oaks Civic Club, P.O. Box 10273, Houston, TX 77206. **THANK YOU!**



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# MARCH 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Civic Club mtg 7:00pm, GOES 	7	8 Garden Club 7 pm MNO 7:30 pm Boom Boom Room	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Gazette Deadline	16	17
18	19	20	21 GOMO meeting, 7pm 	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## ACE TREE SPECIALIST

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