

GARDEN OAKS GAZETTE

VOLUME 36

ISSUE 5

THANK YOU!

A more comprehensive recap of the 2014 Garden Oaks Home & Garden Tour is forthcoming in the June issue of the *Gazette*, but here is a preliminary "thank you!" to everyone who worked so hard to conceive, prepare for, and execute such a fun, beautiful, inspiring, and all-around successful event!

For now, here are some photos of the GO Spring Cleaning Day held on Saturday, April 5th. Many, many thanks to Boy Scout Troop 20, led by Scoutmaster Marc Roberts, and the scouts' parents for cleaning up the trash along Shepherd Drive.



**BOY SCOUT
TROOP 20**

SPECIAL NEEDS GIRL SCOUT TROOP BAKE SALE

By Tina Sabuco and Shellye Arnold

Special Needs Girl Scout Troop 21 invites you to a bake sale it has planned for Sunday, May 18 from 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. in Garden Oaks' Triangle Park at the corner of Azalea and Alba. All proceeds from the bake sale will benefit our troop, the only special needs Girl Scout troop in the United States. Troop members range in age from 30 to 60 years, with some of the original members from the troop's 1976 formation still active. We are co-leaders of this group and would love for you to come by to meet and support our SPECIAL SCOUTS!

Anyone interested in baking goods for the scouts to sell for the troop is most welcome to do so; just let us know so that we can coordinate with you. Please call 713-819-9339 or email tina@artsaliveinc.com for more information. Many thanks to our Garden Oaks neighbors and friends for your support!



**GIRL SCOUT
TROOP 21**

May 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS

May Civic Club Meeting

Tuesday, May 6th

7:00 p.m.

Garden Oaks Montessori

901 Sue Barnett Drive

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 11th

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By Sheila Briones, Civic Club President

As we prepare to celebrate Mother’s Day this month, I thought I would share the piece on the facing page by American novelist and short story writer Temple Bailey, originally published in Good Housekeeping magazine in 1933.

Your Mother is always with you. She’s the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street, she’s the smell of certain foods you remember, flowers you pick and perfume that she wore, she’s the cool hand on your brow when you’re not feeling well, she’s your breath in the air on a cold winter’s day. She is the sound of the rain that lulls you to sleep, the colors of a rainbow, she is your birthday morning.

Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she’s crystallized in every tear drop. A mother shows every emotion—happiness, sadness, fear, jealousy, love, hate, anger, helplessness, excitement, joy, sorrow—all the while hoping and praying you will only know the good feelings in life. She’s the place you came from, your first home, and she’s the map you follow with every step you take. She’s your first love, your first friend, even your first enemy, but nothing on earth can separate you. Not time, not space, not even death.

Here’s to all the mothers of our wonderful community!



Garden Oaks Gazette

The Garden Oaks Gazette is the official publication of the Garden Oaks Civic Club and is published monthly. The submission deadline is the 15th of each month for publication the following month, unless otherwise noted.

Publication herein of any article not directly related to the Garden Oaks Civic Club does not imply endorsement by the civic club and such article is solely an expression of its author’s opinion.

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A Little Parable for Mothers

By Temple Bailey

The young Mother set her foot on the path of life. "Is the way long?" she asked. And her Guide said: "Yes. And the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning."

But the young Mother was happy, and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed with them in the clear streams; and the sun shone on them and life was good, and the young Mother cried, "Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then night came, and storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the Mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said, "Oh, Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come," and the Mother said, "This is better than the brightness of day, for I have taught my children courage."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the Mother was weary, but at all times she said to the children, "A little patience, and we are there." So the children climbed, and when they reached the top, they said, "We could not have done it without you, Mother." And the Mother, when she lay down that night, looked up at the stars, and said: "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday I gave them courage. Today I have given them strength."

And the next day came strange clouds which darkened the earth—clouds of war and hate and evil, and the children groped and stumbled, and the Mother said: "Look up, Lift your eyes to the Light." And the children looked and saw above the clouds an Everlasting Glory, and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that night the Mother said, "This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the Mother grew old, and she was little and bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. And when the way was hard, they helped their Mother; and when the way was rough, they lifted her, for she was as light as a feather; and at last they came to a hill, and beyond the hill they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide.

And the Mother said: "I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them."

And the children said, "You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a Living Presence."

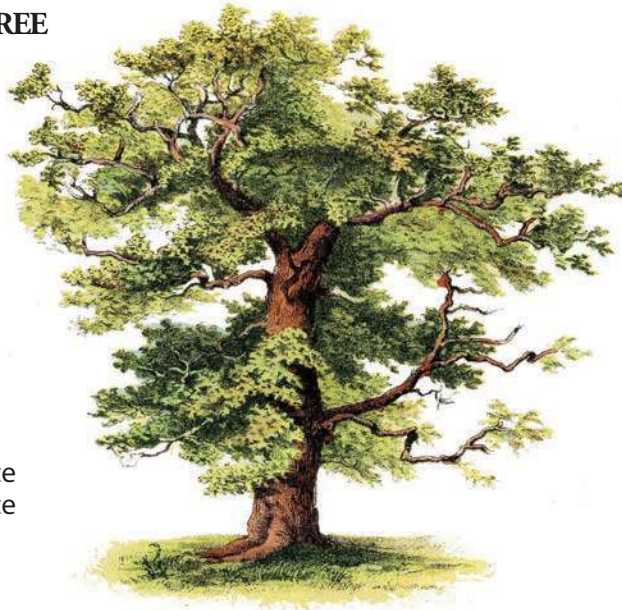
HEARD UNDER THE OAK TREE

By Terry Jeanes

Welcome, New Neighbors!

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

- 810 West 30th 962 Althea
- 208 West 33rd 982 Althea
- 220 West 34th 4223 Apollo
- 709 West 34th 4227 Apollo
- 718 West 38th 4247 Apollo
- 954 West 41st 3110 Lawrence
- 878 West 42nd 3303 Lawrence
- 1015 West 43rd



Happy Birthday

- Cheryl McCosh..... 5/1
- Brad Hem. 5/2
- Christopher K. 5/5
- Susie Heath. 5/8
- Linda Sparks..... 5/8
- Ryan W. 5/9
- Gaia O-A..... 5/21
- Gareth O-A 5/21
- Riley T..... 5/22
- Amelie P. 5/24
- Shannon Miller..... 5/31
- Rowan S. 5/31

New Kid on the Block

- Hudson Magee 2/2

Happy Anniversary

- Jason & Alisha Cunningham 5/16

Out and About

Happy retirement wishes to **Leslie Ryan**.

The surprise is out of the bag for **Lily B.** who will be celebrating her 13th birthday in New York City with mom, **Georgia Lister**, seeing some of her favorite Broadway shows.

Congratulations to all the Garden Oaks MS150 riders, including **Victor Seghers, Phil Ramirez, and Chad Modad**. Several neighbors were cheering from the sidelines along the route, including the **Kleins, Acostas, Pittmans, and Jeaneses**.

Special Thoughts

Special thoughts for the family of **Barry Morris** following his recent, unexpected passing. Barry was instrumental in the forming of a group known as Garden Oaks People Helping in Education Reform (GOPHER), which later became Friends of Montessori (FOM) and is still active in supporting Montessori education in Houston schools. Barry's wife, **Susan Morris**, has been a beloved Children's House teacher at Garden Oaks Montessori for many, many years.

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

Terry Jeanes
Your Neighbor & Area Specialist



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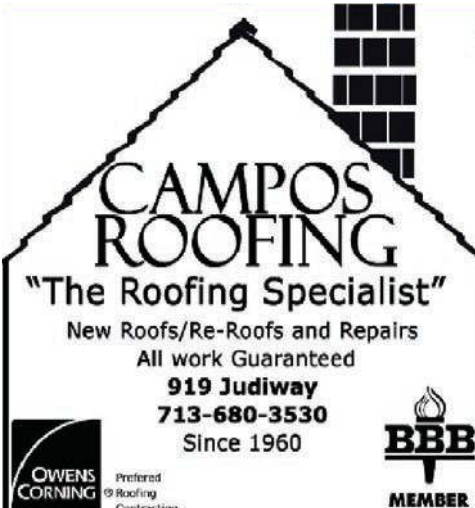
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Each director's term expires in October of year in parentheses.

CITIZENS' PATROL UPDATE

By Carl Waters, Jr.

I hope everyone took advantage of the home tour to check out some of the fascinating homes and gardens of the neighborhood. Another way you can check out the neighborhood is by becoming a Citizen Patroller. The requirements are that you must be a Garden Oaks resident at least 18 years of age and pass a criminal background check conducted by the Houston Police Department. Upon completion of a one-hour training session and a ride-along with one of our veteran patrollers, you will be ready for patrolling on your own and making Garden Oaks a safer place to live. Got an hour to spare? We can help you fill it!

The Citizens' Patrol Program is pleased to announce that Brooke Murphy has joined us. Brooke completed the required training in January and is now patrolling the streets of Garden Oaks to help keep our neighborhood safe.

Inquiries about joining the Citizens' Patrol Program or about other community safety issues can be directed to me via neighborhood website GardenOaks.org, e-mail at GOCOP77018@AOL.com, or by phone at 713-569-3153.

GOMO Review Meetings

take place at 6:30 p.m. prior to Civic Club meetings on the first Tuesday and at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month.

Meetings are open to anyone interested in attending. Additional information about the Garden Oaks Maintenance Organization (GOMO) is available online at GardenOaks.org.

Property owners in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 are all members of GOMO.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services
911

HPD Non-Emergency Services
713-884-3131

Constable Dispatch
713-755-7628

All Other City Services
311

March Crime Statistics (7)

Burglary (1)

500 block of W. 30th on Sunday, March 30 at 2:38 p.m. (residence)

Theft (4)

200 block of W. 31st on Tuesday, March 18 at 2:00 a.m. (driveway).

4200 block of Apollo on Tuesday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. (residence).

2900 block of N. Shepherd on Wednesday, March 26 at 8:42 a.m. (office building).

300 block of W. 32nd St. on Monday, March 31 at 12:10 a.m. (street).

Auto Theft (2)

3400 block of N. Shepherd Dr. on Thursday, March 20 at 10:45 p.m. (restaurant).

2900 block of N. Shepherd Dr. on Saturday, March 22 at noon (commercial building).



GARDEN OAKS CIVIC CLUB MEETING MINUTES

By Cindy Bartos, Secretary

April 1, 2014

Location: Garden Oaks Montessori Magnet School, 901 Sue Barnett Drive

Prior to the start of the meeting, President Briones announced the availability of babysitting services in the school's library, a service arranged by the Civic Club and provided by caregivers from the Harriet and Joe Foster Family YMCA for a cost of \$1.00 per child.

Welcome: President Sheila Briones called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 2014 minutes as published in the *Gazette*.

PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Briones discussed the Board's consideration of obtaining a general liability insurance policy with errors and omissions coverage for Civic Club events such as the Wine Walk, Home Tour, 4th of July Parade, work/clean up days, etc. The Board would like to get at least three quotes before selecting a provider, but had received only one offer at the time of the meeting. In order to have coverage in place for the upcoming Home Tour, the Board would need to obtain more quotes and make a decision before the next Civic Club meeting. Terry Jeanes moved to authorize the Civic Club Board to purchase a general liability policy with errors and omissions for the term of one year not to exceed \$1000. Motion was seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jerry Butler reported on the civic club's current finances and had copies of the current profit and loss statement and balance sheet available for meeting attendees.

Program: Megan Salch, President, Tell Your Tale Marketing & Design, and author of 100+ Activities for Houston Kids, presented a variety of free and low-cost activities for children of all ages and their families. Megan's PowerPoint presentation would be made available to view on the Garden Oaks website www.gardenoaks.org.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Constable Program: Terry Jeanes introduced Deputy Bowden, who works the 10:00 pm. to 6:00 a.m. shift for the Garden Oaks Constable Program. Ms. Jeanes and Deputy Bowden each expressed grave concern over the dangerous traffic conditions and the number of accidents at the intersection of Alba and West 43rd. Ms. Jeanes urged the Civic Club to take action to help reduce the number of accidents such as installing traffic signs with flashing lights to warn approaching drivers of the upcoming traffic light. She volunteered to help explore solutions if someone would take charge of the initiative.

Membership: Brenda de Alba appeared on behalf of committee chair Dian Austin and reported a cumulative total of 356 paid Civic Club memberships for the year. Joan Harmon won the door prize.

Garden Oaks Citizens' Patrol: Carl Waters reported on neighborhood crimes in the month of March.

Gazette: Editor Jenny Espeseth reminded everyone of the deadline to submit articles and encouraged those interested in helping with the *Gazette* to contact her.

Government Affairs: Committee Chair Committee chair Mark Klein was not present at the time of committee reports.

Ad Hoc Drainage Project

Committee: Chair Pam Parks reported that committee member Julie Maddox was successful in obtaining variance petition signatures from 75% of the residents that live on Alba Road. The variance request will be submitted to the City of Houston to ask that sidewalks not be installed on either side of Alba. Ms. Parks would like to arrange a meeting for the committee with City of Houston engineers involved in the Drainage Project, and Council Member Ellen Cohen's office to discuss details of the project before recommending a course of action to the Civic Club.

Beautification: Gary Harmon reported that plants and flowers had been planted in the pocket parks. More mulch and flowers will be added prior to the Home Tour. GO Kids will be coordinating times with Gary for the older kids to help with planting and clean-up. There will be a scheduled clean-up along Shepherd on Saturday, April 5th.

Website: Joe Muscara had no report.

2014 Home Tour: Chair Brenda de Alba reported a record total of \$28,000 in sponsorships to date. Tickets are still available for the VIP Party. Ms. de Alba provided posters to meeting attendees to distribute to area businesses. There will be a party for Home Tour volunteers on Sunday from 6:00-8:30 at Cottonwood. Everyone is welcome, but only those wearing their volunteer t-shirts will receive free food and drinks.

Garden Oaks Montessori: Principal Lindsey Pollock announced that there were over 800 applications for the 60 available Children's House magnet openings for the 2014-2015 school year. Recent improvements to the school include a technical upgrade and, through a \$250,000 STEM grant, implementation of interactive white boards in the

classrooms. Also, a StyroGenie has been purchased for the cafeteria which will transform styrofoam lunch trays into recyclable and reusable blocks. The school will host a Spring Fling on Saturday, April 26th from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

President Briones reported on her meeting with the owner of Cottonwood concerning the recent noise and parking issues. She said he was apologetic and will let us know in advance of future large events.

President Briones announced that the program speaker for the May 6, 2014 meeting will be Garden Oaks resident Shellye Arnold, Executive Director, Memorial Park Conservancy. The topic of Ms. Arnold's presentation will be "Memorial Park: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".

President Briones adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Child Care Offered at Civic Club Meetings

The Civic Club is pleased to offer members an arrangement with the Foster YMCA to provide child care during civic club meetings. YMCA child care specialists, each trained in first aid and CPR, will care for your children from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (the usual duration of civic club meetings) in an area adjacent to the meeting location for a nominal charge of \$1.00 per child. Our hope is that this service will enable more members to attend our monthly civic club meetings.

Please remember to pay Civic Club and Constable Dues for 2014. Pay online at www.gardenoaks.org or complete the enclosed forms.

The Garden Oaks Gazette Wants YOU!

Do you have layout design or desktop publishing skills or any interest in acquiring them? Perhaps you've been dreaming of becoming the next Gazette editor or assistant editor so you can get the inside scoop on GO-ings-on?

Contact the editorial team at gazette@gardenoaks.org to discuss how you can get involved!

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CONSTABLE PROGRAM UPDATE

By Terry Jeanes, Constable Program Committee Chair

Many thanks to all of you who have promptly submitted your constable program dues for 2014. If you have not yet done so, PLEASE JOIN TODAY AND SUPPORT OUR PROGRAM via debit or credit card at www.gardenoaks.org/constable or with a check payable to Garden Oaks Civic Club. However you choose to contribute, please submit a completed Constable Program Contributor Form by mail or e-mail to constable@gardenoaks.org to ensure that we have your current emergency contact information on file. The form is available in this issue of the *Gazette* and online at the link to the right. We greatly appreciate your support of this program!

Our current Garden Oaks Patrol Deputies are Corey Greer (mornings), Jeff Bartee (afternoons), and Jeff Bowden (night). Watch the *Gazette* in the coming months to learn more about each of our new officers.

Be sure your alarm monitoring company has:

**Precinct One
Constable Dispatch**

713-755-7628

as the first responder on your call list when your home's alarm is triggered. Please also program this number in your cell phone for ready access when you or a neighbor needs it.


Constable Program Contribution Form:

www.gardenoaks.com/constable


Vacation Watch Form:

www.gardenoaks.org/resources/vacationwatch.pdf

To receive timely notices of crime alerts, please provide your name, e-mail address, and home address to secretary@gardenoaks.org.



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**GARDEN OAKS RESIDENT PROFILE:
DON STOKEY**

Tommie Vaughn Ford salesman Don Stokey has been a Garden Oaks resident since September of 1989. He was born in Hermann Hospital, raised in the Heights area, and attended Reagan High School. Over the years he has watched the area grow and change. But Don just keeps selling cars and giving his neighbors the exceptional service Mr. Vaughn knew was important.

Don has been a salesman at Tommie Vaughn Motors for 28 years, first from 1982-1983, then from 1988 to today. In his first month at Tommie Vaughn, he sold 15 cars. Mr. Vaughn was impressed. "Doesn't even know anyone in town and he sold 15 cars...he's gonna be a good one," Mr. Vaughn commented. It seems Mr. Vaughn was quite right. Today, Don estimates he has sold between 6,000 and 9,000 cars to residents of Garden Oaks.

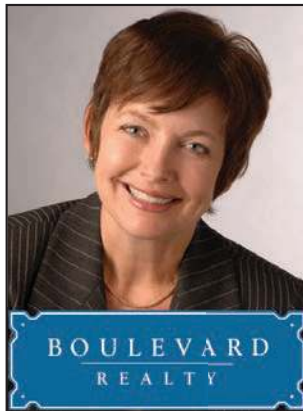
Over the years, Don has had the pleasure of serving some of the area's most established companies. His first commercial clients were McDugaldSteele and Moss Landscaping. Just like Tommie Vaughn Ford, and Don himself, those companies have stood the test of time. Founded in a time where the customers are #1, they hold onto those ideals to this day.

Don's most memorable customer came to the Tommie

Vaughn Ford lot in February of 1993. George H.W. Bush and his Secret Service team visited and purchased several cars. Don remembers Bush senior as being "laid-back and easy to talk to."

Talking to Don, the first thing you notice is his sincerity. He reflects on the last nearly three decades at Tommie Vaughn Ford with a quiet pride and sense of accomplishment.

"The best thing about Tommie Vaughn is the family approach that the Janke family has carried on through the years and the dedication to doing what's best for the customer. Mr. Vaughn always said 'You can buy a car at any lot, but you can't get service everywhere.'" They just don't make companies or cars like they used to.



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TAKE TIME TO PRACTICE HEALTHY HABITS

By Lindsey Pollock, Ed.D.,
Principal, Garden Oaks Montessori

We've all been hearing that childhood obesity is a national epidemic. Parents and teachers have been urged to watch our children's eating habits and encourage exercise since so many of them face a high risk of diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. How alarming it is that we are seeing an increase in a hypertension and even high cholesterol in children as young as 8 years old. With these frightening health factors, many parents have taken proactive measures to monitor their children's health by purchasing healthy food, avoiding fast food stops, and incorporating a family exercise and sleep plan.

But should parents of children who don't have to worry about weight monitor food intake, too? Researchers from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have been studying children's health and nutrition for many years and have found that yes, even if weight is not the primary concern, there are many benefits to adhering to a healthy lifestyle. Benefits to children included greater concentration, improved and more stable moods, better quality of sleep, fewer days missed of school, and fewer learning difficulties.

If you are looking for ways to support your child's developing physical and mental health, consider the following tips:

- You decide what goes in the grocery cart and what gets paid for at the checkout! If you want your child to eat healthy, buy and serve healthy foods. When the only choice is healthy food, your child will eat it.
- Sweets and snacks are to be a treat – a rare exception to a stable, healthy diet.
- DRINK WATER! Your body is made up primarily of water and your brain needs it to function well. Water is naturally clear and refreshing – no need for it to be flavored or sweetened.
- Have a sleep routine that helps your child unwind and relax. Going to bed is a great time to reflect on the day, set goals, and tell your children how much you love them!
- Plan ahead and be on time to appointments. When you are late or under stress, both you and your child release stress chemicals that increase your heart rate and distractibility. Your body is designed to keep you alive and safe. Remember those lessons on fight-or-flight? Stress activates survival chemistry and diminishes the ability to focus.

Your body and your mind are connected. What goes into your mouth provides the fuel and material to build a healthy structure for your mind to direct in thought, word, and deed. The next time you are buying groceries, preparing a meal, or packing your child's lunch, remember that you are building your child's physical and mental future. What will they build with the food, exercise, and rest that you have provided for them? While you review the choices you are making for your child, review the choices you are making for yourself. Are you aware that you are your child's most important and influential teacher? Set a healthy example so you can be around long enough to witness the amazing things your children will do with the physical and mental health you've helped them to cultivate!

For more ideas about how you can support your family's health, visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/USDAchildrensnutrition>

<http://tinyurl.com/AAPnutritionandfitness>

YOUR DESIGNER SHOWROOM

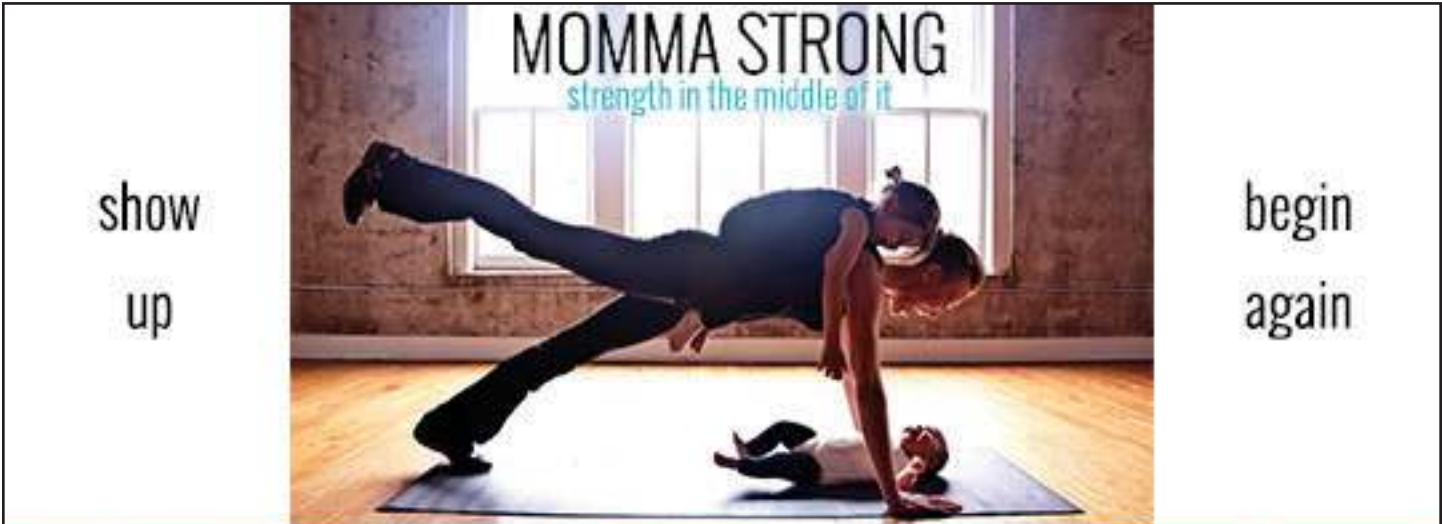




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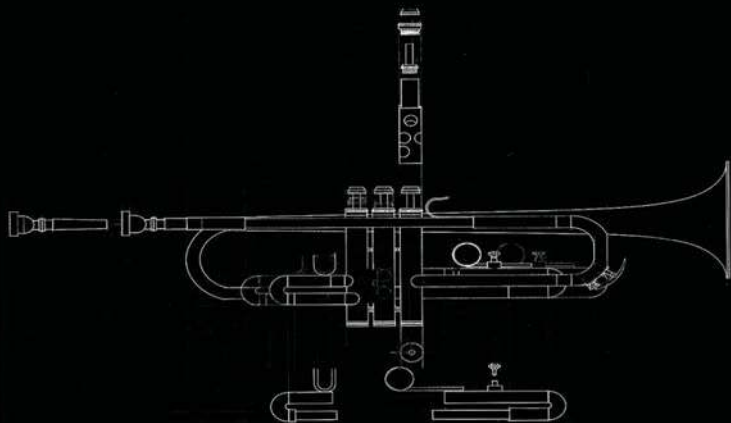
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MOTHER'S DAY THE MOMMA STRONG WAY*By Courtney Wycoff, CPT, CES*

I recently had an interesting discussion (don't get too excited) with a man named Kent about his 29-year old marriage and his relentless wishes for it to end, "finally." Of course, I became immediately attuned to the signs of a mid-life crisis – the lack of presence of said wife, buff arms, freshly shaven bald head, coifed mustache, a Lone Star in hand, and plenty of winks – and I knew that my friend Kent was on the prowl that night to claim his liberation. And one thing led to another and Kent somehow slipped in the following statement: "Well, you know, it's easier for men in their 60s to date than for women in their 60s to do so, because women (and then whispered like he was very frightened) just don't age very well." Well, I'll spare you my response, which I am confident would have made my freshman women's studies professor very proud.

Anyway, the next morning, while performing the daily frantic survey of my oldest's dollhouse ("WHERE ARE ALL MY GUYS," she screams), I found a very frightening bit of evidence. There, in the dollhouse, was the resident miniature wooden family. And, I was pleased to see that Little Sister, Little Brother, even Dad, all looked so cheery and fresh-faced. Then, to my horror, I took a glance at Mom (pictured below in the yellow shirt). She looked like hell. I mean, hair missing, arms missing, face totally banged up.

So, I decided that this called for a little family photo. And, mind you, if Mom looks a couple of centimeters too short, that is only because her left foot was hanging on by a thread and I had to prop her up on her non-arms over the banister.



It turns out that Sassy, our curious dog, had decided a while ago that Mom was super tasty. However, naturally, I decided that, in the world of tiny dollhouse people, what really happened was that Mom had saved the rest of the family by bravely battling the horrible beast (Sassy) and took one for the team. Of course, I go to therapy enough to know that I am totally projecting here, but, come on . . . we all know 7 times out of 10 who it is in the family that often faces the scary beasts of life (barf in the middle of the night, explosive poo, sibling battles, close encounters with the bathtub drain, etc.)

So, this is just to say to all you moms and wives and caretakers of anything or anyone, take good care of yourselves and prove to all the Kents out there that the only reason we supposedly age badly (an assertion still up for debate, of course) is because, generally speaking, we tend to, and even perhaps instinctively, face those scary beasts and take one for the team. And, remind yourself that the journey of motherhood can often whisk away all too quickly the feeling of a body that is truly active and resilient. Carrying a baby in her body during pregnancy and on her body for months and months afterward can leave a woman locked into a sensation of a stagnant state of disrepair. Note the word "sensation." It was used carefully.

I believe that what most of us want after having children is the stripping of that sensation away. Adventure. Risk. Physical agility and possibility. A rekindling of the way your body used to feel after soccer practice or dance class or doing a million cartwheels during recess. To feel armed and ready. To bounce and chase. To end the day with a little extra to give to ourselves. To feel good. To feel strong (again).

So, perhaps on Mother's Day this year instead of waiting to receive gifts of rest and appreciation from your loved ones, give yourself access to what makes you feel alive first. Take note: You'll have to do some digging to figure out what this means to you. I guarantee that the minute you begin that search, you will find something profoundly special about who you were before you willingly and courageously handed your body and mind and soul and energy to children. And that profoundly special "something" will be far easier to reclaim than you think. In fact, it's been sitting right next to you all along, waiting for you to just say hi.

As far as my own life in terms of all of this, I haven't quite ruled out the possibility that my dogs, Milah and Sassy, are secretly planning my demise through the use of some sort of voodoo doll ceremony. I mean, ever since my youngest began finding bliss in toddler rebellion, I certainly have cut back on their walks and I have even, on occasion, forgotten to feed them breakfast. Pray for me.

Courtney is a Certified Personal Trainer and Corrective Exercise Specialist, with 12 years experience in the field of fitness, nutrition, and injury prevention/treatment.

AIR CONDITIONING TIPS FOR THE SPRING

By Mitch Weigand

I've been asked to repeat this favorite column; it is as pertinent now as it was in 2011:

Flora and Fauna vs. A/C System

While landscaping your yard this spring, consider doing it in such a way that the plants actually contribute to the cooling of your home. According to the Department of Energy, keeping the condenser (that's the A/C system's outside unit) in the shade can increase its efficiency by as much as 10 percent. Just be sure that the plants or shrubs placed near the condenser do not obstruct air flow or impede access for repairs. Leave approximately three feet of clearance all around the equipment and at least five feet above it.

In turn, the condenser can benefit your landscaping. One of the tasks your A/C performs is to de-humidify the air from within your home. It collects and pumps the humidity outside as condensation. While not a lot, water from the drain line can provide moisture to keep the surrounding plants.

Pet damage can happen

When we consider our furry family members and the damage they can cause, we often think of gnawed or clawed furniture and stains on the carpet. While we can train our pets to mind their manners indoors and relieve themselves outdoors, the condenser is especially vulnerable to damage done by pet urine. Urine contains chemicals that are very good at eating away metals, especially aluminum. Unfortunately, condenser fins and coils are made of aluminum, and in time, fins become encrusted with dust and coils begin to leak.

A leak in the condenser coil means that your A/C is no longer a properly closed system. The freon will leak out, and in a matter of hours, days or months, the system can be emptied completely. When this happens, you run the risk of burning out the condenser and having to replace it prematurely.

A clean condenser is a happy condenser

When your A/C runs, air is drawn into the condenser through its coil. Outdoor contaminants such as dust and plant matter including grass clippings, cottonwood seeds, small leaves, and bits of landscaping mulch get caught in the coil. You can include pet hair and urine too. As debris accumulates, air flow through the coil is reduced which causes your system to work harder and harder. It is not uncommon for a condenser coil to be clogged completely in just one season of operation. As a homeowner, one thing you can do


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Air Wise came out when my A/C went out. I have a Poodle and a Boston Terrier and needed someone fast so they wouldn't have to sit in the heat. The technician arrived that evening and fixed it in only 1-1/2 hours even though I have an older unit. Thank goodness because my babies need cool air! Also, he was nice and clean because I can't stand rude service men who come in and mess up your house. I feel like I can trust this company.





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Air Wise owner Mitch Weigand

is take your garden hose and spray thoroughly about six inches from the condenser's fins to clear them of dust and leaves. This simple action will go a long way in keeping your condenser running efficiently. This is why routine maintenance is so important. The higher temperatures generated by a filthy coil will cause premature failure of the capacitors, fan motor, and eventually the compressor within the condenser. A thorough cleaning of the condenser coil can prevent this from happening. Not only will keeping the coil clean improve the efficiency and capacity of your entire system, it will extend the life of your entire A/C system.

Mitch is the owner of Air Wise™ and a member of the Garden Oaks Civic

NEW PARTNERSHIP BRINGS VALUABLE COUNSELING RESOURCES TO THE AREA

St. Stephen's United Methodist Church at 2003 W. 43rd Street is pleased to announce its partnership with Interface-Samaritan Counseling Centers. Interface-Samaritan is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that has provided counseling and education services from a Christian perspective for over 42 years. Interface's state-licensed counselors work in 6 locations across greater Houston and strive to offer behavioral health services to adults, adolescents, and children, regardless of their ability to pay.

Some of the issues that Interface treats include, but are not limited to:

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TIPS FOR SENIORS: INCLUDE PARENTS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR DOCTORS

By Marilyn Drane

If you commonly accompany your mother and/or father to their medical appointments, be wary of falling into the habit of speaking “for” them by reporting problems and symptoms. When this happens, Mom or Dad is often cut out of the communication, which may introduce or reinforce a false sense of dependency and incompetence

What You Can Do

- Keep Mom and Dad in the channel of communication.
- Maintain silence after speaking to allow time for them to respond.
- Maintain eye contact with Mom or Dad.
- Avoid referring to Mom or Dad in the third person.
- Have Mom or Dad verify information provided to help establish her/his autonomy and responsibility for personal health.

These seemingly small gestures go a long way toward helping your mother and father feel empowered, which could help their overall health in the long run.

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**Government Affairs
 Important Dates**

Central Northwest Super Neighborhood Council Meeting
 Wednesday, May 28 • 6:30 p.m.
 Candlelight Community Center
 1520 Candlelight Lane, Houston, TX 77018

Northwest Mobility Study - Deadline for Final Public Comment
 Friday, May 2
<http://houston-northwest.org>

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**MEMORIAL PARK
CONSERVANCY EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR SHELLYE ARNOLD
TO PRESENT AT MAY
CIVIC CLUB MEETING**

Shellye Arnold, Executive Director of the Memorial Park Conservancy, will be presenting the topic "Memorial Park: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" at our Civic Club meeting on Tuesday, May 6.

The mission of the Memorial Park Conservancy is to preserve, restore, and enhance Memorial Park for the enjoyment of all Houstonians, today and tomorrow. Founded in 2000, Memorial Park Conservancy aspires to implement principles of exceptional park management and stewardship in a successful public-private partnership with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD).

Shellye brings a wealth of experience in executive leadership and change management from her 19 years at



Cisco Systems, Hewlett-Packard, and Compaq Computer Corporation in strategic planning, marketing, and operations. There she developed and executed innovative marketing programs that helped deliver over \$5 billion in sales, led strategy and planning to help a major line of business grow from \$4 billion to \$10 billion and coached and mentored dozens of employees.

Shellye also served as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company's Houston and Mexico offices where she helped her energy

and high tech clients identify and access new markets. Having studied public policy, Shellye spent the first part of her career with the Texas State Legislature, the Texas Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. She has also lived

and worked across Latin America delivering public health programs and speaks Spanish fluently. Shellye holds a BA from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master in Public Policy from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School.

As a native Houstonian, Shellye cares deeply about our parks, bayous and green spaces and the wildlife that inhabit them. Shellye served as a volunteer with the Houston Park's Board on the Bayou Greenways Initiative; is a leader for Girl Scout Troop 21, the nation's only special needs Girl Scout troop; and volunteers in animal rescue.

Shellye is a resident of Garden Oaks.

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CRITTER CORNER

By Molly Taylor

Our May GO Pet of the Month is:

Spencer



6-year-old neutered male Jack Russell Terrier who has been left unclaimed at the Mutt House following his human's passing away. Weighs ten pounds and gets along well with most dogs. Needs training for resource guarding of toys.

Contact manager@mutthouse.com if you would like more information or to arrange to meet Spencer. Nominations for the next GO Pet of the Month can be sent to gazette@mutthouse.com.

Critters 101: White Vinegar Natural Pet Remedies

Vinegar is great for all types of things in your home and with your pets. Some people cannot stand the smell, but if diluted properly, you will be able to manage and enjoy its many benefits.

Three Easy White Vinegar Remedies:

- **Natural Flea Remedy**
Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray on your cat or dog and massage in with your hands. Reapply every few days as needed.
- **Pet Ear Infections**
Mix equal parts white vinegar and rubbing alcohol in a little bottle. Squirt into the ear and massage the base of the ear. Let them shake it out and then wipe it out with a soft cloth or cotton ball. Repeat up to twice a day for about 5 days.
- **Pet Stains on Carpet**
Mix 2 cups of white vinegar with 2 cups of lukewarm water. Slowly mix in 4 tablespoons of baking soda. Apply to stain, let set for about 5-10 minutes and then blot it with a towel.

What To Do:

Check out the new coffee shop on Heights Boulevard, aptly named Boulevard Coffee. It has a large, dog-friendly patio with water bowls and dog treats, and great coffee, pastries, and WiFi for us humans.

Molly Taylor operates Molly's Mutt House and co-owns Mutt House Relief Effort pet sitting.

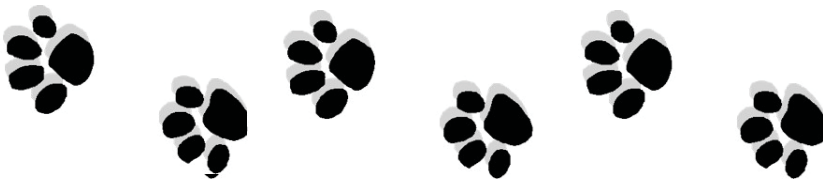
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Classified Ads are \$20 per run for residents, and are for personal services only, e.g. help wanted, items for sale, infant care needed, etc.

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				1	2	3 Farmers Market 9AM-1PM 948 Wakefield
4 St. Rose of Lima Spring Festival 11AM-6PM 3000 Brinkman	5	6 Civic Club Meeting¹ 7PM @ GOMM	7 GOMM Night at Becks Prime² 5-8PM @ Heights location 115 West 19th	8 GO Garden Club Meeting 7PM @ Gazebo Park	9	10 St. Rose of Lima 2nd-Hand Rose Sale 8AM-2PM 3000 Brinkman Farmers Market (GF) 9AM-1PM 948 Wakefield
11 <i>Mother's Day</i>	12	13 	14 GOMO Meeting 7PM @ GOPB	15 Heavy Trash Pick-Up (Tree Waste)	16	17 Farmers Market 9AM-1PM 948 Wakefield
18 Girl Scout Troop 21 Bake Sale³ 12-2PM @ Triangle Park Azalea @ Alba Road	19	20	21	22	23	24 Farmers Market (GF) 9AM-1PM 948 Wakefield
25	26 Memorial Day	27 	28	29 Last Day of School (HISD)	30	31 Farmers Market 9AM-1PM 948 Wakefield

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