

Garden Oaks Gazette

Circulation 1500

NOVEMBER 1986

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The first cool spell of Fall always starts me thinking about the holidays to come and brings happy memories of past seasons. One of the joys of our neighborhood is the small-town feel of sharing holiday festivities, not only with family, but also with community. Numerous events are already planned: Halloween would not be as enjoyable without the trick-or-treat "safehouses" mapped out by Richard Lipham; the Civic Club and Garden Club will again sponsor a Christmas party with caroling around the piano, food and fun; several families whose extended families live outside of Houston have made plans to get together and share Thanksgiving. I have lived in many neighborhoods before Garden Oaks--as you may have also. The sense of community we share here is rare and wonderful.



JIM ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 4TH MEETING: ELECTION OF OFFICERS GARDEN OAKS BAPTIST CHURCH, 7 p.m.

Nominating Committee recommendations:

President	Grace Blair
Vice President-Programs	Betty Cole
Vice President-Gazette	Marcelle Kinser
Treasurer	Willard Mills
Secretary	Open
Vice President-Membership	Jim Alexander

There will also be a speaker at the November 4th meeting: Financial Advisor and Investment Counselor Ray Hitch. Ray will address the new tax law and year-end financial planning.

CASH JACKPOT REMAINS \$120!!

Hope and Tom Brown were the lucky dues-paid members whose names were drawn at the October Civic Club meeting. Lucky except for the fact that they were not present to collect their \$120! Don't let this happen to you--come to the November meeting!

RESULTS OF THE GARDEN OAKS FALL PICNIC AND FUNDRAISER

Sponsored by the Beautification Committee, the September 28 event was a happy and relaxing afternoon of community spirit, good food, competition and family fun for all ages. Mike Ace, manager of the Northwest YMCA, generously came to our aid and provided a new location for the picnic. Since it rained off and on all day, the use of the indoor spaces was a contributing factor to the day's success.

Special thanks to Pat & Bill Eckert, Shirley & Bob Boushell and to Martha Rhea for organizing and leading the children's games and contests and providing the unique winners' ribbons.

The pot luck lunch was delicious. The variety of dishes at lunch and at the baked goods sale proved what good cooks call Garden Oaks "home." Thanks to Sue McFarland for the paper and plastic wares.

If lunch did not tell you what good cooks we have, then the professional bakers who judged the pie baking contest should have. They were so impressed by the display of culinary skill that they found it hard to select a winner. However, winning pies were Richard Lipham's Chocolate Pecan (page 134 of the Heart of Garden Oaks Cookbook) and Judy Scruggs' Cream Pie.

Richard Lipham's non-stop banter made the auction especially entertaining, even if your bid did not win. The auction contributed over \$250 in cash and much more in amusement.

Ticket sales, coordinated by Tricia Hyde, baked goods sales, organized by Lana Miller and the Garden Club, and the concession stand manned by Bill Bijalc and Sammie Broadrick all contributed substantially to the financial success of the day. Mr. Mills reports that we grossed \$637, with contributions of \$75 and \$81 in sales of T-shirts, cookbooks and stickers by Cheryl Luck and her crew of helpers. The gift-wrap designed by children in Garden Oaks is still available. Just call Grace Blair at 862-9623.

The first work day of the Beautification Committee is October 26. If you can help, call David Veselka at 692-1384 or Grace.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY: Becky Jeanes

Nov. 11

age 5

WELCOME to our new neighbors: Cliff & Karen Faldowski, 1555 Sue Barnett
Casey & Kim Ward, 1547 Sue Barnett

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

The OCTOBER YARD OF THE MONTH belongs to Frank and Inez Foyt of 866 LaMonte. The Yard of the Month sign has been stolen. Please be on the lookout for it. No bogus yards of the month! The next meeting will be on November 13 at the Civic Club Building. Program: Christmas crafts.

The Garden Club got a head start on the fall clean up on Saturday, October 18. Working on the pocket park at 31st and Lawrence, Garden Clubbers collected over 20 bags of grass, leaves and debris.

FALL CLEAN UP: SATURDAY, NOV. 8

One of the insights I have gained since moving to Garden Oaks has been the first-hand chance to view trash and litter as an economic development factor in our community. Without quoting from the many available studies or statistical projections, I am convinced Garden Oaks' future will be strongly influenced by how effectively we deal with this serious problem. Supporting a clean-up effort is the responsibility of all.

Twice a year, Garden Oaks residents have focused their efforts on areas important to all of us: the clean up and beautification of Shepherd Drive and the North Loop. People grade the cleanliness of neighborhoods by the presence or absence of litter not because the absence of litter is as important as, say, good schools, but because it is a solid, visible barometer of how much a community cares for itself. At stake in Garden Oaks will be our ability to attract and hold new residents, our political leaders' ears and the appreciation of our property values.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!! I ask that you do 3 things: First - gather your work gloves, your rakes, brooms, pruning shears and gas-powered weed eaters. Second - ask your neighbors to do the same. Third (and most important) - bring yourself and your neighbors to the southwest corner of Shepherd and 38th Streets (across from the Garden Oaks Theater) at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 8.

Volunteers work until about noon, then share lunch at Rose Fitch's home on Garden Oaks Blvd. Please call Rose at 697-1545 to offer to bring sandwiches, chips, desserts, etc. The first 10 people to volunteer receive a 1987 Porsche!

Please help on November 8. We all have a stake in the results!

Bob Wardell, Clean up Chairman

CRITTER CORNER by David Horsley

Last night the wife and I were taking our evening walk through the neighborhood. As we passed pond after pond where folks' driveways dipped into The Ditch, I wondered out loud how our streets would look with sidewalks and storm sewers. Would it improve the neighborhood to lay underground stormpipe, fill in The Ditch and pave over it with sidewalk? Other Houston neighborhoods don't have a big ditch cutting across everyone's front lawns. Even Oak Forest has curbs and storm sewers. Should we get into step?

After a brief discussion, we agreed that we like things the way they are, Ditch and all. Now whoa up, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking about that unsightly pond of muck in your driveway after each rain, breeding God knows what and rusting your calipers every time you drive through it. You're thinking what a pain in the rump it is to try and mow The Ditch, even with your new fuel-injected, Toro V-8 riding lawn harvester, because the bottom of The Ditch is usually a swamp even if your lawn is parched and the last three people to venture in there never came out. You're thinking about those people next door who never even try to mow their Ditch, which results in more muck building up and an even deeper pond in your driveway.

Well, consider this: our Garden Oaks Ditch System, though it is a slight inconvenience, more than makes up for it in other ways.

First, for those of us with roots in the country, The Ditch offers a little bit of country in the heart of the city. You may recall that last month in this column we talked with a Mr. Toad, who pointed out in his inimitable amphibian way that our ditches were also his bedroom and nursery. In addition to toads using the ditch as a vital waystation in their life cycle, other critter neighbors depend upon The Ditch for life: crayfish, snails, waterbugs, treefrogs, not to mention the dozens of birds who drink, dine and bathe there.

Second, The Ditch helps to recharge the shallow aquifer under our neighborhood. Translation: water standing in The Ditch soaks into the ground instead of hurrying off to Buffalo Bayou, thus, the water table stays higher and the trees benefit. Perhaps this is why Garden Oaks has so far escaped the ground subsidence problem which has affected other parts of Houston.

Third, let's face it: our kids love The Ditch. I have seen children playing for hours at a time without benefit of adult supervision in The Ditch, swimming, wading, fishing, splashing, fighting, throwing mud, riding in and out with bikes, trikes, Big Wheels, skateboards and roller skates. Kids learn about nature in The Ditch. A little girl next door once filled our birdbath with tadpoles she and her sister had collected in The Ditch. Nice little girl. Imagine if our kids did not have a Ditch to play in. They'd turn to television and video games, then rock music, finally to truancy, delinquency and incarceration. With a free Ditch out front, who needs Waterworld?

Finally, there is the aesthetic value of The Ditch. I, for one, wouldn't like to see Garden Oaks become totally sanitized, civilized and homogenized like every other neighborhood. Other neighborhoods are nondescript. When visitors come to Garden Oaks and sink up to their axles in our driveways, they know they are someplace special. And when I look down my street after a heavy rain at the pretty little streams, I know that the fertilizer I applied to my lawn that morning is going to a good home somewhere.

The Garden Oaks Ditch System: long may it flow!

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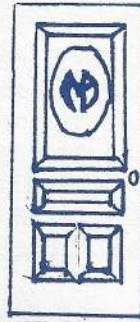
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