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NEIGHBORS *AND* FRIENDS

This coming September there will be one very important additional ballot measure to vote for – approving changes to our declaration of charter regarding minimum lot sizes. This seemingly mundane change carries a great deal of consequence to our community moving forward.

Everywhere around us new development is happening. Anyone who has seen their recent Harris County Appraisal District tax assessment can attest that the west Houston “Energy Corridor” is growing rapidly. That growth coupled with the charm of our neighborhood, diversity, location, convenience, and being one of only a handful of neighborhoods with the privilege of having direct access to Terry Hershey Park, makes Briarhills one of the most desired neighborhoods in west Houston.

That fortune has its drawbacks. As more residential development occurs in the Energy Corridor around us fewer and fewer locations are available for large, multi-family housing. Just in the last two years developments at Memorial and Eldridge, Briar Forest and Eldridge across from Kroger, Briar Forest at Highway 6, and Memorial and Dairy Ashford have gone up at a record clip. Once those prime locations are developed pressure increases on redeveloping single family parcels into higher density housing.

Drive down through The Heights, Rice Military, and the other neighborhoods closer towards downtown and the fabric of the neighborhoods changes rapidly. There is a marked difference between the rows and rows of townhouses and our neighborhood. But it wasn't always like that. Those neighborhoods only 15 years ago were single family homes tree lined streets, but have since experienced similar growth pressures like we are facing today.

It would seem like that kind of development could never happen in our part of the world. And until just a few years ago that would have been true. But as of this year that is no longer the case. Chapter 42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances isn't exactly bedtime story material that we all learn as children and know by heart (who can't recall what happened to Jack and Jill and that hill, or the family that lives in the giant boot, or that James kid and his massive peach?) It is though, something that has the potential to make a marked difference in our neighborhood.

Without the specifics, Chapter 42 regulates the subdivisions, developments and platting (lot sizes and dimensions). Previously the City of Houston allowed for higher density development in certain parts of the

city by reducing the minimum lot size required to build a single family home. By allowing the city to be cut into smaller and smaller chunks, more and more houses could be built – a la the townhouses you see in Midtown or The Heights. That type of development was restricted to the “urban” areas of Houston, namely everything inside of Loop 610.

As of this year, in order to promote a denser city and to address a number of other urban planning issues, the city relaxed the location requirements. Instead of higher density being allowed only in the “urban” areas, it would be allowed in the entire city.

To drive this point home, currently, there is nothing stopping me from purchasing my neighbor's home, tearing down both houses (his and mine) and building four townhouses on the site. For that matter, there is nothing stopping a developer from coming in a buying whole sections of houses and redeveloping them into denser residences.

That is why approving the necessary changes to our charter is so important. A draft copy of the proposed changes has been drawn up by our legal team and has been posted as a draft on the website. The changes include setting a minimum lot size, a minimum lot width, and prohibiting the subdividing of lots. These three changes will ensure that our neighborhood remains a single family low density subdivision in perpetuity. All we need to enact this is your vote.

The Board of Directors is currently working on preparing the exact voting language for the September ballots, and hopes to have it posted to the website for public consumption prior to the election. In the previous years we have had very low voter turnout for Board position elections, but it is vital this year, if for nothing else, to make sure everyone votes on this issue so that we can get the required changes past and ensure the survival of the neighborhood as we know it today.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Briarhills Management office and your questions will be answered by me as soon as I get them. Talk with your neighbors about this issue, make sure they understand or at least have the opportunity to ask questions about this issue before September rolls around.

I hope everyone has a great summer and I look forward to continuing to serve the community for the upcoming year.

Alec Luong, ALA

Director, Vice President, Briarhills Board of Directors

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City Services.....	Call 311
Citizens' Assistance.....	713-247-1888
Public Works.....	713-837-0600
Neighborhood Protection.....	713-525-2525
Animal Control.....	713-229-7300
Wild animal problem	713-861-9453
Hazardous waste.....	713-551-7355

OTHER UTILITY SERVICES

Street light problem.....	713-207-2222
.....	(then 1 then 4)
Power out/emergency	713-207-2222
Gas leak suspected.....	713-659-2111
Before you dig.....	Call 811

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Alarm Local	8
Alarm/Rep. Site	1
Animal/Humane	1
Assault/Family	1
Check Park	2
Contract Check	103
Dist/Juvenile	3
Follow Up	3
Incident Report	1
Information Call	5
Meet the Citizen	10
Meet the Officer	1
Neighborhood Chk	18
Open Door/Window	2
Solicitors	3
Susp Person	3
Telephone/Harras	1
Terroristic Thrt	2
Theft/Other	1
Traffic Stop	5
Vacation Watch	254
Veh Suspicious	3
Welfare Check	1

Total Count for Period : 432



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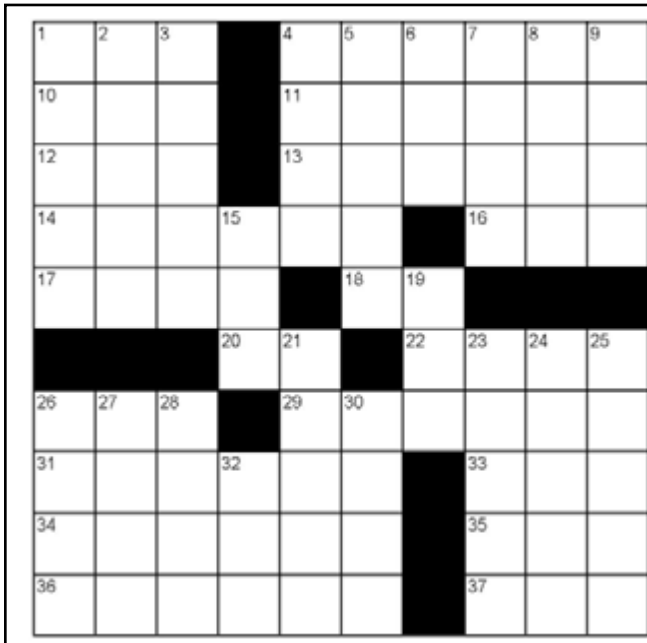
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4. Inhabits
10. Crow's cry
11. Gully
12. Rio de Janeiro
13. Sports car brand
14. List of errors
16. New Jersey's neighbor
17. In __ (together)
18. Kilogram
20. Post script
22. Too
26. Concord e.g.
29. Additions
31. Computer game
33. Killed in action
34. Ancient (2 wds.)
35. Antlered animal
36. Mourning
37. Ocean

DOWN




1. Land
2. Milk's food group
3. Type of enemy
4. Loony
5. __ havoc
6. Make a mistake
7. Stow
8. Greek stringed instrument
9. Defile
15. American College of Physicians (abbr.)
19. Chitchat
21. Book holder
23. Enjoys
24. Steps for crossing a fence
25. City
26. Prod
27. Prudent
28. Plane
30. Nearly horizontal entrance
32. Poet Edgar Allen

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							7	
3	1			4		2		
					8	4	6	3
7								
	8	9	2		6			
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			9					6
		1	3	2				5
		2	1					

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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

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TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco



The Modern Game: The Backhand Approach Shot

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to execute the basic strokes for players who are just beginning to play tennis or who want to resume playing. I am now offering suggestions on how to play the “modern” game mostly geared towards players who are happy with hitting the ball over the net and controlling the point with consistency. These players may be already playing for leagues or in tournaments and are looking for more “weapons” on the court.

In this issue, I will offer instructions on how to execute the Top Backhand Approach Shot. This shot is used when an opponent hits a soft shot that has bounced high over the net. The player will take advantage and will charge to the net, thus hitting with top spin high over the net and hit with power. When the ball hits the court, it will take a big hop, forcing the opponent to fall back close to the fence, or to hit the ball on the rise. This shot can be used as a “winner” or as an “approach shot.”

In the illustrations, Kaylen Combs, one of the top players of the Grey Rock Tennis Academy, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke. Kaylen is coached by the Director of the Tennis Academy, Darin Pleasant, who is showing her the proper point of contact on step 2. Kaylen plays with her left hand.

Step 1: The Back Swing: When Kaylen sees the opportunity, she makes a quick turn of her upper body and takes the racket high and back. The head of the racket is now at shoulder height, her shoulders are turned, the right hand gripping the racket and her left

hand relaxed. Her weight is on the front foot as her momentum carries her forward to attack the ball. Her right wrist is “laid back” to allow maximum point of contact.

Step 2: The Point of Contact: The success of a top spin shot is keeping the ball on the strings going from low to high in a 30 degree angle and accelerating the racket head around the outside of the ball. Kaylen started the swing high and “looped” it to allow the head of the racket to drop down. She will be brushing around the outside of the ball as she makes contact with it. Her left shoulder is almost opening and her weight has is moving through the shot.

Step 3: The Follow Through: In order to get maximum control and power, Kaylen is keeping her right arm extended through the shot. She has “snapped” her right wrist and has the head of the racket facing down. Her weight is going forward.

Step 4: The Finish: Kaylen’s upper body acceleration forced the head of the racket to “wrap around” her left ear, thus creating the most power and topspin on the ball. Her legs are already in position to move forward the net for a volley. Her right foot should naturally move forward due to her momentum and racket speed. From her looks, she apparently hit a very wide cross court approach shot for a defensive return.

Step 5: The Volley Winner: Once Kaylen hit, she moved to the net for a “winner”. By the smile on her face, her backhand approach shot was successful and she won the point with a backhand volley.

Look in the next Newsletter for: “The Modern Game: The Swinging Forehand Approach Shot”



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