

NEIGHBORS *AND* FRIENDS

Alec Luong, AIA, President, Briarhills Property Owners Association

As we head towards the end of the year I would like to take a minute to update everyone on what we have been doing here in the neighborhood.

As many of you might have seen we had an excellent Market Festival in the middle of October. I would like to give another special thanks to Debra Underwood for spearheading the event and being the main driver in making it a reality. The hard work that she put in to pull this event off is quite impressive. The festival ended up with almost 35 individual vendors selling garage sale wares, embroideries, Indian weavings and cloth, trinkets and knick-knacks and many more. We also had vendors from various community service groups that focus on Veterans, the future of Buffalo Bayou, and local real estate. Westside High school also provided an entire group of eager and energetic student volunteers from the National Honor Society to assist in working the event. The turnout was excellent for its first year and we hope to continue this type of festival well into the future. We are looking now for anyone who would like to assist in next year's event. Please contact the POA office for more information.

We also had a fantastic movie night. In years past the movie nights were either held at the Holiday Inn or on the side of the clubhouse. This year, with the help of Rachel Richburg, the POA decided to do something completely different by having a movie in the park event. A professional outdoor theater company was brought in to provide a gigantic 16' movie screen and theater quality sound and local food truck vendors were invited to provide dinner during the presentation. At dusk we had well over 200 people at the event filling up the entire lawn area. We are hoping to continue this event by doing three of them in 2015 (spring, summer, and fall).

The POA is also modernizing its office and management. We have recently decided to move towards a cloud storage system with digital backups of all of the paper files in the office. We've update the office computers and printers. All of these back of house items will help the POA move forward as a more efficient and flexible association.

And lastly, and certainly not least, the POA completed and published the 2014 Capital Reserve Study and ADA assessments. These documents are terribly important moving forward and have been posted to the website for residents to read and familiarize themselves with. The POA faces a tough decision when it comes to the future of our infrastructure. Our clubhouse is over 40 years old while our pool house is right behind it. These structures will require more and more costly capital maintenance in the future and will at some point outstrip what the POA has budgeted for such costs by the year 2020.

The POA has retained the services of PGAL to perform a master plan study and cost analysis on the buildings and the amenities area. PGAL is my employer and a leader in civic and community architecture in Houston for over 40 years. PGAL has offered to perform this study free of charge to the POA as a community service project and will present two options for the Board of Directors to consider in deciding how the future amenities area should be treated moving forward.

I encourage every resident to try and make at least one homeowners meeting. To assist residents in making the monthly meetings the Board of Directors voted to rotate the monthly meetings between the first Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the month – rotating in consecutive months. The November meeting was held on the first Tuesday of the month, the December meeting was held on the first Wednesday of December, and the January meeting will be held (tentatively), on the first Thursday of January. The Board did this thinking that it would encourage more resident participation for residents who find it hard to make only Monday meetings.

The next few months will be very important in deciding the future of the POA. Please come out and have your voice heard on a wide range of topics. Please feel free to email the POA your thoughts and concerns as well. I hope everyone has a Happy Holidays this December and a wonderful New Year.

SEASONS GREETINGS

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Emergency	911
Constable (<i>Closest Law Enforcement</i>).....	281-463-6666
Poison Help	1-800-222-1222
Library and Community Center.....	832-393-1880
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

BRIARHILLS SERVICES

Trash collection	713-733-1600
Amenity tags	281-558-7422
Tennis courts.....	281-558-7422
Pool parties.....	281-558-7422
Clubhouse rental	281-558-7422
Marquee messages	281-558-7422

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Please support the businesses that advertise in the Briar Hills Beat. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all Briar Hills residents to receive the monthly newsletter at no charge. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact our sales office at 888-687-6444 or advertising@PEELinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Article Submission.....	briarhills@sbcglobal.net
Advertising.....	advertising@PEELinc.com

Oct. 2014 Security Report Summary for HOA and POA

Acci/Unk Maj Min.....	1
Accident/Minor.....	2
Alarm Local.....	3
Burglary/Hab.....	1
Check Park.....	2
Contract Check.....	167
Dist/Other.....	1
Follow Up.....	2
Incident Report.....	4
Information Call.....	10
Meet the Citizen.....	8
Meet the Officer.....	2
Neighborhood Chk.....	18
Open Door/Window.....	1
Solicitors.....	2
Special Assign.....	1
Susp Person.....	5
Traf Initiative.....	19
Traffic Stop.....	27
Vacation Watch.....	170
Veh Suspicious.....	5
Welfare Check.....	1

Total Count for Period : 452



THE LEGAL BEAT

By George Niño, Vice-President,
Briarhills Property Owners Association

Dear Neighbors,

I appreciate the positive feedback I received from many of you regarding my article concerning essential estate planning documents. In my article, I mentioned that one study confirmed that the majority of Americans do not have a will. A more recent study confirmed that the percentage of Americans who do not have a will and related estate planning documents continues to fall and examined the reasons for this.

Many people who do not have estate planning documents say that they are more focused on daily essentials like paying bills and buying groceries rather than estate planning. Others are concerned about the legal costs. Regarding priorities and the cost, remember that when a person dies without a will (also known as dying intestate), he gives up control regarding how his assets (also known as his estate) will be distributed, but he does not get rid of the time and costs associated with handling the estate. The deceased person's heirs still need to consult with an attorney and incur legal costs to handle the estate—often times more legal costs than if the proper estate planning documents were in place. And the heirs will be left to guess about the deceased person's intentions regarding his estate.

Regarding this study, a significant percentage of people also responded that they believe that their spouse and children will automatically receive any assets they have, even if they do not have a will. However, if a person dies without a will, his estate will be distributed not according to his wishes but according to a statutory scheme imposed by the State of Texas. Moreover, the division of assets may not be what the person intended or expected. For example, the distribution of assets in the scenario where a person dies intestate and leaves behind a wife and children is dependent on whether the assets to be divided are characterized as community property or separate property. The division of assets will be very different depending on how the property is characterized, and there might be squabbles or outright legal fights among heirs about how to characterize the property—all of which could be minimized or completely avoided with proper estate planning. To avoid these issues, please take the time to make sure that you have the necessary estate planning documents and that someone close to you knows where they are.

The information contained in this article is provided for informational purposes only, and should not be construed as offering legal advice, or creating an attorney client relationship between the reader and the author. You should not act or refrain from acting on the basis of any content included in this article without seeking appropriate legal advice about your individual facts and circumstances from an attorney licensed in Texas.

REACHING YOUR NEIGHBORS *and many others...*

- Atascocita CIA
- Blackhorse Ranch
- Briar Hills
- Bridgeland
- Chelsea Harbour
- Coles Crossing
- Copperfield
- Cypress Creek Lakes
- Cypress Mill
- Eagle Springs
- Fairfield
- Kleinwood
- Lakemont
- Lakes of Fairhaven
- Lakes of Rosehill
- Lakes on Eldridge
- Lakes on Eldridge North
- Lakewood Grove
- Legends Ranch
- Longwood
- Meyerland
- Normandy Forest
- North Lake Forest
- Park Lakes
- Riata Ranch
- Shadow Creek Ranch
- Silverlake
- Steeplechase
- Sterling Lakes
- Stone Forest
- Stone Gate
- Summerwood
- Sydney Harbour
- Terranova West
- Terra Nova HOA
- Towne Lakes
- Village Creek
- Villages of NorthPointe
- Walden on Lake Houston
- Willowbridge
- Willow Pointe
- Wimbledon Champions
- Winchester Country
- Woodwind Lakes
- Wortham Villages

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THE GARDEN CORNER

By George Niño, Vice-President, Briarhills Property Owners Association

As a novice vegetable gardener, I always am on the lookout for tips on how to improve my garden. If you have particular gardening tips and advice, I would appreciate hearing from you and would be eager to post your gardening ideas and photos to our POA website and in future issues.

Now that the Fall/Winter vegetable planting season is upon us, from now through December I like to plant broccoli, cauliflower, and lettuce. Cabbage and carrots also work for me, but I like to get them in the ground by the end of November. Over the years, I have had the best success with broccoli and carrots and would recommend these vegetables for anyone who is just starting out. I have found that these plants thrive in our Houston weather as long as you water and fertilize them regularly. I prefer organic fertilizers like Microlife. Urban Harvest highly recommends growing lettuce in Houston and states that there may be over a thousand varieties of lettuce suitable for planting here. Urban Harvest estimates the cost to grow lettuce to be as low as 10 heads for a penny and labor in



very dry years of less than five minutes per head. Urbanharvest.org is a great resource with several articles on gardening available online.

Whenever possible, I trek out to Wabash Antiques and Feed Store at 5701 Washington Avenue (about 15 miles from our neighborhood) to buy my vegetables. Wabash is a Houston institution and is one of only two stores I know of in Houston where you can buy vegetables (including heirlooms), fruit trees, and gardening supplies as well as dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, and bunnies. My children love to visit with the animals, while I search for vegetables and seek help from Wabash's expert gardeners. The second option is Quality Feed & Garden

at 4428 N. Main Street (about 20 miles from us). Like Wabash, Quality has a selection of plants, vegetables, and animals. Because Wabash is closer and is a bigger store than Quality, I tend to go to Wabash more often than Quality, but they are both great resources for Houston gardeners.

Good luck with your garden and may you have a bountiful harvest!

Take Care of Texas by Managing Your Leaves

As autumn brings cooler temperatures, it also signals the arrival of another seasonal display – falling leaves!

While Take Care of Texas encourages you to plant shade trees to help lower your utility bills in the summer, these deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall. Instead of raking and bagging them, where they will head to a landfill, put them back into your lawns and gardens as a valuable source of mulch and fertilizer.

Leaves contain 50 to 80 percent of the nutrients a plant extracts from the soil and air during the season. Grass clippings, leaves, and other yard debris make up 20 percent of the trash sent to landfills each year. It costs Texans over \$250 million a year to collect and dispose of this waste.

There are four basic ways to manage leaves and use them in landscaping:

Mowing: a light covering of leaves can be mowed, simply leaving the shredded leaves in place on the lawn. This technique is most effective when a mulching mower is used.

Mulching: a lawn mower with a bagging attachment provides

a fast and easy way to shred and collect the leaves. Apply a three to four inch layer of shredded leaves around the base of trees and shrubs. A two to three inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal for flowerbeds. For vegetable gardens, a thick layer of leaves placed between the rows functions as a mulch and an all-weather walkway that will allow you to work in your garden during wet periods.

Composting: in addition to leaves, other yard wastes such as grass clippings, pine needles, weeds, and small prunings can be composted. Compost can serve as a soil conditioner that nourishes your yard and reduces the need for outdoor watering up to 60 percent.

Soil improvement: leaves may be collected and worked directly into garden and flowerbed soils. A six to eight inch layer of leaves tilled into a heavy, clay soil will improve aeration and drainage. The same amount tilled into a light, sandy soil, will improve water and nutrient holding capacity.

Visit www.KeepCyFairBeautiful.org to access more Take Care of Texas yard care publications!

Neighbors in Need Campaign

The women of Northwest Houston Business & Professional Women (BPW) are sponsoring a "Neighbors in Need" campaign in December to collect toys for infants through age 12. BPW is partnering with a renowned Houston non-profit organization, Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM), to spread some Christmas cheer to children in need. The monthly luncheon will feature speaker, Carole Little, a dedicated leader with more than 30 years' experience in health and human services. Since 2001, she has served as President & CEO of Northwest Assistance Ministries. Members and guests are invited to the luncheon on Dec 18 at Northgate Country Club and to bring an unwrapped toy for infants through age 12. RSVP online by Dec 16 at <http://nwhoustonbpw.com/>.



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View answers online at www.peelinc.com

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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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NORTHWEST FLYERS YOUTH TRACK CLUB

Free Registration/Orientation Breakfast

The Northwest Flyers Youth Track Club will celebrate its 28th Anniversary Season by hosting its annual free Registration/Orientation breakfast on Saturday, February 7th, 2015, for all boys and girls who are interested in joining for the 2015 track season. The breakfast starts promptly at 8:30 AM at the Cypress Creek Christian Community Center Forum located at 6823 Cypresswood Dr., Spring, TX, 77379.

The free breakfast is the opportunity for youth athletes to register for the 2015 spring/summer track season, and to meet the Northwest Flyers coaches, staff, and other new and returning athletes. The event will be highlighted by a special presentation from a member of the USA Track & Field Olympic organization (USATF). All athletes and parents who wish to join the Northwest Flyers must attend the orientation.

The Northwest Flyers Track Club is a youth (ages 6 -18) track club, affiliated with USA Track & Field (USATF), that provides a full program of sanctioned "track" events such as sprints, hurdles,

middle distance, distance and relays, and sanctioned "field" events such as long jump, triple jump, high jump, pole vault, shot put, discus and javelin. The Northwest Flyers has approximately 285 members. The club was founded 28 years ago by Olympic gold medalist Fred Newhouse to foster the development of youth track & field in the Northwest Houston area.

The Northwest Flyers is a member of the "Win with Integrity" program, a partnership between USATF and the American College of Sports Medicine. "Win with Integrity" brings elite track & field athletes and school-aged kids together to promote healthy lifestyles, keeping active, and living with integrity through the sport of track & field.

For additional information on the Northwest Flyers Track Club, please visit the team website at <http://www.northwestflyers.org> ; contact Linette Roach at linette.roach@sbcglobal.net; or "Like" the club on Facebook.



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