

Meyerlander MONTHLY



Volume 3 | Issue 7

MEYERLAND.NET

JULY 2015



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Amy Hoechstetter MCIA General Manager
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Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Central Time
Closed Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

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Visit our website at www.meyerland.net

SECURITY

Precinct 5 Constable (including burglar alarms) 281-463-6666

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Houston Help & Information 311 or 713-837-0311

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Meyer Branch Library 832-393-1840

Godwin Park Community Center 713-393-1840

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For missed garbage pickup, water line break, dead animals, traffic signals, and other city services, dial 311. Some mobile phone users may need to dial 713-837-0311.

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On the Cover

*The grand old flag is displayed proudly in front of
5143 Carew in Section 2.*

LET THE RAIN BEGIN

by Joyce Young

The floods hit Meyerland Monday night, Memorial Day 2015. It won't soon be forgotten by most of the Meyerland and surrounding area residents. The storm drains could not keep up with the constant deluge of rain that began Monday night and didn't stop until early Tuesday morning. It was all over when the banks of Braes Bayou overflowed and turned parts of Meyerland into a lake.

Residents were hit hard. It is estimated that over 30 percent of the 2300 Meyerland residences were affected. Houses that had survived Alicia, Allison and Ike were impacted this time around. That's how fierce the 2015 storm was.

Sid Kotha, his wife, Lekha and his two daughters, Aishwarya (age 15) and Sarika (age 13) of Glenmeadow, watched the water rise in their Meyerland home. Ten hours later, there was two feet of water in their home and they are now temporarily displaced. Mr. Kotha said the biggest headache has been trying to get assistance, but that the "community has been phenomenal". Since the flood Kotha and his wife are staying with friends while his daughters are staying with their friends. They recently learned that they will be receiving \$2300/month in assistance to help them with their living arrangements while they decide if they will rebuild or move. They have lived in their Meyerland home for nine years.



Water logged car at Beechnut and South Rice

Charlotte Hust also suffered 2.5 feet of water in her home that she shares with her husband, Robert. The Hust's have lived in their home on Braesheather for 26 years and have managed to avoid damage from the previous floods. This time around they were not so lucky. Speaking

with Ms. Hust you would not get the impression that all is lost. On this particular day she was ebullient and was rolling with the punches. Yesterday, however "was a day of tears". But that feeling of hopelessness lasts "about ten minutes" and then it's over. Hust's main concern during the torrential downpour was for her elderly neighbor. The water outside was too high to attempt a rescue and they had to wait until the water subsided before they could get to her.

If the flood issue was not enough to handle, Hust was also hospitalized for five days after the storm. Her "sweet friends" moved all of her antique furniture and took great care to relocate it to appropriate places. Now that she is better, she is encountering numerous problems with rebuilding. To date, her contractors have not been able to pull permits to do the repairs. The City required a new elevation certificate

(Continued on Page 5)

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RealLiving

(Continued from Page 4)

and survey, but that was not enough. Hust may also have to have a new appraisal done before permits will be issued. She has also heard that her home may be condemned and have to be torn down. She is in limbo right now and her future living conditions are uncertain. She is not bitter, however, and states "I love Meyerland; it's perfect for commuting to the Med Center" where her husband works. She also states that the MCIA office personnel have helped her tremendously and there are "very sweet, wonderful people helping her".

She is happy that her family is still intact. One of her sons was visiting that weekend and other than losing his car in the flood, along with her flooded car, everyone survived the peril unscathed. Her two 16 year old Dachsunds also survived the flood, although Hust found them on the first floor asleep, but floating on their dog bed. After a scare with one of the dogs, both dogs have bounced back and are currently being kenneled. She feels she's a "lot of ways better off than most people". There is no bitterness in her voice. She has reconciled that this is going to be a tough battle, but "it's not about things; it's about God".



Boat rescue at Cheena and Runnymede

needed or what we could provide to those affected by the flooding. We contacted the City, County and local charitable organizations who gladly answered our call and needs. The City responded with rescue operations and immediately began to mobilize recovery teams. The County answered promptly by sending extra security to the flood ravaged areas. Neighbors, friends, volunteers and expert flood mitigation companies from in and around the Houston area came in to assist in the clean-up. As updated news was available, we continued to share it with those in Meyerland and the surrounding neighborhoods. We focused on anything we could do to get help, and help arrived en masse.

The MCIA worked to have FEMA, the Small Business Administration, and the City of Houston Flood Management Office as well as Code Enforcement located in the MCIA parking lot to assist

all residents of the southwest region who were affected by this terrible storm. We met with City officials and County leaders to determine the next best steps to help Meyerland, and Houston in general, recover from this frightful event. And we aided our homeowners as they started the process of putting their lives back together.

While this event was a rare occurrence, it is our goal to figure out what happened so that we can work toward solutions that will greatly reduce the chances of flooding happening again. Meyerland residents can and will rebuild, repair, and replace what was lost on that fateful day in May. This is an incredibly strong, resilient, and vibrant community.



Resourceful neighbors in Section 7 figure out how to get around the neighborhood

Rain, Response, Resilience

by Amy Hoechstetter

The storm that came through Houston on May 25th dumped tremendous amounts of rainwater in a very short time period all over Houston and the surrounding cities. When that occurred, the bayous, detention basins, and streets filled up with water. In this area of town, having no other place for the water to go, homes in Meyerland flooded. At the time of this publication, the best estimate by the MCIA Office is that about 800 homes and garages received at least several inches of water in them. Almost half of those homes received more than a foot of water.

In response to the flood event, it was paramount that we get important information to the residents immediately. Since we were unsure if everyone was receiving our email blasts, we felt we needed to hand deliver information. The staff and some board members walked the streets visiting over 800 homes to see if our residents were okay, determine the extent of the damage, and see what other services were

JULY
is TREE Waste Collection Month
Wednesday, July 8th

FLOODED? THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED DO . . .

by Amy Hoechstetter

If you encountered water in your home, below are important steps you need to take to return your home to the pre-event condition:

Before you do anything, it is important to turn off the electricity to your home. Until it is checked and cleared by an electrician, you cannot know what damage has been done to the electrical outlets in your home.

Next, you must take pictures of the damage to your home. Photograph the water marks on your walls, furniture, and windows in every room that received water. If possible, video tape the entire room or even the house showing all the major contents and structures (walls, flooring, cabinets, countertops, bathrooms, etc.) in the home.

Third, you should contact your homeowner's insurance company (if you have insurance) and the City of Houston and inform them of the flooding in your home. If the area is declared a disaster by the Federal Government, you should also contact FEMA.



Fourth, you must remove all items damaged by water. This includes wood floors, carpets, baseboards, sheet rock (cut 18 inches above the water mark) and any furniture touched by the water. Mold can set into the wet materials within 48 hours. These mold spores can make you sick so removing the wet or water damaged materials is important.

Lastly, find shelter. Depending on the severity of your damage, you could be out of your home for a long time. Quickly finding a space to rent for a few months will give you

peace of mind so that you can focus on the repairs that are necessary to get you back into your home.

You can never be ready for a flood event, but knowing what to do after one occurs can be more valuable than preparing for one.

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UNDERSTANDING THE 50% RULE FOR REPAIRS

by the MCIA Office

We want to clarify the “50% rule” and the “Substantial Damage” letter that some of you have received from the Mayor. The City is preparing an information sheet to be placed on all residents’ doors explaining how you will be able to repair your home without having to elevate your home.

If you have questions about what to do with your home, it is important that you ask the city, a licensed REALTOR®, FEMA and/or your insurance company. Do not guess and do not rely on hearsay. Each homeowner’s situation may be different. The Meyerland Community Improvement Association can try to answer your questions for you or assist you in deciding whom to contact.

If you reside in the Floodplain, there are facts you need to know in order to move forward with the repair of your home due to flood damage. You will need to meet with contractors to get estimates of the cost to repair your home. The contractor you hire will obtain the necessary City permits.

See Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) on the city’s website: http://edocs.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/director/repairing_flood_damage_in_floodplain_faqs.pdf

See also www.houstonrecovers.org for helpful information during your recovery.

REPAIRS TO DAMAGED AREA TOTAL LESS THAN \$10,000:

If repairs to your flood-damaged home cost less than \$10,000, NOT including the cost to remove the damaged material, the City of Houston does not require you to obtain a permit to complete the repairs. You can proceed with your repair work.

REPAIRS TO DAMAGED AREA TOTAL MORE THAN \$10,000:

If repairs to your flood damaged home will cost more than \$10,000, NOT including the cost to remove the damaged material, you need to obtain a permit from the City of Houston. A good, licensed contractor will obtain the necessary permits. IF the repairs due to flood damage will cost you less than 50% of the appraised value of your home (calculated by taking the appraised value of your home and dividing by two), you can do the following:

Visit the Flood Management Office (FMO) where you will receive a Floodplain Development Permit or call 832-394-8854.

Bring a copy of the flood damage repair checklist – which includes a project cost estimate worksheet that is available on our website OR bring a copy of the contractor’s bid.

Bring the appraisal of your home (which can be found at www.hcad.org) to the City of Houston permit office, 1002 Washington Avenue, (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday).

Bring a copy of the Substantial Damage Determination Appeal – available on our website – if you received the “Substantial Damage” letter from the Mayor’s office.

If the repairs to your home will cost you more than 50% of the appraised value of your home (calculated by taking the appraised value of your home and dividing by two), you can try to improve the appraised value of your structure by hiring a certified appraiser

to review your property at the pre-damaged condition. If you had an appraisal performed within the last few years, it may suffice and you will not need a new appraisal. If your new home value is more than two times the cost of your repairs, you can go to the city to get a Floodplain Development permit to proceed. You can also try to use the value of your home on your insurance claim’s Proof of Loss. If that value is more than two times the cost of your repairs, you may go to the city to get a Floodplain Development permit to proceed.

If your repairs still cost more than the value of your home, you will need to consider other options. They include:

- Raising your home so that the bottom floor is at least twelve inches above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Get several estimates prior to signing any agreement with a contractor. An “Elevation Certificate” will tell you what the BFE is for your property. We are seeing estimates for elevating a Meyerland home between \$120,000 and \$160,000. FEMA might offer assistance with this cost. See www.disasterassistance.org.
- Start over. Build a new home on your lot. Get several builder estimates prior to signing any agreement.

Before making major decisions, please speak to a licensed Texas REALTOR® who will assist you with the market value of your home.



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MCIA BOARD COMES TO AID

Understanding the need to respond to the flood event, the MCIA Board of Directors voted on Monday, June 8, 2015 to waive all MCIA construction application fees, not just for residents who flooded, through December 31, 2015. Also, the Board voted to allow the temporary use of mobile and motor homes on lots where the homes flooded and residents were forced to live elsewhere. These temporary housing units will be authorized through December 31, 2015 under the following conditions: the lot being used must have a home under repair due to flood damage, and the temporary home must be placed on the driveway of the home and not in the street. Exceptions on the placement may be made on a case by case basis. Note that permits may be required by the City of Houston for various connections.



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July, 2015						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Trash	8 Tree!	9	10	11
12	13	14 T/R	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Trash	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 T/R	29	30	31	

August, 2015						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2	3	4 Trash	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 T/R	12 Junk!	13	14	15
16	17	18 Trash	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 T/R	26	27	28	29
30	31					1

MCIA Deed Restriction Rules: Weekly - Put garbage and recycling containers, as well as yard trimmings, etc., on the curb no earlier than 6:00 p.m. the evening before pickup. Remove containers no later than 10 p.m. on trash pickup day. Monthly - Put heavy junk/tree waste at the curb no earlier than Friday 6 p.m. before the 2nd Wednesday heavy junk/tree waste collection.

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OUR LOCATION WILL SEE US THROUGH THIS EVENT

by Charles Goforth

Meyerland has been the anchor of SW Houston for the last 60 years and I imagine that scenario will continue for many more decades to come. If you are looking to sell your home, don't sell to the first person that knocks on your door saying they will pay in cash! If we want to see how Meyerland might fare after our recent turn of events, all we need to do is look to our easterly neighbors. The Braes Heights/Old Braeswood areas were pounded by Tropical Storm Allison in 2001 and they have seen nothing but dramatically increased property values since then. Yes, they have experienced a dramatic transformation, but it has been great for those that rehabbed, those that built new and those who received no damage. God only made so much dirt and we happen to be sitting on some of the most valuable in Houston. Our proximity to the Medical Center/Galleria/Downtown areas, along with our schools (public/private), houses of worship, shopping, restaurants, hike/bike trails, freeway access, etc. are not going to change because of this event.

If you are a homeowner who has decided to sell, be patient and make sure you maximize the exposure of your property. As we've seen, there are tons of buyers wanting to pick up properties in our area. Make sure as many of them as possible know about your property. This might involve the dreaded... contacting a Realtor.

Be cautious if you are approached by one of these "we buy homes" groups. If you are not already marketing your property and they come out, never give them a number until they have made you an offer. Many times after viewing a home, they will say "really bad shape"... "total gut job"... "needs to be torn down," all of which might be true, but then they will ask if you had a number in mind. They are counting on you not having full knowledge of the true value and don't want to make you an offer that might be much more than you might think your property is worth. Let them make an offer, then you shop it around and/or contact a Realtor to see if they think you can get more. If the "home buyers" are not willing to make you an offer, then they want to "steal" your home. There is a reason these buyers have descended on our area en masse and it is because they realize Meyerland's value..

Remember the motto, "Location, Location, Location!"

Kolter Cares



Following the Memorial Day epic flood, Kolter opened up its doors to help. Volunteers at the school provided free babysitting, movies, and games during the week so that parents could concentrate on cleaning up their flooded homes.

The school also provided free clothes, water, and laptops with internet.

Thanks to Dr. Jordan Stirneman, D.D.S., Dr. Joe Hutchins, D.D.S., Dr. J. Douglas McDonald, D.D.S., and Dr. Steven Vaughan, D.D.S. for the generous dental supplies donated to the Kolter Elementary community. Coach Tammy Parker and Julie Dickinson, Magnet Coordinator, walked the streets around Kolter Elementary to pass out dental supplies to neighbors in need. Your generosity is much appreciated!

AMERICAN RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS

The American Red Cross and FEMA have been stationed at 4999 West Bellfort since June 5 to help residents affected by the flood. Many volunteers helped hand out supplies after the event, including American Red Cross volunteer, Walt Bodner. He is retired from the US Coast Guard and private security and resides in Memphis, TN. There are approximately 20 American Red Cross trucks in the Houston area helping out since the storm hit on May 25, 2015. In addition to water and snacks, the Red Cross is distributing cleanup kits that include detergent, bleach, broom, mops, and gloves.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County (MHMRA) is providing assistance to local area residents impacted by the Memorial Day flood. They offer crisis counseling to both adults and children in addition to providing resources for mental health patients who have lost their medications due to the flood. They will provide a mobile crisis team to assess individuals and put them in contact with psychiatrists. For convenience purposes, they are temporarily located in the MCIA parking lot or they can be contacted at 713.970.7742.

Other available services are provided by the Jewish Family Service, a non-profit human service agency for people of all ages and all walks of life. Their goal is to provide light, hope and help to individuals struggling with life challenges. Please contact them at <http://jfshouston.org/aboutus.php> or call 713-667-9336.

SUDOKU

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

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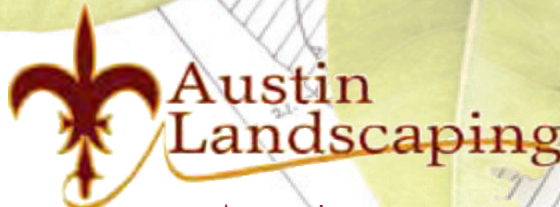
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CICADAS



Cicadas are fairly large insects but can vary in size with some growing over 1 ½ inches. Color may also vary depending upon species, but many are brown or green. All cicadas have bulging eyes and, on adults, wings that are held roof-like over the body. The wings are semi-transparent with thick wing veins. The majority of their life cycle is spent underground.

Cicadas have 2-5 year life cycles and appear in Texas in mid to late summer. Females insert egg clusters into branches of trees using their saw-like ovipositor

(egg laying structure). Eggs hatch after about 6 weeks and small nymphs drop to the ground where they burrow into the soil. Nymphs feed on sap of tree roots with their piercing-sucking mouthparts. After becoming fully developed, nymphs emerge from the ground at night and climb onto nearby objects such as tree trunk, plants, fences, etc. Adult cicadas emerge from the last nymphal stage leaving behind the exuviae (cast skin). Adults can live 5-6 weeks.

Male cicadas are well known for their "song". They rest on a tree and produce a whining sound to attract females. The sound is produced by two vibrating membranes on the side of the abdomen. Females do not "sing". Adults feed on juices from tender twigs, but usually do not cause lasting harm to the plant from feeding.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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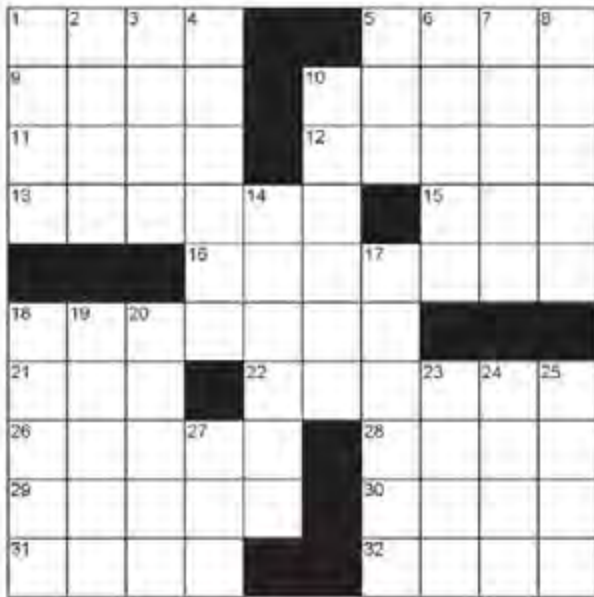


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ACROSS

1. Father
5. Water carrier
9. Radar target
10. English architecture style
11. Corporation (abbr.)
12. White poplar
13. Hastily write
15. Official canine registry (abbr.)
16. Peers (2 wds.)
18. Mother-of-Pearl mollusk
21. Wipe
22. Asian nation
26. Unripened
28. One of Columbus' ships
29. Great ape
30. Swirl
31. Very large book
32. Fewer

DOWN

1. The alphabet
2. Group of nations
3. Vigor
4. Sicken
5. English bar
6. Thoughts
7. Folk dance
8. Build
10. Claws
14. Dating
17. Marrow
18. Jargon
19. Donkey
20. Right angle to a ships length
23. Military officer
24. Ceases
25. "You can't eat just one" brand
27. V

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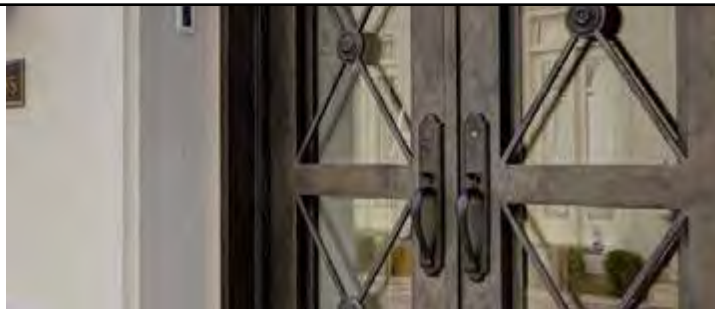
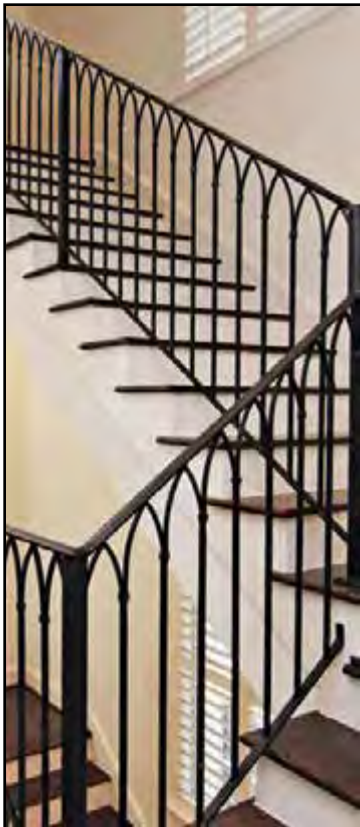
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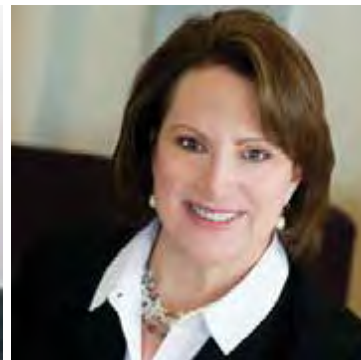
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Historic Flooding



Since 1978, we have helped homeowners in Meyerland. We have also been personally affected by this flood, and we understand the difficulties many of you are facing. If there is anything we can do to help, please call!



If you have any questions or concerns regarding:

- Evaluation of offers you have received;
- What to do when repairing damages or renovating;
- Meeting the requirements the city has for properties located in the 100 year flood plain.

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