

# Meyerlander MONTHLY

Volume 3 | Issue 10

MEYERLAND.NET

OCTOBER 2015

**AFTERNOON IN  
THE PARK**  
SUNDAY, OCT. 25



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Amy Hoechstetter ..... MCIA General Manager  
Catherine Martin, Randi Cahill ..... Office Staff

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Monday - Thursday ..... 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Friday ..... 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Central Time  
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Fax ..... 713-729-0048

General Email ..... [office@meyerland.net](mailto:office@meyerland.net)

Architectural Control ..... [randi@meyerland.net](mailto:randi@meyerland.net)

Community Assistance ..... [catherine@meyerland.net](mailto:catherine@meyerland.net)

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Marlene Rocher

Amy Hoechstetter

Joyce Young

Gerda Gomez

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## On the Cover

You'll find the pretty red brick house with matching red shutters on our cover at 5715 Jackwood in Section 10.



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# AFTER NOON IN THE PARK

Save the Date: Oct. 25

Afternoon in the Park is back! Please mark the date, October 25th, on your calendars for a fun-filled day of FREE activities, entertainment and food. This spectacular event will take place at Godwin Park from 2 – 5 p.m. There will be lots of activities for both children and adults so be sure and SAVE the DATE and come join your neighbors and friends in October and partake in the festive activities!



# 2015 Houston Mayoral Forum

by Elizabeth Black Berry

On Monday, August 17, 2015 Lovett Elementary School opened its doors and welcomed all seven mayoral candidates to a public forum to discuss various issues impacting Houston and the surrounding communities. The 2015 Houston Mayoral Forum was co-sponsored by Meyerland Community Improvement Association (MCIA) and Brays Bayou Association (BBA).

Anne Clutterbuck, Vice President of AECOM, a global engineering firm and former City Council member (2006-2011) was our esteemed moderator. Not only did Anne Clutterbuck agree to moderate, but she took a very active role in the event planning. She personally knew the candidates and had a fabulous rapport with them from the podium.

Questions for the candidates ranged from “what are your top priorities”, “how would you better communicate with city emergency services after storms”, to “how would you fund future flood control” and “how would you provide our area with more green space and support the infrastructure to those spaces”. Ms. Clutterbuck also posed candidate-specific questions to each of the seven candidates. None of the questions were provided to the candidates in advance and candidates were seated in random order.

Lovett Elementary, under Ms. Cara Boynton’s direction, provided the 2015 Mayoral Forum with a most comfortable setting. Mr. Rickey Polidore, Art teacher and AV coordinator, worked with our DDAV sound people and not only provided excellent sound for the event, but also recorded the entire forum. “Mr. Jack,” Lovett’s hard-working Chief Custodian and his staff, assisted in our two day set up and clean up. We appreciate Principal Dawn Thompson, Ms. Boynton, Mr. Polidore and Mr. Jack for allowing MCIA and BBA to utilize their beautiful facility for this event.

Houston’s major news stations, 2, 9, 11 and 13 covered the forum before, during and/or after the event. In addition, Mr. Bob Schwartz, President of BBA, prepared a detailed handout with flood statistics and information. His materials can be found at [www.meyerland.net](http://www.meyerland.net).

Planning Committee members for the 2015 Mayoral Forum included the author of this piece; Amy Hoechstetter, MCIA General Manager; Charles Goforth, MCIA Section 1 Director; Anne Clutterbuck; Bob Schwartz, BBA; and Howard Sack, Willow Water Hole/Levitt Pavillion.



A professional headshot of Cheryl Israel, a woman with long grey hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a dark blazer and a pearl necklace. The image includes a real estate advertisement overlay with the following text: '★★★★★ Five Star Realtor', 'Cheryl Israel', '832.459.7236', 'cheryl@bethwolff.com', and the 'BETH WOLFF REALTORS' logo with a 'RealLiving' tagline.

# INTRODUCTION

## TO OUR STAFF

*by Shirley Hou*

The Meyerland Community Improvement Association is fortunate to have an experienced, in-house management staff to manage the affairs of our neighborhood. Many homeowner's associations have moved to an outsourced model, where the only link between resident and HOA is an impersonal, toll free phone number. This is definitely not the case in Meyerland! We have three, real professionals at our office on 4999 West Bellfort who work daily to serve our residents.

Leading the team is the general manager, Amy Hoechstetter. In her role, Amy is charged with executing the rules and initiatives put forth by the Board of Directors. She engages with the City of Houston, Harris County and the State of Texas, as well other surrounding communities, to get resources for Meyerland. She is the liaison between the Board of Directors and residents. As the general manager of MCIA for over six years, Amy loves knowing she has made, and continues to make, a difference. She gets positive validation at least once a day when a resident says "thank you" or when a project gets completed. On any particular day, you will find her out in the neighborhood talking with residents, responding to emails, returning calls in the office or having a meeting with a resident. She is a key contributor to the Meyerlander Monthly and point of contact for all MCIA events, like the Afternoon in the Park and Annual Meeting. In addition to her demanding job, Amy is a mother of two girls, Rachel, a junior at Bellaire High School, and Jessica, an 8th grader at Trafton Academy. She and her husband, college sweetheart Andrew, live in Bellaire.

Assisting Amy is Randi Cahill, the Architectural Coordinator. Randi is responsible for both deed restriction enforcement and overseeing all construction in Meyerland. This entails reviewing applications, coordinating architectural committees, verifying information provided by homeowners, and explaining Meyerland's Deed Restrictions, policies, and requirements to both residents and contractors alike. Last year, Randi was granted approval by the architectural committees to approve simple applications for routine requests such as painting and sidewalk repair. One of the toughest things about her job is making sure that homeowners know that she is here to help. Randi would like the homeowners to know that the entire office seeks to break the mold



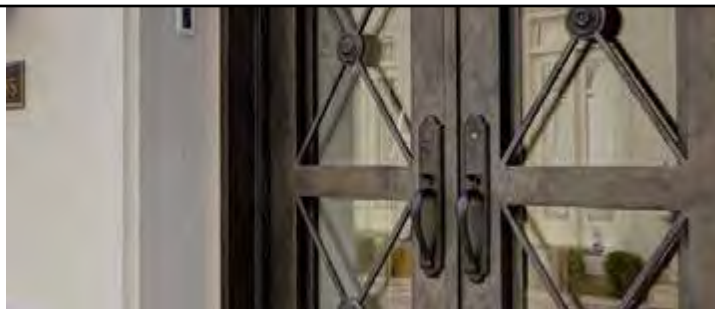
*From left: Amy Hoechstetter, Catherine Martin, and Randi Cahill*

of what many perceive a HOA to be. Doing any construction on one's home can be a stressful situation, especially when it is not by choice, as is the case for many homeowners who are currently repairing their flooded homes. The job can be stressful and hectic, but it is truly satisfying for her to let homeowners know when their applications have been approved. Randi does her best to know people by their first names, and learn about their families, friends, and any memories of Meyerland. Randi and her family live outside of Katy.

Rounding out the team is Catherine Martin, Resident Relations and Communications. Catherine is responsible for communicating with residents in regards to security blasts and general questions and concerns that are called into the office. She also drives the community and notifies people when there is a concern regarding their property maintenance. Another function of her position is title work: property transfers, refinances, working with the title agents, creating 60 day letters for mortgage companies, resale certificates for new buyers, and new buyer packets. During her drives through the neighborhood, Catherine usually stops and speaks with at least one resident. Due to the Memorial Day flood, most of her time now is spent in the office answering questions as well as processing the increased amount of title work for homes being bought and refinanced as the community recovers. Before the flood, Catherine would not have described her job as stressful, but now, the hardest part for her is hearing the stories of those who lost everything and trying not to let those stories break her heart. Her top tip to residents is to provide the office current contact information for their property, especially a phone number and email address. It is much easier for the office to contact residents by phone or email first and then follow up with a letter when needed. Also, residents should regularly visit [www.meyerland.net](http://www.meyerland.net), which has more announcements than what is sent out in email blasts. When Catherine is not at work, she is a busy, married mother of two girls and also helps her disabled parents.

These three remarkable ladies ensure that the association's business is well run every day. We are all very lucky to have them. If you ever run into them or have a chance to stop by the office, please be sure to give them a hug and a thank you!

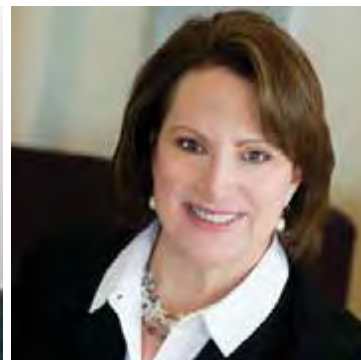




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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Elizabeth Black Berry*

It is now five months after the infamous Memorial Day Flood of 2015, and many of our residents are still feeling the effects. Those who were flooded are rebuilding or selling their properties, and all of us are being impacted by vacant homes and property ownership changes. Since May, our MCIA staff and Board have done many things to try to serve and assist all of our residents. For flood victims, we have waived certain fees and forgiven penalties on late assessment payment and have expeditiously processed applications for exterior work on residences. We continue to monitor Deed Restriction violations and have been as understanding as possible with respect to property maintenance.

Now, five months after The Flood we are beginning to receive more and more complaints of residences not being maintained. We must try to continue to take care of all properties regardless of whether we are able to live in the home at present. If you are a non-flooded homeowner and have a way to contact your fellow neighbors who are having trouble maintaining their lawns or shrubs, offer to assist. If you are a flooded homeowner living off property, please ask your neighbors for assistance or call a lawn service to help with maintenance. We all want to maintain our properties and our home values as we transition into a newly renovated community.

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# Neighborhoods to Trails SW

by Gerda Gomez

In order to become healthier places to live, cities such as London, Paris, New York, Brussels, Chicago and Guangshou, China are seriously working on putting pedestrians and cyclists before motorists. Some are well on their way, according to the September issue of The Economist. Even Los Angeles is engaged in serious planning. And what about Houston? How can Houston become a more livable city with increased access to green space?

Neighborhoods to Trails SW has been meeting since early spring with the common interest of developing trails for pedestrians, hikers and bikers. Members include representatives from Braeburn Valley West, Maplewood West, Maplewood North/South, Marilyn Estates, Meyerland, Westbury and Willow Meadows. This is an emerging group that has begun to organize formally. The purpose of Neighborhoods to Trails SW is the development of safe trails and linear parks connecting throughout the area with schools, places of worship and recreational places in order to increase safety for

pedestrians, hikers and bikers, promote outdoor activity, increase exercise opportunity, decrease traffic and pollution and promote health. The trails would permit the opportunity to truly enjoy the outdoors by people of all ages.

The Bayou Greenway 2020 project of the Houston Parks Board has plans to create a connecting network of 150 miles of hike and bike trails along nine Houston bayous. This network of trails will run east/west along the bayous. However there are no plans for north/south trails to connect to the bayou trails. There are no plans for north/south trails in the Meyerland and adjacent sections of Brays Bayou. Also lacking in southwest Houston is a trail that will connect to the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Park which lies to the south of Meyerland.

If you would like to join in this effort of Neighborhoods to Trails SW, or know of someone in Meyerland who would like to join, please contact, Gerda Gomez at [gegomez1@att.net](mailto:gegomez1@att.net).



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# OPERATION PHOTO RESCUE

Joyce Young

Due to the recent flooding in Houston, many homeowners lost more than material possessions. Memories in the form of photographs may have been lost or damaged also. Although insurance can replace material belongings, it cannot replace the lost or damaged photographs.

Operation Photo Rescue (OPR) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is "to repair photographs damaged by unforeseen circumstances such as fire and natural disasters at no cost to the people who own them". OPR consists of a volunteer network of professional photojournalists and amateur digital photographers, graphic designers, image restoration artists and others. These volunteers are able to restore water damaged photographs. They have several suggestions on how to salvage flood-damaged photos.

To separate photos, carefully lift the photos from the mud and dirty water. Remove photos from waterlogged albums and separate any pictures that are stacked together. Be careful to not rub or touch the wet emulsion of the photo surface. Immediately

remove photos from plastic sleeves, if possible.

Lay each wet photo face up on any clean blotting paper, such as a paper towel. Do not use newsprint as the ink may transfer to the wet photos. Change the blotting paper every couple of hours until the photos are dry. If possible dry the photos indoors as sun and wind will cause the photos to curl more quickly.

When the photo is dry the cleaning process can begin. Test a corner of the photo with a wet Q-tip to see if the emulsion is stable enough to soak the photo. If the photo is stable, the mud/dirt can be removed by gently soaking both sides of the photo in a bucket or sink of clear, cold water. Do not rub the photos and change the water frequently.

If time does not allow for drying, carefully stack the wet photos between sheets of wax paper and seal them in a Ziploc-type plastic bag. If possible, freeze the photos to inhibit damage. Photos can be defrosted, separated and air-dried at a later time.

For more information on how to save or repair your damaged photos, please contact OPR at [operationphotorescue.org](http://operationphotorescue.org).

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

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

**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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# PUMPKIN PATCHES IN HOUSTON

*by Shirley Hou*

If you have young children living in your home, then you are probably wondering where to find this year's "Great Pumpkin" before Halloween. Of course, you can take the easy route and just buy one at the grocery store, but wouldn't it be more fun to actually pick one from a real pumpkin patch?

The largest and probably most famous pumpkin patch in our area is Dewberry Farm. Each fall, eight acres of the farm turns a beautiful orange color when thousands of pumpkins arrive from North Texas and neighboring states. In addition to the patch, there is a corn maze, hayrides, zip lines, and fun activities to fill a whole day. Dewberry Farm is located in Brookshire and is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays until mid-November. Check their website at [dewberryfarm.com](http://dewberryfarm.com) for hours and prices.

Another popular patch closer in town is at the Nature Discovery Center, 7112 Newcastle Dr. in Bellaire. This annual festival is a great, safe place for family fun, food and games - and the pumpkins always provide great photo opportunities. This year, the patch will have a slightly different look. Due to the construction surrounding the Center, the Pumpkin Patch will be held primarily at the south end of the park on October 17-18. Pumpkins and ticket sales will be in the Russ Pitman playground area. Find more details at [www.naturediscoverycenter.org](http://www.naturediscoverycenter.org).

Our family's tradition is to visit the local pumpkin patch at St. Philip's United Methodist Church, located at 5501 Beechnut at Renwick. By mid-October, their front lawn is transformed into a field of pumpkins, straw bales and scarecrows. It is never crowded, and the kids have a great time running through the rows of pumpkins. Before leaving, we take our annual family fall photos with their pumpkin patch props. The family rule is that everyone is allowed to pick one pumpkin, as long as they can carry it themselves.



*Pumpkin Patch at St. Philip's United Methodist Church*

## NEW! FREE COMMUNITY SHRED DAY

Do you have old confidential papers that you want to shred? Bring them to the Afternoon in the Park event on Sunday, October 25th and they will be shredded on site. The MCIA has engaged a shred company that will bring an on-site truck to the event between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

No need to remove staples, paperclips, or rubber bands. Limit 2 bankers boxes per vehicle.



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# National Night Out

is Tuesday, October 6th!

*by the MCIA Office*

Get out your lawn chairs and meet your neighbors - National Night Out is around the corner on October 6th! This event is meant to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, town watch, neighborhood watch, and other anti-crime efforts. National Night Out is typically recognized with neighborhood block parties.

Make plans now to host or attend a block party this year. You can join with your neighbor to host one right in your front yard. If you don't host, ask a neighbor who is hosting how you can help. Perhaps you can bring extra chairs or drinks.

Registration of your block party is not required. However, if you would like a little help publicizing your block party, send an email to [office@meyerland.net](mailto:office@meyerland.net) with your name and address by Friday, October 2nd. The MCIA Office will include your street address in an "email blast" to the neighborhood the day before National Night Out.

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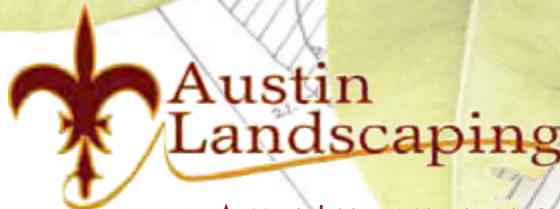
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