

Meyerlander MONTHLY

Volume 4 | Issue 9

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ON THE COVER

Meet the new administrative team at Kolter Elementary School: Kevin Anderson, Assistant Principal; Julie Dickinson, Principal, Maggie Spurlock, Magnet Coordinator

SEPTEMBER

is Tree Waste Collection Month

Wednesday, September 14th

Letter to the Editor

Congratulations to all involved with the latest issue of Meyerlander Monthly. It was filled with interesting, timely and useful information. I often tear pages out of magazines and newspapers to show my husband. There were only two pages left. One was the first page with contact information we already have. The other was the only page that didn't pertain to me (I don't eat much pasta and don't play tennis). So, thank you for such rich, enjoyable reading.

Sincerely,

Suzy Shapiro

5314 Queensloch Drive

15th Anniversary Commemoration of 9/11

Mayor Turner and the Catuzzi Grandcolas Foundation will host the 15th Anniversary Commemoration of 9/11 on Sunday, September 11 at 10 a.m. at Market Square Park located at 301 Milam St. A memorial that honors Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas is located in Lauren's Garden in Market Square Park. Lauren was a Houstonian who lost her life on United Flight 93. To honor her spirit, her husband Jack and Lauren's family started the Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas Foundation, a philanthropic organization that helps people attain their life goals. She will be honored along with all those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

On Saturday, September 10 the Annual 9/11 Heroes 5k Run and 1M Fun Run/Walk Houston takes place at 8 a.m. at Ellington Field. This annual event takes place all over the world as an opportunity to thank our local veterans, their families and first responders. The 9/11 Heroes Run unites an international community and reminds us to never forget the sacrifices the heroes of 9/11 made and those who continue to fight on our behalf.

New Faces at Kolter

By Shirley Hou



The 2016-2017 school year brings both new and familiar faces to Kolter Elementary's administrative leadership team. HISD announced earlier in the spring that the previous principal, Dr. Steven Shetzer, was selected to be principal of Pershing Middle School. Consequently, Julie Dickinson was selected as the new principal of Kolter, having served as assistant principal at Kolter in her prior position. Kevin Anderson, formerly the magnet coordinator at Kolter, was selected to be assistant principal. Maggie Spurlock, a teacher from Fort Bend ISD, joins the Kolter family as the new magnet coordinator.

In addition to the administrative staff, there are nine new teachers and several new staff at Kolter. Therefore, Dickinson's focus in the first few weeks will be integrating the new faculty and staff into Kolter's tight-knit community. Ms. Dickinson and Mr. Anderson spent the majority of the summer interviewing candidates for the coveted teaching spots. They were looking for passion, personality, and dedication in the interviewees. "We were looking for candidates who researched Kolter and who would feel lucky to be here, just as we feel lucky," said Ms. Dickinson. The finalists all demonstrated competence in instruction as well as a desire to build a strong connection with the community.

Ms. Dickinson looks forward to laying the groundwork for strong teams and building upon Kolter's reputation for high performance, global mindedness, and academic rigor. Kolter is one of three excellent elementary schools zoned to Meyerland. It is the only foreign-language and culture magnet school in HISD, offering Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and French. Kolter received an "A+" in the 2016 Children At Risk Statewide Elementary School Rankings. Ms. Dickinson is undaunted by these benchmarks. Already well-known and respected by parents for her hard work and dedication to students, she exudes a "bring-it-on" attitude that will surely make the new school year a success.

(Continued on Page 6)

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(Continued from Page 4)

The transition from magnet coordinator to assistant principal is expected to be smooth for Mr. Anderson, who is entering his third year at Kolter. In addition to assuming some additional duties, he looks forward to working with the new teachers and mentoring them in their new roles.

Ms. Spurlock is glad to be working “back home” in the neighborhood where she grew up and attended Pershing Middle School and Bellaire High School. She is unfazed by the high expectations of Kolter parents and believes she will meet and exceed those expectations. Spurlock says that her former school, Commonwealth Elementary School in Sugar Land, a top-ranked school in Fort Bend ISD, has many similarities in terms of parental expectations and involvement.

Together, these three administrators, along with the new teachers and staff at Kolter Elementary, are excited to be working with students to reach their academic and personal potential and fostering the leaders of the future. There is always some anxiety that comes with change, but the new leadership at Kolter Elementary is ready for the challenge and eager to work with the students, parents, teachers and administrators in the new school term.

Meyerland Under Construction

By Randi Cahill

Meyerland is in a building boom! Residents are repairing and rebuilding after the Memorial Day Flood of 2015 and the Tax Day Flood of 2016. There have been about 120 houses in the demolition stage or construction-in-progress phase in the past 12 months. New construction is concentrated along the streets near North Braeswood and South Braeswood. The majority of the new construction (85-90%), is commissioned by homeowners and the rest by builders. People are using a wide variety of builders. The top four builders in terms of number of sites are David Weekley Homes, Meritage Homes, Partners in Building, and Cason Graye Homes. In general, most new homes are two-story, over 3,000 square feet, and feature cleaner architectural design lines. Open floor plans still appear to be the preference. Extended living space in the backyard, such as outdoor kitchens, patios, and porches, is a popular choice, which has been made more obtainable with the change to allow forward-facing garages in certain sections.

Residents in Sections 7c and 8i recently passed revised Deed Restrictions. Others who are living in adjacent sections are waiting to see if their area will pass new Deed Restrictions similar to 7c and 8i before starting their own new construction. The average time for a MCIA approval on construction plans is 30 days. All the documents that the MCIA requires for architectural approval is also required by the City of Houston. Most residents are surprised to learn that the MCIA approval is usually the easiest to obtain. The delays usually occur when waiting on engineering permits from the City, which can take about 3-4 months. Homeowners should expect a new home to take about 12 months to build, 18 months for a custom home, from the time when permits are obtained.

If you are considering building a new home in Meyerland, I encourage you to visit the MCIA office early in the process. Do not assume things cannot be approved. If it is not allowed, we will suggest alternatives and give you ideas of what other homebuilders are doing. We work with homeowners to make their dream homes come true. Be patient with the process; it's a marathon. Finally, pick a builder with which you can communicate. This is a journey, and you need to be able to trust and communicate with your building partner.

I am continually amazed at the sense of community in Meyerland. People are not just building homes - they are building the future Meyerland. The resolve and determination for this mission are palpable in all my conversations with them. Most homeowners who come into our office did not plan on rebuilding their homes. Nature decided for them. Despite the understandable stress that these owners are experiencing, I appreciate the gratitude that comes my way everyday.

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Update on Project Brays

By Gerda Gomez

Mr. Gary Zika, Program Manager for Project Brays, addressed the July 18, 2016, monthly meeting of the Brays Bayou Association. He spoke about Project Brays current and future plans to reduce the risk of flooding along Brays Bayou. Project Brays is the largest project of Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD). The project's goal is to reduce the risk of flooding by moving more water down the bayou or storing the water temporarily in detention basins. This combination is intended to lower the FEMA 100 year floodplain. Some homes, however, will remain in the 100 year floodplain after Project Brays is completed. All homes and buildings are vulnerable to street flooding and heavy rain events. HCFCD recommends all homeowners have flood insurance regardless if the homes are in the 100 year floodplain.

In order to move storm water as quickly as possible into the Ship Channel, Brays Bayou is being widened and deepened. Project Brays uses dynamic models to determine the width and depth of the bayou at various points. An analogy is a tree trunk which is wider at the base and narrower higher up the tree. Using this analogy, the base is the eastern portion and entrance into the Ship Channel. Meyerland is in the middle section. Therefore, the widening in Meyerland will

be less than what will occur closer to the Ship Channel.

The widening of Brays Bayou from I-610 to Rice Ave., except for bridges, should be completed by late 2018. The widening from I-610 to Fondren should be completed by the end of 2020 or 2021. The Meyerland section of Brays Bayou will include an overall widening of 50 feet. This widening may occur on one side or divided between the north and south sides of the Bayou. The modifications, replacements or extensions of the 32 bridges in Project Brays should be completed by the end of 2021. All dates for completion are dependent upon funding. It is estimated that the completion of Project Brays from I-610 to Fondren will lower flooding by about 1 to 2 feet, depending on the area.

Detention basins are another key part of overall flood management. The Willow Waterhole detention basin, which is the closest one to Meyerland, is meant to retain storm water for 24 to 48 hours. The water is then released into Brays Bayou inside the 610 Loop as the water level in the bayou goes down. The widening of the Willow Waterhole detention basin is near completion.

For further information, go to www.hcfcd.org and www.projectbrays.org.

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September, 2016						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 T/R	8	9	10
11	12	13 Trash	14 Tree!	15	16	17
18	19	20 T/R	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Trash	28	29	30	

October, 2016						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2	3	4 T/R	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Trash	12 Junk!	13	14	15
16	17	18 T/R	19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31	25 Trash	26	27	28	29

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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Approaches to Combat Flooding

By Rhett Davis, Section 8, and Gerda Gomez, Section 7

Dr. Sam Brody, Professor and Director of the Center for Texas Beaches and Shores at Texas A&M University, spoke on August 2, 2016 at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center at the invitation of Citizen Solutions to Houston Flooding. In his presentation, Brody focused on Meyerland and shared his views on the causes of the recent flooding, and how to prevent future floods or reduce their impact on the Meyerland neighborhood.

Dr. Brody shared his view that there is not a single, clearly defined watershed for the Meyerland area. He believes that the Meyerland area is part of a much larger watershed, not just the Brays Bayou watershed. Therefore, deepening and widening of Brays Bayou is a short-term, temporary solution to help address storm water run-off. Dr. Brody believes we should think more regionally, rather than locally. For example, development in the Katy Prairie is as relevant to Meyerland as changes close to the neighborhood. Impervious coverage to the west of Meyerland has increased significantly since 2001. The Army Corps of Engineers approves approximately 98.8% of projects to replace wetlands, yet when wetlands are removed and replaced with impervious surfaces, this is a recipe for widespread flooding. Per Brody, the wetland removal is significant because man-

made structures never replicate the absorption of Mother Nature's wetlands.

Brody recommended advocacy and four fundamental approaches to combat flooding:

1. Resistance - keeping storm water out of your home with retaining systems and/or having water resistant materials in your home, such as concrete tile flooring and metal cabinets.

2. Avoidance - land use planning, guiding development to higher ground, elevating homes and structures.

3. Acceptance - retention, detention areas, underground cisterns, flow to areas such as parks.

4. Awareness - education of neighborhoods, regions, and homeowners on mitigation measures to lessen the impact of floods. Examples: Elevation of homes on piers is fine, but not on concrete slab. Valuables are recommended to be stored on the second story or elevated off the ground in one-story homes.

For our neighborhood, the most powerful opportunity is our Meyerland community pulling together to advocate for the help we need to protect our homes.



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Citizen Solutions to Flooding

By Lydia Musher

Citizen Solutions to Houston Flooding invites recognized experts in the field from around the world to speak in a forum that allows participants to ask questions directly and get information about the causes and potential creative solutions to the Houston flooding problem.

The group meets at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center approximately one evening per month at 7 p.m. Each meeting is a discussion with a well-known scientist, policy maker, activist, or leader from around the world. Future meetings will include the following speakers:

- September 1 -- Ed Browne of Residents Against Flooding
 - October 27 -- Mayor Pro-Tem Ellen Cohen and "Flood Czar" Steve Costello
 - November 15 -- Barry Ward of Trees for Houston
- Previous speakers of the group included:

- Professor Sam Brody of Texas A&M Galveston
- Henk Ovink of the United Nations, The Netherlands, and the Hurricane Sandy rebuild effort
- Professor Phil Bedient of the Rice University SSPEED Center
- Professor Jim Blackburn of the Rice University SSPEED Center

The group, which started on Facebook, has grown to more than 300 members. The group believes that the more people who attend these meetings, greater progress can be achieved with local and state governments, and the more quickly flooding issues can be resolved in our neighborhood, city, and watershed. The group seeks creative for-profit and activist solutions.

For more information, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/citizensolutionstohoustonflooding/> or contact Section 8 South resident Lydia Musher via the Facebook page. Suggestions for future speakers are welcome.

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Houston Zoo

By Joyce Young

Even though school is back in session and finding activities for the youngsters to beat their boredom is not as critical, Houston is packed with many wide and varied activities. Among those activities for animal lovers is the Houston Zoo, which is located a short distance from Meyerland. It is a 55 acre zoological park located within Hermann Park. The zoo opened in 1922 and until 1989 admission to the zoo was free. In 1989 the price of admission became \$2.50 for adults and \$0.50 for children. The price of admission is slightly higher these days and memberships are available. The zoo is open 364 days a year and only closes on Christmas Day.

The zoo houses over 6,000 animals that includes over 900 species. It is the tenth most visited zoo in the United States and receives approximately 1.8 million visitors annually. The City of Houston operated the zoo until 2002 when the non-profit corporation, Houston Zoo Inc., took over management of the zoo. Beginning in September 2016 and lasting through May 2017, admission to the zoo is free on the first Tuesday of each month from noon until closing. The zoo also hosts classes and programs for various age groups. A person can also participate in the daily giraffe feedings, ride the wildlife carousel or play in the water park. For the animal and art

lovers the zoo offers animal art. Many of the animals have channeled their inner Jackson Pollack or Wassily Kandinsky and painted their own masterpieces. These are available for sale and due to the high demand the paintings take 4 to 6 weeks to create.

If you are unable to visit the zoo in person, the zoo's website has webcams where you can watch the animals in action throughout the day. So, even though school is in session, the kids are still going to need some activities and the zoo offers plenty of options to keep your children engaged. Learning is thrown in as an added bonus, but don't tell the kids!



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Crickets

Field crickets are a common sight around homes in late summer into autumn. These insects are about 1” long when fully grown. Crickets are dark brown to black with large hind legs used for jumping. They also have two cerci, or appendages that come off the tip of the abdomen. Female crickets have a large sword-like structure, the ovipositor, protruding from the tip of the abdomen. The ovipositor is used to deposit eggs into soil.

Crickets feed on plant material as well as other insects. They are able to cause damage to seedlings and sometimes large populations can be destructive. Large masses of dead crickets around doorways or other areas can be distasteful to view and cause a foul odor.

Field crickets are primarily outdoor insects, but may occasionally venture indoors. When crickets do come indoors, they may bother residents with their chirping. Males chirp to attract a mate creating the sound by rubbing their forewings together.

Cricket management is more easily accomplished in the summer when nymphs, who cannot fly, are present. Unfortunately, this usually isn't when large populations of crickets are discovered.

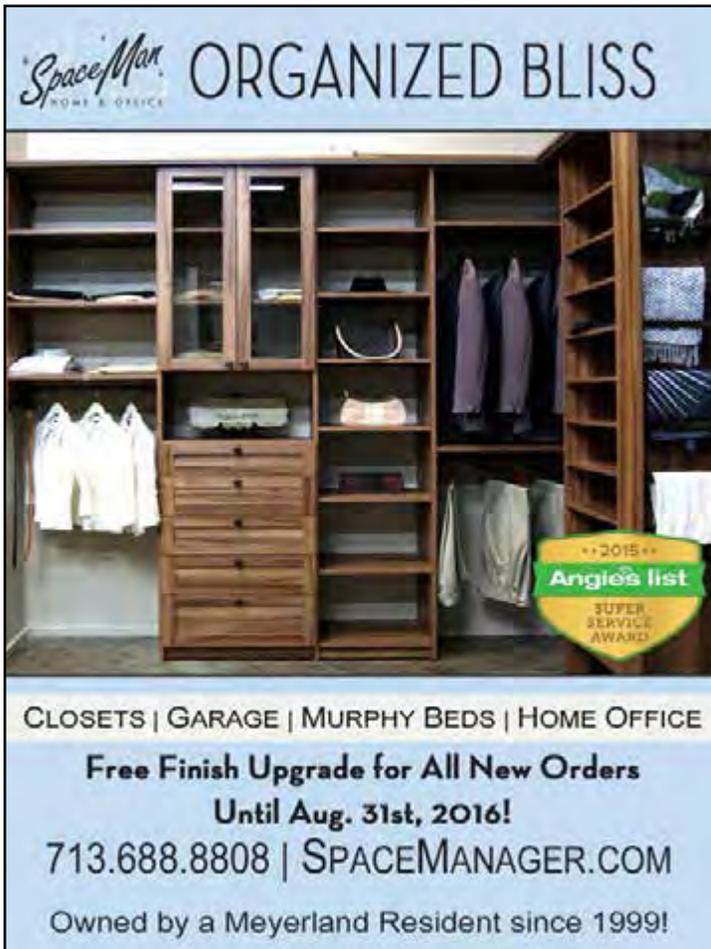
Before turning to pesticides to manage your cricket problems, try these ideas:

- Turn off outside lights at night or use bulbs that are less attractive to insects
- Seal cracks & crevices where insects can enter with sealant
- Remove debris stacked near the structure
- Keep lawn & surrounding areas mowed
- Stuff weep holes with copper mesh

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 <http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com>

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Hurricane Preparedness

Each year NOAA and the American Red Cross publishes a preparedness guide of tropical cyclones to help us prepare for such an emergency. You can download a copy of that guide at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/hurricane/resources/TropicalCyclones11.pdf>. This guide gives great information on the metrological terms associated with tropical storms and what to expect from those storms. Most importantly, it lists critical information about how to prepare for an incoming storm.

Guidelines each year prior to hurricane season:

- Determine safe evacuation routes inland
- Learn locations of official shelters
- Check emergency equipment such as flashlights, generators and battery powered equipment such as cell phones and your NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver.
- Buy food that will not spoil and store drinking water.
- Buy plywood or other material to protect your home if you don't have it.
- Trim trees and shrubbery so branches don't fly into your home.
- Clear clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Decide where to move your boat if applicable.
- Review your insurance policy.
- Find pet friendly hotels on your evacuation route.
- During the storm and when Pearland is in the warning area, you should:
 - Closely monitor radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards for official bulletins.
 - Close storm shutters.
 - Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if ordered.
 - Stay with friends or relatives at a low-rise inland hotel or at designated public shelter outside of the flood zone.
 - DO NOT stay in a mobile home or manufactured home.
 - Notify neighbors and a family member outside of the warned area of your evacuation plans.
 - Take pets with you, but remember that most public shelters do not allow pets other than service pets for people with disabilities.
 - Identify pet friendly hotels along your evacuation route.
 - If you are staying home to "hunker" out the storm:

(Continued on Page 14)

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(Continued from Page 13)

- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and keep it closed.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Turn off propane gas tanks.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Fill bathtub and large containers with water in case clean tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. Do NOT drink it.
- Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway.
- Close all interior doors. Secure and brace exterior doors.
- If you are in a two-story house, go to an interior first floor room.
- If you are in a multi-story building and away from water, go to the first or second floor and stay in the hallways or other interior rooms away from windows.
- Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object.

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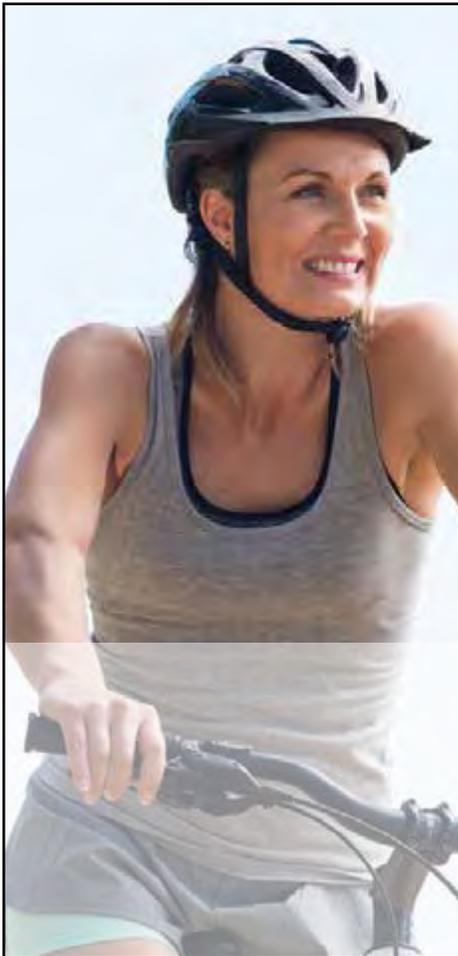
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