

Meyerlander MONTHLY

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Meyerland Community Improvement Association

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MEYERLAND.NET

NOVEMBER 2017



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OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Central Time
Closed Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

Telephone 713-729-2167
Fax 713-729-0048
General Email office@meyerland.net
Architectural Control randi@meyerland.net
Community Assistance catherine@meyerland.net
4999 West Bellfort St., Houston, TX 77035

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Dear Editor:

As I was reading the newsletter this month, I noticed that the home featured on the cover of the October 2017 issue used to be my grandparents' home. I spent many happy days at that house and while I was cleaning up my own house after Harvey (our second flood), I wondered how it had fared. I hope that the Cernoseks have enjoyed the house as much as my family did and I hope that like the rest of us here in Meyerland, they get back to normal soon.

Sincerely,
Forreste Markowitz

KOLTER STRONG

By Kathleen Crossett, Magnet Coordinator



On Saturday, August 26, category 4 Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Rockport, Texas, and began an agonizingly slow climb towards Houston. Our area began to see the strong outer bands that night in the form of pounding rain and violent

thunder and lightning. By morning, half of the beautiful homes in our Meyerland neighborhood were flooded and the water continued to rise higher. Ultimately, our beloved Kolter Elementary took on approximately five feet of water in the cafeteria, three feet in each classroom, four feet in our temporary buildings and almost our entire neighborhood was flooded to some degree.

ABC-13's Jeff Ehling highlighted some of the damage to our school during his on-air boat ride through Meyerland.

When the Kolter administration learned about the devastation of homes in the Meyerland area, we quickly coordinated volunteer efforts to support families in cleaning out their homes. Once a list of families in need of assistance was created, we gathered teachers, friends, and volunteers from local churches, synagogues, non-profit organizations, and businesses around the Houston area to help out.

The long process of cleaning up and rebuilding has begun. There are also changes for Kolter as we have been informed by HISD that we will be moved temporarily to the former Mandarin Chinese Immersion campus in Bellaire, Texas. We will be in this campus for a full school year, if not longer, and we will do our very best to make this new school our home. Teachers have lost everything that was in their classroom - years of lesson plans, collecting books and spending their own money on material was all lost in this flood. Our school may have been temporarily lost to the flood, but our hearts still reside in Kolter Elementary, no matter the location.

You can watch more of Kolter's hurricane recovery efforts on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUqzZs-hdo8>.

Floodie to Floodie Advice

By Drew Shefman

I have some experience to share. I'm sure that most of you have come to the realization that recovery, new normal, or whatever the path is going to be, that it is likely going to be an unfortunate number of months. Please start this honest and critical conversation with with your work, boss and team. Inform them that you are going to be affected by Harvey for months.

Please tell them that whatever compassion that they are showing now, to please remember to keep that same compassion when all of the debris is gone, there is no more mention on the news, and life appears "normal" to the non-floodie. Have the conversation that there is the real possibility that your work performance might be impacted for months. That when it is time for your performance review at the end of the year, that you might not have even been paid by the insurance company to even start your recovery process.

This is a tough conversation to have, I know. I feel that it is much better to have this honest and humble conversation with integrity than to "try" to be the same at work and fail. Nobody wants to admit that they can't do it, and I'm not saying that you can or can't. I'm saying that your long term work performance from pre-Harvey to post-Harvey will most likely be affected and that you should talk about this with your team at work.

Whether you are working on your contents list, evaluating your finances, dealing with FEMA, or all of the beat downs that life is throwing at you, and will throw at you for the foreseeable future, please be proactive in this communication at work.

For me, after Memorial Day, my company was fantastic. They gave me the whole month off, but I failed to set the expectations (for them and me) regarding the following months. I wish I had had enough insight to have told them that the most likely scenario was that my performance was going to drop. I wish I had asked to be moved to a less intensive project, or when they asked if I wanted to switch I could have heard it. I wished that I would have been open to the reduction of hours when it was presented. I wish I had had a conversation about an extended leave of absence or hiatus.

I wish I didn't pretend that my effectiveness at work could have been the same. I wish I showed more honest and raw vulnerability to my team and my company.

I wish I had had someone to have this conversation with me.

Editor's Note: Drew and Pam Shefman's home flooded in the 2015 Memorial Day and 2016 Tax Day floods. They were fortunate and were able to elevate their house out of harm's way, one day prior to Hurricane Harvey's landing in Houston.

COVER CREDIT

The sweet group on the cover delivered water and snacks to Meyerland neighbors who were cleaning up after Hurricane Harvey. From left: Shannon Drake and her children, Zoe and Isaac Drake; Helen Wright and her kids Mimi and Henry Wright.

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Amy Bernstein

713.932.1032

abernstein@BernsteinRealty.com



Laura Perlman

281.796.1798

lperlman@BernsteinRealty.com



Lisa Yambra

713.870.8530

lyambra@BernsteinRealty.com



Mindy Tribolet

713.502.5915

mtribolet@BernsteinRealty.com



Sondra Rosenthal

713.870.3790

srosenthal@BernsteinRealty.com

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Meyerland Construction Expo

By Joyce Young



Hurricane Harvey hit Meyerland hard. For some residents this was the first flood experience and for others it was their second or third flooding in three years. Harvey's impact to the community was massive and

approximately 80% of the homes in Meyerland suffered some form of loss.

In order to quell residents' fears and to provide information in the most expedient way, Randi Cahill and Catherine Martin of the MCIA office went to work and organized a construction expo in order to disburse information to the residents in a central location. The Meyerland Construction Expo was held on Saturday, October 14 at Lovett Elementary School.

There were 26 vendor booths that included builders, architects, general contractors, house lifters, FEMA and SBA. The expo was organized in three weeks' time and hundreds of Meyerland residents attended. Lots of information was dispensed to residents who were unsure of their next steps, or needed more information in order to make decisions.

The MCIA office was present and provided information regarding the application process and rules, in addition to food and refreshments. Information on FEMA assistance, SBA loans, new construction, remodeling, elevating homes, architectural and design services was provided by the vendors. All construction related vendors at the Expo have done work in the Meyerland community. A complete list of vendors is located at Meyerland.net.

Each of the vendors was charged a nominal fee for their booth and all net proceeds will be donated to the PTO of each of the four HISD schools that service the Meyerland community.

The Meyerland residents who attended the Expo were very appreciative for the opportunity to speak with the many vendors who addressed their various needs. Although Harvey reared its ugly head on Meyerland, the Expo brought a glimmer of hope to residents who have been displaced and in a quandary with decision making. Thanks to the MCIA office for making the Construction Expo a huge success.



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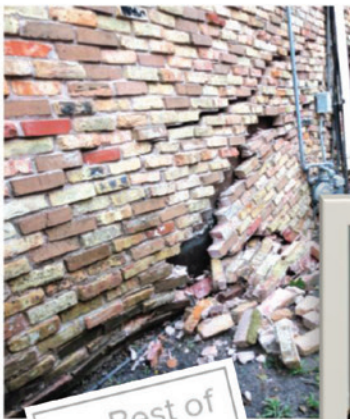
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HOW TO SAVE WATER-DAMAGED PHOTOS

By Orit Lagnado

In light of the recent extreme flooding in Houston, I have had many people ask me what to do with wet photos. Although I specialize in photo organization and traditional/digital album making, I have helped many friends and neighbors save their flooded photos. The good news is that in many cases they can be salvaged! The key is to act quickly. The longer the photos remain wet, the more likely they are to incur permanent damage.

If the photos are in an album, try to gently remove them from the sleeves. You may need to cut the plastic sleeves in order to get to the photos as they will not easily slide out.

Fill a plastic bin with a few inches of distilled water. Using tweezers or being very careful with your fingertips not to touch the image of the photo, hold each photo by the edge and gently place it in the water to wash off any debris, storm water, etc. If the photos are wet and stuck together, you can gently immerse them in the water until they separate. You may need to swish them around a little bit or try to carefully peel them apart but be very gentle.

Finally, place the photo face side up on towels or paper towels to dry.

The photos may curl when dry and can be straightened by placing them under a heavy book. If there is a musty smell coming from your photos once they are dry, place them in an open box and put that box inside a larger, closed container with an open box of baking soda inside to absorb odors. Be careful not to let the baking soda touch the photos, and check the box daily for mold.

If you do not have time to deal with wet photos immediately, place them in a resealable bag in the freezer. This will stop any further damage from occurring or mold from growing. When you are ready to work on them, let them thaw out a little and gently try to separate and clean them using the above method.

If you have wet memory cards, treat them as you would other electronics. Put them into resealable bags with fresh, dry rice and allow the water to draw out for a few days.

Photos and albums should be stored on a high shelf or 2nd floor of a house, with photos preferably in plastic bins. Avoid attics, garages or non-climate controlled storage units.

Editor's note: Orit Lagnado lives in Meyerland and is the owner of a scrapbooking company, ScrapYourEvent.com.



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Find Your Peace

By Aimee Alley Taylor, CHC, CPT, CYT 200



This article was written not long before so many people's world came crashing down with Hurricane Harvey. In fact we, like so many, were flooded out of our home and now we are trying to make our way

through "recovery". Some might say that this information is ridiculous in times such as these, however I would tell you that it is these very things that have kept me feeling somewhat sane throughout the process. It is easy to be peaceful when life is full of flowers and rainbows, but when life gets really tough you need to pull out your tool kit. If you can work on these skills in the normal day to day, you will eventually have these skills as habits which will serve you well in times of crisis. Our hearts and prayers are with you, and

I would encourage you to keep putting one foot in front of the other and look for your blessings (even when they are difficult to find).

We rush from here to there, pick up this kid, drop off that one and all the while we know that we need to slow down and find our peace. We continue to put off the "task" of finding our peace, because good grief who has time? Somewhere along the way, we started wearing busyness as a badge of honor. We carry around a feeling of righteousness because we are too busy to actually breathe. I beg of you to take a step back and ask yourself if you are really living or just getting through your daily life. We talk a big game of how important our family is to us, yet do we really spend time enjoying their company or simply live with them. What does it take to become more mindful, to find your peace? It takes shedding the badge of busy and taking a hard look at what you're spending your time on and with whom. It takes learning to breathe again. Finally, it takes a consistent, focused effort on eliminating those things/activities/people in your life that keep you from feeling peaceful and centered. Now, please don't misunderstand that I think this is an easy task. As with anything worth having, it takes hard work and dedication.

Here are five things I would encourage you to do to get started on your path to mindfulness and peace.

1. Find time for silence, meditation and/or reflection in your day. Whether it is 5 minutes or 45 minutes, you have to silence yourself

(Continued on Page 10)

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each day to start to reconnect with yourself.

2. Contemplate what are your true priorities in life. What sets your soul on fire? What will still be the most important to you in 5-10-50 years?

3. Honestly take a look at how you spend your time each day. How much is wasted on social media, tasks that don't add value, or with people that are not your priority?

4. Make a list of things that need to be lessened or eliminated and how you will make that happen. Do you say yes to too many evening events out of obligation? Do you say yes to too many volunteer positions? Hold yourself accountable to say "no" more so that you can find your peace.

5. Start a gratitude practice. Trust me when I say that gratitude changes everything. The most annoying task can become a blessing when using your "gratitude goggles". When you allow gratitude to transform your heart and mind, then your peace will be easier to find.

Unfortunately, we don't find peace one day and then have it forever. However, once you make enough space in your life for mindfulness and reconnect with yourself, you will be able to find and nurture your peace.

Editor's Note: Aimee Alley Taylor is a Meyerland resident and a Certified Health Coach, Certified Personal Trainer and the owner of Green Peas & Blueberries – Whole Life Wellness, www.greenpeasandblueberries.com

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The City's six (6) Neighborhood Depository and Recycling Centers; the Westpark Consumer Recycling Center and the Environmental Service Center will all be open seven (7) days a week. The hours at each type of facility vary. Residents are encouraged to bring their debris to one of the Neighborhood Depositories to assist with the clean-up.

Proof of City of Houston residency is required at the Neighborhood Depositories and the Environmental Service Center. Please bring a current Texas Driver's License or Texas ID and a current water/utility bill or city property tax receipt. For a detailed list of the materials accepted at each location please see the website at www.houstonsolidwaste.org.



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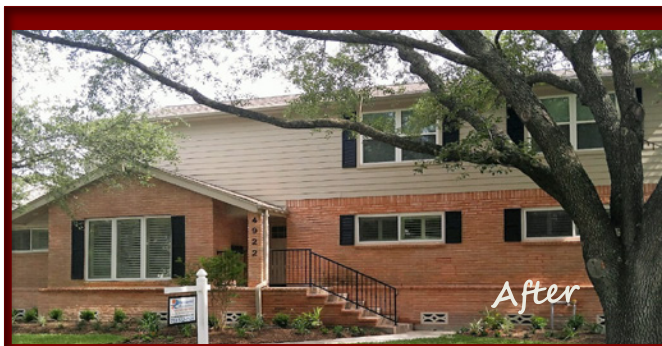
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