

Meyerlander MONTHLY

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Meyerland Community Improvement Association

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MEYERLAND.NET

DECEMBER 2018



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Flood Relief Update – Congressional Visitors

By Charles Goforth, Section 1 Director



Charles Goforth, Sec 1 Director, Congressman John Culberson, Congressman Steve Scalise, Amy Hoechstetter, MCIA Office Manager

United States Congressman and Majority House Whip, Steve Scalise, was in Houston recently and requested a tour of the Meyerland area . . . you know, the media's poster child for flooding. Scalise is the highest ranking government official to visit our area since President Eisenhower dispatched his VP, Richard Nixon, to perform the ribbon cutting ceremony at the opening of Meyerland's first model homes in 1955. When I was asked if I was willing to greet Scalise and Congressman John Culberson to show them some of the Project Brays construction and tour the community, I quickly said "sign me up". At the start of the tour it felt like we were old friends trading war stories. Scalise's district was hit by a massive 3-day flood almost exactly a year before Harvey. His eerily similar experiences with flooding provided him with a grasp of our situation that few from outside of our area (especially in government) could ever have.

While much of our focus was on Meyerland, I was able to emphasize the widespread damage that spanned US-59 to the Medical Center and how many other communities such as Bellaire, Robindell, Westbury, Braeswood Place, Maplewood S/N and Willow Meadows have been subjected to repetitive flooding year after year, as has Meyerland. Congressman Culberson was in campaign mode selling the fact, that although evidence of recovery is everywhere, the flood waters will be back and so much more needs to be done with not only the obvious continued flood risk reduction infrastructure improvements, but also mitigation assistance for the individual homesites. Culberson and I teamed up on this stating that those that have already "self-mitigated" (post Memorial Day Flood) either by elevating, building new or clearing their lot without receiving a prior federal grant should be able to retroactively participate in obtaining any benefits made available. Also, individual mitigation assistance can almost certainly assure that repetitive claims (taxpayers' burden) will be eliminated.

Culberson also spoke about the hardships on the Jewish community and the deep, tight roots that are integral to not only our successful past, but to the overall recovery and future prosperity. He specifically brought up the damage to the area's synagogues and neighborhood centers and the need for the congregants to reside in close proximity. Their hardship is magnified because some can't just move to temporary housing miles away during recovery; close proximity is a must. We ended up in the 5200 block of Braesvalley where Scalise got to meet some of the neighbors and get a closer look at the damage and recovery before holding a brief press conference.

Even though the U.S. House of Representatives flipped, Representative Scalise will still hold an influential position among lawmakers and his newfound familiarity with our community can only be a benefit.

I'll admit it was somewhat surreal cruising through our community in a blacked out security, reinforced Suburban with two congressmen and four Secret Service agents inside while being escorted and followed by blacked out sedans . . . and no stopping for red lights!



Meet and Greet at 5230 Braesvalley

Cover Credit

Bellamy Franzen with Officers Wong, Williams and Kleinschmidt at the Indigo home of her grandparents, Cindy and Charley Raimond at National Night Out in October.

How to Interview Elevation Companies

By Shirley Hou



Once you have decided to elevate your house, first research which companies have successfully raised homes in the Meyerland area. This is a speciality field, so be careful of just any company who claims

they have the expertise and experience. Some of elevation companies that have finished projects in the Meyerland area are (in alphabetical order): Abry Brothers Foundation, Arkitektura Development, Leon Foundation Repair, and Planet Three Elevation (P3).

Once you have contacted the companies for an in-person appointment and site visit, be prepared to ask them the following questions.

General Questions:

1. How long have you been elevating homes?
2. Where is their main office?
3. How many projects have you actually finished in my neighborhood?
4. Ask for references for completed jobs and actually check out those houses yourself with your own eyes! Contact the references!
5. Who is going to be my go-to contact person over the course of the project?
6. Do you take full responsibility for getting HOA permits or is it the homeowner's job? Clarify this especially if you are in Meyerland.
7. What is your payment plan?
Note: For a self-pay lift, payment structure is usually in 4 parts: 20%-40%-30%-10% or 30%-30%-30%-10% at the successful completion of one of the four phases: (a) Design and engineering drawings completed, HOA approval and City permits obtained; (b) House is in the air (c) House is "substantially complete" (typically includes skirt, stairs, utilities reconnect) (d) Final payment after punch list and job is done. You should not have to pay any money to get started!
8. Do you warranty your work? For how long and to what extent? Is said warranty transferable to next owner?

Construction Questions:

1. What method do you use to lift? Are these your employees or do you subcontract? (If the work is subcontracted, check how long they have been in that business, and in which geographies, e.g. Houston, Galveston, New Orleans, etc.)
2. How do you shore up the walls?
3. Do you put concrete and rebar in all of the outside CMU walls and attach to the existing slab?

4. Do you use 16" open blocks at all the corners of the house and any other needed areas with rebar cages and back filled with concrete?
5. If you have an attached garage or breezeway: what are my options? Have you done work like this before?
6. If you have any part of your house that is not a rectangle: how will you address it?
7. Looking at my house specifically, where do you see the greatest risk and complexity in the project? E.g. utility lines, "special" floor plans, etc.

Elevating your house is a unique and oftentimes stressful experience, so it is important to get support from others who have gone through the process. If you are elevating your house or seriously considering it, join the Facebook group, "Houston Flood Support Group: We're Going Up!" This is a self-managed support group for Houston flood survivors who are elevating their homes, with particular emphasis on homeowners in the Meyerland area. Some are on the FEMA grant but most are self-pay. You will find advice and support among the 190-plus members on how to get started and what to expect through the process.

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Meyerland's Superhero Retires

By Amy Hoechstetter



Sgt. Larry Bauer

Meyerland is sad to announce that Sergeant Larry Bauer will be leaving not only our Meyerland community, but law enforcement entirely as he retires effective November 30, 2018. For more than five years, our community has benefitted from the personal protection Sgt. Bauer was driven to ensure. Working closely with a team of six additional Constable Deputies, Sgt. Bauer focused his attention on the protection of our homes and our families. He frequently went the extra mile when responding to calls to discover and report the details, including following up to confirm that all possible evidence was made available to investigators, for the benefit of the Meyerland residents. His militaristic, but supportive disposition and gentle manner of dealing with victims of crime will never be matched.

Sgt. Bauer expressed his formal southern upbringing in phrases such as "Yes ma'am" and "yes, sir" as a sign of respect to everyone with which he spoke. As a child growing up in Harlingen, Texas, Sgt. Bauer, like many other young children at one-point or another thought of being a police officer, but he did not pursue the profession until 1992. His education included Texas State Technical Institute where he was trained in Data Processing. He worked at Shell Oil from 1981 until 1991, at which time he was laid off. Sgt. Bauer's epiphany

that led to a career in law enforcement occurred while looking out his window at home and noticing a police car sitting at a stop sign. He thought "Oh I can do that". He enrolled in the Gus George Law Enforcement Academy in Fort Bend and upon graduation, joined Precinct 5 as a Constable Deputy. Over the course of a 26-year career, Sgt. Bauer has worked in various departments including Parks and as a Sergeant for both Wilchester (on the west side of town) and Meyerland. Sgt. Bauer learned very quickly that Meyerland has very high standards of work and detailed reporting expectations from our partner against crime, Precinct 5. No trouble for him though as he was determined to be the best Sergeant Meyerland has ever seen.

Congratulations Sgt. Bauer. Mission accomplished.

When asked about his plans for retirement, he had the following to say. "I want to be with my wife Velma (a Teacher's Aide at Lamar Consolidated), my son Randall and my grandson Paxton. And now I have an opportunity to try different experiences until I find my hobby – after I get through my honey-do list. I'm fortunate that I can live on my retirement and don't need an extra job and I'm not certain if that is in my future but if I get bored, who knows. Right now, I can take care of the 'the little one' (his grandson Paxton) whose hair is always a napkin."

So as we say goodbye and best wishes to Sergeant Bauer, we are left with very warm and happy memories of the countless interactions we have had with Meyerland's ultimate protector and gentleman who regularly would jest about how he was our superhero. Imagine if you will, Sgt. Bauer in his Superman stance with hands on hips, looking forward with a smile on his face, red cape extending from his shoulders, flowing in the wind, who exits one last time and sails "up, up and away" into retirement. So long, Superman! You will be missed.

Temporary Waivers

The MCIA Board of Directors (BOD) on November 12, 2018 voted to extend the temporary waivers that were previously granted due to flooding from Hurricane Harvey until June 30, 2019. As such, Lot owners may have storage containers for storing flood related items and mobile home/travel trailers for use due to dwelling flooding on their lots beyond the standard time limits. In addition, the BOD waived construction fees. Please note, the fee waiver only relates to applications for construction or lot modification. All other fees remain in effect, as do the requirements that lot owners submit an application to the MCIA for any exterior construction, exterior structure modifications or lot modifications. The BOD hopes that this helps our lot owners during this time of recovery. If you have any questions, please contact the MCIA office at 713-729-2167.

Medicare Enrollment is Here

Whether you're switching plans or new to Medicare, I as your Community **Life & Health Specialist**, can help you navigate your options and pick the coverage that's right for **YOU**. Leaving you feeling confident and comfortable is my goal.

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Damon M. Griffin,
Senior Benefits Advisor

Cell: 832-494-5086
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Trash/Recycling Schedule

| December, 2018 | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------|------|------|
| 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 30 | 24 31 | 25 | 26 | 27 T/R | 28 | 29 |

| January, 2019 | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------------|------------|--------|------|------|
| Sun. | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. | Sat. |
| | | 1 | 2 Trash | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 T/R | 9 Tree | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 Trash | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 T/R | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 Trash | 30 | 31 | | |

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.

At Press Time - if you still have Hurricane Harvey Heavy Trash on your curb, please call 311 to have it picked up - subject to change.



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Trash Can Cleaning Service

By Chris Bisel

In the Spring of 2013, a flyer was left on my door. I generally don't pay much mind to these and throw them directly in the recycling container, but this one caught my eye. It was for a service company that will come occasionally and clean and disinfect my trash cans. Wow! This is a service that I had no idea I wanted! I signed up right away and it was awesome. My two trash cans and my recycling can smelled like flowers and were spotless after the service was performed. I told several neighbors about it and we all subscribed to the service. We were all very sad that the company went out of business about a year later.

I recently read a post on NextDoor about this same type of service that had been started again in the Houston area. The two companies I found that perform this service in Houston are BlastCan and Geoffery Garbage Can Cleaning. I contacted BlastCan and spoke to John, the owner. Meyerland is out of their service area on their website and I was bummed. However, he said he would be happy to come and service my cans anyway. I was thrilled as I have really missed this service. My neighbor and I immediately signed up and now we have sparkling fresh cans every other month when they come. They have different service plans, but I chose the plan that cleans my two trash cans every other month for a year for \$110, or approximately \$9.00 a can per visit. You can select your plan on their website and subscribe accordingly. I chose to have my recycling can done on an ala carte basis since it doesn't get nearly as gross as the trash cans. Once you have this service, you won't want to give it up. More information can be found on their website at www.blastcan.com if you have any questions. Although I opted to use BlastCan, similar services are provided by www.geoffreycleans.com. Whichever company you choose, you will not be disappointed in having clean, disinfected trashcans without having to scour them yourself.

I Heart Kolter Campaign Exceeds Fundraising Goal

By Hydee Kagan and Brooke Wagenheim, I Heart Kolter Campaign Co-Chairs



Due to the generosity of our parents and community, Kolter Elementary PTO surpassed its fundraising goal of \$75,000 for its annual I Heart Kolter Family Underwriting Campaign! We are blown away by your support and are so excited for all the meaningful ways our students and teachers will benefit from these funds. We are proud to be a part of this community and we thank you for your love of Kolter and your contribution to making it the amazing place it is.

Be NICE * to Birds and Butterflies This Winter

Plant natives instead of common exotics

By Lucy Randel, Director-At-Large



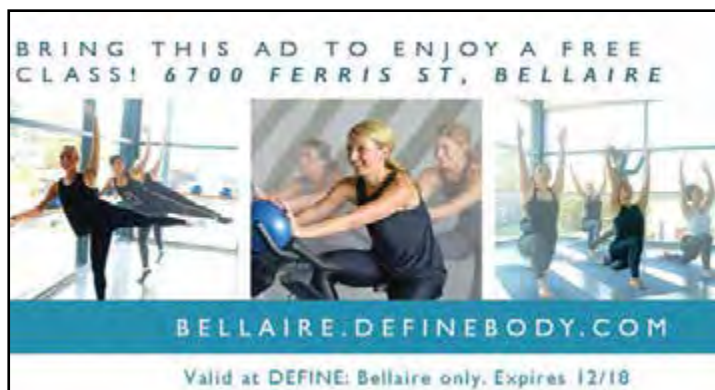
Between the construction and the recent rains in the area, many Meyerland homeowners are bemoaning the mudpits that have replaced their yards. I am actually excited about my mudpit because it gives me the chance to create a new landscape with greater wildlife appeal.

I consider my front yard as a woodland habitat anchored with a live oak and a southern magnolia north of the house. Understandably the St. Augustine grass is challenged by the shade, which is now even greater with the house lifted 42 inches. And let's just say the foundation shrubs or what's left of them have seen better days. My goal is to replace what I can with native plants that will provide winter berries and cover for birds and nectar for butterflies and other pollinators. I expect reduced water use and mowing will be an added benefit.

Incorporating multiple vertical layers maximizes habitat since different species prefer different levels. Designing the habitat from top to bottom makes sense, since the trees are already in place. Happily ours are native and already popular with mockingbirds, blue jays, robins and squirrels. In addition to nesting places, both trees produce seeds favored by local wildlife.

For the shrub layer, we are starting fresh. Our azaleas were beautiful but they only bloomed for about a week. Now we have one intact and one cut in half at six feet tall and two trying to come back from their roots. I never was too fond of the other shrubs that we inherited

(Continued on Page 10)



Higher Education for Senior Citizens

By Joyce Young



Did you know that Texas Education Code Sec. 54.365 allows for Senior Citizens to audit any course offered by a Texas institution without payment of a fee if space is available? Also, senior citizens

may enroll in up to six credit hours each semester or summer term without payment of tuition if space is available. A senior citizen is described as a person 65 years of age or older.

Texas Education Code Sec. 54.263 allows for students age 55 or older to pay reduced tuition and fees at rates lower than the rates otherwise stated.

If you are interested in these programs, please contact your Texas higher learning institution for further information.

In the Know

By Joyce Young

If you are new to the Meyerland area, you may want to sign up for Nextdoor Meyerland at <https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/meyerland--houston--tx/>. Meyerland neighbors use this website to share recommendations, classifieds, lost and found, important alerts and other information pertinent to the neighborhood.

If you are a mom (or dad) with young children (ages 0-5), you may also want to check out the Meyerland Mom's group at www.bigtent.com/groups/mmoyc and www.bellaireyoungmothers.org/ for friendship and support.

Also, be sure to sign up at www.Meyerland.net to receive important alerts and announcements regarding the Meyerland community.

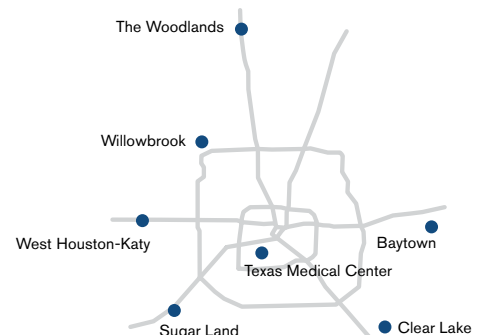


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(Continued from Page 8)

– boxwood, Japanese Yew, and Burford holly. They did not change much from season to season and even if it got cold enough for them to produce berries, the birds did not seem too interested.

Our replacement shrubs include American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa Americana*) and Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea Virginica*), which were obtained at the Houston Arboretum fall native plant sale and may also be available from native plant nurseries or suppliers in town. Both grow in partial or dappled shade under or near trees. American Beautyberry usually grows to about 5-7 feet in our local soil and can be pruned to desired size; it doesn't like soggy spots. It shows off beautiful purple berries, which persist through fall after the leaves drop. Virginia Sweetspire, typically 4 to 5 feet tall, produces 4 inch white spires of flowers around May. The spires remain in fall with small seeds while the leaves turn yellow to red. It prefers moist conditions even tolerating the soggy gumbo parts of the yard. Using a variety of shrubs with seeds of different sizes provides food for multiple bird species.

In the lowest layer the grass is pretty much gone right now, along with much of the topsoil and some of the tree root outer layer. Native groundcovers and perennial flowers will provide nectar and even more seeds for birds and butterflies. The trees will get a larger mulch ring and a native groundcover that invited itself to our yard will be encouraged. Horseherb (*Calyptracarpus vialis*), a low growing plant with tiny yellow flowers has always slipped into patches of the lawn and after the invasion of sod webworms decimated the grass, the horseherb filled in the holes. It doesn't get more than 6 to 10 inches high, minimizing mowing, can be walked on and doesn't need watering other than in prolonged dry spells. Unlike St. Augustine, it stays green all winter unless there is a hard freeze, which could make it disappear for a short time. The tiny yellow flowers provide nectar for butterflies and bees. You may still need some type of turf for the backyard play area but horseherb is great for moderate foot traffic.

A variety of heights, shapes, colors and fruit sizes in your planting creates habitat for multiple species and visual interest, while using defined borders and edges keep things neat and attractive. Extra focal points like boulders and birdbaths enhance both the habitat and the curb appeal.

For more information consult the native plant files of the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center or the Native Plant Society of Texas-Houston Chapter.

www.wildflower.org

<https://npsot.org/wp/houston/files/2018/09/NATIVE-PLANT-GUIDE.pdf>

*NICE (Native Instead of Common Exotics) is an acronym used by the Native Plant Society of Texas.

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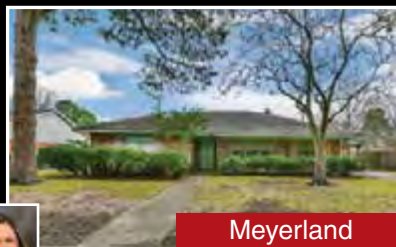
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