

# The West Lane Place News

July 2015

## WLP Civic Association Board Members

**President:** Jane Root

**Secretary:** Pat Bohn

**Past President:** Mohammad Bayegan

**Directors:** Karisa Gallucci, Larry Gray, Ann Iverson, Ted Richardson, Sue Shivers, and Gary Whitney, **Webmaster:** Marj Elhardt

**Vice President:** James Brodnax

**Treasurer:** Cynthia Trigg

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:** [www.wlpca.org](http://www.wlpca.org)

**Block Captains:** Mary McDaniel and Phyllis Maddox

### A LETTER from the PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors:

Our Annual Meeting was held on May 5 at Amazing Place. We are very grateful to the staff of Amazing Place for welcoming WLPCA into their facility for the past several years. It is a perfect spot for our annual meetings. **Chrissy Doherty** and her team of helpers did a fabulous job of coordinating the hospitality and refreshments for the meeting.

**Susan Giles**, Community and Church Liaison for Amazing Place, welcomed our group and made a few remarks about the services Amazing Place provides for members of our community with mild to moderate dementia. A gift was presented to Amazing Place on behalf of the West Lane Place Civic Association.

The business meeting began with the Treasurer's report by **Cynthia Trigg**: Total assets of WLPCA to date are \$46,437.57. **Karisa Gallucci**, Membership Chair, reported that we have a record number of 345 voting members, representing 252 households. Our Security Chair, **Mohammad Bayegan**, reported that WLP has obtained new Crime Watch signs, which will be placed throughout the neighborhood. He also reported that training will be scheduled for Crime Watch volunteers in the near future.

**Margaret Ann Bromberger** and **Gilda Bayegan** were honored for their service and contributions to our Civic Association. Both of these women have served in numerous capacities over many years and have been so important in helping our association become what it is today.

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**Pat Bohn**, Chair of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers and directors for 2015-2016:

President:

Vice-President:

Secretary:

Treasurer:

Directors:

**Jane Root**

**James Brodnax**

**Pat Bohn**

**Cynthia Trigg**

**Ann Iverson**

**Karisa Gallucci**

**Gary Whitney**

The slate of Officers and Directors was approved unanimously. I would like to thank **Chris Elhardt**, who has retired from the Board this year, for his service.

We heard presentations from our own **Ted Richardson**, **Richard Smith** from the Department of Public Works, our District G City Councilman, **Oliver Pennington**, **Lt. Ron Barza** of HPD, and **Colin Moussa**, Director of Marketing for the River Oaks District Development.

The evening concluded with door prize drawings. I would especially like to thank **Kiran Verma**, from **Kiran's Restaurant**, **Marmi's** in Highland Village,

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and **Sue Shivers** and her company **Beauti Control** for the donation of the door prizes. The recipients were delighted.

As we begin our new year for the WLPCA Board, I want to let you all know that I am honored to be serving as your President for a second year. In addition to the Board members listed above, I would like to express my appreciation to the following members of our community who have agreed to serve as Committee Chairs for the coming year: **Gilda Bayegan**, Newsletter Editor; **Karisa Gallucci**, Membership; **Sue Shivers**, Newcomers; **Cynthia Trigg** and **Chrissy Doherty**, Hospitality; **Ann Iverson**, Crime Alert; **Mike Weingart**, HPD Liaison; **Mohammad Bayegan**, Security; **Mary McDaniel & Phyllis Maddox**, Block Captains; **Sherryl Gorman**, Recycling; **Philip Barnard**, Traffic; **Marj Elhardt**, Webmistress; **John Abraham**, Landscaping; **Ted Richardson**, City of Houston Liaison; and **Marion McDaniel**, Legal. Also, **Mohammad Bayegan** continues to serve on the Board as Past President, and **Larry Gray** continues as a Director. All of these individuals have graciously volunteered their time to serve WLPCA, and I am very grateful for their valuable help.

WLPCA will mail the 2015 Directory to all dues paying members in the very near future. If you do not receive your directory by August 1, please advise **Karisa Gallucci**, Membership Chair. Many thanks to **Sue Shivers** for printing our directory.

I wish you all a safe and happy summer, and look forward to seeing you in October at National Night Out.

Jane Root  
President

**SAVE THE DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6  
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

## AN UPDATE ON RAIL ON RICHMOND

The following article is being reprinted with permission from its author, **Chris Seger**, a Board Member of the **Afton Oaks Homeowners' Association**:

Richmond Avenue is a lovely, tree-lined boulevard that bisects Afton Oaks and provides a much needed automobile route to Greenway Plaza and downtown. Since 1991 Afton Oaks has steadfastly resisted attempts by METRO and the City of Houston to build rail on Richmond. Building rail down the middle of Richmond would mean tearing out 85 mature oak trees and splitting Afton Oaks in two with a dangerous and disruptive rail line. In a referendum held in 2003, a narrow majority of Houston voters supported METRO's plan to build five rail lines, one of which was to be the Westpark Line. The ballot language and accompanying maps indicated that the line was to be built in the right of way METRO purchased in 1993 from the Southern Pacific railroad for \$74 million. The Westpark right of way is just south of the Southwest Freeway and runs west alongside the Westpark Tollway clear out to Eagle Lake.

But, in 2004 METRO arbitrarily decided the line was going to be built on Richmond Avenue, not Westpark. METRO'S decision completely disregarded the referendum results and denied the democratic process. Richmond was *never* mentioned as a possibility for the route in the months leading up to the vote, nor on any part of the ballot language.

When METRO pulled the switch, shifted to Richmond Avenue, and changed the name of the route to the "University Line," it set off a firestorm of opposition, but then Mayor Bill White said "light rail will never be crammed down the throats of any neighborhood that does not want it." That edict eventually applied directly to Afton Oaks, but most of Richmond Avenue is still targeted for rail.

Congressman John Culberson, was fully convinced of METRO's bad faith and he took up the plight of the residents and small businesses along Richmond. Since 2004 the Congressman has steadfastly opposed rail on Richmond at every opportunity.

The Congressman's most recent action, however, was to sign an agreement with METRO on May 13, 2015 in which METRO "pledged not to use any federal or state funds to build rail on Richmond west of Shepherd Drive unless METRO service area voters approve it as part of a future METRO service area referendum." Congressman Culberson assured me that this agreement effectively means METRO will leave Richmond Avenue alone for the foreseeable future.

Knowing METRO, any agreement they sign is either for their immediate benefit or will be altered for their benefit when the time is right. You will recall that it was their utter disregard of the 2003 referendum as to where the rail was to be located (Westpark vs. Richmond) that showed their taste for duplicity, and which is the cause of our problem today.

In my view there is nothing final here, and we must maintain our vigilance at all times. We've held METRO and the City off since 1991, and there is hope that we can continue to keep rail off Richmond Avenue.

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### **Meet our Newest WLPCA Board Member**



**Gary Whitney**, a three-year resident of West Lane Place, was elected to the Board of Directors at the last civic association meeting. Gary came to live in our neighborhood when he married long-time resident Molly Boren. They live at 2906 Mid Lane.

Gary was born in Denver, Colorado and moved with his family to Helena, Montana, for his formative years. He graduated from high school in Salt Lake City, Utah. He returned to Colorado to earn a BS degree from Colorado University in Boulder. He then moved to New York City, where he earned a BFA and a Master's Degree in Interior Architecture from Pratt Institute. He focused his career in the Hospitality area of Interior Design. During his 50-year career he has designed interiors

for hotels in the Middle East and Asia, including the American Club in Hong Kong, and multiple projects at Walt Disney World in Orlando. Locally many of you have experienced his interiors at the Houstonian Fitness Center, Transco Tower, and at Olivette, Trevisio, Zula, Tony's and Masraff's restaurants.

Ever creative, Gary and Molly have built a miniature house completely out of twigs gathered in Hermann Park. It resides in their front hall, complete with handmade furniture. The house inspired them to write and illustrate a fantasy book for middle-schoolers called *Thistle Downe*, which will be in bookstores in the Fall.

Gary has two adult children – a daughter, Morgan, who lives in Austin, and a son, Parker, who is in Philadelphia.

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### **TO FLOOD? or NOT TO FLOOD?...THAT IS THE QUESTION...**

*By Gary Whitney*

With all our recent rain, there is interest in how likely West Lane Place is to flood. We are geographically located nearly equidistantly between Buffalo Bayou and Brays Bayou. We are, however, in the Buffalo Bayou watershed, meaning the rain that falls on West Lane Place ends up draining

toward and into Buffalo Bayou, ultimately ending up in the Houston Ship Channel on its way to Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

Fortunately, we are neither within a 100 year flood plain (having a minimum of a 1% chance of flooding in any given year) nor in a 500 year flood plain (having less than a 0.2% chance of similar flooding. Doesn't sound like a lot? Another way to think of it is that structures in a 1% (100 year flood plain) have the minimum of a 26% chance of flooding during a 30 year period of time (the duration of many home mortgages) Likewise, homes in a 0.2% flood plain (500 year flood plain) have a 6% chance of flooding during the same 30 year period.

This may or may not influence your decision to have National Flood Insurance thru FEMA. If you want to investigate further, here are my sources:

Ref: [www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program](http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program)

Ref: Harris County Flood Education mapping tool

Ref: Flood Plain Administrator: Ms. Jamila Johnson

e-mail: [jamila.johnson@houston.tx.gov](mailto:jamila.johnson@houston.tx.gov)


Yet there are things that can affect our immediate drainage, such as grades (slopes) and blockages. As individual homeowners, we can alleviate some minor issues by keeping our gutters and drains clear of accumulated debris. Start with your roof gutters and downspouts, and further "downstream" to the street gutters and curb drains, keeping in mind that most structures are prone to water damage. Fill in any low spots in your landscape, especially if adjacent to your home.

Long time residents recall some instances of local rising water. During tropical Storm Allison in June, 2001, Hurricane Ike, and in May of 2014, there was reportedly rising water on Mid Lane and Bash near the Richmond end. Immediate homes might have seen ground level flooding.

If any of our readers recall other incidents of "flooding" please let me know, and I will write a follow-up for the next WLP Newsletter.

**Recycling and Tree & Limb Pick-up Schedule for WLP**

**JULY**


Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	<b>6</b>	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	<b>20</b>	21		23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**AUGUST**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	<b>3</b>	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	<b>17</b>	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	<b>J</b>	27	28	29
30	<b>31</b>					

**SEPTEMBER**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	<b>14</b>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22		23	25	26
27	<b>28</b>	29	30			

 = Tree waste; **J** = Junk & tree waste pick up

Weekly household trash pick up each Monday. NOTE: Recycling is every other Monday, on highlighted days in boxes. Please have your bins out on the curb by 7 am and in by 10 pm.

"Tree Waste" is defined as "clean wood waste such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps (lumber, furniture, and treated wood will NOT be accepted.)" \*

"Junk Waste" is defined as "items such as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material." \*

Junk and tree waste may be left on the curb a day or two prior to collection day.

This newsletter is published and delivered to you by the **West Lane Place Civic Association**.

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