

WLP Civic Association Board Members

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and Barbara Staley

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**DEAR NEIGHBORS:**

I hope this Newsletter finds all of you well and socially distant! Who would have thought that anything like this year could happen? Despite the crisis, many of us have made the best of a beautiful Spring, walking and riding bikes throughout the day and into the evening, enjoying the absence of traffic on Mid Lane, cleaning closets, planting flowers, and playing more golf. In many ways, it has been a nice change of pace. Most importantly, most of us have been able to focus more attention on what really matters in life, faith, family, and friends.

I feel fortunate to live in West Lane Place, a unique and wonderful neighborhood. As I step down from the position of President of the WLPCA, I thank my fellow Board members and Committee Chairs over the past two years for their service. All have devoted many hours to promoting the welfare of our neighborhood.

Normally, now would be the time that we would hold our Annual Meeting and approve the new Board. Unfortunately, as we are all too well aware, large meetings are not possible. Therefore, we're asking you to vote by mail. Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find a ballot and a membership form, with a return envelope. When you cast your vote to approve the next board, please return your ballot along with the completed membership form and your dues in the enclosed envelope. All votes of WLPCA members will be counted. Please complete the application form even if you are already a member, so we will have your current information. For those of you who are not yet members, now is the perfect time to join.

I am happy to present you with the board we are proposing for the next term. I think you will be as eager as I am to approve this slate.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to have served our neighborhood over the past two years. I hope you all stay healthy and safe, and I hope to see more of you throughout this year.

Best wishes,

Diane Kiecke  
President-WLPCA

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\*\*\*\***This issue contains Membership Materials** \*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\***and a WLPCA Ballot**\*\*\*\*

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The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) of each article, and not necessarily those of the WLPCA.

Please contact Block Captains, Phyllis Maddox and/or Sherryl Gorman, concerning any problems you may experience receiving your newsletter.

## **Business or Bust**

*by Brian Teichman, Mid Lane*

With the recent downturn in the service industry, many area businesses are struggling to make ends meet while offering limited service to patrons. Others are operating for long hours to take advantage of high demand, and still others are using this time to upgrade their facilities.

**Lululemon** is taking the former Smith & Wollensky space and **Cole Haan** has shuttered the location in Highland Village. The fate of **J. Crew** is uncertain, and others are struggling to pay employees. Many people assume the downturn of our nation's economy will cause a longtime loss of local business, but will it? I spoke with some of the business owners surrounding West Lane Place for their stories on the challenges facing their operations

**Pete's Fine Meats & Deli**, 5509 Richmond, has provided the highest-grade meats since 1932. The family owned business is one of kind, and Pete's reputation for hard work comes from "experience, knowledge and integrity." Owner Mike Cruz says his business has increased fifty percent during the Covid-19 shut down and he attributes this to "the best form of advertising, word of mouth." During the lockdown in Harris County, Mike offered curbside service to continue to meet his customer's needs. Cruz says, "there is plenty of meat and I expect there to be plenty to serve my customers' needs even though the country is being told otherwise." The business has endured the difficulties of a slow economy, hurricanes and a fire that nearly put the butcher shop out of business. Mike is a testament to the legacy of his family with a can do spirit that shines brightly amid the hardships of survival.

**Complete Pictures, Inc.**, 3701 West Alabama, has served consumers for twenty-seven years. They provide custom framing services to both interior designers and residential consumers. "Covid-19 has certainly affected us, but we are fortunate to have a loyal client base and support of our community," said longtime employee Nate Stout. Nate was able to take in some design framing through correspondence during the Covid-19 stay-at-home order, but he says product is difficult to obtain because manufacturers are closed. Many of the vendors' employees have been furloughed, making it more difficult to obtain the materials needed to finish projects going forward. He is involved with another business, Peddle Party. Guests peddle down Washington Avenue, The Montrose, Downtown and East of Downtown on a 16-passenger bicycle with wrap around bar. The bike is similar to a party bus and is generally rented as a fun way

to do a pub-crawl or progressive dinner. Due to social distancing and the closure of bars, that business is unable to operate at all. Nate's passion for art is only exceeded by his passion for customer service, and his commitment to succeed. Time will tell what the future holds for Complete Pictures, but Nate is a hard working entrepreneur with the gift of youth to continue his passion.

**Ambassador Chinese Restaurant**, 4326 Richmond, has been in operation since 1975 and is as much a part of West Lane Place as many of our long-time residents. Owner Wendy Wang explains that she has taken this opportunity to remodel her dining room while continuing to serve loyal customers with curbside service. She says business has increased during the shutdown. The vast menu has every dish you could name and everything they serve is centered on authentic dishes created with the finest ingredients by hard working chefs. Ambassador is somewhat of a hideaway for Chinese cuisine, but the dining room always seems to be full of satisfied customers.

**Tres Market**, 2620 Joanel Street, has created quality prepared foods since 1996 that are available for pick-up to enjoy at home, or to cater larger gatherings. Although they lost all of the lunch catering they provided to local businesses, which accounted for twenty percent of their bottom line, their status as an essential business has allowed Tres Market to remain open during the shutdown. Their motto of "Our Language is the Language of Food," allows the customer to enjoy a home cooked meal after a long day without the fuss of cooking it. There are two locations, one in River Oaks and one on Memorial. Although there is no dine-in service, lunch boxes can be purchased with an option to sit outside the market to enjoy a glass of wine or dessert. It is not uncommon to open refrigerators at Lakeway in Austin, ranches in Colorado, or Galveston beach houses and see Tres Market boxes on the shelves.

The volatility of the oil market has fueled growth and other phenomena have created hardship throughout the history of our city. People have driven the Houston economy since 1836.

The future of business throughout the Nation is uncertain, but the endurance of the citizens of Houston will no doubt be yet another show of renewed strength.

## Covid in Our Area: Low Case Numbers in 77027

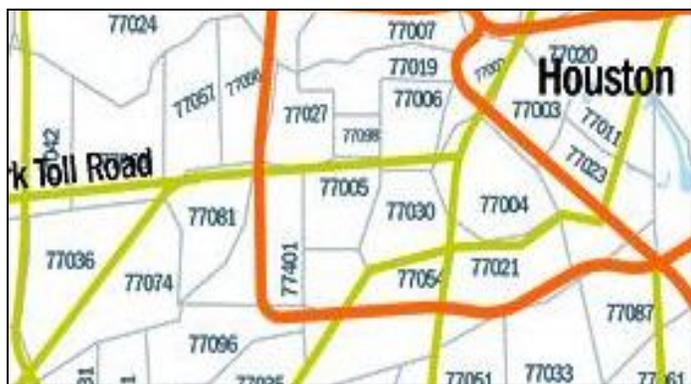
by Anna Dean

We can take courage from the fact that with **30** confirmed cases in our zip code as of this writing, we have fewer Covid cases than our neighbors to the south (**West University, 77005, with 35 cases**) or east (**River Oaks, 77019, with 46 cases.**) Our lower numbers are due, of course, to our lower density, and also to our lifestyle, demographics, and some good luck!

Some of the most densely populated zips in Houston lie further south of us, specifically in the area of **Sharpstown and Highway 59: zip codes 77081 (63,500 people, 140 cases), 77036 (76,200 people, 310 cases, the highest number of cases in any in Harris County zip) and 77074 (39,000 people, 129 cases.)**

**Montrose (77006, 19,700 people, 70 cases,) and West Galleria (77057, 39,200 people, 175 cases)** have higher cases, due probably to the number of businesses that add to their populations during certain times.

With such good stats, we must be doing something right!



These statistics and more are available at:

<https://harriscounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/31370c72d3844e6b962fcf8490718821>



**Mike Ginzel, Hackberry Lane**

Mike tells us, “A civic association is a great opportunity to serve others, meet your neighbors all the while strengthening the community we call home.”

## Meet the New Additions to the WLPCA Board

We are very *very!* happy to announce three new additions to the 2020 slate of the WLPCA board of directors.



**Elaine Khalil, Bash Place**

To fill the position of **Secretary**, we nominate **Elaine Khalil**. Elaine and her husband, Mohamed, moved here in 2017 from the New York area, where Elaine was a managing director in Investment Banking. You may remember from an earlier article in the *West Lane Place News* that Elaine and Mohamed chose WLP as their ideal retirement location, moved here just in time for Hurricane Harvey, and stayed here despite Hurricane Harvey!

We also nominate **two new directors for the 2020-2021 term.**



**Van Demetriades, West Lane**

**Van Demetriades.** Van and his wife, Susan, moved from the Woodlands to WLP in 2013. Van recently retired from Memorial Hermann Health System after 40 years in healthcare finance. He and Susan share their home with their Labradoodle, Luke, and occasionally, their son, Chris, a medical student at Baylor. Van says he feels blessed to live in a neighborhood with so many warm and welcoming neighbors. He looks forward to serving friends and neighbors as a director of the WLPCA.

**Mike Ginzel.** Mike has lived in Houston since 1985, and in WLP since 2017. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children and “3 ½” grandchildren: twin boys, one little girl, and “one on the way.” Although Mike spends his working hours as Senior VP of Martin Product Sales/Martin Asphalt Company supplying bunker fuel to ships and asphalt binder to road contractors, he says his free time is consumed by two Gs: Golf and Grandkids.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**May \*15\* was the deadline to file your HCAD protest  
but you might still have time.**

Despite the crashed real estate market and crushed stock market, almost all our HCAD appraised property values went up this year! The deadline to file your protest was May 15, or **thirty days after your notice of appraised value was mailed.** Some people received their notices late. If you are one of them, you may still have time to file.

One of our neighbors who studied our tax records says that approximately 85% of homeowners in West Lane Place pay higher taxes than they should because they do not protest their appraised values. Failure to keep your appraised value low costs you higher taxes, and Harris County uses your high appraisal to support the high values they place on your neighbors' homes.

**Harris County's appraised value does not increase your property's actual value!** It is simply a means to get more tax money for the County!

Protest on line using your *iFile* number printed on the green sheet sent with your 2020 notice of appraised value.

**Time to vote for the 2020 WLPCA board and update your membership.** Included with this newsletter, you will find an insert with membership materials and a ballot for the 2020 WLPCA board of directors. You already know most of the nominees on the slate, but there are three new additions to the board that we introduced on page 3 of this newsletter.

In normal times we would present the slate for your approval at our Annual Meeting. Since we were unable to meet this year, we ask you to vote by mail instead. Please complete the enclosed ballot as well as the enclosed membership application forms, even if you are already a member, so we can update your information. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2020, please include a check for dues, too. When everything is complete, please put a stamp on the enclosed, addressed envelope and drop it in the mail (or at Sara's door) at your first opportunity. If you misplace the envelope, the return address is:

WLPCA ELECTION  
Sara Ng  
27 Bash Place  
Houston, TX 77027

If you misplace your ballot, too, you can print another one from our website, [wlpca.org](http://wlpca.org). The link is on the home page, in the green band headed "**Become a Member.**"

**Nextdoor Mid Lane.** If you have not yet signed up for this networking site, please check it out. It's a good way to know what's going on around us, sometimes before it's reported on the news. And it's a good way to find out things you'll never see on the news! You can register here: [Nextdoor.com/join](http://Nextdoor.com/join)

**MAY**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	<b>*15*</b>	16
17	<b>18</b>	19	20	21	22	23
24	<b>M</b>	26		28	29	30
31						

**JUNE**

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

**JULY**

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

**AUGUST**

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

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

Weekly household trash pick up on Mondays. 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."