



Belle Isle Buzz

Official Publication of the Belle Isle West Neighborhood Association

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Shelli Wasson, Editor

March / April 2020

Dear Neighbors,

To say that this has been an unusual and terrifying spring is the understatement of the century. Because of the huge and rapid surge in the number of deaths and gravely ill people all over the world due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, people have been feeling isolated and panicky. Schools closed, businesses shuttered, sports events were cancelled, entertainment and arts events were cancelled, travel ground to a halt because social distancing was one of the few actions doctors and experts said would actually help prevent the spread of the virus. Restaurants began curbside pickup, delivery only or closed until further notice. We were told to shelter at home except for essential shopping for groceries, medicine, and gasoline.

Seniors and vulnerable people with underlying medical conditions were urged to stay at home and have necessary things brought to them. We've all been wearing masks and gloves when we're around other people. No one knows when or if this virus will have run its course. It's highly contagious and causes extreme suffering and often death if contracted. All our lives have changed this spring.

We asked some of our Belle Isle West neighbors to share their experiences while being confined to their homes during this period in our history. Here are a few of their stories.

SILVER LININGS OF STAY AT HOME ORDERS

*Article written/submitted by Aimee Dial Parrish,
BIW Newsletter Staff*

If you see an informal group of neighbors of all ages social distancing on the Parrish's side lawn on 59th Street, stretching, doing Tai Chi or Yoga, breathing fresh air in the early evening, that's a visual of one positive adjustment to this new normal.

Belle Isle West has naturally attracted homeowners who enjoy daily outdoor exercise, whether it be a leisurely stroll, jog, walking dogs, pushing baby strollers or cycling. Silver Linings, continued on page 7



Harry, Graham and Sydney Woods

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STREET DIRECTORS (12/03/2019) -
55th Place - Dave Campbell & Greg Hall
55th Terrace - Cathy Fitzhugh
56th Street & Linn - OPEN
57th Street - Shannon & Randy Wells
58th Place - Shelli & Craig Wasson,
Cathie Shaw

58th Street - Sue Fellers
59th Street - Aimee Dial Parrish
60th Street - Christie Baker & Lynne
Womble

61st Street - Scott Sproat & Maribeth Govin
62nd Street (including Imperial Terrace) -
OPEN
Riviera Drive and 2300-2400 Blocks of
NW 59th Street - OPEN
Ross Ave. - Eunice Khoury
Villa Ave. (including Hunters Green) -
OPEN

Please contact Dave Campbell,
Dcamp20000@aol.com for inquiries
about becoming a Street Director.

**Website:
BIWOKC.COM**

MASK MAKER EXTRAORDINAIRE

We'd like you to meet a very talented, energetic and generous neighbor of ours. Linda Randels has lived for nine years in a duplex she owns at 58th and Ross. She has very graciously let us use her garage, huge drive-way, and carport for three neighborhood benefit garage sales.

Linda has had her own sewing factory business since 1978, employing 30 people at one time, making women's handbags and jackets. She's scaled back since then and works with her customers on a contract basis out of her home. Linda was looking around for a new project when she learned about the 405 MaskMakers, a non-profit group producing masks during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She's used her skills to personally sew more than 1000 masks for the group effort, which has turned out more than 7,500 masks since they started up two months ago.

The group began with about 200 people and now involves 2500. They have distributed free masks to The Homeless Alliance, OU Medical Center, Positive Tomorrows, OKC Schools Cafeteria Workers and the Oklahoma County Jail. They've even contracted with the Thunder to use their unsold T-shirts to make masks.

Thanks for all you do, Linda!

Be a Good Neighborhood

In our Belle Isle West neighborhood there are several different types of "street" addresses. Some live on a "Terrace", "Place" or "Drive". Mail and deliveries can get misdirected to the corresponding street, such as mail for 57th Terrace can be delivered to 57th Street. This is a fact of life in our neighborhood. No matter how many times residents talk to the Post Office or FedEx/UPS, this isn't going to get any better.

What can improve is that the resident receiving items at the incorrect address should return mail/packages to the owner listed on the package's address. Please be honest and considerate neighbors and make sure the packages get to the rightful owner in a timely manner without being opened.

Remember: You can file a police report if you can prove that the package in question has not been returned to the rightful owner.

Mail dues to:

Belle Isle West NA
5030 N. May, Box 118
Oklahoma City, OK 73112



**2020 Belle Isle West
Neighborhood Association
Dues**

Name _____
Address _____
Phones(s) _____
Email _____

Your canceled check is
your receipt.

◆ **Annual dues are \$35.00 per household.** ◆



(Make checks to BIW Neighborhood Assn.)

*Thank
You!*

I have enclosed \$ _____

NEED SHELTER FROM STORMS?

Spring in Oklahoma always means some volatile weather. Actually, make that all year. If you do not have a storm shelter, have too much stuff in your garage to park your car(s) there if it's going to hail soon or if you don't have a garage, we have received a kind offer from a very large neighbor of ours with 400 underground parking spaces! Yes, you read that right.

We talked with Ron Dolittle, who is part of the property management company that cares for the Oil Center at 2601 NW Expressway. He says that the Oil Center is extending a neighborly invitation for people who need shelter in a storm to park in their underground parking area. They will ask the guard inside the lobby to leave the gate to the parking area unlocked in stormy weather. You should enter the garage west off Linn, south of NW 55th Terrace, north of the NW Expressway. Here are the details of this very kind offer:

1. This is not free, attended underground parking. You need to stay with your car or plan on picking it up at the crack of dawn before the many tenants of the Oil Center come to park there.
2. If you go over to take shelter and the gate happens to be closed, go into the building and ask the guard to open the gate. He may have just neglected to leave it open and will let you in right away.
3. You **MUST** leave the parking places in front of the entrance into Junior's Club open so their customers are free to park there.
4. Please remember that this is private property and we are being extended an invitation to benefit from it as we do from the school, churches and businesses within our neighborhood. No responsibility for your vehicle, its contents or your personal safety is implied by this friendly gesture.
5. Surely this goes without saying, but here goes. Do not leave any trash behind when you leave. Park in a marked place and be considerate of those sheltering near you by keeping music and noise to a minimum. If anyone abuses this privilege, we will lose it.

Belle Isle West Endures the COVID-19 Pandemic

Hey, neighbors. I hope all is well. Strange times for everyone, including us. My husband John is 67, so whenever we need anything I'm the designated runner. I am also still working every day, because I manage a Walgreens store in El Reno. I'm thankful to still be working, but cognizant of the dangers I may be bringing home every day.

John walks the dog a couple of times a day to keep from getting too bored around the house and to grab some fresh air. Other than that, he is under strict orders to stay safely indoors!

I worry about my being exposed to the virus on a daily basis, but am proud of the fact that we at Walgreens continue to open our doors daily in order to ensure that our friends, neighbors, and loved ones have access to the medications they still require even through this nightmare.

Please stay safe. Wash your hands thoroughly for twenty seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself twice) multiple times a day. Stay at least 6 feet away from others and always use good cough & sneeze etiquette (sneeze or cough into your elbow) whenever you are in public. Also, if you have access to a mask, wear it. It does not keep you from getting the virus, but it definitely will help you not transfer it to others if you have been exposed. Peace and love to you all!

Paul Fenwick,
55th Terrace

Beating the COVID-19 Virus

My best suggestions:

- ❖ Clean out a lot of drawers & closets
- ❖ Read a lot of books
- ❖ Eat a lot of Ice Cream from Braum's

Works for me!
Barbara Pirrong



A friend of mine, early in this mask-wearing experiment, went to the bank. They told him he couldn't come in like a masked bandit. He was the most unlikely of robbers as he is in his mid-eighties. You gotta' find fun in some of this stuff.

Joy Richardson,
Riviera Drive

My family is very holiday oriented. We try to observe all major holidays with a family gathering. Over the years it has changed, of course, but we still like to gather around a family table with seasonal food.

This year is such a unique challenge that we decided to minimize our exposure to one another. I really am not a fan of cyber naming everything new that happens on a daily basis. So unlike social networking, social distancing, distance schooling and non-contact shopping, let's just say we practiced common sense.

Easter dinner (Sunday, April 12) was prepared at my home, and we invited our family members to do curbside pick up. At 4:00 PM on Easter, we served a hot meal that included hors d' oeuvres, dessert and Easter baskets to go. I even had enough to take Easter dinner to a very appreciative friend going through some trying times.

It was as close to our normal holiday as we could prudently get, but the most important thing is we didn't let 2020 become the year "Without a Family Easter." We plan on doing this as long as the world is closed.

Greg Hall,
55th Place

Gratitude Poem for Doctors

Our Medical staff is working day and night
To keep COVID-19 out of our sight.
To one so humble as myself
It's a matter of gratitude 'n pride
To have such noble fellows here right by my
side.

Thank you to all the doctors and frontline
workers who are working day and night in the
COVID-19 Pandemic!

Parinita, 8th grade student at Classen SAS,
55th Terrace

We are doing okay, my kids are learning online or
playing in the backyard. We have been ordering
groceries online.

Gaurav Varshney,
55th Terrace

Sign on 58th Place alerting drivers
to children playing in their yard.
Drivers always need to slow
down whether children are
outside or not. Great sign!!



Remember to take time and enjoy the
pretty things that are right outside your
door. This has been the best year ever
for the "Pansy Patch" in our flower bed!

Shelli Wasson,
58th Place



In Memoriam: Richard L. "Dick" Mayes passed away February 17, 2020. Dick and his wife, Jo Ann, moved into their home on 59th St. with their four daughters in 1965 when the northern part of this area was developed. Dick was instrumental in the founding of our neighborhood association. He served in many capacities, including president and editor of the newsletter. Writing the newsletter was lots of fun for Dick. He published many letters from residents and reported on all the neighborhood activities and the wildlife in our area. Dick was a U.S. Army Veteran and proudly flew the American flag on his front porch.

As newsletter editor, I feel proud to have known Dick and thank him for his many years of leadership to our neighborhood association. Dick helped provide a strong foundation on which to grow into the vibrant neighborhood we have today. I have always been very impressed by the fact that Dick wrote the newsletter every month for twelve years. That is true dedication! Shelli Wasson

SCHOOL MOVES ONLINE

We moved to Belle Isle West one week before our daughter Lily was born. Now she is 13 and in 8th grade at Belle Isle Enterprise Middle School. Our older daughter, Anna, graduated from BIEMS and is now a 16-year-old sophomore at Harding Charter Preparatory High School. Schools in Oklahoma took a two-week break after Spring Break, and our daughters have been going to school virtually since April 6, 2020.

What does a typical day look like?

Anna

I have all seven of my classes each day and each teacher goes about teaching differently. Some do a live video call twice a week, some give an online worksheet, some assign a video or outside source to watch, among other things.

Lily

I usually start my school work about 10am, an hour later than usual. Some teachers have classes via Zoom; others post daily assignments, including units on websites like IXL.com and iCivics.org.

What is the hardest part of this new normal?

Anna

I was really looking forward to playing on the tennis and softball teams and participating in other spring activities at my school. While I am still in touch with my friends, nothing compares to seeing them and my classmates at school. This time has had its benefits, but I am very ready to get back to normal.

Lily

The hardest part for me is not being able to see my friends every day. Talking to my friends through a screen does not compare to being face to face with them. I miss the sense of community at school.

What are positive things that have come from this experience?

Anna

While staying at home, I have had the time to connect with old friends who I have not talked with in a long time and have rekindled many friendships. It has been a great time for detoxing and giving myself a break from the stress of school.

Lily

I have had time to bake with my mom, play board games with my family, and watch movies. Quality time with family should never be taken for granted.

Lisa Boevers,
61st Street

SILVER LININGS, continued from page 1

Our safe streets lined with mature trees entice residents to get out of the house. This has been especially so since the onset of the Covid-19 Stay At Home Orders were put in place to decrease the spread of the virus.

As with any unfortunate crisis, we can try to stay hopeful and find silver linings that are meaningful to each of us. Many families and residents in Belle Isle West have been negatively impacted by this crisis. I was asked to interview one household about their experience.

I chose Jillian and Nick Woods and their three children, who live near me on NW 59th. Nick was laid off from his oil/gas job once the crisis began in March. Jillian, a Yoga Instructor, was not allowed to teach classes once all studios/gyms had to shutter for safety. They had to start homeschooling their three children, Harry, Sydney and Graham. I've witnessed the Woods be an example of resiliency, resourcefulness and utterly great people that all of Belle Isle West benefits from by having them as our neighbors.

I asked Jillian how her family has dealt with this "new normal" and adjusted to our Stay At Home Orders. Are there any frustrations, revelations, adjustments, things her family has learned how to do that the extra time has provided an opportunity to do? Have they discovered any personal talents, reached any milestones, read books that were left half-read, accomplished any next-level chores, created any new routines?

Jillian answered that they are weathering the storm like so many people, but enjoying this special time as a family more than ever. There is a renewed sense of community and strength in our neighborhood. With job loss they have felt an overwhelming amount of support from neighbors and friends. Now, every time someone drops something off at their home, Harry can be heard saying, "Mom, I just love Oklahoma and love our neighborhood."

The Woods' list of Silver Linings:

- ✓ More bike rides, walks, connecting with neighbors and friends outside
- ✓ Puzzles, Legos, dance parties/slumber parties in the den, baking/cooking together inside
- ✓ Graham Woods, 4 yrs. old, has taken up playing harmonica, finger painting and making homemade stamps out of toilet paper rolls.
- ✓ Sydney Woods, 7 yrs. old, is loving long bike rides with her brother/neighborhood friends and helping with home cooking, especially the desserts.
- ✓ Harry Woods, 9 yrs. old, is enjoying the opportunity to shoot hoops between ZOOM (online classes) with his teacher, independent rides with his best buddy in the neighborhood and occasionally sneaking into the creeks to look for frogs!

Jillian said, "We are finding a new normal and settling in. Nick has had some great job leads and we are hopeful that there is something even more beautiful on the other side of this. I am busy recording and transferring yoga content to an online platform. I can barely turn my phone on so this has been comical at best, but a great learning experience. It's an opportunity to reach more clients through web classes (www.jillianwoodsyooga.com) and I'll take private clients now. I also practice more meditation. A quote that I repeat aloud, 'Just this moment, just this breath'."

**Belle Isle West
Neighborhood Association
5030 N. May, Box 118
Oklahoma City, OK 73112**

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**Special Edition:
Neighbors tell how they are
getting through the COVID-19
Pandemic.**



Calendar of Events in 2020

Tuesday, June 2 - Business Meeting via Zoom

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM All residents of BIW are invited to attend electronically.
Contact Greg Hall, 55thpl@sbcglobal.net , by May 31 for instructions on how to join the meeting.

Annual Meeting of the Belle Isle West Neighborhood Association

Date to be determined due to COVID-19.

Bi-Monthly Business Meetings 2020 June 2; Aug. 4; Oct. 6; Dec. 1

Meetings are held at 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Highlights of this Newsletter:

- Family stories about dealing with COVID-19
- Parking at the Oil Center during storms.