



# The Nor'westener



*Serving Concerned Readers in greater Clark Pines, Cottage Grove, Hidden Lake, Holly Park, Lazybrook, Oak Forest, Shady Acres, Timbergrove Court, Timbergrove Manor, Timbergrove Terrace and Woodcrest.*

*"To Inform"*

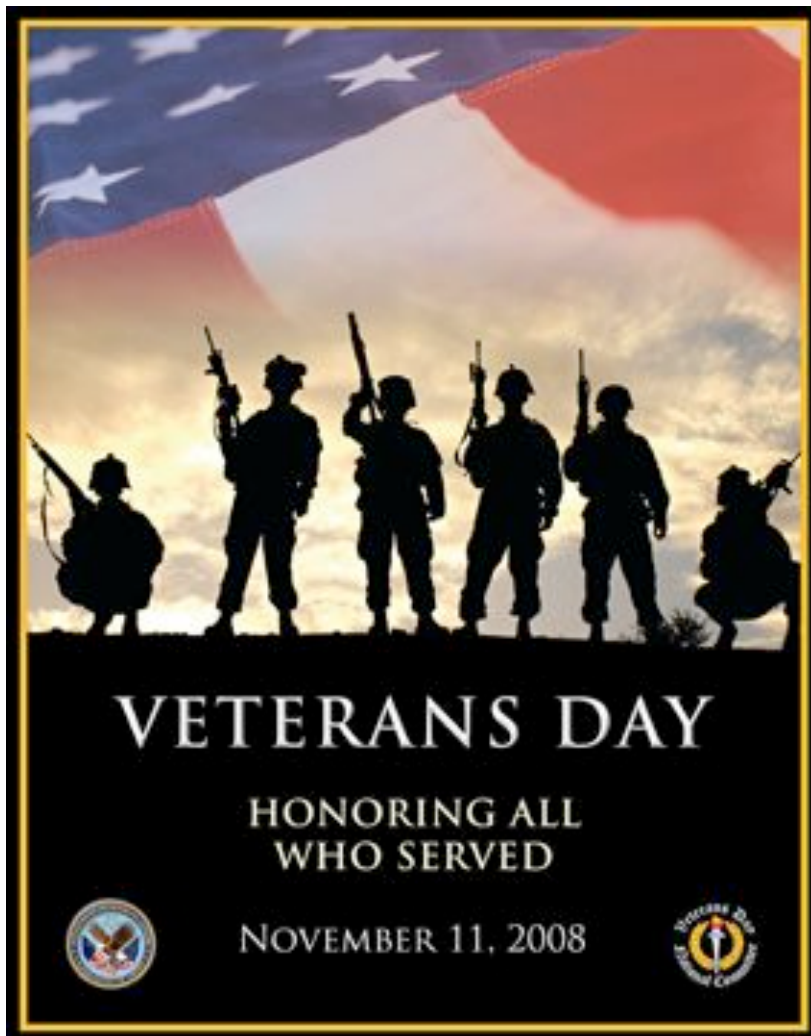
*Community News Since August, 2002*

**November 7, 2008**

**Online Issue**

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**Veteran's Day Observed -  
November 11  
Least We Forget  
Fly Your U. S. Flag  
Shake the Hand of a Vet  
and Just Say "Thanks!"**

## Neighborhood Watch for Timbergrove - West for September 2008

From the publicly available HPD Monthly Crime Report for September, 2008 for TM-West (Sections 5 - 14). Timbergrove Manor along with the greater Shady Acres, Clark Pines, Lazybrook and Holly Park areas are in Patrol Beat 2A60. This month's source HPD crime report for 2A60 and historic monthly crime reports may be accessed at:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/beatpages/cs2a60.htm> Scroll down on that page to the 2008 or 2007 calendar and select the month for which data is being sought.

9/06/08      Robbery                      2300 Willowby Dr.              3 P.M.

Neighbors returned home and walked in on a residential burglary in progress. Neighbors were held in the garage by a black male as two accomplices continued burglarizing the home. Items taken included a sum of cash and neighbor's fire arm found in the home. Our neighbors fortunately were not physically harmed.

Be aware when returning home. If anything is amiss indicating someone has entered the home in your absence **GET OUT!** and use your cell phone or a neighbor's phone to dial 911 for HPD assistance.

This incident brings the 2008 reported crimes total to 24 which places us 6 incidents above our lowest crime rate year (2006) at this point, but below the other five years in which criminal incidents have been tracked. For perspective, the total crimes reported at the end of September in 2004 was 38 and in 2007 at the end of September there had been 42 crimes reported.

### W. 18th Street Tree Rescue Update

Saturday morning November 1 was a beautiful morning and Lazybrook neighbors Sherri Oldham and Sarah Babo along with Holly Park neighbor Tom Castillo turned out bright and early to righten the grouping of American Hollies, three of the most distressed trees along W. 18th Street esplanades. The effort went well and by about 9:30, the task completed, we decided to end the work session and go about the rest of our Saturday's plans. This is, I personally feel, the best way for volunteer efforts like this to be conducted; an hour or two of effort at a time. The other trees needing attention will not be going anywhere and there will be other days and opportunities.



Tom Castillo (*left*) Sherri Oldham (*center*) and Sarah Babo (*right*) pause for a well deserved Kodak moment.

Tom proved to be a hard working and skilled handler of a shovel and if you don't think there are some skills involved you haven't been on the end of a shovel. Sherri Oldham personally paid to have one distressed tree righted on the W. T. C. Jester esplanade and declined reimbursement from LBCC. Sarah is the true,

modest, unsung hero of the Lazybrook area esplanades. You'll frequently see Sarah out on the esplanades with her cart of basic tools, pruning suckers from the bases of the crepe myrtles, delimiting and doing the basic tasks that help so much to keep our esplanades attractive. The ladies showed no hesitation in their willingness to put a shoulder to a tree and muscle it upright.

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Three passes have now been made on the W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street Seamist to 610 esplanades attacking the fire ants and the landscape beds' invading weeds. Both are a matter of control, but keeping the fire ant population down helps to keep the esplanades from being a breeding ground and source of fire ants swarming into area yards. Three other trees have also been given needed attention since November 1 and the project is moving forward.

I met with George Woodward, landscape contractor for the Alresco group, owners of the Broadstone @ W. 18th apartments, on November 6 and he will be preparing and submitting an estimate to Alresco for needed landscape repairs for the first two esplanades nearest 610. George reports that the three Eastern Red Cedars on esplanade #2 are hardy zeriscaping trees and they should do well after they are righted. A bit of supplemental watering will help alleviate their stress as the bid process moves forward and we await a decision from our Alresco neighbors concerning their ability to help out in this overall process. It is most unfortunate that someone, more than likely a city contractor clean-up crew, determined that seven crepes in the grove at 610, which had already been partially righted and staked, were simply removed in the continuing Ike cleanup effort. Two or three of that number were probably due for replacement, but five were quite viable. Most unfortunate especially since Richard Akin, LBCC President, had invested a half day of vacation time in the righting and staking process. These things can happen in massive recovery efforts. A check with businesses in the area revealed no real witnesses to the event so the possibility of simple plant theft cannot be ruled out. Yes, plant theft is a real possibility. It does happen.

### **Keeping an Eye on Ike Rescue Workers**

A report has been received from a Timbergrove neighbor that one recovery crew currently working to remove Ike damaged tree limbs in the greater area removed a significant healthy limb overhanging the street from a tree on the neighbor's property. Sad with all the damage already wrought by Ike. If you see these crews working in the area of your home it would be a good idea to simply openly spend some time observing them as they work. Mistakes will happen in such large efforts, but a bit of resident direct oversight might well bring a bit more care in these crews' activities. Our mature trees are simply too valuable both economically and environmentally to allow too many such errors.

### **Avoiding Storm Chaser Contractors**

The Texas Residential Construction Commission is issuing notices of violation to builders and remodelers in areas affected by Hurricane Ike. Storm Chaser groups are not registered with the commission as state law requires. These Storm Chasers obtain work in storm impacted areas and then move on in a matter of months leaving home owners with little or no recourse for warranty claims. The commission strongly advises consumers to review a builder's or remodeler's record with the commission and check references before signing any work contract or agreement.

Registered builders and remodelers are provided with a commission-issued registration certificate and/or wallet card to verify proof of registration. Consumers are urged to visit [IkeResponse.org](http://IkeResponse.org) to find registered builders or to use the commission's online searchable database located on the website to verify builder/remodeler registration. For more information about a builder or any commission-related questions, visit <http://www.texasrcc.org> or call 877-651-TRCC.

## **What's Up with Macy's at Northwest Mall?**

Mary Ann Bullard, Lazybrook neighbor, reports that Macy's at Northwest Mall has been closed since Ike. Reportedly there was roof damage leading to significant interior damage. Brenda Brummett, also of Lazybrook, reports that the Macy's in Willowbrook and Alameda Malls had also been closed following Ike, but more recent information provides the Willowbrook location has since reopened. Mary Ann emailed Macy's to try and gain some insight about plans for the Northwest Mall location and was told: "Thank you for visiting our website regarding your request and feedback of our stores closed since Hurricane Ike.

Please accept my sincere apology for any inconvenience caused, unfortunately, we do not have a reopening date as of our closed stores.

Receiving feedback from our customers is our most effective tool in creating the best shopping experience for our customers.

Again, thank you for visiting our website and if I may be of further assistance, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Lina Robinson, Customer Service Analyst

Macy's Central Corporate Office

(770)913-5115

[lina.robinson@macys.com](mailto:lina.robinson@macys.com)"

Mary Ann suggests concerned neighbors might email Lina Robinson directly to express support for the reopening of the Northwest Mall location.

Certainly seems there would be no harm in emailing if you wish. Northwest Mall is, however, fully within the proposed economic redevelopment zone surrounding the proposed rail terminal for the proposed commuter rail line extending from loop 610 toward Cypress. That routing is partially contingent upon the passage of some enabling legislation by the Texas legislature. Based upon redevelopments that have occurred near commuter rail stations in other parts of the country decisions concerning that store location, as well as, the rest of the mall's redevelopment might well be on hold pending legislative and many other actions. We may ultimately see multi-story living units of one style or another in combination with retail spaces on that entire existing mall property. Messages to Macy's indicating interest and support for retention of retail spaces may well preserve Macy's or at least help shape developer's ultimate plans. Not expressing interest may well also help shape those plans.

## **White Oak Bayou Association Annual Meeting**

The White Oak Bayou Association's annual meeting will be held the evening of Wednesday, November 12 at 6 p.m. at the historic Height's Firehouse, 107 W. 12th at Yale Street. From 6 until 7 p.m. guests can munch on pizza from Pink's Pizza, sip on wine or beer or soft drinks and visit with a number of exhibitors at their displays. 7 p.m. will bring the formal meeting with scheduled presentations from Harris County Flood Control, City Public Works and Engineering, Near Northwest Management District and the Harris County Waterway Assessment and Restoration Program.

W.O.B.A. is a small, but effective, group representing the interests and concerns of those residing within the White Oak Bayou watershed, which is the majority of the readership of this newsletter. Readers will be hard pressed to find another such meeting providing relevant information on a wide range of topics in an informal and relaxed setting in which questions and one-on-one interactions are encouraged.

Please RSVP to [WhiteOakBayouAssociation@comcast.net](mailto:WhiteOakBayouAssociation@comcast.net) so there will be plenty of food and drink.

## **Timbergrove Manor Annual Rummage Sale**

The Timbergrove Manor Annual Rummage Sale will be held on November 8 from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 W. 11th Street. This sale has

historically drawn quite a number of area neighbors to display for sale a wide variety of items ranging from the modest to the eclectic. You may well find just the item you have been looking for to fill that special 'vacant' spot in your home.

### Solar Manufacturer Opens New Plant

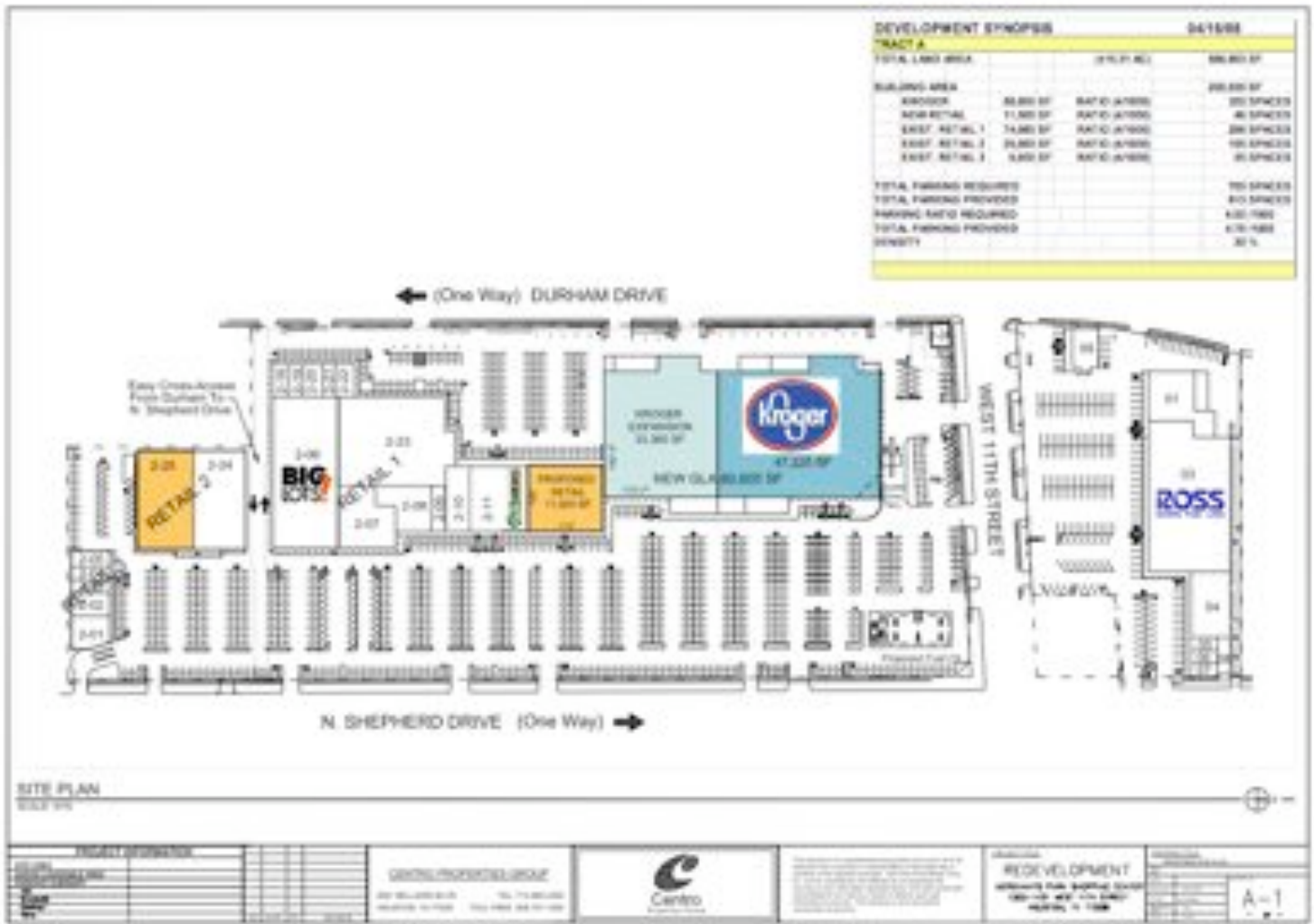
HelioVolt Corp. is opening its first full-scale 122,400 square foot factory in Austin giving Texas a foothold in solar energy manufacturing. The company has pioneered the use of powerful and durable thin-film solar materials that can be made part of metals, plastic, glass and other construction materials.

HelioVolt is targeting three markets: large panels used in solar-farm arrays, panels installed on commercial rooftops, and incorporating solar-generating power into building materials.

### Kroger Signature Store Coming to Merchants Park

Evelyn Shanley, Clark Pines neighbor and President of the White Oak Bayou Assn., brings news that Kroger has a plan in the works to expand it's location at Shepherd and W. 11th into their Kroger Signature format. Centro Properties, the owner of the shopping center, is also purchasing the existing gas station at 11th and Shepherd so Kroger can construct a new gas station on the site. Centro is also demolishing a portion of the existing shopping center adjacent to the new Kroger expansion for a new tenant. All of this required some replatting activity and a variance request as two separate plats are being combined into one unrestricted reserve plat. Concerned neighbors appeared at the variance hearing for the replat to at least assure Code of Ordinances Chapter 33 be complied with regarding plantings of new trees as part of the new project to better fit in with the surrounding community and to soften and beautify the area. Neighbors also expressed concerns that some consideration be given to enhanced control of storm water runoff, but as the property is not in the flood plain there is no requirement for such. Copies of the site plan and elevation renderings are supplied below.





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 To sign up for direct delivery to your email address simply send an email and ask to be added to the distribution.