

Fall 2012
Midtown Management

Baldwin Square

Homeowners' Association • www.baldwinsquare.org

Elizabeth Baldwin

Julia Elizabeth Baldwin was the second wife of William Marsh Rice. They were married at Christ Church on June 26, 1867. She was the widow of John H. Brown and daughter of Horace Baldwin, one-time mayor of Houston (1844).

Immediately after they were married they moved to New York where they lived for the remainder of their lives. But the end of her life was clouded in scandal.

"As carefully as Rice laid his plans for the institute, the doors of the school did not open until 12 years after the benefactor's death. In 1896 his wife Elizabeth died after weeks of illness.

Unknown to her husband, she had drawn up a will shortly before her death, leaving what she judged as half of the Rice estate to her relatives and for several civic and charitable purposes."

Rice successfully contested the will on the grounds that they were residents of New York, not Texas, which meant that community property rights on which his wife's will were based did not apply. But not before the property was given to create Baldwin Park, one of the oldest parks in the City of Houston.



Letter from the Board of Directors,

Greetings to all our long-term homeowners and a special "welcome" to all the new folks of Baldwin Square Homeowners' Association! We're thrilled to see the community remain so vibrant throughout the economic downturn and recovery. We are also pleased to see the pride and engagement so many of you display in the neighborhood – from active involvement in public affairs to maintaining beautiful, eye-catching landscaping for those passing through. The result of our combined efforts is home investment values remaining strong.

Our annual newsletter is one communication tool we use to let you know what's happening at the Board level. This edition is no different – news about changes in property management, to tips for taking care of your investment, and expectations of good neighbors. Most of the articles are authored by homeowners – learn from the mistakes others have already made. Obviously, we also use the website, www.baldwinsquare.org, to keep you informed of monthly changes and board activities – we encourage you to bookmark it. You'll find more helpful tips, copies of the Deed Restrictions, Covenants and By-Laws, along with minutes of all Board meetings. The Board - even as volunteers - never loses sight of the fact we work for you.

The other significant communication occurs at the **Annual Homeowners Association meeting, scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 8, 2012, 7 pm at the Houston Academy for International Studies (HAIS) at the corner of Elgin and Chenevert.** We look forward to seeing you there! This year we shall present two proposals for the 2013 Association Fee structure. Periodically homeowners ask why the Association does not maintain all of the landscaping on the properties, so we have prepared a fee structure to reflect that approach. Budget proposal Two largely leaves the existing services in place, with a recommendation for modest adjustments now needed for an aging property. Please mark your calendars now to attend and vote on the direction you wish the Board to go.

Finally, we are thrilled to welcome back Ms. Sonya Bradley as Property Manager, effective October 3, 2012. Long-term residents will remember her services when employed by PMG Property Management Group. Sonya has now left PMG to form her own company – Midtown Management Corp. In addition to being an area resident familiar with the unique Midtown issues, she is a consummate professional in property management and routinely guides the Board in shaping and preserving the Association's financial health and well-being. We are truly fortunate to have her expertise!

So, we hope you enjoy the newsletter, hope to see you at the Annual Meeting, and sincerely above all "thank you" for choosing Baldwin Square as your neighborhood to live and play in Houston!

Warm regards,

BSHA Board of Directors
Dianne Reece, President (2011-2012)
William Kellar, Vice President (2012-2013)
Michael Oelke, Secretary-Treasurer (2012-2013)

O'Connor: Ghost haunts Midtown

KYRIE O'CONNOR / HOUSTON CHRONICLE



Matt Jones, a senior copywriter at Adcetera, says often times when he knows he's alone in the building, he can hear the sound of doors opening and closing. Many say a repentant female ghost, Eva, haunts the nooks and corridors of the building - banging, clanging and slamming doors - and will go away temporarily if told she is forgiven.

Gather round, children, and I'll tell you a ghost story.

But first, I want to put you in the setting, which is the least ghostly place you can imagine. In Midtown, on the 3000 block of Louisiana, sits a low-slung, crisp-white building, the home of the 30-year-old Adcetera design and communications agency.

Owned by John and Kristy Sexton, it's one of those workspaces that beckon workers to be creative. Inside, in the open-plan rooms, there's art on easels. A foosball table and mini-bleachers are in the basement work area. The walls are bright white, with pops of lime green. (I'm writing this in my office, which is gray with pops of more gray.) You wouldn't expect a ghost here. But you would be wrong, says Matt Jones, a senior copywriter with Adcetera. Ad people often work late, and it's not unusual to be the last person in the building. "When it quiets down, the building changes character a little bit," says Jones. "The vibrancy and creativity stave it off - until the lights go down."

He and his co-workers - and folks in the buildings nearby - have heard odd noises: bangings, clangings, rattlings, doors slamming, winds howling. Sometimes doors open heavily, as if someone is pushing from the other side. Books have flown off shelves. Chairs move. A figure has been glimpsed out of the corner of an eye. According to a tale told on thewhitenoiseforum.com (which I'm sure is totally 100 percent reliable), a young woman once saw a shadowy female figure in the

back seat of her car and the words "Tell him I'm sorry" written on her windshield.

Adcetera brought in some ghost hunters one night, and when the ghost's name was called in the dark basement, a loud bang sounded from a pipe.

Yes, that's right. They know the ghost's name. And here is her story, as best I can piece it together from Jones' tale, online research, the book "The Complete Story of the Galveston Horror" (John Merle Coulter, editor) and, no doubt, some embellishment. As Jones says, "You don't want to look too closely at a magic trick."

Picture a hot September day in 1900 in Houston. Eva McIlhenny, who lives on the present site of Adcetera, wants to escape the heat and go to Morgan's Point on Galveston Bay. But her husband, Samuel K. McIlhenny, a prosperous cotton trader, objects. They went to Morgan's Point anyway, taking with them a married daughter, Rosalie Lucy, Rosalie's two tiny sons, Sam and William Lucy, another small child and Eva's 13-year-old son, Haven. And they are in Morgan's Point when the deadly Galveston hurricane strikes. The little group makes it to the roof of the house, but two of the children are struck by timber

and killed. The rest drown, and Eva is the last to die, swept away when the roof breaks in two. The witness is her husband, who clings to the other half of the roof and survives. A heartbroken Sam McIlhenny names the two streets on either side of his property Rosalie and Anita, the latter after a daughter who died in 1892. He names nothing after Eva.

Life in limbo

Now Eva wanders the block, especially this time of year, seeking forgiveness from a man who is now dead and forever unable to grant her peace. It's said that if you say, "I forgive you" to Eva, she will go away for a time. You may be a skeptic, as is Jones and as am I. But it's a good story, if ineffably sad.

October is a month the Adcetera folks, what with their over-the-top pumpkin-carving contest and all, turn into an extended dance remix of Halloween. Nights in that month, they project an invented image of Eva onto their second-story windows. She appears to walk slowly past, and then turns to face the street and gradually fades away.

Let's hope it's some comfort to the ghost. I forgive you, Eva.

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The Scoop!! (on poop)

Via [Beverly Animal Resource Coalition \(BARC\)](#)

Top Ten Reasons to Pick Up After Your Dog

Every responsible dog owner agrees... picking up after your dog is a MUST. No matter where or when it occurs, there is NO excuse for not scooping the poop. So here are 10 reasons why EVERY dog owner MUST be responsible for picking up EVERY TIME.



1. **It's the law.** Just like littering, it's unlawful NOT to pick up after your dog, and your violation is subject to fine.
2. **It's common courtesy.** Cleaning up after your dog shows respect for our neighbors and our community.
3. **Dog Poop is unhealthy.** Abandoned dog poop can host diseases and/or parasites which can infect other dogs who come into contact with it, or be transmitted to people who accidentally step in it and track it home. Particularly at risk, of course, are children who play on the ground. Disposing of dog poop immediately helps all dogs stay healthier and reduces feces-borne [parasites](#) and illnesses. Vets recommend that dogs who frequent places that are visited by many different dogs should have their stool tested twice a year.
4. **Dog Poop bio-degrades slowly.** Some people think it's okay to leave dog poop because it will break down naturally. However, the biodegrading process is very slow, and, especially in places where the dog population is high, abandoned dog poop can accumulate faster than it breaks down.





5. **It's not fertilizer!** In fact, poop impedes landscaping efforts. Leaving dog poop encourages other dogs to mark that spot (by urinating over the previous dog's scent): poop left on the grass contributes to the problem of "nitrogen burn."
6. **Dog Poop pollutes the water.** Dog feces, like any feces, contain high levels of nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus, which actually pollute the water. Cleaning up after your dog is environmentally responsible. And please don't dispose of dog poop in storm drains; they are a direct conduit to larger waterways!
7. **Dog Poop is unsightly.** Everybody knows that. It's disgusting. Pick it up. We all deserve to live in a clean city where we can be proud and step lightly.
8. **Dog Poop tops the list of complaints against dogs.** More than dog aggression, nuisance barking or unsupervised dogs, most complaints against dogs are about people not cleaning up after their dogs. This is true for city parks, sidewalks, and your neighbors' lawns.
9. **Dog Poop makes dog owners look bad.** The worst thing about dog poop is that it is bad for public relations. Dog Poop is the number one reason for negative public sentiment against dogs. Every time you don't pick up after your dog, you are giving one more reason for others to dislike dogs and dog owners.
10. **Your actions set an example for others.** When you pick up after your dog, you are part of the solution! And your actions will help convey the message that it's the right thing to do. Many people even carry extra bags to offer to others as a subtle and neighborly hint that cleaning up after our dogs is what responsible dog owners do.



Pick up the Poop or Pay the Price

More and more people are taking it upon themselves to pick up "orphan poop." These people are truly ambassadors. You can set a good example, too. If you see orphan poop, pick it up with one of those extra bags you are carrying. I know, I know! Nothing like picking up somebody else's cold poop, but what a message it sends to others! Your actions will encourage others to do the same, and soon, this will be a non-issue, because everybody will simply pick up without giving it a second thought.

Security and Crime Prevention

If you are on any of the BSHA email lists, then you have heard about the petty crimes, trespassing, break-ins and thefts on our thirteen properties in recent months. HPD has some simple recommendations to deter these crimes and keep our community safe.

1. Outside Lighting: Check your porch light and the light over your garage door to make sure your energy efficient bulbs have not burned out. Replace them as necessary. Turn your lights on every evening using timers and/ or photocells. Having all of the lights on in your complex sends a message to would-be burglars that the residents in your section are actively involved in preventing crime in the community. This is part of our community rules, and we appreciate your compliance in the interest of everyone's safety.

2. Gate Security: Lock your gates. Anyone who leaves their gate unlocked is inviting trouble for themselves and their neighbors. It

is time for everyone to be responsible and check that your gate is locked at all times.

3. Common Sense: Secure your valuables and Do Not Leave Garage Doors Open. Don't invite burglars by leaving your valuables on display.

4. Report: Do not be afraid or feel silly about reporting trespassers or suspicious activity! Trespassing on BSHA grounds is illegal. The police cannot prevent crime without reports from the community. Remember that each resident is another set of eyes and ears to help fight crime. The only way to get the increase in police patrol and law enforcement that we need is to report EVERY incident to HPD. Call HPD at 713-884-3131 or Precinct 7 Constables at 713-643-6602.

Can't We All Get Along?

Good Neighbors help prevent problems: The holiday party season is fast approaching. We all enjoy a good time but do remember that

we live in close communities that require a measure of consideration for our neighbors. Don't block the driveways with visitors' cars and please be aware of noise that disturbs your neighbors. The City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Sec. 30-1 states, "Nighttime hours shall mean the hours between **10:01 p.m. on one day and 6:59 a.m. the following day.**" Sec. 30-2. - General prohibitions: (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary, or unusual noise that annoys, disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others." (Ord. No. 01-945, § 2, 10-17-01)

Don't park on common grounds: It is against our rules and you will be towed.

Pets not pests: Pet poop and dogs not on a leash have become a bigger problem in recent months. Don't let your beloved pet become known as a pest in your community. Keep your dogs on a leash and don't forget to "scoop the poop" when you take them outside. Report violators to the City by calling BARC at: 713-229-7300



"Secure your valuables and do not leave your doors open."

The Terrible Teens for Your Home

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.baldwinsquare.org



Most of the 165 homes in our Association were built in 1998 and 1999 and are starting to show their age – those terrible teens when additional investment is needed. Many units have already been repainted, windows have been replaced and nearly half have replaced air conditioning units. Here are a few other things to consider for preventive maintenance before letting these things break and finding yourself in a jam.

You'll see a common theme on several of these: Water in the house = BAD BAD BAD. And while this list may be long, a lot of the maintenance is cheap, easy to do and doesn't take much time. Be sure to protect your investment with some basic maintenance!

#1 Water heaters. If you still have an original water heater, change it now! It's probably filled with sediment and could corrode through and flood your house. There are many good replacement options available to fit any budget, but be sure to have the work performed by a licensed technician and check the work to make sure insulation is installed where it should be, vents are in place, etc. A City inspection is required if you replace a gas-fired unit. Don't wait to let this be a deluge in your house!

#2 Caulk (interior and exterior) and window / door seals. Although you'll find a lot of claims for '30 year caulk', it doesn't last anywhere near that long. Be sure to inspect your windows and door frames and re-caulk wherever you find a crack or gap. Keep that rain from getting into your house frame! Likewise, if you have original caulk in your shower or tub you likely need to remove and replace the old caulk to ensure you are not getting water into the walls. Inspect for signs of rot in exterior door frames and replace/touch up as needed. Change out any window seals and door seals while you are at it! A lot of people didn't lose windows during Ike, but did get water into their homes when the winds force the water through the old seals in the windows.

#3 A/C drain lines. These typically back up more often in springtime, when the A/C runs just enough to keep a wet environment in the drain so that algae can build up. Be proactive and flush your A/C drain lines periodically with bleach to clear out contaminants. If these drain lines plug they can flood your attic and house!

#4 Roofs. Most of our roofs weathered Hurricane Ike with little to no damage. Still, a few homes have already reshingled, and most will have to do so in the next few years. Review the deed restrictions for limitations on roofing before doing this.

#5 Garage doors. If your torsion springs haven't broken yet, they likely will in the next few years – they average every 7 years. Consider upgrading to two springs, adding in a higher power motor unit with belt drive (MUCH quieter!), and even improved bearings or lubrication on the door wheels. Modern units can even be programmed into home security systems and remotely opened and closed via the internet.

#6 Gutters. These should be cleaned annually, and you can get group discounts if you have a contractor perform multiple units at once. Be sure to look for signs if your gutter is pulling away from the roofline. Get something like that fixed right away before it pulls off and causes even more expensive damage!

#7 A/C units. If you still have an original A/C unit, congratulations! But don't expect it to last much longer. If you make it through this summer, consider upgrading your unit over winter when you can get a better deal. Be sure to talk to your neighbor if you share a pad for another A/C unit so you can 'share' the space. A/C companies will consider a group discount if you get a few homes to buy together.