



CITY SAVVY

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New Cape Center classes offer array of training with fun, style

By Dave Schafer

For years, Mary Alcocer wanted to earn her general equivalency degree. Getting it meant she could take the college business courses that would help her do her job better and open up the door for career advancement.

So in April, Alcocer, who has already been promoted from a custodian to a customer service representative I in General Services, will be in the front row when the E.B. Cape offers the first classes in its new GED program.

"It's something I want to accomplish," said Alcocer, who dropped out of high school to care for a newborn baby. "I want to show my children that your age doesn't matter. You can still accomplish your goals and keep learning."

The Cape will give employees at all educational levels that opportunity with several new



Photo by Jason Pickrell

Rochelle Bennett, left, Kenneth Brown, La Tanza Humphrey and Geovanny Osorio work together on a critical-thinking exercise. The class is one of eighteen sessions that make up the City Accreditation Program for Supervisors. In addition, E.B. Cape now offers boot camps for supervisors and managers that are more concentrated.

programs that will train employees better and teach the next generation of city leaders.

"We live in a world of constant change," said Brent Powell, Human Resources assistant director hired as chief learning officer in January. "If we're not learning, the odds that we'll change for the better aren't good."

Powell, who was previously organizational development and learning manager at Anadarko Petroleum, wants the Cape to become the model by which other cities' corporate universities measure themselves. Besides the new classes, Powell is adding a new, interactive teaching style and a learning-management system for tracking courses and taking online classes.

"The knowledge we impart won't change. That's still good knowledge," said Powell, who has a doctorate in human resource management. "But we want to make the classes more enjoyable, more active."

Learning-management system

The classes include two new leadership boot camps and will teach employees communication skills, how to manage finances,

See E.B. CAPE on page 2.

Workplace recycling reduces rubbish

By Dave Schafer

Sarah Mason dug through your trash. Only, most of it wasn't trash.

Mason, an environmental analyst in the Mayor's Office, took bags of City Hall rubbish to her office and stood on a scale, gauging just how much city employees threw away. Then, she tore open the bags and separated the contents - paper, cans, bottles, trash.

In one 24-pound bag, she found 16 pounds of paper, four aluminum cans and 10 water bottles. More than 68 percent of the materials were recyclable.

Mason and the city want to divert that 68 percent away from the waste stream. In June, they're rolling out a recycling program for more than 300 city facilities. Recycling

bins for paper, #1 and #2 plastics, glass, corrugated cardboard, aluminum and bi-metal cans will be located on every floor. Also, 12,000 green, seven-gallon desk-side containers will help employees recycle.

"We're creating a focused effort that's identifiable in every building," Mason said. "The hope is that recycling will become part of the office culture."

Saving trash, saving money

The city has a paper recycling program in 39 locations and a commingled recycling program in three downtown buildings - 611 Walker, City Hall and City Hall Annex - and four service centers.

But the city still spends \$1.5 million for trash collection from city buildings, Mason said. Cost is based on the size of the trash container and the frequency of pickup. By diverting recyclable material, the city may be able to cut back the frequency of pick up, saving money.

For instance, City Hall's trash is picked up every day, Mason said.

Mason estimates the city will save about \$600,000 during the first five years of the program.



See RECYCLE on page 2.

A HEC of a reunion story



Photo by Jason Pickrell

Siblings Shantrielle Scott, left, and Lonnie Holman Jr. discovered each other while working at the Houston Emergency Center.

By Dave Schafer

The name, Lonnie Holman Jr., was eerily familiar. Shantrielle Scott kept noticing the Fire communications captain's name while checking the employee log-in at the Houston Emergency Center.

Scott's father, who was killed when she was three or four months old, was also named Lonnie Holman.

Certainly, many people are named Lonnie Holman, thought Scott, 35, and a 911 operator. And Lonnie Holman hadn't had any sons. He'd had another daughter, a half-sister Scott had met when she was a child.

"It kept bothering me, like a gnat at a picnic," said Scott, who grew up in Houston.

Finally, she asked Capt. Mike Coleman

See REUNION on page 2.

Careful planning is a bulwark against future challenges



Kaye Marvins Photography

Mayor Bill White

Q. With the tough economy, are we still going to get our scheduled pay raises this year?

A. We are working out the details of the FY2010 budget now to go into effect July 1. The pay raises agreed to in the various contracts with police, fire and civilian employees will be included in the administration's FY10 budget.

Pay raises still in effect, but departments are responsible for meeting budgets

Q. What's the status for hiring in the city? Is the city still hiring?

A. The city does not have a hiring freeze. Each director is responsible for meeting budget goals and requirements, and one tool they might use is to leave a vacant position open for a longer period or possibly consolidate a position if it makes sense for the department's goals and responsibilities. We encourage employees to make suggestions about how they can redesign processes to reduce work without reducing results. Our goal is to avoid the furloughs, layoffs or salary freezes that are occurring in most of the larger cities in the United States. Because the sources and amounts of city revenues are largely limited by state law and the

city charter, the active engagement of employees will be critical in helping the city through times when there may be no revenue growth, after debt service, property-tax revenues and sales taxes.

Q. What kind of transition plans and programs have you put in place, or will you put in place, to bridge to the next mayor?

A. We will cooperate fully with the new administration. It benefits the city as a whole and the city of Houston as an organization to have a smooth transition. I am proud of the professionalism of our city work force. Meanwhile, I have visited personally with the mayoral candidates and will do my best to provide them any advice or information they ask for. This administration will pass a city budget

for July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010. In addition, we will have a draft budget for FY2011 before November's election. That budget, for the period July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011, could be used as a road map for the next administration on how to maintain the continuity of city services and employment. Hard choices will be made in that budget, just as they will be in the budget we adopt in June. Returning council members will be thoroughly briefed on this budget. Of course, the new mayor and City Council may make changes, and we expect that they will do so.

Do you have a question for Mayor White? Send it to City Savvy with your name and work number, which will not be printed.

REUNION continued from page 1.

if he knew Holman. He knew Holman well.

"Do you know where he was born? Is his father deceased? Does he have any sisters?" Scott asked.

Coleman called Holman, but Holman didn't answer. Coleman said he'd ask Holman later and get back to her.

Scott asked her aunt if her father ever had a son. "Yeah," the aunt said. "I thought you knew that."

Her aunt and mother didn't know the half-brother's name. Could this firefighter be her brother?

A joke ... or a sister?

Lonnie Holman Jr., 38, thought Coleman was playing a joke on him. This woman who had talked to Coleman knew

too much about his deceased father.

Holman, an ex-Marine who'd travelled the world before joining Fire 13 years ago, had two half-sisters. He'd known one of them as a youngster but had lost contact with her. He'd never met the other, who had been born in Houston when his mother and father were separated.

He'd thought of doing an Internet search for her but hadn't. "It was just so big to try to find her. She could be anywhere," he said.

Now, here at the HEC – where he'd transferred just five months before, in December 2007 – was a woman claiming to be his sister.

He e-mailed Scott that he'd grown up in Silsbee and, yes, his father was dead. He described his height and age. Then they talked on the phone for a few minutes a couple of times and exchanged informa-

tion about how their fathers had been gunned down by a Winnie police officer. The stories' details were the same.

They agreed to meet at Sky Bar. Holman still thought this might be a joke.

Surely siblings

Scott took some family members to Sky Bar that night. Holman took his fiancée. Both ignored their guests as they stood outside, away from the loud music, talking to each other for more than an hour.

"We just clicked instantly," Scott said. "There was no awkwardness."

Scott knew after the phone conversations that she'd found a brother she didn't know she had. Holman realized he'd found his sister as they stood outside talking about the Lonnie Holman they both called "Dad."

Like brother, sister and father

"It's like we were never separated," Scott said. "We're so tight now. I love this man to death. I have an awesome brother."

The two talk almost daily and meet as often as they can. They spend time with each other's children. They have similar personalities, respectful but quick to respond when pushed.

Scott stares at Holman when he talks, taking in his mannerisms, expressions and words. He has the same tall, slim build as her son.

"This is as close as I'll get to my dad," she said. "Lonnie is my brother and a father figure. This is a piece of my father."

Like any good big brother, Holman is protective of his little sis.

"I love her," Holman said. "Everything is good." **S**

RECYCLE continued from page 1.

The two current recycling programs will be swallowed up by the new program.

In about three years, the city might make a little money from the program. Abitibi-Bowater receives more than \$326,000 a year to dispose of the recycling and will pay the city a percentage of the price it gets for paper. In smaller buildings, it will be 80 percent. In larger buildings,

such as the airports and the convention centers, where paper contamination is more frequent, it'll be 20 percent.

Mason thinks the city will cut down trash it sends out by at least 30 percent and possibly as much as 50 percent.

Setting the example

It's right for the city to set the recycling example, Mason said.

"There is really broad support for a

recycling program. It's something people want," she said, adding that department directors are on board with the program. "It will be easier, but it will still be the responsibility of the employees to take their containers to the bigger containers."

Building staff will take the large containers to a central collection point.

Mason will work with each facility to find out what works best for that building, and Solid Waste Management will

administer the contract.

"Recycling needs to be tailored to what works best for the space available," Mason said.

Each site will have one or a few recycling liaisons, she said. Mason and the liaisons will educate employees about recycling.

"We have a responsibility to think more wisely about the things we consider trash," she said. **S**

E.B. CAPE continued from page 1.

and how to be leaders. They will also teach the sources of city money, how it's distributed, and how it's used.

The new learning-management system that will be installed in July will make taking classes easier than ever. Employees will be able to search and register for classes and take on line classes from their city computers. Initially, employees from just a few departments, such as Aviation and Human Resources, will have access to the system, with the rest of the departments online by September.

Powell's plan is that when the system is complete in a few years, employees will be able to view the qualifications they need to be eligible for the next higher job classification and the classes they need to take to get those qualifications.

"Just because you've taken these classes, does that mean you will get a promotion? No," Powell said. "But if you can see the path you can follow to help you become eligible for a promotion, why would you go somewhere else?"

Something for everyone

"The number one responsibility of leaders is to develop their team," said Issa

Dadoush, director of General Services and a recent MBA graduate of the University of Houston Bauer College of Business. "That makes them better employees, more loyal employees, and it gives them a chance to get ahead.

"It's good succession planning."

The Cape will offer classes at every level, from GED to a new mini-MBA. (See New classes box.)

"There are jobs within the city that require a high-school degree, and we've got bright employees who don't have that degree, so they're locked in the jobs they have," Powell said. "We want to give them every opportunity to advance."

Part of the new emphasis in leadership classes will be to train supervisors and managers to listen to their employees and encourage their input, Powell said.

"The goal of any organization ought to be to have everyone, specifically the workers in the trenches, contributing and feeling like they're contributing," he said.

Improving yourself

"If you can learn to do things easier, why wouldn't you do that? How could it be bad to do that?" Powell said. "Times change, and you have to adapt."

The hope, Powell said, is that whenever supervisors and managers take a leadership class, they will become better leaders. That will encourage other employees to take classes so they can do their jobs better or just improve themselves.

"We need to show employees how they can benefit in their jobs by getting more training," Dadoush said. "And, after they

get that next bit of training, maybe they'll want to go on to the next level."

Alcocer's youngest child will graduate with a high school diploma in May. Alcocer will follow soon after with her GED, opening more doors for her and letting in the light of a brighter future. **S**

New Classes

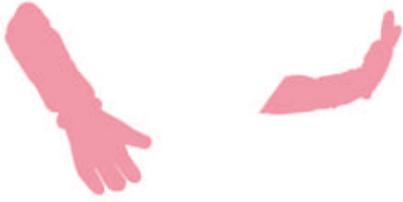
As part of its mission to educate employees at all levels, The E.B. Cape Center will be kicking off a slate of new classes:

- **General equivalency degree** – After an assessment, students will take the necessary classes to strengthen their areas of weakness at the Cape or a Houston Community College campus. They can take as many classes as they need to pass the state test.
- **Leadership Institute Program** – This program, which recently completed a pilot program, isn't brand new. Three 20-week courses for front-line supervisors, middle managers and executive managers provide training, develop effective communication skills, and present issues future leaders could face as managers.
- **Mini-master's of business administration** – In four different MBA classes, employees will learn important management elements such as budgeting, problem solving, communication and leadership. Participants earn a certificate of completion.
- **Boot camps** – One for supervisors, one for managers, these all-day, weeklong classes provide immersion leadership training. These classes are more concentrated than the CAPS classes.

Mascot encourages kids to Reuseit Wisely

Solid Waste Management character puts a face on recycling and reusing finite resources

Photo by Jason Pickrell



Ruby Robinson, library service specialist at Central, helps a volunteer set up a teen survey. She keeps teens active by developing programs that tap into their creativity and keeps them away from trouble.

By Dave Schafer

Ten minutes into the presentation, the middle-school students are fidgeting in their wooden seats, whispering to their peers, laughing quietly, or staring at the ground with their heads in their hands. They aren't listening to Niki Nira, the Republic Waste representative, talk about recycling.

Then Reuseit Wisely, with her big green recycling-bin head capped with a jar and cans and wearing a recycling-bag skirt, steps onto the stage, and a wave of excite-

ment flashes through the auditorium. The students clap, laugh aloud and whistle.

Wisely waves. She's mute, so she serves as a silent, visible advocate for recycling. Then she heads for the steps at the side of the stage.

Her peripheral vision is limited, and her big feet sometimes get in the way. A co-worker from Solid Waste Management usually helps her get around when she goes to schools, Earth Day functions, summer camps or garden clubs.

Wisely and Sharon Moses, a SWM community liaison and her handler today,

had practiced walking down the steps. Now, when Moses reaches out a hand to help Wisely down the steps, Wisely waves her away. I can do this myself. I'm the star.

She heads up the aisle between the two sections of seats, her arms outstretched.

Wisely loves being around children and seeing them get excited when she enters. Normally, she visits children in kindergarten through fifth grade. But these students are at the age where apathy is cool, so they're restrained in their chairs. None respond to her silent request for a four-fingered high five.

Finally, one boy stretches out his hand and they smack palms. Wisely continues her waving way up the aisle.

"If you can reach the children, you can change the culture and make recycling commonplace," she said.

"Reuseit really helps us drive the point of recycling and reusing home with youngsters," said Marilyn Leday, administration manager. Wisely was hired in July 2006 during the Go Green Campaign. The city used a \$4,800 grant to convince her to leave FiberWorks LLC.

When she's not hamming it up for recycling and reuse, Wisely stays in her office at 1245 Judiway.

Wisely has a passion for teaching students to recycle and reuse finite materials.

When she started with the city, Wisely had a French flare to her name – Re-

useit Wisely. But she's adopted a more basic spelling during her time in Houston.

She was recruited to the city by Christina Moreno-Conner and Councilwoman Wanda Adams, then a community liaison. Many other cities have extravagant mascots for their recycling programs, and SWM wanted one, too. Now, the department is looking for more waste-management and recycling companions for Wisely and expect to employ them by the end of the year, Leday said.

"We want kids to understand the message, and when you can have visual aids, that helps," Leday said. "It adds a fun aspect, and it gives recycling a personality and an identity. It gets them talking about it."

When Wisely reaches the back of the auditorium, the students are looking at the front, the excitement of the moment flowing away. Two girls run up to Wisely with their cell phone cameras out.

"Can we take your picture?" they ask. Wisely opens her arms wide in assent.

After they snap their pictures, Moses offers to take their picture with them next to Wisely. They snuggle up close to her and Moses snaps the photo.

The girls, giggling, run back to their seats. Maybe at lunch they'll pass their cell phone picture around and laugh about it. But one thing's for sure: They'll talk about it, and by talking about it, they'll think about recycling. **S**

Pink means citizens drink safe water

Calvin Burton investigates and solves drinking water mysteries

By Bobby Vasquez

When it comes to drinking water, if the customer isn't pleased, Calvin Burton isn't pleased.

"I just want everyone to be happy," he said. No matter the complaint, Burton strives to find the reason. He knows it's out there.

A utility worker II in Public Works & Engineering, Burton investigates drinking water complaints in the northeast quadrant of the city.

"When drinking water smells or tastes funny or doesn't look right, customers want to be reassured," he said.

The day starts at a hotel near Bush Intercontinental Airport. The manager is waiting.

Burton has heard this complaint many times during his three years in drinking-water operations.

"The water, it's yellow," explained the manager. "It just started yesterday."

Burton looks for the water meter. "That's the most basic thing to do, even if we can't find our contact person, we find the water meter," Burton said. "We test the water from the meter to the customer's water point-of-entry. Most of the time, that's where the problem is."

Only this time, Burton faced another problem: He couldn't find the meter. But while searching for the meter, he found the hotel's problem. Someone drove their vehicle into a fire hydrant, moving it several inches.

"That's it right there," Burton said. "When someone hits a hydrant, they dis-

Photo by Bobby Vasquez

Calvin Burton, who investigates drinking water complaints in PWE, holds a vial of water he tested for safety. When it turns pink, the water has chlorine and is safe for drinking.

turb the water line. That causes anything that's in the line to shake out and discolor the water. There are also cast-iron pipes here. When water from a cast-iron pipe is discolored, it's almost always yellow."

Unable to find the meter, he tested the water at the point-of-entry. It was slightly yellow, but it soon gave way to a clear flow. Burton immediately tested it for chlorine.

"When the water has chlorine, it's safe to drink," he said. The test takes seconds. Burton filled a small vial with a sample of the water and added a small packet of powder. After a good shake, the sample



turned a shade of pink. Burton went inside the hotel and conducted the same test – pink in the vial, clear from the faucet.

He told the manager why the water was slightly yellow. However, he still could not find the meter. After prodding a few inches under a flowerbed near the property line, he found it buried under new mulch.

Back to school

The previous day, he had checked on a school that reported muddy water. The school called back with the same problem. Burton pulled up to Chatham Elementary

where he was waved down by a man working in the kitchen.

"The water is just nasty," the man complained. "It's all dark and muddy."

Burton knew the problem. Construction crews were working in the area. "When those machines shake the ground, they shake the pipes. That shakes loose anything inside those pipes, and when you turn your water on, the debris comes flowing through," he explained.

Burton had an extra sense of urgency on this call.

"Schools are harder because you know there are kids inside who need clean water," he said.

Burton made the water in the pipes flow away from the school, pushing the pollutants away while pulling chlorine closer. He drove two blocks and opened two fire hydrants. Both belched dark brown water for several moments before turning clear. He tested the hydrants for chlorine and both were pink.

Back at the school, Burton tested for chlorine. Pink.

That wasn't the end of the problem, Burton said. To keep clean, fresh water for its students, the school needed to perform building upgrades to its water supply.

"Sometimes, that's not the answer they want, but they still need to hear it," he said. "I like that we can solve their problems most of the time. Even if we can't solve customers' problems for them, we can tell them how to do it. I'm not satisfied until they have their problems solved or have their answers." **S**

What's goin' on

Housing & Community Development

Marino Flores retired Feb. 11 after 33 years ... The American Heart Association presented the department with the American Heart Gold Achievement for meeting employee fitness criteria ... At the Housing and Employment Resources Expo Feb. 9, the Homebuyer Assistance Program team set up a booth to market homebuyer assistance programs ... On March 5, the department, residents and Housing and Urban Development officials celebrated the grand opening of a new section of the Talento Bilingue de Houston, 333 S. Jenson. The new 2,200-square-foot rehearsal hall with storage and small-office space was built with \$200,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds ... Welcome **My-Hang Nguyen, Ha Nguyen, Brandon Jackson, Olaolu Kasunmu, Tracy Beavers, Ada Edwards, Will Guajardo, Deirdre Williams, Eric Williams, Donald Sprayberry and Caroline Gamble.** – *Lester Whiteing*

Fire

On March 21, more than 250 people attended the memorial ceremony at the Houston Firefighters' Memorial Garden, 4225 Interwood N. Parkway ... At the Trailblazers ceremony Feb. 27, Councilwoman **Jolanda Jones**, Chief **Phil Boriskie** and members of the Class of 1955, the first class of blacks to be sworn in as HFD firefighters, honored **Rosa**



More than 200 citizens met firefighters, learned about fire safety and took pictures at Fire Station 51, 6902 Bellaire, during an open house Jan. 31.

Arenas, senior communications captain, **Alison Stein** and **Michelle McLeod**, assistant arson investigators, for achieving ranks not previously reached by women in HFD ... More than 100 new firefighters took the oath of office Jan. 8, March 3 and April 9 ... Station 8 downtown was adopted by Devon Energy through the Adopt a Fire Station Program. Devon contributed \$5,000 to make the firefighters' living quarters more comfortable ... During a ceremony Jan. 15, the department honored heroes who made an impact on HFD or citizens. The heroes included several large corporations that adopted fire stations or formed partnerships with the department to promote safety, citizens who assisted HFD with projects, and **Justina Page**, who founded The Amos House of Faith, a nonprofit that supports those who have been affected by burns in Houston and surrounding areas ... Boriskie, Councilwoman **Toni Lawrence** and community leaders welcomed firefighters back to the newly renovated Station 49, 1212 Gessner, March 16 ... EMS at Station 9 held a reunion Feb. 12 with Diana Lorenzana, a cardiac-arrest survivor ... On March 3 at Fire Station 31, fire crews from northwest Houston met three children they rescued from a house fire on New Year's Eve ... At Fire Station 19, 1801 Gregg, March 23, two children and their mother who were rescued from their home in February met the firefighters who saved them. – *Alicia White*

Municipal Courts Administration

The Virut Virus attack and other challenges prompted Director **Sahira J. Abdool** to express a renewed appreciation for the hardworking MCA staff, a renewed awareness of the department's responsibility in guarding the public's trust in handling its information, and a renewed commitment to quality work by department employees. – *Shameka Barnaba*

Legal

Kudos to **Connie Acosta, Tom Allen** and **Don Fleming** for serving as discussion leaders for Professionalism Day 2009. Professionalism Day, a half-day program sponsored by the Houston Bar Association, lets students from the three Houston law schools meet experienced judges and attorneys to discuss ethical problems facing the legal profession ... Kudos also to our Mayor's Cup 2009 bowling participants: **Aisha Adams, Paula Slaughter-Harris, John Tatum, Rafael Sanchez** and **Abraham Izaguirre**. Adams finished second and Slaughter-Harris seventh ... Good job to **Paige Bryant, Carolyn Chaney, YuShan Chang, Alexander Cruz, Deborah Gray, Richard Hinojosa, Abraham Izaguirre, Fabian Izaguirre, Belinda Mata, Rafael Sanchez, Lynna Shuffield, Adorn Strambler, Ondrea Taylor** and **Dennis Yaksich**, who teamed up to win first place in the Go Red Love Your Heart reception desk competition ... On April 9, the department honored the following employees during its public-service recognition awards: **Bill Beauchamp** and **Millicent Sumuel-Fletcher**, 30 years; **Barbara Pierce**, 20 years; **Connie Acosta, Don Cheatham, Robert Johnson,**

J.R. Lopez, Deborah McAbee, Malinda Moss, Trudy Nowak, Sokkhom Tan and **Peggy Walker**, 15 years; **Vanessa Birdow, Velda Britt, Tracy Calabrese, Wynetta Chaney, Evelyn Gilleland, Alice Kipple, Patti Richards, Thomas Rodriguez, Jim Sutherland, Drenda Wallace, Ella West** and **Randy Zamora**, 10 years; **Jan Clark, Leslie "Rico" Davis,**

Shani Dennis, Terri Evans, Tanja Hunter, Sameera Mahendru, Michael Martin and **Mary McKerall**, 5 years ... Welcome new hires **Mandy Prichard, Marisa Gillam, Keith Vaughan, Nelly Gonzales, Karen Sharp** and **Abraham Izaguirre.** – *Vachel Henry*

Planning & Development

The following employees were recognized at a February awards ceremony for years of service: **Lydia King**, 25 years; **Gilberte Banks**, 20 years; **Suzy Hartgrove, Gwendolyn Parker, Anna Sedillo, Debra Kirk, Stephen Tinnermon**, and **Russell Calhoun**, 15 years; **Lynn Henson, Mark Moore, Barbara Thomas**, and **Lawrence Boyce**, 10 years. – *Suzy Hartgrove*

Convention & Entertainment Facilities

The department completed major renovations at Talento Bilingue de Houston and Miller Outdoor Theatre. TBH added rehearsal space and other improvements, while Miller raised the elevation of its hillside seating area by six feet and added 1,708 seats beneath the canopy ... Now you can follow Wortham Center, Jones Hall and the George R. Brown Convention Center on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube ... Congratulations to **John Gonzalez**, promoted to director of event services at the GRB ... Welcome aboard to **Brenda Petersen** ... Congratulations to **Laine Twining, Ashley Wilson** and **Eva Barrios**, who were named department employees of the month. – *Pete Radowick*

Public Works & Engineering

On March 7, a ride from Discovery Green to Texas Southern University with stops to plant trees with The Park People and Parks & Recreation staff celebrated the Columbia Tap Rails to Trails Bikeway Trail opening. The trail runs from Dixie Drive to Walker Street with connections to the Medical Center, TSU, downtown and existing bike routes and lanes, and adds four miles of trails to the city's bikeway network ... On March 28, volunteers cleaned up the Lake Houston Marina during the 16th annual Trash Bash ... The city hosted the fifth annual Administrative Professionals Conference April 9 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The conference enhances relationships and encourages mentoring and networking while helping to transform administrative professionals into "knowledge assistants" ... **Gwendolyn Condoleo**, community liaison in the Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office, gave the street and bridge branch of the right-of-way and fleet maintenance division a thumbs up for repairs to a Kingwood bridge rail ... On April 4, the city, the Overbrook Civic Association and hundreds of volunteers cleaned and mulched the ditch at Bellfort and Northdale. The adopt-a-ditch program, administered by PWE and Keep Houston Beautiful, beautifies esplanade ditches and creates a sense of pride and ownership in keeping the drains free of debris. – *Alvin Wright*

Information Technology

On Oct. 29, City Council approved a contract with Motorola Inc. for a new radio system for Police, Fire and Public Works & Engineering. Their existing systems do not have the capacity to meet the needs of existing or new users. The new Project 25 Phase II-compliant radio-communications system will represent a new era in wireless communications for the city. The 700 MHz radio project will improve coverage, reliability, cost-effectiveness, and interoperability. Visit www.houstontx.gov/it/radio/index.html for more information. – *Bob Nowak*

Parks & Recreation

Lifeguards are being hired for the 2009 swim season that kicks off Memorial Day weekend. With new federal guidelines for pool-drain safety, the aquatics division has been bringing the swimming pools up to code ... Alief Park boasts the city's second Playground Without Limits, with a ramp system offering play opportunities for children of all abilities. The first playground, the Vale-Asche Foundation Playground, is at Memorial Park. A third will be coming soon to Tidwell Park ... Hackberry Park, a 22-acre former golf course in Alief, opened March 21 ... Copies of the "Summer Activities in the Park" catalog that lists recreational opportunities at parks and community centers are at the 57 community centers and www.houstonparks.org ... The fruits of last fall's Lady Bird Johnson Tribute Planting burst into full flower, bringing splashes of color all over town. – *Don Whitaker*



Councilman James Rodriguez, third from left, Mario Ariza, CEF deputy director, second from right, and Dawn Ullrich, CEF director, far right, were among those who gathered at Talento Bilingue de Houston March 6 to celebrate the renovations at the city-owned Latino arts center.

on in the city?

Aviation

A record 2,000 people participated in the Mutt Strut and Runway Race at George Bush Intercontinental Airport March 7, raising nearly \$200,000 for the Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This year's event attracted more than six times as many participants as 2007. Director **Rick Vacar** welcomed the crowd and was very pleased that his "pet project" attracted so much interest. Vacar and his wife, Ann Marie, are strong animal advocates who provide a home to 13 dogs, eight cats, four horses, one longhorn steer, two goats and miscellaneous fowl. The event offered family activities, including a best-dressed dog contest, giveaways and entertainment. — *Roxanne D. Butler*

Library

Welcome **Franchella Ross, Laura Joanna Lopez, Laney Meadow, Denejra Milburn, Katherine Thomas, Jane Allen, Richard Clark, Jeanette Martisek, Alice Tenaglia, Alia York, Rebecca Chin, Jeffrey Coyle, Katherine Keene-Doyle, Phillip Mushtag, Carolyn Rittenhour, Ja'Naye White, Sumitra Chatterjee, Frank Hall, Brian Summers, Robyn Ford, Jacquina Sowell, Kimberly Tobler, Keith Cavanaugh, Sean Oliver, Kristain Clark, Loc Huynh, Kimberle File, Trista Larson, Yasmin Washington, Betty Broyles, Tula Gorden, Christy Chang, Djuna Hammett, Amanda McKenzie, Nicolas Castellanos, H. Boston Bostian, Juan Benavides, Linz Estrada and Joane South-Shelley** ... Welcome back to **Candace Melonson, Timothy Hardy, Ana Ramirez, Andrea Lawrence, Sean Oliver, Melvin Davis and Marjorie Guillory** ... Congratulations on promotions to **Kendra Cook, Runda Giles, Greg Simpson, Sara Pope, Susan Wheeler, Ashley Riggenbach, Patrick Atkins, Justine Basha, Eric Wilbourn, Vilma Mazariegos, Melesia Davis, Jennifer Canales, Monica Siboldi, Gloria Edmond, Udelia Vega, Syndey Colwell, Candace Melonson, Debra Allen, Elizabeth Swan, Darcy Casavant, Aaron Gabaldon, Michelle Goodwyn, Jonathan Sherman, and Gwendolyn Williams**. Best wishes for a happy retirement to **Renate Roberts, Maria A. Juresko and Ellen Campos** ... Doctoral student **Charles Murray**, librarian at Jungman Neighborhood Library, was awarded one of two Simon-Poppenhagen scholarships by Walden University's cyberspace chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, an international organization of professional educators ... In partnership with the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners, HPL is restoring the historic Julia Ideson Building and adding an archival wing to the building. The new archival wing, should be completed in December, and the renovation should be completed in March 2011. The Ideson is among the first Texas Historic Landmark projects on track for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification... Library and Parks & Recreation broke ground for the new Belle Sherman Kendall Neighborhood Library and Community Center, 609 N. Eldridge. The facility will replace and nearly double the space of the Kendall Neighborhood Library, 14330 Memorial Drive. This is the first combined library and community center in Houston, the first three-story neighborhood library, and the first library with a drive-up window. Construction should be completed by the end of 2009. The new facility, adjacent to Terry Hershey Park, will offer a connection to hike and bike trails ... A photo of library staff members traveled into space on NASA's Space Shuttle Discovery mission in March. Astronaut Dominic "Tony" Antonelli, the pilot and son of Pam Antonelli, a librarian at Central Library, carried the photo as a reminder of his mother and her chosen profession. — *Blanca Quezada*

Affirmative Action

Congratulations to **Jean Abercrombie, Vanessa Aplon, and Eduardo Mejia**, who were promoted to senior contract compliance officers ... A warm welcome to **Deborah Chen**. — *Patsy Jackson*

Health & Human Services

In March, the department began setting up community gardens at 10 multi-service centers. Staff with the Bureau of Health Promotion and Education and residents planted the first community garden at the Southwest Multi-Service Center. Residents volunteering in the garden harvest the food and attend nutrition classes. They can then incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into their diet. Plans call for gardens at the West End and Sunnyside Multi-Service centers in the fall ... The Community Re-entry Network seeks to reduce the number of people rearrested by helping them re-enter society and live productive lives. Support groups include training, referrals, peer support, employment, housing, transportation and healthy family relationships ... The Women, Infants and Children program is trying to reduce obesity among low-income children by recruiting pediatricians for its Catch 5 for a Healthy Weight project. The doctors will teach parents about body mass index and the consequences of childhood obesity and help parents and caregivers promote healthier weight for their children. Goals include eating healthy snacks, drinking water, choosing low-fat milk, eating vegetables and exercising. — *Porifirio Villarreal*

Human Resources

The Employee Assistance Program moved to 50 Briar Hollow Lane, Suite 290. To schedule an appointment, call 713-964-9906 ... HR won an Award of Honor from the National Safety Council for having a 100 percent reduction in workplace injuries ... Happy retirement wishes to EAP counselor **Ruth Carroll** ... Welcome new hires **Tina Flowers, Shelia Bailey, Christopher Trevino, John D'Agostino and Jessica Rich**. — *Bobby Vasquez*

General Services

Welcome new team members **Alex Mena, Manny Garcia and Jamil Whalen** ... Happy retirement to **William Hauck**, 28 years; **Chris Fisher**, 21 years; **Alina Gazdyszyn**, 12 years; and **Lucio Vasquez**, 5 years ... **Wanda Adams's** District D office thanked the parking management division for removing 18-wheelers, ensuring safe and efficient parking for citizens downtown and in the Houston area, and enforces residential parking permits and safety in school zones. — *Jacquelyn L. Nisby*

Municipal Courts Judicial

On March 25, City Council confirmed **Cheryl Alsanador, Sydney Braquet, Theresa Chang, Kimberly Gamble, Gerardo Montalvo, Andrew Morrison, Andres Pereira, Njeri Rutledge, Dennis Slate, Kim Trujillo, Joe Villarreal, and MiHoa Vo** as substitute judges. Each brings a wealth of knowledge and experience ... Welcome **Margaret Taylor, Andrea Vaughan and Belinda Villarreal** ... The Juvenile Case Manager (Truancy) Program is underway. **Dolores Mendiola**, senior juvenile case manager, oversees **Elizabeth Alfaro, Catherine Klier, Miguel Nazario and Traci Turner**. All four work closely with targeted HISD campuses, the students and their families to reduce truancy. — *Lilly Warden*

Solid Waste Management

On March 20, Director **Harry Hayes** encouraged residents to dispose of their household hazardous products at the city's free environmental-service centers. The centers accept anti-freeze, batteries, fuel, oil, paint, pesticides, other household cleaners, televisions, VCRs and computers and monitors. For more information, visit www.houstonsolidwaste.org or call 311 ... In March, the city kicked off the Automated Recycling Pilot Program. Participants received a 96-gallon green cart for recycling. Printed on the lid is a list of accepted items. SWM selected 10,000 homes in the Lindale Park, Meyerland, Old Sixth Ward, Oakbrook, Pinebrook, Pineloch, Riverwood Estates and Westbury neighborhoods for the one-year pilot program, which is projected to divert tons of waste from landfills every month. — *Marina Joseph*

Obituaries



Judge **John Paul Barnich**, an adjudication hearing officer, died Feb. 2, 2009, from a diabetes-related illness. He was 63. Barnich became the first openly gay man to be a city court judge in Texas when former Mayor Lee Brown appointed him to the court in 1999. He earned a

psychology degree from Michigan State University before coming to Houston in 1969 and becoming a teacher. He partnered with the FBI to create a criminal-justice program at Waltrip High School, an effort that evolved into the High School for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. For six months in 1977, he studied comparative religion in India as a Fulbright scholar. He graduated from South Texas College of Law in 1980. As an attorney, Barnich was the founder of the Bar Association for Human Rights. He was also on the board of the Houston AIDS Foundation, serving four years as the board's chairman. He is survived by brothers Bill and Rick and sisters Mary Barnich and Martha Jo Vanderberg.

Firefighter **James Arthur**

Harlow Sr. died April 12, 2009. He was 49. Harlow served with the Fire Department for more than 29 years and was named captain at Station 26 in 2004. He posthumously received Medals of Honor from HFD and from the International Association of Firefighters. Harlow is survived by his wife, Debbie; daughter, Brandy Rooth and husband Ron; sons, James Jr. and wife Jessica, and Travis and wife Amber; four grandchildren; parents, James and Virginia Harlow; sisters, Terri Perricone and husband Phillip, and Christie Harlow; and brother David and wife Pam. Services were April 16 at Grace Community Church.



Firefighter **Damion Jon Hobbs** died April 12, 2009. He was 30. He graduated from Alvin High School in 1998 and served in the Army for 10 years, achieving the rank of staff sergeant, before joining the Fire Department. He was with HFD for one month and six days. Damion posthumously received Medals of Honor from the Houston Fire Department and from the International Association of Firefighters. He is survived by his father, Jon Hobbs; mother, Joyce Webb; girlfriend, Crystal Marin; sisters, Janice DeShazer and husband Tim, Tammy Hobbs, and Shiela Hobbs; stepsister, Danielle Moon; stepbrother, Levi Webb; grandmother, Ruth Johnson; and numerous nieces and nephews. Services were April 16 at Grace Community Church.

Firefighter EMT **Rodney Dale Waters**, 43, died Jan. 31, 2009, while off duty. Waters was a career firefighter who served as a volunteer early in his career with the Spring Fire Department. He served with the Conroe Fire Department before joining HFD in 1989. He was a member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, a Special Olympics fundraiser, a little-league coach, and a member of Spring Masonic Lodge AF&AM. He is survived by wife Dawn; daughter Hannah Marie Waters; sons Jacob Dwayne Waters and Garrett Ryan Lorenz; sisters Rhonda Waters and Pamela Lawson and husband, Donald.

MyCity is road map to GIS data



MyCity's public debut is planned for late May. Residents will then be able to search for accurate information about land parcels, find the recycling center, look up appraisal data, see what recent crime has occurred near their residence, view historical areal maps dating back to 1944 and more all at one convenient Web site.

By Bobby Vasquez

Our city just got a little more accessible through MyCity. A web-based mapping application, MyCity is a collection of statistics and other information presented as a map through an enterprise geographical information system.

Many departments use a geographical information system. Police tracks crime statistics, Public Works & Engineering maps pipes and pipe locations, and Fire maps locations of emergency calls and fire hydrants.

"We've had this information available for a long time, but it was in a lot of different places," said Lee Graham, GIS administrator in Planning & Development. Now, all of the information is collected from all the GIS in the city and funneled into one comprehensive program.

Ed Loomis, a GIS consultant in the Houston Emergency Center, said the EGIS will become the focal point for the city.

"Every department can use its applications," he said. "It will change the way the

city operates. Instead of bringing charts and maps to meetings, we will just call up MyCity and give presentations using that data."

MyCity combines 21 databases dating back to 1988, Graham said. For other functions, such as historical topographical, aerial and floodplain maps, MyCity uses databases and photographs dating back more than 40 years.

The good ole' days

Before the introduction of EGIS, Loomis said the city contracted with an outside firm to provide digital mapping and plotting services in a GIS system. This meant problems for the city especially in the police department.

"Sometimes details like police beats or streets were wrong," he said. "There were mistakes on all levels, and they were hard to correct."

To correct problems, the city had to contact the firm that provided similar services across Southeast Texas and tell them the corrections. That could be time-consuming

because the contractor also worked with many other municipalities.

Checking accuracy proved to be tiresome, too. If the city needed to verify where a street changed its name to another street, like Bellaire Boulevard into Holcombe Boulevard, a city employee had to drive to the location.

The maps were not user-friendly either, Loomis said. They were primitive maps with parcels, addresses and streets.

"But with EGIS, streets are accurate, parcels are accurate. Everything is accurate," he said. "It's a much better system."

Long process

Putting all of this data into one useable database has been a sizeable task. There have been some growing pains, Loomis said, but because the city directly inputs the information, the problems are corrected more easily.

"There are still small glitches in the system, but the problems are not nearly as frequent. Most of the time, it's just fine-tuning the system," he said. "That gives us more time to actually use the system instead of working on quality control."

"So much of this data has never seen the light of day in this kind of usable function," Graham said.

Just a click away

City employees have had access to MyCity for several weeks. Graham says the city plans to release a version for the public by the end of May. The public version is very much like the version used by city employees.

"The difference is residents or someone outside the city can't make changes using the data," Graham said. "Public access is strictly for looking up data. They have the same data we have."

For example, a resident cannot access their neighborhood on MyCity and order waterline repairs around their property, but they can look up crime statistics, their police beat, council district, permit

data, flood plain maps as well as traffic and satellite imagery, similar to that from Google Earth.

Changing the way information is presented will make communication between the city, developers, citizens and contractors clearer, Loomis said. In MyCity EGIS, everything is in graphical form, making it easier to see the root of the problems.

When data is presented exclusively in text form, it makes some information open for debate. When the data is accompanied by maps and graphical information, the margin of error is diminished.

All together, now

Many departments have had their GIS in place for years, Graham said. None of them will be forced to do a complete changeover into the EGIS.

"That would mean we have to train too many people to do something completely different than what they are used to. They can keep using their GIS, but we will train them to upload their content into the new system," Graham said.

Departments using their GIS also have it fine-tuned to fit their needs.

"Instead of moving everyone to the EGIS, the EGIS is designed to complement each department's needs. Having all their information pushed into one database makes the EGIS more accurate and more user friendly."

Most departments are expected to upload the most up-to-date information daily and some are doing so already, Graham said. Departments should take about one week to upload their updates.

Loomis said launching MyCity puts Houston in the technology forefront.

"When people want information, they go online. Now, we are right there with them," he said. "The EGIS makes Houston a more attractive place for businesses and citizens to move to. By putting all of our information online, we have an easily accessible resource for them to see the city." **S**

Easier access is natural at city park

By Bobby Vasquez

Parks & Recreation's jewel of a weekend getaway is about to shine a little brighter.

Lake Houston Wilderness Park, nestled 45 minutes from downtown in New Caney, has 4,986 acres of undeveloped forest. Only 762 acres are used. The rest is a wilderness preserve.

In June, the first phase of a master-plan upgrade will begin.

Park fees

- **Entrance fee** - \$3 per person 13 years and older
- **Pine Grove Day Lodge** - \$100 per day plus park entrance fees, taxes and a one time cleaning deposit of \$75.
- **Forest Cottage** - \$125 per night plus park entrance fees, taxes and a one time cleaning deposit of \$75.
- **Lazy Creek Cottage** - \$160 per night plus park entrance fees, taxes and a one time cleaning deposit of \$75.
- **Peach Creek Camp** - \$40 per night
- **Walk-in Tent sites** - \$7 each

For a first-person account of a day at Lake Houston Wilderness Park and for fun facts, visit www.citysavvy.org.

"We spent 15 months talking with cyclists, campers, scouts, birdwatchers, canoeists and Texas Parks and Wildlife about what they would like to see," said Joe Turner, Parks director. "This is not just about park upgrades. This is defining what Lake Houston Wilderness Park will be like years from now."

As Houston expands, the areas north of Kingwood will become a focal point for population and business growth, Turner said. That played a major role in the long-term vision for the park.

"What Memorial Park is to Houston inside the loop, is what we envision Lake Houston will be 20 years from now," he said. "At the same time, we want to preserve the undisturbed forest we have."

The site of the former Peach Creek Girl Scout Camp and the Champion Paper Company, the park is the only city-operated park that allows overnight camping. The first phase includes improving the road system leading to and inside the park. Now, visitors must meander through a poorly lit neighborhood on the narrow Baptist Encampment Road to get to the entrance.

The new entrance will be on FM 1485, which is easily accessible from Highway 59 and will have a staffed entry gate where visitors pay their fees to enter the park.

The park accommodates campers,



Located less than an hour's drive from downtown, Lake Isabell is a relaxing attraction at Lake Houston Wilderness Park. The cypress bog is popular with wilderness enthusiasts.

horseback riders, bird watchers, hikers and mountain bikers, and it features a nature center, canoe launches, dining hall, lodges and tent pads.

After the upgrades are complete, there will be almost 40 miles of trail, a special 11-mile canoe route, additional tent pads, trails and RV accommodations with hook-ups and a pavilion.

"This is going to really boost use of the park," said Paul Hendrix, Parks division manager. "There will be more things to do, and we will be able to accommodate more people who want to use the park."

A major obstacle of upgrading a preserved nature park is disturbing the natu-

ral areas as little as possible, said Hendrix, who oversees day-to-day operations.

"Anytime you have a project of this magnitude, something will be disturbed," he said. "We will minimize the footprint and disturb the forest canopy as little as possible."

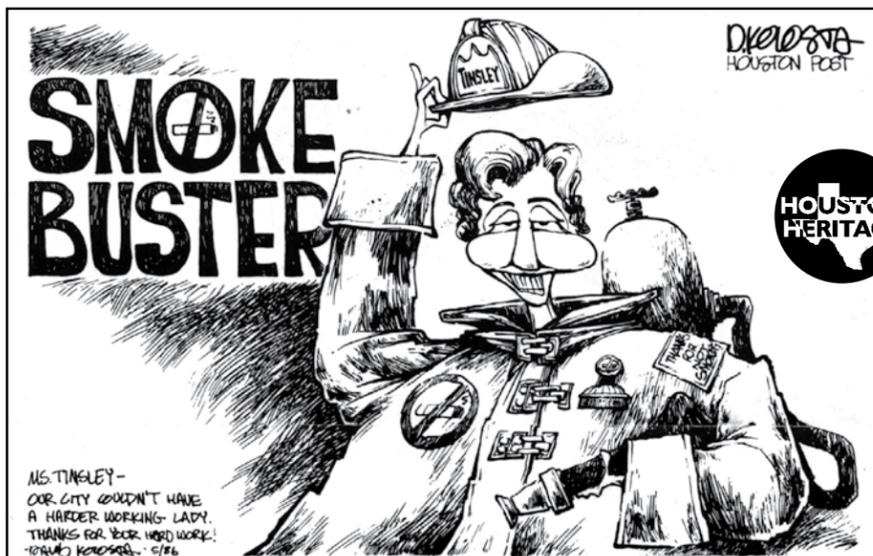
When the upgrades are complete, Hendrix envisions a natural area that can be appreciated by Houstonians and will be a destination for out-of-town visitors.

"The master plan will open a lot of doors for us," he said. "We will accommodate more people with more interests and do so much easier than we do now." **S**

Photo by Bobby Vasquez

City mourns loss of political legend

Eleanor Tinsley, 84, remembered for standing firm in tough times



Amid public outcry against the smoking ordinance, cigarette corporations representatives lodged public complaints and thinly veiled freedom-of-speech demonstrations.

"They complained, but none of that stopped her," Ownby said. "She tried so hard always do what was right for the city, and that wasn't always easy. In her heart, she was doing the right thing for everyone."

"Fences were made for people who cannot fly." – Eleanor Tinsley

Thanks to Tinsley, the city added more than 200 parks through the SPARK Park program, a collaboration of many area governments and entities.

"I doubt anyone could have brought the city, county, school districts and private sector together the way she did," Appel said.

Tinsley was honored by HISD with Eleanor Tinsley Elementary School and by the city with Eleanor Tinsley Park. Soon, her granddaughter, Bethany Mateosian will name her daughter after Tinsley.

Mateosian remembers telling her grandmother the news.



Photo courtesy of Tinsley Family

As a school board trustee and city councilwoman, Eleanor Tinsley helped build Houston into the city it is.

"To say she was thrilled would be an understatement," she said.

"I never thought this would happen," Tinsley told her. "I have been recommending my name to family members for years, and no one has taken me up on it. I thought I would have to settle for a park or a school. But this is wonderful!"

Born in Dallas Oct. 31, 1926, Eleanor Whilden moved to Houston in 1953. She was married for 59 years to her husband, the late Dr. James A. Tinsley. She is survived by their three children, Kathleen Ownby, Tom Tinsley and Marilyn Daniel; their spouses; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. **S**

By Bobby Vasquez

Almost 40 years after Eleanor Tinsley was first elected to public office, Houston still boasts signs of her legacy: reducing the number of billboards in the city, smoking prohibited in public buildings, desegregated schools, 911 and SPARK Parks. The former city councilwoman known for her vigor and progressive - sometimes controversial ideas - died Feb. 10 at 84.

"She loved Houston and the public she served so much," said Kathleen Ownby, Tinsley's daughter and director of SPARK Parks.

"Be careful what you set your heart on for you will be sure to get it." – Eleanor Tinsley

Tinsley began her political career when she was elected to the Houston Independent School Board of Trustees in 1970 and as president of the board in 1972. During her tenure, HISD desegregated, sparking difficult times and emotional outrage from many citizens.

People threw garbage in the lawn and called her names, Ownby said. But it was the words of one parent whose comment sticks in Ownby's mind.

"Someone asked my mother 'What happens if my child catches something from being around a black student?' Mother looked that parent straight in the eye and said, 'I hope your child catches tolerance.'"

HISD made other landmark advancements during Tinsley's years: establishing the Houston Community College system, creating magnet schools and establishing the Volunteers in Public Schools.

She lost her 1974 re-election, but used it as a learning experience.

"Even a turtle gets nowhere until he sticks his neck out." – Eleanor Tinsley

Madeleine Appel, deputy director in the Controller's Office, was Tinsley's supervising aide on City Council. They met as members of the League of Women Voters.

"She was a woman of integrity and courage who rose to many challenges for many people in this city," Appel said. "She made the government process work for the community."

In the late 1970s, Tinsley announced she would run for City Council, taking on 20-year incumbent Frank Mann. In 1979, with an army of volunteers and aides known as her "Turtle Team," she won in a runoff, making her one of the first two women elected to City Council. Cristin Hartung was elected to council that same year.

"Never take a vote personally. Remember, you always have to get in the elevator with them afterwards." – Eleanor Tinsley

Throughout Tinsley's 16 years on council, she and her staff meticulously researched policies, some of which were vehemently opposed by some citizens, businessmen and fellow councilmembers.

Among those controversial issues were the no-smoking ordinance for public buildings and an ordinance to reduce the number of billboards in the city.

You Said It

We asked employees: What is a sure sign that spring has arrived?

Ruth Wakefield, Information Technology:



"When I sneeze when I walk outside in the morning. When my car is covered in yellow pollen - then I sneeze again. On my patio, the daffodils and amaryllis stick their pointed green tongues toward the sun to taste the sunshine. The red robins and blue jays fly as if performing an acrobatic happy dance against the blue sky and yellow sunshine."

Greg Hubbard, Administration & Regulatory Affairs:

"When I hear the sound of a hard pine bat cracking a fast ball. Baseball becomes spring, and spring becomes baseball."



Rhonda Belt Rhea, Administration & Regulatory Affairs:

"When bare arms, flip-flop sandal-type shoes and painted toenails make an appearance. Also, when there's an increase in requests for extended lunch hours."



Lance Licciardi, Administration & Regulatory Affairs:

"When I start thinking I'm paler than everyone else"



Tom Bartlett, Aviation:

"The arrival of the bluebonnets at George Bush Intercontinental Airport symbolizes the arrival of spring in Houston. We have a blanket of the royal-blue flowers along our entrance road and on the airfield. Just like our spring-break crowds, the arrival of the bluebonnets is an airport ritual every spring in Texas."



Joe Laud, Houston Emergency Center:

"Sweatshirt or shorts...sweat-shirts with shorts? If you can't make up your mind, wait five minutes for the weather to change again."



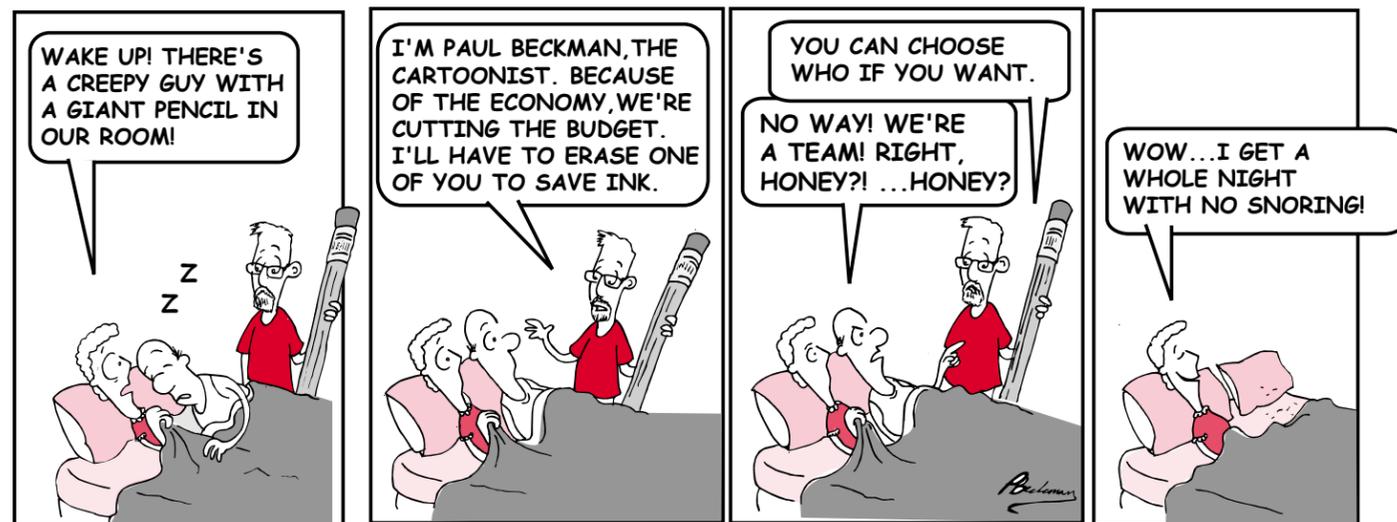
Ruth Gonzales, Public Works & Engineering:

"When you start hearing the birds chirping earlier than usually in the morning and you are trying to get a few more minutes of much-needed sleep."



beckhead

by Paul Beckman





Wintery Bravos

Congratulations to **Mike McCoy**, Police, **Pamela Wafer**, Houston Emergency Center, and **Art Zehnder**, Convention & Entertainment Facilities, who were named BRAVO! Award winners for excellent work and contributions to the community. Mayor **Bill White** and Councilwoman **Wanda Adams** recognized them Feb. 3. For more information, visit www.houstontx.gov/hr/bravo.

Cougar pride

Dannelle Belhateche, senior assistant director for Public Works & Engineering's wastewater operations, and **Mark Loethan**, PWE city engineer, are featured in the upcoming edition of The Cougar Engineer, the University of Houston's alumni magazine published by the Cullen College of Engineering. The issue focuses on graduates who play a significant role in infrastructure and environment.

That's quiet a Persse

Dr. David Persse, EMS physician director, was honored with the Michael K. Copass Award, one of the most prestigious honors among the nation's emergency medical-services directors. The U.S. Metropolitan Municipalities EMS Medical Director Consortium presented Persse with the honor during its national meeting in Dallas Feb. 22.

The award is given to an EMS medical director who has demonstrated longstanding service, contributions and leadership in out-of-hospital emergency care and who has served as a role model for emergency medical-services personnel and fellow 911-system medical directors.

Outstanding child advocacy

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas named **Heidi Ruiz**, Police, an honorable mention recipient of its 2008 Team Excellence Awards. Ruiz showed outstanding leadership that resulted in the development, continuation and enhancement of Children's Advocacy Centers.

Archibald is Firefighter of the Year

The Independent Insurance Agents of Houston named **Laura Archibald**, engineer operator, Firefighter of The Year. Archibald led in developing HFD's Firefighter in Distress and Suicide Prevention Program, the first of its kind in any fire department or firefighter union. She researched the distress and suicide statistics of the general public and U.S. large metropolitan fire departments. Archibald was also recognized as an advocate who worked to ensure the timely receipt of benefits to HFD members and their families following difficult times, disaster, injury, illness or death.

She's in the seat of library power

Meller Langford, Library deputy director of public services, was elected to the executive board of the Texas Library Association.

Talkin' jobs

Rod Newman, Human Resources division manager, spoke about hiring and finding jobs in the tough economy on "Dialogue with Ada Edwards" on radio station KBXX March 28.

Like who has to cut the grass?

Royce Sells, administrative coordinator for Housing & Community Development's fair housing section, presented an overview of landlord and tenant laws at the second annual Housing and Employment Resources Expo at the George R. Brown Convention Center Feb. 9.

Recognized for its public works & engineering

The Houston/Galveston post of the Society of American Military Engineers gave Public Works & Engineering the Public Agency of the Year award at the eighth annual Public Agency of the Year Award Banquet Jan. 21. The award noted the cooperative relationship between private and public agencies and the department's recovery efforts during Hurricane Ike.

She can really pick 'em

Maggie Sepulveda, Library early literacy specialist, was appointed to the 2010 Pura Belpré Award Committee. The committee selects a Latino author and a Latino illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

Arson and EMS awareness

National Arson Awareness Week is May 1-7, and this year's theme is "School Arson – A Burning Subject." May 17-23 is National Emergency Medical Services Week. More than 80 percent of fire calls involve EMS. Both themes will be highlighted at events. For more information, visit www.houstonfire.com.

One month heavy trash, the next tree waste

The heavy-trash program has been revamped, and the tree/junk waste program is in effect. Tree/junk waste diverts recyclable materials from landfills and saves landfill space and tax dollars. Under the new schedule, tree waste will be picked up in January, March, May, July, September and November. Junk waste will be picked up in February, April, June, August, October and December. Tree waste is defined as clean wood such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps. Lumber, furniture, and treated wood will not be accepted. Junk Waste is defined as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material. Junk waste may not be placed for collection during a tree-waste month. Tree waste is accepted during junk-waste months.

Read for prizes ... and fun

Starting May 1, children and teens up to age 18 can sign up for the library's summer reading program and earn a chance to win a laptop, digital camera, restaurant coupons and more. This year's theme is "Summer thrills and chills," and the program runs June 1 – Aug. 1. Youths can sign up at www.houstonlibrary.org/summer.



New depository hours

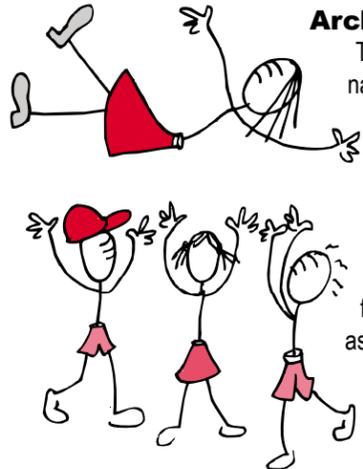
As of March 8, the Solid Waste Management Department changed hours of operation at its four neighborhood depositories to adjust to daylight savings time. The locations, 2240 Central Street, 5565 Kirkpatrick, 5100 Sunbeam and 6023 Windfern, will be open every day, except holidays, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The depositories accept furniture, tree limbs, stoves and other large appliances. Depositories will also accept up to 10 automobile tires per trip per residential unit. A maximum of four cubic yards of building material, not including roofing shingles, brick, plaster or concrete, will be accepted.

The centers also accept recyclables, including aluminum and tin cans, wood, #1, #5 and #7 plastic bottles and jugs, newspapers, magazines, glass bottles, jars, and used motor oil. Each user must provide proof of residency, including a Texas driver's license or an ID along with a current water/utility bill or city property tax receipt.

New Morris Frank Library

The grand opening of the new Morris Frank Library, an HPL express library in the Brays Oaks Towers, 10103 Fondren, is 10:30 a.m. May 9. This new location is replacing the Frank Neighborhood Library, 6440 West Bellfort. Customers will see a futuristic 10,409-square-foot library with free digital connections, more than 100 databases for researchers, students and small businesses, library programs including computer courses, age-appropriate events, and virtual tutoring. For details, visit www.houstonlibrary.org or call 832-393-1313.





POWER To People

Heat absorbed through windows and roofs increases air-conditioning use. Incorporating shade into your landscape design can reduce this heat gain by as much as nine degrees. Planting trees on the south and west sides of your house will produce the greatest energy-efficiency benefits. Also, shading your air-conditioner will allow it to run more efficiently.

