

WLP Civic Association Board Members

**President:** Gilda Bayegan  
**Secretary:** Elaine Khalil  
**Past President:** Diane Kiecke  
**Website:** [www.wlpca.org](http://www.wlpca.org)

**Vice President:** Pat Holmes  
**Treasurer:** Michael Paneral  
**Newsletter:** Anna Dean  
**Webmistress:** Marj Elhardt

**Directors:** Bill Cash, Van Demetriades, Mike Ginzel, Phyllis Maddox, Darryl Shields, and Barbara Staley

**DEAR NEIGHBORS:**

After freakishly brutal winter weather and a year in lockdown, we welcome Spring with enthusiasm. Many of us lost gardens to the Big Freeze in February, but looking around West Lane Place, we see evidence of new life. Streets are filled with landscapers' trucks and brown crispy hedges are being replaced with healthy green ones as we return to our beautiful, manicured pre-storm condition.

Though cold weather is behind us, we are not yet free of the effects of Covid. Since not everyone has been vaccinated yet and many of our members are ill at ease in large indoor groups, the WLPCA Board of Directors reluctantly decided to forego the Annual Meeting again this year. As a result, we will conduct the election of the 2021-2022 WLPCA board by mail, just as we did last year. Please look for the ballot enclosed with this newsletter, complete it, and return it in the enclosed, addressed envelope at your first opportunity so that we can confirm the new board and complete the WLPCA Membership Directories that **Darryl Shields** has been working for the last six months to assemble.

This year ends the terms of Directors, **Barbara Staley** and **Bill Cash**. We thank both for serving on the board for the last two years, but we do not say goodbye. Bill has agreed to remain in touch to help with social activities once they resume, a skill in which he and his **two cute Westies** excel. Barbara has agreed to take on special projects *ad hoc*, a category that can pop up at any time.

**Pat Holmes**, our vice president, has just completed her second novel, *Crude Ambition*, and will be away much of the coming year on book tours. **Fisher Trigg**, a longtime resident of Bash Place, has agreed to take her place on the board. We wish Pat much success with her new book, and welcome Fisher to the WLPCA board.

To fill the seats vacated by Barbara and Bill, a committee headed by Director, **Phyllis Maddox**, joined by **Anna Dean**, Bash Place, and **Melanie Blair**, Lana Lane, have nominated **Marj Elhardt**, Mid Lane, and **Mary MacDaniel**, Hackberry Lane, as directors for the 2021- 2023 term. Both Mary and Marj have lengthy

associations with the WLPCA, understand the needs of West Lane Place, and bring experience and energy with them to the board. We look forward to working with them once again!

We look forward to seeing you again, too. We miss our neighborhood meetings, and all of us on the WLPCA board of directors extend our well wishes to all of you from a social distance that we dearly hope will soon end.

Happy Spring,

Gilda Bayegan  
President-WLPCA

Inside this issue:

**Minal Patel Davis**, by Pat Holmes, page 2

**Should We Hire Constables to Patrol WLP?** page 3

**Recent Scary Events**, by West Lane Place News staff, page 3

**Recycling Schedule for WLP**, page 4

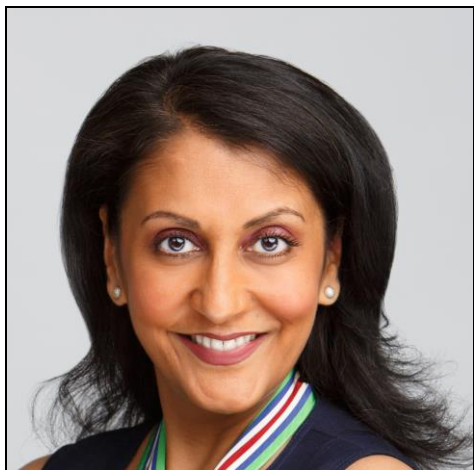
**Announcements**, page 4

**Voting materials enclosed!**

This newsletter is published and delivered to you  
by the West Lane Place Civic Association

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

Please contact Phyllis Maddox concerning any problems you may experience receiving your newsletter.



Minal Patel Davis

*While doing research for my first novel, **Searching for Pilar**, I discovered a leading expert on sex trafficking living down the street in West Lane Place, **Minal Davis**! I found her to be a lovely person doing important work, and interviewed her again last month to share her fascinating mission with all of you.*

**PAT:** Please tell us, where were you born and what is your educational background?

**MINAL:** I was born and grew up in Queens, New York. I went to NYU for my undergraduate degree and received my J.D./M.B.A. from the University of Connecticut Schools of Law and Business Administration.

**PAT:** Those are impressive academic credentials. Did you practice law?

**MINAL:** For a short time, but I have always been interested in public policy. In New York City I volunteered with The New York Women's Foundation. When we moved to Houston, I became the Executive Director of a non-profit organization that sought to provide access to technology to populations that wouldn't otherwise have it and was a volunteer member of Mayor Annise Parker's Human Trafficking Task Force, which is where I made my first contact with city government.

**PAT:** You now have an important position at the City of Houston. How did that come about?

**MINAL:** Ed Gonzales was the City Council Member representing the district where I was working with the technology access non-profit. He wanted to bring NYC talent to the city of Houston. He introduced me to then Mayor Annise Parker. The City had an Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force to which I was appointed and served as a volunteer member for 2 months before being appointed Chair. I first learned about trafficking as a domestic issue through my volunteer work at the NYWF and had become deeply passionate about the issue. Six months after becoming Chair and implementing significant reforms, Mayor Parker appointed me as

Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking. When Mayor Turner took over at the City, he decided to continue my position and decided to keep me in the seat.

**PAT:** What did the position entail?

**MINAL:** Houston was the first municipality in the United States to create such a position. The strategic plan I devised to combat human trafficking in the city was the first Plan, aspects of which have now been replicated in cities across the U.S. with some international replication as well like Milan and Kriva Palanaka, North Macedonia. I have also had the privilege of discussing our municipal approach in Turkey and India. Two years ago, we started a formal replication program called the **Ten/Ten Human Trafficking Municipal Response Fellowship** where cities apply to come to Houston for this 2-day immersion program and learn how to implement our policies in their own municipalities. So far, we have hosted 18 cities, including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dallas.

**PAT:** What is the basic premise of your approach?

**MINAL:** Until now, all cities saw human trafficking as a policing matter. We have institutionalized the fight against sex trafficking in several departments throughout the city. For example, in 2020, the City adopted a hotel/motel ordinance requiring training of employees to spot human trafficking and report it. In the area of procurement, we have policies which require vendors to ensure products and services are not supplied through forced labor. The Health Department screens for victims of trafficking in their clientele and also leverages their food inspectors to recognize and report as they inspect the city's 13,000 food establishments, a common site for labor trafficking. These are just a few examples; you can go to [humantraffickinghouston.org](http://humantraffickinghouston.org) for more information.

**PAT:** I know that in 2018, you were awarded a Presidential Medal for **Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking In Persons** for the work you have done locally, nationally and internationally. And in 2020, the Mayor expanded your responsibilities. Tell me about that?

**MINAL:** My new title is **Director of the Mayor's Office of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence**. There is an intersection between human trafficking and domestic violence. Husbands or boyfriends may force their partner to sell themselves to make money or work for no money and that is trafficking as well being a form of intimate partner violence. Domestic violence non-profits saw a spike in requests for help after the COVID closures. We implemented several initiatives to address the situation. For example, we set up a no barrier, free mental health call center for abusers and victims of domestic violence with the help of The Alliance. There were over 200 calls in the first six weeks.

**PAT:** What do you tell people when they ask you what they can do to fight human trafficking?

**MINAL:** It's really a personal journey. What does the individual feel comfortable doing? Some people want to get out and personally interface with the victims and offer aid or comfort. Some would rather donate money to organizations involved in the fight. Others get involved in church groups which have a particular mission. The most important thing is to recognize and become aware of signs that someone is being sex trafficked and then call the number for the **National Human Trafficking Hotline. The number is 888-373-7888.** Trained professionals will make the call as to who to notify locally to take action.

**PAT:** You are obviously excited about what you do. What excites you the most right now?

**MINAL:** Houston is applying to be a host city for the 2026 World Cup. I helped establish and Chair the Human Rights Subcommittee. This is the first time a mega sporting event is requiring cities to present a human rights strategy as part of the bid. Houston is known internationally for being a leader in the fight against human trafficking. We are in a great position with all of our experience in the human trafficking arena and the other areas FIFA is asking us to focus on to offer the best plan.

**PAT:** You do wonderful work for the City of Houston and make us proud. Thank you.

### **Should We Hire Constables to Patrol WLP?**

Motivated by increasing traffic on Mid Lane, speeding, and erratic driving, as well as the recent shooting incident on Lana Lane, neighbors in West Lane Place have been in touch with WLPCA board members to ask about the possibility of hiring **Harris County constables** to patrol here. We explored this issue in the past but never entered a contract for security services. Since that time, circumstances have changed, and if there is enough support now among the residents of West Lane Place, the WLPCA board will revisit the question.

Please let us know if you are interested in participating in a plan to hire constables to provide contract security for our neighborhood.

Contact **Kyle E.** at [midlanecommons@gmail.com](mailto:midlanecommons@gmail.com) to find out more.

**Gunfight on Lana Lane.** Neighbors have been talking about it, it's on the internet, and KPRC put the story on television news, so you may know there was a shooting on Lana Lane around 2 p.m. on **Monday, April 5.**

The story we got from the victims, witnesses, and police, is this: A rapper and his companions riding in a Rolls Royce SUV were looking for a safe, pretty neighborhood to make a video after shopping in the Galleria. They chose Lana Lane. While they were preparing to film, a car pulled up behind them from which a guy jumped out, held a gun on the driver, and robbed him of his wallet and Rolex watch. Meanwhile, a woman passenger in the SUV took a gun from her purse and started shooting at the robber, who fired back. The robber escaped down Lana Lane and through a cleared lot on Mid Lane, chased by the victims. He has not been apprehended yet.

The victims of this crime were two men, a woman, and a young child. They were driving a black Rolls Royce SUV filled with Louis Vuitton shopping bags. Police say the suspects driving a **white four-door Ford Fusion sedan** followed them from the Galleria. The man who accosted the victims was a **slim, average height black male with dreadlocks, between the ages of 18 and 25.** No one saw his accomplice, who sped away.

The Rolls Royce sustained two gunshots and a shot-out tire. A house on Lana was shot, too. As frightening as this shooting was, thankfully and miraculously, we know of no people or pets that were injured. **HPD says thieves often prey on shoppers in this area, and urges us always to be vigilant when out.**

**Pay attention to who's paying attention to you!**

**\*\*\* If you have video** of this incident that you have not yet shared with HPD, please call **Sgt. R. Gray** in the Robbery Division, **713-308-0700, case no. 447392-21, especially if your video shows the car plate number or face of the assailants.** \*\*\*

\*

**Crash at Westheimer and Mid Lane.** Have you noticed the hole in the brick wall at the north end of Mid Lane, now covered in orange construction netting? That's damage from a crash that occurred during the freeze.


Neighbors report that a car on Westheimer skidded into the back of another car at the light, and sent it flying across the intersection, knocking our painted electric box off its base as it crushed the brick wall on the corner. The car kept driving until it stopped on West Lane, mechanically incapable of driving further. At that point, its youthful driver emerged to face the music. Opinions differ somewhat about whether the driver stopped voluntarily or if he would have kept going but for his broken wheels.

**Recycling, Heavy Trash, and  
Tree & Limb Pick-up Schedule for WLP**

**APRIL**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	J	29	30	

**MAY**


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

**JUNE**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	J	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**JULY**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27		29	30	31

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

Weekly household trash pick up on Mondays. NOTE: Recycling is every other Monday, on highlighted days in boxes. Please have your bins out on the curb by 7 am and in by 10 pm.

“Tree Waste” is defined as “clean wood waste such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps (lumber, furniture, and treated wood will NOT be accepted.)”

“Junk Waste” is defined as “items such as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material.”

**Voting by Mail.** The meeting we have every year in normal times to conduct business and elect the next WLPCA board of directors will be preempted by Covid concerns again this year. Although many of us have been vaccinated, the WLPCA board recognizes that many members still have not. Once most of you enjoy a high degree of confidence in group gatherings, we will have a neighborhood event in person, and after so long in isolation, we expect it will be a humdinger!

In the meantime, we ask that you **please return the ballots enclosed with this newsletter** to elect the 2021-2022 West Lane Place Civic Association board of directors.

**Trash and Recycling Pick Up.** Our solid waste pick up has been erratic lately. The first week of April, some Monday pick-ups weren’t completed until late Wednesday evening. Others were skipped entirely.

Members of the board notified the City of the problems through the 311 line, but the more we squeak, the more likely we are to see improvement. **Please call 311 to file a complaint if your trash is not picked up as scheduled.** If you can **provide the time your trash was picked up, and the truck number,** your complaint will have more impact.

**Coming soon!**

**Directories.** Our Membership Committee Chair, **Darryl Shields,** has almost completed the new directories that have kept him busy for months. If you haven’t yet renewed your WLPCA membership, or joined, do so now! Darryl still might be able to include you in the directory.

**wlpca.org** Marj Elhardt has been working with web designers to add online payment capability to **our website.** Like so many things in life, her project snowballed into an entirely new website. Watch future editions of the *West Lane Place News* to know when the website launches!

**Property Tax Tip.** Every year, Harris County uses the values assigned to similar homes in our area to determine the value of your home. **If their appraisal goes unchallenged, your house may be over-valued.** The next year, Harris County will use the inflated value to increase the value on your house again, as well as the houses around you. **The actual market value of your house doesn’t go up, only your taxes do!**

**Jim Kirkpatrick,** a real estate professional who lives on Hackberry Lane, studied the HCAD values in WLP and says that although our area changes constantly from old to new houses, he sees no consistency in how HCAD assigns quality, which determines value. If two similar houses were built the same year, one might be assigned “Excellent” and the other “Good” quality ratings, resulting in very different tax bills.

**If your house is over 10 years old and HCAD is calling the quality “Excellent,” try arguing for “Good.” If successful, you may achieve a noticeable reduction in your taxes.**

Contact Jim at [jkirkpatrick@utexas.edu](mailto:jkirkpatrick@utexas.edu) for more info.

**\*Note: May 15 is the deadline to file your HCAD protest!**