



# EASTWOOD VOICE



The Monthly Newsletter of the Eastwood Civic Association

June 2004

## RESTAURANT ROOTS IN THE HISTORIC EAST END

BY JENA MORENO

Something's cooking in kitchens in the East End.

And if history is any indication, family recipes cherished and used today by cooks in East End homes could wind up on the menus of some of Houston's future restaurants.

The East End is filled with landmark restaurants such as the original Ninfa's on Navigation Boulevard and the newest location of Doneraki in the recently refurbished Gulfgate shopping center. But while those restaurants brought their dishes to the East End, other restaurateurs were raised in the area and cooked their dishes at historic homes here.

Some people say most Houston restaurants can trace their roots back to the city's East Side. That's certainly true of many Italian restaurants in Houston.

Back in the first half of the century, many Italian families with the last name of Mandola and Butera moved into the Eastwood neighborhood. They and other families in the area would go on to launch local restaurants, many of which still exist and thrive.

These days, Houston diners can also enjoy chicken marsala and cheese enchiladas served at restaurants such

as Carrabba's Italian Grill and Loma Linda, born of owners from this area.

Johnny Carrabba grew up in the East End and in 1986 co-founded Carrabba's, with his uncle Damian Mandola, owner of downtown's Damian's Cucina Italian. Carrabba and Mandola are also related to Frank Mandola, owner of Mandola's Deli on Leeland Street, another East End institution.

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Eastwood Civic Association Meeting • June 7, 2004 • 7:30 - 8:30 pm • Cape Center

SPEAKERS: TOMMIE GARZA, A.S.K. GUN SAFETY & COUNCIL MEMBER ADRIAN GARCIA, CELEBRATORY GUNFIRE

## WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Have you wanted more retail options in our neighborhood? The Houston Business Journal has run two articles on our area in the last month. The first, "Retail to replace landmark industrial complex," reported on the planned retail redevelopment project at the former Stewart & Stevenson manufacturing site on Harrisburg.

In May, the Journal ran an article on the Enclave at Lawndale, the Perry Homes project. Houston's East End is home to over 85,000 people in a 16 square mile area. In a list of US cities with the greatest employment numbers, the East End would rank number 28, above San Antonio, Fort Worth, Miami, and Salt Lake City. Our historic established neighborhoods are welcoming newcomers. Developers are redeveloping old warehouses as condominiums and using old manufacturing sites for home and retail development.

On page three of this month's Voice is a short survey. Please give us your input. Anything not covered by the survey can also be sent to the association by email (eastwood@eastwood-houston.com) or by mail to PO Box 9542, Houston, Texas 77261.

## BLESSED SACRAMENT DEMOLITION

The Diocese of Galveston-Houston has halted plans to renovate the former Blessed Sacrament School, 4015 Sherman, in the East End. Parish leaders raised \$1 million for the restoration. The Diocese is also shelving an architectural plan for the renovation created at no charge by the UH College of Architecture, which found the 94-year-old building to be structurally sound.

The Diocese will demolish the historic structure and build a replacement within three months resulting in a modern intrusion adjacent to Blessed Sacrament's historic sanctuary and rectory.

Contact the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance at info@ghpa.org or call 713.216.5000 to find out what you can do to help save the building. You can also write the Diocese of Galveston-Houston at 1700 San Jacinto, Houston, TX 77001-0907



## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

### LANTRIP ELEMENTARY UPDATE

Plans are moving along quickly on this major construction project. Preliminary elevation drawings were shown to Lantrip parents and teachers, East District Superintendent Thelma Garza, HISD Board Trustee Diane Davila, Eastwood Historic Society President Bill England



(Eastwood), ECA President Steve Parker (WA Kirby) and other HISD representatives. HISD and the architect will be bringing the plans to our August 2nd meeting. Below is one of the preliminary drawings. And don't worry, the large oak trees are staying. They were left out so you can



see the building. The first grade wing has also changed to save another large oak tree. Also, notice that the cupolas on the towers which are currently missing are to be replaced. Plans still call for the construction bids to take place in November 2004. Construction could be completed as early as January 2006.

### RESTAURANT ROOTS IN THE HISTORIC EAST END

Before Carrabba grew up to become a local legend, Thad Gilliam, owner of Mexican restaurant Loma Linda, often loaded young Johnny and other neighborhood children into his station wagon to take the boys to Little League practice and games. Thad Gilliam also coached the boys, including his own son, in the Dixie Little League back in the late 1960s.

"Many people have evolved out of the East End," said Joyce Gilliam, Thad Gilliam's wife.

And while many restaurateurs have opened their businesses in other, more commercial areas, the Gilliams have never strayed far from the East End.

Joyce, now 68, and Thad, now 70, were each brought to the area when they were children and their parents moved here. They later met at a church dance as youngsters and both graduated Milby High School.

Nearly half century ago, Joyce and Thad Gilliam were just a young couple trying to make ends meet by running a paper route. One day, Thad Gilliam returned home from his paper route excited because a woman on his route was so fed up with her restaurant that she offered to give it away to anyone who would take over the payments.

The Gilliams took over the tiny, 26-seat lunch counter on Telephone Road and called it the Silver Spoon, making the eatery a family affair. Thad Gilliam's mother helped out as a waitress while Joyce Gilliam made pies. Back then, a hot lunch with homemade bread cost 65 cents.

The couple later changed the name of the restaurant to Gilliam's Good Food and served dishes such as chicken fried steak and biscuits.

While they enjoyed their own dishes, the couple also liked frequenting other restaurants in southeast Houston.

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One of their favorite Tex-Mex restaurants was a chain called Loma Linda, and they often visited the location on Griggs Road.

"We would go over there because we loved the Mexican food," recalls Joyce Gilliam. "It was so good."

But 20 years ago, the Gilliams discovered the chain would be shutting down and they knew they had to act fast. "We can't let these recipes die," Joyce Gilliam remembered saying.


So the couple took over the restaurant's recipes and changed their own restaurant's concept from one of a "working man's diner" to a Mexican restaurant they called Fiesta Loma Linda. They recently dropped the Fiesta part of the name and simply call their restaurant Loma Linda. Today, they serve the same favorite recipes as the original Loma Linda, such as the puffed crispy taco drenched in queso and the beef enchiladas.

Loma Linda now seats 200 diners and has become an East End institution.

"Not bad for an old paper boy," says Thad Gilliam.

The Gilliams have also become a local institution, investing in not only expanding their restaurant but in the neighborhood by buying homes in need of care and remodeling them, later selling the properties or renting them.

"We just love the East Side," said Joyce Gilliam. "It's got so much flavor to it."

And she says she's happy so many young people are moving into the area. Many of those residents returning to the homes owned by their parents or grandparents, many of the people who were Loma Linda customers in the past, she said. So the restaurant has served generations of Houston families, said Joyce Gilliam. 

**HPD SOUTH CENTRAL** 🌿

The construction of the new South Central station has started. Our current station is in an old, leaky school building. The first phase is to construct a new parking lot. The old parking lot is where the first phase of the building will start. The contract for demolition and construction gives 485 days from the mid-May start for it to be completed.

HPD would also like to remind you to write down your serial numbers and to engrave IDs on your personal property. It not only helps in returning property, but aids the police in convicting burglars.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN** 🌿

The Houston-Galveston Area Council's Transportation Policy Council will hold two meetings on the 2025 plan on May 28th and June 25th with a final vote expected on June 25th. Both meetings will be at 9:30 a.m. at 3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd floor, Room A. City Council will hold a meeting on the RTP June 10th at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chambers. Review the plan at [www.2025plan.org](http://www.2025plan.org). View maps by Council District at [www.livablehouston.org](http://www.livablehouston.org).

**LAND ASSEMBLY REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** 🌿

LARA is preparing an Urban Redevelopment Plan scheduled to be completed by July 19th. Two public workshops will be held. June 12th at Finnigan Park, 4900 Providence, and June 26th at Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive. Both Saturday meetings will be from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

**EL CENTRO DE CORAZON-EASTWOOD HEALTH CENTER** 🌿

The Harris County Hospital District has received \$1.5 million in grants from Houston Endowment Inc. Three existing Federally Qualified Health Centers, including El Centro de Corazon on Navigation and 11 new centers will be developed, The Eastwood Health Center is one of the new centers. Together the new centers are expected to serve 110,000 and bring \$22 million in federal and other resources to the county.

**TEXAS PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING** 🌿

In Fall 2003, State Representative Rick Noriega (*Eastwood*) chaired a series of statewide hearings on how to improve the state's system of funding public education. What emerged from the testimony in the seven cities was that equity must be improved, weights must accurately reflect true costs, and that the citizens of Texas are willing to pay their fair share. It was also clear that homeowners want and need relief from ever-increasing property taxes. The full report of the MALC Task Force on Public School Finance can be viewed and downloaded at [www.malc.org](http://www.malc.org) or by contacting Representative Noriega's office.

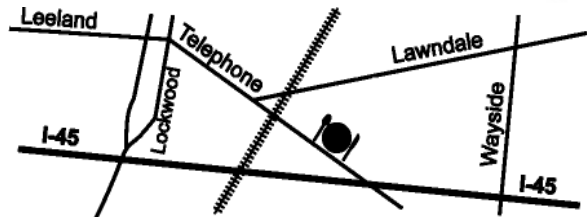
The Eastwood Voice is a monthly publication of the Eastwood Civic Association. If you have story ideas or comments, or would like to help pass out copies to your neighbors, please contact us at PO Box 9542, Houston, TX 77023 or at [eastwood.voice@eastwood-houston.com](mailto:eastwood.voice@eastwood-houston.com).

THE ORIGINAL  
**LOMA LINDA**  
*Mexican Restaurant*



OPEN 7 DAYS

2111 Telephone Rd., Houston, Texas 77023  
Phone (713)924-6074 • Fax (713) 926-3676



*Free Appetizer  
With a Purchase  
of an Entree*

(1 per Table of 4)

Expires: 9/1/2004

*Happy  
Hour*

*3 - 6 pm*

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

- Houston Police Dispatch (non-emergency) 713.884.3131
- HPD South Central Substation 713.651.8100
- HPD Navigation Storefront 713.238.2282
- Harris Co. Constable, Prec. 6 713.923.9156
- Constable Polk St. Storefront 713.921.0236
- US Congressman Gene Green 713.330.0761
- Texas State Senator Mario Gallegos 713.928.7575
- Texas State Representative Rick Noriega 713.649.6563
- City Councilwoman Carol Alvarado 713.247.2011
- Graffiti Abatement 713.928.9916
- Union Pacific RR National Police to report parked trains blocking streets 888.877.7267
- City of Houston Service Helpline 311

**HOMES FOR SALE**

Have friends or relatives you want to join you in a great neighborhood setting? Here is a partial list of homes, by subdivision, listed for sale at press time. (\*new on list)

- |                       |                 |                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Broadmoor</b>      | <b>Dixie</b>    | 4406 Rusk                 |
| 1407 Elliott          | 4920 Curtin     | 4721 Rusk*                |
| 1510 Lawson           | <b>Eastlawn</b> | 4809 Walker               |
| 1453 Lombardy         | 1216 Gustav     | <b>Eastwood Oaks</b>      |
| 1561 Lombardy         | 5011 Lindsay    | 5006 Curtin               |
| 1443 Munger           | <b>Eastwood</b> | <b>Houston City St RR</b> |
| 1416 Scharpe          | 4416 Bell       | 4116 Rusk*                |
| 1510 Scharpe          | 4321 Jefferson  | <b>Lawndale</b>           |
| 1524 Telephone        | 4330 Jefferson* | 5129 Claremont            |
| 1528 Telephone        | 4531 McKinney*  | 5206 Claremont*           |
| <b>Dissen Heights</b> | 4610 McKinney   | 5310 Claremont            |
| 5303 Pease*           | 4303 Pease*     | <b>Woodleigh</b>          |
|                       |                 | 4018 Dallas               |

# CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAY 30	31 MEMORIAL DAY	JUNE 1	2	3	4 Heavy Trash Area B	5
6	7 7:00 ECA Board Mtg. 7:30 Civic Club Mtg. Cape Center	8 6:30 SuperNeighborhood	9	10	11 Area A Trash set out	12
13	14 Heavy Trash Area A FLAG DAY	15 7:00 PIP Meeting	16	17	18	19
20 FATHER'S DAY	21 FIRST DAY OF SUMMER	22	23	24	25 Area B Trash set out	26
27	28	29	30	JULY 1	2 Heavy Trash Area B	3
4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 NO JULY CIVIC MEETING	6 Baseball All-Star Game on July 13, 2004	7	8	9	10 Area B Trash set out

Heavy Trash Area A: Second Monday, West of Lockwood (towards Cullen) and South of Telephone (towards I-45)  
 Heavy Trash Area B: First Friday, East of Lockwood (towards Wayside) and North of Telephone (towards Polk)

## EASTWOOD RETAIL SURVEY

What retail amenities (such as coffee house, dry cleaner, bookstore) would you like to see in our area. As there is a wide variety within each category of retail shops, please be specific regarding the type you prefer.

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Please rank the following grocery stores for their selection and quality. Also let us know how often you shop there and how much you spend during your visit. Then, let us know if you would like to see a new major grocery store in Eastwood. If so, what would be your preference and why.

Rank	Store	Visits per month	\$ spent per visit	Selection (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)					Quality (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)				
-----	HEB Harrisburg	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	HEB Gulfgate	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	Kroger Cullen	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	Kroger Montrose	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	Fiesta Wayside	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	Sellers Brothers I-45	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	Randall's Midtown	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
-----	-----	-----	-----	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
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