

*Since March 1957 - Edition 68 July 2025 Issue*

# HOUSTON LAKER

*Happy 4th of July*



*Thank you Keith Carey and Phil Otte for putting up a new flag.*

## 2025 TRASH & RECYCLING

### DATES

City Trash and Recycling Service are handled by Republic Services. For assistance with your receptacles, issues with pick-up or questions about large items contact customer service at 816-254-1470 or republicservices.com.

Trash and Recycling is picked up every Wednesday starting July 2, 2025. They need to be at the curb/edge of street by 6am. Leave room for the arm of the truck to pick up and return the receptacles without causing damage to vehicles, fences, etc.

### 2025 Holidays:

**January 1<sup>st</sup>** New Years Day – Pick up changed to Thursday January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**May 26<sup>th</sup>** Memorial Day – Pick up Changed to Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup>.

**July 4<sup>th</sup>** Independence Day – No Change pick up will be on Wednesday July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**September 1<sup>st</sup>** Labor Day – Pick up changed to Thursday September 4<sup>th</sup>

**November 27<sup>th</sup>** Thanksgiving Day –No Change pick up will be on Wednesday November 26<sup>th</sup>

**December 25<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Day –No Change pickup will be on Wednesday December 24<sup>th</sup>

**Recycling pickup  
is now every  
Wednesday  
Starting July 2, 2025**

### Houston Lake Cookbook

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Houston Lake Cookbooks is available for \$3.00 each. Email Mary Head at [maryjewel40@gmail.com](mailto:maryjewel40@gmail.com) or call (816) 741-5639

### Houston Lake History

**Book** 76 pages of the History of Houston Lake. \$5.00 each. Email Mary Head at [maryjewel40@gmail.com](mailto:maryjewel40@gmail.com) or call (816)741-5639

## *Lake Life July Events*

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Trash and Recycling Pickup day**

**4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day**

**5<sup>th</sup> - Houston Lake Annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration will be on Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup>.**

**9<sup>th</sup> – City of Houston Lake City Meeting at 6:30pm - City Hall**

**21<sup>st</sup> – Venetian Gardens Homes Association meeting 6:30pm. - City Hall. Members can pick up their 2025 wristband at city hall before the meeting. The wristbands are FREE if your dues are paid. To get your 2025 Wristbands sooner call Homes Association Board Member, Mary Head at 816-741-5639 or email her at [maryjewel40@gmail.com](mailto:maryjewel40@gmail.com) .**

**Guests of Residents must have that Residents 2025 Wristband with them when they are on or around the lake and on Homes Association property.**

## **Houston Lake City Officials**

**City Hall – (816) 741-0644**

Mayor – Sarah Schofield  
[mayor@houstonlake.gov](mailto:mayor@houstonlake.gov)

City Clerk – Lisa A. Shepard  
[cityclerk@houstonlake.gov](mailto:cityclerk@houstonlake.gov)

City Collector – Kathryn Kreider  
[citycollector@houstonlake.gov](mailto:citycollector@houstonlake.gov)

City Treasurer – Kay Honeycutt  
[khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov](mailto:khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov)

Custodian of Records –  
[cityclerk@houstonlake.gov](mailto:cityclerk@houstonlake.gov)

## **Board of Aldermen**

Sarah Loring  
[sloring@houstonlake.gov](mailto:sloring@houstonlake.gov)

Ashley Fuglestad  
[afuglestad@houstonlake.gov](mailto:afuglestad@houstonlake.gov)

Jesse Beshears  
[jbeshears@houstonlake.gov](mailto:jbeshears@houstonlake.gov)

Marsha Duncan  
[mduncan@houstonlake.gov](mailto:mduncan@houstonlake.gov)

**As most of the City Officials and HOA Officers have full-time jobs, phone calls may not be answered/returned as quickly as a text or email.**

**City Hall is open during meetings, events and by appointment.**

## **Venetian Gardens Homes**

### **Association Officers**

President – Pam Freese  
(816) 726-4455  
[venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com](mailto:venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com)

Vice President – Frank Wilson  
(816) 520-3931  
[imua62@gmail.com](mailto:imua62@gmail.com)

Secretary – Monica Beshears  
(573) 356-4118  
[weety30@gmail.com](mailto:weety30@gmail.com)

Treasurer/Lake Tags – Don Miller  
(918) 633-4109  
[drmiller5@icloud.com](mailto:drmiller5@icloud.com)

Board Member at Large – Mary Head  
(816) 741-5639  
[maryjewel40@gmail.com](mailto:maryjewel40@gmail.com)

**In case of a Police, Fire, or Medical  
Emergency – Dial 911**

**Police Non-Emergency & Animal  
Control Platte County Sheriff  
(816) 858-3521**

**Fire Non-Emergency Riverside Fire  
Department (816) 372-9024**

**Grinder Pump Haynes Equipment  
Services (913) 782-5013**

## Venetian Gardens Homes Association

### Don't Forget Your Missouri Fishing License and a Houston Lake "2025 Wristband"!!

Lake Residents from the age of 16 through 64 need a Missouri Fishing License and a Houston Lake 2025 Wristband in order to fish in Houston Lake. Residents 65 and over need only a 2022 Wristband.

#### **ABSOLUTELY NO FISHING IN THE BEACH AREA.**

To get your 2025 Wristbands call Homes Association Board Member Mary Head @ 816-741-5639.

The Wristbands are FREE if your Homes Association dues are paid.

Guests of Residents must have that Residents 2025 Wristband with them when they are on or around the lake and on Homes Association property.

***ATTENTION Your Lake Dues must be paid to use the lake facilities for swimming, fishing, boating or other recreational purposes even if you have lake front property. Non-paying members may not picnic on Homes Association property (for example, the beach, Mayor's park or the peninsula) you must have your 2025 Lake wristband with you when using the lake. This includes using the HOA boat dock at the Boat ramp.***

***NO FISHING if you have not paid your HOA dues.***

Please use your fishing gear safely! Cutting your line loose and leaving long lengths of it in the water can harm our wildlife and our pets, especially if there is still a hook attached.

## Homes Association Rules and Regulations

1. Lake tags will be issued to lot owners who have paid their HOA dues in full. Lot owners will be responsible for the wristbands issued to their property.
  2. Lake Wristband must be worn and visible for everyone on Venetian Gardens HOA property at all times.
  3. Private property. No trespassing. Residents, lot owners and guests only. Violators will be prosecuted.
  4. Property owners are responsible for the conduct and actions of their guest at all times.
  5. No DIVING or FISHING from the Swimming Docks.
  6. No. swimming after 9:00p.m.
  7. Alcohol will not be allowed in the beach area.
  8. Animals will not be allowed in the beach area.
  9. Fishing will NOT be allowed ANYWHERE beyond the gate at the swim beach.
  10. No disorderly conduct.
  11. All Rules and Regulations of the Missouri State Conservation Commission will apply.
  12. No trot lines, jug lines or unattended fishing lines are permitted.
  13. All Terrain Vehicles, motor bikes, motor cycles and motor scooters are prohibited from operating on Homes Association property.
- PLEASE NOTE: Houston Lake is dedicated to preventing the spreading of Zebra Mussels. If you want to use any watercraft on Houston Lake, it must be registered with the HOA and tagged (even if it has been in the water for years). If you wish to launch any NEW watercraft on the lake, it MUST be inspected and approved by the HOA. Please contact Pam Freese at 816-726-4455 or email her at [venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com](mailto:venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com). This process will take at least 10 days, so plan accordingly. You must also have 2025 lake wristband, watercraft safety equipment (life vest) and adhere to lake rules. This applies to NEW boaters. However, safety equipment applies to ALL boaters.***

# Houston Lake Community

## Garden Update

Its salad time! Thanks to Jennifer Heese the lettuce, radishes, chives and chard are ready to harvest. We have two kinds of cucumbers coming soon. Jamie planted an Asian type and Kathryn a smaller version.

The tomatoes, peppers, squash and zucchini have really grown rapidly from all the nice rain we have had.

And the green beans and the sugar snap peas are ready to pick. We spaced the growth of the beans so they wouldn't come in all at once.

A big "Thank you" to Ethan Dean, Tony Branson and Mike Hallauer for adding the new support beams to the garden structure. Great job guys!!

As soon as the weather cools down some I'll be doing some much needed weeding in the first bed. Calling all weed whisperers'!

Again I must remind all of you that this is your garden. Please feel free to harvest anything you want or need for your family. And don't forget the people that can't get out....pick a bag for them.

If you have any questions or helpful hints please give me a call or text me...

Marsha Duncan [mduncannkc@aol.com](mailto:mduncannkc@aol.com) 816.419.5051

See you at the garden....



## *Houston Lake Community Garden*

*In late February of 2009, the Venetian Gardens Home Association generously dedicated a portion of their land on the peninsula to the Houston Lake Community Garden. By March, The City of Houston Lake granted a building permit to start its construction. Residents Bob King, Andrew Garcia, Bill Winton and Mayor Michael Hallauer volunteered and completed the construction out of 80% recycled material and donations from area businesses and residents.*

*The Garden is entirely funded and maintained by volunteers and donations. The harvest is shared by all Houston Lake residents whether they donated, volunteered or not.*

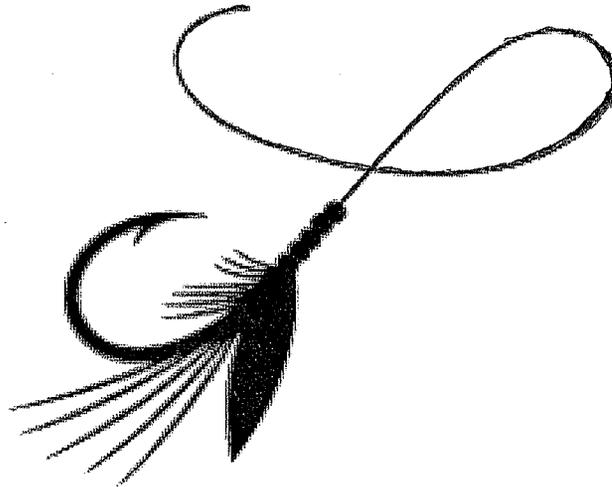
*Through the years the Garden has been a great gathering place to meet neighbors, share gardening information or just have a few quiet moments to enjoy our great community's surroundings.*

*We invite you to join us in nurturing and growing our community garden. Whether you have a green thumb or are just curious, your participation is crucial to the success of this shared space. Come plant seeds of friendship and watch our garden flourish together.*

*Visit us on Facebook: Houston Lake Missouri Community Garden*

**From Pam Freese, President  
Venetian Gardens Homes Association**

Included in this month's Houston Laker is a draft of the newest proposed version of Official Regulations which govern the use of Houston Lake. This is a longstanding document which the board has asked an Oversight Committee, consisting of: Bobbi Baker-Hughes, Frank Wilson, Mike Hallauer, Kay Honeycutt, and Lisa Shepard, to review and update. *[Thank you, Oversight Committee!]* The board intends to consider approving this version at our next VGHA meeting in July. Prior to that approval, we ask Houston Lake residents to review these Official Regulations and offer any comments by sending them to me at [pamelafreese@gmail.com](mailto:pamelafreese@gmail.com)  
Thank you.



**VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION  
OFFICIAL REGULATIONS**

June 2025

These regulations have been adopted by the Venetian Gardens Homes Association (VGHA) for the benefit of Houston Lake owners, residents, and their guests. Following these regulations ensures the utmost enjoyment and safety of our facilities by eligible persons and their guests. These regulations may be changed anytime as reasonably deemed necessary by the VGHA Board of Directors.

**ID Bracelets for Houston Lake Lot Owners, Residents, and/or Their Guests**

- Only lot owners who have paid the current year's maintenance assessment are issued ID bracelets annually. ~~Two (2) ID bracelets are issued to each lot owner regardless of the number of lots owned, except for those owners who have developed additional lots for rental property, in which case two additional ID bracelets are issued for each house. Owners are responsible for all ID bracelets issued for their property.~~
- ID bracelets are color coded and the color changes annually. A current ID bracelet is required to use the lake, or its facilities. Previous year's ID bracelets are obsolete and void.
- ID bracelets will be worn by all those eligible to use the beach facilities, for fishing, and for boating. This ensures anyone using the lake is readily identifiable.
- All guests at the beach must be accompanied by a resident of the lake, a non-resident lot owner, or a member of their immediate family. An ID bracelet shall be worn by the resident, non-resident lot owner, or their immediate family.
- Lot owners, residents, or their immediate family members are not required to accompany fishing or boating guests. However, each fishing or boating guest must wear their host's ID bracelet.

**Swimming at the Houston Lake Swim Beach**

- For reasons of health and safety, swimming should be confined to the designated swim beach area only. The water at the beach is regularly tested for safe water quality. Swimmers are reminded that fishermen have equal rights past the floating dock.
- No swimming is allowed after 9:00 PM in the swim beach area.
- No fishing is allowed within the swim beach area.
- Dogs are not allowed in the swim beach area.
- Lot owners are responsible for the conduct and actions of their guests at the swim beach.
- If you expect more than six (6) guests at the swim beach at any one time, it is required that you get permission from two (2) members of the VGHA Board of Directors.
- All lot owners and their guests should keep the swim beach, lake, and shoreline free of trash, bottles, cans, etc.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted at the swim beach.
- Please avoid the use of profane language and the playing of loud music.
- All those using the swim beach should observe and be aware of any suspicious activity. Please report suspicious activity directly to the Platte County Sheriff's Department by calling **816-858-2424**.

## Use of Houston Lake

- All watercraft, whether electric or gas, and other non-self-propelled watercraft, must be inspected, approved, and registered with the VGHA. A number will be assigned. That number will be permanently displayed on the stern of the watercraft.
- If a new watercraft is to be introduced on the lake, it must be dry docked for two weeks prior to being launched. If a previously inspected watercraft has been used in any other body of water, it must be dry docked for two weeks prior to being re-launched into Houston Lake.
- Lot owners and their guests must follow all current Missouri state regulations and laws for fishing in the lake, unless otherwise posted. The Missouri state regulations are located at [mdc.mo.gov/fishing/regulations](http://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/regulations).
- All regulations of the Missouri State Conservation Commission will apply to the entire lake and its shoreline.
- Outboard motors may only be used on the lake between sunrise and sunset.
- Maximum horsepower permissible on the lake will be 7 ½ HP. After June 2025, only 5 HP motors, or less, are permissible. This regulation is subject to change at the discretion of the VGHA Board of Directors without prior notice.
- Operators of watercraft are to keep away from swimmers and fishermen who would be endangered by the watercraft or disturbed by its action.
- Owners of motors are reminded that Missouri State Laws require all motors to be licensed with the State of Missouri.
- Only watercraft and motors owned by residents of the City of Houston Lake may be used on the lake.
- The maximum speed permissible on the lake will be five (5) miles per hour. All of Houston Lake is a No Wake Zone.
- Lot owners delinquent in their assessments, or their renters, may not use the lake.
- No trot lines, jug lines, or unattended fishing lines are permitted.
- All-terrain vehicles (ATV), motor bikes, motorcycles, motor scooters and all similar vehicles are prohibited from operating on VGHA property.

## Are YOU Interested in Becoming a Houston Lake Alderman?

The Mayor, City Council, City Staff, and our entire community are so appreciative of Ashley Fuglestad's service to our community as an Alderman over the last few years (especially as she also served as Mayor Pro Tem for over a year when our community was without an elected Mayor).

Recently, Ashley decided to step down and she resigned her position as Alderman.

**Are you interested in serving our community?** In between elections, an Alderman position can be filled by appointment. If you would like to be considered, please contact Mayor Sarah Schofield, via email, at [mayor@houstonlake.gov](mailto:mayor@houstonlake.gov) and offer your name for consideration.

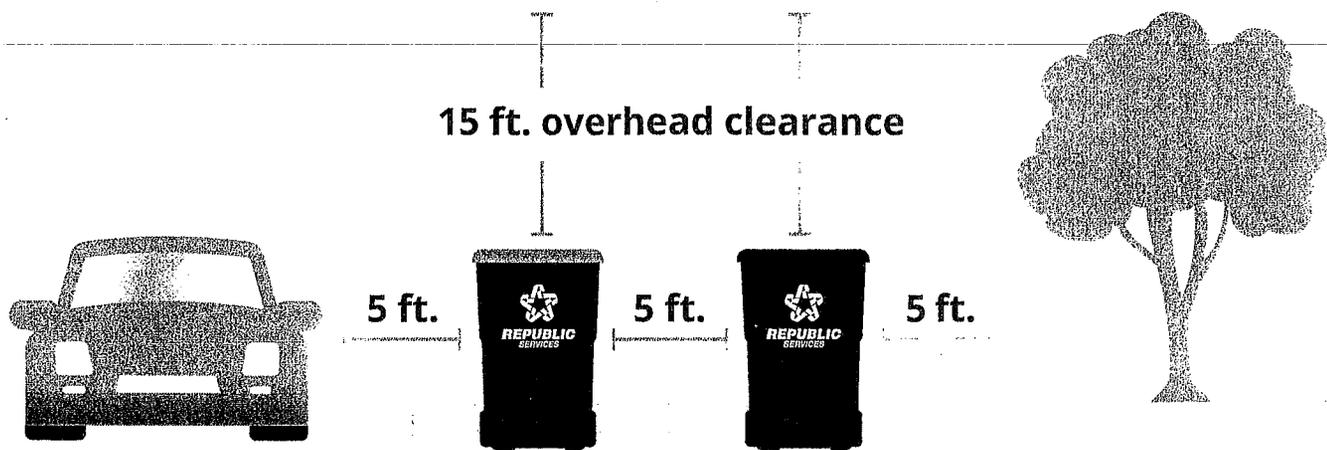
**Alderman Qualifications** – You must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, a citizen of the United States, and an inhabitant and resident of the City for one (1) year prior to your appointment.

## Beginning, July 2 Recycle Pickup EVERY Wednesday

Beginning, Wednesday, July 2, 2025, each household in Houston Lake may place one trash bin and one recycle bin at their curb every week. Please make certain there is at least 5 feet between each bin and there is 5 feet between any bin and an obstacle (such as a car, fence, etc.) so that the pickup trucks have easy access to lift the bins into their trucks.

If your household requires more than one trash bin and/or more than one recycle bin to be placed at the curb, the monthly additional charge each resident will pay directly to Republic Services of Kansas City is \$10 per month per additional bin needed. Please contact Republic directly at **816-254-1470** to set up any additional service you require for your residence.

# Proper Cart Placement Is the Key to Automated Service



- Have the cart at the curb by 6 a.m. on your collection day.
- Place the cart at least 5 feet from any object – like a car, tree, pole, fire hydrant, mailbox, electrical box, or cable box – so the automated arm can reach your cart.
- Please maintain this same distance of 5 feet between recycling and waste carts.
- Don't lean anything against the cart.
- Don't place your cart under a tree.
- Place carts 1 foot from the curb or edge of the street.
- Place the cart with the arrows on the lid pointing toward the street and the handle toward your house.
- Remember to close the lid of the cart.
- Please don't allow children to play in or around the carts. Our trucks use mechanical arms to pick up the recycling and waste carts.



**REPUBLIC**  
SERVICES

Sustainability in Action

# Online Watercraft Registration Form

**Boaters:** ALL watercraft including kayaks must be registered with the Venetian Gardens Homes Association. To do so, please visit [vgha.community](http://vgha.community) Select the online registration form below and enter your information. It will automatically generate an email to the VGHA Board. You will then be contacted to arrange an inspection of your boat(s). Once it passes an inspection, you will be assigned a number which is to be permanently affixed to the stern of the boat.

**Please wear your 2025 wristband while enjoying the lake.**

Maximum Horsepower permissible on the lake will be 7 ½ HP. It is recommended that 3 ½ or 5 HP be used. The maximum speed permissible on the lake by outboards will be FIVE (5) miles per HOUR. NO WAKE.



**PLEASE NOTE: Houston Lake is dedicated to preventing the spread of Zebra Mussels. The Boat ramp is closed.**

No watercraft will be allowed in the lake without being inspected. This process may take 10 days so please plan accordingly. If you want to launch your watercraft (boats, kayaks, canoes, pontoons, etc.) into our lake you must contact Pam Freese at [venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com](mailto:venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com) even if you have lake front property to launch your watercraft from, you must have it inspected and registered. Now if the watercraft has not left Houston Lake, it does not need to be inspected but it does have to be registered. Watercraft safety equipment (life vests) and adhere to lake rules. This applies to NEW boaters. However, safety equipment applies to ALL boaters.

**Completed forms can be put in the HOA mail box at City Hall.**

Today, scientists know that zebra mussels can cause increases in toxic blue-green algae, including Microsystems, which produces a poison that causes liver damage when ingested by humans and wildlife. Decaying algae can make waters uninhabitable by causing low levels of dissolved oxygen that result in fish kills.

Zebra mussels have been found in Missouri in Smithville Lake, Lake Taneycomo, Bull Shoals Lake, Lake of the Ozarks, the Missouri River and the Mississippi River. They also occur in Lake Lotawana in the Kansas City area, the lower Meramec River. Invasive zebra mussels now widespread at Truman Lake.



## City Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, the 14th day of May, 2025

Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 NW Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151

The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 6:31 PM.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Sarah Schofield, Alderman Marsha Duncan, Alderman Jesse Beshears, and Alderman Sarah Loring. Alderman Ashley Fuglestad was absent. A quorum was established. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Schofield.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Duncan moved to approve the 04/16/2025 City Council Meeting minutes as presented. Beshears 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Fire Department Report - Keith Payne, Assistant Fire Chief, reported no calls in the last 30 days. He noticed tonight two fire hydrants that had been hit and he has notified Missouri American Water to fix them.

Sheriff's Report - Deputy James Coleman reported eight calls for service in April for a total of 33.22 hours: 1 check for welfare, 1 domestic disturbance, 1 noise disturbance, 1 ordinance violation, 1 sexual assault (it was determined this was not at Houston Lake - listed on the Houston Lake report in error), 2 suspicious person-vehicle, and 1 trespass. This deputy patrols at night. Several residents shared their concerns. There was a lot of concern expressed regarding speeding in the community.

### PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mary Head reported a resident suggested the playground be fenced. The City is looking at traffic calming options throughout Houston Lake. Katherine Stockbauer reported MODot is coming to regrade on Houston Lake Dr to address rain water that crosses the road. Bobbi Baker-Hughes mentioned pot holes - Schofield indicated this may be addressed before the end of this fiscal year but, if not, in next year's budget. Monica Beshears suggested more police visibility in the community at night.

### VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA) REPORT

Mary Head reported no meeting scheduled in May. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 16. The deadline to submit news of any kind for the June edition of the Houston Laker is May 21, 2025. The City and the VGHA are scheduling a joint meeting.

PERMITS - None

#### FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Reports dated 04/30/25 were accepted with a correction to page 2 of the Financial Report (one General Fund CD listed had already been cashed so is removed from the report). Sewer CD - affirmed that Council still wished to cash the CD, place the funds into the General Fund, and continue to investigate other reinvestment options. The nearly \$11,000 needs to be memorized to be used for Sewer only. Grinder Pump - City is experiencing a number of grinder pump failures at the end of this fiscal year. Amend Budget for 2024-2025 - Beshears moved to transfer \$7,700 from the Road Fund back to the General Fund. Loring 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval. Loring moved to amend the 2024-2025 Budget by redistributing \$9,600 to Park Maintenance. Duncan 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval. Beshears moved to amend the 2024-2025 Budget by transferring \$10,000 from the Grinder Pump Reserve to the 2024-2025 Budget to increase funds available to pay current expenses anticipated. Loring 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval. The amended budget will be published in the Houston Laker. Discussion of Budget for 2025-2026 - discussion; more info needs to be collected to continue on the draft of the budget. A separate budget working meeting is now scheduled for Wednesday, May 28 at 6:30 PM.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Storm Water Grant - Beshears reported the grant application was not approved but we have not received the official notification. It was recommended by phone from Platte Co that we apply through Parks and Recreation for a bridge grant in the fall. We may be able to appeal the decision once we receive the notice of non-approval.

Mowing - City received a bid for mowing the City's property from Dawn Hoover.

#### NEW BUSINESS - None

#### REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

Shepard reminded all to submit any expenses before the end of the fiscal year. She suggested we need "Private Lake" signs. She reported she is uncomfortable opening the City Hall door when she is at City Hall by herself if she does not know who is requesting entrance. Council discussion regarding nonresidents using the lake and

#### REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Duncan reported earlier in the meeting on mowing. She said the Carey's would like a speed bump at their corner of Adrian. Beshears indicated the mowing is important. He has a concern about drains under the roads. Perhaps the drains can be addressed through a Storm Water grant. Loring thanked the mayor for painting a Houston Lake sign by the walking bridge and reinstalling it. She talked to MODot about the noise from the highway. MODot told her they would not do anything about the noise level unless the highway gets widened. She asked who enforced the noise ordinance sign on the highway. They told her we need to contact local police authorities about enforcement. She reiterated that the walking bridge needs to be a high priority. She indicated she hopes the repair of the spillway will be addressed at the next VGHA meeting. She offered thanks for the spring brush pickup.

## REPORT FROM MAYOR

Schofield thanked Fuglestad for arranging for the spring brush pickup. She reported she and Shepard had gone around the city to review residences that were coming close to code violations regarding grass height and trash. She is attempting to determine nuisance trees. We will be posting the fireworks ordinance in the Houston Laker. She is advocating for a 4th of July celebration at Houston Lake that would include the dedication of the new playground area and thanking Teena Walker-Robin for her work on this project at the event. She hopes residents might step forward to help in planning this event. She is wanting to identify homes in Houston Lake that have been abandoned. Regarding the June meeting - need to vote on a Mayor pro tem and address the Republic contract which expires on June 30. She reports, preliminarily, that the surveys she sent out have so far resulted in suggestions that communication and customer service be improved.

## NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

A working budget meeting will be Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM at City Hall. The next City Council meeting will be Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Schofield adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

*Approved 06/18/2025*

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## Fire Ants by Gene Charles

When Linda and I first moved here to Houston Lake in 1957, we had a neighbor lady who had a son and daughter-in-law that were missionaries in the Belgium Congo. The first time I met the neighbor lady she asked me if I was Mr. Ford? It took me a bit to figure that out. Back when apples were shipped in wooden boxes. I'd ask Linda to bring me boxes from the grocery store (Red X), so I could make things with such as a sort of a lookalike model T Ford that Gary (our son) could ride in. Apparently she had seen the car and was referring to it. I used castors in front for steering. Gary seemed to spend countless hours playing with it. So that was what the Ford she was referring to. I had written "Ford" on it. (A picture of this model T Ford and Gary is included in this story).

We met the missionaries when they were here on furlough. They told us a story that seemed almost unbelievable. A young doctor was out in the bush with some natives when one of them got a wound that needed sewing up. He sent some of them to fetch some guard fire ants. Where he wanted a stitch, he held a guard ant over the cut so it could lock its mandibles across the cut, in effect sewing it up. Then he'd snip off the rest of the ant.

The missionaries moved to Brussels, Belgium after an uprising in the Congo many years ago. Before that, they had offered to arrange for us to visit them in the Congo but I didn't have enough vacation time then. Later they did invite us to visit them in Brussels. So in 1988 we went to Brussels for a visit. They lived in their church's apartment.

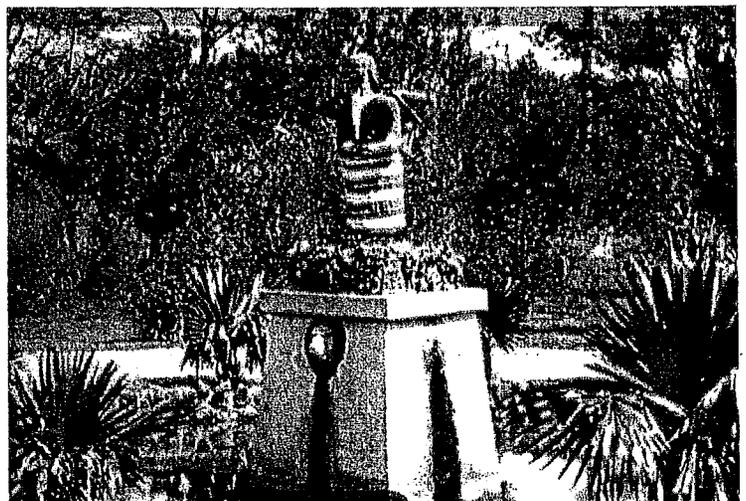
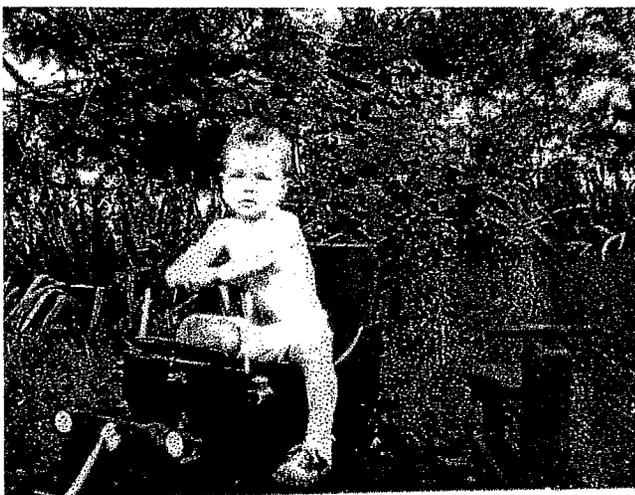
They took us on a tour around Belgium, including to Napoleon's waterloo site and to Bastogne, site of the famous "battle of the bulge" in WWII. As we drove or walked through some of the towns we saw bullet damage on some of the buildings. We stopped at a small café for a coffee break. Ole said nearest he could translate its name in French was "*a cute little sin*".

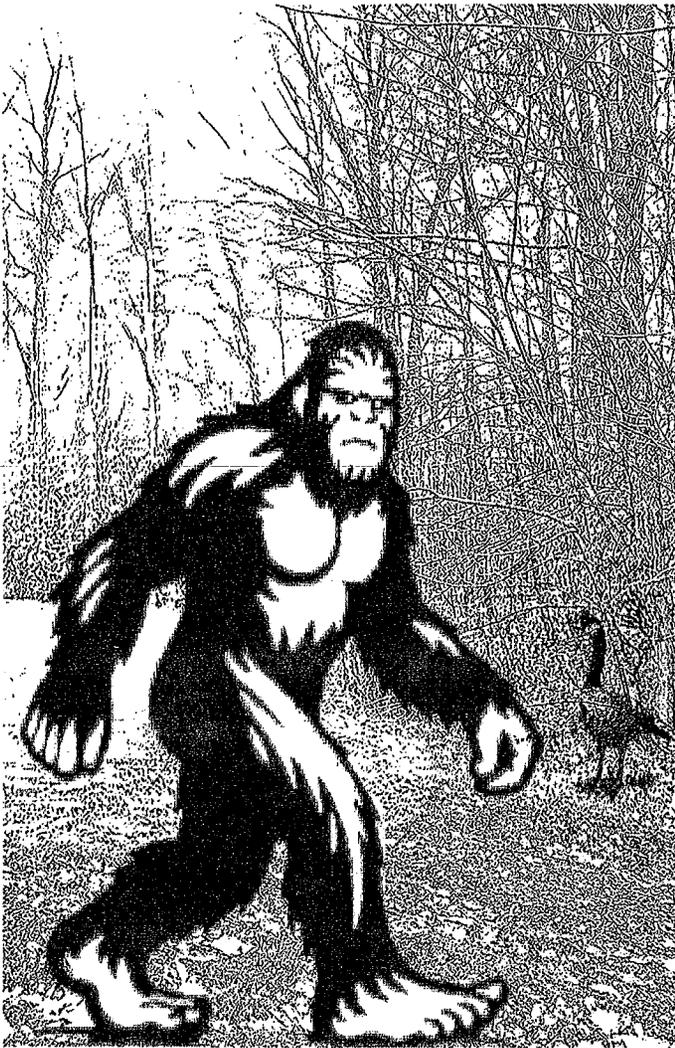
Then we went to Holland. The hotel at Zandvoort where we stayed had the biggest dog I've ever seen. Its bed looked as big as a twin bed mattress. The hotel had two white old fashion type picnic tables with seating on both sides in the lobby to serve breakfast on. The dog would plop its head on the end of a table and roll its eyes back and forth as we ate. Then we toured around Holland some more before heading for Luxemburg. Somewhere along the way traffic was stopped briefly, and then we heard a boom. The workers said they had found a mine. It left me with an eerie feeling to hear a remnant of WWII that had been buried for some 43 years or more.

We explored around a castle and etc. in Luxemburg and spent the night there.

Back at their apartment, the microwave made such a horrible noise that I took it apart and found a fan blade was loose on the shaft. I made a bushing out of aluminum foil but thought something like a pop can would be better. We only found a beer can in the trash, so I made a bushing out of it. Every time they wrote they said my fix still worked.

One day a couple who had been in the Congo with them echoed the story about the fire ants.





## While walking around Houston Lake one day

I was taken by surprise  
by a pair of mischievous eyes.  
Then I heard him growl  
His smell was awfully foul.  
Howling and crashing thru trees  
A Shiver went up my spine about  
knock me to my knees.  
People say I am as crazy as you can get  
what I saw I'll never forget.  
He was big and hairy and that's not all  
had no neck and was ten foot tall.  
He turned and jumped in one leap  
into the woods dark and deep.  
Come what may  
I opened my eyes and started to yawn  
As fast as a humming bird  
Big foot was gone.

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## Water Test at the Beach

The E. Coli (water) Test that taken May 30, 2025 at the beach was **47**. And now the E. Coli (water) test that was taken on June 17, 2025 at the beach is now **8**. Both of these tests are considered Normal, anything under 200 is good. Children under 14 years of age require Adult supervision when using the beach area. This is State Law.

**The swim beach is safe for  
swimming.**

Venetian Gardens Homes Association

## The North Sea and the Baltic Sea merge by "Gene" Charles

Probably the most unforgettable scene that I've witnessed in our travels was at Skagern in the north of Denmark. That is where – the North Sea and the Baltic Sea merge. A small sand bar tapers to a point and we've seen people standing astraddle of it for a photo op of standing in two seas at once. There is only about 15' left of the steeple of a cathedral that is completely buried in sand. We were told that sand, measured in meters, builds up there every year where those two seas meet. Denmark was at the end of a cruise that we took from Dover along the coast of Norway in 2005.

# Mud & Silt Washing Into Houston Lake, MO



# 2016 Houston Lake

## Contacts

- Venetian Gardens Home Association
- President: Pam Freese-816-726-4455
- V-President: Frank Wilson - 816-520-3931
- Secretary: Monica Beshears - 573-356-4118
- Treasurer: Don Miller - 918-633-4109
- Board Member: Marv Head - 816-741-5630

# Will You please help save Houston Lake ?

In 1930 a dam was built at Houston Lake, Missouri 64151. At that time it was a very beautiful lake and was a fantastic place to build a dream home.

By the year 2000 Kansas City, Missouri's Planning Commission decided to do a large per-centage of it's new building North of the Missouri River. Houston Lake is in that area located beside I-29-N and I-635-N.

Houston Lake has a watershed of 1100 acres which means when it rains, a lot of this water is running into the lake. Originally this watershed land was covered with grass land and pasture. All of this land is now in the City Limits of Kansas City, Missouri. This grass land acted as a filter to stop mud, silt and debris from washing into the lake back in the 1930's but today with all of the building that is being done North of the Missouri River there is no more grass land. Houston Lake is receiving tons of mud, garbage and debris washing into what use to be a very beautiful place to live.

In the last 18 years the depth of water at Houston Lake has gone from around 30 feet to between 1 to 6 feet.

Houston Lake is acting as a silt pond for Kansas City, Missouri and the State of Missouri. If the dam at Houston Lake was to wash out all of this silt would end up directly in the Missouri River which is approximately two miles away.

The majority of the residents living here are older. There are only 127 home owners that pay dues to maintain the clean up of the lake. Most of this clean up has been done by volunteers over the years but those thirty and forty year olds that use to do this work are now in their seventys and eighty's. With the high cost of dredging, aeration systems etc., etc. they can not afford to maintain it any longer. It seems that Kansas City, Missouri and the State of Missouri could some how help to take care of this problem!

# Arts Circle of Houston Lake

**Art Delivery Date:** August 9, 2 - 4pm

**Exhibit:** August 16, 1 - 4pm

The **Arts Circle** is honored to announce a call for entries to our 10th Annual Art Show. This year's theme

*Open*

Which means you choose your theme

This is a call to residents for their handmade creations in any medium. Lets see works from new participants and those we haven't seen for a while. So get out your paints, brushes, clay, ink or print out some of those great sunrise/sunset photos from your phone!

## Entry Guidelines

Open to all Houston Lake Residents. All works must be made by the artist. Floor works must be firmly stable and less than 3 sq ft. Wall mounted pieces are limited to 20 lbs, and must be ready to hang.

## Exhibit

Performance works performed only at the exhibit opening.

Physical art remains on display after the opening. Selected pieces displayed Aug - Feb, new pieces displayed March - July.

2025 Arts Circle

Artwork Form (attach to back of art)

Artist:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

Art Work

Theme and title:

Medium (watercolor, yarn, etc):

The Arts Circle will care for your art, however we aren't responsible if damaged

2025 Arts Circle

Artwork Form (attach to back of art)

Artist:

Phone:

Email:

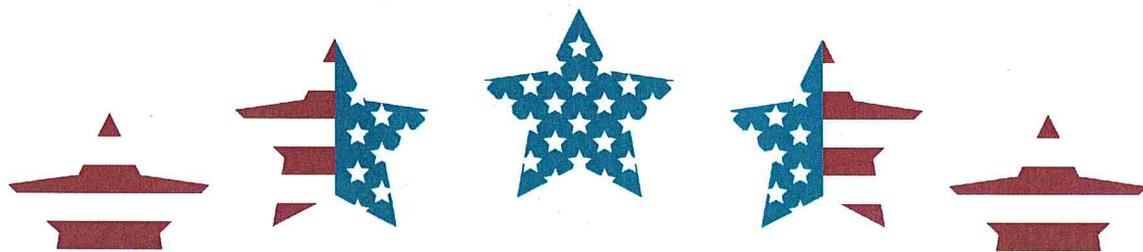
Address:

Art Work

Theme and title:

Medium (watercolor, yarn, etc):

The Arts Circle will care for your art, however we aren't responsible if damaged



**YOU'RE INVITED**  
**HOUSTON LAKE COMMUNITY**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CELEBRATION**  
**Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup> at City Hall**

- 10am Kids Activities with the Art Circle \*bring a t-shirt and your bike to decorate
- 11am Balloon Animals with Todd
- 12:30 Bike Parade \*Adrian will be closed at bridge to Edgewood
- 12:45 Playground Dedication
- 1pm Potluck Lunch Drinks, Hamburgers and Hotdogs provided by the City and Venetian Gardens Homes Association \*Bring a side dish or dessert to share

**Fireworks Section 210.680 of the Houston Lake Municipal Code states:**

**It shall be unlawful for any person to use or discharge any "bottle rockets".**

**It shall be unlawful for any person to use, ignite or discharge any fireworks within the public right of way of any public street. Fireworks may only be used, ignited or discharged at the following times and dates:**

- 1. From 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. each day during the period of June twenty-sixth (26) until July second (2<sup>nd</sup>) and on July fifth (5<sup>th</sup>); and**
- 2. From 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m. (midnight) each day on July third (3<sup>rd</sup>) and July fourth (4<sup>th</sup>).**

**No person shall have in his/her possession Division 1.3 (formerly class "B") fireworks. Division 1.4 (formerly class "C") fireworks may be possessed during periods herein provided.**

**DISCHARGING AIR GUN, ETC.**

**Any person within the limits of this City who shall discharge any BB gun, spring gun, paint gun or air gun or shall shoot any pebble, bullet, slug, arrow or other hard substance by means of a sling, crossbow, rubber band or bow or any other means shall be deemed guilty of an ordinance violation; provided however, that this Section shall not apply to any person or organization authorized by the City of Houston Lake to possess and discharge such devices for the purpose of waterfowl pest control. (Ord. No. 303, 9-12-05 (Section 210.285))**

