



## BUILDING SUCCESS: EASTWOOD'S TOM TELLEPSEN

BY STEVE PARKER

The Tellepsen home at 4518 Park Drive was built by Tom and Ingeborg Tellepsen in 1916. It was built in the "airplane bungalow" style and, at Ingeborg's request, with big windows and a home that would last the rest of their lives.

Tom Tellepsen was born in Tvedestrand, Norway in April 1888. After starting his working life as a cabin boy on a sailing ship at the age of 14, he passed the exam to become a captain less than two years later. As it was customary to purchase stock in a shipping company before becoming their captain, he decided to come to America, land of opportunity to earn the funds. He landed at Ellis Island one month after his 17th birthday in 1905.

His first jobs in New York were as a carpenter, following in his father's footsteps. He was quickly promoted due to his great skill and also allowed to apprentice in other construction disciplines. One of his early projects was building the concession stands at Coney Island. Later, while working on working on a housing project, he learned the exacting tasks of home building, including the art of cabinet work. He also learned about an excellent opportunity to earn and save enough in a year to get financially established. In 1906, he left to work on the Panama Canal.

When he started at the Canal, the conditions were harsh. In late 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt set up a commission to determine why the cost of the Canal

was so high. They immediately set about improving the housing and working conditions. As they did, more US citizens applied for the high-paying jobs. Tom decided to return to the United States to file for citizenship. When



*The Tellepsen home at 4518 Park Drive, circa 1950.*

he did, he found that the immigration laws had changed and he couldn't return to Panama for five years. He decided to find a growing area to move. In 1908, he made his way to Houston.

After living in Pasadena through 1909 working on various construction projects, he returned to Houston in 1910. He had worked on house sketches in his spare time.

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Eastwood Civic Association Meeting • January 9, 2006 • 6:30 - 7:30 pm • Cape Center

## EAST END COFFEE EXHIBIT

The Maxwell House factory on Harrisburg has been a prominent fixture in Houston's East End for more than five decades. The factory itself is infused with history, having been the site of a Model T plant at the turn of the century. General Foods purchased the old Ford assembly plant in 1947 and opened the Maxwell House Coffee manufacturing facility in its place. Kraft Foods purchased the factory in 1988, and continues to produce coffee today. With its soaring tower and intricate neon sign in a perpetual face-off with downtown structures, the factory hints at one of the most interesting but little-known facets of East End commerce: three of America's largest coffee roasters and distributors call the East End home. Maxwell House, Cadeco Industries, Inc. and Sara Lee Coffee & Tea

North America operate out of the Port of Houston, one of only four green coffee ports in the nation. The Greater East End Management District will celebrate the history of these East End companies with an upcoming exhibition of vintage photos, antique coffee grinders and roasters, memorabilia and samples of raw and roasted coffee beans. Coffee is Stronger in Houston's East End will be on display in the offices of The Greater East End Management District, located at 3211 Harrisburg, from February 1 through April 2006. The exhibition, sponsored by Cadeco Industries, Inc., Kraft Foods/Maxwell House, Sara Lee Coffee & Tea North America and the Port of Houston, is free and open to the public.

For more information visit [www.greatereastend.com](http://www.greatereastend.com) or call 713-928-9916. ☐

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Deciding to receive more formal training, he enrolled in an architectural drawing course at the Y.M.C.A. After the third session, his teacher was so impressed with his work, she persuaded him to allow the school to have his plans published in a Houston newspaper. The Houston Land Corporation, bought the plan for their new development, Montrose Place. They also hired him to build the house. The house is not only still standing, but is the offices of the History Department at St. Thomas University on Yoakum Blvd.

By now, he had steady employment and established himself in constructing and remodeling homes. So, in 1911, he took the White Star Liner from New York to Liverpool and then on to Norway, to ask Ingeborg Lawson to be his wife. They were married on August 1, 1912 in Tvedestrand. They sailed back into Galveston and took the new interurban to Houston. For ten dollars a month, the newlyweds rented a house at 1506 Palmer, off of Leeland St. Upon their return, Tom went into business for himself as a contractor.

In 1914, he formed a partnership with Andrew Ness which became the Tellepsen Construction Company in 1929. On December 17, 1915, Tom became an United States citizen.

While building the Eastwood Elementary School, now the Dora B. Lantrip Elementary, Tom fell in love with the Eastwood area. The oaks and pines of Park Drive reminded him of Norway. He bought the property at the corner of Park and Maplewood that year. And,

after a devastating hurricane in August 1915, which uprooted trees and shattered the windows of their frail house, he decided to build a substantial, new house on his new property in Eastwood.



*The young Tellepsen family in 1918.*

Through the years, Tom Tellepsen built some of Houston's landmark structures: First Baptist Church (1921), Miller Memorial Theater (1922), the Manchester Wharfs (1922), Rice Institute Chemistry Building (1923), Palmer Memorial Church (1924), Gray and Temple Masonic Lodge (1924), Brazos River Bridge (1925), Ellington Field (1940), the Shamrock Hilton (1949) and others including the Melrose Building, downtown, the Schlumberger complex on I-45, The Medical Center-Medical Towers, and the Children's and St. Luke's Hospitals. He also chartered and built the East End State Bank on Leeland (now the City of Houston Water Department) and constructed most of the current facilities of Church of the Redeemer.

Tom and Ingeborg lived in their Park Drive home until 1971. Mr. Tom passed away in 1975. Many of

Houston's business leaders joined community leaders and his Eastwood neighbors at the services at his beloved Church of the Redeemer. From his home designs which became a guide for many of the homes in Montrose, and his strong skills and ethics which made him a trusted builder and businessman internationally, to his close personal relationship with his employees, neighbors and business contacts, Tom Tellepsen left a personal legacy in Houston as solid as any building he constructed. ☑

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

### NEW ECA BOARD MEMBERS 🌸

The 2006 board for the Eastwood Civic Association was elected in October. The officers are president - Karen Niemeier (*Eastwood*), vice president - Paul O'Sullivan (*Eastwood*), secretary - Spencer Howard (*Jackson Court*), treasurer - John Peeler (*Eastview*), and board members - Christina Branum-Martin (*Eastview*), Jimmy Knight (*Eastwood*), Lisa Bessinger Voiles (*Lawndale*), Steve Steiner (*Eastwood*), and past president - Steve Parker (*W.A. Kirby*).

We have added new email addresses for you to reach the ECA president at [president@eastwood-houston.com](mailto:president@eastwood-houston.com) and the board at [board@eastwood-houston.com](mailto:board@eastwood-houston.com).

### MAYOR'S TREE PLANTING PROJECT - DIEZ PARK 🌸

Bill and Andrea White's 2006 Holiday Tree-planting project will be held at the Eastwood area's Diez Park at 1800 Dumble on January 7th from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Between 50 and 70 Elms and Pines will be planted. The Parks Department will pre-dig the holes and Scenic Houston will donate Starbucks coffee. Last years tree-planting was held at McGregor Park and was apparently a lot of fun. Please come out and help plant this holiday gift of trees from the Whites and show our appreciation for the support of all the groups coming together to help beautify our community.

SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

The most recent Greater Eastwood/Lawndale/Wayside Super Neighborhood Meeting was held November 8, 2005 at the Villa de Matel. The group accepted an Action Plan for 2006, which included the following: reconstruction of specific sidewalks in Eastwood; creation of a "railroad quiet zone;" conversion of Fair Oaks to one-way headed north; construction of a fence at Cullinan Park, along Polk St.; and construction of an East End library (possibly in Eastwood). The election of new officers was proposed, with final voting to occur in January.

A list of possible goals for future meetings was discussed, covering topics such as I-45 highway reconstruction, East End development, affordable housing, and expanding joint Civic Club/Super Neighborhood collaboration. A motion was passed to amend the by-laws to include additional subdivisions in the Civic Club. The next meeting will occur on January 10, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. (no meeting during December).

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Table with 2 columns: Organization/Service and Phone Number. Includes Houston Police Dispatch, HPD South Central Substation, HPD Navigation Storefront, Harris Co. Constable, Prec. 6, Constable Polk St. Storefront, US Congressman Gene Green, Texas State Senator Mario Gallegos, Texas State Representative Rick Noriega, County Commissioner Pct 2 Sylvia Garcia, City Council Member Carol Alvarado, Graffiti Abatement, Street Light Outage (Centerpoint), Union Pacific RR National Police to report parked trains blocking streets, and City of Houston Service Helpline.

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.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING OR UNDERWRITING AN ISSUE OF THE EASTWOOD VOICE, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO EASTWOOD@EASTWOOD-HOUSTON.COM OR CALL 713.923.3983.



EASTWOOD CIVIC ASSOCIATION



PO Box 9542 • Houston • Texas • 77261

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please complete and mail to the address above or hand in at the meeting.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please list each household member on this membership, including children.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate up to three committees on which you would like to participate:

\_\_\_ Block Captain \_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_ Graffiti Abatement \_\_\_ Park Improvements \_\_\_ Animal Control

\_\_\_ Deed Restrictions \_\_\_ Historical Commission OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Annual Membership Dues \$25.00 \_\_\_ I'm not a member, but please add me to your contact list.

\_\_\_ Our monthly newsletter, the Eastwood Voice is available at the monthly meetings and door-to-door in areas with active block captains. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you please include \$3.70 for postage. (You don't have to be a member to receive the newsletter by mail.)

Circle your subdivision

- EASTWOOD ■ BROADMOOR ■ LAWNDALE ■ W. A. KIRBY ■ JACKSON COURT ■ WOODLEIGH ■ EASTLAWN ■ DISSSEN HEIGHTS ■ HOUSTON CITY RAILROAD ■ SUBURBAN ■ L.B. MOODY ■ BEVERLY PARK ■ EASTVIEW ■ HAVSER ■ DOR RUTH ■ MIVELLER ■ DIXIE ■ GEORGIA ■ YOUNGMENS

# CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JANUARY 1	2	3	4	5	6 Heavy Trash Area B Area A Trash set out	7 8-11 am Mayor's Tree Planting at Diez Park
8	9 Heavy Trash Area A 6:30 Civic Club Mtg. Cape Center	10 6:30 SuperNeighborhd	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 7:00 South Central PIP Meeting	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Area B Trash set out	28
29	30	31	FEBRUARY 1 COFFEE EXHIBIT FEB. 1 THRU APR.	2	3 Heavy Trash Area B	4
5 6:30 Civic Club Mtg. Cape Center	6	7	8	9	10	11 Area A Trash set out

Heavy Trash Area A: Second Monday, West of Lockwood (toward Cullen) and South of Telephone (toward I-45)

Heavy Trash Area B: First Friday, East of Lockwood (toward Lawndale) and North of Telephone (toward Harrisburg)



ONE OF THE ANTIQUE COFFEE GRINDERS ON EXHIBIT ALONG WITH VINTAGE PHOTOS AND ROASTERS AT THE OFFICES OF THE GREATER EAST END MANAGEMENT DISTRICT, 3211 HARRISBURG FROM FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH APRIL 2006.



## GLORIA ACKER

BROKER ASSOCIATE

- Over 25 years of real estate experience
- Original partner Acker-Blum Realtors
- Eastwood Home Tour docent the past 5 years
- Committed to the redevelopment of the Eastwood area

### Sold Properties

- 4415 Bell
- 4309 Clay
- 4321 Clay
- 4344 Clay
- 4709 Clay
- 4722 Clay
- 4346 Dallas
- 5221 Lindsay
- 4221 McKinney
- 4425 McKinney
- 4618 Park
- 4409 Pease
- 4420 Rusk
- 4721 Rusk
- 4324 Walker
- 4410 Walker
- 4415 Walker
- 4430 Walker
- 4436 Walker
- 4507 Woodside

### Active Listings

- 5134 Mulford
- 4618 Park

For your next move,  
please contact

**GLORIA ACKER**  
713-341-1758

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