



## YEAR END 2024 NEWSLETTER

### Letter from Luis Cosme, SAAGH President



Hello again on behalf of the Shell Alumni Association of Greater Houston (SAAGH) Board of Directors. I am pleased to welcome you to another exciting year at SAAGH and to present the President's message.

First off, I'd like to note that José Solano has elected to step down from the Board after fourteen years of service. Many of you might know José from staffing the reception desk at our luncheons or from his presentations at the Shell Retirement seminars. I will miss his sense of humor and hope to see him at some of our 2025 functions. I'd also like to note that we recently restructured our Board Leadership, adding a new position: VP - Events, and appointing Brenda Schroeder to the role. We also created a CIO/Communications position. The position is currently open and is being fulfilled by Sharon Staffel, Rick Swain, and myself. Click [here](#) for the current Board of Directors and [here](#) for more details on our structure and roles & responsibilities.

For those of you who don't know me, here is a link to our past [Newsletters](#). You can read a little bit about me in the July 2024 issue. As I mention there, I assumed the role of President following in the footsteps of Steve Paul, who steered SAAGH through the depths of COVID and helped increase the number and type of events we offer to the SAAGH community. Steve remains very engaged as the EVP/Corporate Secretary and coordinates our highly popular Central Market and Rainbow Lodge dinners.

My 2025 priorities remain the same as I outlined in July - continue to offer interesting and enriching **Events**, increase our participation in Shell sponsored or endorsed **Volunteer** activities, and maintain healthy **Membership** levels of around 1,000 (plus spouses or partners).

Membership at year-end 2024 stood at 981, versus 1,090 at YE 2023. This is concerning. Members are our lifeblood, and replacing natural attrition requires substantial effort, especially after SAAGH and Shell Oil stopped sending the annual post office mailing reminding folks to join (due to privacy and cost concerns). One of the more interesting results from the non-member survey we conducted last year indicated that nearly 20% of non-renewals were simply because people forgot! This puts more onus on the Board to get the word out, and we could use your help to do the same. Annual dues remain very affordable at \$10 and include your spouse/partner. In addition, we have expanded our membership criteria to include **current** and former Shell employees in the Houston area who are age 50+. You can read more about this [here](#).

**Luis Cosme, SAAGH President**

## Volunteer Update

The SAAGH Volunteer Committee is assisted by the Shell Team (Karen Labat and Vicky Moreno) in managing the 2024 events with Shell partner organizations by communicating and getting SAAGH members to participate and contribute their time and talents with five events over seven days.

In addition to supporting the Shell Team, the SAAGH Volunteer Committee expanded their reach by partnering with the Houston Food Bank to have an event just for SAAGH members. This was considered a success, and the Committee will work on coordinating a few SAAGH specific events with the Houston Food Bank and perhaps the United Way in 2025. The Committee is meeting with representatives from the United Way end of January to discuss possible events that align with Shell's and SAAGH's Volunteer Committee mission. The volunteer events that SAAGH will support in 2025 include MLK Day of Service (January), Back to School Fest Backpack Prep (July), Mayors Back to School Fest (August), UNCF Walk for Education (September), Operation Stocking Stuffer (December), 2-3 Houston Food Bank Events – SAAGH specific TBD and 1-2 United Way SAAGH Specific TBD. Stay tuned and please consider volunteering.

[Click here](#) to read more about SAAGH volunteer opportunities.

## Shell Hero

\*\* Please note paper forms will no longer be accepted for the HERO program after December 31, 2024. All future match requests beginning January 1, 2025 will need to be submitted through the HERO online portal at [Shell HERO](#).

### Mike Alvarez, VP Volunteer Events

## Upcoming SAAGH Events

SAAGH is continuing to offer a variety of events during the year – these include educational, sports, social events both in person and virtually. In 2024 the organization added a Holiday Lights Tour, many theatre events – thanks to Maureen Fitzgerald's efforts and Alumni Special dinners. If you have suggestions for an event, contact Brenda Schroeder at [Brenda.schroeder06@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Brenda.schroeder06@sbcglobal.net). The organization especially needs events in the northwest side of Houston and virtual opportunities. Upcoming SAAGH events are on the SAAGH [website](#).

Recently, we've changed the registration form for Events. You might have noticed this if you signed up to attend The Glass Menagerie or the Houston Art event. One benefit of this change is to provide members with three clear options for payment – PayPal, Venmo, and Debit/Credit card. No more navigating through multiple screens to bypass creating a PayPal account! (Note that we still use PayPal to process the transactions, this helps keep your credit card info safe.) Additional changes you might notice are being able to see the number of spots remaining for an event and a hard limit on the number of spots a member can purchase.

### Brenda Schroeder, VP Events

## Working Advantage Discount Program

You may recall that in September, we partnered with [Working Advantage](#) to allow our members to enjoy discounts across a broad range of products, entertainment, and services. This is the same platform

Shell employees use and is available to all SAAGH members at no charge. Use SAAGHPerks (not case-sensitive) as your company code. For those couple of hundred of you that have already joined, you may find it useful to manage how many marketing emails you receive. Simply click on "Unsubscribe" at the bottom of any email and choose how often you want to be notified (weekly, monthly, or not at all). Also, please check with us at [membership@saagh.com](mailto:membership@saagh.com) if you were previously using the platform with a shell.com email address.

## Cybersecurity Tips

While I'm on the topic of navigating online, I have a personal passion to support our members in taking advantage of all that the digital world has to offer, while remaining safe in doing so. I recently came across an [NBC news article](#) about active campaigns to hack into American's calls and messages. I found it interesting that sending a text message to someone using the same messaging platform (e.g., iPhone to iPhone) provides end-to-end encryption, but that sending it to a non-iPhone user does not. You can read more at the US Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Agency - [How to Communicate Securely on Your Mobile Device](#). Bottom line - don't send sensitive information like passwords and pin codes via unencrypted email platforms and text messaging apps!

**Luis Cosme, President**

## Events and Milestones

**Congratulations to Leonard Milholland (Deer Park), who turned 100 in 2024!**

**Congratulations to Randy & Marilyn Braud on their 50-year Wedding Anniversary (11/22/1974)!**

The newsletter includes "special events" such as a major milestone wedding anniversary and things like a golf "hole in one". If you have a special event that you would like included in the newsletter, email [membership@saagh.com](mailto:membership@saagh.com).

## In Sympathy

We are saddened at the passing of the following Shell colleagues during 2024. Please click [here](#) to access the obituaries.

If you want to inform the Shell Alumni about the passing of a loved one or colleague, either post on the Shell Alumni of Greater Houston Facebook page or mail [membership@saagh.com](mailto:membership@saagh.com). To access the SAAGH Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/239750502884880>