



Katy ladies gather in memory of Dude Callender, who started the coffee club tradition at Snappy's when Katy was a much smaller town

The Coffee Clubs of Katy

Friends & Neighbors Gather Daily for a Local Tradition

Written by Natalie Cook Clark & Photography by Suzi Issa



Malcolm Repka, Freddie Hull, Cody Hodge, David Hodge, Richard Hardy, Stanley Hoffpauir, Mike Brewster, Bobby Katsabas, and Billy Caldwell gather for coffee at Snappy's



David, Cody, and Richard catch up over breakfast



Doris Seiber and Thelma Callender remember the good old days when Dude Callender helped organize one of Katy's first coffee clubs



Former Katy Mayors Doyle Callender and Johnny Nelson join their coffee club in paying a visit to Richard Beckendorff, one of their regulars who recently suffered a stroke

Old Katy was built on rice farms and time-honored traditions, one of which includes gathering around coffee tables across the community for a cup of Joe every morning. Many have enjoyed the pastime of meeting with a Katy coffee club, and while they may have changed somewhat over the years, the focus of each club remains on community. "They're the heartbeat of the community and a great resource for local news," says former Katy Mayor Doyle Callender, whose love for coffee clubs was passed down to him by his late father John Dude Callender. "My father loved the Katy coffee clubs."

Coffee & Community

Johnny Nelson, another former Katy mayor and owner of Katy Sales and Supply, has been attending coffee clubs since 1969. "It began at my business with rice farmers coming to mix and mingle and share the news," he says. Over the years, as rice farming declined, the topics expanded. "Now we never know what we're going to talk about," shares Nelson.

Billy Caldwell has been meeting with his coffee club since 1955. The location has moved over the years, but currently, they meet at Snappy's every Monday through Friday at 5:30 a.m. The time of fellowship and friendship has become a meaningful daily routine to Caldwell. His group plays a game each meet. "It is fun, unless you're the one stuck with the tab," he laughs.

The previous winner of the game starts off the fun each morning. They pick a number between one and 300. Then the person to the left makes a guess. The original player with the number informs them if it is higher or lower. They go around the circle and narrow down the guessing field. The person that wins picks up the coffee tab. The game has taken on more risk over the years. When they first began it, they played at Miss Alexander's, when coffee was a dime a cup. Now at Snappy's, it's a \$1.50 a cup.

The Old Katy coffee clubs have watched the city grow and change, but perhaps the greatest change has occurred within. "We're mostly retired and many in our group have passed," Nelson says. Callender adds, "We've also seen the expansion of the city, and as people have become more busy in their lives, coffee clubs have become a dying breed." It's time that is hurting coffee clubs, not an increase in places offering coffee, such as Starbucks. "People want a sense of community and that local feel," explains Nelson.

Bringing Back the Trend

The coffee clubs that these men have grown up loving may be changing, but coffee clubs in general have evolved. You may not call it an official coffee club, but think about all the Bible studies, mothers' groups, book clubs, or many special interest

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Connie, Thelma, and Kay enjoy hearing stories of how their family member, Dude Callender helped start everyone's day with a smile over a simple cup of morning coffee



Nelsen's coffee club talks politics, news, and family with former Katy Mayor Doyle Callender

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groups that meet regularly at local coffee spots. Kosmos Coffee of Katy is one of the local spots that small groups frequent. They're also a nonprofit that Katyites love to support. Each month is devoted to supporting a charity that helps put an end to hunger, homelessness, and human trafficking.

Life is busy, but Katyites have always valued the community. It's fantastic to see how a large community still holds true to its hometown feel, making Katy a place where neighbors are friends and strangers always exchange smiles. Life is busy. While Katy coffee clubs may have lost some popularity over the years, they don't have to be a dying breed. More and more friends and neighbors are making time to connect with others, keeping the time-honored tradition alive.

"Coffee clubs are a great way to start the morning," says Caldwell, jokingly adding, "We solve the world's problems!" But there may be truth to that jest. Through neighborly communication, could more problems be resolved and good deeds accomplished no matter how small? I'm willing to bet so. **KM**

NATALIE COOK CLARK enjoys freelance writing and learning more about her hometown of Katy.



Callender joins the guys outside Nelsen's business, where they meet almost every morning for coffee

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Nelsen's friends and neighbors have been gathering for coffee since 1969

Brewing a Katy Tradition

By Connie Callender Lindsay

Did you ever eat breakfast with somebody and thoroughly enjoy it, catching up on the latest gossip, news, family events, birthdays, and all important celebrations? Several Katyites decided that breakfast would be more fun if we all met each morning at Snappy's for good food and to discuss the latest around town. Through happy and sad times, we have shared each other's special moments in life. And by doing so, everybody has always left for work in a great mood, full of good food, plenty of food for thought, strengthened friendships, and enough blackmail material on everybody should we ever need it! The coffee club feels the meaning of Katy's slogan, "You'll love Katy." We are so proud of our town and what it has become. We think it would be great if more people took the time to gather, celebrate, and communicate with each other at the start of their day. Coffee and conversation go a long way!



Surrounded by her friends, Anna Baker treasures a mug memorializing Dude Callender, who had welcomed the ladies joining in on the morning coffee club.



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