



Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter

January
2011

vccahouston.org
PO Box 130891 Houston, TX 77219-0891

Holiday Decoration Winners

Thank you to the residents of the VCCA domiciles that were decorated for the holidays. There were some grand expressions of creativity mixed with the stately sophistication on many of our streets.

In 2009 the VCCA Yard of the Month Committee reinstated the Holiday Lights Contest winners. As a neighborhood, we enjoy and sincerely appreciate the splendor of lights and decorations to be enjoyed by all who pass through our streets.

The 2010 Winners are:

- 1st Place – 2024 Fairview, home of Lauren & Tim Simpson
- Best Traditional – 2205 Brun, Harres Exezidis
- Best Contemporary – 2224 Brun, Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Howard
- Most Original – 2117 McDuffie, Michael McCardle and 2119 McDuffie, Pam McLemore
- Most Colorful – Tie: 1964 Welch, and 2219 McDuffie, James & Anne Spivey
- Best Block – 1700-1800 McDuffie (west side, between Haddon and Vermont)

Thank you to each of you who got the holiday spirit and shared it with the rest of us.

A Note of Appreciation Contest Winners Lauren & Tim Simpson

I would just like to thank you and the Vermont Commons Civic Association so much for the beautiful flowers, wine, and Paulie's gift card! My husband, Tim, and I were very disappointed that we were not able to make it to the Christmas Party last night to accept the award, but we are so honored! We were not aware of the Christmas Party until last weekend when Nancy came by our house to let us know we had won, and we had unfortunately made other plans for last night that we couldn't reschedule. My husband Tim is particularly excited because since childhood he has always loved putting up Christmas lights, and always wanted to receive an award for it. Now he has! I would have loved to have sent a written thank you card, but I wasn't sure where to send it, so email will have to do. Thank you all again so much! We are honored and thrilled!



Holiday Party

The VCCA Holiday Party at the Mockingbird Bistro was very well attended, and a great time was had by all. About seventy residents crammed into the wine room to laugh, talk, and enjoy food and friendship. If you were unable to attend, be sure to put the event on your 2011 schedule.

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VCCA meetings are held every 2nd
Wednesday of the month.

Join us at 7:00 PM
January 12th
Mockingbird Bistro
1985 Welch @ McDuffie.

Meet friends & neighbors &
stay for the social hour
afterward.



Breaking News!!!

The City Of Houston has just notified VCCA that they were awarded a grant to purchase and install sign toppers throughout Vermont Commons. VCCA hopes to have the sign toppers installed by the end of April. Andy Tallin has been heading up the grant application. As with all grants, the award is just the beginning. Andy still has lots of work ahead of him to satisfy all the City of Houston requirements.

2011 Vermont Commons Civic Association Officers

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January Yard of the Month
SCOTT & CANDACE MULLERVY - 2414 McDuffie
JEFFREY S JOHNSTON - 2416 McDuffie



SOUND OFF!

Barking Dogs

VCCA has had numerous complaints about dogs running loose and barking excessively. Unfortunately, VCCA does not have any DEED Restrictions that address this problem. VCCA's Deed Restrictions only address building restrictions. If dogs are a problem for you and your neighbors, be sure to enlist the help of your local police. There are ordinances that address nuisance animals and the police will address the issue.

Animals, Lost & Found

It's sad to see the posters on the poles, asking for your help in finding a lost dog or cat. Every once in a while, there's a "found poster", which hopefully ends on a happy note. Wouldn't it be great if VCCA and maybe even Park Civic Association could form a sort of network to help keep an eye out for lost animals? There are national and city groups that help with such things, but keeping it on a local basis might help in finding these little babies even quicker. Thoughts? Suggestions?

Keys Found

I recently found a set of keys in my side yard at 2206 McDuffie. Someone had thrown them through our gate, and I assume that they were found on the sidewalk outside our townhouse at 2206 McDuffie. It is possible that someone walking their dog dropped them. The set included a car key, several house keys (I assume), and a cloth key fob. There was nothing to identify the owner.

Jim Heimer, jmsjnk@earthlink.net

Telephone Solicitations

If you are bothered by numerous unwanted telephone calls, you can sign up for the national and state "Do Not Call Register". The links are:

www.donotcall.gov

www.texasnocall.com

Submitted by Betsy Banks

2011 New Year's Resolutions Residents of Vermont Commons

- I will join the Vermont Commons Civic Association.
- I will meet and greet all of my neighbors.
- I will recycle all my recyclable material.
- I will put my garage can out no earlier than 6:00 PM the day before pick up.
- I will put my garbage and recyclable can away the day they are emptied by the city.
- I will keep the street in front of my house clean of dirt and debris.
- I will keep the bushes along the sidewalk on my property trimmed to allow walkers to pass easily.
- I will make my sidewalk safe for walkers.
- I will keep my dog's barking to a minimum.
- I will keep my dog on a leash when off my property.
- I will pick up all my dog's poop.
- I will watch out for my neighbor's property.

Star of Hope Donations

Thank you for your continuing support of the Star of Hope shelter for homeless mothers and their children. The toiletries are much needed and deeply appreciated. I will continue to collect whatever we contribute and deliver the goods on an ongoing basis - so, if you forgot to bring them to the Holiday Party, you can bring them to the next monthly meeting...or the next...or next...

Thanks so much, Nancy Higgs, VP, VCCA

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Thanks to the Yard of the Month Committee for braving a wintery night to choose the best holiday decorations in our neighborhood. Members are Nancy Higgs, Susan Wilson, Betsy Banks and Lillian Skogsberg.

Brun Street resident Stephanie Taylor provided the materials and created the beautiful floral arrangement for the winning holiday home decoration.

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays Jan 10th, Jan 24th, Feb 7th, and Feb 21st

Heavy Trash Collection:

Tree Waste: 1st Tuesday in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep & Nov

Junk Waste: 1st Tuesday in Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct & Dec

Environmental Service Center for the disposal of hazardous waste, 11500 South Post Oak, (713) 551-7355, open Tue - Wed, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM & the 2nd Sat of each month 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Paint, pesticides, batteries, smoke alarms, computers, televisions, most anything you shouldn't throw into the landfill can be brought here.

Helpful Phone and e-mail Numbers

Our New Website: vccahouston.org

City Council Member Dist D:

Wanda Adams: (832) 393-3001

e-mail: districtd@cityofhouston.net

City Council Member at Large, Pos.1 Stephen Costello

e-mail: atlarge1@cityofhouston.net

Go to vccahouston.org for more helpful info, phone numbers & links to city services.

VCCA Resident, Tom Oxford

Long time resident, Tom Oxford, was recently interviewed about his experience of living in this neighborhood for so long. Read on to see how he clears up the mystery of the "House on Driscoll Street where the murders happened".

Tom and his companion moved to 1813 Driscoll in September, 1967. They had been living in an apartment in a fourplex across Grant Street from the now-shuttered Felix Mexican Restaurant, and just felt it was time to find a house. They wanted to stay in the neighborhood and looked at several properties which would have stretched the budget. They found this house via the Classified Ads in the now-defunct Houston Post one Saturday morning, and looked at it the same day. According to the agent, the house was flanked by a widow on the North and a house tied up in an estate on the South. The price was right.

The neighborhood at that time was primarily small bungalows like this one. Butera's Grocery (now closed) was at the corner of Driscoll and Indiana. The River Oaks Shopping Center, although not nearly as upscale as it is now, was three blocks to the North. It was a quiet little area and we got to know the neighbors immediately. The widow to the North was a wonderful baker and welcomed us with something she had freshly baked. She then proceeded to inform us about the house on our other side. Even though we knew about the "ice box murders" and knew it happened on Driscoll, it never entered our heads that it was next door!

The couple who lived there were Fred and Edwina Rogers. The bodies of the Rogers had been dismembered and wrapped in plastic before being put in the refrigerator. The investigating officers thought someone had been deer hunting until they realized it wasn't venison in the packages. Oxford says he doesn't think they had been dead too long, maybe less than a week, before being discovered. A nephew reported them as "missing" and was with the police when the bodies were found. It was Father's Day, 1965. Police believe their reclusive son, Charles "Chuck" Rogers, killed them and then fled after being in the home for several days. He has never been found and was declared legally dead in 1975.

Oxford met the attorney for that "estate" and ended up mowing that front lawn for a monthly fee. He got to see the inside of the house several times. Halloween was always a "treat" because it drew out the thrill seekers. Of course, the anniversary of the event always got a blurb in the papers and more tourists would drive by and gawk. The house was razed by the City of Houston as being a hazard,

around 1978 if memory serves. The property remained vacant until 1998 or so when the current townhouses were built. In 2003, a book titled "The Ice Box Murders" by Hugh and Martha Gardenier was published. Oxford met the Gardeniers just before excavation for the townhouses began. They were using a metal detector looking for any kind of artifact they could find.

The major landmark/business that is no longer in the neighborhood is the Mrs. Baird's Bakery which was at West Gray and Woodhead, stretching almost to Dunlavy. You could smell the bread when it was baking and the wind was right. Butera's Grocery was great for fresh vegetables. It was a sad day when it burned.

The major positive thing about the neighborhood is location, location, location. Everything he needs - grocery store, bank, post office, drug store - is within walking distance (and he does walk to them, rather than drive, 90% of the time).

As for any neighborhood negatives, the only one he has is that for some odd reason, drivers don't seem to like to stop at STOP signs, but that seems to be universal.

The developers who have built the townhomes here sometimes seem to have just "gone for the almighty dollar", without respect to how the home fit in the neighborhood or affected those around it. But that's the way things have gone and there's nothing that can be done about it.

Oxford's experience living in this neighborhood for the past 43 years has been good. He's met a lot of wonderful people. Working with VCCA he says he met a great many people he probably wouldn't have met otherwise.



Just a Note From Jeanette

As I say good bye to 2010 and welcome 2011, I want to thank all those who have volunteered to help VCCA grow into a better organization. When the officers of VCCA met in January of 2010, the four of us set goals for the coming year. Fortunately, those goals were met and surpassed. It has been a great joy to serve as your president, and I look forward to continuing in the position in 2011. The goals for VCCA for 2011 will be posted in the February newsletter. If you can help VCCA meet those goals, be sure to volunteer.

Jeanette Hix, President VCCA



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SATURDAY
NOV. 6
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DRUMMING
EVENT: 9pm



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