



Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter

March
2011

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

The Mystery of "Texas Terroir" March Speaker - Dr. Russell Kane

Sure, we have our fun neighborhood wine tastings, but do we really know about wines from our own state? Here's a chance to astound your friends (and neighbors) with what you will learn at the March VCCA meeting.

Dr. Russell Kane is a wine writer and author who documents his wine experiences at: <http://vintagetexas.com/blog> and on Twitter as VintageTexas. He has traveled the state meeting with growers, winemakers and consumers with the goal of understanding the mysterious Texas Terroir, terroir being the French term meaning "sense of place".

Russ has been a researcher, technical writer and an independent Houston businessman for over 30 years. A little over a decade ago, he discovered the Texas wine industry and has been reporting on it since. Russ has developed stories and articles for local and regional publications, organized wine tastings, "shootouts" and competitions, and has judged in national and international wine competitions. Russ was Executive Director of the Wine Society of Texas, At-Large Director for the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association, and most recently a consumer member of the Texas Department of Agriculture's Wine Advisory Committee. His book, "The Wineslinger Chronicles: Texas Tales of Grit and Gumption" is scheduled for release in Spring 2012.

Pour into Mockingbird Bistro and meet Dr. Kane at the March 9th meeting.

Hit & Run on McDuffie Street

There was a "hit & run" in the 2100 block of McDuffie on January 31 at 9:00 PM.

A parked car was hit so hard that it was moved 2 driveways down and into the lawn.

Cathryn Gabor was walking her dog (Raider) and she immediately became involved.

The offender's car had a severe oil leak. Some neighbors got in their car and tracked the leak into River Oaks (by St. Anne's) where they found the offender. An alert neighbor in River Oaks called the police when they saw the front end of his car smashed in while he parked and the police quickly arrived on scene.

The man, who seemed to have

been drinking, had 2 dogs in the car and hopefully, they were picked up by a friend.

Thanks to all our vigilant and caring neighbors who are making a difference in keeping our neighborhood safe. Six months ago, Cathryn's partner, Rob, witnessed a head-on collision on Shepherd, and when the drunk driver fled the scene, he chased him down in their car. The police arrested him and he awaits trial.

This just underscores the need for speed bumps on many of the streets in our boundaries. Look for volunteers from VCCA to come around asking for your signature on a petition to get speed bumps – or, at the very least, more stop signs.

Vermont Commons Civic Association
Newsletter
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VCCA meetings are held every 2nd
Wednesday of the month.

Join us at 7:00 PM
March 9th
Mockingbird Bistro
1985 Welch @ McDuffie.

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



Former VCCA Pres Dies

Mark Preston, president of Vermont Commons Civic Association in 2007, 2008 and 2009 passed away on Thursday February 24th after a courageous battle with cancer. Mark was instrumental in reviving VCCA's membership and infused enthusiasm into the struggling association. He was an extremely generous and kind person and was passionate about helping others. He was a native of Louisiana, but chose Houston as home where he made his mark on the business community. He is survived by his wife Ashley. Contributions in memory of Mark may be made to MD Anderson in his name.

2011 Vermont Commons Civic Association Officers

President: Jeanette Hix
(713) 521-3337
hix@rmi.net
Vice Pres: Nancy Higgs
(512) 422-3317
nkmh54@aol.com
Secretary: Lance Hack
lhack02@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Andy Tallin
atallin01@yahoo.com
Newsletter: Jeanenne Hagerman
Cay Dickson

March Yard of the Month

Holly and John Keiser
2117 Driscoll St



Holly and John Keiser have resided at 2117 Driscoll St since 1999, along with their little dog, Lexie. Holly and John share the yard design and maintenance, and occasionally consult a professional.

They started a lovely geometric vine design along their fence 3 years ago, which has finally completely filled in this year and survived the ice storm! Check out their pretty pansies and colorful jasmine vine!

A new entry gate, designed by the couple, was just installed.

Repair, Prepare Your Spring Garden

Several residents have asked about how to help their gardens recover from the damaging freezes of the very severe weather in the Houston area this winter. Wait to trim and prune until the risk of a late freeze is past. Although not very pretty, the freeze-damaged parts actually protect the plant. Most perennials will come back, as will many common tropical plants, in spite of looking dead now.

You may want to go ahead and trim back roses and bulbs (amaryllis and gingers), and bedding plants (petunias, etc). With roses, cut above a bud or if landscape roses (Nearly wild or Knockouts) it's okay to just gently round. Crape myrtles don't need to be pruned. Just let them grow naturally, like other plants. If desired, they may be shaped with gentle pruning. Wait until after the azaleas bloom this spring to prune them.

Wait on fertilizing your lawn and plants or you'll feed the weeds and spur new growth which will be more susceptible to another freeze. Roses and bedding plants are okay to fertilize now.

Add compost and mulch to protect the roots, prevent the growth of weeds and provide nutrients.

New bedding plants are arriving in the local nurseries already. You can purchase marigolds, asters, petunias, geraniums, salvias, coleus, and many more for sunny areas. For the shady garden, add impatiens and begonias. These annuals will add instant color and spark to your garden.

Fresh herbs are also available to plant in your garden, or in patio containers. Select some of your favorites to add a fresh taste to special recipes.

Now is a good time to plant strawberries and tomato plants, and lettuce seed can be started. You can also add citrus and other fruit trees and berries to your garden.

The VCCA "Yard of the Month" program was established to encourage residents to spruce up their yard, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. Winners are featured in the VCCA Newsletter, and a sign is posted in the yard to inform the neighborhood of the selection. You could be the next winner!

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays Mar 14th, Mar 28th, Apr 11th, Apr 25th

Heavy Trash Collection:

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

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

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.

Sound Off!

Several residents have complained and called attention to abandoned vehicles and large trash items left in front yards, driveways and even along the street. They have reported heavy trash violators to the city, but have not been successful in getting action. Abandoned vehicles may be part of a crime, so there does seem to be a quick response to this request.

This is the official City of Houston information regarding these items:

1. Heavy Trash Violators

Sofas, tree limbs etc left on the street? Call 311, give the address and an inspector will investigate. If it is in violation, the perpetrator will be ticketed.

2. Abandoned vehicles

Call 311 and they will be removed.

THANKS to Volunteers

- To Bob Immel for redoing the Deed Restriction map to make it available on the web page for all to see if their property is deed restricted.
- To Georgia Viret, who just recently moved into Vermont Commons, for joining the newsletter team heading up the advertisements and for making the trek to the downtown post office to mail the newsletters.
- To Audrey Crawford for hosting the February newsletter folding in her home.
- To Adriana Breidenstein for joining the Deed Restriction Committee.

Volunteers Needed!

Join the VCCA "Git 'Er Done" gang by volunteering for one of these committees:

- Block captains for some streets (streets with block captains can be located in the December Newsletter. Visit the VCCA website at vccahouston.org).
- Crime Committee
- Monthly Speaker Committee
- Deed Restriction Committee
- Representative to attend Near Town Meeting

If you have questions about who does what on which committee, just call Jeanette Hix at 713-521-3337.

Sign Toppers To Be Installed Soon

Andy Tallin, Chairperson of the Sign Topper Committee, reports that the long awaited delivery of the completed Sign Toppers has been promised for March 1st.

As soon as VCCA receives the Sign Toppers, one will be installed at the intersection of Indiana St and Brun St. The City of Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering will have to inspect the first installation before the remaining Toppers can be installed.

After the City grants approval, VCCA will have a "Sign Topper Party" to install the toppers at all Vermont Commons intersections. If you would like to be a part of the installation celebration, walking with us as we move from intersection to intersection enjoying all the goodies that we carry with us, email Jeanette Hix at hix@rmi.net and you will be added to the "party" list.

Discarding Hazardous Materials

The residents of Vermont Commons are doing such a fabulous job of using the new recycling bins. Recycling the glass, plastic, aluminum, and paper keeps these items from being deposited into the city dump. It takes centuries for these items to decompose, so we are doing a great service to our earth by recycling.

There are numerous other ways to recycle. Check out your garage, attic and all the places you keep unwanted hazardous materials. These materials contaminate our water and land. There are two facilities in the City of

Houston which accept hazardous materials. Both are convenient to Vermont Commons

The Environmental Service Center

These are the items they receive:

Monitors, televisions, printers, keyboards, mice, scanners, fax machines, telephone handsets, VCRs, CPUs, cellular telephones, smoke alarms, other small consumer electronics, paint, oil, pesticides, insecticides, unused cleaning products, antifreeze, rechargeable batteries, (standard batteries do not have hazardous waste) and car batteries.

Consumer Recycling Center on Westpark

These are the items they receive:

Paint, oil, antifreeze, old tires and electronic equipment.

Call before taking your items as the amount of paint, tires and electronic equipment is limited to a certain amount per visit. The City of Houston uses the recycled paint to paint over the never-ending graffiti in our city.

Information on the location, telephone number and service hours are printed monthly in the column on the previous page - **Helpful Information**.

Just a Note From Jeanette

It was great that so many of you attended the meeting to hear our local novelist speak. I was unable to attend, but I hear that she was fabulous. Are you familiar with a resident who has an interesting tale to tell? Let me know, and I will make sure the story is shared with all. Be sure to

alert VCCA to any concerns you may have. Our Sound Off column comes from residents who want to see Vermont Commons become an even better place to live.

Jeanette Hix, President VCCA



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Houston, TX 77219-0891

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Rebecca M. Harvey, D.D.S., P.A.
drharvey@dentisthouston.com
2025 Fairview Houston, TX 77019
Phone (713) 528-4054
Fax (713) 528-1443

