



Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter

April
2011

vccahouston.org

PO Box 130891 Houston, TX 77219-0891

April Speaker, HPD Officer Wayne Pate

This month we celebrate Officer Wayne Pate, our local police officer. Officer Pate has been with the Houston Police for almost 27 years, graduating from the academy on his 25th birthday, Aug. 4, 1984. For 21 of those years, he worked the night-shift in the District One area, which is our area. He also did a brief 6-month stint in the jail on the evening shift.

Off. Pate started with the Neartown storefront in August 2005. The storefront is open from 6 AM to 10 PM, Monday thru Friday. The storefront is a work office for officers as well as a place for citizens to walk in and file a report. Police do not dispatch out of the Neartown storefront. Rather, complainants are given the HPD non-emergency phone number, 713-884-3131, to call. All calls are recorded. Called-in crime reports are also compiled into a system known as "CFS" (calls for service) which allows officers such as Pate to better assess ongoing and cumulative problems in a specific area, which is why it is so very important that we call in our concerns!

In addition to fighting crime in our neighborhood, Off. Pate's duties now include frequent presentations before neighborhood and civic organizations. Although this is not typical "policeman training", he says he has learned to love this aspect of his job and "Now you can't shut me up. Ha ha!"

We are so very lucky to have Off. Pate working to maintain safety in our neighborhood! He says he loves his job – and it is easy to see! He invites us to be on his extensive Crime Report email list – among other things. He shared (for the purpose of this article) that "All I ask for is to please have patience with me." Well, we know from experience that Off. Pate is THE BEST! THANK YOU, Officer Pate!!

Meet Coach Tom Penders, Neighbor and Author

In March 2004, after three seasons I spent "off the bench" as a sports media analyst and color personality for ESPN and Westwood One Radio, Tom Penders was hired as the University of Houston's seventh head basketball coach.

Almost immediately, Tom and his wife Susie knew they would need to find a home in Houston but didn't know where to look. Having moved

several times over the course of Tom's career, Susie was no stranger to the relocation process, and promptly flew to Houston.

As luck would have it, Susie met a Houstonian on the plane who told her about living in the Upper Kirby area and how much he loved the neighborhood and it's "urban" vibe. His reference to a street called "McDuffie" caught Susie's attention, so she asked the realtor to pull all listings in Upper Kirby.

More important than finding the perfect home, Tom and Susie wanted to settle in an "ideal" neighborhood where they felt part of a community of people who "watched out" for one another. Having met over 30 years ago as two city-dwellers living in Manhattan, they yearned for a home situated in a (Continued on pg 3)



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Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 13

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

Join us at 7:00 PM

April 13th

Mockingbird Bistro

1985 Welch @ McDuffie.

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



Watch Out for this Crime!

A suspect has been arrested for criminal mischief. He would poke a hole in a customer's car tire with a knife, then wait for the owner to come out and notice the flat. He would then approach the owner in regards to the flat tire and offer assistance in changing the tire for the owner. Of course he's not a good Samaritan who was going to do it out of the kindness of his big ol' heart. HE WANTS MONEY! He has been doing this at Kroger and Walgreens, both on Montrose. Watch out for copy cats!

Reported by HPD Officer W Pate.

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April Yard of the Month

**Steven Tidwell
1517 Hazard St**

April Yard of the Month goes to the lovely home at 1517 Hazard. Steven Tidwell and his partner moved here from Florida and purchased the house late last year. Their landscape "re-design" reflects the geometric aspects of their home's unique architectural style. As you stroll by before the summer heats up, we know you will enjoy the view!



Positive Interaction Program (PIP)

Notes from PIP meeting March 8, 2011

Introduction

Chief Montalvo gave a quick update:

- City of Houston has \$130M deficit in the budget.
- Police cuts? 5% has been proposed - this equals \$33M.
- Last year the Police Department budget was cut \$25M, so already at the bone.
- Areas that won't be cut: Services, Crime Enforcement, Traffic Enforcement.
- New initiatives planned:
 - Independent Oversight Board – retired judges, etc. This board will determine discipline necessary.
 - Public Safety Panel – provide recommendations on how Police are selected, etc.
 - Full-time Ombudsman – handle complaints re: Police officers.
- March is "march on crime" month. Focus areas for Houston Police:
 - Property crime
 - Home burglaries
 - Business crime
- Crime statistics
 - Part 1 (violent) down 22%

- Part 2 (property) down 19%
- Next Citywide PIP is May 10. Educational Program including a tour, showcasing the Mounted Houston Police group. Location: 5005 Little York at 7 PM

Main Program – "Crisis Intervention Team"

- Frank Webb – speaker, Crime Justice & Mentally Ill Unit
- Treatment for the mentally ill has been "de-institutionalized."
 - 80% of homeless have mental illness. (M.I.)
 - In 1955, 559,000 in mental institutions. Since then, the US population has doubled.
 - Today, only 40,000 in mental institutions.
 - Statistics
 - In the ten (10) Texas mental hospitals there are 2,389 M.I. persons.
 - In Harris County jails, there are 2,500 M.I. persons.
 - Methods to deal with M.I. cases:
 - Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
 - Chronic Consumer Stabilization Initiative
 - Won IACP Community Police Award in 2010
- Executive Summary
- Houston Police have become the key organization to deal with Mental Illness cases.

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays Apr 11th, Apr 25th, May 9th, May 23rd

Heavy Trash Collection:

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

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

HPD Officer Wayne Pate: wpate43@yahoo.com

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

Sound Off!

Crime, 1600 block of Hazard:

At approximately 10:45-11 PM my purse and cell phone were stolen from my kitchen counter near the back door. A tall lanky youth was standing idly on Hazard fiddling with some electronic device when I returned home that evening. I used my electronic opener to open my gate. It would not close automatically, and after trying several times to close it, I left it open.

I then proceeded to take things out of my car and go back and forth actively. I put the phone and purse on the counter near the back door and was taking other stuff to the bedroom. I came back immediately and poof, they were gone.

It is creepy that I was being watched so closely. Have there been any other observations or other incidents recently? If not, everyone be alert. A police report was filed.

Coach Tom Penders (Continued from pg 1)

"walking neighborhood" surrounded by local eateries and shops with convenient access to UH's campus. The Penders quickly chose a beautiful Tuscan-style town home on Brun Street, one block east of McDuffie, and have felt "at home" ever since.

While finding a new home was easy, Tom's new job as head basketball coach at the University of Houston would prove to be more difficult. In the eleven years prior to his arrival, the UH Cougars had just two winning seasons and had not appeared in an NCAA Tournament since 1992.

Penders, also known as "Turnaround Tom," had success turning around six other basketball programs – Geo Washington, Texas, Rhode Island, Fordham, Columbia & Tufts Universities, and was ready for the challenge.

In his first season, the Houston Cougars won 18 games, beat a Top-25 Team (16th-Ranked Louisville) for the first time in 8 years, and earned a postseason NIT bid. The following season (2006), the Cougars broke into the Top 25 rankings for the first time since 1993 and in 2010 - Penders' 6th and final season - the Cougars shocked the nation by winning the Conference-USA postseason championship, returning to the NCAA's "Big Dance."

During his 6-year tenure, Penders became the first coach in UH history to win at least 18 games in six straight seasons. After nearly four decades of coaching, Penders decided to retire on a high-note in April 2010.

In his new book titled "**Dead Coach Walking**," Penders talks about building basketball programs, earning national attention, and all of the personalities and sacrifices he encountered along the way.

He offers his wide-ranging perspective on the state of

THANKS to Volunteers

- To Betsy Banks and Nancy Higgs for updating the newsletter address list, spending an entire day walking the neighborhood.
- To Russ Kane for his great presentation on Texas Wines at the March meeting.
- To Jane and Dick Schmitt for hosting the newsletter folding in February.
- To Andy Tallin for his tireless efforts on the Sign Topper project.
- To all those who attend the VCCA meetings and contribute great ideas for our community.

Volunteer Needed

VCCA is in need of a lawyer who can occasionally review papers dealing with VCCA. Please contact Jeanette Hix if you can provide this service for several hours a year.

college athletics today and his dealings with the NCAA, the AAU, athletic directors, officials, assistants, and many other insights, talking frankly about what worked and what didn't in each of his career stints along the way.

The book also reveals details about Penders' health issues and how he dealt with private challenges in a very public setting, and gives both the casual and the hard core sports fan insight into game strategies, coaching styles, locker room stories, and experiences on the recruiting trail.

His perspective is always entertaining, sometimes controversial and reflective of a man who has seen success and encountered sacrifice at every level of college athletics.

Tom and Susie Penders have enjoyed six plus years in Houston and feel they have the best neighbors in the world. "*Our little section of Brun Street is filled with kind and thoughtful people who look out each other,*" says Susie. "*We share a love for this neighborhood, our dogs/cats and each other...Upper Kirby was a great choice for us.*"

As a tribute to his illustrious career, the Penders' next door neighbors, Rob Fuller and Cathryn Gabor, will be hosting a **Vermont Commons book signing and storytelling event on Sunday, April 10 @ Mockingbird Bistro, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM.** Hors d'oeuvres will be served; books are \$20 each.

On Friday, March 4, 2011, the film crew from HBO's Real Sports and anchor Andrea Kremer were on Brun Street interviewing Coach Penders about his new book, *Dead Coach Walking*, for the March 30th episode. Coach and Andrea even walked the neighborhood during some of the filming segments. HBO will be airing the segment several times during the Final Four (April) and online.

Just a Note From Jeanette

Spring is here and it is great to see how all the gardens and yards in our community have become so beautiful. VCCA is still in need of volunteers in many areas. If we each give just a few hours of our time, VCCA will grow and flourish even more.

If you have not attended a VCCA meeting, put it on your

calendar. It is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors. Attending the meetings does not commit you to any volunteer work. Hope to see you on April 13th at 7:00 PM at Mockingbird Bistro

Jeanette Hix, President VCCA



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