

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



April
2012

Civic Association Newsletter

Upcoming Events in Vermont Commons

Spring Clean-Up

The Beautification Committee is sponsoring a Spring Clean-Up in Vermont Commons on Saturday May 5th at 8:00 AM. The Committee is conducting a survey of areas that need to be spruced up. Bushes and trees that block stop signs and intersections will be trimmed with the owner's permission, and grass and mud that prevent proper drainage at street intersections will be removed. Put on your gloves and bring your garden tools to be a part of this important job to give Vermont Commons a spring lift. Look for final details in the May newsletter and on the web page. Please contact Jeanette Hix at 713 521 3337 to volunteer.

Spring Picnic

On Sunday May 6th at 4:00 PM VCCA will be hosting a Spring Picnic. Bring snacks to share, drinks for yourself and chairs to sit on. The picnic will be at Cherryhurst Park. This event gives all an opportunity to meet neighbors. Bring your children to enjoy the wonderful playground. Put this event on your calendar and watch for additional details in your May newsletter and on the web page.

Morning Coffee

VCCA hopes to continue sponsoring a morning coffee in Vermont Commons. Due to the illness of Brenda's mother, the February event had to be cancelled. This month on Tuesday April 24th at 10:00 AM, Jeanette Hix will host the coffee at her home at 2213 Brun St. Please RSVP to Jeanette at 713 521 3337. Hope to see you there.

Double Header At VCCA

Suzy Fischer, a principal in the landscape design firm of Fischer Schalles, has been rescheduled to speak at the April 9th VCCA meeting. Her firm offers residential and commercial landscape design alternatives that blend strong architectural design ability with horticultural expertise. Their goal is to design, install and maintain gardens with a blend of textures, colors, scents, shape and scale to compliment their indoor counterparts.

She manages the design projects, including preliminary, final and working drawings; specifications; cost estimation; contract administration and construction observation. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in landscape architecture from Texas A&M University.

VCCA residents Jane Crowder Schmitt and Carolyn Levy will also speak on April 9th, to propose that VCCA adopt a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) policy for the cats in our community. Great strides have been made along a block of Huldy, where several cats have been neutered and received shots and exams and seven kittens now have homes with loving families.

Help is needed in various areas, including identifying and building trust and explaining the TNR program to people who are feeding cats, and donations to help cover spay/neuter costs. It runs about \$60 per cat, on average; and is tax deductible through Rescue Bank of Houston.

Please come to the meeting with your ideas on how to make this effort a success. Most often, the kittens are trapped and trained and become available for adoption. – a success story for all.

Vermont Commons Civic Association
Newsletter

Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 23

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

Join us at 7:00 PM

April 9th

Mockingbird Bistro

1985 Welch @ McDuffie.



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

2012 Vermont Commons Civic Association Officers

President: Jeanette Hix
(713) 521-3337
hix@rmi.net

Vice Pres: Nancy Higgs
(512) 422-3317
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Secretary: Lance Hack
lhack02@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Andy Tallin
atallin01@yahoo.com

Newsletter: Jeanenne Hagerman
Cay Dickson

Security Patrol Committee

The Vermont Commons and Park Civic Security Patrol Committee met on March 8th. It was decided to pursue forming the non-profit organization that is necessary to form a contract with the constable's office. Once that is in the works, we will begin canvassing the neighborhoods to assess the interest of residents. The cost to residents will be determined by the number of subscribers. You may contact Margaret Immel at mimmel2@comcast.net for more information.

Don't Take No For An Answer!

As you all know, the recent opening of Torchy's Tacos on S Shepherd brought our area not only great tacos, but a plethora of parked vehicles everywhere. Of particular concern were the cars parking on the south side of Fairview between Huldy and S Shepherd. These cars were not only illegally parking so close to the intersection, but were restricting the line-of-sight of traffic turning onto Fairview or S Shepherd.

A concerned neighbor contacted the city and received the following response: "A field investigation was conducted at the 2100 block of Fairview at 2400 S Shepherd in reference to a No Parking zone. This portion of Fairview was asphalt paved with curbs, gutters and sidewalks with an effective width of 34 ft. Parking is restricted when traffic mobility or safety becomes compromised due to vehicles parking on the street. At the signalized intersection of S Shepherd at Fairview, on street parking would not cause a hindrance to traffic mobility. The business (Torchy's) which is located on the E/S mid block of Shepherd S of Fairview provided sufficient parking for its patrons and was not observed contributing to any traffic problem."

Yeah, right. The neighbor responded: "It is an affront to our sensibilities that you deem the parking situation on the south side of Fairview between S Shepherd and Huldy safe. Curbs? What curbs? There are no curbs and gutters as mentioned in your message, only grass and ditches. And, did you even look at the sidewalks? They are crumbled and unsafe to walk on.

Traffic mobility and safety ARE compromised due to parking on the street. Would you like to meet with the neighbors that have to deal with this unsafe condition? I



can easily arrange for a large group to come to your office to voice our concerns. The overflow parking from Torchy's is contributing to this hazard and to state otherwise is ludicrous."

The neighbor received a response that the situation would be reinvestigated. A couple of city engineers came out, viewed the situation and responded, "This is a no-brainer. We'll get the signs put in."

Truth and justice prevailed and happily the No Park-

ing signs appeared.

Moral of the story: Don't give up when you receive a negative response to your request. Houston is a great city and will usually oil the squeaky wheel.

THANKS to Volunteers

- Newsletter Folders: Hosts Jane and Dick Schmitt; Folders: Tom and Jeanette Hix, Marlene Garnant.
- Newsletter staff: Jeanenne Hagerman, Cay Dickson
- Yard of the Month selectors: Nancy Higgs, Betsy Banks, Susan Wilson, and Lillian Skogsberg.
- Beautification Committee: Andy Tallin, Adriana Breidenstein, Dorothy Simmons, Nina Otazo and Jeanette Hix.
- VCCA Officers: Andy Tallin, Lance Hack and Nancy Higgs for all their valuable contributions.



April Yard of the Month

1616 Driscoll St
Sharon Everett

The April Yard of the Month is the home of Sharon Everett, at 1616 Driscoll. This charming little cottage is surrounded by beautiful Spring colors in the azaleas, sweet alyssum, and snap dragons. It's a cheery spot on the corner for all to see.

Helpful Phone and e-mail Numbers

Our Website: vccahouston.org

City Council Member Dist C:

Ellen Cohen (832) 393 3004

e-mail: districtc@houstontx.gov

City Council Member at Large, Pos. 1 Stephen Costello

e-mail: atlarge1@cityofhouston.net

HPD Officer Wayne Pate: wpate43@yahoo.com

Storefront number (713) 284 8604

Office number (713) 284 8608

Daily Crime Report: <http://spotcrime.com>

Houston Police non-emergency phone no: (713) 884-3131

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays Apr 9th, Apr 23rd, May 7th & May 21st

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.

Shepherd Street Redesign

The City of Houston is in the final stages of the design for the reconstruction of the sewer line that runs under Shepherd from Westheimer to Buffalo Bayou. The construction could start in late 2012. There will be new sidewalks, curbs, street construction and drainage. The purpose of the work is to improve drainage in the area. The result will allow Vermont Commons residents to be able to drive through all of the surrounding intersections during heavy rains. Unfortunately, Vermont Commons will probably experience more drivers cutting through our neighborhood during this construction.

Citizens Patrol

Congratulations! Citizens Patrollers collectively walked 218 hours this month. Thank you for keeping our neighborhood safe. Our 4 Citizen Patrol signs are in the application status. Cathryn Gabor is the coordinator for this very valuable group.

February volunteers are:

Cathryn Gabor: Coordinator (713) 808-9240

Adriana Breidenstein

Bob Costantini

Rob Fuller

Tom Hix

Paula Holton

David Hoyer

Karen Kane

Beverly Newman

Mark Newman

Maria Rodriguez

Brenda Rojas

James Skogsberg

Lillian Skogsberg

Andrew Tallin

Stephanie Taylor

Do It In Houston in April

Through June 3, 2012 - Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads at Hermann Park. Houston Arts Alliance presents internationally acclaimed Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei's first major sculpture installation.

Through June 27, 2012 - City Hall Farmers Market at 901 Bagby. The market hosts more than 40 vendors around the City Hall Reflection Pool with an array of locally grown fruits and vegetables as well as a variety of prepared lunch items. Wednesdays, 11 AM - 2 PM.

April 6, 2012 - Houston Astros Home Opener. They play the Rockies.

April 7, 2012 - Earth Day Houston - Discovery Green
The greenest event in Houston is a one-day celebration which will focus on the merits of mindful, sustainable living while educating and encouraging Houstonians to preserve, conserve and enhance our environment and surroundings.

Just a Note From Jeanette

The volunteer efforts of residents of Vermont Commons continue to increase. If you are not a member of this very valuable group, I hope you will consider volunteering for one of the projects mentioned in the newsletter. It is not necessary to volunteer for all committees, but choose your niche and help our community to continue to be a wonderful place to live. I feel privileged to lead this wonderful group of volunteers. Thanks to all of you for making my job so much easier and enjoyable.

Your Pres.,
Jeanette Hix

STOP!

If you live on a corner in Vermont Commons, you've very likely heard the sound of screeching tires, followed by the gut-wrenching sound of metal crushing against metal as two vehicles collide. Sometimes, there are no screeching tires, just the explosion of the impact of the cars.

It's bound to happen more frequently as the population grows, as drivers use our streets for speedy cut-through routes and as drivers disregard or don't see stop signs.

Recently, a small pickup truck crashed through the gate at the home of Delia Cuellar and Russ Kane, at the corner



of Huldy and Fairview. There were three cars involved, no drugs or alcohol and it was in the middle of the day. The beautiful landscaping was mostly destroyed and pieces of the rock on the house were chipped off. No one was hurt. The day before that accident, that same yard had four children playing in it.

A week before that, a car was barreling down Brun St, turned right onto Indiana St without stopping at the sign and crashed, head on, into a parked car.

There surely have been other accidents about which most residents are unaware. The point is that it is dangerous on our streets. Add into the mix the number of residents who enjoy walking or walking their dogs several times daily. It's just a matter of time before a true tragedy occurs.

What can be done to alleviate some of this? Some neighbors have suggested putting STOP signs at every corner on all streets except Fairview, Welch and Vermont. The idea of speed bumps has been floating around for years, but the passions run high both for and against the bumps.

One thing is certain – it is time for VCCA to take steps to reduce the accidents and protect our neighborhood from drivers who disregard speed limits and stop signs.

Vermont Commons Civic Association
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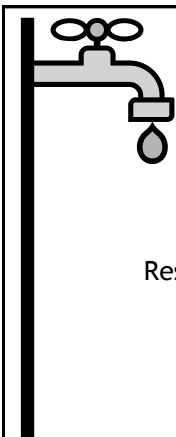
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