

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



March  
2012

## Civic Association Newsletter

### VCCA Goals for 2012

Each year the officers and residents of VCCA set goals for the coming year. It is important to set goals and to accomplish them to make Vermont Commons a better place to live. Listed below are the goals for 2012. Please volunteer for one of these projects:

- Neighborhood Improvement
- Morning Coffee
- Help/Assistance Committee
- Poop elimination
- Streamline Deed Restrictions
- Increase paid membership
- Trap-Neuter-Return
- Spring Picnic

### VCCA & Park Civic Explore Hiring Security Patrol

In response to the increase in crime, a group of about 45 neighbors from the Vermont Commons and Park Civic neighborhoods met on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012, with a representative from the Precinct 1 Constable's office to find out about contracting for constable patrol in our area. At this time a smaller group has formed a committee to further explore a security patrol for the area and to create an avenue for assessing residents' interest in participating. We will keep neighbors informed of further developments. For more information, you may email Margaret Immel at [mimmel2@comcast.net](mailto:mimmel2@comcast.net).

### Deed Restrictions Committee Seeks Assistance

It is the responsibility of all of those who live in Vermont Commons to assist the Deed Restriction Committee in monitoring new construction on Deed Restricted property. The members of The Deed Restriction Committee monitor houses from the time the lot/house goes on the market until the construction begins. If all residents provide assistance the job will be easier.

No one who lives in Vermont Commons wants to have houses that are four stories high or built right next to the street. Things to look for to report to committee members: Property for sale, construction signs, variance/replatting signs, tear-downs. The members, their email addresses and the street they monitor are listed below. Please email them with any information that that you have observed about property.

Bob Costantini: [bobcost@yahoo.com](mailto:bobcost@yahoo.com) - Huldy.

Richard Adler: [radler77479@comcast.net](mailto:radler77479@comcast.net) - Driscoll.

Del Fullen: [del.fullen@fnf.com](mailto:del.fullen@fnf.com) - Brun.

David Hoyer: [davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net) - McDuffie.

John Muire: [john.muire@cabotog.com](mailto:john.muire@cabotog.com) - Hazard.

Tom Mysz: [tmysz5322@gmail.com](mailto:tmysz5322@gmail.com) - Fairview, Indiana, Welch, Vermont, Haddon, & Peden.

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**VCCA** meetings are held every  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month.

Join us at 7:00 PM

March 12<sup>th</sup>

Mockingbird Bistro

1985 Welch @ McDuffie.



Meet friends & neighbors & stay for the

Happy   
St. Patrick's Day

### 2012 Vermont Commons Civic Association Officers

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

Vice Pres: Nancy Higgs  
(512) 422-3317  
[nkmh54@aol.com](mailto:nkmh54@aol.com)

Secretary: Lance Hack  
[lhack02@hotmail.com](mailto:lhack02@hotmail.com)

Treasurer: Andy Tallin  
[atallin01@yahoo.com](mailto:atallin01@yahoo.com)

Newsletter: Jeanenne Hagerman  
Cay Dickson

### Get Your Garden Ready

The speaker for the March VCCA meeting, Suzy Fischer, is a principal in the landscape design firm of Fischer Schalles. Opened in 1983, they offer 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, shapes and scale that will complement their indoor counterparts. Suzy 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.



## March Yard of the Month

2314 McDuffie Street  
Yvonne E. Mikulencak and Alec Horn

## THANKS to Volunteers

- Citizens Patrol : Cathryn Gabor - Coordinator ; Delia Cuellar - Tally Coordinator.
- January Newsletter Folders: Host - Kit Muire; Folders - Jeanette Hix, Susan Wilson, Karen Kane, Judi Adler, Stephanie Taylor, Marlene Garnant.
- New Block Captain (Brun between Fairview and Westheimer): Natasha Laszo.
- Home Elephant suggestion: Delia Cuellar and Wayne Ticac.
- Those coordinating the information search for hiring a professional patroller.
- Near Town Representative: Margaret Immel.
- Finding March Speaker: Susan Wilson.
- Neighborhood Improvement Volunteers: Jeanette Hix, Andy Tallin, Adriana Breidenstein and Dorothy Simmons.
- Help Committee: Wayne Ticac & Kathy.

## Sound Off!

Last night, a car came flying down Brun St, turning east on Indiana St. It crashed head-on into a parked car. A young couple had just crossed the street and would surely have been killed had they not stepped on the curb just a few seconds before the crash. I really think we need to revisit speed bumps or more stop signs in Vermont Commons. It's getting more and more dangerous as cars speed up and down our streets.

## Home Elephant

Home Elephant is a small program designed to help with neighborhood security by making it easy for members of a neighborhood to communicate. The program has a map of the neighborhood (My Neighborhood) that shows the location of all members and a list of their names.

There is a "Neighborhood Chat" section where any member can start a conversation about any topic. An "Alerts" button brings up a map of all the crime alerts that have been posted. Any member can post an alert. There is a "Map Options" button that allows the user to control the details of what is on the map. Finally, there is an "Events" selection that provides a calendar for posting neighborhood events. Any member can post to the calendar.

The program is not managed or overseen by VCCA or any one user. It is self-organized and policed. If a member is posting material that you prefer not to see, or is outside of the neighborhood, you can remove that member from your map by clicking on their name in the list in the "My Neighborhood" section. You will not see that member or any of their posts, and they will not see you or any of your

posts. It is up to each individual member to manage his neighborhood.

The flurry of emails a few weeks ago concerning the spate of burglaries in the neighborhood made it clear that neighbors were watching and wanting to communicate. Home Elephant makes it possible for alerts to be sent by any member to all other members immediately. The time and location of each alert is clearly shown on your map for as long as you choose. VCCA intends to use Home Elephant to supplement the email alert system managed by the block captains. Among other benefits, this will extend the alert system to include the neighborhood bounded by Westheimer, Shepherd, Gray, and Dunlavy.

When you sign up you will be asked for your name, home address, and email. Some people have expressed concerns about their information being made public or sold. The reality is that the risk is probably no greater than it is for any of the airline ticket purchases, Amazon purchases, PayPal transactions, etc. that we all do on the internet. In any case, your name, address and email are usually pretty easy to find. Email at [homeelephant.com](mailto:homeelephant.com).

### Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays Mar 12th, Mar 26th, Apr 9th & Apr 26th

Heavy Trash Collection:

Tree Waste: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov & Jan

Junk Waste: 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Website: [vccahouston.org](http://vccahouston.org)

City Council Member Dist D:

Wanda Adams: (832) 393-3001

e-mail: [districtd@cityofhouston.net](mailto:districtd@cityofhouston.net)

City Council Member at Large, Pos. 1 Stephen Costello

e-mail: [atlarge1@cityofhouston.net](mailto:atlarge1@cityofhouston.net)

HPD Officer Wayne Pate: [wpate43@yahoo.com](mailto:wpate43@yahoo.com)

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

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

## Living History - Ed Quilter & Tom Page

Vermont Commons resident, Ed Quilter, has an encyclopedia of memories of our area from long before most of us moved in. He shared some of that history at the February VCCA meeting. He began by pointing out that native Houstonians pronounce San Felipe as "san-FILL-up-pea", rather than the expected Spanish pronunciation. He then took us on a "tour" of the area, nearly street by street, from his memory, beginning in the early 1900s. He said that this area was "bald prairie" and that Shepherd and Westheimer were muddy roads. There was a fire at his house and the fire trucks couldn't get there quickly because they got stuck in the mud!



Pictured left to right, Tom Page. Ed Quilter

From Welch to Indiana was a pasture, where he kept his horse in 1933. The once-great Houston store, Battleston's, had a beautiful location where the Renaissance apartments, across the street from Petco, are now.

The home that Andy & Maria Tallin live in was built by Ed's father, as were several other homes in Vermont Commons boundaries.

He told of a bookie joint in the neighborhood that was raided by police using machine guns when he was a young boy. He and a friend watched from behind one of the green mailboxes that once were on so many street corners.

Ed also mentioned that the Mockingbird Bistro, where we were gathered, was once a Walgreen's store.

If you run into Ed, ask him about anything in Vermont Commons history and chances are that he'll have an answer for you. But don't ask him for any money. He'll tell you he's on a fixed income and that you should be giving him some money for living so long!

VCCA resident Tom Page also spoke at the February meeting, telling us about the sewer lines that run through Vermont Commons all the way from Camp Logan. Tom had photos of the area and an artifact that was dug up by his house and left by the digging crew. It's just a little more information about our history that we hope to pass down through the years.

## Kitty Kat Korner

Vermont Commons, like the rest of Houston, has an abundance of free roaming cats. Unfortunately, over 80% of all kittens are born to these cats, contributing to the vast over-population of un-owned cats in our city.

Some Vermont Commons residents have been practicing Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) for the cats on their blocks over the past few months and have made great strides in reducing the number of fertile cats on the streets. TNR preserves life for the existing cats and prevents additional unwanted births.

At the April meeting, Jane Crowder Schmitt and Carolyn Levy will propose that TNR efforts be broadened to encompass all of Vermont Commons. Help is needed in various areas, including identifying and building trust and explaining the TNR program to people who are feeding cats, to donations to help cover spay/neuter costs. It runs about \$60 per cat, on average; and is tax deductible through Rescue Bank of Houston.

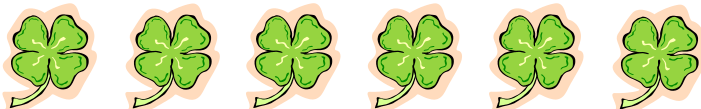
Please come to the meeting with your ideas on how to make this effort a success. Most often, the kittens are trapped and trained and become available for adoption. – a success story for all. Check the VCCA website in the next couple of weeks to see some of the adorable kittens from our neighborhood who need homes.

## Citizens Patrol

Congratulations! We collectively walked 301 hours this month. A great feat for the 23 walkers. Thank you for keeping our neighborhood safe. Our 4 Citizen Patrol signs are in the application status. Andy Tallin is coordinating these signs. Thank you for keeping our neighborhood safe. Below are those who patrolled in January.

:Cathryn Gabor: Coordinator (713) 808-9240

Betsy Banks	Michael Link
Bill Banks	Karen Kane
Adriana Breidenstein	Russ Kane
Debra Cody	Linda Perez
Julie Cornelison	Maria Rodriguez
Bob Costantini	Brenda Rojas
Delia Cuellar	James Skogsberg
Rob Fuller	Lillian Skogsberg
Tom Hix	Lisa Stevens
Paula Holton	Andrew Tallin
David Hoyer	Stephanie Taylor



## Just a Note From Jeanette

I passed the test!!! Recently I was parked in the evening in the parking lot close to Marshalls store on West Gray. When I returned, there was a note on my windshield from the police department. The questions for the test:

- Doors unlocked.
- Window open or cracked.
- Packages or valuables in plain view.

The note said: Your actions can help your local Police Department to deter crime. If all the residents of Vermont Commons passed this test, we would not have cars broken into on our streets and driveways.

Please volunteer for one of the projects mentioned in this newsletter.

Your Pres.,  
Jeanette Hix

Vermont Commons Civic Association  
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