

vccahouston.org  
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March  
2013

## Civic Association Newsletter

Issue No. 32

The Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter is published monthly, September through June.

### Developers Step Up the Pace

Are you waking to an early morning symphony of nail guns and power saws? While developers have been active in this area for many years, it seems as if the pace of new home construction in the neighborhood has recently accelerated. There are numerous new construction projects currently underway on nearly every street. Members of the VCCA Deed Restriction Committee are keeping a close eye on all of these projects to determine if the property is deed restricted and to monitor compliance with the deed restrictions.

#### Where can I find the Deed Restrictions?

The deed restrictions are available on the VCCA website at [VCCAHouston.org](http://VCCAHouston.org).

#### Is my property Deed restricted?

The VCCA web page also has a map indicating the properties that are deed restricted. The map may seem confusing, but just follow the color-coded guide.

#### Why aren't all properties in Vermont Commons deed restricted?

In the 1990s, a group of Vermont Commons residents decided to protect the character of their neighborhood by limiting the size of new buildings, density of structures, and commercial development by implementing deed restrictions. The deed restrictions also regulate set-backs, signage, and parking. At that time, property owners were asked to either sign to deed restrict or to not deed restrict their property. While most chose to deed restrict or not deed restrict, some property owners did not sign at all. At the end of a year, absent any action from the property owner, those properties became deed restricted.

#### Besides construction, what else is the concern of the Deed Restriction Committee?

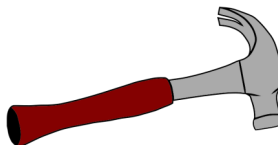
Homes used as a business. In some cases, homes in Vermont Commons are being purchased or leased not to live in, but to run a business. Residents need to be cognizant of that activity and report it to the deed restriction committee member that monitors their street.

#### If properties are not restricted, how can Vermont Commons be protected from over building?

The City of Houston has building codes and inspectors who check to make sure these codes are enforced. Some of the City codes are not as strict as the deed restrictions, but many are the same. The city codes are found at <http://www.houstontx.gov/codes/>

#### Who are our Deed Restriction members and how can I contact them?

Brun - Bob Costantini ([bobcost@yahoo.com](mailto:bobcost@yahoo.com))  
Hazard - John Muire ([John.Muire@cabotog.com](mailto:John.Muire@cabotog.com))  
McDuffie - David Hoyer ([davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net))  
Huldy - Karen Kane  
Peden, Haddon, Vermont, Welch, Indiana, Fairview -  
Lance Hack ([lhack01@hotmail.com](mailto:lhack01@hotmail.com))  
Driscoll - OPEN



As you can see, we need a Deed Restrictions Committee member for Driscoll. Please consider volunteering for this important role. Contact Jeanette Hix at [hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net).

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

Join us at 7:00 p.m.

On March 11th  
at Kenneally's Irish Pub  
2111 S. Shepherd Dr.

This will be a brief meeting followed by a social gathering.



New Location

### Got News?

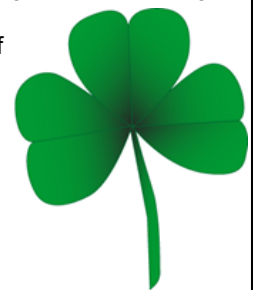
We welcome your news, photos, and editorials, but reserve the right to edit for clarity, style, and length. Send questions and contributions to [vcca.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:vcca.newsletter@gmail.com). Articles and ads do not necessarily reflect the views of the Vermont Commons Civic Association, nor is the Association responsible for errors that may be expressed by writers or advertisers. Submissions are due the 15th of the month preceding the newsletter.

*Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane, Editors*

### Who was Saint Patrick?

Seventy million people in the world claim Irish heritage and on March 17 these folks, and many millions of others, celebrate St. Patrick's Day. In the United States, this celebration usually involves wearing green and drinking beer. But was there really a St. Patrick and if so, who was he?

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is one of Christianity's most widely known figures. But for all his celebrity, his life remains somewhat of a mystery. St. Patrick was born in Britain to wealthy parents near the end of the 4th century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 AD. Although his father was a Christian deacon, there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family.



*Continued on page 2*



## Yard of the Month

This month's winner is 1615 McDuffie. Lovely blooms grace the flowerbeds in the front and creatively terrace down the gutter drain pipe thanks to our neighbors, Rocky and Bobby. Enjoy the show as you pass by on your way to the River Oaks shopping center. Their yard and home always look lovely!

### Thanks to Our VCCA Volunteers

**Deed Restriction Committee:** new member- Karen Kane

**Assistance with Deed Restriction:** Locating vital web page - Brenda Rojas

**Newsletter Folding Host:** Pam Lee

**Newsletter folders:** Robin Green, Kit Muire, Andrea Brown, Jane Schmitt, Joan Edwards, Carolyn Kevlin, Deborah Marr, Ileen Sangster, Lillian Skogsberg, Mary McBeth, Marlene Garnant, Linda Perez, Adrianna Breidenstein, Susan Wilson and Jeanette Hix

### Citizen Patrol Update

Linda Perez, Coordinator

Thank you for keeping our neighborhood safe. We collectively walked 297 hours in January 2013.

Adrienne Bukstein	Bill Banks	Karen Kane
Cindy Brown	Bob Costantini	Lillian Skogsberg
Linda Perez	Brenda Rojas	Maria Rodriguez
Mark Del Pico	Cathryn Gabor	Paula Holton
Tim McWilliams	David Hoyer	Rob Fuller
Adriana Breidenstein	Debbie Cody	Stephanie Taylor
Betsy Banks	James Skogsberg	Tom Hix

### VCCA Officers

**President:** Jeanette Hix [hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net)

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:** Betsy Banks [betsybanks1@gmail.com](mailto:betsybanks1@gmail.com)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** Emmie Chang [emmie.chang+77019@gmail.com](mailto:emmie.chang+77019@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Kit Muire [ki77019@gmail.com](mailto:ki77019@gmail.com)

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

**Newsletter:** Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane [vcca.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:vcca.newsletter@gmail.com)

### Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays

Recycling: Mondays March 11th and 25th.

Heavy Trash Collection:

Tree Waste: 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov.

Junk Waste: 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in Apr, Jun, Aug, and Oct.

Continued from Page 1, St. Patrick

At the age of 16, Patrick was taken prisoner by Irish raiders and transported to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian.

After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo to the Irish coast. Back in England, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than 15 years. After his ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission: to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish.

Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.



### Texas' Largest Canoe and Kayak Race:

#### The Buffalo Bayou Regatta.

Saturday, March 16, 2013

The Tradition Continues! - 41 Years of Racing on Houston's Buffalo Bayou

Over 500 canoes and kayaks will participate in Texas' largest canoe and kayak race. Beginner and competitive paddlers (ages 12 and up) are invited to participate in the fun on the 15-mile USCA-sanctioned race along the scenic Buffalo Bayou. The race begins at 9am at 7700 San Felipe near Voss.

Those not wanting to paddle can catch the outdoor fun and cheer on the racers. Free live zydeco music, awards ceremony, and food and drinks will be available for sale at the finish line at Sesquicentennial Park (adjacent to the Wortham Theater) at Preston Street between Bagby and Smith streets

For additional information about the 2013 Buffalo Bayou Regatta visit [www.buffalobayou.org](http://www.buffalobayou.org) or contact: Trudi Smith at 713-752-0314 ext. 3 or by email at [tsmith@buffalobayou.org](mailto:tsmith@buffalobayou.org).

### Helpful Contact Information

Our Website: [vccahouston.org](http://vccahouston.org)

Newsletter Email: [vcca.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:vcca.newsletter@gmail.com)

City Council Member Dist C: Ellen Cohen (832) 393 3004

e-mail: [districtc@houstontx.gov](mailto:districtc@houstontx.gov)

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)

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

## Notes from the February VCCA Meeting

The February meeting of VCCA was held on February 11, 2013 at Kenneally's Irish Pub. President Jeannette Hix called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, and introduced the speakers: Ellen Cohen (Councilmember, District C), Stephen Costello (Councilmember at Large), Melissa Meyer (City of Houston project leader for Shepherd Drive construction), and Ed Conger (project engineer, Klotz Associates). The meeting was very well attended.



The Shepherd Drive construction project will involve the roadway from Buffalo Bayou on the north to Westheimer on the south. The construction will include buried infrastructure (water line, wastewater conveyance, storm sewers), sidewalks, curbs, wheelchair ramps, road surface, and drainage. The planning is approximately 60% complete. Presently, the storm sewers run mostly along on the west side of Shepherd Drive. Construction will probably begin at the downstream side (north).

Construction is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2013, and should last 18 months. Work will be conducted Monday through Saturday from 7 am to 7pm. The construction will mostly occur in two block increments, with no more than two intersections being closed at any one time. Traffic on Shepherd Drive will be reduced to two lanes.

The traffic reconfiguration plan is not complete, but traffic will not be directed or detoured through the street of Vermont Commons. Ellen Cohen will assist in getting additional HPD presence for traffic safety. The construction crews will not be allowed to park in the neighborhood.

Communication regarding the project will come through Ellen Cohen's and Melissa Meyer's offices.

The 311 app should be helpful. VCCA will request a monthly update. Concerns should be directed to Ellen Cohen's office, as well as every Councilmember's at Large office.

Other issues raised during the meeting:

- how to address additional crime
- excessive speeding down Fairview and other "through" streets
- possibility of more stop signs, speed bumps, parking on one side of street only
- a crosswalk on Fairview; there is a blind couple that crosses here
- penalties for contractors for nonperformance

## Neighborhood Coffee

The March VCCA Coffee will be on Tuesday, March 26th at 10AM at the home of Lorna Ramsay 1706 Hazard Street.



***Come meet your neighbors!***

## Vermont Commons Upcoming Events

### Spring Picnic — May 6th

On Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> 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. Children will enjoy the wonderful playground. Put this event on your calendar and watch for additional details in the May newsletter and on the VCCA web page.

### Spring Clean Up — May 18th

VCCA is sponsoring its second annual Spring Cleanup on Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup>. Many volunteers are needed to be a part of this very important job to give Vermont Commons a spring lift.

VCCA volunteers will trim trees and bushes that block a clear view of stop signs and traffic at intersections or impede sidewalk traffic. Grass and mud that prevents proper drainage at street intersections will also be removed. It would be great if there were enough volunteers to clean the gutters of all the streets. Here's your chance to organize your block for the cleanup. For questions or to put your name on the volunteer list contact Jeanette Hix at [hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net).

## University of Saint Thomas presents Scenes from Opera & Musical Theater

The UST Music Department will perform "An Evening of Scenes from Opera and Musical Theater" at 7:30 p.m. on March 15 and 16, and 3 p.m. on March 17.

**Cost:** Free and open to the public

**Location:** Cullen Hall

**Address:** 4001 Mt. Vernon

**Contact:** Ann Candler Harlan at

713-525-3159 or [harlanac@stthom.edu](mailto:harlanac@stthom.edu)



**Join** the VCCA. VCCA Membership is open to all residents (owners and renters) in the area for just \$30 per year. Pay online at [vccahouston.org](http://vccahouston.org)

*John M. Doody, AIA*  
Architect

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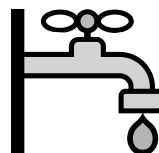
**MARY McBETH**

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Vermont Commons Resident - 2007

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