

vccahouston.org
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April
2013

Civic Association Newsletter

Issue No. 33

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

Recycle! Redeem! Reward! - VCCA April Meeting

The speaker at the VCCA April meeting will be Jorge U. Ungo. Jorge Ungo is the Recyclebank account manager for the City of Houston. Recyclebank (www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/recyclebank.html) is a program that allows residents to earn points for participating in automated recycling using the 96-gallon single-stream green cart rolled to the curb, bi-weekly, for collection.

The program is free to all residents with 96-gallon recycling carts, and is a great way to reduce the amount of solid waste buried in Texas landfills. Participating residents earn points that can be used for discounts and deals at grocery stores, area restaurants, and services. Members can register for free on the Recyclebank website to begin earning points. Mr. Ungo will talk about how the program works and the benefits of participating, and will answer questions about the program.



VCCA meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month

Join us at 7:00 p.m.

On April 8th

at Kenneally's Irish Pub

2111 S. Shepherd Dr.

Learn about your neighborhood and stay for a social gathering.



Upcoming VCCA Events:

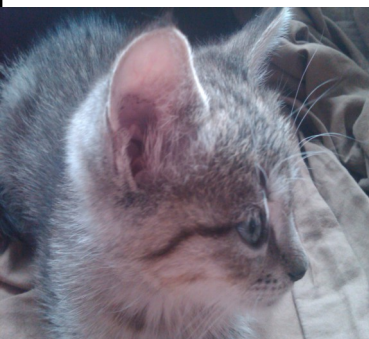
Mark Your
Calendars



Controlling the Homeless Cat Population: We Need Your Help

Spring is in the air, and we all can enjoy the beautiful flowers and budding trees. Unfortunately, none of us can enjoy kittens born to the free-roaming cats in our neighborhood. Now is the time to spay and neuter our Vermont Commons cats so we can avoid further escalation of the homeless cat population.

Your Vermont Commons Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) Team has been busy trapping and fixing juveniles born to a stray mother cat on Huld Street. Six



kittens have been trapped, fixed, and released in March alone. These cats were returned to the area where they were being fed after recovering from their spay/neuter. We are still working to trap at least two more kittens and the assumed pregnant (again) mother cat. (continued on page 2)

The TNR Team wants to ensure that all homeless cats and kittens are spayed and neutered.

Spring Clean-Up: May 18th

VCCA is sponsoring its 2nd annual Spring Clean-Up on Saturday May 18th. Many volunteers are needed to give Vermont Commons a spring lift!. 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.

To volunteer, or for questions, contact Jeanette Hix at hix@rmi.net.

Spring Picnic: May 19th (revised date)

On Sunday May 19th at 4 p.m., the VCCA will be hosting the spring picnic at Cherryhurst Park. Put this event on your calendar and watch for additional details in the May newsletter and on the VCCA web page.

Neighborhood Coffee

All are invited to the April VCCA Coffee on Tuesday, April 23, at 10 a.m. at the home of Jane and Dick Schmitt at 2105 Brun Street.

Come meet your neighbors!





Yard of the Month

1815A Brun Street

Todd Creger's beautiful new back deck and side yard landscape redesign wins hands' down this month! You'll be especially impressed if you drive or walk by after dusk to appreciate the new landscape lighting. Todd has won "Yard of the Month" before, but we gave him a unanimous vote for this outstanding new look!

Thanks to Our VCCA Volunteers!

Newsletter Hosting: Jeanette Hix. **Folders:** Marlene Garnet, Madeleine Schlemmer, Audry Crawford, Ann Ince, Carole Dodson, Pam Lee, Illene Sangster, Susan Wilson, Adrianna Breidenstein and Stephanie Taylor. **Pick-up from Printer & Mail:** Susan Wilson.

Kenneally's Irish Pub for letting the VCCA have monthly meetings at the pub (and for having Guinness on draft!).

Law and Order: GCS* Christine Reed and Ann Ince for keeping our streets clean.

March (Meeting) Madness: Karen Kane for conducting March's meeting in the absence of other officers, and Kit Muire for taking notes.

Pro Tem Block Captain Chair: Brenda Rojas for acting as Block Captain Chair in Betsy Banks's absence.

* *Graffiti-Cleaning Squad*

Trash Talk

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays (Schedule B)

Recycling: Mondays: April 8th and 22th.

Heavy Trash Collection:

Tree Waste: 1st Wednesday in May, Jul, Sep, and Nov.

Junk Waste: 1st Wednesday in Jun, Aug, Oct, and Dec.

Controlling the Homeless Cat Population

...continued from page 1

Please help us help the neighborhood! If you are feeding cats and need assistance trapping/fixing them, send us an e-mail. If there are free-roaming cats or kittens around your house, send us an e-mail. Our contact information is shown below.

Remember, acting quickly is important when it comes to trapping kittens. The earlier in their lives they are trapped, the more likely they can be tamed and offered a safe and loving home. The following Vermont Commons residents are working hard to humanely remedy the stray cat issue in our neighborhood:

Carolyn: HoustonCatLover@gmail.com

Jane: jlc2728@gmail.com

Cay: ocad1@gmail.com

Lisa: blrainey2@sbcglobal.net

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to help pay for the spay/neuter of VCCA free-roaming cats, please send your check made out to **Rescue Bank** (make sure to write "Vermont Commons TNR Project" on the bottom of the check). Checks should be mailed to:

Ms. Elizabeth Asher, Executive Director

Rescue Bank

6363 Woodway, Suite 975

Houston, TX 77057

VCCA Officers

President: Jeanette Hix hix@rmi.net

1st VP: Betsy Banks betsybanks1@gmail.com

2nd VP: Emmie Chang emmie.chang+77019@gmail.com

Secretary: Kit Muire ki77019@gmail.com

Treasurer: Andy Tallin atallin01@yahoo.com

Newsletter: Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane
vcca.newsletter@gmail.com

Helpful Contact Information

Our Website: vccahouston.org

Newsletter Email: vcca.newsletter@gmail.com

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

The Origins of Earth Day: April 22

Most people know that Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, has something to do with the environment and clean-up activities. But how did it get started? Earth Day grew out of the activism and social upheaval of the 1960s—a time of civil rights demonstrations, war protests, and generational clashes. Added to this volatile mix was growing concern about ecological and environmental issues.

In the '60s, American cars guzzled \$0.30/gallon leaded gasoline through massive and inefficient V8 engines. Air pollution and lifeless waterways were commonly accepted as the cost of prosperity. Rachel Carson's seminal 1962 bestseller, *Silent Spring*, shocked the nation with its description of the devastating effects of pesticide use on wildlife. The title referred to a future without birds and discussed the destructive effects of toxic chemicals on the ecosystem, and ultimately on mankind.

Former US Senator and Governor Gaylord Nelson (Wisconsin) is widely recognized as the primary force behind Earth Day. Nelson believed the state of the environment "...was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country." He urged President Kennedy to promote environmental initiatives during Kennedy's 1963 national "conservation tour." In 1964, Congress passed the sweeping Wilderness Act, which protected more than 9 million acres of federal land from development.

Over the next six years, however, Nelson grew more and more frustrated by Washington's inability to make meaningful headway. His solution was to reach out to an increasingly alarmed public, proposing a national "teach-in" on environmental issues. And so, on April 22, 1970, some 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment and policy reform. Senator Nelson directly credited the first "Earth Day" with persuading politicians that environmental legislation had a substantial and lasting constituency.

Significant legislation was passed in the wake of Earth Day, including the Clean Air Act Extension and laws to protect drinking water, wild lands, and the ocean. The Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1970 by President Nixon. Among the provisions of these bills was the requirement that autos use unleaded gasoline, achieve a minimum number of miles-per-gallon of gasoline, and be equipped with catalytic converters.

Earth Day is now observed in 175 countries. What should we do on Earth Day? Everyone can make a difference: walk more, ride less, buy less, grow some of your own food, recycle, plant a tree—participate, volunteer, get involved. As philosopher and educator Marshall McLuhan noted in 1964, "There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew."

Michael Forlenza



Vermont Commons residents enjoying a March outing for a dim sum lunch (l to r): Lillian Skogsberg, Ileen Sangster, Adriana Breidenstein, Pam Lee, Carole Dodson, Vivian Wang, Carolyn Kevlin, Linda Perez, Pamela Davis, Not pictured: Mary McBeth and Nina Westerfeld.

Watch Out for Trees

Trees make our neighborhood more livable for us and for our feathered friends. **Trees on most City of Houston right-of-ways are protected as described in sections V and VI of Chapter 33 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances pertaining to the protection and preservation of trees and shrubs on city property.** This includes trees on right-of-ways, medians, parks and other city property. A permit is required to remove any tree on city property or on a setback.

If you see any tree that may potentially be cut down on or near the right-of-way, call Dale Temple at 832-395-8459 or email him at dale.temple@houstontx.gov. (Keep in mind that the right-of-way typically extends farther from the street than the sidewalk.) Dale is an employee of the City of Houston and his job is to protect trees in Houston. He will make a site visit.

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. 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*

Don't Miss the Upcoming Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, April 20, 2013

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension
Harris County Office
3033 Bear Creek Drive
Houston, Texas 77084



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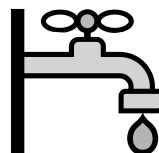
MARY McBETH

Experience You Can Count On

Licensed Realtor - 1994
Vermont Commons Resident - 2007

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