

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



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CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year 2014

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Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219
Issue No. 40

January VCCA Monthly Meeting

The Monday **January 13th VCCA meeting** will be at Café Ginger located at 1952 West Gray Street in the shopping center near the intersection with Driscoll. There will be two speakers for the January meeting followed by a so-

cial gathering. The two speakers will be Heather N. Cook and Josh Hawes



Heather N. Cook is an Assistant City Attorney in the Neighborhood Services section of the City Attorney's office. In particular, she is charged with enforcing deed restrictions for Council Districts C and G. Her office also handles dangerous building abatement, nuisance abatement, deed restriction review from Planning Commission meetings, and TABC license challenges, among other things. Ms. Cook received her law degree from the University of Houston Law Center and earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Trinity University. With the exception of her college years, she has been a resident of the Houston area since 1976.

Ms. Cook will give presentation regarding deed restrictions. She will be discussing the City of Houston deed restriction enforcement process in general terms and will not be able to address the validity or enforceability of specific restrictions, or prior or current deed restriction complaints due to confidentiality concerns.

John Hawes is the Director of Services for the Montrose Management District. Mr. Hawes will provide a short presentation about security in the Montrose Management District area. The Montrose Management District, includes the area of the Vermont Commons Civic Association. Mr. Hawes will speak about the plan to have off-duty Houston police officers patrol our neighborhood. See the related article on the Montrose Management District on Page 2.

VCCA to Merge with PCA

Vermont Commons Civic Association (VCCA) and Park Civic Association (PCA) will merge in the coming year. Park Civic will assume the VCCA name. The first reading of the change to the VCCA by-laws is at the January meeting. The second reading will be at the February meeting. After the reading, VCCA residents will then vote to accept Park Civic as a part of VCCA. Park Civic will then notify their residents and vote to join VCCA.

It has been a long process, with a lot of hard work and organization by residents of the PCA. Cindy Brown, Park Civic resident, has been the leader in this merger. When the PCA asked to join VCCA, VCCA residents voted to accept the merger on condition that the PCA organize and begin to help with the VCCA activities. The PCA went beyond what was expected and VCCA is anxious for the merger to take place.

DEED RESTRICTIONS: Vermont Commons and Park Civic will maintain their own Deed Restrictions and have their own individual committees to oversee the deed restrictions. All other activities will be combined.

The VCCA covers the area bounded on the south by the line that is parallel and 250 feet north of Westheimer Road, on the north by Haddon Street between Huldy and McDuffie Streets and by Peden Street between McDuffie and Dunlavy, on the west by Huldy Street south of Haddon and McDuffie Street north of Haddon, and on the east by the westside of Dunlavy Street. The area excludes the properties that abut directly onto Westheimer Road and the properties contingent with such properties.

Security and the Montrose Management District

The **Montrose Management District** (MMD) officials have committed to providing off duty armed HPD officers to patrol our neighborhood for the next few months.

These off-duty officers will be uniformed and driving black SUVs. They have committed to both day and night patrols. At the request of the VCCA, the officers will visit every construction site on a regular basis...just to say 'Hi.' VCCA representatives explained to the MMD about the need for a 'highly visible police presence' in our area.

Both Park Civic and Vermont Commons residents are located in the MMD. The MMD's function is to supplement city services, including security to Montrose businesses. The service is funded by businesses paying a separate tax to the district. This area includes the River Oaks shopping center. Weingarten Realty has been very supportive of our concerns regarding safety, and very helpful in obtaining our inclusion in security services. If you are not familiar with the MMD review the website at: <http://montrosedistrict.org/>.

Note: An off duty HPD – can write a ticket – in addition to making arrests, so no running stop signs!!!!

Street Awareness and Safety from Officer Pate

You MUST be aware of your surroundings at all times.

- Observe vehicles - colors, makes, models, damages, stickers, plates.
- Make note of people- race, size, weight, height, hat, shirt, pants, shoes, cap, walk, accent. MAKE MENTAL NOTES.

You have to PAY ATTENTION and make it a HABIT. Because if YOU DONT, YOU will be a STATISTIC.

If your walking your dog, or just walking on the sidewalk, don't be afraid to cross the street if someone is walking toward you. Don't feel bad, if you are just the nicest person and don't want to hurt their feelings, by crossing the street. I DONT CARE! You are just taking precaution steps to protect yourself. DONT FEEL BAD. Your SAFETY is first.

Think about the (what if's) and what would you do. You first see somebody from a distance, they are walking towards you. Your thinking, they will probably ask for money, directions or something. Think and be prepared on what your going to say or do, before they get to you. They may not even ask you anything, they may be just walking by. BUT you are still prepared for the what if's. The first words out of their mouth, you could say "DONT BOTHER ME" and keep walking. Don't let him talk and you listen and you fall into a scam. BE PREPARED. If you walk with a ear phones or the phone to your ear, you are surely NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS. Because that lion is in the bushes and is waiting on you to get close enough to make you his prey. Because your are NOT PAYING ATTENTION. DON'T BE A VICTIM.

This information I'm giving you is to help you be aware. It cant stop a criminal from making you a victim. You have to be aware of everything around you. Take these tips and use them. Think of the WHAT IF'S. I think that is very important in being prepared on what to do in certain circumstances. Be Prepared. ITS A MUST!

Citizen Patrol Update

Linda Perez, Coordinator

The members of Citizen Patrol listed below drove and walked through our neighborhood for a total of 411 hours in November. Thank you for looking out for your neighbors. Keep up the good work Citizen Patrol!

Lillian Skogsberg
Jim Skogsberg
Andy Tallin
Betsy Banks
Bill Banks
Brenda Rojas
Cathryn Gabor
Stephanie Taylor
Rob Fuller
Karen Kane
Julie Cornelison
Tom Hix

Jeanette Hix
David Hoyer
Bob Constantini
Maria Rodriguez
Mark Del Pico
Debbie Cody
Cindy Brown
Paula Holton
Linda Perez
Helen Mann
Kasey Buchtien
Adrienne Bukstein

THE HOUSTON MARATHON IS COMING TO THE VCCA!

The Chevron Houston Marathon and the Aramco Half-Marathon will pass through our neighborhood on Sunday January 19th starting at 7 AM. The new course will take runners out West Gray, south on South Shepherd, and then west on San Felipe. This is a chance to get a close up view of some world-class runners. This is a festive city-wide event, but make sure to plan ahead for the area road closures on January 19th. The long anticipated road work on South Shepherd is scheduled to start shortly after the races.



VCCA Officers

President: Jeanette Hix hix@rmi.net
1st VP: Betsy Banks betsybanks1@gmail.com
2nd VP: Robin Green
Secretary: Lisa McDavid lisamcdavid327@gmail.com
Treasurer: Andy Tallin atallin01@yahoo.com
Newsletter: Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane vcca.newsletter@gmail.com



Yard of the Month

January Yard of the Month

The nod for January goes to 2505 A and B McDuffie. Yellow flowers pop out of colorful sidewalk pots and make us smile on chilly days of late. Complimented by FUN huge holidays ornaments draping the balcony next-door! New VCCA neighbors - Yay!



VCCA Caps a Successful 2013

The Joint VCCA and PCA Holiday Party on December 9th was a very successful event drawing many neighborhood residents in a festive mood. The gathering spurred Lisa McDavid to pen this ode:

'twas the night of the Holiday Party

*'twas the night of the Holiday Party you see, and all through the community, spread a wide warm sense of unity.
Vermont Commons and Park Civic had joined their might.
We all knew it would be one heck of a night.
Out in the street, there rose such a clatter. We assumed a construction worker, up on a ladder.
To our wondering eyes would arise, Jeanette Hix and oh what a surprise.
Dressed all in red from toe to head.
She rode in a sled which eight tiny reindeer had lead.
I will never forget the words she did bark,
On, Brun and McDuffie, Hazard and Driscoll, Morse and Woodhead, Elmen and Park.
Our red-nosed Huldy will lead us though the dark."
Into the air and away they did go...all the way, to Churrasco.
Inside the elves were busy at work: Angelica Crespo, Elizabeth McKenzie,Carolynn, Kelvin, Lillian Skogsberg, Sheila Armsworth, Bea Hazner, Jane Ingversen, BR Simon, oh and Jeanette, let's not forget.
The food was spread all over the place.
Everyone was anxious to give it a taste.
There was beef and chicken, shrimp and more.
Only \$5, paid at the door.
The wine was flowing as the spirit was growing.
Oh, what a party this association was throwing.
Attendance was counted at 110.
Same time next year, we'll do it again.*

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. Submissions are due the 15th of the month preceding the newsletter. Michael Forlenza & Karen Kane, Editors

Come for Coffee

Craving some java and good conversation? Then come meet your neighbors at the monthly Morning Coffee! The hostess for the January coffee will be Jane Crowder Schmitt on January 7th (Tuesday) @10am, 2105 Brun Street between Fairview and Indiana.



Letter to the Editor:

Regarding the article in Association Newsletter recommending parking in the driveway or garage, the article should have included a warning that if your car is parked in your driveway and it is any way obstructing the sidewalk the City of Houston will ticket you. Although prosecution seems to be selective, I have received a ticket twice. I know other neighbors have as well. I now park my car in the street.

Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of the civic association

Regards,
Mary Goodman

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Rebecca M. Harvey, D.D.S., P.A.

drharvey@dentisthouston.com
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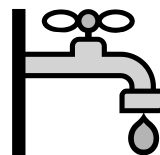
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