



Vermont Commons Civic Association Newsletter

May
2011

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

Looking Out For Each Other

Officer Wayne Pate of the Neartown Storefront HPD station, spoke at the April meeting and spent most of the night answering questions about the recent crime in our area. Officer Pate does an outstanding job of keeping us informed about what's happening in the neighborhood, and he is very accessible. Here are some of the points he emphasized:

- Use your burglar alarms.
- Leave lights on in your home (use compact fluorescent bulbs or have lights on timers).
- Write down serial numbers & model numbers of phones, computers, cameras, TVs, etc.
- Be aware at all times of your surroundings – notice cars, people or activities that don't seem "normal".
- When you're walking (with or without a dog), look at people, places and things. Let people know you see them.
- Don't leave ANYTHING of value in your car. Ever.
- If you feel like you're being followed, go where there are a lot of people.
- If you FEEL like something's not right, it probably isn't.
- Call HPD if you think or feel something is wrong or just out of the ordinary. 713-884-3131 (NON-emergency); 911 (Emergency only).
- The storefront station is at 802 Westheimer, 713 284-8604. Open from 6 AM - 10 PM Monday-Friday. The "beat" is 1A20.

According to a recent article in the Houston Chronicle, there are three ways home invaders have been getting in recently -- busting down the front door (smash & grab), getting a homeowner to answer the door by using a woman with a sad story, or by walking in through an unlocked door in the garage. Some suggestions to deter crime are to put a large dog water bowl by your door, put alarm company sticker or signs in visible areas, put a fake (or real) camera where it can be seen, use 2- to 3-inch wood screws in your front door and have a plan for what to do if a criminal comes into your house. Use the element of surprise that he is using on you.

At The Very Top

Thanks to VCCA Treasurer Andy Tallin for his persistent and diligent work in getting the sign toppers for Vermont Commons' street signs. Thanks also to the volunteers who got up early Saturday morning on April 17th to climb up and down a ladder at every sign to attach the toppers. It's one more step to let people know they're in Vermont Commons. Volunteers included Andy, Tom & Jeanette Hix, John Muire, Carlos Faxas, Bill and Betsy Banks and Dr. David Hoyer.



Vermont Commons Civic Association
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VCCA meetings are held every 2nd
Wednesday of the month.

Join us at 7:00 PM
May 11th

Mockingbird Bistro
1985 Welch @ McDuffie.

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



May Speaker

Our next speaker, Mr. Chalon Dilber, will assist us in a deeper exploration of various security options as they relate to individual homes or to the neighborhood at large. Mr. Dilber lives on Hazard and is currently working for Safety Vision as Director of Marketing and Product Management.

Holiday Garbage Collection

There will be no garbage collection services on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30th. On Tuesday, May 31st, Monday's garbage and yard waste will be collected.

2011 Vermont Commons Civic Association Officers

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May Yard of the Month

Lynda L. Transier
1610 Hazard St

The Yard of the Month for May is at 1610 Hazard and belongs to Lynda L. Transier. The beautiful bursts of color in the petunias on the right side of the house are balanced just perfectly with the blooming Confederate Jasmine growing along the left side. See it before the heat sets in!

Memorial Day, May 30th
Remember the soldiers who died in service of our country.



Crime In Vermont Commons

- March 28th - At 4 AM, someone attempted to kick in the front door of the townhouse at 2021 Haddon St (the corner of Haddon St and McDuffie St). Fortunately the door held, so they were unsuccessful. The resident was home at the time and, hearing the commotion, went down and scared them away (he heard two people talking outside). He has filed a police report.
- April 1st - A house was broken into in the 2200 block of Huldy St. The suspect jumped the fence heading east to Brun St. The stolen goods were left on the property at 2206 Brun St, Clive and Barbara Dodson's property. A K9 unit lost the scent on Brun St and the police surmised that there was a getaway car. Fortunately, most all the stolen property was dropped while fleeing and was returned to the victim's possession.
- April 2nd - A townhouse in the 1800 block of Brun St was broken into. As reported to Jeanette Hix, two men broke the glass of the front door, the alarm went off, they grabbed a few items and then went running down the street. This was all in full view of several people walking their dogs.

A Little Wine, A Little Food Monthly Neighborhood Wine Tasting

Each month, residents of VCCA and Park Civic Association gather to visit, drink wine and nibble on a few appetizers. The event takes place on the 4th Friday of the month in the home of a volunteer. Each attendee is asked to bring a bottle of wine and an appetizer to share. If you would like to attend or to host a wine tasting, send your email address to Sheila Armsworth (jarmsworth@comcast.net), who coordinates the events. Each month you will receive an email telling you where the event is being hosted and what type of wine to bring. This is a fun event and a great opportunity to meet your neighbors!

Houston Art Car Parade

The Houston Art Car Parade is May 22nd from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM. If you have not watched this parade you have missed a real treat. The parade is on Allen Parkway from Bagby to Waugh. The parade is one of the largest in the United States with cars from all over the USA. For more information check out this web site. www.orangeshow.org/en/cev/15/

Helpful Information

Garbage & Yard Trimmings: Mondays
 Recycling: Mondays May 9th, May 23rd, Jun 6th, Jun 20th
 Heavy Trash Collection:
 Tree Waste: 1st Tuesday in Jul, Sep, Nov, Jan, Mar & May
 Junk Waste: 1st Tuesday in Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec, Feb & Apr
 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 New Website: vccahouston.org
 City Council Member Dist D:
 Wanda Adams: (832) 393-3001
 e-mail: districtd@cityofhouston.net
 City Council Member at Large, Pos. 1 Stephen Costello
 e-mail: atlarge1@cityofhouston.net
 HPD Officer Wayne Pate: wpate43@yahoo.com

Go to vccahouston.org for more helpful info, phone numbers & links to city services.

THANKS to Volunteers

- To Margaret Lam for researching information on behalf of the Deed Restriction Committee.
- To the Block Captains who have been passing on information to the residents on their street.
- To Cathryn Gabor for volunteering to help organize the Citizen's Patrol.
- To Cay Dickson and Jeanenne Hagerman for creating a fabulous newsletter every month.
- To Jeanenne Hagerman, Carrie Aldridge, Nancy Higgs and Tom Hix for helping fold the April newsletters.
- To the Deed Restriction Committee Members, David Irvin, Lance Hack, David Hoyer and Adrianna Breidenstein and VCCA Officers for their tireless efforts in tackling recent Deed Restriction problems.
- To the Web Crew, Delia, Wayne and Carlos for their constant improvement of the Web Page.

Speed Bumps or Stop Signs

If you're interested in getting speed bumps or stop signs on more streets in VCCA, here's the place to go for information. Cathryn Gabor has said she'd head up a group to take action to slow things down around here. Speak up - speed kills, and there's too much of it going on in our area! (http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/divisions/traffic/ntmp_application_form.pdf)

Block Captains Needed

Do you want to help build a sense of togetherness on your block? Do you have time to forward a few emails? Then we need you to join us and become a block captain. Speaking from experience, the work is minimal and your efforts will be greatly appreciated by your neighbors. Simply collect names and contact information from your neighbors, either in person or by distributing a flyer, and create an email list. Then as you receive important information from the Vermont Commons Civic Association via email, immediately forward it to your buddies on the block. As you may know, there have been a few break-ins in the neighborhood. Our email network quickly spreads the word and could prevent future incidents. Improving communication among neighbors is an important priority for the VCCA.

Lost or Found An Animal...or Anything Else?

Use VCCA's website to tell everyone about a lost or found animal (or anything else). It's a great way to include a photo and get the word out fast.

Just a Note From Jeanette

The Sign Toppers look great!! Thanks, Andy, for your months of work to bring the project to fruition. There was such a huge crowd at the April VCCA meeting at the Mockingbird Bistro. There was lots of laughing and joking and enjoyment of being together. Hope you all return and more residents will attend the May meeting. Officer Pate, our speaker, gave us loads of information to digest and

encouraged us to form a Citizens Patrol. There were 15 happy home owners who signed up on the spot to join the Patrol. More info in the next newsletter about the Patrol Project. What a great neighborhood we live in! Thanks to all who make Vermont Commons a special place to live.

Your Pres., Jeanette Hix



3 Feet of Separation

An obviously frustrated City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department employee was heard and seen in the neighborhood on Monday, April 25th. She was repeatedly sounding the horn on the huge recycle truck she was driving and attaching orange tags to the green recycle cans on the street. A lovely color combination, but the message was not so lovely: YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF CITY ORDINANCE.

She politely but emphatically explained that the tags were a warning, but the next time there would be no service. The retractable arms on the truck are too wide to pick up the recycle cans when there is not a 3-foot clearance on both sides. She patiently waited while I walked down my street to move neighbors' cans into correct position.

She clearly wanted to be able to do her job well. The next time you see her on your street, give her a big wave to let her know that you support her efforts. Better yet, give her a copy of this article with your signed pledge to help make this part of her route easier.

The orange tags state in part: Your cooperation will help the City perform a better and less costly service. PLEASE:

- Place container at least 3 feet away from fence, mailbox, etc. If you have more than one container, they must be at least 3 feet apart.
- Move vehicle on collection days or relocate container for easier pickup.
- Move container closer to the curb edge.
- Place container so that handle is towards your house.
- Place all garbage inside the container and close the lid completely. Overloading containers or placing materials outside or on top of containers is unacceptable. Overage must have a *Tag for Bags* sticker.
- No heavy, bulky, large or long items such as limbs more than 6 inches in diameter, tree cuttings, yard waste, grass, dirt, furniture, concrete, lumber, bricks, household appliances, garden tools, automobile parts, tires, etc in containers. This type of debris can damage the trucks. Place these materials out for heavy trash-pickup.

This information may also be found on the top of your green recycle can.

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