

vccahouston.org  
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February 2016

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Happy  
Valentine's  
Day

Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June  
Vermont Commons Civic Association  
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219  
Issue No. 61

### February VCCA Monthly Meeting

The Monthly VCCA meeting will be on **Monday, February 8th at 7:00 PM** at Café Ginger, located at 1952 West Gray Street in the shopping center near the intersection with Driscoll.



We are pleased to announce our speaker for the February VCCA meeting: **Dr. John Graham**, President and C.E.O. of the Institute for Spirituality and Health.

Dr. Graham is both a physician and a priest. He received his M.D. degree from Tulane Medical School in New Orleans and is board-certified in both otolaryngology and plastic and reconstructive surgery. He was in private practice for twenty-five years. In 1997, he received national recognition when he successfully replanted the totally amputated arm of

a four year old boy.

In 1990, Dr. Graham left medicine to pursue an even higher calling. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, and went on to obtain a Doctor of Ministry degree from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. Dr. Graham served as a priest at St.

Mathew's Episcopal Church (Austin), Trinity Episcopal Church (Houston), and St. Martin's Episcopal Church (Houston). Additionally, John ministered to the medically under-served in south-east Texas.

He retired from active ministry in 2009, and afterward completed a two-year fellowship in psychotherapy at the Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute and served at the Inter-Face Samaritan Counseling



Center. Since 2010, Dr. Graham has held

his current position as President and C.E.O. of the Institute for Spirituality and Health at the Texas Medical Center. Here, he can actively implement his belief that optimum health derives from the integration of spirituality and medicine.

Dr. Graham is the author of two books, *Mold Me and Shape Me*, and *Graham Crackers and Milk: Food for the Heart and Soul*. He and his wife, Pat, have five grown children and eighteen grandchildren.

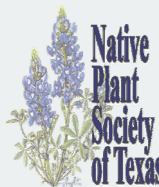
#### Institute for Spirituality and Health

The Institute for Spirituality and Health recognizes that humans are spiritual beings and that healthcare should reflect this reality. **Our mission is to increase awareness of the role that spirituality plays in health and healing**, in coping with chronic illness and in maintaining optimal health.

We bring scholars, healthcare professionals, religious leaders, and the public together to learn how spirituality can impact health and healing. The Institute engages in education, research, and direct services. Website: <http://ish-tmc.org/>

### BENEFITS OF USING NATIVE PLANTS

Landscaping with native plants improves the environment. Native plants are hardy because they have adapted to the local conditions. Once established, native plants do not need pesticides, fertilizers, or watering. Not only is this good for the environment, it saves time and money. A native landscape does not need to be mowed like a conventional lawn. This reduces the demand for non-renewable resources and improves the water and air quality. Landscaping with native wildflowers and grasses helps return the area to a healthy ecosystem. Diverse varieties of birds, butterflies and animals, are attracted to the native plants, thus enhancing the biodiversity of the area. The beauty of native wildflowers and grasses creates a sense of place, both at home and work. The native plants increase our connection to nature, help educate our neighbors, and provide a



beautiful, peaceful place to relax. Since native plants have adapted to local conditions, they are more resistant to pest problems. Sometimes individuals use non-persistent pesticides, which break down into harmless components, before sowing native plant seeds to minimize competition from the weeds. Once the native plants are established, pesticides are seldom needed. Native landscaping practices help improve air quality on a local and regional level. Smog (ground level ozone) and air toxics can be drastically reduced by the virtual elimination of the need for lawn maintenance equipment.

#### Native Plant Society of Texas Monthly Meeting

Thursday, February 18th, 7 to 9pm  
Houston Arboretum and Nature Center,  
4505 Woodway  
Social at 7 pm, meeting starts 7:30pm  
**Speaker:** Ken Hyde—Big Thicket Preserve, Chief of Resource Management

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

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## Citizen Patrol Update

David Hoyer, Coordinator

The volunteer members of the **Citizens Patrol** listed below walked 176 hours through our neighborhood in December 2015. Thank you for looking out for your neighbors. Keep up the good work Citizen Patrol!

Brenda Rojas - 14.4	Cathryn Gabor - 4
Jim Austin - 19.5	Rob Fuller - 6
Curtis Mooney - 21	Barry Brandt - 10.75
Elizabeth McKenzie - 24	BR Simon - 11.75
Andrew Tallin - 6	Karen Kane - 29
Marilyn Fehrenkamp - 3	Tom Hix - 8.5
Jeanette Hix - 15	David Hoyer - 3

## Downtown Rodeo Parade

Saturday, February 27th, 10am



Every February since 1938, the nation's fourth largest city is transformed from a bustling metropolis to a down-home celebration of Western heritage. Decorative floats intermingle with thousands of men and women on horseback to fill the streets with hoof beats and marching bands. Enthusiastic Houstonians join out-of-town spectators to line the streets and sidewalks to be involved in one of Houston's most popular celebrations! Or catch the trail riders as they head to downtown along Memorial Drive.



## Coffee Break

*Take a coffee break with friends and neighbors.*

**When:** Thursday, February 11th, 10 am

**Where:** 2217 Morse, hosted by Jan Johnson

The VCCA monthly coffee welcomes residents from Vermont Commons and Park Civic. Come meet your neighbors, and we guarantee you'll make new friends.



## Senior Exercise Program

The Senior Exercise Program at Cherryhurst Park, at 1700 Missouri, is looking forward to an active 2016. It is free and meets at 1:00 p.m. every Wednesday for a brief 30 minute session, which teaches the Quick 15-minute program. It is not overly difficult and you don't have to get down on the floor! Just come as you are; do some balance and muscle stretching routines; and meet new friends! A great program conducted by Ian Gordon of the Cherryhurst Civic Club under the auspices of the park director.

**Quick 15-minute Senior Exercise Program -**

**Wednesdays, 1:00 to 1:30pm**

## Volunteers Needed

VCCA is in need of volunteers to join a committee to set up speakers for the monthly VCCA Meetings.

Be creative. Submit ideas for subject matter to be presented at the VCCA meetings.

Also needed, a volunteer to contact local shops, businesses and restaurants to see if they could advertise in the VCCA newsletter.

## VCCA Officers 2015 - 2016

**President:** Jeanette Hix  
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**Nextdoor Coordinator:** Karen Kane [karen.db.kane@gmail.com](mailto:karen.db.kane@gmail.com)  
**Coffee Coordinator:**Carolynn Kevlin [carolynnk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolynnk@sbcglobal.net)  
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**Book Club:** Carole Dodson [cardodson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cardodson@sbcglobal.net)  
**Trap Neuter Release:** Carolyn Levy [houstoncatlover@gmail.com](mailto:houstoncatlover@gmail.com)  
**Citizen's Patrol:** David Hoyer [davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net)

## Neartown Association

**Monthly Meeting:**  
Tuesday, February 23,  
2016, 7:00 PM  
Cherryhurst Park Community Center, 1700 Missouri St, Houston, TX

## Resident of Vermont Commons since 1948

Evelyn Gardner, from strong German roots, arrived in the Houston area as a four-year old living “way out” north Shepherd on her parents’ acreage with animals to care for and vegetables and fruit trees to enjoy. She was a true organic eater before it was the fashion.

Ms. Gardner arrived on Hazard Street, her husband’s home, as a new bride to an area of predominantly single family bungalows. The homes in the area did not have central heat or air conditioning. Attic or window fans, which circulated warm air (and dust), were available. What we would ever do now, windows had to be left open for air to enter (how trusting!). Like so many Houston Streets at that time, there were no curbs or gutters, and stormwater ran in ditches. She wonders why after so many years some Vermont Commons streets still do not have curbs and gutters. As time passed, her bungalow was remodeled several times to accommodate her growing family of two children.

One of her favorite memories in her first years of living on Hazard was smelling the fragrant odors that the east wind carried from the Mrs. Baird’s Bakery that was located at the corner of West Gray and Woodhead. She also enjoyed mail delivery twice a day and the choice of three daily newspapers.

A not so fond memory was of the street sweeper noisily heading down her street at 4:00 am. She loved the outcome, but the racket at that hour was not appreciated.

Eating out did not include the multitude of restaurants that are now found throughout the Vermont Commons area. Not too long ago it was necessary to journey to downtown Houston for a meal out.

She has seen many changes during the time she has lived on Hazard, but the greatest change is in the housing. She understands the allure of living in the area - the proximity to the medical center, the closeness of all the arts and culture, and the easy access to the freeways. Empty nesters, and recently, the younger generation are flocking to the area to enjoy a life closer to city amenities.

Ms. Gardner’s 67 years on Hazard Street are full of memories of family and friends and all the activities associated with her life in our wonderful neighborhood.

*By Jeanette Hix*

### Green Tip: Shoe-Free Household

Contaminants are often tracked into homes on the soles of shoes. Consider becoming a shoe-free household by leaving your shoes at the door.

## AN UPDATE ON THE CONSTABLE PATROL INITIATIVE



As many of you know, our neighbors in Lewisdale and Park Civic recently joined the Vermont Commons (VC Security Foundation/ VCSF) initiative to implement a Constable Deputy Patrol in our area. We are pleased to welcome representation from Lewisdale and Park Civic to our Board of Advisors, and we are excited to have our three neighborhoods working together!

VC Security Foundation recently executed our patrol contract with Harris County. Pending formal approval by the Commissioners Court, our first contract will begin on March 1, 2016, and run through February 28, 2017.

The contract will provide us with 32 hours of Deputy Patrol service each week. Specific patrol days and hours will be determined using crime statistics to identify the times at which our neighborhoods are most vulnerable.

With the addition of Lewisdale and Park Civic residents, we will continue expanding the patrol program and growing our subscriber base. As our subscriber base increases, a goal for the future is to extend our patrol service hours from 32 to 64 per week.

Again this month, please find an insert included with the VCCA newsletter that describes the highlights, benefits and costs of the patrol program, along with our website and information on how to subscribe, (subscription info is also provided below).

If you have not yet subscribed, we urge you to review the insert. For little more than \$1 per day, you will receive Subscriber benefits and help create a safer environment for your family and your community. It may be easy to think enough of your neighbors have already subscribed, and your subscription is not necessary. However, please understand that a viable and sustainable program requires high levels of resident participation, and every subscriber is important to our success. Together, we can increase safety and security in our neighborhoods, and improve our quality of life. Please join your neighbors in supporting the Constable Patrol program.

To those neighbors that have joined VCSF in support of the Constable Patrol, thank you for recognizing the value this program brings our neighborhoods! We are gratified to see so many of our neighbors come together in support of this important community initiative.

**VC SECURITY FOUNDATION** (a non-profit corporation serving the neighborhoods of Lewisdale, Park Civic and Vermont Commons)

**HOW TO JOIN:** Please make credit card payments via PayPal at <http://www.vcpatrol.com/membership-dues>.

To pay by check, please **make your check payable to “VC Security Foundation”** and send to: **Carolynn Kevlin, 2120 McDuffie Street, Houston, TX 77019**. (Please include your contact information so we can deliver your yard sign!).

Sponsor: - \$500 Subscriber: - \$395 (Please support this initiative by signing up as a **Sponsor!**).

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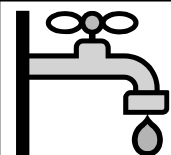
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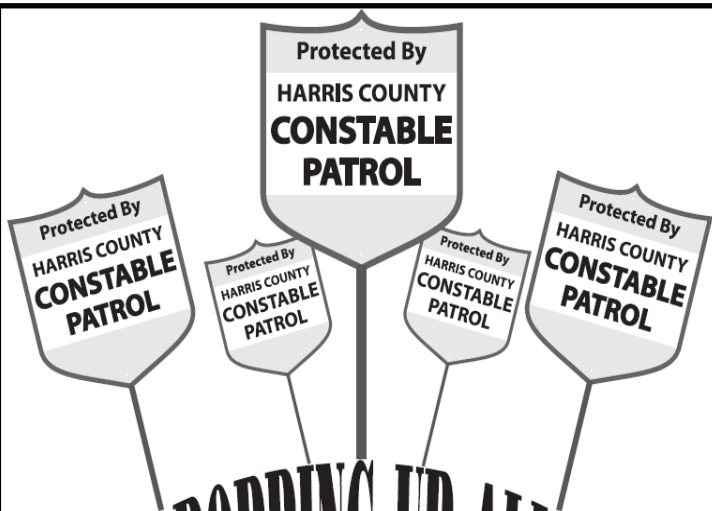


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