

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



March 2016

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Vermont Commons Civic Association  
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219  
Issue No. 62

### March VCCA Monthly Meeting

The Monthly VCCA meeting will be on **Monday, March 14th at 7:00 PM** at Café Ginger, located at 1952 West Gray Street in the shopping center near the intersection with Driscoll.



The speaker at the March VCCA meeting will discuss: **The Texas Wine Legacy and Where to Find It Today**

Texas has one of the oldest continually-running wine legacies on the North American continent going back over a century before the establishment of the well-known wine regions of California. In

the past 40 years, the recent evolution of Texas culture into a respectable modern wine region has shown to be no small task, considering that California has been at it for more than a hundred years and European regions have worked for centuries in their wine-making efforts. Successful Texas wineries have been required to learn about the adaptability of grapevines to our new locale, with different soil and weather conditions,

while also expanding knowledge of new viticultural practices to handle the plethora of local diseases that can afflict grapevines. Luckily, Texas has a long farming legacy, a deep-seated pioneering spirit, and tradition of agricultural grit and determination.



This presentation will describe the “genesis moment” when the basis of Texas wine was created by similar forces to those that established the vineyard terroirs of Europe. It will also cover (a) the

wine culture brought to Texas by Spanish missionaries and European immigrant farmers from the 1600 to early 1900s only to be squashed by Prohibition, and (b) the Texas wine-

growing renaissance since the 1970s that initially focused on efforts to use the same grape varieties common in northern France and California – Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. With the exception of some noteworthy successes, it would take Texas another 20 years to ultimately realize

that it was not Napa or Bordeaux, and sure as heck was not Burgundy. They found that Texas is something

more like wine regions in Mediterranean climates such as Spain, southern France, and Italy. The presentation will include a discussion of the major wine regions of Texas and the grape varieties that are now winning top-rated awards nationally and interna-

tionally, and “tricks” to reading Texas wine labels to identify Texas’s best wines.

The presenter is Dr. Russell Kane (VintageTexas.com) who, with his wife Delia, are Montrose residents. Dr. Kane is an award-winning Texas writer, book author and Texas Master Naturalist with articles with tasting notes and quotes appearing in local, regional, and national publications over the past 20 years. His bestselling book, *The Wineslinger Chronicles: Texas on the Vine*, was released in 2012 and his newly completed book, *Texas Hill*

*Country Wineries* – a hill country wine trail guide and pictorial history of Texas’s wine legacy – was released in 2015. Both are currently available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com).

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## Yard of the Month

1601 Hazard



## Citizen Patrol Update

David Hoyer, Coordinator

The volunteer members of the **Citizens Patrol** listed below walked 304 hours through our neighborhood in January 2016. Thank you for looking out for your neighbors. Keep up the good work Citizen Patrol!

Marilyn Grant,  
Catherine Wisner,  
Marilyn Fehrenkamp,  
Bob Costantini,  
Jeanette Hix,  
B. Rojas,  
Catherine Gabor,  
Rob Fuller,  
Curtis Mooney,

Andy Tallin,  
James Austin,  
Elizabeth McKenzie,  
Tom Hix,  
Jim Skogsberg,  
Lillian Skogsberg,  
Barry Brandt,  
Maria Rodriguez,  
Karen Kane

Thanks to these folks and possibly to myself for a continued job well done helping to keep us safe!

## Step up for the VCCA Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed in several areas. These volunteer jobs do not take much time and some are just a one-time commitment. Please consider a few hours of your time on behalf of your community. You will meet new friends and have fun. Contact Jeanette Hix: [hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net).

Volunteers are needed to help with: finding speakers for the monthly meetings, help the web crew manage the VCCA website, find advertisers for the VCCA newsletter, and help plan the spring picnic.

## VCCA Web Crew

The web crew is making new changes on the VCCA web page. Check out the new updates at [vccahouston.org](http://vccahouston.org). Two vital members moved from Vermont Commons so the web crew is in need of several new volunteers. Contact Jeanette Hix [hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net) or Carol Bjornstad [carol.bjornstad@me.com](mailto:carol.bjornstad@me.com) to inquire about volunteering. The commitment is for about an hour a month and not at any specific time.

## New Volunteers

Landa and Ken Hauser have volunteered to be block captains on Huld Street between Vermont and Haddon Streets.

## Thanks to our Volunteers

Nikki Bannister recently moved back to Louisiana so she resigned from the committee. She was a valuable member of the web crew who gave loads of time on behalf of the VCCA and will be missed.

## MARCH EVENTS

### Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™

(March 1-20) Rodeo time has been a tradition in Houston since 1932, and the three-week extravaganza at NRG Park continues to consume the city every spring. The kickoff for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ is the Rodeo Parade, after trail riders ride into town and set up camp in Memorial Park. All 20 championship rodeo competitions are concluded with entertainment by music superstars.

### Azalea Trail (March 11-13)

One of the surest signs of spring in Houston is the annual Azalea Trail. Houstonians and visitors view the spectacular gardens at Bayou Bend and Rienzi and visit River Oaks' exquisite private homes and admire their breathtaking gardens.

### Buffalo Bayou Regatta (March 12)

The Buffalo Bayou Regatta is the largest canoe and kayak race in Texas. Over 200 vessels are expected to hit the waters in downtown Houston.

### Tour de Houston

(March 20, 2016)

Now in its 11th year, the annual bike ride offers Houstonians and visitors a unique way to view the city with routes winding through Houston's historic neighborhoods, scenic districts and parks while raising funds for the city's Reforest Houston program.

## VCCA Officers 2015 - 2016

**President:** Jeanette Hix  
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**Coffee Coordinator:**Carolynn Kevlin [carolynnk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolynnk@sbcglobal.net)

**Yard of the Month:** Lillian Skogsberg [lillian\\_skogsberg@earthlink.net](mailto:lillian_skogsberg@earthlink.net)

**Graffiti Removal:** Ann Ince [annsplace44@yahoo.com](mailto:annsplace44@yahoo.com)

**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)

## Spotlight on our Neighbors

ByCarolynn Kevlin

If you thought retired engineers spent their days walking around with a slide rule looking for problems to solve, you haven't met Lillian and Jim Skogsberg. Lillian and Jim were both metallurgical engineers for Shell and Chevron respectively. Having taken early retirement, they now spend their days pursuing highly creative endeavors.

Lillian, a native Texan who received her doctorate from Ohio State University, focuses her time on creating stunning beaded jewelry, as well as enamel and metal working projects. She has a workshop set up in her home, complete with a kiln and soldering equipment. By taking classes at Leisure Learning and the MFAH's Glassell Studio School, she has enhanced her natural creativity, and is now producing extraordinarily artistic pieces.

Besides continuing to take classes in the arts, she has served as the President of the Houston Bead Society, Secretary of VCCA, and even spent a year as a volunteer teaching English as a Second Language to young mothers at a Houston elementary

school. Having devoted her years at Shell to traveling the world to assist other engineers solve problems, she's now happily using her superior intelligence and innate artistic ability designing and making objects of beauty and contributing to her community in many valuable areas.

Jim, who grew up in Chicago, attended University of Illinois and received his mas-

ter's degree in metallurgical engineering from Ohio State before going to work for Chevron. Early in retirement, Jim began pursuing bird watching, wine tasting, and photography. He now devotes most of his time and energies to photography. Jim is particularly interested in landscape photography. He is especially drawn to the Native American cultures and the magnificent scenery of the Southwest. He travels, at least four times a year, with a former business colleague to out of the way areas of the Four Corners region, seeking dramatic landscapes as photography subjects. Most of the time, these trips involve hiring a Native American guide and a four-wheel drive vehicle. The trips are definitely not for the faint of heart. He has just returned from an adventure in Monument Valley, where the temperatures were 19 degrees and the wind chill unknown. Traveling off-road up steep mountains and across icy, raging rivers while pushing their vehicle, Jim and Bart explored areas like Canyon de Chelly, known only to reservation inhabitants.

Jim's photographic journeys are well documented on the walls of the Skogberg home and in two stunning books, New Mexico Churches and Missions and Missions of Arizona.

Lillian and Jim live in Vermont Commons with their faithful Labradoodle, Gus, and have recently added a new dog family member, Lucky. Lillian res-

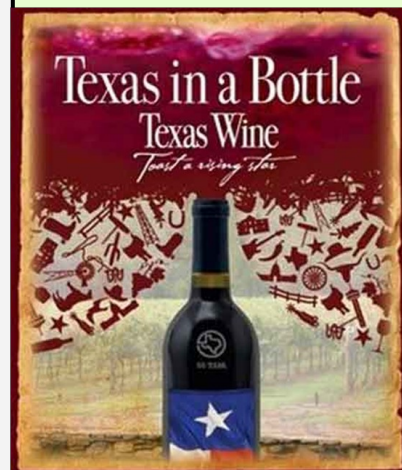
cued Lucky from the traffic on Fairview. Lately, she and Lucky have been involved in pet and owner training with Susan from Bark Busters.

So you can see, if you thought retirement might be dull for oil company engineers, it's anything but for these two talented neighbors in VCCA.



Continued from Page 1

Dr. Kane has served as the executive director of the Wine Society of Texas (501c3), a board member of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association (TWGGA), and a member of the Texas Department of Agriculture's Wine Industry Development Advisory Committee. He is a two-time awardee of the TWGGA Press Award for media coverage of the Texas wine industry. He currently contributes articles for Edible Austin and Edible Houston, provides Texas wine recommendations in the Houston Chronicle and blogs at: [www.vintagetexas.com](http://www.vintagetexas.com)



## Java Time

Take a coffee break with friends and neighbors.

**When:** Thursday, March 10th at 10 am

**Where:** 2304 Elmen, hosted by Patricia Dajani

The VCCA monthly coffee welcomes residents from Vermont Commons and Park Civic. Come

meet your neighbors, and we guarantee you'll make new friends.



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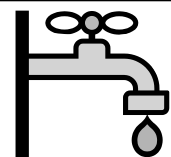


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