

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



April 2016

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June  
Vermont Commons Civic Association  
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219  
Issue No. 63



### April VCCA Monthly Meeting

The Monthly VCCA meeting will be on **Monday, April 11th at 7:00 PM** at Café Ginger, located at 1952 West Gray Street in the shopping center near the intersection with Driscoll.



### SPRING PICNIC

*We live here! We work here!  
We love it here! Come join us.*

Sponsored by: Vermont Commons Civic Association and the Park Civic Association.

**Date: Saturday, April 30th** No rain date

**Time: 5 pm**

**Place:** 1605 Woodhead St - Home of Jim and Sheila Armsworth



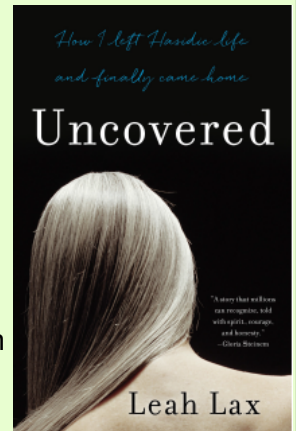
Join us in greeting old friends and neighbors and meeting new ones.

Face Painting for the young and the young at heart. Bring food to share, a chair to be comfortable on, and a beverage (adult or otherwise) to quaff. Hot Dogs and the fixings and water will be provided.

*The VCCA  
thanks our  
Sponsors*

### April VCCA Meeting Speaker — Author Leah Lax

The speaker for the April VCCA Meeting is award-winning author Leah Lax. Her memoir *Uncovered: How I Left Hasidic Life and Finally Came Home*, (She Writes Press, 2015), is an honest, deeply felt account of her years as a covered Hasidic woman, her struggles with faith and secret desires. This book forms both a riveting narrative and an eloquent social commentary on religions that force women to hide themselves — a rare affirmation of human experience by a once-marginalized and silenced woman, in her own voice.



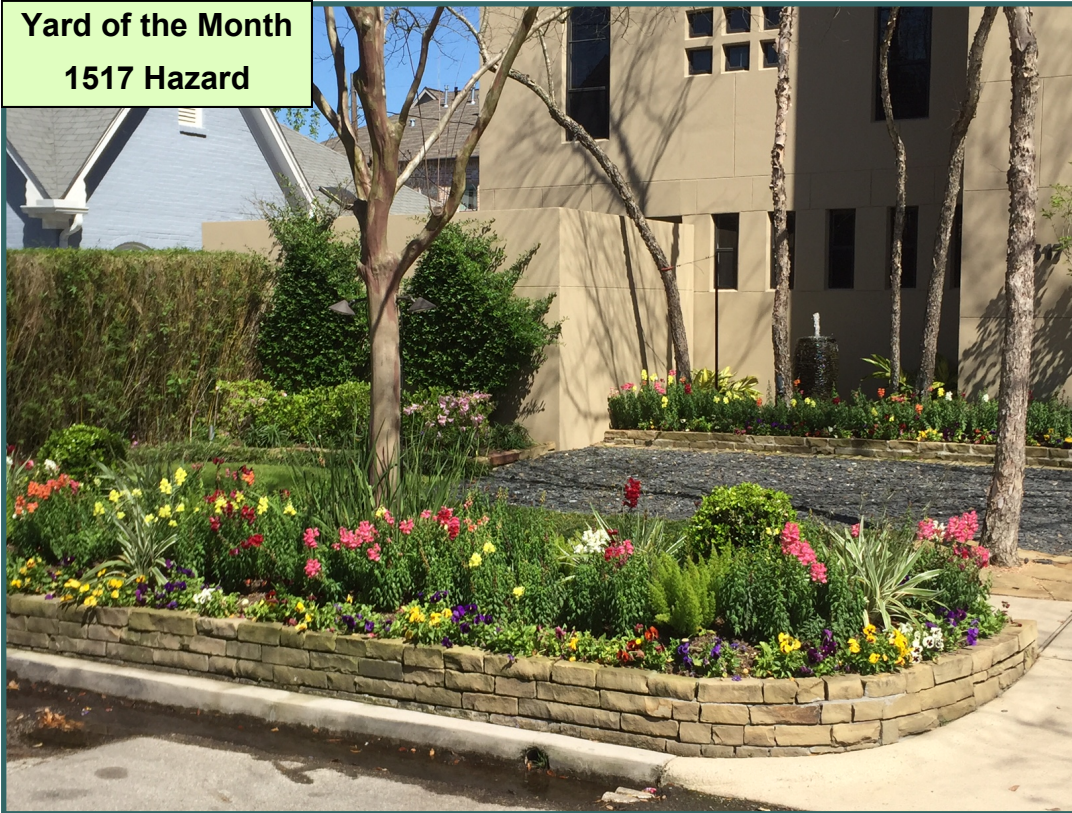
In *Uncovered*, Lax tells her story—beginning as a young teen who left her liberal, secular home for life as a Hasidic Jew and ending as a 40-something woman who has to abandon the only world she's known for 30 years to achieve personal freedom. In understated, crystalline prose, Lax details her experiences with arranged marriage, fundamentalist faith, and motherhood during her years with the Hasidim, and describes in aching detail how her creative, sexual, and spiritual longings simmer beneath the surface. The first memoir to tell of a gay woman who spent years in the Hasidic fold, *Uncovered* is the moving story of Lax's journey toward a home where she truly belongs. *Uncovered* is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, IndieBound and wherever books are sold.

**About the author:** Leah Lax has won awards in both fiction and nonfiction and her work has been included in numerous anthologies and publications, print and online—including *Dame*, *Lilith*, and *Salon*. Her work for stage has been reviewed in the *New York Times* and broadcast on NPR. She has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Houston. When she isn't writing, you can find her out walking the dog, or playing her cello, or with her partner kayaking around the world. Connect with Leah online at [leahlaxauthor.com](http://leahlaxauthor.com) on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/LeahLaxAuthor](http://www.facebook.com/LeahLaxAuthor) or Twitter at @leahlax.



April Newsletter Sponsor: **Cynthia Weil**

**Yard of the Month**  
1517 Hazard



**Java Time**

*Take a coffee break with friends and neighbors.*

**When:** Wednesday, April 20th at 10 am

**Where:** 1904 Brun, Unit hosted by Vivian Wang

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



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

**Citizen Patrol Update**

David Hoyer, Coordinator

The volunteer members of the **Citizens Patrol** listed below walked 221 hours and drove 55 hours through our neighborhood in February 2016. Thank you for looking out for your neighbors. Keep up the good work Citizen Patrol!

Marilyn Grant,	Jeanette Hix,
Barry Brandt,	Brenda Rojas,
Tom Hix,	Elizabeth McKenzie,
Marilyn Fehrenkamp,	James Austin,
Andy Tallin,	Cathryn Gabor and
Bob Constantini,	David Hoyer

**From the VCCA Board**

Recently the VCCA Board and committee leaders have discussed with neighbors at meetings the decline in the number of dues renewals and the decline in newsletter advertisers. We've sent reminders and asked for more help from you, our Vermont Commons community. We are asking again because we continue to find it difficult to raise the funds necessary to support all of the activities we host. These events include the monthly meetings, community picnics, the holiday party, Neighbors Night Out, and our outreach activities including this newsletter. Our only funding comes from the VCCA dues and from the advertisers in the newsletter. Most months the advertising does not cover the newsletter costs related to reproduction and mailing. We appreciate your paying and renewing your dues each year, and ask you to consider advertising your business in the newsletter as well.

The space in the newsletter can be used for so much more than advertising a business or a service. If your daughter sells girl scout cookies or your spouse collects donations for a volunteer organization, our newsletter is a great way for you to reach 1,200 households. Through our advertising

space, we offer you a way of reaching out to our neighborhood on an array of topics - you can offer coupons, expand your business exposure, or just let people know you're there when you need them. Please consider this opportunity and share it with someone you know who could benefit.

**VCCA Officers 2015 - 2016**

**President:** Jeanette Hix  
[hix@rmi.net](mailto:hix@rmi.net) 713.521.3337

**Vice President- Deed Restrictions:**  
Andy Tallin [atallin01@yahoo.com](mailto:atallin01@yahoo.com)

**Vice President- Nextdoor:** Lis Harper  
[lisharper@icloud.com](mailto:lisharper@icloud.com)

**Treasurer:** Robin Greene  
[rbogreene9@gmail.com](mailto:rbogreene9@gmail.com) 281.723.3554

**Secretary:** Lillian Skogsberg  
[lillian\\_skogsberg@earthlink.net](mailto:lillian_skogsberg@earthlink.net)

**Newsletter:** Michael F. Forlenza  
[vcca.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:vcca.newsletter@gmail.com)

**VCCA COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS 2015 - 2016**

**Deed Restrictions:** Andy Tallin [atallin01@yahoo.com](mailto:atallin01@yahoo.com)

**Block Captains:** Sharon McKinzie [sharon912912@gmail.com](mailto:sharon912912@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Michael Forlenza [vcca.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:vcca.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Web Page:** Carol Bjornstad [carol.bjornstad@me.com](mailto:carol.bjornstad@me.com)

**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)

**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)



## **Recycling Change Glass No Longer Accepted**

A couple of weeks ago, the city was considering eliminating curbside recycling. The contract with Waste Management was set to expire and Mayor Turner wasn't on board with either of the offers WM had been making: One contract would cost the city \$18 million over six years, with a \$95-per-ton processing fee; the other was \$11.5 million for three years. Turner, who is facing a budget deficit of up to \$160 million and is already expecting to have to lay off city employees, thought he could get away with asking for a cheaper one-year deal, wanting to save as many city employees as possible. When that didn't go over well with WM, recycling's future in Houston got a little hazier.

But the city reached a deal called a "win-win" situation for everyone. The proposal, which still has to be approved by City Council within two weeks, will cost the city \$2.7 million per year for two years, with a \$90-per-ton processing fee. That'll save the city \$900,000 a year compared to the original negotiation. "This agreement makes good economic sense for the city and for Waste Management," Turner said. "It reaffirms our commitment to recycling, and it doesn't tie the city to a long-term contract."

The caveat: no more glass in the green bins.

Glass is the heaviest recycling item and therefore the most expensive one for Waste Management to process — it has "negative value," according to Don Smith, Waste Management TexOma Area vice president. Glass normally breaks during collection anyway, and can rip up WM's equipment, too.

"Removing glass from the recycling stream was a difficult decision — some would call it a painful decision," Smith said. "But it was a necessary decision."

*Excerpted from the Houston Press article City: We Saved Recycling (Except for the Glass), March 14, 2016, by Meagan Flynn*

**Sisters enjoying the  
spring weather with  
Easter bunnies and  
Easter eggs on Driscoll  
Street**

Photographs by Nancy Higgs



## **Community Support Needed**

By Nina Otazo

Our Trap and Release (TNR) program in our beautiful Vermont Commons neighborhood needs your support. TNR is a loving and compassionate way to care for our community cats. Each cat that comes through our TNR program gets neutered/spayed, vaccinated, and aftercare from a caring neighbor.

We need your donations (of any size!) to keep our TNR program robust so that we can keep our community cats healthy and prevent any future unwanted births. Please donate (tax deductible) today to improve the lives of our most vulnerable creatures in our neighborhood...as well as the quality of our little oasis! Your donations will be used 100% to ensure that our furry neighbors get the kind of treatment that we all deserve - kind and compassionate care. Thank you for your support!

Please make checks payable to Rescue Bank and put Vermont Commons TNR in the "For" line at bottom of check.

Please mail checks to:

Elizabeth Asher, Exec. Dir., RESCUE BANK

11050 Pebble Rock Drive, Houston, TX 77077



If you have questions or would like to participate, please e-mail: Carolyn Levy - [houstoncatlover@gmail.com](mailto:houstoncatlover@gmail.com); Jane Crowder Schmitt - [jlc2728@gmail.com](mailto:jlc2728@gmail.com); Nina Otazo - [ninaotazo@msn.com](mailto:ninaotazo@msn.com); Lisa Rainey - [blrainey2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:blrainey2@sbcglobal.net).

Vermont Commons Civic Association  
PO Box 130891  
Houston, TX 77219-0891

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## RIVER OAKS GYM

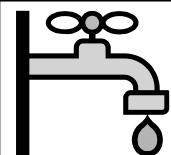
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### Rebecca M. Harvey, D.D.S., P.A.

drharvey@dentisthouston.com  
2025 Fairview Houston, TX 77019  
Phone (713) 528-4054  
Fax (713) 528-1443  
www.dentisthouston.com

