

vccahouston.org
PO Box 130891
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November 2016

CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Newsletter Published Monthly September thru June
Vermont Commons Civic Association
PO Box 130891, Houston, TX 77219

November VCCA Monthly Meeting

New Meeting Location!

We're moving! **Starting in November**, VCCA monthly meetings will take place at **Local Pour at 1952 W Gray St**, just behind Cafe Ginger. We'll be meeting in a room toward the front. We're very excited about the new meeting space and hope you will take the opportunity to join us and enjoy a glass or some nibbles at or after the meeting. See you at **Local Pour on Monday, November 14th!**



NOVEMBER COFFEE — SOMETHING SPECIAL

This month we have been invited by our neighbor, Kimberly Wilson, to coffee on Tuesday, November 15 at our regular time, 10 am. But rather than in her home, we are invited to Kimberly's home away from home, Amador Spa, 1802 Dunlavy. The Amador is in a charming bungalow on the west side of Dunlavy between Haddon and Vermont. It's easy walking from the neighborhood or there is generous parking behind the spa.

Please come by and meet Kimberly, have a cup of coffee or tea and see all the professional hair care and skin care products she offers, as well as some really attractive jewelry at very special prices. Learn about the expert services offered right in the neighborhood--hair styling, color, waxing, and facials and more. You'll love Kimberly and her spa just might become a regular stop on your schedule.

The VCCA coffee is open to all Vermont Commons, Park Civic, and Lewisdale residents. Bring a friend or neighbor with you. We look forward to seeing you on November 15.

November Meeting Speaker — Jack Valinski

Tired of driving over the same pothole? Got questions about utilities? Wondering whether you need a permit for an event? You've probably heard about Houston 311 Help and Info, but you may not be sure how to use it.

Join us on November 14th to meet Jack Valinski from the Mayor's Citizens' Assistance Office (MCAO) (www.houstontx.gov/cao/) in the Department of Neighborhoods. The MCAO, created in 1974 by Mayor Fred Hofheinz and supported by funding under the Federal Community Development Act of 1974, has a mission to improve the quality of life by promoting efficient and effective city services, encouraging community involvement and participation, and supporting neighborhood revitalization efforts. In 2011, the office became a division of the new Department of Neighborhoods established by Mayor Parker. Today, the MCAO continues to assist with the Mayor's chartered duties, responding to citizen inquiries and service requests, and collaborating with city departments, civic groups, and community partners to improve the quality of life. Jack will discuss the 311 hotline, website, and mobile app, and answer your questions.

Jack came to Houston to work for radio station 97 Rock in the early 80s as an Assistant Chief Engineer. He was Director of Operations for Metro Traffic, which provided traffic information to radio stations nationwide. He is the founder of Pride Houston, and was associated with it for 25 years, including converting the event to a night parade.

Jack has served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Council member Jolanda Jones and is now in the Citizen's Assistance Office where he represents 10 Super Neighborhoods from Addicks to the Near North Side including Neartown/Montrose.



Glass Recycling

At the October VCCA meeting, we heard from Bill Robertson, an Oak Forest resident who is passionate about recycling glass. When asked why we should care about recycling glass, Bill explained that glass can be used in a number of products and save as much as 30% of the energy it would take to make those products without glass.

Interestingly, glass can be melted down and reused almost forever, so when it comes to recycling glass, it's just a question of who is willing to do it. Bill told us that while it's possible the City may start to pick up glass in our recycling bins again, there's no guarantee. In his community, Bill has organized a recycling initiative and you can learn more about it at www.iRecycle.glass. Bill shared with us that communities across Houston are developing their own solutions, from taking glass to neighborhood depositories (there's one at the Salvation Army parking lot at 2208 Washington Avenue - available 24/7), to investigating pick-up options as a community. He also shared a map he's been maintaining with recycling and waste locations around the city: www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1rPYomJ9cuxM-FoC7OnYiqVO6iMI.

A number of VCCA residents at the meeting signed up to look into options for supporting a glass recycling program in our neighborhood, and some residents are already organizing glass recycling on their blocks. If you're interested in getting involved, please email lisharper@icloud.com to be added to the group interested in glass recycling.



Neighborhood Wine Gatherings

Do you love good wine with good neighbors? Then you'll want to join the neighborhood wine party list managed by Sheila Armsworth. These monthly wine parties take place the 4th Friday of the month around 7pm. Hosts volunteer at the beginning of the year and guests bring a bottle, their own glasses, and some food to share. The monthly invites are sent via email. If you'd like to sign up, email Sheila at sarmsworth@comcast.net. The wine tastings are a great way to catch up with your friends in the neighborhood and to meet new friends. They are always very casual.

VCCA Yard of the Month

This month is 1710 Driscoll - good job. We ask our residents to nominate yards for our monthly Yard of the Month designation by Nov 10. Send the address to: [Lillian skogsberg@earthlink.net](mailto:Lillian_skogsberg@earthlink.net).

Citizen Patrol Update

David Hoyer, Coordinator

In September, Citizens Patrol did 191 hours of patrolling (152 hours walking and 39 hours driving). Thanks to Rob Fuller, Cathryn Gabor, Bob Costantini, Kristina Ireland, Jeanette & Tom Hix, Andy Tallin, Brenda Rojas, Marilyn Grant, Barry Brandt and myself (of course) for volunteering to help keep us all safe from suspicious people and events. FYI, Citizens Patrol is a city-wide neighborhood organization supervised by the Houston Police Department. The idea is that neighborhoods are safer when residents spend time keeping an eye out for suspicious behavior. Anyone interested in joining just send me an email (davidhoyer@sbcglobal.net) or call me. You will need to do a brief training session first with Officer Pate. Citizens Patrol is ideal if you already walk a dog as you can just keep track of your hours and submit monthly. We are particularly looking for driving volunteers because we need a minimum of 30 hours a month to stay in good graces with HPD.

What Are You Passionate About?

This question is easy for Cay Dickson: Vermont Commons. Cay moved into the neighborhood in 1977, buying a little cottage with a garage apartment on the corner of Indiana and Brun.

She remembers waving at her neighbors for several years, not knowing who they were. With a passion for community, Cay struck out to get to know her neighbors. She recalls that many of the original members of VCCA were in their 30s when they started the association and most still live here today. When the civic association was founded in 1992, there were around 600 homes in Vermont Commons. That number has since doubled to around 1200 households.



From the beginning, Cay and her neighbors wanted to build a sense of community - much like a small town. They wanted neighbors to know neighbors, help keep an eye on things, take care of pets, get the mail and newspaper, and have a sense of what was going on in the community. Cay jokes that she has keys to most of her neighbors' homes!

That connectivity led to more than neighbors just knowing one another. The small group of unified neighbors continued to grow; working together, they developed a strong voice to do positive things for our community.

Cay recalled that when KFC wanted to expand, with a building and parking lot that would reach from Shepherd to Huldy, the deed restrictions that had been put in place by VCCA helped to prevent that expansion. One builder wanted to cut down a beautiful Montezuma Cypress on Brun to avoid having to put a slight curve in a driveway to preserve the tree. VCCA had the tree appraised at \$18,000 to show the builder how valuable it was, and to prevent him from killing the tree. All of a sudden, the tree started dying. VCCA contacted the City Forester and, after the tree died, the builder was fined \$8,000, all of which went to VCCA, allowing the organization to plant 100 more trees in the area.

Cay has always wanted VCCA to be a civic association that effects change for the neighborhood and protects its character. Most importantly, she wants people to get to know each other. Instead of having the "townhouse mentality" (where people drive up, open the garage door, close it, and don't talk to anyone). Cay hopes that the VCCA will continue to bring neighbors together noting that we're all united through commonality and that this is OUR neighborhood. Our neighbors here really do watch our pets and close garage doors for us when we leave them open. Cay is especially proud of her block on Brun. Most of the neighbors have contact information on fellow neighbors and they are very cohesive. The VCCA has helped put in speed bumps and stop signs, honors National Night Out, organizes book and coffee clubs, and is ready to do much more.

As our community continues to grow and change, Cay reminds us "it's so important to have a personal involvement in your community, period."

October Coffee The October Coffee was at the home of Jeanette Hix. With 25 guests attending, it was great opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones.



National Night Out

Thank you for making National Night Out 2016 a huge success! Over 60 neighbors from



Vermont Commons and Park Civic joined in the festivities at Rebecca Harvey's Dentist Office parking lot at 2025 Fairview on Tuesday, October 4th. Neighbors connected with old friends and made new ones while enjoying the great food and beverages brought by all.



Special thanks to Randall's grocery store

on Westheimer for donating food to the evening. We were fortunate this year to be visited not only by Officer Pate of Houston PD, but also by Officer Groves from the Constable Patrol. If you attended early enough, you may have noticed we had a fly by from an HPD helicopter, with pilots and riders

waving down at us from above.

The evening was lovely, and could not have been possible without the help of our volunteers: Chuck Randall, Marilyn Fehrenkamp, Andy Tallin, Jane Ingverson, Tom & Jeanette Hix, Robin Greene, Kit Muire, Ann Green Terrell, and Lis Harper.



Photo 1: Some members of the organizing committee for NNO. **Photo 2:** Some past presidents of Vermont Commons. **Photos 3 and 4:** Officer Pate and Officer Groves share tips and best practices for keeping the neighborhood safe.

Vermont Commons is a very pet friendly neighborhood. It's wonderful to head down any street and see so many neighbors walking dogs, and we're happy to have the TNR team helping care for our area stray cats. But we do ask that everyone be mindful of the neighborhood as well. Please try to keep your dogs on a leash when you let them out or walk them, especially if you know they're very curious or aggressive. Many have posted on Nextdoor about dogs barking late at night. While we know that dogs will bark and need to go outside, please try to be mindful of the hours. Pets are welcome, we just want to work together to make sure we're not disruptive.

**Polite
Pets**



PHOTOS W/SANTA

Nov. 12th*, 3:00- 5:00 PM
at Sheila & Jim's Bench
1605 Woodhead

Sun.
11/12

Complimentary For Park Civic & Vermont Commons Neighbors

RSVP Appreciated:
santa@cqrealty.com

Pets Welcome

* RAIN DATE: Nov. 13th, 3-5 PM

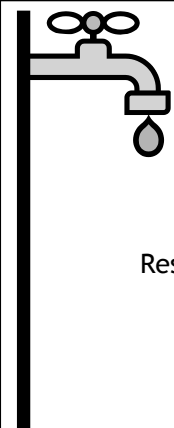
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