

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



February 2017



Happy Valentine's Day

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February VCCA Monthly Meeting

VCCA monthly meetings will take place at Local Pour at 1952 W Gray Street, just behind Cafe Ginger. We'll be meeting in a room toward the front. We 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, February 13th at 7 PM.**

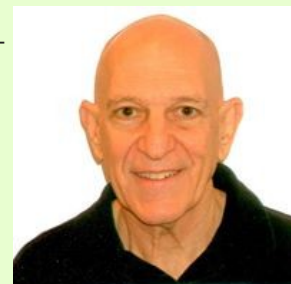


February VCCA Speaker – “Why Meditate?”

Why in the world would you waste time watching your own breath? The speaker at the February VCCA meeting will provide a brief introduction and will include a guided meditation and an explanation of how mindfulness and meditation practice can ease stress and help you focus your energy on constructive solutions to life's difficult problems. Join us on February 13th to learn from Stanley Merrill and learn how to practice some great self-care.

Stanley Merrill has studied Buddhist philosophy and meditation since 1994. He has been teaching “Coping with Stress through Mindfulness” since 2005 at the Veterans Administration, the Houston Area Parkinson's Society, The West University Seniors Center, The Houston Jung Center, MD Anderson Sugarland and at Chevron.

After 23 years of service, he retired from IBM in 2002, having worked as a Systems Engineer, Systems Engineer Manager and as an Application Development Consultant.



Meeting Speakers

Is there a speaker you'd like to hear from or a topic you are interested in sharing with you neighbors? Our monthly VCCA meetings feature speakers who help us stay informed on a wide variety of topics or present subjects of interest. If you know someone who would offer a great presentation for our neighbors, or if you would like to recommend a topic for an upcoming meeting, please email Lis Harper at lis-harper@icloud.com and share your thoughts. Suggestions are always welcome!

GARAGE SALES AND YARD SALES PERMITTING

*** NOT REGULATED BY City of Houston

- There is no City of Houston "garage sale permit." The Office of the State Comptroller regulates sales of this type. Residents are allowed to have only two such sales within a twelve-month period. Any more than two and the resident is recognized as a business and must obtain a sales tax permit from the state.
- Residents should be aware that many subdivisions prohibit solicitation and commercial businesses within residential areas of a neighborhood, and such activity is often restricted.
- Residents seeking to operate a business from their homes must meet other city requirements, including obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy.

Constable Patrol Presentation

A representative from Harris County Constable Patrol Program in our neighborhood will make a short presentation at the February VCCA meeting.

The Constable Patrol has been patrolling in the neighborhood for the past year, meeting the residents, and generally keeping everyone safer. This is an opportunity to learn more about the program and how it benefits you and the entire community.

Read the enclosed flyer to further acquaint yourself with the program and check out the web page (www.vcpatrol.com) for additional information.

If you are a subscribing member of the constable patrol or you are considering joining, the representative will be available after the VCCA meeting to answer your questions.



VCCA Yard of the Month

Our Yard of the Month Committee members drove around the VCCA area on the evening of December 22nd to select homes that had decorated their yards with lights. Here are the notable Holiday Decorations from December 2016.

Townhouses:

- 1993 Indiana- Elegant Lighting
- 2301 A Huldy - Angel scene
- 2505B McDuffie - Best Yard Decoration for a townhome
- 2019 B Driscoll
- 2120 McDuffie

Single Family House

- 1610 Hazard
- 2416 Brun

Bungalow

- 1806 Hazard
- 1916 Hazard

Restaurant

- Mockingbird Bistro

February Coffee

The VCCA Coffee will be at 10am on Tuesday, February 14th at the home of Kit Muire, 2020 Indiana (corner of Brun and Indiana).

Join us for some hot coffee and a warm reception.



Citizen Patrol Update

David Hoyer, Coordinator

The Citizen Patrol did 252 hours of walking and driving in December! Once again Bob Costantini led the way with 48 total hours. We had 4 patrollers tied with 28 total hours, Elizabeth McKenzie, Rob Fuller, Lilian Skogsberg and Jim Skogsberg. Thank you to everyone for doing such a good job during the Holidays.

VCCA Treasurer's Report as of 12/31/16

Beginning Balance 11/30/2016 (A)		\$4,988.94
Income		
Holiday party	\$558.90	
Dues	\$358.90	
PayPal (dues)	\$750.00	
Advertising	\$400.00	
Misc	\$1.93	
Total Revenue for December (B)	\$2,069.73	
	Sub Total A + B	\$7,058.67
Expenses		
Holiday Party	-\$1,430.50	
PO Box Rental	-\$82.00	
Café Ginger (October)	-\$200.00	
Sub Total C	-\$1,712.50	-\$1,712.50
Balance @ 12/31/2016 = A+B-C		\$5,346.17
Pending Payments (Dec. & Jan 2017 Newsletter)	-\$1,132.00	
Net Funds Available		\$4,214.17

Make a Vow to Help Us Find your Precious Stolen Possessions

- from the Harris County Constable

Grab a wedding ring and recite these words: "I do . . . record serial numbers, engravings or other unique markers on property I'd desperately want back if it were ever stolen from my home, my car, my luggage or elsewhere."

Here's why those words are a serious, life-long vow: For law enforcement agencies like Precinct 1, it's getting a little easier to track down stolen goods that thieves trade for money at pawn shops. That's thanks to technology and the law.

But the tracking works only if the items can be identified as belonging to their rightful owners. Your jewelry may look like everyone else's – unless it has a unique feature or a personal inscription. Older handguns, electronics, bicycles and other items that are easy for a burglar to carry off may not have come with serial numbers. So they would need to have personalized, permanent markings to help identify them. Nowadays, many expensive portable items do come with serial numbers: mobile phones, computers, flat video screens – even outdoor grills and electric guitars.

Pawnshop workers are required to copy the IDs of people they lend money to in exchange for goods. They must also send serial numbers or similar information to a database that law enforcement officers can search. If we get a match, we can recover the stolen items as evidence and track down the thief. And when the case is over, the owners get their precious items

back.

So here's your task: Etch your driver's license number into your valuables that don't have serial numbers. For items that do, keep track of the numbers and store them for safekeeping. Take photos of your prized possessions.



The Origin of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is not all about roses, candy, and expensive dinners. It has a historical background too. Contrary to what some may believe, Valentine's Day wasn't created by greetings card companies just to sell cards and candies. It's actually a church sanctioned holiday. In 498 A.D., Pope Gelasius proclaimed February 14th the Feast of Saint Valentine.

Shrouded in mystery, the exact origins of the celebration of St. Valentine are somewhat unclear. While the holiday's history is well documented through the years, the saint (or saints) it's named after is up in the air. The Catholic Church acknowledges three separate saints named Valentine or Valentinus. All were martyred.

The first was a Roman priest martyred on the Flaminian Way under Roman Emperor Claudius (c. AD 269). The second was a bishop of Terni (ancient Interamna), born around 175 AD, who was taken to Rome and martyred. The third Valentine was a martyr in the Roman province of Africa, about whom little else is known. The accounts of martyrdom of all three Valentines are legendary, although each legend may contain kernels of fact.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl -- who may have been his jailor's daughter -- who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed, "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today.

The oldest known Valentine's poem in existence was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife, during his imprisonment in the Tower of London, following the Battle of Agincourt. The holiday continued to gain popularity through the 17th and 18th centuries, but saw tremendous popularity in more recent times, with faster communication. It wasn't until the 1840s that Valentine's Day cards began to be widely produced.

Source: *History.com*



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Tips from our January Speaker, Jennifer Trandell

In January, we heard from naturalist and freelance writer Jennifer Trandell. She shared with us lots of interesting facts about the Buffalo Bayou and the impact that plastics have on our environment. We have some key takeaways we wanted to share:



- Synthetic plastics do not ever fully decompose. While plastics are broken down into smaller and smaller particles by the sun, those tiny particles still have negative impacts on our ecosystem.
- There are so many parts of our daily lives that include plastics, but if we can be mindful of our usage, eventually we can all take steps to reduce plastic usage and plastic waste. Trade out plastic shower curtains for nylon ones, use reusable or paper bags when you go grocery shopping, and carry reusable water bottles with you whenever possible.
- No one person can solve the environmental problems caused by plastics, but we can all do our part. If you're out walking, please pick up the trash you see on the ground in our neighborhood or around the Bayou. If it's trash day, you can easily throw away that trash at the next bin. It may not be your trash, but it is our environment, and we can each do our part to protect it.

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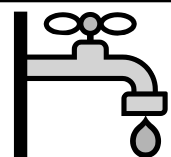
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drharvey@dentisthouston.com
2025 Fairview Houston, TX 77019
Phone (713) 528-4054
Fax (713) 528-1443
www.dentisthouston.com



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