



June 2008

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

I think we have gotten off to a great start this year and I look forward to serving as your president over the coming months. Your WHCA board has a full agenda this year, focused on enhancing and preserving your neighborhood.

Despite the recent downturn in housing across the country, the Woodland Heights continues to be a place where property values are holding strong or rising. While this is good news for each of us, developers' desire to scrape existing historic homes and build lot-line to lot-line or subdivide lots and build town homes, is ever increasing. We have seen this in many other historic neighborhoods throughout Houston: Montrose, The West End, Westmoreland, to name a few. And, it is happening in the greater Heights area right now.

That's why it is more important than ever to strengthen and add to the protections available to us in order to maintain the character of the neighborhood we all value. These protections include: minimum lot size, minimum building line, deed restrictions, historic neighborhood designation and historic landmark designation for individual homes. Relative to most neighborhoods, the Woodland Heights has many of these protections in place: over 50% of our neighborhood is covered by minimum lot size designations and over 60% is covered by deed restrictions. However, we have many holes in our blanket of protection and we can do better.

Your board has been poring over maps and making lists with the intent of patching some of the holes this year. We need your help to do this! For the most part, the path to obtaining protection requires home owner sponsors in the affected areas to obtain the minimum required signed petitions from owners whose lots will be protected. We are looking for owner sponsors to lead the adoption of minimum building line and minimum lot size one block at a time, and to obtain deed restrictions in subdivisions that don't already have them. Further, we are lining up general meeting speakers to explain the benefits of historic neighborhood and landmark designations, and to show us how to obtain these protections.

Please contact anybody on the WHCA board if you wish to take on a leadership role, and be sure to check the newsletter, WHCA website and our general meetings in the coming months for more information.

Sincerely,
Adrian Reed
President Woodland Heights Civic Association

WHCA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

—By Vicky Bettis, VP—Membership

In early March, approximately 1,900 membership statements were mailed to Woodland Heights' residents. 376 residents promptly responded with dues and contributions totaling \$16,755.00. Our goal is to break last year's record of \$26,395 contributed by 618 residents. In addition to dues, residents have very generously donated additional contributions that comprised \$6,175 of the above total. We also had a resident pay 5 years worth of back-dues and numerous homeowners who donated anonymously. Your generosity is overwhelming!

With great pride, we list our March—May "Superneighbors" below. If I have inadvertently left you off the list, please contact me. Thanks to each and every one of you!!

Andrea Vodehnal, Anita & Carl Eckhardt, Anne Goldsmith, Anne & Nicholas Vastakis, Arnold & Adriana Van Ek, Arthur & Laurel Huffman, Arthur & Vicky Mournian, Beth & Steve Fischer, Bill & Olia Palmer, Blake & Shea Hill, Brad & Mary Robbins, Brigitte & Chris Larson, Byron Burke & Arthur Gonzales, Carla & Adrian Reed, Carla Helmer, Carolie Martin, Carolyn Douglass & Melanie Ayres, Carter & Marianne Smith, Chad E & Hannah R Nulty, Charles & Michele Still, Charles & Tiffany Kuffner, Charles B Krenzler, Christopher & Laura Carter, Christopher Martin, Cindy Freeman, Claire & William Getschow, Craig A & Katherine Vollmers, Dale Jensen, Dan Hogan, Dan Smith III & Douglas Dreher, David & Jeri Dubec, David Chandler, David O & Sherry Gibbons, David S & Karen Danburg, David Woodard, Deanna & Steve Tavernier, Deborah Dunten, Debra Mcload, Donna Gray, Douglas Weigle, Edward & Elizabeth York, Ella Free, Elliott Johnstone, Eric & Eileen Olson, Frank & Summer Moore, Freddie Bartels, Fumenico Jr Reyes, Gary Ly & Jeff Kelly, George & Vanessa Chase, Glenn & Suzanne Hieshima, Greg & Pam Roche, Gregg & Elisabeth Mchugh, Henri & Janet Tallichet, Ira & Sheryl Blahuta, J B Cirincione, James & Juanita Finch, James Muhl & Pat German, Janet & Jerry Stuecker,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

"Friends of Woodland Park" Needs You!

—By Louise Moss

"Friends of Woodland Park" has been established to develop a vision for the revitalization of this great area of our neighborhood. Do you have ideas for improvements to the park? Would you like to be involved with the renaissance of this historic park? We need your help! Please contact Beth Fischer at 713-861-4502 (fischspot@hotmail.com) or Becky Houston at 713-862-1520 (bghouston@aol.com).

Habitat Highways™: #2 Designing a Wildlife Habitat Creating a Neighbor-Friendly Wildlife Habitat Landscape

—By Chris LaChance, WaterSmart Program Coordinator

There are many reasons to create a wildlife habitat, not the least of which is having a special place where we can view the wonders of nature without having to travel to a national park! And in this era of high fuel costs, there is no better time to dig in and do it.

To review the basics, it is essential to provide food, water, shelter and spaces to raise young in your home habitat. Although feeders help to bring birds and butterflies in for a closer view, it is best to include plants that offer a natural diet. Because native plants evolved along with native and migratory animal species, these are the best choices. No matter what the size or location of your yard, a single minor change in a landscape can bring from 5-10 times as many birds to a yard, according to ecologists. First, draw a map of your property noting features such as buildings, trees and existing vegetation. Next, decide how and where to install the “basics.” There is excellent reference material in books and online to guide you along. Perhaps a friend or neighbor can offer expertise. Many organizations in Houston offer classes in habitat-friendly landscapes.

Sketch a map with the plants and features you intend to include. Varying the heights of plants will help to mimic a more natural setting, keeping in mind that many birds like to feed and raise young in the understory layers. Make sure to consider the views from inside looking out. After all, you are creating this wildlife wonderland for your enjoyment, too! Start small. Installing your habitat over time can help to minimize cost and keep expectations in check. In Houston, fall is an excellent time for planting. The days are cooler and the time is closer to our normal wet season so plants can become established before the heat of summer sets in.

Maintenance is key to give new plantings the extra care required in the beginning and also to maintain plant vigor, health and visual appeal. A space that resembles a vacant lot will not help you win converts to wildlife habitats or endear you to your neighbors. Remember, wildlife habitats are intended to be assets to you, your neighborhood and your community, as well as the natural world.

The WaterSmart Landscaping™ Program is grant funded by Houston Endowment, Inc and administered by TX Sea Grant and the TX AgriLife Extension Service, all part of the TX A&M University System. For more information, go to www.watersmart.cc or call 281-218-0721.



Rufous Hummingbird on Red Rocket Rusellia

Photo by David McDonald

“Superneighbors” continued from pg. 1

Jarret & Valerie Webb, Jason & Emily Guyre, Jason & Shannon Westin, Jeff & Susan Bell, Jennifer Hoffmann Beard, John & Ann Fischer, John & Gina Barrera, John & Maria Maag, John Mccague & Ann Linville, John Thorne, Jonathan Schenck, Joseph & Ann Liggio, Karen Henderson, Karen Keplinger & Greg Stowers, Kate & Jonathan Day, Katherine & G Keith Brown, Kathi & Van Salley, Kathleen Blakeslee, Kathryn & Glendon Sementelli, Kathryn & Michael Holdridge, Katie Bradshaw & Matt Mccracken, Kevin & Cherie Collins, Kevin & Emily Haggard, Kim M Pettis, Kinder & Ann Baumgardner, Laura Turner, Layne & Catherine Thompson, Leah Ellen Harrison, Lloyd & Rachel Voight, Louise & John Moss, Marc & Cynthia G Hinchey, Margaret & Al Kennamer, Margot Dimond, Mark & Merrill Brannigan, Martin Kopacz, Matt Hawkins, Matthew & Allison Hartzell, Matthew S Emal, Megan Mastal, Michael & Andrea Mendez, Michael A Sobota, Mike Jackson, Mr & Mrs Louis Perales & Angelina, Nat & Becky Smith, Nathaniel Stephens & Dagmar Truckses, Orhan & Christi Yurittas, Pam & B.J. Lowe, Pam Terenzi & Gene Lockard, Patrice Chauvin, Patrick Rutledge & Jayne Porter, Pedro J Elizondo, Raymond & Margaret Blackstone, Reavis Maggard, Renee & Roy Hansen, Richard & Annette Williamson, Richard & Laura Gehring, Richard & Margaret Mickleberry, Rob & Weezie Mackey, Rob Proctor & Jill Whitten, Robert & Anne Baillio, Robert & Elizabeth Hickman, Robert & Jackie Witt, Russell Denson, Ruth Fletcher, Sandra Blair, Scott & Key Selvig, Sean & Laura Haley, Susan & Chris Dray, Taff & April Weinstein, Thane A Wyman, Theodore & Chyna Harris, Thomas & Anne Olson, Tim & Kathy Lee, Timothy & Christa Gaugtyler, Tom Rekc & Annie Teehan, Tritt & Pat Hallmark, Victor & Katherine Kopycinski, W Paul Kellog & Robin Curtis, Wilda Ryvers Pecore, and Zion Lutheran Church.

In addition to our generous residents, the following “Friends of the Neighborhood Donors” have given \$420 to date. A big “thank you” to our outlying neighbors: Brian Kerns, Catherine Read, Fcs Photos, Karen Zorn, Larissa Lindsay, Linda Poyser, Lori Trautwein, Marci Perry, Margaux Methe, Mary Murphy, Sarah Nicely, Steve Colvin and Studio Nia Moves.

Yard of the Month

—By Jill Whitten

Sponsored by Buchanan's Native Plants

Denise Carraux, YOM winner at **2701 Julian**, has a philosophy “keep planting ‘til it grows.” Greg did the hardscape, stone walls and beds, iron fence and paths. These gardeners have created a private luscious paradise and on the cool evening when we chatted, they were outside on the porch enjoying their handiwork—what a concept! Redbud, Bradford pear and Italian Cypress, angel trumpet—they planted it all. You can also see (and smell) gardenias, roses, blue haze, geraniums, pepper plants, Mexican heather, lantana, bulbine and azaleas. Thank you to these creative, hard working gardeners!

Security Report

—By Chuck Britton, VP—Security

The operation along White Oak Bayou, undertaken by the Houston Police Department (Operation Greensweep), has reduced overall crime in the area by 27%. There were 42 felony arrests, mostly for narcotics violations, and over 1000 misdemeanor arrests made. Since the numbers of arrests are declining, the HPD is ending the enforcement phase of this project.

Unfortunately, much of the brush that was supposed to have been removed is still there. Homeless persons have taken advantage of the cover that the brush provides to establish camps. The plan was for the Parks Department to arrange for the brush to be removed, but that has not happened. Police Chief Hurtt has written a letter directly to the Director of Parks, so the police are trying at the highest level to get this done.

If you notice homeless people returning to their old haunts along the bayou, please notify me or the HPD Storefront (713-803-1151). The HPD will redirect resources if there are enough calls about this. The police do not want to let all their hard work in the area go to waste.

Along these lines, if you see someone pushing a shopping cart, even an empty one, you can call 911 to make a report. That is considered a crime in progress. Police have probable cause to stop anyone pushing a shopping cart down the street. If the shopping cart has scrap metal in it, it is highly likely that the metal has been stolen.

Timely information like this can be learned first hand at the monthly PIP meeting. These meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of every month. The next meeting is on **June 25th** at 1602 State Street off Washington Avenue.

I-45 Update

—By Jim Weston, President I-45 Coalition

To refresh everyone’s memory, TxDOT is planning to rebuild / reconfigure I-45 from downtown to north of Conroe. In 2005, TxDOT proposed building 3 additional “managed”/HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lanes to add to the existing 1 lane, making a total of 4 lanes. They also planned to rebuild the existing 8 lanes (4 North bound & 4 South bound), but add no additional general purpose lanes.

The expansion plan was budgeted at \$2.1 billion (2005 estimate) and, according to TxDOT’s calculations, would increase average speed on the 8 general traffic lanes inside Loop 610 by 3 mph. While the 4 new managed/HOV lanes would be faster, they would likely be tolled.

In 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation and TxDOT put a “temporary” hold on the project to further evaluate the plan. With a scarcity of federal money and increasing construction costs, the I-45 project remains on hold for the rest of the 2008 fiscal year (until 9/1/08). After that, the fate of the project is uncertain.

The Coalition recently went before City Council to support an alternative tunnel plan that would increase capacity of I-45 without the need to take additional right-of-way. Advantages of the tunnel include: the tunnel could be built almost twice as fast as a ‘typical’ highway and require minimal lane closures during construction; air could be treated before it is released to the atmosphere; reduction of sound ‘pollution’; the existing I-45 could become something similar to Allen Parkway; there could be room for Metro rail, etc. For more on the tunnel, please go to www.i45parkway.com. A good article can also be found at www.downtownhouston.com/live/qol/I45_Tunnel.php.

CALENDAR

- June 2 Heavy Trash, East of Watson
- June 4 **CERT Training #5; 6—9 pm**
- June 9 Heavy Trash, West of Watson
- June 9 Recycling
- June 11 **CERT Training #6; 6—9 pm**
- June 15 Happy Father’s Day
- June 18 **CERT Training #7; 6—9 pm**
- June 23 Recycling
- June 25 **CERT Training #8; 6—9 pm**
- June 25 **PIP Meeting; 7:00 pm**
- July 4 Independence Day!
- July 7 Heavy Trash, East of Watson
- July 7 Recycling
- July 14 Heavy Trash, West of Watson
- July 21 Recycling
- July 23 **PIP Meeting; 7:00 pm**

The I-45 Coalition is a group of volunteer neighbors who are concerned about the future expansion of I-45 and want to be involved in the decisions that will be made. If you want to get involved (physically or fiscally) and would like to receive e-mail updates about public meetings and progress, please go to the Coalition’s web site, www.I-45Coalition.org and click on the tab “How You Can Help”. If you are already receiving emails from the Coalition, you do not need to ‘re-subscribe. We need all the help & involvement you can give. Although we are constantly in communication with TxDOT, we are now meeting on a quarterly basis with our next meeting scheduled for August 11th. See the web site for more details.

Woodland Heights Newsletter

The Woodland Heights Newsletter is a publication of the Woodland Heights Civic Association (WHCA), and seeks to keep the community informed of board activities and developments of interest to area residents.

WHCA General Meetings are held the **second Tuesday** of every month (except June, July, August and December). Unless otherwise noted, meetings are located in the meeting room at Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beauchamp.

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Giardiasis Case Confirmed in Woodland Heights

—By Dianne Lurix

While the city is working on our water lines, there is potential for exposure to the waterborne protozoan *Giardia lamblia*. At least one family in the Woodland Heights has a confirmed giardiasis diagnosis and six other families on surrounding blocks report unexplained gastro-intestinal problems. A similar trend occurred in 2005-2006 when four families were diagnosed with giardiasis concurrent with City water line maintenance.

Giardiasis is an illness characterized by diarrhea, abdominal cramping, gassiness, greasy stools, occasional nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite and fatigue, and absence of fever. Symptoms may vary widely among family members and can last for an extended period of time. Some family members may not show any symptoms, while the elderly and young children are at greatest risk for complications including severe dehydration and weight loss. Several prescription drugs are available to treat giardiasis. For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/giardiasis/default.htm or speak with your physician.

If you are experiencing cloudy, discolored or foul-smelling water while the City is working on the water lines near your home, please report the problem to 3-1-1 to generate a case number and have Public Works test your water. If you question the quality of your water while maintenance work is being conducted, consider using an alternative water source, such as bottled water, or bring your drinking water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute before consuming.

The City of Houston Public Works and Health Departments are putting together a plan of action to address this concern. If you have any questions, please contact Dianne Lurix at 713-863-7355

Recycling May be Scrapped in Parts of Houston

—Excerpted from Carolyn Feibel, Houston Chronicle Staff

In 2006, the City of Houston conducted two house-by-house counts to gauge participation in the curbside recycling program and more than 40 neighborhoods with poor participation are now at risk of losing pick-ups by the end of the year. If fewer than 10 percent of households in a neighborhood set out recyclables on the curb, then the coveted service will be revoked and given to one of the 25 neighborhoods on the waiting list. Among the laggards: Blossom Heights in west Houston (less than 1 percent) and Hollister Place in northwest Houston (2 percent). The best recyclers live in Beechnut III near Meyerland (79 percent). The average "set-out" rate for the 260 neighborhoods currently covered is 23 percent. *Excerpted from Houston Chronicle, Sat 04/26/2008, Section A, Pg 1, Edition 3.*

Woodland Heights recycling is picked up every other Monday (see calendar on pg.3 for dates). Green recycling bins can be requested, at no charge, from the city by calling 3-1-1 or at the 3-1-1 website https://webintake.houstontx.gov/web_intake/Controller. You can also bag your recyclables in brown grocery bags (no plastic bags please) and set them on the grass near the curb. Newspaper, corrugated cardboard, aluminum cans, and plastic bottles labeled with a 1 or 2 are eligible for curbside pick up. Please note, the city does not collect glass as part of the curbside pick up. However, glass can be dropped off at the recycling facility on Center Street (behind Star Pizza). For more recycling info, go to www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/ Let's be sure to put our curbside recycling to good use!

Woodland Heights Dinner Club

—By Sharon Greiff

Talk about a pleasant surprise—everyone was impressed by the food at Kojak's. First of all, if you want a fancy restaurant complete with a Sommelier, head waiter or wait staff, then this place is not for you. Rather, orders are placed at the counter and you have the option of bringing your own wine/beer or buy from their limited (but very tasty) supply.

As for the food—WOW. Their menu features a wide selection of American and Greek favorites, served piping hot at great prices. All entrees come with a large dinner salad and side, such as fresh mixed vegetables (not that frozen junk your mom served) and garlic mashed potatoes. The meatloaf special, stuffed with cheese and spinach and topped with a red sauce, was yum yum yummy (OK – I'm not a professional food critic). Vicky B. reports that she loves the shrimp and crab cakes. The chicken with Parmesan crust, as sampled by Ken F., is also delicious. Everyone agrees that Kojak's is definitely worth a repeat visit!

We will be going to Teotihuacan Mexican Cafe (1511 Airline Dr) on June 12th at 7:00pm. If you care to join us, please give me a call at 713-868-1579 or email Sharon@glassattraction.net.

ATTENTION—The Northeast Quadrant needs a new Block Captain!!! Route Includes: 3700 Blocks of Bruce, Reagan & Bradley.

WHCA Newsletter Accepts Sponsors

—By An Armstrong, VP—Newsletter Sponsorship

Monthly sponsorship fees are \$50/month for a 2 x 3.5 inch (business card size) sponsorships/promotions block. The WHCA Board will review all applications for sponsorship. Individuals interested in becoming WH Newsletter sponsors, should contact the WH Newsletter Sponsorship VP, An Armstrong at newsletter@woodland-heights.org for further details.

Thank you to our sponsors:

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WHCA Membership Form

Membership Year April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

Mail to: **Woodland Heights Civic Association, P.O. Box 7754, Houston, TX 77270-7754**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ Daytime phone _____

E-mail Address _____

New Member? (Circle One) YES NO

Please check the appropriate space: Homeowner - \$35
 Senior (60+) Homeowner - \$10
 Renter - \$10
 Friend of Woodland Heights — Non-resident — Any amount

I want to make an additional contribution to the Civic Association of \$ _____