

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, APRIL 28
RECYCLING

MONDAY, MAY 2
TREE WASTE PICKUP
East of Watson

SATURDAY, MAY 7
WOODLAND PARK
MOVIE NIGHT:
SECRETARIAT
Woodland Park, 8PM

MONDAY, MAY 9
TREE WASTE PICKUP
West of Watson

TUESDAY, MAY 10
GENERAL MEETING
Zion Lutheran, 7:30PM
Speaker: Candice
Twyman of the BBB
Topic: *Identity Theft*
and You

THURSDAY, MAY 12
RECYCLING

THURSDAY, MAY 26
RECYCLING

MONDAY, MAY 30
MEMORIAL DAY



2011 Woodland Heights Home Tour A Success!



Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, sponsors and participants, the 2011 preview and home tour made more than \$20,000 to support neighborhood initiatives.

If you missed it, the preview was outstanding! It started with participants browsing through each of this year's wonderful homes, enjoying a wine and cheese tasting at each. The party at Janeen Cook's lovely William Wilson home got rolling at 7 p.m. with delicious nibbles from many of our area restaurants, libations, toe-tapping music from

Dog Party Band and, yes, dancing. About 100 guests enjoyed the evening.

Saturday and Sunday brought good home tour weather and more than 1,000 folks took advantage, oohing and ahing over the six homes. While everyone had a favorite (all different!), each had rave reviews about the architectural, size and style diversity. Special thanks to our wonderful neighbors who graciously opened their doors to the hordes and shared what Woodland Heights living is all about. Tour participants came from all over the region: League City, Sugar Land, Spring, Kingwood, The Woodlands, Katy and more.

Finally, the inaugural Preservation Fair, a fundraiser for the Friends of Woodland Park, was a hit with vendors and visitors alike. Some 20 firms, offering products and services for restoring, renovating and improving your home, shared tips and techniques. The fair raised about \$1,600 for the park.

Joint Position Statement on Yale Street Bridge

The board of the Woodland Heights Civic Association and the boards of Washington Ave. Coalition/Memorial Park Super Neighborhood, Greater Heights Super Neighborhood, Houston Heights Assoc. and the West End Civic Club are considering becoming signatories of a Joint Position Statement contained in a letter to Mayor Parker.

That Position Statement would bring several issues to Mayor Parker's attention concerning the Yale Street bridge over White Oak Bayou, which the City has acknowledged to be inadequate to handle the anticipated commercial traffic flow - especially 18-wheelers - that the new Wal-Mart and other commercial development in the area will attract. The City has proposed routing commercial traffic to Heights Boulevard as an alternative.

The Joint Statement will suggest to Mayor Parker and the City that such a

redirection will be difficult to enforce and will likely create an unsafe situation with cars and 18-wheelers sitting idle on the Yale Street Bridge, at a weight far in excess of its 40,000 pound rating.

The Joint Proposal will therefore recommend that the City conduct an engineering review of the Yale Street Bridge and develop plans to reconstruct it so that it can handle the commercial traffic that will surely cross it.

The Statement will also suggest that no Certificate of Occupancy be issued to the Washington Heights Development until reconstruction of the Yale Street Bridge has been completed.

Other suggestions include limiting 18-wheeler traffic on Heights Boulevard and restricting traffic on the new Bass Street connection to the feeder road.

A full copy of the proposed Position Statement can be found at www.woodland-heights.org

Norhill Esplanade Brick Terrace Update

I wanted to provide the neighborhood with an update on our commemorative brick terrace.

Background During our centennial year it was decided that a commemorative brick terrace would be an appropriate way to pay tribute to our families and our homes. In the years since, many neighbors placed orders and purchased engraved bricks with personal messages reflecting their love and respect for family and community. During that time, the terrace was redesigned by a renowned professional landscape architect and a much more impressive design was created all at no cost to the civic association. Volunteers worked diligently for months to obtain the necessary permits to begin construction, and ultimately a neighbor whose firm specializes in building such community projects on city owned property came to our rescue. With their help we obtained all the necessary city department approvals for the plans, then obtained the required encroachment agreements, and finally the construction permit itself.

Current Events Once it was clear that we were going to finally obtain construction approval it was necessary to obtain bids for the project from several qualified contractors. I am pleased to report that the final bid we accepted is more than \$1,500 less than the bid originally obtained more than a year ago, and that bid is “turn key”, including all aspects of the project.

An enhancement to the overall project has been included as well. Engraved bricks will be used as markers at the base of each boulder identifying the different Woodland Heights subdivisions represented by each boulder.

As of early April I am pleased to report that the special clay bricks selected for this project have been ordered and the engraving will begin next week when the bricks are delivered. Within the next week the utility lines at or near the terrace site will be clearly marked so they will not be disturbed. Other materials will be ordered and delivered to the site in the coming weeks as well. And at this point we fully expect that by the April 28th construction will be well underway.

So if you have been holding off ordering your engraved brick you may want to reconsider and start thinking about honoring your loved ones with a place in this permanent neighborhood memorial.

- Pat Rutledge, VP Beautification

Historic District Update

On March 2nd, Planning and Development Director Marlene Gafrick presented a report and her recommendations for the three pending districts (Houston Heights South, Woodland Heights, and Glenbrook Valley). She recommended designation of all three as historic districts, with changes to the boundaries of the first two.

A copy of this report and a map reports on the six existing districts and the three pending districts (with maps of survey results and the Director's recommendations for City Council action) are now available on the City Planning Department site at www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/hist_pres

_amend.html along with the amended Historic Preservation Ordinance and the transition ordinance.

Original support for the district was 208 homeowners out of a total of 388. 44 retractions, 20 additional petitions, and 9 retractions from owners who did not sign the original petition were submitted prior to this recommendation.

At press time, no decision had been made regarding the scheduling of the hearing and/or vote by City Council on Woodland Heights' historic district status.

Woodland Park Movie Night

Back by popular demand the Friends of Woodland Park are sponsoring a Free Movie Night at Woodland Park (the corner of Parkview and Houston Ave.) on Saturday, May 7th starting at 8 p.m. (or when it gets dark enough!). The evening's feature is “Secretariat” starring Diane Lane and rated PG. We are also trying to line up a very special guest to say hello to the crowd!

The movie will be shown in the grassy area on the east side of the community building. We will have free lemonade and popcorn, but feel free to bring a snack of your own! We encourage all to either walk or ride your bikes....parking is limited.

Also, bring your lawn chairs or blankets, and don't forget the bug spray!

Enjoy a great evening outside with your neighbors and fellow park lovers. We look forward to seeing you there!

Questions? – Contact Becky Houston (713-862-1520, bghouston@aol.com) or Beth Fischer (713-861-4502, bea3015@gmail.com) or info@friendsofwoodlandpark.org



How are Dues Doing?

As of April 18, 13.64% of the 2,242 households in Woodland Heights have paid their annual dues. That represents only 306 households! We hope many of you just need a simple reminder. There are several categories of dues, it breaks down like this:

- General \$35
- Senior \$10
- Renter \$10
- Friend of Woodland Heights - Donations accepted by an individual or establishment that wishes to donate to the Woodland Heights. We do not have a membership for businesses so if you have a business and wish to donate, we would be happy to list you in our newsletter.

So far, a handful of streets have reached the 20% mark of renewals on homes on their street. (And yes, some streets are much smaller than others.) But here goes a shout out to all those shining stars (streets) thus far!

Norhill, Northwood, Bayland, Oakridge, Highland, Gladys, and Greenleaf

Let's see which streets shine next month! For now, encourage your neighbor to pay their dues!

Super Neighbor Report

What is a Super Neighbor? A super neighbor has given above and beyond their regular dues. Some by \$10 and others by \$100! Thanks to each and every one of you! Some of you indicated that you didn't want recognition so I won't list your name as you wish, but I will say thank you! Here are 76 of our neighbors we wish to recognize:

- Matthew & Meredith Villere
- Jan Caldwell Callaway
- George & Rosie Garza
- Nancy Kern
- Daniel Rueda
- Margot Dimond
- Shea Sandefer
- Kathleen Sandefer
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- Jill Whitten
- Joe & Jennifer Jacobs
- Janet & Daniel Orfield
- Allen & Sue Thomas
- Christopher Martin & Deannan Spencer

Lights in the Heights Meetings

Due to the marked increase in attendance at LITH in 2010 over 2009 (60K vs. 30-35K), the City of Houston's Mayor's Office of Special Events called a meeting of folks involved with Lights In The Height to discuss the 2010 experience. As a follow-up to that meeting, on Saturday, Feb. 26th fifty-plus Woodland Heights residents gathered at Zion Lutheran Church to talk about the issues raised by the COH and the prospects for future of Lights In The Heights®.



It was extensively agreed that the event has gotten too large. LITH is a victim of its own success! Security is an issue of concern to the entire neighborhood. It is very fortunate that no serious incidents have happened during LITH. Many neighbors who have parties the night of LITH hire their own private security to insure that they are not invaded by uninvited party crashers. Other items discussed during the meeting were:

- Enforcement of City of Houston ordinances
- Public intoxication
- Underage drinking
- Illegal parking
- Unauthorized vendors
- Rock bands
- Amplified vs. non-amplified music
- Request more Christmas music from entertainers
- Change the event to Sunday from 5-9 p.m.
- Change the date of the event to the first Saturday in Dec. and not publicize it
- Skip LITH for 2011 and plan for 2012
- Divide the neighborhood into quadrants (Bayland & Watson as dividing lines) and rotate the event in the 4 quadrants year after year
- "Close" the entire neighborhood to parking by outsiders and issue parking passes to residents. Parking passes would be allocated based on spaces available
- Eliminate the "anchor" (ie. stage on Norhill esplanade) in the quadrants
- Shuttle service for attendees from outside the neighborhood
- Food vendors

No final decisions were made at the meeting but the consensus was that it would be a shame if the event did not continue, but many would prefer a much smaller scale.

A panel of WH residents will be formed to make recommendations to the Board going forth with LITH. If you would like to volunteer for this panel please send an e-mail to lith.houston@gmail.com, or contact Florence Clark at 713-863-8237 before May 15, 2011. The group will convene in May to discuss future options for LITH.

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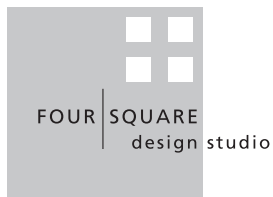
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Thank you to everyone who made last month's home tour and preservation fair such a great success!

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 Beth & Steve Fischer
 Louy Meacham & John Faraguna
 Melanie Millar
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More Home Tour Thanks!

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for also graciously hosting a
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Giving Props: Megan Freemantle

By Arnold van Ek and Riverhorse

It is no secret that there are an astounding plethora of musicians and artists in the Heights. Our very own neighbor Megan Freemantle of the 500 block of Bayland certainly represents the creative realm beautifully, thanks to her amazing years of endeavors with the Houston Grand Opera (HGO).

"I am the Props Design Director at HGO, responsible for the main stage, HGOco and Studio productions. Props include anything not nailed down, furniture, costume props and weaponry. We have a good stock in our storage to start with, but I use many people to make the special props when needed. Most shows are co-productions with overseas opera companies. The entire production travels, not the cast.

I already was an artist interested in drawing and painting in High School. I wanted to do the biggest paintings, and because they don't do a Sistine Chapel anymore, I wanted to be a scene painter for a theatre, painting big drops (canvas backgrounds). I have a BFA in Theatre Arts from Stephens College in Columbia, MO. After some time in Syracuse, I worked at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, together with Jeremy Irons in Hamlet. I moved back to Houston in 1982 and worked at the Alley Theater as a Props Assistant. In 1985, I went across the street to Jones Hall, applied there, and got the job as Props Coordinator at HGO.

Besides myself, there is only one other props person, Andrew Cloud—all others are freelance artists. I have a Rolodex full of names, many of them living in the Woodland Heights or the surrounding areas. This area is rich in resources, like Judy, from Oolala on Studewood, who built two huge three and four-tier wedding cakes that were used in Daniel Catans' opera Salsipuedes.

I received an Emmy for my part in the production of "Nixon in China", broadcast on PBS Great Performances. However, my favorite opera was Babes in Toyland, because there were so many props and the details were amazing. An interesting opera for me is Lucia, not because the props are very special. For example, I had a special Quach (a loving cup used in Scottish weddings) made in Argentina from alpaca silver with small horn handles on the side. The chair in the show is 400 years old and was repaired by Topper Moore, a fabulous carpenter from the Heights.

We started the season with Madame Butterfly, but people who missed it can see a free show at the Miller Outdoor Theatre. Come and enjoy it!

Sometimes we work together with the Opera in the Heights. We loaned items to them for their season opener, Tales of Hoffman. I



Brunhilde

also designed the art car "Brunhilde" the iconic opera singer. Although she is a little big, we won first place art car and first place in music. It took 652 hours to complete the car with help from many artists from the opera staff.

At Lights in the Heights, I used some of the props from Babes in Toyland for decoration of my yard. The soldiers get a lot of attention and many pictures are taken, some are sent to our soldiers in Afghanistan.

Doing props continues to thrill me after 30+ years. Discovering artists and businesses in the community is a lot of fun!"

WH Resident to be Honored at Luncheon

Neighbor Ann Liggio has volunteered for the last seven years at the HPD Mounted Patrol stable helping take care of the 40 horses—grooming, shampooing, leading horses to and from the pasture, feeding, watering, mucking out stalls, sweeping the barn, polishing tack, and just generally doing whatever was needed. Due to her hard work, long hours and dedication, she was nominated and will be honored at the Mayor's Volunteer Houston Awards luncheon on May 5. Congratulations Ann!!

Is There Only One of You? Maybe Not!

Have you ever been a victim of identity theft? If not, consider yourself lucky. Approximately 15 million adults in the U.S. have their identities used fraudulently each year with financial losses totaling up to \$50 Billion. There was an increase in identity theft by 11% in only one year; from 2008 to 2009. An additional 100 million American have their personal information placed at risk each year when records maintained in government and corporate databases are lost or stolen. These statistics show that identity theft may be the most frequent, costly and pervasive crime in the U.S.

The speaker at WHCA general meeting on May 10th will be Candice Twyman, from the Better Business Bureau. She will speak about how to prevent identity theft and what steps you should take if you find yourself a victim of identity theft. We'll also hear about the newest scams and schemes out there.



City Redistricting Input

The City has proposed a redistricting plan which will create new districts based on Houston's latest population growth. The City's proposed plan creates a new district, J, which includes the Heights while Woodland Heights remains in district H. Studewood is our new dividing line. A federal guideline for redistricting is to keep neighborhoods with common issues intact.

If you have concerns or comments on the draft proposed plan, send them to Margaret Wallace:

- Via e-mail -- margaret.wallace@houstontx.gov, or
- U.S. Postal Service or delivery -- directed to Margaret Wallace, City of Houston Planning & Development Department, 611 Walker, 6th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002

Any comments or letters to Margaret Wallace need to be received by May 6, 2011.

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.

WHCA Contact Information

P.O. Box 7754 Houston, TX 77270-7754

Tel: 713-200-3610

Website: woodland-heights.org

Advertising Information

Monthly advertisement fees are \$50/month for a 1.75 x 3 inch (approximately business card size) advertisement/promotions block. The WHCA Board will review all applications for advertisement. Individuals interested in becoming WH Newsletter advertisers should contact the Newsletter Vice President, Brian Hendrix, at newsletter@woodland-heights.org for further details and pricing for larger blocks. Checks are payable to the Woodland Heights Civic Association at the above address.

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