

# WOODLAND HEIGHTS

WHCA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011

## CALENDAR

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 1**  
**RECYCLING**

**MONDAY, SEPT. 5**  
**TREE WASTE**  
East of Watson

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 10**  
**HEIGHTS/WEST END**  
**HEALTH FAIR**  
St. Mark's UMC  
1615 Patterson  
10AM-2PM

**MONDAY, SEPT. 12**  
**TREE WASTE**  
West of Watson

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 13**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
Zion, 7:30PM  
Speaker: City Forester  
Victor Cordova,  
"Caring for Trees  
During the Drought"

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 15**  
**RECYCLING**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 17**  
**WHCA SHREDDING DAY**  
Hogg Middle School  
10:00AM-2:00PM

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 29**  
**RECYCLING**

**MONDAY, OCT. 3**  
**JUNK WASTE**  
East of Watson

**MONDAY, OCT. 10**  
**JUNK WASTE**  
West of Watson

**TUESDAY, OCT. 11**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
Zion, 7:30PM

**THURSDAY, OCT. 13**  
**RECYCLING**

**THURSDAY, OCT. 27**  
**RECYCLING**

## WHCA Shredding Day

Gather all those old papers that you've wanted to get rid of for the first Woodland Heights shredding day. Saturday, September 17th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm., residents of the Woodland Heights can bring up to 5 boxes of paper to Hogg Middle School for shredding. The Civic Association has hired ShredTex for this service to all residents. Please bring identification that shows you live in the neighborhood. Shredding will be a service brought to you by the WHCA at no charge to the residents.

Hogg Middle School is located at 1100 Merrill. The shredding trucks will be located in the west parking lot

on Oakridge which can be accessed from either Merrill or 11th Street. Thank you Dr. Schnitta, principal of Hogg, for offering her location.

In addition to the paper shredding truck, there will be electronics disposal available at cost to residents. You may dispose of old computers, monitors, cell phones, televisions (up to 36") for reasonable fees beginning at \$3.00/cell phone to \$20.00/monitor. Payment must be made at drop-off. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted. ShredTex assures us that electronics are recycled and disposed of responsibly and all hard drives and cell phone data is destroyed.

## Watering Restrictions in Effect

As you have probably heard by now, the City of Houston has imposed Stage Two Mandatory Water Conservation measures during the current drought.

The primary effect of these restrictions is to limit lawn watering by unattended sprinklers or sprinkler systems to twice a week. If you live at an even address (ending in 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8), you are allowed to water on Sundays and Thursdays. Odd addresses (ending in 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) may water on Saturdays and Wednesdays. All unattended watering should be done from midnight to 10AM and from 8PM to midnight, on the days allowed.

Watering by hand from a spray nozzle or from a watering can or bucket is not restricted, but you are not allowed to turn on the hose, set it down and walk away. Washing cars

with a garden hose is also permitted at any time. Swimming pools can be refilled to maintain the function of the filtering system.

Houston residents are also now required to repair private side water leaks on their property within 72 hours.

The Public Works and Engineering Department's Utility Customer Staff will investigate and enforce Private Side Leaks. The Planning and Development Service Division will investigate and enforce irrigation violations. Violation of these new restrictions may result in a fine of \$150 to \$2000/day.

The City has requested that all residents use water wisely during this emergency.

For more information, go to [www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/utilities/conservation\\_measures.html](http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/utilities/conservation_measures.html)

## New Sidewalk Replacement Ordinance

If you are replacing a sidewalk, an amendment to the sidewalk ordinance states that new sidewalks must be five feet wide. This is a change from the prior ordinance requiring a four foot width. If your new sidewalk has adjoining sidewalks which are four feet wide and/or could damage street trees due to the new width and/or you have a drainage ditch, you could request a variance to remain at the four foot width. Sidewalk variances are considered within the Department of Public Works & Engineering (PWE) – specifically within the Office of the City Engineer.

If you have questions or require a variance request form, please contact: [Elizabeth.frazier@houstontx.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.frazier@houstontx.gov).

## Yard of the Month

The new owners of 501 Woodland have hit the ground running with their long hours in their yard planting new perennials and a few small trees. Despite the heat, neighbors have noticed their efforts in sprucing up the landscape and nominated them for September's Yard of the Month. Congratulations!

If you'd like to recognize a wonderful yard, please email [president@woodland-heights.org](mailto:president@woodland-heights.org).

## Neighborhood Organizing Conference

Date: Saturday, October 15, 2011

Time: 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: United Way of Greater Houston (50 Waugh Drive)

Cost: Only \$5/person, to cover the cost of the event (Free Parking)

City of Houston's Community U Conference is geared toward community-based organizations and individuals interested in improving their neighborhoods. It will provide Houstonians with training, resources and solutions through a combination of workshops, presentations and networking opportunities.

Topics will include deed restrictions, volunteers, developing community projects, how to lead meetings, conflict resolution, and networking tools just to name a few.

Early registration is required and payment **MUST** be received in order to be pre-registered by the September 30 deadline. For more information, please contact [CommunityU@houstontx.gov](mailto:CommunityU@houstontx.gov) or 713-837-7803.

## Construction and Renovations in Norhill

Most properties in Norhill are bound by deed restrictions. The exception would be if the property owner opted out when deed restrictions were being passed (a small minority of owners did so). Prior to commencement of construction, all new construction and remodeling projects in Norhill must be submitted to the Woodland Heights Civic Association, which is charged with monitoring and enforcing the deed restrictions. For more information, please go to: [www.woodland-heights.org/landuse/deedrestrictions/norhill-official-dr.pdf](http://www.woodland-heights.org/landuse/deedrestrictions/norhill-official-dr.pdf).

Plans should be submitted to: [DeedRestrictions@woodland-heights.org](mailto:DeedRestrictions@woodland-heights.org)

## Lights in the Heights® is Underway!

It's your year to get involved and volunteer to help with the organization of this important event. This is what makes Woodland Heights a great place to live! There are positions for every time, energy and schedule commitment and we need your involvement to keep it an ongoing success. Many, many thanks to those of you who have already volunteered! You're what makes this event work! We still have a few captain positions available:

**Cashier Captain:** Recruit and schedule volunteers to serve as cashiers on day of event. Supervise volunteers on day of event, obtain cash box and information on advance sales.

**Garage Sale Captain:** Responsible for organizing October Garage Sale.

**Recycling Captain:** Responsible for setting up, monitoring and having recyclables picked up during the event.

More information on this year's event will follow soon. Be sure to check in on the bulletin board from time to time to get event updates. With everyone's help and cooperation we will make this year's event one that will make us all proud to call the Woodland Heights home.

Contact Glen Sementelli at 281-772-3529, email at [gsementelli@yahoo.com](mailto:gsementelli@yahoo.com), Terri Guerra at 713-598-3043, email at [terri@terriguerra.com](mailto:terri@terriguerra.com), or Tim McConn at [timmcconn@andrewskurth.com](mailto:timmcconn@andrewskurth.com) to find out how you can help! Remember, there is lots of work to be done the day of the event.

## Lights in the Heights® T-Shirt Contest

We are looking for new designs for the T-shirts this year. If you would like to submit your original artwork for consideration, please contact Robyn Klepper at [robyn.klepper@nadel.com](mailto:robyn.klepper@nadel.com). You won't get paid for it, but won't it be cool to see everyone wearing your design! Designs must be submitted by October 1st to be considered.

Preferred format for submission is vector art in illustrator, .eps with all fonts converted to curves or outlines but hand drawings are also acceptable.

## Water Your Trees!

Houston's drought will have lasting effects on our trees. Experts are saying not only are younger trees suffering damage from the drought but older trees will too. Even though the larger trees may not show signs of stress or damage now, drought conditions impact on trees could show up in a year or two.

Trees For Houston has published various guidelines for dealing with ailing trees throughout the drought.

Their watering tips include:

- Small, one-year-old trees should receive 28 gallons of water per week,
- Two-year-olds need 56 gallons per week,
- Three-year-old trees require 112 gallons of water per week.
- All trees need a deep, thorough soaking once a week.

## Neighborhood Security Update

*[Submitted by a Woodland Heights neighbor]*

An armed robbery occurred at approximately 11:15PM at the corner of 6½ St. and Norhill Blvd. on Saturday, August 27th 2011. The victims, who are Woodland Heights residents, were walking back to their residence from a venue on White Oak Blvd.

Two individuals approached quickly from the south side of the street with one brandishing a handgun and ordering them down on the ground. Personal property was taken from the victims, however, approximately 3 hours later both suspects were in custody and are currently being held without bond. Residents are urged to be vigilant and aware as the increased business activity on White Oak, while convenient and welcome, has also attracted unsavory individuals to our neighborhood looking for targets, be they residents or visitors. Thankfully no one was hurt and the Houston Police Department should be commended for their quick response, professionalism, and ultimate apprehension of the suspects. As more details become available they will be communicated further to the citizenry.

## West End Health Fair

The free Heights-West End Community Health Fair is open to the public on Sat., Sept. 10, 2011 10am to 2pm at St. Mark's UMC, 1615 Patterson, 2 blocks south of I-10, near the West End Park.

More than thirty agencies and service providers will provide health screening and health issue consultation. Health screenings and childhood immunizations, food and beverage, fun, participatory entertainment and door prizes are all part of fun-filled family event! To get involved or for more information see websites smumc.org, WestEndCivicClub.org; [www.houstontx.gov/council/h/](http://www.houstontx.gov/council/h/) Email: [HeightsWestEndCommtyHealthFair@gmail.com](mailto:HeightsWestEndCommtyHealthFair@gmail.com) or call 713-861-3104

## WHCA Membership Report

Have you paid your WHCA dues? This time last year, we were at almost 27%. At only 19%, we have a long way to go! Enclosed in this month's newsletter is a membership form for all those who meant to send a check but just haven't gotten around to it! We will continue to report on membership until we can happily report that we've received at least half of the neighborhood's dues!

While membership dues are voluntarily, it is our hope that our community feels proud to be a part of Woodland Heights and is willing to support the continued events and beautification efforts. If you are unsure whether you paid your dues, please contact [membership@woodland-heights.com](mailto:membership@woodland-heights.com)

Thank you all our **super neighbors!** We've received \$5,566 from dues paid in excess of the minimum! Some even paid twice! These are committed neighbors, instead of getting reimbursed for their extra dues payment; they simply elected to treat the money as an extra gift to WHCA. How awesome are they! We appreciate your kindness!

- Harry McMahon & Nichola Renfrew
- John & Ann Fischer
- Thelma Vincent
- Reavis Maggard
- Karen Danburg
- Elizabeth Martin
- Kevin Dubose & Glenda Owen
- Andrew Sicignano & Lynne Aiken
- Brenda & John Erickson
- Nancy Barbour & Beckham Dossett
- Mary Feeley
- John McCague & Ann Linville
- Stanleigh & Renee Cross
- John & Melissa Hagan
- David Hall
- Douglas & Alice Laguarda
- Jay Jackson
- Denise & Greg Carraux
- William Howze
- Troy Fraske
- Alan Eyler

## New Neighbors

Welcome to the neighborhood! We hope you find Woodland Heights to be all that you hoped! We have great bike/walk trails, wonderful restaurants, and fun events for all to participate in. You might find Elliott's card on your door or a voice message on your machine. She'd love to come by, say hello in person, and give you a nice bag of goodies to welcome you to the neighborhood. If you are new to Woodland Heights and have not been contacted, please give Elliot Johnstone a call 713/880-5960.

## Through the Looking Glass

*Arnold van Ek and Riverhorse*

Among the many rabid dog aficionados and owners joyously roaming the sweltering streets of Woodland Heights, our neighbor Sharon Greiff stands out not only for the sheer size of her canines, but also for the comedic fodder and grins they willingly provide us. Sharon is a dedicated community volunteer as well as a competent and talented artist.

“People know me as the lady with the four gigantic dogs: Goober is a 200-pounder mastiff, Sweet Pea is a small mastiff, Minnie is a boxer mix and the last one is Nanner, a long time foster from BARC. A burglar has to be insane if he wants to intrude into my house!



I have been very active in the Woodland Heights community by being a “Lights in the Heights” chair for six years, for example. I coordinated the minimum lot size activities, and, together with Vicky Bettis, put in a lot of effort in the successful designation of Historic District for the WH subdivision. I also delivered the newsletter in my area for years, which gave me some good exercise!

I have lived in our neighborhood for 13 years. I’m originally from New York City, but moved to Houston for graduate school at the University of Houston earning my MBA in business and I.T. Then I worked in New Orleans for a while and took a course in stained glass workings in ’89. I was hypnotized by the beauty of stained glass and this was an opportunity to learn more. I have been hooked ever since. The very first piece I made was a tulip that consisted of 7 pieces, which has been made probably by everyone who started in stained class. I do it in my spare time, because I have a full-time job.

I work both with copper foil as well as lead strips, depending on the design and the application. If it is small and has a lot of curves, copper foil works better. Larger pieces with more geometric designs work better with lead strips. Unless glass breaks, it will last forever. I work with someone on the design, but the most difficult part is often the selection of glass because it comes in a thousand different forms based on color, color variations, structure, texture, ripples, opacity, and more.

I make at least one piece a month. My output depends on how many single pieces there are in a panel. Many panels I make are for non-profit organizations who will auction them off. I made several panels for Vicky Bettis, who has a historic home here in Woodland Heights.

## We Hate Bungalows

Disagree? Look how many of them are being torn down and replaced with lot line to lot line behemoths. Three bungalows were torn down on my block this year alone. This trend exists and is accelerating because of policies we put in place. We made mistakes. If we love Bungalows, it’s time to recognize the mistakes and fix them.

Our deed restrictions are bad for Bungalows and will eventually make them worthless. Worthless? “But our property values are way up”, you say. Look at what is going on—bungalows are being torn down to build homes more than twice their size. It costs money to tear down a home. If you live in a bungalow, the value of your home is negative to a developer. The value of your bungalow is negative.

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof so let me explain...

The Woodland Heights are in a prime location. Before deed restrictions were put back in place in the 90’s, this neighborhood was not a prime target for developers. It was too risky, even though the location was very good. Developers and the real estate agents who make money off of their work don’t like risk. Homebuyers who might be able to buy a 4, 6 or \$800,000 home don’t like risk either. None of them wanted the risk that “less desirable” land uses might encroach. They view houses as investments. The buyers of such homes may or may not be buying into a community.

Deed restrictions lowered the marginal risk of developing and owning in our neighborhood. Since they were put in place, our property values have shot up and so have huge houses that barely fit on their lots. Some of them give a nod to the craftsman, prairie or foursquare styles, but they are in every other way suburban McMansions. McMansions that erode the value of your bungalow.

Developers and realtors are business people. They often work with homeowner associations and our PTAs and other neighborhood organizations, but their interests are fundamentally different from the interest of homeowners and community members. Developers and realtors want to maximize their profits. Profit maximization for realtors and developers means selling bigger houses. If homes sell for a given price per square foot, do you want to build and sell smaller homes or larger homes? Larger wins everytime.

People often tell me how great it is that our property values are going up, but is it so great? Rising values mean greater taxes, increasing my cost of living every year. If I’m a transient who is likely to move in 5 years then rising values are great, but they’re not so great if you plan to live here the rest of your life. They’re not so great if you bought into the community, not just a house. Absent additional regulations on builders, rising property values just guarantee that every new construction will be a lot line to lot line 2 story home.

Our current course says we hate bungalows. Do we?

If we love the character of our neighborhood, how do we protect it? We join together to put in place stronger laws. Some parts of our neighborhood have already begun the process. Neighborhoods across the country are taking steps to actively preserve their heritage, as should we. By putting in place protections, we can ensure that our homes, not just our property, increases in value.

There is not a middle ground that can hold. In the battle of blue signs vs. yellow signs, a blue sign is as good as a bulldozer. We either put in place protections that prevent huge homes from being built, or we stand by and watch as one by one the bungalows are crushed by backhoes, and the character that attracted us to this neighborhood is erased from our town.

We can enjoy a community with rising values without watching the bungalows we love being wiped out. Please join in the work to protect and preserve our bungalows.

Brent Sullivan, 910 Omar  
brent.sullivan@gmail.com

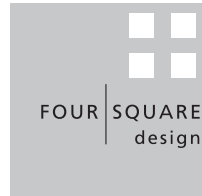
**[Note - the preceding is the opinion of the author, and does not necessarily represent the opinion of the WHCA]**

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Don't forget you can order engraved bricks in the Norhill Plaza Esplanade for as little as \$100. For more information, visit the Woodland Heights website: [www.woodland-heights.org](http://www.woodland-heights.org) or contact Pat Rutledge ([beautification@woodland-heights.org](mailto:beautification@woodland-heights.org))



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## Constable Program Update

Sign up for the Constable Program today! We need more subscribers. The cost of the contract increased by \$18,000 since we began our fundraising efforts. Therefore, if you have not signed up yet, we really need your support. We now have approximately 310 subscribers, but with over 1,800 homes in our Association boundaries, we have lots of folks that will benefit from the patrol. If more people contribute, then we can reduce the costs of the program to everyone, and/or increase the size of our patrol.

Currently, we have contracted with Harris County to provide 40 hours of patrol work in the Woodland Heights. They are providing a full-time, dedicated officer (Officer Patin) who will learn our community and its residents. This is Officer Patin's sole duties with Harris County. Because of the increased costs, we also negotiated a full-40 hour patrol position, instead of the 32-hours that other neighborhoods receive from Harris County.

If you subscribe to the Constable Program, one of the benefits is that the Harris County Constable will do checks on your home while you are on vacation, helping you keep an eye on your place, and giving you comfort while you are away.

You will also have access to a subscriber-only 24-hour a day, 7 day a week, dispatch number, where you can get direct access to Precinct One so that they can give you assistance immediately, including sending an officer out to assist (regardless of whether our officer is currently patrolling the area). No automated phone systems, no waiting on hold, no voicemails. A dispatcher picks up the phone immediately.

The annual cost is \$315.00. You can contribute in two different ways, an easy, on-line payment via PayPal (\$315.00 + \$10.00 processing fee), or by sending a check for \$315.00 directly to the Woodland Heights Civic Association.

To pay \$325.00 via PayPal, please visit <http://www.woodland-heights.org/constablepatrol.htm>.

To pay \$315.00 via check, please mail your check, made payable to the Woodland Heights Civic Association, to:

Woodland Heights Civic Association

Constable Program

P.O. Box 7754

Houston, Texas 77270-7754

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to me at [security@woodland-heights.org](mailto:security@woodland-heights.org).

David Jordan

VP Security, Woodland Heights Civic Association

**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](http://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 Co-Chairs, Maryellen Quarles and Brian Hendrix, at [newsletter@woodland-heights.org](mailto: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.

### Woodland Heights Civic Association Board Members

**President: Allison Hartzell**

[president@woodland-heights.org](mailto:president@woodland-heights.org)

**Treasurer: Annette Williamson**

[treasurer@woodland-heights.org](mailto:treasurer@woodland-heights.org)

**Secretary: Merrily Brannigan**

[secretary@woodland-heights.org](mailto:secretary@woodland-heights.org)

**VP Deed Restrictions: Gabe Vick**

[deed\\_restrictions@woodland-heights.org](mailto:deed_restrictions@woodland-heights.org)

**VP Beautification: Pat Rutledge**

[beautification@woodland-heights.org](mailto:beautification@woodland-heights.org)

**VP Security: David Jordan**

[security@woodland-heights.org](mailto:security@woodland-heights.org)

**VP Membership: Cindy Pena Sarrat**

[membership@woodland-heights.org](mailto:membership@woodland-heights.org)

**VP Infrastructure: Florence Clark**

[infrastructure@woodland-heights.org](mailto:infrastructure@woodland-heights.org)

**Newsletter Co-Chairs:**

**Maryellen Quarles and Brian Hendrix**

[newsletter@woodland-heights.org](mailto:newsletter@woodland-heights.org)