



The Nor'westener



Serving Concerned Readers in greater Clark Pines, Cottage Grove, Hidden Lake, Holly Park, Lazybrook, Oak Forest, Shady Acres, Timbergrove Court, Timbergrove Manor, Timbergrove Terrace and Woodcrest.

"To Inform"

Community News Since August, 2002

September 18, 2009

Online Issue

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Neighborhood Watch

Timbergrove Manor along with greater Shady Acres, Clark Pines, Lazybrook and Holly Park are in HPD Patrol Beat 2A60. For simple listings of criminal activity for 2A60 by month access: <http://www.houstontx.gov/police/cs/beatpages/cs2a60.htm> Scroll down on that page to the calendar and select the month for which data is being sought. HPD has been restructuring its methods of accumulating and displaying data so June and July of 2009 are all the monthly data available on that page at this time.

Eric Carlson's web site <http://www.ericcarlson.net/crimestats/2A60.html> displays monthly reported patrol beat 2A60 criminal incidents on a web-based map. Readers in other patrol beats can go to <http://www.ericcarlson.net/crimestats/> and select your local patrol beat map. Eric also provides various crime analysis on this latter site that may be of interest to all readers. We can zoom in on Eric's beat maps to get a bird's-eye view of incidents closest to home and clicking on any given incident icon provides address, date/time, etc. Eric typically has incidents mapped within a few days of the release of the monthly HPD report (typically about the 20th of each month).



As part of HPD's changed data accumulation methods they now offer an interactive web site with the stated goal of providing maps to reveal crime trends in neighborhoods. Users may search for crime incidents over the past 30 days, 7 days or within the previous 24 hours, by address, area, Council District, Super Neighborhood or police beat. Access <http://mycity.houstontx.gov/crime/> to experience the new information system.

As currently configured Eric's and HPD's sites are complimentary. Within a few days of the 20th of September readers can access Eric's maps and see crime information for August. A check by HPD's site will display crime info for the previous 30 days reaching into the latter part of August. 60 days or so of displayed crime begins to show longer-term potential trends and HPD's site might point out more immediate aggressive activity.

This new HPD info. system was to be all about providing residents with new crime awareness tools. Try the site(s) out and give HPD feedback and let them know what you like and don't like.

For our historic tracking purposes HPD's revamped data system provides only the *hour* of the incident as reflected in the following crime listing. Burglary of motor vehicles are now combined under the common term "Theft" so that aspect of crime tracking has disappeared in the following listing.

Timbergrove West – June and July Crime Report

From the publicly available HPD Monthly Crime Reports for 2009 for TM-West (Sections 5 - 14).

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 6/04/09 | Auto Theft | 6200 Wynnwood Ln. | 1 p.m. |
| 6/19/09 | Theft | 6200 Wynnwood Ln. | Midnight |
| 7/27/09 | Burglary Residence | 6600 Grovewood Ln. | 7 a.m. |
| 7/28/09 | Burglary Residence | 6000 Woodbrook Ln. | 9 p.m. |
| 7/28/09 | Theft | 6100 Queenswood Ln. | 11 p.m. |

The overall TM-West reported crime total through July 2009 stands at 28 incidents bringing our year-to-date total above 5 of the past seven years. For record-year comparisons; *through July 2006* we had 13 reported crimes, but *through July 2007* we had 36 reported crimes. The trend continued through July for criminal activity to be focused east of Ella. Year-to-date only 3 of the 28 reported incidents happened west of Ella.

Our eyes and ears aiding HPD will continue to be our most effective weapon. If you see a burglary or other crime in progress in which life or property are threatened call HPD at **911** and emphasize "crime in progress"! Call **713-884-3131** to report suspicious activity and request an officer to patrol on a more time-available basis. Our HPD Officers at the local Heights storefront are *not* staffed to respond to calls for immediate assistance. They do not simply sit around and wait on a phone call, nor are they assigned directly to respond to 911 calls. But, they are in our greater area performing their many other Differential Response Team (DRT) duties and if a 911 call appears on their computer screens and they are just blocks away and not tied up they may well be the first responder on the scene. It has happened. Our DRT Officers can be called or visited (1127 N. Shepherd - behind Auto Zone on W. 11th at Shepherd Dr., 713-803-1151) to file many reports or to discuss the handling of concerns. If an HPD Officer is not at the storefront, the civilian Police Service Officer on duty will accept your report and deliver it to an HPD Officer for handling. Heights Storefront hours now extend from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday – Friday.

State Code Provides for Posting Political Yard Signs

TX House Bill 873 passed back in 2005 sets aside blanket deed restrictions prohibiting posting political yard signs. Bill 873 permits posting political signs 90 days before an election and up to ten days after that election day. If there is a subsequent run-off election scheduled within 90 days of the original election day then the sign can remain until ten days after the run-off election. The actual text of the bill is attached to the cover email, see: [HB873-Political signs.doc](#)

Yol Art Coming to W. 18th Street

Yolanta Thompson, offering custom framing and art to the Woodland Heights area since 1983 is relocating her business to 1904 W. 18th Street (a few doors east of Kojak's Café). Plans are for the new location to be up and operating by the end of September. Check out Yolanta's web page www.YolArt.com to get a flavor of what she will be bringing to the northwest neighborhood.

Jaycee Park Update

The Jaycee Park effort is moving right along. Ileana Desalos, organizer and lead in the group that has come to call itself "Friends of Jaycee Park", has reported she is pleased with her experiences in dealing with individuals at Houston Parks Board, COH Parks both Planning and Forestry Divisions, Trees for Houston and COH General Services Administration. Ileana also expressed appreciation for the continuing support and efforts by Council Member Lawrence and for the sharing of experiences offered by those area residents she has contacted that were involved in the W. 11th Street Park effort.

One concept that has distilled out of all that significant and time-consuming outreach effort is the importance of demonstrated neighborhood support for a project of this type. It is not like Houston Parks Board (HPB) was required to accept the Jaycee Park effort as one of their projects to help promote, but community interest got us past that hurdle. As HPB's and our own community reps. reach out to larger corporate donors they will need the leverage that comes from demonstrated, continuing community efforts to help fund the planned Jaycee Park renovations.

Area businesses are beginning to recognize community interest and step forward with support. Goodman Manufacturing is finalizing plans to make a donation. The amount of the donation will be revealed as checks are finalized and processed.

In seeking ways to promote and demonstrate community support, *Friends* first community-based fund collection effort is a neighborhood Coin Drive scheduled **Saturday, September 19.**

Looking ahead, there is a park fund-raising mixer scheduled at **Rainbow Lodge, 2011 Ella Blvd.**, the evening of **Tuesday, October 20th** from **6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Rather than the usual stand-around mixer, candidates for the soon-to-be-vacant office of City Council District A have been invited. This event is a deliberate socially responsible action by the *Friends* group to provide an opportunity for area residents to speak to District A candidates in a relaxed one-on-one setting. To get past the "sound bite" positions we all too often depend upon and seek a personal response on a personally relevant issue. Come and meet the real candidates. Your attendance will also affirm our area's support for parks in general and Jaycee Park in particular. This is a fundraiser, however, but a \$25 donation toward the Park's renovation will also give attendees one chance to win one of two wine gift baskets valued at \$125. A copy of the invitation to the event is attached to the cover email, see the attachment [Mixer Invitation.pdf](#) and watch The Leader weekly newspaper the weeks prior to the 20th for more complete details.

A bit further out there are plans for at least a modest tree planting event in Jaycee Park in mid-January 2010 (see *Trees for Houston Urban Forestry Keeper article, p.7*) and some general ideas are being considered for a possible Jaycee Park Spring Festival and/or a Rummage Sale.

The Friends of Jaycee Park meet in open working sessions every few weeks as needs dictate. Anyone interested in participating in those meetings or simply being kept up-to-date on the project

can email Ileana for information at: friendsofjayceepark@yahoo.com

Support by area businesses, both large and smaller, are important to the effort and Michael Martinez Photography located in Holly Park has stepped up. Mrs. Desalos provides, "If you were thinking of having quality photographs made of your family, here is a great opportunity. Michael Martinez Photography has kindly volunteered their service to help Jaycee Park. To learn more about their studio go to: <http://www.martinezphoto.com/aboutus.html> . "



**Jaycee
Park**

Fall Family Fundraiser

FriendsOfJayceePark@yahoo.com

In order to help with the Jaycee Park renovation,

Michael Martinez
PHOTOGRAPHY

is offering a Family Portrait Sitting and 8x10 portrait,
with a \$50 donation to Friends of Jaycee Park. (A \$220 value!)



These specially priced packages will be available by
appointment only for just 2 days:
Saturday, October 17th & Sunday, October 18th.

Michael Martinez Photography is conveniently
located in Holly Park.

Capture today's joy of family while building the park of tomorrow!

Call today to schedule an appointment: **713-355-5345**
www.martinezphoto.com

FIRE FEST

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 10**. That is Fire Fest day. Fire Fest is an all day (**10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**) family fun event that benefits the education and outreach programs of the Houston Fire Museum. It is held at the **HFD Val Jahnke Training Facility** located at **8030 Braniff**, just south of Hobby Airport off Telephone Road. Admission is **free** and there is always plenty of food, music, live fire and rescue demonstrations, antique fire trucks and more. To learn more about the Houston Fire Museum, please visit www.houstonfiremuseum.org.



Planning for National Night Out

Now is the time to begin planning **National Night Out** gatherings. In Texas only, National Night Out will be held **Tuesday, October 6, 2009** from **6 to 9 P.M.**. Readers in the portions of Central Division north of Buffalo Bayou and inside Loop 610 contact Officer Duffy at 713-803-1151 or at centralpatrol2district@cityofhouston.net with your party information such as the address where the gathering(s) will be held and a guesstimate of the number of folks that may attend. HPD Central Division Command details officers to drop by as many block or neighborhood gatherings as they can so request an HPD Officer visit at your gathering if you desire one. The number of requests for officers often exceeds the number of officers that can practically be made available, so get party information submitted as soon as possible.



2009 6th Annual Houston Solar Tour

The 2009 6th Annual Houston Solar Tour takes place on **Saturday, October 3rd from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.** and will feature sites located within Houston, and the communities of Bellaire, West University, the Woodlands, and Spring, Texas.



The self-guided, open-house tour spotlights about 20 residential and commercial buildings located throughout the greater Houston metropolitan area that have installed solar energy systems and other energy-efficient and sustainable technologies.

The Solar Social, held on **October 3rd from 9 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at Discovery Green**, will kick off the 2009 Houston Solar Tour! Come see working solar systems and learn more about sustainable energy choices that help lower costs, support energy independence, protect against power outages and reduce carbon emissions. For more information about this event visit:

www.houstonsolartour.org

Greenspoint Mall Law Expo

The 2009 Law Enforcement Exposition will be held from **10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, September 19th** at **Greenspoint Mall, 12300 North Freeway**. Each year this community event brings approximately 50 different law enforcement agencies together to educate the public on law enforcement resources available to them. If you would like to attend this event or get additional information call 713.759.9454

Salford Drive Update

Construction of the Traffic Splitter Island Project along Salford Dr. is well underway. An engineering drawing of the project is attached to the cover email, see the attachment [Salford Traffic Splitter Project](#) or one can just visit Salford to see the project under construction. A physical visit to the site reveals the traffic facility located at the intersection of Minimax and Salford is nearing completion. The COH has assured Salford will not be open to through traffic until both projects are completed and that day appears to not be too far away.

Time will tell how it all works out. All this may become a traffic control model to be considered in other neighborhoods with similar issues, or it may turn out to be a failed concept to avoid trying elsewhere.

The Hummers Are Here!

If you have any of the many hummingbird friendly plants in your landscape – salvias, hamelia patens, cupheas etc – then you are probably well aware that the annual hummingbird migration from points north heading south to Mexico and Central America is well underway. Time to dust off the hummer feeder if you have not already. Ruby-Throats are the most common – male and female both sporting iridescent green back and upper wings with white chests. The male displays a brilliant red throat.

Positioning the feeder a bit away from the home is generally best, but ruby throats can be bold and may well visit feeders positioned close to your windows. You may get no visitors, then again you may see several at one time blurring around and chattering in their agitated way. Do not worry about leaving the feeder up too long and some hummer not migrating. When the time comes, they will follow nature's call and beat wings southward. Keep an eye on the feeder later in the year. If you continue to get a visitor you may have fortunately gotten a hummer that winters over in this area to be your guest. Some sources report the same birds tend to return to the same yard year-after-year so it may be a multi-year relationship.



Male Ruby Throat Hummingbird

Photo: Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Feeder Prep and Maintenance: Be prepared to change the fluid in your feeder(s) a couple times per week in our area's heat. To prep a hummingbird feeder solution simply mix 1/4 cup of white table sugar into one cup of boiling water and allow to cool. Avoid using food coloring, it adds no food value. The hummers will be attracted to the brightly colored portions of the feeder. I recommend half-filling an 8 oz. feeder and store the rest

in a sealed container in the fridge for replenishment. A clear glass feeder is best to allow us to see any mold that might form or a change in the liquid. If the liquid clouds the sugar has fermented into toxic alcohol. Take the feeder out of service until it can be rinsed well - adding some chlorine bleach to the water if there are signs of scum or mold - before

replenishing/replacing.

Tip: If ants become a problem invading the feeder try placing a bit of sticky tape around the wire used to suspend the feeder. Duct tape or the like works well. Cut a piece an inch or so long. Fold the top 1/4 inch over and use that 1/4 inch portion to stick the tape to the feeder's suspending wire leaving the majority of the sticky portion of the tape exposed. Typically stops the ants for a couple weeks before the tape dries and needs replacing.

City Code – Placement of Garbage at Curbs

Solid Waste Management Division personnel have begun red tagging city garbage and recycling collection containers in the greater Timbergrove area that are not placed at the curb in front of the home for collection. This is mainly an issue for homeowners with corner lots who frequently place their collection containers at the end of their drives on a side street, not in front of their homes on the street of their home's address. City Code 39.67 covers the issue.

Sec. 39-67. Placement for basic collection service.

(a) Except as otherwise specifically permitted in subsection (b), (c) or (f) of this section or section 39-65(2) of this Code, basic collection service shall be limited to automated service containers or one-way containers placed at the curblines of a public street in front of the property upon which the garbage or trash was generated.

(b) The director shall determine the street on which containers shall be placed for collection from a residential unit located on a corner lot.

A disproportionate portion of the reports I have received over the years concerning garbage not being collected on collection day have come from neighbors with corner lots placing their trash at side street curb. This costs extra truck/operator time and energy, leads to more complicated collection routes and an increase in customer complaints. SWMD wants to avoid all those costs.

Trees for Houston Urban ForesTree Keeper Training

(From the *Trees for Houston* <http://www.treesforhouston.org/> website.)

(This is a very good program in a convenient location for those desiring to gain knowledge for community based and personal tree planting information. Good opportunity to become a knowledgeable volunteer for the January Jaycee Park tree planting project. Ed.)

The Urban ForesTree Keeper is a **FREE** tree-care course offered each fall. It teaches basic horticultural principles: tree identification, planting techniques, site selection, pruning, fertilization, and after-planting care. Through this course, we furnish knowledgeable people who will, as owners or volunteers, care for trees in municipalities, school districts, neighborhoods, and yards. The classes consist of 6 hours of classroom instruction, one tree planting day and one tree identification workshop at the Houston Arboretum. After you have completed the course, you will receive a certificate of completion, Trees For Houston hat and be a certified Urban ForesTree Keeper.

UFTK 2009 Schedule

Class I: Monday, October 5, 6-8pm

Tree Planting: Saturday, October 10, Site TBA

Class II: Monday, October 12, 6-8pm

Class III: Monday, October 19, 6-8pm

Workshop: Saturday, October 31, 9am-12pm *At Houston Arboretum

Each class will be held at the Greater Houston Community Foundation Room located at 4550 Post Oak Place Drive, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77027. To register please contact:

randi@treesforhouston.org

Fall into the Katy Prairie

(Reprinted from the Katy Prairie Conservancy Newsletter)

Prairie Discovery Tour

Saturday, September 19, 5 - 7 PM

KPC's *Prairie Discovery Tours* allow you to get up close and personal with the magnificent wildlife and history of the Katy Prairie. This fall, come visit KPC's Nelson Farms Preserve to enjoy the first hints of autumn's crisp weather.

KPC's Nelson Farms Preserve is located on a working rice farm, so participants can get a taste of the historic activities of the Katy Prairie. Expert volunteer guides will lead participants on a path down to the crawfish pond, where you can see iridescent dragonflies flitting over the surface and spot some colorful amphibians taking haven in the water. Look out for brilliant fall birds and keep an ear turned for any owls that might be coming out for an evening snack.

Date: Saturday, September 19 from 5 to 7 PM

Location: [Nelson Farms Preserve](#)

Registration limited and required. Email info@katyprairie.org for more details and to register.



Spec's at the Washington Round-A-Bout Closes

A recent article in The Houston Chronicle reveals that the Spec's Liquor Store location on Washington Ave. at the Round-A-Bout has closed. Quoting from that story "Lawyers for Spec's agreed to voluntarily surrender the licenses at an administrative hearing Friday. Had they continued with the appeal process and been forced to deal with the matter in district court, Spec's owner John Rydman faced an unpleasant potential consequence if they lost.

'The district court judge could have prevented him from getting a license anywhere in the state for a year,' said Linda Geffin, an assistant Harris County attorney. 'I think he did a risk/benefit analysis and decided we are going to give our permits back here. We had a much bigger hammer.'

There were many comments filed on-line after this article, most seeming to see this as the "little guy" being messed over by uncaring government. I'm no fan of big, inefficient, uncaring government (excuse the redundancy). But, all reports indicate that Spec's Liquors, was fully aware they were asking for a State license and City permit that would at least require variances to obtain due to the Spec's location in proximity to Memorial Elementary School. This writer will not be so gullible as to believe the owners or permitting agent were not aware that something was amiss when there were no meetings or notices surrounding any typical variance process being conducted before the State License and City Permit were issued.

The COH asserts the permit they issued was for a business in which food sales exceeded half the total sales – like a restaurant. Area neighborhoods that became involved in this issue early on and the COH asked that Spec's comply with the city permit and the idea was rejected.

The Chronicle article goes on to say "Spec's filed a lawsuit in July against the city and county while it was attempting to keep the store open. The lawsuit alleges violation of equal protection and due process clauses of the U.S. Constitution because of the revocation of the permits. The suit is still pending."

The neighborhoods in this affected area, operating under the umbrella and guidance of Super Neighborhood 22, deserve credit for making this an issue. The stretch of Washington Avenue running through their area has become populated with hot-spot bars and cantinas and liquor-serving eateries of various types. With that has come an increase in traffic and parking problems, general congestion, noise and *drunks*. Neighborhoods best fight to protect their residents and that includes children attending local elementary schools.

This writer feels no remorse for Rydman. With some 31 Spec's locations listed in the Houston telephone directory and being in the business since 1962 one can expect that Spec's is well aware of the permitting and licensing process and has a business-culture awareness of other establishments caught up in this type issue. It seems, at best, he made a calculated business decision and then refused to meet the conditions of his city permit even when approached by his residential neighbors seeking such a compromise. He is due not one city or state *taxpayer* dollar in compensation.

Link to Chronicle story: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/biz/6614602.html>

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