



# THE PLAZA PULSE

SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA CIVIC CLUB

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April 2012

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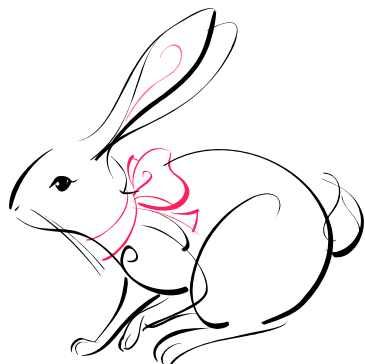
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### **Houston Discusses Capital Improvement Plan** *by Chuck Blesener*

District C Council Member Ellen Cohen recently held a public meeting to discuss the City's current five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is updated annually to address the infrastructure needs for the City of Houston. The plan is data driven with the neediest projects completed first while considering the cost/benefit ratio. It is imperative that residents call 311 with any and every problem they encounter because much of that data is derived from those 311 calls. Eventually many of the CIP projects will become the first Rebuild Houston projects as City bonds are paid off and we go to a pay-as-you-go plan. In the past year the City combined CIP plans to create a 10 year plan that also eliminated the petition process by citizens.

The design, bid, and construction phases of most projects takes from two to six years to complete once started. Job Order Contracts up to \$350,000 can be done quicker. In the past year the City overlaid 34 miles of pavement in District C. Some of the CIP projects scheduled for District C that are of importance to SPP residents include: Collier Library improvements - Job Order Contract in design phase scheduled for completion in June 2012, Garden Oaks Phase II water main replacement project scheduled for completion October 8, 2012, Shepherd Drive area drainage improvements with design phase begun in 2007 and scheduled for design completion on December 2, 2012 and bids and construction to follow, Pinemont Drive reconstruction from Ella to N. Shepherd Drive with design phase begun in 2011 and scheduled for design completion on April 30, 2014 with subsequent bidding and construction.

### **When it Comes to Aging, Getting Good Advice is Critical** *by Christina Lesher*

As the Baby Boomer population ages, individuals preparing for retirement or needing assistance caring for aging parents may want to consider assistance from an elder law attorney.

Elder law generally pertains to people over 65, but individuals under the age of 65 wanting to plan for their retirement can benefit from the counsel of an elder law attorney. Elder law attorneys can review estate planning documents, discuss paying for in home care, assisted living, or nursing home care, and provide consultation on the purchase of long-term care insurance.

Many individuals who are qualified for long-term benefits from the Veteran's Administration and Medicaid are not aware that they could receive assistance in paying for long-term care. With the average cost of assisted living ranging from \$2,000-\$4,000 per month, and nursing home care ranging from \$4,000-\$8,000 per month, many families need assistance in paying for care.

The Texas Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc. (NAELA) is a professional association of elder law attorneys who are dedicated to assisting clients with public benefits, probate and estate planning, guardianship/conservatorship, and health and long-term care planning.

For a list of elder law attorneys in your area, see the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys website at [www.naela.org](http://www.naela.org).

*Christina Lesher is a Shepherd Park Plaza resident and elder law attorney.*

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713-503-2552

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713-594-5295  
[pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com](mailto:pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com)

## Curb and Sidewalk Maintenance *by Chuck Blesener*

For some time now we have been told by the City of Houston that maintenance of sidewalks and curbs has been the responsibility of property owners even though they are located on City property. We have received clarification from the Public Works and Engineering Department on the City Ordinance that gives them that authority.

Chapter 40, Article III, Sections 40-83 through 40-99 of the City Code of Ordinances, dated May 23, 1990, stipulates that construction, reconstruction, repair, or regrading of sidewalks, driveways, curbs, and gutters are the responsibility of abutting property owners.

Section 40-83 says City Council can order construction or repairs with the City Engineer serving notice that work is to be performed by the property owner with time limits and specifications.

Section 40-84 says if the abutting property owners fail to have the work done the City can have it done and bill the property owner for all costs plus 10% for attorney fees and place a lien on the property.

Section 40-85 says property owners can petition City Council for the City to perform all work and be billed for all costs and the terms of payment.

Sections 40-86 through 40-88 specify the permits required from the City Engineer to perform the work and the posting of same within 20 feet of construction.

Section 40-99 specifies that any property owner who fails to post a bond, get a permit, or perform the construction or repairs when ordered, is guilty of a misdemeanor and can be fined up to \$500 per day.

It would surely be better for all of us to repair those broken or uneven sidewalks and curbs in front of our homes without getting the City involved.

## Crime Report *by Chuck Blesener*

Senior Officer J. F. Webb, HPD Investigator in the Financial Crimes Unit, had some interesting things to say about identity theft. White collar criminals are not dumb, most do their research and even if they are caught in a felony, most receive probation even after stealing up to \$2 million. Don't be embarrassed—report identity fraud. There were 11.1 million victims in 2010, up 12% over 2008.

Under the new laws, the only thing a check forger needs is the account number and routing number. The average loss to an armed robber is \$3,200 and the average loss to a check forger is \$79,000. He advises to never give a check to a lawn care worker, a housekeeper, or a home healthcare worker. He also advises against taking a picture of a check with your cell phone and sending it to your bank, or using unsecured Wi-Fi on your computer to pay your bills. Once in the air the signal is fair game and can be stolen by criminals.

Credit cards are safer than debit cards and there is no charge if the number is stolen and you have the card in your possession. Preloaded cards with set amounts are not tied to your bank account. Credit card skimmers often test their forged cards at gas pumps where there are no cameras. They never use an ATM machine with an exposed camera and at gas pumps shake the card reader to see if it moves.

Verify your properties are in your name in the counties and appraisal districts. Criminals are issuing quit claim deeds and taking out loans against them. When the loans are not paid, the property is foreclosed on. Instead of issuing fraud alerts with the three credit bureaus, you can use the freeze option. You can send a 100 word statement to be placed in your file at the credit reporting agencies by return receipt mail. This makes them liable if credit is issued to a criminal. Remember—there are no lotteries in Canada—don't be scammed.

Patrol Hours *Prepared by Charli Merchant*

WEEK	WALK/BIKE PATROL	AUTO PATROL	TOTAL HOURS
1	16	15	31
2	14	16	30
3	16.75	18.5	35.25
4	19	15.5	34.5
TOTAL	65.75	65	130.75

**Interested in patrolling?** Contact **Karen Cruse** at 713-824-4799 or [kjcfm4954@yahoo.com](mailto:kjcfm4954@yahoo.com) for information.

Training for Citizen Patrol certification is the second Tuesday of each month at 9455 West Montgomery at 7 pm. Anyone who regularly walks in the neighborhood is invited to join the COP group. More eyes on our neighborhood means more watching for suspicious activity.

**Ernie Greener** is the winner of the \$20 gas bonus this month.

CALLS HANDLED BY DEPUTY CONSTABLE

Miles Patrolled... 1047

- Arrests..... 7
- Alarm Responses ..... 5
- Citizen Contacts ..... 74
- Disturbances ..... 0
- Investigations ..... 7
- Park Checks..... 25
- Vacation Watch ..... 36
- Misc. Calls ..... 23
- Dispatched Calls ..... 20
- Total Calls ..... 179

Traffic:  
Verbal/Written Warnings... 1  
Citations... 0



FEBRUARY 2012

Passengers aboard the M/V Sam Houston can enjoy views of passing cargo vessels and the operations at the Port's Turning Basin Terminal. This 95-ft. vessel has a maximum capacity of 90 passengers. There is air-conditioned lounge seating and outside standing room. The M/V Sam Houston has been operating as the Port of Houston's public tour vessel since July 30, 1958.

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Tour Schedule

(No tours are available during the month of September when the vessel is dry-docked for routine annual maintenance.)

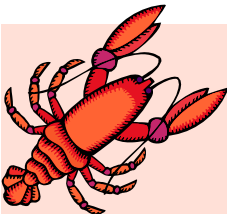
Monday and Holidays	Closed
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday	10 am & 2:30 pm
Thursday and Sunday	2:30 pm only

What's Happening Around Houston

by Carol Jean Hebert

M/V Sam Houston

The M/V Sam Houston offers free 90-minute cruises along The Houston Ship Channel. It Embarks from the Port's Sam Houston Pavilion.



Come to Crawfish Boil May 5!

All are invited to enjoy the annual Shepher Park Plaza Crawfish Boil, benefiting the SPP Civic Club. You'll get all you can eat crawfish, beer, and margaritas, plus great fun with your friends and neighbors! The event will be held on Saturday, May 5 at 6pm at 4718 Thornton Circle, and is limited to the first 100 guests. Kids 5-12 are \$10 and adults are \$25. See the insert in this issue for more information.

# around the neighborhood

By Romi Sandel

► On Saturday, March 10 Lauren Dornak, daughter of SPP residents **Patricia & Tom Dornak**, on Richelieu Lane, married Ryan Grosskreuz at St. Michael Catholic Church in Houston. A reception in their honor was held at The Junior League of Houston. Ryan is from 1960/ Champions Forest area. They met and dated while at college at the University of Texas at Austin. They both work in Houston and will reside in Oak Forest.



► **Catherine & Chris Powell** welcomed **Grant Christopher Powell** on Thursday, February 12 at 4:12 pm. Grant weighed 8 lbs 15 oz and stretched out to 20 3/4" long. Proud parents are joined by proud big sister, **Hannah**, who is sure to be a big help at six years old.

► Wishes for a speedy recovery go out to **Monica Krause** after her recent knee surgery. Monica is currently undergoing rehabilitation and physical therapy, and is expected home soon.

► **Betty Marie Gaudiano**, who lived on Richelieu, passed away on Tuesday, March 6.

**Share Your News**—Please pass along any news of note about SPP residents so that we can spotlight them in future issues of the *Pulse*. If you have news to share, please let us know by emailing [pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com](mailto:pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com) or contacting **Romi Sandel** at 713-962-4171.



SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA

E-Mail Alert!

[WWW.SHEPHERDPARKPLAZA.COM](http://WWW.SHEPHERDPARKPLAZA.COM)

We have recently upgraded our neighborhood website, [shepherdparkplaza.com](http://shepherdparkplaza.com) with a new look and lot of new features. If you would like to start subscribing to the SPP email alert messages, you may now submit your email address directly from the home page of the website. If you're already receiving the SPP email alerts, no action is needed.



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## CITY HELPLINE: 311

Citizens Patrol  
713-824-4799

Deed Restrictions  
713-305-5035

Traffic & Safety  
713-824-4799

New Neighbor/Greeter  
713-305-5036

Garden Club  
713-344-7013

CP Vacation Watch  
713-682-5959

Architectural Guidelines  
713-956-1167

Plaza Pulse News  
713-503-2552

SPP Historian  
713-683-9945

Plaza Moms  
281-888-4533

SPP Membership  
713-683-6502

City Liaison  
713-683-9945

Pulse Advertising  
713-688-0574 or 713-681-3600

Men's Group  
713-683-9945



## SPP CALENDAR

APRIL 2012



= Trash and Yard Waste

= Curbside Recycling

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

 <b>April Fool's Day</b> 1	2	  3	4	5	6	7
 <b>EASTER</b> 8	 Garden Club MEETING 9	 10	11	 Men's Group MEETING 12	13	14
 <b>TAX DAY</b> 15	16	  17	18	19	 Plaza Moms MEETING 20	21
 <b>Earth Day</b> 22	23	 <b>Heavy trash JUNK waste only</b> 24	25	26	 Men's Group TRIP 27	28
29	30	<b>Call Deputy Dispatch • 713-755-7628</b>  A Note About Trash: You can legally put your heavy trash out at 6pm the Friday before your heavy trash day.				



**Oak Forest Veterinary Clinic**  
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Susan Cardenas, DVM

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The beer will flow.....  
We'll let our hair down and party  
Cause the crawfish won't know....  
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*4th Annual  
SPP Crawfish Boil*

*Saturday, May 5th  
6:00 PM*

*4718 Thornton Circle  
The Davis' Place*



All proceeds to support the SPP Civic Club.  
Advance purchase or reservation required.  
Limited to first 100 guests.

Donation: \$25 per person  
Child 5yr – 12 yr \$10.  
All you can eat crawfish, beer & margarita's.

To Purchase or RSVP please contact Patricia Dornak, 713-683-6502, or [PDornak@gmail.com](mailto:PDornak@gmail.com)





## Garden Club

Spring is here, much to the surprise of us all! And along with spring comes increased activities for SPP Garden Club. The March meeting, the annual "brown bag" fundraiser, was held in the home of **Evonne Alford**, with co-hostesses **Shirley Correll**, **Corinne Oppermann**, and **Pat Kubin** serving up culinary delights. Outstanding items were presented for purchase of tickets with winners drawn from the brown bag. Great fun, many laughs, and good memories were made. Garden Club Yard of the Month for March was awarded to **Sheri Beasley** at 1138 Thornton for her outstanding bounty of spring flowers and plantings. In addition, Civic Club Section II Yard-of-the-Month winners were garden club members **Bob Warren & Michael Pate**, also on Thornton.

In the business meeting, approval of the majority was reached on revision and additions to the club's bylaws and standing rules. In addition, the decision was made to contribute a gift certificate to the SPP Civic Club for the annual Spring Fling silent auction, and to again serve desserts at the meeting.

The April meeting will be held at the home of **Bob Warren & Michael Pate**, 1131 Thornton at 7 pm on April 9. A program will be presented by Mimi Klare on "Living Wreaths". Co-hostesses for this meeting will be **Sheri Beasley**, **Sarrah Moseley** and **Corinne Oppermann**. All SPP residents are welcome to attend, and memberships is open to both men and women of all ages.



## Plaza Moms Spring Family Night Out

**When:** Friday, April 20 from 6 pm to 8 pm.

**Where:** Turn About near **Emily Leffler's** home at 1067 Chantilly Lane (Intersection of Chantilly Lane and Clift Haven)

Come join us for a fun night outside with your family, Plaza Moms members, and your neighbors! Think of old school block party where everyone brings their bikes, trikes, lawn chairs, and hangs out. This event is fun for the whole family and children of all ages.

What to bring: If you want to bring dinner, we will have a grill ready OR you can put in an El Rey order for tortas or tacos when you rsvp. BYOB (we'll have coolers iced down or bring your own), plus bring lawn chairs, bug spray, and riding toys for the kids. We will also have ice cream treats for all!


RSVP to Big Tent or contact **Holly Inderrieden** at 832-477-7871 or **Shannon Zierau** at 713-775-0307.



## Men's Group

The Shepherd Park plaza Men's Group will meet for their monthly luncheon and discussion of neighborhood happenings on Thursday, April 12, 11:30 am, at Hibachi Grill, 5601 West 34th St. All men of the neighborhood are invited to join them.

On Friday, April 27, they will head to Huntsville for a guided tour, lunch, and the 25th annual General Sam Houston Folk Festival. For more information contact **Chuck Blesener** at 713-683-9945 or [ccbles77@gmail.com](mailto:ccbles77@gmail.com).




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—Dayna C., Houston, TX



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## GARDENING TIP OF THE MONTH



Protect your precious plants from aphids by spraying the plants with this mixture; 1 cup of isopropyl rubbing alcohol and 1 cup water. Place in a labeled spray bottle and lightly spray plants. DO NOT use this mixture on fruits or vegetables or on plants with very delicate leaves.

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## March YARDS OF THE MONTH

### Section 1:

JAMES & BRENDA MCKEE  
1051 CURTIN ST.

### Section 3:

ADOLPH & JANICE BENYS  
1104 CHESHIRE

### Section 2:

MICHAEL PATE & BOB  
WARREN  
1131 THORNTON

### Section 4:

JIM & DOROTHY WORTHING  
1029 RICHELIEU LN.



Find us on  
**Facebook**

Join your neighbors in the  
Shepherd Park Plaza group  
on Facebook. Share your  
thoughts or pictures and join  
in on discussions.

**SPP**

**Wants to Welcome You**

Thanks to **Spaghetti Western**, 1608 Shepherd Drive  
(713) 861-1313, who graciously donated gift  
certificates for our newest neighbors.  
<http://www.spagwesthouston.com/>.

If you have moved into the neighborhood recently  
and have not yet been greeted by the SPP Civic Club,  
please contact **Eileen Hartman** at 713-305-5036 or  
[eileen@hartmanassociates.com](mailto:eileen@hartmanassociates.com).

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*Martha Turner*  
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