



THE PLAZA PULSE

SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA CIVIC CLUB

{CONTENTS}

March 2012

[Departments]

- Citizens Patrol
- Deputy Constable Patrol
- SPP Clubs
 - Men's Group
 - Garden Club
 - Plaza Moms Society

[Features]

- Spring Fling Set for March 31st
- SPP Deed Restrictions Updates Proposed
- Gardening Tips from the Pros—the Garden Club
- Houston Crime Report
- Facts Revisited for Heavy Trash
- A Note from the SPP Historian
- Are You Getting E-Mail Alerts?
- Support SPP with Your Dues
- Domestic Violence

[Reviews]

- Around the Neighborhood
- What's Happening in Houston
- Calendar
 - Important Dates
 - Numbers to Remember



Spring Fling Set for March 31st

by Caroline Marciano

Save the date and plan to attend SPPCC's semi-annual membership meeting. This is your chance to elect the 2012-2013 SPPCC board, learn about issues affecting our neighborhood, and sign up to participate in neighborhood organizations including Citizens Patrol, Plaza Moms, Men's Group, and Garden Club. You can also hear about what the SPPCC Board has done during the past year, pay your annual Civic Club dues, make a contribution to the Constable Program, and much more! Don't forget the annual silent auction. All funds raised in the auction will support our neighborhood and various improvement efforts. Watch for more details coming to your front porch or e-mail inbox soon!

SPP Deed Restrictions Updates Proposed *by Colette Robichau*

The SPP Deed Restrictions Committee distributed its first publication of the proposed updates to the deed restrictions in the February *Pulse* and we are pleased with the feedback received thus far from our residents. The majority of the feedback forms were in favor of the proposed updates, but there was some confusion around the form wording. The committee has reviewed the comments and updated the information flyer clarifying the areas of concern.

We ask all residents to review the flyer insert and provide feedback comments as desired. The next planned step in this process is to hold at least two public meetings—a weekend meeting and a weekday evening meeting—for residents to discuss the proposed updates. The committee expects to hold the Public Comment Meetings during the month of April. Based on the public comments from these meetings, adjustments to the deed restriction updates may be made and the final legal document will be prepared. The legal document with the proposed updates will then be used for the Civic Club authorized signature gathering process which may take two or three months. At this time the committee expects to hold signature gathering meetings to make it easy for our residents to participate in this very important process. The meeting dates and times will be published in the *Pulse* when the schedule is confirmed.

A note from the SPP Historian

Alice Bongers is looking for photos of houses decorated for Christmas either this year or in the past. She would like to start a book on the history of Christmas in Shepherd Park Plaza.

Please email anything you have to ajbongers@att.net or drop them in her mail box at 1038 Richelieu Lane.



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713-503-2552

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pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com

around the neighborhood

By Romi Sandel

► **Tara & Jason Williams** and big sister **Taylor** welcomed their second child on February 6 at 2:10am. **James Parker Williams** (Parker) weighed 8 lbs 10 oz and was 22 1/4" long—go Tara!

► Condolences to the family of **Letha Dwigans**, wife of **Ted Dwigans**, who passed away on February 7. She had been battling cancer for the last couple of years.

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 or contacting **Romi Sandel** at 713-962-4171.

Gardening Tips from the Pros—The Garden Club

Outdoor Tip of The Month: Here is the dirt; for easier transplanting or planting flowers or shrubs, spray your shovel or trowel blade with cooking spray before you start digging. The soil will slide right off!!

Indoor Healthy House Plants: If you are not ready to move outside just yet, try feeding (all year long) your indoor palm or fern monthly with 2 tablespoons of pure vegetable oil. Use a small kitchen funnel pressed into the soil to carry the oil to the root of the plant.

Houston Crime Report *by Chuck Blesener*

HPD North Division Captain D. T. Runyan says that although there has been a recent rash of home and car burglaries, citywide property crimes, assaults, and murders are down. Property crimes are the lowest they have been since 1965.

In North Division alone COP volunteers patrolled 17,908 hours in 2010 and 13,500 hours through October of 2011. The volunteers of the SPP Citizen's Patrol contributed a large portion of those hours.

HPD has started enforcing the ordinance against vagrants and panhandlers at local intersections. While they have gone to the North Loop, Crosstimbers, Airline, and Hwy 290, their main emphasis has been on the North Fwy where they wrote 170 citations in one month. First amendment rights allow anyone, including charities, to solicit on our streets but there are ordinances that control their behavior. All panhandlers and solicitors must have a City permit even though it does not have to be visible. They must wear a visible/reflective vest and can't step into the roadway. They must remain on the curb or median and can't litter the area they are working. Most of our panhandlers have a criminal or drug history and/or mental problems, and the police encourage you to give your donations to charities that assist them and not to the panhandlers directly.

The law has been changed so that all freeway overpasses are now the property of TXDOT and signs have been posted prohibiting sleeping or living under bridges or overpasses.

In Texas you can't be homeless and a registered sex offender. You must have a physical address. Recently in a two day period they arrested ten homeless men on the North Freeway including five sex offenders and three pedophiles.

Patrol Hours *Prepared by Charli Merchant*

WEEK	WALK/BIKE PATROL	AUTO PATROL	TOTAL HOURS
1	11.5	16.75	28.5
2	10.5	19.25	29.75
3	18.5	15	33.5
4	13.5	26	39.5
TOTAL	54	77	131.25

Interested in patrolling? Contact **Karen Cruse** at 713-824-4799 or 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.

August Galiano is the winner of the \$20 gas bonus this month. Please note that the patrol hour reporting has been changed to align with HPD reports.

CALLS HANDLED BY DEPUTY CONSTABLE

Miles Patrolled... 1172



JANUARY 2012

Arrests..... 0
 Alarm Responses 3
 Citizen Contacts 95
 Disturbances 1
 Investigations 5
 Park Checks..... 31
 Vacation Watch 42
 Misc. Calls 28
 Dispatched Calls 23
 Total Calls 201

Traffic:
 Verbal/Written Warnings... 2
 Citations... 2

Facts Revisited for Heavy Trash *by Chuck Blesener*

SPPs date for heavy trash collection is the **fourth Tuesday** of every month. It is not the third Tuesday or fifth Tuesday or necessarily the last Tuesday since some months have five Tuesdays. The COH Solid Waste Department has decided that odd numbered months should be for tree waste so that this material can be recycled instead of depositing it in a landfill. Even numbered months are for junk waste such as furniture and appliances. That being said, if you call 311 they will tell you that you can put out tree waste on any month. If you put it out on the junk waste months, it will wind up in a landfill and that will waste taxpayer money. Try and follow the approved schedule.

January Tree Waste	July Tree Waste
February Junk Waste	August Junk Waste
March Tree Waste	September Tree Waste
April Junk Waste	October Junk Waste
May Tree Waste	November Tree Waste
June Junk Waste	December Junk Waste

Are You Getting Email Alerts?

SPPCC sends out periodic email alerts to residents who have provided us with email addresses. These alerts provide rapid, up-to-date information and are a great way to get the word out about important news quickly.

Email alerts are used to communicate:

- ◆ Crime in our area
- ◆ Lost and found pets
- ◆ Issues/meetings of interest to our neighborhood
- ◆ SPPCC events and activities

If you are not receiving these alerts and would like to be added to the distribution, email billy@hartmanassociates.com and ask to be added.



Roseate Spoonbills are just one species of water birds that call the Rookery at Smith Oaks home.

What's Happening Around Houston

by Carol Jean Hebert

The Rookery at Smith Oaks High Island, Texas

The island in the middle of Claybottom Pond at Smith Oaks has become a favorite roosting and nesting place for many water birds. In the spring and summer herons, cormorants, egrets, and spoonbills build their nests and raise their chicks on the predator free island. Visitors can get a close look at the home life of these beautiful birds throughout the breeding season. The most spectacular time of day to visit the rookery is the last hour before dark. The show at sunset is something not to miss. Thousands of birds spend the night on the island in Claybottom Pond. This show starts about an hour before sunset when the first birds trickle in. Soon it is small flocks, then big flocks pouring in from all directions. Nesting activity usually starts in March and by mid April is quite active. You can get a close look at the activity from the trail around the pond.

Claybottom Pond was included in the land Amoco donated to The Houston Audubon in 1994. When The Houston Audubon Society first acquired the pond, nothing was nesting there. This was probably due to

the fact that birds, turtles and alligators in the pond were often used for target practice. The "no hunting" policy resulted in quick changes and in July 1995, 50 heron nests were found on the island. By 1997, 332 pairs of birds nested on the island and the first pair of Roseate Spoonbills showed up. The number of pairs of birds grew to 1083 in 2003, and now it is quite a show.

Hours: The Rookery is open to the public sunrise to sunset.

Location: High Island is on the coast just off Hwy. 87. Take I-10 east from Houston, take the Winnie exit, then go south on Hwy. 124 to the town of High Island.

Domestic Violence by Chuck Blesener

Officer Janette Arceneaux of the North Division, Special Crimes Division, Domestic Violence Unit tells us that domestic violence can be physical, emotional, sexual, or mental. It is a learned behavior and not hereditary. While it is not caused by alcohol or drugs, it is enhanced by their use. All family violence should always be reported to the police even though most victims do not follow through with charges.

There are 36,000 reported cases of domestic violence each year in Houston with 50 of them resulting in murder. The category of new or old boyfriend or girlfriend has just been included and will probably add another 10,000 cases to those statistics. Although most victims are women, more men are reporting being a victim in the last five years. A shocking 30%

of women murdered are killed by their husband or boyfriend. Family violence is a large percentage of reported assaults with national statistics showing 20% of all high school girls having been assaulted and three women are killed each day. The average victim tries to leave their abuser 7-9 times before finally leaving.

Locally victims can go to the Houston Area Women's Center where they have an HISD school on site for children. To keep the abuser away, victims can get an emergency 61-day protective order, enforced by HPD and can be extended to two years. This is different from a restraining order which is a civil injunction enforced by the court. For the convenience of victims, there is an Assistant District Attorney and court officials available to write protective orders at the HPD North Division Headquarters, 9455 West Montgomery, on Mondays from 9am to 3pm. On their second assault, the abuser can be charged with a felony, even if it involves a different victim. The law was changed two years ago so that even if the victim refuses to file charges, the police can file felony habitual assault charges against someone if there has been as few as 2-3 reports a year of domestic violence.

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CITY HELPLINE: 311

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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

MARCH 2012



= Trash and Yard Waste



= Curbside Recycling

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Call Deputy Dispatch • 713-755-7628

A Note About Trash: You can legally put your heavy trash out at 6pm the Friday before your heavy trash day.

					1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
		Heavy trash TREE waste only					



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Garden Club

With a house full of Valentine greetings, the Shepherd Park Plaza Garden Club celebrated the February 13 meeting in the home of **Romi Sandel**. Beautiful and delicious appi-"teasers" were served by Romi and co-hostesses **Addie Smith, Geraldine Gurley, and Linda Morgan**. A very lovely and informative program on bromeliads was presented by local expert and grower Odean Head. New business for the club included a presentation by the by-laws revision committee. All current members are requested to provide input, and changes will be voted upon at the March meeting. Committee members working hard on these revisions are **Colette Robichau, Alice Bongers, and Lou Rice**. Among other committee reports was the announcement of Yard-of-the-Month, presented for February to **Colette Robichau**, 1014 Candlelight.

March meeting will be the annual "Brown Bag" fundraiser in the home of President **Evonne Alford** at 1027 Thornton. Members are requested to bring a donated decorative or gift item. Tickets are sold for \$1 each, and tickets are placed in brown bags for each donated item. The winning tickets are drawn at random, and many laughs and great camaraderie are sure to follow. Guests are welcome, as always, and the meetings begin at 7pm.



Plaza Moms

Hop on over for the annual Plaza Moms Easter Egg Hunt and pictures with the Easter Bunny at Shepherd Park Saturday on March 31 from 9:30 to 11am! The egg hunt will start promptly

at 9:45am so don't be late! Please remember to bring your baskets and cameras. Please note that for children 2 years old and under, there will be a separate area for them to hunt their eggs.

Don't forget that you need to RSVP on Big Tent for this event. Send in your Egg Hunt RSVP today!

For all members this event is free to you and your family. For non-members or guests there will be a \$10.00 per family fee. We hope to see you there. The rainout date will be Saturday, April 7.

For more information, please contact **Shannon Zierau** at szierau@yahoo.com or 713.775.0307.

In preparation for the Easter Egg Hunt, and just for fun, join us at the March meeting at Home of **Gena Burke** (1114 Thornton Road) on Tuesday, March 20 at 7pm. Please join us for a relaxed and fun evening of socializing as we prepare for the Easter Bunny's arrival by filling up the goodie bags for the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt.



Men's Group

The Men's Group will meet for their monthly luncheon and friendly conversation on Thursday, March 8, at 11:30am at Don Jose's Mexican Restaurant on Antoine. The group's next bus trip will be on Tuesday, March 20.

The group is open to all men of the neighborhood and they would especially like to invite any newly retired men to join them.



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in on discussions.

SPP

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