



THE PLAZA PULSE

SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA CIVIC CLUB

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September 2015

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Share Your News!

Please pass along any news of note about SPP residents so 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 by contacting your section rep (see names on p.2)

The Semi-Annual Shepherd Park Plaza Neighborhood Meeting is coming up in October. But we shook things up a bit this year!! Check out the information below for **details on the exciting new Venue and Events planned for this Fall's meeting.**

The biggest change? FRIDAY NIGHT! Second biggest change? Location!

Please join us for a great Oktoberfest Celebration!



Shepherd Park Plaza
PRESENTS

OKTOBERFEST

OCTOBER 2, 2015

MUSIC, GAMES,
CAKE WALK
& SILENT AUCTION!

LET'S CELEBRATE
FALL TOGETHER!

6:00 - 9:30PM

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Shannon Zierau, Megan Rasmussen

Men's Group Rep. Chuck Blesener
Pulse Editor: Romi Sandel
713-316-9688 or pulse@shepherdparkplaza.com
Pulse Co-Editor: Laurie Hardwick

THE CIVIC CLUB IS LOOKING FOR A NEW FLAG AMBASSADOR

It has been 6 years since SPP purchased and began flying the United States flags on neighborhood street lights on/around national patriotic holidays. Our current Flag Ambassador, Mike Evans on Candlelight Ln, is unable to continue his efforts in this volunteer activity, so a new volunteer is needed. Duties of this position consist of owning or having access to a pickup truck and be the lead person in getting our flags flying in the neighborhood on four national holidays. Other responsibilities include storing the flags in your garage as well as storing the rig used to easily install the flags. The process of flying the flags requires 2-3 people, so scheduling assistance is also required.

If you are interested in volunteering to become the next SPP Flag Ambassador please let Mike or our board president, Tom Caver know at www.President@ShepherdParkPlaza.com.

Also, the Civic Club has approved the purchase of new flags as our current ones have approached the end of their useful life, so be on the lookout for new brilliant flags the next time we fly our flags.

A special Thanks to Mike and his crew!



NOTICE OF AT&T WORK IN THE AREA

AT&T is scheduled to begin work in the SPP area around 9/14/15, with a projected completion date of around 10/14/15. AT&T contractors may be trying to gain access to utility easements in SPP residents' yards, as they are launching **Giga Power** in the Houston market and SPP has been chosen to get it before anyone else. Once the project is complete, residents may get up to 1000 meg internet service! They will try to complete this work with minimal disruption.

If asked for access to their property, residents are encouraged to ask to see workers' badges.

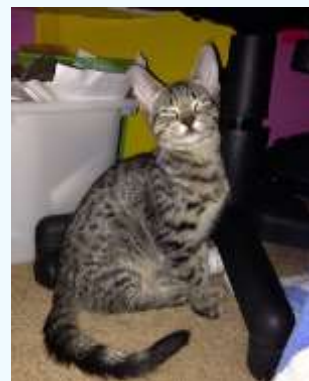
Update on Feral Cat Population By: Catherine Powell

Hello neighbors. I am VERY happy to report that the feral colonies in SPP are almost finished with TNR (trap-neuter-release). I have compiled all of the results since March 2015, when I started all of this. I have been working with 2 colonies: 1) Brian Haven@Thornton and 2) Lehman

40 cats have been altered, vaccinated, and released (4 of these cats were pregnant). Approximately 6 cats were relocated to become barn cats. 44 kittens were rescued, fostered, and found homes. I have so many people to thank for their help in this process, including all of you who donated to the cause. My TNR work will never be finished, but it is nice to see the progress we have made.

Adoption Need:

"Annie" is a 12 week old female tabby kitten who was rescued from the Brian Haven colony. She has been in foster care for 6 weeks and remains a very shy and timid little girl. She is slowly gaining trust in the human species and will need a quiet home where she can explore and play. She loves other cats/kittens and is used to calm dogs. She would make a great companion for another young cat. Annie is spayed, vaccinated, and healthy. If you can find it in your heart to give this little girl a chance at a "fur" ever home please contact Catherine at felinedoctor@gmail.com.





BEWARE OF SOLICITORS

By: Chuck Blesener



We have recently seen a sharp increase in the number of solicitors going door to door in our neighborhood. We have gotten many complaints that they are rude, intrusive, accomplished liars, seeking money fraudulently, and showing up late into the evening. While our Deputies and HPD officers can't run them off, they can check them out and discourage them.

Councilmember Ellen Cohen's office tells us that some state laws were changed in a recent legislative session that required the City of Houston to rescind the ordinance regulating solicitors, and prevents HPD from enforcing 'No Soliciting' neighborhood signs. They are no longer required to register with the city, obtain permits, or wear picture identification. The police can still enforce 'No Trespassing' signs but they must be placed on the front of each individual home to be legal.

Many solicitors prey on seniors thinking them to be easy targets but all of us can become victims. While a few of them represent charities, politicians, or religions, most are scam artists seeking to separate you from your money. Signing a petition is their introduction to asking you for money; selling magazines that you will never receive is their way to steal your identity off your check information; hiring them to do jobs around your home is inviting them to steal from you or to come back and burglarize your house.

HPD and the Constable recommend you always respond to someone at your door so they won't try and break in with you in the house. You do not have to open the door to anyone you don't recognize. Just tell them you are not interested in whatever they are selling and to go away or you will call the police. If they say they are from a utility or company to do work in your home or yard, verify their identification, verify they are in a marked company vehicle, and call the company to verify they are supposed to be there. In any case, if they appear suspicious or refuse to leave, call Constable Dispatch at 713-755-7628 or HPD at 911. *(For more on this, see the notice on page 2 of this Pulse about upcoming A T & T work in our area.)*

It is advisable to not do business with anyone who comes to your door that you did not call or do not recognize. Do not give money to anyone, sign a petition for anything, hire anyone, or buy anything from someone who rings your doorbell. Research and investigate all charities and businesses before you give them money. Contact and deal with them personally by mail, telephone, or online.

SAVE THE DATE! MINISTRY ASSISTANCE OF NEAR NORTHWEST ALLIANCE (MANNA)

MANNA's 2nd Annual BBQ, Auction and Dance

Denim & Diamonds Event

Saturday, October 10th, 7:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m. at Houston Liederkrantz Hall on Ella Blvd.
Featuring the Telstars Band, and MC Art Rascon

For tickets go to: <https://MANNA-DenimandDiamonds.eventbrite.com>

All funds raised will be used to help support the MANNA's missions to help others in our community.

For additional info contact Patricia Dornak, Executive Director, at pdornak@gmail.com.

Citizens Patrol Stats

Patrol Hours *Prepared by Chuck Blesener*

New Patrollers are Needed!!

WEEK	JULY
1	24
2	35
3	18
4	36
TOTAL	113

Contact Chuck Blesener at 713-683-9945 or ccbles77@gmail.com for information. Training for Citizen Patrol certification is the second Tuesday of each month at 9455 West Montgomery at 7:00 p.m. Anyone in the neighborhood is invited to join the COP group. More eyes on our neighborhood means more awareness of suspicious activity. HPD Citizen Patrol Applications can be downloaded at http://www.houstontx.gov/police/vip/vip_citzpatrol.htm. The applications must be sent in one week prior to the training.

The winner of the random \$10 bonus for July is Deborah DeBram. Patrollers who turn in at least 4 hours by the 5th of the month are eligible for a random drawing for a \$10 card. Gift cards for accumulated driving hours will be distributed at the monthly meeting. Please turn in your hours on time!



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Did you know? ...that Ellen Cohen is the City Councilwoman for Shepherd Park Plaza? If you want your voice heard about matters affecting our neighborhood, contact her office at <http://www.ellencohen.org/contact>

RETRIEVING STOLEN PROPERTY

By: **Chuck Blesener**

Our Deputies do a great job protecting us and our property but they need a little help from us. The first thing we can do is to report all crimes so they are aware of all the crimes that have happened. The other thing we should do is keep a current accurate list of our valuables - descriptions, pictures, serial numbers, model numbers, receipts, and owners manuals. Deputy James Moulden has recently solved two crimes and is working on a third where stolen items have been retrieved and returned to residents. He has obtained arrest warrants for those involved in selling the stolen items. Here is what Deputy Moulden has to say. "It would be awesome if all the people in the subdivision would keep up with their serial numbers on tools, electronic devices, guns and lawn equipment. With this simple thing it makes my job a whole lot easier to find, recover and file charges in these cases."

You can keep these records yourself or you can use a service called LeadsOnLine, the nations largest online investigation system to recover stolen property. It is a technology service helping law enforcement catch criminals while helping businesses reduce the hassles of reporting. Certain businesses, such as pawn shops, second hand dealers, gold buyers, scrap metal dealers, and Ebay listings, are required by law to report all transactions in used merchandise. This service is restricted for use by law enforcement and businesses only, but they have a service called ReportIt, which is a citizen property inventory system. You can securely store serial numbers, item descriptions, pictures, and scans of receipts for 100 items of valuable property free of charge that is accessible from anywhere at any time. Only you will have access to this password protected site where you can retrieve information for the police or insurance company in case of theft or loss.

2016 Fundraising Campaign for Dues & Constable Kick Off in September

By: Tom Dornak

It's that time of year to Kick Off our Annual Fundraising efforts for Civic Club Dues and Constable Program Dues for Shepherd Park Plaza. Letters will be mailed to all residents of SPP in mid-September kicking off the 2016 fundraising efforts for both causes. Membership dues will remain at \$25 per year and the Constable Patrol Program will remain \$200 per year. Both the membership to the Civic Club as well as the Constable Patrol Program is voluntary, though we urge your continued support to maintain these successful operations. Your prompt reply is also needed as our 2016 contract with Harris County for our Contract Deputy Patroller must be signed and executed in December.

What are the benefits of becoming an SPP Civic Club Member and Constable Patrol Program Supporter? Below is a list of the many areas of service that your \$25 supports as an SPP Civic Club Member.

- ◆ Generate our monthly newsletter – The Pulse, as well as sell ads to cover cost of publication.
- ◆ Operate a Citizens Patrol Program of neighborhood volunteers to patrol SPP.
- ◆ Hold monthly board meetings to manage all operations, projects and financials.
- ◆ Enforce deed restrictions including Architecture Control for remodeling.
- ◆ Support and monitor violation of City Ordinances.
- ◆ Hold 2 general meetings per year.
- ◆ Maintain our curb painting of address numbers (now replaced on a 4 year rotation).
- ◆ Manage yard of the month contest as well as various holiday decoration contests.
- ◆ Hold various fundraising/neighborhood social events.
- ◆ Maintain flower beds at entrances to subdivision and paint/replace signs as needed.
- ◆ Welcome new neighbors as they move in.
- ◆ Fly the US Flag on our street lights during national holidays.
- ◆ Organize annual neighborhood garage sale.
- ◆ Perform occasional special projects and fundraising to support these if needed.
- ◆ Maintain SPP website and distribute email alerts.

What are the benefits of contributing \$200 per year to the Deputy Constable Program?

- ◆ Contract for Harris County Deputy Constable Patrollers for 80 hours per week in SPP. This was increased from 40 hours per week last year as a result of partnering with Candlelight Subdivision to have 2 Harris County Deputies patrol both neighborhoods.
- ◆ Vacation watch, if requested when traveling.
- ◆ Increased patrolling for speeding violations.
- ◆ Lower crime rates for SPP.
- ◆ Safety check of your home.
- ◆ First responder for home alarms if requested by homeowner.
- ◆ Self-Defense class for women.

How strong is our Membership?

The Civic Club Board is pleased to publish our Strong membership statistics. Frankly, our participation by our residents is unparalleled by our neighboring subdivisions with voluntary programs. I suspect our voluntary participation rates are the highest percentage throughout Houston. Participation is high in both Membership and Constable Patrol Program. Below are the membership statistics for paid membership dues and participation in the Constable Patrol Program for the last 5 years.

Year	SPP Civic Club Members	%	Constable Patrol Participation	%
2015	543	69.3%	447	61.3%
2014	532	73.0%	451	61.9%
2013	543	74.5%	463	63.5%
2012	550	75.4%	460	63.1%
2011	544	74.6%	490	67.2%

Total SPP Residents: 729

Over the last 3 months crime has seemed to increase in SPP as well as other neighborhoods in the area. Please **don't hesitate to jump on board to become a 2016 civic club member and donate to the 2016 Constable Patrol Program** once you receive your notice this month!

around the neighborhood

Condolences to the family of Alison Henning who passed away after a long battle with cancer. She and her family have lived in the neighborhood for over 10 years. She is survived by her husband and two children.

Long time resident, Martin DeVries, 95, passed away August 19, 2015. Martin served in the navy in World War II as a part of the 31st Construction Battalion. After the war, he became a commercial painting contractor. He and his wife, Wilma, raised their children in Houston until her early death. Martin was also a Shriner. He later married Clara with whom he shared a love of traveling. He is survived by many loving family members and friends.



SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA TRAVELERS

The group will be traveling on Friday, September 25th, to a destination that will be determined in early September. The members will be notified by email about the details of the destination.



SHEPHERD PARK PLAZA MEN'S GROUP

The SPP Men's Group will meet for lunch and discussion at Live Oak Grill on Thursday, September 10th, at 11:30 a.m. August Galiano will show a short video presentation.



Houston Fun Facts!

- ◆ Houston was founded on August 30, 1836 by brothers Augustus Chapman Allen and John Kirby Allen on land near the banks of Buffalo Bayou.
- ◆ Houston is the 4th most populous city in the U. S.
- ◆ The Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (Houston CMSA) consists of eight counties: Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller and it covers 8,778 square miles, an area slightly smaller than Massachusetts but larger than New Jersey.
- ◆ Houston is 43 feet above sea level.

For more information on Houston, check out this website:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/about/houston/houstonfacts.html>



Cook's Corner



PECAN PIE

1 cup light Karo Syrup
1 cup granulated white sugar
4 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 stick butter, melted
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups pecan halves (or quarters)
Uncooked pie shell/crust (purchased or homemade)

Mix first 5 ingredients in a large bowl. Add the pecans. Mix **lightly. Gently lay the uncooked pie crust in 9" regular pie plate** and pour mixture into the pie plate. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees and cook pie for another 43-45 minutes. *Do not overbake!*

All recipes are printed without being tested. Cook at your own risk! Want to submit a recipe? Go to our website and email the Pulse Editor.



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BUILDING PERMITS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

By: Chuck Blesener

There are always homes in our neighborhood that are being remodeled, repaired or changed in some way. Most of these residents get approval from the civic club, hire a reputable contractor, and obtain the necessary building permits from the city. Then there are always some who try and save some time and money by taking shortcuts. It is important that we enforce the deed restrictions and building codes to maintain our property values and the quality of life in our neighborhood. Any obvious lack of permits where construction is ongoing will be reported to the city for enforcement. If you observe contractors working on a home where no building permits are visibly posted, contact a civic club officer or go to the shepherdparkplaza.com website and click on the link to the Architectural Control Committee.


Building permits are required if you are in the corporate city limits of Houston and are doing projects which include construction work on new or existing buildings, remodeling, or building repair work. Most projects require a permit. Any alteration, repair, remodel, renovation, or new construction requires permits. All mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work must be permitted and performed by a licensed tradesman or contractor. Some exceptions to the requirement for permits include - painting, carpet/tile/wood flooring, interior trim and similar finish work, wood or metal fences up to eight feet tall, residential storage sheds less than 120 square feet, uncovered decks up to 30 inches above the ground. Roofing does require a permit.

Even where a permit is not required, residents and contractors are required to follow city building codes and neighborhood deed restrictions. When obtaining a permit, home owners will have to complete and sign an affidavit under penalty of perjury that is called "Declaration in Support of Application for City of Houston Building Permit". You will swear that you understand what a deed restriction is, that you understand that copies of the deed restrictions are available for your review, and that your project does not violate any of these deed restrictions. If any statement in your Declaration is false, the city may void any permits obtained, may order you to remove part or all of your project at your expense, and can prosecute you for perjury for lying on an official document.

The best way to avoid problems and speed up your application process is to submit your plans for any project to the Architectural Control Committee of the SPP Civic Club. After your plans are reviewed and approved, you will receive a letter that you can furnish with your application to the City. More on building permits and code enforcement next month.

Street sign down? Traffic light blinking? Tree limb down over the street? The City of Houston has a dedicated phone line for these types of non-emergency related issues. You can dial 3-1-1 from any land or cellular line or you can download the app to your SmartPhone.





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*Figures are for entire contract including SPP and Candlelight Plaza



JULY 2015

Suspicious vehicle...11	Miles patrol led...2843	TRAFFIC STOP ...15
Criminal mischief...2	Citizen contacts...667	Traffic initiative...9
DISTURBANCES...2	Medical emergency...2	Traffic hazard...4
SOLICITORS...3	Vehicle Stolen...1	Vacation watch...124
ROBBERY...1	Suspicious person...12	Park check...58
Theft...2	Property lost...1	Missing person...1

Vacation Watch registry (1 week in advance)...<http://pct1constable.net/sign-up/vacation-watch/>

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If you want to know when crime happens in our area, consider signing up with Harris County Precinct 1 Constable's Office to receive crime alerts via email or text. Please make sure to select our neighborhood when signing up for this service. Click the link below to learn more about this service.

Crime Alert Sign up with Precinct 1: <http://pct1constable.net/sign-up/crime-alerts/>

Women's Safety Class Update

A group of ten very determined SPP female residents took a Self Defense class through a program provided by the Harris County Precinct 1 Constable's office. There were about 10 other participants, including some from the church that hosted the event and from the surrounding communities. The class was called RAD or Rape Aggression Defense. It was a 12-hour class packed with safety tips and hands-on self-defense techniques, with the last three hours being a simulation of the techniques learned over the previous three days. The simulation involved participants in heavy protective gear defending themselves against a simulated attack. The attackers/aggressors were Constable's office officers. Officer Tracie Mathews-Segura was the primary trainer and monitor of the participants' training and she was inspirational, encouraging and supportive. It was evident that Tracie wanted everyone who attended to get the tools they needed to have the confidence to defend themselves. Each participants' abilities were considered and the training was adjusted to give them tools to defend themselves when attacked, including the Senior citizens that participated. It was evident that everyone's confidence grew as the week progressed. A huge thanks to St. Stephens United Methodist Church on 43rd for hosting the event, and a heartfelt thanks to Deputies Tracie, Shonnie, April, Jackie, Carlos and the others that provided the training. Some of the participants are shown in the picture at the right.





GARDEN CLUB NEWS



Yard of the Month

Sheri Beasley - 1138 Thornton Rd.

Sheri's theme is 'green' – all shades and textures! From the gorgeous lime green potato vine flanking her curbside walk way to the fluffy, upright foxtail fern sprinkled throughout her yard. Both these green gems started from castaways – **one found in a Lowe's parking lot, the other a curbside reject.** They are easy to grow and drought-resistant. Sheri loves her 'free' plants; drop by her lovely yard if you are interested in a clipping – she also enjoys sharing!



September Garden Club Meeting

Over the summer, the Garden Club officers have been busily planning meetings, programs, and events to be reviewed at the club's September meeting. Although meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month, due to scheduling conflicts, the September meeting will be held Tuesday, September 8 at 7:00 at Vicki Brandt's home, 979 Curtin. Mark your calendar and join us as we kick off a great 2015-2016 Garden Club season!

SCOUT TROOP 20 ADDS IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY GARDEN ON ALBA

Adam Capfer, along with members of Scout Troop 20, provided long-needed concrete borders for the garden beds at the Community Garden on Alba, between Sue Barnet and Chamboard. The garden is a joint project of Garden Oaks and Shepherd Park Plaza and was started by former Garden Oaks resident Jan Koenig. When Koenig moved from the area, Beth Galiano, Harris County Master Gardener, took over the duties of managing the garden. Galiano has managed the garden for more than twenty years. The garden supplies organically grown fresh vegetables to needy families, free of charge, through local food pantries. Ed and Brenda de Alba of Garden Oaks donate operating expenses for the garden.

Adam's project was completed in June as part of his earning his Eagle Scout Award. Troop 20 is sponsored by St. Matthews Methodist Church (4300 N. Shepherd Dr, -Crosstimbers/43rd). The project involved 22 volunteers including Bill and Rafe French; Todd, Travis and Trevor Guerra; Jonathan Morgan; Gig, Louis and Jack Runge; Reed, Riley and James Tatum; Haydn Pugh, Sepp Lemberger, Joseph Timmons, Mathew Diaz, and Mark and Nick Valero. The troop was assisted by Jim Capfer, father of Adam and Christopher. Christopher was awarded his Eagle Scout Medal two years ago.



Getting scouts outside making community improvements not only helps improve the looks of our neighborhoods, it also impacts the **scout's emotional and physical well-being.** And, a visit to the Garden will show some possibilities for your own landscaping!



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Architectural Guidelines 713-316-5255	Plaza Pulse News 713-628-4210	SPP Historian 713-681-1552	Traffic & Safety 713-683-9945	Constable Dispatch 713-755-7628
SPP Membership 713-683-6502	City Liaison 713-688-7979	Pulse Advertising 713-688-0574 or 713-681-3600	Men's Group 713-683-9945	HPD 713-884-3131



SPP CALENDAR SEPTEMBER 2015



= Trash and Yard Waste

= Curbside Recycling

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Reminder about Heavy Trash: Our heavy trash pickup is the <u>3rd Thursday</u> of each month. Tree waste is picked up in ODD months, and Junk waste in the EVEN months.						August 29
30	31	September 1	2 SPPCC Board Mtg	3 Plaza Moms Ladies Night Out	4	5
6 LABOR DAY	7	8	9	10 Men's Group Meeting	11	12
13	14	15 Plaza Moms Meeting	16	17 Heavy trash Tree Waste	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 SPP Travelers	26
27	28	29	30	October 1	2 SPP Oktoberfest	3



Plaza
Moms

Plaza Moms' Ladies Night Out will be September 3rd at 8:00 p.m. at a location to be determined at a later date. The September 15th meeting is all about pre-school! The group will host a panel to discuss pre-school options in the area, followed by a costume swap.



Shepherd Park Plaza Civic Club
P. O. Box 10453
Houston, TX 77206
www.ShepherdParkPlaza.com

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
DMR, 77041

AUGUST Yards of the Month

Section 1:

1178 Curtin
Robin & Michael
McClung

Section 3:

1003 Martin
Evan Campbell

Section 2:

1038 Thornton
Angie &
Charlie Heinrich

Section 4:

1016 Candlelight
Sandra &
Robert Marshall

SPP
Wants to Welcome You

New to the neighborhood?

Even if you are not-so-new, but haven't
gotten around to introducing yourself yet,
contact **Lynn Myers**
at 713-824-8684
or myers.lynn@yahoo.com
so we can welcome you officially.