

T H E H E I G H T S

Newsletter of the Houston Heights Association



Volume 33, Number 2, February 2007

Come Celebrate the Best of 2006

Get out your rodeo gear a little early and join us at the Fire Station on February 25 for the 2007 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner. We'll be thanking all the many volunteers, donors, businesses, and sponsors who kept the Houston Heights Association going in 2006 and made Houston Heights a better place to live and work, and we'll be giving a few of them special recognition.

Among the awards to be presented are the Citizen of the Year, the Marcella Perry Award, and the Corporate Citizenship Award. The Community Improvement Awards, based on your nominations and the decisions of a panel of judges, will also be given.

Social hour starts at 5:00 PM. We'll chow down on some Hickory Hollow BBQ starting at 6:00. Around 7:00 PM, we'll get down to the serious business of thanking, recognizing, awarding, and applauding.

Advanced reservations and payment are required by February 21. The price is only \$12 per person this year, \$100 for a reserved table for eight. You can mail checks payable to HHA to P.O. Box 70735, Houston, TX 77270-0735. Credit cards are accepted online at <http://www.houstonheights.org/dinner.htm>.

General Meeting

The main speaker at the February 12 General Meeting will be Catherine Burst, TreeScape Coordinator. The TreeScape Program is a collaborative effort of Trees For Houston, The Park People, and Scenic Houston. According to Trees For Houston, "TreeScape's role in the community is to help sustain Houston's urban forest through preserving existing trees and encouraging the planting of new trees."

Coming up in March, we are planning a program on adding to a historic home while preserving its historic character.

The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following 2006 Platinum sponsors:



San Jacinto Stone

Restoration

The next Heights Restoration/Historical Committee meeting will be February 22 from 7:30 to 9:30 PM at 916 Cortlandt Street. This home is a 2-bedroom, 2-bath bungalow home built as a "\$3,000 kit home" in 1920 and being restored by Jerry Frazier.

This is the same home where we met in January. Due to the really bad weather, this home couldn't be finished by the January meeting, so we had to look at it in the "Before" state. The property owner has invited us back to see the final product in February, and the former owner hopes to be able to join us.

This Restoration/Historical Meeting program will include a tour and discussion of some of the renovation details for those considering renovation, restoration, or new construction in the Heights.

Please contact Committee Chairman Dean Swanson if you have a restoration project, a historical structure, or historical information pertaining to the Houston Heights that can be shared at future meetings. General historical knowledge of the Heights neighborhood, historic memories, or photos are also welcome to be shared with other Heights residents and may be forwarded by e-mail to restoration@houstonheights.org or discussed by telephone at (713) 880-2832 or by bringing them to any meeting.

Donations

Our thanks to the following for their generous support of the programs of the Houston Heights Association.

Janice Carle – Parks Maintenance, Flower Gardens, Boulevard Beautification
Katy & John Childs – Beautification
Sue Cox – Parks & Boulevard Maintenance, Flower Gardens
Andrea Farr
Ron Foster
Beth Gallagher – Graffiti Abatement
Gary Gehbauer – Parks & Boulevard Maintenance
JoAnn & Donald Hardey – Anti-graffiti
Robert & Cheryl Ketchie – Boulevard Beautification
Patricia Mayo – Anti-graffiti
Roy Newton – Flower Gardens
Joan Robins – Boulevard Beautification
Anne Rodgers – Boulevard Beautification
Suzanne Labarthe & John Rogers – Boulevard Beautification
Martha & Darrell Seng – Boulevard Beautification
Keith Crane & Kelly Simmons – Parks Maintenance, Flower Gardens, Boulevard Beautification
Charles & Anne Smith – Boulevard Maintenance
Bill Lehnert & Walter Stowell – Boulevard Beautification in memory of Doug Grissom
Christina & Isaac Tapia – Anti-graffiti
Earl Smith & Janice Wensveen – Boulevard Maintenance

The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following Winter 2006-2007 Sponsors:
Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Spring Home & Garden Tour: “The Colors of Our Lives” April 13 - 15

This year’s home tour theme – The Colors of Our Lives – is an acknowledgment and celebration of our richly-cultured and diverse community: our amazing citizens from all walks of life – some of whom are multi-generational residents and others who have more recently discovered this extraordinary neighborhood – and our beautiful architecture – from our tiny cottages and cozy bungalows to our Heights mansions and historic public buildings on beautiful streets lined with century-old trees.



We are proud to announce the homes and participants for this year’s Spring & Garden Home Tour:

Jan & Paul Cottage Home, 1113 Rutland Street, Head Docents:

Linda Eyles & Danae Stephenson

Debbie & Don Broman Home, 1233 Yale Street, Head Docents:

Diane Easley & Jim Bennett

Ellen & John Newcaster Home, 614 East 5th Street, Head Docent:

Jon Helmer

Tracey Conwell Home, 615 East 8th Street, Head Docent pending

Christine & Jan Spin Home, 622 East 8th Street, Head Docent:

Marta Montenegro

Joy Stapp Home, 1130 Cortlandt Street, Head Docents: Janet &

Tom Buchheit

Please see the right column for a list of the other talented (and brave) individuals serving on the Committee.

Plans for the Candlelight Dinner and Auction, to be held at Winter Street Studios on Friday, April 13, are underway, and the auction is shaping up to be a real extravaganza. In keeping with the theme, attire will be “Color-licious Cocktail.” Due to space restrictions, there can be no more than 450 tickets sold to this event, so please make your reservations early.

Proceeds from the Home Tour and Candlelight Dinner & Auction go into the general fund of the Houston Heights Association. HHA general funds are spent on a number of properties and endeavors, including maintenance of the Houston Heights City Hall & Fire Station, an historic building, meeting place, and events venue; reforestation and maintenance of the beautiful Heights Boulevard

Home Tour continues on page 4

Spring Tour Committee

We want to thank the following talented individuals for serving on the Committee for the 2007 Historic Houston Heights Spring Home & Garden Tour.

Kristi Synek – Chair

Christine Spin – Chair-Elect
& Kick-Off Party Chair

Chris Silkwood and Kelly
Simmons – Candlelight
Dinner Chairs

Sandra Crook and Cindy
Hemenway Wingo
– Auction Chairs

John Blass – Auctioneer

Karen Derr, Kathye Elledge,
Peggy Gilbert, Kay

Harnden Lockard,
Pamela O’Brien, Stasi

Ogier, Andrea Sharp, and
Kay White – Auction

Committee

Angela DeWree / Design &
Inspiration – Collateral
Design & Venue Design

Kristal Kirksey / Jubilee
– Venue Design

Kathy Russell and Kelly
Simmons – Collateral
Material

Bill Dijak – Photography
Chair

Marta Montenegro – Floral
Design Chair

Denise Martin – Volunteer
Chair

Honi Knowles and Robin
Franklin – Marketing

Kay White – Ad Sales

Bill Baldwin and Joe
Gonzalez – Kick-Off Party
Hosts

Committee continues on page 4

Home Tour continued from page 3

esplanade, from gazebos, benches, and jogging trails to flowers, trees, and mulch; upkeep of Marmion Park, the original location of the Cooley mansion, one of the first houses built in Houston Heights, with the award-winning Kaiser Pavilion, designed to emulate the Cooley home's unique turret; upkeep of Donovan Park, purchased in 1973 and the home of "The Heights Playground," designed and built by the community in 1996; the Education Committee, a group of community members seeking to enhance and enrich public education in the greater Heights area; the Urban Forestry Committee, dedicated to protecting and preserving the ever-vanishing presence of inner-city trees and green space; and a wide variety of other community improvement projects. We look forward to seeing you all at this very important fundraising event.

December Board Summary

by Janet Buchheit, HHA Secretary

President-Elect Jim Potter called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Dates for the 2007 board orientation and the board organizational meeting were discussed. The board approved the minutes of the November board meeting and approved the financial report.

Jim Bennett gave a report regarding TxDOT's feeder road projects along I-10. Jim submitted suggestions to TxDOT as to how the entrance at I-10 at Heights Boulevard and at Yale Street could be improved and landscaped. He received a reply saying that TxDOT would take his suggestions into consideration. Suzanne LaBarthe has been looking into the cost and feasibility of changing the look of the traffic lights at Heights Boulevard and at Yale Street at I-10. The lights would have a historic look that would fit in with the character of the neighborhood.

The board discussed whether or not to have commercial structures on the home tours and voted that if any structure presented on the home tours is not a residence, then the structure needs to be approved by the board in advance.

Sharie Beale introduced Harla Kaplan to the Board. Ms. Kaplan is a grant writer and presented her credentials to the board for consideration.

Angela DeWree reported on four Urban Forestry projects that will happen in 2007. These will be publicized in the Newsletter.

Selection of the 2006 Citizen of the Year and the Awards Dinner is discussed. The out-going board members were thanked for serving their terms. Out-going board member Gus Kopriva will continue to work with the board on several art-related projects and on the U of H project that involved the design of a bus shelter for the Heights.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Committee from page 3

Paula Collins, Karen Derr
– Gala Program Designer
Susan Love-Fitts – Public
Relations
Lauren Dunlap – Bus Shuttle
Chair
Paul and Mary Carr –
Directors of Operation
Cindy Wingo Hemenway
– Signage Chair
Jim Bennett – Boulevard
Beautification
Lauriel Hindman and Bob
Pearson – Ticket Sales &
Reservations
John Palmer – Cover Artist

You Can Help, Too

The Spring Home & Garden Tour, April 13 to 15, is in need of volunteers to docent at homes, handle ticket/drink sales, or be shuttle docents. In exchange for working a 3-hour shift, each volunteer will receive a ticket to the tour.

Even if you have worked previous home tours, don't assume that we will contact you; the contact information we have may be out of date. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Denise Martin at volunteer@houstonheights.org or 713-868-4119. Leave your name, telephone number, and email address (if you have one).

Demo Watch

There have now been more than 200 demolitions in Houston Heights in approximately the last year and a half. A check of permits issued by the City of Houston Code Enforcement Division finds 17 demolition permits being issued between December 5, 2006 and January 5, 2007. This brings to 212 the number of demolitions in Houston Heights since Demo Watch began. If the current rate of demolitions continues, Houston Heights will lose the equivalent of 45 entire blocks in the next decade.

Historic District designation is the only legal option for deterring demolition and relocation of our historic structures. If you live within the boundaries of the two proposed historic districts and have not yet done so, please sign and mail in the blue petition page. The petition, maps of the proposed districts, and additional information are available at www.houstonheights.org/historicdistrictmaps.htm.

Below is a list of the latest demolitions or relocations.

1216 Arlington	707 Nicholson
1530 Arlington	526 Yale
1333 Ashland	528 Yale
1414 Ashland	841 Yale
514 Cortlandt	643 E 10th St
1227 Cortlandt	712 W 11th St
1002 Herkimer	313 W 20th St
1003 Herkimer	118 E 25th St
1027 Herkimer	

History for Sale

Below is a sampling of historic houses currently for sale in the Houston Heights area. This is part of the overall effort to deter demolition and relocation of our existing housing stock and to raise public awareness of the marketability of our historic Craftsman, Victorian, and Queen Anne architecture.

Many of the homes have been completely renovated and expanded to include additional square footage and all of the modern conveniences of the 21st Century. Others need some tender loving care. All of the houses are 51 years of age or older and all are listed for less than \$500,000. If you have friends who are shopping for a home conveniently located inside Loop 610, please pass this list on to them.

915 Allston	1930	1651 Columbia	1901	1525 Tulane	1953
539 Arlington	1920	1218 Cortlandt	1920	1333 Yale	1920
833 Arlington	1920	1534 Cortlandt	1920	1540 Waverly	1910
916 Arlington	1920	1213 Harvard	1904	710 E 10th St	1930
1244 Arlington	1900	1021 Herkimer	1920	757 E 16th St	1927
2043 Arlington	1940	1313 Herkimer	1940	314 W 21st St	1920
2239 Arlington	1938	1407 Oxford	1920	602 W 28th St	1920
605 Columbia	1945	1511 Rutland	1920		

New Members

Please welcome the following new or returning members to the Houston heights Association.

Arise Acupuncture, Samuel
Leong
Nicole Ball
Tom & Lockie Baugh
Jack & Karrin Beuttell
Jonathan Bowman
Janice Carle
Kelli Considine, Realtor
Michael Jungnickel
Julie Kenyon
Jennifer Lam
Lillian M. Rivera
Christian & Sharon Sheridan

2007 Officers

The officers below were elected at the Organizational Meeting of the Board in January.

Jim Potter, President
Mark Williamson, President-Elect
Janet Buchheit, Secretary
Jim DePitts, Treasurer
Watch future newsletters for a list of the various Vice Presidents.

Prevailing Lot Size Ordinance Under Debate

The Board of Directors of the Houston Heights Association, by unanimous vote, has joined other neighborhood groups in sending Mayor White and Houston City Council resolutions regarding proposed changes to the city's lot size ordinance. Overall, the changes are an improvement over existing ordinances because they will allow more blocks to qualify, but there is a difference of opinion between neighborhood groups and the Greater Houston Builders Association over the level of protection that should be offered by the new ordinance.

The current ordinance establishes a prevailing lot size by measuring the lots on a block, finding the average lot size, and determining that a majority of the lots do not vary from the average by more than 10 percent. Because they were not platted with standard lot sizes or have already experienced some subdivisions, many inner city blocks have too much variance in lot sizes to qualify under the existing ordinance.

The new ordinance will allow for establishment of a minimum lot size and every block will be able to qualify. The size of the minimum lot size will depend on how many subdivisions a block has experienced. Working from the largest to the smallest, the square footage of each individual lot will be added together until a figure amounting to either 60 percent or 75 percent of a block's

total square footage is reached. The square footage of the last lot added in to reach the specified percentage would become the minimum lot size for the block.

GHBA favors the 75 percent calculation. The resolution adopted by unanimous vote of the HHA Board of Directors asks Houston City council to choose the 60 percent calculation. This position was arrived at after determining that the 75 percent threshold would tip the scales in favor of new development on smaller lots sooner than the 60 percent calculation, increasing the possibility that more Heights blocks will fall victim to subdivision and increased density. This is the same position reached by other neighborhood groups and the majority of the neighborhood representatives who served on the Planning Commission subcommittee that drafted the new ordinance.

The following is a comparison of the impact of the 60 percent and the 75 percent calculations on a standard Houston Heights block originally platted with 24 lots of 6600 square feet each.

* If 60 percent is approved: At least 15 of the 24 original lots must remain at the time the application is submitted for the block to still qualify for a minimum lot size of 6600 square feet. If there have been several subdivisions and fewer than 15 of the original lots are left, the minimum lot size will be smaller

than 6600 square feet. We face the possibility of 48 town homes if more than nine, or just 40% of the original lots, have been subdivided.

* If 75 percent is approved: At least 18 of the original lots must remain at the time the application is submitted for the block to still qualify for a minimum lot size of 6600 square feet. If there have been several subdivisions and fewer than 18 of the original lots are left, the minimum lot size will be smaller than 6600 square feet. At 75 percent, the possibility of 48 town homes occurs much sooner, or when more than six lots, just a little more than 25% of the original lots, have been subdivided.

The danger with a 75 percent threshold is that the square footage of more of the smaller lots on a block may have to be added in to reach the higher percentage, increasing the possibility the new minimum lot size will be smaller than the majority of the block's lots. HHA believes it is shortsighted to place an entire block at risk of redevelopment on smaller lots when a majority of its total area is still covered by larger lots.

Calendar (continued from back cover)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 4	5 - recycling HHA Land Use 6:30 PM Fire Station	6 HHA Urban Forestry Group 6:30 PM Fire Station	7	8	9 <i>Deadline for Apr. newsletter</i>	10
11 <i>Daylight Savings Time begins</i>	12 HHA General Adding On 7:00 PM Fire Station	13	14	15	16	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>
18	19 - recycling HHA Board 6:30 PM Fire Station	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 HHA Education 6:30 PM Fire Station	27	28 PIP Meeting 7:00 PM 1602 State Street	29	30	31

Community Calendar

Events planned by other community organizations.

Every Wednesday and Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Historic Houston's salvage warehouse is open. Call 713-522-0542 or visit their web site www.historichouston.org for more information.

February 1-3, Opera in the Heights presents L'Elisir d'amore by Donizetti at Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For more information or tickets, visit www.operaintheheights.org or call 713-861-5303.

February 3, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Timbergrove Manor Neighborhood Association will hold a garage sale in the Community Room at Northwest Mall. Use Entrance D on the old JC Penney side. Proceeds benefit the Timbergrove Manor neighborhood.

February 8, 6:30 PM, Heights Woman's Club Evening Group holds its Valentine's Fundraiser, a potluck dinner, at the Heights Woman's Club Building, 1846 Harvard. Please bring a dish; meat will be provided. \$10.00 per person. Couples welcome. RSVP to Anne Sloan 713-869-8281.

March 22-24 and 29-31, Opera in the Heights presents Mozart's Don Giovanni at Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For more information, visit www.operaintheheights.org or call 713-861-5303.

Future History

April 13-15, Spring Home Tour

June 3, Fun Run

October 7, Bicycle/Skate Rally

November 30 - December 1,

Holiday Home Tour

February 24, 2008, Awards

Dinner

The Heights is published monthly by the Houston Heights Association. Its purpose is to acknowledge achievements and to inform HHA members of events.

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Newsletter inquiries, suggestions, or submissions should be directed to:
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email editor@houstonheights.org, or leave a message on 713-861-4002.

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HOUSTON HEIGHTS ASSOCIATION
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Calendar of Events for February 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 <i>Groundhog Day</i>	3 Heights 1st Sat.
4	5 - <i>recycling</i> HHA Land Use 6:30 PM Fire Station	6 HHA Urban Forestry Group 6:30 PM Fire Station	7	8	9 <i>Deadline for Mar. newsletter</i>	10
11	12 HHA General TreeScape 7:00 PM Fire Station	13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15	16	17
18	19 - <i>recycling</i> HHA Board 6:30 PM Fire Station	20	21	22 Restoration 916 Cortlandt 7:30-9:30 PM	23	24
25 Awards Dinner 5:00 PM Fire Station See page 1.	26 HHA Education 7:00 PM Fire Station	27	28 PIP meeting 6:30 PM 1602 State Street	March 1	2	3 Heights 1st Sat <i>continued within</i>

HHA headquarters: The Fire Station is on the corner of Yale and 12th Streets.

HHA web site: <<http://www.houstonheights.org>>