

# T H E H E I G H T S

Newsletter of the Houston Heights Association



Volume 34, Number Twelve, December 2008

## The December General Meeting Seasonal Social, and Holiday Home Tour Volunteer Appreciation Event.

St. Arnold's Brewery, Texas oldest microbrewery, is adaptively reusing a building on Lyons Avenue east of downtown in order to expand their capacity. There will be a representative from St. Arnold's to talk about the project.

The efforts of all the volunteers who worked on the Home Tour held the prior weekend will be recognized.

## Election Results

*as delivered at the November General Meeting by Mike Easley, Election Committee Chair*

First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Election Committee, who worked diligently to ensure the vote tabulation process was accurate and impartial.

They are all people of the highest ethical standards, and I appreciate their volunteer services on an important task that required and received the utmost in integrity and honesty. Lauriel Hindman has been a long-time trusted business manager of this Association and has survived many independent outside audits. John

*continued on page 3*

## Economic Incentives for Historic Buildings

The City of Houston may grant a tax exemption to qualified property owners who improve designated City historic properties. In addition to the tax incentives, owners of designated historic buildings may qualify for other benefits such as reduced building permit fees.

Historic Site Tax Exemptions

I. Historic Buildings

Who may qualify

An owner of:  
an historic building that has been

*continued on page 4*

*The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following 2008-2009 Platinum sponsors:*



**San Jacinto Stone**

## Spread Some Cheer: Help With Holiday Food Baskets

Heights Rotary and the Houston Heights Association annually underwrite, prepare, and distribute food baskets to local families in need, chosen by area charities. You can help assemble and distribute the goodies on December 16 and 17.

The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following Winter 2008-2009 Diamond Sponsor:



The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following Winter 2008-2009 Silver Sponsor:



The Houston Heights Association is proud to have the following Winter 2008-2009 Bronze Sponsors:



One hundred baskets (actually sets of six bags) will be assembled at the Fire Station on the evening of Monday, December 15, starting around 5:00 PM (not Tuesday evening as previously announced). Volunteers will be assorting bulk groceries among the baskets for two or three hours; come whenever you can.

Delivery starts after lunch on Wednesday, December 17. Come by the Fire Station to pick up a set of bags and the name and address of the family to receive them; if you have a large car or a van, pick up several! Delivery should be completed that afternoon.

Please help us make the holidays brighter for local families in need.

## Donations

Paul & Stephanie Babb—  
Boulevard, Flower Gardens, & Parks  
Tom & Lisa Gladney—  
Boulevard, Flower Gardens, & Parks  
Rita Johnson & Jennifer Smart—  
Boulevard  
Jim & Doris Murdock—Boulevard  
Jim & Barbara Potter—Boulevard  
Alan & Patricia Ratliff—  
Boulevard, Flower Gardens, & Parks  
John & Nicole Ridgway  
Donna Thomas—Boulevard,  
Flower Gardens, & Parks

## New Members

Darryl Anderson  
John Bellows  
Aaron & Becca Bruhl  
Bungalow Fitness, Angie Hasara  
Marybeth & Harry Corcell  
Susan Diederich  
Candy Donahue  
Lauren & Michael Glover  
Pat Hall  
Chad Hesters  
Memories by Duskin Photography, Stephanie Hill  
Northgate Custom Homes  
Althea Tupper  
Roger & Catherine Watkins

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: Editor, *The Heights*, P.O. Box 70735, Houston, TX 77270-0735, email editor@houstonheights.org, or leave a message on 713-861-4002.  
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December contributors: Jim DePitts, Diane Easley, Janice Evans, Lauriel Hindman, Peggy Lindow, Genie Mims, Anne Sloan, Mark Williamson, Cindy Wingo

cont'd from pg 1 *election results*

Hennessey, Jim Bennett, and Diane Easley are all former HHA Citizens of the Year. Working together as a team, this group of your fellow neighbors helped to ensure the propriety of the vote tabulation process, and I thank them for it.

Every step of the HHA election process – from mailing and then re-mailing the ballots, to opening ballots, scrutinizing ballots for proper completion, and tabulating vote counts, to determining applicable Board positions winners – was done with a minimum of 2 committee members watching every step of the process.

As exists in our country's current political climate, our neighborhood enjoys two groups of well meaning neighbors with different opinions on how to reach a common goal.

As has historically been the precedent, vote totals by the membership for HHA Board candidates are never released. Nor will they be as to this election.

However, due to the controversy over campaign materials issued by both factions in this election, I am going to disclose a few election related items of note that apply to our entire membership.

First, despite the vigorous campaigning efforts of many participants, it is interesting to note that somewhat fewer than 1 out of every 3 ballots received voted in lockstep with either supposed

“political” affiliation.

Stated another way, despite the best efforts of either “party,” each was only able to produce their exact slate of candidates in roughly 1 out of every 6 ballots. Interestingly enough, those straight ticket ballots appeared rather evenly divided in number. So, to the credit of our neighborhood, a super majority of HHA members voted for an independent mix of specific candidates that they felt could best lead our community. “Straight party ticket voting” had little, if any, effect on the final results of this election.

Secondly, that independence helps account for why fewer than 5% of total voters accepted the opportunity to re-vote their ballot. A super majority had already independently made up their minds.

A special thank you to all of the candidates who ran for the Board in this election. While HHA voter turnout and totals are not documented or announced, this slate of candidates helped to generate a voter turnout that was the highest in “recorded memory.” Your willingness to serve can be immediately fulfilled in one of the many other capacities in which HHA needs hard working volunteers who want to have fun and serve their community. Stay tuned.

In any event, the HHA Board candidates elected tonight have a strong mandate from your com-

munity to move forward and help continue to change the Houston Heights for the better.

Without further ado:

The two HHA board candidates receiving the sixth and seventh highest vote totals and thus each securing a one-year term commencing 1/1/2009 on the Board of Directors of the Houston Heights Association, in alphabetical order are:

- 1) Christine Spin
- 2) Bart Truxillo

The five HHA board candidates receiving the five highest vote totals and thus each securing a three-year term commencing 1/1/2009 on the Board of Directors of the Houston Heights Association, in alphabetical order are:

- 1) Anne Culotta
- 2) Mary Ellis
- 3) Simon Eyles
- 4) Martin Pike
- 5) Margaret Sanchez-Ripps

Congratulations to all of the newly elected Board members, and thank you to all of the HHA members who participated in this election.



designated as a City of Houston Landmark or Protected Landmark, or a building that has been classified as a “contributing” or “potentially contributing” structure located in a designated City of Houston Historic District.

#### How to qualify

To qualify for this tax exemption, the owner of a City designated historic building must perform restoration and/or renovation work to the building. The expenditures for this work must amount to at least 50% of the assessed value of the improvements (i.e., buildings) prior to the work, as established by the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD). The percentage of the tax exemption (from 50% up to 100%) is dependent on the amount of qualified expenditures relative to this initial year improvement value. The tax exemption applies to the HCAD improvement value only (not land value), for up to 15 years. The exemption applies only to City of Houston taxes, and does not apply to county or school district taxes on the property.

Any exterior work used to qualify for the tax exemption must be approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) through a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

Interior renovation work may also be used to qualify for the exemption, and does not require a COA. In the case of a “poten-

tially contributing” building, approved expenditures must include work towards reversing incompatible alterations or deteriorating conditions on the building’s exterior. If the HAHC determines that the proposed work is not appropriate for the historic structure and denies a COA application, the work will not qualify for the tax exemption.

Expenditures for work performed in the five years prior to historic designation of the structure may also qualify for the tax exemption if the work is later deemed appropriate and the HAHC subsequently issues a COA. However, it is strongly recommended that the owner designate the building and receive a COA in advance of performing the restoration work, as not all work will meet HAHC approval, nor will all buildings qualify for landmark designation.

Once the work has been approved and completed and the minimum amount is spent to qualify, the applicant may apply to the Finance Department to receive the tax exemption. See “How to apply” for more information.

The property tax exemption is transferable to subsequent owners of the property, except in the case of condominiums or other multi-family residential, where the exemption transfers only once – from the developer to the first purchaser of the unit.

For more information, please visit the Planning Department website at [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com) and click on “Historic Preservation.” City of Houston Historic Preservation staff can guide you through the application process for historic designation and for COAs.

You may also contact Randy Pace, Historic Preservation Officer, City of Houston, Planning & Development Department, at 713-837-7796 or [randy.pace@cityofhouston.net](mailto:randy.pace@cityofhouston.net); Thomas McWhorter at 713-837-7963 or [thomas.mcwhorter@cityofhouston.net](mailto:thomas.mcwhorter@cityofhouston.net) for questions about COAs; or Diana DuCroz at 713-837-7924 or [diana.ducroz@cityofhouston.net](mailto:diana.ducroz@cityofhouston.net) for questions about landmark or historic district designation.

For more information regarding the tax exemptions, please contact Julia Gee at 713-837-7828 or [julia.gee@cityofhouston.net](mailto:julia.gee@cityofhouston.net) or go to [www.houstontx.gov/finance/ecodev/historic.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/finance/ecodev/historic.html).

See also the Historic Preservation Ordinance, City of Houston Code of Ordinances Chapter VII, Section 33, and the Tax Exemption Ordinance, Chapter 44, Sections 44-5 and 44-29, for further information.

# 2008 Community Improvement Awards



The Community Improvement Awards program is sponsored by the Houston Heights Association. The awards are given to recognize residential and commercial restoration, renovation, and new construction efforts that serve as models to the community and to encourage similar restoration, renovation, and development.

The four categories of Community Improvement Awards are Residential Restoration or Renovation, Commercial Restoration or Renovation, New Residential Construction, and New Commercial Construction.

## Eligibility and Judging Criteria for Residential Restoration or Renovation

- 1) Any residential restoration or renovation project completed within the past three years and located in the area shown on the map is eligible. (The area is defined in the by-laws of the Houston Heights Association.)
- 2) The project must have received a City of Houston building permit, except where one was not required (such as in the case of cosmetic repairs).
- 3) Entries will be judged on built features sympathetic to the character of the neighborhood. These include such features as building scale, massing, proportions, setbacks, landscaping, and architectural elements.

## Eligibility and Judging Criteria for Commercial Restoration or Renovation

- 1) Any commercial restoration or renovation project completed within the past three years and located in the area shown on the map is eligible. (The area is defined in the by-laws of the Houston Heights Association.)
- 2) The project must have received a City of Houston building permit, except where one was not required (such as in the case of cosmetic repairs). It must also bear a City of Houston certificate of occupancy.
- 3) Entries will be judged on their visual, environmental, and/or economic contributions to the community.

## Eligibility and Judging Criteria for New Construction, Residential or Commercial

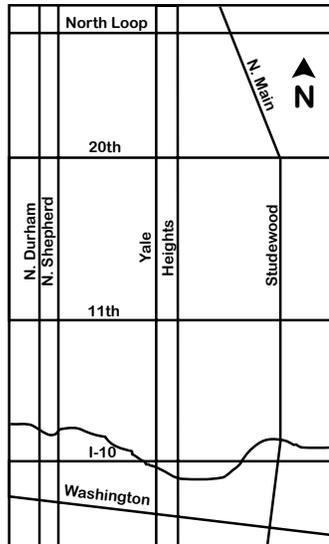
- 1) Any new residential or commercial construction project completed within the past three years and located in the area shown on the map is eligible. (The area is defined in the by-laws of the Houston Heights Association.)
- 2) The project must have received a City of Houston building permit. Commercial projects must also bear a City of Houston certificate of occupancy.
- 3) Entries will be judged on built features sympathetic to the character of the neighborhood. These include such features as building scale, massing, proportions, setbacks, landscaping, and architectural features. Commercial entries will be judged on their visual, environmental, and/or economic contributions to the community.

## Nomination Procedures

- 1) Determine that the property fits within the guidelines listed above.
- 2) Complete the entry form on the next page.
- 3) If available, please include a simple snapshot with your entry for identification. Before and after photographs are very helpful in the judging process. All photo-

- graphs will be returned after the awards are presented.
- 4) Only one nomination per person per category will be accepted.
- 5) Nominations must be received on or before January 15, 2009. Mail in a sealed envelope to the address on the form.
- 6) The winners will be selected by a panel

- of judges.
- 7) Decisions on the number of awards granted and whether to grant an award in every category is at the sole discretion of the judges, whose decisions are final.
- 8) Winners will be announced at the HHA annual Awards Dinner on February 22, 2009 at the Heights Fire Station.



### Eligible Geographic Area

The geographic area shall be bounded by North Loop 610 on the north, North Durham Drive on the west, Washington Avenue on the south, Studewood on the east, and North Main on the northeast.

## Nomination for 2008 Community Improvement Award

Houston Heights Association  
 Attention: Community Improvement Awards Committee  
 P. O. Box 70735  
 Houston, Texas 77270-0735

Name of Nominee (Property Owner) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

My nomination is (Check one):

- Residential Restoration/Renovation       Residential New Construction  
 Commercial Restoration/Renovation       Commercial New Construction

Date project was begun \_\_\_\_\_ and finished \_\_\_\_\_

What was the prior condition of the property? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe work done \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Designer \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Builder \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Has the project received the appropriate City of Houston certificate of occupancy (for commercial projects) and/or building permits (for commercial and residential renovation and new construction projects)? \_\_\_\_\_

Commercial only: How is this property contributing to the growth and development of the Heights community?

- increased interest from other parts of the city       increased property value  
 increased services to the community       increased jobs for the community  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

My relationship to the project is \_\_\_\_\_

## Houston Realtor Organization Tours The Heights

The Houston Independent Real Estate Brokers Association ("HIREBA"), an organization of non-franchised Real Estate Brokers, chose The Heights for their 2008 bus tour. The organization, which meets bi-monthly for networking and professional development, participates in an annual bus tour through Houston's unique neighborhoods. Due to time constraints, the tour was limited to the Woodland Heights, Norhill Heights, and Houston Heights concluding at 19th Street at Shade Restaurant for lunch. The tour was graciously underwritten by two local Heights Builders and an affiliate member of HIREBA; Jeffrey Harrington Homes and Partners in Building and Encore Bank. Two other affiliates, Allied Home Warranty and First American Title, provided breakfast goodies before boarding the bus. Bus stops included two new construction properties, 1020 Arlington (Partners in Building) and 723 Allston (Jeffrey Harrington Homes); and one historic home, 1802 Harvard, the beautiful home of Bart Truxillo. The tour was guided by Jim Parsons, a local historian; Minnette Boesel, a HIREBA member and the City of Houston Mayor's Assistant for Cultural Affairs; Tina Burgos and Cindy Wingo, HIREBA members and active Heights Realtors. Minnette discussed the Historical Preservation Ordinance and its value in

maintaining community integrity without jeopardizing property rights. Jim Parsons guided the Realtors through the neighborhoods' rich history, and Tina and Cindy reported on the current real estate development and values.

HIREBA membership is open to any Broker and its Agents that are part of non-franchised Real Estate Firms. For additional information on membership, go to [www.hireba.org](http://www.hireba.org).

## IMAGES OF AMERICA: HOUSTON HEIGHTS

*by: Anne Sloan*

On Friday, January 16th from 1-5pm and Saturday January 17th 9-1 pm, Allison Yoder, editor of Arcadia Publishing, and I will be at the Fire Station to talk with people who are interested in having their Houston Heights photos considered for reproduction in the upcoming publication. Please bring your black and white photos to be scanned on Friday and Saturday. No newspaper photos can be considered. I would also like to record your interesting stories about Houston Heights or about your home. In addition this will be an opportunity to look at the "unknown" photos which are part of Houston Heights Association Archives, and perhaps give us your ideas about the identity of the subjects. Your photographs will be scanned and returned to you on the spot. You will need to sign a release giving Arcadia Publishing permission to use the photo in the book which is scheduled for distribution in

November 2009. If neither of these dates will work for you, and you have photos that you would like to have considered, please contact me prior to January 16th and plan to bring your photographs for me to look at and have scanned. Thank you for your help with this project. This book requires community participation. I am making every effort to produce a regional history that will be informative, interesting, and unique in its inclusion of previously unviewed photos. Anne Sloan, 713-869-8281, 1433 Harvard St. [anne.sloan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:anne.sloan@sbcglobal.net).

## Houston Heights Holiday Hayrides Return

The hay wagon will be available again this year for Xmas lights/Caroling rides through the Heights. The hayrides are another fun function of the Houston Heights Association. The wagon is available for Heights groups and HHA members. There is no charge.

Berryhill's on E.11th is providing the hay again this year. On December 6th there will be hayrides every 40 minutes, starting at 5:00pm from Berryhill's. The wagon can carry up to 30 persons. To schedule a ride between Dec. 7th & 24th contact Paul Carr at 713-869-0505 or [torturet@aol.com](mailto:torturet@aol.com). Several dates have already been scheduled.

## Get Your Tickets Now for the 2008 Historic Houston Heights Holiday Home Tour

Recently described by Southern Living as “one of the most fascinating neighborhoods in the South’s biggest city,” the Heights will be the scene of the 2008 Historic Houston Heights Holiday Home Tour on Friday, December 5, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM, and Saturday, December 6, from 3:00 to 9:00 PM.

Appropriately themed “Enchantment,” the tour will feature six spectacular homes, including three historic residences ~ a 1908 Texas farmhouse, 1920 brick Craftsman bungalow, and 1912 American Foursquare ~ and three newer homes reflecting traditional Heights architecture. The homes will be delightfully decorated for the holidays. Docents will be stationed at each home to point out the rich history, architectural features, furnishings, and decorations.

Individual advance tickets are \$17 and can also be purchased online; they will be available soon at various Heights locations. Tickets purchased online can be picked up at the will-call booth at the Fire Station during the tour. Tickets purchased on the days of the tour will cost \$20, or \$5 for each home, and will be available at the Heights Fire Station at 107 W. 12th and Yale Streets, and at each home.

Three buses will operate during the tour. Patrons may board the buses at stops located

at each home and at the Fire Station.

Thanks to the generosity of Reliant Energy, tour ticket holders can have complimentary holiday-themed photos taken of them at the Fire Station.

### Homes On Tour:

\* **The Williamson Home** at 1433 Columbia Street, built in 1908 and enlarged in 1928, is a Texas farmhouse nestled behind a charming cottage garden.

The house has a large country kitchen with a 1930s Chambers range and an island created from an antique buffet. Traditional holiday decorations include an extensive collection of “Twelve Days of Christmas” items.

\* **The Ouellette Home** at 1132 Heights Boulevard is a 1920 brick Craftsman bungalow and garage apartment located on the middle lot of three lots connected with lush landscaping. The original kitchen and baths add to the home’s charm.

\* **The Henry Hicks McCain House** at 1026 Allston Street, built in 1912 as an American Foursquare in the Arts and Crafts mold, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is named after one of the Heights’ original residents. The current owners renovated the home’s interior and exterior, using reclaimed hardwoods, natural materials, and antique accessories found locally, including reclaimed/restored light fixtures.

\* **Miz Magnolia** at 408 E. 7th Street, a Southern Classic residence sited among mature magnolia and oak trees, boasts many custom features, such as several fireplaces, a wine room, wooden bar top, cedar courtyard doors, and a deep porch extending across the front and one side of the house. Ten rooms will be open for viewing during the tour.

\* **The Counts Home** at 719 Oxford is a Queen Anne-style residence with many custom improvements, including stained glass and a wood-burning fireplace. Highlights include a turret, front and back porches, and extensive landscaping. In celebration of the holiday season, the owners will display teddy bear- and Dalmatian-themed Christmas trees, Lionel trains and a snow village.

\* **The Worthington Home** at 1135 Heights Boulevard is a newly constructed, 10,000-square-foot replica of an 1897 Queen Anne Victorian in Virginia. The residence features an extensive front porch, antique fireplace, custom stained glass windows, and two copper-capped turrets. The owner’s collections of more than 200 dolls ~ dating from the 15th century to 21st century ~ and blown glass ornaments will be on display.

## Calendar (continued from back cover) Calendar of Events for January 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Years Day	2	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 729 Rutland	7	8	9	10
11	12 HHA HHA General Meeting 6:30 PM Fire Station	13	14	15	16 Images of Houston, Fire Station 1-5pm <i>Deadline for next newsletter</i>	17 Images of Houston, Fire Station 1-5pm
18	19 MLK Day HHA Board Meeting 7pm	20 <i>recycling</i>	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 HHA Crime & Security 6:30 PM Fire Station	28 PIP Meeting 7:00 PM 1600 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](http://www.historichouston.org).

November 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22 – Opera in the Heights presents two works by Gaetano Donizetti in Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For tickets or more information, call 713-861-5303 or visit [www.operaintheheights.org](http://www.operaintheheights.org).

January 29, 30, 31, February 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 – Opera in the Heights presents Giuseppe Verdi's Macbeth at 7:30 PM in Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For tickets or more information, call 713-861-5303 or visit [www.operaintheheights.org](http://www.operaintheheights.org).

March 26, 27, 28, April 2, 3, 4, 10, 11 – Opera in the Heights presents Giuseppe Verdi's Falstaff at 7:30 PM in Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For tickets or more information, call 713-861-5303 or visit [www.operaintheheights.org](http://www.operaintheheights.org).

### Future History

February 22, Awards Dinner  
 April 3-5, Spring Home Tour  
 April 18, HHA Camp-Out & Music Fest  
 June 6, Heights Fun Run  
 October 4, Bicycle Rally  
 December 4-5, Holiday Home Tour

HOUSTON HEIGHTS ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 70735  
HOUSTON, TX 77270-0735

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## Calendar of Events for December 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 HHA Land Use 6:30 PM Fire Station	2	3	4 Hannukkah begins at sunset	5 Holiday Home Tour 6-9pm	6 Heights 1st Sat. Holiday Home Tour 3-9pm
7	8 <i>recycling</i> HHA General Meeting 6:30 PM Fire Station St. Arnold's	9	10	11	12 <i>Deadline for next newsletter</i>	13
14	15 HHA Board Meeting 6:30 Fire Station; Holiday food basket assembly, 5:00 PM, Fire Station, see p. 2	16	17 Holiday food basket distribu- tion, 12:30, Fire Station, see p.2	18	19	20
21	22 <i>recycling</i>	23	24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa begins	27
28	29	30	31	January 1 New Years Day	2	3 Heights 1st Sat

*continued within*

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

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