

UPDATE

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Remodelers Month</i>	1
<i>Feed the Cause</i>	2
<i>Sewer Update</i>	2
<i>Real Estate News</i>	2
<i>HISD Project</i>	3
<i>PIP</i>	3
<i>NMCA News</i>	3

Monthly Meeting Reminder:

JOIN US Tuesday June 8th at 7 pm for our monthly meeting. Jack Rose, President of the Neartown Neighborhood Civic Association, is going to be our speaker. There is also a potluck dinner in the beginning of the meeting. BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH!

Recap of May Meeting

Discussion centered on our neighborhood projects, including the community garden & the esplanade. We discussed how the association could identify dangerous buildings/weeded lots in the neighborhood and how to communicate with owners about their deteriorating properties (ones that are either an eyesore or can pose a danger). We also discussed what we could do to prevent mature trees from being cut down when properties are sold/slotted for development.

Photos of our community garden!

NATIONAL REMODELERS MONTH

BY MARTI EWING

Many homes in Montrose are in need of either renovation or repair and most Homeowners are leery of contractors. Everyone has heard the story of the contractor taking the down payment never to be heard from again. In fact, these people are not contractors, they are criminals and con-artists. There are many organizations that exist to protect the consumer: The Better Business Bureau and the National Association of Remodelers (NARI) are both good places to begin looking for a reputable, professional contractor. Here are some guidelines that are put together by NARI that can help in the selection process:

1. Look for a contractor that has a membership in a professional organization. Check out their records at the Better Business Bureau. Be sure they carry at least a \$1 Million liability policy. This is not required for most contractors in Texas. Protect yourself and your property and ask to see their insurance certificate and

verify their coverage.

2. Solicit bids from different contractors. Be sure they are bidding on the same scope and quality of work. Beware of any bid that is substantially lower than the others. Choose a company that you feel secure with.

3. Ask for references and follow up on them. Call the references and do not be afraid to ask questions such as "did the contractor begin the work on time?" "Was the jobsite neat?" "Did the contractor stay in touch during the project?" "Were the final details finished in a timely manner?" and "Would you use this contractor again without hesitation?" Ask to see the finished project. Make sure you are satisfied with the quality of the work.

Other things to remember:

Proper planning is essential, think your project through from start to finish.

Do you need an architect or a design/build contractor? Think about design and func-

tion, and comply with local building codes and permits. Many contractors will take care of this for you but be sure to ask and be aware of what they are.

Last but not least a well written contract is essential.

By following these steps you should feel confident in your selection of the right contractor. There are plenty good, professional contractors out there just be sure and do your homework! Protect your biggest asset - your home.

Marti Ewing/Archadeck of Southwest Houston

www.archadeck.com

Do you have an article you'd like to share with your neighbors? As long as what you write/provide has something to do with our neighborhood, we would like to hear from you. For articles to be included in the next NMCA newsletter please email Susanna, the NMCA secretary, at the following email address: psevens@sbcglobal.net



FEED THE CAUSE!

BY ALLEN
UECKERT

The Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS (DIFFA) will be hosting its eighth annual Eat Out & Chip in Event in Houston on June 10, 2004. The event brings together local restaurants that donate a portion of the day's proceeds to DIFFA. NMCA area restaurants that will be participating in the event include Barnaby's, Daily Review, and Annabelle's Diner. Other area restaurants include Cabo's, Niko Niko's, Mockingbird Bistro and Farrago's. For a complete list of restaurants, visit DIFFA's website at www.diffa.org and look under the Houston Chapter. DIFFA is celebrating its 20 year anniversary and has been organized in Houston since 1987. Since its inception, DIFFA Houston has raised over \$2.8 million that has directly benefited local recipients.

"DIFFA Houston has raised over \$2.8 million that has directly benefited local recipients."

SEWER PROJECT UPDATE

BY JOHN GALEENER

After a strong start, the response to the City's request for Right of Entry forms has lagged during May. About 50% of the required forms had been returned by the Public Meeting on April 27th. Unfortunately, during May only a few additional forms were received, leaving the percentage completed still less than 60% by Memorial Day. The City needs more forms back to move the project into the next phase, ("advertising for bids"). The required information includes a sketch of each property, which will tell the bidding contractors about how many feet of sewer connection is

needed. This is a critical number, because the City is required by law to seek a fixed price contract, and the bidders have to know the complete scope of the work to figure their costs. If you haven't returned your Right of Entry and property sketch, please send that off as soon as you can.

On another front, your association has sent a letter to the City requesting that the project plan be changed to include re-topping all sides of the streets in the project area. The plan presented at the Public Meeting included only re-topping the half of the street that would be dug up to

lay the new sewer pipe. The sewer connections on the other side of the street would be placed in street cuts. This would lead to having upwards of 10 to 15 half street long cuts repaired in each block of the affected area. Besides being unsightly, we have all experienced the roughness and quick deterioration of streets after a large number of street cuts have been made. These streets were re-topped in the last few years as part of the "Neighborhoods to Standards" program, and it would be a shame to lose the large improvement in the streets we saw with that program.

REAL ESTATE NEWS

BY ALLEN UECKERT

As reported in the Houston Business Journal this past week, there is quite a bit of activity for multifamily development along Allen Parkway. A subsidiary of Archstone-Smith, one of the nation's leading apartment owners and operators, has purchased land on the scenic roadway for a new development, how-

ever, no specific details have been offered.

In addition, the Robinson Public Warehouse -- which sits on 3.1 acres at 2323 Allen Parkway -- is under contract to an unnamed buyer planning a multifamily development.

ZOM Development Inc is still in the design phase of development luxury apartments at

the site of the old Allen Parkway Inn. The project will have 430 units. Inspiration comes from early 1900's resort hotels complete with Mediterranean influences. Construction is slated to begin at the end of this summer.

For a preliminary sketch go to www.zomusa.com and click on "Proposed Projects".

NMCA BUSINESS SPONSORS



**LINA'S
CLEANING
SERVICE**

(713) 528-2791

REFERENCES REASONABLE RATES SINCE 1989
BLOCK CAPTAIN, HYDE PARK UNITED C.A.
832-282-5462 (LINA)

Attention Business Owners!!!

Want to include your ad in our newsletter? Membership to businesses is very affordable, at only \$36 a year. If you're interested in advertising and membership, please contact our President Allen Ueckert at 713-522-1776.

HISD PROJECT UPDATE

BY BRIDGET JENSEN

HISD has secured all the land between Taft and Genesee and north of W. Gray to its existing property on W. Dallas in order to build new facilities for both the Gregory-Lincoln Education Center (GLEC), the elementary and middle school now located at Taft and W. Dallas, and the High School for Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA). Members of the community have raised concerns of possible Union soldier gravesites on the property. Through archival research and cadaver-sniffing dogs, an area in the western part of the property was identified as the likeliest locale to find any Union soldier grave-

sites and where archaeologists, hired by HISD, will dig investigational trenches. Considering the impact of the project on the community and the importance of any archaeological evidence that may be on the site, State Senator Rodney Ellis called the community meeting

The meeting was well attended by both community leaders and residents of Fourth Ward. The broad scope of interest/concern in the project was reflected in the comments offered by representatives from the State Legislature, HISD, City Council, Texas Historical Commission, and Freedman's

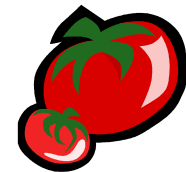
Town community as well as in the public comments that followed. Many addressed the historical significance of Freedman's Town and the responsibility of HISD to honor that. Others were concerned about the site plan for the new complex and a few others voiced the need to improve the conditions for students of both GLEC and HSPVA.

Though the NMCA board of directors has not issued any specific statement about the project, it is informing HISD that, as neighbors, we expect to stay informed and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns.

COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

BY SCOTT HOWARD

The NMCA Community Garden is in full swing with tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, peppers and eggplant. Okra and beans are going in next. The garden has already provided over 150 pounds of vegetables to a Loaves and Fishes, a homeless persons soup kitchen on Congress Ave. It is also a homeless women's facility with living quarters. The on site executive director, Billy Shepherd is very appreciative as this facility's kitchen serves over 300 meals a day. For more info on the garden or Loaves and Fishes please contact Scott Howard at 713-524-1290.



CHECK OUT the pictures on the first page of this newsletter. Those are our tomatoes in full bloom!

POSITIVE INTERACTION PROGRAM (PIP)

BY CAROL GALEENER

The Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program provides a continuing forum for citizens to learn about government services and to meet informally with HPD members. The PIP, now more than two decades old, has been a key factor in helping HPD to understand emerging concerns and issues

about crime that affect neighborhoods.

Numerous PIP sessions are held each month around the City, addressing the interests and needs of individual neighborhoods. The North Montrose/ Mid-town session is the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Multi-Service Center, 1475

West Gray. The hour long session normally includes light refreshments, an informative guest speaker, and time for interaction with officers and their supervisors from the local patrol district. All who live, work, or have an interest in the area are welcome to attend. These sessions are time well spent!

NMCA NEWS

WELCOME NEW

MEMBERS:

- Russ & Jeanne Hanks
- Eddie Zomper & Marc Schwettman
- Set for Life
- Bill Wade & Paula Cizik
- Earl D. Mitchell
- Hans Peter Boy
- Scott & Linda Sustman



JUNE YARD OF THE MONTH!

Congratulations to June's winner Jackie Barry at 410 Bell. The colorful wild flowers really catch your eye and brighten up the street.

North Montrose Civic Association

P.O. Box 130184
Houston, TX 77219

We're on the Web!
www.northmontrose.org

NMCA Officers & Board

Officers:

President:

Allen Ueckert 713-522-1776

Vice President:

John Galeener 832-453-2656

Treasurer:

Gus Elizondo 713-522-2468

Secretary:

Susanna Evens 713-528-8601

Board Members:

Scott Howard 713-524-1290

Betty Anderson 713-527-8961

Bridget Jensen 713-524-1290

Lance Jones 713-522-1776

Russ Lebovitz 713-524-1121

Julie Wilsford 713-520-6433

Margaret Young 713-521-5982

The North Montrose Civic Association was formed over 25 years ago to promote civic affairs in the neighborhood. NMCA is a non-profit organization that depends on voluntary membership and participation. Included in this UP-DATE Newsletter is a form for residents to use to join or renew their membership. NMCA meets every month at the Museum of Printing History at 1324 W. Clay to present programs of interest to the local residents. The membership dues are very reasonable and will help defray the organization's costs to produce and distribute the Newsletter, to sponsor social events such as National Night Out and the Holiday Dinner and to organize and complete various neighborhood projects. Please join NMCA and just as important, become an active resident. See you at the next meeting!

**North Montrose Civic Association
Membership Form**

Mail to P.O. Box 130184, Houston, TX 77219

_____New Member _____Renewal

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ DATE: _____

E-Mail: _____

CHECK ONE:

Owner Resident _____ Tenant Resident, _____
Business _____ Non-resident Property Owner _____

Annual Membership Dues:

Individual Member -- \$15	Household -- \$20
Senior Citizen Individual -- \$6,	Senior Citizen Household -- \$9
Business -- \$36	Non-Rest Property Owner -- \$24