

University Oaks Civic Association

Monthly Newsletter

October 2006

The next meeting of the UOCA will be held on Wednesday, October 11 at 7:30 PM at the UH Honors College, 2nd Floor of the main library, accessible from entrances 1 or 6.

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

For those of you who don't know Tom Whittaker, take a minute, catch Tom at a civic association meeting and chat with him. I guarantee you it will be worth your time. If you are lucky as I have been so often, he will leave you with a little pearl of wisdom. Oh sure, Tom isn't as spry as he used to be but don't let his walker or slight stammer stand in the way of really engaging the person who, as much as anyone else, has worked to make our community into the place we enjoy calling home. We hear frequently about politicians, who, as they like to say, have "served" us, and I don't mean to disparage their work, but Tom's service is a truly unselfish kind too often missing today. For no salary or fame, Tom has tackled the issues that are distinctly local and seemingly pedestrian but are, in fact, most beneficial to our lives: more policing, improved drainage, new streets and preserving community traditions. He has shown us all how us all what devotion to community and public service is all about.

To put Tom's involvement in perspective think about this: Tom has been an active member of our civic club government for over thirty—yes, that's right, thirty years! (Some of my first memories of knowing about a civic club are of Tom walking down Varsity to chat with homeowners about various concerns they had.) When I asked Tom why he first got involved he told me in his usual, unassuming manner that he "just felt like he needed to get involved" after he and Velma moved to University Oaks. That initial calling is one he is still serving today. He was a director for countless terms; he served as president for a number of terms; even after leaving the board, he has remained engaged in the events and with the issues that shape our community. At our last meeting Tom was there with pictures of trees from Lufkin neighborhoods that Tom thought should be planted rather than live oaks. Even now, after bouts with illness and personal tragedy that have slowed him down, Tom, continues to direct the luminary display that brightens our community each Christmas.

To Tom's credit, during his tenure on the board and as president Tom was on the correct side of virtually every issue that came before our community. Early on in his involvement with the civic association, he spoke on behalf of integrating our neighborhood. His was the moderating voice, encouraging people to focus on being neighbors first. Near the end of his tenure as president, as our community changed and we needed greater deed restrictions enforcement, Tom was the ardent advocate for being collegial rather than distant and legalistic. I always admired his unique way to discuss issues and express his opinions, always while being polite and respectful, that preserved relationships even with those with whom he disagreed.

So the next time you see the elderly gentleman with Velma at his side, stop and say hello and thanks. Tom, you are a gem. Thanks for everything.

Yours,
Douglas A. Erwing
President, University Oaks Civic Association

UH Master Plan

Dr. James Anderson, Special Assistant to the President at UH, spoke at our last civic association meeting about the recently announced twenty-year Master Plan for the campus. University of Houston will grow in a big way (mostly upward) on their existing 550 acre campus while keeping plenty of green space, trees and sculpture. Highlights of the plan include:

- Double the learning space to 15 million square feet to accommodate an expected student increase of 10,000 – from the current 35,000 to 45,000.
- Double the living space with 11,000 students in apartment-style housing.
- Create an arts district on the north side with an amphitheater, sculpture garden, and high-ceiling lofts for living and working.
- Create a professional district along Calhoun with an urban residential street that caters to graduate and married students.
- Create an undergraduate district along Wheeler with house-like apartments that blend into the surrounding community.
- Create a stadium district that will be the campus' social center, mixing academic and retail space with access to rail and bus lines.
- Add parking along the perimeter of the campus so that Cullen and the center of the campus will be closed to auto traffic.

\$59 million in projects are in progress right now with another \$233 million planned over the next five years.

Some of the things that will impact the plan as it evolves are Metro's rail routes and also the desire of UH to maintain a good neighbor status with University Oaks. Dr. Anderson welcomes input from us and will continue to attend our meetings and keep our community apprised of activities which may affect our neighborhood.

UO Annual Halloween Party

The annual UO Halloween party will be held at the home of Arlee Dorough and Colin Gatwood, 4391 Fiesta. Keeping with tradition, this will be a pre-Trick-or-Treat event on Halloween evening. Flyers with further detail will be distributed.

Crime in the Neighborhood

- Submitted by *Jim Marcely*

In September four crimes were reported to me.

- A bicycle was taken from a garage on North Macgregor.
- A burglar broke into a Graduate Circle residence and stole a laptop computer. The residents were not at home at the time.
- After the Harvest Lane residents had gone to sleep upstairs, a burglar entered their home through an unlocked back door, walked through the kitchen and another room into the den and stole a laptop computer.
- At another residence a stranger entered the home.

In each case, the resident called the police who investigated and made a report. “Spanky” Schooler, one of the off-duty policemen we hire to patrol our neighborhood, has followed up and confirmed that the crimes are entered into the Houston Police Department computer. It’s working! HPD now knows that we are no longer a crime-free neighborhood!

If you are a victim of a crime or observe suspicious activity, call 911. Also give me a follow-up call at 713-440-7995.

We plan to have HPD make a presentation to us at our November Civic Association meeting. I’ll ask them to address how they respond to and record crime in University Oaks. Ya’ll come!

A Crime Prevention Tip

A great way to discourage burglars is to have a good watchdog in your home. The dog need not be intimidating. An alert barker usually is sufficient to keep burglars away.

Mosquitoes

If anyone finds a dead bird in the neighborhood, call Jim Marcely at 713-440-7995. He will pick up the bird and deliver it to Harris County Mosquito Control. They determine if the bird died of West Nile virus or Saint Louis encephalitis. That information helps them plan where to spray.

UOCC Book Club Schedule

October 4, 2006 – *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks
Host: Lori Stevens Gray

November 1, 2006 – *Waiting for Snow in Havana* by Carlos Eire
Host: Tentative host who may prefer to host next year. Anyone interested in hosting November, Please contact Robyn Webb

December, 2006 – movie time
Host: TBD

Garden Maintenance Schedule – October

1. Begin planting fall and winter color. Buy bulbs and start seeds.
2. Prepare for leaf drop on deciduous trees.
3. Maintain mulch on planted areas.
4. Remove yellowed or unsightly foliage from plants.
5. Prune broken and dead branches from plants.
6. Stake overly tall plants.

Recipe to Share

Witch Finger Cookies

- Submitted by **Amy Cabrera**, Varsity Lane

Ingredients:

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced almonds
1 tube red decorating gel

Directions:

In a mixing bowl, beat together butter, sugar, egg, almond extract and vanilla extract; beat in flour, baking powder and salt. Divide dough into four equal parts, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 325°F. Take one quarter of dough at a time from the refrigerator. Break off one heaping teaspoonful and roll it into a finger shape. Using the tip of a butter knife make an indentation on the tip of the finger to create a nail bed for the fingernail (almond slice). Squeeze in around the middle of the finger to create a knuckle shape. Using the butter knife, make about three indents going across the finger to resemble a knuckle. Repeat with rest of dough.

Place cookies on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool three minutes. Move to cooling rack. Place a good-sized dot of decorating gel on the nail bed of each cookie. Then place an almond slice on each making sure that the gel oozes out from underneath. Makes about 4 dozen fingers.

Amy says the finished product looks pretty disgusting (making it a hit with the kids) but the cookies taste really good !

Family Fun at Dewberry Farm

A visit to Dewberry Farm is a return to the simpler times of our grandparents. Located west of Katy, Texas, Dewberry Farm is all about making memories and enjoying good clean country fun. Open October through November there are plenty of activities for all ages to enjoy. Lots to do including the Corn Maze, the Pumpkin Patch, farm animals, activities center for little ones and much much more.

Call them at 281-934-3276, toll free at 866-908-farm or check out their website at www.dewberryfarm.com.



UOCC Board of Directors (Board@UniversityOaks.org)

President:	Douglas Erwing	H: 713-440-9205
Vice President:	James Pierce	H: 713-748-1743
Secretary:	Wilbert Taylor	H: 713-747-3347
Treasurer:	Jim Marceley	H: 713-440-7995
Director-at-Large	Clyde Leuchtag	H: 713-398-0855
Director-at-Large	Carl Ards, Jr.	H: 713-741-6251
Director-at-Large	John Preston	H: 713-748-1814

Other Contacts

Architectural Review Committee	ArchitecturalReview@UniversityOaks.org
Deed Restriction Enforcement	deedrestrictions@universityoaks.org
Security	security@universityoaks.org
Welcome Committee	welcome@universityoaks.org
Directory Changes/Updates	directory@universityoaks.org
Newsletter Entries (submit in MS Word attachment only)	newsletter@universityoaks.org
Webmaster	webmaster@universityoaks.org

Heavy Trash Pick-Up: Tuesday 10/10; Recycling: 10/10, 10/24; Weekly Trash Pick-Up: 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/24, 10/31

Deadline for newsletter entries: last day of month. Submissions in MS Word attachment are preferred. If you are unable to submit in a Word attachment or do not have computer access, please send submissions to Deborah Thompson a few days prior to the end of month deadline.