

University Oaks Civic Association

Monthly Newsletter

February 2007

The next meeting of the UOCA will be held on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 at 7:30 PM at the home Evelyn and John Broussard, 4830 Rockwood.

President's Letter

Hi Neighbors,

METRO visited our neighborhood a second time last Wednesday to explain in greater detail what their plans are for running their rail project down Wheeler. In case you were not able to attend the meeting, METRO is proposing to purchase the homes along Wheeler and then install a transit line that would operate approximately fifty feet from the back property lines of homes on Varsity. Initially the vehicles would be bus rapid transit vehicles; eventually they would be converted to trains. Their plan contemplates a transit station just east of our neighborhood along Wheeler near the intersection of Wheeler and Calhoun. From the station one could ride the line to the heart of downtown or to Palm Center.

While it seems that there is broad general support for the train line down Wheeler there was a chorus of concerns about how METRO's plan will impact access to our neighborhood from Wheeler because METRO is considering closing either Rockwood or University Oak and also restricting left turns into our neighborhood from Wheeler. METRO is also considering crossing gates and horns on the train. Bruce Webb and others suggested a number of changes to METRO's plan that would mitigate the access problems specifically by having the train sit in the northern most lane of the existing Wheeler right of way rather than in a lane constructed in the land to be acquired from the properties that front on Wheeler. In essence, Bruce suggested moving the vehicular traffic south and having the train sit on the University side of the expanded Wheeler right of way.

A second concern has to do with METRO's power of condemnation. METRO has the right to condemn land within 1,500 feet of a transit station. Some neighbors were concerned that METRO will condemn properties in our neighborhood either in conjunction with the University of Houston or private developers. While METRO swore that they are not in the development business, they did acknowledge that they have some sort of private/public partnership working on development near the line that runs through downtown. Doug Horn and others asked METRO to put their promises in writing that they will not take houses beyond those necessary to complete the line down Wheeler. METRO's representatives at the meeting said that such a promise was for the METRO Board to make and, therefore, they really could not comment more.

If you have thoughts about the plan in general or either of these concerns please email me at derwing@tanglewoodtitle.com. I would like to hear from you so that we, as your representatives, can work to serve your interests. In the meantime, we are facilitating a dialogue over both the Wheeler access issues and the condemnation question. As the issues mature, we will be back in touch. METRO will also be coming back again to tell us more as their plans take shape.

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

Are You New to the Neighborhood?

If you recently moved to University Oaks, welcome! There are probably some things you want or need to know - some having to do with deed restrictions - others just plain old "rules of the road". Here goes.

Garbage Pickup is normally on Tuesday. Your garbage can should be put out Monday evening and taken in no later than Tuesday evening. The same goes for recycling bins and bagged yard waste. In other words, there should be no containers of any kind left out on the street days before or after the date of pickup.

Heavy Trash Pickup is normally the second Tuesday of every month. It is OK for you to stack items near the curb beginning the weekend before the Tuesday pickup. But there should be no heavy trash in front of your house before that weekend.

Property Improvements. If you are considering renovations to your home or property such as interior remodeling, an add-on, a new driveway, a fence, etc., please contact the Architectural Review Committee through its chairman Bruce Webb at 713-741-2105. The committee will review your plans to ensure that you are in compliance with UOCA deed restrictions. It's better to check it out ahead of time so you can avoid complications.

Rentals. If you are planning to rent any part of your home or property to more than two unrelated people, please run your idea by the Deed Restrictions Committee chairman Doug Erwing at 832-466-4201. If there are no deed restriction violations involved, you are good to go.

Civic Association Meetings. Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the second Wednesday of every month Sept. thru June. All residents are invited and encouraged to attend. The location of each meeting is announced in our newsletter which is distributed the first week of the month Sept. thru June. Y'all come!

Please visit the UOCA website at UniversityOaks.org for a complete list of the deed restrictions. We encourage your participation in all our neighborhood activities and look forward to seeing you at our monthly civic association meetings. Again, welcome to University Oaks!

Crime in the Neighborhood

- By *Jim Marceley*

.Only one felony was reported to the police in December. A burglar entered the garage on a residence on North MacGregor, and stole tools, two bottles of champagne and a sweat suit from the utility room. The theft occurred while the resident was out Christmas shopping three hours during the day. The theft of the sweat suit suggests to me that the thief might be living out-of-doors, such as under a bridge along the bayou.

Trees for the Neighborhood

- by *Jim Marceley*

Davey's Trees will plant the twenty five live oak trees in our neighborhood on Wednesday and Thursday, the 21st and 22nd of February. It's quite a sight to see their heavy equipment dig out a big hole and place a good sized tree with its root structure in the ground. I'm arranging to prevent parking on all of Rockwood on those two days, and to put out traffic cones to prevent parking in front of the other properties that are getting the trees.

People who are getting trees have received stakes, each with a white flag on top. They need to be driven into the yard at the preferred location, within ten feet of the curb, before 14 February. Around 17 February a plotting company working for Davy's Trees will be marking the utilities.

I recently read *Six Frigates, the Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy* by Ian W. Toll. Live oak trees were used in building our early fighting ships, including the *USS Constitution* (“Old Ironsides”). Toll gives the following description of the tree.

“*Quercus Virens*, the southern live oak, is found only in the southeastern United States . . . in a coastal zone stretching from southern Virginia to East Texas. John Muir, who knew what he was talking about, called it ‘the most magnificent planted tree I have ever seen.’ An early European naturalist wrote that a live oak had ‘the appearance of a large apple or pear tree, [with a] . . . spreading picturesque top, and delicate olive shaped leaves of a deep shining green . . . one of the most magnificent and delightful shade trees in the world.’ A mature tree stands 40 to 70 feet high, but its branches can spread a radius of 75 feet or more, and its shade can cover half an acre. The trunk is enormous, reaching 20 feet in circumference, but it divides into branches 5 to 18 feet from the ground, giving the tree a squat, stocky appearance. The limbs separate from the trunk at right angles and extend horizontally, often low enough for a man standing on the ground to reach up and touch. As it grows, the live oak’s vascular system is plugged up with a thick viscid gum, making it dense and heavy – as heavy as 75 pounds per cubic foot, the heaviest oak there is. It seems impossible that the trunk can support the weight of so many huge branches, each weighing in the tons and reaching outward at right angles. One only has to look at the tree-to contemplate its peculiar geometry- to gain some idea of its tremendous strength.’

UOCC Book Club Schedule

February 21, 2007 – *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Foer Host Robyn Webb

March 21, 2007 – *Balzac and Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Host: Nancy Klementich

Recipes to Share

Pork Loin Roast

-submitted by Diane O'Brien
4366 Varsity Lane

Diane says this is her low fat, low salt version of a Southern Living recipe that substitutes pork tenderloin for pork loin and provides a quick cook method that keeps the tenderloin moist.

Prepare the following tapenade:

7 oz kalamata olives
1 T drained capers
1 T white wine vinegar
1 t lemon juice
2 T extra virgin olive oil

Pulse the first 4 ingredients, then add the olive oil and pulse again. Set aside.

Prepare the cornbread stuffing:

1 cup cornbread stuffing mix
¼ cup jarred roasted red bell peppers drained & chopped
¾ cup sodium/fat free chicken broth
3 T parsley

Saute 1/3 cup finely chopped onion and mushrooms as well as 1 garlic clove
In 1 T olive oil. Add this to above 4 ingredients and set mixture aside.

Mix together 3/4 cup sodium/fat free chicken broth with 1/3 cup Merlot. Set aside.

Prepare the pork tenderloin by cutting lengthwise most of the way through the open tenderloin and lay flat. Pound to flatten the pork to no more than 1/2" thickness. Spread the tapenade above on the opened pork. Then do the same with the stuffing mixture. Roll up the tenderloin and tie with string. Rub the roast with 2 T olive oil and salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Heat 1T oil on high in an oven-safe pan. Sear pork for 5 minutes (2 1/2 minutes on each side) and remove from heat. Add chicken broth/wine mixture to pan and place pan in 450 degree oven for 15 minutes. Remove and allow to cool for 5 minutes while you make gravy.

Prepare the gravy: Melt 1 T butter. Add 1T flour. Whisk for 2 minutes. Add the pan drippings and 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms. Cook until thickened. Slice pork and pour gravy over it. Serve with stewed tomatoes and roasted baby red potatoes. Bon Appetit!

Editor's Note: Diane graciously submitted this recipe for the January edition of the UOCA newsletter and unfortunately, the editor in her haste to get to press, omitted the recipe entry. As the saying goes...haste makes waste.... The editor apologizes for the oversight.

Classifieds

1 house completely furnished
>> 3711 Charleston (Corporate Leasing)
>> 2 Bdrm/2Bath/1 Study
>> Call DeAndre Sam (281) 808-2981
>>
>> 2910 Wentworth Upstairs
>> 2 Bdrm/ 1 1/2 Bath/ 1 Study
>> Call Sonia Sam (713) 899-9206
>>
>> 2813 Wentworth Upstairs
>> 2 Bdrm/ 1 Bath/ 1 Study
>> Call Sonia Sam (713) 899-9206



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 Marcely	H: 713-440-7995
Director-at-Large	Clyde Leuchtag	H: 713-398-0855
Director-at-Large	John Preston	H: 713-748-1814
Director-at-Large	Vacant	

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, 2/13 Recycling: 2/13, 2/27; Weekly Trash Pick-Up 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27

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.