

Proctor Plaza

Spring 2011 • Volume 22 • Number 1 n e w s l e t t e r

PPNA Neighborhood Message

By Paul Broman, President

Dear Neighbors – The New Year has been active for the Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association. On January 25, in lieu of a January general meeting, the PPNA hosted its annual dinner - catered by Hickory Hollow BBQ. Everyone enjoyed visiting and meeting new neighbors, and we were pleased that our Councilman, Ed Gonzalez, and his community liaison, Laura Thorp, were in attendance too.

The February 22 general meeting included a presentation from Tony Lara from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office. Tony provided an overview of the gang activity in Houston and throughout the schools. The presentation included a description of the membership profiles, ages, location, and graffiti associated with the various area gangs. Although Proctor Plaza has not been affected by significant gang activity, several gangs are present in nearby neighborhoods. Accordingly, we need to be diligent in watching for the warning signs and promptly notifying the Anti-Gang Office if any gang activity is noticed.

Our 2011 membership drive is off to a good start. PPNA's goal is to increase membership numbers over 2010, and we will continue asking all residents to fill out a membership form and pay their 2011 dues (\$35). A membership form is included in this newsletter. Remember that being a paid-in-full member is required to vote at the monthly meetings.

The January, February and March PPNA First Fridays were well-attended. Thank you to all of the hosts for opening their homes to fellow Norhillians. Check the Upcoming Events list below for future happy hours. Please bring a snack and/or beverage of your choice to enjoy while mingling with your neighbors. Also, please let the PPNA Board know if you are able to host a First Friday on June 3 or July 8.

During the past year, there has been lively debate as to whether Norhill should remain a "historic district" under the City of Houston's revised historic ordinance. (Proctor Plaza is composed of East Norhill and North Norhill.) The 30 day voting period ended, and the City determined that only 8.83% of homeowners voted to repeal the historic designation under the City's new ordinance. On February 23, 2011, Marlene Gafrick, Director of Planning & Development, presented a report and recommendation to the Houston City Council. Ms. Gafrick recommended no changes to the boundaries or status of the Norhill Historic District.

I look forward to seeing you at future PPNA meetings.

Upcoming Events

- April 1 First Friday Happy Hour**
At the home of Frank Brown and Mark Scioneaux, 802 W. Temple, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- April 26 Association Meeting**
Proctor Plaza Park Building, 803 W. Temple, 6:30 p.m.
Roland Altinger, Harris County Appraisal District, is guest speaker
- May 6 First Friday Happy Hour**
At the home of Patti Woods, 727 W. Temple, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- May 31 Association Meeting**
Sylvia Brumlow, City of Houston Environmental Investigations, is guest speaker

Yard of the Month

Submitted by Rebekah Mayfield



Manuel Ramirez and John Rohde have lived in their beautiful home at 1115 Winston for 10 years. They have a lovely yard, even in January! The side and back yard areas are totally useable and great for entertaining. PPNA residents and visitors appreciate Manny and John's many decorator touches.

Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association objective

The objective of the Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association (PPNA) is to promote the civic and social welfare and well-being of the neighborhood; to promote the civic betterment and social well-being of all its residents; to encourage the prevention and suppression of crime in the community; to disseminate facts relating to the improvement of this vicinity; and to preserve the residential character and integrity of the neighborhood.

meetings

The PPNA meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m at the Proctor Plaza Park Building at 803 West Temple. All are welcome!

newsletter

Please send ideas for articles to bob.lamons@sbcglobal.net. If you are interested in writing an article, the next submission deadline is May 1. The newsletter is distributed the week of the PPNA General Meeting in March, June, September, and December.

advertising

Interested in advertising in the Proctor Plaza newsletter and reaching more than 1,200 homes? Contact Bob Lamons at bob.lamons@sbcglobal.net Business Card = \$30; Quarter Page = \$45; Half Page = \$75; Full Page = \$150.

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What To Do Now? Tips For After The Freeze

by Paula Mabrey of Tiny Shovels Landscaping

This was the coldest February on record since 1895 and many Proctor Plaza residents are now looking at “twig collections” instead of the lush, green yards they love. Here are a few suggestions that will give you long-lasting, beautiful results in addition to preparing you for next winter and freezes to come.

First, the big picture. Houston is located in USDA zones 8B and 9A. We have a subtropical climate and normally experience freezes in the winter that **kill tropical foliage**. Consider the tropicals you plant as “annuals” and place them accordingly. A lovely row of Ixora or Tropical Hibiscus in your landscape may not make it to the next spring, so they should not be used for the foundation of your landscape but as highlights only. With this mindset you can enjoy your tropicals for what they are, annuals that might have to be replaced every year.

Second, prune selectively. Don't cut back the plants until you see new growth - this will let you see how far back the plant has died. By now, most of your plants that lost their leaves will be showing some new growth, either on the shrub itself or from the ground. If it is showing growth from the roots, cut back the old growth to the ground (2 to 3 inch stubs) and let the new growth fill in. If you see new growth on the branches, carefully cut back to just above the new growth while keeping in mind the overall shape of the shrub. DO remove any wet or gummy plant material. It will encourage rot or has already rotted. Cut back to healthy plant tissue. Resist the urge to dig everything up that is not showing new growth. Some perennials will not be showing growth for another month or so. Gently scrape the trunk with your fingernail and if it is green leave it alone, you might be removing a perfectly healthy plant.

Get rid of the leaves and debris. Remove everything from around your plants, including leaves. Slugs and snails hide in this debris and they are hungry! Protect your tender new growth by cleaning up around your plants and flower beds. Then apply a generous layer of compost and mulch to your beds before the summer heat hits.

Don't fertilize! Fertilizing now encourages top growth that puts the plant in stress - it will not help the plant grow back more quickly. Use a high quality root stimulator to support the roots and prevent further shock. If the roots are nutritionally supported and strengthened, the result will be a strong, healthy plant that can support top growth through the hot summer months. Wait to apply a well balanced, low number organic fertilizer until the end of April. Why low numbered? High numbered fertilizers shock the plants and artificially produce rapid green growth on top that roots cannot support, resulting in plants that will fail when the summer heat hits.

Plant the right plants. You cannot trust the tags on shrubs and plants! Typically the tags included with the plants you buy are printed for large regions of the country and just do not apply here in Houston. A shrub or plant that says “full sun” probably doesn't mean “full Houston sun”, it probably means “full morning sun with afternoon shade in Houston”. So how do you know what to plant where? Consult a gardening professional at your local **independently owned** garden center. These people work hands-on with the plants every day. Their accumulated knowledge is free and yours for the asking. Large garden centers and big box stores do not employ plant experts that can give you advice on what is appropriate for your yard. Also, keep in mind to plant native and naturalized, these plants can take our climate, both hot and cold.

Plant Annual Color. Give your garden a splash of color to raise your spirits and visually disguise the dormant plants. While you are waiting for signs of life from your larger plants and shrubs, plant pockets of bright seasonal color to draw the eye and provide some cheer! Here's to Spring in The Heights!

SPANISH FLOWERS:
4701 North Main Street
Houston, TX 77009



Established in 1979, The Spanish Flowers Mexican Restaurant has flourished under the owner Mary Bernal's constant care and guidance. This restaurant has been a "**Heights Neighborhood Legend**" (Zagat Survey) for many, many years.

Since the first day she opened, Mary decided she would keep her restaurant open 24 hours a day. This tradition continues to this day. The only time the restaurant takes a break is on Tuesday nights, it closes at 10:00 P.M., then reopens on Wednesday morning at 9:00 A.M. and maintains its 24 hour schedule until the next Tuesday night.

One of the biggest challenges in being a 24 hour restaurant is to ensure that the quality of service and the taste of the food are always the same, regardless of what time you visit the restaurant



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Have you joined or renewed for 2011?

Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association



A note from VP of Membership – Janne Alt

When I bought my first home in October 1993, Norhill was a different place. Indeed, after growing up in the Southwest suburbs and living in Montrose and surrounding areas for most of my adult life, I felt like a pioneer moving so far away into the “hood.” When my son was born in 1997, it still felt somewhat like Siberia in that children were few and far between. The general population was long-time homeowners, some who had lived here for generations.

That population has today been replaced by all kinds of different groups creating a diverse community of civic-minded individuals that take pride in the “hometown” feel of our historic neighborhood. Today our streets are filled with children, strollers, pets, walkers, runners, skates, skateboards, and bikes. Our citizens are of every age, race, gender, and religion. We’ve become a historic district, instituted prevailing lot size protection and metamorphosed into a strong civic association dedicated to upholding our deed restrictions while maintaining our small city feel.

After all, it’s why you moved here, isn’t it? As a mortgage banker, I am privy to all kinds of HOA fees, structures, and tenets and know that we are very lucky, since membership in PPNA is voluntary and affordable at a mere \$35 per year. The average American moves every 7.6 years. I’ve been here 18 years along with 10 neighbors on my 18-house block. That is saying something.

“What does membership bring me?” I hear it all the time. PPNA supports your neighborhood and makes it cohesive. It gives you a stake in where you live. And we don’t just want your money. We want your ideas, your presence, and your voice. Our monthly meeting is only one hour long. It’s where we come together to visit, learn, and share. Let’s keep our neighborhood strong. When the neighborhood is strong, our values remain strong. Please join today!

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS

PRIVILEGES:

“Proctor Plaza has one of the safest neighborhoods in the city because residents care.”

- Officer Muskiet, HPD

A PPNA MEMBERSHIP HELPS EVERYONE, AND THAT’S A PRIVILEGE!

YES! I want to renew or join the Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association:

___ \$35 regular member, homeowner

___ \$10 renter

___ \$10 senior citizen (over 65)

___ \$50 business membership

I would like to make an additional donation to support PPNA projects ____.

I want to join a PPNA project committee. Please call me at _____.

I want to work on a PPNA project. Please call me at _____.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ Houston, TX _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

(Please make check payable to Proctor Plaza Neighborhood Association and mail to P.O. Box 30021 Houston, TX 77249-0021)

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Helping our less fortunate neighbors

For the past 19 years, Proctor Plaza resident Sister Eleanor Dickmann has teamed with members of Christ the King Catholic Church, 4419 N. Main, to serve the needs of families and individuals in this area. She celebrates 50 years as a Benedictine Sister/Nun in June.

When I came to CTK on March 1, 1992, the parish was Czech, Polish, Irish, Italian and German. We had one Hispanic family. Now I find myself immersed in a church community of almost 4000 members, 85% Hispanic and most of whom speak little or no English. Many of these immigrant people are very poor. They have skills, but live far below the poverty level.

I am writing to ask if you have things in your home, garage or business that you no longer need. These people need all the basic necessities of life: clothes (including underwear), shoes, socks, jackets and coats; blankets, sheets, pillows and pillow cases and curtains; beds, sofas, tables, chairs, lamps, computers; pots and pans, dishes, silverware, glasses, cups and mugs, pitchers, kitchen utensils, kitchen towels and sponges, shower curtains, towels and wash cloths, bath mats, trash cans, etc. Sometimes they need used appliances. They also need car seats, cribs, strollers. In other words, whatever you need, they need.

All items must be clean and in good condition. Smaller items can be brought to my home and I will deliver them as I make my rounds. Please call me at 713-802-2340 (H) or 713-775-3843(C) or email me at sedickmann@sbcglobal.net. I will let you know when and where to drop off ANYTHING you can donate. Several of my co-workers have pickups so we can usually pick up larger items as needed.

I also make lunches for "street" people and provide financial assistance for families struggling to pay utilities, make home repairs and buy medicine. I'll write more about that in a future article.

If you can help in any way, with money or donations of goods and services, I'd love to hear from you. God bless you.

Sister Eleanor Dickmann, O.S.B.
Spiritual Caregiver, Christ the King Catholic Church

Welcome to Proctor Plaza BBQ Dinner

Approximately 70 PPNA residents and guests gathered at the Community Center on January 25 to enjoy Hickory Hollow barbecue and good conversation. It was a most enjoyable evening.

