

# Commonwealth Comments

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

January/February, 2004

www.commonwealthcivic.com

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

There was plenty of food, fun and good cheer at the annual Holiday Open House held December 15 in The Commonwealth clubhouse.



### Commonwealth's Holiday Open House

\$100.00 gift certificates were presented to the home decorating contest winners listed on page two.



We had a special appearance by the man of the hour! If you missed out, be sure to join in next year!



### Thank You

The Commonwealth Garage Sale, held in November, was a big success. The Association would like to thank Tina McGarvey for organizing this event.

Thanks Tina, the Garage Sale would not have taken place without your efforts and commitment!!!!

Look for another community-wide Garage Sale next fall.

We would also like to thank the people who assured that the design and execution of our entry monuments came to fruition.

Jim McGregor was responsible for the design and the project execution.

Steve O'Hara was responsible for the landscape design.

Zelma Loeb and Donna Danto for the monument holiday decorations.

Thank you Sooo much!

Association  
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281-265-1734

Zelma Loeb  
Vice President  
281-980-7741

Paula Stansell  
Treasurer  
281-579-0761

Jim McGregor  
Director  
281-980-1661

Steve O'Hara  
Director  
281-265-4485



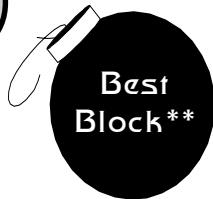
## Annual Holiday Home Decorating Contest Winners

The Commonwealth was alive with lights and decorations  
for the holiday season this year.

The \$100.00 gift certificates were awarded to the following residents:



The Roth  
Family  
11 Aylesbury Ct.



\*\*Block includes 5 or more homes



The Odom Family  
4907 Glen Hollow

H!

H!

H!

Kids' Favorite



**SUSAN M. DELCLOS,**

DMD, MDS, PA

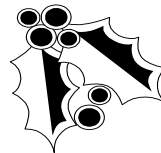
*ORTHODONTIST*

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(next to CiCi's Pizza)  
281-261-2504



Henry Delclos, D.D.S.,  
*Pediatric Dentist*

2225 Williams Trace Blvd.,  
Ste. 206  
281-265-4177



Congratulations to  
our winners!!!



# Association Nuts & Bolts

## *Deed Restrictions/Modifications/Architectural Changes corner*

It is the residents' responsibility to pay dues, follow deed restrictions, respond to HOA letters.

The Modifications and Deed Restrictions Committee will review ALL applications for improvement and modifications. Homeowners are responsible for knowing the deed restrictions before undertaking any changes, improvements or modifications to the outside of their homes. Please check this section each issue for a sampling of the requirements.

### Fences

**All fences must be pre-approved by the Modifications Committee (MC).** Any painting, staining, or varnishing of fences must be pre-approved by the MC. Homeowners shall construct and maintain a fence or other suitable enclosure to screen from public view outside clothes lines, yard equipment, wood piles or storage piles. All fences shall be a minimum of six feet and a maximum of eight feet in height, constructed of cedar or pine which has been treated to last as long as cedar.

Requests for extension of fencing, walls, or hedges must be submitted by both neighbors sharing the side lot line and fence, wall or hedge. If both neighbors do not concur as to a proposed fence, wall or hedge extension, the MC will examine the effect the extension will have on both properties. If one party will suffer detrimentally from the extension, the MC will reject the application.

No fence or hedge may encroach across the front building line and may never extend beyond the actual front building line. No new fence shall extend beyond any side building line adjacent to a street. No fence or wall shall be erected on any lot nearer to the street than the minimum building setback lines as shown on the subdivision plat.

All corner fences and fences which face a restricted reserve must be installed picket side out.

Replacements or repairs of fences, walls, or hedges must be made with similar materials.

Wood fences must be #1 grade hardwood.

The erection of chain link fences on any lot is prohibited.

## Association Committees

Clubhouse & Pool Rentals	
<i>Crest Management</i>	281-579-0761
Neighborhood Watch	
<i>Nancy Castellvi</i>	281-265-2769
Welcome Committee	
<i>Maura Ritchie</i>	281-980-6347
<i>Roseann Pisano</i>	
Landscape Committee	
<i>Steve O'Hara</i>	281-265-4485
Modifications & Deed Restrictions	
<i>Dan Lumpkin</i>	281-265-6709
Tennis Committee	
<i>Cindy Facker</i>	281-207-5129
L.I.D. Representative	
<i>Mike Homeyer</i>	281-980-3794

## Commonwealth Alert

Be sure to sign up for our  
Email Alert system.

This is a service of The Commonwealth  
Civic Association in conjunction with  
residents Paula and Charles Stansell,  
who oversee the Association's web page:  
[www.commonwealthcivic.com](http://www.commonwealthcivic.com).

**NOTE:** The Association will **NOT** be sharing these email addresses with any commercial venture and **NO ADVERTISING** (or jokes!) will be forwarded to residents. This email network is **STRICTLY** for alerting/providing information regarding timely matters that the Association feels are important to our residents.

You may sign up by sending an email to:  
[commonwealth@stansellweb.com](mailto:commonwealth@stansellweb.com)  
please include your name and contact  
information.



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## Annual Assessments are Due

Assessments for the year 2004 are due in the office of Crest Management Service on January 1, 2004. These payments are OVERDUE on February 1, 2004 and interest will begin to accrue at that time.

Invoices were mailed out in November and it is the responsibility of the resident to ensure that the invoice is paid on time. Mortgage companies do NOT pay this bill.

If you have any questions, please contact Crest Management Service (281-579-0761) and identify yourself as a resident of The Commonwealth.

## Pond Ponderings

When the Commonwealth Community was developed in the early 90's, the pond at the intersection of Warwick and Heatherwilde was designated as a Wetlands reserve which meant that modifying the pond was prohibited. A few years ago the US Army Corp of Engineers declassified many water areas like this one and the restrictions no longer exist. The Commonwealth Civic Association (CCA) has continued to leave this area as a reserve and let nature take its course.

In 2003 for the first time, a floating weed began growing in the pond. The CCA contacted a lake management company to make a site visit and to make a recommendation. By the middle of October the lake management recommended to wait until spring to kill the weeds. Their rationale was that the weeds were about to go dormant for the winter and there is a good chance a large portion of them would die during a winter freeze. Additionally, the chemical used to kill the weed is not effective in the cooler fall and winter temperatures. It was also recommended that we spray a weed killer on the surviving weeds in the spring. This is the first time that the CCA has had to deal with this type of problem but with what we have learned lately, we feel we will be able to manage the problem in the future.

We have been monitoring the situation and find that the ducks and other wildlife continue to use the pond. The lake management company made a trip to the pond on November 21 and found only minor trash which was removed. There were no dead ducks or other animals. The CCA will continue to observe the pond and will control the weed growth as described above.

**Ads in Commonwealth Comments are available at very reasonable rates. If you would like to advertise, call Sue at 281-265-4556.**

## TIPS FOR THE DRIVING PUBLIC

Motorists who are unaware of new state laws that recently have taken effect may be surprised and puzzled to have a Sugar Land Police Department officer stop them while they are driving.

Texas laws governing driving privileges consist of more than 475 pages, so it isn't uncommon for a driver to be in violation of traffic law and NOT know it. The following state laws became effective on September 1, 2003.

**License Plate Visibility:** The vehicle license plate law was enhanced and now prohibits any "illumination device, sticker, decal, emblem or other insignia" that interferes with the readability of the letters, numbers or name of the state. The law applies to both front and rear license plates.

**DWI with Child Passenger:** It is now a **state jail felony** if a person is intoxicated while driving and the vehicle he/she is driving is occupied by a passenger who is younger than 15 years old!

**Tinted Windows:** A person is prohibited from operating a vehicle that has an object or material that is placed on or attached to the windshield, side or rear window that obstructs or reduces the driver's clear view. The minimum amount of light transmission through a sunscreening device (window tint) on a front side or vent window increases to 25% from 35%.

**Passing Stationary Police Cars:** A driver can be cited for failing to move to the left or slow down when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle displaying lights. The driver should move to the left on multi-lane roadways or slow to 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit.

If you are stopped by an officer while you are driving:

- ▽ Yield to the right and stop your vehicle as far away from the moving lane of traffic as possible.
- ▽ Turn on your emergency flashers.
- ▽ Stay in your vehicle and, if it is dark outside, turn on your interior light.
- ▽ Attempt to stay relaxed. Keep your hands in plain view, preferably holding the top of the steering wheel.



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- ▽ Wait until the officer requests to see your driver's license and proof of insurance.
- ▽ Sugar Land Police Officers will introduce themselves and explain the reason(s) why you were stopped.

*This information was adapted from information supplied by the Sugar Land Police Department. For more information, please contact the SLPD Traffic Unit at 281-275-2519.*



## New Commonwealth Web Site Contest

Each week during the month of April we will post a new question on the Commonwealth Civic Association website. You must check each week for the new question. At the end of the fourth week send an email to:

[commonwealth@stansellweb.com](mailto:commonwealth@stansellweb.com)

You must include your name, address and the answer to each of the questions.

Each correct entry will be entered in the drawing.  
(One entry per household)

The winning household will be drawn at the annual meeting in May.

...in the meantime, be sure to visit The Commonwealth Civic Association's website at:

[www.commonwealthcivic.com](http://www.commonwealthcivic.com)

## Responsibility to Vote

When was the last time you **DIDN'T** vote in a Presidential or Gubernatorial election? If you're like most people, you don't remember!

That's because the residents of Commonwealth take their right to vote very seriously. We flock to the polls on election day. After all, we all seek bragging rights to having helped place the "right guy" (or girl) into office.

Commonwealth has a reputation in the Fort Bend area for turning out in great numbers to exercise their right to vote. Keep in mind, however, the term "great numbers" is a relative term. The Commonwealth has over 2,700 registered voters. In last year's City Council/School Board election about 20% of our registered voters went to the polls. In the last Presidential election about 46% of our registered voters voted. Only 600 of our residents voted on the Constitutional Amendments.




Those of us who are involved in local politics take great pride in the interest and involvement of this community. Your involvement dictates that local elected officials do court our residents' votes. Commonwealth matters!

Please be sure to read the campaign materials that you will be receiving over the next ten months. There will be a primary election in March. Many of the races will be decided in the primary. In May we will face Mayoral, City Council, and School Board elections. And of course, the biggie in November.

Voters do the best job possible when we have educated ourselves about the candidates and issues. We are smart enough to know that the most polished public speaker, or the person who publishes the slickest campaign materials is **NOT** necessarily the best person for the job.

Unfortunately due to the newsletter publication deadlines, we cannot always advise you about the myriad of opportunities available for you to meet and/or listen to the candidates. Our web page will make every attempt to list ALL forums, coffees and get-togethers that are brought to our attention. Please check it regularly.

And try to attend our Commonwealth Meet The Candidate Coffees. You'll find them **very** helpful!



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E-Mail: liska@flash.net

At the time of this printing, candidates are still able to declare their candidacy, therefore, we do not know who may be running in each position. Therefore, we are listing the positions Commonwealth residents may vote on, rather than candidate names.

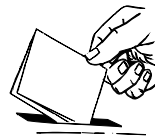
I apologize if the list is incomplete.

Congressional District #22  
State Rep District #26  
District Judges #387 & #400  
County Sheriff  
County Attorney  
Tax Assessor-Collector  
Constable Precinct 4  
County Chairman (each political party)

Every attempt will be made to contact each individual candidate, however, we will not know who is running until after this newsletter is printed. Please watch your local newspapers for details and bios on the candidates.

Links to candidate web sites will be listed on the Commonwealth Website as we learn about them.

*article submitted by Sue Hauenstein*



# Vote



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Happy and Prosperous  
New Year**

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*The Virginia Mack Team*

**Virginia Mack,** ABR, CBR, CRS, GRI

## Where do we fit into First Colony?

New residents are often confused as to how we, as residents of The Commonwealth, fit into the First Colony picture.

Commonwealth is comprised of several small neighborhoods. Bridgewater, Commonwealth Estates, Commonwealth Park, The Enclave, Sutton Forest, Sutton Park and Sweetwater XII.

Several years back, The Commonwealth was annexed by the city of Sugar Land. We fall under the jurisdiction of the Sugar Land Police and Fire Departments and do have 9-1-1 access. Our community sits adjacent to the area known as First Colony.

The term "First Colony" and all symbols and logos are trademarks owned by Sugarland Properties (SPI). SPI granted our developer the right to use the name First Colony when describing the newly developed Commonwealth neighborhoods.

The confusion arises from the fact that, while we may call ourselves a part of First Colony, we are **NOT** a member of the First Colony Community Association (FCCA). FCCA is the name of the Homeowners Association governing most of the First Colony communities. The Commonwealth is **NOT** a part of FCCA.

The developers of The Commonwealth opted to be self governing. Thus, we have our own Homeowners Association: The Commonwealth Civic Association.

The purpose of the Civic Association is to:

- maintain common areas/facilities
- maintain eye appeal (fountains, landscape, etc.)
- collect HOA dues
- promote community events
- maintain property values and
- protect the homeowner's investment

Over ten years ago, the board of directors of The Commonwealth Civic Association hired Crest Management as the Management Company for THIS Association (281-579-0761).

Subject to the direction of our elected Board of Directors, Crest Management supervises our accounting/collections, landscape maintenance, deed restriction violations, etc.

The Commonwealth is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. We have beautiful greenbelts with parks, playgrounds, pools, tennis courts and waterways. We have a

*-article continued on page eight -*

# Vision Source!

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## New Year's Special!

*Mention This Ad and Get 50% Off Any Frame  
Adult or Children's Collection. No Restrictions!*

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**Open Monday - Saturday  
Many Insurance Plans  
Accepted**

- article continued from page 7 -

recognized school district and easy access to shopping and restaurant areas. Under the direction of our Board of Directors and the supervision of our management company, The Commonwealth continues to flourish.

One of the reasons we are so successful is because of the support of our residents. If you haven't been involved in the past, consider becoming more of an active participant this year. The Association members look forward to meeting you.

*article submitted by Sue Hauenstein*

Sugar Land AARP  
is sponsoring a  
driving course eligible to motorists  
50 years and older.

**February 2-3**

**9 a.m - 1 p.m.**

8 hour course - **\$10.00**

Sugar Land Police Department

Graduates eligible for an insurance premium  
reduction.

(NOT for traffic ticket dismissal)

For more information call  
**281-980-0211.**

## Neighborhood Watch

**Neighborhood Watch Program Operates under Two Principles: Know Your Neighbors & Report Suspicious Activity**

The basic idea is for neighbors to watch out for each other. By looking after a neighbor's property as if it were your own, you will more likely contact the police if you observe something suspicious. Citizens act as extra "eyes and ears" for the police department so that calls to the police will be made when criminal activity is suspected.

Once your neighbors have agreed to participate in a Neighborhood Watch Program and the street is organized, officers will send crime information bulletins to your Neighborhood Watch group on an as-needed basis. This information is sent regarding crimes of a serious nature, or when a suspect's description is available. This information, coupled with the two basic principles of Crime Watch, can help citizens become a part of reducing the overall crime rate in the neighborhoods.

**For more information or questions about these services, contact the Sugar Land Police Crime Prevention Unit at 281-275-2575.**

**There will be a meeting to organize our  
Neighborhood Crime Watch Program  
on Monday, January 19 at 7:00 PM  
in the Clubhouse.**

**A representative from the Sugar Land Police will  
present information on the program.**

Think you can beat a traffic ticket because the officer transposed the letters in your name? Think again.

Sugar Land Municipal Court is teaming up with the Sugar Land Police Department to provide police officers with hand-held electronic ticket writers that will record information digitally and then send it on its way electronically to the court. Due to its wireless capabilities, the ticket can be in the court's computer system in a matter of minutes.

## PLAN *For the Future*

### FBISD Update

As you know, the FBISD Bond Referendum passed overwhelmingly in November. A big thank you to those who made the time to vote.

No decisions have been made as to which campuses will be addressed first. There are two elementary schools from the previous referendum that must be completed before the new ones are begun.

The district is currently looking at possible rezoning scenarios. Public meetings will be held when the administration has formulated a plan. Please check the school district website (or your child's campus web page) for the dates. The dates will also be published in the local newspapers. All existing zones may be affected by new zones and that does include The Commonwealth.

At the December board meeting, the Board of Trustees voted on a policy change that requires students to have completed **ALL** credit requirements for graduation **BEFORE** being permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony with their class. The board also voted on Central Appraisal District Board members. Jane Clarke and Kevin Welsh acquired the majority of the votes, with Lee Duggan and Regina Morales also receiving votes from FBISD.



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Ken Rainey

The Board also held a public hearing on the Academic Excellence Indicator System results for FBISD. Statistics included not only standardized test results, but also attendance, annual dropout, and completion rates. Information gleaned from these reports can be located on the district's website at: [www.fortbend.k12.tx.us](http://www.fortbend.k12.tx.us).

## One Man's Junk is Another Man's Treasure

The Clements Theatre Arts Department will present the musical PETER PAN on February 13, 14, 20 and 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the Clements High School auditorium. In order to take the flight to Never Never Land, special flying equipment must be rented. The cost of this equipment is \$4,000.

To raise the needed funds, the Theatre Arts Booster Club is planning a garage sale for January 17, 2004 from 7 a.m. - noon.

Please help by bringing your tax-deductible items, large and small, to the Clements auditorium on Saturday, January 10 from 10:00 - noon or Friday, January 16 from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

.....and then, be sure to come see Peter Pan!!!!

*(Items not sold will be donated to the Fort Bend Women's Shelter)*

# Sugar Land Police Department - Citizens Police Academy

For the past sixteen years, the Sugar Land Police Department has offered citizens an opportunity to learn more about police work by participating in their Citizens Police Academy, a comprehensive 14 week program. Classes take place on Thursday evenings from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. with an optional four Saturday morning classes. The program offers participants an inside look at police work.

The recent classes, most of which took place at the Sugar Land Police Department, were overseen by Sgt. Trevor Nehls and Officer Chad Norvel. Most sessions are taught by Sugar Land Police Officers with the assistance of a few outside professionals. This is a great opportunity to interact with officers, detectives and other department personnel.

Commonwealth resident/university student Jason Mooney and I both participated in the recent academy. Our class had just over 30 participants. For me, it was certainly an eye-opening experience.

The Sugar Land Police Department, as well as police departments around the country, are under a tremendous amount of scrutiny these days. I came away with an increased amount of respect for these men and women who lay their lives on the line for us on a daily basis. (And **yes**, they do face possible deadly scenarios, even here in suburbia).

During our classes we learned a great deal about crime scene investigation, criminal laws and procedure, narcotics enforcement, traffic laws, patrol procedures, accident investigation, use of deadly force and firearms, and much more.

Academy participants were given a tour of the telecommunications/9-1-1 emergency center. We visited the Police Firing Range and learned how to correctly aim and fire a pistol. (I had never held a gun before! Call me Annie Oakley; I'm dangerous now!) **Driving** a real police car

with sirens and lights flashing, we participated in staged traffic stops. We had the opportunity to pull over a "law breaker" and to conduct a couple of staged building searches. Each participant is also given the opportunity to ride with a patrol unit on its regular shift.

If you have any interest in learning what it takes to be a police officer, getting to know your beat officer, or learning more about criminal investigation procedures, you may find this class to be particularly valuable. For more information, check out the police department web site at: [www.sugarlandtx.gov](http://www.sugarlandtx.gov) or contact Sgt. Trevor Nehls at 281-275-2512 (email: [cgn@sugarlandtx.gov](mailto:cgn@sugarlandtx.gov)).

The next class begins at 7 p.m. on January 15, 2004. Graduation is April 16, 2004. Participants must be at least 18 years of age and must either live or work in Sugar Land. The course is free of charge.

*article submitted by Sue Hauenstein*



Sgt. Trevor Nehls



CPA Graduates, Class # 32

The FBISD Education Foundation Gala will be held March 6. For ticket information call the Foundation at 281-634-1000.

## Upcoming Meetings

### Landscape Committee Meeting

Meets once a month. Call Steve O'Hara at 281-265-4485 for the next meeting date and time.

### Modifications Committee Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month - 7:30 p.m. at the Clubhouse

### Board Meeting

Fourth Thursday of each month - 6 p.m. at the Clubhouse

### CAT Meeting

Third Thursday of February, March, June, October & November  
7:00 p.m.  
at the Clubhouse

# Happy New Year!

*Modifications to be considered at the monthly meeting must be received by Crest on or before the 2nd Monday of each month.*

## Important Phone Numbers

Crest Management	281-579-0761
Police (Non-Emergency)	281-275-2500
Animal Control	281-275-2596
Fire Department	281-491-0852
Water & Street	281-275-2750
Trash Collection	281-275-2772
Recycling Coordinator	281-275-2770
Street Lights (Centrepont)	713-207-2222
Newsletter	281-265-4556
<b>Police &amp; Fire Emergency</b>	<b>9-1-1</b>

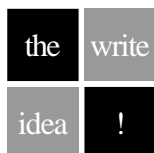
[www.commonwealthcivic.com](http://www.commonwealthcivic.com)

## Attention Advertisers!!!

This newsletter is published in January, March, May, July, September and November. The deadline for each issue is the first day of the previous month. Ads and payment must be received by that date. All Mail to **Commonwealth Comments, 3909 St. Michaels Ct., Sugar Land, Texas 77479** and include a check for full payment. Ad rates begin at \$55.00 per issue.

If you have any questions, call Sue at 281-265-4556.

Newsletter email address:  
[newsletter@commonwealthcivic.com](mailto:newsletter@commonwealthcivic.com)



Sue Hauenstein  
**the write idea**  
281-265-4556

## Special Interest Groups

### The Commonwealth Women's Club

The Commonwealth Women's Club is open to all women residing in The Commonwealth. The club's purpose is to stimulate civic, philanthropic, educational, and cultural interest in the community, as well as foster a cordial welcome to new residents. Volunteer outreach is available to those who are interested. If you are interested in this group, or would like more information, please contact Susan at 281-980-3290 or Donna at 281-265-7108.

### Hispanic Club

If you speak Spanish and are interested in joining this informal group, contact Lucy at 281-265-2610, for information, date and location.

### Moms in Touch

Moms in Touch is a group of mothers who meet for one hour each week to pray for their children and the school they attend. If you are interested in joining us, please contact: Debbie Glasscock (Commonwealth Elementary) at 281-980-4118; Sheryl Poole (Fort Settlement Middle School and Clements High School) at 281-491-4690; Mary Marwil (Elkins High School) at 281-265-0877.

**If information about your group is incorrect or outdated, please advise Sue at 281-265-4556**

If you are interested in publicizing a Commonwealth-based special interest group, give us a call.



The Commonwealth Civic Association does not investigate, qualify, or certify this newsletter's advertisers. The business of each advertiser is independent of the Association.

## Crest Management Service

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Carolyn Bonds, Senior Manager  
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281-579-7062 (fax)

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**Dues are Due!**  
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email: [commonwealth@stansellweb.com](mailto:commonwealth@stansellweb.com)

## Meet The Candidates Coffee

Two coffees have been scheduled to aid Commonwealth voters in their quest to vote wisely!  
Please mark your calendars NOW so that you won't miss out!

We will be inviting declared candidates for contested races in the March primary  
to meet our residents on the following date:

**Wednesday, February 11 - 7 p.m.**

We will be inviting candidates for contested races in the May election to meet our residents on:

**Wednesday, April 21 - 7 p.m.**

These informal "meet and greets" will be held In the Commonwealth Clubhouse.

Please take advantage of this opportunity.

**Sponsored by**  
**The Commonwealth Civic Association**

*Call Sue if you have any questions 281-265-4556.*