

Commonwealth Comments

A newsletter for the residents of The Commonwealth:
Bridgewater, Commonwealth Estates, Commonwealth Park, Oxford, Sutton Forest, Sutton Park and Sweetwater XII

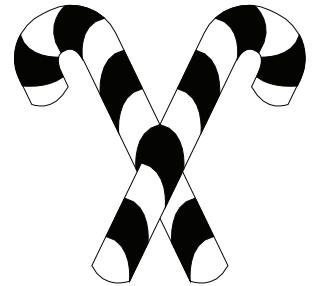
November/December, 2009

www.commonwealthcivic.com

Holiday Open House

The Commonwealth Civic Association invites you to celebrate the season with family, friends, & neighbors

At the Commonwealth Clubhouse
(Knightsbridge & Commonwealth Blvd.)



Tuesday, December 15



6:30 p.m.

Fun for the entire family

Always a success!

Always fun!

Don't forget your camera!



If you signed up for the
Commonwealth Email Alert List
and have not been receiving your notifications,
please note that email addresses often change; whether
because we change servers, or for other reasons
(i.e. alltel.net addresses became windstream.net)
and if you do not notify:
commonwealth@stansellweb.com
you will no longer receive the alerts.

Thanks!

Park Smart!

With all the kids home for the holidays and company
coming and going to share the season,
traffic in our neighborhood will increase for the
next few months.

Be sure that you consider the driving challenge faced by
your neighbors AND especially emergency vehicles,
when cars are parked on both sides of the street.

If a fire truck or ambulance is unable to navigate past your
home due to cars on both sides of the street, lives are
endangered.

Commonwealth Civic Association Board of Directors

Steve O'Hara President 281-265-4485	Mark Thompson Vice President 281-313-4337	Virginia Mack Secretary 281-207-5200	Tom Wooley Director 281-265-1734	Dave Kinzelman Director 281-980-8416
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Board Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Clubhouse.

Your Association Information



Modifications & Deed Restrictions Committee
meets the third Tuesday of each month - 7:30 p.m. at the Clubhouse

Applications must be received in the Crest Management office on or before the 2nd Tuesday of each month to be considered at the monthly meeting. For more information contact Crest Management Service at 281-579-0761.



Landscape Committee
meets once a month.
Contact Steve O'Hara at 281-265-4485 for the next meeting date and time.

Tennis Committee
Conrith Davis
832-326-6202



Welcome Committee
Gwen Dahlin
713-304-1048

Pool Rentals
Greater Houston Pool Management
713-771-POOL

L.I.D. Representative
Ron Frerich
281-265-0137



Clubhouse Rentals
Cindy O'Hara
281-265-4485

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

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- please include your name and contact information.

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
Police & Fire Emergency	9-1-1

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

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. Mail to Commonwealth Comments, 3909 St. Michaels Ct., Sugar Land, Texas 77479 and include a check for full payment. Ad rates begin at \$65.00 per issue.

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

Newsletter email address: newsletter@commonwealthcivic.com

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Tree Trimming -

IT'S THE LAW!

Residents are reminded that the City of Sugar Land requires trees located on public right-of-ways be trimmed to certain heights. The ordinance was passed to assist with safe passage for large vehicles (fire trucks, trash trucks, etc.).

Compliance is required! Your trees (hanging over residential streets) must allow 12 feet of clearance above the street and 8 feet above the sidewalk.

Thirty days after notification, if no action has been taken by the homeowner, a citation will be issued.

If the limbs are large or cannot safely be reached....

If pruning involves using power equipment, or

If pruning is needed near power lines....

It's time to call an arborist.

Considerations Hiring an Arborist

Membership in professional organizations

Certification through the ISA Certified Arborist program

Proof of insurance and

A list of references



Trash In, Trash Out

Please keep in mind that Commonwealth Deed Restrictions mandate trash may not be placed curbside earlier than the evening before trash pick-up.

Trash removal takes place on Tuesdays and Fridays in The Commonwealth.

We realize that many people use weekends to care for their yards or prefer to have their lawn service come on Fridays so they can enjoy a well manicured lawn for the weekend, but leaving your trash cans and/or bags of grass clippings at the curb is not acceptable.

Please respect our guidelines.

Back Home in Fort Bend, Dancing for Joy

Clements High School is proud to announce the arrival of the Fort Bend dynamic duo, Chelsea Harrison, Dance Team Director, and Michelle Barth, Assistant Director. Born and raised in Sugar Land, Ms. Harrison attended Austin High School, and was a member of the Austin Angels Dance Team. Upon graduation from Texas State University Ms. Harrison came home to teach in Fort Bend. Michelle Barth was the top officer with the Dulles Dolls in high school. After graduating from the UT and traveling with a competition dance convention, she taught classes at a local dance studio. Now these two wonderful instructors are dancing for joy at CHS.

*Information provided by CHS Dance Team
Communications Chair, Rose Davis*

Nancy Benevides Sells Commonwealth

Is Your Home in The Healthy Zone?

Commonwealth has great resale values, even in today's softer market. Months of inventory is a real estate term that indicates how markets are performing. It is the **SOLDS** for the last 30 days in Commonwealth divided into current inventory. The months of inventory is how many months on average it would take to sell your home if **no** other new listings were put on the market.

(6 months = Neutral Market, Less then 6 months = Seller's Market, More then 6 months = Buyer's Market)

Value of Home	Months of Inventory
200-300K	0
300-400K	5.3
400-500K	9
500-600K	0
600-700K	0



nancybenevides@yahoo.com
www.aslanancyb.com

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Call your neighbor Nancy 713-203-9975
For your Free Market Analysis to
Determine Your Homes Value!

**Dues are Due
January 1, 2010**

**Reminders are mailed to
homeowners in advance.**

**Interest & penalties begin
accruing on January 31,
2010**

Deed Restrictions Are Good Medicine!

Have you ever questioned the existence of homeowner associations? For many people, the HOA can be the only thing that protects the value of their homes and the quality of their community.

The local HOA sets and collects the fees required to maintain community operations. These fees keep up community assets: the Clubhouse, tennis courts, swimming pools, and landscaping in the public areas.

One of the most important duties of the HOA is to enforce the deed restrictions. Deed restrictions are legally binding rules, filed with the real property records, which provide for building, maintaining and using the homes in our community. They control how homes look and what can be done in the community.

If you take a moment to remember why you purchased your home in The Commonwealth, you will note that, while you may have loved the floorplan and the location, you gave serious consideration to the community before you bought. You bought a lifestyle and surroundings which are much larger than the parameters of your own property; encompassing everything from the community's entries and recreation areas to the way the other homes in the community look - and you assumed it would stay that way!

Like a home, a community can be well maintained or it can be allowed to fall apart. Many communities do not continue to look as nice as they were when they were new. Most communities in the greater Houston area, have reasonable, strong deed restrictions in place. The crucial factor is

the willingness of the association's elected board of directors to enforce the existing rules.

People have differing views of what is attractive and without deed restrictions you have a good chance of your community looking dramatically different from the way it did when you first bought your home. Imagine a vivid assortment of day glow blue, purple or pink houses down your street. (Don't think it couldn't happen HERE!) People can amaze you with what they believe is acceptable in a community and that can differ dramatically from what the majority of the community believes.

How would you feel about a portable toilet cleaning company keeping its toilets and cleaning them on the driveway next door? How about a semi-tractor trailer truck parked across the street? Extreme? Yes, but it all happens and the only way we can preserve the lifestyle we thought we were buying is to enforce the deed restrictions.

Without deed restrictions, people would leave garbage in their yards permanently, never maintain the exterior of their homes, park motor homes in the street for years and make every bizarre and structurally unsound remodeling project you can imagine.

The association, acting through its board of directors, can control the appearance of the community by taking deed restrictions seriously and vigorously enforcing any infraction of those restrictions.

Failure to enforce community rules is like allowing a bacterial infection to go unchecked. At first it may appear to be a small problem, but it soon spreads and becomes very serious.

Enforcing deed restrictions can be unpleasant, but it is necessary for the health and vitality of our community.

*Information in this article was taken from a commentary written by W. Austin Barsalow, Barsalow & Associates, P.C.
-- Thanks to David Kinzleman for suggesting a reprint!*

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BROWN PATCH-A SERIOUS THREAT

If you had Brown Patch circles last fall, you will most assuredly get them again this fall. Brown Patch, a fungal disease caused by *Rhizoctonia solani*, presents a serious threat to most turf grasses each autumn. With the onset of slightly cooler temperatures and fall's wet conditions, brown patch can be a challenge for most homeowners.

Conditions most favorable for brown patch development include (1) the presence of active fungi, (2) vigorous growth of a susceptible grass, (3) daytime temperature ranging between 75 and 85 F, (4) the presence of free moisture on the foliage, and (5) night temperatures below 68 F.

Symptoms: On warm-season turf grasses, the disease is characterized by at least two different types of symptoms. The most common is a circular pattern of brown grass with a yellowish colored ring ("smoke ring") of wilted grass at the perimeter of the diseased area. The leaves can be easily pulled from the stolons within the "smoke ring" because the fungus destroys the tissue at the base of the leaf sheath. Symptoms first appear as small circular patches of water-soaked, dark grass that soon wilt and turn light brown. Stolons often remain green. As the disease develops, the circular patches enlarge, "smoke rings" become more apparent and new green leaves may emerge in the center of the circular areas.

High levels of nitrogen may increase the severity of the disease. Fungal activity generally stops when air temperatures reach 90 F.

On cool-season grasses, the disease first appears as dark green, water-soaked circular patches that range from a few inches to several feet in diameter. The affected leaves wilt and turn light brown, but remain upright. A dark, grayish-black ring (smoke ring) of wilted grass often is present around the perimeter of the diseased areas in the early morning.

Control. The severity of the disease can be controlled to some extent by avoiding heavy applications of nitrogen during spring and fall, by watering early in the morning to remove dew and allow the grass to dry quickly and, where possible, by removing grass clippings during periods of disease activity.

To prevent brown patch in the first place, start with one of the preventive controls sold at your local hardware store NOW, and do it again in 30 days. If and when you see circles pop up, also include a curative control on and around the circles. If you've already got brown patch, then use both a preventative control and a curative control NOW ... followed by another curative in 30 days and another in 60 days.

Landscape info provided by Native Land Design

We have received several comments regarding dogs running free in the neighborhood.

If you have a landscape company caring for your lawn, please be sure to ask them to take care when exiting your yard.

Often pets escape the back yard when the gardener forgets or neglects to completely secure the gate.

If you have a pet, please ensure that you have the correct phone number on the dog tags to assist your neighbors in returning lost pets to fretful owners.

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Bridgewater
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SOLD
Sutton Forest
4723 Yorkshire St.
Commonwealth Park
3730 Stocksbridge



Call Virginia today! Virginia knows how to sell Commonwealth.

*Wishing you and your family a wonderful, happy and safe holiday season.
Thanks for all your referrals this past year.
Please let me know if I can assist you with listing your home in 2010.*

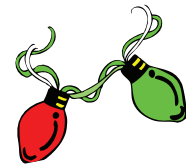
Virginia Mack, ABR, CBR, CRS, GRI

*Merry
Christmas*



*Happy
Chanukah*

Please remember that holiday decorations are permitted and encouraged by the Commonwealth Homeowner's Association, however, deed restrictions require that all holiday decorations **MUST** be removed within 30 days of the holiday.



**Happy
(Holi)days!**

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City Update -

Lots of great things happening in Sugar Land!

The Houston Museum of Natural Science- Sugar Land is now open.

Great place to take the kids/grandkids over the holidays or spend a few hours with your sweetie!!!!
If you like it as much as we think you will, memberships make a great holiday gift!

Located on University Blvd.
on the other side of 59, in Telfair.



If Fido is the love of your life these days,
take him (or her) to Sugar Land's
first dog park.

Pawm Springs Dog Park

(yes, the city has a sense of humor!!!!)
opened in Sugar Land Memorial Park in October.

And if you haven't been to the park, take a few minutes to drive (or better yet, ride your bike) over and check it out.

There is a wonderful little playground for the kids and a really nice jogging trail around the "lake".

Expansion of University Blvd.

For those of us who prefer to avoid the ever increasing volume of traffic on Highway 6, it is expected that construction of the section of University from Commonwealth to Highway 6 through Riverstone will begin late summer or early fall of 2010.

The city plans to take advantage of lower construction costs and moving forward while it is to the taxpayer's advantage!

This section of University will include parkway trails, future hike and bike trails and much more.

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And, also newly opened, the **Justin P. Brindley Bike Trail**. This highly anticipated single track mountain bike trail is unique to the Sugar Land area. Built by Progressive Trail Design, the trail provides exciting challenges for beginner to intermediate riders, with several wooden technical trail features for the more experienced riders.

Sugar Land Memorial Park is located at the end of Commonwealth Blvd. at University Blvd.

New Year's Eve on the Square

The City of Sugar Land is promising a special blowout party at Town Square, featuring "first class entertainment, a fantastic light show, fireworks and a Sugar Cube Drop at midnight."

Your Area Real Estate Expert

Leigh Mattson

Direct: 713-823-6843

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*Commonwealth
Resident*

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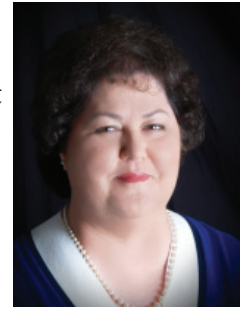
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Moira Holden
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 mholden@garygreenecom

Cecilia Padilla
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 cpadilla@windstream.net



**We're SETTING RECORDS in
 The Commonwealth**

Call us to find out more.

When the mercury and your energy bill go up every summer, many wonder what simple things they can do to reduce energy consumption and lower expenses. Regardless of which side of the “climate change” debate that you fall, we can all agree on one thing: We like to save money. You might want to consider the following:

- Service your AC system. Do this each year by the end of May. Cooling your house is your biggest summertime electrical expense. A well serviced unit gets the job done faster and shuts down, stopping the dollar draining compressor.
- Make sure you that you have adequate attic insulation and ventilation. This reduces the “suction” of cooled air into the attic.
- Seal the “envelope” where you can. Most homes are too loose and can leak around light cans, switches, outlets, AC vent covers, windows and door frames. Properly caulking/sealing these items and replacing damaged weather stripping can go a long way to help prevent loss of energy.
- Use ceiling fans and bump the thermostat up 2 degrees. It all adds up.
- Consider a programmable thermostat. Regularly allowing the computer to adjust up a few degrees when everyone is gone or at night saves energy dollars.

Commonwealth Fall Safety Festival

A huge thank you to Leigh Mattson, Virginia Mack, Dave Kinzleman, and the Sutton Park neighborhood Crime Watch Committee for organizing and hosting this community event in September.

This was our premiere Safety Festival. Attendance was good, interest was high and great information was available for all in attendance. Future festivals are being considered. Suggestions for improving this event are invited and welcome. Please contact any board member or shoot an email to the newsletter and we will be sure your comments are forwarded to the right people!

In addition to a wonderful presentation from the City of Sugar Land sharing the history of our city, representatives from the Levee Improvement District were busy answering questions about the levees protecting our community.

Sonal Bhuchar, of the Fort Bend ISD School Board; Jacqueline Baly Chaumette, At Large Councilmember, City of Sugar Land City Council; and Roger Widmeyer, City of Sugar Land Communications Department, also attended. There was a moonwalk and the Sugar Land Fire Depart-

ment brought a fire truck, which were both huge draws for the children!

Sugar Land’s Crime Prevention Officer, Ron Foster, shared information on how homeowners can save up to 20% on home insurance if their homes meets certain safety standards.

Officer Foster also reminded homeowners that while we are considered a low crime area, we must be diligent and keep an eye out for any suspicious activity!

If you see anything that garners your concern, ***be sure to call the police***. Having access to a written report is the only way officers can stay on top of crime incidents.

We have a strong community where residents watch out for each other. Keep up the good work- be alert!

**Upcoming -
 Spring: CPR/Red Cross Training held at our own
 Commonwealth Club House.**

9 Watch this newsletter for further information.

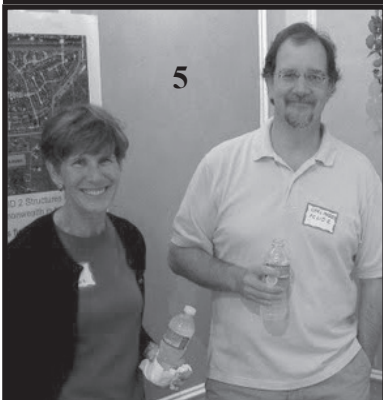
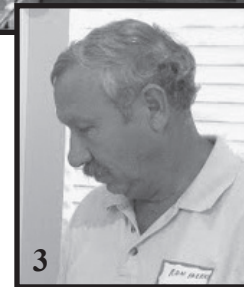
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Fall Safety Festival Photos



1. Fall Safety Festival Site
2. Drawing Participant 3. Ron Frerich
4. Leigh Mattson speaks with resident
5. L.I.D. Representatives
6. Sugar Land Crime Prevention Officer, Ron Foster
7. Festival Organizers Leigh Mattson (1), Virginia Mack & Dave Kinzelman, HOA Board Members (left) and At Large City Councilmember Jacquie Chaumette (center left)

