

## WLP Civic Association Board Members

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**Website:** [www.wlpca.org](http://www.wlpca.org)

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**Vice President:** Marion McDaniel

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**Webmistress:** Margaret Ann Bromberger

## DEAR NEIGHBORS:

**Let's celebrate the end of the unbelievably hot, dry and record-breaking weather, and spend a "cool" October evening visiting with friends and neighbors!**

The **WLPCA annual Neighbors Night Out (NNO)** will be held on the same night as **National Night Out**, a time to **"Join America in a United Stand Against Crime"**. All West Lane Place residents are encouraged to attend, renew old acquaintances, and meet new neighbors. There will be **no Business meeting** so there will be lots of time to be outside, enjoy cooler weather, and socialize with old and new friends and our guests. **Look for the details on page 4 of this newsletter.**

In recognition of the goals of the National Night Out program, and our close cooperation with the **Houston Police Department** we have invited as our guests, **HPD's Daryn B. Edwards** - the recently appointed **Captain of the Central Division**, and **Officer Thomas Ferguson** - the **lead investigator** of the burglaries in our area. We also invited our good friend and very supportive **District G Council Member Oliver Pennington**, and we hope he will be able to attend. Please introduce yourselves to our guests and express your appreciation for their efforts to support our **special Place**.

**NNO Committee Co-Chair Debbie Villeneuve** has reserved **Zilla's Street Eats**, a gourmet food truck, for our evening and they will have reasonably priced "gourmet street food" for purchase. WLPCA will provide several tables and chairs, and NNO Committee member **Isabel Dove** has generously donated soft drinks and bottled water for the event. Feel free to bring your own adult beverages and coolers. WLPCA will provide cups and crushed ice.

Thanks, Debbie and Isabel, for the great job you're doing. We also thank the other NNO Committee members- our new Director **Cynthia Trigg**, Vice President **Marion McDaniel**, and always helpful **Stevelyn Buenger**. - for their hard work and donations!

More than **130 neighbors** have responded to the invitation and the follow-up surveys sent by **Ann Iverson** via the internet **Alert System**. **If you have not already responded**, and want to attend, please let us know **how many will be in your group** by emailing

[newcomers@wlpca.org](mailto:newcomers@wlpca.org) or you may also leave a message on my phone at **713-963-0118**.

**Crime Prevention: Our efforts are helping to reduce crime in WLP, but we must not become complacent.** Every day, we receive reports - some from surrounding areas - of thefts, burglaries, assaults and worse. We owe many thanks to all of our residents and patrol members who generously donate their time and dollars in support of our safety. Each of us can help by adhering to the suggestions in the **WLPCA Security Plan** ([www.wlpca.org](http://www.wlpca.org)): e.g. be observant, use your alarm systems, improve night lighting, report suspicious activity to 911, send email reports to the **WLPCA Crime Alert System** ([crimealert@wlpca.org](mailto:crimealert@wlpca.org)), etc. The WLPCA also supports participation in and training provided by **HPD** and the **West Lane Place Citizen Patrol Group** - a City of Houston effort that is part of the **HPD Volunteer Initiatives Program (V.I.P.)**.

**The "Ditch"** (HCFCD W-129-00): Construction of the long-awaited improvements to the flood control system serving West Lane Place is off to a slow start, but it is a start! Updates: <http://www.hcfcd.org/W129/>.

There'll be a WLPCA Board Meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup>. Let me know beforehand of items you want us to consider by sending me an email at the address below.

**I look forward to seeing all of you on October 4<sup>th</sup>!**

Ted Richardson,  
[president@wlpca.org](mailto:president@wlpca.org)

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This newsletter is published and delivered to you  
by the West Lane Place Civic Association

When this year ends, what we may remember most about 2011 is the terrible drought, exacerbated by the terrible heat we suffered this summer. To summarize the weather records that have been broken, this has been **the longest** (earliest and latest recorded high temperatures) **the hottest** (hottest June, hottest August, third hottest July on record, and on August 27, the highest temperature *ever* recorded in Houston) **and the driest summer that Houston has ever had**. A drive through Memorial Park confirms this news. Our once lush forest is brown and crispy, filled with “firewood” that used to shade our city.

Despite our recent rain, the **City of Houston Stage Two Water Conservation Measures** mandated by Mayor Parker on August 15 are still in place. You recall that these measures **require repair of all detectable leaks within 72 hours of discovery, and limit outdoor irrigation to between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 a.m., two days per week only** (Sunday and Thursday for even-numbered addresses; Saturday and Wednesday for odd-numbered addresses.)

**The mayor asks us to conserve water in these ways as well, although they are not yet mandatory:**

**Limit showers to five minutes or less.**

**Do not let water run in the sink while brushing your teeth.**

**Use your dishwasher and washing machine only with a full load** (these are the two greatest water guzzlers in most households.)

**Inspect your toilets for silent leaks** by testing with food coloring (if tinted water leaks from the tank to the bowl before flushing, you need to replace the flapper because your toilet is wasting water.)

**Do not wash your car unless the dirt poses a driving hazard.**

**Do not wash your driveway, patio or sidewalk.**

**Refrain from filling, refilling, or adding water to your pool, spa, or whirlpool. ♠**

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## **Fires and the Threat of Fires**

Fire safety is always important, but with our fields and green spaces transformed into kindling, it is crucial that we **take extra precautions to avoid conditions that could start a fire**. In this parched environment, the tiniest mistake could spark a lethal, blazing wildfire. With a **wildfire raging recently at Westheimer and Highway 6**, less than twelve miles from West Lane Place, the threat to our homes is all too real.

In response to the fire threat, the mayor’s office has imposed a temporary **ban on lighting fires in the barbecue pits in city parks**, and also has banned smoking **cigars, cigarettes, pipes or any other**

**smoking device in city parks**. Violations are subject to fines of up to \$2,000 per offense.

During this drought, the **Houston Fire Department** recommends we follow these precautionary guidelines:

**Do not operate barbecues, charcoal grills, or any other open-flame outdoor cooking methods on balconies or within ten feet of combustible walls, roofs, or any combustible materials.**

**If you must barbecue, use charcoal lighter, not gasoline, to start the fire, and keep a fire extinguisher or charged garden hose handy while the fire is burning.**

**Hot ashes and/or coals should be thoroughly saturated with water, or kept in a non-combustible container, before being disposed.**

**The City of Houston Fire Code prohibits all open-burning within the city limits at all times. No bonfires, rubbish fires, campfires, trench fires, or any other fire in an outdoor, uncontained location.**

**Park vehicles so their exhaust systems do not come in contact with dry grass, leaves, or weeds.**

**Adjust safety chains on trailers so they won’t drag and cause sparks that can start roadside fires.**

**Keep lawnmowers in proper working condition, and avoid rocks and other materials that might cause a spark.**

**Notify the electric power company if you see dead trees or limbs that endanger electric lines. If the wires touch each other or the ground, they may cause sparks that ignite fires.** (Officials now tell us this is how the fires started in Bastrop.)

**Drench cigars and cigarettes completely with water before discarding them. Do not toss them out the car window or on the ground where they can smoulder for hours!** In Texas, anyone who recklessly tosses a cigarette that starts a fire in a building or injures a person is subject to prosecution for arson, a second-degree felony punishable by up to twenty years in prison. If that fire burns a church, or causes a death, the arson rises to a first degree felony, carrying the possible punishment of life in prison. ♠

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## **Crime in West Lane Place; What You Didn’t See on the Evening News**

**There wasn’t any crime!** No one reported a single incident in WLP since our last newsletter. In fact, **Channel 11 wanted to interview WLPCA president, Ted Richardson, to find out how we did it.** Ted decided not to tempt fate, and declined the interview. **That’s why you didn’t see it on the evening news.**

How wonderful that our security efforts are paying off! Let’s keep up the good work! ♠

by Valerie McDaniel, D.V.M.

*Dr. Valerie McDaniel, a Texas A&M graduate with fourteen years experience practicing veterinary medicine, is the daughter in law of Mary and Marion McDaniel, of Hackberry Lane. She sent us this warning after the heartbreaking deaths of three dogs she couldn't save, all poisoned by Sago Palms.*

Wandering through West Lane Place is a treat for me. There are beautiful gardens, and so many varieties of trees, bushes, and flowering plants to enjoy. But as a veterinarian, my mind is busy cataloging how many of these lovely plants are dangerous because they are toxic to animals. Ask my mother in law, **Mary McDaniel**, how often I've mentioned that the beautiful Texas Mountain Laurel in her front yard is toxic to pigs. Fortunately, she doesn't have a pig!

Unfortunately, many people are carefully tending gardens full of plants that can kill their beloved pets, and they are completely unaware of the danger. Recently, after I placed a poster of toxic plants in my examination room, a client nearly broke down. She saw the poster and recognized the **Sago Palms** growing in her yard. She could not get out of her appointment fast enough! She immediately called her gardener and had all the Sagos removed. Crisis averted.

I wish the crisis really *were* averted, but **Sago Palms**, among the deadliest of our common garden plants, grow in yards all over Houston. **In a single day this summer, we lost three dogs to liver failure from Sago Palm ingestion.** Despite very aggressive treatment, all three dogs died within 72 hours of eating the plant. The average mortality rate for Sago ingestion is high: 32.1%.

**All parts of the Sago Palm are poisonous, but its toxic component, cycasin, is found in greater concentration in the seeds.** The scent of Sago seeds seems to attract dogs that may ingest them out of curiosity. Ingestion is often followed by vomiting within 3 hours. Other clinical signs such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, hind limb paralysis, depression, coma, and death can follow over the next few hours or days.

**Treatment for Sago poisoning must be immediate and aggressive. If you suspect your pet has ingested any part of the Sago, seek veterinary care right away.** Hospitalization will be necessary. For pets that survive the initial insult, their liver should be monitored with follow up blood work for the next year. Usually, they also will need special diets and supplements for the liver.

**My favorite Sago is no Sago at all!** There are other plants that can harm your pets, too. I urge you to visit: [www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/) to see which plants are animal friendly and which are not. You may be surprised!

-Valerie McDaniel, D.V.M.  
The Montrose Veterinary Clinic  
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713-524-3814

## Help for Your Ailing Lawn

After *this* summer, your grass probably is suffering stress. Here's how experts tell us to revive our lawns.

**Steve Crowson, Manager at Thompson and Hanson:** Give your lawn as much water as you can, and winterize it with **Potassium to strengthen the root system.**

**Morris Johnson, Golf Course Superintendent at the River Oaks Country Club** tells us to **"water deeply, not frequently."** He says it is important to give your grass fertilizer high in **Potassium and Phosphorus** (the middle and last numbers printed on the fertilizer bag) **now before the growing season ends.**

**Matt Raney**, owner of **All in One Nursery**, says to **overseed your lawn with Winter Rye and a give it a good dose of organic fertilizer** in early October. The Rye will be green in November when the St. Augustine goes dormant, and will prevent weeds from growing during the winter. When the Winter Rye dies in the heat next spring, it will enrich your lawn again. ♣

## Help for Your Ailing Trees

There are dead and dying trees all over Houston, an excruciating loss to bear. **The Druids considered trees to be sacred, and so do many Houstonians!**

**Jack Swayze\*, District Manager for Davey Tree** tells us that **all trees are stressed now, even if they show no visible symptoms.** He says **2011 may be even dryer than 1789, the drought that was previously the worst in American history.** The problems our trees suffer now began as early as 2008, and worsened in 2009 when we had the worst drought in decades. Now, **they are fighting to survive the worst drought in centuries.** And, according to climatologists, this La Nina drought might continue for another three years, so **we must strengthen our trees now to survive the dry weather we had, and endure the dry weather yet to come.**

Mr. Swayze tells us **"First, look at the ground. If you see leaves, then look up."** If your tree is losing its leaves early, it's in trouble. It probably needs more water, and professional help. Another way to know if your tree is too dry is to **look at the bushes and plants on the surface. If they are wilted, so is your tree.**


Mr. Swayze also advises us to **water deeply.** To get water to the roots, he says we must water in cycles. On the allotted nights, **run your system thoroughly, then wait a couple of hours and run it again.** This allows water to penetrate the soil to reach the roots. He also reminds us that **a tree's roots extend beyond property lines. So, if your neighbor's tree shades your property, you need to water it from your side of the fence, too.**

For more information on watering your trees, please visit [www.wlpca.org](http://www.wlpca.org) or [www.davey.com](http://www.davey.com)

\* Yes, Mr. Swayze is related to Patrick Swayze. ♣

**Recycling, Heavy Trash, and  
Tree & Limb Pick-up Schedule for WLP**


**JANUARY**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12		14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**FEBRUARY**


Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	J	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

**MARCH**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8		10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**APRIL**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	J	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

 = Tree waste; **J** = Junk waste pick up

Weekly household trash pick up on Mondays. NOTE: Recycling is every other Monday, on highlighted days in boxes. Please have your bins out on the curb by 7 am and in by 10 pm.

“Tree Waste” is defined as “clean wood waste such as tree limbs, branches, and stumps (lumber, furniture, and treated wood will NOT be accepted.)”

“Junk Waste” is defined as “items such as furniture, appliances, and other bulky material.”

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Burn ban lifted.** Mayor Parker now has lifted the burn ban in city parks. So, you can bundle up, smoke a cigar, and barbeque to your heart’s content in Memorial Park; *but look out for dead tree branches falling on your head.*

**Water restrictions still in place.** Despite our recent rains, the mandatory water restrictions imposed last summer limiting landscape irrigation have not been lifted. You are asked to continue observing these restrictions, and continue to conserve water in personal hygiene and other indoor uses as much as possible. Some experts fear the drought and heat we suffered last summer will continue, and we may face more severe water shortages in the future. So, **we must not waste any water now!**

**Christmas tree pick up.** The City will pick up your Christmas tree curbside on Friday, January 13. The tree must be in its natural state, all lights and decorations removed. **The crews will not pick up flocked trees.**

**Leaves in storm sewers.** WLPCA urges each neighbor who employs a lawn service to **instruct your gardener NOT to blow leaves and lawn debris into the storm drains** in the streets. We have spent much time and effort working to improve drainage in West Lane Place so that we will not have flooding (if it ever rains again!) Leaves in the storm drains clog them, and prevent them from draining, especially after an extended drought when there has not been enough rain to flush out the extra lawn litter. Believe it or not, we see leaf blowers shepherding leaves into our drains every day in WLP. **Let’s work together to stop this bad habit!**

**Please plant a tree!** Now is the time to plant new trees to replace those we have lost. **Please plant as big and as many trees as you can afford!**