

# UPDATE

## IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Settegast Building</i>	1
<i>National Night Out</i>	2
<i>Taser Demonstration</i>	2
<i>For the Kids</i>	2
<i>Community Garden</i>	3
<i>Federal Reserve Info</i>	3
<i>Membership Form</i>	4

**There will be no NMCA meeting in August because of the National Night Out parties which will take place on August 3rd 6-9 pm. Join us at the various locations for a chance to make our neighborhood more safe!!! For more information, see the bottom of this page.**

### Recap of July Meeting

Last month's speaker was Everett Fetzer of the Federal Reserve. He explained to us in detail about the structure of the organization and the role that the branch in Houston will play. We saw several drawings and aerial photographs of the site and proposed plans for the building. Look in the newsletter for more information on this project. We also discussed the upcoming National Night Out, progress being made with the Esplanade Project and the Settegast building that faces demolition off West Gray.

## SETTEGAST BUILDING FACES DEMOLITION BY ALLEN UECKERT

As HISD continues the design of the new High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA), which is to be located at the corner of W.Gray and Taft, the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance (GHPA) along with myself have had discussions with HISD as to the fate of the 1938 Settegast Building located on the site. While the other buildings and homes on the site have either been moved or demolished, the Settegast building remains and will be used as construction offices while the HSPVA and Gregory Lincoln schools are being constructed. Unfortunately, once the buildings are constructed, HISD plans to demolish the Settegast building to make room for a parking lot.

The Settegast building was designed in the 1930's by Moore & Lloyd, the firm of

noted Houston architect Harvin C. Moore. The art deco streamlined detailing and oversized porthole windows distinguish the structure. The building's fluted, stepped turret is visible from Montrose Blvd and marks the pivot point where West Gray enters the Freedmen's Town National Registered Historic District. The building contains 8 storefronts and was the home of Houston's Orange Crush bottling plant from the end of the Depression to the early 1950s. A ghost sign promoting the soft drink is faintly visible on an exterior wall.

What makes the proposed demolition so much more difficult to swallow is that the building was completely restored in the late 1990's by Randall Davis, who has restored other notable historical Houston landmarks, such as the Rice Hotel. The Settegast

building compliments the architecture of many homes in North Montrose and is a piece of neighborhood history.

GHPA hopes that they can work with HISD to find a way to incorporate and utilize the building as part of the new HSPVA facility. The GHPA has asked for NMCA's help on this issue. While many NMCA neighbors have expressed an interest in supporting the GHPA's efforts, NMCA board members will discuss the issue at the July board meeting and present recommendations at the next NMCA meeting.

In the interim, if you have any questions or would like to support the effort to save the Settegast Building, you can either email me at [a\\_ueckert@hotmail.com](mailto:a_ueckert@hotmail.com) or contact Timothy McWorther of the GHPA at 713-216-5000.

### National Night Out Parties for August 3rd 2004:

*The following are the hosts and locations for this years NNO parties:*

- Carol and John Galeener 1308 West Pierce
- Scott Howard and Bridget Jensen 1920 West Clay
- Carole Yunker and Mike Brady 1141 West Pierce
- Ralph Thomas, Cooper Carter and Allen Ueckert 1951 W. Lamar

All parties begin at 6 pm. National Night Out is an annual neighborhood event for North Montrose Residents since 1985 to get to know each other, meet our Houston Police Officers and County Sheriffs and to promote crime prevention. The NMCA will provide the hamburgers and hotdogs. Bring a side dish, chips or desert. Most important, come meet your neighbors! **TOGETHER WE CAN KEEP OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SAFE. STAMP OUT CRIME!**

FOR OUR KIDS  
BY ALLEN  
UECKERT

SPRAYGROUNDS

Houston's average high temperature for July seems to hover around 94 degrees Fahrenheit but those of us who live here know it's often more than that - and feels even hotter due to humidity. Thankfully, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) has 37 pools in operation this summer to help everyone cool off. As popular as our pools are, though, there's another water feature offered in our parks that's not only gaining on pools in popularity, but sometimes surpasses them as a way to beat the heat. Water playgrounds, or spraygrounds, as they are sometimes known, are available in 10 Houston parks thanks largely to the H-E-B grocery store chain. The Texas-based company agreed to build ten spraygrounds and of these, 4 are already in operation and a 5th will open before the end of summer. The 5

H-E-B Water Playgrounds are located (or will soon be located in the case of Aron Ledet) in Cullen, Blueridge, Edgewood, Hidalgo and Aron Ledet parks. H-E-B made a conscious decision to help HPARD place the spraygrounds in areas that didn't already have some sort of water feature E.g. at Blueridge Park, which sits along the bayou.

Spraygrounds offer a practical alternative to pools. They cost less to design, build and maintain, take less time to construct and are able to be operated year-round, without necessary supervision from lifeguards and other support staff. Additionally, they're colorful, creative and fun environments which have made them extremely popular with the public.

TASER DEMONSTRATION  
BY CAROL GALEENER

Sgt. Bill Tweedie of HPD's SWAT unit demonstrated a Taser International X26 unit at the PIP Session held at the Metropolitan Service Center on West Gray on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The SWAT unit has had older versions of the device for some years where they have been found to be highly useful in subduing aggressive arrestees. Tasers have been successful in addressing problems with perpetrators under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who are belligerent, or holding hostages.

The taser implants 2 tiny darts into the top layers of skin and delivers 50,000 volts with just .002 amps of electrical current. This combination disrupts musculoskeletal function typically dropping the target to the ground and creating an intense pain but without producing lasting

physical damage. Each unit has its own laser to help ensure that the officer hits the torso which is the primary target. The unit is effective up to 21 feet and the darts can penetrate up to 2 inches of clothing. If the darts do not penetrate the skin or the perpetrator is too close to the officer, the taser can be used in "stun gun" mode in which it will cause pain but no musculoskeletal reaction.

Chief Harold Hurtt has proposed purchase of tasers for all line officers. The decision will be made by City Council next month. Deployment of tasers in urban police forces is controversial with some critics claiming that tasers have contributed to the deaths of dozens of people taken into custody following their use. Others have suggested that the units can be

used on arrestees as a method of torture. Officer Tweedie suggested that the data show otherwise and that virtually any device can be abused, but the taser has the potential to protect both the officer from attack and the arrestee from the need to use lethal force. The taser has some built in controls - e.g. it can record data that can be reviewed by superiors following discharge. Every taser is uniquely marked with identical markings on its darts. In addition, on every discharge sergeants will be called to the scene to remove darts and assess the situation. Every officer will undergo 8 hours of training. Officer Tweedie suggested that the public can obtain additional information by "Googling" "Taser International" and reviewing their website.

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# COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

BY SCOTT HOWARD

We've had a really successful first crop of tomatoes and cucumbers. I've estimated around 175 lbs, including some squash, given to Loaves and Fishes, the homeless persons soup kitchen. 22 of the 25 tomato plants are out of the ground. The ones remaining have a couple of tomatoes on each so they will stay in the ground until they are "ready". The eggplant, beans and okra are doing just fine and starting to produce. The basil is going crazy, oregano, parsley and dill are doing well. Need some herbs??

What we need to do next is restore the soil a little with

compost where all of the tomatoes were. I've already started this process but we can do some more. This will give the summer/fall crop seeds a good medium. What to plant next? Some ideas per the Urban Harvest planting calendar are peas, beans, burpless cumpers, okra, arugula and endive which we need to get in the ground as soon as possible.

The President of the Urban Harvest Community Garden Committee visited our garden with two volunteers last week. They had nice things to say but did point out that it was time to get summer seeds into the ground as the crops

most productive in the Fall needed to be seeded soon. The Community Garden is a member now of Urban Harvest and volunteers can join for approximately \$10 a year versus \$30 for an individual or \$40 a household. Urban Harvest asked us to forward the names of our volunteers with addresses, home telephone numbers and e-mail addresses so they could keep everyone up on quarterly meetings of the Community Garden Committee. Urban Harvest web site is [www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org). There is plenty of good info on their site!

## NEW NEARTOWN LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD

According to the Houston Chronicle the land near Wharton Elementary School (900 W. Gray) will be transformed in the next few months into a baseball field for school pupils on weekdays and for Neartown Little League 5- to 14-year-old players during evenings, weekends and summers. On July 15, Houston school district trustees approved a deal that may have Neartown ballplayers on the field beginning next season. This will be a great addition to our neighborhood as HISD has similar arrangements with Little League groups in West University and Tanglewood. The location of the field will also provide easy access for Neartown and Fourth Ward residents.

Grants — primarily one for \$250,000 from the Conrad Hilton Foundation — will help the league build a first-class facility, with one set of bleachers. Will Weber, the league president, indicated that to build the field, the league will have to raise money and find donors in addition to support from one of the original team sponsors, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. "We rely on fund-raising and donations — and we're looking for a flagpole," Weber said. He also mentioned that the Neartown Little League is unique in that it is set up so that every child, regardless of their ability to pay the sign-up fees, can participate. For those who can pay, fees are \$75 for the first young ball player in a family to sign up and \$50 for the second child. "No child is turned away. A child can be put on scholarship," he said. "The idea in our league is to go out and have fun." For more information or to make a donation, write Weber, P.O. Box 66193, Houston, Texas, 77266-6193, or call 713-527-8685.

## FEDERAL RESERVE BUILDING PRESENTED TO NMCA

BY CAROL GALEENER

At the June 13<sup>th</sup> Association meeting Everett Fetzer of the Federal Reserve System presented site plans and discussed construction progress of the Houston Branch center that is rising at the corner of Allen Parkway and Taft. The new campus is motivated primarily by the need to expand capacity of currency operations to meet forecasted demand for this area of Texas over the next fifty years. The building, which will cost just under \$100 million will replace an operation that is currently housed downtown in a much smaller facility. It is expected to be completed in May 2005 and Reserve employees will transfer to the spectacular Allen Parkway site. At that time about 3 acres on the western side of the plot will be sold as surplus. The Reserve site will be fenced with brick and ironwork and landscaped to provide a pleasing approach to the building. As part of the

project the Reserve remediated, at a cost of \$2 million, an underground plume of oil contamination that emanated from the City vehicle repair facility that is nearby. In addition to the highly automated, robot-controlled currency operation, other features will include an employee cafeteria and Federal Reserve offices. Despite the high degree of security surrounding the building, meeting rooms will also be available to the general public as well as public tours.

Mr. Fetzer discussed the general operation of the Federal Reserve System which is responsible for stability in the banking system. For those interested in more information on how this fascinating institution works, see <http://www.federalreserve.gov>. The link available from this page entitled "Personal Financial Education"

(<http://www.federalreserveeducation.org/fined/index.cfm>) contains tutorials and information to help individuals understand key financial issues relevant to consumers and investors. For a highly-readable tutorial on how the U.S.'s Federal Reserve System functions as the nation's central bank, see the link "In Plain English" from the Personal Financial Education page or go to: <http://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/pleng/>.



North Montrose Civic Association

P.O. Box 130184  
Houston, TX 77219

We're on the Web!  
[www.northmontrose.org](http://www.northmontrose.org)

**NMCA Officers & Board**

**Officers:**

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*Vice President:*

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Margaret Young 713-521-5982

The North Montrose Civic Association was formed over 25 years ago to promote civic affairs in the neighborhood. NMCA is a non-profit organization that depends on voluntary membership and participation. Included in this UP-DATE Newsletter is a form for residents to use to join or renew their membership. NMCA meets every month at the Museum of Printing History at 1324 W. Clay to present programs of interest to the local residents. The membership dues are very reasonable and will help defray the organization's costs to produce and distribute the Newsletter, to sponsor social events such as National Night Out and the Holiday Dinner and to organize and complete various neighborhood projects. Please join NMCA and just as important, become an active resident. See you at the next meeting!

**North Montrose Civic Association  
Membership Form**

Mail to P.O. Box 130184, Houston, TX 77219

\_\_\_\_\_New Member \_\_\_\_\_Renewal

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHECK ONE:**

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**Annual Membership Dues:**

Individual Member -- \$15

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