

RICE MILITARY NEWSLETTER

Rice Military Civic Club is proud to host

Kid's Fun
Activities!

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
Red, Rice,
& Blue!

Door Prizes!

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

NELLIE KEYES PARK

801 Lester @ Rose

5:30 PM TO 7:30 PM

Sample great food from local restaurants
Meet your neighbors and local business owners
Visit with the Houston Mounted Patrol
Come meet Houston Firefighters

Come Meet Your
Neighbors!

Please bring a non-perishable food to the park
and HPD will take them to the Houston Food Bank.

September 2011

Rice Military Civic Club Welcomes You to National Night Out!

by Mary Quataro

On Tuesday, October 4, Rice Military residents will gather to celebrate the 28th Anniversary of National Night Out! Once again we will meet at Nellie Keyes Park, 801 Lester @ Rose, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., for an evening of great family fun.

National Night Out was created to promote police-community partnerships, crime prevention, safety, and neighborhood unity, so we have invited the Houston Mounted

Patrol with their trusted steeds, the K-9 Division, and the Houston Fire Department, who will bring along a pumper truck! Our neighborhood protection and patrol officers will also join us and have asked that each of us bring a non-perishable food item that they will take to the Houston Food Bank. The food collection is a citywide effort by HPD. If all neighborhoods generously give, the HFB deficit can be greatly diminished.

Pony rides, face painting, and the moonwalk are a part of the

festivities sponsored by the many generous businesses of Rice Military. Samplings from many of our area restaurants are always the hit of the evening. We welcome the many new restaurants who have opened in Rice Military in the last year, along with our long-established favorites. A drawing for great door prizes will end the evening.

Mark your calendar and plan to join us for a fun-filled night. Join us and get to know your neighbors. See you Tuesday, October 4, at 5:30 p.m.!

2011 NATIONAL NIGHT OUT SPONSORS*

The Rice Military Civic club wishes to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of the National Night Out event and our neighborhood:

Restaurant Sponsors

**Max's Wine Dive
Canyon Creek Café
El Tiempo Cantina**

**Los Dos Amigos
BRC
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Rainbow Lodge
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Molina's Cantina
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Benjy's**

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and Gym**

* 2011 Sponsors at printing time

Rice Military Civic Club Membership Form

- \$20 Household Membership \$5 Senior Membership
 \$30 Business Membership I would like to donate \$____ extra for community outreach!

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

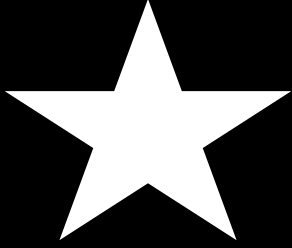
- Contact me about local volunteer opportunities Send me the newsletter by email only

Mail this form to PO Box 130311, Houston TX 77219 or pay online at www.RiceMilitary.org

Rice

Military Newsletter

Fall 2011



*your source for
neighborhood news*

Quarterly Meeting

**October 11
Tuesday, 7 pm**

Speaker Jeff Weatherford
Deputy Director
City of Houston Public Works and
Engineering Department

Jeff Weatherford will discuss how the city determines which streets get improved, how parking restrictions are determined, the pros and cons of burying utility lines, and more.

Election of RMCC officers for 2012

DePelchin Children's Center
4950 Memorial Drive
Enter from Sandman and Scotland

President's Corner

by **Cindy McCauley, President**

One of the jobs of being President of an association such as our Civic Club is to be the focal point for concerns of the neighbors. Many of the comments are surprising as much could be avoided if we all resolved to be better neighbors. Some items are addressed by city ordinances and others by plain common sense. As a friendly reminder to many of us who may not even realize we are creating a problem as we go about our daily lives, here are the top tier items that your board gets the most complaints about.

Street Parking - This continues to be the hottest issue in our area. At our last meeting we had a City of Houston Parking Enforcement Supervisor talk to us about city ordinances. On some streets, parking is potentially interfering with access of Emergency Vehicles. Enforcement is being increased in our area especially on those streets nearest to Washington Ave. For more on this issues, look for the 'DID YOU KNOW?' article elsewhere in this newsletter. We have also invited the Public Works and Engineering Department to our next meeting to talk to us about how they go about determining which streets have no or limited parking. Where possible, residents should park in their own garages and driveways.

Garbage Day - Garbage containers should be placed at the curb between 6 p.m. the day before and 7 a.m. the day of collection. Containers must be removed by 10 p.m. that evening. If there are elderly residents nearby, offer to roll the containers out for them. The size and weight of the containers can be a bit cumbersome for those that may not get around as easy as they used to.

Dogs - While we all love our pets, it is no fun to clean the bottom of our shoes after stepping in that "smelly gift" the neighborhood pooch has left for us. Moms should not have to patrol Nellie Keyes Park for dog droppings before letting the kids play. Houston has both a Leash Law and a Poop Scoop Law. The other common complaint related to animals is barking dogs. The City of Houston has an ordinance pertaining to barking dogs that disturb the peace. (Ord. No. 01-945, § 2, 10-17-01). There are many resources available to help an owner train their pet.

Poorly Maintained Landscaping - Keeping our neighborhood looking nice not only helps with property values but lets those with less than virtuous intentions know that we care about our homes and property. We have had a number of complaints about overgrown bushes and trees obscuring views at intersections creating traffic hazards. If there is an unkempt lot or obscured intersection view in your area, calling 311 is an option if the owner is unable or unwilling to properly maintain their property. As a reminder, when you or your maintenance crew are doing yard work it is not very neighborly to blow the grass and clippings onto the neighbor's driveway and sidewalks.

I am sure you have other items to add to the list. I plan to try to be a better neighbor and I hope others will too! It has been a long, hot summer but hopefully, some cooler weather is around the corner. There are lots of fun things planned for the fall and I hope to "See you around the neighborhood...."

Community Gardening: Composting

by Michael Herman

In the heat of this summer, the one really useful activity for those who don't want to sweat from pulling weeds and mowing is to compost. The Community Garden maintains three separate composting piles on the north and west sides of the garden, two of which are under green permeable tarps. Our compost provides our most effective and all-organic form of fertilizer for the rest of the year's harvests.

Composting mixes grass clippings, leaves, and harvested garden plants with vegetable refuse from our kitchens. Every week we keep in our homes all of the uncooked vegetable refuse (like peels, rinds and expired vegetable or fruits) along with tea and coffee grounds and bring them to the garden. Although it sounds unusual to keep items normally put in the trash, we have found that a good way to do it is to keep everything in a large closed container (protein drink containers work great) in the refrigerator until ready to take to the garden.

When you come to the garden, look for the compost pile marked "Put

it here." That will be the composting area where we are mixing new materials. The other two will be "cooking" and should be left alone until ready.

There are two major prohibitions in composting. First, no animal or human waste. Some people believe animal waste can be composted, but not in the community garden. What you put in, we take out and put around plants like lettuces that will be eaten without cooking. So, no animal or human waste. Second, no meat. Meat in compost attracts varmints.

Once you get used to the idea, composting makes a lot of sense. It is a great form of recycling that produces the most fertile additives for the soil. It keeps out of the trash and the city landfill materials that can be put to better use. In the home, it keeps out of the trash items that smell when not refrigerated and instead lets you save them in a closed, cool container ready for the garden.

So, until the weather cools down to a bearable temperature, keep up the composting.

Trick or Treat

at Nellie Keyes Park

Saturday, October 29

4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Please join your neighbors in celebrating Halloween weekend this year at our own Nellie Keyes Park. All Rice Military neighbors are invited to come to Nellie Keyes with a chair, table, and bowl of goodies to hand out candy to our youngest neighbors. Non-scary costumes are welcome, and we hope everyone will participate in safe trick-or-treating for our neighborhood children.

We will have a bouncy castle provided by RMCC, as well as crafts and games generously provided by neighbors to entertain our little ones as they go around the park in search of candy. This is an annual tradition in Rice Military and we would love everyone's participation and support to help make this Halloween fun, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

We need your help in making this annual event a success. We are busy signing up volunteers to help with the festivities, set-up and clean-up, and we welcome your ideas and participation.

Please contact Lucy Anderson if you would like to help at MAAnderson@HenkeLawFirm.com or 713-940-4500. We look forward to celebrating Halloween with you!

Rachel Morris Rosson



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Wendy Wilkinson,
Editor

Notes from the VP: What Membership Means

by **Amaris Wendelberg,**
Vice President

Welcome New Residents

Walking around our neighborhood we see many new faces and their four-legged friends. So I wanted to take a moment to welcome all neighbors who have just moved to Rice Military. I'm sure you're quite busy unpacking and settling in. But take a moment to read our newsletter to see what we have in store for you. I suggest coming to our next Social (they happen every 3rd Wednesday of the month), and following up with our National Night Out Extravaganza. We look forward to meeting you!

Membership

As the summer comes to an end, I'd like to remind everyone about the

importance of membership dues. Twenty dollars is all it takes to become an Official Member of the Rice Military Civic Club. Even if you have a registered email through Google Groups, it does not mean that you are a registered member. It is so important to keep our membership number up. It allows us to send out this Newsletter, participate in local meetings, have our annual festivities, and more. Many people ask me, "What do I get if I become a member?" I struggle when answering because there is nothing tangible you receive. The honest truth is that you help our group survive. All of us serving on the board do so because we love our neighborhood and we want what's best for it. Each time we approach a local business for support via Happy Hours or events like

National Night Out, we come with a copy of the Newsletter. We try to show them how proactive our members are, and how we in turn can support them. We can only continue to do that if we have more Official Members. So please, check to see if you are paid for 2011 by going to the website, or email me directly at vp@ricemilitary.org, I'll be more than happy to check. Otherwise, I'll see you at the next Social sign-in table!

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next newsletter!**

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Queen of Green: Electricity

by Laury Adams

Reducing Our Electric Bills

Electric bills that look like the national debt are great incentives for us to modify our energy usage. How might we do that?

Flight attendants now request passengers to lower the blinds before departing the plane to keep it cooler while on the ground. This same idea can be used in our homes if we remember to pull the shades and close the blinds. Also, we can add awnings and plant trees to shade windows receiving intense heat from the sun.

It is known that electric fans add to our comfort and lower electric bills. Now, I am sitting under a ceiling fan estimated to cost 10 cents to run for 8 hours, and I've raised the AC setting on my thermostat. I'm also feeling the cool breeze from a Vornado Circulator Tower fan purchased at Bed Bath and Beyond. It is a non-oscillating fan with four power settings that effectively circulates air through the room. But I must admit it's impossible to estimate how long it will take to save enough on my electric bill to equal its cost of \$99.99.

Energy saving ideas include using a timer on thermostats, adjusting AC/heating vents, and closing off areas of our homes that are not occupied.

Irony of Using Less Energy

Most of us assume that saving energy will save us money. But how many know the less energy we use, the higher rate we pay?

The Internet site www.powertochoose.com helps consumers shop for energy companies by giving features and prices of various plans. The prices are quoted for 1,000 kWh used. We assume that whatever energy is used will be billed at the quoted price in a fixed rate plan. Therefore, the less energy we use, the less we will pay. WRONG! The month I used 536 kWh, the average price was 12.3 cents per kWh. Last month, I used 1756 kWh and the average price was 10 cents. On some of my past statements, there was a "Customer Charge" of \$9.99 with no explanation on any page. A company representative explained a customer charge is added whenever less than 1,000 kWh are used. I've been told this is common with most energy companies. So we pay more when we use less! Be sure to check your bill for low consumption months.

Also, on the above web site, Portentia is offering high consumption customers a credit of \$9.95 each billing cycle—a reward for using more energy!

A billing cost we all incur is \$3.05 per month for smart meters that were installed some time ago. Since we have no idea how to use these to reduce our energy usage, we must ask, "Who benefits?"


What irony! Saving energy seems to be in our national interest. But when we try to limit our use of this resource and protect the environment, the electric companies add punitive charges for our low consumption and reward high energy users—quite a consumer dilemma!

Did You Know?

It is ILLEGAL to park...

- on the wrong side of the street (APK-4, see below)
- more than 24 continuous hours on a public street (APK-5)
- blocking a private drive (APK-11)
- within 15 feet of a fire hydrant (APK-12)
- blocking a sidewalk (APK-13)
- on an esplanade, median strip or traffic island (Sec. 26-90)
- on the street for purposes of advertising (Sec. 26-97)
- within 50 feet of a railroad crossing (APK-15)
- with the right wheel more than 18 inches from the curb (APK-20)
- a commercial vehicle on a public street between 2-6 am (APK-22)
- a large vehicle in a residential district unless loading/unloading (APK-23)

APK indicates a parking code. Additional info can be found in Chapter 26 of the City Codes (www.houstontx.gov/codes). Fines start at \$30 and up.




AMARIS WENDELBURG


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5 year Rice Military resident • DePelchin Volunteer
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NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

October

- 4 National Night Out Celebration at Nellie Keyes Park, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- 10 Super Neighborhood 22 Meeting at The DePelchin Center, 6:30 p.m.
- 11 Quarterly General Meeting at The DePelchin Center, 7 p.m.
- 15 Community Leadership Boot camp at The United Way, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Reservation and \$5 required.
- 19 Happy Hour – Location TBD
- 26 HPD Positive Interaction Program at HPOU, 1602 State Street, 7 p.m.
- 29 Children’s Halloween/Fall Festival at Nellie Keyes Park, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

November

- 14 Super Neighborhood 22 Meeting at The DePelchin Center, 7 p.m.
- 16 Happy Hour – Location TBD
- 23 HPD Positive Interaction Program at HPOU, 1602 State Street, 7 p.m.

December

- 6 6th Annual Holiday Celebration at The DePelchin Center
- 12 Super Neighborhood 22 Meeting at The DePelchin Center

5K Walk for Mental Health Awareness on October 15 at Stude Park

by Patrick McIlvain

It all started at 221 Knox Street.

The Houston Walk for Mental Health Awareness was first thought of there about 10 years ago, maybe a bit longer. I wondered if the bars on the windows and door were there to protect me or to keep me locked in. My mental illness/disease was passed on to me by both of my parents. This we know now. Though I am blessed in that I am what some would label, classify as “high functioning.” I personally think that these definitions need to be revisited. I function, period and do it quite well.

Because I know this illness/disease so very well I wanted to find some way to talk about what it is like to be challenged with it. To let folks know that we are really no different, that any one of your neighbors here in Rice Military are just like the neighbors are now for me in the First Ward. Most of us look just like you. We are your sons, your daughters, your fathers, mothers, your close friends. We are the person that you are dating, we are your husband or your wife. We are your significant other, your lover, your mate. We are the person standing next to you in line. We are your boss or your valued employee. We are your elected official. look in the mirror we may be just what you see there too. We are your chief, your food server, your client, your customer. We are every color, every gender, we come in every hair color natural or not. We are over weight, some are under weight. There are even some lucky ones who weigh just right. We are short, tall,


average. We have blue eyes like me or whatever eye color you have are see around you. We are that little child or the senior citizen. We are all ages. We are the professional athletics and the amateurs. We are every where. We are the over achievers and the under achievers. We are the lost and we are silent, invisible followers. We are the upfront strong-looking leaders. We are for sure all of the artists and many of the patrons of the arts. We are the inventors and the builders. We are the farmers and the buyers. We are serving in the Armed Forces. We are your mail carriers, we are the sales clerk that just sold you that outfit that you just had to have. We even designed it. We work, pay taxes, we are labors, mechanics, sales person, doctors, dentist and attorneys and professional business people.

At anyone one time there are 9% of the residents of Harris County fighting this illness/disease. It is time to start talking about this out in the front yard and not in the “safe no one will see or hear” back room. We are really great people.

So with the strong love and support of many folks here in Rice Military and a few other great folks here in Houston, on October 15, 2011, at Stude Park, my ten year dream will become real. Dreams still do. It is a 5K walk, from 8 a.m. to noon. Visit our website at TheHoustonWalk.org to find out more about The Houston Walk. Register to be one of the walkers and be a part of history in the making.

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