

# Historic Spanish Town Civic Association Newsletter April 2009

This issue marks the launch of our new "green" online format.  
Saving you money, saving the planet!

## WANTED: SAFE, HOSPITABLE PROPERTIES IN A ONE-OF-A-KIND COMMUNITY

Because Spanish Town has so many rental properties, we thought it might be good to explore ways to resolve or avoid conflicts between tenants and land lords and remind everyone of the Federal Fair Housing Laws. Please note this is not legal advice, merely suggestions and resources for land lords and tenants. Remember comprehensive communication is key to a peaceful landlord/tenant relationship!

Ideas for avoiding conflicts:

- Because a majority of conflicts arise over deposit issues, it is important to thoroughly inspect the property before moving into a new apartment. It is advisable for the landlord and tenant to do a walkthrough together so there is no doubt that both parties are aware of the condition of the premises. Make notes of any existing damage, take pictures and attach to the lease with both parties' signatures.
- Never make changes to the property without notifying your landlord first.
- If a landlord needs access to the property, tenants should be given notice at least 24 hours in advance.
- Another way to avoid conflict is to avoid oral agreements. Each party is likely to hear the same thing a different way. Get any agreements in writing.

- Understand the terms of your lease. If a tenant has questions, be sure to ask and get answers from your landlord. Landlords should be sure their leases are not overly complicated and point out possible conflict areas such as late fees, deposit rules, automatic renewal clauses and terms explaining who is responsible for the maintenance and repairs of the property.

Louisiana Laws contain provisions for avoiding and resolving conflicts between tenants and landlords. Starting with section RS 93201 of Louisiana Title 9 Civil Code-Ancillaries, a wide variety of areas of landlord tenant conflict are explained by the law. These statutes are available to read on the internet at <http://law.justia.com/louisiana/codes/123/123.html> . If you do not have access to a computer, you can also find this information at your local library.

The major federal fair housing law is the Fair Housing Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant

women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18), and handicap (disability)". You can find a copy of the Federal Fair Housing Act at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/housing/title8.php>.

It is very important for both landlord and tenant to understand that both parties have rights protected by law and each has responsibilities to one another. The landlord or owner's principal obligations are to: (1) To deliver the property to the tenant (renter); (2) To maintain the property in a condition suitable for the purpose of which it was leased; and (3) To protect the tenant's peaceful possession for the duration of the lease. Renters are protected by a warranty from vices.

Let's keep our rental properties safe for our community of renters. Let's maintain our homes so that we can minimize risks to our neighbors. We all need to do better to bring our properties up to a higher standard and to maintain those that are. We can maintain the flavor of our wonderful community without sacrificing safety or comfort.

-David Brown & Melissa Eastin

You can visit the HSTCA web site at:

[http://fatsnake.com/hstca/  
spanishtownhistory.asp](http://fatsnake.com/hstca/spanishtownhistory.asp)

# April 2009

There are many exciting things going on this month. Please take advantage of our wonderful community and enjoy all of the offerings listed here.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
						Great South BR Clean Up
						Red Stick Arts Market
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sundays in the Park: Benjy Davis Project					Good Friday	
International Heritage						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Easter			Blues Week Begins		Live After 5: Mojeaux	Trees!!!
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Earth Day Festival			Maxine Crump: History of the Blues		Ed Markham Lecture	Baton Rouge Blues Festival.
Sundays in the Park: Moreland					Live After 5: Henry Gray	
26	27	28	29	30		
Sundays in the Park: Seth Walker			100 Years of Stan- dard Oil.			

## Schedule of Events

- April 4th: Great South Baton Rouge Cleanup at the Leo S. Butler Community Center. Registration: 7:30am, Clean-up: 8:30a - noon. For more information: 389.5140
- April 4th: Red Stick Arts Market in conjunction with the weekly Farmer's Market. 5th Street 8:00a—Noon.
- April 5th: International Heritage Festival at the Baton Rouge River Center: Noon
- April 18: TREES!!! Come learn about selecting, planting, and maintaining trees with Baton Rouge Green. Capitol Grocery Patio 10-11:30am.
- April 15-26th: Baton Rouge Blues Week. For a full schedule: <http://www.louisianasmusic.com/brbw05/>
- April 19th: Earth Day Festival: North Boulevard Noon-8:30pm. For a full schedule see: <http://laearthday.org/Welcome.html>
- April 22nd: Maxine Crump Lecture on Baton Rouge Blues History. River Center Library, 4th Floor. Noon. Call 389.4960 for more information.
- April 24th: Edward Markham Lecture on Scotlandville Blues Artists, River Center Library, 4th Floor. Noon. Call 389.4960 for more information.
- April 25th: Baton Rouge Blues Festival. Repentance Park Noon-9:30 pm.
- April 29: 100 Years of Standard Oil, part of the Lunch Time Lagniappe Series which runs Wednesdays through May at the Louisiana State Museum. Noon.

There are many other events going on this month in the down town area. For more listings, please visit the following sites:

<http://manshiptheatre.org/>

<http://www.artsbr.org/>

<http://www.redstickfarmersmarket.org/main/>

<http://www.downtownbatonrouge.org/>

<http://www.brpnonline.org/>



You can also join the Cherry email list by writing to:

[rougecherry@gmail.com](mailto:rougecherry@gmail.com)

## SPANISH TOWN MARDI GRAS 2009

Another wonderful Mardi Gras season has come to pass and good times were had by all! Truly spectacular weather and a few new features helped make this a Spanish Town Mardi Gras that will not soon be forgotten. We had a spectacular second line march led by "Big Chief" Bill Good prior to the start of the parade and the parade itself was populated by many members of Spanish Town community. One new element was the performance of the "Baby Cakes" dance squad to which many of our neighbors belong. I hope you didn't miss that one!

This year, efforts were made by Andrea Neighbors and a few other residents, to "green" the traditional Spanish Town Mardi Gras house parties. Ideas circulated and several hosts agreed to take the initial steps toward reducing the waste and ecological impact of our celebrations. With tens of thousands of people descending on our little neighborhood, there is inevitably going to be a pile of discarded or otherwise unclaimed plastic beads and heaps of other garbage, but in our homes, at least, we sought to do things a little differently this year.

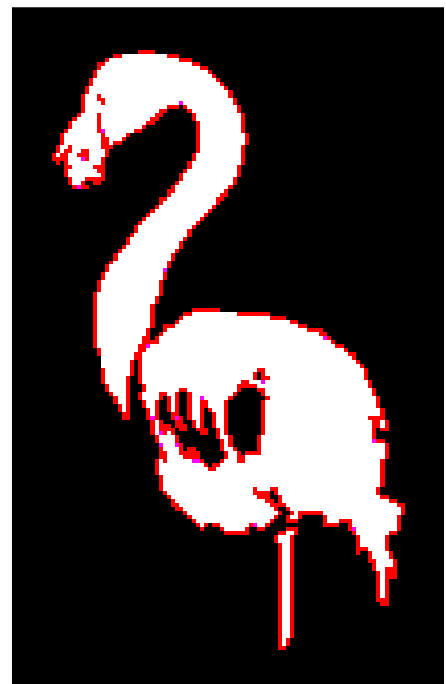
"Green" hosts did such things as put out recycling bins, reusable cups with markers for claiming one's cup and buying kegs and larger containers rather than several smaller ones. One hostess brought her own Tupperware containers to collect her king cakes from the bakery. One host set up separate wash and rinse bins and a drying rack so that he could avoid using plastic or paper plates and to keep the glass, sil-

verware and ceramic plates and bowls in circulation. Labels were placed above light switches reminding guests to turn off any lights that were not in use. Packaging overall was kept to a minimum and dishes were selected to favor finger foods and items for which plates weren't as necessary. Where needed, plates, bowls and utensils were either of recycled content or were washable/reusable. Over all, the "green party" movement got off to a fabulous start with many neighborhood hosts participating and many guests no worse for the wear. Participants intend to do it again next year, recruit other "green" hosts and to implement even more improvements to help the hood reduce, reuse and recycle. As Andrea says, "Green is the new Pink!"

The crew from Dixon Correctional Institute (DCI) came out again on the Sunday after the parade and filled bags and bags of refuse. Next year, we hope to provide them with separate bags and help to make it easy for them to segregate waste from discarded recyclables. The one difference this year, regarding DCI involved cost. In years past, the HSTCA Board has simply paid for a freed lunch to say "thanks" to the inmates who helped clean our "partied" parade route streets. Due to budgetary constraints, however, this year the warden informed us that we would have to be charged for the fuel needed to transport the crew to and from our neighborhood and the hourly wage to pay for the prison guard needed to watch over the work crew. The Board used our budget (from your membership dues and fundraisers) to pay for this expense. If ever you've wondered where your dues go, this is one of those expenses you pay for and given that it's the new DCI policy regarding work crews, this expense is apparently here to stay.

Fortunately, we have enjoyed a very successful fundraising effort this year with the return of a favorite t-shirt design (this time on organic cotton and sweatshop free tees) and new pink koozies. To date, we have sold \$4,081.00 worth of merchandise. Along with your membership dues, this helps pay for our security patrols and other neighborhood improvements. So please consider purchasing a t-shirt or koozie if you haven't already. They will be available from the HSTCA throughout the year! If you've let your membership in the civic association lapse, pretty please consider joining again. Without you, we wither and run the risk of mediocrity! It's only \$20.00 per year and that is very low by Baton Rouge standards for civic association dues. Please fill out the form included in this newsletter and support the Historic Spanish Town Civic Association. Thank you in advance!!

-David Brown



### WHO FIRED CANNON AT UNIVERSITY DURING QUIET HOURS OF THE NIGHT?

From the Daily State March 8, 1908:

Who fired the cannon at the Louisiana State University\* last night, or rather in the early hour this morning? This is a question that the authorities at the University are trying to find an answer to. Captain Sorley, commandant of cadets has been working on the case since an early hour this morning, but he has been unable to solve the mystery. About two o'clock this morning, the

two big cannons that are placed on the campus in front of the president's house were fired twice. The two shots followed on after the other in quick succession and the houses on the campus and all of the residents in that section of the city were jarred to their foundation by the reports. Some window panes were broken. Captain Sorley of the United States Army, the commandant of Cadets was out in a few minutes making an inspection of the cannons, but when he reached the two pieces of

artillery, they were deserted and no one could be found anywhere near the guns. All of the cadets were awakened by the report and many of the people living in the northern part of the city. Captain Sorley has been at work on the case since the shots were fired trying to locate the parties who fired the cannons, but it is a difficult thing to do.

(\*Before moving to its current location in 1926, LSU was located on the New State Capital Grounds.)

Remember to join  
The Historic  
Spanish Town Civic  
Association.  
Your dues help keep the  
neighborhood safe, clean  
and cool. Isn't that worth  
\$20.00?  
Use the form at the end of  
the news letter to join  
now!



Tell your friends too!

### Please Curb Your Dogs

In our neighborhood, there are many, many animal lovers. Though I am one, I do not have a pet. However, I often have to clean up after my neighbors' pets before I can mow my grass or enjoy sitting on my lawn or front porch. Unfortunately, I am not alone. It has become a significant problem in our neighborhood and it really does begin to implicate the quality of our community.

Good neighbors wouldn't want their friends and neighbors to step in poop or have to smell it unnecessarily would they? As the reader might expect, the city has an ordinance prohibiting the depositing of waste matter, litter or rubbish in anything other than a proper receptacle. Your neighbor's lawn is not the proper receptacle. Please bring a plastic bag or other waste collection

implement along with you the next time you walk your dog...and use it!

-David Brown



### Spanish Town's New Street Signs

They're distinctive, very red and set our neighborhood apart with a unique look. The new street signs are installed, thanks to the cooperation of the Downtown Development District and the city parish Office of Public Works. They feature a Castilian-red background with a royal Spanish lion in honor of the area's Canary Islander history. The only missing one is for Kismet Alley, also - but erroneously - known as Whittaker. HSTCA has asked the parish to consider that a few may be installed too high. Let HSTCA hear your opinion on that.

-Jeff Duhe

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# Residential Parking Plan

Spanish Town was developed before cars were king and so our neighborhood was not built around the automobile as much as most other neighborhoods in Baton Rouge. We have very few drive ways and even fewer car ports. Consequently, most of us park our vehicles on the road in front of our dwellings or as close to them as we can get. Sometimes, especially during the legislative session, we can't get very close to our homes at all and the problem seems to have gradually gotten worse.

Rather than wait for market forces or forward-thinking intervention by City Hall, in 2007 the HSTCA decided to investigate the possibility of implementing a residential parking permit plan for Spanish Town. We investigated plans from other Louisiana systems that use residential permits then took a closer look at our neighborhood. Board members surveyed the streets and the number of parking places, the fire hydrants, blue-painted handicapped slots and red painted curbs. Armed with a marked-up map, some photographs, a draft parking plan based that fits in with the framework of the Baton Rouge Metro Code and a working knowledge of how such a system worked in other places, we arranged to meet with Baton Rouge's chief traffic engineer, Ingolf Partenheimer.

By mid 2008, we had done what we could to identify our needs and to pitch our idea to the Department of Public Works. Mr. Partenheimer was sold! He then put his people to work researching the feasibility of the plan and investigating other residential parking plans throughout the country. From there, Mr. Partenheimer met with

Mayor Holden and then city-parish chief administrative officer, Walter Monsour. They two were both on board. By 2009, the new Metro Council had been sworn in and so Partenheimer and Board Chairman David Brown met with our newly elected councilwoman for District 10, Tara Wicker. By now, Partenheimer loved the idea and could have sold the idea on his own without any assistance from the HSTCA Board. After hearing about the plan and asking some additional questions that we have been working to answer over the past month or so, Ms. Wicker was also in favor of the plan. Ms. Wicker asked us to survey the neighborhood to determine the level of support for this idea.

So, in light of the fact that state employees either have their own paid parking garages or numbered parking slots around the Capitol complex, but in large numbers chose to park along our streets, we decided to ask the City to implement a 2-hour residential parking permit plan. This means that our residents would pay a nominal fee (zero profit margin) for a 1-year parking pass that would allow them to park on the streets of Spanish Town. Between the hours of 6am and 6pm, no one else could park on our streets for more than two hours without a visitor or guest pass. Violators would be ticketed much the same as a driver parking improperly anywhere else in the city and this would be enforced by Baton Rouge city police. How would you feel about such a plan? If you need more details or would like to provide feedback of any sort, please contact the Board through email at: rdbkey@yahoo.com. By Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, we need to be able

to report back to Councilwoman Wicker so that this can be brought to a vote and hopefully implemented prior to the start of the upcoming legislative session.

This has been a long time in the making, but we are almost to the finish line. We expect that this will be an inexpensive solution with proven efficacy in other cities and that it will help make our neighborhood a little more accommodating and user-friendly for the folks who live here. We acknowledge that we need to have a plan that works for everyone or at least as many people as we can possibly please. Do take the time to share your feedback with the Board – we want and need to hear from you!

-David Brown

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# *Historic Spanish Town Civic Association Newsletter*

*April 2009*



**SPANISH TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP AND SECURITY FORM:**

Make \$20.00 checks payable to Historic Spanish Town Civic Association. Clip and mail to:

**HSTCA**  
**P.O. BOX 3282**  
**B. R., LA 70821-3282**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rent/Own** \_\_\_\_\_