

# Commonwealth Park

EST. 1939

June 2011

Post Office Box 18833

Charlotte, NC 28218

## Harris Teeter Remodel

Good news! Our neighborhood Harris Teeter is about to become new and green. The current store at the corner of The Plaza and Central Avenue will be demolished and rebuilt as a two-story building. According to their press release there will be "one pedestrian friendly entrance at that corner and another entrance with parking located where the existing store is located." There will be an upstairs mezzanine with indoor and outdoor seating, environmentally friendly lighting, water conservation and a green roof. According to a Harris Teeter spokesperson, we can expect to see work begin sometime in 2012 and last about six months. They are currently working on zoning permits and hope to accelerate their plans.



## New Eastway Division Police Station

By Matt Hickey

CMPD and the City of Charlotte continue to work on plans for the new Eastway Division Station at the corner of Merry Oaks Rd and Central Avenue. At the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Committee meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the proposed Station was presented for approval of the City Planning Committee. The site, which currently has several houses and duplexes, would be rezoned to NS (neighborhood services), allowing the construction of a 12,500 square foot building and parking lot. The proposal is available on the Planning Department website at :

<http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/planning/AboutUS/Pages/MeetingSchedule.aspx>

This new station will replace the rented space that CMPD currently has in the Eastway Crossing Shopping Center. Once the rezoning petition is filed by CMPD, there will be an opportunity for community input on the plans for the Station.

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### NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

**Tuesday,  
June 14  
7:00 p.m.**

WTVI Conference Room  
3242 Commonwealth Ave.

#### Topics:

- Annual Dues and Budget Discussion
- Billingsville Update
- Neighborhood Clean Up Act
- Neighborhood Watch Update
- Initial By Laws Discussion
- Development of Neighborhood Officers

## And the vote is!!

*By Jerome Deveix*

During the last Commonwealth Park neighborhood meeting, held in April, we held a vote to get an idea of the things our community would like to see created or improved using money from the neighborhood fund. There were 33 ballots collected and each required preferences to be ranked in order for us to clearly distinguish priorities. Top choices on each ballot got 10 points, runner up choices got 9 points, and so on. Below is a listing of the top 6 choices as they were all far ahead the other 5 line items. Full results will be shared at the next neighborhood meeting.

Neighborhood website (260 points)  
Fall block party (179)  
Tree banding (166)  
Clean up supplies such as garbage bags, gloves, etc (154)  
Community watch t-shirts/vests (140)

Options that each had less than 100 points were as follows, in order: neighborhood meeting signs, community garden, dog poop bag stations, and community dog park. A write-in I found interesting was yard-of-the-month sign.

Next steps will be to estimate costs for each of the desirable options and present details to the community as soon as possible.



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# Securing Your Home and Property

By Jerome Deveix

## The statistics

According to HomeSecurity.net, most residential burglaries occur between 10am and 3pm. Burglars typically spend 8 to 12 minutes in targeted homes. Homes without security systems are about three times as likely to be broken into than those without (I suspect the appearance of having an alarm – i.e. having a visible alarm company sign – makes the difference). The first stop is usually the master bedroom because we tend to keep our valuables there. Their favorite items are cash, jewelry, electronic equipment, silver, guns and other items that are easy to sell. 34% of paths into homes are through the front door, 23% through first floor windows, 22% through back door, 9% via attached garages, 6% by way of unlocked entrances, 4% through the basement and 2% through second floor. The typical house burglar is a male teenager who lives within a couple of miles of our homes, while the chances of being victimized by a professional thief are low.

## Some safety tips

Burglars tend to be as inconspicuous as possible when casing homes or performing their troubling deeds. So why invite them over with the most burglar-friendly house on the block? Follow these simple steps to lower your chances of having your home targeted.

- Burglars search homes that appear to be unoccupied. A car in the driveway, motion-sensitive lights, and interior lights and televisions give the impression that someone is home. Motion-detecting flood lights can be found as cheap as \$20 at Home Depot.
- Stop newspaper and mail delivery during extended vacancies. US mail can quickly be put on hold at <https://holdmail.usps.com> or a form can be filled out by hand and submitted in person.
- Have your neighbors keep an attentive eye while you're away.
- Clean up shrubs and trees that are immediately against your home that would otherwise provide good cover for would-be thieves, particularly around windows and doors.
- Automatic plug-in timers (\$15) are easy to use and can turn your table top or floor lights on/off regularly while you're away.
- Automatic wire-in control (solar eye) can be bought for \$8 at Home Depot and you can quickly and easily install them on any outdoor light fixture. This

is how my light post and both front porch sconces are wired so they're on every night all night from dusk until dawn, whether I'm home or away. Note that many CFL light bulbs (the squiggly ones) do not dim well so you may need to get traditional light bulbs while they're still available.

- A set of 4 landscape lights can be purchased for as low as \$80 and provide additional deterrence.
- Close your blinds in the evening especially if your magnificent plasma or LCD TV is in plain sight.
- And of course – do I even have to say this?! – lock your car doors all the time, day and night, as you can never be too safe.

One final tip... I noticed recently that the stretch on Goodwin between Commonwealth and Rollins is unusually dark at night, almost pitch black. The streetlights do not do a good job at keeping the street well lit, but more importantly no one keeps a single exterior light on, not even front porches so this could be inviting to those with bad intentions. Sometimes a little awareness goes a long way and I hope this article will provide the community with some helpful ideas.



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*Ernesto R.*

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*Chuck C.*

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# Enhancing Your Home's Curb Appeal with Shutters

By Ted Cleary

What is it about Commonwealth Park that drew you here? Our large, mature shade trees, close bonds with neighbors, and convenient location near Uptown are likely part of the reason, but I'd guess you were also drawn to the charming details of your older house that reflect its age of 60 or 70 years. You don't have to be an architect to appreciate the subtleties that, taken as a whole, exude a richness that's often absent with more contemporary materials. Back in the day, a house with true-divided-light windows, real lap siding (made of 3/4" thick planks, as opposed to thin cement board siding), and chunky, substantial trimwork was the norm, and the deeper shadowlines and sense of craftsmanship simply presented a more comforting and engaging image. Home design was as much about creating a pattern of light and shadow as it was about creating comfort. One of the details that help make or break that perception of 'genuineness' is the proper use of window shutters.

Granted, our Commonwealth Park homes aren't in the same category as historically designated ones built over a hundred years ago. And for some styles such as Arts & Crafts Bungalows, or Mid-Century Modern, shutters are totally inappropriate. But many of the neighborhood's houses are some hybrid of Cape Cod or Neo-Colonial styles, often of brick, sometimes partially or completely of lap siding, in a pared-down historical style that builders mass-produced to appeal to the legions of postwar families shopping for a comforting place to call home. Shutters, then, are likely just the right thing to dress up your windows, and your house will thank you for lavishing such attention to detail on its curb appeal. Cheap vinyl shutters, which are so common that many people don't even question the look, give a flat, pasted-on appearance; authentic ones make all the difference.



Of the several shutter styles, board & batten is probably the easiest to construct for a D-I-Yer [see example here, of a properly hung set of authentic shutters]. Notice how each shutter is **exactly one-half the width of the window**; this is the first cardinal rule to follow, regardless of how wide the window is. The whole idea is that you must give

the believable appearance that they could actually be closed over to protect against sun, storms, or cold; therefore they should always be mounted **on** the side window trim rather than against the outside edges of it. Notice also that the length is exactly that of its



particular window, rather than whatever standard length happened to be available from the big-box store; let's call that the second cardinal rule. (By contrast, see the photo I snapped of one of my favorite

"don't try this at home" examples.) By attaching with actual hinges, either working or simulated, the shutters will be slightly folded back against the wall; again, giving a greater sense of depth than the "wallpapered-on" fake ones (as well as letting air circulate behind them to avoid rot). Pivoting tie-backs ("dogs") are attached to the wall and hold them from swinging in the breeze. Ideally, you should also have some sort of slide bolt that would keep them latched, if closed. While the cost of such hardware can certainly add up, if you're serious about the details they are worth the investment, and available from numerous sources such as [timberlaneshutters.com](http://timberlaneshutters.com).



Perhaps the most commonly used shutter style is louvered. If that's the one you choose, you should look for well-made versions of wood or high-quality synthetic material (not the cheap vinyl clip-to-the-wall version). You want them to last many decades; I'd recommend two coats of primer followed with your preferred color

of topcoat. With louvers, a paint sprayer will avoid a whole lot of frustration compared to trying to get a paint brush into all the nooks and crannies. Even if just for appearance, consider adding a tilt-rod to non-pivoting louvers as in this photo so that they look like they could actually operate just like "plantation shutters" on the

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## Enhancing Your Home's Curb Appeal with Shutters

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inside of your home, and mount them opposite to the way the louvers are typically tilted: think about it, if most fake louvered shutters were actually closed in a storm, the louvers would pour water right down onto the window instead of shedding it away!



A third style are paneled shutters, which can look quite elegant and are usually more appropriate for later ranch-style homes from the '50s and '60s, as with these black ones that echo the square theme of the panelling in the front door. (The circular detailing inside the squares, which I'm guessing the homeowner omitted for simplicity since he made them himself, is actually something I prefer; instead of being a slavish copy of the front door, they instead echo it.)

So.....how to handle the inevitable problem where some windows are double-wide? To flank them with shutters (even though it's often done) makes for an odd look. You could construct shutters that look obviously as though they're double-folded, similar to an accordion door, that would theoretically cover all the windows if closed. It's a tough call, but my personal advice is to simply avoid shutters completely, with double- (and certainly triple-) wide window units, or in a case where there's just no wall space at all on both sides of the window. Don't focus just on each individual window; step back and consider the overall composition of the windows in the facade and the effect of which ones will have shutters and which may not, in terms of visual balance. (You may want to avoid shuttering the oddball out-of-place window to avoid drawing attention to itself, rather than dutifully mounting shutters at every window.)

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# What's Growing in My Garden

By Susan M. Lockman



Although spring is almost over, I am always amazed at what comes up in our yard. You see, even though we have lived here almost 6 years, we haven't planted much. I get so excited in early March when the Trout Lilies come up! They aren't supposed to grow in this area; we aren't deep in a forest by a stream. These slender stalked, 2 leaved, yellow flowered beauties pop up in the plain dirt outside our bedroom window. I tell anyone who will listen that these lovelies are growing right here on Commonwealth Avenue!

While I enjoy the Trout Lilies, I look over in the crook of two big roots of an oak tree where Lilies of the Valley sway in the breezes. To me, these flowers aren't the run of mill type to have in a yard. I love seeing their white blossoms as I go to and from the drive way.

Then there's the Ajuga, a ground cover in the front yard with flat greenish red leaves. I never heard of it until we went to the Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens. I felt special when I realized we had some, too. I have noticed that each year, this plant covers more and more ground, which is fine with us!



Ah, yes, the wonders of growing things! I am so thankful to the person or persons who planted these special wonders to decorate our yard!

## Bylaws Committee News

By Matt Hickey

At the last neighborhood meeting, a draft version of Bylaws for the Neighborhood Association was presented to the membership. These bylaws are being written using elements of the governing bylaws for other Associations in Charlotte, and are open for comment by members, and we welcome your input! For a copy of the draft bylaws presented at the meeting, please contact Matt Hickey at [matthew.s.hickey@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.s.hickey@gmail.com)

The First part of the Bylaws, reproduced here, is the proposed statement of the objectives of the Association:

### Article I – Purposes and Objectives of the Association

#### 1.1 – Purposes and Objectives

1. Promoting the wellbeing, quality of life, and security of the Residents of the Commonwealth Park Neighborhood.
2. Establishing specific goals, to be determined by the Residents, to be advanced through involvement in city and county planning, and through engagement with local governmental entities.
3. Developing leaders in the community and broadening the level of understanding among Residents of factors that affect quality of life, and educating residents about the Association and its work.
4. Protecting the character of the neighborhood, its trees and its homes, as well as other features of the community that are agreed to be of value to the Residents.
5. Communicating with residents and encouraging involvement in the community and in the Association.
6. Advocating the development of recreational, educational, transportation, cultural, and other programs and facilities in Commonwealth Park and in surrounding areas of Charlotte, and to advocate for any related purpose agreed by the Residents, but not for, or on behalf of any political party or partisan political organization.
7. Encouraging a closer association of Residents, as well as businesses and of neighbors from surrounding areas, for the good of the Neighborhood and of the surrounding community.

“Residents” in the above purposes and objectives shall include those businesses and organizations that have premises or offices in the Neighborhood.

# KIDS CORNER

B	R	C	H	I	C	K	E	N	P	O	M
P	I	Y	M	L	W	Q	P	C	A	T	B
L	K	R	E	P	A	N	E	L	G	A	E
I	O	V	X	K	P	M	B	L	M	U	H
O	P	S	N	R	N	V	B	T	A	O	G
N	A	W	E	G	X	O	V	D	L	P	G
S	R	A	Z	P	L	K	M	O	V	C	C
H	R	E	S	R	O	H	D	N	Q	P	L
K	O	V	U	J	A	S	Q	K	E	R	N
N	T	C	L	L	U	B	P	E	N	G	E
S	L	P	F	G	H	L	A	Y	O	B	H
T	G	I	R	A	F	F	E	D	U	I	Z

Find the following words – left to right, right to left, up and down or diagonally

DOG CAT CHICKEN BULL PARROT DONKEY HORSE  
LION GOAT GIRAFFE HEN MONKEY EAGLE LAMB

## Tap Into Your Creative Side

*By Christy Getz*



I visited Open Door Studio in January, at their new location in the Central/Pecan shopping area. I was hoping to tap into my creative side and regain self-confidence lost throughout the last few years. I met the Studio's owner, Jackie, and I confided it's been 20 years since I've danced in a class. She showed me both studios and provided a class schedule which she reviewed with me. I sought an evening class, so she suggested I attend Adult hip-hop. My mind instantly drew an image of being a Fly Girl from In Living Color...I decided to give it a go. I showed up to class on a Thursday night. There was one woman similar in age to myself (mid thirties), several twenty-something ladies, and a few teenagers fresh from high school. The dance instructor embodied a vibrant yet low-key energy which relaxed my nerves. We warmed up for 15 minutes, practiced moves across the floor in groups, and began to learn choreography for a routine. I was bummed when class was over an hour later! I continued to show up each week, and we learned more choreography to the song "I'm Coming Home" (clean version, please!). I discovered the Studio planned to have a recital in May, and I set the goal of dancing w/my class at the show. On Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, we danced a fast paced, three minute hip-hop <http://www.opendoorstudios.com/images/balletfeet.jpg> routine on stage at CPCC's Pease Auditorium, to an audience of 400 people. The feeling of accomplishment is truly euphoric. I am definitely taking the same class this summer. I highly recommend this dance studio. The instructors are professional, and they will critique and praise you at the same time. The main focus is to have fun. The Studio has beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes for several genres, even belly dancing. Please check out their website at [www.opendoorstudios.com](http://www.opendoorstudios.com) for schedule and newsletter information – I urge everyone to try an hour class!

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### Commonwealth Park 2011 Neighborhood Board

**Rebecca Stoddard**  
**Allison Billings**

**Brian Green**  
**Lori Pope**  
**Susan Crosland**

**Lee White**  
**Jerome Deveix**

## Commonwealth Park Neighborhood Association Membership Form

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues are only \$20.00 per household and are very helpful in neighborhood improvements. Please send a check in today!!

**Make checks payable & send to:**  
Commonwealth Park Neighborhood Assoc.  
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Check here if you would like to be contacted to volunteer on a committee or be a part of our neighborhood watch team. A neighbor will contact you shortly!