

The Fountainhead

The
Fontainebleau
Improvement
Association of
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Expert with Mayor Nagin's Office of Technology to Speak about City's New Online Services at FIA General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, May 20 at 6:30 PM

Marseyas Fernandez, Geographic Information Services (GIS) Project Manager with the Mayor's Office of Technology, will address neighborhood residents at the next FIA General Membership Meeting, which will be held on Tuesday evening, May 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Rita School Cafeteria.

You do not have to be a member of FIA to attend this meeting. Any and all residents in the Fontainebleau area are invited to attend.

While his official position with the City relates primarily to the development and

implementation of GIS applications (such as mapping for zoning and urban planning purposes, emergency response planning, and site selection), Fernandez will be discussing all kinds of new technology initiatives that the City has developed under Nagin's administration, including a host of City services that are now available online. Did you know you can now pay parking and traffic tickets online? There's also a user friendly webpage that takes you through the steps of acquiring and renovating blighted housing.

Fernandez also plans to give us some insights into what's in store for the near and distant future. So come to the General Membership Meeting at the St. Rita School Cafeteria next Tuesday, May 20, and hear how our City plans to move us all into the technology age.

We have also invited District A City Councilman Jay Batt and our area's State Representative Alex Heaton to attend the meeting to address your questions and comments on current and upcoming events in our area. We hope to see you there, too!

Palmer Park Renovation Plans Discussed at January FIA General Membership Meeting

Area residents in attendance at the January FIA General Membership Meeting learned of the continuing plans by the Parkway Partners program to make substantial improvements to our neighborhood's Palmer Park, located at the intersection of South Carrollton and South Claiborne Avenues.

As detailed by Lisa Sibal, Executive Director of Parkway Partners, current plans for the park include the construction of walkways, covered seating areas, water fountains, and additional lighting, as well as improvements to the existing entry arch and to the monument honoring World War II veterans from the Carrollton area.

Major portions of the funds for the improvements will come from a grant by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, which will be paired with matching funds from

local sources, including the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which recently signed on to the project. The RTA is particularly interested in a proposed tourist information center planned for the park, which should include a covered coffee pavilion and restrooms for tourists reaching the uptown end of the streetcar line.

Currently, Parkway Partners is awaiting approval to proceed with the Palmer Park renovations. Recent changes in the Parkway Partners personnel and its consultants must be approved by Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds before the project can begin. As of the time of Sibal's presentation, no architectural or site plans for the improvements had been publicly released, though Sibal anticipated that the project could move forward rapidly.

Look for updates on plans for the renovations on Parkway Partner's website (www.parkwaypartners.com) and on FIA's new and improved website (<http://members.cox.net/fontainebleau>).

Also present at the meeting were our State Representative, Alex Heaton, and Linda Diaz, a member of Councilman Jay Batt's staff. Heaton discussed some of the measures that would be coming up before the state legislature this session, and Diaz spoke of the construction progress on the Sav-A-Lot Store on South Carrollton at Palmetto, and the lack of progress with the Walgreen's site at South Carrollton and South Claiborne. According to Diaz, the current developer is hoping to present a plan for the site that would include a grocery store and a Walgreen's, this time with the grocery store being developed as Phase I of the project.

New Board of Directors Elected to Lead FIA in 2003

A new FIA Board of Directors was elected at the January General Membership Meeting. The new directors, who will each serve a one-year term, include:

- J D Demarest - President
- Steve Lane - Vice President
- Rhonda Betbeze - Secretary
- Laurie Conkerton - Treasurer
- Tim Betbeze
- Joy Monahan
- John Broussard
- Lee Miller
- Sheva Dematteo
- Bill Steinhardt
- Elsie Martinez

Our thanks go out to each of these FIA members who have agreed to step up and serve our organization! Isn't it time you did your part to improve our neighborhood? Get involved in your FIA today! Call JD Demarast at 865-7651 and volunteer!

FIA is now Online at <http://members.cox.net/fontainebleau>

You've got to see it to believe it! FIA has a new website, and it is absolutely incredible!!!

Ever wonder about the history behind our beautiful Fontainebleau Arch? Just click on our new website and learn that the Arch was the top pick in a 1912 architectural design contest. There's even drawings of the three runners-up! What's more,

the site is chock full of information on our Fontainebleau neighborhood, the City, and of course, your very own Fontainebleau Improvement Association.

Kudos to FIA member and newly elected director Lee Miller for his outstanding design and construction of our fantastic new website!

Date Set for FIA Annual Block Party

Already feeling the heat of summer? Get your mind off that summer sizzling by setting your sites on FIA's Annual Block Party, scheduled for Sunday evening, October 12. The entertainment for this year's event will be provided by the highly sought-after Papillion, the Louisiana musician and storyteller who has been delighting festival-goers of all ages throughout the state. Mark your calendar now, so you don't miss out on all the fun!



Fontainebleau Goes Hollywood

It all started one evening when Nelson Street residents (and FIA members) Peggy and Steve Armstrong came home and discovered the business card of a location scout pinned to their front door. The card stated that the scout was interested in presenting the two-story Arts and Crafts style house to a client as a potential location for the filming of a public service announcement (PSA). Several weeks later, a small film crew filmed the WalMart-sponsored PSA on missing children, using ten year old Katey Armstrong's bedroom for the set.

Some time later, Peggy and Steve received another call from the location scout, this time, with a much more ambitious proposal. A new movie, entitled "Unchain My Heart: The Ray Charles Story" was being filmed in New Orleans, and the Armstrong's Nelson Street home

was again selected as the perfect location for certain interior scenes.

In the movie, the house plays the role of the first house Ray Charles bought for his wife in 1959. What made the house ideal for the role was that the interior of the house had never suffered any identity-altering renovations, and was still true to its original Arts and Crafts style.

According to Peggy Armstrong, only the ground floor of the house was used for filming. All scenes that would have been shot on the second floor were filmed on a soundstage. A house in California was used for the exterior shots, but the door from that house was removed, shipped to New Orleans and attached to the Nelson Street house for shots that required a front door. The film's production crew placed all of the Armstrong's furniture in storage, and

brought in their own furniture and props from California. They re-carpeted, painted and papered the walls, with the promise that all would be returned to its original look as soon as the three-day shoot concluded.

While all this was going on at home, the Armstrongs were enjoying a four-week stay in a furnished Warehouse District condo, stopping back by occasionally to have lunch with the cast and crew, and checking to make sure that the producers were living up to their promise that the filming would not be too intrusive for the neighbors.

For all their inconveniences, Peggy, Steve, Katey and son Jack, 9, were able to have the house painted and re-roofed, with enough left over for a short trip overseas to visit Peggy's family. They moved back in their home this weekend.

A Neighborhood of Wonderful Neighbors

Remembrances of Dr. Wilbur and
Carolyn Lazarus, Residents of
Fontainebleau Drive for 49 Years

By: Elsie Martinez

“Wonderful Neighbors!” say Dr. Wilbur Lazarus and his wife Carolyn when asked why they have lived at 51 Fontainebleau Drive for almost half a century, “That hasn’t changed since the day we first moved into our house in 1954,” said Dr. Lazarus, a retired dentist.

He recalled a neighbor’s good deed when they were just settling in. “We were having some trouble with the hot water heater and water was all over the place and I didn’t know how to shut it off. My neighbor across the street, Emmett Smith, came out of his house and I asked him if he knew how I could do it. He was all dressed up in a tuxedo and his wife

Bernie was in an evening gown - they were going someplace fancy - but he didn’t just tell me how to do it. He came over himself and in just a minute turned it off. That’s the kind of neighbor we’ve had all these years.”

A native of New Orleans, Dr. Lazarus grew up in the Uptown area, attended Henry W. Allen, Newman School and Northwestern University, graduating in 1938. He practiced dentistry for 50 years, and retired in 1988. During World War II, he served as a dentist in the United States Air Force. On a ship in the Pacific, heading for Saipan, he was told there was another serviceman on board from New Orleans, and he turned out to be one of his patients.

Mrs. Lazarus echoes her husband’s opinion of the neighborhood. “I fell in love with this house when I first saw it,” she recalls. “And all of the neighbors were so friendly; they always have been. Even though our children have moved and

have families of their own, this house is still just right for us. And, of course, we love the neighborhood.”

She also loves the view of tree-lined Fontainebleau Drive from their front room.

“We had five little pine trees in our back yard when we moved in,” recalls Dr. Lazarus. “They’re giants, now.” A magnificent live oak graces the front of their house.

Following his retirement, Dr. Lazarus took up woodworking as a hobby, and has learned to carve duck decoys from his friend, Charles Frank. He also plays bridge regularly and has lunch with his friends, the “ROMEOS” (Retired Old Men Eating Out).

The Lazaruses have two sons, Edward, a medical doctor, and Harry, a commercial contractor, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. One of their grandsons, Gary Lazarus, is also a fan of the Fontainebleau neighborhood, and recently bought a house on Short Street.

Fontainebleau Security Patrol Officer Urges Residents to Report All Crimes to Second District Police Station

In a recent conversation with FIA Security Committee Chair Peggy Demarest, Fontainebleau Security Patrol Officer Carlton Lewis discussed the resurgence of tool shed burglaries that has occurred in our area over the last couple of months. Officer Lewis emphasized to Peggy the importance of reporting each and every one of these incidents to the 2d District Police Station, regardless of the value or significance of the items taken.

According to Officer Lewis, each reported burglary, no matter how large or small, is marked with a push pin on

a map of the city. The map is reviewed at the end of each week, and the police are able to determine hot spots for criminal activity. If an area is being targeted by criminals, then manpower can be re-assigned to deal with the problem.

So don’t be embarrassed about calling the police to report a burglary. They are there to help, and the more information they have, the better they are able to do their job of protecting us and our property. The number for the 2d District Station is 896-4700, or call the main police line at 821-2222.



**Join the
FIA
Security
Patrol**

Did you know that our FIA Security Patrol Officer carries a digital phone while on duty? When arriving home late at night, members of the FIA Security Patrol can call and have the Officer watch them to their front door. Help make our Fontainebleau neighborhood a safer place for you and your family. Call 865-7651 and join the FIA Security Patrol. Every new membership means additional hours of patrol time. Call and join today!

Walmsley Falls Victim to Progress

Just in case you haven't noticed, the City has begun a massive construction project on Walmsley Avenue. On April 3, at a ceremony held at the corner of Walmsley and Lowerline, Mayor Nagin broke ground on a long-delayed \$3.3 million project to rebuild several streets in the area, including Walmsley, Vendome Place, Willow Street and Valmont Street.

Funds for the project come from a 1995 voter-approved bond issue, but for reasons unknown, the project was backburnered by the previous administration. Mayor Nagin, however, has put the rebuilding program on the fast track "so

our neighborhoods and our economy can start to feel the impact."

Area residents are feeling the impact, alright, as construction crews pound through thick concrete streets and sidewalks to unearth the sewer, water and drainage systems below. But as you suffer through the sounds and pounds of progress, just keep this in mind - - it could have been much, much worse.

You may recall that the original construction schedule called for this Walmsley construction project to coincide with the fairly recent rebuilding of Fontainebleau Drive. Now, wouldn't that

have been a kick?

So keep your cool this summer, and just think back on that Fontainebleau project. Seemed like that nightmare would never end, didn't it? But it did, and Fontainebleau is beginning to show signs of recovery from its bout with progress.

The Walmsley project is expected to be completed sometime in September. Till then, give the construction crews a brake (i.e. drive slowly through their workplace) and maybe even give them a break (as in, a tall glass of lemonade on those long summer afternoons). Progress is literally just around the corner.

FONTAINEBLEAU RESIDENTS SUPPORT FIA

(Clip and send in with your 2003 dues)

FONTAINEBLEAU IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION DUES STATEMENT

It's time to renew your FIA Membership.
The annual membership fee is only \$20.00 per household.

2003 Membership Dues:	\$20.00
Additional donation:	_____
Towards capital improvement, beautification and other FIA projects	
Total Contribution Enclosed	\$_____

Mail or deliver contribution to:
Fontainebleau Improvement Association
c/o Jannette Sturm-Mexic
22 Fontainebleau Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Number of family members and ages: _____

Please mark which committees you would like to join or hear more about:

___ Beautification ___ Infrastructure ___ Membership ___ Newsletter ___ Programming

___ Zoning ___ Security ___ Block Party ___ Quality of Life