

The North Druid Hills Residents Association (NDHRA) is a volunteer, not-for-profit, civic association incorporated under Georgia law and supported by membership dues.

Quarterly Meeting & Social

**Monday, July 28
7 pm**

*Join us for news about your neighborhood
Refreshments will be served*

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation, Clairmont Rd.

Artist rendering of proposed park



Strong Support for Proposed Park at Toco Hill Lot

Communities Come Together for a Cause

I wonder if the late Harry Arnold, the former owner of the tree-lined property in Toco Hill Shopping Center (in front of Kroger) had any clue of the emotional attachment this 1.3 acre lot has with so many people in the area? Working closely with Linda Billingsley (president of the Merry Hills Homeowners Assoc.), to spare this site from commercial development and instead create a park, the North Druid Hills Residents Association (NHDRA) has received a huge outpouring of support from local residents, county leaders, businesses, and tree advocates. Our alliance also includes Lavista Park, Leafmore, and Beechcliff.



Liz Beyer
President
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Vision for Toco Hills

If you've had an opportunity to view this property, you will no doubt agree that it is an oasis of natural beauty in a sea of asphalt. It is truly the last piece of natural beauty in the huge area covered by commercial development. Over the past several months, we have been sending a message to our county officials that we see this property as part of a bigger picture for Toco Hills. This property can be more valuable to the County and the community as an open space than as a commercial development. A bank proposed for this property would be in addition to six banks already located within a few blocks.

We envision this property as a commons, as seen in cities such as Savannah and Boston. Imagine winding pathways amid shade and green turf, picnic tables and benches to eat lunch or take a break from work and a children's play area. This is one concept we've been sharing to gather support for the space. Our county commissioners, Gale Walldorff and Judy Yates, and our county CEO, Vernon Jones, have been fully supportive of our efforts to create a park.

Opening the Door

One of the obstacles we currently face is the purchase of the property. The owners are heirs to Harry Arnold and want to land lease it for commercial development. Representatives from Merry Hills and North Druid Hills Residents Assoc. have requested an opportunity to share our vision with the owners, in hope that they would change their minds and allow the property to be purchased. A meeting with the owners' representative will occur this month so that our vision can be passed to the owners. Our hope is they will see this as a chance to leave a legacy, something for future generations to enjoy, instead of an innocuous bank site (that could be abandoned in the near future, as often happens in the banking industry).

Continued next page

Respect your alders, and your oaks too!

- sign held by children at the park rally

At the center of this property, there is a huge white oak, estimated to be around 300 - 350 years old – a true historic landmark. It’s diameter is nearly 5 1/2 feet and larger than the co-state champion white oak in East Point – which was core sampled to be at least 300 years old. To fully grasp its age, remember, DeKalb County was founded 181 years ago and we just celebrated the 227th birthday of the United States this month. And white oaks can live to be 600 years old – making 350 years it’s mere mid life.

Helping Hands

As proof of our momentum, around 75 people, including CEO Jones, attended a pro-park rally on Sunday, July 13th. But that’s just the start. We need people to attend county hearings. We also need donations to help cover the expenses incurred to create the visuals and other communication devices to get the word out. This is not just a request to our association members, but one that is for all in the area. Our association is also keeping our lawyer on retainer for this development. It is important that we cover all bases and proceed with the highest standards. If you feel that this park is worth more than your current membership dues of \$25, please make a donation by using the membership form on the back of the newsletter or at the next General Meeting on July 28th.

We will keep everyone up-to-date on the events and hearings. If you haven’t already, send us your email address at info@ndhra.org. If you don’t have an email address, please let us know if you would like to be contacted by phone or fax.

Please see related articles on the facing page.

**Toco Hills Community Ministry
5K and Tot Trot**

Saturday, September 27, Medlock Park
Race Day registration begins at 8:00 am at the park. Tot Trot follows 5K finish. First Place winners in all age categories. For more information call Ed Williams at 404-327-7738

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Community Rallies for a Park

Pictures might best describe the success we achieved with the Sunday rally on July 13th. In addition to residents from neighboring areas, individuals from Brookhaven to Decatur came out to show their support. The goal of the event was to show the property owners, as well as county officials, how serious we are about conserving this lot. Dekalb County CEO, Vernon Jones, joined us on the sidewalk. He relayed his support for the proposed park to the crowd of approximately 75 attending.



Arnold Property Zoning Issues

John Steinichen

A joint neighborhood association effort is underway to make the old Arnold homestead property on Lavista Rd., in front of Kroger, a community asset rather than just another bank. A request to change the zoning from R-85 to C-1 conditional has been filed with the county and hearings are in progress. This is a very significant site and deserves our full attention.



Discussions have been held with the owners and County officials. Some form of permanent open space is the goal – something that would enhance the quality of the Toco Hill shopping center as well as provide a community focus and asset

July 8th, the Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Commissioners at their meeting on the 22nd defer this rezoning application for 60 days for an opportunity to go back through a complete cycle of reviews. In that time a great deal of work and negotiation is needed.



How To Spot a Dangerous Tree

The recent tree-related tragedies in Atlanta have led many people to rightfully conclude that they must maintain their trees properly. Trees should be examined periodically for health and potential hazards, and there is no substitute for having a professional certified arborist perform tree inspections. But how do you know when to call an arborist? And, as a property owner, what can you do to preserve the trees you love, while protecting yourself and your home against an unhealthy or dangerous tree? Here's a basic outline of where and what to look for to detect potential problems.

Ground Inspection A tree is held up and fed by its root system. There are two types of tree roots. The anchoring roots support the tree, and are the most visible. The absorbing roots pull water and nutrients from the soil. When the anchoring roots rot and decay, the tree has serious problems. The tree may appear healthy, and could be fully clad with foliage because the absorbing roots are still actively supplying the tree with nutrients. It may be completely vertical, or it may have a slight lean. In either case, if there are root problems, even a gentle wind or rainwater sitting on its leaves could cause the tree to topple without warning.

The ground and soil surrounding the base of the tree can provide clues to a serious problem. Cracked or raised soil can indicate root disturbances that could point to tree in the process of uprooting. Look carefully for signs of a tree beginning to fall over. Fungal growth like mushrooms on or near a tree trunk is indicative of rot or decay. The presence of fungus is particularly serious if it is profuse. Fungus grows only on decayed wood. To determine if the tree is unsafe, you need to know how extensive the decay is. Call a certified arborist immediately if you see fungal growth around the base of a tree.

The most accurate procedure for detecting root rot or trunk decay makes use of tool called a resistograph. Here's how it works: A tiny drill bit, less than of an eighth inch in diameter, is pushed into the tree with a gear. A scratch pin records on a wax paper strip the resistance to the drill bit as it enters the tree. This does not damage the tree, and it can tell the tester how decayed or hollow the tree is.

Trunk Inspection The entire tree can break or split if there are cavities or cracks in its trunk. However, the presence of a cavity does not necessarily mean the tree needs to be removed. This depends on how extensive the cavity is, where the tree is growing, and the overall state of the tree's health. The resistograph is valuable here, too, because it can to precisely measure the depth of the cavity or hollow. Using those results, the arborist uses a mathematical formula to determine if there is enough trunk thickness to keep the tree upright.



Peter Jenkins
Certified Arborist
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Look for places on the tree's trunk where there is no bark. This can indicate a dead section or a fungus attack. A long streak of missing bark coming down the tree usually means the tree was hit by lightning. Insects often attack a sick tree's trunk, leaving very fine sawdust shavings that are clearly visible because they are light in color. Ants boring into decayed wood leave coarser shavings. Pine bark beetles attacking a pine tree leave "pitch tubes" that resemble marble-sized balls of light colored sap.

If any of these conditions are present, call a certified arborist to find out if your tree is stable and healthy.

Multi Stemmed Trees Trunks Sometimes a tree grows two or more trunks. The points where the multiple trunks connect must be inspected for weakness or past storm damage. Stronger connections appear as a U shape at the crotch. A tight V shape usually evidences a weak connection. To prevent a double-trunk tree from splitting apart during high winds, a cable made of synthetic fiber can be installed high in the tree to provide mechanical support. Multiple trunk trees should be inspected by a certified arborist.

Branch Inspection One of the most obvious tree dangers is the dead wood that can fall. You can spot dead wood easily: dead branches won't have leaves. (A dead pine branch will have brown needles.) If they have been dead for a period of time, dead branches will be stripped of their bark. Also look for broken branches, especially

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after a strong storm. You might not even know a branch is broken after a recent storm until a month later, when the leaves turn brown. Pockets of decay or rot sometimes exist on the upper side of a branch, where they are invisible to a ground observer. This is where an aerial tree inspection by a certified arborist can be very helpful.

To protect yourself, your home, and the health of your tree, have weak, broken, or dead branches trimmed or removed.

General tips

1. To get the best care for your tree, hire a certified arborist. Arborists have an understanding of a tree's needs. Unlike others who want to profit from your lack of knowledge about tree care, arborists will do their best to protect and save your trees. They will be the last to recommend a removal.
2. If you are having work done on live trees, do not permit climbers to use leg spikes. Leg spikes injure and can sometimes kill a tree.
3. Expect to pay a fee if you want a tree inspection. You are paying for an arborist's knowledge, experience and time.
4. The cheapest estimate may not always be the best deal! A cheap estimate might mean a terrible job awaits your tree!

Peter "Treeman" Jenkins, Certified Arborist
Treeman, Inc. (404) 377-9663

Summertime Bites

Fishing with Conner



Conner Allred
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(404) 634-4165

The fishing has been good overall this year even with all the crazy weather we have had. All the rain has swollen the rivers and creeks making the fishing conditions less than desirable. But fishing on lakes and farm ponds has been productive, especially the smaller lakes.

Bass are biting on plastic worms, black and natural colors, fished weightless if possible. Bream are taking crickets, worms and small spinners like crazy. The crappie fishing has slowed down but you may still catch some on minnows. The best fishing times are 4 pm to 10 am because of the hot weather, but as always, fish whenever you can.

A great place to take the little ones is the Chattahoochie National Park just off Northridge and 400 North. When getting off the exit, bear right on Dunwoody Place, then a right onto Roberts Drive, and enter the Recreation Area. A pond for young people only is on the right – no adults are allowed to fish!

Stone Mountain Park has a lot of fishing opportunities also, and a boat rental is easy at the Fishing Hut or at the Marina. If anyone has access to a private lake, that is the first choice to take the little anglers. Happy Fishing!



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Raven Writes...

The poop on the pets of Fama Pines and surrounds

Molly, Dolly, Holly, Ollie and Harley, oh my!

Golly, there is a definite trend in the names of the dogs in our little neck of the woods. I feel quite left out and am considering a name change...how about Polly? A bird-ish name in keeping with my current style.

Welcome to my column. If you don't know me, I'm Raven, the cute one of the pair of black dogs that lives with Michael on Fama Drive. I tend to be shy of people I don't know but I do like other dogs. Grendahl Behr, my brother, on the other hand, tends to be much more defensive. He gets along better with people.



Harley - OES

You might know Harley the sheepdog next door a bit better. He and Jesse get out a lot more than we do. However, in the event that you don't, I've had a little conversation with Harley and Jesse and have this to report...

Harley is an Old English Sheepdog (OES in the parlance, Jesse tells me) and comes to us via an OES Rescue in South Carolina. As a border collie

on my maternal side, I especially relate to the herding tendencies in an OES. Frankly though, our Michael tends to herd us a lot more than we get to herd him.

Harley's favorite exercise: wrestling ninja poodle. His friends, Misty the poodle and Casey - another OES rescue - visit him almost every day to romp in the backyard. It's such fun when they do that. All of us bark and laugh to see them have such fun.

A distinguishing note about Harley: he is white (head and feet) and gray (body) and he still has his full tail. A full tail is not quite proper with an OES, at least not if it is to compete. However, I'm really not inclined to talk about how that happens or why. We don't have enough room for my opinions on that here. Besides, I think Harley is quite handsome as he is.

A note on rescues that I learned from Jesse: There is a rescue group for almost every AKC breed and they look for foster homes for a rescue animal until they can arrange a permanent placement. Sometimes, as in Harley's case, the foster home ends up being the permanent home. Typically the foster home arranges to have the animal spayed and neutered and its shots updated which the adopter reimburses. A very good cause from what I can tell...

The Animal Rescue Site
SPOT Atlanta Area Animal Rescue List

Wet kisses to you - Raven

A note from Raven's secretary, Michael:

The purpose of this column will be pet talk. There's a heavy emphasis on who is who and some useful insight into a related subject. Any pet gossip you can share will be appreciated and there will be an interview in each column. So, if you know of a good candidate please let us know (michaelwmartin@msn.com). Otherwise, I'll tend towards the dogs I encounter on my walks - but the door is certainly open.

Vet Notes

Fleas and related skin allergies are running high this year, according to Cheshire Bridge Animal Clinic. Dogs can be allergic to the flea's bite and develop dermatitis. Our vet recommends an anti-histamine such as Benadryl to relieve the itching (a milligram per pound every 8-12 hours) and oatmeal bathes like the ones we get at the day spa, er, groomers. The PH balance in people shampoos is too drying for us and only add to the skin problem. Dogs need more conditioners for their skin.

Cokesbury Annual Fall Festival and Chicken BBQ

Saturday, October 4th
10 am-4 pm

Cokesbury United Methodist Church,
2650 North Druid Hills Road NE.

Flea market, Bake Sale, Moon Walk, and more.
For more information, call 404-636-3005

Children's Bike Adventure

The corner of Fama Drive and Jacolyn Place isn't a place where you'd expect to find a crowd, but on Saturday morning, July 12, dozens of neighbors gathered there to socialize. (Some had left by the time this photo was taken). Martha Simmons Turner organized the "Tour De Fama" so kids could ride their bikes while grown-ups (with or without kids) chatted with their neighbors. A neighborhood cookout is planned for Saturday, August 23. Contact Martha at kjturnerinc@earthlink.net.



Land Use Updates

Neighborhood Projects

Status of Previous Projects

There has been no further activity on either the **Simsberry** site at North Druid Hills and Knob Hill (#1 on map), or at **Berkeley Oaks** (#2). Owners and developers have changed. Both will require new applications and procedures under revised Ordinances in order to go forward.

Emory Place (the Jolly/Centex project) is being completed and units being sold (#3). **Nolan Ridge** (three houses on Briarcliff) is sold out (#4). **Grace Arbors East** across from the Greek Cathedral is built out (#5). There has been site preparation work on the **Cliff Valley School** site (#6).

Another buy-out proposal for **Childerlee Lane** has been rejected (#7).

Churches

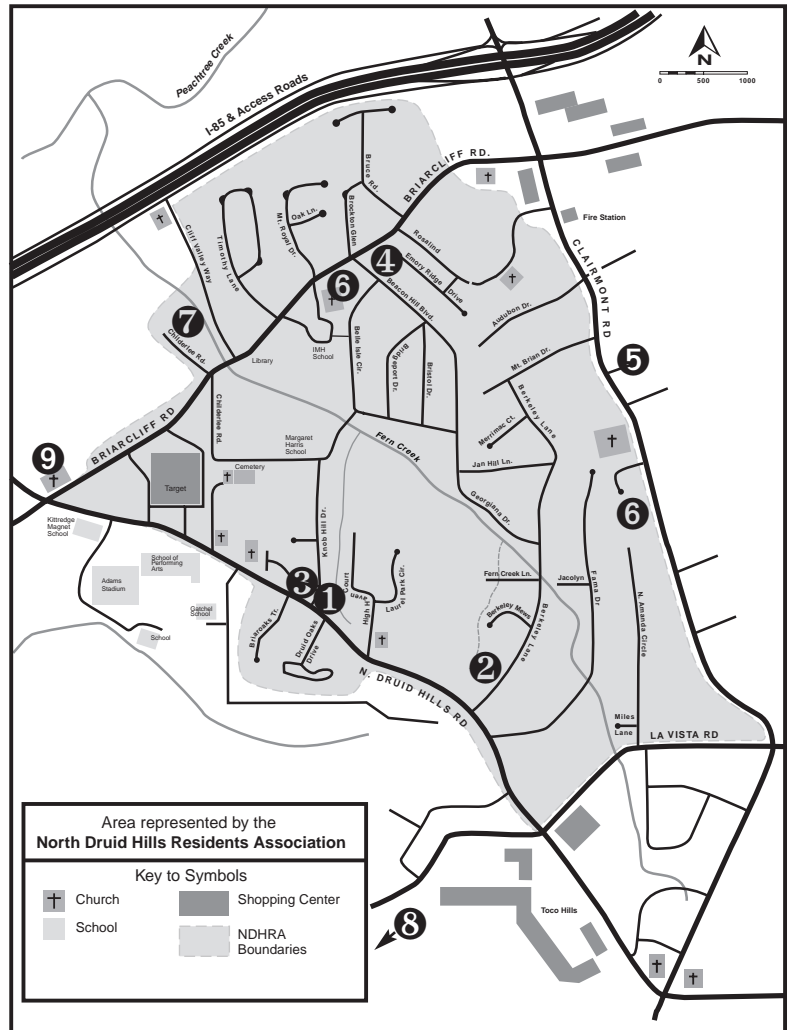
This has been a season of churches. The new buzzword is “mega-church” The **Intown Church** expansion plan SLUP was approved by the BOC with a long list of conditions. In addition to the special conditions, the development will have to comply with all specifications of the Zoning Ordinance R-85 district and the Land Development Ordinance, including a 35 Ft height limit on all buildings. An educational building will be their first project (#8).

The rezoning of the **Lutheran Church** site at Briarcliff and North Druid Hills to C-1 Conditional) was also approved by the BOC. That will allow them to relocate to a much larger site on Lawrenceville Hwy. near the Perimeter. We could not prevent the use conversion from Institutional to Commercial but we were successful in working out a long list of conditions. We emphasized landscaping and tree protection. Redevelopment cannot occur until the new church is functional – almost one year away. Site work will cause serious traffic problems (#9).

It appears that the **IHM Catholic Church** plans to build a new sanctuary along the Briarcliff Rd. frontage. Site plans are being proposed to the congregation.

Housing Redevelopment

The demolition and replacement of residences in this area is increasing. Two houses are replacing one house at Clairmont and Audubon.



Note the increased density by Grace Arbors West and East along Clairmont. Also, see the corner of Christmas Lane and Pine Tree Circle in Merry Hills.

These projects raise a question of compatibility with the established character of mature neighborhoods. Maintaining a high level of established community value for the whole is being sacrificed to developer offers for individual lots so they can over-build incompatible new housing. The County has yet to face up to the need to regulate infill and replacement housing just as much as for new housing subdivisions.

For more details on development in our neighborhood, visit our web site: www.ndhra.org/zoning



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See our web site at www.ndhra.org

Thanks

NDHRA would like to thank the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation for hosting our April General Meeting. (An additional thanks goes out to the Cathedral's staff for the preparation of wonderful Greek desserts and other refreshments!)

North Druid Hills Residents Association 2003 Membership and Donation Form

Would you like to participate in one of the following Committees?

- Zoning/Land use
- Environmental Enhancement
- Community Relations
- Newsletter/Communications
- Membership
- Neighborhood Watch Block Captain

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Name _____

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Phone _____ Email _____

How long have you lived in the neighborhood? _____

I'm a first time member.

I'm a renewing member.

Donation Amount \$ _____

Annual Membership is \$25 and runs from January through December.

Donations toward the Arnold Property expenses can be made with a check payable to NDHRA.

Payments can be mailed to the following address, or dropped off at the General Meeting this month.

NDHRA, Inc., P.O. Box 95965, Atlanta, GA 30347