

Please attend the Final NDHRA Community Meeting of 2008

Sunday, November 23rd 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Greek Orthodox Church in the Community Center (follow the signs)
2500 Clairmont Road NE



In the spirit of Thanksgiving and to show our appreciation for the use of the Church's facilities at no charge to our Association, please bring a donation of non-perishable foods (i.e., canned and dried food goods) to support the Church's Holiday Food Bank contribution to the Savannah Street Mission in Cabbagetown (a suburb of Atlanta).

Several important items will be discussed, and this will be your opportunity to address the Board members on the topics addressed in this issue of the *Fern Creek Crier*, as well as anything else you have on your minds...within reason.

We hope to see you there, and please bring a neighbor or two!

President's Message by Alan Pinsker

Dear Neighbors:

It's hard to believe how quickly the seasons have changed from that hot Sunday in July, when we issued our previous *Fern Creek Crier* and held our Community Meeting and Cook-out / Pool Party at Emory, to these chilly days of mid-November. Time does pass quickly when things are busy, and that's certainly an understatement with everything that has been going on within and around our neighborhood.

Unlike the situation we faced last year, with attention focused primarily on Alex Garvin's Quadrant Area Study and The Ssembler Company's controversial Briarcliff Town Center proposal, this year has seen a multitude of other activities that have garnered our attention, and have continued to bring together the efforts of surrounding neighborhoods to address them collectively. The collective response to the Briarcliff Town Center project demonstrated the influence that neighborhoods can have when we work together to voice our concerns about outside factors that potentially threaten the quality of life that we and our adjoining communities want to preserve. Like the Briarcliff Town Center, today's proposed developments have far reaching implications than that of just a new infill development a few years ago. Until these developers started proposing such large-scale, high-density projects right at our doorsteps, most of us have probably never heard of an Overlay District or a Town Center designation from DeKalb County's Planning Department — and now they are commonplace terminology in our everyday repertoire. I encourage you to visit the County's Planning Department website at www.co.dekalb.ga.us/planning to learn more.

One of the constants to come out of all discussions is the impact of development on traffic along North Druid Hills Road, which already suffers from excessive traffic congestion. Recognizing that having the necessary infrastructure is key to meeting the future needs and growth of our area, Commissioners Gannon and Rader have applied to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for a **Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study** of the North Druid Hills corridor, from Buford Highway to Clairmont Road.

President's Message *(continued)*

While we won't know if the study will be funded for the next 30 to 45 days or so, this is a critical step forward to addressing the needs of several communities that are affected by traffic in and around this major arterial. One of the benefits of the LCI Study is that it involves local organizations to develop planning strategies for their respective communities. If funded, the LCI Study will provide an excellent venue for shaping the future of our area, including options "fixing" NDH Road. *Please see Dan Wright's article for more details.*

During the Presidential election, both candidates talked extensively about the need for change. In general terms, and particularly in the context of the current state of our economy, the expectation — and hope of all Americans — is that change will result in improved conditions. We are likewise hopeful that the inevitable change to our greater community will be for the better, but it will only be that way if we get your feedback and participation in the planning process. A good example is the proposed redevelopment of Executive Park into a high-density, mixed-used development. The LaVista Park Civic Association (LPCA) supported the NDHRA and Merry Hills Homeowners Association's request to have our own community meeting with Executive Park's developer and planners to ask questions, voice concerns and offer comments. I was pleased to see that it was a well attended and constructive session. As other developments come to table in the months ahead, including the redevelopment of Toco Hill Shopping Center, the Williamsburg Apartments, the proposed Ashkouti apartment development, and others, we will continue to engage these developers in meaningful dialogues that will, at some point along the way, provide venues for your participation in the process.

Speaking of the election, NDHRA and Merry Hills Homeowners Association (MHHA) held a Candidates Forum for the DeKalb County School Board, District 2 seat a few weeks ago. I was pleased to hear that all three candidates recognized the intrinsic value of the approximately 40-acres of school properties along North Druid Hills (across from Target) as irreplaceable assets to our area that must be evaluated for the future needs of central DeKalb County, rather than selling them off to the highest bidder for high-density development. While a very large performing arts (K-12 magnet) school is currently proposed for the site, we will work with the School Board to address the future of the site.

One of our Board's "pet projects" this year is the improvement of Kittredge Park into a usable amenity for our neighborhood. Since its purchase by the County several year ago, the nearly 35-acre park has sat virtually untouched following the removal of structures on the site, and has become overgrown and the home to vagrants (see map at <http://merryhills.com/KittredgeMap.pdf>). Rather than wait for something to happen as a result of the redevelopment of the adjacent apartments, NDHRA along with MHHA and LPCA have formed the *Friends of Kittredge Park*. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Commissioner Kathie Gannon for working with us to get this project moving forward. In light of the County's extreme budget deficit, we are hopeful that this project will continue to the next step of becoming a reality that we can all enjoy. As the County moves forward in the near future to retain a professional landscape architect/park planner, we will endeavor to create opportunities for you to provide your input during the design process. Please see Dan Wright's article about the Future of Kittredge Park, and plan to attend an important kick-off event on December 14th with Commissioner Gannon and other officials. *We must show them that we care about this park if we are to gain their full commitment to make it happen!*

You have my fervent commitment to keep you all as fully informed as possible of events taking place in and around our community, from development activities to crime reports to lost pets. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our Board members with your concerns for improving our neighborhood. The best thing you can do is to *get involved and make a difference!*

Finally, with Thanksgiving and the other holidays just a few weeks away, your NDHRA Board wishes all of you and yours a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Respectfully yours in service,

Alan M. Pinsker

The Future of North Druid Hills Road is up to Us by Dan Wright

I talked with you at the NDHRA 2008 Summer Barbeque about needing a new vision and consensus about North Druid Hills Road adjacent to our neighborhood. DeKalb residents enjoy the convenient access it provides to destinations east and west of our neighborhood but so do many other commuters every day. Everyone knows that the traffic is a serious problem and something should be done.

North Druid Hills Road is not a state route so it is the responsibility of DeKalb County. This fact presents opportunities and challenges. We have a chance to provide input to a county process that will be different from what we would be subjected to by the Georgia Department of Transportation. However, if we cannot find an agreement about what should happen, nothing will happen or we will get something none of us wants.

A variety of configurations to improve road capacity are possible but widening alternatives would require painful additions to the right-of-way and limited access alternatives would create new obstacles for local residents. The prospect of any mass transit mode beyond street running busses would require similar sacrifices from local residents. Narrowing the road to limit capacity or leaving it as is are options but responsible citizens demand improvements.

The choices before us are not limited to, "What should happen to the highway?" There are additional pressures that affect the need to determine a policy for the corridor. This year we saw intense interest from numerous developers that proposed dense multi-use developments along North Druid Hills Road from Buford Highway to Clairmont Road. Although we were able to avoid the land use and zoning change request that would have entitled a dense new rental complex across from Berkeley Lane and Fama Drive, we have only delayed the redevelopment onslaught.

What would motivate us to agree to what we consider to be encroachments on our neighborhood? Could the reconfigured road be a parkway? How will noise and air pollution that is already a problem be addressed? If the road is improved and more traffic jams into the corridor, how will our quality of life be changed? Is there a land use plan that could accommodate all of the needs of our community and really make things better for all of us?

These questions and many others are being asked. Commissioners Rader and Gannon have agreed to initiate a LCI (Livable Communities Initiative) Study to get community input and try to find an answer that is best for everyone. NDHRA is supporting the application for funding for this process along with surrounding neighborhoods. I look forward to discussing this with you at our fall association meeting.



The Future Of Kittredge Park is Now by Dan Wright

NDHRA, Merry Hills Homeowners Association, and LaVista Park Civic Association have come together as Friends of Kittredge Park. We are working with our commissioners and the DeKalb County Parks & Recreation Department to provide input to a Kittredge Park Improvement Contract funded by recent county bond issues.

Please plan to join Friends of Kittredge Park and Kathie Gannon on **December 14** at the park for refreshments, to learn about the endangered Star Vine (a.k.a. Wild Sassafras), to tour the undeveloped park, and to pitch in to the inaugural park clean up. We will send you more information about this event and the improvements to the park soon.

Dan Wright
NDHRA Land Use and Zoning Chairman

CRIME ALERT

Over the past several months, we have been notified, and have alerted our members, of the various car and home break-ins that have taken place in and around our neighborhood. It is imperative that we notify the DeKalb County Police of all criminal activity or suspicious behavior, as this is the only way they will know what locations need additional coverage. To file **NON-EMERGENCY police reports, call 404.294.2911**

Community Update

Provided by Crime Awareness Unit of the DeKalb County Police Department

23 October 2008

"Auto Thefts" or "Stolen Vehicles"



Now that the cold weather season is approaching, the potential for Auto Thefts are prone to increase. The increase, unfortunately, could be victim motivated; this means that during the colder months car owners who warm up their cars and leave them unattended contribute to these statistics.

- During the winter months, Detectives estimate that 20-30% of cars reported stolen are taken during this moment of opportunity
- Leaving keys, purses, computers, etc. in the vehicle gives opportunity to other criminal activity (i.e. burglaries, Identity Theft and Fraud)

If you are a victim of an **Auto Theft**, please dial **911** immediately to alert the police of the incident.

H.E.A.T.

Help Eliminate Auto Thefts

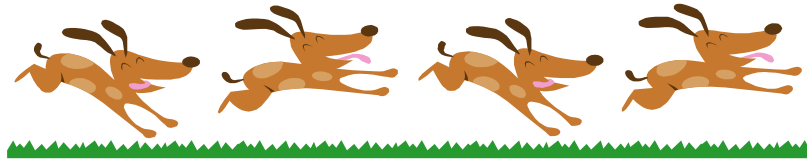
Ways to possibly avoid becoming an **Auto Theft** victim:

- Do not leave your running vehicle unsecured and unattended at any time
- Always lock your vehicle when parked in your driveway/carport
- Stay with your vehicle during the warming-up process to avoid availability to thieves
- Call 911 for any suspicious persons or vehicles in your community
- Communicate with your neighbors on reported incidents to avoid others becoming future victims



*** Remember if you do not inform the Police,
the Police do not know what's happening in your community. ***





Here's The Scoop...Pick Up After Your Pet

Stormwater Pollution – Every time it rains, water runs off rooftops, lawns, driveways, parking lots and streets, picking up pollutants and debris along the way. Eventually, “stormwater” flows into rivers, lakes or streams, carrying pollution with it. This damages the water for both aquatic life and human use.

Stormwater pollution is one of the biggest problems facing the water resources of metropolitan north Georgia. In fact, the majority of water quality violations in the region are due to polluted stormwater runoff.

The Problem

- Pet waste left on sidewalks, streets, yards or other open areas can be washed away and carried by rainwater into storm drains and drainage ditches which flow to nearby rivers, lakes and streams.
- A single gram of pet waste contains an average of 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, some of which can cause disease in humans.
- Waters that contain high levels of bacteria are unfit for human contact.
- As animal waste decays in water, it uses up dissolved oxygen that fish and aquatic life need.

Pet waste contains nutrients that can cause excessive algae growth in a river or lake, upsetting the natural balance

Did You Know?

As of 2002, there are over 60 million pet dogs in the United States.* That's 63 million pounds of dog poop a year!
*Source: 2002 U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Source book by the American Veterinarian Medical Association. It would take a scoop of 300 feet wide and 800 feet deep to dispose of all that poop!

The Solution

Picking up after your pet keeps waste out of nearby storm drains, drainage ditches, streams and lakes. It helps keep waters healthy for recreation. It protects human health and the plants and animals that depend on clean water.

Doing the right thing is easy. Whenever you walk your dog or take him outside in your yard, you can easily do the right thing. Simply scoop the poop or use a plastic bag and dispose of it in a garbage can. It only takes a minute, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you're being a good neighbor and protecting nearby waters.

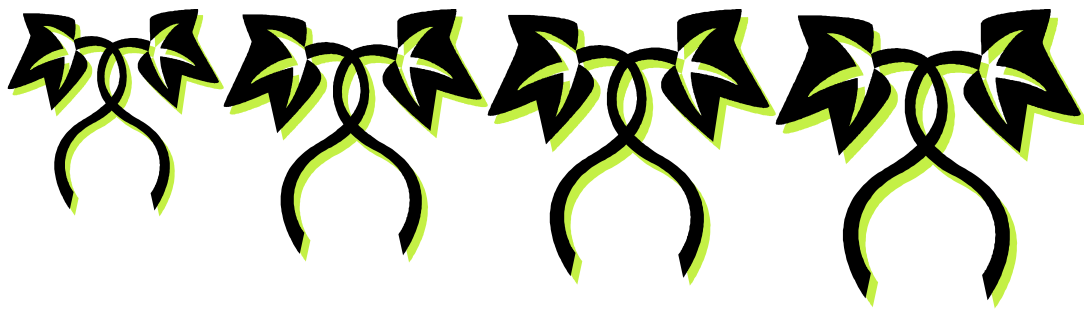
(Information Provided by Clean Water Campaign – www.cleanwatercampaign.com)

Invaders in our Midst...as well as Freedom Fighters!

Look around your property, your neighborhood, parks and public land. English ivy, wisteria, grape vines, privet, and kudzu are killing your trees. It is such a slow process we do not see it happening. Invasive plants are smothering life from all native plants, bushes, and trees. New growth of trees is impossible under these conditions.

Our neighborhood is fortunate to have mature trees, giving it beauty, character and value. Trees absorb tons of CO₂, produce life-giving oxygen, improve water quality, and minimize runoff and erosion.

According to property appraisers, trees increase the value of a home by at least 10%. In summer, trees have a cooling effect in our homes, and in winter they serve as wind blockers resulting in lower fuel cost. The cost of removing a dying tree can range from \$1000 to \$5000. Ridding invasive plants and allowing for healthy trees and re-growth has a real value to our quality of life -and to our bank balance!



The Arbor Freedom Force (AFF) was created this year as an educational, community organization, the mission of which is to bring awareness to the *invaders in our midst* and to provide help and support in removing all types of invasive plants. For sources and information on invasive plant removal; or if you wish to work toward the mission of AFF, please contact Judith Porter at Judith@ArborFreedomForce.com.

Resources to learn about Invasive Plants:

1. www.gaeppecc.org

Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council. This site shows pictures of invasive plants in Georgia

2 www.deepforestfieldschool.org

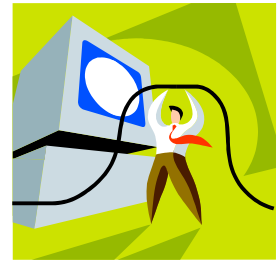
Their mission is to save forests. They (1) provide a service to clean area of invasive plants; (2) provide education on methods to keep it clean; (3) provide educational field trips for schools and community organizations; (4) increase public awareness; and (5) provide consultation.

3. Go to <http://assignmentearth.org/> Click on "Our Stories" and find the "Play List". Click on the right arrow at the bottom until clips 61-71 come up above. Find and click on "Invasive Plants". This provides good information about Privet.

(Article written and kindly submitted by Judith Porter, an NDHRA resident)

NDHRA NEEDS A WEBMASTER

Do you possess the time, talent and desire to be a part of the North Druid Hills Residents Association as its official NDHRA Website Webmaster? The Association Webmaster will help keep our members informed about all of the various activities within our neighborhood. If you would like to learn more, and are interested in joining us, please contact the NDHRA President, Alan Pinsker at alan.pinsker@comcast.net.



Here are some areas of responsibility associated with this volunteer position:

- Maintain account relationship with website and email hosting company on behalf of the Association, including insuring the hosting company has appropriate back-up and disaster recovery plans;
- Regularly update the Association website by helping to develop and post content to such site as may be directed by the Board of Directors provided such content is in keeping with the policies and objectives of the Association and any strategic plan adopted by the Board of Directors
- Create, maintain and regularly update the email service lists for use by the Association with the assistance of the Membership Committee
- Distribute appropriate email communications and alerts related to Association business as requested by the Board of Directors or the Chair of any Standing Committee or Special Committee;
- Distribute email alerts related to neighborhood crime issues, lost pets, or upcoming neighborhood meetings;
- Create and troubleshoot email accounts for the members of the Board, or any Special Committee; and
- Maintain domain registrations and register the website with appropriate search engines.

This may seem like a time-consuming effort, but it really is not. At most it will be a hour or two a month, and what we really need is someone who has this expertise and a little time to spend on these efforts. Please consider becoming involved with our neighborhood association today — we could really use your help!

*******NDHRA Membership Renewal Reminder*******

This is just a reminder that if you have not renewed your membership in the North Druid Hills Residents Association – *now is the time!* Please visit our website at <http://www.ndhra.org> for the Membership Form – the annual dues remain at \$25.00.

If you are not sure which month you signed up, or last renewed your dues, please contact our association Treasurer, Jeff Holmes at jmount63@aol.com and he will be happy to help you.

With all of the new construction and changes that are being considered for our area, now is a great time to get involved and become part of your neighborhood association. The overall mission of NDHRA is to enhance and preserve the quality of life of our neighborhood, and promote the general welfare and safety of our community and its residents. Some of the areas in which the NDHRA has had a positive and on-going impact include:

- Fostering Neighborhood-Friendly Residential and Commercial Development
- Protecting and Securing Parks and Green Space
- Active and On-going Involvement with County Officials
- Public Education on a Variety of Important Issues
- Environmental Enhancement and Education
- Neighborhood Crime Watch & E-mail Crime Alerts
- Lost/Found Pet Alerts

Help us facilitate and foster a spirit of community and maintain a positive relationship with local government. Become a member or renew your dues today!

Thank you!

North Druid Hills Residents Association

North Druid Hills Residents Association Annual Membership and Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Date _____ New Member/Renewing Member (select one): _____

Fern Creek Crier newsletter delivery (check your preference): Email__ Hardcopy_____

The following committees are available for your participation. Please indicate your interest and the chairperson will contact you.

Zoning/Land Use__ Environmental Enhancement__ Newsletter/Communications__

Membership__ Other _____

Annual Membership is \$25.00 per household. Please make checks payable to NDHRA. Payments can be mailed to
NDHRA, Inc. P. O. Box 29249, Atlanta, GA 30345
NDHRA is incorporated as a 501(c)(4) and membership dues and donations are not tax deductible.

***** **SHARE THIS ONE WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR*******

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