



HAWTHORNE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Spring / April 2004

Distribution: 1400+

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Atlanta, GA 30345

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Next board meeting: May 5

Board Meeting dates:

1st Wednesdays, 7:30 pm,
odd-numbered months.

Call Beth to attend/observe
or to propose agenda items.

Annual Dues: \$20/address

*Board members will all have
e-mail addresses when
website setup is complete.*

President's Thoughts ...

All over the neighborhood, you see signs of spring ... plants in bloom, yard waste bags piled by the curb, and For Sale signs sprouting in front yards. Who will our new neighbors be? What image does our neighborhood portray? Look at this neighborhood as if you didn't already live here: what attracts you, what turns you off? What can we as individuals and as an association do to improve the place that we call home?

Several neighborhood visual improvement projects are in progress now: the greenspace project, a landscaping project at the I-85/Shallowford Interchange, a Publix plan for regularly-scheduled clean-up days along Shallowford, efforts by garden clubs to improve subdivision entrances. Other less visual projects are also in progress: planning for a meet-the-candidates event prior to the summer primary election, planning for a public safety communications system, planning for neighborhood-wide social events, continued attention to zoning and redevelopment in our area, and continued monitoring and advocacy on the activities at PDK airport. Look inside this newsletter for information on all these efforts.

Last newsletter HCA asked you, the resident, what issues concern you most and what you could volunteer to help with. Approximately 12% responded. Thank you, involved neighbors !!!! Beginning with this newsletter, there is an indication on each address label of the membership status of the recipient, if you see a "PD" after "or current resident", your membership is up-to-date. Thanks to those who sent additional donations! HCA is incorporated as a Georgia non-profit organization, but contributions are not a tax-deductible.

Respondents indicating interest or concern about listed issues: crime 45%, greenspace 33%, PDK 40%, schools 18%, traffic 27%, zoning 29%, other 4%. 46% of respondents wanted to join one or more e-mail lists (crime, general, advocacy). January responders, who requested e-mail info, received neighborhood watch and/or an announcement for an InFill Housing forum depending on specified area(s) of interest. We haven't had any Advocacy mailings and we've just added February-April responders to the lists. If you want to be part of this communications network, communicate your interest to HCA.

Please send in dues (\$20) if you haven't already done so. How are your dues spent? From September 2002 to August 2003, the association's major expense was newsletter mailings which consumed \$2250 of the \$2677 the association spent. The association's total income for that period was \$2443. HCA operates on a shoestring. The board is now considering which things, maybe the newsletter, may become a membership benefit to minimize expenditures. Board members devote many hours of volunteer time in representing the neighborhood at a variety of meetings and keeping the neighborhood informed. Please show your support of your community and help build our neighborhood association by sending in your dues today!

Beth Nathan

ARMSTRONG GREENSPACE

With the county's acquisition of the Armstrong property (10.6 acres, Briarcliff Road just north of Shallowford), we have an opportunity to restore a small area of woods to a more natural condition and to provide ourselves with a gem in which to enjoy nature. In February, a diverse neighborhood committee met to discuss possibilities and issues and later took a guided walk. Another group participated in a March workday to cut ivy off trees. The county plans to schedule a "charette" meeting to garner everyone's thoughts on park planning, perhaps as early as mid-May. I expect the county to post neighborhood signs about the meeting. As soon as I know more, HCA will inform (primarily via e-mail) those who have expressed interest in the greenspace.



PLANT-LIFE

by Beth Nathan
as learned from Connie Gray

If humans hadn't intervened in the past few centuries, the HCA area would likely be a forest. Metro Atlanta is losing forest, at a rate of up to 50 acres every day, losing large sections of a natural ecosystem that provides cooling shade, filters our air, shelters and feeds wildlife and whose open ground filters water on its way to streams and rivers. Our forest would likely be a mix of drier upland and mesic (moist but well-drained) piedmont forest types. In its maturity our forest canopy would have been primarily white oak and hickory with beech in more mesic areas; earlier in its life cycle the canopy would have contained more tulip poplar, red maple and loblolly pine. Smaller trees and shrubs would all have been deciduous, not evergreen. Light would have filtered through the canopy down to a scattering of wildflowers and leaf litter on the forest floor. In the many niches within the forest (the sunny spot on the forest floor, the depression where moisture collects, the north-facing slope where everything stays a little cooler, a dead standing tree), there would have been a wide diversity of plant life supporting a wide diversity of wildlife each in balance with the other.

Plants that would not naturally have occurred are called "exotics", some of which can be "invasive", no longer controlled by their native habitat, crowding out native plants upon which native wildlife depends. Many plants that do not impress us as beautiful plants, are critical to the life of some species of wildlife.

BIRD-LIFE

by Georgann Schmalz
neighbor and professional ornithologist

Large forested lands are succumbing to urban growth and sprawl, being reduced to small wooded fragments. Many small protected "greenspaces" are surrounded by homes and yards that are often hostile to birds. There is a distinct and persistent decline of songbirds in small fragments of forest (less than 100 acres) despite their plant composition due to ecological factors including predation by cats, opossums and raccoons.

So how can we make our community a better place for birds?

- Step outside and inventory the treeless patches on your street—including your own front yard! Do you see open spaces with little or no vegetation that add to the loss of bird habitat and diversity?
- Vary your landscape with native trees and shrubs that offer both layers and diversity of vegetation.
- Select plants that offer flowers, seeds, nuts or berries for food throughout the year and dense cover for shelter in winter and nesting in summer.
- Do not leave pet food outside for predators like opossums and raccoons to eat.
- Keep your cat indoors. Period. Remove feral cats from the neighborhood.

Try to see your yard through the eyes of a Wood Thrush, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird or a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Try to picture your yard as part of the larger greenspace required by birds.

PDK AIRPORT ... Will PDK Airport Adhere to County Regulations?

This is a vital question for those of us who live just two miles from the second busiest airport in Georgia after Hartsfield-Jackson itself. Since 1976 DeKalb County, the owner and operator of DeKalb-Peachtree (PDK) Airport, has operated the airport under a DeKalb County ordinance limiting the weight of aircraft using the airport to no more than 75,000 lbs., unless special prior permission were granted.

For the past decade however, increasing numbers of heavier jets have been using PDK Airport, causing many residents to become concerned that the airport may be in the process of transformation from a general aviation CII airport (its present official status) to a CIII commercial airport capable of accommodating much heavier and generally noisier planes.

On January 15, 2002, PDK Airport Director Lee Rimmel submitted a grant proposal for state assistance to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) indicating that the taxiway reconstruction project he was proposing was specifically designed to INCREASE the weight-bearing capacity of the airport to a level that would "provide a runway and connecting taxiway infrastructure that will accommodate all aircraft currently in the business aviation fleet." [emphasis added]

To accomplish this objective would require that the routine weight-bearing capacity of the taxiways be increased to far more than the 75,000 lb. limit of the long-standing DeKalb County ordinance. Among the aircraft included in the standard "business aviation fleet," for example, are DC9's and Boeing 737 Business Jets, the latter of which can weigh as much as 171,000 lbs. when fully loaded with fuel.

In an Airport Advisory Board meeting on August 5, 2002, Airport Director Lee Rimmel indicated that the taxiway reconstructions he was proposing would allow PDK Airport to routinely accommodate 3,500 take-offs or landings of 105,000 lb. aircraft annually.

Based, however, on the impression that the taxiways were only being reconstructed to routinely accommodate planes weighing a MAXIMUM of 75,000 lbs., the DeKalb County Commissioners approved the initial planning phase for the taxiway reconstruction project on August 27, 2002. A year later, after finding out that the PDK taxiways were actually being engineered to a substantially HIGHER weight capacity than the County's 75,000 lb. ordinance permitted for routine use, the Commissioner unanimously voted to condition their acceptance of further funding for the taxiways on their being engineered (re-engineered) to a MAXIMUM 75,000 lb. weight for routine use by dual-wheeled aircraft.

THAT WAS SEVEN MONTHS AGO. In the aftermath of the Commission's August 26, 2003 vote, PDK Director Lee Rimmel has repeatedly insisted that the taxiway project (which he had previously stated was being built to routinely accommodate at least 105,000 lb. planes) was, in fact, already being planned to EXACTLY the same specifications as the Commission's 75,000 lb. MAXIMUM mandated weight. Rimmel further has indicated that he has not and will not make any changes in those previous taxiway plans.

On April 6, 2004, concerned citizens sent DeKalb CEO Vernon Jones a certified letter pointing out to him that as the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County he is responsible for carrying out the laws passed by the DeKalb County Commission and asking him to let us know, within two weeks, what he will do to insure that his employee, Lee Rimmel, adheres to those County laws regarding the taxiway reconstruction project.

If you are concerned about this matter and would be willing to share your concerns with CEO Jones, he can be reached by e-mail (ceo@co.dekalb.ga.us) or by writing to him at 1300 Commerce Drive/Decatur, GA 30030. If you are e-mailing CEO Jones, it is easy (and most effective) also to copy your letter to the seven County Commissioners (galew@co.dekalb.ga.us, Jayates@co.dekalb.ga.us, louwalker@co.dekalb.ga.us, CLMITCHE@co.dekalb.ga.us, BELLIS@co.dekalb.ga.us, HankJ@co.dekalb.ga.us, LL.Johnso@co.dekalb.ga.us). Please act NOW on this important matter. Spread the word to anyone else you can, as well.

Larry Foster

CRIME & SAFETY

In January, the Hawthorne Civic Association board met with Captain Waits, DeKalb County Police, to discuss continued robberies in our area, consisting primarily of workday entries into garages and carports. At the end of March, Judge Johnny Panos reported from an Echo Hills meeting with the police that three or four different rings of burglars had been operating, stealing from cars, taking lawn equipment from carports, or entering through the carport doors and taking what they could in five minutes before the police could arrive. The police feel that they have caught these particular rings.

It is important to consider the following measures to make our homes safer:

1. Locking valuable items that are in carports and garages.
2. Providing lights (timers/motion sensitive) and noises (dogs, radio, etc) that indicate the home is occupied.
3. Removing newspapers and trashcans from the driveway.
4. Getting to know your neighbors and sharing information about your daily schedule, trips planned and expected work vans/trucks.
5. Watching for unusual patterns of behavior, reporting them to the police and sharing this information with the neighbors. Call 911.

In March came official word that **NO TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES** will be installed on **ANY** streets in our neighborhood. HCA has asked for additional details from the court.

Meetings with police officers have resulted in more frequent patrols, especially near schools, and traffic recording stations placed at strategic points. The most "congested" times are 8-9 am and 5-6 pm. Our adherence to traffic regulations can set the pace!

Walkers, be sure to wear reflective clothing after dusk and **always** walk facing traffic.

Drivers, you must not pass a stopped school bus that has its warning signals activated. See <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/~transportation/carsstop.htm>

Traffic Calming Yard Signs Phase 2 - Due to popular demand, Hawthorne PTA will order more yard signs; contact Simon Dodge (sdodge@siconsults.com) for info. The Hawthorne PTA was pleasantly surprised to find out how many neighbors were interested purchasing yard signs. There have been reports of vehicles slowing as they passed the yard signs.

ZONING

The access road motel, I-85 at Shallowford, was purchased and demolished by Aaron Goldman, Northbrook Apartments. Adjacent land was previously zoned for development of Northbrook, Phase II.

An InFill Housing Forum, March 18 at Lakeside High School, was attended by approximately 500 people. The event arose from concerns about the rapid pace of teardowns and insensitive, incompatible infill in the LaVista Briarcliff corridor and inconsistent application of the DeKalb County Code of Ordinances. A PowerPoint presentation (available at <http://www.ndhra.org/infill>) illustrated problems occurring when height, grade, set-back and compatibility requirements are not enforced. A panel of experts presented viewpoints. CEO Vernon Jones, Commissioners Gale Walldorff, Larry Johnson and Judy Yates addressed questions submitted from the audience. The CEO established an Infill Task Force, including members of the panel, Commissioners Gale Walldorff and Larry Johnson, forum organizers Liz Beyer (president, North Druid Hills Residents Assn) and Harriett Hollis (president, Oak Grove Civic Assn), and additional citizens representing other areas of DeKalb County, to review and propose code revisions related to infill construction. The committee began meeting the next week and is to complete its work by the end of May. <http://www.30345.com> was established as a clearinghouse for information about Infill issues and to post news about the task force.

HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



MONEY FOR FREE ... Support Hawthorne Elementary School by:

- Using a Publix or Kroger affinity card (available in main office)
- Recycling newspaper (bin located by school dumpster)
- Recycling printer cartridges (box in lobby)
- Recycling Kroger plastic bags (container in lobby)
- Collecting any of several varieties of "Box Tops for Education" (box in lobby). See <http://www.boxtops4education.com/>

Hawthorne's PTA, under the direction of Vice-President Jane Sinner, has published a cookbook, "Hawthorne Family Favorites: Good Food From All Over" which includes 35+ cuisines and 300 recipes, children's art and writings. \$10. Contact Jane @ 770.270.8964 to buy your copy!

The 5th Annual Tech Trek, Hawthorne's 1 mile fun run/walk and 3 mile run, will be held Sunday May 2, at 4:30 pm. There is a fee. Pre-register, if possible, to help with the t-shirt count.

Design discussions are underway about replacing the existing school sign.

NEAR-BY

Our nearest Publix has 'adopted' the I-85 interchange and other portions of Shallowford Road and engaged Dresden East Civic Assn (DECA) and HCA in cleanup and re-landscaping projects. GA DOT tore out junipers at the interchange, oversaw new plans, provided mulch, and watered. Worthing Southeast (new apartments) donated bobcat and worker time to prepare the soil. Publix and ChocoLate provided refreshments for a March 27 workday. Right Car furnished water for plants. The civic associations are paying for DOT-specified crepe myrtles, obtained from Lowe's at public service prices. Green-thumbed residents have donated daylilies, iris, black-eyed susans and Miss Huff's lantana. Newspaper covered with woodchips will retard weeds. Let Beth know if you can help this spring or with summer watering or further planting in the fall.

HCA participates meets monthly with a loose coalition of neighborhood associations called Northeast Neighborhoods Network (NNN). The following comes from a recent meeting.

Dresden East Civic Assn (DECA) spring quarterly meeting will be Thursday, April 22, 7 pm, social starts at 6:30. HCA residents welcome. Dresden School (Dresden just west of Shallowford). Program: Q&A with county commissioners; written questions submitted through a moderator.

Chamblee Wal-Mart proposal: Old BellSouth site, Peachtree Industrial at Chamblee-Tucker, across from Internat'l Farmers Market.
chamblee_citizens_care@yahoo.com
770/986-2700

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Chamblee_Citizens_Care/

INFRASTRUCTURE

If you notice problems with public infrastructure, e.g. roads, drains, traffic signals, water lines, fire hydrants, etc, please notify the appropriate governmental entity. But HCA would like to hear about it too, so that we can track failures and repairs.

From DeKalb's water restrictions page (<https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/watersewer/restrictions.html>): Prior to a drought being declared, outdoor water use can occur during any hours on the days allowed by the State. Allowed days, for both homes and businesses, are defined as follows:

- Addresses ending with odd numbers may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.
 - Addresses ending with even numbers or those that are unnumbered may water on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.
-

ELECTIONS

Our next election day is July 20, 2004; absentee voting begins July 7. This summer election will be a General & Nonpartisan Primary which includes final votes on nonpartisan offices such as judges and board of education seats along with the choice of party candidates to appear on November ballots. Unless there are viable general election (November) candidates in more than one political party, a partisan office can *effectively* be filled during the July primary, whether it appears on the November ballot or not. **All this makes the July Primary VERY IMPORTANT.** Hawthorne Civic Association is working to schedule one or more candidates' events in June in conjunction with other northeast neighborhoods.

To vote in the July Primary, you must have registered to vote by June 21. If you vote regularly, you remain registered. When you register, there is no declaration of party preference. In Georgia primaries, each voter just asks for the ballot for the party of his/her choice on Election Day. When a primary election requires a runoff, it is considered a continuation of the election and the voter is restricted to staying within the party originally selected. Runoffs, when needed, are scheduled 3 weeks following Election Day.

When you first register to vote or when any of your precinct or district assignments changes, you receive a Precinct Card from DeKalb County Voter Registration that states your polling place and district assignments. On Election Day, you must vote at your assigned precinct. However, in the week preceding the election, you may participate in Advance Voting, absentee voting without having to state a reason, at limited live voting locations. This is new in 2004.

For more information about DeKalb elections, an absentee ballot application, sample ballots, election results, district maps or a way to lookup your districts and polling place, use the DeKalb Voter Registration website at <http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/voter.htm>. The website <https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/voter/locator.asp> will give you your districts, the current officeholders with links to their websites, and a link to map to your polling place. The DeKalb County Voter Registration & Elections Office is at 404-298-4020.

In the HCA area, people are assigned to four different precincts (polling locations): Hawthorne, Heritage, Lakeside and Henderson Mill. HCA residents may be in board of commissioners district 2 or 1, BOC super-district 6 or 7, board of education districts 1 or 4, BOE super-district 8, old state senate districts 40 or 41 and old state house districts 54 or 56. We're all in U.S. House District 4. Both U.S. Senators represent everyone in the state.

These non-partisan offices will appear on our July ballot and be decided at that time: Board of Education (districts 1?, 4, 8); Probate Judge; State Court Judges (4); Superior Court Judges (8).

These partisan offices with final decisions in November may appear on the July Primary ballot for the party of your choice:

Federal: U.S. Senate - one seat; U.S. House/Representative - district 4

State: all state senate and state house districts; DeKalb District Attorney

County: Board Of Commissioners -- Districts 1 & 6; Chief Executive Officer; Chief Magistrate; Clerk of Superior Court; Sheriff; Solicitor; Tax Commissioner.





HAWTHORNE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

2677 Flair Knoll Drive, Atlanta, GA 30345

Annual Dues are \$20 per household.

Check enclosed: \$ _____

Donations welcomed!

please print

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

My interests / concerns for the neighborhood:

- PDK Airport
- Neighborhood Watch / Crime
- Schools
- Traffic Safety
- Greenspace
- Zoning
- Other (specify): _____

I can help with:

- Committee work (specify which committee)
- Newsletter editing or layout
- Newsletter labeling / sealing / mailing
- Website creation & maintenance
- Providing information for the website
- Fundraising projects
- Membership benefits & involvement
- Greenspace projects
- Logo creation
- Organizing a meeting on the concern I suggested
- Other (specify): _____

I'd like to receive timely information via e-mail about:

- Neighborhood Watch crime alerts
- Calls for Action, e.g. zoning hearings, letter-writing to commissioners, etc.
- General Neighborhood News, e.g. meetings scheduled, commission actions, etc.
- Specific issue discussion about _____

My e-mail address is _____

If HCA were to institute such a fundraising project, I'd be willing to:

- take an ad in the newsletter
- perform or take a booth at a social event
- contribute to a silent auction
- contribute something to a sale catalog

Category for my contribution or my advertised business:

- art/music/crafts
- home maintenance
- baby-sitting
- home cooking
- medicine/law
- electronics
- gardens
- pets
- other (specify): _____

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2677 Flair Knoll Drive
Atlanta, GA 30345

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If your mailing label is incorrect, please indicate this on the membership survey form when you return it. The "or current resident" designation on the second address line is necessary to insure proper delivery of all newsletters.

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HCA Website-To-Be:

Not enough volunteer time to make it happen yet, but it will happen soon. If you're affiliated with a group (garden club, scout troop, etc) based in the HCA area, please send a very brief blurb about that group with contact info to HCA@gazebosoftware.com for website listing under "ongoing neighborhood activities".

THANK YOU, LARRY !

A big THANK YOU for a job well done goes to Dr. Larry Foster for his dedicated service as president of the Hawthorne Civic Association for the past NINE years. In spite of the heavy demands on his personal time from his teaching career at Georgia Tech, his family, and the writing of his books, Larry has devoted endless hours to furthering our causes.

He wrote our newsletter, kept us informed, wrote eloquent and effective letters to county officials, attended regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meetings as needed, and frequently spoke there on our behalf. Larry sat in on non-public Board of Commissioners meetings and maintained a liaison with our two commissioners personally. In addition, he monitored the school and Board of Education activity, and lobbied for better policies.

Larry has been particularly effective in advocating our opposition to the expansion of Peachtree DeKalb Airport, regularly attending the monthly PDK Advisory Board Meetings, and monitoring closely the actions of the Airport Director and his staff. Now, as HCA Vice-President, he is concentrating his efforts on the airport, and is strongly affiliated with the PDK Watch organization. Thanks, Larry, for playing a pivotal role in strengthening our association and enhancing the quality of neighborhood life.