



NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello fellow neighbors. For those of you who do not know, I am the new President of the NBCA. I served as Secretary last year, and this will be my third year on the Board. I have spent most of my life living off of Briarcliff Road. I spent my first years in the southern part of Briarcliff in the Druid Hills area. I grew up in the central part of Briarcliff in Briarcliff Woods while attending Sagamore Hills and Lakeside. I have now settled as an adult with my family here in North Briarcliff.

I am taking over for Beth Nathan who served as President for four years. She deserves the thanks of the neighborhood for turning this association into a DeKalb County force. I have ideas for the upcoming year, and I would like your input as well. I have communicated to the Board that I would like the NBCA to develop at least one idea each year that the Board and this neighborhood can put our power behind to accomplish. We have already considered some ideas, such as an annual neighborhood event and completing the nature preserve. If you have any ideas, please feel free to communicate them to me.

More than your ideas, we need your help. There is a limited amount of time the Board members can devote. We all have grand ideas for what a neighborhood group should do, but every idea is limited by the people who are willing to accomplish that idea. I ask all of you to contact the Board and find some way to volunteer your time. Let me remind you, too, that Board meetings are open to the public. We generally meet at the Presbyterian Church on Shallowford Road at 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday evening of each month; however, call me to be sure the location has not changed.

And, of course, we need your membership! Membership envelopes are enclosed, so please do not forget to send in your dues. For those of you who are not yet members, I urge you to join and help make this neighborhood even better.

I hope to see you all soon.

Best wishes, Rodney Zell

-- NBCA Board --

Rodney Zell 770-934-1824
president@northbriarcliff.org

Larry Foster 404-362-2192
vp@northbriarcliff.org
pdk@northbriarcliff.org

Betty Phillips 404-634-6498
treasurer@northbriarcliff.org
zoning@northbriarcliff.org

Laura Bulbin 770-939-4636
secretary@northbriarcliff.org
zoning@northbriarcliff.org

Ralph Carl 770-723-1024
schools@northbriarcliff.org

Edward Frost 404-550-0398
editor@northbriarcliff.org

Michael Gross 404-636-7887
nwatch@northbriarcliff.org

Maribel Herrera ... 678-592-9016
nwatch@northbriarcliff.org

Beth Nathan 404-315-7440
parks@northbriarcliff.org
webmaster@northbriarcliff.org

Gary Powell 404-633-0189
tabasco@northbriarcliff.org

-- Board Meetings --

1st Wednesdays, 7:30 pm.
Shallowford Presbyterian Church
Open to all NBCA members
Verify meeting details with president.



-- Off Board --

Linda Dahlke
database@northbriarcliff.org

Billie Sherrod
interchange@northbriarcliff.org

June Buechner
gardens@northbriarcliff.org

Guest Column: OPEN DEKALB SEEKS ENFORCEMENT OF PDK WEIGHT LIMIT

Open DeKalb Inc. is very pleased to announce that the necessary \$50,000 start-up money has been raised to begin the litigation necessary to seek *enforcement* of PDK Airport's 66,000 lb. weight limit on aircraft using the Airport. Early this year, the legal team that won the PDK Open Records lawsuit expects to file a lawsuit seeking enforcement of the Airport's weight limit.

This suit is essential for several reasons. After our legal team won the Open Records lawsuit in August 2005, we documented the fact that more than 200 flight operation *per month* exceed the 66,000 lb. contractual weight limit. This data about oversized flights was presented to the FAA. Their response was that the weight limit was "a mere forecast" of activity at PDK and was not intended to limit flight operations at the airport. In addition, in a letter to DeKalb County's Law Department, dated June 26, 2007, the FAA advises PDK to follow a *proposed* FAA policy "to allow any plane to land if the weight bearing capacity of the runway can accommodate it."

The FAA and DeKalb County are flouting both federal environmental law and their contractual commitments to limit the nature of aircraft using PDK to smaller planes. Members of the Open Records legal team provided legal documentation about the contractual weight limit to the DeKalb County Law Department, and discussed it with them at length. Despite this evidence, the County Law Department, *which reports solely to the CEO* not to the Board of Commissioners, has simply passed along the FAA "policy" to the Airport, allowing the Airport to continue ignoring applicable law and County contractual agreements

Concerned citizens have now concluded that the only remaining way to maintain operations at PDK at an economically and environmentally healthy level is in court.

Your generous help has already made possible two major accomplishments. First, the PDK Open Records lawsuit has been successfully carried to victory and has allowed us to demonstrate that the FAA and the County are acting in violation of state and federal laws. Second, we have secured the funds necessary to *start* the enforcement lawsuit necessary to protect ourselves from lawless expansion of a County owned facility. Now we must secure substantial additional funds to *sustain* this vital legal proceeding for the projected two to three year fight with our government.

We urge you to make a tax-deductible donation of \$100+ to support this critical lawsuit seeking court-mandated enforcement of our government's commitments to keep PDK a safe and healthy Airport for all of us. For an historical summary and to donate on-line, go to www.opendekalbinc.org. Contributions by U.S. Mail may be sent to: Open DeKalb Inc., P.O. Box 190895, Atlanta, GA 31110.



If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at 404-728-8908, or Larry Foster at 678-637-9227, or e-mail us at questions@opendekalbinc.org.

Please help us to carry through with this crucial enforcement effort to protect our neighborhoods, property values, and quality of life. Thank you again for your continuing support for this vital cause.

*Julian F. Fuerst, M.D.
President, Open DeKalb Inc.*

NBCA WEBSITE UPDATE

www.northbriarcliff.org has been operational for many months. There is a lot of information there, though it may not be obvious how to find it. If you are looking for some information on a topic the Civic Association might be involved in, it's likely to be there somewhere. At this writing, Kyle Johnson, one of our neighbors, is working on an upgrade to that website to make it more user-friendly, more functional and especially MORE INTERACTIVE. Look for an upgrade to appear this winter.

Websites and newsletters are only as good as the information that is published. If you have unbiased information that could benefit the entire neighborhood, please share it by sending it to webmaster@northbriarcliff.org and/or editor@northbriarcliff.org (newsletter deadlines approximately 15 days before the close of a calendar quarter).

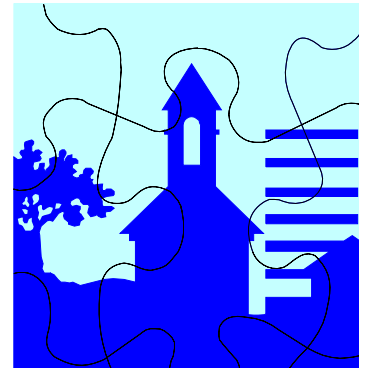
Beth Nathan

SHALLOWFORD NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

On Friday, Sept 28, Beth Nathan (of North Briarcliff Civic Assn) and Ursula Lentine (of Dresden East Civic Assn, across I-85) met with District 2 Commissioner Jeff Rader, SuperDistrict 6 Commissioner Kathie Gannon, and Senior Land Use Planner Sidney Douse III about processes that could allow our area to specify our vision of the Shallowford at I-85 Neighborhood Center area, ideas that would then be conveyed to developers who were interested in the area. Commissioner Rader expressed his pleasure that there is community interest in pre-planning rather than having to suddenly become defensive when a developer's project is placed before us.

There are a couple of regularly used options for such processes, one called a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) and another called the Blueprints process. We understood that we would benefit most from a Livable Centers Initiative study, which may cost around \$100,000; eighty percent of which can come as a grant from the ARC (Atlanta Regional Commission), and the remaining 20% from one or more DeKalb County Departments (Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, or Public Works) with a minor potential for need for funding from our own civic associations or their members. For the most part, the citizen (or civic association) commitment would be in sweat equity. LCIs emphasize pedestrian-friendly environments, transportation alternatives, existing community assets, issues/opportunities. A grant application is required in order to qualify for the ARC funding and that application was due in mid-November. We were unable to make that deadline. A group of stakeholders from both sides of the expressway (commercial & residential) will begin discussions after the first of the year with a goal of doing that application in 2008. If you're interested in participating or just following the process, join the TABASCO (Transform And Beautify Shallowford Corridor) e-discussion (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DECA_TABASCO/).

An LCI study typically takes around a year and includes market and demographic research along with public input/meetings. You can learn more about Livable Centers Initiatives on the Atlanta Regional Commission website at website at http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/308_ENU_HTML.htm (there's a 9 minute video there). Once completed, an Overlay District is typically proposed to give the study's findings the backing of zoning law.



ZONING / DEVELOPMENT

"PURE ATLANTA". On December 12, the Sagamore Hills Civic Association and the Briarcliff Woods Civic Association were successful in their appeal of the permits previously issued for "Pure Atlanta" in the Williamsburg Shopping Center. The Appeals Board agreed that the establishment was not a "restaurant" as claimed, in that it did not have a kitchen. The establishment also does not have on-street parking, as required. The Board voted 4-3 that "Pure Atlanta" was, in fact, a nightclub and not permitted under zoning codes. "Pure Atlanta's" certificate of occupancy was revoked. An appeal is expected.

NORTHLAKE. The LaVista Road Streetscape project groundbreaking ceremony was held October 10. This is the first construction project identified for implementation in the Northlake Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plan. In early December, reports were circulating that Kohl's will open in March in Northlake Mall, rolling out a new concept with a mix of higher end goods.

ST. PIUS BASEBALL FIELD. St Pius X Catholic High School received approval from the Board of Commissioners on December 18 for Special Land Use Permits (SLUPs) allowing the construction of a baseball/multipurpose athletic field on the RM-75 zoned property known as Michelle Court Apartments. The buildings occupying 1.2 acres of the property which front on Frontier Trail will be converted to administrative use. A paved pedestrian path will provide access directly from the campus to Frontier Trail. The remaining 6.07 acres will become the site of the baseball, multipurpose athletic field. After lengthy negotiations with neighboring residents, during which provisions for 90' light poles and auto parking on the multipurpose field were removed, an agreed upon set of conditions were filed as part of the SLUPs.

RESIDENTIAL INFILL OVERLAY DISTRICTS. November: Echo Lake RIOD approved.

MARY SCOTT NATURE PRESERVE

NBCA has not heard anything new about MSNP since October; the latest drawing of the park plan was displayed at the NBCA annual meeting. This plan had a lot of detail for the parking / playground / picnic tables / trash cans area but no information on walking entries off Overlook Drive. The trail is listed as a 5' permeable trail with maximum slope of 5% (accessibility), to be constructed with a Bobcat. Adjacent areas are to be stabilized with mulch and seeding on the day of construction. The plan makes no reference to meeting areas in the middle or back of the park, nor to the kind of educational signage that makes a Nature Preserve meaningful. In October, all the development permits had been secured and the consultant was putting together all the details for the bid package. Once that got to Purchasing, our current contact (Sussan Pickens) expected to have a better idea of the construction schedule and costs. It is likely that a deceleration lane and/or the playground, if constructed now, would exhaust the existing funding or even require additional funding. I asked for pedestrian entryways off Overlook to be made a higher priority.

Sussan has been responsive to requests to keep the Briarcliff frontage mowed and to repair the gate on the old driveway. She offered to develop a planting plan for restoration of the creekbank, an area sorely in need of planting now that the English ivy control is complete, and an educational project for all of us who live along **our** creeks. I have identified three or four small areas within the park that could be good focal points for certain plantings, including one place which may have been a fern garden at the old home. Privet is sprouting everywhere now that the canopy has been opened up (relieved of the overgrowth of wisteria). English ivy is still climbing a few tree trunks. And the bamboo is coming back with a vengeance. The existing trail markers are faded and more plant markers need to be placed. These are all things that could be done this winter, rain or no rain. Look for workdays January through March. Expect the MSNP discussion E-list to be active soon.



Beth Nathan

INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING



Interactive Community Policing is a policing philosophy that promotes collaboration between the police and the community to develop proactive strategies and problem-solving techniques to eradicate and prevent crimes. The DeKalb Police Department invited NBCA to participate in the selection of the ICP officers to be assigned primarily to the North Precinct. Representatives from the North Briarcliff Civic Association, Brookhaven and Briarlake Woods interviewed 14 officers on 11/26 and 11/27. Situational and behavioral questions allowed us to measure leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. I was very impressed by the interview process and the quality of what interviewed officers were doing. Their passion for the community, cultural awareness and community involvement outside of work were some of the main traits I looked for during the interviews.

The official roll-out date for ICP officers is 1/25/2008. The ICP program will have 10 officers and 1 Sergeant assigned to each Precinct. The DeKalb County total will be 55, as we have 5 Precincts. The North Briarcliff Civic Association will have 3 Primary Officers. The Precinct will be divided into three sectors, each having three officers assigned to them. However, there will be times when the entire team may be working on a problem area and all of them would be seen in a particular sector.

The ICP Program is on track and our Civic Association has been part of the start-up of this initiative. We expect to see an increased police presence in the neighborhood and encourage NBCA residents to start interacting with our ICP officers in January. Neighborhood Watch Groups will have monthly meetings with ICP Sector Officers and Public Education Specialists to review issues, progress and action items. We will keep you posted on this initiative and let you know the meetings date and time. We will need to work together to create a safer and more secure environment. If you want additional information on any of the above, please feel free to contact us at nwatch@northbriarcliff.org.

Maribel Herrera

WATER CONSERVATION

We know that we are under strict watering restrictions. Read details via the link on the main page at www.northbriarcliff.org. Legislation which would require homeowners to replace toilets and restrict water flow from showerheads and faucets prior to sale of their homes has been proposed (not enacted as of Jan 1) at the county level. Legislation to make water-saving plumbing fixtures eligible for the state's sales tax holidays program is being proposed this winter. As some neighbors (myself included) feel the push to replace that old toilet while they still have time to enjoy it, NBCA is wondering whether there are ways we might band together as a neighborhood to get better deals on toilet replacement, maybe by having a plumber do a number of toilets on a street or series of streets during one day's work and haul off the debris as a joint effort. If you talk to your neighbors and find that a number of you do want to do this or you know of a good plumber who might be just the person to call for such a group-job, let NBCA know, so we can spread the knowledge. Maybe I can help coordinate it: contact me at parks@northbriarcliff.org.



Chattahoochee River Basin

Personal experience: During the recent replacement of toilets in my home, I concluded that the hardest parts were choosing a new toilet, getting out the bolts holding down the old toilet, and disposing of the old toilets. The county told me that toilets are "Special Pickup" with a *minimum* \$50 fee. The County also advises that there is no local way to recycle toilets but that the landfill would accept them (landfill may fill more quickly than anticipated). We ended driving to the landfill (just south of I-20 outside 285) and disposing of 3 toilets and a hardened bag of concrete for less than \$10. Our old 1.6 gallon toilet had a plunger as its mate and typically required multiple flushes; our new 1.6 gallon toilets do indeed work well and quietly.

Beth Nathan

from an e-mail sent by Commissioner Jeff Rader in September:

Did you know that the population of DeKalb County grows by approximately 934 people per month? Did you know that in 2007, we are already using water at the rate projected for the year 2010?

Rapid population growth, urban development, the tri-state water wars, pollution and environmental degradation, the current drought and waste have combined to exert tremendous stress on Georgia's water resources. To date, this year's rain deficiency is over 14" and growing worse each day. Water conservation is no longer a choice, it is a necessity!

As part of their ongoing water conservation efforts, the Department of Watershed Management is providing **complimentary low-flow water conservation kits** (contains a shower head, two different aerators and blue tablets to check for toilet leaks) to citizens whose homes were built prior to 1992. Low-flow household fixtures are much more efficient, for example a pre 1992 toilet uses over three gallons more than a low-flow fixture available today. To request your complimentary retrofit kit and get more tips on conserving water and saving dollars go to www.dekalbwatershed.com/water/conservation or call 770-621-7266.

IN RETROSPECT

Having passed the torch of the NBCA Presidency to the capable hands of Rodney Zell, I'm looking back to see just what this association accomplished in the past four years. We changed our name, designed a new logo, printed event signs with the new name as well as street sign-toppers. We established a website and started using e-mail to communicate among ourselves on different topics. The newsletter adopted a regular quarterly schedule, started using professional layout services and regularly inviting members to submit information. Bylaws were updated. Our NBCA e-watch program was recognized as a true Neighborhood Watch program. We sponsored several neighborhood-wide social events and organized multi-neighborhood (Civic Association Network)

events to get-to-know-the-political-candidates. We saw the I-85 interchange come to look 1000% better as the result of citizen action. We watched Mary Scott Nature Preserve dawdle in its development while we fought a variety of zoning, traffic calming, and public information battles, coming out on top on maybe half of them. We supported Hawthorne Elementary's parents in their successful efforts to improve the school. We have made progress these four years on NBCA's mission "to promote the civic interests of residents of the area surrounding the Hawthorne Elementary School." Let's keep that ball rolling through increasing neighbor participation in these efforts!! Help in whatever way is best for you. Thanks for four great years!!

Beth

Nathan

And thank you, Beth, for your invaluable leadership and the countless hours you have devoted to NBCA. Beth continues to be a member of the NBCA Board (ed).

HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY – School of Excellence



On November 30, State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox named 23 Georgia Schools of Excellence in Student Achievement, one from each of Georgia's 12 congressional districts in each of 2 categories (Greatest Gains, Top 10%). Hawthorne Elementary was the congressional district 4 school recognized as being in the top 10 percent of schools in Georgia as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics. If you're thinking there's something wrong with the math in this paragraph ... one Georgia district was missing in one of the categories ($(12 * 2) - 1$).

from REP. KEVIN LEVITAS, Georgia House District 82

The 2008 session of the Georgia General Assembly is just a few weeks away, and legislators will face a number of critical issues when we reconvene in January. Items at the top of the agenda include:

- **Water.** Development of a water-management and conservation plan to help carry the state through the current drought and to meet future needs.
- **Tax Reform.** A highly debated proposal to eliminate school property taxes statewide, replacing them with sales taxes on items such as groceries and consumer services.
- **Transportation.** Easing congestion and improving air quality through comprehensive traffic administration and development of alternative commuter options.
- **Grady Hospital.** Providing for Grady's future stability through management changes and long-term financial planning.

In addition to these measures, I will work on several bills that I recently introduced to reform government and to improve our quality of life, covering subjects

such as:

- **Tax Reform.** Providing an annual dollar-for-dollar credit against state income taxes for the amounts of *ad valorem* taxes paid, and eliminating the current system of unpredictable and excessive property-tax assessments by freezing a home's value at the purchase price, until the property is sold.
- **Serious Traffic Offenders.** Making streets safer by keeping drivers convicted of serious traffic offenses such as vehicular homicide and driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs—off of Georgia's roads.
- **Water Efficiency.** Encouraging conservation with a tax-free weekend for the purchase of water-saving products.
- **DeKalb County Government.** Reforming county government by providing important checks and balances to a system heavily tilted, in its current form, in favor of the Office of the Chief Executive.

To receive my legislative newsletter as well as community updates and announcements, please contact me at kevin@kevinlevitas.org, or call me at home at (404) 634-9171.

CATS and BIRDS

In a letter to this editor, an NBCA neighbor urges us to consider keeping our outdoor and indoor cats indoors. She points out that cats are a danger to other wildlife, particularly the birds we love, and she points out that roaming cats are in danger also (from traffic and, of course, those coyotes that were another subject of our newsletter awhile ago).

The writer's concerns are certainly understandable. Strewn feathers and other signs of a bird's uneven battle with a cat is a sad sight ("belling the cat," we are told, is a futile gesture). Frequent utility pole notices of missing cats are also a sad sight.

It must be said, however, that whether or not to housebound the cat is not a simple issue. A recent New York Times article devoted three pages to the ethical/ecological dilemma of cats vs. wildlife, particularly birds. The moral quandary posed by the article was ultimately resolved with the shooting of a bird-hunting cat; however, the birds in question were of an endangered specie.

A cat owner (a designation to make any cat spit) could well argue that some cats are apparently content to grow fat by the fire while others would surely perish if they could not regularly seek and destroy the odd mouse or, yes, bird. "Nothing personal," as a Mafioso would say. We are, after all, talking about nature here and as the poet wrote, nature is not benign but "red in tooth and claw."

We appreciate our correspondent having raised the issue (and we always welcome issue-raising). We can only set the matter before you to decide. Your free-range cat no doubt kills birds and, for the cat, "it's a jungle out there." We must also point out that it is actually illegal to let it roam. Whether or not you seal up the pet door is up to you.

Elected OfficialsFind your districts at <https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/voter/locator.asp>For a comprehensive list of countywide elected officials, see <http://www.lwvdk.org/citizenguide2007.pdf>**DeKalb County Commission:** <http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/commission.htm>

SuperDistrict 7 [Lakeside, Briarlake, Henderson Mill precincts]	Connie Stokes	http://www.electyou.com/conniestokes/ conniestokes@co.dekalb.ga.us 404-371-3053
SuperDistrict 6 [Hawthorne & Heritage precincts]	Kathie Gannon	http://www.kathiegannon.com/ kgannon@co.dekalb.ga.us 404-371-4909
District 2	Jeff Rader	http://www.commissionerrader.com/ jrader@co.dekalb.ga.us 404-371-2863
District 1	Elaine Boyer	http://www.commissionerboyer.com/ njmcbri@co.dekalb.ga.us 404-371-2844
CEO (all districts)	Vernon Jones	http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/ceo.htm ceo@co.dekalb.ga.us 404-371-2881 or 2112

DeKalb School Board: <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/board/members/>

SuperDistrict 8	Cassandra Littlejohn	cassandra_m_anderson-littlejohn@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us 678-873-7878
District 4	Bebe Joyner	bebe_joyner@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us, 404-297-7918
District 1	Jim Redovian	jim_redovian@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us, 404-392-2593
Superintendent	Dr. Crawford Lewis	Crawford_lewis@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us, 678-676-0790

Georgia General Assembly: <http://www.legis.state.ga.us>

Senate district 40	Dan Weber	dan.weber@senate.ga.gov 404-463-2260
Senate district 41	Steve Henson	http://www.stevenson.net steve.henson@senate.ga.gov or stevehenson@mindspring.com 404-656-0085
House district 82	Kevin Levitas	http://www.kevinlevitas.org kevin.levitas@house.ga.gov or kevinlevitas@bellsouth.net 404-656-0116

U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>

Georgia District 4	Hank Johnson	http://hankjohnson.house.gov/ Tucker, Georgia 30084, (770) 939-2016, 3469 Lawrenceville Highway, Suite 205 Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-1605, 1133 Longworth House Office Bldg.
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U.S. Senate (2 senators each representing entire state): <http://www.senate.gov>

Saxby Chambliss	http://chambliss.senate.gov/public/index.cfm Atlanta, GA 30339, 770-763-9090, 100 Galleria Parkway, Suite 1340, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521, 416 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Johnny Isakson	http://isakson.senate.gov/ Atlanta, GA 30339, (770) 661-0999, One Overton Park, 3625 Cumberland Blvd, Ste 970 Washington, DC 20510, (202) 224-3643, 120 Russell Senate Office Bldg

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Winter 2008

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Signed articles in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the North Briarcliff Civic Association.

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Community Calendar



Feb 6	NBCA Board Meeting, Shallowford Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m. (call or e-mail president@northbriarcliff.org to confirm)
Mar 5	
Feb 5	Presidential Preference Primary. Sample ballot is available at https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/voter/pdf/SBPPPFeb52008.pdf . Only the small portion of DeKalb within the Atlanta city limits (not including the NBCA area) will vote on the City of Atlanta tax referendum.
Spring	If you would be willing to open your garden to your NBCA neighbors (not the general public) next spring or summer, please contact June Buechner (gardens@northbriarcliff.org , 770-938-5550) and tell her when your garden is usually at its best.

If there's a neighborhood issue that has you concerned, e.g. traffic, sidewalks, litter, etc, please contact the NBCA board. Let's work together !