The Official Newsletter of the North Briarcliff Civic Association

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THE NBCA HOPES THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE A SAFE, HEALTHY, AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021

THE END OF A NO-GOOD, VERY BAD YEAR?

by Andrew Heaton, NBCA President

I wrote my first President's column last December, as 2019 came to a close and 2020 approached. Like so many of you, I always use the turn of the year to reprioritize, refocus, and become optimistic about the journey ahead. 2019 had a few bumps for myself and my family, so I was excited about the potential of 2020 to be a bounce-back year!



January-March 2021

Whew, was I wrong!

By March of this year, the Covid-19 Pandemic was slowly reaching its claws across this nation, our state, and this very neighborhood. We all watched as businesses shut down around us (some forever, sadly), and we began the process of "quarantine." So many of us have said untimely goodbyes to friends and loved ones who succumbed to this terrible virus, either because of Covid-19 by itself or because it accelerated pre-existing conditions. As I write this, over 300,000 Americans (more than 9,000 in Georgia) have lost their lives due to complications from this novel Coronavirus. We are now entering the height of cold and flu season, so those numbers will continue to climb.

In the face of all this terrible news, I have searched for the light. I have looked to see what I could pull from this year to redeem it even slightly. It takes some digging, but, after a while, one may begin to gleam some nuggets of hope and joy in this season of reflection. Working from home has allowed so many of us to re-prioritize our schedules in favor of more time with our families and loved ones. I have spent more time with my wife and children than would have normally occurred if I were heading to an office every morning. Many of us also have re-discovered the joy of the telephone conversation (even if it's actually on Zoom).

In our community, I have also seen that neighbors in the North Briarcliff Civic Association footprint have banded together more and more. Connections have been re-established or have been built for the first time. In terms of membership, we have seen our member roster grow back to almost 200 from a decade-low 155 members the previous year. My first hope for 2021 is that this trend only continues to grow. It will truly take a "community" for Atlanta, Georgia, and the United States to bounce back strong as the power of the vaccines begins to open our doors to the world once again.

So let us take a few moments at the beginning of 2021 to briefly mourn what we have lost in 2020. Then, let us turn our gaze firmly to the new year. Let us optimistically embrace our potential as a community to grow, to lean on each other, and to build upon the connections we have built in this year to make our future together even better than it was before. Happy New Year! Let's make 2021 a phenomenal year for all.

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HAWTHORNE STAFF MEMBERS LEAN ON EACH OTHER AND THE COMMUNITY TO SUCCEED IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

By Carla Parker (Communications, DeKalb County School District)

Hawthorne Principal Lisa Limoncelli credits the teachers, parent's organization, and the school district for helping Hawthorne Elementary School during the pandemic.

Principal Limoncelli observed that virtual learning has gone well for Hawthorne because of the teachers' hard work and dedication to improve their skillsets to teach their students virtually. When DeKalb County School District made the decision to start the 2020-2021 school year virtually, Hawthorne Elementary School teachers hit the ground running to prepare for the new way of teaching.

Principal Limoncelli said, "It was definitely a learning curve. I'm really proud of our teachers because they took personal time over the summer to take workshops and build up their expertise so that their lessons could be more engaging and more comparable to what they would do in a classroom." The more tech-savvy teachers led the way and created their own professional learning sessions to help their fellow teachers who were struggling with technology. "They made instructional videos for their colleagues to refer to, and they were checking on each other after hours. The staff became unified."

Parents also noticed the teachers' hard work, and Principal Limoncelli has received positive emails from parents about teachers going above and beyond. "As a leader, I always love to get those emails, and I make sure the teachers see those emails."

Although the school district had set up a hotline for parents to call when they need help with any problems, Hawthorne set up its own hotline for parents so that Hawthorne parents could contact a Hawthorne staff member. "Those two staff members would try to solve the problem first. If they couldn't, then we would refer the parent to the district." We found that we were capable of solving the problems." For the parents, "It wasn't a long wait, and it was more personalized. That has worked really well.



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We welcome your neighborhood photos and news items for the newsletter; please send to: editor@northbriarcliff.org



Help the NBCA better serve our community by donating two or three hours a month to advise the board about a subject you care about or an area you want to improve. Contact one of the board or off-board members to learn more about how to help us.

We Ask for Your Help

KDA Tiehs

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North Briarcliff



2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please return your check for annual dues and this form to:

North Briarcliff Civic Association (NBCA) • 2566 Shallowford Road, Suite 104, PMB 132 • Atlanta, GA 30345

To pay your dues with a credit card or via PayPal, go to www.northbriarcliff.org/membership.

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The North Briarcliff Civic Association (NBCA) represents you. A civic association is an organization that exists to improve the neighborhood through volunteer work by members of the association. The purpose and mission of the NBCA is to promote the civic interests of the people living in our area. What this means is that this association is dedicated to informing, representing, and supporting the residents of our area in issues of public concern.

Membership in the NBCA is voluntary and is open to any resident or property owner within the Hawthorne Elementary School District and to other residents living on bordering streets who request inclusion. The newsletter is addressed to "Current Resident" to ensure that the newsletter is delivered (free of charge) to every house and condominium in the NBCA area as a service to all the residents.

We want you to help us become better representatives. As our paid membership increases, we have greater authority and leverage in dealing with (or confronting) the county and other organizations on your behalf. Renew your membership or become a member by paying your annual dues. The \$25 dues covers the household for the calendar year (January-December 2021).

Help us to better represent the interests of our neighborhood by bringing to our attention any issues or events that merit our attention. We would appreciate your perspective, and you may know more or care more about that issue than any board or off-board member. Consider joining the board or advising the board as an off-board member so that the association is better able to address the issue in question. We would welcome your assistance, enthusiasm and expertise.

The NBCA is a non-profit organization that is managed by its board members, all of whom are neighbors who have volunteered to work together to make a difference in our local community. All of the board members are elected by the dues-paying members of the NBCA at an annual meeting in the fall. Some board members have special interests and expertise in specific areas that are important to our area, while other board members are generalists. The board members are supported by off-board members, who are neighbors who have volunteered to help the board by identifying and addressing specific areas. None of the board or off-board members receive any monetary payment for their efforts.

If you want to report something or register a complaint with the county or other agencies, the board may be able to assist you or help you contact appropriate agencies. However, you are responsible for making your report or registering your complaint. Please remember that board and off-board members are volunteers with only so much time and energy.

Email addresses for board and off-board members are listed on the front page of each newsletter and are also found on the NBCA website www. northbriarcliff.org

HAWTHORNE STAFF MEMBERS LEAN ON EACH OTHER CONT'D

"There is always an opportunity for parents to communicate with us. We are communicating with our families every week." The Principal noted that she and her staff recognize that some families are struggling more than others. During the independent learning days on Wednesdays, paraprofessionals contact every student who has been absent in the last week, did not log on, or only logged on for a few minutes.

She also credited the school's parents' organization for helping this semester be a success. "[They are] paying for us to have an interpreter come on Wednesdays, when we're in the building, so that we can assist our Latino families. Our Latino families were able to come to the school and have someone here that could communicate effectively and solve any technology problems or any other problems or questions they may have."

"Our community has been amazing," Principal Limoncelli added. "They have been stopping by and calling to see if we need anything. I always want to make sure that I comment on the Hawthorne community because it really is a community that supports its local school, and I'm very grateful for it."

The school district also played a major role in Hawthorne's success this semester. Principal

Limoncelli praised Superintendent Cheryl Watson-Harris and her cabinet for their leadership during this challenging period. District administrators were very receptive of questions and concerns from principals and teachers.

"I want to commend our superintendent and her cabinet because we were never left without information. We were never left wondering. She has really been steadfast in making sure communication was being sent out as early as it could be. Knowing that there is a support system in place makes us feel a little safer as school leaders."

SHALLOWFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SCHOOL IS OPEN AND SAFE

by Lauren Dellinger, Admissions and Operations Coordinator

As with so much, schooling looks very different so far this year. Some students are attending school virtually; others are attending in-person; and still others are schooling with a hybrid of both. We know that in-person schooling is incredibly important for children's social and emotional growth, but can a school function with the necessary safety precautions in place?

In session since August 17th, Shallowford Presbyterian School (SPS) has a host of new health and safety protocols for the year. Students and staff are wearing masks. Classes are split into two rooms to provide ample physical distance. Personnel on campus are being kept to a minimum. There are no school-wide events this year, but SPS is still fostering a sense of community by offering a Facebook group for current families, weekly newsletters, and even Zoom tours and interviews for potential families. With their already small class sizes, SPS has both the personnel and space to properly and comfortably school students in-person. The school day begins with morning carpool where students' temperatures are taken as they exit the car (with masks in place), and hand sanitizer is doled out as they enter the building. SPS has had 100% mask participation amongst their student population.

Shallowford is fortunate to have an abundance of outdoor space on campus and encourages teachers to take their classes outside as often as possible for lessons, lunch, reading time, etc. How are they making sure students are distancing themselves outside? All the students have their own yoga mats that they bring whenever they have an outside lesson or lunch time.



Shallowford Presbyterian School has small classes and enough room so that students maintain safe distances from each other in the classrooms.



Another classroom at Shallowford Presbyterian School. A section of the outside play area is visible through the window.

SPS Head of School Meredith Moseley has been in education for 20 years, and, needless to say, this year has looked very different. Despite the challenges, the staff at SPS has worked hard to provide an excellent educational experience. "At SPS we are committed to providing quality instruction to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our students in-person in the safest way possible. We have implemented increased safety precautions while still providing individualized attention to each student," says Moseley.

To ensure readiness in the event of quarantine or other closure, teachers are preparing their students now. Students spend time in the computer lab each week to familiarize themselves with their Google Classroom and other online resources.

The students are thrilled to be back in person, able to interact with their friends, run around on the playground, and have an interactive educational experience. They are walking in with enthusiasm every day and thriving. With so much uncertainty at this time, Shallowford Presbyterian School is happy to provide their students with a safe place where they can come to learn and grow -- socially, academically, and spiritually.

Visit www.shallowfordschool.org for more information about the school, their COVID-19 safety protocols, and about enrolling your child for the 2021-22 school year!

BEFRIEND THE PARK – USE THE STAIRS

by Art Hansen, Friends of the Park

Visitors to Mary Scott Nature Park (MSNP) sometimes want to see (a) the creek that flows through the northern portion of the park and (b) the two old chimneys that are the only remaining evidence of Mary Armstrong's old house. When you leave the main gravel path and descend on the small path that leads to Mary Scott Creek and to the chimneys, you will encounter a sign that shows:

- ▶ Left to the Chimneys
- ▶ Right to the Creek



Most of the signs mentioned in this article were drawn by students from Hawthorne Elementary and Lakeside and Chamblee High Schools.

When you go right to the creek, you encounter two sets of wooden stairs that allow you to easily reach and return from the creek. You will not slip on the leaves or get muddy because the stairs have wooden frameworks filled with gravel, and the two sets of stairs are connected by paving stones. The stairs were constructed by Eagle Scouts Jay Hanson and Venhat Ghanta.

When you go left to the chimneys, you reach the two old chimneys, which are at the top of a steep slope. The hillside is eroding because people

have been trampling and sliding down the hillside to the creek. Friends of the Park have erected barricades of brush and posted signs (in several languages) beside the chimney to discourage people from scrambling from the chimneys down to the creek.

Please be a friend of the park. Do not scramble and



Mary Scott Creek flows through the northern portion of the park.



The two chimneys are in the background at the top of this steep hillside that is eroding because people trample the vegetation while sliding down to the creek.



The two sets of stairs and paving stones

slide from the chimneys down to the creek. Instead, return to where the path divided and use the stairs to reach the creek.

Help maintain and restore the park. Come join volunteers from the Georgia Native Plants Society (GNPS) and Friends of the Park who meet for two hours the first Saturday of every month (at 2pm in the winter or 10am in the warmer months) to remove invasive nonnative plants and establish more native plants. We practice safe procedures by wearing masks and maintaining social distance between workers. Bring your gardening gloves, a trowel, and any questions you have about native and nonnative plants.



Signs and piles of brush on the right side of the chimney are designed to discourage people from sliding down from the chimneys to the creek.



The stairs are located on a gentle slope that makes it easy and safe to reach the creek.



The barricade of signs and piles of brush

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PEACHTREE CREEK GREENWAY

by Betsy Eggers, Founder of the Peachtree Creek Greenway, Inc.

What is the Peachtree Creek Greenway? Who will use it? The Peachtree Creek Greenway is a free, public multi-use trail. "Multi-use" means a paved surface for many different users: walkers, runners, bicyclists, stroller-pushers, shoppers, dog walkers, and commuters. Families recognize the value of having a safe, non-car place for children to learn to ride a bike or sharpen their scooter skills. Visitors love walking along the North Fork of Peachtree Creek, listening to birds and taking a respite from their busy lives. Handicap parking places, ramps, concrete paving, and frequent park benches allow those with limited mobility to enjoy this peaceful, linear park.



People really enjoy being able to bike without fighting Atlanta traffic and breathing exhaust.



The Greenway provides an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of Peachtree Creek.

Where is the Peachtree Creek Greenway now? Brookhaven completed the first 1.3 mile section of the Greenway a year ago. This section extends from Briarwood Road (near REI), underneath Corporate Boulevard, to North Druid Hills Road (near the Salvation Army headquarters and the I-85 Expressway). The Briarwood Road trailhead is only 0.6 miles from the intersection of Clairmont Road and I-85.



Brookhaven's official opening of the Peachtree Creek Greenway December 12, 2019



Friends enjoy walking along the trail beside the creek. CDC people from Corporate Square and staff from the Salvation Army Regional Headquarters enjoy "walking meetings" or breaks during the day.

A signpost on the Peachtree Creek Greenway (PCG) in Brookhaven

Is the Peachtree Creek Greenway safe?

The Greenway was designed to meet high safety standards. The entire first mile in Brookhaven is lighted and has security cameras that connect to the Brookhaven police station. Thick bushes and brush have been cleared away so that trail users have significant visibility and can see in many directions at once.

Even during the Covid pandemic, the Peachtree Creek Greenway is a safe place to exercise or meet a friend. There is plenty of space for social distance because the trail is 14 feet wide. Signs ask users to wear a mask, and most users do.

Where will the Peachtree Creek Greenway reach? The map shows the projected length of the Greenway. When it extends its full 12 miles, it will become even more important for bike and pedestrian commuters connecting their homes to stores, school, work, and MARTA stations and bus lines.

When will the Greenway reach the North Briarcliff Civic Association (NBCA) area? Brookhaven's next two miles of the Greenway are already being planned and funded, and all three miles should be completed within five years. The City of Chamblee has included the Greenway in their 2019



The Greenway will pass through the North Briarcliff Civic Association (NBCA) area to reach around Mercer University and connect with Doraville and other locations.

Transportation Plan and added the Greenway's special requirements into their zoning ordinance.

In 2020, DeKalb County Commissioner Kathie Gannon dedicated \$150,000 for the initial planning for the section that will connect Chamblee/Fisher Trail Park to Shallowford Road in the NBCA area. This funding will be used to study the area to determine alignments, estimate costs, strategize for funding, and create priorities for implementation.

Where may I park in Brookhaven, and when is the Greenway open? The three trailheads (with parking lots) in Brookhaven are at 1801 Corporate Blvd, 2036 N Druid Hills Rd, and 1799 Briarwood Rd. Each trailhead has a bicycle repair station and is within a block of I-85. The Greenway is open from 6 am – 11 pm. The Greenway may be closed occasionally because of flooding. The Briarwood trailhead is sometimes closed during weekday construction of the Brookhaven municipal building. Check the City of Brookhaven's website for details.

What did the Greenway cost the taxpayers? How will the rest of the Greenway be funded? The first section of the Peachtree Creek Greenway was built without using property tax dollars. The City of Brookhaven used part of the hotel-motel tax and a revenue bond to secure funding. The next two miles of the Greenway will be funded by federal transportation dollars through the Atlanta Regional Commission.

How may I personally support the Peachtree Creek Greenway? You may help build the Greenway through supporting the advocacy group, the Peachtree Creek Greenway Inc. In addition to your financial donations (which are always needed), you may join the www.PeachtreeCreek.org email list, "like" the Peachtree Creek Greenway Facebook page, join the advocacy effort as a volunteer, and join AmazonSmile, which gives a portion of Amazon's fees to the Greenway effort. Most importantly, visit and enjoy the Greenway with friends and family!

MORE SERVICES FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by Alicia Brown, Public Information Officer for DeKalb County Public Library

We noted in the last issue of this newsletter that the Northlake-Barbara Loar Library is accepting book returns and allowing people to pick up library materials contact-free. Go to dekalblibrary.org to request materials or call the library if you need assistance.

Wireless Printing

Now the Northlake-Barbara Loar Library is offering a wireless printing service. Patrons may print up to ten black and white pages per day - for free! Log into the software with your library card or a guest account; upload your documents; and then call the library to arrange contact-free pickup of your prints.

Checking out Chromebooks

Starting in February 2021, Northlake Library will begin allowing patrons to check out chromebooks for up to six hours at a time on a first-come firstserved basis. Some other library branches are currently offering this service.

Call a participating branch to schedule pickup at the contact free tables, then connect to the wi-fi of your choice - either the library's wi-fi in the library parking lot or anywhere else you have wi-fi access. Return the chromebook later that same day at the branch where you checked it out.

Visit dekalblibrary.org for more information about these and other services.



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WE ARE TARGETS OF MISINFORMATION (FALSE NEWS) CAMPAIGNS

by Art Hansen

Note: This is included because (a) the information affects Georgia voters and (b) I am a proud Papa. Avaaz is an international human rights nonprofit. My daughter is a member of the Avaaz team that produced a study that was recently (December 2020) reported by the New York Times, Time magazine, USA Today, and other national media. The following are excerpts quoted verbatim from these reports.

"Americans are 'being drowned in misinformation in Georgia by these superspreaders,' said Fadi Quran, a director at Avaaz."

"January runoffs in Georgia have become the nation's latest battleground for election misinformation as false and misleading posts swarm Facebook and Twitter. A new report from human rights group Avaaz found a dozen false claims on Facebook including voter fraud and intimidation spread through 204 posts in English and Spanish which generated 643,000 interactions. Sixty-percent of the posts slipped through undetected and reached voters without fact-check labels, the report found."

"As Georgia prepares to hold special elections that will determine which party will control the U.S. Senate, the state has become the focus of a misinformation campaign that is aimed at discrediting the results of the November elections and convincing voters that Democrats are trying to steal the upcoming vote.

A small group of 'superspreaders' is responsible for the vast majority of that misinformation, according to new research by Avaaz, a global human rights group. Not only are those accounts responsible for most of the misinformation swirling around the vote, they are drowning out accurate reporting by mainstream media outlets on Facebook and Instagram."

"The research indicates that, despite efforts by social media companies to curtail misinformation, the viral nature of false news continues to take advantage of the algorithms that gin up what people see on those platforms. The algorithms often reward outrage over accuracy, and telling people what they want to hear or what gets them angry can easily overwhelm the truth."

"A month before Georgia voters are set to decide which party will control the U.S. Senate, online disinformation about the state's elections is kicking into overdrive. The full force of 2020's most effective fake news tactics is hitting the state: fears of widespread voter fraud, allegations of violence and claims about candidates' socialism. But despite its much-touted efforts to add warning or factchecking labels to election disinformation, Facebook is failing to do exactly that on more than half of the questionable posts related to the Georgia races, according to a new analysis by Avaaz, a nonprofit that tracks online disinformation.

In such a competitive and high-stakes contest, a deluge of online disinformation undermining faith in the election, targeting key constituencies, or spreading viral false claims about candidates could make a real difference, analysts say."

THANK YOU.

To all of our dedicated neighbors working in hospitals, grocery stores, home services, restaurants, our teachers, and other essential workers keeping us going through this uncertain time,

we thank you.

January-March 2021

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| Plumbing | |
| Bryan Plumbing Services | |
| Hulsey Environmental Services | |
| Old School Plumbing | |
| Serv'all Plumbing & Rooter Service | 770-917-1852 |
| Shumate Plumbing Services | |
| The Plumbers Guild | -404-694-5128 |
| Pre-Schools & Kindergarten | |
| Omega Learning Center-Acworth | 770-792-7431 |
| Propane Service | |
| Gas Incorporated | 770-720-1378 |
| Real Estate | |
| Atlanta Communities-Jennifer and Associates | - 770-529-7780 |
| Coldwell Banker-Sherry Warner | -404-784-8848 |
| Compass Realty-Gipson and Co. | -404-405-5363 |
| Compass Realty-Natalie Gregory Team | |
| Cory & Co. Realty | - 404-564-5561 |
| Harry Norman Realtors-Pam Hughes | - 404-626-3604 |
| Keller Williams Realty-Cynthia Baer | - 678-358-3369 |
| Remax Around Atlanta-Falkin | 770-330-2374 |
| ReMax-Sarah Terrell | 770-928-6525 |
| Russ Robinson Atlanta Communities | |
| Sever Group Properties//State Farm-Grant | |
| Remodeling | |
| GCI Basements | -404-569-8794 |
| Serv'all Plumbing-Remodeling | |
| Southeast Construction Concepts | |
| Restaurants | |
| Bananas + Beehives | 770-213-4526 |
| Luna Maya | |
| Retaining Walls | |
| Ben Hopkins LLC | 770-893-8986 |
| Retirement Community | |
| Soleil Laurel Canyon | -678-880-3071 |
| Roofing | |
| Aspen Contracting | |
| Earthly Matters Painting and Contracting | |
| Exovations-Roofing | |
| Generation Contracting DBA Generation | |
| Schools-Private | |
| McGinnis Woods Country Day School | 770-664-7764 |
| The Friends School of Atlanta | |
| Security Systems | 404 010 0140 |
| Classic Entry Systems | 678-330-1111 |
| Siding | 010 000 1111 |
| Exovations-Siding | 770-205-2005 |
| Painting Plus - Siding | |
| Tax Preparation | |
| Treasure Tax | 678-888 4920 |
| | |
| Tree Service The Davey Tree Expert Company | 770 451 7014 |
| | |
| Water Heaters | 770 047 4050 |
| Serv'all Plumbing-Water Heaters | |
| Window Cleaning | 770 004 0470 |
| Squeegee Clean | |
| Window Replacement | 770 005 0005 |
| Exovations-Window Replacements | 110-205-2995 |
| Wrought Iron Railing Mind's Eye Fabrication | 770 362 4564 |
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