



Trees Atlanta volunteers planted magnolias, golden rain trees and ginkgoes along St. Charles Avenue this past December.

Trees, Trees and More Trees!

Most residents know Trees Atlanta is a nationally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving Atlanta's urban forest by planting and conserving trees and educating the public. The organization was founded in 1985 and, since then, has planted more than 75,000 shade trees, and cared for more than 100,000 trees in our city.

Our neighborhood has been a grateful recipient of many Trees Atlanta plantings. According to VaHi resident and long-time tree advocate Stephanie Coffin, part of the original vision for VaHi was to plant cripes all along N. Highland Ave. That project started over fifteen years ago, spurred by the 1996 Olympics. Unfortunately, Atlanta suffered record hot tempera-

tures in the weeks before the Olympics, so volunteers and local businesses had to work like crazy to keep all the new trees watered. Not all survived, but that was the start.

In the years that followed local residents planted more trees, sometimes buying them with VHCA funds and planting/watering them with volunteer labor. After partnering with Trees Atlanta, the neighborhood received more help and expertise.

In the last two years, Trees Atlanta has filled in the bare spots along N. Highland – in front of the apartments next to the old Briarcliff Hotel and on the west side from Los Angeles going north. We now have a total of 123 crape myrtles – 28 on the west side and 95 on the east side. Trees Atlanta also planted a row of trees on Virginia Ave. in front of Wachovia going west.

Besides the cripes along N. Highland Ave., Trees Atlanta and the VHCA do a large planting every year. This year's planting installed sixty trees along St. Charles from Highland to Ponce de Leon Place. Golden raintrees and ginkgos were the dominant species planted, giving early summer yellow blooms and fall color to recreate St. Charles as a grand avenue. Neighborhood volunteers and a full crew of more than thirty Trees Atlanta volunteers completed this planting in December. Next year's planting will focus on streets close to the Beltline.

By the time you read this we will also have six beautiful new trees lining the parking lot along North Highland Ave. at Amsterdam (across from San Francisco Coffee)! Trees Atlanta and the VHCA will pay for the trees themselves, but this planting would not have been possible without the support of the commercial landowner.

The Value of Community

Neighborhood Responds to Recent Crime Wave

- John Wolfinger, Public Safety Chair

Starting last September with the armed pedestrian robberies and resulting murder at the Virginia Highland Apartments, and continuing through the recent sexual assault on Rosedale Road, there's no doubt our neighborhood has experienced more than its share of violent crime recently. This crime wave was unprecedented in my memory and, for a while, created a community beset with fear and uncertainty. At the same time, though, the threat was responded to by neighbors not ready to give our streets up to the invading criminals. I'm proud to be part of a community that does not simply give in to negative and frightening incidents that, to some extent, are a reality of city living.

The first positive thing I saw was some eighty residents crowded into the second floor dining room at Atkins Park Restaurant to hear Zone 6 Major Dalton say he was allocating all available resources to respond to the crisis. Thank you to Joy Rouso for organizing this meeting that attracted an overflow crowd. This meeting was followed by a Christmas caroling walkabout organized by Rabbi Rachael Bregman, Katharina Probst, Carla Habeeb and Stephanie Rogers, and a second event at the Christmas tree lighting at the new parkland sponsored by neighborhood merchants was yet another opportunity for neighbors to gather together for some holiday caroling. These events played an important role in rallying community spirit at a much needed time.

After the sexual assault on their street, Rosedale Road street captain Tom Spach organized a meeting attended by seventy residents and six APD representatives in the home of Nicole Foerschler. This was amazing attendance for a meeting of one single street's residents. Many neighbors met each other for the first time and the group is now planning a social evening for their street.

All the while, membership in our neighborhood Yahoo message board, the VHList, has been growing by leaps and bounds, surpassing 1000 members and providing valuable community connectivity in 'real time.' Thanks to resident Stephen Cohen for having the foresight several years ago to give us this free service. In addition, residents David Eckoff and Greg Gongola have created and introduced us to a community-wide e-alert system which now has over 400 members

continued on page 8

"This addition of trees will make such a positive impact along that stretch of North Highland," said VHCA board member Pamela Papner. "We are so grateful to Scott Stern, the commercial property owner, for working with us and installing the asphalt cuts and tree beds to enable this planting."

So much of the tree planting in our neighborhood has been due to the tremendous support provided by Trees Atlanta, along with resident advocates like Stephanie Coffin, who not only plan and execute these plantings, but care for the trees over the longer term. Through these many volunteers and advocates, our neighborhood has consistently planted and protected its trees, which is no small feat. Stephanie Coffin encourages residents to take the time to walk N. Highland from Amsterdam to Ponce de Leon and enjoy the trees.

"Please stop and enjoy the many varieties of crape myrtles that provide a colorful display of white, pink, purple, and red in the summer and deep leaf color in the fall," says Coffin. "And don't forget to also enjoy our Virginia-Highland arboretum. Take a walk along any of the four loops to view the diversity of our beautiful neighborhood trees, and learn about them as you go."

A printable brochure with a map of the four different loops that form the Virginia-Highland Neighborhood Arboretum may be found at www.vahi.org.

We are so grateful for the activism and the stewardship provided by many residents - but especially Stephanie Coffin who, along with Trees Atlanta, has worked for many years to contribute so significantly and positively to our neighborhood. The next time you see her, say "thanks!" Please also consider Trees Atlanta as a recipient of your annual giving. To learn more, go to www.treesatlanta.org. You can also visit them at Summerfest 2011.

Virginia Highland Summerfest 5K Run/Walk

June 4th 8am



Join the fun & support this
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Register today - www.active.com

Race is limited to 1400 | No race day registration
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Virginia-Highland Civic Association

2010-2011 Board of Directors

Board members are volunteers with jobs and/or family, so please email rather than call, unless it's an emergency. Through email a mutually convenient time to discuss can be arranged, if necessary.

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The Virginia-Highland Voice

Published quarterly, by and for the residents of Virginia-Highland

Editor: John Becker

Design: Preeti Ayyangar

Business Manager: Nita Luce

We welcome your feedback on *The Virginia-Highland Voice*.

Please send your comments to editor@vahi.org.

VHCA Calendar

Monthly Board Meetings

When: First Monday of each month, 7 pm.

Starting in June 2011, moves to second Monday of each month, 7pm

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

Planning Committee Meetings

When: Last Wednesday of each month

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

Meeting locations subject to change

You can keep up with community news
and events on: www.vahi.org



Dr. William Carlson
404.881.1805

1402-3 N. Highland Ave.
Atlanta, Georgia 30306
fax: 404.881.6220

Passing the Torch

Do you enjoy writing and editing? Or do you have an interest in helping our neighborhood businesses share their story with VaHi

residents? If so, and you're also looking for a way to give back to the community, we have just the opportunity for you. The Voice is seeking a new editor and business manager. These volunteer positions aren't terribly time-consuming and they're a great way to have a positive impact on one of the association's most important communication tools. Anyone interested in volunteering or learning more should contact current editor John Becker at jnbecker@me.com or VHCA communications chair Pamela Papner at ppapner@earthlink.net.

President's Corner

Aly Higgins *Board President, Virginia-Highland Civic Association*

Before joining the VHCA, I didn't realize how many of the most important functions of our neighborhood are carried out by volunteers. Everything from monitoring the planning of our residential and commercial properties, to raising funds that allow us to purchase land for a new park, to organizing public safety efforts and providing grants to other deserving organizations that come together to make our neighborhood the wonderful place that it is – all are a result of volunteer efforts. I want to thank everyone who helped make our neighborhood strong during 2010 and will make it even better in the coming year.

Happy 2011 to you all! At the beginning of a new year many of us make resolutions, one of which is often giving more of ourselves and our time to worthy causes. I encourage everyone to get involved in our neighborhood to continue to make Virginia Highland the great neighborhood that it is. Whether its hosting a dinner party for neighbors on your street to build a greater sense of community, raising funds for the renovation of our special Fire Station #19 or New Highland Park, volunteering your time for Summerfest, or participating in one of the civic association's committees (planning, fundraising, parks, etc.), there are countless ways to contribute to the neighborhood and give of your time right here in your own backyard.

While we have a very dedicated core of volunteers who are willing to step in and take on new projects, I think about how much more we could do, how many more great projects we could complete, if we had more volunteers. No matter how much (or little) time you have to give, we would love your help. If you are interested in getting involved, please let us know - come to a civic association meeting, e-mail a board member or share your ideas with your neighbors. We look forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you all of the best for 2011.

Aly

Note from Pamela Papner at Publishing:

Aly Higgins has done a wonderful job as President of VHCA this year, and she has contributed countless volunteer hours toward efforts to support and improve Virginia-Highland over the past two years. She is (unfortunately for us) moving to Inman Park, and because her primary residence is changing, she had to resign from the Board. She is retaining her home in Virginia-Highland and remains invested in the neighborhood. I will be finishing out her term as President. On behalf of many, we thank you sincerely, Aly!

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Orme Park Construction Underway

The long-awaited construction planned to improve Orme Park is about to begin! This project has been talked about for more than two years, and will be funded by the more than \$202,000 raised so far by volunteers. Although more funds for landscaping are still needed, construction will begin on the project soon.

As most residents know, Orme Park is a 6.6 acre City of Atlanta neighborhood park located in Virginia-Highland. Like most parks in our city, Orme Park is suffering from overuse and lack of funding to pay for improvements. Friends of Orme Park and the Virginia Highland Conservation League (a 501(c)(3)) subsidiary of the VHCA) have stepped up to improve the park.

Following the community's endorsed 2007 Visioning Plan, the VHCL has approval to move forward with implementation of this park improvement project. These improvements are in line with the overall goal to retain Orme's "woody" look and feel, and are being performed under the auspices of the City of Atlanta Parks Department.

Specific improvements include:



Orme Park's main entrance, at existing playground, is unsafe, does not meet building code requirements, and is in a general state of disrepair. A new plaza space will improve safety conditions by creating a larger landing area between the road and stairway (today there is no landing/ separation between the top of existing steps and roadway).

The new entrance design includes an entrance plaza, stairway, and gently sloping sidewalks that provide wheelchair accessibility into the site. This area will be reconfigured so that the entrance overlooks a central lawn area, rather than the back of a playground.



The playground will be moved to an adjacent shady area. That relocation will allow access from park entrance to pedestrian bridge, without cutting through the playground. A granite seating wall will be built adjacent to the new playground location. A walkway connecting the two entrances on Brookridge Drive will be constructed where a dirt path exists today.

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When “Walkable” Really Isn’t Walkable

VaHi’s Sidewalks Could Use Some TLC

- Kathryn King-Metters, Traffic and Sidewalks Chair

Part of the culture of Virginia Highland is the ease with which we can walk to local restaurants and stores - we consider ours a “walking neighborhood.” Unfortunately, a leisurely stroll in VaHi can often feel like navigating an obstacle course due to the poor condition of many of our sidewalks.

In 2007 some local residents took it upon themselves to organize a review of the neighborhood’s sidewalks, documenting their condition. After reviewing the findings five years later, it’s apparent there hasn’t been much improvement. I plan to update this survey in order to identify and target major pedestrian hazards where repairs are needed. I will post details on the VHCA Website as they are available.

Many residents have asked what the City codes say regarding sidewalk maintenance. To clarify, property owners are responsible for keeping sidewalk adjacent to their homes in good order for pedestrian safety. This includes repair or replacement of broken sidewalk as well as removal of grass, weeds and other natural impediments. During our recent ice storm, it was determined that residents are even responsible for clearing their sidewalks of snow and ice within a reasonable time after accumulation (see Atlanta city code, Sec. 138-14 Maintenance of sidewalk area). Failure to comply could result in homeowner liability if injury should occur and the sidewalk in question was considered to be in hazardous condition for an unreasonable period of time.

One exception to this policy is if sidewalk has been damaged by tree roots, specifically from trees growing in the right of way (i.e., not on your private property). If this is the case, the City will repair the sidewalk at its own expense. If you think your sidewalk qualifies for this repair, call 404-330-6333 and place a service request. An assessment will be performed and, if the city agrees, the sidewalk will be repaired at no cost to you.

So, what if the city comes out and determines the damage was caused by roots from trees growing on your property? For reference, it usually costs around \$4 a square foot to replace smooth concrete. If you want the concrete stamped to look like the original hexagonal pavers, you can expect to pay around \$5 per square foot. Before you or a hired contractor begin repair work, you’ll need to go to City Hall to obtain a permit for the work. To obtain a permit, go to the 4th floor of City Hall, Suite #4700.



In the past, the Virginia Highland Civic Association (VHCA) offered compensation to homeowners to help defray the cost of repairing sidewalks adjacent to their homes. The program reimbursed homeowners up to half the total cost to repair or replace the sidewalk. Maximum reimbursement was \$7/linear ft. with a \$350 cap (higher cap for corner lots). The plan didn’t reimburse for extra work on driveways, private walkways, etc.

As of February, the VHCA budget does not have funding to support this program. However, after Summerfest receipts have been tallied, funds may again be available. If this occurs, we will notify everyone at the monthly meeting and on the website. We truly hope we can offer this important program again soon.

I’m also investigating what recourse we have, as neighbors and as an association, to compel neighbors to repair their sidewalks. Though there has been a City Ordinance on the books since 1977 making the homeowner responsible, it doesn’t appear many citations have been issued.

In my next report I will discuss options for repairing your sidewalk, including using the hex pavers. This is a much cheaper alternative to concrete walks and is more forgiving of tree roots. I personally replaced the broken hex pavers in my front walk and leveled all of the pavers a few years ago. It looks as good today and it did then.

FBAC Doubles Patrol Area

Officers Can Now Respond to Incidents Almost Every Night of the Week

- Brian Gross

Patrol coverage in Virginia-Highland is very different today than before the rash of seven muggings last Fall. In November the patrol territory nearly doubled to include almost all of VaHi from Amsterdam all the way to Ponce. The team of off-duty APD officers is now five strong: Chris, Gary, Chip, Ken and Bill.

A huge benefit of expansion is the number of days there is FBAC coverage for urgent incidents. Each zone is patrolled during four or five 5-hour shifts per week. However, patrols in one zone respond to urgent incidents in the other zone. So, an FBAC patrol is available to respond to incidents nearly every night (versus 4-5 nights per week before).

FBAC's patrolling of VaHi streets benefits each and every resident, with officers questioning suspicious persons, running license plate numbers, and providing other proactive activities to prevent crime. Activity statistics are available at fbacvahi.com under "News".

FBAC has received outstanding support from south VaHi businesses: platinum sponsor Atkins Park Restaurant; gold sponsor Diesel Filling Station, and six others. Our new silver sponsor is Tailfin Marketing Communications. April is renewal time for the south zone, and a high renewal rate is critical to keeping the patrol active there.

Please support the patrol by joining at fbacvahi.com.

VH ALERTS

Get alerts by text message or email about urgent neighborhood safety issues

A new addition to our arsenal of safety tools in VaHi is VH Alerts. The service provides real-time notification of neighborhood safety issues and more than 400 people have signed up already.

Here's how it works. If a member notices an urgent safety issue, he/she sends a text message to the system. All members will then receive the message on their cell-phones (or via email if they prefer). The service is only to be used in case of a truly urgent issue.

To join, visit vhconnect.org and select "VH Safety Alerts".

The Value of Community

(continued from page 2)

give us this free service. In addition, residents David Eckoff and Greg Gongola have created and introduced us to a community-wide e-alert system which now has over 400 members (see related story on p. ?).

In the aftermath of the robbery and murder at the Virginia Highland Apartments, residents packed a meeting room at the complex to learn about the APD's response plan. This meeting was organized by manager Valerie Johnson and led to all complex buildings now having a street captain and increased involvement by the complex in our overall neighborhood watch system. In fact, during this time we have added more than thirty street captains to our network. In the largest gathering ever of this group, more than sixty of these dedicated folks gathered January 22 for an informational session set up by our new street captain coordinator, Eleanor Barrineau.

Two cleanup sessions were held with our Midtown neighbors to clean out homeless camps under the Virginia Avenue and Park Drive BeltLine bridges. Areas that are allowed to decline simply invite crime so activity like this is very important to our overall neighborhood safety efforts.

Also, Virginia Highland Apartments resident Julie Knapp organized a social event: a neighborhood mixer at Park Tavern, yet another chance for residents to meet neighbors, renters and homeowners alike. Events like this support the basic crime prevention tenet that folks who know each other tend to look out for each other – and apparently our city councilperson Alex Wan agrees.

"I applaud the leadership that Virginia-Highland continues to demonstrate with regard to public safety" Wan said recently.

"The partnerships being built both within the community and with Atlanta Police are precisely what police departments and city governments hope for in the fight against crime," Wan said. "E-mail safety updates, block/street safety captains, and now text message alerts are the types of tools and strategies being shared across the city to create safer neighborhoods."

Yes, we've experienced more than our share of crime recently. But, the true measure of a neighborhood's grit is how it responds to adversity. A quick look at the events and activities listed above – not to mention the efforts of those who pick up litter, erase graffiti vandalism, check on elderly neighbors, support FBAC and make suspicious persons calls to 911 – show that our neighborhood doesn't give up. We value the community in which we live and will fight to continue to make it strong in the months and years ahead.



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Last Chance to Buy a Brick

Give the gift of community that keeps on giving...

Buy a Brick in the New Va-Hi Park!

LAST CHANCE! Construction begins on New Highland Park in the second quarter of 2011, so this is your last chance to purchase a brick that will be incorporated into New Highland Park. Please order today (using the form to the right). You can also order online at vahi.org. Please do so today, we really need your support!

The following generous neighbors purchased bricks for the park since the last issue of the Voice:

Stefanie Agusta
 Roberd & Rita Bostick
 John Ernest Ceisel
 Aaron & Deborah Danzigs
 Joycelyn Fleming
 Howard Gold
 Few Hembree
 Allison & Ben Hill
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 Jerelyn Jordan
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Special thanks to our "Founders" Level donors who contributed \$1000 since the last Voice issue: Cornelia Robertson, Katherine Rumbaugh and Pichulik Properties



SAVE THE DATE!

Dine Out for Virginia-Highland Parks
 at
 Atkins Park Restaurant

Tuesday, April 19th (5-10pm)
 Dine-In or Take-Out

794 North Highland Ave.

**Proceeds go to support Orme and
 New Highland Park Projects**

Contribute \$100 and receive an engraved brick. Your donation is tax-deductible. The brick can be engraved with your family name(s), in honor of someone special, or you may simply wish to create something whimsical. You'll receive a certificate, suitable for gift-giving.

ORDER NOW! See details below.

Name: _____

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Email: _____ Phone: _____

Gift is for: _____

(Name desired on personalized certificate)

Provide Specific Engraving Desired:

(Up to 3 lines of text, with no more than 14 characters

-including spaces- per line).

Checks Payable To: Virginia-Highland Conservation League

Mail To: Pamela Papner, VHCA Vice-President,
 854 Highland Terrace, Atlanta 30306

Questions? E-mail: brickinfo@vahi.org

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Park Founder:	\$1000
<i>(Brick + Special "Park Angel" T-shirt and Donor Name on Park Plaque)</i>	



History of Virginia-Highland

{Part X}

Linda Merrill

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS IS THE TENTH IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE HISTORY OF VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND, EXCERPTED FROM A LONGER WORK-IN-PROGRESS BEING RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY LONG-TIME VA-HI RESIDENT LINDA MERRILL. AN ART HISTORIAN BY TRAINING, LINDA WORKED AS A CURATOR AT THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, AT THE HIGH MUSEUM FOR TWO, AND NOW – AFTER A HIATUS TO STAY HOME WITH HER TWO CHILDREN – SHE TEACHES AT EMORY. LINDA WELCOMES COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON HER WORK. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT MAGDALIN@MINDSPRING.COM.

The news in 1916 that two luxurious apartment houses were to be constructed on Highland Avenue, just opposite the new Atkins Park development, was taken as proof that “a wave of prosperity” was sweeping through the city. The owner of the property was Lucian Lamar Knight, a prominent Atlanta journalist and historian who later founded the Georgia Archives. Knight engaged the architect H. K. Chapman to design the Colonnade Court Apartments in a style that complemented the Atkins Park bungalows. Flanking a large courtyard, the pair of three-story buildings comprised 24 one-and two-bedroom apartments, all with graciously proportioned rooms and ten-foot-high ceilings. Although the Colonnade apartments were converted to condominiums in 1980, much of the “Southern elegance endures,” as the Atlanta Journal-Constitution observed in 1993.

Not far from the Colonnade was the Saint Charles Court (now the St. Charles), a three-story, U-shaped apartment house with porches overlooking a courtyard filled with fountains and flowers. Designed by Owen James Southwell around 1922, the sixteen-unit building was constructed in a vaguely antebellum style, with an elaborate scheme of decoration featuring Corinthian columns and Grecian urns.

The Atlanta Constitution confidently predicted that the Saint Charles would be “one of the most modern structures in the city,” adding that “its location in the heart of one of Atlanta’s

most desirable residential sections will make it especially attractive to those who consider essential the proper surroundings and environment in the selection of a home.” These apartments represented a new pattern in suburban life, for apartments traditionally lined city streets and served the needs of a more transient population. Boasting “all modern appliances and conveniences,” as the Constitution reported, the Saint Charles was intended for residents from the upper middle-class: its earliest occupants included a doctor, a lawyer, and a rabbi; and Louis and Rosie Erlich, proprietors of Erlich’s Ladies’ Ready-to-Wear, lived in the building for some forty-five years.

Shortly before the Saint Charles opened its doors, Atlanta’s first condominium was built on Virginia Avenue, just west of the intersection with North Highland, by a prescient entrepreneur named Dewald A. Cohen. His daughter Natalie was 9 years old when her family moved into the building and 56 when she moved out in 1968. Four poplar trees were planted in front of the building, she later recalled, each bearing the name of one of the children who originally lived there. One was named for Natalie’s playmate Bertram Jacobson, later Bert Parks (1914–1992), longtime emcee of Miss America pageants, who grew up in number 4.

In 1923, the Colonnade Court and the Saint Charles were the only apartment buildings in the southern part of Virginia-



Highland, but by 1927 there were 6, and ten years later, 23. One reason for the proliferation of multi-family housing is that Atlanta as a whole was enjoying a population boom, but the concentration of apartments on St. Charles, Greenwood, and Bonaventure avenues and Barnett and Frederica streets may be attributed to industrial and commercial expansion on Ponce de Leon Avenue. The opening of the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant in 1915 and the commencement

of Sears and Roebuck's mail-order and warehouse operations in 1925 had quickened the demand for convenient, affordable housing.

The apartment building at the corner of Highland and Ponce de Leon, however, clearly catered to the wealthy. Built by Asa G. Candler Jr. (1880-1953), son of the founder of Coca-Cola, the Briarcliff (originally the "750," its Ponce address) was designed by the architect G. Lloyd Preacher, who specialized in hotels. Candler's nine-story, H-shaped "apartment hotel" was modeled on "similar exclusive structures in New York and other large cities": in addition to the 200 apartments (including a suite, according to legend, reserved for the gangster Al Capone), there was a grocery store, delicatessen, pharmacy, barber shop, beauty parlor, and restaurant. Asa Candler's real-estate development firm, the Briarcliff Investment Company, occupied the penthouse offices, marked on the outside by a stucco wall enlivened with terracotta decoration. Candler also maintained a suite for his family's use, and after selling his Druid Hills mansion moved into the apartment himself and died there in 1953. By then, the grand hotel was in decline. In 1979 it was renovated and air-conditioned, reopening the next year as the federally subsidized Briarcliff Summit Apartments.

Sources: The Historical Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution; Ann Taylor Boutwell, "Seventy Years Later, Her Tree is Doing Just Fine," Atlanta 30306 (May 1995), p. 28, Virginia-Highland neighborhood file, Atlanta History Center.

Are You Using The Neighborhood's Best Parenting Resource?

By: Aleta Mills-Stubin

Did you know there is a group that provides support, resources, and activities for parents in Virginia-Highland, Morningside and Lenox Park? The Virginia-Highland Morningside Parent Association (VHMPA) provides a link between parents in these neighborhoods for the sharing of parental interests and concerns. The group also provides access to information, activities, and support that enhance the members' child-rearing efforts.

VHMPA includes an email network of more than 700 members. The email network is an invaluable resource where parents can share information about schools, family-friendly restaurants, and activities. You can also buy and sell many

useful childcare items and toys. Most importantly, this tool is a great place to seek parenting advice from neighborhood parents. VHMPA also organizes playgroups, brings meals to families with new babies, publishes a monthly newsletter, sponsors neighborhood festivals, races and fundraisers, and organizes social activities such as backyard happy hours.

But because marketing is an ongoing challenge, VHMPA remains one of the neighborhood's best-kept secrets. It does not regularly advertise and is best known among its existing members. Most parents find out about VHMPA through word of mouth when they have a child or move into the neighborhood with children. If you are or are soon to be a parent, please join us. If not, help us spread the word to new neighborhood parents.

You can find out more about VHMPA and join online at www.vhmpa.org.

Home Tour Success

- Cindy Kaufman and Charlie Lefort, Event Co-Chairs

Thanks to the generosity of homeowners and countless volunteers, the 2010 Tour of Homes was a huge success! Comments during and after the tour echoed that the group of homes included this year was one of the best ever. While the weather on Saturday was superb, many courageous tour-goers braved gusty winds and snow on Sunday. Some even felt the wintry weather added to the tour's charm and holiday spirit.

Tour goers were again treated to fantastic food tastings from our local restaurant sponsors MetroFresh, Atkins Park, El Taco/La Tavola, Shorty's, Murphy's, Goin' Coastal Seafood and DBA BBQ. We truly value local restaurant participation because this unique offering differentiates our home tour from others in the city.

We are fortunate to have a long list of folks to thank, starting with our wonderful media partners DaveFM and 11Alive. This year we stepped up our media presence using radio, television, Internet and social media and that really helped boost ticket sales. We'd also like to thank our major sponsor Harry Norman Realtors, specifically the on-site participation of agents Mary Hallenberg and Shannon Makaila. Additional Foreman Sponsors City Storage and Atlanta Homes and Lifestyles continue to make our tour possible.

This year our tour had a new home: The Church of our Saviour on N. Highland Ave. The church was the site for ticket sales, volunteer check-in, our first ever Design Forum and free childcare offered by the Garrison After School Program. A huge thanks goes to Nan Fischer for organizing this part of our program. Design Forum participants included Leung Gregory Planning + Design (Jason Gregory), Mark Arnold Architecture (Mark Arnold), Karen Hott Interiors (Karen Hott), Capital City Contracting (Jim Terry) and J. Thomas Designs (Jenny Thomas Warner).

Our final thanks goes out to the incomparable Phuong Nguyen of Creative Crop who produced our great looking posters, website and ticket brochure.

If you or someone you know would be interested in having a home considered for the 2011 Tour or you would like to volunteer, please contact tour@vahi.org.

See you in December!



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Graffiti Task Force Update

- Laura Voisinet and Victoria Hathcox, Task Force Co-Chairs

Partnership Development: During winter months with less daylight the occurrence of new graffiti has waned allowing the task force to focus on developing partnerships with residents, businesses and commercial property owners.

Here are some highlights:

- **Intown ACE Hardware:** Owner Micah has partnered with the task force to provide graffiti removal supplies essentially at cost.
- **Artline:** The artistic mural under the Virginia Ave. bridge along the Beltline has been tagged. VaHi resident Jean Ellen Jones brought the recent vandalism to the notice of the Beltline folks and the artist, who will restore the mural to its original beauty.
- **Blind Willie's:** Property owner Suzanne Pichulik Eisenberg has made arrangements to paint over the Walk the Line tag gracing the top of their building.

Citywide Effort: Behind the combined leadership of Mayor Kasim Reed and Parks Commissioner George Dusenbury, Atlanta now has a citywide graffiti prevention and eradication pilot program. Still in its infancy, the program should prove to be an invaluable resource to communities like Virginia Highland.

How Can You Help? In order to prevent recurrence, our goal is to remove graffiti as soon as possible, and we rely on the many eyes – and hands – in our community to support this effort. We encourage you to roll up your sleeves and jump in yourself to remove the small stuff (including stickers and posters). Report graffiti to the task force when you need assistance.

- **Reporting:** Take a photo with your cell phone and mail it and the location to us at graffiti@vahi.org
- **Adopt-A-Spot:** Have a location near and dear to you that you'd like to help keep graffiti-free? A green dumpster, brown telephone pole, or grey utility box, perhaps? Claim it, contact us and we'll help you get started!
- **Tracking:** Residents Alicia Cardillo and David Eckoff have graciously volunteered to initiate amazing new software to help document tags in VaHi.

Special thanks to Di Capri's on Barnett Ave. and Todd Prinky and Squeegee Sharks T-Shirts on Ponce de Leon Pl. for quickly painting over vast amounts of ugly graffiti. Please take the time to thank these conscientious business friends.

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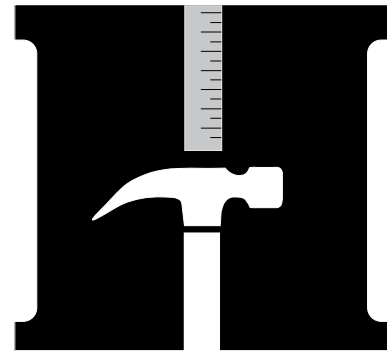
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