

Round and Round mixed paper - magazines



Virginia-Highland VOICE

A publication of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association August 2002

VHCA CALENDAR

General Meetings:

September 4, 7:30 pm

October 2, 7:30 pm

November 6, 7:30 pm

Ponce de Leon Branch Library

Board Meetings:

August 28, 7:00 pm

September 30, 7:00 pm

November 4, 7:00 pm

YWCA

Planning Committee:

September 25, 7:30 pm

October 30, 7:30 pm

November 27, 7:30 pm

Ponce de Leon Branch Library

PEDS Walks:

September 10, 6:30 pm

October 8, 6:30 pm

November 12, 6:30 pm

Highland CVS parking lot

Location of meetings is
subject to change.

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VHCA ELECTIONS 2002

Steve Kushner and Jenn Ballentine

Yes, folks, it's that time again! The term of the current Board of Directors will expire in September and an election of the Virginia Highland Civic Association 2002 - 2003 Board of Directors will be held at the September 4th annual meeting. The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in the Inman Middle School Auditorium. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Anyone interested in running, please contact Steve Kushner either by email or by phone. An announcement about those who have declared to run for a position on the Board of Directors will be sent via email and will be posted on the website (www.vahi.org) prior to the election. Nominations from the floor at the meeting will also be accepted.

Like last year's election, proxy voting will count. The Civic Association will have a proxy voting form on the website and each Board Member will have copies of the proxy voting form for distribution. If you need a form and cannot retrieve it from the website, please contact a Board member. This year, in order for a proxy voting form to be considered, proof of residency in the neighborhood must be attached to the form. Proof of residency should include a copy of any of the following:

- a valid driver's license
- a utility bill not more than 60 days old OR
- a voter registration card.

To ensure that only valid proxies count, the completed proxy voting form will be attached to a ballot at the meeting. This way, if a proxy form is deemed invalid, we will be able to cancel the votes cast through that proxy. If you have any questions about this year's voting process, please contact Steve Kushner.

We encourage you to become involved in the VHCA. This is your neighborhood organization and you can make a difference! Run for a spot on the Board of Directors! Come to meetings! Write an article for the VOICE! And most importantly, don't forget to come out and vote on September 4th! See you there!

VAHI GETS FIRST JEWISH OUTREACH CENTER

Rabbi Eliyahu Schusterman

Chabad Intown is pleased to announce the grand opening of our Jewish outreach center at 928 Ponce de Leon Avenue, between Barnett and Frederica. Though there are many fine Jewish institutions within the Atlanta city limits, we are the first to be located within the Civic Association's official definition of Virginia-Highland. And, we're thrilled to be here!

Please join us for our official grand opening event on August 18 from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. We'll have food, games, educational information, and details on all our upcoming programs.

The goal of Chabad Intown is to provide meaningful Jewish experiences, education and renewal opportunities for Jewish men, women, and children regardless of their level of awareness, affiliation, or spiritual inclination. Whether one is affiliated or not, has much Jewish background or none, you are always welcome to try one or all of Chabad's programs.

Our building is actually a former residence, a two-story brick home typical of many others in the neighborhood. After we moved in, we realized the building needed some renovations to accommodate our growing community. We quickly engaged a local contractor to modernize and upgrade the interior, while still preserving the historical value and charm of the building.

Virginia-Highland already has a very strong community atmosphere. Chabad Intown is pleased to offer Jewish residents the opportunity to experience Judaism within their existing community.

To learn more about what we have going on, you can visit www.chabadintown.org, email me at Rabbi@chabad-intown.org, or simply stop by 928 Ponce de Leon at your convenience.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

As someone who was born in Atlanta and raised in the In-town neighborhoods, mostly Virginia Highland, I would like to respond to Mr. Gallagher's article in the last issue of the VOICE in which he dismisses the New Urbanism as mere nostalgia. My affection for our neighborhood is great, and though I now live in Connecticut, I still feel connected to our In-town community.

As his article suggests, it is easy to become cynical about the way in which market-driven developers have co-opted the label "New Urbanism". It is true that a "gated apartment/condo complex stranded up on the hill" is probably exploiting nostalgia for marketing purposes. And it is also true that there is very little new about New Urbanism. Any New Urbanist worth her salt will readily confess that New Urbanism is simply the revival of timeless patterns of human settlement, which were abandoned after World War II in the naive rush to reorder our lives around the automobile. What is new about the New Urbanism is the accommodation of the automobile within reasonable limits and in adapting to modern life styles.

I urge readers to dig a little deeper. *Suburban Nation* by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater Zyberk or *Home from Nowhere* by James Kunstler will provide insight into what makes Virginia Highlands so wonderful. While the New Urbanist movement has been imitated by many unscrupulous opportunists, this is true of all successful movements. At the core is a remarkable group of architects, developers, planners, and activists who are working to restore the only sensible way of building cities. For the first time in history, the unspoken, accumulated experience of thousands of years of human settlement is being analyzed and described so that it can be used as the basis for modern development. And the New Urbanists have built far more than Seaside and Celebrations. Hundreds of real New Urbanist communities, based on traditional settlement patterns, have been built across America. Despite these hard-won successes, New Urbanist development remains a tiny percentage of actual development as sprawl engulfs our countryside.

Mr. Gallagher asks whether residents of Virginia Highland live up to New Urbanist ideals, and his answer is a definitive 'No'. His line of questioning is valid, but I would suggest that his answers do not take into account the broader picture. While it is certainly silly that a board member drives three blocks to a restaurant - we've all made similar transgressions on occasion - that does not invalidate the importance of good urbanism, such as we have in Virginia Highland. Keep in mind that the street grid and mixed use prevent that three block drive from being several miles, as it would be in the suburbs. In fact, many residents do walk. My mother lived in Virginia Highland for two years without a car, walking to Ansley Mall for groceries. As a kid, I walked to Inman Middle School, and I took Marta to North Fulton, while my sister walked to Grady. The point is that a traditional neighborhood like ours will significantly reduce car trips, and that is a step in the right direction. As In-town Atlanta gets denser, as it inevitably will, car use will continue to decline and mass transit use will increase.

As to the overpriced housing in Virginia Highland, those high prices are a function of supply and demand. Homebuyers covet real neighborhoods, and they know it when they see it. Unfortunately, since World War II and the advent of car-centered development, it has become illegal to build traditional neighborhoods like Virginia Highland. As the novelty of suburban living is wearing off, homebuyers are flocking back to the few traditional neighborhoods that remain, driving home prices up. New Urbanists are advocating sensible changes to our zoning laws in order to allow new neighborhoods like ours to be built that are affordable for "an elementary school teacher and bus driver."

The points to be made in favor of New Urbanism are legion. Though some residents may not be maximizing the opportunities to conserve resources and reduce car trips, overall Virginia Highland is a remarkably green place to live. Smaller yards require less water. The number and length of car trips per resident is undoubtedly less than it is for most suburban residents. Compared to most suburban areas, our neighborhood packs a lot of people comfortably into a small area, helping to reduce sprawl and preserve the countryside.

Rather than discredit the New Urbanism, we should feel privileged to live in such a great neighborhood, and we should actively support the reform of zoning laws throughout the metropolitan area.

Yours truly,

Ben Northrup,
New Haven, CT

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your letter. We appreciate you sharing your ideas with us and your continued, albeit long-distance, support for our neighborhood. The VOICE welcomes letters to the editor and responses to articles published in the VOICE.

Sincerely,

The Editor

PARENTING & EDUCATION UPDATE

Louise Glancy

Twenty-five parents, nannies and other caregivers attended the June Child and Infant CPR classes. Each was instructed by Jo Reeves, a registered nurse with Piedmont Hospital. Participants learned basic CPR interventions intended to be easy to administer in an emergency situation. Classes focused on the procedures unique to children and infants as there are significant differences between child and infant CPR and adult CPR. Participants commented that beyond the instructional benefits of the classes, the sessions provided a great opportunity to meet other neighborhood families with young children.

The Parenting and Education Committee encourages any interested parents to contact Co-Chair Louise Glancy at 404-569-7670 for further information. Special thanks to Allyson Wilner of the Morningside-Virginia Highland Parents Association for her help with the event.

FUNDRAISER FOR THE PIEDMONT PARK OFF LEASH DOG PARK AND DAISY HILL PET FARM

Kathryn Kenith

The Wag N Walk, a 2 Mile Fun Walk/5K Run, will be held in Piedmont Park on Saturday, August 17, 2002. This is a joint fundraiser for the Piedmont Park Off Leash Dog Park and Daisy Hill Pet Farm (a 501C3 organization formed to eliminate the euthanization of healthy, adoptable pets and provide a long term care shelter for homeless pets). The walk/run will start at 8:00AM with late registration at 7:00AM. There is a \$25 registration fee per dog (with incentives to collect additional pledge money) to help these two wonderful causes. Teams (five or more) are also able to enter. For more information call 404-467-1540 or register on-line at www.daisyhillpetfarm.org.



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ASK OFFICER DAVE

Dear Officer Dave,

I was taking my routine walk the other morning about 7 a.m. I noticed a middle-aged white male driving a white van. The reason I noticed him was because he was slowly following me. I also noticed that he was staring at me and the other female walkers. He drove very slowly and deliberately. I was very uncomfortable with the situation and was very happy when I got home. I found that I was uncomfortable all day and it has made me rethink walking that early in the morning. Am I just being overly sensitive and irrational? What would you recommend I do in the future?

Overly Cautious

Dear Overly Cautious,

I don't think you are being overly sensitive or irrational. Always go with your gut feelings! I do recommend calling 911 when you get to a place of safety. There may be nothing to it but you and those in your Community are always better safe than sorry.

I commend you for being so observant! Sometimes when we are afraid or uncomfortable we forget to be watchful. A description will assist the Police in tracking down the suspect and find out what is going on. Living in the City has its downsides. We all have to be aware of our surroundings, all the time. I recommend trying one or all of the following:

1. Workout with a partner - there is always safety in numbers
2. Carry a cell phone
3. Walk your dog - or borrow a friend's dog
4. Carry weights with you - they can be used for self-defense
5. If you are comfortable with either mace or pepper spray carry it with you

Don't allow a stranger to stop you from doing the things that you enjoy. Thank you for sharing your story! It will certainly open the eyes of other walkers/runners and remind them to be observant and safe!

Officer Dave

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Steve Kushner

We are coming off another very successful Summerfest, where the weather cooperated and people from all over Metropolitan Atlanta came to celebrate the start of summer and our neighborhood with us. The Civic Association and the neighborhood extend a special thanks to all of the volunteers (over 300) who made the weekend such a wonderful success. Of course, the event could not have been such a success without the hard work of our Summerfest Chairperson, Pam ("PK") Trettel and her committee chairs - Cynthia Gentry and Ann-Marie White (Artists Market), Jill Gossett and Jean Jordan (Volunteers) and Pierce Pape (5K Road Race and Tot Trot). We also need to thank Mike Ferreira and Dreamscape Designs and Stephanie Coffin for making John Howell Park look beautiful and for preparing it for the festival.

The cooperation of La Tavola, Noche, Murphy's and Taco Mac also contributed to the success of Summerfest. Their participation and extension of their restaurants into the street added a unique aspect to this year's Summerfest that hopefully will continue in the future. It was both a success and a learning experience for the Civic Association and the restaurants. We appreciate their willingness to be a part of Summerfest and look forward to their future participation.

Without the Summerfest Chair, her committee chairs, and the many volunteers who contribute untold hours, the Civic Association would have no means to support the worthy institutions and causes that contribute to our neighborhood. In the past, the Civic Association has donated upwards of \$30,000 annually to Trees Atlanta, Morningside Elementary School, Inman Middle School, Grady High School, John Howell Park and Orme Park. We expect to have another sizeable amount of money available for grants to these and other worthy causes this year.

As you have read, the term of the current Board of Directors will expire in September and an election will be held at the September 4 annual meeting of the Civic Association for the 2002 - 2003 Board of Directors. Again, the meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in the Inman Middle School Auditorium. We urge you all to come to the meeting and exercise your vote. As we learned in a recent national election, every vote really does count. If you are unable to come to the meeting but would still like to vote, you may submit a proxy voting form (available on the website).

We anticipate that an amendment to change the Bylaws will be introduced at the annual meeting to replace proxy voting with absentee ballots. The most significant difference between a proxy and an absentee ballot is that with the latter, the resident actually casts his or her vote, rather than delegating that responsibility to a proxy. This change would continue to allow as many residents as possible to participate in the process by casting their own vote. While some on the proxy commission wanted to eliminate proxies altogether, with no accommodation for those who were unable to attend the annual meeting, the majority of the commission believed the Civic Association should be as inclusive as possible and allow everyone to participate in any way they could. The majority was unwilling to make value judgments about who should or should not be able to vote by proxy or absentee ballot (e.g., a shut-in vs. an evening shift waiter/waitress) and thus, will give all residents an opportunity to vote.

We hope this year's Board met the expectations of those who voted us in, and look forward to as great a neighborhood involvement in this year's elections as there was at last year's.

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THE 100 CRAPE MYRTLES OF HIGHLAND AVENUE

Stephanie Coffin

Natchez (white), Muscogee (light pink), Lipan (medium lavender) and Tuscarora (coral red) are just some of the names of the 100 crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) along Highland Avenue. What a colorful site!

We began planting crape myrtles in the winter of 1996 in preparation for the Olympic games. The city parks department gave the neighborhood 50 Lipan crape myrtles. The trees were huge with not much root structure. We did not have much rain that spring and unfortunately, we lost over half of the trees. But the ones that lived were really gorgeous.

The next year, the city gave us some more trees and we began to plant other cultivars. Over the next seven years, we planted more with neighborhood help, Civic Association funds and Trees Atlanta donations. Today the trees line both sides of North Highland Avenue from Ponce de Leon to Amsterdam.

Crape myrtles have wonderful characteristics for street trees. They give beautiful color with long-lasting blooms beginning in late May and lasting until August. Their fall color can rival the most brilliant maple. They are drought tolerant and produce very little leaf litter. The beautiful colored bark, ranging from deep chestnut brown to soft gray, and the lovely twisted trunk shapes make this tree an all year round tree of beauty.

There are, however, two down sides to the crape myrtle. The first is that they require lots of pruning. The root sprouts at the base need pruning about 4 times a year. The other down side is that in early spring, someone along Highland decides to whack off the top. This happens every year, even when I put tags on the trees asking people not to prune. Unfortunately, when this happens the shape of the tree is ruined, and the tree becomes a visual hazard for pedestrians and cars. It will take several years before the shape can be restored. In addition, the mutilated tree will respond with a tremendous growth spurt weakening the tree and often attracting aphids and/or mildew.

The crape myrtles along North Highland are public trees. The city is ultimately responsible for the trees. As a neighborhood, we have taken care of the trees since the first planting. They are currently pruned for visibility, shape, and clearance. Early this winter, Greg Levine and Andy Krumb from Trees Atlanta and I worked on the trees. We usually lose one or two trees a year from cars that jump the sidewalk. Last year, Trees Atlanta donated five new crape myrtles near Amsterdam and 2 new cultivars from China that are planted near St. Charles.

If you are one of the many people who have helped plant, mulch, prune or voted for money for neighborhood trees, give yourself a pat on the back and enjoy the site of the blooming crape myrtles along Highland. The whole city talks about them. Let's plant more trees. Call Stephanie Coffin, the past Parks Chair and current NPU-F Parks Chair at 404-874-0523 if you want to help prune.

IT'S HIGH TIME FOR TEA

Jenn Ballentine

It's 10 a.m. You know what that means - it's time for tea! If you're in the middle of something - a phone call, a meeting or work on an important document - no matter. When the clock strikes 10 at the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, it's time to put down whatever it is you're doing and head off to the cafeteria for a glorious half hour of uninterrupted chatting.

Last summer I lived and worked in Zimbabwe for six weeks. During my first few days at the office, I reveled in the morning ritual of tea. What a great idea - everybody stops working for half an hour, has a cup of tea or two or three and talks to one another. Not about work, but about the weather, the morning's news, the previous night's escapades.

After the first few weeks of indulging in morning tea, the American in me began to pop back up. "No, I can't go to tea. I've got too much to do." Or "thanks, but I'm in the middle of something right now." Thoughts of "doesn't he see how urgent this is? How can she stop now just to have tea?" began to creep in.

I look back now and wish I had taken teatime more seriously. I realize now that it wasn't about having tea and biscuits, but rather about creating a time and a space for conversation, a place for people of all backgrounds and viewpoints to come together and exchange stories, thoughts and ideas. It's about recognizing that conversing with others is every bit as important as sending that urgent email or finishing that all so important document.

In fact, conversation is where all social change begins, according to Margaret J. Wheatley, an organizational development authority whose latest endeavor included organizing "conversation circles" in more than 30 countries around the world. In her article in the most recent issue of the Utne Reader, Wheatley says "before there were classrooms, meetings or group facilitators, there were people sitting around talking. When we think about beginning a conversation, we can take courage from the fact that this is a process we all know how to do. We are reawakening an ancient practice, a way of being together that all humans intimately understand."

Across America, there are efforts to rekindle the days of fireside chats, porch swing serenades, and high tea. Conversation cafes or salons are popping up in coffee shops in Seattle and on the Internet at www.cafe.utne.com. People of all different backgrounds are beginning to gather to talk to one another, to listen and to reflect. New and great ideas are being generated and people are learning, growing and being challenged by the experience.

I encourage all of us, as neighbors, to make a concerted effort to take the time to talk to one another more, to create a space in our neighborhood where people can come together to talk and debate and where honest conversation is valued and appreciated. I encourage us to put "tea time" back into our day and to relish the opportunity to converse with one another. If anyone knows if such a "space" or group already exists in VAHI or is interested in creating one, feel free to contact me at jennmeg@mindspring.com or to call me at 404-875-7558.

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MOSQUITO MADNESS MEETS MATCH?

Chip Gallagher

From June till October we are forced to close up one of our favorite rooms. This is not by choice. When we dare venture into this "room" we are brutally attacked and sent running for cover. It's mosquito time in Atlanta and that room is our backyard. This is the fate suffered by most folks in VAHI when by mid-June swarms of mosquitoes have taken over our decks and backyards. There are a few ways to keep mosquito population from doubling every three weeks. Make sure standing water in flowerpots, tree stumps, old pails, wading pools, and even bottle caps are emptied. Your birdbath should be dumped and refilled weekly. I checked my birdbath after the recent rains and it was teeming with mosquito larvae. Mosquitoes view leaf clogged gutters as a pay-by-the-hour motel; gutters should be cleaned and free flowing. Puddles or ruts on your property should be filled. Leaky outside faucets should be fixed. Keep your grass short and trim back your bushes. If you intend to venture into the wilds of your backyard wear light colored, long sleeve shirts and pants, do not use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays and use a brand of bug repellent that is 30% DEET for you and 10% DEET for your children. You can install a bat box but it typically takes years for a bat to take up residence. If none of this works invest in a moon suit when you want to read in your hammock.

You can, however, take all these pro-active precautions and still get chewed alive while tending to the bar-bee or pruning your roses. Residual insecticidal sprays with diazinon or chlorpyrifos (Dursban) can keep the swarms in check but if you have animals, fish or children (often the same thing) you may be reluctant, as we are, to blast your back yard with chemicals that have health warnings which include "headaches, nausea, dizziness, and seizures to paralysis, multiple chemical sensitivity syndrome, comas, and death in extreme cases." Seizures to paralysis or mosquito bites; that's some trade off.

The double dealing, sleazy antics at Enron, Xerox, WorldCom, and Global Crossing (to name just a few) require that I give full disclosure concerning my affiliation with American Biophysics Corporation, manufacturer of the Mosquito Magnet. I have none other than handed over \$800 for the Freedom Model machine (plus \$50 for the propane tank), which boasts it can rid your property of mosquito infestation. My neighbor bought a cheap Coleman knock-off and caught almost no mosquitoes after a week of operation. In fact, he was bit more times checking the machine than the machine caught mosquitoes. My Magnet caught over 300 mosquitoes in one week. Knowing each dead mosquito is not going to hatch hundreds of little suckers almost seems to justify the cost. The company explains it takes five weeks to break the mosquito reproduction cycle. It works on Tiger mosquitoes and I did not see any other types of bugs in the trap. I must say that I take a sick pleasure when I inspect the dead, dried out mosquitoes lying on their backs in my trap. This is my revenge for years of mosquito-induced misery.

To test if the machine lived up to its claims I stood out in the middle of my yard in shorts and was surrounded by mosquitoes in less than a minute. One week of Operation Mosquito Storm hasn't liberated my backyard. I'll let you know in the next issue of the VOICE if we have been able to reclaim our back yard. In the meantime, remove all standing water on your property; it takes only two days of water sitting in a flower pot to start mosquito madness. My order from Frontgate came with a 13-month money back guarantee. Our own In-Town Hardware now sells the Mosquito Magnet. Full disclosure: I'm In-Town Hardware's neighbor.

Thank you to all who responded to my piece on new urbanism. Comments, criticism or praises can be sent to: cgallagher@gsu.edu.

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MORE PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE HIGHLAND HOER

John Wolfinger

Now that mid-summer sizzling days have arrived in the neighborhood, it becomes a challenge to keep your garden full of color and new texture. It's not too late to keep planting fast-growing annual seeds to keep new plants coming on. Zinnias, marigolds, sunflowers, cosmos, morning glories, parsley, dill, and mustard are all good candidates for summer sowings. A great garden brightener is the eight million varieties of coleus available anymore, and they're not just for shade now. To keep them from getting leggy, keep the tops pinched out to encourage side branching for a more showy and shapely plant. Don't throw the cuttings on the compost pile though, to create more plants for your garden - stick the cuttings in a glass of water for quick rooting. This also gives you wonderful summer bouquets all summer long. And it's still not too late to set out fast-maturing plants such as eggplant, tomatoes, peppers and squash. Use the space vacated by your crops of peas, lettuce, spinach and other cool season crops.

Make sure all the new plants you set out during the spring planting frenzy have been mulched with 2 to 3 inches of compost, pine bark, needles or wood chips. Not only will you help to conserve soil moisture you are keeping the soil temperature a little cooler for healthier, happier plants.

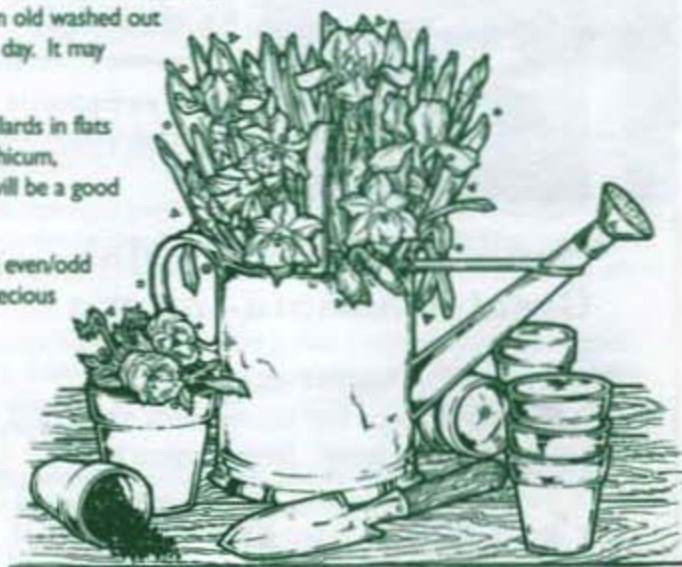
I've just discovered an inexpensive and safe herbicide to kill weeds growing in the cracks and crevices of walkways, driveways, etc. - VINEGAR! Buy the cheap store brand and put it in an old washed out Windex spray bottle and spray it on those weeds during the hottest part of the day. It may take a couple of sprayings to completely kill the plants, but it does work.

In August sow seeds of cool-season veggies such as lettuce, spinach, kale, and collards in flats placed in cool, shady spots. Also in August plant fall-blooming bulbs such as colchicum, autumn-flowering crocus and sternbergia. They will bloom later this fall. Now will be a good time to dig up and divide cannas, iris and daylilies.

Even though we have had some rainfall this summer, it has not been enough, and even/odd and 10/10 water restrictions are still in effect. Do your part to conserve our precious water supplies.

In my continuing effort to keep trying out new things and products, I have discovered solar-powered garden lighting. It really does work and makes your garden areas look completely different after dark.

Keep using your camera to help you remember good or bad color, texture and plant combinations. Dating the photos will help you to remember how big plants are at certain times of the year and when blooming times are.



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Steve Luben, Vice President	404-724-0730
Chair, Public Safety Committee	
Wiley Sommerville, Treasurer	404-881-1003
Louise Glancy, Secretary	404-875-2107
Co-Chair, Parenting and Education	
Chip Gallagher, Chair, Membership Committee	404-249-6390
Corinne Ward-Cameron, Atkins Park Rep.	404-876-0813
Kevin Cronin, Chair, Planning Committee	404-872-5995
Kris Reinhard	404-876-1304
Seth Lynn	404-748-4030
John Craft, St. Charles/Greenwood Rep.	404-815-0977
Jean Jordan,	
Co-Chair Membership, Parenting and Education	404-724-4938
David Ferguson, "Ask Officer Dave"	404-702-1734

VHCA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

PK Tretzel, Co-Chair, Summerfest	404-875-5889
Jean Jordan, Co-Chair, Summerfest Volunteers	404-724-4938
Jill Gossett, Co-Chair, Summerfest Volunteers	404-892-3222
Rob Glancy, Chair, Parks Committee	404-569-7660
In addition to those listed above:	
Krista Miller, Business Manager, VHCA VOICE	404-892-9024
Jenn Ballentine, Editor, VHCA VOICE	404-875-7558



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