

The Virginia-Highland

VOICE

Summer 2007

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Virginia-Highland Circa 2025

Fight Back Against
Crime Helps Keep
Va-Hi Streets Safe

Meetings to Discuss
Neighborhood
Commercial Zoning

The VHCA Needs Your Input and Involvement

What? Virginia-Highland Civic Association Annual Meeting and General Election

When? Monday September 10, 2007, 7 PM

Where? Inman Middle School Cafeteria, corner of Virginia Ave. and Park Ave.

Please consider volunteering as a board member – see President's Corner on pages 4-5 for more information.

Bring the Family and Join Your Neighbors - It's Movie Time!

What? Showing of the hit movie, *Nanny McPhee*, rated PG and starring Emma Thompson and Colin Firth

When? Friday Sept 7, 2007 – movie starts at dusk

Where? John Howell Park, across from Inman Middle School ball field on Virginia Ave.

How Much? VHCA dues-paying members for 2007-2008 admitted free of charge (membership cards should be brought to the movie for free admission). Cost for non-VHCA members is \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

See the article on page 6 of this newsletter for information on how to join the VHCA!

Work Begins on Georgia Power Substation by: Jack White

Until recently, most Virginia-Highland residents paid little attention to the Georgia Power facility on Ponce de Leon Place near Virginia Avenue. The company has been there for years, and the site's main purpose has been maintenance and repair in the northeast Atlanta area. During significant storms, the facility serves as a mobilization site for crews assembling in advance of forecasted storm events.

To the degree that anyone other than immediate neighbors knew Georgia Power, it was probably for their much-appreciated donation in the mid-90's of the corner lot across from Inman Middle School for use as a ball field and playground. The field is heavily and consistently used by the school system, neighborhood soccer leagues and others.

The company's low profile in the community came to an abrupt end this spring with their announcement of plans to build a substation on land it owns behind their office building facing Ponce Place. The company cited sharp increases in electrical demand over the past two decades and anticipated heavy increases over the next quarter-century in justifying its decision. Our neighborhood's electricity is currently supplied mostly by a substation on Boulevard in Bedford Pine and, to a lesser degree, by another on Spring Street near 13th Street.



Taken through the construction entrance to Georgia Power's property on Ponce Place, this photo shows site preparation activity as crews work to replace a decades-old sewer line.

The new substation in Va-Hi is part of a wave of intown expansions by the company that includes building a similar facility in Morningside (currently under construction alongside the Southern RR tracks on Lenox Road), another on Ashford-Dunwoody Road at I-285, and a proposed facility in Kirkwood to our southeast. Others may follow.

All these facilities are located in thriving intown neighborhoods and all of them have generated resistance and controversy at the community level. Resistance has taken several forms: concern over environmental issues (specifically electro-magnetic radiation – EMR – and noise); the wisdom of locating such facilities in areas that are primarily residential (including both aesthetic concerns and impacts on nearby property values); questions about the possible use of sites other than this one; and dismay about the state's absence of regulatory due process for citizen input in regard to the utility's actions.

Briefly addressing the latter point first – the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates utilities in the state. Historically the PSC has chosen not to include specific location of electric substations within its regulatory purview. Formally asked to do so in June by citizens opposing the substation in Ashford Dunwoody, the commission without comment and public debate unanimously declined the chance. In letters to some Va-Hi residents, PSC member Angela Speir cited an interpretation from the state Attorney General's office as a reason. The attorneys for the Ashford Dunwoody group read the letter differently, but – other than voting for a new set of PSC commissioners (they are publicly elected) – there is no obvious recourse available.

Part of the frustration has been the absence of any independent review of the company's analyses or conclusions. Citing proprietary business and security concerns, Georgia Power has declined to provide specific data about anticipated loads (and the assumptions upon which they are based) either to the neighborhood or to the PSC.

The VHCA has responded on several levels. We followed closely (and openly endorsed) the efforts of the Ashford Dunwoody neighbors to push for improved public process at the PSC. We examined a number of options, including the very limited legal

avenues. We've met regularly with groups of neighbors adjacent to the project who are understandably especially concerned about its impacts on their homes and lives. We asked the company for as much information as possible about its decisions and the methods by which they were reached, and we've shared the information we've received as widely as possible with the residents of Virginia-Highland.

Throughout the process a committee of citizens including immediate residents and VHCA board members has met with Georgia Power officials to discuss these issues. The company's studies show that EMR levels around their substations are well within U.S standards, which is the legal mandate that companies here must meet. They have offered to conduct pre- and post-construction site tours to take specific readings at a variety of locations at the site and we have accepted this offer. Noise appears to be less of a concern; our visits to comparable substations suggest that this facility's distance from the street and screening will make this a non-issue for residents. The company has offered to make the same types of measurements pre- and post-construction, and we have accepted this offer as well.

The company's site search was largely driven by a desire to be within easy reach of the 110,000-volt transmission lines located along Monroe Drive. Three alternative sites were considered: one in the building where Trader Joe's is now (rejected due to space constraints and the need to displace existing commercial tenants), a second on the site of Sig Samuels at 8th and Monroe (rejected due to cost, space constraints, business displacement, and immediate proximity to homes), and a third on the southwest corner of the Georgia Power property where Pylant Street dead-ends at the projected Beltline. The last site seemed to have merit, but would have required moving some buildings on site, which the company was reluctant to do.

The substation's aesthetic and property value impacts are difficult to assess, though it would be hard to imagine the latter being improved by construction of a substation. Aesthetically, improving the final appearance of the overall facility has been a primary concern for VHCA. We are working with a landscape architect to come up with a design that creates a more graceful and uniform appearance across the entire front of the property. Specific goals include blocking street and local neighbor views of the substation and reducing the overall industrial appearance of the site. Probable methods include construction of a wall and plenty of new foliage; the company has verbally (but not in writing) committed to such outcomes.

This article is being written mid-summer; by the time you read it, we hope at least a few of these issues will have been resolved. The work you are seeing now – the massive digging and huge piles of dirt – is actually site prep, specifically replacement of a decades-old sewer line that runs through the property. The new sewer line will have the capacity to separate stormwater and wastewater, though that will not matter until the City makes equivalent improvements above and below this site. Actual substation construction will not begin until the first of the year.

Additional updates will be available on the VHCA website at www.vahi.org.

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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: Kim Nickels

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 p.m

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

Va-Hi Newsletter needs your help!

The Voice, Virginia-Highland's quarterly newsletter, is seeking a volunteer to assist with business management. Primary responsibility will be generating invoices to advertising businesses and managing outstanding accounts receivable. Selling advertisements is not required but assistance in this regard would be appreciated. Anyone interested should contact *Voice* editor John Becker at 404-228-0814 or jbecker715@yahoo.com.



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President's Corner 2006-2007 Accomplishments

Pamela Papner

President, Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board

As the VHCA year draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to recognize the significant achievements of the past year. The community owes a huge "thank you" to all Board Members and neighbors who contributed their time to improve our community.

The fact most goals for 2006-2007 have been achieved is no small accomplishment when one considers that all this work was done by volunteers, most with full-time jobs and families. Our goals this year were driven by results of a community survey completed in November 2006. Below is a recap of major results:

Planning:

- **Zoning Variances:** Significant time was spent each month reviewing zoning variance requests; assisting neighbors to ensure plans comport with variance guidelines; developing recommendations to protect the integrity of the neighborhood; and attending lengthy NPU-F meetings to present the VHCA recommendations for vote. Thank you to Co-Chairs John Peak, Betsy Nicholas and all Planning Committee members, including Jack White and Joe Krebs, who often take on extra workload.

- **Neighborhood Commercial Zoning:** In response to the community survey, VHCA initiated a "Neighborhood Commercial" zoning effort, intended to preserve the scale and feel of our three primary commercial nodes. The research was completed in May; the community outreach/meetings were completed in July; and the final charettes will be completed in September. If consensus is reached between residents and property owners, the draft zoning ordinance will be introduced by end of this year. Thank you to John Peak, Chair of this initiative, along with all Steering Committee members and volunteers, including Lynn DeWitt and Frazier Dworet who contributed above and beyond.

- **Residential Preservation:** Thank you to Bill Herrell, Josh Schier and the Steering Committee for their efforts to kick off the residential preservation zoning initiative. This group has begun the long process of inventorying all homes in the neighborhood. To be ultimately successful, this group needs more volunteers. Special thanks to Karen Page for her significant efforts recruiting volunteers and beginning the inventory.

- **Atkins Park:** Thank you to Marilyn Morton, Linda Guthrie, and Mary Chance for their tireless and ultimately successful efforts to achieve Historic District designation for the St. Augustine, St. Charles and St. Louis streets in Atkins Park.

- **Georgia Power Substation:** The news that Ga. Power plans to build a substation in our neighborhood was, of course, met with considerable dismay by nearby property owners. A group of those neighbors, along with Board Member Jack White, has been pursuing discussions with Georgia Power on concessions to miti-

gate the impacts, against significant constraints. See Jack's article on the front page of this issue for more information.

- **Legal:** Thank you to Betsy Nicholas and Liz Coyle for monitoring issues requiring legal research and/or response. The Superior Court's denial of liquor license for a "Convention Center" at Hilan Theater, and the implementation of a Legal Steering Committee is testament to their efforts.

Safety:

A huge thank you is owed to Board Member John Wolfinger. Under his leadership, the Safety Committee made tremendous strides this year, including:

- Publication of a bi-weekly Public Safety Report;
- Development of a hugely successful street captain program (55+ blocks are now part of this program); and
- Improved working relationships with adjunct groups such as APD Zone 6, City Council, Midtown Ponce Security Alliance (for sharing data); FBAC and VHCA off-duty patrols.

John and his committee also completed a street light survey (submitted to the City), and he is working with MPSA on a parking/traffic plan for major events in Piedmont Park.

Parks:

- **Orme Park:** Special thanks to Peter Bade, Jack White, Victoria Talley, Alice Gepp and the rest of the Friends of Orme Park Steering Committee for their work to improve Orme Park. This year, a grant was awarded to develop a Master Plan for Orme Park, and this exciting work is now underway! Check www.vahi.org for details on upcoming planning/design meetings.

- **Piedmont Park:** Thank you to Judy McCabe-Smith for her significant efforts to represent Virginia-Highland residents at Piedmont Park Advisory Committee meetings. Through their efforts, the renovation of the historic bathhouse and pool at Piedmont Park will begin after Labor Day this year!

Communications:

- **Community Communications:** Thank you to Doris Betz for keeping residents informed via community e-mails. A very special thank you goes to John Becker, Editor, and Preeti Ayyangar, Designer, for the outstanding job they did this year with *The Voice*. The content was timely, informative, well-written, and beautifully presented. Advertising revenues, thanks to Kim Nickels, increased significantly this year.

- **VHCA Web Site:** Thank you to John Peak, who accomplished the following goals:

- Migration of infrastructure to better hosting provider with

redundant systems and spam scanning of emails to VHCA domains;

- Creation of updated and regularly refreshed content, automated newsletter subscriptions, and improved community email tool; and

- Implementation of electronic storage for key VHCA documents, along with improved access to zoning documents and tracking of variance requests.

Fundraising Events and Membership:

• Summerfest: Kim Nickels and I co-chaired this event, and this year's Summerfest was very successful! Over 800 residents attended the community dinner and movie, and a fun time was had by all. With our new radio partner and focused marketing, we achieved record attendance levels, and most artists had a very successful show as well. Moving the music stage to the Inman ball field reduced crowding, and the event was both fun and safe. Summerfest raised over \$110,000 in net proceeds for the community, the most ever! Thank you to Pam Ahern and Melissa Yuhas for recruiting and managing the volunteers, and special thanks to all the volunteers upon whom the success of this event ultimately rests!

• Tour of Homes: This year's Tour of Homes was very well attended and raised over \$12,000 for the community. Thank you to Rob Glancy, Hannah Coker and Charlie Lefort for all the work that went into that event, along with the many community volunteers who supported it.

• Membership: Thank you to Hannah Coker for agreeing to chair and re-invigorate the VHCA Membership Committee. The September 7th Movie in John Howell Park is also being organized by Hannah, and a fun time should be had by all!

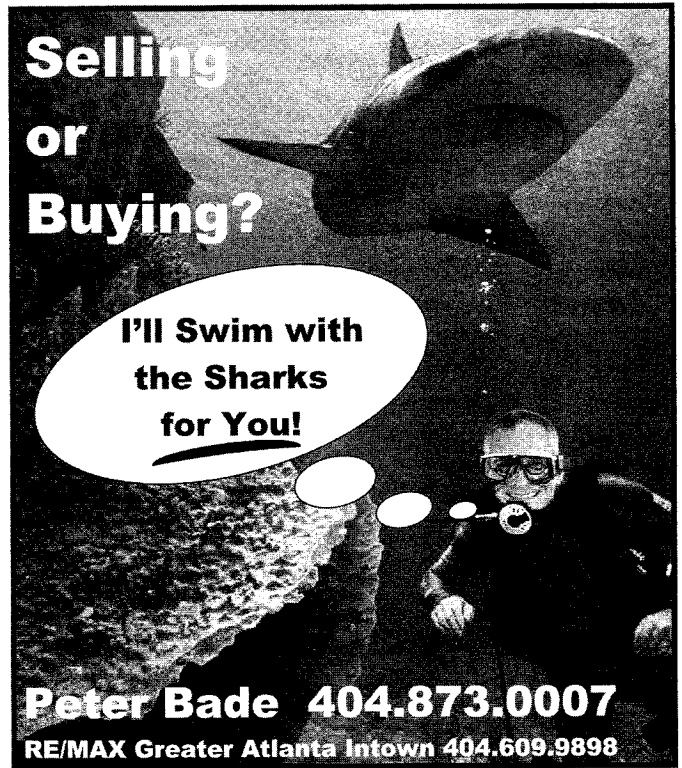
While much was accomplished this year, there is still much to do. If you have not yet done so, please allocate at least some time in the future to get involved! If you are interested, contact Hannah Coker at membership@vahi.org.



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VHCA Membership Drive Update

by: Hannah Coker

The 2007-2008 Virginia-Highland Civic Association membership drive kicked off just before Summerfest and we're off to a fantastic start! All Va-Hi residents are encouraged to become dues-paying members of the civic association to support activities and initiatives undertaken on behalf of the neighborhood by the association. The civic association focuses on issues that impact us all, such as zoning, safety, sidewalks and parks. We also encourage everyone who has supported the civic association in the past to show your support as well by renewing your dues-paying membership.

Congratulations to our lucky membership drawing winners:

- **First Prize** - 4 tickets to the Georgia Aquarium and Summerfest Premium Pack: Heather & Ivan Wademan
- **Second Prize** - Summerfest Premium Pack: Lisa Barbiero, Johnette & David Crum, Anne Fauver, Jay Russo, Preston and Lisa Ladds
- **Third Prizes** - Summerfest hats and t-shirts: Jennifer & Gordon Adams, Christopher & Randal Antle, Scott & CC Davis, Anne Gilchrist, Andrea & Kevin Jennings, Chris Kaufman, Joyce Kinnard, Katie Ryan, Al Padwa & Maureen Walsh, Bret & Stephanie Williams.

Please make a note to join the VHCA on September 7th for a movie in John Howell Park. The movie will be *Nanny McPhee* and admission for all VHCA due-paying members will be free! Admission for non-members will be \$5 per guest and \$10 per family.

Membership Benefits from Financial Support and Participation

- Social opportunities - meeting lots of new and longtime Va-Hi residents and business owners at meetings, socials, and community service events.
- Notification about local events, meetings, crime alerts and other important topics.
- Supporting activities and committees that help keep the neighborhood stable and desirable.
- Voting in regular and special meetings about issues that affect you and control the destiny of Va-Hi. Your dues support efforts to resolve issues such as:
 - Neighborhood improvements (street signs, lighting, roads, sidewalks, parking)
 - Land use issues (future residential, commercial, industrial development)
 - Urban design issues (historic preservation, pedestrian friendliness, parks)
 - Crime and other disturbances
- Discounts at local businesses and VHCA events:
 - Free entry to Fall movie in John Howell Park (September 7th movie is *Nanny McPhee*)
 - Membership committee will work with local businesses to make discounts available to residents who show their VHCA membership card

Virginia-Highland Civic Association Membership Form

Membership Year: July 2007 - June 2008

Name(s):

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Membership Levels:

I would like to support the VHCA with a membership at the following level:

- Individual: \$20.00 Senior (65 & over): \$15.00
 Family: \$30.00 Additional Donation: \$

Community Emails:

- Please add me to the Community email list
 I am already on the Community email list
 Thank you, but I do not wish to be added to the Community email list

VHCA Committee Interest:

I/we have interest in volunteering to help the following committee(s):

- Communications Committee Parks Committee
 Fundraising - Summerfest Planning Committee
 Fundraising - Tour of Homes Safety & Sidewalks Committee
 Membership Committee Other:

Please make checks payable to:

Virginia-Highland Civic Association

Mail to: VHCA Membership Committee,

794 Adair Avenue. Atlanta. GA 30306

Safety and Security Update

by: John Wolfinger

We are a neighborhood of travelers – whether for business or pleasure – and certain steps should be taken every time you leave your home. If you're a regular business traveler, these steps should be an automatic part of your pre-departure checklist. Aspiring burglars spend their days walking and driving through the neighborhood looking for uncut lawns and overstuffed mailboxes. In the evening they look for completely darkened houses or interior lights still on at 3 AM. Here are some security tips from Inspector Ruby Naylor, our APD Zone 6 crime prevention officer:

- Lock (and double-check) all doors and windows. Locks, especially on back doors, should be double-cylinder.
- Use automatic timers to control lights, radio, TV, etc. to create the appearance that you are home. Try to set the times to correspond as much as possible with your usual habits when you are home.
- Shades and blinds should be left in the same position they normally are when you are home.
- Stop the paper, mail and other deliveries. To stop mail, go to www.usps.com and fill out the "hold mail" form – it's easy and really works.
- Let your APD beat officer know you are away by filling out the Zone 6 Directed Patrol form. Go to www.vahi.org click on "news and events" to find the form as well as submission instructions.
- Arrange to have the lawn mowed in your absence.
- Store valuables in a safe deposit box, or at least in places other than where a burglar might normally look.
- Alert trusted neighbors about your absence and leave a contact phone number where you can be reached. Ask these same neighbors to take a daily inspection walk around your home to make sure everything looks OK.
- Use automatically-timed or motion-controlled outside lights, especially at exterior doors.
- Above all – never hesitate to call 911 immediately when suspicious activity is observed. Have a low threshold for using 911. Better that an officer comes for nothing than for an officer not to come for something that truly deserves attention.

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Fight Back Against Crime Helps Keep Va-Hi Streets Safe

by: John Becker

Concerned about crime in Virginia-Highland? Joining Fight Back Against Crime (FBAC) is one way you can tell would-be criminals to find someplace else to look for victims.

FBAC is an off-duty police patrol program administered by volunteers who live in the neighborhood. Patrolling officers are either Zone 6 Atlanta Police Department (APD) officers or APD detectives. Patrolling officers work alternating 4 or 5 nights per week in 5 hour shifts per night. The officers have a visible presence as they drive around the neighborhood investigating anything or anyone suspicious. Times and days of the patrols vary depending on recent crime patterns.

FBAC wants to increase its membership to two thousand which would enable it to offer nightly patrols for the entire Va-Hi area. Two types of memberships are currently offered. A Basic membership costs \$50 for the remainder of 2007 and includes the patrols as described above; a monthly newsletter with details of any crimes occurring in the neighborhood; special "lookout" notices distributed as needed; proactive "reminders" about potential problems; and access to the Eblast information exchange system set up for FBAC on Yahoo Groups. The Eblast system gives members a way to stay informed of criminal activity in the area which assists in efforts to protect family and property.

A Premium membership, costing \$150 for the remainder of 2007, is also available. Premium memberships include all the features of Basic membership, plus access to the patrolling officer's cell phone number; monthly patrol schedules with exact times/dates of patrols; and FBAC yard signage. Premium members can also notify patrolling officers when they'll be out of town so patrols can keep an eye on their house while they're gone.

To enroll in FBAC send a check in the appropriate amount to:

Fight Back Against Crime
1109 N. Highland Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30306

Remember to include your name, address, phone number and email address. For more information on the FBAC program, contact Beth Marks at bethmarks@bellsouth.net or Kris White at kwhiteusa@bellsouth.net.

VHCA Hosts Meetings to Discuss Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Efforts

by: John Peak

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association has been researching ways to maintain the character, scale and health of the neighborhood's commercial strips. A series of meetings was held recently to update the neighborhood on the association's efforts to consider the City of Atlanta's Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning for several of these strips along N. Highland Avenue and to give residents an opportunity to provide feedback.

The NC zoning designation tries to preserve the features that have made this neighborhood attractive to many people while protecting the rights and investments of commercial property owners. The process is being guided by a steering committee of board members, single-family homeowners, and commercial property owners.

The purpose of the meetings is to explain what NC zoning will (and will not) offer, describe how such zoning affects both residential and commercial property owners, and solicit direct input from the residents of Virginia-Highland.

A series of five informal meetings was held in late June and throughout July at which residents could ask questions about NC zoning and what it could do for the neighborhood. A special meeting was held at Inman Middle School in late July at which the community was introduced to the benefits of NC zoning. Three dimensional models were used to show the potential commercial landscape under both current and NC zoning designations. Lastly, two community charettes are planned to gather community input for creation of the ordinance that will be submitted to the city. These charettes are scheduled for August 4th and September 8th from 9AM to 3PM at The Church of Our Saviour, 1068 N. Highland Avenue.

For more information on the NC zoning process visit the VHCA website at www.vahi.org/planning/nc.html or contact the author at jpeak@yahoo.com.

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The Long and Winding Road: Virginia-Highland *Circa 2025*



by: Chip Gallagher

I've been taking MARTA's #16 Noble bus from Virginia-Highland to Georgia State University almost every work day for the last ten years. Using a very conservative yardstick, I estimate I've taken the bus that passes through our neighborhood over 3,000 times.

The greatest visual change I've noticed is unquestionably what's happened to the Old Fourth Ward. What was once a string of empty lots and dilapidated housing has been transformed into rows of town houses and garden apartments.

What really struck me over the last few years, though, is what has happened to Virginia-Highland. Aside from some 'supersizing', the architecture hasn't changed all that much. Traffic patterns have changed, though. As I take the bus north from downtown to N. Highland past Freedom Parkway, what has become abundantly clear is the volume of reverse-commuting traffic I stare down on from my seat on the bus. As recently as 1997, I recall south bound traffic on N. Highland backing up from Ponce to about 50 yards past the CVS. Traffic rarely, if ever, backed up from all the way to the intersection of Virginia and Highland. Now, it's not uncommon to see a line of unbroken traffic that starts at Ponce, goes past the intersection of Virginia and Highland, and ends somewhere past Amsterdam.

What's happening and will it get better? The answer to the second question is almost certainly 'no'. We should expect travel through our neighborhood on our main collector road - N. Highland - to be a 'traffic nightmare' every weekday from 4-6 PM - and it will get worse over the next ten years.

Virginia-Highland differs from planned, enclosed communities typically found in the suburbs in that we have many ways to get

from point A (say Publix) to point B (your house behind Inman Middle School). Most new developments have streets that emerge onto a tertiary or secondary road that whisks you along to a major connector (i.e., GA 400). There really is only one way 'out of Dodge'. The grid pattern of streets in our neighborhood allows for numerous options for routes to move through the neighborhood and by-pass traffic bottlenecks. Va-Hi folks who know the grid can move about without getting trapped on N. Highland, Briarcliff or Monroe. The problem is, of course, outsiders who see our neighborhood as a cut through.

Expect tens of thousands of more cars passing through our neighborhood over the next decade. According to the people who wanted to develop the lot across from American Road House Grill, over 360,000 people live within five miles of our CVS. This number will increase significantly over the next decade. Each day almost 18,000 cars roll past Dish and Intown Hardware. Fast forward ten years. N. Highland is now a dense forest of apartments, condos and town houses. City Hall East has been developed, adding thousands of cars to the traffic mix (think about trying to get into Borders or Whole Foods when CHE is developed!!). Instead of 18,000 cars on our main road, imagine 36,000 cars all trying to move up and down N. Highland.

One could sit back, take MARTA and use the time to read or text message. Unfortunately MARTA isn't designed to get most people to where they want to go in a reasonable amount of time. One could bike, but this increasingly seems to be a form of Russian roulette. It also isn't much fun coming to work drenched in sweat. My suggestion is to make a significant investment in a wicked, high-end car stereo, then play these two songs: 'Imagine (All the People)'.... and 'The Long and Winding Road'.

Court Upholds Denial of Liquor License for Hilan Theatre

by: Elizabeth Nicholas

As discussed in the last issue of Voice, the large space at 800 N. Highland Avenue known as the Hilan Theatre has been the subject of much controversy in recent years.

Parts of the theatre, including the former lobby space, have been leased to and continue to be occupied by Ben & Jerry's and Starbucks Coffee. Remaining portions of the old theater have remained unoccupied, although attempts to establish commercial uses that many residents considered incompatible with the neighborhood (such as a nightclub) were made over the years. All such attempts were either defeated or abandoned.

On May 25, 2005, the current owner of the Hilan Theatre building submitted applications for three liquor licenses for the theatre. The stated purpose for the licenses was to operate a "Convention Center with beer, wine and liquor consumed on premises, [and with] customer dancing and live entertainment."

The VHCA opposed these applications for several reasons, including proximity to single-family homes and a failure to supply sufficient parking. The Atlanta Police Department determined the building does not meet the City's distance requirement, which prohibits an alcohol-licensed establishment within 300 feet of residential property. The City's License Review Board heard the applications and recommended denial to the Mayor, who formally denied the applications on November 30, 2006.

The owner/applicant subsequently filed an appeal in Superior Court seeking to overturn the Mayor's decision. The Court ruled on July 10, 2007 denying all of the applicant's claims. The Court upheld the position of the City of Atlanta and the VHCA (through the submission of an amicus brief) that the distance requirements from a residential property had not been met and thus a liquor license should not be granted.

The VHCA remains hopeful that we can work with the owner/applicant to find an appropriate use for this property that provides for a commercial use that remains consistent with the character and needs of our community.



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Home Tour Preview

by: Allie Coker & Rob Glancy

Please mark your calendars for this fall's 13th Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes! Since the tour's revival in 2004, the event has raised over \$50,000 and 5,000 guests have viewed some of our neighborhood's most beautiful homes. All proceeds benefit the neighborhood through parks and streetscape improvements, sidewalk repairs, safety initiatives, school grants, and much more.

This year's Homes for the Holidays Tour will take place Saturday, December 8th (10 AM to 5 PM) and Sunday December 9th (12 PM to 5 PM). The event will showcase eight unique and exquisite homes, and some of our finest local restaurants will hold food tastings at each home.

The showcase homes – chosen from 25 candidates – epitomize life in Virginia-Highland and capture the style and integrity of our wonderful historic neighborhood. Some of this year's homes have been featured in *Atlanta Homes and Lifestyles* and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. The committee thanks each participating homeowner for kindly opening up their homes for the tour!

The tour committee is in the process of recruiting sponsors for this year's Home Tour. Sponsorship levels are:

- Artisan: \$6,000
- Master Craftsman: \$4,000
- Foreman: \$2,500
- Apprentice: \$1,000
- Neighbor: \$500

Please let a committee member know if you're interested in recruiting sponsors, being a sponsor, or if you know someone we should contact. The complete 2007 sponsorship package is available at www.vahihometour.org.

The committee is also recruiting volunteers to help with posting signs and balloons, ticket sales and distribution, and special events. Contact Allie Coker at alliecoker@bellsouth.net or Rob Glancy at arglancy@ratecapital.com for further information, or call (404) 467-9922 ext. 301.

We look forward to a fun and successful event once again this year and encourage you to get involved. See you on the tour!



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Colonel Mustard in the Kitchen With a Knife

Colonel Mustard – referring to the character from the board game Clue – is a pseudonym for a Virginia-Highland resident who enjoys dining at the many wonderful restaurants in our neighborhood and sharing thoughts on the dining experience with others. In this issue the Colonel takes a look at a long-standing neighborhood favorite:

Taco Mac

If you have it in your name, you'd better deliver – and, in this case, they do! At Taco Mac, I always have 3 crisp beef tacos – always. So, friends have to try something else, but one friend always has the chicken quesadilla – always. Now I know what two dishes taste like. I think that's the norm at Taco Mac. People always seem to have their "favorites", and there are plenty of good menu selections to choose from to find yours.

Taco Mac is a very laid back place welcoming all ages and styles of dress, and it's a good bet you will see friends and neighbors while visiting. The TV's are usually tuned to sports channels and, if you want to sit outside on the popular patio, plenty of fans and heaters help deal with changing temperatures. My favorite "sport", though, is watching the cars and people go by on N. Highland Avenue. I guess Taco Mac is just full of favorites for me, my friends and neighbors.

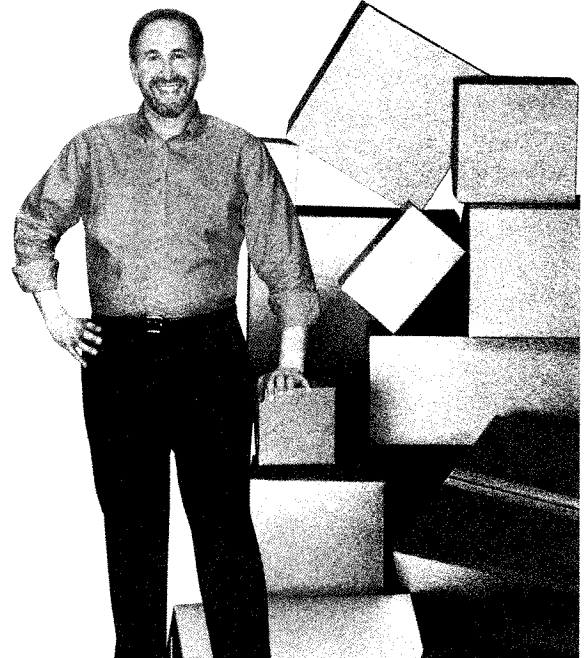
You have to discuss the beer at Taco Mac. There are dozens of brands, literally dozens. There will be some you've never heard of and many in beautiful bottles. I'm collecting for an eventual bottle tree. Taco Mac even has its own beer club. Try a different beer each visit and you can build up points for freebies. And keep your eye out for the occasional free beer glass promotions. If you visit frequently, you'll have to set aside a shelf or two for all the glasses. That's what we've done because my partner is really into those glasses.

The service is friendly and the wait staff gets to know you and recommends food and beer they think you will enjoy. Philip, one of the managers, will become a best buddy. You, too, will find "favorites" and, if you're smart, you'll walk home to make up for over-indulging.

Colonel Mustard gives Taco Mac 4 1/2 hot-dogs.

**Taco Mac; 1006 N. Highland (next to Murphy's)
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