



Virginia-Highland VOICE

A publication of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association March 2003

VHCA CALENDAR

General Meetings:

March 5, 7:30 pm

April 2, 7:30 pm

May 7, 7:30 pm

Ponce de Leon Branch Library

Board Meetings:

March 3, 7:00 pm

March 31, 7:00 pm

May 5, 7:00 pm

YWCA

Planning Committee:

March 26, 7:30 pm

April 30, 7:30 pm

May 28, 7:30 pm

Ponce de Leon Branch Library

Location of meetings is
subject to change.

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- Public Safety and Traffic Update
- Needed: Summerfest Volunteers
- The Highland Hoer

SHIRLEY FRANKLIN SPEAKS TO DISTRICT 6

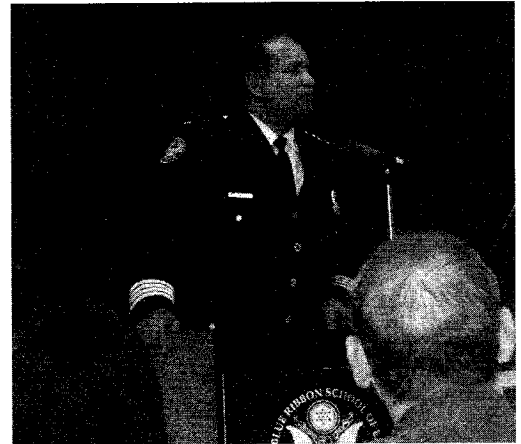
On Tuesday, January 21, a District 6 Town Hall on Public Safety and Traffic was held at Inman Middle School. Several important representatives spoke at the meeting, including District 6 City Council Representative Anne Fauver, Atlanta Chief Police Richard Pennington, and Mayor Shirley Franklin. After a brief speech by each speaker, residents had ample time to ask questions. Highlights from the meeting follow.

Representative Fauver spoke about several new initiatives, including a new ethics code, which is more stringent than the code for ethics in state government. She expressed appreciation for all constituents who provided detailed critiques and concrete suggestions for improving the tree ordinance. She invited similar input on the new festival ordinance. In response to questions, Ms. Fauver spoke about the process for getting approval for speed bumps, stop signs, traffic signals, etc. at specific intersections. She also reported that the council members have reduced their office expenses by \$10,000 each to help balance the budget. If you would like a copy of her booklet, District Six Services Reference Guide, contact her office at afauver@ci.atlanta.ga.us. The booklet contains contact information for civic associations, fire and police services, city services, etc. For other information about the council and mayor's office, go to <http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us>. You can view council minutes and ordinances on this website.

Chief of Police Richard Pennington spoke about new initiatives in public safety. To support a new focus on accountability, he meets weekly with all zone commanders to discuss the previous week's crimes and develop strategies to reduce the frequency of each category. He created a police foundation, modeled on one he used with success in New Orleans, to develop funding for extra training for beat officers, investigators, and managers. With a Quality of Life task force, there will be a new emphasis on addressing aggressive panhandling, public urination, trash, abandoned lots and cars, etc. A community policing approach is intended to build partnerships between the police department, residents, business owners, etc. Chief Pennington has ordered a study to update the information about residence patterns, business zones and crime statistics, which the department will use to design the different beats. In a demonstration of commitment, Chief Pennington was accompanied by his chief of operations, field operations manager, the commanders for each of the zones in our district (2, 5, and 6) and about a dozen other officers.

In response to questions about traffic enforcement and pedestrian safety, Chief Pennington discussed new technology solutions that allow enforcement without requiring more officers, e.g., camera red light enforcement and camera radar speed limit enforcement. Strong debate is expected on these measures.

Mayor Shirley Franklin discussed the major efforts to balance the city's budget while not raising property taxes. She discussed the importance of cultivating new sources (federal, state, county and private sector) for funding to address critical infrastructure issues. In response to questions, Mayor Franklin emphasized the importance of strong city participation in all regional transportation planning. She talked about the comprehensive traffic plans many neighborhoods have commissioned and pledged to have the city commit to as many aspects of each plan as they can reasonably commit to. Several studies are under way to evaluate city services (revenues generated vs. costs), the allocation of budget responsibility between the city, counties and state, homelessness, the city's role in handling arrestees and the city court system, police department compensation, training and equipment, etc. Many of these studies are expected to be completed in the next 3-4 months.



Chief Pennington unveils his plans for improving the police presence in Atlanta.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

Steven Kushner

As most of you (hopefully) know, The Virginia-Highland Civic Association's Bylaws identify the boundaries of our neighborhood as Ponce de Leon Avenue on the South, Amsterdam Avenue and its extension on the North, Briarcliff Road on the East and the railroad tracks on the West. While the neighborhood is defined as one cohesive area, the Bylaws actually divide the neighborhood into three geographical sections for the purposes of representation on the Civic Association's Board of Directors - Atkins Park, St. Charles/Greenwood and everywhere else.

The Bylaws provide for the general election of 9 Directors and 1 alternate. However, the Board consists of 11 Directors and 1 alternate. While the entire neighborhood, including Atkins Park and St. Charles/Greenwood vote for these 9 Directors and the alternate at the General Meeting in September, the Atkins Park Neighborhood Association and the St. Charles/Greenwood Neighborhood Association are each entitled to appoint their own Director.

The proposed Amendment (which is set forth in the Notice of Special Meeting) eliminates these set-asides for Atkins Park and St. Charles/Greenwood and allows the entire neighborhood to elect all 11 Directors and the alternate. This approach is fair to the entire neighborhood, as it does not reward (or penalize) any particular area of the neighborhood. It would also provide for 11 Directors whose primary mission is to act in the best interests of the entire neighborhood, and not feel conflicted by loyalties to the other neighborhood associations that may have appointed them.

Perhaps there were historical reasons for the current provision in the Bylaws. Whatever those reasons are, they no longer appear to

be applicable. The St. Charles/Greenwood Neighborhood Association does not even exist anymore. In addition, the Board (with 9 generally elected Directors) has always acted in (at least what it perceived to be) the best interests of the neighborhood and takes into account how its decisions may disproportionately impact particular areas of the neighborhood. There is no reason to believe that this would not continue with 11 generally elected Directors. The current arrangement, with these 2 set-asides, seems unfair to the rest of the neighborhood and has the potential to balkanize it. Why should these areas have extra representatives, but not others? Why shouldn't the Orme Park area or the area around Virginia Avenue/North Highland intersection, or around John Howell Park form their own neighborhood associations and get to appoint a director? What about the Virginia-Highland Business Association, or the Fight Back Against Crime members?

The Amendment that I propose (see Notice of Special Meeting, pg 5) simply eliminates the set-asides and puts everyone in the neighborhood and every area of the neighborhood on equal footing. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me.

Don't Sell Your Home!

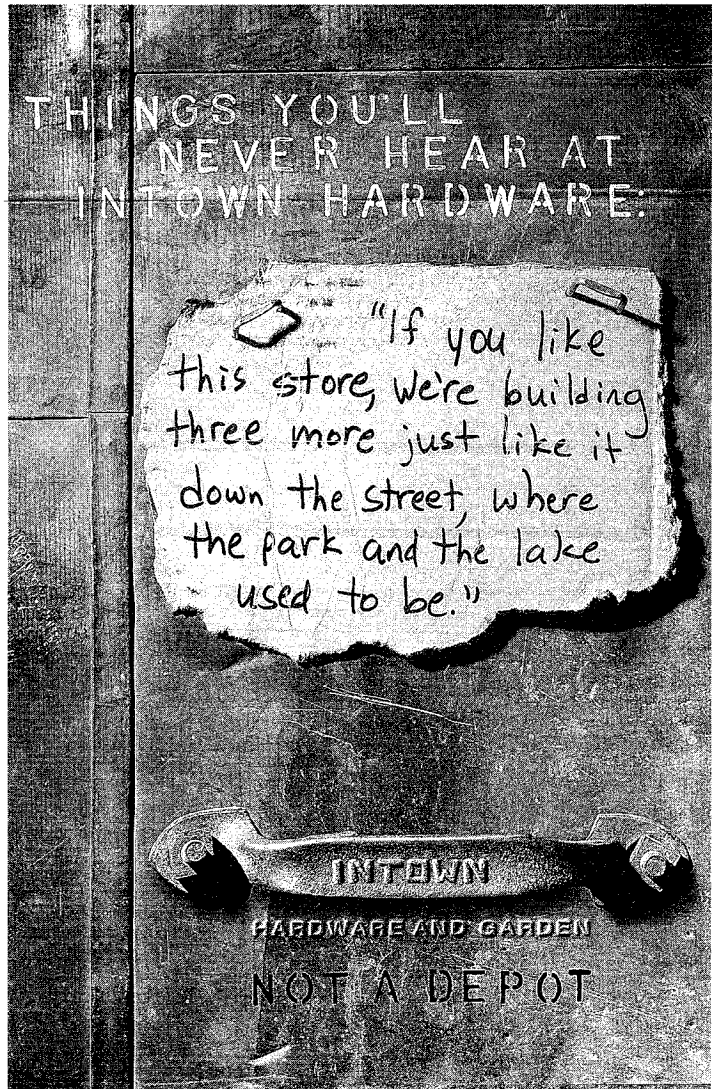
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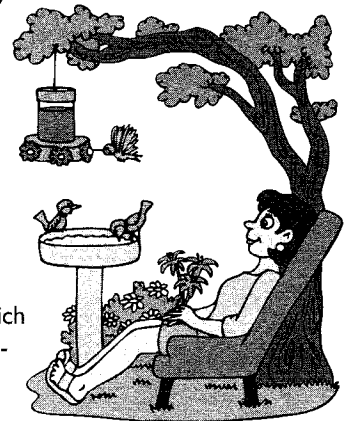
THE HIGHLAND HOER

John Wolfinger

Two new garden publications are debuting this spring. The "Greater Atlanta Gardener" has published its first issue, which I picked up at Habersham Gardens. Their web site is www.greateratantagardener.com for more information. Also, I have sent in a check for a subscription to "Georgia Gardening", but haven't received my first issue yet. Their web site is at www.georgiagardening.com. They both deserve our support in the way of subscriptions and patronage of their advertisers, so that we may have more info on gardening ideas that will work here in Virginia-Highland. There's nothing more frustrating than drooling over pictures of a garden in the Pacific Northwest and knowing that many of those plants will never prosper here. So more local coverage will be welcome by the gardening community here.

This past winter's brutal cold snaps will certainly have taken a toll in our neighborhood gardens. We won't know about a lot of the fatalities till later this spring, when certain of our plant friends fail to appear. But just look at this as an opportunity to try some new plants you thought you didn't have space to grow before. So, have fun at our local garden centers looking for replacements.

A wonderful way to add more color to your garden is by attracting birds. They also add movement - something we can't get with plants. I've gone from one cheap bird feeder (which the squirrels long ago demolished) to four of the expensive - but mostly squirrel proof - seed feeders, five hanging suet containers and six bird-baths. Even in the middle of winter my garden is alive with dozens of types of birds. In our very urban neighborhood, it's amazing how many birds continue to call this home too. They are a very real reason to keep all of our trees protected in the city and for us gardeners to plant plenty of trees, shrubs and flowers to provide them with shelter, nesting areas and natural food sources.



If you want to add to the display of spring flowering bulbs for next year, now is the time to start planning. Take plenty of photos of all your existing blooms, so you can plan your color combinations. Then put detailed measurements as to the locations of the bulbs on the back of your print so you won't accidentally slice up good bulbs when you're digging and planting more bulbs next fall. Your photos also will tell you which clumps may need to be dug up and spread out some, as some bulbs, such as daffodils, tend to multiply rapidly. Once again, your camera is one of your most important gardening tools.

Lastly, another Virginia-Highland garden made the press on January 9, in the AJC Home and Garden section. One of the features was the front garden of Anne and Andy Sheldon at 668 Hillcrest Avenue. Congratulations Anne and Andy!



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