



VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

Twice

A Publication of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association

November/December 2003

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President's Address

**The Transformation
of Piedmont Park**

Public Menorah Lighting

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VHCA Calendar:

Board and Monthly

Meetings:

**Held the first Monday of
each month at 7pm.**

**All held at the
Ponce de Leon Library**

Planning Committee

Meetings:

**Held the last Wednesday
of each month at
7:30pm**

**All held at the
Ponce de Leon Library**

**Locations of meetings
subject to change.**

**Check our web site for
calendar of events
or to become a member:**

www.vahi.org

Build a Playground at John Howell Park

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association and the City of Atlanta Parks Department invite you to join them on Saturday, November 15 at John Howell Park for "Build the Playground Day". The building of the Cunard Memorial Playground will begin at 7am and end at dark. Rain date is November 22. Because of safety concerns, the committee asks that you leave children at home until the playscape is completed.

This playground is being developed as a memorial to Lisa Cunard and her sons Max, three, and Owen, five months, who were killed when a tree fell on their car during a storm this summer. The Cunards, along with father Brad Cunard, were members of the Virginia-Highland community.

If you are interested in helping, come prepared for some hard work and contact the planners at cunardplayground@yahoo.com or 404-222-8244. According to playground committee chairperson Cynthia Gentry, a neighbor of the Cunard family, help is needed in putting together playground equipment, planting bulbs and raking. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be served.

The committee is also accepting contributions to offset the cost of the playground, which is \$135,000. To date, the committee has raised \$50,000. Contributions of \$1,000 or more will be recognized on a donor plaque at the playground. Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.

To make a contribution, send a check payable to: Park Pride-Cunard Memorial Playground, c/o Virginia-Highland Civic Association, P.O. Box 8401, Station F, Atlanta, Georgia 31106.

Many thanks to the hundreds of friends, residents and restaurants who joined the Virginia-Highland neighborhood in the Heartfelt Benefit Dinner on Tuesday, October 21 to honor the Cunard family. Fifteen percent of the proceeds from the community restaurants that participated will go toward building the playground.

Meet Your New Board of Directors

Kevin Cronin

"I have lived in Virginia-Highland for the past 13 years and have worked for Bank of America for the past 16 years. We have two dogs, one cat and about 25 fish. We love to spend time in the mountains of North Carolina. I am involved with the Civic Association Board because I want it to be a voice for all neighbors and to make sure the our great village-like neighborhood stays that way."

Rob Glancy

"My interests in serving on the board include: increasing pedestrian safety, organizing a Virginia-Highland Home and Garden Tour, green space beautification and maintenance, communicating more effectively with homeowners, renters and local business personnel, and real-

(continued on next page)

izing the implementation of the North Highland Corridor Plan. I am on the Home Tour and the Parks Committees. I have two Bernese Mountain Dogs and a Pug. I have an entrepreneurial nature, have built RateCapital Inc., from the ground up and am branch manager. I am an avid gardener, enjoy jogging in Piedmont Park and a good game of tennis. I have lived in the community since 1999."

Seth Lynn

"The VHCA has done many wonderful things for our neighborhood over the years and I'm pleased to be back on the Board after a year's hiatus. Graffiti is a growing frustration of mine in our otherwise beautiful neighborhood. I look forward to leading our newly established Graffiti Abatement Committee as the first step toward addressing this challenge. My wife and I have lived in Virginia-Highland since 2000 and welcomed our baby Noah into our lives in September 2002."

Chip Gallagher

Chip Gallagher is starting his fourth year on the board. He has been in the neighborhood for six years and is the proud father of two self-assured and nearly perfect young daughters, Sophia and Talia. His focus on the board has been maintaining the transparency of board governance and making sure Virginia-Highland residents know what is going on in the community by way of the *Voice*. He is an Assistant Professor of sociology at Georgia State University.

John Craft

John Craft, a self-employed business consultant, has lived in Virginia-Highland since 1994 with his wife Danah, and they are currently in the ninth year of a two-year restoration of their home on St. Charles Avenue. This will be John's third year on the VHCA Board. He serves on the Planning Committee and will be working on the Home Tour which VHCA hopes to kick off this year.

Barbara Touchette

Barbara Touchette and her husband have lived in Virginia-Highland since 1996. Barbara manages communications, public relations and marketing strategies. She served on the VHCA Board from 1997 to 1999 and has been involved in Summerfest since moving to the neighborhood. Barbara also volunteers at the Carter Center and the Atlanta Botanical Garden. While on the board, she hopes to increase participation of the community in Virginia-Highland activities.

Ken McDuffie

"I have lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years. As a new member, I am trying to learn how the board and the Association operate to understand how I can be helpful. I have volunteered to be on the planning committee. I am married and have three daughters."

Jean Jordan

"This is my third year as a board member and I have served on both the Membership and Public Safety Committees for the last two years and plan to again this year. I am most interested in getting more of our neighbors involved in the community and in making our neighborhood a safe place to live and work. I have lived in the neighborhood since 1998 and I have been involved with Summerfest since 1999."

Paula Hyman

"My husband and I have lived in Virginia-Highland for the past 16 years. Our son is currently attending graduate school in Colorado. We own an apparel repping firm at the Atlanta Apparel Mart. I am also on the committee helping to organize and raise funds for the Cunard Memorial Playground and am co-chair of the Parks Committee."

David Vaughan

David Vaughan has lived in Virginia-Highland for the last ten years with his wife and son. He has improved two properties and built their current home matching the architecture in the neighborhood. David is the Director of Show Homes for Southern Accents Magazine in which he has managed and overseen the planning and construction of over 30 show homes across the south. As a native Atlantan, he has a personal interest in local history and preservation and is committed to making Virginia-Highland a better place to live.

Wiley Sommerville

Wiley has been on the VHCA board since 1997. He has served as VHCA treasurer during his tenure and is very active on the Summerfest and Cunard Memorial Playground Committees. Wiley and his wife, Ruth, have two daughters and have been residents of the neighborhood for more than 20 years. Wiley is an independent consultant and very attuned to the needs of the neighborhood.

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Dramatic Transformation of Piedmont Park Continues With the Help of VHCA Challenge Grant

Visitors to Piedmont Park are sure to notice some of the many improvements that have taken place over the last few months. Among the improvements are: the opening of the restored Tenth St. Meadow with its 15 acres of beautiful new lawn; new double-sided swings around Lake Clara Meer; the addition of nearly two dozen permanent grills and the restoration of the stone grills near the picnic pavilion area; new landscaping on the Front Lawn near the Noguchi playground, including trees, perennials, ground covers; and sod and new directional signage obelisks at entrances to the park.

Upcoming improvements will include: a new volleyball area at the south end of the ball fields area; renovation and redesign of the picnic pavilion and bandstand, including new seating, lighting, landscaping and a new lawn; improvements to the Piedmont Avenue edge of the park including widening of sidewalks; a drop-off lane between Twelfth and Fourteenth Streets; a new ornamental fence and hedge and more trees; improvements to the Front Lawn, including new lighting, benches, drinking fountains

Public Menorah Lighting

Rabbi Eliyahu Schusterman

The intersection of Virginia and North Highland will host Virginia-Highland's first public menorah lighting on Sunday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m. The event is free and open to everyone.

Approximately 2,200 years ago, the Syrian/Greek armies conquered the land of Israel, forbade the observance of Jewish tradition, and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem. Under the leadership of the Maccabees, the Jewish people successfully defeated the larger and better equipped enemy armies in a series of miraculous battles. Immediately following the victory the Jewish people were ready to re-dedicate their holy Temple by re-lighting the sacred candelabra called a "menorah." Miraculously, just one day's worth of oil burned for eight days and nights, exactly enough time for the new supply of oil to arrive. For the past 2,200 years since, Jews have observed Chanukah in honor of this historic victory and the miracle of the oil. A cornerstone of the holiday's observance is the lighting of an eight-branched menorah to "publicize" the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days.

The Menorah is a symbol of religious freedom. Chabad Intown of Virginia-Highland is pleased to introduce this notable tradition to Atlanta. The symbolic lighting of the Virginia-Highland menorah will be done by high ranking public officials after a few brief remarks by the rabbi. Latkes and jelly doughnuts, traditional Chanukah foods, will be distributed to those gathered. Other small activities are planned for the children.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 404-898-0434 or rabbi@chabadintown.org.

and trees; the start of the planning process of the North Woods, currently the undeveloped portion that begins at the Park Drive bridge and extends northward to Westminster Drive, bordered by the Atlanta Botanical Gardens on the west and the Southern Railway tracks on the east.

The Piedmont Park Conservancy funds most of these improvements, park maintenance and security through member and donor support. In order to continue to restore Atlanta's beloved central gathering place, and preserve Piedmont Park for future generations, they need our help. For 2003-2004, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association has issued a challenge grant, matching two dollars for every one dollar donated by a Virginia-Highland resident, up to a total of \$5,000.

You can help meet this challenge either by joining the Conservancy or by giving a gift. All members receive: Discounts to PPC Community Center programs, entry to hospitality tents at selected festivals, invitations to PPC member-only events, a quarterly newsletter and e-mail updates to special speakers series.

To join or to give a gift, call 404-875-7275 or e-mail membership@piedmontpark.org if you wish to receive a brochure by mail. You can also send a check to: Piedmont Park Conservancy, P.O. Box 7795, Atlanta, GA 30357-7795. Be sure to state that you are a Virginia-Highland resident in order to be counted for the matching funds.

This fall, come to the park and take in the fall leaf colors, meet family and friends for a picnic on the new grills, go for a crisp, autumn stroll on the freshly landscaped pathways. Enjoy and celebrate your world-class park.

-Judy McCabe Smith

**Virginia-Highland
Civic Association
has issued a
challenge grant,
matching two
dollars for every
one dollar donated
by a Virginia-
Highland resident,
up to \$5,000.**

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President's Address

By Kevin Cronin

I am pleased to announce that we have established several new records in 2003! First, we raised \$76,000 at Summerfest. Thanks to the Summerfest committee: Pierce Pape (5K Race Director), Cynthia Gentry (Artist Chair), and Jean Jordan and Jill Gossett (Volunteer Coordinators). Thanks also to Wiley Sommerville, Kris Reinhard and Steve Kushner for all their hard work on the Oversight Committee. If His Excellency, Juan Antonio Samaranch former head of the Olympics, were to have attended the 2003 Summerfest, I know he would say it was "The Best Ever."

Summerfest, however, is not about making a profit. We see it as a means to enable us to give back to the neighborhood. Money from the Summerfest has allowed us to contribute a total of \$46,000 to our neighborhood this year. As announced at the Virginia-Highland Civic Association's annual meeting in September, the organizations that benefited from our 2003 contributions are:

Morningside Elementary School PTA \$2,000
Inman Middle School PTA \$2,000
Grady High School PTA \$2,000
CINS (Council of Intown Neighborhood Schools) \$1,000
Ponce de Leon Library \$3,000
Trees Atlanta \$2,000
PEDS (Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety) \$500
YWCA \$1,000
Piedmont Park Conservancy - up to \$5,000 over next year matching two-for-one against neighborhood donations.
Fire Department \$2,000 (to be used to purchase items

of need for #19 stationhouse)
Police Zone #6 \$2,000 (to be used to purchase items of need for Zone #6)
Cunard Memorial Playground \$17,500 in a two-for-one matching grant.

A special thank you and recognition were given to Jenn Ballentine and Krista Miller for their help in publishing the *Virginia-Highland Voice* for the past two years.

As many of you know, we have a very generous sidewalk reimbursement plan. I am also pleased to share that we have spent of \$5,000 this past year to help residents make their sidewalks safe. Yet another record for the Virginia Highland Civic Association. It is the responsibility of all property owners to keep sidewalks in safe condition and they can be liable if they do not. If you have neighbors whose sidewalks need replacing, talk to them about their responsibility and refer them to our web site for details on our reimbursement plan.

As we enter the holiday period each of us will have many requests for donations. Our thoughts will also turn to New Year's resolutions. I ask each of you to consider: "What have I given back to my neighborhood?" We have a wide variety of committees and initiatives. To find out how you can make a difference, feel free to contact any board member or myself. Get involved in 2004. We need you and your time! Virginia-Highland is a special place and we want to work to keep it that way.

We all have a tremendous opportunity to show our support for the Cunard Memorial Playground on the Nov. 15 build date in John Howell Park. (Rain date Nov. 22). This is a great way to show your support for Brad and his family and help us set up the playground equipment. Check www.vahi.org for more information.

Please note we have a new meeting time - the first Monday of every month. I hope to see you November 3 at the Ponce de Leon Library at 7 pm.

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Gardening in Virginia-Highland Has Come a Long Way Since the '70's

John Wolfinger

Thanks to a Hands on Atlanta volunteer day project, I learned of a neighborhood area I had never seen before. I was part of an enthusiastic group that cleaned up the end of Cresthill Avenue as it dead ends at the Beltline railroad tracks at Piedmont Park. Special recognition needs to go to the employee volunteers from Ed Castro Landscape Company who brought along cleanup equipment and a truck and dumpster to haul away the debris. It is nice to see suburban-based companies take an interest in the city and its problems.

After enjoying the humorous lecture at The Botanical Garden by Felding Rusher, I bought two of his books that I had long wanted - *Passalong Plants* and *Tough Plants For Southern Gardens*. They are both well-written, easy-to-read reference books that I heartily recommend. They are in stock at The Botanical Garden gift shop. Rushing's newest book is about scarecrows, which tied in nicely with the current exhibit of scarecrows in the Garden. A great pumpkin-buttred scarecrow is in the neighborhood at Barnett and Drewry Streets.

Special thanks to the Atkins Park gardeners who keep their gateway entrances creatively planted and maintained as well as planting and tending the curbside along

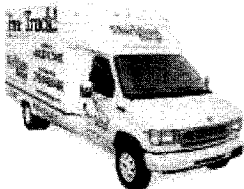
North Highland Avenue in their district. Some good garden and landscape idea spots I have seen lately are great handling of having a driveway serve as a front entrance walkway from the street at 797 Ponce de Leon Terrace. The biggest potted coleus in the neighborhood have to be on the front porch at 853 Ponce de Leon Place. They are well mixed with ornamental grasses in the containers. The iron-fenced-in garden at 919 North Highland Avenue at Rosedale Road is maturing nicely and will be a neighborhood standout. There is a great example of streetside plantscaping at 765 Ponce de Leon Terrace with a creative mixture of plants with contrasting foliage color and texture.

The interest in gardening in this neighborhood has come a long way from when I first moved here in the 1970's. With few exceptions, the landscaping then consisted mainly of ill-tended azaleas, hydrangeas, privets and some marigolds and petunias. We're really becoming a real garden spot now as more and more residents are showing concern as to the appearance of their lawn and garden areas. And I know there certainly were no professionally created and tended gardens here in the 1970's either.

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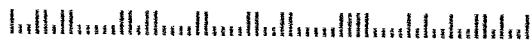


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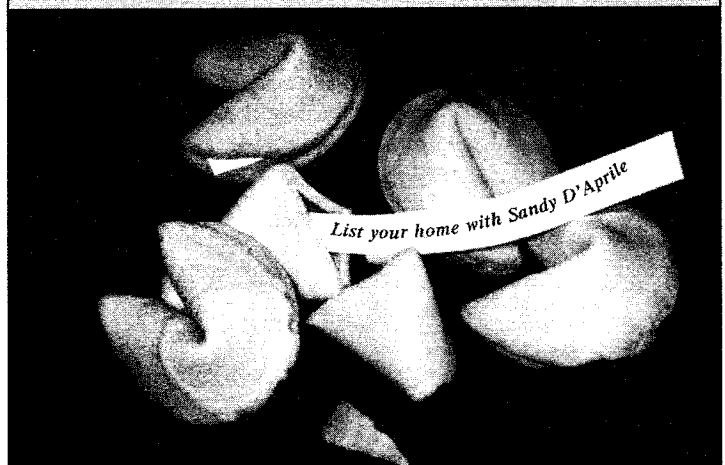
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