

Vote for Your Board of Directors on September 13

Also In This Issue:

Water Restrictions
Reminder

Tour of Homes Update

President's Address

Proposed Amendments
to By-Laws

Why We Don't Use
MARTA

The Highland Hoer

You can make a difference in the quality of your community. The Virginia-Highland Civic Association's current Board of Directors' terms will be expiring this September and elections for the 2004-2005 term will take place during the upcoming annual meeting, which will be held on Monday, September 13 at Inman Middle School on Virginia Ave.

Become involved in your neighborhood by running for a position on the Board of Directors, by showing up with your neighbors to vote on September 13, by attending regular meetings of the Civic Association, by joining a committee of the Board, or by expressing an opinion through your community newspaper, *The Voice*.

What does a board member do?

Board members can serve as president, vice president, treasurer or secretary. They organize activities of the association and serve on one or more of the following committees: Finance, Graffiti Removal, Membership, Parenting Association, Parks, Planning and Zoning, Public Safety, Summerfest, *The Voice*, or Website Management. They must attend the combined Board/General Meetings on the first Monday of each month and be available for committee meetings throughout each month.

Who can become a board member?

Any resident of the Virginia-Highland neighborhood can serve as a board member. The Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board consists of 11 members and one alternate.

How long is the term?

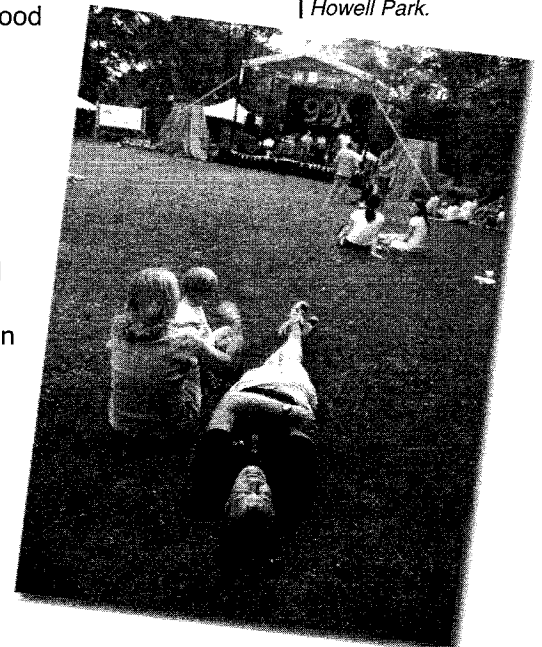
Board members serve one-year terms, from October 1 through September 30 each year.

How can I become a board member?

Since board members are elected at the annual meeting, interested neighbors should contact Kevin Cronin, Virginia-Highland Civic Association President, at president@vahi.org in advance of the annual meeting, on Monday, September 13. Proxy votes will be accepted at the annual meeting. Proxy ballots must be accompanied by a copy of a valid government I.D. or utility bill confirming the voters name and address.

We look forward to hearing from neighbors interested in joining the board!

Over 400 Virginia-Highland residents enjoyed food, drink and the music of the Black Sheep during the first annual Friday night before Summerfest celebration, at John Howell Park.



Water Restrictions Underway

Don't forget that residents with odd-numbered addresses may water only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Residents with even-numbered addresses may water only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Residents may not water on Fridays. There are no hourly restrictions.

Commercial operations such as landscaping companies and car washes are exempt from the restrictions or when residents may water vegetable gardens.

The outdoor watering restrictions within Atlanta's water service area will be enforced by the City of Atlanta. Violations of the restrictions can result in fines up to \$1,000.

Tour of Homes Update

Planning for the 2004 Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes (Dec. 11-12) is on schedule. The sponsorship campaign has been launched and will continue until the beginning of September. For more information regarding sponsorship, contact P.K. Trettel at 404.317.4907.



Volunteers are needed for staffing of the homes on the weekend of the Tour. If interested, please contact Karen Hott (Homes Volunteers Committee Chair) at kthott@yahoo.com.

For general Tour information, please visit vahi.org or contact Sheila Gray, Tour Chairperson, at tour@vahi.org.



VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors

Kevin Cronin, President	404-872-5995
John Craft, Vice President, Planning, Home Tour	404-815-0977
Wiley Sommerville, Treasurer, Summerfest	404-881-1003
Barbara Touchette, Secretary, Summerfest, Parks	404-874-1472
Chip Gallagher, Outreach	404-249-6390
Jean Jordan, Public Safety, Outreach	404-724-4938
Rob Glancy, Parks, Home Tour, Planning	404-875-2107
Paula Hyman, Parks, Planning	404-892-3422
Ken McDuffie, Planning	404-872-9286
David Vaughan, Home Tour	404-815-9183
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Virginia-Highland Voice:

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President's Address

By Kevin Cronin

Summerfest 2004 was truly one of the best neighborhood festivals yet! The festival was energized, offered great art, and included a new, soon-to-be annual event -- the neighborhood picnic. The Friday night gathering of over 400 neighbors was a new tradition that we hope to carry forward for many years to come. The Civic Association treated everyone to some great food from Atkins Park (thanks to Warren Bruno for the great deal you gave us!) And of course we all listened to great live music from the Black Sheep.

At sunset on Friday evening, a faithful group of Aaron Gross' family and friends gathered around the *Japanese Stewartia* tree that was planted in his memory in John Howell Park. It is fitting that the tree blooms each summer at the time of Summerfest, and appropriate that we started this year's festival with a ceremony honoring him!

Mother Nature was on our side this year. She provided us with great weather, not only for the entire festival, but for our runners and tot trotters! (New event chair Ed Williams sighed relief for the dry race!) The 543 volunteers that Jean Jordan and David Urbach helped recruit were also appreciative of the dry weather. Thank you, Jean and David, for such dedication and commitment. The artists were grateful for a dry check-in and of having the option of an early check in Friday evening. How does Cynthia attract so many GREAT artists?

One of my favorite things to do during the festival (when not driving a golf cart with ice or beverages) was to

visit the KidsFest area. Warren Bruno and Georgia McFarlin did a great job of revitalizing the kids' section of the festival for us. It seemed as though there were over 300-400 kids participating in the crafts or dancing in the sand as our DJ entertained them. We heard from many pleased parents, as well.

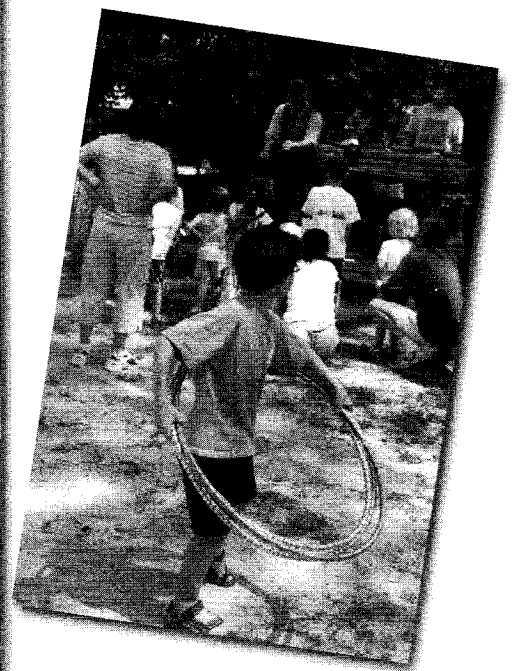
On behalf of all our neighbors, I want to thank all those who volunteered during the two-day event and to thank the Summerfest Committee that worked for eight months to pull it off: Cynthia "Artists' Market" Gentry, Wiley "Money Man" Sommerville, Barbara "Whatever Needs to be Done" Touchette, Jean "Volunteer Extraordinaire" Jordan, Warren "KidsFest" Bruno, Georgia "Crafts" McFarlin, Rob "Coordinator" Frazer, Ed "Road Race" Williams, John "Everything!" Craft, Paula "T-Shirt" Hyman and all our partners at 99X!

We hope to have record attendance this year at our Annual Meeting on the evening of September 13. We plan to make it another memorable neighborhood event, serving either dinner or having an ice cream social prior to the annual meeting. Dinner or the ice cream social will be at 6 pm, followed by our meeting at 7 pm. Further details will be emailed at the end of August. At the meeting I am proposing an amendment that would eliminate proxy voting starting with the 2005 meeting, but allow for absentee ballots. Please read the proposed change on page four of this issue of the *Voice*. Also at this meeting we will elect board members, announce our grant recipients for 2004 and announce the inaugural Aaron Gross Community Service Award as well. Please remember to pay your annual dues of \$25 while at the meeting.

Mark your calendars now!



Summerfest numbers: it is estimated that 65,000 people attended the two day event in June, hosted by some 543 volunteers. At least 300 kids ran the Tot Trot and Kidfest drew 2,000 young participants. Artists displaying their goods numbered 240.



Proposed Amendments to the By-Laws of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc.

Article I

Section 5

Current: Membership. All residents of Virginia-Highland over eighteen (18) years of age are members in the Association. Residents may submit their name and address to the Board of Directors for the membership roll. All members, except as provided below, shall be eligible to vote at annual or special meetings of the Association. Every owner of a business within the boundaries of Virginia-Highlands is a member of the Association but shall not be entitled to vote unless such person is a resident of Virginia-Highland.

Proposed: Membership. All residents of Virginia-Highland over eighteen (18) years of age are members in the Association. Residents may submit their name and address to the Board of Directors for the membership roll. All members, except as provided below, shall be eligible to vote in person or by absentee ballot at annual or special meetings of the Association. No member may vote by proxy. Every owner of a business within the boundaries of Virginia-Highland is a member of the Association but shall not be entitled to vote unless such person is a resident of Virginia-Highland.

Article II

Section 6

Current: Voting. At annual and special meetings, every member entitled to vote shall have one (1) vote. At general meetings, all members, when requested by the Board of Directors, may participate in a non binding vote prior to the Board of Directors taking final action

Proposed: Voting. At annual and special meetings, every member entitled to vote shall have one (1) vote to be cast in person or by absentee ballot. Such absentee ballot shall be in a form adopted by the Board of Directors. Any member submitting an absentee ballot shall attach to said ballot proof of residency within the boundaries of Virginia-Highland. Such proof shall include, but is not limited to, a copy of a valid Georgia driver's license or a utility bill issued within sixty (60) days of the annual or special meeting. Absentee ballots shall be accepted prior to and up to the scheduled start of the annual or special meeting by delivering same to any officer of the Association. Absentee ballots need not be delivered in person by the member and may be mailed to the Association's then current address. Only those absentee ballots actually received by the Association prior to the annual or special meeting shall be considered. At general meetings, all members, when requested by the Board of Directors, may participate in a non binding vote prior to the Board of Directors taking final action.

Sign Up to Receive Timely VHCA and Community News

Stay on top of what is happening in your community by signing up to receive emails about Virginia-Highland news and events. Just go to our web site at vahi.org and enter your email address in the top right hand green area.



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Why We Don't Use MARTA

By Chip Gallagher

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission, about 560,000 people use MARTA each week. Of those who use public transportation, about 85% are from the areas that MARTA serves: the City of Atlanta, and the other parts of Fulton and DeKalb counties. That means that close to 500,000 people from a service area of around two million use MARTA. That's about one quarter of the population, which is a pretty high rate of ridership for a sunbelt city where the car is king. But who takes MARTA? Research from Clark Atlanta University found that 78% of MARTA riders are black, while whites make up the remainder (Latinos weren't part of the study but my guess is if the survey were done today we would see a sizable amount of Latinos on the bus and rails). We also know that half of all MARTA riders are between 16 and 34. We also know that car ownership plays a role in who takes MARTA and the rate of car ownership varies by race. Race in turn is linked to income and wealth accumulation. Research by Thomas Shapiro on the racial wealth gap found that "the net worth of typical white families is \$81,000 compared to \$8,000 for black families." It is not surprising then that 6.3% of whites but 26.5% of blacks in the area in which MARTA serves are carless.

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But all these facts and figures are background information for my central question. Why are rates of MARTA ridership so low in our neighborhood? Certainly a vast majority of individuals work in places that MARTA does not serve (One would have to use two or three transfers to get from Adair or Amsterdam to deep Gwinnett or Henry County.) But many people in this neighborhood work downtown or in midtown and could easily hop on the 16 or the 45 or the 2 and glide MARTA style into SunTrust, CNN, Georgia Power, the Capitol or the Claremont Lounge.

Just for fun I thought about how many people might be able to take MARTA in to work. Let's say that MARTA runs by twenty-five residential streets in Virginia-Highland and people will not use public transportation if they have to walk much more than a quarter mile. Let's say that forty households fall within a quarter mile of a MARTA bus and let's make each household contain two adults of work age (80 people times 25 streets is 2,000 people). Now let's be conservative and say that 15% of those people work close enough to a MARTA stop that they could take the bus to work (15% times 2,000 equals 300 Virginia-Highland MARTA riders).

I have been taking the Noble 16 bus for seven years and I rarely see anyone from our neighborhood in the morning or late afternoon, and I cannot for the life of me figure why. The ride is fast, the bus is usually on time, I absolutely love a few of my drivers, I have never felt unsafe, I can grade papers or read the paper and I always get a seat. My car insurance is lower because as a MARTA rider I am considered a parttime driver. (They know this because we only put 6,000 miles on our car a year).

I have a number of theories I'd like to put forth about why those who could do not use MARTA, but before I do, I'd like to hear from you about why YOU don't use MARTA. In the next issue I'll draw on your comments to talk about the sociological reasons MARTA ridership is so low in our neighborhood. All comments will be kept confidential and I will not identify you by name. Looking forward to your comments.

I can be reached at cgallagher@gsu.edu.

A Pool in Your Neighborhood?

The results from the feasibility study for a neighborhood pool in the Virginia-Highland/Morningside communities are complete and available for review. Please take a few moments now to record your feedback on the financial impact of the pool. Both the feasibility results and financial survey are available at www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=60360483763. Thank you for your input.

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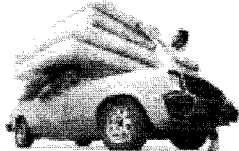
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A Gardener's Heart

By John Wolfinger

There is a wonderful quote in the current issue of *Garden Design* magazine on page 18. The quoter is a Helsinki, Finland lady who said, "If one is lucky, one is born with a gardener's heart." I think that sums up the feelings of gardeners all over the world. We are all lucky to have a love for and an appreciation of plants and natural beauty.

As residents of this great neighborhood, we all have a responsibility to maintain and improve the appearance of our area. You really don't have to be a gardener or a tree-hugger to do such simple things as keeping your lawn mowed, weeds pulled and shrubbery trimmed. As you are walking in the neighborhood, pick up trash instead of walking over it. It's good exercise to bend over and pick up the beer can or fast food wrapper that some clod left on our ground. This land we live on needs our sense of ownership and caring.

This has been a wonderful season for hydrangeas and crepe myrtle. Thanks to all the residents who have allowed their crepe myrtles to grow naturally and have not trimmed them down to little nubs of foliage and flowers. The oakleaf hydrangea at the Southeast corner of Ponce de Leon Place and Drewry Street has to be one of the biggest neighborhood examples of this wonderful native shrub.

Atkins Park gardeners continue to do a great job of maintaining their entrance gate gardens and much of the curbside space along their stretch of North Highland Avenue. Thanks to the folks at the Mitzi and Romano shoe store at Virginia and North Highland for keeping plants going in their urns - in spite of the late-

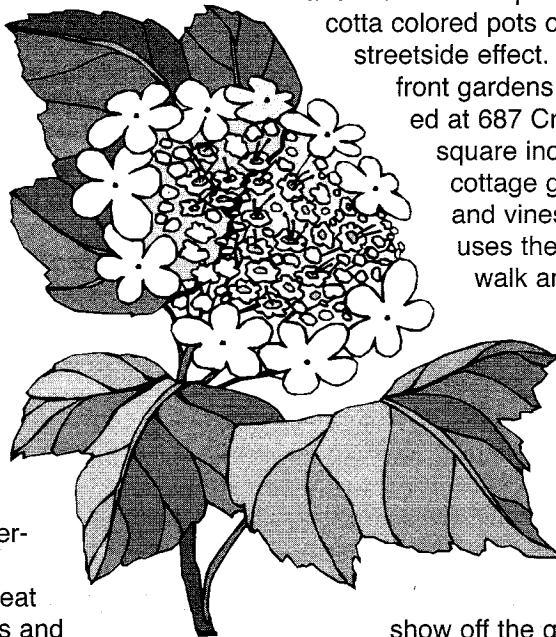
night revelers who evidently think it is fun to pull out the plants and leave them on the sidewalk. Hopefully the plant gods will get those people back some day.

Our neighborhood is full of wonderful streetside garden presentations. Depending on the lot size, size of mature trees, which direction the house faces, the size and placement of the houses, drives and alleys - our neighbors have created some inspiring garden areas. At 531 Elmwood Drive there is a great composition of woody shrubs and perennials that elegantly frames the front of the house and front yard. The owners of 555 Elmwood Drive have brick-paved the area in between the sidewalk and the curb and placed three beautiful terra cotta colored pots on this paving for a great streetside effect.

One of the more exuberant front gardens I have noticed lately is located at 687 Cresthill Avenue where every square inch is planted in a wonderful cottage garden of perennials, shrubs and vines. This great garden also uses the space between the sidewalk and the curb, bringing the

owner's love of plants right to the street. The front garden at 1107 Hudson Drive has a freshly painted wood fence that serves as a backdrop for a well-tended border of annuals, perennials, bulbs and hydrangeas with just enough lawn to

show off the garden areas. At 755 Virginia Avenue, there is a vividly colored sidewalk garden of annuals and perennials. The vivid colors in this garden make it a real standout on Virginia Avenue. The front garden at 929 Todd Road is a great collection of perennials that fills the entire area between the house and the sidewalk. There is no grass at all in their presentation.



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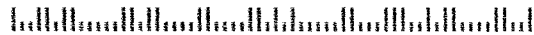


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VHCA Calendar:

Board and Monthly Meetings:

Held the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

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Planning Committee Meetings:

Held the last Wednesday of each month
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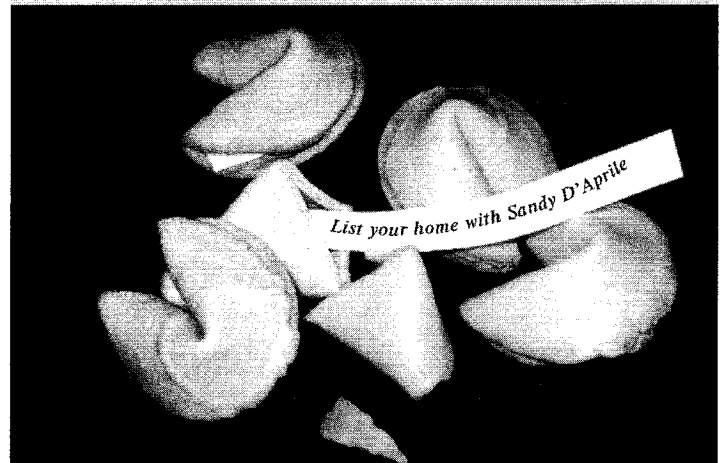
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Locations of meetings
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