

Find Out How the Joneses Live And Support Your Community

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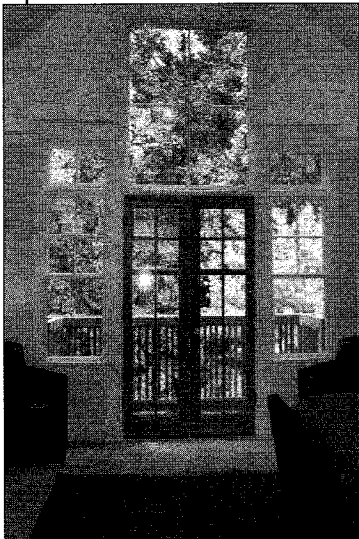
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*H*ome for the Holidays, Virginia-Highland's Tour of Homes will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 10am til 5pm and on Sunday, December 12 from noon to 5pm. Tickets will be on sale, beginning November 15, at these locations:

Harry Norman Realty on Monroe Drive, Whole Foods on Ponce de Leon Avenue, and Murphy's Restaurant. The price of tickets is \$15.

The Tour is as diverse as the community, featuring both older renovated and newly-constructed homes that reflect each owner's distinctive tastes. In addition, Dish Restaurant will be providing complimentary appetizer-sized portions of some of their menu items at the Fowler Tour home on Highland Terrace on Saturday, December 11, from 10am til 3pm and on Sunday, December 12, from noon til 3pm. Noche Restaurant will also be presenting foods from their menu for sampling at the Garvey residence (957 Virginia Avenue) from 10am til 3pm on that Saturday. Sala Restaurant will do a chef demonstration and tasting in the kitchen of the Peart (Crestridge) home on Sunday from noon til 3pm.

As you support your community Tour of Homes, all profits go toward the preservation and enhancement of the neighborhood through projects such as parks and streetscape improvements and sidewalk repairs.

Tour volunteers are still welcome. For volunteer information contact Sheila Gray at Tour@vahi.org.

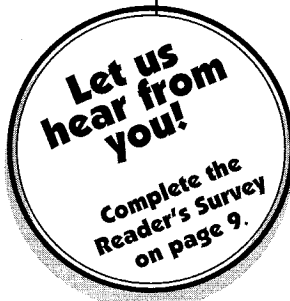
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for more
information
on the
Holiday Tour
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Civic Association Awards More Than \$40,000 To Local Organizations

More than \$114,000 was raised this year during Virginia-Highland's annual Summerfest. At the civic association's annual meeting in September, Board President Kevin Cronin announced that grants would be awarded to the following

community organizations:
Morningside Elementary School PTA
Inman Middle School PTA
Grady High School PTA
Council of Intown Neighborhoods and Schools
Ponce de Leon Branch of the Atlanta Library

Highland Avenue YWCA
Trees Atlanta
PEDS
Piedmont Park
Freedom Park
Zone 6 Police
Firehouse 19
Orme Park



Letter from the President

By Kevin Cronin

I am pleased to have the opportunity to lead the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, along with its Board of Directors, for another year. Last year we accomplished a great deal. If you were to ask me what our number one goal for 2004-2005 is, I would say the improvement of our sidewalks in the neighborhood. So property owners, get ready to fix the broken sidewalk areas that you are responsible for.

Hopefully everyone has had a chance to review the proposed parking deck plans for Piedmont Park. The Board and Civic Association have discussed this proposal at length at several of our monthly meetings. The Board had voted not to support the parking deck at our June 2004 meeting. At our October meeting we reviewed presentations on the proposed parking deck plans. We

were asked to vote on two proposals. The board did not have a majority to support either of the proposed plans.

I do not support the deck for several reasons:

- It decreases green space in our parks;
- It does not support the goal of being a more pedestrian friendly city; and
- It increases traffic and congestion in and around the park.

As you drive around our neighborhood you will see a growing number of "No Parking Deck in Piedmont Park" signs. No matter what your position is on a parking deck or on the North Woods master plan, I encourage you to make your voice heard and to let the mayor and our city council representatives know where you stand on these very important issues. And I encourage all groups to continue to seek an alternative plan, rather than proceed with the proposed deck.

Orme Park Drainage Problems To Be Addressed

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association is continuing its commitment toward upgrading and improving community parks by establishing a 2005 campaign to develop a long range plan for Orme Park. The campaign will be funded by a \$20,000 grant from the Association. Orme Park has been suffering from erosion and drainage problems, which have resulted in the loss of several mature trees and of degraded paths. This problem will be the first of several issues that the committee plans to address. The VHCA is currently collecting feedback from area residents and park visitors and researching a long range plan to ensure its preservation.

If you would like to volunteer or become involved in the process, please contact Paula Hyman and Rob Glancy at Parks@vahi.org or call 404-892-3422.



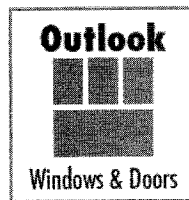
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Wiley Sommerville, Treasurer, Summerfest	404-881-1003
Barbara Touchette, Secretary, Summerfest, Parks	404-874-1472
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Jean Jordan, Public Safety, Outreach	404-724-4938
Rob Glancy, Parks, Home Tour, 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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MARTA Oughta To Be Smarta

By Chip Gallagher

In the last issue of the *Virginia-Highland Voice*, I asked readers to tell me why they did not use or had stopped using MARTA. I'd like to thank the fifteen people who responded with thoughtful, insightful and at times frustrated sounding reasons why, in spite of wanting to use MARTA, they jumped back into their cars. I have identified a number of core reasons that emerged in the data for why ridership in our neighborhood is so low:

Time is not on our side: The additional amount of time it takes people to get from their homes to their jobs when using MARTA is the main reason they do not use public transportation. As one respondent said, "I had a [less than two mile ride] which required no transfers and my total walking distance was less than 100 yards, door to door. But there wasn't a single morning when the trip did not take 15 minutes. The return trip routinely took 25 minutes... the final straw was a 45 minute ride home. I quit MARTA because it takes forever to get anywhere on a bus". Another ex-rider who has lived in New York and Chicago said that his downtown bus

ride "averaged a half hour or more. By car, it took five minutes." One respondent commented "my bus is on time less than 50 percent of the time". According to another former rider, "as the year progressed, the bus came later and later, sometimes not at all."

Can't get there from here:

Another reason people do not take MARTA is that our neighborhood buses do not get them to their place of employment. If they could "get there from here" it requires transferring from bus to train and often some bus/train/bus combination. A response by one of our neighbors typifies this concern "To ride MARTA, my husband has to take the 45 Bus to North Avenue or the 16 Bus downtown then transfer to another bus or take the rail back up to Midtown and then take the Tech Trolley to campus - not efficient routing".

And baby makes three: MARTA no longer works for some families because of life course changes. One neighbor said "My son started kindergarten at Morningside." Another said "as a mother of two, I do not use MARTA because I am not an octopus [do not have enough hands for grocery getting, shopping, etc]". I have heard this same reason echoed by older members of my department at Georgia State University. At least one car (but typically two) per household is required to juggle sports, music, play dates, and the

sundry extracurricular activities of the five and older set. One parent may go right from work to the soccer field or band practice. In this way, many people age-out of MARTA usage as family responsibilities make it practically impossible to use mass transit and accommodate a parent's role in the family livery service.

Sense enough to stay out of the rain: Everyday, I catch the bus in front of Dish Restaurant on Highland Avenue. I have cursed MARTA many times as inclement weather soaked me to the bone because there are no structures to shield me from the elements. As one ex-rider eloquently put it "Given that it rarely just rains gently in Atlanta, it makes sense not to stand outside waiting for a bus at a bus stop that doesn't even have a rudimentary bus shelter." I wish he would have told me not to stand outside waiting for the bus six years ago. I've gotten really wet.

A very thoughtful macro-analysis about the relative costs and benefits of MARTA and the car was also offered: "Yes, the opportunity to read during my commute or to interact with my fellow citizens beyond a beep of the horn is appealing, but this is easily offset by the flexibility that having a car offers. Our roads are well subsidized to the point that public transportation has a difficult time competing. Combine that with our relatively cheap land which allows for cheap parking and the nation's lowest gas tax, it's easily explained that many car owners are simply not incented to use MARTA. To be successful, MARTA must be able to beat driving in terms of either cost or time."

Time, Ben Franklin said, is money. In a neighborhood where median family income is \$102,877 (based on figures published in 1999) the question isn't about being able to afford and maintain a car versus the costs of public transportation. The real question is "what is my time worth." The half an hour or hour we can pick up everyday is a large clip of gained time but we take the car over the bus because most of us we can afford to do so.

My students have also clued me in about low ridership rates. I've come to realize they lack a history and culture of public transportation. Most grew up in black and white middle and upper middle class suburbs and have never been on a MARTA bus. The bus, as so many of them tell me, equals "ghetto", a badge of poverty that implies you cannot afford a car in a culture where car is king. When I told one class that I took a bus to work, a student replied, "Dr. Gallagher, can't you afford a car?" It was unimaginable that I would choose to take the bus. Poor people, it seems are bus people. Race, class and poverty seem to be code words for MARTA. Better service, more extensive routes, bus shelters, posted schedules - these are issues MARTA can at least try to address. In an extremely race and class segregated city that matured around the car, ridding MARTA of its stigma of transporting the minimum wage workers cemented to the bottom of our socio-economic order is going to be a much more difficult public relations obstacle to overcome.

Chip Gallagher can be reached at cgallagher@gsu.edu.

"As the year progressed, the bus came later and later, sometimes not at all"

Holiday Tour of Homes



787 Crestridge Drive

Custom-built by the owners in 2003, this stunning hilltop home provides spectacular views of intown Atlanta. During construction, the biggest challenge for the homeowners was addressing the steep lot. The solution was to engage the site by installing brick stairs that lead to ter-

aced outdoor spaces through arches and under a pergola ascending to the entry level. Each level of the house sets back, creating a porch or balcony on every floor accented with natural wood columns and brackets.

Inside, this home blends the luxury and space of a large house with the useable layout for which Craftsman homes are known. Highlights include a grand study completely finished in custom cherry paneling, a four-way fireplace, gourmet kitchen and an intimate screened-in back porch.

1079 St. Louis Place

This 1920s Mediterranean-style bungalow is a striking display of artful design. The home was renovated in 1998 to create a large master closet and master bath out of the third bedroom. The owner also relocated the front door to provide a better flow from room to room.



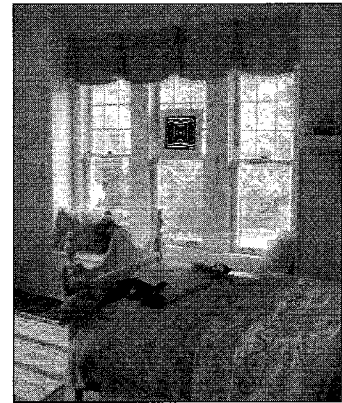
From the street, the home is distinguished by its unusual charcoal gray stucco exterior, terracotta roof tiles and three graceful arches framing the front porch. The interior is outfitted with an extensive collection of art, antiques and furniture. Interesting details include black trim throughout, rustic shutters on the interior windows, an original butler's pantry and a brick kitchen floor.

The gourmet kitchen is decorated in light turquoise and black accents. This area features butcher block countertops, open shelving, custom-built cabinetry, and a beaded-board ceiling. A back door leads to a courtyard paradise. The walled-in garden heightens the Mediterranean feel of the home with lush plantings.

957 Virginia Avenue

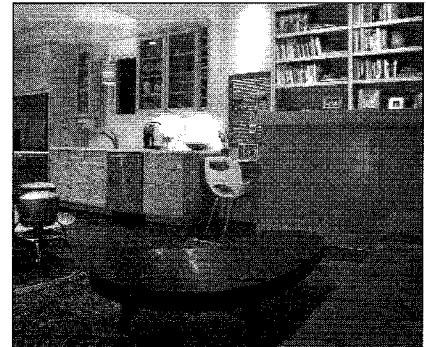
Built in 1913, the Garvey home is a stately two-story Craftsman-style home with twin gables and an expansive front porch. The home was used as a rental for several years; when the Garveys renovated in 1998 they discovered evidence of 13 different phone lines running to the house. The family was able to renovate while keeping most of the original floor plan.

This home is decorated with county-style furnishings and unique paintings, framed prints, and children's artwork. The gourmet kitchen and large master bedroom sit on the location of an old shed roof addition. One of the home's most unusual features is its spaciousness, including large bedrooms and a banquet-sized dining room complete with an original floor-mounted button that was at one time used to call service staff.



905 Virginia Avenue

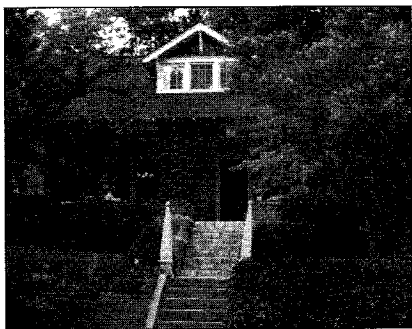
This one-story classic bungalow is an ideal example of the synergy of old and new. Purchased in 1999 and renovated shortly thereafter, the exterior of this 1920s home features classic architectural details such as bracketed eaves, low gables, and a side porte-cochere. Inside, the owners have selected furnishings, artwork, and cabinetry with a modern flair. Elements like an elliptically flared counter at the edge of the kitchen, clean-lined furniture, wide openings between the living areas, and a mix of abstract, still-life, and children's art enhance the home's appeal. Dark woods provide an elegant offset for neutral rugs, walls, and built-ins.



980 Drewry Street

From the boldly scaled and textured furnishings to the spectacular art collection, this 1913 side-gable bungalow evokes a feeling of true city living. With polished wood detailing throughout the

Continued on page 6



home, sophisticated and unusual furniture, abundant stained-glass windows, and well-thought out spaces that flow into the next, the home is sophisticated and cozy. Original period details include inlaid floors, interior transom windows, coffered ceilings, and pocket doors.

854 Highland Terrace

When owner and architect David Fowler renovated his 1940s home, he wanted to combine quality workmanship with well thought-out design. He succeeded by creating a beautiful space large enough to fit his family of four and allow him to work from home.

A modern take on the arts and crafts style, the home features a shingled exterior with stone steps and entryway, large square windows, exposed rafters, and a striking craftsman fireplace in the living room with built-in shelving on either side.

The kitchen features clean-lined cabinetry and a beautiful Spanish-style stone floor. The owner has successfully combined typical period architectural features with calming Asian-inspired details, such as clean-lined stair railings and posts, natural-fiber rugs, and the master bathroom countertop created from one large piece of rustic wood. A large stone-floored back porch is functional and beautiful.



Five Taxi Stands Should Reduce Traffic Problems

In an effort to help reduce parking and traffic problems in the commercial areas of Virginia-Highland, as well as reduce the number of intoxicated drivers leaving bars and restaurants, five taxi stands have been set up in the community.

According to Phillip Pettis, former safety committee chair of the Civic Association, who spearheaded the project, the stands will be in use 7 nights a week from 8pm til 6am. The stands are located near SouthTrust Bank on Virginia Avenue, in front of Highland Hardware Store on Highland Avenue, on Los Angeles Avenue adjacent to the side of the Fire Station, and in front of Hand-in-Hand Restaurant on St. Charles Avenue.

During the day and early evening, the taxi stands are truck delivery or regular parking zones until approximately 9pm at which time, the zones are for taxi stands only. Motorist who ignore the no-parking signs and park in the taxi stands (during taxi stand hours) will be ticketed.

This Could Be You:

Sad, Shamed and Sued

By Chip Gallagher

I want you to imagine that your 65 year old mom comes for a visit to your house. You gussy yourself up for a fun night at a restaurant in Virginia-Highland. Tough decisions need to be made: pizza, steak, sushi or tapas. You lock your door and stroll towards Highland Avenue, thinking how lucky you are to live in a walking neighborhood with so many amenities so close to home. There is also that great feeling that unlike all those suburban folks who drive into the neighborhood, you don't have to spend time looking for a parking spot. You are among the walking elite.

You are strolling past your friend and neighbor John's house. Suddenly, your mom's shoe twists on a rut in your neighbor's broken sidewalk. Mom tumbles forward so quickly you can't grab her and she is unable to break her fall. As you rush to pick her up off the sidewalk, your realize her face is covered in blood, her front tooth is missing and her arm is swinging at such an acute angle that it appears to be a fracture. After a brutal night in the hospital, it turns out that mom lost a tooth, dislodged four others, needs 30 stitches and has a fractured arm. She will need on-going dental surgery, and therapy to regain movement in her arm. The cost will be about \$15,000. The neighbor with the broken sidewalk is horrified that this happened on his property.

This sad incident happened recently in Virginia-Highland. The neighbor is liable and, because the families were friends, John was able to use his homeowners' insurance for cost of his neighbor's Mom's medical care. A stranger would have sued, and John would have been liable for medical bills, pain and suffering and attorneys fees. This accident was tragic, but it need not be repeated. Please take advantage of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association's fund to fix your sidewalk. The Association will pay 50 percent of the cost of the repair with a maximum reimbursement of \$500 and up to \$750 for a house that is a corner lot. For more information, visit the Civic Association's web site at www.vahi.org.

Civic Association Offers Funds For Off-Duty Police Patrols

By Jean Ellen Jones

For over 11 years, off-duty police have successfully patrolled a portion of Virginia-Highland at night to prevent crime. When the program was instituted, the crime rate in the patrolled area declined significantly. Organizers of this Fight Back Against Crime (FBAC) program are calling for more paying members so that services may be expanded to seven nights a week. If at least 250 more residents sign up, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association has offered to match individual contributions so that the patrol area may be expanded to the entire neighborhood. Participants currently pay \$150 every six months.

Organizers are urging community members who are not currently part of the patrolled area to consider joining today. For additional information and membership applications, please contact Beth Marks at beth.marks@ix.netcom.com.

The Good Neighbor

By Nonie Daniel

By now, you will probably recognize Cynthia Gentry as the energetic community member who envisioned and led the efforts to establish a playground in memory of three members of the Cunard family.

Cynthia recently received the first Aaron Gross Memorial Award for these efforts. She took a few minutes to talk about her experiences in working on this large project:

How long have you lived in Virginia-Highland?

I moved to Virginia-Highland in the summer of 2001 at the invitation of my brother and sister-in-law. They made sort of an inlaw suite for me in their new house on Drewry. It was wonderful living so close to them and to my two beautiful young nieces. My brother passed away in March of 2002. I treasure the nine months I spent getting closer to him before he left us. I have since moved to Lanier Boulevard where my studio windows overlook the steel sculpture and the beautiful ginko trees.

What inspired you to take on the job of building this playground?

The Cunards were my next door neighbors when I lived on Drewry. I only knew them to wave at them over the fence...usually in response to the sound of Max's laughter. I am a mom myself and it devastated me to think of Brad's loss. I didn't think that the playground would make anything "better" for Brad, but I knew how much it meant to me when I heard that an outdoor classroom had been built in my brother's honor at Haygood Methodist Church, where my nieces go to preschool, so I hoped that it might help in some way.

What do you do when you are not building playgrounds?

I develop animated websites for chronically ill children to teach them about their conditions and about what they can do to stay healthy. I also paint murals for children's hospitals, Camp Twin Lakes (where Camp Sunshine takes place), and even an elementary school in Sarajevo, Bosnia. My company is called Art Heals (www.art-heals.com) and the first web site is www.SickleCellKids.org. I am currently developing CancerKid.org and working on the second phase of the sickle cell site to be followed by AsthmaKid.org.

Are you a native Atlantan?

I am almost a native. I moved to Atlanta from Connecticut when I was eight years old. I went to Morris Brandon Elementary School, Westminster School, the University of Georgia and Georgia State University.

Do you have any stories to tell about this project?

Well, I think you can safely say that the folks on the playground committee worked harder than any of us ever dreamed we would work to get this done. I think these days it is called "scope creep." Every time someone said "Wouldn't it be cool if..." we knew we were in trouble. But I think I speak for everyone on the team when I say that I wouldn't trade the experience for anything in the world. So many people gave so selflessly because they wanted our neighbor to know that he was cared for. The experience was a pivotal point in my life.

It was amazing how things unfolded. At one point our energy started to flag a bit and I began to wonder if maybe we had bitten off too big a bite. It wasn't 20 minutes later that the phone rang and Rich Chey of Doc Chey's and Osteria 832 asked if he could throw a benefit. Things like that kept happening. It was awesome. After the incredible Benefit Party, there was no stopping us. I remember [Civic Association Board Member] Wiley Sommerville's comment that night: with cigar in hand he stood at our table on the corner of Virginia and North Highland and said, arms outstretched, "Now, THIS is a neighborhood!"

One of the most powerful and telling occurrences was on the day of the playground installation last November. More than one person came up to me and said "This restores my faith in mankind." When you looked around you at the 400 volunteers who came out to perform backbreaking work on a beautiful fall day when they could have been out playing, you have to realize that the statement was not over the top. I had to agree with them. This experience has taught me the meaning of the word "community." I call this neighborhood "My Own Little Mayberry." The lesson I learned about getting things done is to surround yourself with people who are smarter, more dedicated, and more talented than you are. You come out smelling like a rose every time!



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

Time for Outdoor Cleanup

By John Wolfinger

Finally, the hot months are over. The weather is just right for spending time outside - not too hot, not too cold, and, best of all, low humidity levels. After a far from ideal summer growing season - too much rain in the spring, no rain in the middle of the season and then the damaging rain and wind of the hurricane season - it is time for a good garden cleanup. Pull and remove any weeds you may have missed pulling earlier, but don't put them into your compost pile. You don't want to plant those weed seeds next spring for yet another crop of something you don't want in your garden. If you don't have a compost pile, this is the best season of the year to start one. Great instructions are on the web at www.rivenrock.com/compostpile.htm. This fall's fallen leaves are a great compost pile starter. I gather mine with my lawnmower using the grass bag. They seem to compost faster when they are chewed up by the mower.

This time of year is best for dividing and replanting perennials, such as day lilies, hosta, canna, and daisies. I cut these sturdy plants apart with old butcher knives that I buy at yard sales. No, you won't hurt these sturdy plants by cutting down through the thick mass of roots that they develop. These kinds of plants are very strong and will survive and benefit from being thinned out in their growing bed. You will probably end up with extra plants to share with your neighbors. Sharing is one of the nicest parts of gardening.

This is also the best planting time for trees, shrubs and other woody perennials. Fall planting gives the plant all winter to expand and grow its root system, giving it a jump-start to meet the demands of a full blown foliage canopy next spring and summer. Repot your houseplants that have been outside for the summer with fresh potting soil in clean pots to help avoid bringing in insects and soil-borne diseases. Dump the old potting soil on the compost pile. Before planting in new spring flowering bulbs, get out the garden pictures you took last spring so you will know where your existing bulbs are hiding now. If you were one of the unfortunate ones who lost big trees in the recent storms, start planning now for changes in your garden plantings. Where you once had shade loving plants, you may need to switch to sun lovers.

There is a beautiful new stone wall along Barnett Street at Adair Avenue. Stone walls give a look of permanence to our beautiful

neighborhood. Two handsome sidewalk gardens are side-by-side at 1128 and 1134 Stillwood Drive. They have great mixtures of foliage texture and colors.

Thanks to all the merchants in the neighborhood who provide storefront planters to help beautify the business district. Festivity on North Highland Avenue has managed to keep wonderful, lush plantings all summer. I know it is not easy, as our late night drinking crowd seems to delight in pulling up plants from sidewalk displays. Thanks for persevering.

It is nice to see that the handsome building addition at Inman Middle School has plantings around it to complement the renovation. It will be interesting to see if the public school system will maintain the plantings. It would be wonderful to see the school grounds maintained as well as those are at John Howell Park and have a public garden swath along Virginia Avenue. Maybe the school PTA could adopt the landscape maintenance as a project.



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Let us know how the Virginia-Highland Civic Association can best deliver community news to you. You can respond to our survey in one of two easy ways:

Read over and complete the survey below. Then, cut along the dotted line, fold in half (address on the outside), staple and mail (please provide your own stamp).

OR

Look for and reply to the VHCA email survey.

SURVEY:

Age: _____

Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Housing: Rent _____ Own _____

Years resided in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood _____

Household composition (Check one):

Single _____ Single with children _____ (How many children _____?)

Married/Partnered _____

Married/Co-Habiting with children (How many children _____?)

How many times a week do you dine out in our neighborhood? _____

Did you vote in the last election? Yes _____ No _____

What topics or concerns would you like the *Virginia-Highland Voice* newsletter to cover?

Have you talked with your neighbors or friends about any issues or topics you have read in the *Voice*?

Yes _____ No _____

Did you know the *Virginia-Highland Voice* is available on-line at www.vahi.org?

Yes _____ No _____

Does the *Voice* provide you with relevant or useful information about our neighborhood?

Yes _____ No _____

How would you like to receive the *Voice*? (Check one)

Delivered to my place of residence _____

As an on-line publication only _____

In the mail and also on-line _____

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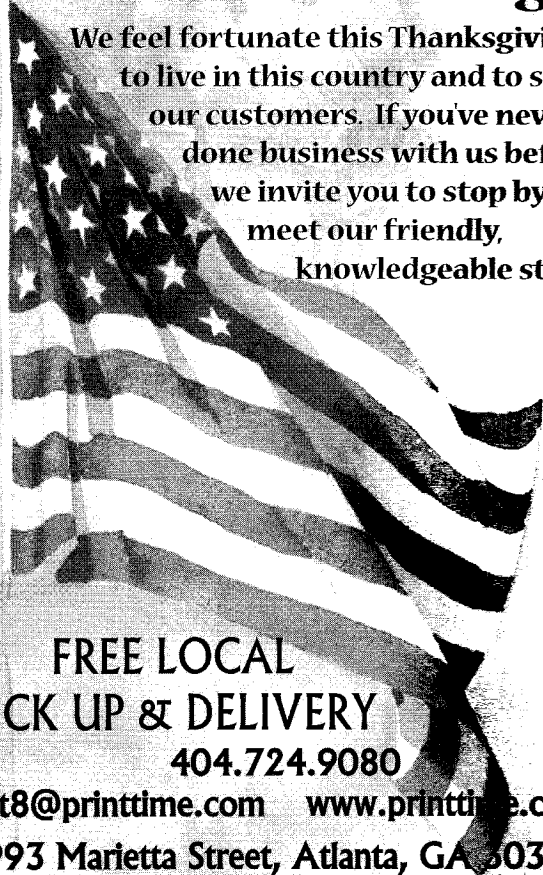
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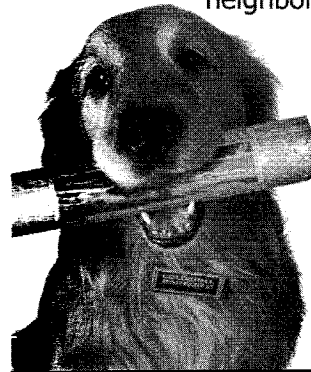
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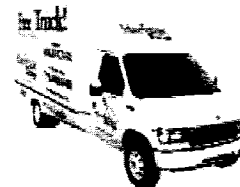
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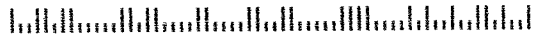
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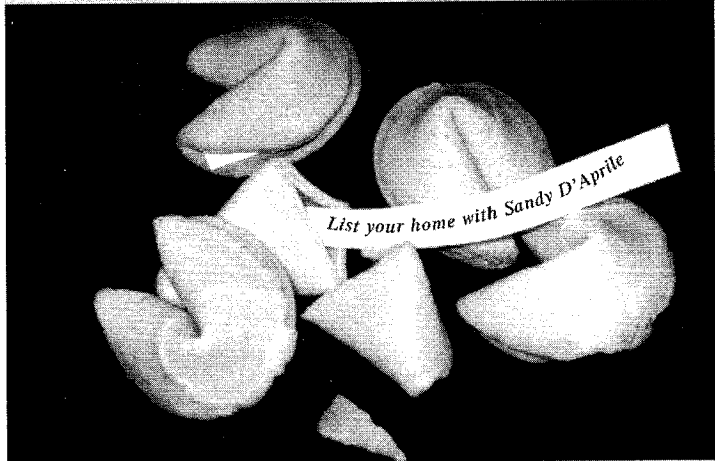
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