

what's inside

2005 Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes December 10 - 11



Mark your calendars now for the 2005 Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes, presented by Harry Norman Realtors and 99X Everything Alternative. It will take place on Saturday, December 10th from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday, December 11th from noon to 5pm.

Themed "Homes for the Holidays," the tour features one of Atlanta's most charming and desirable neighborhoods - a neighborhood known for its beautiful and historic residences, strong sense of community, and unique restaurants and shops. The seven diverse homes presented on the tour reflect the owners' distinctive tastes and passion for living in Virginia-Highland.

This year's homes include a stylish loft converted from a brick foundry; a large European-style flat featured in the spring 2005 issues of "Kitchen Trends" and "Bathroom Trends" magazines; a grand Atkins Park home; one of the area's original estates built as a summer retreat in 1910; plus three distinctive and beautifully-renovated bungalows.

Chef demonstrations and food tastings from local restaurants Wisteria and Pozole; Two Urban Licks; Atkins Park; Sala and La Tavola; Dish; Noche; and Murphy's will be held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Tickets are \$16 in advance or \$21 the weekend of the tour, and they go on sale in November. Tickets can be purchased at the intown office of Harry Norman Realtors located at 1531 Piedmont Avenue. Tickets are also available online at www.vahihometour.org, and they are available the weekend of the tour at 989 North Highland Avenue.

Visit www.vahihometour.org for more information or e-mail the Tour Director at sheila@skgray.com. The Virginia-Highland Civic Association is sponsoring this event. All profits go toward the preservation and enhancement of the neighborhood. Please join us for a festive weekend of style and taste.

VHCA Funds Awarded

VHCA donates thousands of dollars each year to organizations in our neighborhood that contribute to our quality of life, safety and our children's education. Due to the large amount raised at Summerfest, the association is pleased to make the following contributions again this year:

Fire Dept	\$2,000
Police Dept	\$2,000
CINS	\$1,000
Grady PTA	\$2,000
Inman PTA	\$2,000
Morningside PTA	\$2,000
Peds	\$1,000
Dog Park	\$1,000
Trash Cans	\$8,000
Inman School	\$10,000
YWCA	\$1,000
Trees Atlanta	\$3,000
Library	\$3,000

Art in Freedom Park

Virginia-Highland
Business Association

President's Address

You Think Your
Sidewalk is Bad?

Rezoning Update on
Morningside Elem.
School

More on the 2005
Tour of Homes

Electronic Waste
Recycling Day

Art in Freedom Park Comes to an End

By Eric Dusenbury

As most of you have noticed, the art has slowly been disappearing from Freedom Park. Soon all of the temporary art will be removed but we are fortunate to be left with "The Bridge" by Thorton Dial; located at the corner of Freedom Parkway and Ponce de Leon. September 18, 2005 marked the official end of Art in Freedom Park 2005. The day was celebrated with an afternoon of performances on the hill just east of Moreland.

So what happens next? We have been asking ourselves the same question. We consider Art in Freedom Park 2005 to have been a great success. There was good press coverage and a wide enough of an array of pieces for everyone to have several favorites. To generate the same excitement as this year's event plans are already under way to expand the reach of the show to include artists from all over the country. Ultimately we would like Freedom Park to be an outdoor gallery on par with any sculpture park in the country.

Unfortunately, we have a lot of plans but not enough money or volunteers. We are therefore looking for people with the interest and resources to help us move Art in Freedom Park forward into 2006. We can't do it without your help. Specific skills needed include fundraising, grant writing, public relations, bookkeeping, and volunteer coordination. We are also looking for people interested in working one-off tasks such as setting up for an event, cleaning up after an event, or maintaining the area around the art.

Lastly, if you enjoyed Art in Freedom Park and want it to continue, then we need you to contact your local representatives (Atlanta City Council, Fulton County Commissioners, and the Mayor's office). The City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs Public Art Program, the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council Atlanta Fulton County Arts Council, the Georgia Council for the Arts all contributed financially to Art in Freedom Park 2005. This project was also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. We continued support from all of these organizations as we go forward.

Please contact me at dusenbur@bellsouth.net or 404-522-7130 if you are interested in helping with Art in Freedom Park.



Greetings from the Virginia-Highland Business Assoc.

By Tinka Green

In the upcoming issues of the *Voice*, you will be hearing of our plans to attract visitors (and customers) to our unique neighborhood. Despite some inconveniences from sewer work and quality-of-life beautifications that will be going on for the next few months, we want to have a pleasant holiday season for everyone. You will hear from us in plenty of time to participate. After the horrors of Katrina, Rita, and now Wilma, and while we are still embroiled in a war with our losses mounting, we want to provide some smiles and give thanks for the simple things of life. We are so grateful for all of you, our neighbors, and for your continued support to our businesses.

Tinka Green is President of the Virginia-Highland Business Assoc.

Environment Leadership Skills Offered to Teens

YMCA Earth Service Corp, a partnership with Piedmont Park Conservancy, is a service-learning program focused on the environment and developing leadership skills for teenagers 14-19 years of age. The group meets the first and third Wednesday of every month at Piedmont Park Conservancy's Community Center. For more information, contact Kim Cushman at 404-876-4024 x22 or visit www.piedmontpark.org

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President's Address

By Kevin Cronin

Now that another school year has begun, the clock has turned back and the weather is starting to cool, it's time for the Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) to give you an update on the year's activities - and announce an exciting one still to come before year's end.

VHCA continued its tradition of an exciting and successful Summerfest in June. Once again, neighbors and visitors alike enjoyed the art, music, KidsFest, Road Race, food and fun of the three-day event. The neighbors' picnic in John Howell Park on Friday night sponsored by Atkins Park Restaurant has become an annual tradition. Neighbors tell us they enjoy the chance to share an evening with neighbors from all over Virginia-Highland. The Movie in the Park sponsored by Peter Bade also drew rave reviews.

This year also saw the outstanding efforts of previous board member Paula Hyman as she planned and executed a Week in the Park to promote the renovation of Orme Park. Paula created a week of exciting activities for the neighborhood, from tours of the park with naturalists, to painting in the park, to a special fund-raising dinner at the Warren and more. We thank Paula for these events, in addition to actual weekend clean-ups, which continue to enhance and preserve Orme Park. We owe Paula a great deal of gratitude for all her efforts!

The newest addition to VHCA's neighborhood activities arrives for the second year in December. The second annual Virginia-Highland Home Tour on December 10 and 11 promises to be an excellent event and a great way to kick off the holidays.

Many thanks to board member Rob Glancy for organizing the event, Sheila Gray for her work as tour manager and Donna Boynton and Pamela Papner for managing promotions and publicity for the event. Be sure to see the article in this edition, volunteer your time and visit all the homes on the tour.

Finally, I sound like broken record, but I must comment on sidewalks - or more accurately, cracked and broken sidewalks. Our neighborhood has so much to offer residents and visitors, but our sidewalks don't offer a welcoming message. Please read Brian's article in this issue carefully - and fix your sidewalk or talk to your neighbors about fixing theirs!

A new Board of Directors for VHCA was elected at the annual meeting in September. Congratulations to the new board members - we look forward to your contributions:

John Craft
Vice President
Planning Chair
johnacraft@johnacraft.com

Kevin Cronin
President
Summerfest Co-Chair
kevin.cronin@bankofamerica.com

Amy French *
Treasurer
amyrob28@hotmail.com

Chip Gallagher
Sidewalks Co-Chair
cgallagher@gsu.edu

Rob Glancy
Home Tour Chair
Parks Co-Chair
arglancy@ratecapital.com

Jean Jordan
Summerfest Co-Chair, Public Safety Committee
jjordan@admiss.emory.edu

Charlie Lefort (Alternate) *
Sidewalks, Parks & Home Tour Committees
charlielefort@greenwaymedical.com

Ken McDuffie
Planning Committee
kpm@nallmiller.com

Pamela Papner *
Secretary & Website Committees
ppapner@earthlink.net

Brian L. Pilger *
Planning & Sidewalks Committees
bpilger.ne95@gtalumni.org

Herb Stewart *
Public Safety & Summerfest Committees
hstews2@comcast.net

Jack White *
Parks Co-chair & Planning Committee
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* New board member

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Know Your Neighborhood's Value

By Brian Pilger

When Virginia-Highland residents make their way down the street, sometimes it looks like a game of hopscotch. At other times, more like interpretive dance.

Rather than strolling down the street, neighbors are tripping over broken pieces of sidewalk, jumping over mud holes, or dodging low-hanging limbs.

Neighborhood residents, sick of the situation, have asked the Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) to address the issue. Starting this fall, the VHCA begins a year-long campaign to clear, level, and flatten our sidewalks, and it begins with the "Worst Stretch of Sidewalk Contest." Residents are encouraged to find the most disintegrated, buckled, and/or warped stretch of sidewalk in the neighborhood, take a picture, and send it in. Submissions received by December 24th will be evaluated, the winner announced in the New Year, and the VHCA Board will repair the worst section of sidewalk completely free. Full details are listed at the end of this article.

Truth be told, the condition of most sidewalks in the neighborhood is just fine. But there are still many nasty patches of broken, uneven, or overgrown sections of sidewalk that prevent

a safe and smooth trip on virtually every block in the neighborhood. It is hard enough to get through with two good legs, let alone if you have a stroller, are with small child, or - heaven help you - are in a wheel chair. In some cases, it is a nuisance; in others, an outright safety hazard. Some facts that you might want to know about your sidewalk:

-If a sidewalk is in a bad state of repair, it is that property owner's responsibility to correct the problem. Not the City's. (City Code, Section 138-103 (Ord. No. 1996-26, 5-28-96; Ord. No. 2001-22, § 1, 3-14-01))

-If someone is injured, or property is damaged, as a result of a dilapidated sidewalk, it is that property owner who is liable. We have had several injuries in the past year or two, and some have resulted in hospitalization and thousand of dollars in

medical bills.

-The VHCA will reimburse homeowners for the cost of materials in repairing their own sidewalks. Simply submit receipts for the materials used, along with evidence of the repair, and VHCA will cut you a check.

-If the City comes and repairs a section of sidewalk it considers a nuisance or hazard, it will bill the property owner for the repairs - labor and material. Home and business owners are also responsible for keeping sidewalks free from trash, yard waste, and vegetation. For most of the neighborhood sidewalks, that means putting trashcans and lawn bags on the street. Limbs, branches, and vines need to be trimmed back from the plane of the sidewalk to a height of 7 to 8 feet. If the City finds any plant-related nuisances or hazards, the property owner can be cited and/or fined. (City Code, Section 158-4 (Code 1977, § 17-9014))

Following the completion of the "Worst Sidewalk" contest in the New Year, the next phases of the plan include:

-Evaluating all neighborhood sidewalks and cataloguing all trouble spots, including missing curb cuts at street corners. Sending out notices to the appropriate businesses and homeowners about the state of their sidewalk, requesting corrective measures be taken.

-Working with the City to install curb cuts at all street corners and repair sidewalks throughout the neighborhood.

Virginia-Highland prides itself on many things: great restaurants, nearby parks, high-performing schools, a tight-knit community... and the list goes on. The VHCA is determined to add "truly walking-friendly neighborhood" to that list. If you want to get involved in this initiative, please contact Brian Pilger or Chip Gallagher through the www.vahi.org website. The VHCA will especially need volunteers to catalogue our sidewalk problem-spots.

You Think Your Sidewalk is Bad? Take a Picture!



Worst Stretch of Sidewalk Contest

Rules and Guidelines:

-Take a photograph of the most dilapidated, broken or twisted stretch of sidewalk you can find in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood.

-The sidewalk needs to be adjacent to a residence, not a business.

-On the back of the photo, write the address of the property and any contact information that you want to include.

-The photograph and information must be received by December 24, 2005. Please mail to:

Sidewalk Contest
c/o Brian Pilger
740 Drewry St., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306

-The winner will be chosen after January 1, 2006 and announced in the next edition of the Voice.

The "winning" stretch of sidewalk will be repaired by VHCA completely free of charge.

Morningside Elementary School, Rezoning and You. Some Facts and Implications for Our Neighborhood

By Chip Gallagher

In the next few issues of *The Voice* I will be updating the community on what is taking place regarding the Atlanta Public School system's plans to rethink existing school boundaries.

What is going to happen in the upcoming school year starting in August 2006?

No rezoning will take place this year (2006-2007) but change is on the horizon for the 2007-2008 school year. The million dollar question is will Virginia-Highland be split when APS completes its demographic study.

APS had this to say about the upcoming rezoning: "APS has

begun the process of obtaining a demographer to conduct a detailed district-wide demographic study. By December 2005, we expect to ask the Atlanta Board of Education to approve a recommended firm to begin the study; and we will ask that firm that is ultimately approved to review the Morningside area first. However, Morningside will not be re-zoned for the 2006-2007 school year. Information obtained from the demographer will be used to make decisions for the 2007-2008 school year."

Why is there even talk of rezoning MES?

Each APS school has a planning capacity that is deemed optimal. Full capacity at MES is 648 students. Understanding the cyclical ebb and flow of students into any one school or district, APS allows schools to hit 120 percent of full capacity before they start accessing over-crowding issues. MES could, at least hypothetically, reach an enrollment level of 778 (120 percent of 648 students) and be within the APS capacity guidelines. For the 2005-2006 academic year MES currently has 854 students or 76 students over the upper limit (actually 76 over the upper-upper limit). What has happened is the city of Atlanta has grown from about 394,000 in 1990 to 419,000 in 2004, much of this growth occurring in the northern quadrant of the city.

How many kids from Virginia-Highland attend MES?

About 206. In the 2004-2005 school year, Virginia-Highland students comprised 29 percent of MES student population. Together the neighborhoods of Morningside and Virginia-Highland comprise 70 percent of MES student population.

Isn't it true that most or all of our problems would go away if we stopped bussing students in from other neighborhoods because of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) and administrative admits?

No. This assertion is just plain wrong. There are no (no as in zero) NCLB students at MES. Of the 47 students who are administrative transfers (students of faculty and administrators, special needs children who must be served by MES) almost half have or will be graduating this year.

Next Issue: White flight, school closings and the gentrification of in-town neighborhoods.

Chip Gallagher has been a VHCA board member for the last four years. He can be reached at cgallagher@gsu.edu.

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Address: 929 Adair
Owners: Sam and Olga Crawford

This stately country house built in 1910 is thought to have once been the central home on a larger estate subsequently surrendered to the construction of additional homes. The current owners have been restoring the home in keeping with the original notion of the home as a summer retreat, where one could imagine large family gatherings in the expansive dining room and extending into the sun porch and music room. The home has a feel of a secluded escape due to the lush greenery and arched entryway that enclose the property.

Special details in the home include original and intricate glass windows in the dining room in particular, an upstairs sleeping porch and original fireplace with unique woodcarving, wooden beams and huge windows throughout, and original hot water heating system.

Address: 1029 Amsterdam
Owner: Russell Winch

Built in 1930, this traditional bungalow home is anything but traditional once you venture in. The owner's recent renovation preserves and showcases much of the home's original charm, but he has significantly modernized the interior. The result is a sophisticated integration of new/old.

The first floor was opened up and expanded at the rear of the home. Several sets of new French doors practically bring inside the beautifully landscaped backyard patio and garden. The breathtaking upstairs master suite is open and uncluttered, but also inviting, warm space. The Japanese/Scandinavian influenced design features an office area with extraordinary built-in cabinetry, integrated lighting, built-in master bed, and hidden laundry and dark room. The "star" lines of the ceiling in the main area are arguably the

home's most striking architectural detail.

Address: 675 Greenwood Ave. #117
Owner: Phillip Weeks

Originally a brick foundry built in 1906, this conversion to residential lofts offers wonderful views of the midtown and downtown skylines. In keeping with its foundry origins, the loft showcased on this tour features the original factory brick wall, acid-stained concrete floors and a very unique artifact preserved from the original factory - its huge original metal fire door, which is held in place against the main wall by a tremendous weight.

The sleek modern kitchen and contemporary design of this loft create an ideal urban living space. Eclectic light fixtures, attractive artwork and decorative objects are well integrated into the décor throughout. The outside terrace is the perfect space for entertaining or just relaxing and enjoying the city view. Indeed, this home is one of the most unique and stylish in Virginia-Highland!

Address: 989 N. Highland Ave.
Owner: Bryan Kujawski

Located in the heart of the neighborhood and just a few steps from shops and restaurants, this newly renovated home is perfect for entertaining guests who are certain to drop by often. The expansive open floor plan, soft lighting, and newly installed IP-based sound system provide great ambiance throughout the home. In place of an old wall, an innovative seating section now separates a cozy living area with fireplace from the brand new gourmet kitchen featuring commercial grade appliances, travertine marble floors, and granite counters and backsplashes.

This renovation required major system overhauls in addition to cosmetic upgrades. It now offers many modern conveniences, but care was taken to preserve original windows, create period-authentic and consistent crown molding, and reuse original pocket doors throughout the house.

HOMES

throughout the house.

**Address: 870 Rosedale Rd.
Owners: Craig Dixon and Todd Pritchett**

The owners of this large European-style flat gave significant thought to every inch of their newly renovated space. Structural ceiling beams were turned into an architectural feature, and traditional details and furnishings - such as the dark tones of the American walnut hardwood floors and Belgian farmhouse kitchen table - were combined with more contemporary kitchen cabinetry and furnishings, giving the home an eclectic, modern, yet warm and comfortable look.

Only the finest quality flooring, appliances, tile, windows, furnishings and other items were used throughout, and the result is extraordinary. This home is filled with wonderful renovation and design ideas, including integrated

appliances that help preserve the home's uncluttered look. This home renovation was recently featured in "Kitchen Trends" and "Bath Trends" magazines.

**Address: 1026 Rosewood
Owners: Diana and Gray Fleming**

This wonderfully renovated 1930s Tudor is a must-see, particularly if you have an interest in doing a major period-style renovation. The latest renovation was a large second story addition built by former owners in 2000. Special attention was given to preserving the flow of the home and keeping true to the era when the home was built. Throughout the house, period-authentic lighting and restoration hardware could convince you that this was always a two-story home.

The kitchen renovation features commercial-grade appliances and was designed for a professional chef. In the main living areas, modern conveniences are integrated into the traditional design of the home.

Touches like great walk-in closets and a laundry chute provide conveniences that make the home extremely functional and perfect for a growing family.

**Address: 1150 St. Charles
Owners: Peter and Carolyn Cobb**

Remarkable, over-sized original windows in literally every room in this early 1920s Atkins Park home make it absolutely one of a kind. Each of the large rooms is bright and cheery, making this a perfect home for idyllic visits with family and friends.

The warm and inviting atmosphere of the home is further enhanced by the owners' collection of antiques, unique artwork, collectibles and artifacts acquired from the Cobb family's travels all over the world.

Everywhere you look, there is something unique to behold - from antique English furniture and Hobnail glassware in the traditional dining room to Carolyn's whimsical collection of rhinoceros, seen in the most unexpected places throughout. Family, friends, and friends of friends have created most of the quality artwork in the home, so you won't see it anywhere else.



**Interested in being part of the
Virginia-Highland Home Tour?**

Volunteers are needed for shifts throughout the weekend of the tour on December 10 and 11. Become a volunteer and help guide friends and neighbors through the homes on the tour!

For more information, call the Tour Information Line at 404-467-9922 ext. 301. Leave us a message with your contact information and we will get back to you. Or, send an email to volunteers@vahirhometour.org

Q: So, what do you want to be when you grow up



A: Myself.



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Rep. Gardner Sponsors Electronic Waste Recycling Day

On October 8, Georgia State Representative Pat Gardner, District 60, held an Electronic Recycling Day for residents of the district.

The event, held in the Publix on Ponce parking lot in conjunction with Atlanta Recycling Solutions, raised much awareness. Residents learned about the need to recycle electronic materials such as TVs, computers, monitors, telephones, etc. so that they do not end up in landfills, where they can be very hazardous.

Thanks to residents of Virginia-Highlands and the surrounding neighborhoods, a huge amount of material was recycled:

Total Weight	35,234 lbs.
Number of PCs	248
Number of PC Monitors	275
Number of Televisions	66

Everyone who contributed helped to clean up our environment. Representative Gardner is investigating making the Electronics Recycling Drive an annual event.



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