

The Virginia-Highland

VOICE

Winter 2009

14th Annual Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes December 6th & 7th

by: Rob Glancy



The Virginia-Highland Civic Association, along with media partner Dave FM, is proud to present the 14th Annual Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes. This is the tour's fifth consecutive year after a hiatus of over twenty years. The event takes place on **Saturday, December 6th from 10AM - 5PM**, and **Sunday, December 7th from Noon - 5PM**.

Themed "Homes for the Holidays", the event has established itself as the most distinctive home tour in the city thanks to the pairing of wonderful homes and some of Atlanta's finest restaurants. Over the past four years the tour has raised over \$80,000 for the neighborhood with tour proceeds directly benefiting Virginia-Highland schools, parks and sidewalk projects. New this year is the pairing of Food and Art to the tour, with a silent auction of a major work from local artist and painter Tracy Sharp, represented by Linstrum Matre Artworks. Tracy's work is featured across the country in galleries in Atlanta, Charleston, Santa Monica, Aspen, and Nashville.

"This year's tour proudly features a formerly dilapidated quadruplex on N. Highland Ave. that has been reincarnated into a spectacular single family home of yesteryear," said Rob Glancy, returning Tour Committee Co-Chair. "This home illustrates how N. Highland is transitioning back to its single family, pedestrian character of the early 20th century."

"The home on N. Highland would have been a tear down to most real estate speculators," said Glancy, "but the homeowners had an appreciation for the existing structure and a vision of living on the corner of N. Highland and Adair, right in the thick of things. They took this run down quadruplex and converted it back into a showcase of urban Atlanta living."

"This year we were most interested in pursuing homes that represent the roots of the Tour of Bungalows back in the early 1970s," said Tour Co-Chair Charlie LeFort.

This year's collection of homes includes 640 Elmwood Dr., 1142 Virginia Ave., 1099 Lanier Blvd., 1015 Virginia Ave., 921 Virginia Ave., and 936 N. Highland Ave. Inside all of these beautiful homes, you'll experience warm living spaces, with interior décors featuring remarkable antiques – all guaranteed to inspire you!

Food tastings generously provided by local restaurants Vine, La Tavola, Shorty's, Atkins Park, Noni's, and Metro Fresh will be held at each of the six homes from noon to 4 PM on both afternoons. Volunteers and sponsors will enjoy a lively and delightful after party at the "New" Vine Restaurant on Sunday evening.

Thank to our generous sponsors, advertisers, partners and restaurants including Dave FM, Atlanta Homes and Lifestyles, Atlanta INtown, Whole Foods Market, The Atlanta-Journal Constitution, Mary Hallenberg – Harry Norman Realtors, Intown Renovations Group, Lynn Dewitt, Highland Investment Advisory, RateCapital: Mortgage Representatives, Mitzi and Romano, Karen Hott Interiors, Creative Crop and Rhonda Geraci.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 the weekend of the Tour. Tickets can be purchased at:

- www.vahihometour.org
- Intown Ace Hardware, 854 N. Highland Ave.
- Aurora Coffee, 992 N. Highland Ave.
- San Francisco Coffee, 1192 N. Highland Ave.
- Habersham Gardens
- Hastings Garden Center
- Whole Foods Market on Ponce de Leon
- 936 N. Highland (weekend of the tour only)



the Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes
www.vahihometour.org

This year's proceeds will benefit the pending acquisition of the former Fulton County Library lots at the corner of N. Highland and St. Charles for a new neighborhood park. Please help support the neighborhood and purchase tickets!!!

Visit www.vahihometour.org for more information or to purchase tickets or e-mail the Tour Committee at tour@vahi.org. Anyone interested in volunteering should email volunteer@vahihometour.org to sign up for a shift.

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The Virginia-Highland Voice

Published quarterly, by and for the residents
of Virginia-Highland

Editor: John Becker

Design: Preeti Ayyangar

We welcome your feedback on *The Virginia-Highland Voice*.
Please send your comments to editor@vahi.org.

VHCA Calendar

Monthly Board Meetings

When: First Monday of each month, 7 p.m.

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

Planning Committee Meetings

When: Last Wednesday of each month

Where: Public Library on Ponce de Leon Ave.

Meeting locations subject to change

Please visit our web site for calendar updates, additional
information on VHCA or to join: www.vahi.org

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President's Corner

Pamela Papner

President, Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board

What a way to end the year! By the time you receive this Voice issue, so many positive community initiatives may have come to fruition. Let's review highlights:

- **Neighborhood Commercial Zoning** passed by an overwhelming majority of voters at the NPU-F meeting on 10/20/08. The vote was 178 in favor; 15 opposed; and 4 abstentions. In our 2006 Community Survey, 86% of you told us that "irresponsible residential and/or commercial infill" was the most important issue facing our community. The attendance at NPU-F certainly underscored that belief was widespread. Indeed, the turnout may have been a record! I know it was a long meeting; it was hot; and the crowd packed into the meeting room encouraged 42 people to participate from the hallway. But our neighbors knew this was an important vote, and they made time and family sacrifices to attend. The level of neighbor attendance at NPU-F will have significant and positive impact when the matter ultimately goes before the Zoning Review Board and then City Council, in December. From the many people who have worked tirelessly on this initiative for almost two years, we thank our neighbors for recognizing the significance of this vote and for attending this important meeting. I know it made me feel really proud to live in a community that is involved and cares, as ours does. That's a rarity in a big city, and we should all feel very, very proud! THANK YOU!

- **New Green Space Initiative:** By the time you receive this Voice, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association may very well have closed on the purchase of the two vacant lots on N. Highland and St. Charles. If we succeed, we will immediately begin raising funds to pay off the debt – a big but do-able undertaking! Please read the article on p. ___ to learn more about this exciting project and about the ultimate holiday gift you can give this year. You can purchase a brick with your family names, in honor of someone special, or even just to celebrate the pets in your family! Consider giving a "Gift of Brick" this year!

- **2008 Grants:** The VHCA annually awards grants to organizations that support our community. We had to significantly cut back the level of grants this year to protect our reserves and cash flows in light of the potential purchase of the new green space. The following grants were awarded:

- \$ 2,000 to Morningside Elementary PTA
- \$ 2,000 to the new elementary school PTA (to be formed)
- \$ 2,000 to the Ponce de Leon Public Library
- \$10,000 to the Inman Middle School Technology Foundation
- \$ 2,500 to Trees Atlanta
- \$ 500 to PEDs

\$ 19,000 TOTAL

Thank you for your support of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, and Happy Holidays! And....please buy a brick!

Safety Update

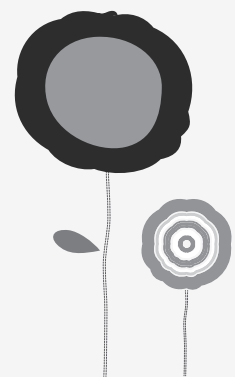
by: John Wolfinger

As we enter the third year of our Safety Team neighborhood watch system, I see from the Safety Team Reports that we've achieved far greater coverage in much less time than I ever thought would be possible. Our entire neighborhood owes a debt of thanks to everyone who's signed up to be a Street Captain. But I also know that for every person reached, there are many more that never see the reports. The more folks who take the time to read the reports and look out for their neighbors –and who adjust their daily activities to stay safer– the fewer opportunities there will be for criminal activity. Granted, we can't stop crime from happening completely but we can be better prepared by being aware and alert.

If you live on a street or block or in a condo/apartment building that is not currently in the network – please e-mail me at safety@vahi.org so we can get you and your neighbors involved by having a Street Captain for your area. This volunteer position is not difficult and the benefits are significant. I hope to hear from you soon.

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The Bus Stop

News of interest from Inman Middle and Morningside Elementary Schools

Morningside Elementary School

Susie Lazega & Blaine Schreiner
MES PTA Co-Presidents

Thanks to the many friends of Morningside Elementary for their support of our largest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from the Sally Foster Gift & Paper Sale provide much of our PTA operating budget and a successful drive enables us to provide many important programs for our students.

Our 'Green Team' has been very busy recently. Many of the projects our school participates in help people in our community and around the world. Our children are reducing the carbon footprint of our community, and are also learning they can help others through their actions and choices. Hats off to Willa Paton Smith and Anna Winer for their hard work on this important program.

Program highlights include:

Reusable Bag Fundraiser: Have you bought your Green MES bags yet? Each reusable bag replaces 1,000 plastic bags. Our Earth Friends Club designed the logo and the "Saving Our Planet One Kid at a Time" slogan. Buy 3 bags for \$10. Contact Anna Winer at jwab@mindspring.com to purchase bags.

Crocs & Nike Reuse a Shoe Recycling Drive: More than 538 shoes were collected during our drive. 75 pairs of Crocs will be recycled and donated to people in need around the world. 153 pairs of athletic shoes were donated and will be recycled into playground and sports surfaces. 41 pairs of shoes were cleaned and donated to the Atlanta Day Shelter for women and children.

Cell Phone, Handheld Device & Ink Cartridge Recycling Drive: This recycling drive in November will increase awareness about the toxicity of e-waste. Proceeds will support our Earth Day celebration in the spring.

Crayon Recycling – Starting this month, children will collect old and broken crayons in their classrooms and send them to be recycled. Crayons are petroleum-based products that take years to biodegrade so this program really teaches kids about reducing their carbon footprint. Check it out online at www.crazycrayons.com.

Please visit our website www.morningsideschool.org for other Green Updates.

Lastly, thanks to all the parents and businesses that supported this year's Halloween Town Event. All who attended had a spooktacular time.

Inman Middle School

Denise Romeo
VP Communications, Inman PTA

Inman Middle School students hit the ground running this Fall – literally! Our 34-member Eagles Cross Country team participated as a group in the Fired-Up 5K sponsored by Fire Station House #19 and also represented Inman at several Cross Country Meets around Atlanta. Please cheer these runners on as you see them running in the neighborhood. In other sports news, our Eagles Football team placed 2nd in their APS Middle School Division with a record of 4 wins, 2 losses and 1 tie.

Our 6th graders journeyed to Rock Eagle 4-H Center for team-building activities in an off-campus, outdoor setting. Inman's 7th graders traveled to Jekyll Island to participate in a study of oceanography as part of their curriculum.

We closed the first nine weeks of school with Inman's annual BBQ & Blues Bash, a chance for Inman families to enjoy barbecued chicken provided by Atkins Park. The record-setting crowd of Inman teachers and families enjoyed the music of "The Blues Barons" while socializing with old and new friends.

Our annual magazine sale was a success and raised over \$25,000 to support our enrichment programs, teacher support, and scholarships. Please remember to save your magazine renewals for next September. You can even renew your magazines online at www.aphearst.com. Just type in the school code of #WA7188 and Inman will get credit for your purchase!

Please take a few minutes to visit the new Inman website at www.inmanmiddleschool.org. The site provides quick access to online copies of Inman's monthly newsletter and you can use the interactive online PTA calendar to keep up with all the happenings at Inman Middle School.

VHCA Attempts to Purchase Former Library Lots

by: Pamela Papner

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association has signed a contract for the purchase of the two lots adjacent to N. Highland Avenue at 1076 and 1082 St. Charles Place. These two lots are currently vacant (they are the site of the former public library), and the intention is to turn them into green space.

The closing on the lots is contingent upon the VHCA's ability to secure financing through the Georgia Land Conservation Revolving Loan fund. Due to a recent change in this loan program (passed by the Georgia Legislature, effective July 1, 2008); non-governmental (non-profit) entities may now apply for low-cost financing. The interest rate is 3%, and the loan term is typically for a 10-year period but can be designated for up to 20-years. Should the property be acquired, the VHCA would fund payments on the property until private (individual/corporate/ grant) funds could be raised to pay off the loan.

The loan program includes a requirement that the financed project be one that pertains to land conservation, with a water quality benefit. The VHCA is proposing the space be used for a passive park and "rain garden" - utilized for recreation, walking, community gathering and educational programs for the residents of Virginia-Highland... and what better location for a passive park than in the heart of Atkins Park!

Specifically, the rain garden would be known as a "Bio-Retention Demonstration Project." One or more slopes would be created to capture storm water from St. Charles Place and re-direct it onto the property and away from the storm drains. A rain garden would be built on the center of the site by scooping out a large area and then backfilling it with amended soils, and native Georgia plants would

be planted. Grassy areas could be covered with local zoysia spreading grasses that are drought tolerant, requiring no additional watering, other than rain water, and no chemical fertilization will be done. Similar other successful green infrastructure projects have been completed throughout the nation. See: www.epa.gov/npdes/greeninfrastructure, which depicts such projects in Chicago, Milwaukee, Seattle, Portland, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia.

A special "thank you" is extended to Sandy d'April, who is acting as real estate agent for the VHCA, without compensation, and to Paul Burks, former president of the Atkins Park Neighborhood Association (and now elected to the VHCA Board for 2008-2009), who has done extensive legwork to support the VHCA's application for financing to the Georgia Land Conservation Program. We have until December 5, 2008 to obtain financing and close on the property.

On October 14, 2008, GEFA (the state loan program) provided "conditional financial approval" for the loan. At print, we still have one hurdle: we must get approval from the Federal EPA that this project qualifies for the loan program. After Paul Burks provided to GEFA examples of similar projects in other parts of the country that qualified under EPD guidelines, we have learned that we may receive conditional approval, which in turn would result in qualification for the GEFA loan.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed that financing will be approved. This would be a great addition to our neighborhood.... and IF we can close, we will look for widespread community support to build this passive park / rain garden. This project would not only be a great addition to the neighborhood, it will surely enhance all our property values!

And by the way, if every household in the neighborhood contributed just \$100, we could nearly pay off the debt. I strongly encourage everyone to review vahi.org, for the latest information, and if we close, CONTRIBUTE! A small contribution from everyone will go a long way.



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More Delays for Phase II of Va-Hi Streetscape Improvements

by: John Becker

The city of Atlanta has again pushed back the second phase of streetscape improvements to the intersection of Virginia and N. Highland Avenues.

This phase of the project will reconstruct and enhance sidewalks along Virginia Ave. from Todd Rd. to approximately 170 feet east of N. Highland, and along N. Highland from Virginia Ave. south approximately 300 feet. Improvements include installation of new concrete and brick paver sidewalks, new curbing, wheelchair-accessible ramps and driveways, street furniture, enhanced pedestrian lighting, and new landscaping and street trees. Intersection improvements are also planned for N. Highland Ave. to the south of Virginia and for Virginia Ave. to the west of N. Highland.

The project's first phase – which brought similar improvements to the north side of the intersection – was completed in early 2007.

At a meeting with city officials last spring, residents were told the project's second phase would commence after Summerfest and be complete prior to Thanksgiving. In July, an Atlanta Department of Public Works update indicated the project would start in late September and be complete by January 2009. What caused the delays is unclear.

VHCA President Pamela Papner says she's been told pre-construction should start in late October or early November, with the bulk of work being done after the first of the year. She says the city has provided written assurance that businesses will not be adversely impacted during the holiday shopping period and that the project will be complete prior to Summerfest 2009.

The project's second phase will cost approximately \$450,000 and is funded through the city's \$150 million Quality of Life bonds.

Neighborhood Commercial Initiative Gains Momentum

by: John Peak and Pamela Papner

Many residents are keeping tabs on this important initiative, and we are happy to say the outcome should be decided by end of year. Ordinances for rezoning the three commercial areas along North Highland at Amsterdam Ave., Virginia Ave., and Atkins Park have been submitted to the city for approval. The VHCA Planning Committee and Board unanimously support these ordinances. By the time this article is printed, an NPU-F vote will have gauged community support. We are hopeful that residents and property owners validate the hard work that's been done over nearly two years, carefully crafting rules around how commercial redevelopment occurs in our neighborhood. Final stops are the Zoning and Review Board (ZRB) in November, a vote by City Council as early as December, and then signature by the Mayor.

To recap, Neighborhood Commercial ("NC") Zoning is a zoning classification that

- Preserves a neighborhood compatible building height (3 stories/42 feet)
- Promotes residential development over commercial development (for example: 2 floors residential over first floor retail)
- Preserves the storefront character of existing commercial nodes with pedestrian-friendly uses
- Allows outdoor dining between the sidewalk and the building
- Certain uses can be limited/prohibited
- Limits the amount of floor space based on use to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood
- Requires sidewalks and street trees on all streets
- Requires pedestrian entrances fronting all sidewalks
- Prohibits surface parking in front of buildings
- Allows for shared parking within each node

Overall, NC Zoning encourages appropriate infill development in commercial areas. There are benefits to both residents (scale) and commercial property owners (shared parking). Customized regulations were proposed for all commercial nodes, as well as for individual nodes. Those customized regulations supplement those found in Chapter 32, Sec. 16-32.001 et seq., entitled "Neighborhood Commercial District Regulations," City of Atlanta Zoning Ordinance. More detailed information is available online at www.vahi.org.

If passed, our neighborhood will finally have new rules around redevelopment and that will help preserve much of the existing scale and character. The rezoning will also provide flexibility with parking that, we believe, will continue to make our business district a vibrant and preferred destination for shoppers and diners. Heartfelt thanks to all of the residents and commercial property owners who came together, engaged in constructive dialog, and built consensus towards a solution that will benefit the entire community.

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VHCA 2008-2009 Membership Q and A

by: Shawna Mahony

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that helps maintain Virginia-Highland as one of the most livable urban communities in America. But why should you join? Here's some information to help you decide:

What does the VHCA do? We support the community by funding: maintenance of John Howell Park; improvements to Orme Park; neighborhood commercial zoning initiative; legal support for community (when needed); and annual grants to local organizations that improve our quality of life, such as the Fire and Police stations, local schools and the library.

How does the VHCA do it? Primarily we are funded through sponsorship fees from Summerfest and the Tour of Homes and your contributions. In 2008/09 we hope to do even more for the neighborhood - but all of this takes time, money, and volunteers. We encourage all Va-Hi residents to become dues paying members of the civic association, as well as to actively participate in committees and community events and activities.

What are the benefits of membership? Through active participation in the VHCA, you will:

- enjoy opportunities to meet new and longtime residents at meetings, socials, and community service events;
- receive notifications about local events and important topics; support activities and committees that help keep the neighborhood desirable and stable;
- have opportunities to vote in regular and special meetings about issues that affect you and control the future of Virginia-Highland.

Where can I get more information? Go to www.vahi.org.

How do I join? By filling out and returning the attached form. We look forward to working with you.

Virginia -Highland Civic Association Membership Form Membership Year October 2008-Sept 2009

Name(s):

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Membership Levels:

I would like to support the VHCA with a membership at the following level:

- ☐ Individual: \$20 ☐ Senior (65 and older): \$15
☐ Family: \$30 ☐ Additional Donation: \$

VHCA Committee Interest:

- ☐ Please contact me about committee participation

Please make checks payable to:

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1073 St. Charles Place NE, Atlanta GA 30306

Neighborhood Preservation Kicks Into High Gear in 2009

By: Doris Betz

The Historic Preservation Committee will begin a crucial phase of its efforts in early 2009. Many volunteers have been working hard doing the background research needed to pull together our application for historic district overlay status. You may have seen our booth during Summerfest where we received great input and support from the community. Our primary focus to date has been developing the regulations that will guide future residential development if Virginia-Highland achieves this important historic district status. Draft regulations are almost complete and will soon be reviewed by a member of Atlanta's Urban Design Commission.

We encourage everyone to attend our initial public meeting to be held on January 14, 2009 from 7-9 PM at Inman Middle School. At the meeting you will hear members of the Historic Preservation Committee discuss the regulations and the history of our neighborhood. One hour will be devoted to presentations and a

second hour to Q&A. You may remember that this whole initiative came about as a result of a questionnaire sent two years ago to all Va-Hi residents. An overwhelming majority opposed inappropriate infill – the tearing down of long-standing Va-Hi homes to erect “McMansions.” The January meeting will be a great opportunity to learn what's happened since the survey, and to provide feedback so we know the most successful way forward.

There will be another meeting in January and three more in February. We want to make sure that as many of you as possible know what's involved with historic designation and how it will affect you.

Please mark your calendars for this very important meeting. For those of you who receive the community e-newsletter, expect a reminder prior to the meeting. And if you don't receive the newsletter, go to www.vahi.org to sign up.

For more information, email us at npc@vahi.org, or go to vahi.org, click on “Planning,” then on “Historic.”

We look forward to seeing you in January.

Street Smarts

by: Drew Baughman

I confess - I've broken a few traffic laws in my day. I've parked illegally (after hours, of course) and I've jaywalked (no oncoming traffic in either direction, I assure you). Once or twice I may have even exceeded the speed limit. I understand each of us makes some exceptions to local ordinances and laws, often for the sake of convenience.

But as a long-time Virginia-Highland resident, a jogger, a dog walker, and a cyclist, I've decided that the law requiring us to choose the paved road for cars and bikes and the sidewalk for everything else is worth respecting. Why? Because violating this law is not a harmless or occasional act. It's a dangerous act - a preventable tragedy just waiting to happen.

On a daily basis, I either witness or am involved in a situation where a serious injury could occur. A harried motorist zips down a Va-Hi street, late for work and/or talking on a cell phone and nearly clips a jogger trying to cross the street. (Yesterday, my neighbor...this morning, maybe me!) Or, I'm on my bike, respecting the rules of the road as I'm supposed to - and suddenly I turn a corner to encounter three walkers taking up the whole road, ignoring the sidewalk. Since I can't see around the walker enough to safely pull around them, I'm forced to brake suddenly, as is the car behind me.

These dangerous and frequent near-misses are completely preventable. If joggers and walkers stuck to the sidewalks, and cars and bikes to the streets, everyone would be safer. Granted, Va-Hi's sidewalks are less than perfect - but not so imperfect they can't be used for this purpose. I'm a statistician, and I'm here to tell you your chances of surviving a lumpy sidewalk are much greater than your chances of surviving an encounter with a car. (Specifically, a collision between a car and a pedestrian at 30 mph holds a 45% chance the pedestrian's injuries will be fatal. At 40 mph, that chance increases to 80%. Even if you're not a statistician, you know those aren't good odds.)

Please - if you're driving, watch out for your neighbors, especially at dawn and dusk. And if you're walking or jogging, please give the sidewalks a chance. No police officer will give you a ticket if you don't, but everyone will be safer if you do. And if that's not possible for you, consider Piedmont Park's paved paths or other options. And join us for lobbying for sidewalk repairs and widening, as well as more paved multi-use trails in our neighborhood.

The safer option is to respect the existing law and realize that ignoring it carries a lot more potential harm and risk than you imagine - both for you and for the person whom drive into you.

Please even if there's no ticket or shame involved, respect this law. And I promise to stop parking in illegal spots, even when no one's looking.

Title 40, Chapter 6, Article 5, Section 40-6-96, Paragraph (a) of the Official Georgia Code Annotated states "Where a sidewalk is provided, it shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to walk along or upon an adjacent roadway" (<http://www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp>). This state law applies to all roadways in Georgia.

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by: Linda Merrill

History of Virginia-Highland

{Part I}

EDITOR’S NOTE: THIS IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE HISTORY OF VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND. THE ARTICLES ARE EXCERPTS FROM A LONGER WORK-IN-PROGRESS BEING RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY 9-YEAR VA-HI RESIDENT LINDA MERRILL. AN ART HISTORIAN BY TRAINING, LINDA WORKED AS A CURATOR AT THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, AT THE HIGH MUSEUM FOR TWO, AND NOW—AFTER A HIATUS TO STAY HOME WITH HER TWO CHILDREN — SHE IS TEACHING AT EMORY. Linda welcomes comments and questions on her work. She can be reached at magdalin@mindspring.com.

Introduction

The neighborhood we know as Virginia-Highland was originally a cluster of subdivisions making up a suburban district three miles from the center of Atlanta. Its earliest attraction was its farmland; later, it became a place for country homes -- an oasis from city life offering clean air, cool breezes, and proximity to the healing waters of Ponce de Leon Springs. As the trolley became a central factor in urban development, the Virginia-Highland area became a convenient and affordable place for city workers to live, and in the 1920s new houses proliferated, chiefly single-family homes in the bungalow style.

In this way, Virginia-Highland exemplifies American housing trends. After WWI, the Harding and Coolidge administrations urged Americans to settle down in homes of their own in the belief that property ownership would not only strengthen the economy but create citizens who would support national security. Small, efficient houses such as single-story bungalows that were within the financial reach of a growing middle class were also promoted as a means of liberating women (a new constituency) from the drudgery of housework.

The neighborhood was developed and settled quickly, and it remained stable until the late 1950s, when scores of middle-class families left Virginia-Highland for more distant suburbs. The area began to recover from the consequences of that urban flight only in the 1970s, when young families gradually began moving

back into the city and renovating neglected houses with the help of a newly formed civic association. Revitalization continues to this day, with many residents drawn to the neighborhood by its convenience to the city center, exemplary schools, appealing commercial district, and comfortable, unpretentious style—the very factors that contributed to its development nearly a century ago.

Early Pioneers

Soon after the War of 1812, the United States government granted the veteran William Zachry—the first known white settler in the present-day Virginia-Highland district—Land Lot 17 of the Fourteenth District in recognition of his “patriotic service.” Then a neutral zone in the territorial battles between the Cherokee and Creek (Muscogee) Indians, the land was part of the territory ceded by the Creek Nation in January 1821. Perhaps anticipating a rise in land values, Zachry sold his 212 acres just over a year later, in February 1822, for \$100. Zachry sold his land to Richard Copeland Todd (1792–1852), a pioneer from Chester, South Carolina. Todd’s older sister Sarah (d. 1865) was married to Hardy Ivy (d. 1843), who in 1833 would settle on the future site of downtown Atlanta. When Todd took possession of the land it was deeply forested, and as the journalist Paul Hinde noted in 1924, “only those aged sentinels of centuries past, Kennesaw and Stone Mountain, stood as today, in blue-gray outline—to the west and to the east of the splendid rolling country destined to become Atlanta.”

Todd built his house on high land with a view of that rolling landscape, at what eventually became 816 Greenwood Avenue; he farmed the fields around his home until his death in 1852. During the Civil War, a Federal battery was established on a ridge not far from the Todd residence, and according to one account, Confederate breastworks were erected right in front of the house. One of Richard's sons, John C. Todd (1847–1925), lived in the house until October 31, 1910, when that oldest of Atlanta's landmarks was demolished by fire. A large, two-story brick residence with a wraparound front porch was subsequently constructed on the same site, and members of the Todd family continued to occupy it well into the 1950s. Since then, the lot has been occupied by an apartment building

Richard Todd and his wife Martha, together with many of their descendants, were buried in a family cemetery a short distance behind the house on what is now Ponce de Leon Terrace. Its existence did not become publicly known until the executors of Judge Todd's estate applied for a permit to exhume his grave from Sardis Cemetery for reburial in the family plot; by then, the cemetery contained thirty-six unmarked graves. Some neighbors complained, insisting that the bodies be exhumed and buried elsewhere; the city denied the executors' request, and upon appeal a judge upheld the decision but ruled that the land be "cleaned off" and a monument erected in the Todds' honor. In 1932 the burial ground (one-fourteenth of an acre, or two lots) was deeded to the city for conversion to a park, with a large granite log to mark the graves of Richard and Martha Todd. As late as 1979 a path led to the graveyard from the street, "through the blooming hepatica and the bare, skinny trees," and in 1980 neighborhood residents joined together to clean up the area. Today, regrettably, there is no public access to the former cemetery, although the Todd marker survives, surrounded by a wrought-iron fence.

Sources

Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events* (Athens, GA, 1954); "History of Virginia-Highland," City of Atlanta, Department of Planning, Development, and Neighborhood Conservation, Bureau of Planning, June 1998; *Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution*, 1924–79; *The Virginia-Highland Voice*, May 1980.

Next Issue: The Cheshire Family and the Nine-Mile Circle

Colonel Mustard in the Kitchen With a Knife

Colonel Mustard – referring to the character from the board game Clue – is a pseudonym for a Virginia-Highland resident who enjoys dining at the many wonderful restaurants in our neighborhood and sharing thoughts on the dining experience with others. In this issue the Colonel takes a look at two of the neighborhood's oldest and most treasured establishments: La Tavola Trattoria.

Saturday night is busy, busy at La Tavola. Fortunately, our group of 4 ready-to-be-fed Italian food lovers had made a reservation. It's fair to say the place is more popular than it really has room for. Customers and servers jockey for position around the tables. The servers are adroit at weaving through with trays and going to the restroom is a 'getting-to-know-your-neighbor' experience as you wind and bump your way to the back of the restaurant. Nobody minds and everyone smiles. These are robust and discerning customers and workers.

On this night we had out-of-town visitors with us who have dined all over the country as well as internationally, including in Italy. The first thing they ordered was a negroni cocktail. Their faces couldn't hide their amazement – first, that the waitress knew what they were ordering and second, that the cocktail was very well made with gin, Campari and sweet vermouth. I let out a sigh of relief since our friends are considered gourmets. The relief, though, would not last.

First, we shared the seared sea scallops appetizer with polenta, spinach and tomatoes. The dish comes with 3 scallops and the waitress added a fourth so we could easily share. This was an outstanding dish that I will have all to myself next time. As an entrée, I had spaghetti with tomatoes, basil and veal meatballs - I love meatballs and these were very good. My husband ordered the grilled sword fish with capers. He thought the portion was a little small but was able to fill up on the sides of roasted sweet potatoes and spinach, all good. One of our guests had baked manicotti made with beef, veal, pancetta, spinach and mozzarella. She said this dish is always a good test for an Italian restaurant. There was a little hesitation but she ended up enjoying it.

But here was the kicker: our other gourmet ordered the veal scallopine. It arrived quite dry from over cooking. Our friend the raconteur - a famously charming man with a Puerto Rican accent - had already entertained our server with his expertise and he took this opportunity to inform her exactly how scallopine should be served. She took the dish off and the manager returned with a new plate and stayed to see how it was received. Ah - good at last! The waitress and manager couldn't have been more gracious and the relief again was sweet. Bottom line, the evening was a success!

Colonel Mustard gives La Tavola 5 hot dogs on a scale of 1 to 5

Buy a Brick in the New Va-Hi Park!

The Best Holiday Gift Ever!

This year, give the gift of community that keeps on giving...

As noted in the article on p.6, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association is very close to closing on the purchase of the former library lots at the corner of St. Charles Place and N. Highland Ave., which would enable us to create additional green space in the heart of Virginia-Highland. Once we close, we will immediately begin fundraising to pay for the construction of the new environmentally friendly, passive park. We must also raise sufficient funds to pay off the purchase debt. We need your help! Here's the offer:

- Contribute \$100 and receive an engraved brick.
- The brick can be engraved with your family name(s), in honor of someone special, or you may simply wish to create something whimsical.
- If the VHCA closes on the park (Dec. 5th is the date), you will receive a Certificate acknowledging your gift, suitable for gift-giving this holiday season.
- Orders (Certificates) will be fulfilled within 5 days of receipt. Orders received by Friday, 12/19 will be delivered (within the neighborhood) by Monday, 12/22. If the VHCA does not close on the property, your \$100 will be refunded.

ORDER NOW! See details below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Gift is for: _____
(Name desired on personalized certificate)

Provide Specific Engraving Desired:

(Up to 3 lines of text, with no more than 14 characters (including spaces) per line).

Make Checks Payable To:

Virginia-Highland Conservation League

Mail To: Pamela Papner, VHCA President,
854 Highland Terrace, Atlanta 30306

Questions? You can email: brickinfo@vahi.org

Details:

- The VHCA reserves the right to reject any request for engraving that includes profanity or incents unlawful behavior.
- This is an early fundraising effort. It may take 18-24 months to incorporate the engraved brick into construction.
- The net value of your gift will be tax deductible.



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Did you know a new playground is coming to Freedom Park?

Before you get too excited, a playground is a lot of hard work and needs community support.

An average playground costs \$100,000. Some features, such as swings, can cost upwards of \$6,500. The Poncey-Highland Playground Committee is seeking donations to support the playground. The playground will be for all communities to use and the goal is to have it constructed from recycled materials. The new park will be located on an old road bed taken by the eminent domain act, at the southeast corner of North Avenue and Freedom Parkway. We hope you come play with us!

What can you do to help?

- Volunteer - Contact ponceyplayground@gmail.com. We need volunteers for fund-raising, landscaping and planting, and for build day (scheduled for April 18, 2009).
- Donate - Return the attached form or visit www.ponceyplayground.com for more donation opportunities. Donation boxes will also be set up at the Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes. Your donation is tax deductible! Ask your employer about matching your donation, too! And ask your local businesses to support the park as well!
- Use the playground when it's here!

DONATIONS OF \$100 OR MORE RECEIVE AN ENGRAVED BRICK
\$500 or more receive special recognition

.....
Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

If your donation is \$100 or more, write what you wish to be printed on the brick :

.....

Make Check Payable To: **Freedom Park Conservancy- playground fund**

Mail to: **Freedom Park Conservancy P.O. Box 8753 Atlanta, GA 31106**

For More Information Contact: Honora Handley at 404-827-0189 or honora@us.ibm.com



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