

Summer 2002

Fern Creek Crier

www.ndhra.org

A Quarterly Newsletter by the North Druid Hills Residents Association

The North Druid Hills Residents Association (NDHRA) is a volunteer, not-for-profit, civic association incorporated under Georgia law and supported by membership dues.

Summer Membership Meeting & Social

Monday June 24

6:45 pm Ice Cream Social, 7:15 Meeting

*Join us for sundaes from Bruster's
and news about your neighborhood*

Intown Community Church, 2059 LaVista Rd

Neighborhood-Wide Yard Sale - "It's a Good Thing"

Diane Buch

The First Annual (we hope) NDHRA Neighborhood-Wide Spring Yard Sale was held on the weekend of April 27-28, 2002. We were lucky in the weather department and had neither glaring sun nor showers. It was a perfect yard sale day and all reports were that it was an event worth repeating on an annual basis.

The idea to have the Neighborhood-wide yard sale was hatched by Maureen Corley, who apparently had quite a vested interest in making this event a reality. This is not a direct quote, but this writer remembers Ms. Corley saying that she didn't care if anybody else signed up for the yard sale or not, she had so much stuff she would still have to have her own yard sale. Well, she didn't have to worry. Close to 40 homes participated from 20 different streets throughout our Neighborhood. We even had homes on the east side of Briarcliff and the south side of N. Druid Hills. This was truly a Neighborhood-wide event!

People were very positive in their feedback to us. The residents who participated felt it was very well organized and so did the shoppers who came from outside of our community. We had many people tell us that they liked the idea of being able to come into one Neighborhood and go to so many sales. The maps and directional signs were extremely helpful to all of the folks looking to spend, spend, spend! (Thank you to Joe Greear for our Neighborhood map.) Any constructive criticism will be taken into account for next year. Speaking of next year, IT WILL HAPPEN! So begin saving your "excess valuables" and mark your calendar for next spring.

Thanks again to out to all who helped! These special events are impossible without a great deal of planning, phone calls and legwork. Our helpers for this one were Maureen Corley, Joe Greear, John Reteneller, Diane Buch, Patrick Gosselink, and all of those who helped distribute the flyers into all 800 mailboxes throughout the Neighborhood.

Poison Ivy for Green Thumbs

Liz Beyer

It's obvious by the curbside collections of yard trimmings that the post spring yard work our neighborhood is in full swing. Looking at the half-empty shelves of Benadryl® at area stores and signs advertising poison ivy relief, I know I'm not alone in the yearly skin crisis. While some have little or no reaction to poison ivy, 85% of us are sensitive and find it worse each year. The cause of the itch, rash and blisters is a chemical in the sap of poison ivy, oak and sumac plants called urushiol (pronounced oo-roo-shee-ohl), which is most abundant in the plants in spring and summer. Even a dead plant is said to maintain the poison for up to five years; so merely killing it with a weed killer doesn't get you off the hook. Anything that has been in contact with the sap is cause for future suffering if not cleaned thoroughly. Dog walkers might want to look a little closer at that lovely green growth along the curbsides and ivy climbing the trees. Animals are frequent carriers of the sap, in addition to shoes and clothing. If you've been working in the yard, your work gloves might have come in contact too.

(continued on page 5)

Land Use Updates

Neighborhood Projects

John Steinichen

For more details on development in our neighborhood, visit our web site: www.ndbra.org/zoning.html

Noland Ridge: (#1 on map) Work on this 3 lot subdivision on one acre at #2915 Briarcliff, was stopped by the County because the developer brought in dirt containing much organic material and proceeded with grading without obtaining a grading permit and without compaction testing. After a long delay, construction is now proceeding.

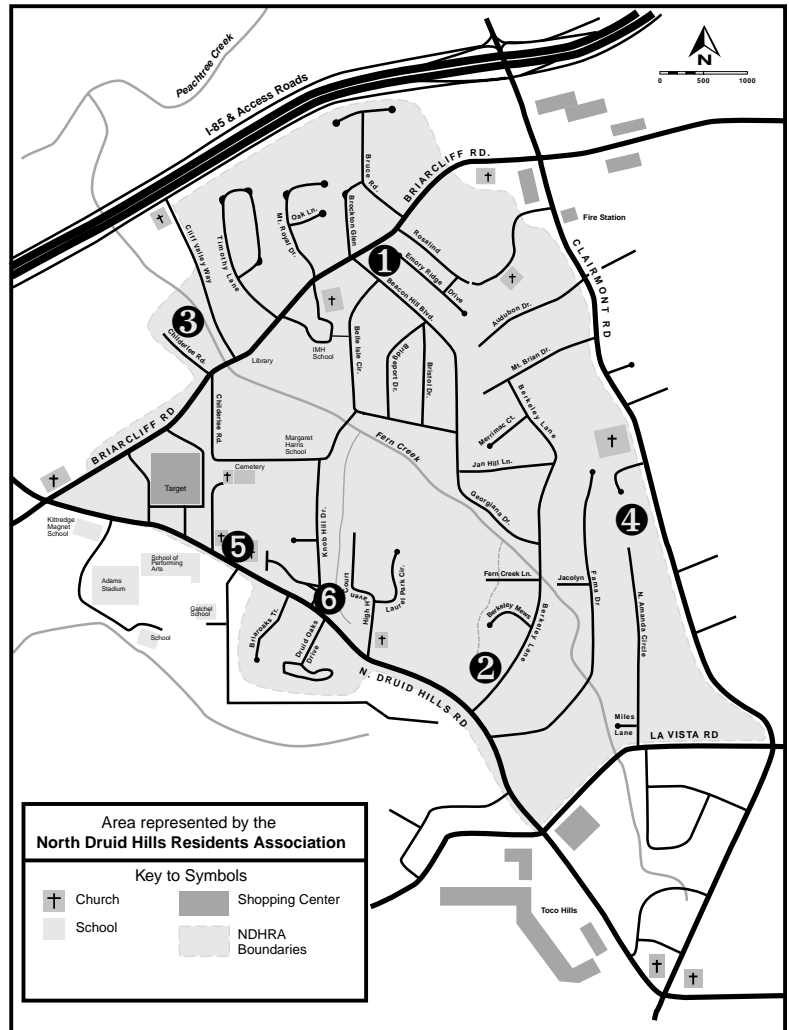
Berkeley Oaks Subdivision: (#2 on map) Legal proceedings are continuing at this time. The owner of the property appealed to the Superior Court of DeKalb Co. the rejection of his subdivision plat by the County Commission upon the appeal to them by NDHRA (see prior newsletter issue or our web site for this development's history.)

Cliff Valley Apartments: (#3 on map) Buildings and a parking deck have now been built between the Fern Creek flood plain that runs through the site and Cliff Valley Way. A second phase to the rear up the hill awaits market response to the front section. Erosion and impact on Fern Creek are of great concern.

Cliff Valley School: (#4 on map) The School purchased this Clairmont Rd. site for their private elementary school. The site is too small under current zoning standards at 4.7 acres but they were allowed by County Administration to assume the permits issued to the site's previous owners, the Torah Day School Academy. The Cliff Valley School recently described to nearby neighbors a two-phase building program with a goal of about 450 students. Clearing of the site began the last week of May, but construction won't begin until fund-raising is complete – about a year away (2003).

The First Alliance Church: (#5 on map) Many trees around their building were cut down to make way for an expansion and landscaping. They started work without permits or a landscape plan. The County stopped them after calls were made. Later, the church was in violation again when much of the tree debris was dumped on the rear of their site.

Recently, they applied for a variance to build a gymnasium on the west end of the main building (within 32 ft of the side property line).



At the last minute the staff decided that the variance was not needed because the adjoining property is another church. We were left without any say at the hearing. Further investigation raised the question of the need for a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) for an accessory use addition, such as a gymnasium, to a place of worship. When questioned, the staff stated that an SLUP was required only if the accessory building were detached from the principal building. A letter from NDHRA has been submitted asking for a legal opinion on that interpretation. We are still waiting on the opinion.

New Zoning Request

The owner of the first two lots across Knob Hill Dr. from the Jolly/Centex Emory Place project on North Druid Hills Rd. has applied for a change of zoning from R-85 to RA-8 in order to build 12 townhouses on 1.5 acres. Only minimum data was included in the application and was presented in a meeting between the Zoning Committee and the developer. Other rezonings in this vicinity were cited as precedents. Our Committee opposes this rezoning. The application has been scheduled for Board of Commissioners hearing on July 23rd, and will be considered by the Planning Commission on July 9th. The District 2 Community Council will review it on June 18th.

Action Printing Ad (to come)

Calling All Candidates...

The terms of the current NDHRA Board will be expiring at the end of 2002. We are currently seeking nominations for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and At-Large Board members for elections this fall. Your current NDHRA is still in a critical growth phase, and now more than ever, we need residents to get involved! If you or someone you know is willing to participate in running the NDHRA, please contact. Acting President Maureen Corley, at 404-634-9054, or email her at ranchomo@hotmail.com.

Briarcliff Sidewalk Clean-Up Day A Success!

Diane Buch

On Saturday, April 13, the NDHRA Environmental Enhancement Committee teamed up with the Immaculate Heart of Mary ABE Group (Atlanta Building Leadership for Empowerment) for a Clean-Up of sidewalks on Briarcliff Road. Maureen Corley and Diane Buch of NDHRA and Debbie Miller and Nikki van der Grinten of IHM organized the Clean-up Day starting way back in February.

As a group of 12 volunteers from our Association and 8 volunteers from the ABE group, we worked from 8:30 AM until about 1 PM cleaning up the sidewalk and the curbs along Briarcliff Road from the Senior Residence opposite Kingsbridge all the way up to Childerlee Lane. Neighbors walking and biking by thanked us for the job we were doing, saying how difficult it is to use the side-

walk with all the weeds, garbage and broken glass having taken it over. It was a great turnout, especially considering it drizzled throughout! Donuts were donated by Dunkin Donuts and bagels by Einstein's. Coffee, juice and water were brought by Debbie and Nikki. All of the volunteers brought their own tools!

It really was a great success. Everybody worked really hard, and seemed to enjoy themselves at the same time. The stretch of sidewalk and road that we worked on in April still looks clean today. The partnership we formed with ABE was a good one, and we hope to work with them again!

For all their hard work and dedication to the Neighborhood, I, as Chair of the EEC would like to thank: Peter Laing, Maureen Corley, Margi Drysdale, Joe Greear, Brown Kitchens, John Reteneller, Jennifer Somers de Gale, James de Gale, Hilary Kaplan, Tom Eidson, and Ken McMillian. THANK YOU!



Enough Is Enough!

Residents Initiate Legal Action

Individuals and neighborhood groups are initiating legal action to protect their property rights (and yours!), and to enforce the legal rights of all citizens. These citizens and groups are responding to breaches of governmental promises made to the courts and to DeKalb citizens guaranteeing that residents would not be subjected to larger jet operations at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK).

Recently, widespread community action has succeeded in temporarily slowing the CEO's attempt to establish Airport Compatibility Overlay Districts (A.C.O.D.), which would have taken away many properties and due process rights of citizens and would have created huge, arbitrary, geographical areas where any consequence of expanded airport operations would be completely insulated from any accountability. Without registering a protest through the courts, we will be relinquishing precious rights and jeopardizing a permanent loss of our air rights.

To help in this effort, please call
Evelyn Brethour

F.O.R. DeKalb, Inc. at (404) 728-0772.
P.O. Box 29604, Atlanta, GA 30359

Neighborhood Crime Update

Covering the North Druid Hills Community
January - May 20, 2002

N Druid Hills Road

3/15/02 Stolen vehicle found at location;
arrest made

Mount Royal Drive

2/3/02 Burglary, side window broken out,
clock taken

Berkeley Lane

1/16/02 Burglary, handle to storage shed
broken, hand saw taken

3/12/02 Stolen vehicle

Briar Oaks Trail

2/12/02 Open door

5/11/02 Open door

Merrimac Court

3/18/02 Harassing phone call

Jo Kenney, ABR

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Have You Seen Our Signs?

During last April's Yard Sale weekend, 18 of our official NDHRA Neighborhood Announcement signs went out on street corners. Only 13 made it back. That's down from our original number of 25 from little more than a year ago! A portion of your 2001 dues were invested in creating these signs, and it was hoped that they would last for several years. They are a critical way to let people know about NDHRA meetings and events. If you know where any are, please contact Joe Greear at 404-315-9977.

How to Contact Your Commissioners

District 6 - At-Large Area Comm. for north 1/2 of
County (Districts 2&6)

Judy Yates jayates@co.dekalb.ga.us 404.371.2863

District 2 - our local district Commissioner

Gale Walldorff galew@co.dekalb.ga.us 404.371.4609

Commissioners Walldorff and Yates share the same
FAX: 404.371.7004

Write each Commissioner at
the following common address:

Commissioner _____
1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA 30030

They want to hear from you!

from cover: Poison Ivy for Green Thumbs

It is spread by birds (who eat the berries), so it is guaranteed a place in our neighborhood. In an attempt to keep the frequency of contact to a minimum, I've found several ways to deal with the growth. If it is a large specimen with an elaborate root system, I selectively spray the leaves with an herbicide (making sure it doesn't drip or come in contact with other plants or trees). After it dies, I remove the plant.

For protection of the hands and arms, I've found it is cheaper in the long run to throw away gloves rather than save them and find money thrown into anti-itch lotions and other treatments later. In the past, I've used cotton garden gloves with several layers of newspaper plastic rappers pulled up over my arms. The plastic newspaper wrappers allow for you to easily turn them inside out as you pull them off and throw away. Recently, I've discovered the economy size box of latex gloves at the drugstore to be handy too. Instead of the cotton gloves, I use these as the base so that they can be thrown away with the least expense (about six cents each). They are also helpful for pulling up the small sprigs you might notice in the garden. Using only one glove, you can pull up the ivy and turn the glove inside out with the culprit inside. When discarding the poisonous plants, never burn them since the urushiol then becomes airborne in the smoke and can add a hospital visit to your woes.

So what works if you've already come in contact? I've found using liquid pump Lava soap works really well, so you can keep one handy by the sink to use regularly when coming in from the garden.

But what if you've already got the itch? If you've don't mind the color pink, a lotion with calamine, camphor and pramoxine HCl help relieve the itch and dry up the blisters over time. An alternative to pink I recently discovered is a topical treatment called CalaGel®. It dries quickly and is clear in color so your clothes and sheets don't get stained. If you still find yourself waking up during the night with the longing to scratch, try using an ice pack on the areas.

Researchers claim that the oozing blisters are not contagious since they don't contain urushiol — putting an end to the famous myth. If it is possible to keep the blisters from popping, I've found they reabsorbed into the body and disappear quicker than the other areas that ooze and are prone to infection. For oral medications, talk to your pharmacist or doctor. An antihistamine like Benadryl is usually recommended to stop the reaction.

If you need help identifying poison ivy, you can see pictures of it in various states on www.poison-ivy.org or just remember the saying, "leaves of three, let it be."

Your Environmental Enhancement Committee — Taking Care of Your Neighborhood in So Many Ways

We: Have completed sidewalk/curb clean-ups and are planning more in the future. They will be "Mini Clean-Ups" which focus on smaller neglected areas inside the Neighborhood.

We: Continue to work with Commissioner Gale Walldorff and Tina Arbes (Office of Parks Bond & Greenspace) toward the realization of a Neighborhood Park at the site of the Margaret Harris Lower Field (by Fern Creek).

We: Continue to work with these same officials to insure the preservation of the Hardwood Forest adjacent to Mt. Moriah Church.

We: Persevere in our negotiations with Target and representatives from the Trust for Public Land to create a landscaped buffer and a pedestrian pathway between the Target store and our Neighborhood.

We: Act as a resource in your Community when there are questions or problems between you and DeKalb County Sanitation, Roads & Drainage, and Code Enforcement.

We: Act as a liaison in your Community to try to help insure DeKalb County Code Violations are enforced.

We: Are working with Commissioner Walldorff and Joel Alvarado (of Keep Dekalb Beautiful) to get NO DUMPING SIGNS installed on Knob Hill Drive and Georgiana Drive.

We: Are always open to other suggestions for improving our quality of life through the beautification and preservation of our Neighborhood. It is appreciated if suggestions are accompanied by a helping hand.

The Committee meets the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. If interested in joining the EEC, please contact Diane Buch at dbuch311@bellsouth.net, or call her at (404) 315-9977.

How Are Your Investments Doing?

With the Stock Market on a roller coaster ride and most 401K and Mutual Funds down 10% - 30% for the year, it's really hard for most people to feel good about their investments. The only investment most of us have that has grown in value is our house.

So what are you doing to protect that investment? Do you do the usual maintenance things? Do you make sure termites haven't invaded? Do you participate in your Neighborhood Association?

Yes, investing time and money in your Neighborhood Association is an investment that protects the value of your home. Your Association is doing more to protect home values than you may think. Not only does the Association monitor and fight unwanted development that may lower property values, your neighbors, members of the Association, are involved in protecting home values in many ways:

- Association members research and distribute information about who to contact in the County Government when you need County Services such as street and Right of Way maintenance, Code enforcement, and . . .
- Association members are actively negotiating with DeKalb County to establish parks in the neighborhood to provide play areas and greenspace for our neighbors.
- Association members are negotiating with landowners to clean up or destroy kudzu that is threatening to take over wooded areas.
- Association members have conducted several neighborhood Clean Up Days to help make sidewalks passable and to enhance the appearance of the Neighborhood.

- Association members have coordinated and funded legal efforts to reduce the density of new development in the area to protect the peaceful, single family residential quality of your neighborhood.
- Association members meet regularly with DeKalb County officials to express concern about growth patterns, traffic issues, and county services that affect property values.

These are just some of the activities that members of your North Druid Hills Residents Association are doing to protect your property investment. Who are these people? Do they have unlimited time on their hands? No, the people who are working to protect your investment are your neighbors, working people and homeowners who are concerned about their home and their neighborhood. And, no, they don't have unlimited time on their hands. That is why it is important that you too become involved. Your neighbors need all the help they can get. Please contact the chairperson of one of the committees listed in this newsletter and let them know that you want to serve on a committee. A few hours a month is all it takes to protect your home, the only investment that continues to grow in these times. Your time and effort will produce one of the greatest returns on investment that you will ever make.

Become a contributor or an advertiser to the Fern Creek Crier!

Business-card sized ads (3.5" x 2") are \$25.
Submit ads or articles to Joe Greear c/o NDHRA -
Fern Creek Crier, P.O. Box 95965, Atlanta, GA 30347
or call 404-315-9977 for more information.

Deadlines: Aug. 1 (Fall issue), and Nov. 1 (Winter issue).

For a list of NDHRA officers and contact information, see our web site at www.ndhra.org

North Druid Hills Residents Association 2002 Membership Form

Would you like to participate in one of the following Committees?

- Zoning/Land use
- Environmental Enhancement
- Community Relations
- Newsletter/Communications
- Membership

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Annual Membership fees for 2002 are \$25. Make your check payable to NDHRA.

Mail your application with payment to: NDHRA, Inc., P.O. Box 95965, Atlanta, GA 30347