



Neighbors

Monthly Newsletter

The Monthly Newsletter of the Lake Claire Neighborhood Association

Written and distributed by volunteers since 1991

Neighborhood Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.

Frazer Center - 1815 S. Ponce de Leon
(or use back entrance at the end of Ridgewood Road)
Auditorium in front of building

Agenda

- * *Denotes issues which may be voted upon at meeting; please read accompanying articles within newsletter for details.*
- **Announcements**
 - Peavine Watershed Alliance - Paul Hayward
 - Mary Lin Update - Principal Cindy Smith
 - Tour of Homes Update
- **Planning Committee Report** - Geoffrey Dunne
- **NPU Report** - Bob Schreiber
- **Treasurer's Report** - Dennis McCarthy
- **Public Safety Report** - Elizabeth Hamilton
 - Officer's Report
- **New Business**

From the Executive Board

by Bob Schreiber, NPU Representative

Aaaah! Spring again. Despite the mildness of this last winter, the colors, sounds, and fragrances of the new season are always welcome (let's just ignore the pollen - it surely won't ignore us).

While the Lake Claire neighborhood remains relatively unchanged, there are several matters which are happening near us which are the result of the influx of population into the metropolitan Atlanta area. These events will eventually have an impact on Lake Claire's residential and small commercial districts.

If you have been hearing about the soon-to-be implemented **Commuter Rail system** for Atlanta, one of the two highest priority routes will come from Athens to the downtown Multi-modal Passenger Terminal. The trains will most likely use the tracks which cross Dekalb Ave., just west of the East Lake MARTA station, and then use the Georgia Railroad right of way. Three or four trips in the AM and PM would be the initial service.

As long as MARTA has a mandate to provide rail service to south Dekalb county, there is a remote chance that a rail line would require the taking of one traffic lane of Dekalb Ave., near Clifton Ave. and the Candler Park Station. This would probably result in the taking of some of the commercial space along Dekalb Ave. so that a new traffic lane could be built. All of this might be done to accommodate a track that would come from Kirkwood, onto an aerial structure over the Pullman Shops and over the existing MARTA east line, and then come down to the Dekalb Ave. level so that it could merge with the existing east line at the Candler Park station. This is the least likely of several alternatives and is not likely to happen until the westward Fulton Industrial extension and a northward extension toward Alpharetta are planned and initiated.

In **Poncey-Highlands and Inman Park**, numerous commercial spaces have been acquired or are "on the market". The general intention of sellers/buyers is to create more residential dwellings. Much of the increase will be in the form of condos and apartments. Only with hard negotiating with some of the developers, has there been a willingness to consider the inclusion of commercial space. Without the creation of "**mixed-use**" facilities, then the growth patterns of the 1960-70's which resulted in long commutes will only be reversed so that people live in-town but still work 15 miles away.

Currently, there is an **entertainment district along Highland Ave.** which starts at Virginia Ave./Highland Ave. and continues south on Highland to Ponce de Leon. There are strong indications that the district will soon cross Ponce de Leon and continue south on Highland to Elizabeth St. and Austin Ave. And the intentions of the owners of the proposed Battery Bar in **Little 5 Points** on Euclid Ave. have not been clarified, but there is a possibility that a **night club** with a full liquor license will be opened next to Outback Outfitters. If they obtain their license, the owners plan to stay open until 4:00 A.M. each night except Sunday. While the revenue from these establishments is beneficial to Atlanta's tax coffers, the consequential noise, litter, public intoxication, and parking problems are a severe adverse impact on the residents near the areas.

Throughout the city, in response to high density projects which are perceived as encroaching on single family neighborhoods, applications for **historic district status** are being considered or initiated. Grant Park has just become Atlanta's largest such area. Applications from Garden Hills, Brookhaven, and Inman Park will likely follow soon. The portion of Druid

continued on page three

What happened to my March Neighbor??? - The Frazer Center closed its printshop operations at the end of last year. The first quarter of this year we continued using our former Frazer Center contact to print our newsletter. He was unable to print the March issue under our usual deadline, so distributors received the issues late and were not able to deliver to all routes before the monthly meeting. We are trying all means at our disposal to prevent any future delays, and apologize for any inconvenience.

NPU Bylaws Update - The NPU-N Proposed Draft Bylaws are on the Lake Claire Website (see back page for address). For those without internet access, copies will be available at the April LCN meeting.

Mary Lin Update - Cindy Smith, Principal at Mary Lin Elementary will attend the April 20th LCN meeting. She will speak for a few minutes about the programs at Mary Lin and will then take questions. Anyone in the neighborhood with children who will be attending school in the next year or two should come and hear what she has to say.

Stream Cleanup - Saturday, April 15, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon - meet at **Lake Claire Park**. Join friends and neighbors in a cleanup of the beautiful stream that flows through our neighborhood. Bring loppers, shears, shovels, and boots if you have them. We will meet at the playground in Lake Claire park on Lake Shore Drive. This cleanup is sponsored by the Peavine Watershed Alliance.

The Peavine Watershed Alliance is a group of volunteers dedicated to restoring the environmental qualities of our streams through community awareness, public education, and watershed protection strategies. The Fernbank Fork of Peavine Creek flows through Lake Claire and joins with branches from Candler Park and Decatur at junctions near Emory University.

What we are able to do in our neighborhood benefits everyone downstream. In the past year, the PWA has secured a

\$250,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to produce a comprehensive watershed management plan for our area. We have also produced an educational video for the metro Atlanta region entitled Building a Watershed Alliance with an Atlanta Urban Resource Partnership Grant. We held workshops for Adopt-A-Stream training, helped organize neighborhood stream cleanups, and sponsored community education meetings. Come hear the details at our monthly meeting of the Lake Claire neighbors Thursday, April 20 at 7:30 PM at the Reach Center. If you want to help with our effort, call **Paul Hayward** at **404-371-8942**.

Atlanta Citizen Advocacy - Would you like to have one more friend? Would you like to make a difference? If these are questions you have asked yourself, it could be we have your answers. We are The Atlanta Citizen Advocacy. We look for volunteers who will befriend people with developmental disabilities. Do you want to be that friend? Do you want to watch a person grow right in front of you because you cared? Do you want to watch a person's abilities increase because you created opportunities? You can do that through Atlanta Citizen Advocacy. Come share in these incredible experiences. Call **Sue Belden**, coordinator, at **404.523.8849**.

Busy and tired, but <u>What's for Dinner?</u>	
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<p style="text-align: center;">Please remit to: Lake Claire Neighbors, c/o Dennis McCarthy, Treasurer, 462 Harold Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307</p> <p><i>Neighborhood Dues support the regular meetings and programs of Lake Claire Neighbors. In accordance with the organization's bylaws, any expenditures exceeding \$100 are voted upon by the general membership. Currently, LCN does not mandate dues payment as qualification for membership.</i></p> <p><i>Security Patrol Dues pay for uniformed, off duty Atlanta Police Officers to patrol the neighborhood in unmarked vehicles. Their patrol shifts vary, and all activity is reported to the neighborhood Executive Committee. Contribution is voluntary, and you may remit in two installments. Please lend your support to this important program to ensure the safety and security of neighborhood homes, businesses and residents.</i></p>	

Hills which is on either side of Ponce de Leon and including Fairview Rd. is already a Landmark District. By the end of the year, the balance of Druid Hills in Atlanta will probably achieve the same status.

All of these issues highlight some fundamental conflicts. If people want to manage Atlanta's **urban sprawl** (horizontal growth and the associated adverse impacts on the environment) and there is a net influx of population into the area, then two general alternatives emerge: create exclusive communities to discourage the influx; or encourage higher density housing and commercial opportunities to accommodate the influx. Nonetheless, Atlanta's already stressed sewer, water, electrical, greenway, and street systems are being stressed even more. Assessing the various costs and benefits and finding acceptable balances takes time, creativity, and cooperation.

At this month's Lake Claire Neighbors meeting, representatives of the **Peavine Watershed Alliance** will present information regarding their efforts to offset some of the past and current adverse impacts on the watershed into which all of Lake Claire's stormwater drainage flows (see article on page 2). In some cases, the costs of undoing past development cannot be offset by the benefits of correcting the development with practices which are now known to be better. Finding economically feasible projects which are beneficial and acceptable to the residents who are involved is a part of that time consuming, creative, and cooperative process.

It's spring and everyone has been out working on the yard. But we need to be especially careful at this time of year because of our tendency to leave the garage door open, a front or back door unlocked, and yard tools out on the lawn as we go in and out of the house getting tools, a glass of water, etc. Lawn tools and machinery take only seconds to grab from the garage or yard, to be thrown in a vehicle and gone before a homeowner returns from the backyard. Another scary thought is catching someone in your house who entered from the opposite side of the house. It's always a wise idea to keep your doors locked, and keep a key on you, on a ribbon around your neck or in a secure pocket.

Also be aware of all the people who walk through the neighborhood looking for jobs doing yard work. Some of these people may really be looking for work; others may be casing your house.

Finally, check out the crimes listed below, and please call me with any omissions from the beat book.

~ Elizabeth Hamilton

Lake Claire March Crime Statistics

- 3/02 300 block Gordon St. - 8:30am - stolen from floor of van was a tote bag containing cell phone, jacket, jewelry, and money
- 3/20 1800 block McLendon - 12:30pm - lawn tools stolen from garage
- 3/26 400 block Page (a block outside of LC, but noteworthy) - 7:50pm -victim hit and knocked off his bike by a maroon Hyundai Excel (partial tag GA 383-) driven by 2 black males who then stole the victim's wallet and fled the scene
- 3/28 100 block Ivy Ct. - 2am - suspect threw rock at window & hit man in face; suspect identified
- 3/28 1200 block Dogwood Cir - 5am - dining room window broken w/baseball bat; suspect apprehended

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Presiding at Meeting: Robbie Collins, VP-Communications
 Attendance: 19, including Executive Board

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tour of Homes - Peg Zeigler has offered to co-chair the Tour Committee. She could really use some help on this project. If anyone is interested please contact Peg at (404) 373-2913. Susan Beeching would be interested in helping.

Incorporation - Robbie Collins: As many of you know, LCN has been pursuing non-profit incorporation for some time. As I understand it, the reasons are (1) to decrease our tax liability, (2) decrease the personal liability of board members, (3) limit our liability from the Security Patrol, and (4) allow us to receive Grants directly. I have adopted the project, and to that end, have been referred to Randall Lenz, a tax attorney, who will incorporate us for \$500. He comes well recommended by a neighbor, Susan Kramer, an attorney and real estate agent. I am interested in ascertaining the will of the members at this time and possibly getting a motion for appropriating \$500 for this purpose. Dennis McCarthy: As VP-Finance, I can attest that we do have money available for this and all other items requiring funding tonight.

Richard Rimer: I am a CPA by profession and helped with the LCN taxes this year. I believe that if we can also obtain tax-exempt status from the IRS that we can definitely save on taxes.

Dennis McCarthy: In fact, we should recoup the \$500 on sales taxes alone from newsletter printing.

Richard Rimer: If this \$500 includes filing the forms for tax-exempt status then this is a good deal.

Robbie Collins: I believe it does but I'm not sure about it. In any case, I believe that the main reasons to incorporate, as told to me

by last year's Executive Board members, are #'s (3) & (4) above. Discussion. Motion made and seconded to appropriate \$500 for incorporation. Motion passes with one no vote.

Mary Lin Report - Susan Beeching: Cinco de Mayo Yard Sale - Big Mary Lin fundraiser on May 5th. Please come and support Mary Lin. RIF Program - As advertised in the newsletter, I am here to ask for an appropriation of \$250 for the Reading Is Fundamental program. Federally sponsored but not funded. Each child gets to take a book for free. We have a dire need of funds.

Motion made & seconded to appropriate \$250 to RIF Program. Approved unanimously.

PLANNING REPORT - GEOFFREY DUNNE

1984 Tuxedo - Side Yard Variance - Ms. Susan Clarke has purchased house next door to her home. She wants to add living space upstairs in rear. Will stay over same footprint. Reason for side yard setback request.

Existing non-conforming use because zoning done after area built. Three feet from edge of house to property line.

Ms. Clarke: Our renovation will not be visible from street and will stay within existing footprint. If this renovation was done to a house with setbacks conforming to code we would not need variance.

Motion made and seconded to support variance request. Motion approved unanimously.

Ashwood Development, Beer & Wine License, etc.

As for Ashwood and their development of the Lake Ponceana site, we are trying to cooperate to make the best of a potentially bad situation. We met with Ashwood, the adjacent neighbors, and Cathy Woolard to apprise her on the shared driveway situation. I clarified to Ashwood and Ms. Woolard that LCN's February vote of support was only to gauge neighborhood sentiment and was not a formal variance vote. I have learned that Mrs. Desta will reapply for a Beer & License for her store at DeKalb & Mathews. I have spoken with her and she intends to do it without an attorney this time. I also spoke about what accommodations she would make to LCN such as a yearly audit report of B&W sales.

Neighbor: Sounds like we are negotiating. We previously voted down her application and that vote should stand.

NPU REPORT - BOB SCHREIBER

Beer & Wine License, Continued - The B&W license application and why it is in our interest to negotiate; i.e., that our disapproval will not carry much weight unless legal reasons are cited. Long discussion of liquor license. A neighbor mentions the negotiation between Candler Park and Fellini's and how their agreement did not become attached to B&W license, hence unenforceable. Overwhelming sentiment expressed by neighbors in attendance that February vote of disapproval be taken to NPU.

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continued on page five

LCN By-Laws - The LCN By-Laws are now online. Please take a look.

Bond Community Star Article - The Star had a recent article that described the NPU process that is worth reading. BTW, if NPU-N doesn't modify its bylaws by September 30th then must have an open meeting. The NPU is a vehicle for resolving neighborhood issues but LCN is not an outstanding member. This by-laws change and vote is important and we need neighborhood participation.

Town Hall Meeting on 11th and 12th - Cathy Woolard will host a meeting to examine the traffic issues concerning Howard Circle and McLendon. Send email to Ms. Woolard to get on mailing list or call (404) 330-6049. City Life will have info a week before.

FREEDOM PARK CONSERVANCY (FPC) - RICHARD RIMER, LCN DELEGATE

At the table by the entrance I have placed information on the changes proposed for the FPC By-Laws. Basically, the mission of the FPC has changed from opposing the Georgia DOT to developing and maintaining the park, hence, it needs to change its bylaws to reflect its changed mission. Richard explains changes. I am looking for a motion to approve these by-laws changes so that I can represent LCN's position at the next FPC meeting. Most other member neighborhoods have approved the by-laws changes. Druid Hills had one issue they needed clarified.

Motion made & seconded to approve FPC by-laws changes with one lone opposing vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT - DENNIS MCCARTHY

Obligated Funds - As I mentioned last time we have obligated funds that appear orphaned. We need a champion for these projects to step forward. The two items are Watershed Improvements and Traffic Calming Devices.

Paul Hayward: As LCN delegate to the Peavine Watershed Alliance I will be happy to champion the watershed item.

Bob Schrieber: My guess is the Traffic Calming Device appropriation is Robert Reed's baby since he was the leader of the neighborhood plan project.

Dennis: I'll speak with Robert. Otherwise, please pick up a copy of this month's Treasurer's Report on the table by the door.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT - ELIZABETH HAMILTON
Inspector Ruby Naylor - Spring is here and people are working on their houses and kids are out of doors. Many valuable objects are being left outside and consequently stolen. Mountain bikes seem to be an often stolen item as are yard tools, mowers, etc. Crimes of opportunity are preventable, so... please stay sharp!

NEW BUSINESS

Paul Hayward - LCN Delegate to **Peavine Watershed Alliance (PWA)** - I will be back next meeting to do a more formal presentation but wanted to take a few minutes to talk about the PWA. The PWA is concerned with the watershed that flows into the Chattahoochee River from our general area. We will have a stream cleanup Saturday April 15 from 9am-12noon. We have not designated a stream yet but will put up signs for the site cleanup ahead of time.

No more new business, meeting is adjourned.

~ Respectfully submitted, Robbie Collins

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Few people realize that approximately 1/3 of Lake Claire is the old estate of General John Brown Gordon. His estate was a significant contributing factor to the early eastward growth of Atlanta as early as the 1880's.

In 1871, the Gordons acquired 86.5 acres from John Kirkpatrick, one of the heirs of the original 1100 acre Kirkpatrick plantation. They named this Atlanta estate "Sutherland", the surname of Mrs. Gordon's maternal grandmother, and built their first house. The estate's acreage covered the core of what is now Lake Claire. "Sutherland" was, roughly, north of DeKalb Avenue, east of the backyards of Mathews and Ridgewood, south of and below Ponce de Leon, and west of the backyards of Claire Drive sloping over to Howard Circle and DeKalb Place. The Gordons built their home on a knoll which was alongside the Decatur Wagon Road, just north of the Georgia Railroad (now the site of the Horizon School, Dekalb Ave./Sutherland Terrace). The original house was totally destroyed by fire in 1897 and was replaced by a house with a virtually identical floor plan but with a more ornate exterior. Numerous stories of fascinating visitors and guests along with evenings of piano playing and singing are referred to by Gordon descendants. The Gordons' larger farm, "Beachwood", was in Taylor County, on the Flint River, near LaGrange.

As for the General, if you have ever viewed the statues which surround the State Capitol building, only one of the honored citizens is sitting on horseback. The bronze statue of Maj. General John Brown Gordon, dedicated in 1907, is located on the northwest corner of the Capitol grounds. It was sculpted by Solon H. Borglum, younger brother of Gutzon Borglum (Stone Mountain and Mount Rushmore sculptor). The General was a very controversial figure in Georgia history but he was greatly revered by Georgia's citizens and by veterans of the Confederate cause.

Born in 1832 in northwest Georgia near Gordon County (so named in honor of someone other than John B.), Gordon attended the University of Georgia Law School and was admitted to the bar in 1853. He became a partner in the firm of (Basil H.) Overby and (Logan E.) Bleckley (eventual Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court and for whom Bleckley County was named in 1912).

Eventually, each of the three lawyers married one of the three daughters of General Hugh A. Haralson (state militia officer and congressman, and for whom Haralson County is named). Gordon married Fanny Rebecca Haralson from LaGrange, in 1854.

When the War broke out, Gordon organized a Georgia militia. Since the corps had adopted a raccoon hat as the only common part of their uniform, they became known as the "Raccoon Roughs". Gordon was named lieutenant colonel and, after the corps joined the Confederate Army, was eventually promoted to the rank of Major General, in charge of one half of the Army of Northern Virginia by the War's end. He is one of only two civilians to have risen to such a high rank in the Confederacy and had become a close confidant of Robert E. Lee. Gordon was wounded a total of seven times in the War, five of those wounds occurring in one battle at Sharpsburg (Antietam). After the fifth wound, he fell off of his horse and accounts indicate that he would have drowned in a pool of his own blood in his hat had not an earlier bullet made a hole in his hat which allowed the blood to drain from it.

As was common for the wives of officers in those times, Fanny followed the General's corps to the various battles to which he was assigned. Gordon was recommended for promotion to the rank of Lt. General, but the War ended before the promotion was awarded. After leading the Confederate troops in the surrender procession at Appomattox he urged his men to (paraphrasing) "bear their trials bravely, go home in peace, obey the laws, rebuild the country and work for the 'weal' and harmony of the republic".

Upon his return to Atlanta, he opened his law practice again. Between 1873 and 1897 Gordon was elected U.S. Senator three times and served two terms as Governor, each term being two years in length. He was active in the Democratic National Party, Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, founded a Presbyterian church in Kirkwood, was a member of the unofficial gubernatorial "Bourbon Triumvirate" along with Alfred Colquitt and Joseph E. Brown (it did not matter which of the three was serving as Governor, their collective interests always had a voice), and was heavily involved in the construction of the Georgia Pacific and Western Railroad from Atlanta to Birmingham. There are too many interesting stories regarding the General's activities after the Civil War to even summarize here other than to say that he seems to have been a peacemaker - of sorts.

The General died in 1904 at the age of 72. His wife, Fanny, survived him until her death in 1930 at age 93. The estate was gradually subdivided into the Sutherland Subdivision (Gordon Ave., Oxford Ave., and Sutherland Terrace) and the Massell Subdivision (Claire Drive and Lakeshore Drive). The house fell into disrepair after years of neglect and, after failed efforts to save the house for its historical value, it was demolished in 1942.

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~ Bob Schreiber

As of 2000 Apr 02 we have **\$3,430.17** in the bank; of that \$463.15 is available in the General Fund.

Members of the executive committee approved spending \$70 to acquire the **web domain name** "lakeclaire.org" and, though not up yet, we hope to have a newly designed webpage there in the near future. We will look into finding sponsors to recoup costs of maintaining the website.

Delivery of the **neighborhood identity signs** has been delayed, but I hope to have the matter resolved and report on it at the April meeting.

The first edition of the neighborhood **Welcome Flyer** is in its final draft and should be released in Adobe Acrobat format on the neighborhood website around the time of April meeting; thanks to Marci Reed for her assistance.

~Dennis McCarthy

Planning Committee Update

1839 McLendon Shared Driveway Variance: Please see the March Meeting Minutes for more details, noting that the BZA denial of the variance seemed to be founded mostly on the pre-existing Staff Recommendation to deny the application. The applicant's request simply did not meet the required City Ordinances, and the final BZA decision was not necessarily influenced by the views of the neighborhood which tended to focus more on the possible negative environmental impact.

Beer & Wine License at Mathews & Dekalb: Also covered in the March Meeting Minutes, but I would like to add that the sentiments of LCN (to deny the request) were taken forward to the March NPU Meeting as requested by members attending our last meeting. However, the NPU Committee did not vote to oppose the application. Their supportive vote was based on the fact that the required City Ordinances appeared to be met (5% of gross sales, etc.) The application process as it stands today means that they were unable to consider any of the intangible issues previously raised at the neighborhood level. Only time will tell if the Grocery Store truly becomes a Good Neighbor.

~ Geoffrey Dunne

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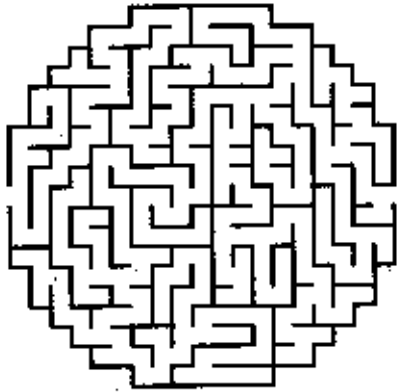
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~ Christopher Collier and Breanne Benedict



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Regular Monthly Meetings
Third Thursday, 7:30 pm Frazer Center Auditorium

Executive Board

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