In Loving Memory of Leroy Freeman
February 2010

In Loving Memory of Leroy Freeman, 1956–2009

I can't help but feel like we have reached the end of an era. On December 28, 2009, we lost a neighbor, Leroy Freeman. He collapsed at the doorway of a neighbor on Leonardo Avenue, went into cardiac arrest, and later died at Emory Hospital. When 911 was called, the immediate response included two fire trucks, a police car, and an ambulance.

I met Leroy Freeman not long after I moved here, about ten years ago. He came to my door looking for work, and I took an immediate liking to him. He wasn't asking just for money but wanted to work. With an alert and friendly manner, he began a long and fruitful relationship with me. We were about the same age, give or take, and would often end the day chatting about our common interests, family, current events, the neighborhood, or what was next in line for the garden.

My garden in the backyard was transformed largely due to Leroy's labors. It used to be bordered (choked, really) on two sides by privet, which I do not like. Leroy dug it all up for me, bit by bit. He also planted my newer trees that have now matured. I have a lovely Japanese Apricot, a huge Black Dragon cryptomeria, and a Mexican Redbud, among others, that he installed and now thrive.

Leroy taught me how to make biscuits from scratch. Now that was a fun day. He kept telling me how much he liked to cook and that he was a good cook. He particularly liked homemade biscuits. So I asked him what was needed to make good scratch biscuits, got the ingredients together, and then announced to him one morning that he was making biscuits for our breakfast. The look on his face was priceless. He washed up and got to work, explaining the quirks of each step as he worked. I think I made a batch alongside him, too. Mary Jo across the street can attest to the success of his cooking lessons.

My dogs loved him, too. Leroy would sweet-talk them and loved to sit and pet them whenever he came by. He would get the familiar greeting from the dogs—more tail wagging and less barking. As with many (mostly) men who live on the streets, his demons would occasionally catch up to him. From time to time, as many of us know, he was not his usual self, becoming moody and perhaps a bit unpredictable, though never a threat. Once we had a bit of a row over a gardening project that he "owned" more than I sometimes realized. My son came out to see if I needed help. A short while later, while I was inside, he took my son aside and told him he would NEVER do anything to harm me and not to worry. We were just hashing out some details in our way.

One year, I managed to break some trays for sale. This took special skill on cold mornings, because the eggshells were brittle in the cold. His family grew peanuts, corn, tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, and cotton. Leroy also milked the cows and fed the chickens and goats.

At the age of fourteen, Leroy and his younger brother walked from Covington to Atlanta to get away from their father, who was brutal toward them. They walked to their sister's house on Woodbine Avenue in the Kirkwood neighborhood. Sometime later, he moved in with his mother, who lived in the Englewood Manor housing project, south of Grant Park, near the proposed

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The Clarion is printed on recycled paper.

A Biography of Leroy Freeman

A few weeks back, I sat down with Leroy to interview him for an article in the Clarion. I had over the years heard some parts of his story, and I thought that the rest of the community would like to know more about him. At the time, I realized that if I procrastinated, these notes would be for an obituary—but I was thinking in terms of years of procrastination, rather than days. So here is my biographical article on Leroy Freeman. —Sam Collier

Leroy Freeman was born into a farming family near Covington, Georgia, in 1956. He learned from a very early age to gather eggs and pack them into twelve-flat trays for sale. This took special skill on cold mornings, because the eggshells were brittle in the cold. His family grew peanuts, corn, tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, and cotton. Leroy also milked the cows and fed the chickens and goats.

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Biography continued on page 6

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Biography continued on page 6
Memory continued from page 1

don't think, with no expectation of

knowing of my penchant for
making use of used items, he fre-
quently brought me good items
found at someone's curb to see if
had any use for them. Sometimes
he was successful; sometimes he
was just thinking of me.

Those of us who have a close
family member who is homeless
or on the edge for whatever
reason will relate to this. I have an
older brother who is emotionally
disabled, alcoholic, and bipolar.
Growing up with him was a bit
of a nightmare. For many years,
I was not interested in having
anything to do with him and was
so grateful for his alcoholic wife,
who managed to keep a roof over
their heads. Helped out Leroy
was, in part, my way of making
up for my absence in my broth-
er's life. Leroy was far more tol-
erable, grateful, forgiving, and
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—Gay Arnieri

Granmaw Gordon
Greenspace Update

The hearing for the appeal to the Atlanta Tree Conserva-
tion Commission concerning the Granmaw Gordon Tree
Removal Plan took place on Wednesday, January 13.
The Tree Commis-
sion denied the appeal, so the
Granmaw Gordon activists will
be appealing the case to Superi-
or Court. More details are forth-
coming from Teri Stewart in the
next issue of the Clarion.

From the Editor

We are honored to make this
issue of the Clarion a special
tribute to Leroy Freeman, a long-
time Lake Claire neighbor who
passed away on December 28 of
last year. Many Lake Claire resi-

dents submitted their personal
and heartfelt memories of Le-
roy, which you'll find throughout
these pages. Details of the funer-
al arrangements are still being
worked out, but we will share
them with the neighborhood as
soon as they are known.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, Feb 1: Summer
camp sign-up at Little Shop of
Stories, 10:00 a.m., 133A East
Court Square, Decatur. A sam-
piler mini-camp session will be
held Monday, Feb 15–Tuesday,
Feb 16, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00
p.m.; two days of capture the
flag, talent shows, art projects,
science experiments, fort build-
ing, storytelling, games, and
more. The camp is for kids ages 8–11.
Cost is $60. Space is limited, so
call ahead to reserve a spot. For
more information on all the
camper, check out www.little-
shopofstories.com.

Thursday, Feb 4: Taste of In-
man! 10:30–8:00 p.m., Inman
Middle School, 774 Virginia
Avenue. Join Inman Middle School,
your community, neighbors, and
friends for a dining extravera-
ganza featuring samplings from
twenty of the neighborhood’s fin-
est restaurants. Advance tickets
are $10 for students and $20 for
adults; at the door, tickets are
$15 for students and $25 for
adults. More information to come
at www.inmanniddleschool.org/
Taste_Of_Inman.html.

Thursday, Feb 4–Saturday,
Feb 6: Opening weekend of One
Twelve Gallery, a new local art
space located at 112 Krog Street,
in the Stove Works building.
The gallery's first exhibition is
the Works of Ted Haddock, the
director of photography for the
International Justice Mission.
In conjunction with the opening
is a conference entitled Dignity,
featuring an artist lecture by Ted
Haddock; a viewing of the Oscar-
nominated documentary film
Kavi, by director Gregg Helvey;
and a panel discussion with local
activists on Saturday morning
on what they are doing and what

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Flat fee: $30

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www.epworththatcandlerpark.net/pmo

can be done to combat human
trafficking in our city. Visit www.
onetwelvegallery.com or http://
onetwelvegallery.wordpress.com
for more information.

Saturday, Feb 6: The Chicks
in the City Symposium, 8:15
a.m.–12:30 p.m., Decatur Re-
creation Center, 231 Sycamore
Street, Decatur. Presented by
the Oakhurst Community Gar-
den, with partners Georgia Or-
ganics, Decatur Active Living,
and the Chicken Whisperer,
Inc. Taught by local experts, the
six sessions highlight going
from coop design to breeds and
from chicken illnesses to getting
started with backyard poultry.
Presenters will address local or-
dinances along with more prac-
tical, day-to-day concerns, such
as keeping chickens healthy and
coop maintenance. Cost is $65;
Oakhurst Community Garden
Project members, Georgia Organ-
ganics members, and City of Decatur
residents pay $50. Pre-registra-
tion is requested and limited to
the first one hundred registrants.
Register at https://app.etapetsy.
cart/OakhurstCommunity-
Garden/co2/index.php. For
additional information, call (478)
642-4977 to visit www.oakhurst-
garden.org.

Monday, Feb 8: Valentine’s
Day, WaterHaven Style, dem-
stration and tasting cooking class
hosted by the Atlanta Com-
unity Food Bank, The Cook’s
Warehouse Midtown/Ansynle
Mall, 7:00–9:00 p.m. Chef Chris
Lee of WaterHaven will show you
how to prepare a home-cooked
meal for the one you love. One
hundred percent of the proceeds
benefit the Atlanta Community
Food Bank. Tickets are $15 for
students and $20 for
adults; at the door, tickets are
$20 for students and $25 for
adults. More information to come
at www.acfb.org/
events/simple_abundance/.

Saturday, Feb 13: 5K Walk/
Run benefiting the Cornelio de
Lange Syndrorme (CDLS) Foun-
dation, 10:00 a.m., Medlock Park,
Decatur. For more information,
visit www.cdlsusa.org or e-mail
pomfrey@comcast.net.

Sunday, Feb 14: Valentine’s
Day Dinner, Community Center,
980 Briarcliff Road NE.
Enjoy a night of intimate jazz,
dinner, and dancing and help
support lung disease research,
education, and advocacy in the
community. Tickets are $75 per
person at www.atlantalaaball.
org or by calling (770) 434-5864.

Friday, Mar 5–Saturday,
Mar 6: First Baptist Church of
Decatur Old House Sale, 365
Clairemont Avenue, Decatur.
Friday, 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; Sat-
urday, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. (half-
price day). For information on
selling items and shopping the
sale, e-mail takisales@bellsouth.
net.

Saturday, Mar 6: The Sec-
ond Annual Decatur Old House
Fair, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Holi-
day Inn, 130 Clairemont Avenue,
Downtown Decatur. Hosted by the City of
Decatur, in partnership with the
DeKalb History Center and the
Decatur Preservation Alliance.
Owners of older homes can at-
tend how-to seminars and work-
shops on restoring old windows,
creating a maintenance plan, tax
credits for rehabilitation, histor-
ic landscapes, researching an
old house, and much more.
The fair will also include a large
exhibit hall of professionals, retail-
ers, and suppliers that specialize
in areas like home improvement,
historic preservation, and inte-
rior furnishings. For a seminar
schedule, exhibitor details, and
ticket information, visit www.
decaturoldhoueFNR.com.
Tickets are $10 when purchased
in advance; $15 at the door. Tickets
will be available on the website or
at select local establishments.

Claire’s List

Do you have a service or an
item that someone else might
need or want—something that
might add to your income or be
a thrifty option for a neighbor?
Let’s help each other out in these
tough times. Claire’s List offers
home-based services and mer-
chandise for sale, rent, loan,
barter, or free locally. It’s also a
place where you can post items
or services you want. Add your
posting for free by the 15th of the
month prior to publication.
Claire’s continued on page 3

www.LakeClaire.org
February 2010
Next LCN Meeting
Thursday February 18
Lake Claire Neighbors meets every third Thursday of the month at the Frazer Center. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.; the meeting begins at 7:00. Meetings are open to all. Check www.lakeclaire.org for updates to the meeting agenda.

Lake Claire Officers for 2010
President: Glenn Frankel, president@lakeclaire.org
VP, Communications: Tish Ganey, comm@lakeclaire.org
VP, Environment: Elise Cormier, environment@lakeclaire.org
VP, Finance: Cara Stevens, treasurer@lakeclaire.org
VP, Fundraising: Diane Moore, fun@lakeclaire.org
VP, Safety: Jennifer Horn, safety@lakeclaire.org
VP, Zoning: Dan White, zoning@lakeclaire.org
NPU Rep: Kathy Evans, npu@lakeclaire.org; alternate: Jennifer Sams

Lake Claire Neighbors, P.O. Box 5942, Atlanta, GA 31107
Visit www.lakeclaire.org to sign up for the newscasts—timely updates on happenings in Lake Claire!

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News from the Land Trust and the Hearth
Greetings, neighbors and friends! It is with excitement that we are sharing our news here in the Clarion, our monthly neighborhood newsletter. We are the collective of the Lake Claire Community Land Trust, and our mission is to cultivate a local green space in the Lake Claire community where neighbors and the larger community can gather to cultivate and celebrate nature, the arts, and each other. This idyllic community-owned green space in the heart of the city is ideal for outdoor activities, meetings, classes, camps, and fund-raisers and is intended to further the Land Trust educational, recreational, and charitable goals.

We greatly encourage neighbors to explore our property, located between Nelms and Arizona Avenues, just north of DeKalb Avenue. There are numerous garden areas, community gathering spots, and quiet private spots for reflection and calm in the center of the city. We also have a surprising menagerie of animals, including a frequent Great Blue Heron at the pond as well as an emu named Lou. People, plants, and animals come together to share space in wonderful ways here. We have drum circle gatherings on the first and third Saturdays of every month, and volunteer workdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on those Sundays, sharing efforts, fellowship, and pizza! Please visit www.LCLT.org for more information on music events, community work projects, and ways to get involved. The recent acquisition of more green space calls on us all to contribute what monies we can. The website has recently added Paypal links to organic girl / Grows and organic boy. Correct donation. We greatly encourage you to support these organizations. We consider your donations easier. Come often and share what you can. We all benefit!

On the northwest border of the Land Trust lies the magical Hearth community, devoted to furthering communication, creativity, and sustainability within our community. The Hearth took its name from the desire to create a gathering place: a site of warmth, welcome, creativity, dialogue, and comfort—a Hearth Community. Founded in 2008, the Hearth is a unique community center nestled on an acre of land, a peaceful oasis removed from the distractions of the city. Constructed by hand, the Hearth building feels much like a tree house with its nooks and winding staircases. Its grounds include an organic garden, a fire ring, and a pond, along with housing for our resident animals. Together the building and grounds create a serene environment reminiscent of a simpler time. Please be sure to check out ongoing classes and events at www.hearthatlanta.com.

Local Theatre Puts Seventies Hit on Stage
Every boy in this land / Grows to be his own man / In this land, an emu frequents to be her own woman / Take my hand. Come with me / Where the children are free / Come with me. Take my hand. / And we’ll run . . .

For more information, please check the website www.hearthatlanta.com.

Local Theatre Puts Seventies Hit on Stage

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February 2010
Lake Claire Clarion @ www.LakeClaire.org
As was noted at Leroy’s memorial service at Epworth, he was known for his persnickety taste in food. One day, Leroy came to our home and asked if we could make him a meal. We happily agreed, and I rushed to put something together for him as he waited at our front door. I handed it to him in a brown bag, and on our doorstep he opened the bag and looked in, searched with his eyes for a moment, and then looked back at me and said, “There’s no drink.” I asked him what he would like, and he responded, “Anything diet.” Considering Leroy’s beanpole structure, my husband and I thought that was so funny—the phrase “Anything diet” is still an inside joke in our family, and we fondly think of Leroy whenever we say it.

—Emily Veazey, Leonardo Avenue

I last saw Leroy Freeman on Christmas Day. He was retrieving his bicycle from the Branscomb-Collier family’s front porch on Leonardo, where he had locked it. My family had just had Christmas dinner there, and we offered him some food.

No, he said, he was heading off somewhere.

Leroy was tall and thin. He wore nondescript clothes and a baseball cap. He could often be seen riding around the neighborhood on an old bike. In an era when we live so thoroughly inside our houses, Leroy was an exception. He was out in the open. He beat a path around the neighborhood.

I first met Leroy about a year ago, although I had heard people mention him for a long time. He came by our house on Marlbrook Drive and asked if we needed any work. He then proceeded to drop by weekly, twice weekly, and sometimes more often to mow the lawn and seek out any work we had.

One morning before dawn, I drove past the Candler Park Market, heading to work. I saw Leroy there, sitting bolt upright on a chair, sound asleep. He slept outside last summer but moved back into a neighbor’s garage for the winter. I knew that he had breakfast every day with June Brown, who lives around the corner, and that he had lived in her garage for a time. He was a fast and competent worker. I was always amazed by his efficiency. I often wondered how someone as competent as he was had become homeless. But Leroy could be tough to deal with. He lived in the moment. He’d get mad if I didn’t have work for him. He’d grminate and stomp away from the front door.

Dealing with Leroy required me to make a firm decision about how someone as competent as he was had become homeless. But Leroy could be tough to deal with. He lived in the moment. He’d get mad if I didn’t have work for him. He’d grminate and stomp away from the front door.

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As I drove home this week, I spied a figure on the sidewalk in the shadows on Clifton and was poised to roll down the window for my six-year-old son to shout a greeting when I realized that “Mr. Leroy” was gone. The tears slowly came down my cheeks. I will never again see Leroy’s salutation of recognition or hear his commentary on the pace of my three-mile evening walks. So many little interactions with Leroy have enriched my nine years in Lake Claire. I wish I had spoken at the Epworth memorial service, but I was still absorbing his passing. And I regret that I paid no heed to the little voice inside me that told me to take a picture of Leroy and my son, Nicholas, a few days before Christmas. I was packing suitcases when Leroy came to the door and asked for...
Leroy continued from page 4

night. Nicholas brought him a plate and went to sit on the front stoop with him, as was their tradition. I heard Leroy laughing wholeheartedly through the door. Rather than sit in the open two-foot space, my son was trying to squeeze into the four-inch space between Leroy and the wall. Leroy let the little guy wiggle in, and they chatted away about Santa and school while Leroy ate. Then Leroy wished us a good trip and walked off into the night. That was my last memory of him.

For roughly the first three years that I knew Leroy, he was a handyman in the neighborhood who walked briskly up and down the streets with a lawn mower and a pair of gloves. We exchanged pleasantries and spoke about plants from time to time as I worked in the front yard. He knew my name, my dog’s name, and my husband’s name without even asking. He borrowed tools occasionally and cut the grass a few times. Once while I was struggling to lean a twenty-foot ladder up against the house, he appeared out of nowhere at my side: “Let me help you with that.” I cannot recall exactly when I first met Leroy in passing when he was struggling to lean a twenty-foot ladder up against the house, he appeared out of nowhere at my side: “Let me help you with that.”

At times, even in passing. Thank you, Leroy. I honor your Life and Life!

I trusted Leroy. Besides being an artful storyteller, Leroy was very good at reading people and their state of mind. He had endured a rough life on the streets but carried himself with much dignity. A few hard knocks he endured since 2000: he survived the fire set at the DeKalb Avenue VW repair shop, in which he was asleep; the blue bungalow on Harold he considered his was razed; his jaw was broken in a night shelter; he lost his disability benefits despite going through batteries of tests he felt were insulting; and his mother passed away at Grady.

During the last three years, Leroy’s visits became more sporadic. Sometimes he stopped by for just an empathetic ear. His chronic health conditions were worsening, he looked tired most of the time, and I worried more about him. I hope our community can raise funds to give him a proper burial. He had his idiosyncrasies, but he was an essential part of our neighborhood. Leroy was a good friend, and he will be missed.

—Celeste Provost

I moved into the Lake Claire community over two years ago. I first met Leroy in passing when I asked him for the first time for some change for bus fare at the time when it was only $1.75 exactly. He needed to get to Grady for treatment, as his diet seemed to have given him problems frequently. I got my updates on MARTA fares through him as he occasionally grudgingly would ask for enough change and notified me of the inflated prices. I remember feeling more than compelled to help him out. It was easy to dig my hand into my pocket and graze my fingers across his rough hand every time I gave him change, but it was never easy for me to ask more questions about who he was as an individual. As time passed and through many interactions, I began to realize he was a part of this community, and people helped him all the time. It never occurred to me that I would contribute compassion to his way of life by merely giving him change or food, a basic human need. I experienced that my fear of street folk, like Leroy, would open me up to a new perspective on that lifestyle, as we all have common basic needs. Because Leroy was who he was, I learned to love him for it. Through this relationship, I found it easier to acknowledge any person for who they really are and simply acknowledge their existence and how much that may mean to a person, for a moment, even in passing. Thank you, Leroy! I honor your Light and Life!

—Tashi Deley & Cecilia MARRERO

Leroy always had time for a smile and a friendly wave. He will be missed.

—Susan Drake

I love this neighborhood. I spent the early afternoon on Sunday, January 10, at Lake Claire Community Hall for the kickoff of a new statewide grassroots movement, Change Georgia Now, with a gathering of citizens, statewide office holders, and candidates, including Jason Carter, a friend and neighbor who’s the grandson of a former U.S. president and is now running for state Senate. Late afternoon was a memorial/tribute and blues concert in Candler Park for Mr. Leroy Freeman, a neighborhood fixture who had a heart attack a couple weeks ago and died at age fifty-three. No living relatives have been located, and his body is in the custody of the county awaiting burial. Leroy didn’t have a house in Lake Claire; he had many homes—as he was invited into people’s basements, porches, decks, garages. He was most often seen riding and walking his bike, helping out with gardens and opportunities missed. One mourner commented that when the three fire trucks and two ambulances showed up to attend to him upon his heart attack, it was most likely the most attention he had ever received from the government. We all very briefly contemplated our mortality. I don’t remember ever actually meeting Leroy. Sometimes we grieve for those we know, and sometimes we grieve for those we didn’t and then there’s that one.

—Sheri Mann Stewart

It’s said that bad news travels fast. The news of Leroy Freeman’s death passed from neighbor to neighbor throughout Lake Claire and Candler Park in short fashion. I received numerous calls from folks who wanted me to know, because Leroy was important to us.

On Sunday evening, January 10, Bluesheart band had planned a free concert. As Leroy was the “guard” for the band (as they loaded and unloaded equipment for practices), it was agreed that this would be a perfect way to remember him—inviting folks to come to Epworth to share memories and listen to music that he loved.

Leroy continued on page 6

Many folks spoke to me indicating that they would like to assist in giving Leroy a proper burial. I have notified the medical examiner to advise the family that the community of Lake Claire, Candler Park, and Epworth would like to assist in his burial expenses. As one neighbor said, “I don’t want him to have a pauper’s burial.” Another neighbor indicated that they would like to donate a tree in memory of Leroy and have it planted at Epworth. Epworth will be the holder of these offerings until we get further information from the DeKalb County investigator. Please look for further details as they become known.

—Regards, Pastor Lisa Dempsey, Epworth UMC at Candler Park

Epworth United Methodist Church held a rememberance concert for Leroy Freeman on Sunday, January 10.
Leroy continued from page 5

Leroy would have been taken
back had he seen the crowd at
Ewpworth in Dobbins Hall. It was
standing room only, an all-ages
crowd that came to honor Leroy!
Voices around the room recalled
his pride in being our neighbor-
hood watch captain. We fondly
remembered his many bikes, his
wave, and seeing him sitting up
at the CP Village. We recalled
that Leroy could have good days
and bad days (just like each of us!).
It became common ground for all
of us as we found that after a bad
day with Leroy, he would “take a
break” with us, but that he had a
“sixth sense” about when it had
been enough time and he could
come back around. Iris wrote the
most beautiful adaptation of the
Twenty-second Psalm for Leroy.
We laughed together as we were
reminded that Leroy had a defi-
nite idea about what he would
eat and wouldn’t just eat what
we thought was good to share.
For my part, Leroy taught this
preacher many things over the
five years we had a friendship.
I developed a grudging respect
for his wish to be independent. I
shared that I resisted。“Leroy,
homeless—for he had many
homes over the time I knew him,
and certainly by the many faces
there that evening, he did have
many homes. Looking at the faces
of the folks in Dobbins Hall that
night, I saw that Leroy did some-
thing else for us. Not only did he
help us to feel safer and remind
us all we have most in common;
he taught us about ourselves. More
than we knew before we lost him,
Leroy was very much the heart of
who this community is. The folks
of grace that shared plates of food,
clothing, shelter, cups of coffee,
tea, and breakfast at the back
teach door taught me the beauty
of this neighborhood. Leroy opened
up a world to us that we can be
in the face of need, and not just
his need. Our need to respect,
love, care for, and share mercy
with one another was fleshted out
as Leroy rode up and down the
streets of Lake Claire and CP.
I still catch myself looking for
Leroy at the corner market, with
his bike resting beside him. I am
sure that Leroy always will. Leroy
maintained his character and in-
tegrity regardless of his circum-
stance. He wasn’t perfect, but
neither are we. In the very best
sense of the word, I hope that
we can keep our “Leroy” lessons
alive, and strengthen the bonds
of our community, our neighbor-
hood through this loss. We don’t
have Leroy to watch for us any-
more, watch for him pulling us
together and know each other better, love
and share grace, and pass the
lesson on to our children. Thanks
be to God for the life of Leroy. He
will be missed!
—Pastor Lisa Dempsey

In memory of Leroy Freeman, please consider making a contribution to Clifton Sanctuary Ministries.

Biography continued from page 1

Beltline. Englewood Manor was
recently torn down to make way
for a mixed-income develop-
ment.
At seventeen, young Leroy had
open-heart surgery, and it was
around this time when he read
on his birth certificate that his
name was Leroy. Up until that
point, he had gone by Lamar. When
he saw the birth certifi-
cate, he started going by Leroy.
Several years later, probably
in the 1970s, Leroy enjoyed living
on his own, making good money
at Addison Windows, on Ells-
on his own, making good money
enjoying this car, one day some
VW he replaced it with did not
work, and that night they stole
and tip off the police.
He would often go up to the
house where someone had just
moved in and introduce himself.
If the new neighbor showed mis-
trust, Leroy would show great
patience and grace. Then, over
time, it would be clear that this
was not just somebody coming
through the neighborhood look-
ing for work or jobs, but a part of
the community—someone
who would be back to ring your
doorbell often.
Some spring days, when Leroy
was helping me prepare the soil
or plant, we would have a really
time, laughing and cutting up.
Other days, when I was not
ready for the doorbell ring, it was a
tense experience. But then a
few days later, he would be back,
and we would get a fresh start.
Leroy was a sort of glue in this
neighborhood—everybody knew
him or knew of him. Many had
hired him once or often to do
something. And he knew which of
us had which tools we would not
mind him using to do something
we needed. He remembered also
which members of which house-
holds would talk to him, and
what time was too early to ring
the doorbell.
And we may never know how
many suspicious characters he
tipped the police off to, and thus
how many crime incidents he
prevented.
Leroy found a way to be a
“community-supported” home-
less person. He wanted nothing
to do with homeless shelters. I
can’t help but wonder if other
neighborhoods couldn’t support
one person in this way, and even
provide some modest shelter they
could call their own, but only one
per neighborhood.
I sure considered Leroy a mem-
ber of our community, and I miss
him. Rest in peace, Leroy Lamar
Freeman.

—Sam Collier

Lake Claire Clarion @ www.LakeClaire.org
February 2010
Kids Cuisine

In the course of writing this column, I’ve discovered a few things. In addition to finding many family-friendly restaurants that welcome children with open arms, I’ve found that our daughter is a better eater while dining out at a restaurant than she is in the house. I am unsure if this situation is a testament to my culinary skills or if it is a matter of being in a more formal, and structured, environment. For my sake, I will venture a guess to say it is the latter. Still, my son is always looking for proven kid-friendly recipes—and beginner-level recipes at that.

Before we proceed with the reviews, I would like to request some feedback and recommendations from the readership. My email is below, and I would love to hear about your experiences. What family restaurants do you recommend? We are always looking to expand our circle of go-to family places. With that, two new recommendations are below.

In the summer months, we (re)discovered Oakhurst Village as we frequently visited McKay Pool. One place that caught our eye was Saba. We’ve been on the lookout for good, down-home Italian for some time, and we found what we were looking for in Saba. Atlanta magazine rated Saba the best new pasta restaurant when it opened in 2006, and they’ve maintained this distinction by offering a wonderful array of pastas, raviolis (the wild mushroom ravioli is terrific), and lasagna. In addition to the regular menu, they offer nightly specials ranging from chicken Parmesan to a fish of the day. The kids menu has several choices that are perfectly sized and priced. Tuesday is family night—kids eat free with the purchase of an adult entrée. As I’ve mentioned before, some restaurants claim to be child-friendly, and others prove it. The first thing you see when you enter the restaurant is a large toy chest filled with books, action figures, stuffed animals, and the like. On one of our visits to Saba, our daughter immediately gravitated to a Curious George stuffed animal and immediately gravitated to a Curious George stuffed animal and "reinforces the vibe, but the staff is witty and friendly. Aside from good New York–style pizza, they offer salads, subs, calzones, stromboli, lasagna, pastas, wings, and phenomenal breadsticks, as well as a full bar (I’m just saying). I’m a huge fan of the lasagna, and our daughter—not typically a pasta eater—loves the penne with marinara sauce. On a recent visit, around 5:00 p.m. on a Saturday, it seemed the children outnumbered the adults in the dining room, and there was plenty of interaction among them. Mojo has a handful of video games and a pinball machine for everyone to enjoy (we tried our hand in a racing game and found out quickly that our daughter is a terrible driver!). Simply put, Mojo is a terrific local hangout for all ages to enjoy!

Cliff Edelmann

Theatre continued from page 3 who learned early to “run where the children are free.” Says Synchromatic’s producing artistic director, Rachel May, “We selected [Free to Be...You and Me] because the three of us who founded the company had all grown up on it and can sing every word... For me, the album really was a huge part of what made me who I am. It encapsulates the notion that no matter what gender you are and what dreams you have, you can go for them.” Although it was written in the seventies, when gender roles were seen as more predetermined, she adds, “a lot of it is” still a fresh idea. You can be whatever you dream you want to be.

In the musical, four friends—William, Janet, Richard, and Vicki—played by adult actors, visit space, discover that it’s all right to cry, and learn that it’s just as okay if a boy wants a doll. This hip, groovy performance lets children know, in the words of Thomas and her friends, that each of their happily-ever-afters can, and will be different—and exciting.

Founded in 1997, Synchonic Theatre is a performing arts group that is dedicated to supporting women artists, forging community partnerships, and developing new work. The group presents three contemporary plays for adults annually through its Bold Voices series and two family musicals in the Family Series. Each year, it runs the Playmaking for Kids Program, an outreach program for at-risk kids. Free to Be... You and Me opens February 13 with shows at 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays, 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. on Sundays, and 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. After the 3:00 p.m. show on Saturday, February 27, come make your own ice cream sundae and join the cast for a post-show discussion. Tickets are $18 for adults and $15 for kids ages twelve and under. Through the “Ambassador Program,” every group of ten or more is awarded two free tickets. Purchase tickets at www.synchonictheatre.com by calling (404) 484-8636. 7 Stages is located at 1105 Euclid Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307.

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Cliff is president of ESQ Marketing, Inc., a firm that specializes in developing and implementing individualized marketing plans for attorneys and other professional service providers. He is also parent-in-charge of his two-year-old daughter, Amelia, Monday through Friday, and is in charge of nearly all meal planning. He can be reached at cedelmann@esqmarketing.com.
Cupid Lives!

Yes, Virginia, there is a Cupid—or, in this case, even two. And you can find the messengers of love at the corner of McLendon Avenue and Oakdale Road in nearby Candler Park, no less.

You, dear Reader, and I know these cupids as Dawn Kee and Wanda Nix, the engaging proprietors of Candler Park Flowers. For the last fourteen years, this talented duo has marked with floral artistry the memorable occasions, both joyous and solemn, in the lives of intown residents.

And now, with Valentine’s Day 2010 fast approaching, the ladies are once again preparing to salute this event with luscious, hand-tied bouquets of blooms created just for the sweethearts of Lake Claire.

Dawn and Wanda invite you to visit their website—www.candlerparkflowers.com—to discover a glorious selection of their European-style handiwork. But, most of all, they invite you to drop by the shop and meet our neighborhood cupids in person.

Both take great pride in rendering superlative customer service to the steady stream of intown customers that passes through their doorway. Dawn firmly believes that it is their sterling standard of care for intown communities like Lake Claire that is the truest measure of their success. Put their dedication to customer service together with the freshness of their product and their ability to concoct stunning creations at any price, and there you have it—our very own Cupid’s award-winning formula for success!

Recently Dawn took a few minutes away from delivering arrangements to answer some inquiries about the shop and her Lake Claire patrons.

The Clarion: How did you and Wanda come to start this business?

Dawn Kee: In 1996, we were both working for a local municipality—unhappily, I might add. My background is in counseling and Wanda’s is in administration. Along the way, I had discovered that I had a knack for sales and also a knack for design. After I opened the business, I invited Wanda to join me, and the rest is history.

TC: What current trends do you discern among your clientele?

DK: People love to arrange for their flowers to be delivered to the restaurant where they’re dining. There’s something really fun about creating what we call the “ooh-aah” factor! We do everything within our power to make our customers’ dreams come true.

TC: What’s the most popular flower with your Lake Claire neighbors?

DK: I’d have to say it’s the Gerbera daisy. The lily runs a close second, but people love the Gerbera for its vivid color.

TC: What is the best part about your business?

DK: Being a part of the neighborhood! We get to know our neighbors, their kids, even the family dog.

TC: Do you offer same-day delivery service in Lake Claire?

DK: Certainly!

TC: Could you tell us about your Frequent Flower cards?

DK: We keep a card on hand for each customer and mark it every time that particular neighbor makes a purchase. Then, at a certain point, we reward that loyalty with free treats. Our customers are quite adamant about keeping their cards current!

TC: To what do you and Wanda attribute your success?

DK: It’s very simple: we like what we do! * * *

So, yes, Virginia, there is a Cupid! And she is as close as the ring tone on your phone. Just call (404) 522-0005, and let the cupids of Candler Park Flowers make this February 14 a day your Lake Claire valentine will remember always.

—Susan Drake