



Working in the Neighborhood Small Businesses and Organizations in and around Lake Claire

What does it take to get a web-based business started? How does an established business keep its clients happy and expand, even in a tough economy? And what, exactly, is a yoga *ashram*? These are a few of the questions answered by the following articles highlighting some of the small businesses and a non-profit organization located in and around Lake Claire.

Lake Claire Mom Launches ScoopMama

Investigating Deals for Family Fun

If you're a parent who's ever wondered, "What am I going to do today?"—and who hasn't?—Julie Roseman is ready to help.

A stay-at-home mom of two young kids, Julie often found herself at a loss for fresh, fun, affordable activities to do with her son, Jed (5), and daughter, Ava (2-1/2). Having decided she would stay home full-time with the kids, Julie and her husband, Seth, were always looking for ways to cut costs, and one strategy that helped was using group-buying sites like Groupon and Scoutmob. But she quickly noticed that none of the deal sites she used catered to her specific demographic: families. A year



ScoopMama co-founder and Lake Claire resident Julie Roseman. Photo Credit: Heidi Hill

ago, she decided to do something about that.

Determined to help her family and other local families save money without sacrificing fun, she dreamed up a plan for a new group-buying website focused on families. Like other, similar sites, hers would offer daily deals on products and services and draw merchants from the metro Atlanta area. Unlike the other sites, her deals would be tailored specifically to families. Not only would her site support families in the always-challenging endeavor of raising kids, but it would also support local small businesses, helping them get the word out to potential customers and also giving them a larger share of the revenue than other sites give.

In thinking about her goals

SCOOPMAMA cont'd page 2

Sweetgrass (and Sweet Deals) Too!

Tucked behind the Flying Biscuit on McLendon Avenue lies one of Atlanta's best-kept secrets. Not to be confused with its sister salon in Little 5 Points, Sweetgrass Too offers the same high-end quality salon service within comfortable walking distance of Candler Park.

Established in 1994 by then-owner and stylist Mark Tschirhart, Sweetgrass Too on McLendon Avenue was originally named Alan Ryan Salon. In 2001, Mark's brother, Tim Tschirhart, a licensed chiropractor, opened Sweetgrass Salon & Wellness Spa on Moreland Avenue in Little 5 Points. Six years later, Tim assumed responsibility for the Candler Park salon, renaming it Sweetgrass Too. Tim currently manages the operations of both Sweetgrass salons.

Sweetgrass Too is planning on expanding into a full service wellness spa. Late last year, in anticipation of this expansion,

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Kashi Atlanta on January 11, 2011 after the snowstorm. Photo Credit: Beth Damon

Kashi Atlanta

More Than Yoga Classes

Since I live two blocks from Kashi Atlanta in Lake Claire, I have noticed it from the time of its location at the corner of McLendon and Nelms avenues in 2004. When I pass by I often see people going in and out with their mats, and I knew they held yoga classes. As I started speaking with neighbors and friends in researching this article, I found that Kashi is an urban yoga ash-

ram, and yoga classes are only the beginning.

The term *ashram* denotes a locus of community activity focused on living more spiritually and more fully. At Kashi Atlanta, this means the coming together of people of different faiths to strengthen their lives and spirituality through the practice yoga, meditation, and breathwork. It also means to serve and improve the community by participating in programs that help those in

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Sweetgrass Too located at 378 Clifton Road. Photo Credit: Leslie Slavich

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THE CLARION IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

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and business model, Julie hit on the idea of an “investigative” mom getting the inside “scoop” on deals for local family fun. And ScoopMama was born.

The Atlanta site launched on January 18, and a second market, Detroit, launched a week later. Becoming a subscriber to the site is simple, and free: you enter your email address and city at ScoopMama.com, and soon after you'll start receiving deals by email, for birthday parties, music lessons, summer camps, restaurants, jumpy places, CPR classes, photography sessions, haircuts, field trips, theater productions, classes, events—basically, anything families need and enjoy, from businesses you can trust and believe in, as Julie promises. All the merchants are based in the metro Atlanta area, with the exception of some “national” small businesses that sell online.

Once you click to buy a deal, you'll get an email with a coupon that can be redeemed with the business. The deal will typically expire in six months, although some will be effective for longer. To accommodate smaller business with little to no staff who



The ScoopMama logo, featuring an “investigative” mom.

supporting small businesses,” she says. And now when her kids ask to do something that's not in the budget, it fuels her to seek out a deal that will benefit her family—and others.

Thinking ahead, Julie has plans to add a reviewing feature

perform certain services—photography, live music at birthday parties, etc.—some deals will include a book-by date, which requires the buyer to make arrangements with the merchant within a specified period of time.

For Julie, who owned two small businesses herself after leaving her job as a television producer, it was important that ScoopMama do right by its vendors. Businesses don't pay anything to sign on with ScoopMama, they get a larger share of the revenue than other group-buying sites give, and they are given the option to do an exclusive “limited quantity available” deal—which helps small businesses manage the influx of customers instead of being hit by huge numbers they can't handle. As Julie says, it's their mission to help small businesses, not hurt their bottom line.

Along with her twofold goal of helping families save money and supporting small businesses, Julie had another very important goal in mind: setting a good example for her kids. “I wanted to teach my kids about saving money, about the value of a dollar, about being one's own boss and

to the site, where members can write their own reviews of the businesses and services, and build a sales team of moms to investigate deals. (ScoopMama currently has six employees—Julie, Seth, a team in Detroit, and a graphic artist.). She also wants to expand the site to include other cities. She picked Detroit to follow Atlanta in the initial launch because she and her husband are from the city, and she felt that, with its depressed economy, Detroit could truly benefit from a money-saving deal site for families. She knows there are many other cities that could benefit as well.

While Julie was looking for a second career that would afford her flexibility, running ScoopMama has become a full-time job. She claims not to be a salesperson by nature, but her passion for the project and eagerness to share it with others is infectious. She thinks, what's not to love about a website that helps you save money and have fun with your kids? “I'm doing good in the world,” she says. “It's expensive to raise kids! I'm helping families not go insane.”

—Heidi Hill

Sweetgrass *cont'd from page 1*

the salon relocated from McLendon Avenue to a new larger space around the corner at 378 Clifton Road. With renovations in full swing, Sweetgrass Too plans to convert its large basement into a serene, healing experience and will offer massages, facials and everything in between. The salon also has a nail technician currently on staff who does natural manicures.

Understanding the value-driven market in our current economy, stylist Kris Lavoie explains, “We are an Aveda-concept salon. From hair treatments to hair color and makeup, we pride ourselves on being organic, while also offering special incentives to new and existing clients.” The client referral program is one of the incentives offered, which allows both an existing client and a newly referred client 20% off any salon service. Another sweet deal for new clients is half-off their hair cut with color. Prices for cuts range from \$40-50 for women, \$30-35 for men, and start at \$20 for children 13 and under.

Asked what makes Sweetgrass Too different from other salons, Lavoie states simply that it's the individual care for each client, and the convenient location is certainly a perk. “We are community business,” said Lavoie. Sweetgrass Too is also on the web at www.sweetgrassspa.com.

—Lindsay Drake

Kashi *cont'd from page 1*

need and to create a sense of community with neighbors in the midst of our busy urban lives. According to Swami Jaya Devi, the spiritual director of Kashi Atlanta, “We teach people practical tools to live more conscious lives, to be present and awake. That's what yoga is about, being present in every moment, no matter how big or small.”

The Atlanta community has voted Kashi Atlanta “Best Yoga” for 10 consecutive years from 2000 to 2010, in *Creative Loafing's* Best of Atlanta. But Kashi Atlanta does not only offer Atlanta's best yoga, it is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to educate and serve humanity according to the principles of yoga, health, healing, meditation, spirituality, community service, and universal consciousness. Kashi has created numerous community service projects, including *Street Meals*, *Kashi KidsArt*, and the Kashi Care Team. Volunteers from Kashi (and anyone who is interested from the Lake Claire community is welcome to join them) go to a men's homeless shelter at Peachtree and Pine Street to deliver meals to people there. They meet Wednesdays at 11:30 am. They give smiles and encouragement to the folks, in addition to meals. Kashi Atlanta feeds over 20,000 people each year this way. Sandwiches are made on Tuesday evenings, beginning at 6:30 pm, on a volunteer basis, and again, anyone is welcome to help. Other service projects include *KidsArt*, in which volunteers go to Atlanta Children's Hospital at Emory and Northside Hospitals and make chil-

dren happy by doing art with them, such as coloring and foil art. And the yoga prison program has made a tremendous difference to the inmates.

Kashi Atlanta is an interfaith sanctuary based in the teachings of yoga, and accepting of all spiritual paths. It includes temples and shrines dedicated to many of the world's religious and spiritual traditions. Kashi Atlanta has three residences near the ashram. There are also numerous members and students of Kashi Atlanta who live in the surrounding areas of Lake Claire and beyond. Kashi Atlanta is a volunteer-run organization where everyone helps out, including taking care of the grounds and the building. I spoke recently with April “Nakini” Groom, who teaches with Kashi's yoga prison program. Talking about volunteering at Kashi, she said, “In the warmer months, for example, I water the flowers. Others clean, vacuum, do filing, volunteer at the desk, hand out flyers, etc.” Nakini also told me, “The Meditations are amazing!” Meditations are on Wednesday nights at 7:30 pm. She also mentioned a yoga class with Swami Jaya Devi, who has been voted Atlanta's best yoga instructor every year since the award began four years ago, at 10 am on Saturdays. In addition, Kashi offers Reiki courses and hosts a variety of kirtans (devotional chanting) throughout the year. Kashi welcomes visitors, first-time yoga students, and seasoned yoga practitioners. On the website there is a

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Lake Claire Neighbors

P.O. Box 5942 Atlanta, GA 31107 (404) 236-9526

Visit www.lakeclaire.org to sign up for the newscasts—timely updates on happenings in Lake Claire!

Safety Report

December 2010

BURGLARY

Sat 12/25 (11 pm)—1700 block of Dekalb Ave.

Someone broke out the front window and stole items.

Taken: Wallet and camera.

Druid Hills Night Shelter at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church

Twenty-eight years ago Druid Hills Presbyterian Church started a seasonal night shelter to serve the area's growing homeless population. For the first thirteen years it functioned as a one-night free shelter serving chronically homeless men. A one-night shelter is a first-come first-serve shelter that better provides for those without jobs who are able to arrive early to secure a spot for the night. The shelter was successful in providing shelter to men who needed to get out of the cold but we did not feel we were helping men turn their lives around.

Fifteen years ago the Druid Hills Night Shelter (DHNS) began transitioning to a shelter for a stable population of homeless men able to pursue employment and transitional housing. Men were referred to the shelter from other social service agencies and were guaranteed a spot each night as long as they attended the prior night and followed rules regarding drugs, alcohol, and behavior. During the transition, counseling services were added and the days of operation were extended from seven to nine months.

The Druid Hills Night Shelter now partners with 26 local churches, corporations, and groups to provide nightly meals to the shelter guests. Additionally, DHNS provides breakfast, hot shower facilities, single beds, laundry, secure personal lockers, public transportation support, phones with answering service for job related calls, a mailing address, limited job coaching, volunteer help with job search skills, and mentoring.

In 2010 the DHNS Board established a Visioning Team that has developed a Three Year Strategic Plan that calls for the shelter's transition to serving the community year round. The board felt it could better meet its goal of helping homeless men gain employment and move into transitional or permanent housing as a year round shelter. To better support a year round shelter, the DHNS is working to set itself up as a separate corporation with its own board (The Mission Team at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church currently serves as the board). Establishing itself as a separate corporation will better allow the DHNS to attain operational funding and to attract talented personnel to their board.

We are excited about this second period of transition and hope that it will be as successful as our original transition that began fifteen years

ago. However, we realize we cannot make this journey by ourselves. We need not only the additional support of the 26 groups that currently support the shelter, but also the involvement of new people and organizations. We would love to have you join us as we work to make a difference in the lives of the men served by the night shelter. Please contact Eric Dusenbury at (404) 522-7130 or dusenbur@bellsouth.net if you would like more information about how you can be involved.

The Druid Hills Night Shelter has two definitions of success. One is its process integrity. The other is the outcome for the shelter's residents to become employed in a job paying a self-sustaining wage and for the residents to move into appropriate long-term housing—transitional or permanent. From its 28-year history, DHNS has learned that the shelter's process success has an impact on the residents' success. Druid Hills Night Shelter endeavors to be a safe place where adult homeless men are consistently treated with respect and dignity and that provides them with a positive and supportive community and other appropriate, essential supports that contribute to them achieving self-sustaining employment and the ability to move into transitional or permanent housing. Success for DHNS consists of the shelter residents not only achieving self-sustaining employment and housing but also a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

—Eric Dusenbury

FREE SPAYING/NEUTERING

During the month of February, DeKalb County residents can get their dogs and cats spayed and neutered for FREE! Residents of DeKalb County can come by the shelter M-F from 10-5 and Sat from 10-4 to pick up a voucher. 845 Camp Rd/Decatur GA 30032. Program is offered through SPOT Society and is called PROJECT DEKALB. Program is for owned animals only; not available to rescue groups.

Letter from the Editor

Greetings! Since moving to Lake Claire a year and a half ago, I have been a devoted reader of the *Clarion*. I am so grateful that I get to live in this friendly, beautiful and interesting neighborhood, and that the *Clarion* does such a wonderful job of informing us about our community. From news from Lake Claire Neighbors, the Land Trust, and Clifton Sanctuary Ministries to articles about our neighbors and, as highlighted in this issue, our fantastic local businesses, the *Clarion* not only keeps us informed, it also highlights the best of our neighborhood.

So while I have no newspaper experience, I jumped at the chance to be the editor of the *Clarion*. I look forward to getting to know my neighbors and my neighborhood better in this capacity. I also look forward to hearing from you, whether it is in an article, through photos or artwork, in a letter to the editor, or just in an email with your suggestions. You can reach me at editor@lakeclaire.org or by calling the LCN voicemail at (404) 236-9526.

—Leslie Slavich

Lake Claire Security Patrol Seeks New Head and Memberships for 2011

We are in a new calendar year and have expended the finances allotted for the Lake Claire Security Patrol in 2010. We have collected some renewals for 2011, but we are at a critical juncture with the LCSP. We need to collect \$250 from 104 households in the neighborhood to continue the patrols at the current four days per week (four-hour shifts).

We also need someone to step up and manage the patrol. I started and have stabilized the process and can easily hand off the tasks associated with managing the patrol. Below are the tasks associated with this volunteer position and the time spent on each:

- Using PoliceShift to schedule the date/time of the patrol (depending on how far out you schedule, this takes 15 to 30 minutes)
- Tally up hours (in an Excel spreadsheet) and write a check to the officer biweekly (15 minutes)
- Send miscellaneous emails to members and communicate with APD/LCSP officer Jason Combee (this varies—but usually takes a few minutes a week)
- Recruit LCSP members to join and pay dues (this can be time-consuming, but about 30 minutes every week at the end of the year should make it happen)

We need someone to step up ASAP to take the reins with this. I will be happy to help with the transition and to help in anyway I can, but I need to step back from my current role and responsibilities. Feel free to contact me with any questions at jen@policeshift.com.

—Jennifer Horn, outgoing VP of Safety for LCN and head of the Lake Claire Security Patrol

Mark Your Calendar

February

7-11 Inman Book Fair to be held in the Media Center. It will be open during Taste of Inman on Thursday, January 10. Anyone interested in volunteering that week can email Stephanie Ricker sgriker@bellsouth.net.

10 Taste of Inman 2011! 5:30-8 pm, Inman Middle School, 774 Virginia Ave. Join Inman Middle School and your community, neighbors, and friends for this dining extravaganza, featuring an array of tasty menu samplings donated by at least twenty of our neighborhood's finest restaurants. Presale tickets will be available the week of the event: \$7 for children and \$17 for adults. At the door, tickets

are \$10 for children and \$20 for adults. Proceeds benefit the Inman Middle School PTA. See www.inmanmiddleschool.org for more information.

14 Valentine's Day

17 Lake Claire Neighbors meeting, 7 pm, Frazer Center atrium, 1815 S. Ponce de Leon Ave. (enter at the back entrance at the end of Ridgewood Road).

18-21 APS Winter Break

21 Washington's Birthday (Presidents' Day)

24 NPU-N meeting, 7 pm,

Little Five Points Community Center, 1083 Austin Ave. NE.

26 Academe Hosts Annual Mid-Winter Auction and Celebration, 6:30 pm, Angora Hall at Clarkston Community Center on College Avenue. Academe of the Oaks will host "Puttin' on the Glitz"—a glittering soirée featuring auction, casino and a dinner in support and in celebration of the school's community and programs. Festivities, around a "Roaring 'Twenties" theme, will begin at 6:30 pm. Period dress welcomed! The auction features items donated by area businesses and the school community, including dining, entertainment, books, music, jewelry, original art, vacation homes, and professional services. Tickets

are \$35 per person in advance, \$45 per person at the door. Ticket prices include an initial supply of chips for use in the casino. Purchase tickets online at www.academeatlanta.org.

Academe of the Oaks is an independent, non-sectarian, co-educational, accredited high school in Decatur, enrolling students in grades nine through twelve. Contact: Frances Reed, freed@academeatlanta.org, Academe of the Oaks, 146 New St., Decatur, (404) 405-2173.

March

4-5 ChantLanta 2011 Sacred Music Festival, evening of March 4th and all day March 5th, Druid Hills Baptist Church, 1085 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, www.chantlanta.org.

Help Clifton Sanctuary Ministries Raise Funds

Participate in The Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk

Clifton Sanctuary Ministries is again participating in The Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk on Sunday, March 13 at 2 pm, starting and ending at Turner Field. We participated last year and raised a good amount of money. It was a lot of fun, albeit a little chilly.

The way the Hunger Walk works is this: if Clifton collects donations or gets people to donate online to the Food Bank and designate Clifton as their agency, we receive a percentage of the donation credited to

our Food Bank account. Clifton receives 70% of online donations and 60% of check and cash donations. We raised over \$2000 last year and, as such, received about \$1250 credited to our Food Bank account.

If you are interested in donating or participating in the Hunger Walk, contact Leslie Prince, leslieprince@comcast.net. More information about the Atlanta Community Food Bank and the Hunger Walk can be found at www.acfb.org.

—Leslie Prince

ChantLanta 2011

Sacred Music Festival to be Held on March 4th and 5th

Last winter, a small group of individuals gathered on the living room floor of a house in suburban Atlanta. Over tea and laughter, the group discussed their collective dream to create a small gathering: a sacred music festival where spiritual seekers could come together and share in the practices of love and devotion. They envisioned bringing a few bands together to share their music and raise money for charity. From this, ChantLanta was born.



In the following months, their humble plans quickly grew into a 12-hour sacred music festival that drew hundreds of people to enjoy seven bands from the Southeast and an expansive buffet dinner of locally donated food. The event raised thousands of dollars for two charities: one local and one international, in order to give back to the immediate neighborhood and wider global community.

Today, the organizers are pleased to announce the second annual ChantLanta, to be held on the evening of March 4th and all day March 5th. With the great success of the 2010 event, they have partnered with the Druid Hills Baptist Church to use their acoustically vibrant Sanctuary as the main stage. Musicians from across the Southeast will bring their hearts and voices, sharing sacred music from diverse traditions including Yoga, Judaism, and Islam. Meditation, Yoga, drumming and dancing, a silent auction, and amazing local vegetarian food will be featured.

As always, the event is FREE, and people of all ages are welcome. Proceeds will support two charities, Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Water is Life: Kenya. More information about the amazing work of these charities, ways to become involved, and a finalized schedule will be posted at www.chantlanta.org. Please come on March 4th and 5th for a joyful and uplifting experience!

—Christine Bourney

—Graphic Credit: Ian Boccio

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The Lake Claire Community Land Trust ... Building Community



Reuben Haller with family (from left) Elijah, Devon, and McKenzie.

I decided, upon arriving in Atlanta sixteen years ago, that I would explore various neighborhoods to see where I wanted to live. It was summer, so I did my neighborhood tours early, before the heat. I had known almost immediately I wanted to settle here: it was two years before the Olympics, and the town felt like a rocket taking off, it was so dynamic. I also felt Atlanta was

home. I found folks warm and welcoming, though I noticed they drove very slowly. How things have changed. So one morning I slowly drove down a Lake Claire Street and got a wonderful feeling about it. The block had something special about it, but I knew not what. From my car window I asked someone if they knew of a place for rent on that block. They didn't, so I ended up moving to Oakdale off McLendon—but not for long. Soon, I moved to that mystery block because of a toilet that fell through my bathroom floor (a story for a different time!). That street turned out to be Arizona Avenue.

What I discovered there was that a group of neighbors went against the normal grain of American society: rather than retreat into their homes to watch TV, the neighbors all came out of their homes to hang out, visit, cook, and celebrate together. What a concept! And not only that: they had also bought land together and created a charming

green space where kids and families and hippies and dog owners and gardeners and everyone else could enjoy life in community.

What I found was an intentional community, but the intent was simply for people to do what they wanted and do it together. It was very laissez-faire: you could have as much community or as little as you wanted. Very American!

I loved this community and I still do, as I have watched it change over the years. The neighborhood has gentrified. The founders, iconoclastic, anarchistic and particularly fun, have, for the most part, let others carry the torch after years of giving to the community. The Land Trust now has by-laws, a Board of Directors, 501(c)(3) status, and committees to organize all kinds of things, from gardens to music festivals. In the past the ethos was: do what you want, when you want, as much as you want.

Despite the changes, the Lake Claire Community Land Trust remains a sleepy little magic

garden of peace, flowers and tranquility. There are activities: drum circles, Easter egg hunts, festivals, sweats, and potlucks. Some of the faces have changed, but the Land Trust is still a place to be with neighbors. Consider becoming a member of the Land Trust if you live in Lake Claire, even if you are a few blocks away. Come enjoy the quiet of nature or a celebratory event. But support the Trust so it can remain there for you.

—Reuben Haller

Yearly Membership for the Lake Claire Community Land Trust

Individual:

\$3/month or \$35/year

Couple/Family

\$6.25/month or \$75/year

Student/Senior

\$2.10/month or \$25/year

All membership dues are tax deductible!

A Glimpse of Grady High School

Pass the giant pencil and the security door and stroll the halls of three floors. You'll find 15 students **writing plays** with a local professional writer and another dozen **applying for college** in the College and Career Center. Georgia Tech students are **tutoring math**, and five **sports** teams are practicing on various fields or across the street in the park. About 30 students of all grades are boarding a bus to the weekly downtown **debate** coaching session.

On any weekday after school, you'd find all this at Grady High School. As a Grady parent, here's a glimpse of what's good—and what's challenging—for the 2010-11 school year (a freely-biased but fair account based on our experience. We have two kids at Grady: Ollie a junior and Emma a sophomore.) First, the good stuff:

Academies: This year, like all APS schools, Grady introduced 'Academies.' We have four: Technology, Communications and Journalism, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Public Policy and Justice. This year just the ninth graders take part; each year the new ninth graders will be added.

Communications: The school's newspaper, radio program, and

TV station continue to win top national awards each year. Students compete to get into the junior/senior year journalism classes with outstanding instructors.

Math/science: Math is not Grady's strength, but it's improving. At least 40 kids are in small classes of an excellent AP Calculus class this year. There's a Math Advocacy parent group that supports teachers implementing Georgia's integrated math curriculum. Science favorites include Physics and Environmental Science, both with AP classes. The Robotics team won a top state award this year.

Speech and Debate: These teams have put Grady on the map in recent years, winning multiple state and national awards. Just a few examples: Michael Barlowe met President Obama last summer, with other top winners of the National Urban Debate League; 26 students, a pretty even mix of girls and guys, have qualified for a national tournament this May. The program also involves hundreds of kids each year.

The arts: Both the orchestra and the chorus have large and select groups; a group of youths recently formed a jazz band out of the large marching band.

Who in Atlanta hasn't heard of Grady's awesome Urban Couture fashion design program? Every May, their multi-media show sells out; it involves Grady musicians, designers and models. In February you can attend the musical "Hairspray," along with the monthly coffeehouses and other drama.

Sports: Lots of them! Traditional: this year, the Grady varsity football team won the 5AAA regional championship with an 11-2 record; we have strong teams for girls and boys in soccer, softball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, cross country and track. Cross country runs all summer long!

Nontraditional: The Ultimate Frisbee team is five years strong and did well at the state tournament last year. Water polo started in 2010.

Essential Extras: Parents, retired teachers, and even alumni parents run wonderful works:

-The Writing Center is active four afternoons a week with tutoring, writing workshops, and contests.

-The College and Career Center (CCC) is one of the most active, inviting rooms in the building. Buzzing computers, college recruiters, and volunteer advisors assist students to dream big and

connect with opportunities.

Challenges: A top concern is overcrowding: our enrollment this year neared 1,500. With a building over capacity and budget cuts for all public schools for the next few years, we've seen crowded hallways and some chaos for the first six weeks of school. A second priority is strengthening the math program.

Here's a quick summary that, on most days, our family would agree on: we're glad to be at Grady for high school. There's a range of opportunities and some exciting/challenging classes each year. Socially, there are conflicts and cliques, but overall kids are happy here and there's lots of crossover between groups. Like any public high school, Grady requires several essential qualities to thrive: flexibility, optimism, and the capacity to release stress!

For more info, visit the Grady website www.srt5.atlantapublicschools.us/grady. Top sections: the college and career center; the academies; and the Jester's (also at www.Gradyspeaks.org). (Proud promotion: email me if you'd like a subscription to the newspaper, *The Southerner*—a great way to get to know the school! melissa.grasse@gmail.com)

—Melissa Aberle-Grasse

Snow Days!

January 10th- 14th



A family walking their dog in the snow.

The snow started falling late Sunday and early Monday morning on January 10th, and it took nearly a week to melt. Due to the icy roads, school was cancelled all week. And the kids of Lake Claire made the best of it, having fun sledding, making snowmen and using the opportunity of having all of their neighbors at home to sell Girl Scout cookies.



Lucy Sturm of Delaware Avenue helps clean snow off neighbors' cars.



Alison Dubose with baby Benjamin of Delaware Avenue.



Jamie and Sara McGill of Delaware Avenue stop to say hello to a snowman while selling Girl Scout cookies.



A snow covered Leonardo Avenue.

Photo Credits: Beth Damon

Kashi *cont'd from page 2*

guide for new students, with a section on most frequently asked questions.

Why do yoga? A short answer is that yoga makes you feel better. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit "yuj," which means "union" or "yoking together." On the most superficial level, it balances and integrates the body. Practicing the postures, breath-

ing exercises, and meditation makes you healthier in body, mind and spirit. For many, that alone is enough. Further research, however, shows that yoga helps manage or control anxiety, arthritis, back pain, blood pressure, carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic fatigue, depression,

diabetes, epilepsy, headaches, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, stress and other conditions and diseases. Yoga may well be one of the world's most perfect forms of spiritual, physical and mental self-development. And a wonderful thing about yoga is that virtually anyone can practice — people who are young and healthy and people in their 80s, as well as those confined to wheelchairs.

And back to Kashi itself, you can see that it is "more than yoga." It is about yoga, service, and creating a sense of community. It is a valuable part of our Lake Claire neighborhood. Getting involved with their community service projects allows volunteers to let go of their own struggles for a few hours and focus on others, which can be a real gift. As many Kashi volunteers attest, service ultimately creates "the ability to live more fearlessly in the world." You might start with yoga and discover the ashram. And if you don't believe in talk about enlightenment, spirit, and the rest of it, that's okay, too. Yoga doesn't discriminate.

—Beth Damon

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Lake Claire Neighbors Meeting: January Minutes

January 20, 2010

Led by Sarah Wynn

Attended by 40 neighbors (5 officers) and 5 guests

Minutes recorded by Heidi Hill

Sarah Wynn, president of Lake Claire Neighbors, opened the meeting at 7:06 pm. She introduced herself and then invited neighbors to introduce themselves by name and street.

1) Guest speakers. Sarah welcomed guests Valencia Hudson, from city councilmember Natalyn Archibong's office, and APD Lieutenant Scott Pautsch. Hudson announced the senior services seminar on February 12 between 10:30 am and 12 pm at Drew Charter School. She informed neighbors that the four-way stop sign at Ridgewood and McLendon was still in process and that there had been a couple of recent robberies in surrounding areas.

A neighbor asked about the ongoing conversations with MARTA regarding the number of buses coming in and out of the Frazer Center through the back entrance on Ridgewood. Had she made any inroads with MARTA? Hudson said she had been eased out of those conversations. The neighbor, Kevin Tompson-Hooper, asked why the planned meeting between neighbors and MARTA hadn't happened. Hudson thought the meeting had taken place and asked if buses were still idling on Ridgewood. Sara Tompson-Hooper said they were, and Kevin added that since the road had been repaved, speeding was also again an issue. Hudson said she would look into it. Sarah Wynn added that she knew of two upcoming MARTA meetings in DeKalb County and would forward the information on to the neighbors.

APD Lieutenant Scott Pautsch introduced himself as the evening watch lieutenant for Zone 6. He discussed recent crime numbers, noting that crime in our neighborhood was down 49.3 percent since this time last year, the biggest decrease in the area. He added that the biggest problem continues to be theft from auto and reminded neighbors not to leave any personal belongings in their vehicles. (Lieutenant Pautsch's contact information: APD, Zone Six Precinct, 2025 Hosea L. Williams Drive, SE, Atlanta, GA 30317, Office: (404) 371-5002, spautsch@atlanta.ga.gov)

2) LCN officer reports. No officers had anything to report, so Sarah presented the treasurer's report. LCN currently has \$13,875.05 in its checking and savings accounts, and \$6,280.37 in an account for upkeep of the Watershed mural. She reminded neighbors that the executive committee and membership had decided to delay donations to local organizations until after the first quarter of 2011 in order to look at the budget and determine how much the neighborhood could give.

3) Announcements. The first announcement was that 2011 dues are due. A pay form was available at the meeting and neighbors were invited to pay by check at the meeting. Sarah also noted that neighbors can pay their dues online by PayPal. As of January, only seventeen households had paid their dues. A list of everyone who has paid dues for the year will appear in an upcoming *Clarion*.

Sarah then announced openings in the LCN executive committee. Robby Handley, who is responsible for the organic garden at Clifton Sanctuary Ministries, has volunteered for VP of Environment. There is still a vacancy for VP of Safety—anyone interested in learning more or volunteering for this role may contact Sarah Wynn at president@lakeclaire.org.

Last, Sarah gave an update on the 2011 Lake Claire Security Patrol. For-

mer VP of Safety Jen Horn, who also ran the security patrol, no longer lives in the neighborhood and needs to hand over the management of the patrol to another neighbor. So far this year, ten households have paid their \$250 dues to be part of the patrol. Last year, 156 households were part of the patrol, and 104 more are needed for the patrol to remain in effect for 2011. Anyone interested in heading up the patrol can contact Sarah Wynn for more details. If there is no interest in both leadership and membership, the patrol will be discontinued.

4) Voting items/Land use. Dan White, VP of Zoning, announced that there were three variance requests, which would be heard by order of filing. The first variance would be V-10-159. The applicant was seeking a special exception to a nonconforming legal duplex to expand off the rear of the house and create a sun porch, bathroom, and expanded master bedroom. Before inviting the applicant to speak, Dan read from the city code with regard to variances and explained the line of review for variances.

4a) Applicant Mike Fisk, the homeowner at 1699 McLendon, explained the variance request. Of twenty-two surrounding neighbors (within 150 feet), nineteen had given a signature of approval, two could not be reached, and one had requested more information. His goal with the renovation was to create a bigger

master bedroom and add a second bathroom to the 2/1 upstairs and to add a screened porch to the back of the house. By ripping out an existing concrete slab and building the porch on top of it, the impervious percentage would remain at 56 percent after the renovation. The addition would abide by the setback, and so this was not a traditional variance request.

Neighbors were shown pictures of the property and diagrams of the proposed work. A neighbor asked about any water issues created by the proposed plan, and the applicant said it would not be an issue. Another neighbor asked about trees, and Fisk said that only a few small shrubs would be taken out. Sarah Wynn confirmed that all required paperwork had been submitted.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

4b) The next variance request (V-10-202) was introduced. The homeowner of 1732 McLendon Ave. was seeking a reduction in the half front yard setback from 17.5 feet to 10.5 feet to allow for construction of a screened porch, storage room, and carport in the rear of the property. The applicant explained that the house was built in 1927, before the zoning laws, so the variance would allow for maintaining the existing footprint of the property. The proposed work would involve tearing down the existing carport and replacing it with a newer, smaller carport located closer to the rear of the house and connected to it by a screened porch. The addition would be aligned to the current structure. The impervious percentage would increase slightly from

43 percent to 45 percent.

The homeowner showed photos of the property and diagrams of the proposed work. Of the immediate neighbors, only one could not be reached for a signature of approval.

A neighbor asked how tall the new carport would be. The applicant said it would be fifteen feet tall. Another neighbor asked if the driveway would be redirected—it would—and if the homeowners had plans for the new open space, which they said they hoped to turn into a usable back yard.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The results of the first vote were announced: the first variance request was unanimously approved by the membership.

4c) Dan White announced that the third variance request (V-10-121) was a rehearing based on modification of an earlier proposed plan, heard in November 2010. The builder of 546 Hardendorf

Ave. had brought the request to two previous meetings and the NPU meeting, where a vote was deferred and he was asked to go back to the neighbors to revise the proposed plan. The builder and the immediate neighbors had met the night before the neighborhood meeting and come up with a revised plan. Because the request was a late addition to the agenda and because of the history of the request, some adjustments would be made to the process.

The applicant was seeking to reduce the half-depth side yard setback from 17.5 feet to 12

feet to allow for construction of a single-family home.

Shea Roberts, representing applicant Tim Allen, told the gathered membership that the builder had added architectural elements so that there was not a

solid-wall effect and had shortened the height of the front porch. She also indicated that the prospective buyers were present at the meeting. Photos were shown of the property and the properties across the streets.

Neighbors asked about the elevation of the front steps, if

dirt would be brought onto the site, if the garage would be replaced by greenspace, how close the house would be to the house behind it, and what would happen to the tree on the northeast side of the house. The applicant answered that there would be six front steps, that existing dirt would be redistributed, that greenspace would replace the garage, that the house would be forty-eight feet from the one behind it, and that the tree, a white oak, could not be salvaged because it was DDH.

A neighbor asked if the map of neighbors who approved or did not approve the request had been revised since last night's meeting, and it had not. A present immediately affected neighbor noted that she would not give her approval until all requests were agreed to in writing. It was explained that the immediately impacted neighbors were asked for their approval first, but the membership could vote without their approval. Tim Allen noted that he still wanted the support of the immediate neighbors.

Roberts read a prepared agreement that indicated the plans were a revision of the original variance request submitted to the city. Immediate neighbor Kathy Evans read a requested addition to the agreement that Roberts and Allen agreed to include.

Sarah Wynn announced that she had received one email by a neighbor disappointed by the late addition of the request to the agenda. Sarah stressed that the request would also be heard at the NPU meeting on January 27, and requested that an email newscast be sent to neighbors informing them of this.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The results of the second vote were announced: the second variance request was approved by the membership by a vote of 36 to 2.

5) Final announcements. Sarah Wynn announced that Lake Claire banners and bumper stickers were available for purchase. She relayed a message from Trace Haythorn, executive director of the Frazer Center, about a new Dumpster service that would begin in two weeks.

The results of the third vote were announced: the third variance request was approved by the membership by a vote of 30 to 9.

The meeting ended at 8:21 pm.

Next LCN Meeting

Thursday February 17

Lake Claire Neighbors meets every third Thursday of the month at the Frazer Center. Meetings begin at 7 pm and are open to all. Sign up for the newscast at www.lakeclaire.org to get the meeting agenda.



Biscuits & Bellyrubs

Anna Trodglan

First Chevy Volt in Georgia Comes to Lake Claire

What if you could drive to and from work each day without ever stopping for gas? Lake Claire neighbor Chris Campbell can. He is the proud owner of the first Chevrolet Volt in Georgia. The Volt is the first mass-produced plug-in hybrid electric car.

Mr. Campbell had to travel to Washington, D.C. to pick up the car after having ordered it in July. At the time, he had no idea how the interior of the car would look. Luckily for him, it has simple two-tone leather interior, though the car can be configured to have green inner door panels, odd graphics, and a rather unattractive white plastic center console. He has the Volt on lease for three years, a wise precaution since he would have been buying a car he had never seen. He is feeling great about his choice and says that his next car will almost certainly be electric, one of twenty or so electric vehicles (EVs) available in 2014.

Mr. Campbell is a great ambassador for the car and provided a very thorough introduction. He says, "Neighbors are welcome to stop by 442 Harold Ave. and take a look at the car in the driveway. If you'd like to get a look inside, or a demo ride, or just have questions, contact me via www.FirstVoltInGeorgia.com, and I'll be happy to arrange a date and time to get together."

While the Volt's main claim to fame is its partially electric power train, it has many other innovative features, such as a smart phone app that allows your phone to act as a long-range remote to view the vehicle's charge status and tire pressure, and even remotely command the car to start preheating the cabin. All of the phone functions work from any distance, even across the world, since they use the cell phone data



Chris Campbell with his Chevy Volt. Photo Credit: Logan Casey

network and GM's OnStar service. Everything about the vehicle is different. From its hidden exhaust pipe to its pencil sharpener-like planetary gearset transmission, the Volt is thoroughly new.

The Volt is a mix of the technologies found in fully electric cars like the Nissan Leaf and those found in hybrids, such as the Toyota Prius. The Volt drives between 25 and 50 miles on electricity alone, and then its small gasoline engine powers a generator to extend the car's range by another 300 miles (or as far you want to go, with access to a gas station, of course!).

The average commuter will use zero gas during regular daily driving. On his drive home from Washington D.C., Mr. Campbell filled the gas tank in South Carolina and the remains of that tank are still in the car. He says, "I have not burned a drop of gasoline since I arrived back in town with the Volt on December 28th and expect to need gas only on days that I'm doing a lot of driving."

The Volt's gasoline engine is a variant of the 1.4-liter engine in the Cruze, Chevy's other new car. After the electric charge of the Volt has been depleted, only then does the Volt start using gasoline, and at that point it gets about 37 miles per gallon. The electric range var-

ies depending on driving conditions and the driver's aggressiveness. In cold weather, the Volt's range is lower, about 25 to 30 miles, versus the official 35-mile figure that can be obtained in warmer conditions.

It takes ten hours to charge the Volt with the portable charger that comes with the car. It takes only four hours to charge with an optional more expensive charger that requires a special outlet, which can be installed in the owner's house or garage. Since the electric engine is the primary source of propulsion for the car, it can take several months to use a tank of gas. Because of this, the gas tank is pressurized so that the fuel does not become stale.

Though the Chevy Volt is smaller and not as luxurious as other cars its price, its interior is nicer than a Honda Civic or Toyota Corolla. Electric cars generally are far more expensive than comparable gasoline vehicles, but this difference in price is reduced by a \$7,500 federal tax credit. In addition, the state of Georgia offers a \$5,000 credit for pure electric vehicles (for which the Volt does not qualify but the Nissan Leaf does). In addition, the operating cost of EVs is less because of the lower price of electricity. GM also offers a clever money-saving feature in the Volt. The car can be programmed to delay its charger's start until late

in the night, when cheaper power can be obtained through a special plan with the electric company. The portable charger uses electricity at approximately the same rate as a small space heater.

Overall, the Volt lives up to its futuristic (but not radical) looks and reputation. While it doesn't lose its gas tank, it brings fossil fuel independence a little closer.

—Logan Casey, age 11

Personal and Business Classifieds

Personal classified ads are free. Business classified ads are ONLY \$3 per line prepaid! For more info, contact newsletter@lakeclaire.org. To submit an ad by mail, send it to Lake Claire Neighbors, P.O. Box 5942, Atlanta, GA 31107, and include a check made out to Lake Claire Neighbors. Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

FAERY TEA PARTY! Invite Faerlie to create a faery tea party for your child's birthday or other special occasion. Planned gatherings include songs, games, a craft, and of course, lovely faery cakes to have with tea. Suitable for children 4 to 8 years of age with a maximum of 8 per event. Please call Jacquelyn Howard at 404-520-6904 for further details.

HANDYMAN / LIGHT ELECTRICAL Neighborhood References, No job too small, Jacob Franklin: 404-863-7657

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