



A Day in the Life. . . A Year in the Life . . . A Decade of Life in Lake Claire Park

The warming sun of spring calls them out this time each year: the charioteers, kicking their legs to urge on their worthy steeds, leaning bravely forward as they near their destination. They wave their hands high in anticipation, lifting their flagons in celebration as they greet their comrades in the softening light of late afternoon. Once in the arena, they dismount quickly and run headlong to their marks: the swing-set, the play structure, the field, and the woods.



Price O'Keeffe getting ready to slide.



Ben and Daniel Morgan and Brad and Jack Morris enjoying the swings.

spring turns to summer, the barbecues heat up, the lengthening days allow more leisurely playtime, and winter coats and runny noses give way to sunscreen and water bottles. By the height of summer, the exuberance is palpable in the park each late afternoon, as kids, dogs, and soccer balls work up a mutual frenzy of activity. Summer ends abruptly when the school bells ring, and as the days grow shorter, visits to the park become furtive and few.

We are fortunate in our small

LAKE CLAIRE PARK cont'd page 3

Such is the afternoon ritual enjoyed at Lake Claire Park. I have had the joy of living next to the park for over ten years now, and I never tire of looking out our kitchen window to see our young neighbors arriving in the park.

Each year has its seasons: this winter, of course, we enjoyed a blockbuster snowstorm that turned the park into a ski resort, complete with moguls. (Okay, there was only one mogul, but you really could catch air if you hit it just right.) This time of year, as spring approaches, neighbors shake off their cabin fever and greet one another with new babies in tow—along with last year's batch of babies, now toddlers—and catch up on news of school, family, and work. As



Nick Brookner steering the ship.

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RECYCLED PAPER.

Park Maintenance and an Update on the Stairs

Lake Claire Park is heavily used, and it requires a great deal of maintenance from the City of Atlanta. The garbage receptacles fill up quickly; the field endures constant use and must be intensively groomed; and vandalism and ordinary wear-and-tear take their toll on every fixture in the park, including park signs, benches, picnic tables, light fixtures, and the pavilion.

Over the past ten years, the parks department has made several substantial improvements to the park. The tennis court was resurfaced in 2001, and in the following years a much-needed drainage system was installed near the playground. After a neighbor fell and suffered a fracture on the muddy hill leading up to Almeta, the city installed a safe entrance from Almeta into the park.

Neighbors have volunteered from time to time to make other improvements. Lake Claire's garden club installed shrubs and flowers in the areas next to the tennis court and on the hill between the tennis court and the playground. Volunteer groups organized by neighbors and

outfitted by Park Pride have cut away the English ivy that threatens the trees on the hillside next to Lakeshore. A hardy group of souls battled the kudzu in the ravine off of McLendon into submission.

Important challenges remain. In 2001, the Lake Claire Park Committee, which I then chaired, warned the Parks Department of the danger posed by the rotted, deeply pitted railway ties that formed the stairways leading from the playground up the hill to the tennis courts and the pavilion. The city responded by patching the holes in the rotten timbers, a temporary fix that held up for several years. But in 2009, the concrete patches had failed, and a neighbor fell on the once-again deeply pitted stairs and broke her collarbone. I wrote the City of Atlanta in the fall of 2009 and implored the parks department to repair the dangerous stairs. The City responded by installing orange netting meant to keep people off of the stairs. Almost a year went by with no further action, and I wrote again. I received a response, but no action was taken.

My worst fears were realized on November 4 of last year, when



The cordoned-off park steps prior to their removal. Photo Credit: Bruce Fort

a man fell near the pavilion and suffered a compound fracture in his ankle. Rescue workers in the playground area told me they were unable to reach the man because they could not get their equipment up the slippery hillside next to the cordoned-off stairs. They eventually found their way to the man via the McLendon entrance, but precious time was lost in helping the accident victim because the stairway system was inaccessible. I went to the fire department

to retrieve an accident report so I could contact the victim, but the report did not identify the man, who was homeless.

Again I contacted the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA) and this time they responded quickly. Within days, the offending stairs were torn out and replaced with mulch. There is still no indication of when a safe stairway system will be installed. I last heard from the DPRCA in mid-November in an email that said that, "it will take a little while to implement the solution. Unfortunately, City Procurement rules will increase the time needed to build any stairs, which are needed." And so we wait, as we have waited for years, for a safe stairway system in the park.

I would urge the residents of Lake Claire to contact DPRCA, as I have done over the years, to make maintenance requests and to report safety issues. Contacts include: Ms. Cora Watson, NE Atlanta Parks Maintenance Manager, (404) 658-6016; Office of Parks Customer Service, (404) 546-6813; Mr. George Dusenbury, Commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs: gadusenbury@atlantaga.gov.

—Bruce Fort



The slopes remaining after the park steps were removed. Photo Credit: Leslie Slavich



Safety Report

January 2011

ENTERING AUTO

1/20 (4:30 pm) 361 Nelms Ave NE
2008 Ford Escape/2002 Ford F-150

Someone broke rear driver's side window of Escape and passenger side window of F-150. Listed property was taken from both vehicles.
Taken: Jewelry, I-pod

1/18 (7:00 pm) 234 Hampton Ter NE
2005 Honda Odyssey

Someone broke driver's side window of vehicle parked in driveway.
Taken: Nothing

1/21 (2:00 pm) 546 Clifton Rd NE
1994 BMW 318

Someone broke front passenger side window and stole listed items.
Taken: Headphones, I-pod

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

1/25 (1:30 pm) 2096 Dekalb Ave NE

Victim advised as she arrived home she saw suspect leaving her residence through the front door that had been kicked in. Victim stated suspect was carrying a bag with listed items, but dropped them after she confronted him. Suspect fled scene.

Taken: 3 laptops

Suspect: B/M, 6', late 20s, gray plaid jacket, glasses, black skullcap

Lake Claire Officers for 2011

President: Sarah Wynn, president@lakeclaire.org
 VP, Finance: Cara Stevens, treasurer@lakeclaire.org
 NPU Rep: Kathy Evans, npu@lakeclaire.org; alternate:
 Jennifer Sams
 VP, Zoning: Dan White, zoning@lakeclaire.org
 VP, Environment: VACANT, environment@lakeclaire.org
 VP, Safety: VACANT, safety@lakeclaire.org
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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!



Daniel Morgan playing with another child's forgotten ball.

Lake Claire Park *cont'd from page 1*

neighborhood of Lake Claire to have several spacious wooded areas to stretch our legs and get our yah-yahs out: the Land Trust, located at the southern end of the neighborhood, the Frazier Center forest, at the northern end, and Lake Claire Park, situated in the geographic center of the neighborhood. The park is owned by the City of Atlanta and maintained by the city's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs. The park consists of about four acres of land, including a playing field, a tennis court, a playground with swings and a gym, and a wooded path leading to a covered picnic pavilion. The park is accessible on foot from Lakeshore Drive, McLendon Avenue, and Almeta Avenue. The park lies within one mile of anywhere in the neighborhood, and is central to our community in many ways.

—Bruce Fort

Photo credits: Leslie Slavich



Families enjoying Lake Claire Park on an unseasonably warm February day.



Lily Morris having fun on the chin-up bar.



Kai Nathaniel filling his dump truck with mulch.

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Mark Your Calendar

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.

8 Grady High School PTSA General Meeting, 6 pm, Grady Theater

11-12 Decatur Consignment Sale, 9:00 am — 6:00 pm Friday, March 11; 9:00 am — 3:00 pm Saturday, March 12, First Baptist Church

of Decatur, Activities Building, 308 Clairemont Ave., Decatur, www.decaturchurch.org

12 March Legislative Update, 10 am—12 pm, Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, 188 2nd Ave., Decatur; Rep. Stacey Abrams, Sen. Jason Carter, and Sen. Emanuel Jones discuss 2011 and 2012 budget proposals, tax reform legislation, APS and DeKalb County Schools, and key legislation; FREE, for more information please contact Ashley Robinson, Chief of Staff at 404-656-5058 or email staceyabrams@gmail.com

13 Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk, see related article in this month's *Clarion* for details.

15 Inaugural Georgia Sustainable Communities Alliance (GSCA) Employment Fair, 10 am—2 pm, Holiday Inn, Downtown Decatur (professional attire), for more information please contact David McIver at dmciver@bbandt.com

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).

17 St. Patrick's Day

19 Fernbank NatureQuest Opens, www.fernbankmuseum.org

20 First Day of Spring (Spring Equinox, 7:21 pm)

20 Publix Georgia Marathon and Half Marathon, www.rungeorgiamarathon.com

24 NPU-N meeting, 7 pm, Little Five Points Community Center, 1083 Austin Ave. NE.

25 Mary Lin Health and Wellness Fair.

26 Atlanta Women's 5K, Candler Park, www.atlantatrackclub.org

Settlement of Whistle-Blower Case Against City

Dr. Tom Coffin was fired as Senior Arborist for the City of Atlanta, in July 2008, after presenting evidence to his superiors of what he believed to be the city's systemic failure to enforce the tree ordinance and initiating disciplinary actions against those whom he believed were not enforcing the law (see details in previous issues of the *Clarion* and at www.treenextdoor.org).

Dr. Coffin's "whistleblower" case has now settled out of court after being rescheduled several times. He is pleased to have reached an acceptable settlement agreement with the City. The settlement restores his pension benefits as if he had not been terminated, and he will also be paid damages and fees. The agreement entails his accepting

a symbolic reinstatement to his former Senior Arborist position, followed immediately by his retirement. It will be several weeks before the agreement will be finalized by a vote in City Council. Watch for a CELEBRATION announcement as Spring approaches.

In the meantime, Tom thanks all who supported him in the continued demand that the Tree Protection Ordinance be enforced and strengthened. He appreciates the continuing support of many people in Lake Claire and other neighborhoods, the constant pressure applied by The Tree Next Door ("an organization dedicated to protecting Atlanta's tree canopy"), and insistent letters sent to the Mayor by many of us. Maintaining Atlanta's magnificent urban forest is critical to

us today and for tomorrow. An oft-quoted loss of fifty acres a day of trees is evidenced by sequential satellite photos; with



Photo Credit: Beth Damon

global warming increasing, Atlanta must be vigilant regarding its tree cover. Mayor Kasim Reed at the time of his election stated, "I am essentially an elected steward of the City's many services." I hope the settlement of Tom's case indicates his administration's commitment to Atlanta's tree canopy and enforcing the ordinance in its totality, strictly and fairly. If so, Dr. Coffin said recently, "my firing will have served a useful purpose."

—Beth Damon

Editor's Note: As reported by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the city's law department said of the settlement with Tom Coffin that it felt it was, "prudent to resolve the matter at this stage rather than continuing with the costs and uncertainty of litigation. The agreement includes a provision that the city is not conceding liability, but is merely compromising a disputed claim."

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We're in the neighborhood!

Montessori In Town to Include an Elementary Program in 2011

Montessori In Town, an AMI Montessori School, announces its expansion to include an Elementary program in Fall, 2011. The Elementary program complements and provides a continuum to the Primary program. It will be the first AMI Elementary program serving the in town neighborhoods. Montessori In Town was established in 2005 with one Primary

classroom (serving children ages 2 ½ to 6 years of age) and has grown to three classrooms.

Please join us for our Open House, scheduled on March 20, 2011 at our Poncey Highland campus from 2 to 4 pm. To RSVP to our Open House and to find out more about our programs please contact us at (404) 784-1038, nikki@montessoriintown.com, or go to our web site: www.montessoriintown.com

News from the Land Trust

The Problem With Roosters!

(Or What to Do With Unwanted Ones)

Over the past 17 years living adjacent to the Land Trust, I have noticed that we have a rooster problem. Roosters keep showing up on the Land Trust. Fancy that! Too many, and too often. Spontaneous generation, you may say. Perhaps, but I want to address the two-legged *homo sapiens* that I believe put them there, under cover and anonymously.

I understand that roosters do not perform the valuable function of laying eggs, and they also have a piercing crow, oh so early in the morning, and so they need to be re-located at times. But when the roosters are tossed out on the Land Trust, it endangers their lives. Many unsuspecting folks are walking their dogs there, and the dogs have maimed and killed these cast-off roosters on occasion.

Concerned neighbors try to catch them (not an easy job). Sometimes we realize they are out there just when we have to go somewhere and cannot tend to them right away. Dropping them off in the open area makes it difficult to catch them, and the birds are frightened as they are suddenly in an unfamiliar area. We look crazy to passersby as we run around with a great big fishnet. I've even had to run after them on the MARTA side of Dekalb Avenue with four other

folks. Our feathered friends deserve better treatment.

So what to do with cute baby chicks that turn suddenly into noisy beautiful adolescent males?

What I do with stray extra roosters, when I finally catch them, is something the folks who drop them off could do just as well. I take photos of them and put ads out. There are folks out there who will give them a good home either as yard pets or companions for their hens or other farm animals.

Here are a few places where you can advertise text and photos for free:

- The Farmers Market Bulletin, Atlanta edition, reaches your best audience by far. The Georgia Department of Agriculture publishes it every other week. Go to www.agr.georgia.gov and click on "Market Bulletin." If you have trouble placing your ad online, as I sometimes have, call them at (404) 656-3682 (ask for Carlton Moore).

- Craigslist Atlanta
- The Atlanta Journal Constitution's www.AJCexchange.com
- Creative Loafing Atlanta online

And email me, dawnaura12@gmail.com, and I'll shoot it to my lists. Do the same with your own Facebook friends and email lists, and ask people to forward it. More folks have chickens in town



Roosters abandoned at the Land Trust. Photo Credit: Dawn Aura

nowadays, so mention your location. Call me at (404) 378-6815 if you need help, but keep them safely cooped until you have placed them. If they are crowing too early, keep them closed in their coop in the early morning, then let them out later.

With the exception of the Farmers Market Bulletin, which advertises solely farm animals, the online methods listed here are excellent for finding homes for dogs and cats as well. I can offer more advice about placing animals, but only if you are willing to foster the stray you have found. I am no longer accepting foster animals myself.

The folks at the Land Trust and myself have been rescuing other people's roosters for 17

years now. Please be responsible and respectful toward those in your care. Don't just toss them out. Thank you!

—Dawn Aura

Dawn Aura of Arizona Avenue is an elder care provider and retired pet rescuer. She is also the main caretaker of Big Lou, the Land Trust emu. She accepts donations of food and funds in Big Lou's name. Contact her for more info about what he eats. Cash donations can be inserted in the chute in the Land Trust bulletin board, using the envelopes marked "Emu" provided there. Checks can be made out to LCCLT with "Emu" on the memo line and mailed to LCCLT, P.O. Box 5379, Atlanta, GA 31107.



Dawn Aura of Arizona Avenue feeding Big Lou, the Land Trust Emu.

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News from Mary Lin Elementary School

Hands-On Learning in the Mary Lin Garden

A successful program worth sustaining

After a long, cold winter, the teachers and students at Mary Lin Elementary are getting ready to plant their 21 garden beds with a new crop of vegetables and herbs. Third grade teacher Lindsay Wyczalkowski, with the help of parent Ashley Rouse, other teachers and parents, and community groups, started the garden in 2009 (for details on how the garden got started, see the December 2009 Clarion in the www.lakeclaire.org newsletter archives).

The garden serves several important functions at the school. First, teachers use the garden as a hands-on way to teach lessons. Next to the garden is an outdoor classroom. From creative writing to math, teachers use the garden and the outdoor classroom to engage their students in a variety of ways. For example, a third grade class learned how to calculate area and perimeter using a garden bed. Another class

wrote adjective poems describing different herbs in the garden and the rest of the class then tried to guess which herb the poem described. Mrs. Wyczalkowski says that, "children naturally enjoy being outside and often are more attentive and focused in the garden."

Even the way the garden is planted is organized around the curriculum. Second graders study Native Americans, and they plant a traditional "three sisters garden" consisting of corn, squash, and beans. Fifth graders study cells, and they plant onions to later look at the onion cells under a microscope.

Planting and tasting from the garden changes the children's eating habits for the better. Children who wouldn't touch a vegetable will beg their parents for radishes after tasting them out of the garden. Others love to snack on the lettuce mixes grown in the garden.

Of course students also learn how to plant and grow their own food. The entire school gets to participate each spring and fall in school-wide planting days. Once plants start producing, students learn when and how to harvest the food. Early in spring, students plant lettuces and radishes, which can be harvested in



Eggplants ripening in seasons past.



Joseph, Aidan, and Alexander spread fertilizer with parent volunteer.



Trellis at the Mary Lin garden provides structure for bean vines.

about a month for a quick reward. In mid-April, students plant their warm weather seedlings, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and corn, which cannot be harvested until the summer.

To maintain the garden over the summer and to not waste the food, the school auctioned off fully planted garden beds to families to care for during the break. The families threw a party at the end of the summer where they shared the bounty of the garden. The program was a success, and the school plans to do the same this summer.

As any gardener knows, even an established garden requires a lot of hard work. Now that the Mary Lin garden is well-established, Mrs. Wyczalkowski's goal is to make the garden more sustainable. This past fall, Mrs. Wyczalkowski gave birth to her third child, and she worried that the garden would not be maintained while she was out on maternity leave. Luckily, she had support from Joy Putman and Gregg Rice, both third grade teachers at the school, who not only maintained the garden, but also organized a school-wide planting for 600 children. Mrs. Wyczalkowski is grateful for their help while she was out and for their continuing support of the garden. The teachers also have support from parents like Ms. Rouse, who had a big hand



Teacher Lindsay Wyczalkowski hoists a tomato from the garden.

in getting the garden started and who continues to support the garden. Ms. Rouse also is the sustainability specialist for APS, so her interest in the garden is both personal and professional. Significantly, the garden has support from the principal and administrators. The principal organized a one-day training for all of the teachers to learn how best to use the garden in the classroom.

Now that the garden is off to such a great start, Mrs. Wyczalkowski is looking for supporters in the wider community to make the garden more sustainable. In particular, gardeners can help with maintenance, such as watering and weeding, especially during school breaks. If you are interested in volunteering your time and talents, please contact Lindsay Wyczalkowski at lwyczalkowski@atlanta.k12.ga.us

—Leslie Slavich

Mary Lin Teachers Pursue Advanced Degrees

Three teachers at Mary Lin Elementary have gone back to school to pursue advanced degrees, but are doing so without leaving their classrooms. Instead they have enrolled in a unique program offered by Piedmont College. Since 1997 Piedmont College, a private college in Demorest in northeast Georgia, has been offering graduate education degrees through “cohorts” presented by Piedmont faculty at neighborhood schools. Several years ago Mary Lin third grade teacher Jody Davis was demonstrating Promethean Board technology to a group of educators that included Dr. Ray Cleere, a former Mary Lin student and now President of Piedmont College. Dr. Cleere broached the idea of starting a cohort at Mary Lin with Ms. Davis, and their discussions evolved into a masters of arts in education cohort being offered at Mary

Lin. Ms. Davis and Posey Arillo, a kindergarten teacher at Mary Lin, have enrolled, along with other teachers from neighboring schools. The classes started in January and the teachers meet every Monday evening for several hours with Dr. Joan Jordan, an Assistant Professor of Education at Piedmont and the Cohort Coordinator. Missy Snyder, a challenge teacher at Mary Lin, is pursuing her education specialist degree at a Piedmont College cohort offered at Morningside Elementary. The programs will take about 15 months of class time to complete and require a significant time and financial commitment from the teachers. The teachers and principal Brian Mitchell are enthusiastic about the program, so much so that Dr. Mitchell is recruiting teachers for a new cohort. Congratulations to these teachers as they model a love of learning (if not homework) for Mary Lin’s students!

— Mary Jo Bryan



Teachers Jody Davis and Posey Arillo preparing for their class. Photo Credit: Mary Jo Bryan

The Conscientious Gardener



Yippee!!! It’s time to get back in the garden! I LOVE this time of anticipation and inspiration. Want a lawn this year? No problem. Start now by taking advantage of the warm spells. If you are a weed-n-feed product user, use it NOW, even during the short-lived warm spells. The burst of lawn and weed growth is telling you the weed killers will work. I am about to go out, rake, then apply some weed-n-feed. After two weeks or more, I will apply some topsoil to my truly wretched areas, then over-seed the entire lawn. Seeding should wait for the persistent warm weather and for the weed-n-feed to dissipate. It will kill off the new grass shoots otherwise. Remember, too, that lawn-loving pets need to be protected from herbicides. Be sure to either keep them off a weed-treated area for about a week or until it rains. Or make sure you wipe their paws when they come in. If your pet routinely eats grass, I’d keep them off treated areas.

What about the veggie garden? Consider tilling with any soil amendments due—compost, wood ash, chicken manure (getting more plentiful around here), lawn clippings, etc. Last year I added raised beds and finished off the

paths with wood chips. It should be really nice this year. I also bought asparagus roots recently since it seems by the time I get ready to start them, they can’t be found. Sure, you can order them in catalogues, but these came by first. Sometimes it’s all in the timing. I have also had to reconcile myself to occasionally killing plants inadvertently. I may purchase plants with all the best intentions but not end up with the time to install them. But it’s like the lottery—if you don’t play, you can’t win. Got any pruning to do? Go for it. It’s a great chore to do while waiting to get out there and plant something. Just don’t prune the azaleas until later, after they bloom. They will be starting to set their blooms now so let them be. Also, be kind to the crape myrtles. If yours need some shape or control, clip away. God knows it will grow back. But be nice and gentle. If you can resist whacking them off to the nubs they will reward you with lovely natural-looking growth.

Did you want to add any shrubs or trees this year? NOW is the time to plan and acquire them, then install at your leisure before the weather truly warms up. There are lots of growers on Craig’s List if you want to purchase at terrific discounts or just like the outing to middle Georgia somewhere. Watch for all those lovely little surprises now—the crocuses and daffodils will be making their debut soon if they haven’t by the time you get this. We are so fortunate to live in a climate that caters to such a wide variety of plants. Something is blooming somewhere nearly all the time. And there is always something that can be done to enhance and enjoy one’s yard/paradise. Someone please kick me if I try to complain.

—Gay Arnieri

Mary Lin Hosts Health and Wellness Fair

Even if you are not a master gardener (or you have a “black thumb”) you can still support the Mary Lin garden. On March 25th, Mary Lin is hosting a Health and Wellness Fair. The fair will feature locally grown food prepared by local food trucks; kids will have tastings from the Mary Lin garden; and community partners will be in attendance to teach attendees about eating healthy and physical activity.

SPRING INTO FITNESS!!

The 10th Annual Spring Boot Camp: Get Super-Fit! Results-producing drills and calisthenics, fun team races, and cardio at your pace! Wednesdays 10:00 am & 6:45 pm. Saturdays 9:30 am

BURN! on PATH: Traveling interval program combines running with strength-building stop points. Ideal for those seeking a megga-dose of fitness. Mondays 6:45 pm

Tai Chi: De-stress with flowing movement taught in Classical Yang Family style. A perfect way to renew energy and balance life. Thursdays 6:30 pm at the Land Trust. Fridays 9:30 am at EChurch. **NEW!**

Sneak Peek Week March 7-12. Take a FREE class, meet our instructors, then choose your favorite programs!

Eight week programs begin March 21 - May 26. View class locations and register at www.funfitnessonline.com or call 404.378.5775. Registration Deadline: March 17.

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Georgia House Representative Stacey Abrams

Lake Claire's Georgia House Representative Stacey Abrams Launches Redesigned Website

A Brand New Year—A Brand New Look!

In January, Georgia House Representative Stacey Abrams, who represents the neighborhoods of Lake Claire, Candler Park, Druid Hills, Kirkwood, and East Lake, announced the launch of her redesigned website. In an email to constituents, Representative Abrams stated, "As we head into 2011, I'm excited to announce the launch of a redesigned website that will help me reach out to more Georgians: www.staceyabrams.com. In my new role as House Minority Leader, I will continue to work hard to keep us informed on the issues and engaged in the legislative process. It is an honor to serve in this capacity—and to be a strong and clear voice for accountability and accessibility in our state."

Representative Abrams can be reached through her website, via email at staceyabrams@gmail.com, in the district: 1912 Hosea Williams Drive, Unit 6, Atlanta, GA 30317, (404) 378-9434, or at the Capitol: Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Suite 509-B, Atlanta, GA 30334, (404) 656-0224.

—Leslie Slavich

Helping Abused and Abandoned Pets

Lake Claire residents definitely have caring hearts for pets. I receive emails looking for foster and permanent homes for dogs and cats weekly, see countless fundraising event notices for shelters, and read numerous articles in this newsletter about pets, including the front page article in December's issue.

It was great to see the notice about a week of free neutering/spaying in Dekalb County in the last issue. To stop both the euthanizing of more than 250,000 dogs and cats in Georgia and the thousands of cases of animal abuse each year, we must focus on spaying and neutering as well as on strengthening and enforcing animal protection laws.

Other states, such as New York, do such a great job of spaying and neutering that they can absorb some of the abandoned animals Georgia produces. In fact, the last time I checked, Fulton County exports puppies to New York. But don't feel too relieved; this is just a fraction of them.

Georgia euthanizes sick, hurt or abandoned older animals that are not adopted in short order. There are not enough nice Lake Claire families able to adopt the thousands of animals brought to shelters every year.

I can't believe we want to live in a state where a starving, sick and pregnant animal, which should have been spayed in the first place, is abandoned in a shelter to be euthanized.

Research conducted by the Southern Animal Rescue in 2007 found that 250,000 dogs and cats are euthanized a year in Georgia; and this was before the hardest part of the Great Recession, which likely made

the problem worse.

We must act, not just to adopt and fundraise for shelters, but also to protect animals by solving the underlying problems.

Spaying and neutering are proven to reduce overpopulation. A quick internet search shows that there are rarely free spaying/neutering government-supported programs in Georgia, little enforcement, and few educational campaigns. The clinics that have reduced rates still charge too much for people who cannot afford to take care of their animals and for good citizens who take in stray animals. Further, in Georgia it costs about \$50 to bring an animal to a government-financed shelter.

Like spaying and neutering programs, strong laws and enforcement are proven to protect animals. Last month the Animal Defense League published its analysis of law and enforcement and determined that Georgia ranks 36 among other states (www.aldf.org). One sad example of the problems with Georgia's laws and enforcement is that animal control workers report frequent dog-fighting casualties.

Now that I've depressed you, here are some very simple things that we can change right here in Georgia:

- Expand our state services to include free and low-cost spaying/neutering and fund an active spaying/neutering campaign in economically disadvantaged communities.
- Get rid of the fee to bring a pet to a shelter. At the same time, screen potential adopters better and ramp up pet store laws to reduce owners who can't cope with their pets.
- Fund better enforcement and strengthen animal protection laws.
- Provide better training, pay and benefits for the dedicated people in animal control and at the shelters who do this difficult work.

How do we do this? Ask our state representative and senator to sponsor legislation or budget for these initiatives, and ask your friends and families outside of our legislative district to ask their elected representatives for support. Take up petitions. Send emails.

We are running around chasing our tails adopting pets and donating to a broken system that euthanizes nearly 700 animals a day instead of solving the problem. Let's not continue to let animals suffer when many other states already implement these simple and inexpensive provisions.

State Representative Stacey Abrams can be contacted at (404) 656-5058 or at staceyabrams@gmail.com. State Senator Jason Carter can be contacted at (404) 463-1376 or at Jason.carter@senate.ga.gov.

—Alison Amoroso

Alison Amoroso has been a Lake Claire resident since 2006.

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News from... Clifton Sanctuary Ministries

March is National Nutrition Month and YOU Can Support Healthy Nutrition for Hundreds of Clifton Guests This Year

Participate in the Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk



Clifton's Executive Director, Alice Jenkins, and Clifton guests participating in the Hunger Walk last year. Photo Credit: Michael Thurmond

For over 25 years, the Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk/Run has united Atlantans of all ages and athletic backgrounds to support hunger and poverty relief. Over 11,000 participants come together each March to raise more than \$400,000.

On Sunday afternoon, March 13th, please join the men of Clifton Sanctuary Ministries, an emergency shelter and a transitional housing program on Connecticut Avenue that's been a good Lake Claire neighbor for over 30 years, and other friends from the 'hood as we participate in the Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk at Turner Field. It'll be a nice day to take a walk and help our neighbors at Clifton Sanctuary at the same time.

If you can't make it downtown, please support another walker or donate; Clifton's Hunger Walk goal is \$3,000. If you donate online at www.hungerwalkrun.org, 70% of your donation will be credited to Clifton Sanctuary Ministry's food account at the Food Bank, allowing them to purchase groceries using the credits accumulated. This will stretch their very tight budget a little further. You can turn in any donations on the day of the walk or drop them off at Clifton.

Clifton Sanctuary Ministries is a nonprofit organization at 369 Connecticut Avenue that provides shelter and nurture to men seeking to overcome homelessness. To learn more, visit www.cliftonsanctuary.com or call Prince Davies-Venn at (404) 373-3253, ext. 7.

To Support the Clifton Team

Please follow these steps to support the Clifton Team at www.hungerwalkrun.org:

Click on "Click to take the next step"

Click on the "Atlanta Community Food Bank" name (NOT "learn more")

Click on "Donate to Support a Walker" at the top of the page

Click on "Search for a Team"

Type in "Clifton" in the Search box and click on "Search"

Click on "C6200 Clifton Sanctuary Ministries"

You can support a registered team member by clicking on his or her name, OR you can make a donation by clicking on "Make a gift!" by the red thermometer at the right of the screen.

To Join the Clifton Team

To join the Clifton Sanctuary Ministries Hunger Walk 2011 Team at <http://www.hungerwalkrun.org/>:

Click on "Click to take the next step"

Click on "Atlanta Community Food Bank"

Click on "Form or Join A Team"

Click on "I Would Like to Join an Existing Team"

Enter Team Name: "C6200 Clifton Sanctuary Ministries"

Click on "Search for a Team"

Under the Search Results, to the far right of C6200 Clifton Sanctuary Ministries, click on "Join" and follow the directions to join the CSM Hunger Walk Team.

More Details

The Hunger Walk is on Sunday March 13, 2011, starting at the Green Lot at Turner Field, 12 pm Park Opens/Event Registration Begins, 2 pm 5K Run and Walk begins, 4 pm Park closes. PARKING IS FREE! All walkers and runners are encouraged to park in the Turner Field Blue Lot to avoid crossing the street. Come early to enjoy entertainment, food and games before the races begin. Festivities conclude at 4 pm. The Run and Walk will take you through downtown Atlanta. No pets please, but service animals are welcome. All participants who raise or contribute \$25 or more will receive a free Hunger Walk t-shirt on the day of the walk. Once you complete your registration, print out a copy of your confirmation and bring it with you on March 13th to receive your Hunger Walk/Run t-shirt.

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Get Moving Lake Claire!

Five Tips To Become Fantastically Fit!



Certified professional fitness trainer Jaye Crawford with new Tai Chi instructor Diirga Brough.

Winter is almost behind us. Come on spring! With warmer temperatures and longer days, it's time to get moving outdoors! If you're ready to pump up the

activity and take fitness up a notch, try these simple tips.

1. Have Fun! When you choose an activity you love, fitness is a pleasure. Make a list of the things you like to do. Try something new each week. Dust off the dumbbells, tune up the bicycle, lace up the shoes or take to the hills. Like group exercise? Sign-up for a program in your neighborhood. Whatever you dig, (credit to Nike) just do it!

2. Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals: Whether you want to tone up the physique, build strength, or cardio endurance, it all starts with a plan. Consider your goals, then plan accordingly. In simple terms, this means doing what you love more often. Your body loves activity. When you engage in frequent activity, it naturally

adapts in wonderful ways! Soon enough, you've made transformation and increased your personal level of health and fitness!

3. Buddy-Up: Exercising with a friend is fun and boosts moral support. Make a fitness "play date" once a week, and don't back-out. Need a buddy? Fun Fitness is a community of fitness enthusiasts. Name your activity and we'll partner you up with a buddy sharing the same interests.

4. Have Patience: Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is a stronger, more fit you. The most important thing is to adopt a healthy, fitness lifestyle. Then, things take care of themselves. Achieving your goals is a process, but with regular, enjoyable activity, it doesn't have to be

complicated.

5. Join Fun Fitness For Sneak Peak Week! March 7-12. Not sure which program is right for you? Fun Fitness offers programs for all fitness levels, from mild to extra-spicy. Take a FREE class, meet our instructors, then choose your favorite programs!

Just Announced! Classical Tai Chi at The Land Trust and EChurch. Visit our web site for the details.

—Jaye Crawford

Fun Fitness, Inc. provides 1-on-1 private instruction and group exercise programs. Registration is now open for 2011 spring programs, March 21 to May 26. Need info? Visit www.funfitnessonline.com or call (404) 378-5775.

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How To Prevent Door Kick-Ins

Suggestions from 'The Entry Enforcer'

There are many aspects to home security. Most people initially think of alarms. But alarms are not the first line of defense; they just tell you somebody is already inside, though they limit the intruder's time. Burglars know police response is so slow they have enough time to grab valuables and scam. An alarm's best use is for fires, to deter timid burglars, and to limit intrusion time.

According to the FBI, about 70 percent of break-ins are by kicking in a door, which busts out the door jamb (frame) and often breaks the door itself at the lock. It's easy to do because only one inch (usually less) of soft wood in the door jamb backs up the deadbolt, and it's been weakened by drilling for the strike plate (which is typically held by two short screws). The minimum thing you can do is to replace those short screws with 3-inch screws, though that frequently won't keep the door jamb or door from busting out. You can also replace the strike plate with a larger one that takes more screws.

For door security you have the following options:

(1) Install a wrought iron security door in front of the entry door (retail from about \$130 depending on style). I call them "burglar bar doors."

(2) Install a security storm door in front of the entry door (Larson Secure Elegance, about \$350 at LOWE's). Adds the advantage of weatherproofing.

(3) Reinforce the door jamb and the door with

one of the steel hardware systems now available. Door Jamb Armor is the most robust and includes Door Shields for the door itself. Strikemaster is an equally effective competitor, but has no door shields. These are long (4 to 5 feet), powder-coated white, steel plates that attach to the frame with long screws that anchor them into the wall studs. They have holes that receive the

deadbolt and knob latch, thus backing them up with steel instead of wood. Equally important is a Door Shield, especially if you have a fiberglass door. If you are handy and have the right tools, you can buy these and install them yourself, though usually there are complications (like alarm sensors being covered or cracks that are too tight). Professional installation is a real frustration-avoider. Prices are from \$240 for single doors or \$400 for double doors.

(4) Once you are inside the house, there are several products you can put in place to prevent the door from being forced in, but they won't secure the door when you leave. Nightlock, Door Chucky, & Door Guardian are some of the brands.

(5) The deadbolt lock is an essential component of the security system. Most residential deadbolts are the widely-available, relatively flimsy Grade 3. A better choice is Grade 2, usually only available through a locksmith. The best readily-available choices are Kwikset's UltraMax or Schlage's B560. High security deadbolts are the ultimate quality, but cost about \$250.

—Duncan Cottrell

The Entry Enforcer, a paid advertiser, provides and installs Door Jamb Armor, Strikemaster, Jamb Enforcer, Nightlock, Door Guardian and other intrusion prevention products. I also reinforce double doors and have solutions for glass doors and windows (including window security film). I'm happy to help my neighbors know what options they have and to give advice to those wanting to do their own installation. See more at www.EntryEnforcer.com or contact Duncan at (404) 289-6960 or by email at Duncan@EntryEnforcer.com

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Lake Claire Neighbors Meeting: February Minutes

February 17, 2011

Led by Sarah Wynn
 Attended by 20 neighbors (6 officers)
 and 8 guests
 Minutes recorded by Heidi Hill

Sarah Wynn, president of Lake Claire Neighbors, opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

1) Guest speakers. Three APD officers were invited to give their report. Sgt. Bruce from Zone 6 said that crime was down in the area. Sgt. Sinks introduced an officer from Beat 605 and told neighbors about the new bike patrol, in which one bicycle officer patrols Lake Claire and Candler Park and surrounding areas.

Sarah asked about a scam reported on the Lake Claire neighborhood watch group in which a well-dressed man talks himself into getting rides from commuters in the area and then asks them for money. She told neighbors to be on the lookout and call 911 if they encountered him. *[Note: The man was arrested last week.]*

Valencia Hudson, from council-member Natalyn Archibong's office, had nothing new to report and asked if anyone had questions. Kevin Thompson-Hooper, a neighbor, said that the situation with the MARTA Mobility buses on Ridgewood was still a problem. He said he would include her on his emails to MARTA with details of recent traffic violations by bus drivers. Dan White asked if neighbors could do anything to get speed bumps installed on Ridgewood. Hudson said that traffic-counting strips had determined that the street did not warrant them.

Kevin said that he was planning to start taking video of the buses' infractions, including speeding, not stopping at stop signs, and idling. Chris Hester, the spokesman from the Frazer Center, said that MARTA had ruled that if a bus is stationary for eight minutes, it must be turned off. Kevin reiterated that the street was not safe with the buses on it.

Dan asked Valencia what the consequences would be for a MARTA driver who got a traffic ticket. She said the license would be suspended, but the violation would have to be witnessed by an officer. She offered to contact Deputy Probst, who oversees police officers who could monitor the stop signs.

2) LCN officer reports. Sarah gave a recap of the executive committee meeting held on February 6. The committee talked about plans for the future, the calendar, and the budget. The next executive committee meeting will be April 13.

In response to a neighbor's questions, Sarah described the three different Lake Claire Yahoo groups (neighborhood watch, discussion group, parents group) and explained how to join them.

Sarah announced a number of upcoming events in the community: a Citizen's Court Watch training on Saturday, March 19; a legislative update held by Rep. Stacey Abrams and Sen. Jason Carter on Saturday, March 12; and a 911 town hall forum on Wednesday, April 20. She also listed street closures for events in the coming months.

Next, Sarah presented the treasurer's report. LCN currently has \$9,822.98 in its checking account and \$4,179.29 in savings. She said people are paying their dues, and as of Feb-

ruary, we had collected \$1,177 in dues for 2011.

Robby Handley announced that he would be attending a Park Pride conference on behalf of the neighborhood to learn more about how to improve Lake Claire Park and other greenspaces in the neighborhood. He added that he was looking into a neighborhood-wide compost and invited interested neighbors to contact him.

There was some discussion of the rotted steps in Lake Claire Park; the City had pulled them out and spread mulch in their place. Robby said he wanted to find out if the City planned to remulch the area over time.

Heidi Hill, VP of Communications, announced that the Lake Claire Neighbors website overhaul was under way and invited neighbors to contact her with any suggestions or problems with the current site.

Cynthia Baer, VP of Fundraising, talked about plans to revive the tour of homes for 2011. She said she was also thinking about ways to raise funds for improving Lake Claire Park.

Kathy Evans, NPU rep, told neighbors that the comprehensive development plan was being revisited, and Lake Claire was looking into changing its zoning along DeKalb Avenue to neighborhood/commercial to increase walking business. Income capital improvements, such as adding sidewalks to the neighborhood, were also being considered.

Sarah ended the officer reports by announcing that dues could be paid at the meeting or online. A glitch with PayPal was being corrected by Tish Ganey, the webmaster.

3) MARTA Mobility buses. Sarah asked if there was anything to add to the discussion on the MARTA buses entering and exiting the Frazer Center by way of Ridgewood Road. Frazer Center spokesman Chris Hester said that routes had been consolidated and MARTA had been notified of the speeding issue. He encouraged neighbors to report traffic violations by contacting MARTA with the bus number and the time of infraction. Kevin Thompson-Hooper asked about the Dumpsters on the Frazer Center property, which tend to overflow after events. Hester explained that they were working to change a DeKalb County ordinance that said that they must use the county's pickup service. Kevin asked if there was any way for the neighborhood to support the center in getting more frequent trash pickups, and Hester said they would welcome the support.

4) Announcements. The first announcements were about two events benefiting Clifton Sanctuary Ministries: the dine-out at Radial Café on February 24, and the Atlanta Community Food Bank's Hunger Walk/Run, for which CSM has a team. If you sign up through the CSM team, part of the

money raised is banked for Clifton's food budget.

Peggy Rogers, of US Road Sports, spoke next to announce details of the Publix Georgia Marathon on Sunday, March 20. She passed out a map of road closures and indicated that certain roads in Lake Claire would be closed from approximately 7:30 am to 10:30 am. For more information on traffic and road closures, as well as a schedule of events, neighbors can visit the Community section of the marathon website. She noted that of the 15,000 runners, 80 percent would be running the half marathon, which does not go through Lake Claire.

Sarah announced that Lake Claire would not have a cheering section this year, and Rogers suggested an option of pairing up with Druid Hills in the future.

5) Voting items/Land use. Sarah

moved on to a discussion of 2010 LCN contributions, which would be voted on at the March meeting. The recommendations from the executive committee were as follows: \$1,150 to Clifton Sanctuary Ministries (in addition to the \$350 given in 2010 for a table at CSM's graduation dinner, for a total of \$1,500); \$1,000 to the Frazer Center (for forest upkeep and, potentially, acoustical panels in the atrium); and \$750 to the Mary Lin Foundation (for innovative classroom technology and staff development).

Kevin Thompson-Hooper suggested reducing Clifton's contribution to \$1,000 and raising Frazer Center's to \$1,150, with the reason that Clifton had also received \$2,000 from the tour of homes committee in 2010, and the Frazer Center allows us to use their space once a month for our meetings free of charge.

Sarah mentioned that the Frazer Center has donors and fundraising events—revenue streams that Clifton doesn't have.

Next on the agenda was a variance request for 1848 Marlbrook Drive. The applicant was seeking a variance from zoning regulations to reduce the required west side-yard setback from 7 feet to 4 feet for the construction of a new, two-story single-family dwelling with a basement. Dan White, VP of Zoning, read from the city code with regard to variances.

He then passed out the application and showed pictures of the home in question and the street.

Architects Lee Ann Gamble and Jim Stoddart were representing their client, the homeowner, who was unable to attend the meeting. They explained that they would be tearing out the first floor of the home and leaving the basement. The variance was for the new garage, which would extend into the setback. The slope of the property dictated the placement of the garage, as did the existing location of the driveway. They felt it was better to build into the setback than do major site grading to move the garage and driveway. They also explained that the widening of the driveway would impact a pine tree on the property. Mitigation of water runoff was a concern of the homeowner, an avid gardener, so they were working on ideas for containing it for reuse.

Kathy Evans, an immediately impacted neighbor, expressed her concern about storm water runoff and said it would take a lot of on-site capturing to contain all the runoff. The applicants said that most of the runoff would go to the other side of the house and would be captured in a cistern, but they had not yet calculated the volume or decided how big the cistern would be or where it would be located.

There was a discussion on the tree to be removed, which some immediate neighbors (not present) wanted removed because they considered it a liability. A comment was made that the architects should consider the damage to the canopy of removing trees. Another neighbor raised a question about the design's finality; the architects said that the design could potentially change based on the budget, but it was what the homeowner wanted.

Dan White asked the applicants for their understanding of why side-yard setbacks exist. Gamble said it was because of fire codes and the ability to perform maintenance.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

With no other issues to be discussed, the meeting was ended at 8:36 pm.

The results of the variance vote were announced: it was not approved by the membership, by a vote of 8 (no) to 5 (yes).

Next LCN Meeting

Thursday March 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.

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New Thrift Store Gives "Second Life" to Homeless Pets

When I read about Second Life Upscale Resale, a new thrift store that opened in January in Avondale Estates, I knew I had to check it out. Not only do I love thrifting—finding vintage treasures or even just a really great deal, and doing my best to live as sustainably as I can—but I also love any effort that helps people in need. Or, in this case, animals in need.

The owners of Second Life, Tanya and Toby Tobias, and their CSO ("Chief Smile Officer"), a fifteen-year-old Dalmatian rescue named Lucky, opened the store with a simple mission: to give homeless pets a second chance at life. Having volunteered at animal rescues over the years and fostered rescued dogs, the Tobiases wanted to help in an even bigger way, and to reach even more at-risk pets. Their upscale thrift store, which sells gently used clothing, home décor, and furniture, supports animal rescue organizations through cash donations. Everything they sell has been donated (this is not a consignment store), and their ultimate goal is for 80 percent of their net profits to go toward supporting their partner charities.

I visited Second Life for the first time a few weeks ago, and I was struck right away by the big, airy, clean, light-filled space it occupies in historic downtown Avondale Estates. I like to visit this part of town for its Tudor charm and a couple of really wonderful local businesses—plus, it's just a short drive from Lake Claire. Located on North Clarendon, just down the street from Savage Pizza, Second Life has lots going for it—conve-

nient location, tons of parking. But what's really special is the atmosphere and the abundance of terrific finds inside.

The owner was friendly and helpful, telling me about a special that day on denim, and Lucky was as sweet as can be. Clothes are set out on racks in the middle of the store, and décor, books, and furniture are displayed along the walls. Near the front register is



Second Life Upscale Resale Store

Hours

Monday & Tuesday: Closed
Wed–Friday: 10:30–6:30
Saturday: 10–6
Sunday: 11–5

Location

1 North Clarendon Avenue
Avondale Estates, GA 30002

Contact

(678)974-5671
contactus@
secondlifeatlanta.org

a table with literature on local animal rescues and other pet-related resources. And of course pet supplies and accessories are also available for sale.

In order to give as much as they want to animal rescue organizations, the owners of Second Life must have the inventory to sell, so they accept donations of many kinds: gently used clothing and shoes (women's, men's, and children's); jewelry, handbags,

scarves, and accessories; home décor, glassware, and artwork; small kitchen appliances in working order; books, CDs, and DVDs; linens and towels; pet products and accessories; current year computer/accessory models; and select, quality furniture items. They like to say that this is also a way to give a "second life"—to all those clothes and other items that would otherwise take up space in a landfill. Second Life also accepts cash donations for the various charities it supports, in the store or online.

As the owner of two rescue pets, I was especially inspired by the charitable work the thrift store does. Yes, it's an upscale thrift store that carries name-brand clothes, and the owners make it part of their mission to provide excellent customer service. But knowing that proceeds of your purchases go toward helping place homeless pets in forever homes gives a good feeling an amazing bargain just can't. Currently, Second Life gives to Royal Potcake Rescue, Atlanta-based LifeLine Animal Project, Ahimsa House, and Friends of DeKalb Animals. The owners plan to donate to a rotating group of organizations, and interested local businesses and animal rescues can contact them for more information on becoming a partner.

Down the road, Second Life hopes to be a real pet-centered community, with events, adoptions, and classes held at the store. In the meantime, the store, its owners, and its website (www.secondlifeatlanta.org) are an excellent resource on pet rescue, adoption, and fostering.

To learn more about Second Life—how to donate and what is and isn't accepted, the charities the store supports, and ways to volunteer—visit www.secondlifeatlanta.org.

—Heidi Hill

Personal and Business Classifieds

Personal classified ads are free. Business classified ads cost \$5 for a placement fee plus \$3 for every 30 characters or portion thereof. 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.

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