



BrookNotes

September 2009

The Newsletter of the Brookwood Hills Community

Volume XXII, No. 7

Where's My Property Tax Bill?

By Alison Caughman

If you own your house in Brookwood Hills and pay your property taxes directly (not through an escrow account with your mortgage holder), you have probably been wondering "What's up with my property tax bill?" Usually these bills are mailed out around the beginning of August, with a due date no later than October 15th. This year Fulton County Tax Commissioner Arthur Ferdinand has been in something of a stand-off with the Fulton County Tax Assessor's Office. Ferdinand's position has been that there are too many known errors in the Assessor's Tax Digest, and he is not willing to mail out bills he knows to be wrong. County Manager Zachary Williams, increasingly alarmed over the prospect of the tax bills going out so late that the County might run out of cash as early as some time in November, requested and received a Superior Court order allowing for temporary bills to be mailed. The court order was handed down August 24th, but Ferdinand's position did not change until September 14th, when he informed Fulton County Commission Chairman John Eaves that he would mail bills for parcels not affected by the known errors. The best guess now is that you should see your bill in mid-October. According to the Tax Commissioner's website, you will have 45 days to pay your taxes once the bills are mailed. You should note that if it happens that the bills are delayed further and are not due until after December 31st, and if it is important for you to take an itemized tax deduction for your 2009 property taxes, you should be sure to make your payment before the end of 2009 even if it is not due at that point.

This latest chapter in the long history of upheaval in the Fulton County Assessor's office should come as no surprise. According to Fulton County Commissioner Lynn Riley, this is the second year in a row that property tax bills will be mailed under a temporary collection order from Fulton County Superior Court. Georgia law requires that each county's tax digest be certified by the State Commissioner of Revenue before property tax bills can be mailed. Fulton County's 2008 digest has *still* not been so certified because the county is continuing to work through the massive number of assessment appeals filed last year. And of course neither has the 2009 digest been so certified, in part because of complications from the unprecedented drop in property values experienced by most property owners over the past twelve months. What a mess!

If you are wondering what in the world your tax bill is likely to be, remember that you can go to the Tax Assessor's website at www.fultonassessor.org. There you can find your property's assessed value for 2009. First click on "Property Records." Usually it will default to a search by address, but sometimes it is by name. Fill in the requested information and your property should come up. You can compare your 2009 assessment to 2008 and know your bill will be somewhat higher due to Atlanta having raised its millage rate for this year.



BROOKNOTES

BrookNotes is published monthly for residents of Brookwood Hills on behalf of the Brookwood Hills Community Club, 77 Wakefield Drive, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. BrookNotes is sponsored on alternate months by Patti Junger of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage and Sarah Hagood of Specialty Homes, Inc.

Brooknotes Editor

Alison Caughman 404-355-7662 (200 Camden Road)

Contributors this month: Lee Morris, Mitch Wickland, Elaine Luxemburger, Jerry Luxemburger, Boyd Gentry, Kathy Gentry, Deborah Gebhardt, Wendy Granot, and Dan Granot

Brookwood Hills Board

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Security Alert Signs

When you see the **Security Alert signs** posted at the entrances to our neighborhood, please call the **Brookwood Hills Security Information Line at 404-325-5114** for details concerning a recent security incident. These signs are a signal that an incident has occurred in the neighborhood and the information has been recorded on the hotline. The cell phone number for the neighborhood security patrol is **404-242-3321**.

Trees Atlanta 10th Anniversary Sale

The Annual Trees Atlanta Tree Sale is moving to its new Atlanta Headquarters this year. The sale will feature over one thousand native and unusual trees and plants. According to the Trees Atlanta office, in celebration of the ten year milestone, more species and varieties of trees, shrubs, and forest-safe vines will be offered than ever before. Special trees to look for will be swamp chestnut oak, walnut, yellow-berried American holly, contorted weeping redbud, weeping bald cypress, dwarf bald cypress, and paw paw. Non-invasive, unusual, and exotic tree and plant varieties will include camellia, dawn redwood, ginkgo (including 15-gallon "Princeton Sentry"), and a variety of columnar parrotia. Trees Atlanta donors of \$500 or more are invited to attend a preview shopping night the evening before the Tree Sale.

What: Annual Tree & Shrub Sale

When: October 10, 2009, 8 a.m. -- 2 p.m.

Where: Trees Atlanta Kendeda Center

225 Chester Avenue, in

Reynoldstown

BrookNotes welcomes articles, art work, photographs and story ideas. The deadline for the next issue of *BrookNotes* is Wednesday, October 7th, 2009. Submissions may be e-mailed to brooknotes@brookwoodhills.com or dropped off at 200 Camden Road.

New Faces

On August 27th Caroline and David Millican at 89 Brighton Road welcomed William Henry Millican into the world. William joins big sisters Liza and Ellie, and big brother John into what is surely a very busy household these days!



On August 31st and just next door to the Millican's at 97 Brighton, Helen Louise Mattie was born to Chris and Kellam Mattie. Louise will be competing for attention with big brothers George, 4 1/2, and Charlie, 2 1/2.

And on September 15th, Rebecca Schell Wilbert was born to Caroline and Tony Wilbert, 22 Northwood Avenue. Sister Chloe, 4 1/2 and brother Whit, 2, aren't sure what to think!

Ice Cream Social and Dog Swim Lots of Fun



Many thanks go to Bruce Wanamaker and his law firm Ledbetter, Wanamaker, Glass LLP for sponsoring the annual Ice Cream Social on Sunday, September 13th. At left Bruce and Elizabeth take a break from scooping delicious mint chocolate chip ice cream for neighbors celebrating the official end of the 2009 pool season. The rain mostly held off so that besides the ice cream, the children could also enjoy train rides around the park (see Debby and Edee Moorman and friends below), an inflated slide and rock climbing wall, and all the usual fun things to do in our wonderful park.

Eight tubs of Baskin-Robbins ice cream were served up by many Brookwood Hills neighbors who volunteered

to help out with the afternoon party. With the approach of 5 p.m., the traditional mayhem broke out as the neighborhood dogs began to arrive for the dog swim. The pool officially closed until next spring when the dogs happily leaped into the water or were cajoled by their owners to take a tentative dip. Thanks to Dan Granot for the pictures.



Clear Creek Corner: Long, Long, Long Ago

By Jerry Luxemburger

The people who originally inhabited Clear Creek left Africa perhaps 50,000 years ago. After moving across the Arabian Peninsula and Persia, they split into those who followed animal migrations and habitats west, and those who followed them east.

The descendants of the people who went east got to Clear Creek first, after spending about 35,000 years or more migrating through China and Korea to the northern reaches of Asia. When the last major ice age shrunk sea levels substantially, a land bridge developed from Asia to North America. Some of those African emigrants of 50,000 years ago then slowly made their way down into central North America and across what is now the U.S. Eventually their descendants formed tribes known as Creek and Cherokee Indians. Although they fought, captured, and enslaved one another from time to time, they had a relatively comfortable life living off the deer, fish, corn, and other foodstuffs nature made available.

Those who left Africa and went west did not get to Clear Creek until about 200 years ago and they got here thanks in large part to the cotton gin and the steam engine. Those inventions made cotton into a cash crop, facilitated its transportation to seaports, and greatly expanded the area of its cultivation. As a result, the westward migrants, such as Andrew Jackson Collier and George Washington Collier, pushed the eastward migrants off the Clear Creek land and farmed it. When the Community Club purchased the Clear Creek land about 35 years ago, it had been in the Collier family for about 150 years.

The peaceful use of the Clear Creek land for hunting, farming, and woodland life was interrupted by the Civil War. Confederate forces were outnumbered by, and had been retreating steadily from, Sherman's armies. The leaders of the Confederacy wanted their armies to stand and fight. In the Battle of Atlanta, they did. The first engagement in the Battle of Atlanta is known as "the Battle of Peachtree Creek." That name is a misnomer. The Confederate plan to attack the Union armies as they tried to cross Peachtree Creek never materialized fully. A large group of Confederates were to advance north up the Clear Creek valley to attack the east flank of the Union forces. Other Confederates were to hold the center and western areas. Miscalculations and delays as well as the decision of the Confederate leaders to change commanding generals the day before, all doomed the Confederate stand at Peachtree Creek. The Union forces advanced up Peachtree Road to the current site of Piedmont Hospital before the battle began in earnest. Confederate forces that were to advance up the Clear Creek Valley were further delayed by difficult terrain. As a result, they came under Union cannon fire from the heights of today's Brighton Road. The Clear Creek group was never effective; when the main armies joined, the battlefield was at Piedmont Hospital and along Collier Road. The Battle of Peachtree Creek should be more properly referred to, at least in the present day, as "the Battle of Piedmont Hospital!"

After the Civil War, the Clear Creek land reverted to field, farm, and woodlands. The Native Americans had long been driven away and the abandoned entrenchments of the Civil War became a distant memory. At the end of the 19th Century, Peachtree Road was becoming the fashionable place for fine homes, with no development behind them. Until the early 1920's a country road accessed Clear Creek from Peachtree Road and where our pool is today, a small lake was a popular swimming spot for young people.

Treats, Trash and Tours on Tap

By Mitch Wickland

We are pleased to announce that the inaugural Clear Creek Preserve neighborhood clean-up will be held Saturday, October 24th starting at 9:00 am. Please join us at the entrance to the pool pavilion at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast, courtesy of Panera. Around 9:30 we'll walk over to the Preserve at the intersection of Palisades and Huntington Roads for a brief presentation by the Clear Creek Committee, which will be followed by a voluntary trash collection effort. Weather permitting, we will also be offering a guided tour of the full Preserve around 11:00 a.m. This event is a great chance for Brookwood Hills neighbors to see the wonderful progress being made in clearing out invasive plant species within the Preserve, to hear about the broader plans for the future, and if you're up to it, to help out in the removal of trash in the portion of the preserve directly behind Huntington. Rain or shine, please put on your gardening clothes and shoes that can get dirty, bring a pair of work gloves, and meet us for breakfast.

For those not familiar with the Preserve, this is the roughly 55-acre green space in between Brookwood Hills and Armour Drive. As you are probably aware, the neighborhood granted a conservation easement on the property to the city several years ago, ensuring that this natural buffer will remain undeveloped. See Jerry Luxemburger's article on the previous page as he tells the early story of the area. And keep looking in *BrookNotes* for the continuing "Clear Creek Corner" series to learn more about it.

We hope to see you on the 24th!

You Can Still Grill at the Pool Pavilion

By Deborah Gephardt

The hot summer months may be behind us, but all BWHCC members are welcome to use the Pool Pavilion grill throughout the year. There are a few things to remember however.

- During the summer Sweetwater keeps the propane tank full. The rest of the year it is up to the community. Check the tank before your meal. Refill it or bring your own.
- Don't count on grilling tools, as the ones provided by the Community Club tend to "disappear."
- Remember to check that the tank has been turned off after use.
- Recycle bins are for use of glass, plastic and cans only. No garbage, including pizza boxes. Bring your own garbage bags and take home for disposal because trash pick-up has been cut to once a week for the off-season.
- A vinyl cover for the grill has been ordered. Please clean the grill and replace the cover after use.
- Check the website calendar for parties that have been booked at the pavilion in order to be sure the space is available for your use. www.brookwoodhills.com
- Questions? Call me at 404-403-3331. Don't overcook your steak and enjoy!

Calendar

- **Monday, October 5, BWH Board Meeting**, 7:15 p.m. at the home of Lee & Gilda Morris, 230 Brighton Road
- **October 9-11, Great Pumpkin Give-Away**, at Sarah Hagood's, 205 Huntington Road
- **Saturday, October 24, Clear Creek Clean-up**, 9:00 a.m. to noonish, at the preserve
- **Saturday, October 31, Halloween Party**, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., at the park
- **Saturday, December 5, Trees Atlanta Tree Planting**, 9:00 a.m. to noon

An Open Letter to *BrookNotes*

By Elaine Luxemburger

Fifteen or so neighbors were pleased to see each other at the Urban Design Commission (UDC) meeting at City Hall on September 9th, as we pinned on our "Save 84 Wakefield" buttons supplied by Sandra Player. Despite freezing temperatures in the City Council Chambers, we persevered for over three hours until this case was called. But it was worth the wait to hear this agency of city government speak about Brookwood Hills and what it represents to the city: Brookwood Hills was called a model of preservation! It evoked "apple pie and the Fourth of July!" Homeowners here were described as being sensitive in the ways they remodeled their homes! And on and on... Commission members spoke repeatedly about the importance of keeping our neighborhood intact and protected. One UDC member called attention to the damage to the environment that demolition of this 1929 structure at 84 Wakefield would involve: "Think of the piles of rubble that will result; you don't want this to be your carbon footprint," she said, speaking to the architect who had designed a new house to replace the one that is slated to be demolished. "Because the roof leaks is not a reason to demolish; because water comes in the French doors is not a reason," said another. It was heartening to hear their thoughts about this house and our neighborhood!

Then one Commission member brought up a point that had hung in the air: if our neighborhood had been zoned as a "Historic District" by the City, the UDC could prevent the demolition of structures like 84 Wakefield. (Much of Brookwood Hills is now a Conservation District, although it is eligible to be a Historic District, the next higher designation with its more stringent requirements for demolition of structures.) The Urban Design Commission now has the responsibility to review and comment on proposed changes in the Brookwood Hills Conservation District, a process which can be helpful to homeowners. With Historic zoning, the UDC would be empowered to stop demolition of older houses as well as exterior changes deemed harmful to the historic character of the neighborhood.

The change to Historic zoning from Conservation District is something that the Brookwood Hills Board should consider. In the future it is likely that issues such as this proposed demolition of an old house will come up more often as the city's pressures around the neighborhood increase. The historic character of Brookwood Hills is perhaps its most important asset, and it should be carefully protected.

Three Reminders on Recycling

Now that furloughs of City employees have ended, Atlanta has resumed the regular weekly pick-up of both recycling and yard trimming.

Electronic Waste Recycling continues every 3rd Saturday of the month from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the 8th Street parking lot across from Grady High School. In 2008 65,906 pounds were collected. Through July 18th, 2009 approximately 74,000 pounds had been collected. Note that while there is no charge for most electronic items, there is a \$10 to \$20 charge for TVs (depending on the TV size) and a \$5 charge for microwave ovens. For more information on what can be accepted go to www.keepatlantabeautiful.org. It is a very long list!

And from *The Atlanta Trebune* published by Trees Atlanta comes the following, submitted to *BrookNotes* by Cookie Frank:

“Leaf your yard alone! Deciduous trees . . . shed their leaves when they no longer need them. Leaves capture sunlight and water and transform them into nutrients for the tree. When weather cools, these trees enter a dormant period . . . and do not require the fuel provided by their leaves. Therefore, they shed their leaves, forming a leaf-like blanket over our lawns and gardens. Do not despair! While some find fallen leaves unsightly, the avid gardener knows fallen leaves are a beneficial and timesaving gift from our trees.

Fallen leaves offer an abundance of nutrients to surrounding soil as they decompose. ‘Recycling’ these nutrients into the soil provides rich compost and improves soil structure. In addition to contributing nutrients to the soil, leaves also retain moisture after an autumn rain. Allowing leaves to fall under trees into large self-mulching beds not only saves valuable time and energy you might have spent raking, but it also helps keep tree roots moist and strong.

If you are not keen on having a leaf-scattered lawn, try mowing the leaves with a bagless mower and leaving the chipped pieces to decompose. Your neighbors will not notice the leaf clippings and your lawn and plants will benefit from the natural mulch. Who wants to spend money on pine straw or wood chips when local trees are offering plenty of free mulch? If you have more leaves than you can use, consider starting a compost pile. Heap extra leaves in the corner of your yard and occasionally sprinkle them with water. The leaves should be ready to use as compost in Spring gardens and flower beds. Fallen leaves are actually quite beautiful and the kids in your neighborhood will enjoy ‘crunching’ them underfoot as they pass by. So put down that rake! Your yard will thank you.”

Editor’s Note: Leaving leaves on a newly aerated and re-seeded fescue lawn before the new grass can become established is, however, not such a good idea.

The Great Pumpkin Give-Away Is Back!

Thanks to Sarah Hagood and Specialty Homes, Inc., a pumpkin will be waiting for you in the front yard of Sarah’s home at 205 Huntington Road, starting on Friday, October 9th. There will be enough pumpkins so that each Brookwood Hills resident can take one home for display during the Fall season. For best selection, get yours by Sunday the 11th, but any left over will be awaiting you through the end of October. Look for your flyer from Sarah in your mailbox for more details. Thank you, Sarah!

There is Another Pumpkin Patch in Brookwood Hills!

Kathy Gentry invites everyone to check out her family's front yard at 84 Palisades Road. Kathy and 9-year old Casey planted 3 or 4 pumpkin plants when the loss of the very large street tree that fell across their front yard the day after Easter resulted in unanticipated sunlight. Kathy reports they have at least one fine specimen. However she will concede that the color of Michael Rinker's pumpkins at 58 Montclair (see the July/August edition of *BrookNotes*) is superior to theirs and they greatly admire his crop!

Two "Save-the-Dates" Not to be Missed

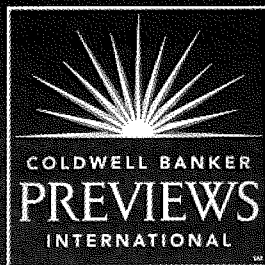
The Brookwood Hills Annual Halloween Party and Parade will be held at the park on Saturday, October 31st from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Join us for pizza, costume contests, and an amazing haunted house. Thank you to our generous sponsor, Joe Noah and Associates.

Please mark your calendars and join your neighbors the morning of December 5th for the Annual Brookwood Hills Tree Planting sponsored by Trees Atlanta. For preliminary inquiries contact Boyd Gentry at bpentry@comcast.net or 404-394-6596. More details to follow in an upcoming edition of *BrookNotes*.

C L A S S I F I E D S

Babysitter/ Pet Sitter. Carolynn Cooper highly recommends her babysitter/pet sitter of over 10 years, Cheryl Padgett. Cheryl is a mature and responsible adult and is great with kids of all ages and furry animals of all sizes. She also is available for overnight/week-end babysitting. She can drive kids to their activities and help with homework. References from other local families are available. Cheryl can be reached at 404-663-5165 or clpsierawest@att.net.

Pet Care and Babysitting. Brooke Gentry, 13 and in 8th Grade at Holy Innocents, would love to watch your pets or your children! I am good with kids, having a little sister myself. Also, I have lots of experience with animals, having 4 cats and a dog of my own. Please email me at 1bgentry4@gmail.com, or call 404-423-1512 (cell) or 404-876-4480 (home).



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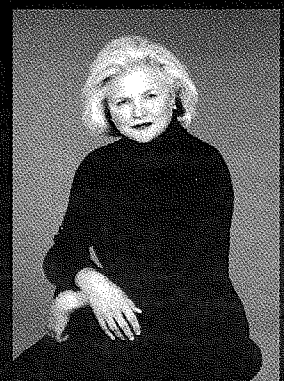
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