

President
Vacant



Secretary
Arlene Gross
secretary@merryhills.com

Vice President
Jorn Winter
vicepresident@merryhills.com

www.merryhills.com

Treasurer
Tracy Alexander
treasurer@merryhills.com

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Annual Election of Officers

On November 17 at DeKalb School of the Arts, Commissioner Kathie Gannon from District at Large spoke to the membership. Some of the things she mentioned were the new police precinct at Toco Hill, which has been delayed because of cost of property; the Kittredge Park planning session to be held in the spring; and the Emory traffic/land use plan. Also on the agenda was Liz Beyer, cochairman of the Infill Task Force, who discussed the November 22 vote by the commission.

New MHHA officers were elected for 2006. They will take office on January 1, 2006. The officers are:

President - Flo Wolf
Vice President - Pat Jenkins
Secretary - Arlene Gross
Treasurer - Tracy Alexander

Gatchell Home, 1457 Holly Lane, Closes Permanently

In an August 28 article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, titled, "Residents of Closing Personal-care Home Prepare to Move," Gatchell Home Executive Director, Kathy Williams, announced the home would close. The remaining 13 residents were moved to other facilities close to their families and in Metro Atlanta.

The Gatchell Home was started in 1949 by Robert and Anne Gatchell for non-ambulatory individuals with musculoskeletal neurological disabilities. In 1960 with the help of several foundations, the present Gatchell Home was built. It was designated a Certified Personal Care Home in 2001. The contents have been sold, and the property consisting of a one-story brick building on 3.44 acres is to be sold. The building contains 10,000 square feet with 14 rooms, a modern kitchen, solarium, classroom, two dormitories, two semiprivate and one private room, and a central dining room.

The DeKalb Parks Department recently bought about 20 plus acres, from the Gatchell Home for the expansion of Kittredge Park. They were asked to look at the home property recently to see if it could be added to the park. Unfortunately, the price was too high, because of the building, so it will not be acquired. The county had also purchased the entryway on Holly Lane. The county lists the property zoning as residential (R-85) with no special permits. Any development of the Gatchell property will have an impact on MHHA and our Kittredge Park, so we will need to watch for any purchase or proposed zoning in the near future.

Zoning and Development Issues

We continue to see infill housing, the replacement of an existing home with a new one, in our midst. Currently, there are no applications for rezoning or special land use permit (SLUP) for property within the boundaries of the MHHA that are being considered by DeKalb County. The MHHA board, though, has taken note of a cluster of homes that have changed ownership during the past two years on and near LaVista Road. If and when zoning or other property issues come before the neighborhood association where action is required, the Board will ensure that MHHA is informed and a full discussion is conducted.

Infill Housing Ordinances

At time of publication of this newsletter, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners (BOC) had not yet enacted the infill housing ordinances. The original ordinances were based on recommendations by the Infill Task Force but were revised several times by the County's Legal Department since the recommendations. The task force has said the revised ordinances (dated December 6) would not result in relief from incompatible building in established neighborhoods, and would place an unreasonable burden on the residents to organize and petition for an infill overlay district. The task force advised the County on December 14 that it was not recommending adoption of the ordinances as revised. At www.dekalbinfill.org, you can find more information on this issue.

Traffic Update

During the past year, MHHA responded to a traffic study funded by Emory University and institutions along Clifton Road. In November, a set of traffic improvement recommendations was given to DeKalb County by the Clifton Corridor institutions (CCTMA) that incorporated MHHA's need to keep our section of LaVista Road pedestrian-friendly. The CCTMA has already started to implement and fund some traffic solutions that will benefit those who live here and work on Clifton Road: expanding its free shuttle van routes within a 3-mile radius; improving traffic-signal timing; and providing employees who leave their cars at home with a loaner car for daytime use.

To relieve traffic congestion, the CCTMA has said it will focus its future efforts on: adding rail service to Clifton Road; improving pedestrian and bicycle access; reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles; and developing properties in the Clifton Corridor as mixed-use developments that reduce car trips.

PDK Airport and Noise

Have you noticed an increase in aircraft noise over our neighborhood during the past year? Holly Lane neighbor Debra Robey has been documenting extremely loud occurrences of aircraft noise and reporting them to PDK Airport. To report incidents of loud aircraft noise, call the 24-hour Noise Disturbance Hotline at (770) 936-5442 and leave your name, address, neighborhood, exact time and date that you were disturbed, type of aircraft (small/large, propeller/jet/helicopter), and phone number (if you want PDK to call you back).

Monthly and annual reports of PDK airport operations and noise disturbances are available at www.PDKairport.org. The October 2005 report showed 754 noise complaints compared to a monthly average of 369. The total number of flights was 19,041 in October 2005 compared to 16,635 in October 2004. Development of a master plan that will determine the future of PDK Airport and its flight paths is currently underway. The Merry Hills website will publish the schedule of meetings for public input when it is provided.

News of Interest

- The county bond issue that passed on November 8 contains some items that affect our community. In the traffic area Briarcliff Road from Clifton to North Druid Hills Road will receive large scale improvements -- possible widening, additional turn lanes, intersection upgrades, and sidewalks. North Druid at Toco will be upgraded because of the high priority congestion. The Avis G. Williams Library on McConnell Drive is slated to be replaced; it was built in the sixties. Mason Mill Park, also on McConnell, is on the list of parks to receive major improvements sometime in the future.
- Christmas trees can be recycled from January 2 through January 7 by bringing them to the following nearby locations from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm: Home Depot at 2295 Lawrenceville Highway, and North Lake Mall. The trees are recycled into mulch that is available free to DeKalb citizens. For more information, call Keep DeKalb Beautiful at (404) 371-2654.
- On Sunday, February 5, the Southeast Kosher Festival will take place at the Beth Jacob Synagogue on LaVista Road. Previous festivals had more than 2,000 attendees. The Beth Jacob parking lots will be closed during the festival, but festival director Michael Anderson expects to provide free parking at either the Toco Hill Shopping Center or the Greek Orthodox Church with a free shuttle bus to the synagogue. You can call (404) 633-0551, extension 247, or e-mail info@southeastkosherfestival.com for more information.
- The county has a new permit system for residential parking on streets-- for people who do not reside in the area. It will cost \$12/year for a permit. Presently there are a lot of cars on our streets that do not belong to

residents. This has caused congestion and aggravation. Cars belonging to relatives and friends should not be stored in our subdivision. When we get a copy of the new permit, we will put it on our website.

People in the News

· Rabbi Mordechai Cohen, Christmas Lane resident, was pictured on the front of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* Living Section, on October 3, blowing the shofar.

· State Representative Mike Jacobs and his wife, Evan, have sold their home on N. Holly Lane and moved across Briarcliff to Timothy Drive.

New Babies

Rivka and Barry Eidex, Holly Lane, have a new baby boy.

Debra and Steve Robey, Holly Lane, have a new baby girl.

Welcome New Neighbors

Alevy Greenblatt, N. Holly Lane

Oleg Iskhakov, LaVista Road

Renee Kutner, Bramble Road

Henry Fink, N. Holly Lane

Levi Graiser, Christmas Lane

David Rosenblum, Wembley Court

Condolences

Sherman Sable, longtime Christmas Lane resident, died in a nursing home in Augusta, GA.

Johelen Owens, Merry Lane, lost a sister.

History of Merry Hills Subdivision and Homeowner's Association

In 1949, a Mr. Edwards bought a heavily wooded property in order to build a subdivision off LaVista Road. The property included a lake and sawmill, located at what is presently Holly Lane, where it intersects with Christmas and North Holly Lanes. The original homestead still stands, although greatly renovated, at the corner of Pine Tree Circle and Merry Lane. The area was named the Merry Hills Subdivision, and the plat plan laid out streets named Christmas, Merry, Pine Tree, Reindeer, Holly, and North Holly. There were two outlets to LaVista Road and two to North Druid Hills Road. Also there were two outlets to Bramble and Jody Lanes. All of the homes were ranch style one-story with the average lots between ¼ to ¾ acres. Many of the tall pine trees that grew up in the woods were retained to make shaded lots. Curbs and foundations were built from Stone Mountain granite. These homes were very popular and affordable to young GIs returning from service as they could be purchased using Veterans Association loans. The average home price then was about \$15,000. The last home in this bunch was built in 1963. Much later, a lot was subdivided into two, and a new home built on the other lot in 2000. Forty-one town homes were built in 2001 along LaVista Road within the original Merry Hills boundaries.

The children all attended W.D. Thomson Elementary School which stood at the southeast corner of LaVista and North Druid Hills Roads (where Longhorn is now). Later Briarcliff High School and Kittredge Elementary School were built on North Druid Hills Road in the sixties. The Gatchell School (now home) was built in 1960 at 1458 Holly Lane. Toco Hill shopping center continued its expansion at the southwest corner of LaVista and North Druid Hills Roads.

In 1995 with increasing pressures on all sides for changes and rezoning, a few neighbors got together to start a new homeowners association for mutual protection. The organization was incorporated in June of 1996 and has grown in membership ever since. It has been active in trying to upgrade the neighborhood by using DeKalb County's code enforcement to correct problems, by leading to the installation of speed humps, by instigating Neighborhood Watch, by being active at rezoning hearings on periphery property, and having regular meetings and block parties. With the town homes mentioned above, there are 265 single-family homes. Beginning in 2002 there have been several tear-downs of older homes, and new much larger infill homes have been built. In 2003 the residents of Bramble and Jody Lanes were invited to join adding 90 more homes.

The neighborhood is unique in that approximately 50 percent of the residents are Jewish and a large percentage of these are Orthodox. Many of the children attend the Jewish Torah Day School and Temima High School for girls on LaVista Road and a high school for boys on Briarcliff Road. The Intown Community Church school is across LaVista and has just enlarged its day school.

There are many residents who have lived here for 40 or 50 years, some of whom are now in their 80's and 90's. Young singles and marrieds are buying and renovating these homes because of the wonderful location and access to jobs at Emory University, CD, Cancer Society, etc. There is a great cross section of ages with many new babies.

**Merry Hills Homeowners Association
Board Members**

Officers

Vice President Jorn Wintervicepresident@merryhills.com
Secretary Arlene Gross.....secretary@merryhills.com
Treasurer Tracy Alexandertreasurer@merryhills.com
Past President..... Linda Billingsleypastpresident@merryhills.com

Section Representatives

Section 1 Erin DiChiarasection1rep@merryhills.com
Section 2 Doug and Tracy Callas section2rep@merryhills.com
Section 3section3rep@merryhills.com
Section 4section4rep@merryhills.com
Section 5 Shirley Brickman.....section5rep@merryhills.com
Section 6section6rep@merryhills.com
Section 7 Patrick Tomlin.....section7rep@merryhills.com
Section 8 Ariana and Roy Fass.....section8rep@merryhills.com
Section 9 Simon Ghertnersection9rep@merryhills.com
Section 10 Nelda and Victor Rousso section10rep@merryhills.com

Section Definitions

Section 1 1252-1330 Merry, 1235 Christmas, 2002-2066 LaVista,
..... 2178 LaVista
Section 2 1331-1413 Merry, 2771-2801 N. Druid Hills
Section 3 1246-1341 Christmas, 1724 and 1725 Pine Tree Circle
Section 4 1348-1448 Christmas
Section 5 1722-1755 Reindeer, 1708-1798 N. Holly
Section 6 1260-1402 Holly
Section 7 1406-1519 Holly, 2487-2515 N. Druid Hills
Section 8 1426-1472 Wembley Court
Section 9 Jody Lane
Section 10 Bramble Road

Chairpersons

E-mail AdministratorSteve Jenkins.....mailinglist@merryhills.com
Neighborhood Val Schlorff and
Welcome Virginia Smithwelcome@merryhills.com
WebmasterFlo Wolf.....webmaster@merryhills.com
Parks..... Linda Billingsley.....parks@merryhills.com
Traffic and
Pedestrian Safety..... Flo Wolf traffic@merryhills.com

Holiday Schedule: Garbage/Yard Waste Collection

Post-Christmas Day: Garbage pick-up is Wednesday, 12/28. No change – yardwaste.
Post-New Years Day: Garbage pick-up is Wednesday, 1/4. No change - yardwaste.

Be a Good Neighbor

Remember to remove your trash receptacles from the curb by the end of trash day. Our streets will look neater and your trash cans will last longer.

Have an item for the MHHA Newsletter? E-mail to newsletter@merryhills.com