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NORTH BUCKHEAD CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Mail to: NBCA, P.O. Box 420391, Atlanta, GA 30342-0391
Website — www.nbca.org E-mail — nbca@nbca.org

Annual membership dues — Household \$25 / Business \$50

(12 months starting today or 12 months added to your existing membership)

Please enclose your check payable to NBCA. Dues/contributions are not charitable tax-deductible contributions.

Name(s) Date

Address Year you moved to North Buckhead

E-mail #1 E-mail #2

Phone (Home) Phone (Work) Cell

We (I) are are not interested in participating in a possible North Buckhead Neighborhood Directory.

Please contact me/us about possibly volunteering for these categories (definitions at www.nbca.org/volunteer):

- Beautification / Park
Christmas Tree Sale
Environment / Trees
Eyesore Resolution
Find Book Group
Find Jogging Buddies
Find Playgroups
Friend of the Park
Legal / Professional
Membership — Business
Membership — Condo
Membership — Single-family
Neighborhood Directory
Neighborhood Signs
New Neighbor Greeting
Newsletter
One-time, quick volunteer jobs
Playgrounds / Kids
Police / Fire / Safety
Sidewalks / Crosswalks
Social Events
Stuff Envelopes
Sustainability/Recycle
Traffic Committee
Web Site
Zoning / Land Use
Other

Comments, suggestions, skills, talents, special interests, and services:

In addition to my \$25/50 for dues, I am also adding to my check: Landscaping \$ Legal \$ and Greenspace Fund \$

Please answer this question.



NORTH BUCKHEAD Civic Association Newsletter

PO Box 420391, Atlanta, GA 30342 July 2009 www.nbca.org
Mailed four times each year to over 4,000 North Buckhead homes

NBCA's newsletter archive is on-line with color photos at www.nbca.org/newsletters.

Wieuca Road changes: Solutions for the new school

By Robert Sarkissian, NBCA Traffic Chair

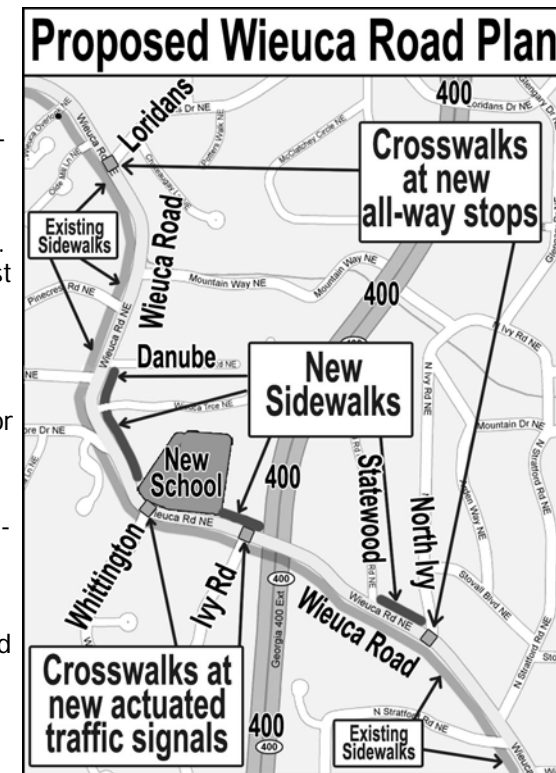
Construction of our new Sarah Smith School has progressed to the stage that the structure of the school complex is visible from Wieuca Road.

At the same time, planning to provide the street and sidewalk infrastructure needed by the school has been moving along. These plans have focused on three dimensions:

- 1. The first involves traffic flow in the area adjacent to the school. The school's new driveway must be integrated with the existing roadway including egress and ingress access, signaling, signage, and striping for vehicular traffic.
2. The second consists of improvements and other safety related mechanisms to ensure student safety for pedestrian traffic: crosswalks, pedestrian-activated signals, adequate sidewalk networks, etc.
3. The third encompasses traffic calming and enforcement for the entire 1.8 mile stretch of Wieuca Road from Phipps Boulevard to Roswell Road.

All of these measures must be in place by next January when the school opens to ensure adequate safety for our students. As Atlantans know, there is a budget crisis in the City of Atlanta and funds for out-of-the-ordinary needs are extremely limited.

ment, who are responsible for street and sidewalk infrastructure. Public representatives have included the Sarah Smith PTA Co-presidents Elizabeth Reed and Angie Chesin, along with NBCA representatives.



While the changes outlined below might make Wieuca Road less attractive for cut-through traffic between Roswell Road and Peachtree Road, our recommendations were based on the premise that our main priority has to be the safety of our children accessing the new campus.

New traffic signals
Plans include two pedestrian-actuated countdown signals on Wieuca Road: one at Ivy Road and the other at Whittington Drive.

New all-way stops
New rules are taking effect that will result in smaller school bus service zones. So, more students

(Continued on page 8)

Inside this Newsletter

Table listing newsletter contents: Annual Meeting: Many facets Page 2, Help for lost pets Page 4, Habersham turn "on hold" Page 4, Buckhead history at Emory Page 4, Northern Concourse, but more is needed Page 5, etc.

## Annual Meeting: Many facets of North Buckhead

By Sue Certain

North Buckhead has many aspects — its history, people socializing and sharing food together, our policemen who work with us and protect us, the education of our children, sidewalks, skyscrapers and green spaces, our pets, our wildlife, traffic, Sarah Smith School, recycling and conservation, concern for those less fortunate and more. A number of these facets of our community were visible at the NBCA Annual Meeting on March 27, attended by about 130 neighbors and guests.

Illustrating the history of Buckhead, our main speaker, Susan Kessler Barnard, author of Buckhead: A Place for All Time, took us on a PowerPoint tour of the past. The Paleo-Indians lived here first, then the Creeks. The Indians thought the Americans were weak, and sided with the British. The Americans had a "peach tree trail" they took, which later became "Peachtree Road". In 1814, the road lead to "Fort Peachtree". After the British lost the war, the Creeks were forced to sign away millions of acres of land (1821, Treaty of Indian Springs) and moved west.

The next historical development was that in 1837, Henry Irby built a general store and tavern. Someone shot a buck and put his head up in the tavern. It was called the "Buck's Head". Mr. Irby had a corral to put in cattle coming through, and the cattle herders could stop at the tavern for some cool refreshment.

We learned how Ivy Road got its name. Henry Irby had several daughters. One, Sara Jane Irby, married Rial Bailey Hicks. They had

daughters, too. Mary Ophelia married Seaborn Ivey; Alice married Russell Ivey. Rial Hicks gave the two brothers land, and some of this land became Ivy Road. (This was a surprise to those of us who thought the name came from all the English ivy that grew in the yards.)

Judge Howell built a mill: the road to it was called "Howell's Mill Road". Sardis Methodist Church was built on Powers Ferry Road near North Buckhead, the first church in Buckhead.

After the Civil War, The New Hope AME Church was built and deeded to former slaves. Pottery became a major industry in Atlanta after the Civil War. People started moving out to Buckhead, as the street car could take them downtown when they needed to go.

This whole history was illustrated with fascinating old photographs. Two of the most memorable were of Lenox Square when it opened in 1962 as an open-air mall,

and the Peachtree Gardens Clubhouse on North Ivy Road in its heyday, when dances were held in a beautiful ballroom. It was a trip down memory lane for a number of us. In the future, Susan Barnard will be publishing a history of Buckhead illustrated in old photographs, including many shared in her presentation.

Henry Hope, R. L. Hope's grandson, also spoke. R. L. Hope was the resident physician and superintendent of the "poor houses", circa 1911. Blacks and whites were housed in separate facilities near the current location of the Buckhead Loop. Both poor houses were relocated to the place where Chastain Park is now: one became



Author Susan Barnard with image of Judge Clark Howell (Howell's Mill fame)



Al Scenna with depiction of new Sarah Smith school

### NBCA Standing Meetings

(NBCA meetings are open to the public)

**Board** — 7:00 PM, 4th Monday of month except March, Nov, and Dec., Room S-103, Wieuca Road Baptist Church.

**Land Use/Zoning** — 7:00 PM, 3rd Monday of month

Room S-103, Wieuca Road Baptist Church

**Playgrounds** — No standing meetings yet.

Meetings may be announced by e-mail.

**Traffic** — Contact chair Robert Sarkissian

oversark@bellsouth.net or 404-504-9444

## Area businesses support NBCA

These businesses support your neighborhood association with their NBCA business memberships. Please support them.

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<b>at&amp;t - Wireless Etc</b>	404-233-9898	<b>Jackie Naylor Interiors Inc.</b>	404-814-1973
<b>Tishann Brown - Realtor</b>	404-310-5548	<b>Parc at Buckhead</b>	www.parcatabuckhead.com
<b>Buckhead Coalition</b>	3340 Peachtree Rd#560	<b>PC Management Co</b>	3495 Piedmont Rd
<b>Buckhead Realty-Jim Cosgrove, Broker</b>	404-841-9000	<b>Pope &amp; Land Enterprises</b>	www.popeandland.com
<b>Carol Cahill, Realtor</b>	404-918-8438	<b>Presstine Cleaners</b>	4455 Roswell Rd
<b>Chapes - JPL, LTD</b>	ChapesJPL.com	<b>Realtors, *The Hinsons*</b>	404-231-1113
<b>DL Crawford, Assoc., Inc.</b>	3445 Stratford Rd #3403	<b>Regent Partners</b>	www.regentpartners.com
<b>CORE Benefit Solutions</b>	www.corebenefitsga.com	<b>Remarkable Real Estate Services</b>	404-233-MARC
<b>Crème de la Crème Preschool</b>	404-256-4488	<b>Scotland Wright &amp; Assoc.</b>	www.scotlandwright.com
<b>Diazo Specialty Printing</b>	3872 Roswell Rd	<b>Jennifer Sherrouse, Realtor</b>	www.jennifersherrouse.com
<b>Jackie Goodman, Realtor</b>	404-609-9898	<b>Laura Sobol, OTR/L</b>	404-798-8809
<b>Grand Hyatt Atlanta</b>	3300 Peachtree Rd	<b>St. James United Methodist Church</b>	www.stjamesatlanta.org
<b>Shirley Irek Piano Studio</b>	404-467-9451	<b>Suzy Smith, Realtor</b>	404-307-0347
<b>Jones &amp; Kolb, CPAs</b>	404-262-7920	<b>The Cat Doctor, Inc.</b>	4716 Roswell Rd
<b>www.LakemooreColonyCondominiums.com</b>		<b>The Hoots Group</b>	www.thehootsgroup.com
<b>Little Davinci School . com</b>		<b>The Suzuki School</b>	404-869-1042
<b>LivingGreenPages.com</b>	404-771-5322	<b>Tuxedo Pharmacy</b>	164 W. Wieuca Rd
<b>Loridans Ventures</b>	404-872-1924	<b>William Word Antiques</b>	707-709 Miami Cir
<b>Lucy's Market</b>	4402A Roswell Rd		

Area businesses, please join us! Can you think of another way to get visibility for your business for so little money? To be listed here and become a business member for a year, send your \$50 check to NBCA, P.O. Box 420391, Atlanta, GA 30342. (Use the membership coupon on page 16.)

### LNC Park vision unveiled

The Friends of Little Nancy Creek Park, together with Park Pride, introduced the final vision for this new Peachtree Dunwoody Road park on May 31. The Friends group is headed by co-presidents Jim Braun of North Buckhead and Mark Stovin of Historic Brookhaven.

The park vision was created by Park Pride's Walt Ray with much feedback from area residents. The plan marks a major milestone in the long-term mission of developing this new city park. A PDF version of the visioning plan is available on NBCA's web site at [www.nbca.org/Parks](http://www.nbca.org/Parks).

Tax-deductible contributions may be made to our park through earmarked donations to Park Pride. For more information, contact Joe Cronk at [josephcronk@aol.com](mailto:josephcronk@aol.com) or the LNCP we site.

#### Friends of Little Nancy Creek Park Officers/Chairs

Mark Stovin and Jim Braun - Co-presidents  
 Joe Cronk - VP for fundraising and marketing  
 Sabre Esler - Secretary  
 Tres Carpenter - Treasurer  
 Sabre Esler and Mandy LeCompte - Playground Committee  
 Lisa Dickerson and Gordon Anderson - Landscaping Cttee

[www.LittleNancyCreekPark.org](http://www.LittleNancyCreekPark.org)



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 at The Blue Heron Nature Preserve  
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 404-434-9078  
[www.littledavincischool.org](http://www.littledavincischool.org)

The Little Da Vinci International School is a nonprofit community oriented preschool. The Little Da Vinci International School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program or any other program, activity, or service.

where learning inspires the mind

## Report from NPU-B

By Andrea Bennett, NBCA Representative to NPU-B

While the level of new commercial real estate development has dropped, NPU-B has continued to actively engage with a number of projects. Recently Christ the King Cathedral presented its long term expansion plans, which include a courtyard in the area of the existing parking lot, a much expanded classroom building and an addition to the parking deck. The community endorsed most of the plan, but expressed reservations about the deck.

Barry Hotel Properties also unveiled plans for a new luxury hotel and condominium project at the corner of West Paces Ferry Road and Paces Ferry Place, across the street from the recently opened St. Regis. The proposed development would include a main tower equivalent in height to the St. Regis, and would incorporate a restaurant and retail stores at street level.

The new hotel would comply with the enhanced streetscapes and other requirements of the soon to be expanded SPI-9. The SPI overlay implements a number of transportation and pedestrian improvements and is intended to provide a more integrated urban feel to the Village area.

The SPI expansion is the culmination of months of public hearings and hard work by planners and stakeholders from the community and major commercial and transportation interests.

Despite a slowdown in new development, the restaurant and hospitality industry has been hopping. NPU-B heard and approved several new venues, including Kolor, an upscale 15,000 square foot restaurant and nightclub at the intersection of Piedmont and Peachtree. The Havana Club, another upscale nightclub, will be located on Piedmont in the former Anteks site. The Lenox Square Grill, an undertaking by CentraArchy, which operates the Tavern at Phipps, is opening in the old Clubhouse location. F&C nightclub plans a new venue at the former Gold Club site at Piedmont and Lindbergh. Buffalo Wild Wings is opening a new restaurant at the former Ali Oli spot at Buckhead Station. All of these applications were carefully reviewed and their approval represents a lot of hard work by the applicants and the surrounding communities.

## Blue Heron Preserve

By Nancy Jones, Executive Director, Blue Heron Nature Preserve

I am happy to report that the Little Da Vinci school at Blue Heron opened its doors for summer camp in June. Their downstairs renovation is finished and beautiful. You can contact their Director Soraya Rouchdi for further information about their programs at 404-434-9078. The Audubon Society, Blue Heron's other non-profit tenant, is renovating their upstairs space. They offer wonderful birding programs all year. Contact them for information at 678-973-2437.

Lastly, our new website is up ([www.bhnp.org](http://www.bhnp.org)) thanks to the efforts of a neighborhood supporter, Joe LeCompte. It looks fantastic and we hope to keep it up to date with photos and information so everyone can stay informed on the news at Blue Heron. Thank you, Joe! Also thanks go to another neighborhood volunteer, Anne Stern, who is helping us maintain the website and compile our membership data. Thanks, Anne!

Come visit Blue Heron this summer. It looks lush and green, we have amazing wildlife and the garden looks great. Come support us.



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## Many facets—continued

Galloway School, the other became Chastain Arts Center. Henry Hope has written a book called "The Poor Houses" on this subject.

Regarding the new Sarah Smith School, Katy Pattillo (Atlanta Board of Education Board Member, District 4), Sidney Baker (Sarah Smith Principal), and Al Scenna (APS Project Manager for the Wieuca Campus) spoke to the group. Sidney Baker stated that there are 899 students at Sarah Smith and portable classrooms everywhere. The kindergarten is located at a church due to lack of space and the school's population continues to grow. But still there's a "focus on excellence" and it is an International Baccalaureate World School.



APD Major Browning

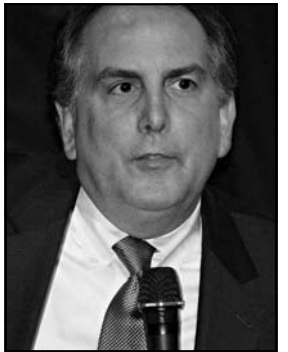
Grades K-2 will be on the Old Ivy Road Campus and 3-5 will be on the Wieuca Road campus. This way, every current student will be able to attend the new campus. Sarah Smith will be one school located on two campuses. He stressed that not one child will be redistricted into or out of the Sarah Smith school district as a result of all this.

The needs for traffic lights, sidewalks, volunteer crossing guards, hired crossing guards, and more were discussed. The new campus is planned to open January 2010. Trees have been saved in the construction of the new campus, due to neighborhood involvement.

Crime and police were another facet of community life. Gordon Certain, NBCA President, presented Major James Sellers with an award as an outstanding citizen of North Buckhead. Major Sellers lives on North Ivy Road and has been the commander of the Zone 2 Atlanta Police Precinct. This honor was richly deserved, as Major Sellers' accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of the community have been un-

precedented. Our new Zone 2 commander, Major Robert Browning, also spoke to the assembled group. He said that crime was down in Zone 2. While many Wieuca neighbors want to keep the 25 MPH speed limit on Wieuca Road and want it vigorously enforced, we learned that the GDOT's policies block radar enforcement on Wieuca at speed limits lower than 30 MPH. (See Robert Sarkissian's article, page 1.)

Our state representative, Ed Lindsey (Georgia House of Representatives, District 54), also addressed the crowd. He spoke of his work as the Chair of the Appropriations Committee of Education. Revenue is down and funding has been cut. The State has greatly cut what they give to education, which is primarily funded by local property taxes. He described how students and parents around the state, concerned about losing school nurses, sent him tongue depressors in protest. The school nurse program was not cut. The state kept full funding for national board certification for teachers and the Governor's Honors Program. The central office for state education took the biggest funding cuts.



Rep. Ed Lindsey

Mary Harrington spoke briefly to the group. She is the new City of Atlanta Recycling Program Manager. She brought stickers to label our bins "Yard Waste" or "Recycling": these were eagerly snapped up. She told us that the original plan had been to give households large rolling bins for recycling and the like, but the economic crisis made this plan impossible.

The economic crisis has also swollen the ranks of the homeless, while donations to help them are down. NBCA collected food for Crossroads Community Ministries, which includes a soup kitchen which feeds homeless persons. Twenty-eight pounds of food were contributed.

Prior to the formal meeting there was a social hour, including dinner. There was hot lasagna (both veggie and meat), fruit salad, mixed salad, and a cake that said "I Love North Buckhead". Many people said that the food at this annual meeting was the best we've ever had. Thanks to Piper Harris, our Social Co-chair, for an outstanding job with the food, drinks, and social gathering. We also appreciate the work of Rita Christopher, Patti Brenan and Carol Cahill, who assisted Piper.

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## Help for lost pets

Residents who enjoy this newsletter but are not on NBCA's e-mail list are missing a lot of news. They also miss alerts about pets that have been found by others.

If you want to join our list, send an e-mail to NorthBuckhead@Yahoo.com. Please include your name and address. You don't have to be an NBCA member, though members get additional benefits. If you don't have e-mail, but want to report a lost or found pet, call Natalie Spalding at 404 231-0646.

## Habersham turn "on hold"

Denise Starling, BATMA's executive director, also headed the recent Piedmont Corridor Project, which studied improvement opportunities on Piedmont Road.

Denise recently reported that one of the planned improvements, the proposed extension of the left turn stacking lane on northbound Piedmont Road onto westbound Habersham Road, was "on hold" due to right-of-way issues. It was hoped that the extended left turn lane would free both through lanes of northbound Piedmont Road for through traffic. Unfortunately, this improvement will not happen any time soon.

## Buckhead history at Emory

For those of you fortunate enough to have attended the NBCA Annual Meeting (see article on Page 2), you were able to see the first public presentation of a wonderful photographic history of Buckhead presented by author/historian Susan Kessler Barnard.

For those of you who wish you had seen it, you have another chance, that is if you are a senior citizen (at least 50). The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Emory University (<http://ccl.emory.edu/olli> or 404-727-6000) provides a wide variety of subjects, including Susan's photographic course, for a fee of \$69 or \$99. Six repeat sessions of her presentation are being offered, all on Tuesdays from 10 AM to 11 AM, July 7 through August 11.

*The Emory catalogue describes the course as follows: "Come see the Buckhead community come alive through a series of old maps and photographs. This class on Buckhead's interesting history will tell the story from the Archaic Period (8000 - 6000 BC) to the opening of Lenox Square in 1962. Susan Kessler Barnard, author of **Buckhead, A Place for All Time**, and **Images of America: Buckhead** will show pictures from private and archival collections."*

## Cox Heroes

By Nancy Jones, Executive Director, Blue Heron Nature Preserve

Our very own North Buckhead hero, Gordon Certain, has been nominated for the "Cox Conserves Heroes" award! Gordon's efforts for the neighborhood and larger community are immense; he seeks little recognition for his efforts but this nomination is one way to show our appreciation. The nominating process is now closed and the nominees will be winnowed down to finalists. Voting begins in August from the 10th to the 31st. The award carries a \$5,000 dollar prize to be donated to a charity or charities of the winner's choice. Stay tuned to the NBCA website for more information. If Gordon is selected as a finalist, we will have a grassroots campaign on his behalf.

*[As we went to press, we learned that Gordon is not a Cox Conserves Heroes finalist.]*

## BOA Heroes

By Nancy Jones, Executive Director, Blue Heron Nature Preserve

Bank of America is offering a \$5,000 grant to be donated to charity by a local community hero. I have nominated another local hero, Kevin McCauley, for this award. Kevin is a longtime North Buckhead volunteer. He was on the board of NBCA long before I joined and is now Board President of Blue Heron Nature Preserve. He founded our Community Garden which he continues to run with great success. He has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and helped build seven houses. Also, he is an Atlanta Bicycle Campaign member and volunteer and these are just some of his accomplishments. The grant cycle for this award closes June 30th. We wish Kevin much luck....he is a true community hero!

## Animal crossing

The pond and upper wetlands at Blue Heron Nature Preserve are bisected by Lakemoore Drive. Frequently we have wildlife, ducks, geese, turtles, otters, mink, muskrats and low flying birds that travel between the two bodies of water. Animal crossing signs have been added to alert drivers to watch out for wildlife. We recently had a large snapping turtle killed by a car at this particular spot. Thank you for watching out for our urban wildlife. They make their home in North Buckhead, too.



This new animal crossing sign is on Lakemoore Drive. It is located near Blue Heron's lake and about a half a block east of Pike's Nursery on Roswell Road.

Also, at the bridge at the Lakemoore Pond is a new sign to let all Nature Preserve visitors know that all the creatures in the pond, fish, birds, turtles, etc. are protected by Georgia State Law. We ask that you refrain from fishing and leave that to the herons. We have an interesting and diverse group of turtles that live in the pond; they are protected from fishing as well.

Thank you, Blue Heron Nature Preserve

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**NATALIE SPALDING**

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(Cell) 404-697-0526



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Robert Sarkissian	oversark@bellsouth.net	404-504-9444
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Mandy LeCompte	mandy.lecompte@mindspring.com	404-386-6839
Staci Wasserman	staciadam@comcast.net	
<b>Web Sites</b>		
NBCA	www.nbca.org	
NBCA Zoning	www.northbuckheadzoning.com	

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<b>Greenspace &amp; Environment</b>	
Chair	Nancy Jones
<b>Land Use and Zoning</b>	
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Chair	Robert Cook
<b>New Neighbor Greeting</b>	
Chair	Rita Christopher
<b>Newsletter</b>	
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Ass't Ed.	Sue Certain
<b>NPU-B Representative</b>	
	Andrea Bennett
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Chair	Mandy LeCompte
Playgroups	Staci Wasserman

<b>Sidewalks</b>	
Chair	Robert Cook
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Co-chair	Rita Christopher
<b>Sustainability &amp; Recycling</b>	
Chair	Carol Cahill
<b>Traffic</b>	
Chair	Robert Sarkissian
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	
Chair	Fe C. Nievera
<b>Web Sites</b>	
NBCA	Gordon Certain
Zoning	Anne Kirsh-Stern
	Andrea Bennett

## NBCA Land Use and Zoning Committee's recent work

By Walda Lavroff, Chair

Since the last Newsletter article in March 2009, the NBCA L/Z committee has been busy. You may wonder how that can be with building activity at a crawl.

Applications were fewer in number but more complex. The listing of applications we have processed is available on our website: [www.NorthBuckheadZoning.com](http://www.NorthBuckheadZoning.com), click "Agenda". (Our web-mistress and committee vice-chair is Andrea Bennett.)

Repeated problems, which could be avoided by better informed applicants, were:

### Construction without appropriate permits

Please note: Before homeowners start any construction project, they need to find out if permits are required.

While the Bureau of Planning has suffered a decrease in staff and operating hours, much information is available on-line. Our website, see above, has links to basic permitting information.

If non-permitted construction collides with existing zoning code, there can be costly consequences and legal action, as well as lasting neighborhood animosity. Our advice to home owners is to find out what can and cannot be done without permits before beginning work.

### Outdoor amenities that do not fit the lot

Example: Applications for swimming pools

usually come to neighborhoods for review because yard setback reductions are requested.

Most of our area's single family homes are zoned R-3, requiring a minimum lot size of 18,000 square feet with allowable impervious lot coverage of 40%. However, many of the larger homes built in recent years are pushing the limits of that allowance, making the placement of outdoor amenities problematic. Homeowners would do well to check with the BOP before committing to pool builders.

Looking forward:

The L/Z committee is aware that when the economy re-balances, development will be different than it was before the economic debacle. Significant changes in the economy and the culture influence future trends:

- For the next twenty to thirty years there will be a demographic shift toward an older relative to younger population.
- The trend is away from urban sprawl and toward increased urbanism with increased population density.
- The demand for mega-houses is likely to diminish.

Our committee members are seeking to learn by attending lectures, workshops and discussions how those changes may affect our community.

## Northern Concourse is coming, but more is needed

By Gordon Certain, NBCA President

In our October 2008 newsletter, we said "We understand that construction of the Northern Concourse will start later this year." Well, it didn't happen. The Northern Concourse is that pedestrian bridge planned to connect the Buckhead MARTA station to Stratford Road on the east and to Tower Place on the west.

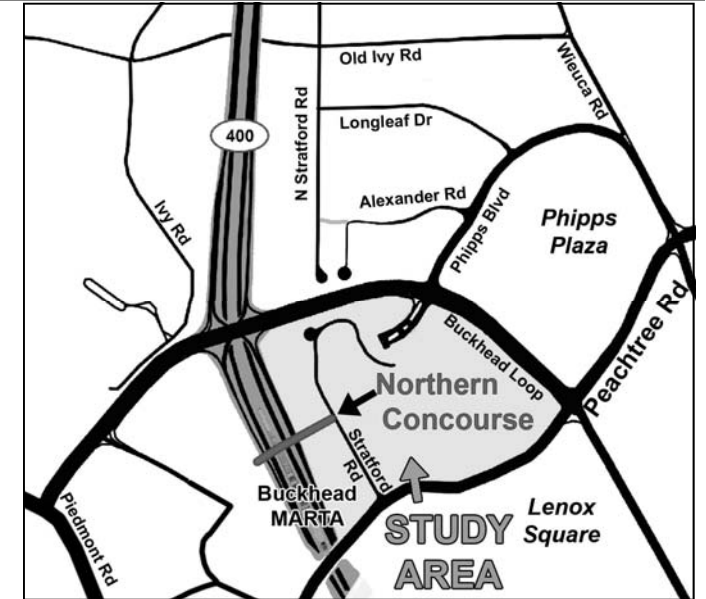
After more than ten years of waiting, we will have to wait longer, but at least the Northern Concourse is now fully funded, being designed and set to happen... eventually. The current estimate is that construction will start in 2011.

What does it mean to North Buckhead residents? Among other things, it means a potentially shorter walk to the Buckhead MARTA Station, should you want to do that.

However, there are still additional problems to be overcome before it will help. Currently, there's no way to walk from Phipps Boulevard or Phipps Plaza to the location of the Northern Concourse without creating your own path through private property over sometimes rugged terrain or through parking decks and alleys. Even then, you may need to find an unlocked chain-link gate. Or, you could walk down to Peachtree Road on public sidewalks (the current path to MARTA) and skip the Northern Concourse entirely. This lack of connectivity affects more than MARTA passengers; it reduces the usefulness and safety of a large, valuable hunk of North Buckhead.

So, what's the plan? As far as we can tell, there isn't one. That prompted a late-June research mission by four NBCA board members: Walda Lavroff, Andrea Bennett, and myself, guided by Dieter Franz. Dieter, an environmental engineer, had amazing insights into how one might get from "here" to "there". We walked through alleys and parking decks for several hours to establish to our satisfaction that with sufficient planning and the cooperation of key private landowners, new pedestrian footpaths and maybe new roads may be feasible in this area. Indeed, a limited street grid might be created with new roads to interconnect Stratford Road to Buckhead Loop and Phipps Boulevard, and possibly these latter roads to Peachtree Road. Many inter-parcel connections could also result.

Having satisfied ourselves that various connectivity routes are plausible (with sufficient planning and engineering), we will be asking the Buckhead Community Improvement District (BCID), our Buckhead urban area's quasi-governmental improvement coordination entity,



Proposed Stratford Road vicinity pedestrian, vehicle and inter-parcel connectivity study area

to conduct a thorough study of connectivity in that area, involving all stakeholders. With this current quiet period in the development cycle, this may be the best (and last) opportunity to take on these connectivity issues.

We will keep you apprised of any progress made on these opportunities.

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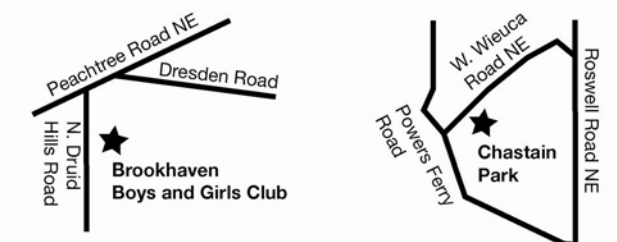
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## Where has the City's tax money gone?

By Bill Bozarth

Executive Director, Common Cause Georgia

City of Atlanta residents continue to reel from the service cutbacks forced by revenue shortfalls. There are long term pension debt obligations looming that we haven't had to face yet, but that factor, along with the lack of sufficient revenue to deliver the basic menu of services has led to a downgraded bond rating. That's a bad thing to happen to a municipality, since all subsequent borrowing becomes more expensive, making it more difficult to ever get back on an even keel. So why are we in such dire straits?

Setting aside the airport, which is its own enterprise, and watershed management, which is likewise a separate operation, the City must deliver all of its services with the money it collects. Those services includes fire and police, roads and other public works, parks, plus debt servicing, and a variety of administrative services. There are three main revenue sources to draw on:

- A portion of the property taxes we pay
- A portion of the sales taxes paid for items bought in the City
- Various fees and other miscellaneous revenue-generating activity

The City depends on property and sales tax revenue to deliver the bulk of the funding it needs. When the economy goes bad, people buy less, so you would expect to take a hit on sales tax revenue. However, even before the Great Recession came upon us, sales tax revenues were not increasing as much as one might expect, rising only 9% between 2002 and 2008. This bears looking into, since common sense would tell us that surely with the rise in consumerism during that period, we should see the revenues from sales tax grow faster than the rate of inflation.

Hard times also force some property owners to default on their property tax payments. The City reported it had \$30 million of unpaid property tax in 2007, before times got tough, so that challenge only gets harder when we see so many homes, apartments, and commercial properties standing empty. Liens should make collections easier. We have a right to expect a better collection rate than we do.

Putting aside the questions on stagnant sales tax revenues and uncollected property tax for a moment, perhaps the biggest unanswered question is **why didn't the City's growth spurt over the last decade bring much more property tax revenue into the coffers?** The

answer to this question is hard to come by. City reports showing property tax revenue over the past seven years are hard to decipher. At best, the revenue generated by the Atlanta building boom seems to have added about 4% annual growth in revenue from 2002 to 2008 while during this same period of time, the population was increasing over 20%, and the property digest rose by about 50%. There were millage roll-backs during this time, but so much of the growth was in new construction that it is hard to believe we wouldn't see a more significant increase in property taxes going to the City. So what's going on here?

Part of the answer lies right on the borders of North Buckhead. Through use of bond financing mechanisms sanctioned by the Development Authority of Fulton County, a number of high-end developments in Buckhead and elsewhere in the City have had their property taxes reduced to half of what they would be if appraised at market value. The typical deal is to set the value of the property at 50% of what it is assumed to be worth, and raise the appraised value 5% a year so that after ten years, it returns to the original value of the property. Properties receiving this generous tax abatement include:

- The Mansion on Peachtree
- The InterContinental Hotel Buckhead
- St. Regis Buckhead
- 3344 Peachtree Buckhead
- Terminus Buckhead

Development authorities, with the assistance of the local county board of tax assessors, promote the use of lowered property taxes as an incentive to spur development in areas where it would not otherwise occur. But it has become commonplace for projects with no hardship case to receive the tax break put into law to reward risk takers. The bond lawyers structure the deals as a "sale" to the Development Authority coupled with a simultaneous lease back of the property to the project owner/developer. The Development Authority approves, and the county board of tax assessors provides the key ingredient by applying the arbitrary 50% valuation formula to determine "fair market value" of the developer's lease interest, instead of a traditional appraisal methodology which would produce a much higher valuation of the lease interest. A bond validation hearing is held before a superior court judge, and if no one raises an issue, which they hardly ever do, the project goes forth, and the lowered tax takes effect. This has

## Eco-Fair—continued



All in all, we had almost 20 exhibitors, including non-profits (AWARE, Blue Heron Nature Preserve, Crossroads Ministries, Da Vinci School, NBCA, etc.) and for-profits (Arrow Exterminators, Honda, Hoots Group, Lucy's Market, etc.) The blue heron even landed in the lake to join us.

Please join us next year!



Live music was provided by several groups, including Scott Glazer, David Fisch, and Jeff Mather, above.



Lucy's Market (L) sold fresh fruit snacks and roasted peanuts; Little Da Vinci School had flowerpots for the kids to decorate.



Nancy Eilen and Ernest Norman of AWARE (Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort) talk to attendees who are interested in protecting wildlife.

### The Green Life

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# Eco-Fair at Blue Heron Nature Preserve



Warren Hull, Jack White and Missy Nichols staffed one of the two greeting tables.



Some of the hundreds of neighbors who attended the Eco-Fair.

By Nancy Jones, Executive Director, Blue Heron Nature Preserve

Our first Eco-Fair on May 9th was a huge success. We had between 200-400 people in attendance, wow! The day was beautiful and we had informational exhibits from profit and non-profit vendors on everything to do with earth-friendly products/services and environmental education.

We raised about \$1,000 in donations from the public and our for-profit vendors. The proceeds were split among the non-profit exhibitors. We were graced with music by our own Scott Glazer and my friend Steve Scarlett and his bluegrass trio.

Kim Wilson from Lucy's market sold delicious watermelon slices and fruit. We encouraged recycling and collected lots of trash that day.

Our new tenants were there. The Audubon So-



AWARE exhibited several wild animals.



Wildlife biologist and Blue Heron Nature Preserve board member Allyson Read with assorted wild animal artifacts.

ciety had an informational booth and offered guided birding tours.

The Little Da Vinci School had an informational tent up with art activities for children. All in all one terrific day!

Many thanks to Carol Cahill who enthusiastically supported this event and worked hard to make it happen. Thanks to all the other volunteers who donated their time to organizing and working on-site to make this event successful.

Our main goal for our Eco-Fair was public outreach, to let the neighborhood and larger community know of the existence of the Preserve and all the great things happening there.



Tishann Brown and Suzanne Loyd, NBCA's new membership co-chairs, staffed the NBCA exhibit.

# Tax money gone!—continued

been going on for years, and no one knows the full impact.

In an article in the business section of the November 30, 2008 AJC, reporter Kevin Duffy described how developers work through the Development Authority of Fulton County to arrange bond financing for their projects. The developer of the St. Regis Hotel project was quoted as saying that they would have had trouble pulling it off without development authority help.

We need to see once and for all that *development authority help* essentially equals tax payer subsidy. Tax forgiveness reduces revenues, and these deals are likely a large part of why City property tax revenues stay flat during periods of spectacular growth.

The tax abatement through development authority bonding is not limited to Buckhead properties. Owners of Midtown and Downtown buildings have also reaped the benefits. Bond financing has reduced property taxes on:

- The Mandarin Oriental Midtown
- 1180 Peachtree
- 55 Allen Plaza
- 191 Peachtree
- Peachtree Center
- and others

The use of development authority bonds for financing these projects goes much deeper than most people know, and there is no check on whether a project is deserving of the subsidy. Development Authority of Fulton County board member Jim Garcia has spoken out against the practices of the Authority as having no criteria by which to judge projects brought to it by its own attorneys. "The board itself is poorly managed and approves nearly every deal that its attorneys recommend. The more tax breaks the board approves, the greater the burden on Fulton's other businesses and homeowners."

The Atlanta Development Authority has also structured similar deals. More recently the DeKalb County Development Authority has been in the news as it was forced to back down on a 20-year total tax abatement requested by mega-developer Sembler on a portion of its Brookhaven Town development. Fulton County's development authority remains in the eye of the hurricane as the #1 grantor of lower taxes on commercial properties. A suit filed by the Fulton County Taxpayer's Foundation has resulted in a moratorium on new bond deals by the Development Authority of Fulton County for the time being.

With revenue shortfalls resulting in dangerously low levels of service for essentials, citizens of the city should be asking why so much of our tax digest has been whittled away by an unelected body. Few of us would resent development authorities using taxes to incentivize development where it is needed for the greater good of the community, such as creating new jobs. However, after years of acting with little oversight, the abuse has taken its toll.

Every three years, most Buckhead homeowners see increases in the appraised values on their homes, meaning, in most cases, increased property taxes. There is no bond deal for us. With our homes appraised at near market value, shouldn't the City apply the same standard to high end commercial properties? At the very least, the taxing authorities owe us a clear picture of how much tax revenue we are losing through tax forgiveness schemes. That should be an election year issue.

Bill Bozarth is the Executive Director of Common Cause Georgia.

Common Cause Georgia is a non-partisan good government advocacy group based in Atlanta.

[www.commoncause.org/ga](http://www.commoncause.org/ga)

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## Wieuca Road changes/Sarkissian—continued

(Continued from page 1)

will need to either walk or carpool to school. Unfortunately, the existing sidewalks along Wieuca Road are across the street from the new school. Hopefully, in the future, sidewalks will be built on both sides of the entire length of Wieuca, but there is neither the money nor the time to build them before the school opens. Accordingly, to reach existing sidewalks, new crosswalks and all-way stops are needed for at least two Wieuca intersections: Loridans Drive and North Ivy Road. These all-way stops ensure that students can cross Wieuca safely while also serving to calm and meter vehicular traffic.

Atlanta Public Works plans to conduct all-way stop analyses at the intersections of Old Ivy Road & Wieuca Road, North Ivy Road & Wieuca Road, and Loridans Drive & Wieuca Road in the coming weeks.

### New Sidewalks

As stated previously, currently the sidewalks are situated on the opposite side of Wieuca from the school. Making all students on the east side of Wieuca cross it twice to get to the new campus seems like an unnecessary burden. So, Atlanta Public Works will prepare a cost estimate for short segments of new sidewalks along Wieuca Road from Danube Road to the school. Additional new sidewalks from Statewood Road, probably to North Ivy, are also needed. With these improvements, 90% of affected students living on the east side of Wieuca who are ineligible to ride school buses will be able to walk to school.

### Wieuca speed limit

Many residents along Wieuca Road have been vocal in their outrage at continual excessive speeding and occasional speed-related crashes on Wieuca Road. Many learned at our Annual Meeting (see article, page 2 and 3) that the police are unable to enforce the 25 MPH Wieuca limit using radar. This limitation is the result of Georgia DOT policies. The lack of speed enforcement poses a special threat, given that the school will open in January. State Representative Ed Lindsey has been most helpful in outlining our options on this issue. An obvious possibility would be to override the GDOT, either through legislation or lobbying — while this may be possible, it wouldn't happen before school opens.

After many hours of discussion, with much input from Howard Shook and Ed Lindsey, we concluded that raising the speed limit to 30 MPH outside of the school zone deserves consideration. As counterintuitive as it may sound, raising the speed limit appears to be our best option to slow down traffic, especially when combined with traffic calming/control measures, such as the new traffic signals and all-way stops. Importantly, it should be possible to make this change before the school opens. With the limit raised to 30 MPH (keeping 25 MPH in the school zone), enforcement all along Wieuca Road will again be possible.

### "Smart signs"

The changes outlined above will be augmented by "smart signs" to alert drivers of their speed vs. the speed limit and by "reduced speed ahead" signage as they approach the school zone.

### Is this the final plan?

We want to keep you informed. At this point in time, we are describing a tentative plan but cannot say for sure what will ultimately happen. All of these proposed changes appear to be realistic, but we don't know if money can be found, especially given Atlanta's dismal financial situation. And, we don't know that the speed limit can be changed in time.

An update will be provided in our October newsletter and through our e-mail updates in the interim. If you are not on our e-mail list, please sent your request to be added to NorthBuckhead@Yahoo.com.

If you have any comments or suggestions about these plans, please send them to NBCA, PO Box 420391, Atlanta 30342 or to NorthBuckhead@Yahoo.com.

## APS needs crossing guards

Katy Pattillo of the Atlanta Board of Education asked us to pass on the following request:

Atlanta Public Schools is interested in having volunteers for the school crossing guard program. They will need crossing guards at the new Smith Annex on Wieuca Road. If you know anyone who is interested, they may contact Ms. Carol Willis at 404 802-3535.

## Peachtree Corridor Project

We have previously reported on the Peachtree Corridor Project (sometimes referred to as the Peachtree Boulevard project). Phase I of the project added a vegetated median, sidewalks and underground utilities on Peachtree Road from the Buckhead MARTA Station to just west of Piedmont Road. Phase II, which will do the same thing on Peachtree Road, from Peachtree Dunwoody to the MARTA station, recently qualified for federal stimulus funding and is now fully funded. Visible work on the project will begin some time in January 2010.

## NBCA elects board, officers

NBCA held elections for board members during its March annual meeting (see related article, page 2). Each year about half of NBCA's incumbent board members stand for reelection to two-year terms. This year, in addition to the reelection of incumbent board members Gordon Certain, Robert Cook, Dieter Franz and Walda Lavroff, three new board members were elected: Tishann Brown, Carol Cahill and Suzanne Loyd.

At the April board meeting, the board reelected Gordon Certain as president, Rita Christopher as vice president, Bob Young as secretary and Dieter Franz as treasurer, all for one-year terms.

## "buc" outings for kids

By Denise Starling, Executive Director of BATMA

The Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association operates the free 'buc' shuttle bus system and coordinates other programs which help reduce Buckhead traffic congestion. The following BATMA initiatives may be of interest to neighborhood residents:



### Little Buc Adventures for the kids

Looking for some summertime fun? Hop on board the Little Bucs Adventure Shuttle! Join us on Tuesday, August 4 for a trip to **Centennial Olympic Park Fountains**. An instructor from The Music Class will lead sing-alongs on the way and you'll have a chance to win a \$50 gift card from Abbadabba's. We guarantee a good time!

Catch the buc at the "Up Front" parking lot at the main entrance to Lenox Square Mall. We will depart at 10 AM and return at approximately 2 PM. Transportation is free, as is Centennial Olympic Park Fountains.

Reservations are not required, but are encouraged and can be made by emailing [info@batma.org](mailto:info@batma.org). Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

And if you can't make it this time, we've got more adventures in store on the first Tuesday of each month for the rest of the year. Take a look at the complete list of upcoming adventures. We hope to see you there!


- Upcoming Little Buc Adventures \*
- Sep. 1: Yellow River Game Ranch
  - Oct. 6: Stone Mountain Park
  - Nov. 3: Center for Puppetry Arts
  - Dec. 1: The Pink Pig

\*Destinations are tentative and subject to change.

For more information, visit [www.bucride.com](http://www.bucride.com).

### Interest-free bike loans

Looking for new transportation? BATMA and The Buckhead Community Bank have a deal that may convince you to consider two wheels instead of four. Open a MAX Reward Checking account and you are eligible to apply for a 12-month, 0% loan for the purchase of a bicycle up to \$2,500. Find out more at [www.batma.org/Bike-Loan.html](http://www.batma.org/Bike-Loan.html).

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