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President's Message

I would like to thank everyone who came to our Fall Membership Meeting. We had a good turnout for a fall meeting. It was very informative in regards to the new park in our neighborhood and to talk about plans for traffic with the Clifton Corridor Group. I would like to congratulate our two new officers: Jorn Winter, Vice President and Tracy Alexander, Treasurer and Arlene Gross who will be serving as our Secretary again this year. I would also like to thank last year's Vice President, Flo Wolf and last year's Treasurer, Steve Jenkins for all their hard work. We have a lot of plans for this year which we will be rolling out as the year progresses. We can definitely use help and would love to have some new volunteers for this year. If you have any questions or are interested in getting involved do not hesitate to call me or email me at president@merryhills.com.
Steve Bighouse

Development Around MHHA

ARNOLD--TOCO PARK PROPERTY: At the January 4 Planning Commission meeting, the lawyer for the family who own proposed park land, said that he received a call from Susan Hood, the Greenspace Coordinator, asking about the transfer of developments rights to the county. A discussion followed about the county adopting a development rights setup. This issue is new, so the lawyer asked for another full-cycle deferment to pursue this possibility. It was approved, but now goes the Board of Commissioners on January 25. Any new ideas for making this property into a park are worth studying further.

KITTREDGE PARK SUPPLEMENT: Due to great interest at our November meeting discussion of the county's acquisition of the new Kittredge Park addition of 32.01 acres, we have created a newsletter supplement page containing all the current information plus an up-to-date map of the property. Please share this information with everyone in our community and other organizations that might have an interest in it. We have also set up an email address for parks only, including Arnold-Toco Park. It is parks@merryhills.com. We will need volunteers in many fields of expertise to help us make Kittredge Park a success. Please contact Linda Billingsley, Past President (parks@merryhills.com) if you can help.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS: DeKalb County Board of Commissioners has allocated funds to plan and build a bike trail connecting Medlock Park to Mason Mill Park. Dresden Park will also undergo improvements including trails, walking paths, multi-purpose fields and a new play area.

News of Interest

NEW ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE: A new ordinance passed by the Board of Commissioners in December 2004 makes it easier for the DeKalb Police Department's animal division to respond more quickly to complaints of barking dogs. It also gives the department the ability to remove an animal from a parked car when the temperature is over 80 degrees. For more information call 404-294-2996.

ROOF RATS ARE BACK: Local exterminators are being kept quite busy as the roof rat returns to plague our neighborhood. Several homeowners have removed the rats and had their homes "rat-proofed." The DeKalb Health Department at 404-508-7900 can send out information and will inspect your home if you want to be on a long list. Also the Cooperative Extension Service can provide brochures at 404-298-4080. A web site with lots of information is <http://doyourownpestcontrol.com/rats.htm>

- Neighborhood Watch/ Crimes: (Need List)
- Regions Bank expects to open a full-service branch in Toco Hill Shopping Center by late November 2005.
- Road and Drainage Hotline: DeKalb County Public Works Department has a new hotline to more efficiently handle complaints about potholes, flooded streets and clogged drainage structures. To report a problem call 404-297-3840, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to midnight. For emergencies, call 911.
- Toco Hill Urgent Care has moved to 2021 North Druid Hills Road, Suite 100, effective November 2004. Telephone 404-325-2100.
- Free Radon Testing: DeKalb County residents can obtain a free radon test from the DeKalb County Board of Health to determine if the harmful gas is present in their home. Environmental health specialists place the test kits in the home and return within a week to collect the tests. Call 404-508-7900.
- Online Restaurant Health Ratings: Restaurants, schools, pools and other food handling establishments can be accessed by names, addresses or ZIP codes to find out how they fared on their latest health inspection. Go to www.dekalbhealth.net, click on Environmental Health, then go to Inspection Scores.
- DeKalb School of the Arts: DSA was one of 11 schools in Georgia in which every student passed the American literature and composition exam. The students also excelled on the state's End of Course Tests in English and history.

NEW NEIGHBORS

Kavin and Mary Smith, N. Holly Lane
Gidon Sobel, Merry Lane
Matthew Lewis, Reindeer Drive
Jonathan Rolnick, Jody Lane
Lynn Nester, Merry Lane
Marc Levinson, Wembley Court

NEW BABIES

Gary and Annette Lowe, Merry Lane, have a new boy, Parker Mikel Lowe born November 13
Sara and Alex Burmenko, Merry Lane, have a new girl, Miriam Dahlia, born in December
Amy and Todd Brown, Pinetree Lane, have twin girls, Avery and Ansley, born December 23

CONDOLENCES

Joe Tannenbaum, Bramble Road, whose wife Yvonne died November 21.

MARRIAGES

Erin Dichara, Merry Lane, Section 1 Rep, has married Michael Coddington

Why am I not receiving an E-mail newsletter?

We have e-mailed four newsletters to residents on our mailing list during 2004 (February, April, June, and October). If you think your e-mail address is on our mailing list, but you have not received your e-mail newsletters during 2004, we have published information to help you on our website. Go to www.merryhills.com and click the Help link at the top of the page. If your e-mail address is not currently on our mailing list, you can subscribe by clicking the Subscribe button on the website.

Please Note -- Hotmail Account Users: We will no longer be able to support NEW email addresses for Hotmail accounts. Too often the emails fail when the mailbox reaches its maximum size. We want to make sure that the email address we use to contact you is a viable one. If you are already subscribed to our mailing list, we are recommending that you provide an email account other than a free Hotmail account. Yahoo, for instance, gives 100 MB of free email storage in comparison to Hotmail's 1MB. Thanks for your cooperation!

Steve Jenkins/Email Admin -- mailinglist@merryhills.com

2005 Merry Hills Homeowner's Association Calendar

January 11	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
February 8	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
March 8	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
April 12	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
May 15	General meeting	Sunday	4pm
June 21	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
July 12	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
August 2	National Night Out	Tuesday	7-9pm
August 9	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
September 11	Block party	Sunday	3-5pm
September 20	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
October 11	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm
November 13	Annual meeting	Sunday	4pm
December 13	Board meeting	Tuesday	7pm

Dues

Your \$20 membership dues for the 2005 Calendar Year are now due. Please click the *Join/Renew Membership* button at www.merryhills.com for a membership application. We appreciate your continued support and welcome new and returning members.

New Merry Hills HOA Address

The new P.O. Box for the Merry Hills Homeowner's Association is P.O. Box 98490, Atlanta, GA 30359

2005 Merry Hills Homeowners' Association Dues

It is that time of year again for membership dues for the Merry Hills Homeowner's Association. If you are going to become a member or renew your membership please forward your check with the enclosed envelope to Tracy Alexander by March 18, 2005. Dues for 2005 continue to be a low \$20 per year. Checks should be made payable to Merry Hills Homeowners Association.

As a Homeowner's Association we were able to accomplish a lot this year including:

- Expanded our boundaries adding an additional 90 potential new members to our group with the addition of Jody Lane and Bramble Road.
- Helped in bringing a brand new 28 acre park bordering our neighborhood.
- Held two neighborhood gatherings for neighbors to meet each other in social settings.
- Our Neighborhood Night Out and our Annual Block Party.
- Kept everyone informed with our quarterly newsletter and website (merryhills.com)
- Kept abreast of zoning issues including the Toco Hills Park which is still being discussed.

We have big plans for next year as well and appreciate your continued support from our previous members and welcome any new members. In addition to money it takes volunteers to make things happen and we look forward to any skills or time that you can put forth as well.

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member		<input type="checkbox"/> Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Renter	
Name(s):			
Street address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
Home phone:		Office phone:	
E-mail address(es):			
List me in the membership directory, which prints names, street addresses and home phone numbers of members (does not list E-mail addresses): (Yes/No)			
List my name in the membership directory: Exactly as above, or as follows:			
I am interested in volunteering for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Board position	<input type="checkbox"/> Section representative	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Website	
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming newcomers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
I can contribute the following professional expertise to the Association:			

THE KITTREDGE PARK STORY

1-14-05

- DeKalb County has closed on the Atlanta Audubon Society's and the Gatchell Home's properties running between Holly Lane, Natahalla Court, and Kittredge Park Road, off North Druid Hills Road.
 - The total acreage acquired is 32.01 acres, most of which is heavily wooded with a tributary of N. Peachtree Creek traversing it. There is a lot of floodplain and a big hill within the property.
 - The county has torn down the old daycare center off Kittredge Park Road and is in the process of demolishing Mrs. Laurie Johns' old homestead which was in very bad condition. The roads to these two sites are barricaded until this work is completed. Otherwise, the park is open.
 - A tree survey for specimen trees has been finished. No botanical or historical surveys have been done.
 - Invasive plants, such as kudzu, honeysuckle, English ivy, poison ivy, privet, etc. Will be removed in time under the supervision of county staff using a contractor.
 - There will be some deed restrictions on the former Johns property which means that no structures can be built on it. There are already some trails here and a bridge which has been repaired.
 - Access points to the park will be Kittredge Park Road, Holly Lane, Biltmore Drive, Natahalla Court, and some apartment access on the west side. Parking should be restricted to Kittredge Park Road.
 - For now the county has barricaded the dirt road up the hill to Mrs. Johns' old home place and the road to the daycare center. There will probably be a gate installed on the dirt road to prohibit vehicles. The neighborhood will be asked to keep the police and park staff informed of any strange activities.
 - Ex-DeKalb Commissioner Judy Yates allocated \$3,627,000 of her Park Bond Funds. The state greenspace program contributed \$983,000 in state funds for this purchase. Commissioner Yates also took \$400,000 from her allotment for development of this park. There had already been \$450,000 set aside for renovation of the swimming pool, which was built in the 1960's.
 - The Arthur Blank Family Foundation gave the county \$1,250,000 for the purchase of this property.
 - The price paid for the land only by the county was \$5,500,000 to the Gatchell Home and \$301,000 to the Atlanta Audubon Society with the total price being \$5,860,000, including due diligence.
 - The Gatchell Home has retained 3.44 acres for their buildings at 1458 Holly Lane.
13. A. Ellyn and Laurie Johns bought 14 acres with access to N. Druid Hills Road in 1939. They lived at the Hilltop House until his death in 1969 and hers in 1984. She was a great conservationist and wanted her property preserved. That is one reason it was available for the county to purchase. At one time the Audubon property was named the A. Ellwyn Johns Bird Sanctuary. There is interest by people who knew them in retaining that name in some way as a tribute. No decisions have been made.
- The Parks Department will be discussing with the Board of Education some kind of joint arrangement whereby the new running track at the stadium, the old tennis courts, and the big baseball field can be utilized by park users.
 - There are currently no specific plans on future use of the park. Input from the community will be requested by way of a planning tool called a charrette. (A meeting set up to solicit input on a project by having people list their ideas, set up priorities, name the problem areas, and try to come to a consensus conclusion—there will probably be at least two—one on a Saturday and one on a Sunday.)Then a Master Plan will be drawn up by the park professional staff.
 - The role of the neighborhood will be to volunteer to help clean up, to attend the above charrette or submit your ideas in writing, to report security and maintenance problems, and most of all, to enjoy this new park expansion.
 - Ex-commissioner Judy Yates will be holding a public announcement about the expansion of this park sometime in the future. It will be held on site, and everyone will be notified when and where.
 - Adjacent property owners have not been notified of this acquisition. (map on reverse)

Merry Hills Homeowners' Association is taking a lead in the Kittredge Park planning, along with the N. Druid Hills Residents Association, mainly because we have all worked hard to try to make this wonderful expansion happen. We have set up an email address for volunteers to respond to—it is parcs@merryhills.com. If you have expertise in any of the following subjects, we would like to have you join our team: clearing and marking trails, children's' playgrounds including mazes and sand pits, bicycle trails, skate trails, tennis courts, a parcour (fitness trail), picnic shelters, park planning, and anything else of interest. We have submitted to the county park staff a list of things that you have asked for, both by our email solicitation of Dec. 2003 and our meeting of Nov. 2004. These are ideas that will be discussed at the charrettes and at team meetings. I will be the chairman for park information and team coordination

Linda Billingsley, Past President

Map of park at <http://www.merryhills.com/KittredgeMap.pdf>



Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Survey

Return completed survey to: Flo Wolf, 1508 Holly Lane, Atlanta, GA 30329

Or complete the survey on-line at www.merryhills.com

Name:
Street address:
Phone # or e-mail address if you would like to be contacted:

The following list includes suggested methods to reduce traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety. Which of the following do you think would help reduce traffic congestion and increase pedestrian safety? For each suggestion listed, indicate your agreement by checking yes, no, or no opinion. Add comments as desired. Survey results will be tallied and may be used in responding to traffic and pedestrian safety issues. Thank you for your participation!

	Agree?			Comment
	Yes	No	No Opinion	
1. Add passenger rail along the CSX railway through the Clifton Road Corridor to reduce automobile traffic through our neighborhood				
2. Add a streetcar on LaVista Road from Northlake Mall to Lindbergh Marta Station				
3. Add traffic lanes to LaVista Road				
4. Add traffic lanes to Briarcliff Road				
5. Add traffic lanes to North Druid Hills Road				
6. Add more sidewalks in our neighborhood (If yes, comment on which streets)				
7. Repair broken sidewalks in our neighborhood				
8. Add bike lanes in our neighborhood (If yes, comment on which streets)				
9. Add another traffic light and crosswalk on LaVista Road for safe access to the Toco Hills Shopping Center (possibly near Blockbusters)				
10. Add a traffic light near the Torah Day School to safely cross LaVista Road				
11. Do not add more parking facilities to institutions along Clifton Road				
12. Add retail establishments on Clifton Road to reduce mid-day employee car trips through our community				
13. Redevelop Toco Hill shopping center and the surrounding area to be more pedestrian friendly				
14. Add "park and ride" facilities for Clifton Corridor employees and visitors away from Clifton Road (If yes, comment on location)				
15. Add express shuttle vans from Clifton Road to retail centers such as Toco Hill and Sage Hill shopping centers, to decrease mid-day car trips to restaurants and retail stores in our community				

Select 5 of the items listed above that are most important to you and circle their numbers.

Use reverse side of survey to add more comments, suggestions, questions, or concerns.