

THE DRUID HILLS NEWS

December 2020
Volume 35 | Number 4

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Neighborhood Service Day Creates Community

By Doug Rollins

If you've been missing activities that are enjoyable and fulfilling (and safe), your DHCA has created a way you can fill that void!

In an effort to give back, build community and even have a little fun, DHCA started Neighborhood Service Days. On October 24, DHCA organized its second Neighborhood Service Day which brought neighbors of all ages together for a morning of "better"! In addition to many DHCA Board members, we welcomed several dozen other residents.

Perhaps you've seen signs of our improvements. From clearing the log jam that was obstructing the flow of creek water through the village to the bridge that crosses it; from 8 bags of trash collected from Briarcliff to the limbs and branches cleared from Ponce near Fernbank Museum and from the triangular island at Clifton and E. Clifton to Azalea Park. Your neighbors, friends and fellow Druid Hills residents have been busy this Fall.

Other signs of improvement include clean speed limit, stop and parking signs up and down Princeton Way and on Ridgewood Drive. We accomplished so much for which we can be proud and perhaps most importantly, we may have the makings of a wonderful new Druid Hills tradition.

We would love to hear about your ideas for how we can all work together to make our neighborhood better (email me at info@druidhills.org). In addition, please mark your calendars for our next Neighborhood Service Day on December 12 and check www.druidhills.org for a link to sign up and join us!



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President's Corner

By Kit Eisterhold

"Moderation...."

I sat there, a young intern at the Georgia State Capitol nearly a quarter century ago, being lectured on moderation by a senior Democratic state senator. Just a few minutes earlier, with the senator presumably out of earshot, I had been cracking off-color jokes about advocating the death penalty for moving violations and privatizing the Georgia General Assembly, among other modest proposals, to the muffled laughter of my fellow interns. Yet as the senator spoke and his gaze fell upon me, I had the sinking feeling he had heard every word I'd said and had evidently failed to see the humor in it. Chastened, I sank into my chair as he spoke, my shoulders slumped, like a kid in kindergarten who just got caught messing his pants, or some other menial infraction.

"You'll see three words draped on the pillars of the Great Seal of the State of Georgia," he bellowed: "Wisdom, Justice and Moderation... I can tell you from experience that the most neglected of these is *Moderation*."

While I have already forgotten most of what I learned in school, this little lecture has been seared in my memory. And I recall it from time to time even as the use of the *word* moderation has declined precipitously in our political discourse and as increasing polarization on both sides of the aisle has come to be recognized by at least some pundits as the most pressing political problem our country faces today.

It feels like a million years ago when McCain conceded graciously to Obama and assured his scared supporters in a Town Hall meeting that Obama wasn't an untrustworthy Arab who cavorted with terrorists but was, in fact, "a decent family man," and "a citizen" and that "you do not have to

be scared of him as President of the United States." In a long and storied political career and life dedicated in service to this country, I thought it was one of McCain's finest moments.

Yet I feared even then he was a dying breed. As I write this, a scant week after our latest presidential election, our incumbent President refuses to concede, and contests the results of the election with allegations of voter fraud, as appeals to his base that a Biden victory will lead not only to the loss of the White House but to the destruction of our democratic institutions as well. Biden will pack the court, eliminate the electoral college, give citizenship to millions of illegal aliens to ensure a permanent democratic majority; and, after capitulating to the radicals in his own party after a bout of dementia, ultimately turn our country into a socialist paradise *ala* Venezuela.

Whatever his detractors might say about him -regarding his reduced mental capacity, his son's shady business dealings, his propensity for plagiarizing other politicians, and his persona, similar to that of a shady used car salesman- I believed Biden was clearly the more *moderate* candidate. And, after an election season marked by protests by armed militias, riots, arson, politically motivated killings, and even an attempted kidnapping of a governor, I felt more than ever that what this country needed was a healthy dose of moderation. For this reason, and pretty much this reason alone, I bit the bullet and voted for Biden.

Of course I could be dead wrong about Biden. I could be dead wrong about moderation for that matter. I don't have any experience in presidential politics. The best I can do is extrapolate from my own experience as the president of a humble

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DRUID HILLS NEWS WELCOMES YOUR ARTICLES

The Druid Hills News is published quarterly by the Druid Hills Civic Association. Articles are welcome for consideration. Please limit unassigned articles to no more than 600 words or notify the editor in advance.

Submissions may be edited for length or grammar. Please send articles and photos to editor@druidhills.org or JJRichar@bellsouth.net. Send copy as e-mail attachments and photos as jpg attachments if possible.

DEADLINES

The Druid Hills News is mailed to be received in homes during the second week of the month of the issue. The following are the deadlines for the next two Druid Hills News issues:

March 2021 issue

Articles deadline - February 10

June 2021

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President's Column ...continued from page 3

civic association, where the stakes, while they may be relatively small potatoes, are nevertheless often subject to the same pitfalls of political polarization we find at the national level.

To paraphrase Kissinger, neighborhood politics are so vicious precisely because the stakes are so small. While they may lack the gravitas of national issues like war and peace, they are much closer to home, more personal, and often just as polarizing. Whether it be Emory's annexation into the city of Atlanta, a proposed bike path down Lullwater, or a controversial development on S. Ponce, to name just a few, the issues we deal with at the DHCA draw impassioned advocates on both sides, wielding sophisticated and technical arguments; and on occasion, thinly veiled contempt for the opposition.

On most of these issues I often have the pleasure of dealing with a dozen people or more who are better versed in the particulars of the matter, better educated than I am, more successful and driven than I am, and quite frankly, often smarter than I am. Like Chris Wallace, I often find myself struggling to moderate the debate.

So I stick to a few simple principles that (like Biden) I have plagiarized from people who are smarter than I am to get by. When I am feeling overwhelmed by technical arguments regarding zoning laws, annexation, or the byzantine guidelines of the DeKalb Historic District, I take solace in the simplicity of Minister Robert Fulghum's admonitions in *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*.

"Share. Play Fair. Don't Hit People. Say You're Sorry When You Hurt Somebody."

I am not trying to be flippant here. As stupefyingly simple as they may seem they are, if Fulghum is to be believed, the very foundation of community and culture in this country. And, as the author suggests, I take pains to extrapolate them into adult terms and apply them to the controversies that I am often confronted with. "Don't hit people" means don't engage in *ad hominem* attacks. «Play fair» means be transparent, don't put words in people's mouths, and allow everyone a turn to speak. "Share" means be inclusive. Share the political space with others. Allow them to share their perspectives and incorporate them into the shared perspective of the organization as a whole.

We should always have an open mind. We should never be impervious to the input of our peers or

be unwilling to moderate our beliefs in turn. "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of a mediocre mind" wrote Emerson. Or as Lao-Tzu (or whoever his ghostwriter was) put it, "The mark of a moderate man is freedom from his own ideas...." and, "...for governing a country well nothing is better than moderation."

This is just common sense. No one person, no matter how well educated or brilliant --and no matter how much they claim to know more about Covid than the CDC, or more about the economy than the Fed, or more about the military than the Joint Chiefs of Staff-- can possibly be in possession of the whole truth about anything. All of us are in possession of at least some small part of it, and all of us have some contribution to make in arriving at it, together.

We see this fundamental truth holds true across all cultures and across all the millennia of recorded human history. "The truth is like a great mirror in the reflection of God," as the 13th century poet Rumi said, "It fell, and broke into a million pieces, and everybody took a piece of it, and thought they had the whole truth." Just as the Gnostics believe we all carry the divine spark, a piece of God that resides within all of us, in my wife's home country of India they greet one another with "Namaste," which translates roughly to "I bow to the divine in you." All of us are children of the universe. We all have a right to be recognized, to be heard, and to be included.

Now I have no doubt this is all starting to sound a little highfalutin, pollyannish, and pie-in-the-sky right now.

And I'm hardly going to suggest that the writings of some long dead philosophers and poets are somehow the solutions to all our problems, or even that our current President is suddenly going to discover an appreciation for the writings of Rumi or Lao-Tzu anytime soon (although I have given serious consideration to mailing him a copy of *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, wrapped up like a cheeseburger, in the faint hope he would at least open it).

But I do believe it is still possible for all of us to recognize the truth in one another, to pick up the pieces together, and work toward a common goal. We owe it to ourselves. And we owe it to one another....



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The Next Phase of Better – Communication

By Doug Rollins

Over the last couple of months, you may have noticed that the DHCA has implemented a new motto: “Doing Better, Together.” Perhaps you’ve seen our new “Better Service to Our Community” signs sprinkled around Druid Hills, pointing out areas where we’ve held neighborhood work days or maybe you read about those Service Days in this issue of the Druid Hills News (see cover page story). This is just one example of how the DHCA is trying to hold the bar higher as we strive to consistently demonstrate the value we bring to the neighborhood.

“Better Communication” is another area that we are tackling. The results from the member survey conducted in early 2020 clearly indicated that the DHCA needed to approach communications with the community in a different way. You mentioned that you didn’t know what was going on, that our website was outdated and difficult to navigate, and there was no DHCA presence on social media. It turns out we have been busy, but we haven’t been very good at informing residents of our progress. We committed to make a change right then and there.

After a thorough search in September, we chose Hillary Kilfeather, of HBK art + design to bring her creative expertise to help solve one of our bigger challenges. As a Druid Hills resident, Hillary can relate first-hand to the possibilities we have as a neighborhood, and in just a few short months, we have focused her tremendous capabilities on our biggest opportunities.

First, she tackled our website homepage (www.druidhills.org); improving visual appeal while ensuring our content was up to date, relevant, concise and logically organized. And as many of us use our phones for all web browsing, she made our site easier to access and read from a smart phone.

Second, she has been focused on ensuring that our residents know about everything going on within the DHCA and our community at large. Recipients of our monthly email newsletter have surely appreciated the friendly, easy-to-read design (if you haven’t opted in, please do so at druidhills.org).



DHCA's new logo design

We have also initiated efforts to improve our social media presence. We have started posting regularly on our Facebook page so our residents can stay in the know as things come up in between newsletters. Also, we introduced a new Facebook networking group for parents in the neighborhood - Druid Hills Parent Group. Any parent who lives in Druid Hills can join and use the group to set up playdates, arrange meet-ups, welcome new neighbors, share recommendations, plan community events, ask questions, share photos, and more. Please like our Facebook page to see those posts and join our Druid Hills Parent Group to network with other families with younger children.

Finally, and perhaps most exciting of all, is our work to bring our neighborhood to life via a new logo. Knowing that one of the main goals for the DHCA is to foster a genuine sense of community in Druid Hills, we believe a contemporary logo would be the perfect way to start building a real neighborhood feel. As Hillary states, “By having a logo for Druid Hills, residents will have the opportunity to show their pride in this great place. I can’t wait to see it on fun apparel, yard banners and more!” Our goal is to roll out the new neighborhood logo in time for the holidays so residents can purchase apparel as gifts. Please save room on your list for these “must have” items.

Stay tuned and please reach out with any questions, ideas or suggestions (communications@druidhills.org).

Let’s all be Better Together!

Druid Hills Patrol Strengthens Security in Neighborhood

By Claudia Edwards

Druid Hills Patrol has been in service for almost 30 years. DHP’s seven off-duty police officers, representing both Atlanta and DeKalb police departments, know the streets of Druid Hills and patrol 7-8 hours daily. The DHP provides a visible police presence to deter crime and a rapid response capability for members’ urgent needs. The DHP law enforcement officers are available as advocates for members who need guidance with any property crime or suspicious activities.

DHP officers want to remind everyone in Druid Hills:

- Do not put empty electronic boxes out with your recycling to be viewed by others. Break the boxes down and discard of them appropriately.
- Do not go to the ATM at night or in isolated areas.
- Let your relatives and neighbors know when you are traveling. Stop the mail and papers and redirect packages. If you are a DHP member, you can notify DHP when you will be gone.
- Do not leave car keys and key fobs anyplace where they are easily accessible.

Keep supporting Druid Hills Patrol. Police presence in our neighborhood is vital for safety and security. Email admin@druidhillspatrol.org or go to www.druidhillspatrol.org for more information. Join DHP and help your neighbors prevent crime.





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Help us make 2021 a year of change for the DHCA

From the time the Druid Hills Civic Association was established in 1938, we've accomplished some remarkable things. From helping to save our parks and our neighborhood from becoming a highway, to establishing Druid Hills as a historic district, we've done a lot. But as day-to-day lives have gotten busier and the way life is lived has changed, we recognize that we need to keep evolving.



We want to be the kind of organization that appeals to ALL of our neighbors.

Together, let's build a neighborhood sense of community

A huge focus for us is to foster a genuine sense of community and a real neighborhood feel in Druid Hills. We want to create opportunities for neighbors to:

- get to know one another and cultivate friendships
- take pride in Druid Hills through service projects around the neighborhood (seen our "better" signs?)
- have a voice in our organization and feel welcome to take part in shaping its future

{ *With your membership we can host or sponsor more social events here in Druid Hills
foster the sense of community in our neighborhood (we are open to all ideas!)* }

Protect what is ours

Owning a property in a historic district goes a long way in ensuring that your home's value is protected and consistently increasing. The DHCA can help you navigate your district's regulations when planning modifications to your property. ➡

Let us be a partner who can offer guidance on what changes will likely be acceptable (or unacceptable) to your district's planning board.

We will always be stewards of the amazing green space that Druid Hills is so fortunate to enjoy. ➡

Your membership will help us implement a new annual plan with Trees Atlanta to replace loss of our tree canopy. It will also help us invest in the protection of our Lullwater and Peavine Creeks.

Make safety a priority

We recognize that our county is focused on fixing some major infrastructure issues, like replacing old sewer and water lines. Repairing sidewalks and addressing other public safety hazards have fallen to the bottom of their list of to-dos.

{ *The DHCA is a strong voice representing our interests with elected officials to get these issues dealt with. Your membership helps fund our Safe Sidewalk campaign to help repair some of the more dangerous walkways.* }

Our Neighborhood Watch program helps keep our residents in the know with monthly crime reports. We believe that neighbors who know each other look out for each other, and that is our most effective method of deterring crime.

We have high aspirations for the DHCA in 2021 and beyond. We are on our way to being an organization that consistently demonstrates its value to the neighborhood.

*"Connect neighbors, foster civic engagement, and steward the neighborhood's beauty."
our new mission statement for the Druid Hills Civic Association*

Bet you didn't know that the DHCA...

- ✓ Was formed in 1938 over concerns for the community's school, and has repeatedly advocated for our neighborhood schools to keep them in tact during periods of redistricting/rezoning
- ✓ Worked diligently over 25 years to prevent the expansion of the Stone Mountain Freeway and the proposed Presidential Parkway from being built straight thru Druid Hills
- ✓ Helped form the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA) to ensure that our linear parks are cared for in a responsible way; committed funding to help implement their master plan including the burial of utility lines and lighting replacement with period-style street lamps along Ponce de Leon
- ✓ Was instrumental in saving the Callanwolde estate and establishing it as a DeKalb County park
- ✓ Is the reason that the integrity and historic legacy of our beautiful Druid Hills homes and parks have been preserved as Atlanta has gone through massive changes and explosive growth

JOIN YOUR DHCA TODAY!

With your membership, we can...

- ✓ Host or sponsor more social events here in Druid Hills to help foster the sense of community in our neighborhood
- ✓ Continue improving our communication with neighbors and provide a warm welcome to new residents so they feel at home
- ✓ Implement our tree canopy renewal plan with Trees Atlanta
- ✓ Invest in improving neighborhood amenities such as repairing sidewalks, installing better lighting, adding signage to mark gateways to Druid Hills, and more
- ✓ Help fill gaps in funding for our schools and other neighborhood organizations (think OLPA, Freedom Park Conservancy, Frazer Center, neighborhood schools like Fernbank Elementary, etc.)

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Join or renew today!

The DHCA membership cycle begins every January. Once you join or renew, your membership will be good through the end of Dec. 2021.

We encourage you to join or renew online!

Go to druidhills.org/join-us or take a photo of the code above.

Member Name(s) _____

Want to get involved with the DHCA? () Yes! () Not at this time If you mark yes, you will be contacted soon!

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As we plan our budget, your membership is vital. Simply said, the more that you can contribute, the more we can achieve as an organization. Thank you for your consideration!

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Hybrid Open Streets Emory Village Recasts Event for 2020

By Sarah Banick

Emory Village Alliance had big plans for Open Streets Emory Village (OSEV) in 2020. Like everything else, those plans came to a crashing halt in the spring thanks to Covid-19.

Instead of canceling, EVA board members decided to pivot to a hybrid version, focused on bringing attention to the struggling businesses in the village. Board member Don Walter took on the task to recast the traditional event.

OSEV—Covid-19 Edition ran over a period of four days, Oct. 22-25, with a total of 46 virtual and socially distanced events, demonstrating that it is possible to safely organize and produce community events respecting public health guidelines.

By the Numbers:

- EVA's team of 20+ volunteers worked in tandem with four partner organizations and 10 village merchants
- Thirty-one participants ran a cumulative 96.1 miles in the virtual 5k
- Forty pounds of sidewalk chalk decorated village sidewalks
- One hundred yellow ducks floated 90 feet, showcasing the work South Fork Conservancy has done to clean up Peavine Creek. Third place, second place, and first place were captured respectively by Mike Goodwin, Todd Ableser, and six-year-old Jeffery Elzemeyer,

a first grader at Fernbank Elementary School.

- Countless calories were consumed by locals celebrating specials at restaurants and by children Trunk or Treating at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church.
- Priceless facts about Emory Village and Druid Hills were shared during guided architectural, bicycling, and river walk tours.

In addition, there were free concerts, gymnastics for kids, yoga for adults, and ten entries in the virtual Dogs from a Distance contest. There is one place you can read all about it – emoryvillage.org.

Board chair Todd Hill wasn't sure how the hybrid event would turn out, but he's happy with the result. "Last January, we started planning the 8th annual Open Streets Emory Village with grand ideas of expanded events for the whole family," he says. "We were even considering an evening fundraiser concert. Then the pandemic hit - we went into a mode of how to still move forward while upholding CDC guidelines. Based on the creativity and ingenuity of our talented and committed EVA board members, we recast OSEV to be a multi-day, socially distanced series of events. It was fantastic! And it will shape Open Streets in the future."



Contestants in the annual Duck Race hit the water ready to swim. South Fork Conservancy sponsors the race each year to bring attention to their work reclaiming the Peavine Creek.



Local artists practice their design skills with chalk near the Emory Village Fountain.

CALLING ALL DRUID HILLS PARENTS!

As we rethink how the DHCA can best first our community, we have decided to take a less formal approach to our traditional committee, formerly known as the Druid Hills Parent Network. We have created a special Facebook group called the Druid Hills Parent Group so parents can interact in real time. We hope people will use this group to set up playdates, arrange meet-ups, welcome new

neighbors, share recommendations, plan community events, ask questions, share photos, and more: [Druid Hills Parent Group | Facebook](#). Our goal is to foster a true sense of community within Druid Hills so that our residents - both parents and kids - can build lasting friendships with one another.

Atlanta's First 'Ability Garden'

By Andrew Keenan

Callanwolde Fine Arts Center is proud to announce the creation of Atlanta's first Ability Garden, built specifically for wheelchair users. Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance and Callanwolde have partnered to host classes and horticultural-therapy workshops for people with disabilities. Trellis uses the power of gardening and nature to improve the lives of people living with disabilities by providing purpose, fostering independence and creating community. Callanwolde will administer the classes and workshops and has provided the space and many of the resources to build the garden.

"Part of what we love to do is get people engaged in gardening and socializing but also set them up with the resources that they can take home," explained Trellis Co-Founder Rachel Cochran. "We also help people with personalized garden spaces or with their local community garden. So, we end up being a resource—creating a lot of different accessibility solutions for folks with impaired mobility. Our goal is to make gardening more accessible for everyone."



Working in Callanwolde's Ability Garden

Thanks to a grant from the Frank Barham Foundation, donations from the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, the Paideia School and the hard work of Trellis and Callanwolde volunteers, the Ability Garden was built in one month. Callanwolde intends to expand this program to other parts of the campus and eventually include arts instruction.

During the past several years, Callanwolde has also created programming for disabled veterans, many who suffer from PTSD. All disabled veterans attend group art classes free of charge. In addition, Callanwolde provides financial aid to veterans who wish to register for regular classes. The positive feedback from veterans attending our classes has been promising; with reports of lowered anxiety and pain issues.

Callanwolde has supported its students with over \$20,000 in financial aid during this calendar year. As we begin to ramp up our post-COVID enrollment, we expect a far greater demand for financial assistance, which will cause us to expand our fundraising efforts. As you make plans for your end-of-the-year giving, please consider supporting Callanwolde's important programming and assure that people in need have access to the arts and our Ability Garden.

Andrew Keenan is Executive Director of Callanwolde Fine Arts Center.



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Bringing Brightness to Druid Hills Middle School

By Hillary Kilfeather

Due to COVID-19, Druid Hills Middle School is fully virtual right now, as is the case with all schools in the DeKalb County School District. However, when school is being held in-person, students attend DHMS at its location on Mount Olive Drive in Decatur.

The school building was originally built as Shamrock High School in 1967 but was converted to a middle school years later. It's hard to compare an older school building like DHMS with some of the really nice, recently built schools in the district - take Fernbank Elementary as an example. In an effort to bring some vibrance and cheer to the middle school building, local artists, including me, have started painting murals in the library and in several of the student bathrooms.

Local creative, Justine Rubin, and I have been tackling the school's bathrooms one by one. Justine is a graphic designer who also paints, does art installations, merchandise/store displays and more. I am also a graphic designer, but have a background working in cable news and communications. We have paired up numerous times previously, working together on children's art projects for the Fernbank Elementary Foundation Annual Auction. Justine is wildly creative. She will have an idea and just start painting, and I jump in. We often don't know where we will end up, but it's really fun figuring out the design as we go. We've chosen positive messages or quotes to incorporate into each bathroom's mural as well as "Wash your Hands" lettering near the sinks! Our plan is to have all of the bathrooms painted before students come back to school in person.

Illustrator and DHMS parent Mike Lowery drew a whimsical, fun mural of quotations on the library walls. Mike's work has been seen on everything from greeting cards to dozens of children's books to gallery walls all over the world. His mural project was the final stage of the library's transformation from an old-fashioned school library to a modern school learning commons. Marcia Kochel, the school's media specialist, picked out the quotes that Lowery used in his mural mainly from books. "Shine my life like a light," however, is a song lyric by the Indigo Girls who have a special connection to DHMS; the singer-songwriting duo met while attending Shamrock High. They held a special concert in 2018 at DHMS which benefited the school's media center.



Druid Hills Middle School library mural is nearly complete.



One of many bathroom murals being painted at Druid Hills Middle School.



Mike Lowery, local illustrator and DHMS parent, uses special paint pens to illustrate a mural in the library.

School News

Fernbank Elementary School

By Dana Borda

The hallways at Fernbank Elementary remained empty this fall, as we have continued with virtual learning. However, our days are filled with online teaching, Zoom calls, and “morning movement moments” with our PE teachers. The Superintendent’s office and the Board of Education are monitoring the COVID numbers to determine when to return to face-to-face learning. We cannot wait to see all our friends and colleagues again in person! Fernbank wishes all our Druid Hills neighbors a Happy New Year!

SPARK

Compiled from web sources

While SPARK students spent the month in a virtual learning mode, the school celebrated Parent Engagement month during November and participated in a Parent and Family Engagement Conference Nov. 16 – 19 hosted by Atlanta Public Schools. The session offered the APS community a variety of virtual programs on topics from Mindful Living 365 to Family Game Night to helping grieving students and even sessions for grandparents. SPARK also partnered with Decatur bookseller Little Shop of Stories for a virtual book fair during November. As of this writing, APS schools, including SPARK, were preparing for a return to in-school learning in January 2021.

Druid Hills High School

By Marie Landis

I am thrilled to share a positive report from Druid Hills High School during this challenging pandemic. DHHS continues to successfully engage students virtually. Of course, the goal is to get back into class physically, but the safety of staff, students and families is of great consideration. The DeKalb School District has created a phase-in plan that is based on data trends. Once the 14-day virus positivity average per 100,000 county residents is 100 or less, the District can begin the transitioning process. In the meantime, an Intent to Return form has been



distributed and families have submitted a preference of hybrid or remote learning.

The benefit of school is not just academic, but also social and physical. DHHS is supporting over 20 virtual clubs like: Board Game, Math, Model United Nations, E-sports, Reading Bowl and even Karaoke! To support students physically during a contagion is especially challenging, but DHHS has found ways to safely sponsor football, softball, volleyball and cross country, with basketball, soccer and swim/dive next season. Cross Country qualified for the State Meet, and the girls placed 6th out of 25 and the boys 9th out of 27. Our brain sport, debating, secured an award of “Co-Champion” with two DHHS 10th graders who remain undefeated.

We are almost halfway through the year and our Seniors feel it. They are sitting for their yearbook portraits and visiting colleges virtually (6 visits a month are offered). One Senior said, “Throughout quarantine I realized how much I rely on my friends. We connect now through Zoom, picnics and small study groups.” DHHS is doing its very best to support them as they head toward their next phase of life. As a DHHS parent, I see the challenges every day and our school is setting a tremendous example for our students and community.

Ben Franklin Academy

By Angela Cassidy

Ben Franklin Academy has been so proud of the creative ways our teachers and students have fostered our caring community both in-person and from a distance. About two-thirds of our students are on campus while one-third continue to learn remotely.

Our redesigned classrooms, modified schedules, and intentionally smaller classes have allowed us to safely offer in-person learning while still accommodating students who are participating in virtual learning. We continue to offer rolling admissions even as our school has seen considerable growth over the past several months!

The BFA Cross-Country team is off to a strong start this fall, meeting virtually every week and tracking their training on social media platforms. The team will take part in a number of virtual races this year. The longest race will be the 2021 Trans-America Footrace from San Diego, California, to Tybee Island, Georgia. Ben Franklin Academy hosts a virtual Green Club nature walk each week where students and teachers take time to enjoy nature around their homes and neighborhoods and find some moments of peace amid the chaos of the pandemic. The Franklin Players, BFA’s theatre group, has found innovative and creative ways to stage a production virtually. Using the iconic 1938 radio show War of the Worlds, the ensemble members have nearly finished co-writing an original script for a radio show that will be performed on Zoom this month.

BFA Senior, Timothy Etson, recently completed his Eagle Scout project where he and some helpers built two safety barriers at an animal shelter. The barriers will allow dogs to move safely in and out of their cages. These exciting milestones mean even more this year as we seek out opportunities for connection and positivity amid the chaos.

Paideia

By Anne Duker

Nineteen Paideia seniors have been honored by the National Merit Scholarship Competition and Program based on their PSAT scores. In addition, the Paideia Science Olympiad Team placed First in A/AA Division Tournament. The high school Science Olympiad team competed in the South Forsyth Invitational Science Olympiad Tournament. Thirty-eight teams from schools of all classifications from five states competed in an all-day online tournament. Paideia finished first in A/AA schools’ class overall in the Circuit Lab event.

Remembering Max Creighton

We are sad to report that Max Creighton, an erstwhile resident of Druid Hills and former member of the DHCA's DeKalb Land Use and Historic Preservation Committee, recently died this November. Max's involvement with the DHCA, where he worked with us to help develop a master plan for Druid Hills, was but a small part of a rich and full life dedicated to public service.

Max grew up in Maryland where his father served as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and Max placed great pride in his father's support of the civil rights movement and his role in pressuring the Church to allow women to be ordained.

He joined the Peace Corps in the late '60s, where he met his wife Sue Jamieson, during a posting in Brazil. After they married, he pursued a graduate degree in city planning at Georgia Tech and later returned to Atlanta to help establish the Community Design Center of Atlanta, where he served as its executive director for over 30 years, helping community based non-profits, lower income neighborhoods and homeless shelters. Max worked tirelessly throughout his life to create affordable housing and to promote economic development in underserved communities throughout Georgia.

He leaves behind his son Mat, who is a sociology professor at University College in Dublin, Ireland; his daughter Emily, an immigrant rights attorney at the American Immigration Council; and his wife Sue, the erstwhile Peace Corps volunteer who serves as the Project Director of the Mental Health and Disability Rights Project of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, and who has brought cases involving the rights of the disabled all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

While we mourn his passing, we should take inspiration from Max's life spent in selfless service to his community.

Input Needed For Freedom Park Conservancy Master Plan

By Harriett Lane

Why do we need a master plan?

The original design for the Freedom Park was developed at the height of the Olympics planning for Atlanta. Approximately 25 years since its opening, there's been very little change in the park and little additional thought and planning put into it aside from placement of several art pieces. What we want to think about now is, 'How has the park and its context changed since that original plan was developed, and in what ways can the park better serve the communities now?

The communities around the park are much different than they were even then so it's important to gather the opinions of all of our neighbors and the city at large to hear what they want your park to be. Your opinions will help to craft a vision by way of a master plan, which the Conservancy will then reference and work on implementing for perhaps the next 25 years.

Why is now the time to do it?

The Conservancy has been thinking about this for several years, and finally raised the funds to do it 2019. We finalized our RFP that was publicly distributed to a wide range of design consultants last year, and a steering committee featuring representative from the Conservancy, Atlanta Parks and Rec, and Park Pride selected the consultant earlier this year; so the master plan process was going to happen this year regardless of COVID-19.

But more importantly, and maybe somewhat

by a coincidence, we think now is a really good time to reevaluate the worth and the place of public space and parks. Because of COVID, because of where we are as a city, our open spaces are becoming increasingly important. Pedestrianism is becoming more important, having green space is becoming more important, and certainly, we think about it differently now that we are in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Having outdoor public spaces with clean air and cultural value becomes even more crucial now that people are using parks in a different way and with greater frequency as a relief from confined indoor spaces. As recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we want Freedom Park to provide a quality and sustainable experience for our city for generations to come.

What should people be looking for in terms of engagement?

We need YOUR help in answering critical questions. As we imagine the next generation of Freedom Park, community input will be foundational to how the master plan evolves. We invite you to explore OUR website at www.freedompark.org to participate in the interactive activities, and to participate in our virtual public events. (Video recaps are now available) Please take the survey—it's the number one impactful thing you can do to help shape the vision. The next Public Input Meeting is December 16th and we have two sessions at 12:00 noon and 7:00 pm for your convenience.

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Want to learn about some of the trees, plants and shrubs? Want to learn about the road fight and who lived in all those beautiful homes lining the park and all the fantastic stories about them (including scam and scandal)?

Jennie Richardson, one of the authors of the "Historic Druid Hills Book," and member of the OLPA board, will take you and two or three guests on her exclusive history tour of the first five pastoral parks. The fee for this special tour is \$50 per person and includes the "Historic Druid Hills" book. All proceeds benefit our Olmsted Linear Park. The tour takes about 1.75 hours and covers slightly over one mile of walking. You won't believe all the facts you'll learn—enough to impress your friends and confound your enemies! Our linear park is Olmsted's last project and the only one in the deep south. Isn't it time you learned more about it?

For more information on booking a tour or to purchase a copy of "Historic Druid Hills," contact Jennie at JJRichar@bellsouth.net.

A Space of One's Own

By Jan Jones

So you've moved into your dream Druid Hills house in the city of Atlanta, and you're looking at that great yard. So much space! You begin to muse about all the excellent things you could do, starting big with a pool and pool house, maybe a toolshed, a dog run, a sidewalk around the house, a wall out front, and even a bump-out addition on the side.

At a neighborhood picnic, you're talking about your dreams, and someone asks you, "What about setbacks?" You frown quizzically, and she continues, "You do know you're in a Landmark District, with the preservation rules and regulations, don't you?"

Hmmm. You were thinking that those rules protected you from your neighbors' crazy schemes and nutty proposals. Admit it - you were also thinking, "I bought this lot, and I can afford to develop it however I like!" Well, yes and no. Listen up.

Way back in the mid-19th century, a guy named Frederick Law Olmsted made a design for Central Park in NYC. His brilliant landscape there, first executed during the Civil War, led to more park and public space commissions. Soon he started thinking about planned communities, mostly suburbs or villages near great cities. In 1863 he was asked to design a campus for the University of California and nearby residential subdivision on a plot called the Berkeley Property. (The campus plan was never executed.) The street (Piedmont Avenue) on which this development centered was curvilinear, which suited his vision of large houses set well apart from one another in an English garden-style community. His dream was a peaceful refuge from the bustling city.

In 1868 he received a commission to design Riverside, a village near Chicago. He envisaged sweeping lawns, naturalized shrubbery, curvilinear avenues and a sense of calm and peace, with houses spaced apart. One of his first stipulations was a setback of 30 feet from the roadway, as he believed this flowing together of lawns would create the appearance of living in a single park. This was one of his most characteristic features in the many neighborhoods and communities he designed over the next decades, and led to a certain "Olmsted look" of houses set in greenspace, not just in front, but around the sides to the rear, as well.

Druid Hills, which was first designed in the early 1890s, was Olmsted's last suburban community plan, and exhibited the evolution of his thinking about garden suburbs, but his initial instinct, making a comfortable retreat for residents and visitors alike, persisted. Setbacks and flowing front lawns contributed to this scenario. After submitting his design, Olmsted retired, and his plans were later executed by the Druid Hills Corporation after 1908.

In the 1970s, the DHCA applied to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Local designation followed in late 1982 when the City designated Druid Hills as what is today called a Landmark District. DHCA worked with the City to draft the ordinance that protects the essential features of Druid Hills. The City uses zoning regulations to protect historic sites.

To determine the size of setbacks, existing structures, (i.e., houses), were studied within their differing lot sizes, and their average distance from the roadway was calculated for each of the streets -- Ponce de Leon, South Ponce and Fairview -- with

those for Lullwater, Oakdale and Springdale roads coming later. Setbacks were determined block by block by taking an average of the front yard setback and the sides for each house. When plans for new structures or additions within the Landmark District are offered for approval, these setbacks must be observed.

Let's say your dream house sits on the west side of Lullwater Road. Since it's in the City of Atlanta, it will be between Ponce de Leon and the city limits. By consulting the Druid Hills Civic Association's City of Atlanta landmark regulations, you will find out that your front setback is 125 feet, with 25 feet on each side and 100 feet for the rear yard. For more assistance or discussion of these figures, you may ask for a review or maybe just a conversation, with the Landmark District Preservation Committee, which will be happy to help. These dedicated neighbors use their experience and training to make navigating the application process somewhat less complicated. They might show you how to measure your setbacks, for example, or answer other questions.

Here's the link for the regulations and figures for your individual location: <https://www.druidhills.org/Historic-Preservation>

Following the rules and consulting neighbors and other local residents with experience in renovations and additions will assure you a very happy outcome, and that's what we all want, isn't it?

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Olmsted 200 Celebration Unveils

Logo

By Alida Silverman

Here is the logo for Olmsted 200, the bicentennial celebration of Frederick Law Olmsted's birthday in 2022. You should be seeing this logo – in color – in many places as we move toward 2022. Stewards of Olmsted sites across the country have begun planning their own particular ways of celebrating the legacy of the father of American landscape architecture and that of his sons who carried on the firm. The Druid Hills Civic Association and the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance are of course among these stewards and planning has begun. Stay tuned! Join in!

In mid-January 2021, the Olmsted 200 website will have a “soft launch” and will debut officially on April 26, the actual birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted. That website will have a rich offering of information including a Master Calendar of events and happenings planned. Organizations like DHCA and OLPA will be able to add their events on that master calendar. Whether a special event for the bicentennial celebration or something that is already an annual event but gets an Olmsted 200 twist, groups across the country (and Canada) can stand up on a national stage.

Check out Olmsted.org and sign up on the special pop-up for ongoing updates about Olmsted 200.

Eighteen Years of Firefighters

By Jennifer J. Richardson

I am writing this on Friday, September 11, 2020—nineteen years after terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and caused a plane to crash in Pennsylvania. On September 11, 2001, I had just finished up a music lesson and opened my front door to let the child leave. Outside stood my tenant, Jeff, who had never come to my front door before. He looked pale, agitated, shaken. Before I could say anything, Jeff told me a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade Towers in New York City—his hometown. Jeff was living here in Atlanta while he attended graduate school at Emory. Jeff knew I was not very familiar with New York City.

“The Trade Towers command the skyline in Manhattan,” he said. “Whenever you come up out of the subway, you look around to see the Towers, and then you know where you are and what direction to go in.” Jeff told me to turn on the television and I did—and probably didn’t turn it off for a week. I watched the second plane hit; the coverage of the flight that rammed into the Pentagon and saw both towers fall. There were incorrect reports of bombs and fires on the mall in Washington DC. I kept up with the flight that crashed in Pennsylvania, that was destined to hit the U.S. Capitol. I saw members of Congress running; news people running; I saw helicopters taking off with the big wigs.

The 9-11 attacks became another of the defining moments of my generation along with the Kennedy assassination, Dr. King’s murder, and the Freedom riders. For my grandparents, it was the Depression, Roosevelt’s death and Pearl Harbor. For younger generations, it was probably the space shuttle blowing up, the last economic decline and now the virus.

Jeff showed up again at my door, telling me that his girlfriend’s father was supposed to be in one of the buildings at a meeting. The buildings were no more. He’d been calling cell and home numbers for an hour, but the phone lines in New York were dead. Jeff asked me to drive him to the airport so he could fly to New York, but the air space was being shut down. I told him there was no way he could get to New York, and if he did, there probably wasn’t anything he could do without EMT training. He sat down next to me to watch TV, endlessly calling on his cell phone—only to get busy signals—over and over. After a very long day, the next day dawned, and we learned that Jeff’s girlfriend’s father had been

late to the meeting at the trade center and was okay. Jeff disappeared back into his apartment for marathon television.

I wanted to do something, but I didn’t know what to do. So, I mindlessly watched television.

One year later, on September 11, 2002, I knew what I’d do. The first thing was to take an advanced life support class so I could provide aid if terrorists struck Atlanta. Then I decided to bake five dozen brownies and take them down to Station 12 on DeKalb Avenue. Station 12 is an Atlanta Fire Department station, but it also has a DeKalb County rescue unit there, as well as Engine 12 and truck 12. “Truck 12” is a shiny red and spotless hook and ladder that says, “Little Five Points” on the front of it. Station 12 is the one that would come to my house or to your house within the city of Atlanta in Druid Hills if there were an emergency. And the DeKalb rescue truck would also serve the rest of Druid Hills.

I was a little shy as I rang the bell. One firefighter came out and ushered me into a small room. Every firefighter in the room stood at attention. Firefighters come in every color, gender, nationality and race, but they are all physically fit, and look gorgeous in uniforms. I explained why I was there and handed an officer the huge tray of brownies. “I am here to thank you and I’ve not forgotten what happened,” I said. One man had tears come to his eyes. One of his friends had died in the collapse of the buildings. I stayed long enough for them to ask my address and then someone remarked, “That’s our call.” “Yes,” I said. “You’re the ones who would come if my house burned down.” Another said, “Don’t worry, ma’am, we aren’t going to let your house burn down!”

I took brownies or pound cakes to Station 12 firefighters for the next 17 years on the anniversary of 9-11. There are too many stories and memories to report here, but they were always grateful I’d come. And I always thanked them, told them I appreciated them, and that I had not forgotten 9-11.

Last night I baked 12 dozen brownies. I will soon package them in foil and put them in containers. Later this afternoon, I’ll make my 18th annual visit to Station 12—just to say thanks and “I remember” and because they are our neighborhood fire fighters and rescue team.

The Mayor of Emory Village:

Memories of Grover

By Jennifer J. Richardson

He was a fixture of my childhood and adolescent years, but I never knew his full name until after his death. His name was Willie Webb, but everyone around Druid Hills called him Grover.

Grover came to the door of Kathleen Milam's home asking for food. Mrs. Milam fed him and learned he was homeless. She made a place for him to reside in her basement. If my subtraction is correct, the year was around 1945. Grover lived there for the next 40 years.

Grover was a regular in nearby Emory Village. He made money by doing chores for various businesses, including sweeping up at Ed Green's old restaurant and keeping the sidewalks tidy. He often did odd jobs for other businesses and regularly swept the sidewalks of Emory Village.

I recall seeing Grover every time I shopped at the old Emory Kroger (now the CVS). I'm dating myself now because this was around the same time that Campbells' Cream of Mushroom soup was 17 cents a can and had a blue sticker on top of the can instead of a bar code.

Grover was known by many with the honorific of "The Mayor of Emory Village." Grover sat on a long wooden bench in front of the Kroger. He was small in stature—just around five feet tall and weighing less than 100 pounds. He always had on worn but neat clothing. He wore either a stocking cap on his head or a ladies' single nylon stocking pulled over his hair and knotted at the crown of his head. He always smiled when you spoke to him. He seemed to enjoy just watching what was going on around him.

In those days, just about everyone shopping at Kroger knew Grover by sight, and most greeted him as they entered or left the store. Some people handed him paper money or loose change—even though he never asked for donations. Grover was a man of few words. One Druid Hills matron recalled never hearing him say more than three words at a time. I remember that his standard answer to "hello" were the words



Grover (1903-1985) was a fixture in Emory Village for decades. Photograph courtesy of the Atlanta Constitution, 1985

"Aw-right," and his standard answer to money or food was "Thank you."

For 40 years, Grover sat on that bench in front of Kroger when he wasn't doing chores, but few people knew anything about him. He was assumed to be in his 60s, 70s or 80s, but no one knew for sure. No one knew if Grover had a wife or family somewhere, or exactly what his story was: Where did he come from? How did he end up in Emory Village? Why was he called Grover instead of Willie?

Though many of us shopping in Emory Village in those days didn't know each other, everybody knew Grover. Grover was like a ribbon that tied all of us together.

Grover died in March of 1985. That meant he was 82 years old and had probably been born in 1903. Grover was listed as having no survivors. Druid Hills residents paid for his burial and funeral. Grover's funeral was held in Canon Chapel on the Emory University campus. His memorial service included pipe organ music, songs, personal memories shared by many who "knew" him, and Scripture readings.

Though he lived a simple, humble life, "the Mayor" was sent out with reverence and in grand style by his Druid Hills friends. There will never be another Grover. I still miss him.



Bridge in Deepdene Park

Despite Covid, Work in Olmsted Linear Park Continues

By Jennifer J. Richardson for OLPA

For many non-profit organizations, COVID-19 has changed normal operating procedures. The OLPA board and committee meetings continue but in the Zoom tele-conference platform rather than face-to-face.

The ongoing maintenance work continues in all segments of the park. In the 22-acre forest of Deepdene, non-native invasive plants are being removed and replaced with native species. The board has completed some major projects such as trail restoration, tree pruning and conducted an erosion study in Deepdene. There are plans to renovate the Springdale playground and replace some of the asphalt paths where they are eroding.

Earlier this year, the OLPA Gala Committee made the decision to cancel the 2021 Gala—our largest annual fundraiser. Our leadership felt strongly that nothing warranted holding a large event where the health of any of our supporters might be jeopardized. However, we are researching ways to reach out to you virtually because we miss seeing you! And, because we are not able to raise the \$65,000 we normally raise from the gala, we're asking all those who use and enjoy the park to be generous when considering your annual charitable donations.

Although COVID-19 has caused disruption in the way we lead our lives, the one thing that has come out of it is very positive: More people than ever are using our gorgeous parkland. We see walkers, joggers, cyclists, dogs on leashes, picnickers, frisbee throwers, mothers with strollers, and children playing. So, while COVID-19 has curtailed many of our regular activities, the park remains open and welcoming to all. Being in the great out-of-doors might just be the fix for COVID's cabin fever. OLPA encourages you to wear a mask and social distance when you're out enjoying our beautiful Olmsted Linear Park.

The Landmark District Preservation Committee and Atlanta's UDC

Editorial Opinion by Jennifer J. Richardson

I've served on the Landmark District Preservation Committee (LDPC) for about 25 years. We're the group that assists Druid Hills owners within the city with the maze of rules and regulations set down in law by Atlanta's Department of Planning and the Urban Design Commission (UDC). We have absolutely no power on our own; nor does the Civic Association. We can only suggest what we think through our vast experience. The city alone has the power to approve an application or not so that the homeowner can alter plans if needed. In any decision, the UDC has the final say.

I learned my love of preservation from my grandparents and older brother. My brother, a Ph.D. in government administration restored a derelict courthouse in Buckingham Courthouse, Virginia, that was designed by Mr. Thomas Jefferson; and later he supervised the already-in-progress restoration of the down-on-their-heels main streets of Saint Charles, Missouri, into thriving shopping and visitor centers. Renovation was done with care and with concern for neighboring businesses and homes.

To me, historic preservation means rehabilitation, protection, and at times, adapted use (such as Minerva's project to convert the Druid Hills United Methodist Church into condos). The LDPC assisted Minerva in recommending the historic Ivey and Crook designed church—at the gateway to Druid Hills on the west side—remain and be used for another purpose. Other developers wanted to clear that lot of all buildings.

The staff of City Planning and the UDC have myriad rules that a homeowner, developer, or architect must wade through with every project. For example, some streets in the Landmark District have different regulations than other streets. Different zoning of lots (single family and multifamily) have different side, front and rear yard setbacks. When things get hard to decipher, the LDPC volunteers are there to help.

One thing that, to me, is missing in the City Planning Department and the UDC is not enough consideration for how a proposed project impacts nearby neighbors. If the project follows the LD regulations, UDC seems to approve it. Yet, in several recent cases, in the name of "historic preservation," the city and UDC have approved what I consider to be inappropriate projects that adversely impact close neighbors. My concerns are clear cutting lots of trees, mismanagement of storm water run-off, cramming too many buildings and too much pavement on the newly clear-cut lot, failing to observe District circulation and spacing, compatibility of existing designs, size, landscaping, and height.

In one such instance, UDC allowed renovation of a mansion into condos, and also allowed four new residences behind the main house. The application met the qualifications for approval by UDC. However, the construction noise and dirt hurt neighbors' ears and filled their homes with fine dust. Worse still, what once was a pristine thickly wooded area, was clear cut, adversely impacting homeowners in both Candler Park and Druid Hills. Yet, appeals by the affected neighbors fell on deaf ears downtown. In my opinion, nearby beautifully landscaped front and back yards and historic architect-designed homes fell victim to development.

In another proposed development, we may face the same thing. Many trees will be lost—trees that provided natural beauty, shade, and wildlife habitat for neighbors who live behind and beside the proposed development. On an already challenged street with storm water concerns, this new development could make things even worse. The street, which has existed as it was for nearly 100 years, will be inevitably changed in terms of view, noise, lighting, and possible reduction

of home and property values. The question is, will City Planning and UDC listen to the concerns of nearby neighbors? These neighbors will have to live beside new developments, while the developers go back to wherever they came from.

It seems to me that The City Planning Department and UDC minimize how a new development—with or without tree removal—can negatively impact the lives of adjacent homeowners. Extensive tree cutting can cause increased light in a neighbor's yard, making the old shade-loving landscape obsolete. Living with construction equipment noise and dust is aggravating. Tree removal disrupts the natural balance of things in the woods and may drive out wildlife such as hawks, woodpeckers, and owls. The view is forever altered. A once serene and sheltered back yard can quickly become a place to view an eyesore of mud, silt fence, equipment, and worst of all—the back doors of homes built too close to the original house. A once grand home can look surrounded by inappropriate designs and seem to be crammed into a space too small for it—and Druid Hills.

Our LDPC team has had a great many opponents to insensitive developments share their concerns with UDC and attend meetings. Many have called these neighbors "anti-development." In fact, they are "anti-inappropriate development." UDC needs to place more emphasis on the feelings of neighbors. I urge UDC to add one more criterion to their long list: What do the neighbors feel about the proposed development? If we live here, we should have a say in what is built around us.



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Dr. J. Michael Lane (1936-2020)

A Towering Oak in the Druid Hills Forest and the World

By Jennifer J. Richardson

Dr. John Michael Lane died on October 21, 2020 at his home in Druid Hills. He was 84. Some years back, I was seeking to interview a “Druid Hills Luminary” for this paper when former Managing Editor Susan Baker suggested I speak with Michael Lane. “He helped eradicate the smallpox virus in the world,” she told me.

It is believed that smallpox jumped from a rodent to a human being about 10,000 years ago in a process known as “crossover” or zoonotic passing. The same type event (but perhaps with a different animal) is what brought us COVID-19. Smallpox is caused by the Variola virus. It was a horrible disease, killing about 3 out of 10 people who were infected, with a much higher death rate for children. Those who survived the highly contagious disease were often left with disfiguring scars and blindness. The disease was no respecter of power and privilege: It caused the death of Pocahontas, Benjamin Franklin’s son, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Ward, and Henry Gray, famous for his book, “Gray’s Anatomy.” Survivors of smallpox include U.S. presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. When Europeans brought smallpox to the new world, approximately 80 percent of Native Americans were wiped out. In the twentieth century alone, it killed more than 300 million people.

After receiving a medical degree from Harvard, Dr. Lane entered the University of California and earned a master’s degree in public health epidemiology. Dr. Lane joined the CDC in the early 1960s, and by 1964 was concentrating on smallpox. He spent the rest of his working life battling smallpox and other infectious diseases and famine in impoverished areas of the world. He traveled all over the world for the CDC, helping to combat outbreaks of smallpox, and tracking and killing the virus. Dr. Lane became an expert in smallpox vaccinations and trained people on the ground in how to administer them.

In 1967, the World Health Organization and CDC began a campaign to eradicate smallpox. They focused on villages with known victims and set out to vaccinate families and other contacts. By 1973, Dr. Lane was the director of the CDC’s smallpox eradication bureau. When I interviewed him several years ago, he shared one of his “think outside the box” moments. He had a viable and tested vaccine in liquid form. But if the vaccine got too hot, its efficacy was destroyed. What to do? Dr. Lane freeze-dried the liquid, shipped it to the hot countries where it was needed, and re-constituted it with water upon arrival, where it could be injected.

Smallpox was eradicated from the world on October 26, 1977. But official designation by the WHO meant waiting two more years to see if any cases turned up. The WHO announced in 1980, that “The world and all its people have won freedom from smallpox.” Today, no verified cases of smallpox have been reported. The extermination



Dr. J. Michael Lane (left) is pictured in Niger 1968 with a small child afflicted with smallpox. Dr. Lane helped to eradicate smallpox in the world. (Photo courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA)

of smallpox has become one of humanity’s greatest public health achievements. Never before or since has a human infectious disease been vanquished by medical intervention—an astounding part of medical history.

With this kind of triumph behind him—stopping a disease that had killed millions throughout the globe—it would be natural to expect some self-aggrandizement. But there was none in Michael Lane. Dr. Lane quickly told me that he hadn’t stopped smallpox in its tracks: it had been a team effort, with leadership from Drs. D.A. Henderson, J. Donald Miller, and William H. Foege and thousands of scientists working in labs and thousands more foot soldiers learning to give vaccinations in other countries. “The main

thing,” he told me, “was not getting the attention—it was knowing the disease was vanquished.”

Dr. Lane remained at CDC until 1987. He later taught at Emory, the Australian National University, and then again at Emory. He continued to write scientific articles and contribute to seminars throughout the world on smallpox vaccinations, and bioterrorism. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he trained Army personnel in bioterrorism defense maneuvers. He “officially” retired in 2002, but continued his scientific work, joined the board of the Decatur YMCA, where he regularly exercised, became an avid bird watcher, and hiked from Atlanta to Seattle Washington, going through many national parks. One of the last things he did was to consult with 200 scientists at a smallpox conference. Many of his ideas could be easily transferred to the teams that are fighting COVID-19 today.

It was just luck and Susan Baker that put me in the same room with this amazing man who had done so much for the world. When the “official” interview was over, we sat for hours just talking about what was going on in the world—and addictions which was one of my professional interests, tobacco use, and the state of medicine and public health, and the role of the insurance companies and “Big Pharma.” He shared with me his fear that a virus, most likely a spillover from an animal, would appear in the world for which there was no treatment and no vaccine. This was several years before COVID-19 arrived. He shared with me that smallpox was “actually still around.” What? “Yes, said Dr. Lane. “There are two deposits of the virus—one at the CDC and one at a research laboratory in Russia. I want it gone! And each year I request that the two remaining samples be destroyed, but others disagree with me.”

He was outspoken and not afraid to share his views. He was funny and treated me like a colleague, which I wasn’t. And somehow, just being in the room with him made me feel I’d touched true greatness—a man who’d given the world a gift and expected no glory. There’s a word for people like Dr. Michael Lane: it’s “inspirational.” *Requiescat in Pace*, Mike. You left the world a better place.



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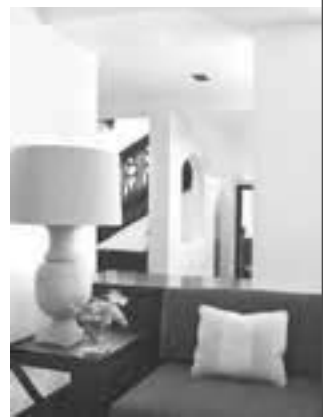
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