

PLAIN TALK

the newsletter of the Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors

June 2008

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Wetlands Project Will Bring Cleaner Water to the Lake and Provide an Enhanced Habitat for Our Wildlife

Pine Lake's wetland project began as an idea a number of years ago with the goal of supplying more clean water to Pine Lake and cleaning up the stream. Now, just three years later as the project nears completion, the whole community can begin to enjoy the fruits of a long journey.

The first steps were developing a formal plan that would be approved by the state Environmental Protection Division, and finding funding. We went to work with Manhard Consulting, a nationally recognized environmental engineering firm, to develop a plan

and figure out a budget for the project. We discovered funding was available through the Clean Water Act of 1972. The Clean Water Act establishes a list of impaired streams, rivers and other waterways that have serious pollution problems and makes funds available to local governments and groups to correct the pollution problems. The stream that flows through Pine Lake, Snapfinger Creek, is on the list for fecal coli form, the same pollution that makes us have to close the lake during the summer

continued page 3



Photo by Kris Casariego

Calendar



June

- 1st Sun. 3:30-4:30pm, Pet Clinic, ClubHouse
- 1st Sun. 6pm, LakeFest Planning, BeachHouse
- 3rd Tues. 7:30pm, ARB, ClubHouse
- 5th Thurs. 7:30pm, PLAIN, ClubHouse
- 7th Sat. 8:30-10:30am, Pancake Breakfast, BeachHouse
- 9th Mon. 7:30pm, City Council, City Hall
Public Hearing on Zoning
- 16th Mon. 7pm, DDA, ClubHouse
- 17th Tues. 7:30, ARB, Clubhouse
- 16th-20th (M-F) Summer Theatre Camp, BeachHouse
- 23rd-27th (M-F) Summer Theatre Camp, BeachHouse
- 24th Tues. 6:30pm, Tree Authority Board, BeachHouse
- 27th Fri. 7pm, Summer Camp Show, ClubHouse
- 17th Tues. 7:30pm, ARB, ClubHouse
- 24th Tues. 6:30pm, Tree Board, BeachHouse
- 24th Tues. 7:30pm, City Council, City Hall



July

- 1st Tues. 7:30pm, ARB, ClubHouse
- 3rd Thurs. 7:30pm, PLAIN, ClubHouse
- 14th Mon. 7:30pm, City Council, City Hall
- 15th Tues. 7:30pm, ARB, ClubHouse
- 21st Mon. 7pm, DDA, ClubHouse
- 24th Thurs. 7pm, PLEAS, BeachHouse
- 26th Sat. 10am-3pm, Summer Singing Day w/Elise Witt, Clubhouse
- 29th Tues. 6:30pm, Tree Board, BeachHouse
- 29th Tues. 6:30pm, Leadership Roundtable, ClubHouse
- 29th Tues. 7:30pm, City Council, City Hall

USO Fundraiser in Stone Mountain

The 4th Annual "Come Back to the Past Visit the USO" event helps raise money for the USO. The event is Friday, June 20th from 7:00pm till 11:00pm at the VFW Post 5257, 800 VFW Drive, Stone Mountain. Sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary of Post 5257, Stone Mountain, Georgia the admission is \$10.00 with a portion of the proceeds going to the USO. Active Duty Personnel with valid ID card will be Admitted Free of Charge. Entertainment, dancing, bingo, and hors d' oeuvres will be provided and a drawing will be held at the end of the event for some great gifts. Come support the VFW and the USO and have a grand ole time in Stone Mountain. For tickets call 770-498-3469 or 770-498-7022, or can be purchased at the door.

Congratulations to Corey Barksdale!

On May 1, the Decatur Arts Festival unveiled their 2008 poster, designed by Pine Lake resident, Corey Barksdale. The talented Mr. Barksdale was honored at a reception in the DeKalb courthouse. The gathering of DeKalb and Decatur arts activists, elected officials, and leaders stood in line to get Corey to autographed their complimentary copy of the poster. The reception included entertainment, food, and beverages and reproductions of Corey's artwork for the poster. Corey's family, friends, and fans were there to support Corey and celebrate with him as he proudly autographed his beautiful artwork. The poster symbolizes all manner of art and music in rich colors of gold, turquoise, black and other colors. Likely you've seen the poster which is widely posted and distributed around DeKalb and the metro area. Congratulations, Corey, and keep up the great work!

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EMERGENCY NUMBER

If you need emergency assistance, please call 911. Pine Lake's Police Department is committed to serving YOU!

JOIN PLAIN

Join the Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors or renew your current membership. Just fill out the membership form on the back page of this newsletter and submit along with payment of \$25 per household to :

P.O. Box 44
Pine Lake, GA 30072-0044.

Guide to Acronyms:

ARB = Architectural Review Board
DDA = Downtown Development Authority
PLAIN = Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors
PLEAS = Pine Lake Environment, Access and Stewardship
TAB = Tree Authority Board



cover story continued

to swimming. We submitted a grant application to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources with a plan to clean up the fecal coli form in Snapfinger Creek and received a grant of \$217,495 that required a local grant match of \$145,000. The local match has been largely provided by several volunteer efforts on the part of Pine Lake residents and a contribution of machinery and labor from DeKalb County. I have been told that our volunteer efforts are remarkable for a community our size. We frequently had turnouts that would be expected only from a much larger communities.

The basic idea behind the project was to clean the fecal coliform out of the water. In case you don't know, fecal coliform comes from poop of all sorts. Here in Pine Lake it is caused by geese, old septic tanks, and dog poop that doesn't get picked up. All of us need to remember that rain washes these contaminants into the lake. When we don't pick up after our dogs and cats, we are polluting the lake. Even if you don't live on the lake, runoff from your yard and the streets goes into the storm drains that lead to the lake and stream.

Septic tanks that are still being used need to be properly maintained and serviced. When a septic system isn't properly cared for, it saturates the ground and seeps into the ground water. Of course we have a community challenge because of the major County sewer lines that run

"I have been told that our volunteer efforts are remarkable for a community our size. We frequently had turnouts that would be expected only from a much larger communities."

through the City. We all need to be diligent and report any suspected sewer leaks. Please report them to City Hall immediately. We will contact the County and have them dispatch a crew to clean it up.

To remove the fecal coliform from the stream and lower the count in the lake, the water must be filtered. The

best natural way to do this is to create a system of wetlands that the water runs through before it gets to the lake. We first must assure that the wetlands have a reliable source of water. This is being accomplished by repairing the old dam area so there is a constant flow of water coming from Snapfinger Creek to the flume that supplies Pine Lake. This step still needs a little work but is about 90% complete. Next we are in the process of constructing artificial wetlands upstream from the lake. The water from Snapfinger Creek will be diverted through the constructed wetlands, then be allowed to enter the lake. The lake water will be much cleaner then but we are still not finished. The lake water will overflow through a drain and enter a second artificial wetlands downstream from the lake, be filtered again and reenter Snapfinger Creek, hopefully free of fecal coliform.

This is a work in process. It will take a couple of years to complete. There will be some stops and starts as funding comes and goes. I have just completed the second round of negotiations with DeKalb County and we will resume work on the upstream portion of the wetlands the week of May 26. We hope to complete the upstream portion within thirty days of that date weather permitting.

Our wetlands project will not only clean up the water, but will provide a superior habitat for our wildlife. We also have a Department of Natural Resources Trail Grant for about \$99,000 that will enable us to put in a trail system with benches and educational signs. All of us will be able to observe the wetlands and enjoy our wildlife in a pretty park setting.

By Phil Howland

Why Our Pets Must Be on a Leash

A recent story in PLAINTalk left me sad and frustrated: sad for a friend of mine who lost a cat; sad that our neighbors can't remember to slow down; and frustrated for the failure of the recurrent messages about the leash law to be heard. While we all understand the reason for a speed limit, the reasons why we have a leash law are soon forgotten. Pine Lake originally established a leash law for cats and dogs in order to maintain its "Bird Sanctuary" designation. Many committees have convened to discuss the pros and cons of the leash law and decided that it was important to maintain the "Bird Sanctuary" designation.

We have worked to get a portion of our city listed as a wildlife sanctuary for six years, but we were met with obstacles including pets being observed off the leash by agency professionals. The wetlands projects will result in creating water features that attract birds and wildlife that can not live near a big lake, because those smaller animals would be open prey to hawks and other natural predators. These water features will increase our chances of getting a "Wildlife Habitat" designation, but only if we reduce the number of domestic predators (off the leash) that have access to

our wetlands.

The "Wildlife Habitat" designation is an honor that is often recognized when federal and state agencies are deciding to fund projects. Phil has done wonders with about \$300,000 in grant funds that has already created habitats. The new wetland grasses, now growing upstream, will attract many birds and the improved spillway will result in a cleaner lake. Later this year we will be planning the \$100,000 wetlands boardwalk (the grant that Kathie and Brent received for us). This will allow us (and our pets) to get close to observe the new species. Next year we hope to develop the Western Wetlands habitat.

Between the contributions of you, the county, the state, and the Feds, these will be considered a combined multimillion-dollar wetlands asset. Such an asset will attract migratory fowl to a region that is losing its wildlife. It will certainly make us deserving of additional wildlife funds.

I respect my neighbors love for their pets. (A tall stone marks the grave of my cat Sinbad, of 21 yrs.) But I urge my neighbors to remember and respect our leash law.

By Pine Lake Mayor, Greg Zarus



PLEAS Committee News



The Pine Lake Environmental and Stewardship Committee met on April 17 with four neighbors participating to discuss areas for the Spring Fling Clean-up, the sign project, and the environmental projects. Like the PLEAS meeting, the Spring Fling Clean-up, while small in number of participants, was very productive in cleaning the lake, the berm, creeks, and dam. Special thanks to the Butera's for kayaking and cleaning the debris in the lake. Other volunteers cleaned the parks, public areas, creek, and the berm. Thankfully over the years the major debris such as bicycles, huge tires, and shopping carts have been removed. We appreciate the work of the volunteers and keeping our lake and parks clean.



2008 Pine Lake Park and Beach Rules

Compiled by Karen Bernheimer, Ella Johanaber, Linda Orgain, and Kathie deNobriga.
Supervised by: Greg Creech!

The Park and Beach are open from 6am to 9pm daily, except for the Western Wetlands, Eastern Green Space and the back side of the lake which close at dark.

Current Park cards are required for use of our park and lake. Park cards are available at City Hall.

Swimming is allowed only from Memorial Day weekend through October 4, 2008.

1. Swimming is always at your own risk.
2. Adults may swim outside of the roped area but within the berm by signing a waiver form available at City Hall or from the Beach Manager.
3. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult and swim within the roped area.
4. **Fishing requires a park card. No fishing in the swimming side of the berm.**
5. **Honor the "Pooper Scooper" law.** Pick up any pet waste and dispose of it properly. Plastic bags are provided in containers at trash cans.
6. **Do not feed the geese, ducks, and other birds.** It upsets their digestion and interrupts their migration pattern. Nature provides plenty of appropriate food.
7. **No dogs or pets are allowed off-leash, in the lake, or on the beach at any time.**
8. **No glass containers on the beach or in the park.**
9. **Alcoholic beverage consumption and public drunkenness are not allowed at the park and beach.** Alcoholic beverages are only allowed during special and permitted events.
10. **Smoking is prohibited on the beach.**
11. **Honor the noise ordinances and litter laws.** Keep our park and lake clean, beautiful and enjoyable for all.

Enjoy our Pine Lake nature and environment responsibly and respectfully.

New Playground Update

The playground fundraiser (in)Formal Auction is just around the corner so be sure you've marked



June 7 on your calendars and invited your firends! With the big event coming up, now is a good time to give an update on the overall progress of the playground.

Thanks to the support of our community, the playground committee has had two highly successful fundraisers since its inception last July. Between last year's LakeFest craft and bake sale and our recent yard sale, as well as many other generous donations, we've raised nearly \$3,500 to go toward building a new playground next to the beach.

For the past several months we have been working with KaBOOM!, a national non-profit organization that provides resources and corporate sponsors to bring together children, business and community interests for a select number of community playspace builds each year. We are deep into the application process and hope to hear any day now if we are chosen for the upcoming playground build in early August. (To learn more about KaBOOM! go to www.kaboom.org)

If we are chosen to receive a KaBOOM! playground build, our obligation will be \$10,000 toward the financial requirements, and at least 150 people to come out in August and participate in the building of the playground. (Before the build day, there will be a planning day where the community decides what the playground will look like.)

We hope to raise a large part of that \$10,000 at the Pine Lake (in)Formal so come out and have a great time with us and help make our city a great place to play!

Yard of the Month



The Yard of the Month for June is awarded to Greg and Suzanne Zarus on Park Drive. They have been hard at work transforming their yard, both front and back into beautiful gardens.

rescuers so many of the plants and trees in their yard now have a new home instead of sure death under the wheels of a tractor or hoe!

Many an afternoon and weekend Greg and Suzanne have been out digging and planting. Their sons, Devon and Yuri can be seen pitching in to help as well, both of them quite handy with a shovel. Greg and Suzanne are big plant

Greg has laboriously placed rocks to create many interesting nooks and crannies, steps and terraces in the front and back yards. A newly placed arbor in front offers a welcoming view of the house, framed with jasmine and plectranthus planted on the sides. Suzanne is the planner of the family and has chosen a wide diversity of plants. Azaleas, Japanese maples, and flowering almond grace the yard as well as flowering vinca, camellias and hydrangeas. Many other beautiful and interesting bulbs are coming along, too. They both say their yard is a work in progress, which is what all true gardeners say. We can look forward to even more blossoms and beauty in the months to come.

Congratulations to Greg and Suzanne and thank you for the beauty your hard work brings to all of us!



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Close to Pine Lake! 4292 D Memorial Drive (in Park Plaza next to Kensington Marta Station) Decatur, Ga. 30032

404-292-6786

Dr. Marty Finkelstein was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis 33 years ago and was told nothing could be done other than medicine and surgery. His life changed when a holistic chiropractor explained how this illness not only could improve but also heal. Within 12 months the ulcerative colitis no longer existed. Dr. Marty changed direction from going to medical school to going to chiropractic school. It was because of that process of healing and understanding about health that he has continued to help and serve others to greater wellness and healing.

Trash Talk

The city offers the service of picking up items and debris that will not be picked up by the regular trash service and disposing of it in the city's dumpster. Many times our city workers will pick up small items or loads free of charge. Larger items and piles will be removed for a small fee. The charge is roughly equal to \$30 per man-hour plus the prorated cost of disposal, i.e. dumpster, tractor or truck time. This usually works out to a minimum of \$5. for a light-weight load about as big as half a

wheelbarrow, up to \$30. or more for larger loads.

The following items **cannot** be put in our city dumpster and should never be left out in the street:

- **Paint cans with wet paint in them.** (For proper disposal, see box below.)
- **Old tires.** The place where you buy new tires will dispose of old tires for a small fee.

• **Excessive construction debris.** We likely can accept a very small pile (think a wheelbarrow full) of scrap wood or sheetrock if it can be quickly and safely hand loaded into our city truck. We reserve the right to refuse any construction debris. It's a judgment call that will be made at the time of pickup. Charges will apply for the disposal of construction debris.



Any appropriate debris will be picked up by the city workers on Monday and Tuesdays ONLY. We don't want our neighborhood to constantly have trash set out on the street, so please, do not put out trash to be picked up until Saturdays or, preferably, Sundays.

How to Dispose of Old Paint

Open the cans of paint, put cat litter or sand in them and allow to completely dry out. Double bag the dried out paint cans, and then we can dispose of them in the city dumpster. **NEVER dump old paint in any storm drains, in the street gutter or in your yard.**

This paint will end up in the stream, violates the EPD hazardous waste laws, and hurts the entire community. Persons caught doing this will be cited and fined.

Philip Howland

Notes from the Tree Board

The initial round of tree and shrub plantings in the eastern wetlands was completed last month. The plantings in this area (at the far eastern end, above the dam) consisted of 'live stakes' along the restored streambed and a variety of trees and shrubs in the former streambed and adjacent area.

The 'live stakes' planted along the new streambed are black willows and silky/swamp dogwoods. They are designed to grow rapidly and densely in a very wet environment in order to secure the new streambed.

The plantings on the far side of the creek include the following: American beech trees, a red buckeye, a river birch, a gallberry/inkberry holly and a possum haw (viburnum). In addition, the area was over-seeded with a mid-height wildflower mix.

Special thanks to Nita Towns for her contribution of Mexican petunias and Crepe Myrtles. As they grow, they will cover the fence and beautify the sidewalk by the baseball building!

By Susan Ramsey

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NOTES FROM CITY HALL

PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF PINE LAKE

www.pinelakega.com

RECENT COUNCIL ACTION

April 29 and May 12, 2008

Heard Alycen Whidden provide an overview of the new Zoning Ordinances (see below).

Discussed setting of the 2008 millage rate, to hold steady at 14.3 cents per thousand dollars of property value.

Coming Up:

June: Discussion of proposed (commercial) property annexation

Public Hearings of New Zoning

After months of discussion, dialogue, and research, Alycen Whiddon and Associates are finalizing several important documents. Whiddon has submitted a draft of the zoning codes for Resident and Uptown (business) areas, as well as application and administrative procedures for the Architectural Review Board.

Copies of these documents are available to the public and will be discussed at upcoming public hearings. There official public hearings will be held on Saturday, June 9 at 10:30am at the Beach House for citizen input. These hearings are the culmination of nearly 25 meetings with large numbers of Pine Lake home and business owners.

Could you lose your Homestead Exemption?

YES! If you have a vehicle not currently registered in DeKalb County, you could be at risk of losing your homestead exemption! Increased code enforcement in the city will result in more residents receiving warnings and citations for this violation of state and county law. You must register your vehicle in your primary place of residence!

Public Works Update

The upstream portion of the wetlands construction project is closer to

completion, thanks to the planting by volunteers (see "Notes from the Tree Board," pg 7); work on the downstream portion continues. (See Phil's article, front page.)

Public Works collected over 6 dumpsters of trash and debris during the recent Trash Amnesty Days!

A few geese were re-located to north Georgia in late April; another removal is scheduled in June, after the geese molt.

City Hall Hours

Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Ph: (404) 292-4250

Fax: (404)292-4859

Court Clerk

Mon. & Fri. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Tues., Wed. & Thurs.

7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Police

Ph: (404) 296-6613

Fax: (404)292-7531

Volunteer Days in Pine Lake

Got a couple of hours? A free afternoon? A leisurely Saturday morning? A little time can make a lot of difference to the City. We have a great group of wonderful volunteers who contribute un-told hours to the benefit of the City and their neighbors, but they need help. Lots of new people have moved into town and have not yet found their 'niche.' All city committees and groups are collaborating on a unified volunteer-drive, now through the Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, June 7. Look for the Volunteer Table at the Pancake Breakfast, and see how a little bit of your time can go a long way in making the City an even better place to live!

Beach Opening

Pending a good report on water quality, the lake will open for swimming on Saturday, May 24, following the traditional Memorial Day parade, City cook-out and ice-cream social. Pine Lake does not provide lifeguards, and swimming is always at your own risk. The city does provide a beach manager whose responsibilities are to monitor the beach, and ensure that everyone follows the posted rules. Lora Donna is trained in CPR and has direct access to public safety officers, and asks your help in having a safe and enjoyable swimming season. Please remember that children under 12 must always have an adult present (no more than 6 children per adult, please). If you are an adult swimmer who wants to swim outside the roped area (but within the berm), you can get a special release to do so: ask Lora Donna, or come by City Hall.

Arts Update

There will be NO Fire Spinning and Music by the Lake for the July 4th weekend our wonderful singers and fire spinners are on tour to exotic locales!

Anyone interested in HELPING to plan the Pine Lake LakeFest (October 4) is invited to attend the first planning session on Sunday, June 1 at 6pm at the BeachHouse.

Pine Lake Theater Arts Camp welcomes volunteers. Come play with us for an hour or a day. Call Ella 404-277-5747 or write ellalaura@gmail.com.

Classified Ads

Classified ads are free to PLAIN members. Members may place two free ads per month. For all other classified ads the fee is \$5 per month. To submit, contact Candy Howland at 404-294-5682 or e-mail her at phowl56954@aol.com

American Electric Contractors - Free Estimates, Commercial and Residential certified and licensed. Byron Brussard 770-328-0340

"Before you know who you want to become, you have to know who you are." **Career Counseling and Resume Writing Service.** Jessica Long, 404-292-3005

For Sale, 5 cemetery lots at Melwood Cemetery. Valued at \$1,500 each, will sacrifice for \$650 each. **Call Martha at 404-299-8754.**

Floyd's Heating And Air - Free Estimates for Pine Lakers. Commercial and Residential. Certified and Licensed. Call 404-314-7704 or visit www.floydsheatingandair.com

For Sale: Five shelf, open curio stand, \$20 obo. Stereo turn table, tape deck, amplifier, two speakers with built in glass top/front cabinet, \$50 obo. Various stereo equipment, call for prices. Cat carrier, \$15

obo. Large beige/brown ottoman, \$25 obo. Holly carburetor, double barrel, \$100 obo. White Ceiling Fan \$15 obo. Paul and Sheila Jasionowski 404-292-1580

Need Some Help Around the House? Inside or outside, I can help. I can also care for your dogs and cats while you are away. Flexible schedule. References available. \$10. per hour. Call Rebecca at 404-372-7669

Reflexology Sessions available in Pine Lake. Eva Sotus, certified reflexologist and licensed aesthetician offers 90-minute sessions. Reflexology uses acupressure and massage of the feet and hands to reduce stress, encourage lymphatic drainage (detox) and circulation. Feels wonderful. Call 678-357-8658

Therapeutic Massage For Relaxation and/or Pain Relief by Susan Ahl, nationally certified massage and

energy therapist and integrative kinesiologist. Chakra balancing and kinesiology also available for integrative healing of the emotional body. Two locations: Toco Hills Shopping Center or Pine Lake. Discounts for Pine Lakers. Call 404-386-9141 for appointment

ASTROLOGICAL CHARTS, both natal (all about you) and monthly forecasts (what the month brings for you) available by Susan Ahl. Full professional natal charts and detailed multi-page reports provided. Also compatibility charts/reports available for those interested in their current or prospective relationship. Discounts for Pine Lakers. 404-386-9141

Yoga at the Clubhouse - Wednesdays 7:15 - 8:30. For information call Ella at 404-277-5747 or write ellalaura@gmail.com.

We would like for the ads in PLAINTalk to cover the cost of printing. Please consider advertising with us! Rates:
 Business card size --- \$25. per month
 1/4 page size --- \$35. per month
 1/2 page size --- \$50. per month
 (15% discount if paid yearly)
 Contact: plaintalkeditor@plainhelps.org

----- Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors Membership Form -----

Name _____ Occupation _____
 Address _____ P.O. Box _____
 Day Phone Number _____ Night Phone Number _____
 Best time to call Day _____ Evening _____
 Email Address _____
 How would you prefer to be notified of PLAIN events? _____ Phone _____ Email _____
 Household Members Names
 _____ Adult _____ Teenager _____ Child Age _____
 _____ Adult _____ Teenager _____ Child Age _____
 _____ Adult _____ Teenager _____ Child Age _____
 _____ Adult _____ Teenager _____ Child Age _____

PLAIN
 PO Box 44
 Pine Lake, GA
 30072-044

Are you interested in volunteering for family events, seniors, environment, etc.? _____

_____ \$25.00 yearly household PLAIN dues enclosed.

Signature _____ Join Date _____ New _____ Renew _____