I first saw John Lewis on television—in one of those grainy black and white films that used to be the norm. There he was, leading the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; then later lying on his side in a raincoat being bludgeoned by the billy club of a police officer. Another time, an impossibly young Lewis stepped up to the microphone at the 1963 March on Washington, surrounded by Civil Rights icons. He was 23 years old when he made his speech there. Another time, I saw him in a television head shot: a huge bandage covering the place where the billy club had shattered his skull.

I was not yet a teenager when all this was going on, but Lewis and Dr. King and others made an impact on me. At that time, I secretly went against everything my family believed and sent Dr. King a letter, supporting his work. His return letter to me is one I treasure. I was twelve years old, proving that the acorn can fall miles away from the tree.

I saw John Lewis sitting in back of a convertible in a Little Five Points parade. I can’t recall if it was the Inman Park Festival or the Little Five Points Hallowe’en Parade. He was waving and shouting, “I needja hep.” He must have been running for Atlanta City Council. Later on, of course, he represented our district for over 30 years in the United States House of Representatives.

You probably have already read about John’s life of service, integrity and standing up for what is right. He was a giant in Civil Rights. His role in the in-town neighborhoods was no different than how he lived the rest of his life. Jimmy Carter wanted his presidential library on Copenhill, a public park where General Sherman watched Atlanta burn during the Civil War, and later the site of an orphanage for children left behind after the war. The Georgia Department of Transportation wanted an expressway through many in-town neighborhoods, including Lake Claire, Druid Hills, Candler Park, Poncey Highland, Inman Park and Old Fourth Ward. This expressway, called “Stone Mountain Expressway,” “Stone Mountain Tollway,” “Presidential Parkway” and later still “Freedom Parkway” had been planned in 1946. Its purpose was to connect two stubs of highway—at Stone Mountain and at Boulevard/Glen Iris downtown. It was planned as a four-lane commuter road so folks out there could get in town to their jobs.

When John Lewis served on Atlanta City Council, beginning in 1982, he put forth a resolution that the city would never support the four-lane highway. It passed unanimously. Later on, Council members began receiving pressure from powerful forces that wanted the highway. One was Mayor Andrew Young, who perhaps had a commitment to support the road and to support Jimmy Carter’s desire to have the road serve his library. Whatever the reason, Mayor Young and several City Council members changed their tune and began supporting the road. In June, Lewis was invited to a breakfast meeting with several council members and Mayor Young, (who had run on his promise to neighborhoods that he would never support the road) who tried to convince him to support the road. Lewis felt he needed to support the citizens who elected him to Council—and refused to change his anti-road vote because he accurately believed that his constituents were dead set against the highway.

Continued on page 4
All Directions Home

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President’s Corner
By Kit Eisterhold

“Life is like a roll of toilet paper, Kit.... It goes quicker toward the end.”

I first heard these words from a mentor of mine on the DHCA Board a few years back. One of the original Presidential Parkway Preservationists of the old school, he’s now well into his 70s, with a full gray beard and a belly on him that I always thought makes him look a bit like Santa Claus—though I’d hesitate to say that to him directly. He was my age, or perhaps a bit younger, when he fought the Parkway all those years ago, laying the foundation for what Druid Hills is today.

I’m turning 50 this year. And while the days seemed to last forever when I was young, lately I’ve come to the creeping realization that I’m getting closer and closer to the core of the toilet paper roll, as time inexorably accelerates toward terminal velocity and my final destination.

Like Brooks in the film Shawshank Redemption, I feel like I woke up and the world went and got itself in a big damn hurry. I feel caught in an ever-accelerating series of product cycles and awash in communications and commitments. I wake up every morning to a flood of texts and emails, and the harder I try to get my head above water, the more they come pouring in. My iPhone never leaves me, and it never stops ringing, and I can’t ever seem to text fast enough to carry on a coherent conversation with anyone.

Halloween is hardly over before I’m setting up for Christmas, and I’ve barely got the lights down before Easter is on me. My daughter has grown up right in front of me like a time lapse video. She was two years old when we moved into the neighborhood, when we were best buddies and I used to carry her around on my shoulders everywhere we went. It still feels like yesterday to me. But she’s moved on, is already acting like a teenager and would rather spend time with her friends, or alone. And as much as I wish I could put her on my shoulders one last time, in some feeble attempt at nostalgia, it would probably give me a hernia or a slipped disc, to say nothing of the enduring embarrassment it would cause her amongst her peer group.

I can hardly count the number of times I have felt like I was on some big demented merry-go-round, turned up like a turntable (I know the metaphor will date me for any millennials reading this) from 33 to 45 or 78. I just want to step off, even if it were only for a moment, and get my bearings.

And then one day it happened. Early this spring, even if it was only for a little while, it all finally stopped. The traffic, the work, the noise, all of it. Suddenly there was all the time in the world to spend with my daughter again: riding bikes together through the Emory campus, feeding the geese down at the Lullwater Preserve, picnicking together by the lake. There was time to sit around the firepit in my backyard till well past midnight with old friends—an old buddy of mine who was leaving for a yearlong deployment to Germany and his wife—drinking wine until we completely lost track of time, like we used to in college, listening to Bob Dylan’s “Spanish Boots of Leather,” Johnny Flynn’s “The Detectors,” and for a finale, singing along to “Day-O” by Harry Belafonte.

My computer crashed and for once, instead of frantically clicking in and out of two minute YouTube videos of car crashes and sports highlights, I found myself actually reading a book before bed for the first time in what seemed like years—an old book from my late father’s library about Ships of the Line in the era of Nelson. I read ‘til late in the evening with the window open so I could hear the sound of thunderstorms off in the distance.

Continued on page 4
the distance as I read of the Battle of the Nile and Trafalgar, and smelled the lingering faint odor of my father’s cigarette smoke on the pages.

I am not trying to make light of a tragedy that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives, and disrupted hundreds of millions more, but I have to be frank: when the wheels came off and all the machinery ground to a halt last March, I actually enjoyed it — the same way you might enjoy the power being knocked out by a storm. Sitting in the house with the candles lit can be quite pleasant, provided the power comes on before the food spoils or the house gets too hot.

Even the earth itself probably enjoyed the time off. The weather here was gorgeous, and images of clear skies and clean water came pouring in from all over the world. In my wife’s home country of India the skies above Delhi were crystal clear for the first time in ages, and the air was so clear the Himalayas could be seen from as far away as Amritsar for the first time since partition probably.

Dolphins swam in the now crystal clear canals of Venice, and with the cars cleared from the roads wildlife was seen coming out into the open in cities all over the world.

Of course, as I write this in August, it’s already all over now. Almost as soon as it formed, my little bubble where time was suspended popped, and the world, with all its noise and haste and demands on my time, has come rushing in on me again.

And the toilet paper roll is turning faster than ever.

I swear sometimes it seems like we’re all running around like chickens with our heads cut off, working quicker and quicker, with more frequent cuts and with more frames per second in the video, rapidly throwing up projects that won’t last, in a frantic effort to make some sort of impression on our world before the grim reaper turns all our works to dust.

I know life is short, time is fleeting, and you can’t take it with you. These sayings may be trite but they are true. And as you get older, you begin to wonder what it is you will leave the world in your wake.

I think of the old man who taught me the toilet paper parable and hope that when he reaches the end of his roll, he’ll at least go with the peace of mind that he’s left in his wake something that will last.

Someday I hope to join him. I hope in the end we all will....
PreK3 – 8th Grade

“I cannot thank you enough for FSA during this time of turmoil. I have no doubt that my daughter will come out of this experience with little to no detriment to her education. It is a credit to all that you do! Your planning and communication in this time has been invaluable.”

– Friends School Parent

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Dear Members of the DHCA Community:

As we enter this new millennium, we are examining where we are in our work to support and strengthen our vibrant community. We are also seeking to more closely collaborate with our neighbors of all kinds including individual neighborhoods, organizations and community members in order to cultivate new and strengthen existing partnerships and, ultimately, to continuously improve.

To this end, we undertook a formal strategic planning process earlier this year, starting with a first phase we called a Listening Effort. We are grateful for the engagement of our community in participating in the survey, focus groups and interviews conducted as part of phase one; these have provided key inputs we needed to understand your priorities. It is particularly exciting to consider that today’s members will have played such an integral role in shaping the future of the DHCA over the next decade and beyond as we move forward into Phase II and III of strategic planning.

They enabled broader discussions and have surfaced a broad desire for DHCA to make a concerted effort to enhance communication. As we adapt to rapid changes in technology and its potential for improved communication, we must manage this growth and look for ways in which we can use this technology to make us more efficient and effective.

Phase II in strategic planning has been a slow start due to COVID-19 with communities working from home, homeschooling children, sharing cramped living spaces, caring for sick family members, or all the above. Many people are experiencing much more difficult situations than this. However, the DHCA board has worked hard to get familiar with videoconferencing and get back to work in our new environment.

Theisen Consulting did impressive work facilitating the first vision sessions in August moving into Phase I, and with every step we grow increasingly excited about our future. Together through our continued work we will develop an Action Plan to drive achievement of the Goals and Metrics we define as most important and ultimately shape the final plan.

The COVID-19 pandemic also poses a unique challenge for many nonprofit organizations at a critical time in their annual work and governance cycles. Nonprofits are being forced to reschedule or cancel annual meetings. Virtual meetings allow all Georgia nonprofits to comply with the legal requirements to hold annual meetings while also protecting public health from further spread; therefore, the Governance Committee is planning a rescheduled 2020 Annual Meeting to be held on October 21, 2020 via videoconferencing. Please stay tuned and we will update you with the details. Please email governance@druidhills.org with questions.

Governance is committed to working with the DHCA over the next few months to drive completion, communication and implementation of the strategic planning process and resulting new Mission, Vision, Goals and Plan. We also encourage our neighbors to take ownership of the upcoming new plan by getting involved. We hope you will join us in supporting our efforts in supporting our community. Most importantly, our gratitude goes to the hundreds of members of our community who helped shape this vision. We can make a difference—together.

So why are we waiting until 2022? It gives us time to plan. It gives us time to engage and recruit new thinkers, doers and fun volunteers. AND, we have the extra bonus of tapping into the national celebration, already in its early planning stages, for the 200th birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. as the backdrop! As co-chair with Bonnie Wolf, we are implementing new ideas and methods and are committed to making the 2022 tour the biggest and most exciting tour to date.

If you are looking for ways to engage with your neighbors, share your talents, or just your energy, and be a part of a long-standing tradition AND a huge national celebration, please reach out to me, Sue Sullivan SueSullivan721@gmail.com or Bonnie Wolf BonnieWolf@harrynorman.com to learn about the different committees, job descriptions and time commitments. And if you have ideas for us, let us know! Our next meeting is September 24, 2020, 4:00-5:30. RSVP to Sue or Bonnie and come join us.

We promise it will be a fun and memorable experience for you and our neighborhood!
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PROUD DESIGNERS OF THE 2020 ATLANTA SYMPHONY SHOWHOUSE
Legislative RoundUp

Compiled by Fran Putney

Druid Hills News asked the three state legislators who represent our community to speak about the 2020 Legislative session and look ahead to 2021. Our thanks to Representatives Becky Evans (District 83) and Mary Margaret Oliver (District 82) and Senator Elena Parent (District 42) for sharing their perspectives. Some responses have been edited for space considerations.

Describe the unusual way this legislative session played out this year and the challenges it presented.

Elena Parent:

This was a Session like none other. In the State Senate, at least 6 senators contracted COVID-19, and there are others who are rumored to have been infected but were not public about it. I supported the suspension of the Legislative Session and Governor Kemp’s Declaration of a State of Public Health Emergency. When the Session resumed, most Senators chose to wear masks, and there was some ability to social distance, but masks and social distancing were not required the way they were in the House of Representatives. The pandemic has punched a big hole in Georgia’s budget, and there were huge cuts made to almost all aspects of state government, including almost $1 billion from public education. The only silver lining was that the budgetary woes caused us to drop some bad legislation that had passed before the state of emergency, like an additional tax cut mostly benefiting wealthy Georgians and a voucher bill that would have further drained the coffers of public education.

Mary Margaret Oliver:

The 2020 Session, which finally ended June 26 after an unprecedented suspension based on the COVID virus from March 12 to June 15, was the strangest and most uncertain resulting in limited productivity of my long political career. The budget is the General Assembly’s only statutory required task. Fiscal year 2020 ended June 30, and we had to pass a budget for fiscal year 2021 prior to July 1 without real ability to predict revenues based on the collapse of the state and national economy. I serve on the Appropriations Committee and followed the state’s revenues on a daily basis in the last weeks of June as we tried to analyze an accurate budget proposal. I voted NO on the budget that came to the House floor based on the approximate $2 billion of cuts and the continuing refusal of the state’s Republican leadership to utilize federal money to expand Medicaid or raise Georgia’s tobacco tax, the third lowest in the nation. Since the Session, the 8th rural hospital, one in Cuthbert Georgia, was forced to close based on falling revenue, and as we know, the virus is expanding most significantly in rural areas. It was a stressful and difficult Session and discouraging in terms of making progress on several matters I have been hoping to address.

Becky Evans:

Just like life under the COVID 19 pandemic -- I would describe our session as crazy, uncertain, exhausting, unprecedented, surrealistic. Normally, session begins the second Monday of January, and after 40 legislative days, ends somewhere in late March or first week of April. Crossover Day, when a bill must pass at least one chamber, is usually day 28. This year, after Crossover on March 12, we adjourned thinking we would return in a few weeks, only to be called into a Special Session to declare a Public Health State of Emergency on March 16. We went into a “suspended session” lasting 14 weeks working from home, trying to get a grip on how the pandemic was affecting our communities, promoting good public health and safety, connecting unemployed people with our Department of Labor, working with state, county, school, and local leaders, and advocating for vote by mail for an election that was delayed twice! And I had a primary election challenger, so I was running a campaign without any in-person staff or volunteers, working remotely from my dining room.

I will always remember our return to the last 11 days of session, on Monday, June 15. The 180 house members were physically distanced across three rooms in the Capitol- and we were all required to wear masks. As Speaker Ralston spoke of the health and economic crises the pandemic was causing,
the unjust murder of Ahmaud Arbery, the stain on Georgia if we did not pass the Hate Crimes bill, the need to wear masks to protect our neighbor, we realized we could hear the chants of the Black Lives Matter peaceful protest outside reverberating through the windows. In the gallery corner, I was able to look out the window at the huge crowd below. The contrast between the closeness and intensity of being in a crowd peacefully protesting, to the distance—it was a successful effort based on the public (THANK YOU to all of you for your emails, phone calls, and peaceful protests!), and corporate interests, the majority party knew they HAD to pass this bill. The price we paid was the Hate Crimes vote in the House was contingent on HB 838 passing, which it did by a close margin (92, with 91 being a constitutional majority), giving first responders more protections. So at the time, the mood in the House was more subdued and bittersweet than celebratory. But ironically, HB 838 was created in such haste, and not well vetted, and may have unintended consequences of providing less severe sentencing if someone kills a police officer.

DeKalb Ethics Bill, HB 1243, with Senate substitute, passed the House, 159-0, and with 13 signatures! This is a good compromise bill that fixes the appointment process of the ethics board, keeps the Ethics Office strong and independent, and removes gifts from the procurement process. We ask you to pass this in referendum in November. Congratulations also to DeKalb Delegation Chair Karla Drenner for her leadership and shepherding the bill throughout the process! And thank you to our citizen advocates, especially DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council, for encouraging us and keeping us accountable.

Elena Parent: The happiest moment was when we passed the Hate Crimes bill. Georgia was one of only 4 states without a hate crimes statute, due to the first attempt from 20 years ago being ruled unconstitutional, and then languished in the Senate, and I do not believe that it would have passed without the tragic death of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick. This debate also dragged in “hate crimes” against the police. While I admit that at times rhetoric can get overheated, I feel that comparing “discrimination” against the police to actual, state-sponsored historical discrimination against minority racial, ethnic and religious groups is unfounded. The Republican majority passed HB 838, which is legislation purporting to protect the first responders from “bias motivated intimidation,” due to their base’s opinion that the police are being discriminated against. There was some hope that Gov. Kemp might veto it because it was poorly written and may have significant unintended consequences, but no such luck.

The budget was the other huge issue. Even before Covid-19, we were facing a budgetary shortfall. There is no end in sight currently, and without further support from the federal government, this will be a very difficult period for Georgians to get through. Key programs from mental health to education to the court system are implementing cuts.
The state budget and the financial cuts for services that I fear will again be required. How and when will our economy recover? When will be pay for education and expand Medicaid to take advantage of federal funds? Budget projections will continue to be very difficult to predict.

I will again be working on criminal justice reform legislation: 1) To expand Juvenile Court jurisdiction to include 17 year-olds so that Georgia will exit the list of only three states to prosecute all 17 year-olds, who are legally minors, as adults for all criminal offenses. About 6,500 17 year-olds are arrested each year, about 2/3 are for misdemeanors, and all are treated as adults, given mug shots, placed in adult jails, and prosecuted as adults. 2) Pass repeal of citizens arrest statutes, and I was a cosponsor of HB 1203 which is a repeal statute that is receiving positive work. Since Sine Die we have had two hearings on 1203.

HB 756, which I am co-sponsor, requires that all ponds receiving coal ash be lined, and as a Board member of the Altamaha Riverkeeper and our work relating to Plant Scherer in Juliette Georgia, I will bring this issue back in 2021. A class action lawsuit was recently filed in Fulton Superior Court by Juliette citizens against Georgia Power alleging damage to their well water based on leakage from Plant Scherer’s 786-acre unlined coal ash pond.

Final thoughts.

Becky Evans:

I am proud of DeKalb County, City of Decatur, Beacon Hill Black Alliance, Judge Seliger, and the hundreds, if not thousands of social justice advocates whose efforts led to the removal of the Confederate Obelisk in downtown Decatur on June 18. Our nation’s history of racism is intolerable. I am also grateful that a marker to honor the four known victims of lynching in DeKalb was installed in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse on May 14. I am a member of the Druid Hills group of the DeKalb Remembrance Project, to honor the life of Porter Turner Jr, who was killed in a racial terror lynching in Druid Hills in 1945. A marker has been approved by the City of Atlanta and Olmsted Linear Park Alliance to go in the linear park across from St. John’s Lutheran’s church. We hope to have a ceremony installing the marker this fall. We are also planning other opportunities for learning about our hard history and working for racial reconciliation and justice in Druid Hills.

Mary Margaret Oliver:

I am privileged to serve HD 82, and thank you for your vote and support. I have been a member of the Druid Hills Civic Association for decades—thank you DHCA volunteers! I send legislative email newsletters regularly, and you can sign up for my newsletters and read past additions on my web site www.marymargaretoliver.org. I also invite you to follow my Facebook page: Mary Margaret Oliver House District 82. In my newsletter I ask how you would vote on specific issues that are before the House, and your participation is very helpful. And please email me anytime at mmo@mmolaw.com or call me at my Decatur law office, 440 377 0485. I grew up on Oakdale Road and live on Burlington Road now, am a lifetime resident of our beautiful neighborhood. The November 3, 2020 election, as with all elections, will change our state’s political participants and direction. Please join us at the Capitol - I need your help!

Elena Parent:

It is such an honor to serve my own neighbors in the State Senate! Please email me at elena@elenaarent.com if you wish to sign up to receive my newsletter, The Parent Press. I also think that the AJC’s Political Insider blog is a good read for Georgia political junkies.
OLMSTED 200: Looking Toward 2022
By Alida Silverman

Olmsted 200 is the celebration of the Olmsted legacy across the United States and Canada.

As introduced in the March Druid Hills News issue, it is set for the bicentennial of Frederick Law Olmsted’s birth in 2022. Central Park Conservancy is planning a Big Birthday Party event in Central Park where it all began on the actual day, April 26th. Here in Druid Hills, we will have the Tour Gala at Callanwolde that evening leading up to a Grand Tour of Homes & Gardens.

The mask image accompanying this article shows Frederick Law Olmsted as he looked when he came to see the 1400 plus acres that Joel Hurt had assembled for his “ideal residential suburb” just to the northeast of Inman Park, Atlanta’s first suburb. In 1890 Olmsted was nearing the end of his career and working in Asheville, North Carolina, on Mr. Vanderbilt’s Biltmore estate.

By 1893, Joel Hurt had a concept plan for what became our neighborhood (with some subsequent subdivisions inspired by the original).

The Druid Hills Civic Association and the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance have begun planning for 2022. Olmsted landscape steward organizations across the country are - or will be - doing the same. Event volunteers have already assembled about a dozen groups within Druid Hills to participate as they see fit. Stay tuned! Look for a way to get involved!

Callanwolde Survives to Serve
By Andrew Keenan, Callanwolde Executive Director

Many of my friends in the neighborhood have asked me, “How’s Callanwolde doing?” - which is a nice way of inquiring about whether we are going to survive this crisis. So far, Callanwolde is doing okay, thanks in large part to prior year successes that set the stage for a strong start this year. We are trying everything we can think of to raise money, including offering what we call “Solo Studio Time” and virtual classes.

Moving forward, I have one simple goal: “Survive to Serve”; in other words, outlive the pandemic so we can continue to provide the high level of arts instruction and historic inspiration that has made Callanwolde an integral part of our neighborhood for the past 40+ years.

If you think Callanwolde is valuable to our community and would like to ensure our survival, there are a number of ways you can participate:

**Jazz on the Lawn**

Concerts will be held this year, with many added precautionary measures. Our outdoor Amphitheater normally holds 550 guests, but this season we will limit ticket sales to 230. On the lawn, each party will have their own “pod” to sit in, distanced six feet from other parties. VIP tables will also be six feet apart. Masks will be required of guests when not in their pods or at tables. The five-concert series starts August 14 and runs through October 9.

**Masked Soiree**

When guests are required to wear masks, why not make them elegant and artistic? This October 17th fundraising event will take advantage of our beautiful outdoor Amphitheater, and ticket sales will be limited to 100 guests to assure at least six feet between tables. The amazing vocalist Karla Harris will be performing. We are predicting a spectacular evening of dining, fine wine, music, auction competition and friendship—all under our beautiful, Atlanta starlit sky. Please contact me if you wish to receive an invitation to this special event (akeenan@callanwolde.org).

**100th Anniversary History Tour**

This may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience what the 27,000 sq. ft. mansion looked like when the Candlers lived at Callanwolde. Thanks to Emory University we hope to display most of the Candler furniture they acquired back in 1959, after they took possession of Callanwolde. This will be the first (and possibly only) time these furnishings will be on public display. A limited number of small guided tours will be held November 27 through December 6, 2020.

**Give**

Donations, at any level, are always welcome. If you wish to give online, you may go to our website: Callanwolde.org. Checks can be sent to 980 Briarcliff Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

Please know the entire Callanwolde staff and Board of Directors will leave no stone unturned to ensure our wonderful organization does survive. Thanks for your support, past and future.
Druid Hills Railroad Bridge Update
By Alida Silverman

Over the last few years, we have been reporting about the nearly 110-year old CSX bridge over Ponce that marks the entrance to and exit from our neighborhood (“Help Transform Unsightly CSX Bridge over Ponce” in the November 2017 Druid Hills News and “Gateway Bridge or Eyesore?” in the March 2018 issue).

Here is a good news update: The Ponce CSX bridge has just had a Condition Assessment Report. Help is on the way!

DHCA and OLPA, along with a trio of enthusiasts, came together to pay for this necessary first step of restoration and rehabilitation. Charles Lawrence, architectural conservator/materials specialist with Lord Aeck Sargent, did the assessment with the aid of a structural engineer.

Called our “Eastern gateway” by Gale Walldorff, the Druid Hills railroad bridge over Ponce was built in 1911. It is a reinforced-concrete, closed spandrel arch bridge (and so much more: read the Physical Description section of the Report on the DHCA website to get the full picture). This type of bridge design evokes the old stone bridges, entirely appropriate for an Olmsted-designed subdivision. Our bridge is among the oldest of its kind in the Georgia Historical Bridge inventory and one of only a few with decorative detail. The triangles that say “Druid Hills” make the bridge eminently special.

Recommendations for treatment focus on careful cleaning and repair. Division 2 Chair Yvette Weatherly, who has been an active participant in this project, has been communicating with our GDOT district engineer about alternative placement of the GDOT signage. Doug Rollins spearheaded the search for the right entity to do a condition assessment report and has met with our DeKalb district commissioner Jeff Rader who considers the bridge project suitable for SPLOST funding. Perhaps after years of looking at that bridge and thinking that something must be done, the stars are at last lining up for a fine outcome.

Emory Welcomes President Gregory L. Fenves

Contributed by Emory University

On August 1, Emory University welcomed its 21st president, Gregory L. Fenves, to campus and to his new position. Fenves comes to Emory from the University of Texas (UT) at Austin where he had been president since 2015. During a 12-year tenure at UT, Fenves served first as dean of the Cockrell School of Engineering, ranked among the top 10 engineering schools in the US, then as provost, and ultimately as president.

Fenves assumes the presidency from Claire Sterk, who announced her retirement as president in November.

Under his leadership, the university recruited world-class faculty while retaining an impressive network of current faculty, broadened cross-disciplinary research, and significantly increased extramural research funding.

A core priority for Fenves was diversity and inclusion among the UT Austin community, beginning with the successful defense of the use of race and ethnicity as a factor in admission decisions in the 2016 US Supreme Court ruling Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin. That landmark decision upheld the educational benefits of diversity in higher education.

Fenves played a central role in UT Austin’s being the first top-tier university in almost 50 years to build an academic medical center from the ground up with the founding of the Dell Medical School, which has become a key partner for communities throughout Austin.

Fenves earned a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University and a master’s degree and PhD from the University of California (UC), Berkeley, all in civil engineering.

In 2008 he was named dean of UT Austin’s Cockrell School of Engineering. He was named provost in 2013 and president in 2015.

For his groundbreaking research in earthquake engineering and academic leadership, Fenves was elected in 2014 to the National Academy of Engineering, the highest recognition for an engineer in the United States.

Fenves is married to Carmel Martinez Fenves. They have two adult daughters, a son-in-law, and one granddaughter, all of whom live in Austin.

President and Mrs. Fenves live on campus in Lullwater House, the University’s presidential home since 1963, located in Lullwater Preserve.

Public Safety Committee Update

By Doug Rollins

As a follow up to the Public Safety article published in the last newsletter, the DHCA Public Safety Committee wanted to provide a critical reminder regarding the FLOCK camera systems that were installed as part of City of Atlanta grant in 2018.

That FLOCK license will expire in October and those 11 cameras will be removed from Fairview, Oakdale, Lullwater and Springdale. Residents on those streets will need to pick up the contracting and payment process directly with FLOCK if they wish to maintain coverage.

The current rate is $4,000 per camera/year or $4,000 to cover both ends of a street segment. The organizers of private FLOCK contracts on Cornell and Oxford tell us that the annual cost per resident varies from $88-$120 per year depending on the number of homes.

Please reach out to pubicsafety@druidhills.org if you have questions about the efficacy of FLOCK or the other prevention strategies used in Druid Hills including Neighborhood Watch and the Druid Hills Patrol.
COVID-19 Affects Emory Village
By Megan Walter (high school intern)

Since March 13, the coronavirus pandemic has imposed a historic metamorphosis on Emory Village. Once well-worn sidewalks pave the way to temporarily closed restaurants and stores, and vacant parking lots leave only the bravest cars to bake under Georgia’s summer sun. Occasionally, village-goers simply walk up to the doors of their favorite restaurants, toting children and over-walked dogs, and remember what once was—all of the Mother’s Day brunches at Rise-n-Dine, the before-school excursions to CVS to pick up that gift card for that friend’s birthday you forgot, and the weekends spent lounging in Ali’s Cookies.

Todd Hill, chair of the Emory Village Alliance (EVA), comments on EVA’s stance on the pandemic-plagued village. In one of EVA’s more recent successes, Hill reflected on local graduates’ drive-through celebration when EVA posted a banner celebrating the spring graduates, and Emory Villagers cheered on the parade of graduates as they drove through Emory Village.

Since then, EVA continues its observation of village life. “Within the Village,” Hill says, “the palpable impact of COVID-19 is the economic devastation of the businesses.” EVA, however, remains loyal to the struggling enterprises—“We are patronizing the businesses ourselves,” Hill says, “and are encouraging the broader community to do the same.”

Hill reports that “EVA shifted to online monthly meetings, which are working reasonably well.” Virtually, EVA “is continuously working to improve the Village on behalf of all of its users,” Hill said, “by work days, lighting the roundabout trees, keeping the plaza fountain clean and operational, maintaining the streetscape plantings, working with the county to install a pedestrian crosswalk signal, and our upcoming streetlight banner campaign.

Despite the ongoing health crisis, Hill reported that the Alliance still plans to host the annual Open Streets event. “The 8th Annual Open Streets Emory Village will be a hybrid series of activities held both virtually and in the Village,” Hill says, adding that EVA is considering starting a fundraising effort that would be associated with the Open Streets Emory Village event which may benefit businesses.

And, while EVA may be planning a host of village-life improvements, it’s definitely not giving up on Emory Village. “As we continue to live the new normal,” Hill says, “we will seek ways to help businesses and keep the Village a vibrant community center—including more social media outreach, focused highlight’s on specific businesses, and acknowledgement of the healthcare providers in our community.”

Emory Village Alliance is on Instagram: Feel free to post your photos to @emoryvillage or @myemoryvillage.

South Fork Conservancy Honors Jeff Rader
By Julie Ralston

DeKalb County District 2 Commissioner and Druid Hills resident Jeff Rader recently received South Fork Conservancy’s 2020 Trailblazer Award in recognition of his efforts to preserve and promote trails and parks along the South Fork of Peachtree Creek.

The Trailblazer Award honors someone who has championed the rich, natural habitat and recreation opportunities surrounding the South Fork, which runs through DeKalb County and the City of Atlanta. Commissioner Rader has been a long-time advocate for the South Fork, including providing pivotal support and leadership in creating Zonolite Park, a former industrial brownfield that is now a jewel of the SFC park and trail system.

“Commissioner Rader has been a force for good in working with South Fork Conservancy. From the cleanup and transformation of Zonolite Park, to assistance in the restoration of the South Fork segment running through Mason Mill Park, he has supported our efforts really at every turn,” said SFC Executive Director Kimberly Estep.

Accepting the award, Rader said, “The South Fork is the heart and soul of my commission district, and one of the places that I have taken pleasure in during this period of social distancing and staying closer to home. I salute the powerful vision of South Fork Conservancy to make this creek part of the public realm for all of people who live here,” he said.

To date, South Fork Conservancy has completed five miles of trails, including catalyzing the development of three parks, along Peachtree Creek’s South Fork. On Friday, August 21 the SFC celebrated a major organizational and community milestone in installing a 175-foot Confluence pedestrian bridge connection to trails along the South and North forks of Peachtree Creek. The bridge was lifted into place by one of the largest cranes in north America.

This $2 million landmark project will provide access to acres of new greenspace in an urban community ranked as a “High Need” area for park access by the Trust for Public Land.

This state-of-the-art bridge lies northwest of I-85 between Piedmont Road and Lindbergh Drive. In addition to connecting nearby neighborhoods to trails and parkland, it will also provide linkages to two regional trails—PATH400 and eventually the Atlanta BeltLine.

For more information about South Fork Conservancy, please visit www.southforkconservancy.org.
School News

Fernbank Elementary School

By Dana Borda

Over the summer, Fernbank Elementary managed to hold a very successful virtual promotion celebration for our 5th graders, who have moved on to middle school. Parents, grandparents, and friends were able to attend online and watch this great group of kids be recognized. We also said goodbye to some retiring staff members and welcomed some new teachers who are joining our Fernbank family.

In July, the DeKalb County School District Board of Education voted to start the school year on August 17 with virtual learning, due to rising levels of COVID-19. We dearly miss seeing our students’ faces and meeting new friends in person, but we know this will not be forever! While this has certainly been a different way to start the school year, our parents, students, and teachers are adjusting to meeting new teachers and classmates online and learning how to make the technology work. Our teachers spent many summer days learning new online teaching skills and virtual classroom management techniques to make virtual learning as easy and effective as possible. We look forward to seeing everyone back in the building as soon as health and safety permit. As always, we thank the Druid Hills community for supporting Fernbank during this challenging time in our history!

SPARK

Compiled from SPARK E-News

School started for SPARK students on Monday, August 24. In advance of the start of school, teachers and administrators discussed instructional expectations in a virtual setting and sent out a technology survey to all SPARK families to ensure that they have the necessary equipment for a successful start to the school year. Virtual town halls via Zoom were conducted with parents during the week of August 10 to convey important information and allow parents to ask questions.

Druid Hills High School

Submitted by Mala Sharma

Back to school looks a little different than it has in the past. The halls may be quiet, but the virtual classrooms are full of excitement for the new school year. The Red Devils welcomed the freshmen class of 2024 with a virtual orientation and town hall. Students and teachers are beginning the school year in a distance learning/virtual setting for at least four weeks and will assess on a rolling basis. Druid Hills High School and DeKalb County School District made considerable changes to the virtual plans and expectations for teachers and students for virtual learning this fall. Faculty and staff wait to welcome the students back to the halls and face-to-face learning until it is safe to do so. Students signed up for a variety of activities, clubs and sports on Virtual Red Devil Day on August 13. It’s important for both students and parents to find ways to connect with the school, so consider volunteering or joining a committee to help DHHS PTO. We look forward to communicating with you in a few months. Things may look very different by then.

Paideia School

Submitted by Anne Dukes

Five Paideia eighth graders were among six national winners in the Nicholas A. Virgilio Haiku and Senryu Competition for grades 7-12. The winners were chosen from over 3,000 entries.

Senior Robin James was named the Georgia winner of the National Federation of State High School Associations Heart of the Arts Award. The award was created in 2013 to recognize individuals who exemplify the positive ideals of performing arts and who have overcome adversity or gone above and beyond their peers.

Junior Vinson Martin was named an Atlanta regional winner of the Positive Athlete Award, given by a national organization founded by former NFL player Hines Ward to recognize high school athletes for their athletic ability as well as their positive and supportive attitude for their teammates and sports. Vinson plays soccer and basketball.

Ben Franklin Academy

Submitted by Angela Cassidy

The Ben Franklin Academy reopened on August 6 carefully following guidelines provided by the CDC and other public health agencies to address and promote the safety, health, and welfare of our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ben Franklin Academy has specialized in Mastery Education and individualized education for 33 years and has always offered small classes of 4-6 students per teacher. During this time, our student to teacher ratio will be even lower to facilitate social distancing. Moreover, we have divided our students into two cohorts, with each cohort of students based in just one building as BFA follows the “Bubble Scenario” for the well-being of faculty and students.

Ben Franklin Academy is offering two options for learning this year. In Option 1, a student will resume on-campus classes. A hybrid learning approach will combine in-person and distance learning. While still physically on campus, students will Zoom in for classes that are not taught in their building and attend in-person classes that are held in their building. Option 2 offers a remote learning experience. In accordance with public health guidelines, until further notice, no in-person clubs, sports, and/or activities, though virtual Cross Country and few virtual activities will be offered in fall.
Druid Hills Middle School Gets New Athletic Fields

By Adam Francois Watkins

While students and teachers switched to virtual learning in the spring, construction crews were busy making improvements at Druid Hills Middle School (DHMS). Work started on brand-new athletic fields, including a synthetic turf soccer/football field, all-weather competition track surface, widened cross-country course, new fencing and new lighting. Once it is safe to resume in-person learning, the students will be happy to be together again and take advantage of these state-of-the-art resources.

It is not just facility improvements that have been catching the community’s notice. Under the leadership of Principal Jacqueline Taylor, DHMS has experienced a renaissance in recent years, with Fernbank Elementary School now contributing more students than any other feeder school. In the last two years, the DHMS Math Team finished first place and second place, respectively, in the regional MathCounts competition. DHMS students have also received state and national recognition this year in writing and dance choreography.

The middle school uses the same acclaimed International Baccalaureate (IB) program that our neighborhood students began at Fernbank. This IB approach encourages skills vital to today’s students and workplaces, including collaboration, academic risk-taking, and intellectual curiosity, all in the setting of our wonderfully diverse community.

Learn more about the exciting developments at Druid Hills Middle School by visiting the PTSA webpage at DruidHillsMiddle.com, where you can also sign up for our weekly Dragon News delivered right to your inbox.

Historic Preservation and Druid Hills: COAs

This is the second article of an ongoing feature (see June 2020 issue) and also focuses on the City of Atlanta local Druid Hills Landmark District. Remember: “national designation identifies and local designation protects.”

All of us Druid Hills neighbors are familiar with the red (City) and yellow (County) signs giving notice that a property is up for a hearing of a COA – Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Exterior changes to homes and properties require a COA: large, small and in-between changes. Why? To protect the ‘look’ of Druid Hills. To make sure that changes are appropriate and in keeping with the elements that give Druid Hills its identity.

The City of Atlanta has 5 different types of COAs depending on the changes:

- **Type I** – This COA is unique to Landmark Districts. (Druid Hills is one of 4 City neighborhood landmark districts.) It is solely for in-kind repair or in-kind replacement of roofs, windows, exterior doors, and certain kinds of paving e.g. driveways and walkways. It is handled administratively - no hearing before the Urban Design Commission (UDC). Fee: $10.

- **Type II** – For changes to facades of structures and to landscape visible from right of way, goes to the UDC for a hearing and decision. Fee: $100.

- **Type IIA** – The newest one, this COA is for fences, walls, retaining walls, and new paving not visible from the right of way. It is handled administratively - no hearing before the Urban Design Commission (UDC). Fee: $10.

- **Type III** – For additions to structures and for new structures whether a house or accessory structure. It goes to the UDC for a hearing and decision. Fee: $100 (additions); $200 (new structures).

- **Type IV** – This COA is for demolition of an historic structure. There are 2 kinds based on the argument for demolition: unreasonable economic return and threat to public health and safety. Both require extensive paperwork (outlined in Chapter 20 of the City zoning ordinance). In the case of the economic return argument, an expert panel is also convened and made up of one individual named by the applicant, one by the UDC, and one by these 2 appointees. Fee: $200 for unreasonable economic return; $100 for health/safety.

The Historic Preservation section of the DHCA website offers detailed information about COAs and the COA process of the City via links to the Landmark District ordinance and the UDC. DHCA has both a City and a County committee set up to help neighbors and to stand up for the City Landmark District regulations and the County Guidelines. Two governmental jurisdictions, two approaches to protection, two different commissions -- but one goal.

The following is a list of the LDPC’s current member: Sally Cohen, Justin Critz, Jan Jones, Betsy Marvin, Tom Newsome, Jennie Richardson, Carol Sleeth, Alida Silverman and Joanna Stroud.
Freedom Park Conservancy Selects Firm for Master Plan

Contributed by Freedom Park Conservancy

The Freedom Park Conservancy announces the selection of the Houston-based studio of SWA Group for development of a master plan of Freedom Park. It has been almost 30 years since the original master plan forged this park from the remnants of a freeway right-of-way, along with The Carter Center and The King Center, into a vision of a cohesive open space for Atlanta. Now is the time to continue the vision and expand the potential of Freedom Park for the 21st century.

“As we imagine the next generation of Freedom Park, we sought a consulting firm that offered both broad experience and an exciting vision commensurate with the richness of this singular place,” says David Hamilton, Master Plan Coordinator. “SWA Group was clearly that firm.” The award-winning landscape architecture consultancy is known for the design of bespoke parks and open spaces all over the world –– from New York to California to China. Tapping into a site’s particular history and possibility is a hallmark of SWA’s design. Their design for Houston’s Buffalo Bayou Park transformed what had been an abandoned waterway into an iconic urban park that integrates art and recreation, links the city’s neighborhoods and all the while doubles as part of the city’s flood protection. Today, the park is a defining aspect of Houston’s identity.

About Atlanta and Freedom Park, SWA principal and designer Natalia Beard expressed her excitement in working on such a culturally important site in the center of a city characterized by rolling topography and a lush arboreal cover. “Atlanta’s Freedom Park is more about a ‘state of mind’ than a spatial concept, like the Beltline,” said Beard.

The site’s historical underpinnings tie to important events and people from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement and whose physical form resulted from coalesced strips of land once intended for a freeway. “Public reclamation is central to this place. How can the park better connect the surrounding neighborhoods? How can this ‘art park’ find contemporary expression? How can design offer different perceptions of the land and the history that has shaped it? How to tap into residents’ hopes and dreams for this place? We are excited to engage with the Conservancy and the City of Atlanta, and the full range of stakeholders, to answer these questions in the master plan.”

The master plan process for Freedom Park will launch on September 17 with a focus on broad reaching public participation and consensus building. Input from the community will be foundational to how the master plan evolves. Both Freedom Park Conservancy and SWA look forward to a full range of tools and opportunities for citizen engagement and input towards realizing this important plan for the future of Freedom Park.
Frazer Center Reopens

By Dina Shadwell

After being closed for eleven weeks during March, April and May, Frazer Center is back in operation, albeit not at full capacity. As you might imagine, the journey has been something of an obstacle course. But we are facing those obstacles and working on finding our way so we can continue to provide our life-changing inclusion programs to the adults, children, and families we serve.

At the beginning of June, we welcomed back a limited number of children whose parents are first-responders. In mid-June, we added a few more families, and in July, all Children’s Program classrooms were back in use. We are fortunate to have several epidemiology experts and medical professionals among our parents at Frazer, many of whom were willing to serve as an advisory committee as Frazer leadership faced decisions about new protocols and reopening. Additionally, we are meticulously following guidance from the CDC and the Department for Early Childhood and Learning (DECAL).

Communication with parents has been critical in our decision-making, and we are so grateful for the support they have shown us. One parent whose daughter has autism remarked, “Frazer should be a model for other schools. I’ve always thought that but now it goes a step beyond as you are skillfully, communicatively, and transparently navigating these uncharted territories utilizing what are probably the most knowledgeable medical advisors an organization could have. Since [my daughter] has been back at Frazer she is THRIVING.”

Our Adult Services Program began its phased reopening in July with the return of over 20 of our 80 participants. The phased approach is allowing for staff and participants alike to become accustomed to the new health and safety protocols. More participants will return in August and September.

Since much of our programming is community-based, Adult Program Director Bill Payne and his staff are re-examining options for providing services, including virtual learning. A grant from Holly Lane Foundation allowed for the purchase of several new Chromebooks, and many participants are learning to navigate their way through Zoom and other applications that will keep them connected to their communities.

In Cator Woolford Gardens, almost all of the events that were slated for the spring have been rescheduled. We now offer elopement packages for “mini-” or “micro-weddings” and have had some lovely events with plenty of space for guests to feel comfortable.

Every day may bring new challenges, and the future may be tenuous, but one thing remains certain—Frazer could not get through these trying times without the support of our community. We are grateful to our participants, families, staff, neighbors, and donors who remain committed to Frazer’s mission of fostering inclusive communities.

If you would like to donate to Frazer’s Flourish Fund which provides financial assistance to families who have been economically impacted by the pandemic and associated budget cuts by the State of Georgia, please visit frazercenter.org/give. For more information about event rentals, please email cwginfo@frazercenter.org or visit catorwoolfordgardens.org.
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