



## Deer Tracks

### Deerbrook Home Owners Association Newsletter February 2006

**Spring Yard Sale:** Mark your calendar for April 22<sup>nd</sup> as the date for the annual Deerbrook Spring Yard Sale! The sale hours will be from 9 to 2. Signs will go up by the 16<sup>th</sup> on the main street entrances to the neighborhood. All you need to do to participate is open your garage door and put out your wares you wish to sell by 9 a.m. Remember some “early bird” yard salers may show up before the 9 a.m. start time despite the signs, and start making offers. It is your yard sale, so don’t feel pressured to open earlier than you planned. Feel free to politely make your desires known.

The Board also wanted to share the number to the American Kidney Fund, 770-441-2220 this year for those who wish to donate any leftover items not sold. Call the night of the yard sale for Monday pickup. Put all items in boxes or bags marked “AKF” and place on the porch or driveway. It’s usually possible to get someone to come by Monday to pick them up. If you want a receipt for items donated simply request one when calling and it will be left for you. The Salvation Army also picks up some items for donation but has more limitations on what they’ll accept. You can reach the local Salvation Army in Lawrenceville at 770-963-8802 for details on their donation pickup program.

**Neighbors Helping Neighbors Report:** Another reminder for members that community starts with the people next to you, and building communities takes only a small gesture like making dinner for a neighbor. Recently one of our neighbors had a brief hospitalization, and afterward received some assistance with a few timely meals from the Deerbrook NHN volunteers. The family was grateful for the helping hand and the volunteers had the satisfaction of helping their neighbors catch some much-needed rest.

If you know of a neighbor that may need some friendly assistance or a helping hand contact Teri Parkman 770-931-7108, or if she is unavailable, Debbie Jacobson at 770-925-0871. They will then coordinate the assistance from volunteers. If you wish to volunteer specific services please call Teri or Debbie as well. Thanks to Deerbrook members, NHN is a big success.

**Crime Watch:** There has been one report of a break-in at the Hubbs’ home on Deerbrook Way on Friday afternoon February 17<sup>th</sup>. The back door of was forced open when the family was away, and electronics were taken. Jeff plans to get sturdier doors and doorframes installed, and encourages others to do the same. He is still considering

other measures as well. Another neighbor wonders if anyone has a good burglar alarm system they are happy with and would recommend to others. In the meantime, if you see questionable activity or a crime in progress, call 911 immediately and report it. Please feel free to call Board members as well, so that we can alert others as needed. Thank you.

**DHOA Membership Dues:** Letters were mailed out to those members who had not yet paid their yearly dues of \$40.00 this year. Thanks to those of you who responded by sending in your payment to the treasurer. If you still have not paid your dues for 2006 you can still drop off your check in the mailbox of the Treasurer, Brian Swinkola at 4163 Deerbrook Way.

**Dues Increase Proposed:** DHOA dues are very low currently at \$40.00 per year. They have been raised once in the 21 years of the homeowners association back in 2002 when the annual fee went from \$35 to \$40.00 a year. The Board has determined that we are in need of another dues increase in order to continue providing upkeep and lighting for the front entrance, pay for street lighting, continue our neighborhood activities, and increase our emergency reserve fund for unexpected future expenditures. In addition, some of the money will need to go for the front entrance sign (see next article.)

DHOA volunteers have offered free labor and many types of in-kind contributions to keep costs low over the years; for instance, by hand-assembling our directories, contributing all sorts of materials and supplies, comparison-shopping for copying costs and other services, planting and landscaping the flower beds at the front entrance, cutting trees on the common property, and much more. Unfortunately, it is clear that people are more pressed for time than ever, and it is hard to say how long we can count on generous souls like these to be able to continue donating their time and work. The worrisome part is when something needs to be done and there are no other options due to lack of funds.

Clearly, prices for everything have gone up more than 14% in the past 25 years—in fact, they've risen that much since 1999. At the upcoming May General Meeting, the membership will have a chance to take a vote on raising our yearly dues. Right now, the Board is looking at proposing the dues be set at \$60 per year. Please consider the costs of similar neighborhoods and their Association dues, and come to the General Meeting with your thought and ideas. It is **your** homeowners association. Your participation is vital.

**Front Entrance Sign:** Deerbrook will have a fairly large expense in the coming months. Our wooden sign up front is cracked and, according to some, looks a bit too “eighties.” The Board has requested quotes from 6 different sign vendors for both repair and replacement of the sign, just to get an idea of how much money these options might cost. We will need to replace the sign in the front entrance soon, though we are hoping the one we have will last until we have enough money to handle it. The sign is 20 years old or more now and starting to show its age. It was repaired 3 years ago, when the crack became a full split, and the lighting had to be repaired (again) in January.

**The Board is very interested in hearing members' ideas for what a new sign should look like.** Please email us at [mail@deerbrookhoa.org](mailto:mail@deerbrookhoa.org), or call any Board member listed on the back of this newsletter with your ideas. The Board would also like to hear your ideas on how we can best finance this new sign.

**Welcome New Neighbors!** This issue we send a warm DHOA welcome to John, Christie, Scarlett, and Eden Johnson, who moved in at 4142 Deerbrook Way in December. Soon after, they gained a new family member, Anna. Congratulations!

A big welcome to Mark, Anna, and Erik Bouzyk, who just moved in at 1395 Rustlewood Court. Their dog Spider is welcome too—we're happy to report that he appears to be enjoying his doggie neighbors so far.

Yasin Muhaimin is our newest resident at 1394 Rustlewood Court. He's told us he's from Louisiana, and further says that it's okay to mention that he's single. He mentioned he was thinking of getting a dog, maybe so he can fit in with the rest of us in the cul-de-sac (we think he's joking...but everyone else on Rustlewood does indeed have a dog.) Welcome, Yasin!

And finally, Bill and Beth Dunn got a lovely addition to their family last month: Allison Ruth, 8 pounds 3 ounces. We hope she likes it here!

**Deerbrook's Garden Club** had its first meeting earlier this month, and plans to set up a "clean up the front entrance" day in early spring, maybe combined with a plant swap. Watch your mailbox for the announcement. If you are interested in participating, or have any questions about Deerbrook's Garden Club, call Mark Ackerman at 770 925-8207.

**Yard of the Month for This Month** goes to the Stotts at 4123 Deerbrook Way. What we all want to know is, how do you keep it looking that good in February?

**DHOA Board Activities:** The Board is a group of volunteer residents who are elected by DHOA members. Each one signs up to serve the community for a year at a time in some capacity. In addition to keeping the bills paid, organizing meetings and activities, being sure the front entry is maintained, responding to problems in the neighborhood, publishing newsletters, maintaining our website, and following up with the County to ensure enforcement of County Ordinances, we are always looking for new ideas to improve our community and enhance our property values. We would like to hear from residents about new ideas for the community. Contact information is on the back, or email us from our website at [www.deerbrookhoa.org](http://www.deerbrookhoa.org).

**Buzz about Deerbrook!!** The latest buzz is coming from where Spikes used to be. Nothing but the concrete slab is left now at the old restaurant site and local eyesore. The location was purchased recently in County auction as the owners were never located in a 3-year search. Rumor has it that the purchasers intend to build a dental office there. This would be a welcome addition to the community at large.

**Newsletter Announcements:** If you have an announcement, special event, or feedback that you want in Deer Tracks please contact the DHOA Secretary Roger Hagen at

rh4g3n@yahoo.com or call 678-524-2797 leave a message with your request or feedback.

**Members Welcome at Board Meetings:** our next Board meeting will be held on March 9, 2006, 7:30 p.m., at Elton Thomas's house. Any Deerbrook member is welcome to attend. If you plan to attend, please call Elton so he can make room for you.

Our next full membership meeting will be held in early May. Look for the announcement in your next newsletter.

**Visit our website** at: <http://www.deerbrookhoa.org> for copies of DHOA bylaws, covenants, photos, links to Gwinnett County government—which include Gwinnett property maintenance law, parking code, animal control, and how to report violations.

If you have suggestions for the website or in general, email us at [mail@deerbrookhoa.org](mailto:mail@deerbrookhoa.org). Or, if you prefer a real-time conversation, you can call any officer or board member.