



Deer Tracks

Deerbrook Home Owners Association Newsletter August 2007

Mark your Calendar and RSVP for Oktoberfest Saturday October 6th. DHOA's fall meeting and barbeque will be held the first Saturday in October in the Rustlewood cul de sac. Party starts at 4 pm, so everyone can get food and a drink before 5:00 pm when the meeting starts. Volunteers plan and organize activities for children in a special play area while parents can attend a quick meeting and vote on any pending issues. **Volunteers are still needed to make this event happen! If you have ideas for games (for kids or adults) let us know.**

This year, we are trying to get the right amount of food & best activities for attendees. **Please let us know whether or not you will be at the Oktoberfest meeting and how many adults and children will be there from your household.** Call BJ Tracy or Debbie Slappey at home (see phone list on back). If you happen to get a machine, please just *leave your name and number of adult and child attendees.* Or you can email us this information at: mail@deerbrookhoa.org.

Anyone who wants to help with the Oktoberfest party should contact Patricia Yeargin, DHOA Secretary, at 770-923-2823, or any board member on the back of the newsletter. This is a fun way to be involved with your community with a small amount of effort. We need help with bringing side dishes, setup and cleanup, ice chests and trash cans, among other things.

Welcome to Deerbrook!!

- Ron & Stacey Roemer at 4023 Deerbrook
- Dominick & Margie Maestromonaco, 4035 Windhurst (we hope we spelled it right!)
- Greg & Amy Phillips, 4253 Deerbrook

We don't have all their names, but we'd also like to welcome their children and pets as well. We hope you'll meet your new neighbors at Oktoberfest!

Wildlife Watch: We've had reports of deer getting over fences and eating the backyard hostas near the Yellow River. And rabbits are everywhere again this year, though there aren't many lightning bugs. No shortage of mosquitoes since it started raining last month.

And who knew it was against the law to kill non-venomous snakes? Not many people, apparently, but turns out it is. While it's okay to kill poisonous ones (copperheads and maybe a few rattlesnakes in Gwinnett), killing other types of snakes can get you fined. Most snakes around Deerbrook are king snakes, rat snakes, or garden snakes which come in several shapes and sizes.

How can you tell the poisonous ones from the harmless variety? We called the Department of Natural Resources and spoke to the herpetologist (snake expert), who suggested looking at and learning what the poison ones look like. In our case, that involves learning mostly about copperheads: it seems that they have hourglass-shaped bands across their backs. Sometimes the hourglass shapes don't meet except for a few places. And they have shiny coppery heads. Younger snakes may have less-developed markings, but here's a hot tip: if the snake has a bright yellow-tipped tail, it is venomous. As the snake matures, the tail dulls to green, then brown or gray.

Residents have seen small snakes this year—mostly worm snakes, which are only about a foot long full grown. Last year, someone spotted a 3-foot black king snake with yellow markings sliding into the underbrush. The larger ones eat rodents, which are plentiful on the river, so it's good to have these slithery predators who eat them for dinner.

If you want to read about snakes in the southeast and see some great snake pictures

to help you identify them the next time you see one, check out these URLs: www.uga.edu/~srelherp/snakes/index.htm or www.snakesandfrogs.com/scra/index.htm.

What kinds of wildlife have you seen? Do you have a bat house? How about a family of bunnies in your yard? Rare birds? Email us at mail@deerbrookhoa.org and let us know.

Deerbrook Garden Club's Yard of the Month Picks: August honors went to the Munn house at 1228 Wheatley. Recent YOTM winners include the Marins at 3993 Deerbrook Way, the Howells at 4353 Deerbrook Way, and the Dennises at 4045 Windhurst.

Real Estate Sales Down: Real estate loans and sales are declining and property is going unsold for longer periods. People who expected their homes to go up in value are finding competition from new homes and low-priced foreclosures.

Home sales throughout the state dropped 13% this spring compared last spring. Given the most recent bad news, some are predicting that it will be the end of 2008 or maybe 2009 before recovery begins.

Despite slow sales, home values are holding fairly well in metro Atlanta, despite a nearly 2% decline nationally.

We have discussed before in various meetings some ways to keep your home values higher, such as updating kitchens and bathrooms. Many, however, involve the neighborhood as a whole. For instance, keeping your yard neat and your home attractive affects your neighbor's property values as well as your own. Neighborhoods that have cars parked on the streets, uncut grass, unruly bushes, and animals roaming free tend to have lower property values. Communities that look cared for hold their value best. In this case, it does take a village.

Gwinnett Police Now Enforcing Property Maintenance Act. We used to call the Planning and Development Office at Gwinnett County for code violations. Now, Gwinnett County Police Department has a special Quality of Life Unit that deals with these issues. Of course, most of our

neighborhood is still under Covenants, which for the most part are more restrictive than the county's requirements. (Note that the GCPD does not help us enforce our Covenants, only the county laws.) However, any citizen can call or go online to report problems if, for instance, you notice your neighbor's grass is over a foot tall. We suggest first speaking to your neighbor directly, or one of your DHOA Board members, but if you need it, the phone number to call is **770 417-3434**, or violations can be reported online. The URL is too long to print here; we suggest doing a quick Google search for **Gwinnett County Code Violation Report**. You should find the proper form within a couple of clicks.

Newsletter Announcements: If you have an announcement, event, or feedback that you want in Deer Tracks, contact DHOA Secretary Patricia Yeargin at yeargin2000@yahoo.com, or you can call her at 770-923-2823.

Crime watch: We've had no criminal activity reported to the Board, but there have been a couple of illegal signs put up at the front of the subdivision recently. Board members called the phone numbers on these "bandit signs" and told the owners where they could pick them up. Other than that, we've heard no complaints or problems.

if you see anything that looks suspicious but does not merit an emergency 911 call, use the Gwinnett Police's non-emergency number, **770-513-5100** and let them check it out. Then call any Board member and we'll pool our information and publish a summary in the newsletter. Or you can email us at mail@deerbrookhoa.org.

Help Wanted: Resident Represent Timber Glen on the DHOA Board. Last year, Timber Glen was represented by Tanya Zamora, who was very helpful to us in working with our sister neighborhood. It is important for both neighborhoods to continue to have someone work in this capacity. Please consider joining us: You do not have to be elected! The only commitment is a monthly meeting, usually Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m., and they are always close by. Call Elton or Debbie Jacobson if you are interested. The next meeting is set up for Monday the 20th at 7:30, after which we'll know when the next one will be. Just call!

