



# dna news

duckpond neighborhood association • NE Historic District • Gainesville Florida • September 2008



Keep up on happenings between newsletters! Check out our regularly updated website at <http://HistoricDuckpond.com>

## general meeting

Tuesday, September 9, 2008  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church  
419 NE 1st Street  
Fellowship Hall

## agenda

**7:00**  
Business Meeting  
Announcements/Reports

**7:15**  
Crime Watch

**7:45**  
Neighborhood Parking

**8:15**  
*Plant a Pond* (See story on page 3.)

Note: Pizza provided at the general meeting, (donations requested). Agenda may be subject to change.

**DNA News** is published four times a year, just prior to general meetings. Remaining meeting dates for 2008 are September 9, and November 25. All neighborhood residents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## A country mouse in the Duckpond

It's been years since I have had neighbors less than acres away, or paid a water bill, or had a street light, or suffered from a paucity of parking. Nine years ago I moved from crowded south-central Florida to rural north-central Florida, finding myself in tiny Mayo, 75 miles northwest of Gainesville. Downtown Mayo is two blocks long, and when you drive down the street you recognize most everyone you see; a smile and a friendly wave are intrinsic to life there. There's a lot of chewing tobacco, pickup trucks, well-worn work clothes and camouflage. But, through a series of complex events—the sort through which life sometimes has a way of herding us in unexpected directions—I suddenly find myself the proud payment-maker on a charming little house in the Duckpond.

May 2nd was my “one-month anniversary” of being a city girl, and three more months have come and gone since then. I have yet to regret my move, and know I never will, but it's been a bit of an adjustment.

I don't recognize the people I pass on the street anymore, but I have met some really great neighbors. Frank and I chat over the fence, while his dog Bentley carries on, barking for all he's worth (which is a fair amount judging by the ruckus he can make). I've met a fine young man by the name of Hunter, whose grandma pushes him in his stroller. John and Larre and their friends

play Irish traditional music that fills the house and touches my heart. Brenda, who lives a few blocks east of me, has a lovely voice and sings jazz at Emiliano's on Mondays. I've chatted with Howard in the drizzle after a storm, helped Jim fix his computer, and passed the time with Kris and Reagan while our dogs galloped about the dog park.

I've been to art shows and visited the Museum of Natural History and Butterfly Rainforest. I've ridden the Gainesville-to-Hawthorne trail on my bicycle (well, part of it anyway), and accidentally ended up at a children's piano recital at the Thomas Center one evening, which turned out to be my favorite cultural highlight since moving here. I bicycle to the Farmer's Market downtown on Wednesdays, picking up fresh organic fruits, vegetables and honey; Friday evenings it's a walk to the free music concerts, and I hear there are swing dance lessons at the Thelma Bolton Center on Tuesdays.

There's no more hauling smelly garbage ten miles to the dump (did you know they actually pick it up at the curb?!) and I've learned to recycle everything under the shining sun. It used to take me half a day on a 26 hp., zero-radius mower with a 48" deck to get the lawn done; now all it takes is a weed-eater and ten minutes. What's not to love!? It's not 35 miles to Publix any

continued on page 2 >



The purpose of the Duckpond Neighborhood Association is to facilitate communication and exchange of information on issues relevant to the neighborhood. We encourage neighbors to submit articles of interest to our neighborhood, or topics for discussion at our general meetings. Please contact Randy Wells at 335.8874 or e-mail [conexos@gmail.com](mailto:conexos@gmail.com).

# A message from our president

## Dear Duckpond residents,

There has been significant neighborhood discussion in recent months about congestion, traffic speed, and parking. Several neighbors have requested new speed bumps on their street. And in this issue, a neighbor writes about the difficulty of finding on-street parking in areas near downtown and the Thomas Center.

**Speed bumps** (or speed humps or other variations): The City currently has a policy against new installations, based mainly on fire department concerns that they increase response times, but also on a lack of funding for traffic calming.

**Parking:** City staff provided a presentation about existing city parking programs at our general meeting last September. Actions the city has taken since include: 1) Repainting of faded parking marks on some streets, helping to reduce blocking of streets and driveways; 2) Hiring of non-police staff to focus on ticketing of illegal parking (such as unpaid meters, blocking of intersections and driveways, etc.); and 3) At least a temporary reduction of employee parking in the neighborhood. The city has also offered to conduct a parking survey see if their criteria are met for a parking program in some areas.

Based on our last meeting, I am not convinced the Gainesville's existing

parking programs would provide the right solution. They now provide either open parking, or meters with resident parking permits, or resident-restricted parking during the daytime that leaves streets almost empty. Instead, we may want to consider more innovative parking solutions that address specific parking problems without banning non-resident parking entirely. And we want to avoid just pushing existing conflicts further into the neighborhood.

**Let's Solve Both Problems.** We will discuss these related issues at our next general meeting. I would like to encourage us to think creatively. Many streets in our neighborhood show how on-street parking can be an effective traffic calming tool. I would like to encourage on-street parking, on both or alternating sides of the street, in areas where traffic speed is a concern. This can be done now at little cost, and has already helped the stretch of NE 5th Avenue where we live. Perhaps if we can just spread out a little of the excess non-resident parking, we can solve both problems: making parking easier for residents in congested areas, and slowing speeds in less congested areas.

Sincerely,  
**Randy Wells**  
President

## A country mouse (continued from front page)

more, but a five-minute pedal, and if I feel like a bottle of pinot noir I don't have to drive across two counties to get it.

Full of unknown promise, new beginnings are a wonderful and scary place to be when you're starting over alone in what amounts to a whole new world. A lot of things have changed and the transition hasn't been without its hurdles. An old dog who had his run of woods and fields for his twelve years walks around

the Duckpond with me now. He had to learn what a leash was and I had to learn about pooper-scooping. We've come a long way, baby!

Erstwhile and innovative, demure and diverse, tradition with an eclectic perspective—the Duckpond is home now and I love it here. This country mouse and her old dog are making our adjustments. We're where we belong and happy in our little house on 5th Street. 🐾

—Submitted by Heather Neill

# Energy Efficiency—a shared challenge for our older homes

**Would you like to see** how your home's energy (and water) usage compares to others in the Duckpond and throughout the city? There is a new website providing just such information: <http://gainesville-green.com/>. By entering your address, you can see (or download) electric, gas and water usage from 2000 to 2007. The site also estimates your home's carbon footprint, based on the level of utility usage. The site is still in Beta, meaning it is working out how best to present the information and more recent data will eventually be available.

The goal of this website is to highlight

those homeowners that have been most successful in improving energy efficiency under similar circumstances. This is particularly important for neighborhoods like the Duckpond, where so many homes were built long before energy efficiency was a standard.

If you are like me, the monthly utility bill provides the best incentive to improve the efficiency and comfort of your house. If you would like to tell what worked for you, we would love to highlight your story in a future issue. Please contact **Randy Wells** at [conexos@gmail.com](mailto:conexos@gmail.com) or 335.8874. 🐦

## **STILL NEEDED: Help with history tour and old photos of your historic homes**

Together with other historic neighborhoods, we are working with the City of Gainesville to develop a history tour accessible by cell phone or the internet. If you would like to write and record a short blurb about your house, or another historic site in the neighborhood, please let us know. Also, we are collecting old and new photographs of homes in the neighborhood. These will be used on our website, and shared with the Matheson Museum. Contact **Randy Wells** at **335.8874** or [conexos@gmail.com](mailto:conexos@gmail.com).

## Local non-profit invites neighborhoods to “Plant a Pond”

**Current Problems** would like to invite neighborhoods and businesses to join an exciting new program in Alachua County called “Plant A Pond”. It is now well known that planted stormwater ponds provide many benefits. Let me explain how.

Vegetated stormwater ponds enhance water quality, wildlife habitat, and biological diversity. Planted stormwater ponds can be beautiful, too, once they become established and full of life, but they do need help from us in the beginning.

When your neighborhood, organization or business agrees to adopt your pond, we will provide you with a training workshop and informational materials; assist with site planning and obtaining required permits; and a supply

of starter plants so you can begin. Your group's responsibilities include removing litter from the pond; conducting four workdays annually for the purposes of planting additional plants, weeding, mulching, and exotic removal; and sending quarterly reports to our office.

**Note:** When the Duck Pond was renovated, the approved design included water plants along the perimeter. As can be seen, none of these intentional plantings were implemented in the pond—although the city did provide and maintain with some success a variety of plantings along the several blocks of the Sweetwater Branch from NE 2nd Street to NE 6th Avenue. Shouldn't our neighborhood adopt our beloved duck pond as suggested here? Submit your comments to [HistoricDuckpond.com](http://HistoricDuckpond.com). 🐦

*Summarized from Letter by Fritzy Olson, Executive Director, Current Problems (full text version available at [HistoricDuckpond.com](http://HistoricDuckpond.com))*

## **MATHESON MUSEUM UPCOMING FALL EVENTS**

### **Museum Open House:**

**Wednesday, September 10**

At the Museum, we often hear “I didn't even know this was here!” Now's your chance to learn all about the Museum, its mission, and how we fulfill that mission through various public events, ongoing research, and educational programs. If you are already familiar with the museum, come along anyway, and bring friends!

### **A Haunted Walk in Historic Gainesville: Friday, October 31**

How well do you know your haunted history of Gainesville? Come along on this family-oriented Haunted Walk and learn more about the haunted “inns” and outs of the area. The Haunted Walk tours provide a trick 'r treating experience for the whole family around the Southeast historic district. There will be two tours—at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Please call **378.2280** in advance to reserve your spot!

## A dilemma of neighborhood parking

### ROPER PARK YARD SALE

The Duckpond Neighborhood Roper Park Yard Sale fund raiser will be held on **Saturday November 8th**, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is the first day of the Downtown Arts Festival. You can donate items to sell, or you can set up and sell your own items. We pay for the ad in the *Gainesville Sun* and set up signs, so the only work for sellers is setting up their items the morning of the sale.

If you want to sell your items, members of the Duckpond Neighborhood Association pay \$10 and non-members pay \$15. Please send your check to DNA, PO Box 233, Gainesville, FL 32602, with a note including your name and contact information. Feel free to invite friends and relatives to join in the sale.

If you prefer to donate items to the DNA for us to sell, please set them aside until the week of the sale, and call **377.4217** to arrange a pick up. Please do not wait until the morning of the sale, because we may not have enough tables and volunteer staff to display them. We also welcome volunteers to help staff the event. Thank you!



**When I first came** to Gainesville in 2002, I rode around the city looking for “my spot.” I had lived in Mississippi for the last ten years in an old house in a downtown neighborhood, so when I drove through the Duckpond area I knew I had found my new home.

I bought the old Methodist Church house on the corner of NE 2nd Street and 3rd Avenue, what I now refer to as the “front line” of the “free parking” for city employees working at City Hall. From 7:30 am until after 5p.m, five days a week, my home is surrounded by other people’s cars. In the last few months I have had to call the police five times because I have been so tightly wedged in by the parallel parkers in front of my house that I have been unable to use my own car.

When I read City Manager Russ Blackburn’s comments in the *Gainesville Sun* on May 4, 2008, I got really agitated. He was defending the city against claims that it was not providing sufficient parking for its employees and referenced the

“ample free parking available in the neighborhoods from City Hall to the Thomas Center.” My immediate thought was why on earth should we as homeowners provide parking to city employees? We are, as he said, a neighborhood, not a parking lot.

So what are the solutions? First, I ask that all those with an interest in this issue come to the next DNA meeting on September 9, 2008. Second, I suggest that we attempt to agree on a proposal to present to the appropriate city officials and present it in a unified manner through the DNA. My suggestion is to request residential only zoning for the most affected areas—NE 1st Street to 5th Street and NE 3rd Avenue to the Thomas Center. Whatever we ultimately decide to present to the City, our goal should be to preserve the character of our neighborhood for the people who live there. It is the City’s responsibility to provide parking, not the homeowners in the Duckpond. 🐦

—Submitted by Michelle Anderson

## Help clean up the duck pond by picking up your pet’s waste

**The City of Gainesville** has installed new *Dogipot* litter bag receptacles near NE Boulevard and NE 5th Avenue, and in Roper Park, to make it easier for dog owners to clean up pet waste. The receptacles dispense litter bags that are used like a glove to allow for a mess-free pick up of your pet’s waste. The bags filled with pet waste can be easily disposed of in a nearby trash can. Removing pet waste before it seeps into the Duck Pond is one critical step for improving water quality in the

Sweetwater Branch. Pollutants washing into stormwater and the creek eventually flow into Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, our local treasure. The Sweetwater Branch has been listed as an impaired waterway by the Environmental Protection Agency due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria—one source of which is dog feces. Cleaning up after your dog is considerate and responsible—and will also help in improving the water quality of the Sweetwater Branch. 🐦

—Submitted by Jennifer Cannon

# Drumming up support to save the arts

Former teacher and neighbor Sue Johnson fundraises for school arts

**Responding to state budget** cuts this summer, the public schools cut funding by half for elementary art and music classes. Citizens banded together to support restoring those funds, and were challenged by the public schools: raise private donations to the tune of \$850,000 to keep the full-time art programs for the 2008–2009 school year.

In less than two weeks, we successfully raised more than \$80,000 in private donations. These funds, which have been collected by the *Gainesville Community Foundation*, will be used to enrich arts and music education. But it is important to note that this private funding is not designed to

replace public tax dollars for education. Rather, this fund will help insure that our children will continue to receive a quality education that includes the arts. The ultimate goal of reinstating these programs full-time in all of our Alachua County elementary schools continues.

If this is something with which you agree, I invite you to show it by BOTH making a contribution *and* supporting efforts to restore funding for full-time arts programs in our public schools. Please contact **Sue Johnson** at [nbjo@aol.com](mailto:nbjo@aol.com) or **374.2342** for more information. 🐦

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## Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

**The Making Strides** Against Breast Cancer march will be held again in our neighborhood on Saturday morning, **October 4th 2008**. Please join our team as we raise money to fight a disease that will strike one 1 out of 9 women in her lifetime. Many of us have a friend, co-worker, or relative who has had breast cancer.

If you don't feel like walking on Saturday morning, consider stepping out that morning to cheer on the walkers, and consider making a contribution to our team. We are raising money for prevention and research, and aid to people who have been diagnosed with the disease. Money

spent on fighting breast cancer helps fight all cancer too.

Often, the Duckpond neighborhood team has been in the Top Ten fund raisers. Last year, we raised \$1570—yet the top teams all raised over \$2000. So we have some fundraising to do if we are to get back in the Top Ten this year. Let's go, Ducks!

Find a link to the Duckpond team at **HistoricDuckpond.com** or visit the *American Cancer Society* website [www.cancer.org/msabc](http://www.cancer.org/msabc). If you are not able to get online, please call **377.4217** for more information on how to participate. 🐦

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## Neighborhood support for National Night Out

**Neighbors joined** Gainesville Police Department for *National Night Out* on August 5th. The DNA is pursuing several initiatives to better address crime in our neighborhood. If you would like to help

with future walks, and/or other crime watch activities, please contact **Randy Wells** at [conexos@gmail.com](mailto:conexos@gmail.com) or **335.8874**, or **Melanie Barr** at [mvbarr@bellsouth.net](mailto:mvbarr@bellsouth.net). 🐦

## HOLIDAY LUMINARIES

Traditionally held the first Saturday of December (this year **December 6th**), the luminaries are small paper bags with tea candles that neighbors place along Northeast Boulevard. We will also again sponsor horse and carriage rides that evening, a fabulous way to enjoy and share the beautiful sight of hundreds of glittering candles along the Sweetwater Branch and duck pond.

Board member **Nelson Logan** has graciously agreed to coordinate this year's luminaries. As usual, we will need the help of dozens of neighbors to pull it off, particularly the morning and evening of the event. Anyone interested in helping should contact Nelson at [ns\\_logan@bellsouth.net](mailto:ns_logan@bellsouth.net) or **384.9303**. Thank you Nelson!

If you know of a business that would like to help sponsor the horse and carriage rides, please contact **Randy Wells** at **335.8874** or [conexos@gmail.com](mailto:conexos@gmail.com).

Also, if you plan to light your home this year (particularly if you live along the Boulevard), please plan to decorate by Saturday, December 6th. The City traditionally holds its annual tree lighting party the same night at the Thomas Center, so this is an awesome time to show off the neighborhood.

## A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

Thank you to local contractor and neighborhood resident **GARY ANGLIN** for completing the neighborhood entry feature at NE 10th Avenue and 2nd Street. This is a project that has been in the works for nearly a decade, and would never have been completed without Gary's creativity and hard work. A sign saying "Duckpond Neighborhood", as well as a couple of planting urns, will be placed on the feature soon. The DNA board will organize a dedication ceremony in the autumn, so stay tuned!

## duckpond neighborhood advertising Please support these local businesses.



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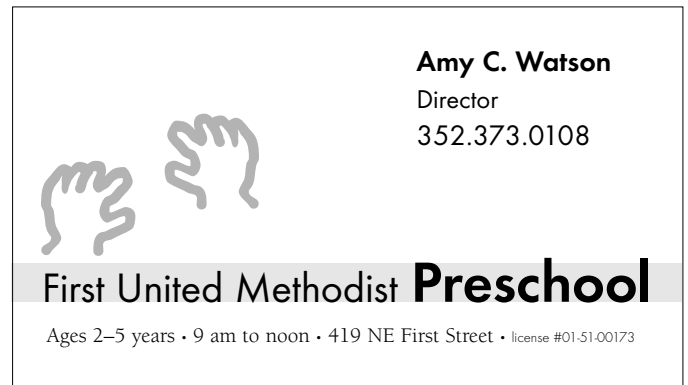
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# duckpond officers and directors



Please fill out and return the form below with your annual membership dues (\$15 per household.) Make your check payable to:

**Duckpond Neighborhood Association**  
**PO Box 233**  
**Gainesville FL 32602-0233**

## President

Randy Wells 352.335.8874 conexos@gmail.com

## Vice President

Melanie Barr 352.377.4217 mvbarr@bellsouth.net

## Secretary

Joanne Auth 352.371.1991 jba4trees@earthlink.net

## Treasurer

Michelle Reeves 352.373.1629 rottina@bellsouth.net

## Directors

Jennifer Cannon 352.271.1027 jjcannon24@hotmail.com

Charles Covell 352.336.0127 covell@louisville.edu

Nelson Logan 352.384.9303 ns\_logan@bellsouth.net

Mary Rhodes 352.375.2616 crawley20@hotmail.com

Kirby Stewart 352.378.3882 none

Bill Warinner 352.372.5056 bw@billwarinner.com

*Please contact Randy Wells if you interested in joining the DNA Board.*

## Stay Informed: Join the DNA Update email list!

To add your email address, send an email to [duckpondneighborhoodassociation@yahoo.com](mailto:duckpondneighborhoodassociation@yahoo.com) with "ADD ME" in the subject line. DNA updates are typically sent out once or twice a month. DNA will never use your email for solicitation or political purposes.



## duckpond neighborhood association membership renewal form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Committee Interests:

- Crime Watch     Environment     Gardening     Holiday Events     Neighbors Helping Neighbors  
 Newsletter Distribution     Parks     Schools     Traffic     Yard Sale     Board Member

Skills and/or resources I would like to make available to the Duckpond Neighborhood Association:

\_\_\_\_\_