



dna news

duckpond neighborhood association • NE Historic District • Gainesville Florida • February 2011



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general meeting

Tuesday, February 8, 2011
7:00–8:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
419 NE 1st Street
Room: Fellowship Hall

agenda

- Approval of Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Report: Gainesville Police Department
- Presentation: Candidates for City Commission at Large Seat, followed by an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates
- Election of officers and members of the DNA Board of Directors
- Refreshments
- Adjournment

Note: Be sure to check HistoricDuckpond.com for changes and updates to the agenda.

DNA News is published four times a year, just prior to general meetings. Meeting dates for 2011 are February 8, May 10, August 9, and November 8. All neighborhood residents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

How walkable is our neighborhood?

Often I am pleasantly surprised at how many people are out walking about in the Duckpond and have pondered how walkability could be measured in our neighborhood. A resource freely available to anyone with a computer and internet access, referred to as *Walk Score*[®], provides a cursory view of how a pedestrian environment ranks. *Walk Score*[®], found at www.walkscore.com, is a simple tool to use that only requires that users submit an address.

In the Duckpond neighborhood, locations east of Northeast Boulevard and north of NE 8th Avenue generally rate as somewhat walkable while areas closer to downtown and Main Street are rated as very walkable. In contrast, most residential areas in *Haile Plantation* rate as car-dependent. Largely, the Duckpond neighborhood is walkable and valued above many other neighborhoods in Gainesville. Out of 100 possible points, the walk score computes values ranging from a walker's paradise (90–100), very walkable (70–89), somewhat walkable (50–69), to car-dependent (0–49). The values derived from the walk score algorithm are based on distance measured as "a crow flies" (not actual street distances) to amenities such as restaurants, grocers, shopping, schools, parks, books, entertainment, coffee shops, and banking.

Walkable communities garner a myriad of benefits related to the health and well-being of people and the environment and can increase property values.

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The surgeon general recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week, and regular brisk walking could suffice.



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The surgeon general recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week and regular brisk walking could suffice. When considering the hectic schedules of daily living, the ability to walk to a destination while simultaneously fulfilling an errand such as returning a library book is particularly appealing. Personally I appreciate the friendly waves and chats that you encounter when walking in the Duckpond neighborhood. When the weather warms up, a walk to the downtown farmer's market on Wednesday afternoons can brighten up a boring day. In light of the benefits of walking such as improved health and quality of life, we should work as a community and send the city prioritized improvements that would truly promote walking and reduced car dependence. Please take a moment to check out the walk score of your home and contact any member of the DNA board if you would like to be involved with improving the walkability of our community.

.....
—Submitted by Jennifer Cannon

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 Melanie Barr at 377.4217 or e-mail mvbarr@bellsouth.net.



The next issue of the Duckpond newsletter will be distributed the last weekend of April. Do you have an announcement, story, article, or advertisement that you would like to share? If so, please submit your information to **Melanie Barr** at mvbarr@bellsouth.net **no later than March 28**. Your submissions are appreciated, and a great way to share information with your neighbors!



CALLING DUCKPOND ARTISTS

Are you or do you know an artist (or performing artist) who lives or works in our neighborhood? We would like to highlight Duckpond artists in future issues of *DNA News*. Contact **Melanie Barr** at 377.4217 or email mvbarr@bellsouth.net

A message from our president

Dear Duckpond residents,

The Duckpond Neighborhood Association (DNA) will hold its annual meeting and elect officers and board members at the general meeting on February 8th. We are seeking neighborhood residents who would like to become more involved in the DNA. Officers and board members meet for a few hours each month, and are also expected to attend our general neighborhood meetings which are held four times a year.

Please consider joining the Board. We would like more input from the neighborhood, and you are not required to do a lot of work. Any duties you take on are completely voluntary and there are no financial obligations. Please attend the meeting on February 8th and let us know if you would like to be a Board member.

Sincerely,
Melanie Barr
President

The Pleasant Street Historic Society

Preserving the neighborhood from Main Street to West 6th Street

The Pleasant Street Historic Society was founded in 1984 to bring recognition to Gainesville's oldest African-American neighborhood, place it on the *National Register of Historic Places*, and preserve and promote the history of the district. The Pleasant Street neighborhood was originally the area where black businessmen, doctors, dentists, carpenters, shoemakers, and bakers lived in Gainesville. Beginning in the 1960s a "bright flight" ensued, and many upper and middle class African-Americans moved father west, or to new houses in southeast Gainesville. By the 1980s the neighborhood was in a state of deterioration.

However, not all of the middle class families left the neighborhood. Among them were Claronelle Smith Griffin and her mother Mamie Smith who continued to reside in the home built by her grandfather in the 1870s, which he enlarged in 1903 and the 1920s. At the time it was built it was located on the northernmost street in Gainesville, now known as NW 8th Avenue.

Claronelle was among the eight graduates who were in the first class to graduate from *Lincoln High School* in 1925. One hundred percent of the class was accepted into colleges. Mrs. Griffin

received her B.A. from *Clark College* in Atlanta, Georgia, and her Master's degree from *Columbia University*. She taught high school in St. Petersburg for more than two decades.

The *Pleasant Street Historic Society* received Mrs. Claronelle Smith Griffin's house in 2003 when she passed away at the age of 96. She specified that it was to be used for a Black History Exhibit. She did not donate any funds to convert the residence into a museum, so the Historic Society has been holding banquets in March as fundraisers.

This year the speaker will be Dr. Peter Ascoli of Chicago. From 1865 until 1925 no African-American child was able to graduate from high school in Alachua County until Julius Rosenwald provided some of the funding to build a high school for black students. Mr. Rosenwald helped fund over 500 schools in Florida, and over 5,000 schools in the south for African-American children. Dr. Ascoli wrote a book about his grandfather, and will discuss the Rosenwald schools at the banquet on March 13th this year. If you would like to attend the banquet, or make a donation to the museum, please write to psht@pleasantstreetneighborhood.com or call 377.4217. 🐦

—Submitted by Melanie Barr

An opportunity to *Take Stock in Children*

Most Gainesville parents would probably prefer to send their children to a neighborhood school since they offer multiple transportation choices such as biking and walking. Think fewer auto/bus emissions, savings on gasoline, and savings in travel time. Many parents have fond memories of walking to and from school with childhood friends. As a result of a recent neighborhood survey, the DNA board learned that most parents of school aged children in the Duckpond send their children to schools outside of our district due to concerns about the quality of education. One way we can help improve our eastside schools is to get involved, and Alachua County has programs to help us do that.

One such program is *Take Stock in Children* (TSIC). TSIC is a mentoring program that helps at-risk children stay out of trouble, maintain good grades, and qualify for a college scholarship. Upon en-

tering the program in the 7th grade, financially eligible students sign a contract to remain drug and crime free and to maintain a minimum 2.5 grade point average under the guidance of a caring adult mentor. Upon graduation from high school and fulfillment of the contract, students receive a tuition scholarship for two years at a community college and two years at a university. Mentors meet once a week at the school with their assigned students. They serve as positive role models, advocates, coaches and friends throughout the child's middle and high school years. As students succeed in the program, graduate from high school, and go on to community college, we should see a positive effect in our schools; reduced discipline problems, truancy, and dropout rates. To learn more about the program, or becoming a mentor, go to www.acpsf.org/takestock.html. 🐢

—Submitted by Mary C. Rhodes

The story of the turtle that lost its shell

Roper Park has two playgrounds, and the original one—for little tykes—has two concrete turtle benches purchased some years ago by the Duckpond Neighborhood Association. Unfortunately, the “shells” of the turtles weren't too well reinforced, and one of them became broken. All that was left of one turtle was its head and tail and a gap in between. The turtle without a shell looked so forlorn in the play area.

It was decided at a Duckpond general meeting to try to find a replacement animal bench, and I volunteered to do some hunting around town and online. Then, Roper Park neighbor Jan Scott told me about *Cement Precast Products* (CPC) in Gainesville's Northeast Industrial Park, saying that they had repaired some items for the *Thomas Center Associates*.

I took photos of the surviving turtle bench as well as the head and tail ends of the bench with the missing middle and



The turtle proudly displays its new shell in Roper Park.

showed them to the wonderful people at CPC. Mr. Stanford, in particular, worked to cast another center piece for the turtle, using rebar to reinforce the cement. He even drew a design on the dome of the shell that helped the replacement section blend in with the design on the head and tail pieces. Then, he installed it at *Roper Park*. Above is a photo of the turtle with its new shell. We know s/he is happier! 🐢

—Submitted by Joanne Auth

CITY INSTALLS WELCOME SIGN AND COMMUNITY POSTING BOARD IN ROPER PARK

Residents of the neighborhood may want to take advantage of a new but “low tech” method for communicating with one another. The *City of Gainesville* has installed a “Welcome to Roper Park” sign that has room on the reverse side for Community Postings. These covered signs are being added to other city parks too, but there are not yet any hard and fast rules about their use. This subject came up at the last DNA meeting, and it was decided to keep the use of the bulletin boards informal unless problems occur. You are welcome to post small signs (up to 8.5 x 11 inches) for lost pets or announcements of events of interest to neighborhood residents. General common sense should prevail, and postings should be removed as they become outdated. The board will be monitored for old flyers. Please be careful lifting the rather heavy hinged cover, and bring your own thumbtacks or regular sized stapler (no staple guns). Push pins tend to keep the clear cover from closing properly. It is not meant to be a posting spot for profit making enterprises, but items of general interest, such as notices of DNA meetings, are encouraged. 🐢

—Submitted by Joanne Auth



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE TUTORING ZONE

A big **thank you** to neighbor **Matt Hintze** and employees from the **Tutoring Zone** is in order. Saturday, December 4 was the occasion of the annual holiday tree lighting ceremony at the *Thomas Center*. Inside the *Thomas Center* where it was snug and warm, Santa Claus greeted children and adults. Outdoors, where temperatures dipped into the 30s, folks waited for carriage rides around the Duckpond neighborhood. Matt and his employees helped everyone keep warm by serving hot chocolate and warm cider.



FOSTERING COMPANIONSHIP

If you would like to experience the love of an animal and the satisfaction of saving a life without the financial commitment, the Gainesville Pet Rescue (GPR) Foster Program may be for you!

If you provide a foster home to an animal in need, you will help to save an animal from being euthanized. As a foster home, you provide a dog, cat, puppy, or kitten with a temporary home. Fostering allows the pet to live in a safe and loving environment until he or she is placed with a permanent family.

If you would like more information on the Gainesville Pet Rescue Foster Care Program, please contact *Gainesville Pet Rescue* at 352.692.4773 or email GvillePetRescue@aol.com.

What's happening in East Gainesville?

Although historically East Gainesville has not enjoyed the same levels of investment and development as West Gainesville, today the Eastside Redevelopment Area is brimming with opportunity. Located adjacent to the Duckpond Neighborhood, the Eastside Redevelopment Area offers close proximity to downtown and the *University of Florida*, minimal traffic congestion, established tree-canopied neighborhoods, beautiful wetlands and other natural resources. The *Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)* is pursuing large and small scale redevelopment projects, and with so much opportunity and potential, the Eastside will continue to be a place in which to invest and call home.

Hawthorne Road Café. Drive by 1714 Hawthorne Road—what was once an abandoned building and eyesore will soon be a contemporary southern influenced restaurant. The purpose of this redevelopment is to create a visually appealing site which will serve as a catalyst for commercial development along the Hawthorne Road Corridor. The CRA Board approved the proposal of *Southern Charm Restaurant and Pie Factory* and staff has entered into negotiations with them as a tenant for the café space. The new restaurant will open in early 2011, and will be a great addition to the community. If you have southern roots you will be looking forward to sampling their Catfish Reuben Sandwiches and Penticostal Fried Chicken.

Power District Redevelopment. Properly designed, street, block, and lot dimensions are essential to healthy city development. Cities such as Paris, London, New York, and Savannah have proven that thoughtfully arranged streets and blocks can successfully accommodate endless changes in land use, social norms, and construction conventions over very long time periods. The CRA

is utilizing this fundamental lesson in urban design as the basis for approaching redevelopment in the Power District, which is centered around 16 acres located between the central business district and *Depot Park* which *Gainesville Regional Utilities* plans to turn over for redevelopment.

Depot Park is a massive redevelopment project with the potential to transform downtown Gainesville. The project incorporates brownfield remediation, economic development, historic preservation, innovative stormwater management, top quality design, and a world class innovation museum. Remediation is underway and Depot Avenue is under construction. 2011 will also bring preservation and core/shell construction for the historic Depot Building. Momentum is building for this highly anticipated premier urban park.

Eastside Gateway. Gainesville's eastern entrance is visually dominated by a sliver of land prominently situated at the intersection of University Avenue and Hawthorne Road. Once the location of a well-known local business, the site fell vacant and became a major contributor to visual blight. The CRA was determined to overhaul the highly visible, highly unattractive site; however the location's small size, abnormal shape, accessibility issues, and environmental contamination severely limited redevelopment options. The CRA poured vision, creativity, and a lot of hard work into the project and developed a stunning new landmark which serves as a gateway to eastern Gainesville.

Kennedy Homes. An exceptional redevelopment opportunity, this 15-acre site in East Gainesville was once home to a low-income housing development. *Kennedy Homes* was a federally subsidized housing development that unfortunately came to embody many negative stereotypes associated with low-income hous-

East Gainesville (continued from page 4)

stereotypes associated with low-income housing. Purchased and cleared by the City, the site is now the responsibility of the CRA. The CRA will pursue a new residential community at the site focused on a mixed-income community characterized by high quality housing, top level urban design, green features and community connectedness. High level visioning is currently underway, with additional progress to come in 2011.

Cotton Club. In its prime, this cultural landmark hosted musical legends BB King, Brook Benton, and James Brown. Thanks to tireless community advocates and partners such as the CRA, the site is on its way to a triumphant renaissance. Rehabilitation of the historic *Cotton Club* structure is underway, with construction adhering to sustainable, green building practices.

Rail trails. Gainesville developed as a rail town, and today it is still bisected by the corridors which originally brought trains, freight, and commerce to the area. These now-dormant rail corridors have been reclaimed by the community and are being rebuilt into an extensive and interconnected system of activity trails and bicycle paths. The CRA supports the *Rails-to-Trails* system and is compiling signage, trail furniture, and lighting which

will create a cohesive and welcoming environment for this well-loved local amenity.

The **Exterior Paint Improvement Grant Program** is a matching grant of up to 75% of costs with a cap of \$7,500 per building to promote the maintenance and restoration of the exterior of commercial buildings in the Eastside Redevelopment Area. The grant is designed to encourage business owners along targeted corridors on the eastside to invest in the appearance of their buildings. Painting was completed on four properties in September bringing the number of paint grants up to eight. For more information about the Exterior Paint Program, contact the CRA.

As you can tell, there is a great deal of activity going on in East Gainesville and what happens in the Eastside Redevelopment Area contributes to the continued attractiveness of the Duckpond Neighborhood. Our CRA is dedicated to removing blight and building vibrant urban neighborhoods. With so much opportunity and potential, the Eastside will continue to become a place in which to reinvest and to call home.



—Submitted by Anthony Lyons
and Kelly Fisher

IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP THOSE AIR POTATOES

As an avid gardener, I appreciate the cold weather because plants don't grow as much and therefore don't require much care. Cold temperatures also cause some plants to die back, which often gives an opportunity to see weeds that have materialized over the growing season. One such weed is the "Air Potato", or *Dioscorea bulbifera*, a plant very common in our neighborhood. In warm months, it is a dense green vine with heart shaped leaves and aerial potato-like bulbils that hang from the vines. But don't let the pretty appearance fool you! The Air Potato is an invasive, exotic plant that originated in Asia and Africa and was brought to Florida. The "potatoes" can be as small as a pea and as large as a yam and each plant can produce hundreds of them. There is often also an underground tuber. Air Potatoes are a problem in Florida because they grow prolifically but have no native animals, insects, or diseases that keep them in check. They form thick mats of vine, often over 60 feet long, that envelope and choke out trees and shrubs and native understory plants. Wildlife that depends on that native vegetation for food and shelter lose their habitat, and when those plants and animals are gone, we all suffer the loss of biological diversity. In short, Air Potato vines are a threat to native ecosystems and should be removed. Once Air Potatoes are established, it is very difficult to control them; but with persistence it is possible.

So how can you control Air Potatoes? Collect the "potatoes" from the vine and from the ground around the vine in a plastic bag and dispose of them *in your trash can* (not with yard waste, as each "potato" is a potential new vine).

continued on page 6 >

SPRING PROMENADE TOUR OF HOMES

The **Thomas Center Associates** present the annual tour of Gainesville's Duckpond homes beginning at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2011 with a reception and the candle light tour from 7-9 p.m. Tours continue Saturday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Friday night and Saturday tours feature six homes. On Saturday, free activities at the Thomas Center include Plein Air artists painting in the garden, and self-guided tours of the period rooms and gardens.

Reception and candlelight tour tickets are \$15 and can be used for the Saturday tour. Saturday tour tickets are \$10. Tickets may be purchased during the event at the Thomas Center, 302 NE 6th Avenue. Park at the Thomas Center and use the free shuttle to the sites.

Proceeds and contributions benefit the **Thomas Center** garden makeover.



Air Potatoes (continued from page 5)

It is easiest to find air potatoes in the winter when the vines are dormant and vegetation isn't as dense. The plants will still grow back in the Spring, but by gathering the potatoes, at least you're helping to stop new plants from spreading. Hand pull vines to stop future potato production. Dig up the underground tubers if possible. As with the "potatoes", discard vines in trash, not with yard waste. In cases of heavy infestation, careful use of herbicides can be effective during the growing season. For more information about herbicide use, contact the Cooperative Extension Service or a reputable nursery. Always follow the label directions.

Once you tackle the Air Potatoes in your yard, you may become interested in removing other invasive exotic plants and planting native species. Good information about native and non-native invasive plants can be found at:

- Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>
- Florida Native Plant Society, <http://www.fnps.org>
- Florida Exotic Pest Council, <http://www.fleppc.org>

And finally, you might want to get involved locally and volunteer to clean up air potatoes from some of the City's conservation lands at the annual *Great Air Potato Roundup* that takes place the last Saturday of January each year. For more information, go to

www.natureoperations.org 🐾

—Submitted by Katherine Edison



A little bite about mosquitoes



While I was on the Biology faculty of the *University of Louisville, KY*, for 40 years, I did consulting work for the Louisville/Jefferson County Department of Public Health in the area of entomology and particularly, on mosquito survey and control. There was an outbreak of St. Louis Encephalitis in 1956, and after the 125 cases and 23 deaths resulting from that epidemic, the Health Department retained an entomologist to help keep tabs on the biting mosquito populations each year from April to October. Over the years I identified over 225,000 mosquito adults and larvae (immature mosquitoes). I identified about 43 species of mosquito; but only three were abundant enough to make up more than 80% of the mosquitoes identified. One, *Aedes vexans*, was a major annoyance pest, while another, *Culex quinquefasciatus*, The Southern House Mosquito, was known as a vector (carrier) of the SLE virus. It also transmits recently introduced West Nile Virus. The latter breeds in several different aquatic situations, including the storm water catch basins. One thing about mosquitoes: they often vary from species to species in the types of water receptacles they prefer. They vary as to what animals from which they get their "blood meal": reptiles and amphibians, mammals, or even other mosquitoes. Females drink blood to provide the nutrients needed to mature their eggs; males drink only flower nectar and water. Different species prefer different times of day to "bite": some are active in daytime, some at twilight, and others at night.

In Louisville, a newcomer was discovered in about 1992, and it was already well distributed around the U.S.A. It is *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian Tiger Mosquito. The common name comes from its black body accented by silvery white markings on the thorax (area where head, legs, wings and abdomen are joined) and legs. It is a vicious day-time

biter. It can drive one out of the yard and into the house. It is also a possible vector of encephalitis varieties and dengue fever. However, it has not been considered a problem so far in the U.S. as a disease carrier. It breeds in water left in home gutters, small receptacles such as birdbaths and containers, and small ponds. Other species use such water sources as well. So, may I make a few suggestions about "cultural control" of mosquitoes?

- 1) Keep gutters and other drainage devices clear of debris so water flows efficiently.
- 2) Replace water in birdbaths every two or three days, pour out all old water.
- 3) If you have a small pool for plants, include small fish such as *Gambusia* ("mosquito fish").
- 4) Use screens and screen doors to exclude mosquitoes from the house.
- 5) If you have a large open area, put up martin poles as purple martins are great mosquito feeders.
- 6) Use DEET repellent when out where mosquitoes may be encountered.

If you get a mosquito "bite", use a cortisone cream or put an ice cube on it to relieve the "itch". Mosquitoes have six-part piercing and sucking mouthparts, and pump an anticoagulant saliva into the wound (which causes the itch or sting) and then sucks that with the blood back into the body. Mrs. Mosquito is ready to lay viable eggs in stagnant (not fast-flowing) water in a day or two.

Mosquitoes are fascinating and remarkable creatures. They are responsible for over two million deaths, mostly of small children, in the tropical world each year from malaria. I have not found them to be a bad problem here; but if you plan to go camping in *Collier Seminole State Park* in southern Florida, beware! And remember: mosquitoes don't bite. They SUCK! 🐾

—Submitted by Charlie Covell

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COMMERCIAL HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL

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



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Melanie Barr 352.377.4217 boardDNA@googlegroups.com

Vice President

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Treasurer

Brian Miller 352.379.7948 boardDNA@googlegroups.com

Directors

Charles Covell 352.336.0127 boardDNA@googlegroups.com

Edith Kaan 352.379.7948 boardDNA@googlegroups.com

David Maren 352.381.1985 boardDNA@googlegroups.com

Currently there are seats available on the DNA Board. If you are curious about the responsibilities and time commitment for being a Board member, please contact any of the Board members listed above. With your help, we can continue to make the Duckpond a great place to live.

Stay Informed: Join the DNA Update email list!

To add your email address, e-mail duckpond+subscribe@googlegroups.com to join the e-mail discussion list. 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 form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Committee Interests:

Board Member Crime Watch Holiday Events Newsletter Distribution Parks Schools Yard Sale

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

I would also like to contribute to the following: *(optional)*

Duck Fund \$ _____ Roper Park Fund \$ _____ Holiday Fund \$ _____ General Fund \$ _____