



dna news

duckpond neighborhood association • NE Historic District • Gainesville Florida • February 2014



Keep up on happenings between newsletters! Check out our regularly updated website at HistoricDuckpond.com

general meeting

Tuesday, February 18, 2013
7:00–8:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
419 NE 1st Street
Fellowship Hall

agenda

GENERAL BUSINESS
Approval of Minutes, Nov. 2013
Treasurer's Report
Election: DNA Board positions

CRIME REPORT
Gainesville Police Department

GUEST SPEAKERS
Candidate Forum
(Candidates listed at right)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. All neighborhood residents are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings. Meeting dates for 2014 are Feb.18, Apr. 22, Sept. 9, and Nov. 11.

Attend our Candidate Forum on February 18th

The program for our February 18th Duckpond neighborhood meeting will be a City Commission Candidate Forum.

Although our neighborhood can only vote for the At-Large Candidates, the District Two and Three Candidates have been invited so that we can hear their answers to our questions. This way we will know which candidates we want to support financially, and we can email or call our friends in District Two and Three about who we believe is the best candidate for the seat. The Candidate Forum is our opportunity to meet City Commissioners and the other candidates face to face, discuss their views on City issues, and let them know what our concerns are too.

We will ask the candidates to make brief presentations on their reasons why they are the best choice for office, and then we will open the Forum up for questions. Please come to our meeting prepared to ask questions you may have about any issues affecting the City. Your questions do not have to relate to our neighborhood. We expect to have a very informative meeting.

Some topics for questions may be:

- Homeless Center off 39th Avenue, near Waldo Road
- NW Eighth Avenue lane change
- Water conservation
- Community Redevelopment Agency
- Gainesville Technology Entrepreneurship Center business incubator

Gainesville City Commission At-Large Seat 2 Candidates

Annie Orlando
Barbara Ann Ruth
Donald E. Shepherd Sr.
Mark Venzke
Helen K. Warren

★

Gainesville City Commission District 2 Candidates

Cheri Brodeur
Todd N. Chase
Sheryl Eddie

★

Gainesville City Commission District 3 Candidate

Susan W. Bottcher
Craig Carter

- Income disparity
- Downtown activities

The candidates have been asked to come at 7:30 p.m. which will allow 30 minutes to discuss our regular Agenda items, and we will have 90 minutes to hear from the Candidates.

Please join us at this important meeting. 🐾
—Submitted by Melanie Barr



A message from our president

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 boardDNA@googlegroups.com.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES

The Duckpond Neighborhood Association currently has four active committees: the DNA Picnic Committee, the Holiday Carriage Ride Committee, the Roper Park Landscape Committee, and the Duck and Pond Committee. None of these committees requires attending frequent meetings. Volunteering can be rewarding and fun. If you are interested in joining one of these committees, please email boardDNA@googlegroups.com.

2014 DNA BOARD ELECTIONS

The Duckpond Neighborhood Association always holds its elections at the first meeting of the year. Please come to the meeting and ask to be placed on the Board of Directors if you are interested in participating in the neighborhood association. We will also take nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer at our February 18th meeting and vote on the officers at this meeting.

Dear Duckpond residents,

I want to welcome the new people who have recently moved to our neighborhood, whether it is for a job or more likely, because a new semester started at the *University of Florida*. Please be sure to join our email list by writing to boardDNA@googlegroups.com. When you write to that address everyone on the Board will see your request. Please include your address and any questions that you may have about our neighborhood. You may also want to join our Facebook page. Our Facebook page has been used to show photos of found pets, the swans, or the high water flow in the duck pond after a heavy rain, among

many other neighborhood views. If you would like to get to know the neighborhood better, we always need new distributors for the Duckpond newsletter, especially during the summer when some of our regular distributors are gone. I hope to see you at our Duckpond Neighborhood meetings too. All residents are welcome to attend our meetings, and the next one will be especially interesting since we will get to hear from the candidates for City Commission. Hope to see you all there!

Sincerely,

Melanie Barr, President

Duckpond Neighborhood Association

Black History Society celebrates 30 years

The *Pleasant Street Historic Society* was formed in March 1984 due to the lack of attention and the demolition of historic houses in the neighborhood west of Main Street. The historic society helped place the neighborhood on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1989. Demolition is less common today, and many houses have been renovated.

In 2003 the historic society received the Claronelle Smith Griffin house to be utilized as a black history museum. In order to raise funds for this project, the Claronelle Smith Griffin Distinguished Speaker Banquet takes place in March. To commemorate the 150th Battle of Gainesville, the 30th Anniversary speaker will be Marvin Alonzo Greer. He will speak about the 55th Massachusetts United States Colored

Troops. Mr. Greer had several ancestors who fought for the Union Army, including two in the 55th Massachusetts.

One of the most well known residents in the Pleasant Street neighborhood was Matthew Lewey, who was also in the 55th Massachusetts. Dr. Paul Ortiz will speak about Matthew Lewey on February 22nd at 4 p.m. at the Yopp Center, 524 NW First Street, for the Black History Month program.

Marvin Greer is a reenactor who will appear at the *Olustee Battlefield Festival* on February 15th–16th. He is currently studying at *Morehouse College* and lives in Atlanta. For ticket information please contact PleasantStreetHistoricSociety@gmail.com or call 377.4217. 🐦

—Submitted by Melanie Barr



It's a new year! Please remember to renew your membership—or join the *Duckpond Neighborhood Association*. Membership is only \$15 per household per year!

Please fill out the form on the back of this newsletter, mail, or bring it to the meeting on Feb. 18.

Shadowy people in the neighborhood

The recent holiday activities, luminaries on display, and carriage rides attracted many residents and visitors who walked in our neighborhood. Unfortunately, we could not see many of them because they were virtually invisible once darkness fell. Our tree-shaded roads provide little warning when pedestrians or bicyclists emerge from pools of shadow. Since bicycling has its own set of Florida laws (<http://gccfla.org/laws.html>), this article will focus on pedestrian safety at night.

How many parents give serious thought to the degree of visibility of their children—or themselves—as they move around the neighborhood at dusk and beyond? During the daytime, fluorescent markings/clothing can help improve motorist awareness of pedestrians. After dark, even white clothing is of practically no value for early detection.

There is a fun and simple game families can play to help determine how well they show up when walking at night. Go to *Roper Park*, *Kirby-Smith*, or a similar area of unobstructed land at dusk or once darkness has fallen. Take along a bright LED or other flashlight. Family members can take turns holding the flashlight alongside their head at eye level while viewing other people who are walking away from them at varying distances. Experiment with different colors of clothing as well as items you know contain reflective markings. This can give a dramatic illustration of who can and cannot be seen at night and from how far away. Be sure to have the walker turn around so that visibility is measured from all directions.



Make our streets safer by reporting streetlights that are out, broken, flickering, dim, or burning during the day. Call GRU at 334.3434 or visit gru.com to report a problem.

.....
Our tree-shaded roads provide little warning when pedestrians or bicyclists emerge from pools of shadow.
.....

Key things to remember:

- Visual sensitivity is highest at the major body joints as people move. Reflective vests, while helpful, may not catch the eye of the driver as readily because the middle of the body moves less during normal walking.
- Red, yellow, and green retroreflective markings are detected at significantly greater distances than white. Retroreflective material returns light rays directly to the original light source, rather than scattering it. Products with silvery or colored markings will be highly visible to someone who is driving or standing near the light. (Many athletic shoes and book bags have reflective dots. “Dressy” clothing rarely does.)
- A goal is to be visible over all 360 degrees. Use multiple markings.

Legally, a pedestrian who is hit by a car should have a stronger case if the driver could have been expected to see him/her within a reasonable distance. If not, the case is much less clear cut. No one wants to be hurt, but few think of their invisibility as they walk and how it affects a motorist’s ability to see them, especially on rainy nights.

Some local stores have reflective tape, although most of it is for hard surfaces. For a starting point in searching for a variety of sources, try Amazon.com with a word phrase like “reflective safety tape” which will yield similar products, as well. 🐦

—Submitted by Joann Auth

OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

**Now and Then:
Bus Tours of Alachua
County’s History
Matheson Museum
(Dates listed below.)**

Hear history come alive with docent led bus tours of historical sites throughout Alachua County. The next tour is scheduled for Saturday, February 22. Guests will be greeted with light refreshments and an opportunity to browse the Museum’s collections. Cost is \$30 per person. The *Matheson Museum* is located at 513 E. University Avenue. Please email info@mathesonmuseum.org or call 378.2280 for tickets or more information. Space is limited, so call today.



Now and Then Schedule

February 22: Gainesville—The African-American Experience in the Pleasant Street Community

May 30: The History of Education in Gainesville

July 25: The History of Businesses in Gainesville

LOCAL EVENTS

A Bare Thread **Thomas Center Gallery** Through March 22, 2014

Elements of painting, color, pattern, and shape in textiles—art quilts by Amy Vigilante are showcased.

Free Fridays Concert Series **Downtown Plaza, Gainesville** April–November, 8–10 p.m.

Bring the family and lawn chairs.
For more information, 393.8746.

Spring Arts Festival **NE 1st Street, Gainesville** April 5–6, 2014

The 45th annual art festival presented by Santa Fe College runs 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, and noon to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free.

A desire to age in place

Maybe it's because I'm turning 65 this year that I've been thinking a lot about aging and how I want to spend my declining years. You might have seen the news story that said a college town is a good place to retire with all it has to offer. Gainesville serves that purpose for me and the Duckpond is the perfect neighborhood with its proximity to most amenities and services. (I tried to get my whole circle of friends to commit to moving to *The Village* when the time came, but that idea didn't work very well!) More and more people are wanting to age in place so I started thinking about how that might work.

While in Boston a couple of years ago I learned about the *Beacon Hill Village* which is a new model for the aging-in-place idea. It is a virtual village that elders within a neighborhood join to give them community and help with household tasks, activities, and transportation. I immediately started thinking about our neighborhood and how this idea might work here. To quote a *New York Times* article from February 9, 2006 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/09/garden/09care.html>), "They [the founding members] were unwilling to be herded by developers into cookie-cutter senior housing and told what to do and when to do it by social workers half their age. They had no

intention of giving up the *Brahms Requiem* at *St. Paul's Chapel* for a singalong at the old folks' home, or high tea at the *Ritz-Carlton* for lukewarm decaf in the 'country kitchens' that are ubiquitous in retirement communities."

Doesn't that sound like our neighbors? What I've learned is that members pay a monthly membership fee that could be a sliding scale based on income from \$100 to \$500 which covers weekly trips to supermarkets, rides to doctor's appointments, group classes and lectures and discounted services for home repairs and health aids. To put my own idea in . . . it could also incorporate a "time bank" so that younger members, who don't pay a fee, could accumulate volunteer hours to be used when needed. Boston is a larger more expensive area so all of this should be flexible based on our city.

Anyway, I've lived in Gainesville for more than 40 years and I plan to end my days here hopefully without being a burden on my children. I would love to keep my independence as long as possible and this village idea is very appealing to me and I thought there might be some like-minded permanent residents in our neighborhood who could benefit from this idea. I would love your feedback so email me at carlton1225@yahoo.com. 🐦

—Submitted by Christina Carlton



Summary of our 2013 holiday celebration

On Saturday December 7, our neighborhood hosted the annual holiday wagon rides and luminaries night. We would like to thank all of those who helped make this into a successful event. Many volunteers had fun on Saturday morning assembling and placing a total of one thousand luminaries along the NE Boulevard and neighboring streets. Others helped light the candles later that night, and a whole clean-up crew picked up the bags and candles on Sunday.

The *Duckpond Neighborhood Association* also sponsored the horse-drawn

wagon rides along the luminary-lit streets, starting from the *Thomas Center*. Our volunteers sold over 380 tickets, which helped to offset most of the cost. We used a new horse carriage ride company this year, and it cost a bit more than last year. We do have enough money to pay for the carriages again this year. Many people also came to see the official lighting of the tree inside the *Thomas Center*, to visit Santa, and to listen to the various groups of carolers and musicians.

A big "Thank You!" to all volunteers, and all of you who joined in this event. 🐦

—Submitted by Edith Kaan and Brian Miller

Spotlight on Neighborhood Artists

John Snyder, a 14-year duckpond neighborhood resident in the '70s and '80s, has returned to the neighborhood with clay on his hands. John is currently renting an apartment on NE 2nd Street and throwing pots at the *Art Alley Studio* on NW 1st Street, while he looks for a house with a home studio in the neighborhood.

John has been throwing pots for 13 years, creating both functional and neo-functional work. He's particularly drawn to large pots, particularly large covered jars and platters. A small selection of his mugs can be enjoyed at The Vine bakery, the first batch of a larger pot donation by the artist to his favorite neighborhood haunt.

While living in the duckpond from 1973 to 1987, John earned two degrees at the *University of Florida*, was the *Gainesville Sun's* staff feature writer for several years, and began a meaningful stint in public radio at *WUFT-FM*. John semi-retired to Gainesville earlier this year after living in Washington, DC for 21 years.

John's work can be seen at www.johnsnyderpottery.com.

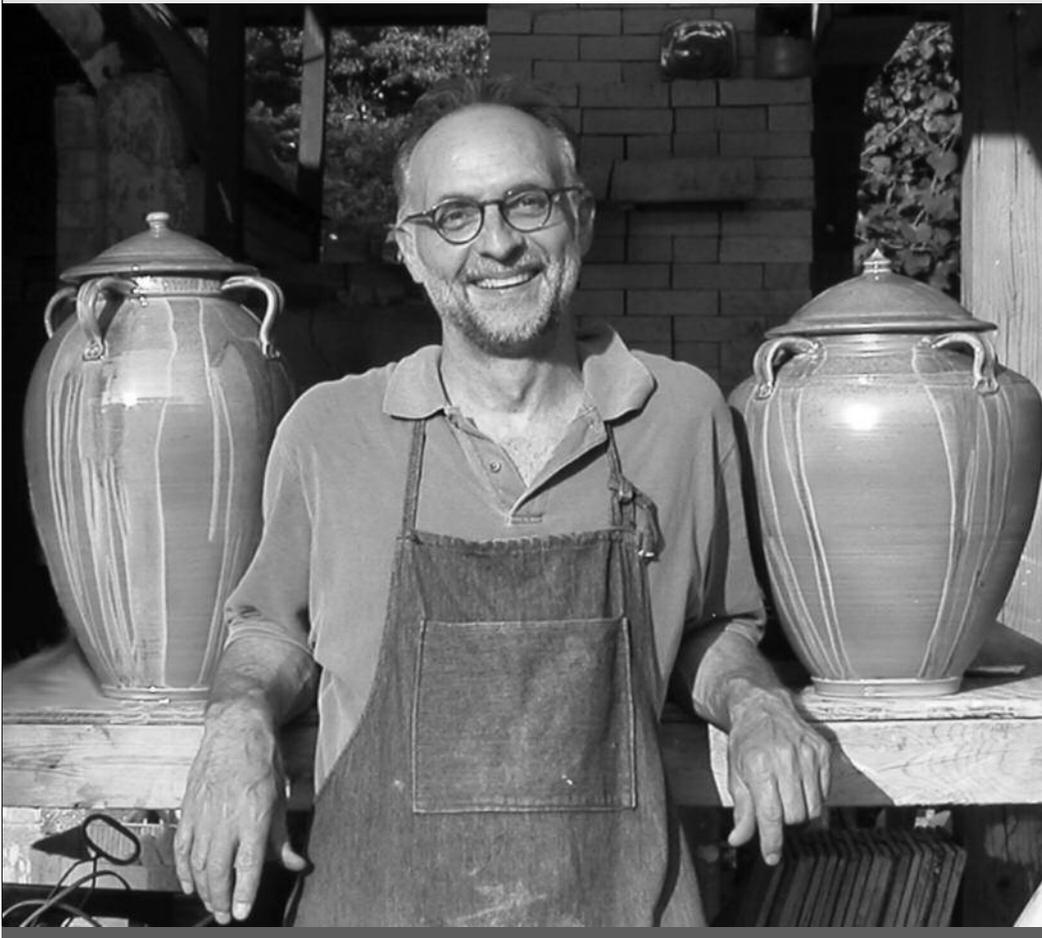
HELP WANTED

There has been some discussion about whether the neighborhood should purchase additional ducks for the pond. One concern that was raised has to do with how many waterfowl the pond can support. The pond now has three geese and two swans that are full-time residents, plus a few migratory birds. The waterfowl food provided by the neighborhood is intended only to be a supplement to their diet and is not intended to be their main source of food.

The duck committee is looking for someone who is qualified and willing to do a pond assessment. The objective of the assessment would be to determine if the pond can support more waterfowl. If you have the time and inclination to complete a project like this, please contact boardDNA@googlegroups.com.



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*. Please contact boardDNA@googlegroups.com for more information.





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MISSING PET ALERT

Please be sure to send out an email to the Duckpond email list-serve if your pet is missing. You should post a picture of your pet on our Facebook page too. Please describe the location you last saw your pet and how to contact the owner.

If you have found a pet, please use the list-serve to notify the neighborhood and post a photo on the Facebook page too.

The address for the DNA list-serve is duckpond@google-groups.com.

Tax savings for homeowners of historic properties may soon disappear

Since 1995, the *City of Gainesville* has permitted an ad valorem property tax exemption for renovations including additions, rehabilitations, and restorations to contributing properties within historic districts. The tax exemption permits 100 percent of the assessed value of the eligible improvements, and the exemption remains in effect for ten years. Recently the Commissioners approved an exemption and then referred the City's policy of historic property exemption to the Community Development Committee for review.

It is important for owners to have this valuable exemption as an incentive to renovate their property and offset the

rehabilitation costs of a historic building. Deferred maintenance and building code requirements can increase the cost of rehabilitating or maintaining an historic property. The tax incentive has a direct impact on maintaining our historic districts for future generations to appreciate.

Please join the discussion about whether the tax exemption should be renewed on Wednesday, February 19th, 4–5 p.m., City Hall, Room 16, Roberta Lisle Kline Conference Room at the Community Development Committee meeting. It is critical that we show our support for this tax incentive to preserve properties in our historic districts. 🐦



Visit these links to learn more about black swans:

<http://www.avianweb.com/blackswans.html>

http://www.theanimalfiles.com/birds/waterfowl/swan_black.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_swan

Update on the Duckpond Swans

By now, interested swan watchers are aware that the swans have abandoned their nest and there are no cygnets. Several people have asked what happened.

The answer is we just don't know. This was the first clutch for our swans. First clutches are known to have fewer eggs, and more infertile eggs, than later clutches. It could be that the eggs never were viable. No one reported seeing any cygnets. No one that we know of took any cygnets. We did hear that someone

saw one of the swans rolling the eggs out of the nest.

It's disappointing that the eggs didn't hatch; but it was interesting nonetheless to observe the nesting behavior. Some of us got to see the nesting swan turn the eggs over and settle back down on them, and the male swan sitting on the nest while the female went for a break.

Our swans are young and we can look forward to them breeding again, hopefully successfully. 🐦 —Submitted by the Duck Committee

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Duckpond Neighborhood Association
PO Box 5794
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duckpond board

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Charles Covell 336.0127

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Mary Rhodes 375.2616

Treasurer

Brian Miller 379.7948

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Edith Kaan 379.7948

George Papadi 373.1296

If you are curious about the responsibilities and time commitment for being a Board member, please contact any of the Board members listed above by calling, or email boardDNA@googlegroups.com. With your help, we can continue to make the Duckpond a great place in which to live.

Do you have an announcement, story, article, or advertisement that you would like to share? If so, please submit your information to boardDNA@googlegroups.com. Your submissions are appreciated, and are a great way to share information with your neighbors!

Stay Informed: Join the DNA Update email list!

To join, e-mail your address to boardDNA@googlegroups.com.

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 \$ _____

DNA News occasionally lists the names of paying members. Permission to list your name: yes no