



celebrating 25 years

# dna news

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



Keep up on happenings between newsletters! Check out our regularly updated website at [HistoricDuckpond.com](http://HistoricDuckpond.com)

## general meetings

Tuesday, November 11, 2014  
7:00–8:30 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church  
419 NE 1st Street  
Fellowship Hall

## agenda

GENERAL BUSINESS  
Approval of Minutes, Sept. 2014  
Treasurer's Report

CRIME REPORT  
Gainesville Police Department

GUEST SPEAKER  
Theresa Lowe  
Executive Director  
*Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry Inc.*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Note: Be sure to check [HistoricDuckpond.com](http://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 2015 will be announced in the next publication.

## Grace Marketplace discussed, Nov. 11 meeting

At our November 11 meeting, a presentation will be made by Theresa Lowe, Executive Director of the *Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, Inc.* about the GRACE Marketplace, which has been located on the City of Gainesville's Empowerment Center campus since May 15th.

Although the original intent was to start small and grow, they have greatly exceeded that intent. This is partially due to one of Gainesville's larger "tent cities" closing down at the same time they opened and many of the former residents being encouraged to relocate close to GRACE Marketplace. At the same time, the City stepped up its efforts to encourage people to move off of the downtown plaza. While there are still some homeless people choosing to sleep near the plaza, a large portion have also relocated either to the shelter at GRACE Marketplace, or to the woods just outside of campus.

The *North Central Florida Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry*, which operates GRACE Marketplace, does so through a contract with the *City of Gainesville*. That agreement is jointly funded by the *City of Gainesville* and *Alachua County*. In addition, the Coalition brings to GRACE Marketplace funding it receives through other grants, as well as through fundraising efforts. They rely heavily on volunteers and donations from the community, including the dinners that are generously provided each evening for many guests.

Plans for the Empowerment Center continue to evolve. The broad community

vision was for the campus to become a one-stop social services center and they are still looking to fulfill that vision. Discussions are underway to develop a medical clinic on campus. There are groups meeting to set up a wrap-around employment center focused not only on getting a job but also how to keep it and advance. With four large dormitories on campus, there are discussions about other types of housing options that can be offered. It is anticipated that it will take between three and five years to reach the full vision, but it is off to a good start.

The Coalition's Executive Director, Theresa Lowe, is fairly new to Gainesville, having moved here four years ago to take on the directorship of the City/County Office on Homelessness. She then moved over to provide leadership to the Coalition. Taking on GRACE Marketplace as a project of the Coalition moved what was a small organization devoted to advocacy and community coordination into the field of direct services and greatly expanded its impact on the community.

If you would like more information about GRACE Marketplace, please visit their website at [www.gracemarketplace.org](http://www.gracemarketplace.org) or stop by 2845 NE 39th Avenue, just down the street from the airport. 🐾

—Submitted by Theresa Lowe Executive Director,  
*Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, Inc.*



# 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](mailto: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](mailto:boardDNA@googlegroups.com).

## NEWSLETTER REDESIGN

*DNA News* was last redesigned 10 years ago and is in need of a new design.

If you have the desire and abilities to create a new newsletter design, and/or would like to produce our quarterly newsletter beginning in January 2015, please contact [boardDNA@googlegroups.com](mailto:boardDNA@googlegroups.com). The Board will provide the articles to you.

After approval of an initial design template, production responsibilities include: layout and design, corrections after proofreading, prepping files for a commercial printer, approving printer proofs, and overseeing delivery from the printer to the newsletter coordinator.

## Dear Duckpond residents,

The weather is beginning to cool down. I am really looking forward to being able to walk downtown without arriving at my destination dripping with sweat! October and November are among the nicest months to live in Gainesville. Not only are there so many activities to participate in that I am often double- or triple-booked on the weekends, the weather allows us to spend more time outside. It is also a great time to show off our wonderful city to visitors. If you are planning to have relatives or friends visit for Homecoming weekend, Thanksgiving, or Christmas break, be sure to let them know about the Bed and Breakfast homes in the beautiful *Southeast Historic District*. I give tours of the Southeast Historic District and it surprises me how often people don't realize the Bed and Breakfast district exists.

I also want to thank our advertisers. This month our newest advertiser is the *Paramount Grill*. It is an easy walk to the restaurant for many of us, and the owner lives in our neighborhood. Please let him know you saw his ad. *Walker Furniture*

offers a special deal for our neighbors if you mention their ad. I love their furniture and the fact that they have been in business since 1940. *Rip's Cleaners* is also an established family business from 1956. Help keep history alive by patronizing the businesses downtown. I know many of us lament the loss of *Central Florida Office Plus*, *Louis Lunch* and *Wise's Drugstore*, so do your best to support our advertisers. Their ads help to pay the cost of printing each newsletter.

Finally, this is our last Duckpond Neighborhood newsletter as prepared by our current Graphic Designer, who has decided to retire with this issue after more than 10 years.

In addition to needing a new Graphic Designer (see sidebar at bottom left), the DNA also needs people to write quarterly newsletter articles, and someone to organize the articles and ads for each publication. Door-to-door newsletter distributors are also needed, particularly in the north end of the neighborhood.

**Melanie Barr, President**  
**Duckpond Neighborhood Association**

## Summary of our September Candidate's Forum

Each year the *Duckpond Neighborhood Association* hosts candidate forums for election to the City and County Commissions and other local offices. This year's forum was held on September 9th and was well attended. The November 4th election will precede this newsletter, so the results, just like the proverbial cat, will already be out of the bag!

Vying for this year's County Commission District 4 seat were Democrat Ken Cornell and Republican John Martin. Present also were candidates seeking the District 2 seat, Democratic incumbent Lee Pinkoson and Green Party candidate Harold Patterson.

Candidates for U.S. House District 5 seat including Democratic incumbent Corrine Brown and GOP candidate Glo Smith had prior commitments.

Candidates for Alachua County tax collector Democrat and Chief Deputy Tax Collector John Power and GOP candidate Joe Costabile also could not attend.

Candidates responded to questions taken from the audience on such topics as the Grace Marketplace Homeless Center regarding additional County support, GRU governance and oversight, and Plum Creek's Envision Plan for developing eastern Alachua County. 🐦

—Submitted by George Papadi

## Community Plaza Facelift to Revitalize Downtown

The heart of Downtown Gainesville is getting a new look! After nearly four years of site studies and community discussions, Gainesville's *Community Redevelopment Agency* (CRA) is leading efforts to turn the historic Bo Diddley Community Plaza into a more iconic destination for locals and visitors alike. Improvements will include a gently-trickling water wall, a green room for performers and a second café space.

"The north plaza rejuvenation will attract more users at all times of day," said CRA manager Sarah Vidal-Finn. "A coffee-shop styled café will encourage early morning traffic and additional features will support and enhance plaza programming. The goal is to create a fun, active space for everyone to enjoy."

The plaza's bus stop will be moved slightly east in order to make the plaza more visible from University Avenue and encourage more pedestrian activity. An informational kiosk will be used to

promote special events. Safety, visibility and accessibility were major guiding principles, Vidal-Finn said.

The north plaza project is currently under design review and construction could begin as early as spring 2014.

In 2010, the agency converted the plaza's old Bethel Station (a 1920s-era gas service station) into the bustling *Lunchbox Café*. The CRA's mission is to eliminate slum and blight, revitalize Gainesville's urban neighborhoods and encourage economic growth. Projects have ranged from building the signature 13th Street DNA-helix bridge to spurring Mindtree's 400-job creation pledge with a high-wage job incentive package.

Governed by the Gainesville City Commission seated as the CRA Board, the agency reinvests tax increment dollars into target redevelopment areas.

Learn more at [www.gainesvillecra.com](http://www.gainesvillecra.com). 🐿

—Submitted by Sarah Vidal-Finn

## HELP NEEDED FOR DNA HOLIDAY EVENTS 2014

The *Duckpond Neighborhood Association* plans to participate in our usual winter holiday activities. We are looking for volunteers to help with the events on **Saturday, December 6th**. Help is needed with the following activities:

- putting up flyers on light poles to inform neighbors about the event
- placing provided sand into the paper candle bags
- placing provided tealight candles in the candle bags
- lighting candles prior to the evening event
- collecting money for carriage rides at the *Thomas Center*
- helping people enter/exit the wagons
- picking up the bags on Sunday morning

For more information, email [BoardDNA@googlegroups.com](mailto:BoardDNA@googlegroups.com).

## Do you live in a house with slidewalks?

If you read this article's headline carefully, you may suspect there is a typo, but you would be wrong. Many houses *do* have "slidewalks," especially during Gainesville's rainy season, when algal growth and the accumulation of mildew on concrete results in dark, slippery surfaces.

The trees we love so much are also contributors of shade which fosters the coatings on these treacherous stretches of sidewalk. It's even worse if you live on an avenue that slopes down toward the duck pond, making the incline especially dangerous.

This scum becomes especially noticeable right after a heavy rainstorm. Avoiding these patches at night can be particularly challenging since streetlights can't always penetrate our neighborhood's leaf canopy.

Aside from the liability issue if some-

one falls on your property, it stands to reason that safety of pedestrians should be of concern to everyone in the neighborhood. In addition to slippery stretches, sidewalk cracks and seams heave up because of tree root growth. There are a couple of ways you can improve the situation.

1) Use a power washer to scour away the growth on sidewalks and concrete/stone paths. If the walkways are on your own property, this is your best option.

2) Contact Public Works (334.2161) and request that a slick stretch on City property be power washed. They will do this, eventually, depending upon how busy they are. They will also grind off uneven edges or even replace sections of sidewalk that stick up higher than adjacent surfaces. 🐿

—Submitted by Joanne Auth

## SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE

Several of the sidewalks in our neighborhood are impeded by overgrown bushes, low-hanging limbs, grass sprigs and weeds from unedged lawns, pine cones, branches, and/or debris of other forms. Please take the time to evaluate the sidewalk in front of your home. Walkers and joggers can twist their ankle or fall as a result of unclear pathways. Also, we have a number of neighbors in either motorized or manual wheel chairs. The above mentioned obstructions make it most difficult for them to maneuver through the neighborhood.

Please help to make our neighborhood pathways more attractive and accessible/usable to *all* neighbors and visitors. Thank you.

## LOCAL EVENTS

### **Downtown Blues Festival** Friday, November 7, 7 p.m. Downtown Plaza

The *Downtown Fall Arts Festival* kicks off with a blues concert presented by the *North Florida Blues Society*. Free.

### **Roper Park Yard Sale** Saturday, November 8 8 a.m.—afternoon

NE 4th Ave. & NE 2nd Street

Neighbors and friends sell their items and help raise money for *Roper Park*. Donations will be accepted if you do not want to set up and sell your own items. Contact Melanie at 377.4217 for more information.

### **Downtown Fall Arts Festival** November 8—9 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Presented by the *City of Gainesville* Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, the festival celebrates its 33rd anniversary. Marvel at works from more than 250 of the nation's most talented artists.

### **Swing and Country Dance with Beginner Lessons** November 21 and December 19 1212 North Main Street (next to Publix)

A beginner-friendly lesson designed to get you out on the floor and dancing the same night! No partner needed. Dances are 50% West Coast Swing (a mix of Rock, Pop, R&B, Funk, Soul, and Blues) and 50% Country Western (a mix of Country Two Step, Waltz, ChaCha, Night Club Two Step). Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; 7:45—8:15 p.m. Country Western Partner Dance Lesson; 8:15—10:45 p.m. Swing and Country Social Dance. Admission is \$10 (\$5 Students). Call 352.316.1762 for more information.

## History of the *Melting Pot* restaurant building

The roots of the *Gainesville Gospel Tabernacle* go back farther than the present day structure, its history is intertwined with that of old Gainesville families and with the *Christian Missionary Alliance Society*. The building, known more recently as the *Melting Pot*, first started being constructed in late 1932 or early 1933. It took over a decade to complete since it was built entirely with donations during the Depression.

The Reverend Harry Jasper Biddlecum was the founder of the Gainesville branch of the *Christian Missionary Alliance*. Born in 1888 in Grant County, Indiana, he was an automobile mechanic, an encyclopedia salesman and served in the Navy during WWI. He attended a *Nyack Bible College* in Texas before moving to Orlando with his family. He first visited Gainesville in 1928 or 1929. Revivals were held in a tent near SE 2nd Avenue downtown.

Biddlecum began preaching at the present site on May 3, 1931 in a large tent. He lived in an apartment at the back of Dr. Sarah Robb's house next to the *Gainesville Gospel Tabernacle's* present site. Her house was moved in 1981 to 235 SW 2nd Avenue, and is now used by the *Alachua County Medical Society and Medical Museum*.

The lot on which the tent was located was owned by one of Dr. Robb's daughters, Emily Robb Dorsey, and her husband W.S. Dorsey. Emily was a schoolteacher and Mr. Dorsey owned a grocery store. They were living in a house behind the Robb house that the Robbs had originally intended to be a barn. When the Robbs discovered that the school now known as the *Kirby Smith* building was going to be built a block away, they converted it to a house and gave it to the Dorseys. It had a very large lot which had to be cleared and filled before the *Christian Missionary Alliance* could put their tent on it.

The Gainesville branch of the *Christian Missionary Alliance* was incorporated on November 13, 1931. Services were held in the tent year round.

Church members collected money

for the construction of the building from people shopping in the downtown square. Donations amounted to around \$400 to nearly \$500 each year. Rows of bricks were slowly laid around the tent by the members for the next five years.

The cornerstone was laid in November of 1933. An impressive ceremony was held with the *Gainesville Sun*.

In January 1935 the members decided to borrow \$1000 to put a roof on the building. Due to a problem with the deed, a loan could not be obtained until November when L.T. Roux lent the church \$1000 to be paid back at \$200 a year with 8% interest.

The 1930s were a period of growth for the *Gainesville Gospel Tabernacle* due to Reverend Biddlecum's popularity. Although the 1940s were a more erratic period due to WWII, the building was finally completed. The sidewalk was laid on NE 5th Street in 1947 after the City built the road. Services at the *Gainesville Gospel Tabernacle* were broadcast on the air live on WGGG during the 1940s too.

Dr. Sarah Robb passed away in May, 1937. Fortunately, the apartment at the back of the church was ready for Rev. Biddlecum to move into by then. He lived in the apartment until he had a stroke in 1956. He moved to what was then the *American Rescue Workers Home* on SE 7th Street, originally known as the Oddfellow's Home. He recovered from his stroke, but died in 1958.

The next pastor lasted only 3 years and the members decided to sell the Tabernacle. It sold for \$28,000 to Fred Cone and P. S. Prevatt in 1962. The first tenant was the *Northeast Church of Christ*. They left after two years. After being vacant for four years, the *Gainesville Revival Center* used it for one year and the *Truth Tabernacle* used it for four years. The last tenant under the ownership of Cone and Prevatt was the *Opportunity Center*, a place where handicapped people were taught skills.

When Mark and Mary Barrow bought the building in March, 1976 they spent

nearly \$15,000 renovating the building. They opened the *Barrow Family Antique Store* during the Bicentennial in July 1976. It closed in March, 1980. The followers of Guru Maharaji rented it from April 1980 to November 1981.

In July 1982 the building was sold to investors from Longwood, Florida. They gave Hope Meucci a long-term lease to

open a *Melting Pot* restaurant. The *Melting Pot* was sold in 1998 to new owners, who sold it to another person in 2003. That owner closed it in 2009.

The *Matheson Museum* acquired it in 2014. 🐦 —Submitted by Melanie Barr

*Note: This article was edited from an original article submitted for publication by Melanie Barr that was an abbreviated version of a report she wrote in 1983.*

## **Matheson Museum purchases former Melting Pot**

The primary mission of the *Matheson Museum*, officially just 20 years old this year, is to preserve, interpret, display and research a small part of the physical human record for historic Alachua County and beyond. This historic county once stretched from the Georgia border to Fort Myers, approximately a third of present Florida. *Matheson* volunteers and staff have quickly increased the collection holdings in our private, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization.

The *Matheson* has thus far relied primarily on donations of historic materials from individuals, most significantly the donation of Mrs. Sara Matheson's private home and contents in 1977. The museum reviews all types of potential donations as tax deductible gifts for the permanent collections. The oldest materials mostly date from the purchase of Spanish Florida by the United States in 1819, when immigrants started settling the interior of the peninsula in greater numbers.

The present museum building was purchased in 1988 from the *American Legion*. The building first had to be totally renovated, a process taking several years. Collections started accumulating long before this and now are housed in the museum's library room, main room, staff office, a small partial basement, the *Matheson House*, *Tison Tool Barn*, and rented off-site storage.

The plan to achieve adequate archive space was to eventually build a major

addition to the south side of the *American Legion* building, but this has proved too expensive. We next looked at the large law office immediately to the east, but this also proved too expensive. Because of the growing need for secure, suitable archive space, the search extended.

A partial solution to our space problem occurred this March, with the purchase of the long-vacant *Melting Pot* restaurant at 418 East University Avenue. This 4,200 square foot former church and then antique store owned by museum founders Mark and Mary Barrow was built in 1933. The front half of the building will eventually become another meeting room for community and museum events and the back half a state-of-the-art archive and several small exhibit rooms. The entire building probably will eventually have to be converted into an archive due to further collection growth. The first phase of renovation begins very soon with a new metal roof, followed by fitting out the gutted interior with walls and renovated bathrooms. Completing the annex requires further fundraising. The present plan is to staff the building only when in use. We are working with the *Florida Department of Transportation* to designate a pedestrian walkway across University Avenue to serve the museum and other *City of Gainesville* interests and activities. 🐦

—Submitted by David Auth  
Museum Treasurer and Board of Trustees Member  
*Matheson Museum*

## **HOLIDAY EVENTS**

**Thomas Center Holiday Events**  
Saturday, December 6  
6–8 p.m.

The *Duckpond Neighborhood Association* will once again sponsor the horse and wagon rides around the neighborhood while the Christmas tree lighting, caroling, cookies, and drinks are taking place inside the *Thomas Center*. Neighborhood volunteers will set out luminaries to light the path of the horse and wagons. Volunteers are needed to bag the candles, set them out, light the luminaries, collect money for the wagon rides, and help riders enter/exit the wagons. Please email [boardDNA@google-groups.com](mailto:boardDNA@google-groups.com) for more information.

**Polar Express Train Show**  
Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 7, 1–4 p.m.  
*Matheson Museum*

See the Polar Express Train Show at the *Matheson Museum* when it is transformed into a winter wonderland. The Polar Express along with many other holiday trains will be on display. Learn about the time when railroads were the life blood of North Florida. Experience the meticulous artwork and skillful engineering of these elaborate train sets. There will also be an opportunity to buy Christmas train sets and accessories at the show. This event is sponsored-in-part by the *Ocala Model Railroaders Club*, which serves to preserve railroad history of Ocala and Marion County. Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$1 for children 12 and under. For tickets or more information call 352.378.2280 or email [info@mathesonmuseum.org](mailto:info@mathesonmuseum.org).



**WALK THE NEIGHBORHOOD  
FOUR TIMES A YEAR**

Many of us view a new year as an opportunity to make improvements and changes in our lives and the lives of others. There are several opportunities within the neighborhood that might be of interest. If you would like to get more exercise, potentially meet a few neighbors, and do something positive for your community—consider volunteering to deliver our quarterly newsletter door-to-door. Delivery routes are broken into zones, none of which require a great deal of time or effort. It's enjoyable, and a great way to see the changes that occur in our lovely neighborhood. Please call 377.4217 or email [mvbarr@bellsouth.net](mailto:mvbarr@bellsouth.net) if you are interested or would like more information.

**Keeping Safe Over the Holidays**

If you attended our last meeting you may remember that the crime incidents in our neighborhood were minimal especially when compared to past years. I remember in the 1990s we had nearly 100 people turn out for a neighborhood meeting because we were experiencing a crime wave and wanted to know how to stop it. Contrast this with the crime in our neighborhood June through August this year consisted of five car break-ins, and no residential burglaries! Perhaps some people did not call the police when they experienced a crime, but those statistics are very impressive.

It is a good idea to walk around your part of the neighborhood and get to know who belongs in what house. If you see something or someone out of place please call the *Gainesville Police Department* at 955.1818. It is better to avert a

crime than to have to file a police report after it has been committed. If you are friendly with your neighbors they may be able to watch your house and pick up your mail and newspaper while you are away. 🐦

—Submitted by Melanie Barr



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# duckpond board

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## Vice President

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## Secretary

Edith Kaan 379.7948

## Treasurer

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Jill Dumas 317.1516

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*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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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