



Mary Lin Singers at Arts Fest (photo by Frank Zamor)

Thanks for Attending Lake Claire's Arts & Crafts Fair

by Beth Damon

Many of us gave up or amended our longtime holiday traditions in 2020, and in spite of availability of vaccinations, other nasty variants have taken this situation into 2021 and 2022. Thankfully, however, many of us have made new traditions that might replace the old ones regardless of Covid. One of these is our Lake Claire Arts & Crafts Holiday Fair that we restructured as an outside porch and driveway event in 2020 in order to keep the annual event for our neighborhood.

Neither virus variants nor politics or weather (showers for an hour or so in the morning brought out the tarps—and the umbrellas for the performance pictured above) could dampen the spirit of Lake Claire. The artists/crafters, neighbors, and food

vendors created community in the way that has attracted people to our neighborhood for many years. It was invigorating to see so many friends and neighbors enjoying music, food, and exhibiting and buying beautiful arts and crafts and baked creations.

Thanks again to our generous sponsors: **John Morgan (Park Realty); BOND Community Federal Credit Union; Copper Sky Renovations; Liliana Bakhtiari, Atlanta City Councilwoman; Hill Manufacturing Company, Inc.; Cynthia Baer Realtor; Joe Agee; Gillespy Group (Lee and Darlene Gillespy); Neal and Wright, LLC; Sharon O. Sullivan Psychotherapy; 24/7 Moving; City Issue Atlanta (mid-century modern furnishings for the home and office); Steve Rai-**

monde (Keller Knapp); Meghan Riley Bowling (The Home Team, Keller Knapp); Compass Within (Career Transition Consulting); Yom Ice Cream; and Beryl Firestone Design. Thank you to all the creative talent who took the time to display their wares so beautifully; to Clifton Sanctuary Ministries (CSM) for providing their parking lot; to the homes for our porta-potties; Debbie Livingston (for capturing the essence of the day in photographs—see pp. 7, 8, 9, and 15); to our non-artist hosts who allowed folks from adjoining neighborhoods to participate; to the musicians for filling the streets with magical sounds; and to anyone else I've neglected to mention (with apologies). Some of you may have been lucky enough to hear Mary Lin

kids from various choirs of the 2nd through 5th grades sing in the mid morning at Clifton Sanctuary Ministries (pictured above) and later in the day on Harold Avenue.

There are many moving parts to this adventure, and it would not have been a success without all of you who attended and supported the artists. We are so pleased that through vendor sales, Lake Claire was able to donate to Mary Lin and Hope Hill Elementary Schools PTAs, through vendors donating 10% of their profits (and in some cases more than 10%). This donation helps the schools with programming, much needed supplies in classrooms, etc.

Please check out a sampling of the day in pictures, on pages 7, 8, 9, 10, and 15.

Don't miss the Amazing Animated Xmas Display in LC

Opportunity to see it through around mid January

by Beth Damon

The amazing animated display is a one-of-a-kind Christmas display which we are lucky to have in our own Lake Claire. Please see the pictures on Page 16, but best to see it in person!

Don Newby and Joe O'Brien have lived on McLendon in Lake Claire for 42 years. Since they retired from AT&T, they have decorated their

front yard for all of the holidays during the years, but Easter, Halloween, and Christmas have the most elaborate decorations. This Christmas, they set up their Christmas display for the third year.

When Don was 15 years old, he made his first animated Christmas

Cont. on p. 16

A Tender Heart—and a Microchip—Lead to a Happy Ending

by Scott McLane

Opportunity! Sometimes it is of our own design, and other times it is thrust upon us. What follows are two accounts of large hearted individuals, each making a huge difference in a stranger's life.

I have a friend who owns Buckhead Paws pet sitting and dog walkers. This is his account in their monthly newsletter of a rescue success story:

"Lil, a member of our team, had just finished walking a client and

was headed to her next visit. There on Northside Drive, near W. Conway, was a pup, standing in the middle of the road. Just standing there, quivering. Cars were slowing down, going around, but the pup was paralyzed with fear. Lil pulled over, got out of her car and stopped oncoming traffic so she could go to the pup. He didn't have a collar, so she scooped him up in

Cont. on p. 5

Words about Sharon Doochin

Jennie Hillmann:

What to say about Sharon? She was a complex, loving, and independent woman who lived life her own way. After college and design school, she was a professional clown before her love of photography inspired her to start her own business scouting locations for commercials, TV, and movies around the greater Atlanta area, including the ABC morning show, "Good Morning America." She felt things very deeply, had a huge heart, and would give anything she had to a person in need. She was passionate about music, children, animals, her friends and family, the environment, and her Lake Claire community in which she lived for over 30 years.

Those of us who knew Sharon knew that she spoke unfiltered. You knew exactly where she stood on things, for better or worse. She always spoke from the heart, and nothing was held back from the people she cared about. She loved fun and loved to laugh. The pickin' parties at her Harold Street house used to be THE event to attend, with musicians from all around the area stopping by to play some tunes and hang out with friends.

Sharon had an amazing memory and could talk about past events in great detail. She loved to sit on her front porch, breathe in the beauty of her fiery red maple tree, and share stories about the history of the community, and her life growing up outside of Nashville.

She had a quick wit and playful spirit, which many times resulted in inappropriate stories and belly wrenching laughter.

Sharon did not have any children, but she did 'adopt' many of our chil-

Sharon Golubic:

When I think of Sharon, I think of how clear her love for me and my children was. I don't doubt that there was anything she wouldn't have done for us. I hope that everyone has someone in their life that can love that much. Love for people, animals, music, and the (Frazer) Forest that was her backyard and neighborhood.

I will miss Sharon, and the comfort of knowing that she is just around the corner.

I thank her for being part of creating this neighborhood that so many of us love.

Bill Fleming:

Sharon was so much more than our neighbor. She was a fierce protective co parent for our daughters,



Sharon was flower girl at my wedding in 2000, and she repeatedly told everyone that it was one of the happiest days of her life. She was so beautiful that day!!



My kids now 18 and 20 have known Sharon since birth and grew up calling her Aunt Sharon. At her funeral, Avery said that he didn't know that she wasn't actually in our (blood) family until he was 13.

dren as her own. She never missed their birthday parties, holidays, or graduations. For every big life event, she was there with gifts and excitement. Our children grew up knowing her as Aunt Sharon. For all of us, losing her weighs heavy on our hearts.



Sharons—Doochin and Golubic

who mourn her passing as a revered family member. We all miss her.

Obituary and More Thoughts to "Share"

Longtime Lake Claire resident Sharon Doochin passed away on November 27, at her home on Harold Avenue at the age of 70. For over a year, Sharon battled cancer with her signature ferocity. She passed away quickly and peacefully at home, with her loving 3½-year-old Aussie Shepherd, Betty White, nearby.

There was a celebration of Sharon for Atlanta friends and neighbors in Sharon's home November 29 and 30. Friends shared stories, photos, and celebrated Sharon's specialness. A graveside service was held on December 1 at the West End Synagogue Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sharon graduated from Madison High School in Madison, Tennessee. She went on to Peabody College, and then followed her older sister, Ellen Goldstein, to Atlanta where she attended the Fashion Institute of America. Sharon worked in several different capacities until she found her true calling as a photographer and scouting for film and TV locations, more details in the previous article.

"Sharon was a free spirit who loved her family dearly, as well as her beloved Lake Claire neighborhood in Atlanta. She was a passionate activist for the things that were important to her," said Ellen, "She was a very giving person. One of her neighbors told me that if she complimented anything that Sharon was wearing, whether it was earrings or an article of clothing, Sharon would insist on giving it to her. Another friend shared that Sharon knew she liked to sprinkle dried flowers on her parents' graves and not too long ago, even though Sharon was so sick, she went to that neighbor's house with a bag of dried flowers."

Sharon was known as a passionate activist, including her love for tree preservation. Her home backed up to the Frazer Forest. Harold Avenue neighbor Roger Swift said, "For years Sharon would place orange traffic cones along the street directly in front of her house in order to prevent cars from damaging the low hanging limbs of her precious Japanese maple tree. The beautiful tree turns a vibrant scarlet red in the late fall; the tree was fittingly in full regal the day Sharon passed away." Other friends shared memories of good times spent with Sharon around the campfire at Bill Fleming's "Georgia Boogie" Fourth of July reunion. Sharon's campsite on the property will forever be named in her honor.

Sharon was well known for her incredible memory and love of history. Her family noted, "Sharon had a vivid story to tell about each and every



person she knew, and her favorite thing to do was "SharOn." Nephew Brian Doochin said, "She lived life so vividly, so vibrantly, and that's what I loved about my Aunt Sharon. It's like we all see in black and white while she lived life in Technicolor. She was the ultimate rule-breaker. She never had a 9 to 5 job, as when she was a professional clown, and she was hilarious. What she would most want to SharOn: Live a little, feel a little, break some rules, ruffle some feathers, and have some fun with it all."



Sharon with her beloved Betty White

Sharon's beloved Betty White has found her "forever" home with a family in Nashville that includes 3- and 5-year old kids, who are so happy to have her and already love her. They live near where Sharon rests in peace. Sharon was predeceased by her parents, Joe Doochin and Bess Doochin; her brother Steve Doochin; and her brother-in-law Paul Goldstein. She is survived by her sister Ellen Goldstein; her sister-in-law Cheryl Sandler, niece and nephew Brian and Jamie Doochin, and her nieces Amy (Adam) Coffsky, Robyn (Steven) Gold, and great nephews (Jared, Derek, Jordan, and Ryan). Anyone who wishes to donate in Sharon's honor, please consider The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society or The Humane Society.

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 Cover banner photo by Sarah Coburn

The Clarion Newspaper (and its predecessor Neighbors Monthly Newsletter and its predecessor Lake Claire Neighbors Flyer) has been written, edited, and distributed by volunteers since 1989.

January Events

1–31 Many events at the Land Trust!
 See Page 13

7 Frazer Forest Volunteer Workday with Trees Atlanta, 9 a.m. to noon.
 Pre-register: fraziercenter.org/about-us/events

9–11 11:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m., Dragon Bowl in Emory Village hosting Mary Lin dine-out with 25% of your order coming back to Mary Lin PTA. Be sure to mention Mary Lin—includes take out and dine-in, excludes delivery.

14 S'mores in Wylde Gardens, see www.wyldecenter.org/event/smores-in-our-gardens/2022-10-22/

17 The Lake Claire monthly neighborhood meeting (via Zoom) is the 3rd Thursday of each month. lakeclaire.org for updates and Zoom info.

19–20 Important Meeting to discuss safety on McLendon—"Safer McLendon"—see flyer at right.

And the Wind Fell Bleeding

for Martin Luther King Jr., January 20, 1986

by Stephen Wing

How long has it been
 since I cried three times
 in a night?

Once at the newsreel
 of the three cops in riot helmets
 wrestling the portly grey-haired lady
 down

Again at the words
 swelling in the golden throat of the dreamer
 who saw the promised land and knew
 we could not conquer it by killing
 this time

And again when I heard
 how that windpipe shattered
 and the wind fell bleeding

And I kept thinking what if
 all over America in black
 factory towns and cities
 full of white marble
 people are
 walking out of chapels
 and capitol rotundas tonight
 feeling what I feel?

Important Note to Lake Claire

We hope you love the Lake Claire Arts/Crafts Fair as much as we do! To continue the tradition as an outside walking event with artists of all ages, food vendors and music, WE NEED YOUR HELP!! If anyone is interested, and more importantly, has the hours available, to work on this event next year, we would love to delegate specific deadline-related tasks to you (such as arranging sponsors, porta-potties, and other tasks). There are many moving parts to bring this off successfully. If interested, please email editor@lakeclaire.org.

SAFER
McLendon

Come see the first draft of the Safer McLendon Plan.
 Please stop by and give us feedback on our design concepts addressing traffic-calming, pedestrian safety, bike facilities and placemaking.

Thursday, January 19
(5:00 pm to 8:00 pm)
 –and–
Saturday, January 21
(9:00 am to 12:00 pm)

Neighborhood Church, 1561 McLendon Ave.
www.safermclendon.org

thank you!

The guests, staff, and Board of Directors of Clifton Sanctuary Ministries would like to say a great big thank-you for all the end-of-year donations to our ministry.

We love being neighbors!

Your donations go towards our vital work of empowering men experiencing homelessness with the skills and resources necessary to become self-sufficient and productive members of the community.

Lake Claire is awesome!

We look forward to partnering with you in the New Year.

Nature-based Summer Camp at Frazer Center

by Dina Shadwell

Happy New Year! Is it too soon to talk about summer? Not if you're a parent looking for camp options for your children. This summer, Frazer Center is offering seven weeks of nature-based camp for rising kindergarteners and first-graders. This camp is an off-shoot of Frazer's nature-based curriculum developed in partnership with Georgia State University. For the past three years Frazer staff has joined forces with Dr. Gary Bingham and his team at GSU's Urban Child Learning Center to create an early education nature-based curriculum that is inclusive of children with and

without disabilities. Following the principles of nature-based learning, this new curriculum is an "emergent" one, meaning the teachers take into account the skills, needs, and interests of the group of children in their class.

Frazer's new summer camp will also be emergent. Camp activities will be a combination of teacher-led, inclusive lessons, and child-led exploration. Local occurrences will help shape daily activities as well. Campers will spend about half of every day outside, exploring and learning in Frazer Forest. Research on nature-

based learning is a growing field, and certain benefits continue to emerge from studies, such as increased critical thinking and problem-solving skills, increased resilience, increased executive functioning, and reduced stress. Frazer's nature-based summer camp will be a fun experience that stimulates campers' curiosity about the natural world that surrounds them—hopefully, for a lifetime!

Sign up your rising kindergarten-

er and first-grader for one to seven weeks. Registration opens on February 1, 2023. Dates: June 5–July 21, 2023, hours: 9 a.m.–3 p.m., \$300/week. *Before-care and after-care will be available for an additional fee. Fees for the week of July 4 will be prorated.* For more information, visit frazercenter.org/child-development-program/summer-camps, or email Pam McClure, VP of Programming, at p.mcclure@frazercenter.org.





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Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center Closed: Surrounding Communities Concerned

by Ally Bliss and Shay Bowman

After 100 years of serving Atlanta, Wellstar downtown Atlanta Medical Center officially closed its doors on November 1. Atlanta Medical Center was a Level I Trauma Center and Advanced Primary Stroke Center and served as an essential hospital for neighborhoods in the surrounding area, including Old Fourth Ward and Midtown. Wellstar closed emergency room services on October 14 and began to relocate ongoing patients to other Atlanta hospitals in time for the official closure on November 1.

Following the closing of the South Atlanta campus, the downtown Atlanta Medical Center is the second Wellstar hospital to close this year due to a decline in revenue. The Wellstar health system bought Atlanta Medical Center in 2016 with a goal to improve the facility, and Wellstar invested \$350 million. In its initial announcement of the closure, Wellstar said Atlanta Medical Center lost \$107 million “amid decreasing revenue and increasing costs for staff and supplies due to soaring inflation.”

Community Impact. Wellstar’s announcement of its closing caused shock and backlash from communities served by the hospital. Neighborhoods that relied on the medical center lost the convenience of a nearby hospital, and roughly 2,000 employees lost their jobs in a short time period. Grady Memorial Hospital graciously opened its doors to Atlanta Medical Center’s ongoing patients

and has offered jobs to former Wellstar employees. But former employees, partners, and nearby residents all have concerns for the future of accessible healthcare for neighborhoods affected by the closing.

Lynne Scroggins, Atlanta Medical Center’s vice president of community engagement, worked closely with the community for 22 years. “This whole transition has been extremely emotional; it’s been sad,” Scroggins said. “For many of our employees, [the hospital] has been their [lives]. It will significantly affect access to care for the Atlanta community.” Access to healthcare will be challenging, specifically for people of lower socioeconomic status.

“I have many neighbors who were employed there, for whom it was convenient to be able to walk down the street to work,” Midtown parent and Old Fourth Ward resident Marcel Benoit said. “Not only that, but their children go to school here, so if something happened at school, it was easy to get to their kids.” Wellstar has been working to relocate employees to other Wellstar hospitals in the Atlanta area, calling the process “mapping.” However, there is a significant population of people with limited resources for travel outside of the city for work.

“We had over 2,000 employees,” Scroggins said. “People at the hospital have either had to leave, or they’ve

Cont. on p. 12

Tender Heart—and a Microchip

Continued from page 1.



Theo and his mom from Texas (!) reunited at the DeKalb Animal Shelter

her arms and walked back to her car, then called the Buckhead Paws number. The pup was a German Short-haired Pointer. He was a beauty, but he was frail, scared, and trembling. Lil called the Atlanta Humane Society and others to see if they would accept him. Lil, and others, called different shelters and rescues to see where they could bring a lost pup. In the meantime, I posted his picture on Next Door and Facebook, then called one of my best friends who is an active volunteer at the DeKalb County shelter. Among other ideas, he suggested that I do a Facebook search for a listing called, “Lost and Found Pets of Fulton and DeKalb”. Holy Cow! There he was! His mama had posted a mere 15 minutes before, saying that 14-year-old Rudy had gone missing near Northside Drive.

Tragic Relationship between Substance Use and Homelessness

by Kevin Posey

The Washington Post recently ran an article about how the fentanyl epidemic is transforming the U.S., and not for the better. Consider this snippet regarding San Diego, once one of the more pleasant cities in the country: “San Diego’s Gaslamp Quarter is lined with pricey new restaurants and old-style saloons that evoke the city’s history. They share the streets with thousands of people sleeping in tents and alleys, many gripped by addiction.”

Los Angeles, Seattle, and Atlanta also face this housing and public health crisis. Under pressure from some vocal advocates, these U.S. cities and others have adopted a policy of tacitly endorsing the use of public right-of-way as de facto homeless shelters. Sidewalks, underpasses, parks, bike trails, and more have become tent cities with no sanitation, security, or healthcare. These camps are where many of those who are addicted to fentanyl end up. That’s assuming that the drug doesn’t kill them outright. According to the Post, the DEA is still counting the death toll from overdoses for 2021. A few months ago it stood at 107,622, of which two-thirds were caused by fentanyl. Drug overdose deaths in 1970 were a mere 6771, yet President Richard M. Nixon still felt the need to launch the first war on drugs in response. Fentanyl overdoses are now the leading cause of death among those aged 18-49. This toll is worse than those of car crashes and gun violence.

Multiple presidential administrations on the left and right have come and gone since Nixon’s truncated tenure. Based on the escalating death toll, they all failed to deal with the homeless issue that exacerbates the unending string of drug crises. Had a proper housing policy been in

place, as is the case in much of the European Union (Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands, etc.), those with addictions could have received shelter and treatment, including institutional care that isn’t a mere prison cell. Their failure is shared by the advocates who argued in favor of using public spaces as shelters.

Leaving people with severe addictions and mental health problems to fend for themselves on the streets is the opposite of compassionate. It allows the problem to be ignored, or at least dismissed with some small change handed through a car window at a stop light.

*Editor’s note: Obviously, there is concern on so many levels for those experiencing homelessness, including this highlight on the drug crisis. Political leaders are needed to help effect change both nationally and locally, to end homelessness, improve medical care, and take care of vital needs. They are a diverse population, and it is a tragedy in so many ways, including that many veterans become unhoused. And of course, historically marginalized groups are more likely to be disadvantaged within housing and homelessness spheres. In Lake Claire, Clifton Sanctuary Ministry provides a transformational experience for homeless men. See www.cliftonsanctuary.com. A donation envelope was included in last month’s Clarion. Also, there is **a wonderful opportunity to help folks: our Lake Claire Community Land Trust has just partnered with the non-profit “Blessed Bags of Warmth” to collect coats, scarves, hats, gloves, sleeping bags, and throw-blankets for our unhoused neighbors as the cold weather worsens. Please see the article on Page 13 for details.** ~Beth*

At that moment, Lil called. I told her about the Facebook page, and she pulled it up. She and I both PM’d the mama, and Mom responded immediately. Mom met Lil at the DeKalb Animal Shelter on Chamblee Dunwoody, and there was a very joyful reunion between Mom and Rudy. Thanks to the miracle of a tender heart, networking, and social media, Rudy had gone from quivering in the street to being reunited with Mom in just two hours.”

Short and Sweet: A very nice lady (with a newborn in her car) found a small dog (later found out to be named Theo) wandering on the street.

She brought Theo to DeKalb Animal Services in Chamblee, and the staff found a microchip. Staff called and contacted a woman who lived in TEXAS! Her dog was stolen in April, and she was crying to hear that her dog had been found safe! Mom booked a flight to Atlanta and was reunited with Theo within 2 days!

All this is to illustrate that each one of us can take a small opportunity and transform a life, whether it be for a four-legged or two-legged friend. Opportunity is always there. Think of what a thousand multiplied by “each one of us” can accomplish.



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Lake Claire Arts & Crafts Fest



All photos on pages 7, 8, and 9 are by Debbie Livingston

Lake Claire Arts Fest, continued from page 7



Arts And Craft-

Bracelets 2\$
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 candle holders 1\$
 magnets 1\$
 airplanes 2\$
 Baked goods

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 Salted Caramel Sauce 1.00\$



See more pictures on pages 10 and 15!





Photos this page only, B. Damon

Wishing All of Our Neighbors a Happy 2023!

Here's to a bright New Year and a fond farewell to the old. Here's to the things that are yet to come, and to all the memories that we hold dear.

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Neighborhood Dues for Lake Claire

Suggested annual dues are \$20/year per household. Pay at lakeclaire.org via the link OR with the old-fashioned check in the mail, to Eileen O'Neill, Treasurer, PO Box 5942, Atlanta GA 31107. Since the last Clarion, the following folks paid dues:

- Carissa Vasquez,
- Chris Bagby,
- Amy Chillag,
- Lindsey Aprati,
- Maria Smithy

Mary Lin Rocket Fuel Fundraiser

Did you know that Mary Lin, your neighborhood school, has been ranked as the #1 school in all of Atlanta Public Schools? How about that it is also ranked in the top 1% of all Georgia public schools? How did Mary Lin Elementary School become the best, you ask? It's because of all the resources we at Mary Lin Education Foundation are able to provide the teachers, students, and overall facility—and that is because of all of your generous and loving support.

Our Annual Rocket Fuel Fundraiser needs your help to keep this going. Our goal is to raise \$130,000 by the end of January 2023 with as much community participation as possible = Galactic Giving!

This is the fund that fills the gap between the budget allotted by the district and the budget we need to continue to provide the first-rate educational experience our children deserve and our parents have come to expect. The Mary Lin

Education Foundation [MLEF] is trying to bounce back from three years of NO fundraising events, coupled with drastic losses in business sponsors. As an Atlanta Public School, Mary Lin is one of six schools in APS that does not receive Title 1 funding [federal funds allocated to districts that qualify as disadvantaged]. That means there is a sizable gap between the resources the school needs and the budget allocated by the district.



At non-Title 1 schools, such as budget deficits must be filled by parents, relatives and/or the local business community. The Foundation funds curriculum enrichment, professional development, enhanced technology and environmental upgrades not covered by the district budget. We are 501c3 certified and are able to provide the necessary forms for tax exemption purposes.

The Rocket Fuel Fund is the "One Big Ask" this school year. Teachers depend on resources and materials paid by the Foundation, such as the \$2,500 of STEAM lab supplies and ten new microscopes that the Board just approved for the upcoming semester. Our kids are going to love this next semester of learning, and the families are not burdened to buy any of the items used.

All donations are welcome and appreciated. Every amount counts! PLEASE consider donating to this great cause that keeps our neighborhood amazing and special. Want to know more about the Rocket Fuel Fund? Read through these fun facts or visit www.marylinfoundation.org to discover more and/or donate today!

secure.lglforms.com/form.../s/tOMgi63qVxDvx2q3zaLAYg



Hello – Safe Journey – Skiing in and around Lake Claire

Hello Birthday People:

- 3 – Leah Braun, Claire Drive, turns 16
- 3 – Lisa Morris, Sutherland Place
- 5 – Dave Kaiser, Hardendorf
- 6 – Nancy Noland, Leonardo
- 6 – Happy 4th birthday to Chad. Tina Smith says, "If you see him hanging out on his favorite spot (front porch) stop and tell him Happy Birthday. He'd love it." Connecticut Ave.
- 8 – Sam Elalouf, McLendon Ave.
- 9 – Reese Kruskamp, Clifton Rd, turning 6!
- 11 – Ezra Billinkoff, Harold Ave.
- 12 – Tamar Williams, Harold Avenue; Tiffany Mawhinney, Howard Circle
- 15 – Sophie Oren, Leonardo, seven!
- 16 – Theo Emanuel, Marlbrook, seven!
- 18 – Some famous people's bdays... Pat Del Rey, illustrious Clarion ad man[ager], Leonardo; Cynthia Baer, Gordon Avenue; and Jake Craney, Leonardo
- 19 – Genise Spenlé, Arizona Avenue
- 21 – Amelia Stevens is turning 15!
- 28 – Tom McGill, Delaware – Happy birthday, my friend! No one looks more like Larry David and Gus Fring than you!

Safe Journey:

Sharon Doochin, longtime (30+ years) resident of Harold Avenue, passed away after a year of fighting cancer, on November 27. Sharon was dedicated to serving Lake Claire. She delivered the Clarion for many years; she made sure to attend meetings when neighbors were needed for zoning issues. In addition to many other contributions to Lake Claire, Sharon actually coined this Clarion column's name for birthdays, anniversaries, and deaths, "Hello – Safe Journey." So, safe journey to you, Sharon. May her memory be a blessing. Please see article Page 2.

Take a minute, and send life cycle events for the next issue, February, by January 18

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Wellstar AMC Closed

Continued from page 5.

been mapped to other Wellstar hospitals, including those outside of the perimeter. Some people can't accept positions because it is just so far away. I have to give Wellstar credit for trying to place people." It is challenging both to employees and to neighborhood residents to have to travel farther for medical care.

"I live right here in the Old 4th Ward, and that has been a known hospital that would cater to all of us low-income folks," Benoit said. "There is always sadness about a hospital closing, but we have to learn how to adjust and overcome."

Former Atlanta Medical Center employee and Midtown parent Stuart Segerman is concerned about the implications. "There is no doubt in my mind that this is the wrong thing to do," Segerman said. "Even if I weren't involved previously, I would recognize the huge hole in trauma, critical care, and residency programs. It is nuts that they are letting this go."

Local organization *Motherhood Beyond Bars* has partnered with the Atlanta Medical Center for five years to support pregnant incarcerated women in Georgia. Every pregnant woman in the Georgia Prison System delivered her baby at the Atlanta Medical Center. Amy Ard, *Motherhood Beyond Bars*' executive director, was shocked at the closure.

"My jaw was on the floor," Ard said. Ard is not only concerned for the general population who utilized the hospital as a primary source of healthcare, but also for the women she serves with *Motherhood Beyond Bars*. "It was a vital piece of our community fabric," Ard said. "It provided services for some of our most vulnerable citizens, and there is no safety net for them. Grady exists, and it is a powerhouse, but this puts tremendous pressure on Grady."

Impact on local hospitals. The closing has a large impact on surrounding hospitals. Alex Koutsos, Piedmont Healthcare's director of primary care operations, said the closure worsens an already prevalent problem, given the size of the hospital. "In general," Koutsos said, "access to care is already hard. There are not enough beds for the amount of sick patients. When you close down such a facility, it puts more strain on Piedmont, Grady, Northside, and Emory. It gives the patients less ability to be seen, including for an urgent need." Many patients must now adjust how they receive healthcare and rely on other services. "People are acclimating to where they can get seen the quickest, especially for emergent

needs," Koutsos said. "For those only needing basic care, such as physicals or other routine-type care, it's harder and may take — instead of two weeks or three weeks to see a doctor — four or five weeks. They may opt for services like urgent care centers, CVS MinuteClinics, or telemedicine, or they may just not get treated, which is always a risk."

"Access to healthcare, in general, is already not in a good situation, and that's with every healthcare facility," Koutsos said. "Taking away a big hospital like this will have a negative impact based on patients' financial situations, and/or their ability to get to other places." Atlanta Medical Center was one of just two Level I trauma centers in metro Atlanta; the other is Grady.

"Wellstar was a trauma center," Dr. Patrick Railey, Piedmont Hospital's chief of primary care, said. "Now, this significantly shrinks down the number of hospitals in the metro Atlanta area where people can be taken for trauma care."

The closure heavily affects underprivileged Atlanta residents who cannot afford expensive medical treatment. According to the American Hospital Directory, the Atlanta Medical Center was the primary hospital for three zip codes: 30331, 30344 and 30315. The U.S. census bureau discloses that these zip codes have a median income of \$33,198 per year. "There were a decent number of patients who received indigent or pro bono care there, and now those patients will have to find their care somewhere else; the lion's share of that burden will fall to Grady and Piedmont," Dr. Railey said.

Stephanie Stoddart, an access case manager who dealt with Atlanta Medical Center referrals at Shepherd Center, the rehabilitation hospital for brain and spinal cord injuries, also recognizes the severity that the closing of a crucial trauma center will have on the community. "Much of the community in close proximity to that hospital may not have the transportation to get across town to some of the other hospitals, Stoddart said. "It's really going to be a big loss, especially for that area farther south with closures of two of their emergency hospitals. Now, almost the entire South Atlanta population has no trauma hospital nearby."

Stoddart also has concerns about overcrowding and understaffing in other hospitals. "From a staffing standpoint, many of the other hospitals have had to absorb those patients that would normally go to Atlanta Medical," Stoddart said. "A lot

of the staff are overworked; the beds are filled, and people are likely discharged sooner than they normally would just to try to accommodate the increase in the patient population."

Unfortunately, the closing of Wellstar's Atlanta Medical Center is just one of many closures across Georgia and the U.S. "It's more than just the Wellstar," Koutsos said. "If you look across the United States, there are more and more hospitals that are closing down, especially in rural areas, for communities that aren't able to pay their bills or are dependent on other resources to help cover their costs. This trend is probably not going to go away anytime soon, and that's why sometimes you see hospitals like Piedmont get bigger; we acquire other hospitals that are maybe in financial need, or need assistance in other ways, and they just become part of a big system."

Despite the negative impacts the closure will likely have, Koutsos encourages people to be understanding of why the hospital closed. "People are upset; they feel like they're being done wrong," Koutsos said. "Wellstar may be our competitor, but I don't think Wellstar is doing this maliciously. At the end of the day, they've got to be able to pay their doctors

and pay their bills to keep the lights on. If you've got a part of your business that is losing money, and you're unable to keep it sustaining, and it starts to drain the other facilities or parts of your company, then unfortunately, you've got to make a tough decision about whether it makes sense longterm.

Stoddart hopes government officials and hospital officials will look into ways in which improvements can be made. "I hope that there are some resolutions that come about quickly, and hopefully it will come from the state helping out, because this has a big impact," Stoddart said. "I don't know if it's really being addressed as it should be, considering there is such a large demographic that is going to be so highly negatively impacted."

Ally Bliss and Shay Bowman are Seniors at Midtown High. Ally is a lifelong Lake Claire (Leo) resident and is Lifestyle Associate Managing Editor for the Midtown Southerner, and Shay is the Lifestyle Managing Editor. This was written for and first published in the Midtown Southerner, and it is reprinted here with permission, slightly edited due to Clarion space considerations.

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Kids Rule at the Land Trust!

by Sunshine Allard

Are You Ready for Our Kids Fest in the Spring? Calling all kids, moms and dads, this announcement is for you! We are having our first Kids' Festival at the Land Trust this spring, on Saturday, May 13, 2023. This super extravaganza will include (but will not be limited to) a scavenger hunt, fairy village, art projects, hide and seek, musical chairs, mini-golf, cake walk, kids' bands and choruses, circus performances, animal

show, kids' yoga, veil dancing, hula-hooping, and more!

In order to achieve all this, we are looking for parents, neighbors, and kids of all ages to get involved. Is there a family-friendly activity you would like to see or help to organize? You can build a fairy house for our village, bake a cake for the walk, help facilitate one of the activities, or sponsor added surprises. Share an art project or supplies! Help organize

the site to hold all of this! Or help underwrite expenses as a Land Trust Community Business Partner.

We are totally open to additional kid-oriented ideas, especially if you'll help to facilitate one. Please call or text Sunshine Allard at 678-508-6632 to find out more, to volunteer at the Fest, to help with planning, or to sign up for an activity.



Help Keep Our Unhoused Neighbors Warm This Winter!

Join the Land Trust Coat Drive to Support "Blessing Bags of Warmth"

by Amber Corbett

Can you help? The Lake Claire Community Land Trust is joining forces with our fellow nonprofit Blessing Bags of Warmth to collect coats, scarves, hats, gloves, sleeping bags, and throw-blankets for our unhoused neighbors. Drop off items, either new or used, on Miriam's porch, 300 Arizona Ave. or Elizabeth's two doors down at 290 Arizona Ave., Sunday, January 8 through Saturday, Jan. 14.

On Thanksgiving weekend in 2020, Blessing Bags of Warmth founder Sherri McCoy and her then 8-year-old daughter Rose were delivering meals to a homeless encampment in Atlanta when Rose exclaimed, "It's so cold. I just want to help them, Mommy!" The people were asking for coats and blankets, and Sherri and Rose had none; Rose begged her mom to get some and come back. They headed to a nearby thrift store with the money saved up for Christmas and bought what they could. They got some backpacks, blankets and a few coats. Then they stocked up on some food and hygiene items and created informational packets full of local resources. The "bags of warmth" were filled not only with necessities but also with hope. After passing out

the bags, Rose asked if they could do it again the next weekend, and a mission was born.

Blessing Bags of Warmth is both grassroots and 100% community funded. According to Sherri, they are "only able to serve through the generosity of our neighbors." To date, they have served over 3,000 unhoused individuals in the Atlanta area, and the goal is to continue to do so with our continued support. Their mission: "We have a desire to encourage self-worth within our unhoused population through personal, face to face contact . . . Building a dialogue of understanding and offering the simplest of basic necessities, from personal hygiene to clothing, is beginning to show that a little human-to-human compassion is immense in bridging the gap between us." Last winter, Blessing Bags of Warmth distributed an astonishing 763 blankets and sleeping bags, 519 coats, over 1,000 winter accessories, and hundreds of pounds of food. The goal this year is to do even more and be prepared ahead of cold weather instead of scrambling at the last minute.

According to Partners for Home (PartnersForHome.org), of Atlanta's approximately 3,200 homeless indi-

viduals, about 1,000 of them are unsheltered, living either on the streets or in vehicles. Two out of three are dealing with a serious mental illness and/or addiction, and one out of ten are either veterans or survivors of domestic abuse. A staggering 63% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, which is a near historic high. An unexpected expense such as a medical bill or a car repair can cause a family to lose their home.

Let's do our part to help, Lake Claire. Let's start our spring cleaning a little early and prioritize those closets! And keep your eyes peeled for deals when out shopping. If you prefer to make a monetary donation directly to Blessing Bags of Warmth, every dollar helps, and it's tax deductible. Please visit www.BlessingBagsOfWarmth.com or www.LCCLT.org/new-events for more information.

Venmo: @BlessingBagsOfWarmth; PayPal: BlessingBagsOfWarmth; Zelle: blessingbagsof-warmth@gmail.com. To qualify for a tax deduction, use tax ID number 86-1848959, or donate through their fundraising partner Give Butter: givebutter.com/WarmthATL.

Upcoming and Ongoing at the Land Trust . . .

Tue. Jan. 3, 17, and 31: **Walking Club** with the Frazer Center, 1–2 p.m. Walk from the Frazer Center to the Land Trust and back with members of the Center's program for disabled adults. Ongoing every other Tuesday.

Sat. Jan. 7: Drum Circle, 8–11 p.m., \$5 donation requested. Rain date: Sat. Jan. 21

Sun., Jan. 8–Sat. Jan. 14: **Coat Drive** for Blessing Bags of Warmth. See article this page.

Thu. Jan. 12: Land Trust Board meeting, 7–8 p.m. All are welcome! Contact info@LCCLT.org for a Zoom link.

Sat. Jan. 21: Community Work Day, 1–4 p.m. Pizza follows. Rain date: Sat. Dec. 28.

Sat. Feb. 11: "Dead of Winter" Dance with the Ex-P.A.N.D. Band & Webster, 37 Main Rock Café, Avondale Estates

COMPOSTING AT THE LAND TRUST

Our 3-step compost system is accepting contributions of kitchen waste. Your food scraps will be composted on-site, and we will use them in our community garden plots.

Our compost workers (microbes, bugs, & worms) are vegan raw-foodists who also love coffee grounds and egg shells. Contact Lauren at Lauren.Ladov@gmail.com.

Land Trust Benefit:

"DEAD OF WINTER" DANCE

with the Ex-P.A.N.D. Band & Webster

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023

37 Main Rock Café (formerly Towne Cinema), Avondale Estates



LAKE CLAIRE KIDS' CORNER

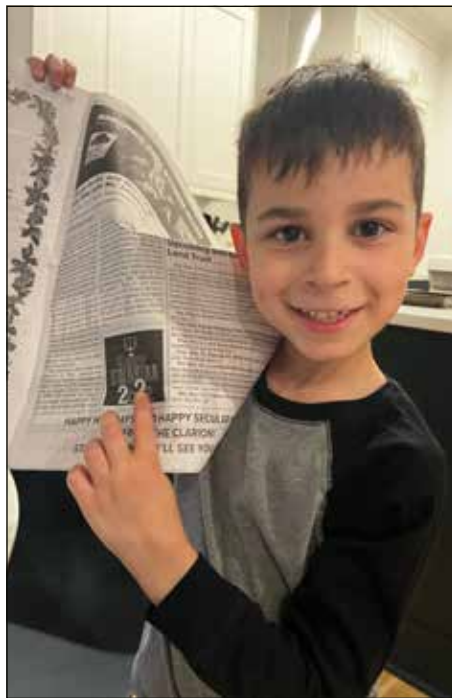
We hope this series is fun and a way for young Clarion readers/writers/artists to participate. This month Sawyer Klehr wrote about his creative and unique activity at the Lake Claire Arts Fest last month. Please see more on the Arts Fest on Page 1 and pictures of our many kid participants on pp 7, 8, 9, 10, and 15, including a picture of one of Sawyer's chess matches on Page 7.

Thank you, Sawyer, and congratulations on your chess skills—and writing skills. Judging from your writing, you take after your mom. To all the Lake Claire children who read and contribute

to the Kids' Page each month, we appreciate you. Add **your** creativity to this page! Send to editor@lakeclaire.org, by **January 15-18** for the next issue of the newspaper, which will be the FEBRUARY issue.

Contest Winners!

Our winner of last month's contest to find the picture of Kwanzaa is Hudson Frank! Hudson is six years old, a first grader at Mary Lin, who lives on Hardendorf. Coming in a close second place, Hawthorne Alden and Genevieve Douglas tied. Hawthorne lives on Colebrook Street and is in the 4th grade at Mary Lin. Genevieve is age 7, also at Mary Lin, and lives on Ridgcrest (our first Ridgcrest winner). Congrats, Hudson, Hawthorne, and Genevieve! You won the contest over a VAST number of Lake Claire kids who participated. Your prize is your picture in the Clarion. Attention other Lake Claire kids—Add your name to the list of winners. To all of those kids who didn't win, many of you came close this time. Please do keep reading this page, and keep playing. This is the Clarion editor's



Hudson

"baby" and favorite part of the paper!! See our new contest below.



My Activity During LC Art's Fest

by Sawyer Klehr

I love to play chess, so I decided to set up a chess table at the Lake Claire Craft Fair to help raise money for our schools. It was called, "Beat the 9-year old in chess in 5 minutes." I charged

\$1 to play me, and if you won, I would give you your dollar back. So far, I'm undefeated. (There were only a few games, because the weather was not good for the chess boards.)

Editor's note: Sawyer is too modest to mention, but he took 1st place over all in both hours of chess as the highest point scorer. His medals mean he completed the most puzzles and got close to beating the coach. The coach said, "Great stats! Sawyer had the highest percentage at Mary Lin, and of all my 7 schools, the highest point earnings. He attacks me over the board with the most confidence, and forces trades that other students don't consider doing." So congrats, Sawyer, and at the next fest, we'll see who DARES to challenge you!!

Claire is eligible, except that you cannot win two months in a row. For extra credit, tell us anything else you know about Dr. King, or if there is something special you will do on MLK Day. The extra-credit prize is that you'll be a featured writer/artist in a future Lake Claire Clarion with your original work. **The deadline is JANUARY 15-18. Hurry and look; competition is always stiff for this coveted prize.**



Hawthorne



Genevieve

New Contest

Hello, Kids! Somewhere in this newspaper is a graphic of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "MLK," as we sometimes say, was born in Georgia in 1929. He became a great speaker and a famous American leader, one of the main leaders of the civil rights movement. "Civil rights" are rights that should belong to all of the citizens of the country. The civil rights movement in the 1960s focused on equal rights that were long overdue. Dr. King hoped to make things equal for

people regardless of their race/color of their skin. Our hidden graphic this month is a graphic of this important American leader. The winner/winners will have their pictures in the next Clarion. To win, send e-mail to editor@lakeclaire.org, identifying the page number where you find the graphic, and include your name, age, school, street, and grade, along with a photo of yourself. **(Please tell your parents to send large picture files, 1mb+. Any child from Lake**



Beth and Annsley, co-organizers

Wild in Lake Claire

by Sara Gottlieb

The notion of predators in our midst makes many people anxious to the point of irrational. Predators live among us, nonetheless, and I recommend taking the time to learn more about their role in the ecological system. Without population control by predators, prey animals can suffer “boom and bust” cycles where too much growth during periods of abundant food are followed by mass starvation. When wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 after an absence of 70 years, they caused a ‘trophic cascade’ that changed the entire system to a more diverse one and even restored the physical geography by reducing grazing pressure in riparian areas next to streams.

I’ve been delighted this year by the frequent presence of a red-shouldered hawk in my backyard and surrounding properties. I wrote about the bird in an earlier column, and it continues to make its presence known. Becky Pope snapped a photo of the hawk perched on a fence at the Land Trust. I was sowing some fall vegetable seeds in the CoHousing garden when I caught movement out of the corner of my eye that turned out to be the hawk flying to the ground (probably in pursuit of one of our many squirrels). It then flew up to the railing on our 2nd story deck and then over to a tree. I was able to extract some impressive photos from a short video I made of its flight.

Speaking of predators, Margaret W. wrote to say that she saw two

coyotes in her backyard at mid-day in early December. She thought they were interested in the neighbors’ chickens next door. Neighbor Bryan D. came over and chased them off with a broom. Pet owners in the neighborhood should beware [Sara notes: another reason to keep your cats indoors at all times!] There is some debate and controversy about the presence of coyotes in Georgia, and if you’d like to learn more, I recommend checking out the Atlanta Coyote Project and reporting any sightings you make through their website at atlantacoyoteproject.org/.

Debbie L. observed 15 turkey vultures converge in the trees at the southern edge of the Frazer Forest near Marlbrook Drive. They stayed for about 15 minutes and then flew away.

Meredith W. watched a gulf fritillary caterpillar make a chrysalis under the eaves on her screened porch in early October. Meredith had nearly given up on it when on November 8, after much cold weather, she emerged as beautiful as could be. Meredith was impressed by her patience and her late-season determination.

Meredith has been happy the golden- and ruby-crowned kinglets are back, and she reports seeing lots of them around. She has also seen several hermit thrushes, along with the many sparrows, finches, robins, cardinals, and others who seem particularly busy right now.

It’s mating season for deer, and Meredith has been enjoying seeing them more often. She has watched



Coyotes in Margaret W.’s backyard!

a few bucks trailing or sitting near does, and twice she saw bucks make a scrape—scraping away leaf litter, rubbing their antlers on low branches of nearby trees, and squatting to leave their scent. In spring, there may be an abundance of fawns!

Bernard S. reported a wasp nest that had been abandoned by its occupants, as they apparently do every winter. Richard P. and Bernard cut it open to see what was inside and declared that wasps deserve an architect diploma for their design. The nest had several levels of larval housing surrounded by layers of paper insulation. Very ingenious! Bernard also saw a leaf bug during a Land Trust work day, pointed out by a volunteer.

If you’ve made a New Year’s Resolution to spend more time outside, I encourage you to be observant—look up, down, and maybe even bring a pair of binoculars along in case something far away catches your eye. You may be surprised, delighted, or even just curious about what you see. If you are, please share it with us here.

For now, I’ll leave you with this excerpt from the poem *Hawk* by C.F. MacIntyre:



Broad-shouldered hawk in the Co-Housing garden

He draws a circle in the sky
and never moves a wing.
Its center pivots where his eye
rests on a stricken thing.
His golden gaze is ominous.
Let small beasts have a care
and not affect the frivolous
when Raptor rides the air.

If you’d like to report a wildlife sighting for inclusion in a future column, please email sara.gottlieb@gmail.com

Animated Xmas Display

Continued from page 1.



display to go in his home’s picture window in Kokomo, Indiana. He made it by dismantling his battery-operated toys and taking the parts and motors from the toys to construct it. It had two hand-sewed characters that were mice, so he called it the

“MouseHouse.” Don’s dad, who was a TV repairman, contributed a piece of equipment that converted 110 volts to battery power. Don tore up more toys to get more moving parts, used his tinker toys and old record players. He made everything with a toysaw and a glue gun. He changed out the mice for four kittens. The story line is of 3 naughty kittens that have stayed up past their bedtime on Christmas Eve. Santa Kat catches them in the act of opening their Christmas presents. Before 2020 in Lake Claire, the last time the “MouseHouse”; was on display was 47 years ago. Don and Joe refurbished the display in 2020 and built a special Christmas shed for their front yard to display it.

Don’s skills include building things and also playing the piano. He recorded himself playing the piano for background music on the



display. The cat in the first picture was part of it. As an aside, on this picture, I didn’t use Don’s suggested caption, “Naughty Kitten dances on the bed after receiving a teddy bear for Christmas.”

If you remember and loved the Christmas windows at Rich’s, then you will enjoy this scaled-down version, and if you are too young to have



heard of Rich’s, you will also love it. **The display is planned to be in place this year until around mid January. If you haven’t seen it, it is worth your while to make your way to the end of McLendon near Ridgcrest by that time. It runs between dark and 9 p.m.**

Bring the family, and enjoy!