



Holiday Fair December 7 – photo by Debbie Livingston

Lake Claire Holiday Fair/ Walking Tour

With the clear skies making us smile ear-to-ear, our adventurous arts & crafts vendors, food trucks, and musicians braved the cold 40s, setting up tents and tables on the morning of December 7. As the day progressed, the sun was brighter, and the temperature reached a still brisk mid-50s. With the help of hot

soup and hot beverages, many neighbors and visitors to Lake Claire immensely enjoyed the day, joining the artists/crafters, musicians, and food vendors to create community in the way that has attracted people to our neighborhood for many years.

Cont. on p. 8

Two+ Homes in Lake Claire

by Beth Damon

This continues our series on Lake Claire folks who have lived in two or more homes in our LC ‘hood. Some people downsized, some upsized, and it has been so interesting—and so much fun—hearing these folks’ stories. This month’s article features Meg and Matt Hanna.

Meg and Matt had lived in a variety of intown neighborhoods through

their 20s, including Midtown, Virginia-Highland, Morningside, and East Atlanta Village. Daughters Ellie (now in 2nd grade at Mary Lin) and Claire (now K at Lin) came along in 2016 and 2019. Meg and Matt said that they lived in some great spots, but were starting to keep an eye out

Cont. on p. 10



Claire and Ellie in front of the Hannas’ first home on Marlbrook

Lake Claire Park News

by Judy Hammack, Friends of Lake Claire Park

Lake Claire Park is a happening place these days with contributions from many groups; some work is maintenance, some volunteer, and some city mandated. Here are some of the changes occurring:

Invasive removal. Friends of

Lake Claire Park funded a Trees Atlanta/Forest Restoration project. Trees Atlanta/Forest Restoration’s Sav Tello led a group of 36 neighbors and volunteers in invasive removal along the maintenance road leading from McLendon to the park.

Tree planting. In November, Trees Atlanta, as part of Plantlana, coordinated neighbors and volunteers to plant 30 trees in the park and surrounding areas. These plantings are especially noticeable on the path from McLendon, with bigleaf

magnolia, beech, and other trees dotted along the service road.

Tennis court renovation. In July, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation assembled a

Cont. on p. 15

Lake Claire Creatives: A Recap and A Request

by Jane Branscomb

I hope readers have enjoyed getting to know some of our Lake Claire creatives even half as much as I have since launching this column last year. Today I review the neighbors we’ve featured so far—if you missed

any, it’s easy to pull up past issues in the Clarion Archives at LakeClaire.org—and renew my request for referrals. Do you know a Lake Claire resident with a creative talent, whether accomplished amateur or consum-

mate professional, in, say, quilting or choreography? Animation or songwriting?

Email me: janebranscomb@gmail.com (*JaneBranscomb at gmail dot com*). I try to cover a geographic, de-

mographic, and thematic variety, so be creative!

I also renew my invitation for any writers out there to let me know if

Cont. on p. 7

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The Clarion is published monthly. The deadline for advertising and editorial consideration is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Letters to the editor should be limited to 300 words or fewer. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not those of Lake Claire Neighbors, Officers, or the Clarion Staff. 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.

Calendar for January

In addition to these, please see the variety of neighborhood events on the Land Trust calendar, page 11.

4 Frazer Forest Volunteer Workday with Trees Atlanta, 9 a.m.–noon. Help restore and maintain our beloved neighborhood old-growth forest. Space is limited; pre-register at frazercenter.org/about-us/events.

16 **The Lake Claire Neighbors monthly meeting.** (via Zoom) is the third Thursday of each month. The meeting will be hybrid—in person at the Frazer Center and on Zoom. lakeclaire.org for updates and Zoom info. Sign up for neighborhood mailings/Zoom at lakeclaire.org/resources/newscast-sign-up/

18 Fiddler's Green. The 1st Existentialist Church in Candler Park. January's featured artists: CJ Jones & the Spirit Bones and Peetmidnite. Info: aaffm.org/aaffm-events/

18 Alliance Theatre start of the show *Doctor De Soto*, on the Hertz Stage. Ages 6-10. www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2024-25/doctor-de-soto

20 Great volunteer activity for MLK Day! Lake Claire Park clean-up, 9a.m–noon in the park. See article Page 1

20, 25 & 31 Freedom Park Conservancy events, see article Page 1. For info, flcpark@lakeclaire.org. To register for MLK Day on the 25th, www.treesatlanta.org/get-involved/events/mulching-in-lake-claire-park-a0VUd00000ESYd1MAH.

24 Horizon Theatre presents, back by popular demand, *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*, by Dave Maloy. Running through Feb. 23. Tix/info: www.horizontheatre.com/.

25 **Mary Lin Dine-Out.** Osteria 832 on North Highland, brunch dine-out. Mention Mary Lin for 25% (!) back to our PTA. 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Classified:

Lake Claire living! Fully furnished 2-BR, 2-BA open floor plan apartment with large bonus office (big enough for 2 to share), gourmet kitchen, and lovely private patio. \$3000 per month includes all utilities and internet. Call 404-431-3726.

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Dine-outs to Support Mary Lin PTA

Please support Mary Lin PTA and generous local restaurants who participate in this program the whole school year, AND, of course, have delicious food while doing so! This month, see the entry under January 25 for Osteria 832 on North Highland. As noted, 25% of proceeds will

go to Mary Lin PTA when you mention the fundraiser.

For more information, contact Aviva Berman, avivaberman@gmail.com. Please spread the word about this great program and check the Clarion calendar each month.

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Dekalb Animal Shelter 2024: Our Successes and Our Failings

by Scott McLane

The DeKalb Kennel Expansion breaks ground: Wrapping up the year, and with the help of DeKalb County government officials and advocates, Dekalb County broke ground on a kennel expansion at DeKalb County Animal Services called the “Pet Neighborhood.” This additional kennel space aims to house 120 dogs and is an important initiative to address the current shelter overcrowding. The first of the kennels are expected to open this Spring 2025!

Support for Dekalb Pet Owners: Additionally, DeKalb County

provided funds throughout the year to help LifeLine provide free spay/neuter services through SNIP (Spray/Neuter Impact Program), and began monthly pet food pantries for the county’s pet owners! The more pet families that these offerings can help to keep together, the better.

DeKalb Board of Commissioner legislative initiatives: Litter Permit Legislation – To regulate and reduce unlicensed breeding of companion animals. This should be passed by the new Commission in January, 2025. **Transient Sales Leg-**

islation – To prohibit the sale of animals in public spaces such as parking lots and street corners. **PASSED IN SEPTEMBER!** These two proposals are critical steps toward addressing pet overpopulation.

Record-Breaking Healthy Pets: Nearly 5,000 dogs and cats were provided FREE services through LifeLine’s Healthy Pets events in 2024! This is more than any previous year. Healthy Pets are held in the spring and fall, giving pets access to free vaccines, spay/neuter surgeries, microchips, food, more!

Foster Program Reaches New Heights: With more than 55% of Dekalb shelter pets living in temporary foster homes, the foster program is now one of the largest in the United States. Lifeline Animal Project has a fostering opportunity for every person’s schedule and experience to support pets with unique medical or behavioral needs, including vulnerable puppies and kittens and pets awaiting outcomes of court cases or rescue transport. The Shelter would not be able to save lives without its foster parents!

Celebrity Spokes-pups: The Famous Miss Peaches and Pete the Beagle were adopted by media personality and founder of Barstool Sports Dave Portnoy. They are living a life that most only dream of living! Dave’s online advocacy for adopting from shelters and attendance at LifeLine’s Good Human Gala with Miss Peaches has garnered an incredible amount of support for Lifeline and DeKalb shelter pets.

Kingston. How we have failed our four-legged friends: Until early in 2024, Lifeline Animal Project, the non-profit which has the contract to manage the Dekalb



Kingston

County Animal Shelter, had managed through unmanageable odds to maintain the “no-kill” status which is the most fundamental of its core values. When the shelter, built in 2017 to house 288 dogs, reached 670 dogs drastic measures had to be taken just to be able to function. There were dogs in crates in the hall and lobby, storage rooms, conference room, and in every office, a danger to staff, volunteers, and the dogs, not to mention the strain on the quality of life for every animal in Lifeline’s care. Special events and promotions, reduced adoption fees, etc., were not enough, and Lifeline had to turn to humane euthanasia when all else failed. Below is the story of Kingston, one of those failures. Sadly, his is the story of hundreds of dogs suffering in the shelter.

Cont. on p. 13



Allister Belle, a Lake Claire student at Midtown High School (2nd from left) with G3 Robotics teammates Roxy R., Milo P., and Lela M., with the FRC Team 1648 Robot at FIRST Robotics Peachtree District Competition, March 2024. Photo by Russell McIntosh

Please Give G3 Robotics the Help We Need to Succeed

by Allister Belle

In today’s day and age, we are all pushing for the future of engineering and technology. As a junior at Midtown High School, I’m proud to be a member of First Robotics Competition (FRC) Team 1648 G3 Robotics. Robotics has been extremely important to me and everyone on this team, teaching us invaluable life skills from engineering solutions to logistics management and leadership.

But why donate to us? Unfortunately, what we do isn’t free. This year, we have all the ingredients for an award-winning team. But we need money to build our robots, maintain them and make upgrades to the shop we design and create them in. You can make a real difference to our

team members! By donating to G3 Robotics you’ll help remove financial boundaries and push for a better future—one where every student in Lake Claire and nearby neighborhoods has the opportunity to pursue a STEM field and receive the support they need to succeed. Please visit our Go Fund Me page and help if you can: gofund.me/94fd18f7

G3 Robotics at Midtown High School is a member of the non-profit Georgia Robotics Alliance. All donations are tax deductible and the proceeds go directly to the team to meet its needs. To learn more about G3 Robotics, or to become a team sponsor, email boosters@g3robotics.com.

Thank you, Lake Claire!

The guests, staff, and Board of directors of Clifton Sanctuary Ministries would like to give a great big THANK YOU for all the end-of-year donations to our ministry. We love being your neighbors! Your donations make a difference as we work to create a transformational environment for men in the community who are experiencing homelessness. Please know that your time and talents are so necessary in helping us provide the necessary resources to our guests, to assist with their journeys of becoming self-sufficient and productive members of the community. As we like to say, Lake Claire is awesome! We look forward to partnering with you in the new year.



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Wild in Lake Claire

by Sara Gottlieb

The hole in the boxelder tree just outside the window in my home office that I wrote about last month continues to be a source of fascination for many creatures. This month I've observed squirrel pairs investigating it inside and out on multiple occasions, as did a gorgeous red-bellied woodpecker. Just today, I watched a downy woodpecker poking away at the many smaller holes and crevices along the whole length of that tree, looking for insects to feed on. I have never been a fan of boxelder trees—they seem to age into ugly, gnarly, hole-filled gargoyles that send up unruly suckers for years before dying, if they ever totally die. To the untrained eye, they hold no appeal. But to our native wildlife, these trees provide shelter, food, and habitat. Here are some more interesting facts about boxelder trees. They are not elders (think elderberry) at all, but maples, and the most widespread maples native to North America! Boxelders have that common name because their wood used to be used to make boxes, crates, and pallets. They have a short lifespan (about 30 years) and are plagued by many diseases and pests, but they are highly adaptable and will grow in a variety of rural and urban settings, including disturbed areas where they help control erosion.

Bernard S. wrote to say that he was hosing down his retaining wall in order to fill cracks in the mortar, when suddenly out of one of the cracks came two lizards like he had never seen before (see his photo above). They looked as if they had put

on an Elvis costume from his Vegas days! He found out later that they are Turkish gecko (aka Mediterranean house gecko), and come from the Mediterranean region. These geckos tend to be nocturnal and have been increasing in numbers around Lake Claire in recent years.

I must mention that I made an identification error on the bug observation Bernard submitted last month, which I had said was an assassin bug, but is actually a leaf-footed bug. A friend of mine who is an invasive species ecologist with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) caught the error when I posted my column to Facebook.

Jane B. sent in an observation her husband made at their property in South Dekalb County. He said that as he was driving down the gravel road, a hawk flew in front of him and dropped this (see photo by Jane's husband); it appears to be a snake carcass, which evoked a feeling of awe for Jane.

Meredith W. was recently watching a doe and her nearly grown fawn in the woods at Lullwater Preserve. Suddenly the doe, who was only about 25-30 feet away, went down onto her front knees and then fully laid down. Her young one soon followed. Meredith was deeply touched that they felt safe enough to lie down in her presence. She soon joined them on the ground and spent a lovely afternoon taking in the colorful leaves that seemed to glow in the autumn sunlight and enjoying the deer's peaceful and beautiful presence.



Bernard's gecko

Frank W. saw a beautiful hawk in Inman Park the other day. It flew right past him and parked itself in a tree. He also saw quite a few robins and blackbirds at the end of Arizona for several days in a row. In addition, he witnessed 20 or more robins on the bike path close to downtown and about 40 blackbirds close to Inman Park. He wondered if they're the same birds that were on Arizona?

I too have noticed that the mobs of robins and red-winged blackbirds have begun arriving in the neighborhood already. It seems a bit early, but this fall into early winter has been so strange, with the weeks of drought, punctuated by deluges of rain along with unusually warm periods and several days with overnight temperatures below freezing. Many plants have been blooming out of season, including some rhododendrons which normally only bloom in the spring.

One final thing I noticed while working in my vegetable garden, shoring up my winter greens and seeding in cover crop were several



Sara's avocado plants

avocado pits that had sprouted from the compost I spread in the garden and one that had fallen out of the compost bin to sprout on the ground below it (see my photo). It took me a few seconds to realize what I was looking at as I saw these fresh, glossy leaves where almost everything else had gone brown and died. I took pity on a couple specimens which won't survive the winter outside, dug them up, and potted them to bring inside for the winter. One of these plants now resides with Clarion editor Beth. ("I love it! Thx, again." ~ B.)

As you go about your business and notice the wild world around you, remember that even things that seem out of place, inappropriate, unappealing, or even gross about nature are perfectly good observations. Alice Walker said, "In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect."

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



Jane's husband's snake carcass



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 **Around 30307**
 with Cynthia Baer



Lake Claire Creatives Recap

Continued from page 1.

you'd like to pen one of the monthly columns. We can negotiate subjects and dates according to your interest and availability. Here, I'll introduce myself and the guest writers I've had the pleasure of welcoming so far.



Who am I? I am retired from three careers (so far); and I love my neighborhood! I've lived in Lake Claire since 1993, in two houses on Leonardo Avenue (see "Lived in 2+ Houses in Lake Claire, March 2024 Clarion). All my jobs have required writing—from engineering reports to grant proposals to academic papers—but only briefly was I hired explicitly to write. That was as a reporter for the Rockdale Neighbor newspaper in the mid-1980s. My editor was my then-roommate and friend-since-college, Stell Simonton. See more about her below!

Why did I start this column? Last winter, several friends and I laughed uproariously through a Rob Cleveland stand-up comedy show; and then I saw that his other half, Mary Lynn Owen, was reprising her one-woman play, *Knead*, which had blown me away in its first run. I thought it a loss if anyone in our most neighborly of 'hoods was unaware of the talent brimming out of their home on Palifox. And I knew there were lots more houses like that!



Who are your other column authors? To date, Gillian Grable and Stell Simonton.



Gillian and her husband, Johnny Mason, also live on Palifox. They've known Mary Lynn & Rob for decades; so it was a natural fit for Gillian to interview Mary Lynn for the very first installment in the Lake Claire Creatives series. As I do, Gillian has lots of writing experience, but until she undertook a book that she felt undeniably called to write, nothing like that! In fact, as turnabout is fair play, I wrote about her and her "author-activism" (my term) for the second monthly column.



Stell Simonton, on the other hand, is a professional writer. For years she was a digital editor and producer at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; then for more years she was a freelance journalist. You can check out her work at stellsimonton.weebly.com. Stell has many other talents, among them gardening, painting, and sewing, lately including pattern-making. She has more eclectic reading habits than anyone else I know. And yes, we've known each other since college and were roommates in Inman Park when we met our respective spouses.

Who are the Lake Claire Creatives we featured in 2024? Here's a recap. Do check out the full stories in the Clarion Archive!



March: Mary Lynn Owen, Actor, playwright, educator



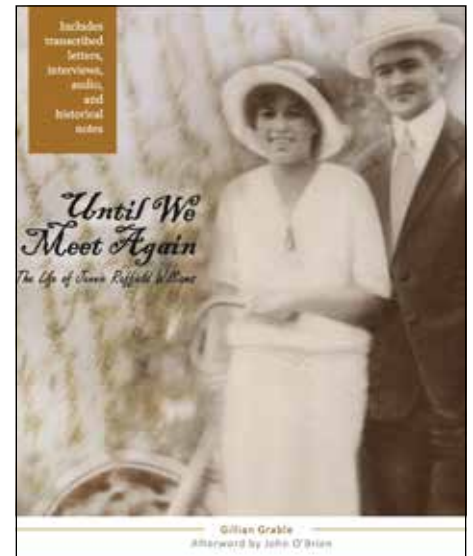
May: Steve Johnson, Flamenco guitar maker



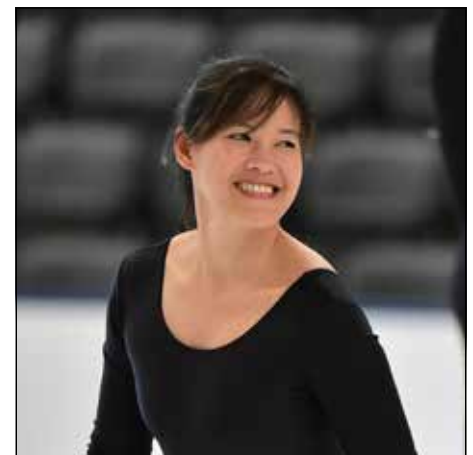
September: Andy Weeks, Painter in oils



November: Nelms Creekmur, Blacksmith



April: Gillian Grable, Activist-author and column guest writer. (This is her book jacket, and her photo is next to Jane's.)



Summer: Cindy Hsieh, Figure skater, theatre-on-ice performer



October: Rob Cleveland, Actor, storyteller, comedian, wood carver



December: Kelly Karim, Painter in gouache and acrylics

Lake Claire Holiday Fair/Walking Tour

Continued from page 1.

Thanks again to our generous sponsors: District City Councilperson Liliana Bakhtiari; Cynthia Baer Real Estate; Neal & Wright, LLC; John Morgan Park Realty; BOND Community Federal Credit Union, Hill Manufacturing, Achieve with Steve (Steve Raimonde Realtor); Joe

Agee; Shannon O. Sullivan Psychotherapy; YOM Ice Cream; Meghan Riley (Keller Knapp Realty); Clifton Sanctuary Ministries; Beryl Firestone Design; and Lake Claire Neighbors.

There are many moving parts to this adventure, and it could not have

been such a success without our volunteers—as well as all of you who attended and supported the artists and food vendors. Our only requirement for vendors' participation is 10% of their profits, that we donate to the public schools of our choice each year. We are so pleased that through

sponsorships and vendor sales, Lake Claire was able to donate to Midtown High School this year, the school into which all seven elementary schools feed.

See further photo evidence of the fun on Page 16.

Thanks, everyone!



Ansley, Beth and Jill



All photos on Pages 8, 9, and 16 by Debbie Livingston. Thanks, Debbie!

Two+ Homes in Lake Claire

Continued from page 1.

for the neighborhood and home that they really wanted to invest in, and build community to raise their kids in. One of only a few to which they had narrowed the search was the Lake Claire/Candler Park area. They were drawn to Mary Lin and to all of the surrounding greenspace. And Matt had fond memories of bike commuting through the neighborhood; they both loved the idea of biking and walking to get to places.

At the end of February 2020, the Hannas put a hold on the search, because they were given the chance to move to Mexico City for two years for Matt's job. Meg noted, "We were so excited for the experience!"

But when Covid lockdowns started just a couple of weeks later, they had to put Mexico on hold. They sold their house in EAV, and moved in with Matt's parents, assuming Covid would blow over within a few months. Six months later, they realized Covid wasn't going anywhere, and they needed to shift their focus away from Mexico, and back to finding their forever home in Atlanta.

They had not quite figured out what the next step was going to be, but on a Thursday morning, Meg called Matt and said, "I FOUND IT! It's on a dead-end street in Lake Claire, the listing went live an hour ago, and it says they can't start showings until tomorrow—clear your calendar, and let's get the earliest slot we can!" With most of their stuff still in storage waiting to go to Mexico, they moved into 1810 Marlbrook Drive in November 2020.

It didn't take Matt and Meg even a week to fall completely in love with Lake Claire. Their surrounding

neighbors were playing (and happy hour-ing) in the streets in the evenings, in the most remarkable show of community togetherness, to support each others' sanity and blocking and tackling the Covid life's logistical challenges.

"We really do love spending time outside, and love having a home that can be a gathering place for our family, friends, and neighbors," they said. "We were daydreaming about some yard and porch renovations to the house, and kept trying to figure out how to fit a pool on the lot. But we always felt kind of overwhelmed and hesitant to take on the headache, and as much as we thought a pool would be dreamy, we didn't want to give up the rest of our yard for it."

The Hannas had no plans of ever leaving that lovely patch of dirt on Marlbrook, but once again, the day Meg saw the 'coming soon' posting for 2005 Palifox, she texted Matt, "I think you have to see something. We may not want to overhaul the outside spaces—I think someone's done it better than we ever could." And inside of a week, the offer was in, and the wheels were in motion.

The double lot on Palifox, with loads of space for kids and grownups all to play outside—and the ability to share the pool with the neighbor community they love so much—was just too much to refuse. "We love the cozy size of the house, and the way it's left much of the living to the outdoors," Meg and Matt observed. "Even moving across the Lake Claire Park felt like a too-big move given how attached we were to our little corner of the neighborhood. But we're so glad still to be in Lake Claire and hope



The Hannah Family in front of their house, Palifox Dr.

that we never move again!"

Thank you so much, Meg and Matt, for spending the time to tell your unique story and adding to the previous residents' stories of more than one home in Lake Claire. This series started in February 2024, and there have been one or more folks featured in every issue since then, many more than we thought when Miriam Herbers suggested the original idea to me last year; if you've not seen the articles, do go to [lakeclaire.org/clar-](http://lakeclaire.org/clarion/clarion-archives/)

[ion/clarion-archives/](http://lakeclaire.org/clarion/clarion-archives/); I think you'll enjoy the variety of experiences. And perhaps now, it's *your* turn. To share your love of Lake Claire in more than one home, please contact me at editor@lakeclaire.org. You don't have to be a writer, you may bullet-point your details or if you don't want to write anything at all, you may meet with me or my able colleague Alicia McGill for an interview. Let's keep this going!!

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An Eagle Has Landed in Lake Claire

by B.J. Alden

Lake Claire is home to many accomplished people. And our list continues to grow, as young resident Addison Baer has achieved Scouting's highest honor: Eagle Scout. She has earned the distinction after years of effort and dedication—and our community is a better place because of it. Addison, or Addy as her friends and family call her, is a proud member of Troop 372, an all-girls troop based in Brookhaven. She and some friends joined Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on February 9, 2019, the very first day troops for girls could exist. She told us, “The day that they actually let us in, we went up to headquarters in Atlanta, took our pictures with the flag, and we're all so excited about being the first girls.”

Hailing from a Scouting family, her two older brothers are also Eagle Scouts. And her father Michael has been highly involved in Scouting for years, currently serving as Phoenix District Commissioner for the Atlanta Area Council. He said, “She's been all in, and I'm just thrilled that she's had the opportunity.”

The achievement was a true challenge. “It took me around 5 years of Scouting,” says Addy. “At first I thought it was going to be easy, but then after reaching First Class, I had to start earning all the merit badges.” Like many pioneering efforts, it came with its unique obstacles. Some Scouting traditionalists thought the policy change to allow girls to join their programs and earn the Eagle Scout rank might alter the essence of the program. And in her first year at historic Burt Adams summer camp, Addy was the sole female member at the table in her beginner-Scout skills class.

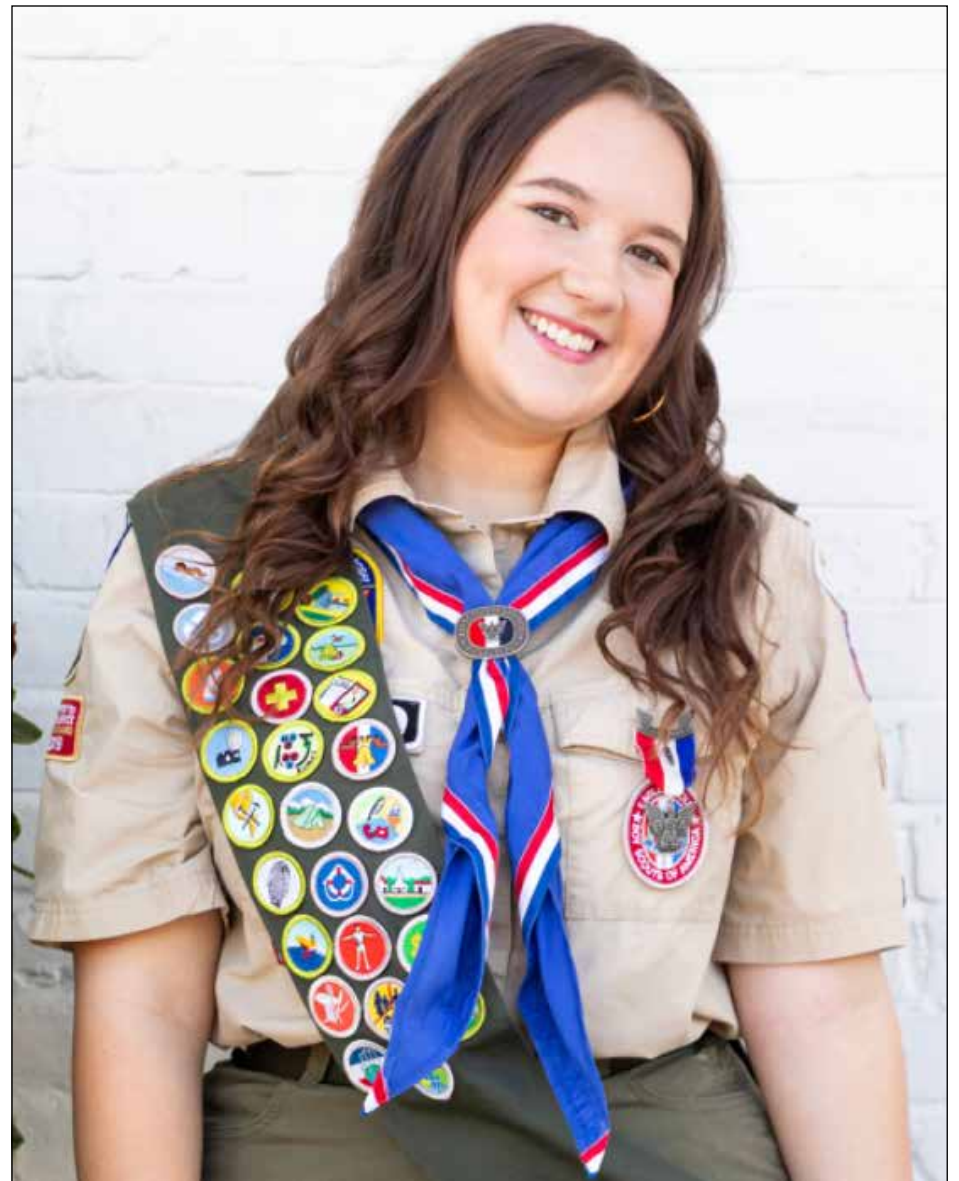
“I was absolutely alone with no girls,” she said. “Even my mentor was a guy. They were all telling me that I shouldn't be there.” For example, when it came time to make a flag for their patrol, they told her to only draw in a tiny box in the corner and not to draw anywhere else or else she'd ruin it. “They just kept telling me that I was making everything too girly.” Many ask, why just not do Girl Scouts? Which she did in elementary school. “At first, I really enjoyed it. We did stuff like horseback riding and climbed trees, but overall, it kind of felt like learning to be a housewife.” Addy wanted to go on camp-

outs and experience more adventure. “My brothers were super into their troop at the time, and they were always going on these big trips.” She recalls when she was younger. “Once when they were about to hike the Appalachian Trail, I snuck into the car in my little Cinderella outfit. They didn't notice me until we were out of the driveway. I really wanted to go with them, but I couldn't.” Once they finally adjusted the rules allowing girls into Scouts, Addy was ready to go. “I got really excited about camping and the outdoors.”

This increased access to Scouting has not only made it a more inclusive program for all youth, but has enriched the program as a whole—bringing in diverse perspectives and talents while creating a richer experience for everyone involved. It's helped break down gender stereotypes, showing that Scouting's values and skills are universal. And over the past 5 years, Addy stuck with it, demonstrating dedication, leadership, and commitment to these values. She steadily advanced through the ranks acquiring an impressive collection of 26 merit badges, including her 13 Eagle Scout requirements. In addition, holding a leadership position within one's troop is a key requirement to earn the rank. Which she did—as well as planning and executing her culminating service project known as The Eagle Project. Being a dog lover, Addy chose to take on a cause that benefits shelter animals at the Lifeline Animal Project. She and a group of local students and Scouts assembled dog rope pull-toys out of old fabric from donated t-shirts and tennis balls. These were given to Lifeline to help boost canine morale and enrichment at the facility.

Addy had no problem recruiting volunteers for her Eagle Project. “She had over 30 kids help out,” her father, Michael, told us. “It was pretty impressive. I had not seen that level of turnout before, and I applaud her recruiting efforts.” It's an encouraging sign to see this increasing surge of youth involvement in our community. Not just Scouts, but high school students looking to meet their service requirements. True community activism in action.

Through these types of projects, and general involvement with Scouting, many of us have gotten to know



neighbors better who may live just a few houses down. “We've done some activities and become friends, as well as neighbors.” Addy's father Michael says, “I'm shocked how the kids will not even realize their neighbors go to school with them. Then, through Scouting or other extracurriculars, realize their peer three doors down is someone they really want to hang out with.” Addy reminds us how Lake Claire benefits every year as “Scouts support and help clean up the area. We're conservation-minded, one of

our big ideals. So, we're all about having a clean community and helping keep it that way.”

As the troops in the area grow in numbers, these young, ambitious Scouts continue to give back to our communities. It's important to recognize their contributions and accomplishments. As for Addy Baer, we send our gratitude for your service and our admiration on achieving the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. Congratulations!

Looking for a Clarion Volunteer!

Our delivery family for Leonardo and Marlbrook (for over 3 years) needs to turn over this vital neighborhood service to someone else. The only requirement is to be available for the time-sensitive delivery the last week of each month (except no Clarion in July and August). This route has 50 porches. This is a great way to get steps, and (high schoolers) to earn community credit, in addition to the joy of volunteerism.

Please email Alicia at distribution@lakeclaire.org with questions or to volunteer.



Stuffing Clarions with CSM Guests

by Beth Damon

Last month, Alicia and I (distribution manager and editor) met with volunteer guests at Clifton Sanctuary Ministries to insert Clifton's fundraising envelopes into Clarions, and stuff Clarions into bags for our delivery teams. We do this at the end of each November. It was a community effort that was fun for us (and I hope them) as we completed the task while talking about sports, families, and holiday plans. Speaking of the fundraising envelopes, I hope you found the envelope in your Clarion and that you considered a donation to Clifton. It is a great cause. As many of you know, Clifton provides a transformational experience for men experiencing homelessness, through comprehensive life skills training, purposeful and assertive case management, collaborative community partnerships, and dedicated volunteers.

During their stay at CSM, men receive regular medical care, both

physical care and mental health care. This year, many of those guests have found employment and are now living on their own. And it wouldn't have been possible without volunteer efforts, both in-person and monetary.

In November, Clifton celebrated their 45th anniversary. Think about it: every night of every year (except during a fire reconstruction in 2005) since November 1, 1979, men experiencing homelessness have slept in what was once the church sanctuary of Clifton Presbyterian Church. Tens of thousands of men have been kept warm, fed, and loved.

I have lived one block down the street from CSM since 1990, and they have been excellent neighbors these many years. It is great having them as part of the Lake Claire community, and if one can't pitch in by helping at the facility, I do hope you'll consider using that envelope.

Hello – Safe Journey: Skiing in and around Lake Claire

Happy Birthday to:

Happy Birthday to:

- 3 – Lisa Morris, Sutherland Place
- 5 – Dave Kaiser, Hardendorf
- 6 – Nancy Noland, Leonardo
- 8 – Sam Elalouf, McLendon Ave.
- 9 – Reese Kruskamp, Arizona Ave., turning 8!
- 11 – Ezra Billinkoff, Harold Ave.
- 12 – Happy 17th to Elliott Bulloch, Casson Street
- 12 – Tamar Williams, Harold Avenue; Tiffany Mawhinney, Howard Circle
- 15 – Sophie Oren, Leonardo, turning 9!
- 16 – Theo Emanuel, Marlbrook, turning 9!
- 18 – Happy birthday, Pat Del Rey, illustrious Clarion ad man[ager], Leonardo; Cynthia Baer, Gordon Avenue; and Jake Craney, Leonardo.
- 19 – Genise Spenle, Arizona Avenue
- 21 – Amelia Stevens is turning 17! Harold Avenue
- 22 – Happy 14th birthday to Zoe Bulloch—Casson Street
- 28 – Tom McGill, Delaware—Happy birthday, Editor's friend who looks like Larry David—and Gus Fring!

Send us life cycle changes for the next issue—February—already??!—need YOUR help to make this series inclusive (editor@lakeclaire.org) by January 15–18)

Neighborhood Dues for Lake Claire

Suggested annual dues are \$20/year per household. Pay at lakeclaire.org via the PayPal link, OR with the old-fashioned check in the mail, to Leigh Reynolds, Treasurer, Lake Claire Neighbors, P.O. Box 5942, Atlanta, GA 31107. These are the last of the folks paying 2024 dues:

Bethany Clark	Virginia Apperson & Pete Williams
Sarah Sliwa	Linda Hoopes & Jack Feldman
Colin Pigott	Bob Arco
Lori Blank	Marcy Cornell
Tim Yoder	Stacy & Bruce Howard
Rachel Weinthal	Stephanie Sanson
Grace Balzer	Jim & Sarah Rockaway
Ann Mauney	Elizabeth Hamilton
Melissa Ingersoll	David Turrentine
Thomas Stemen	Katherine Deprey

Happy New Year from the Clarion!!

abbadabba's

WHERE COMFORT

meets cool shoes atlanta

LITTLE 5 POINTS
421-B Moreland Ave. NE

BUCKHEAD
4389 Roswell Road

EAST COBB
1255 Johnson Ferry Road

FOR ALWAYS FREE PARKING

Tell the attendant,
"I'm going to Abbadabba's."

PARKING

Moreland Ave
Euclid Ave NE
McLendon Ave NE

Frazer Welcomes New Director of Development

by Dina Shadwell

Ashley Jackson-Dawkins has a heart for service, and she credits her mother for that. Ashley grew up in the small rural town of Brandon, Mississippi, on the same land where her mother and thirteen aunts and uncles were raised. Ashley was surrounded by “trees and critters,” as well as plenty of cousins and extended family. Her mother is a minister who has also worked for over thirty years in nursing homes and assisted living homes. “She’s a super kind person who always seems to find the quietest person to befriend,” says Ashley about her mom. “We didn’t have much, but she was always helping other people.”

Ashley took that lesson into high school where she would defend fellow students against bullies—sometimes landing herself in the principal’s office. But she was always sent back to class by the principal, who recognized that Ashley was on the side of justice. Brandon was one of those towns “where everyone knows everybody,” says Ashley. “It was great being around my family, but I knew I did not want to stay in a small-town environment.” So, when she graduated from high school, she moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where she studied marketing at Hinds Community College. She worked in print media for a few years, doing advertising and marketing with the Jackson Free Press,

an alternative weekly publication.

Being in the city of Jackson, Ashley felt the freedom to come out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. She had a friend who was a social worker with the ACLU, and the two of them discussed “the lack of support for queer youth. We got together with other community leaders, and college and high school student leaders, and we created an organization called Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition [MSSC].”

MSSC worked with high school and college students to help them create gay-straight alliance clubs on their campuses to provide “a safe space for students who are queer or are assumed to be queer, whether they identify that way or not,” says Ashley. They provided trainings for teachers and counselors, and they hosted the annual “Second Chance Prom” for Mississippi LGBTQ+ students to bring their dates and to feel safe expressing themselves authentically. Ashley was passionate about her work as co-director of the MSSC, but it was a volunteer situation; she moved to Montgomery, Alabama, to become the first LGBT Community Advocate for the Southern Poverty Law Center. Eventually, Ashley was recruited to become the first Executive Director for the Human Rights Campaign’s Alabama office. After a year with the HRC, she and her long-



distance partner of almost five years decided they wanted to both be in Atlanta, so Ashley made the move.

Ashley was able to take her experience with community organizing and translate that into development work. She found she had a natural ability to talk with potential donors to match their interests with the needs of a nonprofit organization in Atlanta she began volunteering with. “It was the most fulfilled I had felt in some time,” she says. Before long, she was hired to be their full-time development director. Ashley continued her fundraising work while she and her partner, now wife, and their two young children came through the other side of the pandemic. “I love nonprofit work,” says Ashley. “I love working with and for the most marginalized people. It’s a part of who I am.” Knowing this about Ashley, a

close family friend who happened to be familiar with the Frazer Center alerted Ashley to the job posting for the Director of Development position. Ashley landed the job and began her Frazer tenure in September 2024.

“Ashley is a wonderful addition to the Frazer team,” says CEO DeAnna Julian. “She’s already a fierce advocate for our mission of inclusion for people with disabilities.” Ashley notes, “Frazer is such a hidden gem. We have a rich history, and the work that’s happening here is awesome. I’m excited to expand the opportunities for the community to be involved in the Center.” If you would like to welcome Ashley, or if you have any questions about how you can get involved with the Frazer Center, please email her at a.jackson-dawkins@frazercenter.org.

Dekalb Animal Shelter 2024

Continued from page 3.

Kingston was 4 years old and very handsome. Good on a leash, appeared house trained, and enjoyed playing with other dogs. He loved toys and would even do the cutest splotch with full belly on the ground. He died today, 120 days after arriving at the shelter as a stray... not because he did anything wrong; his only crime was being born, being a stray, and having kennel stress, which actualized by his banging on the divider door between kennels. Volunteers and staff said that he was sweet, chill, and friendly. I loved his face.

I’m not a “save them all” rescue person. I know in this climate it is not going to be possible. It breaks

my heart to say that, but unless we can lower the intake via spay and neuter, and strengthen and enforce breeding laws, dogs will continue to suffer and be euthanized. Not only am I heartbroken for Kingston, but I am heartbroken for the volunteers, advocates, and staff that loved him and advocated for him. He wasn’t the only dog that died today, and there will be more. As residents of DeKalb continue to breed their dogs, have accidental litters, or simply not be able to afford owning a pet, the innocents in all of this will continue to come into overcrowded shelters and suffer the same fate as Kingston. We can do better.

Freedom Park Conservancy News

Freedom Park Conservancy will sponsor “Limb and Litter Clean up,” Saturday January 20 from 9 am to 11 a.m. Please contact Sally Dorn at sdorn47@comcast.net if you would like to participate. Watch social media for more details. Freedom Park has 130 acres. We need your help to keep it clean.

Kitty Dare is hosting a dine-out night for Freedom Park Conservancy on Wednesday January 31

at Kitty Dare, 1029 Edgewood Avenue. They will donate ten percent of all the money spent that night to Freedom Park Conservancy. These funds will be used to help match funds we are receiving to purchase additional trash receptacles for Freedom Park. Please make a reservation and come dine out and support Freedom Park. Make Reservations at RESY or Yelp.

*** HAPPY ***
HOLIDAYS

from the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF
of



Your Neighborhood financial institution.



433 Moreland Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30307



Upcoming and Ongoing at the Land Trust . . .

Sat., Jan. 4: Yoga Class with Vada of Unveil, 11 a.m.–noon. (and every Saturday starting now), \$10 per person. Please register in advance at LCCLT.org/new-events. *Note new day and time!*

Sat., Jan. 4: Family Drumming, 7:30–8 p.m. (and every month on the 1st Sat.) with guidance from experienced drummers. *Rain date: Sat. Jan. 18.*

Sat., Jan. 4: Land Trust Drum Circle, 8–11 p.m. (and every month on the 1st Sat.), \$5 donation requested. No alcohol please.

Rain date: Sat. Jan. 18. Check LCCLT.org/new-events for updates.

Sat., Jan. 11: Yoga Class with Vada of Unveil, 11 a.m.–noon. *See Jan. 4 for details.*

Sat., Jan. 11: Tarot Class with Chakura Kineard of Unfiltered Glitter, 1–2 p.m. \$25/person (20% goes to LCCLT). More info: www.unfilteredglitter.com. Please pay in advance via Venmo or CashApp; see LCCLT.org/new-events. Sliding scale available to women of color and LBGTQIA+ community; if needed; contact info@LCCLT.org.

Sun., Jan. 12: Death Café with Denise Johnson, 3–4:30 p.m. in the amphitheater. Denise Johnson of EOL (End of Life) 101 LLC hosts this monthly informal conversation about death and dying, with tea, coffee, and cake. Free, donations welcome.

Sun., Jan. 12: LCCLT board meeting, 5–6 p.m. (and every month on the 2nd Sunday) in the Gorilla Grill (with the heater on!) All are welcome to sit in and speak up. Come in person or contact us at info@LCCLT.org for a Zoom link. Note: *same day, new time!*

Mon., Jan. 13: *Sorry: Community Potluck on hiatus until Spring*

Sat., Jan. 18: Yoga Class with Vada of Unveil, 11 a.m.–noon. Please register in advance. *See Jan. 4 for details.*

Sat., Jan. 18: Community Work Day, 1–4 p.m. (and every month on the 3rd Sat.). Bring drinking water and work gloves. *Rain date: Jan. 25.*

Sat., Jan. 25: Yoga Class with Vada of Unveil, 11 a.m.–noon. Please register in advance. *See Jan. 4 for details.*

Lake Claire Park News

Continued from page 1.

study group to assess the state of the tennis court and to evaluate the viability of the current master plan for that section of the park. The result is the current renovation of the court.

More invasive removal. In November a donor funded 12 Trees Atlanta/Forest Restoration work days to remove invasive species. The next workday is MLK Day, January 20, 9 a.m.–noon in the park. Thereafter work days will be the 4th Saturday of every month (1/25, 2/22, 3/22, 4/26, 5/24, 6/28, 7/26, 8/23, 9/27, 10/25, 11/22), 9 a.m.–noon. To volunteer, go to this link: www.treesatlanta.org/get-involved/events/mulching-in-lake-claire-park-a0VUD00000ESYd-1MAH. Contact me for more info at flcpark@lakeclaire.org. Or just walk down to the park and join in the fun.

Step replacement and water fountain. Friends of Lake Claire made a request to Council Member Bakhtiari for these two park repairs. Thanks to the park advocacy of Council Member Bakhtiari, we now have

new steps that lead all the way into the park and include a railing that extends the length of the steps, and a working water fountain.

Maintenance. Friends of Lake Claire Park members Paul Dangel, Allison Troxell, and Judy Hammack walked Lake Claire Park with Council Member Bakhtiari and her chief of staff to discuss the state of maintenance, leading to CM Bakhtiari meeting with the COA maintenance crew that services our park. Some noticeable results include pressure washing of steps, ramp & concrete, and garbage bins at the playground. The steps and ramp have been resealed. The benches have been sanded and repainted along with two of the tables. The water connection now works from the street to the park. Again, thanks to CM Bakhtiari for her support of Lake Claire Park.

Maintenance by Park Friends. Have you ever noticed that magically the trees in Lake Claire Park do not have ivy growing on them? Or that



Land Trust Notes

The LCCLT Board of Directors meeting has shifted from morning to afternoon, still on the 2nd Sunday each month. The new time is 5 to 6 p.m. We hope this will encourage churchgoing Land Trust lovers to take part. The location will continue to be the Gorilla Grill, with the heater on.

Sunday Yoga Classes announced last month will be shifting to Saturday due to an unexpected schedule conflict for our instructor, Vada.

Valentine's Day Dance – Mark your calendar for **Saturday, Feb. 14**, and don't miss our traditional winter fundraiser at First Existentialist Congregation in Candler Park.

Jingle & Mingle!

The first annual Jingle & Mingle Holiday Gathering on Saturday, Dec. 14, was a great success! Over 40 people attended! We made ornaments to trim the Land Trust tree, sung carols around the bonfire, and enjoyed

apple cider & homemade treats. It was a great way to build memories with our neighbors and community, and we're so happy to start this fun new tradition!



overnight the path from Marlbrook is freshly mulched? Or maybe you have seen a person and her golden doodle Ruby picking up trash on random Monday mornings after busy (and trashy) weekends? Or a recently tidied Marlbrook entrance trimmed and cut? How about those trees planted to stop erosion? A new planting beneath the Lake Claire sign (the park

sign has been missing for years) on McLendon? These are all the work of Park friends who quietly and mostly anonymously donate their time and money to Lake Claire Park. Bravo! Thanks to these folks and many others who donate their time to keep Lake Claire Park a clean and beautiful environment.

See you in the park!



LAKE CLAIRE KIDS' CORNER



We hope this series is fun and a way for young Clarion writers and artists to participate in our 'hood. Each month, we try to feature a writer, poet, or artist. This month, we don't have a featured child. We plan to resume the usual routine

for the February issue.

Any Lake Claire child or young adult who wants to add *your* creativity to this page, send to editor@lakeclaire.org, by **January 15** for the February issue.

Congratulations to Maefaire Rogovin, Hardendorf, who performed in Horizon Theatre's Madeline's Christmas, playing the role of Mary, this past December. Maefaire is in 7th grade at Paideia. Congrats!

Contest Winners

Ginny Garrett is our first-place winner this month. Ginny is 6 years old and attends Mary Lin Elementary. She lives on Clifton Road. Mabel Robertson was a close runner-up, winning the second-place spot this month. Mabel is 5 years old, also attends Mary Lin, is in kindergarten, and lives on Harold Ave.

We love the first-time winners and the repeated winners that we see getting older as the years go on. Congrats, Ginny and Mabel!!! Both of them are in first-place for the cuteness prize.

Important Editor Disclaimer to Parents: If ever I miss a child who sent an entry, please let me know, I'll fix it in the NEXT issue. Also, please reach out if you need extra copies, for grandparents to post on refrigerators or otherwise to celebrate the winners' 30 seconds of fame, editor@lakeclaire.org.



1st place winner, Ginny



2nd place winner, Mabel

org. And of course, the paper is also available online, lakeclaire.org/clarion-archives/.

Kids: See our new contest at right, and make your guess: here is your chance to be **famous!**

New Contest

Hi kids, who loves starting off a fresh new year? Find the New Year's graphic in this issue. The winner/winners who find it will have their pictures in the next Clarion (February). To win, write editor@lakeclaire.org, identifying the page number, and include your name, age, school, street, and grade, along with a photo. **(Your parents should send large picture files, 1mb+.) Any child from Lake Claire is eligible, except that you cannot win two months in a row.** For extra credit, tell us your favorite thing about Lake Claire in the Winter or favorite thing at your house in the Winter. The extra-credit prize is to 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 HIGHLY coveted prize.**

