The Lake Claire Clarion

December 2026

The Lake Claire Neighborhood Newspaper • www.LakeClaire.org
Lake Claire embraces inclusivity and diversity of all kinds.

V.34, #12

# Neighborhood Generosity—and Puppy Love

## by Ben Barrington

Driving back from dinner at Ponce City Market in early September, I spotted three small shadows dart across McLendon Avenue. "Coyote pups," I thought—knowing they were all over the neighborhood. My curiosity piqued, I pulled onto Ivy Place only to see three very small puppies frozen in the headlights. Realizing the danger they were in (from actual coyotes, cars, or who knows what) we scooped them up and popped them into the kennel in the bed of my truck, normally reserved for our dog, Mojo. Unknowingly, this would mark the beginning of an emotional month of puppy love and neighborly generosity.



*Agnes Barrington and Coco*

***Cont. on p. 9***

# December 5 Craft Fair

If you've gotten this Clarion by December 5, check out our great walking-tour-style craft fair that day, with an amazing line-up of crafts, delicious food trucks/tents, and fabulous music. Artists listed by street, musicians' set times, and food tents/trucks are listed at our website *www.lakeclairecraftfair.com* ***AND you can get all the artists, events, etc., by scanning the QR code on our yardsigns that are spread throughout Lake Claire.*** We ended up with over 100 participants! Join us, contribute to the community effort benefiting selected schools in the Midtown cluster, and have fun!

***IF you get this paper after December 5,*** we hope you enjoyed the fair. Pictures to come in the January issue. Please support our sponsors, Councilmember Liliana Bakhtiari, John Morgan/Park Realty, Cynthia Baer Realty, BOND Community Federal Credit Union, Hill Manufacturing, Inc., Achieve with Steve (Steve Raimonde), Meghan Riley (Compass), Lisa Pittman (Cushman Wakefield Commercial Real Estate Advisor), Little Muscles, Yom Ice Cream, Little 5 Pub, Neal & Wright LLC, Moxie Burger, Clifton Sanctuary Ministries, Beryl Firestone Design, Lake Claire Neighbors.

# Winner of Annual Lake Claire/Candler Park Halloween Decorating Contest

## by Adler Waugh

We'd like to congratulate Lake Claire resident Patricia Farmer of Hardendorf Avenue, who won 1st place in the 7th annual CP/LC Halloween decorating contest. The contest raised $825 for the CPNO to use for neighborhood improvements. There was a record of 32 participating houses, 21 of whom were new contestants this year! Fun fact: 7 of the top 10 entries were Lake Claire homes.

Patricia noted, "I love creating fun Halloween scenes each year. Last year I did a coffee shop. So surprised & excited to have won. I really enjoyed creating the decorations, and I'm so happy that everyone loved them. The idea came from a mash-up. My friends and I used to have a little circus performance group, and with it being fall, it's carnival season, so it just seemed like a fun idea. As for challenges, I need to find a better building material than cardboard! Sadly, the hurricane did a bit of damage to the swings, and neither they nor the rollercoaster were quite right afterwards; but thankfully the effect was still there."

The full list of winners: 1st place: 451 Hardendorf "haunted carnival" house; 2nd place: 417 Clifton "construction crew" house; 3rd place: 516 Candler Park Drive "huge witches and more" house; 4th place: 1851 McLendon "everything" house; 5th place: 1475 McLendon "spider sat down beside her" house; 6th place: 441 Leonardo "rivals" house; 7th place: 451 Harold "white lotus" house. Honorable mentions: 2126 McLendon "Yikes Nursery," 1201 McLendon "partying skeletons," 421 Ridgewood "Dolly & friends."



*Editor's note: Adler is a 10th grader at Midtown High who enjoys volunteering every year for the joint Lake Claire Candler Park Halloween decorating contest to raise money that benefits CPNO initiatives. Adler notes, "Lake Claire residents also benefit, since we in LC also use the CP Park and businesses. It's a fun way to encourage cross-neighborhood cooperation."*

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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.**

*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.*

# December Calendar

In addition to these, please see the variety of neighborhood events on the Land Trust calendar, ***Page 15*** of this issue.

5 Frazer Forest volunteer workday with Trees Atlanta, 9 a.m.–noon. Help restore and maintain our beloved neighborhood old-growth forest. Pre-registration required. Space limited. *frazercenter.org/about-us/events*.

5 Lake Claire Craft Fair! 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. For detailed info, see article page 1, website (*www.lakeclairecraftfair.com*) or scan QR codes on yard-signs throughout the 'hood.

12 Winter Wonders in the Garden, Cator Woolford Gardens and House, 2–5 p.m., holiday fun, cookies & cocoa, arts & crafts, inflatables, and photos with Santa in the Cator Woolford House. More info at *frazercenter.org/about-us/events*, and see details in the article Page 5.

12 Cynthia Baer's Gingerbread House Decorating Event. Bring the kids, dropping by between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. for holiday creativity and fun. Free with a donation of a toy for Wellroot Family Services (formerly the United Methodist Children's Home). Fun to make holiday memories while helping bring joy to children in the community. Advance registration is required as there are limited spots :-). They do 150 houses every year and usually run out.

17 **The Lake Claire monthly neighborhood meeting is usually the third Thursday of each month. (As of going to press, I have not been apprised if the December meeting will be held, or if the former Annual Holiday Dinner will be resumed – PLEASE CHECK at *lakeclaire.org*.)**

19 Fiddler's Green Coffeehouse (3rd Saturdays), First Existentialist Church, 7 p.m. $10 at door (members $8). Musicians: The Solstice Sisters, a lovely blend of bluegrass and old-timey country songs into three-part vocals. **THIS MONTH**–A pre-show special to celebrate 50 years of AAFFM and 40 years of Fiddler's Green. Jam session starting at 4 p.m. and a potluck starting at 5 p.m. Musician details, music schedule, info at *aaffm.org/aaffm-events/*. ***Check out the AAFFM/Fiddler's Green table at the Craft Fair Dec. 5, at 310 Connecticut.***

THE *CLARION* IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

# Ascertaining Interest in Helping with the Clarion

## by Beth Damon

A couple of months ago, I wrote in the newspaper that the four Clarion volunteer staffmembers (editor and managers of advertising, layout, and distribution) are past retirement age and have been serving for many years. We were "testing the waters" to see if, when we do decide to step back, there would be interest in volunteering for this vital neighborhood service. As I stated, we do not at this time plan to retire from our Clarion responsibilities. That said, however, our advertising manager would very much like to start training someone as an "intern" who might later have an interest in taking over her position as Advertising Manager. If this is something you might be interested in learning about and seeing if it grabs you, please contact me (*editor@lakeclaire.org*) and Pat (*advertising@lakeclaire.org*).

# Hello – Safe Journey: Skiing in and around Lake Claire

**Happy December Birthday to:**

Dec. 3 Ethan Fisher, happy 6th birthday! (Leonardo)
Dec. 4 Drew Pittman, happy 11th birthday! (Marlbrook)
Dec. 7 Jeff DeBell, Harold Avenue
Dec. 10 Tim Kline, Leonardo Avenue
Dec. 12 Henry Allen—Happy 14! Harold Avenue
Dec. 13 Laura Tanguturi, Harold Avenue
Dec. 17 Dawn Aura, Clarkston now, but honorary member of Arizona/Lake Claire
Dec. 19 Elliott Williams, Howard Circle
Dec 24 Darby Bashaw, Hardendorf
Dec. 26 Happy 15th birthday to Cabot Williams, Howard Circle.
Dec. 31 Cara Haycak Tobin, Hardendorf
Dec. 31 Robert Frank, Hardendorf

*Send us new family additions, anniversaries, b'days, and other life cycle changes for the next issue—it will be a combo January/February issue! Please send by December 18.*

Dear Lake Claire friends,

I couldn't believe it when Beth Damon called and said it was time to write our annual holiday letter. We so appreciate the opportunity to touch base with our Lake Claire family each year, but it also meant that the holidays are near and where has this year gone? It has been a busy and productive year at Clifton, and we hope it has been for you, as well.

Our Lake Claire volunteers continue to be the hub of Clifton, and this year was no exception. Many of you brought meals and had meaningful conversations with our guys over a bowl of chili. Many of you kept up with our "Need of the Month" on our corner sign and dropped off laundry detergent. And many of you kept the little envelope we enclosed in The Clarion and our quarterly newsletters and made a generous investment in the transformed lives of the Clifton men who are your neighbors. Thank you for everything. Clifton wouldn't run without you.

This year, we served approximately 200 men who are working hard to make BIG changes. The Clifton men have completed training classes and obtained meaningful employment, allowing them to move into their own apartments. They achieved lasting sobriety, reunited with their families, and were able to move back home. A few of our men will never be able to live independently, but our terrific staff found appropriate and safe housing for them. And recently, the Clifton men, volunteers, and staff had the honor of serving Franchot Bell, a long-time Clifton guest and employee, as he passed from this world to the next. When we receive new guests, we never know what needs they will have, but our staff and volunteers always step up.

You, the Lake Claire Neighbors, have a permanent seat on our Board of Directors and, for more than a decade, Bryan Davis was your representative. Bryan recently stepped off our board, but before he did, he recruited Lake Claire neighbor, Eli Awbrey, to be the Lake Claire representative. We are excited to welcome Eli to the board and are so very grateful to Bryan for his leadership over the many years.

THANK YOU for everything you have done to support Clifton this year. None of the successes enjoyed by our guests would have been possible without you. We wish you a fantastic holiday season and 2027, and we hope you will include Clifton in your holiday celebrations. We have, once again, enclosed the little white envelope with your newspaper, and we hope you will use it to make another investment in Clifton. If online contributions work best for you, please visit our website, www.cliftonsanctuary.com to make your year-end gift.

With so much gratitude,

Leslie

Leslie Prince, Chair
Clifton Sanctuary Ministries Board of Directors




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Thank you to every client, friend, and familiar face who's been part of our story over the last 10 years. Here's to the next decade of serving our neighbors with care, connection, and expertise!

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*Families and friends enjoy holiday lights, festive activities, and visits with Santa at Frazer Center's Winter Wonders celebration at Cator Woolford Gardens. This year's event takes place Saturday, December 12, from 2 to 5 p.m. Bring the kids!*

# Santa Comes to the Cator Woolford House for Winter Wonders

## by Dina Shadwell

For many Lake Claire neighbors, Cator Woolford Gardens is a familiar landmark along South Ponce de Leon Avenue. But the historic house overlooking the gardens may be less familiar. This December, Frazer Center's Winter Wonders Celebration offers a chance to step inside. For the first time, photos with Santa will take place in the Cator Woolford House, where the downstairs area will be decorated for the holidays. The house, built in the 1920s by Cator Woolford, sits at the top of a sloping lawn overlooking the Italian-style gardens below.

It's a fitting setting for Winter Wonders, Frazer Center's annual holiday celebration, returning **Saturday, December 12, from 2 to 5 p.m.**

Families and friends can enjoy holiday lights and inflatables, cocoa and cookies, arts and crafts, and the gardens' winter blooms. A visit with Santa inside the house adds a little extra magic to this year's festivities.

The property has changed considerably since Cator Woolford lived there. Over the years, the gardens have undergone extensive restoration, with

***Cont. on p. 14***

# Our Democracy: Another Common-Sense Election Reform

## by Jane Branscomb

The hopes I expressed in the November Clarion—that by now we'd be safely through another secure and unimpeded election—came true in spades. With record numbers of votes cast as well as record numbers of partisan and nonpartisan observers, there were very few hiccups and no major disruptions. I'm equally glad for the prediction I made that did not materialize: a special legislative session for redistricting. Indeed, there may be a possibility for movement toward redistricting reform in the new, divided State government. We'll see. Follow Fair Districts Georgia and the House Governmental Affairs and Senate Ethics Committees if you're interested!

Another election reform that I believe could make our process more small-d democratic is ranked choice voting. In RCV, voters rank the candidates in order of preference on their initial (and only) ballot – like casting your runoff vote at the same time you mark your top choice. This approach has positive implications for how candidates campaign and how they govern; how voters view votes for so-called third-party candidates; and how much support there is for the winners.

Because candidates are seeking to be at least voters' second or third choice if not their first, they are incentivized to run more positive campaigns. Similarly, incumbents need to govern more toward the will of a majority of constituents than curry favor among the fringe of their party. Third-party candidates can run without fear of being "spoilers" when their supporters can rank their second choice up-front; and voters for third-party candidates are free to vote their conscience instead of trying to "game the system." In the end, everyone can be confident that a majority of voters actually supported the winner. This is for two reasons: first, there is no drop-off in turnout as there is for a separate runoff, where leaders are often selected by a sliver of the electorate; and second, over half of voters will have affirmatively selected the winner, even if not as their first choice.

In addition to all of these wins for democracy, RCV saves tons of money for the jurisdictions that don't have to gear up and run additional elections as well as for the candidates who don't have to

***Cont. on p. 11***

# A Note from Lake Claire Neighbors President

Dear Neighbors,

It's been a while since I last wrote. My topic at that time concerned the impact of AI that not only portends to change the way we will be working and living in the future but also challenge how we used to think of ourselves as human beings. Fortunately, we live in a quiet but thriving neighborhood that can provide a lot of solace and good old-fashioned fun while the rest of the world races on. Just recently, there was the annual Lake Claire Halloween Parade, traversing a whole two blocks to end up the LC Park with a costume competition and other fun activities. Soon (December 5) there will be the now well-established December Lake Claire Craft Fair featuring neighborhood porches filled with a myriad of offerings, homespun music, and food trucks/tents providing a variety of cuisines. Additionally, Lake Claire has individual street events. Only a few days ago, I was at the Dorf'd Dazed and Confused Block Party on Hardendorf Ave., with great music and Mexican food. The Lake Claire Community Land Trust has year-round musical and cultural events along with a bi-weekly drum circle (see Page 15). It really don't get no better than this! Renovations of Lake Claire Park are on the horizon that will add to further enjoyment in the neighborhood. All this said, it's important to remember that we belong to a Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU), District 5, that includes Lake Claire, Candler Park, Druid Hills, Inman Park, Cabbagetown, Reynoldstown, Poncey-Highland, and the Little Five Points Business Association. Liliana Bakhtiari, our Councilmember for this district, provides support for our efforts, including generous contributions to the Lake Claire Craft Fair. A couple of months ago, I attended a Neighborhood Summit with the other District 5 neighborhoods where she and her representative, Jacob Pierce, led discussions about how her office assists with zoning, variances, traffic/environmental issues, and general information on City Departments

***Cont. on p. 14***

























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# Zombie City, aka The SEC District

## by Kevin H. Posey

Imagine waking up to find yourself in a city that is eerily quiet. You are surrounded by massive buildings and endless expanses of pavement, but there are no people in sight.

Wait, was that someone? In the distance a furtive figure ducks through a glass door and out of sight. Were they rushing to get somewhere or away from someTHING? Is this that scene in the first episode of The Walking Dead when the protagonist wanders through an empty downtown Atlanta, only to suddenly be swarmed by hordes of zombies? What's around that next corner, past windows plastered with the State Farm logo? How fast can you run?

The good news is this isn't yet another zombie show. It's the SEC District, a place so devoid of street life that zombies might actually liven things up. Emerging from the MARTA station here is a lot like waking up into a nightmare, with almost nobody around. From the station to the World Congress Center, you walk between the featureless hulk of the State Farm Arena and a small parking lot with an empty, almost-treeless plaza on the far side. The World Congress Center is a mass of glass and concrete that is as inviting as a correctional facility, but with less barbed wire. Now, you might say that this emptiness isn't noticeable when something is going on, like the Falcons getting beat at the stadium. But I was here for an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) event that drew a big crowd. The attendees weren't noticeable outside, because apparently few of them used MARTA to get there, hence my solitary, post-apocalyptic stroll.

Instead, after the event I noticed a stream of people shuffling down to underground parking. Well, undersurface—it's hard to know where the ground is in this Dantesque part of town with its many descending levels. Apparently, most of the attendees just mindlessly drove to the event. I feel like another zombie analogy is appropriate here, but I'll refrain. The irony is that MARTA was called out for praise during this event. Well, if it's so great, why weren't they using it? Did they feel unsafe? Was service unreliable? Was it too slow? Or is there an income level above which you aren't supposed to use it anymore? There were some Decatur officials on the train with me, but they are a hardy, independent folk.

However, even if everyone had ridden MARTA that morning, the SEC District would have still been ominously quiet. The lack of anything to engage or draw people walking through creates a dead zone (another zombie reference!). There are no storefronts, no kiosks, no residences, nothing—-just concrete.

Consider this: The area that I'm describing—from SEC Station on the south, State Farm Arena on the east, Georgia International Plaza on the west, and The World Congress Center on the north—is roughly the same size as the Eastside Beltline area bounded by Ponce City Market on the northwest, "Murder" Kroger on the northeast, Fourth Ward Park on the southwest, and a huge number of apartments on the southeast. Which do you think is more vibrant? Which one is going to have people milling about and spending money for most of the day and for 365 days a year? The Beltline or Zombie City?

Perhaps the new, more diverse, Georgia legislature should look into their stark, bland asset, as the State of Georgia owns this property. Let's get rid of this lingering example of Brutalist architecture… before it starts attracting those pesky zombies.

# Dekalb Commission Passes New Tethering Ordinance!

## by Scott McLane



*Edmonton*

Good news for DeKalb County residents and their pets! After months of advocacy by Advocates for DeKalb Animals (AfDA), the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously, 6–0, to pass a stronger animal tethering ordinance on November 10. DeKalb joins Henry, Walton, and Clayton counties, among others, in prohibiting owners from leaving dogs chained or tied up in one spot outdoors.

What does this mean? The new ordinance strengthens restrictions on leaving dogs chained or tethered without supervision. Owners can still temporarily secure their dogs when they are nearby and able to intervene, subject to the ordinance's requirements. Previously, dogs could remain on approved cable systems for up to 12 hours a day. That made enforcement difficult because animal control officers had no practical way to verify how long a dog had been tied up.

"A dog left tied up alone, day after day, month after month, suffers, and our old rules made that too hard to stop. This ordinance sets a clear standard: A dog on a tether must be attended, and dogs kept outside need enough room to move," stated DeKalb District 2 Commissioner Michelle Long Spears,

Why should neighbors care? This isn't just an animal-welfare issue. It's a neighborhood safety issue. Dogs left chained for long periods can experience fear, stress, and neglect. Research has also linked tethering to an increased risk of dog bites, putting children, neighbors, other pets, and first responders at risk. The county has also advanced financial assistance to help qualifying residents afford safe dog enclosures. AfDA has spent months advocating for this change, and we're grateful to the residents who contacted commissioners, attended meetings, and helped bring this issue to the forefront. We thank Commissioner Michelle Long Spears for sponsoring the ordinance, the commissioners for their unanimous support, and CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson for her engagement. Safer neighborhoods and better treatment of animals go hand-in-hand. The Advocates for Dekalb Animals (AfDA) thanks everyone who helped make this happen!

**Edmonton**. As I write this today, November 13, it is my 5-year anniversary as a volunteer at the Dekalb County Animal Shelter. It has been one of the most blessed experiences of my 71

***Cont. on p. 11***

# Wild in Lake Claire

## by Sara Gottlieb



*Robins visiting Sara's birdbaths*



*Meredith's phoebe*

I was doing some final harvesting and clearing my plots at the Land Trust in preparation for freezing weather when a whole flock of robins descended to my three bird baths (photo to the right). There were as many as seven robins at once on the baths and several more hopping on the ground or perched on branches above. The birds were skeptical of my presence and flew off if I got too close but as long as I kept my distance and didn't make any fast moves, they let me watch while they took turns sipping the water and occasionally squabbling. Birds need sources of water all year long, and this fall has been so dry; keeping my bird baths filled and clean has been more important than usual. It always makes me happy to see birds taking advantage of the water I put out for them.

Meredith W. had several interesting bird encounters as well. In one instance, she had a hand on a beech tree at a local park when a bird flew so close to her face, she ducked. She was holding some sticks in her other hand, and a few seconds later, a phoebe landed on the sticks (see photo top right by Meredith). The bird flew up, pecked at her eyes (which were closed), then landed on her arm. The phoebe investigated a couple moles with her beak, then flew to her eyes again, then landed on her other arm, then repeated the circuit several times. The phoebe didn't seem angry so much as curious, but after Meredith got out her phone and took a picture, it joined another phoebe who had been watching the whole interaction from a nearby branch, and they both flew off. Meredith also reports recently sitting outside in her yard when a large group of raptors flew over. At first she thought they were sandhill cranes, but quickly realized they were too small and weren't making any sounds. Meredith thinks there were close to a hundred of the birds, and they passed low in the sky with the sun glinting off their underfeathers for over a minute. She posted a video to a raptor ID group, and most said they were turkey vultures going to roost. A small but significant minority IDed them as broadwing hawks. They didn't look like vultures to Meredith, but she guesses that's what they were, and either way, she says it was a thrill to witness them gliding silently overhead in such large, glowing numbers.

Daniel G. shared a photo of a carpenter bee enjoying a catmint flower (see photo below by Daniel G.). This late in the season, it can be hard for pollinators to find forage, so it's always good to have at least a few plants that flower late in the season, like anise hyssop, swamp sunflower, pineapple sage, and orange cosmos.

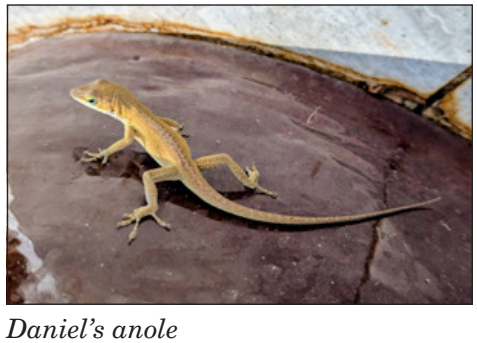
One of my neighbors shared that he had discovered a couple of green anoles on the inside of a window in his apartment—or possibly just one animal that got back in after being escorted out the first time. My neighbor didn't get a photo, but Daniel G. captured one of these ubiquitous reptiles (see photo below by Daniel G.).

Finally, Bernard S. shared a photo of some ginger that sprouted on his kitchen counter (see photo by Bernard S. at right). I can attest that it is quite easy to sprout store-bought ginger in a small amount of water in the spring and then plant in the garden, where it will grow a surprising amount of new rhizomes. I just harvested the ginger I planted out this spring (see my photo at right), and I am making plans for some warming carrot-ginger soup.

*Editor's note: If a bird pecked my eyes, "investigated" moles on me, and landed on my arms, I'd think I was in the middle of the Hitchcock movie! Whew! If you'd like to report a wildlife sighting for Sara's inclusion in a future column, please submit it via this Google Form:* bit.ly/WildInLakeClaire.



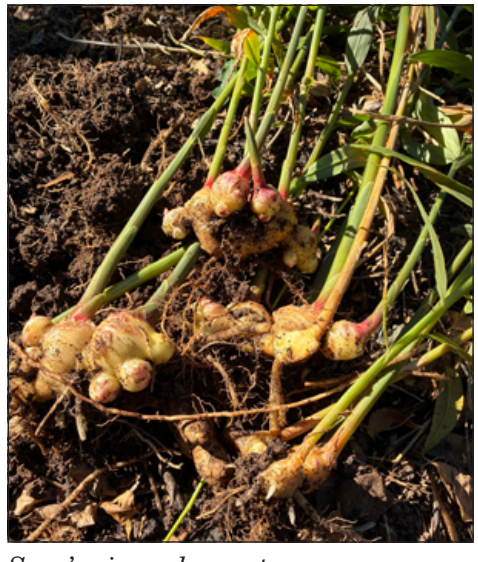
*Daniel's carpenter bee*



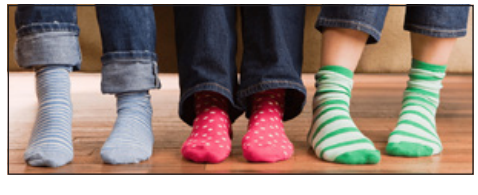
*Daniel's anole*



*Bernard's sprouting ginger*



*Sara's ginger harvest*



# Annual Halloween Party and Parade

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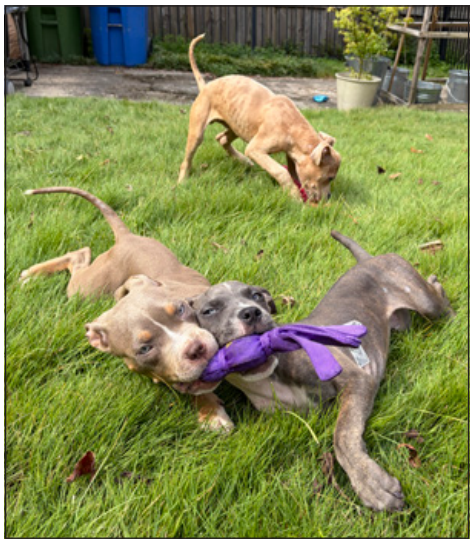

# Neighborhood Generosity

***Continued from page 1.***

The pups were in rough shape: dirty, dehydrated, and malnourished. We phoned a vet friend who works at the CDC for advice: give them plenty of water, a little food, and keep them separate from our dog—for their safety, and his. A quick stop to Target got us food bowls and puppy chow. We moved the kennel, packed three puppies deep, to our shed, and let them out. Under the light of our phones we got a better look at them—all so skinny with their ribs and hips poking out under pockmarked skin. They drank close to a gallon of water between the three of them, and after a fistful of kibble they were off to bed.

The next day was Labor Day, and we awoke to three puppies whimpering and yelping from the shed. Still very hungry and thirsty, the pups devoured small handfuls of kibble and drank their bowls dry. Occupied with their breakfast, these pups obviously had not been properly cared for—it appeared that they'd been abandoned. Nevertheless, they were very trusting of people, and over that first day, elements of each pup's unique personality began to show. Cheetah (named for his spots and speed) was the biggest: bold, brave, and athletic! Coco (named for her light brown coat and sweet demeanor) was the middleweight and was comparatively calm and easy-going. And there was the third pup, yet to be named—a curious little guy, missing half his tail, who was as happy exploring pockets of our backyard as he was playing with his siblings.

This was our first time finding strays, so we turned to our neighbor Tamara Lopata for advice on next steps, knowing she was involved with an animal rescue organization. Tamara and her husband Mike took the pups in for an initial screening at PAWS Atlanta. The screening revealed swollen lymph nodes and a skin condition unfortunately named "puppy strangle." The pups would need to see a vet and be treated for this skin condition before PAWS could put them up for adoption. Mike and Tamara graciously offered to take them in for an appointment later that week – and to watch the pups while my wife Sarah and I had to be in the office. The appointment came on Friday and



determined the swollen lymph nodes were just symptomatic of dehydration and that the pups' skin condition was less severe and easily treatable. Mike and Tamara left the vet with prescription shampoo and a surprisingly small bill thanks to the kind folks at Dearborn Animal Hospital.

And for the next month, while the pups were getting their mandatory baths from Mike and Tamara's son Trent, we shared care duties. The Lopatas took them during the week and sent them to their "summer home" up the street with us for the weekends. It was a month filled with playtime on the lawn, exploring the "wilds" of the backyard, wrestling, chewing sticks—and visits from all the kids in the neighborhood. The time these dogs spent with small children over this first month eventually gave them a real advantage in the adoption process, as we could confidently say they were great with kids. Coco, the only girl, was a lapdog from the very start and quickly became my daughter's favorite; the two developed a special bond. In that time, Cheetah proved himself a very trainable pup—motivated to fetch and quick to potty train. And the third dog, the smallest of the three, got his name: Bueller—named by the Lopatas' daughter, Marisa.

After a month had passed, the dogs were deemed eligible for adoption. We packed them back into the truck and with tears in our eyes, turned them over to PAWS Atlanta. We knew we'd miss them dearly, but also took comfort knowing they were sure to find good homes. All three pups were adopted within a month of going to PAWS. One of those homes ended up being much closer than we'd expected: Mike and Tamara decided to adopt Bueller! We're over the moon excited that we'll get to see him grow up around the neighborhood! All the neighborhood kids are thrilled too!

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# Solutions Bathing—on the Homefront

## by Sam Collier

Last month, I focused on electrification of the transportation sector. Now I move to the home. But why, you may ask, is home electrification so important to solving the climate crisis? The answer, in part, involves the "Thousands vs. Millions" proposition.

In the United States alone, there are about 146 million residential buildings and almost 6 million non-residential buildings. There are about 13,450 electric power plants of different sizes and types feeding electricity onto the grid. If we can decarbonize the thousands of plants feeding the grid, we clean up those millions of buildings – to the extent that they are electrified. Some homes are already totally electric, and they will decarbonize automatically as the grid decarbonizes. Many (if not most) of us have dual-fueled homes: some appliances use "natural" gas (usually fracked) which burn methane onsite for cooking, heating, drying clothes, and heating water. The transition to electrification can be challenging and may take some time and investment, but it is worth the effort. Aside from the climate benefits, the house would no longer have combustion occurring in the attic, basement, or living area. Cooking would not require a vent fan simply to remove harmful fumes from the kitchen. No risk of gas leaks, and no separate bill with its own monthly charges regardless of how much gas you use.

I have electrified a rental house and am in the process of electrifying our Lake Claire home. Some swaps are relatively easy (water heater and clothes dryer), though each swap may require rewiring, and possibly wiring upgrades.

Let's focus first on the biggest capital equipment challenge in a home: how it is heated and cooled. Heat pump technology has come a long way in recent decades: "air-source" heat pumps are now so efficient that they can remove heat out of very cold air and warm a home even in Maine, which has had a tremendous surge in heat pump installations, aided by utility programs to assist the transition. But "ground-source" heat pumps are even better – they are essentially heat banking systems, pulling heat out to cool in summer, sticking it underground, and then pulling it back up in winter to heat the building.

When Steve Nygren turned from restaurant mogul (Peasant Restaurant chain) to new urbanist developer, he built Serenbe, a walkable village on small lots surrounded by permanently protected land in south Fulton County. He quickly realized that if he used traditional HVAC cooling systems, the noise of so many condenser units would be a problem, so he started using geothermal energy. Now, Serenbe is a model for this technique. The Trilith community in Fayette County has followed its lead, making all homes geothermal. Agnes Scott College has two geothermal fields heating and cooling its buildings. And now, an Atlanta company, Eco-Smart Solution, has taken the concept a step further. They use a network of pipes to connect several houses. This requires less energy, costs less to install, and they even have a "utility model" where you pay a monthly capacity fee rather than a huge up-front cost for the pipes to be drilled and connected. The Massachusetts utility Eversource has been retrofitting an existing neighborhood in Framingham, Mass., connecting homes, schools, and businesses. The beauty of mixed uses on the geothermal network is that the load can be shared among building types, some of which need daytime conditioning while others need nighttime conditioning – so less total pipe and less capital cost.

I can imagine a day when entire blocks of our neighborhood can be connected with pipe (very similar to natural gas pipe) and we pay a "utility fee" for all our heating and cooling needs. The likelihood is that the cost of this clean heat/cool approach will be a good bit lower than either a gas furnace/air conditioner setup or even air-source heat pumps. Because the HVAC system is the biggest capital equipment purchase, and because it needs replacing STAT!!!! whenever it fails, it is wise to plan now for how you would do your electrical upgrade for the entire electrification journey, so that you are ready gradually to replace the other appliances when that HVAC failure induces an emergency replacement. You may have a 220V line sitting beside every gas appliance for a while, then slowly replace your water heater, dryer and range as they age out. After that, the rest of the home electrification puzzle becomes much easier. But more on that next month, including "but I love to cook with gas!!"

If you have questions, want to delve deeper into any of these ideas, or have other thoughts, I am happy to help and discuss. Reach out to me at *OverallQuality@gmail.com.*

# New Tethering Ordinance

***Continued from page 7.***

years, and I wouldn't trade it for anything, but with all the joy and purpose comes moments of extreme sadness. So goes my story of Edmonton.

When I first met Edmonton, his kennel presence actually "scared" me, but he slowly worked his way into my heart and became my guy. I even made the 30-minute drive to the shelter on days I don't normally come in just to make sure he had a walk. From other volunteers: "Edmonton is a real teddy bear! Looks like one and acts like one in that he just wants to lean in, be held and hugged, and get loving." Edmonton quickly become a staff and volunteer favorite, and he was mine. So, to make him more adoptable, I put in a request to have him neutered.

After his neuter on October 21 Edmonton stopped eating. His clinic visit on October 25 showed no observable illness, and he ate a hotdog so he was returned to his kennel. On our walks on the following days he would eat wet food from my hand, but he became listless, and I put in another request to be seen in the clinic. On the morning of the 29th he was found crying in his kennel, not able to sit and in extreme pain, with severely swollen lymph glands that had appeared overnight. His bloodwork showed his platelets at 20% of normal. In rare instances, alteration surgery can kick a dogs system into a severe autoimmune response, and that is what had happened to this sweet boy. Massive amounts of steroids were given, but it was not enough, and he was medically euthanized on October 30.

This is life. As George Harrison sang "All things must pass". We give them our hearts. Sometimes they break. I am grateful to have been allowed into his.

# Election Reform

***Continued from page 5.***

keep campaigning. It also reduces the burden on voters to put up with endless campaign ads and to show up again and again at the polls.

Georgia adopted RCV for military and overseas Georgians' ballots in 2021, so we've had experience with the method since the 2022 election. And many local jurisdictions—among them City of Atlanta and DeKalb County—have passed resolutions asking the Legislature to let them try it. If you'd like to learn more about ranked choice voting, check out *Better Ballot Georgia* (.org). That's the nonpartisan nonprofit organization working for this specific and powerful reform in Georgia.

# Transforming spaces responsibly to deliver amazing new homes in Lake Claire and Candler Park.

2044 Howard Circle



*Distressed house*



*Coming soon!*

*Every project begins with architectural rescue. In order to preserve the past, our standard practice is to partner with local entities to recover historic assets before demolition.*

As a 28-year resident and perennial Top Producer with Atlanta REALTORS® Association, I bring unmatched local knowledge and proven experience to the market. I pride myself on being a trustworthy partner and offering my neighbors total transparency. From coaching to sponsoring local events, I'm plugged in to our community. My roots here run deep—in fact, you might even remember me as your child's former APS school bus driver!

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

# Note from LCN Prez

*Continued from page 5.*

and their procedures. There are times when things come up that can make a major difference in people's lives.

As an example, for several years a formerly homeless person has done yard work for me. Unfortunately, he has a mental disability that makes it difficult for him to get along with others and was recently evicted from the subsidized housing where he had been living. Having the eviction on his record made it extremely difficult to find something else. He was near being homeless again when I called Jacob, who immediately put the above individual in contact with the City's Housing Help Center, and he is now housed at the Clifton Ministries. Although the stay is temporary, there are good prospects for finding permanent housing in the future. During the process, I found out how various agencies in the City can help in this type of situation such as the Housing Help Center that may be able to intervene when someone is at risk of being evicted or having other difficult issues. So, in spite of problems people can experience dealing with the City, there are times when reaching out can be a great resource in unexpected ways.

I wish everyone a great holiday season and a continuation of the good times in the neighborhood next year!

~Joe Agee
President,
Lake Claire Neighbors, Inc.

# Santa Comes to Winter Wonders

*Continued from page 5.*

renewed pathways, stonework, and plantings that respect the property's history while keeping it a living, evolving landscape. Winter Wonders offers neighbors a chance to enjoy that setting in a different season and experience a part of the property that they may not have seen before.

Tickets are $25 for adults and $15 for children ages 3–17. Children 2 and under attend free, and a family bundle for up to five people is available for $70. Proceeds support Frazer Center's programs for children and adults with and without disabilities.

**Another Way to Share the Season: Help fill the Holiday Wish List.** Frazer's Adult Services program is also preparing for its December 10 holiday celebration. Each year, staff and participants put together a personalized Holiday Wish List, inviting friends and neighbors to help celebrate the adults in the program. The list is tailored to the individual interests and preferences of each person, with thoughtful input from participants and the staff who know them well. Gifts purchased through the Amazon registry ship directly to Frazer Center. The ordering deadline is December 4 to allow time for delivery before the celebration. Even after that date, neighbors can learn more about this annual tradition and Frazer's Adult Services program at ***frazercenter.org/about-us/news.***




*A Frazer Center Adult Services participant celebrates with a gift at a previous holiday gathering.*

For Winter Wonders tickets and more information about Frazer's holiday activities, visit ***frazercenter.org/about-us/events.***

# Lake Claire Neighborhood Dues

Suggested annual dues are $25/year per household. We rely on—and appreciate—your willingness and generosity to help LCN to serve the community. Please pay at lakeclaire.org via the PayPal link, OR with the old-fashioned check in the mail, to Jay Severa, Treasurer, Lake Claire Neighbors, P.O. Box 5942, Atlanta Georgia, 31107. Please note any family members' names you'd like included here. And, we still have a great promotion—$5.00 off the Lake Claire banner, when you buy a banner at the time you pay dues.

These folks have paid since the last issue:

Glenn Marker
Kristin L'Esperance
Chris Rome
Bernard Gomez
Rev. Sarah V. Johnston
Ashley Cragin
Anna Karwata
Owen Herzegh
Marilyn Schertz & Louis Boulanger
Kelly and James Crutcher
Rachel Weinthal and Robert Frank
Dan Geller
Thomas Chapel
Joe Agee
Pat del Rey
David Gelin
Melissa Aberle-Grasse

THANKS TO ALL of YOU! Be famous, and be listed in a future issue!--most important, of course, support the 'hood and its good causes. You only have the month of the December left to pay 2026 dues! You can send a check for both 2026 and 2027 if you wish! Be the first to pay 2027 dues!



# Kids' Page New Contest

Hi kids, December features major global holidays and smaller cultural observances. Two special days are National Cookie Day and National Socks Day— both falling on December 4. Would you rather wear socks or eat cookies? To win this month, find a graphic of kids wearing socks. The winner/winners will be pictured in the next Clarion. For extra credit, tell us—what do you like about winter. Or answer the question about cookies vs socks, your choice. Email *editor@lakeclaire.org*, identifying the page number, and include your name, age, school, street, and grade, along with a photo of yourself. **Any child from Lake Claire is eligible, except that you cannot win two months in a row.** The extra-credit prize is that you'll be a featured writer/artist in a future Lake Claire Clarion. **The deadline is DECEMBER 18 for the combo January/February issue. Hurry and look; competition is always stiff for this HIGHLY coveted prize.**



# Upcoming & Ongoing at the Land Trust

**Sat., Dec. 5: Lake Claire Craft Fair,** 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Come see us at our table on Arizona Avenue during the LC Craft Fair. We will have hand ice-dyed LCCLT shirts, stickers, and merch, and sign-up to be a sustaining member.

**Sat., Dec. 5: Land Trust Drum Circle,** 8–11 p.m. (and every month on the 1st Sat.), $5 donation requested. No alcohol please. Rain date*:* Rain date: *Dec. 19.*

**Mon., Dec. 7:** Monday Play Group, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Join this playful gathering with your children ages 6 and under. Contributions of $10/drop-in or $15 monthly per family.

**Sat., Dec. 12: Jingle and Mingle Gathering,** 5–8 p.m. Gather around the bonfire for hot chocolate, ornament making, a treat swap, and holiday memories with the community.

**Sun., Dec. 13: Death Café with Denise Johnson of EOL 101**, 3–4:30 p.m. in the Gorilla Grill with the heater on (and every month on the 2nd Sunday). All are welcome for a monthly informal conversation about death and dying, with tea, coffee and cake. Free! Donations welcome.

**Sun., Dec. 13: LCCLT board meeting,** 4:30–6 p.m. (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.

**Sun., Dec. 13: Community Potluck Dinner,** 6–8 p.m. We're excited about our monthly Community Potluck Dinners! Please bring a dish, dessert, or beverage to share. To help keep cleanup simple, we encourage everyone to bring their own plate, cup, and eating utensils.

**Mon., Dec. 14, Dec. 21, Dec. 28: Monday Play Group,** 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Join this playful gathering with your children ages 6 and under. Contributions of $10/drop-in or $15 monthly per family.

**Sat., Dec. 19: Community Work Day**, **1–4 p.m.** (and every month on the 3rd Saturday). We'll be weeding, spreading wood chips, doing special projects, and more. Bring drinking water and work gloves. Rain date: 4th Saturday. (Check the website if the weather is iffy.)

**Sun., Dec. 19: Tarot Class with Chakura Kineard** of Unfiltered Glitter, 2–3 p.m. Beginners, 3–4 Advanced, $25/person (20% goes to LCCLT). Pay in advance via Venmo or CashApp; see *LCCLT.org/new-events*. Sliding scale available to women of color & LBGTQIA+ community if needed.

**Sun., Dec. 27: Science for Georgia - Climate Survival Training Monthly Skill Share Meetup** 3–5 p.m. Gathering to share skills and knowledge which are useful for community climate resilience and preparedness. Free! Donations welcome.

**Tues., Dec. 29: Land Trust Open Mic.** 7–9 p.m. at the Land Trust amphitheater. All acoustic and spoken word performers welcome, or just come to listen. For details and updates, visit *www.LCCLT.org/new-events.*

**For details and updates, visit www.LCCLT.org/new-events.**

## LAND TRUST NOTES

**Community Workday hours have changed to the Fall/Winter schedule, from 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Acoustic Open Mic moved to the last Tuesday of the month.**

**YOUR EVENT HERE!** Do you have knowledge or skills to share in an outdoor setting? Get in touch at *info@LCCLT.org* and let's discuss holding your class, workshop or presentation at the Land Trust!

# Give the Gift of Community This Holiday Season!

Looking for a meaningful gift that gives back? This holiday season, consider giving the gift of a Lake Claire Community Land Trust Sustaining Membership in honor of someone special! The Lake Claire Community Land Trust is a volunteer-supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting green space and providing a welcoming place for nature, community, and the arts.

**What does it mean to be a Sustaining Member?** Sustaining Members make a recurring monthly donation of any amount, helping provide reliable support for the ongoing care and maintenance of the Land Trust. Your generosity helps keep this special neighborhood space thriving for generations to come. Sustaining Members also receive a free Land Trust T-shirt as a thank-you!

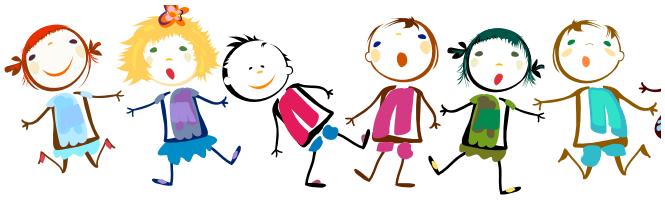
**Give a Gift That Grows!** Make a donation in honor of a friend, family member, neighbor, or loved one, or give the gift of a Sustaining Membership. It's a thoughtful way to celebrate someone special while supporting a place that brings our community together. Not ready for a monthly commitment? Become a Land Trust Supporter with an annual donation of $10 or more. Every contribution makes a difference!

Visit *LCCLT.org* to learn more and donate.

This holiday season, give a gift that supports nature, nurtures community, and keeps *your* Land Trust growing!





# LAKE CLAIRE KIDS' CORNER



**We hope this series is fun and a way for young Clarion writers and artists to participate in our 'hood.** Anjili Mohan is this issue's featured writer, writing about monarch butterflies. Anjili previously wrote for the Clarion in September, all about fireflies. At fourteen years old, she has loved bugs since she was six years old and wants to share the love. Now an 8th grade bug enthusiast, at Woodward Academy, she believes the more we know about insects, the more we know about our planet as a whole in order to protect its biodiversity. Anjili lives on Gordon Avenue and is part of our Clarion delivery team. Thank you, Anjili, for sharing the love! We are so impressed with Anjili's writing—and her handling of "Bella." Any Lake Claire child or young adult who wants to add your creativity to this page, send to *editor@lakeclaire.org*, by December 18 for the next issue, which will be a combo January/February issue.

## The Butterfly Effect

### by Anjili Mohan

In September, I began participating in Monarch Watch, which is an organization that encourages and teaches monarch tagging as well as conservation. As part of my project, eighteen two-day-old caterpillars were sent to me in the mail. Monarch caterpillars are one of the funniest animals I have had the pleasure to observe.

Monarchs are recognizable by their bright orange wings, bold black veins, and speckles of white on the borders of their wings. Unlike their flamboyant adult forms, monarch caterpillars are a lot more unassuming. These little guys are striped yellow and black, a little bit like the design of a cartoon bee. Like most baby animals, their attention is consumed (pun intended) with two things: eating and sleeping. In fact, they were so ravenous, that when they climbed onto my hands, the first thought they had was to take a bite. Thankfully for me, my skin apparently wasn't up to their standards, because shortly after that, they returned to ravaging the milkweed plants I provided.

Caring for monarchs is what I envision as a Pre-K class in parenthood. There are the usual activities like feeding the leaf gobblers milkweed when they run out (how many times per day?), cleaning the enclosure, and making sure none of them decided that they wanted to pursue a career in escape art. There are some things that could have caused some major problems. I remember when the first butterfly formed her chrysalis on the ground. I didn't learn until days later that butterflies who emerge on the ground will never be able to fly, as their wings will tear and crumple before they dry properly. My first thought was "It's going to die," but then, as I browsed the internet in panic, I learned that there is a method for re-attaching a chrysalis to its original place using sewing string. I followed the procedure carefully, and about three days later, a perfectly healthy, beautiful, 45 mm long female monarch emerged from her chrysalis. I named her Bella because it seemed to me that she rose from the dead. A deformed chrysalis and a new, clumsy owner didn't stop her from thriving.

Bella was precariously tagged and let go. I was hit by a wave of amazement, excitement, and pride as she flew off. I was so proud to have successfully raised this beautiful creature!

Get Involved: The losses in monarch butterfly numbers has been largely because of the destruction of the butterflies' natural milkweed habitat, as milkweed serves as a host plant for their young. If you don't want to risk the ever-adventurous eaters that are caterpillars, planting milkweed is an easy and effective way to help. Make sure to use a regional milkweed finder to find native species, or opt for swamp milkweed like I did. If your mom will let you have 18 new starter pets for 21 days, you can begin your adventure by buying a monarch rearing kit at *monarchwatch.org*.

Monarch Waystations Near You: The Oakhurst Garden at the Wylde Center, Freedom Park Bird and Butterfly Garden, Fernbank Science Center Butterfly Garden, The Carter Center.



*Lincoln, Ingrid, River, 1st place winners!*

## Contest Winners

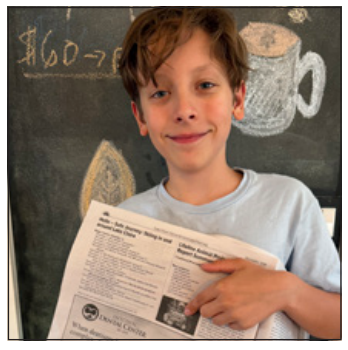
Lincoln, Ingrid, and River Pope are our 1st place winners! Linc is 9, Ingrid 8, and River 5, and they live on Harold Ave. The Popes also win extra credit, saying they are thankful for neighbors that became best friends! And Ingrid adds that she is excited since she has never been in the Clarion before!

The second-place winner is Sam Sporleder, in 5th grade at Mary Lin, on Connecticut Avenue.

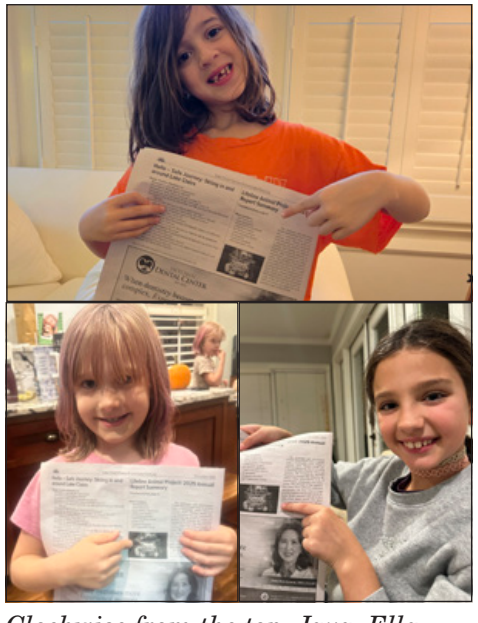
We had a 3-way tie for 3rd place among Jaya Blaylock, Ella Fisher, and Ginny Garrett! Jaya is six years old, in first grade at Mary Lin, and lives on Clifton. She won extra credit saying "I am grateful for my mom because she is nice." Ginny is 8 and a second grader at Mary Lin. Ginny was also excited to find the picture!

Ella is 8, a third grader at Mary Lin, who lives on Leonardo, who ALSO wins extra credit, saying, "I am grateful for my mom, my dad, my brother, my cat and dog, and my friends." **Congrats to all of you!**

**KIDS: PLAY NEW CONTEST PAGE 14—it's your chance to be famous!**



*Sam, 2nd place winner!*



*Clockwise from the top, Jaya, Ella, and Ginny, 3rd place winners!*