

Around the Park



An InterNeighborhood Council member neighborhood

PARK

Neighborhood

Association

President's Letter

By Dan Read - February 2016

The recent snow storm resulted predictably in a lot of missed work, school closings, pre-snow craziness (memo to self: stay away from supermarkets before the next snow storm), and for some unlucky people loss of power. Also, predictably, it resulted in forging and renewal of neighborhood relationships. What is a neighborhood, after all, but a small geographic area, and when you cannot leave it for days on end you have to meet and get along with the other people that live there.

Fortunately for most of us, the first layer of snow was washed off the branches and power lines by a cold rain on Friday (Jan. 22) afternoon, so that when the mercury dropped below freezing there was not much weight to drag them down. I did not hear of any power-related emergencies—I hope that if you lost power you were able to get help from the people around you.

As the snow started to fall the emails started going out about preparing the Anita-Hollywood sled run. The famous banked corner got built and the hard core sleds were out in force. The rain and the quick freeze following it made for great sledding, even for the Yankee-style runner sleds. And the emails about potluck dinners and breakfasts followed shortly afterwards. Maria and I actually had to decline a few invitations, there were so many. No need to worry about the food going bad—only if there would be enough!

On Saturday morning a few vendors made it to the Farmers Market. They were glad to see those of us who crunched over the ice and we were glad to see them. Fresh eggs and greens on a cold barren winter day, within walking distance of home and when everything else was closed—that was a miracle.

I go to Quaker Meeting; Sunday the roads were still icy, especially the side streets, so our Clerk called it off. It would have been a 2.8 mile walk across treacherous ice for me. There are a lot of Quakers who live in Duke Park

and Old North Durham, so I suggested on the listserve that we have meeting at my house. Nobody responded (though I found out later there actually had been a small gathering at Dylan and Laura's) but that was OK, because Cleve May, a minister at Citywell Methodist Church, had an impromptu service at his house just across the tracks in OND. I picked my way across the ice and into a small room packed with people and the true joy of fellowship. It really warmed my heart and made it easy to go back out into the cold. I am so glad I live here and count so many of you as my friends.

Duke Park Well-Represented at Coffee With Council

The City Council shares its budget and takes comments from citizens at its annual Coffee with Council. Duke Park was well represented at the February 8 meeting at the Hillandale Resource Center. Our main focus was the bath house, as it has been for several years. Bill Anderson spoke to it first, applauding the council and staff for finally getting remodel of the bath house into a pavilion onto the City's Capital Improvement Plan. Bill noted that the City plan really was to tear down and rebuild a structure there at a cost of around \$1 million; with the help of an expert from Trinity Design Build he proposed saving as much of the historic structure as possible. (The pool was a WPA project in the 1930's and the bath house is the oldest park structure still standing in the City's Parks.)

Dan Read added that we still want to work with the City on this (DP&R director Rhonda Parker promised she would), as well as adding a plea to refurbish the tennis courts which have been majorly under utilized since at least 1986. Council member Steve Schewel expressed the most favorable support. Neighbors Darryn O'Shea and Laura Hall also spoke, about better coordination of police protection (Darryn) and tax inequity (Laura). The recent tax re-evaluation was talked about a lot and the council is aware that this will hit people in moderate priced housing harder. Council member Charlie Reece is especially interested in this issue.

I-V-B-Gone!!!

Pat Petersen

We love our trees. They provide shade in the heat of summer, beautiful colors in the fall, and that haze of almost green that says spring is on its way. But winter and ice have taken their toll this year, especially on the weaker trees. How can you encourage your trees to stay strong and healthy, and grow beautifully full?

One way to help: cut the English ivy off of them! This invasive species, though not as rapacious as kudzu, nevertheless will slowly choke and starve even your biggest trees, eventually weakening them and making them more susceptible to ice and wind. Now is a great time to do this, as it's easier to tell the evergreen English ivy from the furry branches of poison ivy. If you have Roundup, you can paint the cut stem; but even if you don't, you can discourage the ivy by pulling it away from the tree. The dead ivy branches may look grungy for a couple of years, but in the long run your tree will thank you!

Geer Cemetery Cleanup Event April 8

The historic Geer Cemetery at Camden and Colonial on the east side of Duke Park was the principal burying ground in northern Durham for African-Americans from the late 19th century into the 1940's. Maintenance of the cemetery is a volunteer effort of the Friends of G.C. They will be having a clean up day on Friday, April 8 at 2 p.m. Please pitch in! Bring gloves and clippers. For more information contact Jessie Eustice at jteustice@nc.rr.com.

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Primary March 15

By the time you get this the February 19 deadline to register for the March 15, 2016 primary will have passed. Remember this is the first election for which voters must produce a valid picture ID (usually a license, a state ID card, or a passport). Early voting will take place at the following locations.

- (1) Board of Elections, 201 N. Roxboro Street
- (2) East Regional Library, 211 Lick Creek Lane
- (3) North Regional Library, 221 Milton Road
- (4) South Regional Library, 4505 S. Alston Avenue
- (5) Eno River UUF, 4 907 Garrett Road
- (6) DU Freeman Center for Jewish Life, 1415 Faber St.
- (7) NCCU Turner Law Bldg., 640 Nelson Street
- (8) Parkwood Fire Station 83, 1409 Seaton Road
- (9) Greater Emmanuel Temple of Grace, 2722 E. Main St.
- (10) Durham Tech, 1637 E. Lawson Street
- (11) Rose of Sharon Church, 4109 Guess Road

Dates are every day from Thursday, March 3 to Saturday, March 12 (most days from 9 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. shorter hours on weekends). For complete schedule and absentee instructions go to <http://dconc.gov/government/departments-a-e/board-of-elections/>.

Ellerbe Creek Trail Safety Updates

Cameo Edwards

Quarter mile markers on Ellerbe Creek Trail are still pending. City Transportation, GIS, 911 staff and Parks and Rec have had several meetings about markings and tying this trail into the 911 emergency response system. They had planned to have the markings installed during January but still have a little more work to do.

The graffiti has been removed from the above-ground sewer manhole along the trail as well as from the bollards and trail surface, and the trash cans have been replaced. The trail will be closely monitored and kept free from graffiti in the future.

Parks and Rec is still in the process of researching the feasibility and cost for installing a call box. Once that's done, they will need to identify funding. The box will be a longer term project.

There are existing street lights at every trail access point where the trail crosses a street. If you notice that any of those lights are not burning, please contact the City One Call number at 919-560-1200 and report the location. Please consider joining the Community Trail Watch group to assist in keeping the trail safe. Applications available at <http://durhamnc.gov/686/American-Tobacco-Trail-Watch>.



Mardi Gras on Mangum

Mardi Gras 2016 was celebrated on North Mangum, and over a hundred revelers joined in. Hosts **Sally Hicks and Richard Hart** (the guy with the tuxedo top and underwear) opened their home again to pot luck, shoe box float building, and of course king cake, red beans and rice. Richard grew up in NOLA and Sally has mastered the Cajun tradition—ask her to make gumbo z’herbes if you get the chance! An impromptu band led the traditional 5 o’clock parade, then a gospel brass band from the People’s House of Prayer came to play in the dark. Thank you Sally and Richard! **Laissez les bon temps rouler next year!**



Most Honorable Sir
Richard Hart



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Winter Sports In The Hood

By Andrew Preiss

This most recent storm on Jan 20th provided some of the best sledding since the big 2000 storm. The conditions included sub-freezing weather before the storm, a substrate of icy sleet, and finally an undisturbed layer of snow. If the snow is carefully compacted with plastic toboggans and saucers, a super low friction surface is created that allows daring riders to get a thrilling ride down almost any incline. It's also an opportunity to gather on the hills with neighbors to share some exercise, camaraderie and spirits.

Our neighborhood's topography and minimal through automobile traffic is ideal for sledding. Duke Park is loaded with short fast runs, but watch out for the trees (as Jen Hill can attest). Glendale and Acadia have some excellent long runs with an optional steep intro from Englewood.

Perhaps the most daring challenge is Anita Street into Hollywood, a steep, north facing slope that stays icy and fast for days. The hill ends in a sharp 90 degree turn that can send a rider sailing into the woods or forcing a bailout to avoid a strategic and unkindly positioned telephone pole. If you can make the turn, you are rewarded with a nice runout that can take you down to the Furiness's garden. This year we added a fire can to help with the chill. There has been rumor of a t-shirt printed with "I Survived Anita Hill," though no examples of the garment (or Justice Clarence Thomas) have been seen in the area.

When the forecast calls for frozen precipitation, regular plans might be interrupted, but other exciting opportunities may be available for outdoor play. Check the list serve for updates.



Dog Park Update

Cameo Edwards

Most of demolition/deconstruction of the caretaker's house has been completed. There are still a few loose ends but Parks and Rec is finalizing several potential options for the layout of the dog park and will then get quotes from contractors on fence costs. Once they do that, they'd like to meet with any interested Board members and neighbors to look at the footprints and current conditions on site. Cameo will send out an update on the listserv when that time comes.

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Ian Article

Ian Kipp

Last year I worked with Wilkinson's youngest son, Tim, and he recently talked to me about his dad.

Thomas Wray (T.W.) Wilkinson's dad owned a lumberyard and his sons, of whom Thomas was the youngest of three, were all involved in the building trades. This is how T.W. got his GC license at age 17. The youngest ever in NC! Wray went on, with no formal training, to draw all of his own building plans.

His developing started on the East side of Duke Park, the first house was 406 E Markham Ave., pictured. He built the White Colonial for his family at Markham and Shawnee, taking out a \$3,000 mortgage. From there he built homes for other people, moving down the streets: Shawnee, Hollywood, Anita (named for his daughter) along Markham to Roxboro and down Vista to Knox Circle.

While he is probably thought of most for the "Modernist" homes that he built mid-century homes- such as 404 Anita Street & 1617 Shawnee Street- his broad architectural interest is seen in the varying scales and hybrid styles of homes that are forever part of Durham's landscape.

He devised a design/build system for small homes on his jig table in his studio on N Roxboro Rd. He would build the entire home: subfloor panels, walls and roof. Like a modular, he would then put it together on-site.

Besides smaller-scale homes, Wilkinson also built apartment houses on Gregson St., Commercial buildings and larger houses in Hope Valley. Later on he built his masterpiece, his personal residence where Northern High School is now. He sold the land to the School System, also donating part of it. This land is near what is today... Wilkinson Road!



Williamsburg home replica built in the 1980's.



The bottom floor of the Williamsburg home.

T.J. Wilkinson was also an avid airplane enthusiast involved in aviation in Durham.

In the 1980's, T.J. Wilkinson, designed a Williamsburg home replica (**pictures**) for his, brother, James at 1616 Shawnee Street. They used 150 year old wood repurposed from a train station in the Richmond area.

The modular design/build system he used to build aesthetically interesting, small-scale homes could be a plank in the platform of a model for affordable housing today! How many of Wilkinson's homes have you passed by today?

Mangum-Markham-Roxboro Plan Unveiled

The two intersections and block (100 East Markham) that make up this complicated and dangerous part of our neighborhood have been the subject of discussion and concern for along time. Since the street is part of US 15-501 it is controlled by state Department of Transportation. The City will fund the improvements but they have to be approved by the State. The primary goals of the new design were to reduce traffic speed and increase safety for pedestrians. The design includes two concrete "refuge" islands at Roxboro and Markham, a raised divider down the middle of the 100 block, and a permanent concrete island at Mangum. Lanes will be narrower and the curves redesigned to slow traffic. Crosswalks will be better marked.

It will not include any traffic signals. Reverting Mangum and Roxboro to two-way streets was not considered. City Director of technical services Wesley Parham has been very helpful. wesley.parham@durhamnc.gov. He indicated that the plan is now complete. There are a few property rights that need to be acquired and the project will start in 2017. There will probably be one more pre-construction meeting in the next year. **To see the map go to the Duke Park website.**

City of Durham 2016 Arbor Day Celebration with Community Tree Planting

Who: City of Durham General Services Department Urban Forestry Division, Keep Durham Beautiful, Trees Across Durham, and Durham City-County Sustainability Office **When:** Sunday, March 6, 2016, from noon to 4 p.m. **Where:** Museum of Life and Science, 433 W. Murray Avenue.

This annual celebration of Durham's trees is free and open to the public. Activities are suitable for all ages and tools are provided for the volunteer tree planting. The schedule of activities includes:

- ⌘ Noon Ceremonial presentation of the City's Arbor Day proclamation and Tree City USA award
- ⌘ 1 p.m. Tree seedling giveaway and educational table displays, where attendees can choose from eight varieties of seedlings and receive guidance on tree selection, planting, and care.
- ⌘ 1 p.m. Arborist equipment demonstration as well as a "Meet a Scientist" lab demonstration.
- ⌘ 2:30 p.m. Community volunteer tree planting of 30 trees along North Glendale Avenue

Entry to the Museum of Life and Science is free to all on Sunday, March 6. For additional information, or to volunteer for this community tree planting event, email info@keepdurhambeautiful.org or call (919) 354-2729. The Museum of Life and Science has asked that we provide additional clarification regarding free entry on Sunday, March 6. **Entry is only free to Durham County residents with identification**, such as an N.C. driver's license. Showing proof of residence for each adult is required to receive free admission, and the limit is five children per adult resident.



Thomas Wray Wilkinson

Date of birth: 1913 • Date of death: 2002

Wilkinson was a well-known Durham building contractor and developer and built more than a hundred houses in Durham, including much of the southeastern portion of the Duke Park neighborhood from the 1930s through the 1960s. He named Anita Street for his daughter, now Anita Wilkinson Brame.

Born to John Walker Wilkinson and Mary Pearl Wray Wilkinson in Durham in 1913, Wilkinson grew up in East Durham on Angier Avenue and studied architectural books on his own, with a primary interest in the architecture of Colonial Williamsburg. He learned much about building materials from his father, owner of Wilkinson Lumber Company. Wilkinson and all three of his brothers became involved in the building trade in Durham. Wilkinson earned his contractor's license at 17 and designed and helped build a one-and-a-half story bungalow on North Driver Street in East Durham for himself and his father and brothers soon thereafter.



In 1938, he married Frances Horn. In 1940, they settled into their first home together at 406 East Markham Avenue which he designed and built. In the early 1950s, Wilkinson built a larger Colonial Revival home farther north on Roxboro Road and moved there. This 6,000 square foot house was later sold to Northern High School that tore it down for a baseball field.

Duke Park Neighborhood Association

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