

## Winter Fire Precautions

With the rise in heating oil costs, many are trying alternate forms of heat. Here are a few guidelines:

- **Wood Stoves** cause over 9,000 residential fires every year. Carefully follow the manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions. Look for solid construction, such as plate steel or cast iron metal. Check for cracks and inspect legs, hinges and door seals for smooth joints and seams. Use only seasoned wood for fuel, not green wood, artificial logs, or trash. Inspect and clean your pipes and chimneys annually and check monthly for damage or obstructions. Be sure to keep combustible objects at least three feet away from your wood stove.
- **Electric Space Heaters:** Buy only heaters with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) safety listing. Check to make sure it has a thermostat control mechanism, and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over. Heaters are not dryers or tables; don't dry clothes or store objects on top of your heater. Space heaters need space; keep combustibles at least three feet away from each heater. Always unplug your electric space heater when not in use.
- **Kerosene Heaters:** Buy only UL-approved heaters and check with your local fire department on the legality of kerosene heater use in your community. Never fill your heater with gasoline or camp stove fuel; both flare-up easily. Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene. Never overfill any portable heater. Use the kerosene heater in a well ventilated room.
- **Fireplaces** regularly build up creosote in their chimneys. They need to be cleaned out frequently and chimneys should be inspected for obstructions and cracks to prevent deadly chimney and roof fires. Check to make sure the damper is open before starting any fire. Never burn trash, paper or green wood in your fireplace. These materials cause heavy creosote buildup and are difficult to control. Use a screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks. Don't wear loose-fitting clothes near any open flame. Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed. Store cooled ashes in a tightly sealed metal container outside the home.

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January 2006

# Apalachee Plantation Homeowners' Association Newsletter

## Our Association Needs You

**W**E NEED volunteers for the Architecture Control Committee. They have the responsibility of considering home and yard changes such as tree removal or planting, tool sheds, etc. Your participation can help to maintain the value and beauty of our homes.

We have a vacancy on the board for Vice President. With elections coming up, other board seats may become available. Please contact any member of the Board (contact information on page 3) if you would like to volunteer for any position, or would like to nominate a board member for election. The election will be held in April and we will send out a ballot in the March newsletter.

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## Spring Bulbs to Brighten Subdivision Entrance

**O**UR THANKS go to the Association Members who took time out of their busy schedule to participate in our neighborhood clean-up day this past October. While the turnout was small, it was enough to enable us to plant several hundred bulbs along the main entrance and drive into our subdivision. Watch for the more colorful welcome at our entrance this Spring.

Those who stayed into the afternoon made a start on removing the kudzu covering trees in the common area at the creek, just before the stop sign on Ft. Daniels Drive.

We especially appreciate the volunteer work of our Landscape maintenance provider, Jamie Burns of Reliable Lawn Care. Jamie provided tools and worked with us well into the afternoon, **at no charge.**

Because turnout was limited, we were unable to care for all the areas needing attention. The small turn out indicates that most home owners prefer to hire the work done, rather than sharing in caring for it. This will necessitate an increase in Association fees. Please see the article "Association Fees: \$120.00" on page 2.

Thank you for removing the waste from fireworks left in yards, on the streets and sidewalks, and in other common areas.

## Zero Tolerance for DUI

**I**N RECENT months we've had two drunk driving incidents in our neighborhood that caused property damage. In both cases, the offenders were apprehended thanks to responsible action by Apalachee Plantation residents. We are proud to live in a neighborhood that refuses to tolerate drunk driving.

No innocent person was injured in either of these two incidents. However, if people are allowed to drive under the influence, it is only a matter

of time before they kill an innocent child or adult. We will not take such a risk in our neighborhood. Police will be increasing their patrols, and we ask everyone to continue to do their part by calling 911 to report any evidence of drunk driving.

Everyone loses when a person, especially a child, is killed by a drunk driver. We are proud that our neighbors took action to keep our families safe.

## Association Projects in 2006

**O**UR ASSOCIATION will be hiring work done to care for a number of necessary projects this year. These will increase our costs to between \$15,000.00 and \$20,000.00 for the year. Currently scheduled projects are listed below.

**Increased Landscaping Services:** While we will continue to hold neighborhood cleanup days, it is unrealistic to expect the few who support them to care for the large common areas. Therefore, we will be expanding the amount of work cared for by our landscape maintenance provider.

**Fencing around detention ponds:** We are required by the County to provide and maintain protective fencing around neighborhood detention ponds. Work needs to be done on the fencing at the two ponds in our neighborhood. The estimates for fencing in the two detention ponds are between \$6,500.00 and \$7,200.00.

**Wash Repair at Fort River Detention pond:** We will be repairing erosion damage at the Fort River detention pond. The County is providing the rock and we have to hire someone to do the grading for us. The repair cost will be roughly \$800.00.

**Sprinkler system repair:** The controller for the sprinkler system at our subdivision entrance has failed and must be replaced. The one that was put up there in the beginning is one that a homeowner would have inside a garage, not outside. The one that we are looking at is a mechanical timer that is designed for commercial use. The repair cost will be around \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00. This will cover parts and labor for the installation.

**Liens placed on non-paying HOA member homes:** We can no longer allow home owners to shirk their contractual obligation to pay membership dues. These are not optional. Their non-payment has a direct bearing on the increase in dues over the past two years. While liens will cost the Association \$150.00 each, these costs will be recouped when the homes are sold, or the owner fulfills his or her obligations.

**Additional Projects:** The Board also has several projects that they would like to accomplish in 2006. One is to firm out the maintenance of the website to a firm closer to our neighborhood. It took six days last time the site went down to get it back up.

## Association Fees: \$120.00

**O**UR ASSOCIATION fees for 2006 will be \$120.00. The increase is due to the number of home owners not paying their fees, and because we are having to pay for more landscape maintenance services and other necessary projects.

If you are unhappy about the increase, please encourage your neighbors to pay Association fees and, please do your part by supporting neighbor-

hood clean-up days. The Board will be considering a lower fee for those who actively support neighborhood clean-up days by working for at least four hours at each of two different clean up days.

## In Our Next Issue

**C**ONTACT the HOA board with your comments and article suggestions for upcoming issues.

## Garden Checklist for Winter

*Over the next two months, Pike's suggests:*

- Fertilize Pansies.
- Plant trees that have winter interest. Some great choices are River Birch, 'Natchez' Crape Myrtle and all hollies.
- Remove low hanging and damaged limbs from trees. Prune away some of the crowded limbs along the trunk of Bradford Pear trees.
- Plant balled and burlapped trees. Plant in a hole dug at least twice as wide as the rootball.
- Prune hardwood trees and fruit trees. Remove dead limbs and any vertical sprouts.
- Don't prune early spring blooming trees like Dogwoods and cherries, wait until after they bloom in the spring.
- Apply first application of crabgrass preventer to control grassy weeds in all types of lawns.

*Information courtesy of Pike's Family Nurseries.*

*For additional, detailed information go to:  
<http://www.pikenursery.com>*

## Protect Your Families

**W**ITH all the recent news reports about sexual predators, we all are more careful about the safety of our families. One way we can do that is to regularly check the Georgia Bureau of Investigation website for sex offenders. The following address provides links to a number of sites. <http://www.ganet.org/gbi/disclaim.html>.

Please remember that family members of such persons are innocent, and may even be victims. Also, the person that is convicted could even be a victim themselves, as in a he said she said case. We are providing the link above simply to help you be informed.

## Fire Safety

**E**ACH year over 4,000 people die in fires. Approximately 25,000 more people are injured. And, even if no one is injured in a home fire, personal loss is often extensive. The United States Federal Emergency Management Agency provides a number of tips to help prevent household fires.

- **Have a working smoke detector in your home.** This will double your chance of survival. Keep it free of dust, test it monthly and replace batteries yearly. You should have at least one per level and in halls outside bedrooms.
- **Do not use appliances that spark, sputter, smoke, or smell bad.** These are all indications of wiring malfunction or electrical overload. Unplug any such appliances and have them checked and repaired by a qualified electrician.
- **Have an escape plan.** Prepare and practice home evacuation. Determine an outside meeting place.
- **Never leave candles unattended.** A breeze, child, or pet could quickly start a fire.
- **Never smoke in bed.** Even if you feel wide awake, never smoke in bed. Better yet, quit smoking.

## Board Members and Contact Information

**President:** Lee Adkins, 404-432-6878

**Vice President:** vacant

**Secretary:** Travis Nolan

**Treasurer:** Madeline Andrade

**Member-at-large:** Mary Farmer

• **Association website:**  
[www.apalacheeplantation.com](http://www.apalacheeplantation.com)

• **HOA E-mail:**  
[apalacheeplantation@yahoo.com](mailto:apalacheeplantation@yahoo.com)

## Liens Placed on Homes Owing Association Fees

**T**HE HOA will be placing liens on the properties of any home owners who have not paid their HOA dues. Owners will be getting a final invoice showing the amount owed. If payment is not made within sixty days, a lien will be placed on their home until the amount is paid. Please note, that when a lien has been placed on your property, your home cannot be sold until the lien has been removed. Lien charges will also include Association costs in placing the lien. It is in everyone's best interest to pay dues promptly.

### Bounce House Rental

**T & K BOUNCE HOUSE RENTAL CO.**

3 to Choose from:

Sponge Bob

Castle with Mini Slide

Hot Air Balloon with Mini Slide

Affordable fun,

Kids love em.

Tim & Kathy Zeiher

Apalachee Plantation

Dacula, GA

770-655-8333

770-614-7665

Serving Gwinnett County

### Reliable Lawn Care

*Serving Apalachee Plantation*

- Lawn Maintenance
- Garden Design
- Specializing in low maintenance and native plants
- Full-service Company
- Free Estimates

770-596-3042

### Ads

*Ads can be placed for \$15 per year for homeowners and \$25 per year for non-homeowners.*

*Contact the HOA*

**Catering Budget**  
on a Budget

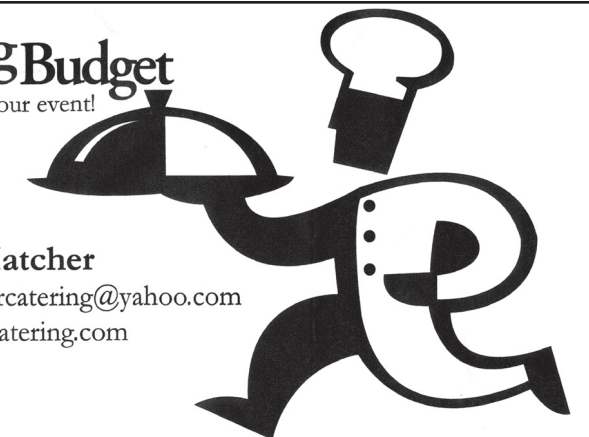
Let us plan your event!

**Donette Hatcher**

Email: [hatchercatering@yahoo.com](mailto:hatchercatering@yahoo.com)

[www.hatchercatering.com](http://www.hatchercatering.com)

770.356.5060



We do Birthday's, Wedding's, Bar Mitzvahs, Super Bowl Parties, Office Parties, etc.