Hurricane Irma Visits Our Park

Article by Krista Brewer

OLPA Annual Fund support even more critical

Our beautiful old-growth forest and linear park received a most unwelcome guest in September. The same Hurricane Irma that knocked out power and downed trees across metro Atlanta also did extensive damage to the Deepdene forest in Olmsted Linear Park.

Several significant old growth trees were downed by the winds. Various parts of the trails were damaged. And unfortunately, trees fell across the eastern bridge along the main trail way. The damage to the bridge is so extensive that it will have to be replaced.

“When the storm was over, we walked through Deepdene and could not believe the extent of the damage. It was astounding,” says Toby Brooks, OLPA President. It will take months to clean up all the debris in the forest, which adds a new urgency to the importance of OLPA’s annual fund support.

Even in normal times, extensive resources are needed to ensure that the park is beautiful and safe for all to enjoy. While the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County are responsible for mowing and tree removal, the day-to-day maintenance and operations of the park such as planting and caring for trees and shrubs, maintaining trails, and addressing a broad range of damage and drainage issues is performed by the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance.

Because of the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Irma in Deepdene, we anticipate the additional cost for repairs above OLPA’s annual fund target for 2017.

We know many of you are wonderful, long-time supporters of our park. We ask that you consider making a special gift this year to the OLPA’s Annual Campaign to help address this unexpected need to make Deepdene safe and beautiful again.

Many thanks!
OLPA Celebrates 20 Years With a Garden Party in Virgilee

It seems like just yesterday that Atlanta’s historic gem, Olmsted Linear Park, was saved from the bulldozers and road paving machines. It was one of the most dramatic and sustained efforts by residents of any city to save the character and cohesiveness of a community.

Soon after the settlement of the parkway dispute, a plan was developed to rehabilitate Olmsted Linear Park and it called for the formation of the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA) to guide and support the ongoing work. Twenty years later, OLPA celebrates a special anniversary and Atlanta residents and visitors enjoy rolling green vistas and the tranquility of an old-growth forest.

In June, park enthusiasts gathered to celebrate OLPA’s 20th Anniversary. It was a gorgeous day to be in Olmsted Linear Park – then it poured rain. Not to be deterred, our dedicated park lovers pulled on their rain jackets, donned their umbrellas and had a grand ole time.

Guests were met with beverages and tasty treats donated by some favorite local restaurants. Our canine friends, Lucy, Fiona, Buster, Toto and others made their debut with some dog-friendly activities. Some of our favorite local musicians joined in to share their musical talents - the Druid Hill Bil-ly’s, Rob and Bob Allen with friend Mike.

We want to give a big shout out and sincere thanks to all the special businesses that donated wonderful food and drink. Thanks to Orpheus Brewery: Total Wine & More, Double Zero in Emory Village, Chai Pani and Wahoo! in Decatur, Mediterranea in Grant Park, Pig-n-Chuk at Sage Hill and Sweet Auburn BBQ in Virginia Highlands. King of Pops was a big hit, as well as Park Pride’s toy box – notably the sack race and tug of war.

A special note of thanks goes to Councilman Alex Wan and Arborguard Tree Specialists for sponsoring the anniversary picnic. Many thanks to our stakeholders and officials who are instrumental in the day-to-day operations to preserve and protect this historic greenspace — City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation; Commissioner Jeff Rader, DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs; Fernbank Museum of Natural History; Druid Hills Civic Association and Park Pride. We also want to thank our volunteers for their hard work to make this event possible.

It was an amazing day and we appreciate everyone who came out to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Julie Ralston Honored in the Park by Atlanta Regional Commission

The management team at the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) could think of no better way to recognize Julie Ralston (OLPA past president) on the occasion of her retirement than with a tree planting in the park.

In honor of her many years of service (32) and dedication to ARC, Emerson Bryan and the ARC Management Team planted a large, white dogwood tree and wild azaleas in Olmsted Linear Park’s Virgilee segment. It was a beautiful fall day and many of Julie’s co-workers joined OLPA at the planting. A lovely reception was held at the OLPA office following the planting.

At the ceremony, Julie and her husband Tim also dedicated a bench in the park to celebrate their love of nature and of all things park related. Congratulations Julie and thanks to the Ralstons for their loyal support of OLPA!

Sadie – PAWS in the Park

Hi, my name is Sadie, and I love the Olmsted Linear Park. I live right across the street from Shadyside Park and get to walk there everyday with my mom, Linda DiSanzito, and my dad, Bob Kerr. I have lived by an Olmsted park since I was a pup. My first house was next to Springfield Park, but that was before the park was fixed up by those wonderful people at OLPA. (My mom and dad told me about all the good stuff they have done.) I am almost 14 ½ years old now, so I have been walking in the park for a long time. I used to chase squirrels and chimpsunks and point the birds, but I don’t see so good anymore, nor do I run as fast as I used to. But my nose works, and I love all the smells in the park. Sometimes I make mom and dad wait a long time while I sniff every leaf on a bush. I am so glad there are so many nice trees and bushes for me to sniff. I get my mom up every morning about 5:30, and we start our day with a walk in Shadydile. Thanks to you good people who help to make the park a great place for dogs like me. Love and puppy kisses, Sadie.

In Memory of June Hardeman Hemby

By Jennifer J. Richardson

The Olmsted Linear Park Alliance regrets to announce the recent death of June Hemby, June, and her late husband, John Hemby, were true angels to OLPA, volunteering in almost every capacity and wherever needed and donating generously to ensure the park stays viable for future generations.

June Hardeman Hemby was born and raised in Tennessee and attended David Lipscomb College in Nashville, where she earned a BA in music. June met the love of her life, John, who was already a fantastic piano player, and the two fit together like hand in glove. They took off on a joint adventure as John rose through the ranks at Georgia Power. Being with Georgia Power meant that the couple moved to various towns in Georgia throughout John’s career, including Athens, Waycross, and Macon and ending up in Atlanta where John retired as Executive Vice President of Georgia Power.

June was a homemaker, a teacher of piano, and a Sunday School Teacher. She twice served as president of the Women of Georgia Power group in Waycross and Macon. She served as president of the Mother Earth Garden Club. She and John were members of the Druid Hills Golf Club, where John entertained the Downtown Kiwanis Club group each Christmas with carols on the piano while they sang each year at the Club, and June played on the senior wom-
What’s better than a picnic on a beautiful fall day in the park?

In September, Druid Hills Civic Association and the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance joined forces to host the first annual Picnic in the Park. More than 250 friends and neighbors came out to enjoy the splendor of the fall colors, food, music and conversation.

Entertainment included music by Journeymanz, led by Cate Moore with members Evan Paul Smith and Brandon Sherrill. The DeKalb School of the Arts Drama Ensemble, directed by Candace Lambert came out to show off their drama talent. This Drama Ensemble has consistently placed at top levels in the State of Georgia High School Association’s one-act play competition (https://www.ghsa.net/one-act-play). They have also been selected to perform at the annual Georgia Thespian conference several times in the past few years.

Picnic goers enjoyed food truck treats from Grubin’ Out and Yumbii, who provided a variety of sliders and tacos among other delicious items. Park Pride provided games for the kids. And, our very own Sally Harbaugh, founder of Olmsted Parks Society of Atlanta and long-time resident of Druid Hills, and her son Chip came out to enjoy the fun.

It was a spectacular event and we want to extend our sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers who helped make this a success, especially our partners, the Druid Hills Civic Association. We also want to give a very special thank you to DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Director Marvin Billups, DeKalb County Sanitation and Commissioner Jeff Rader.

OLPA and DHCA look forward to making this an annual event – see you next year!

You’re invited to the neighborhood party of the year! Please join us on Sunday, February 25 for the annual Party for the Parks on Ponce at the beautiful Fernbank Natural History Museum. This evening of elegant food, drink and silent/live auctions will benefit our Atlanta treasure – Olmsted Linear Park.

Visit http://atlantaolmstedpark.org/feature/olpa-gala for more information, to purchase tickets, to join the Host Committee or become a Sponsor!
The following families and individuals made legacy contributions to the Olmsted Linear Park in tribute of friends and families that made a significant impact in the restoration and preservation of the Olmsted Linear Park. You will see their plaques scattered among benches and bridges within the park. If you are interested in making a legacy donation in honor or in memory of a loved one, please contact Sandra Kruger at sandy@atlantaolmstedpark.org or call (404) 377.5361.

**LEGACY LEADERS**

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- Martha & Toby Brooks
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- Dolly Evans
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- Allison & Warner Iarocci
- Sally Harrbaugh
- John and June Hemby
- George Ickes

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**THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS**

Thank you for your contributions to the Olmsted Linear Park Annual Campaign.

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