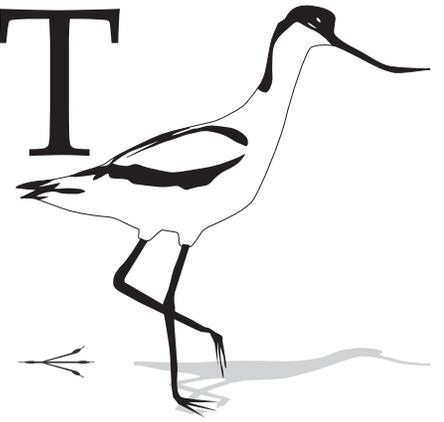


# AVOCET

SEPT. - OCT.  
2007

Bobby McVey, Editor

## Prints



## Annual Meeting set for Tuesday, September 25

The Avocet Property Owners Association holds its annual meeting every year at the end of September. This year's meeting is on Tuesday, September 25 at 7:00 pm. Registration begins at 6:30.

The annual meeting is an important event. It is an opportunity to meet your neighbors and the outgoing Board of Directors. There is usually a presentation of the achievements of the prior year, and recognition of those folks who have served our community. It is a great opportunity to learn more about our community. This year, a representative from Gwinnett County will present information and answer questions about the security issues we have been concerned about.

The most important part of the meeting is the election

of a new Board of Directors who will guide our community through the next year. If you want to have real input into our community, this is the opportunity. Just voting is important. Even more important, is the chance to stand for office. You can make a difference for all of us by volunteering for a position on the Board.

This is not an easy job, but can be very rewarding. It does require a commitment of time and a positive vision of the future of our community. Much has been accomplished this past year, but many tasks remain. If you are up to the challenge, please consider volunteering.

Our documents require a quorum, defined as 10% of households represented at the meeting. Avocet has 218 homes, so we need at least 22 homes represented.

### A Word About HOAs/POAs

We've all heard the stories of homeowner's associations gone amok, running rampant through the rights of individual homeowners....of pesky notices when a single weed shoots its head up through a lawn....or threats of action when the trash can gets left out overnight. Yes, sometimes HOAs can get a bad rap, and deservedly so.

But, if you would, consider a life without them. A life where every neighborhood dispute, ranging from unkempt lawns to someone building an outhouse on your property line, has to be settled by calling the police or filing a court injunction. At Avocet, our Property Owners' Association fills a vital role in maintaining the look and feel of the neighborhood, while trying to fulfill this role as inobtrusively as possible. I'd much rather get a friendly reminder in my mailbox (some people call them pesky notices) than live in a neighborhood where folks don't care what their home or yard looks like.

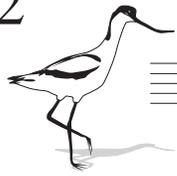
Some have commented that an HOA/POA can have a negative effect on home prices, but the opposite is true. The special assessment last year to help repair/improve the amenities was a great point in fact. When we moved in a few years ago, a competing real estate agent warned us to not move into Avocet because they were going to have to "shut down the pool" and didn't have the money to fix it. Without our POA we could never maintain the subdivisions amenities to the point that it would not affect our property values. I'm not running for the board, and I don't have the time to serve on it, but I do want to take the time to say "thank you" to those who do.

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## Community Safety Issues

### Security

We could fill this entire newsletter with reports from the past few months of break ins, attacks, stolen property, etc., from the surrounding neighborhoods. We won't list them in order to avoid alarming anyone to a paranoid level.

But we all need to be careful, and with that in mind, here is a list of common sense tips from the National Council on Crime Prevention....

- Be sure outside doors of your home or business have strong deadbolt locks.
- Keep spare keys with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in the mailbox.
- Lock gates, garage doors, and shed doors after every use.
- Illuminate or eliminate intruder hiding places: the spaces between trees or shrubbery, alleys, and entryways.
- Set timers on lights when you're away from home or your business is closed so it appears to be occupied.
- Keep your bike & sports equipment inside the house when not in use.

### Stop Sign Courtesy

We've heard recently of issues at some stop signs in the neighborhood where people are failing to stop. We are all frequently in a hurry when it comes to our schedules, but.....

We've had complaints of stop signs being ignored in most locations in Avocet. The two signs with the most complaints are at the corner of Pomarine Lane and Avocet Drive, and at the street to the amenities area and Avocet Drive. A homeowner was escorting several small children across Avocet Drive at the amenities area when a homeowner drove through the stop sign on Avocet Dr. without stopping, endangering those kids. We have had reports of folks driving along Avocet Drive having close encounters with folks pulling out of Pomarine Lane without stopping.

We realize that the unfortunate

juxtaposition of the speed table and stop sign at the street to the amenities area is an inconvenience. In fact, someone has stated that they no longer bother to stop there because of the speed table. However, we cannot remove one speed table without removing them all. Those who live along Avocet Drive have seen a significant improvement in safety. Also, for those pulling out of the amenities area, the stop signs are a necessity. It is impossible to get a clear view of oncoming traffic on Avocet Dr. until you pull far enough out into the intersection to put yourself in danger.

Our streets are county streets. The stop signs are put there by the county to control traffic flow. Because they are county stop signs, county police have authority to issue tickets to those who do not stop. Please observe stop sign courtesy. It is, after all, the law.

**Warning:** In the next few weeks the Gwinnett Police will be out writing tickets to those who run the stop signs.

## News and Notes

- The BOD recently purchased four new umbrellas and stands for the pool. Since that time, one of our new umbrellas has been stolen. If you know where the green umbrella with white trim is, please return it to the pool area. This theft hits all of us in our wallets!!

- The old green lounge chairs at the pool are up for adoption. Please e-mail us at [bod@avocet-hoa.org](mailto:bod@avocet-hoa.org) to let us know if you are interested in adopting one or two. This applies ONLY to the green lounge chairs, not the green regular chairs or any white pool furniture. A Board member will meet with you at the pool to ensure only authorized furniture is leaving the pool area.

- Men's and women's tennis teams are now forming. Please e-mail [recreation@avocet-hoa.org](mailto:recreation@avocet-hoa.org) for details.

### Correcting our error

Last month we encouraged you to subscribe to the Avocet Forum. We regret that we printed the wrong address for the link. The correct link is [http://avocet-hoa.org/general/forms/request\\_avocetclub.htm](http://avocet-hoa.org/general/forms/request_avocetclub.htm).

## The Gwinnett County Police Crime Prevention Unit will be hosting our annual COPS Festival

**Tuesday October 2, 2007**

at the

Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center • 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway

Located at Sugarloaf Pkwy and Satellite Blvd

For information please call the Crime Prevention Unit at 770-338-4170

**Doors will open at 5:00 pm**

Come see many of the special units that make up the Gwinnett County Police Dept.

Those units include SWAT, Bomb Squad, CSI, K-9, Motors, DUI, and many others.

There will be representatives from different branches of Gwinnett County Government as well, and outside vendors. There will be inflatables and goody bags for the kids. It's a great time for the entire family and the best part is that it's **FREE!** Please sign in under "Avocet" at the District 5 Table, so that Avocet will get credit for your attendance.

The COPS Festival will be a great opportunity to ask the police about what crime in our area and what is being done about it. Go to the District 5 Table and look for the precinct captain. Officer Charles Wilkerson, our COPS liaison officer, will be there and can answer questions about what is happening in our area.

# Outside the fence

## Join the Gwinnett Co. Community Emergency Response Team

The Gwinnett County (GC) Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is part of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to utilize community volunteers. Citizen Corps is endorsed by the President of the U.S. and the Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS). GC CERT members are trained in basic response techniques in order to assist local citizens and first responders in disaster or emergency situations.

This helps to insure an organized and efficient response to a large-scale emergency or disaster occurring in Gwinnett County.

Local government prepares for everyday emergencies. However, during a disaster, the number and scope of incidents can overwhelm conventional emergency services. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is an all-risk, all-hazard training. This valuable course is designed to help you protect yourself, your family, your neighbors and your neighborhood in an emergency situation.

CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and situations where citizens may initially be on their own and their actions can make a difference. While people will respond to others in need without the training, one goal of the CERT program is to help them do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger. In CERT training, citizens learn to:

- manage utilities & put out small fires
- treat the three medical killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock
- provide basic medical aid



- search for and rescue victims safely
- organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective
- collect disaster intelligence to support first responder efforts.

### WHY ATTEND CERT TRAINING?

Well, it's like paying for car insurance. You might never need either; you'd hope not to. But if the occasion arises, having the CERT training, just like having car insurance, means you're as ready as you can be to help yourself, your family and your neighborhood.

### HOW DO I JOIN?

The CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Program is an 8 week DHS-FEMA program that consists of 24 hours of instruction and practical lessons on how to assist the team member, their family and their community or neighborhood in the event of a major disaster or mass casualty event. The premise behind the team is if one of these events happens and rescuers aren't able to get to their neighborhood quickly then the team can step in and assist until professional help arrives.

CERT is provided free of charge within Gwinnett County to anyone 18 or over. Classes are taught on a regular basis continually throughout the year.

The current schedule and link to register for training is available on the website on the Training & Education page. If you have any questions you can e-mail Gwinnett CERT at [info@gwinnettcert.org](mailto:info@gwinnettcert.org) or call 770-513-5830 and leave your name and contact information. You can also contact your Avocet neighbor and local Battalion Coordinator for Zone 1 (southwest Gwinnett County which includes Avocet community), Joel Barrett, at 678-640-0634. Visit the Gwinnett CERT website at [www.gwinnettcert.org](http://www.gwinnettcert.org).

## Peachtree Corners Women's Club

The goal of the club, founded in 1984, is to unite women in the area, and

provide a support system for them.

According to their newsletter, the mood of the meetings is extremely relaxed, making it easy to meet new people. Dress is very casual.

The next meeting is Thursday, Sept. 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Laurie Killen, 4251 Mary Walk in North Manor. From Jones Bridge Circle, turn into North Manor, third street on the left.

## Tour of Homes

The first UPCCA Peachtree Corners Tour of Homes is Sunday, October 14 from 12 noon to 5 p.m. With our inaugural Tour, we hope to:

- Raise funds for beautification and signage along Peachtree Parkway
- Better unite the Peachtree Corners community
- Showcase the quality, variety, and value of homes in Peachtree Corners for prospective homeowners

We hope to raise more than \$10,000 (400 tickets must be sold) – but we need *your* help. We are asking both UPCCA homeowner associations and UPCCA individual members to sell tickets to their neighbors and friends. Tickets are \$10 in advance, and \$15 at the door.

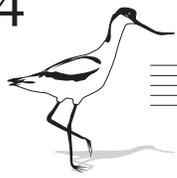
In Avocet, Jeanne Aulbach has tickets available. You can e-mail Jeanne at [jeanneteacher@earthlink.net](mailto:jeanneteacher@earthlink.net) or call her at 404-786-4825.

## FedEx Kinko's to Open Soon

In response to inquiry, FedEx responded kindly with the following information:

The store hours for the FedEx Kinko's currently being built at the corner of South Old Peachtree Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard are scheduled to be:

Monday - Friday: 7:30am - 9pm  
Saturday: 10am - 6pm  
Sunday: 12pm - 6pm



## Inspection process information

The news has been good for Avocet, lately. Back last Fall, when we were in a zoning battle over the townhomes being built behind us, the statistics that were presented at the Board of Commissioners meeting included an average selling price of \$270,000 and a high price around \$319,000. Today, our home prices have soared. Our average selling price is close to \$305,000. The highest selling price was almost \$360,000. The lowest listed prices today are above the average selling price at this time last year.

In part, this is due to a satisfactory settlement of the zoning on the property behind us. But there is also the effect of a strong and active homeowners association. Many people are interested in purchasing homes in a community that is committed to maintaining and improving property values. It is a selling point. We have become known in the Peachtree Corners area as just this type of community.

Part of maintaining and improving our values includes properly maintaining our properties. That is where our partnership with Heritage Property Management Services, Inc. comes in. Our property manager, Robin Steinkritz, does 2 to 3 inspections of our properties each month. He is looking for maintenance issues on our properties that we may not have noticed.

This process includes having the “friendly” maintenance reminder sent. We have worked with Heritage

to try to take the sting out of these letters, particularly the first notice. If you have received a letter from Robin, it came from his inspection, not your neighbor!

Some of the things that Robin looks for are things like weeds in your yard, pine straw beds and weeds in the cracks in your sidewalk and driveway. Also, he looks to ensure that your lawn has been mowed properly, and that the grass along your driveway, sidewalk and pine straw beds has been edged properly. Additional inspection items include rotted trim; stained or rotted siding; rusting gutters; debris in yards and driveways; leaning or damaged mailbox posts; damaged mailboxes; and other outstanding maintenance issues.

Receiving a letter is not a “black mark” on your record, only a reminder that you have outstanding maintenance items. You should see the inspection date in your letter. You may have cleaned up the item between the inspection and when

you receive the letter. It can happen. Or you may be planning to correct the item at a future date.

This process is done by humans. As such, there will be times when an error can occur. An address can be entered improperly, for one. If you feel you received a letter in error or if you need additional time to correct the item, you have the option of contacting Robin at Heritage and/or the Board of Directors. In either case, you should receive a response within 2 business days.

At a time when housing prices have dropped, Avocet’s prices have rebounded. Lets work together to ensure this trend continues.

### *Lawn Care Maintenance Note:*

The time to put down the pre-emergent to prevent winter weeds is from October 15 to November 15. By taking a little time to do this (or have your lawn care provider take care of this) you will have a weed free lawn through Spring!

## *Great Offer from Georgia Pressure & Steam!*

**The folks from Georgia Pressure & Steam have teamed up with the Avocet Property Owners Association to bring you a great 20% discount on their pressure washing services.**

For a typical Avocet home, Georgia Pressure & Steam offers the following estimated great prices **before** our 20% discount:

Pressure washing your home—Regularly \$225, Discount Price \$180  
Pressure washing sidewalks & driveways—Regularly 15¢/sq. ft.,  
Discount Price 12¢/sq. ft.

*To get a firm estimate, you can call William at 770-729-6200 and let him know you are an Avocet resident. You can also visit their website at [www.georgiapressure.com](http://www.georgiapressure.com).*