

County Line

a monthly publication of gwinnett county, georgia

december 2004 v12, n12



End of the year means end of an era for Gwinnett County

Not only will Gwinnett County say goodbye to the year 2004, citizens will also be casting farewell to four of the County's top officials.



Chairman **F. Wayne Hill** will step down as Commission Chairman after 12 years of service in the position. Chairman Hill has been

a champion for both water quality and greenspace issues in Gwinnett County. Water production has nearly doubled to 84 million gallons per day and greenspace has more than quadrupled to nearly 7,800 acres under the Chairman's watch. He was the visionary behind the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Center, and he worked with state officials to build a new Department of Motor Vehicle Safety Customer Service Center in Lawrenceville.



County Administrator **Charlotte Nash** began her career at Gwinnett County with the Department of Financial Services in 1977.

She first held the position of grants management officer, then budget manager before becoming finance director in 1985, a job that she held until her appointment as county administrator nearly a decade ago. *"The fact that we are now one of only a handful of counties in America to get Triple A bond ratings from all three ratings agencies speaks volumes for*

Charlotte's financial savvy," said Chairman Hill. *"She has been a respected and ethical manager of taxpayer dollars, and an inspiring local government leader."* Nash will retire in December.

Two district commissioners will also step down at the end of the year: District 1 Commissioner **Marcia Neaton** and District 3



Commissioner **John Dunn**. Both Neaton and Dunn worked hard to make improvements in their respective districts.

Residents in Neaton's district now enjoy having one of Gwinnett County's newest parks close to

...continued on County Line page 2

contents

Keion Carpenter delivers meals



Tax tips to avoid fees



Citizens Fire Academy



History Book Club



Property tax exemptions



Pet Corner



Check it out!



Around Gwinnett



From left to right: Adrian Williams, Sean Ballisty, Don Brooks, Clayton Wright, Reuben Easterling, Brian Ward, Ryan Fulcher, Seth Pilcher, Andy Lane, Charles Gonzalez, Kevin Harnes, Tim Lister, and Derrick James

Fire and Emergency Services graduates 13 new recruits

Basic Firefighter Class 2004-2 graduated from 16 weeks of firefighter training at the Gwinnett Fire Academy. The graduation was held in the GJAC jury assembly room.

Thirteen recruits were assigned to area fire stations to begin EMT training.

...continued on County Line page 4

Keion Carpenter delivers Meals on Wheels



Atlanta Falcons defensive back Keion Carpenter recently spent the afternoon delivering meals to Gwinnett clients of the Meals on Wheels program. The program operates more than 30 daily delivery routes. If you are interested in volunteering to deliver meals to homebound seniors in Gwinnett County, call Gary Galloway at 770.822.8837.

Citizens Fire Academy graduates nine

Congratulations to graduates of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' 5th Citizen Fire Academy. Nine Gwinnett County citizens graduated from the CFA on November 12 at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. Students participated in a nine-week course, which included many of the same hands-on exercises that real fire school recruits must go through. Approximately 80 citizens have graduated from the CFA program since its beginning in February 2003.



Citizens Fire Academy participants spent nine weeks getting a feel for what fighting fires in Gwinnett County is really like.

Advice from the Tax Commissioner: Avoid fees for lapsed insurance coverage

While Georgia's electronic insurance reporting requirements are in place to protect you – the driver – from uninsured motorists, they may cause complications when selling or trading in a vehicle. The following information details the primary reasons for why a lapse fee occurs and what actions you can take to avoid a lapse fee situation.

The potential for this situation arises most often when the owner of a vehicle sells or trades in their vehicle. The first logical step after selling or trading in a vehicle is to cancel the insurance coverage, but most people forget to cancel the vehicle registration. As a result, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS) assumes that the vehicle is being operated without insurance and the vehicle owner will be assessed a \$25 insurance coverage lapse fee.

In order to cancel the vehicle registration, the registered owner needs to file a request with the local tag office either in person, by mail, e-mail, or fax prior to canceling their insurance coverage. With the request, the registered owner needs to include the following information:

- Registered owner's name
- Current license plate (tag) number
- Current title number
- Current daytime telephone number
- Year, make, and model of the vehicle

To transfer vehicle registration, call or visit your local tag office to discuss your specific situation. This is a simple process, but one that is often overlooked. It is also important to note that vehicle registrations cannot be cancelled over the telephone, and ad valorem taxes may still apply if you cancel a vehicle's registration but still own the vehicle. For more information about Georgia's insurance coverage requirements, lapse fees, or other vehicle registration issues, visit the Web site at www.gwinnett-tag.com.

End of an era

...continued from County Line page 1

home, McDaniel Farm Park; residents in District 3 welcomed the new Mountain Park Aquatic Center in 2003.

Citizens are invited to attend a reception on Friday, December 17 in the first floor atrium of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center from 3:00pm – 6:00pm in honor of Chairman Hill and Charlotte Nash to celebrate their dedicated service to Gwinnett County.

History Book Club discussion

Join the Gwinnett County Public Library and the Gwinnett History Museum for a book discussion on *Our Father's Fields: A Southern Story*, by James Everett Kibler. *Our Father's Fields* offers "an especially vivid portrayal of the antebellum South, a compelling collection of Civil War letters, and a poignant account of life after the war."

The History Book Club will meet Monday, January 10, 2005, at the Gwinnett History Museum located at the Lawrenceville Female Seminary building at 7:00pm to discuss the selection. For more information, visit www.gwinnettpl.org or call 770.822.5178.

Holiday closing reminder

All offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of the citizens of Gwinnett County, will be closed half a day on Thursday, December 23 and all day on Friday, December 24 in observance of the Christmas Holidays. All offices will resume regular working hours on Monday, December 27.

Property tax deadline

The homestead filing season begins January 1, 2005. A regular homestead exemption and value offset exemption is available to all homeowners who occupy the property as a primary residence. It is not applicable to rental property or vacant land. Other exemptions are available to senior and disabled homeowners. The deadline for filing is May 1, 2005.

Mobile home tax bills will be mailed on January 15, 2005. The deadline for mobile home tax payments is May 1, 2005. For more information on homestead exemptions or mobile home taxes, call the Tax Commissioner's 24-hour customer service line at 770.822.8800 or you can send your question by e-mail to propertytax@gwinnettcountry.com.

Check it out!

Basketball season is just around the corner. Check out these stories about legendary basketball coaches of the NBA and the NCAA.

The Carolina Way: Leadership Lessons from a Life in Coaching, by Dean Smith

Venus to the Hoop: A Gold Medal Year in Women's Basketball, by Sara Corbett

Let me Tell You a Story: A lifetime in the game, by Red Auerback and John Feinstein

Knight: My story, by Bob Knight and Bob Hammel

More than a game, by Phil Jackson and Charley Rosen

Coach K's Little Blue Book: Lessons from college basketball's best coach, by Barry Jacobs

Unguarded: My forty years surviving in the NBA, by Lenny Wilkens with Pluto

Bird Watching: On playing and coaching the game I love, by Larry Bird with Jackie MacMullan

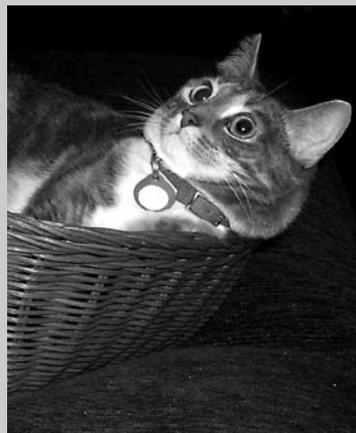
The Smart Take from the Strong: The basketball philosophy of Pete Carril, by Pete Carril with Dan White

Sacred Hoops: Spiritual lesson of a hardwood warrior, by Phil Jackson

This list was provided by the Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit your local branch for additional selection assistance, or check out the GCPL Web site at www.gwinnettpl.org.

Visit the new Suwanee Branch Library!
361 Main Street
Suwanee, Georgia

Pet Corner



You can find lots of adorable cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens at the Gwinnett County Animal Shelter at Highway 316 and Hi-Hope Road in Lawrenceville. Please visit www.gwinnettcountry.com to see pictures of pets currently up for adoption.

Share your pet adoption success story with us! If you have adopted a pet from the Gwinnett County Animal Shelter, please e-mail a picture and brief description to kinsey.snell@gwinnettcountry.com or send it to Attn. Kinsey Snell, Communications Division, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville GA 30045.



Get into the holiday spirit at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse. Enjoy carriage rides around the square in downtown Lawrenceville or take a photo with Santa and stroll through the beautifully decorated rooms of the courthouse. There will also be live musical performances throughout the month of December. Call 770.822.5450 for a schedule of **holiday events at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse**.

Find the perfect holiday gifts at the **Holiday Craft Festival** at Meadowcreek High School. The festival, hosted by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, is Saturday, December 4 from 9:00am – 3:00pm. For more information, call 770.417.2200.

Join Santa's elves in making great holiday gifts at the **Elf Workshop** on December 4 at Mountain Park Activity Building in Stone Mountain and on December 11 at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center in Lawrenceville. Children ages 4 – 10 can enjoy fun activities and refreshments from 10:00am – noon. The cost is \$5 per person, and reservations are required. Call 770.822.5414 for more information.

Enjoy live animal programs at **Reptile and Amphibian Day** at the Lanier Museum of Natural History on December 4 from

10:00am – 3:00pm. The museum is located at 2601 Buford Dam Road in Buford. The cost is \$3 per person. For more information, call 770.932.4460.

Santa is coming to the Centerville Community Center in Snellville! Enjoy **Breakfast with Santa** and get your picture taken with Ol' St. Nick on December 4 from 9:00am – 11:00am. You will even have the opportunity to place a letter to Santa in his special mailbox. The cost is \$3 per person and all proceeds will benefit the women and children in the Gwinnett Women's Shelter. For more information, call 770.985.4713 or visit www.centervillecommunitycenter.com.

Santa is also coming to the Bogan Park Community Center in Buford! Make plans to have pancakes and make crafts with St. Nick at **Breakfast with Santa** on December 11 at 9:00am. Don't forget to bring your camera! The cost is \$20 for one child and one adult and \$3 for each additional adult. For more information, call 770.614.2060.

The Gwinnett History Museum is presenting a **lecture series on the history of Christmas** and Victorian Christmas traditions. The series, geared towards ages 12 and up, will take place on Saturday, December 11 from noon – 2:00pm at the Gwinnett History

Museum. The cost is \$3 per person. Call 770.822.5178 for more information.

Meet your friends at Pinckneyville Community Center in Norcross for a **Hometown Christmas** on December 17 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm. Help decorate the tree with homemade crafts, sip hot cocoa, and snack on scrumptious cookies. Join carolers in singing some of your old favorites and have your picture taken with Santa Claus. The cost is \$20 for a family of four and \$5 for each additional person. For more information, call 770.417.2200.

The Pinckneyville Community Center hosts free art exhibits at various locations around Gwinnett County. **Art by Michi** and **Art by Pedestals: Tangled Threads Doll Club** will be displayed at the Pinckneyville Community Center in Norcross through February 3, 2005. **Art by Carly Clements** will be displayed at the Centerville Community Center in Snellville through January 9, 2005. Call 770.417.2200 for more information.

New Recruits

...continued from County Line page 1

New firefighter recruits begin their careers with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services by attending a full-time fire and medical training program at the Department's Fire College. Located in Dacula, the Gwinnett Fire College has developed a reputation for academic respect and credibility in the Southeast because of its strong stance on and investment in training.

Recruits participate in an integrated, physically challenging program consisting of academic and practical applications. Examples of practical drills and exercises include

ladder, confined space, search and rescue, rope rescue, and live fire evolutions.

For successful completion of recruit school, candidates must satisfactorily complete as specified by the Gwinnett Fire College: NPQ Firefighter I and II examinations; Hazardous Material First Responder Operations Level Certification; Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Certification; all FDC tests and First Class Firefighter exam within 12 months from the beginning date of firefighter training; and state of Georgia Certification as an Emergency Medical Technician at the level specified by the department.

**Congratulations to
Firefighter Class 2004-2!**

countyline

Editor

Heather R. Welch

Staff Writer

Kinsey Snell

Art Direction

Shannon E. Coffey

Layout and Design

Laura Heck
Rock, Paper, Scissors llc.

Gwinnett County
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, GA 30045
770.822.7035
www.gwinnettcountry.com

Call editor **Heather Welch** at 770.822.7035 with your newsletter articles and suggestions or e-mail heather.welch@gwinnettcountry.com. Please remember that information may not be printed in its entirety due to space constraints. The County Line can be read online at www.gwinnettcountry.com