



county Line

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SPLOST: New park opens while another boasts additional features

Hundreds of county residents attended the grand opening of DeShong Park last month. The county's newest park opened on August 11 with an official ribbon cutting ceremony followed by an afternoon full of free festivities. The park is located at 2859 North DeShong Road in Stone Mountain.

Visitors to DeShong Park will enjoy a two-acre open play area, 1.5-mile multi-purpose trail, lawn court area with horseshoe pits, chess and checker tables, two half-court basketball courts, 11,000 square-foot skate complex with streetscape elements, play-

ground with swings and climbing structures, and restroom facilities.

Mountain Park Park's new amenities debut

Several new additions to Mountain Park Park opened to the public last month. The new amenities include a skate complex, sand volleyball court, playground with climbing boulders and swings, open space lawn area for free play, small picnic shelter, and picnic tables.

The new skate complex, designed by Site Design, Inc., offers bowls, half-pipes, and ramps for beginners and

advanced skaters alike. Benches for spectator seating also surround the skate complex. The site was originally home to the former Mountain Park Pool before the Mountain Park Aquatic Center was built on Rockbridge Road in Stone Mountain in 2004. "Site Design did a great job making the skate complex work with the existing slopes," said Project Planner **Amy Musser**. "We hear from the local community that it is well-done with features that skaters like."

These new features complement existing amenities at Mountain Park

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Around Gwinnett



Outback at Work charity lunch

Local businesses and organizations can eagerly anticipate Outback at Work charity lunches to be delivered right to their door this fall. Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services (FOGCSS), a volunteer-governed nonprofit organization that privately supplements select Gwinnett County Senior Services programs, continues the public-private partnership with the Suwanee Outback Steakhouse. This annual event has generated more than \$50,000 in the past seven years to assist the Gwinnett Senior Services Meals on Wheels program.

The Outback at Work lunches are more than scrumptious meals – they are value-added contributions to what helps to make our community



Harriet Wharton (Center Coordinator of BHSC) and Susan Shenefield (FOGCSS board member) at the Outback at Work 2006 event.

great. According to Suwanee Outback Proprietor **Yanis Latsis**, Outbackers (his staff) are "people who can make a difference."

Community involvement activities like this one are part of the company's grassroots marketing effort.

Even when they volunteer, Outbackers are committed to maintaining top quality standards. In fact, the Outback motto stresses putting people first. He estimates that a typical Outback restaurant is involved with about 25 events annually ranging from tours to free lunches for school children or civic organizations. In addition to food donations, Outbackers at any given store contribute about \$20,000 in volunteer time.

The 2007 dates for Outback at Work are September 19 and October 17 when FOGCSS will be delivering pre-ordered meals to your door. Latsis is excited to offer a mouth-watering mixed grill this

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Advice from the Tax Commissioner

Dealing with lost or stolen license plates and decals

Perhaps you go out to your car one morning and notice your license plate is missing from the rear of the car. Or, you renewed your registration and then misplaced the decal. What do you do?

The good news is that lost or stolen license plates or decals can be replaced at your local tag office. You will be asked to complete and sign an incident report and show your Georgia driver's license or identification card. The tag office will forward the report to the Gwinnett County Police.

In most cases, an \$8 fee will be charged to replace the plate or decal. One exception is that no fee is charged for a plate or decal that was not received in the mail, as long as the vehicle owner reports the loss within 90 days from the date of renewal.

If a prestige or specialty tag is lost or stolen, a regular plate can be issued for an \$8 fee. Alternatively, you can purchase another prestige or specialty tag for a \$33 fee. Unfortunately, tag offices cannot replace lost or stolen prestige plates with new ones containing the same combination of letters and/or numbers as the lost or stolen one.

First property tax installment payment due September 15

The Gwinnett County Tax Commissioner has mailed 2007 property tax bills with new installment dates. As in past years, this is the only bill that will be mailed. It includes payment coupons and reply envelopes for both installment payments.

The first installment amount shown on the tax bill must be paid by September 15, 2007, or the taxpayer may pay the entire amount by this date. The second installment is due November 15, 2007. Installments not paid by the stated due dates will incur a five percent penalty. In addition, interest will begin to accrue at the rate of one percent per month beginning on November 16.

Gwinnett taxpayers have the option of making 2007 property tax payments in person at two locations: the Property Tax Customer Service Office in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in

Lawrenceville and at the Tax Commissioner's North Gwinnett Motor Vehicle tag office located on Mall of Georgia Boulevard in Buford. Customers should note that because of a scheduled state computer system shutdown, the North Gwinnett tag office will not be open on Saturday, September 15. Both of these locations will process property tax payments and provide receipts to taxpayers.

Other payment options include:

- Payment drop off locations at each tag office (anytime)
- Telephone payments using banking information on the Tax Commissioner's TaxTalk 24 line, 770.822.8800
- Credit card payments at gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com (convenience fees apply)

Vehicle registration computer shutdowns scheduled for 2007

The Georgia Department of Revenue is performing scheduled maintenance on its vehicle registration computer system over several weekends throughout 2007. During these scheduled maintenance periods, the vehicle registration system will be inaccessible to tag offices. The impact will be as follows:

- The Tax Commissioner's North Gwinnett Branch Tag Office, located at 2735 Mall of Georgia Boulevard in Buford, will be closed on the Saturday of each weekend scheduled for maintenance
- Internet and telephone tag renewals will not be available during each maintenance period

The scheduled maintenance periods during the remainder of 2007 are:

- September 14 at 7:00pm until September 17 at 6:00am
- December 7 at 7:00pm until December 10 at 6:00am

Property Tax Customer Service 770.822.8800

Motor Vehicles Customer Service 770.822.8818

www.gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com

Prepare for the unexpected

September is National Preparedness Month, a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. Throughout the month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security asks all Americans to take some simple steps to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies.

One of the simplest things you can do to be better prepared is to have a family emergency plan. You can also create a kit that can be used in case of emergency. The kit should include basic items like

water, food, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and a first aid kit. For emergency planning templates, a complete list of recommended supplies, and to learn more about natural disasters and potential terrorist threats, go to ready.gov.

Citizen Corps provides residents with opportunities to prepare, train, participate in community exercises and support local emergency responders. For more information or to get involved, visit citizencorps.gov to find your local Citizen Corps council.

– Source: ready.gov

Festival celebrates reading, learning, and community

The Gwinnett County Public Library will present the first annual Gwinnett Reading Festival on Saturday, October 20 at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds. The event is free to the public and will take place from 10:00am until 4:00pm.

The Gwinnett Reading Festival is designed for people all ages and will promote the library, books, and a love of reading. The event will feature approximately 30 local, regional, and national authors who will read, discuss, and autograph their works.

The festival also will feature workshops, panel discussions, a Starbucks coffee shop, food, a bookstore provided by Barnes & Noble, musical and comedic entertainment, and an on-site library branch. Events for children and teens will include storytellers, battling knights from Medieval Times, sumo wrestling, and a live Quidditch match.

A special ticketed event will take place during the evening and will feature Georgia author Terry Kay reading from his new novel **The Book of Marie** at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in downtown Lawrenceville. This event is being sponsored

jointly by GCPL and the Lawrenceville Tourism and Trade Association.

The Gwinnett County Public Library operates 14 branches throughout Gwinnett County. For updates on Gwinnett Reading Festival author schedules, programs, and activities, visit gwinnettreadingfestival.org.

Parks ... cont'd from page 1

Park, including seven baseball/softball fields, a football field overlay, six lighted tennis courts, two existing playgrounds, a mulch trail and a one-mile paved, multi-purpose trail. Mountain Park Park is located at 5050 Five Forks Trickum Road in Lilburn.

The new DeShong Park and the additions to Mountain Park Park were funded through the voter-approved special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST). A \$100,000 grant from the Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund enhanced the improvements at Mountain Park Park.

For more information, call 770.822.8840 or visit gwinnettparks.com.



Check It Out!

Fascinating non-fiction for inquiring minds...

The Book of General Ignorance, by John Mitchinson

Super Crunchers: Why Thinking by Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart, by Ian Ayres

Um – Slips, Stumbles, and Verbal Blunders and What They Mean, by Michael Erard

The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window Into Human Nature, by Steven Pinker

The Intellectual Devotional American History: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, and Converse About Our Nation's Past, by David S. Kidder

A Year Without "Made in China": One Family's True Life Adventure in the Global Economy, by Sara Bongiorno

Running the Table: The Legend of Kid Delicious, the Last Great American Pool Hustler, by L. Jon Wertheim

How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read, by Pierre Bayard

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

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. Look for information in next month's issue of the County Line about the new Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center opening soon.

To see pictures of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, visit www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com. For more information, stop by the shelter, or call 770.339.3200.



Pet Corner



Outback at Work

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year – combining beef tenderloin medallions, flame-grilled chicken, and grilled shrimp with seasoned french green beans and vanilla bean mashed sweet potatoes. The *No Worries Wednesday Mixed Grill* combo is sure to be a big hit.

For more information, call 770.822.8846 or e-mail shawn.valadez@gwinnettcounty.com.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Spend an **Evening with Mark Twain** on September 14. Join us for Twain's wonderfully witty and humorous stories and a sing-a-long featuring music of his era. Cost is \$10. This event starts at 7:00pm and will be held at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse, 185 Crogan Street, Lawrenceville, 770.822.5178.

It's time to clean out your garage/closets and bring your wares to sell at the **Shorty Howell Yard Sale and Craft Fair** from 9:00am – 2:00pm on September 15. Reservations required for sellers. Spaces available for rent, rain or shine, no refunds. GCPR reserves the right to disqualify inappropriate sale items. The Shorty Howell Park Activity Building is located at 2750 Pleasant Hill Road in Duluth, 770.814.4914

Join McDaniel Farm Park and the Georgia Herpetological Society for the annual **Snake Day** featuring live animals, snakes of Gwinnett, and information about Georgia's venomous snakes. Cost is \$3, payable at door. September 15 from 10:00am – 2:00pm at the Dacula Park Activity Building, 2735 Auburn Avenue, Dacula, 770.822.5414.

Participants in the **History Book Club** discuss books relating to Southern or Georgia history. The next meeting is on September 17 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm at the Gwinnett History Museum, 455 South Perry Street in Lawrenceville. Call 770.822.5178 for book title. Co-sponsored by Gwinnett County Public Library.

The Barnwell School of Etiquette will instruct on etiquette and manners for the working world during the **Professional Etiquette Class**. This event will be held from 9:00am – noon on September 19 at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse, 185 Crogan St., Lawrenceville. Call 770.822.5178 for more information.

Caledonia Swing will perform on September 21 at the Gwinnett History Museum during **Coffee Ceilidh**, part of the Coffeehouse Night music series. Doors open at 8:00pm, music starts at 8:30pm. Starbucks, drinks, and light desserts will be available for purchase. Alcohol and smoking are not permitted. Admission is \$5 (\$4 for members). The museum is located inside the Lawrenceville

Female Seminary, 455 South Perry Street in Lawrenceville, 770.822.5178.

Moonlight and Music is a series of free concerts jointly produced by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and the Lawrenceville Tourism and Trade Association. Concerts are held on the lawn of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse every fourth Friday, May through September. The last concert of the season is September 28 at 8:00pm. For more information, visit visitlawrenceville.com.

The Gwinnett County Police Department's **C.O.P.S. Festival** will be held on October 2. In its 10th year, the festival will take place between 5:00pm 8:00pm at the Gwinnett County Civic and Cultural Center in Duluth. C.O.P.S., or Community Oriented Police Services, is the law enforcement department's neighborhood watch program. This year's festival has a lot to offer with displays and demonstrations by various GCPD and the Fire and Emergency Services Department units. A fun activity area will be set aside for children. For more information, call Officer **Todd Topor** with the Gwinnett County Crime Prevention Unit at 770.338.4170 extension 5754.

The Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center is located at 2020 Clean Water Drive in Buford. GECH is open to the public Monday through Friday from 1:00pm – 5:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am – 5:00pm. Daily admission fees are: \$7 for adults, \$5 for students, \$3 for children ages 3 – 12, and \$5 for seniors 55 and over.

The following events take place at the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center:

Bring your friends or make new ones at **Club Method** (middle and high school students) on September 15 from 1:00pm – 2:30pm. Participate in fun, hands-on science activities, receive help with projects, and learn to be a leader while having fun. Center admission requires additional fee.

Families will learn about the different animals living on our 233 wooded acres at **Skins, Scat, and Tracks** on September 15, 2:00pm – 4:00pm. Learn how scientists identify ani-

mals by what they leave behind. This program will be led by a guest from the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center. Registration required by September 12, call 770.904.3500. GEHC members only event; \$3 per person or \$7 for family of four.

Learn about **Birds in Your Backyard** with David Decker from the Atlanta Audubon Society on September 22. Walk begins at 8:00am with presentation at 9:30am. \$3 per person, free for GEHC members. Center admission requires additional fee. Ages 16 and up. Register at 770.904.3500 by September 19.



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The County Line is published monthly by the Gwinnett County Communications Division to inform residents about County services and items of interest. For more information or to submit newsletter suggestions, call 770.822.7035 or e-mail heathersawyer@gwinnettcounty.com. The County Line is also available on the County's website, gwinnettcounty.com.