



January 12, 2015

I think quite a few of you have met our **Police** Precinct Commander Major Gale Higginbotham when she attended our city council meetings or was my guest at various city events. I've tried to help her get to know us as much as possible, and she has been more responsive to our needs and concerns than anyone we've had before. As you may have read in the *Gwinnett Daily Post*, Major Higginbotham recently completed an 11-week course at the FBI National Academy. It was a great honor for her to be chosen to attend in Quantico, VA, with law enforcement personnel from 49 states, 26 countries, and 3 military organizations.

In view of the responsiveness of our police, we are about to make some changes in our extra patrolling throughout the city. I have been concerned that it has become more difficult for us to get security officers who stayed with us long enough to learn much about our city. There has been a lot of turnover lately which didn't happen so much a few years ago. I have been talking with other mayors about the **City Marshals** that some of them have, and after some study have made a recommendation to our City Council that we create such a program. City Marshals would be hired and paid directly by our city and would patrol in a marked city-owned vehicle (we're looking at an SUV) with a light bar on top, similar to police vehicles. We will begin with one full-time officer and discontinue the use of Plaza Security guards. This will be an evolving process to see how best to serve our security needs and we may add more later if it proves to be cost effective. Meanwhile, your thoughts, as always, are welcome. Your City Council representatives have supported this idea and would be as happy as I to discuss it with you, so feel free to contact any of us as this develops and you have a chance to form opinions.

There is a third prong to my current vision for city security that I have been discussing with your homeowner association Presidents. You may remember some years ago when our city was able to hire directly some off duty Gwinnett County Police officers of our choosing. Officer Doug McClure and others were very helpful to us until the county disallowed their working with us in that way. That's when we went to the security guard company. By working with Major Gale Higginbotham I have arranged for Doug McClure and other officers knowledgeable of and interested in our city to be hired by our homeowner associations to work on specific needs in their communities. Miramont is very happy with the extra patrols they are receiving and are targeting their own specific neighborhood concerns. Other homeowner presidents are considering this. BLHA is exploring the use of such police officers to patrol the beach area and picnic grounds who could arrest trespassers, and the BLHA is also updating their security facilities to include new key-card entry gates to the beach and picnic grounds. It is my hope that together

we can fine tune a cooperative effort between our county police, our new City Marshal(s), and off-duty police in neighborhoods that will give our citizens the best possible coverage for our security needs, without raising taxes.

Thanks to Laurel Mauroy who is currently coordinating **the FROGS** group of young people who work together to make our community a better place. Their next project is to make valentines and goodies for some of our honored seniors and others. If you’d like to support Laurel and the FROGS, please let her know.



I read with interest an article in a noted national magazine, *The Atlantic*, about our nearby neighbors in Norcross and elsewhere in Gwinnett. (Click [here](#) for article.) It made me even more grateful for those of you who have regularly supported our City of Berkeley Lake efforts to collect holiday toys, food, etc. for Norcross Co-operative Ministries. **Our current drive is for coats of all sizes, children and adults.** Please go through your closets and collect any coats that your family no longer needs, because it’s really cold out there lately and some are struggling to stay warm. Bring them to City Hall, or if it’s easier you can leave them in a plastic bag at my house and I’ll make sure they get to the Co-op. Although it’s not a city program, I’m also collecting children’s books for a group at Mt. Carmel United Methodist that will be tutoring children after school and teaching English to Hispanic students. If you can spare some books, I’d appreciate those also. If you’d like to volunteer at the Norcross Co-op or at Mt. Carmel, please let me know and I’ll help you get started.



Rich Edinger, our City Engineer, has won a 2015 Honor Award for Engineering Excellence for his work on our dam. He will be recognized at the annual Engineers Week Gala at Ga. Tech and in an upcoming issue of *Engineering Georgia Magazine*. We are fortunate to have received such great work on something so important to us, and we’re glad to see him and our dam recognized by his professional peers. It’s a great dam!

Congratulations to Berkeley Lake Elementary which has won another award for its students’ performance on statewide tests. The state school superintendent recognized in BLES “some of the finest efforts being put forth in Georgia education.”

Promise686 is a nonprofit organization located in The Commons at Berkeley Lake office park. It **advocates for adoption and foster care**, and for assisting vulnerable children by recruiting, equipping, and supporting foster families. One such family lives in Berkeley Commons – Paul and Tracy Baird. They have fostered several children as a part of their family and would be happy to talk with you if you’re interested in a similar experience or in encouraging and supporting someone else who is fostering. You can learn more at www.promise686.org.



I met an interesting lady at a Chamber of Commerce meeting recently and talked with her about **Gwinnett Online Campus** which may be of interest to some of you. It’s the Gwinnett school system’s new full-time diploma-granting school that serves students in grades 4-12 with a flexible learning environment where exciting things are happening. High school students have access to classes in the core academic areas, modern and classical languages, health and PE, technical education, Advanced Placement, and a variety of electives and connection courses. Grades 4-8 course offerings include language arts, math, science, social studies, foreign language, and a variety of connections classes unique to the online environment. Unlike the traditional setting, GOC students work online at the time of day that works best for their schedule. Face-to-face meetings occur on campus for hands-on labs, interactive learning labs, and testing. The school has earned national recognition as a winner of the Blackboard Catalyst Award for Innovation,



which recognizes those who challenge conventional thinking to improve the way education is delivered and experienced. Gwinnett County’s Teacher of the Year for High School is one of their teachers. GOC soon will be registering students for the 2015-16 school year. Students in grades 4-12 interested in attending Gwinnett Online Campus full-time for 2015-2016 may complete the online Intent-to-Register process during the month of February, 2015. Registration details can be found on the school’s website at www.gwinnettonlinecampus.com.

This year the American Red Cross asks you to make a resolution to get your household ready for possible **emergencies**. I share their suggestions here, but you can find more details [here](#).

GET A KIT Having things in one place and close at hand can make a difference. Store your kit in an easy-to-carry container that you can use at home or take with you in case you have to evacuate. Have at least two weeks’ worth of supplies at home. Your kit should include:

- Three-day supply of non-perishable food and water—one gallon per person, per day for drinking and hygiene purposes.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible).
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit, medications and medical items.
- Copies of all important documents (proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies).
- Extra cash in small denominations (not all \$20 bills).

MAKE A PLAN Plan what to do in case everyone is separated. Choose two places to meet—one right outside the home in case of a sudden emergency such as a fire, and another outside the neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate. Other tips include:

- Choose an out-of-area emergency contact person. All household members should have this person’s phone number and email address. It may be easier to call long distance or text if local phone lines are overloaded or out of service.

- Tell everyone in the household where emergency information and supplies are kept.
- Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case main roads are impassable.
- Plan ahead for your pets. If you must evacuate, make arrangements for your animals. Keep a phone list of “pet friendly” motels/hotels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation routes.

We are sad to lose our **former City Treasurer, Kathy Sanders, and her husband Dag Sandbakken** as they move to the west coast. I cannot help but hope they will find their way back to Berkeley Lake someday. Meanwhile, they go with our appreciation and good wishes.

My featured **Berkeley Lake businesses** for this month are:

IntelligIS, Inc., 4720 Peachtree Industrial Blvd, Ste 5201, [678-680-5860](tel:678-680-5860), www.intelligis.com

An IT Services company providing full-service technical support for small and medium sized business. With user-friendly, leading edge solutions, they offer businesses the opportunity for growth and efficiency using technology. They take the hassle out of IT and simplify its complexity—freeing you up to run your business.

Law Office of David S. Lee, LLC, 3301 N. Berkeley Lake Rd, [\(678\) 474-0005](tel:678-474-0005), www.davidslee.org

Representing the citizens of Gwinnett County and more particularly, Duluth and Berkeley Lake for over 10 years in the areas of Personal Injury, Criminal Defense, DUI and Real Estate closings. David has been a member of the Georgia Bar since 1991 and is a former Senior Assistant District Attorney in Fulton County and DeKalb County.

Happy New Year, everybody!

