

Mayor's Message

December, 2007



Happy Holidays to everyone! Enclosed you will find a little present from your City. A great deal of work has gone into the creation of these two laminated guides for each of our families. There's a **Preparedness Guide** and an **Emergency Guide**, both made just for Berkeley Lake. The Preparedness Guide has practical steps you can take *before an emergency occurs* to either prevent it or to have the resources on hand to confront the problem successfully. The Emergency Guide has important action steps to follow *at the time of an emergency* to protect your family and your property from harm. The City paid a noted consultant in emergency preparedness to create these for us. Both BLEMA and the Council studied them and worked with the consultant to produce the final versions which come to you now. Please study them with your family and keep them in an easily accessible place. I hope you never have to face any major emergencies, but if you do, these should help. In any case, it's good to stop at some point soon, go over these with your family, and do some thinking and planning for emergencies that may arise. This can be a catalyst for that kind of discussion in your home. Additionally we are finalizing a Berkeley Lake Handbook for emergency preparedness and response, and from time to time will post additional information concerning this on the city's website.

I want to introduce Tom Rozier to you. He is our **new city administrator** and Leigh Threadgill is dropping back to part time as deputy city administrator. She is expecting a new baby soon and requested this change. Both of them are real assets to our City, and we are lucky to have them.

Our police officers have reported to me that recently a white male stopped a black Nissan Altima on South Berkeley Lake Road near the entrance to Berkeley Walk. He was seen standing by the car about 5:30 PM wearing no clothes at all. It is thought that the same man was seen naked a few months ago in our City. The person reporting this did not get a tag number, and was probably too shocked to think of it, but I want everybody to make a mental note to get tag numbers whenever possible if you ever have anything to report to our police. Any problem that's reported can be handled better if there's a tag number to follow up on. If this guy has appeared twice in our city, it's reasonable to think he may show up again. Our police are, of course, on the lookout for him. Parents may want to have a preemptive discussion with their children about the very few unfortunate people in the world who have some strange need to take their clothes off in public, etc. Additionally we've had some reports of what may be vandalism. Sometimes people think things are too small to report, but we keep a very close watch on our **public safety** and want to know of any incidents, as well as to help when we can. Please report any incidents of crime in our City to me or to City Hall. Even if you file a report with other police officers, please call us, too. They respond to one incident. We study patterns in our city.

Please remember that **trash collection** is always a day behind in weeks that have a holiday, including Christmas and New Year's Day. For those two weeks, our service will be on Saturdays - Dec. 29 and Jan. 5.

There has been a lot of citizen concern lately about the possibility of changing our city's ordinances to provide for certain **home occupations** that are currently not allowed. The existing ordinance has for some years allowed a person to do work in their homes that was essentially invisible to neighbors. Council members are now considering the pros and cons of allowing things like music and art teaching, tutoring, and in-home day care, all with certain limitations. At the November council meeting many people came to give us their thoughts at a public hearing we had advertised in the newspaper on these possible changes. With so much input, the changes may become somewhat fluid as new language is created to try to meet people's concerns. That being the case, your best bet to keep current if you cannot attend the meetings is to check our website for the latest information - www.berkeley-lake.com. You can read the minutes there of the November meeting and public hearing, and copies are available in City Hall. You can offer your comments at other meetings, even if you missed the recent public hearing. Remember that council meetings are always the 3rd Thursday of the month in the Chapel at 7:30 PM. You may also want to discuss your opinions about this with council members. They are all open to your input.

I am currently finalizing my appointments to the various **committees for 2008**. I know I've asked before in previous *Mayor's Messages*, but I wanted to remind you again to let me know if you would be willing to serve the City in some way. It's important for us to have citizen involvement from all areas of the City, and I believe you would enjoy working with your neighbors in ways that make this an even better place to live. You can find information on the various committees on our website, or just call me at 770 368-3243 and we'll talk.

I am told that some cities are giving their citizens free CFL light bulbs to promote **wise energy consumption**. I don't think we want to spend your tax dollars on this, but I did agree to share this information with you when I had room in a *Mayor's Message*. A compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) is a light bulb that uses less energy than a standard bulb to provide the same amount of light. Those bearing the government's Energy Star label use 1/3 the energy of a traditional bulb, can last up to 10 times longer, and save \$30 or more in energy costs over their lifetime. You can find Energy Star CFLs most anywhere you currently shop for light bulbs. If every American swapped just 1 bulb for an Energy Star labeled CFL, it would collectively save more than \$8 billion in energy costs, prevent burning 30 billion pounds of coal, and remove 2 million cars worth of greenhouse gas emissions from our atmosphere. Imagine the difference we could make if we replaced all of the lights we use most.

I hope you enjoy your families and friends in this special time of the year, and that the new year will be good to you, and to our City. Blessings on you all!