



# Williams Park

# MEMO

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR WILLIAMS PARK NEIGHBORS

## '06-'07 CALENDAR

caroling in the park  
saturday, dec. 9  
6 pm at williams park  
we'll have a fire,  
hot chocolate and  
s'mores

wpn kids' holiday party  
sunday, december 17  
smyrna library, 2-4 pm  
(Shaun 404-556-5282)

wpn book club  
sunday, december 17  
3:00 pm  
(Leanne 770-863-9580)

wpn happy hour  
friday, january 19  
6:30 pm  
location tbd

wpn general assembly  
neighborhood meeting  
tuesday, january 23  
7:00 pm at smyrna  
community center

wpn book club  
sunday, january 28  
3:00 pm  
(Leanne 770-863-9580)

wpn bridge club  
wednesday, january 31  
7:30 pm  
(Mary Helen 770-437-8620)

MEMO submissions  
due february 15  
(casey 770-333-9995)

continued on next page...

## The old bungalows on Highland — by Casey Clavin

— with research by  
Mike Kemp

ON MAY 1, 1922 John R. Brewer purchased 15 acres of land from A.E. Wilkie which had been part of the large tract held by M.S. Gilbert since 1907. Hawthorne Avenue is at the northern boundary of Brewer's purchase, and Highland Avenue runs due south down through it. Over the

next three decades, he built several houses along Highland then sold off the remaining northern-most portion (probably as two parcels flanking Highland Ave.).

The first house he built, 2613 Highland Ave., was a beautiful new 1600 square foot bungalow on the property's high point. It was completed in 1923 and the Brewers moved in — John R. (1875-1954) and Pearl Hill Brewer (1882-1959) and their two children, Maryann (circa 1911 to circa 2001) and John R., Jr. (close in age to his sister). The senior Brewers lived in the house until they died, then moved only a short distance to rest in the New Smyrna Cemetery on Hawthorne Road (near its intersection with Old Roswell Road). Maryann married, becoming Maryann Caldwell, moved away briefly, then returned home where she stayed until until 1998 — her residency there spanning 75 years!

The home is built in the craftsman style, its symmetrical facade dominated by a large porch running nearly the full width of the building. It has brick foundation walls and columns on the front and a smaller side porch.



Except for the changed porch rail, the Brewer house looks almost exactly as it did when built in 1923.

The double hung windows are all six over one, the attic is lit (at both ends) with six-pane fixed windows. Other than the foundation and columns, the structural components are built of locally timbered and milled pine, as are the exterior siding, the floors, and all trim work., Originally, it had a cedar shake roof. Ms. Caldwell said her father personally selected all of the timber and, on more than one occasion, rejected lumber which was not up to his standards.

The house is wonderfully crafted inside with nine-foot ceilings and beautiful, basically knot-free heart pine floors throughout (laid over diagonally-laid inch-thick sub-floor). The walls, plaster (with horse hair binder) on wood lathe, carry picture moulding about sixteen inches below the ceiling. There are nine-inch baseboards throughout the house and 6-inch trim around all window and door openings. The interior doors are two-paneled, with mortise lock sets. There are four (originally coal-burning) fireplaces on two chimneys. The dining room and living room have simple but beauti-



## CALENDAR

...continued from previous page

**wpn happy hour**  
**friday, february 23**  
**6:30 pm**  
**1351 roswell street**  
**Liz & Ron Davis**

**wpn book club**  
**sunday, february 25**  
**3:00 pm**  
**(Leanne 770-863-9580)**

**wpn bridge club**  
**wednesday, feb 28**  
**7:30 pm**  
**(Mary Helen 770-437-8620)**

it to Mike and Heather Kemp. They'd been married for about a year and living in a house Heather already owned when they decided they wanted a home that was "theirs." Attracted to this neighborhood where Heather had previously lived in a garage apartment, Mike recalls that "2613 caught my eye because it had a certain charm, yet it was not well maintained." It wasn't for sale but it was "tugging at" him. Heather was a bit taken aback by the condition but said, "Why don't we knock on the door and see what happens?" They did, then introduced themselves Mrs. Caldwell (who answered the door in her nightcoat) and asked if she was interested in selling her house. "To our amazement, she said 'You know, my son's been on me for years to sell this house, and I just might be.' Then she invited us into her living room and we knew immediately that we wanted to make it our home."

They set to work immediately remodeling the house and returning fairly closely to the original configuration. They installed a new electrical supply line and breaker box, and rewired the entire house, including all plugs, switches, and lighting fixtures. All of the plumbing beneath and inside the house was replaced. Both bathrooms and kitchens were entirely torn out. The floor in the second kitchen (being returned to its former use as a bedroom) required only limited repair which was done with recycled pine to match the original flooring. The original kitchen and both bathroom floors were entirely removed including subfloors. All damaged floor joists were replaced or reinforced and new subfloors were installed. The kitchen got new flooring and all new fixtures. The baths got new tiled floors, new toilets and new pedestal sinks chosen to appear as the originals might have looked. An old clawfoot tub was refurbished and installed in the original (now master) bath.

The original coal heat had been superseded at some point by three floor furnaces. During installation of the one near to the bath, a floor joist supporting a load bearing wall had been cut, causing settling of about two inches in the area. Once the joist was repaired, the cracked and partially collapsed ceiling above it was sheathed with sheetrock (and attic access stairs were installed in that area). A completely new HVAC system was installed including a new furnace and compressor, as well as ductwork, vents, returns, etc. Putting it beneath the house allowed reuse of two of the old floor furnace openings as fresh air returns, leaving the grates in place.

Mike and Heather repaired and patched all the plaster walls in the house, which entailed hundreds of hours of digging out and filling cracks, adding leveling coats, and sanding and sanding and sanding. After a brief attempt

ful matching brick mantles similar to the one in the front bedroom. The middle bedroom has a less formal wood mantle. Originally, there was a wood stove in the kitchen at the right rear corner of the house. Though the stove is long gone, there are burn marks on the floor where it used to sit and a "moon and stars" metal plate on the ceiling where the flue used to exit.

Sometime around 1950 a "modern" kitchen was added at the rear of the house. Then at some point after Mr. Brewer's death, the house was divided into two apartments, Miss Caldwell occupying the right alongside a paying tenant on the left. This, of course, meant changes to the interior configuration including the loss of a main hallway that originally ran through the house. Only a small portion of it remains adjacent to the original bathroom. Also, a small bathroom was added, the original kitchen became a bedroom, the dining room became a living room, and the front bedroom became a kitchen.

The house changed hands for the first time in 1998 when Maryann Brewer Caldwell sold

at repairing the ceiling plaster, they decided to sheath all of the ceilings with sheetrock. Next they repaired the trim around the windows which had been damaged from installation and removal of blinds and curtains rods over the years. They were filling and sanding trim until three in the morning the night before the painters were to arrive.

According to Miss Caldwell's nephew (in conversation in 1998), the house had not been painted in about 40 years. Because of the quality of the lumber, there was almost no rotten siding but the old paint was chipping and peeling rather severely. So the painters were instructed to grind all of the existing siding clean and apply two coats of primer before applying the final coat. It was quite a job and ran well beyond the original painting budget!

When the Kemps bought the house, the property ran all the way through to Old Roswell Road at its rear. The front yard had been kept up over the years and was not too bad. The back, however (approximate 150 to 200 feet deep), had not been mowed since the house had been painted. The underbrush which had grown over those intervening 40 years was so thick that it took a front end loader eight hours to clear the backyard.

The renovation complete, the Kemps invited Mrs. Caldwell over. Assessing the improvement she jokingly commanded them to "Get outta my house!" She was happy to see it had been turned back into a single family home, and that it was going to be around for a good while longer.

While at 2613 the Kemp family grew with the arrival of their daughter Abigail. When circumstances conspired to take them away from the neighborhood, they found they missed it considerably. Then, through an unexpected turn of events, they had the opportunity to return and they jumped at the chance to buy the house across the street (2620 Highland). So they're back, now numbering four since the addition of their second daughter Ellie.

"I used to think that attachments to houses were irrational," Mike said. Now acknowledging how very special 2613 and 2620 Highland Avenue are to his family, Mike admits, "I have joined the ranks of the irrational."



*The Kemps second bungalow on Highland, 2620.*

## Where YOU BEEN?

We thought we'd ask a few wp neighbors where they've traveled lately. Here's what we learned.

Kimm & Greg Martin took a Nothern European cruise and went to Wisconsin to see Frank Lloyd Wright's Talliesan

Nancy & Doyle Smith took in the sights on the Cherahala Skyway, NC

Jill & Larry Jones soaked up the sun on St. George's Island

Don Kinter visited Seattle and Bainbridge Isl.

Madge Jackson Niagara Falls & Chicago

Lem Ward & Leanne Fey took their annual state park trip to Desoto State Park in Alabama with a side trip to Huntsville.

Leanne also visited San Francisco with college girlfriends.

The Hambys went to Disney World

Liz & Ron Davis attended a Kiwanis convention in Montreal and also visited Niagara Falls.

Rob & Heather Teilhet attended a friend's wedding at Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Rob toured Israel with a legislative delegation.

Kris and Beth Studley visited Spain.



## Williams Park Travels ... Alan Wilgus on the Pacific Coast Hwy

I have found that one of the best ways to explore this great land of ours is on a motorcycle. About seven years ago, as part of my continuing mid-life crisis, I bought a motorcycle and immediately fell in love with the exhilarating feeling of the wind in my face as I cruised the winding roads through the north Georgia mountains. For the last three years a small group of guys I ride with have begun extending our trips nationwide. Back safe & sound after a great motorcycle trip I thought I would share our adventure.

This year three of us flew to Las Vegas rented Honda GoldWings and headed northwest across Death Valley. With temperatures of

115 degrees riding at 70-80 miles per hour it

felt like we were in a convection oven. By the end of the first day a cold beer really tasted good! We continued north through the interior of CA and went through Yosemite, around Lake Tahoe, and up into Lassen National Park. Riding up toward Lassen Peak at 10,500 ft we were surrounded by snow and beautiful panoramic views. The twisty roads with no guard rails or shoulders and 1,000 ft + drop offs required our full attention.

We drove by Mt. Shasta crossed into Oregon and rode through Crater Lake N. P. Riding through Oregon we encountered some of the best riding of the trip. Fifty mile stretches of twisty, well paved roads through towering pines with little or no traffic. There is nothing like the feeling of leaning a motorcycle into a sharp curve and powering out the other side. Negotiating one curve after another over that long a stretch is both exhilarating and exhausting. And periodic Elk

and Deer Crossing road signs meant that at any moment we had to be prepared to take evasive action. Fortunately we did not encounter any large critters waiting for us around those curves.

Continuing north we traveled along the Columbia River Gorge before entering Washington then passed Mt. St. Helens and on to Mt. Rainier. At 14,500 ft. it towers majestically over the landscape. I might add that in three previous trips to this area I was unable to see the mountain due to rain and/or fog. This day was clear and sunny.

We turned west and headed for the coast stopping for the night in Chehalis, WA. That night doing a routine

check of my motorcycle, I noticed that four days of hard riding had taken its toll and my back tire was worn down past the tread and bald in places. With half the trip left, we headed to the nearest Honda shop in Centralia for a new tire. While they mounted it we did laundry. Getting a late start we reached the Pacific coast late in the afternoon and pushed into the night before stopping.

We spent the following days winding along the coast through quaint villages and stunning vistas. Once back in CA we rode through the redwood forests. There is nothing like riding a motorcycle with its unencumbered view along "Avenue of the Giants" with these 300 ft. trees towering over you. We cut over to 101 at Petaluma and crossed the Golden Gate Bridge. We continued south through San Jose and at Salinas we cut back to Hwy 1 at Monterey for the trip along the coast through Big Sur. Of course Monterey was enveloped in fog but we still had good visibility. We turned east toward Paso Robles and returned to the warm sunlight. Our final day we headed back to Las Vegas going through Bakersfield and at Barstow we picked up I-15 for the final leg of our trip.

For the 8.5 days of riding we covered 3,740 miles. The really good news is that we didn't have to put on our rain gear during the trip. The weather was perfect.





# Trees ... Myrna Evans



The best tree in our neighborhood has to be the big White Oak in Paula Kraemer's front yard on Walker Street. Though technically not the state's Champion in its category, it's within striking distance and may well take top honors one day.

When Paula's tree was measured for competition in 2000, it had a score of 338. Points are given for height, trunk circumference, and crown spread — with the majority awarded for height and circumference. Her tree was 83' tall, 206" around, with an average crown spread of 98'. The currently reigning Champion White Oak at 385 points is 115' tall, 238" around, and has a crown spread of 129'.

According to Paula's forester, Joe Burgess, her tree is easily 200 years old and was probably two individual trees that grew into one. He said any tree this size is a "rarity in an urban area." A White Oak can put on as much as 2' per year with good rainfall and sufficient nutrients, but it can also become smaller — primarily through damage such as from a storm. Joe suggests measuring every 10 years.

And now for a little story. About a year ago, some Civil War relic hunters requested permission to metal detect in Paula's yard. Curious, she asked why they stopped at her house in particular. "The size of the tree," they said — and proceeded to find a mini ball in the yard!

I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful fall colors of the trees in our neighborhood. It seems it is unusually brilliant this year. Fall always brings to my mind thoughts of harvest and Thanksgiving and wonderful times with family. It also brings the realization that this is the perfect time for planting new trees to help replace the many trees that have been lost due to construction damage. I have an appropriate anonymous quote here: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the next best time to plant a tree is today."

With that in mind, I would like to express some thoughts about planting trees. Fall is the best tree planting time (after leaves have dropped) for the main reason that this is the period of growth for what is below the ground—the roots. For the newly planted tree, rapid root growth is imperative for establishment and survival. More about that later, but first, let's talk about which trees should be planted. This is a matter of personal preference, of course, but good advice would be to plant trees that are normally "native" to this area since, by nature, they will be more successful. Non-native trees can be planted as long as they are deemed hardy for our "hardiness zone" which, by the way, is on the border between zone number 7 and zone number 8. If you choose non-native trees, be prepared for a more difficult time of establishment and growth. A list of Georgia's native trees can be found at [www.gfc.state.ga.us/Education/nativetrees.cfm](http://www.gfc.state.ga.us/Education/nativetrees.cfm).

Almost as important as the type of tree to be planted is the selection of the area in which to plant. While the tree may be only 8 or 10 feet tall now, make sure that there will be enough room for branches later on when the tree is 60 or 70 feet tall. Be particularly careful when planting trees in the right-of-way—not a good idea if there are power or telephone lines overhead. Also, keep in mind any utility easements that may be on your property to provide access: if you plant a tree there and the utility company later needs access, they will remove it. For ornamental trees, be especially mindful of exposure (sun, part-sun, shade, wind, type of soil, mois-

ture, drainage, etc.) in the area you want to plant and choose

a tree appropriate to that exposure. Nursery guides and sources on the Internet will usually give expected maturity height and breadth of different species of trees along with exposure requirements. I also recommend the website [www.TreesAtlanta.org](http://www.TreesAtlanta.org) as a source of all kinds of great information on trees, care and planting, for the Metro Atlanta area. While this organization deals mainly with trees inside the I-285 perimeter, information there is very appropriate for our neighborhood. Also, check out [www.treelink.org/linx/?navLocationRef=11](http://www.treelink.org/linx/?navLocationRef=11) and [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com). Since even native trees can have problems, see County Extension services at [www.ces.uga.edu/cobb/Horticulture](http://www.ces.uga.edu/cobb/Horticulture) for a wealth of information on trees, growth habits, and susceptibilities to disease and insects. Increase your chances of success in planting and nurturing your tree by taking the time to be well informed before you head to the nursery.

The sources mentioned above also contain very detailed information on how to plant including pictures, so I will not repeat here, except to say that probably the single most important thing is to get your tree planted at the appropriate depth. Since root growth is so important to success with new trees, I would recommend that after your tree is in the ground you consider contacting an arborist to give your new tree a mycorrhizal inoculation, which will give the roots a head start. I also caution you to be watchful for those diseases and insects on your new tree, since transplant shock will stress the tree and make it a target for the first year or two. We'll talk more about

that subject in our next issue, since the problems start to occur in the Spring.

Last issue we mentioned a large old White Oak in the neighborhood which is nearly the State Champion of its type. For anyone who hasn't yet discovered its whereabouts, it belongs to Paula Kraemer of 1551 Walker Street. See sidebar at left for more details and definitely take a look next time you go by there.



Paula Kraemer's mighty *Quercus alba L.* (aka White Oak), having measured 83' in height and 206" in circumference in 2000, is likely more than 90' tall now.

## WELCOME

to these most recent  
new members:

on ivy springs drive  
Maureen Carter

on spring street  
Brooke & Will Seybt

on windy oaks court  
Roni & Kathryn Barker

on gilbert street  
Keith & Susan Bentley

on highland avenue  
Brian Dammond  
Cristy Howie

on walker street  
Micah Rapoport  
and family

on roswell street  
Susan & Clyde Tyler

Our membership now  
stands at 110 families

## WPN BOARD

president  
Ron Davis  
770-431-9786

vice president  
Lem Ward  
770-863-9580

secretary  
Kimm Martin  
770-438-6596

treasurer  
Madge Jackson  
770-432-3563

socail committee  
Sandy 770-435-5613  
& Jill 770-434-5494

beautification com.  
David Whited  
770-435-1904

communications com.  
Casey Clavin  
770-333-9995

security committee  
Don Kinter  
770-436-9380

## Williams Park Cooks! ... Tom Haley

... and we're not bad in the kitchen either!

I'm no chef, but I sure like to cook! As the weather turns colder, there is nothing I like better on a Sunday than to keep warm with a raging fire and take in all the football there is to offer and to have something warm and aromatic brewing in the kitchen! For this issue, I thought I'd share some of my favorite meals that warm not only the stove, but the heart and soul as well!

One of my favorites is also one of the easiest recipes I know. It's a great meal to put together before the game and then sit back, watch the game and let the stove do the rest of the work.

### Spanish Stew

This can easily be doubled or tripled to serve larger parties.

4 tablespoons olive oil  
1.5 Lbs. lean stew meat – cubed  
1 medium onion – minced  
1/2 cup tomato sauce  
3 tablespoons garlic vinegar  
1 cup red wine  
1 bay leaf  
1 teaspoon Oregano  
salt & pepper to taste  
mushrooms

Heat olive oil in large stew pot or dutch oven. Brown stew meat and do not drain. Add all ingredients except mushrooms. Simmer for at least three hours. Add the mushrooms toward the end (for the last 30 minutes).

Another favorite and a big crowd pleaser is a recipe I got from my mother. It can be made as a main course or a game day snack/appetizer.

### Kraut Bread

1 Lb. bacon  
1 large onion – chopped  
1.5 Lbs. ground beef  
1 large head cabbage cut into 1" squares  
1 package frozen Parker Dinner Rolls

Place bacon in a large skillet and brown over medium-high heat. Add onion and continue to cook until onion is translucent. Slowly begin adding the cabbage, which will quickly water down. Once all the cabbage is added, reduce heat to simmer and cook for four (yes 4) hours, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and drain off all excess grease. (This can be done a day ahead of time)

Three hours ahead, take the rolls from the package and place on a cookie sheet. Cover with a clean dish towel and let rise.

Using a rolling pin, roll out a roll on a floured surface. Place the roll in the center of your palm and spoon approximately 2 heaping tablespoons of filling into the center. Pull the edges of the dough into the center and place on a cookie sheet with the edges down. Continue until all of the rolls are filled. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. These can be served warm or at room temperature. If making these as an appetizer or snack, make two per uncooked roll.

Both of these recipes have been big hits in my house. Try adding a little spice to either one to make the recipe your own!

## Who knew?

... something from Smyrna's  
code of ordinances.

Chapter 46, Environment  
Sec. 46-4. Strobe lights; declaration of nuisance.

Strobe lights which are visible to public streets are hereby declared a nuisance to the public health, safety, and welfare. Any person who places, permits or allows any type of strobe light upon a property or inside any premises in the city that is visible from any point beyond the property on which the strobe light is located shall be deemed to have created a nuisance and shall be punishable as provided in section 1-8. This section shall not apply to traffic signal or safety devices.

## Kudos for neighbors

Thank you to **Betty Crane** (Roswell Street) for her repeated generosity to WPN. Not only had Betty provided (on several occasions) gifts to be given as door prizes, she also donated a percentage of her "Clean Sweep" proceeds to our WPN treasury. We appreciate all you've done, Betty.

**Judy Kessler** (Highland Ave.) trophied again at this year's State Fair. She took home Red Ribbons (second place) for her breadloaf and her beets (which I'm told are "out of this world"). but that's not all — she received Blue Ribbons (first place) for her spagehetti sauce and for her biscuits. This good old fashioned cooking comes out of the good old fashioned kitchen in Judy's eighty year old bungalow. Conratulations, Judy.

## MILESTONES

### births

April and Greg Moncrief (Hawthorne Ave.) have a new baby girl, Ella Jean, born October 22. Big sister Grace gets a playmate!

Michelle and Dennis and O'Hergarty (Highland Ave.) have a new arrival, Hannah Marie, born November 9th weighing 7 lbs. 1 oz. and being 20" long.

### illness

Judy Kessler (Highland) has had cancer surgery. She is home and recovering slowly.

### deaths

Our neighbor **Mr. John Marr** (Highland Avenue) passed away November 23 from cancer. He is survived by his wife Ruth and son Gary. He used to tell this story about being wounded by shrapnel in WWII. Doctors had treated him the best they could, but after a while, they could no longer find a pulse in his lower leg. He was told that his leg would become gangrenous and should be amputated, or he would die in that hospital. So he replied, "Well, then I'm gonna die in this hospital, 'cause you aren't taking my leg. Sixty-five years later, and I'm still walkin' on it!" Then with a look of humor, gratitude, and macho, indignation he'd add, "Who was right?" He was courageous, unassuming, kind, sometimes brash, and always convicted to his beliefs.

Our mission is to promote community among neighbors through social interaction, emphasizing the unique character of Smyrna's oldest neighborhood.

## Coach's Corner

... Ron Steiger

What are we attracting into our lives? Wouldn't it be nice if we all had our own personal genie to give us whatever we wanted, when we wanted it? Well, would it?! Garth Brooks sings a song that says "sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers." And there is the expression, "be careful of what you ask for, you just might get it!"

There's a common theme here. The fact is we do all have a genie in our lives and we have more control over what comes into our lives than we often acknowledge. The power comes from the Law of Attraction... discussed in detail in the documentary called *The Secret*.

There is good news and bad news to be realized here. Let's start with the good news. Our minds are always shaping what is being created. The images we have in our minds attract those things into our lives. Buddha said, "All we are is the result of what we thought." Einstein stated, "Imagination is everything, it is the preview of what is coming." So if these and many other philosophers and scientists are correct, it is our minds that are our genie. We execute 60,000 thoughts per day and each one of them begin the creation of our tomorrow. More good news is, when we choose good thoughts we are creating good results.

The bad news is that when we choose bad thoughts, we are creating bad results. If we keep telling ourselves, "I can't afford a house" the genie responds with "your wish is my command" and begins to set your future actions accordingly since that is what you told your inner genie. At least there is a time delay and not every one of our bad thoughts plays out instantly or there would be some very strange phenomena taking place out there.

Live in abundance and create a positive attitude and let's be thankful for what we have and what is coming, especially during the holiday season!

Provided by business coach and consultant Ron Steiger,  
[www.EntrePartnersInc.com](http://www.EntrePartnersInc.com)

## Making WP pedestrian safe

... Alan 'Wilgus

As a newcomer to Williams Park I enjoy living within walking distance of Market Village, the community center and library. However, I learned that a walk along Spring Street can be a risky undertaking. Traffic races down this narrow street less than two feet from where I walk on the narrow sidewalk. I decided to look into this.

There were three factors creating hazards to pedestrians. First the 35 mph speed limit seems too fast for a 20' wide residential street. Secondly, a two-block long stretch of sidewalk only 3' wide and positioned right next to the curb makes it impossible for two people to walk side by side. And lastly, Spring Street is being used by many autos and large commercial vehicles as a shortcut from Spring Road to Market Village or north on Atlanta Road, speeding in excess of the already too fast speed limit.

Learning that many of my neighbors felt as I did, I proposed three changes to the City — lowering of the speed limit, stop signs on Spring Street at the western end of Anderson Circle, and widening sidewalks — and learned a lot about engineering and politics. Some of the more interesting issues follow.

The City Council has the authority to lower a speed limit. However, if they do so without prior approval from the Department of Transportation (DOT), it's not enforceable by police radar. This was enacted to prevent speed traps for the sole purpose of generating revenue. According to the police, when Smyrna lowered the limit on Church Street without DOT approval and the situation became worse as drivers discovered they could speed without consequence.

Speed Bumps seem to be a mixed blessing. According to the police, where traffic is heavy they may actually present a hazard as cars slow to a crawl to ride over them, they slow emergency response times, risk damage to vehicles, risk injury to personnel and liability to the City. They should only be used as a last resort — there are more passive measures to "calm" traffic.

According to the City Engineer slowing traffic is not proper justification for installing a stop sign, though limited sight distance or increased traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) would be good reason.

Ideally the City would like sidewalks five feet wide with a 2 foot buffer between them and the curb. Builders are not required to lay sidewalks to this standard, however, nor even to allow adequate setbacks to provide for this. Diverting sidewalks around utility poles and fire hydrants frequently removes a buffer altogether. Without published standards the result is what we have today, inconsistency and unsafe conditions for pedestrians.

Our City's vision is to transform Smyrna into a pedestrian friendly environment that promotes a sense of community. Building craftsman-style homes, however, is not enough. Finding a way to improve our streets so that residents can take an evening stroll, walk their dogs, or push their baby strollers without fear of being hit by a speeding vehicle is necessary to make this vision a reality. Hopefully Mayor and Council will agree and approve our recommendations.