



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Gilewski

NEWS of GROVE PARK

March 2008 Edition

Grove Park Association

President: Brenda Cook

Vice President: Jan Cimbala

Secretary: Jewel Davis

Treasurer: Ed Fox

Communications Committee: Mary-Ellen Jones,
Maureen Gilewski

Neighborhood Update

Representatives from the city of Charlotte held a meeting with the Grove Park Neighborhood at Hickory Grove Presbyterian Church on 21 February 2008 to present several plans for city sponsored improvements to our neighborhood. These plans include concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks on connecting roads in our neighborhood. One plan incorporated low impact measures to preserve some of our grass swards and culverts. The meeting raised questions such as:

- 1) whether there is the option to spend some of the funds on bioretention instead of sidewalks?
- 2) whether the sidewalks need to follow the paths suggested?
- 3) where 50% of the neighbors live who want sidewalks?
- 4) would the sidewalks need to be concrete?

These questions could not be answered at this meeting and a 3rd planning meeting will be needed. Contact Brenda Cook for maps of the city's sidewalk options 704.536.1633 or brendac77@bellsouth.net.

Next Meeting

The Grove Park Neighborhood Watch/Neighborhood Association will meet on Tuesday, 25 March 2008 at 6:30 PM at Hickory Grove Presbyterian.

Thanks: Have you noticed the differences, and the added color at the Triangle? Thanks to the Garden Club members who purchased and/or donated plants for the Triangle Gardens, as well as to those who have nurtured the gardens. We all benefit from this gift that continues to give.

News to Share? Please submit neighborhood news for the newsletter to Mary-Ellen Jones @ jimij@carolina.rr.com.

Does anyone have a chipper/shredder for rent by the hour? If so, please contact Helene Hilger at hhilger@uncc.edu.

Garden Club News

Thanks to Maureen Gilewski's efforts the Garden Club enjoyed a memorable field trip, 16 February to meet Pearl Fryar and tour his amazing gardens in Bishopville, South Carolina. Garden Club members Isaac and Natasha Sonin share their reflections.

Isaac Sonin: Trees and bushes do not speak and do not complain. They grow quietly in the forest, and if they are in our garden we can water them or not, and we can shape them as we please. In this way people created the Semiramides Garden in ancient Babylon, the park of Versaile, or "Russian Versaile" near the Peterhof Palace. On a small scale this happens in every garden and every backyard. Centuries bring new trends and fashions, and what seemed beautiful one hundred years ago, today may seem bad taste. We, humans consider ourselves much higher than trees and we do have a lot of freedom, but not too much. We lose our illusions and youthful dreams, we are vulnerable to punches of fate, we suffer, we cry. From this perspective, I found the most interesting feature in Pearl's garden, Pearl himself. I saw a man, who did not want to be shaped by conditions of life around him, who found a way to shape his life. He did not become a famous baseball player, jazz singer or a mayor of a big city, but he found a field where he can blossom, show his talent and find a way to other people's hearts. He shaped the trees and bushes but they also shaped him, hardworking, honest, and a very gifted person.

Natasha Sonin: This immensely talented man and his enchanted garden! His trees of all geometrical forms: huge spheres, gigantic spirals, pyramids, cubes. Green arches made of fused branches. His trees, cypresses, hollies, evergreen oaks are so tall and healthy. When we were standing there listening to Pearl, I felt like he was introducing us to his family. We, people, and those trees, his grown children, were listening with all attention and

respect to what Pearl was saying. The trees were waiting to be touched by him, and he gently stroked their branches.

Next Garden Club meeting: Saturday, 15 March @ 10:30 am at the home of Barry and Mary-Ellen Jones, 6608 Terry Lane.

A Bird Tale: One evening recently, around 5:30 p.m., I was in my backyard cutting camellias to bring inside when suddenly I heard the sound of large wings overhead. I looked up and watched in stunned amazement as somewhere around 100 or so huge black birds flew over me and into the trees right behind our neighbor's barn. The sky seemed to be filled with them and they just kept coming, and coming and coming from the southeast. Occasionally I could even hear the low "whoooooosh" of their six-foot wings when they flapped directly over my head. As soon as they were all settled into the trees I ran inside and grabbed my binoculars and camera and went through our gate into the neighbor's back property where I could hopefully get a good look at these guys. They surely looked like vultures to me, but a lady I had spoken to last week was adamant that she and her friend had seen a large flock of hawks in the neighborhood. That seemed more than a little questionable to me, since I knew that hawks tend to be loners. It seemed likely that these were the very same birds, and I just had to check them out more closely and see for myself. I did manage to get a really good look at several of them through my binoculars, and they were very clearly vultures. Homely as all get out, but impressive nonetheless, simply by virtue of their size and confidence. The confusing thing was that some of the birds had the red featherless heads of turkey vultures, while some of them had the heads of black vultures. As I kept trying to get closer I apparently spooked them and they took off (wow! what an experience again!) and went a little further down the block. I decided to try to follow them by way of the road, and as I walked around the end of Terry Lane and turned down Williams Rd. I finally found them. They were roosting in about half a dozen trees, mostly behind the houses on Linda Lake Dr., but some were across Williams Rd. in the trees closer to the lake. Since a few of them continued soaring for a few minutes it gave me the opportunity to get a pretty good look at them in flight from below, and it was clear that there were two different sets of markings. One was light colored all across the entire bottom of the wing feathers on the underside, like a turkey vulture, while the other was light colored only on the feathers of the wingtips, like a black vulture. This confused me because I always thought that birds flocked only with their own kind. So I headed for home with my binoculars hanging around my neck, camera dangling from my hand, pink

polka-dot gardening shoes on my feet, freshly spiked hair, and large dangly earrings, no doubt looking like someone who just wandered out an unlocked exit of a mental ward. After telling my husband what I had seen and what I thought it must be (a combined flock of at least 100 raptors - some turkey vultures and some black vultures), I got on the internet and did a little research. Sure enough, turkey vultures and black vultures sometimes flock together because they are able to help each other. Black vultures have no sense of smell and find their food strictly by sight; turkey vultures have an excellent sense of smell and are able to locate carrion long before they see it. Turkey vultures have weak beaks and cannot tear open a thick hide; black vultures have very strong beaks and can tear open pretty much anything. Also, black vultures will attack and kill young or weak animals (watch your puppies and kittens!), and turkey vultures eat only flesh that is already dead. So they help each other and have learned to mingle peaceably for their mutual benefit. I just wish someone could explain the mystery of why these buzzards have chosen our neighborhood as a comfortable place to roost! And how do they know where to meet up at the end of a long day of gorging on road kill? Do they have a little huddle in the morning before they head off to their street maintenance jobs, and agree on a latitude/longitude coordinate in the sky to meet at just before dusk? If anyone has the answers to these questions, I'm dying to know. -Lin Vickery

Harris Blvd Cleanup

Thank you to those who signed up to help keep our neighborhood boundary sidewalks on Harris Blvd. cleaned on a regular basis. It will be wonderful when we have every week covered for every section of our Harris Blvd. boundary. Not only will it make a big difference in the appearance of our neighborhood to outsiders, but it will greatly minimize the amount of work that any individual has to do when it is their "turn" to pick up the litter. After a few rounds of cleaning you should all notice that the job gets easier and the results more impressive. However please be careful, especially of traffic. It is very easy to become so engrossed in your work that you forget to check for traffic before stepping off the curb to pick up something. If you work against the flow of traffic it will be easier to stay alert and thus stay safe. If anyone has questions about what is expected, or clarification on what section they are cleaning, please feel free to contact me, Lin Vickery at linvickery@carolina.rr.com.