

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



SPRING 2013

**HOME SALES
SPRINGING
FORWARD**

SPRING 2013 IMPROVED MARKET FOR AGE PREFERRED 55+ COMMUNITIES

The year 2012 saw not only a strong uptick in local new home development, construction and sales but also saw a great improvement in the "Active Adult-Age Preferred" marketplace.

One reason is that with so many young adults having relocated to Metro Atlanta since the 1980s who subsequently raised families here, the demand for "Active Adult-Age Preferred" neighborhoods for those who wished to relocate to be closer to their children and grandchildren grew at an outstanding rate.

Secondly, the need for these types of homes has been in great demand for local retirees who look to divest themselves of their large, older homes in exchange for smaller, more energy efficient homes with floorplans and features best suited to their needs. Oftentimes these communities offer an improved social component as well with clubhouses, pools, exercise facilities and Meet & Greet-style parties and functions.

Prior to the real estate collapse of 2008, approximately 25 percent of all new homes sales in the Active Adult segment were made to buyers from outside Georgia with the balance moving locally. However, due to the downturn in the Atlanta used home market since 2008, the ratio of out of town buyers to local buyers pretty much flipped. This was not so much a result of an increase in out of state buyers, but more so the decline in the local market, prohibiting prospective purchasers from selling their existing homes, which would enable them to purchase new; it was a frustrating experience to say the least.

There is good news, however. The Atlanta resale market has improved drastically since the beginning of 2012. Prices have stabilized with the availability of foreclosed and troubled properties greatly diminished. Many retirees who faced difficulty in selling their homes have now found much greater success. Even though the prices being achieved in the resale of their existing home may not be as high as they would like, pricing on the new home side has become more competitive as well. All in all, it is a great time to sell and an even better time to buy.

Thanks for reading,

The Orchards Group Team • Mitch Block, Sales Director • mjblock@orchardsgroup.com

MEET PURCHASING MANAGER DAWN SCHURMAN



Dawn Schurman is also the closing and warranty coordinator for The Orchards Group. When Dawn and her husband moved to Roswell from Calgary, Canada, in 2000, she was hired by a master plan community developer. She joined The Orchards Group in 2003. When she's not working, she loves spending time with her husband and two daughters, ages 8 and 6.

Favorite local attraction:
Her backyard

Favorite local eatery:
Monterrey Restaurant

Last theater movie she saw:
Snitch

What she listens to on the morning commute:
94.9 The Bull

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

THE ORCHARDS COMMUNITIES OFFER NO. 1 PRIORITY IN REAL ESTATE.

Nothing is more important when investing in a new home than location.

Convenient locations to major roads and highways, shopping and entertainment opportunities, and medical care facilities. are vitally important. If the location is not right for you, then no home will be satisfactory.

The Orchards Group has always prided itself by offering AAA locations for both lifestyle and investment.



Easy to reach shopping

Home to the largest Kroger in Cherokee County, complete with an organic market and Starbucks coffee shop, Hickory Flat Commons sits directly across the street from The Orchards of East Cherokee.



Convenient healthcare services

Situated just three miles north of The Orchards of Brannon Oak Farm, Northside Hospital Forsyth offers accessible, top-notch healthcare.



Dining out options

A true destination, The Avenue Forsyth provides a variety of shopping, delicious restaurants and a 12-screen cinema. Plus, it's just one mile from The Orchards of Brannon Oak Farm.

MEET WARRANTIES COORDINATOR JOEY FREEMAN



An avid golfer and family man, Joey Freeman has been with The Orchards Group before it was even called by that name! He says it has been over 20 years, and he's happy to still be a part of this team of people.

Favorite local attraction:
Any Atlanta sporting event!

Favorite local eatery:
Frankie's Italian, Marietta

Last theater movie he saw:
The Dark Knight Rises

What he listens to on the morning commute:
AM 750

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD: LIBRARY LENDING

Sometimes you want to grab a good book without digging out the library card and driving across town or shelling out cash at the local bookstore. At The Orchards of Brannon Oak Farm, homeowners need look no further than their very own Grand Clubhouse when the craving for book borrowing arises.

Resident Giselle Warner recently offered to take a chaotic cabinet overflowing with books and turn it into a local “library,” based on the honor system.

Giselle says the donate-and-return system is working wonderfully. She volunteers to keep the books organized by author and by category – and her friends and neighbors appreciate her effort and the convenience her hard work provides.

Giselle moved to The Orchards of Brannon Oak Farm about two years ago to be closer to her family – especially her grandchildren. She says The Orchards community puts everything at her fingertips – including some really great books.

Beginning a Book Club?

Thinking of starting your own neighborhood book club? Here are some ideas to help meetings run smoothly:

Pick a consistent meeting date and time.

For example, the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Have members write suggestions of books they’d like to discuss and submit to the club organizer. She can email out the suggestions and members can vote. The top 6 vote-getters can be the books the club reads for the next 6 months.

Each month, ask for volunteers to provide refreshments at the next meeting.

Choose books with discussion questions, or find and create discussion questions on your own in advance. You don’t have to stick strictly to these questions, but they usually make a great jumping off point.

Reading Rules!

You never know where good books and good friends might lead! That’s the fun of a book club! Learn more about The Orchards of East Cherokee’s book club, led by Liane Dolezar, in our next *Neighborhood News*.

CHOOSING A PAGE TURNER

Books make it easy to escape into someone else’s story for a while. Whether you are in a book club, thinking of starting a book club or just like to cozy up alone on the couch with a good book, the website www.GoodReads.com, offers these suggestions as top picks for popular discussion-starting books.

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption

by Laura Hillenbrand

Life of Pi

by Yann Martel

The Red Tent

by Anita Diamant

The Kitchen House by Kathleen Grissom

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows



HOW DOES THE GARDEN GROW?

Now that spring is finally here, bright spots are blooming all over the metro area. Check out these amazing gardens, just a short drive from any Orchards Group community.

Atlanta Botanical Garden

www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org

Located adjacent to Atlanta's Piedmont Park, the Atlanta Botanical Garden features Atlanta Blooms! each spring. Lasting through April, the gardens explode with more than a quarter-million bulbs – including tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses and many others. By selecting bulbs based on when the variety blooms – early, mid- or late spring – the Garden is able to stagger their performances for a show spanning the entire season.

The Atlanta Botanical Garden also features special events and a kids' garden.

Gibbs Gardens

<http://gibbsgardens.com>

Nestled in Cherokee County's rolling hills of Ball Ground, Gibbs Gardens boasts 24 ponds, 32 bridge crossings and 19 waterfalls. Visitors to Gibbs Gardens will experience what owner Jim Gibbs describes as "the harmony of nature" as they stroll through his 16 garden venues. The seamless integration of nature and artistic design provides a breathtaking canvas for the four feature gardens.

Gibbs Gardens is home to about 20 million daffodils – *Southern Living* magazine named it the "most stunning" daffodil garden ever! This spring, you won't want to miss this local outdoor treasure.

Smith Gilbert Gardens

www.smithgilbertgardens.com

With a variety of plantings, the Hiram Butler Home and 31 sculptures, Kennesaw's Smith-Gilbert Gardens has something for everyone.

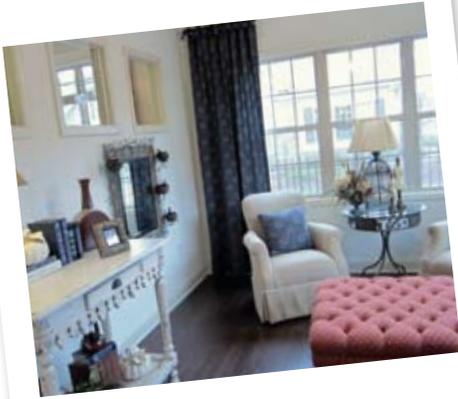
At the center of Smith-Gilbert Gardens is the historic Hiram Butler House, dating back over 150 years. The house was once owned by Mr. Butler, a Confederate railroad man, who worked the lines most of his life and was present during the "Great Locomotive Chase."

Now open to the public, Smith-Gilbert Gardens is 16 acres of serene setting with more than 3,000 species of plants, several rare in American gardens.



IMAGES COURTESY OF ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

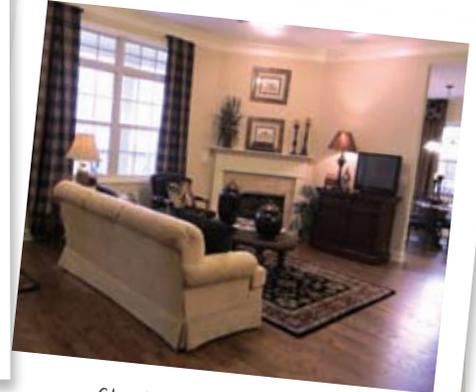
THE ORCHARDS OF BRANNON OAK FARM



Ashewood Sunroom.
Great space for reading.



Charleston Gourmet Kitchen
with Sienna cabinets



Charleston Living Room
with Corner Fireplace

The Orchards of Brannon Oak Farm. 21 New Homes Under Construction Since Jan. 1! The strength of the Atlanta real estate market continues to drive our success at this flagship neighborhood. With many of our prospective purchasers now able to sell their existing homes, the huge turnaround in the pace of new sales that we experienced in the second half of 2012 continued with even more strength in the first quarter of this year. So much so that of the 21 new homes started since Jan. 1, eight were already sold! The balance replenishes previously sold inventory. Since we have fewer than 40 homes remaining of the original 218, we sincerely expect to be sold out by the end of this year. We need to advise you that if you are seriously considering making a move to a new "Orchards Lifestyle," you need to come to visit soon. Additionally, our construction activity is as busy as it has been in years, and we find ourselves running low on prime locations in the community. Remember there are three different villages at Brannon Oak Farm, each with its own unique set of floor plans, homeowner benefits and low maintenance features. Location, location, location is the key to this incredibly successful Orchards neighborhood. **Come out and see the selection of homes and homesites now before it's too late. Model Home: 678-513-8879**

FUN FACT:
Georgia is the largest
state east of the
Mississippi River.

THE ORCHARDS OF EAST CHEROKEE

The Orchards of East Cherokee. Grand Opening of New Models!

"I honestly believe this new Ashewood II model, with its color coordination and beautiful decorating, is the best model home we have demonstrated in years," said Mitch Block, sales and marketing director for The Orchards. Featuring many of the upgrades we offer, yet without being pretentious, this model has received great reviews from our prospective buyers and current homeowners alike. It truly is a must see. Additionally, we are featuring the Beaumont plan as a second, less "upgraded" model to demonstrate the beauty of our "standard" design schemes as well. With a brisk sales pace over the past eight months, The Orchards of East Cherokee is now 50 percent sold – an increase that is also reflected in the number of attendees at our regularly scheduled events and parties. The newly improved Ashewood II floor plan features two bedrooms and two baths, sunroom, a larger living room with 10' ceilings, a larger master suite and a few changes to its interior trim and cabinet details. The Beaumont, which features two bedrooms and two baths also showcases the optional Activities Suite over the garage. Both of these homes are part of the "Southern Heritage Ranch Condominium" section of the property. **Come see us soon. Model Home: 770-345-5409**

FUN FACT:

Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, is one of the largest single masses of exposed granite in the world.



Ashewood Kitchen
with Light Maple Cabinets



Ashewood Living Room
with Hardwood Floors



Beaumont Activities-Bonus Room



GO SKY HIGH

Feeling stir crazy after a cold Atlanta winter? Hit the skies and take in the views at **Stone Mountain Park's Summit Skyride**. This high-speed Swiss cable car provides a stunning view of the Confederate Memorial Carving as it transports guests more than 825 feet above ground to the top of Stone Mountain. From the top, experience amazing views of the Atlanta skyline, the Appalachian Mountains and more up to 60 miles away. For more information, visit www.stonemountainpark.com.

- 2 bunches cleaned spinach
- 4 cups sliced strawberries
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ½ cup organic sugar
- ¼ tsp paprika
- 2 T sesame seeds
- 1 T poppy seeds



In large bowl, toss together strawberries and spinach.
In medium bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, sugar, paprika and all seeds. Pour over spinach and strawberries; toss to coat.

WELCOME, SUNNY SALAD SEASON. Spring's warm weather is back, and it's time to for the crockpot to take a well deserved break. Say sayonara to the stew and salutations to the spring salads. Here's one of the easiest spring salad recipes we could get our hands on.

Pull up a porch swing and dig in!

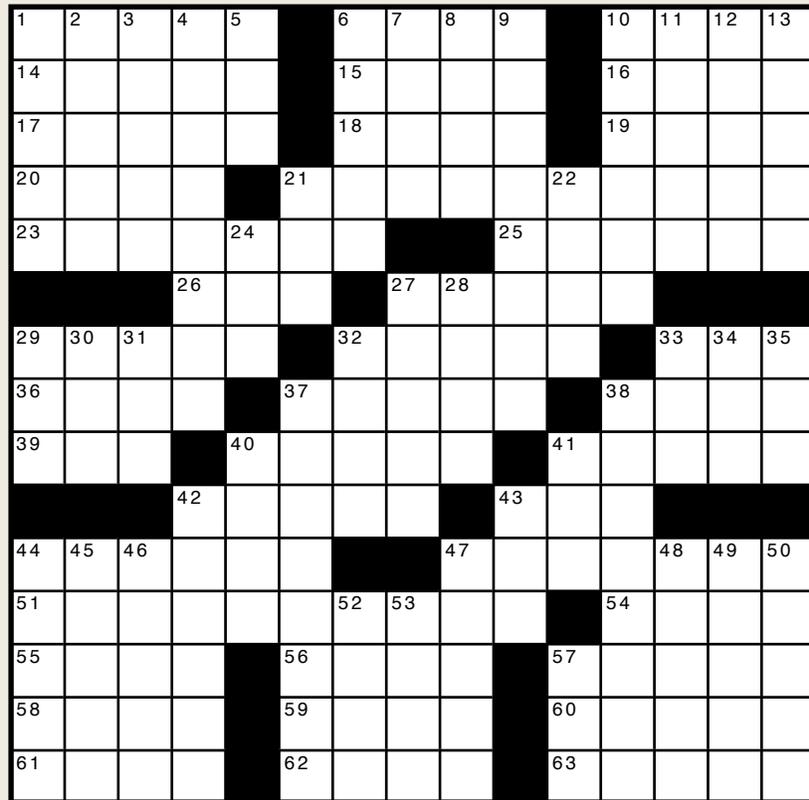
Do you have a recipe that's a classic hit with your Orchards Group friends and neighbors? **Share it us via email at mjblock@orchardsgroup.com**, and we might publish it in the next *Neighborhood News*.

Across

1. Wrist bones
6. Earth goddess
10. Without
14. Bellowing
15. Table scraps
16. Zeno of ____
17. Big rigs
18. Flesh
19. Thick slice
20. Adolescent
21. Property
23. Toy racer
25. Daniel Webster, e.g.
26. Electrically charged atom
27. Under way
29. Device with 88 keys
32. Very cold
33. Common article
36. Work like ____
37. Audibly
38. Horse's gait
39. Fam. member
40. Dried plum
41. Oozes
42. Wise ones
43. Thrice, in prescriptions
44. Chest of drawers
47. Withdraw
51. Mental lapse
54. About, in memos
55. Part
56. Gaucho's weapon
57. "Barnaby Jones" star
58. Profit
59. Cut of meat
60. Slumbered
61. Kitchen addition
62. French summers
63. Waxy membrane at the base of a parrot's beak

Down

1. Throws
2. Staggering



3. Lover of Juliet
4. The Mona Lisa or Guernica
5. Apr. addressee
6. Private Pyle
7. Domain
8. And others, briefly
9. Planetoid
10. Stanza of six lines
11. ____ once
12. Peachy!
13. Cavalry sword
21. Managed
22. Not barefoot
24. Dove's sound
27. Ages
28. Fireplace opening
29. Hole goal
30. Ox tail?
31. "You've got mail" co.
44. Vessel
45. German submarine
46. Ignited again
47. Some horses
48. Goose genus
49. Classy pancake
50. Camp sights
52. Horn warning
53. Nastase of tennis
57. PC panic button
32. Adhesive
33. Quattro minus uno
34. Bounce on one foot
35. Aliens, for short
37. Questionable
38. Awful
40. Carson's predecessor
41. A collection of articles
42. Tranquil
43. Sawbuck

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (<http://www.bestcrosswords.com>). Used with permission.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Spring

Spring is in the Air! Atlanta knows how to celebrate the return of warm weather, flowers and plenty of sunshine: Festivals! The metro area is brimming with festivities in April and May. Here is a round up of just a few, but you can find out more by visiting www.Atlanta.net/festivals.

April 19-21

Atlanta Dogwood Festival,

www.dogwood.org

April 19-21, Piedmont Park

An Atlanta staple for more than 75 years, there is something for everyone at the Atlanta Dogwood Festival. Virtually every kind of art imaginable is represented at the festival, with a nationally renowned-juried Fine Artist Market that includes sculpture, paintings, pottery, jewelry, photography and much more.

In addition to the fine art for adults and art collectors, a Kids' Village features huge inflatables, arts & crafts and face painting for all ages, as well as the ever-popular 24-foot rock-climbing wall.

Weekends, April 13 - June 2

Georgia Renaissance Festival,

www.garenfest.com

Weekends, April 13 - June 2

This 32-acre, 16th-century kingdom located south of Atlanta brings the Renaissance to life. Celebrating its 28th anniversary this year, at the festival you'll find knights in shining armor, King Henry VIII and his Court plus a World Bazaar full of treasures created by more than 150 artisans who perform demonstrations of their crafts. Feast like royalty on gourmet delights including giant roasted turkey legs washed down with frothy ales served in 4 jolly pubs! Endless entertainment awaits with 150 thrilling shows daily featuring juggling, music, comedic storytelling and feats of incredible physical skills! The kingdom also features a petting zoo, rides, a birds of prey show and more. Parking is free.

Atlanta Food & Wine Festival,

<http://atlfoodandwinefestival.com>

May 30 - June 2

The South has never tasted so good! The first festival to celebrate the South as a culinary destination, this four-day event is designed to lead guests on a culinary journey through the region. With an extensive catalogue of programs and events, guests will eat, drink and learn about the South's rich food and beverage traditions from the region's best talent. The festival is held in Midtown Atlanta.



SCENE AROUND THE ORCHARDS



Above: Guess how many I sold last week

Below: Our homes all start with a solid foundation



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1	C	2	A	3	R	4	P	5	I	6	G	7	A	8	E	9	A	10	S	11	A	12	N	13	S
14	A	R	O	A	R	15	O	R	T	S	16	E	L	E	A										
17	S	E	M	I	S	18	M	E	A	T	19	S	L	A	B										
20	T	E	E	N		21	R	E	A	L	E	22	S	T	A	T	E								
23	S	L	O	T	24	C	A	R				25	R	H	E	T	O	R							
					26	I	O	N			27	A	F	O	O	T									
29	P	30	I	A	N	O			32	G	E	L	I	D		33	T	H	E						
36	A	D	O	G			37	A	L	O	U	D			38	T	R	O	T						
39	R	E	L		40	P	R	U	N	E			41	S	E	E	P	S							
					42	S	A	G	E	S			43	T	E	R									
44	B	45	U	R	E	A	U				47	R	E	T	R	48	A	C	T						
51	A	B	E	R	R	A	T	I	O	N			54	I	N	R	E								
55	R	O	L	E			56	B	O	L	A			57	E	B	S	E	N						
58	G	A	I	N			59	L	O	I	N			60	S	L	E	P	T						
61	E	T	T	E			62	E	T	E	S			63	C	E	R	E	S						



Above: Valentine's Day Breakfast at East Cherokee
Below: Pat B. and her best friend, Dino





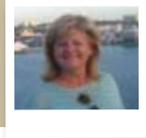
11660 Alpharetta Hwy
Suite 515
Roswell, GA 30076



RESALES & LISTINGS...



DEAR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS,



FOR SALE

Harris Orchards of Duluth. Three-bedroom Chateau floor plan. Enjoy the outdoors on a very private patio. New beautiful, wide plank hardwoods on entire first floor. Great sized master and second bedroom on the main floor. Upstairs suite ideal for guests and grandchildren. \$159,900.

Coming Soon: Three-bedroom in The Orchards of Roswell.

Attention Homeowners! I have people calling daily looking for The Orchards homes. If you would like to sell your Orchards condo, please give me a call!

UNDER CONTRACT

The Orchards of Windward. Great view in this beautifully appointed Canterbury three-bedroom floor plan. Bright sunroom has southeastern exposure. Huge master and two great sized secondary bedrooms. The kitchen boasts hard surface countertops and upgraded appliances. Very close to Ga 400 and Windward Parkway. Gated, active community. \$225,000 Under Contract!

Orchards of Sweet Apple. Premium Lot. True three-bedroom Canterbury floor plan with a private front yard. Granite counter tops, third bedroom conversion and plantation shutters are just a few of the upgrades in this beautiful home. Priced to sell! \$222,500. Under Contract!

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's been said time and time again over the past few months, but we think it's worth repeating: **Now is the to sell or buy a home!**

Even though mortgage interest rates have climbed slightly over the past few weeks, they still remain at historically low levels in the 3 percent range. Rates reached as high as 18.5 percent in the 1980s, which is a far cry from where they are today.

If you're looking to take advantage of affordable pricing and low interest rates, there are plenty of real estate opportunities in Atlanta for you. Builders are busy constructing new homes and communities, and these properties aren't staying on the market long!

Now for those of you who are interested in selling, If you want to sell, **list now!** Low interest rates combined with low inventory is giving the **edge** back to the seller. Don't get me wrong, we have not climbed back to the peak prices that we saw in 2007, but the market has bottomed out and **values** are climbing back up at about a 3.5% annual rate.

The Active Adult market is a very sophisticated market. These clients have experience in buying and selling homes. Here are some features that they prefer when buying a home.

1. Value. They are willing to pay a fair price for a quality property.
2. Maintenance Free. Buyers want to be able to move in turn key without making any improvements.
3. Community. They are looking for a community that will match their personalities and be convenient to their circles of interest.
4. Amenities. They are looking for the amenities that they had in their past homes. They feel that even though they are downsizing, they should not have to give up the features they love about their homes.

As I stated earlier, it is a great time to buy or sell an Orchards Group home. Please call me for a free comparative analysis to estimate the value of your home. Spring is here, and the market is definitely on the move.

Call me for a free market analysis.

Geri Beckmann, Orchards' Resale Specialist

404-290-2330 Direct, 678-795-0200

gbeckmann@orchardsgroup.com

Visit my website www.orchardsgroup.com/resale/

Special Offer to New Orchards Customers. If you are interested in one of our two currently marketed The Orchards neighborhoods and have a home to sell that is NOT currently on the market, contact me immediately to discuss our Special Listing Incentive Program designed for sellers just like you. **Call today: 404-290-2330.**