

MERIFIELD ACRES NEWSLETTER

Quarterly

First Edition

Summer 1994

NEWSLETTER- The Board of Directors, aware of a need for better communication with the membership of Merifield Acres Landowner's Association, is initiating this Newsletter in an attempt to accomplish that goal. Plans now are to issue the Newsletter quarterly in mailings to the entire membership to keep them informed on significant issues and happenings affecting the welfare and quality of the community.

GROWTH- Merifield Acres has been developing since the 1950s and has over 500 landowners scattered throughout the United States and overseas. There are now over 180 homes within the subdivision, half of which are occupied by year-round residents. In the past year alone, 15 new homes have been under construction. The increase in number of people in the community due to this continuing growth leads to the need on the part of the governing Board for consideration of means to provide the improved services and upkeep essential for maintenance of the high quality and attractiveness of the area. In addition, the landowners themselves need to give greater consideration and respect for their neighbors' rights and well-being. To this end, regulations and restrictive covenants were established for the benefit of the members, and they should be observed by all the members to insure the greatest happiness and satisfaction for all.

BUILDING GUIDELINES- Very specific guidelines are set forth in the Restrictive Covenants concerning the Architectural Committee and its duties, dwellings, temporary structures, water and sewer, lot use, trees, easements, etc., which are aimed at maintaining certain standards for the community. Each landowner planning to build in Merifield Acres has the responsibility to meet the criteria spelled out in these guidelines. These have been developed both for the benefit of the individual landowners as well as of the community as a whole. Recent information indicates that new homes being occupied now may begin using the new street addresses conforming to the emergency 911 address assignments.

ALERT- Recently, it has come to our attention that land liquidators have sent letters to a number of landowners in Merifield Acres offering cash for their lots. Inquiry has found that these outfits are not licensed brokers in Virginia nor do they have Virginia business licenses. So, in this situation, our advice is "Let the Seller beware"! It is suggested that, if you decide to consider their offer, you might want to check first with the Better Business Bureau.

LAND ACQUISITION- Merifield Acres is in the process of negotiations for the purchase of a strip of land at the main gate. This is directly along the side of Merifield Drive. We do not at present control this part of what amounts to our front yard; it is zoned R-2 (multiple-family residential) and potentially could be developed in a manner that would be harmful to us.

This land has been tied up in legal action that did not involve us, but this has been settled and negotiations have started again. However, financial considerations on the part of the owner may delay any resolution of this matter for as long as a year. Money for this has been budgeted, and no special assessment is anticipated for this project.

ROADS- The winter of 1993-1994 damaged our roads significantly. In addition, at present there are ten houses, one house addition, and a garage under construction. Heavy trucks carrying building materials such as masonry, concrete,

and woods clearing machinery are especially damaging, particularly to our secondary roads that have neither base nor surface designed for heavy use.

Some repairs were completed in the spring of 1994, and others are scheduled for the fall.

Part of our road budget is slated for upgrading the most heavily traveled roads that still have tarred gravel surface. The priorities are, in order: Occoneechee, Lewis, and Oak Run. How much upgrade we can do depends on how much money we have in the budget after mandatory repairs. Asphalt is expensive. However, Merifield Drive, Lakepoint Drive, and High Point Boulevard, which were asphalted several years ago, are holding up quite well.

ROAD SIGNS- The road signs have deteriorated over the past several years, and repairs were limited while we waited for instructions regarding the institution of the 911 emergency telephone system. We have been given permission to erect road signs of our own design. We have selected a panel type sign with large white letters. These are made of pressure-treated wood that should last a fairly long time, and should be completed by mid-September 1994. Dennis Hayes, our Resident Manager, is both building and erecting the signs, and that work has to be sandwiched between mowing and his other responsibilities.

Traffic in Merifield has increased substantially. For that reason we are in the process of changing "Yield" signs to "Stop" signs at some key intersections.

ROAD NAME CHANGES- Because of the 911 system, we have been instructed to change the names of three roads: Elm Court to Elm Place, Walnut Court to Walnut Place, and Ridge Road to Ridge Drive. Apparently there are other roads in the County with those names.

ASSESSMENTS- The 1994 approved budget was not to exceed our projected annual assessments. Some 46 owners have not paid their 1994 assessments at present; therefore, in keeping with the MALA By-Laws, the Restrictive Covenants, and Virginia Law, Title 55, Chapter 26, Warrants in Debt will be filed against these owners.

FIRE SAFETY- Mr. Charles Case met with Raymond Hite, Chief of the Clarksville Volunteer Fire Department, regarding fire fighting within Merifield. They drove over all the roads with a pumper engine and found that many of our turnarounds are too sharp to handle that equipment without substantial pruning and removal of existing trees - and a lot of them. While Dennis Hayes can cut trees, and the residents can probably deal with the fire wood produced, removal of the slash is formidable. We have no place to dump trash wood, or the place or personnel to supervise a large burn, which has its own dangers, and the county landfill is twenty miles away. The cost and time to do this is overwhelming. Cost estimates for grinding the slash on site, even considering the purchase of a chipper/grinder indicated a large saving over the cost of loading and hauling. The chipper that was bought with the special assessment will be amortized by selling it to Dennis Hayes who will pay for it in hours of work. Wood chip mulch will be made available to the land owners at no charge.

Another consideration in the purchase of the wood chipper was our experience of fallen trees and branches blocking our roads after severe summer thunder and wind storms and winter ice storms. This practice of disposing of downed limbs and slash from roads has been adopted by the Virginia Highway Department

which often blows the chips back on the land, providing nutrients to the soil as well as reducing soil erosion. MALA's chipper was a smaller model of the same brand of chipper used by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

LAKESHORE CLEANUP- In cooperation with the Corps of Engineers in their Big Sweep Campaign to clean up the lakeshore, MALA will participate on Saturday, September 17th, concentrating especially on the areas within Merifield Acres. John Floreth will be heading up this activity for MALA. Details are provided on the back of this NEWSLETTER. All residents are asked to get involved.

ANNUAL MEETING / PICNIC- The Annual Meeting of Merifield Acres Landowner's Association will be held at the barn in Oak Park on September 18, 1994 at 1:30 PM. Preceding the meeting members are invited to come at 12:30 PM with their families and food to join in a picnic so that there is an opportunity to meet other members and renew old acquaintances. Dwindling attendance at the Annual Meeting over the past years is most discouraging for the Board Members who devote many hours in an effort toward improving the community. Let's show our support by attending this year even if it requires a little extra effort.

SCHOOL BUS PICK-UP LOCATION- There have been many obstacles in attempting to establish a safe school bus pick-up location that will meet the criteria of the School Board. At this time proposals for land usage have been made to the U. S. Corps of Engineers as well as to Merifield, Inc. (Mr. David Wilson). The MALA Board shall notify parents as soon as this problem is resolved.

COMMON FACILITIES-

Oak Park Usage- The area at Oak Park is available for use by individuals or by groups for special events such as picnics or reunions, etc. However, for such usage, application and approval must be obtained by filling out forms obtained from the Resident Manager, Dennis Hayes. This procedure has been initiated to insure that the Park is available on the date requested, the group and number attending is known to Security, and the requirements for clean-up and other regulations are met.

Tennis Courts- The tennis court is available for use by members and their guests upon obtaining a key (deposit required) from the Resident Manager. The use of the court by unauthorized persons and some limited vandalism has led to the need to lock it when not in use. The court surface is beginning to show cracks and plans for re-surfacing are under consideration.

Walking Trail- A large number of residents are using Merifield roads as walking paths which is creating safety problems due to the increasing traffic in the area. Plans, underway for a year, have led to initiation of construction of a walking path beside a portion of Lakepoint Drive between Lewis Road and High Point Boulevard. Completion of this work in the fall should result in greater safety for both the drivers and pedestrians on our roads.

FEEDBACK- Please let us hear from you regarding this Newsletter with suggestions as to how it can better serve your needs. Our address: Merifield Acres Landowner's Association, Route 1, Box 59-B, Clarksville, Virginia 23927

OPERATION BIG SWEEP

WHAT: Waterway cleanup campaign on John Kerr Reservoir, in coordination with the "BIG SWEEP" Campaign of North Carolina.

WHEN: Saturday, September 17, 1994

TIME: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm (approx.)

BACKGROUND: In North Carolina, BIG SWEEP began in 1987 as a quickly organized beach cleanup effort called "Beach Sweep". The idea caught on, and soon spread to communities along inland lakes and rivers. It expanded across the state, becoming BIG SWEEP in 1989, and has become the nation's largest statewide waterway cleanup and education program. In 1993, more than 12,000 BIG SWEEP volunteers picked up nearly 232 tons of debris from waterways across North Carolina. This is the first year the Corps of Engineers, and local businesses and industry, have played a leading role in the campaign in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

HOW IT WORKS: Volunteers work in teams, with 3 or 4 persons on a team. Each team receives gloves, bags, a data collection card, and a map of their assigned shoreline area. Team members pick up everything that is considered "trash" (not driftwood, brush, etc.) and record all items on the data cards. Filled trash bags and completed data cards are returned to the team captains at designated sites during and after the cleanup. Boaters and owners of shoreline property are encouraged to do their part by cleaning up visible debris on that day.

DATA COLLECTION CARDS: We know they're a nuisance, but they are important. Completed data cards allow BIG SWEEP officials to focus on where the trash is coming from, and on helping to control it in the future.

FOOD AND DRINKS: Food sponsors are being contacted at this time. Team captains will have more information on this as we near BIG SWEEP. Several cook-outs are already in the planning stages for volunteer groups. In the past, many teams have included a thermos of cold drinks as part of their shoreline hiking equipment.

WE NEED YOU: If you, or your group, can join BIG SWEEP in Merifield Acres on September 17, please call John Floreth at (804) 374-5734 to volunteer. BIG SWEEP falls the day before the MALA Annual Meeting, so it's only natural to be a participant in both events.