

MERIFIELD ACRES NEWSLETTER
VOLUME V, No. 1 - WINTER 1998

GENERAL INFORMATION - The next meeting of the MALA Board of Directors is Sunday, March 1, 1998. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions relative to Merifield Acres, please discuss them with a board member or write to: MALA, PO Box 70, Clarksville, VA 23927. You may also address them to the appropriate committee member via the MALA Voice Mail system at 374-5080. The 1997 year end Treasurer's Report is enclosed for your information.

ASSESSMENT NOTICE - As mentioned in 1997 newsletters, and discussed at the Annual Meeting in September, **ALL** lots in Merifield Acres (except those still in the hands of the developer) will be billed at regular and special assessment rates beginning in 1998. This brings to an end the practice of not billing "non-perk" lots. Per Merifield, Inc. covenants, the only distinction between properties is "improved-vs-unimproved" for the purpose of levying assessments. Those residents who legally replatted two or more lots into a single parcel of land prior to September 21, 1997 will still receive one assessment for their property. The 1998 regular assessments have been increased by 10% across-the-board per action by the MALA Board of Directors in December, 1997. Also, we will begin assessing a late fee for all assessment payments received after June 1.

COMMUNITY SERVICE - The voice mail system has been in operation for some time now. To access it and get in touch with a board member or committee person, dial 374-5080 and press 240 (the MALA information hotline). Listen to the general message and follow the automated instructions. Pressing * returns you to the main menu, and # allows you to listen to the current message again. We encourage everyone to use this system.

SECURITY - Residents who own and/or operate off-road vehicles are reminded to limit their operation to the power line right-of-way. These vehicles should **NOT** be operated on our roads or walking path, on any private property, or on any public-use property such as Oak Park and the tennis court area.

Though occurrences of crime are rare in Merifield Acres, we are certainly not immune. Recent car break-ins have demonstrated this fact. Please be sure to keep your cars locked, even if parked at your residence. Also be wary of allowing strangers into your home.

Reports have been received of raccoons attacking pets, and of dogs running loose. Please keep dogs restricted to your property or on a leash, and do not feed the raccoons. Be aware of our neighborhood watch and report suspicious persons and/or vehicles. We're our own best security.

Residents are reminded of the danger of forest fire in Merifield Acres and are requested to take appropriate measures to lessen the risk of fire on and around their property. All burning should be done on open shoreline land, wind conditions permitting.

ARCHITECTURAL - There are currently 206 completed homes in Merifield Acres, with 5 under construction. All landowners are reminded that the Architectural Committee must review plans for homes, additions, garages, satellite dishes, etc.

COMMON FACILITIES - Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with last year's cleanup, weeding, and bulb planting. Cracks in the surface of the tennis court have been patched by Dennis Hayes and Frank Clippinger. Though this is a temporary measure, it allows the court to be used while saving (or deferring) the cost of fully resurfacing it, which is very expensive. Participation in the 1997 shoreline cleanup campaign was minimal, due in large measure to the on-going work residents continued to do following Hurricane Fran. We ask that all property owners continue their individual cleanup efforts, both on the shoreline and on the roads inside Merifield. Lookin' good folks . . . keep up the good work!

ROADS - The asphalt upgrade to Oak Run was completed in the spring of last year. Three deteriorated metal culverts on Merifield Drive were replaced with concrete pipe. A lot of general road maintenance, ditch work, limbing, etc. was also accomplished in 1997. In all, the roads in Merifield Acres are in fairly good condition, and continuation of a so-far mild winter will help them stay that way since much of our damage is caused by freeze-thaw cycles. Some centerline reflectors need replacing. This will be done in the spring to avoid any snow plowing activity.

We hope we can start on the MALA maintenance area this year, and get far enough along with it that we can move the sand and crushed rock piles off the end of Terrace Drive. There are no plans for asphalt upgrading in 1998. However, if any group of property owners wants their street paved and are willing to share the expense among themselves (eg., as done on Myrtle Court), the Roads Committee will be happy to aid and abet.

LEGISLATIVE - In accordance with the conclusion at the Annual Meeting, MALA is pursuing legislative relief regarding road financing. Through prior agreement with the County of Mecklenburg, MALA is required to maintain the road network in Merifield Acres - the County does not, nor does the state. At the same time, MALA is not empowered by restrictive covenant to collect road fees from all those who depend upon the roads. Thus, those property owners who are required to pay assessments, plus those who pay voluntarily, shoulder the entire burden. MALA has requested our Delegate to introduce a bill in the upcoming legislative session. This bill would require all who depend upon the MALA road network to pay for the support of the roads, regardless of covenant.

SCHOOL & YOUTH - We had a great turnout at our first Easter Egg Hunt last year, held at Oak Park on March 22. Plans are in the works for another one in 1998!