

# MILL CREEK HOME



Newsletter of the Mill Creek Homeowners Association, Charlottesville, Virginia  
 also available online at [www.millcreekhomeowners.org](http://www.millcreekhomeowners.org)

## Let's Meet at the Annual Meeting

We don't have many opportunities to meet together and talk about our community and its concerns. On January 20, we can catch up on Mill Creek news and discuss a wide range of shared concerns. See highlights of the agenda on page 3.

Whether your primary interest is maintaining the common areas, the status of HOA finances, the Mill Creek sidewalk, or a favorite project, there will be plenty of time to discuss them all. Join the Board and your neighbors for an overview of HOA activities and planning for 2011.

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Looking forward to seeing you at Cale Elementary School on Thursday, January 20.

Addeane Caelleigh, Editor  
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P.S. I urge you to make a resolution for 2011: Send me your ideas for newsletter articles.

## Mill Creek Board Meetings

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### Join the Board for meetings

— 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, 7:30 pm —

Meetings are held in the Calvary Baptist Church, intersection of Avon Ext. & Southern Parkway (Come in the glass double doors, turn right, then left toward the meeting rooms.)

## Culverts and Common Areas

Janet Eden, Mill Creek HOA Board Member

Winter is a good time to look about your yard and take care of basic maintenance before spring growth begins.

**Culverts** usually lie along the front of your property to collect and channel water along the side of the roads and under driveways. When Mill Creek was built, the culverts were carefully designed to channel water along the best drainage routes. Homeowners are responsible for maintaining their culverts keeping them cleared of large plants and accumulated debris. Nothing should grow in the culverts except grass, which should be kept short. Any shrubs or trees will raise the soil level and impede the flow of water, causing pools of water to back up onto the roads. Water standing in culverts becomes breeding grounds for mosquitos in our hot summers.

**Common areas** present some difficulties because Mill Creek was planned with many small common

areas between houses and as buffers for water flow. Many of these areas are wooded. The HOA's annual budget and reserves, even before recent financial setbacks, were sufficient for only minimal maintenance of common areas. The HOA can provide mowing of common areas along roads and can deal with trees that present a clear danger if they fall. Other than that, common areas are left natural.

**Permission to improve common areas.** Homeowners often wish to improve the common areas adjoining their property, and the whole community benefits when visible common areas are attractive. Homeowners who want to personally take responsibility for improving an adjoining common area must discuss such plans with the Board and get permission. The common areas belong to the whole community and are available to be enjoyed by all homeowners. The Board welcomes discussions with homeowners who want to improve the common areas.

## Mill Creek Trail

In November, a few homeowners from Mill Creek, Mill Creek South, and Foxcroft met informally with Dan Mahon of the Albemarle County Department of Parks and Recreation to discuss Mill Creek Trail in light of the development of Biscuit Run State Park. The trail is an asset to Mill Creek homeowners, offering a woodland walk not easily available in most suburban areas. It also needs major improvements and presents liability and security concerns for all the neighborhoods that border it.

Albemarle County has raised the possibility that the narrow strip of land containing the trail might be deeded to the County in order to link it with the Biscuit Run and the network of walking and hiking paths throughout the County. The County would

assume responsibility for maintenance, improvements, and security. To be effective, all the bordering neighborhoods would need to deed their portions of the trail.

Many related issues need to be researched and discussed thoroughly before a decision can be made. In the coming year, interested homeowners can begin to collect detailed information to begin these discussions.



## 2011 Annual HOA Meeting

*—everyone attend!—*

The HOV Board invites all homeowners to attend the 2011 Annual meeting scheduled for **Thursday, January 20, 7:00–9:00 p.m., at Cale Elementary School.** (The meeting is on Thursday rather than Wednesday this year because the room was not available for a Wednesday meeting.)

The community has important topics to discuss. The **draft agenda** covers:

- Treasurer’s Report, including final report and updates on HOA taxes and the pond escrow
- Neighborhood Watch
- Newsletter
- Special discussion topics
  - Status of embezzlement case
  - Sidewalk maintenance on Mill Creek Dr.
  - Lights at the Mill Creek entrance
  - Speed impediments on Mill Creek Dr. & Gristmill Dr.
  - Solicitors in Mill Creek
  - Community events
- Homeowners’ concerns and questions
- Solicitation of new Board members

Come on Thursday, January 20, and join the discussions.

Interested in working on  
Mill Creek Trail  
in the Spring?

Contact Janet Eden or Addeane Caelleigh



Mill Creek Pond at its low point  
Summer 2010

### Community Notice Board

**2011 Annual Meeting** — The annual meeting of the Mill Creek Homeowners Association will be Thursday, January 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cale Elementary School on Avon Extended. See article above.

**Contractor Recommendations.** When you are looking for contractors or services, remember to check your neighbors’ recommendations posted on the Mill Creek website. Many new recommendations have been added in recent months.

<http://millcreekhomeowners.org/contractors.html>

**Planning major additions or outbuildings?** Remember to request approval from the Architectural Review Committee—contact Maritza Saavedra ([mms3u@virginia.edu](mailto:mms3u@virginia.edu)) to submit a request. Check the Covenants on the Mill Creek website about requirements.

## Neighborhood Solicitations

Sue Voreis, Mill Creek Board member

Reports of people soliciting work in our neighborhood were recently reviewed by the Board. A few residents are concerned and have been uncomfortable during a visit by someone seeking work or selling something.

Many solicitors represent legitimate businesses and organizations, but be aware that some might have illegal intentions. They could pose a threat to you and your pocketbook. Sadly, many victims are the elderly or those living alone.

Whether you are contacted by someone looking for yard or tree work, roofing and home maintenance, or magazine sales, the HOA Board wants to offer some suggestions for all our safety.

- Beware of pressure tactics or requests to enter your home. If you feel uncomfortable, don't question your intuition—it's probably right! Remain polite but state that you are not interested and close your door.
- Beware of verbal quotes that are suddenly reduced in the same conversation. It means that the first price quote was inflated.
- Never pay money up-front for "materials and supplies" or other reasons. The individuals may not appear again to do the work—and they have your money.
- Observe appearances and behaviors. Is a business card offered? Is the business local or out of state? How did they arrive at your home? If they are walking through the neighborhood and no vehicle is visible, be cautious.
- If they arrive in a work vehicle, look for a business name and phone number displayed. An unmarked vehicle may be perfectly

legitimate, but know who you are talking to. Check for out-of-state vehicle plates.

- Ask for a written estimate. A valid estimate should show a business name, address, phone number, and an itemized breakdown of materials, labor, and tax. They should be able to provide verification that they are licensed and bonded if you ask for it. The Better Business Bureau or a state licensing board can verify a business's standing and legitimacy.
- Obtain at least two written estimates to compare the price you have been quoted.
- Call the business telephone number. Check local phone listings and yellow pages for the business name. If the business number is disconnected or temporarily out of service, this is a red flag.
- Be aware that groups referred to as "Travelers" are organized fraud groups whose members often pose as contractors, roofers, and other craftsmen. They move from state to state and use many identities and names interchangeably. They are known by law enforcement and anti-fraud groups; most have criminal records, including felonies.
- If you are threatened or someone becomes threatening or abusive toward you, call 911 as soon as you can.

The bottom line: be cautious, get full information, verify and check around, and get other estimates.

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