# MILL CREEK HOME

Newsletter of the Mill Creek Homeowners Association, Charlottesville, Virginia also available online at www.millcreekhomeowners.org

## Thanks to All Who Help

A friend who moved to Charlottesville last year took a summer walk with me and was amazed at the beauty and style she saw everywhere on our streets. I realized that I took for granted the beauty, friendliness, and safety of our neighborhood—it was good for me to see Mill Creek afresh through her eyes.

It takes a lot of work to create and maintain a community like ours. Some of us create lovely gardens, others contribute time to special projects, such as the Mill Creek webpage, newsletter, or social events. Some participate in City-County Planning activities, working to improve county services and maintain the beauty of the larger environment. Some

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serve on the Homeowners Association Board to provide basic community services and facilities.

The community needs all these contributions—and we are thankful to everyone who helps.

-Addeane Caelleigh, Editor asc8f@virginia.edu

#### **Local Wildlife**

We are used to seeing the neighborhood's squirrels, rabbits, and birds in our yards and even the occasional deer. But few of us have seen a local red fox in the driveway.

Thanks to Erin Hall for this photograph of a fox paying an early morning visit.



### Mill Creek Annual Meeting — Wednesday, January 16, 2013

See page 3 for details—including discount vouchers for annual dues.

All residents are urged to attend: vital issues to discuss

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### **Updates**

#### **Mailboxes**

Thanks to homeowners who repaired, repainted, or replaced their mailboxes last fall. The improvement is noticeable on every street.

The survey of mailboxes will resume in the late winter. Two kinds of notices will be sent out in early spring.

- 1. Notices will be sent (a) if homeowners have not corrected work detailed in previous notices or (b) if mailboxes have deteriorated significantly since the last survey.
- 2. Notices will be sent about mailboxes that need attention but were not considered to be in the worst condition during the last survey. These may require cleaning, repainting, or minor repairs.

A new mailbox—built and installed by Mark Louisell for a fellow homeowner.



#### Sidewalk

We have all enjoyed the resurfaced sidewalk along Mill Creek Drive. The new, smoother asphalt surface makes walking and pushing baby strollers much easier and safer.

#### Chili Cook-off Planned

Neighbors near the Gristmill Drive cul-de-sac are planning a Chili Cook-off for later winter or early spring—when it's warm enough to enjoy an outdoor event and yet cold enough to be perfect for chili. Watch for an announcement in February—but you can start planning your entry now.

#### Mill Creek Board

**Neal Grandy**, President & Treasurer Grounds Committee <a href="mailto:nrg2p@virginia.edu">nrg2p@virginia.edu</a> **Brian Lewis**, Member-at-Large

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**Sue Voreis,** Member-at-Large Architectural Review Committee Grounds Committee suevxyz@yahoo.com

#### Come to Mill Creek Board meetings

—2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 pm—

~ All homeowners welcome ~
Share your ideas, learn about current issues,
ask questions.

Meetings are held in Board members' homes—contact any Board member to learn the location of the next meeting. \* The Board is searching for a public meeting place for 2013 meetings.

Watch for an announcement.

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## Annual Homeowners Meeting January 16: Vital issues to discuss

#### Urgent: We need your input

The Mill Creek community faces crucial issues that affect the future of our Homeowners Association (HOA). Every homeowner is strongly encouraged to attend this year's annual meeting on Wednesday, January 16, at 7:00, at Cale Elementary School. All residents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

This year, homeowners who attend the annual meeting will receive a \$10 voucher at the end of the meeting for a discount on their annual dues. (*Only one voucher per household.*)

The annual meeting is the only opportunity in the year when all residents have the opportunity to discuss the range of issues important to the community. Homeowners can help make basic and far-reaching decisions about the future of Mill Creek and the HOA.



Come this year to ask questions, make suggestions for improvements, and share your opinions on how the HOA should function—and learn about your neighbors' ideas.

#### **Possible Discussion Items**

**Improving the Mill Creek website.** The website is in need of an overhaul. In addition to redesign, it could include information for our families with small children, information for new residents, information on special projects or group activities. Clean Up of Common Areas. The community could have a clean-up project on a weekend in the Spring: otherwise, an outside firm would be hired. Neighborhood groups. Homeowner groups can take on projects of special interest to them (social events; dog stations; Biscuit Run Walking Trail; website; planning community social events; neighbors-helping-neighbors (with mowing, grocery shopping, etc.); maintaining the entrance. Financial Report and HOA Reserve Fund. The treasurer will provide a financial report and review the legal requirement to maintain a reserve fund. **Review of HOA Responsibilities.** The HOA has legal responsibilities that must be met.

Need for new members of HOA Board. The Board needs more volunteer members; the alternative is to consider hiring a management company to perform basic functions for the HOA—with a consequent rise in dues.

**Mailbox Project and Survey**. The survey will resume in late winter and notices will be sent.

**New resident packets.** The HOA needs to bring the content up to date with current legal requirements.

## All Mill Creek residents welcome at annual meeting

Everyone who lives in Mill Creek is welcome at the annual meeting on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m. (at Cale Elementary School). Meetings concern a wide range of issues that affect everyone in the community. (Only homeowners may vote, however.)

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## Safety for Your Dogs

In the first of a series, Liz Lewis offers valuable information and tips for dog safety. She will be happy to discuss these issues and your suggestions for these articles: <u>Lizlewis1929@yahoo.com</u>.

- 1. Safe walking on dark streets. In these long winter evenings, Mill Creek is very dark. Anyone walking dogs along our streets in the evening should help drivers by making themselves as visible as possible. Wearing light-colored or reflective clothing can catch a driver's attention, as can using a flashlight or head lamp. Reflective strips also work well on your dog's collar or dog-blanket.
- 2. **IDs.** All dogs need an ID tag or special ID collar. Hanging tags can be bought at most pet stores and at the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA. The small tags can include a dog's name and an address or phone number. Special ID collars can be ordered with the dog's name and a telephone number imprinted on it.

Watch for further tips in upcoming newsletters.



## Halloween on the Gristmill cul-de-sac

On Halloween, several homeowners held a trick-or-treat party for the young children of Mill Creek and Creekside. Costumed homeowners set up trick-or-treat tables with (mildly) scary decorations, and candles and jack-o-lanterns lined the area.

Parents brought their children, while other neighbors and friends came to check out the party. An assortment of dragons, tigers, ballerinas, and bunnies arrived to sample the treats. The youngest trick-or-treater was only a few weeks old!



Thanks to Erin & Chris Hall, Pam Riley, Fred Ward, Janet Eden, and Addeane Caelleigh for organizing this community event.

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