

# MILL CREEK

## HOMEOWNERS ASSN. NEWSLETTER

SUMMER

2006

### ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY

Save **Saturday** afternoon, **September 30**, for the Mill Creek Homeowners Association block party. Once again Rose Van Epp is making all the arrangements, and they'll include barbecue from Big Jim's, vegetarian lasagna and hotdogs. Last year Morphy the Caterpillar slide was a major success, and this year Rose hopes to book something that's just as much fun. This editor begged for the same magician who turned pigeons into rabbits.

The party is always held in the field at the end of Southern Parkway, near the Foxcroft entrance. And the admission cost is always a nonperishable food donation for the Emergency Food Bank.

Rose may need adults to help monitor the safety of the children on the Morphy-like activity. In September, once final plans are made, another notice will be sent around with definite times, entertainments and volunteer requests. If you'd like to volunteer early, you can call Rose at **971-7832**.

### DOGS AND MORE DOGS

In the spring '06 issue of the newsletter one of our residents wrote an article about what to do if you see dogs running at large through our neighborhood. Since then board members have received several complaints from Mill Creek residents about dogs running off leash on a regular basis through their property. Some residents report being threatened and even knocked down by loose dogs, and it is not always clear who owns the dogs or where they come from.

To repeat the good advice in the original article: the best thing to do is call the **Albemarle County Animal Control Officer at 977-9041**. County ordinances prohibit dogs from roaming unleashed and unattended. Give the officer as much information about the dog and, if known, the owner, and leave the rest to them.

This editor would like to hear from residents who have called Animal Control to know if officers are dealing effectively with the problem. You can reach her at **roussie2@ntelos.net**.

### BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

#### Treasurer

Kevin O'Connor 244-0081

#### Secretary

Barbara Mann 923-0411

#### Members at Large

Miles Weiss 951-9146

Bruce Ingersoll 293-6133

Buck Klintworth 295-0666

Alan Shook 242-1430

#### Architectural Committee

Buck Klintworth 295-0666

Larry Jacksina 979-3989

#### Grounds Committee

Barbara Mann 923-0411

#### Newsletter

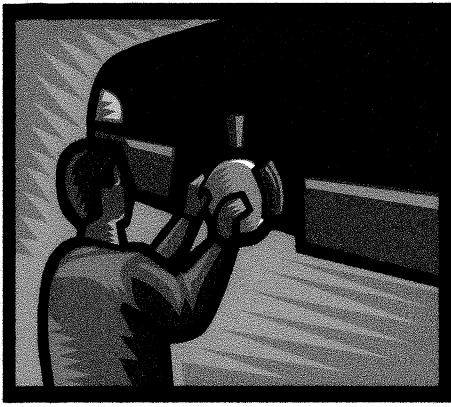
Roussie Jacksina 979-3989

### BOARD MEETINGS

**Second Tuesday of every month, 7:30 pm, at Calvary Baptist Church on Avon Street across from Southern Parkway. All residents are welcome.**

### SHOULD THE MILL CREEK SIGN BE LIGHTED?

The spotlights on the Mill Creek sign are currently out. Do you want the board to get quotes on getting them relit or do you prefer Mill Creek be discreet after sunset? Let a board member know or email Larry Jacksina at **lju4ia@ntelos.net**.



## CAR REPAIR SCAMS

Whether because of a collision or simply because of wear and tear, from time to time every car will need to be repaired. For those of us who do not know anything about car repair, a trip to the repair shop can provide an occasion for unscrupulous mechanics to bilk us out of our money. Although most mechanics are honest, the few who are not have a number of tricks that they use.

Some scams are fairly obvious: lying about the need for a certain repair, agreeing to charge a certain amount and then actually charging more, or misrepresenting that a repair has been done when it has not. However, other car repair scams are more ingenious, such as:

- Putting your car on a lift and disassembling it before getting your permission to repair it. This may leave you stuck with the option of either authorizing the repair or paying to have your car

put back together. Even then it may not run.

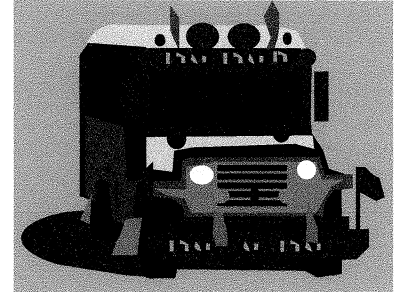
- Showing you dirty oil contaminated with metal filings, and then telling you that this demonstrates that you need a new transmission. Transmissions often contain dirty oil with metal shavings, and this does not necessarily mean that you need to have the transmission replaced—an expensive repair.
- Replacing a part with a rebuilt one but charging you for a new part.

Be sure to protect yourself. Get all estimates for repair work in writing, and insist that the mechanic get your specific authorization before doing any work for which he is going to charge. If necessary, get a second opinion. Finally, always ask either for the return of any parts that have been replaced or for the box from which your new part came. If you follow these simple steps, you will make it more difficult for a scam artist to work his tricks.

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**Editor's note:** A helpful website (and a funny one too) is Tom and Ray Magliozzi's **cartalk.com**. Perhaps you listen to their NPR radio show on Saturday mornings at 10:00. Their knowledgeable radio advice is expanded on their website. Currently displayed, for instance, is their study on whether dealers or independent garages charge

more for repairs. Their site also steers you to **cars.com** where you can find customer recommendations and warnings about Charlottesville repair shops.



## STEER CLEAR OF BIG RIGS

With more and more tractor-trailer trucks on the roadways, it is prudent to be extra cautious when you encounter a big rig.

- Remember that a large truck has a large blind spot. If you are driving in the truck's blind spot, the driver cannot see you. Either stay behind the truck or pass it quickly.
- Do not follow a big rig too closely. Large trucks block your view of hazards further down the highway, and a tired trucker might not brake soon enough to give you the warning time you need to avoid a collision.
- If in doubt, give the truck a wide berth. A car almost always loses in a collision with a large truck. The best way to avoid such accidents is to avoid the trucks.

**WWW.MILLCREEKHOMEOWNERS.ORG**

# Mill Creek Notes: All the news that fits

## **RATE YOUR CONTRACTOR**

The board learned there is a definite interest in reinstating a past page to the Mill Creek website, a Rate-Your-Contractor page. If you've used a contractor or a service that you either recommend or are disappointed with, email board member Miles Weiss at [mweiss@nlrg.com](mailto:mweiss@nlrg.com) with his/her/company name and your comments. He'll install them on the website.

In order for the comments to be published on this new web page, you must be willing to provide your name and a phone number or email address where other homeowners may contact you. The board cannot be responsible for the veracity of the comments but Miles is willing to receive and post your messages.

One company that recently received a good review (from board member Barb Mann) is Montague Miller's Home Concierge Service. They function as a middleman between you and their list of over 50 carefully scrutinized vendors. You pay them nothing for their recommendations. After the job is done, they follow up with you to be sure you're satisfied. We hear their service may be a bit expensive but that might not be an impediment for those of us who are all thumbs. For

more information call Lee Cabbage at Montague Miller, 973-5393.

## **VDOT'S PAVING JOB**

Perhaps the first business concern that ought to get poor reviews on the new Mill Creek Rate-Your-Contractor web page is the company that recently paved our streets. Board members have received many calls expressing anger over the loose gravel and dust that are damaging homeowners' paint jobs and collecting on lawns.

The board had to refer everyone to the Virginia Department of Transportation (though board members called VDOT to complain as well) because, unfortunately, the homeowners association has little say in how our streets are maintained.

After comparing notes among board members and residents at its last HOA meeting, the board came up with the relatively coherent story that VDOT subcontracted the paving job and does not have the money to correct the flaws. VDOT is not scheduled to repave Mill Creek for another five years. If you want to add your complaint to VDOT's list of dissatisfied residents, you can call them at 286-3201.

## **MAILBOX LETTERS**

If you received one of the 116 letters the board sent out about painting and/or repairing your mailbox, here's a reminder to contact Barb Mann at 923-0411 or [bjm2r@virginia.edu](mailto:bjm2r@virginia.edu) for free mailbox paint.

Kevin O'Connor, HOA Treasurer, who has served on the board for eight years, says that, in his experience, this is the most proactive any board has ever been about the eternal subject of our unique and surprisingly fragile mailboxes.

## **HELP ONE OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS**

Rose Van Epp reports an opportunity for us all to help **Cale Elementary School** earn money for such items as computers, printers, software, sports equipment and educational field trips. All we need do is pass along our empty laser and inkjet cartridges and old cell phones to the school for recycling. Last year through this program students earned \$150.

Rose has a basket for these items on her porch. You can drop them off anytime at **1271 Quail Crossing** or bring them to the block party. Cale would particularly appreciate businesses adopting this program. Call Rose for more information at 971-7832.

**WWW.MILLCREEKHOMEOWNERS.ORG**

# Mill Creek Notes: All the news that didn't fit on p.3

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Barb Mann tells us the police department would like Mill Creek to consider reforming a Neighborhood Watch Program. Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programs in the country, bringing citizens together with law enforcement to deter crime and make communities safer. Contact Barb (923-0411 or [bjm2r@virginia.edu](mailto:bjm2r@virginia.edu)) if you're interested in participating, and she'll invite an officer to a board meeting and/or the block party to explain the program.

## BISCUIT RUN DEVELOPMENT – A MASSIVE RUNAWAY?

Karla Berger lives in Mill Creek South, the development that borders the proposed Biscuit Run development, which is slated to replace about 900 wooded acres south of I-64. Its backers have asked for an increase from its current potential of 900 units to up to 4970 residential units (figures taken from a "Daily Progress" article of June 14, 2006).

According to a July 2006 "Progress" letter to the editor Ms. Berger furnished, before rezoning can be accomplished at least three connecting roads must be built: the Southern Parkway

extension from Avon to Fifth Street (very costly), a connector to UVa's Fontaine Research Park, and a separate connector to Route 29. The only current connecting route is the stretch of I-64 between Route 20 and Fifth Street. In 2004 the traffic rate on that connector was 50,000 trips per day. VDOT estimates the expanded development will cause an increase of 30,000 to 50,000 cars per day.

Ms. Berger is part of a loose coalition of area neighborhoods that includes Mill Creek, Lake Reynovia, and Mill Creek South. The coalition is keeping an eye on the progress of Biscuit Run. She'd like to find a Mill Creek resident willing to act as an email conduit for information, meeting announcements, etc., to other Mill Creek residents. If you want to participate, call her at 963-4507.

## LOSING A PRESIDENT

This year Larry Jacksina has served as co-president of the HOA along with Kevin O'Connor. At the last board meeting Larry announced he was stepping down from that post because of pressing family concerns. The board regrets his leaving and expressed its appreciation for his time and efforts.

Kevin O'Connor is already serving as treasurer and understandably cannot take

on two offices. This leaves the HOA board presidentless.

Larry will continue to maintain the Mill Creek residents' email list. If you want to be added to it or make a change to your current address, email him at [lju4ia@ntelos.net](mailto:lju4ia@ntelos.net).

## CONTESTS, ANYONE?

Is there anyone in Mill Creek who'd like to conduct some sort of annual contest like "Best Halloween Costume" or "Best Holiday Decorations?" It might be fun and engender more neighborhood esprit de corps. Call a board member and let him or her know you're interested.

## GUILT TRIP FROM THE EDITOR

One of your editor's favorite methods of coercion...er, manipulation...no, she means *suggestion* is through guilt. She sits in on the monthly board meetings and finds it heartening (especially considering the cruelty and hatred on the nightly news) to watch the board's civility and cooperation with each other. Currently there are barely enough board members to make a quorum. *Please* (your editor is on bended knee, hands folded, eyes beseeching, voice whining – no forget that last one) consider attending a monthly meeting. The board needs you and Mill Creek needs its board. Feeling any guilt yet?