

# THE MANOR MONITOR

A Monthly Publication of The Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association

April 2010

([www.vinthillmanor.org](http://www.vinthillmanor.org))

## **Two Meetings in March**

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

As advertised, the Annual Membership Meeting of the Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association (HOA) was held on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, at the Greenville Elementary School. With a quorum of the membership having been achieved—33 present and 7 by proxy—the meeting was called to order by Frank Fuerst at 7:00PM.

The minutes from the 2009 Annual Membership Meeting were approved and the election to fill the one vacant position on the Vint Hill Manor Board of Directors (BOD) was conducted. Ken Williamson, who had come forward and expressed his interest in serving on the BOD, was given an opportunity to address the assemblage. Afterward, there being no nominations from the floor, Ken was elected by acclamation. On behalf of the membership, appreciation is extended to Ken and best wishes offered for a successful term.

Ed Ortiz presented the Financial/Treasurer's Report covering the financial condition of the HOA at the end of 2009. Briefly, the total assets in CDs, checking, accounts receivable and reserved increased by more than \$7,300 from 2008. Total income outpaced total expenses resulting in a surplus of \$9,600 which was passed on to members by low-

ering the monthly homeowners' assessments starting in January 2010 and at the same time funding the necessary community capital improvements. The Report was approved.

Frank Fuerst then delivered the President's Report for 2009, in which he provided a comprehensive review of the snow removal actions taken during this unprecedented harsh winter. The President's Report on Snow Removal, in its entirety, is contained elsewhere in this issue.

Frank also took the opportunity to formally thank outgoing Director, Mark Melancon, for his outstanding work as Programs Chair during his term on the BOD.

In the Membership Comment Period which followed, Betty Pell expressed her appreciation to Frank Fuerst for his hard work and actions during the aforementioned snow storms, and, shortly afterward, the meeting was adjourned.

### **Board of Directors' Monthly Meeting**

Immediately following the Annual Meeting, the BOD held its regular, monthly meeting, albeit with a brief agenda. The main objective customarily for this meeting that follows the Annual Meeting is for the BOD to elect the Officers of the HOA. Each of the Directors, who held Officer positions in the previous year, were

elected to reprise their roles for the current year, i.e., Frank Fuerst, President; Tom Daily, Vice President; Stan Manvell, Secretary; and Ed Ortiz, Treasurer.

The minutes for the February BOD meeting were accepted, as was the Financial/Treasurer's Report, before the meeting was adjourned.

## **President's Column Real Estate Assessments**

- Thanks to Joe Durant, who came over to compare Fauquier County real estate assessments. We discovered that our land assessments were both \$80,000, even though our lot sizes were different. That led me to research other lots and found that all were assessed at \$80,000. When I called the County, I learned that the \$80,000 was for a one-acre lot and that all lots up to 20 acres were assessed as though they were one acre. This policy is unfair. The largest lot in our subdivision is less than 1/4 acre. The smallest lot is less than 1/6 acre. We are carrying a greater proportion of real estate taxes than our lot sizes warrant.

I made a presentation to the Board of Equalization (BOE) on March 16 and requested that they recommend a sliding scale for future assessments based on actual lot size. Although the BOE did not guarantee they would do that, the Chairman did admit that I had presented compelling evidence and other Board

members agreed. I have asked our neighboring HOA to make a similar presentation. If you have friends in another HOA in Fauquier County, please let me know so I can contact them as well.”

**Opportunity to Host an Intern** - We have a wonderful opportunity to host Kelsey Blair, an intern who will be here May 15 to July 25, documenting the Cold War Museum collection. Kelsey has a Bachelor of Arts degree and is currently working toward a Master's degree. She lives in NW Florida (a lower rent area). You may learn a little about her professional background from her one-page website [www.wix.com/kblair01/Kblair](http://www.wix.com/kblair01/Kblair).

Kelsey would be most comfortable staying with another woman or a couple in a home where she can have her own bedroom and bathroom at a reasonable price [say around \$400 per month]. Kelsey will be purchasing and preparing her own food; so she would also like to have kitchen privileges.

Providing a home for Kelsey will provide a wonderful, cultural, enriching and rewarding remembrance regarding the Cold War Museum that won't soon be forgotten. If you are interested, please call me as soon as possible.

### **Dogs Running At-large**

*The Manor Monitor* has contained an article on this topic before. Unfortunately, a few dog owners have not complied with the request in that article. As a result, the BOD continues to receive complaints about dogs running

at-large. We have been told the yards of other homeowners need to be cleaned before they can invite relatives with small children. Dogs that run at-large in the sensitive common areas also displace wildlife. For example, according to a quote from *The Nature Conservancy Magazine*, “Dogs in sensitive areas displace birds, reducing sightings by more than 40 percent.” Last, but not least, Fauquier County Code 4-22 says that it is a misdemeanor to have dogs running at-large. Please respect your neighbors and the environment and obey the law. Please keep your dog on its leash and remember to pick up after it.

Frank Fuerst  
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540-341-1473  
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### **Reading Buddies**

Our community has been approached by Greenville Elementary School, via an e-mail to Frank Fuerst, for volunteers to assist with their reading program. The school is nearby—just down Rogues Rd a short distance at the traffic light (Academic Avenue), and at which we have held our last two Annual Membership Meetings. The program is entitled “Reading Buddies” and it requires ADULT participation.

Volunteers are asked to commit to donating about 45 min a week to regular meeting times that fit both their and the students' schedules. Each volunteer is assigned a single reading buddy for the rest of the school year, and they work from an easy-to-follow plan, built by the teacher, and individualized for each student.

This is considered by the school to be a vital part of our community and the future of our children and grandchildren. Anyone interested is asked to please contact Stacey Babish, [sbabish@fcps1.org](mailto:sbabish@fcps1.org), the teacher in charge of the program, directly, or the school office at 540-349-8925.

### **ARMI**

The Austin Realty Management and Investment Company (ARMI), as part of its service under contract to the Vint Hill Manor HOA, is positioned to serve as a liaison between the community and the BOD and/or the ARC members. Fred Austin, owner of ARMI, advises that direct contact with his company results in all BOD and ARC members, as the case may dictate, being advised.

ARMI's address, where our monthly HOA assessments are sent, is: PO Box 3413, Warrenton, VA 20188. Phone: 540-347-1901, Fax: 540-347-1900

Website: [www.ARMIVA.com](http://www.ARMIVA.com).

### **An Appeal for Consideration**

Recently one of our wheelchair bound neighbors was obliged to leave the sidewalk and proceed in the street for some distance because the sidewalk was blocked by a parked vehicle. It is recognized that the driveways in our development have varying lengths and are not always straight, and that our garages are sometimes filled with other things; nonetheless, an appeal is being made to all homeowners to use your garage, if accessible, or be sure to pull forward in your driveway sufficiently

to avoid blocking the public sidewalk, if at all possible. Failing either of the above, please consider an appropriate spot on the street.

## Residential Lamp Posts

The lamp posts outside our homes provide the only light in our community in the evening and throughout the night. When lit, they provide a nice compromise in that they provide enough light for safety and security, and, at the same time, preserve the country atmosphere. This works best when the lamps at all the homes are lit. It has been noticed lately that there are a number of our homes where the lamp post lights are not on. Please check your outside lamp as soon as possible and replace the bulb if needed.

## Board of Directors' Meeting Agenda April 6, 2010

1. Call to Order
2. Membership Comment Period
3. Minutes of Previous BOD Meeting
4. Financial/Treasurer's Report - March
5. Committee Reports
  - a. Architectural Review
  - b. Common Grounds
  - c. Communications
  - d. Programs
6. Unfinished Business
  - a. Fire Hydrants
7. New Business
  - a. Real Estate Tax Assessments
  - b. Assignments for 2010
8. Adjournment

## Architectural Review Committee (ARC) Activity

Since there were no new design requests to consider and extremely limited street parking due to the lingering mounds of snow, the ARC meeting for February was cancelled. Steve Chronister, ARC Chair, did however provide an annual report of ARC activity that was published in the March issue of the Manor Monitor, along with other Annual Committee Reports.

**The next ARC meeting** is set for Tuesday, March 30, 2010, 7:00PM, at the home of Steve Chronister, 6828 Averbach Court.

The ARC is always ready and willing to meet with any homeowner to provide assistance with an application which is required to modify the appearance of our homes. **Manor Pride!**

*Planning some changes? give Steve a call at 428-1828*

VINT HILL MANOR  
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 3413 WARRENTON, VA 20188

### DIRECTORS/ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President	<b>Frank Fuerst</b> ..... 540 341-1473 fafuerst@earthlink.net
Vice-Pres	<b>Tom Daily</b> ..... 540-341-7606 tomrdee@comcast.net
Secretary	<b>Stan Manvell</b> ..... 540-341-2886 stanvell@comcast.net
Treasurer	<b>Ed Ortiz</b> ..... 540-347-5927 edortiz_50@yahoo.com Ken Williamson .... 540-347-5845

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Architectural Review	<b>Steve Chronister</b> ..... 540-428-1828
Chartering Documents	<b>Frank Fuerst</b> ..... 540-341-1473
Communications	<b>Tom Daily</b> ..... 540-341-7606
Common Grounds	<b>VACANT</b> .....
Programs	<b>Mark Melancon</b> ..... 540-341-4177

## Lecture Series 2010

The Fauquier County Public Library and the Fauquier Heritage Institute sponsor monthly lectures that seek to provide knowledge, understanding and appreciation of local, regional, and national history. Bill Dumas provided a copy of the pamphlet that contains information about the Institute and the lectures scheduled for the year, culminating with the one on November 21st entitled "Colonial Buckland" which will be presented by David Blake, Chair of the Buckland Preservation Society.

These lectures, which are free to the public, are presented at 3:00PM on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the John Barton Payne Building on Main Street in Warrenton. For more information, go to - [www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments/library](http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments/library) .

This will take you to the home page for the library. Go down the column, in blue, on the left, and, in the Areas of Interest segment, click on the word Adult. When you get to this page, click on 'upcoming events', which is located under the picture. The title of this page is Adult Programs. Under Special Events, the sixth one down is entitled "Fauquier Heritage Institute: Lectures in American History".

Cynthia Taylor, Public Information Coordinator for the Fauquier County Public Library, was very helpful in providing the web information above. She also provided a link for the Library Newsletter: <http://fauquiercountylibrarynews.blogspot.com> .

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON SNOW REMOVAL

This winter, we had a series of record-breaking snow storms as well as below average temperatures that kept the snow in place. The stated objective of VDOT is to have all roads passable within a certain number of hours after the end of a storm. The number of hours varies based on the depth of the snow. Their fastest objective is 48 hours.

### So, how did they do?

Our two-foot storm of Friday and Saturday, Dec 18-19, was the first. The snow was light in weight. Within 30 hours, by Monday, Dec 21, they had our roads plowed, and they left all driveways clear of snow and ice and left all but one mailbox clear as well.

Our two-foot storm of Friday and Saturday, Feb 5-6, was the second, and it was quickly followed by another six-inch storm. These storms were different. The snow was heavy. Nevertheless, VDOT came on Monday, Feb 8, and stayed until late at night making all of our roads passable. For the next three days, bobcats worked to clear driveways and mailboxes, and widen the roadways. In doing so, they dumped snow on some sidewalks and on top of some fire hydrants. While the bobcats were still here, they were asked to clear a path to a fire hydrant, and they did that. After the bobcats left, they were asked to come back to clear the last fire hydrant. Although they put that job on their to-do list, they never came back.

### What happened

**elsewhere?** Three days after our roads were made passable, VDOT made one lane passable for our neighbor HOA in Vint Hill. Four days after us, VDOT made one lane made passable for Grapewood, the subdivision across from the school. Eight days after us, schools in Fauquier County were finally able to open when VDOT made the last 46 streets in the County passable. Eleven days after us, I still saw snow plows at work widening roads.

What VDOT did was not always pretty and it was not always perfect, but **they got the job done within their best projected time frame!**

### A few persons have asked why we don't plow the streets ourselves.

**First,** I talked to VDOT. They own the streets. Anybody plowing their streets does so at their own risk. Anyone that VDOT uses as a subcontractor has been certified and is required to have \$500,000 of liability insurance in case of damage to the streets, curbs, or driveways.

**Next,** I talked to two subcontractors. One put up a sign on Cray as you turned left toward Rogues. That company was neither certified nor did they have liability insurance. The second company was the one who plowed our streets in December. I asked them to give me a quote for a one-time plowing similar to what they did, and I'm still waiting for their answer.

**Next,** I talked to our neighboring HOA in Vint Hill. They said that to keep a

company on a retainer would cost at least \$20,000 a year to be paid whether or not it snowed, so they rejected the idea.

### Here are answers to questions I've gotten:

#### *Why didn't VDOT salt our streets?*

VDOT does not salt streets within any subdivision.

#### *Did VDOT sand our streets?*

They only sanded the uphill side of Osborne and Cray.

#### *Why did VDOT plow Turing so wide?*

Averbach is the most remote street that we have, and it needed to be wide enough so that an ambulance and a fire-truck could pass each other.

#### **Here's what I learned for the future.**

The persistent calls to VDOT paid off. We need to build on that partnership to ensure that our high priority in these storms will last into succeeding years. My letter complimentary to VDOT printed in *The Fauquier Times* was part of that. I've also complimented individual people at VDOT. All of these people are far more likely to respond positively to compliments than to criticism. We also need a plan to keep our fire hydrants clear. We may need at least one person involved for each hydrant. We may also need a person to act as a snow 'czar.' I'm hoping that someone here tonight will raise their hand to volunteer to put our plan together.

Last, but not least, I'd like to thank once again all of you Good Samaritans who pitched in to help neighbors.