

◆ Blue Mountain Newsletter ◆

Blue Mountain Property Owners Association

Spring 2005

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Jim McManaway

If you wish to approach Blue Mountain news in the order of relative importance, read Pete Plourd's article on the budget first (page 3), then come back to this.

Assuming that you have taken that suggestion, let's go on. This has been a pretty quiet Fall and Winter. We paved two roads, Indian Look-out/Old Log and Allegheny. We added rip-rap rocks to build up the sides of Old Log, and Cliff Road so that a car wouldn't slide into the drainage ditches and stay till Spring. While this presented a better surface for traveling, our snow equipment is not heavy enough to penetrate the compacted ice built by vehicles on these paved roads before and between passes by the plows. We therefore have to treat the surfaces with gravel laced with calcium chloride. Once this is done the hard surfaced roads are great. These roads (and others) do not melt off and dry in the winter sun, but it can be overcome.

The hard surfacing cost \$61,000; and was put in by the contractors who had presented the best proposals to the previous roads committee. It took almost a quarter of the \$200,000 line of credit budget that



BLUE MOUNTAIN PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

bmpoaboard@bmpoa.org

BMPOA Board Roster

President

Jim McManaway (H) 635-7630

1st VP

Kathy Murphy (H) 635-6637

Treasurer

Pete Plourd (H) 636-3657

Secretary

Cathy Berger (H) 635-1259

Directors

Helga Heiberg (H) 636-9944

Tom Higgenbotham (H) 635-4577

Nynette Rourke (H) 635-6381

Jonathan Morrison (H) 636-8349

ANNUAL BMPOA MEETING MAY 15, 2005

12:30 Potluck Lunch
1:00 Meeting
At the Blue Mountain Lodge!
BUDGET VOTE
and PAVING discussion scheduled

had been presented and approved previously. That budget, when presented did not include the level of base preparation that is required to ensure the potential life of the pavement. We are paying that loan back at the rate of \$2000 per month or \$24,000 per year. This is depleting the road maintenance budget to the point that the remaining gravel roads, which have been heavily invested in this year, will again begin to deteriorate from lack of funds.

The situation described above, coupled with the 25% increase in our insurance costs (which represents a general large increase across the industry, not just for us) and rising costs of everything we are required to do dictates that we generate more income. Our board believes that the budget presented in Pete's article represents the minimum that will suffice for the next year. Like the federal government, we have many "fenced items" in the budget; that is things that we have to pay. The roads are discretionary along with a few other things I, for one, hold as requirements but they will have to be proportionately reduced if we don't raise the budget this year. That's it in a nutshell about budget. I won't belabor the issue.

The decision on whether to keep or sell the lodge was tied 20-20 at the vote last year. Our bylaws require

continued next page

that 60% of the total owners respond in the affirmative to sell our property. As a practical matter, the board does not see that happening anytime soon. It makes the best of business sense but business sense falls before sentimental value almost every time. We are going to hold another vote on this at the May meeting, which will be in the lodge, by the way. Since we do not have the directive to sell the lodge, it behooves us to make the minimal repairs necessary to keep it from deteriorating more. These same repairs, mostly done by volunteers, will also allow us to use the lodge in good weather.

See you at the May meeting.

BMPOA Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Linden United Methodist Church at 6 p.m.
Schedule alterations due to holidays will be posted on the bmpoa.org website.
Homeowners are welcome and encouraged to attend.

GRAVEL ROADS MAINTENANCE

*by Kathy Murphy 1st V.P.
And Co-Chair Roads Committee*

I am pleasantly surprised at how well the areas we built up last year are handling the spring water, and as always appalled at how many more roads need the same treatment! The culverts have been replaced at the top of Old Sawmill and at the

end of Shady Tree Lane, and New Dominion has been regraded and lightly graveled. The road to the lodge from Cliff has also been reworked to facilitate volunteers in their efforts. That road had become impassable for vehicles past the parking area. Repairs to the lake road are also under way to prepare for the summer.

With the agreement of the board to pave Cliff road, I am planning to also use the trucks and roller to redo the gravel surface on Cliff Road from the termination of paving to the intersection at Source, or possibly a bit beyond.

The work scheduled for May Apple is high on the list for this spring. Volunteers would definitely be welcome to lay drainage pipes, remove brush and debris from the ditches, and to remove the tree that we are having taken down.

We will also be doing major reconstruction on Far View, Red Robin and on Old Sawmill Road. Each has severe ruts, mud and recurring pot-holes. Also needed are culvert and gravel work on Rocky Boulder between Fire Trail and Rocky Spring and grooming and hopefully rolling the roads that still have gravel, or only need a small amount added.

These plans are aggressive when working on a limited budget and I intend to get as much as possible for our money by scheduling use of equipment in grouped areas, and using alternate sources for labor. We stockpiled gravel against the latest price increase, so some is already

paid for. I may again need to ask the board to allow funds for these repairs, but should get to a good point of maintenance shortly. Happily we are now in a good working relationship with Shenandoah Farms regarding repairs to Tomahawk and they have voted to reimburse us for half of the expenses incurred in repairs there last year.

As always, I appreciate your input regarding trouble spots. Contact at bmpoaboard@yahoo.com.

- REMINDER -

The season is near to worry about "MOUNTAIN FIRES"

We would like to remind you to remove all possible Fire hazards like dead branches and dead trees from your property.

If you need help to shred this material call Bruce Drummond at 636-7352.

We will have an expert on fire safety from the National Forestry Service speaking at our May meeting.
Please be sure to join us!

FIRE PREVENTION PRESERVES FORESTS

FROM THE TREASURER

by Pete Plourd

After careful review and consideration the BMPOA Board will be recommending an increase in your Blue Mountain Sanitary District assessment. It has become apparent to this board that to maintain the level of services expected by our members requires more money than is currently being collected (at the 1996 budget rate). You will be asked to vote on this matter at the annual Sanitary District meeting on May 15. A voting Proxy is printed on page 7; please return it if you are unable to attend.

Although the requested increase appears to be a significant one based on rates formally approved by the Warren County Board of Supervisors nine years ago, it is actually not much more than what you have been paying for the past two years. Homeowners approved a temporary increase two years ago for the 2003 and 2004 budget years to replenish our contingency fund which had been depleted by extreme snow removal and road repairs.

The following compares what was submitted to the Warren County Board in December and what our budget would be if the new rates are approved:

<u>Expected Revenue:</u>		<u>New rate</u>	
Current			
725 Lots		725 Lots	
x \$40.00 per lot:	\$29,000.00	x \$55.00 per lot:	\$39,875.00
Improvement Value of			
\$23,827,500 x .18:	<u>\$42,889.50</u>	\$23,827,500 x .25	<u>\$59,568.75</u>
Total Expected Revenue	\$71,889.50		\$99,443.75

Expenses:

Current		New rate
County Fee:4.3%	\$ 3,091.25	\$ 4,726.08
Contingency Fund	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Total other expenses:	\$ 8,091.25	\$ 4,726.08
Funds available for operating expenses:	\$63,798.25	\$94,717.67

Detail of budgeted expenses:

Current rate		New rate
Roads:	\$36,365.00	\$23,717.67
Snow Plowing:	\$ 0	\$ 6,000.00
Repay Line Of Credit:	\$ 0	\$24,000.00
Administrative:	\$12,121.67	\$18,000.00
Maintenance:	\$ 5,103.67	\$ 0
Improvements:	\$ 5,103.67	\$ 0
Combined Maintenance and Improvements:		\$18,000.00
Security:	<u>\$ 5,103.67</u>	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>
Total Expenses:	\$63,798.25	\$94,717.67
Total Expenses:	\$71,889.50	\$99,443.75

Last May the home owners approved borrowing up to \$200,000 for paving of designated roads. 2 roads have been paved so far costing \$61,508. We have chosen to only borrow from the Line of Credit as needed to keep the operating fund in the black. So far we have borrowed approximately \$11,000 which includes the initial costs of securing the line of credit, according to the following motions made at the February Board meeting.

Motion was made by Pete Plourd, seconded by Cathy Berger, that the Line of Credit (LOC) obtained in January 2005, not be borrowed against until it is necessary to do so to keep the general fund in the black. Borrowing will be limited to the amount spent for Hot Topping and shall never exceed \$200,000 or cost of Hot Topping, whichever is less. Approved.

Motion was made by Pete Plourd, seconded by Kathy Murphy that the LOC be repaid at the rate of \$2,000 per month, when money is owned. Approved.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me or call me to discuss any of the above.

GETTING TO KNOW THE NATIVES

by Emily Ford

Spring has Sprung! Here on Blue Mountain there are many beautiful native wildflowers and plants to enjoy in the coming months.

Perhaps the most well known native wildflower in our area is Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*). Trillium's flower is a white three-petaled solitary flower that is born above a whorl of three ovate leaves. The color of the flower changes as it ages. The plant stands about 6" to 15" and usually begins flowering in April. One of the most varied populations of Trillium is nearby at the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area.

One of the first signs of spring is the wildflower Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). This solitary flower has 8-12 white elliptical petals and a golden



center. The leaf of Bloodroot is quite distinctive. It has a lobed reniform (or kidney shaped) leaf that curls around the flower stalk, the flower often closing at night. The leaf is thick and almost waxy. Another distinctive characteristic of Bloodroot are its' namesake, its' orange-red roots which ooze a reddish liquid

when broken or cut. Native Americans used this plant for dyes and as an insect repellent.

The yellow lady slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*) is a fragile plant with a delicate flower. If you find one on your property, please appreciate it with your eyes only, be careful not to disturb it or to move it, if handled too much it will die. The plant has three to five long leaves with parallel veins, which can be up to 8" long and the usual, yellow flower has an inflated lip petal and somewhat resembles a moccasin or slipper as the name indicates. This lady's slipper usually begins flowering in April and can continue until August.



Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) is a diminutive plant, the flower is only about 1.5 inches in width and is hard to find, as the plant is typically less than a foot high. It is likely the odor of the plant will be noticed first, as one can guess from the name, it gives off a ginger-like smell. The flower unfolds between its' two leaf-stalks and is a single, cup-shaped reddish-brown flower.

Why should native plants interest you? Not only are they beautiful and unique plants, native plants encourage biodiversity in our natural areas.

Try making your lawn more than just a grassy, manicured lawn, ecosystems thrive from diversity and native wildflowers and other plants promote this. In addition to encouraging natives, it is extremely important to discourage invasives.

An invasive plant is one that is non-native to an area and grows and spreads rapidly, has high seed production and outcompetes natives. Two intense invasives I have noticed on Blue Mountain are Asiatic bitter-sweet and Tree of Heaven or Ailanthus.

Both grow in disturbed areas and can quickly overtake other plants. *Ailanthus altissima* has compound leaves each with between 10-25 leaflets with small glands at the bases. The tree grows rapidly and large, dense stands of Ailanthus can quickly overcrowd native plants.

Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is a climbing, twining woody vine that chokes out other plants, from small shrubs to larger adult trees. Its' finely toothed, glossy leaves are alternate along the stem and the flowers are small green and clustered.

This vine invades in several way, it can choke out large trees by wrapping its' vine around the tree, and it can cover over plants to prevent photosynthesis, killing the plants.

There is a native climbing bitter-

continued next page

sweet (*Celastrus scandens*), which the invasive Oriental bittersweet seems to be displacing. Be careful in identifying this invasive, as the native species looks very similar.

If you are interested in learning more about our native wildflowers and other plants, there are several local resources available. The State Arboretum of Virginia in Boyce holds a Garden Fair every year on Mother's Day weekend. This year the fair falls on May 7th and 8th. There will be several nurseries carrying native plants participating. The State Arboretum's website is www.virginia.edu/blandy. Another great resource is the Virginia Native Plant Society also located at the State Arboretum. The VNPS has a website with a great deal of information on native and invasive plants, www.vnps.org. The VNPS also has a scheduled walk at the Thompson Reserve on May 1 at 1p.m., they will meet in Parking lot #6 and the focus of the walk will be native wildflowers. Additionally, both the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can offer help with plant identification and invasive eradication, etc.

*There are many, many more wonderful plants and flowers to discover on Blue Mountain, so...
Have a great Spring!!*

UNLESS...

A sunlit woodland reminds us of joy.

The quiet valley reminds us of peace.

Wildflowers in bloom remind us of wonder.

But when the sunlight fades, does joy fade too?

When fog hides the valley, has peace slipped away?

When the wildflowers are gone, is our wonder less?

No -- not unless we forget what we really are...

A community coming together, celebrating nature –
learning patience with nature.

For in time, the sun will break through the clouds, painting the trees with light
and re-kindling our hearts with joy.

In time, the mist will rise again, revealing a tranquil valley scene...
and the peace within ourselves.

And the wildflowers? With time and care, their little roots can grow deep.
Surely they will spring forth again on these slopes --
bringing wonder into bloom once more.

Unless we stop remembering...Unless we trample them with our forgetting.

Oh, may we remember what we are on this mountain.

May we not forget why we are here!

Hollie Sullins Wolters

- **The State Arboretum of Virginia in Boyce holds a Garden Fair every year on Mother's Day weekend.**
- **The VNPS also has a scheduled walk at the Thompson Reserve on May 1 at 1 p.m., they will meet in Parking lot #6 and the focus of the walk will be native wildflowers.**

HUGE APOLOGIES!

Our thanks to volunteers was missing two vital members of the board from last year, and we let them fall through the cracks when we counted heads for the volunteer dinner and made notice of our volunteers in the newsletter. Mike Bacon served as treasurer across two different terms, and Todd Hemminger has served on the board recently as well as past terms in so many capacities it is hard to note them all. Thank you to you both, and our most sincere apologies for missing you in all points of recognition. If there were others, consider yourself in our thanks as well, and please let one of the board members know. We promise to catch you all next time!

REVISIONS TO THE BY-LAWS AND COVENANTS

By Jack Davis

There have been some questions recently regarding the status of the proposed revisions to the By-Laws and Covenants. At the 2003 Annual Meeting, a committee was formed to address the ten-year review of those documents. Late last summer, the Committee had come close to finalizing our recommended changes to both documents. The Committee anticipates finalizing our job during April 2005 and having a complete set of proposed changes

for the Board and the General Membership shortly thereafter. In anticipation of presenting them to the Board and to the membership for review and approval at the Annual Association Meeting I am preparing a summary of proposed substantive changes to the By-laws which will appear in the next Newsletter. In accordance with the Covenants, The complete proposed text will be mailed to you this summer before the Annual Meeting. At this time, the Committee is recommending few substantive changes to the Covenants.

ROAD CLEAN-UP ON APRIL 9TH

Once again the perennial volunteers have come out to rescue us from the beer can, fast food container mess that gathers on the roadside. They filled 46 bags! If you haven't walked the grassy areas of 638 you have no idea how difficult and necessary that job is! With our variable schedules, we know how hard it is to set aside a morning like that. The next time we set a date, if you are not available on that day, please contact the coordinator and make arrangements to pick up bags and vests to do a small section on your own - before or after the date can work. Moms with toddlers can team up and take turns on the roadway and are very helpful in the parking areas which keep the kids away from the fast moving traffic. Also needed are people to bring cold drinks and snacks. If you'd like to help, but can't make the scheduled date - call

anyway. Thank you to all of the able bodies who came out to help this time!

BMPOA BOARD CHANGES

Our "Thanks" and best wishes go to Jeff Rodman and his family for his current term on the board and for all of his past work on the mountain. We wish them much happiness as they relocate to the other side of Front Royal. Jeff's position on the board will be filled by Jonathan Morrison and we welcome him as a new director. We still have open spaces on the board roster and we would like to fill those with energetic folks who have at least 10 hours a month to spare for the association. We are asking people who are interested in the positions to come to the next board meeting. We meet on the second Monday of every month at 6pm at the Linden United Methodist Church currently. Summer months may see us meeting at the lodge and the changes will be posted on the website www.bmpoa.org.

Business card sized ads for the Blue Mountain Newsletter

\$15.00 for residents
\$25.00 for non-residents

Fees offset the cost of printing this newsletter, please consider our advertisers when choosing services!

Proxy and Ballot
for
May 15, 2005 Sanitary District Meeting

This proxy will serve as your vote as a property owner at the Sanitary District Meeting on May 15th. The proxy is to be completed and mailed or given to an attending Blue Mountain resident (insert named representative below) to be delivered on your behalf if you are unable to attend the meeting.

If you are mailing it, mail to:
Blue Mountain Property Owner's Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 114
Linden, Virginia, 22642

Proxy: To Jim McManaway, President,
Blue Mountain Property Owner's Association, Inc.,
or to _____ (Blue Mountain resident)
to vote at the May 15, 2005 Blue Mountain Sanitary District Meeting.

Signed: _____
(Blue Mountain Property owner of Record)

Ballot for Proposed Sanitary District Tax Increase

It has been proposed that the Blue Mountain Sanitary District tax be increased as proposed in the Treasurer 's column of this newsletter for the stated purposes.

I (we) vote to: _____ Approve
_____ Reject

the proposed increase.

Signed: _____
(Blue Mountain Property owner of Record)

If you are unable to attend the Sanitary District Meeting where a vote on this proposal will be taken and absentee ballots will be accepted, please mail your proxy/ballot to the BMPOA post office box.

Your entry MUST be received by May 13, 2005

Blue Mountain Property Owner's Association
P.O. Box 114
Linden, VA 22642

Address correction requested

*Don't forget the May 15 meeting at the lodge. Potluck 12:30 p.m.
 Your vote and opinion are vital to maintaining the community!*





Peter J. (Pete) Plourd
 Associate Broker, ABR, CRS, GRI
 Toll Free: 1-800-292-3548
 O: (540) 635-9808 C: (540) 974-2189

 petep@shentel.net 
<http://peteplourd.realtor.com>

Seller Agent Buyer Agent

SAM SNEAD
 REALTY

437-A S. Royal Ave. • Front Royal, VA 22630

**Pete Plourd's
 Homeowner Services**

Powerwash Decks, Houses & Driveways
 Deck Waterproofing & Preservation
 Tree Cutting • Wood Splitting
 Minor Yard Work • Light Hauling
 - Free Estimates -

Blue Mountain
 Linden, Virginia

Pete Plourd
 (540) 636-3657

Child Care
*Fun, Educational Childcare on
 Blue Mountain!*

Mother of two, available from
 6:00 am. to 6:30 pm
 weekdays through the summer, in my home.
 Call Tricia at 636-6669

AVON Expedition
 Aerosol or pump spray, DEET-free insect repellent

**Repels fleas, mosquitos,
 gnats and ticks! Safely.**

Call Kathy Murphy 635-6637 for delivery

Decorate your life jlapolk@lynxconnect.com
Celebrate your spirit 540-635-6859
Illuminate your home

Lorie Polk
 Independent Consultant
 Partylite Gifts, Inc.

Call for your FREE Shopping Spree! Ask how you can make FT \$ working PT hours!



Master Designer
 664 High Ridge Rd
 Front Royal, VA 22630
 (540) 551-9941

LISA CLUCK