



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2001

McLean Province Homeowners Association
PO Box 8134, McLean VA 22106

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

I thought it would be timely to reflect on several issues of importance to all of us in McLean Province and to request feedback from interested homeowners. In the last couple of years much has been accomplished in our community, thanks to the support, encouragement and active involvement from many of you. We need that support to preserve the vitality of the community and to help coordinate our common interests.

Here are a few of our mutual achievements for the record: All the contracts for grounds and lawn service, snow removal, trash pick up and recycling etc, have been reviewed and renewed. Our grounds maintenance contractor (Bladerunners) has performed very well (and is available to help with private landscaping – tel: 703-273-8873). Our new landscaping, especially at the entrance on Kirby Road, has been the source of many compliments, including from neighboring communities who want to upgrade their own properties. New speed and safety control measures have been installed on McLean Province Circle --- and seem to be working.

Also pertaining to safety, the Board has monitored the regular replacement of street lighting, which the HOA owns and maintains. Thanks to Steve Ehrler, the financial condition of the McLean Province HOA is sound and well managed. We have an appropriate insurance policy for the HOA. Earlier this year you approved the complete revision and updating of the HOA's Covenants and Restrictions and Bylaws --- a major and imperative task. In July the Board prepared and distributed the booklet entitled "Rules and Guidelines for External

Maintenance and Architectural Changes"--- the first such compilation of guidelines since MP was built. The Board has received very positive and welcome feedback on this booklet. (However, we will have to revise the section on "Satellite Dishes" in the booklet to bring this into compliance with current FCC regulations.)

All these successful accomplishments could not have been achieved without good community support and input. For this the Board thanks you. On a personal level it has been a pleasure for me working with all the other Board members during the year that I have served as president of the HOA. Equally pleasurable has been getting to know many of our wonderful neighbors, even if we have communicated only by e-mail. In the coming weeks the Board will continue to work on the McLean Province Web Page, closely assess road surface conditions and set forth future landscaping improvements that benefit and beautify the entire community. Please feel free to write any of us on the Board with your thoughts and comments. My e-mail address is: jhfalliii@aol.com Many thanks, James H. Fall

GARDENING ADVICE FOR SEPTEMBER

To conserve moisture in your garden beds and to keep weeds at bay try applying a 2 – 3 inch layer of mulch. By taking the time to apply a layer of mulch you will be not only easing your weekly clean-up chores but also beautifying our community by presenting a neat, weed-free area in the front of your home. Mulch is available by the bag from most garden centers and is easy to spread and maintain. Examples of mulching materials include shredded pinebark or cedar chips. These will decompose slowly and add some nutrients to the

soil in the process. As a bonus, a layer of mulch applied over the winter will provide added protection to both shrubs and dormant plants. To prevent insects and rodents from damaging your plants, keep the mulch about 2 inches from the main stems.

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE NEWS

We are beginning to plan our community landscaping projects for the next few years and your comments are requested and welcome. Several areas targeted for improvement include the wooded area to the right of the main entrance, the “Gervais Plain” and the hill on Gervais that fronts onto Great Falls Road. A brief outline follows:

The Front Entrance gardens continue to mature and provide a very impressive introduction to our community. The area to the left of those plantings has become overgrown with brush and non-native invasive plants. To increase the attractiveness of this area we are proposing an informal woodland area with shade-loving understory plantings and groundcovers.

The Gervais Hill fronting Great Falls – This area is a real eyesore! Trees there have been overrun with vines and other unwanted trash plants. We are proposing to remove all of the present plant material and replace them with an attractive border that will define the back entrance to our community and still provide a sound and sight barrier for the residents in this area. In addition, the sidewalk area on the hill had become a cut-through for someone with a very large, heavy SUV. We have since placed large boulders at the base of the hill to discourage this out-of-control driver and also are proposing to cut a planting bed next to the Bradford Pears that line that walk.

The Gervais Plain presents a number of challenges. What was originally a wooded area has become over the years an area overgrown with ivies, honeysuckle and other invasive plants. We can continue to have the area cut on an annual basis but this is expensive and doesn’t do anything to improve our community. We propose to have the area cleared of all of the weeds, rototilled and planted with native grasses and wildflowers. There

are two lovely Black Walnut trees that can be surrounded with a large bed of shredded bark (Plantings won’t work here because walnuts produce a chemical called juglone which is toxic to a large number of garden plants).

Our community is being invaded by a new very nasty garden thug! The Mile-A-Minute vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*) is easily identified by its bright green, triangular leaf and nasty little spines on the backs of the leaves and stems (hence it’s other name, “tear-thumb”). It is a shallow-rooted vine so can easily be pulled out of the soil. Unfortunately it is seeding itself this time of year and if not removed will continue to spread through out our wooded area. If you see this unwelcome invader, please consider removing it wearing heavy gloves. This newest invasion just emphasizes the fact that depending completely on our landscape company for maintaining our property isn’t enough. If we want to continue to maintain and improve our community we need to involve our residents in the process. Our annual budget just will not go far enough. If you would like to help us on a Saturday morning, would be interested in making a small donation towards plant materials for our improvement projects, or would like to comment on our proposed projects please contact either Marianne Polito (mpolito@ahs.org) or Theresa Steverlynck (baldwina13@hotmail.com).

COMMUNITY-WIDE GUTTER CLEANING

As we have reported in earlier Newsletters, members of the HOA overwhelmingly approved the Board’s proposal that we contract the cleaning of all gutters in McLean Province and include this service in the annual dues for this year. Work under this contract for 2001 will be done in late November or early December, after all the leaves are off our many beautiful trees. The contract is with Maple Leaf, Inc., an experienced company that has provided excellent service to a number of owners in the community for several years. This is a trial contract. The Board will assess its value and homeowner reaction for possible extension. Some homes have gutters that are seriously blocked up now. Owners should be aware that blocked gutters, if left uncleaned, can cause damage to siding,

soffits, and decks, in addition to offering breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

If your gutters need cleaning now, it is your responsibility to take care of this and to pay for the necessary work. Cleaning later this year will be done under the HOA's contract. Maple Leaf can be reached at 703-207-2020. They are apparently fully booked with existing customer contracts, but if you tell them that McLean Province has a contract for the community later this year, they will do everything to help you.

FENCES AND FENCE MAINTENANCE

Most of the original fences in McLean Province are in a sad state of terminal decay. Some residents have taken the initiative to replace the entire fence. The Board encourages that initiative, especially when there is good coordination between neighbors. That coordination can produce many benefits --- community cohesion, a laudable model for other residents, and enhanced property values throughout McLean Province. If you are not quite prepared to finance a new fence at this time, you might consider a professional cleaning and resealing using a colorless sealant. One company that has provided professional, trustworthy, and fair-priced service in McLean Province is: Renorr Dynamics, owned by Greg Reveles, tel: 703-960-5041. If you call, identify yourself as calling from McLean Province.

PET ETIQUETTE AND OWNER COURTESY

Please help keep McLean Province clean, safe and quiet. If you walk your dog or dogs in any common areas, including near the wooded areas, please pick up all waste and throw this out in your garbage. Please do not let your pet urinate on anyone's front yard or near trees and shrubs of the community. This is a courtesy to all of us. We recognize that there are only a few residents who disregard this gesture of cleanliness. They could face a \$250 fine according to Fairfax County ordinances. These ordinances also require that all dogs be on a leash.

If a barking dog bothers you, we suggest that you try to speak personally to your neighbor or leave a friendly note on his or her door. Only if there is no response or if the noise persists would we suggest that you call 703-830-3310. This is the

number for the Fairfax County Animal Control. A police officer will be sent to the home of the offending pet and a polite warning issued. Follow up complaints could result in more severe actions, such as investigations of noise ordinance violations, fines associated with animal cruelty and abandonment, and, if violations are serious, loss of the pet.

HAZARDOUS WASTE – PAINT, OIL, ANTI-FREEZE, INSECTICIDES, THINNERS, TURPENTINE, ETC.

Many thanks to several residents for asking the Board for guidance about household hazardous waste disposal. And thanks especially for not disposing of these dangerous and environment threatening products in your twice-weekly regular trash pickup. All these products should be taken to the disposal point at 4618 West Ox Road, just off Rt. 66. This location is open all day Saturday (8-4). Call the Department of Public Works number (703-324-5068) for other hours of operation and a recorded message about hazardous waste disposal FAQs. Please help keep McLean Province clean and environmentally safe.

SEE A SPEEDER OR RECKLESS DRIVING?

Please get the license number and call the Fairfax County Police at 703-556-7750. This is the McLean Station on Balls Hill Road and is the non-emergency public safety number. You will hear a recording and eventually talk to a polite and helpful officer. The police will send a stern written warning to the owner of the vehicle. If police see a moving violation while on patrol in McLean Province, they will issue a ticket.

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