

Down in the Valley

The Newsletter of the Hope Valley Neighborhood Association

SUMMER 1997

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

FREE

A Summer Report to the Membership

by Bob Drake, President

In reviewing this newsletter, you will quickly see how busy your Board has been in its efforts to make our neighborhood and the Durham community a better place for all of us. We could not have done it without your help. Thanks for your counsel through your many comments and overwhelming return of surveys from the February HVNA newsletter!

Survey Responses:

Question #1 - Dover Road Speed Humps: ended up in a three-way split between respondents who felt that the humps had helped, those who were opposed, and those with no opinion -- many of the pro group requested humps for their streets. Comments opposing the humps ranged from a "snobbish approach" on the part of Hope Valley residents, to that of a Persian Gulf veteran who said that he had "not seen tank traps this large". The most significant safety concern came from the fire department since the stops causes them to lose over a minute in response time. Note: The humps were recently reduced in height to conform more fully with engineering specifications -- properly engineered humps should allow a non-abrupt passage at the posted speed limit.

Question #2 - Shopping Centers: an overwhelming 92% were opposed and concerned over the Durham plan deviations. The greatest concern centered on increased traffic on already over-crowded roads

Question #3 - HVNA Social Activities: while 55% of you were against total neighborhood events, many supported the block party idea.

Question #4 - HVNA Focus: a strong mandate was given for attention to development & zoning issues. This was followed closely by safety, security, crime prevention & neighborhood watch. Many neighbors praised the newsletter and emphasized its importance in improving neighborhood communications.

Question #5 - Volunteers: 22% of you offered to help!

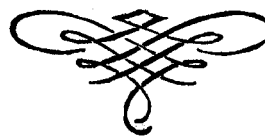
Thank you very much for your offer! If you have not yet been contacted, you will be!

Newsletters: To increase the probability of every resident receiving a newsletter we have taken the somewhat impersonal approach of adding "or current resident" to the mailing label. If the name on your *mailing label* is not correct, please make corrections and send them to us. Your help in correcting the mailing list is most appreciated.

Dues: There are still some who have not paid their \$10 *dues* for 1997. If in doubt, please check your newsletter mailing label. A "97" on the label indicates payment has been received. Please send your check to **Ed Kennedy**, at 3804 Churchill Circle, or call Ed at 419-7468 with questions.

A *nominating committee*, headed by **Rita Musante**, has been appointed to select a slate of HVNA Board members for 1997-1998. If you would be interested in being a Board member, please contact Rita at 493-2006.

In closing, congratulations to **Millie Hershner** upon her recent graduation from the Durham "Citizen Police Academy." And thanks also to you, **Jeanne Henrickson**, and all your volunteers for the beautification work!



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 p.m. October 14th at St. Stephen's Church. **Paul Norby**, Durham City/County Planning Department Director, will discuss Durham's 2020 plan. Please mark your calendar now to attend.

The next **board meeting** is set for 7:30 p.m. September 9th at the HVCC and is open to all.

Hope Valley History Part 4: Hard Times

by Mena Webb

In 1930, when it became known that Mebane and Sharpe Realty Company was pulling out of Hope Valley, Inc., and even the popular Mebane family was selling its home and moving to Chapel Hill, the impact of Black Tuesday was felt all over again among the 18 families living in the community that had begun with such promise. Greensboro businessman Smith Richardson, who had backed Mebane and Sharpe and invested \$612,000 in the Hope Valley project, decided to hang on and salvage what he could. He appointed H. W. Boone the head of Hope Valley, Inc. and sent him to Durham to try to collect rents on houses and payments on lots. The effort was largely futile because money was scarce and becoming scarcer, with stocks and bonds still plummeting and over 13 million Americans out of work.

Nevertheless rock bottom was still to come, and it arrived on March 4, 1933 when the American banking system failed. However, newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt told the country it had “nothing to fear but fear itself” and ten days later he began his famous “Fireside Chats” to boost public morale. Amazingly, within a short time people were talking about the president’s “New Deal” rather than the stock market crash. But the effects of that crash on the Hope Valley Country Club were just short of disastrous! One club bulletin from those lean years stated that it “was only by the strictest economies, augmented by members of the Board of Governors, that the storm was weathered” but certain members gave financial help also. One of these was Dr. W.C. Davison, dean of Duke University’s medical school, who bought 40 memberships for doctors on the Duke Hospital staff “not to promote interest in the club, but to help it remain intact.”

A slowly improving economy also helped, and around 1939 the board decided it was time to enhance the club’s image by building a new pro shop, caddy house and grill room; by remodeling locker rooms for men and boys (never mind women and girls); and by beautifying the golf course. To help defray costs, a fee for golf privileges was added to resident membership fees, and a few years later those dues also were increased substantially. Assessing the membership to make

improvements deemed necessary by the board became the norm and while the practice inevitably sparked dissatisfaction, it sometimes inspired creativity. In his inimitable and irreverent fashion, one member, William E. Stauber, wrote “The Hope Valley Club Song” to the tune of “Home on the Range”.

“Oh, give me a Club
Where it’s easy to rub
Elbows with the Proud and Profane;
Where seldom is heard
A discouraging word
‘Til assessments are mentioned again.

Hope! Hope Valley Club!
Rest home for the Proud and Profane,
Where seldom is heard
A discouraging word. . .
What good would it do to complain?”

There are many more verses to the song, and many more tales of Hope Valley’s early days and of the interesting people who lived there. It was “way out in the country” to some, and highly desirable. By 1950, when Smith Richardson decided he had recouped enough of his original investment, he had the satisfaction of seeing 61 families living in the area he was largely responsible for developing and eventually saving.



Neighborhood Watch by Millie Hershner

Sharing information between neighbors is important. Since January there have been several daytime break-ins in the Darwin-Bentley area of Hope Valley. One incident occurred when the owner of one house was mowing the lawn. In two of the break-ins, a burglar alarm scared off the robbers, and in the others, very valuable silver and jewelry was taken. The pattern was the same: a pillowcase from the master bedroom was filled with jewelry, and then the thief very neatly put everything back in its proper place so that the victims were not immediately aware of the theft. The thief must have parked a vehicle somewhere nearby and was able to escape quickly.

A resident of Dover Road was attacked as he was getting into his car at 5 a.m. one morning. He successfully fought off his assailants and luckily a neighbor heard his cries and called 911. Just before the attack the neighbor had noticed a strange car parked in front of the house.

As members of the neighborhood watch, we can all help by observing unexpected outsiders and vehicles, or vehicles which return several days after some work has apparently been completed. Jot down the vehicle color and make, and any other identification, even though at the time you may not know whether the vehicle is legitimate. If later you hear that a robbery has been committed, it might be your diligent observation which helps the police. We need to report any crimes or suspicious activity to our block captains and to the head block captain, and all crimes need to be reported to the police via 911. Although many of us are hesitant to use this "emergency" number, there are many 911 operators on duty at one time; we need not fear we are taking valuable time away from real emergencies. The police allocate patrols according to the number of reported incidents; thus if we want more police protection, we must report all crimes.

And last, but not least, we need to be good neighbors, watching out for each others' homes. We may also want to tell our neighbors to keep watch at consistent times when we might be away - such as regular club or board meetings, a regular sports activity, or school pick-up times. Don't forget to leave a contact phone number and a key, in case, like one unlucky

resident, the alarm malfunctions and needs to be reset. Be a friend who cares about your neighbor's safety as well as your own.



Neighborhood Watch Needs Block Captains

I am reorganizing the neighborhoods into sub-districts to provide better coverage and additional captains are critically needed. Please call me at 493-4321 if you can help out.

-Millie

Coffee with City Council by Millie Hershner

The HVNA hosted a "Coffee with Council" on Monday, April 28 at the Hope Valley Farms clubhouse. Many neighbors attended along with persons from Hope Valley Farms, Woodcroft, Marydell, Trotter Ridge, and Surrey Green. About six City Council members were there to answer questions. Some of the issues discussed were: ~~rezoning and construction projects, taxes and~~ increasing government efficiency, better methods of recording and accessing crime data, and the equitable allocation of money for parks, whether city bond money for open space and trails should be given to the private Blue Devils Ventures, and how City Council might stop the "white flight" from Durham.

Laura Gill, from the City Budget Office, said it was one of the best meetings they have had. She would like to arrange another similar meeting in late January, after elections. If you would like to attend, please call a board member to get on the calling list. We owe special thanks to the management of **Harris Teeter** at University Commons for donating refreshments for the Council meeting.

Local Developments and Growth

by Nonna Skumanich

In the last newsletter Jim McDonald reported on various development proposals for our part of Durham. Many changes have occurred since that time, with some projects withdrawn and others approved. The proposal for a shopping center on the southwest corner of Highway 54 and Hope Valley Road was withdrawn by the developer. On the other hand, rezoning was approved for lots behind the Shannon Plaza on Williamsburg Rd. This approval came as a surprise to many as the Association had been actively involved in reviewing and opposing this rezoning from the start.

New Procedures for Notifying Neighborhoods

As a result of complaints to City Council, the City Planning Department has proposed new procedures for notifying neighborhoods of rezoning requests. Gail Sherron, a city planner, stated that in her experience, if neighborhoods stay on top of rezoning requests, they can influence the process. The proposed changes will make it easier for your association to identify and review developments that impact our area. Rezoning requests will now be posted on the web, including the timetable for public hearings. Information will also be provided at public libraries for individuals who do not have access to a computer.



Trouble in the Field

One fiasco has already occurred at the New Hope Commons shopping center. If you take the time to go behind the new Walmart on 15-501, you will see how the parking lot is eroding and collapsing into the stream - a result of poor planning, and poor design.

Growth as Opportunity

As an organized neighborhood we have the opportunity to influence how Durham will manage growth. It can be distressing to see changes - lots clear-cut for townhomes or shopping centers. However, it is also an opportunity. As growth occurs, we can help to

shape it so that we have a vital, attractive community with adequate roads, sidewalks and bike facilities, all of which operate to improve property values. The Association has put together a development committee open to anyone interested in participating.



Beautification Notes

by Jeanne Henrickson



It has been a cool spring, but now we're in the glory of summer. What a blessing to view the abundance of beauty and lushness; however along with the roses come the weeds! Keep them under control by weeding after each rain and mulching. Remember to water thoroughly to encourage deep roots. Have you noticed the beautiful job Philippe has done around the gates? Flowers have been transplanted and the beds tidied. Do have a grand summer--keeping cool both in body and mind!

HOPE VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1997

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