

# Sassafras Leaves

The Sassafras Mountain Newsletter



Spring 2007

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**Sassafras Mountain Estates  
Property Owners Association  
Annual Meeting  
May 19, 2007  
10:30 a.m.  
Dean Center at Amicalola EMC  
544 Highway 515  
Jasper, GA**

## You Hold the Keys to Our Success

As we close this fiscal year, I want to reflect on the progress that has been made, as well as look to the future. I am pleased to report that we have completed paving all of the unpaved roads within our control in Sassafras Mountain Estates. With this accomplished, we can now turn our focus to resurfacing our paved roads. You will be hearing more about this at the Annual Meeting.

It is also noteworthy that all assessments for the year ending May, 2006 have been paid. And, as of this writing, we have received more than 90% of the amount invoiced on July 1, 2006. Unfortunately, those who have not paid their assessments in a timely manner have caused SMEPOA to incur legal costs in excess of \$15,000 this past year. To put this in perspective, it costs approximately \$12,000 to resurface 1,000 feet of paved road - so this legal expense prevented us from resurfacing more than 1,000 feet of your roads. While the Board does not like to incur these costs, it is necessary to ensure that all property owners share the obligation of maintaining and improving our roads.

Since this is my last newsletter article as president of SMEPOA, I would like to address a couple of additional important items. First, I want to thank the Board for their support and advice. Without their hard work, you would not have an association and the roads would deteriorate, falling into a state of disrepair. With that said, it's time for everyone to get on board in support of your SMEPOA. Our roads are private roads, and if we don't take care of them, no one will do it for us. Some have raised the issue regarding Dawson County taking over our roads. Within the past month, I met with the Dawson Commission and heard discussion regarding their roads program. They have no interest in taking over any private roads unless those roads are brought up to full current county standards (road base, slope, and curve). To meet those standards would require a major reconstruction effort, and cost more than which property owners have shown an appetite. Your assessment allows us to maintain the right-of-way, paint lines, install reflectors, repair potholes, and resurface / pave roads to ensure safe access to our community.

Good roads equate to improved property values, thereby protecting your investment. Everyone wins

## Board Updates Members on Road Improvements, Costs

Well, it's that time of the year again; the invoices for the third year of our seven-year plan will be going out in June. The assessment will remain at \$550.00 per year per owner. Last year 66% of the property owners paid by the end of July and 86% by the end of August. It would be pragmatic and responsible to see 80 to 90% pay by the end of July this year, and 100% by the end of September. Please, make your plans to pay this year now and this can happen. Our plans for paving this year are to go as far as we can to finish the bottom part of Upper Sassafras Parkway, approximately \$60,000 worth, or more if possible. We can only go as far as the money we have on hand. The road construction budget will be explained and approved at our annual meeting on May 19, 2007.

All roads have been repainted and we are trying some new high reflective paint with glass beads on the top part of Upper Sassafras and Cold Stream Trail. This will show up better on those foggy mornings or late evening drives in or out. Kris Lovejoy and I (The Road Crew) have volunteered our time to do this for all property owners so that you will be able to get to and from your homes as property as safely as possible. All of us owe a big thank-you to Kris.

Grass cutting will begin soon. Kris and I will be doing the cutting again this year. It would be very helpful and appreciated if you would help pick up trash and limbs along the frontage of your property. Kris and I cut a lot of grass along both sides of all the roads and we can "get 'er done" a lot faster if we do not have to get off and on our lawn tractors so often. Thank you for your help!



## Meet Your Neighbor—Mike Jolly



Sassafras Mountain resident Mike Jolly's story is all about when good things happen to good people. Smart, successful, semi-retired, yet self-effacing, Mike, together with his lovely wife Anita, moved to the mountain from Marietta in 2004. To hear him tell it, his ability to take an "early" retirement was "not brilliant planning," so much as it was the result of good timing, good health and good luck. Not to mention his association with a pretty good company – Hewlett-Packard. He downplays the twenty-eight years of hard work, business travel and moves across the country that preceded his retirement in October, 2005. Not one to toot his own horn, Mike would leave one with the impression that the planets somehow aligned, and "poof!" he and Anita just appeared one day on Sassafras Mountain! The true story is one of long hours and professional dedication.

Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Mike and his family moved six times before he turned sixteen. Lake Charles was followed by moves to Galveston and Houston, Tulsa and Oklahoma City, and finally to Memphis, where he attended high school and met Anita (there's your good luck!). After graduating from high school, he entered the military and was stationed in Hawaii (bummer!) at an N.C.O. academy during Vietnam. Afterwards, he rode the GI Bill back to Memphis, where he obtained an electrical engineering degree, with honors, from Memphis State University. Mike will not readily offer this information, but he is one of the few people on Sassafras Mountain who can program your TiVo without using a manual. And for

those of you whose VCR's still display a flashing "12:00," your man lives near the end of Upper Sassafras Parkway. (I promised Anita I would not disclose the actual address).

But I digress. The Hewlett-Packard years took the Jollys from California to Huntsville, Alabama, from there to Nashville and Knoxville, Tennessee, and finally to Atlanta. Their three sons – Jason, Jeremy and Jacob – are all grown, and with the exception of Jacob, who is in his second year of pharmacy school, are living in the metro Atlanta area, and have families and careers of their own. Mike's work with Hewlett-Packard has taken him around the world, from Beijing to Buenos Aires, from Hong Kong to Paris. And he and Anita have traveled together on business trips to the U.K., Germany, France and Spain, to mention just a few. They recently celebrated their 30th anniversary with an eighteen day cruise from Miami to Los Angeles, via the Panama Canal. Retirement has been "a blast," Mike says. The planets have aligned. And it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

## Black Bears Enhance and Sometimes Annoy



Black bears symbolize the wild qualities of the North Georgia Mountains. Those same qualities are why many of us live on Sassafras Mountain. As more people move into bear areas, these wild creatures become accustomed to people and houses. They will ignore their traditional diet (berries, insects, grasses and meat) to obtain easy-to-get non-natural foods such as garbage, pet food and birdseed. In time, bears will learn to associate these non-natural foods with people, losing a natural fear of humans that may lead to a potentially dangerous situation.

**Bear sightings:** We saw our first bears at 12:30am on March 26<sup>th</sup>; this is one of our earliest sightings. If you see a bear, there is no need to panic. Most bears are simply moving through the area to find food. If no food is found, it will simply move on. If you are outside and see a bear, make sure the bear is aware of your presence by yelling or making noise – this should frighten the animal and encourage it to leave. If you encounter an aggressive or non-yielding bear, notify authorities immediately by calling the WRD Game Management Office at 770 535-5700. For more information, visit the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) website at [www.georgiawildlife.com](http://www.georgiawildlife.com).

Remember: Bears Live in Your Neighborhood and they were here first. Keep the "WILD" in wildlife by following these steps:

**NEVER** feed bears. One person feeding bears intentionally or unintentionally can create a problem bear that may affect the entire neighborhood.

1. Store garbage in bear-proof containers or containers in secure areas such as a garage, basement or shed. Be sure to bag trash so there are fewer odors.
2. Put garbage out the day of disposal, not the night before.
3. Discontinue feedings birds between April 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>.
4. Take pet food in at night.
5. Clean and store grills when not in use
6. If necessary, install electric fences around beehives, gardens or compost piles.

Let's all enjoy the wildlife by using compassion and common sense.



## SMEPOA Awarded FireWise Communities/USA Status

Have you seen the signs? SMEPOA, as a member of Wildcat Community, Inc., has been awarded the FireWise Communities/USA designation from the National FireWise Coordinating Committee! As you have read in previous news releases, this award makes Wildcat Community eligible for grants and awards to improve fire prevention and control as well as improving other emergency management services. At this time, Wildcat Community Inc. consists of six communities: Sassafras Mountain, Monument Falls, Tomahawk Mountain, Wintermont, WindSong, and Big Canoe. We have begun an outreach program to bring in other communities and property owners in this area.

Wildcat Community has been active in improving emergency management services. First, we are cooperating with local governments and Emergency Management Services in Pickens and Dawson Counties to establish a fire station in the Community. Wildcat volunteers assisted Pickens County Commissioner Robert Jones, in negotiating a lease for land on Monument Road as the site for the station. The Dawson County Board of Commissioners cooperated in this effort by donating and installing a thirty-thousand gallon water tank on the land. Both Counties have agreed to train and support volunteer personnel for the station. To begin equipping the fire station, Wildcat Community, Inc. has secured the services of a consultant to prepare a grant request to Homeland Security for purchase of a fire truck. The next major challenge will be to construct a building to house the truck and other equipment.



The primary purpose of Wildcat Community is to provide a forum for education and increased awareness of ways to prevent and control wildfires in our area. As residents and property owners in the "wildland/urban" interface, we face challenges and dangers that are not found in urban communities. As property owners are the first line of defense against fire. If we don't protect ourselves by becoming FireWise, firefighters have very little chance of protecting us. We have information that explains these dangers and what each of us can do to minimize them. To receive copies of this material, send a request to John Edwards at [jsolo@mindspring.com](mailto:jsolo@mindspring.com).



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*For publishing "Sassafras Leaves" each quarter.*

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START"*

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## Outside Burning Guidelines on Website

A reminder to all of us that burning regulations may be reviewed under the Guidelines for Covenants, Property Owners Rules and Construction on our website ([www.SMEPOA.com](http://www.SMEPOA.com)).

**Outside Burning:** Leaf/yard burning is permitted only if a verbal permit has been obtained from the Georgia Forestry Commission for each day a fire is set. This verbal permit is numbered and must be retained and provided to SMEPOA if requested. Failure to have a verbal or printed permit may subject the property owner to Specific Assessments. All fires must be attended as long as the fire is burning and must be completely extinguished if no longer attended. All permitted fires must be extinguished by sundown. Burn barrels and garbage burning are not allowed.



*Notice: The Georgia Forestry Commission is the Permitting Authority for outdoor burning. The website for the Georgia Forestry Commission is [www.gfc.state.ga.us](http://www.gfc.state.ga.us). In 1988, The Georgia Forest Fire Protection Act was amended to require a permit for the burning of woods, lands, marshes, or other flammable vegetation. This means that you must call your local Georgia Forestry Commission office and obtain a permit before you proceed with any outdoor burning. When burning is allowed, a Burn Authorization Permit must be obtained. A permit is only good for the day issued. When allowing a permit, the Georgia Forestry Commission takes into account current weather conditions, the Fire Weather Forecast, and Current Fire Danger Rating for the area to help minimize the risk of a forest fire. When a permit is issued, there are strict requirements on managing the fire. Violation of The Georgia Forest Fire Protection Act is a misdemeanor.*

*Currently there is an outdoor burning ban, from May 1 through September 30, in effect for the entire metro Atlanta area, which includes Dawson and Pickens Counties.*

It is important to phone the Georgia Forestry before you burn. With some consideration of the weather, they will issue burn permits numbers over the phone or you can go online and get a permit to print immediately. The phone number for the Jasper office of the Georgia Forestry Commission is (706) 692-4801. The web address is <http://www.gfc.state.ga.us/OnlinePermits/>

With a permit; you are covered if your fire happens to get away from you. Without a permit, you're in for some trouble. If you have to burn, please be very careful and safe. Remember all outdoor burning is banned between May 1, 2007, and September 30, 2007. If possible do not burn outside at all.

*Sassafras*  
*Mountain*  
SMEPOA  
P. O. Box 1611  
Jasper, Georgia 30143



**New Address? Email? Please send us any changes in your contact information, so we can be sure you get all the Sassafras news.**