

Sassafras Leaves

The Sassafras Mountain Newsletter



Fall 2006

SMEPOA BOARD

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- Mike Moran, Board member -
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WANT A VOTE?

If you would like to be able to vote on board members, budget, and other important issues of our community, you will want to become a member of the Property Owners Association. Forms and instructions are on the website, or contact the secretary, Bonnie Lovejoy.

COMBINE YOUR LOTS?

If you currently own multiple lots and want to combine them into one property, I have a surveyor you may want to contact. He was one of the original engineers that plotted Sassafras Mountain lots and will survey and mark your property lines for a reasonable rate. If you need his name give me a call.

Mike Jolly - 706-301-9394



THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

As we look ahead to the new fiscal year, the future of our community looks bright. Two initiatives that stand out are roads and Firewise. Our roads are in the best condition they have been in years, and we have a solid plan to keep them that way. In addition, our community has been selected as a Firewise Community – opening doors for improving fire safety and ultimately improving our fire safety rating that will lower our insurance premiums.

Special thanks to all of the property owners who have paid their 2006 assessment. As of this writing, we have received more than 60% of the amount invoiced on July 1, 2006. Timely receipt of these assessments allows us to schedule our road improvements before further price increases in asphalt occur. We have received many positive notes from property owners, complimenting SMEPOA on the condition of our roads.

With respect to last year's assessment, more than 93% of assessed lots have been paid leaving 9 property owners who have not paid their assessment. Despite our best efforts to resolve these delinquent assessments, these few property owners have refused to pay. Therefore, on advice of legal counsel, we are in the process of moving to the next step of the collection process - through the Courts. We regret that this step is necessary, but it appears to be the only way to collect the assessments due your association.

In closing, let me remind all property owners that SMEPOA roads are private roads. If we don't take care of the roads, no one will do it for us. That means that it is up to the property owners to maintain them. SMEPOA is your association and is charged with the responsibility to maintain those roads. Your assessment allows us to maintain the right-of-way, paint lines, install reflectors, repair pot-holes, and resurface / pave roads to ensure safe access to our community. In addition, good roads equate to improved property values, thereby protecting your investment. Everyone wins.

NEW LOOK FOR NEWSLETTER

One of our property owners has volunteered the use of their printing press and has agreed to publish our quarterly newsletter. *Yeah!*

We hope you like the new look and appreciate the contribution from Don and Vickie Holyfield and their business

**Sequoyah
Planning**
CORPORATION



MIKE SPIDEL – A SASSAFRAS MOUNTAIN PIONEER

“I bought myself some sheet rocker for Christmas.” That’s how Mike Spidel laughingly describes his memory of the Christmas before moving into his Monument Road home in 1996. That was back before Upper Sassafras Road had even been cut in, he recalls, and Monument Road was just a stretch of dirt road from 136 up the mountain to his property. One of the original Sassafras Mountain landowners, Mike bought the property in 1993, thinking that he would build a house “sometime in the future.” But, like many who have followed in his footsteps, his love of the mountains, the opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle of city life, and a vision of what things might actually look like when finished, coalesced to “speed the process.” And did we mention the large dose of sweat equity?

The founder and owner of Measurerite, a flooring estimation business, Mike was no stranger to the construction trades. His custom work brought him into contact with (and the homes of) many of the more recognizable names in some of Atlanta’s high end communities – names like Smoltz, Glavine and Maddux, to drop just a few. So to a large extent he was prepared for the labor of love that awaited him on Monument Road. He did most of the work himself – the slab, the framing, the installation of doors and windows, and yes, the flooring. But by the end of those labors, he was ready for a well-deserved break, and (apologies to Melissa Fay Greene) praying for sheetrock(ers)!



Mike, who was born in Atlanta, attended Tucker High School and thereafter acquired many of his technical skills at Dekalb Technical College. He has been a full-time resident of Sassafras Mountain since 1996, and judging from his unabashed love of the people and the place, has never looked back. The big, friendly guy you will often see hiking, biking or backpacking the environs of Sassafras Mountain – that’s Mike Spidel. Like his long-time friends, Dan Agricola, Phil and Jean Moen, Betty and Dave Hannah, and Joe and Wanda Earnest, Mike is one of the originals, one of the “pioneers” of our community.

***Editor’s Note:** This is the first in what we anticipate will be a series of articles profiling the people who live on Sassafras Mountain. We welcome your comments, as well as your suggestions about other people whose interests, industry and involvement create the fabric of our community. Please send your suggestions to Mike Moran at mid-townm@aol.com.*

FALL SOCIAL EVENT

Date: Sunday September 24, 2006

Time: 3:00 to 6:00PM

Place: Amicalola Falls State Park, Group Shelter Building

Cost: \$5.00 per person

Park Pass: \$3.00 per vehicle, at the Visitor Center or collection boxes located throughout the Park

Provided: Meat (chicken, pork, and beef), dinnerware and facility rental. There is an electric range in the Shelter.

No pets are permitted at the Shelter.

We will have a Park Ranger share information with us about wildlife.

Please bring the following to share with your neighbors, according to your last name:

A-F Salads (tossed salad, spinach salad, pasta salad, potato salad, slaw, fruit salad...)

G-K Desserts

L-P Main dishes (vegetables, macaroni and cheese, casseroles...)

Q-T Bread and Snacks (buns, sliced bread, chips, dips, nuts, appetizers, condiments...)

U-Z Drinks (Cokes, lemonade, tea, water, ice...)

Feel free to add to these suggestions!

Directions: Hwy. 53W out of Dawsonville (or Hwy. 136E from Jasper) to Hwy.183 to Hwy. 52E. Follow signs to the Park. Once inside the park, go straight, bear to the right. The shelter is the first one on the right.

RSVP by Monday September 18 to Bonnie 706-692-0968 or kbonsassy@hotmail.com

ROAD COMMITTEE REPORT

Paving:

The paving of Cold Stream Trail is a big success. Thanks to all who helped work on the shoulders and other areas. Please continue to help keep the new road in good condition so that it will last for many years. Our plans for this fall are to pave our last dirt road, Falls Trail, and repave some of Paw Prints. It looks like we will be able to complete this around the first of October. I will notify all involved so there will be little inconvenience.

Grass and Culvert Maintenance:

I would like to thank our grass cutters, Kris Lovejoy and the new guy, Dennis Leath. When Melvin Peters could no longer cut, I checked several possibilities. I was told by a professional service that it sounded like a volunteer job, so I volunteered. I purchased a John Deere lawn tractor like Kris' and I am trying to keep up with him. Kris cuts all of Lower Sassafras, Falls Trail and Paw Prints and I cut all of Upper Sassafras, Cold Stream and the Huckleberries. We are reimbursed for gas, maintenance and use of our lawn tractors. We are not the maintenance department although we volunteer many hours for shoulder and ditch work on all of our roads.

Many thanks to those of you who already maintain your yard and cut your frontage. They look great. We can not do it all, so if you can help keep the ditches clear of debris and leaves along your property, especially around your driveway culverts, it will be very much appreciated and minimize road damage. It is almost fall and that brings cooler nights, pretty colors and loads of leaves. When the leaves collect on the side of the roads and it rains, they tend to get clumped together and create blockage for rain water. This is unsightly, and very damaging to our roads. If each property owner will take the time to rake the leaves away from the edge of the road and ditches, so the rain water can run into the catch ponds, it would help and be of value to the community.

We will have a clean up day in the early spring; more information will be coming.

Appreciation:

I would especially like to thank Keith Ransdell, for the rock wall and wildflowers at our Sassafras Mountain sign at the top of Upper Sassafras. Also, thanks to Mike and Anita Jolly for the lighting. It now looks beautiful day or night.



FIREWISE UPDATE

As a participant in Wildcat Communities, we have received the Firewise Community/USA designation. Wildcat Communities includes Monument Falls, Tomahawk, Wintermont, Georgia Highlands, and Sassafras. As you may know, Clayton Preble and I are the representatives from Sassafras on the Wildcat Communities Board.

Our request for designation was supported to a large extent by Dennis' plans for making Sassafras roads compliant with county regulations. Many thanks to Dennis for his devotion and efforts to make this happen. Also, the county governments' cooperation in placing the water tank close by helped. We should thank them for giving us top priority in their fire control planning.

The Wildcat Board has begun developing plans for moving forward with our fire protection and emergency management.

1. Purchasing "first response" fire trucks to park beside the water tank. These are small tanker/pumper trucks that can control fires until the big ones arrive from county fire stations.
2. Developing an emergency management plan.
3. Encouraging everyone living on the mountains to participate
4. Creating a fire station close by

If you have suggestions, send them to Clayton or me.

We are planning a "media event" to announce our achievement. We will invite county governments and emergency management personnel, Georgia Forestry Commission personnel, Boards from the Associations, all property owners, and others that we may identify as we make our plans.