

Ashcroft

May 2024

President's Corner

As we roll into Spring, the Association's committees will be working to update and enhance Ashcroft. The playground, trails, landscaping, and pool committees will all be busy with their individual projects. Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find articles from committees, events and news.

One of the near-term infrastructure projects being undertaken is the removal of the cinder block storage building and a portion of the retaining wall just north of the swimming pool. The building has been used for storing swimming pool chemicals and other pool support items. Over the years, pressure from the land behind the storage building and retaining wall has caused the building to crack in multiple places and the retaining wall to buckle. This presents a safety hazard that must be addressed. Last year we installed a support wall to hold the undamaged retaining wall section in place. The storage building will be removed sometime in the next couple of months pending obtaining the appropriate permit. As part of the project, several dying trees in the immediate vicinity will be removed and the entire area regraded. A final step will be to purchase and install a portable building to house the pool supplies and other items currently stored in the clubhouse. All these tasks were approved last year by the Board and are included in this year's reserves budget.

Ashcroft is a vibrant and highly sought after community that faces many challenges to maintain its appeal. The East Ridge and Summit Ridge build-out, aging facilities, and ongoing road maintenance all present opportunities to keep our neighborhood's reputation. The Board is considering projects based on input from the Long-Range Planning Committee's survey and the material condition of existing infrastructure. On the plus side, some of our biggest expense items are now behind us: the pool replastering, pool covers replacement, tennis court resurfacing, road signage, and roadside tree pruning. We have approximately 197 homes in Ashcroft. That number will increase to nearly 275 once the East Ridge and Summit Ridge areas are completed. The timing of completion remains one of the wild cards in the planning process. The Board of Directors has an obligation to ensure current conditions are maintained and to look ahead to the community needs in 5, 10, 15 years and beyond. This is where forecasting becomes exceptionally difficult. As the cost of housing rapidly increases, it becomes more difficult to figure out who will buy the new homes and resales, whether there will be a shift in demographics (eg, families with more children, fewer children?). Accommodating the increases will likely require capital investments not at present included in the future budgets. To make those investments without having one-time assessments means planning and budgeting now. The Long-Range Planning Committee and Board of Directors will be working together to develop a plan for the Ashcroft membership to consider. Once that process is complete, we'll have a better sense of what projects, over and above the existing budget, have to be plugged into future budgets.

I encourage everyone to participate in Ashcroft activities. The committees have plenty of tasks that may need your help on a particular weekend--whether it's rejuvenating the playground sand, refashioning the trails, or participating in a community clean-up day. A little time spent can go a long way in supporting your neighborhood.

Ted Miller

ARC Corner

What is the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and why does it exist? Is it a bunch of do-gooders who have nothing better to do than to get into other people's business? No, it is a group of volunteers who are performing a duty imposed upon each homeowner and the Association.

The ARC is required to exist under the Ashcroft Declarations. All homes in Ashcroft are subject to all of the restrictions stated in the Declarations. By purchasing a home in Ashcroft each homeowner agreed to be subject to the obligations and restrictions contained in the Ashcroft Declaration. The Declarations impose several obligations upon all homeowners and establishes the ARC as the vehicle for helping homeowners comply with their obligations.

First, the Declarations require the ARC to “*regulate* the Lot areas to be cleared, external design, appearance, size, use, location, and maintenance of the *properties and of the improvements thereupon* in such manner so as to preserve and enhance values, to maintain a harmonious relationship among structures and the natural vegetation and topography, and to conserve existing natural resources and amenities.” The Rules and Guidelines are periodically reviewed and amended to address changes in the Ashcroft subdivision, Virginia State Laws, Virginia Supreme Court decisions, and Albemarle County ordinances.

Second, the Declarations state that “*no* building, fence, wall, structure, improvement, excavation, change in grade, major landscaping, or other work which *alters* the *exterior* of any Lot or the improvements located thereon from their *existing* state shall be commenced, constructed, erected, made, or done without the approval of the Architectural Review Committee.”

Third, the Declarations require homeowners to submit to the ARC for approval “plans and specifications showing the nature, kind, shape, size, height, materials, color, and location of the work.”

The ARC complies with the Second and Third mandates by requiring all homeowners to submit an application of any proposed improvements for its review.

Finally, the ARC is required to enforce the Rules and Guidelines. Enforcement is very, very rare as the vast majority of residents recognize the value of everyone accepting the need to comply with some regulation in exchange for the benefits of a vibrant community. However, when enforcement is required, the volunteers on the ARC must reluctantly use its enforcement tools.

The Declarations, 2023 ARC Rules and Guidelines, and the Application are available in the Resources section of the website, Ashcroftneighbor.com

The ARC can be contacted at arc@ashcroftneighbor.com.

Bob Baumgartner

Board of Directors & Meeting Dates

Ted Miller - President
Tom Timbie - Treasurer
Lotta Löfgren - Secretary
Halsey Blake-Scott - Vice President
Cameron Bolton - Vice President
Andy Bonaffini - Vice President
Rick Beyer - Developer
ashcroft-board@googlegroups.com

Meeting dates can be found on the Ashcroft website on the Resources page. Zoom information is included in the Agenda. ashcroftneighbor.com/resources/

Upcoming meetings, all scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. at the clubhouse, will be held:

June 19, 2024	October 16, 2024
July 17, 2024	November 20, 2024
August 21, 2024	December 11, 2024
September 18, 2024	

Treasurer's Report

No one likes to see their annual assessment go up. There are many ways your board works to help minimize annual assessment increases including:

- Limiting capital project spending to the extent possible,
- Being thoughtful about when projects must be completed by looking for opportunities to delay spending,
- Planning ahead to ensure we have the funds we need when projects must be done,
- Generating interest income from safely investing cash,
- Reducing costs where possible.

Your board pays attention to all these approaches and prioritizes projects, looks at our needs over 15 years to make sure our reserves are adequate to minimize surprises down the road, invests in CDs and Money Market funds expected to yield approximately \$15,000 in 2024, and bids out contracts to ensure the best pricing possible.

Please email our Property Manager at ashcroftmanager@gmail.com or our Treasurer at ashcroftrtreasurer@outlook.com with questions.

Tom Timbie

New Property Manager

Earlier this year Ashcroft gained a new property manager. Brian Gallagher has taken over the duties previously fulfilled by Ryan Miller. Brian has a variety of property management experience in the local area, and he is a welcome resource to the Ashcroft community. Below is Brian's contact information:

Brian Gallagher
Community Manager, AMS
ashcroftmanager@gmail.com

For concerns during the weekend or after working hours the *new* emergency number is 434-971-1600 option 1

Update on New Development

New home activity along the mountain top is going well. There are still 20 to 25 lots to be built upon. In addition, construction of a house at the very top will begin soon following a recently signed contract.

In the Phase III development behind the clubhouse, we have planted the road banks and have grass coming up, thanks to the unusually warm winter. It has been too muddy to continue with road construction; instead, we have spent the time installing soil erosion measures so that when we get dryer weather, we can resume road construction.

Rick Beyer

Little Free Library

The Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee thanks Milton and Carolyn Adams for the creation of our first Little Free Library. You can find this stunning little structure on North Pantops Drive by Sassafras Lane.

When visiting the library, please leave at least as many books as you take.

The library is part of the LRP's short-term goals. If the project fares well, we will place other libraries around the neighborhood. I am delighted to share the happy news that thanks to Milton Adams (builder) and Carolyn Adams (stocker and manager), our first Little Free Library is up and running. It is adorable!

Lotta Löfgren



Pool Summer 2024

The Pool Committee hopes to build on last year's successes in the coming years, including:

Summer Pool Opening. The pool will open with lifeguards on Saturday, May 25, 2024.

Pool Management. Kim Martin's company, H2O Works, LLC, will manage the pool for the third year.

Lifeguards. Lifeguards are scheduled on weekends only from Memorial Day Weekend until Albemarle County Schools close on June 7. Then, through Labor Day Weekend, lifeguards are scheduled daily from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (with extended hours until 7:00 p.m. on Memorial Day Weekend, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day Weekend).

Swimming At Own Risk. The pool is open during all daylight hours. However, swimming is at your own risk during all times when the lifeguards are not present.

Pool Rules. The rules for the use of the pool are available on our website at ashcroftneighbor.com/resources/

Key Fobs. Key fobs are necessary to access the pool. The forms to obtain a new or replacement key fob are found in the Resources section of *Ashcroftneighbor.com*. For a new fob you need to complete, sign and return the Assumption of Risk and the Agreement for Using Key Fobs. To get a replacement fob, use Key Fob Request Form.

Pool Committee. If you are interested in helping improve the Ashcroft pool experience, please consider joining the Pool Committee. Contact Denise Bachman at dedleuva@gmail.com to learn more about the committee.

Denise Bachman

WANTED!

Residents to help with social events
for Ashcroft adults and children

Multiple Opportunities

Experience not necessary

Easier than it looks

Experienced volunteers working with you

Payment: Fun, friendships, and gratitude

If interested, contact the Board:

ashcroft-board@googlegroups.com

Trails Committee

The Trails Committee will soon meet to begin planning for the near-term work on the existing trails, including rerouting some trails as the development in East Ridge progresses, and developing the long-term trail plan. Since many of the existing trails are former road beds that follow flatter terrain, and are now being overlaid by new roads, new trails will probably be narrower and steeper in some places.

The arrival of spring brings forth the challenges of keeping the existing trails clear of debris and all of the encroaching vegetation. It takes a lot of effort to keep the trails clear and Trails Committee members will be out and about attending to the clearing tasks. Please continue to post on the list serve when you see trail issues that need to be addressed.

As you may be aware, the earthwork going on in the East Ridge area has made a significant impact on the Red Trail with the trail disappearing in many places. Rick Beyer has agreed to allow use of the new roads by trail walkers where the roads interfere with the Red Trail so signs will be posted soon that show where the trail continues after crossing the road. As this work continues and other connections are made, updates will be sent to the community.

For the long-term trail plan there is much work to be done to identify existing property lines and new lot lines planned for the East Ridge section. The intent is to outline and then build a trail that can extend all the way around East Ridge and connect with the existing trails. Several key factors have to be taken into consideration during this design process. Among these are avoiding trails going across private property within and outside of Ashcroft, and limiting the use of roadways. If the terrain permits it, the plan will include utilizing the corridors between property surrounding us and the lot lines anticipated for the new East Ridge homes. Corridors like these already exist elsewhere in Ashcroft and they provide an opportunity for expanding the trail system into longer and more varied trails so Rick Beyer is incorporating common area corridors around the entirety of East Ridge.

Billy Bolton

Not on the list-serv ?

Information is in the resources section of Ashcroftneighbor.com (Amenities information)

To join Ashcroft's community mailing list go to: ashcroftneighbor.com/listserv-signup/

Playground News

The Playground Committee has been active this spring with updating features of the playground area. The recent updates have included a new toy box, new and repurposed toys, a ton of sand, and a ton of playground mulch. More playground mulch will be spread soon in the remaining area under the big kid swings. The toy box is a new feature to help sustain sandbox toys in good condition.

As a general courtesy, we ask all playground users to be mindful of keeping material where it should be (for example, please keep rubber mulch in the climbing areas, sand in the sandbox, etc.) and return toys to the box after use.

The Playground Committee has a few ideas to further enhance the playground area, but is always looking for additional ideas and input. Please contact Cameron and/or Will Bolton with your feedback and ideas. If you are interested in volunteering, we would welcome your help!

Cameron Bolton



Hospitality--A Beautiful Tradition

For more than 20 years, new home owners in Ashcroft have been surprised with a beautiful floral arrangement, created and delivered by neighborhood resident Carolyn Adams.

The Hospitality Committee is delighted to report that the tradition is still going strong, with arrangements delivered to six new home owners last year and two arrangements so far this year.

New residents also receive a Welcome Letter that explains how to gain a key fob, access the community list serve, enjoy the amenities, explore the trails, and volunteer in the neighborhood. The letter is updated frequently.

Ida Lee Wootten

Newsletter Team

Kris Bean, Laura Hoffman, Ida Lee Wootten

Please send news, suggestions, events or items of interest to Ashcroftnewsletter@gmail.com.

The 3 (4? 5?) Legos by Laura Hoffman

In December of 1794, Thomas Jefferson wrote in his Farm Book that he planted 287 peach trees on the “dividing lines between the feilds” (sic) of Lego. Too bad that peach trees don’t live as long as tulip poplars, or we might know just where those fields in Lego were situated. Even without an orchard, however, we do have a lot of information about the Lego Quarter Farm.

In the late 1700s, Jefferson bought 819.25 acres called Hickman’s from Thomas Garth. This land was part of the patent that included Pantops. In a list of documentary references sent to me by Lucia Stanton, Retired Shannon Senior Historian at Monticello, there are two references in January 1775 to buying the parcel, but the deed isn’t recorded until 1783. Since one of the references is a payment schedule, that may explain the delay in the deed being recorded. Lego was bordered by Shadwell and possibly Edgehill on the east, Pantops on the northwest, and the Rivanna on the south. Just how far it went up the mountain, however, is hard to tell.

But why *Lego*? Today we associate the word with building blocks and a mispronounced waffle. In Latin, it means, *I read*. Mr. Mead in his book *Historic Homes of the South-West Mountains*, gives two family legends concerning the origin of the name. First, a rather implausible story that Jefferson had a child stand on the Lego property and hold up a book while he read it from Monticello with his spyglass. Another family tale referred to a shady vale near a spring where he often “went to study and read”. Lucia Stanton presents another theory in the *Monticello Newsletter*, Spring 1992, that is now generally accepted. The *Poems of Ossian* are a cycle of poems that the Scottish poet James Macpherson claimed to have translated from ancient sources written in Scots Gaelic. Whether they are a translation, or the creation of the translator, is still a subject for debate, but not debatable is the fact that during Jefferson’s time they were popular and he was very fond of them. He may have taken the name Lego, a featured lake on the poem, for his farm. After all, as Ms. Stanton suggests, would a scholar like Jefferson use a verb to name a noun? For more on the poems, you can go to www.sacred-texts.com/neu/ossian/index.htm

As well as naming the estate, Jefferson named the various fields: the Square, the Triangle, the Oblong, etc. You can see a map of the fields at monticello-www.s3.amazonaws.com/files/resources/quarter-farm-map-1.jpg

Jefferson also seems to have had tenant problems on the Lego Farm during the years he was away as president. Letters suggest he was very dissatisfied with the tenant’s behavior. The *Farm Book* lists slaves associated with Lego, so it is possible that log cabins, an overseer’s house, and barns were built there during Jefferson’s ownership.

After his death, Jefferson’s heirs sold Lego to the Lewis family: in 1829, 734 acres were sold to Thomas Walker and Charles T. Lewis, and in 1831, 123 acres were sold to Nicholas H. and Charles Lewis. Thomas Walker Lewis was the grandson of Dr. Thomas Walker of Castle Hill, who figured prominently in the founding of Charlottesville. He built a frame house on the property.

After several more owners, including a Luther George, who built a brick dwelling, the property returned to the Jefferson family. Patsy Jefferson Randolph of Edgehill was the daughter of Thomas Jefferson Randolph, son of Thomas Mann Randolph and Thomas Jefferson’s daughter, Martha. In December 1834, Patsy married John Charles Randolph Taylor (I warned you about the Randolph clan), and in 1854, they moved from their plantation near Berryville, to Charlottesville, to be near her family, and for better educational opportunities for their numerous children. J.C.R. Taylor bought both a home, “Midway,” in the center of Charlottesville, and the Lego property, which also had a house. He lived at Midway, and immediately set about enlarging the Lego house to accommodate his family. In letters, Patsy wrote of Lego being the home of their old age. Sadly, Patsy died in 1857 and is buried in the family graveyard at Monticello. J.C.R. moved the family to Lego, and the farm apparently flourished through the Civil War. He died in 1875, survived by 9 children, many still living at Lego.



“LEGO”, HOME OF JOHN CHARLES RANDOLPH TAYLOR
(burned January, 1894)

An 1864 map of Albemarle County shows the location of a J.C.R. Taylor's house next to a stream and south of a road that would be north of today's 250. Green Peyton's map of Albemarle County from 1875 shows J.C.R. Taylor with Lego and nearby a McGee with an unnamed house. Although it is very risky comparing a map from the 1800s with a current one, I did try. My guess is that the Lego house was along Hickman's Branch, not far from where it is joined by the stream that runs through Glenorchy. Possibly far enough south to be on the south side of I-64.

In 1894, three daughters, Jane, Margaret, and Cornelia, were still living at Lego. Their brother, Stevens Taylor, was in Washington, DC, where he had moved from Lexington. He was not yet established enough to send for his family, so his wife and three daughters were also living at Lego. One of those daughters, Page, wrote a description of the fire that destroyed the Lego house, which was given by her grandson to Monticello in 2005. I was able to read it at the Monticello Library when I first wrote this article. She signed it Page Kirk, her married name, so it was probably written from memory later in her life. Page, Mrs. Edwin Kirk, died in 1983, and is buried at Monticello.

January 30, 1894 was cold and grey, and there was a high wind. None of the men were at home, but were working near the river. We can get some idea of the location of the house, because she says a high ridge between the house and the fields prevented the men from seeing what happened. When the fire broke out, Page grabbed her most treasured possession, her grandmother's Bible, given to her by her father, and rushed outside. As the children watched from the yard, boys from the Pantops School, who had seen the fire even before the family detected it, arrived and began to help remove furniture. Later it began to sleet, but it was too late to save the house. According to Page's description, the brick house had been built around a log house that was so sturdy it was too much trouble to tear down. This log house was the parlor, and it took a long time to burn. Double doors led from the house to a yard with old oaks. Under the oaks, they stacked furniture, but when the oaks caught fire, they had to move it.

The decision was made immediately to rebuild. Since they often took in summer boarders, J.C.R. Taylor's sister Charlotte advised the house be made larger. Lego 2 was large, with twenty rooms and open corridors on every side—a must in the days before air conditioning. It was also on the crest of a small hill, away from the oaks. It was doubtful the oaks would live, and the family was afraid of branches falling on the house. An apple barn on the property was quickly enlarged to serve as a cottage, while the new house was being built. Stevens' furniture was still stored in Lexington, and it was brought to help furnish the new house. Page remained at Lego until 1897. Mead's 1898 book shows the new Lego.



In her narrative, Page also talks about how J.C.R. Taylor, was a staunch Confederate, giving his money from the sale of Midway and from mortgaging Lego, to the Confederacy. Charlotte had married Moncure Robinson, and lived in Philadelphia. The combination of her money

and his ability to make money, as well as living in the north during the Civil War, meant they were a very well to do family. According to Page, Moncure paid the mortgage: "Taylor money coming back to the Taylors." He did stipulate that the place would finally belong to the daughters living there, and be left to any of J.C.R. Taylor's grandchildren. It would also always be home to any of his children who needed a place. In searching through the Albemarle County deed books, I discovered that Page told only part of the story. In September 1868, J.C.R. Taylor actually deeded Lego to Charlotte and Moncure Robinson, and it was at this point that the stipulations were added. In 1892, the house came to Jane Taylor, Mrs. Margaret Taylor Randolph, and Cornelia Taylor. After Margaret's death, a lawsuit was instituted by Jane, Cornelia and all the grandchildren of J.C.R. Taylor to break the stipulations, since it was in the interest of all to allow the sale of the property and the reinvestment of the proceeds. In the May Term 1905, a Special Commissioner was appointed by the court to sell "Lego". A parcel of 211 acres was sold to Raleigh C. Taylor in January 1906, but that was not the entire estate. In August of 1919, Cornelia, now the only sister still alive, sold to F.L. Harris all of the property, known as Lego, on the south side of the road that ran from Charlottesville to Keswick (remember, this is pre-Route 250), including the house and buildings. The deed included as well a spring lot and the pipes to the house that were on the north side; a parcel of approximately 146 acres. The deed includes a very detailed survey description, but since the landmarks include locust trees, rocks, and such, it is hard to tell exactly where the property lines ran.

In 1959 the Livers (pronounced with a long I) purchased land from A.L. Mueller on the south and north side of route 250. This land can be traced back to the chancery court case of Jane Randolph Taylor vs. Raleigh C. Taylor and the sale to Harris. When Harris sold to Wenger, the mansion was still listed on the deed. Later deeds do not mention a house; but is this because the mansion was no longer there, or simply because at this time, no one listed houses on deeds? Part of this land was later sold to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the construction of I-64.

A 1967 photograph from the Daily Progress shows “Third Lego” being moved from the south side of 250 to a new foundation on the north side, out of the path of I-64. The house is described as a 91 by 44-foot brick dwelling built in 1951. Not the house described in Edward Mead’s 1898 book.

And our Lego? Is 300 Lego Drive Lego Number 4 (5 if you count the log cabin described by Page Kirk)?

Dr. Brenbridge talked to members of the Livers family, who said that they built the new house here after selling Lego 3 to the state. He also confirmed there is a spring on the property, possibly the spring on the ‘spring lot’ included in the 1919 sale.

Notes and Sources:

There was a Midway Hotel and a Civil War hospital at the corner of Ridgeway and Main and later a school. Whether there is a connection, I don’t know. There was also a Midway Plantation but it was located near White Hall.

www.cvillepedia.org/Midway_Hotel

Cornelia (Miss Nely) Taylor’s obituary has a great deal of information about her life

www.findagrave.com/memorial/6875395/cornelia-jefferson-taylor

As well as the entries in the Farm Book confirming that Lego was a working farm, there is a drawing for the Barn at Lego among Jefferson’s papers. I don’t know if it was actually built.

For more information about the descendants of Thomas Jefferson, a Jefferson family genealogy is available on the Monticello website tjrs.monticello.org/letter/44

Papers of the Randolph Family are now housed in Special Collections at UVa.

The 1864 Map: www.loc.gov/resource/g3883a.cw0520a80/?r=0.604,0.345,0.146,0.085,0

Green Peyton map: www.loc.gov/item/2012586250/

Jefferson’s *Farm Book*, 1774-1824 by Thomas Jefferson [electronic edition]. Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive. Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2003 www.thomasjeffersonpapers.org

Historic Homes of the South-West Mountains Virginia by Edward C. Mead, C.J. Carrier Company, Harrisonburg, 1978, originally published in 1898

archive.org/details/historichomesofs01mead/page/51/mode/1up

Historic Homes and the Green Peyton map are also available at the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society