

# Ashcroft



September 2024

## President's Corner

We have had a highly successful summer. The pool season has gone well, the trails continue to be improved, the amenities' scheduling system has been revamped, and the damaged well house and wall were removed.

Probably the biggest event of this year is the changeover to a new management company. As of September 1, Ashcroft came under new management with Associa. This has been a lengthy process filled with a significant behind-the-scenes effort to ensure a smooth transition. The best transitions are those that are least noticed, and this fits that description. Our Treasurer, Tom Timbie, has worked diligently with the Associa onboarding team to port over the Association investment and checking accounts, set up financial reports, and finalize the list of property owners.

Coming up: The Social Committee has several events planned over the coming months (see the accompanying article). As the leaves fall off the trees, the Trails Committee will get to work on new trails. We will also be purchasing and installing a storage shed near the pool outside the fence line to store pool covers, ladders, chemicals, umbrellas, and other items.

It takes a lot of work to keep our community in good shape, and our members play no small part in that effort. With so many volunteer opportunities available in Ashcroft, I encourage everyone to consider getting involved with individual projects or committees. The committees have plenty of short-term tasks that may need your help. As an example, with the cooler weather approaching, the Landscaping Committee will be busy planting in the Lego Drive traffic circle. This will be a great opportunity to help out. A small-time investment can go a long way in supporting our community. Watch the Ashcroft ListServ for announcements of upcoming opportunities.

The next big task for your Board of Directors is the 2025 budget. We've been reviewing the Reserve Study for items approaching their projected end of life because these will need attention next year. We will be doing a drive-through of the neighborhood roadways with the new property manager to assess their condition. We're also reviewing this year's expenditures to determine where efficiencies may be gained, cost reductions made, and maintenance reasonably deferred. There are always tradeoffs to be considered.

As always, thanks for taking the time to read this, and I hope you enjoy the upcoming seasonal colors as we head into Fall.

Ted Miller

### ***A Peek Inside***

End of Summer Splash- Social Update (pg 4)

Pups in the Pool (pg 4) and more...

Happy Trails (pg 5)

Ashcroft Circle—Planters invited (pg 6)

How's that development going? (pg 7)

Invasion! (invasive species) (pg 8)

More Ashcroft History (No Quiz) (pg 8)

### **Not on the Ashcroft ListServ ?**

Information is in the Resources section of [Ashcroftneighbor.com](http://Ashcroftneighbor.com) (Governing documents)

To join Ashcroft's community mailing list go to: [ashcroftneighbor.com/listserv-signup/](http://ashcroftneighbor.com/listserv-signup/)

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## Treasurer's Report - Summer 2024

The Board has been very proactive in managing the 2024 Budget this year and, for the most part, we are on plan on the Operations side, but continue to be challenged with unexpected or higher than planned expenses on the Capital project side. As a reminder, Operations expenses include routine, mostly recurring, expenses such as landscaping, pool operations, insurance, routine maintenance, snow removal, and property manager fees. Capital projects include larger, non-routine or irregularly recurring projects such as the storage shed removal, street and drainage refurbishment, clubhouse and pool improvements, and community-wide efforts such as sign and guardrail refurbishment and hazardous tree removal. We plan for these Capital projects in advance to the extent possible and set aside reserve funds over time to pay for these larger items when they come up.

Now that we are over halfway through the year, Operational expenses look to be on plan, but at least two large Capital projects (including removal of the cinder block shed and removal of hazardous trees) are coming in meaningfully over plan. In addition, an unplanned drainage issue has developed on North Pantops that will cost approximately \$20,000 to repair. We have postponed some other planned projects, including street repairs, to compensate for the overruns in 2024. This will likely create pressure on the 2025 budget. Although we have sufficient reserves to cover these overruns, we must always look ahead to ensure reserves remain adequate for future years. As always, the Board will work diligently to manage these situations as prudently and economically as possible. The 2025 Budget will be a topic of the next several board meetings. The agenda, date, and time of Board meetings are always published on the community website.

Tom Timbie

### Board of Directors & Meeting Dates

Ted Miller - President (Infrastructure, Technology, Pool Committees)  
Tom Timbie - Treasurer  
Lotta Löfgren - Secretary (Long Range Planning, Landscaping/Gardening Committees)  
Cameron Bolton - Vice President (Playground, Social Committees)  
Halsey Blake-Scott - Vice President (Special Projects)  
Andy Bonaffini - Vice President (Trails Committee)  
Rick Beyer - Developer

To contact the Board, email:  
[Ashcroft-board@googlegroups.com](mailto:Ashcroft-board@googlegroups.com)

Meeting dates can be found on the Ashcroft website on the Resources page at: [ashcroftneighbor.com/resources](http://ashcroftneighbor.com/resources)

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

- September 18, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- November 20, 2024
- December 11, 2024

Information about attending meetings via Zoom is included in the meeting agendas.

### New Management Company

As noted in the President's Corner, the Ashcroft Board has chosen a new management company, Associa. As of September 1, below is information about Associa that residents may find useful.

- Owner Services Dept..... (804) 270-1800 and follow the prompts or via email to [email@communitygroup.com](mailto:email@communitygroup.com)  
Owner Services is set up to receive and answer most of your assessment-related and general questions.
- Charlottesville Office..... (434) 984-0700
- Community Manager..... Philip Adams
- Administrative Support..... Robin Hicks
- Email Contact..... [email@communitygroup.com](mailto:email@communitygroup.com)
- Office Hours..... Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
- Website Address..... [www.communitygroup.com](http://www.communitygroup.com)
- Emergencies (after hours).... (804) 270-1800 and follow message prompts

Special thanks go to Tom Timbie, Treasurer, who devoted a significant amount of time to finalizing the property owners' list, switching over Association investment and checking accounts and establishing financial reports.

Ted Miller

## ARC Corner

The ARC Committee has undergone a few changes recently. In addition to adding two new replacement members, Tom Shuyler and Joe Massie, the ARC has begun to conduct its meeting in person (and via video conference links) once a month. Generally, it meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Clubhouse. Meetings are open to all members of the Association. The schedule can be found on the Association website. The Agenda will be posted on the website prior to each meeting, and minutes of the meetings will be posted on a regular basis.

Please remember that any changes to the exterior of your home or lot need to be approved by the ARC. The current application (which includes a checklist of required items) can be found in the Resources section of the Association website under Architectural Review Committee Information. It is critical to obtain the signatures of your adjoining neighbors (the neighbors whose lots directly adjoin your lot on your side of the street) on your application. Email notification (with emails confirming delivery) are only acceptable if your neighbors are out of town or otherwise unavailable to sign your application.

Exterior improvements that require an application include any major landscaping. See section 3.20.1 of the ARC Rules, which has been revised. Of special concern is any major landscaping that involves the planting of trees or shrubs that may grow to a height of more than 20 feet and that are located in the rear of properties that have views of the Charlottesville valley or the valley or mountain range to the north of Summit Trail Drive.

Each of us has an obligation to maintain our properties. Our collective efforts help maintain the value of all of our homes and the attractiveness of our community. A CEO of a major operation once told me that, once a month, he would walk into the company's office building as if he were visiting it for the first time to observe the building's condition. He would look at whether public areas were clean, the paint was chipped, the molding was damaged, and the glass was clean. He recognized that he would become blind to normal maintenance failures, and it took a conscious effort to stop, focus, and observe the actual condition of the building.

Our neighborhood is the same. Most of our homes are more than 30 years old. When was the last time that you drove into your driveway and really looked at your home? Does your mailbox, fencing, or screening need new paint or stain, are your gutters dirty, is your exterior molding chipped and faded, or is their mold on your siding, trim, or gutters?

This fall is a great time to take stock of your home's exterior condition and to consider remedying items that are in disrepair. If your repair maintains the same paint or stain color, *ARC approval is not needed*. But if you want to change a structure's color scheme, please submit an application to the ARC that includes the type and color of the proposed paint or stain.

Maintaining our community requires a collective effort.

The ARC can be reached at [arc@ashcroftneighbor.com](mailto:arc@ashcroftneighbor.com).

Bob Baumgartner

### Newsletter Team

Kris Bean, Laura Hoffman, Ida Lee Wootten

Please send news, suggestions, events or items of interest to [Ashcroftnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Ashcroftnewsletter@gmail.com).

## Pool Update

The Summer of 2024 has been fantastic! I can't begin to tell you how lucky I feel to manage your pool and make new relationships with the members.

We had a few mechanical problems throughout the summer. I so appreciate everyone's patience. We are certainly getting there and addressing issues that have been overlooked.

We enjoyed some fun days together this summer. Memorial Day weekend and the 4th of July were great fun.

Even though we closed down the pool on September 4, the annual favorite - Doggie Day--will be held on September 29, from 2 to 4 p.m.

I would like to say how grateful I am for my life-guards. They truly care about the safety of our swimmers, are wonderful young people with amazing work ethics, and make my job so enjoyable. Thank you Katie Higgins, Max Bachman, Stella Jones, Miller Jenkins, Ellie Houchens and Izzy Bradley.

We can't wait to see you next year!

Kim Martin



## Social Committee News

The recent 4th of July picnic was a success with many neighbors attending and sharing food. There was lots of fun! A very big thank you to everyone who helped set up and clean up, and for those who the Social Committee members tagged in a pinch to move heavy items before the rainstorm. It was such a wonderful afternoon with neighbors, delicious food, and fun at the clubhouse and pool. We cannot wait for more upcoming events!

Speaking of upcoming events, we have a few neighborhood events coming up! First, the **End of Summer Splash** occurs on Friday, September 13, It will include a pizza party at the clubhouse/pool. Be on the lookout for more information on this event in the coming weeks.

We are so excited to share that the Social and Trails Committees are collaborating for community trail walks this fall! Once we have dates pinned for these walks, we will send them out to the neighborhood.

**Oktoberfest** will be held on Sunday, October 20. The Social Committee is putting together a fun afternoon including a food truck on site at the clubhouse, crafts for children, and hopefully a band! We know Ashcroft has talented musicians amongst our neighbors. If you would like to play at Oktoberfest, or know someone who may, please contact Cameron Bolton at [camjbolton@gmail.com](mailto:camjbolton@gmail.com).

We cannot wait to share in the festive atmosphere of Oktoberfest with you!

Members of the Social Committee delivered a hard copy of the social events calendar for 2024-2025 to your mailbox. If you did not receive a calendar, please email Cameron, and she will deliver one to you.

Lastly, we are always looking for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering for a certain event, please let Cameron know. We would be happy to have you!

***Don't forget  
End of Summer Splash Friday, September 13  
Doggie Day, September 29***



## Trails Committee News

The Trails Committee generated a new map of all the “official” trails in Ashcroft and published the map on the ANA website. The map is available as either a PDF suitable for printing, or as a Google map, which supports zooming and viewing with a satellite image as the base map. See the Resources section of the website for access ([ashcroftneighbor.com/resources/](http://ashcroftneighbor.com/resources/)) - login required.

Several of the Ashcroft trails were better marked including the Yellow Trails adjacent to the Lego traffic circle and the White Trail. Look for more marking efforts in the near future including wooden signs at the trail entrances and at significant trail junctions.

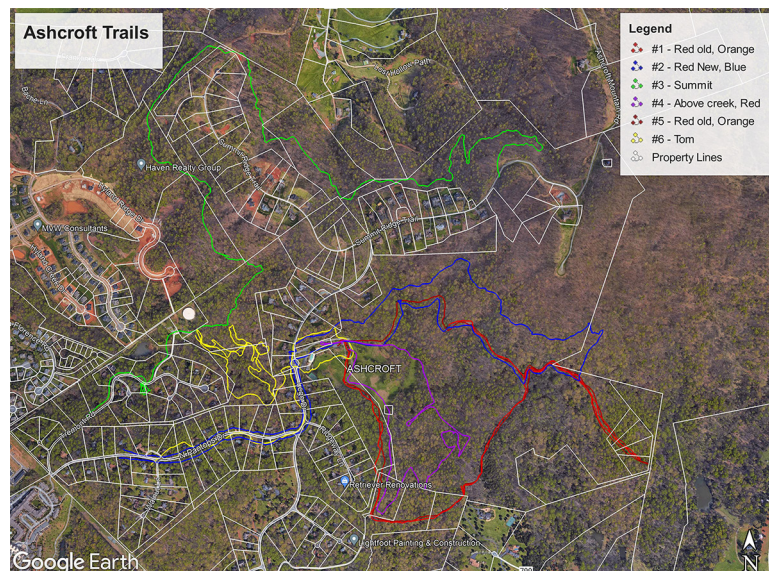
The portion of the Red Trail next to the ballfield, and turning to run along the creek, was graded to allow for an easier walking surface. The plan is to cover this portion of the Red Trail with gravel.

A “ramp” was created opposite the basketball court to allow a more gradual approach to the White and Red Trails. The ramp will be posted with a wooden sign and covered with gravel.

As fall approaches, the Trails and Social Committees are planning a hiking event to introduce residents to the trail system. As the weather cools, we welcome the assistance of neighbors to get involved with periodic trail maintenance events as well as the establishment of the East Ridge Perimeter Trail.

Happy Hiking!

Billy Bolton, Trails Committee  
Andy Bonaffini, Board Representative



## Oscar Hansen Biography

Aaron Street has written an article detailing the life and art of Oscar Hansen, who once lived in what became Ashcroft. Aaron has spent years chasing down relatives and information on the elusive Hansen. Aaron visited Ashcroft a while back, and brought Hansen’s elderly son, Alex, who grew up in a now-gone house where our clubhouse stands. I published a couple of articles about Hansen in our newsletters, but Aaron’s research is expansive, providing a fascinating look at a man who left his name on the road that leads to our neighborhood, and a unique history of our area. You can find a PDF of the article at [naha.stolaf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Currents\\_Summer24.pdf](http://naha.stolaf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Currents_Summer24.pdf).

Kris Bean

For more on Oscar Hansen's connection to Ashcroft,  
read **More Ashcroft History** pg 9

## Upcoming Projects

As many of you know, the ANA Board has been engaged in a strategic planning process. We have identified several projects and are now turning to you for help. Instead of asking people to serve on committees, we are instead seeking help with discrete projects that can be accomplished in the short term. We hope that some of these projects will pique your interest.

If you are interested in working on any of the of the projects listed below, please reach out to Ted Miller ([millertanaboard@gmail.com](mailto:millertanaboard@gmail.com)), Ida Lee Wootten ([ildwootten@gmail.com](mailto:ildwootten@gmail.com)), or me ([llc8c@virginia.edu](mailto:llc8c@virginia.edu)). We hope to get a group working on each project. In each instance, we will ask you to research and brainstorm, and then recommend action to the Board. It is important to work quickly on this, since we will soon be formulating a budget for next year.

Here are the projects:

- Review and recommend upgrades to the furnishings in the clubhouse.
- Improve storage space in and around the clubhouse.
- Formulate an effective use of the concrete area above the tennis court.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Lotta Löfgren

## Little Library Success!

Thanks to Milton Adams (with brilliant detail work by Carolyn Adams), our first Little Free Library is up and running on North Pantops Drive by Sassafras Lane. We have had such great feedback about the box, and it is getting so much use that we are now planning a second Little Library in the clubhouse area.

Would you like to build one? If so, contact Lotta Löfgren at [llc8c@virginia.edu](mailto:llc8c@virginia.edu).

In addition, we hope to install a larger Free Library in the clubhouse, measuring about three feet wide and six feet tall. This will be available to anyone with a key fob. If you have an extra bookcase of about the right size, could you let us know? Again, please contact Lotta at [llc8c@virginia.edu](mailto:llc8c@virginia.edu) if you do. Thanks for being great neighbors in a wonderful neighborhood!

Lotta M. Löfgren

## Landscaping Committee News

The Ashcroft Landscape Committee's purpose is to evaluate the existing landscaped areas in Ashcroft, create a plan for improvement and maintenance, and implement any additions or changes to these areas. We hope to have esthetically pleasing landscapes using as many native plants as possible, while doing our best to remove plants invasive to our area.

We are working with Waynesboro Landscape and Garden Center to create and install a new landscaping plan in the Lego traffic circle. We will be asking the community to help with installation and watering in September. We are also planning an invasive plant education and removal community workday for the fall. We look forward to everyone's participation in helping to maintain and improve Ashcroft's beautiful surroundings.

Michelle Schuler



## Development Update

Dear Neighbors,

I understand there are some questions in the neighborhood about when roads will be completed and houses constructed in the new Phase III section.

We are making good progress, although it never does go as fast as I would like. First it was too wet to compact soil early in the spring and then it was too dry for soil compaction in July. In both cases we had to shut operations down for extended periods. We now anticipate being done moving dirt by November and putting gravel down right after that.

When we get all the construction areas stabilized with grass, we will begin building the pond in the field below the clubhouse.

I am negotiating a contract for the installation of the water line that will supply the new houses; we hope construction on it will begin in September.

We plan on starting home construction in that area next spring.

**Mulch.** We did our final clearing of trees and stumps and ground them into a very course mulch that would normally not be suitable for use around houses. A local mulch supplier would not accept it unless we paid them to finish processing it. That was going to cost about \$30,000 plus trucking costs. I decided to use the money I saved to do the additional processing that was necessary for it to be a presentable mulch for homes.

There is now a huge pile of mulch, approximately 100 dump truck loads, that I am placing at assorted locations around the new development with plans to use it for my own projects. I am also locating many truckloads in areas where neighbors will be able to get to them for their own use.

The mulch is available now. Keep in mind that this is double ground mulch, which will not look as finished as mulch sold for \$30 to \$40 per yard by retailers. Those mulches usually have been aged and have been mixed with bark mulch, which gives a more finished look. However, this is the best-looking double ground mulch I have seen because we used a small screen to run it through. ***It is also free to Ashcroft residents.***

There are several dump-truck loads at the shed by the pond. I'll also be depositing a big pile on the cul-de-sac at the end of one of the new roads in Phase III, which will be accessible to anyone who wants it. That road is the first one to the left off the new road past the clubhouse. Please feel free to take whatever you need. I also would be willing to place piles in other areas of the community as long as it is done in a place that does not pose a nuisance to the nearby residents. If neighbors agree to this, it could be dumped in a cul-de-sac, where all could dig into it.

**Mountain Top Update.** We are now completing the home for the Parade of Homes. Please check it out at Parade time, during the first two weekends in October.

Despite high mortgage interest rates, we have stayed busy this year with two pre-sold homes under construction along the mountain top and another one starting in that area that will be for sale. We also have a number of potential purchasers expressing interest in homes along the mountain top.

Rick Beyer



## Landscaping Committee: Invasive Species Alert

Now is the time to treat these two invasive species to prevent them from spreading in our neighborhood.

**Autumn Olive** is an invasive deciduous shrub, native to Asia, now widespread in the U.S. It can grow up to 20 feet tall and 30 feet wide, forming dense thickets that displace native vegetation. The leaves are elliptical with a distinctive silvery shimmer on the underside.

### Control Methods:

- **Hand-Pulling:** Effective for seedlings and sprouts, especially when the soil is moist. Ensure the entire root system is removed to prevent regrowth.
- **Herbicide Application:** Use glyphosate on larger plants. Foliar application is effective but should be done carefully to avoid harming nearby plants. Applying herbicide to freshly cut stumps also works well and minimizes damage to other vegetation.

For more information follow this link to the Blue Ridge PRISM website:

[blueridgeprism.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Autumn-Olive-Fact-Sheet-Blue-Ridge-PRISM.pdf](http://blueridgeprism.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Autumn-Olive-Fact-Sheet-Blue-Ridge-PRISM.pdf)

**Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)** is a fast-growing deciduous tree native to China, now invasive across the United States. It can reach heights of up to 80 feet, forming dense stands that outcompete native vegetation. They also attract the Spotted Lanternfly, which is a very invasive species of insect that has moved into our area. Please use the Blue Ridge PRISM link below for information on how to identify these trees.

### Control Methods:

- **Hand-Pulling:** Effective for seedlings, especially when the soil is moist. Care must be taken to remove the entire root system to prevent regrowth.
- **Cutting and Herbicide Treatment:** For larger trees, cut the tree and immediately apply an herbicide containing glyphosate or triclopyr to the stump. This prevents resprouting and is most effective during the growing season. If glyphosate isn't immediately applied, the roots of the tree will sprout new trees along the entire root so it is imperative that this is used or you will have a significant problem.

[us14.campaign-archive.com/?u=14f106d040bc4a19e9b83a704&id=ffd826c90f](http://us14.campaign-archive.com/?u=14f106d040bc4a19e9b83a704&id=ffd826c90f)

[blueridgeprism.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Tree-of-Heaven-Fact-Sheet-Blue-Ridge-PRISM-1.pdf](http://blueridgeprism.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Tree-of-Heaven-Fact-Sheet-Blue-Ridge-PRISM-1.pdf)

Lou Baumgartner

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## More Ashcroft History

June 21, 2007

Dear Ashcroft Residents,

At last year's July 4th picnic, I had a number of people approach me and ask what I knew about Ashcroft's history. I told them I had written a letter outlining some of Ashcroft's history just a few years ago, and that I would look it up. As it turns out, I actually sent that letter in September 1991. So, it was just a "few" (16) years ago. I thought it might be time for an update.

Ashcroft history has been a curiosity of mine for the last 27 years of developing the mountain. In the beginning, we would sometimes encounter the stones of collapsed foundations and the stacked bricks of old chimneys. There were trees that weren't indigenous to this area that had obviously been planted and cared for. There is some history here.

My knowledge comes primarily from conversations with two people: Frank Farrish and Mildred Anderson. Farrish was a farmer who grew up on the northern side of Ashcroft in the 1920s and 30s. Many Ashcroft residents knew Mildred Anderson. She lived in the red brick house adjoining the horse pasture on Lego Drive. She lived in the area for nearly a century, and until the day she died in 2002 she would come out to chat if you stopped to feed her horses.



In 1920, Route 250 was only a gravel road. Automobiles were an uncommon sight among the horse and buggy traffic to Charlottesville. One entered "Ashcroft" on a dirt lane through what is now the Westminster Canterbury community. This dirt lane followed Tremont Road and continued to the area of the Ashcroft playground and recreation center. The lane then continued east across the valley below the ball field and up the mountain to the field where the radio tower now stands. It rejoined Route 250 some miles distant at the entrance road for the current UPS headquarters. This road fell out of use in the 1960s, when it was cut off by the construction of I-64.

Ashcroft itself consisted of several parcels of property. Lower Ashcroft was two separate farms operated by Carol Wright and Mildred Anderson. Today this area would include the horse pastures and forest along Lego Drive and the area surrounding Wright Lane and Locust Shade Lane--nearly 25% of what is now Ashcroft. The main part of Ashcroft was owned by three businessmen in Charlottesville. They rented out a farmhouse and a small pasture, but considered the land primarily an investment. This land includes all that surrounds the roads Tremont, North Pantops, Walnut, Upper Lego, Ridgeway, and Summit Ridge Trail.

Lower Ashcroft stayed in the hands of the Wright and Anderson families until their deaths. Carol Wright lived in the old white farmhouse located on Hansens Mountain Road and kept horses in the adjoining pasture until his death in 1996. I bought the property from his heirs to preserve the pasture and prevent the possibility of an apartment complex being built. When Mildred Anderson died in 2002, we negotiated a similar deal with her family, to preserve most of the fields and forest with a minimum of development.

Most of my information about the early history of Ashcroft comes from Frank Farrish, who, as I mentioned earlier, grew up here in the 1920s and 1930s. Frank's story is interesting and came to me almost entirely by chance. In 1991, Diana and our sons, Paul and Scott, lived at 2001 North Pantops. I was working in the yard and I noticed an older man driving around the neighborhood. He kept driving back and forth, so I thought he was lost, and I waved him down to talk. He told me he had grown up in the area, and was trying to find the location of the house where he had lived as a small boy. His name was Frank Farrish and his family had moved to the mountain in 1916 when he was two years old. He lived on that farm until 1937, when he joined the Navy. He had made that his career, eventually settled in New Jersey, and finally retired in Florida. He had come back to visit his first home after nearly 54 years of absence.

Frank told me that in 1922 his house had been a farmhouse with two adjoining barns. His family rented the house from three doctors who owned the property in exchange for its general upkeep. He remembered drawing water from a natural spring nearby. He also remembered an oriental tree that had been planted in the yard.

I knew what tree he was talking about. To my knowledge, there is only one natural spring in all of Ashcroft. We came across it in our initial survey of Birch Lane and Tremont Road. When we had built there years back, I remember pushing over the remains of an old barn and discovering an assortment of farming articles such as horse shoes, harness buckles, and tools. Frank's house stood where the home at 60 Birch Lane now stands. A little way down the hill, Frank recognized 1940 Tremont Road as the site of his barn and outhouse.

Frank remembered exploring some ruins in Ashcroft. At 110 Hawthorne Lane, there had been the ruins of a farmhouse, destroyed in a fire. In the 1920s, its brick chimney was all that remained. The Farrish family would sometimes use the chimney brick for upkeep of their own house. That answered a question for me as I had noticed assorted shrubs and flowers on that site that were not native to the wooded areas of Virginia. Frank did not know who owned the house or anything other than it had burned down in 1919.

Unfortunately, he could not also inform me of the other curiosity I had. When I first cleared 2001 North Pantops Drive in 1980, there was a tremendous ring of English boxwoods at the intersection of today's Walnut Lane and North Pantops. A manor of some sort must have existed there in the past. By 1980, there were only a few stones of what must have been a foundation, but the fire that destroyed the building occurred long ago. All that remained was the English boxwoods that ringed the house. Some of those boxwoods are still evident on the properties of 1987, 2000, and 2001 North Pantops Drive.

Frank Farrish almost didn't make it as a child. He caught pneumonia as a three-year-old. He pulled through, though, and filled his growing years doing assorted agricultural jobs around the farm. In the field below the playground there once was a walnut grove. Farrish collected wagon loads of walnuts and sold them downtown to supply most of their money during the Depression. He would also work in a peach orchard and packing house located (as near as Frank could figure) on the fields just above the radio tower. The produce was hauled on that dirt road down to Route 250 where the UPS access road now lies. Frank spent his youth exploring the ruins of the mountain and often crossed the Rivanna to climb the hill to Monticello, which was not open to the public at the time. One of his friends lived there.

In 1937 Oscar Hansen, a reasonably well-known Norwegian sculptor, bought the property from the Charlottesville businessmen. Hansen was an eccentric and demanded isolation. He kicked the Farrish family off the property and burned down their house. He closed off the dirt road to public access. There was a doctor living in a little stucco house on what is now Summit Ridge Trail. Hansen blocked off the doctor's access to the road and made him cut another trail over the mountain to access Route 20.

There is a fair amount of information about Oscar Hansen on the internet. I have seen the bust of Orville and Wilber Wright, which was commissioned for the Wright Brothers memorial in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. He is best known, though, for the 30-foot sculptures the Federal Parks Department commissioned him to do on the Hoover Dam. The Smithsonian Gem Collection includes his "The Stallion's Head," which he carved from a piece of turquoise. His bronze "Liberty" tops the Monument to the Alliance in Yorktown, Virginia. I had also heard he designed entrances to the national parks, Yellowstone and Yosemite, but I could not find confirmation online.

Hansen built his house and art studio where the playground and clubhouse now are located. The cinder block building beside the swimming pool was his pump house. If you look in the woods behind the "Ridges at Ashcroft" sign, you will still find a low rock wall. That was his fish farm. Hansen hated going into the city so he raised all his own fish for food. Sometime in the 1940s or 1950s, Hansen thought about starting a school. The concrete wall adjoining the tennis courts was the beginning (and end) of that plan. It was the foundation for what was going to be the school: ten studios looking out over the valley. For reasons I'm not aware of, he never completed his vision.

Oscar died in the mid-1960s. Different investors purchased Ashcroft, until finally Gary Cooper and Harold "Poochie" Payne consolidated it again in the late 1970s. I bought my first lots in 1980. By 1983, the bad economy and the 21% interest rates had taken their toll on the initial Ashcroft partnership. Poochie dropped out and Gary took me on as a minority partner. When Gary suffered a heart attack in 1984, he sold the remainder of the mountain to Diana and me.

I know the history that a lot of people are curious about concerns the resident across the Rivanna at Monticello. About that, I do not know any more than what is general myth in the area. It is my understanding that the farms of Ashcroft were once part of the Jefferson estate. But if so, I don't know for how long, or when it was sold, and to whom it was sold. I have also heard talk of a slave school that Jefferson started and had hidden away in the valley where Hansens Mountain Road ends. It was hidden because educating slaves in those days was a criminal offense. Whether this is urban legend or not, again, I don't know.

Hopefully, though, this oral history of the past century is of interest to those of us living here now. For those of you curious about knowing more, we hope we've included enough detail to aid further exploration. We would love to know anything you discover.

Sincerely,

Rick & Diana Beyer