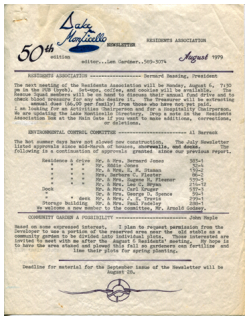

Lake Monticello NEWSLETTER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

50th edition editor...Len Gardner..589-3074 August 1979

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ---------- Bernard Jeasing, President

The next meeting of the Residents Association will be Monday, August 6, 7:30 PM at the Lake Club House. Please bring your membership card with you. Renew lapsed members will be on hand to discuss their annual dues drive and to check blood measure for any who desire it. The Treasurer will be submitting a report on the Lake Club House and Pool Operation for the year to date.

I am looking for an Activities Chairperson and for a Hospitality Chairperson. We are updating the Lake Monticello Directory. Drop a note in the Residents Association Box at the Main Gate if you wish to make additions, corrections, or deletions.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL COMMITTEE ---------- Al Barnsch

The hot summer days have not slowed new construction. The July Newsletter listed the following new homes and additions. Additions are listed following a continuation of approvals granted since our previous report.

Residence & drive	Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Jones	325-1
" " "	Mr. Emile Jones	324-4
" " "	Mr. & Mrs. G. M. Jiusan	152-2
" " "	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hunter	153-1
" " "	Mr. & Mrs. Eugene M. Flanner	330-1
" " "	Mr. & Mrs. Lee G. Bryan	214-13
Dock	Mr. & Mrs. Jack Hall	214-1
"	Dr. & Mrs. George W. Lemon	32-1
" deck	Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Travis	229-1
Storage Building	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hunter	153-1

We welcome a new member to the committee, Mr. Arnold Godsey.

COMMUNITY GARDEN & POSSIBILITY ---------- John Maple

Based on some expressed interest, I plan to request permission from the Residents Association to use a portion of the Lake Club House Lawn for a community garden to be divided into individual plots. Those interested are invited to meet with me after the August 6 Residents' meeting. My hope is to have the area staked and cleared this fall so gardeners can fertilize and lime their plots for spring planting.

Deadline for material for the September issue of the Newsletter will be August 15.

Every so often, it’s good to stop, take a look back, and reflect on what, exactly, brought us to the point that we find ourselves. Often sparking such periods of reflection are birthdays or anniversaries, as they carry with them an implied remembrance of beginnings and progressions. As the *Fluvanna Review* is turning 35 this year, the time seemed ripe for just such an exploration into the paper’s history. After all, if history isn’t captured and recorded, it eventually fades away.

Birth of the *Bulletin*

The first house at Lake Monticello was built in 1971 and, four years later, 50 homes stood in the development. With that many houses, Lake Monticello was in need of a good newsletter. So in April 1975, five Lake residents got together and started what would someday become the *Fluvanna Review*. Their names were Barbara MacDonald, John Maple, Herb Greer, Dan Risher, and Bruce Clarke.

Of course, they didn’t have a full-fledged newspaper in their sights. Rather, they began the *Residents’ Association News Bulletin*, a one-page monthly newsletter that covered matters of interest to residents of the Lake. The very first issue championed the paving of Rt. 600, which was then a dirt road.

The newsletter hummed along for four years until one pivotal day in July 1979. Retiree Len Gardner had moved to the Lake a year earlier, and he was looking for something new to do. At the Residents’ Association meeting, Gardner offered to take over as editor of the *Bulletin*. “There was a collective sigh of relief in the audience,” Gardner recalled. “No one else wanted the job. And as it turned out, no one else got a chance at the job for the next 18 years.”

The reason for the job’s unpopularity, Gardner explained, was the sheer amount of work involved in producing the Bulletin: “The editor had to collect all the news, do most of the writing, do the typing, run off 200 copies on the Xerox machine, collate and staple them, and then stuff the paper into the mailboxes.”

Becoming a newspaper

When Gardner took over, he changed the name of the publication to the *Lake Monticello Newsletter*. The size of the *Newsletter* had also expanded into multiple legal-sized sheets. But four months into Gardner’s tenure as editor,

something more significant changed.
"The Lake Monticello Owners' Association (LMOA) decided it would no longer subsidize the publication," Gardner remembered. "I was cut off from their typewriter and their copy machine."
In those days, most folks had typewriters at home, making the loss of the Lake's typewriter no big deal. But the Xerox machine was a real problem. "I had to take the paper into Charlottesville to be printed," Gardner explained. "Running off 200 copies of a multi-page paper, collating, and stapling cost money.
Asking for donations from residents didn't appeal to me, so I decided to solicit advertising to cover the cost."
Cut off from LMOA ownership, the *Newsletter* crossed an important threshold by becoming thoroughly dependent upon Gardner, and the advertising he procured, for its survival. So it was really then, 35 years ago, that the paper began.
"Surprisingly, I had no trouble getting advertising," Gardner recalled. "The advertisers came to me because advertising in the *Newsletter* was the best and surest way to get their message to the growing population at the Lake. Just as it is now."
The *Newsletter* played an important role in affairs at the Lake. In the 1980s, Lake Monticello's burgeoning size drove previously unimportant issues to the forefront. As Gardner recollected, "If it hadn't been for our [the owners' association and the *Newsletter*] activity, we would have had cluster mailboxes at each gate instead of having mailboxes at the end of our driveways." He laughed. "We had people here who had experience in these kinds of things, because we were a retirement community. One retired postal inspector knew more about the postal regulations than the local postmaster who was trying to put in cluster mailboxes."
Another such issue had to do with school buses. Because the Lake's roads are private, school buses couldn't drive on them, and schoolchildren had to be collected at the gates. "As more and more people moved here, that was getting to be a dangerous thing," Gardner said. "So we ended up getting around that problem by having our roads declared for traffic purposes to be subject to the rules of the state." Because of that, the buses could then enter the community.

The *Review*

Over time, Gardner took on a photographer and a cartoonist, who would illustrate the articles. And in 1985, Gardner changed the name of the paper to the *Lake Monticello Review*. Why "Review"? "Well, it was a monthly newsletter. All you could do was 'review' the news," Gardner cracked. "It's not like I could call it the *Daily Progress*."
But, despite its name, the *Review* didn't just concern itself with happenings in Lake Monticello. "From the very beginning of my time on the paper, I included county news," Gardner recalled. "I began the practice of attending the meetings of the Board of Supervisors. Usually I was the only one in the audience."
Eventually, in 1988, Gardner decided to reflect that emphasis in the paper's name. And so the *Lake Monticello and Fluvanna County Review* was born.
Also in 1988, the paper went to magazine format. "You typed up the right sized column, snipped them off, waxed the back, and laid it on a board," Gardner explained. "Then you took the boards to a printer and that's what they would use to print the paper. We'd have 28 boards."
Throughout the paper's early years, Gardner relied on volunteers to keep the paper thriving. "More than 100 volunteers served with me in many roles: typing, advertising, layout, editing,

reporting, special columns, bill paying, photography, and distribution. My wife, Doris, backed me up on almost all the jobs at the paper at one time or another." Though the volunteers received no salary, the revenue generated by the ads was more than enough to cover the paper's expenses. So at the end of the year, Gardner would give his volunteers a share of what the paper had made.

Early on, Gardner deliberately selected a positive tone for his newspaper. "It's easy to fall into the habit of criticism," he observed, "to emphasize problems and mistakes. 'Look at this or that mess. Why did they let that happen? Look how stupid someone is.' I decided the paper would not dwell on negatives but rather emphasize the positives."

Over time, Gardner's life became even busier. Once a mayor of a small town in Maryland, called Morningside, Gardner felt his political interest heat up again. In 1992, he ran for Fluvanna's Board of Supervisors and was elected. Despite his new slew of commitments as supervisor, Gardner still ran the paper, even incorporating it into its own legal entity in 1994.

Passing the torch

"By 1995, the paper was running 56 pages monthly in magazine format," Gardner recalled. "It had become too big an enterprise to be run by volunteers.

The Lake, and Fluvanna County as well, had grown into a significant market. A monthly publication was no longer adequate for news coverage or to serve the needs of the business community. There was so much going on – if we didn't go to a weekly paper someone else was going to come in and do it. I was just too busy at that point in time. I was the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and I couldn't handle a weekly paper. So that's when I recruited someone else to do it."

That someone else was Eric Allen, a Lake resident with Charlottesville newspaper experience. In 1996 he joined the staff, and for a time the two worked together. Forsaking the magazine format, they decided to move to tabloid format, which the Review still uses today. At the end of 1996, Gardner stepped down as publisher. And in 1997, Allen changed the name of the paper one final time, to the *Fluvanna Review*.

Now 92 years old, Gardner still stays involved with the paper, often joining office staff for the paper's weekly critique. And because he's often in attendance at Board of Supervisors meetings, he still knows what's going on in the community.

"The 18 years that I ran the paper were among the most satisfying years of my life," he declared. "I learned on the job how to run a paper. I learned that sometimes it can be difficult and unpopular, but necessary. I learned to stand up for ethical and accurate reporting, to edit out poorly thought out commentary and unfounded accusations. Working with volunteers, I learned a lot about keeping my eye on what was really important, and not sacrificing good will and cooperation on transitory emotional issues."

The second part of the history of the Fluvanna Review *will run next week.*