



SLEHA GAZETTE

A Newsletter of the Spirit Lake East Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 217 Spirit Lake, ID 83869

April

2000

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Vacancy

Message From The Board

By Jess Blocker

Spring has sprung again, and I suspect many (if not most) of you have spring fever as Cathy and I do. It is time to start scratching the ground, planting gardens and flowers, spring cleaning, catching fish, etc.

There is one very important thing we all need to do. We need to attend our semi-annual membership meeting on May 9, 2000. Your presence, in person or by proxy, is very important. There are some things your Board of Directors and committee members cannot do without your vote. We can't make any large purchase such as a much needed replacement dump truck with snow plow, no matter how much money we have in the bank.

We also can't elect Board members for two reasons. We have not had a quorum at a regular membership meeting in four (4) years, and we have not had any volunteers willing to be nominated. Let's change this trend. I'm ready for a challenger!

Thanks to all of you who responded to the questionnaire in our January newsletter. We have tried to respond to all of your questions and suggestions.

The Board is considering a rewrite and clarification of CC&Rs. Bring your suggestions for a draft to the May meeting.

Message (Continued on page 3)

Meet Your Neighbor

By Cathy Richardson

If you started any timber management plans in 1999 you have talked with our next featured neighbor, Irma Vorhauer. She has lived in Spirit Lake East for 2 1/2 years and was on the Timber Management Committee until she became our newest Board member. A Native American originally from New Mexico, she moved here from Green Acres where she lived on a hill with more snow than the surrounding area. Little did she realize when she moved here to get away from so much snow what a snowbelt we live in.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, she lives in a straw-insulated house. Irma did most of the work herself, including the wood floors and tile work. Throughout the house are hand-painted tiles she has designed herself.

In addition to building her house, she is home-schooling her 2 boys, Preston 6 and Wesley 5. Along with their other studies, the boys are learning to speak Spanish and soon French. Pretty Amazing!!

Irma also gives painting classes at her house. She teaches the Bob Ross technique of painting from the PBS "Joy of Painting" series. She offers 4-hour classes on Sundays with no more than 6 students in order to give them a lot of attention. Students leave being able to paint even though they have no prior experience. And in her "spare time," she sells beautiful hand burnished, hand-painted Saltillo (clay) Tiles.

Neighbor (Continued on page 3,

Community Comments

These are questions we received from various homeowner's in SLE. If you need more information, or have additional comments to add, please visit our website at www.webpak/-sle and comment in the "suggestions" section. A copy of this question/answer page is on our web site in the Bulletin Board section.

Q: The roads should be our number one concern. Why aren't they?

A: Roads ARE the number one priority in our community. If you take a look at our Budget, you will notice that more than 55% of your dues money goes DIRECTLY towards the roads and road equipment maintenance. There is considerable overhead as well, including weed control, grader loan insurance, fuel, and some miscellaneous which brings the total budget dedicated to the roads to over 85% of the yearly budget. Also, ALL of the money from the SBA special assessment was applied to the roads for much needed improvements.

If you have any specific questions regarding our roads and their maintenance, please contact Don Walter, Road Chairman.

Q: The dust in the summer is horrible! What can be done about it?

A: Dust can be controlled by oiling the roads, or other alternative means (you may want to visit the Roadpacker Canada, Inc. website) of dust control. The downside to oiling is an increased number of potholes. Other methods of dust control employ the application of a cohesive agent to the road, which causes the dirt to "clump." This produces far fewer potholes, but is more costly.

Q: Why can't we oil ALL of our roads to control the dust?

A: Past records show that the cost of oiling roads is approximately \$6000 per linear mile. We have nearly 26 miles of roadway. Additionally, oiling of dirt roads increases the number of potholes. Oiled roads can not be graded without re-applying the oil after grading.

Q: Change the speed limit to 15mph. Then maybe the residents will slow down to 25 or 30. 15 mph signs should be posted every 400 ft.

A: Changing the speed limit would not necessarily slow people down. Only some form of speed enforcement will. Local law enforcement can NOT enforce traffic laws on private roads. Posting signs every 400 ft would not necessarily help. Without any form of enforcement, your money that would be applied to the approximately 340 signs would be wasted

Q: Can't we improve the roads the way Spirit Lake did? It was done at low cost and solved the dust problem,

A: To do what was done in Spirit Lake would require more money than what we take in every year. To do this we would either have to drastically raise dues or levy a large special assessment. These are private roads, not city roads, and grants are very difficult to find for private road improvement.

Q: Since we live in Kootenai County and pay taxes to Kootenai why aren't our roads paved and maintained by the county? What are our taxes paying for?

A: The county will not pave our roads because our roads are not (nor have they ever been) up to county standard. We would have to bring them up to county standards ourselves (which would be very costly) before they would consider taking them over. These are private roads, owned by all members of the SLE Homeowner's Association. Your property taxes go towards maintaining the county roads you drive on outside of the community.

If you have any questions about your tax bill, please call the Kootenai County Assessors Office at 208-769-4459.

Q: More homeowners should be encouraged to oil their road sections in order to keep the horrible dust problem at a minimum. This would slow people down.

A: Oiling the section of road in front of one's property would help reduce the dust, but it has been noticed that the oiled sections have a greater number of potholes and tend to lose rock to the ditches faster. Oiling roadways will not slow people down, only speed enforcement will do this.

Q: Why can't you enforce speed limits?

A: Outside law enforcement can NOT enforce speed limits on private roads. They have no jurisdiction. The excess speed must be proven, or the "offender" can not be penalized. We have no means of proving the speed of any offender that would hold up in a court of law.

Q: Can't you install speed bumps to reduce the speed?

A: Speed bumps in the community would make it very difficult to grade and plow the roads. Also, the Association would be liable if any person was hurt or vehicle damaged as a result of speed bumps constructed by us.

Q: Do you have to plow our driveways closed each time you plow?

A: Please refer to the letter which was sent out in February 2000 regarding snow plowing. Our plow operators try to leave as small a berm as possible in front of the drives. However, there are currently over 150 homes in our community and growing. Even if it only took 5 minutes to do each driveway, it would take over 12 hours to do every drive.

Committee Reports

Architectural Review

The year **2000** is already a busy year for new homes in Spirit Lake East. Three homes are currently under construction. A fourth home is scheduled to begin construction in early April.

Please remember to contact the Architectural Review Committee if you are planning to build. The process for approval is quick and painless. You'll get your approval, or in rare instances a disapproval, usually on the same day your plans are submitted.

Although the CC&Rs say the Committee has 30 days to approve plans, it is preferred to give people an answer ASAP.

Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact anyone on the ARC Committee.

Mary Lou Gunn, Chairperson

Road Committee

Well, I think our snowplowing days are over for this winter. It is now time to concentrate on grading the roads. We are concentrating on the roughest parts such as where we dug the muck out of some *areas* and put in some pit run gravel. Later when the snow melts more, we will do a total grading of the roads.

Equipment Update

The two trucks we have are old and expensive to keep running. The extra grader (Gallion) that we have is not used often enough to warrant its existence. We need to get rid of these three antiquated pieces of equipment and update to a newer and bigger truck. This can't be done without your approval.

PLEASE ATTEND THE UPCOMING SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING SO WE CAN DISCUSS THE ISSUE.

Remember, it is your vote that tells us what do do.

Don Walter, Chairman

DRWJKW@AOL.COM

DOGS, DOGS, DOGS!

We have, again, been asked to make a plea for dog restraint. We have received complaints of dogs running wild - specifically on Kelso - but also on other roads. These dogs are more than a nuisance to law abiding members of this Association.

ALL members have a right to hike and walk the roads of our ~~Association~~ in safety. However, some feel they can neither safely walk alone for their health and well being nor can they walk with their dogs without the fear of harm to themselves or their pets.

We are privileged to live in such a beautiful area. These roads belong to all of us. Please don't trample the rights of others in a misguided attempt to preserve your rights!

Neighbor (Continued from page 1)

Irma has a real commitment to our community, and volunteers her time and her house to the monthly board meetings. She has also had several get-togethers for neighbors, a great way for all of us to get to know each other. I don't know how she finds the time, but I appreciate all her efforts and enjoyed talking with her.



NOTICES

* Highway Cleanup
**9:00 am, May 20, 2000 Meet at
 Hwy 54 and Coeur d'Alene Drive**

* Weed Control
**Timeframe for spraying roadsides
 To be announced at May meeting**

Message (Continued from page 1)

Willi Hanson has informed me she can no longer publish our newsletter. The April issue will be her last, and Spirit Lake East is poorer for it. Thanks for the great job you've done, Willi!

REMEMBER--May 9, 2000, 7 pm, Timberlake High School. See you there!

Comments (Continued from page 2)

Q: It looks like the majority of the roads were worsened by the grader's efforts. Most of the road's gravel was pushed into the ditches and never recovered. Is this our plan to make them worse? Can't we find an experienced operator?

A: Many Association members have indicated that the roads have never been in better condition. The gravel in the ditches is actually a very small amount and will be recovered when sufficient amounts warrant the time it takes to do so. Our roads have actually been improved by the addition of gravel, and installation of dry wells and culverts.

Our current grader operator has worked for the Post Falls highway district, driving and supervising for over 30 years and has experience in all areas of heavy equipment. He is very knowledgeable about road maintenance and improvements.

Q: When do we get our fire truck at Spokane Circle?

A: The Spirit Lake Fire District owns Spokane Circle, and eventually plans to house their equipment there, as well as develop the unused portion of the circle into a park/picnic area. However, there is no money in their budget to do so in the near future.

Q: Can we have a neighborhood directory or a phone list to notify people in case of an emergency?

A: Last January (1999) a questionnaire was sent out asking this question. The response was about 50/50 as to whether people would be interested or willing to be part of such a list. Many people specifically wrote that they did NOT want their phone numbers published. Anyone who is interested in assembling a voluntary phone directory should contact a board member for more information on this matter.

Q: What is the deal with the pink trailer on Kelso drive? I thought these were not allowed.

A: This matter is being looked into. Originally it was approved for temporary housing. For more information contact the ARC.

Q: There are two dogs that chase cars on Liberty drive. What can be done about them?

A: The owners have been sent a letter regarding this matter. Should the problem continue, the humane society may have to intervene.

Q: Can we increase the square footage requirement for building a home in SLE?

A: Adjusting the square footage requirements would be a change in the CC&R's. To do this would require a full membership vote, which in the past has been extremely difficult to get. If this is a concern for you, please contact the ARC.

Q: Can you impose dog ordinances to control the barking dogs?

A: Excessive barking dogs would fall under the CC&R nuisance provision. If talking with the dog's owners does not stop the barking, notify any board member if nuisance dogs are a chronic problem.

Q: Can we ban the discharge of firearms?

A: The discharge of firearms in SLE is already banned by our CC&R's. Please report any violators so action can be taken.

Q: Can we get a light at the St Joe entrance?

A: The entrance of Coeur d'Alene Drive has a light only because power already existed right there at that corner. The same is not true for St. Joe Drive. To install a light at St. Joe would be cost prohibitive, but if the membership really wants to put one there, we can.

Q: Why can't you enforce the logging rule?

A: Enforcement of logging is a civil case. To prosecute an "offender" requires up-front money we don't really have to initially cover legal fees. It is simply a matter of lack of funding.

Q: We need to install a knap weed program. It is useless if only some of us spray.

A: Idaho law requires homeowners who have noxious weeds on their property to eradicate them. Please see the noxious weed information in the Timber section of our site for more information. Weed control is very expensive, not only for the pesticides, but also for application. Any ideas on how to institute a community weed control program please contact the SLE board of directors.

Dear parents,

Changes in road and weather conditions affect the bus schedule of our students in Spirit Lake East. These changes can be sudden and can catch parents unaware.

The bus barn and schools attempt to alert parents, but time does not allow everyone to be contacted. I am looking for volunteers to form a call group to help keep parents informed.

Scenario:

The school will call the contact person who in turn will contact volunteers who call a short list of parents.

If you would be interested in helping, please call me at 623-3214.

Sincerely,
Kay White

Check out our new web site at www.webpak.net/~sle

Features of the site include:

- Treasurer's Information-** budget information updated monthly
- Lot Info-** interactive lot map with key to roads, developed and undeveloped properties, Hanson-owned properties. Also, a local map of Spirit Lake
- Timber Information-** information on noxious weeds, tree identification, forest management, bark beetle control, and lots of links to timber and management related sites.
- ARC info-** Still under construction, but will be updated monthly
- Meeting Minutes-** Still under construction, but will have minutes from the board meetings, updated monthly
- Road Maintenance-** Contains articles relating to the roads in our community
- Newsletters-** Still under construction, but will contain a digital version of our quarterly newsletter
- Articles-** Still under construction, but will contain an archive of articles of interest to SLE
- Contact Info-** contains contact information (name and phone) of board and committee members
- Suggestions-** general comment section- each comment will be posted and answered in the upcoming SLE Community Concerns Bulletin Board

Things to be added:

- SLE Community Concerns Bulletin Board-** comments, questions, concerns received from the membership will be answered and posted here
- CC&R's/ ByLaws** - will contain a digital version of our CC&R's and By-Laws in an easy-to-read and download format
- FAQ-** A typical Frequently Asked Questions section
- Timberland Management Plan-** will contain forms directly from the Kootenai County Assessor's office you can download which will allow you to file for a timberland tax exemption

Please remember when you are viewing this site that it is still under construction. The "glamour and glitz" has not yet been added. Please, we need your suggestions for content. If you have any articles you wish to submit, please e-mail the association through the Suggestions section of **our** site or directly at **sle@micron.net**.

Letter From The Editor

As Jess Blocker mentioned in his message, I will be hanging up my keyboard, turning off my computer, and riding out of town in a cloud of dust! Well. . . not really! What I am doing is relinquishing the reins as editor of our Association newsletter in the hope someone will pick them up and charge full speed ahead.. We live in an area, by choice, that gives us space-lots of it. Our homes are far enough apart to afford us the privacy that so many crave.

There may be times - for socialization or possibly crisis situations when we will need to depend on one another - when knowing about our neighbors and the area in which we live will be vital. There is a small monthly journal published by someone locally that covers the special interests and activities of the citizens of the City of Spirit Lake and the outlying area. There is nothing, however, that relates to Spirit Lake East. It is my personal opinion that our Association needs a newsletter to keep its members informed and linked to one other.

Your Board needs someone with new ideas and a zeal to improve what we started. Are you willing to help in this effort? I hope so!

Thank you for allowing me to exercise my imagination in putting together your newsletter for the past six years!

Willi Hanson