

# OLDE TOWNE PEARISBURG REGISTER

March 2013

Published by the Olde Towne Pearisburg Association to foster historical preservation and heritage appreciation among the residents and business community of the Town of Pearisburg, County of Giles, State of Virginia.

## *Glen Alton*

The abundance of natural beauty in Giles County is astonishing. Witness the beautiful old Alleghenies with their rounded peaks that shelter valleys delineated by cold, rocky creeks flowing along the roadside and through rolling pastures, and the magnificent New River, the sculptor that carved it all.

Witness dramatic overlooks where you can see for miles, and hills covered by National Forest. The early morning mist covering the River and hiding the mountaintops. The play of sunlight and shadow on mountains creating the illusion they change size and height - nearer and taller in the morning sun, then distant and blue-gray in the afternoon. So many vistas, so much beauty.

And then, there is Glen Alton. A former farm and family retreat that has been transformed over the years into picturesque, bucolic public space for all who care to drive the narrow back country road alongside Big Stony Creek to the front gate. The first impression is "this is a film set." The old lodge, the caretaker's home, manicured lawns around a large pond, and the sound of a tumbling creek as background music set the imagination

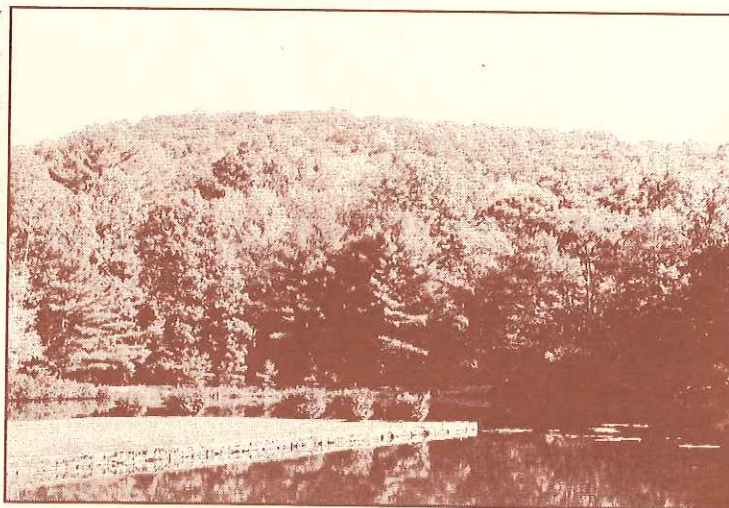
whirring. In actuality, it is a public park to be enjoyed at one's leisure - a place to stroll the walking paths past the pastures and wetlands area, walk the dog, or picnic near the pond. Time takes a back seat in the serene setting.

Glen Alton came to be when a local banker, Clarence A. Lucas began to buy parcels of land along Stony Creek during the 1930s, the Depression years, when the

land was cheap and overtimbered and sold for a dollar an acre or less. Lucas was born in the Clover Hollow area near the town of Newport in 1887. James Lucas, his father, managed the hotel, store and maintenance shop in the remote community of Interior built to accommodate loggers who were timbering mountain land. Once logging ceased, the hotel was torn

down and the Lucas family moved to Pembroke, his home for the rest of his life.

After college, he intended to join his father in farming, but became intrigued by the banking business. His banking career spanned over 50 years during which time the small town banks in Newport, Eggleston, Pembroke and Pearisburg gradually merged and merged again



THE FRONT POND AT GLEN ALTON



until 1933 the Bank of Giles County was organized with C.A. Lucas as President and Chairman of the Board. The main office of the Bank of Giles is now The Bank Restaurant in Pearisburg. He retired from banking in 1965 and invested his remaining years in his farm, cattle, vineyard and apple orchard at Glen Alton.

Before retirement, Lucas continued to improve the property that had been christened Glen Alton by his wife, Evangeline, when they first purchased the land in the 1930s. She chose the name from a book she was reading about New Zealand. Evangeline obviously shared Clarence's vision of what the place could become when she chose such a poetic name for rough mountain land covered with tree stumps left by the loggers.

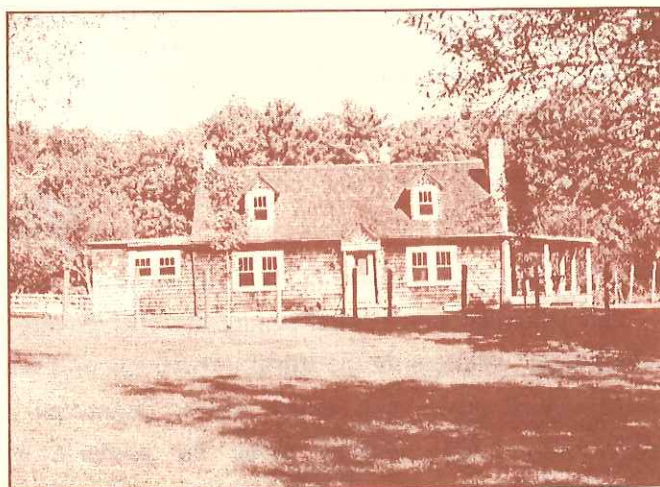
The couple and their ward, Virginia Reel, Evangeline's niece, never lived at Glen Alton, but spent weeks there during summer months and hunting season. As the years passed, Lucas's improvements added modern convenience and comfort to the lodge and to a caretaker's house he built in the 30's. He used the creek to power a turbine to supply the buildings with electricity, and later built an upper pond to run the turbine when the creek was low. Barns were built, and a truly unique heated house for his hunting dogs.

Willie and Lake Sutphin and their twin daughters moved into the caretaker's house in 1938 and with the exception of two years, were caretakers until they died - Willie in 1980, Lake in 1994. The Sutphin's two year absence from Glen Alton was due to a feud between Clarence and Willie over a long forgotten farm matter.

Befitting his profession as a banker, Lucas was a thrifty man. When APCO arrived in the area in the 1940s, he bought a generator and turbine from a cousin, Hugh Givens, who shut down his mill that had provided electricity to Newport. The old equipment served Glen Alton well until APCO brought electricity to the Big Stony Creek Valley in the late 1950s. He used discarded scrap materials from a defunct train line that once serviced an old iron mine located behind his property to build a bridge. In 1912, Clarence and his brother-in-law, Jack Reel, sensing potential in the future of motion pictures began showing films at the old Pembroke High School. Their estimation

of public response to "movies" was dead on. They eventually formed the Star Amusement Company that operated motion picture theatres in Pearisburg, Narrows and Radford.

Clarence Lucas seems to have been a complicated personality. His parsimony was well known. Someone remarked "he would not pay a dollar to see an earth-



CARETAKER'S HOUSE

quake." In his later years, changes in his personality were evident as he became more and more irascible. However, he was the same person who was willing to raise Virginia Reel as his own child, and who allowed Lake Sutphin to live in the caretaker's house after Willie died until her death 14 years later.

In the 1980s after Clarence's death, Virginia Reel Winston inherited 304 acres of Glen Alton. The Winstons sold the property that was later resold to the US Forest Service in 1999. The Glen Alton now open to the public is the product of efforts by the Forest Service, Giles County and Congressman Rick Boucher to obtain funds to upgrade the buildings and surroundings to the wonderful outdoor experience it is today. The number of visitors sharing that experience continues to grow as the Forest Service managers and the Friends of Glen Alton create more and more programs to entice visitors to participate in outdoor activities designed for families to enjoy.

The lure of the serenity and natural beauty of the old farm continues to draw people who cherish a day away from the everyday.



# PEARISBURG TODAY

## TOWN OF PEARISBURG TOWN ELECTIONS

The Town elections will be held on November 5th this year. On the ballot will be the Mayor's Office and three of the six Town Council seats. The incumbents whose term expire are Charlie Via, Kristi Eaton, George Psathas as well as Mayor Robert Dickerson. To qualify for a spot on the ballot petitions must be completed and turned into the Voter Registrar by June 11, 2013 at 7 p.m. The signature of 125 qualified town voters is required for the petition to be valid.

George Psathas has announced that he will not seek another term on the Town Council. George served on Town Council from 1976-2004 and from 2005-2013 for a total of 36 years. The final makeup of the ballots will be known after June 11th when valid petitions are certified by the Election Commission. Winners of the election will take office January 1, 2014 and will serve four year terms. Watch for announcements in local paper and be sure to get out and vote on November 5th.

## PSA WATER ISSUE

The Town of Pearisburg has joined with Narrows and Pembroke in voicing opposition to a River Withdrawal Project that is being pursued by the Giles County Public Service Authority (PSA). The three towns represent two-thirds of the revenue and customer base of the PSA, but have a minority vote on the PSA Board. The three towns think that the proposed project is too expensive, not needed, and that cheaper alternatives are available to insure adequate and reliable water. The PSA has voiced concern that any water source, except the New River, is unreliable and leaves no option except the expensive River Project.

Although the PSA Board has agreed to a study of the cheaper well option proposed by the towns, they have contracted with Thompson & Litton Engineering firm to design the River Intake. In the meantime, the towns have retained legal counsel for advice on how to proceed with opposition to the PSA. The PSA position is that in times of drought the existing wells are not sufficient and only the river can guarantee adequate source. The towns' position is that wells have been used for many years as a source for municipal water and industrial needs at Celanese. The preliminary engineering work available to the Town indicates that the well withdrawal option in the New River alluvium area can provide a reliable source of high quality water at a much lower cost compared to withdrawing raw water from the New River with the necessary treatment costs. The use of wells in the New River alluvium area as a water source is not as susceptible to drought conditions as would be deep wells in fractured rock as typically used in areas outside of the New River alluvium area.

Pearisburg's Tannery Well has little to no drawdown in drought conditions. In rainy weather it does not increase in turbidity. In short, this well takes river water and naturally filters it without the costly treatment facilities needed for the treatment of river water. The PSA's main well, located at the

water treatment plant, is more susceptible to drought than would be wells located directly in the New River alluvium area. The Town's engineers recommend looking at the use of existing wells in Pearisburg and Narrows and drilling of a possible new well in the river alluvium. By doing so, a reliable and safe source can be achieved at a drastically lower cost to the customers.

No matter which water supply alternative is ultimately selected, any new well, water intake, pumping facility or pipeline located within the Town's boundaries will require review under the Town's Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. These land use review processes will include public hearings and opportunities for citizens to comment.

Unfortunately the PSA continues to move forward on the expensive project even as the cheaper alternative is being discussed. If done, the cost of water from the PSA will increase significantly. This will then lead to big increases in the cost of water supplied by the town to our customers. In the end, this cost will be paid by you when paying the monthly bill for water services. The towns have asked to discuss and resolve this issue in order to avoid costly legal fees, unnecessary and expensive projects, and to insure safe and reliable water services to everyone. The PSA continues to assert that it will act as it determines even if contrary to the concerns and opposition of half of its member localities who represent two-thirds of the PSA's customer base. Pearisburg will continue to work to serve the best interests of our citizens.

In addition, the PSA has notified the Town of its intent to raise water rates July 1, 2013 to \$3.33 per 1000 gallons or about 75%. This is more than any other member, although Pearisburg by contract does not pay transmission costs. The town is actively opposing this increase, which is obviously punitive in nature and in violation of its contract with the PSA.



## BUSINESS NEWS!

We welcome Drs. Nick and Susan Clark to Pearisburg. They are located in Dr. Dan Bowling's building on Tazewell Street. Dr. Bowling has retired. Their business is Pearisburg Eyecare Associates. Coming soon is Dr. Chad Johnston who is opening River Ridge Dermatology on Buchanan Street. Be sure and stop by Sweet Bliss in Pearisburg Square for a delicious frozen yogurt or the Xanadu Game Room on Main Street (formerly Old Virginia BBQ). Coming soon will be Papa's Pizzeria which is being remodeled and will have new management. We welcome all these new businesses to Town. Remember...Shop Pearisburg First!

### HOLIDAYS

July 4, 2013

TOWN OFFICES, LIBRARY and  
COMMUNITY CENTER WILL BE CLOSED

## WATER UPGRADE



Jack St. Clair, Inc continues work on replacing water lines in Town. The construction is finished in the Curve Road and Lilly Fair areas.

The Town added Mayo Circle, Woodrum Street and Tyler Avenue to the project with remaining funds from the Rural Development loan. This work is underway at this time.

This work is part of over \$1.5 million in new lines that will replace old worn out leaking lines. The project is being funded by a low interest loan from Rural Development. These funds were part of the federal stimulus program. The Town urges you to be cautious and careful when utility work is underway. All construction should be completed later this summer. Thank you for your patience while these important projects are completed..

## FESTIVAL IN THE PARK

Customers are reminded that utility bills are due and payable before the 3rd day of the month following receipt of the bill. A 10% penalty is added to the bill on the 4th day of the month. Water service will be cut off ten days later for failure to pay. There is a \$35 reconnection fee applied to turn the meter back on following payment of the bill. Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the Town in order to avoid cut off of service. The Town normally sends out utility bills around the 15th of the month. Prompt payment will not only save you money by avoiding penalties, but will also insure that service is not interrupted.

Also remember to check the Town's website at [www.pearisburg.org](http://www.pearisburg.org) or Facebook page for notices of service interruptions and other important information.

June 14-15 will be the dates for Festival in the Park this summer. The Town will sponsor the year's event. A Festival Committee has been appointed and is working to make the annual event come together. The Friday evening picnic and gospel night will once again start the celebration. All day Saturday will feature music, crafts, games, and exhibits. Be sure to check out the car show. The Committee will continue to expand the entertainment schedule. The Festival will start off with a 5K Race so be sure and sign up for this new event. In addition to the Town and Merchant's Association, the Committee includes members of the Giles Rotary Club and Pearisburg Junior Woman's Club. So mark your calendar and plan on a full weekend of fun with friends and family.

## NEW CARILION CLINIC

Plans are under review for a new doctor's office building to be located on Boxwood Lane near the hospital. This will hold space for nine doctors. The Carilion Family Practices in Pearisburg will be relocated into the new facility. There will be room for future expansion on the property that would allow additional specialties to be added as the need arises. The Town Council has approved a subdivision plat for four new lots cut from the former Dogwood Farms property. Once the storm water, site, and building plans are approved construction will begin. The Town anticipates that this will occur by early summer. With the new hospital anchoring development, the doctor's offices will join Davita Dialysis as new medical facilities. Future plans for the area allow additional office and medical facilities as well as commercial and residential development. Other announcements are anticipated as interest grows in this area.





## TOWN OF PEARISBURG

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Town Manager  
kvittum@pearisburg.org



# Mayor's Corner

Be sure and mark your calendar for the annual Festival on June 14-15. Once again we will have food, games, fun, and fellowship for everyone. A new feature will be the return of the 5K Run/Walk. Starting at the Town Hall participants will run out Wenonah Avenue to Woodrum Street and back. Bring your whole family and enjoy a full weekend of activity. Festival 2013 promises to be a good time for all.

I am very pleased that the Town is working with Giles County on two boat ramp improvement projects at Bluff City and at Whitt-Riverbend Park. The Town is also partnered with Macy on a Safe Route to School project featuring the first Macy Tiger 5k Walk/Run. The Town looks forward to more partnerships like these.

Unfortunately the disagreement between the Town and the Public Service Authority continues. The Town opposes a costly River Withdrawal Project planned by that Authority. It will significantly raise water rates and we do not think it is the best solution. Narrows and Pembroke also oppose the project. I remain hopeful that the PSA will work with the Towns and avoid costly legal fees. Thank you for your support.

**Robert L. Dickerson**

mayor@pearisburg.org

## 2013 PAVING PROJECTS

The Town has completed paving projects for the year. Easton Road and part of Monroe Street have been paved as part of the water/sewer upgrades recently completed. This work was funded by a Rural Development loan.

Also paved this year were Fort Branch Road, Robinhood Drive, High Street, and McGuire Lane. These streets were capped using VDOT Revenue Sharing money that was matched with budgeted funds by the Town.

Henson Avenue was paved earlier this year as part of improvements funded by VDOT Urban Construction Fund. This project included installation of new sidewalks as well as other improvements.

Pearisburg attempts to budget paving funds annually as part of a plan to pave all streets instead of the older chip and seal method of maintenance. We want to thank everyone for their patience during the construction done on Town streets. We hope you enjoy the new streets.



## BOAT LAUNCH PROJECTS



The Town and Giles County are working jointly to improve boat access on the New River. Bluff City and Whitt-Riverbend Park will benefit from upgrades provided by funds awarded in January by Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The two grants were among the largest amounts awarded this year statewide. Concrete ramps, 30 space parking areas and a restroom area are among the improvements being planned for the two popular boating areas.

The Bluff City landing will be relocated off private land and entirely onto public right of way. This will insure future access is kept open at this location. Town and County equipment and labor will provide the required 20% match for the projects. Design work is being started and we anticipate work will begin later this summer. The Town is very excited to be working with Giles County on this project that will benefit citizens and visitors who use the New River.



## TOWN COUNCIL & DEPARTMENT REPORTS

### 2013 LIBRARY ACTIVITY REPORT

#### First Quarter

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Circulation              | 14,051      |
| Book Acquisitions        | 294         |
| Membership               | 7,164       |
| Total Volumes In Library | 35,877      |
| Library Donation Account | \$14,198.41 |
| Number of Internet Users | 1,164       |

### 2013 FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

#### First Quarter

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Structure Fires      | 5  |
| Automobile Accidents | 17 |
| Brush Fires          | 4  |
| Total Calls          | 64 |
| Mutual Aid Received  | 6  |
| Mutual Aid Given     | 11 |
| Calls In Town        | 18 |
| Calls In County      | 38 |

### 2013 POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT

#### First Quarter

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Driving While Intoxicated | 6           |
| Reckless Driving          | 4           |
| Speeding                  | 72          |
| Moving Violations         | 61          |
| Non- Moving Violations    | 79          |
| Assists and Other Calls   | 104         |
| Alarms Answered           | 11          |
| Driving Suspended/Revoked | 37          |
| Seatbelt                  | 13          |
| Felonies                  | 49          |
| Misdemeanors              | 51          |
| Drunk In Public           | 16          |
| Domestic Calls            | 16          |
| Vandalism/Larceny         | 32          |
| Animal Related            | 9           |
| Total General Calls       | 688         |
| Accidents                 | 21          |
| Traffic Control           | 48          |
| Warnings                  | 36          |
| Total Service Calls       | 9,809       |
| Total Fines and Fees      | \$16,392.65 |
| Miles Logged              | 18,764      |

### TOWN COUNCIL ACTIONS

#### March 2013 to May 2013

- \* Council approved a grant from SERCAP for \$11,500 to conduct an analysis of the sewer system.
- \* Council approved bid for a new dump truck submitted by Newberry Ford (\$43,411).
- \* Council approved small subdivision plat off Horsely Drive.
- \* Council accepted parade permits for the Macy Tiger Run and Autism Walk.
- \* Council approved a subdivision plat for four lots in the Dogwood Farms Planned Unit Development.
- \* Council approved Spring Banner design.
- \* Council attended a meeting with the PSA to present an alternative approach to the River Withdrawal Project.
- \* Council approved use of a special donation to the Fire Department.
- \* Council approved a Budget Amendment to the FY 13 Budget.
- \* Council approved a contract with Anderson & Associates to conduct the study of the Sewer Collection System.
- \* Council approved a contract with Sawyer Paving to overlay several streets.
- \* Council presented a resolution honoring a team from The Bank for the Cast Iron Cook Off Competition.
- \* Council approved parade permits for Walk With Jesus and for the Festival 5K Race.
- \* Council approved a Proclamation for Relay for Life Paint Pearisburg Purple.
- \* Council approved granting Columbia Gas an easement to install a line serving the new car wash.
- \* Council approved writing off certain bills and taxes as uncollectable.
- \* Council approved revisions to Operational Procedures for the Fire Department.
- \* Council acquired additional property for parking at the Fire Station.
- \* Council agreed to work with Davenport, Inc on debt restructuring.

### 2013 BUILDING PERMIT REPORT

#### First Quarter

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| New Residential/Commercial | 1          |
| Additions                  | 5          |
| Total Permits              | 24         |
| Total Construction         | \$ 367,130 |