

Newsletter Jan 2007

From this side of the ridge

Our memories make us who we are



Looking back over the three years since our family moved to Franklin from South Florida, I am struck by how the memories we are creating now are so different from those that defined us not so long ago. I write this as I sit in my home office on a quiet, misty January morning. A fire burns in the fireplace. And I look out the third story window and see the fog rolling across green pastures and the ridgeline beyond.

My mind is filled with old memories and with thoughts of the future. I believe now more than ever that we all need to find our place in the world, both literally and figuratively, if we are to live meaningful, fulfilling lives. We need a sanctuary. By this I'm not suggesting a place to hide, to retreat from the world, but rather a place that renews us continually so that we may better engage with the world – and perhaps change it for the better by virtue of our engagement. For our family, that place of refuge is on a particular side of a particular ridge in the ancient mountains of Western North Carolina: Mountain Grove.

The value of this place as memory-maker was brought home to us over the holidays, when our family gathered here at our home in Mountain Grove. These were the best holidays we have ever shared together. We all seem to be at such peace with where we are now. Maybe that realization was underlined by the contrast we felt after a visit, just before Christmas, to our old environment in Miami. On that brief trip, Iva, my wife of 24 years, and I saw glimpses of how our lives use to be. I went back to my old company, a company I started 20-plus years ago. Iva, a software engineer, returned to where she has worked for 15 years (and still does, only now as a telecommuter). We spent time with old friends and visited favorite hangouts. But already our memories were shaded by our time in our new place. What came through clearly to us was the rush of the lives we used to live and how important our choice was to leave all that behind, even with no solid plan before us, and seek out our place on this side of the ridge in Mountain Grove.

We know this kind of move is not for everyone. Yet we also know from emails and letters we get about our two Sanctuary communities that plenty of others are also seeking the same combination of refuge and renewal. Like us, they're ready for a new phase of engagement -- with the natural setting, with the traditions of an historic community, with other citizens who prefer small town mountain life to the annoyances of too many hours spent in cars and in places too soulless to be called real communities.

A real community has to know and honor the unique place in which it finds itself. It knows where it fits in the natural world and in the built environment shaped by local tradition. You know you've achieved community with a new place if it feels as if it belongs with the best of the region's old places, as if it's always been there.

That's what we're committed to creating in these mountains near Franklin, North Carolina. And we're getting closer to our goals all the time. I'm delighted to share with you the official news from the North Carolina Department of Transportation that they will soon begin widening and paving Mountain Grove Road (State Road 1521). This road, which is currently gravel, connects our Sanctuary at Mountain Grove community with already paved routes to Franklin in one direction and to Western Carolina University, the Town of Sylva, and Asheville in the other. When this work is complete, it will shorten the trips to Franklin and Sylva while offering one of the most scenic drives in our region.

Those who choose this high-mountain approach to life will enjoy both the opportunity for solitude and the convenience of a close-in location. [With only 10 mountain view home sites and one completed home \(our waterfall cottage\) available](#) in The Sanctuary at Mountain Grove, if you have not already done so, now is a great time to consider investing your families memories in our growing community.

Between *The Sanctuary at Mountain Grove* and our in-town community, *The Sanctuary Village*, we believe **The Sanctuary Communities** offer the two most popular choices for new homes in the mountains. And we're carefully designing these communities so that they're not only worthy of the unique places in which they're found but that they add to those natural amenities and inspire pride for decades to come.

I hope you will come and visit us soon. But by all means, watch our progress on our website.

[The Sanctuary Communities](#) are about choice, for a lifestyle and a lifetime.