

## **It's Our History**

If you had read the *Manassas Weekender* June 27, 1997, real estate page, you would have learned that “The Northern Virginia hunt country’s premier adult community is one step closer to becoming reality soon, as U. S. Home has received the Prince William County Planning Commission’s unanimous approval for the Board of Supervisors to proceed with zoning for Heritage Hunt.” If this caught your interest, you could have called 1-888-424-HUNT for more information. U. S. Home settled on the parcel that was to become Heritage Hunt on July 31, 1997, following zoning approval by the board of supervisors.

Jerry Berman, U. S. Home regional vice president, now set about the task of locating prospective residents who would purchase homes in this new active-adult, country-club community. Detailed market research was to be conducted prior to opening Heritage Hunt. In addition to articles published in real estate sections, 50,000 questionnaires were mailed out seeking to determine what amenities would draw prospective buyers to this senior community and what suggestions or opinions they had regarding home plans and lifestyle. Focus groups were also held with Jerry Berman and his marketing vice president present to gather more detailed information on potential buyers’ preferences and requirements—one-story living and ample closet space topped the list. Also, general information brochures were sent to questionnaire respondents and focus group attendees with an invitation to become members of the founders’ club. Those who accepted this invitation received updated information on developmental progress for the new community and were offered special privileges for signing non-contingent contracts before model construction began. Members of the club would receive free lawn care for a year, special incentives or discounts on options, moving services, and brokerage fees, and invitations to special events. In addition to creating an incentive for these seniors to buy early, the club provided an opportunity for its members to become acquainted at the promotional events that were held. This was felt to be important for buyers who would be moving away from established neighborhoods, friends, and family. U. S. Home also had a promotion with a local real estate company that would lower its commission from 7 to 5½ percent for all Heritage Hunt buyers who listed their current homes with an agent of this company.

October 16, 1997, was the formal opening of the sales trailer, which was located to the left of the entrance from Lee Highway as one entered Heathcote Boulevard. It contained a large attractive reception area with pictorial marketing information on the walls as well as a large model site plan table in the center of the room. Sales offices were off an adjoining hall.

An article in the November 7, 1997, *Manassas Weekender* entitled “Let the ‘Hunt’ begin...” stated that Heritage Hunt, Prince William County’s newest age-restricted community celebrated its grand opening recently with a ribbon cutting and luncheon for prospective buyers. It showed a picture of prospective buyers surveying the terrain model of Heritage Hunt with Jerry Berman and Rory Dickens of U. S. Home. Also pictured were Prince William County Supervisor Ed Wilbourn and Bill Gerald of U. S. Home who cut the ribbon to officially open Heritage Hunt.

[Next month’s article will continue the events that opened the Heritage Hunt community.]

*Karen Naylor, Community Relations Committee member and Heritage Hunt historian*