

SUNRAY SHORES, INC.

Back in the mid 1960s, Harry Smith wanted to sell off 25 acres. The land was a scrubby, swampy mess. By today's wetland standards, It should never have been developed. There was once a stream that by then had been dredged into the now familiar Sunset Canal and it connected to a pond, "the Old Pond". Sunset Drive went only as far as the beach; but Pond Road reached over the old wooden road bridge that spanned the canal high enough for small boats to pass under and ran just past the only house in the area., a little white camp where Mike Farren's house now stands.

Harry approached his friend, Noel Derry, who had a camp on Sunset Drive. Noel called his brother-in-law, Maurice Durgin, and Maurice called his brother, Ken Durgin. Together, they were known as the three D's. They formed a corporation called Sunray Shores, Inc., and then the fun began. These men were not real estate developers. They all had families and full time jobs. Noel worked for Scott and Williams; Maurice ran a business repairing typewriters (which in later years became MacDurgin Associates); and Ken was a career Air Force officer stationed at the Boston Army Base, awaiting orders go to Viet Nam. These industrious men were only available on weekends to work on the property.

Noel was in charge of sales and the Durgin brothers took charge of clearing the lots. They hired Mr. North, an old Yankee woodsman to topple the trees; then Maurice and Ken sliced them up and burned the brush. The canal lots sold originally for \$1500 and the back lots for \$600. All the money they received from the lot sales was reinvested into land fill for the roads and the lots. Progress was slow at first. Eventually, the corporation hired a marketing team. Even though prices tripled, sales grew steadily and they hired construction people. John Jurta and Al Loring were two of the developers who brought in heavy equipment.

Our streets were named after the daughters of the developers. June Circle was named for Noel Derry's daughter; Elaine Drive and Nancy Drive were named for Ken Durgin's daughters; and Linda Drive, Sheila Drive and Arlene Drive for Maurice's two daughters and a niece.

The men did incredible work. They dredged out the canal, forming the south marina and installing a boat ramp. White, uniform boat docks laid side by side at this marina. They also marked out 80' and 90' wide lots and dredged out boat slips for each lot. They then built a foot bridge across the canal, south of the marina. It was picturesque.

There was a huge sand pit where "the New Pond" now is situated. People used to drive or walk across the sand pit to get to a hand-crank pump near Tucker Shore Road to get their drinking water. This sand pit proved to be invaluable. The sand and gravel was excavated and used to fill, fill and refill the swampy lots surrounding the canal and the two ponds. The two ponds were eventually connected. Al Loring once remarked that every day they would come back to add more fill only to find that the fill they dumped the day before had sunk and was nowhere to be found. Several of the lots surrounding the Old Pond proved to be impossible to fill, and were never built on. John Jurta, who up until recent years, still owned five of the sunken lots on Elaine Drive, loved to tell the story of how his big tractor "sunk in the muck" in a

matter of minutes. They had to send divers down to find it and bring it back up.

The first camp built in the area belonged to Arthur and Ellen Beane. This property now has a beautiful red, Cape Cod house, owned by the Reinauers, . Eventually, the area began to grow. Champoux built their "pink" place, Ken Durgin built the camp that his daughter, Nancy still owns at 127 Sunset Drive. Burgland, Bolduc, Lyons, Ross, Salerno, Proctor, Hanks, Stec; all pioneers.

The 3 D's had great foresight for which we owe them a huge debt of gratitude. They knew that because the Town of Belmont had no Zoning regulations, it was necessary for them to come up with a set of rules to make this a beautiful neighborhood. They enlisted the help of Attorney O'Neill, and the declarations were drafted and attached to each deed. With these rules, no trailers or pig farms or junk yards or multiple rental cottages would ever spoil our neighborhood. To prevent the hassle of each property owner having to dig their own well, they dug a community well where the pump house now stands and ran pipe under the roads. They ran tees off the main line to each lot with a shut off. Then, the lot owners paid to hook up to the water system. Everyone installed their own septic systems. Unfortunately, due to the very high water table, the systems filled all too quickly and caused numerous headaches. It wasn't until the early 1980's that the federal and state and local governments collaborated in an effort to clean up the lakes and ran sewer lines down our streets. Oh happy day!

Another joyous time in the neighborhood came shortly after the sewer lines. In 1982, The Town **finally** paved our roads. Up until then, we and our cars all suffered the treacherous, washboard, ratty dirt roads to get to our camps. They were horrible. If you forgot something at the store, it was better to go without than to travel that miserable road again. Broken axles and misalignments were common occurrences, as were migraines. Then, like magic, the roads were smooth. It was heaven!

Bob Bolduc, and the "boys" built the railroad tie walls the entire length of the canal. It is a tribute to the beautification of the area that the individual owners have repaired and replaced the walls with the same materials, maintaining their continuity.

The Town of Belmont adopted Zoning Regulations in 1986. Since then, we haven't had to "police" the building of homes like we used to. The growth in our area is nearly complete; very few lots remain unbuilt. Now, we mostly only witness the replacement of the old summer camps with modern, year-round homes. Sunray Shores, Inc. and namely the efforts of three special men, laid the foundation for Sunray Shores Improvement Association and Sunray Shores Water District to continue the positive development and beautification of our area.

A huge thank you to Kenneth Durgin for these facts and photos.
Janice P Beauchemin