

Va-Pe Wm / Buckland



A "trimming" of right-of-way for Vepco often means "wholesale tree slaughter," and a Buckland job was no exception.

## FOR POWERLINES

# More trees butchered

MRS. MARTHA LEACH of the historic mill village of Buckland watched from her window that overlooks Broad Run what she called "wholesale tree slaughtering."

Vepco representatives were in the grove of sycamores that line "The Run" (Broad Run) opposite Mrs. Leach's house, which was once an old store. Across the rattle of water, the men were "exercising Vepco's right-of-way."

To the tune of portable radios and whining chain saws, Mrs. Leach suffered the concert provided by the Astec Tree Company and watched a narrow, insignificant right-of-way "modernized."

While she watched, the tree cutters played and took coffee breaks. "And then I saw one man run and hide behind a tree and a second man run behind another, and I ran into the living room because I thought they were going to dynamite," said Mrs. Leach casually. "Then two men came looking for the hidden two, and I could see they were playing hide-and-seek."

**THE FRIVOLITY OF THE** tree cutters and what Mrs. Leach characterized as the arrogance of C.E. Hale, Operations Construction Supervisor for Vepco in Warrenton—the man who received Mrs. Leach's complaint with a "we have the right-of-way and we're gonna exercise it"—was almost more than the lady could bear.

Martha Leach is just the kind of woman an operations construction supervisor dreads. She called the newspaper; she

countries that have hidden unsightly utilities underground, travelled to historic areas in England where every effort has been made to retain the natural beauty of the countryside.

"My contention is, you can have service and beauty too," said Mrs. Leach. "We've been here 23 years and this is the first time they've done wholesale tree slaughtering on the right-of-way. They cut the right-of-way and throw the limbs over on the banks of Bull Run to wash away in the winter."

**SHE CALLED VEPKO IN** Warrenton. She reported that Mr. Hale declared, "I ordered it done. We have to get service in."

Mrs. Leach wanted to know why Vepco needed to clear this dogleg right-of-way on swampy ground by Broad Run for a few houses along a road farther up hill, when lines could be run directly into them.

"A trouble-free line necessitates cutting all the trees," she observed. "They'll never get in here when its limbs fall on the line." In the end Mrs. Leach admitted that she was a veteran of the arrogance of public utilities, had heard slick talk from a man trying to get right-of-way at a previous home.

"Vepco's not popular on right-of-way acquisition because they abuse it," she said, concluding that she feels she performs a service if she makes tree cutters a little self-conscious every time they jerk on a chain saw, and supervisors squirm before they can realize

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This grove of trees along Broad Run opposite historic Buckland was "trimmed" during a right-of-way clearing, upsetting long-time residents of the old town.

right-of-way and we're gonna exercise it"—was almost more than the lady could bear.

Martha Leach is just the kind of woman an operations construction supervisor dreads. She called the newspaper; she wrote the Environmental Protection Agency; and she tried to rally support from a local radio station that had broadcasted about "Keep America Beautiful" for weeks.

Mrs. Leach has visited European

acquisition because they abuse it," she said, concluding that she feels she performs a service if she makes tree cutters a little self-conscious every time they jerk on a chain saw, and supervisors squirm before they can realize their plans to run paths across the countryside.

And she observed; "We pay higher rates for line clearing that takes two weeks because the men play hide-and-seek."—Harrison O'Connor

## Pipeline foes organize

**THE NEWLY** formed "Environmental Conservation Committee of Loudoun" (ECOL) will announce "a plan of action" to deal with the threat of a natural gas pipeline that will beset the County at a meeting in the Friends Meeting House in Lincoln on October 4 at 8 p.m.

Ever since Consolidated Systems L & G announced in June the routing of a 100-foot gas pipe right-of-way from Gilberts Corner to North Fork, Lincoln, between Purcellville and Round Hill, along Short Hill Mountain to the Potomac, Loudoun residents have worried "about the safety of a 30 inch pipe 30 inches underground," or "insurance companies reluctant to insure house near a pipeline" or whether "a high tension line will follow that gas line"...

The pipeline threat is not new to Loudouners. Columbia L & G and Consolidated announced joint plans to enter Loudoun a year ago, prompting the organization of the rather passive Mt. Gilead Association.

While Mt. Gilead residents may no longer be

concerned, since the re-routing of the gas line, apparently more Loudouners have re-acted to the threat.

A **SPOKESMAN** for ECOL said that Thursday's meeting in Lincoln will note that since Consolidated must soon make an environmental report to the Federal Power Commission, Loudouners will watch the Federal Records and that ECOL will conduct its own environmental report.

Various subcommittees will explore legal aspects,

including the Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection's argument that additional Vepco lines through Rappahannock County are not necessary.

The Loudoun Committee representation is county-wide, and apparently ECOL will explore all possible ways to force large utilities to confer with local jurisdictions during the planning processes, not just take a few local officials for a helicopter ride two weeks prior to announcing a final route.—H. O'C.

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