

Ocean Park Echo

**Meeting
Meeting
Meeting**

Thursday

Nov. 6

7 p.m.

**Ocean Park
Fire & Rescue**

www.opcl.org



They Stay in Ocean Park

(This is the first of an occasional series on the history of Ocean Park. The story appeared in *The Beacon* on March 30, 1967. It was written by Suzanne Holden and is reprinted here with permission from *The Virginian-Pilot*.)

The arrival 5 weeks ago of the Ethan E. Wood's tiny son; Mark, brings the population of Ocean Park to right around 600.

If this newest newcomer grows up to be like his neighbors, you won't be able to pry him away from here with a crowbar. And about 25 years hence, he's likely to be adding offspring of his own to Ocean Park's steadily, if slowly growing resident group.

The Woods, like their nearby friends, the Walter G. Bryans and E.B. Scribners, live here in their own homes, decidedly by choice. Only a few families have been moved by happenstance or inheritance to make it home. They're the ones who used to live in "the country," who watched a new resort come into being about the time of World War I and who now know Ocean Park as one of the most peaceful and closely knit year-round settlements in the Beach.

It wasn't until after the Depression that the bulk of the families here now started moving in permanently. Talking about her attachment for this tiny community straddling Shore Drive at the west end of the Lesner Bridge, Mrs. Scribner said, "The air just gets you."

Like many others who own property here now, the Scribners came vacationing and never left. It's a place where friends come ready-made, where loyalty to one's neighbors is considered admirable, not one of style. Perhaps the "one big family" atmosphere shaped naturally by long-time land owners has something to do with the way newcomers behave, but whatever the cause, the mood of togetherness catches on fast, and it works toward the comfort of all.

There's nothing elegant about Ocean Park. It bears no resemblances to the Beach's oceanfront community with its high-rise, luxury motels and fancy restaurants. Ocean Park looks like home. When home has the fringe benefits of a clean beach, the pristine beauty of towering sand dunes and quiet water in which children can safely swim, its appeal is readily understood. Mother of four children, Mrs. Wood said, "We've considered moving, we'd like to have more room. We even picked out a house in another neighborhood. But when we get right down to it, we can't leave. The first thing we do in the morning is to look out at the water and the last thing we do at night is look out at the water in the light from the bridge-tunnel."

See Ocean Park, Page 4



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Bayfront News

News from Bayfront Advisory Council Oct. 16 meeting

SHORE DRIVE UPDATE: Phil Pullen, Public Works, reported that when street lighting, construction and landscaping are finished, **Phase I** will be complete. **Phase III** will be designed soon. **Phase IV** is funded, and there will be an opportunity for additional public comment in January 2009. **Phase IV** is funded at approximately \$12 million, with work starting in 2012 and completed in 2013.

LESNER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT UPDATE: David Jarman, Public Works, reported that the City of Virginia Beach has allocated \$10.1 million for the design phase of the Lesner Bridge replacement project, which should be 35% complete by November. At present, additional funding looks grim, as the declining local and state revenues and a worsening federal economy offer no further funding from the usual budgets. The only remaining prospect would be to seek earmark funding from Congress.

As far as design development, environmental concerns will be addressed according to the terms of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires, in this case, an Environmental Assessment, as opposed to an Environmental Impact Statement. This assessment has begun and will require public input at a later date. It is anticipated that the assessment will take approximately 18 months to complete. The City is partnered in this effort by VDOT, Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The proposed structure is expected to be 1,575 feet long and about 54 feet wide, consisting of 9 sets of piers, 4 on the west side and 5 on the east, with a 225 ft. spread bracketing the channel, and 150 ft. on the others.

Continued on Page 3

OPCL Finance Committee Update

The asset allocation of the Robbins Legacy Account is approximately 14% equity and 86% fixed income/CD exposure, on a balance of approximately \$170,000. To date, \$2,624 of interest has been earned since March and is available for disbursement to OPCL.

Due to the almost unprecedented market conditions and concerns over the banking system, OPCL had our account representative, Jody Luck, attend the October board meeting to discuss the Robbins account. It was noted that our CD investments were prudently spread out among six different issuers and that Wachovia Securities offered substantial and multiple layers of investor protection.



State Water Control Board Meeting Re: Indigo Dunes Deferred

The State Water Control Board hearing on Indigo Dunes, scheduled for Oct. 16, was postponed to a future, undetermined date.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued preliminary approval of the Sandler's permit for wetlands destruction at Pleasure House Point in June.

Members of the Ocean Park Civic League and the Shore Drive Community Coalition are continuing to work with professionals in the environmental and legal communities to oppose the application. See www.noindigodunes.com for updates.



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Bayfront News From Page 2

Engineers are evaluating the need for either a southern or a northern alignment. The southern alignment would require the relocation of Dominion Power utilities, at a cost of as much as \$12 million. The northern alignment would not require this, but would closely abut the existing 3556 building. The next target in the schedule is a public meeting in spring 2009, 60% design completion in early 2009 and the completed NEPA Assessment in 2010.

BAC UPDATE: Following staff reports and updates, Kal Kassir reported on the meeting between himself, Scott Ayers and Alura Guion with City Officials to air BAC concerns about how BAC is perceived by residents, heard by the City and presented on the City's Website. In addition, the City's problems with making its Website more user friendly and organizing and including information citizens need and want were discussed. Anyone who has recommendations or observations should convey them to Mr. Kassir at kkassir@aol.com.

STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS: Bernick outlined the City's work on Strategic Growth Areas (SGA). Presently, there are 12 designated areas, with the resort area constituting a 13th, more loosely circumscribed. The Bayfront area is not currently included. Bernick

Elaborated on the five basic principles applicable to an SGA: 1) Efficiency of land use (high-density development) and pedestrian-friendly design including walk/bike paths and appropriate lighting 2) Full use of urban services, for example, streets, power and infrastructure that already exist 3) Compatible mixed-use development 4) Full range of transportation services 5) Emphasis on optimal architectural and landscaping appeal. Bernick said the City may have to fund and engage a consulting team to develop a master plan for the SGAs. The City would like to schedule the development of 3 SGAs per year. Work has begun on the first, at Burton Station, in the Northampton Blvd. area.

A discussion ensued about whether or not the BAC should request inclusion of the Bayfront area on the list of SGAs. It was determined that there was little to risk and possibly much to gain. Since the City is currently holding public meetings to invite citizen comment on the upcoming 5-year Comprehensive Plan, BAC was encouraged to present their vision for the area at one of the scheduled meetings between now and Oct. 30, or to communicate with Tom Pauls of the City's Planning Department.

“The children never lack for something to do. This beach is just wonderful.”

The Bryans like Ocean Park so well they just built onto their home. “Good roads have made all the difference to us,” Mrs. Bryan said. “We moved away from here 20 years ago because it was so inconvenient. We’ve been back for four years.”

Both Mr. and Mrs. Bryan grew up in the area and they’re obviously grateful that their four children can enjoy its relaxed way of living.

The mothers here suffer little of the awesome chauffeuring duties city mothers complain about. Both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meet right in the neighborhood. The children ride a bus to school. The library comes to them via Bookmobile.

Larry Marshall, city councilman for Lynnhaven Borough, believes the man who laid out Ocean Park, “was 30 years ahead of his time.”

“Take a look at the map,” he said. “Those curves and loops and circles form natural parks. It’s a handsome plan.”

“Live oaks, stunted a bit in the salt winds, take on a look of oriental serenity. There’s many an oasis of welcome shade under their branches.”

An Ohio couple who’ve vacationed here for 20 years long ago labeled the combination of trees and beach one of the

community’s chief *attractions*. Now they’ve retired here and built one of the handsomer structures, a brick duplex that’s both home and a source of income.

Then there’s the Man in the Gray Flannel Suit who welcomes the tranquility of this little backwater after a day of the city’s fierce commercialism. There’s the Baptist minister now retired from the presidency of Elon College. He may now worship hourly in the observance of some of nature’s finest benefits.

There’s the shipyard employee and the shipyard executive; the man who gave the section its first and only grocery store and another who operates a thriving hardware and building supply business.

The civic league, the woman’s club and the volunteer fire department—the first in the Beach—bring together there divergent peoples in a “one for all” brand of effort.

George C. Lyon, chief, and Eugene Caldwell, president, have served the entire 21 years of the fire department’s existence. Ocean Park people claim Lyon “unofficial mayor” as well.

One of the women labeled the fire department as “the center of the universe” to the men and boys of the community. It wasn’t said with chagrin, either. Doesn’t she worry about her teen-age boys helping fight fires?

“Goodness no,” she said, “I’m so proud of them.”

“They love that fire station. It gives them something really worthwhile to do. You can go by there any weekend and see

them shining up those trucks and engines. They take a lot of pride in that.”

William H. Farrow heads the league this year. A count of membership is a hard thing to pinpoint, he said, because “we consider everybody in the neighborhood a member.”

Beautification is the league’s springtime bent. The current project got that name out of the community’s usual courteous approach,

“We were afraid if we called it a clean-up drive, the people would think their premises were dirty,” said Farrow.

The Lyons have lived in Ocean Park for 35 years. “I started going down there to fish and I fell in love with the place,” said Lyon. “Then I married an Ocean Park girl (the former Louise Wood) and that fixed it.”

“Their home is at 3800 Shore Drive and it, too, is a gathering place for the neighborhood. Teens have a steady Friday night date to roller skate on the Lyons’ lighted and paved basketball court.”

The civic league and the woman’s club meet at the fire station in a big room built especially for community gatherings. George Lyon reminisces fondly about the help of woman’s club members as the new building went up. “We did it all with volunteer labor,” he said, “and those ladies cooked and served us our meals every weekend.”

Continued on Page 5



Ocean Park continued from Page 4

The woman's club draws its membership from neighborhoods other than Ocean Park – Baylake Pines and Thoroughgood among them. But no one would think of changing the club's name to indicate that it isn't exclusively an Ocean Park organization.

"It started out that way and we think it should remain so," said Mrs. J. Laurence Eley of Baylake Pines, a past president. Mrs. L. E. Quackenbush is currently president.

Before there was a church anywhere nearby, the woman's club led in the founding of the non-denominational Ocean Park church, still a flourishing house of worship. Now, Baylake Methodist, Our Saviour's Lutheran, Bayside Christian and Bayside Baptist churches are all within a few minutes' drive. Active and influential the woman's club dips into its cash reserves each year for liberal gifts for a students' scholarship to libraries, the fire department, and for community improvement, such as beautifying Shore Drive. Volunteers from the club help with the Bloodmobile's clerical work, visit and entertain Kecoughtan and Eastern State patients.

Hand in glove with the league, the women got Ocean Park streets graded and drainage ditches installed. There's little Ocean Park residents would like to see changed. Mothers of elementary school children are unhappy about their youngsters' transfer next year from Thoroughgood to John B. Dey school because of overcrowding at the former. But they understand.

Gratitude for getting city water a year ago after the Ash Wednesday storm fouled their wells, overshadowed the disappointment when city sewage lines stopped short of Ocean Park. It sounds like Ocean Park is a nice place to live; you wouldn't want to just visit there.



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Zoning UPDATES

See the items below for an update on current issues affecting your community:

The **Planning Commission is scheduled** to hear an application on Nov. 12, for the street closure of a portion of Jefferson Boulevard, located at the northwest corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Windsor Crescent and a portion of Windsor Crescent to the north of Jefferson Boulevard. The beach access at the end of Raleigh Avenue runs through Windsor Crescent, This application will not impact the beach access. The applicant's home encroaches into the 40-foot right-of-way approximately 9 inches on one corner of the home and has an overhanging deck that encroaches 5.7 feet. If the closure is recommended by the commission, City Council will need to approve, and the applicant will be required to purchase the portion of the street closed to resolve the encroachments.

SDCC: Chick's Oyster Bar

It was noted by the Shore Drive Community Coalition that Chick's Oyster Bar has hired on-site security to address concerns raised this summer by Lynnhaven Colony and Vista Circle residents. Their efforts to curtail late night issues are appreciated, and the problems caused primarily by non-locals seem to have abated.

Picnic in the Park

OPCL hosted its first annual "Picnic in the Park" to raise money for the Southeastern Food Bank of Virginia on Sunday, Sept. 7, at Lockhaven Park, off East Stratford Road. There was live music by a steel drum band, food, drink, "can-castle" building, and other fun activities. We collected \$330 and more than 600 pounds of food for the community food bank. The event was successful in numbers but also enjoyed by many. Keep an eye out for our next event and, who knows, we may have the 2nd annual picnic in the park next year.



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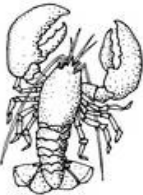


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There are **1,500** households in Ocean Park. But only **180** are members of the Ocean Park Civic League. We need your support. Please join or renew your membership. Dues are only \$10 per household. Property owners, residents, renters and businesses are eligible to join. Please encourage your neighbors as well.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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AREAS OF INTEREST IN THE OCEAN PARK CIVIC LEAGUE

Newsletter Contributions/Distribution • Shore Drive Committees Liaison

Traffic Committee

Zoning Committee

Social Events Committee

Mail this application with your dues (\$10 annually, payable to OPCL) to:

Ocean Park Civic League (OPCL)

P.O. Box 55385. Virginia Beach, Va. 23471

