

OCNA news

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The OLD CATONSVILLE Neighborhood Association, INC.

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GOOD CHANGE

We moved to Beechwood Ave. in 1999 and our son was born two months later. I remember strolling him to the Hillcrest playground shortly after he could hold his head up and talking with another mother who had lived in the neighborhood for 5 years. “You’ll see,” she said. “You’ll blink, and 5 years will have gone by.” True words. And yet, there have been so many good changes in these 22 years. For example, that playground. In 1999 it consisted of a metal slide and a hole full of sand. The woods next to the playground were an exciting play spot (poison ivy being part of the excitement). Though I felt sad when the church started making some changes there, but what they have created is a magical woodland for both humans and wild creatures.

I put out a call for good change lists from neighbors, and heard from a number who have lived here even longer than I. One of the good changes is all the new young families—Rick Cook says “I seemed to have noticed an influx of younger families with children. It is nice to hear kids playing and walking to school on some streets that those sounds have been absent for a while!! Great stability for the neighborhood!!!” And Kitty Corbitt, here since 1964, observed: “Our perspective has changed from Beechwood and the woods (where we lived 1964-1989), to Summit and recently the Woodlands (1989-present). From my dining room chair the joy of watching young and old has given Don and I lots of smiles during the covid.”

Other good changes:

Al Gruber says, from my 35 years in Catonsville,

- Traffic calming and islands along Edmonson Ave
 - Tree-planting and pruning by the Catonsville Canopy Project (Yes! Huge thanks to Jim Himel for this!!)
 - Walking paths by the Catonsville Rails-to-Trails group
 - The Trolley Trail to Ellicott City, mostly a County project, I believe
 - Frederick Road Fridays and Lurman Woods concerts
 - The Fourth of July Celebrations Committee events
- (ed. note—hard to imagine Catonsville without the parade!)

The restaurant scene has developed enormously. As Bindy Quigley notes, “I love having all the different restaurant choices within walking distance of my home. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are all so close...and there is diversity, too. The challenge is in choosing which place!” Even for vegetarians (not so in 1999). As Kathy O’Dell mentions, there is yummy vegan & gluten-free food at specialty venues like Sprout or Umami, but such offerings can be found at many other venues, and also outdoor seating at more and more restaurants (silver lining of the pandemic).

And not just Frederick Rd., but other retail hubs have grown more interesting. Rob Brennan points out that “Catonsville Junction has resurged as a retail crossroads anchored by the 7-11, Scittino’s and the old school Catonsville Tavern. Over the past 20 years, Opies has increased their visibility and the Tastee Zone has stepped up, perhaps energized by the Trolley Trail paving and Catonsville Rails to Trails and the Edmonson Avenue bike lane improvements. Ellicott City is a walking and biking destination.

Long timers Bertimini’s, Cafe Roma, Oakdale Wine and Staub Art Studio have been joined by Yoga, Crank it up Bike and Wielands. It has become a varied retail village.

Route 40 has become more diverse and vibrant. The furniture stores are closing, Asian-based food opportunities, high end car dealerships, healthcare and convenience stores are investing and expanding to serve a broader regional base. Route 40 is polishing up.” H-Mart is a coup for Catonsville, along with diverse ethnic restaurants. AND there is electric car charging right at Giant, as Annie Antar points out.

Nancy Haines mentions the many neighbors regularly stopping by to cheer on the 11U Catonsville Cubs at the Hillcrest baseball diamonds, which were completely redone during the pandemic, and the innovations and continuous improvements at the Woodland Sanctuary (aka “the Slice”) at Catonsville Presbyterian Church and the brand new Pavillion for outdoor learning.

Continued on the next page.

Melissa Woods said this in an email: Our Catonsville community has started and supported unique, important, and thriving businesses in Catonsville, and even through a pandemic, most have survived. We have a creative, resourceful, and hardworking group of neighbors that share their passions and strengths with the community and the community has supported them wholeheartedly.

We have so many wonderful organizations that help and give back to the community and beyond. From Catonsville Emergency Assistance, to EPIK Kids*, The Women's Giving Circle, Scout Troops, Rails to Trails, churches of all denominations, and oodles more that I just can't think of at the moment. :>)"

*a program that Ellie McIntire started afterschool at several local elementary schools that facilitates the students giving back and doing nice things for the community like visiting nursing homes, making bags for homeless, and other fun things.

Kirby Spencer, longtime community advocate and Catonsville resident pointed out that Community Revitalization Efforts started by Sam Moxley in the late 1990s were the start to attract building renovations, drawing in businesses like Atwaters, Pats Porch & Catonsville Gourmet. (ed. note: though the Atwaters live in Catonsville, for years the closest place to buy their bread was in Kensington).

The Baltimore County Arts Guild, which provides a long-missing piece to a vital community—a place for arts classes, performances, exhibitions—is now at the old Catonsville Clubhouse on St. Timothy's Lane. And something Kirby worked on for years has come to pass—our Arts & Entertainment Designation as “Catonsville Arts District.”

Now I'll add a few of my own. Let's not forget the farmer's markets. We have not one, but two sources of freshly grown produce, meats, and baked goods. In fact, there's a third market—the Catonsville Food Co-op has wonderfully priced food from local farms at the “Rainbow Church” on Edmondson four times a month.

UMBC has changed tremendously in the past 20 years, from a fine “commuter school” to an international leader in education, with beautiful new buildings including a stunning performing arts center, which presents magnificent shows open to the community.

And, OCNA always had good bones, but homes have been beautifully renovated without tripling their size, as has happened in other older neighborhoods. Gardens are flourishing, and many homeowners are using native plants and creating habitat to help the whole environment flourish.

We're doing it! Embracing the old, but letting in the new and good. Thanks to all for your part in making this a welcoming community. ■

by Ann Quinn

ARE YOU NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OR HAVE SOME NEWS TO SHARE?

If you're new, welcome to the neighborhood! Please share some information about yourself (and family) if you would like us to publish a welcome message in the next issue of the newsletter. We look forward to getting to know you and sharing our wonderful neighborhood.

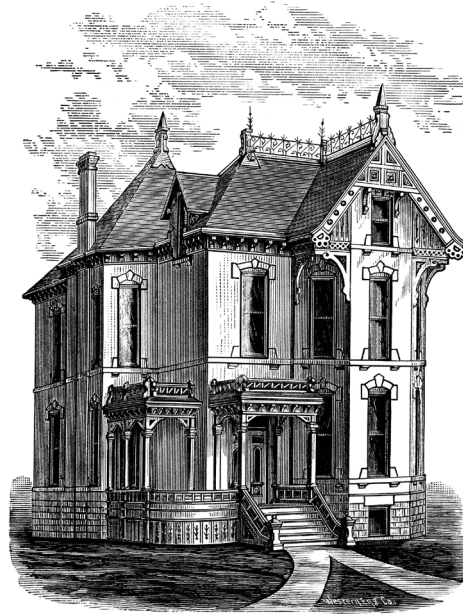
Or, perhaps you are celebrating a family milestone such as a big birthday, new baby, retirement, graduation, or a 25th, 50th or 75th even anniversary. Send us a message to print in the next issue. Photos are also welcome! ■



OCNA NATURE WATCH – GOING BATTY

While the record breaking film “The Dark Knight” may have brought bats to the minds of its millions of viewers, a close encounter of the bat kind can really send shivers down your spine. When I first moved into our Osborne Avenue house, I shared it with starlings and sparrows nesting in the eaves. Their access was kindly provided by the squirrel family, whose matriarch had chewed through the soffits beneath the eaves. I can only speculate that our friendly neighborhood bats had also taken advantage of the squirrels’ creative carpentry. At that time I had a lovely old cherry four-poster bed which had an actual old-fashioned canopy top. Thus it was that on a warm summer night, I was awakened by the sensation of something moving past my face. While not a light sleeper, my senses are attuned to any type of abnormal stimulus. So I opened my eyes in the dark, wide awake, thinking, “Something just flew past my face!” And sure enough, a minute later a flapping entity passed between my face and the canopy. It was a bat flying in circle eights around the bedroom and each time passing beneath rather than above the bed canopy. Well that is a stimulus certain to get anyone’s blood pumping and I quickly rolled out of bed, crawled out the bedroom door and closed it. Now I’m not afraid of bats and know that they don’t fly at you with the intent of getting tangled in your hair. But there is something unnerving about having this dark furry creature continuously whizzing around and past you in the dark. Armed with my trusty trout fishing net, I boldly re-entered the bedroom, turned the lights on and then, of course, had to play hide-and-seek with the little critter, who had decided he had better hunker down. After scanning all the walls and furniture, I finally found him hanging on a window screen, offering the simple solution of lifting the screen and shooing him (or her) out.

Unfortunately, that was not my last bat encounter. Over about 25 years, we’ve probably entertained a total of perhaps 10 bats, most of which could simply be shooed out an open door or window, but a few of which just seemed to disappear, their bodies later discovered (one in the bottom of a suspended ceiling light cover) some time later as a result of a slight smell of decay. One of the most memorable visitors appeared while Sharon, I, and our daughter Japhia were sitting on the living room couch watching a movie. While the ladies were covering their heads with pillows, I proceeded to try to intercept the bat, which was doing a regular circle route through living room, dining room,



back foyer, kitchen, front foyer and back to the living room—something like a bat version of NASCAR. It was a true bat-inspired circus!

Most OCNA residents, if they are attentive just after dusk during the summer and early fall, would realize that bats are quite common in the neighborhood. And it may surprise people to know that there are several species of bats that might occur in our area, the three most common being the little brown bat, the big brown bat and the hoary bat. The little brown bat is most likely my unwanted visitor. And I know why they find our home so inviting. It turns out that shutters, particularly the original old louver type that we have on almost every window, are ideal bat houses, providing a dark space between the shutter and house shingles and plenty of surfaces to cling to while sleeping during the day. But while I can understand the attractiveness of our house to bats, I have yet to figure out how they are getting in, particularly after our major renovation in which the roof, including eaves and soffits, was replaced. After our bat NASCAR experience, I even called an animal control company to see if they might help. Their steely-eyed technician identified one open space above a basement window that might be a place of entry. But when I then requested that they close it off, I learned it was not permitted. It turns out that the little brown bat is a protected species in Maryland. As a result, access to a potential roosting area could not be closed off until after the bats’ normal time for migration from the area, generally in October. Who knew?

But now our little bats are facing a much greater threat than me and my trout net. It also turns out that wind power turbines, which are currently providing all of my own electric power through Clean Currents, are responsible for killing significant numbers of bats; even more bats than birds. This is surprising, given the animal form of radar that bats use to detect their flying insect prey. The whirring turbine blades create pockets of low air pressure, and bats moving into such pockets experience rupture of blood vessels in their lungs. Birds, which have stronger lungs, do not experience such an effect and are more often killed by being struck by a blade. So as with everything else man does, actions with the best intentions often have unintended consequences. Bat migration routes and timing are now being taken into account sitting and operating new wind power projects. ■

by Bill Richkus (Article originally printed in Fall, 2008)

HOME RESTORATION CORNER: THE LOWDOWN ON GUTTERS

Who would have guessed that the latest hot topic to hit the OCNA listserv would be gutters? This large response inspired me to research the topic. Also, I would love to keep Andy from climbing huge ladders and walking on our roofs, leaf blowers and other devices in hand to clean the gutters.

Types of Gutters: The Historic Perspective

Originally homes, especially Victorians, did not have gutters. The edge and pitch of the roof were designed to divert rainwater well away from the foundation. If they did have gutters, they were half rounds attached without a fascia board. To view this topic in greater detail, go to www.heritagehillweb.org where you will also find guidelines to qualify for the National Historic Tax Credit.

The Present Day Perspective

Unless you have such a home, here are your other options.

Copper is the most beautiful and maintenance free of them all. Although costing \$18-\$25 per linear foot, they will last for at least 100 years. A sealant can be applied to prevent green oxidation.

PVC/Vinyl is a wonderful choice, long lasting, easy to install, lightweight, paintable and cheap at \$4 or \$5 per linear foot. The drawback is that with cold and heat, they tend to get brittle and break or sag after a few years.

Steel is stronger than aluminum and good for the weight of ice and snow. The con is that after 5 or 10 years, its finish becomes galvanized and ugly.

Aluminum is THE most popular choice. It's cheap, easily installed, and comes in several colors. The cons are that it dents easily, can't hold ice and snow that well, and expands twice as fast as steel or copper.

Lead will last forever, never needs painting, resists rust, is malleable, cheaper than copper, is non-combustible, and a poor conductor of electricity. Unfortunately, you have to live in England to use it. The Brits also have beautiful imitation iron gutters. Visit www.guttering.co.uk.

Wood, fir and cedar in particular, is a wonderful choice that will last forever and look gorgeous. The cons are that they are heavy, expensive and must be custom made and installed. Visit www.blueoxmill.com to see some beautiful examples.

Other considerations: Size counts! These old homes with high-pitched roofs usually need commercial size gutters. The half-round style, quite good for handling water on Victorians, needs to be one inch wider than the common K style.

Types of Gutter Guards.

Gutter covers consist of screens--wire or plastic--that are snapped onto your existing gutters. There are also brushes that you can stick into the gutters. The pros are that they are cheap and easy to install. The cons are that you still have to climb up those dangerous ladders to remove the leaves, acorns and whatever else fell out of the sky on top of them.

Gutter toppers are a much better solution. These are solid coverings that go over the top of the gutter diverting the water into the gutter while preventing leaves and debris from entering. Tom Silva has a little video at www.thisoldhouse.com demonstrating the various types. Most need to be installed by a professional and run between \$10-\$15 a linear foot. This, compared to a hospital stay or loss of mobility from falling off a ladder or roof is well worth the investment. Brand names are GutterGuard, LeafGuard, and LeafFilter. The web site for the latter, www.LeafFilter.com, has slide shows comparing all the brands. For do-it-yourselfers, Home Depot has the Amerimax PVC topper running just \$1 a linear foot.

GutterHelmet is a gutter and topper all in one and costs \$20-\$25 per linear foot.

RainHandler is a gutter-less plastic system that attaches to the edge of your roof diverting rain far away from the foundation. It's cheap but gets bad consumer reviews. Their web site recommends you get a handyman to install it. (Great service!)

Installation.

A source for installers along with tons of information on this topic is at www.rainguttertips.com. These companies will also just clean your existing gutters and probably enjoy charging you season after season.

If you have any further advice either send it to me at jbowie@comcast.net or consider signing up with the OCNA listserv and share information that way.

Happy Restoration! ■

by Jane Bowie (Article originally printed in Fall, 2008)

DONATE TO CATONSVILLE RAILS TO TRAILS

The mural on the Short Line trail along Old Catonsville has been graffitied several times recently. Cleanup is underway as are plans to apply a coating to the mural to protect it from spray paint. To donate to support the trails and the cleanup effort go to www.crtt.org/donate. If you prefer to write a check, made payable to Catonsville Rails To Trails, please send to our Treasurer, Joe O'Keefe, CRTT, 1013 Vineyard Hill Road, Catonsville, Maryland 21228.

Reminder: Please lock all spray paint away. Kids under 18 can not buy spray paint so they are getting it from your basement, garage and craft rooms.

We enjoy walking on the trails and appreciate the beauty they add to our community. ■



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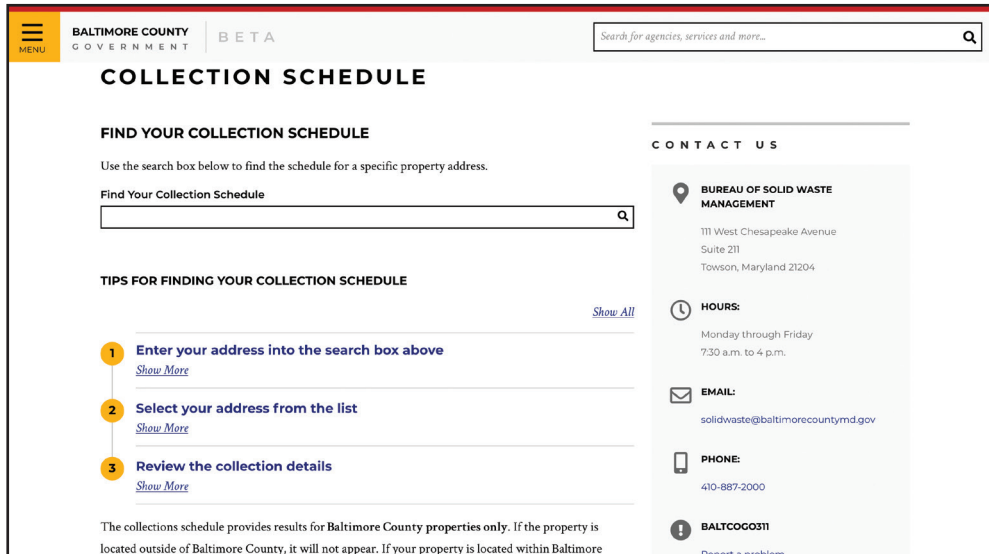

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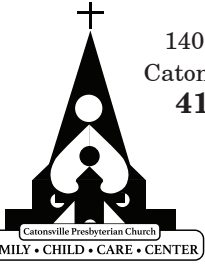
Recently the recycling pickup schedule was changed for some homes in Old Catonsville. To find out when your pickup occurs go to this website address - https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/publicworks/solid_waste/collection-schedule.html#/ and enter your address. You will see the schedule for trash, recycling and yard waste pickup and can download a pdf of the schedule to keep handy. ■

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**Contact Mellissa Woods mwoodsrd@yahoo.com
with ad questions and for payment info.**

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Fall Issue - August 5

Winter - Nov 5

Send artwork to Christina - drewsleonard@gmail.com

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