

## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE -

Do You Have a Story? .....	1	Smart Moves Against Crimes .....	4
Newsletter Topic Ideas .....	2	From the Editor .....	5
Free Calendar .....	2	A Sweet Treat .....	6
OCNA Nature Watch - Snowbirds .....	3		

## DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

Calling all writers, wordsmiths, and people with opinions! We are seeking authors to write regular columns or occasional stories on whatever topic interests them. The newsletter is interested in printing the thoughts, experiences, and memories of any and all of our residents. If you're interested, please contact Ann Quinn at [annandsteves@gmail.com](mailto:annandsteves@gmail.com).

Several of our wonderful regular writers have moved, retired, or no longer have time to contribute as often. If you have an idea you would like to share, we would be delighted to accept your written words, help you with organization or editing, or come to you and write it down for you.

This newsletter is a community effort and features stories written by residents of Old Catonsville. There have been regular columns on dining out in the area, entertainment such as reviews of movies and books, gardening, house restoration, and nature over the years. We also like to feature news about residents and community events.

Recently, we sent out a survey about the newsletter and received positive responses from our community. Our neighbors are reading the newsletter. Many didn't know that it's available online. Some people want to contribute to the issues. One resident noted recently that the newsletter is one of the standout features of our neighborhood.

Every three months (or sometimes longer), I take the stories Ann sends me that we have received or written and assemble them into this newsletter. I moved here in 2001 and have been helping with the newsletter since 2008. It has been great fun to read the articles and learn about Old Catonsville's past, local businesses, historic homes, flora and fauna, and things that occasionally go bump (or screech!) in the night.

If anyone would like to help us out as editor-in-chief or designer for the newsletter, we would be happy for the help. It would be nice to share the issue creation among a few people so that no one has too much work to do.

If you would like to write an article but need help with ideas, here are a few recent suggestions from the newsletter team:

- A number of oak trees in the neighborhood are dying, and a recent problem has been cropping up in azaleas (scales?)
- Students recount their return-to-school experiences
- Creating a list of OCNA volunteer experts would be worthwhile, e.g. on gardening, statistics, architecture, whatever
- Any ghost stories from the old houses in the neighborhood for Halloween--or maybe that time you discovered a bat flying around your bedroom
- What to do with old separate garages. Does anyone have any ideas or has done something interesting?

If you have contacts at area businesses that might like to advertise in the newsletter, please let us know. Advertising in four issues starts at only \$150.

Also, I was wondering if anyone has any of the older issues saved from pre 2003? If you do, please contact me if you'd like to share them. ■

*by Christina Drews-Leonard*

## NEWSLETTER IDEAS

Ideas for what to write about or share in the newsletter:

Arts Section - Share a photo, artwork, poem, short story, comic strip

Kid's page/section - featuring children's contributions such as artwork, stories

Personal achievement - Write about what you do at work, an accomplishment such as finishing a long hike, or fixing a car, a hobby you would like to share.

Interests - Travel, movies, theater, dining, exercise, yoga, gardening, home renovation

Upcoming Events - An upcoming event list for the Catonsville area. Need somebody to put this together and update it per issue.

School or church news - Something new happening at your school or church in Catonsville?

OCNA - What does the Old Catonsville neighborhood association do?

Neighbor News - Anniversaries, weddings, graduations, retirement, memorials, block parties, new addition to the family

Advertisers - The newsletter features ads to help cover the cost of printing. If you know a potential advertiser, please share the opportunity with them.

Classified - Selling something, beach condo for rent, apt for rent, but we only publish 4 times a year

## FREE CALENDAR FOR OCNA RESIDENTS

**F**ree SeeCal daily wall calendar for Old Catonsville residents as my thank you for your support of the newsletter. One per Old Catonsville household please. Be ready for 2022 and 2023!

SeeCal is a daily wall calendar designed to be easy-to-see from across a room. You update it daily by turning the cards. It can be used for multiple years by changing the year card.

Send an email to [drewsleonard@gmail.com](mailto:drewsleonard@gmail.com) if you would like one and include your name and address. Or send the form on the [Seecalendar.com](http://Seecalendar.com) website. Your info will not be used for any type of marketing. Offer available through January 31, 2022 or when I run out of calendars. ■

*by Christina Drews-Leonard*



*See more details about  
the calendar at [Seecalendar.com](http://Seecalendar.com)*

## OCNA NATURE WATCH – SNOWBIRDS

I don't personally know of any "snowbirds" living in Old Catonsville, those being the retired individuals who travel south to spend the cold wintery months in the warmth and sunshine of Florida, before returning to the neighborhood to spend the more pleasant times of the year. But, I am fascinated by the snowbirds of the feathered variety that frequent Old Catonsville during the summer months. Anyone who has a bird feeder in their yard would be familiar with our year-round residents, such as the gorgeous red cardinal and his more subdued-colored mate, the house finch with his reddish-purple face, and the black and white downy woodpecker that frequents the suet feeder. But what about those species that disappear as the cold winds begin to blow, only to reappear when the flowers begin to bloom and the trees start to green?



The travels that some of these species undertake are really mind-boggling. Take, for instance, the chimney swift. During the warm months, Sharon and I frequently eat dinner on our back deck. And one of the joys of that venue is the aerial exhibit of the chimney swifts swooping and diving as they chase their airborne insect prey near dusk, chattering away. These swifts occupy and nest in some of the chimneys in Old Catonsville homes – obviously those that are not capped. While I've never found signs of their nesting in our own chimney, I did find one unfortunate individual in our basement, mummified, having made its way down our heater flue and finding no exit from the basement! But what fascinates me about these aerial acrobats is that they disappear come fall. They gather into large flocks prior to migration, and many years ago I was fortunate to see such a flock swirling above the Catonsville Presbyterian Church at Frederick and Beechwood, before forming into what looked like a tornado as they funneled into one of the chimneys to roost for the night. There is a famous swift roosting site in Hampden at the old Mount Vernon Mills. In the spring and fall, crowds gather to view and count migrating swifts each evening at sundown as they swirl down into this chimney to spend the night. And to where do these flocks disappear? Turns out that they winter in northern Peru. I don't think anyone knows how long it takes them to make the 3,500 mile flight, but at least they can eat on the wing along the way, snatching insects from the air during the course of their travels.

The even tinier long-distance travelers are the ones that further amaze me. Our little ruby-throated hummingbirds, which burn vast amounts of energy just hovering while they feed, pass down the east coast and about 500 miles across the Gulf of Mexico during their fall migration to their winter home in Central America. Needless to say, unlike the swifts, the brave hum-

mingbirds have no source of sustenance as they pass over those vast waters. So prior to migration, they go on a feeding frenzy that results in nearly doubling their weight in a short time and storing the energy needed to survive such a long non-stop journey.

Another of our tiny-feathered Old Catonsville migrants is the house wren. One of my sure signs that spring has fully arrived is to hear the first incessant calls of the males, sometimes described as a "bubbling chatter." It's not the call itself

that attracts my attention but its repetitiveness and continuity; hard to imagine how that little bird has a chance to take a breath. Not much larger than the hummingbird, these little guys spend the winter in the Southern U.S. and Northern Mexico. While they don't travel as far as the swifts or hummingbirds, they most likely have to make frequent stops along the way to stock up on their forage of caterpillars, spiders and bugs. It is notable that wrens have been found to eat stinkbugs, perhaps a good reason to encourage everyone to put out wren houses as a means of countering the invasion of the non-native brown marmorated stinkbug!

The one migrant that I wish would leave and never return is the slate gray catbird. I battle the catbirds all summer and fall to preserve our berries and fruits in the yard. One of my spring rituals is to erect a frame around our blueberry bushes to support the netting that is essential if we are to have any harvest at all. This year these gray marauders even began to attack our cherry tomatoes! My feathered nemesis departs in late fall (but not too late to miss ravaging our fall raspberry crop) for the Southern U.S., Mexico and Central America, where they probably harass all the Latino gardeners!

What is also remarkable about all these migrants is that they and their progeny return to the very locale from which they departed, as has repeatedly been shown through songbird tagging programs. Such fidelity to tiny, half-acre plots after many months and thousands of miles of migration is just one of the many wonders of nature. This natural phenomenon combined with the catbird's prolific reproduction rate (they generally nest twice during the summer) certainly contribute to my bird depredation problem. If only I could find the secret weapon to divert the returning catbirds to somewhere other than Osborne Avenue!! ■

*by Bill Richkus (Article originally printed in Winter, 2011)*

## SMART MOVES AGAINST CRIMES

With the increase in auto and property break-ins reported on the listserve, a brief review of some basic crime prevention tips could be helpful. The Baltimore County Police web site offers practical theft prevention tips at <https://www.baltimore-countymd.gov/departments/police/yoursafety/basicprevention-tips.html>.

Tops on their list: Keep the car doors locked when you park. Don't leave visible items in the car that invite a break-in. A missing cigarette lighter from your dashboard sends a signal to a burglar that it was probably used for a battery charger or power adapter for your cell phone and/or portable GPS. They're willing to take the chance and break the passenger side window to see if your glove box holds the reward.

Statistics show a rise in the number of shed burglaries during the summer months. The majority occur during the day with the assumption that no one is home. Make sure your latching device on your shed is attached with bolts, NOT screws, and secure it with a heavy-duty lock. If you're planning on being away for several days, run a heavy-duty chain through all of your equipment in the shed (bikes, mower, chain saw, large tools) and lock the items together. This makes it tougher for a burglar to quickly remove items. Police recommend that you record the model and serial numbers of tools and equipment stored in the shed. En-

graving your more valuable property items and taking pictures of them can make them easier to identify in case of theft.

To deter a nocturnal burglar keep an outdoor light lit all night. BGE estimates a 40 watt bulb should cost about 10 cents per night and is by far the most economical deterrent. Consider installing a motion detector light that will illuminate your shed, porch, car, etc. For a more decorative fixture just Google "antique motion detector lamps". Photoelectric models can turn light on automatically at dusk and off at daybreak. Inexpensive timers can be purchased which can be set to turn interior lights on and off to give the appearance that someone is home.

Never reveal to telemarketers or door-to-door sales reps any home security information. They could be burglars in disguise hoping to find an unprotected house.

Baltimore County Police offer a Home Security Survey that assists the homeowner or apartment resident in locating security weaknesses and recommends practical ways to correct them. If you would like a law enforcement officer to visit your home, contact the Wilkens Precinct Community Outreach Office at 410-744-1584 for an appointment. This service is free of charge. ■

*by Andy Bowie (Article originally printed in Summer, 2009)*





# FROM THE EDITOR

This morning I caught a bit of the Reader’s Review on the Diane Rehm show, in which they were discussing “Hannah Coulter,” by Wendall Berry. A good bit of discussion centered around the wonderful community in the small town in Kentucky where the novel was set, and a caller lamented the lack of such in his life, and the rarity of it in modern day America; having a place where you belong just because you are there. It struck me that OCNA is such a place. Thanks to the welcoming acceptance of Dorothy Noble, Kirby Spencer and other good neighbors and leaders in the community, we can all feel that we belong. If you are not sure of your place in this community, I hope you will venture out to the picnic, or caroling, or the clean-up day, or even to a board meeting and I guarantee that you will feel welcomed. I would like to thank the OCNA board for their hard work over the years, and to wish you all a joyous holiday! ■

*by Ann Quinn (Article originally printed in Winter, 2010)*




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OCNA now accepts Paypal! Eager to pay your dues as part of this great community but unused to writing checks? Send your \$20 with the click of a button to [oldcatonsville@gmail.com](mailto:oldcatonsville@gmail.com)

Cash and checks still gladly accepted—payable to OCNA Membership, 16 Osborne Ave., Catonsville MD 21228 with 2021 on the memo line

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# A SWEET TREAT - SHOPPING AT PAT'S PORCH

Spend an morning or afternoon shopping in Catonsville, take an easy walk down Frederick Road to get to Pat's Porch. The perfect place for someone with a sweet tooth.

Some of us remember the "old" Candy Box. It is still there, on Frederick Road just beyond Matthew's 1600 at 819 Frederick Road in the heart of Catonsville's business area.

Formerly Ken's Old Fashioned Candy Box, Pat's Porch offers candy, gifts and Americana with a Maryland twist. Opened in 2016 by Beth Reymann, it's also home to Maryland Gift Box, a business specializing in gift baskets full of Maryland-themed treats.

Pat's Porch is the place to go if you're craving freshly-made chocolate or other sweets. The front half of the store features greeting cards, scented lotions, home decor and jewelry while the back half is devoted to chocolate, candy and savory treats.



Image from Patsporch.com



Candy selections include many kinds of chocolate and fudge. Crystalized ginger, sugar-free chocolates and other specialty diet treats are available. Get your Maryland favorites like Dad's cookies, Old Bay seasoning, Otterbein's cookies, Fisher's popcorn and McAllen's toffee here. Picking the perfect penny candy is as pleasing as the eating. We like picking some almond

bark for us, and Nerds and Mike 'n Ikes for the kids. You can also get balloons and favors here for parties. They have Comet's balloons for the Catonsville High crowd.

It's nice to shop local. Especially within walking distance of OCNA. ■

*by Christina Drews-Leonard*

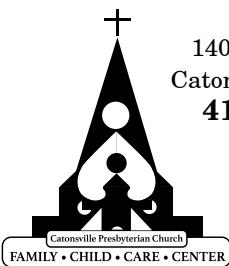


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## ADVERTISE IN THE OCNA NEWSLETTER

### Space Available in the Next Issue at Only \$150 Per Year (4 Issues)

- Review this issue to see the types of ads that we run for local businesses.
- Choose ad size.
- Supply artwork in black and white. Please supply high resolution artwork for your ad. If you need help creating your ad contact us. Ads have to be reviewed before they're approved.
- You must have permission to use any images in your ads.
- Proofread your ad for errors.
- Payment accepted via check or Paypal. Ad must be paid in full before it can run.
- You can start advertising at any time of the year. Updated artwork can be provided for current ads by the next issue deadline.

Contact Christina Drews Leonard at [drewsleonard@gmail.com](mailto:drewsleonard@gmail.com) with ad questions or to volunteer to be our new advertising rep.

### Deadlines to submit newsletter articles and ads to get into the next issue (usually flexible):

Spring issue - Feb 15  
 Summer issue - May 15  
 Fall Issue - August 15  
 Winter - Nov 15

Archived copies of the OCNA Newsletter are now available on <https://www.oldcatonsville.org/connect>

### Do you want free advertising?

Volunteer to write for the newsletter regularly and live in Old Catonsville, get a free 1/8 page ad in each issue.

1/8 page ad size:  
 3.75" wide x 2.375" high  
 \$150 / year, 4 issues

1/4 page ad size:  
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1/3 page ad  
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