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## SHARE YOUR STORIES OR VOLUNTEER

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. ■

*by Christina Drews-Leonard*

**Please submit articles or ideas, events & news for the Spring issue by February 15th to Ann by email [annandsteves@gmail.com](mailto:annandsteves@gmail.com) or call: 410-747-4920**

## NEWSLETTER TOPIC IDEAS

Here is a list of some story ideas for the newsletter. You can write a story, or do something else using one of these ideas (or your own ideas) and see it published in our next issue!

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, shopping, 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

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Some of the Events at the Library: See full list here: <https://www.bcpl.info/events-and-programs/list.html#!/?locations=Catonsville>

Monday, December 19, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm

Sit and Stitch

Event type: Crafts and DIY

Age group: Adult, Teen

Thursday, December 29, 2022, 4:30-6:00pm

Teen Anime Club

Event type: Games, Gaming and Recreation

Age group: Teen

Other Events:

Saturday, December 15, 2022, 6pm to 8pm

20th Anniversary of Catonsville "Music City Maryland" event hosted by Bill's Music

Bill's Music and the Greater Catonsville Chamber of Commerce welcome the Catonsville businesses and community to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Music City Maryland designation of Catonsville by the Maryland General Assembly.

Wednesday, December 18, 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Color & Light by Alice Gail Dvoskin- Closing Reception

The Clubhouse, 10 St Timothys Ln

Dvoskin captures the unique landscapes, people and architecture of nearby and distant locales with an emphasis on the interplay of color and light.

*Happy  
Holidays*

*Designed by Katemangostar / Freepik*

Dec 22, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Poetry Open Mic with Patti Ross

The Clubhouse, 10 St Timothys Ln

A Poetry and Prose open mic hosted each 4th Thursday of the month. An open mic is for community wordsmiths to share their work and love for language and performance.

Check the Arts Guild website for up to date info on their events and tickets <https://www.bcartsguild.org/>

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Noon Year's Eve Party at sweetFrog Catonsville

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

On New Year's Eve, bring the kids in for a celebration of their own from 11am to 12pm! They will dance, play games, eat snacks and pizza, have a yogurt and then celebrate with a count-down to noon

Saturday, January 14, 2023, 10am

Banneker's Winter Farmstead

Come out and explore what Benjamin Banneker would be doing during his winters on the Farmstead. You may wonder how...

Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum

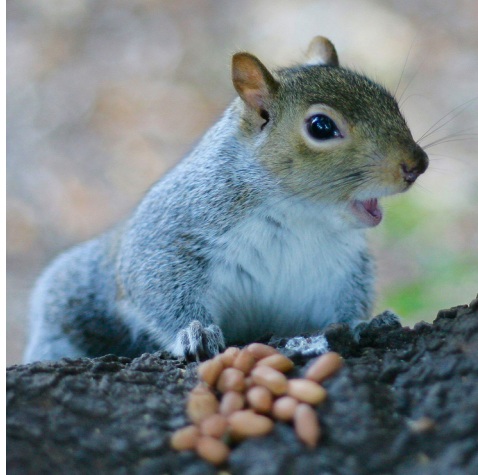
300 Oella Ave

## OCNA NATURE WATCH - Squirrels Gone Wild

Oh, the ubiquitous grey squirrel, my nemesis in house, yard and garden, but perhaps the cleverest of my animal adversaries. The home invasion incidents were over thirty years ago, when Rebecca was 7 or 8, and probably a year or two after we moved to our house on Osborne. The third floor consisted of two unfinished rooms, but with plastered walls and wood floors. In Rebecca's second floor bedroom we would hear occasional loud thumping in the ceiling at night, sounding as if the Budweiser Clydesdales were hauling their Christmas carriage back and forth above her head. And then there was the most terrifying sound that brought her screaming and crying from the room in the middle of the night; the thumping creature had fallen down inside the wall of the closet and was scrambling to get back up, making a horrible scratching racket.

The next morning I did a reconnaissance of the house exterior and discovered our noise-making culprit (or culprits). From the front lawn, I spied four small grey heads peering down at me from a hole in the soffit above the gutter. We were hosting a family of squirrels in the second floor ceiling (and who would guess that squirrels would be very active in the dead of night)! Given the youth of the interlopers, I decided I would not evict them and their mother until they were old enough to fend for themselves, which didn't take too long. Then the challenge was to determine the route by which the squirrels were reaching the roof and eliminate it. I thought I had trimmed all of the trees and branches that were anywhere near the house, until one day I saw a branch of the neighbor's large maple tree swaying on a windless day, and witnessed typical squirrel acrobatics: a mature squirrel launching itself about four feet from a thin, springy branch to our roof, quite a feat. Once I eliminated the routes, the next critical thing was to close the soffit hole, since once the squirrels did the hard work of creating the hole, both starlings and sparrows found the house eaves to be perfect nesting areas, so we had quite the biodiversity in our house roof for some time. With later house renovation and a new roof, our squirrels-in-the-house problem was eliminated, but every time I see a squirrel hopping across one of our neighbors' house roofs, I know the sneaky devil is scouting around for a nice little corner of a soffit to start gnawing.

The yard and garden squirrel issues are more typical and common. How many bird feeders did we go through, having them knocked down and chewed apart, before we found the perfect black sunflower seed feeder (a plastic feeder enclosed in a wire cage)? And I can't count how many bulbs I planted on nice



*Flickr Photo Credit: [Graham Ó Siodhacháin cc.](#)*

sunny fall days, only to go out the next day and find that an evil squirrel had dug up half of them (they seem particularly fond of snow drops and expensive lilies). It has been somewhat amusing in the spring to find components of some of Sharon's flowerbed designs scattered throughout the yard, where the evil squirrels have placed them in locations of their own choice. But the loss of bulbs to the squirrels is understandable, given their rather remarkable food storage behavior. Grey squirrels are scatter hoarders, and spend the summer burying acorns and other nuts throughout their territory (thus explaining why I frequently uncover buried peanuts in my garden plots, and, strangely enough, find houseplants placed outside for the summer almost dug out of their pots by a squirrel trying to find a really safe place for his prize nut!). They play this scatter hoarding game well, and will actually fake burying nuts in case other squirrels are watching to steal them. They will also come back, dig a nut up and move it to a new location to make sure it is safe! So it's logical that a sneaky thief will explore any disturbance in the soil that suggests something has been buried there.

Given all the squirrel problems I have faced over the years, I have occasionally implemented my squirrel reduction program: a Have-a-Heart live trap placed under the bird feeder, followed by transport of the captive squirrels to a location far away (for many years, it was my office in Columbia). Of course I have heard numerous times of others carrying out such efforts only to learn that someone in the vicinity of the squirrel release location was doing the exact same thing in reverse, frustrating both their efforts. But what was remarkable to me was the abundance of squirrels. In one fall-winter season, I gave nearly 40 squirrels a free ride to Columbia. Where did they all come from?

Turns out that grey squirrels breed twice each year, usually in the middle of summer and again near the end of winter. And a successful mating, with a gestation period of about 44 days, results in up to nine babies (although the average is only two or three). So you can see that there is great potential for an exponential increase in squirrel numbers over very short periods. In our neighborhood, cars might be the most common source of mortality of squirrels, although our local foxes, outdoor cats and red-tailed hawks probably also put a dent in their numbers. And circling back to my column title, fairly soon you will begin to see squirrel mating behavior taking place (the end of winter mating period). During the breeding period, female squirrels come into

heat, much like dogs, deer and other mammals. When a female nears her period of fertility, exuding come-hither hormones, males will begin chasing her, and males will begin fighting amongst themselves for the right to reproduce. You may see as many as a ten males chasing the receptive female, although more commonly it is three or four. This is when you will see squirrels rapidly scurrying up, down, around and through the trees, and scampering after each other everywhere. Usually the most

dominant of the males will end up earning the right to mate with the target female after a brief period of courtship. So when you see all this frantic activity, now you know there is squirrel hanky panky to follow. ■

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

## MINUTES FROM OCNA MEETING

### Old Catonsville Neighborhood Association (OCNA) October 25, 2022 – Meeting Minutes

In attendance: John Marshall, Val Androutsopoulos, Kelcie Longaker, Jane Bowie, Steve Delwiche (for Pam Ewouds), Robert Croom, Larry Wilt, Susanne Ogaitis-Jones. On line: Chris Conley

John Marshall, OCNA president welcomed everyone for coming, noting that our last meeting was a year and half ago, and on-line.

1. Treasurer's report: Robert Croom, Treasurer said that overall our budget is "fairly healthy" because we haven't had a lot of expenses other than our newsletter and Mellissa Wood had caught up on our ad payments for the newsletter before she moved out of the neighborhood. Robert said that we gave our usual \$200 donation to Lurman Theater last year and this year. Last March we started a Paypal account which worked well for some residents' dues payments and ad fee collections. Overall we had a net increase of \$1,662 and total balance of \$7,961. There was a question about non-profits (i.e., OCNA) making a profit. Kelcie answered that it is legally ok to generate modest amounts of profit, though there are some rules, but there is no problem with OCNA's non-profit status. Larry pointed out that we don't spend much money these days (i.e., we are not doing much to spend money) but some of this is related to the pandemic. The group discussed how we'd like to have activities this year and OCNA can potentially cover costs.

Robert also added that he filed the Maryland Form 1 for non-profits, but we have outdated info on the form (e.g., our previous president) and we have to file a formal resolution with the State to make these changes.

#### 2. 2023 Planned Events:

OCNA Yard Sale Day: Saturday, April 22 (rain date April 23). Anyone who wants to participate can; signs will be put up to promote the neighborhood-wide event.

Cleanup day: Saturday, April 29. Kim Marshall (who couldn't attend tonight) has already confirmed the reservation of the 4 dumpsters with Baltimore County. Volunteer helpers are needed. Student service learning hours can be available. Kim

Marshall will be recruiting helpers beginning in February.

John, on behalf of his wife, Kim, suggested we have some low key events this year, like gatherings at Matthews or Opies, or one year we had food and snacks in the Presbyterian Church's woods, and OCNA paid for the food.

3. Newsletter—Ann Quinn is the editor but would love to have someone else to take over or share the duties, and she is always looking for writers for the newsletter. We discussed if/who is reading the newsletter; we don't know numbers but everyone attending the meeting reads it and knows some others who read it. Everyone present also said that they really like having a PAPER newsletter versus changing it to an online newsletter. There was a discussion about newsletter topics; Larry said there have been "editorial board" meetings to talk about possible topics, so he suggested anyone talk to Ann about any possible involvement.

Newsletter ad revenue: we need a new volunteer to collect the payments from the advertisers since Mellissa moved and can no longer do this job.

Robert suggested that for the spring newsletter we should again include a self-addressed envelope (addressed to him/treasurer) and a flyer about the annual OCNA dues, as this greatly increases the number of residents who pay their dues.

4. Edmondson Avenue medians and crosswalks: John said that someone told the County that the median plantings were causing hazards to pedestrians and cars, so there was a meeting with some county representatives (Julia and Cathy) about this and some other Catonsville neighborhood reps. One suggestion was to replace the Knock Out roses since they get overgrown and block visibility. As the roses were bought by OCNA, they could be dug up and given back to OCNA residents. For the trees in the median, drivers have sight lines under the trees so they aren't a problem. A motion was made to have OCNA pay for some new, lower plants to replace the roses. Motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the pedestrian crossing on Edmondson Avenue, the County had done work on the street at some point and made it so the crossing's paint couldn't be seen, which makes it more hazardous. There was a discussion with the County about making that crossing be a raised crossing, or have better signage, or add a speed awareness sign, or a lighted pedestrian signage. The

County said “yes, we can do something, but you need to put in a proposal.” John suggested we put in this proposal in conjunction with the Oak Crest Neighborhood Association. Larry suggested that we first form a committee to look into this issue. John made a motion to do this-- we solicit a committee in conjunction with Oak Crest to examine this issue and ultimately create a proposal in the future to the County to improve the pedestrian crossing. The motion passed unanimously. John and Susanne both offered to be on this committee and will notify the OCNA and Oak Crest neighborhoods about joining the committee.

There also was a discussion about the need to have a continuous sidewalk from the current crosswalk at Rosewood Avenue and extend to Opie’s since that route is so well-traveled, and walkers currently have to use the bike lane, which puts them close to traffic. The consensus was that all the property owners along there would have to agree to do this and pay for it for their property.

5. OCNA Board Elections

John said he is willing to stay on as president.

We need a vice president since Mellissa has gone. We will seek a VP through the listserv and through word-of-mouth.

Robert said he is willing to continue as treasurer, but said he will be away for an extended time in the spring and needs an acting treasurer. This person has to be official so he/she can sign checks.

Susanne said she’d be glad to turn the secretary duties over to someone else, or stay on if no one else wants to do it.

A motion was made to approve the Board. Everyone present voted in favor of the motion and the proposed Board.

The meeting was adjourned. ■


*Minutes submitted respectfully by S.Ogaitis-Jones, secretary*



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We'd like to congratulate the Old Catonsville Neighborhood Association for their valuable contribution to our community!



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# LOCAL ORGANIZATION HOLDS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Catonsville Rails To Trails is conducting our 2023 Membership Campaign and we hope you will become a member. Please review our membership levels and the “thank you” gifts we are offering to boost and reward membership. CRTT appreciates the local restaurants and businesses who have provided these gifts and who support our membership drive every year.

Most people think Catonsville Rails To Trails is part of a county or state agency, but we are not! We are a non-profit group of Catonsville residents who volunteer our time building trails on abandoned rail lines. We do not have an office or staff, so virtually every donated dollar is used to support trail development and maintenance, right here in Catonsville including the #8 Streetcar

Path. Maintaining 2.5 miles of wooded trails, 365 days of the year, is a difficult and expensive job. We need the community’s financial help to continue our work to build and maintain our trails.

Catonsville Rails To Trails got its start as a sub-committee of OCNCA and we have appreciated the community support since 1996!

Check out our website at [www.crtt.org](http://www.crtt.org) and join today! ■

*by Maureen Sweeney Smith*

**Support Catonsville Rails To Trails and Receive Thank You Gifts**

Thanks to local restaurants & businesses we can offer Thank You Gifts.  
Earn up to 6 thank you gifts by becoming a CRTT member.  
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## 2023 Membership Drive

CRTT is an all-volunteer, grassroots organization working to promote pedestrian and bicycling friendly neighborhoods in Catonsville. We convert abandoned rail lines into bike/hike trails and have completed the Short Line Trail that runs from Charlestown Senior Living to Bloomingdale Ave. behind Catonsville Elementary School. We rely on community donations to develop and maintain trails. Please support CRTT by becoming a member. **Go to [crtt.org/membership](http://crtt.org/membership) or mail in this form.**

Check here v	Level	Member Dues	Gifts Earned
	Trail Enthusiast (Student)	\$30.00	
	Trail (Senior)	\$30.00	
	Trail Lover (Individual)	\$50.00	\$10 Gift Card
	Trail Family	\$100.00	\$10 Gift Card 1 SWAG Item
	Trail Explorer	\$200.00	\$10 Gift Card 2 SWAG Items
	Trail Protector	\$300.00	\$10 Gift Card 3 SWAG Items
	Friend of the Trail	\$400.00	\$10 Gift Card 4 SWAG Items
	Trail Builder	\$500.00	\$10 Gift Card 4 SWAG Items Jacket

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**CRTT will send a link to order thank you gifts when your donation is received.** Go to [CRTT.org/membership](http://CRTT.org/membership) to join on-line. Mail form to: CRTT, P.O. Box 3282, Catonsville, MD 21228. Make checks payable to CRTT. Questions? 443-326-5474 or [sweeneysmith@comcast.net](mailto:sweeneysmith@comcast.net)

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### Advertise Your Business in Old Catonsville

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## ADVERTISE IN THE OCNA NEWSLETTER

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- 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:  
 3.75" wide x 4.75" high  
 \$200 / year, 4 issues

1/3 page ad  
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 \$200 / year  
 7.5" wide x 3.25" high

## SEEKING A VOLUNTEER: NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

The ad representative keeps track of ads in the newsletter and contacts advertisers about renewing their ads and checks their payment status with the treasurer. The ad rep also handles inquiries from businesses about placing new ads.

Support the OCNA Newsletter, buy advertising space for your business. Contact Christina at [drewsleonard@gmail.com](mailto:drewsleonard@gmail.com) for more information.