

## OTBA Minutes – FEBRUARY 11, 2015

Meeting began at 8:45 am

There were 29 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, President, Joanne Wunderly, announced that there were no minutes posted from our annual breakfast meeting on Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> because the secretary had been ill with flu, and unable to post the minutes, and that our Treasurer, Nury Mena, was unexpectedly sent out of town this morning by her employer, so there was no official treasurers' report to be distributed this morning. Our account balance is at \$7,530.93 as of the end of January. Joanne reported that not all members have paid their dues and to please do so promptly. The newly re-vamped **Guides to Shops and Services** were deliberately not printed in the usual quantity because there would be a number of changes and an additional spring printing would be in order.

Chip Rohr spoke about the upcoming Ducks Unlimited fundraising event to be held at the end of February at the Portuguese Social Club. Chip gave a brief history of Ducks Unlimited. It is the world's largest wetlands and water conservation group and in Canada, owns more land than the Canadian government. It was founded by hunters and sportsmen to ensure that the nesting and resting habitats of waterfowl in North America would be protected from development and preserved. There are more than 50 chapters in Virginia alone with chapters in each state, Canada and Mexico.

**HMI** – Debbie Haight stated that the first Friday event, “Souper Friday” was an overwhelming success, so much so the soup supplied by the restaurants, quickly ran out. The first Friday in March theme is “MARCH MADNESS” and can be individually interpreted by those participating. A most welcome upcoming event will be the opening of the Farmers' Market in the Spring. The refrigerator magnets with the events of Old Town are in and can be picked up at HMI office.

Debbie also announced that a new promotion, Banner Art, will give budding artists an opportunity to have their art displayed on the banners that are attached to the light poles. There have been more than 45 artists who have submitted their entries for a juried selection. It is planned that once the banners are up, there will be an accompanying walking guide that will take interested people on a walking tour with biographies of the artists. The contest was open to residents from the greater Washington Metro area. Committee members, Mary Reilly, Patty Prince and Debbie Haight will select the finalists.

**Manassas Museum** – Doug Horhota announced that tours of Liberia Plantation (basement to attic) will be coming again soon. The tours usually sell out very quickly.

An event, ‘**Picnic with Painters**’ will be held at Liberia on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. There will be music, period games, talks, ladies in period clothes strolling the grounds and tours

of the house (including the latest peek of Civil War graffiti voted one of the top 10 Endangered Artifacts by the Virginia Associations of Museums in 2104). Doug likened the event to a “kind of Downton Abbey comes to Liberia”.

**Harris Pavilion** – Anna Marie Morgan said that the last day for ice will be 2/28. There are several events scheduled for the last week of skating – Cartoon Skate, a benefit for Wounded Warriors, School Spirit Day and the Polar Bear Skate will be held. Anna Marie also reported that the summer season is quickly getting booked for events.

**Welcome Center** – Kathleen Reilly announced that on the tables were packets of Virginia peanuts and the latest issue of Virginia Travel Guide.

**Hylton Performing Arts Center** – Susan Landis introduced Carol Devany who has been hired as the new marketing manager. Susan also mentioned that this weekend, the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra will be performing as a nice musical Valentine’s treat.

**Discover Prince William/Manassas** – Wendie Vestfall said that there two staff members from Discover Prince William/Manassas will be going to Montreal, Canada to participate in an expo aimed at bus and tour operators. A video of Old Town filmed and produced by DPW/M has been playing and received over 25,000 hits or viewings. The World Police and Firemen’s Games are slated to begin in Fairfax in June of 2015. There are some 20,000 athletes and their families who will be in the area. Wendie is working to coordinate with the organizers to get some of those people to Manassas. A Baby Boomers blogger is coming to Manassas at the end of March.

**Center for the Arts**– Sally Lay stated that “Shrek, the Musical” will be performed at the Hylton Performing Arts Center by the Pied Piper Players and an adult play, “Incorruptibles” will be performed at the Keller Rooftop Theatre by the Rooftop actors at the Candy Factory.

**Restaurant Alliance** – Debbie said that the next Restaurant Week will be in March and plans are underway for a Spring Taste of Manassas.

**Manassas City Police** –Officer Steve Neely reported that there were no real issues to report on.

**Manassas Fire & Rescue** – no report

**City of Manassas** – Representing the City today were Pat rick Small , Director of Economic Development, and City Media Specialist, Patty Prince.

Patrick Small talked about the results of the NorthStar survey that was sent to residents. The results are very positive with more than 75% favorably rating the city as a whole. There were three areas of concern that were brought to light from the survey: economic development, parks and recreation opportunities for citizens and the school

system. The city received high marks for citizen satisfaction and our police department. Patrick went on to encourage all in attendance to present the positive when talking about the city. Managers with the Main Street from across our state and other states who have been to Manassas, have all expressed the wish that their communities would be even a small bit like Manassas with the active participation and cooperation of businesses within the Main Street community.

The next step is the development of written concepts to further address both positive and less positive responses to the survey.

Several comments from the group affirmed that Manassas is special and relayed stories and comments from customers who have sung our praises.

Patty Prince announced that there is space available for artists to exhibit the foyer of City Hall.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Kathleen Reilly and it generated \$29 for OTBA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 am.