

OTBA Meeting March 9, 2016 at City Tavern Grill

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 am by President, Joanne Wunderly. There were 33 members & guests (the Manassas Utilities Department workers who make Manassas brightly lit up for the Holidays) in attendance.

Joanne opened the meeting with the announcement that bills for the annual dues will be out shortly. At \$125 per year, there is a lot that a member benefits from in their membership in OTBA.

Joanne recognized OTBA members, Ann and Marc Hempen of the *Manassas Junction Bed & Breakfast*. Their recent horrific experience as parents being notified that their Prince William County Police Officer son, Jeese, was wounded in a recent incident in the Lake Ridge area of the county. Another Officer was killed and a third was wounded when they responded to a domestic violence report.

Manassas Restaurant Week is this week (March 7 - 14) and Historic Downtown Restaurants are offering prix fixe dinners and entrees.

The 17th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade will be held on Saturday, March 12 at 11 am.

The Annual Sidewalk Sale will be Saturday, April 16th.

Minutes from our meeting in February were approved by Elizabeth Bailey and seconded by Ann Hempen.

Treasurers' Report - Nury Mena reported that at present we have \$5,907.26 in our treasury. Nury thanked those businesses who have sent in their annual dues ahead of time.

Historic Manassas (HMI) - Debbie Haight told of a full schedule of events beginning with the Spring Cleaning Day on April 16th in addition to the 2016 Live Well Festival at the Harris Pavilion from 9 am - 2 pm.

Debbie invited business owners and residents of the Historic District to attend a forum on preservation of historic properties at the Manassas Volunteer Rescue Squad Multipurpose Room March 24, at 5:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Debbie also announced that , the iconic steam engine will again attend the annual Railroad Festival the first weekend in June.

Arts are alive in Manassas! Banner Art Contest finalists have been selected and will shortly be adorning the light posts in downtown. The 'Little Bits of Art' may be seen at various locations throughout downtown. The Spring Gallery Walk (first Friday in May) this year is in conjunction with the Prince William Arts Council. The upcoming Gallery Walk will feature performance art in addition to other artistic expressions at participating businesses.

Manassas Museum - Doug Horhorta announced the Osborn High School Art Exhibit "Perspectives" is up through April 17th. Talented art students in the high school are showing art presented variety of mediums.

Also at the Museum is the exhibit "To Be Sold" which explores the realities of the slave trade and its impact on families torn apart. The exhibit features photos, historical documents and recorded remembrances of those times. It is an honest look back on that ugly period of American history.

As the weather warms, Doug will also be conducting costumed walking tours as well as bike tours of downtown.

Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory - Candace Penders announced that catalogues are ready for the Spring/Summer Arts programs and classes at the CFA.

Candace also announced that the CFA's Gala on April 2nd this year will fill the three floors of the Center with music, art, performance skits, dancing, wine and tasty bites and a beer garden. Tickets are \$25 each prior to the event.

Harris Pavilion - no report but the ice season is over!

Hylton Performing Arts Center - Coming to the Hylton in the upcoming weeks Celebrate your Irish at a performance by Danu on March 18th. Art Garfunkel will also be at the Hylton for a special performance on March 31st. Resident arts partners will showcase dance performances (Manassas Ballet Theatre, Aspah Dance Ensemble, Mason School of Dance), The Manassas Chorale Voices United and profemusic nee

Discover Prince William - no report

Restaurant Alliance - no report

Fire and Rescue - Brett Bowman reminded us that Daylight Savings Time will begin this upcoming weekend and that it is also a good time to change the batteries in the smoke detectors in your home and in your businesses.

Manassas City - Mayor Hal Parish noted that it was just wonderful to see every seat taken and a gave a big Thank You to restaurants and retailers who contribute so much to the vitality of Historic Downtown.

Welcome Center on 66 - Kathleen Riley introduced Jonathan Lyle who spoke about the opportunity to promote Historic Downtown at the Welcome Center for a promotional blitz for the summer. Not only would there be space available at the welcome center for exhibits, but the rest areas on interstate 95 and 66 . Jonathan mentioned that if one traveling through decides to spend the night in Virginia, an additional \$216. is spent locally.

Featured Speaker - Manassas Police Officer, Eddie Rivera, was our speaker this month. Officer Rivera was asked to give tips and advice about how to deal with people who have issues (homeless, mentally challenged, or intoxicated) in our place of business. Rivera stated that you may ask them to leave and if they don't, do not hesitate to call the police. If they are asked to leave the business in the presence of a Police Officer, and don't, they can be arrested and/or a No Trespass order issued which will result in arrest if the behavior continues.

If a person is belligerent or argumentative when asked to leave, Rivera suggested that you call 911. Chip Rohr mentioned that one might feel threatened and asked the question, "Should you not hang up the phone but leave the phone line 'open' on a 911

call". An open line lets the police know that there is a situation that is disturbing to the business

Officer Rivera also suggested that you not encourage them by making free coffee or cookies easily available to just anyone.

Mary Reilly asked about homeless people napping on the benches and Rivera suggested calling the police about that issue as well.

Jan Alten mentioned that with warm weather coming, the skateboarders will once again descend on the Pavilion and should the police be called. There are signs that prohibit skateboarding at the Harris Pavilion but the skateboarders tend to ignore any request to leave. If they don't leave, call the police non emergency number.

Announcements -

Ann Hempen invited anyone interested in viewing the St. Patrick's Day Parade to the *Manassas Junction Bed and Breakfast*. It is a prime viewing location for the parade.

Jim Bolt of Edward Jones Financial Investments announced the ribbon cutting for the office opening on Tuesday, March 15 from 3 - 5 pm and invited all to stop by for the occasion.

Councilwoman, Sheryl Bass, expressed gratitude that Jesse Hempen is recovering from his wounds and thanked Ann and Marc for the service to the community of their son.

Elizabeth Bailey of *Bedrock Yoga* announced the spring class schedule with several new classes to begin April 2. Elizabeth also gave out free class cards for those interested in trying a yoga class.

Darlene Runaldue of *Scatter Seeds* spoke about her business and explained the meaning of Fair Trade and what it means to participate. Scatter Seeds has been involved with a small village on an island off the coast of Haiti and is helping them earn a wage that allows them to live a better life. Darlene recently returned from Haiti (she usually visits 4 times a year) and spoke movingly of the hardships the villagers face.

At the beginning of our meeting and at the end, expressions of gratitude to the city Utilities Department workers who lit up our downtown during the holidays. Responses to the holiday lighting program have been nothing but enthusiastic, with more buildings wanting to join in the program. Chip Rohr took the lead on this effort. Chip reported that the townhouse communities (Olde Towne Square at Center and Zebadee Streets and Lee Square at Stonewall Road and Center Street) at either end of Old Town, wanted to be included next year with the light post wraps of greenery and lights. Manassas really sparkled this holiday!

The 50/50 drawing netted \$56 collected and the winning ticket and \$28 was won by Chip Rohr.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 am.