

## **OTBA Minutes – September 11, 2013**

Attendees began the breakfast buffet at 8:15 am

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 am. There were 36 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on July 9<sup>th</sup> were approved by Bob Chase and seconded by Chris Finnie. Our minutes are posted on line at the OTBA website.

Nury Mena, OTBA treasurer gave the treasurer's report. Our ending balance in Fulton Bank as of August 28, 2013 is \$13,282.01.

Vice President, Marcie Settle conducted the meeting for Joanne. Marcie announced that the sidewalk Sale on September 21, there will be lawn signs at the Museum and the Harris Pavilion. There is advertising in Discover Publications and the Manassas Observer. There are a few outstanding Christmas Light reimbursements still due.

Our next meeting will be October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Before the meeting began in earnest, Brett Bowman spoke movingly of the events of 9/11/2001 and a moment of silence was observed in memory of all who died on that day in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon.

September is Emergency Preparedness Awareness Month and Robert Hoffhower of the Virginia Department of Emergency Preparedness spoke of the need for everyone (residents and businesses) to have a plan in the case of an emergency. Robert had handouts, posters and other information available and invited all who were interested or had questions to see him.

Jack Lilley and Jerry Martin, representing the Veterans' Day Parade spoke briefly about the upcoming parade to be held on November 9. Because of the overwhelming support previous years, this years' parade is self supported. Veterans of Desert Storm and Desert Shield will be honored this year and the Grand Marshall will be Joe Artiz, a door gunner on a Black Hawk helicopter during Desert Shield.

**HMI** – The Taylor Lenz and Anne Blewett 'tag team' reported for HMI. Anne said that the FAM tour of hotel operators, though small, was most successful. Anne announced the Passport Program for employees of Old Town Businesses to know more about each other. Taylor reported that the Civil War Weekend saw 250 re-enactors and more than 5,000 visitors to Old Town. There will be the Bands, Brews and BBQ on the Museum Lawn on September 28. The Haunted Happening will be held again this year with a parade and trick or treating in Old Town. Lastly, the Fall Jubilee will be October 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Manassas Museum** – Jane Riley reported that the Antique Auto Show will be held on the Museum lawn on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. October brings a new exhibit – 40

Years of Collecting Manassas with many items from their archives being on display. In addition to the new exhibit, there will be tours of Liberia and a book talk.

**Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory** – no one was present but Marci announced that the Pied Piper Theater had cast Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory with 47 very talented children.

**Harris Pavilion** – Anna Marie Robinson said that the Pavilion had been super busy this summer with practically every day filled. Coming up is the Old World Festival now re-named Greece and East which will be held on September 21, and the Latino Festival will be held on Sunday, September 22nd.

**Manassas Art Guild** –no report

**Chamber of Commerce** – no report

**Welcome Center** – Kathleen Reilly invited any business that would like to do a demonstration at the Welcome Center to contact her. Tourism numbers are up from last year.

**Hylton Performing Arts Center** – Katie Campbell announced that the 4<sup>th</sup> season is underway and that event calendars are out and encouraged others to take them to hand out. A new community series of art exhibits/receptions to be held in the Buchanan Partners Art Gallery on selected Thursday evenings. The public is invited to attend but should RSVP to [HYLTON@GMU.EDU](mailto:HYLTON@GMU.EDU).

**Discover Prince William & Manassas (formally known as the CVB)** – Wendy Vestfall mentioned that the Governor recently announced that tourism in Virginia is up by 4%. At the recently held Tourism Expo, attendees were treated to homemade cookies supplied by The Manassas Junction Bed and Breakfast and the Bennett House Bed and Breakfast. There was much interest in Manassas and 40 travel writers are making plans to come here. There will be three travel writers coming in October. The 2014 Visitors Guide is in the works and will feature a tear out map. It will be given to 100 thousand visitors and will be a good opportunity to advertise. Wendy encouraged all to please update their website as it will be the source of information for the guide. Since March 1<sup>st</sup>, traffic on the website has increased 80%.

**Restaurant Alliance** – no report but Chris Finne reported that Restaurant Week (September 22 –28) and one can get a three course meal for \$25 –\$35.

**Manassas Fire and Rescue** – Brett Bowman encouraged all to take up the offer for assistance with the business plan for emergencies. Brett also reported that he and his wife visited all three 9/11 Memorials and that it was an emotional experience for him as he personally knew several people who died in that attack either in New York or at the Pentagon.

**Manassas City Police** – Recently promoted Sgt. D. W. Hylton reported that our longtime liaison officer, John Barnes, has retired. The Traffic division has identified some discrepancies in the signage that limits through truck traffic and there has been increased enforcement of this issue.

**City of Manassas and our Featured Speaker** – Mayor Hal Parish began his remarks by stating that he, also, is “one of us”, a fellow business owner and expressed appreciation for all the work done by OTBA and other business owners who are making the city a better place to live and work. The city should not “do it all”. Hal announced that the city recently captured a Guinness Book of World Records by having the largest game of Red Light, Green Light to be held. This award had been held by the Ford Motor Company.

The website for the city received a national award, the highest, from the 3CMA (City-County Communications and Marketing Association).

Home sales in the city are looking better. Recently built and currently under construction of townhomes and condominiums have been strong.

There actually are few homes for sale in the city at this time. Retired Commissioner of the Revenue, John Grzejka’s position is being filled by an interim director and election for this position will be held in November.

The Battle Street improvements have increased meals tax revenues by 44.4%. The construction of the improvements on Main Street is expected to generate much business and similar revenue. Completion of the improvements is expected sometime in November.

The utilities in the Prescott Avenue and Quarry Road neighborhood have been put underground. The Prince William Street water tower needs repainting at a cost of \$70 thousand dollars. It is necessary to paint the water tower to protect the internal workings and protect the water that is stored in the tower.

The Summer Career Camp program for rising freshmen was a huge success. Our Police Department’s accreditation is something that has been achieved by only 2% of police departments nationwide. Other Police news was that Master Police Officer, Brian Hogan, took top honors at the Steel City Motor Police Competition. Teena Laguna, a graduate of Osbourn High School, was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain. Two new officers have been added to the force, Brittany Alexander (another Osbourn High School graduate) and Chris Sutton.

Our Fire and Rescue Department presented a program on the dangers of hoarding and their presentation was featured in the conference publication. New equipment has been ordered.

The city is holding a lottery for 124 cemetery plots at our local cemetery.

The Manassas Airport 10K run was a huge success and the airport has been selected by MAUIVA, an air/cruise company that offers tourists a multi destination option now has the airport as a stopover.

Our new City Manager, William Patrick (Pat) Pate, has been selected. He is highly qualified, hails from High Point, North Carolina. He and his wife, Sandra, are looking for a house in Manassas.

Liz Via-Gossman also spoke about the process of getting through the minutia associated with a new business. Liz emphasized that the city follows the state guidelines/laws and that the state laws on building codes can be quite restrictive. In January, there will be a new Economic Development Director who will be responsible for business recruitment, retention and tourism. In the meantime, Liz is the person to call.

Liz's many 'hats' worn during the downturn in the economy have re-designed and she is now the Director of Community Development.

### **Business announcements: What's New?**

Pamela Ryan of NVFS (Northern Virginia Family Services) and SERVE spoke about the upcoming Adult Scavenger Hunt to be held in Old Town on Saturday afternoon, October 26<sup>th</sup> (the same day that earlier will see little ones in town for the Haunted Happening activities). Businesses are invited to participate by being a stopover for the scavenger hunters. Malone's of Manassas will host hunters later on in the afternoon with beverages and nibbles. This a fundraiser event.

Mary Reilly of Creative Brush Studio reported that the community painting of Liberia that reflected the efforts of members of the community as well as tourists, was auctioned off and generated \$500 that was donated to the Manassas Museum for the Liberia house restoration. The painting was purchased by John Jewell, who donated it to the city to be hung in Liberia House in memory of Creston Owen.

Bob Chase mentioned that in honor of the exterior renovation of Prospero's, the book store will give away a book to OTBA members who come into the shop.

Ann Hempen of Manassas Junction B & B acknowledged that there have been complaints about the disruption of traffic due to the Main Street project, but the "bandaid should just be ripped off" so the project can get it done quicker.

Ricky Simpson of Ricky Simpson, PHD, LLC spoke about an upcoming weekend to improve one's marriage to be held at the end of September. Cost is \$50.

Chris Finnie asked that OTBA members for email addresses so she can send out the newsletter via email to them. Chris does bring a limited number of copies to the meetings.

Jan Alten of Opera House Gourmet announced that on September 22, Marcus Johnson (the headliner of the Manassas Wine and Jazz Festival) will be at the FLO Moscato Wine Launch Party at the Opera House.

The 50/50 raffle was won by Nury Mena of the Fulton Bank and she won \$30.

Our next meeting will be October 9th.

The meeting ended at 9:38 am.