



The Oella Almanac

*A publication of the Oella Homeowners Association
Fall 2007*



Editor's note: If you have any suggestions or contributions for the newsletter, please e-mail Amanda at laueram@yahoo.com or drop them off at any HOA board meeting. Contributions may be subject to editing.

News from the Board of Directors

One of the things that makes Oella so beautiful is our abundance of mature trees. Unfortunately, some of these trees are past their prime. The board has responded to numerous requests for tree removal and trimming on HOA common areas in the past few months. Replacing many of these lost trees is part of a 3-yr landscape improvement initiative. Some trees may not be placed due to hazardous locations; however, look for new trees and shrubs throughout the neighborhood. For your safety and the health of our trees, the board asks that residents refrain from trimming, fertilizing, or spraying pesticides on trees located in common areas. We have licensed arborists who attend to the trees.

The board has also contracted with a company to help address the invasive weed problem. The company will use integrated pest management (IPM) which involves spraying a minimal amount of chemicals to get things under control. The regular lawn mowing service will also trim back some of the weeds. If you spot little warning flags in the common areas, please steer clear of the area until the flags are removed. It is especially important to keep children and dogs away from areas that have been sprayed.

The board voted to begin making twice-annual tours through the neighborhood to assess the needs and condition of the association. Members are encouraged to join us on our walk. The first tour will be on October 7 at 1:00pm. We will start at Timber Point (Charles James Circle) and work our way around.

In July, President Richard Gambrill resigned from office. The board thanks Richard for his service as the board's President. Mr. Gambrill will still remain an active board member. Amanda Lauer was elected to serve as President for the remainder of 2007.

Board elections for terms beginning in 2008 are approaching. Please consider serving your community in this capacity. We are looking for energetic, positive, motivated people who are dedicated to preserving and improving our wonderful community. If you are interested in running for election, please contact any board member.

Finally, the board would like to thank those residents who take special care of their properties. Your pride in your homes helps keep Oella beautiful.

Please note: 2007 regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held on the second Monday of each month in the small meeting room at the Westchester Center unless otherwise noted on the website calendar.

Check www.oellahoa.blogspot.com for frequent community news updates and events. If you have an announcement for the blog, send it to laueram@yahoo.com.

Reduce Home Improvement Waste

Tackling a home improvement project? Help keep materials out of our county landfills. Conserving landfill space means money in your pocket—we pay for it with our taxes! Follow these tips to make your project as "green" as possible:

- Measure carefully so that you don't buy too much product.
- If you need to store extra items for later use, make sure paint cans are tightly sealed and wood and other porous items are kept in a dry area (indoors)
- Design projects to correspond to standard lumber and drywall dimensions.
- Reuse excess materials in other projects or donate the materials. Habitat for Humanity accepts some items. Check the Baltimore County website for other options.
- Use products made from recycled materials. Search the web for a multitude of options.
- Use salvaged architectural items. There are architectural salvage warehouses in Baltimore and York, PA. You can also find some great pieces in Historic Ellicott City.
- Need to replace carpet? Check out www.flor.com for a wide selection of easy to install and replace carpet squares in a range of fun colors, textures, and patterns.

Poop Patrol

Please remember that it is important to pick up after your pet—this includes

along the Mill Race trail. The Association's rules require owners to pick up after their pets and keep pets on a leash while on HOA common areas. Please also make sure your pet doesn't wander onto others' property without an invitation.

The HOA provides Mutt Mitts for your convenience at several locations. The newest Mutt Mitt station is located across from Spring Street. Let's extend a very big **thank you** to all of the volunteers who refill the Mutt Mitt holders and to Richard Gambrill for installing the new station.

Oella Home & Garden Pilgrimage

Oella will participate in the 2008 Maryland Home and Garden Pilgrimage. On May 18 from 10:00am to 5:00pm, ticket holders will tour various homes and gardens in Oella. Some of the stops are within the HOA, and some are outside the HOA. Don't miss this chance to tour the Oella Mill, the George Ellicott House, and many other special structures. Information on volunteering, purchasing tickets, or becoming a patron of the event will become available in the coming months.

Granite Hill *by Holly Bohart*

In June, the Oella Historical Society was treated to a tour of some homes in the area, courtesy of Charles Wagandt. The first stop was Granite Hill, the collection of stone houses on Oella Ave. near Main St. that are undergoing restoration.

The Granite Hill homes, built around 1806, were not originally part of

Oella. They were built as homes for the mill workers at the Iron and Slitting Mill that was located near these homes on the river. Originally operated by the Ellicotts, the mill was taken over by the Granite Manufacturing Company, which launched a cotton mill on the site in the 1840s. The mill was destroyed twice, first by fire and then by the flood of 1868. After the flood, the company decided not to rebuild the mill. The Union Manufacturing Co. later bought the property, and in 1887 the Dickeys became the owners of the company and the property.

Some of the stone houses survived and are undergoing restoration. Originally duplexes, some are being combined into larger single-family homes, and a current single home will have an addition. Plans for Granite Hill also call for several new homes to be built on the site. A total of 16 homes, including the current ones being restored, is planned.

One of the stone homes is nearing completion. It boasts interior stone walls, restored pine floors, and original fireplaces. The attic of one side of the home was removed, leaving an airy bedroom with walk-in closet, full bath, and a small loft accessible by ladder. This former bedroom-attic space was at one time divided into four bedrooms. A second bedroom in the home has a spiral staircase winding up to the attic. The home has two basements or cellars, remnants of its days as two separate homes, that are accessible only from the outside. The low ceiling of one basement still shows the original logs—bark and all.

Historically, Granite Hill also included a number of log homes. The two that have survived, believed to be built in the early 1800s, are located up the drive behind the stone houses and are also part of the ongoing restoration. One

is nearing completion. Sometime in the past, the outer logs of both homes were covered over, and there are no plans to expose these. However, the interior of the home that is furthest along showcases restored logs and new chinking and mortar, the original brick fireplace, and a winding, wooden staircase to a small loft above. A modern addition was removed. Both log houses will be linked to new homes, allowing these relics of the past to be saved. A narrow drive will wind between the two log homes to other new homes planned. The drive will extend to Westchester Ave.

The other site toured was the former Dutch Hotel, the stone home next to the old church that houses the Oella Company and other businesses. One half of this duplex is currently for rent. Built around 1809 or 1810, it features two original cooking fireplaces on the first level, original pine flooring, beaded wall boards, and exposed beams in the upstairs bedroom where the attic once was. A tasteful two-story addition, done as part of the building's restoration in 2004, has added significant space, including a large kitchen with cathedral ceiling.

The historical society occasionally hosts speakers and tours, and anyone is welcome to participate. For more information, please contact Chris Innes: innes@smart2.net



Capturing the “Essence” of the Building:

Southern Management’s Impressive Transformation of the Oella Mill
by Dawn Sage

In an August 2005 edition of *The View*, Paul Peluso wrote about Southern Management’s (SM) plan to renovate the Oella Mill, turning its historic industrial space into 147 apartments, while honoring the history and integrity of the structure. According to Peluso, “there is still an essence to the building that [SM’s CEO, David Hillman] wishes to preserve.” For Hillman, essence is synonymous with the Mill’s character, and capitalizing on those elements that represent character—very high ceilings and generous industrial windows that allow natural light to flood the space—is key to the building’s transformation.

Clearly, Hillman’s plan has come to fruition. In early July, SM’s Marketing Director, John Cohan led members of the Oella community on a tour of the Mill, where we saw firsthand how maximizing on the Mill’s character, using smart design and paying attention to detail, has truly transformed the interior and revitalized the exterior of a much-neglected building.

During the tour, Cohan emphasized the importance of honoring the original purpose of the Mill, as well as celebrating the industrial feel of the building. Leaving the high ceilings exposed and revealing the ductwork, and resurfacing the concrete floors with self-leveling polyurethane, was essential to achieving this ideal. But also, repairing and replacing the timeworn wide-plank flooring with specially milled tongue & groove wood, further reinforced SM’s commitment to the historical integrity of the structure. In addition, the original interior brick walls have also been

exposed and incorporated into many apartments and some common areas.

Besides raising the building to accommodate the new underground parking garage, one of the most impressive aspects of the renovation was the creative re-use of space. As we meandered through freshly dry-walled corridors, we were surprised to find that no two apartments were alike, an idea that ironically echoes the theme of many houses in Oella. For example, some of the apartments are mostly drywall, while others have brick interior walls; some one-bedroom units have loft spaces, while others have spiral staircases; and six of the two-bedroom apartments are two-level units, boasting eleven windows to the space and beautiful views of the Patapsco River.

Despite their uniqueness, the apartments do share similar elements, such as stainless steel appliances, Silestone countertops and sleek, black Italian cabinetry. Also, all apartments will be wired for cable and broadband service, providing residents with a choice of Comcast or Verizon. In addition, all tenants will have access to the two-level library that will be wi-fi accessible and features a mini-business center, including a fax, printer and copier. But also, there will be a lounge area with a catering kitchen, gas fireplace, pool table and patio, as well as an outside picnic space and party room, where tenants can entertain guests. Lastly, Cohan emphasized the distinctive two-level fitness center that includes a Yoga/Pilates studio, weight room and cardio-vascular equipment.

Admittedly, SM’s commitment to the renovation and restoration of the Mill, and willingness to work with the Oella community, has inspired residents to help preserve the very essence and character that is unique to this beloved community.