



The Oella Almanac

Summer 2006



Editor's note: If you have any suggestions or contributions for the newsletter, please e-mail Amanda Lauer at laueram@yahoo.com or drop them off at 748 Oella Ave or at any HOA board meeting. Letters to the Editor may be edited for length.

HOA Board News

On March 11, the board toured the Oella Mill. The mill will be restored to look much the way it did when it was built in the early 1900s. The brick is being cleaned, a new roof is being put on, and period windows are being installed. The main structure and stone powerhouse will contain 147 units, including studios and 1BR and 2BR apartments. Indoor and outdoor parking will be available, with a total of approximately 250 parking spaces. The apartments will feature exposed ceiling beams and brick. The complex will offer amenities such as a club room with kitchen, a gym, a pub, observation decks, and a concierge desk. More information about the Oella Mill can be found at www.oellamill.com.

The Mill Race Bridge is expected to be completed in early July. Stay tuned!

Do you have suggestions for how we can improve the website? Send us an e-mail with your thoughts.

*Check out the Oella HOA website at www.oellahoa.org and the **NEW** blog at www.oellahoa.blogspot.com for community news.*

Architectural Review Committee (ARC) Update

Changes to the exterior of your home must be reviewed and approved by the ARC *before* you make them. The ARC attempts to respond to all requests within 30 days. This process helps ensure that Oella stays beautiful! Thanks for your cooperation.

Please check the HOA website for the latest announcements from ARC.

Home Maintenance Tips

Maryland summers are hot and humid. The A/C runs almost constantly in July & August. This year, our BGE bills will be higher than ever. To conserve energy, try the following tips:

- Use a dehumidifier. Humid air feels hotter than dry air. When you empty the tank, use the water to quench your plants' thirst.
- Seal gaps in doors and windows to prevent cooled air from escaping.
- Change the air filter in your cooling system.
- Use ceiling fans to keep the air circulating.
- Turn off lights when you aren't using them. Replace incandescent bulbs with fluorescent bulbs that produce less heat & use less energy.

Gardening Tips

The harsh summer sun can take its toll on your plants, so keep them hydrated. Water plants early in the morning to reduce evaporation. Plants in containers are especially prone to drying out. Try a using moisture-retaining potting mix, and water often.

Reduce dangerous pesticides: Try removing pests from your plants by spraying them with a hose. Don't forget to spray the undersides of leaves! An environmentally friendly way to keep pests away is to spray plants with a mild soap & water mix or a chili powder & water mix. Don't kill pest-eating bugs like praying mantis, ladybugs, and lacewings. They will help keep the bad bugs in check. Strong plants are more resistant to pests, so add compost, coffee grounds, and eggshells to your soil for healthy plants. If you still have a pest problem, you can order organic and biological pesticides and fertilizers at www.gardensalive.com.

The early morning dew softens the soil, so this is a great time to pull weeds (instead of using weed-killer). White vinegar poured directly on weeds will also kill them. If you see garlic mustard growing on the hill, please pull it and bag it up. It's very invasive and crowds out our native species.

Do you love the taste of homegrown tomatoes, but have no space to grow them? The "Patio" variety grows well in containers. Other veggies that are well-suited to containers: lettuce, radishes, carrots, and some cucumber varieties. Herbs also grow well in containers, and add delicious flavor to your summer dishes. Herb plants can be brought inside

when the weather cools. Just keep them on a sunny window and water when the soil is dry to the touch.

When mowing your grass, cut it high and let the clippings fall to the ground instead of bagging them. The clippings add nutrients to your lawn, reducing the need for fertilizer. If you do fertilize, don't overdo it. Your lawn may only need it once a year, in the fall.

Pet Corner

Provide pets with plenty of water and a cool area to nap. Don't keep them locked in a car, even with the windows down. If you take Fido on long walks, take along a portable travel bowl (available at pet stores) and some water. Consider getting your pet a short haircut for the season to help him keep cool.

It's prime flea & tick season! There are several one-spot flea & tick treatments available at your vet's, at the pet store, or online at sites like PetCareRX.com and DrsFosterSmith.com. Be sure to check yourself and your pet for ticks after you've been outside.

Please remember to keep your pets leashed and clean up after them. The HOA provides Mutt Mitts for your convenience at several locations around Oella.

Residents' News

If you have any news please let us know!

Please extend a warm welcome to new residents Andrea & James of 935 Oella Ave. (Spring Street).

It Takes A Community To Build A Bridge

by Geoff Baker

Donning leather gloves, former HOA President Bruce Elliott strode down the Mill Race trail in the late afternoon light. His pocket hid the tool of liberation and litigation. Plink. Plunk. Plank. One by one the nest of barbed wires barricading the trail succumbed to the cutters. The nadir in the fight over access to Oella's Mill Race Trail had been reached, but the stonewalling had just begun.

The date was 1998 but we need to back up a bit in order to fully understand the history of this issue.

Oella's Mill Race Trail, running from behind Long Brick Row upriver all the way to the dam under Route 40, was once the country's longest at 1-³/₄ miles. The water in it powered the Dickey Mill. It dates to 1800's when the mill was built. The trail provides our community with the only direct access to Patapsco Valley State Park.

In 1993, Charles Wagandt, Oella's developer, recorded with the county subdivision plans for Race Road. Two of the proposed lots contained parts of the Mill Race Trail. Those two properties, as well as an adjacent one, also had a private walkway easement on them. The developer held the easement.

Once the properties were sold in 1998, the easement was transferred to the HOA. Concurrently the new owners of the lots blocked access to the easement with barbed wire and No Trespassing signs. Shortly thereafter the whole situation

ended up in court with the HOA insisting it had an easement and the right to use it, and the homeowners insisting there was no easement and fighting to keep the Community from crossing it. A long and drawn out court case with several decisions and appeals worked its way up the legal system. The final ruling, after thousands of dollars of litigation and several years time, was in the HOA's favor.

Since that ruling, the properties in question have changed ownership several times. The current Race road owners have gone above and beyond in working with the HOA to ensure that the realigned trail and bridge over the Mill Race will ensure Oella's continual access to the park.

Now that the bridge is nearing completion, it's important to note that the access to the trail and bridge is not via Race road. Race road is private. The access is from behind Long Brick Row. Please be good neighbors and do not venture off the trail, pick up any trash, clean up after your dogs and respect the privacy and solitude of the Race road homeowners. It's also worth mentioning that the easement is for HOA members and their guests only. It is not a public easement.

This project could not have come to fruition without the help of countless neighbors and several administrations of HOA Board of Directors. The current Board of Directors is to be commended for finally bringing this project to fruition.

Local Business Highlight

Summer is the season for antiquing, and we live in an antique hotspot! Since the Mill shops closed in early 2005, we've had to travel farther down the road for our aged goods. We all know about the shops on Main St. and Holland's antiques right here in Oella, but where did the antiques vendors from the Mill end up? Drive down Frederick Rd. a little farther and find out! P.J's Antiques and HomeStyles on the corner of Frederick Rd. and St. John's Lane are run by several of the people who once peddled their wares in the Mill. P.J.'s always has a fantastic assortment of antique and vintage furniture, and HomeStyles offers unique gifts as well as antiques.

Where in Oella?

The answer is posted on the blog.



If you have a photo of a unique place in Oella, please send it to us. Digital photos are preferred.

\$\$\$COUPON\$\$\$

Mention that you live in Oella and receive 10% off of bottles of wine on Tuesdays at Annabell's wine shop on Main Street (next to the Fire Station Museum).

Keep Oella Beautiful

Baltimore County Recycling news: BaltCo now accepts recyclables in any color plastic bag. Please remember that Baltimore County does NOT accept bulk trash. You can take it to the dump, consider donating it, or hire a private bulk trash collection agency (try 1-800-GOT-JUNK).

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Earth Day clean-up of Oella Ave. Please help keep our common areas clean by picking up any trash you see.

For our new residents: trash is picked up on Tuesdays. Fridays are recycling days. The county operates on an alternating bi-weekly cycle. One week is for paper products. The opposite week is for plastic, glass, and metal bottles, jars, and cans.

If you'd like to organize a clean-up in your area of Oella, please e-mail Amanda at laueram@yahoo.com and she'll post your announcement on the blog.

Keep Oella Delicious!

Mozzerella Caprese

- 1 ripe tomato (homegrown or farmer's market are best)
- 1 8 oz. (approx.) ball of fresh mozzarella
- Fresh basil leaves
- Olive oil, salt & pepper to taste

Slice tomato & mozzarella. On a plate, alternate tomato, mozzarella, and one basil leaf. Drizzle with oil and salt & pepper to taste. Enjoy immediately. For extra zing, add a splash of balsamic or red wine vinegar.