

Welcome to...

OPCL

Ocean Park Civic League - Virginia Beach, VA

Ocean Park Echo

OPCL Meeting / Thursday, March 3 / 7:30 p.m.

Ocean Park Fire and Rescue

Ocean Park Civic League

CRAWL OUT

Saturday, March 26

6 p.m. at Salty C's



Dove Payman tries to coax neighbor Kim Burgess out of winter hibernation. Bring a neighbor and CRAWL OUT.

Free appetizers

Fantastic door prizes:

Wheeleez Beach Cart (girls not included)

Beach chairs, canopy, cooler

Prizes for first 20 guests

Beach police arrest five men for break-ins

Virginia Beach police said alert neighbors helped them catch five suspects who allegedly had been breaking into vehicles in the Chick's Beach area.

Police said the suspects broke into several cars on both sides of the Lesner Bridge. From witness descriptions, officers caught them on Shore Drive and found stolen items in their car, including a GPS and laptop.

All of the suspects are Norfolk residents. They are being held in jail without bond on charges of grand larceny and conspiracy.

If you see a crime in progress, call 911. If you see something suspicious, call the Police Safety Line 385-5000.

**Secure your home
against crime**

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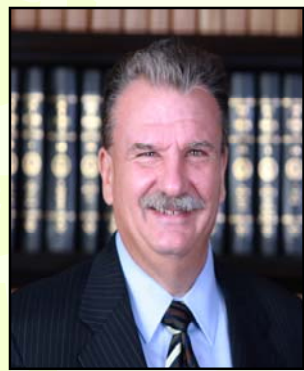
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Martin Thomas
OPCL President

Greetings:

It has been a long, cold winter, but spring will be here before we know it, and we will be walking on the beach watching the dogs play. Not long after that we'll be preparing for the 4th of July celebration and enjoying the fireworks display.

I would like to encourage all Ocean Park residents to please join the Civic League. The dues are only \$15, and you can join online by going to our website www.opcl.org.

Once you join, please come to one of the membership meetings, and get involved. There are lots of issues that we are dealing with regarding our community, and we need your involvement. Mike Gaskins at mstva92@aol.com, is trying to organize a Neighborhood Watch, but needs many block captains to step forward and get involved. Please contact him by email if you are interested in participating. This would benefit all of us.

If you have concerns about zoning or any land-use issues in our community, please contact Mike Wills at Mandjwills@cox.net.

I also invite you to peruse our website for other information about the Civic League and how to reach other Board members and Committee members with whom you may be interested in speaking with about issues in your neighborhood.

The Virginia Beach police department liaison to OPCL has been very attentive in contacting the Civic League Board. If you have any concerns that you would like me to discuss with the police department about our neighborhood, please let me know, and I will be happy to talk to you about them and relay them to our liaison.

Last, but not least, although it is a few months away we need to continue to raise funds in order to pay for the wonderful July 4th fireworks display. Please contact Jill Doczi at jilldoczi@aol.com, and make a contribution. All of the contributions, no matter how small or big, add up, and will help us pay for this display that will be visible to all of our members and residents.

In closing, I urge you to please get involved with your Civic League. You can make a difference.



Secure your home against crime

The most important tool in making the neighborhood safer is "awareness"

By Jill Doczi

Since December 2010, the Shore Drive corridor has experienced a surge in thefts of all types, ranging from petty yard object pilfering to automobile break-ins and home burglaries. Ocean Park residents can do many things to protect themselves from becoming victims.

Third Precinct Police Detective Sloane reported many incidents in the Chick's Beach area around Greenwell Road, in Ocean Park and Church Point. He stressed that ALL theft should be reported because even petty theft can be part of a larger issue. Sloane said theft has become popular due to Craig's List, eBay, cash-for-gold locations, and flea markets. Items can be sold quickly and easily without questions. He offered some tips for keeping our neighborhood safe.

- **If solicitors come to your door selling magazines, car detailing, yard work, cleaning services, window washing, etc.,** ask for a business card. This simple act can alert someone that you are aware of the possibility of fraud. Check up on a business before hiring someone. Never allow a solicitor into your home to demonstrate a product or provide a sample. They could be assessing your home's interior for a future break in.
- **Keep all doors or fences locked. There is a system involving two or more criminals.** While one keeps you busy at the front door, another enters through a rear door and burglarizes your home.
- **Be aware of your neighbor's habits.** Know when they are having work done on their homes and when routine maintenance occurs. Know the car that belongs to the regular housekeeper or dog walker. Let neighbors you trust know when you're going away for a weekend.
- **Make your house appear occupied.** Most of these break-ins occurred during broad daylight during working hours. If you have an extra car in the garage, consider parking it in the driveway while you're at work. Don't leave packages sitting on the porch. Arrange for a neighbor to take them in or for the carrier to drop them behind your fence. A package sitting for hours or days on your porch is a sure sign you aren't home.
- **Don't be afraid to let strangers know you are aware of them.** A recently apprehended thief confessed that while he was scoping out the Ocean Tides neighborhood, someone approached him and asked him a question. He immediately felt uncomfortable and left. Get a good look at strange vehicles. Write down license plates, Report suspicious activity such as strange vehicles sitting for long periods. Get a good look at people you don't recognize, and let them know that you see them.
- **Don't put out identifiable items on curb for pickup.** Boxes for big screen televisions, computers, tools, etc. are advertisements to criminals that you just purchased some valuable items. Break them up, and put them in trash cans or take them to a dumpster.
- **Be aware of what can be seen from the street.** Don't leave your garage door wide open for hours with expensive tools and toys in plain view. Don't leave your computer sitting in a front window.
- **Record serial numbers and take photographs** of valuables for insurance purposes and identification.





Fundraising is underway for the second annual Shore Drive Fireworks. The fundraising goal for a major fireworks show is \$10,000. Last year's show was spectacular and enjoyed by probably the largest crowd ever assembled on our beach.

To pledge, go to www.opcl.org

Kids need your help to save Pleasure House Point

Did you catch the Pleasure House Point story in the Feb. 11 issue of the *Beacon*? Students at Kemp's Landing Magnet School have taken up the crusade to save PHP, starting with a video, which can be viewed at www.vbprf.org about the property.

One of the production group members, Charlie Harrelson, has been selected as a finalist for a Cox Conservation Heroes award, and will receive \$1,250 - \$5,000 for Pleasure House Point, based on online voting, which begins March 7.

The Cox Conserves Hero, chosen by online voting, will be awarded \$5,000 to donate to the environmental nonprofit of his or her choice. Each finalist will be given \$1,250 to donate to their nonprofit of choice. Charlie has designated Pleasure House Point preservation as his beneficiary.

The Virginia Cox Conserves Heroes program is a national awards program to honor individuals who are helping to create, preserve or enhance outdoor places for everyone to enjoy. Eligible work must be done on a volunteer basis and may not be part of an individual's job. By improving our shared environment, these unsung heroes make the Hampton Roads community a better place for everyone to live.

These same students will be entering their video in the Pepsi Challenge. If you want to be notified when that happens, so that you can vote for them, please contact grace@sdcc.info. They could win up to \$250,000 for PHP.



***BA* AS IN BETTER**

The Lynnhaven River is showing signs of improved health



First, some statistics about the Lynnhaven River: It's the largest and most developed waterway in the city, encompassing 64 square miles, with nearly 250,000 residents living nearby as well as about 40,000 dogs.

Dogs mean untreated poop, which means bacteria, which means pollution, which means trouble. Eight years ago, an environmental group was formed to clean up the fecal bacteria and other pollutants that had made eating famous Lynnhaven oysters a health hazard.

On Thursday night, the same group, Lynnhaven River Now, celebrated its annual gathering at Steinhilber's restaurant with 26 dozen oysters – raw and steamed, with sides of cocktail sauce and horseradish – that had just been plucked from a cleaner and healthier river. They cheered, sipped wine and recycled their spent shells, to be used later to build new, artificial reefs.

As part of their yearly ritual, group leaders issued a "State of the River" report, which scored the overall health of the Lynnhaven in 2010 with a B, above average – slightly better than 2009's grade of a B- and noticeably improved from their first grade, issued in 2005, of a C.

"We've made significant progress," said executive director Karen Forget. "To have this kind of quantifiable progress in environmental restoration in such a short time is almost unheard of."

Not that everything is rosy. Late last year, the state Health Department, citing elevated bacteria levels, closed about 3 percent of the river that had been opened earlier to unrestricted shellfish harvesting. According to the report card, amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus – two ubiquitous elements that, in excess, can cause low oxygen and dead zones – continued to worsen last year. "Our biggest problem," Forget said.

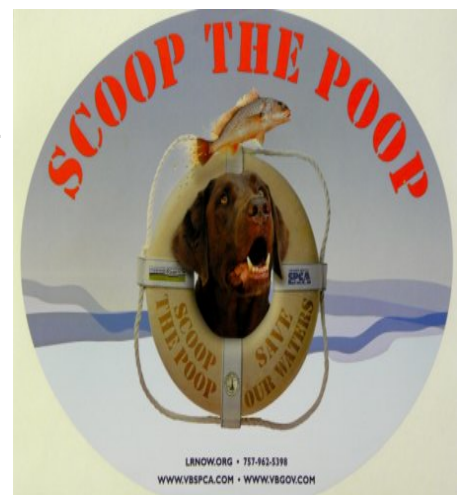
And there were more raw sewage overflows into the Lynnhaven in 2010 than the year before – 17 in all – though still a lot fewer than the 115 in 2005. "We have challenges ahead," Forget told a room full of group members and political leaders, including the mayor and several City Council members. "We cannot be complacent. We have to be more aggressive."

By Scott Harper © The Virginian-Pilot Dec. 27, 2010

New Scoop the Poop Stickers

Lynnhaven River Now and the Virginia Beach SPCA have printed 10,000 garbage can stickers urging dog owners to clean up after their pets. The sticker, featuring a dog in a life preserver, urges folks to "Scoop the Poop" and "Save Our Waterways." It is based on a poster, designed by John Koehler of Koehler Books, almost a decade ago. The poster was part of the Virginia Beach SPCA and Lynnhaven River Now's first scoop the poop campaign to help combat pollution in the Lynnhaven River.

"We want to convince every dog owner to scoop the poop. No matter what you hear, dog poop does not fertilize sea oats at the beach nor flowers in your garden. Dog poop does not belong in a compost heap. It belongs in the trash," said Sharon Adams, SPCA executive director.



Sixth-graders are saving the earth, 10 acres at a time

By Irene Bowers
Virginian-Pilot correspondent
© February 11, 2011

These students aren't deterred by a monumental task. A team of Kemps Landing Magnet School eighth-graders and the sixth-grade class at Cape Henry Collegiate School have a shared vision: to preserve the last 10 acres of land at Pleasure House Point through the sale of monument trees.



The live oaks will bear small plaques designating the donors and will be planted at Pleasure House Point. They are called monument trees because the species is long-lived. Proceeds from the sales will go to the Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Foundation, which hopes to raise \$4 million for the remaining tract of land on Shore Drive.

Last year, a partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Virginia Beach funded all but 10 acres of the 122-acre parcel on the Lynnhaven River, sparking grassroots efforts to save it. In August, a legal issue between Wells Fargo and former owner Wayne McLeskey Jr. surfaced, delaying the entire project.

According to Grace Moran, former president of the Shore Drive Community Coalition, donors' checks to the foundation were returned to prevent problems donors might have had with claiming a tax deduction for 2010 and having it rebated in 2011. Pete Hangen, resource development coordinator for Parks and Recreation, said the city is not involved in the lawsuit.

"This has been a long journey," he said. "We certainly appreciate the community's resolve." Kemps Landing eighth-graders Charlie Harrelson, Michael Horth, John Murrell and Jack Myers, teamed up to help the cause as part of the Siemens Challenge "We Can Change the World."

Their teacher, Dianna McDowell, said the national challenge - which is sponsored by Siemens Foundation, Discovery Education and the National Science Teachers Association - requires students to use scientific inquiry to explore local environmental issues. The \$10,000 prize per student would go to the Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Foundation. "None of us live by Shore Drive, but having cleaner water and more green spaces makes this a better place for everyone and everything," Michael said.

Through the Shore Drive Community Coalition, the students received monument tree cards for distribution. They contain blank spaces in which to draw a tree and make an appeal.

"You write to celebrities, professional athletes and philanthropists," Charlie explained.

Cape Henry science teacher Debra Duffy learned of monument trees through LynnhavenRiver NOW, an organization with which the school's sixth graders participate in environmental community projects.

Continued on page 13





What's your first reaction when you hear sirens?

By Judy Jones

If you're driving, you start figuring out whether you need to pull over and let an emergency vehicle by. If so, you may even feel a twinge of annoyance, but you get over that in a flash. Whether you're driving, or not, you probably think, "Oh,,no. Somebody's in trouble. I hope it's nobody I know."

But that's not the whole story. Fortunately for our community, thanks to the Ocean Park Volunteer Rescue Squad, you can think, "Somebody's got trouble, but help is on the way." And then you move to thoughts of concern for the safety of the responders and hope for the best possible outcome, whatever the emergency.

For more than 60 years, the OPVRS, located where East Stratford Road meets Shore Drive, has been saving lives by providing emergency medical services and fire protection. Its stated goal is "to enhance the quality of life wherever we are called upon by providing education, training, and support for our membership, as well as facilitating the highest quality of pre-hospital care for the citizens living in the Ocean Park area and the City of Virginia Beach."

This volunteer group of about 50 of our neighbors responds to all kinds of emergency situations. As a nonprofit, its services are free, and they rely on fundraising efforts for their operational needs. Equipped with three ambulances, they answer more than 4,000 calls a year citywide, but focus on the Shore Drive/Great Neck Road corridor.

By now, you are no doubt wondering what you can do to support the OPVRS. Check out their website, www.opvrs.com, for details. Here are the basic options. You can:

- Become an active member (an emergency responder)
- Become an administrative member (any kind of help except ride in the ambulance)
- Donate money or equipment (The nor'easter of 2009 severely damaged the station; building repairs and equipment replacement are not finished yet.)





Ocean Park History Project

By Nadine Costenbader

nadinecos@aol.com

It was so nice to read that OPCL is considering participating in an upgrade of the Ocean Park Fire and Rescue station's exterior. These photos from the 1950s shows it much unchanged from today. Below, an interior view shows a new living area. Notice the knotty pine walls, fireplace, and juke box. What happened?



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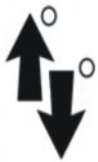
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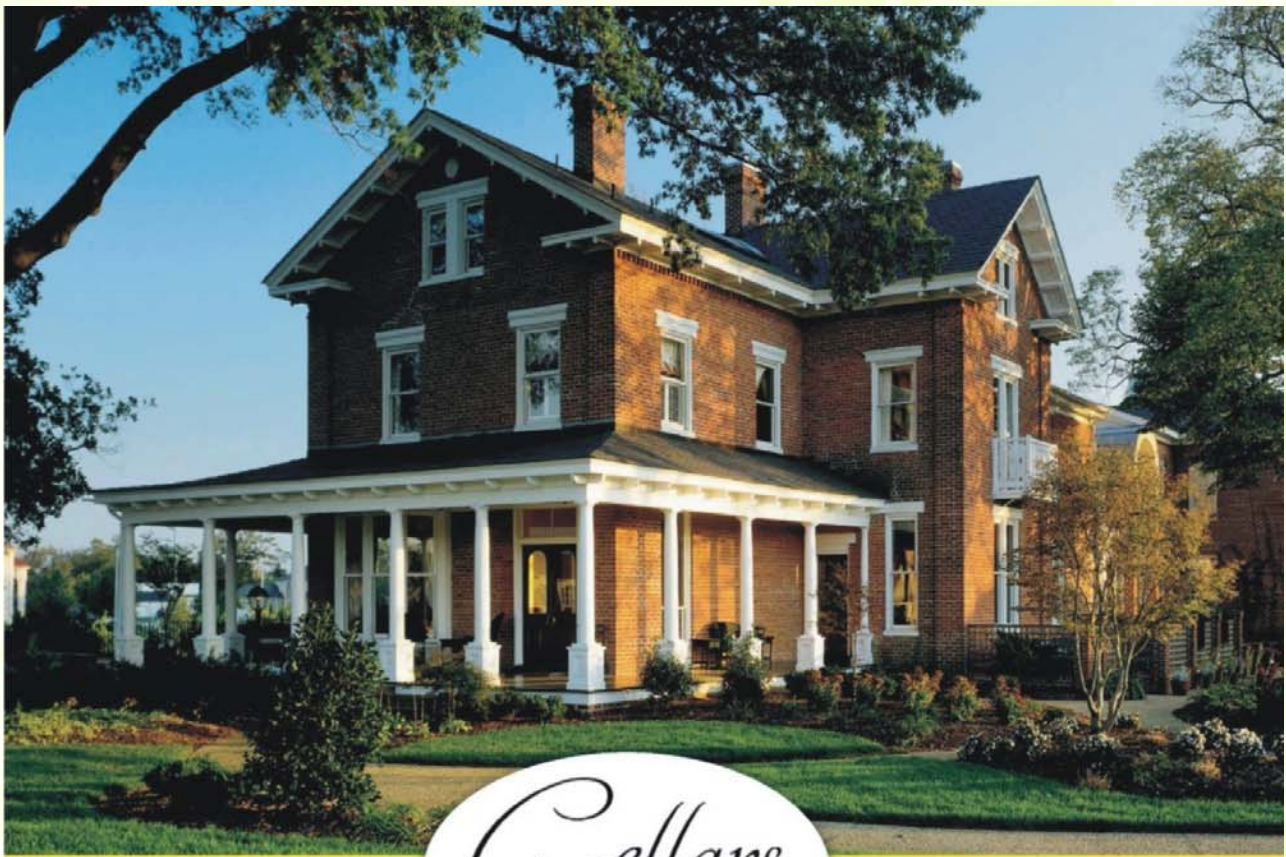
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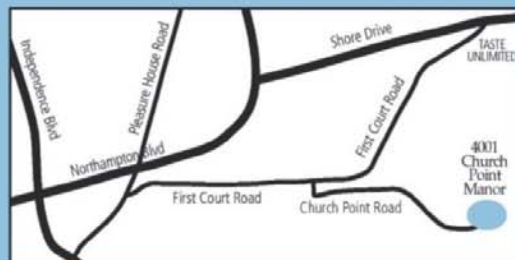


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Sixth-graders are saving earth

Continued from Page 6

"The monument tree cards were a perfect combination of community service and environmental activism all wrapped up in a small package," Duffy said.

According to Carol Collins of Shore Drive Community Coalition, the young live oaks are already in the city's nursery inventory. "We are striving for \$100,000 per monument tree," Collins said. "But all donations are welcome."

Cape Henry student Hunter Ramirez targeted New York Mets third baseman David Wright. "He's from here, so he might help," Hunter said.

"The monument tree cards were a perfect combination of community service and environmental activism all wrapped up in a small package," Duffy said.

If the acquisition of the remaining Pleasure House Point acreage does not occur, money will be returned if the donors request it. Previous donors whose checks were returned in 2010 and wish to resubmit their checks can contact the foundation.

In a related effort, the Kemps Landing Magnet School team created a Pleasure House Point video that can be viewed at www.vbprf.org.

The boys submitted the video to the Pepsi Refresh Project for consideration. If the project is selected as a finalist, supporters can vote for it online in March at www.refresheverything.com. The effort could garner the foundation \$250,000.

"A simple vote could save Pleasure House Point," Jack said.

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