



OCEAN PARK CIVIC LEAGUE



NEWSLETTER

January 2002

Serving the Ocean Park Community

Meeting Notice
Thursday, January 3, 2002
@ Ocean Park Volunteer Fire & Rescue H. Q.
Time: Social-7:00 to 7:30 P. M.
Meeting: 7:30 to 9:00 P. M. Sharp!!

**COME TO THE MEETING TO HEAR ABOUT NEW BOAT RAMP
FACILITY, SAND REPLENISHMENT, AND MORE !**

Sand from the dredging of Lynnhaven Inlet has poured onto our Ocean Park beach for weeks. The sand is available because it is coming from the need to dredge Lynnhaven Inlet for navigation. Ocean Park happens to be the lucky recipient of the sand. Only the necessary amount of sand will be removed to get the navigable depth needed for Lynnhaven Inlet. The Army Corps of Engineers controls the dredging; the federal government pays for it. The City pays for the depositing and spreading of the sand on our beach

According to the current estimate from the Army Corps of Engineers, we will get a very large beach a "fore shore slope" and a "berm width." Two passes were made to fill in the beach. For protection, the sloped section is at an 8-foot elevation.



DWW

This work is "in progress." It is not finished. Even in its unfinished state it really looks great.

In our multipurpose newsletters, we try to incorporate vital issues concerning our area, stories of local interest and historical perspectives about the development of Ocean Park and its vicinity. Beginning with this issue and in the following two issues we will give you the historical background of the Ocean Park Volunteer Fire and Rescue units from their origins to the present time.

Please come to the next meeting. Meet your neighbors. Learn more about your community and what many dedicated citizens are doing to improve our quality of life.

To all our residents: The OPCL Executive Committee extends all good wishes for the New Year.

William G. Sykes

Co president



Meeting Agenda

(We will keep to the time schedule)

7:00 - 7:30 P. M: Social and Refreshments

7:30 P. M.: Welcome and Pledge to Flag- William Sykes, Co-President

Treasurer's Report - Anne Kane

Shore Drive Community Coalition update

Update on Boat Ramp -

Update on Sand Replenishment - Wendy Vaughn, Co-President

Report on Open Spaces

Fire House/Rescue Squad update

8:45 P. M. New Business

Raffle Two (2) Twenty-five Dollar (\$25) Gift Certificates will be raffled at the conclusion of the meeting. You must be present to win.

9:00 P.M. Good Night!

DONORS OF GIFT CERTIFICATES: DUCK IN & BAYSIDE EXXON

Ocean Park Civic League Officers

P. O. Box 55385, Virginia Beach, VA 23471

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invited to
contribute timely
news items to the
OPCL Newsletter

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OCEAN PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE

57 Years of Caring

1944- 2001

Part I

WILLIAM G. SYKES

THE EARLY YEARS

In the Fall of 1944, the 40 families living in Ocean Park, Princess Anne County, Virginia decided they needed a change. Brush fires constantly threatened their property and lives, but the closest fire stations were in Broad Creek Village, Norfolk County, or at the nearby naval bases. At the beginning of World War II, the Department of Civil Defense had established several local Civil Defense units to provide firefighting equipment to the scattered communities of Princess Anne County. George and Louise Lyon, and the Ocean Park Men's Club, looked into improving community services by using these resources.

George Lyon, a veteran firefighter became the first fire chief of the volunteer company, leading a staff of 18. He served until his death in 1977. Their first truck was a Diamond T, a 650-gallon Navy aircraft refueling truck with a jeep engine. A booster pump was used to build up pressure that would equal a city hydrant, converting it to use as a fire truck. "Oceana Jet Fuel" emblazoned the sides of the truck. Imagine the horror of the North End residents when they saw THAT responding to their fire!

Chief Early of the Tanner's Creek Fire Station in Norfolk County provided invaluable assistance with equipment purchases and fire training. He sold the organization their first "true" fire engine. Other military surplus obtained by the fledgling fire service included jeeps, wooden boats and ladders.

The original home of the Ocean Park fire service was a one story, 2,400 square foot cinder block building with two truck bays, a galley, a fireplace, bathrooms and a meeting room. Funds came from a variety of fund raisers - bingo, raffles, fish fries, and spaghetti dinners. The labor came from the service members, in their "off 'hours and on weekends (what "off" hours?). Southern Materials donated many supplies. The building also included an observation platform on the roof. Due to the uneasy nature of the times, teams of women would spend four-hour shifts looking for enemy planes coming in over the Chesapeake Bay.

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) care was limited to transporting patients to the hospital. The first ambulance at Ocean Park was a 1946 Army field ambulance, which the late Walter Peavey, who owned a garage on Shore Drive, maintained for many years to come. Beginning in 1952, several ambulances were station wagons built at the Ford plant in Norfolk. Friends at the plant "double-dipped" the vehicle bodies for a more durable coat of paint and installed engines normally used in Ford Thunderbirds. Vroom!

Originally, crossing the mouth of Lynnhaven Bay was accomplished by a low span vehicle bridge built in the 1930s. The Lesner Bridge replaced this old bridge in 1958, as a two-lane passenger vehicle high-rise span. Frequently, traffic was so bad that cars squeezed along the sides of the bridge to give the ambulance space up the middle ("parting the seas" as it is called now) to get by. The area then consisted of scrub brush and pine trees, which in dry seasons became tinder boxes. Threats of wildfires were constant. Another danger was flooding, which continues even today.

Next Edition: Part II- The 1960s and 1970s

A NEW LOGO FOR OCEAN PARK



No place in Virginia Beach has more identity with the live sea oak tree than Ocean Park. This tree dots the properties, streets, and the Bay beaches proving the persistence and endurance of nature. The Ocean Park Civic League voted at the November 2001 meeting to consider formally adopting the live sea oak tree as the symbol of Ocean Park. This is the first step in working to preserve the remaining trees and plant new saplings to restore the native habitat while

maintaining the natural beauty of Ocean Park. As a representation of the community and its roots to its natural surroundings, this picture of a live sea oak tree located at the new Lynnhaven Boat Ramp would serve as the Ocean Park symbol. It would be used to reinforce this identity and the commitment of our community to continual preservation of the local native environment. The Open Spaces Committee of the Ocean Park Civic League recommends adoption of this specific tree as the emblem of Ocean Park. *Submitted by Michael Spangler*

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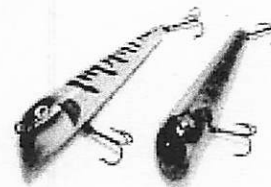
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BEACH COMBING

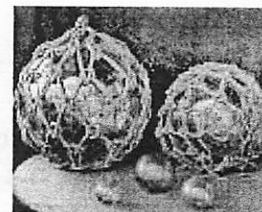
Ocean Park and Aeries on the Bay have a new beach. The joint project shared between the City and the Army Corps of Engineers costs \$1.2 million. Cottrell Contracting Corp. of Chesapeake is doing the job. The project will deposit approximately 163,000 cubic yards of sand along 6,400 feet of beach. Two dredges working full time are spewing water and sand from Lynnhaven Inlet. About 250 cubic yards of sand flow through a 16-inch flexible pipe each hour. Every day for weeks the beach has grown larger. Work at the dredging is halted often, sometimes several times an hour. Abandoned steel mesh crab traps continually foul the dredging cutters. The traps need to be removed from the equipment. Still, the work goes on; little time is lost and all is on schedule.

Along with that sand, the detritus of civilization was pumped onto the beach. Beachcombers looking for artifacts came across mostly shredded seashells, beveled glass, and fragments wood, believed to be mainly pilings of the old bridge that preceded the Lesner Bridge. In abundance there were thousands of mangled aluminum cans, colorful eyeglass frames and an assortment of variegated colored fishing lures. No really exciting finds of value have been reported.



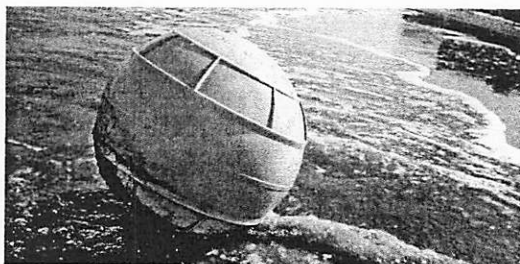
GLASS BALLS USED AS FISHING FLOATS

Large glass balls were once used by Japanese and Portugese fisherman as net floats. Their colors can range from opaque olive green to pale and subtle shades of turquoise and muted blue. For a beach comber a glass ball laying at lying at the water's edge is the ultimate find. During the 1950s and 1960s, they were used extensively in the South Atlantic Ocean. Glass balls gave way to orange plastic balls in the 1970s and 1980s. After that time, the fishing boats abandoned that type of fishing. Many of these floats broke away in storms and drifted in the ocean only to be washed up on distant shores. They are rarely found these days.



Japanese Glass fishing floats

As the dramatic day of September 11 unfolded, one of our residents walked down the wooden steps at Dupont Circle and Seagull Bluff Drive to see if he could observe any elements of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet coursing Thimble Shoals Channel easting to the sea. As he walked to the shoreline, an orange float was coming ashore. For 20 years he searched the beaches of the Bahamian archipelago and the Hawaiian Islands without success looking for fishing floats. He never found any until this day. And there it was, just one hundred feet from his home!



Japanese plastic fishing float found on Ocean Park beach-20 years old

The orange float was 14 inches in diameter. The top was faded from years of exposure to the sun. The orange bottom of the float was not faded, but it was encrusted with barnacles and a long beard of seaweed. This ball may have been floating in the currents of the Atlantic Ocean for more than 20 years. So, all you beachcombers, keep hope alive. There may be a great surprise for you on our beach some morning.

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If you are not a member, please become one, **NOW**.

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