

The PIER

POA/AOTB: Property Owners Association of Arundel-on-the-Bay

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

<u>General Meetings:</u>	<u>Board Meetings:</u>
Saturday, Nov. 19	Tuesday, Dec. 13
Saturday, Apr. 21	Tuesday, Jan. 10
Saturday, June 16	Tuesday, Feb. 14
General Meetings are held in Hillsmere Library starting at 10 a.m.	Board Meetings are held in Hillsmere Library starting at 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2011

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SAY HOW YOU WANT YOUR TAX MONEY SPENT: MEMBERSHIP MEETING on NOVEMBER 19

“To go along with the unseasonable snow on Halloween, here’s your early Christmas present -- the chance to make your views known on the FY13 AOTB budgets! The Board will be taking your input on how you’d like your tax dollars spent at the upcoming General Meeting on November 19. Unlike Congress, your Officers and Board Members actually do listen. Please Participate!”

So we’re promised by AotB Treasurer Becky Morris. To note what’s at stake, the Community anticipates a regular budget of nearly \$265,000 for July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013, plus a Shore Erosion budget of over \$81,000. A thousand here, another thousand there – that used to be real money. Get the details fresh, and make your choices heard on the 19th.

Even if money is of no importance to you, you’ll find a morningful of other items to stir your interests – conditions of our streets, shores, and drainage swales, for instance. Storm damage, anybody? Andy Grannell sets the presidential agenda, but as Becky has pledged, he listens to us.

NOW do you already hear sleigh bells? For SANTA is coming to the Beach, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 at 5 p.m., tugged down Cohasset Avenue (by reindeer, of course) on his Antique Fire Truck. He is calling all neighborhood children to meet him there under a heated tent, and to bring an UNWRAPPED TOY for him to donate to needy children of Annapolis. Then at 7 p.m., under that same heated tent, the Community’s HOLIDAY PARTY begins, with eggnog and hot chocolate. We ask each family to bring a \$10 donation and a batch of favorite holiday cookies. Alison Buckler is seeking volunteers to help her manage this celebration; please inspire your holiday spirit to communicate with Alison: runner2m@aol.com.

DELIA TAKES ON BGE

Trekking to Baltimore on October 12, David Delia represented AOTB at the State of Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) hearing on Baltimore Gas and Electric performance, subsequent power outages, and potential rate increases as a result of Hurricane Irene. Secretary Delia had previously sent a formal letter to the commission outlining AOTB's recent and long-standing problems with BGE. That eloquent document and Dave's subsequent report deserve extensive exposure in these pages. Excerpts from his letter and report –

We are a small, isolated, peninsular community of about three hundred fifty families, just west of the Chesapeake Bay, south of Annapolis City, and north of Thomas Point. As such, he wrote, we are literally at the end of almost every kind of social life line--power, emergency services, waste water, etc. Our diverse neighborhood consists of the full spectrum of economic and social situations, from the well-off to the just-getting-by; from multi-child young families to elderly invalids of all races, colors, and creeds; and we all get along rather well together. We are home to many who rely on electric power to run essential health-care equipment that some of us literally cannot live without. Power failures don't simply mean spoiled freezer food; they can severely affect our citizens' health. As a result of planning and decisions made before most of us can remember, we have no public water supply and rely on individual wells that won't work without electric power.

Arundel on the Bay is also a Special Community Benefits District and enjoys a measure of independence, so our volunteer neighbors routinely step up to community service. However, when confronted by large-scale power distribution and reliability failures, it seems appropriate for our county and state governments to supply what we cannot -- real leadership, including appropriate political pressure.

Historically, Arundel on the Bay has come to expect almost any weather event to disrupt our electrical power supply, and these events need not be extreme to have serious impact on large numbers of us. Even minimal amounts of wind, ice, snow, rain -- and of course nature's larger weather manifestations such as blizzards, ice storms, and hurricanes -- are a common cause of momentary, to hourly, to day- and week-long power outages. Conservative estimates indicate that our community endures these interruptions at least eight times per year--far more frequently than neighboring communities such as Hillsmere Shores and Bay Ridge.

AOTB's power reliability problems are not recent; they predate 2003's tropical storm Isabel, but that particular event highlighted our plight, when for nearly a week all of us all lived in a very dark, damp, and dangerously warm place--our homes! Some of us, who physically and financially could, fled inland; but many others who could not, were forced to endure real hardships. The winter of 2009-10 saw accumulations of snow and ice that once again cut power for days, and those dark days were also dangerously cold for many whose oil furnace pumps had no power.

Most recently, hurricane Irene brought us nearly four days of power disruption. We could go on and on; however, we are far more interested in our political leadership and our electric company working toward a brighter future than dwelling on our dark past, so we appeal to all of you to finally hear our pleas and do right by those who have no champion save simple justice.

Delia letter re BGE, cont.

Few-to-none of us are electrical engineers or community service planners, so we cannot laundry-list a series of sure-fire solutions. We are certain, however, that our most pressing problem could be better addressed and that this issue has essentially been ducked for decades. The architecture of our fragile power grid is in a word, abominable. Since AOTB's power is channeled into our peninsula through a very few overhead lines, these must be protected at all costs, which is, in our estimation, your job one! Our tiny "end-of-the-line" community cannot continue to be held hostage to a few dead, dying, or just unhealthy trees in neighboring communities -- especially Bay Ridge --whether or not those hazards reside on "private property." BGE must do its duty, and our political leaders must back them up, in eliminating as many dangerous tree situations as possible.

Several neighbors have offered additional suggestions that should be brought to your attention -- such as getting a real, contractual, and measurable commitment from BGE to upgrade the infrastructure of service delivery to AOTB, replacing antiquated switches and overloaded transformer boxes, and perhaps even burying at least the most vulnerable power lines. Another suggestion parallels a practice of some northern states that frequently lose power due to downed lines—alternative emergency generators. Although large diesel and gas turbine auxiliary power stations may be impractical here, whenever outages exceed a certain standard our power distribution operator could be obliged to supply smaller back-up generators to elderly or immobile residents.

But as we stipulated, we are not engineers, just citizens, tax payers, and customers who are simply asking our elected and appointed representatives and power suppliers to come up with effective, long-term solutions that will lessen the severity and the frequency of these outages. Whatever your beliefs about our planet's changing environment, the reality of AOTB's exposed position puts us directly in the path of ever-more frequent hundred-year storms. We cannot and should not be forced to wait another century to deal with them.

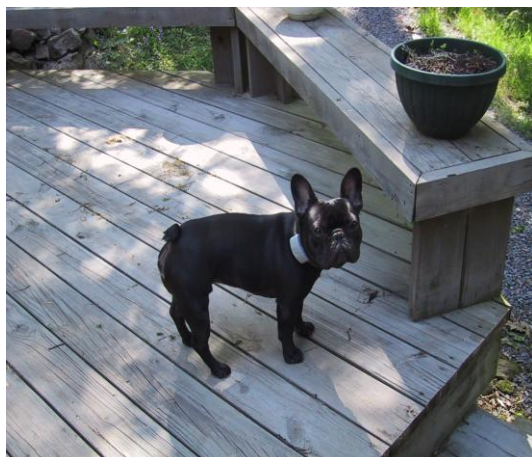
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Subsequently, Delia's report stressed that the October 12 meeting, attended by some 100 citizen-consumers and government representatives, was organized to gather facts from citizens affected by the power disruptions and not to solve problems or to approve rate increases. Our comments were officially recorded and the session was reported by WJZ and WMAR.

Although BGE's resident and contract workers were almost universally praised by spokespeople, the utility's "fat-cat" management and for-profit business ethic elicited a distinct tone of resentment, bitterness, and anger from the majority who deplored corporate disregard for elderly, infirm, and economically disadvantaged customers. Some of this frustration spilled over onto the PSC, whose commissioners refrained from comments but appeared to be taking copious notes.

After the meeting Dave was approached by Paula Carmody (Maryland Office of People's Counsel) who assigned her col-league Peter Saar to assist our neighborhood in seeking solutions from BGE. In addition, a member of Senator Astle's staff assured him that the Senator was taking an interest in these matters.

THANKS, DAVE: HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL. WE AWAIT PROGRESS



HUGO's BEAT

Seven Caninical HAIKU

[The Haiku, as composed by Hugo, is the canine adaptation of a traditional Japanese poetic form, consisting of three lines totalling 17 syllabic feet. Birds call it a tweet, cats a mew-tube. Hugo's prosody – in his native bulldogue barque – has been clumsily translated for *The PIER* by his humble leash-holder.]

1. GUARD DOG

Barking through my window as a strange
dog nears,
He passes on.
I won.

2. AT CHESAPEAKE'S EDGE

Take a bite at the incoming wave,
It ebbs away.
Tasted good, too.

3. ON THE AVENUE

He calls it a walk, she a "promenade."
For me,
It's collars and scents.

4. COURTESY?

We freeze at the corner.
It turns without signaling.
We don't exist?

5. TRASH COLLECTION

Monday morning, on the street,
Delightful!
If only the nose could eat.

6. IF I'M NOT THERE

[for Kyle]

What happens to the neighborhood
When dogs are sick?
Does it drift away?

7. DIAGNOSIS

[for Sasha]

Vet says *Only rest!*
Don't jump! Don't play!
Get me a second opinion.

President ANDY GRANNELL : LOOKING FOR A (HIDDEN?) TREASURE

Nothing lasts forever, I'm told. So AOTB's Treasurer has advised that she will not seek re-election when her two-year term ends June 30, 2012. Becky Morris has certainly done more than her share of volunteering for her community, having given us ten diligent years, and she feels it is time to share the joy of civic service. The members, Board of Directors, and officers of this Association are truly grateful for her time and effort.

If you can reconcile a checkbook, have a computer and a printer, you can do this task. And you will not be left on an island, for Becky will be here to answer your questions. I too will be available, along with our county liaison. Becky is currently writing an Accounting Procedures Manual; every organization should have one. We use *QuickBooks* – user-friendly software -- to account for our revenues and disbursements. As AOTB is a Special Community Benefit District (we tax ourselves), our records are audited by an independent CPA firm and then forwarded to the County Auditor for approval. Our auditor takes care of all compliance work -- tax returns and other necessary filings -- required by our various governments.

Our fiscal year ends June 30th and the process actually begins this month. At the November 19th General Meeting we will gather input to be used in preparing a budget. Based on last year's budget, actual expenditures, and your advice, the treasurer presents a draft budget for the Board to massage into a document that is presented at the January 14 General Meeting for approval. The budget for the forthcoming fiscal year must be submitted to the County by January 31st. After June 30th the records are turned over to our auditor and that audit report must be submitted to the County Auditor by September 30th.

Meanwhile the treasurer is drawing checks for approved invoices, signing, and presenting them to the president for a second signature. At the monthly Board of Director's meeting the treasurer issues current financial statements produced by the *QuickBooks* software. You can be sure that Our Treasurer is seriously treasured. So how about it: **will you be the new-found treasure?** Want more information? Becky welcomes your call (contact info on page 8).

THE CHESTNUT AVENUE AREA DRAINAGE PROJECT PROGRESSES

In April 2011, AOTB received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to develop designs to address drainage problems in the area of Chestnut Avenue. The community is in partnership with the South River Federation, our fiscal agent, for the project. We have one year (to April 2012) to complete the design work before the grant expires. The project team, led by community resident Julie Winters, includes Erik Michelson and Kirk Mantay (South River Federation), and Joe Berg and Phil Jones (BioHabitats). The team presented five initial design concepts to the Board in October. The Board asked the team to work with the community residents living adjacent to the design sites, to incorporate their comments, and to select the sites for the final designs.

On November 3, 2011, the design team met with neighbors living on Newport and Chestnut Avenues and received their comments. The team will follow up with those who could not attend. The neighbors preferred that the project sites be focused on the tidal wetland at the end of Chestnut, the Chestnut drainage swales, and the Newport playground.

Contact: Julie Winters, 202-997-4240.

Third Time is the Charm for Community Picnic

- says Marc Apter (he should know)

For the first time in recent history the AOTB **community picnic** was rained out -- not once, but twice; still the plucky community made a third try on October 1st, this time successfully. The first date, August 27th, ran into the impending hurricane and a September date met a similar fate. So the October event was brisker and, in constant rain, had no need for a water slide. Instead, the organizers brought in a face painting crew, Christalene, to have a kid-friendly activity in cooler weather. Kids and a bunch of adults sported their superhero dreams as a result.

In the Fall weather, with lots of logs on the beach from the previous storm, Andy Grannell and Dale Grigsby thought of building a bonfire on the beach. And Alan Hinman figured out how to get the beer keg over to the party-goers who'd relocated at the bonfire – steering it on a skateboard, of course! Hinman's creativity was greeted with cheers and toasts.



The AOTB **History Project** had a tent to display historic photos, objects, and maps that folks had contributed – responding to a contest contrived by Pam Duncan and Karen Neale -- to help flesh out the community history book and video to be published in 2012. The winners were Ray Morgan, Wilma Coble, John Gordon, Joyce McManus, and Errol Brown. Local companies donated the prizes, including Hobo International courtesy of Toni Ray, Homestead Gardens courtesy of Tim Hamilton, and Bay Ridge Wine & Spirits courtesy of Chuck Ferrar. You may offer additional photos or other items of interest by contacting Marc Apter at 301-904-3690. That History Project continues apace under the stewardship of Marc Apter. Hear more about this worthy enterprise from Marc at the membership meeting. Meantime, you will shortly have an eleventh **Video Interview** posted on our website Arundelonthebay.org -- this one a lively two-hour conversation with musician, teacher, organizer, and longtime resident Joyce McManus, who, with her late husband, former AotB President Willie McManus, hosted eminent visitors to the neighborhood. The ten earlier video interviews remain very much worth the visit, too. Each posted interview has a short (five-minute) excerpt to initiate viewers to the longer session.

SAFETY DATA BASES from the COUNTY

Anne Arundel County's Community Services Office recently provided the following **safety communication ideas** for dissemination to the membership.

- We depend on our cell phones more and more every day. Here's a connection for you to make with your cell phone, especially if you no longer have a land line, and whenever Police or Emergency Management have an urgent message (a CodeRED alert) that will protect your safety and that of your family.

Visit <http://www.aacounty.org/OEM/CodeRED.cfm> to register your cell phone number and email address and receive CodeRED alerts from the County's **Emergency Notification System**. Registrants can sign up to receive alerts via email or on their cell phone, including text messages. Email alerts may contain a picture if pertinent to the situation -- e.g., missing person, crime suspect, etc. Citizens can opt-in to receive general notifications as well. For example, in the past, county agencies have contacted communities to warn against a rash of break-ins in their area or for changes in trash collection. Registration is confidential, free, and only takes a few minutes. Contact the Office of Emergency Management at (410) 222-0600 if you have any questions or concerns.

- Another useful idea that has come to fruition: The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration has launched an Emergency Contact Information program to help law enforcement officials notify emergency contacts in the event a person is injured in a vehicle accident and is unable to communicate.

The **Emergency Contact Information Registry** is a database through which holders of a valid Maryland driver's license or identification card can voluntarily store emergency contact information electronically on their driving record. Holders of a Maryland driver's license or State of Maryland identification card can provide the name and contact information for one, two, or three persons whom they wish to be notified in the event of an emergency.

Individuals may submit their Emergency Contact information online at www.mva.maryland.gov, or via MVA Kiosks located in all MVA offices. The information is very secure and can only be accessed by authorized law enforcement personnel. For Marylanders who voluntarily add emergency contact information to the database, law enforcement will be able to quickly get word to their loved ones in the event of a serious accident.

For more local news and other announcements check out Anne Arundel County Week in Review on-line at http://www.aacounty.org/Video/WIR_YouTube.

Property Owners Association of Arundel on the Bay
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