



# *The Old Town Crier*

**The Monthly Newsletter of the Old Town Civic Association, Inc.  
May Program and Notice of the Meeting**

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 13, 2009  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m., Socializing with Neighbors; 7:30 p.m., Program  
**LOCATION:** The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street

## *PROGRAM AGENDA*

- 1) ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 2) REPORT FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE
- 3) POLICE REPORT
- 4) SMALL BUSINESS IN OLD TOWN

1. *Panel discussion*
2. *Comments from invited stakeholders*
3. *Question and answer session*
4. *Membership Discussion*

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## **Old Town Civic Association Hosts Small-Business Forum**

When asked about their restaurant and shop preferences, people inevitably choose small, independent businesses and retail stores instead of chains and fast-food establishments. In fact, travel planners know that visitors come to Old Town Alexandria because of its charm and distinctive buildings and shops.

This instinctive preference for independent businesses is supported by measured economic studies that show the benefits in dollars and cents. And yet despite this evidence, too often people who do not favor chains and fast-food restaurants are tarred “obstructionists” and attempts are made to undermine the City’s Special Use Permit (SUP) process during which public input often supports residents’ preferences.

It is time to talk about this issue and to underscore the symbiotic relationship that exists between the success of small businesses in Old Town and the quality of life of its residents. To that end, OTCA has invited representatives from the small business community along with experts and owners. We encourage an open discussion of issues and will look for solutions during this forum, and want our members and residents to become part of this process by being with us at this meeting. We expect to show that residents and small businesses are really on the same page, and hopefully this forum will help forge a strong bond among all.

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## **Why Small Independent Businesses**

“Providing a community with a robust retail environment is important. A strong retail sector provides jobs, increases the tax base, and provides residents with local shopping and dining options”. However “One of the greatest challenges that communities face today is how to best promote economic development while preserving community character.” Sounds corny, but is true and points to the symbiotic relationship between businesses and the residents. Having understood this, many communities have studied the retail types, which are best suited for the locale. Alexandria did a study three years ago with the King Street Retail Study, and is completing a new one this summer, but are they on the right track?

A surprisingly large number of studies have actually been conducted in areas that are similar to Old Town and they all appear to reach the same conclusion. Small locally owned stores inject more money back into the local economies than do chain stores.

By far the most comprehensive of these studies is the San Francisco Retail Diversity Study completed in 2007, but there are many notable ones such as Andersonville outside Chicago, Midcoast Maine and the seminal one in Austin Texas.

These studies differ from the ones conducted in Alexandria by virtue of looking at a wider array of benefits and comparing the indirect impact of retail presence in the community. Direct effects reflect the first round of local spending, such as wages and benefits, profits to local owners, local procurement, and charitable contributions. Indirect and induced effects reflect the continuing circulation of that first round of spending by businesses and individuals respectively.

For Andersonville they find that “for every square foot of space occupied by a chain, the local economic impact is \$105; if a local firm occupies that same space, impact jumps by 70 percent, to \$179.”<sup>1</sup>

The San Francisco Study<sup>2</sup>, which is far more robust and comprehensive, reaches the same conclusion: that small independent retailers give far more back to the community than chains and that “In this analysis, we focused on the positive: increasing independent market share by 10% would yield nearly \$200 Million in economic activity and nearly 1,300 new jobs. However, it must be remembered that the reverse is also true: shifting a further 10% of sales to chain merchants would deprive the community of that same \$200 Million and put those 1,300 employees out of work.”

A major reason that small independent retailers are so much more advantageous to the community is that they tend to hire and spend money locally. They purchase goods and services in their community and that they are locally owned means the money does not leave the community as readily as for chains.

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<sup>1</sup> Andersonville Study of Retail Economics: Civic Economics 2004

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Retail Diversity Study: Civic Economics May 1 2007

The results seem to be the same for most of these studies; the methodology of looking at the benefits in a holistic manner is sound, but unfortunately not used in the Alexandria Studies. Consequently if these other studies are correct, then a shift to chains will have a deleterious effect instead of benefiting the community

## **Nominating Committee Report; election process and schedule**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to submit the following slate of nominees for election to terms beginning at the June 2009 Annual Meeting:

### ***OFFICER NOMINEES***

		<b><i>TERM</i></b>
President	Poul Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court	2009-2010
Vice President	Douglas Thurman, 804 Duke Street	2009-2010
Treasurer	Bert Ely, 901 King Street	2009-2010
Corresponding Secretary	Linda Couture, 505 Duke Street	2009-2010
Recording Secretary	Timothy Elliott, 422 South Fairfax Street	2009-2010

### ***DIRECTOR NOMINEES***

North of King Street, West	Christa Lyons, 818 Cameron Street	2009-2011
North of King Street, East	John Kester, 313 North St. Asaph Street	2009-2011
Central	Ignacio Pessoa, 618 South Pitt Street	2009-2011

The following Directors are completing the first year of their two-year terms and thus will continue in office:

At Large	John Gosling, 208 South Fayette Street	2008-2010
South of King Street, West	Vincent "Chip" Carlin, 1302 Prince Street	2008-2010
South of Franklin	Alan McCurry, 706 South Union Street	2008-2010

As provided in the Bylaws, additional nominations of eligible members may be made by nomination from the floor at the May 13, 2009 Members Meeting, if supported by a written petition signed by five Members eligible to vote and accompanied by the written acceptance of each such additional nominee signifying his or her willingness to be a candidate, and received by the Corresponding Secretary (Linda Couture, 505 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314) in person or at her regular address prior to the May meeting. The election will take place at the June 10, 2009 Annual Members Meeting, among the nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee and any additional members nominated from the floor at the May meeting; no other nominations (including nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting) are in order.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Board and other members of the association for their advice and suggestions for its work, and to its nominees for their agreement to stand for service to OTCA and to our community.

2009 Nominating Committee

Michael Hobbs, 419 Cameron Street	(Chairman; North)
Lawrence Robinson, 624 South St. Asaph Street	(Past President)
Vincent Carlin, 1302 Prince Street	(West)
Charles Trozzo, 209 Duke Street	(Central)
Sandra Welch, 204 Green Street	(South)

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Old Town Civic Association, Inc., for the election of officers and directors and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before it, will be held on June 10, 2009 at the Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The Board of Directors has fixed May 29, 2009 as the record date for the meeting; all persons who are members of the association as of that date will be entitled to receive notice and to vote at the Annual Meeting.

## City Commences parking Study

The City has hired a Parking Coordinator who asked us to forward the following information.

Please inform the members of your civic association and community this URL: <http://apps.alexandriava.gov/ParkingQuestionnaire2009/> .  
This link is to an online parking questionnaire and it will allow each person to voice their approval or disapproval on City parking matters. City staff will read every response and use them as a tool to better manage parking throughout our great city.

Thanks,

Calvin Abram  
Principal Parking Planner  
Transportation & Environmental Services  
City of Alexandria, Virginia  
[Calvin.Abram@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Calvin.Abram@alexandriava.gov)

[www.alexandria.gov](http://www.alexandria.gov)  
703-838-4411 x172

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## Candidate Forum

Over a 100 people turned out for the City Council Candidates forum held jointly by the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations and OTCA, more than in any other forum. Again thanks to the committee for their hard work that made it such a success.

Carolyn Merck, Linda Couture, Mike Hobbs, Tim Elliot, Charlie Huettnner, Bert Ely and Doug Thurman and from the Federation, Katy Cannady and Geoff Goodale.

We are very appreciative of everyone who decided to run for elected office and wish express our congratulations to those who prevailed (election takes place after the Crier is sent out)

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*Next meeting will be held on June 10*

*Poul Hertel*

# Help Boost OTCA's Membership Count

Membership numbers are important in the civic-association world, for they translate into political influence -- the higher a civic association's membership, the greater the impact the association will have on important local issues. For OTCA, those issues include the preservation of Old Town's historic character, waterfront development, motor-coach regulation, and crime and public safety, to name just a few issues. OTCA membership will be especially important this spring as Alexandrians get ready to elect a Mayor and City Council on May 5.

If you are an OTCA member, encourage your neighbors to join. If you are not a member, please join as soon as possible. A membership application is included below; it also can be found on-line at: [http://www.oldtowncivic.org/Pages/join\\_us.pdf](http://www.oldtowncivic.org/Pages/join_us.pdf). If you have any questions about OTCA membership or your membership status, please contact OTCA's Treasurer, Bert Ely, by calling him at 703-836-4101 or emailing him at: bert@ely-co.com.

Help boost OTCA's influence -- join OTCA today and encourage your friends and neighbors to join, too.

## OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC. 2008/2009 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM

**To Join or Renew:** Please complete the information below. For membership, the dues period begins each September 1 and ends each August 31. Dues paid after July 1 are applied to the dues for the next period.

### Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(For a Household Membership, please list up to two persons)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

In an effort to keep dues low, we are trying to produce as few paper copies of our monthly newsletter as possible. Can we send you our monthly newsletter by email? [ ] Yes [ ] No

<b>Dues:</b> Single (\$12.00)	\$ _____
Household (\$20.00)	\$ _____
Additional Contribution	\$ _____
Total Dues Enclosed	\$ _____

**Remittance:** Please make checks payable to "OTCA." Mail the Completed Form and your check to:

**The Old Town Civic Association**  
**P. O. Box 1213**  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1213