

October 2016

Message from the Office of the President/CEO

“Everything old is new again.” The refrain from the Peter Allen song is a fitting tribute to the resurgence of two landmark institutions in Columbia and the reopening of Main Street in Ellicott City.

The Turn House Kitchen and Drink is now open at the Hobbit’s Glen Golf Club. Formerly Coho Grill, the restaurant’s new owner and executive chef is Thomas Zippelli. “Eat Local” is Chef Zippelli’s philosophy and many of the ingredients in its farm-to-table offerings are purchased within the county. The lunch, dinner, and brunch menus are seasonally inspired and the public is welcome to come and experience this reimagined local favorite.

Splashdown at the Columbia Swim Center reopens on Saturday, October 22 at 1:30 p.m. Closed for over 17 months, Splashdown will feature body slides which are faster with more turns and drops than before. Other enhancements include a new color scheme, graphics and design, as well as renovations to the waterslide tower.

Congratulations to Ellicott City on the reopening of Main Street to pedestrian and vehicular traffic on October 6. Columbia Association salutes the county personnel, volunteers, community members, merchants, building owners, and residents who worked countless hours to repair the damage from the July 30 flood. While much work remains to restore Main Street and the historic district fully, this first step is a major achievement and attests to the spirit of “ECStrong.”

“Dreams can come true again, when everything old is new again.” Welcome back.

Administrative Services

The Department of Administrative Services completed the upgrade and transition to a hosted environment for the Infor (Lawson) financial application in early October, with only a few relatively minor open items. This nearly year-long project involved team members throughout CA, and will provide for a more up-to-date and stable platform for this vital application.

Ron Meliker has been selected as the new Director of Human Resources. Ron comes to CA with outstanding credentials in HR and in the operational leadership of an organization similar in size to CA. Ron has also been very active in the community, serving as board chair and Acting President/CEO of the Howard County Chamber of Commerce.

Sport and Fitness

Aquatics

Marty Oltmanns has been named Director of Aquatics. He served as acting director during the summer season and has been with Columbia Association for almost 20 years.

Indoor/Outdoor Tennis Clubs

Columbia Association Tennis hosted a charity tennis event to benefit the Columbia Tennis Special Olympic Division. A round robin event featured nearly 30 participants, who played in a sporting doubles format. Highlights of the event included tennis, a silent auction, and a double exhibition featuring the Women's Tennis Team from The University of Maryland. The tennis event raised over \$1,000 for the cause. Special Olympic Athletes were present to participate and presented a written thank you to the community for supporting their cause. They also expressed gratitude for the community's assistance in achieving Olympic medals at the most recent games.

Personal Training

The Personal Training team and School Age Services are partnering again this year to provide fun fitness classes for free to after-care students in various elementary schools. Each trainer commits to teaching a fitness class at one school for four weeks. The program structure and focus vary based on the trainer and group needs/wants, but building strength, endurance and a love of fitness are the overarching themes. Classes started October 3 and run through the end of the school year.

The Personal Training team has been leading the group training runs for the HCC 5K Challenge for which CA is a major sponsor. Every Monday from Howard Community College, and every other Thursday from Gateway, two CA trainers lead runners in a dynamic warm-up, a challenge practice, and a two- or three-mile run. The trainers are there to provide advice, insight and to answer questions afterward.

Community Planning

Increasing Influence in Columbia Planning and Development

Staff from the Office of Planning and Community Affairs (OPCA) continued to participate in and monitor proposed and ongoing development projects in and around Columbia. The [Development Tracker](#) provides information on development related meetings and submitted proposals for sites in and near Columbia. The document is updated monthly and is available on-line at <http://bit.ly/developmenttracker>.

Planning staff also attended various meetings related to planning and development. These efforts are enhancing CA's influence in planning and development matters that are impacting Columbia including:

- Hickory Ridge Village Center Redevelopment Proposal – On September 27, staff attended the second Pre-submission Community Meeting hosted by Kimco.
- Oakland Mills Village Center Redevelopment Feasibility Study – Continued to serve on the client team for the County's village center redevelopment feasibility study. The consultant team is currently analyzing background information, collecting market data and engaging with stakeholders. The next public meeting on the study is November 15 at the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center at 7pm.
- River Hill Garden Center – On October 6, staff attended the Pre-submission Community Meeting for the proposed redevelopment of the River Hill Garden Center. The new proposal includes a bank, retail (no drive-through establishments) and a post office.

- Central Maryland Transit Plan – On October 19, staff attended a Central Maryland Transit Plan public meeting. The plan (to be developed) will guide future improvements and identify service areas for the next five years.

Community Building Speakers Series

On October 4, Columbia Association held its Community Building Speakers Series event “Sustaining Racial Integration in Housing in Columbia: Exploring the Model of Oak Park, Illinois.” Rob Breymaier, Executive Director of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, spoke about the social and economic importance of integrated housing and the work done by his organization to further fair housing. The event was well-attended. His [presentation](#) and the [recorded evening session](#) can be found on the [speakers series webpage](#).

Chinese Urban Planning and Architecture Delegation

Staff gave a tour of Columbia to a Chinese delegation of urban planning and architecture students. The tour took place on October 7, starting with the history of Columbia and followed by a trip through Downtown Columbia, Wilde Lake neighborhoods and the Wilde Lake Village Center, where a major redevelopment project is underway.

Community Services

Volunteer Center Serving Howard County

The Volunteer Center Serving Howard County was awarded a Volunteer Generation Fund Continuation Grant from the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism to support the center’s mission to build capacity of nonprofit organizations through volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition.

The Volunteer Center is supporting Ellicott City’s Flash Flood Long Term Recovery Committee by connecting representatives from the committee with local non-profit organizations such as Bridges to Housing Stability, Rebuilding Howard County, Grassroots and the Community Action Council of Howard County. The goal is to identify volunteers willing to serve on the committee, which is tasked with working with Howard County Government in its efforts to provide rebuilding assistance in Ellicott City.

Columbia Archives

The Columbia Archives BikeAbout on September 17 was a great success. More than 400 riders enjoyed the opportunity to explore the pathways and Columbia history at the seven designated sites.

Youth and Teen Center

The Teen Advisory Committee at the Youth and Teen Center sponsored the 14th Annual Hear My Voice Teen Day culminating in the Columbia Teen Idol Finals on Sunday, October 9. Ten finalists competed for first, second, and third place. There was also a People’s Choice Award winner chosen by the audience.

Each year, the Teen Advisory Committee selects a “focus of concern.” This year, the James Place organization was invited as a special guest to educate youth on the debilitating disease of addiction through the “Shatter the Stigma” initiative. Two former Howard High School students shared their personal accounts with the audience and encouraged them to seek help if they are in trouble or if they know of someone who is. More than 150 people came out to support the event.

Communications and Marketing

Email Broadcast: Reach

CA has an exceptional open rate for its eNewsletters. The CA Digest sent to PPP members has a 55% open rate, the non-PPP version has a 61% open rate, and the Sport & Fitness eNewsletter has a 41% open rate. These rates have each increased about 10% over the past 12 months. In comparison, the industry average for sports is 26% and the average for non-profits is 25%.

Events

A YaY CA! event for the Open Space Management crew was held at the maintenance facility on October 18 to engage this group of team members in the two-year long campaign.

The fall program of Excite Columbia ends October 26; Andrew Stack, chair of the CA Board, will present to the nine participants certificates for completing the fall program. The spring program will be restructured and offered during three sessions rather than six.

Public and Media Relations

High-profile coverage between September 13 and October 17 included the widespread reporting in print, online, on television and radio of Columbia being named the best small city to live in by *Money Magazine*; a piece in *The Baltimore Sun* previewing CA's Community Building Speakers Series event; a Columbia Flier piece previewing the Teen Idol competition finale; and a piece in Howard Magazine's editorial section focusing on tai chi classes at Haven on the Lake.

In addition, CA assisted a reporter from *Common Ground* magazine for an upcoming feature about Columbia turning 50 and a CA spokesperson was interviewed for an on-air story by WTOP about the *Money Magazine* recognition.

Social Media – Greatest Traction

- September 19 CA Facebook posting: We're #1
Generated 408 comments; 80,683 people reached
- September 19 Haven Facebook posting: Whoo-hoo! Columbia is number one!
6,168 people reached

Video: In the Works

- Spotlight on newly-opened Splashdown
- Video version of CA Annual Report

Websites

The CA website was rebuilt and launched in April 2016. Below is a September '16 to September '15 comparison of traffic, which shows that the usability and Search Engine Option employed in the web pages are attracting a greater number of users and page views, and people are finding what they are looking for faster. Additionally, we are averaging about 175 new opt-ins to our eNewsletters each month from a form posted on the new website.

Sessions	Increased	8.13%
Users	Increased	8.49%
Page views	Increased	8.51%
Percent New Sessions	Increased	4.26%
Bounce Rate	Decreased	7.88%
Average Session Duration	Decreased	0.79%

The Haven on the Lake website is being rebuilt with a projected launch date of early November 2016.

Monthly Updates

Inner Arbor Trust

The next meeting of the Inner Arbor Trust Board of Directors is Wednesday, November 2.

Upcoming Events

Youth and Teen Center

The Youth and Teen Center's Teen Outreach Committee will host a "CommUnity Toiletry Drive" October 1-November 18, collecting items such as tissue, toothbrushes, laundry detergent, and Pampers for families in need living in Columbia and other areas of Howard County. Donated items can be left at locations in all 10 village centers and at The Barn.

Volunteer Center Serving Howard County

The Volunteer Center Serving Howard County will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a reception at Historic Oakland Manor on Tuesday, November 15 from 4-6pm. Volunteers from several partner organizations will highlight their volunteer experience and how their service has made a difference in our community.

Columbia Archives

Columbia Archives' Barbara Kellner will be a Keynote Speaker at the Healthy and Sustainable Howard County: "You Can Work to Sustain a Healthy Community" public forum sponsored by Howard Community College and Transition Howard County at Howard Community College on November 12 from 11am to 5:30pm. Barbara also presented a program on Jim Rouse at Howard Community College on October 19.

Columbia Art Center

In partnership with the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society, Columbia Art Center will host a literary reading by authors Sally Rosen Kindred and Michael Ratcliffe, November 8, 7-8:30pm. The event is free to the public. The two authors will read from their current books, followed by an open microphone segment during which teens and adults are welcome to share their poetry and prose.

Columbia Art Center will host a new art history and tour series entitled "Out and About" with recognized art historian Ann Wicker on November 11 and 18, 10am-noon. The two part class includes a presentation on various art movements and artists, followed by a tour of galleries, museums, and artists' studios.

In partnership with the Candlelight Concert Society, Columbia Art Center Galleries will host a free lecture titled "The Art of Modigliani and the Music of Ravel" on November 15, 7-8:30 pm. Stephen Acker, former senior music program advisor for the National Gallery of Art, will present the art lecture in Columbia Art Center's galleries.

New Resident Event

An event for new residents will be held on Saturday, November 5, 10am-12noon at CA headquarters. The event will be hosted by CA in conjunction with the Howard County Library System.

Veterans Day Event

The first annual Veterans Day Event will be held on Friday, November 11, 12noon-1pm at the Lakefront.