



# Orleans Citizens Forum Observer

We Keep You Informed

[orleanscitizensforum.org](http://orleanscitizensforum.org) Spring 2012 [orleanscitizensforum@gmail.com](mailto:orleanscitizensforum@gmail.com)

## **President's Letter: Presenting Difficult Issues Fairly**

The OCF has not shied away from tough issues during the past year. The Forum on our declining Orleans population and its effect on our town's future is one issue that attracted a lot of attention, for example. Another forum dealt with how to maintain our excellent education system in the face of our declining student population.

Looking ahead to this year, one issue looms larger than any other in the town's future – wastewater management. Our newest Director, Dick Laraja, is planning how we can tackle the subject in a new forum that might be held this fall. We selected him for this task because, along with his accomplishments and service to Orleans, Dick has no preconceived opinions or bias on wastewater solutions. He will strive to provide the town's citizens with an unbiased and fair treatment of the issue.

In addition, those OCF Directors who have taken public positions on the wastewater controversy, or who are members of organizations which have advocacy positions on wastewater, will recuse themselves from the planning of this forum. In fulfilling our mission to "keep you informed," we want to ensure that we inform you fairly.

Ed Daly, President

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE**

Even though housing prices have softened somewhat in the current recession, the median single family home sale price of the lowest 25 % of sales in 2011 was \$368,750, still out of reach for those on limited incomes. The housing market on the Cape is 10 % higher, yet wages are 35 % lower than in the rest of the Commonwealth. In this challenging environment, meeting the need for affordable housing seems more dream than reality. Yet OCF Members heard from speaker, John Holt, Vice-Chairman of the Town's Affordable Housing Committee, that there is some light on the horizon for Orleans. If all goes as planned, four new houses can be built within the next two years on a plot off of Route 6A--the Hinckley Project. Vicki Goldsmith, Executive Director of Habitat, offered more good news: in mid-March a single working mom and her daughter, a student at Orleans Elementary, moved into their Habitat-built home on Nickerson Rd. Theirs is the first first such home in Orleans in six years, and the 75th on the Cape.

A group of about 30 OCF members were privileged to hear the foregoing update and join in a discussion at the second annual Members Only Coffee Gathering held March 17, hosted by the Orleans Inn. More information on Affordable Housing presented at that event can be found at [orleanscitizensforum.org](http://orleanscitizensforum.org)

## **How Would the Candidates Handle Town Issues?**

Ask them at the Orleans Citizens Forum Selectman Candidates Night April 24, 6:30pm, Orleans Council on Aging

Hear how candidates running in the May election for Board of Selectmen want to handle the issues that affect you. Ask them your questions, to help you decide how to vote.

The Orleans Citizens Forum, a non-partisan organization continuing to keep you informed, is holding a selectman candidates night on Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. It is free and open to all. This important event, presented with assistance from the Town of Orleans, will be held at the Orleans Council On Aging, located on Rock Harbor Road.

We have invited only the individuals vying for the 1 contested selectman seat to participate, make brief presentations and answer your questions—all supervised by a non-partisan moderator. Don't miss this chance to see close up who deserves your vote on May 15th.

For further information on this event or the OCF please visit our website at [www.orleanscitizensforum.org](http://www.orleanscitizensforum.org) or e-mail us at [orleanscitizensforum@gmail.com](mailto:orleanscitizensforum@gmail.com).

## Board Members

Past President-  
Elizabeth de Lima  
President-Ed Daly  
Vice President-  
Cricket Keener  
Secretary- Jeanne Hayward  
Treasurer- Bob Donath  
Membership-  
Elizabeth Kuechenmeister  
Web Master- Jim Robertson  
Publicity- Judi Weil  
Hugh Andrews  
Joseph Cardito  
Dick Laraja  
Advisory panel- Erica Parra

### The Orleans Citizens Forum:

an all-volunteer, independent and nonpartisan organization wholly supported by member contributions, employs public forums and communications media to inform full- and part-time residents about issues important to the quality of life in Orleans.



Hugh Andrews and Bob Donath

### We value our volunteers!

A big thank you to the Orleans Waterfront Inn. OCF would like to thank Jane Chirgwin, who did the layout for this issue.

## IMPLICATIONS OF OUR DECLINING POPULATION

A forum examining the implications of our changing demographics and the impact on health care, home values and support services, was sponsored by the OCF in December, 2011.

The OCF invited community leaders to be the panelists:

- Anne Van Vleck, Executive Director of Cape Cod Young Professionals, Dr. Timothy Reed, physician and owner, Orleans Medical Center, William von Thaden, President, von Thaden Builders, Thomas F. Cronin, President, American Heritage Realty, and Patrick J. Kane, Sr. VP, Marketing Communications and Business Development, Cape Cod Health Care.

Each panelist described the changing demographics of Orleans and Cape Cod - the aging population and the loss of young professionals - from their professional, and often, personal perspective. More than 180 attended the forum, which was open to questions following the presentations. Video of the forum is available on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

## New Board Member

We welcome Dick Laraja, who has lived in Orleans for 31 years and has been a practicing attorney for 36. He is a co-founder and partner in the Orleans law firm, Laraja and Kanaga, P.C. where his practice concentrates on real estate and probate law.

Dick has been married to JoAnne for 39 years and they have three children(34, 31 and 26). He is the past president of the Orleans Taxpayers Association and a past chairman of the Orleans Search Committee. He was Chairman of the capital campaign for the Church of the Transfiguration, is a docent at the church and is active in a Gregorian Chant Schola.



Dick Laraja