

August 2021

Harford Heritage News

250th Anniversary of Founding of Harford County—2023

200th Anniversary of Lafayette's Tour of America— 2024

Harford 250 Planning Session—September 16

Thursday, September 16, 2021, 10:00 am

Bel Air Armory, 37 N. Main Street, Bel Air.

Join us and help plan this exciting project. Share your ideas, plans and experience with the planning committee and other participants. The meeting will start with an overview of the work already completed and the highlights of the activities planned so far. Next, participants will gather in small groups to discuss plans for the Harford 250 Kick-off event in January 2023, the Grand Finale in March 2024, and events planned by participating organizations throughout the Celebration Year. Each small group will report to the full group on

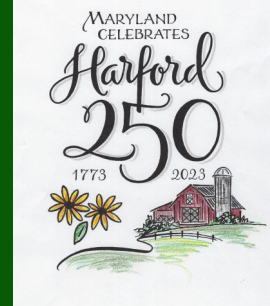
their best ideas. The Steering Committee will use these to finalize plans, begin organizing the Kick-off and Grand Finale events, arrange guest speakers, target publications and recruit sponsors. At the planning meeting participants will spark and share ideas that can be translated into activities and events each organization holds in 2023.

Ideas for the kick-off event will fill out the general framework developed at the last general meeting. At the April meeting the group agreed that the Kick-off will be a hybrid event with both virtual and live components. January weather is unpredictable and the past year's pandemic has taught us to be prepared for just about anything. The live portion will include two guest speakers, yet to be determined, booths for any groups wishing to participate, displays of county history, and information about planned events for the Celebration Year. The virtual component will include at least the guest speakers, and a tour of the displays. Ideas gathered at the September meeting will round out the remaining program details and propose possible locations.

The Grand Finale will celebrate the date the Maryland Assembly order establishing Harford County formally became effective in March 1774. One suggestion is to hold a grand ball, but no decision has been made. What is the best way to celebrate our beginning?

The Steering Committee asks that organizations, businesses, governments consider planning their 2023 events around the history of the people, places and historic events that created the county we know today. The Historical Society will act as a clearing-house advertising these programs and will partner with *Visit Harford* to publicize events to county residents and visitors.

This is an exciting community-wide celebration and your help is crucial to making this year-long celebration a success. Come hear about the projects and trail systems already underway and those in the planning stages throughout the county. This is a real opportunity to be a part of history.



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Trivia Questions for August

1. Name the early 20th century conservationists whose headquarters was in Bel Air.
2. Name the heroine of the Battle of Havre de Grace that negotiated with Admiral Cockburn for prisoner release.
3. Name the author of Our Harford Heritage, who also served as Superintendent of Schools.
4. Name two women who made major land donations to the Harford County Parks system.
5. What company created a 20th-century, European-style, industrial village in Harford County?

Answers on the last page.

Harford 250 Website Online

The website, Harford250.org, went online in June. For now, the website subcommittee continues to work on expanding information for inclusion on the site. The committee is still collecting logos from participating members and is developing a timeline highlighting 250 years of Harford County's history. Visitors may sign up for the monthly newsletter or read previous newsletters, sign up to become volunteers, or learn how to become event sponsors. The site's event page allows visitors to add upcoming events. We encourage you to visit the website and to add any planned events to the calendar while you watch the countdown to the anniversary year.

Sharing Your Story

Stories continue to arrive telling the personal and professional stories of life in Harford. Details of how to submit your story are provided on the flyer at the [end of the newsletter](#). Here is an excerpt from one of our Anthology submissions. Of course you will need to wait for the 2023 edition of the Anthology to read the rest of the story.

Gone Are the Days of "Racing to the Mall"

By Erika Quesenbery Sturgill

My parents Ray and Ann Quesenbery lived in Fallston, in the same house where my Dad was born, for all but 5 years of their married life when he was serving in the military. They would often bemoan the loss of the good old days when you could find whatever you needed (or wanted) at the myriad shops in downtown Bel Air. Dad was devastated when the old racetrack was plowed under and the Harford Mall went up. "End of an era," he'd say, "that ended the Bel Air I knew," he'd shake his head with sadness.

Over time he accepted Harford Mall, though he never did appreciate it. Sure, he had a great affinity for the old Horn & Horn Smorgasbord and their unique recipe for bread pudding of a Sunday afternoon. He got his Monkey Wards, better known as Montgomery Ward, credit card and could be enticed to go to Friendly's for ice cream and a lap around the mall. But it was my Mom for whom Harford Mall was her domain.

Living off of Carrs Mill Road we always took Tollgate Road into Bel Air, or what Mom referred to as the "back way," past what used to be the old dump and now is home to condos and parking for the Ma & Pa Trail. A creature of habit, my mother always parked on the Woolworth's side and we'd troop in through those multiple glass doors and pass the tall check-out counters that looked to me as a child like a judge's bench where you were always looked down upon. We didn't know she was testing us – letting us have a half hour to ourselves to shop or browse with \$5 in our pockets just to see how we'd do. I'd make a beeline to the pet section and the aquariums of fish and rows of toys for my cat Bob, my sister would hit the arcade. Apparently, we passed and as the 80s rolled in, THE Decade for "THE Mall" we were granted the privilege of most 80's or Gen X kids – being dumped at the mall to meet up with friends with some allowance in our pockets and hair teased and sprayed to Heaven, ripped jeans, leather or jean jackets and attitude.

The Harford Mall of the 2020s bears no resemblance to the Harford Mall of "Decade of Decadence" the 1980's – the days of hair metal, Valley Girl movies, Moonwalking, Aqua Net, acid wash everything and Madonna, Madonna, Madonna... In "our day" L.L. Cool J rocked the bells instead of hosting lip synch programs, Bon Jovi wasn't a winemaker from New Jersey he was a cowboy on a steel horse and Janet Jackson was Miss Jackson, if you were nasty. We went to the mall to hang out with friends and the only stores likely to see at least a quarter from our sojourn there and endless laps around the shiny floors dodging plumes of smoke from the innumerable smokers were the arcade, Swiss Pretzel, Orange Bowl and maybe, just maybe, Friendly's.

(Continued next page)



WAITING AT THE DOORS—10 a. m. was the magic hour at the Harford Mall Thursday morning and eager customers were waiting in groups, like the one pictured here at Korvettes, to shop in the county's first enclosed mall.

Harford Mall started out with a very large bang, not in the 80's, but in the early 1970s. On a chilly Friday morning November 24, 1972 a helicopter swooped over the mall carrying the man who would become Harford Mall's most famous visitor – Santa Claus. Arriving at 9:30 a.m., Santa's chopper landed in the parking lot and touched off the Mall's Thanksgiving to Christmas "festival of fun and values." He visited all the stores Getz Jewelers (who retained their store downtown at 13 N. Main Street but signed on early for a store in the mall), Hess Red Barn Bootery (that had cowboy boots for \$8.98), Discotape (selling 8-tracks), Reamer's Slak Shack and more. The mall didn't feature elaborate holiday displays for Santa. No in 1972 the mall was "decorated in the tinsel-and-glitter that will make your Christmas shopping joyful," it was proudly announced.

"Horace the Harford Mall Horsie will be in the Mall all day Saturday," the mall advertised. "He's a talking horse, a listening one too and he'll be glad to take the kids' Christmas request right to Santa." There were puppet shows featuring Rudolf the Red Nose Moose, yes a moose – it's Harford County, deal with it. The mall also booked choral groups from Harford County schools, churches and other organizations and nearly every day and night WVOB radio broadcast from the mall. On November 24 and 25, Bob Callahan and Jim McMahon (who passed away in 2021 while this article was being researched) were on hand for live on-air interviews with mall shoppers, with the mall open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Watch for the Anthology in 2023 for the rest of the story.)

Ideas for Anniversary Events: Source Material

The Harford Heritage Committee has visited the websites of numerous communities whose celebrations of their 150th, 200th and 250th anniversaries provided fascinating ideas for countywide consideration. The committee has include a few of these concepts in the website with more to come. We are sharing these websites with our partners in the hope that they may generate ideas for some local programs. Here are a few for your consideration.

www.america250.org www.southhaven.org/150 www.fxva.com/275/ coloradosprings.gov/cos-150
durham150.org bedford250.com/index.html www.cityofhuntington.com/huntington150

Committee Updates

The Harford 250 Steering Committee will be meeting in August to plan the General Meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 10 am at the Bel Air Armory. If at all possible, please attend this General Meeting and help plan Harford 250s Kick-off event and share ideas and information about your role in the celebratory year. If you are unable to attend, please share any suggestions or plans with your liaison (See list of liaisons and committee members below)

Liaisons and Contacts

County Liaison –

- Jacob Bensen – jmbensen@harfordcountymd.gov
- Greg Pizzuto – greg@visitharford.com

Municipal Liaison –

- Jenny Falcone – jenny@downtownbelair.com
- Patti Parker – pparker@belairmd.org

Museum Liaison –

- C. John Sullivan, Jr. – jsullivans@verizon.net
- Iris Barnes – iris.l.barnes@gmail.com

Business Liaison –

- Lyle Garitty – lylegaritty@outlook.com
- Bill Walden – bill@mainstdesign.net

Arts & Entertainment Liaison –

- Chris Potts – cpstory@aol.com
- Diane Booth – booth@ix.netcom.com

Memoir and Monthly Newsletter –

- Jackie Seneschal – jackieseneschal@gmail.com
- Carol Deibel – caroldeibel@verizon.net

Grants and Fundraising

- Arden McClune – ardenbeachlvr@verizon.net
- Bill Walden – bill@mainstreetdesign.net

Website development –

- Bill Walden bill@mainstdesign.net
- Kathi Santora ksantora@gmail.com

Trivia Answers:

1. Russell and Kate Lord
2. Matilda O’Neill
3. C. Milton Wright
4. Anita Leight and Emily Bayless Graham
5. Bata Shoe Company

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HARFORD 250

SHORT STORIES WANTED!

Together, we're writing a book the Historical Society will publish.

Write a true story (in 2,000 words or less)
about places, events, and/or people
that were part of your past here in
Harford County.

Just a few examples:

- *Did you have a favorite hangout that isn't around?*
- *Perhaps a business was located elsewhere in its early days*
- *A person from the county who had a profound impact.*
- *What were some things we did 50 or more years ago that we don't do or do differently now?*

TELL US!

We want to make YOUR story, part of OUR story.

Email stories to 250Celebration@HarfordHistory.org

DEADLINE for submission is December 31, 2021

All submissions will be reviewed by a committee. The society will notify those whose stories have been selected for publication.

All submissions will be retained in the Society's Archives. Submission constitutes the individual's agreement to allow the use of the story in the anthology and also acknowledges that extracts/pictures may be used for publicity purposes. It is also understood that no payment will be given for use of the stories and pictures.