

The Bel Air Bond

A quarterly publication from the Town of Bel Air, Maryland

www.belairmd.org



MEET THE NEW TOWN COMMISSIONERS
PAGE 4 - 5



VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS
PAGE 8



ARMORY GARAGE MAKEOVER
PAGE 10



CALENDAR OF EVENTS
PAGES 6 - 7



A show of their own: Liriodendron celebrates children's art

Drawings, paintings and multi-media works created by Harford County Public School students will fill the Liriodendron Gallery in an upcoming community art show that gives young artists a venue to display their work outside of classrooms and private art classes. The Harford County Public School Young Artist Showcase opens on Sunday March 6 with a free public reception and extends for the following five Sundays. (Easter Sunday opening TBD.) The free-to-the-public event is a collaboration among Exploration Art School, Liriodendron Gallery and several art teachers from Bel Air-based Harford County Public Schools.

Mary Jane Blasi, Liriodendron's Art Gallery Director, believes that Liriodendron is a fitting setting for this first-time art show: "Dr. Howard Kelly (Liriodendron's original owner) had nine children. His family and neighboring children often filled this elegant house and grounds during the summer season." (Cont. p. 3)



(L) Mary Jane Blasi coordinates art shows that take place at Liriodendron throughout the year. (R) Owner Nicki Jergensen provides technical help on a multimedia project at Exploration Art School.

Dear Neighbors,

I have always been intrigued by demographics, numbers and trivia. Here are ten exciting (and some new) reasons to love Bel Air:

- The land area of the “Town” of Bel Air is three square miles and the population is 10,700. The 5-mile radius known as “Greater” Bel Air has a population of 130,000, which is roughly 49% of Harford’s residents.
- The Bel Air Reckord Armory recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. We obtained nearly one million dollars to rehabilitate the armory and its adjacent park. It is the venue for the annual Chocolate Festival, Film Festival, Zumba classes, weddings, basketball games, professional wrestling matches and more.
- There are 693 retail and professional businesses within the Town. We are home to the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health and Kaufman Cancer Center. Bel Air residents once had to drive 45 minutes each way for cancer treatments. Now lifesaving treatments are just minutes away.
- Bel Air’s seven public parks range in size from the half-acre Alice Anne Park to the 51-acre Rockfield Gardens Park.
- There are 25 places of worship within the Greater Bel Air area.
- Bel Air has two memorial tree groves that offer a park-like setting for the planting of trees as a memorial to residents who have passed away. One is for human residents and the other is for our companion pets.
- Hungry? There are 63 dining establishments within our three square miles.
- The Farmers Market celebrated 40 years of service and now has over 50 vendors.
- We host thousands of people from all over the East Coast during the annual Maryland State BBQ Bash (August) and the Bel Air Festival for the Arts (September).
- Over 200 volunteers attend monthly and weekly meetings for our seven commissions and committees. Many more serve the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Department, the Bel Air Downtown Alliance, the Rockfield Foundation and Bel Air Recreation Committee.

After my swearing-in ceremony, I asked you to send me an email and tell me about the time or place in Bel Air when you said “I love this town!” I also look forward to hearing from you about how we can make this an even better place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,



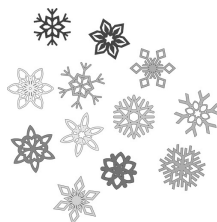
Susan Burdette
Mayor of Bel Air
 sburdette@belairmd.org

ON THE COVER:

As snow piles up, the first line of defense should simply be to shovel sidewalks and plow streets to keep them clear and to prevent ice formation.

When icing occurs, we encourage the use of more environmentally-friendly deicing products, available at most hardware stores. These products include potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride and calcium magnesium acetate (CMA).

— **Bel Air Department of Public Works**



Board of Town Commissioners



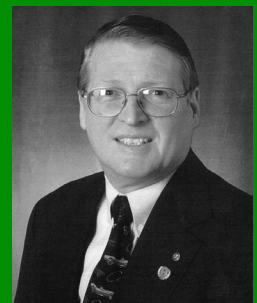
Susan U. Burdette



Philip L. Einhorn



Brendan P. Hopkins



Robert M. Preston



Patrick T. Richards

HCPS students stage a show of their own

(Cont. from p.1) She adds, "Liriodendron is a wonderful and warm place for children to show their art to the community."



An Exploration Art School student draws a still life.

Nicki Jergensen, owner of Exploration Art School, who started her career as a Baltimore County art teacher, is coordinating the collection for display. A community-based show, she says, champions young artists as well as their art teachers. Harford County art teachers Heather Johnson (Forest Lakes Elementary School) and Jennifer Byrne (Homestead/Wakefield Elementary School) are participating in the upcoming exhibit. Both Mary Jane and Nicki hope that similar exhibitions will happen in the near future.

"My goal is to get art out in the public in Bel Air and to build a relationship between the public schools and the private art schools in the area," says Nicki. Liriodendron, she adds, is the perfect setting. "I want to bring the community to Liriodendron so they can see how beautiful it is, celebrate the arts and bring neighbors together."

Exploration Art School's location on Main Street in Bel Air reflects Nicki's commitment to community-based art. She started the school in her basement after her first child was born. After gradually expanding, she moved to downtown Bel Air so that the school would reside in the Arts & Entertainment District. She now offers summer camps, birthday parties, adult painting parties and a field trip venue for homeschoolers and local traditional schools. She welcomes students and their parents to individualized assessments to determine if art lessons can support special needs.



Bel Air High School student Taylor Crehan (above, right) has been an Exploration Art School student since she was eight years old. She now is a teacher assistant in exchange for lessons and materials. She worries about a reduced emphasis on art in the schools. "I think art gives students a way to express themselves, learn about themselves and to learn about others," she says. "Art shows how everyone is different and has a different sense of themselves."

**HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL
YOUNG ARTISTS SHOWCASE
LIRIODENDRON GALLERY
SPOTLIGHTING THE ART WORK OF HCPS AND
THE EXPLORATION ART SCHOOL STUDENTS
SUNDAYS MARCH 6 – SUNDAY APRIL 17
1:00 - 4:00 P.M.**

Presented By The Bel Air Cultural Arts Commission

An Irish Journey

Performed by the Irishman's Chorale
Amhranai Na Gaeilge

Saturday, March 5th • 7:30 pm
Doors Open at 6:45 pm
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
1200 E. Churchville Rd • Bel Air

The concert is a musical journey celebrating the history, traditions, and people of Ireland. Experience the harmonious voices of the only all male Irish Chorale in the mid-atlantic region.

Remember the wearin' of the green while enjoying an evening of music, dining, and shopping in historic Bel Air.

For more information call:
410.838.0584

FREE ADMISSION

A conversation with new Town Commissioner Phil Einhorn



Phil Einhorn's family looks on as he is sworn in during the November ceremony at Town Hall.

Tell us a bit about your background.

After high school I joined the U.S. Navy. I went to Bainbridge for boot camp and then to Yeoman School. I was assigned to an Admiral's staff and visited Italy, Spain and Gibraltar. After that, I attended the District of Columbia Teacher's College. Instead of teaching in a school I joined the Combined Insurance Company of America and used my teaching skills. This helped me to get into sales management quickly.

I developed a skill of going into an area that was underperforming and putting that area on profit. Then the company would ask me to do so in another area. During my 35-year career my family and I lived in 12 states. I retired in Arizona and after 9/11, I answered an ad for work with the Sheriff's Department in Maricopa County. My wife and I lived in Arizona for eight years. One Saturday morning she said she missed our grandchildren and her church (Trinity Lutheran in Joppa)

and would I consider moving back to Bel Air. It was the town where we met and the town that we loved the most. On Monday we put our house up for sale. We have been back for nine years and love the area and the people.

What made you decide to run for Bel Air Town Commissioner?

I had dealt with the Town Commissioners when trying to get a traffic light (at Gateway Drive and Boulton Street, near English Country Manor). They were very nice to me and always left the door open. After two years, we got our light. They have done a wonderful job in managing the Town. I knew that two key people were leaving and thought, if the town wanted me, I'd like to step in.

What issues do you think residents are most concerned about?

The people with whom I have spoken are concerned about the water costs. The water problem will probably affect the whole country at some time. Around here, water will be a problem. It's just a matter of when it happens. I also think transportation can be a problem, though it is improved since the county buses cover more areas now. We have unique problems in English Country Manor since we do not have public roads due to an agreement that the developer made 22 years ago. We need to look at whether that is still working out for the people who live there.

I called on over 600 homes while I was running for Commissioner. Many people didn't have complaints. People like the services in Bel Air.

What are some of our challenges in the coming years?

We have been without a tax increase for 10 years. How many towns can tell you that? The management of this town has been very frugal, but I see some challenges in the future to make sure that we can meet our needs.

Brendan Hopkins and I (newly elected commissioners) spent a whole day with each of the department heads. We have really good people on staff here and most have been here for years. I believe that we are understaffed in a few areas such as the Police Department and the Public Works Department. The Board of Commissioners have always given the citizens of Bel Air outstanding service and we will continue to do so. Bel Air has a large group of volunteers and civic groups who devote time to make Bel Air a wonderful town to work, play and live in.

What unique talents and skills do you bring to the Board of Commissioners?

I have a lot of management experience. I have hired a lot of people in my career and know how to spot talent. I am a good public speaker and conduct successful meetings. It's important to conduct meetings in the right way so that everybody feels a part. I have taught those topics to key managers many times in my career.

A conversation with new Commissioner Brendan Hopkins

Tell us a bit about your background.

I moved to the Major's Choice neighborhood with my family when it was built in 1987. I still live there, now with my two sons. I graduated from C. Milton Wright High School and Harford Community College. I've worked in restaurant management and as a dispatcher for Baltimore County Fire Department. Most recently, I was an officer and detective for the Harford County Sheriff's Office and retired as a Corporal in 2013.

What made you decide to run for Bel Air Town Commissioner?

I saw that Eddie Hopkins (no relation) was leaving and thought that it was important for someone to be on the Board of Commissioners who had public safety experience. The police department is almost one quarter of the budget and a 24/7 operation. Of course we have Jesse Bane as Town Administrator, but the commissioners have to have an understanding of safety issues too. I have lived here most of my life and think that younger people need to get involved. It is our town and we are the generation coming up.



Brendan Hopkins is sworn in as his father, Thomas, and son Brendan Jr. look on.

What issues do you think residents are most concerned about?

The number one concern that I have heard about is the traffic. The Town is already studying pedestrian access and safety. There is a lot we can still do about that.

I have also heard a lot about the need for family-oriented businesses. I am talking about bringing your family to Bel Air on a Friday night. If you are a family with no children, there are restaurants and bars, but that's not for families with kids. So I have talked to a lot of families who are going outside of town. I'd like to recruit family-oriented businesses to come back into town. Perhaps a movie theater, an arcade or one of those bouncy places. There is no reason right now for families to come to Bel Air on the weekend and that is a problem. They are going elsewhere into Forest Hill and Abingdon.

What are some of our challenges in the coming years?

We have essentially run out of room to expand outward. We have to make a decision about whether we start going upward and building bigger when structures need to be replaced. I am not sure where I stand on that yet. We have some vacant properties and we can focus on what we have and build that up with programs such as façade improvements.

The water challenge is also a major concern. This issue should be stable by 2019, when the Mt. Soma water impoundment will be completed, but from this point until then, we don't have a lot of water. I don't think a lot of people are aware of that. I also have concerns about how the cost of water will impact our citizens.

The heroin epidemic is also something that we need to address. We need to provide supports for our youth. The community center for kids (in the McFaul Activity Center) is in the business district and away from all of the residential districts. Most children can't walk there. What activities are we providing for our youth to help them stay away from drugs and to show them what they should be doing? The same concerns go for our seniors. How accessible are programs for them and can we get them to the services they need? As much as we can't turn our backs on the youth, we can't turn our backs on the seniors. We may have it good in between, but both of those generations have needs to be addressed.

What unique talents and skills do you bring to the Board of Commissioners?

I have job experience and training in security, disaster preparedness and weather events. I understand the younger generation and how the Town must use social media in order to be transparent and to promote town events.

JANUARY

Saturday 2
**FROSTY FAMILY FILM FEST:
 TEEN BEACH 2**

Harford Community College
 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
 Dive in and rock out with the hottest surf sequel under the sun! Modern day teens Mack and Brady get a real world visit from Lela, Tanner, Butchy and other surfer and biker pals from the beach party film within a film, *Wet Side Story*. Wear your flip flops and join us for a beach party in the middle of winter! Admission: \$3. 443-412-2211

Friday 8 – February 28
STARVING ARTISTS SALE

Harford Artists Gallery, 503 E. Churchville Road (located in the cottage next to Rockfield Manor)
 Gallery hours: Friday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Paintings, photography, pottery and jewelry created by local artists. Reception: January 9th from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. www.artinharford.org. 410-420-9499

Saturday 16
**FROSTY FAMILY FILM FEST:
 INSIDE OUT**

Harford Community College
 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
 Growing up can be a bumpy road, and it's no exception for Riley, who is uprooted from her Midwest life when her father starts a new job in San Francisco. Her emotions conflict on how best to navigate a new city, house and school. Admission \$3. 443-412-2211

Saturday 23
HARFORD HISTORY ON PARADE

The Historical Society of Harford County Grand reopening after renovations. Meet Society Bulletin authors for signings and discussion. Visit unique exhibits and displays of vintage materials from the Society collection. 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Free. 410-838-7691

Saturday 23
**DANIEL TIGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD:
 LIVE!**

Harford Community College
 The legacy of the beloved "Mister Rogers" lives on with the hit television series, "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood," from the Fred Rogers Company and PBS KIDS. Daniel and all of his friends hop aboard the trolley to delight audiences in person. Recommended for Grades K-3. Admission: \$15 - \$40. 443-412-2211

Sunday 31
**THE WINTER DOLDRUMS: A SUNDAY
 AFTERNOON OF MUSIC AND FINE
 ART**

Harford Community College, 3:00 p.m.
 Enjoy the HCC music faculty in their annual concert in the Chesapeake Theater. Afterward, admire the fine arts faculty's annual exhibit of paintings, sculpture, photographs, digital art and ceramics in the Chesapeake Gallery. Join the HCC Artists in Residence "After Hours" at a reception featuring hot jazz, cool drinks and tasty treats. Admission: \$15. 443-412-2211

FEBRUARY

Friday 5 – Sunday 7
56TH ANNUAL BEL AIR GUN SHOW

Bel Air Armory
 Bel Air's longest running gun show, featuring modern and vintage firearms from many area gun dealers. Historic displays, knives, hunting equipment, hunting and firearms related collectibles, firearms raffles along with good food for sale. All proceeds benefit conservation and scholarship activities for Harford County Chapter: Izaak Walton League of America. Friday, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Admission \$5 for adults and \$2 for students under 16. 410-303-6145

Saturday 6
**FROSTY FAMILY FILM FEST:
 MINIONS**

Harford Community College
 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
 Follow the Minions as they evolve through the ages, perpetually serving the most despicable of masters. The trio embarks upon a thrilling journey traveling from frigid Antarctica to 1960s New York City, ending in modern London, where they face their biggest challenge to date: saving Minionkind from annihilation. Admission: \$3. 443-412-2211

Friday 12
VALENTINE'S DAY DINNER

Bel Air Armory, 6:30 p.m.
 A catered, served dinner will precede a cabaret performance. Guests can hit the dance floor. Appearance by "Cab Calloway." Ticket info: 410-838-7691

Saturday 13
THE JASON BISHOP SHOW

Harford Community College
 Jason Bishop is an international award-winning illusionist whose show features

stunning and original state-of-the-art magic, mesmerizing sleight of hand, exclusive grand illusions and close-up magic projected onto a huge movie screen. Underscored by an outstanding rock and pop soundtrack, Jason's funny and truly magical show treats the audiences of all ages to some of the world's most astonishing illusions. 7:00 p.m. Admission: \$15-25. 443-412-2211

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14
**CANDLELIGHT VALENTINE'S DAY
 DINNER AT ROCKFIELD MANOR**

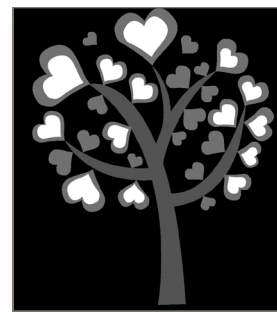
501 E. Churchville Road
 Rockfield Manor hosts its 15th annual Valentine's Day Dinner catered by Pairings Bistro. Enjoy a perfectly paired menu with great wine in an intimate setting. Live music sets the tone for this romantic evening. For tickets and reservations, please contact Pairings at 410-569-5006. Space is limited.

Saturday 20
**FROSTY FAMILY FILM FEST:
 JURASSIC WORLD**

Harford Community College
 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.
 Located near Costa Rica, the Jurassic World luxury resort provides a habitat for an array of genetically engineered dinosaurs, including the vicious and intelligent Indominus rex. When the massive creature escapes, it sets off a chain reaction that causes the other dinos to run amok. Now, it's up to a former military man and animal expert (Chris Pratt) to save the day. Admission \$3. 443-412-2211

Sunday 21
17TH ANNUAL WINTER WINE EXPO

Harford Community College
 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 An afternoon of wine, hors d'oeuvres and delectable desserts. Join us to sample hundreds of fine wines from around the world and a terrific selection of craft beers. Admission: \$40 in advance, \$50 at door, \$20 designated driver. 443-412-2211



Sunday 28
BRING YOUR OWN BLANKET (BYOB) MOVIE SERIES: THE PEANUTS MOVIE
 Harford Community College, 6:00 p.m.
 Snoopy embarks upon his greatest mission as he and his team take to the skies to pursue their arch-nemesis, while his best pal Charlie Brown begins his own epic quest back home. Chair seating also available. Admission: \$5 Adult/\$3 Youth. 443-412-2211

MARCH

Thursday 3
BOOK SALE
 Bel Air Library
 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Paperback, hardback and children's books. Member Night Only. Sponsor: Friends of the Bel Air Library. 410-638-3151

Friday 4 – Sunday April 24
LONG SHADOWS
 Harford Artists Gallery, 503 E. Churchville Road (located in the cottage next to Rockfield Manor)
 Gallery hours: Friday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 Paintings, photography, pottery and jewelry created by local artists.
 Reception: March 12th from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. www.artinharford.org, 410-420-9499

Friday 4 – Saturday 5
BOOK SALE
 Bel Air Library, 1:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 Paperback, hardback and children's books. Sponsor: Friends of the Bel Air Library. 410-638-3151

Friday 4
LADYBUG GIRL & BUMBLEBEE BOY, THE MUSICAL
 Harford Community College, 7:00 p.m.
 Inspired by the New York Times top 10 best-selling children's books, this lively new musical "buzzes" with the inventive energy of childhood, celebrates the power of imagination and promotes a sense of adventure. Admission: \$10 - \$16. 443-412-2211

Saturday 5
CHOCOLATE AND CANDY FESTIVAL
 Bel Air Armory, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
 The sweetest place to be in Harford County is the Bel Air Armory for the Chocolate and Candy Festival.

Follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook for up-to-the minute information on all of our events!
 www.downtownbelair.com

Saturday 5
IRISHMAN'S CHORALE
 St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 1200 E. Churchville Road. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.
 Amhranai Na Gaeilge is the only all-male Irish Choral in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Choral is dedicated to the preservation of Irish culture and history through music with traditional and contemporary music by Irish composers and lyricists. Hear patriotic, spiritual, ballad, sea chanteys and fun songs. Sponsor: Bel Air Cultural Arts Commission. Free. 410-879-2012 or 410-838-0584

Sunday 6
BOOK SALE
 Bel Air Library, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 Paperback, hardback and children's books. \$5 Per Bag Day. Sponsor: Friends of the Bel Air Library. 410-638-3151

Sunday 6 – Sunday April 17
HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL YOUNG ARTISTS SHOWCASE
 Liriodendron Gallery, 502 W. Gordon Street.
 Spotlighting the art work of HCPS and the Exploration Art School students, this show energizes the "kick off" of Liriodendron's 2016 Gallery season. Sundays only 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 410-879-4424

Friday 11
AN EVENING OF JAZZ
 Harford Community College
 8:00 p.m.
 Featuring jazz vocalist Julie Kelly
 Admission: \$10. 443-412-2211

Sunday 13
SEASONED TO YOUR TASTE – THE TEMPTING STORY OF SPICES
 Hays House Museum, 324 Kenmore Avenue, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 Interpreter Susan Wooden will discuss the origins of particular spices, their various uses and the significance of the spice trade from its secret beginnings through the Age of Discovery. Adults: \$5, Students & Seniors: \$3, Children under 4: free. Sponsor: The Historical Society of Harford County. 410-838-7691

Sunday 13
THE YOUNG IRELANDERS – MAKING OLD TRADITIONS NEW
 Harford Community College, 3:00 p.m.
 The Young Irelanders features eight sensational performers and a live band that create a unique, eclectic mix of traditional Irish, Celtic, folk, world, jazz, country and popular music. They have toured with *Riverdance* and Michael Flatley's *Lord of the Dance*, performed as soloists on PBS specials and shared the stage with Bono. Admission: \$15 - \$25. 443-412-2211

Thursday 17
GIRLS NIGHT OUT
 Downtown Bel Air from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Grab your best girlfriends for a night of shopping, discounts, food and drink specials in downtown Bel Air. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for up to the minute information on all of our events! www.downtownbelair.com.

Saturday 19
SPRING LECTURE
 The Historical Society of Harford County, Erika Quesenbery Sturgill will present *No Irish Need Apply: Baileys, Barleycorn and Blarney*. 2:00 p.m. Admission. 410-838-7691

Sunday 20
INTRODUCTION TO SOUL COLLAGE WITH LAURA NUMSEN
 Liriodendron Gallery, 502 W. Gordon Street. 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Create your own deck of collage cards reflecting your archetypes, interests, roles you play in life, symbols/totems and honoring the different parts of you. Beginners and seasoned artists welcome. Admission fee TBD. 410-879-4424

Saturday 26
ROCKFIELD MANOR'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT
 501 E. Churchville Road. 11:00 a.m.
 Bring a basket and join Rockfield for this fun, family event. Hunt takes place behind the Manor. Free parking; Admission: \$5 per family.



Volunteers make a town go round

By Jesse Bane, Town Administrator, jbane@belairmd.org

What makes Bel Air a great town? There are many answers, but one of our first should be its volunteers.

When I first came to Bel Air as Town Administrator, I was amazed at the level of commitment and effort, not just on the part of our work force, but on the part of our volunteers as well. Without our volunteers, Bel Air would not enjoy its reputation as a desirable place to live, work and play. And the costs of the services our volunteers provide would be beyond our reach if we had to depend on tax dollars alone to get the job done.

Let's begin with the holiday season. Who didn't enjoy the lights and displays around town that put us in the spirit of the season along with the events and activities we enjoyed and shared with family and friends? I developed a deep appreciation for our volunteers as I watched them decorate Town Hall, paying attention to every detail and making certain the job was done right. Then there was the Downtown Alliance that spurred our shoppers on with activities and incentives to help our local businesses. Don't forget the Rockfield Manor Foundation and its open house reminiscent of a Currier and Ives painting of an old fashioned Christmas. How about the Cultural Arts Commission? The Town would not be the same during the holidays without its promotion of the arts, something very near and dear to the fabric of our town and the mission of our people.

Let's fast forward to Spring. Soon we will enjoy the well-kept and manicured gardens that would not exist were it not for our Appearance and Beautification Committee. Its members spend the entire year planning, planting and tending our gardens and our parks. And speaking of parks, where would we be without our Tree Committee? Let's reflect on the recognition the Town recently received as home of some of the oldest living trees in our state. Then there is Parks and Recreation; the value of the contributions of its members goes without saying. And there are the Boy Scouts who have made significant contributions to our properties in Town as part of their Eagle Scout projects.

Let us move to Summer and our Fourth of July Celebration. Our parade and the events leading up to the parade are the work of many volunteers and the Bel Air Independence Day Committee. Contributing to the cause are the Bel Air Police Department Auxiliary and the Explorers Post. Don't forget the Barbecue Bash, the Summer Concert Series at Shamrock Park, the Bel Air Film Festival, the Farmers Market and the Wine Festival. Hundreds of volunteers make these possible.

Where would we be without the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Department; the Bel Air Lions Club and the Bel Air Rotary?



The Greater Bel Air Community Foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund many of our park amenities and capital projects for our schools. Our Historic Preservation Commission and our folks at the Historical Society work long and hard to save our historic structures and preserve our past.

Want to hear more? There are the volunteers at our local churches who feed our homeless and provide gifts for the holidays to the less fortunate among us. And many thoroughly enjoy the Festival of Trees every November. It is the members of the UM Upper Chesapeake Medical Center Volunteer Services Association who make this possible. Where would we be without our Christmas Parade, the Chocolate Festival, the Town Run, the Turkey Trot, the annual Red Cross blood drives, the concerts by the Harford Choral Society and the Maryland Conservatory of Music events at the armory?

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture. If you think I have covered everything, I have just scratched the surface. If you tally the cost thus far, you recognize a substantial savings in tax dollars and a major investment of time and talent on the part of many dedicated individuals.

There are so many more events and amenities that require people power that I failed to mention. But there is only so much space that I have to deliver this message. I only hope that those whom I failed to mention will forgive me. Please know that I am grateful for your services and I speak for many others who live and visit this Town to enjoy the amenities and events that you provide.

This is my bottom line: Bel Air is a great place to live, work and play. And it is our volunteers who make this Town what it is. If you are not involved but want to play a part, please let me know. We have a number of things you can do. Be a part of who we are and what we will become. And remember to thank a volunteer at our next event. Your appreciation for what they do is their only compensation and reward.

Outgoing Commissioner Eddie Hopkins: It has been an honor and privilege to have served as your elected Town Commissioner for the past 8 years.

Municipal government is the purest form of government – the level of government where elected officials are best positioned to help their constituents. When I campaigned for office in 2007, and then throughout the years, citizens most frequently asked for a safe town, quality town services, excellent customer service, an aesthetically pleasing community, family-friendly parks, no tax increases, and a vibrant and business-friendly main street.



Eddie Hopkins with Eagle Scouts William P. Murtagh, III and Joseph G. Camello

Together, with my elected colleagues, our Town staff and in concert with the community, we achieved these goals and then some. We revitalized Plumtree and Shamrock Parks. We strived to make Bel Air pedestrian friendly

by working closely with the Ma and Pa Heritage Trail organization to secure easements to complete the trail. We enhanced and added crosswalks along with pedestrian safety traffic enforcement efforts by our Town police, and installed accessible curb cuts.

We continued to invigorate the armory showcasing it as a Town landmark and place where we come together as a community. We worked closely with communities whose storm water management systems deteriorated and needed immediate and costly repairs.

We weathered an economic downturn without laying off staff or increasing taxes and still managed to fully fund such services as Parks and Recreation, the 4th July Independence Committee, the fire company, and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

We developed continuity of operations plans in the event of a disaster and trained our staff in disaster response. We attracted new businesses, redeveloped in-fill and explored adaptive reuse of properties all in an effort to continue our revitalization of downtown Bel Air. As a team we supported health and wellness initiatives, closely followed our comprehensive and master plans, decreasing our environmental impact while increasing our sustainability footprint. We are blessed with an amazing town staff who work hard to keep Bel Air safe, well-run and a community where people want to live, work and raise their families.

I grew up in this Town and I am forever indebted to the civic leaders and my predecessors, who created the Town I love so dearly. In turn, I wanted to give back what was given to me and create an environment where my successors will continue that tradition. You see, Bel Air is a standard by which communities should be measured. We continue to be fiscally responsible, environmentally sensitive, sustainability-friendly, supported by strong resident, community and business partnerships. I held your confidence dear. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

Eddie Hopkins

Outgoing Commissioner Rob Reier: Thank you from the bottom of my heart for placing your trust and confidence in me as your commissioner for the last eight years. This Town has become my adopted home, and I feel truly blessed to have been embraced by this community.

When I took my place on that dais, I was wide-eyed and a little unsure of what I had gotten myself into. I was thrust into the public service arena and its enormous responsibility. I would often bristle when my patients asked how I liked being a politician. I said that I didn't care too much about politics, but I thoroughly enjoy community service.

Serving at this level is the purest form of government. It's, quite frankly, where things get done, and get done quickly. For example, soon upon joining the Board, I was walking my dog and saw that residents of Hickory Court Apartments had to walk on a portion of the street due to a missing sidewalk. After discussions with staff and my fellow commissioners, we decided to address this. And within a few weeks the residents there had a new sidewalk. At other levels of government, a project like this may have been vetted over months, if not years. This is what municipal government is all about. It's certainly not glitzy or glamorous.

I'm most proud of working with our staff to navigate our Town through one of the most difficult economic down turns in decades. It was through collective strong fiscal management that we weathered the Great Recession without furloughs, layoffs or increased taxes.

We improved pedestrian accessibility with enhanced sidewalks and curb ramps. Other town accomplishments are HEAL City Designation, Workplace Wellness Program, Maryland Certified Sustainable Community, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, public park improvements, Main Street enhancements in partnership with the state.



Rob Reier with recent Student Achievement Award winner Catherine Standish, Bel Air Middle School

The Town's staff is of the highest caliber. The Board's job is made much easier through their efforts. I thank my fellow commissioners, past and present, for their fellowship and collegiality.

I believe that we can only grow and move forward in life by stepping outside of our comfort zone. I would have never thought that I would be an elected official and small Town mayor. But there I was. These past nine years have not only been a time of growth for the Town, but also for me.

The one message that I would like to extend to people of all ages is to challenge yourself. Don't be afraid of change. Good government starts with citizen participation, community involvement and volunteering in civic activities.

Robert Reier



Bel Air Armory: Expanding on the past for our future

In November, the Reckord Armory celebrated 100 years as an iconic structure on Main Street in Bel Air. Built to house National Guard units, the armory, along with the adjacent Fred Ward Park, now serves as a community center in the heart of downtown. In a further transformation of the historic site, the next phase in the development of the Armory is the rehabilitation of the garages located in the rear of the building.

Thanks to generous infrastructure grants from the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development, as well as corporate and individual donations, the Town began construction on the garages this summer and has been able to make significant renovations to the building, which had been in disrepair for many years. The goal is to create a year round farmers market, Town government office space, and possibly a black box theater or an art gallery. In the future, the goal is to add a small incubator facility to house seed businesses that would mature and ultimately relocate to storefronts in downtown Bel Air.

If you are interested in starting a business and would like to learn more about the incubator facility or you would like more information on the project, please contact the Town of Bel Air Economic Development Office at 410-838-0584.



Jim Butcher, a long-time friend to the Town of Bel Air, graciously provided his personally-owned bucket truck to the Town's Appearance and Beautification Committee to use for helping decorate the Town for the holidays. The picture shows the truck being operated by Daniel Feveryear, a member of the Public Works Department, decorating the 50' Town Christmas tree.

Town Public Meeting

**February 2016 (exact date TBA)
Bel Air Comprehensive Plan**

Provide your opinion on proposed initiatives regarding vital issues.

Visit www.belairmd.org and select the *Community Voice* button. Choose the *Notify Me* button to get up-to-date details about public meetings & other news.

Welcome Police Chief Charles Moore

Though Police Chief Charles Moore grew up in northern Harford County, his favorite memories include walking in downtown Bel Air with his parents and grandparents. After recently taking command of the Town’s 29 sworn officers, two cadets and 9 dispatchers, he now protects those same streets and their residents and businesses.

Chief Moore spent his first career with the Maryland State Police (MSP) for 26 years. The MSP took him to assignments all over Maryland and led him to projects in which he has a particular interest. These include the Regional Automated Property Information Database, which catalogues stolen property and has been shown to increase both property recovery and arrests. He was also part of the evolution of the Metro Crime Stoppers project as well as data-driven policing practices, which focus on placing resources where experience has shown they are needed the most. “I’ve always had the thought that I could take the things I’ve learned over the years in MSP and apply them back home,” says Chief Moore.

Bel Air faces most of the same challenges that confront jurisdictions of all sizes, he adds. These include growing traffic and subsequent accidents as well as substance abuse with connected criminal activity. In the event of large-scale crises, Bel Air’s Police Department has established partnerships with regional agencies that include the MSP, Harford County’s Department of Emergency Services, the Harford County Sheriff’s Office, federal agencies and other regional police forces.

“Bel Air is the center for government, small businesses and restaurants. Our focus is to make sure that everyone has a good time, but that they know that law enforcement is out there and that we are vigilant,” Chief Moore remarked.



Committees & Commissions	Contact Us www.belairmd.org	Town Government
<p>Board of Town Commissioners 1st & 3rd Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall</p> <p>Planning Commission 1st Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall</p> <p>Board of Appeals 4th Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall</p> <p>Economic & Community Development Commission 2nd Thursday, 5:00 p.m., Armory</p> <p>Historic Preservation Commission 4th Thursday, 6:00 p.m., Town Hall</p> <p>Appearance & Beautification Commission 2nd Monday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall</p> <p>Cultural Arts Commission 3rd Wednesday, 4:00 p.m., Armory</p> <p>Tree Committee 2nd Wednesday, 4:30 p.m., Planning Department</p>	<p>The offices of the Town Administrator, Human Resources, Police and Finance Departments are located in the Town Hall, 39 N. Hickory Ave. The Department of Public Works and the Planning Department are located at 705 E. Churchville Rd. The Department of Economic Development and Visitors Center are in the Bel Air Armory at 37 N. Main St. The Police Department is open 24/7. Other office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays.</p> <p>There are many free publications at the Visitors Center, Town Hall and online. Topics include business assistance, historic preservation, parking guides, a walking tour and an event calendar.</p> <p>In addition to the Board of Town Commissioners meetings at 7:30 p.m. on first and third Mondays, the public may attend Commissioners’ work sessions, held at 5:15 p.m. on the preceding Tuesdays. Direct questions/concerns to the Commissioners c/o Town Hall in writing or by phone: 410.638.4550 or 410.879.2711.</p> <p>For sewer system, refuse collection, recycling, street light outages, call 410.638.4545. For sewer emergencies, call 410.638.4545 during business hours or 410.638.4500 at other times.</p>	<p>Town Administrator Jesse Bane 410.638.4550 or 410.879.2711</p> <p>Administration Department Michael L. Krantz, Director 410.638.4550 or 410.879.2711</p> <p>Finance Department Lisa M. Moody, Director 410.638.4555 or 410.879.2712</p> <p>Economic Development Department Trish Heidenreich, Director 410.838.0584</p> <p>Police Department Charles Moore, Chief of Police 410.638.4517 or 410.638.4500</p> <p>Planning Department Kevin Small, Director 410.638.4540 or 410.879.9500</p> <p>Public Works Department Stephen D. Kline, Director 410.638.4536 or 410.879.9507</p> <p>Bel Air Bond Editor Kathi Santora, The Writing Studio ksantora@gmail.com; 443.695.3345</p>

Hello, Narva, Estonia, Bel Air's sister city

The Town of Bel Air has a sister city in Narva, Estonia. The Town of Bel Air entered into a partnership with Narva in 2014 to explore and initiate cultural, student, business, technology and health care exchanges. As a part of that initiative, the Town of Bel Air and Harford Community College (HCC) are offering a three-session Continuing Education course to better acquaint us with our sister city.

Wednesday, February 10

Session 1: What is a sister city? How did Bel Air develop the partnership and what is it like to be a citizen of Narva?

Wednesday, March 9

Session 2: The Narva Culture: Music, dance, art and food

Wednesday, April 13

Session 3: Moving forward: How we can be a part of and continue the Bel Air/Narva relationship?

All sessions begin 7:00 p.m. at Darlington Hall on the HCC campus. Please register for Course #25924 through HCC's Department of Continuing Education. Course Fee: \$19.00. If you are interested in learning more, contact Jesse Bane, Town Administrator at 443-900-0144.



Narva River in Narva (Wikipedia Commons)