

# The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

*Preserving Our Past For Your Future*



143 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014

## Society News

March / April 2024

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The Historical Society of  
Harford County, Inc.,  
headquarters.

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### WHAT'S NEW AT THE HAYS HOUSE

The Hays House Committee has been very busy over the past few months. The Committee has been looking at the types of programs that have been held in the past as it is also exploring other creative uses that may be appealing to visitors today. We hope to have our initial planning work finished by spring or early summer and present a plan for programs and activities that will begin in mid-2024. Planning will be ongoing, and we will continue to work to expand the types of programs offered.

In the past, the Hays House has been open on Sunday afternoons two Sundays a month. Of course, from time to time, it has also been opened on other days for special events. We hope to begin our programming by re-instituting Sunday programs. To reopen the Hays House this spring or summer, we will need volunteers. Volunteers can help by:

1. Helping set up the building for programs in advance of the day of the event.
2. Helping on the day of the event by signing people in and directing visitors.
3. Being available in the pollinator garden for visitors coming to visit the garden on the Harford County Pollinator Trail.
4. Helping set up displays, arrange displays, and assist with general maintenance of the house (basically, helping move things around).
5. With specialized training, conduct house tours.

If you are interested in being a Hays House volunteer, please contact me at [HHChair@HarfordHistory.org](mailto:HHChair@HarfordHistory.org). I can set up a conversation with you and, if you are interested, a tour of the house. ... cont'd page 2



**HARFORD MUTUAL**  
INSURANCE GROUP

The Historical Society of Harford County newsletter is funded in part through a gift from Harford Mutual Insurance Group.

*cont'd from page 1 ...*

We are also looking at the need for maintenance and repairs. Our number one priority is the restoration of the north wall which dates from the late 1700s. Bids for the wall preservation should go out shortly. Interior painting and minor repairs are also being addressed. By the end of February, we hope to have generated a project list to initiate as soon as the weather allows.

One change that occurred during the COVID closure was the creation of a pollinator garden. The Conservation Committee of the Governor William Paca Chapter DAR, led by Lizanne Smith, created the garden and continues to maintain it. Harford County is creating a "Pollinator Garden Trail," and we hope that this garden will be added to the trail shortly.

This is an exciting time at the Hays House. We are looking forward to sharing this historic house and its grounds with visitors again.

*Sandra R. Wallis, Hays House Chair*

### *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

We are looking forward to an exciting spring filled with celebrations, events, and projects that are sure to delight. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the year-long Harford 250 anniversary celebration will come to a close with a Grand Finale at the Bel Air Armory followed by the Ringing of the Bells at noon. The following month, the Town of Bel Air will begin its 150-year celebration at the Armory with the *Then & Now* program. The Society will be on hand to share in the festivities showcasing Bel Air's story through the ages.

April will bring a much-awaited program featuring Todd Holden as he takes us on a journey through his years as a reporter and photographer at the Aegis, back in the days when local news was truly local. This event will be followed in May with a Mother's Day Tea & Trivia program. What better way to celebrate Mom! Details on all of these celebrations and events are included in the newsletter.

Several projects are also moving forward. I am pleased to announce the initiation of the first annual Sports Hall of Fame Induction ceremony scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup> at the Maryland Golf and Country Club. Meanwhile, the museum committee is curating a vast number of items as it prepares the museum's artifacts for display. The Hays House Museum committee is developing plans for programs in the coming season and a newly organized research committee began work on research and development on the History of the African American Experience in Harford County.

On the administrative side, the Board periodically reviews its Bylaws to make recommendations for any necessary amendments. The last Bylaw update was done in 2018. Much has changed since then, particularly the need for virtual meetings, and the increased dependence on electronic equipment. A subcommittee consisting of myself, Roxann Redd-Wallace, Nancy Kroupa, William Carr, Esq., and Chris Potts was appointed to review and submit recommendations for any amendments. The subcommittee's proposed amendments will be reviewed at the March 4, 2024 Board meeting.

This is just a brief glimpse of the many activities humming along at the Society. I hope you will join us for some of these events and possibly consider becoming a volunteer. There are volunteer opportunities to match almost every interest from history to gardening to construction and everything in between.

*Bill Walden, President*

## COMING EVENTS

- Genealogy Workshop: – My Ancestor Was a Quaker***



On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 7 pm, Historical Society Genealogist, Christopher Smithson will share the path to finding the ancestral stories of Harford County Quakers. The Quakers found respite from persecution in Harford County as early as the 1700s and many of its members went on to become a unique part of the county's history. Come and discover the records of the Friends who went on to establish communities in Harford and learn how to research their stories. Visit the Society website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) to register. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members.

- Harford 250 Grand Finale, Celebrating Tomorrow***



Join us at the Grand Finale of the Harford 250 celebration on Saturday, March 23, 2024, from 9 am to noon at the Bel Air Armory, 37 N. Main St., Bel Air. This will be a special event featuring, guest speakers, the unveiling of a commemorative public art mosaic, musical performances, the unveiling of the Harford 250 Time Capsule, and more. The event will conclude with a county-wide sounding of bells at noon and an invitation for all county neighborhoods to join in the closing celebration and begin making Harford history now.

This is a free event, however, seating is limited, so early registration is recommended. Visit [www.harford250.org](http://www.harford250.org) to register.

- Adventures at The Aegis featuring Todd Holden***



On Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 2 pm, Todd Holden, celebrated photographer, writer, and journalist will share stories of his years as an *Aegis* reporter and photographer in Harford County. Todd's memories and photographs of the famous H. Rap Brown trial, the fury of Agnes, the storm that threatened the Conowingo Dam, and the many charming characters along with some of the villains, that he encountered in his career are sure to entertain.

The event will be held at the Historical Society's headquarters, 143 N. Main St. in Bel Air.

Visit the Society website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) to register. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members.

- Salute to Bel Air at 150***



Join the Historical Society on Saturday, April 27, 2024, at 11 pm at the Town of Bel Air's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the Bel Air Armory, 37, N. Main St., Bel Air. The event hosted by the town of Bel Air will feature historical displays tracing Bel Air's history from its early days as a town of just 42 lots centered around a courthouse, jail, and sheriff's residence to the bustling town we know

today. A concert featuring the Bel Air Community Band and Chorus will follow at Shamrock Park at 4 pm. Everyone is welcome, no registration is required.

- **Trivia & Tea with Mom**

Looking for a way to show mom how much you care? Sign up for this special afternoon tea at the Historical Society on Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 2 pm. The program will include a lively trivia challenge along with the nostalgia of tea and goodies. This promises to be fun for everyone with a combination of fine food, sweet treats, and great competition.



Space is limited, so you are encouraged to register early. Visit the Society website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) to register. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members.

### MUSEUM UPDATE

The Museum Task Force continues to curate items for the Historical Society of Harford County Museum. This is one of the items selected to be on display.

This baby scale was used in Dr. Phillip Heuman's office off Webster Street in Bel Air, Maryland. Dr. Philip Heuman was a Bel Air physician for 44 years (1953-1997) and a Harford County Medical Examiner for 27 years. During his distinguished career, he commanded a front-line field hospital during the Korean War, served as president of the Harford County Medical Society, and president of the Harford County chapter of the American Heart Association. At the age of 70, he was named a Harford County Living Treasure in 1985. Dr. Heuman was a true country doctor, often accepting deer hides or tomatoes for payment. According to an interview with the *Aegis*, he delivered over 1,000 babies, many of which were delivered at home.



Source: *Baltimore Sun* Obituary October 15, 1998

Other items we have from Dr. Heuman: Medicine Bottle, Registry of Physicians 1894 and forward, and Burroughs adding machine

Bonnie Bailey, Museum Department

### THE INAUGURAL HARFORD SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

The Historical Society's first annual Harford Sports Hall of Fame Induction ceremony will be held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at the Maryland Golf and Country Club in Bel Air. From an initial list of more than 90 Harford County athletes and coaches which contained Olympians, World Champions, World Record Holders, professional athletes, coaches, and locally dominant athletes, the first class of athletes and coaches were chosen for induction into the Harford Sports Hall of Fame. See the list of athletes being inducted this year!

Please go to the Society's website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) for ticket and Sponsorship details.

Chuck Castoro, M.D., Development Director



### NEW MEMBERS

Sharon Snyder

Danny O'Hern

Joseph Price

Cindy Ciscle

William Raetz

Barbara Piddington

### 2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

It's that time of year again when we encourage existing members to sign up for the coming year and seek new members who share our love of history. Generous contributions through membership help to support the collection and preservation of Harford County's historical records, artifacts, and textiles. In addition, your membership contributions support the development of content for the newsletter, bulletins, and multi-media productions for the website, YouTube channel, and other mediums.

As we enter the new year, it is time for our 2024 Membership Drive. Our membership levels are listed below. If you are already a member, please consider renewing your membership, or if you are not now a member, becoming a member of The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. Visit the Society's website [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) for details about membership levels and the associated benefits.

### THE TEXTILE DEPARTMENT



*1870's Wool and Silk Dress with Jacket  
– front & back*

Have you ever wondered if you're qualified to volunteer in the Society's Textile Department? Wonder no more! If you can vacuum, dust, do laundry, and replace buttons, you're as qualified as current and past volunteers were when we first began establishing the department.

We came across reminders of those early days while searching our files for the provenance of a child's dress. In 2009 we conserved the dress and several other garments during a workshop conducted at Society headquarters by Colleen Callahan and Newbold Richardson, proprietors of The Costume and Textile Specialists\*. Our goal for hosting the workshop was to

acquire basic skills to evaluate and safely clean, repair, and prepare garments for display and storage. We learned that conservation is an attempt to stabilize and preserve the garment, not restore it to its original condition (fortunately!). We also learned to keep detailed records of our work and to beware of doing anything to a garment that could not be undone.

Here are brief descriptions of some conservation techniques taught in the workshop:

- Evaluate the garment by laying it out flat to examine its fabric content and overall condition and features; look for stains, holes and tears, mold, insect damage, missing buttons and trim, and any other issues.
- Determine if the garment can be cleaned and which gentle cleaning method is best. Cleaning is important because dirt and soil are like sandpaper on fabric. Some fabrics can be dusted with a small brush (very effective on folds and pleats), vacuumed with a special tool or cloth-covered wand, or

wet washed by hand with an approved cleaner. A garment with insect damage may require time in the freezer; a garment with mold might not be salvageable if the mold is extensive or if treatment with diluted white vinegar is ineffective. Some odors can be eliminated with a spritz of diluted vodka.

- Stabilize the garment, if needed, to prevent further deterioration. For example, netting can be sewn invisibly under a non-repairable hole or tear, or to stabilize fragile beading. Determine whether damage *should* be repaired, and how to safely accomplish the repair.

We conserved these children's garments during the workshop:

- Late 19<sup>th</sup> century red plaid dress made of wool, with black velvet trim. The dress has a dropped waist, pleated skirt, lace trim on the sleeves and neck, a front button closure, and three buttons on each cuff. The workshop student vacuumed the dress and replaced the missing buttons with new buttons. Taking care to match the plaid, she cut a piece of fabric from inside the hem and used it to repair moth holes.



Left: Late 19<sup>th</sup> century Girl's Corded Dress

Right: Late 19<sup>th</sup> century Girl's Red Plaid Dress

- Late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century white corded cotton two-piece dress with long sleeves, Peter Pan collar, and front button closure. The pleated skirt buttons to the top of the dress at the waist. Conservation included wet washing and replacing missing buttons with new buttons.
- 1870s tobacco-brown wool and silk blend dress and jacket with bright blue trim, possibly a boy's outfit. The dress is fully lined with polished brown cotton and closes at the back with covered buttons that need to be reattached. The jacket fabric was brittle and had begun to shatter. To rehydrate the jacket, the student created a tent over it with PVC pipe and dry cleaner bags, then placed small bowls of water under the tent, near to but not touching the jacket. After absorbing moisture for 24 hours, the fabric had softened enough for the student to gently couch a stabilizing lining to bare-thread areas. (Couching is an embroidery technique that lays a thread or other fiber on the surface of a fabric and stitches over the fiber to hold it in place.)

Several months later these and other workshop garments were mounted and displayed at the Hays House Museum in the Textile Conservation Workshop exhibit.

There is always more to say about the ways we preserve "old clothes" and the time it takes to work with them than we can cover in one article, so please feel free to get in touch with any questions or comments at [info@harfordhistory.org](mailto:info@harfordhistory.org).

\*The Costume Society of America featured Colleen and Newbold in an Oral History presentation about their work in 2022. The video can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbcDNW8TVog>

Susan K. Wooden and Kathy Scholl, Textile Department

### *THE HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN HARFORD*

"From Roots to Recognition: Celebrating African American Contributions in Harford County"

In an exciting new project and collaborative effort, the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. (HSHC) has joined forces with the Hosanna School Museum to honor and research the African American legacy within our Harford community.

Thanks to the generous support from the Harford County Government, the HSHC has been awarded an African American Heritage Award Grant. The scope of work for the grant is to research, curate, and develop a traveling exhibition that features the rich tapestry of achievements and contributions of African Americans in Harford County, tracing back to their earliest presence as enslaved individuals. Additionally, finding aids will be developed for researchers and genealogists to make it easier to locate the African American presence within HSHC's expansive holdings.

After an initial opening at the Hays House Museum, the educational exhibit will go on the road, circulating across Harford County to a variety of public venues and community spaces. It is a matter of pride for us to announce that three dedicated research and curatorial professionals have been appointed to bring this vital project to life, supported by exceptional volunteers from the Historical Society.

In an inclusive spirit, we are reaching out to the community, inviting individuals from all backgrounds and ethnicities to contribute to this project. We are in search of photographs, documents, personal memorabilia, and stories that can enrich this exhibition. Your participation is pivotal in creating a comprehensive portrayal of our shared history.

We urge you to get in touch by contacting the HSHC at (410) 838-7691. Your contributions are invaluable; whether you choose to donate or lend artifacts, each piece will add to the collective memory we aim to preserve and celebrate.

Join us in this journey to illuminate the stories of African Americans in Harford County — their struggles, their triumphs, their enduring impact, and valuable contributions to the fabric of our society.

*Roxann Redd-Wallace, Board of Trustee Recording Secretary*

### *PUBLIC NOTICE: BYLAWS AMENDMENT*

In accordance with Article XVI of the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. Bylaws, the Board of Trustees shall consider amendments to the Society 2018 Bylaws at its Monday, March 4, 2024 meeting. The meeting will be held at the Historical Society's headquarters, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, MD 21014 at 6:30 pm.

Copies of the proposed Bylaws are available at the Society's headquarters and on the Society's website, [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org). Members may attend the meeting and submit comments on the proposed amendments.

### ON DOING HISTORY

#### A Historian Encounters Richard Chizmar's "Boogeyman"

I cannot recall exactly how I came upon Richard Chizmar's *Chasing a Boogeyman*. The occasion occurred, I do know, at the Bel Air Library on November 22, 2023, and was likely the result of the book's being set atop a shelf in the New Book section. A fervent reader of non-fiction, I can count on one hand the number of times in the recent past that I've deliberately gone through the stacks in search of a work of fiction.

Perhaps my discovery was the result of the name *Chizmar* being prominently shown on the book's dust jacket. I've been aware of the Chizmars for years as a locally prominent family, one of whom, Richard Chizmar, was a nationally noted author. That Chizmar is a surname often confused with my own (and presumably also the reverse) could also have been a factor. As I skimmed the book's fourteen chapters, I recall noticing regular Harford County references. In any event, these factors sufficiently induced me to add *Boogeyman* to my pile, checked it out, and headed home.

What follows is NOT a book review. I'm no student of literature and lack sufficient insight and prior knowledge to take on such a serious task for so noted a work. I've decided that what I've done after reading *Chasing the Boogeyman* has been to *describe my encounter* with Chizmar's book, using internet sources, book reviews by informed persons, and my own training, experience, and historical sense.

So, who is the author? Richard Chizmar is a native of Harford County. He was born in 1965 to William and Olga Chizmar of Edgewood, where the Czechoslovakian and Ecuadorian-born couple had settled after William retired from the Air Force and started working at Edgewood Arsenal. Richard's uncle, Ted Chizmar, followed his older brother from Alliquippa, PA, to Maryland to begin a 30-year career teaching at North Harford High.

Richard graduated from Edgewood High School in 1983 and the University of Maryland McGill School of Journalism in 1988. His wife, Kara, also an Edgewood High grad with degrees from Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, worked as a Physical Therapist. The couple have two sons and now live in Bel Air, where Richard reads, writes, and oversees his many related publishing ventures centered in Forest Hill. Richard and current Bel Air Town Commissioner, Steve Chizmar, are first cousins.

In his Senior year, Richard founded a "modest, underground magazine," *Cemetery Dance*, that featured a "type of dark fiction...horror blended with a strong dose of mystery and suspense and wonder." With its positive reviews and effectively designed promotional campaigns, the upstart periodical grew in circulation and sophistication, and attracted more and more renowned writers of the genre. In 1991, the literary giant, Stephen King, submitted a piece for *Cemetery Dance*, initiating a continuing literary relationship with Chizmar that includes co-writing and editing novels and compilations. In 1992, Chizmar established Cemetery Dance Publications, "widely-considered the world's leading specialty press publisher of horror and dark suspense." During its 30-plus years, Cemetery Dance Publications has produced over 300 hardcover titles and close to 80 issues of the magazine.

Gallery Books, a Simon & Schuster imprint, published *Chasing the Boogeyman* in 2021. In her interview with Chizmar about his newest book the following September, April Snellings of *The Big Thrill Magazine* presented the following succinct summary:

*In CHASING THE BOOGEYMAN, Chizmar inserts a gruesome [not really]—and entirely fictional—serial-killer narrative into a largely autobiographical coming-of-age story. Set in 1988, the book finds a*



young Chizmar returning to his family home in Edgewood, Maryland, to spend the summer between his college graduation and his upcoming wedding. Chizmar mostly plans to hole up in his childhood bedroom to write horror stories and turn out the first issue of *Cemetery Dance*, but fate has something else in mind for him. When teenage girls begin disappearing from their bedrooms and driveways, only to turn up dead and mutilated [overstated] hours later, Chizmar is drawn into the investigation that quickly consumes his hometown.

For the next ten months, Richard and Carly Albright, his equally- obsessed reporter friend from the *Aegis*, threw themselves into following and, at times, assisting Detective Lyle Harper, of the Sheriff's Department, who headed the investigation into the murders of four teenage girls that so horrified the community. In April of 1989, the killings abruptly stopped. Gradually rumors come to an end; curfews lapsed; suspicions waned; and people discontinued avoiding remote locations. Life in Edgewood returned to normal.

Years passed. Richard became a full-time writer/publisher. He and Kara marry and raise two lacrosse-playing sons. Carly got promoted to *The Sun*, and went on to a career with the *Post* and other noted East Coast dailies. Detective Harper retired. The police, including the FBI and the Maryland State Police, promised to maintain their search, but essentially the case remained cold. Until September, 2019.

I found *Chasing the Boogeyman* to be uniquely appealing. Chizmar is a highly skilled writer who provides a fast-paced narrative that remains clear, albeit complex and mysterious, throughout the book's 300+ pages.

The Bel Air author utilizes several literary devices to draw readers into his narrative. In addition to creating fast-paced dialogues that provide a deft mixture of factual and fictive material, Chizmar inserts throughout the book a series of behind-the-scenes photographs. These depict a variety of subjects, including the Bel Air Courthouse and Armory, the old Edgewood Library and Train Station, numerous structures in the greater Hanson Road area where Chizmar grew up, and candid photos of persons purportedly being interviewed by Harford and Baltimore reporters and snapshots of the teenage victims seemingly out and about the Edgewood area.

Writers and reviewers are universal in their praise for Richard Chizmar and *Chasing the Boogeyman*. The following snippets from their editorial reactions testify to their professional beliefs:

- " *Boogeyman*, which bridged the gap between fiction, biography, and true crime, is perhaps the most unique book I read in 2021."
- "you'll find yourself questioning whether the account is real or not as it sends chills up your spine."
- "Writing as a fictional persona of himself and setting the plot in his hometown, Chizmar delivers a uniquely descriptive work that delves with delicious detail into the dark heart of the U.S. in 1988."

An excellent book, yes, one that I fully enjoyed. And one that seemingly incorporates many of the elements of a good work of non-fiction. *Boogeyman* is so extremely reminiscent of a work of True Crime or a personal memoir that readers, entrapped in the book's narrative and the local aura, become so taken in as to forget that the author's first words in "a note to readers" are "*Chasing the Boogeyman* is a work of fiction, an homage to my hometown and my passion for true crime."

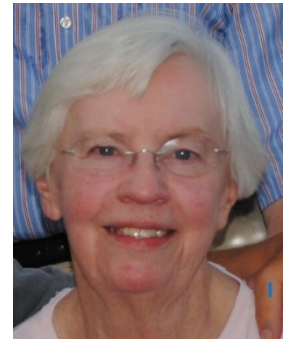
A knowledgeable writer/historian friend of mine recently admitted falling prey to Chizmar's skills: "I kept wondering how I had missed such a huge story. He is incredibly talented." I share fully her reaction to the point that I found myself thinking seriously about heading to the basement and checking the Historical Society's collection of *Aegis* back issues.

All in all, my strong recommendation is for persons of high school age to grab a copy of *Chasing the Boogeyman*, regardless of your normal reading preferences, and let yourself be taken in by a book that Stephen King describes is "absolutely fascinating, totally compelling and immensely poignant."

*Jim Chrismer, Archives Department*

### IN MEMORIAM

Cora Mae Rueckert Harrison, wife of Society Vice President, George Harrison, passed away on January 26, 2024, at their home in Bel Air. Cora was a long-time fixture on Bel Air's Main Street where she operated an unfinished furniture and wicker store. She later expanded into hand-made decorations, quilting fabrics, art supplies, and picture framing. At one point she had five stores including Harbor Place in Baltimore, North Plaza Mall in Parkville, Bel Air's Tollgate Town Center, and Bel Air's Main Street.



She was a true mover and shaker organizing street fairs on Main Street, serving on the Rockfield Foundation Board, helping to plan for the Society's gift shop, and working to preserve the old Bel Air Theater as an arts center. This last effort unfortunately failed, but as always Cora put up a good fight.

Cora is survived by her husband of 62 years, son Stephen Harrison of Mukaltea, WA, daughter Deborah Harrison of Bel Air, and five grandchildren.

### 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAFAYETTE'S FAREWELL TOUR

On July 29, 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette stopped in Havre de Grace while traveling from Lancaster PA to Baltimore. On July 29, 2025, Harford County citizens will celebrate the anniversary of his farewell tour and welcome the Marquis to Havre de Grace once again with a festive celebration. A full program of events is being planned in preparation for this visit. These events will include living history presentations, lectures, exhibits, and theatrical and musical productions. Events will kick off in August 2024 and continue until July 2025.

Lafayette was 66 years old when he traveled from France to New York in August 1824 to begin a jubilant tour across 24 states as the "Guest of the Nation." He was given a hero's welcome everywhere he went. He ended the tour 13 months later.

What was the purpose of this "Farewell Tour?" The United States was embroiled in a very contentious presidential race and then-President James Monroe thought the country needed a morale booster. The country was also approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Monroe proposed bringing back the last living American General from the American Revolution in celebration of the nation's 50 anniversary and in hopes of reigniting a feeling of patriotism. That last surviving general was Lafayette. He came—planning

to stay for three months or so. He stayed a total of 13 months and was greeted everywhere with outpourings of affection. Even in places he did not visit, citizens celebrated his return.

As a side note, the election of 1824 took place between October and November 1824. There were four candidates. Andrew Jackson won the popular vote and even won the most electors. However, he did not win a majority of the electoral votes. Thus, the election went to the House of Representatives, and John Quincy Adams (who had finished second to Jackson in popular votes and electoral college votes) was chosen president. On his tour, Lafayette was feted by James Monroe and John Quincy Adams. He visited the grave of his close friend and father figure George Washington. He also traveled to Monticello and Montpelier to visit with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

As events in the Farewell Tour are finalized, they will be shared in this newsletter.

Sandra R. Wallis, Chair Lafayette Farewell Tour Planning Committee

### 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE BUSH DECLARATION

Harford County's first America 250! Commemorative Event will occur on March 22, 2025, with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Bush Declaration.

The Bush Declaration is often hailed as "the first Declaration of Independence." In reality, it was a declaration in support of the patriot cause, that was signed at the Town of Bush on March 22, 1775. It is believed to be the first (or one of the first) such resolution drafted by an elected body in one of the colonies.

News of events across the colonies, especially the situation in Boston, reached the ears of the citizens of the newly created Harford County. Harford's citizens were already collecting goods and money to send to the aid of the citizens of Boston. One question historians have explored is how familiar with the Bush Declaration were the men who drafted the Declaration of Independence, especially its author, Thomas Jefferson. Certainly, men traveling by horse or horse-drawn carriage to Philadelphia from the southern colonies may have traveled through Bush on the Old Post Road. The language of the last line of each document bears uncanny similarities.

Last line of the Bush Declaration:

*... we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, and engage ourselves by every tie held sacred among mankind, to perform the same at the risque of our lives and fortunes.*

Last line of the Declaration of Independence:

*... And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.*

A committee of interested persons has been created to plan events to celebrate this anniversary. If you are interested in learning more or exploring volunteer opportunities, please contact Sandi Wallis at [swallis1776@gmail.com](mailto:swallis1776@gmail.com).

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The Historical Society  
of Harford County, Inc.  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
March / April 2024

DATED MATERIAL

The NEWSLETTER of The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. is published bi-monthly.

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***Recording Secretary***

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*Nancy Kroupa*

**TRUSTEES 2024-2025**

*Paul Koermer*

**TRUSTEES 2023-2024**

*Charles Wolpoff*

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*Mary Schweers*

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY and GIFT SHOP HOURS**

Tuesday  
COURT RECORDS  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Wednesday  
ARCHIVES  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Third Wednesday  
ARCHIVES & HENRY  
C. PEDEN Jr. LIBRARY  
5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Thursday  
HENRY C. PEDEN Jr.  
RESEARCH LIBRARY  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fourth Saturday  
ARCHIVES & HENRY  
C. PEDEN Jr. LIBRARY  
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.