

Town Notes

News from La Plata Town Hall

August – September 2006

MAYOR'S CORNER



Hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Please come out and join in the fun at the summer concert series every Friday evening at Town Hall from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Later this year the Town Council will be presenting "Screen on the Green", where several movies suitable for families will be presented.

The Town's recent decision to annex 70+ acres of land north of town to build a shopping center and expand the corporate boundaries of La Plata will certainly offer some challenges to the Town's infrastructure. The Town Council will work diligently to ensure services, such as water and sewer capacity, are maintained at acceptable levels and the developer builds a center we can all be proud of visiting.

The Town Council is considering enacting limitations on smoking in public places. Thanks to the business community and many residents for voicing their concerns to make La Plata a healthier place to live and breathe. By continuing to work together much can be accomplished to make La Plata a better Town for all.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following day in observance of the holiday listed:

Labor Day Monday, September 4

If you have a water or sewer emergency after hours, call 301-934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

MEET THE TOWN STAFF

Lt. Wayne Wathen



Lt. Wayne Wathen with Terry Satterfield, Director of the Police Executive Development Program.

Lt. Wayne Wathen has been serving the Town of La Plata Police since 1987. Wayne is a graduate of La Plata High School and holds a B.A. Degree in Criminal Justice Administration. Wayne currently serves as the Commander of Operations of the Police Department. Wayne recently completed the Maryland Police Executive Development Program - Leadership Challenge. Wayne's group won the meritorious award for their presentation on Police Ethics.

Town of La Plata Officials

Mayor: Gene Ambrogio

Council:

Wayne Winkler.....Ward 1

C. Keith Back.....Ward 2

Paddy Mudd.....Ward 3

Vic E. Newman.....Ward 4

Interim Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Assistant Town Manager:

Patricia L Bembe

Town Clerk: Judith T. Frazier

Treasurer: Joseph W. Norris

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Director of Planning and Zoning:

Catherine N. Flerlage

Director of Public Works:

Stephen A. Murphy

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

305 Queen Anne Street, La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Telephone: 301-934-8421 / 301-870-3377

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: mminer@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

Council Column

FROM WARD 1

Councilman Wayne Winkler

Hi, everyone: I'm writing this on July 3rd and the temperature is supposed to reach 94 degrees, so the hot, humid, hazy days of summer are here.

Two weeks ago the Faison annexation came before the Mayor and Council for a vote. We voted it in, with the exception of Mayor Ambrogio who voted no. This annexation caused me to have problems in one respect because I don't want to see La Plata continue to grow. On the other hand, more commercial growth helps keep residential taxes low. Also, I think all of us are getting tired of having to go to Waldorf for goods and services, and with gas costing \$3.00, plus all the traffic, I believe this will be a good annexation.

What's going on around Town: Baldus and someone else are building 17-19 townhouses on St. Mary's Avenue. The Echols family is building two apartment buildings containing 24 apartments each. Also, St. Mary's Avenue is now being worked on for new sidewalks and repaving. I saw a concept plan where Facchina wants to build at least one more building on St. Mary's Avenue. St. Mary's Avenue seems to be the place to be, or maybe not, with all of the construction traffic that will be coming. Also, I think we are getting a Staple's where the old Safeway used to be on Rt. 301.

On another note, I was talking with Charles County Economic Development Department (EDD) and Charles County Chamber of Commerce, and we in the Town don't always know what is going on in the County and vice versa. I think it's time the Town formed its own Economic Development Commission with members from the Town's Planning Commission, La Plata Business Association, County EDD,

County Chamber and County Planning Commission, plus others as they are identified. I will be working on this project this summer to see if I can get it off the ground.

Other items: You probably read that we are under a consent order by Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) and are being fined \$10,000 plus \$100.00 a day until we get our sewer problems fixed. Michelle Minor and I went to Baltimore to meet with MDE and plead our case. We have selected a contractor and everything should be completed by Oct. 31 of this year. Hopefully, MDE will reduce our fine as we had no idea we were being fined. Good news, we are getting a Town Clock in front of Town Hall, in part because of a generous donation by Kitty Newcomb, and the Town covered the rest. The Town Farmers' Market needed to move because of the construction of Talbot Street and should do fine in their new location. The Mayor and Council introduced a smoking ban and should be voting on it in a few weeks. The ban looks good and should protect us non-smokers while protecting some of the smokers' rights, but not in public places.

Last, since I last wrote to you a very good friend of mine, and good friend of the Town of La Plata, passed away. He is Louis Jenkins. Louis lived on Spruce Street in La Plata and had a law practice on La Grange Avenue near the Town Hall. Louis and his wife Gladys loved and cared about La Plata and, until he took his last breath, wanted to know what was going on. He will be missed. Gladys plans to continue to live in La Plata and be near her children and grandchildren. God bless and be with you, Gladys.

FROM WARD 2

Councilman Keith Back

I want to thank all who have joined the email list I talked about in the last *Town Notes*. I have begun sending out information about issues and upcoming events in the Town to concerned citizens within Ward 2. If you would like to receive this type of information as an email, please send

me your email address so that you can be added to the distribution list. You can send this information to me at thebacks@comcast.net.

I also have been pleased with the outpouring of support for Town of La Plata's ordinance to address the problem of secondhand smoke in public places. The intention is to protect all citizens from exposure to secondhand smoke in the restaurants, bars, public meeting areas and work places within the Town. As recently as June 27, 2006, the Surgeon General of the United States published new findings linking secondhand smoke to many forms of illness affecting the citizens of our country. Hopefully by the time this is published we will have passed this measure to protect the health of all of our citizens.

Don't forget to come out to the summer concert series at the Town Hall and enjoy time with your family and friends over the rest of the summer season.

FROM WARD 3

Councilwoman Paddy Mudd

As most of you know, I am a strong supporter of Ordinance 06-10 – or La Plata's "smoking ban". I feel this will pass on July 18th with amendments to allow smoking in private parking lots and on public streets and sidewalks except within 20 feet of public entrances to buildings – not to include someone just walking by on a public street or sidewalk. This ordinance will be enforced by the La Plata Police Department, the Town's Chief Executive Officer or any Code enforcement official of the Town. The County's law is enforced by the County Health Department! As a health professional, I feel that education is the important issue!!! There must be lots of education about the health effects of smoking and secondhand smoke. Also, we have an obligation to educate those who must smoke on where they can with the least effect on others. I do feel enforcement of this ordinance will be a burden on the 911 or EMS system, which must answer all calls.

Council Column *continued on page 3*

Council Column *continued from p2*

Many non-emergency calls are made to 911 now-and this will add to those. We must develop a plan where all in-town non-emergency calls are directed to the La Plata Police Department.

Enjoy the rest of the summer –and come out to our Friday night concerts on the green.

FROM WARD 4

Councilman Vic E. Newman

Much is going on in La Plata. Check the Town website to review the times for your Planning Commission, Design Review Board, and Council meetings. These meetings are an excellent source not only to participate in your Town Government, but a way to stay on top of the issues and/or concerns that are molding your community. Following are just a few:

- You have several new retail opportunities coming to Town, such as: Target and Walgreen's.
- Memorial Garden (Tornado Victims) next to the Charles County Firemen's Museum was started. This is an excellent project that showed how businesses, local community, Parks and Recreation Commission, Community Garden Club and the La Plata Beautification Commission are all working together.
- Your new Police Station opened. The La Plata Police Department continues to focus on community patrolling.
- Wills Park Community Center upgrade well on the way of being completed. This community center provides a wonderful opportunity to hold community events.
- Concerts on the Town Hall lawn continue every Friday at 7:00 p.m.
- A planned northern shopping complex that will include Lowe's and Giant to name just a couple. This shopping complex will help balance future growth north of La Plata, and add much needed retail for all residents.
- County continues to build St. Charles Parkway to merge with Rosewick Road; not my favorite project but something we all will have to live with. That is why the previous item is important. Trying to balance retail north, central, and south of La Plata will hopefully help to reduce the expected increase in traffic out of central/downtown La Plata.
- St. Mary's Avenue repaved and landscaped.

Please have a wonderful and safe summer. School will be starting soon – please be especially careful at pedestrian crossings and school bus stops.



As a highly technical civil engineering, land planning and surveying firm, Bolton & Associates has an excellent reputation for quality performance. The engineers, land planners, surveyors and technical experts specialize in land development design and related engineering support functions. By supplying full service consulting services, Bolton & Associates is able to provide specific solutions today for the world we live in tomorrow by turning ideas into reality.



On May 1, 2006, Bolton & Associates opened its new five-story, 24,000 square foot office building at the corner of St. Mary's Avenue and Centennial Street in the heart of La Plata. The new building is equipped with its own garage that houses seven company vehicles, as well as a state-of-the-art print room, three conference

rooms, a library, wireless internet connection and ample work space for up to 125 employees, 75 of whom currently call Bolton & Associates home.

Bolton & Associates has opened a branch office in Southfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, with a team of four engineers and three designers. Future expansions include plans for offices in Florida, North Carolina and other areas of Southern Maryland.

Charles County Chamber of Commerce

Mark your calendars: "Festival of Scarecrows" is coming to the Town of La Plata in October 2006. For more information about this event, call the Chamber office at 301-932-6500.

La Plata Mill & Do It Best Rental Center

Moon Bounces are now available at La Plata Mill & Do It Best Rental Center. They offer a 17x17x32 Castle Slide Combo and a 15x15 Regular Moon Bounce. Each bounce comes with an enclosed trailer for easy transport. Call today to make your reservation: 301-934-8161. They are open 7 days a week!

United Way of Charles County

The United Way of Charles County 2006 Campaign Kickoff Event will take place Thursday, September 7 at the Greater Waldorf Jaycees Community Center, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Cost is \$18 per person or \$125 for a table of 8. For more information about this event, call 301-609-4844 or email vburchuwcc@comcast.net.

La Plata Town Services

Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Minimum fee: \$11.00 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.00. A fee of \$6.00, or the current Landfill disposal fee, shall be charged for each tire collected. NOTE: As noted in the June-July 2006 edition of *Town Notes*, effective July 1, 2006, the fee for this service increased to \$11.00 for 5 minutes loading time (fee for each additional minute remains \$1.00) and \$6.00 or the current Landfill disposal fee for each tire.

Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.

Yard Waste Pickup

Containers of yard waste ONLY - leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches - may be put out on your regular trash day for pickup that day or the next day. The containers must be marked "Yard Waste." Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 inches in diameter or more than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed - if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

La Plata Farmers' Market

Remember to visit the Farmers' Market for fresh produce, flowers and handcrafted items. The Market is open on Wednesdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. On Wednesdays, the Market is located just east of the Baldus Centre building (which is at the corner of Charles Street and Crain Highway). On Saturdays, the Market is located in the back rows of the parking lot behind the Charles County Courthouse.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Charles County Sanitary Landfill accepts household hazardous waste products the first Saturday of each month during April through December, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Upcoming collection dates are: August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4 and December 2. The landfill is on Billingsley Road East, between Piney Church Road and Rt. 5. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription medicines and other poisons that are around your house. They advise that you should keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring the items to the collection site in cardboard boxes for ease in unloading. *If you need more information, please call the Charles County Dept. of Public Facilities at 301-932-3599 or 301-870-2778, or the Landfill information service at 301-932-5656.*

New water, sewer, and trash collection rates

After conducting work sessions and holding a public hearing, the Town Council adopted Ordinance 06-7, dealing with the FY2006-2007 Tax Rate, Ordinance 06-8, dealing with the FY2006-2007 Budget, and Ordinance 06-9, dealing with the FY2006-2007 Fee Schedule. The ordinances became effective July 1, 2006. Copies of legislation are available at Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street, or on the Town's web page at www.townoflaplata.org under "Legislation".

The tax rate remains the same, \$0.32/\$100 of assessed value. Effective July 1, 2006, the water rate is \$2.00/1000 gallons; the sewer rate is \$5.72/1000 gallons; and the residential curbside trash collection rate is \$57.30/quarter. The new rates will be reflected in the utility bill you receive in October, for service in July, August and September.

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

Due to Charles County Sanitary Landfill being closed on certain holidays, the following adjustment is necessary to the Town's refuse collection schedule:

If your regular trash collection day is:	Trash will be picked up on:
Labor Day	
Monday, September 4	Tuesday, September 5



National Night Out

This is the 21st anniversary for National Night Out. It will be held on Tuesday, August 1, 2006, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in most communities. Contact your community leaders for the location of your event. For additional information contact D/Sgt. Brooks at La Plata Police: 301-934-1500.

Town of La Plata

2005 Drinking Water Quality Report

Important Information about your Drinking Water:

Special points of interest:

- The water at La Plata was tested for over 120 different compounds
- The Town of La Plata Drinking water meets all State and Federal requirements
- Drinking Water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some compounds. The presence of these compounds does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Safe Drinking Water Act Hotline (1-800-426-4791)

We're pleased to present to you the Annual Water Quality Report for 2005. This report is designed to inform you about the water quality and services we deliver to you every day. Maryland Environmental Service, an Agency of the State of Maryland, operates the water treatment facility and prepared this report on behalf of the Town of La Plata.

Our goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. Last year more than 800 tests for over 120 compounds were conducted on the water at La Plata. We want you to understand the efforts made to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water.

We're pleased to report that your drinking water meets all Federal and State requirements. This report shows the water quality and explains what it means.

If you have any questions about this report or have questions concerning your water utility, please contact **Mr. Jay Janney** at 410-729-8350 or jjann@menv.com

We want everyone to be informed about their water.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Public Meeting Information:

For the opportunity to ask more questions or participate in decisions that may affect your drinking water quality, the Town Council meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The water for La Plata comes from four wells in the lower Patapsco aquifer and two wells in the upper Patapsco formation. After the water is pumped out of the wells, we add disinfectant to protect against microbial contaminants. The Maryland Department of the Environment is performing an assessment of the source water which should be complete in 2006.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain compounds in water provided by public water systems. We treat our water according to EPA's regulations. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.



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The table below lists all the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the past several years. The presence of these compounds in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. Unless otherwise noted, the

data presented in the table is from testing done January 1 – December 31, 2005. The State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year.

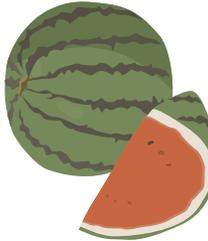
LaPlata Treated Water Quality Report 2005

Definitions				
Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)	The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.			
Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)	The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.			
Action Level	The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.			
Treatment Technique (TT)	A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water			
ppm = parts per million or milligrams per liter				
ppb = parts per billion or micrograms per liter				
mrem/yr = millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)				
pCi/l = picocuries per liter (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)				
Contaminant	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCL)	Highest Level Detected	Ideal Goal (EPA's MCLG)	Typical Sources of Contaminant
Regulated at the Treatment Plant				
Well 5				
Gross Beta (2002 Testing)	4 mrem/year	0.96 mrem/year	0 mrem/year	Decay of natural deposits
Barium (2004 Testing)	2 mg/L	0.053 mg/l	2 mg/L	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (2001 Testing)	4 ppm	0.57 ppm	4 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Chromium (2001 Testing)	100 ppb	10 ppb	100 ppb	Erosion of natural deposits
Gross Alpha (2002 Testing)	15 pCi/l	1 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	Erosion of natural deposits
Di (2 - Ethylhexyl) Phthalate (2004 Testing)	6 ppb	1.7 ppb	0 ppb	PVC Plastics
Well 6				
Fluoride (2004 Testing)	4 ppm	0.78 ppm	4 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (2004 Testing)	2 ppm	0.003 ppm	2 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Di (2 - Ethylhexyl) Phthalate (2004 Testing)	6 ppb	2 ppb	0 ppb	PVC Plastics
Well 8				
Barium (2004 Testing)	2 ppm	0.004 ppm	2 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (2004 Testing)	4 ppm	0.81 ppm	4 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Gross Alpha (2002 Testing)	15 pCi/l	5 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	Decay of natural deposits
Pentachlorophenol (2004 Testing)	1 ppb	0.13 ppb	0 ppb	Discharge from wood
Di (2 - Ethylhexyl) Phthalate (2004 Testing)	6 ppb	13.2 ppb	0 ppb	PVC Plastics
Well 9				
Fluoride (2004 Testing)	4 ppm	0.69 ppm	4 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Gross Alpha (2002 Testing)	15 pCi/l	4 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	Erosion of natural deposits
Di (2 - Ethylhexyl) Phthalate (2004 Testing)	6 ppb	3.5 ppb	0 ppb	PVC Plastics
Barium (2004 Testing)	2 ppm	0.004 ppm	2 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Well 10				
Fluoride (2004 Testing)	4 ppm	0.94 ppm	4 ppm	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium (2004 Testing)	2 ppm	0.006 ppm	2 ppm	Discharge of drilling wastes
Gross Alpha	15 pCi/l	11 pCi/l	0 pCi/l	Decay of natural deposits
Gross Beta	4 mrem/year	0.24 mrem/year	0 mrem/year	Decay of natural deposits
Distribution (2004 Testing)				
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)	80 ppb	.88 ppb	n/a	By-product of disinfection
Regulated at the Consumer's Tap				
Copper	1.3 ppm (action level 90th percentile = 0.208 ppm)		1.3 ppm	Corrosion of household plumbing fixtures and systems

Important Information about Lead & Copper in Drinking Water:

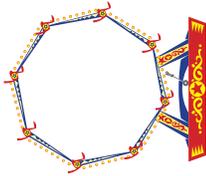
20 sites in the Town of La Plata distribution were tested for Lead and Copper in 2005. All Lead levels were non-detect in this water system. The highest level of Copper detected in the distribution was 0.325 mg/l, well below the EPA action level of 1.3 mg/l. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards for lead and copper. The lead and copper levels for the Town of La Plata are well below the Safe Drinking Water Act Standards.

AUGUST 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting No Planning Commission meeting this month. 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., National Night Out	2 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market No Design Review Board meetings this month 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	3	4 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>United States Naval Academy Band</i> "The Electric Brigade"	5 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
6	7 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 8/4 to schedule)	8 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	9 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	10	11 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Roadhouse</i>	12 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
13	14	15 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	16	17	18	19
20	21 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	22 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	23 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	24	25 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Wicked Jezebels</i>	26 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.
27	28	29	30 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	31	31 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Southern Maryland Concert Band</i>	8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.



SEPTEMBER 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
3	4 LABOR DAY – TOWN HALL CLOSED (Monday's trash will be picked up on Tuesday, Sept. 5.)	5 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	6 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	7	8	9
10	11 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 9/8 to schedule)	12 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	13 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	14	15	16
17	18 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	19 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	20 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session	21	22	23
24	25	26 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	27 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	28	29	30
			8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market			8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.

Charles County Freedom Landing, Inc.

Charles County Freedom Landing, Inc. was incorporated in 1985 after being part of a joint program initiated in 1980 for both Charles and St. Mary's Counties. The agency is a non-profit created by a group of interested professionals and consumers of mental health services to provide community services to those diagnosed with a serious, persistent mental illness.

The services are based on the "clubhouse" philosophy. This focuses on people helping each other to develop skills and mutual support to manage their illnesses. There are certain skills required to sustain oneself in the community. Obtaining or improving such skills is a priority, i.e. cooking simple meals, budgeting money, having a place to live, taking care of your home, obtaining employment, taking medication, if needed, and creating a sense of community. One can receive assistance, leave the program, and return if necessary. Each person is important to the entire community in some fashion.

Originally there was a day program where skills could be tested, friendships and support developed. A residential component was added in 1985 to assist those being discharged from the state hospital system to obtain housing and necessary skills. Referrals now come from local hospitals, shelters, outpatient clinics and state hospitals. The program is designed to give the needed structure to become more independent and then to transition to a less structured living situation in the community.

In 1988, the vocational component was added. Staff members assess job skills, interests, and employment possibilities. Jobs are sought and assistance made available to have an easier transition into the position.

Staff support is gradually decreased as the person becomes more comfortable.

In the same year, as services expanded, we moved from space in what had been a small church to our current location at 400 Potomac St. in La Plata.

In 1996, funding and regulations shifted to permit us to provide more mental health rehabilitation services in people's homes or other community settings. Believing people should live in their own homes whenever possible and that learning is better transferred in the environment in which it is used, many of the consumers were able to transition from residential homes operated by Freedom Landing to shared homes in the community. Services are provided in the homes, libraries, banks, schools, stores, etc.

As the understanding of mental illness and the proficiency of skills in illness management improve, services and strategies change. Being a non-profit and part of the public mental health system necessitates careful management of resources. Funding, staffing and provision of services are a constant concern.

The agency welcomes volunteers and student interns. Donations of craft materials, small appliances, and household and hygiene items are used by the folks with whom we work. Participation in our fundraisers – an annual crab feast and raffle of a bushel of crabs, or our semiannual yard sales which have been located at the La Plata Wal-Mart parking lot – bring in additional monies to supplement services. Please join us for the Raffle and Crab Feast at Capt. John's Crab House, Tuesday, August 8, 2006 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For additional information, call 301-932-2737, e-mail jabramson@freedomlanding.com or visit our web site at www.freedomlanding.com.

2006 Summer Concert Series

August 4	<i>United States Naval Academy Band "The Electric Brigade"</i>
August 11	<i>Roadhouse</i>
August 18	<i>Wicked Jezebels</i>
August 25	<i>Southern Maryland Concert Band</i>
September 1	<i>Infinity</i>
September 8	<i>Jimmy Rhythm & the Rhythm Breakers</i>



Concerts begin at 7:00 p.m. on Friday evenings, on the west lawn of the Town Hall. All concerts are free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn chairs. Parking is limited at the Town Hall but there is ample parking a very short distance away at Sacred Heart Church. An after-hours recorded message will advise of concert cancellations due to threatening weather: call (301) 934-8421.

Please do not bring pets or alcoholic beverages to the concerts.

La Plata Citizen Profile



Victor B. Bowling, Jr.

For the past 50+ years, Vic has volunteered his time to the Charles County Rescue Squad. He has held every position except President (which he didn't want) at some point in time with this organization and has spent countless hours in training to be ready when the need arises.

Vic is a former Mayor of La Plata and a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He began volunteering with the fire department as a teenager prior to leaving for his military service. There was no rescue squad at that time. While Vic no longer responds to emergency calls he is still on the Board of Directors and stops by the rescue squad every day.

Vic grew up in the La Plata area and attended Sacred Heart School, which is now Archbishop Neale School.

Vic has won numerous awards. His most recent award was the Knights of Columbus' Emergency Medical Technician of the Year,

which was announced at their Founders Day Awards Banquet.

Vic is a wonderful person and one of the finest people you could meet. He is an inspiration to many of the younger members of the organization, and he is an inspiration to keep going - which can be tough some times.

Please let the Mayor and Council know if you know someone in the Town's residential or business community who should be recognized for their outstanding achievement, volunteer service, community involvement or contribution to the community, no matter how great or small. Provide a brief description of the person and why they should be profiled in Town Notes. Send your information (and a digital image if you have one), to the Mayor and Council: e-mail to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org, or regular mail to Town Notes- La Plata Citizen Profile, P.O. Box 2268, La Plata, MD 20646-2268.

Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata. If you would like to submit a Community Announcement item (subject to Town approval and space availability), please send it by e-mail to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org

Town of La Plata

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