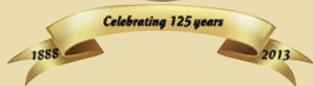


TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

By the time you receive this Newsletter, spring will be here and, hopefully, we have escaped another harsh winter. Since the State of Maryland did not allocate most of the highway user funds for another fiscal year, funds that we use for road maintenance and snow removal, mild winters can be a positive thing for those who manage the Town budget. Albeit the picture is looking a little brighter for the fiscal year starting on July 1, in that the Governor has included in his budget an allocation of highway user funds that would provide municipalities a greater amount than has been allocated in the past two fiscal years. Highway user funds are derived from the gasoline tax and are prorated to municipalities based on the amount of streets and roads in each jurisdiction. The past two fiscal years we received about 10 percent of our normal allocation; in the fiscal year starting July 1 the allocation may be close to 50 percent provided the Governor's request is not modified before the end of the current legislative session in Annapolis.

Speaking of budgets, the elected and Town officials are at work on the budget for the next fiscal year. Our General Fund, funded principally from real property taxes and the Town's share of the state income tax, is used to cover the general cost of the operations of the Town. The recent devaluation of property values provides less revenue for the Town, but we have a strong financial base and will continue to provide the high level of service that is a standard for La Plata. Enterprise Funds used for sewer, water, trash pickup, recycling, and storm

Continued on page 3

La Plata's Quasquicentennial

In 1988, La Plata celebrated its Centennial, 100 years since incorporation. Now twenty five years later we are about to celebrate La Plata's Quasquicentennial, 125 years since incorporation. Although 1888 is considered La Plata's year of incorporation, the Town's history goes back well before 1888. Some may be led to think that the precise date of May 6, 1853 was La Plata's conception and derived from Governor Enoch Louis Lowe, a democrat, approving the charter that authorized construction of a railroad. Later to be called the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad (B & P) that ran from Baltimore to the Potomac River south.

In August 1892 a fire destroyed the courthouse at the County seat in Port Tobacco. Subsequently, the Maryland Assembly made the decision to remove the county seat from Port Tobacco. La Plata became the new County seat and along with the construction of the B & P railroad, economic and sociologic conditions in Southern Maryland benefitted. The business community rallied and transportation and shopping opportunities opened up. Soon area merchants living some distance from La Plata became aware of the profitable advantages of opening up businesses in the thriving community near the railroad tracks and the County seat.

Amidst such growing pains of early La Plata, on April 4, 1888 the General Assembly of Maryland enacted "that the citizens of the Town of La Plata in Charles County be and they are hereby created a body corporate...". The Act provided for election of five commissioners, specified qualifications for them, and required that from the five one be chosen to serve as president.

The form of government changed in the 1960's with the adoption of a new Town charter to a Mayor and four councilperson form. No longer were our elected officials worried about controlling roaming livestock, slaughtering of animals in the Town limits, or keeping hogs. The elected body was now tasked with subjects such as, industrial parks, Town hall computer capabilities, new comprehensive zoning plans, waste water treatment plant capacities, and housing, just like their counterparts in the larger cities of the State. Today, La Plata has grown into a thriving, sought after community to live, work, and do business.

Town Elections

General Election – Tuesday, May 7, 2013, 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m.

Election of Mayor and Wards I, II, III and IV Councilmen

Polling place: La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street

The Town of La Plata will hold a General Election on Tuesday, May 7, 2013, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m. The polling place for all qualified voters of the Town is the La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street. The Town will be using paper ballots.



Find us on
Facebook



Town of La Plata

COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward 1

It's hard to believe that one quarter of 2013 is already over. So much has happened and we have so many wonderful events coming up. I started this year with the passing of my Mother on January 9th. She was 93 years old and so much of her life was dedicated to this wonderful Town we live in. She served on the Beautification Commission, the Planning Commission and is a past Councilperson. She was also Past President of the Charles County Garden Club and a Federated Flower Show Judge. She loved this Town and the people in it and is so missed by all of us.

Coming events is the next topic and do we

have plenty. We have an ice cream tasting with the Easter Bunny on April 1, then; we will open Tilghman Lake on April 21. The lake has a walking path, bathrooms, a new parking area, a pier, and is gorgeous to look at. To get there, go out Route 6 east, take a left on Radio Station Road, then a right on Box Elder Road to the end. It's well worth the trip. More events include yard sales, our concert series, Memorial Day Celebration and on and on. Go to the Town website (www.townofaplata.org) and click on events to see what is being offered.

On another note, we are now working on the budget and do we have good news. Because of all of the work of Town Staff and the cost saving measures they put in place there will

be no tax increase. The bulk of the Town's income is from property taxes and, as you know, most property assessments went down causing less income. The employees compensated by better maintenance procedures, technical innovations, and plain hard work. Thanks to all.

Last, we have our Town election on the first Tuesday on May. Some Council members have competition and I think this is healthy. Competition and choices are good things. I wish everyone well. Please come out and vote for the candidates of your choice.

Spring is here, we are now in Daylight Saving, it is getting warmer, and I love it. Hope we all have a great summer, with good times, and wonderful memories.

THERESA DENT



Theresa Dent, Senior Planner for the Town of La Plata has received the American Institute Certified Planner (AICP) professional certification from the American Planning Association (APA)

AICP certified planners carry a high mark of distinction because they are required to meet rigorous standards, maintain their expertise through continuing education, and serve com-

munity interests.

AICP certified planners have demonstrated a commitment to high standards of professional practice and a mastery of theories and tools of planning. To become certified, an APA member must meet requirements for education and experience, pass the AICP Comprehensive Planning Examination, and pledge to uphold ethical standards and engage in ongoing professional development.

The AICP Comprehensive Planning Examination is a rigorous test that must be completed in 3 ½ hours, consisting of questions that are randomly distributed with varying degrees

of difficulty across specific topics including, Planning History, Theory and Law; Plan Making and Implementation; Spatial Areas of Practice; Functional Areas of Practice; Public Participation and Social Justice; AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct helps certified planners uphold those ethical standards. AICP's Certification Maintenance program helps them engage in ongoing professional development. Under the Certification Maintenance program, certified planners engage in 32 hours of professional development every two years.

TESTING OF EARLY WARNING DEVICES/SIRENS

The Town of La Plata will be testing our early warning devices/sirens on **Saturday, May 4 at approximately 10:00 a.m.** Testing is done twice per year in early May and early December. The testing lasts about a half hour. The tests consist of both siren alerts and audible notifications. The tests are conducted in conjunction with the Charles County 911 Communications Center, which controls and operates the system for the Town.

The devices are installed at the following locations:

- On Charles Street in front of the Charles County Courthouse
- On Curley Hall Road at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (near Quailwood Subdivision)
- In Clarks Run Subdivision
- In King's Grant Subdivision

- On Shining Willow Way next to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department

Emergency Management Officials remind you that in the event of a real emergency to stay tuned to local radio stations for more information, to have emergency supplies on hand - including a radio which can be operated during a power outage, and to know where the safe haven is in your home. It is everyone's responsibility to plan for an emergency.

TORNADO SIREN MESSAGE

Twice a year, the Town of La Plata and the Charles County Emergency Operations Center test the tornado sirens located throughout Town. When there is a threat of a tornado the Charles County Emergency Operations Center sounds the Town's tornado siren. The siren is followed by a pre-recorded message to advise people in

the community what to do in the event of a tornado warning. The pre-recorded message states "Attention! A tornado warning has been issued. Seek shelter now. Do not delay. Seek shelter now. Attention! A tornado warning has been issued. Seek shelter now. Do not delay. Seek shelter now." This message is used during all threats of a tornado.

When you hear the siren going off, please do not delay in seeking shelter. Get indoors, get to an interior small room or basement, and get low. It can be loud during a storm. You do not need to wait by a window or door to listen to the pre-recorded message. For some tornado tips, please visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's site at <http://www.sp.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/safety.html>

MAKING LA PLATA MORE EFFICIENT

With resources strained by challenges in the economy, it is vital that the Town explore ways to make its operations more efficient to save money, time, and add value to the services provided. Town staff is charged with finding new ways to improve services, and the Town regularly invests in technology or implements process changes to drive efficiencies.

Mobile Data Terminals

Most of La Plata's employees work outside of the office environment. They are providing services on the streets and in the neighborhoods of the community. As with many jobs, access to information is essential to performing the work in the most productive manner. La Plata's Police Officers spend most of their time on patrol and responding to requests for service. While their work focuses on

person to person contact, there are many office related functions that officers must also perform.

Instead of returning to the station each time information needs to be looked up, or a report is written, officers utilize the computer in their vehicle called a Mobile Data Terminal, or MDT. All of La Plata's Police vehicles are outfitted with MDT's. Instead of officers having to call for property or vehicle information over the radio or back at the station, they may simply look up the information through the databases in their computer. Information is accessed in real time through cellular connections that ensure access the most up to date records.

By putting the latest technology into police vehicles, La Plata assures that officer time in the community is maximized.

Travel time to and from the station is reduced. Radio transmissions are reduced, keeping communications channels open for emergencies. Information added to databases also gets in the hands of other law enforcement quicker as well.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

water management are funded by user fees. These costs, which appear in your quarterly utility bills, reflect the cost of providing the respective services. We do our best to hold these costs to a minimum but equipment and infrastructure must be repaired and replaced on an ongoing basis and federal and state mandates continue to place more stringent demands on municipalities such as the recent storm water mandated standards that has prompted the Town to establish a storm water fee on each utility bill.

Just like your family budget, there are always more projects that you would like to accomplish than limited resources will normally permit. However, we will continue to look for ways to implement specific projects that will improve our Town. Your input through direct contact with the Town or by attending any one of our regularly scheduled meetings goes a long way in helping set priorities.

On May 7th the Town of La Plata will hold an election for mayor and each of the four council representatives. The elections are held every four years and each registered voter in the Town of La Plata should make an effort to exercise their right to vote; a privilege of living in a free democracy. Even if some candidates are running unopposed, a vote should be cast to demonstrate support for those individuals willing to serve in an elected capacity. Mark your calendars now and make sure your vote is included in the final tally.

On April 27th we will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Town of La Plata. This historic event will be held in conjunction with the annual Celebrate La Plata Day. The celebration will include many events and something unique to La Plata: bed races. Assemble your bed racing team and register with the Town. All pertinent information is available on our web site. Plan to attend this celebration and as many of the regularly scheduled Town events as possible.

As your Mayor, I will always be receptive to your comments, either favorable or critical. You may reach me at Town Hall (301) 934-8421 or at home (301) 934-4850.



New Employee—Patrick Dennison

Patrick Dennison joined the Public Works Department in late January as a Public Works Technician I. Patrick was born and raised in Charles County and graduated from La Plata High School. In his spare time he volunteers with the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department and enjoys fishing and skeet shooting.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Memorial Day

Monday, May 27, 2013

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.

TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

Council:

Wayne Winkler Ward 1
C. Keith Back Ward 2
Hammad S. Matin Ward 3
Joseph W. Norris Ward 4

Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Planning and Community

Development: David M. Jenkins

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

Senior Planner: Theresa C. Dent

Manager of Inspections: James Q. Yates

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

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

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Household hazardous waste collection will resume in April on the first Satur-



CHARLES COUNTY
HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION

day of each month, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Department of Public Works building, located at 10430 Audie Lane, off of Radio Station Road in La Plata. Household hazardous waste collection is a contracted service and items cannot be accepted when the contractor is not on site.

Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription drugs, and other poisons that are around your house. Please keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring them to the

collection site in cardboard boxes to ease unloading.

For more information, call the Charles County Department of Public Facilities, Environmental Resources Division at (301) 932-3599.

Yard Waste Pick Up

Residential yard waste pickups will only take place on Monday and Fridays. Containers of yard waste ONLY – leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches may be put out on Mondays and Fridays. The containers must be marked “Yard Waste”. Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed – if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Monday, May 27, 2013

Yard Waste Pick Up

Monday, May 27, 2013

Trash will be picked up on:

Tuesday, May 28, 2013

No Pick Up

On April 20, 2013 La Plata High School will be hosting the Warrior 5K to benefit the Peter Mahon Scholarship and the March of Dimes. For more information please contact Kellye Nicholl at (301) 934-1100.

NEW RECYCLING CONTAINERS:



The Town Council is developing its budget for FY 2013/14. Part of the budget consideration will be funds for more large recycling containers. You must contact the Town if you are interested in a larger recycling container. All of the

95 gallon recycling containers purchased in FY 2012/13 have been distributed. To ensure adequate funding for the next order of containers in July, please contact the Town to be put on the recycling container waiting list. If you are interested in receiving one of the containers or have additional questions please contact Mary Trollinger at the Public Works Department (301) 934-8421 or email mtrollinger@townoflaplata.org. To ensure you will receive a container after the next order and there are enough to meet demand please be sure to have your name added to the list. Due to a limited budget, large recycling containers are only being ordered to meet demand, not for

every recycling customer. Thank you for your interest and the Town hopes to provide even more convenient service while improving efficiency.

Just a reminder!



On windy days please make sure your recycling is secure by placing heavier items on top of lighter ones.

APRIL 2013

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1
Yard Waste Pick Up
Special Pick Up (call
Town Hall by 4:00pm
Fri., March 29)
Ice Cream with the
Easter Bunny

2
Planning Commission
Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

3
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Design Review Board
Meeting: 9:00 a.m.
Crime Watch Council
Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

4
5
Yard Waste Pick Up

6
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

7
8
Yard Waste Pick Up

9
Mayor and Council
work session: 7:00 p.m.

10
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Parks and Recreation
Commission meetings:
5:00 p.m.

11
12
Yard Waste Pick Up

13
Matula Elementary Silent
Auction
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

14
15
Yard Waste Pick Up
Beautification
Commission
Meeting: 4:00 p.m.

16
Mayor and Council
work session: 7:00 p.m.

17
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Design Review
Board Meeting: 9:00 a.m.

18
19
Yard Waste Pick Up

20
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Tighman Lake Park
opening: 10:00 a.m.

21
22
Yard Waste Pick Up

23
Mayor and Council
Regular Meeting:
7:00 p.m.

24
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

25
26
Yard Waste Pick Up

27
Farmers Market
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Civista Run/Walk:
8:30 a.m.
Celebrate La Plata:
noon to 4:00 p.m.

28
29
Yard Waste Pick Up

30

Celebrate LA PLATA!

**Saturday, April 27th
12 PM to 4 PM
On the grounds of
La Plata Town Hall**



Enjoy activities for children of all ages; face painting, art activities, displays, craft vendors, entertainment, refreshments for sale from local favorites, and Bed Races!



On your mark, get set, go!

There's still time to register for the Bed Races. Gather three of your friends, family or co-workers and sign up today. Registration deadline is April 17! For more information or to register for the Bed Races, contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or cwilson@townoflaplata.org. Participation form is available on the Town's website www.townoflaplata.org.

Town of La Plata Celebrates 125th Anniversary

The Town of La Plata will celebrate its 125th Anniversary of Incorporation in April and we invite the community to be part of this momentous commemoration. In honor of the anniversary, the Town will bury a time capsule at Celebrate La Plata on Saturday, April 27 to be opened in 25 years. We would like to invite the community to be part of the time capsule project. Town residents are welcome to submit a letter or message to be included in the time capsule. **Write a letter to your child, a good friend, or yourself. Be sure to include enough information so your loved one can know the message is from you in a generation.** Please include your name, contact phone number, and address when submitting the letter.

The letter or message must be no larger than a standard sheet of paper (8.5"x11"). All letters must be received at Town Hall by Friday, April 19th in order to be included in the time capsule. Town Hall is open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday and there will be a box in the lobby for time capsule letters. You may email letters to cwilson@townoflaplata.org. Letters will also be accepted by mail: Town of La Plata, Attn: Time Capsule Project, PO Box 2268, La Plata, MD 20646. The Town of La Plata reserves the right to omit any letters deemed inappropriate.



BED RACES AT CELEBRATE LA PLATA!

The Town of La Plata will come together for a day of family fun at the annual Spring Festival, Celebrate La Plata on Saturday, April 27th. Enjoy a day of activities for children of all ages at Celebrate La Plata; face painting, displays, entertainment, refreshments for sale from local favorites and ever entertaining Bed Races!

On your mark, get set, go! Gather three of your friends, family or co-workers and sign up to participate in the Bed Races. Your team will race on La Grange Ave as the crowd cheers you on. We have made it even easier this year for you to join in the fun – no registration fee and the Town will provide all beds for the race. Teams may bring a decorated bed to display at the event. Each team must have four participants that are 16 years or older. Don't miss out on the chance to come dressed in team t-shirts or costumes to promote your business or organization. The annual bed race is a great way to do some marketing while having a lot of fun. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams and best team attire. See you at the starting line!

Join in the fun this year!

Fill out the interest form below to receive more information.

Your Name: _____

Teammate 1: _____

Teammate 2: _____

Teammate 3: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact number: _____

- We are interested in racing and making a display bed. We just want to race!

Please return the form to:

Town of La Plata
Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator
PO Box 2268
La Plata, MD 20646

Or email the information to cwilson@townoflaplata.org.



Photos from 2012 Bed Races.

NEW EMPLOYEE—MELINDA ADAMS



Melinda Adams recently joined the Town of La Plata staff as the Stormwater Utility Manager in January 2013 for the newly created Stormwater Utility. After diligently working through college as a single mother, she graduated with Honors from Christopher Newport University with a BS in

Environmental Science. She comes to the Town of La Plata with a variety of environmental and stormwater management experience having worked as a Water Resources Specialist for Virginia Department of Transportation, as the Permit Manager and Environmental Coordinator for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project, and as an Environmental Scientist for the Division of Stormwater Management in the City of Newport News, VA.

A native of Newport News, Melinda moved to Charles County six years ago with her son and new husband, where she quietly resides with her family of cats and dogs. In her spare time, she can be found gardening, cooking, exercising, and meditating, as well as crafting functional art pieces through knitting, beading, pottery, etc.

The La Plata Kiwanis Club was recognized as a “Distinguished Club” by Kiwanis International for the 2011-2012 year at the Potomac Region Mid-Winter Conference held March 2, 2013 at Leisure World in Montgomery County.

The La Plata club was formed after the April 28, 2002 tornado in La Plata. New members are encouraged to join. For more information email laplatakiwanis@gmail.com or call Gale Crooks at (301) 751-3341 for more information.

WEBSITE POLL



Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> to participate in an online poll. Click on the 'Snap Poll' link on the left side of the web page to go to the poll and see the results to date. The current question is:

Where will younger children in your family spend the days of summer?

At home with a parent

With a relative

In day care

Summer camps

At home alone

Vacation

Summer school

February Website Poll Results

Below are the website 'Snap Poll' results from the last issue. The question and results are:

Where do you walk most often?

In my neighborhood on the sidewalk - 12%

In my neighborhood on the street - 25%

In downtown La Plata - 10%

In a park - 5%

On a nearby trail - 2%

Don't walk - 45%

Walking is one of the most convenient forms of exercise that people can engage in. Whether out by yourself, with family, friends, or your favorite pet; walking is a great way to enjoy your community. La Plata has been built over many decades, and while there is a requirement for new construction today to be built with sidewalks, many areas do not have separate areas designed for pedestrians. A look at the Quailwood neighborhood demonstrates the changing policies where Quailwood Parkway has no sidewalks, Quail has sidewalks on just one side of the street, and Oriole has sidewalks on both sides of the street. Municipal development regulations changed in the years that neighborhood was constructed.

As a community La Plata has had a goal of making its downtown more walkable as well. With business entrances close to the street, trees, lighting, and many marked crosswalks, La Plata's downtown has become increasingly inviting for walkers. Walkability improved with a federal stimulus grant the Town received a few years ago, which allowed the Town to make over 140 curb cuts ADA accessible. This improved access not only for individuals with disabilities, but skaters, bikers, and walkers as well.

Challenges also exist for the ease of walking in La Plata. There are many disconnects in the Town's pedestrian transportation system,

where neighborhoods are not readily connected to one another or to downtown and shopping. Major roads like Crain Highway and Charles Street can be challenging to cross with high volume of traffic. The railroad tracks bisect the community, and leave few convenient opportunities to cross. This is all further complicated by insufficient funding for the pedestrian network. Like roads, sidewalks can be maintained with Highway User Revenues shared with local government from the statewide gasoline tax. Since the State took much of that revenue away from local government, resources for maintenance and new construction have diminished.

La Plata continues to pursue grant opportunities for new pedestrian connections and improved pedestrian safety, yet these grants have a lot of competition among local government. In La Plata's most recent Citizen Survey pedestrian safety was ranked as the Town's most important major initiative. As an important local value, it is important along with many of the other services of local government. Residents should take advantage of the existing pedestrian ways throughout Town. It is good for health, fellowship, and community.

SAFETY SEAT CHECKS

The La Plata Police Department in cooperation with Maryland Kids in Safety Seats (KISS) sponsored a Child Passenger Safety Certification Training Program March 19 – 22, 2013. Police Officers received training on a number of skills to ensure the proper use and installation of a car safety seat.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) created a standard-

ized course to teach a variety of professionals how to help parents do a better job of protecting their children by:

- Developing technical skills regarding child passenger protection
- Identifying misuse and correcting it
- Becoming a community resource
- Educating others in child passenger

safety issues

- Reducing potential liability

This course involved hands on experience, critiquing and installing car seats. Officers upon completion of the course must pass required testing. They will then become entry-level technicians certified for 2 years by National SAFE KIDS.

POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR



In late January Corporal Michael Payne was selected as the Knights of Columbus-Archbishop Neale Council's Police Officer of the year. Cpl. Payne's selection was based on his untiring commitment to enhance and preserve the quality of life and protection of property within the community. He was then submitted to the Maryland State Council, Knights of Columbus, of the nomi-

nations received throughout the State, Cpl. Payne has been selected as the Maryland State Council, Knights of Columbus Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Cpl. Payne was recognized at the Founders Day Mass & Awards dinner in Baltimore on March 24, 2013.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Yard Sale

The first of three **Community Yard Sales** scheduled for this year will take place on Saturday May 4th from 8AM to 12PM on the grounds of Town Hall. To reserve your table to be a vendor,

download the registration form at our website. Go to www.TownofLaPlata.org, click on **Events**, then click on **Community Yard Sales**. You can also pick up a form at La Plata Town Hall, or contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 x 142 or CWilson@TownofLaPlata.org.

2013 Special Events Calendar



The Town of La Plata 2013 Special Events Schedule is now available. You can pick up copies of the new Special Events brochure at Town Hall or from merchants around town. A pdf version is available for downloading from our website. Go to www.TownofLaPlata.org and click on Events.



Summer Concerts

Join us for the Friday night Summer Concert Series. The weekly concerts take place from 7pm to 9 pm on the lawn at La Plata Town Hall at 305 Queen Anne Street. Concert goers are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. Coolers are allowed, but

no alcohol, please. Concessions are available from the Town's food trailer located in the back of the parking lot; an ice cream truck is stationed there for your enjoyment. A play area for children, the Kids' Zone, allows parents to enjoy the concert while keeping an eye on the little ones.

Check out the schedule for May and June! For a complete concert schedule please visit the Events page on the Town's website.

Friday May 24th: 7PM to 9PM

25th Hour Band
Motown, Jazz, Classic & Contemporary Rock

Friday May 31st: 7PM to 9PM

Family Night - Performances from local groups
Port Tobacco Encore Kids, La Plata High School Show Troupe, and Island Music

Friday June 7th: 7PM to 9PM

John Luskey Band
Pop, Country, & Rock

Friday June 14th: 7PM to 9PM

United States Air Force Band Max Impact
Classic/Contemporary Rock & Country

Friday June 21st: 7PM to 9PM

Four of a Kind
Oldies, Classic Rock, Country, Funk, & the Blues

Friday June 28th: 7PM to 9PM

US Navy Band Country Current
Country & Bluegrass

Summer Fun at Town Hall

The Town of La Plata will host three kids summer shows at Town Hall. The shows are geared towards preschool and elementary age children and are approximately 45 minutes long. The shows are free and open to the public. Shows will be held outdoors on the West lawn where the Friday night concerts take place. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. No concessions will be available, but you are welcome to bring drinks and snacks along.



Tuesday June 18th at 10 am -
The Funny Magic Dude,
Brian Garner

Tuesday July 9th at 10 am -

Mad Science of Washington, Spectacular Science



Tuesday August 6th at 10 am -
Class Acts Art, DinoRock

For more information about the shows please visit the Events page at www.TownofLaPlata.org.

CONSERVATION MINI-GRANTS

Help make La Plata a better place for you and the environment. In order to help turn some of your ideas on helping our environment into reality, the Town offers Conservation Mini-Grants. Several grants of up to \$500 for projects that positively benefits La Plata environmentally are available for the May 17, 2013 application deadline.

Find a way to inspire action, educate the community, or directly benefit our environment. This is a great outlet for Home Owner Associations, school projects, scout groups, civic organizations, individuals, businesses, and other community members to do something that benefits you, the Town, and the environment. Grant applications

are available for download from the Town's website, or you may get them directly from Town Manager Daniel Mears at (301) 934-8421 or dmears@townoflaplata.org. Successful projects will receive up to \$500 to help implement the idea. Thank you for your interest in helping our community and the Town can help you make that happen.

LA PLATA'S TAX RATE

Whether it is the five years economic downturn or more recently the sequester by the Federal government, there have been significant challenges in the economy. This has put stress on the budgets of individuals, families, and businesses. Government has not been immune, and cuts at the Federal, State, County, and local levels of government impact the delivery of public goods. La Plata was first and most significantly impacted by the State cuts to shared revenue for road maintenance and Police aid.

Through all of this, the Town of La Plata has maintained its real estate tax rate at \$0.32 per \$100 of assessed valuation. This means that for each \$100,000 in value, the Town of La Plata's annual revenue is \$320. This has been the same rate since 2001, when the rate was lowered from \$0.75 per \$100 of assessed valuation. In that year the State of Maryland changed

its assessment to the full value of a property, prompting La Plata to lower its tax rate so the burden on property owners would not increase.

The real estate tax rate for the FY-2013/14 budget will remain at \$0.32 per \$100 of assessed valuation, despite the decrease in La Plata's assessed value over the past couple years. The Town Council advised Town staff to prepare the upcoming budget without any change to the real estate tax rate. This is challenging, as inflationary pressure drives up the cost of insurance, fuel, energy, and other necessary costs. Opportunities to find efficiencies also decline, which adds to the strain of supporting basic local services.

Out of the 157 cities and towns in Maryland, La Plata has the 48th lowest tax rate. While La Plata is in the lowest third of tax rates in the State many smaller municipalities do not offer the same level

of services as La Plata. For example, there are just 74 municipalities that provide any level of their own law enforcement. Out of those municipalities, La Plata has the 11th lowest real estate tax rate.

La Plata has long held a conservative fiscal management philosophy, which has served the community well for many years. The largest challenges placed on providing La Plata's basic municipal services is externalities. Whether it is a reduction in shared revenue from the State, new environmental mandates that local government is made responsible for, or the general economic pressures of society. While La Plata has had to raise rates on its utility services, the basic real estate tax rate has been able to remain constant. External forces may change that in future years, however for next year, La Plata's real estate tax rate will be the same low \$0.32.

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

Commercial Building Permits issued 1/1/13-2/28/13

Spring Dell Center Storage and Work Shop – 6040 Radio Station Road

Medical Supply – 504 Charles Street

Charlie Nails & Spa – 9375 Chesapeake Street Suite 115

Food Lion (Remodeling) – 100 Drury Drive

Commercial Certificate of Occupancy Permits issued 1/1/13-2/28/13

Phoenix Internet Radio – 606 Charles Street

Salon – 305A Centennial Street

Springs of Living Water Church – 101 Catalpa Drive Suite 100

Child Care Center – 700 Charles Street

Discovery Academy Tutoring Center – 602 E Charles Street Ste#101

Ollie's Salon – 6770 Crain Highway

Child Care Center – 112 Charles Street Unit B

Code Corner -

Vacant Property

The foreclosure process can take months, and in some cases more than a year to complete. If the property owner chooses to "walk away" the property sits abandoned, subjected to the elements and whims of trespassers and vandals. In other cases, a property owner moves and is unable to sell their empty home for a long period. A prevalence of these types of conditions has the potential to lower the livability of neighborhoods, reduce property values and marketability, and can increase crime and calls for emergency services.

Municipalities need help to identify vacant properties in order to enforce their good maintenance so that neighborhoods do not become blighted. Blight increases the cost of rehabilitation and re-integration into the market. Property maintenance demonstrates that properties are being attended to, which serves to deter vandals and other criminal activity. In an effort to assure that neighborhoods are not set on the path to blight, the Town maintains an inventory of foreclosed properties.

Your help is needed to ensure all vacant properties are identified. Please notify the Town if you are aware of a property that is now vacant on your street or within your neighborhood and please report any suspicious activity in vacant properties. There is no single reliable list of foreclosed or vacant properties. Resident reports are essential to finding them all. To report a vacant property, please email Planning Technician, Nina Ruhter at nruhter@townoflaplata.org or call (301) 934-8421. If you prefer to make an anonymous report, you may mail or drop a letter off at the Town Hall at 305 Queen Anne Street, La Plata, MD 20646.

Some property owners avoid foreclosure by renting their property. It is important to know that all rental property owners must obtain a rental license from the Town. This license is important to the tenant and the owner. The Manager of Inspections inspects all rental properties to ensure that the property meets the minimum livability codes so that the tenant has a safe place to live and that the owner's property is being maintained. Rental Licenses may be obtained at the Town Hall. As with vacant property, if you are aware of a residence that has turned into a rental property, please notify the Town so it can be added to the rental inspection list.

TOWN OF LA PLATA

305 Queen Anne Street
P. O. Box 2268
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Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata.

Grand Opening **Tilghman Lake**



La Plata's Largest Park!
61 Acres of nature to explore

Sunday, April 21st from 10 AM—2 PM
Located at 10598 Box Elder Road off of Radio Station Rd

FREE Fun filled day of events!



Fishing derby from 10 AM to 1:30 PM (ages 15 & under)

Scavenger Hunt

Geocaching

(Bring your Handheld GPS or smartphone)

Demonstrations by local boy scout troops

One mile trail to walk or bike

Refreshments Provided

(Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult)



For more information, contact Colleen Wilson at 301-934-8421 ext 142,
CWilson@TownofLaPlata.org or visit www.TownofLaPlata.org.