

# TODAY Tourism

## CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

This fall brought a chance to reflect on both the Tourism Council's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the first season in the new Frederick Visitor Center. Much has changed since the Tourism Council of Frederick County was incorporated in October 1976, spinning off of a tourism committee at the Chamber of Commerce of Frederick County during our national bicentennial year.

The same month that brought the last major flood of Carroll Creek saw the establishment of this organization dedicated to marketing Frederick County as a visitor destination. The flood instigated the development of Carroll Creek Park (and flood control project) in downtown Frederick, the donation of the former Tivoli Theater to the City which now houses the Weinberg Center for the Arts, the establishment of the Frederick Arts Council and more.

The first season in the new Frederick Visitor Center is winding down with consistent double-digit percentage increases every month since the facility opened in April, with a year-over-year peak increase of 45 percent during June. November brought some very pleasant news as the new center was repeatedly recognized with tourism industry and historic preservation awards (see page 6).



Above: New Frederick Visitor Center at 151 S. East Street



Left: 19 E. Church Street housed the Visitor Center from 1976 to 2011.

## DIVINE DESTINATIONS FOR 25 YEARS

### CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Twenty-five years ago, Peter Plamondon, Sr., founder of the Plamondon Companies, had an idea that has grown into a longstanding, treasured event for Frederick County residents and out-of-town guests. His desire to open the doors of Downtown Frederick's houses of worship so others could see the beautiful interiors and different faith practices sparked the Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship that now, 25 years later, attracts 1600 visitors each year.

"I thought it was an excellent idea to let others know how people practice their faiths, particularly at Christmas time," Plamondon says, recalling how much he enjoyed, as a youngster in Illinois, visiting different Roman Catholic churches during Holy Week. He and his family have attended almost every Historic Houses of Worship tour in the past 25 years. Pleasantly surprised that the event continues to thrive and grow, Plamondon has received numerous thank-yous over the years—not only from tour participants but also from Downtown Frederick restaurant owners who are delighted with increased business as a result of the event.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**G**rowing up in Vermont, a state where tourism is the main industry, I have always been aware of the impact visitors have, not only on local and state economies but also on the lives of the state's citizens.

Many of my friends' first jobs were at ski areas and nearby restaurants and hotels. Not only were the "locals" earning a living, they were also being introduced to the outside world through the visitors who passed through the town. Long before the internet could take us to places we wanted to go, we were seeing fashion styles, hearing languages, and experiencing customs that were much different than our small town offered. This exposure led to a curiosity that motivated our parents to start taking us outside the confines of our small state and become tourists ourselves.

In many ways, Frederick County reminds me of where I came from and is one of the reasons that I find the region so remarkable. As the Executive Theater Manager of the Weinberg, I love being part of an industry that brings outsiders to the region to explore all the many attributes the County of Frederick has to offer. I know that I when I offer an event at the Weinberg, people may be travelling from regions five to six hours away to attend. They choose the Weinberg Center not only because of the great hall that it is but also because they know they can spend a whole weekend in the area visiting historical sites, antiquing, shopping, or sampling local food, wines, and beers, while finding a clean, comfortable, and affordable place to lay their heads at night.

With the wonderful new Visitor Center, which is a great starting point for visitors and residents alike, both the County and City of Frederick have cemented their status as a destination locale visitors from all around the world should start to add to their itineraries. As the newly elected president of the Tourism Council's Board of Directors, I look forward to supporting John Fieseler and his staff as they continue to introduce people to all the charms that Frederick has to offer.

— *John Healey*



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RANDY McCLEMENT  
Mayor - City of Frederick

MAYOR CARROLL JONES  
Council of Governments

### - NON-VOTING LIAISON -

KARA NORMAN  
Downtown Frederick Partnership

The Tourism Council is a non-profit organization. Membership is open to all parties interested in undertaking a joint effort to promote the growth of travel to Frederick County, MD.

TOURISM COUNCIL  
OF FREDERICK COUNTY, INC.  
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Peter Plamondon, Sr.



**SESQUICENTENNIAL UPDATE**

Sesquicentennial planning in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage area is focused on finalizing plans for commemorations of the 1862 Maryland Campaign, including the 150th anniversaries of the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. The recent ABA designation (see below) energizes local efforts by giving a boost to our locale’s visibility among professional tour planners.

Commemorations in September 2012 will explore the impact of General Robert E. Lee's first advance of the Confederate army into the north, crossing the Potomac into Maryland. Tours, living history interpretations, lectures, concerts and other events are planned throughout Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties. The website, [www.marylandcampaign150.org](http://www.marylandcampaign150.org), is updated regularly with events and attractions for the 2012 commemoration and will include pre- and post-Sesquicentennial events related to the Maryland Campaign.

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**DIVINE DESTINATIONS FOR 25 YEARS**

As the sun begins to set in Downtown Frederick on Monday, December 26, Plamondon and other visitors will tour many of Frederick’s famous clustered spires and other historic houses of worship by candlelight from 4 til 9 p.m. Special programs, live music performances, and nativity scenes will celebrate Frederick’s tradition of religious diversity, local history, and the holiday season. Volunteers will greet visitors and answer questions about the history of each site, and luminaries will guide visitors from one house of worship to the next.

The Tourism Council of Frederick County coordinates the tour with the support of participating worship sites, together with sponsorship from the Plamondon Companies, Everedy Square & Shab Row, Frederick County Bank, and *The Gazette*. Admission is free, and no tickets are required. Event brochures for participants will be distributed at the tour information center at 19 E. Church Street (the old Visitor Center) on the evening of December 26, and the brochure is also available online at [www.fredericktourism.org](http://www.fredericktourism.org).

**HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS  
MUSEUMS BY CANDLELIGHT**

Frederick County’s museums and historic sites presented the free Museums by Candlelight open house on Saturday, December 10. Twenty-two historic places invited visitors of all ages to discover wintertime tours, exhibits, demonstrations, and hands-on activities. New to the event this year were the Thurmont Historical Society in downtown Thurmont and the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Museum in Emmitsburg. Support from Plamondon Hospitality Partners makes this annual gift to the community possible.



**ONE OF TOP 100 EVENTS**

The American Bus Association (ABA) named the Civil War 150<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Maryland Campaign, to be held on September 8–22, 2012, as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2012. Inclusion in the Top 100 list indicates that the 150th Commemoration of the Maryland Campaign offers excellent value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world, according to ABA.



## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On October 26, the Tourism Council celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a membership dinner at Morningside Inn. In addition to staff and volunteer recognition, those in attendance reflected on the history of the Tourism Council, which grew out of a Chamber of Commerce committee in 1976.

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the Ambassador of the Year award to George E. Lewis, Jr. Dr. Lewis has been an ongoing champion for the restoration of the Catoctin Aqueduct along the C&O Canal.

“Without George’s vision, the Catoctin Aqueduct would still be in ruins,” says Tourism’s Executive Director John Fieseler. “He pursued his vision, establishing the Catoctin Aqueduct Restoration Fund to secure private funding, and made this project a reality.” A partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), the Catoctin Aqueduct Restoration Fund, Inc., and the Community Foundation of Frederick County, Inc., the restoration project received \$2.7 million of federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and created more than 40 jobs. The restoration is projected to attract approximately 520,000 additional visitors a year, providing more than \$350,000 in economic benefit to the area.

The Tourism Ambassador of the Year award can be presented to anyone in the community, whether in the tourism industry or not, who helps to improve the experience of visitors to Frederick County, thus helping the Tourism Council to achieve its mission.

Top: Dean Fitzgerald and Tom Lynch

Middle: Robyn Hildebrand and Colleen Remsberg

Bottom: **Tourism’s Ambassador of the Year: George E. Lewis, Jr.**  
Tourism Council Executive Director John Fieseler, George Lewis, outgoing Tourism Board President George Wunderlich



## MEMBERS, CHECK YOUR LISTINGS

If you’re a Tourism Council member, please check your listing on [www.fredericktourism.org](http://www.fredericktourism.org) and update as needed. The information that appears on the Tourism Council’s website as of December 31 (edited to a 35-word description) is what will appear in the 2012 *Destination Frederick* visitor guide. If you are not sure how to update your listing, contact Patsy Ensminger, 301-600-4043, [pensminger@fredco-md.net](mailto:pensminger@fredco-md.net).



George Wunderlich and John Healey

## THE PASSING OF THE GAVEL

At the annual meeting, George Wunderlich, executive director of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, passed the gavel to John Healey, executive theater manager for the Weinberg Center for the Arts, who will serve as Tourism Council’s new board president. Wunderlich’s term as board president began in October 2009.



## FOOD AND TRAVEL WRITERS TOUR FREDERICK COUNTY

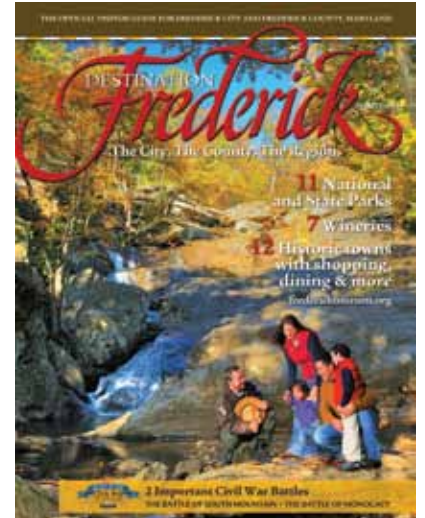
In late October, the Tourism Council hosted a group of food and travel writers for a weekend that showcased Frederick County's hospitality. The itinerary, "Culinary Delights and Historic Sites," featured numerous stops at local restaurants and area highlights.

Articles resulting from the press tour have already appeared in *The Washington Post* and on the popular dining website, DiningInDC.net. "All of the writers were impressed with the area and discovered something new," says Michelle Kershner, Tourism's Marketing and Communication Manager. "Many of them write for more than one publication and said they are looking forward to returning to Frederick—both for business and pleasure."

## A BUSY, BUS-FILLED FALL

This fall, Tourism Council staff greeted 12 motorcoach groups and approximately 300 visitors with welcome receptions at our Visitor Center. The visiting groups came from Indiana, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maryland. In addition, several local school groups have visited to explore their local history through our film and exhibits.

- The Holiday Inn and Conference Center at FSK Mall hosted the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) Annual Meeting in September.
- CRUSA (Capital Region USA) brought six tour operators from New York and Virginia to Frederick in September for a Familiarization Tour. Participants visited historic sites and attractions and dined at local restaurants.
- Tourism Council's Becky Bickerton attended a GLAMER (Group Leaders of America) trade show at the Newseum in Washington, DC, and also participated in a state-sponsored sales trip to Western Pennsylvania.
- In November, we hosted a Familiarization Tour for Lakefront Lines from Ohio.



## COMING SOON... DESTINATION FREDERICK: RESERVE YOUR SPACE

Don't miss the opportunity to be part of Maryland's award-winning visitor guide!

Designed by Jean Peterson Design, *Destination Frederick* has been named the Best Visitors Guide in Maryland during the Maryland Tourism Council's Tourism and Travel Summit for five of the six years the award has been given. *Destination Frederick* showcases the best our county has to offer—and, since March of this year, more than 140,000 copies have been distributed to those seeking information on Frederick County.

Ad reservations are due by December 31, 2011. For details, contact Jean Peterson Design at 301-631-2401, [visitor@jeanpetersondesign.com](mailto:visitor@jeanpetersondesign.com).



### NEW TO THE TOURISM TEAM

Jack Spinnler joined the Tourism Council as a Visitor Center Host this fall. Jack has served as a tour guide with the Historical Society of Frederick County for 26 years and recently retired from the National Park Service after 32 years as a park ranger and park planner. Welcome, Jack!

### INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING AT THE FREDERICK VISITOR CENTER?

We have an occasional need for extra helpers to welcome and direct visitors to locations in Frederick City and County. If you would like to be on our “call-as-needed” volunteer list, please contact Patsy Ensminger, 301-600-4043, [penminger@fredco-md.net](mailto:penminger@fredco-md.net).



Now you can recharge your batteries in more than one way when you visit Linganore Winecellars, thanks to the installation of a 5kw solar system project that supports two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. USDA Rural Development Grants provided through the Rural Energy for America program helped to fund this project.



### FREDERICK VISITOR CENTER WINS THREE AWARDS

Just seven months after opening the doors of the new Visitor Center at 151 S. East Street, Tourism Council staff members were pleased to receive three prestigious awards for the project in November: the Visit Maryland Award and the Judges’ Award, presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Maryland Tourism and Travel Summit in Hyattsville, and the Phoenix Award from Preservation Maryland, presented at the organization’s annual meeting in Baltimore.

#### VISIT MARYLAND AWARD

This 2011 Maryland Office of Tourism Development Award in the Visit Maryland category is presented each year to a project that exemplifies outstanding investment and performance in improving and promoting Maryland’s image as a travel destination. Additionally, the award recognized the Frederick Visitor Center’s use of new and innovative interactive media.

#### JUDGES’ AWARD

This 2011 Maryland Tourism Council Tourism Industry Award is presented when judges receive an entry in the Professional and Marketing award categories that merits special recognition.

#### PHOENIX AWARD

This award from Preservation Maryland—an organization dedicated to preserving Maryland’s historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes, and archeological sites—is in recognition of the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center, an adaptive use of a 110-year-old warehouse.



Left to right: Event emcee Matt Neitzey, Prince George’s County CVB; Michelle Kershner, Marketing & Communication Manager, Tourism Council of Frederick County (TCFC); Liz Shatto, Visitor Center Exhibits Committee Chair (TCFC); Becky Bickerton, Sales Manager (TCFC); John Fieseler, Executive Director (TCFC); Sandy Turner, Maryland Tourism Council Chair, Cecil County Office of Tourism; Margot Amelia, Executive Director, Maryland Office of Tourism



## UNIQUE GIFTS AT THE VISITOR CENTER

Looking to add some local Frederick flavor to your holiday shopping this year? Here is a sampling of Frederick gifts you can find at the Visitor Center:

- annual Frederick Christmas ornament, along with select vintage Frederick Christmas ornaments
- reusable Historic Frederick canvas tote bag
- Frederick, Maryland T-shirts...perfect for friends and family who have moved away, so they can wear a “shout out” to their hometown
- for art lovers...Frederick’s *Legacy*, *the Art of Helen L. Smith* or *Yemi’s Pillars of Frederick*
- selection of books for the Civil War and local history buff or the cook in your family
- 24-piece puzzle of Maryland for ages 5 and up
- stocking stuffers, including playing cards, key chains, and lapel pins

Of course, don’t forget the Downtown Frederick Gift Card, which can be used at more than 150 participating stores and restaurants. Gift cards can be purchased at the Visitor Center in any amount from \$10 to \$500 with cash, corporate check, VISA, or MasterCard.

Holiday hours at the Visitor Center: Open daily, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; closing at noon on December 24 and at 3 p.m. on December 31; closed on Christmas and New Year’s Day.

## BYWAY BITS

**T**ourism Council’s Chris Haugh represented the Maryland portion of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway (US15) at the 2011 National Scenic Byways Conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota this summer.

Participants explored emerging and timely byway topics, including finances, visitor experience, corridor management, and byway organization. Workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities focused on byway development, sustainability, and livability—all part of responsible planning practices for America’s Byways. While at the conference, Chris also took part in delivering a presentation entitled *Take the Journey! Developing Broad Partnerships around a Common Vision*.

Production work has commenced on *Heart of the Civil War*, a television documentary scheduled to premiere on Maryland Public Television in early September 2012.

This one-hour historical documentary will give viewers a greater appreciation of the role of Maryland’s Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (Frederick, Carroll and Washington counties) during the legendary conflict. The program will conclude with a travelogue itinerary of local Civil War-related tourist resources and experiences tied together with suggested travel routes utilizing various national and state designated scenic byways.

Filming for *Heart of the Civil War* documentary.



## KUDOS

- Debra Mills, park ranger at Catoctin Mountain Park, received the National Capital Region’s Freeman Tilden Award for Interpretive Excellence. Named after Freeman Tilden, whose writings and teaching improved the quality of National Park Service programs and services based on visitor needs, the award is the highest honor presented to an individual National Park Service interpreter.
- Congratulations to Tracy Evans, park ranger at Monocacy National Battlefield, for receiving the National Capital Region Special Event Notable Achievement Award from the National Park Service for her work on Frederick’s 1861 commemorative weekend, *The Burning Question of Secession: The Maryland Legislature Meets in Frederick*.
- Several member businesses recently celebrated anniversary milestones, including McGuire Fine Arts Gallery (15 years) and Carriage House (25 years).
- National Museum of Civil War Medicine Executive Director George Wunderlich was awarded the Order of Military Medical Merit by the United States Army Medical Department (AMEDD) in recognition of his dedication to service, education, and preservation of military medical heritage through the Letterman Institute.
- Susan Trail, 22-year NPS Veteran and former Monocacy National Battlefield Superintendent, was named the new Superintendent of Antietam National Battlefield by the National Park Service.



**TOURISM COUNCIL STAFF**

JOHN FIESELER  
Executive Director

BECKY BICKERTON  
Sales Manager

PATSY ENSMINGER  
Operations Director

CHRIS HAUGH  
Scenic Byway &  
Special Projects Manager

MICHELLE KERSHNER  
Marketing & Communication  
Manager

ELIZABETH SHATTO  
Historic Sites Coordinator

**• VISITOR CENTER STAFF •**

ROBYN HILDEBRAND  
LORI PADDY  
Visitor Services Managers

PEGGY ALLEY  
DAVID PEARSON  
JACK SPINNLER  
Visitor Center Hosts

JANET HOUCK  
Supervisor Emerita

**WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

**AAA Mid-Atlantic**  
8170 Maple Lawn Blvd.  
Suite 100  
Fulton, MD 20759  
443-472-7891  
Contact: Marie York  
[www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)

**AngelCakes**  
319 E. Church Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-898-2666  
Contact: Jon Angel  
[www.angelcakesandcupcakes.com](http://www.angelcakesandcupcakes.com)

**The Banner School**  
1730 N. Market Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-695-9320  
Contact: Lauren Webb  
[www.bannerschool.org](http://www.bannerschool.org)

**Casa Rico Mexican Restaurante**  
1399 W. Patrick Street  
Frederick, MD 21702  
301-663-3914  
[www.casaricos.com](http://www.casaricos.com)  
Contact: Ajay Prakash

**Catoctin Creek Park  
and Nature Center**  
2929 Summantown Road  
Middletown, MD 21769  
301-600-2050  
Contact: Jeremy Kortright  
[www.frederickcountymd.gov/  
index.aspx?nid=4069](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?nid=4069)

**Fort Richie Community Center**  
14421 Lake Royer Drive  
Cascade, MD 21719  
301-241-5085  
Contact: Kirsten Hubbard  
[www.thefrcc.org](http://www.thefrcc.org)

**Frederick Area Bridal Network**  
PO Box 3256  
Frederick, MD 21705  
301-418-8122  
[www.fabnet.info](http://www.fabnet.info)  
Contact: Matthew Shew

**Frederickvacationrentals.com**  
211 W. South Street  
412 W. Patrick Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-252-5304  
[www.frederickvacationrentals.com](http://www.frederickvacationrentals.com)  
Contact: Nancy Eller

**Roads and Rails Museum**  
200 N. East Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-624-5526  
Contact: Matt Burroughs  
[www.roadsandrailsmuseum.com](http://www.roadsandrailsmuseum.com)

**The Sage Way Farm**  
5509 Old National Pike  
Frederick, MD 21701  
240-643-1066  
Contact: Ajay Prakash