

New Directions

The Heritage Area of Anne Arundel County



Chesapeake Crossroads
HERITAGE AREA

ChesapeakeCrossroads.org



WORKSHOPS LEAD THE WAY

What's Inside:

Page 2

.....
New Website

Page 3

.....
New Board Members

Page 4

.....
17th Annual Maryland Day Celebration

CCHA Workshops Focus on Learning, Equity, and Preparation for the Future

This year, the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area has offered four workshops for our stakeholders to learn about key issues and best practices that will prepare us for a stronger future. Each was planned in response to requests arising from discussions in committee meetings.

The first was suggested by waterfront partner sites concerned about planning for sustainability in light of the effects of climate change. On January 31, CCHA hosted a webinar presentation by Anastasia Poulos, entitled "Climate Resiliency in the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area." Ms. Poulos is the Archaeological Sites Planner for the

Cultural Resources Section, Anne Arundel County Department of Planning and Zoning. In this webinar, we heard that Anne Arundel County is experiencing increased flooding as a result of relative sea level rise (SLR). The County has conducted studies of SLR risk, collaborating with federal and state agencies, and is taking actions to increase resilience to coastal flooding, informing stakeholders and planners seeking to update risk assessments and formulate future actions to protect resources and minimize impacts. Ms. Poulos shared a number of resources for climate resiliency which are cited in a supplemental blogpost on the CCHA website. *(cont. on page 2)*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Timothy Leahy
Vice Chair: Linnell Bowen
Treasurer: Christine Dunham
Secretary: Jean Russo, Ph.D.
Eric Elston, Ed. D.
Diane Nowak-Waring, APR
Lily Openshaw
Heather Skipper

COORDINATING COUNCIL

Donna Anderson
Chesapeake Arts Center
Donald Bailey
Small Organizations Group
Karen Theimer Brown
Historic Annapolis
Honorable Gavin Buckley
Mayor, City of Annapolis
Jackie Coleman
Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts
Jane Cox
AACO Office of Planning and Zoning
Lynda Davis
Northern Arundel Cultural Pres. Soc.
Patricia Delgado, Ph.D.
Jug Bay Sanctuary
Heather Ersts
VAAAC
Erik Evans
Downtown Annapolis Partnership
Dianne Feeney
Hancock's Resolution
Lynne Forsman
Annapolis Green
Janice Hayes-Williams
Anne Arundel County
Anson Hines, Ph.D.
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
Jake Iversen
Watermark
Chanel Johnson
Banneker-Douglass Museum
Sarah Knebel
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Linda Paez
Goshen Farm
Will Rowel
Annapolis Mayor's Representative
Emily Oland Squires
Maryland State Archives
Marcie Taylor-Thoma, Ph.D.
Education Committee
Dorothy Whitman
Galesville Heritage Society
Laura Wood
Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Staff
Carol Benson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

(cont. from page 1) The second workshop, entitled “Improving the Visitor’s Experience for Visitor’s with Physical Dissabilities,” assembled speakers who have disabilities themselves to share powerful insights into working to make our heritage attractions more accessible for visitors with physical disabilities. This workshop took place on March 1 in the Bowen Theatre at Maryland Hall, and was requested by members of our Education Committee. The speakers included Ann Deschamps, Director at Mid-Atlantic ADA Center; Beth Ziebarth, Head Diversity Officer at the Smithsonian Institution; Meredith Peruzzi, Director at the National Deaf Life Museum at Gallaudet University; and Steven Hairsine, Specialist, Blind Industries and Services of Maryland. Workshop participants learned best practices for meeting ADA standards as well as making visitors feel more comfortable while visiting our attractions and public programs.

The third workshop arose from discussions in the CCHA African American Preservation Committee. A panel discussion, led by author and scholar Chris Haley of the Maryland State Archives, was entitled, “Sticks and Stones: (De)humanizing Words? Considering the Language of Slavery, Race, and Marginalized Communities,” and took

place on March 28, at the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center in Annapolis (**cover image**).

The program was designed to look closely at the ways that language used by public history professionals, academic historians, and today’s communities to describe current and past peoples and atrocities has changed.

Haley, who is Director of Research, Education and Outreach, and the Study of the Legacy of Slavery at the Maryland State Archives, gave a presentation on complex representations of race and language which he has noticed over his career as an actor, writer, and archivist, and nephew of renowned author Alex Haley. Other presentations were given by panelists Maya Davis, Riversdale Museum Director; Joe Toolan, Chair of Annapolis Pride and Commissioner of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs; and Hannah Lane, Archivist at the Study of the Legacy of Slavery. Each shared insights about loaded words and language, especially terms considered offensive or dehumanizing that are found in historical records. Dr. Eric Elston, CCHA Board member and Director of Diversity and Development with Telegraph Creative, served as Moderator.

Finally, to assist with preparations for America’s Semiquincentennial, Dr. Marcie Taylor-Thoma offered a webinar entitled, “Planning for Civics in our 250 Celebrations,” on May 16. Dr. Thoma is Executive Director of the Maryland Council for Civic and History Education and a CCHA Coordinating Council member, among other affiliations. She coordinated social studies instruction, curriculum, assessment, policy, and professional development programs for over twenty years at the Maryland State Department of Education in Baltimore. At the Maryland Council for Civic and History Education, she coordinates history and civic programs such as the History Teacher of the Year, We the People... , and the James Madison Legacy Program in Maryland, and supports National History Day programs in our schools.

All four of the workshops were recorded and are available via links on the CCHA website, chesapeakecrossroads.org.



After six months of work behind the scenes, our new website launched in early June.

Check it out today!

chesapeakecrossroads.org

Planning Under Way for America's 250th in July 2026

Discussions about "America 250", also known as the Semiquincentennial, have been in the works in Maryland and our heritage area for more than a year. The Director of the Maryland 250 Commission, Michele Johnson, has been meeting with key leaders since last summer, carrying out the directives of the Executive Order issued by Governor Moore in July, 2023. These include:

- Invite broad-based public input on the meaning, significance, and opportunities of this anniversary that will inform development of commemoration activities, programs, and events.
- Acknowledge that the confiscation of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people is central to the United States' origin story and recognize the persistence and contributions of these communities today.
- Honor the legacy of both free and enslaved African Americans in the making of Maryland and the nation, whose untold stories of heroism and perseverance are critical to the understanding of our shared past and present.

- Support the identification and enhancement of cultural assets that tell the story of who we are as Marylanders and promote place-based visitor experiences for residents and visitors alike.
- Engage youth, new Americans, and lifelong learners in programs designed to encourage the search for meaning behind America and deepen engagement in civic life.
- Celebrate service to country and community, and create opportunities that promote social responsibility, compassion and understanding that will unite and strengthen Maryland's diverse communities for the benefit of all.

CCHA Executive Director, Carol Benson, is proud to serve on the Annapolis 250 Commission. She encourages partners to formulate projects, events, and programs well in advance of the commemoration year, to optimize local awareness and participation.

Contact her to discuss your upcoming event!

Eric Elston and Christine Dunham Join Board of Directors

In recent months, two new Directors have joined the Board of the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area. In January, CCHA welcomed Dr. Eric Elston to the Board. Beyond his active schedule of local nonprofit Board service and a wide variety of community engagement projects, Eric produces impactful documentaries addressing the intricate issues of race, culture, and education in America, which have been screened at film festivals and universities nationwide. He partners with local organizations to create leadership and mentoring programs designed to ensure that local teens can access resources and develop 21st-century skills. He brings a strong commitment to fostering positive change and providing platforms for youth, families, and communities to achieve their goals, dreams, and ambitions. Eric holds a Doctor of Education degree from Creighton University, a Master of Education degree from Johns Hopkins University, a Master of Science degree from Bowie State University, and an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Bowie State University.

In February, CCHA welcomed Christine Dunham to the Board, after she served

for many years as the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center's representative on the Coordinating Council. As the program manager for the SERC Directorate, she works with the Director, Smithsonian Administration, the board, and various partners, and coordinates special projects. Most notably, she served as exhibit curator for SERC's new exhibit in the recently rehabilitated Woodlawn History Center. Previously, she was a management and program analyst with the National Historical Records and Publication Commission, the grant-making arm of the National Archives, and a Senior Program Officer at the Chesapeake Bay Trust, where she managed multiple grant programs. She was also an environmental management fellow focused on land use and smart growth at the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, and worked for a national political organization in Washington, D.C. Christine has a Masters in Historic Preservation and a Masters in Community Planning from the University of Maryland, and undergraduate degrees in History and Political Science from Penn State University.



Dr. Eric Elston



Christine Dunham

Seventeenth Annual Maryland Day Celebration



The Seventeenth Annual Maryland Day Celebration in our heritage area took place on March 22-24, 2024, with the theme of “Maryland Day For All.”

This year we had 41 partners hosting events at 50 different sites collaborating to kick off our tourism season with three days of history and heritage across the county for one dollar or FREE. Social media cross-promotions by our partners reached a total of 324,000 impressions on Facebook, 11,000-plus Facebook engagements, and 16,000-plus views to the event website, www.marylandday.org, drawing hundreds of families to our sites.

Many thanks to all who combined efforts to make this year’s event a great success. Make plans to join us again next year!



Pictured (clockwise from upper left): Activities at Annapolis Maritime Museum; Anne Arundel County Archaeology Lab; Historic London Town and Gardens; Chesapeake Children’s Museum



You Make the Difference!

Please remember the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area in your charitable donations. Visit our website, chesapeakecrossroads.org/donate for details. Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3, charitable non-profit organization. Your contribution supports the heritage sites and organizations that make a difference to our region’s quality of life.



**Chesapeake Crossroads
Heritage Area**
44 Calvert Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-222-1805
heritage_area@aacounty.org
www.chesapeakecrossroads.org

