

Harford Hub Newsletter

Your source for news and events in the county.



JOHN BARCZAK
REALTOR
♦
WINTER/SPRING 2026



Gunpowder Falls State Park - Scout Bridge

Oakington Peninsula Park Announced

The Harford County government recently unveiled preliminary plans for a 1,400-acre park system on the Oakington Peninsula, between Aberdeen and Havre de Grace. The project preserves over 1,400 acres of contiguous, county-owned waterfront land, which includes Swan Harbor Farm and Belle Vue Farm. The preliminary plan outlines potential features such as land and water trails, bird watching opportunities, a future nature center, event spaces, and playgrounds. Development will be phased over the next 15 or more years, with initial efforts focusing on establishing the walking trail system.



Conowingo Dam Sediment Settlement



A recent historic settlement was reached between the State of Maryland, Constellation Energy, and environmental groups regarding the relicensing of the Conowingo Dam and the critical issue of sediment and nutrient pollution trapped behind it. The agreement, valued at \$340 million over the 50-year license term, resolves years of contentious litigation. While only a small portion is dedicated to dredging studies and related activities (\$18.7 million), the majority of the funds are committed to Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, including pollution reduction projects in the Lower Susquehanna watershed, trash and debris removal, improving fish and eel passage, and establishing a freshwater mussel hatchery for natural water filtration. Crucially, the deal reasserts Maryland's authority to enforce Clean Water Act standards for the dam's operation.

Winterizing Your Home: Essential Tips for the Season

As the temperatures drop, preparing your home for winter is crucial to prevent costly damage and ensure energy efficiency. Start by insulating exposed pipes in unheated areas like basements to avoid freezing and bursting. It's also vital to clean out your gutters to prevent ice dams from forming, which can damage your roof and siding. Finally, check your windows and doors for drafts, applying weatherstripping or caulk where necessary to keep the warm air in and the cold air out, ultimately reducing your heating bills this season. Taking these simple steps now will protect your investment and keep your home cozy all winter long.



Harford History - Ma & Pa Railroad

The Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad (Ma & Pa) was a 77.2-mile short-line railroad connecting Baltimore, MD, and York, PA, that operated from 1901 to 1958. The Ma & Pa was a crucial part of life in Harford County, serving as a vital link between rural communities and the larger cities. Its section through the county was approximately 23 miles long, with its predecessor, the Baltimore & Delta Railway, first laying tracks in the area in 1881. The line was a lifeline for the county's agricultural economy. Early morning trains, often dubbed "The Milky Way" by locals, transported immense quantities of milk, while other freight trains carried products like canned goods from local canneries, slate from quarries, and general merchandise to markets. The railroad was also a significant passenger service, providing a way for residents to travel for jobs, shopping, and entertainment. In its prime, the station in Bel Air alone saw as many as 16 trains a day providing commuter service.

The Ma & Pa's route was notable for its scenic but challenging terrain. The line through Harford County was especially curvy and hilly, with the train's average speed being only 15-20 mph. The railroad navigated difficult landscapes, including the Deer Creek gorge, where it required significant engineering, including stone retaining walls and bridges. The railroad's decline began in the 1920s and 30s with the rise of automobiles, buses, and trucks, which offered faster and more convenient transportation. The loss of its U.S. Mail contract in 1954 was a major blow, leading to the discontinuation of all passenger service. After years of financial losses, the Ma & Pa ceased operations on its Baltimore-to-Whiteford, MD, section in 1958, and the tracks were removed the following year. Today, the legacy of the Ma & Pa lives on in Harford County through the Ma & Pa Heritage Trail, a multi-use trail built on a portion of the original railbed. Many remnants of the railroad, such as old abutments and stations, can still be found along its former path. This includes the Forest Hill station (pictured to the right circa 1940).



Take A Hike!

Interested in getting more fresh air and more steps in 2026? Consider the 52 Hike Challenge 52hikechallenge.com where participants attempt 52 hikes within the year. Harford County has over 50 hiking trails to choose from. Some of my favorites include:

Rocks State Park - King & Queen Seat: The King and Queen Seat rock outcrop provides breathtaking views of the Deer Creek river valley. It's a short walk from the Rock Ridge Picnic Area. Hikers can add some steps by hiking up from Deer Creek or by taking the white-blazed loop trail.

Susquehanna State Park - Susquehanna Ridge Trail: Blazed in red, this trail runs along the ridge from the Deer Creek Picnic Area, past the Rock Run Mill area, and south to the boat launch area. The trail is about 3 miles long and moderately difficult.

Eden Mill Park: The property has a nature center and a range of short trails of varying difficulty. A loop around the edge of the property includes Beaver Run trail along Deer Creek and Mingo trail along Eden Mill Road, making a 2-mile loop.

Anita C. Leight Estuary Center: There's a nature center plus a few easy trails on the property that can be combined to make a 2-mile loop, including beautiful water views.





Important Dates & Things To Do

HCPS Dates for Spring 2026

24 Dec - 2 Jan: Schools Closed
16 Jan: 3-hour Early Dismissal
19 Jan: Schools Closed
13 Feb: 3-hour Early Dismissal
16 Feb: Schools Closed
27 Mar: 3-hour Early Dismissal
30-31 Mar: Schools Closed
1-6 Apr: Schools Closed
17 Apr: 3-hour Early Dismissal
22 May: 3-hour Early Dismissal
25 May: Schools Closed
TBD: Last Day of School

Pro Football Playoff Schedule

10-12 Jan: Wild Card Round
17-18 Jan: Divisional Round
25 Jan: Conference Championships
3 Feb: Pro Bowl Games
8 Feb: Super Bowl



Local Events for Winter/Spring 2026

10 Jan: Magical Mystery Doors, STAR Ctr, HdG
17 Jan: Pete the Cat, HCC Amoss Ctr, Bel Air
1 Feb: Gospel Fest, HdG Opera House
15 Feb: Popovich Pet Comedy, HCC Amoss Ctr, Bel Air
17 Feb: Harlem Globetrotters, APGFCU Arena, Bel Air
6 Mar: Seussical the Musical!, STAR Ctr, HdG
6-15 Mar: The Wizard of Oz, HCC Chesapeake Theatre
11 Mar: Peking Chinese Acrobats, Star Ctr, HdG
14 Mar: Harford Choral Society Spring Showcase, Bel Air
20 Mar: Comedian Michael Palascak, HdG Opera House
21 Mar: Duran Duran Tribute Band, HdG Opera House
18 Apr: Get the Led Out, APGFCU Arena, Bel Air
8 May: Calpulli Mexican Dance, STAR Ctr, HdG
15-17 May: Alice in Wonderland, Harford Dance Theatre



10 & 24 Jan, 14 & 28 Feb, 14 & 28 Mar: Bel Air Winter Market, 10am-1pm

Check the calendars for Anita C. Leight Estuary Center, Eden Mill Nature Center, and the Harford County Public Library for more activities.

Bel Air's Chicken Row!



Raising Cane's opened in Bel Air in September, joining Popeyes and Chic-fil-A along a two-block stretch of Bel Air Road. With so many options, it can be hard to decide where to get your fast-food chicken. To reduce your stress level, I've created the handy chart below. I can tell you from experience, there are no wrong choices.

	Popeyes	Raising Cane's	Chick-fil-A
Primary Focus	Bold, spicy, Louisiana-style flavor.	Simple, high-quality tenders.	Classic, reliable chicken sandwiches & nuggets.
Flavor	Spicy, savory, and well-seasoned.	Mildly seasoned; flavor comes from the sauce.	Savory and slightly sweet.
Texture	Crispy, thick breading and juicy meat.	Light, crispy breading and very tender meat.	Evenly breaded, tender, and moist.
Key Product	Chicken sandwich and bone-in chicken.	Chicken tenders and Cane's Sauce.	Chicken sandwich and nuggets.
Sauces	Multiple sauces available, but not their main selling point.	Signature Cane's Sauce is integral to the experience.	Wide variety of popular sauces, including the iconic Chick-fil-A sauce.



Harford County Real Estate Snapshot

Closed Sales: 224 homes were sold in November 2025, a decrease of 16% from last year.

Median Sold Price: The median sale price in November 2025 was \$399,990, which is consistent with the previous year.

Days on Market: Homes are selling after an average of 15 days on the market, compared to 12 days this time last year.

New Listings: 207 in November, down 3% from last year.

Active Listings: 534 in November, up 33% from last year.

Market Snapshot: Harford County's housing market is considered a "seller's market," meaning there are more people looking to buy than there are homes available. However, with home values remaining stable and rising inventory, the power dynamic may be shifting slightly back toward buyers.

Looking for answers about your home's value or what's happening in the local market? Whether you're thinking of buying, selling, or simply curious about the current conditions, I'm here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any real estate questions you have—I'm always happy to provide a personalized, no-obligation consultation.

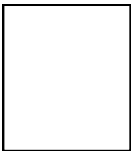


Thank you for reading!

Thinking of BUYING OR SELLING?

I CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR DREAM HOME TODAY!

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Hello,
I'm now 4 months into my real estate journey and, with the support of my broker and a seasoned agent, I've completed my first sale! We had multiple offers in less than a week and sold the home for more than the asking price. If you ever have any questions about buying or selling a home, or if you know of anyone who could use a trustworthy Realtor, please keep me in mind. I'm happy to help.
Seasons Greetings, John



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