

In 1908 superintendent John Frances Bledsoe, moved the school to its present location in Northeast Baltimore City.

The leadership at MSB reads like a Who's Who in Education for the Blind in America. Francis M. Andrews, Herbert Joseph Wolfe, Richard L. Welsh, and Louis M. Tutt were all internationally recognized innovators who moved the school forward into the 21st century.

In 2018 W. Robert Hair became Superintendent, the 13th leader of the school. 2023 will mark the 170th year anniversary for Maryland School for the Blind.

## Congratulations Tom Brocht

Long time Overlea resident Tom Brocht, an avid walker and bicyclist, has accepted the appointment by Councilwoman Cathy Bevins to the Baltimore County Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, representing the 6th District. The PBAC was established by the County Council to oversee a comprehensive program for improving the County's roads for pedestrian and bicycle use. Baltimore County needs committed people like Tom who understand and value the need for creating more extensive bike and walkways.

### Your Overlea Community Needs YOU!!!

Our amazing programs like ArtsFest, the Farmer's Market, and the Holiday Tree Lighting cannot survive without your help! Just an hour or two of your time could make a huge difference in your community. Please contact Mspicknall1@gmail.com for info!



## Do You Receive the OCA Members Bulletin?

Want to stay up to date on all the happenings in our neighborhood? Our membership bulletin is emailed monthly to all dues paying members! Stay informed on important issues and events happening in Overlea. If you have paid your dues but have not provided the OCA with your email address (or if you do not have one) please contact Doris Poling, Membership Chair at 443-841-9132. Membership is PER PERSON, paid yearly, July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022. Please Submit your dues using the coupon below or online. Thank you for your support!

### OCA 2021-2022 MEMBERSHIP FORM

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## Environmental Human Rights Amendment

Information from NeighborSpace of Baltimore County

Current and former leaders from our State are drawing attention to a bill before the General Assembly to create a State constitutional amendment to protect the right to a healthful environment in Maryland. The bill proposes an amendment to the Constitution of Maryland to establish that every person has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful and sustainable environment; and requiring the State to serve as the trustee of the State's natural resources, including the air, land, water, wildlife, and ecosystems of the State, and to conserve, protect, and enhance the State's natural resources for the benefit of every person, including present and future generations. Delegate Wanika Fisher (PG County), a sponsor of a bill, notes that: "There is a difference between regulations, which address a particular issue, and a right, which is all encompassing." According to Fisher, an environmental human rights amendment would "create a structure in which people's environmental rights need to be taken into consideration."

Former Congressman Wayne Gilchrist recently submitted an op-ed to the Bay Journal saying "we must live according to nature's principles, creating a regenerative world that affords each generation no less than what prior generations enjoyed. We can do this by recommitting ourselves to live within Earth's planetary boundaries, ensuring that everyone - in this and future generations- has a right to a healthy environment. And we can do that by placing the Environmental Human Rights Amendment in Maryland's constitution."

NeighborSpace is among the nonprofits that has signed on as a supporter of the bill, a stance the organization has taken in each of the last three years that the bill has been introduced.

## Get Connected on Nextdoor

Catch up on community news and conversations on Overlea's NextDoor social networking site. Sign up at <https://overleabltnextdoor.com>.

### ADVERTISING RATES FOR THE OCA NEWSLETTER

2"x3.5" (business card size) \$50 per issue, \$150 per year (4 issues)  
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Contact Cory Scott @ Corsco@gmail.com

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## Overlea Community President's Message

Dear Community Members,

With the coldest winter days upon us, I can't help but look forward to warmer days ahead. Our first community meeting of the new year will be on Tuesday, March 8th at 7 p.m. As of press time, we will be holding this meeting virtually, but please stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates!

While most of us have been holed up inside, trying to stay warm, your Overlea Community Association has been hard at work. Thanks to requests from Senator Kathy Klausmier, Delegates Carl Jackson, Harry Bhandari, and Councilwoman Cathy Bevins, the Maryland State Highway Administration is investigating concerns about the condition of the sidewalks on Belair Rd. These sidewalks are dangerous and unusable by anyone in a wheelchair. Our current sidewalks are not ADA compliant. The issue here is safety. Our citizens, pedestrians, and businesses deserve safe sidewalks. I will happily share any updates on the progress in our membership news bulletin. This issue isn't one we can fix overnight, but I believe we are headed in the right direction.

February is Black History Month. We celebrate the diversity and resilience of our black community members and businesses. Overlea is home to Cherry Heights, the first neighborhood in the county marketed to African Americans beginning in 1910. That was uncoincidentally the same year the city enacted a law requiring neighborhoods to be racially segregated. This 24 acre parcel of land was advertised directly to African Americans as affordable housing. What we know about that time period is that neighboring communities were not hospitable to the residents of Cherry Heights. We also know that the reason for so many dead-end roads in that area was to minimize residents' circulation (source: Neighbor Space Baltimore). The students of Towson

*continued on page 2*

## Fullerton Fireworks Are Back for 2022!

Join us once again as the Fullerton Fireworks display is back! The festivities will be on July 3rd with fireworks beginning at 9:15 pm. The field will open at 3pm with food vendors and at 5pm live music by "Awaken" begins! Bring the family for dinner and stay for the excitement.



Fullerton Fireworks Foundation is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. The foundation has built one of the largest, non-government sponsored fireworks programs in the region. It is supported by the communities of: Linover, Overlea, Elmwood, Belmar and our neighbors in Perry Hall, White Marsh, Parkville, Rosedale and NE Baltimore City. 2022 will be the 59th Anniversary of the event.

Volunteers are always needed! If you can help, please contact George Stover at: [george@adventureproductions.com](mailto:george@adventureproductions.com)

## Overlea Farmers Market Returns

Save the dates for the 2022 season of this community treasure. The Overlea Farmers Market, organized by your Overlea Community Association, begins on Saturday, June 4 and runs every other Saturday through October 22. We'll once again be in the parking lot of the Natural History Society of Maryland (6908 Belair Rd). So get those dates on your calendars now, and plan to support local farmers, bakers, and makers this season. If you'd like to get involved (all hands on deck!), please email OCA president Melissa Davis: [president@overleaonline.org](mailto:president@overleaonline.org). See you at the market!

## OCA MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Overlea Community Association meeting will be March 8th, 2022, @ 7pm. Please check the website/facebook for meeting details, or email [president@overleaonline.org](mailto:president@overleaonline.org). Until then, community updates will be broadcast via OCA Email Bulletins to current members, and advertised on Facebook and Nextdoor. Please sign up for the community association bulletin emails by becoming a member of the Association. If membership dues are a barrier to you, please reach out to Melissa Davis about alternatives ([president@overleaonline.org](mailto:president@overleaonline.org)).

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University's BTU program are currently researching the impact and importance of this neighborhood. Neighbor Space Baltimore has built a lovely park at the end of E. Elm Ave. called the Cherry Heights Woodland Garden. While the garden is unfinished, the goal is to draw attention to the history of the neighborhood and the people who lived there. If you are interested in donating to the park's goals, please go to [www.neighborspacebaltimorecounty.org](http://www.neighborspacebaltimorecounty.org).

Stay tuned for updates on our 2022 Overlea Farmers Market. Opening day will be June 4th, so mark your calendars! A huge thank you to all the community members, sponsors, and performers of our Overlea Tree Lighting in December. We were so thankful to hold this event again, in person. As always, please reach out to me if you are interested in volunteering (even just an hour of your time) with any of our events.

Stay safe, stay warm!

Melissa Davis, OCA President

## Overlea ArtsFest 2022 Returns to Holt Park!

Thanks to everyone who attended ArtsFest 2021 at our new home in Holt Park & Center for the Arts. You all helped to make our first 3-day festival a great success! The event was attended by art gallery owners, local businesspeople, residents and families from the surrounding communities, and many of our juried artists.

We are excited to announce that ArtsFest 2022 will return to Holt Park in August:

- Friday evening, August 12th – Art Show and Sale
- Saturday afternoon, August 13th – Live Entertainment and Vendors
- Sunday afternoon, August 14th – program TBD

We are currently looking for all types of volunteers to help create our 2022 event, as well as local artists who wish to submit work to our juried show. If you'd like to be a part of our growing arts festival, contact Carol Stover at [carolstover@comcast.net](mailto:carolstover@comcast.net).

## Baltimore City Recycling Schedule Change

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works Residential Recycling Program has now initiated a new pick-up schedule. Overlea is on the "A" schedule. Currently our pick-up will be every 2 weeks as opposed to every week. Pick up dates are March 1st, March 15th and March 29th, and every other Tuesday after that. Please mark your calendars. Do NOT put recyclables in a plastic bag as they will not be picked up. Please make sure your recyclables are properly contained INSIDE the cart with lids shut. Open lids will allow rodents to get into your bins and spread litter into the streets. The recycling initiatives improve the environment by keeping waste out of local waterways, providing for cleaner, healthier neighborhoods.

## Community Compost

Compost collection is still on-going at the NHS parking lot on alternating Saturdays from 9:30-10:30am. Drop off your compost on March 19th, April 2nd, 16th & 30th.

## 7-11 Updates

In our last newsletter, we made the community aware of a proposed 7-11 on the corner of Fullerton Ave and Belair Rd. This 7-11 would make a tremendous impact on the community at large. Both the Linover Improvement Association and the Overlea Community Association communicated with our county representative and the State Highway Administration (SHA) to object to such a large project that would have such a negative impact on our community.

The initial zoning hearing was postponed in December and has not been rescheduled. The developers for the project are working with SHA to address issues with that section of Belair Rd., specifically this project's impact on the future of Belair Rd. development. We will keep all members up to date in our monthly Membership Bulletin, so please consider paying your membership dues to receive (by email) the most current information.

**THANK YOU!** The OCA is very grateful to Don Ceryes for his generous donation of printing paper for our OCA Newsletters.

## Community Commitment.....

### Sippel Electric—An Enduring Friend to the Overlea Community

By Doris Poling

Casper G. Sippel Inc. has been an Overlea institution since 1923. Casper started his business, with his wife Christina at his side, almost 100 years ago. Still located at 7408 Belair Road it is now a three-generation family business in our neighborhood, and soon to be a fourth-generation!

They are not only a much respected electrical company but also have a long history of generosity. Sippel Electric has donated the spotlights and the 50 foot tree lights installation for the annual OCA tree lighting event since it started in 2014. They installed all of the electrical work needed to bring electricity to the tree- and included a switch to turn the lights on! Their generosity of ensuring our tree is lit has helped this event thrive. The lighted tree and event have become a much loved holiday tradition and the extended community remains grateful for Sippel's continued kind and helpful donation.

At the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) located at our western boundary since 1907, a road is named Sippel Lane in honor of all that the Sippel family has contributed to the school. Casper funded the much needed indoor aqua therapy pool for the students, built in 1977. It is heated and built so blind and physically challenged children can simply walk into it with no barriers. The pool building can be seen along Taylor Avenue and is named the Casper G. Sippel building in his honor. Casper and Christina served on their board for many years. Casper and Christina lived at 4122 Taylor Avenue until 1989. Some of you may remember the beautiful lit fountain garden they installed next to their home many years ago. It was quite spectacular in its day and folks from all over loved to drive by in the evenings to see the show. Different colored lights would illuminate the fountains as they went on and off and often the water display was quite high. It was beautiful and Overlea residents loved having such a wonderful garden in their neighborhood.



John E. Sippel Sr., son of Casper and Christina, passed away on January 29th. John, an active community member, also sat on the board of the MSB and was a lifetime member. He was also a member of the Overlea Lions Club and the Overlea Fullerton Business Association. John was a devoted community member, business man, much loved by his family and is greatly missed.

Casper G. Sippel Electric Inc. now has 30 employees, and will soon celebrate 100 years of serving the community with superior service. They continue to be generous to institutions in the spirit that Casper created, as they usher in a fourth generation to the business. Thank you to the Sippel family for their contributions and care, all these years by giving back to the Overlea Community.

## The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB)

Over the years, the OCA has established valuable ties to this historical institution. Overlea is fortunate to have this world-renowned school in our community. For those who are not familiar with its services, MSB is a statewide resource center, providing outreach, education and residential services for students to reach their fullest potential by preparing them to be a successful, independent, and well-rounded contributing members of their communities.

In 1853 the school first known as the Maryland Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, opened its doors in downtown Baltimore. The first superintendent David E. Loughery was a blind graduate of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind.

Though the first eleven years saw several changes in leadership, the school settled into a period of tremendous growth under the direction of Frederick Douglas Morrison, superintendent from 1864 to 1904. Mr. Morrison was a national leader in his profession, who was instrumental in the founding of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind and an early proponent of a controversial new system called "braille".

In 1868 Mr. Morrison moved the campus to much larger quarters on North Avenue and changed the name to The Maryland School for the Blind. In 1872, when segregation was still common practice, he was a founder of The Maryland School for the Colored Blind and Deaf serving as the superintendent of both schools.

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