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8th annual McCeney March returns Sept. 30



On Saturday, Sept. 30, Laurel community members are invited to join the Laurel Historical Society for the eighth annual McCeney March in honor of James “Jim” McCeney, a community activist, devoted LHS board member and avid walker. All proceeds will go toward local educational programs and scholarships.

McCeney is fondly remembered for his work as board chair, treasurer and president of the Laurel Historical Society for many years, as well as his cheerful morning greetings to passersby during his daily walks through Old Town Laurel. Since 2016, participants in the annual McCeney March have honored McCeney’s memory by retracing his steps and visiting some of his favorite locations in historic Laurel.

“This year’s McCeney March will honor Jim’s memory by adding a new component to the event that will make the day a fun-filled learning experience about the history of the city Jim loved so much,” said Bob Mignon, chair of the McCeney March committee.

From 10 a.m. till 12 p.m. on Sept. 30, McCeney March participants will have the chance to gather at the Laurel Museum and from there enjoy a self-guided walking tour through historic Laurel by visiting any or all of the eight interactive stops along a scenic 1.25-mile route.

Following the route in any order, walkers can visit four stationary stops to read signage about Laurel’s history since the mid-19th century, as well as hear from volunteers at four interactive stops about in-depth history on St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, the Laurel Museum, Old Laurel High School and Emancipation Park.

While most of the terrain is level, there are a few hills to climb from Ninth Street to the Museum. Participants may also drive the route, as parking is available at all of the interactive stops.

"This year's McCeney March will be really exciting because we will be remembering Jim and his legacy in Laurel while also learning more about the history of the town he loved so much," said Ann Bennett, executive director of the Laurel Historical Society. "Expanding the walking portion to include a self-guided tour with stationary and interactive stops will allow more participants to learn more about Laurel's history and what we do at the Historical Society."

Following the walk, participants will gather at noon in the Pool Meeting Room at the Laurel Municipal Pool for a closing reception where pizza and light refreshments will be served for lunch. Members of the Laurel Historical Society will speak about the positive effects of donations on local educational programs, and the 2023 James B. McCeney Scholarship winners will be presented.

At 12:30 p.m., the event will also honor the memory of Mildred Awkward, a long-time St. Mark's parishioner and avid home baker, with the return of the Cold Oven Pound Cake Challenge. The pound cake challenge will be judged by Mayor Craig Moe, Laurel Board of Trade President Marilyn Johnson, a member of Mrs. Awkward's family and a member of the Laurel Historical Society. Attendees can sample the different cakes, meet the Awkward family and take home Mildred Awkward's prized cold oven pound cake recipe.

"We expect the second annual 'Cold Oven Pound Cake Challenge' to be even better than the first because we have last year's champions to defend their awards," said Bennett.

Finally, from 12 to 4 p.m., the Laurel Museum will be open with the current exhibit "It's All Laurel: City Limits and Beyond" and the Museum Shop will have local gifts available for purchase. The exhibit explores the four counties that are part of Laurel and further expands on the history of some of the stops from the McCeney March walking tour. It strives to demonstrate that "Laurel" is more than the areas within the city limits. Focusing on communities ranging from Scaggsville to Russett to the historic African American community of Bacontown, the exhibit reveals the breadth of Laurel – geographically, demographically and historically.

Registration fees for the McCeney March are \$25 per adult, \$10 per child and \$60 for a family of four. Registration is available online at www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/the-mcceney-march.html or in person at the Laurel Museum. Sponsorship information can be found at www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/store/p153/McCeney_March_Sponsorship.html.

The Laurel Historical Society is located within the Laurel Museum at 817 Main St. in Laurel, Md. The Laurel Museum is open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 4 p.m. The current exhibit "It's All Laurel: City Limits and Beyond" runs through August 2024. Admission to the

Museum is free. Research requests and tour groups can visit on weekdays by appointment. For more information contact info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org , 301-725-7975 or www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org.

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