

SISTER CITIES OF SALISBURY/WICOMICO COUNTY, MD



WHAT IS *SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL*?

Founded in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Sister Cities International became a nonprofit organization that works to build and maintain relationships between cities across different countries by promoting social, cultural, economic, and educational exchanges. These connections, referred to as a “sister city” are made between these various cities to advance understanding, collaboration, and peace.

Each sister city partnership is tailored to the needs and interests of the paired communities, in many of these programs involve exchange student programs, art, music, trade delegations, and city officials. Sister Cities International hopes to advance global cooperation and diplomacy at the local level by fostering these connections.

In Salisbury, MD...

Through its vibrant Sister Cities program, Salisbury/Wicomico County cultivates global partnerships with various international cities. These include our first partnership, Salisbury, England; Tartu, Estonia; Salinas, Ecuador; and a friendship city in Dalian, China. The past Chairs of this organization include Greg Olinde, George Whitehead, Marion Keenan, and present Chair, John Hickman. The program encourages cultural exchange, economic partnerships, and educational opportunities to promote global understanding and cooperation.

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A Tribute to Marion Keenan



From left to right, this image includes Kevin Cardy, Jan Cardy, Marion Keenan, and Richard Keenan

Marion Keenan, who recently passed away, chaired Sister Cities of Salisbury-Wicomico County from 2014 to 2017. George Whitehead, Past Chair, recalls that Marion joined the committee after hearing a presentation about Sister Cities at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Salisbury. She liked its international focus. Following this, she was Vice Chair from 2008 to 2013. During those years Marion and her husband, Dick, developed a friendship with a couple in Salisbury, England, Kevin Cardy, who was the city's mayor from 2007 to 2008, and his wife, Jan. As Jan recalls "We became excellent friends with Marion and Dick, and they were our hosts in 2006 when we came to the United States and again in the spring of 2009." (See photos below. More images from these years can be found on our website under Photo Gallery.)

In addition to these visits, Marion and Dick traveled to Europe and stayed with Kevin and Jan in Salisbury, England. The four of them met again in Paris and in Rome. According to Jan, Marion's interest in Salisbury, England never waned. She kept informed about events in Salisbury, England by reading the digital Salisbury Journal online.

Carole Champagne, Secretary of Salisbury Sister Cities, recalls that she and Marion enjoyed attending several events together. Carole would drive Marion and other committee members when there were important events, such as the yearly receptions for Maryland Sister States in



The image to the left showcases Marion and other Salisbury Sister Cities Committee members with Jonatan Vsevirov, the Estonian Ambassador to the USA, and Col (Ret) Milton Davis at the 2019 Sister States reception.

Annapolis (see photo below at the reception in 2019). After one of the receptions, they took in a happy hour at Galway Bay, Irish Restaurant and Pub. Carole and Marion also attended receptions that honored Estonian Prime Ministers and Ambassadors at the Estonian Embassy in Washington, D.C. They represented the Eastern Shore at A Smart City Symposium hosted by the Embassy.

Board Member Mary Bargion first met Marion at the Salisbury YMCA where she taught Yoga. Mary remembers her warm and encouraging smile. "She was a natural. Marion led with a calm assurance that we all appreciated." When Mary joined the Sister Cities Committee, she found that she worked well with Marion's leadership style.

The current Chair of Salisbury Sister Cities, John Hickman, believes that there would not be a Sister Cities Committee without Marion's efforts, or her initial energy. "Marion was well-received by others with her strong influence and presence," he recalls. "While her personality and actions made people feel welcomed, she was unfailingly enthusiastic about taking on new activities - whether it was coming up with ways to receive donations for the organization, sharing Sister Cities Committee's mission and vision, or hosting events. Marion was always eager to continuously push Sister Cities to the next level. Her dedication never wavered."



From left to right, this image shows City Council President, Louise Smith, George Whitehead, Marion Keenan, Kevin Cardy, Jan Cardy, and Mayor, Jim Ireton

Meanings Behind the Flags

Salisbury, England

The Flag of England, known as St. George's Cross, features a red cross on a white background. The red cross symbolizes the patron saint, St. George. He was a Christian martyr and modeled bravery and chivalry. The white on the flag represents peace, honesty, and purity while the blue backdrop symbolizes loyalty, truth, and justice. The flag's history dates to the Middle Ages while becoming associated with England in the thirteenth century. Today, the nation's emblem is frequently flown down during national celebrations and sporting events to symbolize English patriotism.



Tartu, Estonia

The flag of Estonia, known as the "sinimustvalge," consists of three horizontal stripes of blue, black, and white. The sky, the country's lakes, national pride, and the allegiance of the Estonian people are represented by the blue stripe. The black stripe reflects the homeland's rich soil, Estonia's trying past, and the resilience of its people. Finally, the white stripe signifies purity, the country's long winters, and optimism for a bright future. Together, the colors embody Estonia's natural beauty, history of perseverance, and its aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous future.



Salinas, Ecuador

The flag of Ecuador features three horizontal stripes consisting of yellow, blue, and red. Double the thickness of the other stripes, the yellow stripe signifies the country's rich natural resources of gold, fertile land, and abundant crops. The blue stripe symbolizes the sky and the sea surrounding the country. Highlighting its geographical beauty and its position on the equator. Finally, the blood of those who fought for Ecuador's independence from Spain is represented by the red stripe. The National Coat of Arms, which features the Andean Condor, Mount Chimborazo, and the Guayas River, is frequently displayed on the flag.



Our Friendship City:

Dalian, China

China's "Five-Star Red Flag" represents the nation's solidarity and revolutionary spirit. The large golden star symbolizes the leadership of the Communist Party, while the four smaller stars represent the unity of their different social classes of laborers, peasants, petty bourgeoisies, and national capitalists. The red background stands for the Chinese Revolution and the blood of those who sacrificed themselves for the nation's liberation. China's socialist ideology and its long history of fighting for unification and independence are reflected in this flag.



My Unforgettable Experience in Tartu

By: Stephora Cesar Alberi

My name is Stephora Cesar Alberi, and I'm a senior Computer Science major at Salisbury University. This past summer, I had the incredible opportunity to study abroad in Tartu, Estonia. I participated in a Computer Vision and Space course, drawn by Estonia's reputation for being at the forefront of technology and digital advancements. It was my first time studying abroad, and, more significantly, my first solo trip. Naturally, I was both excited and intimidated, unsure of how things would unfold, especially since I take a little time to make new friends. Estonia, however, exceeded all my expectations and completely shifted my perspective. Despite the rainy weather on my first day, I met some of the kindest people.

Navigating the transit system was challenging- most signs were in Estonian, and I got quite lost. Residents were willing to help, guiding me, and making me feel safe right from the start.



When I arrived at the University of Tartu, I quickly bonded with fellow students. I had three roommates: one from Siberia, another from Taiwan, and the last from Rome. We clicked instantly and spent a lot of time together throughout the program, sharing both academic and cultural experiences. The program leaders made it easy to settle into Tartu, with plenty of cultural events to enjoy. As the European capital of culture, the city offered concerts, museum visits, cathedral ruins, botanical gardens, and a scenic boat ride on the Emajogi River. The summer school organized social activities like bowling nights and scavenger hunts, giving the students a chance to connect with students from other courses.

A field trip to southern Estonia was equally memorable. We explored Taevaskoja, took a peaceful boat ride, and hiked up Suur Munamägi, the highest point in the Baltics, for stunning panoramic views. At the Piusa Caves Visitor Centre, I wandered through intricate sand caves and even left my mark by engraving my name. Our adventure ended with a hike along the serene Meenikunno Bog trail, surrounded by the beauty of Estonian nature. Cultural exchange was constant. I explained the American political system to a roommate studying Politics of Popular Culture and clarified the difference between American and European football to a couple of my classmates. I was also introduced to sauna culture, a common practice in Eastern Europe. With my classmates, we alternated between a steamy sauna and a refreshing swim in a nearby lake, followed by a barbecue—an unforgettable experience.

On the academic front, the program didn't disappoint. I gained valuable knowledge to support my current and future research. We interacted with KuupKulgur, a Luna Rover developed by the University of Tartu's space department. Learning about its robotic

operations was fascinating. Toward the end, we participated in a hackathon and visited the Tartu Observatory. There, we saw robots, including one mowing the grass, explored space galleries filled with artifacts, and gazed through one of Estonia's largest telescopes. One of the major highlights of the trip was the lunar bunker at the observatory. This simulated moon environment allowed us to run rover simulations. During the hackathon, my group, along with another, created a 3D model of the lunar bunker. Other teams focused on object detection, enabling the rover to recognize obstacles like rocks and debris. The outcomes were truly impressive and gave me a hands-on experience I'll never forget.

My time in Estonia was life changing. I made friends from all over the world, many of whom I keep in touch with. I broadened my academic and cultural horizons, embracing a culture so different from my own. Tartu, with its charm and innovation, left an indelible mark on me, and I know this won't be my last visit—whether for another study abroad or simply for a vacation. It's a place that will always hold a special place in my heart.

Fun Fact About an Estonian Christmas!

Christmas is one of the most important holidays in Estonia! Traditionally, Estonians celebrate with a festive meal of roast, pork, blood sausage, sauerkraut, and potato salad. Christmas trees, gingerbread cookies, and the presence of *jõuluvana* (Santa Claus) are common, symbolizing warmth and togetherness.

Excursion to American Salisburys

By: Simon Maher



Hello, my name is Simon Maher. I live in Salisbury, Wiltshire, in the south of England.

For the last 12 years, I have worked for a British military charity called Help for Heroes, comparable to Wounded Warriors in the United States. I am the Senior Graphic Designer for the charity, and I work on a wide variety of creative projects with the aim that money is raised to provide vital support for veterans and their families. I came to the United States to visit several Salisburys around March in 2010. I can remember it was St. Patrick's Day when I was visiting! In all, I explored six Salisburys.

This was primarily due to using public transport to get from place to place. I had to miss out on Salisburys in Pennsylvania and Connecticut because they weren't so easy for me to reach using bus or train. The order in which I went to see them, was

North Carolina, Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. When asked as to why I took this excursion, in 2010, I decided I wanted a change from the Graphic Design career. I started work at the Tourist Information Centre which was a simpler lifestyle. I spoke to several visitors of the Information Centre who hailed from the Salisburys of Maryland and North Carolina and, from searching online, I discovered there were several more places in the US with the same name.

My inquisitive designer mind started to wonder about the reasons the founders of such towns in America named their new settlements after the city across the pond where I had grown up. With the help of online maps, I was able to piece together a somewhat rational route from Salisbury, NC, roughly following the East Coast of the

U.S. and ending up in Vermont. I was finally convinced to turn this high-concept daydream of an idea into an actual trip

Each Salisbury was very different, bear in mind, I already had a particular mental reference for 'Salisbury' and all things related to where I'm from. From the southern hospitality and very unfamiliar garden bird varieties of North Carolina, exploring Salisbury by the coast on the Delmarva Peninsula, all the way to the beach resort in Massachusetts and the still-lying snow of New Hampshire and Vermont! Salisbury, VT, was just a tiny village at the center of which was a chicken farm which produced eggs for the local area. No mayor here, instead I was greeted by the Head Selectwoman, who was very gracious and pleased to hear about my travels. I had thought the photographic portraits I was collecting of the various places would naturally be themed around the churches and civic buildings. It seemed an obvious place to start, coming from a city famous for its medieval cathedral and close-knit 13th-century streets. That soon began to not feel enough; instead, my scope widened and soon was comparing the people, parks and even the police liveries. Everything! There are areas of historical significance within each Salisbury, which townspeople, young and old, strive to preserve and teach visitors and residents about the history of the places. Additionally, I got to experience the workings of the local council, honored, as I was to be invited to address and be greeted by the local Council during their

when one day I was informed the Information Centre was having to ask for some voluntary redundancies!

meetings in North Carolina and Maryland. Some of the concerns and points of order that were raised resonated with some of the concerns from my hometown, which further strengthened and added to all the similarities I was noticing. There are lots of lovely green areas in and around most of the Salisburys. This was a wonderful link back to home, where we could be out in the beautiful Wiltshire countryside after a few minutes' walk. I visited local markets and shops and, while some of the produce and products differed slightly from England, these places were reassuringly familiar and great to visit. As my journey through the various Salisburys of America came to an end, I couldn't help but reflect on the deep sense of connection I felt in each place. While they were, of course, different from my beloved Salisbury in the UK, there was an undeniable shared spirit—a sense of community and pride that transcended borders. The warmth and openness that I was greeted with made these places feel oddly familiar, as if I were simply visiting another corner of my home. This trip, which started as a high concept "I wonder what they're like?" daydream, was more than just a geographical exploration; it was a reminder that, no matter where I visit, the heart of a place is its people and history. And in these American Salisburys, I found that warm and proud heart. Thank you!

Salisbury, England on the Rise: Sustainability & Growth

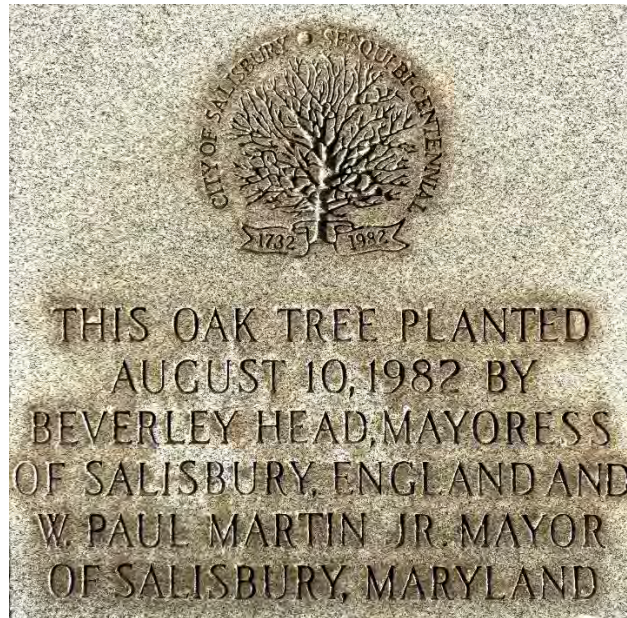
By: Simon Maher

Salisbury, England is on the path to growth with the expansion of new developments and restorations. The Salisbury River Park Project has been a significant development in our beloved city in recent years. This ambitious venture has become a beacon of progress aimed at tackling flood risks and enhancing our local environment. As someone who grew up in Salisbury, I've been thrilled to see how the

project is bolstering flood defenses along the River Avon and rejuvenating the natural landscapes we cherish. With the restoration of floodplains and the creation of new green spaces, the project is making our city more resilient to climate change while offering new paths for walking and cycling. It's wonderful to witness these changes firsthand, especially as parts of River Park have opened, blending practical improvements with beautiful recreational areas that make Salisbury an even more inviting place to live and explore.

Additionally, since the new Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, took office, the impact on Salisbury has been quite significant, particularly with the recent postponement of the Stonehenge/A303 road tunnel project. Locally, this delay has sparked a mix of reactions. While the postponement was disappointing for many who were hoping for improved traffic conditions and a more sensible way to bypass and visit Stonehenge, it has also led to more focus on local transportation and infrastructure. The new administration campaigned for the General Election earlier this year on different priorities, and the hope is this new outlook will bring increased investment in other regional projects and public services, such as the upgrades to local amenities and flood defenses, which are crucial for our community. Despite the setback with the tunnel, there's a growing sense of optimism as the new leadership appears committed to addressing local needs and fostering economic growth, although our local Member of Parliament sits in the opposing party to the new Government.

A Look into the Past



Attached is an image of a stone in memory of this collaboration. It is placed off Mt. Hermon Road in the Twilley Center in Salisbury, MD.

A 1982 news article in The Daily Times states that Salisbury, Maryland's Mayor, Paul Martin, was joined by Mayoress, Beverly Head, of Salisbury, England in August of 1982. This pair, along with other visitors from Salisbury, England, appeared in the city's Sesqui-Bicentennial parade showcasing various organizations, businesses, city officials, and many more. Following the parade was a cruise down the Wicomico River to Whitehaven hosted by the Wicomico Yacht Club. Mayoress, Beverly Head, emerged into the town's historical markers and dedicated time to learning about the past of her Sister City.

Information provided by: "Newspaper." The Daily Times, 12 Aug. 1982, p. 3, delmarvanow.newspapers.com/image/281455550/?terms=Beverly&match=1. Accessed 6 Oct.