

South Baltimore news

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Defenders Day

Every year the rangers and volunteer re-enactors at Fort McHenry put on a big show in honor of Defenders Day and this year's celebration promises to be as spectacular as ever. Visit the Fort any time during the weekend of September 11 and you'll feel like you stepped through a time portal.

Defenders Day is Baltimore's oldest holiday and commemorates the Defense of Baltimore and the bombardment of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. It was during that battle that Francis Scott Key, a Maryland lawyer and prisoner on board a British naval ship during the battle, was inspired to write a poem that would later become our national anthem.

The three-day event kicks off on Friday evening, September 11, at 6 p.m. when "soldiers" attired in uniforms of the period march through the streets of Baltimore from the Star Spangled Banner Flag House to the Inner Harbor, where they will stop in the amphitheater for a ceremony. Then they board sailing vessels and head over to Tide Point where they will disembark and parade up Hull Street and down Fort Avenue carrying a replica of the 30'x42' flag that flew over the Fort during the Battle of Baltimore.

All day on Saturday and Sunday you can find replica encampments, demonstrations by War of 1812 re-enactors, children's programs, historic boats, and a privateer's auction. The big event comes Saturday at 6 p.m. and is always the highlight of the weekend. There will be a concert of patriotic and period songs, a musket-firing tactical demonstration, a ship-to-shore bombardment and a fireworks show. The Saturday evening program is free.