

# NEWS & MESSENGER

# SUNDAY

VA

\$1.<sup>25</sup>

APRIL 1, 2012

Mostly sunny with a high of 68, low of 52.  
Details, B5

RECEIVED

APR 01 2012

PRINCE WILLIAM, MANASSAS + MANASSAS PARK

HISTORIC SITE FILE: BEL AIR

PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

Bull Run Library

## BEL AIR MANSION

# History under the gavel



JEFF MANKE/NEWS & MESSENGER

Bill Naedele, the owner of the Bel Air mansion, strolls through the guest parlor, also known as The Red Room, of the oldest house in Prince William County. The mansion has a storied history — both Washington and Thomas Jefferson spent time in the home, with Washington and his wife spending one night of their honeymoon there. It also was home to Washington biographer the Rev. Mason Locke Weems.

### County's oldest home to be sold at April auction

BY KIPP HANLEY  
jhanley@insidenova.com

Another chapter in the life of the Bel Air mansion will commence next month.

The oldest home in Prince William County will be sold at auction April 18. For owner Bill Naedele, who has lived there for 20 years, it's time to move on.

Naedele is retired and ready for a break from the laborious tasks of maintaining the 25 acres on which his home sits.



Bel Air mansion, which was built in 1740, will be put up for auction April 18. Owner Bill Naedele is retired and ready for a break from the laborious tasks of maintaining the 25 acres on which his home sits.

See **MANSION**, Page A4

# Mansion

From Page A1

"I hope to find someone willing to take on the challenge," said the 66-year-old former real estate agent, who also is holding an online auction for much of the personal property in the home.

Now amid a swath of suburbia known as Dale City, the Bel Air mansion has stood the test of time since its construction in 1740. Thanks to some tender loving care from its most recent owners, the house and grounds are in impeccable shape.

In the 1940s, the Flory family purchased the home. It was in such terrible disrepair that the renovations took 25 years longer than expected, Naedele said.

"Half of the roof was missing, and there was no running water or electricity," said Naedele, whose late wife, Randi Flory, inherited the home from her father, William Flory.

At one point, the prop-

erty stretched from the Silverdale subdivision of Dale City all the way up to Cardinal Drive, Naedele said.

"When he [Flory] bought it, it was 50 acres," Naedele said. "... They had horses, cattle, sheep, goats. They had everything you could imagine there. It was quite the working farm."

Eventually, parts of it were sold off for development.

However, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources placed an easement on the remaining 25 acres in the 1980s, which kept the current parcel of land intact. It's also been placed on the Department of Interior's National Register of Historic Places.

Maj. Charles Ewell, a friend of George Washington's, built Bel Air. Both Washington and Thomas Jefferson spent time in the home, with Washington and his wife spending one night of their honeymoon there.

The property later

served as the home of the Rev. Mason Locke Weems, the first biographer of Washington.

There are several interesting features to the house, most notably the movable wall that was taken down for large parties.

Since estates were taxed by the number of rooms, it was a convenient way for the homeowners to avoid paying more to the government, Naedele said.

"It has a doorway and glass panes and comes out in sections," Naedele said.

The house has five bedrooms and three full bathrooms. It also has eight fireplaces, including one of the largest Colonial chimneys in Virginia, he said.

The auction will be held at 3 p.m. at the house, located at 14513 General Washington Drive.

A virtual tour of the house can be found on [tranzon.com](http://tranzon.com).

Staff writer Kipp Hanley can be reached at 703-530-3904.