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“I LOVE HELPING PEOPLE.”
DONNA MARIE VOORHAAR, WINNER OF THE RUTH BADER GINSBURG LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



LOCAL 3
Major commercial project for Charlotte Hall approved



LOCAL 5
Town Hall raises open meetings act questions



ON THE COVER
St. Mary's to honor Voorhaar and Millen for their community service

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, MAR 9 Mostly Sunny Hi: 52° Lo: 35°	FRI, MAR 10 Showers Hi: 47° Lo: 34°	SAT, MAR 11 Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 29°	SUN, MAR 12 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 38°
MON, MAR 13 Rain Hi: 50° Lo: 31°	TUE, MAR 14 Partly Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 26°	WED, MAR 15 Mostly Sunny Hi: 44° Lo: 29°	THU, MAR 16 Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 36°



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Charlotte Hall Shopping Center Approved



Restaurant and grocery shopping parcel



Relocated farmers market parcel

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A proposed Charlotte Hall redevelopment project that would bring in a new Aldi's grocery store, Chick-fil-A restaurant as well as other commercial space and cause the relocation of the farmers market that has long fronted Route 5 was approved this week by unanimous vote of all county planning commission members in attendance at their March 6 meeting in Leonardtown.

The project, known as Golden Beach Development, is perhaps the biggest redevelopment proposal in recent history for

North County.

The developer of the project, Golden Beach Development LLC, owned by Justin Rosemore, has agreed to make improvements to local roads and intersections to facilitate better traffic flow around the project; this drew the praise of Joe St. Clair, board member.

"I think the developer has really helped upgrade this area," St. Clair said. "I really think that [lane] is going to save lives at the Golden Beach [Road] intersection because it's going to slow that drag strip down."

"I think he [Rosemore] went overboard trying to save the county money."

A deceleration lane on Route 5 headed north that would connect with the loop road around the development is also planned.

The developer has also agreed to add a roundabout to Traveled Lane/Henry Lane near the location of the future Aldi's in an effort to further calm traffic. While the project has drawn support for its plans to modernize and diversify shopping in the area, others oppose it on the grounds that it will greatly increase traffic.

"There's a reason the comprehensive plan sets guidelines for traffic on our roads," Josh Guy of Mechanicsville said. "Even under this new plan our intersec-

tions will operate at a 'D' level of service. "They're supposed to operate at a 'C' level of service...I think that's unacceptable."

The concept site plan for Golden Beach Development, owned by Golden Beach Properties, LLC, which is headed by developer Justin Rosemore, calls for 20,599 square foot Aldi's Supermarket and 30,000 square feet of buildings for the relocated flea market and fairgrounds.

The entire project would be situated on 48.48 acres on Three Notch Road with three distinct sites within the parcel located at 29890, 29990 and 29940 Three Notch Road, county planning documents state.

The property is considered suitable for mixed-use moderate-intensity under the county's zoning ordinance.

The traffic study included with the concept site plan states that the Chick-fil-A restaurant would generate 3,350 average daily trips, while the Aldi's supermarket would generate 2,160 average daily vehicle trips.

The additional retail space would raise that volume to 7,325 average trips per day, the report estimated.

County planning reports show that more than 44,000 vehicle trips per day occur at the intersections of Route 5 and Golden Beach Road, close to where the new site would be developed.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Citizens Oppose SMECO Rate Hike

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Southern Maryland residents came out to oppose a proposed service rate hike by SMECO at a Feb. 28 public hearing in Hughesville.

One of them, a St. Mary's public school teacher, said life was already expensive enough.

"As a homeowner in St. Mary's County with four children under the age of three and only one income, a teacher's salary, we are financially unstable enough," said Dr. Ashland Murphy in a letter to the Maryland Public Services Commission. "I work various part-time jobs to pay bills."

"We have used various generous community resources in St. Mary's County but still take money from our savings account each month to pay for living expenses."

The Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) is asking the Maryland Public Services Commission to authorize a rate increase that will boost the public utility's revenue stream by a projected \$15.75 million, according to filings at the state-level oversight agency.

"This proposed increase would result in an approximate 8 percent overall increase for the average customer-member," the SMECO case request reads. "Under existing rates, without the relief requested, SMECO would most certainly be at risk of failing to

meet the requirements of its indenture as it works to provide the type of service that its customer-members deserve."

The utility argues in its case filings that it has incurred costs in stalling an advanced metering system which it wishes to recoup, also it seeks to collect revenue to make up for deferred rate collections, which stem from the last time SMECO increased its rates.

This is called bill stabilization adjustments, case filings explain.

If the commission grants this request it would be the second such increase in as many years.

A Charles County resident, Debra Krahl, said her bill had reached into the hundreds of dollars and she could afford nothing more.

"Please do not raise my electric bill again," Krahl wrote. "My last two bills were \$470 and \$530. I heat with wood when I am home and turn the temperature down to 60 when I am gone."

"Charles County is raising the land taxes \$25 and adding another \$1,000 per year to my bill."

Krahl continued: "Food has gone up. The oil that I was using to heat with has outpriced by ability to pay."

"I buy no new clothes, go on no vacations, am working in my retirement years... Please do not raise the electric bill again."

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Town Hall Raises Open Meetings Act Question



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Commissioner Mike Hewitt said he attended a town hall sponsored by Commissioner Scott Ostrow which included attendance by another, Commissioner Eric Colvin.

According to Maryland's Open Meeting's Act, the presence of three county commissioners constitutes a quorum of elected officials empowered to do the public's work.

"When you get three county commissioners together at a meeting that has not been advertised publicly or not advertised in the appropriate way that's a violation of the Open Meetings Act," Hewitt said, noting he did not participate in the meeting but remained in the audience to listen.

His explanation, given during the end of the regular business meeting of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County March 7 in Leonardtown, was that to actively participate was to commit a violation of the meetings act.

The act is designed to prevent the operation of government under veil of secrecy and ensure public oversight of the people's business.

Ostrow's town hall meeting was held at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Depart-

ment on Shangri-La Drive March 4.

"It's something I take very seriously, so I did not engage," Hewitt said this week.

Ostrow said he was "100 percent confident" that his meeting did not violate the open meetings statute; he said Assistant County Attorney John Houser was in attendance and told him he had no legal concerns regarding the open meet-

ings statute.

Ostrow advertised the meeting on his Facebook page, he said, and announced it at the end of the Feb. 28 county commissioner meeting.

Colvin said he was confident that the commissioners who were present, which according to Colvin, included Commissioner Mike Alderson for a brief time during the beginning of the meeting, was not a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

"There was no business discussed among us," Colvin said. "I think we answered the public's questions but we didn't do any business."

There was no apparent notice of the town hall on the county government's website.

According to the state Office of the Attorney General: "A 'meeting' occurs whenever a public body's quorum convenes to discuss public business," a guide to the act states. "An occasion that starts out as a purely social event is a 'meeting' only if a quorum uses it to discuss the public body's business.

"A gathering at which a quorum discusses public business is a 'meeting' no matter where it occurs and no matter whether the quorum takes an action."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Sikorsky to Suffer Mass Layoff

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Defense contractor giant Lockheed Martin said that it would be laying off nearly 200 local workers who are employed by a subsidiary's helicopter program.

"Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, is in the process of completing its testing program for the CH-53K helicopter in Patuxent River, Maryland," a missive from the contractor to the Commissioners of the St. Mary's County revealed. "As a result, a layoff will take place at Sikorsky's facility located at [Patuxent River Naval Air Station.]"

The layoffs are to begin on a "rolling basis" the letter stated, starting April 27.


"The company expects to lay off a total

of approximately 176 employees, of which approximately 85 salaried, non-union employees will be affected," the letter reported. "Approximately 91 union-represented employees will be laid off in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement."

The letter was sent to local leaders to comply with the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN).

The CH-53 K helicopter is the latest iteration of Sikorsky's marquis aircraft and has been designed as a heavy lift and logistical support helicopter for the U.S. Marine Corp.

The aircraft is also known by the moniker the King Stallion and it was approved for full production by the U.S. Navy late last year.




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Speed Limits in Military Communities Debated



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Two military housing communities exist outside the base fence line of Patuxent River Naval Air Station and base leadership wants local elected leaders to change the speed limits there from 25 miles per hour to 15 miles per hour.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County heard the request from the base commanding officer Capt. Derrick Kingsley at a joint meeting March 7.

Alec Young, community planning liaison officer for the base, explained that other such communities like Lovell Cove, Carpenter Park and Glenn Forest have speed limits of 15 miles per hour or below.

Columbia Colony and Challenger Estates, which are outside the base, are at 25 miles per hour, Young said, noting that the average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian or bicyclist struck by a vehicle reached 25 percent from a vehicle traveling just 23 miles per hour.

Young said he did not have collision data available for the two communities in question, but that the request was a forward looking one.

"We're trying to get in front of the issue," Young said.

While the county has control over the speed limit of county-owned roads, Commissioner Mike Hewitt said, he was concerned about carving out the two exceptions.

"The issue is whether people will pay attention to the 15 mile per hour speed limit," Hewitt said.

The sheriff's office would have to engage in special enforcement there, Hewitt said, which could drain their already stretched resources.

"Where this is coming from is we've had complaints about people driving too fast in these neighborhoods," Kingsley said.

This is not the first time Kingsley has dealt with speed limits.

"I dropped the speed limits on the base and that was not popular," he said. "I'm OK with that."

The commissioners decided to put the prospect to a public hearing before making any decisions either through an ordinance or resolution.

Hewitt said that the public must be given a chance to speak on the subject.

"We're under the command of the constituents," Hewitt said.

The commanding officer also asked the commissioners to pursue a local rule that would ban the use of plastic bags — or at least restrict their usage — in the wider community to help support the base's efforts in that regard.

Lance McDaniel, environmental director on base, said the measure would help combat the persistent pollution of plastic waste that washed up not only on installation beaches but throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

After the meeting, Commissioner Eric Colvin said he was unsure that the commissioners had the authority to enact such a rule.

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Men Facing Federal Indictment for an Arson Targeting Convenience Stores

A federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging Stephen Kennedy, age 33, of Temple Hills, Maryland, and Donnell Kelly, age 33, of Washington, D.C., for conspiracy to commit arson, arson affecting interstate commerce, commercial robbery, and use of a destructive device in furtherance of a crime of violence, in connection with a series of convenience store robberies. Kennedy and Kelly are also charged with being felons in possession of a firearm and an explosive device, respectively, and Kennedy is charged with carrying an explosive during the commission of a felony. The indictment was returned on February 22, 2023, and was unsealed today upon the arrests of the defendants.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron; Special Agent in Charge Toni M. Crosby of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Baltimore Field Division; Maryland State Fire Marshal Brian Geraci; St. Mary's County Sheriff Steven A. Hall; Chief Malik Aziz of the Prince George's County Police Department; and Chief Tiffany D. Green of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

According to the 10-count indictment,

from at least January 2021 to January 2022, the defendants conspired to commit arsons at 7-Eleven convenience stores so that they could obtain cash contained in ATMs in the stores. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Kennedy and Kelly traveled to 7-Eleven locations while they were open for business and deployed explosive devices to set fire to the buildings, and on at least one occasion, demanded the contents of the cash register. The defendants allegedly burned the stores to force their closure and shut off power to the security cameras, which would enable them to return to the unguarded locations to burglarize the ATMs unhindered. The indictment alleges that this resulted in losses to the ATM company of at least \$249,000. To conceal the evidence of their crimes, Kennedy and Kelly allegedly burned vehicles used in the arson attacks and/or burglaries and/or made false police reports regarding stolen license plates.

If convicted, Kennedy and Kelly each face a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison for the arson conspiracy and each of four counts of arson affecting interstate commerce; a maximum of 20 years in prison for an armed com-

mercial robbery; a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years and up to life in federal prison for using a destructive device in furtherance of a crime of violence; and a maximum of 10 years in federal prison for being felons in possession of an explosive device and firearm. Finally, Kennedy faces a mandatory sentence of 10 years, consecutive to any other sentence imposed, for carrying an explosive during the commission of another federal felony. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. The defendants each had an initial appearance today in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ajmel A. Quereshi. Kelly and Kennedy agreed to remain detained pending detention hearings scheduled for Friday, March 3, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. and at 3:30 p.m., respectively.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and

the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron commended the ATF, the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, and the Prince George's County Police Department for their work in the investigation and thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia, the ATF Washington Field Division, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the Alexandria, Virginia Police Department for their assistance. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam K. Ake and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Joshua Rosenthal, who are prosecuting the case.



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Voorhaar, Millen Honored for Service to the Community

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The two women, both community servants to St. Mary's County for years, never actually met before this week. They both said they were anxious to finally meet each other.

When Donna Marie Voorhaar, walked through the doors of St. Mary's Caring Soup Kitchen in Lexington Park she immediately embraced the director there, Kristine Millen.

They immediately started talking about the operations there, focused on feeding the hungry and needy throughout the county.

Both women continued to talk about and to focus on the needs of others and what it takes to fulfill them; it's their unique passion expressed in different ways.

Voorhaar has been a fixture of the emergency medical services community for decades here and come March 18 she will be awarded the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award by the St. Mary's County Commission for Women.

Millen, who has run the soup kitchen since 2006, will receive the Hometown Shero Award at the same ceremony.

Neither woman said she felt completely comfortable with being honored by their peers for their outstanding service to others.

"It's a really great award but I'm really embarrassed," said Voorhaar while taking a shift at the Lexington Park Volunteer Rescue Squad station on Buck Hewitt Road. "There are plenty of women and there are a number of members on our squad who are just as deserving."

Millen said the award was more about the people she worked with at the soup kitchen.

"I'm thrilled our volunteers are getting the recognition they deserve," Millen told The County Times. "We can't open our doors without our volunteers."

Both women distinguished themselves over the past several years by continuing work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During COVID they were first responders, too," Millen said of the approximately 100 volunteers who prepared and distributed meals at the soup kitchen. "We never missed a beat."

Voorhaar, too, continued to run calls on

ambulances during the pandemic, though at 74, she was at risk of infection and severe consequences.

"I ran calls through 2020," Voorhaar said. "My family wanted me to stop, but this is what I'm trained to do."

Voorhaar started with the Ridge Volunteer Rescue Squad in 1985 but by 1987 had moved up to her current volunteer position with the Lexington Park squad.

Back then, as now, Lexington Park was the place to find the most calls for emergency medical service and Voorhaar said she wanted the experience.

"It was better, it was better to move," she said. "I love helping people and it's a challenge."

The work can be stressful, she said, but just as much, an EMT had to be insightful into the plight of their patient, who was often times not in the best position to adequately express what was wrong with them.

"You have to be like a detective," Voorhaar said. "You have to look for clues and you have to ask questions."

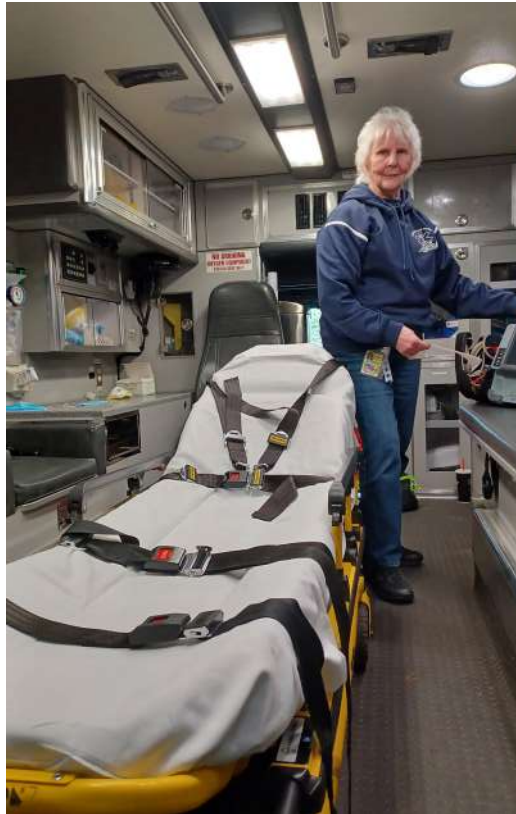
She has served in virtually every position that could be filled at the rescue squad, except that of chief, which she said did not really want.

She's even volunteered as a paramedic for about a decade, she said.

She was a principal's secretary working for the county school board for 30 years while still volunteering at the rescue squad and now works part-time at the local Cracker Barrel restaurant, a job she said she really enjoys.

Volunteering at the rescue squad can be exciting, Voorhaar said, and she's seen both horrors and miracles on the job but she keeps coming back for one simple reason.

"It's the adrenaline, that's true but it's



Voorhaar



Millen

really the satisfaction that you helped someone, that you made a difference," Voorhaar said.

Millen is busy now with keeping the soup kitchen operating, while overseeing its move into its new home at the former Brass Rail Sports Bar.

The bar, long vacant, belonged to local construction magnate Joseph "Bubby" Knott who last year donated it to the soup kitchen.

"We're doing a huge move," Millen said. "We're bringing the kitchen in the building up to commercial kitchen standards."

"It's going to be our forever home; it's exciting."

Last year the volunteers at the soup kitchen provided 125,054 meals between hot meals and family boxes, Millen said, who noted it was "unthinkable" to have shut down during COVID.

"We're a safety net for the community," Millen said. "We feed a lot of the working poor."

"They're having to choose between rent

and utilities."

With economic stress continuing, many families have yet to recover from the social ravages of COVID.

"It could be any of us," Millen said.

More than a place that "slaps food on a plate," Millen said, the soup kitchen volunteers help connect guests with medical and community resources that can help them and always try to lend a sympathetic ear and a shoulder to lean on.

"We want them to know they're not alone," Millen said. "We're here for them."

"We feed everyone in need."

The work done at the soup kitchen has brought everyone who comes there closer together, she said.

"We're family," Millen said. "The volunteers, the guests, the staff we're all family."

"This is my passion; this is a place of acceptance and hope."

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Dog Adoption Fees Waived by AARC During March



The St. Mary's County Animal Adoption & Resources Center has announced that all dog adoption fees will be waived through March 31, 2023. Adoption fees will still apply for all other animals, excluding dogs and some specific animals that have been "sponsored" and paid in advance by other residents to encourage adoption.

Since opening last September, the St. Mary's Animal Adoption & Resource Center has been protecting, advocating for, and providing compassionate care to animals in need; facilitating over 340 animal adoptions. The Animal Adoption & Resource

Center takes in and oversees adoptions for a variety of animals, including dogs, cats, reptiles, small mammals, birds, and more!

The shelter is open to the public on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from noon – 6 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays from noon – 4 pm. Walk-ins are welcome; no appointment necessary!

Residents can learn more about the Center and volunteer opportunities, view animals available for adoption, and watch the live kitty cam online at: stmaryscountymd.gov/animalshelter.

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Saturday, March 11, 2023 – 9:30 am
9900 Fallard Court, Upper Marlboro, MD
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Saturday, March 11, 2023 – 5 pm
15245 Prince Frederick Road – Hughesville, MD
Doors Open and Registration begins at 4 pm.

20th Annual "Millwood" Auction

Friday, March 17th – 2 pm
Saturday, March 18th – 8:30 am
27429 Thompson Corner Rd. – Mechanicsville, MD

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To schedule an obituary in the County Times, submit text and picture to aldailey@countytimes.net by noon on Tuesdays for publication on Thursdays. Any submissions received after this deadline may run in the following week's edition.

In Remembrance

Elizabeth Turner, 96



Elizabeth Turner Pilkerton Adams, (Nanny), 96, of Clements, MD passed away on March 2, 2023, peacefully with her family by her side. She was born December 10, 1926 in Clements MD. Elizabeth was the daughter of the late Joseph Turner and Mary Lessis Pilkerton. Elizabeth was a life long resident of St Mary's County and a homemaker. She graduated from Margaret Brent High School in 1945 and was a member of the Alumni. She loved gardening, her flowers, watching the birds, and playing Pitch. She also Loved Her Family and her Life long Friends. She was loved by so many.

Elizabeth was preceded in death by her husband, Howard Edwin Adams whom she was married to for 51 years, by her daughter in law Cecelia Adams, grandson Howard Anthony Adams, Jr, brother Joseph Turner Pilkerton.

Elizabeth is survived by her loving children, Patricia Yates (Johnny deceased), Tony Adams (Roberta), and Linda Huseman (Al).

In addition to her children, she is survived by her grandchildren, Frannie Yates Taborek (Larry deceased), Timmy Yates (Tammy), Al Huseman, Jr. (Cindy), Kim Huseman and Amy Adams. Great-grandchildren Dillon Yates, Alex Taborek, Ryan Huseman, Kayla Yates and Maddie Vallandingham. Great-great grandchildren Rhett Pickle and Hayden John Taborek. Siblings Mary McLaughlin, William Pilkerton (Larinda), Richard Pilkerton (Janet) and Gloria Jean Pilkerton.

The family will receive friends at the Mattingly Gardner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD for Elizabeth's Life Celebration on Tuesday, March 14th from 9:00 am - 10:30 am. A Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 am will be celebrated by Father Drew Royals at St Joseph Catholic Church, Morganza, MD. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD.

Serving as pallbearers will be Frannie Yates Taborek, Timmy Yates, Al Huseman Jr, Kim Huseman and Amy Adams.

Honorary Pallbearers Dillon Yates, Alex Taborek, Ryan Huseman Kayla Yates, and Maddie Vallandingham.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be

made to the Hospice of St Mary's PO Box 625 Leonardtown, MD 20650

James Miedzinski, 90



James "Jim" Francis Miedzinski, 90, of Leonardtown, MD, passed away peacefully on February 27, 2023. Jim was the second of nine children born to Robert (Sheriff) Miedzinski and Mary Lillian Hayden Miedzinski. He is survived by his children: Sandra Lynn Dyson (J.C.) of Great Mills, James Randall Miedzinski (Karen) of Oakville and Mark Wayne Miedzinski (Sandra) of Clements, and his long-time companion, Sharen Dyson of Lexington Park. His 8 grandchildren, 3 step-grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and 4 step-great-grandchildren. Jim is also survived by his siblings: Pritzi Ely of Leonardtown, Jane Bussler of Compton, and Dolly Abell of Leonardtown. He was predeceased by his brothers and sisters: Bob Miedzinski, Bertie Dooley, Billy Miedzinski, Charles Miedzinski, and Phyllis Miedzinski.

Jim proudly served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War Era. He entered into the Air Force on February 9, 1951, and served until his honorable discharge on January 13, 1955 as Staff Sergeant. While serving he earned the Korean Service Medal.

In 1959, Jim and Bob opened Leonardtown Building & Supply Company and served the community until 2010. Jim's passion and commitment to the LVFD spanned over 75 years of volunteering. He also dedicated 20 years of service at the Leonardtown Rescue Squad as a back-up driver. He was a member of the VFW #2632, California, MD and the American Legion Lodge 221, Avenue, MD. He was inducted into the Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen's Association (MSFA) Hall of Fame for his service with the county.

Family will receive friends on Thursday, March 9, 2023, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., at Brinsfield Funeral Home in Leonardtown, Md. Prayer Service will be held at 7:00 p.m. with Fireman's Prayers. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Reverend David Beaubien at 10:00 a.m. on March 10, 2023 at St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Leonardtown, Md. A Graveside Service with Military Honors will follow at Charles

Memorial Gardens in Leonardtown, MD.

Serving as pallbearers will be Michael Miedzinski, Robert Miedzinski, David Miedzinski, Larry Miedzinski, Wayne Miedzinski, and Kevin Miedzinski. Honorary pallbearers will be members of the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Leonardtown Rescue Squad and Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department.

Please visit Brinsfield Funeral Home's website, www.brinsfieldfuneral.com, for the full obituary.

Patricia Bohle, 77



On Sunday, March 5, 2023, Patricia Ann Bohle fell asleep in the Lord. She was born on December 2, 1945, in Washington, DC, to Clarence D. Stone, Jr. and Margaret Eicke Stone and was their 2nd eldest of 7 children.

Patricia, known mostly as Patsy or Pat to those closest to her, moved to Saint Mary's County in 1960 and graduated from Margaret Brent High School. Shortly thereafter while working for the FBI in Washington, DC, as a 'fingerprint specialist' she met and fell in love with the love of her life, her Johnnie (John Egon Bohle, Jr.). They married on August 14, 1965, and moved back to Saint Mary's County a few years later. Together they built their first home and brought 2 sons into the world. Their eldest, John Egon Bohle III, was born in 1969 and then their youngest, Michael Brian Bohle, was born in 1971. They built a life surrounded by their big extended family. Every chance they had there was a gathering or the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas party in their home. There was nothing small about these gatherings as there would be 50 - 70 people of immediate family together; everyone was welcome and the numbers swelled. She remained in Mechanicsville, MD, in the home she built with her husband for the last 52 years. Pat was a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother. Her laughter and her smile were infectious. She loved to entertain and have people surrounding her. But she greatly missed her Johnnie who passed away too soon in 1997. When her grandsons came along she would leave her home for weeks on end to spend time with them. She tried to be there for her grandson's every milestone. Pat was extremely proud of her loving and dedicated boys (including her grandsons) and their accomplishments. Her life revolved around them.

Pat will be sorely missed. Her family knows she is finally with her beloved and in his arms dancing the night away. She was predeceased by her husband, Johnnie, and her brother, Wayne William Stone. Pat leaves behind a wonderful legacy with her sons, John Egon Bohle III and Michael Brian Bohle (Sophia S. Varlas); her grand-

sons, Stratis John Bohle and Nikolas Alexander Bohle; her siblings: Clarence "Candy" Stone (Lorraine), Martin "Marty" Stone (Patsy), Mike Stone (Gloria), Kathy Malloy (Ronnie) and John Stone; and countless nieces, nephews and friends.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at Mattingly-Gardiner Funeral Home, 41590 Fenwick Street, Leonardtown, MD 20650 from 5PM - 8PM. Funeral Service will be held at Mattingly-Gardiner Funeral Home (same address) on Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 11AM. Interment will follow the funeral service at Trinity Memorial Gardens, 3221 Mattawoman-Beantown Road, Waldorf, MD 20601. In lieu of flowers please make a donation in Patricia Bohle's name to American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 7023, Merrifield, VA 22116-7023 or online at <https://diabetes.org>

Lou Pepper, 84

Robert (Lou) Pepper, surrounded by family daily, passed peacefully (April 16, 1938-March 5, 2023). His wife, Helen, of 55 years, preceded him September of 2014. Lou was extremely proud of his children, Teri (John 2005) daughter, and sons, Timothy (Teresa) and Troy (Yanti) Pepper. Granddad Pep especially loved his five little Peppers: grandchildren, Crystal (Matt) Sigafoose, Robert (Sara) Pepper, Ashley Pepper, Gabrielle Pepper and Juliette Pepper. He said he was a lucky man having such wonderful great grandchildren, Lucas and Camden Sigafoose & Colton and Skylar Pepper.

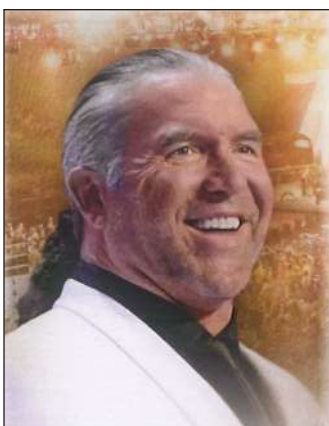
Lou joined the Navy as a young teenager, then fell in love with Helen Edwards, married, started a family and worked his way up from apprentice to journeyman in the HVAC environment, eventually becoming self-employed until his retirement. Lou coached football for the Clinton Boys and Girls Club and won Championships for XX years in a row and mentored many young boys, some of whom reached out as friends on social media and kept in touch with him.

He will always be remembered as sometimes gruff, sometimes a softy but always a formidable strong presence as Dad to his kids and Granddad Pep to his grand/great children and many others.

Show Lou some love by helping out your local Boys and Girls Club with a donation to purchase new equipment and all the needed supplies necessary to keep all kids safe and healthy playing sports.

Ray Taylor, 63

Ray Edward Taylor, "Opie", 63, Lexington Park, MD, formerly of Clarksburg, OH, passed away on February 27, 2023 in Leonardtown, MD. The family will receive friends on Friday, March 10, 2023 from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM in the Mattingly-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held at 3:00 PM with Deacon Walter Rourke officiating. Interment will be private.



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Mom, Jeff, and Steve

St. Mary's Community Calendar

Fri, Mar 10

Contra Dance

37497 Zach Fowler Road, Chaptico
7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Come out to swing, promenade, and do-si-do to lively jigs, reels and waltzes played by the So. MD Open Band. A caller will teach and call the dances. Dance workshop at 7:00 PM. Dance begins at 7:30 PM. No partner required. Beginner's welcome

Sat, Mar 11

"Lifting Jesus Higher and Higher"

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
23421 King's Creek Rd, California
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Pray, Praise, Promise Apostolic Church will sponsor a gospel concert to benefit St. Mary's Caring Soup Kitchen, Three Oaks Shelter and other needs.

Participants include soloist Sister Bonita

Ruff, Keep in Touch Brothers, Brother Ron Cradle of Restoration Church, Harmonizers of Faith, Mt. Gethsemane Holiness Church Praise Team, Elder Dezi Weems of the Church of God—God's Choice and the St. Peter Claver Church Choir.

2 Cor. 9-7 For God Loves a Cheerful Giver

Annual STEAM Event

Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
22156 Three Notch Road
Lexington Park
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Join the museum in celebrating its annual STEAM Day. There will be various professionals throughout the museum representing Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. Each STEAM group will have an activity for museum visitors to interact with.

All children 13 and under will receive free admission to the event. High School Students that present an active student ID will also receive free admission. Accompanying adults will receive a reduced ticket price.

Sun, Mar 12

Turkey Shoot and Oyster Scald

7th District Optimist Park
21860 Colton Point Rd, Bushwood
12 p.m. start time

Kid's shoot, cash shot. Hot dogs, chili and cold drinks.

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www.7thdistrictoptimist.org

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\$17 fried oysters or fried scallops

\$24 seafood platter

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Kids Meal: Five fish sticks and one side for \$5.

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Desserts offered by IHM cash only

Mon, Mar 13

Pax River Quilters Guild Meeting

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church
20850 Langley Road
Lexington Park
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Pax River Quilters Guild will host its monthly meeting which will include a trunk show by one of our guild members. Meetings are the second Monday of every month and feature guest speakers, show and tells, and other fun activities. Pax River Quilters Guild is a non-profit organization devoted to philanthropic quilting projects and promoting the skill of quilting. New members of all skill levels are welcome. For questions, email: prpgsmd@gmail.com

Website: paxriverquiltguild.com/

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Home & Garden

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Options to Finance Home Improvements

Renovating a home is a great way to impart personality indoors and out. Improvements can make spaces more livable and address safety issues. Home renovations often take residents' lifestyles into account, and changes can be customized to accommodate a growing family or an empty nest.

No matter the job, home improvements tend to be costly. According to the financial resource SoFi, on average, the cost to renovate or remodel a whole house runs between \$10 and \$60 per square foot. Certain rooms demand a higher cost, with a kitchen or bathroom remodel costing around \$100 to \$250 per square foot due to electrical and plumbing needs. Figuring out how to pay for the improvement project is as essential to the planning process as picking out materials and contractors.

The following are some financial considerations and financing options for homeowners looking to renovate their properties.

- Consider if the investment is worth it. Remodeling magazine routinely assesses common improvements and how much homeowners can expect to recoup on the investment in its annual "Cost v. Value" report. In 2022, a homeowner spending \$4,000 on a garage door replacement recouped

93.3 percent of the investment, whereas adding a midrange bathroom at \$63,000 would only offer a 51.8 percent return. Homeowners must decide if they want to go forward with the project if they're likely to get just a \$33,000 return when they choose to sell the home later on.

- Refinance the home mortgage. Homeowners can use a cash-out mortgage refinance as a way to access thousands of dollars for a remodel. This taps into a home's equity. Keep in mind that the mortgage will then be a new mortgage at the current interest rate and an outstanding balance higher than what was the current one. Typically 20 percent equity in the home is needed to refinance.
- Take out a personal loan. For those who do not want to refinance, a personal loan or home improvement loan can be good for mid-sized projects, according to American Express. Personal loans for home renovations typically require no collateral and one's credit score determines the interest rate.
- Utilize a home equity line of credit. A HELOC is a form of revolving credit, like a credit card. Homeowners borrow against the credit line granted



with the home being the collateral. As a person pays down what is owed, he or she can borrow more. This is a good idea for recurring or long-term home improvements.

- Try a home equity loan. Home equity loans use the home as collateral like a HELOC. The home equity loan is an installment loan for a fixed amount on a fixed monthly schedule for a set term. These are sometimes called sec-

ond mortgages.

- No- or low-interest credit card. Smaller projects can be financed using credit cards. Many will offer introductory rates with no interest for a few months. This is generally only preferable if a person can pay off the balance before interest is charged.

These are the primary ways to finance home improvement projects when costs exceed available cash on hand.





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Choosing the Right Plants for Your Landscape



Each year, gardening enthusiasts anxiously await the arrival of spring. Spring is a great season to plant new flowers, plants, grasses, and trees, making it a popular time of year to spend sunny days out in the yard.

Veteran gardeners may know their land-

scapes well and be able to pick the right plants on their own. Novices may need a little help as they look to give their landscapes a whole new look. The following are some helpful tips to help homeowners pick the right plants for their landscapes.

- Conduct a site evaluation. A colorful landscape featuring an array of plants and flowers can be eye-catching and add curb appeal to a property. However, where plants will be planted is a significant variable that must be considered before homeowners choose what to plant. The Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst notes that site evaluation is the first step when picking plants. A number of factors must be evaluated, including light availability; water availability; exposure to the elements, including wind and extreme temperatures; and competition from existing vegetation, among other things. Document these variables prior to picking plants. For example, take note of the area you plan to plant to see if it is full sun or partial shade, and then pick plants whose growing conditions align with those you observe.

- Look at more than looks. Aesthetic appeal might be what homeowners most desire from their landscapes, but that appeal is only achieved when the right plants are chosen for a space. If the wrong plants are chosen, they're unlikely to thrive or they could threaten existing vegetation, thus compromising the overall appeal of the property. Native plants can often handle local weather conditions, so prioritize natives over more exotic plants whose key attribute is aesthetic appeal. If jaw-drop-

ping aesthetic appeal is your top priority, speak with a local landscaping professional about which natives can provide that without compromising surrounding vegetation.

- Consider maintenance prior to planting. Maintenance is another variable gardeners must consider. Newly planted trees may require substantial watering until they've fully established their roots, and some homeowners may not have time for that. In addition, certain plants may require a considerable amount of pruning in order to create and maintain the look homeowners desire. Individuals must be willing to invest the time and effort necessary to maintain new plantings that require such diligence. If not, look for plants that don't require much maintenance while keeping in mind that even low-maintenance plants still require some effort and attention.

- Consider local wildlife. If your lawn is routinely visited by local wildlife, then look for plants that won't look like a meal to these welcome, if uninvited, guests. For example, if you routinely see deer lounging around in your backyard, look for deer-resistant plants. This is a good way to protect your investment, of both time and money, and ensure minimal wildlife traffic through your newly landscaped yard.

Spring gardens are awe-inspiring, especially when homeowners embrace various strategies for successful planting.

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What to Know About Landscape Lighting



Home improvement trends come and go, and one trend that has become wildly popular in recent years is recognizable in yards every night. Landscape lighting has transformed how people see and enjoy their properties at night, making it one of the more sought-after upgrades among modern homeowners.

Curb appeal is often seen through the lens of how homes appear during daylight

hours, but landscape lighting can make homes look better and more modern, and potentially safer, after the sun goes down. With such potential, landscape lighting is worth exploring for homeowners looking to upgrade their properties.

Are there different types of landscape lighting?

When considering landscape lighting,

homeowners should know that there are various options to consider. According to the lighting experts at Lumens, spotlights project a concentrated and narrow beam of light that's usually around 45 degrees. Spotlights are often chosen to highlight specific features on a property, like a component of the landscaping. Individuals who want to cast light over wider, more general areas may consider floodlights, which Lumens notes spread light up to 120 degrees.

Inground lighting is among the more sophisticated landscape lighting options. Lumens notes that inground lighting illuminates the whole of a tree or structure, often creating a dramatic look. These circle-shaped lights also are great at illuminating walkways and driveways.

Post lights are another outdoor lighting option, and these are often used to light up long walkways and pathways so it's easier and safer to navigate dark areas at night.

Can a DIYer handle landscape lighting?

Many homeowners consider a do-it-yourself approach when pondering a potential home renovation, and a landscape lighting project is likely to inspire such curiosity as well. The home experts at HGTV note that the feasibility of DIY in regard to a landscape lighting project depends on the type of lighting homeowners want to install and where they want to install it. Replacing an existing electrical

fixture may be well within the skill of a seasoned DIYer, but installing a new fixture is a job best left to the professionals. Homeowners whose homes currently have no or very little landscape lighting are almost certainly better off working with a professional. Solar lighting that does not require any electrical work can be installed quickly and easily by anyone, but such options may not provide the look homeowners are aiming for.

How much lighting is necessary?

The amount of lighting homeowners want to install is up to them. If the home currently has little or no landscape lighting, a consultation with a professional can help to determine how much lighting to install and where to install it. When discussing landscape lighting, homeowners may want to inquire about dimmers. Dimmers can increase or decrease lighting depending on the situation. For example, homeowners may want a little extra light during a party, but less when relaxing alone outside at night. Dimmers allow homeowners to adjust as necessary.

Landscape lighting is a popular home renovation trend. Homeowners considering adding landscape lighting to their property are urged to work with a skilled professional to devise and install a set-up that makes their homes more appealing at night.

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How to Compare Contractors' Bids

Home renovation projects are significant undertakings. It is common for homeowners who may not have the time nor the expertise to do the work themselves to call in professionals to tackle these jobs.

According to the home improvement resource HomeGuide.com, for a bathroom remodel, which is one of the more popular improvement projects, installation and labor accounts for 10 to 25 percent of the total project cost. In general, many contractors pay themselves \$300 to \$500 for an hourly rate, while helpers may make \$150 per hour.

Materials used account for the other components of an overall project cost. Homeowners negotiate the best rates possible by obtaining a number of bids from contractors, spelling out both labor and material costs and determining their best option. Here's how to compare bids.

Check as many reviews as possible

Go online, ask friends for recommendations, or rely on the Better Business Bureau to find reliable contractors. A contractor who seems too good to be true will not necessarily be so, but it's still best to vet each professional thoroughly prior to signing a contract.

Cost basis vs bid basis

Certain contractors will produce an estimate based on the best guess of the cost

of supplies then add on a flat fee or percentage for their services. This is called a cost basis bid. Others will create a bid that includes all their anticipated supply and labor costs, known as a bid basis bid. Know what you're getting to make the most accurate comparison.

Create a master itemized checklist

It's easy to explain the project differently from one contractor to another when doing so verbally. That may result in a different plan and price. Rather, make a checklist of what you want done and have several copies to give to the contractors with whom you meet. This makes it easier to compare costs line by line.

Have specific materials in mind

Make sure bids are based on the same materials and tasks. For example, if you're comparing window replacement quotes, be sure that each quote is based on the same window material and coating. Vinyl replacement windows may not cost the same as fiberglass or wood.

It is much easier to compare pricing when contractors provide estimates reflecting the same materials.

Small versus big contracting companies

Some bids may differ based on the manpower of the company. One contractor may view a project as an easy one that can be



slipped right into the schedule. Another may have to devote more time and effort if it is being undertaken by one or two people. This can affect cost in the quote. Furthermore, a contractor who does a lot of advertising in print, television or online, or has an office or warehouse space, may have extra overhead costs that are passed on to the customer.

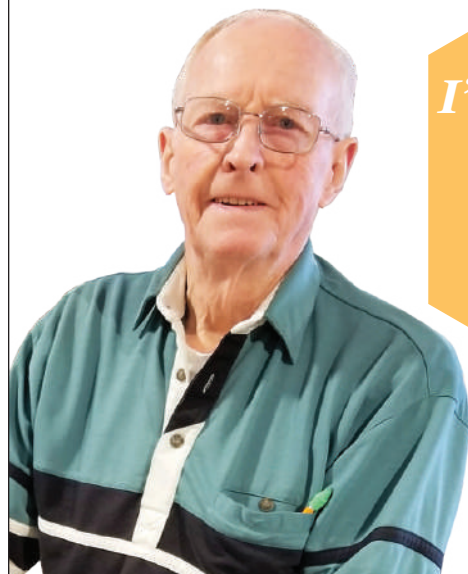
Doing your own demo

Figure out if the contractor will allow you to perform a portion of the tear-out, clean-up or other tasks to save on labor costs. Make sure this is included in the bid.

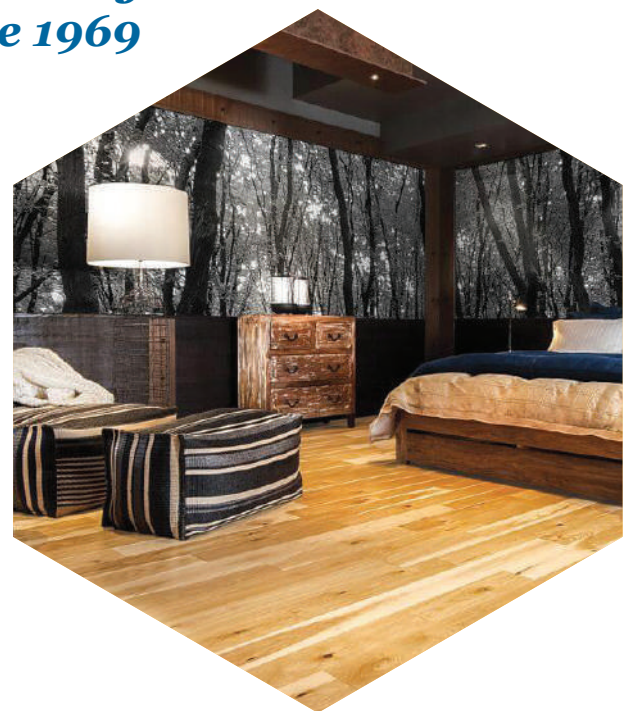
Comparing contractor work bids can be tricky, but it helps homeowners know they're getting the best value for their money.

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How to Make Your Backyard Safe for Dogs



Dogs, particularly puppies, can be full of boundless energy. Channeling that energy into exercise with long walks or play sessions can help stem dogs' propensity to get into trouble around the house as they burn off extra adrenaline. Pets who don't have an energy outlet may chew off-limits objects or get into other mischief.

According to the American Kennel Club, the amount of exercise a dog needs depends on the animal's age and breed. For example, border collies or Siberian huskies may require much more exercise than English bulldogs, simply because the former are working breeds. Pet owners with large backyards often find those outdoor spots are ideal for when their dogs get the "zoomies," something that tends to be a daily occurrence. Letting their dogs run around yards, whether on their own or chasing tossed tennis balls, is an ideal way to provide exercise and tire out pups. In such scenarios, it's vital that pups have a dog-friendly yard in which to play.

Use safe lawn care products

An expanse of grass is the perfect place to frolic or enjoy some sunbathing — for people or pets. But contact with chemically treated lawns can cause a number of health issues for dogs, such as allergies or intestinal upset.

Switching to native grasses can reduce the need to use chemicals to get lush lawns. When supplementation is needed, homeowners can switch to organic products or natural compost as safer alternatives than chemical-based products.

Fence off the yard

Off-leash running and bounding through the yard will make any dog smile. However, a fence is a must-have to ensure a dog doesn't become an escape artist. Be sure the fence is high enough so that the pup

cannot jump over it. Burying chicken wire in the dirt beneath the lower edge of the fence also can help prevent dogs who like to dig from exiting by crawling underneath the fence.

Consider installing a lock on the fence gate so that no one can wander in and surprise the dog, which may startle the animal and prompt it to defend the property. A lock also helps prevent dog theft.

Keep the yard tidy

Maintaining a clean yard also is key to safety. Inspect the yard regularly to make sure nothing is around that can prove harmful, whether it's poison ivy, felled branches or broken fence panels. Also, keep shrubs and grass trimmed to reduce flea and tick populations on the property.

Avoid poisonous plants

Certain plants can be dangerous if they're consumed by curious pups. Chrysanthemums, peonies, irises, and hydrangeas are some plants that can be poisonous. For a full list of poisonous plants, visit the ASPCA website (aspcaweb.org).

Keep an eye on animals

Dogs can spend some unattended time in the yard, but check in from time to time. Should wildlife get into the yard, dogs may get hurt by tussles or bites. Birds of prey, such as owls, hawks and even vultures, may attack small dogs in a yard. According to Pat Silvosky, director of the Milford Nature Center in Kansas, some birds can be territorial. While they might not view a dog as an easy meal, they could swoop down and attack to defend territory. The same may occur with other wild animals.

A dog-friendly yard may require a little effort to create, but it's worth a little sweat equity to keep pups safe.



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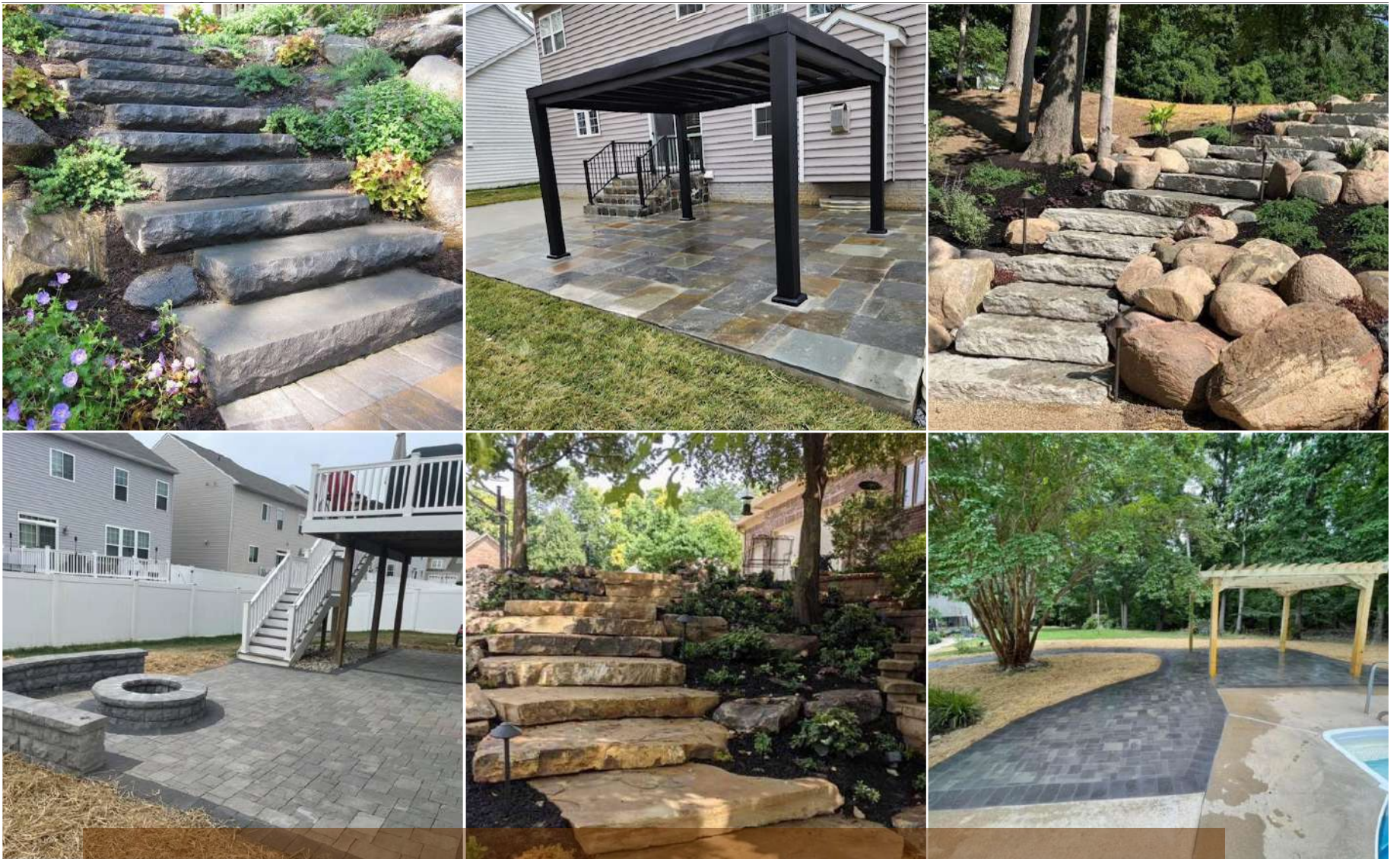
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Create More Privacy on Your Property



An inviting backyard can serve as a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life. After a long day at the office or an exhausting day spent transporting kids to and fro, it's hard to resist the allure of a peaceful outdoor space in which to unwind.

Privacy is a key component of any backyard oasis. Some homes may be so remote that privacy isn't an issue. But many suburban homeowners recognize they might need to tweak their landscapes if they hope to create a private oasis outside.

Fencing or planting?

Most homeowners looking to create more privacy on their property will have to choose between fencing and planting. Fencing provides immediate privacy because, once it's installed, no one can see into the yard. Fencing also doesn't require watering or other immediate upkeep, which will be necessary when planting to ensure tree roots can establish themselves.

But planting has its benefits as well. Planting for privacy is essentially creating a living fence that can grow over time and provide even more privacy as trees reach maturity. Plants also tend to be less costly than fencing. The home renovation experts at BobVila.com estimate that fencing projects typically cost between \$1,667 and \$4,075. However, fencing projects can cost considerably more than \$4,000, especially for homeowners with large properties they want to enclose. Large, mature trees can be expensive, though it's unlikely they will cost as much as fencing. In addition, fencing requires more maintenance and will potentially need to be replaced, while native trees won't require much upkeep and can last for generations.

Planting

Homeowners who choose to plant for privacy will next have to decide which type of plants to add to their properties. Evergreens provide year-round privacy because they don't shed their leaves, so these are the ones most often chosen when

creating a living fence. A number of varieties of evergreen trees can do the job, but it's important that homeowners consult with a landscape architect prior to choosing trees so they can ensure the trees will thrive when faced with the growing conditions on their properties. During such a consultation, homeowners may discuss the following popular privacy trees.

- **Leyland cypress:** The Arbor Day Foundation® notes that the Leyland cypress is popular for hedges and boundaries, likely because a typical tree reaches a mature height of 60'-70' and can spread as wide as 25'. The Leyland cypress grows fast, which may appeal to homeowners who don't want to wait to establish privacy.
- **Green Giant Arborvitae:** There are different varieties of the arborvitae, but the Green Giant tends to be the go-to option for privacy. The ADF notes that Green Giants will grow up to three feet per year until they reach maturity, providing a fast-growing option for privacy planters. The Green Giant can spread as wide as 20 feet at maturity, which is another attribute that makes it so popular among homeowners desiring privacy.
- **Eastern White Pine:** The ADF notes that the eastern white pine, which can reach heights as high as 80 feet, is favored in spacious yards. That's likely due to its height and its potential spread, which can reach 40 feet. Homeowners who choose the eastern white pine might like it for its resemblance to a Christmas tree, and in fact it is widely used for that purpose. The privacy provided by the eastern white pine is significant, but it might be best suited to especially large properties.

Whether it's fencing or planting, homeowners have many options to consider as they seek to create more privacy on their properties.



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Some Hidden Costs of DIY

The home renovation industry is booming, and that's reflected in the cost to upgrade a home. Home Guide says remodeling a kitchen costs \$25,000 on average, and a bathroom renovation runs around \$10,000. Though rates fluctuate depending on a host of variables, renovations can cost \$15 to \$60 per square foot depending on the project.

The average homeowner wants to save as much money as possible when renovating their home. Many think doing much of the work themselves is the easiest way to keep costs low. What some homeowners may not realize is that DIY can be costly and prove a big hassle in the long run. The following are some hidden costs of DIY and renovating in general.

Time

DIY projects are a major drain on free time. Homeowners taking the DIY route typically work on weekends or after work. Few people can take off and devote their undivided attention to a remodel like a contractor can. Time is a valuable resource that is not renewable. Therefore, think of a DIY project in terms of what it would equal in lost wages. Because homeowners are not professionals, a DIY project may take double the time it would take a contractor. It may be worth it to simply hire it out.

Mistakes

Many resources are available to help DIY enthusiasts work on a project, but there are still tricks and techniques learned after years on the job. DIYers may damage their homes by taking shortcuts or not understanding how to do a job properly. A plumbing mistake, for example, may lead to flooding that damages another room in the home. And such mistakes may not be covered by homeowners insurance policies.

Fines

Permits are required for many home improvement projects. Forgetting to obtain permits or not realizing one may be necessary could subject you to hefty fines and/or force the job to be redone so it's up to code. Professionals likely know the rules regarding permits and often include the cost of acquiring permits in an estimate.

Remediation

It's only after opening up walls or removing floors that you may discover issues you did not anticipate, such as termite damage or mold. These unforeseen factors can drive up the overall costs of a project.

Disposal

Removing old building materials or gutting a room is part of many renovations.

Chances are this refuse simply cannot be left at the curb for trash pickup. As a DIYer, you may not factor the costs for a dumpster or the time and money required to haul debris to a recycling or landfill center.

Tools

DIYers may have to purchase tools

as they engage in new projects. These expenses can add up and negate the savings of doing some of the work yourself.

DIY projects may initially seem like a way to save money, but weekend warriors should calculate the hidden costs associated with DIY renovations before deciding to do some work on their own.



In addition to overhead lines, SMECO has many underground electric lines. Call **Miss Utility at 811** before you dig.



Stay safe around power lines

With the return of spring, many people are excited to head outdoors and get started on some projects around the house and yard. It's important to stay safe and be aware of overhead power lines. Look up.

- Never climb power poles or transmission towers.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- Keep equipment away from overhead lines when carrying ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning tools
- If you are doing work close to power lines—such as trimming trees, working on your roof, or doing exterior renovations—keep yourself, your ladder, and anything you are handling a safe distance from the power line.
- Contact SMECO to disconnect power if you are doing work that requires close contact with overhead lines attached to your home.
- Use a licensed electrician for all electrical work.
- Plant trees away from power lines.



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Shedding Some Light on Home Solar

Consumers shopping around for home improvement projects may be leaning toward overhauls that can reduce energy consumption and save them money in the long run. This is a driving factor behind a growing number of homeowners investigating solar energy for their residences.

How does solar power work?

Solar power harnesses the sun's energy and converts it into electricity that can be used in homes. Many people are familiar with photovoltaics (PV), which are the panels that absorb sunlight and create an electric field across their layers. Another solar technology, known as concentrating solar power, is primarily used in large power plants and is not appropriate for residential use, according to Energy.gov.

According to the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have been put in use across the United States since 2008.

Costs associated with solar

The upfront expense of solar panels is significant, costing anywhere from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for initial installation. However, comparatively speaking, homeowners can spend \$1,500 or more per year on electricity, so solar panels will pay for themselves over time. Keep in mind that

costs may vary depending on energy needs and how many panels will be required to service the system.

How much electricity can I expect?

The Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Advice says that the amount of power generated from a solar energy system depends on a few factors:

1. The average number of hours of direct, unshaded sunlight your roof gets each year;
2. The pitch (angle), age and condition of your roof, and the compass direction it faces;
3. The size and strength of your system; and
4. Environmental factors such as snow, dust or shade that may cover the system.

Save even more money

Consumers can contact their utility companies to find out if they provide homeowners who produce solar power with "net metering." This program pays the homeowner money or gives credit for excess power the system produces and returns to the electric grid. Individuals also may be eligible for energy tax credits or other benefits.

Homeowners may find it worthwhile to explore solar energy, particularly if they consume a high amount of electricity.

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Budget-Friendly Ways to Freshen Up Your Home's Exterior

As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an "average cost" of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.



- **Power washing:** Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.
- **Furnished front porch:** A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an

entryway at low cost.

- **Window box installation:** Installing window box planters is another cost-effective way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.
- **Replace hardware:** Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.



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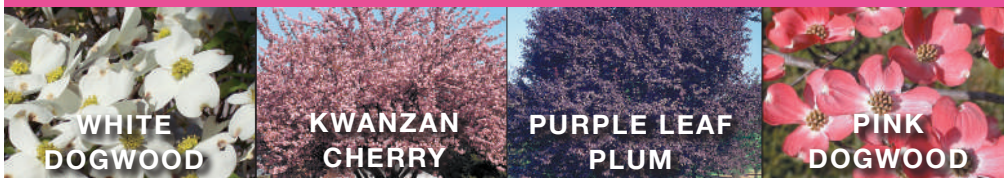
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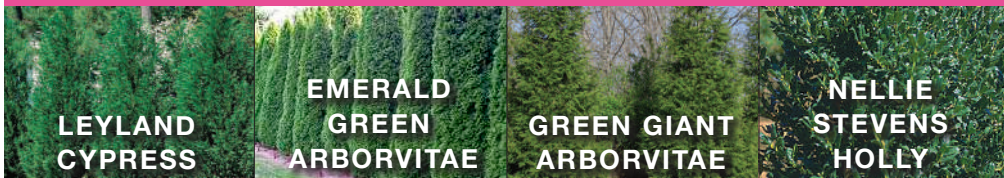
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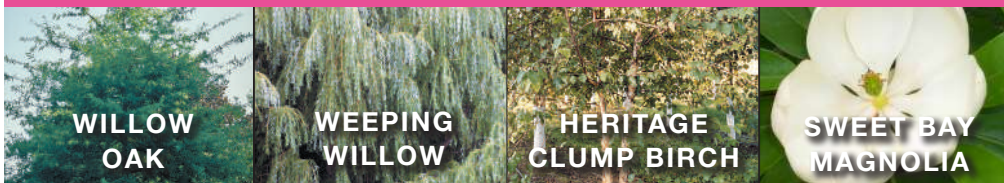
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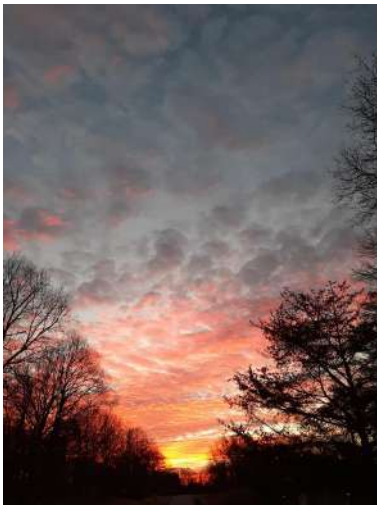
Wanderings

of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



"Almost 9 to Almost 5"



I finally did a 9 to 5 and it felt really good! No, I don't mean a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday, I mean I fell asleep a bit after 9 p.m. and did not wake up until 5 a.m., well 4:57 a.m. to be exact. Normally I get 3 or 4 hours of sleep at the most. If I could get 7 hours every night I could rule the world.

Of course, you know the reason I woke up at 4:57 a.m. if you are my age or older. I always hope I can take care of that mission with the bathroom light completely off and with my eyes closed or nearly closed and get back to bed and right back off to dreamland. But you have to wash your hands afterwards right? Sometimes I get impatient waiting for the

water to get warm and stick my soapy hands under the stream too soon and get a jolt of ice cold water. Okay, eyes are partially open now.

Once that necessary task is accomplished, I notice my nose starts running and the typical morning congestion starts which means I have to go to the kitchen and get an Alavert allergy tablet. While I am fighting for three minutes to get the devil's made contraption of sealed foil around the tablet off I realize that my fingers and back are really painful, so its time to take my Excedrin Migraine to take the edge off which means I will have to turn on the kitchen light because I have a few pill bottles that size. Eyes are nearly wide open now.

If I am taking my Excedrin to get the fingers working I might as well take my prednisone for all the other painful parts. I always drink a glass or two of water with the Excedrin, so it won't upset my esophagus or stomach (If you have ever burned a hole in your esophagus from too many NSAIDS which I have done twice, then you will know why I drink so much water and never lay down immediately after pills). Well, I have to sit up to drink the water might as well turn on the TV and hear the early morning news. It's about 5:15 a.m. or so now. I may still have time to lay back down until the sun begins to rise. But let me check my phone first. I am only going to check email really quick and see what my friends are doing on Facebook. It's now 6 a.m. and I wonder where 45 minutes of life just went that I will never get back. Eyes are wide open but glazed with double vision now; I see two of everything when I glance up from my phone at the news occasionally, missing any segment I wanted to listen to. And also, the Eastern sky is just beginning to lighten so I need to start the tea kettle and get my Scottish Breakfast tea to steeping.

By 6:20 a.m. my head is thumping because my Blood Pressure has skyrocketed from the other two pills, so after a trip to the necessary room, I go get yet another glass of water, my BP pill, and my other morning meds and give up all hope of going back to bed because it is time for the sunrise, oh glorious sunrise. I'm sure you remember that I am obsessive about seeing the sunrise every morning. Going off on a Freudian tangent and doing like all the celebrities do (except they make a ton of money about their childhoods), I believe my need to see the sunrise is directly linked to the fact that my mother liked everything dark with low lamp light or no lights and dark velvet drapes covering most of the windows, add in the heavy cloud of two chain-smoking parents and it was suffocating in many ways. My mother said that her family and friends called her Theda Bara when she was young after the silent film actress with the heavy kohl-rimmed eyes who was referred to as the Vamp or Vampire. So yes, a light filled house with sheer curtains and the sunrise are important to me.

6:30 a.m. The routine of the morning has kicked in: Mindy has rolled on her back to get her morning leg stretch and massage and my strong breakfast tea is perfectly steeped and creamed & sugared to my taste. I breathe in the scent of the tea, take a long sip, and watch as the golden sunrise with all the lovely prism of colors is filling the morning sky just breaking over the trees up on the crest of our road. My eyes are wide, my heart is open...with the beauty and promise of a new day.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

Please send your comments or ideas to: shelbys.wanderings@yahoo.com or find me on Facebook

FINANCIAL FOCUS

Have you built an emergency fund?

Many people make financial New Year's resolutions, such as reducing their debts or contributing more to their retirement accounts — both of which are certainly worthy goals. But among those who planned to make a financial resolution for 2023, the primary reason was the desire to build an emergency savings fund, according to a December 2022 study by research firm Morning Consult.

Factors such as economic concerns and the sharp rise in inflation seem to be driving this greater interest in building an emergency fund. But it's extremely valuable to maintain this type of fund in any economic environment. An emergency fund can help you prepare for a temporary job loss or early retirement, or pay for large home or auto repairs, sizable medical bills and other needs.

So, how much do you need to keep in an emergency fund? The answer depends on your stage of life. If you're still working, you might want at least three to six months' worth of living expenses in your emergency fund. If you're already retired, however, you may need at least three months' worth of expenses for emergencies, plus another 12 months' worth of expenses, after accounting for your other sources of income, to cover your everyday spending needs.

And if you are retired, it's especially important to maintain this larger emergency fund so you can avoid dipping into your investment portfolio to pay for any unforeseen costs and daily expenses. As you know, the financial markets can be volatile, so, if it's possible, you'll want to avoid having to sell investments when their prices may be down.

When building an emergency fund, where should you keep the money? You'll need it to be accessible, so you'll want it in a liquid investment vehicle. At the same time, you don't want to take risks with this fund, so you'll want to be confident that your principal will likely be preserved. Some possibilities might include short-term certificates of deposit (CDs) or money market accounts. But wherever you put the money, keep it separate from your regular checking or savings account — it's called an "emergency" fund for a reason, and you don't want to mingle it with the accounts you use every day.

Given the high cost of living, it's not always easy to sock away money for emergencies — and if you wait until all your bills are paid before addressing an emergency fund, you may only make very slow progress. One possible strategy is to pay yourself first, so to speak, by having some money automatically moved from your checking or savings account each month into your emergency fund. And whenever you get a financial windfall, such as a tax refund or a year-end bonus at work, you might use some of it for this fund.

It will take time and discipline to build and maintain an emergency fund. But once you've got such a fund in place, you'll feel more confident in your ability to deal with unexpected costs that could potentially disrupt your progress toward your financial goals. So, make it a priority this year to build or strengthen your emergency fund. It will be worth the effort.

*Article was contributed by David McDonough
Financial Advisor at Edward Jones
Office located at 41680 Miss Bessie Dr. Suite 302
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301 997 1707*

Legal Notices

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

CASE NO: C-18-CV-23-000102

Glen E. Vacek,
Plaintiff

v.

Chesapeake Land & Development
20720 Golden Thompson Rd 27, Site #27
Avenue, MD 20609

and

St. Mary's County, Maryland,

and

all unknown owners of the property described below, their heirs, devisees and personal representatives and their or any of their heirs, devisees, executors, administrators, grantees, assigns, or successors in right, title and interest and any and all persons having or claiming to have an interest in the property described as:

20720 Golden Thompson Rd 27, Site #27, Plat 38/74, St. Patrick's Campground

and also known as Account Number 07-039182

Defendants

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this proceeding is to secure the foreclosure of all rights of redemption in the following property, sold by the Collector of Taxes for St. Mary's County to the Plaintiff:

20720 Golden Thompson Rd 27, Site #27, Plat 38/74, St. Patrick's Campground and also known as Account Number 07-039182

The Complaint states, among other things, that the amounts necessary for redemption have not been paid. It is therefore on this 21st day of February, 2023, by the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland:

ORDERED, that notice be given by insertion of a copy of this ORDER in some newspaper having a general circulation in St. Mary's County once a week for 3 successive weeks, warning all persons interested in the property to appear in this Court by the 21st day of April, 2023 and redeem the property and answer the Complaint, or thereafter a Final Judgment will be entered foreclosing all rights of redemption in the property, and vesting in the Plaintiff a title, free and clear of all encumbrances.

Debra J. Burch
Clerk of Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

CASE NO: C-18-CV-23-000103

Glen E. Vacek,
Plaintiff

v.

Chesapeake Land & Development
20720 Golden Thompson Rd 28, Site #28
Avenue, MD 20609

and

St. Mary's County, Maryland,

and

all unknown owners of the property described below, their heirs, devisees and personal representatives and their or any of their heirs, devisees, executors, administrators, grantees, assigns, or successors in right, title and interest and any and all persons having or claiming to have an interest in the property described as:

20720 Golden Thompson Rd 28, Site #28, Plat 38/74, St. Patrick's Campground

and also known as Account Number 07-039190

Defendants

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this proceeding is to secure the foreclosure of all rights of redemption in the following property, sold by the Collector of Taxes for St. Mary's County to the Plaintiff:

20720 Golden Thompson Rd 28, Site #28, Plat 38/74, St. Patrick's Campground and also known as Account Number 07-039190

The Complaint states, among other things, that the amounts necessary for redemption have not been paid. It is therefore on this 21st day of February, 2023, by the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland:

ORDERED, that notice be given by insertion of a copy of this ORDER in some newspaper having a general circulation in St. Mary's County once a week for 3 successive weeks, warning all persons interested in the property to appear in this Court by the 21st day of April, 2023 and redeem the property and answer the Complaint, or thereafter a Final Judgment will be entered foreclosing all rights of redemption in the property, and vesting in the Plaintiff a title, free and clear of all encumbrances.

Debra J. Burch
Clerk of Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel(s) has apparently been abandoned for more than 60 days on the private marina/property of: Point Lookout Marina, LLC., 16244 Millers Wharf Road, Ridge, MD 20680, 301-872-5000.

The vessels are described as:

- MD 8253 AU
HULL # RCMR1315J788
1988 Regal Red/White Hull
Name "Bay Break"
- MD 9588 CD
HULL # TRJ040051273
1973 Trojan White Hull
Name "Island Twist"
- MD 4886 CF
HULL # ALC7D2550582
1982 Marinette White Hull
Name "Endless Summer"

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

CASE NO: C-18-CV-23-000145

SINAN CESUR
19805 Center Avenue
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971
Plaintiff

v.

STEVEN BROWN
4701 Sargent Rd., NE
Washington, DC 20017-2722

-and-

MATTIE L. BROWN
4701 Sargent Rd., NE
Washington, DC 20017-2722

-and-

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P.O. Box 1
Leonardtown, MD 20650

-and-

CHRISTINE L. KELLY, Treasurer
P.O. Box 642
Leonardtown, MD 20650

and

Unknown owners of property known as Lt 10 & 11, Longview, 07-002955
the unknown owners, heirs, devisees, and personal representatives, and their or
any of their heirs, devisees, executors, administrators, grantees, assigns, or succes-
sors in right, title and interest

Defendants

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this proceeding is to secure the foreclosure of all rights of redemp-
tion in the following property located in St. Mary's County, Maryland, sold by the
Collector of Taxes for the County of St. Mary's and the State of Maryland to the
Plaintiff, in this proceeding:

Account Number 07-002955, *UNASSIGNED, LT-10&11, LONGVIEW

The Complaint states, among other things, that the amount necessary for redemp-
tion has not been paid.

It is thereupon this 27th day of February, 2023, by the Circuit Court for St. Mary's
County, Maryland, ORDERED, that this notice be given by the insertion of a copy
of this Order in some newspaper having a general circulation in St. Mary's County,
Maryland, once a week for three (3) successive weeks, warning all persons inter-
ested in the property to appear in this Court by the 27th day of March, 2023, and
redeem the property above described and answer the Complaint or thereafter a final
Judgment will be entered foreclosing all rights of redemption in the property, and
vesting in the Plaintiff a title free and clear of all encumbrances.

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Townsel Presents Budget to Commissioners

Superintendent Grilled by Grasso

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

“It’s an unprecedented dollar amount that you are asking for,” Calvert County Commissioner President Buddy Hance observed at the end of an hour-and-25-minute presentation by School Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel of his proposed \$271.3 million budget that is seeking \$22.4 million more from the county than the current fiscal year (13.9 percent increase).

Commissioner Vice President Mike Hart observed, “It’s going to be the most difficult one I’ve approached. This will be my ninth budget. I think it’s important that however we get down to whatever the numbers are, that we make sure it’s a sustainable budget.”

Townsel’s proposed budget was the subject of a school board work session on March 2 (see separate story) that included persistent questioning. The March 7 session with the commissioners was no exception and expanded to include grilling on persistent concerns raised during the election that propelled three new commissioners to office. Commissioner Catherine Grasso led the charge.

Grasso wanted to know why Dr. Townsel highlighted third grade performance in presenting test scores. He said, “Do you know third grade is a very pivotal moment in education. A lot of times, in some areas, dropout rates are determined by third grade achievement. So, it’s a very focused group. We have an amazing third grade staff here in Calvert County Public Schools. The educators, the supervisors that support our elementary population, they do a phenomenal job with that third grader the same way with our middle school population. Our eighth graders are absolutely prepared to go into our high school. And when we take that MCAP test at our high school level, our young people do a phenomenal job at that level. It’s the in-betweens that we can really focus on to have high quality teaching and learning. Across the state of Maryland, test scores have dropped, and it’s also dropped in Calvert County Public Schools. I would attribute that to potential learning loss during the pandemic. A lot of the virtual learning, the asynchronous instruction. It was very challenging for a lot of populations across the country. We do believe that we have a budget designed to increase academic achievement over time.”

Grasso then went on to ask, “How are we helping students make up for the pandemic loss? What are you all doing to bring the kids back up to snuff? Do you have tutors who come in?”

Townsel responded: “Our educators go above and beyond for us. The first thing we did was went back to traditional schooling,” adding there were no restrictions such as masking, “nothing to prohibit or to cause any type of attendance concerns or issues. Our schools completely, professionally developed. Our teachers and our young people are rocking and rolling in the classroom. As a matter of fact, later this month and next month, we’re testing for the MCAP again. We’re very confident. We are very encouraged with the scores that we took. We are very encouraged that our student achievement this time next year will have something to celebrate.”

Then Grasso asked: “Why are we still funding a virtual academy?”

Townsel said, “We still have young people and families who still look to that service. Although it’s a very small population of young people, that is something that we’re going to consider at the district level as whether it is the appropriate return on investment for the population of which it serves.”

Grasso persisted: “Why do we have that?” The pandemic is over. Why are we spending money on that?

Townsel responded, “Some of our families still, prior to my arrival, we have hundreds of families enrolled into the program. They thought it was best for their kids and in some cases it is. But when you look at 16,000 kids compared to a hundred students, I understand it. It has to be the appropriate maternal investment. But our families that are in the program that want to be in the program, see a value in it, and there is a value in it. But looking at a budget, looking at everything across the board, is it good for Calvert County as a whole?”

Grasso pressed: “What is the reason for this? Why would a parent keep a child home and deprive them of socialization, in-person help? When you look at the losses we’ve had because of the pandemic, why would anybody want to fund this and not get the children back to school so they can learn, socialize, and realize their potential. Why would we do this?”

Townsel said, “Parents think that’s the best instructional environment for their kids. As you know, we also offer alternative education in our school district. Every young person, although we have a traditional school system, but a hundred percent of young people may not be in the traditional population. As you know, there’s a percentage of our young people who are potentially in special education, some of our young people require alternative education.”

Grasso asked for an explanation of alternative education. “What would that look like?”

Townsel said, “Alternative educations for young people who may not succeed in a traditional setting who need additional supports. Something called multi-tier system of support, which is 75 percent of your universal population. About 20 percent is your targeted intervention. And five percent need that very intense support. So, I’m providing intensive support, on all levels -- behavioral, academic, and social and emotional.”

Which prompted Grasso to ask, “How closely do we follow our code of conduct for our students? And do we make referrals?”

Townsel said, “Our educators follow our code of conduct, and our teachers do fill out referrals.”

“What do we do to a child who hits a teacher or throws water on them? What would be the course of action for that?” she asked.

The superintendent said, “(In) the process or the flow chart of that, the teacher would make a referral. That referral would get processed by administration. The administration would look at the discipline, look at the record of the young person, and provide the appropriate disciplinary action with parent involvement and communicate that with the teacher. So, our range of interventions or discipline that we have for students, range from in-school suspension to out-of-school suspension to the ultimate of expulsion.”

He repeated that suspension was still an option.

Grasso observed, “I know that a lot of our teachers are not feeling safe within the school system. A lot of our teachers are feeling that the students are running the schools and the teachers are not supported by the administration. Just to make you aware.”

Townsel responded, “Yes, ma’am. We hear that all the time. And that is so wrong on all levels. I’ll say, one of the privileges I have of being the superintendent is I’ve been in every last school, most recently, yesterday I was at Huntingtown High School. And not only visiting students, but just being in the midst of the climate and culture of the school. I think Calvert County Public Schools have a phenomenal school system. Our teachers are teaching at a high level. Our administrators are working with teachers to increase academic achievement on instruction. And we’re holding our young people accountable with behaviors. I know that there’s a narrative, and I listen to it, and I respond to it. But I’m confident that we have a phenomenal school system, especially if we compare to other systems in the state of Maryland. Are we perfect? No. Perfection is unattainable. But through the pursuit, we will find excellence. And I’m confident that over time we’ll get better and better and better from where we started. For sure.”

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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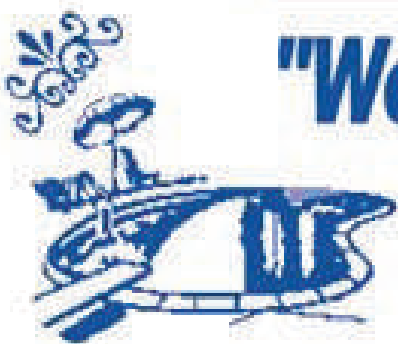
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New CSM President Presents Annual Report



CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

In the job for just a little more than two months, new College of Southern Maryland (CSM) President Dr. Yolanda Wilson made her first visit March 7 to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to deliver the college's annual report.

"I am so honored to meet all of you and to serve as the sixth president of the College of Southern Maryland. It has been an amazing 60 days and it is so wonderful to be back in my home state," the native Marylander said.

The new CSM president explained,

"My primary focus has been to listen and to learn. I don't presume because I grew up in this state and I'm familiar with Southern Maryland, that I understand and know all the unique, wonderful qualities of each of the three counties that I serve. I think it is absolutely my responsibility to nestle in and to get to know what makes each one of the counties unique and the points of intersection that all three counties share."

She said, "I married a man from North Carolina, which is what took me away from the home state, as oftentimes love will do. And we've been married almost 25 years and I have served in my role in the North Carolina community college system, many institutions that served more than one county service area. And I've found in doing that, it's really important that each county gets its own attention, that each of its needs are served uniquely."

"I've found that that is an opportunity and not a challenge," she said, adding "there's commonalities among the county service areas. For example, as I've been listening to the past 60 days, I've heard that everyone is experiencing a teacher shortage, that there are healthcare needs. And that our CEOs of the healthcare systems, we actually hosted them at our new center for health sciences, could use more front facing and nursing practitioners.

There's also a need for a more robust transportation infrastructure," including a transportation hub "so that students who can only go to one location do not have the burden of trying to figure out how to go to multiple campus locations in a 45-minute travel drive."

Another common discussion is about building broadband access, she said, "so no student has to try to find a hotspot device in a McDonald's parking lot."

She's concluded, "What I know that we share in common is a desire for the economic mobility and social mobility of our communities. That we want all of our students and children to be successful, that we want to focus on our adult learners and retooling and upskilling as needed. And that we have business and industry that's depending on us because they need a talent pipeline and a workforce pipeline."

"The community college is both the connector and the convener," she noted. "We know where students are coming from and we connect them to where students are going to, whether that's transfer or business and industry. So it's absolutely critical that we are that bridge."

One of the things she's heard is the need for more than seven-week courses, which works for some and not others.

She noted that Pell grants aren't available for workforce certifications, such as

commercial driver's licenses. She said community colleges are working to legislatively change that.

As to the future, Dr. Wilson said, "We're going to look forward to how do we prepare our students and our communities for the future of work. What does that look like? One of the things that came up was artificial intelligence and how do we prepare for the metaverse and how do we prepare for all the IT changes in infrastructure. There's so much happening that's going to be moved to technical advances. What does that look like and how does that impact our day-to-day work? How do we continue to shore up our skilled trades? We cannot do without plumbers and electricians and HVAC workers, et cetera."

From an earlier presentation with School Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel, Dr. Wilson was advised that they were having difficulty finding teachers and thus couldn't fulfill all of student needs. She was asked if there was any opportunity for collaborating to help meet the need for teachers and providing space.

"It certainly can be," she said, adding "I would absolutely love it."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

School Board Reviews Budget Request

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Although revenue estimates have not yet been presented to the county commissioners, President Buddy Hance said recently that typically the county has about \$10 million more annually to work with in building their budget. So, with a \$22.4 million requested increase from the county in the schools' budget as recommended by Superintendent Dr. Andre Townsel, it is virtually assured that absent some drastic cuts elsewhere in the county budget, there would have to be a tax increase to cover the request. With that in mind, the school board at a special March 2 meeting grilled staff on various aspects of the budget, looking for places to make cuts and in some cases suggesting additions.

Part of the budget increase is mandated by the state's education reform known as the Blueprint, which includes teacher salary increases and pre-kindergarten. The school board was told those mandated Blueprint increases for the next fiscal year have a slightly less than \$10 million price tag. But board member Dawn Balinski observed that amount included unmandated pay increases for support staff comparable to those mandated for teachers.

Balinski expressed concern that the state wasn't putting up as much as they had previously promised. Instead of the approximately \$8 million in the budget from the state," she said they had promised \$15 million.

"They are relying on the counties to pick up the difference, which is very disappoint-

ing to me. Very disappointing. And, you know, the county will just have to tell us what they can or cannot do for us."

Some of the issues raised during the special meeting included a question from Student Member of the School Board Maggie Rathgeb. She was told by Chief Academic Officer Dr. Susan Johnson that the Blueprint also is mandating that all costs for student Advance Placement tests would be covered next year by the school system.

Board member Lisa Grenis asked for justification for the \$210,000 in the budget for a Chief of Communications Director. Townsel said, "We added a chief of communications to the district to cover all communication needs from printed material, to media requests and support. Every education agency in the state of Maryland has a department dedicated to that. In addition, agencies like county government also have a communications department. We did not have that when I came on board. At minimum, we had a halftime public information officer that worked also halftime in human resources. We understand that communication was one of our weak points, so we added that to our executive cabinet team, and now it's a part of the executive cabinet and it's the spokesperson for the district."

Chief Financial Officer Scott Johnson added, "One of the positions reflected on this page (of the budget) is a transfer from another department. So that salary is not for one person alone." The second person would be a webmaster.

Grenis also asked for the justification for hiring another human resources super-

visor. Human Resources Director Zach Sewell said, "We have seen an increase in staffing numbers over the years with additional positions. The biggest reason that we're requesting an additional supervisor in human resources has to do with certification and being able to support CER certification for our teachers."

Grenis also asked, "Why is mid-level administration and supervisors getting a 10.3 percent increase when enrollment is declining and there's no shortage of administrators? I know that's on par with what the teachers are getting, but that seems like a very hefty increase."

Chief Operations Officer Tony Navarro said the increase was part of the salary negotiations with the administrators' union.

Grenis observed, "I remember a few years back where teachers did not get their raise and step increase because the money simply wasn't there. And I think this is a case where the money simply isn't there for that kind of an increase. That's a huge increase."

Grenis was told the increase also included monies for two assistant principals. Board member Jana Post said, "I think there really is a need for those two additional administrators at the two separate high schools," adding they were needed based on enrollment numbers.

Post asked about increases in transportation costs. She said, "I know that we're asking for a lot of money from the county, and I think that it's important that everyone know, including the commissioners, what the level of effort is that we went through to kind of understand and determine how

we arrived at this point, why we need this number? And that we did everything that we could, looking through the entire budget to see where we may have been able to save money or where there were costs that we really couldn't change."

Director of Transportation Edward Cassidy Jr. said, "We pay the contractors, through the contract with what we call an attachment or a schedule, that varies from year to year with funding. And part of that is per mile rate for the use of the bus. Part of that is an operations fee, which is just a flat fee that the contractor can use however they see fit to keep their operation running. And the fuel rate varies with the local fuel rate. What we did institute about three years ago, is the buses do have to be inspected at three to four times a year by law, depending on the age of the bus."

Board Vice President Antoine White was told that the increase in the school security budget was for three safety advocates for middle schools.

As to the increase in safety training, White was told that was to cover the increase in training for bus drivers and adding training for bus assistants and contractors.

So what happens if there isn't enough county funding available to cover the Blueprint mandates? Dr. Johnson said as they do with the rest of the budget, "If we don't get what we are requesting, we'll be looking at (cutting) what has the least impact to our students."

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In Retirement, Charlie Bucy Made an Impact on His Adopted County



Charles Bucy



Charlie Bucy with his wife Doris and daughter Michelle

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

When Charles Bucy and his wife Doris moved to Calvert County in 1990, he had retired from a distinguished career in the federal government, largely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. His life in Calvert since then was more than just a chapter in his life's story. It could easily be an entire book. When he died on Dec. 28 at the age of 94, he had left a legacy of service to his adopted home.

Bucy, known by everyone as Charlie, was born in Brooklyn, New York, but his parents moved to the DC area when he was young. He graduated from Georgetown University.

When Charles was five years old he was struck with polio that left him paralyzed on one side of his upper body, but he never felt that to be a handicap.

It was the water that drew him to the property they bought in Lusby. He had family in Deale, in southern Anne Arundel County, but his daughter Michelle Leonardi said, "When I was growing up, they

would take me with them with realtors trying to find the perfect lot to be on the water. But then when they found a lot that they built on here, my mom said, this is it. And when they built it, and they would be sitting on the front porch here, looking at the water, my dad would say, 'I love it here'."

Charlie's first community involvement was when he was appointed to the Calvert County Ethics Commission, a post he held for 19 years. His wife Doris said of his emersion in the county, "You could just see it in his face. He was just very, very interested in all the things that were around and the projects that he had. He was in the Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus," she said. "He had a lot of good friends down here."

Doris added, "That was what his personality was. He liked to help people in situations. I mean, that's what I've known about him my whole life. Being married to him and everything. He was just very, very conscious. If somebody needed some help, he would try to find out. If he couldn't do it, with his knowledge he would search and find the right place for these people to get themselves back in order. And he was just very good at that."

She added, "He was just a very helpful person. That was his nature. And he was there, and he helped animals too." That family love of animals has led to the establishment of a non-profit to aid rescue groups called the Strickland Foundation.

That love of animals also led to Charlie's involvement in another commissioner appointed entity, the Animal Matters Board, which he served on until his death.

Of his dedication to the ethics commission, Leonardi said, "He was always just totally devoted to doing it. Sometimes he would have me help him to type things out for him if he had long reports. But he was always researching laws and things for whatever he was working on for the ethics commission. I would come in the house and he would have all these papers on the table because he would be working so hard on something. He would just be fully focused. And he did that for 19 years. This is supposed to be his retirement. It was more like a second job as much as he did. But he loved it."

People who The County Times spoke to about Bucy said he was very much a behind-the-scenes guy. His widow agrees. "He would do these different things for people, but he didn't do it just to get the limelight. He would he do things if he was

called upon. He didn't shrink from any of that, but he didn't go out to take the limelight away from the group; that wasn't what he wanted."

One of those behind-the-scenes things was the Charlie Bucy Project at Freedom Hearing Center. And, if you want to find out about what people in the community feel about his life and contributions to the community, just ask anyone at one of the five Freedom Hearing Centers in the area.

Company founder, Clinical Audiologist Dr. Rebecca Jahed met Charlie 15 years ago when she was working for another hearing aid company. "He would come to the office. I would always schedule extra time because I just loved his stories. He had the best stories, just so animated. So much humor. He just always made you feel good."

One of those stories was about losing all his money gambling and having to walk home. "So, I don't think he started out as a really good businessman," she said. "That would change and impact her life forever. I think he became a very good one over time. And he just had this wealth of knowledge."

She explained, "We started to become friends. And there came a time when my position was dropped down to part-time. Because he was almost like family at that point, he encouraged me to do something on my own, and he supported me every step of the way. He helped me to get hooked up with the right person, to start the business. He helped me to go through everything that was involved to get it set up. But the main thing that he really did was just so inspirational and supportive and really helping me to feel confident and to build this. And so that's how we got to be really good friends."

Jahed emotionally related, "He was

probably one of the most inspirational, uplifting, positive, amazing people that I have ever met. Everybody that met him just adored him. And he would often come to our seminars, or our luncheons and he got to talk to people. And he just had this amazing spark about him, this amazing way. It did not matter what was going on in his life. There was just something very, very special about him. You just wanted to be around him. You just wanted to hear his stories."

"He just was such an inspirational, incredible person."

The Charlie Bucy Project was started about four years ago. Jahed said, "We started with just one person, one location, and it grew and he had such a big part to do with that. We decided to do something that we wanted to do in his honor. And so twice a year what we do, and it's not really based upon needs, it's really just more of anybody that needs help in our community that could just put their name in a box and Charlie drew all of the names. And then sometimes he was there when we did the first fitting (of the hearing aid), and other times, we would just meet somewhere, and he could just choose the name." They hope his widow will continue the tradition.

Freedom Hearing Director of Operations Pamela McIntyre said, "He was a truly remarkable human and I was one of the lucky ones that really got to know him."

His daughter said, "Last year at 94, I took him to the Calvert Marine Museum, and we got that charter boat there, and we went out on the river one last time, and he was just so happy."

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for April 22 at Hilton Garden Inn in Solomons.

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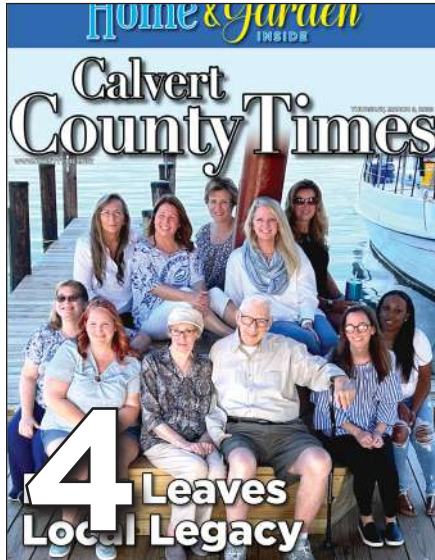
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WEEKLY FORECAST

<p>THU, MAR 9</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 52° Lo: 36°</p>	<p>FRI, MAR 10</p> <p>Showers Hi: 46° Lo: 35°</p>	<p>SAT, MAR 11</p> <p>AM Showers Hi: 45° Lo: 28°</p>	<p>SUN, MAR 12</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 38°</p>
<p>MON, MAR 13</p> <p>Rain Hi: 49° Lo: 31°</p>	<p>TUE, MAR 14</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 43° Lo: 27°</p>	<p>WED, MAR 15</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 29°</p>	<p>THU, MAR 16</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 36°</p>

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Bucy Leaves Local Legacy