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St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023

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SHERIFF STEVE HALL ON EMERGENCY DRUG TRENDS TARGETING YOUNG PEOPLE.



LOCAL 3
Murder suspect caught in D.C.



LOCAL 9
Stewart's Grant hearing continued



ON THE COVER
Law enforcement, health officials warn of new drug trends

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, MAR 30 Sunny Hi: 54° Lo: 41°	FRI, MAR 31 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 71° Lo: 59°	SAT, APR 1 AM Light Rain Hi: 74° Lo: 41°	SUN, APR 2 Sunny Hi: 56° Lo: 41°
MON, APR 3 Mostly Sunny Hi: 70° Lo: 53°	TUE, APR 4 Partly Cloudy Hi: 74° Lo: 58°	WED, APR 5 AM Showers Hi: 74° Lo: 59°	THU, APR 6 Partly Cloudy Hi: 72° Lo: 50°



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District Man Arrested for Murder of Transgender Woman



Tasiyah Woodland

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A Washington, D.C. resident has been arrested and charged with the murder of a transgender woman, previously identifying as 18-year-old Isaiah Alexander Woodland but going by the name of Tasiyah or Siyah, of Lexington Park in Mechanicsville in the early morning hours of March 24.

Four days later local CID investigators and police in Washington, D.C. arrested Darryl Parks, Jr. 29 for the killing and are holding him pending extradition to St. Mary's, according to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

Parks faces charges of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, use of a firearm in a violent crime, two counts of reckless endangerment and illegal possession of a regulated firearm.

The sheriff's office has said that there is no evidence to suggest that Woodland's gender identity was a factor in the murder.

Capt. Edward Willenborg, commander of the Criminal Investigations Division of the sheriff's office, said that Woodland was inside Big Dog's Paradise Bar on Route 5 socializing and left before being shot in the parking lot.

It is unknown, Willenborg said, if the victim was served alcohol there.

"That portion of the review will be addressed, if any violation, by our alcohol

compliance personnel," Willenborg said in a text message to The County Times.

PFLAG Southern Maryland, a regional advocacy group for the LGBTQ community, issued a statement on the murder.

"Our organization requested contact from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office and were able to speak with Sheriff Steve Hall..." the statement reads. "We discussed the importance of ensuring Tasiyah is remembered with respect and dignity, and that her name and identity be reflected in further communications from the SMCSO and to local media.

"PFLAG also voiced concern regarding the potential for worsening stigma around our trans and queer residents."

PFLAG leadership stated: "This is an unfortunate reminder that fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women — particularly black, indigenous, and people of color. Trans people are more likely to lack access to education, healthcare, and are often forced into unemployment, poverty, homelessness; all of which increases their risk of violence."

The family of the deceased is seeking donations to help pay for funeral expenses.

Donations can be made at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tasiya-woodland>.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Memorial Planned for Tasiyah Woodland

A memorial for Tasiyah Woodland will be held Sunday, April 2 at Chancellor's Run Park in Great Mills.

The candle light vigil begins at 6 p.m.



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Emergency Bill for Veterans Home Entered in General Assembly



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

An emergency bill supported by both Sen. Jack Bailey (Dist. 29) and Del. Brian Crosby (Dist. 29 B) would compel management companies operating state-owned nursing care facilities to inform state government officials of any deficiencies found in the quality of care offered there.

The bill originated with the two lawmakers in the aftermath of recent reports of neglect, abuse and inadequate care at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home dating back to at least 2017 by federal Medicare officials.

Gov. Wes Moore stated after a mid-March Board of Public Works hearing that the state would be terminating the contract with HMR Services, based in South Carolina, which it has held since 2002 after hearing of numerous complaints.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) gave the veterans home — the only one in Maryland — a one-star quality rating in January and the state's Department of Veterans Affairs has since barred any new residents coming into the facility until a new management company has been installed.

Reports by CMS detailed numerous complaints as well as monetary fines levied against the operators of the facility but

elected leaders said they were surprised by them and had not heard of any such complaints until announced by the governor.

Deficiencies recorded against a contractor operating a state-owned care facility by an authorized outside agency must be reported to the governor, the state agency overseeing that facility, the state Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee as well as the elected representatives in the district of the facility reported within 30 days, the legislation introduced March 29 reads.

The deficiencies must be noted and specified and a plan of action offered to correct them, according to the legislation.

"I am incredibly disappointed not only to hear the reports of how our veterans living at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home were treated, but also that these problems could be serious enough to result in fines while the General Assembly was left unaware of these ongoing issues," said Bailey in a prepared statement. "I believe it is necessary to ensure that major problems such as these cannot be swept under the rug or kept from the oversight of the General Assembly during future administrations."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Lane Diversion on Buck Hewitt Rd. Starting April 3rd

The St. Mary's County Department of Public Work's (DPW&T) contractor continues construction for the FDR Boulevard Extension.

Beginning on April 3, 2023, travel lanes in each direction of Buck Hewitt Rd, at the FDR Blvd intersection, will be diverted to allow for the construction of a new roundabout intersection.

Motorists are required to reduce speed to 20 mph within the work zone. The existing portion FDR Boulevard and Chickadee Circle will be connected to the temporary

lane diversion on Buck Hewitt Rd. Drivers are advised to follow the new lane markings and traffic signs. During this construction, drivers may experience a brief delay and should use caution. Please remain alert for equipment, work crews, and changing traffic patterns. Portable message signboards have been deployed to provide advance notification of the roadwork.

For more information about this project, please visit stmaryscountymd.gov/fdr. Additional questions may be directed to DPW&T at (301) 475-4200, ext. 3525.d

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Officials Warn Parents of Drugs in Disguise

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The county sheriff and health officer both said this week that new drug trends on the rise are either here in St. Mary's County already or are on their way — and many of them are targeting younger citizens.

From cannabis edibles to “gas station heroin” being marketed as a weight loss supplement, younger people are being targeted to use these drugs said both Sheriff Steve Hall and Dr. Meena Brewster.

These emerging drug trends are in addition to the already dangerous opioids that continue to claim lives through overdoses, they said.

Counterfeit medications laced with fentanyl, cocaine and crack cocaine mixed with fentanyl, heroin mixed with fentanyl and MDMA — known as Ecstasy and Molly — are most commonly being encountered by sheriff's deputies, Hall said.

“When you deal with these drugs you have no idea the amount of fentanyl in it,” Hall said of the immensely powerful pain medication that causes so many overdose fatalities. “The amount of fentanyl varies from tablet to tablet.”

Methamphetamine was not one of the rising trends list.

“We thank God everyday that's not on there,” Hall said. “It's not far away.”

“If it came across from the Appalachians [Mountains] we would see something completely catastrophic.”

In a later interview, Hall said parents must be watchful of what their children were buying.

“They need to take an active interest into who [their children] are hanging around,” Hall said. “I think social media and on-line purchases are a big part of it.”

“Have an open dialogue about what's going on.”

That meant taking extra time to ensure young people knew about all the drug threats they might face.

“The conversation is just going to have to be longer,” Hall said. “The threats are multiplying.”

Fentanyl mixed with vape materials as well as marijuana and “rainbow fentanyl” that looks like either candies or chewable vitamins are also a worry, Hall said.

So are tianeptine — “gas station heroin” — and cannabis edibles packaged as everyday snacks.

Familiar brands such as Oreos are repackaged as “Double Stuffed Stoneo” and Sour

Patch Kids as “Stoney Patch.”

“They are targeting younger people,” Hall said emphatically. “That's the intent.”

“We have not seen this in any kind of a scale in the county but it is not far away.”

Tianeptine is also being sold as a weight loss supplement on line and in fueling stations, Hall said, “actually has opioid-like effects.”

“That is really scary stuff and it is targeting younger populations through the packaging and colors,” Hall continued. “We're watching in hopes... we can take a hard stance against it.”

“Parents need to be able to see this,” said Commissioner Eric Colvin. “It's scary stuff.”

Brewster said: “Tianeptine has been used to treat depression in other countries; it has not been approved in the U.S.”

“It's not an opioid drug but it acts similarly... that's why they're calling it gas station heroin,” Brewster added.

Not being an opioid, Brewster said, Naloxone, or Narcan could not be used to counteract an overdose.

The drug has caused so much suffering, Hall said, that it has been banned in Mississippi and Kentucky.

Another lethal narcotic, an animal sedative called Xylazine — with a street name of “Tranq” — has been identified in Southern Maryland as being cut into fentanyl powder and pills, Brewster said.

Because it is not an opioid, Narcan is not effective in counteracting an overdose.

“This is something present across Maryland,” Brewster said.

Opioids cause the suppression of lung function, she explained, which makes them so deadly.

Xylazine does the same but without the readily available cure of Naloxone.

The number of drug-induced fatal and non-fatal overdoses remains high, said Hall, but there was a small glimmer of hope in the numbers.

The number of non-fatal overdoses has dropped from 225 in 2020 steadily to 162 in 2022, Hall showed in the latest statistics.

Fatal overdoses, which peaked at 31 deaths in 2021 have dropped to 26 for 2022 as well.

“It's not a surprise that opioids are the leading cause for fatal and non-fatal overdoses,” Hall said.

In 2021, for example, opioids were responsible for 146 non-fatal overdoses, while in 2022 they were responsible for 101 such overdoses.

Drugs such as stimulants, hallucinogens and

dissociative drugs sedatives and other depressants caused the remainder, statistics show.

In both 2020 and 2021 opiates were responsible for 30 fatal overdoses out of 30 and 31, respectively.

In 2022 they accounted for 20 of the overdose deaths, data showed.

Hall credited the drug Naloxone — also known as Narcan — with saving lives once administered to those who have overdosed; though lately more than one dose has been required to effectively end an overdose.

“That's 204 souls that were saved by way of doses,” Hall said, noting the statistics for 2020 through 2022.

“Those who did not survive... is too many,” Hall continued. “One is too many.”

Brewster said all of the work the health department and the sheriff's office had done in the past decade to fight back against the opioid crisis was paying some dividends.

“I think what we're seeing now in our younger people... while the stresses of life may be great, because we have focused so much attention towards prevention and mitigation and treatment... those things are working,” Brewster said.

There are some positive trends in substance use among young people.

The latest data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) shows a decline in the number of high school aged students who smoke tobacco products and use other substances.

Marijuana used dropped from 17.3 percent of high schoolers using it at least once a month in 2018 to 2019 to 13 percent in 2021 to 2022.

“Alcohol [use] has similarly dropped,” Brewster said, noting that in 2018 to 2019 30 percent of high school aged youth reported drinking at least once in a month's time.

That figure dropped to 21.6 percent for 2021 to 2022, the latest data showed.

The percentage of high school youth who reported using cigarettes, cigars or smokeless tobacco at once in a period of 30 days dropped from 12.7 percent in the 2018 to 2019 reporting year to 7.2 percent in the reporting period of 2021 to 2022.

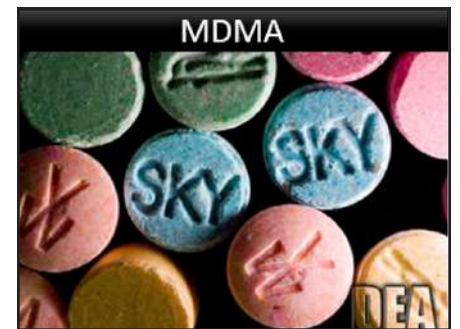
Brewster said the statistical example of those who responded to the anonymous survey was significant enough to make an accurate inference about the use of such products among all high school aged youth.

“There's enough youth participating that that gives us statistical power in the survey,” said Brewster.

The amount of high school aged youth who responded was about 25 percent, she told the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at a briefing given March 28.

The amount of high schoolers who used vaping products also dropped significantly from 35.4 percent at least once a month to 18.4 percent in 2021 to 2022.

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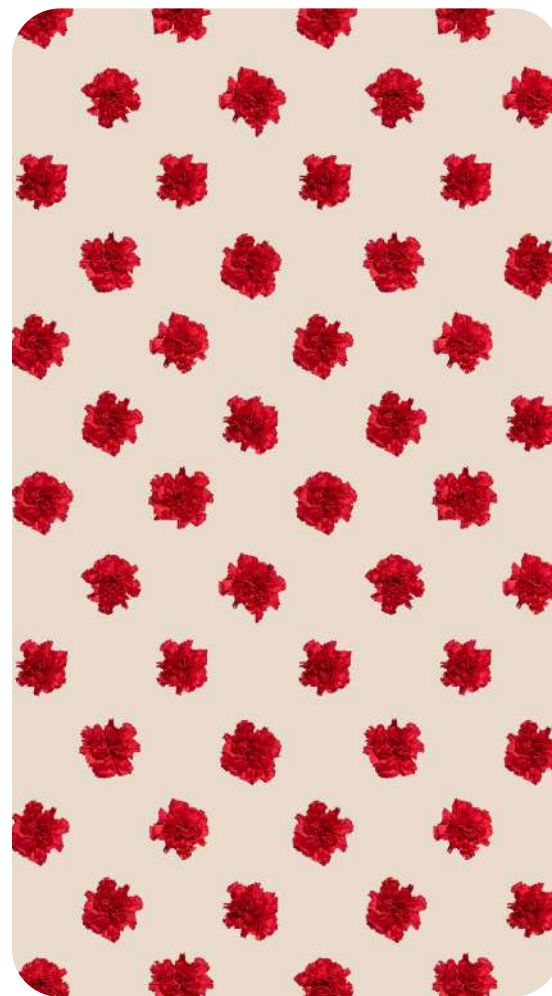
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Stewarts Grant Development Hearing Continued

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

After more than three hours of testimony and discussion on the biggest housing development proposed for St. Mary's County and Lexington Park in recent memory, the county planning commission continued the hearing on the Stewart's Grant planned unit development (PUD).

The next meeting will be in April 17 where the public should have the opportunity to speak out on the massive development, which has drawn concerns and praise from the community.

The project would bring 1,122 housing units to a 394-acre piece of land in the area of Quatman Road and Great Mills Road, according to county planning documents.

But only about 20 percent of the entire project, or about 80 acres, would be dedicated to the residential piece, planning documents reveal, with about 256 acres set aside for open space.

About 20 acres would be used for commercial development.

The concept site plan calls for 619 town homes, 291 single family homes and an apartment building with 224 units, planning documents show.

John Dixon, representative for the developer of the project Reliable Real Estate

Services, said they were requesting a change in the phasing plan to just 100 units a year.

That was based on projections from the builder, Dixon said, that that number was what could be reliably sold in a year.

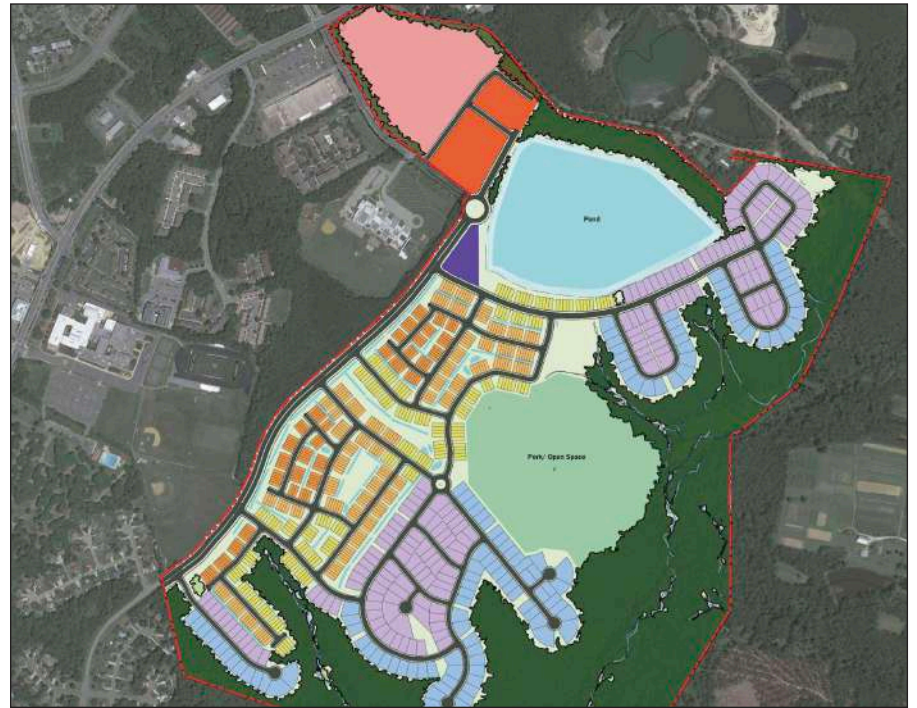
The project has a prominent place in the Lexington Park Development District Master Plan as part of the overall plan to improve the Great Mills Road Corridor.

"Approximately 50 percent of the site will remain as recreation or preserved open space to protect Hilton Run," the notation in the master plan stated. "The village center will face onto the main street with parallel parking on the street side and access parking behind the units."

"Each housing area will be built around public open spaces, in both the multifamily and single-family areas."

There are worries that such a large development would overcrowd local schools and the county school system has gone on record with the planning commission saying as much.

At the March 26 planning commission meeting Assistant County Attorney John Houser said that the Stewart's Grant PUD, which was approved initially by the county decades ago, was grandfathered under a provision in the zoning ordinance that stated that such projects proposed after 2008 were subject to adequate public facilities require-



Stewart's Grant

ments for schools.

"It's our opinion that is grandfathered in under normal concept site plan approval," Houser said. "That's not to say schools won't be looked at at all through this process."

Other residents, sending in written testi-

mony, said the project would inject much-needed affordable housing stock into a county that has long grappled with providing it due to ever increasing home prices.

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Health Department Wants to Control Opioid Settlement Funds

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A few years ago, the county government agreed to take part in a lawsuit against large pharmaceutical companies who had allegedly lied about the addictive properties of their synthetic opioids designed to assuage pain.

The opioid epidemic has since ravaged communities across the nation, including St. Mary's County, and opened the way for powerful pain killers such as fentanyl to become deadly street drugs.

St. Mary's County now has access to millions of dollars in opioid restitution funds after being on the winning side of the sweeping lawsuit and Dr. Meena Brewster, county health officer, wants the county to give authority over that money to the health department.

"Since 2014 [St. Mary's County Health Department] has been working directly with community partners to prevent and mitigate opioid-related illness and mortality in St. Mary's County," Brewster wrote in a missive to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

The health department coordinates the local opioid response plan, Brewster wrote, and already distributes behavioral health dollars.

"This helps to ensure we are synchronized as a county in working towards a comprehensive spectrum of prevention, mitigation and recovery supports addressing mental health and substance abuse behaviors," she stated. "The state has designated specific uses for [opioid restoration fund] dollars; all of



Dr. Meena Brewster

the specific uses fall within the purview of [the health department] in our role as local behavioral health entity."

Commissioner Eric Colvin said St. Mary's County is going to receive perhaps \$500,000 a year for the next 18 years from the settlement, which given the impacts of the opioid epidemic here is a small amount.

"The problem is it's multiple settlements being put into one," Colvin said. "The health department could definitely make use of the funds.

"But wherever the funds are funds are used... we want to do the most good with the money within the confines of the settlement."

The terms of the settlement dictate that the funds be used only for substance abuse and mental health treatment.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

County Budget Going To Public Hearing

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved an operating budget to take to public hearing next month that tops \$314 million, which is still about \$10 million less than last year's approved budget.

Commissioner Mike Hewitt was the only commissioner to vote against the budget.

Income tax and property tax revenues increased by 1 percent over last year to the tune of just over \$302 million but commissioners included another \$11.8 million from an uncommitted fund balance into the operating budget for fiscal 2024.

The Department of Emergency Services had a 53 percent budget reduction from last year as their allocation for fiscal 2024 was just \$10 million.

The fiscal 2023 allocation was \$21.4 million.

The sheriff's office, which asked for more funding this year got at least some of their request — \$61.9 million of a requested \$62.6 million — over last year's \$58.9 million.

Sheriff Steve Hall had told commission-

ers in prior weeks that he sought funding increases to offer more pay for deputies already with the agency and to attract new ones.

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling wanted \$6.9 million for her office and got \$6.2 million, which is still a 17 percent increase over last year's operating budget, county documents show.

Sterling, too, wanted to hire more attorneys and office staff to deal with higher levels of crime, particularly homicides, and more funds to modernize the office for using digital evidence and case tracking systems.

The health department sought a massive increase from its fiscal 2023 budget of \$3.1 million to \$8.4 million — Dr. Meena Brewster's agency received \$4.5 million, which was still a 43 percent over last year's allocation.

The county Board of Education requested \$130 million from the county for fiscal 2024 but got just \$127 million or 4.8 percent more than last year.

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Illegal Dumping Draws Community Complaints

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Citizen complaints to The County Times about the constant trash build up on Pegg Road showed that pockets of trash continue to accumulate there, sometimes in small portions.

Sometimes it occurs in larger incidents of dumping.

According to county public works chief, James Gotsch, Pegg Road is swept for garbage by work crews once a month, though they can be called out for cleaning of the roadway if it becomes too onerous.

"If additional larger items such as furniture, tires, appliances, etc. identified, they will go down as needed in between the monthly

pickups," Gotsch said.

The county has historically used inmate labor to help keep county roads clean but that changed recently.

"Due to COVID, they are no longer available," Gotsch said. "Once the health & safety protocols in the detention center have been eased, residents will be available again to assist, thus increasing the mileage of roadways picked up daily."

To catch violators of illegal dumping laws is difficult, Gotsch said, and the county often has to rely on residents to report incidents.

The county apparently does not use remote surveillance of thoroughfares such as Pegg Road to detect illegal dumping.

"Remote surveillance would be difficult, notably from a motor vehicle, because proper

identification of the individual operating the vehicle would be required in order to determine the violator," Gotsch said. "If a resident were able to obtain video of illegal dumping, that information should be shared with the [sheriff's office.]"

Illegal dumping carries stiff fines, if violators are caught.

"In Maryland fines and penalties associated with littering/illegal dumping range from a \$1,500 fine and possible 30 days in prison to a \$30,000 fine with possible 5 years in prison," according to Gotsch, noting it was up to law enforcement to nab violators.

Pegg Road, which is at the heart of the Lexington Park community, is one of a handful of roads where the most littering and illegal dumping occur, Gotsch said.

"Pegg Road, Golden Beach Road, Charlotte Hall Road and Abell Road are swept/picked up on a monthly basis," Gotsch said. "The rest of the roads in the county are picked up annually."

"We often receive specific reports of dumping locations from residents, so the crew is dispatched to those areas as notified."

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PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR STATION *News*

Navy Moves Forward with Hypersonic, Carrier-Based Weapon

The Navy awarded two contracts to Raytheon Missiles and Defense and Lockheed Martin March 27 for the initial development for a carrier suitable long range, high speed missile designated Hypersonic Air Launched Offensive Anti-Surface (HALO).

The contracts, valued at a total of \$116 million, is the first step to fielding a critical capability over the next decade that will address advanced threats and allow the Navy to operate in and control contested battle space in littoral waters and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) environments.

The initial contracts to Raytheon and Lockheed Martin will provide technical maturation and development through preliminary design review of the propulsion system required for a carrier suitable hypersonic weapon system. The contract period of performance for each award will end in December 2024 with each company's preliminary design review working towards a prototype flight test.

HALO will be a carrier-based, high speed, long range air-launched weapon that will provide greater anti-surface warfare capability than what's available today.

"As threat capability continues to advance, additional range, warfare capability and capacity is required to address the more demanding threat environment," said Capt. Richard Gensley, Precision Strike Weapons (PMA-201) program manager.

The program is part of the Navy's Long Range Fires investment approach to meet objectives of the National Defense Strategy where hypersonic weapons are a top priority, he said.

"Our team is leveraging science and



technology and rapid prototyping arenas to support aggressive schedule execution," said Gensley.

These contracts are the first of potentially additional development and production contracts based on initial designs and supplier performance that will inform Navy leadership on future program decisions.

HALO's predecessor, the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), is currently fielded on the Navy's F/A-18 and Air Force B-1B. To bridge the gap until HALO is operational, the Navy recently funded an upgrade to the existing weapon which will incorporate missile hardware and software improvements to enhance targeting capabilities.

The Navy plans to pursue a competitive acquisition strategy leveraging LRASM requirements and concept of operations to meet future maritime threats beyond mid-2020s. Initial operational capability for HALO is planned to field late this decade.

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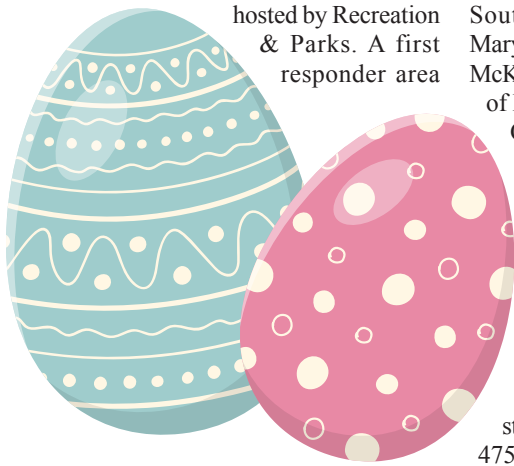
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40th Annual Easter Egg Festival Saturday

On Saturday, April 1, 2023, the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks department will host its 40th Annual Easter Egg Festival at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds. This rain or shine event will be held from 11:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. and is open to the entire community. The Easter Egg Festival has become a staple of the Southern Maryland community every Spring and many are looking forward to its return this year!

For a \$5.00 entry fee, children can participate in egg hunts, visit with Mr. or Mrs. Bunny, enjoy face painting, arts and crafts, live animals, and lots of other bunny approved activities. Live entertainment will be offered by local performing groups as well as a BMX demo and golf demo hosted by Recreation & Parks. A first responder area



will be available with "touch a truck" opportunities and K9 demonstrations. There will be over 45 local merchandise and information vendors and the option to purchase food from at least 18 different food vendors.

Tickets for this event can be purchased in advance online at stmaryscountymd.gov/easter or at the St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks main office, Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the gate on the day of the event, beginning at 11 a.m.

St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks thanks all our sponsors for their support and donations. Patuxent Orthodontics is this year's Title Sponsor, along with Williams, McClellan & Stack; Schneider Orthodontics; Southern Maryland Foot & Ankle; St. Mary's Fit Body Boot Camp; Dugan, Dugan McKissick & Longmore; the Commissioners of Leonardtown; Community Bank of the Chesapeake; PSI Pax; and Erin's Star.

Net proceeds from the Easter Egg Festival, along with the department's annual golf tournament, are used to fund the Recreation & Parks Scholarship Program which provides qualified applicants the opportunity to participate in an activity at a 50% prorated amount of the registration fee.

For more information, please visit stmaryscountymd.gov/easter or call (301) 475-4200 ext. 1800.

SMECO Nominating Committee to Meet

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative's (SMECO) Board of Directors has appointed 10 members to the 2023 Nominating Committee scheduled to meet on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at SMECO's headquarters in Hughesville. The committee will review candidate applications for the five Board positions to be elected this year. Elections will be held to fill one position in Calvert/Anne Arundel counties, one position in Charles County, one position in Prince George's County, and two positions in St. Mary's County.

The 2023 Nominating Committee members follow:

- Calvert County: Kimberly Freeland, Prince Frederick; and Terence N. Gibson, Prince Frederick.
- Charles County: Joseph L. Gardiner Jr., La Plata; Edward Holland III, Waldorf; and William B. Young Jr., Waldorf.
- Prince George's County: Charles E. Claggett, Accokeek; and Ernest H. Riess, Brandywine.
- St. Mary's County: Edith M. Bell, Chaptico; George A. Brown, Loveville; and Catherine Brenda Coates, Lexington Park.

SMECO members interested in being nominated should complete a Board of Directors Candidate Application, which may

be accessed and submitted online at smeco.coop/annualmeeting. To be reviewed by the Nominating Committee, completed candidate applications should be submitted online by 4 p.m., Friday, May 5, 2023.

In addition to nominations made by the committee, any 15 or more SMECO members acting together may make other nominations by petition. Members running by petition should complete and submit a Board of Directors Candidate Application by 4 p.m., Friday, May 26, 2023. The application and candidate materials are located on SMECO's website at smeco.coop/annualmeeting.

SMECO's Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, August 24, 2023; however, the election will be conducted by mail and online. Co-op members will receive ballots in the mail. Members may vote online or return their completed ballots by mail prior to the Annual Meeting. Election results will be announced at the meeting, but no voting will occur on-site.

Selection of the Nominating Committee members is in compliance with SMECO's bylaws. For more information regarding the committee, nominations, and qualifications of directors, refer to Article IV, Sections 4.02 and 4.03, of SMECO's bylaws. Bylaws may be obtained from a SMECO office or online at www.smeco.coop.

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Drayden African American Schoolhouse Offers Free Open Houses

The St. Mary's County Museum Division, in partnership with the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC), will be offering free Open Houses for visitors and the community at the Drayden African American Schoolhouse in Drayden, one Saturday a month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Open House dates include: April 1, May 6, June 3, June 17, 18 & 19 (special Juneteenth weekend hours), July 1, August 5, September 2, and October 7.



ciate the continuing support of the volunteers who staff it for us, most of whom are members of the UCAC.”

The Drayden African American Schoolhouse is one of the nation's best-preserved one-room African American schoolhouses, and its story represents a significant part of St. Mary's County's African American history. Visitors are invited to learn more about the restored schoolhouse, its rich history and importance to education in St. Mary's County. Hear the real stories about how African American students learned in this school up until the mid-20th century.

Volunteers will be available on site during the open houses to share stories about the schoolhouse's history with visitors. All ages are welcome, and admission is free.

“The Division is pleased to offer open houses at the Drayden African American Schoolhouse each month so guests can learn more about this important piece of our county's African American educational history,” says Karen Stone, Manager of the St. Mary's County Museum Division. “We further appre-

The St. Mary's County Museum Division also offers special programs for school, bus, and other tour groups who would like to schedule a visit to the Drayden site. Individual visitors who would like to see the schoolhouse during times outside open house hours can contact the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum at (301) 994-1471 to arrange a visit.

For more information about the Drayden African American Schoolhouse Open Houses, programs, admission prices, and more, visit the Drayden African American Schoolhouse Facebook page at Facebook.com/DraydenSchool or call (301) 994-1471.

Pet OF THE WEEK



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To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, “like” us on Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or view us on our website at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>



Legal Notice

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

CASE NO: C-18-FM-23-000015

Brian Beidleman
4817 Coyle Rd
Owings Mills, MD 21117,
Plaintiff

Ashley N. Smith
27386 N. Sandgates Rd
Mechanicsville, MD 20659
Defendant

NOTICE—ALTERNATE SERVICE (Md. Rules 2-121, 2-122)

Brian Beidleman, the above named plaintiff, has filed a petition/complaint titled Petition to Modify Custody in which he/she is asking the court to grant custody of a minor child.

The Circuit Court for St. Mary's County may grant that relief unless Ashley Smith, above named defendant, can show reasons why the court should not grant the relief. Ashley Smith must file a response to the petition/complaint/motion on or before May 10, 2023.

If Ashley Smith fails to respond within the time allowed, the court may enter a judgement by default or grant the relief sought, as long as a copy of this Notice is:

- published in a newspaper in this county/city at least once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks on or before April 12, 2023
- other: Complaint and related documentation mailed to Defendant's last known address.

After the time period in the judge's order has passed, you may ask the court for a default judgement or to move forward with your case.

Debra J. Burch
Clerk of Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland
March 10, 2023

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Mary Goldring, 81

Mary Frances Goldring was born on July 27, 1941, in Leonardtown, Maryland to the late Mary Agnes Thompson Barnes and the late William Rhody Barnes, Sr.

She was raised in Leonardtown, MD and graduated from Banneker High School in Loveville, Maryland.

Mary married Earl Bernard Goldring on April 28, 1962 in St. Joseph's Church, Morganza, MD, he preceded her in death March 26, 1991. Mary and Earl had two children, Earl Timothy Goldring and Angela Denise Goldring Dion, who they raised in Loveville, Maryland. Mary was a loving mother and cherished her children. Mary was proud of her children and grandchildren's accomplishments, and she enjoyed spending time with them. She was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, with the exception of the last eight months, when she was in Charles County.

Mary worked as a teacher's aide at Banneker School and as a counselor at the Rock Creek Foundation and Freedom Ways. Mary was a dedicated worker and found her positions very rewarding. While at the Rock Creek Foundation Mary took classes and seminars at St. Mary's College. She retired from the Rock Creek Foundation in 2013.

Mary enjoyed spending time with her siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins and other family members. Mary was very involved in organizing the Barnes Family Reunions. She often held family gatherings at her house. She loved to cook and made wonderful tasty

dishes. She also loved playing Bingo and card games, shopping and yard sales. She also liked celebrating the holidays with her family. Mary was a kind, gentle, giving person, who was a source of support for her family especially her younger brothers and sister. Mary was a very religious person and lived according to her Christian beliefs.

Mary died on March 24, 2023 at Sagepoint Senior Living Center in LaPlata, Maryland. Mary's family mourn the loss of a dear sister, a dear aunt and a dear grandmother whom they love, whom they will miss. She will always remain in their hearts.

Mary was preceded in death, by her parents, by her husband, Earl, her daughter, Angela, her son Earl Timothy, her brothers, James W. Thompson and Joseph C. Barnes and her sister, Alice Barnes.

Mary leaves to cherish her memory her brother, William Rhody Barnes Jr. (Alice), her sister, Florence Lurinsky (Mark), her aunt Catherine Dorsey, daughter-in-law, Brenda Goldring, son-in-law, Marc Dion, three grandsons Marcel Dion, Andre Goldring and James Thomas, two granddaughters, Shannon Smallwood and Natasha Curtis, and a great grandson, Kyrie Curtis, three nieces, Florence Herndon (Mike), Brenda Barnes and Joy Lurinsky, and nephew, Lester Barnes, her godson, James L. Goldring, James Armstrong and family, and her in-laws, J.C. Goldring and Family, Gwen Strayhorn and Family, Julia Reeves and Family, Mary Jackson and Family, Gertrude Ford and Family, Claudette Holland and Family, Agnes Marie Goldring and Family, Thomas Goldring, Jr. and Family, Vera Goldring & Family, Valerie Pointer and Family, and her grandnieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and close friends.

The family will receive friends on Saturday, April 1, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD, with a Service held at 10:00 AM with Reverend Roderick McClanahan officiating. Interment will follow in Charles memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD.

Pallbearers will be James L. Goldring, Gregory Goldring, Marc Dion, Marcel Dion, James Armstrong, and Michael Herndon. Honorary pallbearers will be Andre Goldring, Mark Lurinsky, William R. Barnes, and Lester Barnes.

Carolyn W. Siebert, 79

Carolyn Wheeler Siebert, 79, of Scotland, MD, passed away peacefully at the Hospice of St. Mary's in Callaway, MD, on March 22, 2023.

Carolyn was diagnosed in 2022 with lung cancer. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Arlie Bryan Siebert; son Michael Siebert (Pam) of Oakdale, MN, grandchildren Lindsey and Grant Siebert; grandson James Rippeon II (Aimee) and great-grandson James Rippeon III, of Fayetteville, NC. She will be missed by nephew James Coffin (GiGi), sister-in-law Becky Machacek; brother-in-law James Siebert (Kathy), and many close first cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents, James Clyde Finney and Thelma (Margaret) Faye Walker; sister Diane Coffin; and daughter Linda Rippeon (2022).

After World War II, Carolyn's family moved to the Washington, D.C. area like so many of that generation. Her father had worked on the Manhattan Project and her mother was a homemaker. Carolyn was a 1962 graduate of Northwood High School in Silver Spring, MD, and remained active in the class's reunions over the ensuing decades. Carolyn worked for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for her entire career. In her early days she worked in various positions such as a secretary and as a lab technician. While employed by NIH she obtained her BS in biology from American University and her Master's in Public Health (MPH) from Johns Hopkins. After obtaining her MPH, she was asked to help initiate and manage what turned out to be the largest most successful clinical trial in diabetes management.

The Diabetes Control and Complications Trial (DCCT) began in 1982, funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). A principal objective was to see if, for people with Type 1 diabetes, maintaining blood glucose concentrations as close to normal as possible would affect the appearance or progression of insulin-dependent diabetes. It did. Highly skilled nurses and physicians conducted the randomized, multicenter, clinical trial with more than 1400 patients. The trial also demonstrated that the cooperation of academia, government, and the private sector, working together, could produce extremely valuable diabetes treatment. The trial ended in 1993 but a follow-on study initiated in 1994 continued to monitor participants and yield even more information about specific things diabetics could do to limit the effects of the disease. Carolyn modestly described her role in DCCT as "keeping the trains on track and running." She was a team player

and a problem solver. She absolutely loved her work and called it the best job in government. The trial was highly successful and is today described as a landmark; it is still yielding useful data in the treatment of diabetes.

Carolyn's passion for horses and riding introduced her to many lifelong friends and associations over the years. She and Bryan moved to the beautiful bucolic area of Southern Maryland in 1999 where she continued her love of trail riding as well as gardening, cooking, and travel. Together, they enjoyed dogs and had several conformation champions and one Master Hunter -- including a Rhodesian Ridgeback, an English Pointer, two Border Terriers and two German Wirehaired Pointers. When they met, both had Doberman Pinschers they were showing. They were members of the Solomons Island Yacht Club, and Carolyn was very active in the St. Mary's County Garden Club. She contributed to the Garden Club on many levels, from fundraising to participation in flower arrangement competitions at the St. Mary's County Fair. So many members of the Garden Club have been wonderful in supporting Carolyn throughout the course of her illness. The family is grateful to them, as well as to the kind and considerate staff of the Hospice of St. Mary's during her final days.

Undoubtedly one of her biggest sources of joy were her three grandchildren and new great grandson. Nothing would light up her smile and produce so many happiness vibes as just being with them, while perhaps picking some freshly caught crabs. One of her greatest gifts was her unique ability to make and maintain many and varied friendships. Carolyn was a true friend and wonderful listener, and dispensed much sage advice to those lucky enough to be in her orbit. She will be tremendously missed by family and friends alike.

A celebration of Carolyn's life will be announced at a later date. Memorials may be sent to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or <https://www.stjude.org/donate/> with a designation for the Safer Ukraine Fund.

Raymond Paiz, 60

Raymond Franklin Paiz, age 60 of Mechanicsville MD, passed away at hospice in Callaway, on January 16, 2023.

Ray, was born on September 16th, 1962 in Huachuca Arizona, to Benjamin and Rosemarie Paiz. Entered in the army from 1980 to 1984, he is survived by his wife Connie Paiz and his three children, Danae Paiz, Nicholas Paiz, Shelby Paiz, and one grandchild, Constantine Paiz 'Taki'. He has two brothers Tom and Mike Paiz, His mother, Rosemarie Armstrong and Stepdad Wayne Armstrong, and stepmom Linda Paiz.

Ray's usual occupation, was being a truck driver and loved to restore the year 1973 mustangs and other owned cars in his spare time. Being a huge family and friend guy, he held many parties, camping trips, and traveling visits to friends and family. His burial was at Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery, on March 3rd, 2023.

He will be heavily missed by dear friends and family.



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What is The Aging and Disability Resource Center/Maryland Access Point?

The ADRC/MAP is your link to health and support services. The St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services is working to provide older adults, persons experiencing a disability and caregivers with a single point of entry to:

- Access information and provide referrals to resources and services.
- Provide options counseling regarding benefits and long-term care planning.
- Connect caregivers of older adults and adults with disabilities to services.
- Provide access to services offered by the Department of Aging & Human Services and its partner agencies such as the Health Department, the Southern Maryland Center for Independent Living, the Department of Social Services and other community service providers.
- Link active adults (50+) to services, activities and programs.

Who is eligible for MAP services?

Everyone is encouraged to visit or call the MAP site, including **adults 50 and over, individuals 18 and older experiencing a disability, caregivers** or those of any age who have questions or concerns about someone in need.

How does it work?

MAP is a **free** information and referral service. It is open to the public and to individuals of **all income levels**. Contact the Division of Home and Community-Based Services to schedule an appointment. **All information and assistance is completely confidential.**

To learn more, contact: 301-475-4200, ext. 1057



Top Volunteer Has No Time For TV

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Dolly Griffin loves to bake — she even has her own home-based business that churns out pound cake creations like “Midnight Indulgence” — but she doesn’t watch the pantheon of baking shows on Netflix even though she has a subscription.

She doesn’t even have cable and she doesn’t watch television.

“I just keep the subscription in case someone comes to visit and wants to watch something,” the 58-year-old entrepreneur and volunteer told The County Times.

Baking is her joy, she said, and helping people is her passion.

When she’s not working at Naval Air Systems Command as an internal security specialist — her actual job title is Personnel Security Manager — or baking custom confections in her kitchen she’s volunteering for the local WARM (Wrapping Arms Round Many) Nights program.

The WARM program works with local churches to bring homeless people off the street during the cold winter months to give them shelter for the night.

At first, she said, she started volunteering with the group in 2011 registering the homeless for the program.

She came to St. Mary’s in 2004 from Lakehurst, New Jersey, whence she originally hales.

Growing up there, her grandmother and her mother instilled in her from an early age to care for others and give of her time and effort.

“My grandmother was always trying to

help the community,” Griffin said. “She was always trying to make sure people had a place to stay or have enough food to eat.”

Her Aunt Vivian gave her the gift and joy of baking, she said.

“She used to make these delicious pound cakes,” Griffin said, pointing to one she brought from home. “I’m the only one in the family who still has her recipe.”

She brought her passion for helping other people from New Jersey with her to St. Mary’s.

Now she helps to assess and screen clients for drug and alcohol use before they’re allowed to come in for the night at a church.

She uses a breathalyzer to accomplish this and sometimes has to turn them away because they show up drunk or high; even then she tries to connect them to mental health or substance abuse treatment resources before they go.

“It’s sad,” she said. “But you have to think of the volunteers at the church, some of them are elderly.”

Their safety, she said, is a top priority to keep the program going.

Being a gatekeeper for WARM Nights is an important and difficult job at times.

“It’s been challenging to give them the mental health resources they need,” Griffin said. “It’s the world we live in.”

Griffin also holds a leadership position with the local NAACP chapter, advocating for more affordable housing and helping



Dolly Griffin

to ensure that those seeking it can attain it when they find it.

Whether it’s baking or volunteering, Griffin said she does it for the benefit of others.

“I love the fact that I can help people,” she said. “I feel like I make a difference.”

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Did you know?

Community service is a great way to strengthen one’s community and build relationships with neighbors. But the benefits of volunteering go beyond building communities. According to Harvard Health Publications, people who routinely volunteer are less likely than non-volunteers to develop cardiovascular issues, including high blood pressure. Additional studies have found that individuals who volunteer have lower mortality rates than non-volunteers. But one’s motivation when volunteering is important, especially as it pertains to the effect that community service can have on individuals’ overall health, including their mortality. A 2012 study published in the journal Health Psychology found that people who volunteered for self-oriented reasons had similar mortality risk as non-volunteers, while those who volunteered to help others had a lower mortality risk than non-volunteers.



Home and Community-Based Services

- Aging & Disability Resource Center/
Maryland Access Point (MAP)
- Caregiver support and respite
- Community Options Waiver
- Community First Choice
- Long-term care rights and advocacy

Human Services

- Homelessness Prevention
- After School Programs
- Youth Services Bureau
- Teen Court
- Christmas Caring
- WARM Transportation
- Local Management Board
- Non-Profit Agency Monitoring
- Community Development

MAP/Senior Information and Assistance

- Financial Assistance Programs
- Senior Rides
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
- Legal Assistance
- Maryland Access Point (MAP)

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DEPARTMENT OF AGING & HUMAN SERVICES
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P.O. Box 653

Leonardtown, MD 20650

301-475-4200, ext. 1050

www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging

Facebook - www.facebook.com/SMCDAHS

YouTube - www.youtube.com/c/SMCAgingHumanServices

Schedule a Road Show Presentation to learn more about the St. Mary’s County Department of Aging & Human Services! Call 301-475-4200, ext. 1073, to schedule a presentation or to sign up for delivery of the Department’s bi-monthly newsletter, New Beginning.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

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Medication Collection & Shred Day

Saturday, April 8

Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

Tuesday, May 2

Law Day - Friday, May 5

Men’s Health Day - Saturday, June 3

Road Show Presentations

New Beginning newsletter

SOUTHERN
MARYLAND

30th ANNIVERSARY

caregivers conference

APRIL 28th
FRIDAY
8 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

RICHARD R. CLARK
SENIOR CENTER
1210 Charles Street
La Plata, MD 20646



To register for the Caregivers Conference, contact:
Charles County Department of Community Services

301-934-0128 • OlmstedC@CharlesCountyMD.gov

For information about resources and support for caregivers St. Mary's County, please contact
St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services

www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging/respite/ • 301-475-4200, ext. 1050

How to Plan for a Post-50 Career Change

Professionals change careers for many reasons. Some do so in pursuit of a higher salary, while others seek a more even balance between their personal and professional lives.

Career changes can renew a person's passion for working, which can grow stale for individuals who have been doing the same job for years on end. Though there's not necessarily a bad time to change careers, there are times when making such a transition carries more risk. Such is the case for individuals over 50. Many individuals over 50 may not have the financial obligations they had when they were younger, as children may have grown up and moved out of the house. That can make changing careers after 50 more palatable. However, some individuals in their 50s may be hesitant to leave the security of an established career behind in favor of something new. Hesitance about job prospects after 50 also can make some less likely to take the plunge into a new career.

Though hesitancy about a career change after 50 is understandable, a recent survey from the American Institute for Economic Research found that 82 percent of workers who responded to the survey were able to successfully transition to a new career after age 45. In addition, projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that labor force participation among individuals aged 65 and over would increase significantly by 2022, nearly doubling the rate of participation in 1990. Those figures

suggest that a midlife career change is not necessarily the same thing as a late-career career change. That should give professionals the confidence they need to successfully transition to a new career.

Individuals mulling a career change after 50 also can take these steps to make such a transition less risky.

- **Pay down as much debt as possible.** Financial freedom can be an ally for individuals 50 and over who want to change careers. Career changes often require a pay cut, so individuals who can pay off their mortgages, consumer debts and/or auto loans prior to making a career change may find the transition to a lower income goes more smoothly than it might if they're still carrying such sizable financial commitments.
- **Make plans to delay retirement.** As BLS data indicates, individuals who want to delay retirement certainly won't be alone. Delaying retirement affords individuals more time to save, and a financial advisor can help adults over 50 come up with a new retirement plan that reflects their willingness to work longer. Delaying retirement also means delaying withdrawals from retirement savings accounts, which can provide peace of mind against a loss of income resulting from a career change.
- **Downsize your lifestyle.** Even a post-50 career change that will require a



significant drop in income can be doable for professionals who downsize their lifestyles. Empty nesters can consider moving into a smaller home, while travelers can cut back on the number of trips they take each year. Cutbacks won't necessarily be easy, but they can be worth it for individuals looking for new career challenges.

- **Go back to school.** Much like young people go to college before entering

the professional arena, adults over 50 who want to change careers may need to go back to school to improve their career prospects. Remote learning and part-time schooling can make juggling a career and school more manageable.

A successful career change after 50 is entirely possible for individuals willing to make some sacrifices to be happier in their professional lives.

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options

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Department of Aging & Human Services

Melissa Craig 301-475-4200, ext. 1064
Theron Hudson 301-475-4200, ext. 3104
Renee Thomas 301-475-4200, ext. 1654



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Tips to Pick the Right Time to Retire



Professionals work hard to achieve both short- and long-term goals. Retirement certainly qualifies as a long-term goal, and many people spend decades building and investing in a nest egg that they hope will help them enjoy their golden years to the fullest extent.

The decision regarding when to retire is affected by a host of variables, so what's a good time for one individual may not be ideal for another. However, professionals on the cusp of retirement can consider these tips as they try to pick the right time to retire.

Consider age-related benefits.

Both the United States and Canada feature government-sponsored retirement income programs and it behooves individuals to familiarize themselves with the rules of those programs so they can maximize their benefits. The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) allows individuals to begin receiving full CPP benefits at age 65, but they also can get a permanently reduced amount the moment they turn 60. The CPP also allows people to receive a permanent increase if they wait until turning 70 to receive payment. Similar age-related rules govern the Social Security benefits program in the United States, where individuals can begin claiming benefits at age 62, though those benefits will be reduced by 25 percent. If individuals wait until they're 66 or, in some cases, 67, to claim Social Security benefits, they will receive their full benefits. The Social Security Administration notes that those who can wait until age 70 to claim benefits will receive as much as 132 percent of the monthly benefit they would have received at full retirement age.

These distinctions are significant, especially for people who will be looking to

government-sponsored programs to provide significant financial support in retirement. Individuals who won't rely as heavily on such programs may be able to retire earlier.

Pay off your debts.

Carrying debt into retirement can be risky. In general, it's ideal to pay off all debts, including a mortgage and car payment, before retiring. Doing so can provide more financial flexibility and make it easier to manage unforeseen expenses, such as those incurred due to health problems.

Consider your retirement living expenses.

It goes without saying that a sizable nest egg will be a necessity for anyone hoping to live comfortably in retirement. But the tricky part is figuring just how big a nest egg might need to be. In such instances, individuals can speak with a financial advisor and discuss what their retirement living expenses will be. Conventional wisdom based on the Consumer Price Index suggests individuals will need to replace between 70 and 80 percent of their pre-retirement income after calling it a career. But even that figure is not set in stone, as rising inflation, such as the rapid spike experienced in 2022, can quickly put retirees in financial jeopardy. By estimating the expenses they might have in retirement, individuals can begin to see just how close or far away from retirement they may be. Budget for inflation so any spike in living expenses can be easier to manage.

Many individuals recognize that there's no perfect time to retire. But a few simple strategies can help professionals make the best decision possible.

Money Management Tips for Retirees



and disciplined approach to money management.

Average life expectancies have risen considerably over the last several decades. According to estimates from the United Nations Population Division, the average life expectancy both sexes is slightly more than 79 in the United States. Those figures are a welcome sign, but they may inspire a little fear among seniors who are concerned that they might outlive their money. No one knows how long they will live, but everyone can embrace a handful of money management strategies to increase the chances that they won't feel a financial pinch in retirement.

What constitutes a perfect retirement is different for everyone. Some people may imagine spending their golden years fishing their days away, while others may aspire to finally embrace their inner globetrotter. Though individuals' retirement dreams differ, every retiree will need money, which only underscores the importance of a wise

- Study up on the tax implications of withdrawing from your retirement accounts. Every retirement investment vehicle, whether it's an IRA or a 401(k), has tax implications. Money withdrawn too early may incur tax penalties, and even money withdrawn long past retirement age could elevate retirees into

a new tax bracket that could prove costly. A financial advisor can help retirees determine the tax implications of withdrawing money from their retirement accounts and may even develop a detailed guideline of when withdrawals should be made and how much should be withdrawn in a given year in order to minimize tax liabilities.

- Prioritize your own needs. Though retirees, particularly those with children and grandchildren, may feel an obligation to help their families in difficult financial times, generosity can be very costly for adults who have stopped working. Retirees may or may not have opportunities to generate new income, and even those who do likely won't make enough to meet their daily financial needs. Given that reality, retirees must prioritize their own financial needs, including their immediate needs and those they will have for the rest of their lives. Though it might be difficult to turn down loved ones' requests for financial help, retirees must make sure they can pay their bills and maintain a quality of life that won't jeopardize their long-term health.
- Examine your housing situation. Equity in a home is a feather in the cap of many retirees. Retirees who own their homes and live in locations with high property taxes might be able to cash in

on their equity by selling their homes and downsizing to a smaller home with lower property taxes. If moving is not a consideration, discuss a reverse mortgage with a financial advisor. A trusted financial advisor can highlight the advantages and disadvantages of reverse mortgages, which are a great option for some people to improve their financial well-being in retirement.

- Stick to a budget during retirement. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that roughly 70 percent of individuals who turn 65 will need long-term care in their lifetimes. That's just one expense retirees must budget for, and it's more sizable than some people may recognize. In fact, the Fidelity Retiree Health Care Cost Estimate found that the average retired couple age 65 in 2022 will need roughly \$315,000 to cover health care expenses in retirement. And health care costs are just one of many expenses retirees can expect to have. Budgeting and avoiding overspending can ensure retirees have the money they need when they need it.

No one wants to outlive their money in retirement. Various strategies can help retirees effectively manage their money so they can enjoy their golden years without having to worry about their finances.

Retiring? Downsizing?
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How to Make New Friends After 50



The early years of midlife are a hectic time for many people. Around the time many people reach their late 30s and early 40s, they're balancing the responsibilities of a career and a family. But as people enter their 50s, some of those responsibilities tend to be less significant, leaving more time for recreational pursuits.

Hobbies and other pursuits outside of work are often more fun when enjoyed with friends. People over 50 undoubtedly recognize that it's not always so easy to make new friends, even though it's undeniably beneficial to have supportive relationships into your golden years. A 2017 study from researchers at Michigan State University found that valuing friendships was a stronger predictor of health and happiness among older adults than valuing family. Those results align with an earlier Australian study that found Australians age 70 or older tended to live significantly longer if they had more strong friendships.

Making friends after 50 might not be as simple as it was during your school days, but these strategies can help men and women in midlife build new friendships.

- Identify your interests. Fiftysomethings who have spent the last couple of decades building a career and raising a family can give some serious thought to their interests outside of work or passions they hope to pursue now that they have more time to commit to such pursuits. The more interested you are in a given activity, the more likely you are to stick with it. And the longer you stick with something, the more likely you are to meet like-minded individuals

(i.e., future friends) willing to make similar commitments.

- Utilize social media. In years past, men and women over 50 may not have had any readily available tools to reach out and connect with new people. Social media has made it much easier to build such connections. Even the most obscure passions likely have a social media group of locals devoted to them, and these groups can be great ways to meet new people. A local runner's club may have its own social media accounts, and local governments and community groups often share information about sports leagues and other groups via social media.
- Sign up for group outings. Communities often sponsor group outings to museums, the theater, sporting events, and other day trips. Signing up for a bus trip to a local museum presents a great opportunity to meet people who share your interests, providing the potential to build lasting friendships built on a foundation of shared interests.
- Broaden your horizons. Just because you're in your 50s doesn't mean your friends have to be. Don't hesitate to invite younger or older acquaintances and colleagues over for dinner or on weekend excursions. Friends come in all shapes, sizes and ages, so you could be missing out if you're not willing to extend a hand in friendship to people of different ages and backgrounds.

Making friends after 50 can be challenging. However, various strategies can help men and women over 50 connect with new people.

Did you know?

Socialization in midlife can have a profound impact on individuals as they approach their golden years. A 2019 study led by researchers at University College London found that being more socially active in your 50s and 60s predicts a lower risk of developing dementia later in life. The study used data from a previous study that tracked more than 10,000 participants between 1985 and 2013. Participants in the study completed cognitive testing from 1997

onwards. Researchers found that someone who saw friends almost daily at age 60 was 12 percent less likely to develop dementia than someone who only saw one or two friends every month. Strong associations between social contact at age 50 and subsequent dementia were also uncovered. The study supports the idea that remaining socially active in one's 50s and 60s can benefit long-term cognitive health.

St. Mary's Department of Aging & Human Services

Programs and Activities

Loffler Senior Activity Center 301-475-4200, ext. 1658
Garvey Senior Activity Center, 301-475-4200, ext. 1080
Northern Senior Activity Center, 301-475-4002, ext. 3101

Unless otherwise specified, all activities are open to Senior Activity Center participants ages 50+. Please call your local Senior Activity Center or visit StMarysMD.com/aging for the most up-to-date information.

Crochet Club

Would you like to work on your crochet projects and socialize with other people who enjoy crochet? Crochet Club will meet at the Garvey Senior Activity Center on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Bring your own projects as there will not be materials available and there is no instructor. To learn more, call 301-475-4200, ext. 1080.

Spring Yarn Hanging

Would you like to try a fun project using yarn without needing to know how to knit or crochet? In this fun seasonal craft we will hang spring colored yarns from a wooden rod to create a beautiful piece to hang in your home. Project is beginner friendly, and all materials will be provided. Class will be held at the Garvey Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, April 5, at 6 p.m. Cost for the class is \$10. You can now use the online registration at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs". Please call the Reservation Request Line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1075 if you need assistance with registration.

Fraud & Scams with Lt. Douglas Mills

Unfortunately, folks are being scammed and defrauded out of their life savings at alarming rates. Don't let it happen to you! On Thursday, April 6, from 2-3 p.m. at Northern Senior Activity Center, Lt. Douglas Mills of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office will provide crucial information on recognizing fraud/scams (bank, computer, mail, phone) & how to prevent these attacks. To register for this free event, click on the "View and Sign Up for Activities and Programs" button at www.stmarysmd.com/aging. Accommodations can be made for those requiring registration assistance by leaving a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

Cycling Without Age – 4 Rides Available

On Thursday, April 6, Christina Allen will provide four 45-minute covered rides (with blanket if needed) on Three Notch Trail leaving the Northern Senior Activity Center. This is an exceptional opportunity for those who cannot or have not been able to enjoy the Trail or cycling activity. A waiver is required by the Cycling Without Age association before the ride departs. To register for this event, visit www.stmarysmd.com/aging. Accommodations can be made for those requiring registration assistance by leaving a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115. Learn more about Cycling Without Age at www.cyclingwithoutage.com.

Community Shred & Medication Take Back Day

Do you have paper documents with personal information that you'd like to purge? Or do you have unused, unwanted, or expired medications in your cabinets? This is your chance to dispose of them safely at the Community Shred & Medication Take Back

Day! This event will be held on Saturday, April 8, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Department of Aging & Human Services, located at 41780 Baldrige St, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

This event is a cooperative effort between the Department of Aging & Human Services, St. Mary's County Health Department, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, and the St. Mary's County Department of Public Works & Transportation. Shredding services, medication collection, and safe disposal of medical sharps will be offered, all free of charge!

For more information, contact Community Programs & Outreach Manager Sarah Miller at sarah.miller@stmaryscountymd.gov or 301-475-4200, ext. 1073.

Nutrition Education

A Nutrition Presentation by Donna Taggart will take place at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Monday, April 11, at 10 a.m. This topic will be The Sleep-Nutrition Connection. Register for this free talk by going to www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660. Additionally - Donna offers free personal nutritional education at 11 a.m. on the day she is here if you make an appointment with her by text message or calling 240-538-6539.

Card Making Class

Would you like to make handmade cards to give to your loved ones? Are you looking for a new hobby or social activity? Come to Garvey Senior Activity Center for a beginner friendly card making class. Materials and instructions will be provided. You will have a variety of punches, stamps, embellishments, and more to create your cards. Cost for the class is \$4. Class will be held on Tuesday, April 11, at 6 p.m. You can now use the online registration at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs". Please call the Reservation Request Line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1075 if you need assistance with registration.

Insurance 101

The Maryland Insurance Administration will offer a free presentation- *Insurance 101*- at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, April 12, at 10 a.m. The primary role of the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) is to protect consumers from illegal insurance practices by ensuring that insurers and producers that operate in Maryland act in accordance with State insurance laws. Find out what you need to know about insurance and the many types available from the agency that is designed to protect you. Register for this presentation at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660. Limited seating available.

Painted Flowerpots

Paint a spring flowerpot! Class is beginner

friendly, and no experience is required. All materials will be provided. Class will be held at the Garvey Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, April 12, at 6 p.m. The cost for the class is \$10. You can now use the online registration at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs". Please call the Reservation Request Line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1075 if you need assistance with registration.

AARP Safe Driving Class at Loffler

An AARP Safe Driving course will be held at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Thursday, April 13, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (with an hour lunch break around 11:30 a.m.). This program includes emphasis on roundabouts, pavement markings, stop sign compliance, red light running, and safety issues such as speeding, seat belt, and turn signal use. Registration in advance is required- go to www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging. If you would like to order lunch from the center, please call 301-475-4200, ext. 1658 by 12 p.m. on April 12. Please confirm your registration in the class when calling. Lunch is \$6 for those under 60 and by donation for those 60+. Cost of AARP Class: \$20 for AARP Members, \$25 for Non-Members-

due the day of class.

Loffler Book Club

During the month of March read: *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown- a true story based on the struggles and sacrifices made by the University of Washington rowing team to compete at the highest possible level, rowing at the 1936 Summer Olympics. Discussion will take place on April 14, at 2 p.m. in the Loffler Senior Activity Center. Contact Sheila.Graziano@stmaryscountymd.gov if you wish your e-mail address to be added to the book club contact list.

April Health Watch: Spring Gardening Safety

Safety in gardening will be the Health Watch topic at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, April 19, at 9:30 a.m. Nature is emerging from the long sleep- time to enjoy early gardening! But watch out- grass and flowers are not the only things waking up! Be on the lookout for dangerous creatures and while you're at it- watch your back, not just for creatures but for safe movement practices as well! Advance registration is required for this presentation. Go to www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660.



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St. Mary's Community Calendar

To submit your event listing to go in our Community Calendar, please email timescalendar@countytimes.net with the listing details by 12 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication.

Fri, Mar 31

Lenten Fish-Shrimp Dinners

St. George Catholic Church
19199 St. George's Church Road
Valley Lee
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

St. George Catholic Church Lenten Dinners—Every Friday evening dinners Menu is Shrimp or Fresh Catfish with Pancit, French Fries, Fritters and Soup. \$20 per dinner, we hope to see you again this year!

Steamed Shrimp Dinner

Mechanicsville Vol. Fire Dept.
28165 Hills Club Road
Mechanicsville
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Pre Order Only
1/2 lb. Steamed Shrimp, Hushpuppies, Green Beans, Applesauce, Roll w/butter, Brownie, Honey & Cocktail Sauce
\$22.00 per Dinner
Order by 2/26/2023
Contact: Call or text Diane 301-481-0954

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover *processing fees apply*

Our Lady of the Wayside's Lenten Fish Fry

Our Lady of the Wayside's Loretto Hall
37575 Chaptico Rd, Chaptico
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Adults \$20 Children 6-12 \$10 Children 5 and under free. Dine-in or drive thru. Inside dining menu includes fried fish, fried fish nuggets, popcorn shrimp, French fries, coleslaw, green beans, rolls and iced tea. Desserts available. Drive thru menu is the same except whole fish only. Cash or checks only. For more information contact Brenda Russell at rsbrsll@aol.com or 301-247-1871.

Visit one of the nation's best-preserved, one-room African American schoolhouses the first Saturday of each month from April to October and during Juneteenth weekend. Check out the restored schoolhouse and learn about its rich history and importance to education in St. Mary's County. Staff will be available at the school during this time to answer any questions and provide information.

The Museum Division also offers special programs for school, bus and other tour groups who would like to visit the site. Visitors who would like to see the schoolhouse outside open house hours can contact the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum at 301-994-1471. INFO: www.facebook.com/events/843753903614672/

and under. Pictures with the Easter Bunny, Easter egg painting, Free goody bags at the door, Carnival games with prizes. Chance to win a Bicycle (4 being given away), large stuffed animals, or an Easter basket full of goodies. Raffle for Jumbo Easter Basket.

Mon, Apr 3

Companions and Buddies for Singles Seniors

Leonardtown Library and Senior Center
23630 Hayden Farm Ln
Leonardtown
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

This is a group of singles seniors ages 50 and up. We meet on Mondays at the Leonardtown Library. We Have half hour socializing. We plan on events to go to such as movies, dine out, movies, plays, picnics and trips. For more information call Christine Olson 301-997-4160 or email mccambridgec@yahoo.com or just show up.

Sat, Apr 1

Drayden African American Schoolhouse Open House

Drayden African American Schoolhouse
18287 Cherryfield Road, Drayden
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sun, Apr 2

Hollywood-Leonardtown Optimist Club Easter Eggstravaganza

VFW Post 2632
23282 Three Notch Rd, California
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Free Easter Event for the first 150 kids, 12

★ ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library



Cricut Crafts: Custom Bag: Using Heat Transfer Vinyl

Unlock your crafting potential by learning how to use the Cricut cutting machine to make your own vinyl embellished cloth bag at Leonardtown Library on Thursday, April 6 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Join us for this introductory, in-person class in the Leonardtown Makerspace where you'll learn the basics of how the Cricut cutter works as well the use of Cricut Design Space. You'll create your own heat transfer vinyl design to apply to a cloth bag to take with you! After learning the basics, you'll be able to return to the Makerspace during open hours to use the Cricut on your own to create whatever you can imagine! Visit the Makerspace website to see open hours and learn about all it has to offer! No experience needed and all materials are provided. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Email Basics

Join us for this introductory class to learn how to use emails at Lexington Park Library on Tuesday, April 4 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. If you are interested in learning how to set up an email, in addition to sending, receiving, formatting, and understanding how to attach documents, cc people, and organize your emails, this session will introduce the basics of email, including Gmail, Yahoo, and Outlook. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Intro to Microsoft Word

Join us for this introductory class to learn how to use Microsoft Word at Lexington Park Library on Wednesday, April 5 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. If you are interested in learning how to use Microsoft Word, this class will cover the basics including what Microsoft Word is, how to create, save, and format documents, in addition to how to use Mic-

rosoft Word at the Library. Register on www.stmalib.org

Intro to Microsoft Excel

Learn the basics of Microsoft Office's computer spreadsheet application in this introductory class at Charlotte Hall Library on Friday, April 7 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. Excel is most often used to make lists or calculate columns of numbers. We will get you started with the basics like creating, saving, and formatting the spreadsheets. Register on www.stmalib.org to reserve your spot and receive a reminder email. Walk-ins welcome as space allows.

Outdoor Storytime at Historic Sotterley

Stories, songs, and activities for children with their adult caregivers, outdoors at Historic Sotterley on Friday, April 7 from 10:30 - 11 a.m. Please register once per family group. Rain or

shine! This activity will take place outdoors on the grass lawn beside the gardens. Participants should bring blankets or chairs for comfort, and follow social distancing practices during the event. In case of rain, storytime will move to a covered pavilion. Families attending storytime will receive free admission stickers to Sotterley, so be sure to stay and explore the lovely grounds after storytime. Address: 44300 Sotterley Ln, Hollywood, MD 20636. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Library Closed for Easter

Lexington Park Library will be closed on Sunday, April 9 in observance of Easter. All three locations of the St. Mary's County Library will be open regular business hours on Monday, April 10.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS 2023 SCHEDULE



MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28 NYN 12:05 PM	29	30 ATL 1:05 PM	31	1 ATL 4:05 PM
2 ATL 1:35 PM	3 TB 7:05 PM	4 TB 7:05 PM	5 TB 1:05 PM	6 COL 4:10 PM	7 COL 8:40 PM	8 COL 8:10 PM
9 COL 3:10 PM	10 LAA 9:38 PM	11 LAA 9:38 PM	12 LAA 4:07 PM	13	14 CLE 7:05 PM	15 CLE 4:05 PM
16 CLE 1:35 PM	17	18 BAL 7:05 PM	19 BAL 7:05 PM	20	21 MIN 8:10 PM	22 MIN 2:10 PM
23 MIN 2:10 PM	24	25 NYM 7:10 PM	26 NYM 7:10 PM	27 NYM 7:10 PM	28 PIT 7:05 PM	29 PIT 1:05 PM
30 PIT 1:35 PM						

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 PHI 4:05 PM
2 PHI 1:35 PM	3 CIN 6:05 PM	4 CIN 11:05 AM	5 CIN 7:05 PM	6 CIN 1:05 PM	7 TEX 7:05 PM	8 TEX 4:05 PM
9 TEX 12:05 PM	10-13 ALL-STAR WEEK 2023				14 STL 8:15 PM	15 STL 7:15 PM
16 STL 2:15 PM	17 CHC 8:05 PM	18 CHC 8:05 PM	19 CHC 8:05 PM	20	21 SF 7:05 PM	22 SF 7:05 PM
23 SF 1:35 PM	24 COL 7:05 PM	25 COL 7:05 PM	26 COL 12:05 PM	27 NYM 7:10 PM	28 NYM 7:10 PM	29 NYM 7:10 PM
30 NYM 1:40 PM	31 MIL 7:05 PM					

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 CHC 7:05 PM	2 CHC 7:05 PM	3 CHC 7:05 PM	4 CHC 1:05 PM	5 ARI 9:40 PM	6 ARI 8:10 PM
7 ARI 4:10 PM	8 SF 9:45 PM	9 SF 9:45 PM	10 SF 3:45 PM	11	12 NYM 7:05 PM	13 NYM 4:05 PM
14 NYM 1:35 PM	15 NYM 4:05 PM	16 MIA 6:40 PM	17 MIA 6:40 PM	18 MIA 1:10 PM	19 DET 7:05 PM	20 DET 4:05 PM
21 DET 1:35 PM	22	23 SD 7:05 PM	24 SD 7:05 PM	25 SD 4:05 PM	26 KC 8:10 PM	27 KC 4:10 PM
28 KC 2:10 PM	29 LAD 9:10 PM	30 LAD 10:10 PM	31 LAD 4:10 PM			

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 MIL 7:05 PM	2 MIL 1:05 PM	3	4 CIN 6:40 PM	5 CIN 4:10 PM
6 CIN 1:40 PM	7 PHI 6:40 PM	8 PHI 6:40 PM	9 PHI 6:40 PM	10 PHI 6:40 PM	11 OAK 7:05 PM	12 OAK 7:05 PM
13 OAK 1:35 PM	14	15 BOS 7:05 PM	16 BOS 7:05 PM	17 BOS 4:05 PM	18 PHI 7:05 PM	19 PHI 4:05 PM
20 MLB LITTLE LEAGUE CLASSIC vs PHI 7:10 PM	21	22 NYN 7:05 PM	23 NYN 7:05 PM	24 NYN 1:05 PM	25 MIA 6:40 PM	26 MIA 4:10 PM
27 MIA 1:40 PM	28 TOR 7:07 PM	29 TOR 7:07 PM	30 TOR 3:07 PM	31 MIA 7:05 PM		

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 PHI 7:05 PM	3 PHI 4:05 PM
4 PHI 1:35 PM	5	6 ARI 7:05 PM	7 ARI 7:05 PM	8 ARI 1:05 PM	9 ATL 7:20 PM	10 ATL 4:10 PM
11 ATL 1:30 PM	12	13 HOU 8:10 PM	14 HOU 8:10 PM	15 HOU 8:10 PM	16 MIA 7:05 PM	17 MIA 4:05 PM
18 MIA 1:35 PM	19 STL 4:05 PM	20 STL 7:05 PM	21 STL 4:05 PM	22	23 SD 9:40 PM	24 SD 8:40 PM
25 SD 4:10 PM	26 SEA 9:40 PM	27 SEA 9:40 PM	28 SEA 4:10 PM	29	30 PHI 6:05 PM	

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 MIA 7:05 PM	2 MIA 4:05 PM
3 MIA 1:35 PM	4	5 NYM 7:05 PM	6 NYM 7:05 PM	7	8 LAD 7:05 PM	9 LAD 4:05 PM
10 LAD 1:35 PM	11 PIT 6:35 PM	12 PIT 6:35 PM	13 PIT 6:35 PM	14 PIT 12:35 PM	15 MIL 8:10 PM	16 MIL 7:10 PM
17 MIL 2:10 PM	18 CWS 7:05 PM	19 CWS 7:05 PM	20 CWS 1:05 PM	21 ATL 7:05 PM	22 ATL 7:05 PM	23 ATL 1:05 PM
24 ATL 1:35 PM	25	26 BAL 6:35 PM	27 BAL 6:35 PM	28	29 ATL 7:20 PM	30 ATL 7:20 PM
1 ATL 3:00 PM						

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A View From The BLEACHERS



DREAM ON

By Ronald N. Guy Jr.
Contributing Writer

Unease. Discomfort. Frustration. Anger. Anxiety. Fear. These are the emotional bedfellows of unwanted change. And fear, well, fear is the first step on the path to the dark side, according to Master Yoda. Resist that, we must; but change is an escapable force.

If you have a few decades on your odometer, enough to have experienced the 1990s, if not the 1980s (or before), do you ever just stop and look around and wonder, in the words of the Talking Heads and the incomparable David Byrne, “You may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile; you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife; and you may ask yourself, well how did I get here?”

Consider how the tried-and-true American road trip has changed. Destinations would be selected based on word-of-mouth suggestions about magical places or alluring pamphlets. Reservations were made by calling hotels and comparing prices, and required talking to other humans (gasp). The drive itself was somewhat dicey – uncertain directions, carelessly unfolded maps and for kids, hours of antiquated handheld devices, bad radio stations and significant boredom. Clark Griswold’s journey to Walley World in National Lampoon’s Vacation was a comic embellishment of such adventures, but it worked because it wasn’t that far disconnected from reality. Now you can Google map locations, easily find restaurants and activities, and GPS will prevent any wrong turns into desert wastelands. And with virtual reality and the Metaverse coming, soon “going places” won’t require leaving home. Sheesh...the risk of a wrong turn or a bad hotel experience has been solved!

And what about raising teenagers? Once upon a time I could exit my parents’ house with a cryptic description of where my buddies and I were headed (even though I knew exactly what mischief was planned). Now parents can track kids’ locations, reach them by phone at any moment and even get data on their driving practices. As a parent now, I often wonder if this is better; while information is power, ignorance is bliss.

Speaking of change, how about a reading assignment, class? Check out Sports Illustrated’s recent piece titled “Death of the Local Sports Anchor.” It is a journey back to a time before the dominance of ESPN, when local sports anchors were gods. And spoiled we were in the D.C. region with giants like George Michael (The Sports Machine) and the comic genius of Glenn Brenner (The Weenie of the Week). You know what made vegetables taste better in 1984? Scarfing them down while watching Brenner crack jokes with Sonny Jurgensen and Michael and Jim Vance ham it up over the latest crazy sports happening during the six o’clock news on Channel 9 and 4, respectively.

I do miss those days.

Which brings this meandering article to the point of all this change talk: the sale of the Washington Commanders. What began as a glimmer of hope last fall, but one to be received with skepticism given the seller, has now gained sufficient momentum and generated enough smoke to conclude that there is actually a healthy fire of change ablaze.

File this under “not all change is bad.” The thought of our football team cleansed of any vestige of Dan Snyder produces not one of those aforementioned negative emotions. No, the exit of Snyder is a path from the dark, back into the light. It allows dreams of winning football and a new stadium in D.C., of an owner who doesn’t meddle and an organization that doesn’t objectify women, maintain a toxic workplace, cut shady financial deals and bleed its fans dry of every hard-earned dime.

“Every time that I look in the mirror; all these lines on my face getting clearer; the past is gone.” These are the opening lyrics to Aerosmith’s classic “Dream On”; the words capture the nearing end of Snyder’s reign of terror, one that has battered a once great beacon of the DMV community. And while that new organization won’t be covered like Brenner and Michael did on those cherished sports segments of yesteryear, perhaps that great feeling of pride in the...in our...burgundy and gold can be regenerated again.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

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Calvert Community Calendar

To submit your event listing to go in our Community Calendar, please email timescalendar@countytimes.net with the listing details by 12 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication.

Thu, Mar 30

Reading Buddies

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Children that need some extra help with reading build confidence by reading with teens! With snacks, games, and reading incentives! A program for K-5 graders to practice reading in a relaxed and welcoming group space! A fun event that inspires a love of reading, offers great social activities for shy or anxious children and teens, and promotes positive interactions between children of all ages. Teens get to participate in a meaningful experience by encouraging children and helping them with their reading skills. They can also earn a service hour for school. No need to register, just email Jess if interested in being a Reading Buddy: jess.swain@calvertlibrary.info 410-326-5289. <https://calvertlibrary.info>

Sat, Apr 1

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

St. Leonard Polling House
5095 St. Leonard Road, St. Leonard
11 a.m.

Hunt eggs, decorate a cupcake and have a snack. Easter Egg Hunt for children 10 years and younger. Sponsored by the St. Leonard Vision Group. Contact Nancy Zinn, 410-586-0682. Weather date, Sunday, April 2, 3 p.m.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Mt. Hope Convenience Center
96 Pushaw Station Rd., Sunderland
8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Calvert County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division, will host a free

household hazardous waste collection event for county residents.

Hazardous household products are common in many homes and must be disposed of carefully in order to prevent dangerous chemical reactions, ignition, burns, vapors and ground water contamination that can occur when included with regular household waste. A substance is considered hazardous if it ignites easily, reacts or explodes when mixed with other substances, is corrosive or toxic. To determine if a substance is hazardous, check product labels for words or symbols that indicate caution, warning, danger, poison or toxic.

Acceptable hazardous waste items include auto and floor care products, medications, pesticides, gasoline, fertilizers, ammunition and more. Latex paints will not be accepted at this event.

There is no limit per resident and proof of residency is required. Businesses are prohibited from this event. For a full listing of accepted hazardous waste materials or for more information on household hazardous waste collection events, call the Calvert County Solid Waste Division at 410-326-0210 or visit calvertcountymd.gov/hazardouswaste

Garden Market

Annemarie Sculpture Garden
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Admission to the market area is free

You'll find garden and yard art, flowering plants and vegetables, outdoor living products, gardening accessories, picnic supplies, and everything you need to enjoy being outside on a beautiful day! Well-behaved pets on a short leash are welcome; rain or shine event; no smoking or vaping. Details: www.annemariEGarden.org

Mulch Sale

Solomons Volunteer Rescue Squad and Fire Department, 8 a.m. to 12 noon

Benefit of Patuxent High School Band. Only \$5 per bag (red, black and natural brown). Free delivery for 10 or more bags. Online preorders are available to ensure product and delivery. Please add the student's name to comments when ordering so that they will receive credit for your order. We will have some mulch available on April 1st for same day sales, but it will be limited and first come basis.

Sun, Apr 2

Community Book Swap

Dunkirk District Park, Noon to 2 p.m.

Join MAEVE Northern Calvert at the main park pavilion for a free Community Book Swap & Share Event. Bring gently used books to swap, then browse the selection and take more home to fill your shelves. We welcome books for all ages (no reference materials please). Bringing books is not required to participate. This event is family friendly. We will have a story-time and a bookmark craft. It's right next to the main playground.

Wed, Apr 5

Birds of the Marsh

Calvert Marine Museum, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Join one of our educators for a guided marsh walk at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., or 2 p.m. to explore and observe the birds that make their home in our salt marsh. Learn how to identify birds by their tracks and feathers. Play the Migration Game to discover just how difficult it is for our feathered friends to make their seasonal journeys! Activities planned for ages 4 – 10 (children must be accompanied by an adult). Programming is included with museum admission.

Thu, Apr 6

Predator/Prey Day

Calvert Marine Museum, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Join in some fun activities as we learn about predator/prey relationships between the animals in the museum's exhibits. Discover the many ways that animals avoid falling prey to a predator, and the adaptations that help predators catch their prey! Activities planned for ages 4 – 10 (*children must be accompanied by an adult*). Programming is included with museum admission.

Upcoming

Learn About the Lighthouse Keepers

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday, April 7, 11 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Step back in time and learn about Mr. and Mrs. Goeshy, the keepers of the Drum Point Lighthouse from 1930 – 1931. Special tours at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. will highlight the aspects of life at the Drum Point Lighthouse during the early 1930s. Appropriate for all ages. Programming is included with museum admission.

Annemarie After Hours

Annemarie Sculpture Garden,
Friday, April 7, 5-7 p.m.

Enjoy a special family-friendly opening in celebration of a new exhibit. Both galleries in the Arts Building will be open until 7:00pm, along with the sculpture garden and walking trails. Enjoy live music, tour the new exhibit, take a walk, and appreciate an evening of art and nature. You'll find a cash bar and food truck as well. Admission is \$5/adults, \$3/kids; 2 & under free; members free. Reservations are not required, just come. Details: www.annemariEGarden.org

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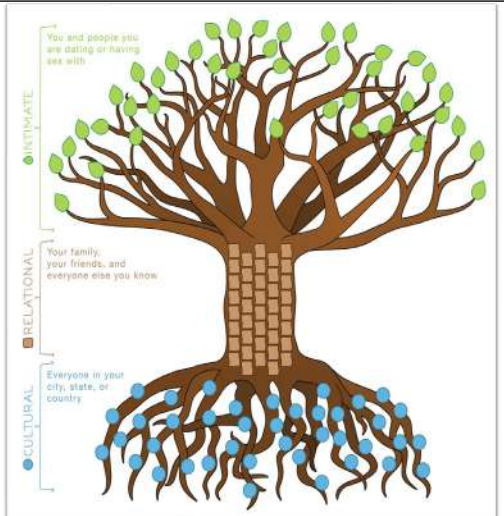
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School Board Briefed on Sex Education

Human Sexuality

- Sexuality is something we experience personally, individually, and uniquely.
- It influences & affects us on different levels:
 1. Cultural
 2. Relational
 3. Intimate
- There are a variety of elements that make up what we understand to be our sexuality.
- Some of the elements include: Abstinence, Body Image, Boundaries, Communication, Consent, Contraception, Education, Family, Gender, Healthcare, Intimacy, Love, Prevention, Puberty, Relationships, Reproduction, Safety, and STI's



The Sexuality Tree is one tool used in Calvert County Health curriculum.

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

With the ongoing controversy over alleged sexually explicit library and classroom materials, the Calvert County Board of Education was briefed at their March 23 meeting about Health Education with a specific emphasis on Family Life and Human Sexuality content.

Director of Health Education Brita Sparks reported from the most recent data from 2018, "Fifty percent of all new sexually transmitted infections in the United States each year are in teens and young adults," adding that in Calvert "we do have teenagers who engage in sexual intercourse, and we do have a prevalence of chlamydia and gonorrhea."

"HIV is also a concern for us," she said, "because we know that nationally, 20 percent of new HIV cases are in the 14 or 15 to 24 age group. New local data should be coming out later this spring. We have a relatively low number of ninth graders reported as ever having sex at 16.9 percent and that number increases yearly to over 40 percent of 11th graders, and over 55 percent of 12th graders. Alarmingly, only 54 percent of Calvert County high school students reported using a condom the last time they had sex. That means 46 percent did not. This data reminds us that while national trend data for students engaging in sexual intercourse has decreased since 2011, there are still teens engaging in intercourse and risky sexual behaviors in middle and high school."

Sparks said, "A comprehensive sexuality program provides medically accurate information, recognizes the diversity of values and beliefs represented in the community, and compliments the sexuality education children receive from their families, religious and community groups and health professionals. Comprehensive sex ed programs prevent misinformation, reduce violence, abuse, and sexual exploitation, and make it easier for children to report if someone does try to harm them. Comprehensive sexuality education also has been shown to reduce the number of students engaged in sexual activity and delay the onset of sexual activity. We all want students to make healthy choices, and we all want students to feel safe at school and have opportunities for learning, and if parents worry that students may hear some-

thing troubling or uncomfortable. We worry too with the internet and television and the media out there. That's why we're supportive of giving them access to accurate information from a trusted adult."

She said, "Young people are exposed to sexual content. It's unavoidable. A quality educational program prepares them to manage the development of their changing bodies and the impact of influences from peers, media, and society. It is misinformation and omission that sets children up to make avoidable mistakes and not advocate for themselves."

"Parents and guardians do have the right to preview materials and to opt out of family life and human sexuality curriculum," she said. "They can opt out of particular lessons for their children or the unit as a whole, and they will be provided alternate learning. They need to communicate this with the teachers. Parents receive a letter to invite them to reach out to the teacher to preview materials and discuss how content is taught."

She added, "I always recommend that the parent talks with the teacher to discuss the content because most often in our experience when a parent takes the opportunity to do this, they have a better understanding of what is taught and how it is taught."

"The Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework is written for teachers. When writing curriculum, we look at that standard and develop age-appropriate content. From just reading the standard, it's sometimes difficult to understand what that looks like in the classroom, so we urge families to talk to the teacher to understand what that standard looks like in instruction. When we talk about age-appropriate instruction, elementary health education begins with concepts like respect, healthy friendships, anti-bullying, and bodily autonomy. In this lesson sequence, reproductive anatomy is not introduced until the fifth grade. Two standards from the framework and recognize a range of ways people identify and express gender and demonstrate ways to treat people of all gender identities and expressions with dignity and respect."

Then she said, "Fifth grade is where we teach the reproductive system and hormones," adding, "We talk about how elements of puberty may feel embarrassing, but

to recognize that it happens to everyone, and everyone has the same emotions about that. Be kind and be helpful and empathetic. Do not tease or bully someone."

Then she noted, "In grades seven and eight, we define sexuality. In seventh grade, because there's an assumption that sexuality means sexual intercourse. Sexuality's an umbrella term used to include all aspects of human sexuality, including relationships, sexual anatomy and reproduction, consent, sexual activity, abstinence orientation, gender identity, contraception and reproductive rights and responsibilities. The focus of

the seventh-grade curriculum is the science of the reproductive system, menstruation, and fertilization, and how a pregnancy occurs through intercourse. When a sperm can enter an egg and fertilize it while they learn how a woman becomes pregnant. We emphasize it is not healthy at this age, and the only way to ensure that someone does not become pregnant is to remain abstinent."

"In eighth grade, we again stress healthy versus unhealthy relationships, including relationships with parents, friends, boy-friends, girlfriends, relatives, coaches, teach-

ers. They practice providing healthy advice to peers and explain what qualities are important in relationships. Abstinence is, again, a large topic in eighth grade, and we focus on the benefits of abstinence."

Part of that she said, is "why is it important to be confident in your ability to say no to sexual pressure."

Regarding gender identity, she said, "We think once we know one thing about someone, we can fill in the rest of their blanks. For example, if someone is a woman, we have a picture in our mind of what that person looks like and who she's attracted to. We might assume she expresses gender and feminine ways, embodies femaleness, and is attracted to men. This image is an oversimplification and an assumption at the simplest level. Gender expression can change just by the way a person cuts their hair or changes their clothes. The activity in the classroom that goes with the teaching of the definitions of the four aspects of gender, identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. The activity is a reflective one for students. They are asked to personally reflect on this for themselves. We do not ask students to share; that is inappropriate."

The complete presentation can be watched on the video of the March 23 meeting on the Board of Education section of the Calvert County Public Schools website.

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County to Buy Prince Frederick Properties
Price Tag: \$2.1 Million for 179 Acres

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has approved the purchase of two parcels of land in Prince Frederick totaling 179.11 acres for \$2,118,000. The properties at 255 JW Williams Road and 221 Stafford Road were owned by Phillip T. Goldstein, Louisa Horton Goldstein, and Margaret Goldstein Janney, members of the family of the late Louis L. Goldstein, long-time Comptroller of Maryland.

According to a memo from Deputy Director of General Services Thomas Jones, presented at the March 28 public hearing before the decision for the purchase, the purpose of the December 14, 2022, option on the land was to “enhance public safety at the Barstow Convenience Center and provide an additional discharge area for Prince Frederick Wastewater Treatment Plant No. 1 in Prince Frederick. An Environmental Phase One study was conducted and determined that the property meets satisfactory standards.”

Both properties are adjacent to land owned by the county and are across JW Williams Road from the College of Southern Maryland, Prince Frederick campus.

Three people spoke at the public hearing, expressing confusion about the purpose and the price. Bob Estes said, “It sounds like a great purchase. It’s not clear to me exactly how it’s going to be used.”

Estes added, “I know that some of my groups are concerned as to how this is going to be used and the impact on future expansion of the Prince Frederick Town Center. I know that we’re running out of spaces to put, let’s just call it the spray irrigation for a lack of better term. But it’s not clear that is this a replacement for aging systems or is this a road to aid in future development and expansion, or perhaps it’s both.”

After hearing the concerns, Commissioner President Buddy Hance explained, “Some of you may remember that about a year ago there was a lot of discussion about the sewage treatment plant in Prince Frederick and some capacity issues for water disposal.



Commissioner President Buddy Hance

The plant, as I understand, has processing capacity, but they were very limited on capacity to discharge the water after the process is complete.”

Hance added about the purchased property, “It adjoins up to the property we already own, where the convenience center is and therefore connects up to where the sewage treatment plan is. We’ve done soil tests. The soils are perfect for the land application of graywater, I guess, for lack of a better term.”

Hance also said the compactor facility on Stafford Road is “very tight in there. We’ve tried to make changes to our compactor sites, make them more user friendly, better suited for us to move in and out when we’re changing out boxes.”

Hance added, “It’s in no way intended to add more density or help with expansion of the town center.”

He observed, “The balance of the land that we don’t use for our two intended purposes will just be forested. There may be opportunity for forest mitigation there or to preserve that forested land.”

The decision to proceed with the purchase was unanimous.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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School Board Approves Budget on Split Vote

3-2 Decision Goes to the Commissioners

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education, on a 3-2 vote on March 23, ratified Superintendent Dr. Andre Townsel's proposed budget with two exceptions. The budget that now goes to the county commissioners asks the superintendent to find money within his budget for two additional gifted and talented teachers and also reduced the needed revenue by \$500,000 by removing a payment to the reserve for future retiree benefits.

Board members Lisa Grenis and Jana Post opposed the budget. Grenis said, "For me, this budget should be hyper-focused on student achievement and salaries. It's not reasonable or sustainable to keep asking for more money. We need to dig deep into the bowels of this budget to find savings and to focus on these priorities. Our duty as school board members is to present a fiscally responsible budget to the commissioners."

"Priorities must be made, and sacrifices must be made. This economy that we're having right now affects everyone. And I fear that this budget could lead to potentially higher taxes. So I need to be ensured that absolutely every effort has been made to ensure there is no wasteful spending in the budget."

Board member Dawn Balinski defended

the decision. "This is a huge ask in for our county commissioners," she said. "Most probably they are not going to be able to fully fund it. And when I first saw the superintendent's proposal, I was probably as stunned as the commissioners were."

She said she went over the budget with a fine-toothed comb. "I'm sure there are some savings that we could do," observing, "when more expensive teachers retire and you replace them, that will always be a moving target in any kind of budget building."

Balinski said, "In that \$219 million in salary and benefits, which is 81 percent of our budget, teachers make up 76 percent of that. I looked at what the teacher budget included for next year and what's reflected in our budget is the mandated Blueprint salary increases, which is a nice five and a half percent increase, the negotiated increases that were not included in the Blueprint, and that's another one percent Cola plus steps. Then we had to increase staff to ramp up our pre-K program. That's included in that. That is mandatory." That all adds up to \$13.1 million, she said.

"Then we asked for the superintendent to include equivalent raises to all the other staff because of their intrinsic and undeniable importance to the quality of our school system," she said, which adds \$5 million.

Then she noted, "We do have some additional head count that goes into the salaries

and benefits level. We're adding back two assistant principals that had been removed a few years back. But now that we see that was sort of shortsighted, especially when you take into account Covid and its effect on student behavior. I think we all know what's going on. This puts more adults in the building and I believe our two high schools who had it removed would benefit greatly from them.

"We also have added three safety advocates to have full coverage of our middle schools, which again, having more adults in the building to reinforce acceptable behavior will have a palpable effect on school climate and make for more responsible students as these guys move into high school."

She concluded the total for additional salaries and benefits adds up to \$18.3 million.

"If we suffer a terrible reduction in the amount that the commissioners can give us this next year, the implications are going to be pretty dire and will require drastic action," she said, including reduced staff levels or increased class sizes or not honoring negotiated agreements.

"Next year is the last year of our contract, and we have to be able to honor that salary increase," she concluded.

Dr. Townsel's budget includes an historic \$22.4 million more from the county.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



Dawn Balinski



Lisa Grenis

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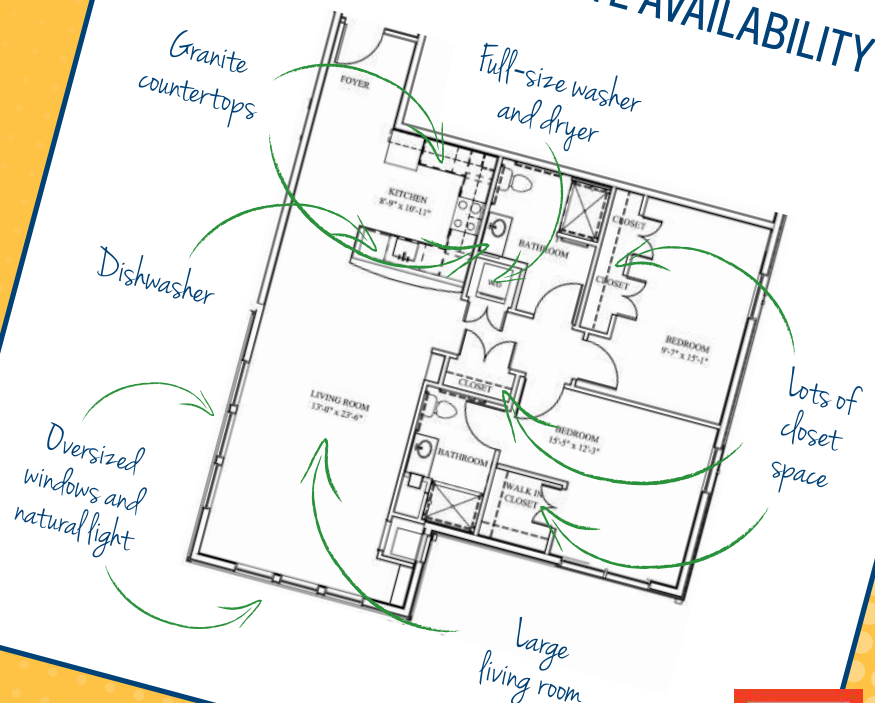
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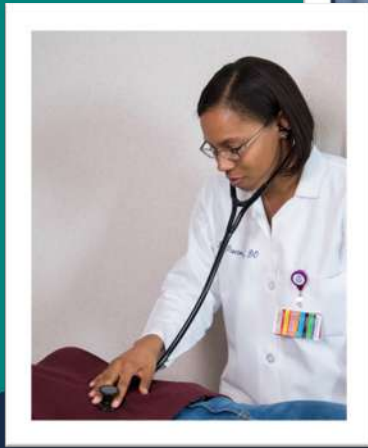
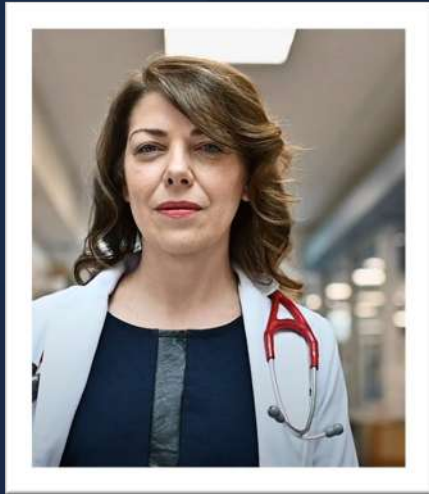
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School Board to Consider Restroom Vaping Detectors

Proposal Recommended in CHS Classroom Project

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education has asked staff to investigate the possibility of vaping detectors for school restrooms after a presentation by a class from Calvert High

School (CHS).

Teacher Amie Dryer, who has been at CHS for 14 years, told the board at their March 23 meeting that she had her students do a “project-based learning project where I asked them to take Martin Luther’s 95 theses and figure out some theses that they had for



our high school. They chose three projects: school lunch menu and dieting, traffic control on Dares Beach Road and “vaping and our bathroom situation.”

She said the students worked with many community partners to compile statistics and ideas for recommendations. Students Kathleen Tayman and Cassidy Dillard presented the report.

The board was told “Three main problems were the risks to student health, the fact that vaping is happening on school property and the funding for vape detectors.”

The report says of those who responded to a survey, “The majority of students experienced delays due to crowds in the bathroom and say that they are concerned about the air quality in the bathroom because of the vaping issue.”

The survey also shows “65.2 percent of students said that they were completely unable to use the bathroom because of the vaping issue.”

The report said vaping can lead to heavier drug use, vandalism, and fights.

Three remedial actions have been tried: putting teachers outside bathrooms, locking

bathrooms, or giving detentions. “None of these solutions have truly worked at all,” the report concludes.

Vaping detectors were chosen as the best alternative in part because funding was either already in the budget or grants available.

“Multiple counties outside of our own have used these and they’ve been very effective,” the report concludes.

The board was informed “these detectors specifically don’t have an alarm that goes off.” Other than vaping, it can detect a variety of other causes such as sounds and chemicals. Once detected, an email is sent to a person or persons specified to receive them and they can go and check or later review video evidence for the perpetrator(s).

Board member Dawn Balinski said, “You’ve come up with what sounds like a pretty darn good solution,” and she urged staff to investigate to see if there were any problems with the idea.

All of the board members praised the students for the detail of their investigation and the hard work they put into it.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Next Year’s First School Day Changed

Spring Break Next Year Also Revised

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education on March 23, after getting feedback from the community, has decided to change the opening day of school for next year from Aug. 24 to Aug. 28.

The board at an earlier meeting had voted 2-1 for the Aug. 24 opening, with two members not in attendance. But the board attorney had ruled that decision was invalid because three affirmative votes are needed for passage.

In making the motion for the Aug. 28 start, board member Jana Post said, “My apologies, I was not at the last board meeting. There were some that were in favor of the start date, and there were certainly many more that were opposed. And while I do recognize that it will be difficult to make every single person happy, I think that what is causing the most heartburn right now is that we are to this point in the school year, and we don’t have an approved calendar. I know there were some benefits to moving spring break. There were other people that weren’t happy about moving spring break. I think 13 plus days of half days might be a little much.”

“Starting that early may not be such an issue if there was proper time and planning. And I know that that’s impacting a lot of people, especially teachers and parents who have kids going to camp.”

At the suggestion of member Dawn Balinski, the board voted to make up the two lost days at the beginning of the year with one inclement weather day and adding one day onto the end of the school year in June.

Regarding spring break, the board took note of the fact they were the only district in the area to have it before Easter, so they agreed to switch it to after Easter next year.

Board member Lisa Grenis said, “Teachers in this county and families would not be having the spring break together. I think we should coincide with what our surrounding counties do.”

Marking periods and half days for teachers to complete their grading will also have to be adjusted.

The decisions for the changes were unanimous.

Staff agreed to start the calendar process earlier next year (a committee works on it) to avoid the confusion that happened this year.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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CHRIS FRANJOLA is a writer and comedian who can currently be heard hosting his highly successful podcast, “Cover To Cover With Chris Franjola.” He’s a frequent contributor on Heather McDonald’s wildly successful podcast, “Juicy Scoop.” Chris was a regular panel guest on “Lights Out with David Spade” on Comedy Central and on Fox’s gameshow “Punchline.” Chris was also a writer and a regular performer on E!’s hit show “Chelsea Lately” for eight years. Together with the talented writing staff, Chris wrote more than 1,500 episodes while performing on the show. Before “Chelsea Lately,” Chris wrote for other shows, including “Family Guy,” the MTV Video Music Awards and the original “Chelsea Handler Show.” He also starred on the critically acclaimed scripted comedy series “After Lately,” which aired for three seasons on E!. He was the host of the “Sons of Anarchy” aftershow “Anarchy Afterword,” airing live on FX.

MATT BERGMAN has been honing his comedy craft since he was in college pursuing a degree in criminal justice. After graduating, he realized he was afraid of criminals and decided stand-up comedy was the way to go. Bergman is easily relatable and versatile, a skillset that has opened the door to tv appearances on Gotham Comedy Live, Comedy Central Live and a Dry Bar Comedy Special. His recent album “Approbation Constante” was called “really tough to purchase” by his mother who still doesn’t quite understand iTunes.

TIM D. MILLER is a master at engaging audiences and crafting a stand-up set that is a guaranteed good time for all. Tim’s material is based on his life experience from Waco to the Army to the White House, trying to raise a daughter and his unique ability to find the funny in everyday life. Tim has appeared on TRU TV and in 2019 he performed at Comedy Central’s Clusterfest. He is the producer and host of “Read the Room,” a crowd work showcase.

Monica Mehta: Coming Home a Doctor



Dr. Monica Mehta

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

When Monica Mehta was five years old her physician parents were recruited to move to Calvert County. She attended Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) and graduated from Huntingtown High School. After graduating from George Washington University, she attended their School of Medicine and did her residency at University of Maryland Medical Center. In 2020 she returned home to join in her father's practice in pediatrics.

For Dr. Monica, 30, it is indeed all in the family. Her husband is also a doctor. So, on this Doctor's Day (March 30) what better person to feature in a story than a home-grown one.

Her pediatrician father, Dr. Bhargesh Mehta, and mother, Dr. Parul Jani, who practices internal medicine, were obviously role models for her growing up. Both are affiliated with CalvertHealth Medical Center, as she is.

"I wanted to be a doctor since I think the day I knew the word doctor," she said. "It was definitely something I wanted from a very young age. My parents were just very passionate about what they did. They loved their jobs. They loved what they did every day. So, I think that really inspired me."

"Being a doctor is one of the most amazing things in the world," she opined. "So, I think there was definitely strong encouragement from both of my parents to pursue the field of medicine. But they were pretty flexible. They would've let me do whatever I wanted to do as long as it was something that I was really passionate about."

"Very early on I was encouraged and inspired by a lot of the doctors in our community," she added.

She didn't immediately gravitate to her father's specialty. She explained, "When I started medical school, I wasn't actually thinking about going into pediatrics. During your third year of medical school, you have rotations, and you rotate through all of the different fields, internal medicine,

Ob Gyn, surgery, and one of my rotations was of course pediatrics. I really enjoyed working with children. I enjoyed diagnosing them. A lot of times when they can't tell you what's going on, you kind of have to play investigator in a way. And I found that really intriguing and rewarding.

"I loved being able to influence kids at an early age and try to prevent a lot of the chronic diseases that we see in adults. So, prevent them from picking up that cigarette or vape, prevent them from forming those bad eating habits, that kind of thing. So that is what inspired me to go into pediatrics."

She was asked what it was about being a doctor that most influenced her to be in the profession. She

responded, "I think the basic answer that everybody likes to give when they ask what made you become a doctor is you wanted to help people. But you can do so many different fields where you help people, right? I think that the key to being a doctor is helping people when they're really at their most vulnerable. When your child is sick or your parent is sick, or you yourself are sick, you're in such a vulnerable position. And to be able to navigate patients through that, help them through that, educate them during that time, is a very unique thing that only certain people can do. And so you have to have a little bit of a calling to want to do that. And then you have to want to put in the just truly hard work that it takes to go through training, the grueling hours of learning so much about the human body and then come out and then be able to diagnose, treat, and work with patients every single day."

"I love the challenge of learning about the human body, the science, the complexity, but also the humanistic part of it," she added. "Being able to help people when they're so vulnerable, really learning what scares them, what matters to them, what they want out of their body, out of their health. And so that combination is kind of what inspired me."

Has it changed over time for her? "I think that innate passion is still there. I think one of the things that has changed is being a little bit more realistic about the limits. I mean like in terms of insurance companies and some of the barriers that our patients face to just even obtaining care, accessing care, those kinds of things are something I didn't know when I was first starting medical school. I didn't even realize that was a thing. And now a lot of what I do is helping my patients deal with access to care, getting them to the appropriate specialists, and

also dealing with the burden of insurance companies and that mess."

What do students now in Huntingtown High School need to ask themselves about whether they are doctor material? "

She said, "I think number one, is your heart in the right place? Are you really passionate about helping people? Number two would be, are you willing to put in the work? So, are you ready for some really grueling years where you're going to be not just mentally exhausted, but physically exhausted? Medical training is really a marathon. You have to do four years of college, four years of medical school, and then you have to do some specialized residency training. So, for me, that was three years in pediatrics. But if you want to be a surgeon that can be five plus years, or a cardiologist, that's six years."

During residency, she said, "You're working 80 hours a week, sometimes you're on call 24 hours a day. So, you're really sort of challenged mentally and physically to prove that you can learn the material and then also apply the material and then still come out as a compassionate human being at the end of it all."

As to people skills, they're "a hundred percent absolutely necessary," she noted.

But she also added, "I think we've changed very much from what used to be a paternalistic way of practicing medicine, where it was, you go to the doctor, the doctor says, take this medicine, come back and see me in 10 days. Now it's more about, here's three different options that we have to treat this, which one is going to suit your lifestyle or your goals of care the best? And that definitely requires some people skills when you're presenting those options. The other thing is, it's not just one patient. For me, it's the patient and then it's mom and dad, and sometimes even siblings. So, you have to think about how the patient care is going to fit within the greater family as a whole."

With the availability of online medical advice, she observed, "I think patients have always been very smart, but I think they have a lot of resources at their fingertips now. I think one of the hardest things as a doctor is educating patients on good versus not so good resources."

She likes knowledgeable patients. "I think

it keeps me on my toes because patients will ask me questions about, I read X, Y, Z and then I'll want to go and read that and see what it's really about. Is it a reliable source? Is it not a reliable source? I also think social media has played a huge role in where patients are getting their medical information from now. So, I actually started a social media account for myself as a pediatrician, to try and put out truly evidence-based information to help parents get information from a reputable source."

Dr. Mehta was in her residency when the pandemic hit and when she moved back to the county it was still ongoing, so that was a challenge. Telemedicine has been one outcome that she thinks will continue to grow.

She is proud of CalvertHealth and heard it from others as she was going through her medical training. "I think everyone was really impressed that Calvert has maintained its independence as a community hospital. I think that is just absolutely amazing. I'm so impressed at the leadership's ability to do that."

She also credits her success to her education in CCPS. "My parents really believed in the educators that we had in our community. I have nothing but amazing things to say about the education I received in Calvert County."

Of her first three years of her practice, she said, "It's been more rewarding than I thought," explaining, "I feel like I've been able to make an impact already, even just in a couple of years. Our community in Southern Maryland is so welcoming, and even when I may not know the right answer, like exactly what's going on with the patient, the parents have been so trusting and they're very willing to work with the provider and listen and come back if things are not getting better."

She observed, "When you come out of medical school, when you come out of residency, I think one of the biggest things you fear is that you're not going to necessarily always know the right answer or not be able to do right by your patients."

"Even as a young physician, that has been super rewarding, more than I thought it would be."

dickmyers@countytimes.net



Dr. Mehta with patient Phoebe Greenwald

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“WE THINK ONCE WE KNOW ONE THING ABOUT SOMEONE, WE CAN FILL IN THE REST OF THEIR BLANKS.”

DIRECTOR OF HEALTH EDUCATION BRITA SPA ON GENDER IDENTITY



LOCAL 6
BOE votes on schools budget



LOCAL 7
County purchases land in Prince Frederick



ON THE COVER 3
Pediatrician follows parents' footsteps

WEEKLY FORECAST

<p>THU, MAR 30</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 52° Lo: 40°</p>	<p>FRI, MAR 31</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 70° Lo: 59°</p>	<p>SAT, APR 1</p> <p>AM Showers Hi: 73° Lo: 40°</p>	<p>SUN, APR 2</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 55° Lo: 40°</p>
<p>MON, APR 3</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 70° Lo: 53°</p>	<p>TUE, APR 4</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 72° Lo: 57°</p>	<p>WED, APR 5</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 71° Lo: 58°</p>	<p>THU, APR 6</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 71° Lo: 50°</p>



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