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# St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024

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**Leaders Warn of  
Sales Tax Changes**

**Town House Project  
Proposed in Hollywood**

**Restaurateur Enters  
Mayoral Race**

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“THE RULING PARTY WILL PUSH THROUGH THREE OR FOUR SMALLER TAX INCREASES TO GO ALONG WITH THEIR NEARLY 250 DIFFERENT FEE INCREASES.”

DEL. MATT MORGAN ON PLANS TO EXPAND THE SALES TAX TO SERVICES



**LOCAL 8**  
Pool tournament set for Leonardtown



**LOCAL 10**  
Townhouse project hearing continued



**ON THE COVER 5**  
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a proposing wildlife preserve in St. Mary's

## WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, MAR 14	FRI, MAR 15	SAT, MAR 16	SUN, MAR 17
 Mostly Sunny Hi: 74° Lo: 58°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 74° Lo: 48°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 61° Lo: 47°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 65° Lo: 41°
MON, MAR 18	TUE, MAR 19	WED, MAR 20	THU, MAR 21
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 34°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 34°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 51° Lo: 37°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 57° Lo: 43°



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# St. Mary's Could Host Wildlife Refuge

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

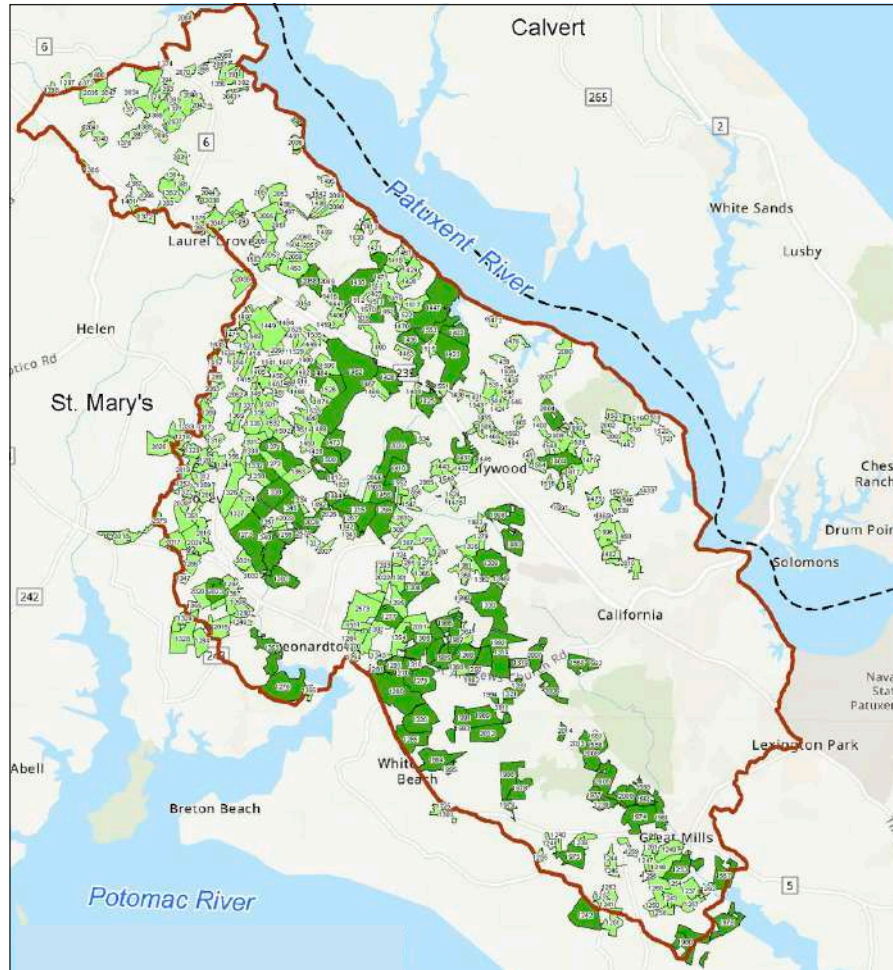
Thousands of wooded and wetland acres in St. Mary's could be transformed into a wildlife refuge if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has its way with a proposed program aimed at protecting endangered and at-risk species and staving off the effects of climate change.

Last week the FWS announced its plans with a 45-day comment period available to the public across five counties in Maryland including St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles and Anne Arundel and Prince George's.

"The forests and wetlands of Southern Maryland provide special places for people and for wildlife. As these habitats come under pressure from climate change and other threats, this proposal would help conserve these areas for future generations," said Scott Kahan, chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System for the Service's northeast region. "We look forward to working with local communities and partners and receiving their feedback."

The land that FWS wants to turn into a wildlife preserve here is called the McIntosh Run-St. Mary's Unit which encompasses 84,420 acres of which smaller parcels would be preserved, the federal proposal states.

"The McIntosh Run watershed is currently one of the most ecologically intact watersheds remaining in Maryland," the FWS proposal states. "It contains large blocks of contiguous forest, which provide habitat for ... wildlife in addition to ensuring that water quality in the stream is adequate to support the federally endangered dwarf wedge mussel and other aquatic life."



The McIntosh Run area proposed for preservation

The McIntosh Run area also contains a significant number of avian species the federal government considers at-risk.

"These include the at-risk wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, and prairie warbler,"

the proposal states. "Primarily because of this dense undeveloped forest block, the upper watershed of the St. Mary's River is considered by the Maryland [Department of Natural Resources] Natural Heritage Program to be

highly significant for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity conservation."

The proposal states that the preservation of tens of thousands of acres into the wildlife refuge would take place over "many years" and land would only be purchased from willing land owners.

The entire acquisition time for the entire project, whose boundaries would be encompassed around nearly 600,000 acres across all five target counties, would be approximately 30 years, according to the proposal.

FWS acquires land for the refuge using two methods, the proposal states, through fee simple purchase of the land, which confers all land rights to the federal agency, or through conservation easements, which preserves habitat but leaves the land in question in the ownership of the original holder.

The main thrust of the program is to prevent habitat loss, the proposal stated.

"Habitat loss is the greatest threat to biodiversity in the United States," the proposal reads. "In Maryland, conversion of important natural areas to other land uses is the primary threat to fish and wildlife."

"More than half the extent of pre-European-contact forests and wetlands in Maryland has been lost."

The report stated that it took 300 years of colonial settlement to develop 650,000 acres of land but just 37 years since 1973 to develop an additional one million in Maryland.

While a wildlife refuge area would preclude most further development, such activities as hunting and fishing, bird watching and other wildlife observation and photography would still be allowed within the refuge areas, the proposal states.

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**April 24: Part D Coverage Phases-** Learn how your medication costs change throughout the year. From the deductible phase to the donut hole and well as some new changes.

**May 29: Medicare for Federal Employees and Retirees-** Learn how your FEHB benefits coordinate with Medicare and what to consider when making enrollment decisions.

**June 26: Preparing for Future Health Care Needs-** Learn about advanced directives, living wills, health care proxies, and powers of attorney to help ensure that decisions made on your behalf meet your needs and preferences.

**July 31: New to Medicare-** Learn the basics you should know about Medicare from enrollment periods to coverage choices and beyond.

**August 28: Cost Saving Programs-** Learn about programs that can help you save on your Medicare costs. Expect to hear about programs like the Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help, and more.

**September 25: Fall Open Enrollment -** This is the time you can make changes to your Medicare coverage. Learn strategies to choose the coverage that best fits your needs for 2025.

**October 30: Medicare and Immigration-** Learn about Medicare eligibility for people who are not U.S. citizens.

**November 27: Medicare Preventive Services-** Learn about Medicare's coverage for preventative services and review the screenings, vaccines, and counseling that can help you stay on top of your health.

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# Commissioners Debate Income Tax Increase



Commissioner Eric Colvin



Commissioner Mike Hewitt

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Commissioner Eric Colvin sparked a discussion at the Mar. 12 budget work session amongst local elected leaders over whether they should consider raising the income tax to pay for increases in spending pushed on the county by the state, particularly in education.

"I'm going to talk about the unpopular thing and talk about the income tax," Colvin said. "It's not something I want to do... but we're stuck with it."

Colvin was referring to the state's mandate that all teacher salaries must begin at a base of \$60,000 by 2026 as part of the Blueprint for Education funding scheme that is aimed at vastly improving education statewide.

"There's really no other way around it," Colvin said.

But Commissioner Mike Hewitt disagreed. "I'm not going to raise taxes," Hewitt said near the end of a three-and-a-half-hour budget work session. "I think we can make adjustments and there are salary savings with these positions that haven't been filled."

Hewitt was speaking of the more than 120 positions in county government that remain vacant, which include 30 sworn positions within the Office of the Sheriff.

Commissioners decided to use salary savings from the other vacant positions to provide a 3 percent pay increase for sheriff's deputies to maintain a level of competitiveness with neighboring counties and the Maryland State Police.

A reserve of more than \$3 million also

exists within the sheriff's budget to hire some or all of the 30 positions which have remained vacant for at least two years should candidates become available.

After much debate, Colvin's motion did not gain any support but a motion made by Hewitt to change the percentage of health care costs paid by the county for employees from an 85 percent/15percent split to an 80 percent/20 percent split also failed after much debate.

Hewitt argued that making the change for new employees but keeping the old split for retired employees would free about \$500,000 in revenue to spend on other items in the budget.

"It's not revenue growth, it's revenue reallocation," Colvin said.

"But we can spend this instead of raising taxes," Hewitt replied.

Commissioner President James "Randy" Guy pointed out that the 85/15 split was a benefit that helped recruit and retain badly needed employees.

"We're having enough trouble recruiting and retaining people already," Guy said.

Colvin said: "We should not balance our budget on the backs of our employees."

Colvin, Commissioner Scott Ostrow, and Guy all voted against the motion.

The commissioners will continue their budget work sessions next week with talks on non-profit entities and the public schools budget.

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

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# Commissioners Approve Landfill Fee Increases

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation Jim Gotsch got his wish this week to have the tipping fees at the St. Andrews Landfill increased from \$65 a ton to \$95 a ton for commercial trash haulers.

This was necessary, Gotsch explained to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at their Mar. 12 budget work session, to allow his department's budget for trash disposal to be balanced.

The county must pay to have the trash in the landfill hauled away to another jurisdiction for final disposal.

"We're charging \$65 [per ton] but we're paying \$95 [per ton] to haul the trash away," Gotsch said. "We will not change the \$10 fee [for residential trash disposal] unless it's over a certain weight."

The difference in tipping fees and trash disposal fees is just one problem that had to be solved to make the public works budget more solvent, Gotsch said, as some haulers resulted to unscrupulous means to avoid paying higher tipping fees in other counties where they should be disposing of trash.

"We've got some guys coming down here trying to cheat," Gotsch told commission-



ers. "We catch them and shoo them away."

But it wasn't a perfect score on stopping rogue trash haulers, said one commissioner.

"They still get in," said Commissioner Mike Hewitt.

Gotsch noted that St. Mary's current fee is sometimes a third of what other jurisdictions charge for dumping at their landfills.

Commissioners also approved an increase in the fee for dumping tires from \$158 per ton to \$190 per ton.

"We're not trying to make a profit," Gotsch said. "We're just trying to break even."

The final decision on the county fiscal 2025 budget will not be made until mid-May.

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

# Prize Money, Prestige at Stake in Pool Tournament



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

A local businessman with a passion for the game of pool has planned what he calls an old-school, traditional pool tournament for players who share his love of the sport this weekend.

The tournament is set for Action Lounge and Billiard in Leonardtown March 16 and is free to spectators with a \$100 entry fee for players on 16 tables.

Thomas Ferrall, owner of King Cutters tree service, said there will be about \$14,000 in prize money for the top three contestants with additional monies from the Calcutta — or player bets on who will win — available.

Ferrall said he hopes to have as many as 50 players at the tournament, both local and out of town.

"There's a lot that goes into this," Ferrall said. "Next year, I want to take in \$20,000 in prize money."

"That's my goal."

Ferrall's reason for holding the tournament is simple.

"It's diminishing," Ferrall said of the game locally. "It's being bogged down in handicaps."

"I don't see it growing; I'm trying to do something for the real pool players."

Ferrall said he grew up locally playing pool since he was a young boy and remembered many local players were so good, they would often play for money.

"It was strong," he said of the local pool scene.

Ferrall said this tournament was aimed at bringing back those kinds of glory days.

"There's never been a tournament this epic in the county... not with this level of money," Ferrall said. "A great player, a great battle, that's what people want to see."

"And true pool players love to shoot pool and they love money."

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# Elected Leaders Warn of Tax Increases

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Talk of finding ways of raising revenue to close billions of dollars in gaps in the state's budget has risen in the Maryland General Assembly, and it is sparking warnings from local officials to citizens to create a ground swell of opposition against it.

Del. David Moon, Montgomery-County based majority leader in the Democrat-controlled House of Delegates, has proposed to drop the state sales tax from 6 percent to 5 percent but expand the sales tax to services.

The same proposal was rejected four years ago but now the state is faced with funding a multibillion-dollar plan known as the Blueprint for Education as well as several high-cost transportation projects, all while dealing with a continual budget deficit.

The proposal is estimated to raise an additional \$772 million once enacted in the first fiscal year and then increase to an additional \$2.6 billion by fiscal 2029, according to state fiscal and policy notes.

Just last week the state received a revised revenue estimate that showed they would be getting approximately \$250 million less this year.

Speaking at the Leonardtown Town Council meeting this week, council member Mary Maday Slade, an accountant, warned that citizens should look beyond proposals to lower the sales tax for what they really were.

"They're going to start taxing all services

5 percent," Slade said of Moon's proposal. "That's going to effect hair dressers, nail salons, tax offices, anybody who provides a service.

"So, is it a decrease?"

Moon's bill has already met stiff opposition from many business advocacy groups and Republicans in the House of Delegates. Not even all Democrats appear willing to consider the proposal.

The timing of Moon's bill — HB 1515 — has even been called into question as there are fewer than 30 days left in the session and this week is customarily the time when bills are expected to come out of committee with either a favorable or unfavorable recommendation.

Those who receive a favorable recommendation then go to the opposite chamber of the General Assembly for consideration.

The first hearing on HB 1515 was just March 11, the final day of the session is April 8.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County discussed the bill in their March 12 session and County Administrator David Weiskopf said that there was a possibility that state level legislators might not pass on the extra revenue this time as they did in 2020.

"It didn't pass [in 2020] but it's so much money, that it will eventually pass," Weiskopf said. "It's so much money that they're leaving on the table.

"There are a lot of people against it... but it's a lot of money."

John Houser, deputy county attorney, said the fiscal and policy note of the bill noted that the impact to small businesses would be "meaningful."

"Meaningful, I like that," quipped Commissioner President James "Randy" Guy. "That means they're being mean."

Moon testified that he had "a very nervous eye" when looking at this year's state operating budget and intended his bill to be "something of a conversation starter."

Moon said he wanted to come to a solution to the deficit problem in "one vote" rather than cobble together a revenue raising plan out of "disparate" bills.

"It would put us below all of our neighbors who charge a sales tax," Moon said. "But it would broaden our tax base to include most services except a handful of services that are exempt off the bat."

Religious, professional and non-profit services would be exempt, Moon said.

When fully realized, Moon said, the tax expansion would eventually bring in about \$4 billion.

The state's annual operating budget is over \$40 billion.

Del. Matt Morgan (R-Dist. 29A) was blunt in his assessment of the bill in a later interview.

Morgan been sounding the alarm since the beginning of the session and before that tax increases would be coming this year.

"It expands the sales tax and taxes everything that moves," Morgan said. "It's the

largest tax increase in Maryland's history."

Benjamin Orr, president and CEO of the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, testified in support of the bill but admitted that working families and the economically vulnerable were impacted most by the sales tax.

"Maryland needs significant and sustainable revenue sources to maintain our commitments to education and many essential public services," Orr said. "Adjusting the sales tax is a way to raise the significant amount of funds quickly.

"However, as the sales tax does fall disproportionately on working families, it should be well targeted."

The state teachers' union, which is the largest expense in the Blueprint for Education through salary increases, also favored the bill.

Morgan said it was unlikely that the measure would pass but he was confident that Democrats would find ways to increase taxes in other, more subtle ways.

Morgan said he planned to vote against all tax and fee increases.

"It's a deep fake," Morgan said of HB 1515. "That bill isn't passing.

"The ruling party will push through three or four smaller tax increases to go along with their nearly 250 different fee increases."

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

## Town Entrepreneur Files for Mayoral Race

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Ken Held, the owner of The Slice House pizza restaurant in Leonardtown has filed to run for mayor in this spring's town election.

He faces incumbent Mayor Dan Burris, who has also filed for his third term in office.

Held said he has worked closely with the current town administration over the last six years as he has built two businesses and come to reside there.

He considers Burris a friend, he said, and he has nothing negative to say about the incumbent's administration, just that he believes there needs to be a change.

"Leonardtown has been great to us," Held said. "Over the last six years we've witnessed an amazing transformation of the community.

"I want to be part of the next phase of the controlled growth of Leonardtown."

Held said the current administration has done well in revitalizing the town but communication about projects in the town and their impacts could be better.

Held said one such example was the recent installation of the new arch leading to the Leonardtown Wharf property.

It was paid for by state grants, Held said, but some commenting on social media said the money could have been used for other projects.

Had people better understood that the



Ken Held

grant money was allocated specifically for that project, there might not have been so many negative comments, Held said.

"They should be involved in the decisions as we go forward," Held said of town residents.

The town's wharf property could also be improved, said Held.

"The wharf could look much better," Held said. "I'm not a big fan of the unpaved parking lot there."

The improvements to the wharf could be done, Held said, "and not at a significant cost to the tax payers."

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

## Great Mills Woman Convicted in Dismemberment Murder

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that following an eight-day trial, a St. Mary's County jury convicted Michelina Desiree Goodwin, 46, of Great Mills, Maryland of murder in the second-degree, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, and the unauthorized disposal of a body in reference to the homicide and dismemberment of a 50-year-old male victim.

On December 21, 2022, the victim's family reported him missing and noted their last contact with him was on December 7, 2022. Several weeks later, the case developed into a homicide investigation. Goodwin was identified as the primary suspect.

On January 18, 2023, Goodwin told investigators that during an altercation at her residence, she retrieved a firearm that accidentally discharged and killed the victim, who also resided there. Goodwin admitted she dismembered the victim's body post-mortem and led investigators to his remains in remote areas of St. Mary's and Charles Counties.

"This horrifying crime shocked the community and caused unimaginable pain to the victim's family," said State's Attorney Sterling. "Over eight days, the victim's family and the jury heard the graphic circumstances surrounding the victim's final moments and gruesome post-mortem mutilation. The Defendant's gutless decisions



Michelina Desiree Goodwin

deprived the family of a proper burial."

Goodwin faces a maximum penalty of 61 years in prison. She will remain held without bond pending the sentencing hearing.

Senior Assistant State's Attorneys Donna C. Pettersen and Jeffrey R. Maylor prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Sergeant Roger Schwarb of the Maryland State Police Homicide Unit and Trooper First Class Evan Ruggles of the Maryland State Police Criminal Enforcement Division were the lead investigators.

The Honorable Terrence J. McGann presided over the case.

## Legal Notices

### TOWN OF LEONARDTOWN, MD Ordinance No. 219

Notice is hereby given that on March 11, 2024, the Leonardtown Town Council passed Ordinance No. 219 (the "Ordinance").

The Ordinance authorizes and empowers The Commissioners of Leonardtown (the "Town") to issue and sell to the Community Development Administration (the "Administration"), pursuant to the authority of Sections 4-101 through 4-255 of the Housing and Community Development Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Act"), one or more series of general obligation bonds of the Town in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$6,000,000 (the "Bonds") for the purpose of financing, reimbursing and/or refinancing any components of the following: (i) costs of two projects generally referred to as the (A) Meadows at Town Run Water Storage Tank Project, and (B) Meadows at Town Run Well Project, (ii) funding a portion of a capital reserve fund and/or other reserves, and/or (iii) paying or reimbursing issuance and other costs of the Bonds; provides that the Bonds shall be issued upon the full faith and credit of the Town; provides for the disbursement of proceeds of the Bonds; provides for the levy of annual taxes upon all assessable property within the corporate limits of the Town to the extent needed for the payment of principal and interest on the Bonds; pledges and grants a lien on and a security interest to the Administration of certain payments otherwise due to the Town from the State of Maryland to secure the Town's obligations with respect to the Bonds; provides for the forms, tenor, denominations, maturity date or dates and other provisions of the Bonds; provides for the sale of the Bonds; and provides for related purposes, including, without limitation, the method of fixing the interest rate(s) to be borne by the bonds, the approval, execution and delivery of documents, agreements, certificates and instruments, and the making of or providing for the making of representations and covenants concerning the tax status of interest on the Bonds.

Pursuant to the Act, the Ordinance is effective upon its passage by the Council and its approval by the chief executive officer. The Ordinance may be petitioned to referendum in accordance with Section 211 of the Charter provided the petition is received by Monday, April 1, 2024. The Ordinance may be inspected (i) in Town Hall between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays) or (ii) on the Town website at [www.leonardtown.somd.com](http://www.leonardtown.somd.com).

THE COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN  
By: Laschelle E. McKay  
Town Administrator

### LEONARDTOWN ELECTION AND DEADLINE FOR FILING AS A CANDIDATE

Election of one (1) Mayor and two (2) Council Members of the Town of Leonardtown will be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

The candidate deadline for filing is Monday, April 15, 2024 at 4:30 PM.

To obtain forms or for any questions, please call 301-475-9791 or go online at <https://leonardtown.somd.com> or email [leonardtown.commissioners@leonardtownmd.gov](mailto:leonardtown.commissioners@leonardtownmd.gov).

Deadline for submitting a completed application for an Absentee Ballot is Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at the Town Office by 4:30 pm.

Deadline for Obtaining Emergency Ballot is Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

Deadline for registration to vote is Friday, April 19, 2024 at 4.30 pm.

Visit the Board of Elections office at 23250 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650, Monday through Friday, between the normal business hours of 8:00 am through 4:30 pm or call 301-475-4200 ext. 1625 or <https://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/SupervisorOfElections/>

The polls open Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at the Town Office 22670 Washington Street, Leonardtown, Maryland, between the hours of 12:00 pm and 7:00 pm, on said date, for voting.

## Town House Project Proposed in Hollywood



Artist's rendering of the Village at Clarks Mill project

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The county planning commission held off on giving approval to a concept site plan that would have allowed for 18 townhomes to be built on Mervell Dean Road in Hollywood at their March 11 meeting.

The project would be built near the intersection with Clark's Mill Road on K & R Way but planning commission members were concerned about the buffer between the southern edge of the property of a little more than a proposed 32 feet that comes up against a vacant building.

The official name of the proposal is the Villages at Clark's Mill.

Rick Benefield, of FDR Holdings, LLC, the developer of the project attended the meeting with the project engineer Jay Hopson.

"The development will only generate an average 105 daily trips and that will equate to about 10 peak hour trips," Hopson told planning board members. "Which is well below the 50 [peak hour trips] required for a traffic study."

Benefield said his company's reading of the applicable zoning ordinance allowed a 32.5-foot buffer that would be adequate should the vacant property ever become occupied.

"The county disagrees with the applicant on the buffer yard," said Deputy County Attorney John Houser. "What it comes down to is a buffer yard is required... when

a high intensity residential development comes in contact with a low-intensity residential community."

Benefield contended that the structure has been abandoned for at least a decade and does not meet the county's minimum living standards; Houser argued that the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) considered the property in question abandoned but not vacant.

The property was not vacant, Houser said, because LUGM contended that it had been improved with a structure.

The property with the abandoned structure is currently up for sale.

"Whoever buys that property has the right to put a single-family home in there," Houser said.

Benefield said the owner of the adjacent property had agreed to his plans for a buffer yard reduced from the normal 70 feet.

Benefield said his plan for a reduced buffer yard was needed to ensure the full build-out of the project due to space constraints.

"We would lose a townhouse or two," Benefield said. "That would make the project maybe not so viable."

The ultimate decision over the buffer yard question could come down to a case before the county's Board of Zoning Appeals.

The planning commission members voted to continue the hearing on the project to their May 20 meeting date.

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

## Utility Work Scheduled for Mervell Dean Road & MD 235

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) is announcing upcoming utility work at the corner of Mervell Dean Road and Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road).

Residents may experience related traffic delays and/or brief road closures on or around Monday, March 18 and Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Local traffic will be permit-

ted only for access to residential entrances. Traffic disruptions may occur for a period of approximately one week, weather dependent.

Drivers are asked to please remain alert for equipment, work crews, and changing traffic patterns. Message boards and signage will be deployed in the area prior to and during the project to serve as an additional reminder.

# Leonardtwn Delivers State of the Town

Leonardtwn, a Town that embodies the essence of community spirit and progress, has witnessed a remarkable transformation fueled by collaborative efforts between businesses, residents, developers, and the local government. This synergy has not only enhanced the Town's economic landscape but also enriched its cultural heritage and quality of life for residents and visitors. During the annual State of the Town meeting on March 8th, attendees witnessed first-hand what the future holds for Leonardtwn. Daniel Burris, Mayor of Leonardtwn remarks, "Each year the State of the Town breakfast brings together many of the partners that have made Leonardtwn so successful over the last several years."



Local businesses have joined to create a vibrant ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurship and economic growth. From cozy cafés to boutique shops to government contractors, the Town's business community is thriving like never before. Steve Cassetta, Vice President of Nexagen Networks, Inc., at the State of the Town meeting said, "One of the reasons we wanted to open an office in Leonardtwn is to be part of a special community and to improve the quality of life for our work force... we are all committed to honoring Leonardtwn's history while continuing to make Leonardtwn a special place to live, work, and play."

The Town and the Leonardtwn Business Association (LBA) host the State of the Town. The LBA has been instrumental in organizing events, marketing campaigns, and drawing attention to Leonardtwn's unique offerings while driving foot traffic to local establishments.

Another collaboration is through the new Main Street designation. This program aims to revitalize and preserve the historic commercial district. The program operates under the philosophy that economic development, revitalization, and historic preservation are interconnected goals that can be achieved through a comprehensive approach through

the four pillars – organization, economic vitality, promotion and design. The Main Street approach offers the businesses in the district new grant opportunities, curated strategy initiatives, and numerous resources.

The revitalization of Leonardtwn's downtown owes much to the visionary stakeholders who recognize the Town's potential as a cultural and economic hub. From the development of LTown Alley to strategic branding & wayfinding signs, the essence of Leonardtwn can be recognized throughout the downtown district.

The continued waterfront redevelopment expands the current Leonardtwn Wharf Park which is already a vibrant destination. Plans are underway for the expansion of green spaces and recreational trails, offering residents more opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty of their surroundings.

Through collaboration, innovation, and thoughtful development, the Town has reinvented itself as a dynamic and thriving destination. As Leonardtwn continues to evolve, one thing remains certain – its best days are yet to come.

*Press Release from the Commissioners of Leonardtwn*

# Applications Open for Compensation Review Commission

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) are seeking three (3) interested applicants to serve on the 2024 Compensation Review Commission.

Pursuant to Chapter 23 of the St. Mary's County Code, the St. Mary's County Compensation Review Commission convenes every four years to review salaries and benefits of St. Mary's County officials and members of the St. Mary's County Board of Education and make recommendations to the CSMC.

Appointees will be expected to attend all meetings of the 2024 Compensation Review Commission, monthly from June – December 2024, on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.:


- June 5, 2024

- July 10, 2024
- August 7, 2024
- September 11, 2024
- October 2, 2024
- November 13, 2024

All citizens interested in volunteering their time for this Commission should complete the online application (include attached resume) at: [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/boards](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/boards). Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. on April 23, 2024.


Questions about St. Mary's County Boards, Committees, and/or Commissions may be directed to Diane Gleissner at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1700 or [Diane.Gleissner@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:Diane.Gleissner@stmaryscountymd.gov).

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NAVAL AIR STATION  
PATUXENT RIVER *News*

# NAVAIR Returns V-22 Osprey to Flight Status



Effective March 8, 2024 at 7 a.m. EST, Naval Air Systems Command has issued a flight clearance for the V-22 Osprey thereby lifting the grounding. This decision follows a meticulous and data-driven approach prioritizing the safety of our aircrews.

A U.S. Air Force investigation began following the tragic loss of eight Airmen during the November 29, 2023, mishap off Yakushima, Japan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the fallen.

In response to the preliminary investigation indicating a materiel failure of a V-22 component, the V-22 grounding was initiated on December 6, 2023. The grounding provided time for a thorough review of the mishap and formulation of risk mitigation controls to assist with safely returning the V-22 to flight operations.

In concert with the ongoing investigation, NAVAIR has diligently worked with the USAF-led investigation to identify the materiel failure that led to the mishap. Close coordination among key senior

leaders across the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Air Force has been paramount in formulating the comprehensive review and return to flight plan, and this collaboration will continue.

Maintenance and procedural changes have been implemented to address the materiel failure that allow for a safe return to flight. The U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Air Force will each execute their return to flight plans according to service specific guidelines.

NAVAIR remains committed to transparency and safety regarding all V-22 operations. The V-22 plays an integral role in supporting our Nation's defense and returning these vital assets to flight is critical to supporting our nation's interests. NAVAIR continuously monitors data and trends from all aircraft platforms, so service members are provided the safest, most reliable aircraft possible.

The safety of our pilots, aircrew and surrounding communities remains of paramount importance.

# Water Taxi Operations at St. Clement's Island Resume March 25



The St. Clement's Island Museum water taxi will resume seasonal operations on Maryland Day, March 25, 2023. The water taxi, which provides rides for visitors from St. Clement's Island Museum to St. Clements Island State Park, will be cruising daily through October 31, 2024. Interested guests should always call the museum at (301) 769-2222 before visiting to check water taxi availability, as adverse weather or other extenuating circumstances may impact operations.

On the first day of cruising, Maryland Day, water taxi rides will be free for all visitors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. On all other days, the water taxi is \$7 per person (all ages) and includes round-trip from the museum to the island and back, as well as museum admission.

"We are extremely pleased to reopen the water taxi for a full season of cruising to the island," said Karen Stone, Manager of the St. Mary's County Museum Division. "Being one of our most popular attractions for locals and out of town visitors alike, the water taxi allows guests the opportunity to enjoy one of St. Mary's County's best assets – our beautiful waters!"

If you are interested in bringing a group to ride the water taxi, please call ahead to St. Clement's Island Museum supervisor, Christina Barbour at (301) 769-2222 to schedule.

For more information regarding hours of operation, programs, admission prices and more, please visit [MuseumStMarysMD.com](https://MuseumStMarysMD.com) or [Facebook.com/SCIMuseum](https://Facebook.com/SCIMuseum).

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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>

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## FINANCIAL FOCUS®

### Time for financial spring cleaning?

Spring is almost here, which means it's time for some spring cleaning. This year, in addition to tidying your home and surroundings, you might want to consider sprucing up your financial environment, as well.

Here are some suggestions for doing just that:

- *Improve your vision.* Once the days are warmer and longer, you may want to get outside and clean all the winter grime and smudges from your windows, allowing you to see the world more clearly. And you may want to bring more focus to your financial vision by asking some key questions: Is my investment strategy still appropriate for my needs, goals and family situation? If not, what changes should I make? And am I prepared for changes in my life, such as health challenges or a need to retire earlier than planned? The answers to these and other questions can help you clarify where you are, in terms of your financial picture, and where you want to go.
- *De-clutter.* As you look around your home, you may find things such as expired health care products, old prescriptions, ancient cleaning solutions, and so on, in addition to duplicate household items (how many blenders do you really need?) and non-working equipment — printers, laptops, etc. Most people find that eliminating this clutter gives them a good feeling — and more livable space. As an investor, you can also find clutter in the form of redundant investments — for example, you might own several nearly identical mutual funds. You might be better off selling some of these funds and using the proceeds to find new investments that can help you further diversify your portfolio. As you may know, diversification is a key to investment success, but keep in mind that it can't prevent all losses.
- *Plant seeds of opportunity.* Whether they're planting camellias and crocuses or carrots and cilantro, gardeners are busy in the spring, hoping their efforts result in lovely flowers and tasty foods. And when you invest, you, too, need to plant seeds of opportunity in the form of investments that you hope will grow enough to enable you to make progress toward your goals. So, you may want to review your portfolio to ensure it's providing this growth potential, given your individual risk tolerance.
- *Reduce dangers.* You may not think about it that much, but your home and surroundings can contain potential hazards. You might have ill-fitting caps on cleaning products with toxic chemicals, or sharp cutting instruments protruding from shelves in your garage, or heavy, cracked tree branches hovering close to your roof. Spending some time on a spring-cleaning sweep can get rid of these dangers — and devoting time to consider the possible threats to your financial security, and those of your family, can pay off, too. For starters, review your life insurance to determine if you've got enough. Your employer may offer some coverage as an employee benefit, but it might not be sufficient, so you may need private coverage. And the same is true for disability insurance, because if something were to happen to you, and you couldn't work for a while, you'd still want to protect your family's lifestyle.

Spring is a great time for brightening your physical space — and your financial one, too.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*

*Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

*Contributed by David McDonough*

*Financial Advisor at Edward Jones*

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## Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



### They Paved Paradise...

I don't know why I get so nervous over any kind of medical tests. I'm only going to St. Mary's Hospital to have a DXA bone scan density test in an hour. I start to panic even when there is the slightest possibility of anything with a scan in the title, like MRI or CT scan. The darn claustrophobia rears its head every time. I looked up the bone density scans on YouTube and it clearly shows that in most cases it is just a large wand that goes over the body. There is no tube, everything is open on all sides. Silly, I am just being silly. I will take deep breaths and it will be fine.

Anyway, that will be the morning thing. Then the real panic sets in; finishing the last bit of tax gathering information. With my husband having an LLC, taxes are not easy, but I am sure many of you know that and are gathering or finishing your taxes right now. Luckily, we have a wonderful tax preparer who can take my inch thick folder and plug in all the information and make it make sense. I used to do our own taxes, even when I had my large frame shop and my was under sole proprietorship as well. But it is too much for me now.

March is a busy month anyway, besides tax preparation. That's when I start my 8 page timeline by month for everything leading up to the Strawberry Festival in May. I'm a little behind on that, but all documents have been updated and everything is a go. Pool season calls for pool openings start to ramp up, so I know I will be tied to the business phone, though I love every minute of it. I may not get to meet all of our pool customers like my husband and colleagues do, but I love talking to each and every person and catching up from the winter.

And this March also starts the fundraising and event season for The Clements Cuties Foundation. This year we have three local children as our childhood cancer recipients, the new flyer is out on our Clements Cuties Foundation Facebook page. In fact, our first event is 9th annual Shamrock 5K run/walk/Little Leprechaun event that the Clements Cuties have been chosen as the beneficiary of and will be held at the Port Tobacco Marina on Sunday, March 17th. You know my husband is not a morning person so hopefully he will just smile and help on Sunday morning — we have to be there by 7:15 am. And that's after being at our Christ Church, Chaptico's fun St. Patrick's Day dinner the night before. We may both be a bit groggy Sunday morning.

I think we have time for a short nap on Sunday after the Port Tobacco event, maybe 30 minutes, before heading over to Robin Hill Winery on Croom Road in Brandywine to see Shari Flowers Sweeney (a friend I went to Surrattsville High School with) perform for her first appearance at Robin Hill. Shari will be at Corteau Winery on Golden Beach Road on March 24th. Shari has a beautiful singing voice and can really sing some Bonnie Raitt. Come on out and enjoy a day of great wines, great local musicians, and delicious food from local food trucks for some fun. We love supporting all the local wineries and have lots of fun at Port of Leonardtown too. Our dear friends Debs and Greg of Folk Salad also perform at the local wineries, and we love to sing along with them. Well not up there with them of course, but from a table away after a glass or so of wine.

It's good to be busy, and it's good to be alive and open to what we are so fortunate to have around us. I hope you get to partake in some local fun and support our neighbors and friends.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

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# 6 Ways to Make Your Garden More Successful

Homeowners enjoy gardening for many different reasons. In addition to adding beauty to a property, gardens can offset grocery costs by yielding tasty produce. They also offer important habitats and food sources for both insects and animals.

While growing a vegetable or flower garden can turn into a rewarding hobby, or even a passion, gardening also can be overwhelming — particularly when the results are less than stellar. Novice gardeners have scores of resources at their disposal, including the advice of gardeners who have made mistakes and learned from them. The following guidance can make home gardens that much more successful.

## 1. Start small.

You may have visions of an expansive garden growing rows of crops or acres of flowers. But it is smart to start small and build on what you find successful, which includes plants that thrive in your lawn and garden.

This also is beneficial if you are unsure of vegetable yields. Several blooming plants producing bushels of crops can be overwhelming, especially if you can't get to harvesting or cooking them in a timely fashion.

## 2. Assess the soil.

Plants need nutrient-rich soil to encourage extensive root systems and produce strong, hardy plants, according to the gardening resource GrowVeg. Nourish soil with organic matter, such as manure, compost, shredded leaves, and natural mulch. Add



this organic matter in the off-season to give it enough time to be incorporated into the ground before spring. You can have your soil tested for pH and other characteristics that make it friendly or averse to plants at a local garden center.

## 3. Arm yourself with knowledge.

Do you know how deeply to plant seeds and how far apart to space plants? Are you aware of the sunlight needs of certain flowers or plants? If not, read the packaging and do your research so your plants have the best chance of not only sprouting, but also surviving. Many people prefer to start seedlings indoors in late winter and then transfer those

plants outdoors when they are stronger and more established.

## 4. Sit in your yard and observe.

Watch the way the sunlight dances over areas of your landscape. Take note of which areas get the most sun and shade. This will help you plan what to plant and where to plant it. Vegetable gardens tend to need ample sunlight to bear pick-worthy produce. You can give plants a leg up by growing them in optimal conditions.

## 5. Choose hardy varieties.

Certain plants have been bred to thrive in your climate, including heat-tolerant plants

for climates with sweltering summer sun. Consult with a local gardening center to figure out which plant zone you are in and which plants will do best within that zone.

## 6. Use rainwater.

Rainwater contains fewer contaminants and additives than tap water, which can benefit garden plants. Collect rainwater in rain barrels and use irrigation systems to deliver it to the garden.

Home gardens can yield many gifts, from flowers to fruit. Beginners can utilize some time-tested strategies to increase their chances of planting a successful garden.

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



## Stay safe around power lines

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

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



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# How to Conserve Energy While Keeping the A/C Running



Air conditioning is a welcome luxury come rising temperatures. Few people can imagine getting through a hot afternoon without turning their A/C on, and that can make for greater costs in regard to energy consumption.

Though warmer weather may not seem well-suited to cutting energy consumption, there are ways to conserve that don't require turning off the AC.

- Reconsider the location of your thermostat. The Performance Building Institute, Inc. notes that thermostats are sensitive to heat. Thermostats located near heat-generating appliances like lamps, televisions and computers may be fooled into thinking a home's interior is warmer than it actually is. That will keep a temperature-controlled AC running longer and more frequently than is necessary. If necessary, move the thermostat to a part of the home where there are no electronics and appliances.
- Emphasize maintenance of the AC unit. Even the most energy-efficient AC unit will be forced to work harder, and consume extra energy, if it's not well-maintained. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy notes that ENERGY STAR-certified HVAC equipment can yield annual energy savings of 10 to 30 percent. But such products must be maintained.

Annual maintenance appointments with an HVAC technician can ensure the unit is clean and refrigerant levels are correct, helping it run as efficiently as possible.

- Embrace natural ways to keep a home's interior cool. Cranking the AC is not the only way to maintain a comfortable temperature inside a home during the months of July and August. Closing curtains on especially warm days keeps the sun out and makes it easier to maintain comfortable temperatures inside without lowering the temperature on the thermostat. Avoiding the stove on hot nights and preparing cold meals or firing up the grill outside is another way to keep the house cool.
- Address insulation issues. Cracks around windows and doors affect the temperature inside the home, making it colder in winter and warmer in summertime. Seal cracks around doors and windows to keep the cool air in during the summer. Keeping that air in should allow you to raise the temperature on your thermostat without compromising comfort.

Come the dog days of summer, conserving energy needn't come at the cost of comfort. Various strategies can help people reduce their energy consumptions and keep their air conditioners on.

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# The Dos and Don'ts of Fire Pits



Many homeowners relish any opportunity to retreat to their back yards, where they can put up their feet and relax in the great outdoors. That retreat-like escape is made even more relaxing when sitting around a fire pit.

Fire pits can be found in millions of suburban backyards across the globe. Fire pits have become so popular that a 2016 survey of landscape architects conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects revealed they were the most sought after outdoor design element. Fire pits remain wildly popular a half decade after that survey. Homeowners who are only now joining the fire pit revolution can keep these dos and don'ts in mind as they plan their summer s'mores sessions.

- DO keep the fire pit a safe distance away from the home. Fire pits should be located a safe distance from the home at all times, but especially when they're in use. Home design experts recommend keeping fire pits a minimum of 10 to 20 feet away from a house or other structure, such as a shed or a detached garage. The further away the fire is from houses and other structures, the less likely those structures are to catch on fire.
- DON'T place the fire pit beneath trees or next to shrubs. Though fire pits should be kept safe distances away from a house and other structures, it's important that they're not placed beneath trees or next to shrubs. Shrubs and low hanging branches can easily catch embers and be lit ablaze, so make sure fire pits are not placed in locations that increase that risk.
- DO clean out seasonal debris. It can be tempting to let seasonal debris resting inside the fire pit burn away during the season's first s'mores session. But burning debris poses a serious safety risk, as embers can easily

be blown out of the fire pit and catch nearby trees or shrubs or even a home on fire. The National Fire Protection Association advises homeowners that embers blowing from a backyard fire pose the same threat to homes as if they are from a wildfire.

- DON'T let fire pits burn near flammable materials. Store firewood piles a safe distance away from the fire pit while it's in operation. It may be convenient to keep firewood right next to the fire pit while the fire is burning, but that increases the risk that embers will land on firewood and start a fire outside of the pit.
- DO check the weather report prior to starting the fire. Windy weather increases the risk of embers blowing around and potentially landing on the house, other structures around the property or trees. If the weather report is calling for gusting winds, burn a fire on another night.
- DON'T leave a fire pit fire burning. Unattended recreational fires are illegal and incredibly dangerous. Homeowners should never leave fire pit fires burning unattended or allow fires to slowly die out overnight. Always extinguish the fire before going inside and stop adding wood to the fire roughly one hour before you plan to go inside. Water or sand can be poured on ashes to extinguish the fire. Once homeowners are confident a fire has been extinguished, ashes can be spread around to ensure there are no hot spots still burning. If there are, start the extinguishing process over again.

A night around the fire pit is a summertime tradition in many households. Safety must be as much a part of such traditions as s'mores.

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# Low-Cost Ways to Revamp Living Areas



Home improvement projects require substantial financial investment. But just because a homeowner wants to bring a fresh look indoors doesn't mean he or she has to break the bank along the way.

Living rooms are some of the most frequently used spaces in a home, and they can use an update from time to time to stay on trend or to make the area more functional for a changing family dynamic. Here are some budget-friendly ideas for breathing new life into living room designs.

- Establish the budget. Homeowners should figure out how many dollars they can designate to a living room makeover before purchasing supplies or hiring out the work. Figure out the scope of the remodel, visit stores or suppliers to price out materials, get estimates from contractors, and then plan for some unforeseen circumstances along the way to determine if this type of renovation is affordable. If not, scale things back until the project more closely aligns with your budget.
- Change the paint color. Lighter and brighter colors are on trend. A can or two of paint can do wonders for updating a space without a large financial commitment. Pair that new paint color with new window coverings and complementary throw pillows to pull the theme together with minimal expense.
- Update the flooring. Tired, outdated carpeting or other flooring can use an overhaul. While solid hardwood flooring may be preferable, there are many types of laminate flooring that mimic the looks of popular wood colors and styles for a fraction of the cost.

Plus, many are sold at home improvement retailers and even at warehouse clubs or online for reasonable prices. Laminate flooring also may be a potential DIY job for a skilled homeowner, saving even more money.

- Introduce a fireplace. Fireplaces were once hot commodities, but that popularity waned in the 1970s and 1980s. Homeowners with chimneys may discover a fireplace was boarded over and the bare bones still exist that can be renovated to bring back character. There also are ventless freestanding units that are quite affordable that can mimic the look of a built-in fireplace.
- Reupholster instead of replace furniture. There's no need to throw away quality furniture if the fabric is the only thing impeding design. New upholstery or even a slipcover can update designs.
- Conquer clutter. Rather than adding something to the living room, remove clutter to give the room a more airy feel. This can instantly change the look of the room. Use cord covers to tame plugs for electronics and remove unnecessary furniture from the room.
- Improve lighting. Another easy and often inexpensive fix is to change lighting fixtures, including using brighter, more energy efficient LED bulbs, and to assess lighting needs to eliminate dark corners of rooms that can make the space seem drab.

Living room spaces in need of an update often can benefit from improvements that go easy on the wallet.

# Popular Insect Repellant Plants

Homeowners choose plants for their properties based on a number of variables. Some may be into growing their own foods, while others desire their gardens to be an awe-inspiring mélange of bright colors and alluring scents. There's no wrong reason to plant a fresh garden, but some plants offer extra benefits, such as repelling insects.

Insects can be a nuisance and a threat to individuals' overall health. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, insect-borne diseases are viral and bacterial illnesses that develop from insect bites. Mosquitoes, sand flies and fleas are some examples of insects that can pass on disease. Fever, chills, headache, and muscle soreness are just a few of the more common symptoms linked to insect-borne diseases.

The good news for avid gardeners is that certain plants can help repel insects and provide the additional benefits like fresh food and aesthetic appeal that so many people love.

- **Basil:** The aroma of fresh basil is enough to compel any gardener to make a place for it in their garden. But there's more to fresh basil than its scent, as the Farmers Almanac notes it can be used to repel mosquitoes and moths.
- **Lavender:** Fleas, flies, mosquitoes, and moths are not fans of this aromatic and colorful member of the mint family. Bees tend to be drawn to lavender, a durable plant that many garden centers recommend in areas prone to drought or hot summers without much precipitation.



- **Mint:** Mint is another plant that is instantly recognizable for its aroma. But mint lovers may not realize that it's also great for keeping ants at bay. Mint also can be used to repel mosquitoes, but gardeners with no experience planting mint should plant it in pots. That's because the Farmers Almanac notes mint is an especially aggressive spreader that can quickly take over a garden. Separating mint in pots can prevent it from bullying its way into other plants' domains.
- **Lemongrass:** Lemongrass is a tropical grass that's so fragrant it's often used in perfumes. Lemongrass contains citronella, which many people associate with

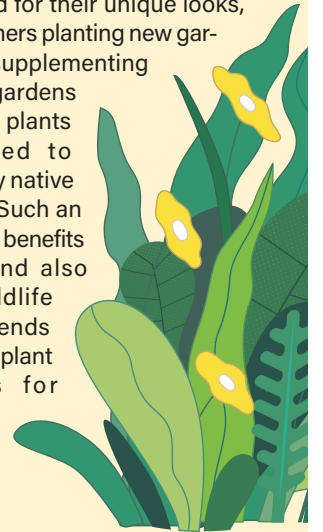
repelling mosquitoes. A potted lemongrass plant can repel these unwanted guests, keeping them away from decks, porches and/or patios all summer long.

- **Chrysanthemums:** The Farmers' Almanac® recommends using chrysanthemums, which repel a range of insects from bedbugs to fleas to ants, as border plants around a home. That's because they contain the natural insecticide pyrethrin, which can serve as something of an insect-repelling boundary around a home.

Insects are unwanted guests around a home each spring, summer and fall. Certain plants can help repel insects and serve as an eco-friendly alternative to insecticides.

## Did you know?

Homeowners should give due consideration to whether or not plants are considered invasive species before introducing new plants on their properties. According to the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, invasive species of plants can lead to the extinction of native plants and animals. Invasive plant species also can reduce biodiversity and cause significant fundamental disruptions to local ecosystems. Though non-native plants are often cherished for their unique looks, homeowners planting new gardens or supplementing existing gardens with new plants are urged to plant only native species. Such an approach benefits plants and also local wildlife that depends on native plant species for food and cover.



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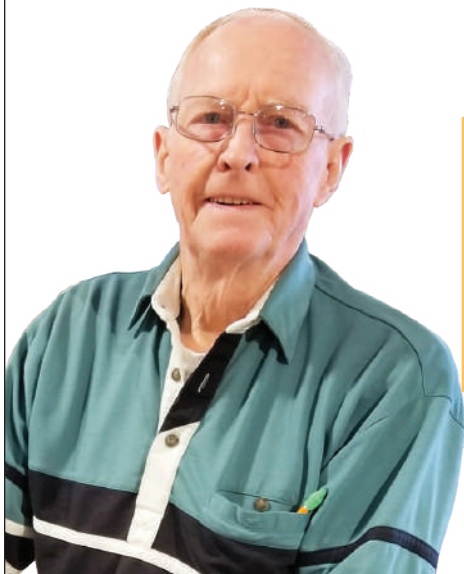
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# The Basics of Container Gardening



Gardening is a rewarding hobby that has been linked to health benefits like reduced stress and improved mental well-being. Gardening also can lead to an inviting home landscape full of attractive blooms and/or delicious foods.

Backyard gardens have long been planted after clearing a plot of land, tilling and amending the soil, and planting rows of favorite crops. However, gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

### What is container gardening?

As its name implies, container gardening is growing plants inside of containers. These containers can be flower pots, rectangular deck boxes or even large raised garden beds.

### Pros to container gardening

One of the advantages of container gardening is that plants can be moved in and out of sunlight to ensure the right growing conditions. This isn't as easily achieved when gardens are stationary. Also, beginner gardeners may be more able to control soil conditions inside of a small container rather than a vast ground-based garden, which will require a good deal of manual labor. Pots and boxes also can be grouped together to create eye-popping displays, usually at lower costs than the sheer volume of plants that would be needed to fill out an expansive landscape.

### Cons to container gardening

Container garden plants will not have direct access to the ground, so they need gardeners to create the ideal growing conditions. Developing the right care formula can be challenging. The home and garden resource

The Spruce says that drainage is an important factor in container gardening, and most containers do not offer enough drainage holes. If water cannot escape the soil, the roots of the plants can rot and die. It's not enough to add stones or gravel to the bottom of containers. Drill additional holes in the bottom (1/2-inch in diameter for small or medium-sized pots; one inch in diameter for larger pots). Also, be sure to check on soil moisture so that watering can be adjusted. During hot stretches, plants may need to be watered more frequently.

### Plan for plants that play well

Grouping plants together can create visually stunning combinations. However, it is important to choose plants that require the same amount of light and moisture. Look at plant tags when visiting the garden center and select complementary plants, or ask a store employee. Mixing different plant shapes, colors and leaf textures, as well as plants of various heights, can help containers look filled out.

### Feed plants accordingly

Plants need nutrition to thrive in containers. Quality potting mixes will contain fertilizers, but nutrition will wane over time. Every couple of weeks, container plants will need either fresh potting mix or granular fertilizer added to feed them. Oregon State University Extension Services suggests using a slow-release fertilizer or worm castings several times throughout the season.

Container gardening is a great way to add plants to smaller patios, reduce the workload involved in maintaining expansive gardens, and customize conditions for optimal growth.



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## In Remembrance

### Merle Norris, 78



Thomas "Merle" Norris, Sr., of Leonardtown, MD, passed away peacefully at the age of 78 on March 9th, 2024 at Washington Hospital Center with his beloved

wife, Eleanor, and children at his side. Merle was the eldest son of Mildred and Ernest Norris of Leonardtown, MD, born on March 16, 1945. He attended Leonardtown High School and was a graduate of the Class of 1964. Merle started working at Fenwick Ford in 1964, and soon became a certified Ford mechanic. While working at the Ford dealership in 1964, they had a delivery of new vehicles which included the very first 1964 1/2 Canary Yellow Mustang Convertible GT in St. Mary's County, MD; Merle purchased it on the spot.

While working at Fenwick Ford, in July of 1966 his life was forever changed when his cousin, Phyllis Norris, introduced him to the love of his life, Eleanor Ellis, of Avenue, MD. Merle and Eleanor were married on November 18, 1966 in Holy Angels Catholic Church. Merle then transitioned to the State Highway Administration in 1974 where he retired in 1988. He had quite the green thumb, and always grew the best gardens using his 1939 L John Deere that he inherited from his father, Ernest Norris. The 1939 John Deere is still in the family today and is owned by his oldest son, Tom. Merle was quite the jokester and was an avid waterman. He enjoyed spending time with family and friends out on the water, as well as oystering, crabbing, fishing, and duck hunting with his long-time friend, Roland Demers, Sr.

Merle and Eleanor had the opportunity of renewing their vows after 50 years of marriage at the same church on the same day at the same time with the original maid of honor and lifelong friend, Tommy Cook, of Waldorf, MD as his best man.

Merle and Eleanor have three children, Anne Hilsinger (Mike) of Mechanicsville MD, Thomas Norris, Jr. (Rose) of Leonardtown, MD and Andrew Norris of Mechanicsville, MD. He has three grandchildren, Ashley Stephenson, Matthew Norris (Ashley), and Heather Norris, three extended grandchildren (Ashley King, Alexandra Barnaby, and Katherine Hilsinger), six great grandchildren, Jaylah, Bentley, AJ, Jaelyn, Hailey, and Rylynn, three extended great grandchildren, (Kennedy, Mikey, and Raylah due in June), as well as five nieces and two nephews. Merle is preceded in death by his mother, Mildred, his father, Ernest, his brother, Ernie, his sister, Millie, and his niece, Erin Rochelle Norris. In addition to his wife, Merle is survived by his sister, Ellen Quade, of Leonardtown, MD.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, March 14, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM in Our Lady's at Medley's

Neck, Leonardtown, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 AM with Father John Nguyen officiating. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Tom Norris, Andrew Norris, Jimmy Quade, Matt Norris, Heather Norris, and Michael Hilsinger.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Condolences may be made to the family at [www.mgfh.com](http://www.mgfh.com).

Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

### Joe Greer, 87



Joseph Leroy Greer, Jr., age 87, of Dameron, MD died March 5, 2024.

Joe was the son of the late Joseph Leroy Greer, Sr. and the late Marie Margaret (Flynn) Greer. In addition to his parents, Joe is preceded in death by two sisters, Helen Jean Owens and Linda Marie Greer and two brothers William Robert "Bob" Greer, Sr. and Richard Greer.

Joe is survived by his loving wife of nearly 60 years Mary Nell (Sellers) Greer; his sisters Anna Mae Outland and Mary Ann Bear, brother-in-law Glenn Sellers (Janice) and many nieces and nephews.

Joe was born on October 24, 1936, in the town of Welcome, Maryland. He graduated from Sacred Heart High School in LaPlata, MD. He later attended the University of Maryland and Georgetown University, where he majored in Business Administration. He served in the Maryland National Guard from 1954-1955, when he enlisted in the United States Air Force where he served until 1959.

Joe retired after 30 years in the Bureau of Navy Personnel. He held various positions in the Bureau and retired as the Head of the Navy Casualty Assistance Branch. Some of the families he assisted were the families of the unaccounted for from Vietnam, those whose loved ones were held captive during the Iranian hostage crisis, families who suffered tragic losses during the Beirut bombing, the space shuttle Challenger disaster, the attack on the USS STARK, the explosion aboard USS IOWA, the sinking of the USS SARATOGA liberty boat, and the families of DESERT STORM casualties.

Following his retirement as a civilian employee with the Navy, Joe went to work for the St. Mary's County Department of Public Works as a driver for STS Transit. He also volunteered as an ambulance driver for the Ridge Volunteer Rescue Squad. He was a member of St. Mary's County Duck's Unlimited, Knights of Columbus and St. Cecelia's Catholic Church.

Joe was an avid outdoorsman who

enjoyed fishing, hunting and time on the Bay. He enjoyed sharing these pursuits with his many nieces, nephews, and friends. He inspired a lifelong love of spending time outdoors in many of his family and friends.

Joe holds a special place in the hearts of all who have ever enjoyed the pleasure of his company. A true gentleman in every sense of the word. Joe made one feel at home whenever in his presence. Even upon initially meeting him, it was as if he had known you for a lifetime. Joe never met a stranger.

Service and burial will be privately held at Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery.

Donations can be made in memory of Joseph L. Greer, Jr. to the Ridge Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 456, Ridge, MD 20680.

Condolences to the family may be made at [www.brinsfieldfuneral.com](http://www.brinsfieldfuneral.com).

Arrangements are by Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

### Sheila Corbin, 62



Sheila Rae Corbin, 62, of Fayetteville, NC, formerly of Abell, MD, passed away on March 7, 2024 in Fayetteville, NC. Born on April 13, 1961 in Okinawa, Japan,

she was the daughter of the late Rachel A. Riley and the late Joseph F. Irvin. Sheila was the loving wife of the late Charles Mark Corbin, whom she married on September 8, 1979 in Forestville, MD, and who preceded her in death on October 6, 2022. Sheila is survived by her children, Randy N. Corbin (Christine) of Martinsburg, WV, Megan R. Riley (Christopher) of Fayetteville, NC, and Dixie C. Deehan (Paul) of Pearl City, HI, her siblings, Joseph Irvin of Mechanicsville, MD and Charles Irvin of Bel Alton, MD, her grandchildren, Zakk Corbin, Jacob Corbin, Gabriel Riley, Jackson Riley, and Charles Deehan, her great granddaughter Analeigh Corbin, as well as one granddaughter on the way.

Sheila graduated from Suitland High School in 1978. She was a realtor for LK Farrell Realty/Coldwell Banker.

The family will receive friends on Monday, March 18, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 11:00 AM with Pastor Dennis Gillikin. Interment will be private.

Contributions may be made to the Charles County Animal Care Center, 6707 Animal Shelter Road,

Hughesville, MD 20637.

Condolences may be made to the family at [www.mgfh.com](http://www.mgfh.com).

Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

### Lisa Crowe, 71



Lisa Estevez Crowe, 71, of Lexington Park, MD died on March 1st, 2024 at St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown MD, surrounded by her family.

Born Lisa Roseanne Estevez, Lisa was raised in Pomfret, MD. The fourth of eight children to Teresa (née Willett) and Henry Estevez, Lisa graduated from Archbishop Neal Catholic school before finishing her education at the Washington School for Secretaries. She married her high school sweetheart, Paul Crowe, in 1972. After being stationed abroad, Lisa and Paul settled in St. Mary's County in 1975, where they built a happy life. Lisa worked in the admissions office at St. Mary's College of Maryland for 37 years, helping generations of students find a place to learn and grow. Lisa was an active member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, where she did everything from teach Sunday school to Eucharistic ministry. She spent many Saturdays painting and crafting with the Southern Maryland Decorative Painters, of which she was a founding member. Club members remember her not only as a skilled artist but a friend who fostered joy, kindness and community. She raised two sons, Nathan and Colin, who still benefit every day from the steadfast love she provided. In the last years of her life, she faced the cruel realities of a degenerative neurological condition that she endured with unparalleled grace, courage, and determination. Her friends, family, and anyone who spent time with her will always remember her for her ever-present kindness, generous nature, and positive attitude. She brought joy to the world and was an example to all. She will be forever missed.

Lisa Crowe is predeceased by her parents Teresa and Henry Estevez and her brothers Kip and Robin Estevez. She is survived by her devoted husband Paul; her sons Nathan and Colin; her daughters-in-law Stephanie and Sarah; her grandchildren Talia, Gabriel, and Mariela; and her siblings Maria Estevez, Alida Berman, John Estevez, Lance Estevez, and Brian Estevez.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Monday, March 18, 2024 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. followed by a Memorial Gathering from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 22375 Three Notch Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653.

Memorial contributions can be made in Lisa's memory to CurePSP: [https://secure2.convio.net/cpsp/site/Donation2?1400.donation=form1&df\\_id=1400&mfc\\_pref=T](https://secure2.convio.net/cpsp/site/Donation2?1400.donation=form1&df_id=1400&mfc_pref=T)

Condolences to the family may be made at [www.brinsfieldfuneral.com](http://www.brinsfieldfuneral.com).

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

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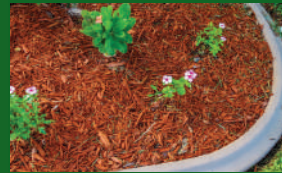
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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Mar 14

### Mobile Library Starting Up

Loffler Senior Activity Center  
21905 Chancellors Run Rd., Great Mills  
11 a.m. to Noon  
2nd Thursday of each month

St. Mary's County Library's new Mobile Library will be visiting the Loffler Senior Activity Center on the 2nd Thursday of each month starting on March 14.

The Mobile Library will be open for tours as well as browsing the collection, checking out books, Free wi-fi, and knowledgeable Library staff available to assist.

### Team Trivia at Wicomico Shores Golf Course

Riverview Restaurant  
at Wicomico Shores Golf Course  
35794 Aviation Yacht Club Rd.,  
Mechanicsville  
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Team trivia every Thursday in March! Bring a team, or come and join one. Fun and food galore! Please call 301-884-0399 to reserve a table.

## Fri, Mar 15

### Music from Poplar Hill

St. George's Episcopal Church  
19167 Poplar Hill Ln., Valley Lee  
7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Join us for the third event in our 2023-24 concert season. Our guest artists will be the duo Dong Xi ("East-West"), a musical collaboration between world percussionist Tom Teasley and renowned Chinese dulcimer artist Chao Tian. Through improvisation, they create a spellbinding, colorful musical dialogue between Eastern and Western cultures. Dong Xi received the Wammie Award for Best World Music Artist/Group 2020 and were the nominees for Outstanding Sound Design of the 2020 Helen Hayes Award. Don't miss this opportunity to hear their special artistry transform the sanctuary at St. George's! Tickets are on sale at [www.musicfrompoplarhill.org](http://www.musicfrompoplarhill.org)

### Lenten Fish Fry

St. George Catholic Church  
19199 St Georges Church Rd., Valley Lee  
4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Come get your fresh caught catfish or Steamed Shrimp dinners with french fries,

pancit and more. \$20 per take out order, we will be there until sold out, so come early!

## Sat, Mar 16

### Historic Weapons Certification

Point Lookout State Park  
11175 Point Lookout Rd., Scotland  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This event is open to visitors. However, the concentration will be on the certification of demonstrators on the proper drill of percussion flintlocks small arms and percussion period artillery weapons. The weaponry will span Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War timeframe.

## Sun, Mar 17

### MVRS Easter Egg Hunt

Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad  
28120 Old Flora Corner Rd.,  
Mechanicsville  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

We will be gathering at MVRS for an Easter Egg Hunt covering all of Mechanicsville!

Meet at the squad to obtain a map and sheet with hints. We will be holding 50/50 raffles and Basket Auctions!

It's \$5 per participant and kids 5 and under are free! Come join us for some Sunday fun and help our squad raise money!

## Upcoming

### Dolly and Me Tea

Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department  
24801 Three Notch Rd, Hollywood  
Saturday, June 8  
12 p.m to 3 p.m.  
Deadline to register is Friday, May 31

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department presents its 3rd annual Dolly and Me Tea.

Finger sandwiches, scones, dessert and tea will be provided. Vendors will be on site selling clothing items for your dolls. Decorate your own table to be entered for a chance to win 1st, 2nd or 3rd Place Prize. Raffle Items: 6 tickets for \$5.00 Arms Length for \$30.00. Musical Chairs with free prizes; 4X6 Cinderella Picture for \$10.00.

\$25.00 per ticket. Make reservations by Friday May 31, 2024. Contact: Lynn Brady 240-538-2503



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# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Mar 14

### Teen Movie Night

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

Chill in your most comfy clothes (or jammies), eat popcorn, and watch a movie on the big screen! Free popcorn, pizza, and movie theater snacks! For ages 13-17. It's time for a comfy, cozy movie night! Feel free wear your sweats or pj's, and bring sleeping bags, pillows, stuffed animals. Bring your friends and vote on the movie. For ages 13-17. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

### Alzheimer's Caregivers Support

Calvert Library Prince Frederick  
850 Costley Way, & Zoom  
6:30-8 p.m.

Get tips and support from other caregivers. Facilitated by Jeannette Findley & JC Hooker. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

### Social Security: Retirement

Zoom, hosted by Charles County Library  
In Spanish at 5:30pm  
In English at 6:30pm

The Social Security Administration provides protection for workers and their families. Programs provide monthly income to seniors, workers with a disability, children with disabilities, and families in which a spouse or parent has died. We invite you to this virtual presentation to learn more about retirement eligibility requirements, family benefits, options, and the application process. Presentation by Diana Varela, Public Affairs Specialist for the Social Security Administration followed by Q&A. This event will not be recorded. If you'd like to use the wifi and a library computer to participate in this Zoom event please call 410-535-0291. Calvert Library, 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

## Sat, Mar 16

### 21st Annual Women of the World Celebration & Awards

Zoom  
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join Calvert County Commission for Women's annual evdnt. Ten leading women of Calvert County will be honored at the event. Keynote speaker: Lt. Governor Aruna Miller. Registration required by March 9 to receive an emailed link and program for the event. Partner Organizations include: Calvert County Historical Society, Calvert County Minority Business Alliance, Community Mediation Center of Calvert County, Concerned Black Women of Calvert County, League of Women Voters of Calvert County, NAACP of Calvert County and Calvert Library, 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### St. Patrick's Day 'Leprechaun Hunt'

American Chestnut Land Trust North Side Trailhead  
676 Double Oak Rd, Prince Frederick  
10 a.m.

Based on the book "The Leprechaun Story," families go through a "field of shoes" reading clues to help them find the pot of gold. Bonus: Find rocks painted with 4-leaf clovers.

## Tue, Mar 19,

### Book Discussion

Calvert Library (Online)  
8-9 p.m.

Join us this month to discuss "The Maid" by Nita Prose. Clue-like, locked-room mystery and a heart warming journey of the spirit, The Maid explores what it means to be the same as everyone else and yet entirely different—and reveals that all mysteries can be solved through connection to the human heart . 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862.

<https://CalvertLibrary.info>

## Wed, Mar 20

### Homeschool Day

Calvert Marine Museum and Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Calvert Marine Museum (CMM) is partnering with Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center (AMG) for Homeschool Day in Solomons. Look all around you! You can find patterns everywhere! Participate in hands-on activities to explore nature, math, and art while you discover different types of patterns. Continue this exploration on your own and see the many patterns you can detect. Ideal for grades K-5, but all ages can discover something new. Space is available at both locations to enjoy your lunch. Pick up an interactive Homeschool BINGO card at AMG, complete the tasks at both sites to earn BINGO, and turn it in at CMM for the chance to win a prize! Pre-registration not required. Regular admission applies for both locations. For more information, visit: [www.calvertmarinemuseum.com/182/Homeschool](http://www.calvertmarinemuseum.com/182/Homeschool). Visit [www.annmariegarden.org](http://www.annmariegarden.org) for information about AMG.

### Chromebook Giveaways to Eligible Households

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
11 a.m.-5 p.m.

We are excited to be able to give one FREE Chromebook to qualified households. These Chromebooks have been provided by a grant from the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development. Please see the qualification requirements before making a pick-up appointment. check out our lending program. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

### Bicycle Safety Class

Calvert Library Prince Frederick  
850 Costley Way  
6-7:30 p.m.

So many of us love that feeling of wind in our hair while we ride our bicycles! Learn how to be safe on the roads and trails while having fun! Solomons Island Cycling Club will share with us how to equip cyclists with the skills to ride confidently and safely, whether solo or in a group. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

## Upcoming

### Calvert Marine Museum Society Otter Trot 5K

Calvert Marine Museum  
Saturday, March 23  
8 a.m.

Get ready for otterly awesome fun! You're invited to the inaugural CMMS Otter Trot 5K! Whether you're sprinting, strolling, or just really into otters, this timed race is for you. Cost is a \$40 Race Fee + \$2.80 Sign-Up Fee. Proceeds from the 2024 Otter Trot 5K will contribute to building a new enclosure for our beloved North American river otters Chessie Grace and Calvert.

### OtterMania

Calvert Marine Museum  
Saturday, March 23  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Help us celebrate our favorite museum mammal – the North American river otter! Ideal for families, OtterMania! invites kids to dance the "Swim" with the otter mascots, discover how the otters stay warm, explore other adaptations that help otters survive, and complete an "otterly" awesome craft. Don't forget to visit Calvert and Chessie Grace along the way! All activities included with museum admission. Free for CMM members.

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The County Times is a weekly newspaper providing news and information for the residents of St. Mary's and Calvert County. The County Times will be available on newsstands every Thursday. The paper is published by Southern Maryland Publishing Company, which is responsible for the form, content, and policies of the newspaper. The County Times does not espouse any political belief or endorse any product or service in its news coverage.

To be considered for publication, articles and letters to the editor submitted must include the writer's full name, address and daytime phone number. Submissions must be delivered by 4 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication to ensure placement for that week. After that deadline, the County Times will make every attempt possible to publish late content, but cannot guarantee so. Letters may be condensed/edited for clarity, although care is taken to preserve the core of the writer's argument. Copyright in material submitted to the newspaper and accepted for publication remains with the author, but the County Times and its licensees may freely reproduce it in print, electronic or other forms. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of letters. The County Times cannot guarantee that every letter or photo(s) submitted will be published, due to time or space constraints.



# County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636



# CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of February 26 – March 3, 2024, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,387 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health – 68
- Disorderly – 15
- Domestic – 24
- Motor Vehicle Crashes – 32
- Patrol Checks / School Checks – 1,261
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles – 37
- Traffic Complaints – 71
- 911 Hang Ups – 60
- Arrests – 21



David Elliott Ballou

**Assist Other Agency:** 24-16.652 -- On February 29, 2024, at 4 a.m., Calvert Deputies and Maryland Troopers were dispatched to a reported stolen vehicle and conducted a traffic stop on Rt. 4

at Ward Road in Dunkirk. The passenger, **David Elliott Ballou**, 54 of Damascus, bailed out of the vehicle on foot and proceeded to run across Rt. 4. Ballou and was later apprehended by Deputy Lee. The vehicle then fled northbound and was discovered unoccupied in a ditch in the area of Rt. 4 and Brickhouse Road. A search for the operator was conducted with negative results. Ballou was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged accordingly by Maryland State Police.

**Bomb Threat:** 24-17615 -- On March 2, 2024, at approximately 11 p.m., DFC Strong responded to the Northeast Community Center located at 4075 Gordon Stinnett Ave. in North Beach, for the report of a bomb threat. Investigation revealed an employee of the center received two separate calls from the same phone number implying a bomb was inside the building. Deputies responded and performed a sweep of the building and surrounding area. No evidence of a bomb was found. The investigation is ongoing.



Zachary D. Wayne Ingram

**CDS Violation:** 24-16134 -- On February 27, 2024, Deputy DeSantis was patrolling Calvert Cliffs State Park located at 10540 HG Trueman Road in Lusby, and observed a suspi-

cious vehicle. A male was observed making multiple trips from the vehicle to various parts of the park and onto HG Trueman Road. Further investigation revealed a glass cylinder with a scouring pad (suspected crack pipe) was located inside the vehicle. The occupant, **Zachary D. Wayne Ingram**, 29 of Danville, KY, was arrested and charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.



Barry Jeremiah Parran

**CDS Violation:** 24-16268 -- On February 28, 2024, Deputy Hill initiated a traffic stop in the area of S. Solomons Island Road and Plum Point Road in Huntingtown, on a vehicle for speeding and an equipment violation. Contact was made with the driver, **Barry Jeremiah Parran**, 56 Prince Frederick, who advised he did not have a valid driver's license. Further investigation revealed a tied-off bag containing white crushed-up rocks (suspected cocaine) was located in the center console. Parran was placed into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis, DUI, DWI, and other traffic-related charges.



Vaughn Cornell Mackall

**CDS Violation:** 24-17488 -- On March 2, 2024, Deputy Tunnell initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle for a traffic violation near the intersection of Main Street and Duke Street in Prince Frederick. Contact was made with the driver, **Vaughn Cornell Mackall**, 44 of Chesapeake Beach, who advised his license was suspended. Further investigation revealed a plastic baggie containing a white powdery residue was found inside the vehicle. A search of Mackall's person revealed a second baggie containing a white powdery residue (suspected cocaine). Mackall was placed into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis (x2).

**Damaged Property:** 24-17540 -- On March 2, 2024, Deputy MacWilliams responded to Discount Liquors located at 5005 N. Solomons Island Road in Huntingtown, for

the report of damaged property. Contact was made with the complainant who advised an unknown suspect walked up to the store and threw a brick through an outside window causing it to break. The estimated value of damaged property is \$600.00.

**Theft:** 24-15654 -- On February 26, 2024, DFC Huy responded to the 2600 block of Manor Court in Owings, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised a 14k yellow gold crest ring was stolen from the residence. The ring measures 23.5mm across the top and tapers to an 8mm shank. The ring has the Prince George's County Fire Department Shield on top. The estimated value of stolen property is \$1,895.

**Theft:** 24-16775 -- On February 29, 2024, DFC Aley responded to the Calvert County Sheriff's Office located at 30 Church Street in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised his temporary rear VA registration plate was stolen from his vehicle while parked at 115 JW Williams Road in Prince Frederick. The estimated value of stolen property is \$50.00.

**Theft:** 24-17806 -- On March 3, 2024, DFC Savick responded to the boardwalk located at 9100 Bay Ave in North Beach, for the reported theft. The complainant advised that they had rented a memorial bench from the Town of North Beach and had affixed four ornament photos to it on January 23. The photos were securely screwed onto the bench. Upon returning to the bench in early February, the complainant discovered the photos were missing. Subsequently, on February 11, four new photos were placed and secured on the bench. Upon revisiting the bench on March 3, the photos were once again missing. The estimated value of the stolen property is \$200.



William Sylvester Ennis

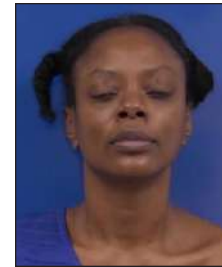
**Traffic Arrest:** 24-17477 -- On March 2, 2024, Cpl. Bowlan initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of N. Solomons Island Road and Pardoe Road in Lusby, after multiple observed traffic violations and the vehicle's suspended registration. Cpl. Bowlan activated his emergency lights and sirens to attempt a traffic stop. The driver, later identified as **William Sylvester Ennis**, 20 of Glen Burnie, failed to stop and accelerated as he turned off the highway. Ennis put his car in reverse and



James NMN Jackson

struck the deputy's vehicle. Ennis was taken into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with Fleeing and Eluding, Driving on a Suspended Registration, and various other traffic offenses.

**Traffic Arrest:** 24-17057 -- On March 1, 2024, Deputy Tavares initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle due to traffic violations in the area of the Thomas Johnson Bridge in Solomons. Upon making contact with the driver, who initially provided the false name of "Junior Jean-Baptiste", it was discovered that he had multiple warrants from various jurisdictions. Further investigation revealed a generator, green tubing, and large plastic totes containing suspected cooking oil inside the vehicle. The driver was identified as **James NMN Jackson**, 33 of Irvington, NJ. During routine questioning, several inconsistencies arose, and Jackson continued to falsify his whereabouts and intentions with the cooking oil. Jackson was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with False Statement to an Officer.



Latoya Renee Mason

**Trespassing:** 24-15810 -- On February 26, 2024, Deputy MacWilliams received a trespassing complaint at the Wawa located at 10205 Kirksville Lane in Dunkirk. Investigation revealed **Latoya Renee Mason**, 41 of Great Mills, had been previously trespassed from the establishment. Mason was charged with Trespassing: Private Property.

*Editor's Note: The above arrests are not an indication of guilt or innocence as the cases have not been adjudicated.*

*Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call the Sheriff's Office at (410) 535-2800 and reference the case number provided. Citizens may remain anonymous thru the 'Submit a Tip' feature on the Calvert County Sheriff's Office mobile app. To download, visit <https://apps.myocv.com/share/a39520678>. Tipsters may also email [ccsotips@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:ccsotips@calvertcountymd.gov)*

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# CALVERT COUNTY INFORMATION & EVENTS

Calvert County Government will be responsible and accountable to all citizens of Calvert County; provide high quality, effective and efficient services; preserve Calvert County's environment, heritage and rural character; foster opportunities for responsible and sustainable residential growth and economic development; and support Calvert County's essential institutions and keep them strong.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are subject to change.

Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 10 a.m., Commissioners' Hearing Room, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick

### Boards and Commissions Meetings

Meetings are held via Zoom unless otherwise noted.

Call-in information can be found on [www.calvertcountymd.gov](http://www.calvertcountymd.gov).

Architectural Review Committee - Lusby Town Center meeting, Monday, March 18, 2024, 2-3 p.m.

Architectural Review Committee - Owings Town Center, Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

### Public Hearings and Meetings

Flood Mitigation Plan meeting, Monday, March 18, 2024, 10 a.m., Harriet E. Brown Community Center, 901 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick

Public Hearing: Requesting Grants to Assist in the Funding of our Locally Operated Public Transit System, March 19, 2024, 10 a.m., Commissioners' Hearing Room, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick

Public Hearing: FY25 Staff Recommended Operating and Capital Improvement Budget, March 19, 2024, 7 p.m., Commissioners' Hearing Room, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick

## SPEAK UP CALVERT

Explore Calvert County Government's community engagement platform, Speak Up Calvert. This central hub invites community members to participate in discussions, exchange insights and collaborate with the county to tackle crucial issues, challenges and opportunities in our community.



Ensure your voice is heard by visiting [www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/SpeakUpCalvert](http://www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/SpeakUpCalvert).

## TRUCK RACE

Saturday, March 23, 2024, 3:30-4 p.m., Edward T. Hall Aquatic Center, Prince Frederick

Purchase a rubber duck to race down the pool for a great cause! Buy a duck online at [CalvertCounty.PerfectMind.com](http://CalvertCounty.PerfectMind.com) using the activity numbers below:

Regular Duck: \$5 (Activity #470662)

Deluxe Ducks: \$6/each (Activity #470663)

## VACANCIES ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Every day, decisions made by Calvert County Government officials affect you.

The Board of County Commissioners has established many boards, commissions and committees that offer citizens an avenue to actively participate in local government.

Now is a great time to get involved! Learn more at [www.calvertcountymd.gov/GetInvolved](http://www.calvertcountymd.gov/GetInvolved). Call 410-535-1600, ext. 2201 with any questions.

## ARTICLES 20 & 21 OF THE DRAFT 2023/24 CALVERT ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Public Comment Period open March 8 through April 5, 2024

Joint Work Session: Calvert County Board of County Commissioners & Planning Commission, March 20, 2024, 7 p.m., Harriet E. Brown Community Center, Prince Frederick

Find the full schedule and documents online at [www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/ZoningOrdinanceUpdate](http://www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/ZoningOrdinanceUpdate).

## "SPREAD YOUR LEAVES" NATIVE TREE COUPON

The Calvert County Environmental Commission is encouraging native plantings outside of the critical area by offering a \$50 off coupon per tree purchase (up to six trees) at participating nurseries. To receive your coupon and learn more, visit [www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/TreeCoupon](http://www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/TreeCoupon)



## FREE PAPER SHREDDING EVENT

March 23, 2024, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appeal Landfill, 401 Sweetwater Road in Lusby

The Calvert County Department of Public Works is hosting a free paper shredding event for county residents and businesses.

Shredding events are held monthly. For information about recycling events, call the Calvert County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division & Recycling, at 410-326-0210 or visit [www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Recycle](http://www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Recycle).



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The Calvert County Visitors Guide is available online at [www.visitcalvert.com/Brochure](http://www.visitcalvert.com/Brochure). Use this guide to find shopping, restaurants and fun attractions for the whole family.

To request a printed copy, call the Calvert County Department of Economic Development at 410-535-4583 or email [info@choosecalvert.com](mailto:info@choosecalvert.com).

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# Georgia Man Sentenced for Sex Abuse of a Minor

Jonathan Santos of Marietta, GA was sentenced in Calvert County Circuit Court on March 8 to 30 year's incarceration, with 10 years active, for the crimes of sex abuse of a minor and second-degree rape. Upon release from prison, Santos will be on five years supervised probation and required to register for life as a convicted sex offender.

In April, 2023, the Calvert County Sheriff's Office received information that Santos had groomed and sexually assaulted a 12-year-old girl. The abuse began in 2020 and continued over a nine-month period. The victim was scared but finally had the courage to report the abuse.

The sentence was imposed by Judge Mark S. Chandler. Senior Assistant State's Attorney Rebecca N. Cordero prosecuted the case.



Jonathan Santos

Press Release from Calvert County State's Attorney

# CalvertHealth Foundation Welcomes New Board Member

Huntingtown businessman Bob Carpenter has been named to the CalvertHealth Foundation Board of Trustees. "I served on the Foundation board previously and really enjoyed the experience. I know how critical community support is to CalvertHealth and its upcoming initiatives," said Carpenter.

Owner of Chesapeake Beach Consulting, Seven Lands and Seas Travel and a former two-term Chesapeake Town Council member, Carpenter said he is most excited about the medical center's recent purchase of the Da Vinci Robotic Surgical System and its recent affiliation with Duke Health, an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center.

"With his history serving the hospital and community connections, Bob brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding to our work," said Theresa Johnson, Vice President for Brand Strategy and Philanthropy. "Knowing that he is passionate about advocating for the hospital's new initiatives, Bob will be a valuable asset in helping us grow our programs and realizing our strategic goals."

Carpenter joins 15 other community members are currently serving.



Bob Carpenter

# Bald Eagle Rescued After Striking Car



An unexpected call recently had Calvert County Animal Control Officer (ACO) Neel rush into action to save a bald eagle!

Early on March 9, Animal Control received a call that a driver on Route 4 had accidentally collided with an eagle. When the driver stopped, they realized that the eagle was still alive, but trapped in the vehicle's grill.

With teamwork from the Calvert County

Sheriff's Office, ACO Neel safely removed the eagle. After a thorough examination, all were relieved to find the bird seemed to be in good health and was quickly released back into the wild.

Thanks to ACO Neel and all who helped rescue this wonderful creature!

Press Release from CCSO

**COMEDY INVASION**  
For Project Graduation  
Silent Auction at 6:30 p.m.!

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2024

Silent Auction at 6:30 p.m. | Auditorium Seating Open at 7:30 p.m. | Show Starts at 8 p.m.  
Huntingtown High School Auditorium, 4125 Solomons Island Road, Huntingtown



**MICHAEL PALASCAK** is a comedian who grew up in Indiana and now lives in LA. He performed on both *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* in the same year. In addition, his résumé includes appearances on *A Little Late with Lilly Singh*, *The Tonight Show*, *Letterman*, *Craig Ferguson*, *Conan*, has a Comedy Central half hour special and was a top five finalist on *Last Comic Standing* where one judge claimed, "My first impression of Michael was a great likability. Michael's optimism continues in the new National Lampoon series on YouTube, *The Bright Side*, where he takes a positive stance on a negative topic. Consistently writing and performing, Michael released both a new album, *The Internet Live*, through 800 Pound Gorilla and a new stand-up special called *1984* on the Dry Bar app this summer. Visit [www.michaelpalascak.com](http://www.michaelpalascak.com) for more information.

**HAYWOOD TURNIPSEED JR.** During the day Haywood Turnipseed Jr. is a Husband, a Dad, a Telephone Man, and a Jedi; at night he becomes a Stand-Up Comic, and occasionally a Sith Lord. Haywood likes both Michael Jackson's & Prince's Music; Hip-Hop; The Pittsburgh Steelers Football Team; Mambo Sauce on chicken wings; and Laughing. Originally from the Holy Land of Indiana, Haywood graduated from high school in Moon Township, PA., attended two semesters at Waynesburg College, then enlisted in the US Air Force.

**EDDIE MORRISON** is a D.C. native who has performed stand-up comedy all over the metro area. His career includes appearances include the DC Improv, the Kennedy Center, the Comedy Store and Magooby's Jokehouse, where he was named runner-up at the 2015 New Comedian of the Year Competition. Eddie won Comedy Kumite 15.2 at the DC Improv in spring 2018 and Kumite 30 in spring 2021.

## TICKETS

\$35 in advance  
\$45 at the door (cash and check only)  
\$25 for CAASA members and students 13-18

Available for purchase at (cash and check only):  
CAASA Office  
Prince Frederick  
Floral Expressions Owings

Tickets may also be purchased online at:  
[CAASAComedyInvasion2024.eventbrite.com](http://CAASAComedyInvasion2024.eventbrite.com)



For more information, contact the Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse at 410-535-3733.

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# Chesapeake Beach Utility Fee Hikes Pondered

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Chesapeake Beach Town Council is considering a staff proposal for utility fee increases beginning July 1. The proposal reflects the need to overcome a \$1 million projected revenue shortfall with an increase in the fixed quarterly sewer fee from \$50 to \$100 and an almost 50 percent increase in the variable water rates based on usage.

Town Treasurer Brittany Moran explained at the March 12 town council work session, "Last year in the FY '24 budget process, we went through a lot of discussion on the rate structure and kind of clarified some information for town council, but also for the public. We had some public outreach as well to just to answer a few questions before we go into the budget." She said the utility fund has historically been supplemented from the general fund in place of user fees.

But she said the utility fund is "an enterprise fund meaning that the user fee should support all costs for the fund. And when this does not happen, the general taxpayers are forced to support the fund. This creates a problem for numerous reasons, but in one important reason would be that

a self-supporting fund is required for any loans or qualifying for grant funding, if we should need this for major infrastructure down the line."

Mayor Pat Mahoney observed that even with the proposed increases Chesapeake Beach rates were significantly lower than North Beach and Calvert County.

The proposal for the fixed charge increase from \$50 to \$100 was questioned by several council members, including Valerie Beaudin, who said it didn't encourage water conservation. She instead suggested looking at increasing the variable charges or reducing the fixed rate increase.

Beaudin expressed two concerns, "I think where I have an issue with the budget is really nothing with the numbers that you've done or any of the work is that there's no incentive in my opinion for conservation in this because everything is a fixed fee or at least three percent is variable and 97 percent is fixed. I think that's something that I fundamentally disagree with. I just do. I think we need to encourage people to conserve. And when you encourage people to conserve, one way to do that is to have them save money and show them how they could do that by using less water. But this budget

doesn't allow for any of that."

She added her concern about "how this affects our lower income and our retirees and those people that are living in one of the old cottages versus living in one of the new subdivisions."

Mahoney observed that others, such as families, could be negatively impacted by having the user fees increased in place of the fixed charge.

Town Administrator Holly Wahl said, "This is not necessarily just predictions from Brittany, these are real numbers. So, 97 percent of our costs are fixed costs. That's real. It's not predicted. And so, what she's conveying is that our variable costs, on the other hand, are difficult to capture. So, we have things in the field operationally that cause issues with variable calculations including we have meter issues often."

The fixed fees, she said, ensure the monies will come in to cover costs. The variable charges, on the other hand, could be less based on water conservation, meaning those monies budgeted may not materialize, leaving a shortfall.

The council asked Moran to come up with some revenue projections for increasing the variable charges in the various usage tiers.



Chesapeake Beach Town Council member Valerie Beaudin

The council will further discuss the issue at later work sessions or during full council meetings.

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# New Non-Profit Hires Its First Executive Director

## C4 Addresses Historical Racism, Economic Inequality

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

A new Calvert County non-profit organization has hired its first executive director. Michelle Crosby has become the first staff person of Calvert Concept Charitable Corporation (C4), which according to a press release is focused on “righting the wrongs of institutional and social injustices amongst descendants of enslaved people, Native Americans and public servants in Calvert County, Maryland.”

Kip Atlee, chairman of the Board of Directors of C4 said, “Our national search presented us with many well-qualified candidates, but Ms. Crosby was clearly the leading candidate, combining an understanding of the complexities involved with sensitivity to the goals of our organization.”

The press release said of Crosby, “In addition to being a Karoly Polanyi Award winner, (she) is a distinguished researcher, adviser, and educator who has had a profound impact on global education, instructional design and evaluation. With a rich academic background from George Washington University and American University, and a PhD in progress in Sociology focusing on Economic Sociology (ABD) in progress with Corvinus University of Budapest, Ms. Crosby’s expertise includes an understanding of international science and technology policy, as well as international studies.”

“Most recently, at the helm of Crosby Consulting & Associates, Crosby has served as an independent evaluator, leveraging her expertise to conduct evaluations of complex programs, ensuring their positive impact on target communities. Her tenure at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and her service delivery in the Middle East and Northern Africa, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, underscore her commitment to capacity building, and strategic planning,” the press release said.

Crosby explained to The County Times why the position intrigued her. She said,

“My background is in international development, and I’ve been working in that sphere for about a decade. And to be honest, when I returned back here, because I’m originally from the area, I’m from southern Anne Arundel County, from Harwood, I had really intended on kind of leaving that development concept behind. I’ve been working in war zones, and I hadn’t really expected to see that kind of, let’s say humanitarian crisis, right here in my old home in Maryland. So, what really appealed to me about the C4 was that the board and the community, which supports the organization, is to me an example of collective actions. So, community, civil society coming together to collectively address historical racism and economic inequality here in Calvert County.”

She added, “This aligns a lot with my background as an academic as well, because I’ve worked a lot on inequalities, but mostly in the household realm. So, the home sphere, and especially on unpaid labor. So, to find a situation where there’s very clear material deprivation of our own people of Americans right in Calvert County. I don’t need to go to a war zone to see that and to see an organization that has recognized this, has motivated the community to address this collectively, it was more than an honor and a privilege to be a part of that kind of organization.”

Crosby talked about how C4 works. She explained, “I come from a capacity development background, and that’s about individual capacity development, and that is really the program of C4. It is a three-year program that is essentially a mentoring program. So, when you’re accepted into the program, you receive a liaison, and that liaison helps you with improving your personal financial planning and budgeting. And you’ve probably done financial planning and budgeting yourself, and anybody who does that knows that you kind of get to a point where you realize, I might need a different kind of job to meet my personal goals for budgeting and planning. So, we also help them improve their skills to seek other employment options that would assist them with their personal goals.

And the most unique thing about the organization is what we call D2, or dollar to dollar savings matching for a home or business. So, this year, in 2024, C4 is going to match participant savings up to \$3,000 per year. If we have more funding, we can match that at a higher rate. But right now it’s \$3,000 for three years of matching funds. And after you complete the program, the participants receive those matched funds plus the interest that they can put towards the down payment for a home or a business.”

The mentors are volunteers, she explained, and for now she’s the only paid employee. “I love it. To find this level of clear direction towards remedying historical racism in a place where I consider to be my home.”

Looking to the future, before expanding outside the county, she said, “Basically we were incorporated as a 501-C-3 only last year. And so, we’ve been at it for about six months. So, we want to make sure that we’re getting it right locally. The more partners that become interested in the organization, they say to us all the time, I really wish this was available in St. Mary’s County. I really wish it was available on the entire bay side of Maryland. But we want to make sure that we’re focusing right now on Calvert County and its residents and getting it right locally first, and then scaling up once it’s obvious that our model is really tight and working the way that we want it to.”

The organization is renting space at All Saints Episcopal Church in Sunderland. But the press release announcing Crosby’s hiring says, “C4’s programs include the development of a \$10 million campus where eligible descendants of enslaved people and Native Americans of Calvert County can live for up to three years while qualifying to purchase a home or business. This campus will also be available for other persons who have faced social and financial injustices such as teachers, hospital workers, and public servants.”

Of C4’s core mission of addressing historical racism, she said, “We do that to remedy past systemic racism and eco-



C4 Executive Director Michelle Crosby

omic disparities. And that’s primarily for descendants of formerly enslaved people, including Native Americans. But this also includes public servants. So, the nurse who is working here has to travel three hours a day because she can’t afford to live in our county. And right now, this category also includes seniors who have devastated their savings and caring for the children of parents who have died as a result of the opioid epidemic in Calvert County as well.”

The genesis of the formation of the organization came from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and especially All Saints Parish, Crosby said. She explained, “You’ve heard of this concept of the Trail of Souls, which really was an example of community, civil society coming together to reconcile.”

In the early days of her tenure, she will be focusing on securing corporate donors for their programs. Anyone interested in helping can do so on their website [www.C4housing.org](http://www.C4housing.org)

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# Staff Recommended Budget Set for Public Hearing

## State Education Funding Cut Still Unresolved

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on March 12 got their first look at a \$377.7 million Staff Recommended Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget that is \$3 million less than the current approved budget and uses "\$28.1 million from Prior Year Fund Balance due to expenditure surpassing revenue projections," according to County Administrator Mark Willis.

"The budget is tough. I mean, money is tight. We've looked at about everything that you can look at," Willis reported. The biggest budget challenge is getting the state to overturn its proposed \$22.5 million cut in education funding. St. Mary's is experiencing a small cut, but Calvert is by far getting the biggest hit. The county is speaking to everybody they can at the state level, so far unsuccessfully, to try to get a reversal.

Willis explained, "The (Cove Point) liquid natural gas payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) adjustment matured into a tax credit. And the Constellation power plant PILOT expired. The State Department of Assessments and Taxation included the assessed values of these plants in the county's wealth. I think what didn't happen is they didn't account for any discount that was

provided to entice these businesses into the state or into Calvert County to begin with. And we're taking that up at the state level for sure."

Commissioner Mike Hart ranted against the state decision. He observed that Prince George's County schools are getting \$57 million more from the state while Calvert is being cut.

Hart observed that the county took on a project that was controversial. "I think if they would've went to the folks and all these other jurisdictions and said, Hey, this is what we're going to do to you, and then five or six years later we're just going to take half the money back, I wonder how many jurisdictions would've went for that. I mean, I think it's disgraceful."

Hart added, "We just seem like easy pickens. We just seem like who's going to stand up and say anything? We're 90,000 people."

"It's really a shame that the people that do this don't have the courtesy to come here and tell us in person and tell the people that live here why their children and teachers aren't as important," Hart said.

Hart opined, "You can't find a politician to not say he doesn't care about kids and care about education. Do you see it? Because I don't. I see a \$22 million cut at a time when you're supposed to be putting money into education. The Blueprint is all we've heard,

about how much time and money was spent on Blueprint and how this is going to take Maryland to one of the top of the school systems. Not only do you not fund it, but then you've cut on top of it. Because we had the audacity to open up a liquid natural gas facility that Baltimore didn't want (and) on a single lane road."

Willis pointed out that the flat budget really was more than that. "The caveat is there's no such thing as a flat line budget. The reason for that is when you go into a contractual agreement, there's always an escalator in that agreement, in that contract. So, you will have increases in the budget, whether you add staff, add vehicles, add salary, you're still going to have a slight budget increase."

The school board still has not finalized their portion of the Staff Recommended Budget. That is expected to occur at their March 14 meeting.

The public hearing on the Staff Recommended Budget is scheduled for March 19 at 7 p.m. in the commissioners' hearing room. After that the commissioners will put their stamp on the budget and will hold a public hearing on that in May.

For the March 19 hearing, the public may dial in by phone (audio only) to participate remotely:

Toll-free: 301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 899 4188 8251



County Administrator Mark Willis

Passcode (if asked): #

To provide public comment: \*9

The FY 2025 Staff Recommended Budget document will be made available for public viewing in advance of the hearing at [www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/PublicHearings](http://www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/PublicHearings). Hard copies will be available at the public libraries or by contacting the Department of Finance & Budget at 410-535-1600, ext. 2441, or Dawn.Wood@calvertcountymd.gov.

[dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)

# Chesapeake Ranch Estates Tax District Approved

## Each Lot Owner Assessed for Roads

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved, on a 4-1 vote, another Special Taxing District (STD) for the Property Owners Association of Chesapeake Ranch Estates (POACRE) for roads for the next five years at \$275 annually for each property owner. Commissioner Mike Hart, who grew up in the subdivision, voted against it.

The vote came after a March 12 public hearing at the Southern Community Center at which 35 people spoke, of which more than two-thirds were in support of the STD.

Jeff Howard spoke in opposition. He said, "The question here is we pay annually a road fee in our dues. So why are they continually asking us for more and more money?" He noted POACRE's engineer said, "inflation is going up. But what's not going up are paychecks. So, the question is how are we going to afford this STD if it gets passed. A lot of people live well, but a lot of people live paycheck to paycheck."

But Dorothy Lusby said, "I am in favor of the special tax district. A community needs good roads to provide safe travel for deliverers, for homeowners to get to and

from work and wherever they need to go. It also protects your property value, and it also provides good storm drainage as you're traveling along the road. I've lived in this community for 42 years and I've seen a lot of changes on the roads. When I first moved in the roads were done by somebody else. And we had humongous potholes in the few paved streets. We had lots of dusty roads, and it was not well maintained. Today, it's ever so much better."

Hart said, "I know it's not popular to everybody. What I'm saying is I just believe 20 years from now, you'll still be in this room, and you'll still be divided. I think it'll be four more times for 20 years, just because I've watched it over and over and over again. And I've asked to please come up with another solution because I just don't see light at the end of the tunnel."

A similar petition was turned down by the BOCC last year, saying they needed more information.

Earlier in the day, County Attorney John Norris gave a briefing to the BOCC on the POACRE petition. He said, "The sixth special tax district expires on June 30th, 2024. The Board of Directors of the Property Owners Association of Chesapeake Ranch Estates have submitted the enclosed peti-

tion requesting that the county assist them in raising funds for community infrastructure by assessing a special tax on all properties in the Chesapeake Ranch community in the amount of \$275 per lot per year for the next five years."

He added, "They say they need a special tax district because they have minimal money in their homeowner's association. They maintain improvements made with special tax district proceeds that have already been applied to the community and continue to make improvements to infrastructure. They were originally conceived as a private neighborhood with controlled access entrances and private roads. We know that has transitioned to the point where the roads are semi-public, but still privately owned. That is the public is allowed to transverse those roads to school buses, mail service, those UPS and FedEx all use these roads. There are 63 miles of private roads. There are 11,000 residents. There's 5,500 lots and 4,100 homes. Money collected from the special tax district has been spent only on roadway improvements and all revenue received and expenditure of money from the special tax district are audited at POACRE expense."

The STD is expected to generate \$1.2



Commissioner Mike Hart

million annually.

Norris said the slopes and right-of-way widths make it impossible for the county to take over the roads, thus necessitating their maintenance by the homeowner's association.

[dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)

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“...I JUST DON’T SEE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.”

COMMISSIONER MIKE HART ON POACRE TAX DISTRICTS.



**LOCAL 3**  
Ranch Club tax district approved



**LOCAL 5**  
New non-profit takes aim at historical racism, economic inequality



**ON THE COVER 6**  
Bald Eagle trapped after vehicle collision released by animal control, sheriff’s office

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, MAR 14</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 74° Lo: 58°	<b>FRI, MAR 15</b>  PM Showers Hi: 74° Lo: 48°	<b>SAT, MAR 16</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 60° Lo: 46°	<b>SUN, MAR 17</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 63° Lo: 41°
<b>MON, MAR 18</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 52° Lo: 34°	<b>TUE, MAR 19</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 36°	<b>WED, MAR 20</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 49° Lo: 37°	<b>THU, MAR 21</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 57° Lo: 43°

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THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024

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District Approved**



# TRAPPED EAGLE RESCUED, RELEASED