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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4	CALENDAR	8
LETTERS	7		

“WE’VE SEEN POLITICIANS HAVE ZERO CONTROL OF THEMSELVES WITH PUTTING OUT SIGNS.”
 COMMISSIONER MIKE HART ON POLITICAL ADVERTISING



LOCAL 5
 Rally planned to fight school disruptions



ON THE COVER
 Schools Budget Asks for Major Increase



LOCAL 6
 Political signs nixed from parks and recreation policy

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 2	FRI, FEB 3	SAT, FEB 4	SUN, FEB 5
 Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 31°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 34° Lo: 17°	 Sunny Hi: 32° Lo: 28°	 Cloudy Hi: 51° Lo: 37°
MON, FEB 6	TUE, FEB 7	WED, FEB 8	THU, FEB 9
 Mostly Sunny Hi: 50° Lo: 34°	 Cloudy Hi: 55° Lo: 47°	 Showers Hi: 58° Lo: 43°	 Showers Hi: 53° Lo: 42°

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Townsel Proposes His First Budget

Seeks \$22.4 Million More From County



Dr. Andrae Townsel

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Calvert County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Andrae Townsel presented his first budget Jan. 26 at a school board meeting. The \$271.3 million proposed budget is also the first to show the fiscal impact of The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the state's education reform initiative. Known simply as the Blueprint, Townsel says its implementation in the next fiscal year will cost almost \$10 million.

"The tomorrow that we were all concerned about yesterday is today. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is here," Townsel reported.

It'll be a sticker shock for the county commissioners who'll be asked to bear the brunt of the Blueprint's impact. Townsel described it as "a larger than usual amount of budget support from Calvert County," which the county could consider an understatement since he is asking for \$22.4 million more in local funding, a 15.9 percent increase. Total budget increase is 10.1 percent.

One big unknown is what new Gov. Wes Moore and the legislature, which is now in session, will do about state fund-

ing. And Townsel noted, "Various Blueprint requirements are still being disseminated and clarified, and corresponding cost estimates are being updated as new information arrives."

Townsel used a sailing analogy to describe the Blueprint's impact. "There are 24 school districts in the state of Maryland. All of us are in our own sailboat, and it's not the blowing of the wind that determines the direction of Calvert County Public Schools. It's the set of the sail. The same wind blows on us all, the wind of the Blueprint, the wind of early childhood education, the wind of high quality and diverse teachers and leaders, the wind of college and career readiness, the wind of resources for student success, the wind for governance and accountability. The same wind blows on us

all. In Calvert County, it's the political wind, the academic achievement wind, the discipline wind, the learning loss due to the pandemic wind. The same wind blows on everybody. The difference is where we arrive in three years, five years, and 10 years. The difference in arrival is not the blowing of the wind, but the set of the sail."

The proposed budget includes 56.4 new positions, of which 28.2 are grant funded. New positions include three additional school safety advocates, so every middle school has one. Board member Lisa Grenis said she will also advocate for one in every elementary school.

Blueprint changes for students in the budget, he said, are:

- Advanced placement testing
- Career and college readiness costs
- CTE certification of students
- Dual enrollment costs for students
- Pre-K from half day to full day for 4-year-old students

Changes for staff are:

- Teachers must receive a 10 percent salary increase from FY20 to FY24
- Minimum teacher salary must be at least \$60,000 by July 1, 2026
- Career ladder for teachers

- National Board Certification track and salary impact
- Pre-K from half day to full day for 4-year-old students

Teachers will get:

- One step advance
- One percent salary increase previously negotiated
- 5.5 percent salary increase (2.75 percent at beginning of school year and 2.75 percent in March 2024) to meet Blueprint requirement of 10 percent by June 30, 2024.

Support staff will get the step and one percent and "wage and salary increase comparable, by employee group, to teachers' pay increase."

The support staff still are not satisfied, alleging unequal treatment with the teachers. The school board faced a sea of blue shirts in the audience in a show of solidarity for the support staff. During the public hearing portion of the budget session, Joseph Cormier of Ownigs said, "CCPS is the largest employer in Calvert County. So when the commissioners complain that we take so much of their budget, it's because we are so much of their budget. I know that I come to the building every day and I see staff support and nurture these children. And while the Blueprint currently only mandates a raise and a career ladder for teachers, our support staff deserve the same, special-

ists like occupational therapists, physical therapists, adaptive speech and language. They all have certifications, but they're not part of that career ladder. Don't they deserve the same respect and support?"

Stacy Tayman, president of the support staff union, used active shooter training as an example of uneven treatment. "Support staff are hourly employees who are paid the exact hours they worked. We're non-exempt. When trainings are held outside of the contract day, those hours must be paid. Support staff were told that they could volunteer to stay that would actually violate CCPS policy or they would not be included in the training. Active shooter training!"

Board members Grenis and Dawn Balinski pledged support for the support staff. And board President Inez Claggett concurred. She said, "I am human. I feel you. I know that you have been fighting for years to be considered equal and to feel valued. I know this, and I will continue to fight along with you. I'm fully prepared to join my colleagues to visit the county commissioners to request full funding for our budget, to ensure that we can provide you the increase that is comparable to what we are giving our teachers."

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Post on Discipline: 'How Did We Get Here?'

White: 'The Kids are Watching What We're Doing'



Antoine White

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A rally has been scheduled for before the Feb. 23 Calvert County Board of Education meeting. According to Maryland State Director for the Power2Parent Union Maryland Melissa Goshorn, it is "an effort organized by parents, students, teachers/support staff, and community members in Calvert. The goal of the rally organizers is to empower and give a voice to our children who cannot get the change public schools so desperately need by themselves. The organizers have seen the disruption these extreme behaviors in schools have caused, and the harmful effects to their own children." The rally will start at 5:45 p.m. before the 7 p.m. meeting.

The announcement of the rally came after another discipline horror story was relayed to the school board at their Jan. 26 meeting by instructional assistant (IA) Sonya DeGuzman.

She reported, "We recently had an



Jana Post

event to where a second grader held his entire classroom hostage by locking the door and barricading it with his body. His teacher could not put her hands on him, and during the time that it took us to get a master key and to get in the room, the other children heard him spewing profanities, threatening to stab his teacher to death and to go home and kill himself. Once we got into the room and we got it evacuated, he started throwing chairs and before I could get there, I saw him chase my co-worker across the room with a workbook...and beat her across her back and down her ribs.

"And you know what he got for that? He got lunch detention and a referral, and he was brought back into the classroom 30 minutes later with the teacher that he threatened to stab, all of the classmates that he held hostage and with the IA that he beat with a workbook.

"Now, if this had happened in her home, her spouse would have been charged with domestic violence and removed from the home. If it had hap-

pened in Walmart, the person who attacked her would've been charged and there would've been legal paperwork that that person would not have been allowed to come near her. This happens in our schools every day."

New school board member Jana Post, after hearing the story, asked, "I need to understand how we got here, because I grew up in this county. My kids go to school in this county. I went to school in this county. What happened that everyone is unhappy. What happened that everyone is so overworked? What happened that the discipline and the behaviors are out of control? How did we get here?"

She added, "Did we cut teachers? Did we cut our educational support professionals as a means of balancing a budget in previous years? Is that what happened? Is it a matter of what's coming down from the state and the things that we're kind of being forced to do in terms of curriculum, in terms of disciplinary action. What's happening here?"

Post said, "I also think that we've kind of lost sight of how important a parent's role is. And, while we may have some limitations on what we could do, for lack of a better word, to punish a student, because I don't really think that's the greatest word, but there is nothing that prohibits us from making sure that the parents are involved when we can. So, I think that we have to be very proactive. And I think generally speaking, we have not been proactive. We are very reactive."

School board Vice President Antoine White said, "We have to look at our culture. It's changing. I'm a basketball official (27 years), and for me, and for my colleagues, we can be out on a basketball

court. We go through years of training. We take tests every year. We have rules interpreters. So, we have all this knowledge, and it's usually three of us on the court. But that doesn't stop someone 60 feet away from yelling something that they think is right. Not comparing officials to teachers, but when you have teachers, educators, and professionals making decisions, I would tend to believe and listen to them."

White added, "We can all have our own opinions, but when you're yelling something because you feel that you have the right to yell and scream about something that you don't even know the rules of, it makes it tough. Or, when someone has a question, and you offer them the direct person to talk to. If you ask me a question and I don't know, and I say, this is the person for you to contact, and you choose not to, you don't really want to know. You just want to stay in whatever thinking or mindset you have."

White cited the recent election. "That was a horrible time to live in Calvert County. I have friends in other states, man, what is going on there with the signs, the billboard, the madness that's going on. So when we're wondering why we are where we are here, look at what's going on. Look at some of these Facebook posts. Look at yourselves. Look at the way that you interact with people. Kids are watching. They're seeing how easy it is for you to be nasty."

"And we wonder why. It's because we're adults. The kids are watching what we're doing," he added.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Public Safety Capital Budget Presented

Includes New St. Leonard, Solomons firehouses

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Calvert County Public Safety Department includes new firehouses for St. Leonard and Solomons, a replacement fire and rescue boat for Solomons and planning for a new Public Safety Building. The proposed \$67.5 million capital budget was presented Jan. 31 to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The board is working its way through department capital programs and no decisions were made on the public safety CIP.

The Solomons boat is included in next year's CIP, as is design for the new St. Leonard firehouse, whose construction is scheduled to begin the following year. The Solomons firehouse is scheduled for design in FY 2026 with construction the next year.

Price tag for St. Leonard is \$22.3 million and \$23 million for Solomons.

The \$1.4 million price tag for the new Solomons boat elicited the most comment. The BOCC was told that was a placeholder for a boat similar to the one now in North Beach. Bur Solomons Assistant Chief Joe Ford said they probably wouldn't need to be quite that big. "We have a lot of smaller tributaries of getting in and out of. So we're probably looking at something in probably the 30- to 32-foot range," he said.

Solomons current boat is 29 years old.

The proposed CIP for the next fiscal year is a little over \$6 million and includes \$1.4 million for career EMS apparatus and \$3.2 million for volunteer fire, rescue, EMS apparatus. But the mix of those two might change, the BOCC was told, as the career EMS component increases.

Career EMS Division Chief Kenneth

Miller said, "We're finding a need that county employees should be staffing county apparatus. And we're running into that significantly."

Commissioner President Buddy Hance said, "Just to me it doesn't make sense that we would continue to replace the volunteer units if we're putting paid units in. So, I guess we'll have to have that discussion." It was agreed to set up a special meeting to do that.

The proposed new Public Safety Building is in its design phase for FY 2028, with no construction monies in the six-year plan.

The commissioners reviewed the schools' CIP last week and have public facilities scheduled for their next session.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



Public Safety Director Jacqueline Vaughn retired on Jan. 8 after 42 years in county government. She was honored with a proclamation on Jan. 31.

Parks and Recreation Ad Policy Adopted

Would Ban Political Advertising



Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Nazzal

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has adopted a “revenue enhancement policy” for the

Department of Parks and Recreation that allows advertising at events and in their literature. But during a presentation of the proposal by Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Nazzal and Recreation Division Chief Nate Smith, the commissioners decided not to allow any political advertising with the new policy.

Commissioner President Buddy Hance introduced the concern. He asked County Attorney John Norris, “We’ve had this discussion before and there was some concern about the ability to control the advertisements that may be solicited. Is that still true?”

Norris replied, “I would say that there is some control that the county can exercise. When it comes to political speech and other forms of protected speech, that’s less true. But we’re creating a commercial enterprise and it is one that is going to be for financial gain for the county and be less viewed as a public forum where freedom of speech would be allowed without charge.”

Hance said, “There was an issue with a billboard in Calvert County that had messaging that people didn’t seem ap-

propriate,” adding, “If someone calls them and wants to put that message on a fence at a ballpark, can we control that?”

Norris responded, “Yes. The issue we had there was the only way of regulating that billboard on private property that was privately owned was through zoning regulation. In this venture, we will be as an advertising company, providing space and have more authority to regulate on that ballfield fence.”

Hance wanted to know who was going to make the determination. Nazzal said, “We have within the policy different items that would be prohibited, and that includes tobacco or vaping products, alcoholic beverages, demeaning or disparaging words about individual groups on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity expression, pregnancy, age, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, profanity, violence or the image or description of graphic violence or the depiction of weapons or other implements or devices associated with acts of violence or harm to people in animals, provocation or incitement of violence.”

Commissioner VP Mike Hart said on political advertising, “The concern I have is well this one did it, I have to do it. So, we’ve seen politicians have zero

control of themselves with putting out signs. Everywhere and anywhere.”

In the end, the BOCC agreed to go along with the staff’s recommendation, but with the banning of political advertising, along with Commissioner Mark Cox’s motion that “the expenditure of the revenue is set forth into the department’s budget approved by the board and that agreements contain a termination without cause clause, allowing prompt termination by the county.”

Before the unanimous vote, Hart expressed concern about the proliferation of signs for one business at a park. Nazzal said, “That’s not the intent of this at all. Now it doesn’t specifically prohibit that at this point, but that would be a program as a part of this policy.” She said it was not her intent to “sign up” parks, but to be more selective.

Smith explained by way of introducing the topic that the reason for the revenue enhancement policy was to “develop and implement market-based approaches for generating incremental revenue and offsetting operating costs, while improving services and increasing public satisfaction and enjoyment of services with reduced taxpayer subsidization.”

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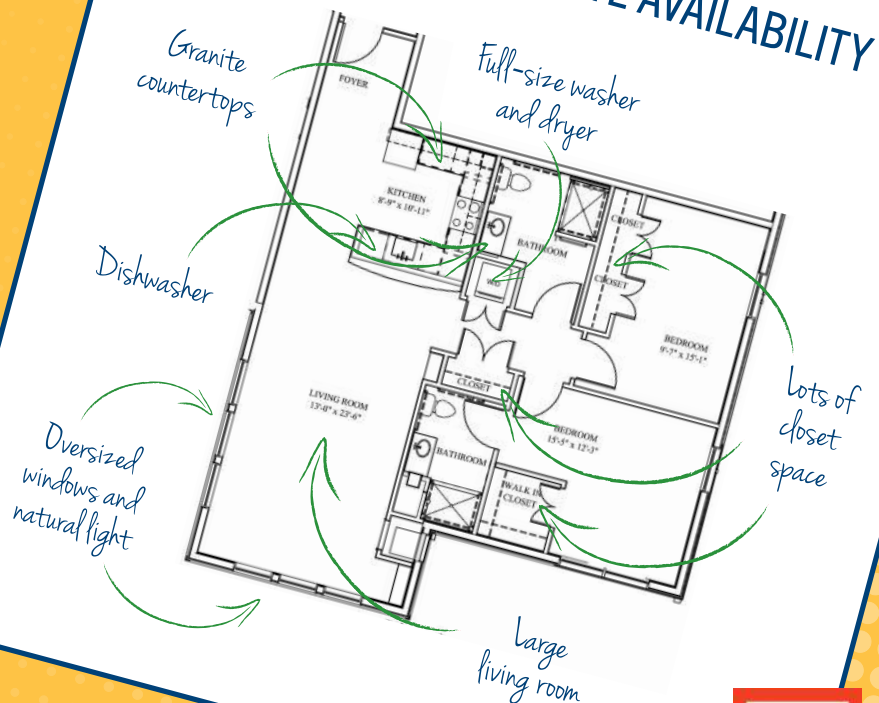
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Letters to the Editor

Maryland residents, are you aware that there are case laws on the books that allow and even promote corruption of all Maryland Elected Officials? Members of the nonprofit known as Calvert Citizens United, Inc., found this out first hand, last week, when we received The Maryland Supreme Court's ruling on our lawsuit against the Calvert County Commissioners (BOCC). (Dzurec vs BOCC)

The case stems from what Calvert citizens perceived as the illegal passage of the County's Comprehensive Plan. During the final moments of the BOCC's 8/06/19 discussion and ratification of the 20 Year Comprehensive Plan, Commissioner Hart made a motion, which was seconded by then Commissioner McConkey, to expand a Town Center to include McConkey's 5 1/2 acres of personal property. Shortly thereafter, Commissioner McConkey proceeded to cast the deciding vote to adopt the Plan. The upgrading of his property's designation, once the zoning was updated, would potentially allow for a negotiated commercial contract estimated value to be upwards of \$4million.

Outraged citizens filed numerous complaints with the County's Ethics Commission which eventually ruled that Commissioner McConkey did in fact violate the Ethics Code regarding Conflict of Interest.

In an outlandish turn of events McConkey sued the Ethics Chairperson, on numerous issues including conflict of interest, in an effort to make her recuse herself thus eliminating the Commission's quorum and stall his case from proceeding. As a result of multiple twists and turns, the case ended up in Maryland's Court of Special Appeals. (In the Matter of Kelly McConkey) The three judge panel found that McConkey committed a "Classic Case of Conflict of Interest" when he voted his own property into the Town Center and in the end, his lawsuit against the Ethic Chair failed completely. Subsequently, McConkey's request for a Writ of Certiorari was denied and dismissed by The Maryland Supreme Court.

Sadly, based on two Md. case laws, dating back to the late 1980's, known as Sugarloaf and Kenwood Gardens, the Supreme Court's hands were tied and they had to uphold the right of elected officials to vote on pieces of legislation that contained the conflict of interest. The 7 justices stated that the Judicial Branch does not have jurisdiction over the Legislative Branch where ethics is concerned.

So there you have it. The Legislators' system upholds the right, of all elected legislator, to use their office for the purpose of self-enrichment under Sugarloaf and Kenwood case law.

Amazingly, there are little to no consequences for our elected officials as it relates to unethical behavior and voting standards by Maryland's Legislators. However, the citizens still hold the power to vote these lawmakers out of office.

The Calvert County Code of Ethics Statement of Purpose states in part:

A.

"The County, recognizing that our system of representative government is dependent in part upon the people having trust and confidence in their elected officials, appointed officials and employees, finds and declares that the people have a right to be assured that the impartiality and independent judgment of its elected officials, appointed officials and employees will be maintained.

B.

This confidence and trust is eroded when the conduct of County business is subject to improper influence or even the appearance of improper influence."

Legislators, how can the citizens of our county and state possibly have trust and confidence in YOU, our elected officials, while laws such as Sugarloaf and Kenwood Gardens continues to be the law of the land and egregiously contradict the Ethics Code? We call on you to make the necessary changes in the law to help restore the citizens' trust.

Susan Dzurec
V.P., Calvert Citizens United, Inc.

County Prevails in Comp Plan Suit State Supreme Court Issues Ruling

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The state's highest court, now known as the Supreme Court of Maryland, has ruled in favor of the Calvert County Commissioners and the county, defendants in a suit brought by four citizens seeking to overturn the 2019 adoption of the rewrite of the county comprehensive plan. The plaintiffs, Susan Dzurec, Myra Gowans, Michael King, and Phyllis Sherkus, contended that the plan was invalid because of former commissioner Kelly McConkey's vote to include properties he owns within the Huntingtown Town Center and then his subsequent vote on the overall plan, both on 3-2 votes.

The Calvert County Ethics Commission's determination that McConkey's vote violated the Ethics Ordinance was affirmed by the Supreme Court in December. But the court cited Maryland case law in ruling against setting aside the comprehensive plan.

The county had prevailed at both the circuit court and state appellate court levels, but the highest court agreed to hear the case.

In rendering a decision on Jan. 25, the court cited two cases, Sugarloaf Citizens Association, Inc. v. Gudis (a 1990 case) and Kenwood Gardens Condominiums, Inc. v. Whalen Properties, from 2016. Both cases were cited by John Mattingly, the county's attorney, in arguing their position.

The Supreme Court noted the appellate court decision in the county's favor. "It held that the Calvert County Ethics Code does not create an implied private right of action and that, under the common law, the Comprehensive Plan was not void because a conflict of interest does not make a legislative act ultra vires (illegal)." The high court agreed.

The court said, "There are no disputes of material fact present in this case. Rather, the parties' disagreement revolves solely around a question of law—whether Dzurec (how the case is identified) may seek relief in the form of a declaratory judgment invalidating the County Commissioners' legislative enactment of the Comprehensive Plan where a Commissioner's action in voting for the Plan violated the conflicts of interest provisions of the Calvert County Ethics Code."

In the Sugarloaf case from Montgomery County, a councilman voted while holding stock in the company involved. The court said, "We determined that the Montgomery County Code provision 'impermissibly attempts to vest in the court a nonjudicial power'."

The decision in that case said, "Courts cannot invalidate legislation 'because a

judge thinks that to void the legislation is in some fashion in the best interest of the public. To permit a court to act on that basis is to permit it to perform a nonjudicial function'."

The court carries that argument forward. "That sort of unguided discretion, involving, as it does, questions of policy and expediency, is legislative, not judicial, discretion."

The court added, "There is ordinarily no common law remedy that permits invalidation of legislative action because of a legislator's improper motivation."

The court concluded, "At bottom, Dzurec is seeking the same relief as the relief sought by the petitioners in Sugarloaf and Kenwood Gardens—a judicial declaration that the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan is void because one of the Commissioners may have been motivated by self-interest when casting his vote in favor. In Sugarloaf, we stated that courts 'usually do not' inquire into legislative motivation, and that there is 'ordinarily no common law remedy that permits invalidation of legislative action because of a legislator's motivation'."

It added, "Although we will not say that a court would never review a public official's motivation in matters involving legislative action, we determine that there is no reason to deviate from the general common law rule in this case, particularly given the separation of powers concerns that are the foundation of the common law principle."

The four plaintiffs are members of an advocacy group called Calvert Citizens United (CCU). Its President Myra Gowans, who was an unsuccessful county commissioner candidate in the Republican primary, told The County Times, "Clearly, Maryland citizens/voters must demand our legislators immediately repeal these two scandalous self-enriching, backroom money making, ethics conflicting state laws known as Sugarloaf and Kenwood. These legislative laws promote and protect every state and county legislator in order to dismiss their pledge to abide and uphold their Code of Ethics. Payments by lobbyists, voting to rezone one's own property and silent partnership interests are thoroughly permitted. Code of Ethics be damned! His summation before the seven Supreme Court Justices, Deputy County Attorney John Mattingly, overconfident with saturated smugness, stated, "Justices, it's all about the sausage, not what goes into making it."

The group has been raising money in the county to litigate their case. Dzurec said in a Facebook post that the suit cost \$115,000 in attorney fees.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

If you would like to submit a Letter to the Editor,
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County Times
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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Feb 2

Sea Squirts: "Who" is out at night? Owls

Calvert Marine Museum
10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 - 40 minutes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Cost is free with admission.

Fri, Feb 3

First Fossil Friday!

Calvert Marine Museum
1-4:30 p.m.

Fossil hunters, bring your fossil finds from the Calvert Cliffs or other local areas to be identified! This service is provided for free; however, admission fees apply for access to CMM exhibits.

Wed, Feb 8

Candy Gram Delivery

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Have a favorite professor or CSM staff member? Send them a candy gram for Valentine's Day! Order your candy gram by Feb. 8, and Student Life will deliver the candy grams Feb. 13. Learn more and order your candy gram at <https://www.csmd.edu/calendar/2023/02/candy-gram-13.html>

Thu, Feb 9

Sea Squirts: "Who" is out at night? Owls

Calvert Marine Museum
10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 - 40 minutes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Cost is free with admission.

Ongoing

FREE Quit Tobacco Classes

Calvert County Health Department
975 Solomons Island Road
Prince Frederick
Thursdays, 6-7 p.m.

Free classes to assist with quitting tobacco or vaping. through March 2. One hour a week for eight weeks. Medication aids are free if insurance doesn't pay. Group support is especially valuable. Registration required: email: jane.dodds@maryland.gov, call: 410-535-5400, ext. 359, or visit calvert.health.org

Mt. Hope Community Center Closure

Mt. Hope Community Center
104 Pushaw Station Rd, Sunderland
Through Thursday, Feb. 16

The Calvert County Department of Parks & Recreation advises citizens that the Mt. Hope Community Center will temporarily close on Thursday, Jan. 26 through Thursday, Feb. 16 for removal of the out-of-service communications tower. Normal hours of operation will resume Friday, Feb. 17, 2023.

For updates on Parks & Recreation services, park availability, field closures and more visit Parks & Recreation at www.Facebook.com/CalvertCountyParks

Upcoming

Annamarie After Hours, Opening Reception

Annamarie Sculpture Garden
February 10, 2023
5:00-7:00pm

For Breaking Ground: Art About the Earth and Narratives: Works by Sharon Robinson

Enjoy extended hours in the garden in celebration of the opening of two new exhibits. Both galleries in the Arts Building will be open until 7:00pm, along with the sculpture garden and walking trails. Enjoy live music, tour the new exhibit, take a walk, and appreciate an evening of art and nature. You'll find a cash bar and food truck as well. Admission is \$5/person; members free; reservations are not required, just come. visit www.annamariegarden.org or call 410-326-4640.

Southern Maryland Bluegrass concert series

Calvert Elks Lodge #2620
1015 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick
Sunday Feb.12, 2 p.m.

Featuring Lonesome River Band. Since its formation decades ago, Lonesome River Band continues its reputation as one of the most respected names in Bluegrass music. Five-time International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Banjo Player of the Year, and winner of the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass, Sammy Shelor leads the group that is constantly breaking new ground in acoustic music.

Tickets for each show will be available at the door for \$20 per person. Under twelve are admitted free with a paid adult. Food and beverages will be available for sale and there will be a 50/50 raffle as well as door prizes. The doors open at Noon and the shows will begin at 2 p.m. with the announcement of an upcoming surprise event. Information for each show can be found at www.somdbluegrass.com or by calling 301-737-3004.

Maritime Performance Series with Ash & Eric

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.

The married couple's new album Sure (May 2022) is "a tale of love... [with] some heartaches and a pinch of disputation along the way." Hailing from the gritty heart of New England, the two find consolation in discovering beauty in the challenges of life. Their warm harmonies, swirling acoustic guitars, and easy stage presence have earned them a dedicated following in the emerging US folk scene, performing with folk legends like Livingston Taylor, Mark Erelli and Vance Gilbert. Performance is in the museum's Harms Gallery starting at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. with beer and wine for sale. Tickets are \$20 online at bit.ly/MaritimeConcerts and \$25 at the door.

Universal Coprolite Day Celebration

Calvert Marine Museum, Monday, Feb. 20, 10 a.m.0 3 p.m.

Join us for the second annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as coprolites. Stations featuring fossilized feces and the stories they tell will be dispersed through our galleries. This year we will also feature coprolites in the making...modern feces, some with a twist. Included with museum admission.

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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 St. Mary's 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 St. Mary's County Times and its licensees may freely reproduce it in print, electronic or other forms. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of letters. The St. Mary's County Times cannot guarantee that every letter or photo(s) submitted will be published, due to time or space constraints.



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A View From The BLEACHERS



INTERCONNECTED AND INTERDEPENDENT

By Ronald N. Guy Jr.
Contributing Writer

Jan 2, 2023: Paycor Stadium in Cincinnati was electric. The Buffalo Bills had traveled from western New York to the chilly shores of the Ohio River for a pivotal late-season showdown with the Cincinnati Bengals. Both teams were jockeying for playoff seeding and figured, along with the Kansas City Chiefs, to be the prohibitive favorites to represent the AFC in the Super Bowl. The matchup was happening in prime time, on the venerable Monday Night Football, and before schools, work and life's hectic tempo had fully resumed from the holiday breather - it was the perfect night for football.

The game started as expected; the fervor somehow pumped out of the heart of the stadium, through television feeds and into the beings of every lucky football soul watching it. With Cincinnati leading 7-3 with just over six minutes remaining in the first quarter, Bengals QB Joe Burrow connected with WR Tee Higgins over the middle. As Higgins crossed midfield, he collided with and was tackled by Buffalo S Damar Hamlin.

It was an innocuous play. Television coverage panned to the crowd, then to Higgins as he walked back to the huddle. Play-by-play announcer Joe Buck casually noted that another Bills player was down. NFL fans are trained to listen for clues. A quick replay or joint being tended to by trainers can indicate the nature of an injury. Mention of a cart is bad news; lack of evident movement and immobilization measures are far worse. Hamlin's situation quickly moved beyond the imaginable football injuries. Within minutes an ambulance was the on field and CPR was being performed. Hamlin was in cardiac arrest.

In the weeks since, Hamlin has made a remarkable recovery, the latest feel-good evidence being his first public statement released last week via Instagram. And with his progress has come an opportunity to contemplate what happened that night, how Hamlin's life was saved and what else it says about the course of human existence.

The most obvious standing ovation goes to the medical personal at Paycor Stadium and the Cincinnati

and Buffalo hospitals who tended to Hamlin. Imagine running to a downed player's aid expecting to encounter a dislocated shoulder, a balky knee or a high ankle sprain - routine football stuff - and finding a player in cardiac arrest. To have the skill and poise to perform so exquisitely in those precious moments after Hamlin collapsed, and then to nurse him back to health in the weeks that followed... simply amazing.

Few, if any, have been in Hamlin's situation on that fateful Monday night. But roam this planet long enough and every one of us will face a health crisis - either personally or with a loved one. The odds of developing cancer alone in one's lifetime is roughly 40%. In those sobering moments, you are completely dependent on the talents of others. Where those medical experts hail from, the color of their skin, their gender identity - all the divisive, and sometimes hateful nonsense that infects humanity - is reduced to rubble.

Widen the aperture. Look around. The appliances in your house. The "phone" in your hand. The food on your table. The goods that efficiently move around the globe. The mail that gets picked up and delivered daily. The knowledge being conveyed in classrooms. The stuff - cars, HVAC units, leaky pipes - that gets repaired by tradesmen. The grocery shelves that are always stocked. The coffee and gas that is consistently available at convenience stores. How did these things get created? How did they get delivered? How is it all maintained?

The world: what an extraordinary machine.

There has been much rhetoric in recent years about the need for nationalism, for America to look inward, to end support for Ukraine, to build walls and to retreat into tribes, etc. and so forth. Worse, pre-existing prejudices have been preyed upon and weaponized to breed division and weaken our shared cause. The reality is we need each other. All of us. Doing our things. We are interconnected and interdependent - for the mundane, the underappreciated, the assumed and for desperate situations when a life hangs in the balance.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Feb 2

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue
8 p.m to 9 p.m

American Legion Post 221 invites all active duty personnel and veterans to join us for our monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00pm. Visit our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/American-Legion-Post-221-105239187962458/ or e-mail us at alpost221@aol.com. Call 301*848*9458 for more information. Tell them you saw the announcement on the SoMD Internet Calendar.

Sat, Feb.4

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
23421 Kingston Creek Rd.
California
8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Gentlemen, join us for the Men's Prayer Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall at Patuxent Presbyterian Church! This group meets the first Saturday every

month to share a meal, testimony or devotional, and prayer. This is an informal gathering for men of all ages. www.pax-pres.com.

Sun, Feb 5

Quarter Auction

Mechanicsville Moose Lodge
27636 Mechanicsville Rd
Mechanicsville
Noon to 4p.m.

Angels of Hope Quarter Auction to benefit Margaret Brent Middle School PTSO Doors open at Noon; Auction starts at 1pm. Come dressed anything Valentine's and get a free paddle when you purchase 2 for \$5. Food will be available for purchase.

Designer Purse Bingo

Mechanicsville VFD
28165 Hills Club Road
Mechanicsville
12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Doors open at 11:00 AM. Regular Games: 12:30 PM. Holder games will be played 12:00-12:30 PM.

Special auction items for Valentine's Day and the Super Bowl

To Benefit the Southern Maryland Boot Scooters and the 15U Southern Maryland Senators Baseball Team.

Come join us for an afternoon of bingo fun filled with chances to win designer purses, raffles, door prizes and more!

Food and beverages will be available for purchase

Mon, Feb 6

Dungeons & Dragons

Garvey Senior Activity Center
23630 Hayden Farm Ln
Leonardtwn
5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Cost: Free

Are you a fan of storytelling? Have you ever wanted to be a character in Lord of the Rings? Are you looking for something new to try out? Have you been playing D&D since the 70s and want a new group to adventure with? This might be just the thing! Join Pete Friesen, to learn about D&D and play a series of one-shot campaigns! D&D will be meeting on Mondays from 5-8 p.m. every Monday. For more information,

contact Peter Friesen at: elpasopete@hotmail.com.

Point Lookout Prison & Hospital

Leonardtwn Library
23630 Hayden Farm Ln
Leonardtwn
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Jonathan Beasley, St. Mary's County resident and historian, will give a presentation on Point Lookout Prison & Hospital during the Civil War. Event begins at 5:45 pm and is open to the public.

Sat, Feb 11

Contra Dance

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

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

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Why a Wedding Planner Can Be a Couple's Best Asset

The average cost of a wedding today is enough to make a sizable down payment on a home. According to The Knot's 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in the United States cost \$33,900 in 2019, though the price tag can vary widely from state to state. Though love may not cost a thing, weddings certainly do. One of the best ways to maximize wedding budgets and ensure that all that money is well spent is to enlist the services of a wedding planner. Wedding planners wear many hats, which underscores how valuable they can be.

Sounding board

An experienced wedding planner can help couples keep their worries at bay. Countless decisions must be made when planning a wedding, and some couples may feel as if they need to micromanage their nuptials. A wedding planner can take tasks off of couples' plates and serve as a sounding board as couples try to make the best decisions.

Financial guru

A wedding planner may help couples score insider deals and will know when a vendor's price is on target or inflated. That savvy saves couples money in the long run. Wedding planners also can advise on ways to save money and allocate funds so couples' biggest priorities get the financial

attention they deserve.

Problem solver

Wedding planners step in to save the day when hiccups threaten to derail plans. A planner will know what to do should a gown become torn or if a vendor fails to respond to calls on the day of the wedding. Removing some stressors allows couples to relax and more fully immerse themselves in their weddings.

Idea generator

Pulling together ideas from every corner requires a creative eye. Couples can rely on a professional wedding planner to help with brainstorming and putting different elements together. He or she likely has seen a vast array of celebrations and can make suggestions based on what's worked before.

Time saver

Wedding planners already have a bevy of industry contacts and can pull together wedding details in much less turnaround time than couples with no wedding planning experience.

Wedding planners are invaluable resources who wear multiple hats as they help couples plan the wedding of their dreams.

Stage Fright? Consider Private Vows

Weddings are very special occasions for two people who are in love. That's why many couples want close family and friends nearby when they tie the knot. But even the happiest couples may express some nervousness about one particular part of traditional wedding ceremonies.

Wedding vows are a way for couples to profess their love for each other. However, many couples who want to write their own vows are hesitant to say them aloud in front of an audience. If couples are intimidated by a heartfelt recital of their vows in front of a crowd, then exchanging vows in private may be for them.

Wedding planners and industry experts say that private vows have become very popular. While the vows do not replace the public exchange that seals the marriage from a legal standpoint, they can be words shared in a private moment before the actual ceremony itself. A quiet moment alone allows couples to shed private tears and share a special moment before they make haste for the altar.

The Knot, a premier wedding planning resource, notes that there are many reasons to share private vows.

- You do not like being in the spotlight or become shy in front of crowds.
- There are words you would like to share with your future spouse that are deeply private, and you don't want to express those feelings to every person at the wedding.
- You do not want to censor your thoughts or words.
- You desire an intimately private and personal moment together before all of the fanfare and rush of the wedding.
- You'd like to recite loving words in a native language that some guests may not understand.
- You desire the potential for some very great candid photos if you invite the photographer to be there at a distance.
- You want to create a lasting memory that is only yours as a couple to share.

The popularity of private vows exchanged before a wedding ceremony is growing. This growing trend provides yet another way for couples to personalize their weddings.

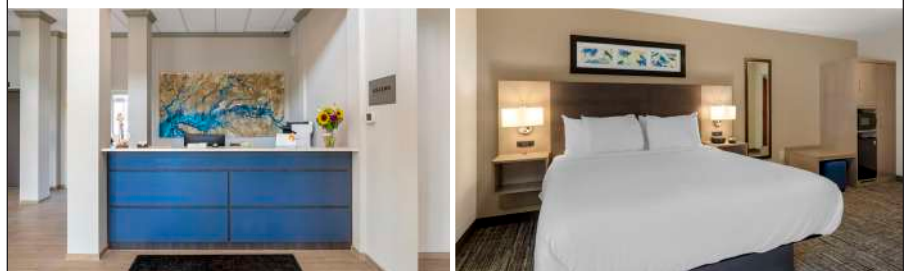
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Date: Sunday February 19th 2023
Time: Time 1:00 to 4:00
Where: The White Rose
Address: 21030 Point Lookout Road Callaway MD 20620

"Say Yes to the Venue and So Much More" 2023 Wedding Show will be held in the brand-new venue called The White Rose in Callaway MD. Attendees will be able to connect with vendors across the Tri-County area to plan your dream wedding in just one day. Gather ideas for the bigget day, talk to vendors, see setups, and get ideas. Also be there to see who wins the 2023 Wedding Package worth over \$21K.

Here are just a few of the vendors: Of Course The White Rose (Venue), Personalized Touch Catering, Dawn On The Chesapeake, LLC (Ceremony Location and Outdoor Venue), Jennifer Le Makeup (Hair and Makeup), Views/Sounds Media and Production, By The Sea Travel, LLC, Patuxent Transportation, The Inn at Leonardtown, Natalie Grace Photography, Elite Beatz Entertainment and many more!

Also be on site to find out who won the big Southern Maryland Love Story Contest (Contest <https://www.facebook.com/SOMDLoveStory>). Winner will be receiving \$21K in free wedding items.

Please sign up to be eligible for the Door Prices. Go to www.whiterosehall.com under the Event Tab and registration form attached.

How to Find the Right Reception Venue



Every decision engaged couples make in regard to their weddings is significant, but some may affect the day more than others. Perhaps no decision will help couples set the tone they hope to establish more than their choice of reception venue.

Reception venues are where couples and their guests will spend the vast majority of their time on the wedding day, which is why choice of venue bears such significance. With that in mind, couples can consider these tips as they look for the perfect place to host their receptions.

- **Decide what you want out of a venue.** Prospective brides and grooms may have vastly different ideas regarding how they want their weddings to go, and it's imperative that couples discuss their ideal weddings prior to looking for a venue. Do you want to get married in a place of worship? Or do you prefer a venue that can host both the ceremony and reception? Do you want an indoor, outdoor or hybrid ceremony and reception? Define what you both want before looking for a venue and make the nec-

essary concessions if you have different ideas in mind.

- **Consider picking a venue before setting a date.** It can be wise to pick a reception venue first and then choose your wedding date based on the availability of the venue. This is especially important for couples who already have an ideal venue in mind, and it also provides some flexibility as couples search for the venue. For example, couples working within a strict budget may not be able to afford a preferred venue during the height of wedding season, but that venue could be less costly during slower times of year. By waiting to pick a date until you've chosen a venue, you're increasing your options.

- **Consider your guests.** Though couples, particularly those footing the bill on their own, should prioritize their desires when choosing a reception, it's important they also consider their guests before making a final decision. A venue that's accessible and located near transit hubs like airports and train stations will increase the likelihood that more people can attend. In addition, if children will be invited, a venue that includes family restrooms, including at least one with a changing table, can make parents' nights much easier.

- **Consider your budget.** The Knot

2021 Real Weddings Study found that couples typically spend around 30 percent of their overall budget on the venue, which makes this decision the biggest one in terms of the financial commitments a couple will have to make. Couples may be tempted to choose an awe-inspiring, costly venue for their reception, but they should consider how devoting so much of their budget to the venue will affect the rest of their big day. The best reception venue might be one that won't eat up too much of your budget.

- **Consider the package.** Venues vary in terms of their reception packages. Some may offer catering, including beverages, with each of their packages, while food and beverage might not be part of other venues' offerings. If you find a venue you love but it doesn't offer catering services, seek estimates from area caterers to determine how much it will cost to feed and serve your guests. Many couples find it more convenient and less stressful to pick a venue that offers on-site catering, though plenty of others have had no trouble after choosing a venue and separate caterer.

The bulk of a couple's wedding day and night will be spent at the reception, making choice of venue one of the more fun and important decisions they'll have to make.



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Questions to Ask Prospective Officiants

Couples make many decisions when planning their weddings. Everything from the design of save-the-date cards to the color of the napkins at the reception tables requires couples' input. Choice of officiant is another decision that's worthy of significant consideration.

Many couples may have an officiant in mind before they begin planning their wedding. In such instances, couples may choose an officiant who's affiliated with their place of worship or even a friend or family member who's been ordained or certified to officiate weddings. Couples with no such option can ask the following questions as they look to hire an officiant for their wedding.

Can you legally officiate our wedding?

Each state has its own requirements regarding who can sign the paperwork necessary for couples to be considered legally married. An officiant should meet these requirements.

What services do you provide?

Some officiants will do more than officiate the wedding. Some will help couples obtain their marriage license and even submit the documentation after the wedding. Those services can be important, but many couples are more concerned with what officiants will do before and during the ceremony. Ask if the officiant will write his or her own remarks to be delivered during the ceremony. Some couples may want to write remarks for the officiant, while others may need help crafting the message they want to convey.

How flexible are you?

Ask how officiants handle feedback and how willing they are to deliver remarks they did not necessarily write themselves. Some officiants may have a template they customarily follow, but that doesn't necessarily mean they won't stray and personalize the ceremony based on couples' wishes. Couples should ask such officiants how far they're willing to stray from their routine if necessary.

Do you have a portfolio?

Written testimonials from past clients can be invaluable, but couples can get a true feel for an officiant's style by watching video of ceremonies they've officiated in the past. Ask prospective officiants if they can share video of weddings they've presided over. It's not a red flag if officiants have no such video, which couples may have forgotten to share. But video can help couples get an accurate idea of how offi-



cians may preside over their ceremony.

Will we work together prior to the ceremony?

Many officiants will ask to meet with a couple at least once before the wedding so they can get to know them as well as possible. Ask each officiant if this is their policy. Pre-wedding meetings can be conducted in person or via Zoom. When discussing meeting before the wedding, ask the officiant if he or she will attend the wedding rehearsal. It's not customary for officiants to do so, though some might be willing to attend the rehearsal, especially if the ceremony will feature any elaborate components that require their involvement.

Miscellaneous considerations

Couples also may want to broach some additional topics when questioning prospective officiants. Such topics may include:

- Officiant's attire
- Backups if the officiant falls ill prior to the ceremony
- Officiant fees, and if extra services like attending the rehearsal incurs additional charges
- Officiants' experience

Couples can ask prospective officiants various questions in an effort to find the right person to officiate their wedding.

How to Build a Wedding Budget Without Breaking the Bank

Wedding planning is a unique experience unlike any endeavor most couples will ever encounter. Much effort goes into planning a wedding, and that includes building a budget that ensures the big day will be fun without breaking the bank.

Most couples planning a wedding have never tied the knot before, so it can be difficult to determine a reasonable amount to spend. It's easy to go overboard when planning a wedding, and couples may find their list of wants and, consequently, their expenses, growing as they get into the weeds of wedding planning. Though it might require some difficult decisions, couples can keep these tips in mind so they can build a wedding budget that won't land them in debt after saying, "I do."

- **Determine funding.** The days when a bride's parents would finance the wedding entirely on their own are largely a thing of the past. According to a recent WeddingWire Newlywed Report, parents now pay for 52 percent of wedding expenses. As couples begin establishing a wedding budget, it's imperative that they first determine who, if anyone, will be helping them finance the big day. Fifty-two percent of wedding expenses is a significant amount of money, but in that scenario, couples will

still need to come up with roughly half of the money needed to fund their weddings. Couples without substantial savings may be forced to cut back in order to avoid beginning their life as a married couple in debt.

- **Make a list of potential expenses.** Location will be a significant factor when determining potential expenses. For example, a 2022 ValuePenguin analysis of data from The Wedding Report found that the average wedding in Massachusetts cost roughly \$30,500 in 2020, while couples tying the knot in Arkansas spent around \$12,500 on their weddings. With such wild fluctuations, it's important that couples get an accurate estimate of how much it may cost them to get married in a given city. Couples who met in a city and still live in a city but grew up in a suburb might save a considerable sum by getting married in their hometowns. Compare and contrast prices in locales you're considering, and then build your budget accordingly. This can help you avoid sticker shock and going over budget. Notable expenses to budget include the venue, attire (i.e., wedding dress and tuxedo rental), hairstyle and makeup, entertainment, photography, and transportation, among others.



- **Make a list of what's most important.** Most couples will have to compromise in order to avoid taking on debt to finance their weddings. An earnest discussion about what's most important to each person can ensure you both get what you want. Each person can make a list of their priorities, ranking them from most important to least important. Once lists are shared, couples can see where their priorities converge and where they diverge. Any items that rank low on each person's list of priorities can be afforded less funding, while those that are high on each list can take up more of the budget, if necessary.

- **Commit to a limit before spending a dime.** Committing to a limit before spending a dime can help couples keep wedding costs more manageable. Once that number is defined, couples can then work within its parameters, which can make potentially difficult decisions a little easier by narrowing options at a time when options can seem endless.

A well-planned budget can be just what couples need to begin married life on strong financial footing.

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Your Wedding Timeline Guide



Wedding planning involves many movable pieces that ultimately need to come together on the big day. Planning is typically a months-long process, and adhering to certain monthly benchmarks can help couples stay the course.

Brides magazine offers that the perfect engagement period is 12 to 14 months, which affords ample time to get organized and work with vendors. With that in mind, here's a 12-month timeline for couples getting ready to say "I do."

12 Months Out

At the start of the planning process, establish your budget, hire a wedding planner (optional), choose the wedding party,

pick a date, and start to assemble a cursory guest list. This also is a great time to begin touring venues to get a feel for potential ceremony and reception locales.

11 Months Out

Now is the time to get a firm handle on the theme and scope of the wedding. Start picking wedding colors and overall design. Also, interview and hire vendors, such as photographers, bands and videographers. These vendors tend to book up quickly as wedding season draws near, so it's never too early to book them.

10 Months Out

This is a good time to start shopping for a

wedding gown because it might take some trial and error to find the perfect dress. You also can start shopping for wedding party attire at this time. Check with formalwear vendors to see how long it will take for the gowns to arrive in the shop for alterations. If you haven't already done so, be sure to book the wedding venue.

8 Months Out

Reception halls may have their own schedules, but you should think about setting your menu at this time, including deciding if you will host a seated dinner, a buffet or something else.

Eight months out also is a good time to finalize the guest list and send save-the-date cards.

This also is a good time to visit stores to create registry gift lists.

6 Months Out

Meet with potential florists and other vendors, like transportation companies and hotels, to secure these arrangements. Your place of worship also may require certain classes or preparatory meetings, so be sure to inquire about these.

Meet with a makeup and hair stylist and book a trial. Choose attire for groomsmen and give them a deadline for fittings and orders. If you will not be getting married in a place of worship, hire an officiant at this time.

4 Months Out

Grooms traditionally arrange the honeymoon, so this is a fine time to get those travel plans in order. If you need passports, you should secure them as early as possible, and no later than four months prior to the wedding to ensure processing times. Book cake tastings and order the cake if it is not part of the venue food and beverage package. If you haven't already done so, the bride should have an initial gown fitting, and wedding invitations should be ordered at this time.

2 Months Out

Secure your wedding license and buy wedding party gifts. Address and mail the wedding invitations. Undergo a second gown fitting and work with the seamstress for the final fitting date just before the wedding. Finalize any song selections with the DJ or band.

The final details will occur in the last weeks before the wedding. Buy all the small accessories and items, undergo final fittings and check in with all vendors for final payments and to ensure they are on schedule. Notify the reception hall of the final guest count.

Once the wedding day arrives, couples who have done their best to stay on schedule can relax and have a great time with family and friends.

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Stepping Stone Mosaic Workshop - facebook.com/theyellowline.co

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. The Old Jail Museum & Visitor's Center

Open with extended hours for First Friday - facebook.com/theoldjailmuseum

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Shepherd's Old Field Market

Specials throughout the Market - shepherdsoldfield.com

11 a.m. - 8 p.m. St. Mary's County Arts Council

Extended holiday hours - stmarysartscouncil.com

12 p.m. - 8 p.m. The Yellow Line Studio

Funny Little Valentine Pop Up Shop - facebook.com/theyellowline.co

4 p.m. - 6 p.m. Viking Axe Throwing in the Brudergarten at Shepherd's Old Field Market

All first responders throw for \$5 off per person - www.facebook.com/vikingaxethrowingandrentals

5 p.m. - 8 p.m. North End Gallery

2023 Invitational Show Opening - northendgallery.com

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Port of Leonardtown Winery

Music provided by Swingaway, Far.Fork.Soul truck on site - facebook.com/portoftownwine

6 p.m. - 6:45 p.m. eliv8

First Friday cycling event - facebook.com/eliv8somid

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Wine & Design

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ceded in death by infant son Christopher Francis Hewitt, his former wife, Sharon with whom he maintained a lasting bond of friendship and his brother, Robert "Bobby" Hewitt.

Family will receive friends on Friday, January 6, 2023 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial officiated by Rev. Joseph Sileo at 11:00 a.m., at Holy Face Catholic Church, 20408 Point Lookout Road, Great Mills, MD 20634. Inurnment will follow in the church cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to Little Flower Catholic School, 20410 Point Lookout Road, Great Mills, MD 20634 and the Second District Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 1, Valley Lee, MD 20692.

Condolences to the family may be made at www.brinsfieldfuneral.com

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

Teresa Mayor, 94



Mary Teresa Mayor, 94, of Leonardtown, MD passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 29, 2023 at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown, MD with her family at her side.

She was born on September 2, 1928 in Leonardtown, MD to the late Bernard L. Goldsborough and Alice Richley Heard Goldsborough.

Teresa was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County and was raised behind Our Lady's Medley's Neck Church, where she also attended school. In 1944 at just 16 years of age she went to work for C & P Telephone Company as a switchboard operator. She worked there for 12 dedicated years until leaving to raise her family in 1956. On July 28, 1951 she married her beloved husband, Charles Edward Mayor, at Our Lady's Medley's Neck Catholic Church. Together, they celebrated over 42 years of marriage before his passing in September 1993. While her kids were growing up she volunteered at Little Flower School in Great Mills, MD. In 1968, she went back to work as a cafeteria monitor at Great Mills High School until 1972. She left there and went to work at Green Acres as a cashier and kitchen attendant for approximately 10 years. She also was an Avon Representative for 24 dedicated years from 1978 to 1996. She especially enjoyed working for the social interaction that came with the jobs. She enjoyed being with people and never meeting a stranger. She was actively involved in her home parish for many years as an altar attendant, keeping the linens sharply pressed and the church clean and as a long-time member of the Ladies of Charity. Her hobbies included listening to country music, cooking, ironing (which she loved to do), canning, and dancing. She had a beautiful voice and loved to jitterbug and waltz. She was the matriarch of the family, always prepar-

ing many delicious Sunday suppers and family gatherings for the holidays. She led by example demonstrating her faith and the importance of accepting others and helping people in any way she could. She was also a member of NARFE and a past member of Country Music Club.

She is survived by her three children: Brenda Mayor of Leonardtown, MD; Bernard A. Mayor (Barbara) of Chaptico, MD, and Edward Lee Mayor (Kay) of Chaptico, MD; nine grandchildren: Michele Brinsfield (Trae), Becky Kyser (Dave), Allan Mayor (Amy), Michael Mayor (Kristal), Leanna Mayor; Kristie Mattingly (Brian), Kimberly Oliver (Glenn), Mary Ellen Tiller (Will) and Lorrie Trossbach (Josh); 19 great grandchildren; and one great-great granddaughter. In addition to her parents and husband, she is also preceded in death by her brother, Bernard Joseph Goldsborough, her grandson, Douglas Haden, Jr., and her great-great granddaughter, Willow Jansyn Brinsfield.

Family will receive friends on Friday, February 3, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Holy Face Catholic Church, 20408 Point Lookout Road, Great Mills, MD 20634. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Reverend Ron Potts and con-celebrated by Reverend Joe Sileo at 12:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the church cemetery where she will be laid to rest next to her husband.

Serving as pallbearers will be: Allan Mayor, Michael Mayor, Blake Brinsfield, Billy Price, Jay Knott, and Chris Mayor.

In lieu of flowers the family requests memorial contributions be made to Holy Face Catholic Church, 20408 Point Lookout Road, Great Mills, MD 20634, Second District Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 1, Valley Lee, MD 20692, and ACTS, P.O. Box 54, Bushwood, MD 20618.

Condolences to the family may be made at www.brinsfieldfuneral.com

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

Sandra Eversberg, 64



Sandra Anne Eversberg, "Sandy", 64, of Hollywood, MD, formerly of Mechanicsville, MD, passed away on January 27, 2023 at her home. Born on February 28, 1958

in Washington, D.C., she was the daughter of the late Mary Long and the late Thomas Long, Sr. Sandra was the loving wife of Michael Eversberg, whom she married on September 27, 1986 in St. John Catholic Church, Hollywood, MD. She is survived by her children Michael Eversberg II of Lexington Park, MD, William Eversberg (Kirsten) of Lexington Park, MD, Jessica Eversberg of California, MD, and Joseph Eversberg of California, MD, her sister Ellen Long of Lexington Park, MD, as well as two grandchildren. In addition to her parents,

Sandra was preceded in death by her siblings Thomas Long, Jr., Gerri Stokel, Michael Long, and Patricia Lewis.

Sandra was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident. She graduated from Chopticon High School in 1975 and was a homemaker. Sandra enjoyed gardening, crocheting, watching wildlife, and her cooking shows. She belonged to the Hollywood Vol. Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary.

The family will receive friends on Friday, February 3, 2023 from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Mattingly-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held at 11:00 AM in the funeral home chapel with Father Ray Schmidt officiating. Interment will be private.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.mgfh.com. Arrangements provided by the Mattingly-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD

Edna Stauffer, 74



Edna M. Stauffer, 74, of Leonardtown, MD died Sunday, January 29, 2023 at home, surrounded by her family.

She was a homemaker and co-owner of Dave's Engine Service.

She was born on April 28, 1948 in Lancaster Co., PA, to the late Frank B.

and Elizabeth Z. Sensenig.

She is survived by: her husband of 53 years, David B. Stauffer; and 11 children: Elizabeth S. (James M.) Stauffer of Leonardtown, MD, Susannah S. Stauffer, at home, David S. (Stella M.) Stauffer, of Waterport, NY, Jacob S. (June S.) Stauffer, Miriam S. Stauffer, Esther S. (Norman S.) Stauffer, all 3 of Bainbridge, OH, Ida S. (Leroy S.) Stauffer of Mechanicsville, MD, Amos S. (Orpha A.) Stauffer, Eli S. (Rebecca B.) Stauffer, both of Loveville, MD, Harvey S. (Sandra V.) Stauffer, of Leonardtown, MD, Mary S. Stauffer, at Home, 49 grandchildren, 11 step-grandchildren, 2 foster grandchildren, 14 step-great-grandchildren. As well as her siblings: Anna M. (Marlin A.) Martin of Winchester, OH, Alice M. (Mahlon B.) Stauffer, Helen M. (Elam B.) Stauffer, Alma M. (late Henry B.) Stauffer all 3 of Leonardtown, MD., John M. (Thelma S.) Sensenig of Ephrata, PA.

Preceded in death by: Parents: Frank B. and Elizabeth Z. Sensenig; Brother: Frank M. Sensenig (late husband of Susannah B.)

Family will receive friends on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at the home of the deceased. Funeral is on Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 8:45 am at the Stauffer Mennonite Church, where she was a member. Burial will be in the adjoining cemetery.

Arrangements provided by Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

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In Remembrance

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

Chester Dement, 93



Leonard Chester "Tinky" Dement, 93, of California, MD passed away peacefully on Thursday, January 19, 2023 at his home surrounded by his family. Born on January

12, 1930 in Great Mills, MD he was the oldest of eight children, born to the late George "Lenny" Dement and Doris Pilkerton Dement.

Chester was the loving husband to his childhood sweetheart, Gladys Bryant Dement, whom he married in June of 1953 at St. George's Episcopal Church in Valley Lee. In addition to his wife, Chester is survived by his daughters Jacquelyn Dement of California, Virginia Jordan of Lexington Park, MD and Melanie Merchant (Josh) of Lexington Park, MD, his grandchildren Mandi La Valle (Eddie) of California, Jimmy Jordan (Kayla) of Tall Timbers and Tank Merchant of Bealeton, VA; great grandsons Scott Carter and Isaac Soto of Tall Timbers, sisters Mary Broadhurst (Mark) of California and

Melva Abell (Billy) of California, sister-in-laws Betty Tippet of Accokeek, Beulah Bryant of Waynesville, OH, Nancy Bryant of Knoxville, MD and Marilyn Dement Brown of Edmonton, KY, godchildren Leon Dement Jr. of California, David Dement of California, Crystal Gershult of Waynesville, OH and Sandi Buchanan of Great Mills, MD, along with numerous nieces and nephews.

Chester was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, living primarily in Great Mills and California. He attended Little Flower School in Great Mills. As the son of a farmer and carpenter, he was well educated in the field of hard work. By the age of 10, he had started his own garden and built his first playhouse. As a boy, he helped his father working at Cecil's Mill in Great Mills, MD, sweeping up the mill and helping to sell grain. In 1954, he worked beside his father as a carpenter with Dement & Sons Construction until 1967 at the time of his father's death. He then worked for various construction companies throughout St. Mary's County until his retirement in 1992 from Wildewood. Throughout his time as a full time carpenter, he was a full time farmer, growing tobacco, corn, soybeans and wheat, as well as raising

livestock. Of the two job roles in his life, farming is what he loved the most. He had a deep love of nature, taking walks throughout the woods and just sitting and watching nature around him. As a young man, he was an avid raccoon hunter, loved to fish and went trapping with his Uncle Gene for muskrats. In his later years, he enjoyed watching the squirrels and a variety of birds that would visit the multiple feeders around the house.

One of his greatest joys in life was spending time with his family. From the weekly pancake suppers at the family farm, to holiday celebrations, to the simple backyard cookouts, he loved being with his family and friends. He would sit and tell stories about his life, his parents and grandparents and how the county was "back in the day". He loved to share his story of watching "The Base" coming to the area and watching the paratroopers practicing jumps. He knew most of the woods in this county from his many years of raccoon hunting and would talk about where the old stores were located and families lived.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his stepfathers Theodore Adams and Mark Bradburn, brothers James "Hoss" Dement, Leon Dement Sr. and Merrill Dement Sr., sisters Mildred "Sissy" Hampton and Delores "Tinie" Zucharo, brother-in-laws Emory Bryant, James Zucharo and Edward Hampton, sister-in-laws Lois Ann "Potsie" Dement, Aletha Saigeon and June Ritlaw and several nieces and nephews.

Services and interment are private. A Life Celebration for Chester to follow at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650 and to The Clements Cuties Foundation, P.O. Box 992, Mechanicsville, MD 20659.

Condolences to the family may be made at www.brinsfieldfuneral.com.

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

Wayne Edger, 53



Wayne Bradley Edger, 53 of Avenue, MD passed away peacefully on Thursday, December 22, 2022, at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC

with his fiancée' Jennifer Huntington by his side.

Wayne was born in Washington, DC on May 10, 1969, to parents William "Bill" W. Edger and Gale Gamble Edger of Avenue, MD.

Wayne is survived by his parents, his longtime fiancée Jennifer Hunting-

ton and his brother Andrew "Andy" G. Edger (Sandy) as well as Aunts & Uncles, Johanne G. Reynolds (Leslie), Tommy Gamble (Nancy), Jill Shertzer (Chris), Jeff Edger (Anita), Randy Edger (Marylynn), Jack Edger (Rosemary) and Judy Edger Felkamp (Bob) and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. He was predeceased by his sibling, Elizabeth "Beth" Edger Morris.

Wayne graduated from Chopticon High School in 1987. His interests in life were cooking, dancing, fishing, playing with his dog Bandit, and card games with friends and family, he enjoyed life to the fullest. Wayne loved to cook, and you could say it was his passion! He worked at his family's restaurant Gambellinis in Charlotte Hall, MD, Colony South Hotel, PJ's restaurant, and Morris Point restaurant. He also worked for the Department of Public Works, St. Mary's County, MD, and a part-time mason with Dave's Masonry. Wayne was also a member of the 7th District Optimist Club.

Wayne was affectionally known as "Big Dog" and he was a very caring, loving, and helpful person. He would do anything for family and friends. He will be greatly missed!

A **Celebration of Life** will be held on Saturday, February 11, 2023, from 12:30pm to 3:00pm at Christ Church located at 37497 Zach Fowler Road Chaptico, MD 20621

Billy Hewitt, 71



William Francis "Billy" Hewitt, 71 of Callaway, MD passed away suddenly on December 15, 2022 at Medstar Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C.

He was born on March 18, 1951 in Leonardtown, MD to Mary Lillian Johnson Hewitt of Callaway, MD and the late Francis Emmanuel Hewitt.

Billy is a graduate of Little Flower Catholic School and the class of 1970 from St. Mary's Ryken. He was employed for many years as the vice president of Hewitt Lumber Company. He was an avid fan of the Philadelphia Eagles and enjoyed watching NASCAR. He took great pride in maintaining his yard and loved putting on a spectacular Christmas light display. He enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandsons.

In addition to his mother, Mary Lillian Hewitt; he is also survived by his children, Heather Schumacher (Jack) of Callaway, MD and his son, William Hewitt (Richard) of Yuma, AZ; his sister, Judi Sterling of Leonardtown, MD; his grandsons, Colton and Hunter Schumacher; and extended family and friends. In addition to his father, he was also pre-



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Schwartz Recovering From BMX Crash



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Mike Schwartz, local bike shop owner, bicycle motocross (BMX) racer and community activist, was badly injured during a race last week in Virginia, and had to be flown to a regional hospital for surgery.

Schwartz, long-time owner of Mike's Bikes located on Great Mills Road, broke both his neck and back in the crash at Lexington Va. at the USA BMX Blue Ridge National Race Jan. 27, friends and relatives of Schwartz have stated on social media.

After surgery he was placed in the intensive care unit at trauma center in Roanoke, friends and family have reported, and has since been moved to a standard hospital room.

Eleanor Schwartz, Mike Schwartz's sister, said that on Jan. 30 he was able

to walk 60 feet with the aid of a walker.

She said this about her brother's mood.

"He is sleep deprived, fatigued, and rather grumpy, which means he is improving," she said. "Not ready to go home just yet; not feeling up to answering his phone yet, but appreciates everyone's prayers."

Schwartz's time as a BMX racer appears to be over, she said, but he can recover enough to continue playing volleyball, which is his second favorite sport.

Schwartz has long advocated the use of bicycles for not only sport but as a means of alternative transportation.

But Schwartz is perhaps best known for his ongoing donation drives to benefit community members, particularly those who are less fortunate or have suffered a serious mishap.

His annual Christmas Turkey drive has delivered thousands of turkeys and side dishes to residents every holiday season for the past 40 years.

Schwartz operated the drive for years in gratitude to a community that came together to aid him when a fire destroyed his home and left him displaced decades ago.

A GoFundMe page has been established on-line to collect donations to help pay for Schwartz's medical bills, which are expected to be extensive.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

County Purchases Hollywood Rescue Squad Land

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County unanimously approved the purchase of approximately eight acres in Hollywood for \$500,000 to be used to continue the construction of the Three Notch Trail project.

According to county planning documents, the land the county purchased belonged to the Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad and had been intended as a site for a new rescue squad headquarters.

The current volunteer rescue squad serving Hollywood is located on Rescue Lane north of the property being sold.

"The Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad (HVRS) contacted [recreation and parks] staff in June 2022, notifying them of their intent to sell the 8.09 acres of property located on Three Notch Road that was intended for a new site for the HVRS operations," county documents show. "Previously in 2017 the [recre-

ation and parks] staff approached the [rescue squad] requesting an easement on the same property for construction of a portion of Phase VII of the Three Notch Trail with the north end of the property being utilized as trail head."

The decision to purchase the property was made in a closed session of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County June 26 of last year, county documents reveal.

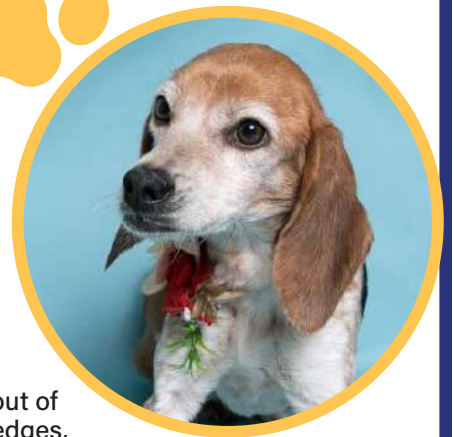
The property could serve as more than just to provide an easement for the trail head of the Three Notch project, according to county documents.

"The property can offer many benefits to the citizens of St. Mary's beyond phase VII of the trail, including a trail head/rest stop with amenities such as restrooms, a pavilion, small playground, water fountains, bike repair stop and a location for bike rentals," the county documents read.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Pet OF THE WEEK

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School Board Approves \$279 Million Budget

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The newly approved school system operating budget will now go to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County to join the months-long debate over a the fiscal 2024 funding plan for the county.

The school board is proposing an overall operating budget of \$279 million comprised in roughly equal parts of local and state funding with some federal money as well.

The local contribution the school board is requesting is approximately \$130 million, or \$8.4 million more than the current fiscal 2023 adopted budget.

The state budget portion the local board wants is \$142.1 million, or \$16.7 million more than this year's state portion.

Some of the major increases in the budget include \$97.1 million for instructional salaries, \$20 million for mid-level administration, budget documents state, \$22.9 million for special education.

The purchase of textbooks and instructional supplies will see one of the biggest increases from \$4.5 million to \$7.1 million, the proposed budget states.

Operation of plant expenditures will also increase to \$22 million, Deputy Superintendent of Finance Tammy McCourt told school board members at their Feb. 1 budget work session in Leonardtown.

"This also incorporates 18 new security officers for elementary schools," McCourt said.

"It's a big budget," said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith of the latest funding plan for public schools. "The most important part of that budget... is the salary enhancements for our staff.

"We all find ourselves in a situation where there are more jobs than there are employees."

The competitive job market was taking a toll on school staffing levels, Scott reiterated.

"We are losing staff from schools to go on base work for contractors who are luring them with salaries that outpace our own," Smith said.

The salaries increase for school teachers was intended to mirror the county commissioners' recent commitment to a 4.5 percent cost of living adjustment for county government employees in their earliest budget work sessions.

Dorothy Andrews, newest member of the school board, said she had many questions about the budget that were answered to her satisfaction.

"I was trying to find something, people," Andrews said. "There's nothing there except for what we need to invest in the students."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Arrests Made in Lexington Park Shooting



On Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2023, at 8:19 pm, a St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Deputy reported hearing shots fired in the area of Hancock Road in Lexington Park, as well as multiple witnesses who reported shots being fired in the area. Upon investigation, multiple shell casings were located in the roadway of Hancock Road, and a residence on Midway Drive was struck by a projectile, but there were no reported injuries from the incident.

On Jan. 26, detectives with the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division (CID) executed a series of search and seizure warrants, with the assistance of the agency's Emergency Services Team.

As a result, investigators located a loaded Cobray MK-11 assault pistol as well as a loaded Taurus G2C semi-automatic handgun, which are suspected

of being utilized during the incident. These seizures resulted in the arrest of an 18-year-old male and 14-year-old male on multiple firearms-related charges.

Pernell Maddox, 18 of Lexington Park, was charged with Handgun in Vehicle; Loaded Handgun in Vehicle; Handgun on Person; Loaded Handgun on Person; Reckless Endangerment and Possession of a Firearm by a Minor.

A 14-year-old male from Lexington Park was also referred to the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services for the illegal possession of the aforementioned firearms during the incident.

Additionally, Maddox was served an outstanding warrant for his arrest, stemming from an unrelated incident wherein he has been charged with Armed Robbery; Robbery; Second-Degree Assault and Theft: Less than \$100 by warrant from an incident in November in Lexington Park.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call Cpl. Austin Schultz at 301-475-4200, ext. 71953 or email austin.schultz@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Citizens may remain anonymous and contact Crime Solvers at 301-475-3333, or text a tip to "TIP239" plus their message to "CRIMES" (274637). Through the Crime Solvers Program tipsters are eligible for an award of up to \$1,000 for information about a crime in St. Mary's County that leads to an arrest or indictment.

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St. Michael's School Celebrates More Than A Century in Ridge

Catholic Schools Week Jan. 29-Feb. 4



Jeff and Mary Lou Troutman spend time with their granddaughter Maddie Langley at St. Michael's

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Tuesday was something of a big deal at St. Michael's School in Ridge as they celebrated Catholic Schools Week.

It was Grandparents/Special Person Day at the school and students got to engage in fun activities with their special guests for about an hour before getting back to their regular studies.

Having special days and special guests was once a routine thing at St. Michael's but that was before the COVID-19 pandemic.

While students and staff continued to attend class at the school, which will celebrate its 105th year of operation next year, visitors were often restricted from entering.

"We haven't had grandparents in the building for three years at least," said Mary Van Ryswick, vice principal at St. Michael's. "We gained some students during the pandemic because their parents wanted them learning in class."

"We've retained them even after COVID-19."

There are approximately 120 students at St. Michael's in grades from pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade.

This year, St. Michael's has a new principal — Shileta Weems — a Calvert County native and former teacher at Father Andrew White School in Leonardtown.

Weems is taking over after Lila Hoffmeister retired as principal after 16 years in that position.

Before applying for the position, Weems said she had never even heard of Ridge despite growing up in Southern Maryland.

But she has come to love working in the Ridge community and at St. Michael's.

"I felt called down a certain path," Weems said. "I absolutely enjoy it."

"I definitely appreciate the community

here; they're highly supportive."

Weems said that feeling goes for both the community in Ridge and the smaller one in the school.

"They're very much committed, both our teachers and our scholars," Weems said.

Van Ryswick is a veteran of the school, having taught there for 27 years; just one other teacher has been there the same length of time.

Though she has senior administrative duties there, she still teaches some of the youngest students at the school.

"I'm a teacher," Van Ryswick said. "I'm with the Kindergarteners; I'm the one who gets to see the lights come on when they make the connections about letters and numbers and they learn how to read."

"My heart is in the classroom."

Keeping things running at St. Michael's can be challenging; in the past they've had challenges with funding and keeping enrollment up but the community has always come together to ensure the school's survival.

"We're like a family," Van Ryswick said of the school's character. "We invite everyone to come."

"We're a very diverse [student] community."

But there are problems.

Ridge is situated firmly in the county's rural preservation district which strictly controls any residential development to the point that dense housing developments would be all but impossible.

This means that new families with children coming to live in Ridge will be in short supply.

"We have to promote ourselves more to get families farther north [in the county] to come and learn about us," Van Ryswick said. "They're not going to put a new housing development here."

Still, there are families who continue to send their next generations to be taught at St. Michael's in their formative years.

"I'm teaching kids of kids now," Van Ryswick said. "I'm grateful to see that cycle of families coming back to us."

One of the families that have decided to make St. Michael's their new school home for their children are the Primms.

Christine Primm had her two children learning at Ridge Elementary School before the pandemic broke out and was content to have them start learning remotely on-line from home, hoping it would be temporary.

But as the months dragged on and the pandemic seemed to get worse, the flaws in on-line learning became apparent.

"We could just tell the level of education just was not the same," Primm told The County Times. "When we first took our kids there [St. Michael's], we didn't know that we'd be staying there."

Primm said that they had known about St. Michael's for a long time but

never really considered it as an educational option.

But the pandemic changed all that.

"We really wanted the children to be in school," Primm said. "It [St. Michael's] was always in the back of our minds."

"But after we considered paying for our kids' education, we knew it was worth it."

When their children's education began at St. Michael's, she said, the dedication of the teachers and the small class sizes made the Primms dedicated supporters

of the school.

"Once we saw all the wonderful things going on there at St. Michael's we knew there was no turning back," Primm said.

Van Ryswick said perhaps the single most important aspect of St. Michael's was the sense of family that permeated its halls.

"When you come in the doors you feel welcome," Van Ryswick said. "You're going to be embraced."

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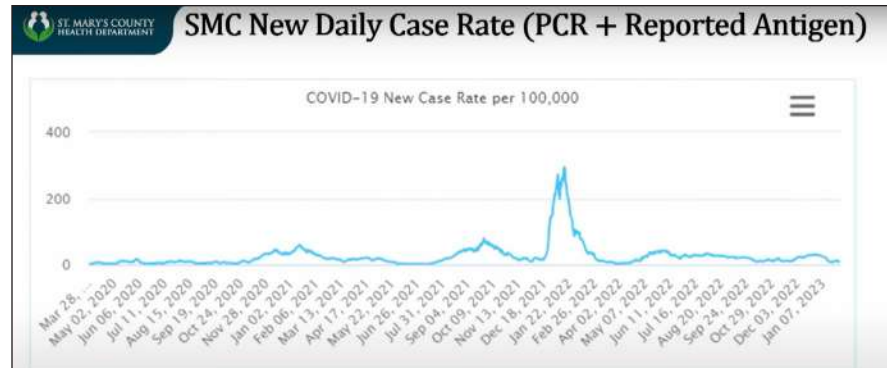
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Brewster Briefs Commissioners on COVID



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

After a post-holiday surge in COVID-19 cases nationwide, new cases locally are trending downwards, Dr. Meena Brewster, County Health Officer and head of the county health department, told the Commissioners of St. Mary's County this week.

"We are still at high transmission in our county," Brewster said at the Jan. 31 meeting in Leonardtown. "Since the beginning of the pandemic we've had 243 St. Mary's residents who have passed related to COVID."

For the first time in almost three years Brewster addressed the commissioners without wearing a facemask, something she said in the past she would continue to do so long as the pandemic.

Later, she said she did so as the room was not crowded at the time.

The COVID pandemic began officially in Maryland in March of 2020.

The prevalence of at-home test kits has led to lesser indications of infection surges, Brewster said, as residents have not had to report their results as would have been done when testing was in the hands of hospitals and the health department.

"We really look at that hospital load as an indicator," said Brewster.

The COVID-19 virus, unlike the flu

virus, Brewster said, continues to mutate at a rapid rate.

"It's generating new strains all the time," Brewster said. "It's many strains across the world, some of which don't even get to the U.S."

But at least in this country the COVID-19 virus variant most prevalent in the Omicron variant, which has not mutated enough to be considered a whole new strain.

The health department is continuing to recommend bivalent vaccine booster shots and the wearing of "more effective" masks in a health care or congregate living arrangement or in otherwise crowded situations.

Getting testing for COVID-19 was also key, she said, as was seeking medical care.

The latest bivalent vaccine was more effective in preventing infection than the first versions of the inoculation, Brewster said.

It also was better at ensuring that if an inoculant was infected they would be at less of a risk of serious illness or death from COVID.

"Booster shots... help refresh that immunity and get immunity on board in preparation for those new strains of the virus," Brewster said.

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Pax River Announces New Gate Hours, Spike Strips

NAS Patuxent River has adjusted its gate hours beginning Feb. 1, 2023.

Pax River's new gate hours are:

Gate 1 – Open 24/7

Gate 2 – Open 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Gate 3 – Open 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

NAS Patuxent River will also lay spike strips on Cuddihy Road just beyond its intersection with Cedar Point Road at Gate 2 during morning rush hour beginning Feb. 1.

"This is an increased security measure to prevent unauthorized access to the base," said Lt. Charles Whittenton, NAS Patuxent River Security Officer. "The spikes will be marked by a bar-

rier of cones during the morning rush; if you drive over the cones, you'll hit the spikes."

Drivers are reminded that Gate 2's sentries check IDs at the tension material-covered shelter just beyond the gate during morning rush hour (6 a.m. to 9 a.m.) to provide greater traffic flow into base during those hours, and that drivers should not proceed onto base without having their IDs checked by a sentry.

For more information on NAS Patuxent River, follow on social media at www.facebook.com/NASPaxRiver and <https://twitter.com/NASPaxRiverPAO>

Aldi, Chick-Fil-A Planned for Charlotte Hall Project

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A major redevelopment project proposed for Charlotte Hall will be up for a public hearing Feb. 13 before the county Planning Commission; it includes plans for a new grocery store, fast food restaurant, retail space and a relocation of the current farmers market property that has long been a staple of the community, county planning documents show.

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

It also proposes a 5,200 square-foot Chick-Fil-A restaurant with drive-through service, 2,675 square feet retail space pad sites and 2,437 square feet of space for a restaurant pad site.

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

The property is considered suitable for mixed-use moderate-intensity under the

county's zoning ordinance.

The County Times first broke the story of the sale of 77 acres of property, then known as Charlotte Hall Center, Inc., in August of 2021 by the local Burroughs family to a Baltimore-based developer.

The property includes many businesses fronting the north bound section of Route 5 from Golden Beach Road down to the Charlotte Hall Farmers Market.

More than half of the overall parcel is to be used for this new development project.

County planning documents show that the development once completed could bring significant traffic impacts to the area.

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

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

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

guyleonard@countytimes.net



Site plan for Golden Beach Development, LLC

Sheriff's Office Retirement Plan Deals with Shortfall

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Significant pay increases for the St. Mary's Sheriff's Department rank and file contributed to miscalculations in the retirement fund for local law enforcement, consulting financial staff told the board overseeing the sheriff's office retirement plan (SORP) last week, meaning that retirement contributions to the fund were lower than they should have been.

This means that there is a significant shortfall in the SORP that will have to be dealt with.

Jim Richie, president of Bolton Retirement, said the miscalculation from 2020 was not found until this year and the contributions of \$6.6 million, or 39 percent of pay should have been 44.3 percent of pay or \$7.5 million.

The SORP board, which included County Administrator David Weiskopf, Chief Financial Officer Jeanett Cudmore and sheriff's office Lt. Shawn Moses, voted unanimously to increase the contribution to the SORP to 40 percent immediately during the meeting.

Richie's recommendation was to ease in the higher contribution levels over the next two fiscal years so the total shortfall would not have to be paid in at once.

"We kind of glossed over what a mistake means," Weiskopf said to Richie as he explained the error and options for correction to the board. "I don't mean

to put you on the spot... but was it malpractice, negligence?"

"This shouldn't have happened," Richie said. "We made a mistake."

"We're doing what we can to limit the pain of that mistake."

The sheriff's office employees contribute just seven percent to the SORP, with the county contributing the remaining 39 percent.

The county, not sheriff's office employees, would be making the increased contribution to the SORP, said Cudmore.

"So we're short \$1 million," Weiskopf said.

"We were rushing at the end," Richie told the board about the team's efforts to come up with the valuation reports. "That's when mistakes can happen."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt spoke on the Bolton consultant's valuation of the SORP investments.

"This valuation from Bolton does concern me," Hewitt said at the Jan. 26 meeting in Leonardtown. "What I'm concerned about is how we're made whole."

"They're [Bolton] correcting the problem internally but that really doesn't help St. Mary's County... all this money does come from tax payers."

Hewitt continued: "It's one thing to smooth it out over a couple of years, it's another to find how it happened in the first place."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Leonardtown Man Sentenced to Prison for Sexual Abuse of a Minor



State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling today announced that Defendant Phillip Jae Han Tayag, 21, of Leonardtown was sentenced to the Department of Corrections after being found guilty of sex abuse of a minor. The State's Attorney's Office requested the defendant be sentenced

to the maximum penalty of 25 years in prison. The defendant was sentenced to 15 years in the Department of Corrections, suspend all but 10 years of active incarceration. He was further placed on five years of supervised probation. The Defendant must register for lifetime sex offender registration.

Sterling thanked members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office for their investigation and Senior Assistant State's Attorney Sarah Proctor who prosecuted this case on behalf of the citizens of the County. Sterling stated, "Crimes against children are the most heinous of all. My office will continue to defend victims and strenuously prosecute these cases."

Proctor added, "As the parents of the victim expressed to the court, this was a horrendous and unspeakable crime against a child who will carry the scars and trauma for life."

The Honorable Joseph Staloni presided over the case.



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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	5	CALENDAR	13
OBITUARIES	10	SPORTS	14

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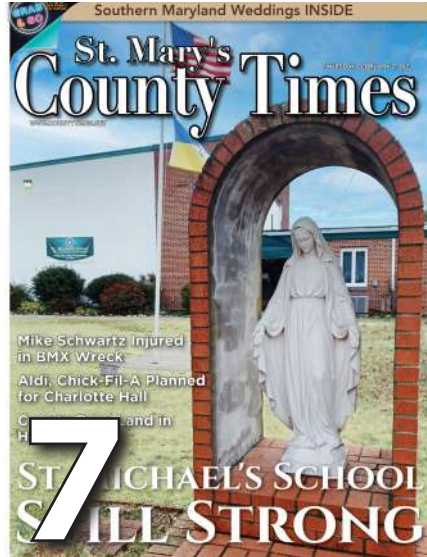
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Charlotte Hall project public hearing planned



LOCAL 9
Mike Schwartz badly injured in BMX race



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St. Michael's School celebrating 105 years next year

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