

Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024

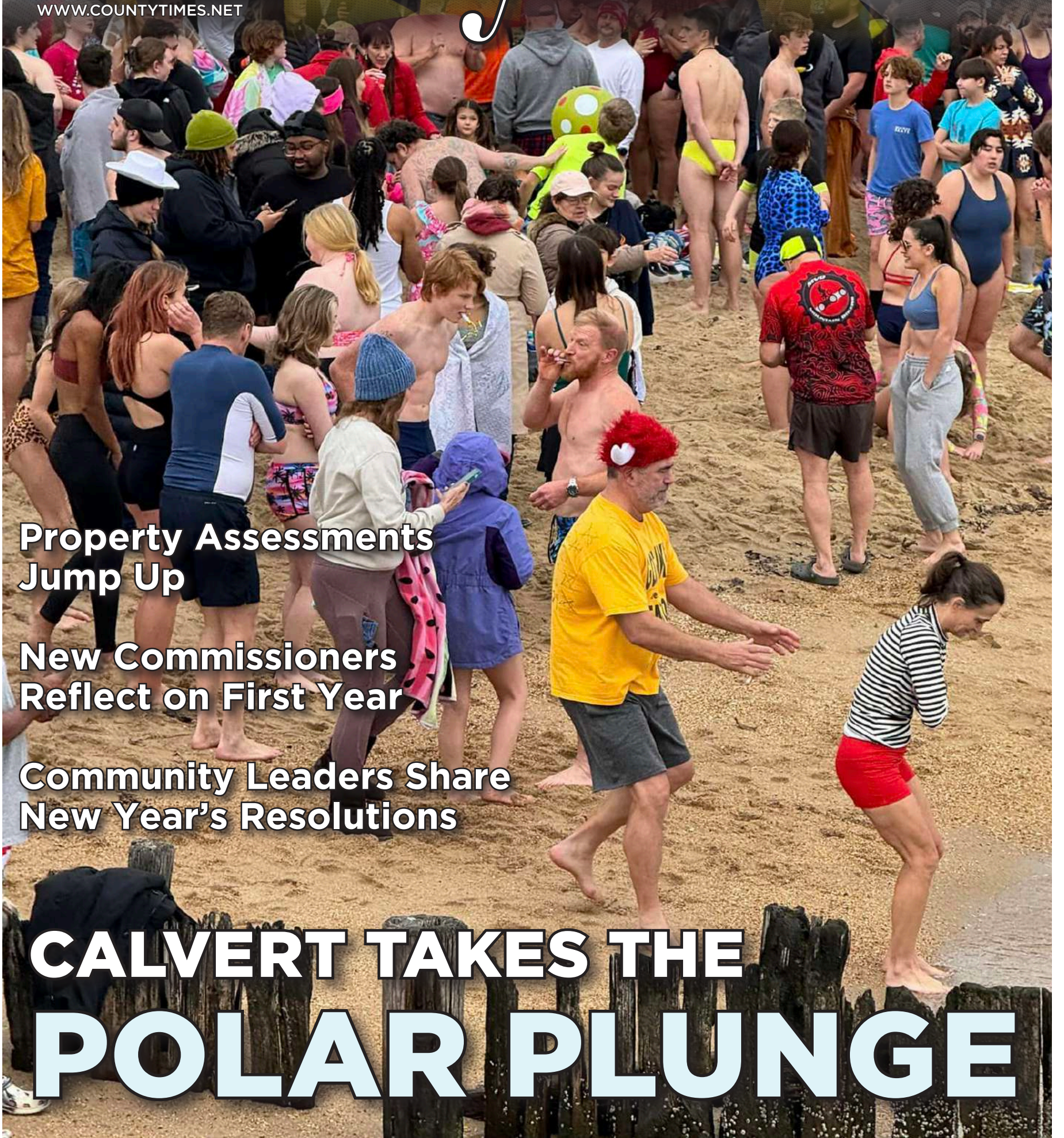
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**Property Assessments
Jump Up**

**New Commissioners
Reflect on First Year**

**Community Leaders Share
New Year's Resolutions**

**CALVERT TAKES THE
POLAR PLUNGE**



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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4	COMMUNITY	7
COPS & COURTS	6	CALENDAR	9

“THE FIRST YEAR WAS NOT LIKE I ANTICIPATED IT.”

COMMISSIONER VICE PRESIDENT CATHERINE GRASSO



LOCAL 4
Calvert property assessments rise sharply



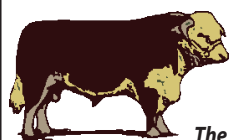
LOCAL 5
Calvert welcomes its first baby of the year



ON THE COVER
Polar Bear Plunge marks the New Year in North Beach

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 4 Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 25°	FRI, JAN 5 Mostly Sunny Hi: 42° Lo: 30°	SAT, JAN 6 Rain Hi: 41° Lo: 34°	SUN, JAN 7 Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 32°
MON, JAN 8 Mostly Sunny Hi: 47° Lo: 34°	TUE, JAN 9 Rain Hi: 54° Lo: 45°	WED, JAN 10 Mostly Sunny Hi: 50° Lo: 32°	THU, JAN 11 Mostly Sunny Hi: 49° Lo: 36°



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Reassessments Show Property Values Rise

Calvert Slightly More Than State Average

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (MDAT) has announced its 2024 reassessment of 767,226 “Group 3” residential and commercial properties. In Maryland, there are more than two million property accounts that are split into three groups, each appraised once every three years.

The overall statewide value increase for “Group 3” properties was 23.4 percent since its last reassessment three years ago.

Group 3 in Calvert County is the lower one-third of the county. Reassessments rose 24.6 percent for Group 3 residences and 26.8 for commercial properties, for an overall percentage of 24.9. Group 1, or the northern third of Calvert County, was reassessed last year.

According to MDAT, “The overall statewide increase was higher than 2023’s 20.6 percent increase, representing an average increase in value of 25.6 percent for all residential properties and 17.6 percent for all commercial properties over the three-year period since the last ‘Group 3’ reassessment for January 2021.”

“For six consecutive years, all 23 counties and Baltimore City have experienced an increase in residential and commercial property values, indicating that owning a home or business in Maryland continues to be a good investment,” said SDAT Director Michael Higgs. “SDAT is pleased to provide our customers with new and improved reassessment notices this year and, as part of our Tax Credit Awareness Campaign, each reassessment notice includes information about the Departments’ Homeowners’ and Homestead Tax Credits, which save

Marylanders more than \$260 million in taxes each year.”

In a press release, MDAT said, “The 2024 assessments for ‘Group 3’ properties were based on an evaluation of 85,904 sales that occurred within the group over the last three years. If the reassessment resulted in a property value being adjusted, any increase in value will be phased-in equally over the next three years, while any decrease in value will be fully implemented in the 2024 tax year. For the 2024 reassessment, 96.6% of Group 3 residential properties saw an increase in property value.

Property tax assessment notices were mailed to Group 3 property owners on Thursday, December 28, 2023. A map of which properties fall into Groups 1, 2, and 3 and their respective years for reassessment can be viewed on SDAT’s website here. For additional statistics and infor-

mation, please visit the Department’s Statistics & Reports webpage.

“The Homeowners’ Tax Credit provides relief for eligible homeowners by setting a limit on the amount of property taxes that are owed based on their income. Residential property owners who complete a one-time application and meet certain eligibility requirements can also receive a Homestead Tax Credit, which limits their principal residence’s taxable assessment from increasing by more than a certain percentage each year regardless of their income level. Although statewide legislation caps the increase at no more than 10% per year, many local governments have capped property taxes at lower percentages.”

dickmyers@countytimes.net

New Commissioners Reflect on First Year, Look Ahead

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

As Calvert County Commissioner Catherine Grasso ended her first year in office, she was elected by her peers to be vice president for 2024. Grasso and the other two newcomers, Mark Cox and Todd Ireland looked back on their freshman year experiences and looked ahead to 2024 at the request of The County Times.

Of her first year, Grasso was asked if it was what she expected. “The first year was not like I anticipated it,” she responded. “And I did my homework while I was running and met with our administrator weekly to be up to speed with what was going on. It has been way, way, much more than I had anticipated. But I have to tell you, I have enjoyed it immensely. I must have a public servant’s heart because I’m really enjoying it.”

Grasso added, “The year was made easy because our administrator, Mark Willis has done such a good job of keeping us informed. He’s at our disposal at any given time. And also, our administrative staff, I would put them up against anyone. They made my first year much easier for sure.”

Looking ahead, she said, “In the next year, I’m looking forward to much of the same. We will have some challenges because our governor has an agenda that we are going to have to deal with fiscally and that will present some new challenges for us as a county. But this board is very cohesive, seems to be on the same page, and I’m sure we will weather anything that comes our way.”

Grasso said, “[I’m] looking forward to another great year. Love what I’m doing. My husband supports me 110 percent, and that makes my life way, way easier than the next person who doesn’t have that support.”

Commissioner Mark Cox, in a prepared statement submitted to The County Times, said, “Our first year in office was challeng-

ing but rewarding. We have a great group of commissioners that want the very best for Calvert County. Some of our accomplishments for 2023 include hiring a new Deputy County Administrator. We broke ground on a new County Administration Building. We hired a new Finance and Budget Director which helped in securing a triple A bond rating. We hired a new Public Safety Director that is working with both career and volunteer services to meet increased demands of our Emergency Medical Services. We made huge steps in communication with the Board of Education and continue to work on their budget needs. We worked with our new Sheriff and our Community Resource Director to tackle some increasing concerns with homelessness and mental health issues. Our Parks and Recreation Director continues to move forward with numerous projects to enhance our parks. Planning and Zoning is rewriting our zoning ordinances with the community’s input. Economic Development continues working with our business community to meet their needs. Our Technology Services Department has continued to keep us safe with their cyber security efforts. I look forward to 2024 and supporting the citizens of Calvert County.”

Cox added, “The goal of teamwork is not to think alike, but to think together.”

Commissioner Todd Ireland was asked if the first year was what he expected. “Well, all that and then some,” he responded. “It was undoubtedly a learning experience and I felt like coming into it, I was able to bring my 29 years of experience from the sheriff’s office to that side of things. [For] my last 15 years at the sheriff’s office, I was a commander, and the decision-making process was a daily event. Am, you made a decision, right, wrong, or indifferent, you live by it. If you had to tweak it, you tweaked it. Whereas now you’re 20 percent of a decision-making process and it seems like it takes a lot lon-



Commissioner VP Catherine Grasso



Commissioner Mark Cox



Commissioner Todd Ireland

ger to get things done.”

As to the staff support, he’s received, he said, “Our staff is absolutely wonderful, without a doubt. I don’t put them up against anybody as far as that goes. Very, very informative, very helpful, very knowledgeable. We have a great bunch that we work with.”

Of his accomplishments, he said, “The budget was a, a huge part of it. I dealt with the budget in the sheriff’s office, but not the overall budget. That was a piece of the county budget. Dealing with the CIP and that and trying to learn about the CIP, all the projects that are in line which we still need to focus on that as well, as far as I’m concerned.”

He added, “The budget’s very complex without a doubt. And then of course, we were met with the challenge from the Board of Education with the Blueprint, so we had to address that. And of course, that’s all going to be reoccurring.”

He’s looking forward to seeing the results of the school system audit. He said, “I am very much so. I actually am the main one that’s pushed that audit from this time last year. I requested it, and it’s taken forever to get that ball rolling.”

Asa to 2024, he said, “We have a lot of things that are left open from this year that I would like to see closed. Number one, our very first meeting last year, we made national news with the water and sewer issue. We’re still working on that, and I want to see that thing closed out. I want to see it put to rest. I want to be done with that. That’s one of the main things. We have, of course, the county administrative building won’t be done this time next year. It should be getting close. The golf course project, that seems like it’s been a long time in the making. I can’t wait for that to be done and get that wrapped up.

“I want to get stuff done. I want to get stuff closed out. I don’t want things lingering, as much as I possibly can. And we need to make some more adjustments within county government. I want customer service to be at the forefront. I don’t think that necessarily been the case in some departments, but it definitely needs to be, be addressed,” Ireland added.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Community Leaders Look Ahead to 2024

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Times asked community leaders to tell us what they hope for or expected in 2024, either personally or professionally. There are the responses we received:

Commissioner President Earl “Buddy” Hance:

“As we step into the new year, the board is unified in a vision that honors Calvert’s rich heritage and maintains the economic vitality that keeps us resilient and steady. Engaging in effective and meaningful two-way communication with our residents, we have pledged to operate with transparency and accountability. We will work to ensure that our decisions and actions reflect the trust placed in us by the people we serve.

“We will continue to push forward with initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all and uphold the highest standards of safety, security and fiscal responsibility. Our focus will include supporting our career and volunteer services to meet the increasing demands for emergency medical services; continued collaboration with our Sheriff and local law enforcement; working with the Board of Education to address their budget needs; enhancing our parks and infrastructure; updating our zoning ordinances; supporting our business community; continuing our digital transformation and enhancing our cybersecurity posture; and continuing staff recruitment and retention efforts.

“We have a great group of commissioners that want the very best for Calvert County and together we look forward to another



Buddy Hance

Pat Mahoney

Lisa Grenis

Mark Willis

Jennifer Moreland

year of progress, prosperity and strengthened community bonds.”

Chesapeake Beach Mayor Pat “Irish” Mahoney

“For 2024 I wish for Calvert Countians to focus less on divisive politics and more on our health and the wellbeing of our families, friends and neighbors, children in particular:

Drive slower, walk more

Exercise regularly, reduce stress

Provide our children with the basics: full bellies, medicine, a wholesome education and protection from domestic violence and drug dealers

Board of Education member Lisa Grenis

“In 2024, I will continue to champion a common sense and conservative approach to education and the future of our schools. This includes unwavering support for our teachers and staff, giving our parents a stronger voice and ensuring full transparency and accountability across CCPS.

“This year, we need to:

“Create a fiscally responsible budget

“Strengthen our code of conduct to protect teachers and staff from student abuse and assault.

“Improve the learning experience by stopping the use of cell phones in the classroom.

“I believe CCPS can be the best in the state and the even the nation. Giving each student everything he or she needs to achieve academic excellence and be successful is our number one goal.”

Mark Willis, County Administrator

“In this new year, the Calvert County Government team is fully committed to translating the vision set forth by the county commissioners to better serve our community’s needs. We recognize that our staff is our greatest asset and are investing in their development to ensure they are equipped with the skills, tools and resources needed to excel in their roles. Our aim is to foster a workforce that is great at their jobs and aligned with our core values of innovation, accountability, integrity and service. In

2024, we will continue to streamline our processes internally and encourage a culture of excellence that sets the foundation for an engaged and thriving community.”

Jennifer Moreland, Director of Community Resources

“My goal for the new year is to be more present and intentional with my family. When your kids get to be teens, you realize how fleeting your time is with them. My parents and their siblings are getting older too and the time with them is also precious. I plan to reduce time spent on trivial things and be more proactive in planning time together with my family. The strength of my family is important to me. In my work, my staff and I assist people at all stages of life with every kind of challenging life circumstance. Strong families can help people overcome these challenges. They are like a team, showing encouragement and ready to go to bat for each other when life demands it.”

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CalvertHealth Welcomes First Baby of the Year



It's a boy! Congratulations to parents Jacki and Keith Bazyk of California on the birth of their son, Rowdy on January 2. Weighing 8lbs. 3.6 oz, Rowdy was the first baby born at CalvertHealth Medical Center in 2024.

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CALVERT COUNTY CRIME BLOTTER

During the week of December 11 – December 17, 2023, Calvert County Sheriff’s Office Deputies responded to 1,768 calls for service throughout the community.

Damaged Property: 23-88599

On December 13, 2023, Deputy MacWilliams responded to the 1700 block of Old Adelina Road in Prince Frederick, for the report of damaged property. The complainant advised sometime between 8 p.m. on Dec. 12 and 10 a.m. on Dec. 13, an unknown suspect damaged the lock system for the victim’s security gate. The estimated value of damaged property is \$500.00.

Damaged Property: 23-89574

On December 17, 2023, DFC Mohler responded to Dunkirk Park located at 10750 Southern Maryland Blvd. in Dunkirk, for the report of property destruction. Investigation revealed an unknown suspect(s) vandalized a portable toilet at the dog park. The estimated value of the damaged property is \$900.00.

Theft: 23-88131

On December 11, 2023, Deputy Tunnell was dispatched to the Sheriff’s Office for the report of a theft. The complainant advised a backpack with various medications had been stolen from her unlocked vehicle while parked in the 400 block of W. Dares Beach Road in Prince Frederick. The estimated value of the stolen property is unknown at this time.

Theft: 23-88695

On December 13, 2023, DFC Shoemaker responded to Taco Bell located at 13400 HG Trueman Road in Solomons, for the reported theft. The complainant advised an unknown male entered the restaurant and proceeded to the restrooms. The male was observed exiting the bathroom grabbing food from the counter and exiting the store without making payment. The suspect was seen fleeing in an Amazon van. The estimated value of stolen property is \$10.00.

Theft: 23-89103

On December 15, 2023, Deputy Lewis responded to Traders Seafood Restaurant located at 8132 Bayside Road in Chesapeake Beach, for the report of a theft. Investigation revealed **Jennifer Rachel Tate**, 43 of no fixed address, ordered food totaling \$25.71 and left the restaurant without paying for her meal. Tate was placed under arrest for Theft: Less than \$100.

Theft: 23-89470

On December 16, 2023, Deputy Grierson responded to Baia Coastal Kitchen located at 8323 Bayside Road in Chesapeake Beach, for the report of a theft. Investigation revealed that **Latorri Alicesarah Jones**, 32 of Lusby, entered the restaurant at 10 a.m. and ordered food and multiple alcoholic beverages totaling \$71.22 while sitting at the bar. After several hours passed, Jones advised she had no way of paying for the food and service. Due

to a call history of Jones in similar incidents, Jones was issued a criminal citation for Theft: Less than \$100.

ARRESTS



On December 15, 2023, Deputy Jones to a residence on Eastern Church Road in Lusby, for the report of a disorderly subject. The complainant advised a male was on scene

breaking out car windows. As Deputy Jones pulled into the driveway, he was drawn to the residence due to the sound of glass breaking. Deputy Jones observed a male walking toward him with a baseball bat. The suspect **Thomas Dahsay Gary, Jr.**, 27 of Lusby, was placed into custody. Investigation revealed Gary had smashed out three vehicles’ front and rear windshields, the front residence storm door, and four house windows. The estimated value of the damaged property is \$4,000.00. Gary was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with Assault 2nd Degree, Malicious Destruction of Property Value \$1,000+, and Malicious Destruction of Property Value Less \$1,000.



On December 17, 2023, DFC Plant responded to PetSmart located at 10400 Southern Maryland Blvd. in Dunkirk, for the reported trespassing. The complainant

advised a male suspect later identified as **Michael Joseph Keller**, 60 of no fixed address, was in front of the business yelling at customers. Upon making contact with the suspect, Keller began yelling profanities causing a disturbance in the presence of employees and customers of local businesses. Keller was placed into custody for transport and began spitting inside the patrol vehicle. Keller continued to use profanities and threatened the officer and threatened to burn down the PetSmart. Keller was charged with Trespassing: Private Property, Disorderly Conduct, Intoxicated Public Disturbance, and Arson/Threat.

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

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

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Calvert Emergency Rental Assistance Program Helped Over 400 Households

Calvert County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) provided vital aid to over 400 households from May 2021 to June 2023, disbursing nearly \$3.8 million in rent and utility assistance to renters throughout the county. Administered by the Department of Community Resources, the program demonstrates the county's dedication to improving the well-being and quality of life for its citizens.

Funded through two grants from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, ERAP was instrumental in the county's efforts to alleviate the economic strains faced by residents, preventing evictions and utility shut-offs. The program assisted income-limited households who fell below the area median income (AMI) with up to 18 months of assistance. Most households served were below 30% of the AMI for Calvert County, which is \$40,500 per year for a household of four.

The county received \$1.8 million for ERAP in 2021 and an additional \$2 million in 2022. The program's funding was fully expended by June 2023.

"ERAP was a significant undertaking, reflective of our commitment to serving the

community," said Community Resources Director Jennifer Moreland. "It provided immediate relief to hundreds of households and highlighted the strength of our community partnerships."

Through its execution, the program underscored the effective collaboration between county staff and nonprofit partners, LifeStyles of Maryland, Inc., and Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc., which managed individual cases and provided housing stability services to clients.

"Collaborating with nonprofit partners is critical to the success of programs like ERAP, as it brings together diverse expertise and resources for a common goal," said Moreland. "Their involvement ensures that our assistance is effectively distributed but also resonates with the real-life challenges of our residents."

Collaboration across county departments also played a role in the success of ERAP. During the three years the program was operational, staff from the Department of Communications & Media Relations, the Department of Finance & Budget and the Department of Public Works, Water & Sewerage Division, played a pivotal role in

ensuring the community was aware of the program and payments were made promptly. At times, the Department of Finance & Budget processed nearly 150 payments a month to prevent evictions.

The success of ERAP provides a window into the Department of Community Resources' broader mission of service and support. The department manages a range of services and divisions, including Public Transportation and the Office on Aging. It also acts as a liaison with local human services agencies, including Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse, Calvert County Department of Social Services, Calvert County Family Network, Calvert County Health Department, Calvert Library, Housing Authority of Calvert County and Maryland Extension Service. In addition, Community Resources administers programs aimed at reducing living costs, such as the House Keys 4 Employees Program, the National Association of Counties (NACo) Pharmacy Discount Card Program and the NACo Dental Discount Card Program. Learn more at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/CommunityResources.

Though ERAP has ended, residents in need of financial assistance or referrals to

other services are encouraged to contact the following agencies:

- Calvert County Department of Social Services: 443-550-6900
- LifeStyles of Maryland, Inc.: 301-609-9900 or 1-866-293-0623
- Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc.: 301-274-4474
- Maryland Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
- Maryland Housing & Energy Assistance (Navigate to the "Housing & Energy Assistance" section)

Residents who are having difficulty making utility payments are also encouraged to contact their utility provider as soon as possible. SMECO and BG&E may be able to provide options that prevent loss of service.

Find information on Calvert County Government services online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov. Stay up to date with Calvert County Government on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyMd and YouTube at www.youtube.com/CalvertCountyGov.

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What's Coming to Calvert

The following list of pending Category 1 site plans was presented to the Calvert County Planning Commission at their Dec. 13 meeting. That means that the proposals are on the list for consideration by the planning commission at a future meeting. The meeting was in a hybrid form, both virtually and in person at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center (HEBCC), 901 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick.

1. CSPR-142807, **655 STR Gymnastics & Dance**, located at 655 Skinners Turn Road, Owings, on multiple lots totaling 1.9 acres, zoned light industrial (I-1), using private water and sewer. Proposed 10,800-square-foot building for holding classes in gymnastics (7,400 sf) and dance (3,400 sf). The submitted plan indicates a possible address change due to dual road frontage. The concept submittal was accepted March 23, 2022. Agent: Wilkerson & Associates
2. CSPR-142842, **Sunset Terrace Condominiums, Mixed Use**, located at 14474 & 14478 South Solomons Island Road, Solomons, on two lots totaling .42 acres, zoned Solomons Town Center. Proposed 19,191-sf, three-story building for mixed use: 1,000-sf commercial retail space and 18,191 sf for eight condominiums with parking and site improvements. This project is on public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted July 27, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett
3. C SPR - 142856, **Solomons Condominiums**, located at 14516 & 14518 South Solomons Island Road, Solomons, on two lots totaling .67 acres, zoned Solomons Town Center. Proposed 34,483-sf, four-story building for mixed use: 2,450-square-foot commercial retail space and 32,033 sf for 13 multi-family condominiums with parking and site improvements. This project is in the Critical Area and on public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted July 27, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett
4. CSPR-142881, **Prince Frederick Town Center South, Shopping Plaza**, located on South Solomons Island Road, Prince Frederick, on 115-acre parcel, zoned Town Center/Forest District. This project will have private water but will utilize public sewer. Proposed 75,099 sf of disturbance for commercial retail space with parking and site improvements. The concept submittal was accepted September 28, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett
5. CSPR-142988, **St. Leonard Volunteer Fire Department**, located on Calvert Beach Road, St. Leonard, on a 5.076-acre parcel, zoned Town Center/Village District Subarea B. This project will have public water but will utilize a private septic sys-

tem. Proposed 4.1 acres of disturbance for demolition of the existing pavilion and construction of a two-story, 40,280-sf fire & rescue service building with 8 double loaded apparatus bays. The concept submittal was accepted June 28, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

6. CSPR-143093, **Calvert C&D Recycling Center**, located in the Calvert Industrial Park on Ketch Road, Prince Frederick, on a 2.49-acre parcel, zoned I-1, and will utilize public water and sewer. The applicant proposes to develop the property as a commercial construction and demolition recycling facility with a 19,220-sf, 1-story building with an anticipated 2.57 acres of disturbance for construction of the facility. The concept submittal was accepted October 25, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

The following Major Subdivision Proposed Project List for Upcoming Review was also submitted at the same meeting.

1. SD-142770, **Lusby Villas**, Lot 1, located on Lusby Parkway in Lusby. One commercial lot proposed on one parcel consisting of 24.87 acres, Zoned Lusby Town Center, Village Residential Office District, Tier I. The Preliminary Plan submittal was accepted January 26, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett
2. SD-142999, **Magnolia Ridge**, located on Fox Run Boulevard, Prince Frederick, on a 31.29-acre parcel, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District and will be served by public water & sewer. Proposed 164 Townhouse Units and 96 Apartments with a density of 8.3 units per acre. The project proposes 3.04 acres of recreation area and 12.58 acres of open space. The Preliminary Plan submittal was accepted August 23, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett
3. SD-142999, **Magnolia Ridge West**, located at Armory Road and Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, with frontage and access from Dares Beach Road & Armory Road. The project is proposed on multiple parcels totaling 26.30 acres, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District. The subdivision proposes 79 townhome TDR lots on 4.58 acres total with a density of 3 units per acre. This project will be served by public water and sewer. A total of 19.47 acres of total open space is provided, including 3.81 acres of proposed recreation area. The preliminary submittal was accepted September 27, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

Concept submittals have been removed from this list. There is no assurance that those projects will reach Preliminary Plan status. If/when they do, they will be placed on this list under their Preliminary Plan project number.

Calvert Elks Lodge Tees Off for Cancer Care



Elks member Scott "Smitty" Smith presents a check to Melissa Carnes with the CalvertHealth Foundation at an event on November 11. The generous donation will support cancer care initiatives at CalvertHealth.

On Friday, September 29, 2023, more than 100 people gathered at Chesapeake Hills Golf Course to support the Calvert Elks Lodge #2620 at their annual golf outing. Proceeds from this year's tournament will benefit Cancer Care at CalvertHealth, to include advancements in clinical care, the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment and CalvertHealth's continued affiliation with Duke Health – which is opening doors to clinical trials and research for area patients.

"It was a great day for a great cause," said Scott "Smitty" Smith, Elks member and chair of the 2023 tournament. "The Calvert Elks work to support many worthy charities in our community. When we heard that CalvertHealth was raising funds for cancer care, our lodge knew we had to be a part of this important project. So many people in our community are touched by cancer and knowing that our tournament is going

to help bring new equipment and resources to our community hospital makes the event more significant for our Elks members."

On Saturday, November 11, Smith presented a check to the CalvertHealth Foundation for \$18,972.16 – the proceeds of this year's golf outing. "We are so blessed by this incredible gift from the Calvert Elks," says Melissa Carnes, CalvertHealth Foundation Grants Manager. "This gift is going to positively impact the lives of so many people as we use these funds to support enhancements to our cancer care service line."

Special thanks to the 2023 tournament sponsors including: Gadway's Property Management, Wheelhouse and Beer Garden, LLC, Bayside Chevrolet/Toyota, The Pier, Dowell Financial Services, A-Game Home Inspections, The Tavern, Morgan Russell, Re/Max, Priceless Home Improvements, and Motto Mortgage Preferred.

Republican Women Leaders Install Officers



The Republican Women Leaders of Calvert installed new officers for the 2024-2025 term at their December meeting at Bulrushes Cafe in Prince Frederick. The President of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women, Sharon Carrick, installed the new officers.

Shown at left is MFRW President Sharon Carrick and officers (l to r) are: Jana Barberio, President; Miriam Caudill, Vice President; Janet Cosh, Corresponding Secretary; Carolyn Rice, Treasurer; Amanda Dolina, Recording Secretary. These officers, together with retiring President Donna Zupancic will constitute the Executive Board of the RWLC for the next two years. All Republican women are welcome. Meeting information is posted at: www.Republicanwomenleadersofcalvert.com

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, Jan 4

STEAMLab

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
6-6:30 p.m. for grades K-2
6:45-7:30 p.m. for grades 3-5

Become a scientist and explore topics related to STEAM on the first Thursday each month! Build, code, count, and create with different activities each session. Registration required. For accessibility accommodations, please contact us at least 2 weeks before the event to 410-535-0291. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Pints and Private Eyes Book Discussion

Calvert Library (Zoom)
7-8 p.m.

Have you always longed to drink beer and talk detective books with a librarian? Pints and Private Eyes is a book group for fans of noir, detective and crime fiction. We are currently meeting online on the first Thursday of the month from 7 - 8pm. Register for the link! From Goodreads: "Hollow's Edge use to be a quiet place. A private and idyllic neighborhood where neighbors dropped in on neighbors, celebrated graduation and holiday parties together, and looked out for one another. But then came the murder of Brandon and Fiona Truett. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Jan 5

On Pins & Need

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
1-4 p.m.

Bring your quilting, needlework, knitting, crocheting or other project for an afternoon of conversation and shared creativity. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

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. For more information visit calvertmarinemuseum.com

Sat, Jan 6

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
12-3 p.m.

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Dungeons & Dragons – TEENS

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
12:30-4 p.m.

Meet up and have fun with D&D. Players ages 13-19 of all levels and interest welcome. Registration is required. For accessibility accommodations, please contact us at least 2 weeks before the event. 410-535-0291. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Jan 8

Book Discussion

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
3819 Harbor Road, Chesapeake Beach
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join us this month to discuss "The Year of Yes" by Shonda Rhimes. The megatalented creator of Grey's Anatomy and Scandal and executive producer of How to Get Away with Murder chronicles how saying yes for one year changed her life - and how it can change yours, too. C410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Jan 9

Social Security: Disability Benefits

Calvert Library (Zoom)
12-1 p.m. en Español
1-2 p.m. in English

We invite you to this virtual presentation to learn more about disability benefits, eligibility requirements, and the application process. Presentation by Diana Varela, Public Affairs Specialist for the Social Security Administration followed by Q&A. This event will not be recorded. If you'd like to use the wifi and library computer to participate in this Zoom event, please choose "in-person" registration. Call the library if the Prince Frederick location is not the most convenient for you. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Jan 10

Grooving and Moving

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
9:30-10 a.m.

Join us for Grooving and Moving where we will use music and movement to start the day! Fans of Storytime will enjoy this music session as we move, play instruments and sing together. For ages Birth - 5. , 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Grooving and Moving

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
10:15-10:45 a.m.

Join us for Grooving and Moving where we will use music and movement to start the day! Fans of Storytime will enjoy this music session as we move, play instruments and sing together. For ages Birth - 5. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

JobSource Mobile Career Center

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
1-4 p.m.

Stop by to visit the JobSource Mobile Career Center for your job search needs! Get job counseling and resume help, search for jobs and connect with Southern Maryland JobSource. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

WOW (Work on Whatever) Wednesday Kids

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
2-3:30 p.m.

Kids in K-8th grade can bring their project and supplies. Whether it's paper craft, scrapbook, quilting, origami or whatever you're working on. We'll have some crafting materials to try out too. Get your projects done and make new friends! For accessibility accommodations, please contact us at least two weeks before the event to 410-535-0291. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Alzheimer's Caregivers Support

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
3-4 p.m.

Get tips and support from other caregivers. Facilitated by Charles Harrell and Dennis Poremski of the Alzheimer's Association. Alzheimer's Association caregiver support groups, conducted by trained facilitators, are a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to develop a support system, exchange practical information on caregiving challenges and possible solutions. Talk through issues and ways of coping, share feelings, needs and concerns and learn about community resources. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

STEAMLab

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

Become a scientist and explore topics related to STEAM on the second Wednesday each month! Build, code, count, and create with different activities each session. Registration required. Intended for scientists in grades 3-5. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Thu, Jan 11

Sea Squirts

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

This month's theme is "Are they Fish? Jellyfish." 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 craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 - 40 minutes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Included with museum admission.

Ongoing

New Exhibit! Backyard Ballads

Calvert Marine Museum
10 a.m. - 5 p.m., daily

Be sure you catch our newest micro exhibit, Backyard Ballads, which will be on display throughout the year. This exhibit will inspire visitors to engage in citizen science by learning how to create a welcoming bird habitat in their own yard, as well as learning how to identify our native bird species. Included with museum admission.



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63					64					65			
66					67					68			

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snakelike fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David __, US playwright
- 38. Move one's head slightly
- 39. Secret rendezvous
- 41. Improved
- 44. A place to exercise
- 45. 18-year astronomical period
- 46. Automobile
- 48. You can take it
- 49. A radio band
- 51. Jaws of an animal
- 52. Short-billed rails
- 54. Chinese province
- 56. Shameless and undisguised
- 60. Horizontal passage into a mine
- 61. Adult males
- 62. Fail to entertain
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. City in north-central Utah
- 65. Southern U.S.
- 66. German river
- 67. Oxygen
- 68. Make law

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into
- 5. Commercial document (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They __
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. __ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware

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DECEMBER 7 SOLUTIONS

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3	8	6	9	4	2	7	5	1
1	4	2	3	9	6	8	7	5
6	3	8	5	1	7	2	4	9
9	7	5	2	8	4	1	6	3

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References Available



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St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Jan 4

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

American Legion Post 221
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. E-mail us at alpost221@aol.com or call 301- 481-6625 for more information.

45779 Fire Department Ln., California
7 p.m. to Midnight

Buy-in: \$80.00
Starting Chips:20,000 chips
Blinds will increase every 20 minutes.
Please enter through the side of the building. No late entries allowed. Sign up before 7 pm. For any question or additional details contact:

James Dean
240-577-0828
jdeanjunior@gmail.com

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

GriefShare is a 13-week grief recovery group for those who are recovering from the death of a loved one. The loss does not need to be recent. It combines a video presentation, group discussion, and workbook material. Each session is self-contained, so you do not have to attend in sequence. This small group is open to the community.

Leaders: Heather Wolfe (LCMFT) and Kathryn Rivers

Limited space. To register for this free recovery group: churchteams.com/m/Register.asp?a=SmZaTzFqenFjMFE9

Upcoming

Red Cross Blood Drive

Mt Zion United Methodist Church
27108 Mt. Zion Church Rd.,
Mechanicsville
Mon, Jan 15
12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter "Mt Zion UMC Mechanicsville" to schedule an appointment.

Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

Fri, Jan 5

ELKs Texas Holdem Tournament

St Mary's County Elks Lodge

Wed, Jan 10

GriefShare Recovery Group

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
23421 Kingston Creek Rd., California

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library

UPCOMING EVENTS



De-Stress at the Library

The start of a new year can feel stressful. Come to the Lexington Park Library on Saturday, January 6 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. and enjoy some relaxing experiences. Make some fluffy new friends with the therapy animals from Pets on Wheels. Paint with watercolors. Make a meditation jar. Or just enjoy some relaxing music and enjoy some sensory activities. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Connect and Converse

Do you enjoy arts and crafts? Do you enjoy games? Do you want to make new friends? Connect and Converse might just be the event for you! Join us at the Charlotte Hall Library on Monday, January 8 from 12 - 1 p.m. for an opportunity to connect and converse with others. During this monthly program, we will gather in the meeting room to either create artwork or play a game. You are encouraged (but not required) to bring your own lunch with you! This event is intended for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities as well as their friends, family, and caregivers. Connect and Converse usually meets on the sec-

ond Monday of the month. Food will not be provided.

Introduction to Google Workspace Highlights

New to Google? Would you like to use Google for more than just searching? This is the class for you! Lexington Park Library on Monday, January 8 and 6 - 7 p.m. Google features much more than just a search engine. We will focus on some of the most commonly used and most useful aspects of the Google Workspace like Gmail, Google Calendar, Drive and Photos. Learn how to use them to fully benefit from your Google account. Please bring your Gmail address, password, and cell phone. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Intro To Canva: A Graphic Design Tool

Learn to create polished posters and flyers like a pro! Join us at Charlotte Hall Library on Tuesday, January 9 from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. for this introductory class to learn how to use Canva, a free, web-based graphic-design tool. We'll get you started with Canva and cover the basics of creating your own promotional flyer. Computer Skills needed for this class:

Advanced mouse and keyboard abilities. Register on www.stmalib.org to reserve your spot and receive a reminder email. Walk-ins welcome as space allows.

Purposeful Play : Serious Fun for Preschoolers

Join us at Lexington Park Library on Tuesday, January 9 from 4 - 4:45 p.m. for learning-based crafts, games, and activities as we play our way to developing valuable school readiness skills such as fine motor control, following directions, and group participation. Activities are designed with preschoolers in mind and vary week to week. No registration required.

Vision Board Collage Class

Need help with your New Year's resolution? Want to do something crafty and creative that requires absolutely no skill? Join us at Leonardtown Library on Wednesday, January 10 from 2 - 3:30 p.m. in making some fun collages to encourage you in achieving your goals! Feel free to bring any printed images, magazines, etc. that you would like to use or to share with others. We will have some available, as well as poster paper and various other crafting supplies and tools. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Library 101: Parent Resource Refresher

Dealing with homeschool burnout? Come learn about the ways the Library can help! Homeschoolers and Parents can benefit from learning about all the resources the Library has to offer! Lexington Park Library on Friday, January 12 from 10 - 11 a.m. We'll go over navigating the physical Lexington Park Library, searching the catalog, all of our online resources and how to access them, using your library account and smartphone apps, and more! You'll leave with a whole collection of bookmarks and printouts to walk you through everything and also inform you about anything we may not have time to fully touch on. This program is aimed specifically towards homeschoolers & parents, so we will be paying specific attention to our library services that are geared towards children and families. This includes resources to help with finding materials for different subjects, using our online Homework Helper, our Apps, Events that we offer, and so much more! Kids are welcome to come along! We will have crafts set up to keep them occupied while you learn! Register on www.stmalib.org.

St. Mary's Department of Aging & Human Services

Programs and Activities

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

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

WARM Program Seeks Volunteer Drivers

With colder weather settling in, St. Mary's County Government's Department of Aging & Human Services (DAHS) is seeking volunteer drivers for the Wrapping Arms 'Round Many (WARM) program, which provides emergency shelter during winter months for homeless individuals in St. Mary's County. DAHS coordinates transportation for the WARM program, to include the recruitment and scheduling of volunteer drivers. Drivers must be 18 years of age or older and have a valid driver's license. Volunteers will be given access to a county-owned van. Volunteer slots are open seven days per week while WARM is operational.

Volunteer drivers are divided into evening and morning shifts. Evening drivers pick up WARM guests at the Church of Ascension at 5:30 p.m. for transportation to their host site for the evening. Morning drivers arrive at the host site by 7 a.m. the next morning to transport guests back to the Church of the Ascension.

This year's WARM season will end Sunday March 31, 2024. This is your opportunity to make a difference for those experiencing homelessness in our community. To volunteer, contact Ursula Harris at 301-475-4200, ext. 1658, via email to Ursula.Harris@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Teen Court Program Seeking Volunteers

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity in the new year? Consider volunteering with the St. Mary's County Teen Court Program! Teen Court is designed to reduce the number of youthful offenders and educate youth in an actual court environment. Teen Court is a juvenile justice diversion program offering the first-time misdemeanor offenders, ages 11-17, and first-time traffic offenders under the age of 18, the opportunity to accept accountability for their minor crimes without having to incur a permanent criminal record or traffic court fines and points. Teen Court is a voluntary

program that allows juvenile respondents to be judged by a jury of their peers.

The Teen Court Program also provides our county teens who are interested in our judicial system an opportunity to help their fellow teens and gain first-hand knowledge of the court system. Several of our teen attorneys have proceeded to utilize the experience gained through this program in their future goals and careers. Please contact the Teen Court Coordinator with any questions or to join our dedicated staff of volunteers who make this program work for the benefit of all the citizens of St. Mary's County.

For more information, visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/TeenCourt/ or contact Teen Court Coordinator Greg Jones at 301-475-4200, ext. 1852, or TeenCourt@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Loffler Book Club News

Loffler Senior Activity Center- On Friday, Jan. 5, at 2 p.m., discuss *A Season for Second Chances* by Jenny Bayliss (A holiday story) During the month of January read *Nazis on the Potomac* by Robert K. Sutton (Nonfiction) Discuss on Feb. 5 at 2 p.m.

Basketball for Ages 50+

Pick-up basketball games will be held in the gymnasium at Margaret Brent Recreation Center on Fridays, January 5–April 26, from 10 a.m. to noon. Games are open to both males and females. Advance registration is required; a minimum of 8 players is needed to run the session. Cost is \$30 payable in advance at the Garvey Senior Center. Advance registration is required. For more information, call 301-475-4200, ext. 1080.

Indoor Cornhole Competition

Who doesn't love a good round of cornhole? Compete in this casual & fun competition at Northern Senior Activity Center on Monday, January 8, from 1-3:30 p.m. Show off your skills or try it out for the first time. Keep in mind that this game requires good dexterity, throwing, and hand-eye coordination. The 1st and 2nd place win-

ners of the tournament will win a prize. This event will be held indoors. Register for this competition and pay the \$2 fee by visiting www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs." If assistance is needed, leave a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

Nutrition Presentation by Donna Taggart

On Monday, January 8, at 10 a.m., Donna will present "What's the scoop on non-nutritive sweeteners?" at the Loffler Senior Activity Center. Free. Register for this talk by going to www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660. ADDITIONALLY- Donna offers free personal nutritional education at 11 a.m. on the day she is here if you make an appointment with her by text message or calling 240-538-6539.

Living Well with Chronic Conditions

Join us at Northern Senior Activity Center on Tuesdays, January 9-February 13 from 1-3:30 p.m. and start doing something wonderful for yourself by improving your life even while dealing with a chronic health condition! This evidence-based program, led by certified co-leaders MarieNoelle Lautieri & Debbie Buckler, was developed by Stanford University to help people with chronic conditions take charge of their life. There is no charge for taking this class; however, a commitment to regular attendance is needed for good results.

Educational Video Series

Loffler Senior Activity Center will present the documentary *Tupperware!* on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 10 a.m. Summary: In the 1950s, American women discovered they could earn thousands, even millions of dollars, from bowls that burped. "Tupperware ladies" fanned out across the nation's living rooms, selling efficiency and convenience to their friends and neighbors through home parties. The secret behind Tupperware's success: the women of all

shapes, sizes, and backgrounds who discovered they could move up in the world without leaving the house. The unlikely partnership of Earl Silas Tupper, a reclusive small-town inventor, and Brownie Wise, a self-taught marketing whiz, and thousands of women unhappy with being pushed back to the kitchen after World War II, built an empire--bowl by bowl--that now spans the globe. Register for this video at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660. Free.

Memoirs for Your Grandchildren

Joyce Haderly will again present this popular class at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Thursdays, Jan. 18-Feb. 22, at 12:30 p.m. (6 sessions) Joyce will show you how to choose special memories from your lifetime and write about them so that your stories can be passed down to current and future generations. What may have been everyday events to you will be fascinating knowledge to great-great grandchildren- what better way for them to gain that knowledge than to read your very own words? Register for this course at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660.

AARP Smart Driver™ Safety Course

The AARP Smart Driver™ Safety Course will be held at Northern Senior Activity Center on Monday, January 29, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. with an hour lunch break at 11:30 a.m. This program includes emphasis on roundabouts, pavement markings, stop-sign compliance, red light running, and safety issues such as speeding, seat belt and turn signal use. The fee is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members. Payment is due to the instructor on January 29 payable by cash or check. Register by visiting www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs." If assistance is needed, leave a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

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

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



County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

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

In Remembrance

Dave Wilson, 87



We are heartbroken to announce the passing of a great man and gentle soul, who has resided in Hollywood, MD for over 50 years. David Wilson, "Dave", passed away on

December 9, 2023 in Callaway, MD. Born on September 24, 1936 in Philadelphia, PA, where he spent his youth, he was the son of the late David Wilson, Jr. and the late Catherine Marie Wilson.

In 1953, two days after his high school graduation, he joined the U.S. Navy. During his 22 years of service, he fought in the Vietnam War and retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer in 1975. Later, he retired from a career in Civil Service, where he made many lasting friendships.

David met his bride, Joan Ann Cameron Wilson, of Hollywood, MD, in 1958 and they wed at St. John's Catholic Church. They celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary this past August.

His children, Stephen C. Wilson (Beverly) of Hollywood, MD, Angela McCreary (Mark) of Charleston, SC, the late Brian Wilson, and Kathleen "Kate" Deroche (David) of Mechanicsville, MD, are forever grateful and blessed to have such a devoted father, grandfather, and friend.

He is also survived by his ten grandchildren who grew up with his humor, wisdom, and loving spirit; Beth Martin (Kelsey) of Hughesville, MD, Jonathan Martin (Bianca) of Mt. Pleasant, SC, Kassie Irwin (Johnny) of Ireland, Adam Martin (Mae Mae) of Awendaw, SC, Ben Martin (Makaela) of Charleston, SC, David Wilson (Chen) of Katy, TX, Joanann Dedge (Daniel) of Altha, FL, Maria Kirby (Sam) of Niceville, FL, Andrea Deroche of Mechanicsville, MD, and Erin Deroche (Daniel) of Mechanicsville, MD, and his nine great grandchildren who were the highlight of his later years.

In his younger years he ran many marathons and later competed in the Senior Olympics. Softball was also a big part of his sport and social life.

Dave was also a blood donor and regularly donated platelets. He received an award for his 150th donation at Bethesda Naval Hospital. He always said he just "wanted to help a fellow sailor in need", and he did.

Dave led his family with faith and moral integrity, teaching invaluable life lessons, the pursuit of happiness, and, most important, to love unconditionally. He's their forever role model and lives on always in the hearts of all who loved him. Fair Winds and Following Seas.

Contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's and/or St. John's Catholic Church.

Serving as pallbearers will be Jonathan Martin, Adam Martin, Benjamin Martin, and David Wilson.

Services will be announced at a later date.

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

Ann Hall, 81



Annie Marie (Ann) Hall, 81, of Chaptico, MD passed away peacefully at home on December 18th, 2023, surrounded by her loved ones after fighting a hard battle with cancer for over 12 years.

Ann was born on January 24th, 1942. She was the daughter of Robert and Charlotte Cook. She married her beloved husband, John Edward Hall Sr. (Puddin'), on August 26th, 1961. During their 62 years of marriage, they raised their children: John, Cynthia, and Wendy. Ann was a farmer's wife, home maker, and caregiver to her family. Ann worked at the Minitex Corporation for 21 years. Ann enjoyed playing bingo, going to yard sales, watching birds from her window, and spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She also enjoyed canning and cooking, she always made sure everyone was fed, especially Puddin'. She is most famously known for her canned tomatoes, potato salad, and most notably her chicken salad.

Ann is preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Charlotte Cook, and her sister, Mary (Teny) Wood.

Ann is survived by her husband, John Edward Hall Sr. (Puddin'); Children, John Hall Jr. (Susie), Cynthia "Cindy" Wise (Bobby), and Wendy Buckler (Dale) all of Chaptico, MD on the family farm; Siblings, Betty Stewart, Elaine Toney, and Susie Shotwell (Glenn); Grandchildren, Tiffany Hall (Zach Lawrence), Victoria Johnson (Adam), Courtney Brady (Paul Jr.), Gabrielle Wise, Anna Buckler, and Sydney Wise; and Great Grandchildren, Colton Lawrence, Bailee Johnson, Landon Lawrence, Parker Johnson, WillaDean Brady, and Weston Johnson.

Pallbearers are Zach Lawrence, Adam Johnson, Paul Brady Jr., Franklin Shotwell, James Goldring, and Dennis Hall. Honorary Pallbearers are her granddaughters, Tiffany, Victoria, Courtney, Gabrielle, Anna, and Sydney.

The family will receive friends for visitation on Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024 from 5:00pm - 8:00pm, with prayers at 7:00pm at Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, 41590 Fenwick Street, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Followed by a funeral service on Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024 at 10:00am at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 23070 Maddox Rd. Bushwood, MD 20618 with an Interment to follow at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery.

Contributions may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic Church P.O. Box 37 Bushwood, MD 20618, Hospice of St. Mary's P.O. Box 625 Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Condolences can be made to the family at www.mgfh.com.

Arrangements by Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home & Crematory, P.A., Leonardtown, MD

Bernadette Zimmerman, 86



Bernadette Zimmerman of Leonardtown, MD passed away on December 19, 2023 at the age of 86. Born on May 9, 1937 in Bushwood, MD she was the

daughter of the late Thomas Laurie and Essie Mae (Owens) Gibson. She lived in Bushwood until 2015 when she moved to Cedar Lane Senior Living Community in Leonardtown, MD. Bernadette was an active member of the community. Over the years, she helped work the Gibson family farm, coached softball and T-ball teams, directed the Sacred Heart church choir, led a 4H club, and was active with the Chopticon High School marching band and Sea Scouts Ship-548. She also played softball and volleyball. She earned two associate degrees in 2003 from the College of Southern Maryland. She loved children and animals.

Bernadette is survived by her children Anna (Mike Lyon), Caroline, Kurt, Alyssa, and Jason Zimmerman, and Shannon Riley (Melissa Freedman), siblings Mary (Betty) Williams, Helen Hewitt, and MacGuire Gibson, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband of 58 years, Leon Ray Zimmerman, former foster daughter Sharon Riley, her parents, and siblings Thomas Laurie, Jr., James, Francis, and Walter Gibson, and Rosaline Thorne.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 from 5:00-8:00 PM, with prayers at 7:00 PM, at the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD 20650. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 AM in Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bushwood, MD. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. A reception will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 10:00 AM at Sacred Heart Church Hall, Bushwood, MD.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to St. Mary's Animal Welfare League (SMAWL), P.O. Box 95, Leonardtown, MD 20650, or to Cedar Lane Senior Living Community, 22680 Cedar Lane Court, Leonardtown MD 20650 (<https://www.cedar-lane.org/>).

More information can be found at <https://>

mgfh.com.

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

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

Robin Mattingly, 70



Robin Ann Mattingly, 70, of Coltons Point, MD, passed away on December 28, 2023 at her home. Born on October 14, 1953 in Baltimore, MD, she was the daughter of

the late Edna Elizabeth Robinson, and had 11 siblings. Robin is survived by her children, Patricia Thompson, Roberta Hatch, and Angela Jenkins, as well as her grandchildren, Melanie, Sabrina, Morganne, and Jeffrey, and one great grandchild, Natalee.

Robin retired as an Administrative Secretary for the St. Mary's County Health Department. She loved spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchild, and was a member of the Seventh District Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary for 12 years. Robin enjoyed taking walks along the beach and collecting sea glass. She took pride in her yard and loved planting flowers; her favorite was red roses. Robin was able to finally take that trip to Australia that she always wanted in February 2020 with two of her daughters, Robbi and Angie.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 4, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with 7th District Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary prayers recited at 6:30 PM, in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held at 7:00 PM in the funeral home chapel with Deacon Joe Lloyd officiating. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the 7th District Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, P.O. Box 206, Avenue, MD 20609.

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

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

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County Times
St. Mary's County, Maryland

Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



Wandering Farther Afield

I hope everyone's Christmas was wonderful with lots of family and hugs. We had two great Christmases: one at my stepdaughter Michelle's house with so much food and family. Michelle even arranged one of those gag gift exchange games again which causes so much laughter, and our second Christmas was yesterday with my 2 sons and my youngest sons two little boys. There was so much food yesterday too since I made French Toast in the morning and then we had the traditional turkey with the family recipe for stuffing, and lots of sides, and cookies. My husband had smoked a ham Christmas morning which gave us enough ham for both days. Now I only need 360 something days to recover from all the food I ate and from all the shopping, cooking, and wrapping presents, etc. Part of my recovery is from making 8 batches of cranberry-orange shortbread cookies: each log makes from 30 to 36 cookies.



I treated myself one day a week before Christmas in the middle of a shopping trip through La Plata and Waldorf when I decided to make a detour and stop at The Farmhouse café and creperie at 5965 Washington Avenue in La Plata (near to the Lowes and Aldi). I have really been looking forward to them opening because I love crepes. I didn't think I was going to make it before they closed at 2pm, but stopped in about 30 minutes before they closed, and walked into this amazing, very busy restaurant that looked like it should be in Georgetown or Old Town Alexandria. The décor and the Christmas trees were beautiful, and it smelled so good inside.

Well, I thought I was going in for a quick crepe, but when I looked at the menu I found that they have a large full breakfast and lunch menu too. Somehow my eyes fell on the creamed chipped beef with home fries and that was all she wrote, though I did waver a bit over getting a cheese omelet. There is a nice homey atmosphere inside, so I found myself comfortably sitting with hot tea and creamed chipped beef and working on my Christmas list. The home fries were also delicious.

I saw a man checking on all the tables and checking with the servers and finally I asked if he might be the owner of this fine establishment. Yes, he said, he was the owner by the name of William DeVane. Mr. DeVane is a long time Charles County resident and businessman who owns another business, used to own the Accokeek Inn, and has been a farmer all of his life. He was very personable and said he originally built the business for his daughter Whitney who loves to make crepes, though he did initially question whether the business could make it just as a creperie and decided that adding breakfast and lunch was the best route. He worked on creating the business for two years digitally before starting renovations of the old farmhouse (re-purposing at its best). He also likes to use locally sourced ingredients from Charles and St. Mary's Counties, telling me he gets his mushrooms from here in St. Mary's County. I also watched as Mr. DeVane brought in a box of fresh produce earlier.

We talked about the restaurant and different things he had done in his life and when he mentioned The Accokeek Inn, I was trying to think if I had ever been there. I asked if that would have been the old Mick's Quail Inn where my mother worked at one time. He said no, but then his eyes lit up and he said, "Do you see what the tabletops are on? Those are the base pedestals that were in Mick's Quail Inn". I thought it was pretty neat that pieces of old Charles County had been refurbished and are living on in another local business. The main dining room alone has room for 44, so take all your friends or the whole family, and another dining area has space for 22.

I also asked if his future plans include being open longer than 2pm (at present their hours are 8am – 2 pm daily). Mr. DeVane said they hope to be open Friday and Saturday evenings after they gain their liquor license – looking at some time in January for that. He mentioned how nice it would be to have Mimosas with brunch. I was quickly nodding yes while he said that. I think I'll be making another trip soon when I wander farther afield again.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby.

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

FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Make your New Year's financial resolutions

Now that we've reached 2024, you might be thinking about your goals and hopes for the new year. But in addition to whatever personal resolutions you might make — volunteering, going to the gym more, learning a new language and others — why not make some financial resolutions, too?

Here are a few to consider:

- **Boost your retirement savings.** If you can afford it, try to increase your contributions to your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. The more you put away in these accounts, the greater your chances of reaching your retirement goals. At a minimum, contribute enough to your 401(k) to earn your employer's match, if one is offered. And whenever your salary goes up, consider raising the amount you put in to your 401(k).
- **Reduce your debts.** It's not always easy to reduce your debts — but it's worth the effort. The lower your debt load, the greater your monthly cash flow. So, look for ways to consolidate debts or find other, possibly more productive, ways of using credit. And if you truly can't afford something that's nonessential, don't go into debt for it. "Live within your means" is an old piece of advice, but it's just as valid now as ever.
- **Build an emergency fund.** If you suddenly needed a major home or car repair, or received a large medical bill not fully covered by insurance, would you have the funds available? If not, you might be forced to dip into your retirement accounts or other long-term investments. To avoid this possibility, try to build an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account that's separate from the ones you use to meet your daily expenses. It can take a while to build such a fund, but if you make it a priority and contribute regular amounts each month, you can make good progress.
- **Avoid emotional decisions.** Too many people overreact to events in the financial markets because they let their emotions get the better of them. If the market is temporarily down, it doesn't mean you need to sell investments to "cut your losses" — especially if these investments still have good fundamentals and are still appropriate for your portfolio. It can be hard to ignore market volatility, but you'll be better off if you focus on the long term and continue following an investment strategy that's designed to meet your needs.
- **Review your goals.** Over time, your goals may have changed. For example, while you once might have wanted to retire early, and planned for it, you may now find that you'd like to work a few more years. If that's the case, you may also need to adjust your financial and investment strategies.
- **Revisit your estate plans.** If you've married, divorced, remarried or added children to your family within the past few years, you may need to review the account titling and beneficiary designations on your 401(k) and other retirement assets, along with your estate-planning documents, such as your will or living trust. You might also need to revise these documents in other ways.

Of course, you may not be able to tackle all these resolutions at one time, but if you can work at them throughout the year, you can potentially brighten your financial outlook in 2024 — and beyond.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Contributed by David McDonough

Financial Advisor at Edward Jones

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HSMC Welcomes New Executive Director

Historic St. Mary's City Commission is excited to announce that John L. Seidel, Ph.D., has been appointed as the museum's new Executive Director, effective January 3, 2024. Dr. Seidel comes to the museum with an impressive background, having experience in archaeology, non-profits, and higher education. He will take on the role in the new year as Acting Executive Director Travis Parno, Ph.D. steps down to resume his position as Director of Research and Collections.



Dr. John L. Seidel

"It's been a pleasure and an honor serving as HSMCC's Acting Executive Director for the past nine months. Dr. Seidel brings a wealth of experience, skills, and leadership qualities to the museum, and I look forward to working with him to execute his vision."

Holding two Master's degrees and a Ph.D., Seidel has previously taught at Rutgers University, Drew University, University of Maryland College Park, and Washington College. While at Washington College he developed a new archaeology program, resulting in a new Anthropology major, and spearheaded the eventual establishment of a stand-alone Department of Anthropology. In 2006, he was appointed Interim Director of the College's Center for Environment Society (CES), becoming its full-time director in 2007 after a national search. Under his leadership, the CES saw an explosive growth in annual gifts, grants, and contracts; the development of extensive public programming that ranged from environmental science and habitat restoration to archaeology; K-12 STEM initiatives and extensive teacher training programs; growth of the Center in staffing and volunteers; and the establishment of three labs, the Public Archaeology Laboratory, the Watershed Innovation Lab, and a Geographic Information Systems Lab.

His wife Elizabeth also worked at Washington College, in the role of Archaeology Lab Director and Senior Staff Archaeologist. Elizabeth Seidel began her career in the late 1980s at the Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology. She has worked for the University of Maryland College Park, Historic Londontown, the Lost Towns Project of Anne Arundel County, and various con-

sulting firms. In 1999, Elizabeth launched Washington College's Public Archaeology Lab, stepping down from the role last March.

Seidel expressed his excitement at joining HSMC, saying "From the professional staff to volunteers and the Commissioners, the team at St. Mary's is truly impressive. My wife Liz and I are delighted to be joining this great community." He continued, "After 25 years at Washington College, I took some time to survey the landscape and figure out my next chapter. This opening at St. Mary's City couldn't have been more timely for me, and I'm thrilled to have been selected. I'm especially energized by the remarkable opportunities in front of us as we approach the 400th anniversary of the founding of the City."

"We are excited about Dr. Seidel's deciding to join Historic Saint Mary's City as Executive Director," said Tim Heely, Commission Chair. "His experience, energy, and fresh perspective will be a tremendous addition to the City."

The land Historic St. Mary's City encompasses is the site of the fourth permanent settlement in British North America, was Maryland's first settlement in 1634, and for sixty-one years (until 1695) its colonial capital. Today, Historic St. Mary's City is an outdoor museum of living history and archaeology dedicated to telling the diverse stories of early Tidewater Maryland. For more information about the museum, contact the Visitor Center at 301-994-4370 or email info@stmaryscity.org.

Commission on Public Health Announces 2024 Meeting Schedule

Maryland's Commission on Public Health released its 2024 meeting schedule. The monthly Commission meetings for 2024 start on Thursday, January 4th from 2-5 pm and are hosted at the Baltimore County Department of Health with a virtual option. Agendas and meeting information are available at smchd.org/CommissionOnPublicHealth.

Members of the public may attend Commission meetings virtually or in-person but need to pre-register. Community members may submit requests for in-per-

son attendance by emailing MD.CoPH@maryland.gov with full name and jurisdiction of residence by 9 am EST on the day of the meeting. Due to space limitations the Commission may be unable to accommodate requests for in-person attendance. Community members interested in attending the Commission meeting virtually can use the virtual meeting link on the agenda.

For more information on the Maryland Commission on Public Health, please visit smchd.org/CommissionOnPublicHealth.

Patuxent River Utility Services Hiring Event

Apply online by scanning the QR code below prior to the hiring event. You will be contacted for your interview time after your application has been reviewed.
Walk-ins welcome for pre-screening interviews.

January 12
9:00 am – 5:30 pm
Hampton Inn Lexington Park
22211 Three Notch Road
Lexington Park, Maryland 20653

ASUS is transitioning operations of the water and wastewater utility systems on Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

Interviews will be held for the following position types:

- Administrative
- Management
- Field Operations
- EH&S
- Engineering & Construction
- Treatment Operations
- Geospatial

ASUS has been awarded a 50-year contract by the U.S. Government to operate, maintain, and provide construction management services for the water distribution and wastewater collection facilities at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, a United States Navy air station located in Maryland.



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Contact RSVP Project Manager Monika
Williams at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1653,
or RSVP@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Museums Receive \$10,000 Grant Gift

The Friends of St. Clement's Island & Piney Point Museums, the non-profit organization that supports the historic sites overseen by St. Mary's County Government's Museum Division, was recently awarded \$10,000 from Maryland Humanities through the Hatza Memorial SHINE (Strengthening the Humanities Investment in Nonprofits for Equity) Grant Program for general operating funds.

"We are truly honored that our organization was selected for this grant funding," says Dale Springer, President of the Friends of St. Clement's Island & Piney Point Lighthouse Museums. "These funds will help us continue our mission to sup-

port and preserve local history and provide educational and leisure programming through our museums here in St. Mary's County."

SHINE Grant recipients include museums, historic sites, preservation & historical societies, and community & cultural organizations. General operating expenses include salaries, rent, utilities, supplies, equipment, programs, and other expenses. The grants provide full flexibility to nonprofits, allowing them to determine where funds are most needed. These grants are funded by the State of Maryland via the Maryland Historical Trust. Learn more about the SHINE Grant Program and recipients at: www.mdhumanities.org/grants.

County Seeks Nominations for 2023 Sustainability Awards

The St. Mary's County Commission on the Environment (CoE) is seeking nominations for the 2023 Sustainability Awards, which recognize St. Mary's County organizations and residents for outstanding efforts to improve our local environment.

Community members are encouraged to submit nominations for students or schools, restaurants, businesses, non-profits, farms or agricultural organizations, and even individuals or a household that has demonstrated environmental stewardship, resource conservation, innovative or best practices and/or pollution prevention. Nominees for the 2023 calen-



dar year should demonstrate an impressive commitment to improving local environmental impacts. The 2022 Sustainability Award Winners were Southern Maryland Sierra Club and the Environmental Division of the Department of Public Works at Naval Air Station Patuxent River.

Nomination forms are due by 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2024. Nominations and requests for more information on the awards should be emailed to CoEStMarys@gmail.com.

For more information on the Commission on the Environment, please visit stmaryscountymd.gov/coe.

Mobile Library Ribbon Cutting Announced

St. Mary's County Library and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County are excited to announce the upcoming ribbon cutting ceremony for the Mobile Library.

Community members are welcome to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 1 p.m. at the Leonardtown Library & Garvey Senior Activity Center, located at 23630 Hayden Farm Ln in Leonardtown, to celebrate this new resource for our community.

"We have been anxiously awaiting the delivery of our new mobile library, and hope the community is as excited as we are to officially get it out on the road," said Commissioner President, James Randy Guy. "The mobile library will serve as a gateway to knowledge and services that will meet our residents where they are!"

"We are grateful to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Maryland State Library, the State of Maryland, many generous donors, and of course St. Mary's County government for funding the mobile library and its staff," said Michael Blackwell, St. Mary's County Library Director. "We are excited to extend great library services to meet people where there is need."

RSVPs are appreciated by January 5, 2024, to ensure we have enough seating, handouts, and refreshments available for attendees. RSVPs and inquiries may be directed the Public Information Office via email to pio@stmaryscountymd.gov or by phone at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1340.

For more information about the St. Mary's County Library, please visit: www.stmalib.org.

Oral Histories of Lexington Park "Flat Tops" Now Available Online



The St. Mary's County Historical Society, in partnership with St. Mary's County Government is pleased to announce the digitization of the Lexington Manor Oral History Collection, which is now available to the public on the St. Mary's County Historical Society website at: www.stmary-shistory.org.

"Digitizing this collection and making it publicly available allows everyone to explore the history of this area through the words of their friends, relatives, and neighbors," said Historical Society Executive Director, Peter La Porte. "We are honored to work in partnership with St. Mary's County Government and other community partners to ensure these stories are told."

The Lexington Manor Oral History collection features eight interviews with former residents of the Lexington Park and Lexington Manor neighborhoods, both from their early days as WWII and post-WWII Navy housing for civilian contractors. Historians have called the neighborhood "the earliest example of modern community

planning in St. Mary's County" and connect the neighborhood to the larger story of affordable housing in Southern Maryland.

"St. Mary's County Government is proud to be a part of this effort to preserve and share our local history," said Commissioner President Randy Guy. "I encourage everyone in our community to check out this collection and take a virtual stroll down memory lane with voices from our own community as your guide."

Digitization of the Lexington Manor Oral History Collection is part of the St. Mary's County Historical Society's "Through Countian Eyes" oral history and online exhibition project. The project aims to digitize multiple oral history collections held by the Historical Society and accompany them with online exhibitions situating the collections in their broader historical contexts. Additional exhibits are scheduled to be released during the Winter and Spring of 2024.

For more information, please contact the Historical Society at (301) 475-2467.

MedStar St. Mary's Welcomes First Baby of the Year



Welcome to the world, baby River! Born in the early hours of Jan. 1, two days after his due date, the Wilson family has welcomed MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's first baby of 2024. Congratulations to Zoe and Tim Wilson of St. Mary's County, plus new big sister Lyra!

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Pet OF THE WEEK

MEET ROCKY



The day God made dogs,
He just sat down and smiled.

Hello, my name is Rocky. I'm a ONE-YEAR-OLD Rottweiler with a HEART as BIG as my paws and a spirit as adventurous as my LOVE for long walks! I'm an ACTIVE and COURAGEOUS boy who has a SOFT SPOT for EVERYONE I meet, but don't get between me and my food. Naturally, I take my meals very seriously! As I continue to perfect my housebreaking skills, I'm DREAMING of finding an IDEAL HOME with a PATIENT and LOVING FAMILY ready to embrace my quirks and shower me with the time and attention I truly deserve. While I might not be a fan of sharing my snacks, I'm more than ready to share a lifetime of LOVE AND LOYALTY with the PERFECT FAMILY! Please hurry and hop in your car and come MEET ME during adoption hours, Monday-Friday 11am-4pm and Saturday 10am-3pm. BE MY MIRACLE AND PLEASE CHOOSE ME! ALWAYS OPT TO ADOPT, please don't shop!

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



Firearm Hunting for Deer Resumes in Maryland January 5

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will open the January firearm deer hunting season on Jan. 5, 2024 in Deer Management Region B, which includes all of the state except the westernmost counties. Hunters with a valid hunting license may use firearms to harvest sika and white-tailed deer during this season.

The season is open Jan. 5-6 in all of Region B. The season is also open through Sunday, Jan. 7 on private and designated public lands in Cecil, St. Mary's, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties, and on private lands only in Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, and Washington (Zone 1) counties. Shooting hours end at 10:30 a.m. in Kent, Montgomery, Talbot, and Wicomico counties.

"The January firearm season is the perfect opportunity for hunters to restock the freezer after the holidays," Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Karina Stonesifer said. "This is a great opportunity for many to harvest their first deer of the New Year, and January hunting favors antlerless deer, which is a critical component of managing a healthy deer population in Region B."

Hunters are reminded that an antler-point restriction remains in effect. Deer hunters may harvest one antlered white-tailed deer within the yearly bag limit that does not



Photo by Sizhu Liu

meet the requirement of having at least three points on one antler. Any additional antlered deer taken within the established bag limit must meet the minimum point restriction. Licensed junior hunters and apprentice license holders, 16 years of age or younger, are exempt from this restriction.

New for the 2023-24 hunting season, if hunters intend to pursue sika deer, they must purchase a sika hunting stamp. Sika

stamps may be purchased on COMPASS, at a licensing agent, or by calling DNR Licensing and Registration Services at 866-344-8889. The sika deer firearms season bag limit is three with no more than one being antlered. An antlered sika is defined as a deer with at least one antler visible above the hairline. The sika deer season is open in every county.

During firearms season, Maryland

requires deer hunters and their companions to wear daylight fluorescent orange or daylight fluorescent pink in one of the following manners: a cap of solid fluorescent daylight orange or pink, a vest or jacket containing back and front panels of at least 250 square inches of fluorescent daylight orange or pink, or an outer garment of camouflage daylight fluorescent orange or pink worn above the waist and containing at least 50 percent daylight fluorescent color.

More information on the firearms season, along with season bag limits and other deer hunting regulations, are available in the 2023-2024 Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping.

Hunters should carefully inspect all tree stands and always wear a full-body safety harness while in the stand and while climbing in or out. The department strongly recommends using a sliding knot, commonly known as a prusik knot, attached to a line that is secured above the stand that allows the hunter to be safely tethered to the tree as soon as they leave the ground.

Hunters are encouraged to help others by donating deer taken in Maryland. A state tax credit offers hunters an incentive for donated deer. Other local or state programs are also available so please check with your deer processor.

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Environmental Health Director Appointed to Bay Restoration Advisory Committee

St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) Director of Environmental Health, Heather Moritz, has been appointed by Maryland Governor Wes Moore to the Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee.

The Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee's main tasks are to advance the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration Fund and enhance its effectiveness in reducing nutrient pollution in Maryland's waters. The Committee also provides guidance on education, outreach, and upgrade programs, and advises the Maryland Secretary of the Environment on adopting regulations.

"I am honored to be appointed to the Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee," said Heather Moritz, Director of Environmental Health. "I look forward to providing my expertise to the Committee and working to continue to promote and improve the Bay Restoration Fund in Maryland."

"Heather Moritz is an incredibly knowledgeable and experienced environmental health professional," said Dr. Meena Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer. "Her expertise and dedication will be very



Heather Moritz

valuable to the Committee's efforts to protect our Bay. Better quality of our environment supports better public health in our communities."

Learn more about SMCHD's Clear Water® Program, which administers the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) in St. Mary's County, at smchd.org/clearwater/.



NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

PMA-271 Celebrates 50 Years of Women in Naval Aviation

This year marks the 50th anniversary of women in naval aviation, an anniversary that celebrates when the first women began flight school in Pensacola, Florida, back in 1973.

In the years since those “first six” donned their flight suits, women’s role in naval aviation has expanded to serve and lead in every aspect of the enterprise.

“They fly and fight in all strike missions, hunt submarines, protect the integrity of our nuclear triad, supply essential cargo and personnel to every corner of the globe, and rescue those in distress at sea and ashore. They command aircraft carriers, carrier air wings, squadrons, and missions to space,” according to U.S. Navy’s “50 Years of Women Flying in the Navy.” “In 2023, we reflect on our Naval Aviation history and pay tribute to all of our women Naval Aviators- ‘The First Six,’ and all those who have come after them. Our Nation and our Navy is stronger because of their service.”

A lesser known part of this history is the role that women have played in support of the Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO) mission, which links the president and secretary of defense with naval ballistic missile forces during times of crisis. Throughout the years, TACAMO has been ahead of the curve in its inclusion and promotion of women, said Vern Lochausen, a retired commodore and longtime member of the TACAMO community who now serves as a consultant for PMA-271.

As far back as 1989, women made up roughly one-fourth of the operational squadrons that fly the TACAMO mission, according to an April 1989 article in Proceedings magazine. They helped pave the way for women in other aviation communities and advocate for women to be allowed to serve in combat.

Among there were women such as the first TACAMO squadron pilots, Lt. Janine Igou and Lt. Sue Harter. TACAMO women also included Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, the first woman to command a carrier strike group and the first to serve as 3rd Fleet commander; Rear Adm. Margaret “Peg” Klein, the first woman commandant of midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy; and Vice Adm. Robin Braun, the first woman to command the U.S. Navy Reserve.

Today, that tradition is carried on by the women still serving the TACAMO mission, including those at Naval Air Systems Command’s Airborne Strategic Command, Control and Communications Program Office (PMA-271). The program office is an acquisition command that delivers capabilities to the warfighter by maintaining the E-6B Mercury fleet. It’s also fielding the next generation of TACAMO aircraft through TACAMO Recapitalization Program, E-XX. PMA-271’s mission is to

deliver and support survivable, reliable and endurable airborne command, control and communications for the president, secretary of defense and U.S. Strategic Command.

They include Cmdr. Rebecca Anderson, PMA-271’s military assistant program manager for logistics (APML). Anderson, a native of Catonsville, Maryland, enlisted in the Navy 20 years ago, working in maintenance and logistics and earning her officer commission in 2010. She joined the PMA-271 team at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, in 2022.

She has made an indelible impact on the E-6B Mercury fleet’s depot reform, leading the team to reduce turnaround time from 595 days to 372 days.

For the 50th anniversary of women in naval aviation, Anderson answered some questions about her journey as part of the Naval aviation community.

Why did you join the Navy?

I joined the Navy because I was bored as a teacher, where I taught various computer courses at an adult technical school. They were short, six-week-long classes and, despite enjoying the interactions with the students, the material was the same again and again. I have always loved to travel and felt the military would provide that opportunity.

Why did you decide to pursue a career in naval maintenance and logistics?

I began my Navy career as an avionics technician. My dad worked for the airlines and I grew up with a fascination of airplanes. My first command was the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department at Naval Air Station Oceana, where I learned to run and fix gear across maintenance benches. It wasn’t until I deployed for the first time aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) that I truly fell in love with what I do. I’m passionate about doing things that make a difference. I may have had a very small part in the overall mission, but I knew that I contributed and wanted to have a bigger role. I looked at the leaders around me and began to research earning a commission. I applied to Officer Candidate School in 2009 while on deployment on the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) and, thankfully, was selected upon my first submission.

What’s been your favorite job in your naval career so far?

Serving as the maintenance office at Strategic Communications Wing 1 (SCW-1) at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. It was the first position I held where I felt I made a difference on the larger scale as I’d dreamed of doing as a young second class petty officer. I love the TACAMO mission.

In this role, I briefed the SCW-1 commodore regularly on the status of our aircraft and improvement initiatives.

Have you had any mentors along the way?

My first mentor was Cmdr. Mike Barriere. He was the maintenance material control officer on the Dwight D. Eisenhower and was instrumental in my selection as an aviation maintenance duty officer. He also came to Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island, for my commissioning and continued to mentor me until he retired. Capt. Michael Mulhern is my current mentor. He was instrumental in my growth as a young Lieutenant on the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) and continued to mentor me from afar through my lieutenant commander tours and selection for commander.

What led you to join the TACAMO community?

I knew of others who had been in TACAMO. I looked up the “doomsday plane” on YouTube and was fascinated by what I learned. Once I was in place as the wing maintenance officer at SCW-1, I never looked back. I have worked to develop the path I am currently on to continue my support of this critical national security mission.

What’s your day-to-day like as the APML for PMA-271?

As the military APML at PMA-271, I conduct and attend a lot of meetings. That may sound monotonous, and some days it can be, but most days I’m leading a team of teams to resolve issues in the fleet or the depot line. The teams I work with are filled with a wealth of knowledge and expertise. I collaborate with them to find the best paths forward and deliver solutions to the fleet, ensuring that they can continue to execute their mission. These teams include people from NAVAIR, the Fleet Support Team, SCW-1, Boeing, our contractor logistics support provider, Boston Consulting Group, Northrup Grumman and more.

What’s your favorite part of your job?

I enjoy working with the teams to drive us forward toward our common goal of aircraft readiness.

What skills and/or traits have helped you be successful in your career?

Humility and relationship development. My enlisted time spanned just short of seven years. I have never turned a wrench on an aircraft, and yet I have led maintenance efforts on multiple platforms: the F/A-18 Super Hornet, E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, P-8A Poseidon, H-60 Seahawk and the E-6B Mercury. I have humbled myself and built relationships with maintenance experts, and



Cmdr. Rebecca Anderson

I owe any success to them. Leading teams of teams, the path forward can be both dynamic and challenging. Listening to each entity and understanding the different constraints and implications has been essential.

Have you faced any unique challenges as a woman in the Navy?

I have never felt discrimination in the Navy. In my experience, those who work hard are part of the team and instrumental to mission accomplishment, regardless of their gender.

Do you have any advice for women who want to pursue a career in the Navy and/or Navy logistics and maintenance?

Do it! Do your job. Work hard. Let your work speak for itself. I offer that same advice to anyone wanting to pursue a naval career.

With this year marking the 50th anniversary of women in naval aviation, what do you think about the contributions that women have made to the Naval Aviation Enterprise over the last 50 years?

I am thankful to be here and contribute to the NAE mission. I understand there have been women who have paved the way for the opportunities I have had in my career.

Anything else you would like to share?

I’m looking forward to the day when each individual is valued for their accomplishments and demographics are not part of the narrative. I want my work to simply speak for itself.

2024 NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

JANUARY 5TH

First Friday
Leonardtown

St. Clement's Island Museum
APPRAISER FAIR
Saturday, January 27, 2024
10AM - 3PM

Visit with expert appraisers as they determine the value of your prized possessions at St. Clement's Island Museum. Appraisers for dolls, furniture, glassware, pottery, artwork, music boxes and coins will be available.

Scan here for event details!

St. Clement's Island Museum
38370 Point Breeze Road
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301-769-2222

Only items that can be hand-carried will be appraised. Space is limited and items will be viewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Fine arts has a two-item limit per person. FREE admission, various costs for item appraisals.

www.museums.stmarysmd.com • www.facebook.com/SCIMuseum
Event made possible by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

First Friday Itinerary

5:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Choose from a variety of fitness classes from root SUP & Fitness.

6 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Choose from a variety of fitness classes with SPICE Studio, including Barre and High-Low fitness, and Pilates.

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Brunch at Antoinette's Garden.

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Visit the Old Jail Museum & Leonardtown Visitor Center. They offer extended hours for First Friday & FREE tours.

11 a.m. - 5 p.m. "All Things Art" popup show at North End Gallery.

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery featuring Doc Lohn and Scratch Mobile food truck on site.

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. "Winter Wonderland" art activity at The Yellow Line Art Studio



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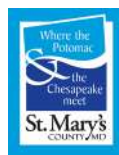
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ST. MARY'S COUNTY CRIME BLOTTER

Lexington Park Man Sentenced to 15 Years for Drug, Firearm Felonies

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that Dimitri Paul Brooks, 28, of Lexington Park, Maryland, was sentenced to 40 years in prison with 15 years of active incarceration for felony drug and firearms offenses.

A St. Mary's County jury convicted Brooks in September of 2023 following a two-day jury trial of possession with intent to distribute narcotics, possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime, controlled dangerous substance possession – not marijuana, illegal possession of ammunition, and firearm possession after conviction for a crime of violence.

"Getting drugs off the streets and firearms out of the hands of criminals is paramount to keeping our county safe," said Sterling. "The defendant was prohibited from possessing firearms because of prior convictions, and yet continued to do so while trafficking narcotics. This sentence means that the defendant will no longer be able to compromise the safety of our community."

The charges stemmed from an investigation conducted by the St. Mary's County



Vice/Narcotics Unit. Sergeant Kevin Meyer of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office was the lead investigator.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lisa Ridge, Chief of the Narcotics Unit, prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The Honorable Joseph M. Stalanonis presided over the case.

Loaded Weapon Recovered After Saturation Patrol Stop

On Monday, January 1, James Richard Nelson Jr., 43, of Upper Marlboro, was apprehended during county-wide holiday safety saturation patrols for various offenses, including the possession of a loaded weapon.

While conducting a routine traffic stop for a violation, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Deputies discovered Mr. Nelson in possession of a loaded firearm. A subsequent investigation, including a check of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), revealed that Mr. Nelson is prohibited from owning firearms due to prior criminal convictions. Furthermore, it was determined that the gun in his possession had been reported stolen by the Maryland State Police.

During the subsequent search of Mr. Nelson's vehicle, deputies also uncovered a digital scale containing suspected cocaine residue.

Mr. Nelson was arrested, transported to the St. Mary's County Detention



and Rehabilitation Center, and charged with nine firearm-related charges, CDS: Possession – Not Marijuana and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.

Theft Suspect Sought

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is seeking assistance to identify and locate an individual connected with a theft from a local business. At approximately 2:12 p.m., on Friday, December 22, 2023, the individual shown in these photos entered King Smoke tobacco shop in California, MD. While distracting the clerk, the suspect took a vape from the counter, concealed it in his pocket, and left the store, failing to pay for it.

Community members with information about this suspect or about this incident are asked to contact Deputy Austin Welch at Austin.Welch@stmaryscountymd.gov or 301-475-4200, ext. 8180. Please reference case number 71916-23.

Tipsters can also call Crime Solvers 24/7 at 301-475-3333 or send a text to Crime Solvers at 274637.

Type "Tip239" in the message block and select SEND. After you get a response, continue your conversation.

Note: Tip239 is case-sensitive and must be typed in the message block as shown.

With Crime Solvers, you never have to give your name. You may be eligible for a cash reward if your information leads to an arrest.



Persons of Interest Sought in Theft Investigation

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is seeking assistance to identify and locate these individuals in connection with a theft. On Friday, December 22 at approximately 1:40 p.m., the individuals pictured entered Sneade's Ace Home Center, Inc. in Leonardtown and the male removed an item from a shelf, concealed it in his clothing, and walked outside. The male then returned and removed another item from a box, concealed that, and left. It is believed the two left the store in a dark-colored four-door sedan.

Community members with information about this suspect or about this incident are asked to contact Deputy Thomas Snyder at Thomas.Snyder@stmaryscountymd.gov or 301-475-4200, ext. 8068. Please reference case number 72031-23.

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County Times

Hearing Set for North County Fuel Station



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The county planning commission is set to hear the details of a new proposal to build a Sheetz fueling station and convenience store in Charlotte Hall.

The hearing is set for Jan. 8.

According to county planning documents the project would sit on 3.64 acres and include a 6,139 square foot convenience store and a 12-pump fueling station with a 4,800 square foot canopy.

The site is located on Three Notch Road just north of the intersection with Charlotte Hall School Road, planning documents show.

The land in question is zoned mixed-use moderate intensity.

According to staff documents at the county land use department the developer of the project to consist of modifying signage and making markings for a lane use change at Route 5 and Golden Beach Road, modifying Golden Beach Road's eastbound approach to a shared left-thru and right only turn.

The developer has also been in discussions with the State Highway Administration, county documents show, to make possible improvements to the intersection with Route 5 and Route 6.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

School System Wants \$141 Million More from County

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The local school system's fiscal 2025 budget is asking for \$14 million more dollars this budget season from the Commissioners of St. Mary's County than the current \$127.3 million allocation.

This \$14 million in additional funding would be for transportation costs — including wage increases for bus drivers, funding employment agreements currently under negotiation to include pay increases for teachers and administrators, and health insurance programs.

Under state mandates from the Blueprint for Education, all new teacher starting salaries begin at \$60,000.

With federal funds included in state and local contributions, the overall schools operating budget being requested is approximately \$289 million for fiscal 2025.

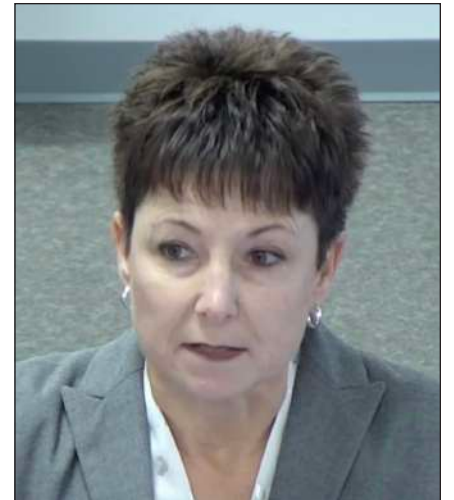
The school system will also see employment positions reduced significantly this year, as well as drops in state level funding.

The state funding will reduce by about \$1.1 million because of declining system enrollment, a decrease in students who have applied for free and reduced meal status (FARMS), and an increase in county wealth.

Under the Blueprint for Education, wealthier counties can expect to receive less than counties who have higher levels of economically disadvantaged students.

Deputy Superintendent for Fiscal Service Tammy McCourt said that money given to the school system during the COVID-19 pandemic from federal sources would no longer be available to the tune of about \$20 million.

This means that about 85 full time employee positions would have to be



Deputy Superintendent for Finance Tammy McCourt

removed from the fiscal 2025 budget.

"They will not be there to support the public schools," McCourt said.

"No matter what happens with the budget, even if we find a way to be fully funded, these funds are going away," said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith. "They [the 85 positions] are being cut from the budget."

"This budget being presented has no new positions."

Currently the school system has a fund balance of \$8.6 million, down from approximately \$19 million after about \$4 million was spent on the current fiscal 2024 operating budget, a budget amendment and nearly \$300,000 being spent on the charter school budget.

That fund balance, McCourt explained, was already assigned to expenditures, leaving none of it for disposition elsewhere.

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County Mourns Death of Longtime Parks and Rec Employee

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The loss of Marcus Tyrone Harris in a tragic car crash shortly after Christmas Day has been deeply felt by the community at large. Harris, 69, had been a county recreation and parks employee for more than 30 years and had made connections with many in youth sports leagues and the larger recreation community.

"He's been a part of athletes and young people and families for a good bit of time and it shows," said Arthur Shepherd, director of the Department of Recreation and Parks. "He's gregarious and gentle and people appreciated that."

"He'll be a big miss for us; I'll miss him greatly professionally and as a friend."

Kelsey Bush, Community Affairs Liaison at St. Mary's College of Maryland, said Harris' legacy should be honored by continuing his work, especially with young people.

"There will be no one else like him," Bush said in a social media post. "However, as much as we all are grieving, to honor him, would mean we carry on his legacy of caring, support, and being there for young people."

"Taking chances on those that everyone else has given up on, to find the best in everyone, but to call them out when they



Marcus Tyrone Harris

aren't acting right."

The crash occurred December 27 near the intersection of Willows Road and South Shangri La Drive in Lexington Park, according to the sheriff's office. Units arrived to find Harris' 2003 Dodge Ram 1500 had

struck a tree in a wooded area. Harris of Great Mills, was pronounced deceased at the scene by fire and EMS first responders.

Harris was traveling in the Dodge Ram, heading north on Willows Road, toward Great Mills Road, when, for unknown rea-

sons, the vehicle exited the roadway and struck a tree, according to the sheriff's office.

At this time, alcohol, drugs, or speed are not considered to be contributing factors in the crash.

Members of the St. Mary's Little League group also mourned his loss.

"Tyrone was more than just a member of our community; he was the very definition of a community man," the league's statement read. "His dedication to St. Mary's Rec & Parks and all youth sports was an inspiration to us all."

"His contributions extended far beyond the baseball field. Tyrone was a friend, a mentor, and a source of unwavering support for countless children and families. He had a way of making everyone feel valued and included, and his approach to any situation was simply inspirational."

"Tyrone leaves behind a legacy of kindness, generosity, and unwavering commitment to our community. He will be truly missed, but never forgotten."

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Collision Reconstruction Unit has assumed this investigation. Anyone who may have witnessed the collision or any events leading up to it is asked to contact Corporal Dale Reppel at 240-496-6694.

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04/23/24	Patuxent River, MD
04/25/24	Andrews AFB, MD
05/16/24	Stafford, VA
07/25/24	Dahlgren, VA (King George)
07/31/24	Fort Gregg-Adams
08/20/24	Patuxent River, MD
08/22/24	Andrews AFB, MD
09/19/24	Stafford, VA
10/24/24	Dahlgren (King George), VA
11/19/24	Patuxent River, MD
11/21/24	Andrews AFB, MD
12/04/24	Fort Gregg-Adams Club, VA

Commissioner Pushes Tax Credit During Assessment Increase

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The recent announcement by the state Department of Assessments and Taxation that property values, both residential and business, increased by nearly 25 percent has one local leader here pressing residents to partake of the built-in tax relief option on their property tax bills.

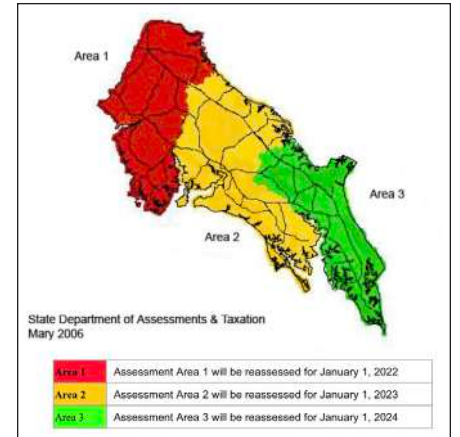
"It's very important that people who own their homes are taking advantage of the Homestead Tax Credit on their primary residence," said Commissioner Mike Hewitt in a social media post. "The increase for those who claim the credit is three percent versus the 10 percent charged in Calvert County and the seven percent charged in Charles County."

Hewitt said property owners should take care to ensure they are enrolled in the homestead program.

"Your assessment can go up 20 percent but your property taxes will only increase three percent," Hewitt said of the situation in St. Mary's. "Look in the upper right-hand corner of your property tax bill and it will say if it's a primary residence or not."

"Too many county residents just don't know about this important way to save money on property taxes."

The property assessments take place in



three stages with the state making assessments on one-third of residential and commercial properties around Maryland each year.

The third and final tier of properties have been assessed for 2024.

Valuations of properties in St. Mary's beat the state average of a 23.4 percent increase with a combined increase of 25.9 percent.

The increase in local residential property assessments was 27.3 percent, while commercial properties 22.1 percent.

The total assessable property tax base in St. Mary's is \$6.5 billion.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Leonardtwn Looks to New Internet Service Options

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Next week the Leonardtown Town Council will be considering two new options to bring internet service to town residents.

Town Administrator Laschelle McKay said the Jan. 8 meeting would include a public hearing on whether to approve a cable franchise with Comcast.

"We have a franchise agreement with Breezeline, we've had it for 20 years," McKay said. "We're considering adding this new provider."

The potential franchise agreement would not replace Breezeline but give town residents another option in seeking internet and cable services.

The new agreement would enable Comcast to lay its own cable lines in town right of ways underground or by adding their facilities using new utility poles, McKay said.

Another service provider is also interested in partnering with the town, she said.

The fiber optic broadband provider ThinkBig, based in Chestertown, reached out to the town, McKay said, to provide services at around the same time that Comcast did.

At the same meeting where residents

will have the chance to speak on the new franchise agreement, the town council will consider a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to partner with the provider.

The two providers bring internet services to customers through two different means, either cable or fiber optic lines.

ThinkBig has already expressed interest in working in St. Mary's County.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding in October of 2002 to make the new partnership happen between the provider and county government.

It represented the first significant step in years in getting a competing brand of internet service provider here.

This was the main reason the town government was open to both new providers coming in.

"We've had residents asking for a long time for competitive options for internet service," McKay told The County Times. "It's just in the past we haven't had providers who thought it was economically possible to do it."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

St. Mary's County Residents Share Their Resolutions for 2024



Gerrie L'Heureux

Cindy Slattery

Daryl Hinmon

Tremaine Fuller

Devonte Alexander

BJ Hall

Ben Beale

Heather Soellner

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

As the county says goodbye to 2023, a year full of turbulence and change, residents are still hopeful that 2024 will be a better year and are sharing their plans to make sure that they continue to grow and improve.

Some have just one or two personal goals, while others will be working on themselves over a wide range of goals.

Gerrie L'Heureux, owner and operator of Shepherd's Old Field in Leonardtown

"SOF Market and Brudergarten's New Year's resolution is to continue our commitment to provide Leonardtown with offerings and an atmosphere that are unique to St. Mary's County.

"We resolve to help develop Leonardtown by eliminating limitations to sustainable growth and make St. Mary's County the premier community catalyst of the nation."

Cindy Slattery, ADA Coordinator with the Department of Human Services

"While not great on resolutions –
"Visit new places more frequently – finding reasons 'to go – not reasons 'not to go.'"
"Spend more quality time with friends and family."

"Devote more time to things that make me happy – and find more things to enjoy."
"To be fully present for some fabulous life events this year – plan less – enjoy more!"
"Happy New Year Everyone!"

Daryl Hinmon, Head Coach at Knowledge Boxing

"Continue to spread positive energy throughout the Southern Maryland community and host our first Professional Boxing Show in Southern MD!

Professional Boxer Tremaine 'Teddy P' Fuller

"Be more outgoing and meet more people."

Professional Boxer Devonte 'Quiet Storm' Alexander

"Show more fiscal responsibility."

William "BJ" Hall, founder of Reach Back and Lift One community non-profit.

"Spiritual development: Read the Bible cover to cover. This will be the fourth year

doing this. The goal this year is to dig deeper and become a real student of the Word instead of just digesting the stories."

"Physical wellness: Sustain a body weight of 240 lbs. I'll accomplish this by getting back to working out at least five times a week for 48 of the 52 weeks this year. I'll be working to regain strength loss over the pandemic and due to injury."

"Intellectual development: Read 52 books, a book a week. I'll be focused on local history, black history, economics and professional development. These areas of interest align with long term goals and I'll complete the book list that I can provide upon request."

"Learn to play the guitar: If you know me, you know that I'm a die-hard Crimson Tide fan. I've always wanted to learn to play Sweet Home Alabama and Dixieland Delight on the guitar. I need to have that done before our 2024 championship game."

"Grow my nonprofit: Secure facility for RB&L1. It's been a dream of mine to develop a center that supports the local workforce, ensuring local workers have access to resources to fill needs of the small businesses in our area. We will make that dream a reality in 2024."

"Develop public speaking skills: Over the last year, I've become active in an improv troupe. People ask why I do it. I desire to become a more effective and impactful public speaker. Consistent practice will help me become more comfortable converting my thoughts to words that are easily understood."

"Become a private pilot."

Ben Beale, director of University of Maryland Agricultural Extension

"The results from the latest agricultural census conducted every five years will be released in the coming months. The ag census provides a comprehensive look into the health of our agriculture industry. The 2017 ag census showed just over 600 farms in the county. We look forward to see how St. Mary's has fared in the last five years. Our goal is to sustain and even grow this number."

"In the Extension we focus on two key drivers of farm success- profitability and sustainability. The ag program has several trials planned this year on local farms in the county. They include watermelon grafting study for managing soil diseases, evaluation of new tomato cultivars that perform well in hot temperatures, a new legume fava

bean study, and studies of control options for tough weeds in field crops. The goal with our trials, along with trials in surrounding regions is to answer some of the most pressing issues facing our producers."

"Finally, this time of year is always one of preparation and renewed optimism for the farm community as we look forward to the next growing season. Days are once again getting longer, orders for seed are being placed, and soon spring will be upon us. Farmers continue to produce the safest and most abundant food supply in the world. In Southern Maryland, we are blessed with a diverse set of agricultural offerings- from field crops to fruits and vegetables to ornamental and greenhouse plants to timber and seafood, alongside a growing livestock, agritourism and equine sector, and a vibrant

local food system with private and public farm markets and retail venues. Let us all resolve in the coming year to support this industry- eat and buy local, give that tractor a little extra room on the road, and provide farmers with the tools they need to succeed."

Heather Soellner, of the T-Bone and Heather morning radio show on Star 98.3 FM

"I'm not making any resolutions this year. I think I'm too old to change anything. That's a horrible excuse, but this old dog can't learn any new tricks!"

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Law Makers Look Ahead to General Assembly



Sen. Jack Bailey



Del. Todd Morgan



Del. Matt Morgan



Del. Brian Crosby

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The State of Maryland is facing a \$2 billion deficit, rising costs for providing virtually all services and the need to find a way to pay for hundreds of millions of dollars in additional education funding — the Blueprint for Education — during this year's General Assembly session in Annapolis.

The General Assembly will meet for the 446th time Jan. 10 and while Gov. Wes Moore has said he is against raising taxes, local elected leaders are wary that such increases will come through either his budget or through legislature.

Del. Todd Morgan, chair of the St. Mary's County delegation to Annapolis, said he is concerned that the governor's green energy agenda might have negative effects on the operations of the county's biggest economic engine — NAS Patuxent River.

"My mission No. 1 is to protect Pax River [NAS]," Morgan told The County Times a week before the state legislature reconvenes. "If there's something in the climate agenda that hurts the mission there, I'm against it."

The governor has set the state on an ambitious program of eschewing the use of fossil fuels and Morgan said the state government should put greater emphasis on nuclear power, but that sector of the energy market has not received such attention.

"Calvert Cliffs [nuclear power plant] produces 37 percent of the state's electricity and does it at a 95 percent efficiency rate.

"Why isn't nuclear energy included in the green energy discussion?"

There are still forces who want to place wind turbines in the nearby Atlantic Ocean, Morgan said, a carry-over project from more than 10 years ago and a prior administration, but he vehemently opposes that effort.

"Those wind turbines jeopardize the mission at Pax River," Morgan said. "That's our Atlantic Test Range... anytime the green agenda is pushed it threatens Pax River."

There will be much debate, the District 29C delegate said, about how to deal with the state's financial woes; Moore's plans include cutting \$2 billion in transportation projects to make up for the budget deficit, including removing some \$15 million from a project to improve Route 5 near its intersection with Great Mills Road.

The intersection has become one of the worst daily traffic problems in the county.

"We have a structural deficit and that's bad," Morgan said. "There's still no answer

for how to pay for Kerwin [Commission, the massive education funding increase]... the bills keep going up."

Del. Matt Morgan, representing District 29A, wants to introduce bills that would mandate the local school system provide more data publicly, particularly on disciplinary infractions by students, and with easy access for parents.

"My research uncovered a comprehensive datasheet mandated by the federal government," Matt Morgan said in a social media post to constituents to increase support for his ideas. "It includes data on test scores, graduation rate, student population, class size, suspensions, crimes on school property, student arrests, incident reports, and other helpful information for parents.

"Unfortunately, this report is buried on the state board of education website and is five years old."

Matt Morgan also wants to introduce a bill that would allow children being homeschooled to take part in extracurricular activities in public schools, as parents of those in homeschool settings still pay taxes for public schools.

"Many other states, like Florida and Utah, have successfully implemented this," Morgan said in a statement to constituents. "It's time for equal access to extracurricular activities for all students, regardless of their educational setting"

Morgan has also stated he expects the legislature to find ways to increase taxes this year; Sen. Jack Bailey (Dist. 29 St. Mary's, Calvert) said he is not solely focused on that possibility now but realizes it could be an issue.

"I will oppose that very diligently," said Bailey of his response to tax increases. "I don't have a crystal ball but the Senate will get the [governor's] budget first this year and in the next few weeks we'll have clear insight."

Bailey said he has 13 bills pre-filed dealing with public safety, small business, education and consumer protection but perhaps the most high-profile of these is one he has named Jamari's Law after 18-year-old Jamari Duckett who was killed last year in a high-speed vehicle collision in which the other driver drunk.

This bill aims to increase the prison sentence for a person found guilty of such a crime from 10 years to 20 years for a first offense and from 15 years to 30 years for a subsequent offense.

"Our No. 1 priority is public safety," Bailey said. "That's going to be one of our biggest bills."

Another bill he wants to introduce and pass is one that would change the state law regard-

ing vehicle collisions and wild animals.

Under the current rules, the state can increase premiums on drivers who hit a wild animal that runs out in front of them; his law would stop that practice, Bailey said.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County also have an agenda they want to press in Annapolis, including a measure that would compel the nursing home operators who are found deficient or fined for poor care practices to inform local leaders as well as state elected officials.

This law stems from the revelations of long-term abuse and neglect at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home which led to the operator there being replaced and state oversight being increased to insure reform.

These allegations caught local leaders off guard.

The commissioners also want legislation passed that would create two new liquor license types; one for community non-profit theater groups to provide alcohol during performances and also for wine and liquor tasting events.

Compounding the state's fiscal challenges, said Todd Morgan, was the fact that there were fewer Marylanders who were willing to remain and contribute their tax dollars, particularly retirees.

"People are leaving the state, let's face facts," the delegation leader said. "And it's because of the tax structure."

Del. Brian Crosby (Dist. 29B) did not return phone calls seeking comment for this article.

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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	3	COLUMNISTS	18
COPS & COURTS	9	OBITUARIES	19
COMMUNITY	12	CALENDARS	20

“THEY WILL NOT BE THERE TO SUPPORT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.”

SCHOOLS FINANCIAL OFFICER TAMMY MCCOURT ON 85 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES REMOVED FROM THE NEXT BUDGET.



LOCAL 7
Parks and Rec employee remembered



LOCAL 8
Hearing set for gas station project



ON THE COVER
Property values in St. Mary's rise 25 percent

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 4 Partly Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 24°	FRI, JAN 5 Mostly Sunny Hi: 42° Lo: 29°	SAT, JAN 6 Rain Hi: 41° Lo: 33°	SUN, JAN 7 Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 31°
MON, JAN 8 Mostly Sunny Hi: 47° Lo: 33°	TUE, JAN 9 Rain Hi: 54° Lo: 44°	WED, JAN 10 Mostly Sunny Hi: 50° Lo: 31°	THU, JAN 11 Mostly Sunny Hi: 49° Lo: 35°

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**Lawmakers Preview
General Assembly**

**Rec and Parks
Employee Remembered**

**St. Mary's Shares
New Year's Resolutions**

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS UP

25 PERCENT