

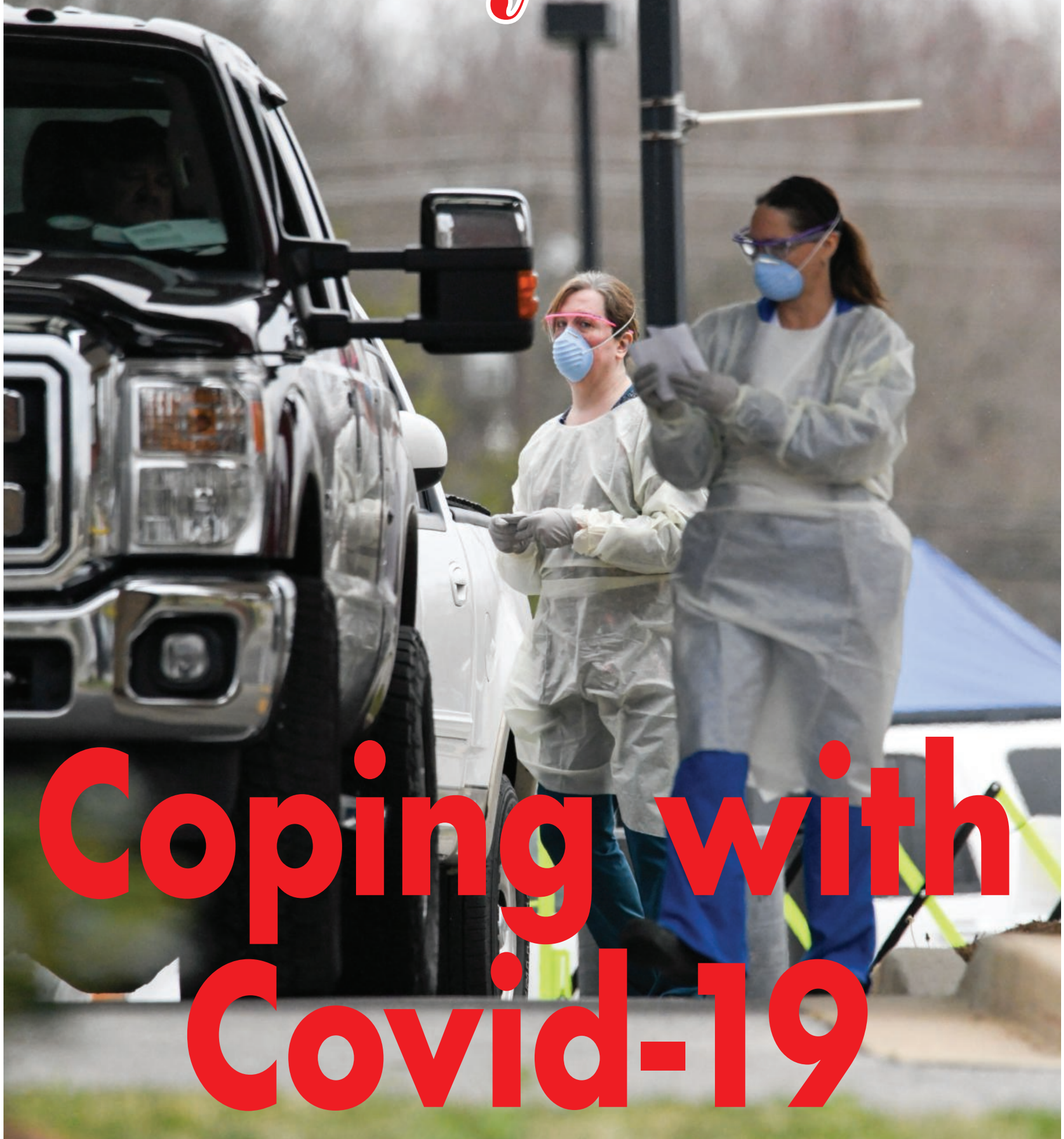
FREE

Home & Garden Guide *INSIDE*

St. Mary's
County Times

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020

WWW.COUNTYTIMES.SOMD.COM



**Coping with
Covid-19**

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Seahawks Lacrosse season ends

“THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE HOSPITAL ARE HERE TO HELP.”

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Special Section Home & Garden Guide

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Community Helps Feed Needy Students



Volunteers load up a bus full of needy students with donated lunches March 17 at the Lexington Park Library. Photo By Ceandra Scott

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

With schools closed starting this week by order of Gov. Larry Hogan, the St. Mary's County public school system began providing lunches to students in need, but one woman took it upon herself to start her own lunch service.

Annabelle Sanders, who works at Great Mills High School, said she started out with \$100 of her own money, which dwindled to \$60 after she gave a portion to a neighbor to help them, to provide lunches for students in the Lexington Park neighborhoods along Great Mills Road.

"I just thought I would get some bread, lunch meat and chips and do what I could," Sanders told The County Times. "God told me to feed the kids and I've got \$60."

She took to social media to ask the community for donations and the help she and her volunteers received was far beyond what she could have imagined.

On Tuesday she and her band of helpers staged at the Lexington Park library, now closed as well to the public, and waited on the walkway for customers to come by.

Soon a van pulled up full of students and volunteers brought them bagged lunches before they quickly drove off.

"It's amazing, stuff is just coming in," Sanders said. "This is truly a blessing."

Sanders and her volunteers had 200 lunches ready for distribution on Tuesday, with an extra 200 ready for students to pick up on Wednesday.

"My goal is to do 200 lunches a day," Sanders said.

She said residents continued to bring food to her distribution site even as they were ready to hand out lunches, the support for her project was so great.

She said the two lunch distribution sites the school system was operating were much needed but the students near the library were too far removed from Greenview Knolls and Leonardtown Elementary schools.

"There was nothing for the kids in Patuxent Homes or in Park Hall," Sanders said. "But everybody can make it to the library."

Sanders and volunteers later went out into local neighborhoods to deliver lunches.

The community members and organizations who donated to the food drive are: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Tri-County Chapter of Southern Maryland; Great Mills High School Coach Bell; Flaming Knights, Landover; Ladies of Literature- Bernita Courtney, BJ Hall; Adrienne Mathis Dillahunt; Pastor John Tillery, Free Worship Ministries; Travelers Lodge #4, Joseph E. Egan Lodge; GMHS Alumni; Social Studies Dept, Great Mills High School and individual donors.

guyleonard@countytimes.net



Volunteers assemble lunches for the March 17th distributions. Photo By Ceandra Scott



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*"Helping the Community
One Person at a Time"*

In coordination with the County's recent health policies, the Mission will continue to serve the less fortunate and the homeless by supplying food, tent shelters, sleeping bags, toiletries, and COVID19 education skills to the extent that your donations make possible.

We are committed to meeting the needs of our families and individuals who may be hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak. Through the generosity of your donations and the support of our county leaders, we address the needs of the forgotten in the name of Jesus Christ. By doing so, we make St. Mary's County a safer and stronger community for everyone during this time of uncertainty.

Thank you for joining us.

To learn more about The Mission or to make a donation please visit:

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For questions call Richard Myers, Director of The Mission
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Sheriff Focuses on Detention Center Amid COVID-19 Fears



The Sheriff's Office is monitoring the adult detention center closely to guard against a COVID-19 outbreak.

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Sheriff Timothy K. Cameron said this week that deputies are taking precautions to avoid contamination by the coronavirus in their daily duties among the public and special care is being taken to ensure that an outbreak does not occur at the adult detention center in Leonardtown.

Still, deputies and corrections officers are on normal duty schedules, Cameron said.

"It's business as usual," Cameron said, "But there's a few differences, there's a renewed emphasis on PPE (personal protection equipment)."

All deputies are equipped with a special bag complete with Tyvek suit, safety glasses, gloves and N95 face masks to put on in case of possible exposure to a virus such as coronavirus.

But the sheriff's office is looking to increase its supplies of those masks as once used they cannot be reused.

"We're trying to increase the quantity of those issued to deputies," Cameron said.

Deputies who arrive on a scene will do what is known as a "hallway assessment" where they will ask questions of those in homes about whether the resident exhibits suspicious symptoms.

"It's a screening process in use all over the world," Cameron said, adding that visits to the sheriff's office headquarters in Leonardtown would be by appointment only and visitors would be screened for temperature and possible symptoms.

"We're trying to practice social distancing where we can."

The sheriff's office is also encouraging residents to report crimes either on-line on their website or call in their complaint to the agency where a deputy can take a report.

This option would be for crimes that were non-violent in nature or for property crimes, for example, that were not emergencies.

"We'll try to issue criminal citations where we can and criminal summons where we can," Cameron said.

These policies were to help avoid bringing in too many new inmates to the detention center who might already carry coronavirus.

"We have a healthy inmate population when it comes to COVID-19," Cameron said, adding that at risk inmates, those who are elderly or those who have underlying health conditions, and who are non-violent offenders are in the process of being released.

New inmates get a thorough medical examination, Cameron said, once confined and are immediately screened now for coronavirus.

Any of them who test positive would be confined in a special holding cell.

"We have cells with positive/negative airflow for observation," Cameron said.

The compact conditions in the jail mean it could be the ideal location for a viral outbreak, Cameron said, if it were not well maintained.

"We never stop cleaning there, ever," he said. "We start and finish and then we start again."

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Guns, Ammo In High Demand

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

As the coronavirus spreads across the nation, St. Mary's County has yet to have a single case but residents are busy stocking up on essential food and personal supplies; guns and ammunition are included.

On Three Notch Road, at The Tackle Box sporting goods store which has long operated in Lexington Park, employees there could barely stop to answer questions.

Owner Ken Lamb said the buying of firearms and ammunition had spiked in the last two days but started last week.

"Ever since we opened this morning [March 16] we've been going as fast we can all day long," Lamb said. "When there's this much uncertainty, people buy stuff."

"That includes guns and ammunition."

The most popular guns sold include Maryland-compliant AR-15 rifles, shotguns for personal defense and .22 caliber rifles often used in small game hunting, Lamb said.

"And we've sold lots of ammunition of all kinds," he said.

John Mountjoy, one of the owners and operators of J2 Defense in Prince Frederick said COVID-19 has sparked increased buying of firearms and ammunition, but not just among residents who are already gun owners.

"There are lots of first-time buyers and non-traditional demographics," Mountjoy told The County Times. "We hosted a training class for the Southern Maryland chapter of the National African American Gun Owners this past Sunday."

"The classroom and ranges were overflowing."

J2 Defense offers training facilities as well as practice ranges for simulated firearm shooting. Mountjoy said the gathering was still below Gov. Larry Hogan's former threshold of no more than 250 people in one gathering.

That has since been reduced to just 50 people per gathering per his executive order of March 16.

Mountjoy said customers are buying up all firearms of all kinds.

"They are buying handguns, personal defense shotguns and modern sporting rifles," Mountjoy said. "Some are buying shotguns and carbines while awaiting state approval for handguns."

"Others are eagerly obtaining their Maryland handgun wear and carry permits; there's a lot of anxiety out there."

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Sign of the Times



Linda's Cafe in Lexington Park. Photo By: Al Dailey

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Legislature Passes Education Reform, Spending Bill

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

As the Maryland General Assembly came to a close this week, cut short by fears of the spread of the novel coronavirus, both the House of Delegates and Senate passed a piece of legislation that would bring sweeping reforms to public education in the state and add \$4 billion a year to education funding over the next 10 years.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, commonly known as the Kirwan Commission recommendations, would provide more pay for teachers and put more stringent guidelines on local school systems as to how they teach and test their students.

Gov. Larry Hogan has staunchly opposed the Kirwan-inspired legislation as it would almost certainly necessitate raising taxes to help pay for the hefty price tag.

District 29 Sen. Jack Bailey (R) voted against passing the bill, known as HB 1300.

The bill, he said, allowed massive spending from increased taxation without enough accountability, particularly regarding classroom behavior.

"Discipline is and remains one of the missing pieces of improving our education system," Bailey said in a prepared statement. "This bill makes some strides in improving the behavioral health of students, but it does not



Senator Jack Bailey

address the problems caused right now to all students by a few who are disruptive to the classroom learning environment."

Del. Brian Crosby (D-Dist. 29 B) voted in favor of the bill on March 6, legislative records show.

In an on-line post, Crosby said the day of the House vote that the bill could "potentially [usher] in a greater state funding formula for schools in our district than ever before.

"Fiscal impact on St. Mary's County [equals zero.]"

Crosby has said that the Kirwan legislation is funded out to 2023 because of a tax revenue windfall the state received of more than \$700 million.

Del. Matt Morgan (R-Dist. 29 A) opposed the measure, as did Del. Gerald "Jerry" Clark (R-Dist. 29C).

"The state cannot begin to pay for this during the best of times," Morgan told The County Times. "Now with businesses being forced to shut down because of a pandemic, I think it's irresponsible to jam this through."

guyleonard@countytimes.net



Delegate Matthew Morgan

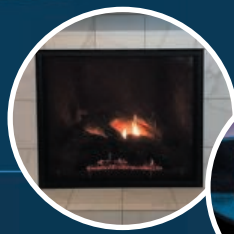


Delegate Brian Crosby



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Small Businesses Look For Community Support During COVID 19 Scare



Downtown Leonardtown was virtually deserted Wednesday morning.

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Locally owned small businesses stand to lose significantly during the coronavirus scare as independent operators depend heavily on cash flow to keep their doors open.

Many small shops and eateries are trying to find ways to survive after Gov. Larry Hogan's order of March 16 shuttering sit down restaurants, bars, movie theatres and gyms.

Groups of more than 50 people face stiff fines and even jail sentences if caught by law enforcement; Hogan has said the orders are necessary to contain and reduce the spread of novel coronavirus.

"It was the right call," said Ellen Lewis, owner of Crazy for Ewe and president of the Leonardtown Business Association. "He has the whole state to think about."

Lewis said county residents should actively patronize small businesses during the COVID-19 emergency.

"My customers have really been supportive by buying things on line and I've made time for private visits for them so they don't have to worry about being in a crowd," Lewis said. "I think it's tough, especially for the bars and restaurants since they don't have the virtual sales opportunities that we do."

Even if their favorite sit-down restaurants were closed, patrons could still support them with a promise of service at a later date.

"They can go buy gift certificates," Lewis said, adding that many of the restaurants in Leonardtown, which were locally owned, were providing carry out options. "They can use them later on when things are up and running."

"I'm sure that the extra cash for small businesses would be most welcome."

Linda Palchinsky, owner and operator of Linda's Café in Lexington Park, said the COVID-19 scare had taken a significant toll on her business, which sits right outside Patuxent River Naval Air Station.

"We're trying to hold up," Palchinsky said. "It's been very slow."

"We still have take out orders coming in and out."

She still has five employees working at the store, she said, but she had others still waiting at home.

"I'll keep it going if I have to do it myself," said Palchinsky.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Governor Hogan Issues Proclamation to Postpone April 28 Primary

As part of another series of major actions to limit the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and maintain essential services, Governor Larry Hogan today issued a proclamation to officially postpone the April 28 primary election until June 2, and to move forward with the 7th Congressional District special general election as scheduled by implementing a vote-by-mail system.

"I have two main priorities—keeping Marylanders safe and protecting their constitutional right to vote," said Governor Hogan. "I am directing the State Board of Elections to develop a comprehensive plan by April 3 to conduct the primary election in a way that protects public health and preserves the integrity of the democratic process in our state. While there are many valid reasons for unease and uncertainty right now, ensuring that the voices of Maryland citizens are heard shouldn't be one of them."

The governor also announced that the state is in active discussions regarding postponement of the Preakness Stakes.

"I know that right now there is a lot of anxiety and stress out there—folks are worried about what lies ahead and how we will get through this," said Governor Hogan. "We have seen the jarring images of empty streets in Italy and France, and we worry about our family members and loved ones, and about our own communities and neighborhoods. But I want Marylanders to know that if we continue to lead and work together—if we rely on and help each other—we will get through this."

SMECO suspends non-payment disconnects

Will be During Coronavirus Outbreak

In response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus outbreak, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) began suspending electric disconnects for non-payment on Friday, March 13.

"We care for our cooperative members and we understand that the actions being instituted to limit the spread of the virus may create an economic burden. Many businesses and their employees will be impacted, and during this period of economic stress, we will continue to work with our customers to ease that burden," said Sonja Cox, SMECO President and CEO.

"We have also instituted business-related travel restrictions and other precautions to keep SMECO employees safe as we continue to ensure reliable service to our members. And when outages occur, power restoration will continue to be managed quickly and safely," Cox said.

"We encourage our customer-members to limit public contact by using our online services," she added. "SMECO members can log in to Account Manager on our website and set up payment arrangements and budget plans to help manage their bills. For customer-members who need to call, SMECO customer care representatives are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-888-440-3311."

Press Release from SMECO

MetCom Suspends Disconnections

The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission (MetCom) and St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) have partnered to ensure that public water supply is available to MetCom customers. "Our primary concern at this time is the health and safety of our customers, the continued protection of the citizens of St. Mary's County, and our desire to help create a safe and sanitary environment," said George Erichsen, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Commission.

Effective immediately, and until further notice, and unless there is a water main break or other related emergency, the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission will not be disconnecting water/sewer service to any customer who is delinquent in payment. In addition, for customers whose water had been previously disconnected, water supply will be temporarily restored. Customers should continue to pay their bills as they will ultimately be responsible for any charges and late fees incurred during this temporary turn-off moratorium.

"This is an important step in ensuring the availability of clean water to all of our residents in a time of public health emergency," said Dr. Meena Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer. "It is so critical for everyone to be able to wash their hands and prevent the spread of the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19 in our community."

Community members who have questions about COVID-19 should visit the SMCHD website, www.smchd.org/coronavirus for local updates and information or call the St. Mary's County COVID-19 Community Hotline, Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at (301) 475-4911.

Press Release from St. Mary's County Health Department.

McKay's Markets



To our valued community:

From all of our family of associates we would first like to share our concerns and prayers for all those who are suffering, both physically and financially from COVID-19 virus. Our dedicated staff has been doing all it can to provide our community with food in a safe and clean environment.

We understand the need to do more, therefore we are announcing the following changes until further notice:

- 1) **Food Bars closed**: all of our self-service food bars will be closed. We will provide additional packaged salads, sandwiches, entrée's and side dishes as an alternative.
- 2) **Senior Shopping Time**: beginning on March 24th, Tuesday and Thursday mornings we will be open for seniors only. From the hours between 8 am and 10:30 am, seniors 60 years and older will have exclusive access to our stores. Additionally, we will offer a 5% senior discount during these hours.
- 4) **New Hours**: Beginning Sunday, March 22th our store hours will be from 8 am until 9 pm each day. We will utilize the shorter hours to enhance our cleaning and sanitizing efforts.
- 5) **Hand Sanitizing**: We are asking that everyone entering our facilities please sanitize your hands. We are striving to provide sanitizer at our front doors as long as supplies are available.

We thank you for your understanding during these difficult times. Our suppliers are working hard to make certain we have products available and our associates are committed to providing the most reliable food source for you. We look forward to serving you now and always.

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME REPORT

Possession at Place of Confinement- On March 9 Dep. Henry responded to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center, for the reported found contraband. Investigation determined Kanard Jaivon Bishop, 22 of no fixed address, was in possession of several cigarettes located in his shoe, after returning from the work incentive program. Bishop was charged with Possession of Contraband at Place of Confinement.



Kanard Bishop

Alter Drug Test- On March 9, Dep. Henry responded to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center, for the reported altered drug test. Investigation determined Brian Christopher Hancock, 41 of no fixed address, reported to the detention center and provided a urine sample as part of his pretrial requirements. A search of the Hancock's jacket revealed a bottle and device that was suspected Hancock used to provide a false urine sample. Hancock was arrested and charged with Alter Drug Test.



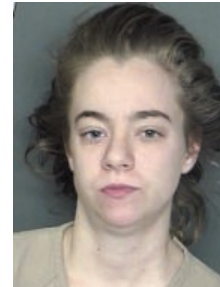
Brian Hancock

Violation of Protective Order- On March 9, Dep. Wynnyk responded to the 37700 block of Waterloo Road in Coltons Point, for the reported disturbance. Dep. Wynnyk contacted Garret Brady Harim, 23 of Lexington Park, at the victim's residence. There is a valid court order preventing Harim from contacting the victim or being at the victim's residence. Harim was arrested and charged with Violation of Protective Order.



Garret Harim

Disorderly Conduct/Disturbing the Peace/Fail to Obey- On March 9 Dep. Salas responded to the 18400 block of Point Lookout Road in Park Hall for the reported disturbance. Upon arrival Ashley Nicole Tippet, age 27 of Park Hall, was observed yelling and causing a commotion while banging on the outside of a residence. Tippet was ordered to cease her behavior, however she refused and continued her behavior, which disturbed numerous neighbors. Tippet was arrested and charged with Disturbing the Peace, Disorderly Conduct, and Fail to Obey Reasonable/Lawful Order.



Ashley Tippet

Assault- On March 11 Dep. Edwards responded to the 21500 block of Great Mills Road in Lexington Park, for the reported alarm activation. An individual was located, and provided deputies on scene with a false name. The individual was ultimately identified to be Chazze Le Marko Hall, age 29 of no fixed address. Hall had an outstanding warrant through Calvert County. Hall then fled on foot from deputies on scene. Deputies pursued Hall, and while being taken into custody, Hall kicked Dep. Graves in the chest. Hall was arrested and charged with Assault 2nd Degree and Fraud/ Identity to avoid prosecution.



Chazze Hall

LAW OFFICE OF
**DANIEL A. M.
SLADE, L.L.C.**
LOKER BUILDING



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LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND 20650
PHONE: 301-475-5150 • FAX: 301-475-6909

Public Warned of COVID-19 Charity Scams

The Federal Trade Commission has reported that scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus, including through the sale of counterfeit products and the solicitation of money and personal information. When charities request donations in response to the coronavirus, Marylanders may feel duty-bound to donate in an effort to help their neighbors. Maryland's Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith and Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh are cautioning Marylanders to be vigilant and to donate wisely.

"During uncertain times, con artists prey on your generosity and create scams, frauds or deceptive acts to line their own pockets," warns Secretary Wobensmith. "Be sure you know who you are giving to, and remember it is always best to give directly to well-established, reputable charitable organizations."

The Office of the Secretary of State registers and regulates charitable organizations that solicit charitable contributions in Maryland. Together with the Attorney General's Office, the Secretary of State's Office works to ensure that charitable contributions go to qualified charitable organizations and are used for their intended purpose.

"Fraudsters will take advantage of nearly any opportunity to steal other people's money," said Attorney General Frosh. "Consumers can avoid being cheated by understanding how thieves are trying to steal their personal information and money. It is always wise to research the charity first before donating, and avoid any charity or fundraiser that is reluctant to give information on how donations are used."

For more tips on how to give wisely, Marylanders can visit the Maryland Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division publication Consumer's Edge Charitable Giving Tips.

The Office of the Secretary of State maintains a public registry of charitable organizations authorized to solicit in Maryland. For more information and to search the registry, please visit the Secretary of State's charities database.

If you think that you have been a victim of a deceptive or illegal charitable solicitation, contact the Charities and Legal Services Division of the Secretary of State's Office: 410-974-5521 or 1-800-825-4510.

Press Release from Office of Gov. Larry Hogan.

Maryland Income Tax Deadline Extended to July 15, 2020

Following today's press conference from the White House where it was announced there would be a 90-day extension of the April 15th deadline for federal income tax payments, Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot has announced that Maryland business and individual income taxpayers will be afforded the same relief. No interest or penalty for late payments will be imposed if 2019 tax payments are made by July 15, 2020.

"Right now, Maryland taxpayers and businesses must stay focused on their health and keeping their lights on, both in their homes and businesses," Comptroller Franchot said. "Extending the due date for Maryland state individual and business income tax payments helps us keep cash flowing in our economy and into employees' bank accounts."

Taxpayers who take advantage of the federal extension to file their return, which is separate from the relief granted today to pay their taxes, will continue to be automatically granted an extension on their Maryland tax filings. No additional extension forms are required. Fiscal year filers with tax years ending January 1, 2020, through March 31, 2020, are also eligible for the July 15, 2020 extension.

St. Mary's County woman wins top prize playing Rose Gold game



A Leonardtown woman reports having no thoughts of buying a Maryland Lottery scratch-off when she pulled into the gas pumps at a Sheetz store in California last week.

However, she quickly remembered that she had a winning instant ticket in her purse to cash. The loyal scratch-off player entered the store and reinvested her prize in the purchase of three more scratch-offs. One of those, a \$10 Rose Gold game, would soon provide her with \$100,000 worth of shock and joy.

Scratching her instant tickets later that evening did not put her in the best of moods. "The first two games were complete misses, not even close to a win on either," said the 47-year-old. "Then, I picked up Rose Gold."

The self-employed St. Mary's County resident tells us that she watches for new scratch-off games. "I chose Rose Gold because it was new and, boy, am I glad I did."

The Southern Maryland winner started yelling as soon as she saw the \$100,000 prize on her instant ticket. "I couldn't believe my eyes. Even as I was shouting, I was checking and rechecking the ticket, just to be sure."

Anxious to share her good news, she picked up the phone to call her husband. He was traveling for work and didn't answer. She reached out next to her mom and got the answering machine. "I had to tell someone but nobody was answering!" Happily, both husband and mother soon called back. After some convincing that she hadn't dreamed up the big win, her husband and mom celebrated the family's luck with her.

The husband and wife, who chose the nickname "J & T" for Lottery publicity, plan to spend part of the prize on a new car and put the remainder of the \$100,000 win into savings.

Sheetz #292 at 22711 Three Notch Road will receive a \$1,000 bonus from the Lottery for selling the top-prize winning ticket in the game. The lucky retailer also sold a top-prize winning 2020 Cash scratch-off earlier this year, which gave some happy player a \$20,200 prize.

Our lucky lady left plenty of prizes remaining in the Rose Gold game, which hit Lottery retailer shelves in late February. Players can search for seven more \$100,000 prizes as well as 28 \$10,000 winners and thousands of others ranging from \$10 to \$1,000.

Leadership Hears About Public Safety



Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) Class of 2020 on March 5 participated in the seventh of nine educational sessions – Public Safety. The day began with a tour of the Charles County Detention Center. The class then traveled to the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute where they got an in-depth look at firefighting. They also had the opportunity to interact with the crew of Eagle 2, a United States Park Service helicopter, and check out the aircraft.

The afternoon portion of the day included a question and answer session with Assistant Sheriff Dave McDowell (Calvert), Sheriff Troy Berry (Charles), and Sheriff Tim Cameron (St. Mary's). Afterward, the class watched a police drone demonstration before heading to the Southern Maryland Criminal Justice Academy (SMCJA) where they spent the remainder of the session. The group watched demonstrations by local K9 and SWAT units, experienced what it's like for law enforcement to make split second decisions in the training simulator and learned about defensive training. The class held a post-session debrief at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 24 in La Plata to discuss the day's events.

Leadership Southern Maryland's Executive Program is a nine-month tuition-based program and is designed and dedicated to educate and inspire a diverse group of current and emerging leaders to create collaborations and partnerships to impact the community needs of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties and incorporates a cross-section of the region to include diversity of geographic location, profession, ethnicity and gender.

Leadership Southern Maryland is now accepting applications for the Class of 2021 Executive Program. Interested candidates should visit www.leadershipsomd.org to learn more about the program and apply by April 1, 2020.

Press Release from LSM.

Cutline:

Members of Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) Class of 2020 experienced Public Safety in Southern Maryland via numerous demonstrations and hands-on activities

“

The County Times is one of the best methods for advertising my events – it is also the best source for me to catch up on all the local news and events, especially those related to our County's rural heritage.

Ronnie Farrell
Farrell Auctions

”



Need help paying your utility bills? Do you qualify?

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. Office of Home Energy (OHEP) is accepting applications Monday through Thursday - 9am-3pm - We are located in Charles County at 8371 Old Leonardtown Road-Hughesville, MD.; in St. Mary's County at 21775 Great Mills Road-Lexington Park or in Calvert County at 3720 Solomon's Island Road-Huntingtown, MD. Applications may also be submitted online at www.dhs.Maryland.gov/benefits. You must be income eligible to receive energy assistance.

Contact: OHEP, 301 274-4474, ext. 200

Need help building a career?

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. offers a CDL Program. Get your CDL License and start a new career as a CDL driver! Contact us and find out how to enroll in the program.

Contact: Leo Hoffman, 301 274-4474, ext. 268

Need help managing your finances or purchasing a home?

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. offers a Housing Counseling Program. Get assistance with money management and/or home ownership counseling and start a new life of financial freedom. Contact us and find out how our services can help you.

Contact: Martin Kane, 301 274-4474, ext. 274

The Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc., is a nonprofit organization working in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties that provide services for eligible citizens that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty, promote upward mobility and enrich the quality of life. For information, visit www.smtccac.org.

Afternoon Meal Sites in St. Mary's County



Photo By: Ceandra Scott

LEONARDTOWN, MD -The St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services' Human Services Division and the Local Management Board are proud to support organizations helping to ensure citizens in need in St. Mary's County continue to get meals.

St. Mary's County Public Schools

St. Mary's County Public Schools Department of Food and Nutrition Services is offering meals to students through the Summer Meals Program. Acceptance and participation requirements for the Program and all activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Meals will be provided at the sites and times as follows:

Leonardtown Elementary School, 22885 Duke Street, Leonardtown

Greenview Knolls Elementary School, 45711 Military Lane, Great Mills

Margaret Brent Middle School, 29675 Point Lookout Road, Mechanicsville

Lexington Park Elementary School, 46763 Shangri-La Drive, Lexington Park

Beginning March 17-27, 2020, a drive-up lunch service will be provided at the locations listed below from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meals will be offered to all children age 18 years of age and under free of charge. Parents and children can drive up to these locations and receive meals that they can take home during our current school closures. We are asking community members to remain in their vehicles until they are directed to retrieve their meals from the designated area. There will be St. Mary's County personnel to direct service.

St. Mary's Caring Soup Kitchen

Meals will be handed out, one per person, between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday-Saturday AT THE St. Mary's Caring Sour Kitchen located at 20850 Langley Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653. People will be required to leave the property immediately upon receiving their food and will not be allowed to congregate on the grounds for personal safety reasons. The soup kitchen will alternate between hot meals and cold sandwiches.

The soup kitchen needs bottled water, fruit cups, puddings, etc., granola bars, chips, to-go containers with lids for soup, individual condiment packets, and individual desserts. Drop-off times are 8:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. Monday – Saturday.

If there are other agencies or citizens that are providing feeding service, please contact the Local Management Liaison, Kelsey Bush at, 301-475-4200 ext. 71848, or kelsey.bush@stmarysmd.com.



Photo By: Ceandra Scott



Count everyone under your roof.

Hundreds of billions of dollars are at stake every year for the next 10 years.

The results of the 2020 Census inform funding and planning for new clinics, school lunch programs, emergency services, and more. So make sure you count everyone living in your home as of April 1, 2020.

For more information, visit 2020CENSUS.GOV/count



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United States
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2020

This Project has been financed in part with State funds from Maryland's 2020 Census Grant Program. Project content or opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the State of Maryland or any of its instrumentalities.

St. Mary's Anxious Over Coronavirus



Drive up testing available at MedStar St. Mary's with doctor's prescription

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Health officials say there are still no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in St. Mary's County, though testing began in earnest last week at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, but the supposed lack of the virus here has not stopped a slowly building anxiety among residents.

Some are expressing that anxiety by constant purchasing of food and other essential supplies, leaving whole sections of grocery stores bare until they can be restocked.

Some have already lost their jobs since Gov. Larry Hogan closed all restaurants, bars, movie theatres and gyms across the state as of Monday, while others are worried over their elderly family members who have been quarantined at local nursing homes in the hopes that some of the most vulnerable members of the population can be kept from infection.

Still others are busy buying firearms and ammunition; but most appear to remain calm and try to go about their lives with the virus's threat looming over them.

Over the weekend Commissioner President James "Randy" Guy declared a state of emergency for the county, cancelling many county sponsored meetings and events but keeping county employees on the job.

County officials, despite the rapid grinding to a halt of much of the county and the state, have encouraged residents to avoid panic buying and continue to use social distancing and rigorous hygiene practices to beat back the virus's spread.

Dr. Meena Brewster, the county health officer, said Monday evening that there was a "high volume" of testing for novel coronavirus at MedStar St. Mary's, yet no tests have come back positive.

Dr. Stephen Michaels, chief operating officer at MedStar St. Mary's, said sample test results taken last week should be returned by the middle of this week; the hospital was not releasing numbers of county residents who had been tested so far.

But, Michaels said, anyone tested and who was waiting for results had been asked to self-isolate.

"We've tested everyone who has come with a

physician's permission," Michaels said. "Right now, it's taking up to seven days to get results back."

The demand is such, Michaels said, the number of tests pending are greater than those that have been returned with results.

Few test samples taken at the drive-up facility at the hospital go to the state's labs.

"Most are going to commercial labs," Michaels said.

There was some good news in this time of coronavirus, Michaels said.

"The health department and the hospital are here to help," he said. "We can easily obtain tests if you need to be tested."

"We can quickly collect test samples without clogging the emergency department."

For most people who contract coronavirus, said Michaels, its effects were not life-threatening.

"For the most part people who get coronavirus are going to get better without a problem," he said.

Michaels said Hogan's recent executive orders were appropriate despite questions about them being an overreaction.

"The governor is absolutely doing the right thing," Michaels said. "If we can get this virus under control, it will burn itself out."

"We're taking measures never before seen in this country."

Austere measures, no matter how effective, come at a cost.

Kim Lawson, a Great Mills resident, works as a bartender at two private clubs in both St. Mary's and Calvert counties, and is now out of work after Hogan's March 16 order.

She said it came as a real shock.

"I felt fear for everybody, wondering how bad it's going to get," Lawson said. "I'm just wondering how the bills are going to get paid."

"In my line of work there's no paid leave, most of the income comes from tips."

Despite the hardship quickly besetting her, Lawson did not think Hogan's actions went too far.

"It seems more and more cases are popping up," she said. "This is a scary thing."

Commissioner Todd Morgan said many in the defense contractor community are using the telework option to keep projects and programs running on base; only essential personnel such as information technology specialists are coming into work.

"Per the DOD (Department of Defense) you can't force people to telework but it's being strongly encouraged," Morgan said. "These agreements have been laid down in the past couple of weeks."

Patrick Gordon, public affairs officer for Patuxent River Naval Air Station, said there were no plans to close the base and it would take a "major disruption" in workforce readiness to even consider such an option.

Leonardtown attorney Daniel Slade can still accept clients, though most District and Circuit court activities have been shuttered until early April, but his family waits for the day when his aunt can be released from St. Mary's Nursing Center where she has been quarantined since March 12.

She is not allowed any visitors, Slade said.

"We call her and talk to her," he said. "It's tough."

Used to moving about and getting out on her own to patronize the nearby shops, his aunt was feeling the strain.

"She's scared, it's not something that's normal," Slade said. "It's disrupting her life, but she understands it's for the best."

Slade said it was important to stay positive, but it was difficult with anxiety building all around.

"People are scared, it's a scary time," Slade said. "We just have to muddle through."

Hogan's orders closing down many public gathering places also came with a warning, that no groups should gather greater than 50 people.

Hogan said law enforcement officers would actively breakup, fine and possibly arrest those found in prohibited gatherings.

Officials with the Maryland Municipal League have told local jurisdictions that violators could face a \$5,000 fine or face a year in jail.

Shops, stores, banks and grocery stores are still open.

"We don't want to shutdown commerce...it's going to be a huge hardship," Hogan said. "We're trying to keep these people [those most at risk] from getting infected by everyone by the people who crowded into bars over weekend," Hogan said March 16.

"These orders carry the full force of the law and will be strictly enforced; we're no longer asking for peoples' cooperation."

County Emergency Services Director Stephen Walker said Saturday, after the county came under a state of emergency, that dealing with the coronavirus would not be a short-term proposition. Walker said the county was ready to deal with the emergency, but it was not a short-term situation.

"It's a marathon," Walker said. "We'll be dealing with this for a couple of months."

Walker confirmed that enacting the emergency designation meant that St. Mary's would be eligible for funding from the state and federal government to help with its coronavirus response.

guyleonard@countytimes.net



An empty meat section at a local grocery store

St. Mary's College Named a Best Value

St. Mary's College of Maryland is one of the nation's top colleges for students seeking a superb education with great career preparation and at an affordable price, according to The Princeton Review®.

The education services company named St. Mary's College as a Best Value College for 2020. The Princeton Review profiled 200 schools selected out of 656 institutions the company considered and surveyed. St. Mary's College is also ranked #5 on The Princeton Review's Green Colleges list and included in its annual college guide, "The Best 385 Colleges."

The Princeton Review chose its Best Value Colleges for 2020 based on data the company collected from its surveys of administrators at 656 colleges in 2018-19. The company also factored in data from its surveys of students attending the schools as well as PayScale.com surveys of alumni of the schools about their starting and mid-career salaries and job satisfaction figures.

"The schools we name as our Best Value Colleges for 2020 comprise only 7 percent of the nation's four-year colleges," noted Robert Franek, The Princeton Review's editor-in-chief. "They are truly distinctive and diverse in their programs, size, region, and type, yet they are similar in three areas. Every school we selected offers outstanding academics, generous financial aid and/or a relative low cost of attendance, and stellar career services. We salute St. Mary's College of Maryland for these exceptional offerings and recommend it highly to college applicants and parents."

Press Release from SMCM.



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CSM Limits Public Access to All Campuses

Student Services Continue to be Provided

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) will maintain a virtual learning environment for its students but limit access to its La Plata, Leonardtown and Prince Frederick campuses in a move to deepen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective March 17, CSM campuses will be closed to the public, except for employees and current students, until further notice.

In addition, CSM was advised today by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) that all spring sports are canceled for the remainder of the 2020 spring semester.

"In light of the progressive evolution of the COVID-19 situation, the NJCAA has decided to end all competition for the remainder of the academic year," stated Dr. Christopher Parker, NJCAA President & CEO in a statement released this afternoon. "As an association, the NJCAA exhausted all possible avenues to potentially postpone competition for both upcoming basketball championships and spring sport competition. We believe following the recommendations of the CDC is in the best interest of our member colleges and our student-athletes."

"These are uncharted territories for all of us," said CSM President Dr. Maureen Murphy. "We are all doing our part and following national guidance to create additional social distancing for our faculty, staff, and students. But be assured CSM's faculty and staff are here for our learners. We are still teaching, still providing students services, and still tutoring. We may look a little different this semester, but we are still here for our students and learning will not be canceled."

Murphy added that CSM is also extending its cut-off date to withdraw or change to audit/credit without a grade. Originally set for Friday, March 20, students will now have until April 11, 2020 to make that decision.

"We want our students to have time to absorb everything that is happening all around us and not make rash decisions," Murphy continued.

CSM leadership also decided today to close the St. Charles Children's Learning Center, located on CSM's La Plata Campus at close of business today.

"Maintaining a healthy and safe environment for our littlest ones is of the highest importance," said Murphy.

In addition to limiting public access to campuses, CSM has made several operational changes that can be tracked at ready.csmd.edu/covid-19/. Please visit the website often for resources and updates.

Students should make sure they are monitoring their CSM student email accounts, as well as the MyLearning course shells for their individual courses, and stay in close contact with their professors if they have any questions about their courses.

CSM is in close contact with local, state and federal authorities, and will share information as quickly as possible when and if these new operating conditions change. All updates can be found at <http://ready.csmd.edu/>.

Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or any other flu-like symptoms (e.g. sore throat, body ache, congestion) should not come to CSM campuses. Anyone exhibiting these symptoms will be required to leave campus immediately.

For additional information about the status of COVID-19, Marylanders can call 2-1-1; text MDReady to 898211 to receive text updates re: COVID-19, or go online to 211md.org.

Press Release from CSM.

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College Receives First-gen National Honor

For Commitment to Student Success

The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation, recently announced their 2020-21 cohort of First-gen Forward Institutions. The First-gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. Selected institutions receive professional development, community-building experiences, and a first look at the Center’s research and resources.

“The Center is so pleased to welcome St. Mary’s College into the 2020-21 cohort of First-gen Forward institutions. Through the application process, it was evident that St. Mary’s College is not only taking steps to serve first-generation students but is prepared to make a long-term commitment and employ strategies for significant scaling and important advances in the future,” said Sarah E. Whitley, senior director of the Center for First-generation Student Success.

With programs like the Sum Primus Sum Exemplar first-generation initiative established by President Jordan in 2017, St. Mary’s College of Maryland supports its core belief that rigorous, relevant, and experiential education should be accessible to everyone with the talent, ambition, and potential to do the work.

“Being chosen to join the FirstGen Forward cohort is a recognition of our accomplishments in helping first generation students succeed, but it’s more than that. It is also a sign of our continuing commitment to assessment and program development so that every student who is prepared to take on the challenge of the National Public Honors College can see themselves in this institution and take that step with confidence,” said F.J. Talley, director of the DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program at St. Mary’s College.

The DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program proactively recruits students from underrepresented higher education groups and provides support both academically and interpersonally, to help students succeed in their journey through college and beyond.

Talley said the College’s efforts to empower first-generation students are not limited to a single office or division.

“It is a priority to the entire institution, from waiving the application fee for first generation students, to the President’s Sum Primus, Sum Exemplar program to the DeSousa-Brent Scholars, our flagship program of academic and leadership excellence,” said Talley.

As a First-gen Forward Institution, select faculty and staff will be afforded multiple opportunities to engage with peer and aspirational institutions who are also creating environments that improve the experiences and outcomes of first-generation students. Selected institutions will send representatives to the First-gen Forward Workshop to be held in Baltimore in June and will participate in monthly phone calls, virtual professional development, goal setting, blog development, annual reporting, and more. After two successful years in the program, institutions are eligible to apply for the Advisory leadership designation.

“The 2020-21 First-gen Forward cohort demonstrates a national movement of two- and four-year institutions dedicated to advancing the success of first-generation students; redefining student success as a movement. We commend St. Mary’s College for their already strong contribution and look forward to engaging more at the First-gen Forward Workshop and throughout their participation,” offered Kevin Kruger, president and CEO of NASPA.

To learn more about first-generation efforts at St. Mary’s College visit <http://www.smc.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/first-generation-students/> To learn more about the Center for First-generation Student Success, visit firstgen.naspa.org.

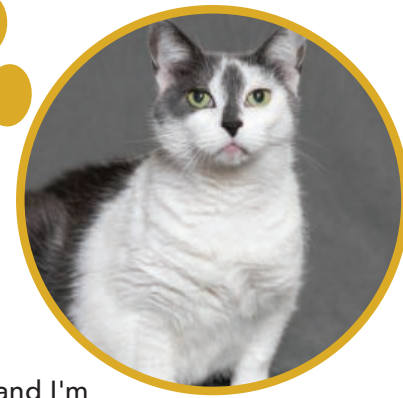
NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Its work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories. Visit naspa.org for more information.

The Center for First-generation Student Success is the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students. Through four strategic priority areas, the Center drives higher education innovation and advocacy for first-generation student success.

Press Release from SMCM.

Pet

OF THE WEEK



MOMMA CAT

Hello, my name is Momma Cat and I'm the type of cat that takes my time to get to know you. I enjoy my own space and a comfy rug is where I want to be! I was turned in with other cats but folks say I seem to be a bit of a loner. If you are looking for a LOVING MELLOW OLDER CAT who keeps to herself then I'm the pet for you! I will be there for you everyday and stay your BEST FRIEND FOREVER! Make that call to TCAS to come meet me and the world will be a better place. BE MY MIRACLE! When you choose to adopt from TCAS, you are literally saving a life.

PLEASE CHOOSE ME!

And remember, if there is room in the heart, there is room in the house.

Come meet me and the wonderful gang at Tri-County Animal Shelter (6707 Animal Shelter Road, Hughesville) or call 301-932-1713. To see more of my amazing friends available for adoption, “like” us on Facebook @ Tri-County Animal Shelter Southern MD.

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St. Mary's
County Times

ON NEWSSTANDS EVERY THURSDAY & ONLINE AT COUNTYTIMES.NET

The County Times runs complimentary obituaries as submitted by funeral homes and readers. We run them in the order we receive them. Any submissions that come to guyleonard@countytimes.net after noon on Mondays may run in the following week's edition.

In Remembrance

John Thomas Hurley



John Thomas Hurley "Tom", 72, of Mechanicsville, MD passed away on March 12, 2020 in Charlotte Hall, MD. Born on July 29, 1947 in Buffalo, NY he was the son of the late Katherine Donlon Hurley and James Aloysius Hurley. Tom was the beloved husband of Elaine Beatrice Hurley of 50 years, and whom he married on June 7, 1969 in Milwaukee, WI. Tom is survived by his children Jon Hurley (Jeanine) of Belpre, OH, Sheri Kaylor of Mechanicsville, MD, Patrick Hurley (Kari) of Fall Church, VA, and Kelly Hurley of Mechanicsville, MD. Along with 9 grandchildren Connor, Trevor, Bren-

nen, Hope, Brayden, Simon, Skylar, Bryce, Addison and her brother George Goetzmann of Buffalo, NY.

He graduated from Kenmore East in 1965, and earned his Masters from Central Michigan in 1981.

Tom moved from Prince Georges County, MD in September, 1977. He worked as a Sr. Industrial Security Rep for the Department of Defense for 20 plus years, retiring December 2003.

Tom served in the United States Navy from May, 1966 to February, 1970. While serving in the Navy he earned the National Defense Service Medal, and Viet-Nam Service Medal with bronze star. Tom served aboard the USS Forrestal during the time it caught on fire in Vietnam in 1967, for those of you who knew Tom he told you, "I fought the fire for 24 hours, repaired the ship for 24 hours, lost 134 shipmates all on my 20th birthday." Tom touched the lives of many in St. Mary's County, MD as a soccer coach. Kids and adults alike appreciated the time, energy and love he gave to the kids and the game. His work with the Mechanicsville Optimist Club also impacted the community in positive ways. He was an active and founding member of Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church. For the past 7 years he has been a resident of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. He was treated like family by a staff who pro-

vided excellent care which was a tremendous blessing to him and his family.

Tom will be remembered for all the positive ways he impacted many of our lives with his jovial sense of humor, his dedication to his family and community, and his love for Jesus. Although Alzheimer's may have robbed his family and friends of the man he used to be, it cannot take away our wonderful memories of him.

The family will have a Funeral Service at Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church 9463 H.G. Trueman Rd, Lusby, MD 20657 at a date and time to be announced

Vivian Marie Ridgell Barnes

Vivian Marie Ridgell Barnes, 89, of Ridge, Maryland, passed away



on March 9, 2020 in Ridge, Maryland. Born on January 5, 1931 in Ridge, Maryland, she was the loving daughter of the late Florence C. Ridgell and Ernest F. Ridgell. Vivian was the loving wife of the late Carl B. Barnes whom she married on December 27, 1948 at St. Michael's Church in Ridge, Maryland and who preceded her in death on August 8, 2010. Vivian is survived by her children Shirley O'Connor (Tim) of Connecticut, Barbara Jean Gray (Jim) of Ridge, Maryland, Veronica Vallandingham (Dale) of St. Inigoes, Maryland, Theresa Queal (Ron) of Fort White, Florida, Cecilia Graham (Floyd) of Great Mills, Maryland, 12 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her siblings Inez Parson, Ernest Ridgell, Jr., Edna Larrick, Betty Lou Yarber, and Vince Ridgell.

She was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident. Vivian went to St. Michael's School. She was a home maker, a member of Ladies of Charity, and an active member of St. Michael's Church. Her hobbies included sewing, gardening, woodworking, painting, crocheting, crabbing, and fishing.

In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 10665 Stanhaven Place #3115, White Plains, Maryland 20695.

Joseph Oliver Long, Sr.

Joseph Oliver Long, Sr., "Joe", 80, of Avenue, MD passed away



on March 9, 2020 surrounded by his loving family at his home. He was born on June 10, 1939 in Washington, DC and was the loving son of the late Mary Emily Long and Joseph Ollie Long. Joe is survived by his wife Margaret Ann Huseman Long whom he married on September 24, 1965. He is survived by his children Joseph (Joey) Oliver Long, Jr. of Avenue, MD, Paul Timothy (Timmy) Long (Bonny) of Mechanicsville, MD, and Robert Matthew (Matt) Long, Sr (Shannon) of Hollywood, MD. Along with his grandchildren Emily Long, Matthew Long, Jr, Abbey Long, Jamilynn Long, Lacie Long, Carly Long, and Ryan Buckler Long. As well as his siblings Buddy Long (Franny) of Leonardtown, MD, Bill Long (Susan) of Waldorf, MD, TV Long (Brenda) of Avenue, MD, Ray Long (Sarah) of Leonardtown, MD, Gary Long (Anna) of Clements, MD, Ricky Long (Gerry) of Avenue, MD, Melanie Poole (Kevin) of Avenue, MD.

He was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and attended Margaret Brent. Joe was a bricklayer for several local companies Pearson Gibson, Guy & Guy, Gordon Regan, Matthews & Pierce, and on his own for over 40 years. He was a member of the Seventh District Optimist Club. He enjoyed crabbing, goose hunting, playing pitch, cooking, doing woodcrafts, and having a few Natty Bo's.

Interment will be private.

Serving as pallbearers will be Buddy Long, Bill Long, TV Long, Ray Long, Gary Long, and Ricky Long. Honorary pallbearer will be Kevin Poole.

Contributions may be made to the Seventh District Volunteer Rescue Squad P.O. Box 7 Avenue, MD 20609 and St. Mary's Nursing Home 21585 Peabody Street Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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**Richard Henry “Dickie”
LaBarge**



DPC Richard Henry “Dickie” LaBarge, USN (Ret.), 78, of Lexington Park, MD died on March 13, 2020, at his home.

He was born on December 4, 1941, in Tupper Lake, NY, to the late Henry LaBarge and Gertrude Peets LaBarge.

In 1960 Dickie proudly enlisted in the United States Navy where he proudly served his country until his Honorable Discharge in September 1980 as a Chief. On June 10, 1961, Dickie married his beloved wife, Pennie Lee LaBarge in Plattsburgh, NY. Together they celebrated over 57 wonderful years together before her passing in August 2018. After retiring from the Navy, he continued working as a consultant to the Navy for the next 40 years. He would have celebrated 60 years of service to the Navy in June 2020. He and his wife enjoyed travelling during his Navy career and then in retirement, especially taking cruises throughout the Caribbean. He was a skilled handyman and enjoyed building sheds, chicken coops and gazebo’s. He was handy with tools and fixed many things. He found peace in being outside, where he could build things, fish, and travel in his new RV. He also enjoyed dancing, league bowling, and shooting pool. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Chief’s Club, the VFW, and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Dickie is survived by his daughters, Tammie LaBarge Holt (Jeffrey) of Buena Vista, VA and Deborah LaBarge Linehan (Thomas) of Littletown, PA; his sister, Barbara Schiff of Rock Hill, SC; his grandchildren: David Russell Jr. (Jayme), Kimberly Russell (Troye Owens), Nicholas Linehan (Tara), Melissa Linehan, Joelle Watson (Leo) and Jeremy Linehan (Gabriella); his great grandchildren: Karmen Donaldson, Christian Russell, Gavin Linehan, Piper Linehan, Oliver Linehan and another one on the way; and many extended

family and friends. In addition to his parents and wife, he is preceded in death by his children, Timothy Richard LaBarge and Amy Michelle LaBarge.

Services are pending. Interment will happen at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to Pets for Vets, P.O. Box 10860, Wilmington, NC 28404 or online at: Pets For Vets.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, PA

Patricia Annette Murphy



Patricia Annette Murphy, 78, of Charlotte Hall, MD, passed away on March 13, 2020.

Born in Sperryville, VA on July 29, 1941, she was the daughter of Lorelle Gertrude Woodard and John Henry Coppage.

On November 24, 1962 Patricia married the love of her life Robert Leroy Murphy. Together they spent 57 wonderful years of marriage together.

Patricia was a Christian woman and looked forward to attending her church services at Grace Church in Waldorf, MD. She loved to cook all different kinds of meals. Her kitchen was never lacking the smell of freshly baked goodies. Above all, Patricia was a family woman and she absolutely adored spending time with her friends and family.

In addition to her husband, Patricia is survived by her children: Robert Leroy Murphy, Jr. (Anna) of Lusby, MD, Susan Marie Murphy of Welcome, MD, Deborah Lynn Sheperd (Raymond) of Hughesville, MD, Sandra Lee Rye (Carl) of Pomfret, MD, and Barbara Jean Spittle (Ronnie) of Selbyville, DE; her siblings: George Henry Coppage (Linda) of Luray, MD, John Lee Coppage (Mary Anne) of Huntsville, AK; her 8 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her sister Barbara Townsend.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be

made to Hospice of Charles County, 2505 Davis Road, Waldorf, MD 20603.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, P.A.

Jack M. Hughes



Jack M. Hughes, 79, of California MD passed away on March 12th, 2020.

Jack was born on May 5th, 1940 in Detroit, Michigan to Nathaniel and Harriet Hughes. Jack is survived by his wife Barbara Hughes, his 8 children, 17 grandchildren, and his cat “Tinker”. Jack loved his country, he retired from the Navy after 20 years of service as a Master Chief. Jack continued his pro-

fessional career in the IT and Security field, eventually retiring in 2014. In addition, Jack was previously post commander at VFW 2632 and was the president of the Wildewood Village HOA. Jack loved all his family. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend to all. Jack and Barbra loved to travel, eat out, and go to the movies. Jack and Barbara were truly soulmates. Jack will be missed dearly.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.


Rosemary Lephew

Rosemary Lephew, 56, of Mechanicsville, MD passed away peacefully on Monday, March 9, 2020 at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital surrounded by her loving family.

Rose was born on December 9, 1963 to the late Freeman Joseph Daugherty, Sr. and Mary (Stone) Daugherty.

Rose met her husband, David Lephew, when she was just a bright-eyed fifteen-year-old and he was a spry sixteen years. They married on July 13, 1984 and would have been married, thirty-six (36) years this July. Together they grew up and never strayed from the others side, growing their family

Roderick Wayne Wood



Roderick Wayne Wood, 59, of Annapolis MD, formerly of Oraville, MD passed away on February 2, 2020 at his residence. Born July 10, 1960 in Plattsburgh, New York, he was the son of the late Howard Ralph Wood and Barbara Ann (Elliott) Wood.

Roderick is survived by his siblings: Howard Ralph “Chip” Wood, Jr., Charleln (Tim) Fowler, Bruce Wood, Craig (Nina) Wood and Dale (Shelly) Wood, 11 nieces and nephews and 17 great nieces and nephews.

Roderick enjoyed hiking, exploring for Indian artifacts, fishing, playing the guitar, hanging out with his family, friends, and pet cat, The Boss.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2020 from 1:00PM to 4PM at the Moose Lodge, Mechanicsville Maryland. Services and Interment will be private.

The image of your kind face and sweet smiles will be forever in our hearts.

odelljoan@yahoo.com

The County Times runs complimentary obituaries as submitted by funeral homes and readers. We run them in the order we receive them. Any submissions that come to guyleonard@countytimes.net after noon on Mondays may run in the following week's edition.

In Remembrance



with two wonderful children.

A bright smile, positive energy, energetic, and an overall enthusiasm for life are only a few attributes she possessed. If you were lucky enough to know Rose, you knew her love and devotion for her family, especially the special bond she shared with her children, Mandy, Justin and grandson, Vinny. Rose loved to take Vinny to school every day and Tae Kwon Do. He even asked her to assist him in his preparation to receive his First Holy Communion. To say Vinny was her whole world was an understatement, she cherished every little moment they had together.

Rose found joy in gardening, crafting, going on trips with her children and her Dunkin Donuts coffee. She adored summer and her trips to the beach. The sun on her face and sand between her toes brought her joy. She especially loved the Bahamas and Ocean City, Maryland. Rose loved animals and adored her dog, Ryden who slept beside her every night. When a feral cat and her kittens showed up one day, she took such good care of them.

Rose was a blessed woman who put all her faith in God. A devout Catholic, she was at peace with her faith and knew she would be in her golden palace in heaven. As you see the golden lights shine down from heaven, know that Rose is smiling bright and sending you her love from above. An angel on earth has made her way home. Fly high sweet Rose, you are missed dearly and loved ever so much.

Rose is survived by her husband, David Eugene Lephew, of Mechanicsville, MD; children, Justin Lephew of Mechanicsville, MD, and Amanda Capoen of Mechanicsville, MD and grandson, Vinny; sister, Sue Keefer of Jacksonville, FL and brother Freeman Daugherty of Pensacola, FL.

Special uncles, Charles Daugherty, Roy Daugherty, Floyd Daugherty and special aunts, Cora Patch, Paula Moran, Dee Davidson; many loving cousins, nieces, nephews and extended family. She was preceded in death by her father, Freeman Daugherty, Sr. and her beloved grandmother who raised her,

Esther Daugherty and her aunt, Betty Nichols.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, P.A., Charlotte Hall, MD.

Elsie Mary Baker



Elsie Mary Baker, 93, of Lexington Park, MD, passed away on March 11, 2020, at her home surrounded by her loving family.

She was born on December 26, 1926, in Hoboken, NJ, to the late Lawrence Vlacich and Mary Massura Vlacich.

On September 27, 1947 she married her beloved husband, Merrill Woodfin "Bake" Baker in Hoboken, NJ. Together they celebrated over 63 wonderful years of marriage before his passing in 2011. She was employed by the Department of Defense for many dedicated years as an administrative assistant until her retirement. She was a dedicated to her family and friends.

Elsie is survived by her children, Karen Carr (Al) of Fredericksburg, TX and Robert Baker (Ingrid) of Annapolis, MD; her sister, Florence O'Brien of Clouster, NJ; her grandchildren: Lauren Miller (Adam) of Houston, TX, Ashley Carr of Austin, TX and Bobby Baker (Ann Marie) of Annapolis, MD; her great grandchildren, Liam and Addison Miller of Houston, TX; and extended family and friends. In addition to her parents and husband, she is also preceded in death by her daughter, Susan Marie Baker; her brother, John Vlacich, and her sister, Helen Vlacich.

Memorial contributions may be made to Juvenile Diabetes Foundation Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Chapter, 825 Hammonds Ferry Road, Suite H, Linthicum, MD 21090.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, PA

George Richard Fairfax



George Richard Fairfax, 78, of Park Hall, MD passed away on Monday, March 9, 2020 at his home surrounded by his loving family. He was born September 5, 1941 in Washington, D.C. to the late Rudolph Keith Fairfax, Sr. and Margaret Grace O'Brien.

After moving to St. Mary's County and graduating from Great Mills High School, George enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corp in 1961 and honorably served in the Vietnam War. After the service, he continued his education and graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business.

George married his wife, Bonnie Rollins Fairfax on February 22, 1975 at St. Michael's Church, Ridge, MD. Together they celebrated over 45 years of marriage. George worked 27 years as a civilian firefighter with the U.S. Navy, retiring as a supervisory firefighter in 1996. He was a lifetime member of the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department. After retirement, he began working for the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) as a Technician and Field Instructor, ending his second career as the MFRI Training Coordinator for the Southern Maryland Regional Training Center. In 2012, George received the award for Fire Instructor of the Year for the state of Maryland.

George loved hard work and was constantly on the move. He loved helping family and friends and spending time with his grandchildren. He especially loved working outside and mowing the lawn. He had a strong work ethic and no job was left unfinished. In addition to his beloved wife, Bonnie, George is also survived by his sons: Jeff Fairfax (Jen) of Lexington Park, MD and David Fairfax (Ashley) of Leonardtown, MD; his grandchildren, Jake Fairfax, Tyler Davis, Reese Fairfax and Scarlett Fairfax; his siblings: Keith Fairfax of Lexington Park, MD, Peggy Maio of Great Mills, MD, Jimmy Fairfax of Great Mills, MD, Tommy Fairfax of St. Inigoes, MD, Marie Dean of Hollywood, MD and cousin Michael O'Brien of Thurmont, MD.

Memorial contributions may be

made to the Lexington Park Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 339, Lexington Park, MD. 20653.

Paula Jan Letcher



Paula Jan Letcher, 65, of California, MD passed away March 15, 2020 at her home surrounded by her family.

Born September 12, 1954 in Bethesda, MD, she was the daughter of Frank and Barbara (Brennan) Sevarino. Paula was a graduate of Bowie High School in Bowie, MD. She retired in 2010 after working for more than 30 years as a bookkeeper for the Sprinkler Fitters Union Local 669.

Paula married James Lee Letcher in 1981 and was privileged to become the mother of his two children, Shannon and Jimmy. She loved her family, hosting her yearly party, cruising anywhere, QVC, and riding her trike with her husband and friends. Paula was a member of the All American Harley Davidson Hughesville HOG Chapter and Ladies of Harley.

Predeceased by her father, Paula is survived by her husband James Lee Letcher; children Shannon Roecker (Andy) of Mechanicsville, MD and Jimmy Letcher (Jennifer) of California, MD; grandchildren James (JR) Roecker and Heather Roecker of Mechanicsville, MD; mother, Barbara Sevarino of Bowie, MD; siblings Donna Symonds (Ray) of Fleming Island, FL, Neil Sevarino (Lisa) of Glendale, AZ, Lisa Larson (Louie) of Elkridge, MD, and Laura Sevarino of Bowie, MD; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The family will receive friends for a viewing on Thursday, March 19th from 5-8pm at Rausch Funeral Home in Lusby, MD and a private funeral will be held on Friday, March 20th.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, PO Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650 or The American Cancer Society.

Lent Seafood Savings

February 26th Through April 11th, 2020



King Crab Clusters
13.88 Lb.



Dungeness Crab
11.68 Lb.



Fresh Salmon
6.98 Lb.



Iceland Cod Fillets
6.38 Lb.



16-Oz. Captain Bob's Imitation Crab
2/4.00



16-Oz. Bantry Bay Whole Mussels
2.58 Lb.



41/50-Count USA Raw Shrimp
5.98 Lb.



20/40-Count Peeled & Deveined Argentina Shrimp
6.98 Lb.



21/30 Count Peeled & Deveined Raw Gulf Shrimp
8.98 Lb.



41/50-Count Cooked Shrimp
5.88 Lb.



41/50-Count EZ Peel Shrimp
4.38 Lb.



10-Oz Shrimp Rings
4.58 Ea.



2/3-Oz. Lobster Tails
3.98 Ea.



10/20-Count - IQF Dry Sea Scallops
10.68 Lb.



2-Lb. Bag, 41/50-Count Sea Best EZ Peel Shrimp
10.98 Lb.



1-Lb. Bag Sea Best Tilapia
3.58 Ea.



16-Oz Shrimp Rings
6.98 Ea.



12-oz. Dockside Crab Cakes
6.98 Ea.



10-Lb. Retail Box Nature's Best Whiting
2.98 Lb.



2-lb. Nature's Best Catfish Nuggets
4.98 Ea.



1-Lb. Bag Sea Best Cod
5.98 Ea.



8-Oz. Margaritaville Island Lime Shrimp
8.98 Ea.



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40845 Merchants Lane
Leonardtwn MD
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Mon-Sun
(301) 997-1828

Hollywood
23860 Hollywood Road
Hollywood, MD
7am to 9pm
Mon-Sun
(301) 475-2531

Charlotte Hall
37670 Mohawk Drive
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
7am to 10pm
Mon-Sun
(301) 274-4122

Men's Lacrosse Falls to McDaniel



Erich Wuesthoff '20 | Photo Credit: Bill Wood

The St. Mary's College of Maryland men's lacrosse team (5-3) traveled to McDaniel College on Saturday (Mar. 14) to take on the Green Terror (3-3). The Seahawks fell to the Green Terror by a final score of 18-12.

St. Mary's College - 12, McDaniel - 18

How It Happened

McDaniel jumped out to a 4-1 lead to start the quarter, but the Seahawks tied the game with a three-goal run with 6:41 remaining in the opening stanza. Jack Conway, Erich Wuesthoff, and Jude Brown recorded scores during the run. The Green Terror outscored the Seahawks 2-1 to end the quarter and held a 6-5 lead over St. Mary's College.

The Seahawks grabbed their first lead of the game in the second quarter with back-to-back goals from Brown and Wuesthoff. However, McDaniel responded with two-straight goals to end the half, bringing the score to 8-7 in the McDaniel's favor.

In the third quarter, the Seahawks were outscored 3-2 and headed into the final stanza trailing 11-9. Wuesthoff tallied his fourth goal of the game in the third quarter, while Cameron Linger recorded his first goal of the season for the Seahawks ninth goal.

The Green Terror used a six goal run to start the fourth quarter to pull out to a comfortable 17-9 advantage. St. Mary's College finished the game strong by outscoring McDaniel 3-1. Brown (2) and Jaylen DeCarlo found the back of the net to end the game. DeCarlo's goal was his first of the season.

Inside the Box Score

Brown led the Seahawks on the offensive end with a season-high nine points. Brown recorded four goals and five assists. Wuesthoff finished the game with four goals for his best mark of the season.

Luke McWright hustled for a team-high five ground balls, while Mason Hoffman led the Seahawks with two caused turnovers. Kyrle Preis and DJ Walker split time in goal for the Seahawks. Preis recorded five saves and Walker gathered three.

Jackson Reilly led the Green Terror with five points.

Press Release from SMCM.

St. Mary's College Cancels Remainder of Season

With further developments in the outbreak of COVID-19, St. Mary's College of Maryland will cancel all spring athletics practices and competitions through the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year. This announcement comes on the heels of the recent announcement from the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) on March 13th on the cancellation of all Conference competitions, including Conference championship events through the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

Also on March 13th, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) announced the cancellation of all remaining winter and spring National Championship events for the 2019-20 season.

"It is with a heavy heart that I make this announcement regarding Seahawks Athletics," stated St. Mary's College of Maryland Director of Athletics & Recreation Scott Devine. "Last week was an incredibly difficult emotional roller coaster ride for our student athletes, coaches, staff, parents of our student athletes, and our fans. Having said that, clearly we all have a critical role to play in limiting the spread of COVID-19. Following the CDC informed decisions rendered late last week by the NCAA and the CAC in the face of this evolving world health crisis, canceling the spring season was the proper and responsible course of action for the College to take."

As of March 16th, 22 NCAA Division III conferences had officially canceled their spring seasons with 18 more suspending operations indefinitely or until a later date.

Devine concluded with, "we remain extremely proud of all of our Seahawk student athletes, but feel a particular sense of sadness and disappointment for our spring sports athletes and coaches because of the suddenness with which their respective seasons came to an end."

A View From The BLEACHERS

Best Laid Schemes

By Ronald N. Guy Jr.
Contributing Writer

"May you live in interesting times."

For some, it's an ancient blessing; for others, it's a curse – "interesting times" being code for some sort of upheaval. Its origins might be Chinese; although it has links to British history. Whatever the meaning, intent or source, living in interesting times certainly applies to a world now battling the spread of COVID-19, a virus that, ironically, began in China. Or maybe, according to a wild suggestion by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was started by the U.S. Military.

Despite the mysterious history of the quote and rumors of this pathogen's origins, this isn't in question: the disruption this micro-organism will have on our lives has just begun. Sports, in context of an evolving public health crisis, are an insignificant footnote to a developing new way of life, but last week it was the world of sports that first triggered the transition to our new normal. The NBA first suggested playing games with no fans – how naïve and "early March that seems now. Shortly thereafter, a Jazz-Thunder game was cancelled before tip-off after Jazz players Rudy Gobert and Donovan Mitchell tested positive. Then the league suspended the season for 30 days. The NCAA slowly followed suit, first cancelling conference tournaments and then making the unimaginable, but absolutely appropriate, decision to cancel March Madness. NASCAR and the NHL quickly adopted the coronavirus shutdown protocol. Golf nixed its near-term schedule and postponed The Masters. MLB has delayed the start of the 2020 season and the NFL's league events are fluid. For all intents and purposes, sports has been shut down indefinitely - and it all happened in a dizzying 48-hour period.

But the sports columns must go on, if not for your sanity, then certainly mine!

Again, setting aside the true victims of this disease – those battling or who have succumbed to COVID-19 – and focusing only on those inconvenienced by its spread, my sports mind immediately extends sympathies to amateur athletes. As Maryland closed out a victory over

Michigan in the regular season finale to secure a share of the BIG conference championship, I applauded as senior guard Anthony Cowan was removed from the game in the waning seconds. Little did we know that the victory over Michigan would be Cowan's last game as a Terrapin and the end of the season for an exciting Maryland team.

The disappointment extends far beyond College Park.

Dayton and San Diego State, two unlikely basketball powers, had generational teams and legitimate chances to win it all. Former Wizards head coach Leonard Hamilton had perhaps his best Florida State team and was poised to make a serious run at the national championship; the same can be said for head coach Mark Few and his Gonzaga Bulldogs, a perennial contender that's never cut down the nets.

Down a level, it's hard to contemplate the number of high school athletes who didn't finish winter sports or who will have spring sports cancelled altogether. To lose a season at the college or high school level – one of only a precious four – is just a real kick in the knee; and for the seniors, it is an unfortunate end to one of the great experiences in life – amateur athletics.

Tom Hanks, who is currently being treated for COVID-19, channeled Jimmy Dugan, the character he played in the movie "A League of Their Own," when concluding a social media post on his condition and the virus with "There's no crying in baseball." Or in the world's battle against a pandemic, so Hanks's suggestion goes. I suppose that frank statement applies to all athletes who lost a season or saw their amateur athletic careers end prematurely. That seems a little harsh, but then life just has its way with us sometime. As Robert Burns said in his poem "To a Mouse", "The best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry."

At the end of this, let's just hope that lost athletic seasons remain among the most significant social consequences. For if so, we won. Until then, good health to all while we navigate these most - unfortunately - interesting times.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

THE SECURE ACT AND 5 CHANGES IN THE NEW RETIREMENT LAW

*Contributing Writer:
Lynda J. Striegel*

The SECURE Act, the “Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act” was passed into law effective January 1, 2020. This new retirement law has five significant changes, as follows:

1. The new law increases the age for Required Minimum Distribution (the “RMD”) from 70 ½ to 72. The RMD is the amount you are required to withdraw from your retirement account. Anyone turning 70 ½ in 2020 is not required to take RMD. If you have been taking RMDs prior to 2020, you will need to continue taking them. Starting in 2020, you are required to withdraw retirement funds at age 72 (as opposed to 70 ½ prior to 2020). Those born on or before June 30, 1949 must take RMDs at age 70 ½. Those born in July through December 1949 take RMDs in 2021; those born in 1950 take RMDs in 2022 and those born in 1951 take RMDs in 2023.

2. The new law eliminates the IRA “stretch” option. This is potentially the most significant law change. When you withdraw money from a traditional IRA in RMDs, you must pay income tax on the money. Inherited IRAs with death dates prior to 2020 were able to “stretch” the RMDs over the beneficiary’s lifetime. For younger beneficiaries, this meant the amounts of RMD could be much smaller and therefore result in a smaller income tax. Beginning in 2020, the new law requires, for non-spouse beneficiaries, that an inherited IRA has to be distributed over 10 years after the individual’s death. The new provisions make it clear that IRAs must be liquidated, and income taxes paid, over a ten year period, potentially resulting in income tax on much larger amounts required to be withdrawn. For deaths in 2020 and later, all IRAs must be distributed in full by the tenth calendar year following death.

3. The new law repeals the maximum age for traditional IRA contributions. Prior to 2020, no one over age 70 ½ was permitted to make IRA contributions. The new law allows anyone over 70 ½ who has U.S. earned income to make contributions to a traditional IRA. With our population aging, this is a good benefit for saving.

4. The new law expands Section 529 plans. Parents can now use their 529 accounts to cover costs associated with registered apprenticeships and for up to \$10,000 of qualified student loan repayments. This should be a help to those paying student loans.

5. The new law increases the maximum credit for startup business retirement plans from \$500 to \$5,000. A new tax credit of \$500 is also available for some smaller employers who set up automatic enrollment in their plans.

Everyone with a traditional IRA or similar retirement plan should consult their financial advisors or accountants about how to cope with the changes in the new law.

Join me on the third Wednesday of every month to discuss this and other topics at 11am, 8906 Bay Avenue, North Beach. Call 301-855-2246 to reserve your spot.

We support PROJECT ECHO, the homeless shelter in Calvert County and urge you to do the same. Donate to Project Echo by leaving paper products and other items at our office or through a cash contribution to www.projectecho.com. Your support is appreciated.

Wanderings *of an* Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann
Contributing Writer



“No Coffee, No Perky, No Talky”



I’ve made my long commute from the living room sofa to the office chair and I am ready to work from home. I saw someone had posted online asking if people were still getting dressed while they had to telework now. Some people said, yes, they were dressing for the day just like they were going into their brick and mortar places of work. One group I am in is composed primarily of women who are stay at home moms or women who work from home. Most of the women stated that they get dressed as they would for working outside the home, though quite a few were jeans and t-shirt women like me. I end up getting into many projects for home and for customers that are quite messy – which I enjoy. I love grunge work, makes me feel like I have really accomplished something. And yes, I do have to be showered and dressed before I start my column or work out in the workshop for some reason.

Any work for me is good, that way I am not just talking my husband’s ear off – which is funny because I used to not say much of anything until he persistently asked me what I was thinking and why I wasn’t talking enough in our early years together. “Karma’s a b*#*h”, as they say. So, I am really trying hard to tone down my chattering in the morning, but it doesn’t seem to work. And now, my husband has another way to stop the flow of words from my brain to my mouth that begins the moment I hear him awaken. Of course, I have already been up for hours usually starting anywhere from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., because you all probably remember that I have to see the sunrise each day or my world is completely out of whack. Well, actually, the world is completely out of whack right now, so there is even more for me to express and ask – mostly rhetorically.

This past Christmas, I found the perfect wooden sign that sums up my husband’s mood in the mornings. Now, as he grumbles out of the bear den (our bedroom) in the morning, he automatically points at the red sign hanging on the wall at the top of our steps, which reads: I am not a morning person and I don’t do perky before noon (as seen in photo). This was very apt for him. I once had a beautiful, large corrugated metal sign with flowers and a poem hanging there, but somehow it was replaced by the new wooden sign, which I originally thought would hang in the bedroom. So, I have to stop my stream of words as he silently points to the sign now every morning.

Once he has had his coffee things start to gradually improve, and that all also depends critically on whether it is a sunny day, or worst of all scenarios for me, a rainy or overcast day. Yes, there is a lot to deal with here in the Oppermann household. You know I am married to a retired, old PG County/NRL Firefighter, and firefighters are known for needing lots of caffeine before they start their day. And whatever they need is great for all the amazing unsung things they do or did each day in the service of others. I am very lucky to be married to him, and I repeat this to myself over and over every morning before his coffee kicks in.

I hope everyone is doing okay through all this and trying to keep their spirits up. I am saying a prayer for all of us. As I hear my husband making funny songs up while he is feeding Mindy while I am typing, I am grateful for each day with this man...with words, without words, coffee or no coffee.

To each new day’s adventure, Shelby

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