



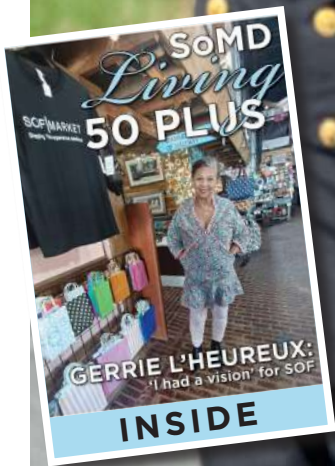
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# CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	3	LIVING 50+	13
COMMUNITY	9	OBITUARIES	20
COLUMNISTS	12	CALENDARS	23

## “UNTIL THIS GETS RESOLVED, WE REALLY ARE UP AGAINST IT.”

SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON THE CHALLENGES OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM



**LOCAL 3**  
County testifies against transportation cuts



**LOCAL 6**  
Native cosmetologist makes it big in film industry



**ON THE COVER**  
County's lease with Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy to end

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, JAN 18</b>  Mostly Cloudy Hi: 42° Lo: 31°	<b>FRI, JAN 19</b>  Rain/Snow Showers Hi: 37° Lo: 22°	<b>SAT, JAN 20</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 28° Lo: 19°	<b>SUN, JAN 21</b>  Sunny Hi: 35° Lo: 20°
<b>MON, JAN 22</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 44° Lo: 29°	<b>TUE, JAN 23</b>  Mostly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 38°	<b>WED, JAN 24</b>  Showers Hi: 51° Lo: 43°	<b>THU, JAN 25</b>  Showers Hi: 59° Lo: 53°



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# St. Mary's Testifies Against State Transportation Cuts



Deputy County Attorney John Houser and Public Works Chief Jim Gotsch

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The county's deputy legal counsel testified this week as to what the proposed state level cuts to transportation projects would do to St. Mary's.

Deputy County Attorney John Houser told members of the House of Delegates Appropriations Committee that he was "grateful" that certain monies such as highway user fees had been restored the same day, he offered testimony.

"What is still left on the table though... is an adjustment to one project that will be of great significance to St. Mary's County," Houser said. "That is the Maryland Route 5 reconstruction project."

The project Houser referred to was slated to begin in either early 2025 or 2026 and includes improving the intersection at Great Mills Road and Route 5, which for years has been one of the worst traffic jams in the county at least twice a day during the morning and evening rush hours.

Houser said the intersection served NAS Patuxent River, Webster Field Annex, Great Mills High School, five elementary schools "and countless small businesses."

"And probably a few thousand residential homes as well," Houser added. "It sees approximately 25,888 trips a day and it

is failing."

The intersection was last improved in the mid-1990s, said Houser.

The project consists of widening Route 5 from two lanes to four from the intersection at Great Mills Road to Flat Iron Road and includes new lane for bicyclists, Houser said as well as pedestrian sidewalks.

The plan also calls for replacing a bridge over a small portion of the St. Mary's River that was originally built in 1913, Houser said, more than a century ago.

The total cost of the project — to include stormwater management improvements — comes to \$26.5 million.

Over the past several years the state has spent several million dollars to acquire property for the expansion project that has also meant several businesses have had to relocate only for the project to face yet another delay.

Del. Ben Barnes (D-Dist. 21 Anne Arundel and Prince George's) said the testimony from St. Mary's County showed how state level cuts had real negative effects on the economic engines of counties throughout the state.

"We've been talking about growing the state's economy but certainly, with these cuts, it's not going to get us where we need to be," Barnes said commenting on Houser's testimony.

# Linda's Café Moving to Its New Home

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The Linda's Café on Tulagi Place in Lexington Park is no more, its owner — Linda Palchinsky — and staff having moved out on Jan. 14 after having served thousands of loyal customers for decades.

But that is hardly the end of the story; the community favorite restaurant should be reopened soon, its owner has announced, after successfully taking over the space of the former Days Off Deli at the intersection of Three Notch Road and Millstone Landing Road.

"It's been a long road deciding to make this move to a new location," said Melissa Rivera, Palchinsky's daughter, in a social media post the day of the move. "We really had to look deep and make sure that we wanted to make this level of commitment again.

"So many ranges of emotions came over us today, I really had to think about the fact that I grew up in this restaurant."

Rivera said she "played in the basements as a child, I remember when the library was across the street and every afternoon I had to go do my homework there."

"It's where I bought my first pack of cigarettes out of our cigarette vending machine, dropping one quarter at a time as I helped my parents open on Saturday mornings."

Palchinsky has been operating her



Melissa Rivera (l) and Linda Palchinsky (r) in front of the new location of Linda's Café

restaurant on Tulagi Place for about three-and-a-half decades, leasing the property month to month from property owners based in Virginia.

But in just the past two years, the owners of the property have agreed to lease it to Royal Farms to build a new fueling and convenience store at the corner of Great Mills Road and Route 235.

This necessitates the demolition of the aging strip shopping center that has housed Linda's Café and several other local businesses, including a church.

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**Auction Closes:** THURS, FEB 15<sup>th</sup> - beginning at 6 pm

**Auction Preview:** FRI, FEB 9<sup>th</sup> from 3 pm to 6 pm

SAT, FEB 10<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 11 am.

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# Ruling on North County Gas Station Delayed



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The county's planning commission decided last week to hold off making a decision on whether to approve a concept site plan for a new fueling station and convenience store project in Charlotte Hall.

Many of the concerns expressed were over traffic flow and volume both at the site in question and how it would affect traffic in the immediate area.

The Sheetz gas station is to be part of a new development called Charlotte Hall Commons being built next to the U.S. Veterans Administration's Community Based Outpatient Clinic located on John Knight Drive, said Jay Hobson, of Jay Hobson Consulting, the local engineering firm representing Sheetz at the Jan. 8 planning commission hearing.

The commission will take up the case again at its March 4 meeting, county documents showed.

Among other improvements the developer has proposed for the project is an enhanced right turn lane on Route 5 onto Golden Beach Road to keep the flow of traffic moving steadily, though the development in question is further south.

The developer's representatives at the

hearing said their initial plans called for a 6,500 square foot store with 16 fuel pumps and so their traffic study submitted to the county reflected that size in average daily vehicle trips.

That study claimed more than 8,300 per day through the store's property.

According to recently submitted 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.

Board chair Howard Thompson was critical of the plans to improve the intersection at Golden Beach Road, as it would not help alleviate extra traffic and turning of vehicles further south at the actual project site.

"That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me," Thompson said.

The developer's traffic engineer explained that they had offered to signalize the intersection at the site entrance to the proposed project, but the state rejected that idea as that would stop or slow traffic flow on southbound Route 5.

Jackie Chanlder, with Traffic Concepts, Inc., said the state was unwilling to allow more delays moving south than were already there.

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

# Report: School Performance Hit By Absences

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The state Department of Education rates schools on a five-star scale based on criteria such as student performance and attendance; a recent report to the St. Mary's County Board of Education shows the number of five-star schools here has dropped.

Increases in rates of absenteeism was one reason why, student growth was another.

The way the state measured such criteria have moved back to pre-COVID 19 methodology, the report explained.

In 2022 there were four five-star schools in St. Mary's, by 2023 that number had dropped to just one, the latest data reported Jan. 11 to the school board stated.

The number of four-star schools dropped as well, from 17 in 2022 to 12 in 2023.

There are no one-or-two-star schools in St. Mary's — schools which have earned either less than 30 percent of quality points or under 45 percent, but the number of three-star schools — those who have earned between 45 percent and 59.9 percent of quality points — has increased from four to 13 in just one year.

The high school graduation rate, which is still calculated with 2022 numbers, shows declines as well.

In 2022 the graduation rate dropped from 91 percent to 90 percent, continuing a steady decline since 2018 when 94.5 percent of high schoolers graduated.

The county's graduation rate was still well above that of the state's, which was reported at 86.3 percent.

The schools' top official said absenteeism was one of the most pressing problems in education today, laying most responsibility at the feet of parents.

"The average rate of chronic absenteeism across the student population is 30 percent," said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith. "Over 300,000 children in the state of Maryland are considered chronically absent."

"Until this gets resolved, we really are up against it."

According to state policy, a student who is absent, excused or not, 10 percent or more of the days they are enrolled in the system, they are considered chronically absent.

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# Cosmetologist Uses Her Talents in Hollywood Movies

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Renea Dyson was born and raised in St. Mary's; hailing from Valley Lee, she's taken her talents as a cosmetologist and a top-tier hairstylist all the way to Hollywood movie productions.

Her work is on display in such features as the recently released "The Color Purple" and other movies such as "Just Mercy" starring Jamie Foxx and Michael B. Jordan and "Cop Shop" with Gerard Butler.

She went through all the local schools, George Washington Carver elementary, Spring Ridge middle and Great Mills High School before moving on to a cosmetologist training school in the former San Souci Shopping Center in Lexington Park to pursue her passion.

"I'm a home town girl," Dyson, now based in Atlanta, Georgia, told The County Times. "I started at Blades in San Souci."

She went on to own several salons locally, she said, and started to take on work in the

film industry while the tax credits for such operations in Maryland were still available.

But once those tax credits were no longer available, she found herself moving on to Atlanta, where the movie and television industry takes advantages of them.

That was in 2017, Dyson said.

"It's crazy busy all the time because of the tax credits," she said. "We recently did 'The Color Purple'."

"I've done 17 or 18 films but that's the one that's the big blockbuster for me right now."

More of her work can be seen Feb. 1, she said, on the National Geographic channel detailing the life and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.

She has worked with quite a few celebrities in her line of work, she said.

"They're my coworkers," Dyson said. "It's exciting to meet them; when you're assigned to an actor, you're with them all day, every day, until you wrap the show."

"When you meet them, they're human beings just like everyone else; they're regular people."

Working on a Hollywood production is a tremendous effort, Dyson said, with every person, whether a hairstylist, carpenter or actor, constantly honing their craft.

"It's a huge collaboration," Dyson said. "It's a train of many moving parts."

She had some critical advice for anyone who wanted to follow in her footsteps and make it in the film industry.

"Do your research, know where you want to be... pick a place where you want to be and stake your position," Dyson said. "This is a relationship-based industry; people are always watching."

"Do your job and let your work speak for you."

Always being willing to learn and find new ways of doing things, was also important she said.

Every time a job was done, it was essentially the interview for the next one, she said.

"Being a team player, that is key," said Dyson.

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



Dyson was recognized for "Outstanding Achievement in Business and Trades" by the St. Mary's County NAACP in 2022.



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# County Decides Not to Extend Lease for Junior Naval Academy

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Time seems to be running out for Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy in Leonardtown, as the county government has decided not to extend its long-standing lease to allow it to stay in the county-owned building.

The junior naval academy has been in operation for more than 100 years and has operated out of the building immediately adjacent to the county government headquarters for decades.

Commissioner Eric Colvin revealed to The County Times this week that four out of five commissioners agreed in executive session Jan. 9 to not extend the lease.

"They decided it wasn't in the county's best interest to continue to keep the school there," Colvin said, noting he was the sole commissioner in favor of extending the lease.

In a later interview Colvin said the rationale for the executive session regarding the building's fate was to seek legal advice for options available to the commissioners in dealing with the lease.

Executive sessions are often called for purposes of property acquisitions but that was not the case here since the county already owns the building.

It is also procedure for commissioners to return to public session and vote on decisions agreed upon in executive session, in this case no public vote was cast, Colvin confirmed.

"There was not [a public vote,]" Colvin said. "It probably should've been made clear to the public."

Colvin said part of the mission statement of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County was preserving the history and heritage of the county.

"They're part of the county's heritage,"



Colvin said of Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy. "We talked about a few potential options for them."

The building in which the school operates is old and has several maintenance issues, Colvin said, and their rent increased this year as well.

A letter from County Administrator David Weiskopf to the school's headmistress Sarah Green, explained the county's reasoning

"After reviewing the drafted financial plan and the current updates needed to the facility, the county feels it necessary for the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens that it is best to terminate that rental relationship between the parties," Weiskopf stated in the letter. "To not disrupt the current school year, the county is hereby giving notice pursuant to MD Real Property Article § 8-402 that the current month-to-month tenancy shall terminate on June 30, 2024, at midnight."

Colvin explained further that the current

lease was "very favorable" to Leonard Hall and it held the school responsible for all maintenance at the school except for the roof.

"The board believed as a majority the school would not be able to do the required upkeep."

Colvin said the county would likely renovate the building once the school left and repurpose it, though "nothing has been finalized on that."

He declined to divulge what commissioners had discussed about what might be the new use for the building.

In the absence of a lease agreement extension, the school will have to find a new facility to continue teaching students or cease operations.

Colvin said he hoped the county would work with the school administration to help it find a new home.

The number of students attending LHJNA in recent years has been small — usually not more than 50 young people — spanning the

middle school grades all the way up through high school seniors.

Green released a statement regarding the school's immediate future to parents this week.

"As you know, Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy will no longer be occupying its current location beyond this school year," Green wrote to parents. "In the recent past, the school has relied on our very limited resources to maintain the building."

"However, an assessment completed by county administrators this summer determined needed repairs to the building were outside the scope of our capabilities."

Green went on to write that the school leadership had "pursued grants and fundraising, both to no avail."

"We appreciate your compassion for our situation and hope you'll continue to support us in the future as you have for the last 115 years."

Parents who had children enrolled at the venerable school expressed their anger at the commissioners' decision.

"Small classes and those kids clean the school — not a janitor — and teachers make lower salaries, said Jaime Abell Weber. "Parents fix things and one dad teaches life skills of fixing things there."

"Last year, parents adopted a classroom to freshen it up and currently they are fundraising for a new HVAC."

Weber continued: "But do they care about these kids [who could] get uprooted from discipline and respect? Nope. If you get smart with a teacher, there are consequences. [That's] how it should be!"

Green, in her letter, stated the school's board of trustees and county were "looking into all avenues for the future location of Leonard Hall."

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## Legal Notices

### COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Rezoning Request 22675 Cedar Lane Court, Leonardtown, MD 20650

The Commissioners of Leonardtown will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 4:15 p.m. at the Town Office, 22670 Washington Street, regarding Tax Map 040, Parcel 017. The purpose of the hearing will be to present for public review and receive public comment regarding the request to rezone the parcel located at 22675 Cedar Lane Court, from Residential Single Family (RSF) to Commercial Business (C-B). Copies of the documents are available for public review at the Leonardtown Town Office. The public is invited to attend and/or send written comments to the Commissioners of Leonardtown, P.O. Box 1, Leonardtown, MD 20650 to be received no later than February 12, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. Special accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities upon request.

By Authority: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator

### COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Franchise Agreement with Comcast of Maryland, LLC

The Commissioners of Leonardtown will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. at the Town Office, 22670 Washington Street, regarding the proposed franchise agreement with Comcast of Maryland, LLC and The Commissioners of Leonardtown. The purpose of the hearing will be to present for public review and receive public comment regarding the request to enter into a ten-year Franchise Agreement with Comcast Maryland, LLC. Copies of the documents are available for public review at the Leonardtown Town Office. The public is invited to attend and/or send written comments to the Commissioners of Leonardtown, P.O. Box 1, Leonardtown, MD 20650 to be received no later than February 12, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. Special accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities upon request.

By Authority: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator

## Lexington Park Man Sentenced for Vehicular Manslaughters

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that Kevin Eugene Luther, 43, of Lexington Park was sentenced to 20 years in prison with 12 years of active incarceration for two counts of manslaughter by motor vehicle for a crash that tragically took the lives of two victims.

On August 31, 2021, at approximately 6:50 p.m., Luther was traveling northbound in the southbound lanes of Pegg Road at speeds between 89 and 92 miles per hour when he struck the victims' vehicle head-on. Luther's blood alcohol content was 0.21 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood, more than twice the legal limit of 0.08 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. Both occupants of the victims' vehicle succumbed to their injuries on-scene.

At the sentencing hearing, the State asked the Court to impose the maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The Maryland Sentencing Guidelines called for a sentence between one and ten years. The Court went above the guidelines and sentenced the Defendant to 20 years in prison with 12 years of active incarceration.

"Drunk driving is a crime that is entirely preventable and has devastating effects on members of our community and their families. Our office will continue to vigorously prosecute those who make the choice to endanger the lives of others," said State's



Kevin Eugene Luther

Attorney Sterling, "My thoughts are with the loved ones of the victims, whose lives were senselessly and tragically taken."

Sergeant Justin Zimmerman of the Maryland State Police Crash Team was the lead investigator.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lisa Ridge handled the sentencing hearing on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The Honorable Amy D. Lorenzini presided over the case.

## County Commissioners Announce Budget Briefing

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) will host Budget Briefing for fiscal year (FY) 2025 on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, during their regular business meeting, in the CSMC Meeting Room, located in the Chesapeake Building at 41770 Baldrige Street in Leonardtown. The Budget Briefing will include discussion on the following topics:

- The economy
- Property tax credits
- Upcoming requests
- Budget flexibility

Community members are encouraged to attend or watch this Budget Briefing. Meetings are open to the public and can be viewed live on St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) Channel 95 or on-demand via the SMCG YouTube Channel.

Additionally, the CSMC are pleased to announce the launch of a new online

engagement page for the FY2025 Budget, available to the public at: <http://bit.ly/SMCGFY25Budget>. From this Budget Engage Page residents can learn about the budget process, view the budget timeline and meeting schedule, watch meeting videos, and even leave feedback on local priorities – all in one place!

"As we enter this budget season, we know there will be significant challenges and competing needs across our community," said Commissioner President, Randy Guy. "Our goal is to produce a balanced and fiscally sound budget, that considers the needs and priorities of the residents we serve. It will take collaboration, flexibility, and community engagement to get us there, and we hope this briefing and new online platform will help our residents stay informed."

For more information on SMCG, please visit: [stmaryscountymd.gov](http://stmaryscountymd.gov).

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# Honoring Dr. King's Legacy



Rev. Trisch L. Smith (top) spoke on Monday at St. Mary's College of Maryland's 20th Annual Prayer Breakfast in honor of the great civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Photos by Ceandra Scott

# New Theatre Group Sets Organization Meeting

A new theater group dedicated to presenting the work of area playwrights will have an initial organizational meeting on Saturday, January 20, 11 a.m. at the Charlotte Hall Library, 37600 New Market Road, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622.

The meeting is open to anyone interested in productions of previously-unheard plays, whether their interests lie onstage or backstage, including acting, directing, lighting, set design, sound, costuming, lighting and sound operation, stage crew and management, publicity, front of house, or anything else — not to mention play writing. All are needed and welcome.

The group's artistic theme is "New Shows, New Voices, New Theatre" and its purpose is to provide playwrights and other artists with an opportunity to advance their craft and creative growth. It is envisioned

that the group, for now called "Opening Night Productions," will program unpublished scripts that have not yet been produced.

It will give playwrights the opportunity to see their new scripts, be they one-act or full-length, on a real stage performed by real actors, either as readings or full productions. The actors, meanwhile, will have an opportunity to literally be the "original cast" of a show, creating the roles.

Inasmuch as the company is to be based in Southern Maryland, it will be particularly interested in scripts by Southern Maryland playwrights, and also Maryland and nearby Virginia playwrights.

For further information, contact [openingnites@gmail.com](mailto:openingnites@gmail.com) or contact Rick Thompson 410-535-2144



# Letters to the Editor

## County Administrator Responds:

I am writing in response to the recent article, "New Emergency Services Chief Accused of Toxicity in Last Post," published in the January 11, 2024, issue of the St. Mary's County Times. As the County Administrator for St. Mary's County Government (SMCG), I feel compelled to provide additional context and information regarding the recent appointment of Ms. Aubert-Utz as the Director of Emergency Services (DES).

The recruitment process for the DES Director position was rigorous and involved a multi-step interview process, to include the interviewing of co-workers and past and present leaders. Ms. Aubert-Utz emerged as the top candidate after a thorough evaluation.

The initial interview panel included the President of the St. Mary's County Fire Association, the St. Mary's County Rescue Chief, a Captain of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, SMCG's Human Resource (HR) Director, and the Deputy County Administrator. This highly experienced and qualified panel, representing multiple sectors of local emergency preparedness and response, unanimously selected Ms. Aubert-Utz as the top candidate moving into the second round of interviews. The second interview was conducted by the HR Director, County Administrator, and Deputy County Administrator. All the interviewers were highly impressed with Ms. Aubert-Utz and satisfied with her responses, which included a detailed discussion about the union vote. It was a unanimous decision to recommend her as the top can-

didate for the position. Lastly, at the Commissioner meeting on January 9, 2024, the Commissioners unanimously approved Ms. Aubert-Utz's employment contract.

Furthermore, her references, including a retired Baltimore County Fire Chief, attested to her exceptional leadership qualities, competence, and commitment to excellence. Ms. Aubert-Utz's impeccable credentials, education, and achievements further support her suitability for the role. She holds advanced degrees from Johns Hopkins, serves in leadership roles for key organizations, and has received notable recognition within the emergency response community.

It is crucial to emphasize that none of Ms. Aubert-Utz's references expressed concerns based on the union vote, as well as the fact that less than half of the membership voted. Her long track record as Assistant Fire Chief, overseeing both career and volunteer members, speaks volumes about her ability to lead and manage effectively.

Considering these facts, I believe it is essential for the community to have a more comprehensive understanding of the meticulous process that led to Ms. Aubert-Utz's appointment and the wealth of qualifications she brings to the role. We remain committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community through strong and capable leadership in the Department of Emergency Services.

David Weiskopf  
County Administrator  
St. Mary's County Government

# Pet

OF THE WEEK  
MEET  
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## FINANCIAL FOCUS®

### Consider a family meeting to discuss estate plans

At some point, you'll want to share your estate plans with your loved ones — and the first step in this process may be to hold a family meeting.

The best time to hold this meeting is when you're still in good mental and physical shape, and the enactment of your estate plans may well be years away. But what topics should you cover?

Consider these main areas:

- Your wishes — and those of your family. Use this meeting to introduce your estate plans and, in a basic sense, what you hope to accomplish with them — leave money to your family, support charitable groups and so on. You'll want to emphasize that you want to be equitable in what you leave behind, but there may be issues that affect this decision, such as disparities in income between grown children or an allowance for a special-needs child. But you'll also want to listen to what your family members want — and you might be surprised at what they tell you. Consider this: More than 80% of the millennial generation would rather know their parents are financially secure throughout their retirement, even if this means that their parents will pass on less money to them, according to an Edward Jones/Age Wave study.
- Estate planning documents — At the time of your family meeting, you may or may not have already created your estate planning documents, but in either case, this would be a good time to discuss them. These documents may include a will, a living trust, financial power of attorney, health care power of attorney and possibly other arrangements. At a minimum, you'd like to give a general overview of what these documents mean, but at an initial family meeting, you don't necessarily have to get too detailed. For example, you might not want to talk about specific inheritances. This is also an opportunity to inform your loved ones of the professionals involved in your estate plans, such as your attorney and your tax advisor.
- Roles of everyone involved — Not only does a comprehensive estate plan involve moving parts, such as the necessary documents, but it also includes actual human beings who may need to take on different roles. You will need an executor for your will and, if you have a living trust, you'll need a trustee. Even if you choose to serve as the initial trustee, you'll still need to identify one or more successor trustees to take your place if you become incapacitated, or upon your death. Plus, you'll need to name people to act as your power of attorney for health care and finances. Choosing the right people for these roles involves thought and sensitivity. Obviously, you want individuals who are competent and reliable, but you also need to be aware that some family members could feel slighted if others are assigned roles they feel they could do. By being aware of these possible conflicts, you can be better prepared to address them.

Here's one more suggestion: Let your family know that this initial meeting doesn't mean the end of communications about your estate plans. Encourage your loved ones to contact you with questions whenever they want. You may need to hold additional family meetings in the future, but by laying the initial groundwork, you will have taken a big first step in establishing the legacy you'd like to leave.

*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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# Edward Jones®

## Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



### If I Don't Notice, It's Just Not There

Some people notice things that others don't...or block them out. That truth is abundantly clear in this house. Take, for instance, mustard. I did not notice that we had three large containers of yellow mustard in the door bin of the refrigerator, but my husband noticed it a few days ago and let me know this fact. I thought, well maybe he will pour two of them into one bottle since I am pretty sure he knows I don't like the smell of mustard too much. But this is part of married life sometimes. My husband will say, "What's this?"

Usually I am in another room, and say, "What??" He'll say, "This!" Okay, never mind that the best part of a Hallmark mystery is on, or my beloved British mysteries are just at the point of naming the killer. I get up and look and hear the "What is this" again. I look in the refrigerator and see lots of things, still not sure what this is, until he points at the mustards which I have conveniently blocked out of my head. I can't be the only spouse who is mumbling under their breath or in their head, "Well if it bothers you, and I didn't notice it, maybe you should take care of it." I don't say those thoughts out loud of course.

Back to the mustard issue. I did re-mention to him when he pointed out the abundance of mustard how much I don't like the smell of mustard. So, anyway there I was a few days later blending all three mustards together since they were still in there sitting side by side even though I'm not the person that they bother. And also, because the bright, happy, yellow mustards were now screaming at me every time I opened the refrigerator door to blend them. I did my due diligence Google check on whether mustard goes bad, and read from Epicurious that, "...the flavor will change...so while it doesn't go bad like a fish or wine, it does become less exciting." I had no idea mustard was considered exciting. Maybe I should start putting mustard in all our meals, so the winter months are more exciting.

This spousal bantering/bickering happens a lot in this house during the winter. When does pool season start again?? If you have read any of my older columns like "The Winter Hater" then you may remember how much my husband hates winter, he must be the person for whom SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) was coined.

The reason I haven't liked mustard and haven't liked it since I was pregnant with my second son in 1987, was due to a commercial which came on TV with a large amount of mustard being poured on a hamburger. I was very ill from that commercial. Up until then, I still loved bologna and mustard on white bread like I did in kindergarten and mustard and onions on hamburgers. I also loved hotdogs with the works from 7-11 along with a cherry Slurpee and chips of course...maybe with a pack of Zingers too. I can still eat hotdogs with mustard, but there also has to be catsup, relish, and minced onions on it. And now for some reason, I am craving a hamburger with mustard and onions again — it only took 41 years to get to this point of remembering how good it tasted. I better go get a Fig Newton to stem these cravings.

This explains why we also have two open mayonnaise jars in the fridge. I couldn't eat mayo when I was pregnant with my first son in 1983. I had just started liking mayo, catsup, and red onions on hamburgers before that, but for some hormonal reason mayo would make me ill. Most people know how smells affect women carrying a child. The strange thing is that it sometimes takes years to get over those pregnancy aversions. Now I can't have a hamburger unless it has mayo, catsup, and pepper on it.

Well, tonight, if the snow isn't too bad, I am going to ask if my husband will grill some hamburgers for us. I've attached a photo of him doing just that in bad weather a few years back. That way I can have one burger with catsup, mayo, and pepper and the other with mustard and onions to see if I am really free of my fear of mustard. But before I do that, I am going to find something in a room of this house and yell out, "What's this?!" Gotta keep things exciting and interesting...yup, it's going to be a loooong winter.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

Please send your comments or ideas to: [shelbys.wanderings@yahoo.com](mailto:shelbys.wanderings@yahoo.com) or find me on Facebook.





A woman with short grey hair, wearing a light blue floral patterned top and white pants, stands in a store. To her left, a black t-shirt hangs with the text 'SOF|MARKET Shopping. The experience redefined.' Below it, a rack holds several colorful paper shopping bags in various patterns like polka dots, stripes, and solid colors. In the background, there are shelves with various items, a blue sign that says 'STAIRS AT THE END OF HALLWAY', and a decorated Christmas tree with lights. The store has a rustic feel with wooden beams and a brick floor.

# P.S. SoMD *Living* 50 PLUS

**GERRIE L'HEUREUX:**  
'I had a vision' for SOF



# SOF Market Owner Has No Plans to Stop

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Gerrie L'Heureux is perhaps best known as the owner and inspirational force behind Shepherd's Old Field Market in Leonardtown, but her resume shows a winding road the 67-year-old has taken to get here.

Born in Singapore to an Asian mother and an English father, she lived there for about 16 years before moving to Switzerland.

It was there that she met and married her husband, who was a Marine attached to the diplomatic mission there, and began to work as a secretary for various companies such as Caterpillar and even in the United Nations, she said.

She looks back on her journey with fondness and a dose of reality.

"That's when you know your old," L'Heureux told The County Times. "You look back on all the things you've done."

But when she started a family — raising four boys — she said she was a stay-at-home mom for most of that time before slowly reentering the workforce.

It wasn't long before her husband's 26-year career in the U.S. Marine Corp brought them back to the United States and even to Japan, L'Heureux said.

"I started taking sanity jobs, like waitressing," she said with a laugh. "Sanity jobs means where you don't have to talk baby talk to your child; you can have adult conversations apart from young children."



Her husband's last duty station brought them to St. Mary's County and Patuxent River Naval Air Station in 1995 where she worked in administrative positions for construction companies that worked to expand the base's footprint during the big consolidation of Trenton, NJ and Warminster, Pa. Navy Facilities here.

It was then that she got into government contracting and earned her bachelor's and then master's degree in management.

Eventually she would take over as the CEO of Bowhead before retiring in about 2015.

She said the job aged her significantly for the nine years she held it but she still had the energy in retirement to pursue her vision for Leonardtown, a place she has come to love.

"I started flipping houses here in Leonardtown," L'Heureux said. "While I was flipping houses, I saw the [former] Miedzinski building and that's when God spoke to me."

L'Heureux is serious when she said divine inspiration brought her to buy the old building on Duke Street on the backside of the downtown area and redevelop it as

Shepherd's Old Field Market, a mecca for boutique businesses and includes such local specialties as Viking Axe Throwing, Smash Burgers and the Brudergarten bar.

"I had a vision for that building," L'Heureux said. "I just knew Leonardtown was going to boom."

"All the reports were saying that brick-and-mortar was dead but I believed that people would come for the experience."

She was right, as SOF Market has proven to be one of the most successful revitalization projects in Leonardtown's recent history.

Even as she approaches 70 years old, L'Heureux doesn't show any signs of slowing down.

"That's what scares me," she said. "That I won't be able to stop."

"But if you stop, you die."

L'Heureux loves to sew and to ski, she said, and is busy getting to know her grandchildren.

But she's still very much the entrepreneur.

"My market keeps me going," L'Heureux said. "I'm always looking for opportunities that make sense."

"My passion is helping small business to grow."

L'Heureux said what she does is work, though it doesn't feel like it.

"If you put a lot of passion into what you do, you'll love it," L'Heureux said.

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

## Home and Community-Based Services

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## Human Services

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## MAP/Senior Information and Assistance

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

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Saturday, June 1

New Beginning newsletter

Road Show Presentations



# Tips for Seniors to Safeguard Their Mental Health



The wide-ranging impact and reach of mental health issues garnered considerable attention during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the virus as well as mandates designed to reduce its spread led to increased feelings of anxiety and isolation. Since then, life has returned to normal for billions of people across the globe, but many people, including seniors, continue to experience mental health issues.

The Pan American Health Organization reports that at least one in four older adults experiences a mental disorder such as depression, anxiety or dementia. And those figures will likely only grow, as population estimates indicate seniors will make up a greater percentage of the global population in the years to come. Seniors dealing with mental health issues may feel helpless, but there's much they can do to safeguard their mental health.

- Socialize regularly. A 2019 study published in The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences found that older adults who socialized with people beyond their circle of family and close friends were more likely to have greater positive moods and fewer negative feelings. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of older adults report feeling isolated from others. According to the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging that was conducted in January 2023, one in three older adults reported infrequent contact (once a week or less) with people from outside their home.
- Speak with a mental health professional. Among the more troubling aspects of the mental health crisis affecting seniors is that the PAHO

reports two-thirds of older adults with mental health problems do not get the treatment they need. Speaking with a mental health professional can help older adults in myriad ways. Such professionals can identify the issue that is prompting seniors to seek help and offer suggestions that can improve overall health and quality of life. Roundstone Insurance notes that reliance on digital behavioral health tools, including telehealth, was turned to both during the pandemic and ever since, and seniors can utilize such services if they have limited mobility and/or no one to help them make it to in-person appointments.

- Volunteer. Many older adults are retired, and while ample free time may have seemed like the ultimate reward after a lifetime of working, many retirees experience a void once their life no longer has the structure that work can provide. According to the independent nonprofit HelpGuide.org, retirement depression can compel retirees to feel as though they miss the sense of identity, meaning and purpose that came with their jobs, which can make some feel depressed, aimless and isolated. Volunteering can help fill the void created by retirement, and the positive mental health effects of volunteering are well-documented. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies have shown volunteering increases positive, relaxed feelings and gives volunteers a sense of meaning and appreciation.

No one is immune to mental health issues, including seniors. But older adults can take various steps to address their mental health and improve their overall health as a result.

Medicare covers a full range of preventive services to keep you healthy. Find problems early when treatment is likely to be more effective.

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- One time "Welcome to Medicare" Preventive Visit—within the first 12 months you have Medicare Part B
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- Depression Screening
- Diabetes Screening
- Diabetes Self-management Training
- Flu Shots
- Glaucoma Test
- Hepatitis B Screening
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- HIV Screening
- Lung Cancer Screening
- Mammogram (screening for breast cancer)
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- Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program
- Obesity Screening & Counseling
- Pneumococcal Shots
- Prostate Cancer Screening
- Sexually Transmitted Infection Screening & Counseling
- Counseling to Prevent Tobacco Use & Tobacco-caused Disease

For More Information:

St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services  
 SHIP Division  
 301-475-4200, ext. 1050  
[www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging)





# Three Questions to Ask Before Beginning a New Fitness Regimen

Exercise is widely recognized as a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. Despite that, a recent analysis of data from the 2020 National Health Interview Survey found that more than two-thirds of individuals are not getting enough exercise. Though the survey was conducted amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which suggests the overall figures might be somewhat lower than they might have been had the data been collected in a more typical year, just 28 percent of respondents were meeting the physical activity guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Routine exercise is beneficial for people of all ages, and seniors are no exception. Aging adults who want to be more physically active but think they are among the 72 percent of individuals who aren't meeting CDC exercise guidelines can speak with their physicians and ask these three questions to ensure the transition to a less sedentary lifestyle goes smoothly.

## 1. Should I get a heart checkup?

Doctors may already be monitoring aging individuals' hearts even if they have not exhibited symptoms of heart problems in the past. However, it's best to discuss heart health in greater detail prior to beginning a new fitness regimen. In an interview with Penn Medicine, Neel Chokshi, MD, MBA,



medical director of Penn Sports Cardiology and Fitness Program, noted the risk of heart attack or cardiac complications slightly increases when individuals begin to participate in a moderate or intense activity. So a physician might want to conduct a heart checkup in order to determine if a patient has an underlying heart condition.

## 2. Which types of activities should I look to?

A physician also can recommend certain activities depending on a person's age and medical background. Though exercise is beneficial for everyone, certain activities may not be. For example, AdventHealth notes that high-impact activities like jogging and jump rope may not be suited for individuals with arthritis. In addition, aging individuals with physical limitations that

require them to use a wheelchair should not write off their ability to exercise, as physicians can recommend exercises for patients with mobility issues as well.

## 3. Should I take extra caution while on medication?

Prescription medication use is another variable that must be taken into consideration before beginning a new exercise regimen. The CDC notes that roughly 84 percent of adults between the ages of 60 and 79 use one or more prescription medications. Each medication produces different effects, and a 2016 study published in the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal* noted that certain medications evoke an acute drop in blood pressure, which can disturb balance and increase fall risk, while others actually facilitate greater improvements in health outcomes. That means the dynamic between medications and exercise is unique to each medication, which underscores the importance of speaking with a physician whenever a fitness regimen is started or tweaked and/or a new medication is prescribed.

These are just three of the questions seniors can ask when discussing exercise with their physicians. Seniors are urged to ask any additional questions they might have during such discussions.

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# Having Pets Can Offer Amazing Benefits for Seniors



Pets bring much joy to the lives they touch. So it should come as no surprise that the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey, which was conducted by the American Pet Products Association, found that about 85 million families in the United States own a pet. In Canada, 7.5 million households are home to companion animals, states the PetBacker blog.

Pets offer companionship and unconditional love. While they are fitting for any family, seniors may find that having a pet is especially beneficial. The organization A Place for Mom, which helps match families with senior living residences, says pets provide a comfort system that produces measurable health results. Caring for pets and being around them can produce a chemical chain reaction in the brain that may help to lower stress hormones while also increasing production of the feel-good hormone serotonin.

This is not the only health benefit pets may provide. A recent study from the Mayo Clinic, which looked at 1,800 people between the ages of 25 and 64 who had healthy hearts, found that almost half owned a dog. Having a dog was likely to spur heart-healthy behaviors, like exercising with the pet, eating well and having ideal blood sugar levels.

Pets also provide emotional support and companionship that can help seniors — including those who may be divorced or widowed — feel more secure and happy. The National Poll on Healthy Aging found that, among respondents who had pets, 88 percent said their pets helped them enjoy life, and 86 percent said their pets made them feel loved.

Seniors considering getting a pet can explore the many benefits to doing so.

- **Reduce pain:** A 2012 study published in Pain Magazine found therapy dogs provided “significant reduction in pain and emotional distress for chronic pain patients.”
- **Feeling of purpose:** Caring for an animal not only stimulates physical activity, but it also can give seniors a reason to get up and go, which equates to a feeling of purpose.
- **Altered focus:** Having a pet can help seniors focus on something other than physical or mental health issues and preoccupations about loss or aging, according to New York-based psychologist Penny B. Donnenfeld.
- **Increased physical activity:** Pets require care, and that interaction can get seniors moving more than if they didn’t have a pet.
- **Improved health:** Ongoing research from Harvard Medical School has found dog owners have lower blood pressure, healthier cholesterol levels and lower risk of heart disease than those who don’t own a dog.
- **Stick to routine:** Caring for pets helps seniors maintain a routine. Having structure after retirement can be important to ward off risk of depression. Staying on top of feeding, grooming and other pet needs also can help prevent cognitive decline.

Pets bring many benefits to their owners’ lives, and they may be the perfect remedy for seniors looking for a friend and purpose.



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# Three Tips to Catch Up on Retirement Savings

One need not look long or far to be reminded of the importance of saving for retirement. Indeed, it's hard to go a single day without encountering roadside billboards, television and streaming service advertisements, and/or promotional emails touting the retirement planning services offered by an assortment of investment firms. If those ads seem ubiquitous, it's for good reason, as saving for retirement is among the most important steps individuals can take as they look to ensure their long-term financial security.

Despite the widely accepted significance of retirement planning, studies indicate that many people are behind on saving and aware that they're behind. According to a recent survey from the online financial resource Bankrate, 55 percent of respondents indicated they are behind on their retirement saving. In addition, a Gallup poll released in May 2023 indicated that just 43 percent of nonretirees think they will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement. The good news for individuals who are behind or concerned about their financial wellness in retirement is that three strategies can help them catch up on their savings.



## 1. Take advantage of catch-up rules if you qualify.

Laws governing retirement accounts in the United States allow individuals 50 and older to contribute more to their retirement accounts than they're eligible to contribute prior to turning 50. Bankrate notes that current laws allow individuals over 50 to

contribute an extra \$1,000 per year to a traditional or Roth IRA and an extra \$7,500 annually to a 401(k), 403(b) or 457(b) account. In Canada, individuals can contribute the maximum to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). According to the National Bank of Canada, individuals can contribute up to 18 percent of their annual

income to an RRSP, and those contributions are deducted from taxable income. That means individuals are potentially saving more for down the road and paying less in taxes today.

## 2. Itemize your tax deductions.

The online financial resource Investopedia notes that taking the standard deduction is not for everyone. Individuals with significant amounts of mortgage interest, business-related expenses that are not reimbursed by an employer, and/or charitable donations may lower their tax obligation by itemizing their deductions. That reduction in tax obligation allows individuals to redirect those funds to their retirement accounts.

## 3. Cut back on discretionary spending.

Perhaps the simplest, though not necessarily the easiest, way to catch up on retirement savings is to redirect funds typically spent on discretionary expenses like dining out or travel into retirement accounts. One way to feel better about this approach is to remind yourself that the less money spent on dining out and travel now means more money will be available to spend on such luxuries in retirement.

Three simple strategies make it easier to catch up on retirement savings.

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# Considerations for Retirees Thinking of Working Part-Time

Retirement is an opportunity to wave goodbye to the daily grind. Retirees may focus on rest and relaxation, and many make travel a major component of their lifestyle.

According to a 2022 Gallup poll, Americans expect to retire at an average age of 66, up from 62 in 2022. However, most do not hold out that long; the average actual retirement age is 61. Canada used to have a mandatory retirement age of 65, but that mandate was overturned in 2009. Today, the average retirement age for Canadians is 64.4 for men and 63.8 for women, according to Statistics Canada.

Upon retiring, many retirees discover that they sorely miss getting out of the house and being productive through some sort of employment. Others may find it necessary to supplement their retirement incomes. There are a few things to know about working during retirement, particularly if a person is collecting government benefits.

- According to the Social Security Administration, those falling under full retirement age for the entire year (which was raised to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later) will be subjected to an SSA deduction of \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit. For 2022, that limit



is \$19,560. In the year you reach full retirement age, SSA deducts \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above a different limit, but they only count earnings before the month you reach your full retirement age. For full retirement age reached in 2022 your limit on earnings for the months before full retirement age is \$51,960. After full retirement

- age, there is no limit on earnings.
- The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada reports that individuals between the ages of 60 and 65 who continue to work while receiving a Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) retirement benefit must still contribute to the CPP. Your CPP contributions will go toward post-retirement benefits.

These benefits increase your retirement income when you stop working. However, if you continue to work while getting a CPP retirement pension and are between the ages of 65 and 70 years old, you can choose not to make any more CPP contributions.

- Keep in mind that if you are on Medicare, extra income could potentially trigger surcharges for parts B and D. It's beneficial to speak with a financial consultant to weigh the pros and cons of part-time work during retirement.
- Part-time work does not need to be daily work. Many retirees work according to how they feel. Some options include seasonal jobs, such as driving shuttles in national parks or working during the holidays in retail stores. Or you may use your expertise to consult or start a business.
- A number of people work part-time during retirement simply to get out of the house. Jobs that help you interact with a number of people can be beneficial, as socialization has been shown to benefit the mental health of seniors. Working during retirement can supplement savings and provide structure that some retirees may be missing.




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### Garvey Senior Activity Center

23630 Hayden Farm Lane  
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8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Fridays  
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### Loffler Senior Activity Center

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**For more information, visit: [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging)**






# In Remembrance

To schedule an obituary in the County Times, submit text and picture to [aldailey@countytimes.net](mailto: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.

## Carolyn Briscoe, 94



Carolyn Mason Briscoe, 94, of California, MD, peacefully transitioned from this earthly life to eternity on Sunday, January 7, 2024. She found consolation at home, surrounded by her beloved children Vivian Jordan, Rodney Briscoe, and grandson Shawn Jordan.

Carolyn was born on March 11, 1929 to the late James Mason, Sr. and Rosie Chaney Mason. Carolyn was raised and educated in the St. Mary's County public school system, graduating from Jarborsville High School in 1947. Carolyn worked for years at the Lexington Park Dry Cleaners as a Presser and in the St. Mary's County Public School System as a Building Service Worker.

She met and married her first husband, the late Maurice Henson, with whom she had two daughters, Vivian Jordan, Sharron Connie Bond, and a son Marty Mason. Later in life, she wedded Robert Vincent Briscoe and from that union, they were blessed with two children, Rodney and Robin Briscoe.

Carolyn was preceded in death by her parents James Mason and Rosie Chaney Mason, husbands Maurice Hanson and

Robert Briscoe; sister Irma Mason; brothers James Mason, Jr., Earl, Warren and Leon Mason; and two daughters, Connie Bond and Robin Briscoe. She leaves to continue celebrating her life and legacy: her caring daughter Vivian of Drayden, MD; devoted son Rodney of California, MD; dedicated son-in-law Alfred Jordan; two granddaughter Danielle Mason of Baltimore, MD and Kelly Jordan of Waldorf, MD.; three grandsons: Shawn Jordan of Washington, DC; Vaughn Clark, Jr. of (Victoria) California, MD and Kyle Briscoe (Kasi) of Park Hall, MD; one bonus granddaughter Evita Chapman (Vincent) of Great Mills, MD; and seven great-grandchildren Nevaeh Goldring, Jaliyah Chase, Kyleigh Briscoe, Derron Briscoe, Kiyon Briscoe, Kyle Briscoe, Jaelien Clark, McKenzie Clark and bonus granddaughter Kennedy Chapman and a multitude of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. In cherishing her memory, we honor a life that left an enduring mark on those fortunate enough to know her.

Visitation will be held on Saturday January 20, 2024 at St. Mark Union AME Church 45686 Happyland Road Valley Lee, Maryland 20692 from 9:30 a.m. until Homecoming 11:00 a.m. Interment will be at St. Mark Union AME Church Cemetery.

## 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 65<sup>th</sup> 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 150<sup>th</sup> 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.

The family will receive friends on Friday, January 26, 2024 from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM in St. John's Catholic Church, Hollywood, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 AM with Father Ray Schmidt officiating. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. Serving as pallbear-

ers will be Jonathan Martin, Adam Martin, Benjamin Martin, and David Wilson.

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

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

## Joan Wilson, 84



We sadly lost the heart and soul of our family, Joan Ann Wilson, of Hollywood, MD, on January 11, 2024. She passed peacefully in Callaway, Md. Born on October

11, 1939, Joan lived most of her life in St. Mary's County, MD. She was the daughter of the late John W. Cameron and Elizabeth Virginia Cameron. She also had four brothers, Frank Cameron, Thomas Cameron, Phil Cameron, and the late John L. Cameron, all of Hollywood, MD.

In 1957, Joan graduated from St. Michael's School in Ridge, MD, and then worked in Washington, D.C. for an insurance company. Later, she enjoyed a long career at Cedar Point Federal Credit Union as an operations manager, where she made many lasting friendships.

In 1958, Joan met a young sailor, David Wilson, of Philadelphia, PA, who was stationed at Patuxent River Naval Air Station. It was love at first sight. They were married at St. John's Church in Hollywood, MD, and celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this past August. David passed in December, and this beautiful couple was apart just one month before their souls were reunited in Eternal Life. Theirs is a true love story and a true match made in Heaven.

Joan's children, Stephen Wilson (Beverly) of Hollywood MD, Angela T. McCreary (Mark) of Charleston, SC, the late Brian J. Wilson, and Kathleen K. Deroche (David) of Mechanicsville MD, are forever grateful and blessed to have her as such a beautiful mother and friend. Joan, "Grammy", is also survived by her ten grandchildren who grew up with her genuine love and guidance through her faith. Beth Martin (Kelsey) of Hughesville, MD, Jonathan Martin (Bianca) of Mount Pleasant, SC, Kassie Irwin (Johnny) of Ballymote, Ireland, Adam Martin (Mae Mae) of Awendaw, SC, Ben Martin (Makaela) of Charleston, SC, David Wilson (Chen) of Katy, TX, Joan Ann Dedge (Daniel) of Altha, FL, Maria Kirby (Sam) of Niceville, FL, Andrea Deroche of Mechanicsville, MD and Erin Deroche (Daniel) of Mechanicsville, MD had a very special and close relationship with "Grammy". Joan's ten great-grandchildren brought her much joy and happiness in her later years.

Throughout her life, Joan enjoyed many activities. Daily exercise was very important to her, and she had many friends at the gym and in her spin classes. Joan ran marathons and was proud to be a Senior Olympian where she won many medals. She was an active member of TOPS Club, Inc. since 1998,



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and in her early years, was a member of the Navy Wives Club in Hawaii and PAX River. Joan, Dave, and their young children lived in Hawaii for four years. Throughout her many travels, Hawaii was Joan's favorite place. She loved the ocean, especially her long walks along the beach. Joan's best friends are part of our extended family with whom we have many fond and cherished memories.

Joan was a woman and mother of grace, dignity, strength, and humor. Much of her life included helping others and serving her community. The biggest gift she left her family is the gift of faith. She is their forever ray of sunshine and shines bright in the hearts of all who loved her. "A mother holds her children's hands for a while, their hearts forever."

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

The family will receive friends on Friday, January 26, 2024 from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM in St. John's Catholic Church, Hollywood, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 AM with Father Ray Schmidt officiating. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. Serving as pallbearers will be Beth Martin, Kassie Irwin, Joan Ann Dedge, Maria Kirby, Andrea Deroche and Erin Deroche.

Condolences may be made to the family at [www.mgfh.com](http://www.mgfh.com). Arrangements provided by the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

**Kendall Rooney, 20**



A much-loved daughter and sister, Kendall Alexis Rooney, age 20, passed away unexpectedly and peacefully at her home in Hollywood, Maryland on

Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Kendall was born at Southern Maryland Hospital Center in Clinton, Maryland on January 27, 2003, to parents Rick and Sandy Rooney.

At 5 months old, Kendall was diagnosed with a rare neurological defect, lissencephaly. Affecting just one in 100,000 children, lissencephaly prevents the brain from developing normally and causes severe developmental disorders and seizures, requiring 24/7 care. With the continued support of her dedicated medical team at Children's Pediatricians of Waldorf and Children's Hospital in Washington, DC, Kendall was always a priority and provided the absolute best care possible.

From the time she enrolled in school at 6 months old with the Infants and Toddlers Program, Kendall's amazing special education superheroes of St. Mary's County Public Schools at Benjamin Banneker Elementary, Leonardtown Middle and Leonardtown High took her under their wings, and showed her

the kind of love and dedication any parent could ever hope for. Kendall absolutely loved going to school, especially being with her classmates, and of course showing the staff who really was in charge. This school year was Kendall's senior year with graduation scheduled for this coming spring. It was by far one of her best years ever!

Once Kendall became ventilator dependent, she required nursing to care for her at home and to accompany her to school. This very special group of ladies from Professional Nursing Services were more than just nurses to Kendall. The care, love, and support they gave her will never be forgotten.

Over the years, wherever her big brother and sister were, Kendall was sure to be. Whether it was at a PSTO event or at the soccer, football, baseball, or softball fields, she was welcomed and accepted with open arms by their friends and family. She enjoyed hearing the cheers and laughter of everyone around her.

For quite a while, it was hard to know what Kendall liked and disliked, but the one love she had was for happy music, especially Christmas songs.

Kendall will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by her extensive family. In addition to her parents, she is survived by her big brother Hunter Rooney (Allison); big sister Sarah Seifert (Charlie); nephews Clark and Carson; her grandparents Bill and Barbara Tolson; great-grandmother Martha Herbert; many aunts, uncles and cousins; as

well as her beloved furry siblings Lola and Charlie the cat.

She is preceded in death by her grandfather, James Rooney; great-grandfather, Wilson Herbert; and great-grandmother, Ruth Stewart.

The family will receive friends on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. with a service celebrated at 11:00 a.m. at Brinsfield Funeral Home, 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Gardens, 3221 Mattawoman Beantown Road, Waldorf, Maryland 20601. A celebration of life will follow interment.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Stephen's Fund, an amazing local organization that the family has had the honor to volunteer with for many years. They support special needs kids and their families in St. Mary's County.

Electronic donations can be made through PayPal: [Shirley.mattingly@verizon.net](mailto:Shirley.mattingly@verizon.net) and choose "sending to a friend" or Venmo: @Shirleymattingly.

Checks should be made payable to Stephen's Fund and mailed to:

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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Jan 18	Fri, Jan 19	Fri, Jan 26	Ongoing
<p><b>Bereavement Support Group</b></p> <p>Loffler Senior Activity Center 21905 Chancellors Run Rd., Great Mills 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Cost: Free</p> <p>Losing a friend or family member is never easy and grief can often feel like an invisible injury. We invite you to join us in a safe space to share your grief experience and learn new ways to cope while meeting friends for the journey. This group will be facilitated by the Bereavement Coordinator from Hospice of St. Marys, Dr. Patricia Watson. No need to register, drop-ins are welcome.</p>	<p><b>Heavy Equipment Auction</b></p> <p>Flat Iron Farm 45840 Flat Iron Rd., Great Mills 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Flat Iron Farm Southern Maryland Auction Company Winter Heavy Truck, Construction &amp; AG Equipment Auction. Proxibid.com, Equipmentfacts.com &amp; live at site. Consignments accepted up until January 17th, 2024. Eight late model tri-axle dump trucks. Several Pickup Trucks. Several farm tractors. Fifteen Escavators. Two Pavers. Two Rollers. Eight new trailers</p>	<p><b>Learn About Human Trafficking</b></p> <p>Loffler Senior Activity Center 21905 Chancellors Run Rd., Great Mills 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Cost: Free</p> <p>Sgt. Chris Beyer and Detective Taylore Nauman from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office will be at the Loffler Senior Activity Center to discuss the growing problem of human trafficking. Is it happening here in St. Mary's County? Who is vulnerable? What are the red flags you should be on the lookout for? How does cell phone/social media safety help? Register for this presentation at <a href="http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging">www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging</a>. or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-4200, ext. 1660. Limited seating.</p>	<p><b>Military and Veterans Support Group</b></p> <p>The Flashback Restaurant 21797 North Coral Dr., Lexington Park Every other Saturday at 9 a.m. starting Jan. 20</p> <p>We support our military and veterans through the PTSD/Suicide Prevention Group of Southern Maryland meeting at The Flashback restaurant. Problems? Come join us. Call Harry Metzler at 240-298-3837 or Nick Gravelle at 301-481-6751</p>



**ST. MARY'S COUNTY**  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**St. Mary's County Library Strategic Plan Focus Groups**

St. Mary's County Library is updating our Strategic Plan! We are working with Library IQ to complete the planning process and will have an updated plan by mid-2024. We have been collecting data, and now it is time to involve you via focus groups! Please join our consultant at one of our public focus groups to tell us your thoughts and hopes for the future.

Charlotte Hall Library, Monday, January 22 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Lexington Park Library, Tuesday, January 23 from 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Leonardtwn Library, Tuesday, January 23 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

**Targeting Lighthouses: Civil War on the Potomac River**

Karen Stone, Division Manager of the St. Mary's County Museums, will give a special seminar highlighting the role of the Potomac River and

lighthouses during the American Civil War at Leonardtown Library on Tuesday, January 23 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. The Potomac River has always been busy, but in the 19th century, it got considerably busier and more hazardous with the introduction of steamships. The River was also full of dangerous shoals and narrow turns, making it necessary to install aids to navigation, including lighthouses and light vessels. By the start of the American Civil War, six aids of various types were in use on the Potomac between Alexandria, Virginia and Piney Point, Maryland. All of these aids were targeted by the Confederates at one time or another. Join us as we explore the conditions on the Potomac River during the Civil War, especially in reference to the lighthouses and light vessels, and the dangers they faced. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

**Money Matters: Online Banking and Keeping Your Money Safe**

Explore ways that tech can help you save money and manage your finances

at Lexington Park Library on Monday, January 29 from 2 - 4 p.m. The internet can open a new world for saving money and managing your finances. This lecture introduces online banking and goes over how to keep your financial information safe. You'll also learn about online shopping and explore some digital resources for saving money on entertainment, prescription drugs, and everyday items. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

**All the Dirt on Winter Sowing: Make & Take: Veggies, Herbs, Annuals & Native Plants**

Learn from a Master Gardener how to get a head start on your garden this year with winter seed starting! Lexington Park Library on Saturday, January 27 from 2 - 3:30 p.m. Master Gardeners Marlene Smith and Molly Moore will introduce the 10 simple steps to winter sowing and walk participants through creating and seeding their own mini greenhouse to take home! Participants are invited to donate plastic gallon jugs (milk jugs)

to refresh our supply of mini greenhouses. Participating Partners: University of Maryland Extension Master Gardeners, St. Mary's County Community Development Corporation, St. Mary's Garden Club, Southern Maryland Audubon Society, and Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

**Find Your Perfect Book!**

From young to old, fantasy, sci-fi, romance and more. Your favorite book could be a few clicks away! Learn about the resources that will give you a new way to find your next great read at Charlotte Hall Library on Thursday, January 25 from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. We're going to look at Novelist and Novelist K-8 to show you how you can find the perfect book when you're looking for yourself or your family. No registration.



# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Fri, Jan 19

### On Pins & Needles

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>.

### Maritime Performance Series: Dick Hensold and Patsy O'Brien

Calvert Marine Museum  
7 p.m.

Dick Hensold is one of the leading Northumbrian smallpipers in North America, and Patsy O'Brien is a singer, songwriter, and guitarist from County Cork in Ireland. Music born from the age-old traditions of Ireland, Scotland, England, and Cape Breton is given new life in the hands of two of its Master musicians, delivering an evening of songs, tunes, and stories that have stood the test of time. Performance is in the museum's Harms Gallery starting at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. with beer and wine for sale. Tickets are \$20 online, up to one day prior, and \$25 the day of the concert and at the door.

## Sat, Jan 20

### 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. Interested in reading about Mahjongg? Take a look at what the library has. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Dungeons & Dragons – TEENS

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
1-4 p.m.

Meet up have fun with D&D. Players ages 13-19 of all levels and interest welcome. Registration is required. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Texas HoldEm

St. Leonard Volunteer Fire Department  
6 p.m.

\$85 buy-in for \$20k in chips. Rounds are 20 minutes each.

Doors open at 5 pm, tournament starts at 6pm. BYOB, food and sodas will be available for purchase. See [www.slvfd.org](http://www.slvfd.org) or Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/500115481937635/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/500115481937635/) for more info.

## Mon, Jan 22

### Jewelry / Earring Workshop: Wire Wrapping Basics

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
6-8 p.m.

Do you ever feel stressed and wish you had a relaxing hobby to enjoy? Join us to create wire wrapped earrings, learn how to use jewelry tools and work with wire while listening to meditation music on Freegal. You will leave with finished earrings and basic wire working knowledge to create your own jewelry at home with a new appreciation for meditation and relaxation surrounding art. For accessibility accommodations, please contact us at least 2 weeks before the event. 410-535-0291. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Tue, Jan 23

### Book Discussion

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

Join us this month to discuss "Project Hail Mary" by Andy Weir. Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission—and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Wed, Jan 24

### Grooving and Moving

Calvert Library Southern Branch  
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons  
9:30-10 a.m. and 10:15-10:45 a.m.

Join us for 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>.

### AI and the Future of Work and Business

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

Meet author Adam Davidson and learn about the rise of AI and the impact we might expect, particularly on the economy and our careers. Register to receive the link. Hosted by Howard County Library System. Adam Davidson is an expert at demystifying complex topics, and he applies these skills to the most crucial issue of our time: the rise of AI. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Thu, Jan 25

### Little Minnows

Calvert Marine Museum

10:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.

This month's theme is "Are they Fish? Starfish." For preschoolers ages 3 – 5, with an adult. This program focuses on one of the museum's three themes. 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.

## Upcoming

### Big Conversation

Middleham and St. Peter's Parish Hall  
10210 H.G. Trueman Rd., Lusby  
Sunday January 28  
2:00 to 5:00 pm

Topic: The Racial Wealth Gap: Rooted in Land and Home Ownership. In-person expert panel presentation followed by small group discussions Must register to attend: <https://bit.ly/WealthGap24> For more information: [www.dismantleracism.org](http://www.dismantleracism.org) The Big Conversation is sponsored by Middleham & St. Peter's Episcopal Church in partnership with: All Saints Episcopal Church, Calvert County Public Schools, Baltimore Mediation, CalvertHealth, Calvert Interfaith Council, Community Mediation Centers of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, Calvert Concepts Charitable Corporation (C4), College of Southern Maryland, Concerned Black Women of Calvert Co, Emmanuel SDA Church – St. Leonard, Historic Sotterley, Inc., Gray-Ray American Legion Post, League of Women Voters of Calvert Co., NAACP Branches of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, Patuxent Friends (Quaker) Meeting, Piscataway Park/Accoceek Foundation, Public Libraries of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties, Remnant Center of Excellence, Inc., St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's Co. Health Department, St. Mary's Co. Public Schools, Salisbury U. School of Social Work

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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



# Huntingtown High Student Wins Black Engineers Award

LEAPForward, Inc. is happy to announce that Gavin Goldring will be awarded the Golden Torch Award during the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in March 2024. Gavin will receive this award at the "27th Annual Golden Torch Awards (GTA)" ceremony being held on March 23, 2024 in Atlanta, GA.

The GTA recognizes excellence among technical professionals, corporate, government and academic leaders, and university and pre-college students. These awards illustrate the possibilities that can be cultivated through support and responsibility.

Gavin joined the Creative and Striving Hard to Succeed (C.A.S.H.) NSBE Jr. chapter as an elementary student and has held several positions. He now serves as our Chapter's Senator. Most notably is the fact that he led the chapter as President for two terms in 2019 and 2021. Gavin led monthly meetings and participated in STEM hands-on activities. His scientific knowledge is commendable. As a leader, Gavin set a good example for our membership and his genuine camaraderie made him very popular.

In addition to serving in various leadership positions, Gavin was also very active on our competition teams. He served on several award-winning teams including Math Video, Math Counts and Tri-Math-A-Lon. He was instrumental in starting a middle school competition team for our chapter that centered on radio-controlled car racing; Ten80 Next Generation Radio Controlled Racing Team. The team performed extremely well and garnered numerous racing awards and even national recognition for the on-line points competition. His NSBE Jr.-CASH journey has solidified his career path to becoming an orthopedic surgeon.



Gavin Goldring

Gavin is a Senior at Huntingtown High School and has maintained a 3.60 unweighted grade point average since ninth grade. He achieved this while taking multiple Honors and AP classes and will major in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. He serves as the Vice President of his high school Class of 2024 and the President of the National Honor Society.

Gavin was selected as a summer intern at John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and participated in the Youth in Aviation program where he received ground training for a pilot's license.

Gavin believes in giving back and has volunteered for several of our community events. He has recorded over 100 hours of community service.

*Press Release from LEAP Forward, Inc.*

# Sheriff's Office K-9 Retires

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office is proud to announce the well-deserved retirement of the esteemed K-9 Kano, marking the conclusion of an illustrious 7-year career in service. K-9 Kano was purchased from a vendor in Pennsylvania in 2016 where he embarked on a remarkable journey under the dedicated partnership of Sgt. Stephen Moran. This dynamic duo, having successfully completed Narcotics Detection School, graduated from Patrol School in the early months of 2018.

Throughout their years of unwavering commitment, Sgt. Moran and K-9 Kano seamlessly transitioned through various units, leaving an indelible mark on the Patrol Division, the Crime Suppression Unit, the Special Operations Team, and the Twin Beaches Patrol. Their collaborative efforts and exceptional skills were a cornerstone of success within these divisions.

Now, as the sun sets on K-9 Kano's active service, a well-earned retirement awaits in the warm embrace of the Moran family. The



Kano and Sgt. Stephen Moran

Calvert County Sheriff's Office extends heartfelt gratitude to K-9 Kano for his exemplary dedication, invaluable contributions, and steadfast loyalty throughout the years. May his golden years be filled with long walks, tail wagging, and dog treats.

*Press Release from CCSO*



## Home Healthcare Providers Wanted

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Physical Therapists (PTs)  
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# Historic Solomons Church Prepares for Centennial

## *Pastor, Parishioners Pitch in for Renovations*



By Dave Spigler  
Contributing Writer

Under the leadership of their new pastor, Father Bob Kilner, the parishioners of the Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish undertook a complete and thorough renovation of their historic church. This well-known landmark overlooking Solomons Island and the Patuxent River has stood majestically for 97 years as the oldest Catholic house of worship in Calvert County. Despite its age, it has held up well and continues to provide a sacred picturesque setting for weddings, baptisms, funeral services, and daily Mass for the more than 1,200 parish families in the area.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Solomons was a small, sleepy village of folks who made their living on the water primarily as fishermen and oyster harvesters. There was a small firm that built and repaired boats to support this trade. Roads into the town at the southernmost tip of the county were poor, often no more than dusty dirt roads that were not taken care of. Transportation to and from this tiny seaport was primarily by water. A firm in Baltimore made regularly scheduled boat trips down the Bay with stops at Annapolis, Solomons, and St. Mary's County, bringing needed supplies and an occasional traveler. On the return trip north, the ships were loaded with fresh seafood as well as tobacco and corn grown by farmers in the area.

The population of the county at the time was largely Protestant consisting of Episcopalian, Methodist, and Baptist families, many who could trace their family roots back several centuries. Following World War I, the county began to grow as people decided to move out of the metropolitan areas of the north to seek the quieter, simpler life rural Southern Maryland offered. As this migration grew in Calvert County, the Archdiocese of Washington recognized among this growing populace were a small number of Catholics who would need sup-

port to practice their faith. In 1920, the archbishop assigned Father Maurice Alexander to serve as the first pastor of the new Our Lady Star of the Sea parish in Solomons.

Father Alexander was selected for this task due to his perceived visionary skills and keen ability to resolve issues and make things happen. Starting from scratch with no funding and nothing but a small building then located where the parish cemetery exists today, Father Alexander realized he would need to come up with a plan to raise some immediate funds in order to build a church and eventually a school and convent to support his burgeoning flock. During his first year he noted the parish's weekly collection at mass normally ran between \$6-\$9. Pew fees annually totaled \$80. There was no money for his salary and little to maintain or improve the parish. He barely had enough money to put gasoline in his car. There were reports he often would serve his flock by horseback when visiting parishioners.

He realized his first priority was to find the means to build a church of sufficient capacity to accommodate the parish size and also allow for the anticipated growth. He decided to start a nationwide letter-writing campaign to solicit donations for the construction of a church. And despite the ridicule and negative reaction his plans provoked, his dream was realized with the dedication of this church in 1927. It included a bell tower and a large basement that provided the first parish school rooms! To staff the school with teachers, he convinced an order of nuns from the Congregation of Divine Providence in Covington, Ky to run the school. These women provided for the education the parish students until 2020. A parish school and convent were later designed and constructed during Father Alexander's tenure as pastor.

In 2022, the parish welcomed Father Bob as its newest pastor. At 30, he was ordained and assigned to Sacred Heart Parish in La Plata as an assistant priest. When the par-

ish pastor in Solomons was transferred to Florida to be nearer to his elderly mother, the archbishop offered the role to Father Bob. He was raised in a family of builders in Montgomery County. His willingness to roll up his sleeves and get down to business reflected the energy and idealism of his predecessor Father Alexander when he first took on the challenge of forming the parish over 100 years ago!

The new pastor was impressed with the parishioner's generous with their time and talents. The parish was not known to be monetarily wealthy, however they have a rich reputation for their charity and good works. Father soon learned of their ability to come together and tackle a major project as evidenced by the church's rejuvenated wooden pews that 20 years ago were covered with layers of paint. Many men and women spent several weeks refinishing and reassembling these pews that seat 200 churchgoers. The pews now look brand new.

Seeing how well his flock responded with this effort inspired the priest to proceed with plans to take on other projects knowing the centennial for this structure was looming in just three years. He set out to obtain estimates for upgrading the walls and ceiling, the lighting, the altar, and many other issues that needed attention. The initial estimates provided by professionals were more than a half million dollars! It was obvious these efforts were beyond the parish's financial ability to accomplish all at once.

Undeterred, much like his predecessor Father Alexander, Father Bob set out to come up with a plan. He gathered a dedicated group of parishioners with building and design experience to decide on colors and come up with solutions to expensive renovation problems. He credits this liturgical arts committee and parish engineers with saving tens of thousands of dollars due to their expertise. He offers several examples of the works contributed by members of Our Lady to beautify their place of worship:

- A parishioner designed and built the new altar rail in his garage and installed it himself, saving the parish more than \$20,000.
- Another parishioner built a new base for the mensa table altar using considerable carpenter skills to hand carve details to match the original altars.
- A parishioner with more than 40 years' experience in plastering and sheetrock, redid the interior walls saving thousands of dollars.
- Another member with electrical skills worked tirelessly to upgrade the church's overhead lighting and affix Tiffany-style lampshades.
- A family provided over 100 hours of their free time to painstakingly clean all the stained-glass windows by hand.

Father Bob states "Every time I asked for a group to help me, dozens of parishioner answered the call. A quick calculation of the volunteer hours provided shows we saved over \$100,000 in labor due to their generosity."

And finally, the priest took upon himself to design and construct the reredos at the top of the high altar at the rear of the church. Using some carpenter and painting skills he learned from his father, Father Bob used an old antique mantelpiece and an inverted small boat hull to fashion a place for the gold tabernacle, a gift from the Sacred Heart Church in La Plata. His design reflects his desire to reflect the heritage as a coastal parish and a reference to the parish patroness, Our Lady Star of the Sea.

With the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historic church in 2027, a few small details to complete this project remain. To date parishioner volunteers and their new pastor have so far achieved the renovations for less than \$185,000.

Father Bob, the son of a carpenter, prays "this church will stand as a beacon of the truth of the Gospel and the generosity of our parish family for another 100 years."



# CALVERT COUNTY CRIME BLOTTER

During the week of January 1 – January 7, 2024, Calvert County Sheriff’s Office Deputies responded to 1,548 calls for service throughout the community.

**Damaged Property: 24-0852**

On January 4, 2024, Deputy Deinert responded to the 1300 block of Flag Harbor Blvd. in St. Leonard, for the report of damaged property. Contact was made with the complainant who reported that her vehicle had been egged during the overnight hours. Two additional victims residing in the 1500 block of Overlook Drive in St. Leonard also experienced vehicle damage after being struck with eggs. The estimated value of the damaged property is unknown at this time.

**Theft: 24-0344**

On January 2, 2024, Deputy Fleenor responded to the Walmart located at 150 S. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised her purse was stolen after being left in a grocery cart that was left in the parking lot. The complainant went back to retrieve the purse and it was missing. The purse is described as a small black satchel with a long black pullover strap with approximately \$1300-\$1600 cash, \$500 in various gift cards, a checkbook, and a Walmart credit card inside.

**Theft: 24-0312**

On January 2, 2023, Deputy Sylver responded to the 7-Eleven located at 685 Prince Frederick Blvd. in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised an unknown male placed a drink in his pants and fled the store. The estimated value of stolen property is \$4.11.

**Theft: 24-0402**

On January 2, 2024, Deputy Fleenor responded to the McDonald’s located at 515 N. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised he lost his wallet at a New Year’s Eve party and at 9:17 a.m. on Jan. 2, a \$1.71 charge was made at the McDonald’s with the victim’s Cash App card. The wallet is described as a black leather wallet with an NFL Panther’s logo on it. The wallet contained \$250 in cash, a Maryland driver’s license, and a Cash App card. The estimated value of stolen property is unknown at this time.

**Theft: 24-0708**

On January 3, 2024, Deputy Jones responded to Sneades Ace Hardware & Home Center located at 11851 H G Trueman Road in Lusby, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised an unknown male suspect entered the store and stole a Schlage deadbolt lock. The suspect is described as a white male, wearing a black sweatshirt, black coat, jeans, and brown shoes. The estimated value of stolen property is \$38.00.

**Theft: 24-0913**

On January 4, 2024, M/DFC Aurich responded to the Dunkirk Park and Ride located at 10839 Town Center Blvd. in Dunkirk, for the report of a theft. The com-

plainant advised his rear Maryland registration plate had been stolen. The estimated value of stolen property is \$100.00.

**ARRESTS**



Zachary Nathaniel Jenkins

On January 2, 2024, DFC Rzepkowski responded to the Chick-fil-A located at 806 N. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick, for the report of a disorderly subject. The complainant advised a male subject was being disorderly disturbing customers and cussing. Contact was made with **Zachary Nathaniel Jenkins**, 21 of no fixed address, who was asked to leave several times and refused. Jenkins was taken into custody and began to resist arrest. Jenkins was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with Trespassing: Private Property, Disorderly Conduct, and Resist/Interfere with Arrest.



Matthew Robert Windsor

On January 6, 2024, S/DFC Wilder initiated a traffic stop along St. Leonard Road in the area of the St. Leonard Post Office in St. Leonard, on a vehicle traveling 30mph+ over the posted speed limit. During the traffic stop, a tear-off baggie with a hard white rocky substance (suspected crack cocaine) was observed in plain view inside the vehicle. The driver, **Matthew Robert Windsor**, 38 of Prince Frederick, was placed under arrest and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis, CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, Reckless Driving, and other traffic-related charges.



Richard Alvin Nolan, III

On January 2, 2024, DFC Ostazeski responded to the 11500 block of Bootstrap Trail in Lusby, for the unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. Investigation revealed **Richard Alvin Nolan, III**, 36 of Lusby, had taken the complainant’s vehicle without permission. Further investigation revealed Nolan was observed operating the vehicle in St. Mary’s County leading to a traffic stop. Nolan was taken into custody and charged with Unauthorized Removal of a Motor Vehicle.

On January 6, 2024, DFC Shoemaker initiated a traffic stop near the Cove Point Self Storage located on Cove Point Road in Lusby, after the driver was observed speeding. Upon



Trent Allen Hall

making contact with the driver, **Trent Allen Hall**, 26 of Great Mills, DFC Shoemaker observed suspected drugs and drug paraphernalia in plain view. Further investigation revealed a plastic bag containing white powder (suspected cocaine) and 3 cut straws containing a white powdery residue were located inside the vehicle. Hall was placed into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Marijuana and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.



Barry Christopher Quigley

On January 3, 2024, the Calvert County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO) Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) Stop Team initiated a traffic stop in the area of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Marcellas Drive in Owings, after the operator repeatedly crossed the center lines and the rear taillight was not fully operational. Upon making contact with the driver and sole occupant, **Barry Christopher Quigley**, 58 of Pasadena, two blue round pills were observed in plain view. Quigley advised deputies he had “a little cocaine” on him. A search of the vehicle and Quigley’s person revealed 47 pills of Oxycodone, \$2,855 in US currency, and multiple individual baggies containing various amounts of cocaine. Quigley was placed into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute: Cocaine, CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute: Oxycodone, CDS: Possession-Not Marijuana (Cocaine and Oxycodone) and CDS Prescription/ Remove Label.

On January 6, 2024, at 9:39 p.m., deputies from the Calvert County Sheriff’s Office received a report of a stolen vehicle traveling



Jalen Lewis Webb

southbound on Rt. 4 in the area of Chaney Road in Dunkirk. Cpl. Robshaw spotted the vehicle near Lyons Creek Road, where it promptly turned off all its lights in an attempt to evade detection. Cpl. Robshaw activated his emergency lights and sirens to initiate a traffic stop in the area of Brickhouse Road. The suspect vehicle continued southbound at speeds of 110 mph in a posted 55 mph zone. Deputies observed the suspect vehicle continuously turning their headlights on and off, swerving between lanes, and cutting off other motorists. The pursuit continued to Rt. 4 and Lower Marlboro Road in Owings. There, the suspect vehicle made an abrupt right turn on Lower Marlboro Road, slid out of control, and came to a rest in the yard of a residence in the 1300 block of Lower Marlboro Road. Three black males wearing all black were observed bailing out of the vehicle into fleeing into the woods. DFC Idol and his K-9 partner Stryker along with Deputy Newton responded to the scene, conducting a successful track that led to the apprehension of two suspects in the 1500 block of Hinton Drive. Cpl. Bortchevsky, operating a drone, located the third suspect nearby. Two juvenile suspects were transported to the Calvert County Sheriff’s Office and charged on a youth report for eluding an officer on foot. **Jalen Lewis Webb**, 19, of Landover, was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with Theft of a Motor Vehicle and various traffic-related offenses.

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

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

## Legal Notice

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has apparently been abandoned for 180 days on the property of: Flag Harbor Condo Association, 1565 Flag Harbor Blvd. St. Leonard, MD 20685. 410-586-0070. The vessel is described as:

Reg# HOL930103385  
Hull# 2548EN NC  
Name: Woosh  
Builder: Holland  
Length: 31 feet  
Color: White.

Application for title will be made in accordance with Section 8-722 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article if this vessel is not claimed and removed from the above property within 30 days of this notice.



# Staffing Request Presented for New Library

## Twin Beaches Branch Slated for April Open

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

With the new Twin Beaches Library set to open this spring; the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has received a proposed staffing request for the new facility. Calvert Library Executive Director Carrie Willson presented two funding options at the Jan. 9 BOCC meeting.

Her preferred plan would increase staffing from three to seven full-time positions and three to seven part-timers. Several part-time positions at the existing branch in Chesapeake Beach would be converted to full-time.

In a memo to the commissioners, Wilson said, "The new Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch is expected to open in April. Additional staff is needed for this facility, which is nearly four times the size of the current building and encompasses two floors rather than one. The library anticipates 60,000 visitors annually, making Twin Beaches the second-largest branch rather than the smallest."

The new library will be 18,000 square feet of indoor space and another 3000 square feet of outdoor porch and terrace space overlooking the Chesapeake Bay in North Beach.

Wilson said, "This staffing request is being made to provide adequate lead time for the library to advertise, interview, hire and train staff to have them in place for the opening of the new library upon certificate of occupancy."

Wilson said, "There are 5,000 people who live within walking distance of the library. So, it's going to be very easily accessible. That's part of the reason that the library is located now in North Beach with a wonder-



ful sidewalk system. So, there are a number of wonderful features in this new library. As you've been hearing from me over the past several years, there is a meeting room, which is technologically equipped so that presentations can be viewed on screens. It's dividable into two different-sized meeting rooms. There's one for about 65 people and one for about 35, where the whole space will fit about a hundred people."

Wilson added, "There are exhibit spaces. There's a dedicated teen area, so teens in the beach communities will have a place that is all theirs. There's a wonderful children's department in the library. There's a multi-use podcasting booth, makerspace, and all sorts of creative technology items in it. There's a memory lab so folks can digitize family history. And then of course, as we have been discussing, there's an incredible view of the Chesapeake Bay, which some of you have seen from the terrace already. It's really pretty spectacular that this is a public space that's going to be completely open to the public, that we've invested in a million-dollar view for residents they don't have to have purchased."

Branch Manager Melissa Gray said, "A public services librarian plays a crucial role in providing a wide variety of services to the community. At a minimum, we hold a bachelor's degree, while many staff hold a master's degree in library and information science. We go through extensive training, over 150 hours in our first two years of employment. And we have continuing education throughout our careers to stay on top of technology trends and information resources. Our duties and skills encompass a range of responsibilities aimed at each phase of the lives of our community members. So, at the earliest ages, early childhood literacy, we have classes that promote brain development, gross and fine motor skills and socialization for children and their caregivers. Our story time curriculum is aligned with the Maryland Department of Education's early learning standards, to prepare our earliest learners for kindergarten. We provide research assistance. In FY 23, we answered over 300,000 questions across the system. We provide readers with advice. We recommend books, resources, and materials based on customer interests and needs.

We offer guidance on information literacy skills. We help users navigate and evaluate information sources. We plan and coordinate public programs, workshops and events to engage the community. We assist customers with technology-related questions, including computer use and online resources. We collaborate with community organizations, our public schools, and local groups to promote early literacy and library services."

To provide all those services in the new library, the request, Wilson said, "is for three staff members on the second floor, which is the adult level of the building and three staff members on the third floor with one manager on site. This level of staffing would provide the same level of service to customers that we do at the other library locations."

Yearly cost would be \$439,697. Wilson said, "The April to June for that nearly \$110,000, we can find in our current budget."

Wilson also presented a second option with two fewer full-time staff, but she said they would not be able to provide the services that the new library is intended to provide to the community.

Commissioner Catherine Grasso, a former member of the library board of trustees, observed, "It's not a significant difference. But I'll just make one comment...I've done a really good comparison and it's like minus two FTEs, all the money the county has put into this building, we get so much taken away from us if we take away two FTEs, we get a tremendous amount taken away from us."

The commissioners said they would take the staffing request under advisement. Wilson said they hoped to begin advertising for the new positions next month so they can be on board for the opening.

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# School Calendar Firmed Up for 2025-26

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education, with two calendar options for the 2025-26 school year, has opted for the school opening and closing a week later than the other option.; Opening day will be August 27 instead of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the last day will be June 10 instead of the 4<sup>th</sup>.

That was the same option chosen for the 2024-25 school year last month, but the school board delayed the decision for the following year in order for a poll to be taken of preferences for students, parents, and staff.

At the Jan. 11 school board meeting, Director of System and Instructional Performance Jackie Jacobs said that 4,568 responses were received, and 63 percent preferred the later option. That breaks down as follows:

- 65 percent of employees who were not parents.
- 67 percent of employees who are parents or guardians.
- 62 percent of parents or guardians who are not employees.
- 58 percent of students

While that decision was not controversial, the board did spend quite a bit of time discussing a proposal by board member Lusa Grenis to change a proposed late arrival of school on December 10<sup>th</sup> for professional development to just before winter break on Dec 22, the day before a two-hour early dismissal on Dec. 23.

Grenis said it would be "advantageous to put that early release, change it from the 10th to the 22<sup>nd</sup> so that those two days before Christmas are two early releases and then that 10th can become an instructional day, full day. I just think before Christmas it might be better to throw those early releases in more consistency for parents too and more consistency for instruction."

Student Member of the Board Jordan Hayes agreed with Grenis. She said, "I don't know how teachers will feel about possibly having a professional learning day moved to right before Christmas. However, on the student side of it, I believe that this will take advantage of the instructional time that we have to a much higher level. Having been in CCPS since I was in kindergarten, I don't think I've ever once not watched the 'Polar Express' the two days before Christmas break. So, I just think maybe if we had a full day on the 10th, we would be

able to take advantage of the time in the classrooms versus having a full day of learning on the 22<sup>nd</sup> where we wouldn't be as successful."

Jacobs and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Susan Johnson observed that the fear was there would be high absenteeism if that change was made. And in the end, Grenis' idea failed on a 3-2 vote to keep the schedule as proposed.

The board also delayed a decision on whether several days should be early dismissals versus online at home. They will see how the asynchronous day in May this year works out.

They also delayed a decision on an idea by Vice e President Inez Claggett to give the calendar committee a chance to review it. She said, "I would like to just throw out an idea no matter what we decide or how we go with the calendar. I found one of the public comments to be very interesting. Apparently somewhere in Florida, one of the school systems does a consistent release of their staff every month or every couple of weeks, but it is consistent throughout the entire school year. So, it allows parents and staff and everyone to plan, and to know that that is what's going to occur."

Jacobs said, "I will say, where they are placed currently and, in the past, have always



School Board member Lisa Grenis

been around where the marking period ends. So, we can make some adjustments to that or look at the impact of moving that day and what it might have on when teacher's grades are due and things like that. But that's definitely something we can consider."

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# White Elected School Board President on 3-2 Vote

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Antoine White will be president of the Calvert County Board of Education for the next year. He and Inez Claggett switched positions and she will be the board's vice president.

White was elected at the school board's Jan. 11 meeting on a 3-2 vote, with Lisa Grenis and Jana Post voting against his selection. The board's newest members have clashed with White on a number of issues, including critical race theory, library oversight and most recently at the same meeting on the board's Anti-Racism Policy. Many of the conflicting issues are also plaguing school boards across the country and could be seen as falling into conservative versus liberal camps.

White is up for re-election in this year's school board race. School board elections are non-partisan in Calvert.

White's biography on the school board website says: "Antoine White was born and

raised in Calvert County. He attended school at Prince Frederick Elementary, Calvert Elementary, Calvert Middle School and graduated from Calvert High School. After high school, he joined the United States Air Force, where he not only served his country, but also continued his education in Civil and Electrical Engineering. He used this training in the military, received his Power Line Certification through the State of Maryland, and built a 25-year career with SMECO. He currently works with Universal Mortgage & Finance as a Mortgage Broker.

"For the past 30 years, Antoine has been a very active member in his community and has served in various capacities through many organizations. He holds certifications in: Embracing Diversity, Coaching Team Building, Communication, Violence & Bullying, Multi-Cultural Diversity, and Conflict Resolutions. These certifications have enhanced his service to the following organizations: The United Way of Calvert County, Community Mediation Center of Calvert County, Calvert County

Interagency Council, Rotary Club, Calvert Collaboration for Children and Youth, Asset Development Trainer, Maryland Basketball Officials Association, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Freemasonry, Executive Director and Founder of Dance Empowerment, Coach of many sports throughout the county (t-ball, soccer, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, and football). He has also served with several political groups and youth ministries as well.

"Antoine was elected to serve on the Calvert County Board of Education in District 2 for the 2021-2024 term. He believes that parents deserve a great school system, students and teachers deserve a safe environment in which to learn and teachers, administrators, support staff and bus drivers deserve to be valued. Having positive and effective communication between the BOE, Superintendent, schools, and parents will produce a healthy school system."

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Calvert County Board of Education President  
Antoine White

# Friday's Creek Winery Founders Pass Away

By Dick Nyers  
Staff Writer

Janet and Frank Cleary, founders of Friday's Creek Winery in Owings, passed away recently within two days of each other. Their obituary, as it appeared on the Lee Funeral Home website, says:

"Janet Mae Cleary (84) and Frank John Cleary (90) passed away on January 12, 2024, and January 14, 2024, respectively in Calvert County, Maryland. They were married and raised 5 kids on Cleary Lane in Mitchellville, Maryland. Frank and Janet sent all of their children though Catholic School and enjoyed many family vacations together often with cousins' & friend's families. The close-knit family built a home on the Patuxent River where the couple has lived ever since. February 1, 2024, would have been their 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Together they leave behind sons Frank Cleary (Rose), Steve Cleary (Suzy), Tom Cleary (Jackie), Rich Cleary, daughter Ruth Lake, along with 13 grandchildren and four great grandchildren, plus two more on the way. Frank is also survived by siblings, Patsy, Maureen, Jim, and Bob. Frank and Janet were cherished as a couple and individually by a multitude of relatives and friends.

"Frank was born Catholic in November 1933 to George Joseph Cleary Jr and Anne Zidek in Washington, DC. The family first moved from DC to Seat Pleasant, MD. George and Anne purchased a farm in Mitchellville, MD when Frank was a boy, where he and his seven siblings spent most of their childhood. From this farm, Cleary Lane evolved. Frank served in the Navy before spending over 70 years as a Homebuilder. Through his company Frank J Cleary, Custom Builder, he constructed many custom homes and developed small subdivisions throughout Calvert County. His

two sons Frank and Steve became partners in the business. Franks passions included family, hunting game, gardening, artistry, and cooking. His passion for gardening lead to growing grapes in Calvert County soil and sparked the idea for Fridays Creek Winery

"Janet was born Methodist in October 1939 to Edwin Coulter and Ruth Isaacson in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She lost her mom as a pre-teen and when her father remarried, her stepmother wanted to send her to boarding school. Aunt Eileen, Ruth's sister, would not hear of that, so Janet came to Maryland to live with Aunt Eileen and Uncle Tony, attended Bladensburg High School and has been in Maryland ever since. Her one full brother, Allan, disappeared in the late 1970's and since has been declared deceased. She had a half-brother, Ronnie. Janet converted to Catholicism in the 1960s and became quite devout. Her passions included family, art, antiques, and travel. When the family moved to Calvert County, Janet joined an Antique Arts association where she forged many lasting friendships. Her passion for antiques led her to partner with Gracie Bowen at Bowen Garage Antiques. She was also a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Smithsonian Institution. She enjoyed traveling throughout the US and abroad with her art and architecture enthusiast friends.

"Both retired, except for owning Fridays Creek Winery, Frank and Janet enjoyed a quiet life together at their home in Owings, Maryland. They were blessed with care and visits from family and friends who will miss them dearly. They were both well respected, greatly appreciated and much loved by friends, family, and the community."

In a video on the Friday's Creek website, the couple's son Rich talked about retiring from the fire department and working alongside his father at the vineyard:



Frank Cleary

"When we decided to do this, when my father came to me and said, do you want to be the winemaker? Do you think we can do this commercially? I was like, well, absolutely. We'll certainly give it a try.

"Well, I have a lot of friends that are retired out of the fire department as well, and I talk to a lot of them about how do you transition? How did, how did that work for you? I said, that's going to be very hard. I did 28 years in Anne Arundel County Fire Department doing pretty much anything that's a little bit over and above what the normal fire department would handle. And I still have times where it just doesn't feel right. I wake up and I think I have to go to the fire department. The fire department, you're running out the door, kind of handling emergencies. The wine business is not that, on any given day. I am looking at the health of the vines. I'll start doing tests on them to see how much sugar's in the grapes. We'll pick all of one variety at any given



Janet Cleary

time, take them up to the winery and start our process up there.

"It is still difficult. And my friends say, yeah, it's usually about a year before you really flush all of that out of your system. So, the transition's tough, but this is something that I really am starting to enjoy greatly coming out and working in the fields. Just pruning vines and kind of doing that kind of stuff and it's the opportunity to work with your family, which we've always had a family business. But I like working with my father. I like working with my brother, and it's a good business for that. I'm really starting to enjoy that transition. This helps. This helps. So, I'll get there."

Visitation for Janet and Frank Cleary will be Saturday, Jan. 20, 12-2 p.m. at Lee Funeral Home-Calvert. 8200 Jennifer Lane, Owings, MD 20736. Funeral service will follow at 2 p.m.

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# 'White Privilege' Remains in Anti-Racism Policy

## 'White Supremacy' Proposed to be Added

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education is publishing for 30-day review its Anti-Racism Policy. At the board's Jan. 11 meeting, the majority of the members agreed to add "white supremacy" to unacceptable attitudes. The majority also rejected a move to remove the term "white privilege" from the policy.

Supervisor of Equity Margo Gross told the board, "We are recommending one change, the removal of the definition of white supremacy. The removal of the definition of white supremacy is being proposed because white supremacy is a term not used in the policy."

Gross added, "It should be noted that the term does appear in procedures and can be defined within the procedural documents."

Board Vice President Inez Claggett argued for retaining the definition and putting language in the policy opposing white supremacy. Speakers during the public comment section also made that argument.

The singling out of white privilege as a contributor to racism in the policy drew criticism from board member Jana Post, who attempted to get it removed. She said, "The one thing that concerns me is that white privilege in and of itself is a racist term. So, I don't know that calling out white people and calling out white privilege and saying

those sorts of things create, I think, a further divide. It doesn't bring parties together. And I'm all in favor of having an anti-racism policy for sure. But I just don't know that we need to call out white privilege as it's stated here."

Board member Lisa Grenis said, "I have a problem with that because it suggests that white people's privilege suggests that white people have privilege. Some do, some don't. I don't know that you can generalize that all white people have privilege."

Claggett responded, "So the policy purpose statement says to acknowledge and understand the concept. That doesn't mean that every white person has white privilege, nor is a white supremacist. They are concepts. And so, putting those words in the purpose statement simply says that they are concepts."

Grenis said, "It seems like divisive language."

Claggett said, "There's plenty of divisive language in our world, in our lives and in our communities. And here, the placement of those two words is not pointing a finger at any individual. If you are accepting that responsibility that you have white privilege or that you are a white supremacist, you are accepting that responsibility and hopefully accepting that responsibility to work on yourself and your bias."

Post also questioned whether institutional racism exists in the schools today and that

saying that was an admission that nothing is being done about it.

Student Member of the Board Jordan Hayes insisted, "Racism still exists in our schools. By excluding the language, it continues to exist in our schools, we're no longer recognizing a continuing issue in the schools. We are even going so far as to say it is an issue that has been solved, but it hasn't. We can poll our students right now, and no matter how much we are excited to go to school and excited to be a part of CCPS, this is still an issue that just about every student can say that they have firsthand experience with, or they have heard. It's just needs to continue to stay in the policy because it still exists no matter how much we don't want to recognize it."

Board member Dawn Balinski said, "I just want to ensure that if there are things like that are occurring, that we are addressing them much like we would address any other kind of behavioral issue that might occur in our school system that we're not dismissing or excusing or just updating policies, that there is specific action that's taken to address those things. That's the only way that we can combat things like this."

The Anti-Racism Policy was one of the main issues addressed during the public forum before the board discussion. Dawn Collins had first-hand experience, because her son Lt. Richard Collins was murdered by a white supremacist. She said, "The use of this terminology is not included to divide or to be used as an instrument of ridicule against others. Instead, it is necessary to identify the term as an instrument of exploitation of those disadvantaged by the inequitable treatment based on one's race. As with any injury, illness, or disabling circumstances in life, the first step toward healing and recovery must first begin with identifying the root of the issue and then confronting it directly. In 2017, on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park, the flagship university, a beautiful young lieutenant was taken away by a murderous monster who embraced the ideology of white supremacy."

Retired education Dr. Mike Shisler, speaking for the Big Conversation steering committee, said, "Why do the board of Ed and Calvert County Public Schools have an anti-racism policy? We are here because our school system's main duty, and our community's main duty is to provide a safe environment where every child is respected, protected, and loved. Our kids' learning and growth depend on our commitment to and our fulfillment of that main duty. That duty also extends to our staff members. That duty should also extend to our community members."

Calvert County NAACP Branch President Deborah Jones Harris, said, "This policy aligns with the vision and mission and the work of the NAACP, which works to eliminate discriminatory practices in public education. We believe that every child must be guaranteed to attend school each day and have an opportunity to learn in an environment where they feel safe and are respected regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic background, or any other differences they may have. The racism policy



School Board Vice President Inez Claggett



School board member Jana Post

also ensures that the staff of Calver County Public Schools work in an environment that doesn't discriminate against them as well."

Middle school teacher Lindsey Owen said, "One of the things that I'm most thankful for growing up in Calvert County was the fact that we were taught first to look at people's hearts. We were not taught to look at skin color or blame anything on anyone who didn't wrong you. Also, I will say my faith is one thing that I hold very dear to me, and it's how I operate in my classroom, outside of my classroom. And I've been taught through my faith to look at people's hearts again, their souls."

She went on to say, "I would like to be maybe the 10th man in the room to bring up an opposing view perhaps because that's another thing I learned in Calvert County Public Schools to value opposing viewpoints. I would like the board to consider removing any racial language from the anti-racism policy. I believe that fighting racism is a wonderful thing but fighting it with more racial discrimination is counterproductive. When I was in school, we were taught not to judge anybody based on the color of their skin, whether you think they're extreme or not, whether you don't know, like how they look or what their ancestors might have done to your own ancestors. I just feel like the racial language in the policy harms students, harms staff when they have to constantly look at it and say, well, okay, there's justice for other groups, but maybe not my own."

The public can comment on the policy on the school system website until the board's first meeting in February.

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# CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	3	COMMUNITY	7
COPS & COURTS	6	CALENDAR	9

“WHITE PRIVILEGE IN AND OF ITSELF IS A RACIST TERM”

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER JANA POST



**LOCAL 4**  
Winery founders die



**LOCAL 5**  
Calvert school calendar updated



**ON THE COVER**  
Our Lady Star of the Sea gets renovations

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<p>THU, JAN 18</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 41° Lo: 31°</p>	<p>FRI, JAN 19</p> <p>Snow Showers Hi: 36° Lo: 22°</p>	<p>SAT, JAN 20</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 28° Lo: 20°</p>	<p>SUN, JAN 21</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 34° Lo: 19°</p>
<p>MON, JAN 22</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 43° Lo: 29°</p>	<p>TUE, JAN 23</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 38°</p>	<p>WED, JAN 24</p> <p>Showers Hi: 50° Lo: 43°</p>	<p>THU, JAN 25</p> <p>Showers Hi: 57° Lo: 52°</p>

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**School Board Debates  
 Anti-Racism Policy**

**New Library Staffing  
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**New School Board  
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