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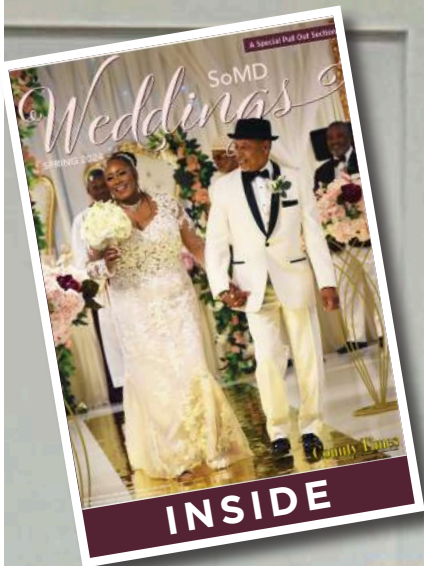
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# St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

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**Speed Camera  
Ordinance Approved**

**Leonard Hall  
To Reopen**

**County Joins Social  
Media Lawsuit**

# SHERIFF TOUTS NOVEL ANTI-VIOLENCE PUSH

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“THEY ARE FINDING WORTH, FINDING POWER, FINDING VALUE HOLDING A GUN.”

SHERIFF STEVE HALL ON YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE



**LOCAL 3**  
Citizens worry over mobile home park redevelopment



**LOCAL 4**  
Commissioners approve speed camera ordinance



**ON THE COVER**  
Sheriff's office, county agencies partner to curb gun violence.

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, FEB 1</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 52° Lo: 39°	<b>FRI, FEB 2</b>  Cloudy Hi: 48° Lo: 32°	<b>SAT, FEB 3</b>  Sunny Hi: 47° Lo: 29°	<b>SUN, FEB 4</b>  Sunny Hi: 51° Lo: 31°
<b>MON, FEB 5</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 32°	<b>TUE, FEB 6</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 31°	<b>WED, FEB 7</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 32°	<b>THU, FEB 8</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 53° Lo: 37°

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# Residents Decry Trailer Park Plan, Call for More Youth Sports Resources

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Several residents told the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at their Jan. 30 public forum that they either should not allow for the redevelopment of the Lord Calvert Mobile Home Park across from Great Mills High School or should oversee it to ensure that residents there are relocated and even compensated for the move.

Concerned parents also voiced their concerns that the county should put more resources towards the recreation and parks division of the government and youth sports in particular.

The Lexington Park-based Cherry Cove Group, which owns the property upon which the mobile homes have been situated for decades, has decided to redevelop the land, which necessitates the removal of the trailers and their residents.

No plans for the redevelopment have come before the commissioners yet.

Jacob Lang, speaking for the Southern Maryland Democratic Socialists of America, said the county commissioners must take an active role in the issue.

"We're here to urge you to prevent any redevelopment that does not include a comprehensive plan to ensure that new units are affordable at below market rates and priori-



Greg Tollefsen urges commissioners to increase budgets for recreation and parks

tize Lord Calvert residents' applications for those units and financially compensate those who relocate," Lang said.

He criticized the ongoing "gentrification" of certain areas of the county where working-class residents had been priced out of their land, which in turn was redeveloped into what he called luxury homes and shopping centers.

"Frankly, the policy has been consistent contempt for low-income people," Lang said. "It may be inconvenient but people

don't disappear when you knock down their neighborhoods."

Donald Rankin, a Leonardtown resident, called upon the commissioners to prevent the demolition of the mobile home park entirely.

"It is harder to find decent places to live that the poor and working poor can afford than ever before," Rankin said. "Waiting lists for income-based neighborhoods are years long.

"We are being priced out of this area."

R.J. Bean, of Great Mills, long an advocate for youth sports, spoke on the need for more resources for that effort.

"We envision a future where our baseball and softball field durability is beyond comparison, there is accessibility for all and their playability ignites potential," Bean said. "This vision... can be brought to life by an investment in more turf softball and baseball fields at Dorsey and [John V.] Baggett parks."

More than 1,000 games were cancelled in 2023 locally due to oversaturation of fields with rainfall, Bean said.

"With turf fields we can forget the constant struggle against rain-soaked fields and unplayable games," Bean continued.

Greg Tollefsen, of California, called for more "return on investment in the community" and said commissioners should spend more on parks and recreation to help retain young professionals and their families.

"I work for the federal government, I lose team mates every year... they leave Maryland, they leave St. Mary's County," Tollefsen said. "My coworkers, my peers, they don't want to be here; there's not enough for them.

"You need to up the budget for parks and rec."

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AT THE DODGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



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#### The JoGo Project

Saturday, Mar 23 at 7pm



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# Speed Cameras One Step Closer to Use on County Roads

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

On a split vote the Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved an ordinance that allows them to pursue the installation of mobile speed cameras but they reserved the right to have final approval on any proposal by a vendor who would operate them.

The vote was 3-to-2 in favor of the ordinance, which commissioners had held off voting on in November in anticipation of more locally collated data on the instances of speeding incidents and serious vehicle crashes in the areas of schools, where the cameras would be installed.

Recent study data provided at the Jan. 30 meeting in Leonardtown by public works chief Jim Gotsch seemed to confirm what many already suspected — that many of the county's schools sit directly in areas with the highest areas of speeding motorists.

Gotsch said in one instance his department's study found that in three days of observation they recorded 27,000 speeding violations.

"I think that's horrible and we need to do something about it," said Commissioner Scott Ostrow. "The last thing I want to see is a fatality by one of these school kids when they're getting off the bus and walking to school or something tragic.

"By no means does this put speed cameras out on the streets when you wake up tomorrow."

Ostrow said a vendor would still have to show their own studies proving their products were needed locally for verification before receiving a contract.

Commissioner Mike Hewitt voted against the measure, stating that "it was a forgone conclusion" that the county would move to get the cameras regardless of any studies once the ordinance was adopted.

"It's the camel's nose under the tent," Hewitt said, adding that the county would waste time and money conducting its own speeding studies and then requiring a vendor to come up with a similar study.

He was also unsure if a speed camera could detect a specific speeder amongst a heavy flow of traffic.

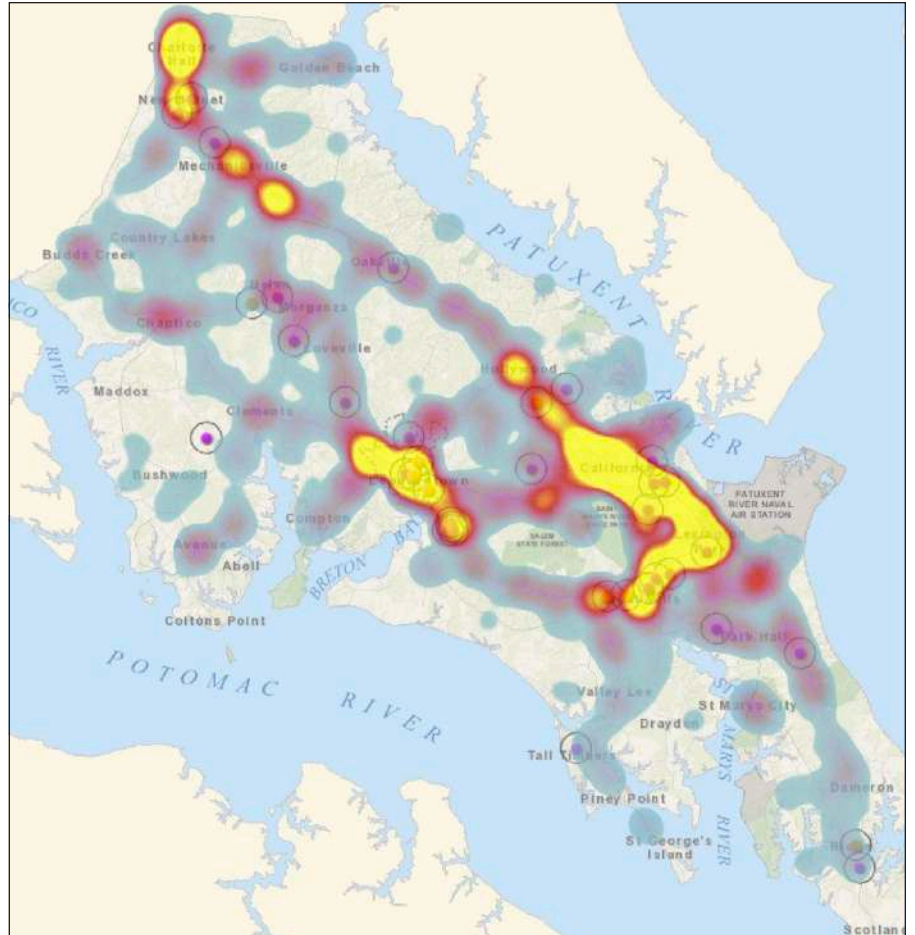
"There are a lot of unknowns here," Hewitt said.

Commissioner Mike Alderson was the second opposition vote on the speed camera ordinance.

Deputy County Administrator David Yingling said the speed cameras would provide coverage to counter speeders at times when deputies and other law enforcement were pressed with calls for service, essentially aiding them without drawing any more resources away from the agency.

"Speed cameras are a game changer when it comes to that," Yingling said.

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School Zone and Crash Data Map for 2023

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# Sheriff's Office Tries Novel Approach to Confront Gun Violence

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Deputies of the county sheriff's office are going out in the community, knocking on doors of those they believe who are engaged in the continuing epidemic of gun violence, and telling them they face steep consequences — either death, severe injury or arrest and incarceration.

But they also have another message; that they are also valued and don't have to engage in that kind of life.

It's called the Group Violence Intervention Program and the sheriff's office has embraced it as a tool to deal with one of the worst and newly emergent problems here.

"We go out on a monthly basis and talk to these individuals," said Sgt. Austin Schultz. "We explain to them that we want them to be alive, safe and free."

The messaging, though, is clear, said Schultz, speaking at a gathering of the local NAACP Chapter 7025 in Church of the Ascension in Lexington Park last week, that the county has a zero-tolerance policy for gun violence and the community will not stand for it.

"There are going to be consequences if they continue to participate in gun violence," Schultz, a member of the sheriff's office Criminal Intelligence Unit said.

But representatives from the health department also tell these suspects about opportunities, including financial and legal support, to repent of their lifestyle.

"Anything we can do in the community to divert them away from gun violence," Schultz said.

The supposition is, Schultz said, is that those involved in gun violence only turn to it as a way to deal with poverty — by seeking prosperity through dishonest means — or simply have fallen into that life through a lack of family or proper example.

Deputies, along with a health department employee and a local faith-based leader, have comprised the DVI notification team since August of last year, Schultz said.

They have gone out and spoken on 29 occasions to people they have identified as being involved in gun violence since that time.

The program may be making a difference on the street, as Schultz reported that gun

violence dropped off to nothing for the last two months of 2023 before several incidents started off the new year.

Sheriff Steven Hall, who also spoke at the meeting, was asked what the community could do to reduce youth crime, which is often directly connected to gun violence.

"The people in this room are the solution," Hall said. "It is not simply a law enforcement problem."

"If a young person has access to a weapon, and uses the weapon in a crime, we're responsible for the active response to that."

But, Hall said, the question remained as to who was influencing and guiding a young person either away or towards the use of that gun.

"These young people are flopping in houses, they have little to no supervision, they have no role models, no mentors," Hall said. "They are finding worth, finding power, finding value holding a gun."

"It gives them power, it gives them purpose and it scares me to death."

Hall said using a little compassion towards someone at risk of being in that lifestyle was important.

"We have to care, we have to reach out," Hall said. "If you know someone who is at risk, put them into contact with someone who can get them services, mentoring."

"Call one of us."

There was an infatuation, a love even, of violence by young people, Hall lamented.

"You can [hear] it in music, you can see it in the movies," Hall said. "It's all saturated with violence."

"They feel akin to that and I think it desensitizes them."

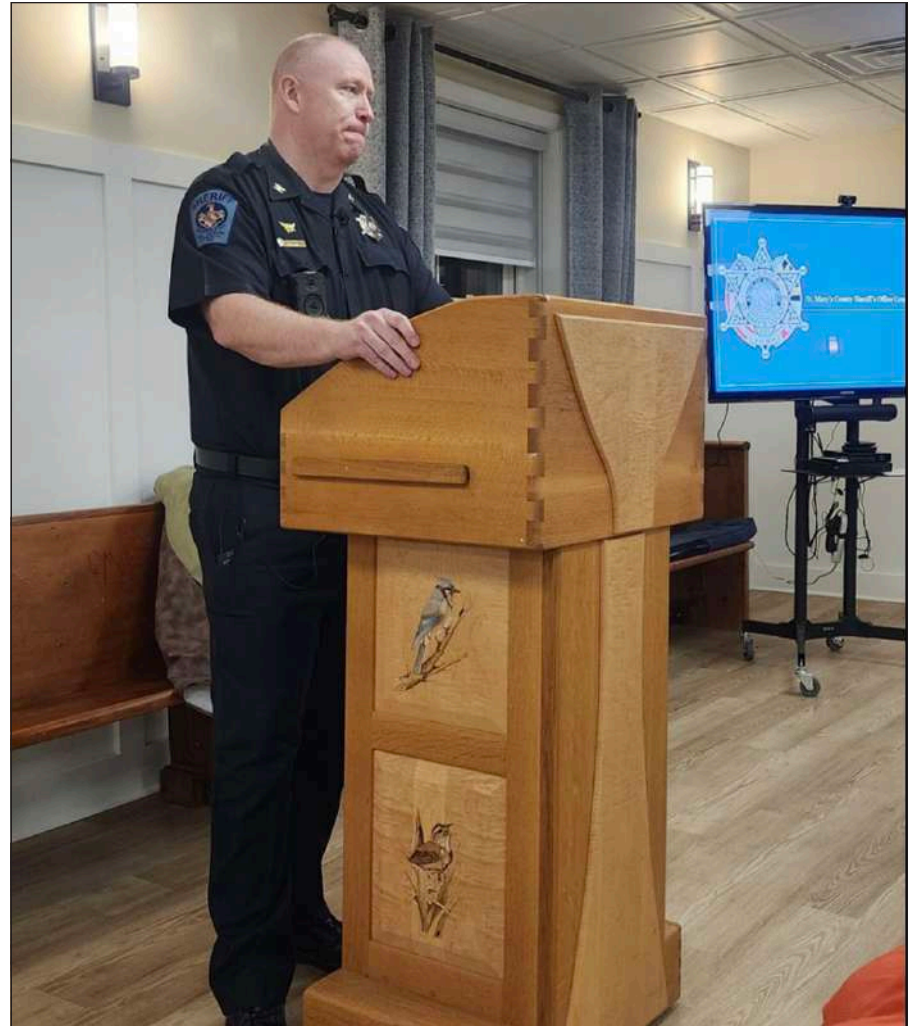
If a young person lacks meaningful relationships in their classrooms, neighborhoods or even in their homes, Hall said, the result was often some sort of violence.

An essential problem now facing law officers is juvenile justice reform.

"It's a big source of frustration... for the people who deal with this every day," Hall said. "If you have an [juvenile] individual who is potentially involved in crime, we can't even talk to them."

"An intervention by a law enforcement officer can change someone's life and change the trajectory."

Hall said the solution to the problem



Sheriff Steve Hall at the NAACP. Photo courtesy of NAACP 7025.

of youth criminality was not anything new but restoring what was tried and tested, values central to stable family life. "We have to restore things that were basic 30 years ago," Hall said. "That's how far we've gone afool."

Sheriff's deputies are continually thwarted in their investigations of gun violence, Hall said, when they arrive on a scene and potential witnesses say they are able to tell them nothing about what just transpired.

The sheriff said this is a result of fear of reprisal from criminal elements, but also because of a lack of trust held by some in the community.

Hall was hopeful that the GVI initiative would continue to be successful.

"It's so out of the box," Hall said. "We're

going and knocking on doors, we're going into living rooms and saying to people... 'You matter; we want you alive, thriving and free.'

"I can tell you, 25 years ago, that was not in the law enforcement mantra."

The alternative can be seen in the faces of juveniles — some on the street and some in the detention center — Hall said.

"The thing that concerns me is that their eyes are devoid of hope," the sheriff said. "They are not afraid to pull a weapon and shoot, they are not afraid to be shot, they are not afraid to die and they are not afraid to be incarcerated."

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# Leonard Hall School to Reopen

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

A group of parents with students at the beleaguered Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy in Leonardtown have announced they have gained control of the board of directors and have reopened the school that had been closed as of Jan. 18.

"A special meeting was held on [Jan. 24] to meet with the corporation [parents and staff] to have a proper vote in regard to the future of our historic [and] iconic junior naval academy," wrote the school's newly elected board of directors. "We intend to resume class this coming week."

Last week the county commissioners formalized their intentions to terminate the lease on the county-owned building the school currently occupies; the week prior The County Times learned that a majority of commissioners had reached a consensus in executive session that they would terminate the lease and leave the school to finish out the remainder of the school year before having to find a new home.

The action of the commissioners was widely criticized — and opposed by Commissioner Eric Colvin — and shortly after their intent was communicated to the leadership at the school, they decided almost immediately to close the school's doors.

But a group of parents rose up to oppose the closure, stating the action taken by the headmistress Sarah Greene and the former presi-



dent of the board of directors Karlie Estrada, was against the bylaws of the schools.

A subsequent meeting of the parents and teachers apparently resulted in a vote to establish new leadership in the board of directors.

"That decision to close the school when it had the ability to go through the rest of the year was not fair to the students or parents with that short notice," said Commissioner Mike Hewitt during the board's meeting this week. "I'm glad these parents have taken it on; hopefully it will work."

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# State Proposes Cutting Bus Routes

The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration today announced proposed reductions in Commuter Bus service. The agency will hold a series of public hearings and a 30-day public review and comment period on the proposed reductions, with changes set to go into effect on Monday, July 1, 2024. The service reduction is in response to the unprecedented structural financial deficit in state transportation funding, recently announced by the Department of Transportation. An additional infusion of funding allocated by Governor Moore from the Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal will enable the Maryland Transit Administration to maintain Commuter Bus service at a reduced level rather than eliminate it in its entirety.

"We recognize that the Commuter Bus service reduction will have a significant impact on many Marylanders," said Maryland Transit Administrator Holly Arnold. "We encourage riders to visit our website to learn about alternate transit options."

The proposed changes focus on maintaining access across all regions where Commuter Bus currently operates. The agency used ridership data and considered

equity and both existing and potential access when creating the service reduction plan.

Local routes affected are:

- 850 – Prince Frederick/Dunkirk to Suitland/Washington, D.C.
- 705 – Charlotte Hall/Waldorf to Washington, D.C.
- 715 – Charlotte Hall/Waldorf to Washington, D.C.
- 725 – California/Charlotte Hall to Washington, D.C.
- 735 – Charlotte Hall/Waldorf to Washington, D.C.
- 820 – North Beach/PG Equestrian Center to Washington, D.C.
- 830 – Sunderland/Dunkirk to Washington, D.C.
- 840 – St. Leonard/ Prince Frederick to Washington, D.C.

The agency will hold five public hearings (three virtual and two in-person) on the proposed changes between March 18 and March 27 and will accept public comments through April 29, 2024. Riders and interested parties can visit [mta.maryland.gov/commuter-bus2024](http://mta.maryland.gov/commuter-bus2024) for dates, times and information about how to participate in a public hearing.

# County Joins State's Social Media Lawsuit

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Social media giants such as Meta, Snap, TikTok, YouTube and others have targeted young people in St. Mary's County with content that has been damaging to their mental health, a multi-jurisdictional lawsuit claims, with "aggressive and predatory content," and the county government wants to hold those tech giants accountable.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County voted to join the lawsuit at their Jan. 30 meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

"All of us are worried about that," said Commissioner Mike Hewitt about the alleged negative mental health impacts on the young. "So, I'll support this litigation. "Go get 'em."

The Alabama-based law firm of Dicello Levitt reached out to the county government to be their legal representatives in the suit, county documents show. The law firm is now representing Montgomery, Anne Arundel and Garrett counties in similar suits.

The agreement with the law firm ensures the county pays no legal fees, but if any damages are awarded from a successful suit the firm would take 25 percent with additional

reimbursements for sundry other costs.

"If there is no recovery, we owe nothing," County Attorney Buffy Giddens wrote in a briefing for the commissioners. "St. Mary's County could join the litigation and assert a claim for public nuisance and neglect and seek abatement to fund social-services programs to abate continuing and future harm to St. Mary's County as a result of the social media sites' conduct and role in the current mental health crisis."

In October of last year Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown joined 41 other attorneys general in filing suit against social media giant Meta, formerly known as Facebook.

"A child's mental health and emotional development help determine how they will see and cope with the world around them, and an addiction to social media disrupts that critical development," said Brown in a prepared statement. "We believe that Meta has manipulated their social media platforms to attract and addict young people, without regard for how using applications like Instagram will negatively affect children and deepen the mental health crisis afflicting our nation's youth."

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# State Warned Over Bus Funding Cuts

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Southern Maryland consumes the majority of the Maryland Department of Transportation's commuter bus funding, according to Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland (TCC) officials, with pre-COVID-19 numbers showing that nearly 100 bus trips a day were coming to each of the three counties.

The ridership dropped off to essentially zero during the pandemic, according to George Clark, a regional transportation specialist with the TCC, speaking to the Southern Maryland Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly Jan. 19.

"That's come back to 35 percent ridership and its steadily increasing," Clark said, warning the state was considering serious cuts to the program's funding. "These cuts are going to affect us a great deal because Washington D.C. Mayor [Muriel] Bowser announced all District employees are coming back to the office."

The federal government is also planning on bringing workers back to three days a week in offices as well, Clark said.

Without Metro or light rail in Southern Maryland, Clark said, the only other option to keep cars off the roads and reduce congestion were alternatives like the commuter

buses, van pools and car pools that TCC runs.

Despite \$150 million being put back in the state's budget for transportation, Clark said, he still expected 60 percent cuts and did not know where they would fall.

"We can see the need for reduction of some trips," Clark said. "Not the elimination of trips."

"Once we lose a particular route, we're not going to get it back."

Holly Arnold, Maryland Transportation Authority administrator, said the budget for commuter buses had initially been cut from \$64 million to just \$28 million.

"We're trying to minimize impacts as much as possible," Arnold said during the on-line delegation meeting. "I'm hoping by the end of the month we will have a proposal out; we're going to have to do public hearings for these changes."

John Hartline, executive director for the TCC, said the Commuter Connections program lost all of its drivers during the pandemic and if cuts were made to the program now, it would certainly encourage drivers with a commercial driver's license to seek rapid reemployment elsewhere.

"It's very difficult to get people to come back once they've found new employment," said Hartline.

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# Catholic Schools Retain Strength Through Faith Vision

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

At Mother Catherine Academy in Mechanicsville, the days of struggling to get enough students enrolled to keep the doors open seem to be long in the past.

Years ago, when the Archdiocese of Washington withdrew its support, the parents rallied quickly to raise the money to keep the school running.

Now, said principal Anthony Wojt, they are stronger than ever before.

“Our numbers are great... we’re at capacity for most classes,” Wojt told The County Times. “Right now, we have 40 families on the waiting list for next year.”

“They [parents] want to get them on the waiting list when they turn 3 years old.”

Parents are keen to put their children in Catholic schools at an early age, Wojt said, because of the controlled environment and more specialized attention they are likely to receive.

And it’s all based on the core principals of the Christian faith.

“We opened earlier after COVID-19 and parents realized their children needed face to face education,” Wojt said. “You might not get that kind of attention in public school.”

“We’re blessed to model and teach the way and the truth and the life, and that’s Jesus Christ.”

Parents are also concerned with what

their children are being taught now by others, Wojt said, to include lessons on gender identity and sexuality.

“We teach using tried and true practices that still work today, that there’s only one truth,” he said.

Mother Catherine Academy teaches children from pre-kindergarten — 3 years old — to 8<sup>th</sup> grade with a capacity of 219 students.

Wojt said the school has grown 40 percent in student numbers in the last eight years.

“I remember when I came here,” Wojt said of his nine years heading up the school. “We needed 150 kids to stay alive and having 200 was a miracle.”

“Now were dealing with the question of whether to expand or not.”

Non-Catholics who are Christian are also seeking out potential seats for their children at Mother Catherine, Wojt said.

“When it comes to education, there are these shared values that parents are looking for,” Wojt said. “They make it easier for a child to navigate society now.”

Sarah Bowes, principal at St. Mary’s Ryken High School, said the emphasis they have on educating their student body — which is focused on preparing for college — means ensuring their teachers are up to the task.

That meant sending them to extra training and educational opportunities so they could teach their students to be more competitive in their future endeavors.



Grandparents work with students at St. Michael's Catholic School in Ridge

“We have a deep bench of teachers who have deep expertise,” Bowes said of the instructors there. “We focus on our teachers on being professionally developed.”

This emphasis on teacher training helps students in another way, Bowes said, when the students realize that even their instructors have to continue their education.

“We do that so they’re going to want to be life-long learners,” Bowes said.

Parents who send their students to St. Mary’s Ryken do so they can be nurtured as well as educated, Bowes, herself a graduate of the institution, said.

“They’re choosing rather than escaping,” Bowes said of parents counting on Catholic

education over public schools. “When they send their children to us they know it’s to someone who considers them to be made in the image of God.”

“I know parents appreciate that.”

Bowes said that on the campus of students — which runs from freshmen to seniors — there is virtually no bullying.

“We’re on a mission that includes God and prayer,” Bowes said. “That strengthens our institution; I know it does.”

“It’s a great place to work and send your children; here they are treasured and loved.”

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**2.98** 14-Oz. Eckrich Meat Cocktail Smokies

## FARM to TABLE

Sweet & Crispy Honeycrisp Apples **1.98 Lb.**

Greenhouse Grown Beefsteak Tomatoes **1.98 Lb.**

12-Oz. Fresh Express Garden Salad Mix **2/\$3**

3-Lb. Bag, Sweet Seedless California Navel Oranges **4.98**

Farm Fresh Crisp Green Cabbage **.68 Lb.**

9.2 To 13.8-Oz. Selected Kellogg's Townhouse Crackers  
**2.98**

16 To 24-Oz. Selected Ragu Pasta Sauce  
**1.98**

6-Ct. Paper Towels Or 12-Ct. Cardinal Bath Tissue  
**3.98**

30-Oz. Selected Hellmann's Mayonnaise  
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8-Ct. Selected Swiss Miss Hot Chocolate  
**2/\$5**

6-Pack, Selected Act II Microwave Popcorn  
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Deli Fresh! Kretschmar Yellow or White American Cheese

**5.98** lb.



9-Oz., Meurer Brothers Assorted Mini Danish

**4.98**



52-Oz. Red Velvet Cake

**11.98**



9-Oz., Selected Bill Knapp's Toaster Tops

**4.98**

## Liquor and Beer

10-Oz. Cans 24-Pack Bud Light

**19.89**



18-Pack 12-Oz. Bottles Miller High Life

**13.99**



12-Oz. Cans Coors Light 12 Pack

**11.99**



12-Oz. Bottles Bud Light 18 Pack

**18.99**



1.75L Ketel One Vodka

**35.99**



1.75L Crown Royal

**42.99**



1.75L Tito's Vodka

**30.49**



1.75L Bacardi Superior

**23.99**



750-ML Josh Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon

**13.98**



750-ML Ecco Domani Pino Grigio

**11.98**

## Wines of the Month

750ml Freixenet Cava

**11.99**

750-ml Freixenet Prosecco

**11.99**



# Pet OF THE WEEK

## MEET RUSTY



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



# Pax River Prepares for Exercise Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain



Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Colton Farmer and Military Working Dog (MWD) Georgina perform a perimeter sweep during a suspicious package drill during the Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain (CS/SC) Exercise 2023.

Naval Air Station Patuxent River will participate in the annual force protection exercise, Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain, Feb. 5-16, 2024.

Exercise Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2024 (CSSC24) is conducted by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC) and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) on all Navy installations in the continental U.S.

"Pax River joins Navy bases across the region and country in training to protect our personnel and mission from possible attack," said NAS Patuxent River Commanding Officer Capt. Douglas Burfield.

Citadel Shield, which occurs the first week, is the field training exercise portion led by CNIC. Solid Curtain occurs the following week and is the command post exercise led by USFFC. This two-part approach was designed to enhance the readiness of Navy security forces and ensure seamless interoperability among the commands, other

services and agency partners in order to protect life, equipment and facilities.

CSSC24 is a regularly scheduled exercise and is not being held in response to any specific threat.

Measures have been taken to minimize disruptions within local communities and to normal base operations, but there may be times when the exercise causes increased traffic around bases or delays in base access. Brief gate closures are expected at NAS Patuxent River during the exercise. Area residents may also see or hear security activities associated with the exercise. Advanced coordination has taken place with local law enforcement and first responders.

Base residents and personnel are reminded to avoid posted exercise areas.

For information about potential impacts due to the exercise, follow NAS Pax River online at [www.facebook.com/NASPaxRiver](http://www.facebook.com/NASPaxRiver), [www.twitter.com/NASPaxRiverPAO](http://www.twitter.com/NASPaxRiverPAO), and [www.instagram.com/nas\\_patuxent\\_river/](http://www.instagram.com/nas_patuxent_river/).



**Philip H. Dorsey III**  
*Attorney at Law*

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SPECIAL MASS IN HONOR OF SAINT JUDE: 7:00 PM

VENERATION ENDS: 10:00 PM

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# ST. MARY'S COUNTY CRIME BLOTTER

## Jury Convicts Callaway Man in Domestic Violence Case



Charles Reid

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that a St. Mary's County jury convicted Charles Ray Reid, IV, 35, of Callaway, Maryland of charges stemming from a domestic violence incident that occurred on May 26, 2023.

Following a two-day jury trial, Reid was found guilty of all charges:

- Fourth degree burglary;
- Second degree assault;
- Second degree malicious burning; and
- Malicious destruction of property less than \$1,000.

Reid will be held without bond awaiting

a sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum penalty of 13 years and 2 months in prison.

"Domestic violence is a tragically common circumstance that often times leaves victims feeling violated and voiceless. I hope this verdict has given the victim in this case a sense of justice, closure, and most importantly, safety," said State's Attorney Sterling. "I want to thank the jury for their careful consideration of all of the testimony and evidence in rendering their guilty verdicts."

Assistant State's Attorney Zach Varda and Senior Assistant State's Attorney Alena Mosier prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Deputies Devin Absher and Richard Wilhelmi of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office were the lead investigators.

The Honorable Leo E. Green, Jr. presided over the case.

## Two Arrested for Assault and Robbery in Lexington Park

On Saturday, January 27, 2024, Deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to a Lexington Park residence for the report of an assault and robbery.

According to the victim, the incident occurred at approximately 4:50 p.m. in the rear of the St. Mary's Square shopping center near the Weiss grocery store. The victim reported being knocked to the ground, physically assaulted, and robbed of his wallet. Following the initial interview with deputies, the victim was transported to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital for medical treatment.

Subsequent investigative efforts led to the identification and arrest of two individuals. Shannyn Elizabeth Dulemba, 40, of No Fixed Address, and Jamaze



Shannyn Dulemba

Jamaze Wood

Jovan Wood, 25, of No Fixed Address, were taken into custody and transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center and charged with Robbery, Assault First Degree, Assault Second Degree, Theft, and related CDS: Possession Not Cannabis violations.

## Legal Notices

### COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN CORRECTED 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 Office (C-O). 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 INVITATION FOR BIDS Open-End Contract Services for Line Striping, Signage, and Pavement Sealing Maintenance

Sealed bids, addressed to the Capital Projects Manager, and marked "BID FOR CONTRACT SERVICES FOR PUBLIC WORKS" will be received at the office of the Commissioners of Leonardtown, PO Box 1, 22670 Washington St. Leonardtown, Maryland 20650 no later than February 22, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

A pre-bid meeting will be held on Friday, February 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Leonardtown office conference room. The official bid opening is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 22, 2024. All potential bidders are invited to attend.

The work to be performed under the contract consists of furnishing labor, service, equipment, and materials for services for line striping, signage, and pavement sealing maintenance. Questions should be directed to Tony Wheatley, Capital Projects Manager, at (301) 475-9791.

The Commissioners of Leonardtown reserves the right to reject any bids and proposals, and to accept any proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

By Authority: Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator



## Letters to the Editor

### An Appreciation for Public Education

I have proudly served nearly two terms on the SMCPS Board of Education and have decided not to run for a third term. My current term expires this December and, at age 86, I hope that my seat will be occupied by someone younger who has diverse skill sets. I therefore urge anyone who is willing to work on the Board to take the initiative to run for office and to file before the February deadline set by the Board of Elections.

During the past seven years, I have developed a great appreciation for public education - especially in St. Mary's County. I had the good fortune to attend both private and public schools when I was growing up, and I can understand the advantages of both venues. As everyone well knows, the student profile, family structure, demographics, and the mission of public education has drastically changed over the past 70 years. The focus on the "Three R's" is singularly no longer relevant. Today the school board and administration have numerous challenges in preparing our students for college or for entering the work force. Teachers must balance teaching our children while, at the same time, navigating a myriad of regulations. The nuclear family has changed as well. Single parent households are more common than in the past, forcing many to rely on the school system for support. Yet, Dr. Smith has reminded us repeatedly that SMCPS can never replace the parents of our students. The school environment has also drastically changed. How can we hope to teach our children if they feel unsafe in their school settings? We are also obligated to ensure that no child comes to school hungry; many of our students qualify for free or reduced cost meals. Our school system also provides a social

services umbrella including health and psychological support as well as providing English-As-A-Second Language guidance. Importantly, SMCPS offers a wide variety of opportunities to participate in the arts and sports; these are programs I consider essential in the development of young folks transitioning to adulthood.

Their are legitimate concerns about how well we are preparing our students for life's journey. Can we do better managing the financial resources; can we transfer more administrative costs to the classroom? Perhaps, but the fact remains that the Maryland school system and, in particular, St. Mary's County Public Schools remain in the forefront of educational excellence. U.S. News and World Report last year ranked Maryland as the second highest educational system in the county and, arguably, SMCPS as one of the best school systems within the state. These rankings didn't happen by accident; they happened with a high investment in funding from federal, state and, especially, by our local SMC commissioners who have continually supported our schools by providing the necessary funding resources. It has been reported that our country's strategic security can be traced to education; indeed, education is not a necessary cost but an investment.

My report card therefore is very high. I would agree that a school board member has a very important responsibility within the county; I urge that all county residents understand the challenges and responsibilities of this elected position.

James J. Davis, P.E.  
Leonardtown

# Lovin' LEONARDTOWN FEBRUARY 2



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## First Friday Itinerary

**10 a.m. - 3 p.m.** Brunch at Antoinette's Garden [www.facebook.com/AntoinettesGarden](https://www.facebook.com/AntoinettesGarden)

**10 a.m. - 7 p.m.** Visit the Old Jail Museum & Leonardtown Visitor Center. They offer extended hours & FREE tours for First Friday [www.facebook.com/TheOldJailMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/TheOldJailMuseum)

**5 p.m. - 6 p.m.** "Better Together Yoga" at SPICE Studio - pop-up yoga partner class [www.somdspice.com](https://www.somdspice.com)

**5 p.m. - 8 p.m.** St Mary's County Arts Council opening reception for Fiery Hues - Community Art Show [www.stmarysartscouncil.com](https://www.stmarysartscouncil.com)

**5 p.m. - 8 p.m.** North End Gallery's opening reception for the 2024 Invitational Show [www.northendgallery.com](https://www.northendgallery.com)

**5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** Live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery with Jason Mitchell and Heidi's Eats & Sage Treats food truck on site [www.polwinery.com](https://www.polwinery.com)

**6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** The Yellow Line "heArts" activity for First Friday [www.theyellowline.co](https://www.theyellowline.co)

**7 p.m.** Concert at the Rex Theatre with headliner Parker Barrow. Doors open at 7 p.m. [www.therextheatresomd.com](https://www.therextheatresomd.com)

**8 p.m. - 11 p.m.** Live music with Funkzilla at Action Lounge and Billiards [www.actionloungelandbilliards.com](https://www.actionloungelandbilliards.com)



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Receive a **free rose quartz tumble stone** with any purchase at Happy and Zen Crystals. [www.happyandzencrystals.com](https://www.happyandzencrystals.com)

**Specials & Sales** throughout Shepherds Old Field Market [www.shepherdsoldfield.com](https://www.shepherdsoldfield.com)

The information included here is accurate at the time of printing, and is subject to change. Please visit the event page for current information.

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# Weddings SoMD

SPRING 2024



Cynthia Herbert & James Brown's wedding in Leonardtown  
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# Questions to Ask When Vetting Potential Wedding Vendors

The process of planning a wedding involves the coordination of many different components, including people. It can be stressful and it can be exciting. Chances are the couple-to-be will be handling conversations with vendors they may have never worked with before.

It may be tempting to simply sign on the dotted line when hiring wedding vendors and hope for the best. But the process can prove more fruitful when couples prepare for it by compiling a list of questions designed to ensure they know what they're getting before they enter into a contract.

## Is the date available?

The most important question to ask is whether the vendor is available on the day you have chosen to get married. The house of worship or place where you will be exchanging vows should be set first, and then additional vendors can be interviewed to confirm their availability and the scope of their services.

## How long have you been in business?

How long a company has been in business, and more importantly how much experience they have with weddings, can be a telling detail. Experience is not always indicative of ability, but vendors with long track records of success may prove easy to work with.



## Are you insured?

Check if the vendor is insured. It can be a risky proposition to work with vendors who are not insured.

## Will you be on site to oversee things?

From florists to private caterers to specialty performers, it is acceptable to ask vendors if they will be there the day of the wedding to manage things or if it will be a third party or another representative. Confirm all pertinent details, including who will be there on the

day of the wedding, in advance.

## What is your payment schedule and cancellation policy?

Understand how the vendor expects to be paid. Many businesses require a deposit up front to book the date. Some may want payment in full a week or so before the wedding day. Others may enable you to make monthly payments for a set period of time. Ask how the vendor handles cancellations, and whether any deposit or portion of the

money already paid will be refunded.

## When is the last possible date for making changes?

Know how long you have to make any changes to your plans, colors, music choices, or other details.

## Are there any additional fees?

It's important to determine if gratuity, travel, overtime charges, cleaning fees, or any other charges are included in the contract or if it leaves room for additional expenses.

## Is mine your only wedding that day? How do you handle conflicts?

Figure out if the vendor handles just one wedding per day or if they have staff to cover multiple weddings on a given date.

## Do prices differ depending on time of day, month or year?

Certain dates are busier than others. Find out if the vendor charges a premium for holidays or particular times of the year.

Couples are urged to exercise due diligence and ensure contracts with vendors specify all details before signing on the dotted line.

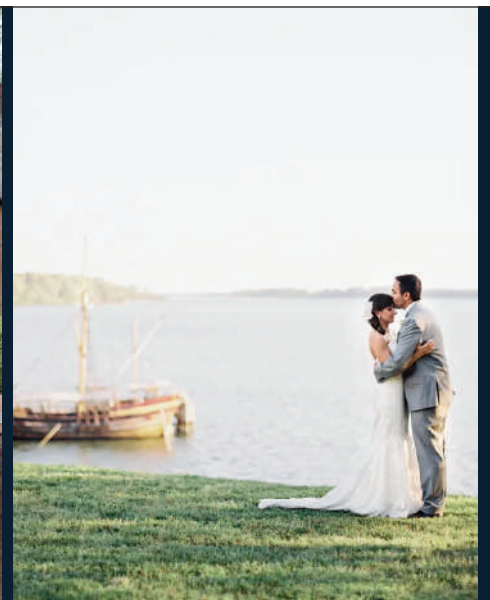


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# Tips to Plan a Perfect Honeymoon

Couples have much to look forward to when planning their weddings. In addition to the momentous occasion when they say “I do,” couples can look ahead with excitement as they anticipate spending time with family and friends in a fun setting.

Though the wedding day is the focal point of couples’ planning efforts, the post-wedding honeymoon also merits ample consideration. A honeymoon is the first trip many couples take together after tying the knot, and many will never forget this special excursion. As couples pore over the details of wedding planning, they may want to consider these tips to ensure their honeymoon is a trip to remember for a lifetime.

- Identify your dream trip. There are no rules regarding honeymoons. Though couples’ budgets and professional obligations may factor into where they can go and how long their honeymoon can be, couples can discuss their dream trips and then determine if they can make those dreams come true on their honeymoon. Couples who have always aspired to backpack through Europe should consider that a possible honeymoon trip. If a food tour of Italy is on couples’ bucket list, then investigate how feasible that might be for your honeymoon.
- Stay up on current events. It can be easy for couples to get lost in the weeds while planning their weddings



and miss what’s going on across the globe. However, knowledge of current events can be vital when planning a honeymoon. Faraway and exotic locales may seem tailor-made for a honeymoon, but that’s only the case

if such destinations are not plagued by civil unrest, conflict, natural disasters, or other events that can affect how safe it is to visit such places. The U.S. Department of State maintains a free, easily accessible list of travel

advisories at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov). The Government of Canada maintains a similar list at [travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca). Couples are urged to visit these sites before booking their honeymoon, particularly if they hope to travel internationally.

- Consider amenities and all-inclusive packages. All-inclusive packages can be a great deal, particularly for couples who want their honeymoon to be all about relaxing at a single resort destination. All-inclusive packages cover the cost of food and most beverages, making these options both convenient and budget-friendly. When going this route, couples also should decide which amenities they want to access on their trip. Access to a gym and/or spa, activities like parasailing, and other perks are just some of the potential amenities couples can look for as they choose a honeymoon destination.
- Collaborate. A honeymoon may be the first trip couples take after tying the knot, and it can lay the foundation for future collaborative efforts. Planning travel is not always so easy, so couples can work together and make any necessary concessions so each person gets what they want out of the trip.

Some simple strategies can help couples plan and enjoy a honeymoon they are likely to remember for a lifetime.



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# How to Find the Right Wedding Officiant



Weddings consist of a lot of moving parts. As engaged couples plan their weddings, many become masters at multi-tasking as they try to coordinate a day that will make them happy and prove fun for their friends and family.

Deciding on a wedding officiant is one of the tasks couples will have to address in advance of the big day. There's no shortage of officiants, from religious leaders to people who specialize in nondenominational ceremonies. As couples begin the process of looking for a wedding officiant, they can keep these strategies in mind to ensure they find the right fit for their wedding.

- Determine the location and type of ceremony you want to have. Before they begin searching for an officiant, engaged couples should discuss where they hope to get married and the type of ceremony they want to have. This may differ within the couple, as one person might prefer a religious wedding in a house of worship while the other might want a secular ceremony outdoors or in another location. The requirements to get married in a house of worship differ by faith, and restrictions may dictate who can officiate a wedding in a church, synagogue, mosque, etc. Couples are urged to learn the qualifications to get married in a house of worship before hiring a wedding officiant.
- Take your time and meet with various officiants. When the time comes to interview officiants, speak with as many as possible. The interview process can give couples a feel for what's out there and help them identify the

type of officiant they want. If a rapport develops between a couple and a particular officiant, that can make for a better ceremony.

- Consider a friend or family member. Couples have increasingly looked to friends or family members to officiate their weddings. Statistics differ considerably depending on the source, but the 2020 Brides American Wedding Study found that one in four couples are married by a friend or family member. A friend or family member serving as an officiant can lend a more personal feel to a ceremony, but couples should first confirm a loved one is willing to take on the responsibility, which will require the individual become licensed. It also may spark some nerves, so couples should confirm the person is comfortable doing so and should not pressure someone into performing the task.
- Ask around. Couples who don't know where to begin when looking for an officiant should not hesitate to ask around. Wedding vendors, including representatives at the location where the ceremony will take place, may be willing to recommend officiants whose work has impressed them in the past. Google Reviews and other review aggregators also can offer insight into officiants and their approach to officiating weddings.

Wedding officiants play a significant role in a wedding ceremony. Finding the right officiant may require couples to carefully consider their preferences, including the style of ceremony they want.



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# Clever Ways to Invite People to Be in Your Wedding Party

Plenty of love and effort goes into coordinating a dream wedding. Although the happy couple garners most of the spotlight on such momentous occasions, they're not the only ones who will feature prominently in the wedding.

The wedding party is made up of bridesmaids, groomsmen, a ring bearer, a flower girl, ushers, and other guests of honor, such as a couple's parents. The wedding resource *The Knot* reports that old school etiquette once indicated there should be one groomsmen and one corresponding bridesmaid for every 50 guests, although four bridesmaids and four groomsmen tends to be the average nowadays.

Choosing who will be included in the wedding party requires forethought and should not be rushed. The rule of thumb is to ask roughly a year to eight months before the wedding so those asked have time to prepare. When that time comes, these fun ideas can help couples invite loved ones to be in the wedding party with style.

- Say it with a treat. Remember those heart-shaped candies that come out at Valentine's Day that are printed with various sentiments, like "Be mine"? Replicate the idea by giving prospective wedding party members cookies



iced to look like tuxedos and bridesmaid gowns with a phrase like "Will you?"

- Give personalized drinkware. Whether it's wine glasses or flasks, have drinkware engraved with the names of who is being asked so that everyone can

toast when they say yes. In the event that someone declines, that person will still have a thoughtful memento.

- Make custom scratch-off cards. This is one gamble that is likely to pay off when you present loved ones and friends with scratch-off tickets that

reveal the question, "Will you be my bridesmaid/groomsman?"

- Put together swag bags. Take a page out of fashion shows or celebrity parties and package some luxury items into gift bags for those special people you want to stand by your side on your wedding day. High-end grooming products, jewelry, electronics accessories, and more can be great gifts for those who are likely to be in your wedding party.
- Gift robes or T-shirts: Plan ahead for staged and coordinated photos by purchasing matching robes or T-shirts for all the besties in the wedding party. Those who are up for having a good time will have no problem wearing the matching outfits when out for wedding-related events.
- Fill balloons with confetti and messages. Ask friends and loved ones to pop balloons to reveal your request that they be in the wedding party.

Engaged couples may have many close friends and loved ones they want to stand by their side during the wedding. There are plenty of fun ways to ask them to be part of the celebration.

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# The Responsibilities of Bridal Party Members



A couple's wedding day is one they will never forget. Guests' focus is squarely on the happy couple on the day they're set to make their union official. However, happy couples are not the only ones with important roles to play during a wedding.

Being asked to be in a bridal party is a unique honor. With that honor comes responsibility, as each person in a bridal party can do their own part to ensure a couple's wedding day is a success.

## Maid or matron of honor

A maid of honor and matron of honor perform the same functions. The terms are simply unique because a maid of honor refers to a person who has not yet gotten married, while the term matron of honor is used for a person who has gotten married. Brides also may choose a man to serve as man of honor. Whatever title is appropriate, the person who serves in this capacity will help the bride plan the wedding, including being there to offer insight when shopping for a wedding dress. This person also may coordinate the bachelorette party and periodically speak with bridesmaids to ensure everyone is on schedule. The maid of honor will typically give a bridal toast during the reception.

## Best man

Don't let the title fool you, as many couples now choose to have a best woman. Like the maid of honor, the best man may be asked to help with wedding planning and is typically tasked with organizing the bachelor party and toasting the groom during the reception. The best man also can help to ensure groomsmen are on schedule with tuxedo fittings.

## Bridesmaids/Groomsmen

Bridesmaids stand beside the bride during the wedding ceremony. They can help with planning and help to resolve any last-minute issues that may arise on the big day, such as a vendor arriving late.

Groomsmen stand next to the groom during the ceremony and may be asked to help the best man plan the bachelor party. Both bridesmaids and groomsmen also may be asked to help host events leading up to the big day, such as a shower or engagement party.

## Ring bearer/flower girl

The roles of ring bearer and flower girl are typically filled by young relatives of the couple, such as nieces, nephews or young cousins. The flower girl walks down the aisle in advance of the bride, spreading pedals as she goes. The ring bearer carries the wedding rings down the aisle.

## Parents

If they choose to do so, parents of the happy couple can help to pay for the wedding. The custom of the bride's parents paying the entire bill has largely fallen by the wayside, as many modern couples now pay for their own weddings. Parents can offer to pay for the engagement party and/or rehearsal dinner, but such generosity is not expected of them.

Serving in a wedding party is a unique and humbling honor. The roles of each person in the party vary, and party members who want to do their best for the couple can study up on their responsibilities in advance of the big day.



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# Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



## No Place Like Home

Is 45 minutes too far to drive for a hamburger? I don't think so, not if it is another gray-white cloudy day and you realize that if you and your husband don't get out of the house soon then snarkiness could become the order of the day (see my last column if you are a new reader of Wanderings to understand what effect grey days have on my husband, especially when there are a few in a row). I believe my husband is rubbing off on me, because



by the third or so day of gloomy gray skies I was restless and knew we needed to get out of the house. Some days, well many days, I cannot seem to focus to accomplish anything, and my mind will just spin – its best to just leave on those days and refresh mind and spirit. I probably should have been diagnosed with ADHD when I was younger, but I don't know if they did that in the 60s and 70s.

For some reason, I had been wanting to try Burger Fi – I had a craving for a burger bad. Last year, I noticed the chain in National Harbor and the smells wafting out onto the street. The company originated in 2011 in Lauderdale-by-the sea in Florida and now has 120 locations.

For the last month Robert and I have been talking about bucket lists and lifetime goals. I don't have the lofty bucket list items I did in my younger years like learning to fly a plane and jumping out of planes – none of which came to fruition anyway. So, I mentioned to my husband about wanting to try the Burger Fi hamburger place in order to work on checking off the milder bucket list items like finding a burger even better than Chaptico Market's hamburgers (guess what? It can't be done – Chaptico Market definitely has the best burgers) and find the perfect lasagna which I found hands down at Rucci's in White Plains quite a few years ago – two bucket list items checked off. I guess I need to think of some more bucket list items.

But off we went to National Harbor to brighten up our day, try a burger, maybe get a drink somewhere and see all the lights and neat shops and our traditional Starbucks Café Mochas at the end. It was a nice ride up to the National Harbor, even 210 was quiet, the way I remembered it growing up in PG County. We remarked to each other, as we often do on our drives through Waldorf and Oxon Hill how much development is taking place...so many townhouses and strip centers, though St. Mary's seems to be losing old land to these same things as well. As we drove, I said, "Thank goodness for all the swampland along 210, at least they can't build there too." and my husband replied, "Just wait, see all those large hills, they will find a way to level them and push all that dirt down below into the marsh areas and build." He went on to add that flooding would occur in other areas that didn't have flooding before because of that. That happens here in our county too. Sorry, shouldn't have even gotten started on all that.

Back to burgers. We were lucky and found a spot directly across from Burger Fi and didn't even have to go in the parking garage. I didn't smell the same good smells as before, but they probably hadn't been open for long. On their website it says they source their beef from ranches across the country and "their Angus beef is NEVER exposed to steroids, antibiotics, growth hormones or additives – EVER". Their potatoes are real, never frozen russet potatoes which are hand cut and come plain or with different toppings like fresh herbs, fresh grated parmesan cheese, and garlic aioli sauce (which was amazing I might add). I got the bacon cheeseburger though I must say like all fast food burgers, the burgers was thinner and not as appealing as the photos I saw on their website. And they didn't taste bad in any way, just not what I was hoping for. As I mentioned above, Chaptico Market still reigns supreme in my humble opinion. Like Dorothy said at the end of the Wizard of OZ, "There's no place like home".

A drink at another newer place called Tom's Watch bar helped to pick up the mood and we were both in a better place than when we left the house earlier. But you know, we have all the best places right here in our county and next time we need to get out of the house we will go back to what we know and love – just like Dorothy.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

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

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- **Developing a personal financial strategy** – Many factors go into creating a long-term financial strategy. What is your risk tolerance? When would you like to retire? What sort of retirement lifestyle have you envisioned? What are your other important goals? A financial advisor will ask these and other questions in getting to know you, your family situation and your hopes for the future. By taking this type of holistic approach, a financial advisor can help you create financial and investment strategies appropriate for your needs.
- **Avoiding mistakes** – A financial advisor can help you avoid costly investment mistakes. One such mistake is attempting to "time" the market. Investors pursue market timing when they try to "buy low" and "sell high." In theory, of course, this is a great idea — if you could consistently buy investments — stocks, in particular — when their price is down and then sell them when the price has risen significantly, you'd always make some tidy profits. The main drawback to this technique, though, is that it's virtually impossible to follow, especially for individual investors. Nobody, not even professional money managers, can really predict with any accuracy when stock prices have reached high or low points. Consequently, those who try to make these guesses could miss out on opportunities. For example, investors who are determined to buy low might not want to purchase investments when the market is up — but this practice could lead to taking a "time out" from investing just when the market is in the midst of a rally. But a financial advisor can steer clients toward a more disciplined approach, such as buying quality investments and holding them for the long term, regardless of the ups and downs of the market.
- **Checking progress toward your goals** – If you were to invest without any guidance, you might not be looking at your investments' performance with the proper perspective. For example, some investors simply compare their portfolio returns against a widely used market index, such as the S&P 500. But this comparison may not be that useful. The S&P 500 only measures the stock prices of the leading publicly traded U.S. companies by market capitalization — but your investment portfolio, if properly diversified, will include investments other than U.S. stocks, such as bonds, government securities, international stocks and more. Consequently, the performance of your portfolio won't track that of the S&P 500 or any other single index, either. Your financial advisor can help you employ more meaningful benchmarks, such as whether your portfolio's progress is on track toward helping you meet your financial goals. Also, a financial advisor will review your portfolio and investment strategy regularly to determine what changes, if any, need to be made, either in response to the markets or to events in your life.

Investing for your future can be exciting and rewarding — and you can feel more confident in your decisions when you have someone helping you along the way.

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

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## 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.

### Andy Chinni, 86



Andy Chinni passed away on January 15, 2024. A Memorial Mass will be held at 10:30am on February 3, 2024 at Our Lady of Medley's Neck Church, 41410 Medley's Neck Rd.,

Leonardtown, Maryland.

Eternal rest grant upon him, oh Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace! Amen.

*We give our loved ones back to God,  
And just as He first gave them to us  
And did not lose them in the giving,  
So we have not lost them  
in returning them to Him.*

*For life is eternal, love is immortal,  
death is only a horizon*

*And a horizon is nothing but  
the limit of our earthly sight.*

— Helen Steiner Rice

### Robert Abell, 59



Robert Clark Abell, 59, of Hollywood, MD, peacefully entered into eternal rest surrounded by his loving family on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Born on September

1, 1964 in Leonardtown, MD to the late Joseph B. Abell, Sr. and the late Ann Hope (Clark) Abell, Robert was the loving husband of Vicky Sue, whom he married on April 14, 2007 in St. John's Catholic Church, Hollywood, MD. He is survived by his siblings, Mary Ann Yount (Jeff) of

Mechanicsville, MD, Joseph (JB) Abell, Jr. (Donna) of Leonardtown, MD, M. Rose Gatton (Danny), and Randy Abell (Joanne) of Hollywood, MD, his sister-in-law, Denise Abell, of Mechanicsville, MD, his step-children, Marcus, Jake, Shawn, and Nicole, and his step-grandchildren, Alexis, Jessa, Christopher, Scarlet, Maize, and Braxton. Robert will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by his many nieces, nephews, great nieces, and great nephews. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his siblings, Sue Woodburn and James "Jimmy" Abell.

Robert was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and attended the St. Mary's County Public Schools. He was a truck driver/mover for Quality Transfer and Storage, Lexington Park, MD for over 35 years, receiving many Safe Driver Awards.

The family will receive friends on Monday, February 5, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 10:00 AM in the funeral home chapel with Fr. Ray Schmidt officiating. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be his nephews, David Yount, Brian Yount, J.W. Abell, Danny Burroughs, his stepson, Jake Clark, and long-time family friend, Robert Carter.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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

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

## Sell it - Buy it at Auction

### Tri County Livestock Auction

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the Month – Auction begins at 4 PM  
Located Off MD Rt. 6 West – Charlotte Hall, MD

### Online Auction – Oyster Cans, Collectibles, More Including Oyster Cans from J. Banagan Collection

Oyster Cans, Vintage Slot Machine, Working Decoys, Wood Oyster Packing Boxes, Milk & Oyster Bottles (including local Milk Bottles), Local Memorabilia, Advertising Signs, Framed Waterfowl Prints, Oyster Knives, Nautical Items, More

**Online Auction Opens:** On or about FEB 1, 2024

**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.

26689 Laurel Grove Rd. – Mechanicsville, MD

### Anne Arundel County Young Farmers Auction

Saturday, March 23, 2024 - 8 am

241 Farmhouse Lane, Lothian, MD

For more information call: 240-486-6592

### Grocery Auction—Hughesville VFD

SAT, MAR 23<sup>rd</sup> - 5 pm

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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, Feb 1

### American Legion Post 221 Meeting

American Legion Post 221  
21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue  
8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

American Legion Post 221 invites all active duty personnel and veterans to join us for our monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00pm. E-mail us at [alpost221@aol.com](mailto:alpost221@aol.com) or call 301\*481\*6625 for more information. Tell them you saw the announcement on the SoMD Internet Calendar.

## Fri, Feb 2

### ELKs Texas Holdem Tournament

St Mary's County Elks Lodge  
45779 Fire Department Ln., California  
7 p.m. to Midnight

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

James Dean  
240-577-0828  
[jdeanjunior@gmail.com](mailto:jdeanjunior@gmail.com)

## Sat, Feb 3

### Yard Sale

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church  
27108 Mt. Zion Church Rd.,  
Mechanicsville  
7 a.m. to 1p.m.

Time for a Yard Sale! Get your registration contact: Vickie Frederick 301-904-0097 Or [vickiefrederick1154@gmail.com](mailto:vickiefrederick1154@gmail.com). Tables for Rent: 8 ft \$20 or 6 ft \$15. NO set-up on Saturday morning! Set-up on Friday, February 2nd from 12—7 p.m.

Food will be available for sale on Saturday.

## Sun, Feb 4

### Designer Purse Bingo

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

Come join us for an afternoon of bingo fun filled with chances to win designer purses, raffles, door prizes and more! Lots of opportunities to win. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. Doors open at 11:00 AM.

Proceeds to benefit the Southern Maryland Boot Scooters as they participate in the annual Walk to End Alzheimer's.

## Wed, Feb 7

### Black History Month Open House—U.S. Colored Troops Center

Lexington Manor Passive Park  
21675 S. Coral Dr., Lexington Park  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Come see the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Medal of Honor recipient exhibits at the USCT Interpretive Center in the Lexington Manor Passive Park during a free open house for all ages in honor of Black History Month.

On the trail between the Lexington Manor Passive Park and John G. Lancaster Park, you can learn about the Civil War era in St. Mary's County and the African American troops on interpretive panels that lead to the statue of the soldier. Inside the building, you can also learn about the local Medal of Honor recipients who served in the U.S. Colored Troops and fought for the Union during the American Civil War.

There is also an exhibit about the segregated school system in the county, including information about the Drayden African American Schoolhouse, which is open by appointment and on the first Saturday of the month, April through October (11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.).

THIS EVENT IS FREE; donations accepted. Staff will be on hand to answer any questions.

Occurs every Wednesday and Saturday in February 2024 (10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.)

## Sat, Feb 10

### Black History Month Open House—Drayden African American Schoolhouse

18287 Cherryfield Rd., Drayden  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In honor of Black History Month, visit one of the nation's best-preserved, one-room African American schoolhouses every Saturday of February from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Check out the restored schoolhouse and learn about its rich history and importance to education in St. Mary's County. Staff will be available at the school during this time to answer any questions and provide information.

This is a FREE EVENT co-hosted by Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) and the St. Mary's County Museum Division.

### Military and Veterans Support Group

21797 North Coral Dr., Lexington Park  
Every other Saturday at 9 a.m.

We support our military and veterans through the PTSD/Suicide Prevention Group of Southern Maryland meeting at The Flashback restaurant.

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# ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**St. Mary's County Library Presidents Day Closing**

All three locations of the St. Mary's County Library will be closed on Monday, February 19 in observance of Presidents Day. All locations will be open regular business hours on Tuesday, February 20.

**Soul of Langston: Black History Month Performance**

Daron P. Stewart reveals the bitter-sweet wit and wisdom of Langston's poetry; the tragedies and triumphs that constructed his life; and the worldwide impact of his literary accomplishments in a performance at Lexington Park Library on

Saturday, February 3 from 2 - 3 p.m. Langston Hughes went from busboy and poet to becoming "Harlem's Wonder" helping establish the Civil Rights movement through the Harlem Renaissance. He is among the most eloquent American poets to have sung about the wounds caused by social and political injustice. Though he never sought to be all things to all people, he managed to create a body of work that epitomized the beauty and variety of the Black American experiences, as well as the diversity of emotions, thought, and dreams that he saw common to all human beings. The St. Mary's County branch NAACP #7025 and the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) are

partnering with the St. Mary's County Library to make this program possible and they will provide light refreshments.

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

**The Holocaust as Portrayed in Pop Culture**

Paul Rose, a Research Historian at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, will share how books, films, comics, and television have portrayed the Holocaust over the years in a virtual presentation on Wednesday, February 7 from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Register to receive the link on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org). Starting with media created during World War 2, to media made today, learn how pop culture's view of the Holocaust and how it is discussed has changed throughout his-

tory. After the presentation, there will be a short time for Q&A.

**Black History Month Book Discussion**

In honor of Black History Month, join us and Professor Garrey Dennie of St. Mary's College of Maryland to discuss the true story of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot at Leonardtown Library on Thursday, February 8 from 6- 7:30 p.m. This biography focuses both on the science and medical information gained from Lacks and also the ethical issues of race and class in both medical research and Lacks' own life. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

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# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Feb 1

### Sea Squirts

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

This month's theme is Chesapeake 1, 2, 3. Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 – 40 minutes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Included with museum admission.

## Fri, Feb 2

### 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 creativ-

ity. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### First Fossil Friday!

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

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

## Thu, Feb 8

### Sea Squirts

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

This month's theme is Chesapeake 1, 2, 3. Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 – 40 min-

utes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Included with museum admission.

## Upcoming

### New Program: Creature Feature

Calvert Marine Museum  
Tuesday, Feb. 13  
10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

Come to the museum for the Monthly Mystery Creature Feature. Every second Tuesday of the month, the CMM Education Team will feature an animal in the museum lobby that is not normally on display. Learn about a new animal and discover the wonderful variety of the creatures found in our local estuaries. Take-home educational coloring pages will be available! Check our social media feed for the big reveal on Monday to find out what Tuesday's Creature Feature will be! Included with museum admission.

### Great Backyard Bird Count

Calvert Marine Museum

Friday Feb. 16 & Saturday Feb. 17  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Participate in a Citizen Science activity that provides data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Check out a pair of binoculars and a bird count tally sheet in the museum lobby to assist us with this program on your own or on a guided walk with museum educators. For adults and children in third grade or older who are interested in assisting with research. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Included with museum admission.

### Universal Coprolite Day

Calvert Marine Museum  
10 a.m-3 p.m

Join us for the third annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as coprolites. Stations featuring fossilized feces and the stories they tell will be dispersed through our galleries. The event will also feature coprolites in the making...modern feces, some with a twist and a new Scats and Tracks activity. Included with museum admission.

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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

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## Legal Notice

### TOWN OF CHESAPEAKE BEACH PUBLIC NOTICE

The Mayor and Town Council will hold a public hearing on the following ordinances and Charter Amendment Resolution at the Town Council meeting on February 15, 2024 beginning at 6:50 pm.

Charter Amendment Resolution CAR-24-1, a resolution of the Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, amending the Charter of the Town of Chesapeake Beach to provide for the clarification of a referendum of an ordinance.

Ordinance O-24-1, an ordinance of the Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, amending the annual budget for the General Fund of the Town of Chesapeake Beach for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 to reconcile expenses and ratify over expenditures.

Ordinance O-24-2, an ordinance of the Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, amending the annual budget for the Water Reclamation Treatment Plant of the Town of Chesapeake Beach for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 to reconcile expenses and ratify over expenditures.

Ordinance O-24-3, an ordinance of the Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, amending the annual budget for the Utility Fund of the Town of Chesapeake Beach for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 to reconcile expenses and ratify over expenditures.

Ordinance O-24-4, an ordinance of the Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, amending the annual budget for the Water Park Fund of the Town of Chesapeake Beach for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 to reconcile expenses and ratify over expenditures.

The complete Ordinances and Charter Amendment Resolution may be viewed upon request to [shumm@chesapeakebeachmd.gov](mailto:shumm@chesapeakebeachmd.gov) Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## What's Coming to Calvert

The following list of pending Category 1 site plans was presented to the Calvert County Planning Commission at their Jan. 17 meeting. That means that the proposals are on the list for consideration by the planning commission at a future meeting. The meeting was in a hybrid form, both virtually and in person at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center (HEBCC), 901 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick.

1) CSPR-142807, **655 STR Gymnastics & Dance**, located at 655 Skinners Turn Road, Owings, on multiple lots totaling 1.9 acres, zoned light industrial (I-1), using private water and sewer. Proposed 10,800-square-foot building for holding classes in gymnastics (7,400 sf) and dance (3,400 sf). The submitted plan indicates a possible address change due to dual road frontage. The concept submittal was accepted March 23, 2022. Agent: Wilkerson & Associates

2) CSPR-142988, **St. Leonard Volunteer Fire Department**, located on Calvert Beach Road, St. Leonard, on a 5.076-acre parcel, zoned Town Center/Village District Subarea B. This project will have public water but will utilize a private septic system. Proposed 4.1 acres of disturbance for demolition of the existing pavilion and construction of a two-story, 40,280-sf fire & rescue service building with eight double loaded apparatus bays. The concept submittal was accepted June 28, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

3) CSPR-142842, **Sunset Terrace Condominiums, Mixed Use**, located at 14474 & 14478 South Solomons Island Road, Solomons, on two lots totaling .42 acres, zoned Solomons Town Center. Proposed 19,191-sf, three-story building for mixed use: 1,000-sf commercial retail space and 18,191 sf for eight condominiums with parking and site improvements. This project is on public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted July 27, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett

4) CSPR-142881, **Prince Frederick Town Center South, Shopping Plaza**, located on South Solomons Island Road, Prince Frederick, on 115-acre parcel, zoned Town Center/Forest District. This project will have private water but will utilize public sewer. Proposed 75,099 sf of disturbance for commercial retail space with parking and site improvements. The concept submittal was accepted September 28, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett

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

6) CSPR-143112, **Mulford Building**, Lot 3R CCIP, located at 171 Skipjack Road, Prince Frederick, Lot 3R in the Calvert County Industrial Park, zoned light industrial (I-1).



Mulford Industrial proposes to redevelop a portion of the 4.5-acre lot by demolishing the existing office at the northern entrance to the property and constructing a new two-story office building in its place. They further plan to repave the southern portion of the site and to construct a storage warehouse and wall to segregate parking between the storage building yard & adjacent flex space tenants. A total of 6,524 sf of new construction with a total disturbance of 1.2-acres is proposed and the amenities will utilize public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted December 20, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett.

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

1) SD-142770, **Lusby Villas**, Lot 1, located on Lusby Parkway in Lusby. One commercial lot proposed on one parcel consisting of 24.87 acres, Zoned Lusby Town Center, Village Residential Office District, Tier I. The Preliminary Plan submittal was accepted January 26, 2022. Agent: COA Barrett

2) SD-142999, **Magnolia Ridge**, located on Fox Run Boulevard, Prince Frederick, on a 31.29-acre parcel, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District and will be served by public water & sewer. Proposed 164 townhouse units and 96 apartments with a density of 8.3 units per acre. The project proposes 3.04 acres of recreation area and 12.58 acres of open space. The Preliminary Plan submittal was accepted August 23, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

3) SD-142999, **Magnolia Ridge West**, located at Armory Road and Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, with frontage and access from Dares Beach Road & Armory Road. The project is proposed on multiple parcels totaling 26.30 acres, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District. The subdivision proposes 79 townhome TDR lots on 4.58 acres total with a density of three units per acre. This project will be served by public water and sewer. A total of 19.47 acres of total open space is provided, including 3.81 acres of proposed recreation area. The preliminary submittal was accepted September 27, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett

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



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# School Employee Sentenced for Child Porn

U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang on Jan. 26 sentenced Tyler Edward Perkins, 30, of Huntingtown to seven years in federal prison, followed by 10 years of supervised release, for possession of child pornography. The statement of facts also established that Perkins distributed child sexual abuse material to others and Judge Chuang took that into account in imposing today's sentence. Judge Chuang also ordered that Perkins must pay restitution of \$12,000 and upon his release from prison, Perkins will be required to register as a sex offender in the places where he resides, where he is an employee, and where he is a student, under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA).

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron; Special Agent in Charge James C. Harris of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Baltimore; Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr., Superintendent of the Maryland State Police; and Calvert County State's Attorney Robert Harvey.

According to his guilty plea agreement, Perkins was an instructional assistant at a school for children requiring special

education services. On June 1, 2022, law enforcement executed a search warrant at Perkins's residence after the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received CyberTips from the instant messaging platform Kik, that accounts associated with usernames, which investigation determined were controlled by Perkins, had uploaded files containing child pornography to Kik. Kik also determined that many of the uploaded files were distributed to other users in private chats.

Law enforcement investigating the CyberTips were able to identify Perkins's residence as being associated with the distribution of child pornography. During the search of his residence, law enforcement seized several electronic devices. A digital forensic examination of the devices revealed that they contained at least 600 images of child sexual abuse material, including videos, documenting the sexual abuse of minors, including prepubescent minors. Further, some of the material portrayed sadistic or masochistic conduct. The investigation did not reveal any evidence of Perkins committing any sexual assault or having illegal contact with any child.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc). For more information about Internet safety education, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc) and click on the "Resources" tab on the left of the page.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron commended HSI, the Maryland State Police Computer Crimes Unit and Maryland State Apprehension Team, and the Calvert County State's Attorney's Office for their work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher M. Sarma and Timothy F. Hagan, who prosecuted the federal case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and



Tyler Perkins

resources available to help the community, please visit [www.justice.gov/usao-md/project-safe-childhood](http://www.justice.gov/usao-md/project-safe-childhood) and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

*Press Release from U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Maryland*

## CALVERT COUNTY CRIME BLOTTER

During the week of January 15 – January 21, 2024, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 1,758 calls for service throughout the community.

**Theft:** 24-4214 On January 17, 2024, Senior Deputy Mohler responded to a residence in the 100 block of Dares Wharf Road in Prince Frederick, for a reported theft. Investigation revealed an unknown suspect described as a slender white male with a thin mustache and goatee, wearing a hoodie or hooded jacket, approached the front of the residence. The suspect, carrying a collapsible cloth bag, proceeded to steal a stack of copper wire from the driveway. Surveillance footage captured the suspect walking away from the residence with the cloth bag filled with the stolen copper wire. The estimated value of stolen property is \$325.00.

### ARRESTS



On January 15, 2024, Deputy Hudson initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle with no registration plates in the area of Bayside Road and Gordon Stinnett Avenue in Chesapeake Beach. Contact was made with the driver, **Ashley Marie Howes**, 37 of Chesapeake Beach, who advised she did not have a valid driver's license and stated the vehicle was not registered. A search of the vehicle revealed a stolen Virginia registration plate in the trunk. Howes was transported to the Calvert County

Detention Center and charged on traffic charges and with Rouge and Vagabond and Theft: Less than \$100.

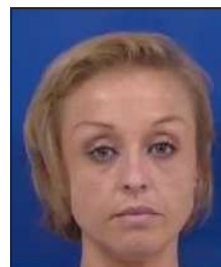


On January 16, 2024, at 9:19 p.m., Deputy Sylver responded to the 100 block of Llewelyn Lane in Huntingtown, for a reported burglary. Upon arrival, contact was made with the complainant who advised an unknown male had attempted to gain unauthorized access to both the front and rear entrances of his residence. Video surveillance shows the suspect, **Mark Emery Cress, Jr.**, 40 of Huntingtown, loitering around the home and manipulating the rear door handle in an effort to gain entry. During a search of Cress's person, a large knife was found on his person. Cress was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with Fourth Degree Burglary.



On January 19, 2023, DFC Shoemaker initiated a traffic stop in the area of Rousby Hall Road and NB Rt. 4 in Lusby, on a vehicle traveling in the wrong travel lane. Contact was made with the driver, **Toni Louise Davis**, 64 of White Hall, who

consented to a search of the vehicle. The vehicle search revealed a cut red straw with a white powdery residue and a Marlboro box with a tied plastic bag containing white powder. Davis confirmed the substance was cocaine. Davis was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where she was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis and CDS: Possession of Controlled Paraphernalia.



On January 21, 2024, DFC Shoemaker initiated an investigative traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of Solomons Landing Way in Solomons, for suspicious activity. Further investigation revealed DFC Hendrickson and his partner K9 Atlas conducted a K9 sniff of the vehicle resulting in a positive alert. A search of the vehicle was conducted and revealed two plastic push rods, two glass crack pipes, one with burnt edges and a white powdery residue, and a container containing a white rock-like substance (crack cocaine). The driver, **Chelsea Lee Hoofnagle**, 38 of Lusby, and passenger, **Daniel Joseph Leaman**, 40 of Lusby, were both transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where they were both

charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.



On January 18, 2024, Deputy Brown responded to the 3200 block of Ben Oak Drive in Huntingtown, for a reported suspicious vehicle. Upon arrival, a vehicle was observed idling with its lights on. Upon making contact with the driver, **Robert William Twigg**, 50 of Dunkirk, drug paraphernalia was observed in plain view. DFC Hendrickson and his partner K9 Atlas conducted a K9 sniff of the vehicle resulting in a positive alert. A search of the vehicle revealed a plastic bag containing a powdery substance (suspected methamphetamine), two Suboxone pills, and other prescription pills wrapped in tinfoil. Twigg was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.

*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)*

# Police Accountability 'Working Very Well'

## Annual Report Given to Commissioners

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The legislature-mandated police accountability process, which began with a lot of angst from police agencies, appears to be going smoothly, at least in Calvert County.

During the annual report to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners from the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC), PAB Chair Wilson Parran said, "We're all working towards improvements. And in Calvert County, we only have one local law enforcement agency. That's the sheriff's (office). We continue to meet with them to work with them to make sure that we build trust between us and the sheriff's office."

Parran added, "I spoke recently with the sheriff about the PAB, and he's very happy with the process. It's been working very well. We work together. We both have the same goal. We both serve the public."

Complaints either go directly to the sheriff or to the PAB. After the sheriff reviews them and makes a determination, the findings go to the ACC for final determination on appropriate action.

During the presentation, Commissioner Mike Hart observed, "Sometimes that offi-



## POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Calvert County, Maryland

cer's just doing everything they can to try to control the situation." He asked, "Are you finding that when it goes either way that it's really obvious or has there been a lot of where it's almost very gray to try to figure out who was right and who was wrong? Because it's hard to reconstruct the event?"

Parran responded, "Actually, what I'm finding is that we have very good officers in Calvert County. I also find that they have policies in place, and they follow those policies. It's that gray area, maybe that's when there's a policy in place and the policy is not followed, but that clarifies it. What's been very helpful, though, is) the use of body cam footage. In a lot of these cases, I don't think... we could have made a decision without looking at that body cam footage, because what we're looking for is, you have

a policy in place; are you're following your policy, or you're going out there and doing something on your own."

He added, "Is the policy that you have in place consistent with the state regulation?"

In 2023 there were 29 complaints filed, down from 41 the previous year. Of those, 23 were reviewed by the ACC and six were not eligible. Four cases resulted in administrative charges, and the ACC agreed with the sheriff's findings in all of the cases, according to ACC Chair Scott Deacon.

Parran listed some of the recommendations that have emerged during the PAB process:

**Speeding:** CCSO: Policy 1-820, Part D. During case review the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) found that the CCSO Policy with respect to a Priority 2 response, and how the ACC sees that policy

being implemented, is not consistent with Transportation Art., §21-201, or the exceptions found at Transportation Art., §21-106. Recommendation: The CCSO policy and the procedures that implement that policy should be reviewed and revised as necessary to comply with state law and exceptions to speed limits.

**Strip Searches** CCSO: Policy 10-501, The policy needs to be more definitive with respect to who approves strip searches; who can conduct strip searches; and where can strip searches be conducted. Recommendation: Review and clarification of the CCSO Strip Search Policy 10-501 and revise as appropriate.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** Recommendation: While officers have access to information that would fall under HIPAA regulations, a policy and training are needed to clarify how this information and related situations are managed, with emphasis on privacy.

**The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA)** Recommendation: PAB recommends the CCSO acquire CALEA accreditation.

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## County Explains Enforcement Action

Since we have received numerous inquiries from residents regarding the operation of MMG Sports Performance Center (7630 Meadow Run Lane, Owings), we would like to proactively provide information to clarify recent enforcement actions taken by the county.

On Jan. 21, 2024, the county responded to a call about events taking place at the facility. Because the building is not approved for occupancy, the building was closed and vacated. On Jan. 22, a Stop Work Order/Cease and Desist was placed on both buildings for unpermitted use. This action was taken in the sole interest of the health, safety and welfare of the public, especially children.

The buildings in question are permitted as "Flex Space," which is mixed use of retail, warehouse and office. They are not approved for indoor recreation, which has different zoning use, Fire Marshal, Environmental Health and building code requirements. To date, there has been no application submitted to request permitting for indoor recreation.

Furthermore, the buildings have not been approved for use and occupancy. The buildings are currently only have permits issued for the shell and cannot be occupied until all tenant fit outs have been permitted, approved, inspected and granted Certificates of Occupancy. To date, the county has not received any applications for tenant fit outs. Inspections have not been requested for the building, interior electrical or plumbing.

Fair enforcement of permitting, inspec-

tions and zoning regulations is important to protect public safety by ensuring that buildings, structures and activities comply with laws, codes and regulations in order to prevent accidents, fires and other hazards that could endanger patrons and staff.

It is deeply unfortunate that this situation has impacted numerous organizations and individuals who have already paid to have use of this space. County staff has informed the owner, verbally and in writing, on multiple occasions since 2020 that the proposed use was not allowed without permits and approvals. Staff has made multiple attempts to work with the property owner to bring the buildings into compliance and meet the requirements that would allow for indoor recreational use. Unfortunately, we are unable to estimate when the facility may be allowed to open. Customers are urged to contact the owner regarding any business transactions that have already taken place.

Local business is essential to the community and is the backbone to a healthy economy. We believe that responsible business practices can lead to mutual prosperity and community well-being. However, we will always act in accordance with our authority when alerted to actions that risk harm to the physical and financial well-being of Calvert County residents.

*Statement from Calvert County government*

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# Proposed Capital Budget Has New Public Safety Facility

## Hance Questions Architect Fees

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

A new public safety facility in a building just purchased by the county is included in the proposed six-year Public Safety Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) presented to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on Jan. 30. Budget for the project is preliminarily listed as \$6.5 million, including \$1.5 million for architect's fees in the next fiscal year (2025).

The CIP also includes completion of both the new St. Leonard and Solomons firehouses. Solomons is budgeted to cost \$23 million and St. Leonard \$21 million. St. Leonard is anticipated to be completed in FY 26 and Solomons in FY 28.

Of the monies budgeted in the next fiscal year for the public safety facility, Director of Public Works J.R. Cosgrove said, "The one-and-a-half-million dollars that is in there for FY 25 for the new public safety facility is to cover A and E (architectural and engineering) design costs in order to relocate the 911 center, emergency management and most of public safety into their new facility at 110 Main Street. We've talked to a few architects, especially the ones that are in the

field of designing public safety facilities, to get a rough idea of what the design costs would be, to evaluate the existing structure and what would be needed to move, especially the 911 center into that facility. And estimates they were giving us of where they've done elsewhere in the past few years is around a million and a million half on design, give or take. And then of course construction follows that. So, in FY 26 you see some dollars. That's kind of a placeholder until we get a rough design to figure out exactly what the cost would be."

Commissioner President Buddy Hance questioned the architect's price tag. He asked, "How much would it cost us to hire our own architect?"

"Not one-and-a-half million a year," Cosgrove admitted.

Hance said, "Look, I'm not kidding, because if you add up what we spent in my five years in design, we could have hired three architects and probably would've done a better job."

"I don't know what we paid to design the Prince Frederick firehouse," Hance observed. "It had to be over a million dollars and there was a steel beam running right through the middle of the stairwell."

Then Hance added, "We should look at what it would cost because every year we're building something and we're spending a million dollars and then they screw it up. I'm sorry, every building I've seen that we built has been screwed up by the architects. I'm just being honest."

Capital Projects Analyst Veronica Atkinson, reported on the overall Public Safety CIP, "The Department of Finance & Budget reviewed the Department of Public Safety's FY 2025 - FY 2030 six-year CIP Staff Recommended Budget, amounting to \$81,710,720. The Department of Public Safety covers various components such as the Detention Center, Career EMS, Fire Rescue and Emergency Medical Services requests."

For the next fiscal year, the proposal is:

- Detention Center (Facility Repairs/Upgrades) \$0
- Career EMS (Apparatus) \$1,633,000
- Emergency Communications \$1,513,324
- Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical (Apparatus) \$1,940,000
- Fire, Rescue & Public Safety (New Facilities) \$12,500,000

The presentation was the second of six department capital project budgets to be



Commissioner President Buddy Hance

presented to the commissioners to review before a final budget decision. The commissioners made no decisions.

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

# Superintendent's Budget Filled with Uncertainty

## Projected State Cuts Loom Large

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Calvert County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Andraé Townsel released on Jan. 25 a proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget that is fraught with uncertainty. The proposed \$277.1 million operating budget is \$10.45 million more than the current approved budget but contains only a marginal increase request from the county, which ponied up a \$13 million increase this year.

The major uncertainties include a proposed \$22.5 million cut in state aid in Governor Wes Moore's budget that is not even included in Townsel's budget. And his budget only includes a placeholder increase in salaries since that is still being negotiated with the school system's unions.

At the Jan. 25 school board meeting at which the budget was unveiled, Townsel said, "Everyone's saying, how's there a budget and there's no contract in place. We are in negotiation. So, the information is subject to increase once we get these negotiations approved or agreed with both parties."

Townsel said he just found out about the proposed state cuts the previous Friday and it's his understanding they were based on the county's wealth and tax revenue the county

receives from the Cove Point LNG facility and the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant.

"Calvert County appears to be more wealthy. The wealthier your county is, the less money the state gives you," he said. But the commissioners say there appears to be a mistake in the state's calculation so they are pressing state officials to make changes in the budget.

"To my knowledge there's some errors there where that money did not exist. So, we're working collaboratively with our county commissioners, our county executive, and our Board of Education to ensure that the numbers are correct, that we go after that \$22 million that we're projected to not receive," Townsel said.

During the budget presentation, Townsel said of the school system's priorities, "Foremost is to always provide a safe environment for our students and staff, and to maximize education opportunity for students. Additionally, attracting and retaining high quality instructional, administrative and support staff. And we must fulfill local, state, and federal requirements."

He added, "We must honor our current collective bargaining agreements and provide excellent fiscal stewardship for all of our taxpayers."

The teachers in recent weeks have expressed dissatisfaction with the negotiations. Calvert Education Association President Dona Ostenso said, "Do you see the sea of red (t-shirts in the audience)? It represents the heart of your school system and just like the heart is the most important muscle in the human body, your educators are the most important resource within Calvert County Public Schools. Your budget must show love and respect to your current employees who have chosen Calvert as the place to work and call home. It must include a step and COLA [increase] and in order to provide this, it cannot be at the cost of increasing class size, extending the workday, raising healthcare costs, or hiring less support staff. No one ever asks teachers what they need or what their budget priority is. So, I hope that you will read each one of the many postcards you receive this month. By ignoring teachers' voices is partially how we have gotten here. All children deserve teachers that are fully invested, not so overwhelmed or underappreciated, that they understandably have one foot out the door."

The complete budget document had not yet been posted on the school system's website as of Jan. 31. The lack of a complete budget drew concern from several of the



Superintendent of Schools Dr. Andraé Townsel

school board members.

Once they receive the full document, the school board will go over it and develop their own budget by March 14.

The public is invited to comment as well on the website.

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# A Growing CSM Makes Its Annual Report

## New President Concludes Her First Year

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

“The state of the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is stronger and better than ever,” said President Dr. Yolanda Wilson, “and we remain steadfast in our commitment to partner with all of you to ensure that we have a strong workforce pipeline in our Southern Maryland region and that every one of our students has an opportunity to support themselves and their families.” Wilson’s comments came at the end of CSM’s annual report to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at their Jan. 30 meeting. Wilson is ending her first year at the helm of CSM.

Wilson said the college is focusing on a strategic plan “which gives us an even greater opportunity to work with our respective partners focused on student success and workforce development. And we’re going to be focusing on three core pillars, and that’s access, momentum, and mobility.

“Access is looking at the students that we desire to serve who have not yet come to our institution or students who have stopped out and we want to return, or looking at the shifting demographics and wanting to make sure that we have opportunities for all students who come to the Southern Maryland region.

“Momentum is looking at once those students come through our doors, how do we keep them? That’s retention. How do we make sure those students get a certificate, a degree, receive the courses they need to transfer to up school, upskill or retool or retrain? That’s what we’re looking at when we look at momentum.

“And when we consider mobility, it’s all with the goal of making sure that we offer programs that can improve the living wages of our student population, that we are offering services that allow them to be able to support

themselves and their families with the goal of them living, training and remaining right here in the Southern Maryland region.”

Wilson said for the first time in years enrollment is up at CSM.

The college is opposing two bills filed by Charles County State Senator Arthur Ellis that would increase only Charles County’s membership on the board of trustees and would make it more difficult to transfer monies for one campus to another for the benefit of all of their students. The BOCC last week voted to join CSM in that opposition.

Wilson talked about the benefits of a regional collaboration and “the wonderful fortune that I have of working with a nine-member board that has equal representation among all three counties. A concept that was developed, this regional approach two dozen years ago. So, we’re really grateful for our predecessors for having that vision. And we’re positioned today better than ever to serve our 14,329 credit and non-credit students. And our goal is always to do that fairly, efficiently, strategically, and most of all, equitably according to their needs, regardless of their campus location or their county.”

She added, “Students are more fluid than ever. They want online, they want hybrid, they want high flexibility. And so, we have students who live in one county and take courses in other counties, and that’s quite common; 45 percent in fact of CSM students attend two or more locations, almost half, and another 32 percent take online classes. We have 11 online programs of study, and we have 26,000 enrollments just in online courses alone.”

Wilson explained, “This growth of our online footprint has been possible due to the ability to assign resources and costs to a virtual campus that is tied to all three counties.” She also noted the opening of the Hughesville campus and its health sciences program.

The CSM president touted the beginning of the high school college program available in all four Calvert high schools. She said, “We are the workforce pipeline here in southern Maryland. We are honored to be the workforce pipeline and we know that we are able to do that because of the amazing students like Ava Wilson,” a Calvert high school student whom she introduced to the commissioners. The 17-year-old student plans on attending Towson University. She said thanks to the program she will be able to attend with a year of college courses under her belt.

“Early college gives me opportunities that I would never have been able to have in high school, like making my own schedule and fitting around classes that work best for my learning style. Early college allows me to work more on my time and learn the way that I feel that benefits me best,” she said.

Commissioner Catherine Grasso said she has two grandsons in similar programs. “It’s a wonderful program and I’m so glad we have it in Calvert.”

Dr. Wilson said, “We’re so honored to have it in Calvert and looking forward to growing it even more in Calvert. We have students like Ava and your family that are testament.”

Grasso said, “That program works; it helps position our students for success and you can save a lot of money at the same time.”

Dr. Wilson praised the commissioners for providing scholarships for county students to attend CSM. She said, “Those scholarships launched in all three of our counties during Covid and supported 1,798 students and continuing their education. This included \$225,000 in Calvert commissioner scholarships, which supported 450 Calvert students during Covid. More than a third of all of these students are now graduated.”

The CSM president said, “I’m pleased to also share that CSM and Charles County



CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson

government joined to begin a new bus route that transport students to the front doors of CSM Center for Trades and Energy Training and the Center for Health Sciences at the college’s regional Hughesville campus.”

She also pointed out the opening of a new cyber lab at the Prince Frederick campus and expansion of the one at the Leonardtown campus.

“So, we have a cybersecurity program that’s designated by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency as a center of academic excellence in cyber defense for two-year programs. That is a very unique designation and we’re proud to have it,” she added.

Commissioner President Buddy Hance said at the end of the presentation, “I brag to everyone how wonderful of a community college system we have here in Southern Maryland.”

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# Calvert Delegates File Ethics Bill

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Calvert County Delegates Mark Fisher and Todd Morgan have filed a bill aimed at avoiding the legal wrangling that occurred when former commissioner Kelly McConkey voted to put two properties he owns into the Huntingtown Town Center.

Although the Calvert County Ethics Commission ruled that McConkey had a conflict of interest in the vote, the Maryland Supreme Court denied a suit brought by Calvert Citizens United to overturn the vote on the county’s comprehensive plan that followed the town center vote, because of existing state law.

The bill that was filed on Jan. 29 and received the number HB 834 on Jan. 31. It was referred to the House Education and Transportation Committee.

The bill says in its preamble “Requiring that the conflict of interest provisions enacted by Calvert County include certain

provisions relating to judicial relief for certain violations of the county’s conflict of interest provisions; and requiring Calvert County to enact a law or regulation to require removal of a county elected official from office for violations of certain conflict of interest provisions.”

In addition to removal from office, the bill would also provide that an official deemed to have a conflict of interest to be fined \$5,000 per day as long as the conflict exists.

Fisher, whose staff worked with the Department of Legislative Reference to draft the legislation, told the county commissioners at a joint legislative meeting last year that he intended to introduce the bill at the request of Calvert Citizens United.

The commissioners did not take a vote at that meeting on whether they would support the bill or not. County Attorney John Norris, who briefs the commissioners every week on the status of bills, has not reported to them on HB 834.

Fisher said at that work session with the

commissioners in November, “Obviously that’s (McConkey’s) a pretty clear violation of the ethics code. The question is why couldn’t more have been done? And it was no one’s fault.”

He added, “Probably in a perfect world, what should have happened is the individual, under law, if we had this in place, would’ve been required... to recuse himself after being called out as a result of voting their property into the town center.”

Myra Gowans of Calvert Citizens United, said at the legislative meeting the existing state legislation goes back to two court cases in which elected officials were allowed to vote on zoning cases even though they had conflicts of interest.

She said of the Maryland Supreme Court, “unfortunately, seven justices actually say in a 27-page opinion, we cannot do anything about this. We cannot eliminate state law. That’s for the legislators, and they have to do that.”

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Del. Mark Fisher

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COMMISSIONER PRESIDENT BUDDY HANCE ON HIGH FEES



**LOCAL 3**  
Calvert delegates file ethics bill



**LOCAL 5**  
Police Accountability Board makes annual report



**ON THE COVER**  
CSM reports growth under new president

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<p><b>THU, FEB 1</b></p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 52° Lo: 39°</p>	<p><b>FRI, FEB 2</b></p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 32°</p>	<p><b>SAT, FEB 3</b></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 45° Lo: 32°</p>	<p><b>SUN, FEB 4</b></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 51° Lo: 32°</p>
<p><b>MON, FEB 5</b></p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 32°</p>	<p><b>TUE, FEB 6</b></p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 43° Lo: 32°</p>	<p><b>WED, FEB 7</b></p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 46° Lo: 32°</p>	<p><b>THU, FEB 8</b></p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 50° Lo: 36°</p>

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**Calvert Delegates  
File Ethics Bill**

**School Budget  
Looks Uncertain**

**Public Safety  
Facility Planned**

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