



In 1776, history was made when Marylanders repelled the British Army on St. George's Island. Relive history at this special semiquincentennial event.



Saturday, April 6th • Piney Point Lighthouse

St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

WWW.COUNTYTIMES.NET

Shoppers Grocery Stores Set to Close

Push for Lexington Park YMCA Continues

Shots Fired at California Restaurant

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“WE HAVE OVER 1,000 REGISTRANTS RIGHT NOW.”

RUN FOR HOSPICE ORGANIZER JIM DICUS ON THE APR. 6 EVENT



LOCAL 6
Seniors updated on YMCA progress



LOCAL 7
Run for Hospice this weekend in Leonardtown



ON THE COVER 8
Social Coffeehouse finds new home after two years of renovations

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, APR 4	FRI, APR 5	SAT, APR 6	SUN, APR 7
 PM Showers Hi: 57° Lo: 38°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 55° Lo: 36°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 37°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 58° Lo: 40°
MON, APR 8	TUE, APR 9	WED, APR 10	THU, APR 11
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 60° Lo: 47°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 69° Lo: 49°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 65° Lo: 53°	 Showers Hi: 68° Lo: 56°



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New Traffic Signal Planned for Clements

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Numerous occurrences of speeding and traffic crashes have brought complaints about the intersection at Route 5 and Route 242 in Clements but the county could see some relief there.

According to an announcement from the district engineer for the State Highway Administration (SHA), the state now plans a traffic signal for the intersection, which serves nearby Chopticon High School as well as several residential neighborhoods.

"The results of a traffic signal warrant evaluation for the intersection determined that traffic signal control is justified at this time," the notice from SHA states. "In addition to the traffic signal, actuated cantilever hazard identification beacons will also be considered on [Route] 5 approaches, before the intersection to alert motorists approaching the intersection to prepare to stop.

The notice said that the construction of the new signal could take between 18 months to two years.

There are also signage improvements planned as well.

"The signing improvements will involve replacing the existing stop signs with larger ones and adding 'Cross Traffic Does Not Stop' panels underneath the proposed stop signs," the notice states. "A recent three-year crash was reviewed history was reviewed and considered.

"The intersection sight distance for motorists on the Morganza Turner Road looking north was found to be inadequate."

The notice stated that those signage improvements would be completed in approximately 60 days if the weather permitted.

The state's survey of the intersection's traffic also showed that speeding was a constant problem there.

"The speed at which 85 percent of the motorists drive when unaffected by weather or other roadway conditions [was found] to be 48 miles-per-hour and 45 miles-per-hour for northbound and southbound directions respectively" the notice stated.

The posted speed limit is only 30 miles-per-hour.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Shoppers Grocery Stores Closing

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

All three Shoppers Food Warehouse grocery stores in St. Mary's County will soon be closing, The County Times has learned.

The major grocery store brand has stores in Leonardtown, California, and Charlotte Hall.

The Shoppers stores had been open for only about two years since taking over the store space left by the McKay's Food Stores which had also gone out of business after more than 50 years in the community.

Officials with the company stated that in the two years since reopening in St. Mary's a lack of profitability was the main reason to close the three stores.

In local on-line forums, posters commented that the stores had long suffered from a lack of sufficient clientele while not offering significantly better prices on food and other items.

The closure of the store in Leonardtown means the community there will be down to one large grocery store, a Food Lion in an adjacent shopping center.

"We never like to see an empty building,"



said Town Administrator Laschelle McKay. "It's always hard to see a business going out.

"But hopefully they'll be able to find something to fill that space."

guyleonard@countytimes.net



SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2024
Piney Point Lighthouse • 10 am - 5 pm

Join us at this special event honoring the Battle of St. George's Island, a highlight of Southern Maryland's history, when local soldiers turned back a fleet of British war ships attempting to land. **Rebels & Redcoats: A Southern Maryland Revolutionary War Family Event** is the kickoff as we build to America's Semiquincentennial, the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation, of Maryland and of Southern Maryland.



This event/program is part of the Southern Maryland 250th Semiquincentennial, Maryland 250th, and America 250th celebrations, commemorating Southern Maryland's contributions to our nation's founding.

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This semiquincentennial event is made possible by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area.





Campaign for Local YMCA Continues

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A top official with the YMCA of the Chesapeake, the non-profit group working with the county to establish a new facility in Lexington Park, told a senior citizen advisory group that they have raised \$1.5 million locally towards building the 60,000 square foot facility.

Tony Sigmon, chief development officer, with the YMCA of the Chesapeake said at a March 25 meeting that the local committee of those seeking donations must still raise another \$2.5 million before they are able to break ground next to the county-owned public pool and Great Mills High School.

"We are working on a campaign of raising \$5 million to \$7 million," Sigmon said. "We hope \$2 million of that \$7 million will come from the federal government."

If the organization can raise approximately \$4 million, Sigmon said, they could break ground after the summer.

"Our goal is that we will break ground this fall," Sigmon said. "This is going to be a 15-to-18-month project."

Sigmon said they have already received \$850,000 in federal funding through the efforts of U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md-5th) and U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin.

The overall cost of the project is anticipated to be \$22 million — \$15 million of that has already been allocated by the county government.

"We anticipate serving a little over 10,000



folks here in St. Mary's," Sigmon said. "We're super excited to come down here and work with the folks in St. Mary's County."

When the non-profit built a YMCA in Chestertown in Kent County, Sigmon said, it had a transformative effect on the community there, bringing together racial, socioeconomic and age demographics who rarely associated.

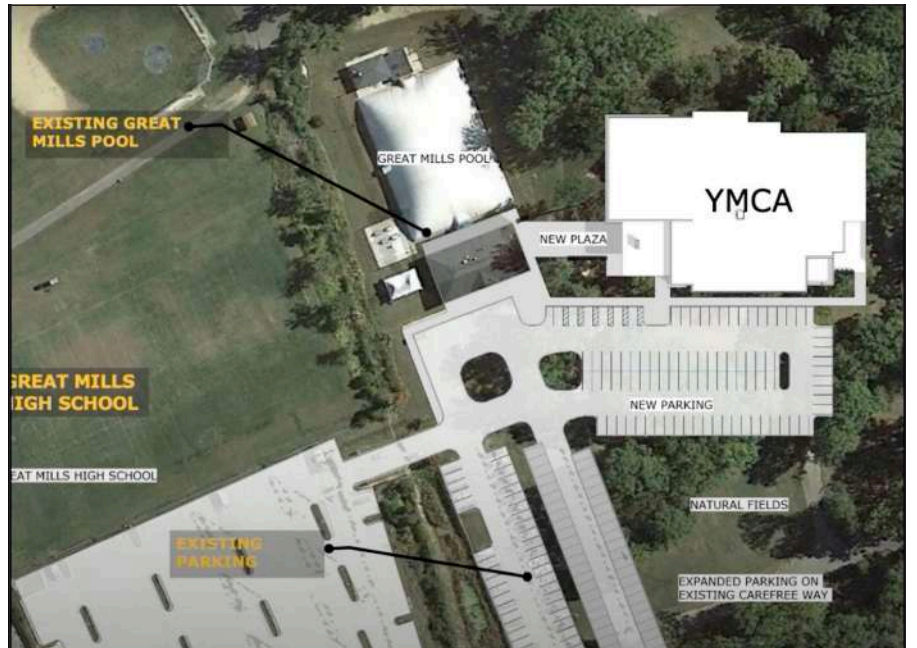
"It's the most diverse place in the county," Sigmon said. "One-third of the folks are members of the YMCA there."

"That's what we're hoping to change, to have a place for people to gather."

There will be numerous programs planned for the YMCA, Sigmon said, including sports and fitness for all age groups.

"We're going to reengage the 5th grade swimming lessons for all of the kids in St. Mary's County," Sigmon said. "We give every 6th grader a membership at the YMCA."

guyleonard@countytimes.net



MEDICATION

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DAY



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Sheriff's Office Investigating Shooting at Local Restaurant

On April 2 at approximately 11:11 p.m., deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to the Applebee's Restaurant on Miramar Way, California for the report of a shooting.

Detectives and Crime Lab personnel from the Criminal Investigations Division assumed the investigation and determined there was an altercation that led to one victim being shot while inside the restaurant. Deputies administered life-saving measures until the victim was transported to an area trauma center for medical treatment.

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Warren Forinash at 301-475-4200, ext. 8072, or Warren.Fornash@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Tipsters can also call Crime Solvers 24/7 at 301-475-3333 or send a text to Crime Solvers at 274637. Type "Tip239" in the message block and select SEND. After you get a response, continue your conversation.



Note: Tip239 is case-sensitive and must be typed in the message block as shown. With Crime Solvers, you never have to give your name. If your information leads to an arrest, you may be eligible for a cash reward.

Run for Hospice in Leonardtown This Weekend



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Anyone interested in running or walking to raise money for hospice this weekend has until 3 p.m., April 4 to register online to take part. Same-day registration on April 6 will still be available.

The annual event, which is now in its 27th year is broken up into four parts; one is a five-kilometer run through the streets of Leonardtown, a 10-kilometer run on a rural country road course, a fun walk on one loop through Leonardtown and the Defender's Cup, which is a five-kilometer run team competition.

All proceeds from the event go directly to support Hospice of St. Mary's and its work to provide medical comfort and care to patients in their last days of life.

Runners and walkers participating in the race can do so in memory of loved ones they have lost and run with messages memorializing them.

This year's Defender's Cup has a special meaning, said race organizer Jim Dicus.

It is being dedicated to the memory of Felix De Weldon, an Austrian immigrant, sculptor and U.S. Navy sailor who crafted the scale model for the Iwo Jima Memorial over a three-day non-stop effort at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in February of 1945.

De Weldon would go on to create the memorial that now stands in Arlington National Cemetery in 1954 with the help of hundreds of other sculptors.

"It's such an amazing story," Dicus said. This year's event is continuing the return of participants to the race which had sharply dwindled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

"We're having a good pre-registration," Dicus said. "We have over 1,000 registrants right now."

"It's rebounding well." The organization is still looking for volunteers to assist in managing the run/walk course. Those interested can contact Liz Calabrese at 301-904-3078 or via email at Barbara.E.Calabrese@medstar.net.

guyleonard@countytimes.net



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Social Coffeehouse Gets New Home

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Workers are in a flurry of activity at the old Duke building at the corner of Washington Street and Fenwick Street in downtown Leonardtown, pushing to meet the Apr. 6 deadline for the opening of the new Social Coffeehouse's home, just across the street from its much smaller original establishment.

Sean Coogan, its owner, is confident that the interior of the newly renovated building will be ready in time.

When he bought the space, he thought it would take a much shorter period of time to get it ready; but it's already been two years, he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic hurt many businesses badly, but, Coogan said, it brought much more business his way than before the dread disease struck.

"We made twice as much in revenue in 2020 than 2019," Coogan said, noting that the shift to allow outdoor seating in town brought out many customers who wanted to socialize after being cooped up during early lockdowns. "We just blew up because of COVID-19."

The situation started to cause problems. "Being the central coffee and day drinking establishment, we just started outgrowing our current store," said Kelly Hintze, who coordinates the new coffee roasting business that will take up a portion of the new home for what Coogan now wants to



Sean Coogan and Kelly Hintze oversee work at the Duke building



Hintze's daughters at Social: Zoe, 8, and Leah, 6

be known simply as Social.

Social became so popular, Coogan said, that customers had to contend with a lack of space when they arrived.

"We actually got some negative reviews," Coogan said. "Because people just couldn't get in."

The move to a new place was more of a necessity than the fulfillment of a long-held desire.

"We had to move here," Coogan said. "There was no other choice."

The old Duke's Bar was the only space available to match what Coogan wanted to accomplish, he said, but the old building had to be gutted — even the exterior wall facing Fenwick Street on the roof had to be restabilized — but there are pieces of the original bar that are still there.

One of them is the original bar that was

part of an old hotel in Washington D.C. — Coogan said the bar may date back from the 1850's — that was hauled by boat down the Potomac River to Leonardtown and off loaded at the wharf and finally brought up to the Duke building.

The building was constructed in 1920. The town leadership is excited to see the business shift its lodgings.

"I'm glad to see the Duke building open-

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ing back up," said Mayor Dan Burris.

The front of the house of the new store will be for coffee and other beverages, while the back of the house will hold the cocktail bar as well as a custom coffee roasting apparatus.

"That's our next big push," Hintze said. "The coffee roasting business."

Coogan had achieved a certain level of coffee quality, he said, and he wanted to ensure that he kept that level in house.

His operation gets coffee beans from all over the world, from Colombia to Indonesia, he said.

"Roasting coffee is part science but part art as well," Coogan said. "So, we figured we might as well just do it ourselves."

By roasting their own coffee beans, they can distribute their own brand to other businesses who want to tap into their popular products, Coogan said.

The new store will also include a kitchen, Coogan said, which will allow Social to expand its menu.

"The kitchen in the new location is the same size as the [entire] older location," Coogan said. "Our seating capacity [in the old location] is 52 customers; our seating capacity over there [in the new store] is 190 people."

The new venue also has outdoor seating like its predecessor.

"We may have lines [to get in] but at least they'll be able to sit," Coogan said.

Coogan started his business in Leonardtown in 2018 after considering whether to do so in Old Town Alexandria in Virginia.

He decided on Leonardtown — his long-time home where he has lived since he was

a boy — because of his attachment to it but also because his business would not be one among so many similar ones across the Potomac River; it would be a unique business that could expand into a community anchor.

"It's not just a local business it's run by a local family," Coogan said, adding that the new store is fitting in with the town's overarching plan to bring services and amenities closer to residents. "We want to help make the town more walkable."

The façade of the new store has been refurbished as well, Coogan said, with all of the old signage redone in its original colors just as it was so many decades ago.

Coogan and Hintze have striven to shore up the old structure and make it more modern while still retaining much of its historic appeal of old Leonardtown.

Coogan said the building's renovation was supported in part by a grant from American Express to restore historic anchor businesses.

"We're one of just 25 in the whole nation to get that grant," Coogan said. "This is a place that will be a hub for the young professional."

Coogan said he is not sure of what the future holds for his smaller property, only that he may turn it into a speakeasy-themed establishment.

To top off the return of the iconic Duke building, Coogan said the duck pin bowling alley installed long ago over top of the main space will be reopened as well.

"That's unique entertainment no one else offers," Hintze said.

guyleonard@countytimes.net



Hintze behind the bar in Social's new home



Coogan shows freshly roasted coffee beans and the redone facade



MEDICARE MINUTE PRESENTATIONS

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April 24: Part D Coverage Phases- Learn how your medication costs change throughout the year. From the deductible phase to the donut hole and well as some new changes.

May 29: Medicare for Federal Employees and Retirees- Learn how your FEHB benefits coordinate with Medicare and what to consider when making enrollment decisions.

June 26: Preparing for Future Health Care Needs- Learn about advanced directives, living wills, health care proxies, and powers of attorney to help ensure that decisions made on your behalf meet your needs and preferences.

July 31: New to Medicare- Learn the basics you should know about Medicare from enrollment periods to coverage choices and beyond.

August 28: Cost Saving Programs- Learn about programs that can help you save on your Medicare costs. Expect to hear about programs like the Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help, and more.

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Nick is a quiet 13 year old boy who loves to do a variety of things such as playing baseball and basketball, fishing, hunting, crabbing, and doing a variety of crafts from drawing to building/creating things. On the outside you would say he is a typical kid, but it is what you cannot see that he hides so well. Nick has Crohn's disease.

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Sheriff's Deputies Recover 197 Capsules of Fentanyl

Deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division and Criminal Investigations Division executed a search warrant on Kevin Jason Copey, 39, of Mechanicsville, MD, on Tuesday, April 2, 2024; significant quantities of fentanyl and cocaine were recovered during the operation.



Kevin Jason Copey

The warrant was executed in Charlotte Hall following a traffic stop for an equipment violation. During the traffic stop, K9 Maja positively alerted to the presence of a controlled dangerous substance, and the subsequent search of the vehicle uncovered a plastic bag containing 197 fentanyl capsules and 25 vials of cocaine. The suspect was also found to have a capsule of fentanyl on his person.

Copey was arrested and transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center and charged with CDS: possession with intent to distribute cocaine, CDS: possession with intent to distribute fentanyl, CDS: possession with intent to distribute fentanyl/heroin mixture, CDS: possession of large amount and related charges. Additional charges are pending a review from the Office of the

State's Attorney for St. Mary's County.

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office remains committed to combating illegal narcotics distribution within our community and will continue to work to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents.

Letters to the Editor

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

The St. Mary's County Commissioner just voted to raise our income taxes from 3% to 3.2%. Mike Hewitt voted against the income tax increase. Guy, Colvin, Anderson, and Ostrow voted for the tax increase. The Commissioners blame the State and said "the State let us down", which is true. But, The Commissioners who have been there for 2 and 3 terms, Colvin, Guy and Hewitt spent down the very LARGE fund reserves we had built under previous much more fiscally conservative Board of Commissioners. So, if we still had those reserves, we would be in good shape financially. Mike Hewitt said "we need to give these reserved back to the people with more spending" Now the chickens are coming home to roost. He can enjoy the chicken. We need to cut spending, not raise taxes!

All 5 Commissioners are Republicans, and we hear that Republicans are the fiscal conservatives but not this bunch, particularly the ones who have been there awhile. The jury is still out on Anderson

and Ostrow, the first termers, but looks like they are going to follow along. Maybe they will readjust if they want to be reelected?

And, the School System is the "sacred cow" and they always want more, even with enrollment down. Pay the teachers, but require the school system to consolidate programs and cut Administrators, Assistants, and the fat that always exists in any government office.

Raising the income tax rate will hurt the economy of St. Mary's County as a lot of tax payers are already strapped because of out of control inflation caused by Democrat policies at the Federal and State levels.

Attend the public hearing on 23 April and/or email the Commissioners to object to tax increases at csmc@stmaryscountymd.gov

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NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

Navy and Air Force Fighter Pilots to Train as a Joint Force

Navy and Air Force fighter pilots will begin training as a joint force at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD)'s Joint Simulation Environment (JSE) starting in 2024.

NAWCAD installed a division of four U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor cockpits into the Navy's premier simulation test and training facility alongside its division of eight F-35 Lightning cockpits in January.

"When America is engaged in conflict, the DOD will bring joint capability to bear from every service across all domains," said NAWCAD Commander Rear Adm. John Dougherty IV. "We've replicated this ability in the Joint Simulation Environment, a force multiplier helping aviators deter aggression and—if necessary—prevail in conflict."

The new addition of fifth-generation fighter simulators brings Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and allied partners into the hyper-realistic digital range that consists of cockpits, domed simulators with 4K projectors, and aircraft software to enable pilots to fly wartime scenarios in a near-exact virtual environment. Tactical groups training in NAWCAD's JSE fly more sorties over one week than they do over a year on open-air ranges.

"Open-air ranges are extremely constrained with safety limitations that prevent warfighters from training like they'd



A pilot tests a U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor cockpit simulator headed for installation in the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Joint Simulation Environment.

fight," said NAWCAD JSE Director Blaine Summers. "The JSE is where fifth-gen fighters train to hone their tactics and fight like their lives depend on it."

Developed by Navy engineers and industry partners, NAWCAD's JSE is a powerful training and test facility designed to adapt and grow, utilizing hardware and software from actual DOD aircraft, weapons, and other defense systems. The JSE has all the equipment and experts needed to keep the

facility running smoothly from its cockpits, to its software and simulators, to its mission debriefing rooms where pilots get feedback on their performance during training.

In this highly realistic digital range, aviators experience the consequences of their mistakes, including mission failure, loss of systems, and even loss of life. The JSE enables pilots to learn those hard lessons, immediately adjust, fly again, and continue the learning process to become a highly

capable tactical aviator.

The JSE was initially designed to support F-35 Lightning's operational testing as there was no way to safely and adequately represent real-world conflict on an open-air range. Today, the DOD is scaling the Navy's technology for additional digital range facilities supporting programs like F-35, F-22, and E-2D. In addition, the DOD has made training in the JSE a formal part of the Navy's Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor Program—commonly known as TOPGUN.

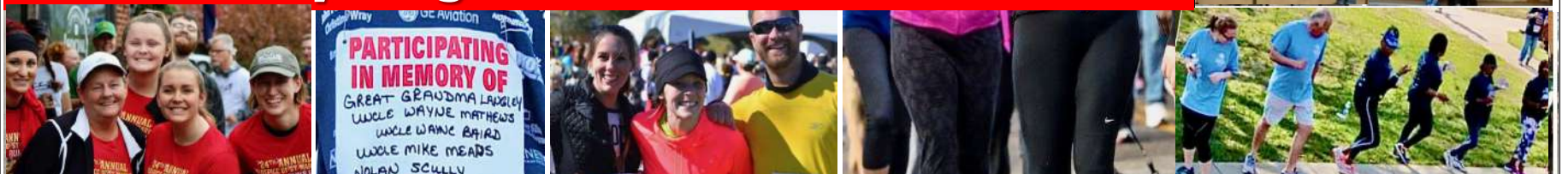
Over the next year, NAWCAD will incorporate additional test and training cockpits including the F/A-18 Hornet, EA-18 Growler, and E-2 platforms to train fighters for future flight lines. The warfare center will also deploy its second training system onboard a Navy carrier, USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division employs more than 17,000 military, civilian and contract personnel. It operates test ranges, laboratories and aircraft in support of test, evaluation, research, development and sustainment of everything flown by the Navy and Marine Corps. Based in Patuxent River, Maryland, the command also has major sites in St. Inigoes, Maryland, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and Orlando, Florida.

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April 5th




First Friday Itinerary

- 9 a.m.** Social's Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony www.facebook.com/socialonfenwick
- 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.** Book signing with Karen Janowsky at Fenwick St. Books www.fenwickbooks.com
- 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.** Tarot card readings by Holly at Fenwick Street Books www.fenwickbooks.com
- 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.** Kid-friendly mini sign workshop at Board and Brush www.facebook.com/boardandbrushleonardtownmd
- 4 p.m.** St. Mary's County Arts Council and the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce host a ribbon cutting in celebration of the new logo and newly refreshed gallery www.smcart.org
- 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.** Audience participation Drum Circle on the St. Mary's Arts Council lawn with the SoMar Drummers www.smcart.org
- 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.** Meet photographer Sal Icaza at the Opening Reception of his in-house exhibit at the St. Mary's County Arts Council Gallery & Gift Shop. Meet & greet with Sal from 6:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. www.smcart.org
- 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.** Learn botanical illustrations techniques for drawing and water coloring flowers at The Yellow Line www.theyellowline.co
- 8:30 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.** Live music featuring Nightcap at Action Lounge and Billiards www.facebook.com/ActionLounge



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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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Kindergarten Enrollment Announced

St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) is pleased to announce registration for Kindergarten for the 2024-2025 school year. All schools will hold open registration beginning Monday, May 6, 2024, which will continue throughout the summer.

Parents of children who will be five years old by September 1, 2024, should register at the school assigned to their physical address during the open enrollment period.

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) may go to the school assigned to their legal address to complete the registration paperwork. Children are not required to be present for registration. Required documentation includes evidence of birth, proof of residency, a copy of the child's immunization record, and any court papers regarding custody of the minor child. Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) must also bring photo identification when registering their child.

Each elementary school will conduct open enrollment for the children residing in their zone. Information regarding which school serves your residential area is provided by the Department of Capital Planning at SMCPS - Find a School by your address or 301-475-4256, option 6. You do not need to make an appointment to register a child.

Documentation that indicates the current physical address of the child will be accepted as proof of residence. Proof of residence will include, but is not limited to,

one of the following:

- Mortgage/deed/rental agreement with 911 address assignment;
- Current utility bill with parent/legal guardian name, 911 address of residence, and service address (post office box is not acceptable, wireless phone bills are not acceptable); and,
- Patuxent River Naval Base housing form NOW-NATC-1110-1/15, Assignment to Public Quarters, which identifies bona fide residence in St. Mary's County.

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) not intending to register an appropriately aged child for kindergarten must obtain a waiver from the St. Mary's County Public Schools Department of Student Services. It is not necessary for children enrolled in Head Start or Pre-Kindergarten in the public schools to register again.

Additional Kindergarten information can be found at SMCPS - Kindergarten Registration.

Additional Early Entrance to Kindergarten Information can be found at SMCPS Early Entrance to Kindergarten.

Questions about Kindergarten registration may be directed to Kate Weaver, Supervisor of Student Services, at 301-475-5511, ext.32150.

Questions about Early Entrance to Kindergarten may be directed to Cortney Dvorak, Supervisor of Instruction/Elementary Programs, at 301-475-5511, ext. 32101.

Health Department Hosting Community Baby Shower



The St. Mary's County Health Department invites expecting and new parents who live in St. Mary's County to a Community Baby Shower. The event will take place on Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Margaret Brent Middle School-Based Health Center at 29675 Point Lookout Rd, Mechanicsville 20659.

This FREE event will offer giveaway items to attendees, including diaper bags, diapers, baby wipes, and essential baby items while supplies last. Special raffle items include car seats, pack 'n-plays, and more. Additionally, families will be connected to community resources.

"Our team at the health department is proud to continue providing this wonderful

event for our community," said Dr. Meena Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer. "We're excited to celebrate our growing St. Mary's families by offering support, free resources, and valuable education."

Pre-registration is recommended, as space is limited to 300 participants - click here to register. If you have any difficulty registering, please call 301-475-4330 or email smchd.healthdept@maryland.gov for assistance. Individuals must live in St. Mary's County and be either pregnant/expecting or raising a new baby (less than one-year-old).

To learn more about SMCHD's programs and services for infants, children, and families, please visit smchd.org/infants-and-children.

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Commission for Women Honors Woman of the Year



Patrice Campbell, founder of Building Bridges, was honored March 30 by the St. Mary's County Commission for Women by being named Woman of the Year.

Building Bridges is a community non-profit organization based in Lexington Park that provides assistance to families, children and even the homeless.

Photo courtesy of the St. Mary's County Commission for Women.

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How to Pick the Right Trees for Your Property

Trees benefit a landscape by serving both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. A home surrounded by healthy green trees can be a sight to behold, and those same trees can benefit surrounding plants and wildlife at the same time.

As appealing as trees are, not all trees and landscapes make for the perfect match. The Arbor Day Foundation notes the importance of planning when designing a landscape. Planning ensures the trees homeowners ultimately choose for their properties will grow well in the soil and moisture present in their yards.

Careful consideration of a handful of variables can help homeowners determine which trees will make the best fit for their properties.

- **Height:** Homeowners must consider the projected height of a tree before planting it. Avoid trees that will bump into anything when fully grown, as that can adversely affect surrounding greenery and pose a safety hazard. The ADF's tree sizing guide can be accessed at <https://www.arborday.org/trees/rightTreeAndPlace/size.cfm> and serves as an invaluable resource for homeowners who want to plant new trees around their properties.
- **Canopy spread:** Trees grow out as well as up, so it's important to consider their potential width at maturity as well. The ADF sizing guide can help homeowners get an idea of how wide a tree is likely to be at maturity. Trees that spread out quite a bit don't necessarily need to be avoided, but it's important



that they're planted far enough apart so they don't adversely affect surrounding plants. In addition, wide trees that are planted too close together can make the landscape appear crowded, taking something away from its aesthetic appeal.

- **Growth rate:** Growth rate is an important variable because it can affect how quickly homeowners will see changes in their landscapes. Homeowners who

want to plant for privacy can consider trees with quick growth rates or purchase more mature trees that are already near full growth. Those who are not in need of instant transformation can try trees with slower growth rates, which the ADF notes typically live longer than fast-growing species.

- **Requirements:** Different trees require different amounts of sun and moisture and different soil components to

thrive. Homeowners can have their soil tested to determine which trees will thrive in it. Local garden centers can be a great resource for homeowners who want insight as to which trees will thrive in their local climates.

Trees serve many functions on a property. Choosing the right trees for a landscape requires careful consideration of a host of variables.

9 Signs of Pest Infestation

Individuals want a home that is welcoming and comfortable. Unfortunately many conditions that people find appealing also appeal to pests. Pests may be more problematic at certain times of year, such as when weather is extreme and pests like rodents or even raccoons seek refuge in a home. During times of year when temperatures are mild, certain insects may begin to hatch or swarm, becoming problematic around the home.

Some signs of pests taking up residence may be readily apparent, while others may be less obvious. The following are nine signs of pest infestation in or around a home.

1. **Droppings:** Small droppings may indicate that pests are nearby. Droppings will vary depending on the insect or rodent. It's good to familiarize yourself with the appearance of various droppings, from mice to termites to bed bugs.
2. **Footprints:** Footprints are another sign of pest infestation. Footprints left in dirt around a home, or in dusty areas in the attic or basement, may show that pests are tracking in and out of the house.
3. **Sawdust piles or trails:** Sawdust could be indicative of termites or ants. Insects like carpenter bees also may burrow into areas of wood and leave sawdust behind.
4. **Shed wings, skins and casings:** Many insects molt and, during this process,



will shed certain parts of their anatomy to grow larger. Roaches, bed bugs and beetles are some pests that might be scattering sheds or egg casings in a home. Termite wings are discarded once the swarms choose a new location for the colony.

5. **Foul odors:** Musty or foul smells, particularly in hidden areas, may indicate pests are nesting nearby.
6. **Unexplained noises:** Scratching or scurrying in walls or floors often indicates pests are present.
7. **Bites:** Waking up in the morning with welts or red areas on the skin might indicate the presence of bed bugs or

other biting insects.

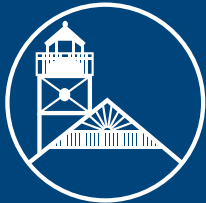
8. **Presence of nests:** Those who can see nests in corners or undisturbed areas of the home likely have pests present. Rodents often use chewed cardboard, insulation, paper, and other scavenged items to create nests, according to exterminators.
9. **Increased number of beneficial insects:** An influx of spiders and other predatory insects may indicate there are plenty of food sources in the home for them to feast on.

Pests can be problematic, but homeowners who recognize signs of infestation can take prompt action.

Did you know?

Many pest control methods don't only target pests — pollinators can often get caught in the crossfire. Without pollinators, more than 100 crops grown in the United States would not be able to thrive. Plants, including various fruits, vegetables, nuts and more, rely on pollinators to ensure to transport pollen. Though many plants are self-pollinating and others are pollinated by the wind or water, many others rely on insects and animals to become pollinated. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says birds, bees, bats, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, and small mammals all can work as pollinators. Examples of crops pollinated by pollinators include apples, squash and almonds. Animals and insects help pollinate more than 75 percent of the world's flowering plants, and nearly 75 percent of all crops, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Unfortunately, pesticide use can diminish the number of natural pollinators. Natural gardening and pest control can help protect the habitats of pollinators.





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The Pros and Cons of Irrigation Systems

Maintaining a lush, green lawn and thriving landscape that includes shrubbery, flowers and trees requires time, money and often some sweat equity. However, the beauty that results from such effort compels many homeowners to take on the landscaping challenge.

Forgetting to water the greenery or getting hit with a drought can cause a lawn to deteriorate rapidly. An irrigation system may seem like a smart investment, but homeowners should weigh the pros and cons of such systems before having one installed.

Irrigation systems are installed to protect landscaping so plants can thrive year-round. Irrigation systems come in various forms, from sprinkler to drip to surface irrigation systems. No system is necessarily better than another. That's because each is designed to address specific watering needs.

Here's a look at various irrigation systems and the pros and cons of each.

Sprinkler system

Sprinklers are popular because they tend to be very affordable and easy to set up. Manual sprinkler systems utilize a hose and sprinkler head, while automatic systems are programmed and do all the work once they're installed. Sprinklers cover a lot of ground and can irrigate large spaces quickly. However, that same benefit can be a disadvantage as well.

Sprinklers are indiscriminate in their watering, sometimes hitting pavement or driveways. Also, the Gardening Channel



says that water from sprinklers is lost due to evaporation on hot, windy days. In fact, as much as 80 percent of the water used may not make it onto the grass or plants.

Surface irrigation system

Sometimes called gravity irrigation, these

systems use channels or furrows throughout the cultivation area. Once the water runs through these channels, gravity distributes it accordingly.

Surface irrigation systems require minimal effort but are best suited for farms and commercial enterprises because they

require a large reservoir or pond to accumulate water. Also, uneven terrains could divert the water.

Drip irrigation system

This type of irrigation system is used primarily in arid regions. It is made up of lateral lines of flexible or rigid polyethylene pipe. Drip irrigation allows homeowners to focus watering on a particular garden area. It provides moisture directly to the soil. Therefore, there is no water waste from runoff or evaporation. Drip irrigation waters plants slowly and can cause less soil erosion and reduce nutrient leaching.

While easier and more effective than some other irrigation methods over the long haul, a drip irrigation system has a substantial startup cost. In addition, the system can get clogged at times. When gardening season is finished, a drip irrigation system will need to be drained and dismantled.

Irrigation systems can help care for plants and lawns. However, they can be costly and some require significant maintenance. Weather and pests also can reduce the effectiveness of yard irrigation systems by damaging equipment or directing water in directions homeowners did not intend. Customers are urged to do their research regarding which system, if any, is best for their properties.



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How to Pick Paint for Home Interiors

Many components combine to define a home's interior. Some homeowners may be partial to certain styles, such as ultra modern or farmhouse, while others may opt for a more traditional look that cannot necessarily be categorized as one style or another. Though many homeowners may spend considerable time and devote a lot of energy to making their home embody a certain style, those who aren't willing to commit to a particular look can lean on one component to make a stylish statement all their own: paint.

Color can be a part of every homeowner's design arsenal. Bold colors can be used to create a stunning accent wall, while homes with open concepts often utilize color to define rooms. Homeowners who want to revitalize their home interiors can do so with paint, and this approach doesn't require homeowners to commit to a whole new design style.

Though paint may seem simple to novices, homeowners who have painted home interiors in the past recognize how complicated the process of picking paint can be. Paint retailers have a seemingly endless swatch of paint colors to choose from, and before long homeowners heads may be spinning as they try to narrow down their options. The following tips can help homeowners pick the perfect paint for their home interiors.

- Take stock, and photographs, of your current furnishings. Many interior



designers rely on a simple technique when recommending color schemes to their clients. Choose a standout color from existing furnishings, such as the dominant color from a patterned decorative pillow or piece of furniture, and then look for the same shade to paint

the walls. A photograph of the item can be handy when visiting the paint store.

- Lighten colors as you go up. The home renovation and design experts at HGTV recommend picking darker color values for the floor, medium color values for the walls and light

values for the ceiling. This approach mimics the look of the great outdoors, where the ground tends to be darker than the trees, and the trees are darker than the blue sky.

- Utilize paint to create the vibe you want. The home renovation experts at This Old House note that colors evoke an emotional response. Cool colors like blue and green give off a relaxing vibe, which makes them ideal for bedrooms and bathrooms. Red is an intense color that can up the energy ante in any room, which can make it an option for homeowners who want to spark debate around their dinner tables.
- Give personal preference its place at the table. Though interior designers may have years of experience picking paint colors for a home and researchers may have determined how certain colors can be utilized to create a desired ambiance in a given room, ultimately homeowners are the ones who will be living in the home. So it's important that homeowners pick colors they like for their home interiors.

Paint is an inexpensive way to transform a room. Homeowners can rely on a combination of color strategies and their personal preferences as they try to decide which colors they want on their interior walls.



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How to Tackle Spring Cleaning

Spring is a season of renewal. When the flowers are blooming and the trees are budding and the weather is pleasantly warm, people often feel inspired to make changes around their homes. Work may begin with culling belongings and organizing essentials.

There is debate regarding where the practice of “spring cleaning” originated. Some researchers link it to certain religious groups. It has long been an ancient Jewish custom to thoroughly clean a house in preparation for the springtime feast of Passover. The house is scoured to remove any yeast bread, or chametz, from the home. Similarly, members of the Greek Orthodox church celebrate “Clean Week,” which is a week of cleaning before Lent. In Iranian culture, families spend days cleaning prior to the Persian New Year, which begins on the spring equinox.

Spring cleaning also has some secular roots. For instance, in the 1800s, Londoners routinely cleared their homes of grime and soot that accumulated over the winter.

Spring cleaning is still a ritual for many today. As people embark on their plans to tidy up, these tips can help them along.

- **Tackle one big task a day:** Who hasn't started one project only to be distracted into moving along to another room? This often occurs when people discover something out of place in one space and then move that item where it belongs, only to find a new cleaning task at hand in that space. Inefficiency



can make you give up on spring cleaning prematurely. Agree to address one room/task a day. Keep a basket or box handy to store errant items until you move on to the next room.

- **Stock up on supplies:** Prepare all of the cleaning supplies in advance. Put together a tool kit of sorts with the equipment you need, including mops, brooms, rags, cleansers, and the like. Organization can keep you on course.
- **Harness your strengths and weaknesses:** Some people clean because they are stressed or angry, others do so

to avoid other tasks. Keep personality in mind when establishing a cleaning schedule. For example, clean at night if you're a night owl, or wait until you are feeling antsy before embarking on a “calm down cleaning.”

- **Tackle seasonal chores first:** Some tasks need to get done to prepare for the spring and summer season. These may include cleaning the grill and sorting through outdoor furniture and decor. Spring cleaning may involve readying the pool for another year of use, or cleaning out rain gutters to pre-

pare for spring storms. Tackle time-dependent tasks first and then move on to others that are less time-sensitive.

- **Spread out the work:** Some people like to devote full weekends to spring cleaning, but that can be overwhelming for others. Breaking down cleaning tasks into 15- to 30-minute intervals each day can make the job more tolerable.

Spring cleaning season has arrived, and certain tips can make the job more efficient and manageable.

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How to Prepare Your Landscape for New Plants



New plants can add much to a landscape. Whether they're replacing plants that are no longer thriving or being added to supplement an existing landscape, new plants are an affordable way to give a home's exterior a whole new look.

Much consideration is given to which plants to add to a landscape. That's understandable, as homeowners want to choose plants that will thrive and won't compromise the health of surrounding plants and trees. Before planting or even choosing plants, it's important to plan for new additions to a landscape. Preparing the landscape can inform homeowners about which plants to purchase and can ensure they thrive after planting.

- Document sunlight exposure. Plants have different needs, and one of the biggest differences between species is the amount of sunlight they need to thrive. According to Penn State Extension, plants characterized as "full sun" require six or more hours of sunlight per day, while those considered "partial sun" need between four and six hours of sunlight per day. Plants designated as "partial shade" need two to four hours of sun per day, while "shade" plants need less than two hours of sunlight a day. Documenting sunlight exposure in advance gives homeowners an idea of which plants should be planted and where they should be planted. Jot down these observations in a journal over several weeks and then choose plants that will thrive in each area.
- Test the soil. A soil pH test is a simple and quick way to determine the acid-

ity of soil. Soil pH levels will indicate how likely a plant is to thrive in a given spot. High levels won't necessarily mean an area should be avoided, as some plants thrive in acidic soils. Additional soil tests can determine other characteristics, such as the nutrient levels of soil and the amount of organic matter it contains. Each of these variables can help homeowners make the right choices as they introduce new plants to their properties.

- Consider local wildlife. If local wildlife makes its presence known on a property, homeowners may want to take proactive steps prior to planting anything new. A new fence might prevent animals like deer from getting in, but that likely won't do much to repel smaller animals like squirrels, rabbits or foxes. If wildlife is a concern, homeowners can seek advice at their local garden center about which plants certain animals are likely to ignore. Homeowners who want to attract wildlife can do the same in reverse, choosing plants wildlife will be drawn to. Homeowners who want to deter wildlife should erect fencing or other barriers prior to planting.
- Clear space if necessary. Plants grow up and out, and cramped quarters can make it hard for new plants to thrive. Some may thrive but only at the expense of other plants. If necessary, clear space prior to planting to ensure plants have ample space to grow.

Some pre-planting landscape preparation can ensure new plants thrive.



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Maintaining a Lawn Routinely Roamed by Pets

Vibrant, green lawns can draw attention to any landscape. Many homeowners toil for hours each week to ensure their lawns are pristine, or invest in lawn care services to help maintain a yard if they do not have the time to do so themselves.

While many treatments can be applied to lawns to help them thrive, animal waste is not among them. Pet owners who aspire to have beautiful lawns will have to take a few extra steps to ensure lawns can persevere despite the presence of furry companions.

Reseed with a damage-resistant grass. There are many different types of grass, and some are more resilient than others. Tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and Bermuda grass are just some of the grass varieties that can capably handle pet traffic. If replacing the entire lawn is not possible, consider reseeding or addressing the areas that pets frequent.

- Strengthen the root system. It may be tempting to cut the lawn short, particularly if dogs or cats like to nibble on longer blades of grass. But that approach could be doing the lawn a disservice. According to The Home Depot, letting the lawn grow to at least three inches will help keep moisture in the soil and prevent evaporation. That moisture will strengthen the roots, creating a healthier lawn for pets and people.
- Create pet paths. Various materials can be used in these high-traffic areas to minimize the sights and signs of pet traffic. Mulch or crushed stone can



establish these pet highways and look like intended features.

- Set boundaries. Pet urine contains high levels of nitrogen, which can burn grass and turn it brown. It's not possible to water down urine or pick up solid waste immediately every time a pet goes outdoors, so designate a pet-friendly spot for potty time. Use fencing or a dog run to separate this area and help mitigate "land mines" all over the lawn. Fencing also can keep pets out of vegetable gardens and away from potentially toxic plants.

- Avoid chemical lawn treatments. When pets use the yard and rest on the lawn, you'll need to eliminate products that can be harmful to them. Choose all-natural fertilizers and weed and pest preventatives.
- Look for pet-friendly alternatives. If maintaining a lawn with pets seems like an uphill battle, consider swapping out your landscape with a variety

of materials. Scale back on grass, and incorporate groundcover, hardscape materials like pea gravel, or extend the patio. Artificial turf also is an option, as it won't brown and wither. Some turf products can even be quickly and thoroughly cleaned with water.

It can take some trial and error for pet parents to protect their lawns from the effects of having furry friends playing in the yard.

Did you know?

Dog owners often find that having a fenced-in space gives pets an opportunity to run around off-leash and enjoy time outdoors and can make it easier for pets to go out on bathroom breaks. Still, pet owners must recognize that inquisitive dogs can get into trouble even in seemingly safe yards. One potential danger is ingestion of potentially toxic mushrooms. It is essential for homeowners to check their yards for mushrooms all year long, but especially during wet springs and in the fall. Mushrooms can pop up overnight. Depending on the type of mushroom and the size of the dog, ingesting even a small amount can result in gastrointestinal distress or more dire circumstances, like liver failure. Certain mushrooms give off a fishy smell and they may entice dogs who are prone to indiscriminate eating. According to the animal care resource Preventative

Vet, signs of mushroom toxicity include vomiting, salivating, yellowing of the skin and "whites of eyes," coma, seizures, and loss of balance. Other dogs may experience diarrhea or refuse to eat. Any pet owner who has suspected a dog has eaten wild mushrooms should consult a veterinarian. Early treatment can help and prevent more serious organ damage or death. Pet owners who cannot trust their dogs unattended in the yard should bring their pups out on leashes or keep careful watch on them while they're outdoors.



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Tips to Organize Your Cluttered Kitchen



Kitchens serve as the heart of many homes. Thanks to the popularity of open floor plans, kitchens also tend to be highly visible from nearby spaces, such as family rooms and even main entryways. A messy, cluttered kitchen can be an inefficient eyesore that's visible from various locations in a home. That makes getting organized in the kitchen a worthwhile goal.

The following are some tips to help homeowners organize their kitchens.

- **Start with the utensils:** Utensils come in all shapes and sizes. Take inventory of your utensils, discarding or donating items you don't use. Next, designate drawers or countertop storage solutions for the utensils you use most often. Place them within easy reach, and take into account your dominant hand for placement.
- **Categorize your pantry:** Empty the pantry, paying attention to staples you regularly use. Then figure out a system for categorization that works for your household. Perhaps place all baking essentials together, such as flour, oil, baking soda, and cocoa powder. Maybe you need to designate a "kids corner" in the pantry where you keep fruit snacks, granola bars and breakfast cereals. Use uniformly shaped containers to store packaged foods so you're not contending with oddly shaped boxes and bags.
- **Use extra wall or ceiling space:** Large

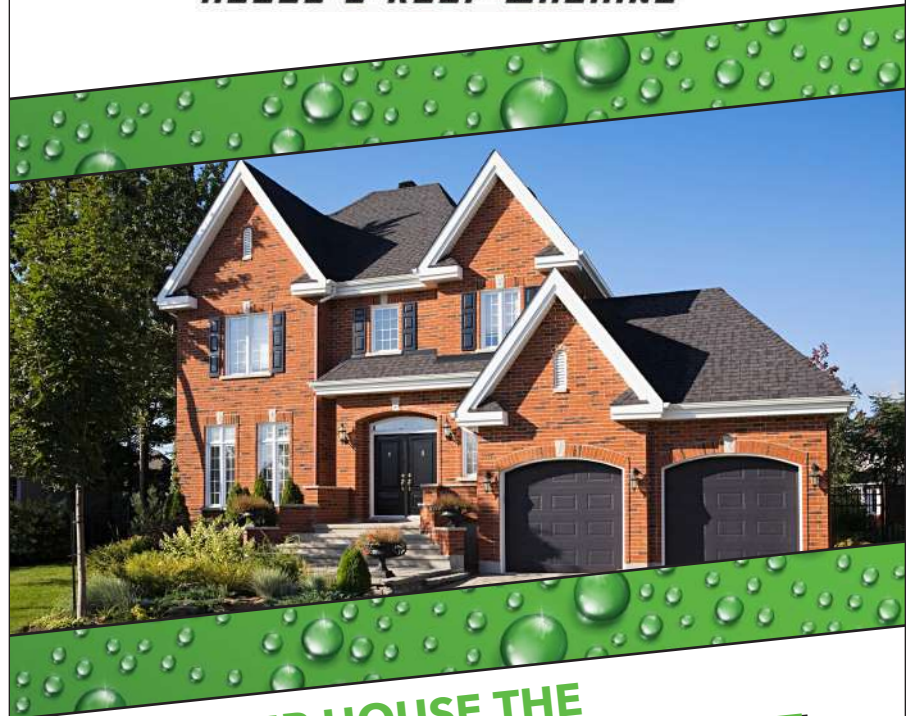
pots and pans can eat up cabinet space or clutter the inside of an oven for those who don't have any other space. While your decorative enamel Dutch oven might fit nicely on a shelf or counter, cast-iron pans and skillets can be hung from durable hooks over an island or near the stove.

- **Organize under the sink:** It can be difficult to keep cleaning products tidy and within reach. Try installing a short tension rod inside the cabinet and use it to hang spray bottles, rubber gloves and cleaning cloths.
- **Use kitchen cabinet rollouts:** A shortage of storage space in cabinets can be remedied with rollouts. They provide additional capacity to cabinets and make it easier to find items, instead of having to dig at the back of dim cabinet recesses.
- **Tame your container collection:** It's tempting to save all of those take-out containers or empty margarine tubs for leftovers. But if there's an avalanche every time you open up a cabinet to reach for a container, you probably have too many. Invest in one type of storage container so you can nest the containers and lids for ultimate organization.

An organized kitchen is more attainable than it may seem. Some simple strategies can help homeowners make these home hubs less cluttered and more calming.



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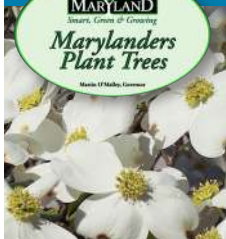
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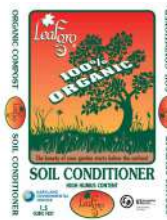
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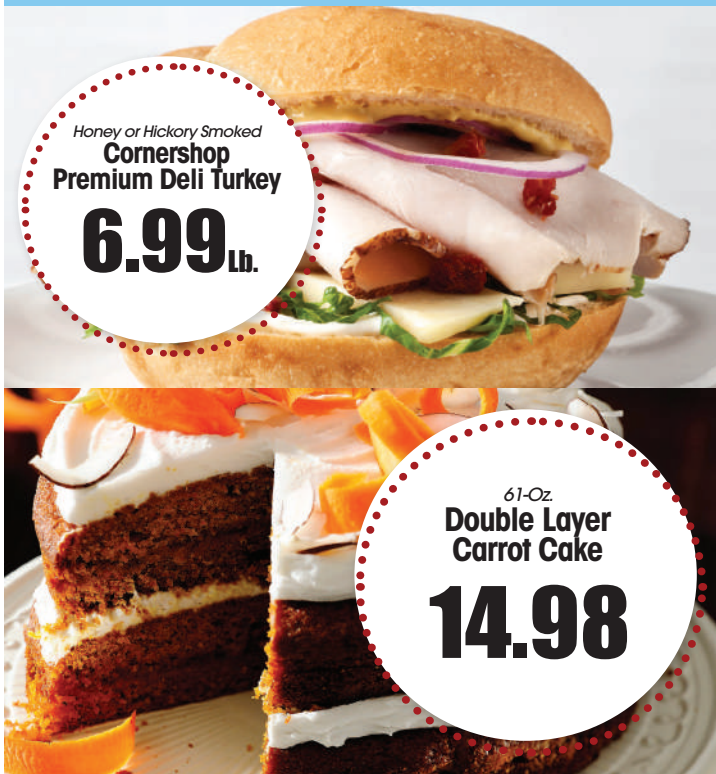
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St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Apr 4

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

American Legion Post 221
21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue
7 p.m. to 8 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 7:00pm. E-mail us at alpost221@aol.com or call 301*481*6625 for more information.

Senior Thursday at Historic St. Mary's City

Historic St. Mary's City
18751 Hogaboom Ln., St. Mary's City
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Seniors 65+ enjoy FREE ADMISSION to Historic St. Mary's City the first Thursday of each month! Learn about Maryland's history while visiting the Woodland Indian Hamlet, the reconstructed Town Center, the Maryland Dove on the waterfront, and the Tobacco Plantation. Visitor Center, Gift Shop, site interpreters, beautiful walking paths. 301-994-4370 or hsmcdigshistory.org

Sat, Apr 6

Growing for good Planting day

Historic Sotterley Plantation
44300 Sotterley Ln., Hollywood
9a.m. to Noon

Ready to help Historic Sotterley usher in spring? We're looking for volunteers who don't mind getting dirty, love gardening and farming, and want to help their community to join us for our Growing for Good Planting Days! You will help us get our seeds planted so they can start growing in our Hoop House or cut and prep potatoes for planting in our fields. What we produce here at Historic Sotterley gets donated to our partners at local food banks and pantries to support community members in need.

Rebels & Redcoats: A Southern Maryland Revolutionary War Family Event

Piney Point Lighthouse Museum
44720 Lighthouse Rd., Piney Point
10 a.m. to 5p.m.

FREE family fun event commemorating the American War for Independence as it happened in St. Mary's County. This event is being held on land at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum near the site of the Battle of St.

George Island—the only Revolutionary War battle to occur in Maryland.

Sun, Apr 7

Quarter Auction Benefit

Knights of Columbus Hall,
16441 Three Notch Rd., Ridge
Noon to 2:30p.m.

Auction starts at 1PM. Regular bidding paddles are \$3 each, 2 for \$5 or 3 for \$7. Bring your quarters to bid with. All-in paddles are \$45 and include a bid on all items on the event program. For info or reservations, email mdquarterauctions@yahoo.com or call 240-416-4224.

Mon, Apr 8

Pax River Quilters Guild Meeting

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church
20850 Langley Rd., Lexington Park
6:30 p.m.

Meetings are the second Monday of every month and feature guest speakers, show and tells, and other fun activities. Pax River Quilters Guild is a non-profit organization devoted to philanthropic quilting projects

and promoting the skill of quilting. New members of all skill levels are welcome. For questions, email: prqgsomd@gmail.com

Upcoming

Carry-Out Chicken Dinner

K.C. Hall, Ridge
Sunday, April 14, 2024
11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

\$15 Dinner: 1/2 chicken, potatoes, veggie, cole slaw, and a roll. Self serve dining facilities available. Baked goods available. 301-872-4641

Ongoing

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. Problems? Come join us. Call Harry Metzler at 240-298-3837 or Nick Gravelle at 301-481-6751

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library UPCOMING EVENTS



Connect and Converse

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

on the second Monday of the month. Food will not be provided.

Introduction to A.I.

Come chat with ChatGPT and learn about A.I. at Lexington Park Library on Wednesday, April 10 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Curious about A.I.? Want to know more about Chat GPT? This lecture will introduce some of the basic ideas around artificial intelligence. We'll talk about how A.I. is being used today, what its current limitations are, and how it will shape the future! Computer Skills needed for this class: Internet searching. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Plant for Native Trees in Your Yard at Home

Join us as Karyn Molines, the Division

Chief for Calvert County Natural Resources, introduces the native trees of Maryland and offers strategies for selecting and placing a tree in your yard at home at Leonardtown Library on Saturday, April 13 from 10 – 11 a.m. Maryland's native trees come in an amazing array of sizes and shapes. They can provide beauty and boost the environmental health of your home landscape, no matter how large or small the space. Learn more about their many benefits, from supporting nesting birds and beneficial insects to improving air and water quality. The talk will conclude with a walk around the Library's "Front Yard" for an up-close look at the native trees that are the focal points of our native plant garden. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Fix-it Fair: Clothes & Fabrics

Community members are invited to bring in broken household items and learn how to repair them themselves at Lexington Park Library on Saturday, April 13 from 2 – 4 p.m. Local experts will be here to guide you through the repair process, with a different focus each month. April's focus is fabric! Tear a hole in your best denim jeans? Remember your favorite sweater fitting better last year? Need to cover up a stain that won't budge? Bring in your torn, stained, or ill-fitting items, and let's see if we can't fix it together! Tools, materials, and light refreshments will be provided. Registration is encouraged; walk-ins welcome as space allows. Register on www.stmalib.org.

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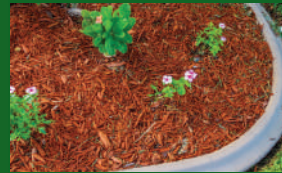
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CALVERT COUNTY INFORMATION & EVENTS

Calvert County Government will be responsible and accountable to all citizens of Calvert County; provide high quality, effective and efficient services; preserve Calvert County's environment, heritage and rural character; foster opportunities for responsible and sustainable residential growth and economic development; and support Calvert County's essential institutions and keep them strong.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are subject to change.

Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 10 a.m., Commissioners' Hearing Room, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick

Boards and Commissions Meetings

Meetings are held via Zoom unless otherwise noted.

Call-in information can be found on www.calvertcountymd.gov.

Architectural Review Committee - Prince Frederick Town Center, Monday, April 8, 2024, 7-8 p.m.

Administrative Charging Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 3-4:30 p.m.

Historic District Commission Meeting Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Public Hearings and Meetings

Board of Appeals Hearing Thursday, April 4, 2024, 9 a.m.

Find more information about all Boards and Commissions at www.calvertcountymd.gov/GetInvolved. Now is a great time to get involved! Call 410-535-1600, ext. 2201 with any questions.

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, May 14

The voter registration deadline is April 23

For polling locations, important dates and more visit

Visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Vote



Meals on Wheels

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteer drivers needed who can commit to one day per month for approximately 1.5-2 hours.

Drivers deliver meals to homebound older adults. If you cannot drive but still want to serve, delivery route coordinators and board members are also needed. If you are interested or have any questions, please call 410-535-4606 or 301-855-1170.



Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch Ribbon Cutting

Join the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, April 16 at 2 p.m. for the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch located at 4100 5th St. in North Beach.

VENDORS WANTED!

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Visit www.calvertag.com/FarmersMarketVendor for more information.

Zoning Ordinance Update - Public Comment Period open for articles 17 & 31 opens April 5 through May 3, 2024



Learn more about project information, sign up for email notifications, and view the schedule of work sessions, public forums and public comment periods at: www.calvertcountymd.gov/ZoningOrdinanceUpdate

NEW Sherrif Office District Station Locations:

Dunkirk District Station

10500 Southern Maryland Blvd, Dunkirk, MD 20754

Lusby District Station

11780 HG Trueman Road, Lusby, MD 20657

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CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/calvertcountyanimalshelter) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/calvertcountyanimalshelter) calvertcountyanimalshelter.com

Parks & Recreation to Host Pickleball Tournament at Hallowing Point Park

Players must register by April 12. The cost is \$70 for one day or \$85 for both days.

To register online, visit calvertcounty.perfectmind.com.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Find all of our social media accounts online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/SocialMedia

FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyMd

YOUTUBE
www.youtube.com/CalvertCountyGov

LINKEDIN
www.linkedin.com/company/calvert-county-government

Calvert Community Calendar

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

Fri, Apr 5

On Pins & Needles

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

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

First Fossil Friday!

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

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

Sat, Apr 6

Garden Smarter - Landscaping

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way

Tips and what not to do when landscaping your garden/yard. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Chromebook Giveaways

Northeast Community Center
Chesapeake Beach
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Calvert County and Calvert Library are excited to be able to give one FREE Chromebook to qualified households. These Chromebooks have been provided by a grant from the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development. Please see the qualification requirements before making

a pick-up appointment. We understand that demand may be higher than our supply of Chromebooks. If you don't receive a laptop at one of our events, we encourage you to check out our lending program. Customers can borrow a Wi-Fi-enabled Chromebook, a mobile hotspot or both for a normal borrowing period of 21 days with a library card. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register. Interested in reading about Mahjongg? Take a look at what the library has. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Apr 8

Watch the Solar Eclipse with Us

All Calvert libraries
2-3:30 p.m.

We're not in the direct path but we should have about 80 percent coverage! Come watch with us and the Astronomy Club! We'll have a limited number of solar eclipse glasses on hand to safely view the eclipse. Remember, never look at the sun without proper eye protection!! Glasses will be available starting at 2pm. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mortgages 101

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
6:30-7:30 p.m.

Home ownership helps you build wealth. Learn the steps to getting a mortgage and

the various loan options available to you. Learn about down payments and what gets counted in your income and assets. Find out what those acronyms MIP and PMI are about. Bring your questions! Mortgage Consultant Jessica Sullivan will be on hand to answer them! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Apr 9

Creature Feature

Calvert Marine Museum
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 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.

Wed, Apr 10

Brain Games (PF): Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

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

Resumes and Cover Letters

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

Offered by Maryland Department of Labor, American Job Center, this is an interactive workshop for resume and cover letter writing help. Looking for a job, or a better job? Don't miss this free class. Registration closes the Monday before the event. If you have questions, please contact Cheryl Thorne at cheryl.thorne@maryland.gov More job-seeker help is available on mwejobs.maryland.gov. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Alzheimer's Caregivers Support

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

Get tips and support from other caregivers. Facilitated by Charles Harrell and Dennis Poremski of the Alzheimer's Association. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Upcoming

Maritime Performance Series: Claude Bourbon

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday, April 12
7 - 9 p.m.

Claude Bourbon is known throughout Europe and America for amazing guitar performances that takes blues, Spanish, and Middle Eastern stylings into uncharted territories. It is an experience that compels his audience to return again and again to hear and watch him play, as his fingers lightly dance over the strings of his guitar. Performance is in the museum's Harms Gallery starting at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. with beer and wine for sale. Tickets are \$20 online, up to one day prior at bit.ly/MaritimeConcerts, and \$25 the day of the concert, online and at the door.

Publisher Thomas McKay
Associate Publisher Eric McKay
General Manager Al Dailey aldailey@countytimes.net
Advertising Jen Stotler jen@countytimes.net
Staff Writers Dick Myers dickmyers@countytimes.net
Guy Leonard guyleonard@countytimes.net
Contributing Writers Ron Guy, Ken Lamb, Shelby Opperman, Dave Spigler

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

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



County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

North Beach Nature Center to Celebrate One-Year Anniversary

The Town of North Beach is inviting everyone to Wetlands Overlook Park to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the North Beach Nature Center on April 20 from 12 to 3 pm. There will be fun for families and nature lovers alike.

The town is thrilled to have Trail Life Troop 0153 dedicate the new Green Woodland Trail, and they also will be planting a tree for Arbor Day with the Tree Committee. In addition to these activities, there will be crafts and door prizes for everyone to enjoy. You can also relax and

take in the live music performed by the Cypress Creek Bluegrass Band.

The Calvert County Master Gardeners have been added to the event, providing valuable insights and information. Inside the Nature Center, we'll be showing the original "The Lorax" film, adding a touch of nostalgia and environmental awareness to the celebration. And of course, no birthday celebration is complete without cake!

The complete schedule for the event is available on the North Beach website.

Caution: Duck Crossing

There has been an increase in duck activity around town. This is the time of year that Mallard Ducks breed and nest near the Chesapeake Bay. Nests are built on high ground near water. The female will lay 8 to 10 eggs that typically hatch in 28 days. Please be cautious when driving and keep your eyes out for ducks that may be crossing the roads.

This is also a great time for a reminder

to not feed ducks. Feeding ducks people food can lead to serious problems, including malnutrition, overcrowding, pollution, pest attraction, and loss of the duck's natural fear of humans.



Parks & Recreation Announces Pickleball Tournament

The Calvert County Department of Parks & Recreation (CCPR) will host its annual Pickleball Tournament on Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28, 2024. Games will be held at Hallowing Point Park, located at 4755 Hallowing Point Road in Prince Frederick.

The tournament will be run by CCPR staff. Events will consist of women's doubles and men's doubles on Saturday and mixed doubles on Sunday. Medals will be awarded for first, second and third place in each age group.

Players must register by April 12. Registration costs \$70 for one day or \$85 for both days. To register online, please visit calvertcounty.perfectmind.com and use the following activity numbers:

- Ages 19-34: Activity #442855
- Ages 35-49: Activity #442856
- Ages 50-64: Activity #442857
- Ages 65 and older: Activity #442858

Proceeds from the tournament benefit the Therman Gray Memorial Scholarship. Calvert County Parks & Recreation operates this program in memory of the late Therman Gray, a former Calvert County Government employee who was active in working with and mentoring Calvert County's youth. The

scholarship helps those who wish to participate in Parks & Recreation programs but lack the funds to do so by subsidizing program costs. The program also encourages young adults to pursue a career in the field of parks and recreation through a continuing education scholarship.

The Calvert County Department of Parks & Recreation strives to enhance the health, economy and well-being of the Calvert County community through sustainable practices, leisure opportunities and environmental stewardship. For more information about Parks & Recreation facilities and programs, visit online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/ParksandRecreation.

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

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

Living Well With Diabetes

SIX-WEEK WORKSHOP

Southern Pines Senior Center, Lusby

20 Appeal Lane, Lusby, MD 20657

Tuesdays, April 16 - May 21 | 1-3:30 p.m.

Calvert Pines Senior Center, Prince Frederick

450 W. Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Tuesdays, June 25 - July 30 | 1-3:30 p.m.

FREE!

Get the support you need while exploring strategies that promote well-being and decrease the risk of complications associated with diabetes. Learn simple techniques to manage your symptoms and receive effective ways to talk with your doctor and family about your health.



**To register, please call
410-535-5400, ext. 514.**

Funding for these workshops is provided by the Maryland Department of Aging, Title IIID funds.

April Showers Bring Flood Risks

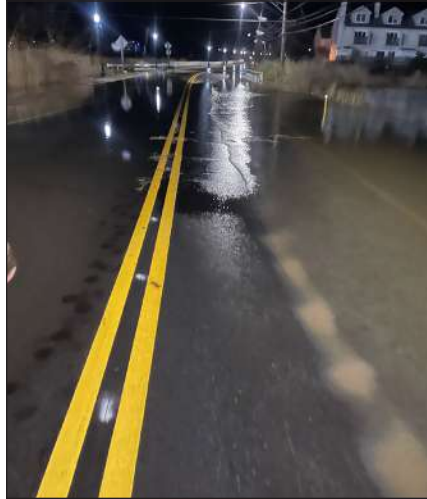
Prepare for Emergencies During Flood Awareness Month

With April designated as Flood Awareness Month, Calvert County Government urges residents to take proactive steps in understanding and preparing for flood hazards. Calvert County is susceptible to various flood risks throughout the year, such as storm surges, heavy rainfalls and coastal flooding.

Flooding is the most prevalent natural hazard in Maryland. Armed with the right information and tools, residents can be prepared for when flooding strikes:

- **Make a Plan:** Have a household emergency plan that includes emergency contacts, a meeting place and communication plan with others in your household, and how to meet any special needs.
- **Build a Kit:** Assemble an emergency kit with essentials like water, food, medications and important documents.
- **Stay Informed:** Sign up for local alerts and monitor weather updates.
- **Property Protection:** Consider flood insurance, ensure equipment like sump pumps operate correctly, elevate utilities and use sandbags or other barriers to mitigate floodwater damage.
- **Report Flood Prone Areas:** Report nuisance tidal flooding, precipitation-caused flooding and coastal storm damage using the MyCoast Maryland mobile app or website. Citizens are reminded to always follow safety precautions when making flood reports: do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters, and stay off bridges over fast-moving water, which can wash bridges away without warning.

A centerpiece of this year's Flood Awareness Month is a series of educational videos set to be released every Tuesday in April on the county's YouTube channel. These videos will cover topics such as floodplain awareness, floodplain mitigation planning, floodplain community ratings and the National Flood Insurance Program.



In addition to the video series, Calvert County is making updates to critical resources aimed at bolstering the community's resilience to flood hazards. Later this April, the county will unveil an updated flood hazard map that will provide residents with more detailed, accessible information on flood risks in their specific areas. Furthermore, updates to the Calvert County Flood Mitigation Plan and an improved Community Rating System (CRS) rating are on the horizon. These enhancements promise to bring valuable benefits to the community, including reduced flood insurance rates through the CRS program, in recognition of stronger protections and preparedness measures against flood hazards.

Residents are encouraged to learn more about the county's floodplain management efforts by visiting www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Floodplain.

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

Hospice of the Chesapeake's Culinary Event Raises \$100K



Hospice of the Chesapeake President and CEO Becky Miller, center, poses with, from left, Brittany, Bill, Roger and Diane Murphy from the events Presenting Sponsor, Floor Systems.

The Calvert County community came together to enjoy fine cuisine, local wines and spirited dancing, helping to raise more than \$100,000 for Hospice of the Chesapeake at the 11th annual Culinary Event held March 22 at The Hall at Huntingtown. All proceeds will be used to grow and strengthen programs in Calvert County and provide direct support to local patients and families living with illness and loss.

As guests enjoyed dinner, Hospice of the Chesapeake's Director of Community Health Faith Fitzgerald talked about a major initiative that benefited from last year's event. The Burnett Center for Hope & Healing, formerly the Burnett Calvert Hospice House, was reopened in November with a new purpose of focusing on hope and healing of the Calvert County community through a variety of experiential teaching, learning and partnership opportunities. "Hope and healing are a critical part of our care continuum," Fitzgerald said. "The Burnett Center's vision is serving community members who are at different

points in living with their diseases."

Funds from this year's event will continue to benefit programs at the Burnett Center as well as hospice and supportive care for residents of Calvert County. "By joining us tonight, you are supporting those who are making change happen, those who are seeking new and innovative approaches, and those who are expanding on that original vision," President and CEO Becky Miller said.

The organization is grateful for the generous support of its many sponsors, including Presenting sponsor Floor Systems; Vintners Blend sponsors Kelly Generator & Equipment, Inc.; and Maertens Fine Jewelers; Malbec Sponsors Lee Funeral Homes; Peggy McKelly; and Michael & Karen Sharpe; and Rosé sponsor Gail Siegel, O'Brien Realty.

The nonprofit also would like to thank its event partners, The Hall at Huntingtown, Maryland Country Caterers, Event Pro, and NightLife.

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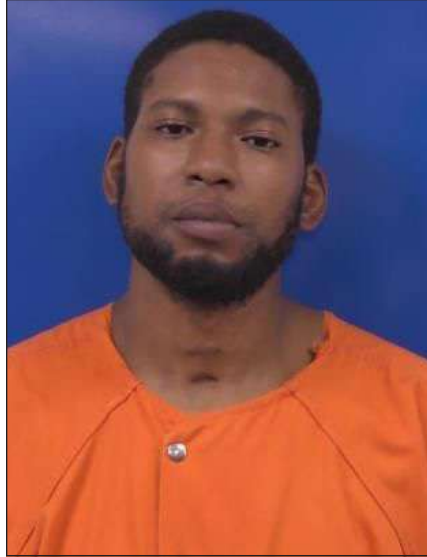
Guilty Plea Entered in Yardley Hills Murder

Anthony Hill, 28, of Washington, DC pleaded guilty on March 28 in Calvert County Circuit Court to second degree murder, use of a handgun in a crime of violence, and unlawful possession of a regulated firearm. The charges resulted from the August 1, 2023, shooting death of Dakarai N. Milburn in the Yardley Hills subdivision of Prince Frederick.

Sentencing has been scheduled for July 1, 2024, before Judge Mark S. Chandlee. Hill is facing a maximum of 75 years incarceration, including at least 5 years without the possibility of parole.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lee Ann Bell and Assistant State's Attorney Allison Walton.

Press Release from Calvert County State's Attorney



Anthony Hill

Fire Damages Sunderland Home

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A fire that damaged a single-family home on March 31 in Sunderland has been ruled accidental by the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office.

The fire at 1110 Claggett Road caused \$100,000 damage to the structure and \$25,000 damage to the contents. James Mackall was listed as the owner/occupant.

According to the fire marshal's office, "The fire originated in the basement of the dwelling and spread to the remainder of the residence. The cause was determined to be a space heater placed too close to combustibles. One occupant sustained a minor burn injury but refused medical service. The occupants were assisted by the American Red Cross.



Photo from Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office

A smoke alarm was present and did activate.

The primary responding fire company was the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department. It took 40 firefighters 30 minutes to bring the blaze under control.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Calvert County Board of Elections Provides Voting Information for 2024 Primary Election

As the Maryland primary election approaches, it is essential for Calvert County residents to be informed about important voting information. The primary election will take place on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, and it is crucial for all eligible voters to exercise their right to vote.

Voter Registration

The last day to register in advance to vote or to change your voter information is Tuesday, April 23, 2024. Same-day voter registration will also be available at any voting location during early voting and on primary election day. For more information about voter registration, visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/VoterRegistration.

Polling Place Changes

In January, Calvert County voters in the Dunkirk, St. Leonard and Lusby areas were notified by mail of polling place changes. Voters can confirm their polling locations online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/PollingPlaces or through Maryland Voter Services at <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/PollingPlaceSearch>.

Sample Ballots

Sample ballots will be mailed to voters beginning April 12, 2024. A sample ballot includes an example of the actual ballot the voter will receive, including the date of the election, a list of candidates and ballot measures the voter is entitled to vote on, voter precinct information, polling location and voting instructions. Voters are encouraged to research and fill out their sample ballot. Voters are allowed to bring their sample ballot with them when voting. Sample ballots will also be available through the Election Board website at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Vote.

www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Vote.

Early Voting

Registered voters can vote early in person from Thursday, May 2 through Thursday, May 9, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, including weekends, at the following locations:

- Community Resources Building
30 Duke St. in Prince Frederick
- Southern Community Center
20 Appeal Lane in Lusby
- Ward Farm Park Vote Center
10455 Ward Road in Dunkirk

Learn more at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/EarlyVoting.

Vote by Mail

Registered voters may choose to vote by mail. To have a ballot mailed to you prior to election day, applications must be received (not just postmarked) by the Election Board by Tuesday, May 7, 2024. Ballots have begun to be mailed to voters who have requested to vote by mail.

Requests for internet-delivered ballots must be submitted by Friday, May 10; requests for in-person pickup of ballots may be requested by Tuesday, May 14.

To complete an application online, visit vote.md.gov/NeedBallot. Voters may also request a mail-in ballot form by calling the Calvert County Board of Elections at 410-535-2214.

After a mail-in ballot is received and completed, voters may submit the completed ballot by mail using the included prepaid envelope or by placing it in one of the four secure drop boxes provided throughout the county, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, until Tuesday, May 14, at 8 p.m. Drop boxes are under surveillance and ballots are retrieved daily by Board of Elections staff at the fol-

lowing locations:

Community Resources Building, 30 Duke St. in Prince Frederick

- Southern Community Center
20 Appeal Lane in Lusby
- Calvert Library Fairview Branch
8120 Southern Maryland Blvd. in Owings
- Northeast Community Center
4075 Gordon Stinnett Ave. in Chesapeake Beach

If voting by mail, be sure to follow all instructions provided with the ballot. Learn more at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/VoteByMail.

Primary Election Day Information

Voters may cast their ballot at their assigned polling center on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The least crowded time to vote on election day is typically between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Voters may bring their sample ballots with them when they cast their vote.

Transportation

During the 2024 primary election in Calvert County residents have access to various transportation providers. Regularly scheduled public transportation service will be available during early voting and on primary election day. Visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/BusSchedules for fares, routes and schedules.

Public Transportation provides point to point paratransit services upon request for qualifying seniors or disabled to all polling locations, except Plum Point Elementary. For more information, visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/ParaTransit. The Office on Aging coordinates with Lifestyles, Inc. to provide point to point

service for seniors and persons with disabilities at a sliding scale; please contact the Office on Aging at 410-535-4606 for more information.

Preliminary Results

After Maryland polls close on Tuesday, May 14, citizens can tune in to the Calvert County Government channels at www.YouTube.com/CalvertCountyGov or Comcast channel 99 or 1070 to view preliminary results for state and local contests.

Preliminary results will not be released until all polls in Maryland have closed. All results are unofficial until all mail-in and provisional ballots have been canvassed and counted and results are certified by the Election Board.

For more information on voter registration, early voting locations, preliminary results from the State Board of Elections and other important details about the Maryland primary election, visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Vote. Citizens may also contact the Calvert County Election Board office at 410-535-2214 or elections@calvertcountymd.gov. The Election Board office is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 30 Duke St. in Prince Frederick, lower level. Stay up to date with Calvert County election information on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CalvertElectionBoard.

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

Governor Blamed for Calvert Budget Crunch

Fisher: There's No Legislative Remedy

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

As the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) begins in earnest next week working on next fiscal year's budget, they are facing a two-pronged budget squeeze from the state. County schools are facing a \$22.5 million budget cut from the state due to the county's alleged wealth. That wealth is due in part to the existence of two utility plants, Exelon's Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, and the Dominions Cove Point LNG plant. Yet the county still is negotiating on the revenue it will receive next year from those two plants.

The staff recommended budget the BOCC will use as a baseline had anticipated \$69 million from those two plants. Because the issue has not been resolved, the flat budget includes the use of \$28 million in fund balance to balance the budget.

It has been suggested at public meetings that the legislature rectify the situation. But Del. Mark Fisher (R: 29C) says there is no legislative remedy for the county's woes. Fisher, in an April 2 interview with the County Times, talked about what has caused the problem.

Fisher said, "Calvert County invited years ago a nuclear power plant and an LNG plant to locate in the county. This happened many, many years ago. And the LNG plant was then converted from an import plant to an export plant. And, the county entered into a fixed payment agreement, which are PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreements for taxation. And the reason the county effectively invited these facilities was twofold. One was because they paid an enormous amount of taxes, which helps to fund public schools and other county services, but also because they, of course, have high paying jobs."

Fisher explained, "The governor decided this session because of the ridiculous overspending of, quite frankly, the governor and his party, and they are overspending. There is no one that would deny that he decided to take the county's surplus, which was created by those two facilities largely and put it into the state budget. So literally he stole Calvert County's surplus."

Fisher said, "Most counties would never want an LNG plant or a nuclear power plant in their county. Most people...they would say no, I don't want those here."

Fisher added, "Whether or not the so-called negative externalities are real or imagined by those two things is less important than the fact that we took them willingly in Calvert County. And the tradeoff

was we're going to get a lot of high paying jobs and we're going to get a lot of revenue to pay for county services and especially the public schools. And so, our county has been operating very conservatively, fiscally for many years. And then because the state isn't acting the same way, they came in and grabbed our surplus. And so, then the next question is, how can the governor grab your surplus? How can he do that?"

Fisher answered, "The answer is simple. For one, both of the fixed tax agreements with the nuclear power plant and the LNG plant expired in, I believe 2022, that timeline. So, in other words, during the pandemic, the county began renegotiating those. And of course, it's just the county, it's not me up here in the state. It's pure county authority. And the LNG plant has, which is really out of the two of them, the one that pays an enormous amount of revenue. The LNG plant has been playing hardball with Calvert County. And that is to say they haven't renewed that agreement. So, the county issued a temporary tax credit, and they did so with the goodwill of understanding that they would eventually renegotiate a PILOT agreement, not just for the LNG plant, but also for the nuclear power plant."

Fisher noted, "To give you an idea of why that matters, in Maryland law, a PILOT agreement that a county has with a major employer is not considered part of the wealth effect, but a tax credit is. And so consequently the governor could, he didn't have to, but he could choose to steal the money, and he did. In the event the county renegotiates a PILOT agreement for each of those two facilities, which of course they will, then that will not be included in the wealth effect."

Fisher further explained, "The problem now is that you now have two facilities, both of whom know that they have leverage over Calvert County because of this state law, which is a wealth effect where they steal from the fiscally responsible and reallocate money to the fiscally irresponsible. And that is really what is happening now. And that state law has been in effect for more than two decades ever since Thornton was put into place for that sole purpose, to steal from the so-called responsible."

Fisher says Calvert isn't the first county it's happened to, it occurs every year.

Fisher said, "The lobbyists for the LNG plant, which is now owned by Berkshire Hathaway, one of the largest companies in the world, those lobbyists are saying that the LNG plant's only worth \$4 billion. Remember what Calvert County receives,

it negotiates, is based on that amount. Well, there's a problem with that. When Dominion built the facility 12-14 years ago, it cost \$4 billion. Berkshire bought the facility in 2020 for \$8 billion. So, it's worth \$8 billion at least. And so, Calvert County has appealed the valuation and saying that it's obviously worth what they paid for, which is \$8 billion. And, if it were assessed and a PILOT agreement were to be put in place, Calvert County would be doing extraordinarily well. The problem is Berkshire is fighting like crazy through the appeals process to say it's really not worth a whole lot. And the reason why this should matter to the citizens of Calvert County isn't just for school funding and for county services funding and for the Sheriff's Department's funding and so forth, it should matter because the people who technically are paying those taxes to Calvert County are people who are receiving the natural gas, which is Europe. So, 84 percent of the natural gas currently is being exported to Europe, and the rest is being exported to Japan and India."

Fisher is expecting a ruling soon and if the county loses, they can appeal to the tax court, he said.

But he said, "I kind of smell a rat because if you're the governor of Maryland and you are a spend thrift, you're spending like

crazy, you would want the LNG plant to be valued as much as possible because the state gets a good portion of the revenue as well. But the governor isn't interested in helping in this issue. He's not even talking about how this facility should be properly valued. And so, I find that very odd, on the one hand, and on the other hand, he took all the money from Calvert County and that makes it even odder. And so, it's not personal with him. It's just a spending problem. He has a spending problem. And it sounds a little corrupt to me, quite frankly. I smell corruption. When you have a governor who's basically saying he's not going to try to have a conversation with the local stakeholders about the valuation of a facility when there's a matter of public record. Because it's a publicly traded company that purchased it for \$8 billion."

Fisher said he's looked at the matter every which way and doesn't believe politics is at play, given that the governor is a Democrat and Calvert is now majority Republican.

Expecting a resolution shortly, he said, "So for next budget year we should be in decent shape. But this one, it doesn't change the fact that the governor literally stole this money out of the budget. And that is a fact."

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Grand Opening Set for New Twin Beaches Library

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

April 16 at 2 p.m. will be a milestone a long time in the making. That's when the ceremonial ribbon will be cut, and the doors will swing open for the new Twin Beaches Library in North Beach.

The library is moving from leased space in Chesapeake Beach. Calvert Library Executive Director Carrie Willson said, "My kind of assumption is that anytime we're leasing a space, that we don't intend to do that forever. I know that at least 20 years ago the plan was to move the library to North Beach. It's taken about that long to actually get a new building."

Lack of space was the glaring problem. But Willson noted, "We made every effort to make it as ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible as possible. And so, we even moved some of the shelving ranges a little further apart, maybe six or seven years ago to allow a wheelchair to get up and down each of the aisles. But the parking is at such an angle that if you are actually in a wheelchair, or have mobility issues, it's really challenging to get into the front door of that Captain's Quarters location."

She added, "There is not a meeting room per se. So, the children's story time happened on the carpet in between the stacks on the children's side of the library, which limited the number of people who could come to a story time program. And then if there was a program happening in what we called the meeting room, it meant that everybody at the public computers and anybody who was browsing the teen section was also involved in that program because there just weren't separate spaces."

Willson observed, "There's so much happening at any given time in addition to people who are studying or remote working. The list goes on of things that make a modern library. So, we're really grateful for this new space."

Of the time it has taken to get to this point, Willson said, "It's difficult for a small county like Calvert to come up with money for a capital project. So, thankfully there's a county capital grant program that's run by the Maryland State Library Agency, and that provided almost half of the funding for this project. And so, without that program, which recently in the last few years expanded from a \$5 million program to a \$7.5 million program, we were able to get a significant amount of funding that made it possible."

The site selection featured a battle between North Beach and Chesapeake Beach, but Willson said, "I think it's worked out. It is such an ideal spot, basically a block off the boardwalk, the views of the Bay are tremendous. (Chesapeake Beach) Mayor (Pat) Mahoney, I think, has a corner picked out for his morning newspaper reading. The Chesapeake Beach Town Council and the North Beach Town Council and mayors have both all been super supportive of the project."

"It's kind of a jaw dropping," Willson said about what people will see when they enter the new library. "It makes me emotional. I'm so excited. It's really beautiful.



Staff of the new Twin Beaches library. Front row: Sandy Hunting, Assistant Branch Manager (black sweater) and Melissa Gray, Branch Manager (red dress, denim jacket). 2nd row: Heather Thielker (gray shirt), Heather Malcomson (teal shirt), Denise Alexander (purple shirt over teal long sleeve), Jennifer Miller (gray jacket with red turtleneck), Nicole Hurley (gray sweater over black dress). Last row: Erin Gage (gray jacket), Sally Anderson (purple jacket), Shannon Gibbons (black jacket).

It's large; it's spacious."

Willson did a verbal tour: "The first thing you encounter on the second floor, which is kind of the main floor of the library, is the adult collection and adult computers. There's a cafe area where folks can get things out of vending machines and have lunch from one of the surrounding restaurants brought in. There's your typical copier and the information desk, circulation desk combo where you can get help from a staff member. There's comfortable seating with views to the Bay, both inside and outside."

Willson went on to explain, "On the second floor, there's a porch area with some outdoor seating. And then there's a 100-person meeting room on that floor as well, which is dividable into two smaller meeting rooms for groups to use or for library programs to happen in."

She said, "And then if you walk or take the elevator to the third floor, you're on this really gorgeous roof that you can see from; the outside is visible from the inside. So, you've got all the exposed beams of the roof. The children's side takes up one half of the third floor, and the teen area takes up the other half. So, it's tremendously exciting to have that much space for the young people in the community to make their own."

"There's a podcasting booth up there for all ages, not just for kids and teens, but for adults as well. That can be used for telehealth appointments or job interviews or recording a podcast or recording an oral history, you name it. And that's fully equipped. There's also Makerspace on the third floor, again for older young people and, and adults. So there's a laser cutter, a 3D printer, a vinyl cutter. So, you can design and print your own stickers or design and etch a glass, like a glass or a coffee cup or a metal travel cup. It's just tremendously cool."

The Children's Imagination Station is on the third floor, an imaginative play area that we have in each of the Calvert libraries," Willson said. "There's expanded space for that. And then if you walk all the way

toward the Bay there up on the third floor, there's a kind of giant terrace that you can see from outdoors that has seating for small children, for teens and for adults. So, there's a really amazing space that you can lounge in, sit on, read on, look at the Bay, watch the ospreys. It's pretty incredible."

Willson said the architects who designed the library were very conscious of the setting. "The library was designed for the setting, for the building to stand out as a public library and that kind of beacon of lifelong learning, but also kind of fit in with the beach."

"I think the end product people are generally really happy with," she said. "The gray siding makes it look very beach like."

Willson added, "The roof that's on the building is called a butterfly roof. But I think you've heard me refer to it as an open book. That was a nice touch."

When Willson was in Hagerstown before coming to Calvert she helped move a library there, so "I had a little bit of a taste of what it was, but generally it's as big a project as you can imagine. So, the staff at Twin Beaches have been incredible. And the move team that's worked on the project has done an incredible job. But it involved packing up everything that we needed to take with us, and not the things we didn't, and then hiring a moving company to physically move the collection from where it was to where it is now. So that mapping each part of the collection to its new shelving units, and every box coming from this place in the old building and going to this place in the new building."

But she added, "We're also moving into a space that's four times the size of our old space. And we've added a lot of staff, so we needed new tape dispensers and more pencil holders and all of the things that go into a building; we needed lots more clocks for the walls and more trash cans. And so, between the county and the library staff, and the architects and the project managers, it's been quite the project. But we've had a really fantastic team working on the project."

Twin Beaches Branch Manager Melissa Gray said, "We are very excited for the next chapter of welcoming the community to enjoy and experience this amazing space. This building was designed with intentional gathering spaces, so we are looking forward to being a place where people come together to explore, learn, and grow."

The grand opening comes right after National Library Week (April 7-13). In honor of the week, Southern Maryland Regional Library Association released some facts about libraries:

- Library materials have circulated 546,331 times, including checkouts and renewals.
- 37,385 people used their library cards and 4,240 people signed up for new library cards.
- So far this fiscal year (July 1, 2023-March 30, 2024), Southern Maryland public library customers checked out 738,879 physical materials and 298,421 digital materials.
- Mobile hotspots for those unserved/underserved by broadband have circulated 1,164 times.

Most popular online resources (all free):

- LinkedIn Learning: An online educational platform covering business, technology and creative skills with expert-led course videos.
- ConsumerReports.org: A provider of unbiased reports on a variety of products to help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions through test results, ratings, recommendations and buying guides.
- Brainfuse HelpNow: A live, online learning platform providing homework help, writing labs, adult learning resources, and much more.

Top 3 Adult Fiction Titles, year to date:

- *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus
 - *The Exchange: After the Firm* by John Grisham
 - *Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros
- Top 3 Adult Nonfiction Titles, year to date:
- *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann
 - *The Iliad* by Gillian Cross and Neil Packer
 - *The Best of Me* by David Sedaris

Top 3 Young Adult Fiction Titles, year to date:

- *One of Us is Lying* by Karen M. McManus
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Top 3 Children's Fiction Titles, year to date:

- *The Deep End* by Jeff Kinney
 - *Loyalty* by Avi
 - *Unlocked* by Shannon Messenger
- Top 3 E-books and Audiobooks:
- *Pretty Girls* by Karin Slaughter
 - *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
 - *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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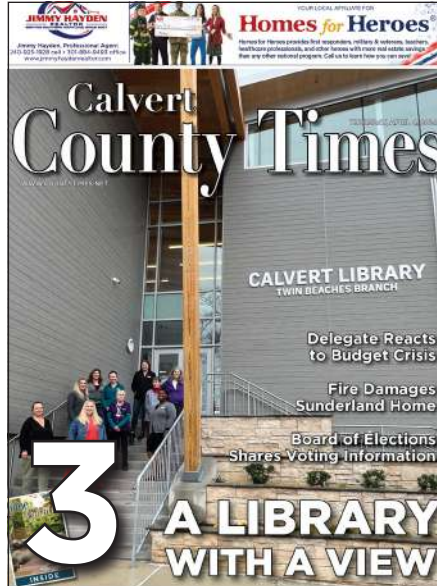
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Delegate blames governor for Calvert budget woes



LOCAL 8
North Beach nature center celebrates one year anniversary



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Beach towns get new library building

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, APR 4	FRI, APR 5	SAT, APR 6	SUN, APR 7
 PM Showers Hi: 57° Lo: 39°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 54° Lo: 37°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 38°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 57° Lo: 40°
MON, APR 8	TUE, APR 9	WED, APR 10	THU, APR 11
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 60° Lo: 47°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 68° Lo: 49°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 64° Lo: 53°	 Showers Hi: 66° Lo: 56°

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