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Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024

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SHERIFF ROLLS OUT COMMUNITY POLICING

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Sheriff Rolls Out Community Policing Initiatives

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Ribbon cutting ceremonies were held March 5 for the new Calvert County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) district substations in Lusby and Dunkirk. The initiative is part of Sheriff Ricky Cox's community policing effort which also includes assigning specific deputies to county neighborhoods.

Cox explained to the Police Accountability Board (PAB) at their Feb. 29 meeting, "I think we have up to 15 neighborhoods. So, any neighborhood in Calvert County that wants one, a lot of them at HOAs (homeowners associations) or the president, reaches out to us and we can assign a deputy to your neighborhood. What the goal is, or my thinking of this, that a lot of times people call and give complaints to the sheriff's office. They'll call, next shift comes on, and then it's forgotten about. So, you have direct contact with the deputy that is assigned to your neighborhood. We'll assign him or her to your neighborhood, and they field complaints. You have a direct phone line to that person. And I think what it has been doing is what we're seeing is that those complaints are taken care of rather than it's escalating to a bigger problem inside that neighborhood. We can get on it and give you resources and it corrects some of these problems that these neighborhoods are having."

Cox added, "Rather than calling the sheriff's office (and it's) forgotten about next

shifts or they don't know anything about it. So, they're all posted at the office that say if you're having an issue, the lieutenant or the commander will call that deputy and shoot him an email. But we've been seeing that they're calling them directly, emailing them directly."

Cox noted that the 16th neighborhood had been added the day before. "It kind of started at the neighborhood watch meetings and kind of just grew from there. So, when I went to the neighborhood watch meetings, we had four or five people show up, and I don't think you're really achieving anything when you have four or five people there. So now, if you have a direct line to a deputy that's assigned to your neighborhood, regular working, (it's) by far better than what we've been doing."

Cox observed, "A lot of them (the deputies), are invited to their community events, and getting our deputies involved in these neighborhoods and the kids, it's actually been working out very well."

Cox was asked what results they've seen. He responded, "We're still pretty new into it, but honestly, the biggest portion of it is a communication tool," adding, "That's kind of hard to quantify. Just based on communication because if you're sitting in front of the bank, the bank doesn't get robbed."

The district offices are part of the effort, Cox said. Lt. Col. Dave Payne said, "That's going to give us the ability to be a lot more efficient and stay in those areas than come



Ribbon cutting at the new district station in Lusby

down (to the main office) because currently what happens is, prior in Dunkirk if a deputy had something (he had) to come to Prince Frederick for that. If you've driven up there, it's a 20-minute drive to get up there now. So, 20 minutes down, 20 minutes back, 20 minutes of messing around, he's gone an hour and that's left an hour, and it's just not acceptable. So, we are keeping the deputies in those areas as we can."

He noted they also have gas cards, so they don't have to come to Prince Frederick to fill up. Cox said, "We had one gas pump to fill the entire county, and they'd have to drive out of the patrol and then get gas to go back. As far as how much that costs for the deputy doing that, for just getting gas and then there and back, it does save when you add it up for the year. And keeping those deputies in the patrol cars and improving the response times is the whole goal and key to this whole district thing."

State's Attorney Robert Harvey told the PAB, "I'm thrilled that the sheriff mentioned a districting project that they have just initiated. That has the capability of revolutionizing law enforcement in this county. That's something that is completely new, hasn't happened since I've lived here 40 years. So, it's a great concept. I'm hoping that the state's attorney's office can eventually, once it gets on the ground, tie into that program and have prosecutors working directly with people in the district stations."

Also, at the PAB meeting Cox reported an 80 percent reduction in Part One crimes in 2023 and a four percent reduction in fatal accidents compared to the previous year.

Cox also boasted of a 51 percent reduction in use of force complaints. He said, "That's a big number. And I think that goes to us going to the escalating training, to see the CIT training that we send the deputies to, that we host here, right in Calvert County, to be able to talk down a person that's outraged or rather than putting hands on them like we were trained in the past. Now we're talking the situations down to where we can come down on their level and talk to them and hopefully have a good outcome."



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Tradition Alive and Well at Watermen's Wharf



The popular docking competition at the annual Watermen's Festival. Photos from Calvert County Watermen's Association

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The 2022-2023 season saw the landing of 22,400 bushels of oysters. That was one of the highlights of the Calvert County Watermen's Wharf as presented March 5 to the Calvert County Board Of County Commissioners by the committee charged with the Solomon's wharf's oversight.

The facility is rented by the county from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's Chesapeake Biological Lab and a 10-year renewal was secured by the committee in the last year. All 12 slips at the dock are leased (at \$1,000 yearly) and there's a waiting list of five, according to Tom Jones, deputy Director for General Services and the county's representative on the committee.

The wharf is the site of the annual Watermen's Festival in September that last year was attended by more than 6,000 people. The festival includes the popular docking competition.

The committee was formed by the commissioners on Aug. 9, 2011. Jones said, "The purpose of the committee was to provide an oversight of the wharf leased by the county for the use of waterman engaged in commercial fisheries." He said of future goals, "The Waterman's Wharf Oversight Committee will continue to ensure that all slips are filled, and the water and the wharf will continue to operate as a working waterman's wharf."

During the past year also, Dan Baker, the county's safety Officer, was given the added day-to-day duty of dockmaster. Jones said, "This position will also review all applicants submitted each year for slips to ensure information of vessels."

Jones explained that a dollar paid for each bushel of oysters goes to the Calvert County Watermen's Association for an annual seeding program. The seeding

occurs in the Spring.

Currently there's one oyster buyer who comes to the dock and purchases directly off the boats. Other seafood products are tricked out to buyers, such as restaurants.

Committee member Stacy Hutchinson, Associate Director of Administration and Facilities at the Chesapeake Biological Lab (CBL), said, "One of our most treasured partnerships and one of our proudest is with the watermen and what we can do that with the county and provide space for the watermen. We have a great relationship with them. A lot of times when they're seeing things out on the water that don't coincide with what our science might be telling us, we have that wonderful relationship with them that we can have those conversations."

She explained, "Um, CBL was founded in 1925, so we're embarking on our 100th anniversary. Um, it was the very first state funded, uh, research laboratory, uh, founded by Dr. Truitt, which one of our newest buildings is named after. Um, we, uh, advise the state and national agencies on sustainable fisheries management and breaking new ground and understanding how chemicals move between the atmosphere, sediments, and water. We also work on nutrient dynamics in the food web. We like to refer to ourselves as researchers that cover the Arctic to the tropics because we have researchers in all of those areas."

Hutchinson said CBL is getting ready to begin construction of a new 13,000-square-foot building on Farren Avenue facing the waterfront.

Baker said, "Calvert County watermen love the Waterman's Wharf because it makes it easy access for them to bring their trailers down with a hundred crab pots on it. They can put them right on their boat. It works so great for everybody, and it is definitely needed."

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Commissioners Review Transportation Capital Plan

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) concluded their review of capital budget request at their March 5 meeting with a look at a proposed \$126.2 million, six-year transportation proposal.

Capital Projects Analyst Veronica Atkinson explained in a memo, "Finance & Budget has examined the DPW Transportation's FY 2025-FY 2030 six-year CIP Staff Recommended Budget, totaling \$126,280,000. DPW Transportation encompasses various vital initiatives, including county road repairs, county road paving, culvert repairs and salt barns. Moreover, DPW Transportation addresses non-specific transportation projects, incorporating roadway safety improvements, sidewalk repair programs as well as bridge and dam maintenance and repairs. Fiscal Impact: The fiscal impact for DPW Transportations 6-year CIP proposed budget reflects \$129,993,060, funding is broken out below:

- Paygo/General Fund: \$ 18,577,060
- Debt Bond: \$109,786,000
- Grant/Other: \$ 1,630,000
- Total: \$129,993,060

Projects included in next year's proposed capital budget are:

- Appeal Salt Barn
- All-day Bus Turn Around
- Countywide ROW Acquisitions
- County Paving
- Barstow Salt Barn
- Breezy Roundabout
- Little Cove Point Road Curve
- Mill Branch Rd Culvert
- Prince Frederick Loop Road NE Seg-Chesapeake BLVD./Fox Run BLVD
- Stephen Reid Rd.
- Warren Drive

Non-Specific Transportation Projects include:

- Bridge and Dam Maintenance Repairs
- Roadway Safety Improvements
- SHA Signal Matching Funds
- Sidewalk Program
- Stormwater Management



Commissioner Mike Hart

Maintenance

- Storm Drainage Projects
- Transportation Safety Projects
- Maryland NPDES MS4

The total FY '25 request is \$19.6 million, of which \$11.5 million is for paving.

During the presentation Commissioner Mike Hart argued for removing the \$2 million in later years or the Lusby Parkway extension. He asked Director of Public Works and Transportation J.R. Cosgrove if the county owned any of the land involved and he said it didn't. Hart replied that it should be removed. Cosgrove said, "That was a project that was set in there years ago and it's just stayed in the out years."

Hart said, "It should go, it should come off the books because of course the two people that own the property want us to pay for it. Absolutely they do. But it ain't our responsibility to build it. No."

Hart added, "They keep trying to slide that in for years and we have been trying to find if we owned one stitch of dirt there and we couldn't find it. So, it's not our responsibility."

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Residents Advised to Avoid Aggressive Otter

Rabies Prevention Tips Offered

Please be advised that an otter near the creek on Skinners Turn Road recently attacked two individuals who were out on the water. The otter may be protecting her pups. It's less likely, but possible, the otter may be infected with rabies or other illness. Regardless of the reason for the recent attack, for your safety, please avoid this area for the next two weeks.

The Calvert County Health Department has issued the following tips on rabies prevention:

Rabies is a deadly disease that can be transmitted from an animal infected with rabies to unvaccinated pets and to people. If untreated, rabies is almost always fatal. Rabies is known to exist in all counties in Maryland.

In Maryland, rabies is most frequently found in wildlife, most commonly raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats. Domestic animals, including livestock, are also at risk, and cats are the domestic animal most frequently identified with rabies. The last human rabies case in Maryland occurred in 1976.

To protect you and your family from rabies you should:

Protect Your Pets. Maryland State and Calvert County law requires that all dogs, cats, and ferrets be vaccinated at three to four months of age and thereafter, kept current. If your unvaccinated pet is exposed to an animal suspected of having rabies or has a wound from an unknown source, law requires that the animal be either euthanized (humanely put to sleep) or put in quarantine for six months. It is important to keep your pet's rabies vaccination up-to-date at all times.

- **Avoid contact with wild animals or stray domestic animals.** Teach your children not to play with or approach any unfamiliar animals. Do not leave pet food outdoors and never feed stray or wild animals. Never pick up injured animals from the roadside.
- **Confine pets to your home or yard.** Allowing pets to roam freely is unlawful and may result in a fine.

- **Prevent bats from entering your home.** Put screens on windows, caps on chimneys, draft-guards beneath doors to the attic and ensure all doors to the outside close securely. Inspect the inside and outside of your home and seal all holes bigger than a quarter inch. Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the signs of rabies in animals include:

- Changes in an animal's behavior
- Problems swallowing
- Increase in drool or saliva
- Wild animals that appear sick, disoriented, fearless or aggressive
- Difficulty moving or paralysis
- Wild animals or bats that are usually nocturnal are active during daylight

Rabies is a virus that invades the central nervous system and it can affect all warm-blooded animals, including humans. It is transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal or through the saliva of that animal into a fresh scratch or break in the skin. A series of post-exposure vaccinations can prevent rabies from developing. Once symptoms develop, rabies is almost always fatal.

If you have been bitten or exposed, immediately wash the wound with soap and running water to reduce the risk of getting rabies. Get the name, address and telephone number of the animal's owner. If you were bitten by a wild animal, or bat, try to capture or confine the animal if you can do so safely. If the animal must be killed, try not to damage the head. Seek medical attention immediately. Notify the Sheriff's Department of all animal bites at 410/535-2800.

In Calvert County, notify the Sheriff's Department of any stray domestic animals in your neighborhood by calling 410-535-2800

For more information on rabies go to the Centers for Disease Control site at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

District 27 Legislators to Hold Constituent Night



Del. Mark Fisher



Sen. Michael Jackson



Del. Jeffrie Long

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Calvert County residents living in Legislative District 27 are being invited to Annapolis to meet with their representatives.

Justin Thompson, Calvert constituent representative for Sen. Michael Jackson (D: 27) told the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners at their March 5 meeting, "I wanted to extend my offer to both the commissioners and the viewing public to the District 27 constituent night, which is going to be on March 21st from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Governor Calvert's House, which is 58 State Circle, Annapolis."

Thomson explained, "This is going to be a free meet and greet sort of event with all

District 27's elected officials being State Senator Michael Jackson, Delegate Mark Fisher, Delegate Kevin Harris and Delegate Jeffrie Long."

He added, "We ask that everyone RSVPs to our office by March 15, either at 410-841-3700, or michael.jackson@dotstate.md.us."

District 27 includes northern Calvert and parts of Prince George's and Charles counties. Fisher, who is a Republican, has his district (27C) entirely within Calvert. Long, a Democrat, also represents a part of Prince George's County in addition to northern Calvert. Harris' district does not include Calvert.

Jackson lives in Prince George's, while Fisher and Long live in Calvert.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Investigation Underway Following Altercation at Calvert High School

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the Administration of Calvert High School, is investigating an incident that occurred Feb. 28 at approximately 10:10 a.m. on school grounds. Preliminary investigation revealed a confrontation ensued among several students regarding a matter unrelated to the school.

The confrontation escalated and other students joined the altercation. Swift action was taken by the school administration, staff, the School Resource Officer (SRO), and school safety advocates to manage the incident and ensure the safety of all students and staff present.

"We take any incident of this nature very seriously," said Sheriff Ricky Cox. "The CCSO is collaborating closely with school administration to determine the appropriate charges for those involved."

"As your Sheriff, my utmost priority is ensuring the safety and well-being of every

student within our community. Any physical altercation on school grounds is deeply concerning, and we are committed to thoroughly investigating the incident, implementing necessary measures to prevent future occurrences, and providing support to those affected. Our focus remains steadfast on fostering a safe and secure learning environment for all students," said Sheriff Cox.

The sheriff's office would like to remind parents/guardians if you see or hear something, say something. Incidents of this nature can be reported immediately to the School Resource Officer, School Administration, or the Be Safe Maryland Tip Line: 1-833-MD-B-SAFE (1-833-632-7233) or <https://schoolsafety.maryland.gov/Pages/Tipline.aspx>. Thank you for your support and assistance in keeping our schools a safe place for our students and staff.

Press Release from CCSO

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Local Sailing Club Open House Targets New Sailors

By Henry Dishman

In what has become a nearly annual event, Solomons-based Southern Maryland Sailing Association (SMSA) is hosting the Start Sailing Now Crew Party presented by Coors Banquet Beer on Sunday, March 10th. Doors will open at 4pm and continue until 6pm. SMSA is located at 14490 Solomons Island Rd., South, on Solomons Island, across the street from the boardwalk gazebo.

The event is part of a series co-sponsored and developed by SpinSheet Magazine, an Annapolis-based publication that covers sailing on the Chesapeake Bay.

“The Crew Party’s focus, for us, has always been introducing wanna be sailors to the sport of sailing,” said event chairman and SMSA member Tim Flaherty. “Some people, especially newcomers to this area, think that because they don’t have a boat or a dock, they don’t have anyway to get out on the water and enjoy sailing. That simply is not the case.”

When SpinSheet held their first Crew Party in Annapolis a couple of decades ago, the focus was on matching race boats in need of crew with people looking go racing. While matching boats with new crew members is still a function of the crew party series, Flaherty says that focus has widened



Visitors mingle at last year's Start Sailing Now Crew Party at Southern Maryland Sailing Association in Solomons.

to sailing in general and sailing education. “People looking to go sailing, or who want to learn to sail, can come to the Crew Party and find a race boat to go out with. But there are also some opportunities to just meet new people to go out and have a sail up and down the river. SMSA also has an Adult Learn to Sail Program, a summer sailing camp for

kids, a high school sailing program, and a lot of social events where you can become involved with the sailing lifestyle.”

Flaherty went on to say that party attendees on March 10th can also find out about other sailing resources in the area. “There is a really good sailing school down the harbor from us here in Solomons that offers a vari-

ety of courses from beginner to advanced,” he said. “We can also get you signed up for the SpinSheet Crew Finder, which is an online data base to match sailors and boats in any port on the Chesapeake. You can also talk to our members and other guests about types of boats we sail in this area, what marinas people use, where there are service facilities, and anything to do being on the water. Our members are the best resource out there. We’ll have people manning stations for all of our club programs to tell you about how you can go sailing.”

Flaherty also says SpinSheet will be sending either Editor in Chief Molly Winans or Associate Publisher Chris Charbonneau to SMSA on March 10th to lead a Q&A session, and to mingle with sailors and answer questions. “I’m hoping we get lucky and both of them will show up,” he added.

Southern Maryland Sailing Association is a private club, but is open to the public for this open house. All you are asked to do is sign in on the guest book. The club bar will be open to signed-in guests, and light fare will be served midway through. There is no charge to attend. “All you need to do is show up and be ready to meet people and ask questions about sailing,” Flaherty concluded. “It’s that simple!”

CAASA Hosts ‘Comedy Invasion’ in Support of Project Graduation

The Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse, Inc. (CAASA) announces an invasion of comedy featuring comedians, Michael Palascak, Haywood Turnipseed, Jr., and Eddie Morrison. Mr. Palascak has performed on both *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. He’s also appeared on *A Little Late with Lilly Singh*, *The Tonight Show*, *Letterman*, *Craig Ferguson*, *Conan*, and was a top five finalist on *Last Comic Standing*. Mr. Turnipseed is a husband, a dad, a telephone man and a Jedi; at night he becomes a Stand-up Comic. Originally from the Holy Land of Indiana, Haywood graduated from high school in Moon Township, PA, attended two semesters at Waynesburg College, then enlisted in the US Air Force. Mr. Morrison is a DC native who has performed stand-up comedy all over the metro area. He’s appeared at the DC Improv, the Kennedy Center, the Comedy Store, and Magooby’s Joke house.

Join us for a night of comedy on Friday, April 5th at the Huntingtown High School Auditorium and come early for the Silent Auction. Lobby doors open at 6:30 pm for

the Silent Auction; auditorium doors open at 7:30 pm for seating, and the show begins at 8:00 p.m. The show is rated PG13. All proceeds from this event benefit Project Graduation, an alcohol-free and drug-free celebration for the graduating seniors from Calvert, Huntingtown, Northern and Patuxent High Schools.

Tickets are available for purchase at:

- <https://CAASAComedyInvasion2024.eventbrite.com>
- CAASA Office (30 Duke Street, Prince Frederick) — cash and check only.
- Floral Expressions in Owings — cash and check only.

Help us keep our students safe on one of the most important nights of their life — graduation. Tickets are \$35 in advance for adults, \$25 in advance for CAASA Members and students ages 13-18; and \$45 at the door the night of the performance for all ages. Ticket purchases at the door and all silent auction donations are by CASH and CHECK Only.

For further information regarding the show, please contact the CAASA Office at 410-535-3733.

COMEDY INVASION

For Project Graduation

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2024

Silent Auction at 6:30 p.m. | Auditorium Seating Open at 7:30 p.m. | Show Starts at 8 p.m.
Huntingtown High School Auditorium, 4125 Solomons Island Road, Huntingtown



MICHAEL PALASCAK is a comedian who grew up in Indiana and now lives in LA. He performed on both *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* in the same year. In addition, his résumé includes appearances on *A Little Late with Lilly Singh*, *The Tonight Show*, *Letterman*, *Craig Ferguson*, *Conan*, has a Comedy Central half hour special and was a top five finalist on *Last Comic Standing* where one judge claimed, “My first impression of Michael was a great likability. Michael’s optimism continues in the new National Lampoon series on YouTube, *The Bright Side*, where he takes a positive stance on a negative topic. Consistently writing and performing, Michael released both a new album, *The Internet Live*, through 800 Pound Gorilla and a new stand-up special called *1984* on the Dry Bar app this summer. Visit www.michaelpalascak.com for more information.



HAYWOOD TURNIPSEED JR. During the day Haywood Turnipseed Jr. is a Husband, a Dad, a Telephone Man, and a Jedi; at night he becomes a Stand-Up Comic, and occasionally a Sith Lord. Haywood likes both Michael Jackson’s & Prince’s Music; Hip-Hop; The Pittsburgh Steelers Football Team; Mambo Sauce on chicken wings; and Laughing. Originally from the Holy Land of Indiana, Haywood graduated from high school in Moon Township, PA., attended two semesters at Waynesburg College, then enlisted in the US Air Force.



EDDIE MORRISON is a D.C. native who has performed stand-up comedy all over the metro area. His career includes appearances include the DC Improv, the Kennedy Center, the Comedy Store and Magooby’s Jokehouse, where he was named runner-up at the 2015 New Comedian of the Year Competition. Eddie won Comedy Kumite 15.2 at the DC Improv in spring 2018 and Kumite 30 in spring 2021.

TICKETS

\$35 in advance
\$45 at the door (cash and check only)
\$25 for CAASA members and students 13-18

Available for purchase at (cash and check only):

CAASA Office
Prince Frederick
Floral Expressions
Owings

Tickets may also be purchased online at:

CAASAComedyInvasion2024.eventbrite.com




For more information, contact the Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse at 410-535-3733.



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, March 12, 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 meeting, Monday, March 11, 2024, 7-8 p.m.

Administrative Charging Committee meeting, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3-4:30 p.m.

Historic District Commission meeting, Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 4:30 -6:30 p.m.

Architectural Review Committee - Dunkirk Town Center meeting, Thursday, March 14, 2024, 5-6 p.m.

Architectural Review Committee - Huntingtown Town Center Meeting, Thursday, March 14, 2024, 7-8 p.m.

CALVERT Zoning Ordinance UPDATE ARTICLES 20 & 21 OF THE DRAFT 2023/24 CALVERT ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Public Comment
Period open March 8,
2024 through April 5, 2024

Public Forum, March 14,
2024, 7 p.m., Harriet E.
Brown Community Center,
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Find the full schedule and
documents online at
[www.calvertcountymd.gov/
ZoningOrdinanceUpdate](http://www.calvertcountymd.gov/ZoningOrdinanceUpdate).

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2201 with any questions.

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, May 14

For polling locations, important dates and more visit

Visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Vote

Cast your vote by mail!

Mail in ballots can be requested prior to Election Day:
Request by Tuesday, May 7 to have your ballot delivered
by mail/fax or request by Friday, May 10 to have your
ballot delivered digitally.

Want to avoid potential lines? Vote early!

Starting Thursday, May 2, through Thursday, May 9, early
vote sites will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Southern Community Center

20 Appeal Ln, Lusby, MD 20657

Community Resources Building

30 Duke St, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Ward Farm Park

10455 Ward Rd, Dunkirk, MD 20754



DOG ADOPTION FEES WAIVED THROUGH MARCH 9

The Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter is
at capacity for dogs. Regular adoption
procedures still apply. Learn more at
www.calvertcountyanimalshelter.com.

FREE PAPER SHREDDING EVENT

March 23, 2024, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Appeal Landfill, 401 Sweetwater Road in Lusby

The Calvert County Department of Public Works is
hosting a free paper shredding event for county residents
and businesses.

Shredding events are held monthly.

For information about recycling events, call
the Calvert County Department of Public
Works, Solid Waste Division &
Recycling, at 410-326-0210 or visit
www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Recycle.



VISITORS GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE!



The Calvert County Visitors Guide is available
online at www.visitcalvert.com/Brochure. Use
this guide to find shopping, restaurants and
fun attractions for the whole family.

To request a printed copy, call the Calvert
County Department of Economic
Development at 410-535-4583 or email
info@choosecalvert.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, Mar 8

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>.

Sat, Mar 9

Spring Auction

Online
12pm - Sunday, March 10 at 4pm.

Hosted by C.A.S.H. NSBE Jr., Calvert County Chapter of Maryland, a student chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)!. This online auction is a fundraising event to support the participation of our students in the National NSBE STEM annual convention scheduled for March 2024 in Atlanta, GA. Whether you're a seasoned bidder or simply want to support our cause, there's something for everyone. Plus, if bidding isn't your style, we offer a donation option too!

- To register, simply follow these steps:
1. Visit <https://app.galabid.com/cashnsbejauction>
 2. Click on the 'Register' button
 3. Follow the instructions to complete your registration.

Garden Smarter-Native Ground Covers

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10-11 a.m.

The benefits, beauty and which plants to use as native ground covers. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Poetry Share

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join fellow poets and poetry-lovers to share poetry in a casual open mic-type setting. If you'd like to stay to workshop your poetry afterwards, you are welcome! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Sun, Mar 10

Historic Homes of Prince George's County

North Beach Town Hall
1-2 p.m.

Houses that built America, right in our backyard. Join us to talk with Mary Haley-Amen. Co-sponsored by Calvert Library, Bayside History Museum and John Hanson Chapter NSDAR. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Mon, Mar 11

Book Discussion

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

Join us this month to discuss "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride. In September 1969, a fumbling, cranky old church deacon known as Sportcoat shuffles into the courtyard of the Cause Houses housing project in south Brooklyn, pulls a .38 from his pocket, and, in front of everybody, shoots the project's drug dealer at point-blank range. The reasons for this desperate burst of violence and the consequences that spring from it lie at the heart of Deacon King Kong, 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Unsung Achievements of African American Women of Calvert

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
6:45-7:45 p.m.

Michael Kent speaks on the unsung achievements of African American Women of Calvert County from the early 1800s through the 1940s, in recognition of their steadfast resilience, resourcefulness, and contributions to the advancement of our society. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Tue, Mar 12

NEW Program: 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.

Astronomy Night

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
7:30-8:30 p.m.

Come see what the night sky has to offer in the field behind Fairview. Learn about the equipment used to view the sky from the Astronomy Club of Southern Maryland. All ages welcome. Outdoor only event, weather permitting. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Wed, Mar 13

Job Seeker Resources – Skillbuilders

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

Maryland Department of Labor, Veterans Program, Senior Community Service Employment and Job Service representatives will meet with those seeking employment or career change. Walk-ins welcome on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. More job-seeker help is available on mwe-jobs.maryland.gov. If you have questions or need more information about resources available, please contact Cheryl Thorne at Maryland Department of Labor, cheryl.thorne@maryland.gov 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Resumes and Cover Letters – Skillbuilders

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 mwe-jobs.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>

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

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



County Times

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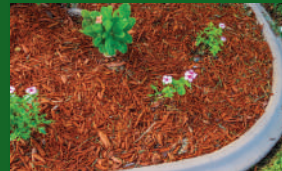
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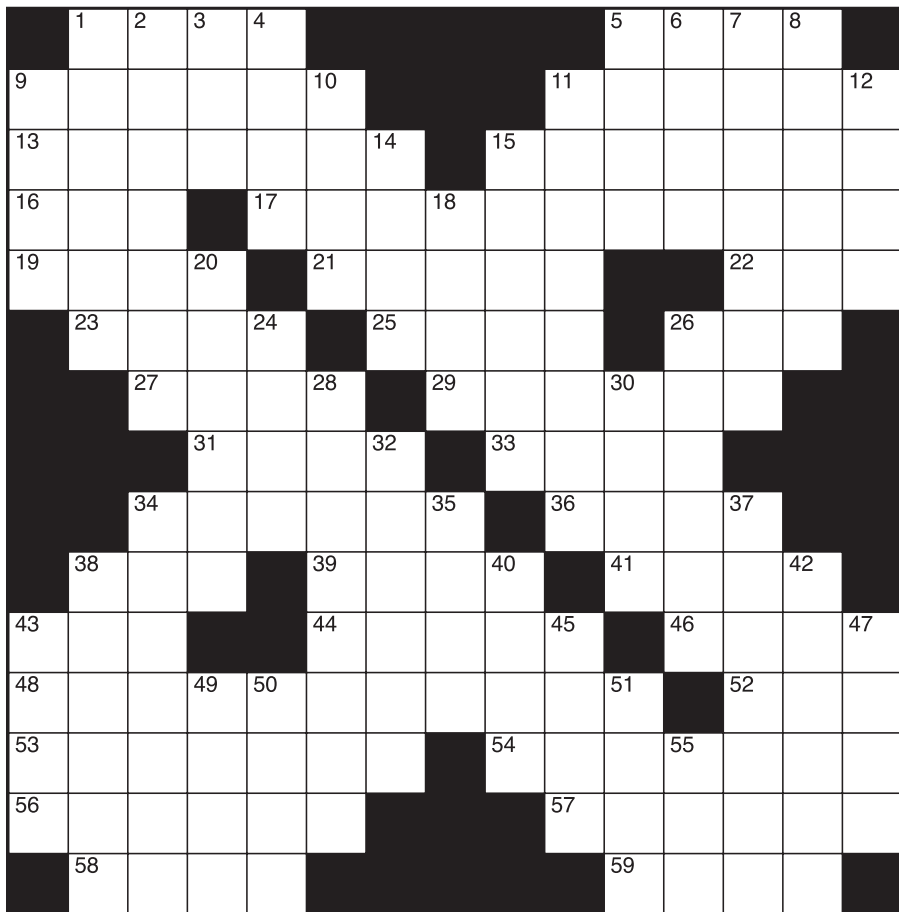
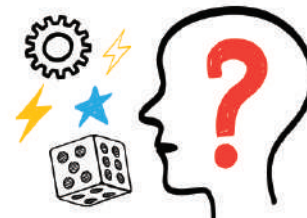
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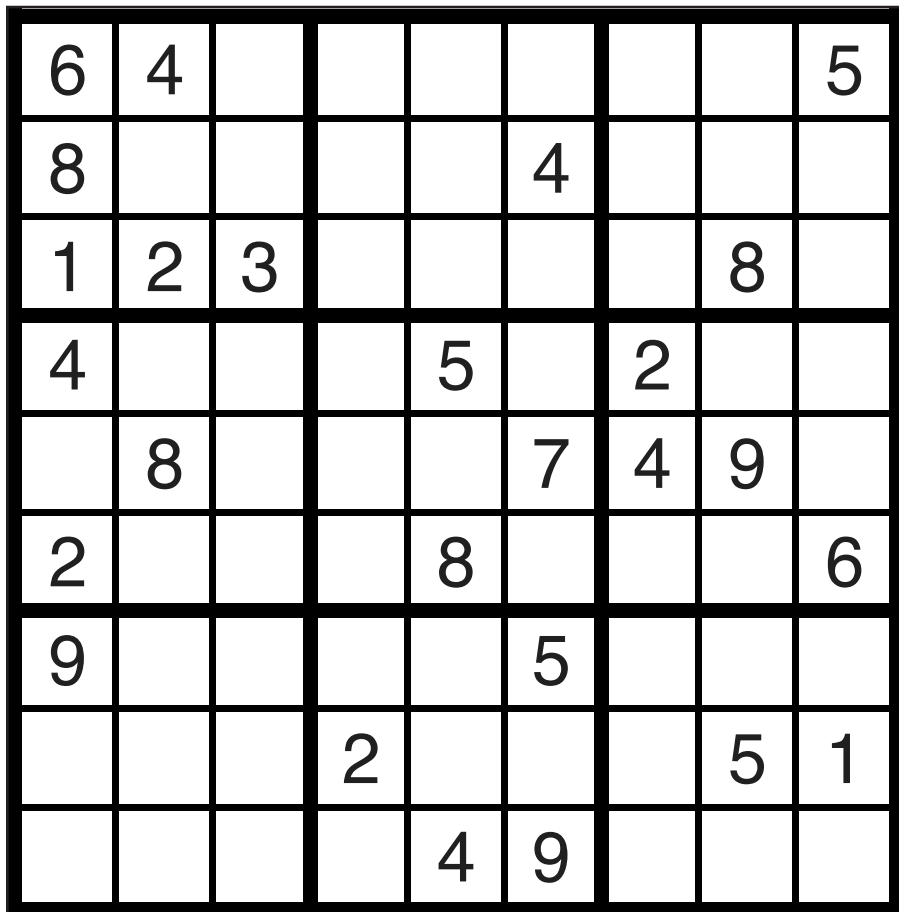


CLUES ACROSS

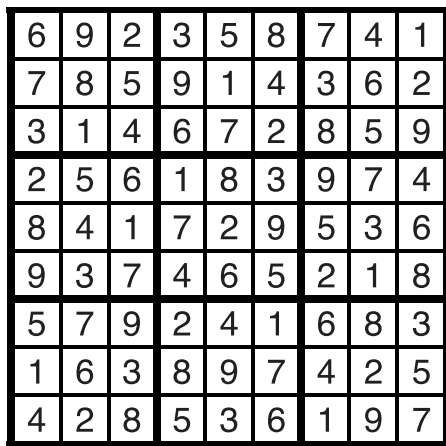
- 1. Chaps
- 5. Currently fashionable
- 9. Collision
- 11. More slim
- 13. European city
- 15. Implicitly
- 16. The side of something that is sheltered from the wind
- 17. The Mount Rushmore State
- 19. Gold or silver wire cord
- 21. Muscles along insects' diaphragm
- 22. Trent Reznor's band
- 23. Sweet juicy gritty-textured fruit
- 25. Broken branch
- 26. Indicates ten
- 27. Expression of annoyance
- 29. Brings together
- 31. Ancient city in Thrace
- 33. Sailors' spirit
- 34. Looked into
- 36. Muckraking woman journalist Rheta
- 38. A type of cast
- 39. One's responsibility
- 41. Where golfers begin
- 43. Make a mistake
- 44. Semitic Sun god
- 46. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 48. Beheaded
- 52. A place to stay
- 53. Unwise
- 54. Most supernatural
- 56. "Dennis" is a famous one
- 57. Ointments
- 58. Exam
- 59. Leaked blood

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Baseball managers assemble it
- 2. Revised
- 3. Mountain is a popular kind
- 4. Takes to civil court
- 5. Pouches
- 6. A type of veil
- 7. Chants
- 8. Boston hoopster
- 9. Elongated appendage
- 10. Sailboat
- 11. 2017 Oscar-winning film
- 12. Actor Gosling
- 14. Monetary units
- 15. Assembly
- 18. Russian pop duo
- 20. Embellished with expressions
- 24. Infrequent
- 26. Temperature unit
- 28. Hydrophilic amino acid
- 30. Honk
- 32. Legislative body
- 34. Swinish
- 35. Russian assembly
- 37. Take over for
- 38. Put in advance
- 40. Satisfy
- 42. Felt
- 43. Dutch cheese
- 45. Witnesses
- 47. Strong insects
- 49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 50. Ancient people of Scotland
- 51. Cheerless
- 55. Sick



FEBRUARY 15 SOLUTIONS



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, Mar 7

Team Trivia at Wicomico Shores Golf Course

Riverview Restaurant at Wicomico Shores Golf Course
35794 Aviation Yacht Club Rd,
Mechanicsville
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Bring a team, or come and join one. Fun and food galore! Please call 301-884-0399 to reserve a table.

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

American Legion Post 221
21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue
7p.m. to 8p.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.

Fri, Mar 8

Lenten Fish Fry

St. George Catholic Church
19199 St Georges Church Rd., Valley Lee
4:30p.m. to 6:30p.m.

Come get your fresh caught catfish or Steamed Shrimp dinners with french fries, pancit and more. \$20 per take out order, we will be there until sold out, so come early!

St. Mary's Chamber of Commerce 50th Anniversary Gala

The White Rose
21030 Point Lookout Rd., Callaway
6p.m. to 10 p.m.

As we mark this golden jubilee, let's come together to celebrate the achievements that have shaped our community.

This dinner and dance gala promises an extravagant evening featuring culinary delights, entertainment, and more. Dress to impress for an elegant evening of memories in the making.

Let's raise a glass to 50 years of success and toast to many more! We look forward to celebrating with you!

Chamber Member Tickets: \$125 per person. Non-Chamber Member Tickets: \$150 per person

Tickets can be purchased here: cca.smcchamber.com/EvtListing.aspx?dbid2=MDSTM&evtid=45601&class=E

Want to hear your favorite dance song to relive your most treasured decade? Suggest them here: forms.gle/dNMamhc5RFdWCv3k8

Sponsorship opportunities available here: cca.smcchamber.com/EvtListing.aspx?dbid2=MDSTM&evtid=49937&class=E

Sat, Mar 9

SMTMD Contra Dance

Christ Episcopal Church
37497 Zach Fowler Rd., Chaptico
7p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The evening starts at 7 pm with a half hour beginner's dance workshop followed by live music performed by the SOMD Open Band and dancing from 7:30 to 10 pm. Check the website calendar for the lineup of dances and

callers! Admission is \$12 for non-SMTMD members; \$8 for members. Children 17 and under, when accompanied by an adult, and band members are free. Info: smtmd2@gmail.com, smtmd.org/#/dances/

Sun, Mar 10

Breakfast w/Easter Bunny

2nd Dist. VFD&RS Social Hall
45245 Drayden Rd., Valley Lee
8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

All you can eat homestyle. MENU: scrambled eggs, home fried potatoes, pancakes, french toast, sausage links, ham, bacon, creamed chipped beef, sausage gravy, spiced applesauce, grits & biscuits. Drinks: Assorted juices, milk, and coffee will be available.

Adults: \$13.00

Children 6 to 12: \$6.00

Children 5 & under are free

Proceeds from this fundraiser are for the Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad to continue to keep our community safe.

Thank you for your support!

For more information call: 301-994-9999

Mon, Mar 11

Genealogy: Finding Your Irish Roots

Northern Senior Activity Center
29655 Charlotte Hall Rd., Charlotte Hall
1 p.m. to 2p.m.
Cost: FREE

Join genealogist Louise McDonald to learn more about tracing your family tree, using online resources, documenting rich histories, and more! In celebration of the St. Patrick's Day holiday, Louise is focusing on helping

you search for Irish roots. This session begins with a presentation on the topic and progresses to a workshop environment of discussion and assistance. Register at www.stmaryscounty.md.gov/Aging/Activities-Programs/.

Tue, Mar 12

Opening Day: Historic St. Mary's City

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

Learn about Maryland's history while visiting the Woodland Indian Hamlet, the reconstructed Town Center, the Maryland Dove ship, and the Godiah Spray Tobacco Plantation. Visitors Center, historic interpreters, and beautiful walking paths. Continues every Tues-Sat, 10am-4pm.

Admission: \$10/adults, \$9/Seniors, \$6/youth or college ID, \$0/age 5 or under;

Free for HSMC Members

301-994-4370 or info@hsmcdigshistory.org
www.HSMCdigshistory.org

Thu, Mar 14

Mobile Library Starting Up

Loffler Senior Activity Center
21905 Chancellors Run Rd., Great Mills
11 a.m. to Noon
2nd Thursday of each month

St. Mary's County Library's new Mobile Library will be visiting the Loffler Senior Activity Center on the 2nd Thursday of each month starting on March 14.

The Mobile Library will be open for tours as well as browsing the collection, checking out books, Free wi-fi, and knowledgeable Library staff available to assist.

sics of creating documents. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Maryland Day History Talk

Join Karen Stone, Division Manager of the St. Mary's County Museums, for a special seminar on our local history at Leonardtown Library on Tuesday, March 19 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. Karen will discuss the founding of Maryland from the perspective of local indigenous peoples and their relations with various colonial groups. Register on www.stmalib.org.

How to Buy Your First Home

Looking to buy your first home, but don't know where to start? Join us at Lexington Park Library on Tuesday, March 19 from 6 - 7 p.m. to learn more about the buying process, what to expect, how to prepare, and first-time buyer loan options that can stretch your dollar. Come ask us the hard questions! Register on www.stmalib.org.

Introduction to 3D Printing

Have you ever wanted something 3D printed at the library, but weren't sure how? Now is your chance to learn at Leonardtown Library on Tuesday, March 12 from 2 - 3:30 p.m. or a second session at Lexington Park Library on Sunday, March 17 from 2 - 3:30 p.m. This introductory course will cover the basics of how a 3D printer works and how to use PrusaSlicer software. Learn how to find ready-to-print files online and submit them to the Library for printing. No prior experience is needed. This is an in-person class held in the Computer Lab Makerspace. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Renting vs Owning a Home: Lunch & Learn Series

Pack a lunch and join Dr. Troy Anthony Anderson, financial wellness expert, as he breaks down the complex decision that is whether to rent or buy

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library UPCOMING EVENTS

a home at Lexington Park Library on Wednesday, March 13 from 12 - 1 p.m. There are many factors that go into making such an important decision, from the high initial cost of home-ownership to the home equity you might be missing out on by renting. interactive workshop is packed with practical, family-oriented exercises that will help you be the master of your own financial wellness. The Lunch & Learn series is a hybrid event. If you are planning to attend virtually, be sure to register for the event to receive a

link to the online session. In-person walk-ins welcome. All registrants will receive a Zoom link the day before the session. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Introduction to Google Docs

Would you like to know how to use the computer to write letters or other types of documents? Join us at Lexington Park Library on Saturday, March 16 from 2 - 3:30 p.m. for this introductory class to learn how to use Google Docs. We'll get you started with Docs and cover the ba-

In Remembrance

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

Pat Hammett, 85



Patricia Heflin Hammett was born on December 23, 1938 and left us on March 1, 2024 to be with her beloved husband, Ray, her parents, Flossie and Curmit, her brother,

Jimmy, and many others I'm sure she was excited to reunite with. She passed at Calvert Memorial Hospital at the age of 85 from complications due to congestive heart failure.

Pat graduated from St. Patrick's Academy, a Catholic high school in Washington, D.C., in 1955 and went to work for the CIA shortly thereafter as a secretary who was also skilled in shorthand. She worked there her entire career and retired on disability after she was injured in a car accident. Pat loved plants and flowers, and her office was decorated with several varieties of plants that she meticulously cared for. To her delight, she went in one morning to find that her spider plant had sent out a shoot and at the end of that shoot was a little baby spider plant. She got so excited that she purchased and sent out birth announcements to all of her friends! She had a great sense of humor and was always fun to be around.

Pat and Ray were married in Washington, D.C. in 1958 and remained so until his death. They had been residing in the Wildwood Community in California, MD for years. Pat and Ray loved to entertain and hosted many memorable parties for family and friends. They loved to travel and went to the beach in Wildwood, NJ, the Outer Banks in NC, and Myrtle Beach each summer where they would meet up with several military buddies. Ray loved Las Vegas and when they traveled there, they would also go to visit Ray's sister, Rose, who resided in Huntington Beach, CA. Family was very important to Pat and she was always close with her parents, brother, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and nieces and nephews. She was fun-loving, interesting to talk with, and loved sports- mostly professional football and basketball, witty, funny, and, all-around, a cool person to be with.

Pat loved animals. In the 1970s, I got the bright idea that a pet skunk was the pet to have, and after Pat and Ray met my new prized possession (de-scented, of course), they decided that they wanted one as well. They went to Docktor's Pet Center in Iverson Mall and brought home "Streaker". He was a great topic of conversation and provided many laughs when they had friends come to visit, but, if you know anything about skunks, they hibernate, so Streaker went on a food binge, got up to about 75 pounds, and decided to camp out under their bed for the winter. When Streaker wasn't in hibernation mode, Pat's mother, Flossie, who lived with them, had to wear knee-high leather boots all the time because he loved to bite her legs. Needless to say, skunks do not make ideal pets! Pat also had a sweet dachshund named Happiness that provided them with years of love and companionship. In the

nursing home, Beth, the activities coordinator, had a goldendoodle named Greta that Pat adored. She is a trained therapy dog, so she is allowed to go just about anywhere. Greta spent hours with Pat laying on her bed with her, and Pat always kept treats on her bedside table for her special pal. Pat dearly loved Greta and I think Greta dearly loved her in return. She even came to the hospital for a visit during one of Pat's recent stays.

Pat was elegant, always dressed to the nines with hair perfectly styled, nails manicured, full make-up every day with jewelry and purses to go with every outfit.

I could go on and on about this woman that I have loved all my life, but to sum up her optimistic spirit, while her world became heartbreakingly small while confined to a bed in the nursing home, Pat would get dressed each morning and make up her face just as she had her entire adult life. She still loved getting her hair done, and the staff at Solomons called her the "lady with red lipstick." Her room there had recently been changed so that her bed was near a window. There was a shepherd's hook in the courtyard just outside her window, and, when I was there last, she said that she wished that there was a bird feeder and seed so she could watch the birds. I immediately went and bought both to take to her, but, sadly, they are still in my car. She left us before I could get them to her. I tell you this because she was always finding the small things that she could be happy about and find joy in, and tried very hard not to complain. She was a beautiful person and we were all blessed to have her in our lives.

Pat was preceded in death by her parents Florence and Curmit Heflin, her in-laws Lloyd and Agnes Hammett, her husband Raymond Hammett, her brother Jimmy Heflin, brothers-in-law Robert Hammett, Thomas Corbett and William Gingery, sisters-in-law Patricia Corbett, Dulcie Hammett and Rosalie Gingery, and nephews Charles Gingery, Patrick Corbett and John Corbett. Those she left behind include her best friend Eileen Gough and her family, her sister-in-law Fran Heflin, her devoted niece Robin Hammett who has cared for her and handled her affairs since Pat became unable to; nieces Stacey, Sharon, Tami, Marybeth, and Tracey; nephews Bill, Russell, Mike, Steve, Tom, Jim and Kenneth as well as many great nieces, great nephews, other family members and friends.

The family will receive friends on Monday, March 11, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 10:30 AM in Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Solomons, MD, with Father Peter Giovanoni officiating. Interment will be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 10:00 AM at St. Michael's Catholic Church Cemetery, Ridge, MD.

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

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

Joanie O'Dell, 76



Joan Marie "Joanie" O'Dell, 76, of California, MD passed away peacefully on December 22, 2023, surrounded by her loving family. She was born March

23, 1947, in Leonardtown, MD to the late Thomas Leon and Mabel L. Thompson Wood. Joanie attended St. Mary's Academy and graduated in 1965. She worked as a flight attendant, legal secretary and finished her proud career at Burch Oil where she worked for more than 20 years.

Joanie was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County and a devoted Catholic. She enjoyed duck pin bowling, traveling, RV'ing and eating crabs. She especially enjoyed time with family and friends. Some of her fondest memories took place at the World-Famous Wood Family Reunions. She was a patient, kind, loving and encouraging woman. Joanie was a firm believer that it was better to be rich in faith than in wealth.

Joanie is survived by her loving husband, Joseph Marx O'Dell, her children Stephen Combs (Corey), Nathaniel Combs (Paulina), Joshua Combs (Christina), stepchildren Brandy Tweedy (Butch), Morgan O'Dell (Melissa), and David O'Dell (Xingyu) along with 17 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

The family received friends on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm with a Service celebrated at 12:00 pm at Brinsfield Funeral Home, 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Pallbearers were Stephen Combs, Nathaniel Combs, Joshua Combs, Morgan O'Dell, Aaron Combs, and Chance Fischer.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, 44724 Hospice Ln, Callaway, MD 20620.

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

Arrangements provided by Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A. in Leonardtown, MD.

Sam Saliba, 84



In memoriam of Sergeant First Class Sam George Saliba, born on October 30, 1939, passed away on February 20, 2024, leaving behind a legacy that will forever echo

the valor of a true warrior. He is survived by his loving wife, Darlene, his steadfast and caring children, Amy, Danielle, Denise, Melissa, Melody, Terra, Tony, and Tracy, and his many grand and great-grandchildren. For his indomitable courage, Sergeant First Class Sam George Saliba was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with the "V" device for valor, a symbol of his fearless initiative and determination, but his heroism was not confined to this single act. Throughout his service, Sam earned numerous decorations, medals, and commendation ribbons, including the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal (five times), the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Civil Action 1st Class Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Medal, and the Vietnam Service Medal with stars. Each decoration, a chapter in the story of a man who gave his all for his comrades, his loved ones, and ultimately his country. As we bid farewell to Sergeant First Class Sam George Saliba, let us do so with the solace that his was a life well-lived, a battle well-fought, and a legacy that will endure. We salute you, Sam, for your service, your bravery, and the profound impact you have had on all our lives. Rest in peace, soldier. Your duty is done, but your honor, your valor, and your memory will forever stand as a beacon for all of us.

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A View From The BLEACHERS



GO FOR IT

By Ronald N. Guy Jr.
Contributing Writer

I can't imagine being Caleb Williams. Or Caitlyn Clark. Or Jayden Daniels. Or any of the hundreds of athletes who will be considered for the NFL, NBA, NHL, WNBA, MLB, or any other professional sports league draft over the next few months. Neither does the vast, perhaps even all, of the millions of readers of this column (wink). We have never thrown a pass in a packed stadium, set NCAA scoring records, drained threes from deep or hoisted the Heisman Trophy. But those obvious athletic differentiations aren't what this is about.

Close your eyes. Breathe. Imagine. You're about 20-years-old, give or take a calendar year or two. A college student. You likely haven't voted in a presidential election. If you're a dude, you're only a couple of years removed from selective service registration, a sobering obligation. Renting a car or a hotel room, and buying a beer could be problematic. To date, you've been mainly a student and an athlete. Defined. Simple. Maybe you stayed close to home for college, or perhaps you ventured out of state, or even across the country, to a blue blood program with some serious panache. Regardless, the choice was yours.

Now, due to eligibility limits or prodigious prowess, college has been outgrown. The "real world" beckons. A professional life awaits. In preparation, you're poked and prodded, measured, interviewed, tested, analyzed and judged...every aspect of your life is considered to the nth degree. Such is the pre-draft experience of the best prospects, those who could convert a woe-be-gone franchise into something special, something that matters, something that will be remembered. Or maybe you're a marginal prospect just hoping to catch the eye of anyone – any general manager or obscure scout – who will provide an elusive opportunity to continue chasing the dream.

Regardless, where you will work and who you will work for isn't your choice. An unpredictable draft process and the intentional or whimsical actions of front office personnel determine your fate. Your name is called; the future has arrived. Video in the immediate aftermath features hugs with family members, celebration and a few tears. The athlete dons a team cap or slips into a uniform. Idyllic. Iconic. Heart-warming. Beautiful.

I wonder what they are really thinking. The athletes, that is. To have your future so uncertain, so beyond your control, and ultimately so dictated. Are they too young to care? Perhaps the euphoria over the culmination or continuation of a dream overrides everything. Pizza is good anywhere, right? Beer from darn near any microbrew from across this great country is lovely. Perhaps the awesomeness of basketball, baseball, football...sports...transcends geography. I'll buy that.

Still, to have life pivot so quickly is unique. For most of us, employment and residency are carefully considered. Every pro and con – salary, cost of living, location to schools, proximity to family, recreational opportunities, crime, healthcare, etc. – is thoroughly vetted in our overactive minds (analysis paralysis). To know, that at any moment, you can be picked and sent to Seattle or Detroit or Dallas or Atlanta or New York? I can't imagine it – as a husband, a son and a parent.

Every year, though, young athletes face the same personal and professional inflection point, and, to the casual eye at least, handle it with grace beyond their years. Some certainly experience a hint of disappointment over their dictated location or team – a longing to be closer to home or in a familiar city - but there is rarely evidence of remorse in their words, deeds or performance. Whether it is the great adaptability of youth or the steadfast power of their joy, these young athletes, these new draftees, these rookies, these kids...embrace the moment – the uncertainty, the fluidity, the opportunity - and just go for it.

And in that annually repeated act is their gift – to the older, the more calculating, the rigid. When faced with a pivot point in life, be it personal or professional, be there some control of the outcome or absolutely none, sometimes the best thing to do is commit completely to the process and have faith – in the universe, in the journey, in yourself.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

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Geoge Sparling	1974	George Smith	1992-1993	Bill D. McKissick, Jr.	2005-2006	Ernie Williams	2016-2017
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Bert Fenwick	1976	Robert Askey	1995-1997	Mary Ann Murray	2007-2008	Dr. Tracy Harris	2018-2019
Martin J. "Rocky" Willis, Jr.	1977	Carolyn Huff	1997-1998	Tom Jarboe	2008-2009	Dan Dawson	2019-2020
Wayne Swann	1978-1979	Douglas B. Ahearn	1998-1999	Frank Taylor	2009-2010	Chad Day	2020-2021
F. Elliott Burch, Jr.	1980-1981	Kelly Joy Dugan	1999-2000	Chris Longmore	2010-2011	Tari Moore	2021-2022
Carl Loffler, Jr.	1982-1983	Frank Goldbach	2000-2001	Joe Densford	2011-2012	Marsha Williams	2022-2023
Dr. Patrick Jarboe	1984-1985	Gary Bell	2001-2002	Kim Oliver	2012-2013	Patrick Haley	2023-2024
Shirley Colleary	1986-1987	Vince Whittles	2002-2003	Buzz Snelley	2013-2014		
Richard Wilson	1988-1989	Carl Franzen	2003-2004	Margaret Sawyer	2014-2015		
A. Joseph Slater	1990-1991	Brandon Haden	2004-2005	Glen Ives	2015-2016		

Business Person of the Year Recipients

Carl Loffler	1984	William Mattingly	1994	Bob Woody	2004	Dan Burris	2014
Joe Gough	1985	J. Patrick Jarboe	1995	Dan Rebarchick	2005	Chris Longmore	2015
Sonny Burch	1986	Anne Marum	1996	Vince Whittles	2006	Bill Scarafia	2016
Abell Longmore	1987	John Parlett, Jr.	1997	Barbara Horn	2007	Kim Oliver	2017
Shirley Colleary	1988	Wayne Davis	1998	Bill McKissick	2008	Sherry Whittles	2018
James Manning McKay	1989	Steve Mattingly	1999	Joseph Slater	2009	David Dent	2019
George Guy	1990	Christine Wray	2000	Billy Mehaffey	2010	Ray Dodson	2022
Ford Dean	1991	Charles Hayden	2001	Carl Franzen	2011	Jenny Wamsley	2023
Rodney Thompson	1992	Wayne Swan	2002	Mary Ann Murray	2012		
Lewie Aldridge	1993	Frank Taylor	2003	Tom Jarboe	2013		

Public Servant Award Recipients

John Wood, Jr.	2008	Emily Harman	2015
Phil Shire	2009	Laschelle McKay	2016
Bob Schaller	2010	George Erichsen	2017
Tim Cameron	2011	Mel D. Powell, Ph.D.	2018
J. Harry Norris	2012	Viki Volk	2019
Robin Finnacom	2013	Meenakshi Brewster	2022
Michael J. Stamm	2014	Chris Kaselemis	2023

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- Judge Amy Lorenzini



As an attorney, I was a small business owner and I acted as general counsel to many local small businesses. Our Chamber of Commerce is integral in supporting our local and small businesses and they should be commended for their work.

Scan for More Info



Continued from page 13



years," she said. "It really hurt. "Small businesses are really struggling and we don't want those businesses to close so we can continue to have all of these choices."

The commercial and retail scene has advanced much in the past several decades since the chamber was founded in 1974, with many more choices available locally to residents who might have taken their disposable income farther north to Waldorf in Charles County or even farther, she said.

"Now, people realize they don't have to go to Waldorf," Huff said, noting, though that they can take their dollars on-line and shop.

This made cooperation between businesses all the more important, she said, since businesses in the same community would invariably become customers at some point outside the everyday consumer.

"If you don't network your business, how are people going to know about it?" Huff said. "Other businesses become your customers."

"When you go on-line and see all those negative reviews, they don't tell you which businesses are good."

The chamber helped consumers, she said, by providing a cadre of reliable, established businesses that could be trusted.

"That's gold," Huff said.

The composition of the chamber underwent a major change in the early 1990s as the two U.S. Navy installations in Trenton, N.J. and Warminster, Penn. consolidated at Patuxent River Naval Air Station; many new defense contractors made the move as well as joined, said Charlie Hayden, former owner of Hayden Auto Parts and once a chairperson of the chamber's membership.

"It gave us the chance to meet other business people," Hayden said of one of the

most foundational benefits of being a member. "Chamber membership was a group of people in the same boat."

"We were all catering to the same customers."

When anyone enters the county, either crossing the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge, coming south from Charles County on Route 5 or coming in on Route 234 they are greeted by a welcome sign beckoning them on towards St. Mary's.

Those signs are not put there by county government but by the commerce chamber, Hayden said.

They stand as another reminder that the chamber of commerce is always trying to welcome people and opportunities to the Mother County.

"I've maintained my membership," Hayden, who now works in real estate, said. "It [the chamber] gets like-minded people working together."

The chamber's current board chair, Patrick Haley, of Oak Point Insurance, said the chamber remains focused on its basic mission, bringing business and community together.

Without it, Haley said, new businesses would have a harder time getting started.

"There would be a lack of knowledge about where to go for help for business owners," he said.

"We lookout for the business community and the community overall," Haley told The County Times. "We try to bring the business community and the community at large together."

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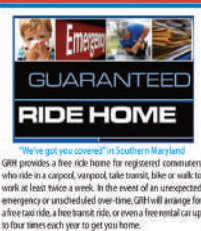
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Chamber of Commerce Looks Back on 50 Years of Service

By Guy Leonard
 Staff Writer

Residents may not have daily contact with the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce but more than likely they are patronizing a business — one of more than 300 — who are members of the group.

Started half-a-century by local business leaders, the chamber continues to find ways to promote small businesses and advocate for their interests.

Longtime chamber member and founding member of its Ambassador's Club, Carolyn Huff, said the chamber works both in front and behind the scenes.

Outwardly, it hosts events legislative breakfasts so lawmakers can tell chamber members about laws and trends in the State House that will affect them and State of the Schools and State of the County luncheons so business owners can ask questions about people who might be their future employees



and how their tax dollars are being spent.

But mostly, Huff said, the chamber exists to ensure businesses can network and help ensure each other's success and survival.

"The more they get their name out the more business they would get," Huff said. "In a small community [like St. Mary's]

word of mouth is critical."

Each year the chamber hosts its Taste of St. Mary's event, taking over the town square in Leonardtown, giving residents a chance to sample local restaurant cuisine all in one place.

It's one of the ways the chamber works

to bring the community closer to businesses and their owners, helping to ensure that dollars earned locally are spent locally as well.

"It's a great event and it's been great for the local restaurant business," Huff said. "We're trying to think of ways we can help all of the businesses."

The chamber also maintains a legislative committee, which watches carefully local and state level legislation that could affect small businesses; its members are quick to speak to law makers on what bills could harm commerce.

The past few years have been challenging for the chamber because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which badly hurt businesses due to government-mandated shutdowns.

Some businesses locally shuttered, leaving the chamber lagging in membership. Now, Huff said, the chamber is trying to rebuild.

"We didn't do ribbon cuttings for two

Continued on page 15



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50 years ANNIVERSARY

Cedar Point congratulates the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce on its 50th Anniversary. Here's to many more years of serving the community!



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St. Clements Island Museum Celebrates 'Maryland Day'



On Monday, March 25, 2024, "Maryland Day" the public is encouraged to celebrate the founding of Maryland at the state's birthplace, St. Clement's Island. St. Clement's Island Museum will offer a full day of fun from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., including free museum admission, kids' activities, free water taxi rides (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.), lighthouse tours, a food truck, and special exhibits. The event will also include a public ceremony (2 p.m.) held on the mainland and a public Mass on the island (10 a.m.) commemorating the first Mass said in the English-speaking New World.

Maryland Day commemorates the first landing of English colonists on St. Clement's Island on March 25, 1634 – a significant part of St. Mary's County's and the State of Maryland's story. The St. Clement's Island Museum, which sits just a half-mile from the island from which it takes its name, is under the care of the St. Mary's County Museum Division and interprets the fascinating stories of the island and surrounding Colton's Point from colonial times until the present.

"Maryland Day is the most important event in our program year, since it marks the beginning of both St. Mary's County and the state of Maryland in 1634," says Karen Stone, Manager of the St. Mary's County Museum Division. "On this day, we honor the meeting of two cultures – the newly-arrived English and the native Piscataway – and the friendship and collaboration that ensued. It is also a day on which we celebrate Maryland's religious history and its place in the development of the statutes of religious freedom that are so pivotal in this country's history."

The day will begin at 10 a.m. with Mass

on St. Clement's Island, featuring students from Father Andrew White, S.J. School in Leonardtown, who will serve as the choir and cantors.

At 2 p.m., the official Maryland Day Ceremony will take place on the mainland at the museum, featuring James Randy Guy, President of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County; Piscataway Tribal Leader Francis Gray; and other dignitaries. The ceremony will also feature an interpreter portraying Father Andrew White, S.J., who will make the yearly ceremonial presentation of gifts from the English to the Indigenous Peoples. A small public reception will follow the ceremony.

Back on the mainland, a food truck will be available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the public. Attendees are encouraged to explore the museum, as admission is waived for the day. There will also be a special display of the original Maryland Charter, as well as a wonderful collection of local art in the changing gallery. As a bonus, the museum will also display the plans for the new St. Clement's Island Museum building facility for the public.

Also, starting on Maryland Day, the museum officially kicks off water taxi operation to St. Clement's Island State Park. Boat rides occur most days through October 31, visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/water-taxi for more information.

For more information regarding Maryland Day at St. Clement's Island Museum, please call the museum at (301) 769-2222. For hours of operation, programs, admission prices and more, visit [Facebook.com/SCIMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/SCIMuseum) or museums.stmarysmd.com

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Winter Survey Takes Stock of the Chesapeake Bay's Blue Crabs

DNR measures hundreds of sites to help provide a snapshot of the crab population

At a nondescript spot in the middle of the Choptank River, the Mydra Ann slowed to a crawl.

The crew aboard the crabbing boat, a mix of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) scientists and commercial watermen, readied the gear. With a thud, the large, steel-toothed dredge met the water of the Choptank, its chain whirring along the center of the boat as the metal bars lined with netting descended to the river bottom.

After a one-minute drag traveling at 3 knots, the crew pulled up the dredge and emptied its contents onto the deck. Among the leaf litter, small rocks, and chunks of ice, small crustaceans shifted groggily—juvenile blue crabs.

"It's Christmas every day," said Chris Walstrum, a DNR natural resource biologist. "You don't know what you're gonna get."

Walstrum leads the department's annual blue crab winter dredge survey, which provides an estimate of the size of the population of Maryland's state crustacean in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. A coordinated effort between Maryland and Virginia since 1989, this survey helps assess how blue crabs are doing in the Bay and



Blue crabs await measurement during the 2024 winter dredge survey. Photo by Joe Zimmerman.

how much of the population is removed by harvest.

Picking through the detritus, Heather Hayden, a DNR biologist, and John Murphy, the first mate of the Mydra Ann, set aside the crabs to be measured and logged. The sur-

vey takes place in the winter because crabs are more dormant during the colder months. Though they're not technically hibernating, the crabs are largely inactive and bury themselves in mud.

The trip to the surface is a temporary awakening for the arthropods. Most only just begin to rouse to the change in temperature and scenery before Walstrum measures them, records their sex, notes any abnormalities (like a missing claw), and casts them back into the chilly waters, where they swim down, disappearing under the surface to resume their slumber.

But the smaller crabs tend to be a bit quicker to adjust. They stretched their tiny claws skyward, pinch-ready.

"They're a little slower this time of year," Hayden said. "When you feel them start to reach, you just have to move."

"They'll hurt you in the summertime," said Murphy, who crabs commercially for much of the year. "In the summer, they're moving and biting all over the place."

The smallest crabs are the representatives of the latest spawn, known as the young-of-the-year, and are important to the future crab stock of the Bay. Those larger than 2.4 inches across the carapace will grow throughout the summer season—by shedding their exoskeletons every month—and will be able to spawn themselves.

The survey also takes stock of female crabs, or sooks, which are more abundant than male crabs and important to a sustainable population. Easily identified by the Capitol-dome shape of their aprons, female blue crabs mate only once, in their final molt to maturity.

Once the dredge's pull was accounted for, the team set off to the next location. Roger Morris, the captain of the Mydra Ann and a commercial crabber, entered the GPS coordinates and monitored the depth and temperature of the water on display screens.

Map of sites surveyed in the Chesapeake Bay for the winter blue crab survey

For the survey, the Bay is divided into three strata, with each assigned a number of sites proportional to its area.

The survey samples 1,500 sites, which are randomly assigned with a statistical analysis. Both states split them evenly, so Maryland monitors 750 sites through the course of the winter, hitting around 30 each day.

Morris, who named his boat after his grandmother and daughter, both named Mydra, and his wife Ann, said they try to save the rivers for a windy day and tackle the open Bay when the wind is moderate, but they're out pretty much every weekday regardless.

"It's no fair weather game, I'll tell you that," Morris said.

Each dredge follows a familiar pattern. After a pull, the team analyzes the crabs. They also clear out the bycatch, which can be anything from sea squirts and small clams to the occasional beer can. The crew returns organic material back into the Bay, while they throw away the litter.

At each site, scientists also collect a water sample to measure salinity and temperature.

In the end, the data collected will help DNR and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science come up with an estimate of the total crab population in the Bay. The population varies from year to year, though recent years have raised concern.

The 2022 survey estimated 227 million crabs, the lowest ever recorded in the survey. In 2023, the population bounced back to 323 million, an encouraging improvement, although scientists urged continued vigilance based on low juvenile abundance.

The results of the winter dredge survey from 1990 to 2023. Estimates of blue crabs have been below average for the past four years, though fluctuations are common over time.

Predation, water quality issues, and habitat loss likely contribute to diminished blue crab populations. A 2023 study found that invasive blue catfish ate 440 tons of blue crab in the James River in Virginia.

The 2024 blue crab winter dredge survey results won't be released until May. After completing the 750 sites, the team returns to high density sites and pulls again there, to make note of mortality. By comparing the number there at the first and second pull, they can get a sense of how intense the winter was for the crabs.

Despite the crew's 45 days on the water through the coldest weather of the year, there was a light mood on the boat. Between pulls, the team joked around with each other and played guessing games at the number of crabs that day or the number of cars leaving Tilghman Island that morning.

Walstrum stays positive about Maryland's state crustacean too.

"They're resilient; you can't look at one year to determine how they're doing," he said. "There have been some noticeable drops, but we have to keep on the up."

Sell it - Buy it at Auction

Tri County Livestock Auction
1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the Month – Auction begins at 4 PM
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"Millwood" Public Consignment Auction
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Flowers/Plants – Groceries – Cheese – Meats – Misc. Items/Box Lots
Saturday, March 16, 2024 – 8:30 am
Tri County Livestock Auction Facility
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Tractors – Farm Equipment & Machinery – Shop Equipment – Building Materials – Antiques/Collectibles – Tools – Lawn/Garden Items – Furniture & Crafts – Buggies – Hunting & Sporting Items – New/Used Construction, Shop, Home & Garden Items – Books – Toys – Quilts
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Farm Tractors – Equipment – Tools – Garage, Shop, Lawn/Garden Items – 241 Farmhouse Lane, Lothian, MD (Rt. 408 & Farmhouse Lane)
To consign items or for more information call: 240486-6592

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NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER News

Great Mills Native Serves Aboard Navy Warship in San Diego

By Megan Brown
Navy Office of Community Outreach

Petty Officer 3rd Class Nevyn Harris, a native of Great Mills, Maryland, serves the U.S. Navy aboard USS Tripoli operating out of San Diego.

Harris graduated from Great Mills High School in 2017.

The skills and values needed to succeed in the Navy are similar to those found in Great Mills.

"I learned in my hometown to stay true to myself, and to be who I am and not who people wanted me to be," said Harris. "My family knows who I am supposed to be and I know I would lose their support if I kept changing who I was."

Harris joined the Navy five years ago. Today, Harris serves as an aviation boatswain's mate (handling).

"I joined the Navy because I wanted to do something and set a positive example for others," said Harris. "Eventually, I want to be a recruiter so I can provide opportunities to future sailors."

Tripoli is an amphibious assault carrier

that provides presence and power projection as an integral part of Joint, Interagency and Multinational Maritime Expeditionary Forces. Supports Marine Air/Ground Task Force requirements, from small-scale contingency operations to Expeditionary Strike Group operations for forcible entry missions in major theaters of war.

"The sailors who make up Team Tripoli really are the best the Navy has to offer," said Capt. Gary Harrington, commanding officer of Tripoli. "We say it all the time, our Navy is nothing without the men and women who serve on the deckplates each and every day. I truly believe that the continued success of our Navy, and Tripoli specifically, is due in no small part to the contributions of our sailors."

With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

"We will earn and reinforce the trust and

confidence of the American people every day," said Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations. "Together we will deliver the Navy the nation needs."

Harris has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

"My proudest accomplishment in the Navy is staying in the Navy," said Harris. "I am proud of being here, preserving through the tough times and doing something positive with my life."

Harris serves a Navy that operates far forward, around the world and around the clock, promoting the nation's prosperity and security.

"Serving in the Navy means I am giving a voice to the people that don't have one and providing an opportunity to help them," said Harris.

Harris is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I want to thank my mom, Shelita Lawrence, for keeping me here and for making me join the Navy because I didn't want to at first because I was being stubborn," added Harris. "I also want to thank Mr. BJ Dorthard, my school counselor who made me realize I want to help people."



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PTA President Wants School Board Seat

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Anthony Lotierzo, president of the parent and teacher association (PTA) at Leonardtown Middle School, says there are problems that have crept into the St. Mary's County Public School System and he wants to find solutions to them.

"Over the past seven or eight years, I've seen things that I'm not OK with," Lotierzo said. "There needs to be some changes."

He has echoed a growing concern that order is waning in the halls of county schools.

"The lack of discipline is running rampant," Lotierzo, who is also a U.S. Navy employee and Navy veteran of 20 years, said. "Teachers are able to do what they love, which is teach.

"They've had to become disciplinarians."

It has also become increasingly difficult, he said, to get parents and guardians of students involved in the educational lives of their children; if this could be accomplished, Lotierzo believes many of the discipline problems could fade away.

"We need to bring the community back into the school system," Lotierzo said. "I want to keep kids safe.

"I want to minimize the fighting." He noted the recent brief walkout staged by about 100 or more students at Great Mills High School in protest of a lack of security



Anthony Lotierzo

in schools due to the constant fighting that takes place.

He said even the students were standing up against such trends in schools.

Teachers also needed more support in the classroom, he said.

"Teachers don't have the resources to do their jobs," he said. "They don't have paper to make enough copies, they don't have dry erase markers, pencils and pens."

School funding needed to be prioritized, to ensure students remained competitive, Lotierzo said.

"We need to do a better job of preparing them [students] for the future," he said.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

ST. MARY'S COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

Early Morning Shooting in Lexington Park, One Arrested



Dakarai Amon Mason

At approximately 2:10 a.m. on March 2, 2024, deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to a shooting at the 21800 block of Ronald Drive, Lexington Park, MD.

Upon arrival, deputies located Dakarai Amon Mason, 18, of Lexington Park, suffering from a non-life-threatening gunshot wound to the leg. He was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

Detectives from the Criminal Investigations Division responded and continued the investigation. Detectives located several video sources that show Mason dis-

charging a firearm at a vehicle. Mason then fled the immediate area and attempted to hide his handgun, which deputies recovered. Detectives learned Mason is prohibited from possessing regulated firearms.

Mason was arrested following receiving medical treatment and was transported to the Adult Detention and Rehabilitation Center, where he was charged with:

- Reckless Endangerment
- Handgun on Person
- Loaded Handgun on Person
- Illegal Possession of Regulated Firearm by Minor

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact Detective Allison Mattera at Allison.Mattera@stmaryscountymd.gov or 301-475-4200, ext. 8124.

Identity Needed in Fraud Investigation

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office needs help identifying and finding the individual shown in the picture concerning fraudulent purchases made through identity theft.

Community members with information about these individuals are asked to contact Corporal Vincent Pontorno at Vincent.Pontorno@stmaryscountymd.gov or 301-475-4200, ext. 2337. Please reference case number 34143-23.

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

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



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Report Faults State Police Over Handgun Licenses, Records

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Maryland State Police have been remiss in performing quality control [QC] checks on handgun license applications they have approved, a recent report from the Office of Legislative Audits states, and they did not have adequate records kept of all regulated firearms owned in the state.



trations had not yet been entered as of September 2022," the audit stated. "[State police] personnel informed us that this backlog was because of a significant increase in firearm registrations and certain personnel shortages."

The state police also were behind on their own audits of firearms dealers, the report stated, ensuring what was being sold by those dealers, the report showed.

"Our test of 11 firearm dealer audits conducted during the period from March 2021 through June 2022 disclosed that the audit files did not include documentation of what was reviewed by the auditor, such as schedules of the firearms and transactions examined," the audit report stated. For example, one dealer audit file was limited to the statement that "Twelve regulated firearms were inventoried. All regulated firearms were properly stored and properly listed in the Acquisitions and Dispositions book."

"No details were provided specifying which 12 were reviewed or how or where the firearms were stored."

The state police responded: "The [audit] identified 372,300 [firearms] applications processed during the audit period, with approximately 600 instances where data entry errors were identified in [the on-line system] as compared to the Licensing Portal. This equates to a 0.16 percent error rate, and therefore meets the data entry industry standard error rate of one percent and is well below the established four percent acceptable error rate."

Handgun licenses, or HQLs, as they are widely known, are required of citizens to purchase handguns and can only be had with a background check and training course authorized by state police.

"[State police] conducted QC reviews of 3.1 percent of firearm registration applications during our audit period while its policy requires 10 percent of firearm applications be reviewed," the audit released Feb. 28 stated. "In addition, state police modified its policy and reduced the required number of QC reviews for HQL applications from 10 percent to 1 percent which, in our opinion, is not sufficient."

The constitutionality of the HQL is currently being contested in the courts.

Additionally, most quality control reviews of handgun licenses were not completed in a timely manner in accordance with agency policy, the report stated.

The audit also showed that state police did have a "comprehensive process to ensure the accuracy of all firearm registration data recorded in its automated record of regulated firearms."

"We identified approximately 600 discrepancies with data entered in the system and noted another 15,100 firearm regis-

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THE Wentworth Weekly

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Teacher Salaries Still Short of Blueprint Goal

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Public Schools have been able to fulfill one of the mandates of the state's Blueprint for Education by increasing teacher salaries by 10 percent by this year, said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith this week but the far-reaching plan still requires more of the local system.

"One of the largest challenges of the blueprint is to actually live up to the aspirational goal of teachers and leaders," Smith said at the March 6 school board meeting.

The local school system was able to increase the entire salary scale for teachers by 10 percent, Smith said, in the five-year period mandated by the blueprint but there was still much to do for teacher pay.

"Even with all of that... our starting teacher salary for this year is still \$52,500," Smith said. "Far off is the career ladder for teachers and that ladder starts out with \$60,000 minimum salary for certificated teachers.

"That is an aspirational goal in a county where we have had not really the most competitive starting salaries for teachers."

Teachers and leaders are one of the five so-called pillars of the blueprint; the first is early childhood investments such as full-day pre-Kindergarten, college and career readiness, resources for student success such as tutoring for struggling students, and governance and accountability.



Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith

The requirement that all starting salaries for teachers to be at \$60,000 a year takes effect July 1, 2026, Smith said.

The school system was recently able to secure an agreement with the local teachers' union, the Education Association of St. Mary's County (EASMC), that 95.5 percent of members approved of, Smith said.

The system is now seeking an additional \$9.5 million from the county to fund that labor agreement in the absence of substantial additions in state funding of only \$102,000.

Declining student enrollment and the county's overall wealth means is receiving less state funding under the blueprint.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

New Traffic Signal on Hollywood Road



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A new traffic signal on Route 245 could soon be activated, Leonardtown officials say, but they are unsure when.

The new signal has been erected at the intersection of Hollywood Road and Leonard's Grant Parkway and has been in the works for the better part of a year, said Town Administrator Laschelle McKay.

"They had some [traffic] complaints," McKay said of the State Highway Administration, which had recently completed the latest of many traffic studies done for the intersection.

"In this latest traffic study, the state found it [the intersection] met all the warrants [requirements] for a traffic signal," McKay said. "There has been much more traffic there."

Along with the Leonard's Grant community, the parkway serves the Leonardtown Library and Garvey Senior Center complex as well as Capt. Walter Francis Duke Elementary School.

Across from, though not directly, the parkway is the Meadows at Town Run housing community, which has grown quickly in recent years.

"It will give them a break from traffic as well," McKay said of the signal.

The new signal will also necessitate a new crosswalk that will allow Meadows at Town Run residents to crossover to improved sidewalks on the opposite side of the roadway.

The sidewalk improvement project is planned to extend from the parkway to the county governmental center farther into town.

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Teacher Arrested for Assaulting Student

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A special education teacher at Great Mills High School has been arrested this week for allegedly placing a student in a chokehold back in October, though the teacher has asserted they did not intend to injure the student and made physical contact with jest.

On Oct. 19 of last year, the day after the alleged incident occurred, a detective with the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office contacted the male victim at his residence.

The victim recounted that there was a fire drill before third period and once class started, he was doing his work with his friend when one of the teachers, Tony Randolson Dunn, Jr., came in and talked the victim, which the victim described as playful banter between them, court papers stated.

According to charging documents, the victim advised he did not understand the directions for the classwork or there was a miscommunication in what was expected when Dunn realized he was not completing the work correctly, Dunn is said to have made the comment, "If you didn't have glasses, I'd smack you."

The victim told police the comment was made in jest; he took his glasses off and stated, he "bucked" at Dunn.

The victim described the action as a quick lunge at Dunn. He advised his actions were also in a playful manner. The victim then went back to his work and thought the exchange was over.

But, charging papers stated, while he was

sitting in his seat working on the assigned material, Dunn came up from behind and allegedly put him in a choke hold.

The victim told police that while Dunn had him in a choke hold, he became scared. He reached back to grab the defendant's head and thought about striking him with his right elbow to release his hold.

The detective asked the victim if he was familiar with mixed martial arts, and he said he was. They then asked him if the choke hold that Dunn placed him in was a rear naked choke. The victim advised he believed it was.

When the teacher released the victim from the choke hold, the victim said Dunn asked him if he was "good." The victim advised he wasn't. The victim claimed he cried as a result and that during the choke hold, he could neither talk nor breathe.

Afterwards, the victim complained of soreness to his neck and stated he didn't think it was a joke and felt as though Dunn was trying to hurt him

On December 21, 2023, a detective completed an interview with Dunn and during the interview, Dunn denied attempting to injure the victim and advised it was all done playfully.

Dunn currently faces charges of first-degree assault and second-degree assault; a preliminary inquiry into the charges against him is scheduled for April 12.

As of March 5, Dunn is still listed as a teacher in the Great Mills High School Special Education Department.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

North County Gas Station, Convenience Store Approved



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

After being delayed after its Jan. 8 public hearing before the county planning commission, the concept site plan for a Sheetz gas station and convenience store got a unanimous consent vote at the March 4 hearing.

The conditions under which the concept site plan was approved included requiring 4,400 square feet of additional landscaping to mitigate the developer's desire to include 22 parking spaces, planning documents show.

Also, a use and occupancy permit would only be issued upon completion of any road improvements required by the state or county.

The Sheetz gas station is to be part of a new development called Charlotte Hall Commons being built next to the U.S. Veterans Administration's Community Based Outpatient Clinic located on John

Knight Drive.

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

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

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

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

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“ONE OF THE LARGEST CHALLENGES OF THE BLUEPRINT IS TO ACTUALLY LIVE UP TO THE ASPIRATIONAL GOAL OF TEACHERS AND LEADERS.”
 SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON THE BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATION



LOCAL 5
Charlotte Hall Sheetz approved



LOCAL 4
New traffic signal in Leonardtown



ON THE COVER 13
St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce celebrates 50 years

WEEKLY FORECAST

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MON, MAR 11 Sunny Hi: 54° Lo: 36°	TUE, MAR 12 Sunny Hi: 60° Lo: 40°	WED, MAR 13 Partly Cloudy Hi: 64° Lo: 44°	THU, MAR 14 Partly Cloudy Hi: 66° Lo: 47°



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