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# St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022

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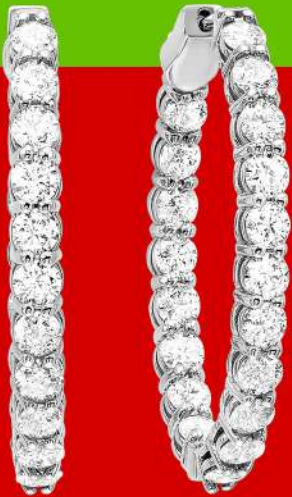
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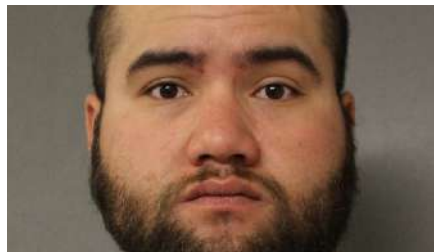
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 IT CHIEF BOB KELLY ON APPLYING FOR 4,500 FREE INTERNET CAPABLE COMPUTERS FOR THE NEEDY.



**LOCAL** 7  
Va. man charged in attempted murder



**LOCAL** 9  
Delegation hears St. Mary's bill proposals



ON THE COVER

Mike Schwartz is continuing his turkey drive for the holidays

## WEEKLY FORECAST

THU 12/15 51° / 39° Rain; breezy in the afternoon 99%	MON 12/19 45° / 34° Times of clouds and sun 5%
FRI 12/16 52° / 33° Partly sunny 9%	TUE 12/20 48° / 33° Mostly sunny 16%
SAT 12/17 47° / 29° Sun and some clouds 11% →	WED 12/21 40° / 31° Mostly sunny and colder 1% →
SUN 12/18 45° / 28° Mostly sunny 11%	THU 12/22 42° / 25° Increasing cloudiness 25%

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# Schwartz Continues 40<sup>th</sup> Year of Holiday Food Drive



Del. Todd Morgan (L) and Mike Schwartz (R)

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Good time, bad times, thin times or flush times, Mike Schwartz has continued to collect donations of money and menu items to give a Christmas dinner to the community's needy for decades.

Schwartz, 66, owner of Mike's Bike's on Great Mills Road, said this year will be his 40<sup>th</sup> giving event to the community.

This year, even with higher food and fuel prices, Schwartz said the St. Mary's County community continues to give as it always has, either monetarily or with food items.

It's a year-long process that Schwartz undertakes and the pressure accelerates during the holidays to ensure that as many families don't have to go without as possible.

"We're getting there," Schwartz told The County Times in an a little more than a week out from the food distribution day. "I think I'm going to make it."

Schwartz estimated about a week ago that he was about 75 percent complete

for donations collected to provide about 1,000 turkeys — along with canned goods and a 10-pound bag of potatoes — to make a complete holiday meal.

The food will be distributed starting Dec. 19 and again on Dec. 20, Schwartz said, from the parking lot of Zion United Methodist Church on Route 235 in Lexington Park.

Despite the perpetual giving nature and generosity of the larger St. Mary's community, getting the turkeys and side dish items for the holiday food drive has not been without challenges and the costs have continued to rise.

To provide meals for 1,000 families will take an estimated \$40,000, Schwartz said, of which he has collected \$30,000 so far.

In years prior Schwartz had depended on the local Wal-Mart to provide bargains for turkeys and last year the McKay's family grocery stores, which are no longer in business, provided the yuletide birds for families. Thomas f. McKay is still picking up the turkeys for delivery this year, Schwartz said.

This year a more expensive brand of turkeys are on the menu, Schwartz said.

"We had to get Butterballs this year," Schwartz said. "The avian flu wiped out a lot of birds."

"That's why."

In years past, with a greater ability to economize, holiday dinners to be donated cost about \$20, Schwartz said.

Now the same family-sized meal costs about \$35.

A dedicated group of volunteers will gather at the church on the donation days to put together parcels for needy families.

Schwartz will also have several bicycles on hand to give away for needy children, he said.

Schwartz continues to collect donations up to the day when meals are distributed and then on throughout the year.

Any money from donations he has left from the holiday drive he said he uses for food emergencies for families.

"I take care of people year-round," Schwartz said. "I accept donations year-round."

This year's food drive is atypical for another reason, said Schwartz.

By this time of year his workshop at Mike's Bikes is usually filled with canned or boxed goods of food donations.

Not so this time around.

"None at all, which is weird," Schwartz said. "The money donations are running O.K. though."

"I'm not freaking out right now and there have been plenty of times when I'd be freaking out right about now."

Schwartz's food drive started back in 1983 in the aftermath of a personal tragedy when a fire drove him from his home.

But it wasn't long before the St. Mary's County community rallied to

him help him in his time of need, he said. It was that show of kindness that inspired him to help those in need; he has never run out of demand.

While his food drive is one of the seminal St. Mary's community events each holiday season, becoming something of its own tradition, it has had its own highs and lows.

In 2008, when the nationwide economy took a major downturn and even St. Mary's County—usually immune from most economic woes with its defense industry dependence—shuddered, he gave out 2,400 birds to needy families, he said.

Now, at 66 years old, Schwartz said he has no plans to stop gathering and donating for the community that he has embraced and which has embraced him.

"I just feel like so many people depend on me around Christmas," Schwartz said. "I'd feel really bad if I quit."

He praised the community for its continued support of the efforts of he and his volunteers who work to keep needy families feed during the holidays and throughout the year.

"When you ask for help, they will step up," Schwartz said.

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# Virginia Man Arrested for Attempted Murder

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer



Brama Bussell

According to court papers filed this week against a man accused of trying to kill one of his apparent co-workers, bad blood on the job site led to the alleged assault.

On December 8 at about 7:44 a.m. deputies responded to the Point Lookout State Park in Scotland, for the reported assault. Investigation determined Brama Joseph Bussell, 28 of King George, Virginia, approached the victim, Tyler Knott, from behind, and proceeded to strike the victim

multiple times in the head and back.

Knott was pumping fuel into a loader at the time of the alleged assault, police said in charging documents, and he exhibited signs of having been struck several times.

During the altercation, Bussell submerged the victim's head in a ditch filled with water for an extended period, police said. Bussell held the victim's head under water until a witness intervened and ordered Bussell to release the victim.

When deputies examined Bussell they found that his sleeves were soaked in water from his cuffs to his elbows, according to charging documents.

One witness to the alleged assault said that the altercation was a result of "feelings of favoritism on the job site."

That same witness told police Bussell knew that he had done the wrong thing and that was why he had not attempted to flee the scene.

Bussell was arrested and transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown and charged with Attempted 2nd Degree Murder. Bussell has been held at the detention center on a no-bond status.

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# School Board Briefed on Use of Fund Balance

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer



Schools chief financial officer Tammy McCourt

School system budget officials reported to the St. Mary's County Board of Education on their vision for expenditure of several million dollars in budget savings from fiscal 2022 on numerous projects.

The school board voted unanimously to approve the expenditures.

Schools chief financial officer Tammy McCourt told board members at their Dec. 14 meeting how her department used already used much of the \$3.7 million available in the school system's unrestricted fund balance.

In developing the current fiscal 2023 budget, \$ 2 million had already been used, she said.

Much of these savings from fiscal 2022 were realized by instructional salaries that did not have to be paid due to continued vacancies to the tune of \$1.5 million as well as savings in building operations costs and other fixed charges for an additional savings of about \$1.2 million, according to school budget data.

McCourt petitioned the school board for permission to use the remainder of the fund balance on a new press box at Great Mills High School at a cost of \$250,000, assorted playgrounds at a cost of \$220,000, improvements to the Chopticon High School gym floor and bleachers at a cost of \$575,000 and re-

freshing of technology for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades at a cost of \$595,000.

"We are requesting a state bond match [for the press box] of \$100,000," McCourt told board members.

The playground improvements would go to Green Holly, Greenview Knolls and Lettie Marshall Dent elementary schools, said McCourt.

McCourt also wanted to use \$24,000 to replace the fire suppression supply tank at Greenview Knolls Elementary School.

Lastly, the school system was seeking a portable air chiller at a cost of \$60,000.

"We are not going to let \$1.7 million sit on our books," said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith. "That's why we're coming before you, to put it into action."

The budget amendment approved by the school board this week must still receive support from the Commissioners of St. Mary's County for final approval.

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# Charges Levied in Great Mills Fire

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer



Michael Tyree Mitchell

A St. Mary's County Circuit Court indictment has charged a Great Mills man with setting fire to a home earlier this month.

Michael Tyree Mitchell, 40, now faces charges of first-degree arson, malicious destruction of property and first-degree malicious burning.

The fire occurred Dec. 4 in the 22060 block of St. Elizabeth Court in Great Mills with units from the Bay District, Hollywood, Valley Lee and NAS Patuxent River fire departments called to fight the fire.

According to court documents, Mitchell lived in the area of the alleged arson fire.

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# Veterans' Home Receives Much-Needed Items



much needed items. Mrs. Parker shared the post on the funeral home Facebook page and began receiving donations. Collection efforts really took off when she created an Amazon shopping list, making it a matter of a few clicks, to log in to your Amazon account, choose from a preselected list of items, pay, and have your purchase shipped directly to the funeral home. "The outpouring of love, care, and support from the community is precisely what the Christmas spirit is about and this is truly heart-warming" said Parker.

The Parkers, who operate the funeral home, were looking for a way to give back to the Southern Maryland Community, which has graciously welcomed them with open arms. They have collected hundreds of toys in drives for Toys for Tots over the past

few years but were moved when they saw veterans in need. "I lost my father, who served in Korea earlier this year. My family has a rich history of military service. I am an Army veteran, both of my grandfathers served in World War II, my great-grandfather, and his brother walked nearly 70 miles from their small farming community in Virginia, over the mountain to Charlottesville to enlist and serve eventually in France, during World War I. I have direct descendants who served in the Civil War, The War of 1812 and the American Revolution. Veterans are, and always will hold a special place my heart." said funeral home owner, John Parker. "We are both privileged and honored to give back to those who sacrificed for our great nation."

Collection efforts began after Kristy Parker viewed a post on Facebook, by the Charlotte Hall administration, seeking

Team members from Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home and Cremation Services were privileged to present veterans and family members residing at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home with nearly 100 items, which they collected recently on behalf of the facility. Electronic items including tablets, wireless headphones, Bluetooth speakers, large face watches and alarm clocks, personal care items including electric razors and grooming supplies, activity related items such as puzzles and art supplies, wheelchair and walker accessories, clothing, gift cards and much more was delivered to Charlotte Hall by the funeral home owners and staff.



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## Fatal Overdoses Drop in St. Mary's

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The prevalence of Narcan, a drug that counteracts the effects of a potentially deadly opioid overdose, continues to save lives and pare down the number of drug-fueled tragedies in St. Mary's County, both law enforcement and health department officials say, but the opioid crisis persists.

What's more, law officers say, it becomes difficult to ascertain just how many non-fatal overdoses there are in St. Mary's County since the proliferation of Narcan means that addicts can carry it with them and a friend or fellow addict can use the drug to counteract the overdose without it being reported to law enforcement or health professionals.

"It's really the proliferation of Narcan," said Lt. Shawn Moses of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. "Anyone can have it."

Years ago, Moses said, Narcan was only being prescribed to deputies and other law officers through the county health department.

This meant that law enforcement could track overdoses much more closely because they—along with rescue

squads—were the only ones responding to calls for overdoses.

Currently, every inmate released from the county detention center, said Capt. Edward Willenborg, head of the Criminal Investigations Division, is provided a card that allows them to obtain their own Narcan from a pharmacy or the county health department.

The preliminary numbers of fatal overdoses the sheriff's office has responded to shows the effectiveness of Narcan.

So far in 2022 there have been 22 fatal overdoses the sheriff's office has dealt with, but that is down from 31 last year and 30 in 2020.

The number of non-fatal overdoses the sheriff's office responded to—and therefore are aware of—has also dropped.

In 2020 there were 225 overdoses the sheriff's office responded to; that fell to 187 last year and 156 so far this year.

"Some of these are being handled by family members or friends without us knowing," Willenborg said.

Moses said groups of addicts using opioids often designate one of their number to standby with Narcan and not use while the others pursue their high.

But Narcan, and its effectiveness, can

be somewhat misunderstood, Moses and Willenborg said.

Addicts whose overdose is counteracted by the drug can still relapse when the Narcan wears off, they said, leading to the narcotics still in the addict's system leading to what is known as a "secondary onset" overdose.

Willenborg said many addicts refuse additional hospital care once their initial overdose is counteracted, leaving the user vulnerable to another overdose without taking any additional opioids.

Deputies have pursued emergency petitions with the courts to ensure users can be compelled to stay in hospital to guard against a relapse.

Dr. Meena Brewster, county health officer, said fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opiate, is responsible for 80 percent of fatal overdoses in Maryland.

The decline in fatalities from opioids locally does not mean the crisis has abated significantly.

"I don't think it's gotten better," Brewster said. "We're seeing fewer fatalities and that's because we're seeing greater use of our strategies to address the epidemic."

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## County Seeks Grant For Free Internet Ready Computers

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The county government is pursuing its policy of providing internet connectivity to the neediest of county residents.

This week the Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved an application for money from the state's broadband office to provide 4,500 free HP Chromebooks to those otherwise unable to afford them.

County information technology director Bob Kelly told county commissioners this week that the grant opportunity from the state's office of rural broadband came under its "digital equity umbrella."

"This is a heavy lift for county government," Kelly said at the Dec. 13 meeting.

He noted that there were specific criteria that residents must meet to be eligible for an internet-capable computer from the county.

"But basically, it's for low-income and the elderly," Kelly said.

The state has already issued a contract for 145,000 of the HP Chromebooks to be distributed throughout Maryland.

Kelly said the notice of the grant op-

portunity came to their attention three weeks ago.

If awarded the county would receive the computers over a six-month period, Kelly said, for final distribution.

"We're heavily dependent on our community partners who have signed up who are going to help us do that," Kelly said.

The initial plan is to use public libraries and recreation and parks sites for distribution, said Kelly, with the local NAACP and sheriff's office also assisting.

"It's one device per home," Kelly said, noting that the county would have to be exact in its accounting of its distributing of computers. "We have to record that and report that to the state."

Commissioner Eric Colvin said the opportunity fit the shifting need of not only supplying broadband infrastructure but hardware for users as well.

"This is about ensuring access to the infrastructure once it's there," Colvin said. "This is a big lift for an already busy department."

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## Thrive By Three Program to Launch in St. Mary's

The St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) has been awarded grant funding in the amount of \$250,000 to launch a Thrive By Three Program in St. Mary's County. This funding was provided through the Maryland Department of Health Prevention and Health Promotion Administration Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.

The Thrive by Three program will help ensure that pregnant moms in St. Mary's County have access to adequate, effective, and equitable healthcare. The program focuses on pregnant and postpartum women previously disconnected with care and thus at higher risk of poor health outcomes. The Thrive by Three program will provide care coordination and appointment scheduling assistance for prenatal and primary care, behavioral health, and dental visits. Additionally, the program will offer a wide range of additional services, including Maryland Medicaid insurance enrollment assistance, linkage to community resources, breastfeeding support, and education on vaccines and safe sleep.

"This program will improve health outcomes for both mom and baby while advancing health equity in our community," said Dr. Meena Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer. "I commend our Health Promotion and Community Services Division Director Angela Cochran, Maternal Child Elder Health Director Ashley Milcetic, and other SMCHD team members for their dedication to healthy pregnancies and healthy families."

"Prenatal care is crucial in preventing pregnancy complications and managing conditions that can have an adverse effect on both the pregnant person and their infant," said Angela Cochran, Division Director of Health Promotion and Community Services at SMCHD. "We are very grateful to have this opportunity to provide more support for our pregnant moms and young children in St. Mary's County."

To learn more about SMCHD's women's health programs, please visit: [smchd.org/womens-health](http://smchd.org/womens-health).

## Commissioners, Delegation Meet on Proposed Legislation

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County are seeking additional bonding authority this coming year to borrow \$56 million for capital construction projects and they want the county delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to support their request.

This piece of proposed legislation was one of four official proposals made by the county to delegation members at their Dec. 14 joint meeting.

The Maryland General Assembly meets in January.

Del. Matt Morgan (R-Dist. 29A) wanted to know when those bonds would be up for sale, either next year or sometime after.

County Chief Financial Officer Jeannett Cudmore told the delegation, which includes Del. Brian Crosby (D-Dist. 29B) and Sen. Jack Bailey (R-Dist. 29) and soon-to-be sworn in Del. Todd Morgan (R-Dist. 29C), that the county has already sold \$30 million in August and would see another \$30 million bonds by the close of December of next year.

"Usually about two years after we get the authority is when we sell them," Cudmore said of the approximate time the \$56 million in bonds would be sold if the county received authorization.

"We don't sell bonds until we need to sell bonds," said Commissioner Eric Colvin. "What we're asking for is two years' worth so we wouldn't have to come back next year."

Morgan approved.

"I think that's the smart way to tackle it," the 29A delegate said. "Instead of coming back every year."

The largest project the county is seeking to fund right now is the YMCA in Lexington Park, with the county putting in \$15 million and the remainder to be raised through private means and state grants, Cudmore said.

The second county-proposed law would allow the county to continue to assess a transfer tax for an additional four years.

Deputy County Attorney John Houser explained that without the legislation approved this year the county's ability to assess the tax would sunset and cost it about \$8 million a year in tax revenue that would have to be replaced by other means.

"The reasons we have sunsets on taxes like this is that it's important to justify it," Morgan said. "I don't think we'll



Del. Matt Morgan

have a problem passing this."

The third proposed bill had to deal with gambling, Houser said, and the small stakes games residents played at local senior centers.

Under state law, it is a crime for any space to be used, set aside or rented for wagering, he explained.

"While innocent enough... that question was brought to our attention and we just do not see room for leniency in the law," said Houser.

The proposed legislation seeks a carve out from state law for St. Mary's County senior centers — "and only senior centers — Houser said to continue with these small-stakes games.

The payouts for these games typically did not exceed \$50 to any one player.

The fourth bill deals with the Metropolitan Commission (MetCom) and changes it wants to make to its administration, including not having to seek permission from the county commissioners when the utility is restructuring debt so as they do not take on any extra liability.

The bill is described as proposing text amendments and clarifying language to existing MetCom operating regulations.

The assembled state leaders had no further questions on the MetCom proposal and said they would take it under consideration for the upcoming session.

Several citizens rose in support of reviving a bill of Crosby's that would do away with at-large election of county commissioners and change to a district-based voting plan where residents in a commissioner district would vote in just their resident district for one candidate rather than four.

Local commissioners have opposed that legislation and Crosby has not refiled that bill as of press time.

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## The Tackle Box Fishing Report



By Ken Lamb  
Contributing Writer

The fall rockfish bite is on in the Potomac River from the 301 bridge to Point Lookout. Trollers are catching the 20-to-27-inch rockfish steadily in the upper regions where feeding birds show the location of schools of bait and predators. The farther south, the more activity. The real frenzy is from Smith Creek to Point Lookout.

The early morning has been best with the fish erupting on the falling tides at dawn. The fish are active all day, but the real blitz is early.

Trollers are using umbrella rigs and tandems. Smaller lures fit the mid-sized fish.

Jiggers using shads, bucktails, and metal are all scoring. Jiggers should

avoid running to the flocks of birds close on the water. Just get in the general area and put the lines over. The fish will be under your boat soon enough and all the rods will hook up. If you run to the birds the boat will scatter the fish and they

show up in a minute or two where you just came from. Chasing them is a bit like chasing your tail. If you are stationary your turn will come and the trollers will not have to keep dodging you. I am an advocate for peace between trollers and jiggers. There are more than enough fish for everyone.

Customers have said thing like: "I saw the biggest bait ball I have ever seen." "We had our limit before we could get all our lines in the water." "We left out of St. Clements and got our eight fish (four anglers), before we got to Ragged Point and were back at the dock in about one hour and fifteen minutes."

The season lasts until 31 December and no one needs to let this opportunity get away from them.

## FINANCIAL FOCUS

### Add Layers of Protection to Financial Strategy

To achieve your financial security, and that of your family, you will need to create a comprehensive strategy. But for this strategy to succeed, you'll need to guard it from various challenges – and that means you'll need to build in different layers of protection.

What are these challenges – and what types of protection can be used to defend against them? Consider the following:

- **Challenge #1: Protecting your ability to reach your goals** – To achieve your long-term goals, such as a comfortable retirement, you'll need to build adequate financial resources. And that means you'll need to create an investment portfolio that's suitable for your objectives, risk tolerance and time horizon. And you'll need to keep your long-term goals in mind when adjusting your portfolio during times of volatility.
- **Challenge #2: Protecting your family's future if you're not around** – Hopefully, you will live a long life and always be around to support your family. But the future is not ours to see – and if something were to happen to you, how would your family cope? Their chances could be much better if you have adequate life insurance. Proper coverage could help pay off your mortgage, pay for your children's higher education and allow your family to continue its lifestyle.
- **Challenge #3: Protecting your income should you become temporarily disabled** – If you were to become ill or temporarily disabled and could not work for a while, the disruption in your income could jeopardize your family's living situation, or, at the least, lead to an inability to pay bills in a timely fashion. To protect against this threat, you may want to consider adding disability insurance. Your employer may offer a short-term disability policy as an employee benefit, but it may be insufficient, either in duration or in amount of coverage, so you might want to look at a private policy.
- **Challenge #4: Protecting your long-term investments from short-term needs** – Life is full of unexpected expenses – a major car repair, a new furnace, a large bill from the dentist, and so on. If you did not have the money available to deal with these costs, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments, such as your IRA or 401(k). Taking money from these accounts earlier than you intended could incur taxes and penalties, and, even more importantly, could reduce the amount of money you have available for retirement. To help protect these investments from short-term needs for cash, try to build an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in cash or a liquid account.
- **Challenge #5: Protecting your financial independence** – You would probably do all you could to avoid ever becoming a burden to your grown children – which is why it's so important to maintain your financial independence throughout your life. One potential threat to this independence is the need for some type of long-term care, such as an extended nursing home stay, which can be extremely expensive. A financial professional can suggest protection strategies to help you prepared for these types of costs.

It can be challenging to keep your financial strategy intact – so do whatever it takes to protect it.

*Article was contributed by David McDonough  
Financial Advisor at Edward Jones  
Office located at 41680 Miss Bessie Dr. Suite 302  
Leonardtown, MD 20650  
301 997 1707*

## Pet OF THE WEEK

### MEET RICHARD



You can do something big  
You can do something small  
Because whatever you do  
Is better than nothing at all!

Hello everybody, my name is Richard. I'm a SWEET LITTLE PACKAGE OF LOVE and I'm so ready to find my FUREVER HOME! My TCAS pals say I love burrowing in my cage, eating my snacks, and getting out to explore. I can also be handled with patience and consistency. If you're looking for a NEW FAMILY MEMBER who is LOW MAINTENANCE then I'm your boy! Hurry and email [animalshelter@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:animalshelter@charlescountymd.gov) to schedule an appointment to meet me ASAP! BE MY MIRACLE AND PLEASE CHOOSE ME! When you choose to adopt from TCAS, you are literally saving a life.

To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, "like" us on Facebook @ Tri-County Animal Shelter Southern MD or view us on our website at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/tri-county-animal-shelter>

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# Wanderings

of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



## CANDY CANES AND CHRISTMAS PIES

Well, the candy cane striped ribbon is on the street sign pole and the fairy garden is magically blinking through the wee hours of the evening and morning with colorful twinkle lights. That's enough right? No, probably not. I always tell myself, "Not too many Christmas decorations outside, because remember, you have to put it all away". That never happens. As we were wrapping our street pole, Robert (sarcastically) asked if I wanted to do the stop sign pole in our neighbor's yard across the street, well actually the poles are not technically considered in any of our yards, and I said, "No, but I will give our neighbor my leftover ribbon". This morning I just messaged our neighbor and told him all this, and he replied back that it sounded like a great idea... though I think he meant, a great idea if I put it up. I told him not to call the police on me. I'm also wondering if I could add the old candy canes I use year after year on the Christmas tree to the street pole. No one ever eats the candy canes, so I just started saving them in a freezer bag. Ants are hiding under ground now right?

Robert is taller than me of course, so he was up on the ladder while I unwound the ribbon, and he kept saying to me, "Are you holding the ladder, it's shaking!" Now you know I wouldn't shirk my duty in that, I love my husband. I yelled up to him, "It's not me and the ladder, it's the street pole shaking from you leaning against it." I always thought the poles were set in concrete. My husband showed me they are not in concrete by shaking the pole around when he got down. The poles were indeed just pounded in the ground without concrete. He did a great job up there, and I hope he feels the same way when I ask him to add the solar lights around the pole today. The solar lighting project may or may not get done – I'll know by the look I get back when I ask.

My husband set up a beautiful Christmas scene in the little circle within our driveway with the old blow mold decorations from his family and from what we have collected over the years. I still need to find places for a second Santa and a snowman we pulled out. I have left our surprise pumpkins that grew inside the circle, or we have now found out that they are called Crown of Thorns gourds. I feel the gourds should stay there because of their name.

We have finally moved half of the 12 hay bales we used for Halloween. I told Robert I thought we should leave the ones out front so I could wrap them like Christmas presents. He quickly nixed that idea, saying how heavy, wet, and stinky they were. My husband was right, because when he spread some around an area in the yard where it just seems to stay muddy forever, the smell from the wet hay was overwhelming. The squirrels are having a field day with the leftover pumpkins and gourds. I have never seen squirrels eat them up so fast, does this mean we are going to have the bad winter that some weather sites are saying?

Last night Robert was asking if I had all my Longaberger pie plates back so I could make Christmas pies. I was thinking what?! I made 6 apple pies (one with apples and golden raisins soaked in Bourbon and lightly cooked for him), over 150 cranberry orange shortbread cookies, two trays of pumpkin mousse cups, and 2 pumpkin pies during Thanksgiving week and figured I was good and done with baking for this year, maybe for the next few years. My four cortisone shots made it through until the Sunday after Thanksgiving thank goodness. So, anyway, now I am looking up what kind of Christmas pies to make – if you have some recipes please email or message them to me. I have made mincemeat pie many years ago (without the old English tradition of actual meat and suet though), but there must be some other good pie recipes. I thought an eggnog and apricot brandy custard pie sounded good. My father and I loved our apricot brandy either in eggnog or just apricot brandy with ginger ale. I guess I better add them both to the Christmas shopping list. Oh, and the most important item on the list is always to breathe and use all senses and feelings to enjoy every moment of this time leading to Christmas Day, frazzled feelings and all. I hope this is a wonderful Christmas for all of you and I'll write to you again right after Christmas. Merry Christmas!

To each new day's wonderful adventure, Shelby

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



# The Way We Were...

History and Stories of St Mary's County from long-ago to just yesterday

## THE LIFE OF RILEY

In these columns, we have often directed you, gentle reader, to people who moved to St. Mary's County and whose life here, led to their leaving an indelible mark on the County, the State, or beyond. Our last column on Father John LaFarge, SJ was just such a story.

Conversely, there are sons and daughters of the County whose destiny lay elsewhere. One such person was Bennet C. Riley.

Born in St. Mary's County in November 1787, to a poor Irish-Catholic couple, his father – also named Bennet – apprenticed him at a young age to a cobbler in town eventually finding his way to work as a foreman in a shoe factory.

At age twenty-four and following his father's death in 1811, the younger Bennet signed up as a privateer – meaning a person or ship allowed by a government to attack and steal from ships at sea. In 1813 during the height of the War of 1812, he enlisted in the U.S. Army rising quickly through the ranks to Lieutenant in 1817 and Captain by 1821.

Regarded as one of the ablest and bravest young officers, Riley moved up through the ranks eventually attaining Colonel during the Mexican-American War in which he distinguished himself in several major battles. His conduct and gallantry at the time earned him promotion to the rank of brevet Brigadier General. (A "brevet" was a warrant giving an officer a higher rank as a reward for gallantry or meritorious conduct; the promotion may not confer the authority, precedence, or pay of real rank.)

Following the war with Mexico and a brief stint at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1848 Riley was given command of the Military Department of Upper California serving as the Provincial Governor.

While the U.S. Congress dithered over the question of statehood, the California Gold Rush entered a very violent phase in 1849. An influx of prospectors and large-scale desertions of his own men hampered General Riley's ability to maintain order and protect the native population.

Commanding Army forces stretched from San Francisco to San Diego, he was unable to gain control of the lawless mining camps or to stop the slaughter. Seeing no remedy from the Federal Government, General Riley surrendered all his civil power in December 1849.

In 1850, Riley returned to his home in Black Rock near Buffalo, N.Y. With his wife, Arabella, he had eight children; three of his sons fought in the Civil war, one surviving, a Confederate.

General Bennet C. Riley died of cancer on June 6, 1853. He was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery Buffalo. He is one of just three generals for whom a military post is named; Fort Riley, Kansas is named after Bennet Riley.

General Ulysses S. Grant described Bennet Riley as "the finest specimen of physical manhood I had ever looked upon. . . '62" in his stocking feet, straight as the undrawn bowstring, broad shouldered with every limb in perfect proportion, with an eagle and a step as light as a forest tiger."

A loyal and brave son of St. Mary's County.

Learn more about the extraordinary history of this County and its people at the St. Mary's County Historical Society.





# 2022 Shop With A Cop

On December 10, 2022, the Optimist Club partnered with the St. Mary's County Fraternal Order of Police and hosted the annual "Shop With a Cop" program.

Children who participated in the program were picked up at their homes by local, state, and federal law enforcement officers and taken to Walmart to purchase

Christmas gifts. This program is funded with donations from private citizens and businesses throughout the county.

The Shop With a Cop Program is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization consisting of members of the St. Mary's County Optimist Club and the St. Mary's County Fraternal Order of Police.



All photos courtesy of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office



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# ST. MARY'S SHERIFF'S CRIME BLOTTER

## Chaptico Collision Under Investigation

On Friday, Dec. 9, 2022, at 12:29 pm, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Patrol Deputies were dispatched to a motor vehicle collision involving a SUV and a tow truck with serious, life-threatening bodily injury at the area of Budds Creek Road and Mechanicsville Road in Chaptico. The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Collision Reconstruction Unit responded to the scene to continue the investigation.

Preliminary investigation determined that a 2016 Toyota Highlander, operated by Agnes Marie Douglass, age 66 of La Plata, was traveling south on Mechanicsville Road when she failed to stop at a stop sign and struck a tow truck, operated by Shawn Patrick Koetter, age 49 of

Fredericksburg, VA, which was traveling east on Budds Creek Road.

Agnes Douglass and front passenger of the Toyota, John Christopher Dewy Douglass, age 35 of La Plata, were transported to an area medical center by ambulance. The rear passenger of the Toyota, Shirley Marie Douglass, age 44 of La Plata, and Koetter, the operator of the tow truck, were flown to a regional medical center by helicopter.

At this time, speed may have been a factor in the collision.

Anyone who may have witnessed the collision or any events leading up to it and has not already provided a statement is asked to call Cpl. Rachael Roszell at 301-475-4200, ext. 78108 or email.

## Hollywood Man Arrested for Motor Vehicle Theft



Taylor, Rodney.png

On December 9, 2022, at 8:13 a.m. Dep. Campbell responded to the 21400 block of Great Mills Road in Lexington Park, for the reported stolen vehicle. Investigation determined an unknown suspect entered several vehicles parked in the secured lot, and ultimately stole a 2012 Ford F-250. The suspect then drove through a fence leaving the parking lot.

A short time later, Corporal White observed the stolen vehicle in the area of Three Notch Road and Pegg Road in Lexington Park. The suspect, later identified as Rodney Delray Taylor, age 56 of Hollywood, fled on foot and after a brief foot chase was apprehended and taken into custody. Located on Taylor was a CDS smoking device containing suspected cocaine residue. Cpl. White

sustained injury to his arm while apprehending Taylor. Both Taylor and Cpl. White were taken to an area hospital for treatment and later released.

Taylor was transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown, and charged with the following:

- Motor Vehicle/Unlawful Taking Theft
- Rogue and Vagabond (five counts)
- Malicious Destruction of Property
- Elude Uniformed Police on Foot
- Fail to Remain at Scene of Vehicle Damage Accident

CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis

CDS: Possession-Paraphernalia

Citizens may remain anonymous and contact Crime Solvers at (301) 475-3333, or text a tip to "TIP239" plus their message to "CRIMES" (274637). Through the Crime Solvers Program tipsters are eligible for an award of up to \$1,000 for information about a crime in St. Mary's County that leads to an arrest or indictment.

## Lexington Park Man Arrested for CDS Distribution



Scriber, Robert

On December 9, 2022, detectives from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division/Vice Narcotics Unit, along with assistance from the Emergency Services Team, the Criminal Intelligence Unit, the K-9 Unit, and the Patrol Division, executed a search and seizure warrant in the 20700 block of Hermanville Road in Lexington Park. Located at the residence was Robert Maurice Scriber, age 49 of Lexington Park. Scriber had an outstanding warrant for his arrest for the charge of Possession with Intent to Distribute. A search of the residence recovered over 80 grams of suspected

cocaine, packaging material, a loaded firearm and over \$2,800 in currency.

Scriber was transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown, and charged with the following:

- Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon
- Possession of Firearm with Nexus to Drug Trafficking Crime
- Illegal Possession of Ammunition
- CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute

Citizens may remain anonymous and contact Crime Solvers at (301) 475-3333, or text a tip to "TIP239" plus their message to "CRIMES" (274637). Through the Crime Solvers Program tipsters are eligible for an award of up to \$1,000 for information about a crime in St. Mary's County that leads to an arrest or indictment.

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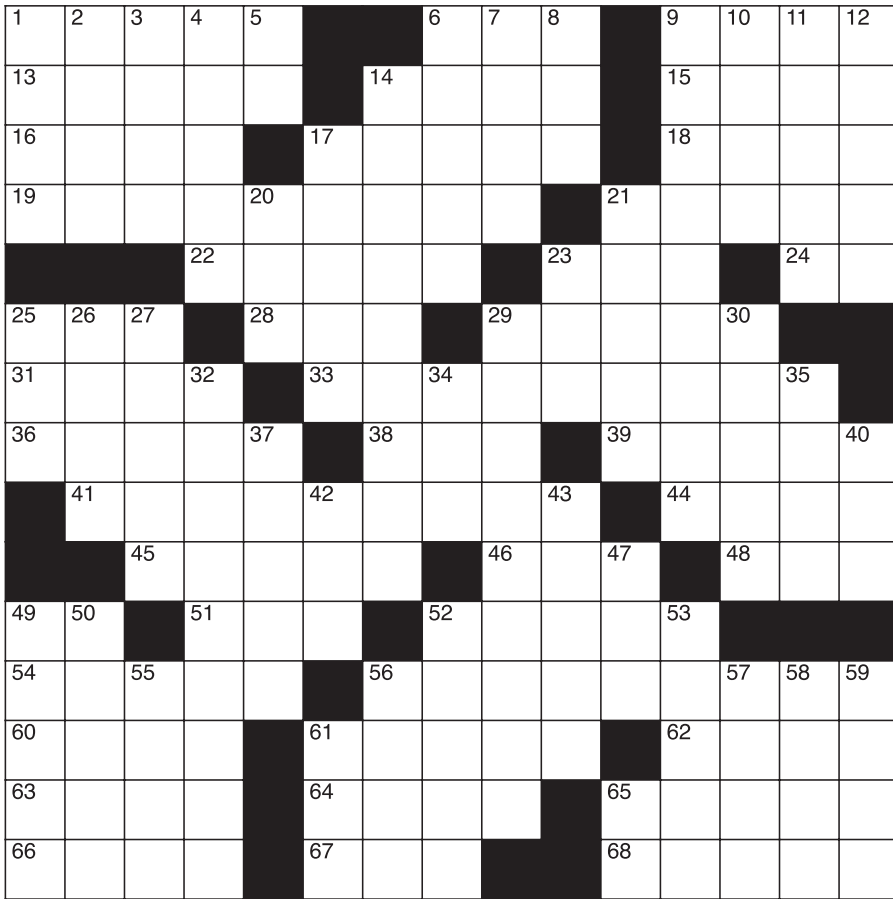
### Editor's Note

The above arrests are not an indication of guilt or innocence as the cases have not been adjudicated.





# GAMES & PUZZLES

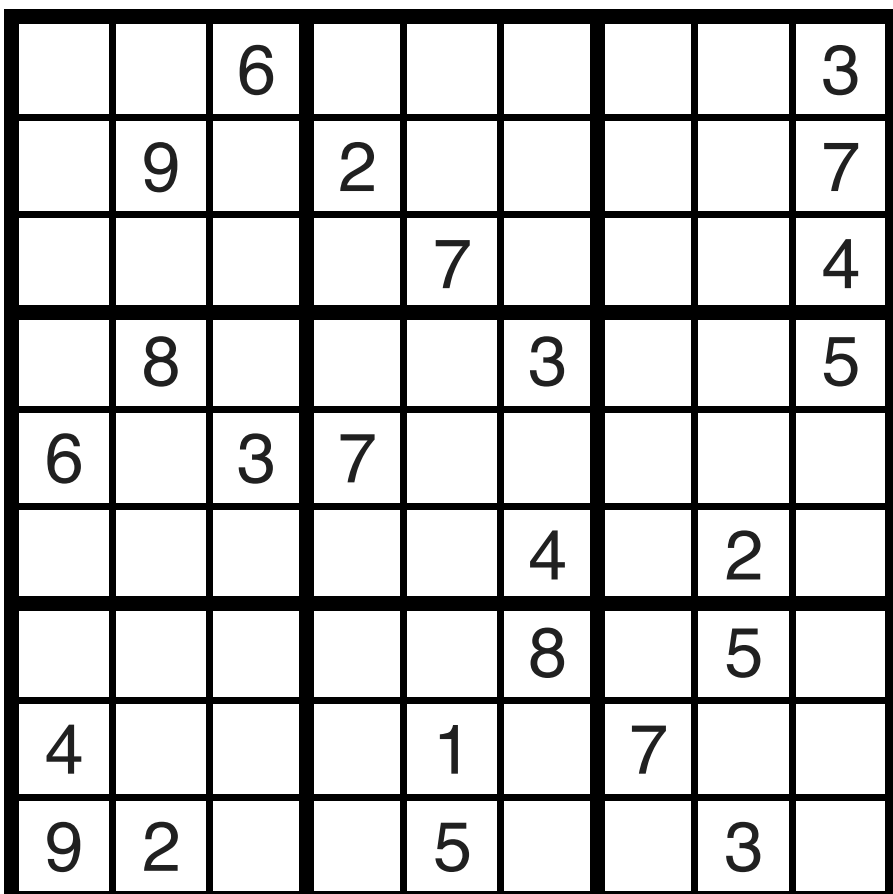


**CLUES ACROSS**

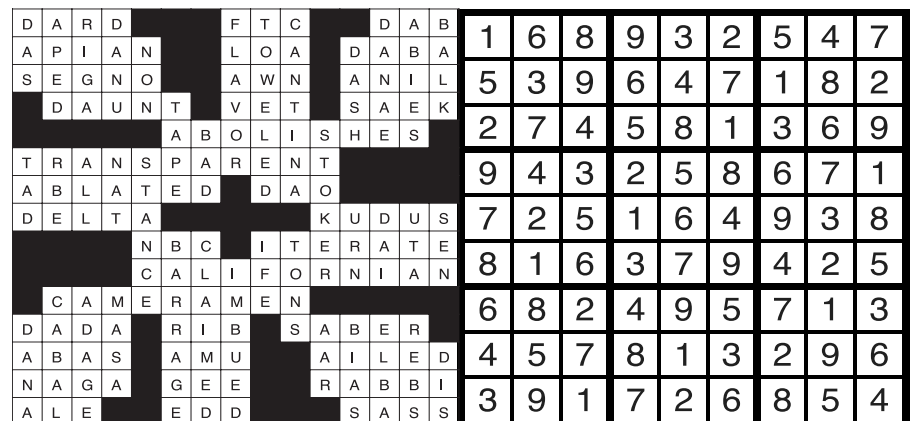
1. Take weapons away from
6. Soviet Socialist Republic
9. Most ancient Hindu scriptures
13. Actress Lathan
14. Baseball's strikeout king
15. British codebreaker Turing
16. One who lives by disreputable dealings
17. Tropical American plant
18. Opposite of right
19. Importance
21. Monetary units
22. Lawmen
23. Cool!
24. Affirmative answer
25. Thrust horse power (abbr.)
28. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
29. Muslim nobleman
31. About aviation
33. Scientific instrument
36. Protests strongly
38. Not polished
39. Grab
41. Alias
44. Large wrestler
45. Relative quantities
46. One who is big and awkward
48. Sunscreen rating
49. Atomic #90
51. Mock
52. Whales
54. Peoples
56. A state of being unclothed
60. Ottoman military commanders
61. Gatherer of fallen leaves
62. Norse personification of old age
63. Muslim mystic
64. German river
65. Measuring instrument
66. Have witnessed
67. Disallow
68. Proverb

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
2. The back side of the neck
3. A type of imine
4. Black bird
5. Partner to "Pa"
6. Puts together in time
7. Lucid
8. Transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm
9. Demonstrates the truth of
10. Ancient Greek City
11. Nishi language
12. Slang for fidgety
14. Southwestern farmers
17. Metric weight unit
20. Instant replay in soccer
21. Less polished
23. Popular pickup truck model
25. Slang for a cigarette
26. Large pile
27. Solid geometric figure
29. One from the Big Apple
30. Male admirers
32. Balsam is one
34. Local area network
35. Canadian law enforcers
37. Koran chapters
40. Cooperstown, NY museum (abbr.)
42. Certificate (abbr.)
43. An official who carries a mace of office
47. Briefly in fashion
49. Volcanic ash
50. Dutch city
52. Made of wood
53. Legendary golfer
55. Restaurant
56. None
57. Spanish city
58. Stony waste matter
59. Father
61. Confederate soldier
65. The ancient Egyptian sun god



**LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**





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## 100% LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS

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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Dec 15, 2022

### Queen of Hearts—LVRSA

Action Lounge and Billiards  
25470 Point Lookout Road  
Leonardtown  
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
Queen of Hearts Every Thursday Night at Action Lounge and Billiards. Queen of Heart ticket sales from 6pm to 745pm. Drawing at 8 pm. You must be present to win. Take your chance at Pull Tabs while you wait for the drawing. Instant win up to \$250.

Bring your family, bring your friends, enjoy some dinner, some drinks, enjoy some good company.

All of this is to Benefit the Leonardtown Volunteer Rescue Squad Auxiliary. Please share to get the word out

## Fri, Dec 16, 2022

### SMTMD Acoustic Open Mic

37497 Zach Fowler Road  
Chaptico  
7 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
Holiday Open Mic and Potluck Din-

ner—Bring your holiday cheer to this last SMTMD event of the year! The evening will kick off with a potluck dinner, starting at 6:30 PM, at the Christ Church parish hall in Chaptico. Please bring a dish or dessert to share.

Afterwards, enjoy some holiday-themed music at the open mic, starting at 7:30 PM. If you'd like to perform at the open mic, contact Chris Dudley in advance [ccdudley@rocketmail.com](mailto:ccdudley@rocketmail.com) to sign up. Admission is \$8.00; performers are admitted free!

## Sat, Dec 17, 2022

### Texas Hold'Em @ HVRS

Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad  
23469 Rescue Lane Hollywood  
Date: 12/17/2022  
6 p.m. to midnight  
Texas Hold'Em at Hollywood Vol Rescue Squad. \$85.00 buy-in for \$20k in chips. Rounds are 20 minutes each. Doors open at 5 pm, tournament starts at 6pm. BYOB, food and sodas will be available for purchase.

See [www.hvrs.org](http://www.hvrs.org) for more info. Chance for 50/50 included in your buy-

in. Tables deal their own cards, dealers are not provided. Late Entries permitted until 1st break, approx. 7 pm cut off. No rebuys allowed. Pull tabs for sale as well. \*\*We will have an ATM on site.\*\*

\*\*PLEASE NOTE THIS EVENT IS AT THE RESCUE SQUAD, NOT THE FIRE HOUSE\*\*

## Sun, Dec 18, 2022

### Christmas Cantata: "Canticle of Joy"

Patuxent Presbyterian Church  
23421 Kingston Creek Road  
California  
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

ALL are welcome to join us for this year's Christmas Cantata performance as the talented Patuxent Presbyterian Church Choir presents "Canticle of Joy" on Sunday, December 18th at 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary of Patuxent Presbyterian Church. (If you are unable to attend in person, you may view via livestream at: [www.youtube.com/patuxentpresbyterianchurch](http://www.youtube.com/patuxentpresbyterianchurch)).

### Santa Flies in to Aeropark!!

St. Mary's County Airport

44200 Airport Rd  
California  
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join Santa for some great food at the Fly in Farmers Market. Santa arrives by helicopter (weather permitting) at approximately 11:00 AM. Great food vendors:

- Dixon Family Farm
- Olga's Cakes
- Olivin's Olive Oils & Balsamic Vinegars
- Unforgoatable goods
- Beez Knees (Ice Cream!)
- Boon Doggie Farm
- Zekiah Farms
- Tobacco Barn Distillery
- No Guarantees Bakery
- Mully's Brewery
- Free State Ciders
- Gigi's treats
- Nativo Spices (Empanadas & take home pizza!)
- Sotterley (Growing for Good)
- Achterberg Acres
- The Garden (Mushrooms)
- Bird Dog Café
- Blue Wind (Chocolate & Stuffed Ham)

## Keep your family safe this holiday season



Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to **avoid tripping hazards**.

★ **Never nail, tack, or stress wiring** when hanging lights; keep plugs off the ground away from puddles and snow.

**Don't use frayed or damaged electric cords**, and never use electric lights on a metallic tree.

**Turn off all holiday lights** when you go to bed or leave the house.

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.

In homes with small children and pets, take special care to **avoid sharp or breakable decorations**.

Here are a few simple tips to remember to keep safety in mind.

**LIVE TREE:** Make sure it always has an **adequate amount of water**, and keep it away from any **heat source**.

**ARTIFICIAL TREE:** Choose one that is tested and labeled as **fire resistant**. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the **Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label**.

Make sure the Christmas tree **does not block foot traffic or doorways**.



Avoid using candles; they are a primary cause of house fires during the holidays.

**SMECO cares about your safety. Have a safe and fun-filled holiday.**

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*Countdown*  
TO  
*Christmas*  
2022



**Gift Ideas · Holiday Activities**



# ST. MARY'S Christmas Calendar

## Retro Holiday Exhibit @ Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Dec 12-Dec 19



**Location:** Piney Point Lighthouse Museum  
44720 Lighthouse Road  
Piney Point, Maryland 20674  
301-994-1471

**Admission:** \$7 for adults/\$3.50 for seniors, students and military/5 and under free

Bring your loved ones and friends if you're looking for a special place to have some holiday throwback fun. Enjoy tours of the retro holiday exhibit inside the museum and the keepers' quarters in this welcoming environment for families. Bring your list with you and purchase your holiday presents from the museum shop. This special exhibit is open 11/28/22 - 1/1/23; daily from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., except on Christmas and Christmas Eve.

## Doll and Train Exhibit @ St. Clement's Museum Dec 12-Dec 19



**Location:** St. Clement's Museum  
38370 Point Breeze Road  
Coltons Point, Maryland 20626  
301-769-2222

**Admission:** \$3 adults, \$2 for seniors and military, \$1.50 for children; 5 and under are free

Gather all of your family and friends that would enjoy an antique and collectible dolls and train exhibit inside the museum.

Get a jump on your holiday shopping with a wide variety of unique and local items inside the Museum Store.

The holiday exhibit continues all December long until January 1, 2023 (except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day). Great for visiting family and kids.

## Holiday Show @ North End Gallery Dec 15

**Location:** North End Gallery  
41652 Fenwick St.  
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650

301-475-3130

**Time:** 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Bring your special someone along for an evening of art to see the "Holiday Show" this month.

Stop by between November 22 - December 31, 2022 (Open every day 11 am - 5 pm excluding Thanksgiving and Christmas days), to see the stunning and detailed artwork included in this month's exhibits, or to add to your art collection by purchasing one of the many local treasures on display.

Mixed media, fiberworks, pottery, photography, jewelry, painting, pastels, woodworks, batiks, painted gourds, and more are available at North End Gallery, Southern Maryland's oldest cooperative gallery.

## Saturday Holiday Market @ The Barns at New Market Dec 17

**Admission:** Free

**Location:** The Barns at New Market  
29133 Thompson Corner Rd.  
Mechanicsville, Maryland 20659

**Time:** 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Prepare your shopping list for your holiday customs and meals on Saturdays (11/5 - 12/17) while taking advantage of the many artisans and craftspeople, locally grown fresh produce, baked goods, alcoholic beverages, and wines that are available.

## Santa and Mrs. Clause @ the Square Dec 17

**Admission:** Free

**Location:** Town of Leonardtown  
**Time:** 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Visit Santa Clause at the Town Square with your list of holiday wishes!

Once you've taken your pictures, go holiday shopping at a nearby store or grab something to eat at a nearby restaurant to warm yourself up.

## Holly Day Lights @ Lexington Park Dec 17

**Admission:** Free

**Location:** St. Mary's Square  
21600 Great Mills Road  
Lexington Park, Maryland 20653  
**Time:** 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Visit a beloved site from the past and join the people in this famous square to commemorate the day. Families may enjoy the colorful Christmas vendor village from 2 to 5 p.m., shop, visit Santa, make seasonal crafts, and enjoy the décor while carolers perform. Additionally, there will be a food court with nachos, hot dogs, burgers, baked goods, BBQ, hot chocolate for hungry customers.

## AeroPark Fly-In Farmers Market Dec 18



**Admission:** Free

**Location:** St. Mary's County Regional Airport Terminal Building  
44200 Airport Rd  
California, Maryland 20619

**Time:** 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Visit this distinctive farmers market with regional cuisine and goods on display within the local airport terminal. Haven't seen Santa yet? Look to the skies, not for reindeer and sleigh, but a helicopter. Santa is scheduled to land at 11:30 a.m. (weather permitting). Shop for your holiday fare and purchase your next beverage, appetizer, side dish, main course, or dessert. You are not required to fly to attend, but if you do, there is lots of parking!

## Holiday Open House @ Shepherd's Old Field Market Dec 18

**Admission:** Free

**Location:** Shepherd's Old Field Market  
22725 Duke Street  
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650

**Time:** 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Bring your favorite shopping companions and take in Holiday entertainment while sipping on light refreshments. The activities for children include Santa photographs and face painting.

## Sing Joy! Live Concert Dec 20

**Admission:** \$10

**Location:** 21760 Great Mills  
Lexington Park, Maryland 20653

Put on your festive best and enjoy live music that celebrates the joy of one of the best seasons of the year. This celebration will feature songs of enthusiasm, hope, joy, and happiness performed by both well-known artists and local musicians. One performance at 7 p.m.

# Saturday, December 17

Lexington Park  
**Holly Days**

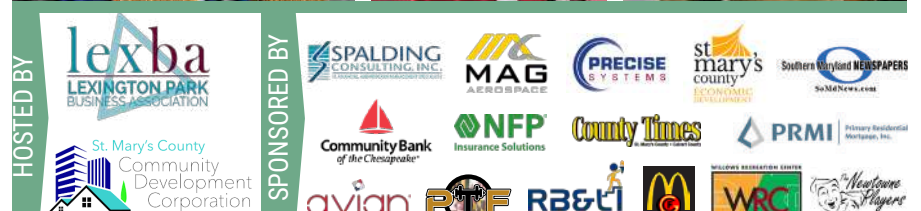
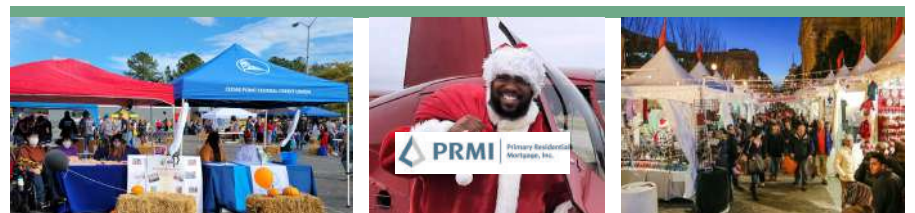
1-4 p.m.

St. Mary's Square

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Pictures with Santa

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Holiday Crafts for Kids  
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# Chesapeake Orchestra Open for the Winter



Jeffrey Silberschlag

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The Chesapeake Orchestra, long known for its summer time River Concert Series of great popularity, is trying something different, said its conductor and musical director Jeffrey Silberschlag. With the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the River Concert

series coming up next summer, Silberschlag will be conducting a concert Dec. 18 with a Christmas and winter seasonal flair.

“We’re trying to see if an indoor concert series will work,” Silberschlag told The County Times. “I call this our HVAC [heating, ventilation and air conditioning] series because we’ve been performing in summer weather so much.”

The performance, which will take place at St. Mary’s College of Maryland’s new Dodge Performing Arts Center, will feature a mix of holiday themed songs, including selections from famed composer and song writer Steven Sondheim.

Sondheim passed away last year and the concert is in part a memorial salute to his work.

Headlining the event will be Melissa Errico, a Tony-nominated Broadway singer and actress; Randy Waldman, who has played piano for famous performers such as Barbara Streisand will also perform, Silberschlag said.

“This guy is a major L.A. [Los Angeles] superstar,” Silberschlag said. “We’ve

developed connections to bring in people from the greater music business.”

Silberschlag’s son Nathaniel, the principal horn of the Cleveland Orchestra, will also play during the concert.

The auditorium of the Dodge center seats 700 and ticket sales go to fund the Chesapeake Orchestra, Silberschlag said.

The Chesapeake Orchestra, through the River Concert Series, has long sought to bring that sort of arts and culture to St. Mary’s.

“That was the original vision of a lot of the community leaders during the BRAC [base realignment and closure] re-alignment of the ‘90s,” Silberschlag said. “St. Mary’s County is this unique place where you have just as much chance to speak to an admiral as you do a waterman.”

“Over the years, it’s become more cosmopolitan and the Chesapeake Orchestra is a part of that.”

With Errico taking center stage this weekend, Silberschlag said, the atmosphere should feel “like going into a New York [City] club” rather than the typical

orchestral experience.

It’s part of a larger concept of bringing more musical culture — and a chance for the community to grow closer through sharing it — to the county all year round.

“We hope the people will embrace it,” Silberschlag said.

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



Melissa Errico

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#### VINTAGE CHRISTMAS EXHIBITS



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FOR MORE INFO [FACEBOOK.COM/SCIMUSEUM](https://www.facebook.com/SCIMUSEUM) • 301-769-2222

#### CHILDREN’S HOLIDAY EXHIBITS



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38370 Point Breeze Rd., Colton’s Point, MD 20626  
301-769-2222

Museum Store at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum  
44720 Lighthouse Rd., Piney Point, MD 20674  
301-994-1471

Museum Store at The Old Jail Museum  
41625 Court House Dr., Leonardtown, MD 20674  
240-925-3427



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# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Thursday, December 15

### Sea Squirts

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

This month's theme is Dinosaurs. Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a takeaway craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25-40 minutes. Cost is free with museum admission. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. For more information, visit: Sea Squirts | Calvert Marine Museum, MD - Official Website

### S.T.E.A.M. PUNKS

Calvert Library Southern Branch, 13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons, 6-7 p.m.

Question, Discover and Explore! Experience new technology and techniques as we adventure with science, engineering, math and the arts! This month we'll be doing some intergalactic exploring and getting inspired by what we see in the stars! For astronauts in grades 2 to 7. Registration required. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### TACOS Teen Advisory Council of Students

In person and on Calvert Library's Discord Server 6:30pm-7:30pm.

Teens! Calvert Library needs you! We want the library to be a safe space where teens can hang out and freely access books and information. TACOS meets monthly to help us with our events and services planning. Join us on the third Thursday! You can receive 1 Service Learning hour for each meeting attended. Register for the invite to our Discord server. Sign up to join Calvert Library's Discord server, Email Tori for more information. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Friday, December 16

### 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>.

### Writers by the Bay

Calvert Library (online), 7:00pm-9:00pm.

Looking for a writers' group? All writers and would-be writers are welcome to come for critique & camaraderie. Please register by the day before the event in order to receive the link the evening of the

event. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Saturday, December 17

### Free Paper Shredding Event

Appeal Landfill located at 401 Sweetwater Road in Lusby, Saturday, Dec. 17 at

The Calvert County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division, will host free paper shredding events for county residents and businesses to help prevent identity theft by destroying confidential or sensitive documents.

Proof of residency or business location is required. All paper must be removed from plastic bags and cardboard boxes prior to shredding. Paper clips and staples are acceptable. Binders and binder clips are not acceptable.

Businesses are allowed up to five banker boxes of paper per business (or the equivalent volume of five banker boxes in alternate containers). There is no limit for residents. Certificates of destruction will be provided if requested.

### Christmas Movie

Upstairs at North Beach Town Hall, 5:30 p.m., Saturday, December 17

Watch a special Christmas movie inside the town hall.

### Campfire

On the beach at North Beach, 5:30 p.m.

Warm up around the campfire and enjoy hot chocolate while you roast marshmallows.

### Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

Hope to make your Scrabble skills killer? Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register.

## Sunday, December 18

### An Old-Fashioned Christmas

One-Room Schoolhouse, 3080 Broomes Island Road, Port Republic, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Come and celebrate an Old Fashioned Christmas in the original Port Republic One-Room Schoolhouse, which will be decorated for the holidays. Visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Make popcorn/cranberry strings and Christmas stars, and help to decorate the Christmas tree. Have fun making seasonal Christmas crafts. Enjoy Christmas music and our guest flutist. There is no charge, everything is free. For more information, please visit our website at [calverton-roomschool.org/](http://calverton-roomschool.org/).

### Santa Claus is Cruisin' the Town

North Beach, 1-3 p.m.,

Santa will trade in his sleigh for a day to golf cart around town. Come out to visit when you see him making his way down your street.

## Monday, December 19

### Mechanical Mondays

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

Become a scientist and explore topics related to STEAM on the first and third Monday each month! Build, code, count, and create with different activities each session. Registration required. Intended for scientists in grades K-2, 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Monday Night Movie Musings

Calvert Library (Zoom): Four Sheets to the Wind, 78 p.m.

The film is available on Hoopla through Calvert Library. Watch the movie prior to the Zoom event and join us for a lively discussion on Monday night. Please register to receive an emailed link to the Zoom event an hour before it begins. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Wednesday, December 21

### Working Wednesdays, Resumes and Cover Letters

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

Offered by Maryland Department of Labor, American Job Center, this is an interactive workshop for resume and cover letter writing help. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Scrabble

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

Do you love to play Words with Friends on your device but want to meet people IRL (in real life)? Or are you hooked on the newest word sensation Wordle? Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Come play Scrabble with us! Please register so we know how many boards to put out. Register to receive a reminder, 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Book Discussion

Calvert Library, (Zoom), 2-3:30 p.m.

Join us this month to discuss "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" by Benjamin Alire Saenz. Join us this month to discuss Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Dungeons & Dragons

Calvert Library 6-9 p.m.

Come have fun with D&D, a role playing game for adults of all experience levels. Please register. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Thursday, December 22

### Little Minnows

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

This month's theme is Dinosaurs are Fossils Too. For preschoolers ages 3 - 5, with an adult. This program focuses on one of the museum's three themes. Join us for story time and a takeaway craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25-40 minutes. Capacity is limited. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Cost is free with admission. For more information, visit: Little Minnows | Calvert Marine Museum, MD - Official Website

## ONGOING

### Annmarie Garden in Lights

Annmarie Garden, 13470 Dowell Road, Solomons, MD 20688, Nov. 25-Jan. 1 (closed some evenings); 5-9 p.m/nightly

Dazzling light show - festive exhibits - holiday shopping - food trucks. Admission: ADVANCE TIMED-ENTRY TICKETS REQUIRED! Members FREE (must reserve tickets); Non-members \$15; Ages 2 & under FREE; SNAP card holders, call 410-326-4640 to reserve your reduced price tickets

### Santa Sundays @ Annmarie Garden In Lights

Annmarie Garden, 13470 Dowell Road, Solomons, MD 20688; Nov. 27 and Dec. 4, 11 and 18; 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening with Santa at Annmarie Garden In Lights. Santa will be greeting guests from the Front Patio of the Arts Building; in the event of inclement weather, Santa will greet guests in the Arts Building.

Guests will be able to take a family photo with Santa and other holiday characters.

Please note that Santa may take warm-up breaks at 6:00-6:15 and 7:00-7:15. Thank you for your understanding. This is a first-come, first-served activity.

Included with cost of admission.

### Holiday Magic

ArtWorks@7th, 8905 Chesapeake Avenue (near 2nd street), North Beach; December 1, 2022 - January 1, 2023 Open House December 3, 1-4 p.m.



# What's Coming to Calvert

The following list of pending site plans was presented to the Calvert County Planning Commission at their Dec. 14 meeting. That means that the proposals are on the list for consideration by the planning commission at a future meeting. The meeting was in a hybrid form, both virtually and in person at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center (HEBCC), 901 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick.

1) SPR-2018-286, **Calvert Gateway**, Lot 4R, located at 10825 Town Center Boulevard, Dunkirk, on a 4.3-acre lot, zoned Dunkirk Town Center. Proposed 15,890-square-foot building for commercial retail space with parking and site improvements. This project is on private water and sewer. The submittal was accepted December 19, 2018. Agent: Bay Engineering

2) CSPR-138331, **Barstow Convenience Center**, located at 340 Stafford Road, Prince Frederick on three separate parcels consisting of 83.07 acres, Zoned RCD/EC. The project proposes replacement of the existing recycling center with a new facility that includes improved customer parking, vehicular circulation and separating public vehicles from County vehicles. Site utilities will be connected to services currently supplying the existing maintenance building. The submittal was accepted June 23, 2021. Agent: WBCM

3) CSPR-138320, **Calvert Gateway**, Lot 11, Retail Building, located at 10375 Town Center Boulevard, Dunkirk on 2.66 acres, Zoned Dunkirk Town Center. Proposed 10,395-square-foot building for commercial retail space with parking and site improvements. This project is on private water and sewer. The submittal was accepted July 28, 2021. Agent: Bay Engineering

4) CSPR-142742, **Magnolia Ridge**, located at the corner of Dares Beach Road and Fox Run Boulevard, Prince Frederick on 31.20 acres, Zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District. Proposed 96 multi-family apartment units and 164 townhouse units with associated site improvements. This project is on public water and sewer. The submittal was accepted October 28, 2021. Agent: Barrett & Associates

5) CSPR-142795, **Calvert Gateway**, Lot 12R, Retail Building 'A,' located at

10380 Town Center Boulevard, Dunkirk, on a 4.04-acre lot, zoned Dunkirk Town Center. Proposed 15,493-square-foot building for commercial retail space with parking and site improvements. This project is on private water and sewer. The submittal was accepted February 23, 2022. Agent: Bay Engineering

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

7) CSPR-142755, **Armory Towns**, located at 46 Armory Road, Prince Frederick, on two lots totaling 0.85 acres, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, Old Town Transition District, using public water and sewer. Proposed nine, two-story townhomes totaling approximately 7,560 square feet. The submittal was accepted April 27, 2022. Agent: Collinson, Oliff & Associates

8) CSPR-142828, **Magnolia Ridge West**, located at Armory Road and Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, on multiple parcels totaling 24.497 acres, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District. Proposed approximately 91,000 square feet creating 79 townhomes. This project is on public water and sewer. The submittal was accepted April 27, 2022. Agent: Barrett & Associates

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

10) CSPR-142856, **Solomons Condominiums**, located at 14516 & 14518 South Solomons Island Road, Solo-

mons, on two lots totaling .67 acres, zoned Solomons Town Center. Proposed 34,483-square-foot, four-story building for mixed use: 2,450 square foot commercial retail space and 32,033 square feet for 13 multi-family condominiums with parking and site improvements. This project is in the Critical Area and on public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted July 27, 2022. Agent: Barrett & Associates

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

12) CSPR-142871, **Calvert Hills - Phase II**, located on Calvert Hills Road, Prince Frederick on a 2.33-acre parcel, zoned Town Center/Village. This project is proposed for 35 apartment units, served by public water & sewer, to complete the development that started with Calvert Hills - Phase I. The concept submittal was accepted October 26, 2022. Agent: Bay Engineering.

13) CSPR-142896, **Dunkirk Business Center - Lot 3**, Flex Space, located on Keith Lane, Owings on a 1.15-acre parcel, zoned I-1 Light Industrial. Proposed 9,750' one-story building for flex space. The project will have private water and septic. The concept submittal was accepted October 26, 2022. Agent: Collinson, Oliff & Associates.

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

1) SD-138200, **Wyatt's Ridge**, Lots 1-24, located on Skinners Turn Road in Owings. 24 lots proposed on one parcel, consisting of 100.368 acres. Zoned RCD, Tier III. As this project is in Tier III, a public hearing is required prior to preliminary approval. Submittal accepted December 16, 2020. Agent: Collinson, Oliff & Associates

2) SD-142751, **Armory Square**, Lots 1 & 2, located between North Solomons Island Road and Armory Road, Prince Frederick. Two commercial lots

proposed on two parcels, consisting of 12.95 acres. Zoned Prince Frederick Town Center - Newtown District, Tier I. Submittal accepted December 16, 2020. Agent: Barrett & Associates

3) CSD-2020-090, **Bowen's Pride Section II**, Lots 1-12, located on N. Solomons Island Road in Huntingtown, within one-mile buffer of Prince Frederick Town Center. 12 lots proposed on one parcel, consisting of 34.32 acres. Zoned RCD/FFD, Tier III. As this project is in Tier III, a public hearing is required prior to preliminary approval. Submittal accepted December 16, 2020. Agent: Barrett & Associates

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

5) CSD-2021-201, **Saint Pierre Estates**, located at 80 Toye Lane, Prince Frederick, on a 10.27-acre parcel, zoned Residential District and entirely within one mile of the Prince Frederick Town Center. A Private Right-of-Way is proposed for five lots. This submittal was accepted November 17, 2021. Agent: Wilkerson and Associates, Inc.

6) CSD-2022-109, **Armory Towns**, located at 46 Armory Road, Prince Frederick, on two lots totaling 0.85 acres, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, Old Town Transition District, using public water and sewer. Proposed nine 2-story townhomes totaling approximately 7,560 square feet. The submittal was accepted April 27, 2022. Agent: Collinson, Oliff & Associates

7) CSD-2022-113, **Magnolia Ridge**, located on Fox Run Boulevard, Prince Frederick, on a 31.29-acre parcel, zoned Prince Frederick Town Center, New Town District and will be served by public water & sewer. Proposed 164 Townhouse Units and 96 Apartments with a density of 8.3 units per acre. The project proposes 3.04 acres of recreation area and 12.58 acres of open space. This submittal was accepted October 26, 2022. Agent: Barrett & Associates.

*Information provided by Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning.*

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# Additional Middle School Safety Advocates Sought

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Currently three school safety advocates are shared among the school system's six middle schools. At the Dec. 8 meeting of the Calvert County Board of Education, safety advocates urged that three more be hired so each middle school has one in their building at all times.

Dean Jones, a safety advocate at the Career and Technology Academy, spoke in support of his middle school colleagues. He represents the advocates on CAESE, the Calvert Association of Educational Support Employees. He said, "It is pretty much common knowledge that our students came back post pandemic a little bit damaged, lacking in skills in their behavior and their social skills and even academic skills. And the safety advocate serves as a mentor in the building and as a person that helps solve those problems within the building. And they're having a more difficult time bouncing back and forth. And the kids are now emailing their safety advocate when they're in one school, saying where are you? I have a problem, or some emergency has come up that's actually dangerous to the school and I need someone to address it, and they're not there."

He added, "We know that middle school years are the most difficult years

of a student's development. And now add post pandemic onto that for a pre-teen or a teenager to be able to go through middle school without that trusted adult, which is that safety advocate. That safety advocate is very different than a security guard that they have at other schools. A safety advocate is a mentor that builds relationships, that solves problems, that also oversees the safety of the school. And when that safety advocate is not there, the school is not as safe as it should be."

Gordon Pracht, who shares safety advocate duties between Plum Point and Calvert middle schools, said, "We are all aware of the safety issues nationally, statewide, neighboring counties, and here in our own Calvert County affecting our students and our staff of the Calver County School system. We have received many alerts from Charles County, PG County, Anne Arundel County, and other counties around us and also kind of tweaked the way we do things in our schools, trying to keep up with the trends."

He said sharing safety advocates "affects our staff at many levels. Our administrative staff are stretched so thin."

Pracht added, "While this is a safety issue alone, we must realize that the reduction of support to our teachers in the classroom translates additionally into the investigations of things that students and

staff members bring up in the school, who already have their plates kind of full with what they're doing, but that they have this put on top of that when the safety advocate's not available."

He observed, "Most importantly, let's look at how that addresses and translates to our students. I've developed a rapport with many of my students at both of my schools. This rapport is delayed and hampered at times by this every-other-day schedule. I'm off to the email from students at one school while I'm at another with a sometimes minor, sometimes major issue that's going on. I must coordinate by either email or phone with

staff members at that school where the student is that day to try to get things accomplished in different forms of communication without being there for the student as I'd like to be. This sometimes leads to more severe situation for the student when they don't choose to email me if I'm not there on Wednesday. I come in Thursday, and they tell me, I wanted to tell you yesterday this was going on, but you weren't here."

New Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel will be submitting his first budget to the school board in January.

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

## Letters to the Editor

### Calvert County Board of Ed Missed Golden Opportunity

The following letter was read at the Calvert County Board of Ed meeting December 8, 2022.

I attended the meeting on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Ed's "Let's talk with Superintendent Townsel". The meeting's purpose was to learn more about the playbook program that of which is being funded through the Operating Budget.

I had specific questions regarding the breakdown of the students selected. These questions regarded gender, race demographics, and the sport or sports the students participated in. Unfortunately my questions went unanswered. I was then instructed to speak to Dr. Johnson who provided the information last week.

The BOE voted for the program with the exception of Mr. Pat Nutter who was absent. The playbook program consists of 50 students selected by the principals from each of the four high schools. The following is a gender breakdown by each school:

- The student's selection at NHS is comprised of eight girls and 40 boys (two girls dropped out of the program). **Girls represent 16.67%** while boys represent 83.33%.
- At HHS, eight girls and 41 boys were selected. **Girls represent 16.33%** and boys represent 83.67%,

- At CHS 11 girls were selected and 39 boys. **Girls represent 22%** and boys represent 78%.
- Patuxent High School there were six girls and 44 boys selected. **Girls represent 12%** and boys represent 88%.

The program consists of 200 students representing the four high schools. One would expect 100 girls and 100 boys, meaning 25 girls and 25 boys from each high school. The girls seem to be grossly under represented based on the aforementioned statistics.

There are a total of 33 girls and 164 boys selected by the principals across the schools for this program. **Girls represent ONLY 16.75%** and the boys represent 83.24% of the student participants. This is a **huge under representation of girls in this program.**

**Ladies, you are the majority. You voted for this program. And it is not equitable!** You keep talking about equity but you missed a golden opportunity. You have the obligation when voting on a program such as this—to make sure girls are equally represented.

Thank you,  
Beth M. Bubser.



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# Report: Mill Creek is Slowly Degrading

## County Receives Annual CBL Study

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

“Overall, the water quality of the Mill Creek system is slowly degrading over time in terms of bottom water dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll-a concentrations,” Calvert County Environmental Planner Amalia Pleake-Tamm told the county commissioners Dec. 13 during a briefing on the 2021 and 2022 Water Quality Monitoring Program for Tidal Creeks in the county conducted by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL).

She went on to say, “Solomons Harbor continues to experience periods of hypoxia (low dissolved oxygen levels) that can impair habitat suitability and stress organisms. Water clarity is vital for submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), which provides food and habitat for marine life; oxygenates the water; and traps sediment and nutrient runoff. Water clarity in Mill Creek declined in 2022. There was generally inadequate levels of light reaching the floor for SAV growth.”

In addition to Mill Creek, the annual study conducted for the county looked at 11 other tidal creeks. They were Fishing, Plum Point, Parkers, Hall, Hunting, Battle, Island, St. Leonard, Hellen’s, Hungerford, and Flag Harbor.

Pleake-Tamm said, “The 11 tributary creeks have less historical data. Thus far, there do not appear to be any long-term trends in the creeks, except for degrading trends in some creeks for dissolved oxygen (St. Leonard, Battle, Parkers creeks). Algal blooms were common throughout the county in both 2021 and 2022.”

The lab’s Dr. Lora Harris presented the findings to the commissioners. She explained, “We study the symptoms of eutrophication. If we think about eutrophication and the pollution of the Chesapeake Bay as kind of a disease that the Chesapeake Bay system is experiencing as a result of nutrient pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus. The symptoms of that eutrophication are low dissolved oxygen, lack of light transmission through the water column, which impairs the ability of SAVs or sea grasses to grow high chlorophyll concentrations, which are phytoplankton blooms. So, we measure those three characteristics of the water column along with temperature and salinity.”

Harris said the data that was collected over the past two years is measured against previous years of the study. She showed the commissioners time lapsed maps showing the trends in upper Mill Creek. As to oxygen levels, she said, “We use statistics, and we can say this is significantly declining and so that’s why we are concerned about this system.”

Mill Creek’s shape presents inherent problems, she said. “It’s a large, narrow tributary,” Harris noted, adding, “The water doesn’t move around as much because of kind of the morphology, the shape of the basin.”

As to the other creeks measured, Harris observed, “In general, for algae, we were either around average for the time series or last year in Hungerford even a little bit low. And for oxygen, the station that was kind of lower, to keep an eye on, it’s like this almost every year is St. Leonard Creek,” adding, “St. Leonard is almost its own little baby estuary. And so that’s part of it is it’s deeper and it’s larger.”

On the Bay side, at Fishing, Plum Point, Parker’s and Flag Harbor, she said, “I was really excited to see Plum Point... getting a little better.”

Flag Harbor remains “a tough spot,” with its marina. She noted, “There’s a lot of impervious surfaces, and it’s small and kind of stuck in there with a lot of still water.”

During the presentation, Commissioner Mike Hart bemoaned the lack of progress on Mill Creek, where he spent a lot of time on during his youth. He said people were supportive of Bay clean-up efforts.

But Commissioner President Buddy Hart noted people want progress, yet they complain about paying for the implementation. “The rain tax was part of

the plan. The tier mapping was part of the plan. The plan to clean the Bay is billions of dollars.”

Hart noted fixing the Conowingo Dam was part of the solution. But Hance said, “Pennsylvania is way behind us, but even the Maryland portion of the plan is billions of dollars. And you don’t like what they want to do in the plan.”

Hart said he would be in favor of it “if it makes sense and it saves the Bay.”

Hance retorted, “I know I’ve heard you complain about the rain tax.”

After the presentation the commissioners agreed to direct staff to:

1) Continue monitoring Mill Creek and the tributaries to measure the effect of local climate variances, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and identify areas needing water quality improvements.

2) Continue supporting sewer upgrades, BMPs, riparian and vegetative buffers, and the use of pump-out facilities by boaters; and

3) Continue interpreting the tributaries water quality in the context of adjacent Patuxent River conditions.

The survey cost the county \$34,319 in 2022.

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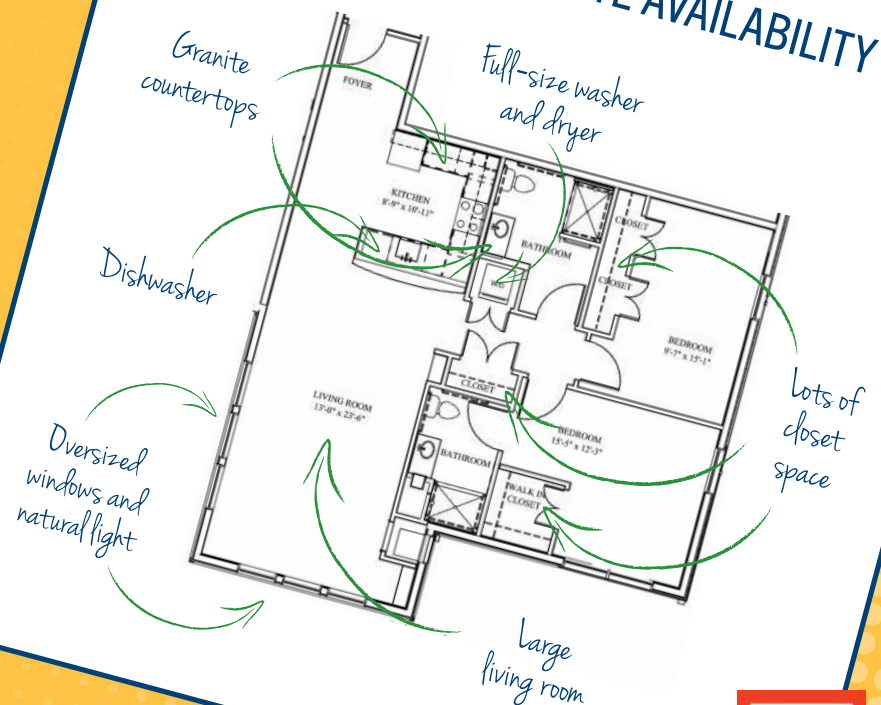
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# School Board Revises Public Comment Policy



School Board Vice President Inez Claggett

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

For many months Calvert County Board of Education member Pat Nutter has made a motion to eliminate the board's policy limiting public comment at their meetings to no more than 10 speakers. Each motion failed 4-1.

The policy has come under persistent criticism from the county commissioners and other citizens. And it became an issue in the election in which school board candidates opposing the policy prevailed.

So, when at Nutter's last meeting on Dec. 8, Board Vice President Inez Claggett suggested that it was time for the board to set aside the policy and when a motion was made at the suggestion of board member Dawn Balinski that a one-hour time limit be substituted instead, Nutter went along with it. "Sometimes something's better than nothing," he concluded.

Since the per speaker time limit remains at three minutes, or five minutes for someone speaking for a group, if each speaker uses their allotted time, that will accommodate between 12 and 20 speakers in an hour.

Claggett said in broaching the subject, "So colleagues, we each share the understanding that public comment is essential for our meetings, and we want to continue to ensure that we are offering our community the opportunity to come before us to speak. Although we do realize there are many means by which our

community can reach us, to talk to each of us, whether that be individually or collectively, we have the options to email, as well as to reach out to us individually, to have conversations. But I wanted us to talk amongst ourselves to possibly find a way for us to move beyond our 10-person limit, to allow additional public commenters to be able to come before us at meetings."

Board member Antoine White said, "I appreciate all the emails and people who reach out to me, and everyone knows I'm in the community. I go to these games, I go to places, people invite me to things, and that's where I think a lot of things take place, by having a conversation. As far as with the public comment, I understand we want to know what's going on, but if you really want something done, you're going to reach out through an email or a phone call or something so you can actually get communication back and forth from that. Not saying that we don't want to hear it, but in order to get an understanding, it needs to be communication back and forth. But with that being said, some aren't comfortable with emails, some are uncomfortable with calling. So, we have to try to be flexible

to meet everyone's needs."

Board President Pamela Cousins, who has been the most resistant to changing the policy, said, "I am perfectly fine with lifting the 10 limit. My only concern is that this is a business meeting, that we do have business to conduct."

Nutter seemed perplexed that the idea surfaced after so many months of resistance. "There are 90 some thousand people in this county. Don't put a number on me saying, you're number 96,000, so you can't talk. I think that's ridiculous. I think that if you're number 11, if you're number 12, and I honestly believe that if you take this number away, that you're not going to be inundated with tons and tons of speakers."

But he observed, "I guess it's just trying to appease my motion." Going along with the time limit, he added, "In my head, I guess I really disagree with it, but it's a step in the right place."

The motion passed unanimously and the new policy will begin at the first board meeting in January.

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

# Outgoing School Board Members Attend Last Meeting

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Two members of the Calvert County Board of Education attended their last meeting on Dec. 8. Board President Pamela Cousins, who has served two terms, and member Pat Nutter, who was appointed to replace the late Bill Phalen, both chose to not seek election for another term. Lisa Grenis and Jana Post were elected to the at-large positions and will begin to serve in January.

Nutter, who served two terms as county commissioner, said being on the school board is a difficult job. "Everything looks different when you're outside looking in. But when you get inside, it's a whole new ballgame. It takes you a long time to learn this job. I've been really fortunate to have been through Calvert County schools. My brothers, my children, my grandchildren have been through Calvert County schools and my nieces and nephews. So, I have a lot of pride in Calvert County schools. And their educators and their service workers, which I see many here today. And I think the Calvert County schools are not only a frontline educational system, but they're a safe educational system."

Nutter has been persistent during his tenure in trying to get his colleagues to change their policy of limiting public comment to 10 speakers. Before the meeting was over, he finally saw at least some change in that policy (see separate story).

Cousins agreed with Nutter on the difficulty of the task. "No one knows what it's like to be a school board member

until they win an election. This work is hard. It's frustrating. It's been scary at times."

She added that when first elected, "I had to intentionally learn how to be a board member. I studied Maryland school law, attended MABE (Maryland Association of Boards of Education) continuing education classes and visited schools to meet students and staff. I participated in community-based activities and events and networked with school board colleagues around the state and across the nation. Fast forward eight years later, two superintendents, seven student members of the board, eight school board colleagues and one super bad board assistant, Karen Maxey, and there's still much more I don't know."

She added, "Because I earned a seat at this table, it allowed me to collaborate with my colleagues to put policies and a strategic plan in place that compel the district to see each child for who they are and teach them through an equity lens. In this seat, I obtained the commitment to dismantle systemic racism and create an inclusive, equity-oriented environment for each student and employee. In this seat, students had a voice. In this seat, I championed to save jobs during the Global Pandemic. In this seat, I was committed to protecting small businesses, specifically our bus contractors. In this seat I lobbied for support staff, teachers and administrators to be treated as professionals. In this seat, I helped raise the bar for public education in the state of Maryland through my work at MABE. And Dr. Townsel, you're here because I earned a seat at this table."

Calvert Education Association President Dona Ostenson said of Nutter: "Thank you, Pat, for stepping in over the past two years. I am 100 percent sure being on the Board of Education was more than you ever imagined. I just want you to know that we appreciate the many years of service to the citizens of Calvert County, and we wish you well in any future endeavors you take."

To Cousins, she said, "Thank you for being a champion of education. I know at times it has seemed like a thankless job, but I want you to know that our students and staff have benefited from your leadership over the past eight years, and we don't think that you're going to be going too far away. So, we look forward to continuing our relationships with you outside of the Board of Education."

Tracy McGuire, who ran an unsuccessful bid to return to the school board, said of Cousins, "Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your patience when people who should have known better were slow to grasp all the things you tried to show us. Thank you for the courage to name things by their name. Thank you for creating space for people and groups Calvert County tries to exclude and diminish."

She said, "I trust your good work cannot be undone. Not that people won't try. There are people who will continue their fight to block people and groups from fully participating in Calvert County. However, groups and individuals having claimed their space will not easily concede it."

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Pam Cousins



Pat Nutter





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# Outgoing Commissioners Bid Farewell



Proclamations were given to outgoing commissioners Chris Gadway (l), Steve Weems (center) and Kelly McConkey (second from r) as Mike Hart and Buddy Hance (r) look on. Photo courtesy of Calvert PIO.

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The three outgoing county commissioners were honored at their final meeting on Dec. 13. Steve Weems decided not to seek a fourth term and Chris Gadway and Kelly McConkey were defeated in the Republican primary in June.

Commissioner President Buddy Hance noted that Gadway had been appointed by Gov. Larry Hogan to fill the term of Tim Hutchins, who resigned for health reasons. Hance said, "He has done an outstanding job in his short time here. It takes you a while to get your feet under you. I can attest to that for sure. And so, he learned very quickly the job and took his responsible very seriously."

The proclamation in Gadway's honor noted he was "a vocal advocate for the county's fire/EMS, working with his fel-

low commissioners to enhance service to the citizens of Calvert County," and also, he "worked diligently to improve the relationship between the Board of County Commissioners and the Calvert County Board of Education with the goal of lending support to parents and students by advocating for open

communication." It was stated he "has also been a dedicated supporter of animal rights, the Linda L. Kelly Animal Shelter, and volunteering his time to many local organizations."

Commissioner Weems said of McConkey, "We've had a journey together for over 12 years with the school board," adding, "On a personal level, it's been an honor and a privilege to serve with you on this board and on behalf of the citizens."

The proclamation in McConkey's honor said he "has been an advocate for the business community and strong supporter of animal rights and the Linda L. Kelly Animal shelter." adding, he "has also been a dedicated volunteer in many organizations and giving back to his community."

Commissioner Mike Hart said someone told him that 'Steve Weems personifies everything that is good.' Hart observed, "When you hear stuff about all

the politicians, that doesn't apply to him. I've met a few people in my life and I can count them on one hand that I call my moral barometer that when you feel lost and you don't know what to do and you feel pulled on and you know you were going to get an answer that's honest, genuine, and is thinking about people first. And that's this gentleman right here."

Later McConkey said, "I'd just like to thank the citizens of Calvert County for giving me the opportunity to serve on this board. It's been a wonderful experience. I could have never done it without the staff, the directors, Mark (Willis), Linda (Vassallo), especially John Norris. I could have never done it without you guys. It's been an honor to work with each and every one of you. Even though we didn't agree all the time, we always kept it very professional. And I look forward to the new board moving the county in the right direction and keeping our taxes low like we did. So, I'm going to miss working with everybody. I'm going to take a break. It doesn't mean I'm gone for good. I could be back in the game before you know it. You just never know with me."

Gadway said, "I'd like to congratulate the board and wish them the absolute best. Coming in about a year and a half ago, I had the opportunity to start serving the community in a different way. And whenever anybody out there gets these opportunities to serve, please jump on board. Whether it be for Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, or in a church or civic organi-

zation, if you see an opportunity to serve, please, please do that. If you're asked to serve, please serve your community or your county. This county is blessed by an amazing group of professionals, not only in the leadership, but throughout every level of service and tier of government that we have. I want to take this moment to thank each and every county employee in here and out there in the field, because without each and every single one of those people, this county would not be the great place that it is. It's been an honor and pleasure serving over the past year and a half. I'd like to thank my wife and my family for the opportunity."

Weems said, "I too want to thank the citizens of Calvert County for the past 12 years. The journey is a full one. And I, I want to thank the current members that I've served with and past ones as well. I wish the new board every success. I also want to thank the staff, from those who arrived last week to County Administrator Mark Willis. They do a phenomenal job. Our staff, the ladies, thank you for your kindness."

Weems added, "I also want to ask forgiveness for anything I didn't do for those who I served as well as county employees. I thank you for the honor, and I also want to thank my wife, especially, and my family."

"Merry Christmas to all and have a great New Year. That's all."

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**“I COULD BE BACK IN THE GAME BEFORE YOU KNOW IT. YOU JUST NEVER KNOW WITH ME.”**  
 KELLY McCONKEY ON EXITING AS COUNTY COMMISSIONER.



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**LOCAL** Mill Creek health in focus **6**




**4** COMMISSIONERS SAY GOODBYE **ON THE COVER**  
 Three commissioners say farewell

## WEEKLY FORECAST

THU 12/15	52° /40°	Rain; breezy in the afternoon	99%	MON 12/19	45° /32°	Times of clouds and sun	5%
FRI 12/16	53° /36°	Times of clouds and sun	9%	TUE 12/20	49° /33°	Mostly sunny	16%
SAT 12/17	48° /30°	Sun and some clouds	11%	WED 12/21	38° /33°	Mostly sunny and colder	1%
SUN 12/18	44° /30°	Sunshine and patchy clouds	11%	THU 12/22	44° /27°	Thickening clouds	25%

Provided by [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com)



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8B



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8C

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A most cheerful time to say  
**I DO**



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**\$899**  
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8F



8G



8H

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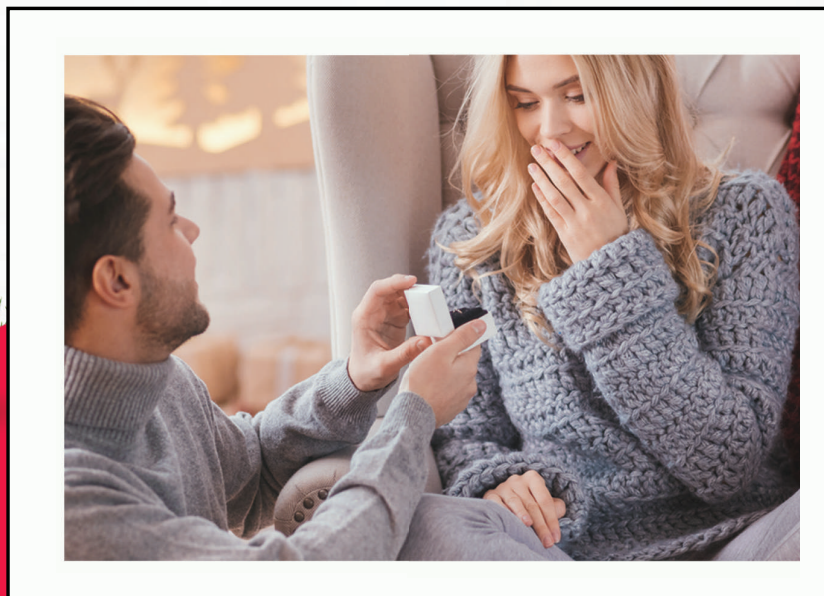
8J

**\$999**  
Reg \$1249



8K

**\$599**  
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- 8B. 14K Diamond Ring, 3/4 ctw, **\$1499** Reg \$1879
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- 8D. 14K Diamond Ring, 1 ctw **\$1999** Reg \$2499
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- 8K. 14K Diamond Ring, 1/4 ctw, **\$599** Reg \$749
- 8M. 14K Diamond Ring, 3/4 ctw **\$2299** Reg \$2879
- 8N. 14K Diamond Ring, 3/4 ctw **\$2399** Reg \$2999
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