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St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

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CAR CRASHES PILE UP DURING SNOW



Photo courtesy of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office

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“I HAVE A TALENT FOR GETTING PEOPLE TO A CONSENSUS.”

FORMER COMMISSIONER TOM JARBOE ON HIS PLANS TO RUN IN 2026 FOR COMMISSIONER PRESIDENT



LOCAL 5
Sheriff's office will honor ICE detainers



LOCAL 4
Planners approve town house project



ON THE COVER
Recent snow caused many car crashes

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 13	FRI, FEB 14	SAT, FEB 15	SUN, FEB 16
AM Rain Hi: 50° Lo: 28°	Sunny Hi: 39° Lo: 28°	PM Rain Hi: 42° Lo: 38°	Rain Hi: 58° Lo: 27°
MON, FEB 17	TUE, FEB 18	WED, FEB 19	THU, FEB 20
Sunny Hi: 35° Lo: 19°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 34° Lo: 23°	PM Snow Showers Hi: 34° Lo: 26°	AM Snow Showers Hi: 36° Lo: 22°

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Snow Throws Drivers for a Loop

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

As snow began to blanket St. Mary's County this week drivers were confronted with wet, slippery roads that resulted in more than a dozen car crashes in just a few hours.

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office was busy cleaning up the mess with other first responders Feb. 11.

"Today, between 2:30 p.m. and 4:15 p.m., [the sheriff's office] has responded to 14 crashes, 11 [with] property damage only, [and] three with injuries, and three disabled vehicles," the sheriff's office reported on their Facebook social media account.

The sheriff's office was quick to warn residents to stay indoors.

"If you don't have to drive, stay off the roads," the admonition stated. "If you must go out, slow down, increase following distance, and drive with caution."

Several of the automobile accidents resulted in cars completely turned over on

their hoods, sheriff's office pictures of the incidents showed.

Despite this, there were apparently no serious injuries.

Snow continued to fall in the county throughout the night and into the morning of Feb. 12 but rain and temperatures that remained in the 30s helped to melt it away.

Main roads, such as Route 235, were largely clear, though slippery in some sections.

Still, county government and the county school system closed for the day.

Regional news reports showed that the crashes here in St. Mary's were just a small fraction of an estimated 235 such accidents that occurred in the Maryland area alone.

Throughout the Maryland, Virginia, D.C. area, news reports showed there were an estimated 800 crashes or calls for service during the snow storm.

guyleonard@countytimes.net



Photos courtesy of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office



Ostrow, Housing Board Member Spar at Town Hall

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

At a weekend quarterly town hall in Lexington Park, County Commissioner Scott Ostrow lambasted the St. Mary's County Housing Authority for poor conditions at the properties they had allowed to fall into disrepair, by way of explaining why he voted recently to deny an affordable housing project that would have been constructed on FDR Boulevard.

But two members of the board, the current chair Mark Bellis, and a former member Roy Alvey, fired back at Ostrow's comments saying their work was being unfairly and incorrectly criticized.

Ostrow, speaking Feb. 8 at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department, said he voted against leasing county land to a developer to build affordable housing because it would have been managed by the local housing authority.

"I do not believe it's the place for government to provide housing," Ostrow said to the nearly 60 constituents gathered there. "We make a mess of that time after time."

"I have absolutely no faith in St. Mary's County Housing Authority."

To support his contention, Ostrow referred to comments made by the authority's director Shawn Kingston at the commissioner meeting on Jan. 28 for the proposed project.

Kingston agreed with Ostrow's statement that the housing authority had been in "an extreme state of flux" in recent years.

"We've taken official actions to correct a lot of the issues," Kingston said last month. "The housing authority has basically signed [off] and walked away from these places [such as Indian Bridge Apartments]."

At his first meeting with the volunteer board steering the housing authority, Kingston

said he brought pictures to them of properties he found to be in unacceptable condition.

At that time he said: "I would be ashamed to be the [executive director] of this housing authority."

Ostrow paraphrased Kingston's comments at this recent town hall but Bellis refuted his claims.

"It's big talk to say we're a failing agency when we receive zero money from the county," Bellis said. "To say we're wildly mismanaged is not only wrong but offensive."

"I've been to our properties; have there been errors in the past, absolutely, but to not invest in our future is criminal."

The county commissioners came to the housing authority with the idea for the affordable housing on FDR Boulevard, only for the idea to be rejected in open session, Bellis said.

Alvey later confirmed Bellis' assertion. "We've done amazing renovations on every single property," Bellis asserted. "We've done millions of dollars in renovations, without any support from the county."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which supplies most of the money for the housing authority, does not want any more such affordable housing to go in Lexington Park, Bellis, said, but in other areas of the county to avoid further concentrating it in the county's oldest urban area.

"We want to develop in California, we want to develop in Hollywood," Bellis said. "So, what gives?"

Ostrow held firm on Kingston's comments of Jan. 28.

"Your own director said, he wouldn't want to live there," Ostrow said.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Jarboe Seeks Commissioner President Seat

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Tom Jarboe, a local entrepreneur and former county commissioner, announced this week that he wants to return to public life but this time as president of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

Currently, that position is held by James "Randy" Guy, but he is term limited by the next election and will have served a full 12 years in that seat.

Jarboe, who represented Commissioner District 1, served from 2014 to 2018 as a Republican.

During his time on the commissioner board, Jarboe — a St. Mary's County native — focused on fostering a stable environment for small businesses and improving the relationship the county had with the U.S. Navy and Patuxent River Naval Air Station.

"I'm a county boy," Jarboe told The County Times as one of the reasons he chose to run for public office again. "I'm just trying to give back to the county."

Jarboe viewed the position of commissioner president as special, even though commissioners all shared essentially the same level of power.

The commissioner president, he said, has the ability to set the weekly agenda for the commissioner meetings as well as see that the commissioners are coming to some kind of consensus as much as possible.

"When I was first on the commissioner board I played that role a lot," Jarboe said. "I have a talent for getting people to a consensus."

Jarboe said his first priority were he to win the seat would be to press for fiscal responsibility.

"As a business owner there are things



Tom Jarboe

I'd risk doing with my own capital that I'd never do with tax dollars," Jarboe said. "We also need to focus more on building public private partnerships."

"When people have skin in the game; they play better."

One example he said, was private industry's desire to get electric vertical take-off and landing capabilities at the county airport, but they need the cooperation of the county to make that happen.

"There's no airport in Maryland with such a capability," Jarboe said. "But Air Uber is the wave of the future."

Jarboe is a veteran of the United States Coast Guard and has successfully led and founded multiple defense contracting companies located locally in St. Mary's County.

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Sheriff: Agency Cooperates with ICE Detainers

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Recently, local law officers and elected leaders have been bombarded with questions about whether the sheriff's office was cooperating with the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) when it came to detaining illegal immigrants and turning them over to federal authorities in accordance with President Donald J. Trump's recent executive orders.

Residents have even stated publicly, much to the surprise of Sheriff Steve Hall and the ICE agents in Baltimore with whom he and his agency works that St. Mary's is listed as a so-called "sanctuary county" that does not cooperate with ICE detainer orders.

Hall told the Commissioners of St. Mary's County this week at their public business meeting that, while the county may be on that list, his agency was in full cooperation with ICE over criminally dangerous illegal immigrants.

"We have a documented and long-standing working relationship with ICE," Hall said during the Feb. 11 business meeting in Leonardtown. "Our policy mirrors state law, I'm sworn to uphold that law."

Deputy County Attorney John Houser explained that under current state law, it is prohibited for a local law enforcement agency to check on the immigration status of

an inmate in almost all cases after an action by the General Assembly approximately four years ago.

Also, local law enforcement agencies are prohibited by state law from holding an inmate who is an undocumented immigrant longer than 48 hours after their obligatory release from confinement, Houser explained.

"We're not allowed to do that 48-hour hold under state law," Houser said.

A new law proposed in Annapolis this session and supported by District 29C Del. Todd Morgan (R) would essentially reverse the current law; the commissioners voted unanimously to send a letter of support to the county delegation in favor of HB 1188.

The sheriff said he would cooperate with ICE in removing a criminally dangerous illegal immigrant from St. Mary's.

"If ICE were to call today and say they have a dangerous person they want get of the county, I'll be pointing the door," Hall told The Commissioners of St. Mary's County. "Phase 1 is to get dangerous, undocumented people out of this country."

"I'm in full favor of that; we would assist in getting anybody that's a dangerous threat that's in this community out."

Sheriff's deputies would not ignore alleged criminal activity by anyone, whether they were native or immigrant.

"If a person, regardless of their immigra-



Sheriff Steve Hall

tion status commits a crime in this county, they're going to jail," Hall said.

That cooperation extended to undocumented immigrants already in the detention center.

"If someone is in the detention center that ICE wants, they'll be held because I have probable cause and probably a judiciary signature on that ICE detainer that gives me full authority to hold them as long as it's needed."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt said he had

been confronted by multiple constituents about the county being included in the non-cooperation list by ICE and if anything was being done to correct that mistake.

"It's in the process," Hall said, noting he was unsure how the county sheriff's office made it on that list in the first place.

"Please work to get us off that list," Hewitt said.

"Indeed," replied Hall.

guyleonards@countytimes.net

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Nearly 100 Townhomes to Be Part of Pax River Village

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The redevelopment of the former Millison Plaza — now known as Patuxent River Village Center — is continuing with plans to build a new Aldi's grocery store already underway.

The developer of the shopping center project, David Ross, of the Atlantic Realty Group, said this past weekend that the redevelopment of the aging shopping center with new facades, demolitions of old buildings, improved pedestrian access and new stores to include a Starbucks coffee shop, will also include an affordable housing element.

That cluster of homes will be 91 townhomes to be built by an as-yet-unnamed developer, Ross said, during the second phase of the shopping center's redevelopment.

The units will be of the two-bedroom variety, Ross said, with a garage.

There have been some exits from the shop-

ping center from the shopping center, Ross said, to include the Walgreen's pharmacy.

"That's unfortunate; we wanted them to stay," Ross said to the more than 100 people gathered at a town hall sponsored by Commissioner Scott Ostrow at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department in Lexington Park Feb. 8. "They're closing a lot of stores across the country right now."

Greater Baden Medical Services, which has a base in Prince George's and Charles counties has agreed to take over the pharmacy's space in the interim, Ross said.

"It will be an urgent care type of clinic," he said. "We're excited about it."

A pharmacy was still part of the redevelopment plan, said Ross, but it would likely be a smaller, private operator with a position near the new grocery store.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Planning Commission Approves Townhouse Project



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The county planning commission approved this week a 140-townhouse project at their Feb. 10 business meeting in Leonardtown.

The project is proposed for the already-existent Pembroke housing subdivision in Lexington Park off of Willows Road on Meadow Creek Drive.

The site upon which the project is to be built is 27.83 acres, according to planning documents from the county's Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

According to the traffic study included in the planning documents of the concept site plan, the data shows the projection is 820 additional total vehicle trips per day.

The vote by the planning commission was unanimous in support of the project.

The commissioners made their approval with the conditions that any road improvements required by the state would be com-

pleted before use and occupancy permits were issued by the county.

Also, the developers of the project, Pembroke LLC, must get a permit from the state to work in wetlands before the project can start.

The county board of appeals would also have to grant a waiver for development in the stream buffer on the property, county planning documents read.

"This is one of the last undeveloped parcels of Pembroke," said Steve Scott, the attorney for the developer, noting it was the wish of the county's comprehensive zoning plan to build not only in development districts such as Lexington Park but to build on land surrounded by dense development.

"This project is really an in-fill project," Scott said. "This is almost the end of the Pembroke project; there's just a little bit left to go."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Sheriff's Office Investigating Fatal Lexington Park Crash

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is investigating a fatal motor vehicle collision that occurred on Sunday, February 9, 2025.

At approximately 2:29 p.m., patrol deputies responded to the area of the Crossroads Apartments in the 21000 block of Great Mills Road in Lexington Park for a reported crash. Upon arrival, deputies discovered a two-vehicle collision involving a 2015 Nissan Armada and a 2007 Chevrolet Cobalt. The driver of the Chevrolet was pronounced deceased at the scene by medical personnel.

The Collision Reconstruction Unit was called to investigate. A preliminary investigation determined that both vehicles were traveling in lane two of Great Mills Road toward

Westbury Boulevard when the Nissan, driven by Zykera Sharnae Shubrooks-Nunley, 20, of Lexington Park, struck the rear of the Chevrolet, operated by Kathy Mae Davis, 59, of Lexington Park. The impact forced the Chevrolet into a telephone pole, causing it to overturn and eject the driver.

Davis was pronounced dead at the scene. Shubrooks-Nunley was taken to a local hospital for medical treatment. Investigators believe that speed and driver error were contributing factors in the crash.

Anyone who witnessed the collision or the events leading up to it is asked to contact Corporal Jason Smith at 301-475-4200, ext. 2328.

Motor Scooter Struck in Fatal Collision

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is investigating a fatal motor vehicle collision that occurred on Saturday, February 8, 2025.

At approximately 10:58 a.m., patrol deputies responded to 28085 Point Lookout Road in Leonardtown for a reported crash. Upon arrival, they found a two-vehicle collision involving a motor scooter and a Nissan sedan.

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Collision Reconstruction Unit responded to the scene. A preliminary investigation determined that a 2023 Zhilong BWS motor scooter, operated by Joseph Louis Young,

71, of Leonardtown, attempted to cross Point Lookout Road but failed to yield the right-of-way and was struck by a northbound 2023 Nissan Versa.

Young was ejected from the scooter and transported to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. Investigators do not believe speed, alcohol, or drugs were contributing factors in the crash.

Anyone who witnessed the collision or events leading to it is asked to contact Corporal Jason Smith at 301-475-4200, ext. 2328.

Wanted: Daniel Jerome Ball

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is seeking the whereabouts of Daniel Jerome Ball, 55, who is wanted on five open warrants.

Ball is described as a black male, 5 feet 8 inches tall, weighing approximately 180 pounds, bald, and has brown eyes.

Anyone with information on Ball's location is asked to call the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office at 301-475-8008.

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

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Daniel Jerome Ball (photo from 2024)



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St. Mary's Designated as Primary Natural Disaster Area

Emergency Farm Loans Available Due to Drought and Excessive Heat

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated St. Mary's County, along with several other Maryland jurisdictions, as a primary natural disaster area due to drought and excessive heat occurring between June 22, 2024, and October 22, 2024. This designation allows eligible farmers and agricultural producers in St. Mary's County to apply for emergency loans through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to aid in recovery efforts.

Emergency loans are available to assist producers in replacing essential equipment or livestock, reorganizing farming operations, or refinancing certain debts. The FSA will evaluate loan applications based on the extent of losses, available security, and repayment ability. The deadline to apply for assistance is September 15, 2025.

"St. Mary's County remains committed to supporting our agricultural community as they navigate the challenges posed by extreme weather conditions," said Commissioner President, Randy Guy.

"We encourage all eligible producers to take advantage of these federal resources to help sustain their farming operations."

In addition to St. Mary's County, the following Maryland counties are designated as primary disaster areas: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, and Prince George's. Several neighboring states including Delaware, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, are also eligible for assistance.

Farmers seeking more information on available resources can visit www.farmers.gov and use the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet, and Loan Assistance Tool to explore program options. To file a Notice of Loss or inquire about eligibility, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center.

For more details on USDA emergency loans, please visit: www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/emergency-farm-loans.

County Government Presidents' Day Operations

All St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) administrative offices will be closed on Monday, February 17, 2025, in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday. Offices will resume normal operating schedules on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

The February 17 closure also includes:

- All three St. Mary's County Libraries (Charlotte Hall, Leonardtown, and Lexington Park).
- All three Senior Activity Centers (Garvey, Loffler, and Northern), and there will be no home-delivered meals.
- The St. Mary's Transit System (STS), including ADA and SSTAP.
- St. Mary's Animal Adoption & Resource Center.

The following SMCG operations will be open on February 17:

- The six Convenience Centers and the St. Andrews Landfill.
- St. Clements Island Museum, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum, and the Old Jail Museum.
- The Wicomico Shores Golf Course and the Riverview Restaurant.
- Department of Recreation & Parks programs and facilities. Please note that Recreation and Parks programs held at St. Mary's County Public School locations will not operate on President's Day.

For more information on SMCG programs and operations, please visit: stmaryscountymd.gov.

Rising Freshman Orientation Scheduled

St. Mary's County Public Schools will host three Rising Freshman Orientation Nights this March. The events provide an opportunity for rising ninth graders and their families to preview ninth-grade course selections, learn about available Academies and Pathways, meet counselors and school administrators, and get an overview of high school graduation requirements. The Rising Freshman Orientation Nights will be held from 6:00

p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 3rd, at Leonardtown High School, Tuesday, March 4th, at Chopticon High School, and Thursday, March 6th, at Great Mills High School.

Families are welcome to attend any night. All information will be repeated each night. For more information, contact the Department of Strategic Initiatives at 301-475-5511, extension 32133, or email classof2029@smcps.org.

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LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED



County Sisters to Turn 101, 102 Years Old



Sisters Joyce Mayor and Jane Kopel

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Jane “Inky” Kopel, 100, will turn 101 Feb. 17, one of her many children told The County Times this week, while her sister — Joyce Mayor, 101, — will turn 102 just a few weeks later on March 9.

“They were both born in Great Mills,” said Bill Hammett. “For a few days every year they are the same age.”

Jane and Joyce were born on a tobacco farm at the end of what is now known as Norris Road, Hammett said.

Their parents were Joseph and Lula Norris, he said.

Hammett’s mother now lives in Colton’s Point, he said, noting that she and his aunt have lived parallel lives in several respects.

Joyce lives on Flat Iron Road in Great Mills, Hammett said.

Joyce said she was grateful to still be with her family, which includes 20 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren and nine great, great

grandchildren.

“I’m very thankful,” Joyce told The County Times. “I grew up on a tobacco farm and back then you helped with everything.

“You helped to cut it and you helped to strip it.”

Life was much simpler then.

“You knew what your jobs were and you went on and did them,” Joyce said. “You didn’t ask any questions.”

They both left school at a young age, Hammett said, to help tend to the family farm after their mother died and both married young and had many children.

Jane had nine, Hammett said, of which he is one, while Joyce had eight, both women would be widowed by their first husbands.

Jane would go on to marry Bob Kopel, owner of Kopel’s Marina, while Joyce would remarry to Leonard Mayor, who has since passed away, Hammett said.

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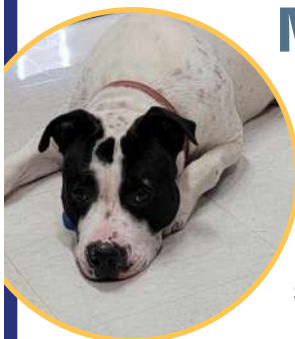
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Photo courtesy of Historic Sotterley



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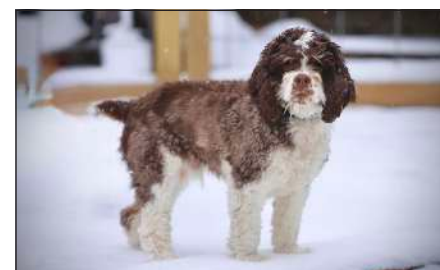


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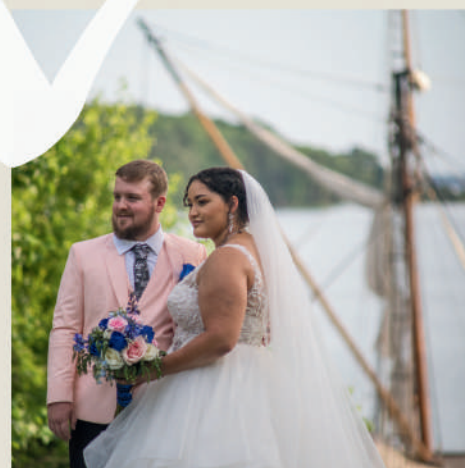
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Variables to Consider Before Picking a Wedding Date



After announcing their engagement, couples may need to get used to being asked if they have chosen a date to tie the knot. Friends and family members who are thrilled for the happy couple may want to know when the partnership will become official, but choosing a date is not always so simple.

A host of variables must be considered before couples pick a wedding date. Though the choice of date is ultimately a couple's decision to make, consideration of the following variables can help engaged individuals make the most informed choice.

- **Season:** Time of year is an important consideration when picking a wedding date. Summer was once the season-of-choice when tying the knot, but data from the online wedding resource The Knot indicates that has changed a little in recent years. The most popular day to get married in 2024 was Saturday, September 21, which the experts at The Knot note reflects a notable shift in couples' preferences that began in 2015. Since then, fall has been the most popular season to tie the knot. Moderate temperatures and less rain-fall likely contribute to that popularity. Before picking a date, couples can consider which time of year they prefer to get married.
- **Convenience:** The convenience of a particular date won't be the same for everyone, but couples may want to consider a date or season that is amenable to as many bridal party members and guests as possible. Couples planning to invite children to the wedding may learn from parents that fall, winter and spring are tough times of year due to youngsters' hectic school and activities schedules. Summer may be more convenient, but it's also likely that some guests with preexisting vacation

plans may not make it if the date chosen coincides with their trips. There's no way to accommodate everyone, and couples should make their own preferences their top priority. But those with no such preference may want to look for a time of year when traveling to and from the wedding is convenient for as many guests as possible.

- **Holidays:** Holidays are another variable to consider. Travel and accommodations tend to be more expensive on holiday weekends, and roadways also can be crowded during three-day weekends. In addition, many people look forward to their own traditions during the holiday season and other notable events, such as July Fourth and Labor Day. Before choosing a wedding date that coincides with a holiday, it might be a good idea to get some feedback from bridal party members and other trusted confidantes.
- **Local event schedule:** It's common for couples to inquire about other events a wedding venue may be hosting when shopping for ceremony and reception sites. But it can be equally important to consider events in the area where you plan to get married on and around the days you're considering. For example, tying the knot on the same weekend as the Super Bowl in the city where the event is taking place may not be wise, as hotel availability will likely be limited and room rates may be much higher than normal. Even more localized events like harvest festivals may affect the availability of accommodations, so this important variable merits consideration.

These are just a handful of variables couples should consider before choosing a date to tie the knot.



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How to Create a Backup Plan for an Outdoor Wedding

A wedding day is a magical and memorable day for a couple and their family members. Months or even years of planning may go into making a wedding day special.

For some, an outdoor wedding and celebration amid the beauty of nature is the ultimate setting in which to tie the knot. When Mother Nature is your decorator, the setting can be hard to match. Perhaps that's why 62 percent of couples opted for outdoor nuptials in 2023, according to The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Survey. However, there may be some extra work involved when exchanging vows outdoors, hosting a reception outside or both. That work includes having a contingency plan in place if the weather does not cooperate. Here's what couples should know about having a backup plan for their outdoor weddings.

- Identify a second location. Couples who book outdoor receptions at catering halls can inquire how they handle inclement weather. Many will have a clause built into the agreement to move the party indoors in the event of bad weather. Others may enable the wedding to move to a different space for an added fee. Smaller, less formal weddings taking place at other locations may require a bit of ingenuity when looking for a backup space. Perhaps a friend has a large house where everyone can gather, or an employer may have a warehouse, loft or even a barn



that can be transformed into unique venues at the last minute?

- Choose outdoor spaces with covered areas. The wish might be to have blue skies overhead, but it's impossible to control the weather. So it's safe to select outdoor spaces that offer a measure of weather protection, such as a pavillion in a park or a covered deck at a beachside locale. Such sites offer a little security without detracting from the ambiance.
- Look into a tent rental. A tent is a great investment because it keeps everyone out of the elements rain or shine. Even on a lovely summer day, the blazing sun can make being outdoors uncom-

fortable. A tent is the solution. Couples should coordinate with a wedding planner or the venue itself to be sure that a tent is allowed on the grounds.

- Think about event insurance. Special event insurance may protect against financial loss in the event that severe weather throws a wrench into outdoor wedding plans. Poor weather may make moving around the venue treacherous and might force a postponement. Liability and cancellation protection in an insurance policy helps couples avoid financial hardship.
- Hire a wedding planner. The Knot suggests hiring a wedding planner or coordinator who can pivot to plan B in the

event of bad weather. This helps take some of the stress off of the couple so they can enjoy the day.

- Plan wardrobe and hair/makeup accordingly. Brides and bridesmaids can choose fabrics for dresses that will be comfortable and not become blown around or see-through due to rain and wind. The wedding party can ask hair stylists to create a wedding hairstyle that is somewhat weatherproof. Experienced makeup artists likely know some tricks to keep makeup looking flawless even when the weather isn't.

Outdoor weddings can be beautiful events, but it is important to have a backup plan in place in case weather doesn't cooperate.



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What to Know Before a Wedding Gown Shopping Trip

Weddings mark a turning point from one stage in life to another. The significance of that transition is perhaps one reason why couples and their guests dress so nicely for a wedding ceremony and reception. Formal garb is a wedding tradition, and guests anxiously await seeing which type of gown a bride will wear. In western cultures, white wedding gowns have been the standard since the nineteenth century and are believed to symbolize purity and grace. In eastern cultures, wedding gowns often have been elaborate, colorful creations that have their own symbolic meanings unique to various areas of the world.

Shopping for a wedding gown can spark mixed emotions. While it is exciting to try on some remarkable garments, there also is the pressure of knowing all eyes will be on you while wearing this couture creation. Narrowing down wedding gown prospects can take vision, time and patience. The following pointers can help when it comes time to visit bridal shops.

- **Make an appointment:** Many bridal shops operate by appointment only. That's because the staff wants to

devote complete attention to a client, and having people simply walk in from the street can draw their attention away and/or lead to long wait times. Identify the stores you want to visit, and then call to secure your time slot.

- **Narrow down styles:** Think about what your personal style might be and how you want to look on your wedding day. If you're not sure about the vocabulary surrounding dress silhouettes, visit Pinterest or Instagram and save images of dresses that you love. Then you can show the sales staff what you are thinking instead of going in empty-handed.
- **Keep an open mind:** Try on a few different styles even if you have a particular dress in mind. You never know if something might be a better fit for your body type or the scope and style of your wedding unless you give it a go.
- **Start the process early:** Unlike off-the-rack clothing, most wedding shops will have to order your dress and have it shipped. Then comes a few weeks for alterations. KWH Bridal notes eight to 12 months before a wedding is a

good time to choose and order a dress. Brides magazine says most made-to-order wedding gowns take about six to nine months to create. There also are three separate fittings to ensure the gown will fit like a glove.

- **Invite a handful of confidantes:** It's best not to arrive at the shopping appointment with an entire entourage. Pick, at the most, four people whose opinions you trust; otherwise, it could be a case of too many cooks in the kitchen. As a bride-to-be you'll already be anxious, and you'll want soothing, supportive people with you.
- **Plan your budget:** Know well in advance what you can afford to spend. According to data from The Knot, wedding attire accounts for 7 percent of the average couple's budget. Most wedding gowns are in the range of \$2,000. Don't forget about additional costs, such as veil, shoes, alterations, undergarments, and any add-ons.

In addition to these tips, arrive to an appointment well-rested, fed and comfortable.



Did you know?

Brides-to-be make many important decisions when planning their weddings, and one of the more notable ones is the choice of wedding gown. According to The Knot Real Weddings Study, the average wedding dress cost \$2,000 in 2023. Despite that hefty price tag, gowns remain a pivotal component of a wedding, as 98 percent of women who responded to The Knot survey indicated they wore a dress for their nuptials. If the sizable price tag is a cause for concern to some aspiring brides, The Knot notes that customization can drive up the final price tag by a significant amount, which undoubtedly affects the median price of gowns. Brides who opt for no or minimal customization can likely find a dress that costs significantly less than the \$2,000 average price.

Top Trends in Tuxes

Theories on the origins of the tuxedo vary significantly. Some believe that this formal garment was created by wealthy aristocrats attending an autumn ball in Tuxedo Park, New York. However, the Wall Street Journal has reported that the tuxedo might be a British invention, spearheaded by the fashion-conscious King of Wales Edward VII in 1865. No matter where the tuxedo originated, it has become standard attire for formal occasions, including weddings.

It may seem as though every tuxedo is the same, but that's not the case. Tuxes come in different styles, so those tying the knot or attending other formal functions can choose an option that fits their personality and physique. Here's a look at what sets tuxedos apart and some noteworthy tux trends.

- **Suits versus tuxedos:** Some may wonder what sets a tuxedo apart from a suit. One of the more notable differences is that tuxedo lapels are designed with silk, satin or textured grosgrain to provide that signature V-look, says Brides magazine. Suit lapels are made from the same fabric as the suit jacket. Tuxedos traditionally are held up with suspenders, while suit pants have belt loops for use with a belt. Suits are styled with a dress shirt while tuxedos are worn with a particular tuxedo



shirt that likely has a spread collar, bib, decorative studs, and French cuffs fastened with cufflinks.

- **Change up lapel styles:** Men who want to set themselves apart can opt for what The Knot calls the most popular styles of tuxedo lapels. Notch lapels are the most common and feature two lateral points. Shawl collars feature a smooth, sleek looped lapel without

notches or peaks. Peak lapels have the lower point of the lapel peak above the upper. Trying on the different jackets can give individuals an idea of which lapel look is best.

- **New color spectrum:** A traditional tuxedo will be black, although navy tuxedos have gained a following. But individuals can find a tuxedo in any color. Those who want to add some

extra flair to their weddings may opt for a tuxedo in a color that coordinates to the season or aligns with what the rest of the bridal party is wearing.

- **Alternative fabrics:** The majority of tuxedos are made from wool and will have the silk or satin detailing as described. Newer trends include incorporating fabrics like linen or flannel, although these are rare and may be harder to come by.
- **Neckties grabbing hold:** People can set themselves apart with everything from lapels to tuxedo shirts to different colors, but only bowties or neckties can be worn with tuxedos. While bowties once were the gold standard, those personalizing their wedding looks and taking liberties with style are increasingly opting for neckties. Gents can choose a necktie in a complementary texture that will coordinate with the elegance of the tuxedo.
- **Slim fit:** Modern tuxedo choices feature a slim fit in both jacket and pant. It's a good idea to try on a few different options to see what feels comfortable before choosing a fit.

Tuxedos have been around since the nineteenth century and are the attire of choice for formal functions.

Questions to Ask When Shopping for a Wedding Reception Venue

Engaged couples make plenty of decisions when planning their weddings, and some may be more significant than others. Choosing a wedding reception venue is among the most important decisions couples will make.

The reception venue is where couples and guests will spend the majority of the day, and no two venues are the same. As couples begin shopping for a place to host their reception, they can ask themselves and venue representatives a multitude of questions to narrow down their options and ultimately make the best decision for them.

What are we looking for in a venue?

Some couples may know precisely what they want their receptions to be like, while others may not have the slightest idea. Of course, some couples may be somewhere in the middle. Prior to beginning the process of choosing a venue, couples can identify what they're looking for. Is a venue with outdoor entertaining space a priority? Do you want to hold the ceremony and reception at the same venue? How many guests will the venue need to accommodate? Answering these questions and others can help couples narrow down their search.

How much can we afford?

Budget is a significant variable when shopping for a wedding venue. Some venues offer multiple spaces that can accommodate couples with a wide range of budgets, while others are singular spaces suited to receptions within a specified size. Itemizing a budget and determining how much can be allotted to



a reception venue can serve as a guideline when couples begin searching for sites.

Is our date available?

Once couples know what they want and what they can afford, they can prepare a number of questions that are worth asking at every venue they visit. Perhaps the most important, at least for those couples who have already chosen a wedding date, is the availability of the site on that date. If couples have not yet chosen a date, they can ask for a list of available dates at each venue they visit and perhaps use that knowledge to pick a day, particularly if they prefer a given venue.

Who will cater the meal?

Some venues do their own catering, while others may have working relationships with

outside caterers. And some venues rent only the spaces and require couples to hire their own caterers and arrange all the details on their own. If a venue caters the meal, ask if they accommodate people with various restrictions, such as food allergies and religious observances.

How many hours are included in the rental agreement?

It's important that couples know what they're getting, including how much time they get in each space they consider. The online wedding resource The Knot notes a standard wedding reception is five hours, the first of which is generally designated as cocktail hour.

These are just some of the questions couples can ask as they plan their wedding receptions.

Did you know?

A number of variables affect how much engaged couples will spend on their weddings. Personal preferences, location and the season in which couples get married are just some of the factors that can affect the final cost of a wedding. However, one aspect couples can count on regarding wedding spending is the reception will likely require the most significant financial investment. The Knot 2022 Real Weddings Study found that the average cost of a wedding in 2022 was \$30,000. The study also found that the biggest investment couples make is the venue. Couples indicated they spent about 37 percent of their overall budget on a wedding venue. Though some couples may spend more than that and others may spend less, engaged couples currently planning their weddings should know that the cost of the venue where they will tie the knot will likely end up requiring the most significant investment of any component related to their wedding.



Consider Wedding Flowers Carefully

Although many decorative elements help to create ambiance for a wedding celebration, perhaps none is more awe-inspiring than beautiful floral arrangements. Flowers offer visual appeal, captivating aromas and texture that can make a space more welcoming.

Engaged couples typically go to great lengths when planning their weddings, but flowers may not be as micromanaged as other elements. Some are content to let florists design their arrangements, but the average cost of wedding flowers in 2023 was \$2,800, according to The Knot Real Weddings Study. That price tag merits some input on the part of couples. Floral experts say couples should budget for floral arrangements coming in at 10 percent of the overall wedding budget, which is the industry standard. Therefore, for a \$60,000 wedding a couple should assume their florals will cost \$6,000. It's important to note that the cost of wedding flowers has been steadily increasing over the last few years due to inflation and climate change, says The Knot. So couples may need to be even more involved in floral decisions to maximize their dollars spent.

Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.

- **Greenery:** Adding greenery to fill in spaces in floral arrangements can save



some money. Centerpieces and bouquets that are floral-heavy will certainly cost more.

- **Symbolism:** Consider the meaning behind flowers to make choices even more personal. You also may want to select flowers that will complement the theme of the wedding. For example, traditional spring blooms like tulips and daffodils will coordinate with

spring weddings.

- **Flower varieties:** Hardier varieties of flowers, such as daisies, mums, carnations, and protea, are less likely to wilt quickly in bouquets or centerpieces than some other blooms, even when they are cut. Such blooms can hold up in any weather and last the entire day so that arrangements will be picture-perfect no matter the hour.

- **Venue:** Couples may find that some venues already have faux flowers or other decor. That may mean couples do not need to have as many flowers or any elaborate arrangements.
- **Size:** A particularly large floral centerpiece can overwhelm a table, and a bouquet that is overly cumbersome may detract from the bride or her bridesmaids. Choose the correct scale for comfort in bouquets. For table arrangements, select a size that will not discourage conversation or block guests' view, nor take up too much real estate on the table.
- **Allergies:** Although they are cut, flowers in arrangements can trigger allergic responses in some people. Others may be bothered by overly aromatic flowers. Work with the florist to find blooms that will be best.
- **Color scheme:** Although white flowers always coordinate, many couples like some color in their arrangements. Be sure the flowers pick up the hues used in bridesmaid dresses or even the season of the year.

Couples should take an active role in deciding what to include in floral pieces for their weddings.

How to Find the Right Wedding Reception Entertainment

Wedding planning requires a lot of hard work, as couples try to ensure all of the components and moving parts add up to a memorable day when the time comes to say, “I do.” One notion that can help couples navigate wedding planning is to keep the focus on fun, as the goal of any couple is to make their wedding day a festive affair for them and their loved ones.

A couple’s choice of entertainment can go a long way toward ensuring the wedding reception is fun and festive. Couples can keep these tips in mind as they look for entertainers to establish the right vibe for their wedding reception.

- **Identify your options.** Couples typically choose a DJ or live band to entertain guests during the reception. Some couples may even choose both. In general, the more densely populated an area is, the more entertainment options couples will have to choose from. Couples who have no preference regarding DJ or band can explore each option, speaking with representatives for each to get a grasp of their cost and offerings.
- **Seek recommendations.** Word-of-mouth helps many wedding vendors attract new clients, and entertainers are



no different. Couples can seek recommendations from friends who have tied the knot. In addition, speak with people who have coordinated other gatherings in the past, such as family reunions, office parties and community events. Entertainment is often part of such events, so those who plan them might be able to offer some valuable insight

into the local entertainment scene.

- **Attend a performance.** In addition to seeking recommendations, couples can see entertainers in action and form their own opinions. Many DJs and bands that perform at weddings also ply their trade elsewhere, including at bars, clubs, community events, etc. If couples are intrigued by a band or DJ

as a wedding reception entertainment option, they can arrange to see them perform. Pay attention to their catalog, performance style and how they interact with the crowd during their show.

- **Consider the crowd.** The guest list and number of invitees also merit consideration when choosing entertainment for the reception. Conventional wisdom suggests bands tend to suit smaller affairs better than DJs, who may be accustomed to playing loud dance music for bigger crowds. In such cases, a booming dance playlist with a sparsely populated dance floor may not establish the vibe couples are going for. Live bands may provide a greater sense of intimacy, which can work better with a smaller crowd. It’s also beneficial to consider musical style before choosing entertainment. A band or DJ that can incorporate a wide range of musical eras and genres is ideal for a wedding reception, where guests will include the very young and the elderly.

Finding the right entertainment for a wedding reception is a fun component of wedding planning. The right choice of entertainment can make for a particularly festive wedding night.

An Example Wedding Day Timeline

Married couples often advise loved ones who are engaged that they should make time to enjoy their wedding days in the moment, noting that the day has a tendency to fly by. The pace of a couple’s wedding day can seem so fast because the hours leading up to the ceremony and reception are typically filled with activities to ensure couples and bridal parties look their best.

Wedding ceremonies begin at different times depending on variables such as couples’ preference, ceremony site and even the time of year the wedding is taking place. The following timeline, which is based on a summer wedding with a 5 p.m. ceremony, can serve as a guideline for couples as they map out their own big day.

- **10 a.m. – 2 p.m.:** Begin getting ready. Grooms and groomsmen typically do not require the same level of attention and amount of prep time as brides and their bridesmaids, so they likely won’t need to start at 10 in the morning. But brides and their bridesmaids will need ample time to do their hair and makeup, and it may be necessary to begin by 10 a.m. Depending on the size of the bridal party, the hair and makeup session may last to 2 p.m. Grooms and groomsmen can decide when to start getting ready within this four-hour window. If a groom and his groomsmen will get a hot shave at a local barbershop or hairstylist, schedule the shave so there’s enough time to return to the hotel to get dressed, as it’s not advisable to get a shave when



already dressed in a tuxedo.

- **2 p.m.:** Once everyone’s hair and makeup is done, a bride can begin to get in her dress. Be sure the photographer is aware of this timeline, as many prefer to document the bride revealing how she looks in her dress.
- **3 p.m.:** Couples who want to do what’s called a “First Look” can do so at 3 p.m. for a 5 p.m. Couples choose to do a first look for a number of reasons, but it involves the happy couple seeing each other in their tuxedo and gown

prior to the ceremony. One reason to do a first look is to take photographs with bridal party members prior to the start of the wedding. Doing so ensures the newlyweds will get to spend more time with their guests, particularly during cocktail hour. A pre-wedding photoshoot also can ensure couples have ample natural lighting for their photos should they choose to take some outdoors.

- **3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.:** A first look won’t take very long, which leaves ample time

for photos of the happy couple and their bridal party. Sixty to 75 minutes should be plenty of time for a photographer to get all the shots couples requested. It helps to submit a list of desired photos (i.e., couple with full bridal party, couple with all four parents, etc.) prior to the wedding day, and some photographers even insist on doing so to ensure they don’t miss anything.

- **4:30 p.m.:** Rest and some last-minute preparation and sprucing up can take up the final 30 minutes before the ceremony begins.
- **5 p.m.:** Ceremony begins.
- **5:30 – 6:30 p.m.:** The hour right after the ceremony can be designated as cocktail hour. Couples also can use this time to take additional photos with family and others that might not have been taken during the initial photoshoot. This window also serves as a good time to sign the official documents confirming the couple’s nuptials, particularly if a hired officiant will be taking that paperwork and filing it with the appropriate government office.
- **6:30 – 10 p.m.:** The reception, featuring bridal party member and couple introductions, can commence at 6:30. The choice of when to perform father-daughter and mother-son dances is up to the couple and their parents, but such traditions are generally reserved for early in the reception so every guest is still around to witness these special moments.

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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



By the Light of the [Hungry] Snow Moon

As of this writing, we are met with another day enveloped in a cocoon of snow; a mushy, damp snow, not like the soft, dryer powder from weeks ago. Early this morning all noises were muffled, except for the occasional snowplow, as I went outside to do a quick measurement of snow in the back yard with 6 to 6 ½ inches being the total. I didn't even hear all the neighborhood roosters with their normal hours long gossip catch-up session. They decided they were off today and they could catch-up on the local farm news tomorrow. I'm really not a snow fan though I do appreciate the sound cushioning effects the snow brings.



A few hours later when our crazy hound dog Mindy awakened from her long slumber to venture outside, she cautiously, but quickly, ran out a little ways in the yard for necessary business then ran back in quickly when she noticed that a cold sleet was pelting her fur with icy sparks. Mindy has shown no inclination to go back outside. She also gave me the side eye because I neglected to put her pink quilted jacket on.

I had read somewhere on Facebook that a snow moon was coming soon, so I just looked it up and found a Newsweek article by Ian Randall that said it would be happening tonight the 12th. I hope some of you were able to see it since you won't read this until Thursday. The article had this information: "The February full moon—the 'Snow Moon,' named for the snowfall common at this time of year—will grace the skies on Wednesday, February 12. The Snow Moon is sometimes also known by the names Bald Eagle Moon, Bear Moon, Bony Moon, Groundhog Moon, Hungry Moon and Raccoon Moon. The phenomenon will be followed on February 16 by Venus—the so-called Evening Star—reaching its peak brightness, surpassed in the sky only by the moon."

So, if you didn't get to see the Snow Moon on Wednesday night be on the lookout for Venus at it's brightest 4 days from now. It would have been neat if Venus could have been at its brightest on Valentine's evening, but it is close enough I suppose. I am worried about the snow moon also being known as the Hungry Moon – hoping I have enough snacks and treats in the house. Darn, we shouldn't have eaten the leftover ice cream cake our neighbor gave us last night. Instead of singing, "By the Light of the Silvery Moon", "I'll be singing to the light of the hungry moon to the light of the open fridge. I must be hungry now obviously either that or the extra Prednisone has kicked in hard. Sometimes Fig Newtons and a cup of tea for breakfast is not enough. I'm going to head downstairs to the basement fridge right after this and bring up what's left of that pot of chicken soup I made yesterday. (I couldn't wait – the pot is already heating on the stove along with the water for the fine egg noodles).

Speaking of being hungry, I can hear my husband out in the living room munching on pretzels while I type here in the office down the hall. That is sooo not fair when all I can think of is food and know I have to keep typing. My husband ended up with a new name yesterday, Man-i-gator, which relates more to how he sleeps than to eating, though that could apply as well. I am sure I have mentioned how when he sleeps he does an alligator death roll and winds the sheet and blanket around himself several times during the night leaving me with nothing except my soft, but small cocoon blanket (You can see I am into cocoons of all types). When he starts his alligator death roll, I wake up even if it is from a deep sleep and try to grip the sheet and blankets as tightly as I can to hold onto what I have. Creating long nights of little sleep. Sometimes I give up and huffily take my pillow out to the couch and grab my living room cocoon blanket and then get startled as Mindy flips, much like her dad, and smacks her paws on the end table. I have tried moving her bed away from the table, but she bossily pushes it with her head back to where she wants it. I just can't win, might as well stay awake all night for the Hungry Snow Moon. See you at the fridge.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby.

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



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In Remembrance

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

Barbara Dotson, 78



Barbara Mae Dotson, 78, of Mechanicsville, MD, passed away peacefully on February 03, 2025 at St. Mary's Hospital, after a brief illness. Born on November 07, 1946 in Leonardtown, MD, she was the daughter of the late Warren James Guy, Sr. and Helen Frances Wheeler Guy. Barbara is survived by her husband of 55 years, Wayne Joseph Dotson of Mechanicsville, MD. Barbara's precious daughters are Karen Frech (Karl) and Debbie Anderson (Jon), both of Mechanicsville, MD and her dear grandchildren, Kaitlyn Anderson, William Frech, Ashton Frech, James Frech, and Joshua Anderson. Barbara's siblings are Ella Tennyson (Charles "Wise") of Scotland, MD, Ernest Francis Guy (Charlotte) of Leonardtown, MD, Robert Michael Guy (Betty) of Bushwood, MD and many beloved nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her siblings Joyce Ann Hammett, Kenneth Andrew Guy, Mary Paula Thompson, and Warren James Guy, Jr.

Barbara was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, MD and grew up on the family farm on Big Chestnut Road in Leonardtown, MD with her parents, four brothers, and three sisters. She grew up learning to cook from her mother and grew a love for baking, gardening, and canning fresh vegetables. She always talked about baking a "flat top", which was a delicious, homemade yellow cake with a chocolate ganache frosting. Her favorite dish to prepare was St. Mary's County stuffed ham and passed the tradition down to her daughters and grandchildren.

Barbara was a graduate of Father Andrew White School in 1961 and later graduated from Leonardtown High School in 1965. Her first job was for the St. Mary's County Board of Education as an Office Clerk. Barbara then worked for the St. Mary's County Commissioners' Office and St. Mary's County Government in the Office of Economic Development. Lastly, she retired in 1999 with 30 years of service from St. Mary's County Government where she worked for the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Department as a Budget Analyst. She also worked as the Grants Coordinator where she received Federal and State grants for the Sheriff's Office and our local community. Barbara also took minutes and transcribed meetings for the Liquor Board in her spare time. Later, she used her talents in grant writing to work for the town of Leonardtown for an additional 10 years, retiring in 2012. Several of her favorite projects were obtaining and managing millions in grants for the Leonardtown Wharf Project, the Leonardtown Winery, and developing the Walking Tour of Historic Leonardtown, the County Seat of St. Mary's County for over three centuries showcasing local businesses, churches, residences, and historic buildings. Barbara enjoyed local history and working with the St. Mary's County Historical Society.

Barbara had a strong Catholic faith and was a lifelong member of St. Aloysius Church. She loved her grandchildren and especially enjoyed

Grandparent's Day at Father Andrew School where all of her grandchildren attended as she did growing up as a young girl. Barbara loved spending time with her daughters and helping with her grandchildren. She enjoyed watching dozens of hummingbirds come and visit every year. She also loved to read and collect cookbooks. Barbara enjoyed spending time cooking and canning with her Mennonite friends Mikayla, Andrea, and especially Nancy and had a special bond with them over the years.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with prayers recited at 7:00 PM, in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 9:30 AM in St. Aloysius Gonzaga Roman Catholic Church, Leonardtown, MD with Rev. David Beaubien officiating. Interment will follow at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery, Bushwood, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Karl Frech, Jon Anderson, William Frech, James Frech, Joshua Anderson, and Kevin Thompson. Honorary pallbearers will be Kaitlyn Anderson, Ashton Frech, and all of her many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Father Andrew White School in Leonardtown, MD, the Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad, Mechanicsville, MD, and A Community That Cares (ACTS), Bushwood, MD.

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

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

Madelyn Garriss, 99



It is with sadness that the family of Madelyn Boomhower Garriss announce her passing on February 4, 2025. Madelyn was born in Wayzata, Minnesota on November 22, 1925 to Herbert Westlake Boomhower and Mabel Kronstrom Boomhower. After moving to Virginia with her family, she married Frederick Barrett Garriss on April 10, 1949.

She is predeceased by her husband, Frederick Barrett Garriss, her son, Frederick Westlake Garriss, and her siblings, Mary Colliton, Veronica Eckholm, Nellie Slager, and Eddie Boomhower. She is survived by her daughter, Claudia Garriss McMillan, of Prospect, VA, and sons, David Garriss of Solomons Island, MD and Jeffrey Garriss of California, MD, granddaughter, Amber Garriss Richardson (Scott) of Virginia Beach, VA, grandson, Daniel Garriss, of Glen Burnie, MD, granddaughter, Sarah McMillan King (Andrew), of Charleston, SC, and great-grandchildren, Brooke Morgan, Holly Morgan, Austin Richardson, Paige Richardson, Sullivan King, and Brooks King. She also leaves behind great-great-grandsons, Jenesis Taylor and Jaiden Taylor, and many loving nephews and nieces.

Madelyn was an active member of the First Church of God in Norfolk, VA, Lexington Park Baptist Church, and Hollywood Methodist Church. She taught Sunday School and was the Vacation Bible School Director

for many years. She was a charter member of St. Mary's Craft Guild, as well as other art organizations and garden clubs. Her passions included art, reading, gardening, quilting, shopping, and traveling all over the world. Her proudest accomplishment was her family, who will miss her boundless energy and wit.

The family will receive friends at the Hollywood United Methodist Church, Hollywood, MD, on Friday, February 14, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, where a funeral service will be held at 11:00 AM. Interment will follow at Joy Chapel Cemetery, Hollywood, MD.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to St. Jude's or Samaritans Purse, two of her favorite charities, in her memory.

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

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

Lee Petty, 94



Lee Mills Petty, a devoted mother, grandmother, friend, pastoral counselor, and gardener, passed away in her sleep on February 2, 2025.

Born June 4, 1930 in New York City, Lee was raised on Long Island and summered in Bar Harbor, Maine and Massachusetts. Her mother, Louise Morris Mills, a Vanderbilt, was a founding member of the Girl Scouts of America, and Board member of Engender Health. Her Father, Dudley Mills, was President of the Discount Corporation, J.P. Morgan's government bond company, and was a Board Member of the National Audubon Society.

Lee graduated from Ethel Walker School where she met her lifelong friend, Sandy Pool and visited her summer home in Willsboro, New York every year.

A graduate of Vassar College in 1952 with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She was married to John R. Petty from 1957 to 1995 living in Manhattan, Paris, Washington D.C., and Chevy Chase and weekendend in Tuxedo Park, NY and a family farm in Hollywood, MD.

Lee worshipped at St. Columba's Episcopal Church where her volunteer work led to her pastoral counseling calling and she subsequently helped found and direct the pastoral care center.

Lee graduated magna cum laude from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1983 with a master's degree in theological studies. She became a supervisor of clinical pastoral education at Holy Cross Hospital and later at Sibley Hospital as co supervisor of the clinical pastoral education students program and Chaplain.

Lee was an avid gardener and created flower gardens in all of her homes. She was a member of the Garden Club of America from 1974 until 2010. Her Chevy Chase garden was featured in the book "Garden Club of America's outstanding Gardens" and was showcased in many Garden Tours.

Lee is survived by her four Children and 13 grandchildren: Talmage Petty, his wife Na and their daughter Alice, and his children from a

previous marriage, Laura, Helen, Russell, and Nolan; Robert Petty, his wife Lydia and their children, Lucia, Ian and Cleo; George Petty, his wife Diane, and their children Sebastien and Emilie; and Tory Stine, her husband Matt, and their children Taylor, Christian, and Isabel.

The family is spread around the world, from Hollywood Maryland and Thailand to Portland, Oregon, and from London, England to Geneva, Switzerland. The family has gathered every summer since 1959 at Rockywold Deephaven Camp on Squam Lake in New Hampshire.

Donations are requested in lieu of flowers to either the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (cbf.org), Engender Health (engenderhealth.org), or St. Columba's Episcopal Church (columba.org). Services will be held at St. Columba's Episcopal Church on March 1, 2025 at 11am followed by a reception and celebration of life at Maplewood Park Place at 12:30 pm on the same day.

Eric Hutchinson, 74



George "Eric" Erickson Hutchinson, 74, of California, Maryland passed away on Saturday, February 1, 2025, in his California, Maryland

home. His sister Jennie was there by his side.

Born in Glen Cove, New York on June 13, 1950, Eric was the beloved and loving son of the late Irving Norton Hutchinson, Jr. and Helen Jane (nee: Erickson) Hutchinson. He grew up and spent his life in Oyster Bay, NY.

Eric was predeceased by Melissa Kay, his partner and soulmate of 33 years. Eric lost his Melissa to COVID, in April of 2020; at this time, he joined his sister and her family living in Maryland.

Eric is survived by his siblings, Helen Judith (nee: Hutchinson) Catalfo (Louis Catalfo), Mark Talmage Hutchinson (Lisa Tilp Hutchinson); Jennie (nee: Jennie Norton Hutchinson) Shanks (Donald L. Shanks) of California, MD; and Bradley Potter Hutchinson (Mary Brigid Johanna McHale Hutchinson).

Eric earned the admiration and respect of his colleagues as an accomplished tree surgeon. As a boxing enthusiast, he recorded thousands of hours of fights, and made many boxing videos highlighting the best bouts of the best fights with the best fighters. Among other places, he worked the 'Heavy Bag', tied up to the tree on the front lawn of the old family home in Oyster Bay, Long Island (NY). (See photo)

Eric was also a gifted pianist. He could play *anything* by ear, and built an endless repertoire of songs (with lyrics/chords) still preserved in his notebook of many decades. He had a great ear and played marvelously and often, which brought him, and those around him much joy.

Memorial contributions in George's name may be made to Knowledge Boxing Center, 21310 Great Mills Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653.

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

Arrangements by Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Sat, Feb 15

Seafood Sale-Now thru 2/25/25

2nd District VFD & RS
19330 Piney Point Rd., Valley Lee
6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Pick-up Saturday, March 1, 2PM—4PM at SDVFD RS

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- Frozen Rockfish Fillets—8 oz packs, 10 lb case : \$ 70
- Frozen Brown Shrimp—26 / 30, 5 lb Bags : \$ 40
- Breaded Jumbo Shrimp—16 / 20, 3 lb Box : \$ 25
- Fresh Shucked Oysters—Pint: \$ 17 : Quart: \$ 32 : Gallon: \$ 115

READY TO ORDER? Contact Dee Dee at 240-561-2750 :or email fundraising@sdvfd rs.org.

Proceeds support 2nd Dist. VFD & RS, Co. 6, Valley Lee. Thank you for your support!

Black History Month Open House

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

In honor of Black History Month, learn more about one of the nation's best-preserved one-room African American schoolhouses, located right here in St. Mary's County.

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

The St. Mary's County Museum Division also offers special programs for school, bus and other tour groups who would like to visit the site. Visitors who would like to see the schoolhouse outside open house hours can contact the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum at 301-994-1471.

This is a FREE EVENT co-hosted by Unified Committee for Afro-American

Contributions (UCAC) and the St. Mary's County Museum Division.

Poker at HVRs

Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad
43256 Rescue Ln., Hollywood
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. Chance at 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.

Please note this event is at the rescue squad, not the fire house.

Sun, Feb 16

All You Can Eat Breakfast

Ladies Auxiliary of Hollywood VFD
24801 Three Notch Rd., Hollywood
8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Omelettes made to order, bacon, sausage, scrapple, scrambled eggs, potatoes, waffles, scalloped apples, creamed chipped beef, sausage gravy, biscuits and assorted beverages. \$18-age 13 & up; \$8- ages 4-12; under 3 eat FREE.

Fundraiser for American Cancer Society

Texas Roadhouse
45255 Abell House Ln., California
4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Come and support St Mary's County's Relay For Life—fundraiser for American Cancer Society. Jus Mention Relay during your visit and a portion of proceeds will be donated. Thanks, and see you there.

Tue, Feb 18



ST. MARY'S COUNTY

Library

UPCOMING EVENTS



St. Mary's County Library Closed for Presidents Day

All locations of the St. Mary's County Library will be closed on Monday, February 17 in observance of Presidents Day. All locations of the St. Mary's County Library will be open regular hours on Tuesday, February 18.

A St. Mary's Civil Rights Story

Join us as we discuss the often unrecognized and undervalued efforts of Black women in the civil rights movements in St. Mary's County. Lexington Park Library, Saturday, February 15 from 11 a.m - 12 p.m. Lifelong countians Evelyn Holland, Alonzo Gaskin, and Janice Walthour will share their perspectives on the past and present with moderator Merideth Taylor. People in a county long known as "a rural backwater" have continued over centuries to strive for civil and human rights. Learn about key moments and actions, from freedom lawsuits and emancipation, to citizen political ac-

tion groups and desegregation in health care and education. This is a walk-in program. Registration not necessary unless you would like a follow up email.

Lexington Park Chess Day

An all-ages chess social hang-out! Drop in and out to play as needed, no experience required. Staff will be available to assist those who haven't played before. Lexington Park Library, Sunday, February 16 from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Registration required on www.stmalib.org.

Get Tech Smart: Drop-In

Drop in during this open session to get all your tech and computer skill questions answered! Leonardtown Library, Tuesday, February 18 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Whether you have a phone, tablet, or computer, we're here to help you build more confidence using your device. Refreshments will be provided. No registration required. This event is provided with support from AT&T and the Public Library Association.

First Time Home Buyer Q&A

Ask the simple and difficult questions about buying a home. Register for email/text reminders. Walk-ins welcome! Lexington Park Library, Tuesday, February 18 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. Join Amy Scott, Broker/Owner with OE Realty, to learn more about the buying process and how best to be prepared to purchase a home. Scott and her team will discuss what to expect, how to prepare, define all the real estate terminology, and show different first-time buyer loan options that can stretch your dollar. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Expungement Day

Williams, McClernan & Stack LLC will offer free legal help to those seeking Maryland expungements of criminal records. Lexington Park Library, Friday, February 21 from 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Appointments will be at Lexington Park Library and will last approximately 20 minutes. Please bring any paperwork relating to the case if the case was dismissed because the lawyers will be un-

able to see it on CaseSearch. Please note: registration information will be shared with Williams, McClernan, & Stack so that the attorney can assist you during your appointment. Maryland Expungements Only. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Perks Partners

St. Mary's County Library is excited to announce a partnership opportunity for businesses! Through our Perks Partners program, the Library will spread the word about your business through our network, including social media, in-library messaging, and email messaging. In return, your business will offer a 10% discount to library card holders. Perks Partners are welcome to sign up on the Library website: <https://www.stmalib.org/about-us/perks-partners/>. After you sign up online, a library staff person will contact you to bring you a window decal to display in your place of business.

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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Feb 13

TACOS Teen Advisory Council of Students

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
5-6 p.m.

Teens! Calvert Library needs you! We want the library to be a safe space where teens can hang out and freely access books, information, and form community. TACOS meets monthly to help us with our events and services planning. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Feb 14

Great Backyard Bird Count

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday & Saturday, Feb. 14 & 15
10 a.m.-1 p.m., daily

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

Sat, Feb 15

Pop-in with Poppie

Calvert Marine Museum
1:30-2:30 p.m.

Make your Saturday afternoon memorable by coming to visit with our very own Pop Star "Poppie," our Virginia opossum. You can join the Poppie paparazzi in the museum lobby with one of our educational interpreters, learn all kinds of fun possum facts, and visit the Museum Store for possum fan gear. Since the welfare of our animals is our primary concern, Poppie's ability to visit with her adoring public may occasionally be subject to change on short notice. Included with

museum admission.

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

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

On Pins And Needles - South: Knitting and Crocheting

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
2-4 p.m.

If you knit, embroider or crochet, or would like to learn, join us on the 3rd Saturday of the month. BYOY! (Bring Your Own Yarn!) 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Dungeons & Dragons – TEENS

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

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

Sun, Feb 16

Beyond the Displays: Artifact Stories

Calvert Marine Museum
1:30-2:30 p.m.

Join Lori for an insightful exploration of the museum's artifacts, uncovering their origins and significance. Discover the history behind the emblem from a paddle wheel boat, the tools found in the blacksmith shop, and the Gov. R. M. McLane name board. Hear captivating stories about WWII's impact on the Solomons community and uncover hidden pictures within the museum murals. It's a unique opportunity to delve into local history and see these artifacts in a new light. Learn something new every tour. Included with museum admission.

Bayside History Winter Lectures

North Beach Town Hall
1-2 p.m.

Learn about local history and more from local experts. Co-sponsored by Calvert Library, Bayside History Museum and John Hanson Chapter NSDAR. The Fossil Road Show by Stephen Godfrey. Take a look at the past through fossils we find today. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Feb 17

Universal Coprolite Day

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

Join us for the fourth annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as coprolites. Stations featuring fossilized feces and the stories they tell will be dispersed through our galleries. The event will also feature coprolites in the making...modern feces, some with a twist and even a chance to get an up-close look at dung beetles. Included with museum admission.

Tue, Feb 18

Dine Out Book Discussion

Panera Bread
Prince Frederick
6-8 p.m.

Join us to discuss "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Dinner at 6pm with a book discussion at 7pm. Come for dinner or the discussion or both! 410-535-0291. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Feb 19

Fairview Book Disc

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings & Zoom
2-3 p.m.

Join us online or in person to discuss "The

Backyard Bird Chronicles" by Amy Tan, a gorgeous, witty account of birding, nature and the beauty around us that hides in plain sight. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Dungeons & Dragons – ADULT

Calvert Library (Zoom/Roll20)
6-9 p.m.

Come have fun with D&D, a role playing game for adults of all experience levels. Please register for this event. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Upcoming

Maritime Performance Series – ASH & ERIC L'ESPERANCE

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday, Feb. 21
7 p.m.

Coming from the heart of New England, husband and wife duo Ash & Eric L'Esperance bring us songs that feel like a warm welcome at the end of the day. Performance is in the museum's Harms Gallery; doors open at 6 p.m. with beer and wine for sale. Tickets are \$20 online, up to one day prior and \$25 the day of the concert, online and at the door.

Urban Ag Farmer Meet-up

SMADC Office
15045 Burnt Store Road, Hughesville
Feb. 21, 5-7 p.m.

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) invites urban agricultural farmers, gardeners, and homesteaders to this meet-up. It will provide an opportunity for networking, sharing experiences, and learning from fellow farmers. Tickets are priced at \$10 per adult and include dinner. Kids are welcome at no additional cost, with a special coloring corner set up for them. Only 15 tickets are available, so don't miss your chance to connect with like-minded individuals.

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

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



County Times

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Grief Workshop Offered Following DCA Tragedy

The Chesapeake Life Center will offer "Healing Our Community: Navigating Grief in the Aftermath of the DCA Tragedy" to support those affected by the Jan. 29 tragedy at Reagan National Airport.

Chesapeake Life Center's trauma-informed grief counselors will lead this healing workshop from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, at Hospice of the Chesapeake's center at 2505 Davis Road, Waldorf, Maryland.

The session offers a supportive space for community members to connect with others who share in their loss. Together, they can learn about grief and healthy coping strategies, participate in activities to express and process emotions and create

a remembrance keepsake.

Adults will meet separately from the children and teens to ensure age-appropriate conversations.

This is a free program open to adults and children ages 6 and older. Registration is required and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities to enhance the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.



Letters to the Editor

Remembering Mike King

It is with a heavy heart that Calvert citizens mourn the loss of Mike King, who was the epitome of the proverbial Southern Maryland Gentleman.

Mike was a stabilizing influence in Calvert politics, farm preservation and strengthening our shared history. Mike shared his time, talent and treasure to preserve and defend our fragile hometown.

Mike adored Wanda and all his family; he took great pride in being a Calvert native

and was enthralled with his Orioles team! He charmed everyone with his infectious grin and humor. However, the twinkle in his eyes let everyone know he could be trusted and he had 'your' back.

Truly, there is only one Mike King and he will be missed, but Mike will NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

Myra Gowans
Huntingtown

Schools' Public-Private Partnership Workgroup Issues Report

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A legislatively mandated workgroup to study the possibility of public-private partnerships for school construction has recommended a comprehensive feasibility study to further explore the idea. The workgroup's report was presented recently to the school board and the county commissioners. The report was presented by the school system's Director of Planning & Construction Shuchita Warner.

The workgroup consisted of legislators, county commissioners, and representatives of the school system and business community.

Deputy County Administrator Linda M. Turner, in a memo to the commissioners, explained, "During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 114 and House Bill 515 requiring the establishment of a workgroup for the purpose of studying the Fiscal and Operational Viability of Public-Private Partnerships for Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS). The bill became effective June 1, 2024, and terminates June 30, 2025. The bill requires the Workgroup to study the following:

- "The fiscal and operational viability of using a P3 for financing, constructing, maintaining, and
- "Operating schools in Calvert County;
- "Implementation of a P3 by CCPS; and
- "How a Public-Private Partnership (P3) may relieve the significant burden for funding new School construction and renovations for CCPS.

"The Workgroup is charged with making recommendations regarding using a P3 for:

- "New school construction; and
- "Maintenance and rehabilitation of schools to meet the identified needs at a lower cost."

Turner noted, "On or before December 31, 2024, the Workgroup provided the report, its findings and recommendations to the Board of Calvert County Commissioners (BOCC), the Calvert County Board of Education, the Interagency Commission on School Construction, and in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the members of the Calvert County Delegation to the General Assembly."

Turner went on to report, "The high-level assessment of implementing Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) in Calvert County has revealed several key findings:

- "Funding Challenges: Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) face significant financial constraints that limit their ability to maintain and upgrade aging educational facilities. Traditional funding sources are insufficient to address the extensive repairs, replacements, and modernizations

needed to meet current educational standards.

- "Financial Relief Potential: P3s offer a viable solution by introducing alternative financing mechanisms. Through collaboration with private entities, CCPS can reduce immediate capital expenditures, transfer certain risks to private partners, and benefit from private sector efficiencies and innovations.
- "Cost-Benefit Advantage: Performing a comparative analysis would determine if P3s can provide greater overall value than traditional funding methods. Advantages include cost savings from streamlined construction and maintenance processes, accelerated project delivery timelines, and improved long-term facility management.
- "Community Impact: Implementing P3s can positively affect the community by enhancing educational environments for students, providing parents with confidence in the quality of school facilities, and ensuring that taxpayers' funds are utilized effectively.

"Additionally, P3 projects can stimulate local economic activity through job creation during construction and maintenance phases."

Warner explained, "P3 is a delivery model where a public agency and a private entity enter into a contractual agreement to design, build, finance, and potentially maintain and operate public infrastructure or services. The goal is to leverage private sector efficiency and financing while sharing risks and rewards before between both parties.

"So, when applied to a K through 12 environment, the model mostly applied is the design, build, finance, and maintain, or the DBFM model leaving the operations under the school district's control. One of the reasons that maintenance is often transferred to the private entity for the term of the arrangement is because it helps shift the risk away from the owner."

She said P3 "is not privatization. It's not an avenue to privatize a public sector facility. The public agency retains ownership and ultimate control of the asset. By incorporating performance based contracting and linking project financing to agreed-upon outcomes. P3s can allow school districts to optimize long-term planning and investment."

Warner said, "Charles has done a similar (to Prince George's) value-for-money analysis, and they have done a couple of different iterations of packages to see if something could be more beneficial."

After listening to the report and hearing the recommendation for a study, the commissioners did not immediately make a decision.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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Commissioners Continue Capital Budget Review

Jail Renovation/Expansion Discussed

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) continued their review of proposed department capital budgets on Feb. 10 with a look at requests from Calvert Library, County Administrator and Departments of Planning & Zoning, Public Safety, Recreation Resources, and Technology Services.

Acting Capital and Grants Management Specialist Danielle Russell reported to the commissioners, "Calvert Library and County Administrator projects were part of the Public Facilities section of the FY 2025 capital budget. The Department of Planning & Zoning has no project requests for FY 2026. The Department of Public Safety FY 2026 request is \$2,863,952, a 215 percent increase from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget. The Recreation Resources FY 2026 request is \$5,875,000, a 16 percent increase from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget. Technology Services has a FY 2026 request of \$550,000. This is an 88 percent decrease from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget."

The public safety request elicited the most discussion. The budget includes monies in the next fiscal year for planning for both a jail renovation/expansion and a new sheriff's headquarters, with construction later in the six-year plan.



Calvert County Detention Center

Russell said, "Currently they (sheriff's office) have the detention center chiller in FY 26 and then the new sheriff's facility as well as a mental health and medical unit at the detention center being requested in 27-28. So those are our big out-year projects for the detention center. They are prioritizing that mental health and medical unit. It's their highest priority project. The planning phase currently is at \$85,000. They would like to increase that to \$200,000 and move it to FY 26."

"The project scope includes architectural and engineering study for design improve-

ments. There'll be construction of a new jail medical and mental health unit. And then upgrades to the center processing and jail booking unit. Total project costs are expected to exceed \$16 million, and the state of Maryland will only provide matching funds if the entire minimum-security section is essentially demolished and rebuilt to meet modern specifications. So right now, we're not able to look at state funding assistance for that."

Proposals for the volunteer departments are:

- North Beach VFD & RS Company 1

- Ambulance #19 — \$ 471,000.00
 - Calvert Advanced Life Support Company 10 — Replace Medic #103 — \$131,000.00
- Career EMS proposals are:
- FMV LifePak 35 Lease to Own Recurring Contract (Stryker) — \$428,747.76
 - Career EMS: Ambulance 38 Replacement (Projected Amb 208) — \$668,602.06
 - Career EMS: Ambulance 49 Replacement (Projected Amb 209) — \$668,602.06
 - Career EMS: New EMS Shift Commander (Captain) Vehicle ES 27 — \$146,000.

The recreational resources requests are:

- Cove Point Park Playground — \$800,000.00
- Marley Run Parking Lot Erosion Control — \$1,000,000.00
- Flag Ponds Nature Park Living Shoreline — \$2,700,000.
- Ward Farm Recreation and Nature Park — \$1,000,000.
- Chesapeake Hills Golf Course — course improvements — \$100,000.00
- Breezy Point — Parking/Drainage — \$200,000
- Land Preserve P&R Plan — \$25,000.00
- Hall Aquatic Center — HVAC/Roof — \$50,000.00

The commissioners will be reviewing the education capital plan on Feb. 25.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

County Receives a 'Clean' Audit

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The county has received a clean bill of health from its auditors.

The county's Senior Advisor Beth Richmond told the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on Feb. 10, "The county's financial statements received an unmodified opinion from the auditors. The General Fund, the main operating fund of the county, ended Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 with a budgetary deficiency of \$1.7 million. The ending General Fund balance was \$144.8 million, of which \$34.8 million is a committed fund balance for the county's "Stabilization Arrangement."

Engagement Partner Christopher Lehman, of the SBC accounting firm said of the Fiscal Year 2024 audit, "We've issued an unmodified opinion on the financial statements. That's a good opinion. That's a clean opinion. That would be the best opinion we could give under professional standards. We did not discover any instances of fraud. It's not a forensic audit, but we are required to have a healthy skepticism that fraud could happen at any time. We did not discover any material weaknesses in the internal controls."

Richmond said of the 'budgetary defi-

ciency,' "So that actually was good news. So, the adopted projected amount of use of fund balance was originally \$18.6 million. So, to only use \$1.7 [million] when the audit was said and done; that was excellent news. So how we got there, expenses were under by about \$27.5 million under budget, but the revenue shortfall was \$29.1 [million]. So, we still had to use some fund balance, but to go from \$18.6 [million] projected use down to \$1.7 [million]. We actually had a very good FY '24."

The county was late getting its FY '23 reports done. Lehman explained, "There was some turnover in staff, there was a new accounting system put in place, and it just seemed to be the perfect storm of trying to get reconciliations to work in the new system while you're also trying to close at the same time. So that led to delays. And then there was another accounting firm brought in to assist with closing the books just to get extra sets of hands; finance has to worry about daily operations. Plus closing the books at the same time can be a bit overwhelming."

Lehman praised county staff for recovering and getting the FY '24 reports out in a timely manner and the commissioners in turn praised staff for their accomplishments.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

St. Leonard Man Sentenced for Sex Abuse of a Minor

Ernest Drew Phillips, of St. Leonard, was sentenced in Calvert County Circuit Court on Friday, Feb. 7 for two counts of second degree rape and sex abuse of a minor. Judge Mark S. Chandlee imposed an active sentence of 33 years in prison, concurrent to a 25-year sentence imposed by a federal judge on February 3, 2025.

In 2023, police received a cybertip that devices linked to Phillips were being used to distribute child pornography. A court-authorized search warrant was obtained for those devices. The search revealed over 500 images of child pornography, some of which depicted the victim engaged in sex acts.

The victim was interviewed and she disclosed that Phillips had raped and sexually abused her over a period of 4 years. The abuse began when the victim was eight years old.

Upon release, Phillips will be required to submit to life-time supervision as a sex offender.

This case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Rebecca N. Cordero.



Ernest Drew Phillips

Press Release from Calvert County State's Attorney.



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Zoning Ordinance Update Headed for Public Hearing

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

It's been several years in the making, but the updated Calvert County Zoning Ordinance is ready for a public hearing.

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. to receive and consider written and oral public comments regarding the update and amendments to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan and town center master plans, and town center zoning ordinances. The public hearing will be held in the Commissioners Hearing Room, located in the Calvert County Circuit Courthouse, Second Floor, at 175 Main St. in Prince Frederick. The date may be subject to change due to weather or emergency.

The plan incorporates some tentative changes made by the commissioners, including reducing the maximum density in town centers to four units per acre. It also includes a new category called Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) which allows the commissioners to relax requirements in exchange for concessions from developers that are considered a benefit to the community, such as donated park land. The CDAs cannot be used for residential development.

The updated zoning ordinance proposal is a reflection of the slow growth desires of the majority of the commissioners.

In the event that public comments conclude before 7 p.m., the board has committed to recessing the meeting until 7 p.m., then reopening it to allow those not able to comment earlier an opportunity to express their views. Residents are urged to review the proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan and town center master plans, the zoning ordinance and zoning map updates, and the proposed text amendments in their entirety. Comments submitted previously to the planning commission are not part of the record from this hearing – please submit any comments you have based upon the documents that are a part of this hearing before the close of the record.

The public is invited to attend the meeting in person at the commissioners' hearing room. Individuals may also listen or comment by phone:

- Toll-free: 301-715-8592
- Meeting ID: 899 4188 8251
- Passcode: #
- Request to speak: *9

The public hearing will be streamed live on Comcast channel 1070 and the Calvert County Government YouTube channel at www.YouTube.com/CalvertCountyGov. Recorded meetings can be watched on demand at www.CalvertCountyMD.gov/Meetings or www.YouTube.com/CalvertCountyGov.

According to a release from the county, "The Calvert County Zoning Ordinance regulates land usage, as many aspects can impact adjoining neighborhoods, public facilities and overall county development as part of the effort to promote health, safety and welfare of Calvert County residents,

as mandated in the Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2019 and amended in 2022)."

At the hearing, the board will consider and receive comments regarding the following documents:

1. Proposed amendments to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan;
2. Proposed amendments to the Huntingtown Town Center Master Plan;
3. Proposed amendments to the Solomons Town Center Master Plan;
4. Proposed amendments to the St. Leonard Town Center Master Plan;
5. Text Amendment 24-01: Amendments to the Dunkirk, Owings, Prince Frederick, Lusby, and Solomons Town Center Zoning Ordinances to reduce density to 4 units per acre;
6. Text Amendment 24-02: Amendments to the Dunkirk, Owings, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, St. Leonard, Lusby, and Solomons Town Center Zoning Ordinances to remove Architectural Review Committee reviews;
7. Text Amendment 24-03: Amendments to the Dunkirk, Owings, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, St. Leonard, Lusby, and Solomons Town Center Zoning Ordinances to remove the Land Use Charts;
8. Text Amendment 24-04: Amendments to the Prince Frederick, Lusby, and Solomons Town Center Zoning Ordinances to increase Transferable Development Right (TDR) requirements;
9. Text Amendment 24-05: Amendments to the Dunkirk, Owings, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, St. Leonard, Lusby, and Solomons Town Center Zoning Ordinances to update Zoning Ordinance references;
10. Text Amendment 24-06: Amendment to the Prince Frederick Town Center Zoning Ordinance to increase residential parking requirements; and
11. Comprehensive Rezoning: Repeal and Readoption of the County Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Maps with amendments.

The documents are available for review at www.calvertcountymd.gov/PublicHearings.

Residents, businesses and stakeholders are encouraged to review and comment on the items being considered. Individuals may submit written comment before the public hearing.

Written comments submitted in advance must be received by 4:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17, 2025 by email to ZOupdate@calvertcountymd.gov, or by mail; Calvert County; Attn: ZO Update, 205 Main St., Prince Frederick, MD 20678. Written comments will be accepted at the county commissioners' public hearing up until the close of the record. Any of the draft ordinances, maps, amendments or plans may be substantively modified, revised, amended or otherwise changed, based upon comments in the record.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Funeral Arrangements Set for Plane Crash Victim

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Funeral arrangements have been announced for Jesse Jameson Pitcher, one of the Calvert County residents killed Jan. 29 in the collision of American Airlines Flight 5342 with a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter while the airplane was approaching Reagan National Airport in Washington. In all, nine Southern Maryland residents perished in the mishap.

Friends and family are invited to join in celebrating Jesse's life. Visitation will be held at Church by the Chesapeake, 3255 Broomes Island Road., Port Republic on Friday, Feb. 14 from 12 noon-2 p.m. and 5-8 p.m. A Celebration of Jesse's life will be held Saturday, Feb. 15 at noon at Church by the Chesapeake. The internment will be private.

A luncheon will be held at the Calvert County Fairgrounds, 140 Calvert Fair Drive., Prince Frederick.

In lieu of flowers and to honor Jesse's love of waterfowl hunting, donations can be made to the Jesse Pitcher Memorial Fund, 610 Sollers Wharf Road., Lusby, MD 20657. Funds will be used for a local Youth Waterfowl Day to introduce, teach, and promote interested youth in waterfowl hunting and hunter safety.

Due to weather, ground conditions and parking constraints at all locations, it is asked that those attending any of the services, to please carpool, if possible.

Pitcher's obituary from Rausch Funeral Home said, "Jesse was born in Alexandria, VA on December 3, 1994. He was the first child of Jameson L. Pitcher, Jr and Christine Andeara Pitcher.

"Jesse grew up in Lusby, MD surrounded by his large, loving and supportive family. He loved spending days on end playing with his cousins and friends. As a young boy, he enjoyed paintball, target practicing with his BB gun, riding go carts, swimming in the pool and video games. WHO knew that first BB gun and hunting anything that moved in the backyard, would spark his lifelong passion for anything outdoors, including hunting, riding side by sides, bon fires and more.

"Jesse attended Dowell Elementary School, Mill Creek Middle School, Patuxent High School and the Career Technology Academy's (CTA) plumbing program in Prince Frederick. He graduated from both Patuxent and CTA in 2012. During his years at CTA, Jesse ironically received the "Most Improved Performance and Work Ethic Award." How could one award in high school sum up his career, determination, and life accomplishments? His love and dedication to plumbing and his incredible work ethic is rarely seen in such a young man as Jesse.

"After graduation, Jesse wished to further improve his plumbing education and chose to join Washington DC Local 5 Plumbers & Gasfitters. He excelled during his apprenticeship and graduated in 2018. He went on to work for Local 5 union for another two years. He quickly learned that if he was going to work so hard, he would work for himself. Upon leaving the local, Jesse remained highly respected in his field amongst his co-workers and management.



"At just 26 years old, with a lot of courage, talent, and incredible drive, he followed in his dad's footsteps and opened his own business; JP Plumbing Services, LLC in 2020. Jesse worked day and night for years building his reputation and company within the residential, commercial, and emergency services industry. Jesse initially started as a one-man operation and within just five short years had built a highly respected and very successful company. Kylie was right there beside him, as it grew exponentially to seven employees servicing the MD, DC, VA metro area in the residential and commercial space.

"His commercial work had taken him back to the city working with many of the same co-workers, management, and companies he worked with while in the Local. It was one of these companies who sponsored the trip Jesse so enjoyed and was returning from on that fateful day.

"July 4, 2016, Jesse met Kylie at an event that he had not planned to be at, when she just happened to stop by to check in with a friend. Jesse, being the observant hunter he was, spotted her right away, a poor unsuspecting soul who just wanted to go home after a long day at work. Jesse pursued her that evening, tried MANY times to get her number, which she declined each time. Later, his name popped up on Facebook. Never one to give up, Jesse later messaged her friend from the event, to get her number. Jessie and Kylie began to connect as they realized they had similar goals in life. They both wanted to stay connected to the area, both wanting to plant roots here, build a home here and give back to their community. As they say, the rest is history.

"Jesse proposed to Kylie in May 2022; they were married in September 2023 on their property in Calvert County. They were in the process of building their dream home together. They were truly soul mates in the truest sense of the word. They not only loved one another, they respected and supported each other and had a lot of fun together. They were working on building their dreams together. Jesse loved that Kylie enjoyed being in nature with him. She didn't mind getting dirty and muddy on trial rides, as long as she was with him. They enjoyed

sitting around bonfires together at night telling stories and enjoying the company of friends and family in the beauty and serenity of their surroundings.

"Jesse began his love of hunting locally with family and friends as time permitted. His local circle grew wider with each hunt. After a while, the allure of out-of-state hunts became more and more enticing to Jesse and thus, his out of state trips began. Some of them were within driving distance and many were not. Jesse's passion grew deeper and

deeper for anything, whether waterfowl, wild pigs, bear, or bob cats. Jesse's circle of friends was certainly wider and included many diverse people from different walks of life and interests. Much more so than any of us ever realized."

Jesse was predeceased by his mother, Christine Andeara Pitcher; maternal grandparents, John and Betty Jean Andeara; maternal great grandmother, Irene Stoll; paternal grandfather, Jameson L. Pitcher, Sr.

Jesse is survived by his beloved wife, Kylie Pitcher, his father, Jameson L. Pitcher, Jr. sisters, Jenna Holiday (Matt) of Caldwell, OH and Shannon Maughan of Fredericksburg, VA. Mother-in-law, Mesha Cox (Rudi), brother and sister in-law, Berek and Jennifer Jones, Paternal Grandmother, Joyce Pitcher McCready, Paternal Aunts and Uncles; Kimberly Gott, Carl and Patricia Pitcher, Cynthia and Keith Turner, Robin and Scott Cox, Jerry and Jo Ann Pitcher. Maternal Great Uncle, John Stoll (Jo Ellen).

Cousins, Galen Gott (Becky), Jamie, Emma Pitcher, Crystal Cobberly (Billy), Mark Turner (Jackie), Kayla Smith (Harold), Carly Dean (Alan), Ashley Cox Dare, Scott "Kenny" Cox (Sarah), Stephanie Carle (Tim), Joseph Candido (Sarah), Sarah Dawes (Nicholas) and Tyler Burch. And maternal Great Uncle, John Stoll (JoEllen).

dickmyers@countytimes.net



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“WE ACTUALLY HAD A VERY GOOD FY ‘24.”

SENIOR ADVISOR BETH RICHMOND ON THE COUNTY AUDIT



LOCAL 4
Funeral set for plane crash victim



LOCAL 7
Schools public-private panel issues report



ON THE COVER
Calvert blanketed in second snow of the year

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 13	FRI, FEB 14	SAT, FEB 15	SUN, FEB 16
AM Rain Hi: 50° Lo: 29°	Sunny Hi: 38° Lo: 28°	PM Rain Hi: 41° Lo: 38°	Rain Hi: 57° Lo: 26°
MON, FEB 17	TUE, FEB 18	WED, FEB 19	THU, FEB 20
Sunny Hi: 34° Lo: 19°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 33° Lo: 23°	PM Snow Showers Hi: 33° Lo: 26°	AM Snow Showers Hi: 36° Lo: 22°



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Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

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**Funeral Set for
Plane Crash Victim**

**Zoning Ordinance
Gets Public Hearing**

**Capital Budget Proposes
Jail Renovation**

ONE TOUGH COMMUTE

