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St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025

Leonardtown Voted Maryland's 'Spirit Town'

Commissioners Oppose Off-Shore Drilling

Overdose Deaths Continue to Decline

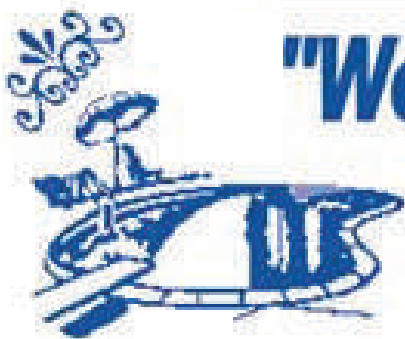


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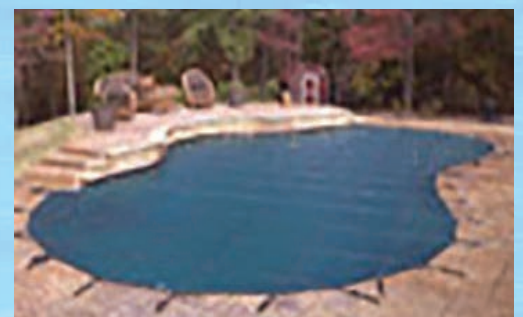


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“WE HAVE SEEN A DECREASE THIS YEAR.”

LT. AUSTIN SCHULTZ ON OVERDOSE DEATHS IN ST. MARY’S



LOCAL 5
Leonardtown named Maryland’s ‘Spirit Town’



LOCAL 7
State Attorney General joins Commissioners to oppose off-shore drilling



ON THE COVER
Pictured: Commissioner President Randy Guy, Center Operations Manager Marie Noelle Lautieri, Aging and Human Services Director Lori Jennings-Harris

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JUN 19 PM Thunderstorms Hi: 91° Lo: 65°	FRI, JUN 20 Sunny Hi: 85° Lo: 68°	SAT, JUN 21 Mostly Sunny Hi: 90° Lo: 72°	SUN, JUN 22 Partly Cloudy Hi: 93° Lo: 74°
MON, JUN 23 Sunny Hi: 95° Lo: 77°	TUE, JUN 24 Sunny Hi: 96° Lo: 77°	WED, JUN 25 Mostly Sunny Hi: 95° Lo: 75°	THU, JUN 26 Mostly Sunny Hi: 95° Lo: 75°

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JULY
10
THUR



A Jazz Sunset Affair on the Potomac

6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum & Historic Park
This exclusive, elegant affair in the shadow of the lighthouse by the Potomac River features music from Higher Standards and wine from local wineries, seafood Hors d'oeuvres and dancing under the stars. Tickets: \$85 per person/\$160 per couple.

JULY
11
FRI



Jazz in the Neighborhood

Kick Off Concert *fea. U.S. Navy Band: The Commodores*

6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at St. Clement's Island Museum
Kick off the 25th anniversary weekend with a FREE family-friendly concert featuring food trucks, vendors and more along the waterside museum lawn.



Artful Harmonies: A Plein Air Celebration

5:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. (All Day) at St. Clement's Island Museum
Attention artists: Bring your art materials and capture the vibrant energy of the festival's setup and the gorgeous riverside landscape. Fee: \$10/artist.

JULY
12
SAT

THE Main EVENT



CASUAL GROOVE



REBECCA JADE



ANDRÉA LISA



CHELSEY GREEN

12 p.m. - 7 p.m. at St. Clement's Island Museum Grounds
Enjoy live jazz performances by **Casual Groove, Rebecca Jade, Andréa Lisa, and Chelsey Green**, as well as a variety of seafood vendors and activities. Tickets: \$75 General Admission/\$95 VIP.

JULY
13
SUN



Jazz Brunch and Golf at Wicomico Shores

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Riverview Restaurant at Wicomico Shores Golf Course
Enjoy a delicious jazz brunch with music from The Sweet Potatoes, then head out to the links for a round of golf (optional fee). Brunch Tickets: \$50 per person/\$90 per couple.



Jazz Cruises with Captain Phil and Sax Appeal

Departs from St. Clement's Island Museum dock
Music on board by Sax Appeal Duet. Tickets: \$85.00 per person/\$160 per couple.
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. **Early Bird Jazz Cruise** featuring pastries and mimosas.
1 p.m. - 3 p.m. **Seafood Jazz Cruise** featuring seafood or chicken option and wine.
4 p.m. - 6 p.m. **Evening Casual Jazz Cruise** featuring charcuterie and wine.



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MAJOR FESTIVAL PARTNERS

Leonardtown: Maryland's 'Spirit Town'

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A new study has disproved a common misconception — that an area's cultural center is in a large city. A study conducted by Mondly, a language learning platform, to identify each state's "spirit town" or cultural capital, has identified many small towns capturing that title.

And as a matter of fact, in Maryland the top town was in fact Leonardtown.

Mondly's survey went to 3,012 respondents. According to their press release, "If your state had to be summed up by just one town — its accent, its quirks, its food, its humor, the very way it moves — where would you point? Not the capital. Not the biggest city. But the place that locals say feels like us."

According to the report, a "spirit town," is "the place that speaks your language, cooks your comfort food, and lives by the rhythms that shaped you."

For Leonardtown, that means, "Down in Southern Maryland, Leonardtown blends old tobacco fields with parish potlucks, oyster roasts, and the kind of small-town rhythm you don't need to explain. It's a town of Friday night parades, seafood boils, and folks who know where you went to high school before you say your name. Quietly rooted and full of ritual, it's Maryland with manners."

"Anytime that we are designated as a nice place to be is good for the town," said Mayor Dan Burris.

Neighboring Virginia chose nearby



Fredericksburg as their spirit town.

In Maryland second place went to Frostburg in Western Maryland and third place was captured by Easton on the Eastern Shore.

Of Frostburg, the study says it "sits high in the Appalachians, where Maryland feels more mountain than mid-Atlantic. It's a town with coal-town roots and college-town energy. Main Street is still the kind of place where people show up for parades, shovel each other's sidewalks, and know which diner has the best pie. Winters are long, the accent steady and direct. It's not the

Maryland you see on postcards — but it's the one that holds the line.

Number 3 Easton is described as "Easton feels like history whenever you turn the corner — centuries-old brick storefronts, the courthouse rising at the town's heart, and the Quaker meeting house that still anchors mornings. It's Eastern Shore through and through: oyster houses and a waterfront trail, tucked into colonial architecture and church steeples. But it's also becoming something new — stellar restaurants, a historic theater reborn, and a community arts scene that's part of the weekly rhythm — gallery shows,

local plays, and neighbors who show up. Easton wears its layers without pretending. It's Maryland in full story."

"These towns aren't always the flashiest or the most visited, but they're where culture is lived, not just performed. They reflect how people talk, what they celebrate, and how they show up for each other. That's what makes them powerful symbols of identity," says a language specialist at Mondly.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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They Said Yes!

Congratulations to the happy couples who applied for marriage licenses
in St. Mary's County during the month of May. Best wishes to all!

Presley Hope Gibson, 30, Mechanicsville, MD
Damian Isaiah Lyles, 30, Mechanicsville, MD

Aprile Rae Preller, 27, Salisbury, MD
Joseph Glenn Guy, II, 28, Salisbury, MD

Lauren Nicole McGowan, 23, Mechanicsville, MD
Daniel Keith Coombs, Jr., 23, Mechanicsville, MD

Andrew Lee Sien, 25, Mechanicsville, MD
Laura Abigail Green, 25, Lexington Park, MD

Justin Alan Smith, 35, Lexington Park, MD
Elizabeth Anne Garber, 40, Lexington Park, MD

Christopher Joseph Widmann, 36, Mechanicsville, MD
Victoria Kawehionaihlani Torres, 29, Mechanicsville, MD

Daniel Evan Deaderick, 25, Chaptico, MD
Erin Elizabeth Deroche, 25, Chaptico, MD

Joseph Franklin Stone, 57, Mechanicsville, MD
Katherine Mary Smith, 64, Mechanicsville, MD

John Edward Quirk, 47, Lexington Park, MD
Brandy Lee Blankenship, 39, Lexington Park, MD

Madeleine Claire Stern, 32, Lexington Park, MD
Matthew Aaron Brookins, 48, Lexington Park, MD

Baylee Elizabeth Montanez, 27, Hollywood, MD
William David Sprouse, 43, Hollywood, MD

David Shawn Griffin, 47, Mechanicsville, MD
Heather Michell Weeks, 43, Hollywood, MD

William Frederick Hopf, 31, Lexington Park, MD
Melissa Ann Golowski, 30, Lexington Park, MD

David Leon Lindsey, 26, Bushwood, MD
Micayla Jade Adams, 24, Hollywood, MD

Kyle Anthony Ploger, 31, Leonardtown, MD
Tara Caitlin Fisher, 35, Leonardtown, MD

Gabriella Annette McFadden, 48, Leonardtown, MD
Milton Randall, IV, 50, Leonardtown, MD

Anthony Terry Liberto, 57, Mechanicsville, MD
Hazel Louise Brady, 55, Bushwood, MD

Maria Esther Ortiz Garay, 26, Lexington Park, MD
Frankie Moreno Perez, 27, Lexington Park, MD

Tamieka Nicole Carter, 41, California, MD
Prince Jerome Armstrong, 40, California, MD

Alejandra Tobon Romano, 27, Prince Frederick, MD
Michael James Stewart, 40, Mechanicsville, MD

Jordan Renee Scott, 33, Leonardtown, MD
Rachel Catherine Corcoran, 29, Lusby, MD

Alexander Gerardus Chapman, 24, Indian Head, MD
Taylor Maurine Good, 24, Indian Head, MD

Jabari Ali Joron Rozier, 26, Lexington Park, MD
Emily Rose Marie Ritchie, 22, Lexington Park, MD

Kenneth Dwayne Barry, 39, Waldorf, MD
Jennifer Loretta Harris, 38, Great Mills, MD

Jackson Anthony Bell, 19, Purcellville, VA
Maeden Faith Rhoton, 18, Lexington Park, MD

Gabrielle Simone Oler, 24, Great Mills, MD
Daniel Andres Reina, 24, Great Mills, MD

Alexander Damien Hiatt, 30, Great Mills, MD
Desirea Lynn Hart, 33, Great Mills, MD

Erica Lynn Truske, 35, Mechanicsville, MD
Alex Wayne Evans, 34, Mechanicsville, MD

Joshua Andrew Lester, 33, Leonardtown, MD
Erin Colleen Hickey, 32, Leonardtown, MD

Randall Edward Carr, 50, California, MD
Barbara Lee Clark, 51, California, MD

Nicole Yvonne McNeil, 36, Lexington Park, MD
Matthew Jarod Milburn, 37, Lexington Park, MD

Matthew Jacob Uzdavinis, 23, Leonardtown, MD
Maria Catherine Schwartz, 22, Leonardtown, MD

Rachel Helene Jackson, 26, Hollywood, MD
Blakie Neil Jones, II, 37, Hollywood, MD

Darren David Rogers, 23, California, MD
Rebecca Terese Allen, 22, Lexington Park, MD

Jonathan Lamar Butler, 37, Mechanicsville, MD
Jasmine Lettice Baker, 36, Waldorf, MD

Emilie Kierstin Bentiz, 30, Mechanicsville, MD
Morgan Mary Williams, 32, Park Hall, MD

John Demetrios Andrikos, 26, Mechanicsville, MD
Mary Rose Annette Depperschmidt, 33, California, MD

Erica Paige Martin, 44, Lexington Park, MD
Courtney Lamont Epps, 45, Lexington Park, MD

Lindsey Ann Bush, 38, Lexington Park, MD
Terance Lovell Harvey, Sr., 55, Lexington Park, MD

Robert Glenn Thompson, 68, Leonardtown, MD
Lori Ann Wyatt, 62, Leonardtown, MD

Morgan Elizabeth Belden, 25, Valley Lee, MD
Evan Troy Broadhead, 26, Hollywood, MD

Kaylee Jayde Davis, 19, Lusby, MD
Adam Neale Xavier Sparks Parlett, 18, Lusby, MD

Chang Feng Chen, 52, Mechanicsville, MD
Feng Lin, 53, Mechanicsville, MD

Olivia Marie Jenkins, 21, Clements, MD
James Michael Harman, III, 24, Alexandria, VA

Devin Eligah Fenwick, 18, California, MD
Jacqueline Grace Reeves, 18, Huntington, MD

Martin Ngwa, 33, Littleton, CO
Melanie Kaitlin Hane, 32, Littleton, CO

Summer Marie Wood, 29, Valley Lee, MD
Ryan Alexander Downey, 33, Valley Lee, MD

Alexander Cole Evans, 22, California, MD
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Susan Burroughs Vallandingham, 43, Leonardtown, MD
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County Reaffirms Off-Shore Drilling Opposition

State Attorney General Joins Opposition

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County have reaffirmed their opposition to oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic Coast in Maryland.

At the commissioners June 10 meeting, County Attorney Buffy Giddens said, "There's a request for a new resolution, a new letter opposing the offshore drilling. This coincides with the federal government's next evaluation process for where they're going to renew offshore gas and oil drilling leases. The Mid-Atlantic region is one of the 27 places that they're considering allowing those leases to be held."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt asked Claudia Davis, with the advocacy group Oceana, who attended the meeting via Zoom, "Do you have any indications that there have been problems off the coast of Maryland or off the East coast, with drilling and pollution? I think we find, at least this commissioner's opinion, more pollution coming from the Chesapeake Bay with ships and whatnot going up through it and discharging whatever they do versus oil drilling off the coast."

She responded, "So there's no existing oil and gas infrastructure off of the coast of Maryland right now. The concern here is that the federal government is currently scoping for the next five years of oil and gas drilling. And we have reason to believe that they will heavily consider the Mid-Atlantic for proposing new oil and gas drilling. And if they don't propose new oil and gas drilling, we think an even higher concern for the region would be renewed mapping of oil reserves off the coast, which would mean seismic air gun testing."

That, she said, "is a process that the oil and gas industry uses to scope the sea floor to identify pockets of oil reserves where they would eventually put a rig and drill for those oil reserves. But the process of seismic air gun blasting is really disruptive to fisheries, to marine mammal migration, and to honestly tourism and recreation that's related to fish and being on the water."

Commissioner Eric Colvin supported the opposition. "I look at this similar to the windmills off of Ocean City, which many of us have had conversations with some of our sister counties and have voiced opposition to that concept. And we don't want to see the windmills there because of the impact it



Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown

would have to tourism in Maryland, but also to the work that's being done on our Navy base here. And I view offshore oil and gas drilling at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in a similar light."

Commissioner President Randy Guy said, "I'm interested in protecting the Chesapeake Bay, and this would be a disaster to have an oil spill up the Bay. It would be truly a disaster."

The resolution to oppose off-shore oil and gas drilling passed 4-1, with Hewitt the lone dissenter. He said, "I don't think there's enough evidence that this could be a negative thing and I don't have any opposition to taking a look."

Subsequently, on June 17, Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown led a coalition of 10 attorneys general in filing comments with the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management opposing offshore oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

According to Brown, "The coalition is asking the federal government to exclude all planning areas in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans from the upcoming 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The final program will determine which ocean areas could be opened to lease sales for oil and gas activity over the next five-year planning period."

"Offshore drilling threatens the Chesapeake and marine ecosystems that Marylanders rely on daily. We refuse to gamble with our environment and livelihoods," said Brown. "Attorneys general across the nation stand united to keep these operations away from our shores."

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Overdose Deaths Down This Year

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County have approved applying for a state grant to extend for another year the position of Heroin Coordinator within the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO).

The presentation at the commissioners' June 10 meeting prompted Commissioner Mike Hewitt to ask Lt. Austin Schultz of the Criminal Intelligence Unit in the Criminal Investigations Division, "Tell me, heroin in St. Mary's County? I read an interesting article on the internet this morning, so you know, it has to be true, that fentanyl and those kinds of related deaths are way down since 2021-2022. What have we seen in St. Mary's County as regards heroin or those types of deaths?"

Schultz said, "We have seen a decrease this year. Actually, I just jotted this down. So, last year we had a total of 17 fatal overdoses and 84 non-fatal overdoses. This year we worked four fatalities and 22 non-fatal."

He noted that the statistics for this year were to date so far.

"We're halfway through. Alright, good!"

Hewitt observed.

SMCSO Chief Financial Officer Lotti Bell said, "On May 30, 2025, we received notification of funding availability from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy for this Overdose and Drug Awareness Coordinator Grant."

Bell said, "This grant funding will go towards continuation of the full-time professional staff, Heroin Coordinator Position, Grade 6 for the period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The total cost of the position for FY2026 is projected to be \$74,692. The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy will only cover a portion of the salary and a maximum of 30% of the actual grant funded salary towards fringe costs. Thus, approximately \$12,925 in County funding is needed to cover the portion of the salary and fringe costs not covered by the grant. This grant and the grant position are included in the Sheriff's FY2026."

She said the county portion of the funding would come from savings in the sheriff's office budget.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Lexington Park Man Arrested Following Firearm Threat

Deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO) responded to a residential neighborhood in Lexington Park on Monday, June 16 at approximately 2:10 p.m., for the report of a threat involving a firearm.

Upon arrival, deputies made contact with the victim, who reported being involved in a verbal altercation with a male subject. During the dispute, the suspect allegedly threatened the victim and displayed a handgun before fleeing the area. No shots were fired, and no injuries were reported.

While interviewing the victim, deputies canvassed the area and observed a male matching the suspect's description attempting to hide in nearby bushes. The suspect fled on foot but was apprehended without incident following a brief pursuit. He was identified as Javontay Kyree Nolan, 18, of Lexington Park.

Although a firearm was not recovered at the scene, surveillance video from a nearby residence showed Nolan engaged in the altercation and appearing to display an object consistent with a handgun.

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

- Assault First Degree
- Assault Second Degree
- Use of a Firearm in a Felony Violent Crime
- Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun on Person
- Possession of a Regulated Firearm While Under 21.



Javontay Kyree Nolan

If anyone witnessed this incident or has additional information to provide, please contact Deputy Mina Geric, #428, at 301-475-4200, ext. 8166, or by email at Geric@stmaryscountymd.gov.

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

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Press release from SMCSO



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Man Sentenced for Domestic Violence Offenses

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that John Otha Dickens, Jr., 35, of Lexington Park was sentenced to life in prison with 58 years of active incarceration for several domestic violence incidents.

On November 21, 2024, a St. Mary's County jury convicted Dickens of attempted first-degree murder for viciously attacking his prior intimate partner. Dickens slashed the victim's neck with a knife, causing devastating, life-threatening injuries that required immediate emergency medical treatment.

Most troubling, Dickens was out pending sentencing for other assaults against the same victim stemming from 2021 when he committed this subsequent offense in February 2023.

At the sentencing hearing, the state requested the maximum sentence of life in prison. The court imposed the following sentence:

- Attempted first-degree murder: life in prison, with 40 years active incarceration, consecutive;
- Second-degree assault: 8 years active incarceration, consecutive;
- Second-degree assault: 10 years in prison with 5 years active incarceration, consecutive; and
- Third-degree burglary: 10 years in prison with 5 years active incarceration, consecutive.

Dickens received a total sentence of life in prison, with 58 years of active incarceration.

"Dickens had a lengthy history of violence against women as a domestic violence offender. This sentence demonstrates our office's commitment to stopping intimate partner violence in our County," said



John Otha Dickens, Jr.

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling. "With this sentence, I hope our survivor can find some solace knowing that her abuser will no longer be able to harm her or her family."

Corporal Christopher DiToto and Trooper First Class Michael Posch of the Maryland State Police and Detective Kortnie Marsch and Deputy Bianca Salas of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office were the lead investigators.

The sentencing hearing was presented by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Alena Mosier on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The Honorable Joseph Stanalonis presided over the case.

Press Release from St. Mary's County State's Attorney

Pax River Begins 100 Percent ID Checks

NAS Patuxent River will be conducting 100 percent ID checks at all gates at until further notice. Personnel that are authorized to escort individuals will require that their guests/vehicle passengers have a valid ID to enter the installation (driver's license, Real ID, etc.).

More information about NAS Patuxent River's base access can be found at <https://ndw.cnrc.navy.mil/Installations/NAS-Patuxent-River/About/Visitor-Information/Base-Access/>

Press Release from NAS Patuxent River

Legal Notice

COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN 2024 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR)

The 2024 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) will be available July 1, 2025 to Town residents and the public at the Town Hall office, 22670 Washington St. Leonardtown, MD between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and at the Leonardtown Post Office, 22735 Washington Street and will also be available online at <http://leonardtown.somd.com> under the Government tab, titled Water Quality Reports.

By Authority: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator

STS App Now Available for Download



As the St. Mary's Transit System (STS) prepares to go fare free beginning July 1, riders now have a powerful new tool to make their experience even more convenient—the new STS Mobile App, available for download now through the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

The STS App offers riders on-the-go access to route maps, real-time schedule information, and stop locations—all from the convenience of a smartphone. With this new tool, residents and visitors alike can plan their trips and explore all that St. Mary's County has to offer, fare-free.

The launch of the STS app complements the county's new fare-free transit initiative—approved as a one-year pilot project in the FY2026 St. Mary's County Budget—to enhance equity, access, and sustainability across the region. For more information on this initiative, please visit: www.stmaryscountymd.gov/pio/docs/2025-120News-ReleaseFareFreeSTS.pdf.

"In today's world, most people rely on their phones for everyday tasks—and now that includes riding the bus," said Allison

Swint, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works & Transportation. "This new app puts real-time transit information right at your fingertips, making it easier than ever to plan your trip, track your bus, and take full advantage of our fare-free service."

The STS Mobile App was developed by the St. Mary's County Department of Information Technology. Their innovation and technical expertise helped bring this important project to life, enhancing accessibility and convenience for our transit riders.

Download the app today: Search "St. Mary's Transit System" in your mobile app store or visit: www.stmaryscountymd.gov/STS to scan the QR code and download directly.

For more information on STS, please visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/STSTransit. Questions or concerns may be directed to the Transportation Division at (301) 475-4200, ext. 1120 or via email to sdispatchers@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Press release from St. Mary's County government

County Government Juneteenth Operations

All St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) administrative offices will be closed on Thursday, June 19, in observance of the Juneteenth holiday. Offices will resume normal operating schedules on Friday, June 20.

The June 19 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)
- Department of Recreation & Parks indoor programs and facilities (*exceptions below*)
- The Animal Adoption & Resource Center

The following SMCG operations will be open on June 19:

- The six Convenience Centers (9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
- The St. Andrews Landfill (8 a.m. –

4:30 p.m.)

- Great Mills Pool (11 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
- Wellness & Aquatics Center (6 a.m. – 12 p.m.)
- St. Clements Island Museum, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum, and the Old Jail Museum
- The Wicomico Shores Golf Course and Riverview Restaurant

The St. Mary's County Government Museums Division, in partnership with the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions will be offering free open houses at the Drayden African American Schoolhouse and the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Interpretive Center at Lexington Manor Passive Park for Juneteenth from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 19; Friday, June 20; and Saturday, June 21.

Press release from St. Mary's County government

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NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

Patuxent River: A Model for Excellence in Navy Barracks Management

The living conditions of junior military personnel, especially sailors, have been under active public and congressional scrutiny in recent years to address concerns about safety, sanitation, and the overall quality of life. Leadership across the Department of Defense has acknowledged that it can significantly impact readiness by affecting the morale and well-being of service members, and subsequently, their warfighting missions.

Navy barracks, also called unaccompanied housing facilities, provide housing for junior sailors, particularly those with paygrades E-4 and below, and are maintained either by private contractors under the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) or, as in the case of Patuxent River, by the Department of the Navy through the installation commanders. Pax River's Navy-managed unaccompanied housing facility presents a picture of barracks life done right. As its personnel maintain, the \$40 million facility has stood out over its five years of service as the "platinum standard" of barracks living across the service.

Being a newer facility not only limits the maintenance burden, but incorporates newer amenities such as "intelligent mail lockers" for residents to receive Amazon, FedEx, and other carrier packages, full kitchens, private bathrooms, and individual air-conditioning units for each suite to provide residents with as comfortable a living experience as possible.

"We're able to be proactive and on top of maintenance needs because we succeeded in maintaining trust and alignment with the decision makers," said Jeff Sias, NAS Patuxent River Fleet and Family Readiness



Rear Adm. David Faehnle, Commandant, Naval District Washington, greets a new check in to the NAS Patuxent River Unaccompanied Housing barracks during a tour of the installation. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Jeff Sias)

director. "On the other hand, being a Navy-managed facility staffed with three active duty billets fosters a higher level of accountability, as the welfare of the service members – not profit making – is top priority. The facility management and staff create an unparalleled sense of community and camaraderie through a set of targeted programs and activities designed to directly interact with the residents like Nutritious Food Initiatives promoting healthy shopping and cooking habits, to rock painting and outdoor activities such as fishing and chalk-the-walk during events like our sexual assault awareness and prevention campaigns."

Wendy Thomas, NAS Patuxent River Unaccompanied building manager and

responsible for maintenance and safety of the facility, described the importance of these staff-to-resident connections, especially for junior Sailors.

"I show them that we are here for them," said Thomas. "They come from different backgrounds, and for many of them it's their first time away from home, we support them as they bloom."

This personal stake in the wellbeing of the residents as warfighters and people makes a difference, according to the residents.

"I'd say she's like a mother and a friend," said Aviation Electrician's Mate Airman Princessanneco Gerona, a resident of Pax River's Unaccompanied Housing barracks. "I didn't feel she was a building manager,

because she takes care of everyone here and makes sure we feel that we belong."

This interest in a high standard for barracks living extends beyond Pax River. On a recent familiarization tour of NAS Patuxent River, Rear Adm. David J. Faehnle, Commandant, Naval District Washington (NDW), made a point of inspecting the barracks and walked away impressed. His tour was capped by a unique interaction, when Faehnle welcomed a new Sailor checking into the barracks that day and expressed his confidence that the Sailor will be very comfortable there.

"It was a serendipitous meeting between two levels of barracks life – The admiral in charge of the region overseeing this unaccompanied housing facility at Pax and a brand new resident," said Sias, who was leading the tour that day. "To have Admiral Faehnle tell a new check-in at his first command that he trusts the Sailor will be looked after and comfortable here is a vote of confidence you don't get every day."

In spite of budgetary challenges, Pax River's leadership is confident that incremental change will lead to success. Sias stated that investments in newly-built Navy-managed facilities coupled with a top-down approach enables the staff to perform their duties better and continue to foster a sense of ownership; this responsibility will parlay into a greater living standard for the service members.

"Every day we're getting better," added Sias. "And our management team knows what's at stake — the quality of life for the future of the Navy — our most important and greatest investment."

U.S. Naval Test Pilot School Welcomes Aviation's Newest Developmental Testers

The United States Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) welcomed the newest group of test pilots, flight officers, and project engineers to the military aviation community, June 13, during a graduation ceremony near Naval Air Station Patuxent, Md.

The USNTPS graduation marks the completion of an intense 11-month course. In addition to 19 naval aviators, Class 166 included members of the U.S. Army, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and civilians, as well as the British Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, and Royal Canadian Air Force.

Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, a USNTPS alumnus, naval combat and test pilot, and former NASA astronaut, gave the graduation's keynote address crediting USNTPS with many opportunities throughout his Navy and NASA career including four spaceflights, time aboard the International Space Station, and commanding the Space Shuttle Endeavor on its final mission.

"None of that would have been possible without my time here at USNTPS," Kelly said.

USNTPS Commanding Officer Cmdr. Travis Hartman welcomed attendees and emphasized the significance of the graduation ceremony.

"[Graduation] is one of our favorite events in the lifecycle of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School," said Hartman. "It's an amazing time for these students and their families."

Following the presentation of diplomas, the school presented its class awards recognizing outstanding achievement. Lt. Nicholas Ramzi earned the Empire Test Pilots' School Award, which recognizes exceptional flight test performance. Maj. Christopher Troke earned the Syd Sherby Leadership Award, presented to the student who best demonstrates leadership and teamwork. William Josephson earned the Capt. Willie McCool Outstanding Student Award, given to the student who demonstrates overall excellence in



academics, flight test, and leadership.

The ceremony concluded with a speech by Troke, Class 166's class leader, who reflected on the academic, personal and professional challenges they faced as a class and as individuals during their time at USNTPS.

USNTPS trains pilots and engineers for

developmental test and evaluation of aircraft and aircraft systems. USNTPS is a component of Naval Test Wing Atlantic under Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) in Patuxent River, Maryland. NAWCAD advances capability and operational readiness for naval aviation.

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Jazz & Seafood Festival Announces Kickoff Event



The Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival, a premier Mid-Atlantic jazz event, is thrilled to announce "A Jazz at Sunset Affair on the Potomac" at Piney Point Lighthouse as the kickoff event for this year's four day 25th anniversary festival.

Visitors are invited to an elegant evening at Piney Point Lighthouse. Imagine strolling along the beach at sunset, a gentle breeze carrying the sounds of incredible live jazz by Higher Standards. Sip handcrafted cocktails on the porch of the historic Lighthouse Keepers Quarters or climb the lighthouse itself for breathtaking panoramic views. The grounds will be bathed in silver and candlelight, creating a magical ambiance for this unforgettable night.

Indulge in delectable seafood and heavy hors d'oeuvres while enjoying complimentary wine from local wineries. This intimate event offers a unique experience, combining the charm of a waterfront setting with the sophistication of live jazz.

Be part of something special: This exclusive fundraiser supports the St. Mary's County Museums, helping preserve local history and fund vital educational programs in Southern Maryland. Tickets are \$85 per person or \$160 per couple (21 and older only). Your ticket includes delicious food, live music, two complimentary glasses of wine, and more. Don't miss this chance to celebrate, connect and support a great cause! Book your tickets now before they sell out!

The festival continues through Sunday with lots of special events. Festival highlights include:

- **Friday, July 11 (5:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.):** "Artful Harmonies: A Plein Air Celebration" at St. Clement's Island Museum. Artists can capture the beauty of the museum grounds for \$10 per artist. Later that evening, a free "Jazz in the Neighborhood" concert will take place on the museum lawn, headlined by the sensational U.S. Navy Band, The Commodores, with a special opening performance by the St. Mary's Ryken

Jazz Band. Food trucks and vendors will be on site.

- **Saturday, July 12 (12 p.m. – 7 p.m.):** The Main Event at St. Clement's Island Museum features performances by Casual Groove, Rebecca Jade, Andréa Lisa, and Chelsey Green. Enjoy a wide selection of seafood and Southern Maryland cuisine, shop at jazzy vendor booths, and take a free water taxi to St. Clement's Island. Free admission to the museum is included. Tickets are \$75 for general admission and \$95 for VIP.
 - **Sunday, July 13 (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.):** Enjoy a delightful jazz brunch & optional golf experience at the scenic Riverview Restaurant at Wicomico Shores Golf Course featuring live jazz music and great food. Tickets are \$50 per person / \$90 per couple.
 - **Sunday, July 13 (various times during the day):** Enhance your festival experience with a two-hour jazz cruise on the Potomac. Three exclusive cruises will depart from St. Clement's Island Museum, each featuring unique food, beverages, and live music by Sax Appeal. Tickets are \$85 per person, with only 15 spots available per cruise. General admission, VIP tickets, tickets to all events, including the jazz cruise, are available at www.PotomacJazzFest.com. Stay updated on festival details by following the event's Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/SCIMuseum/events
- Proceeds from the Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival support the Friends of St. Clement's Island & Piney Point Museums in their mission to preserve and promote St. Mary's County's historical sites. Major partners include the Friends of St. Clement's Island & Piney Point Museums, the St. Mary's County Museum Division, the St. Mary's County Arts Council, and other partner organizations.

Press Release from
St. Mary's County Museum Division.

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Students Compete with Unmanned Aerial Systems

The sky isn't the limit, it's the starting line. Next week, more than 50 international student teams will launch their autonomous unmanned aerial systems (UASs) into realistic mission scenarios, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world technological application.

RoboNation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing robotics education and workforce development, will host the 2025 Student Unmanned Aerial Systems (SUAS) Competition from June 24–26 at St. Mary's County Regional Airport.

Supporting RoboNation's mission to build the workforce of tomorrow through hands-on robotics education, the SUAS Competition doesn't just challenge students, it equips them to lead in an increasingly tech-driven world.

The SUAS Competition, held annually since 2002, is designed to foster interest in the autonomous aerial systems industry and engage students in a challenging mission-based contest. Teams must design, build, and demonstrate an autonomous UAS capable of complex tasks, such as autonomous navigation, obstacle avoidance, aerial imaging, and precision payload delivery. These skills reflect cutting-edge

applications of drone technology in industry and defense. By tackling these scenarios, students gain practical experience in systems engineering, coding, and airspace safety, preparing them to solve real-world problems using advanced robotics.

The 2025 Competition will welcome approximately 300 students from 53 international university and high performing high school teams.

For RoboNation, which assumed management of the SUAS Competition in 2023, the program exemplifies the synergy of real-world technology education and workforce development. The competition provides a platform for students from around the world to showcase their ingenuity, technical prowess, and teamwork on an international stage.

"Workforce development is at the heart of the SUAS Competition," said Daryl Davidson, President & CEO of RoboNation. "This event equips students with real-world skills, fosters a solution-oriented mindset, and provides the collaborative experience needed to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving technology workforce."

Press Release from RoboNation.

Hoyer Announces Service Academy Appointments

Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) has announced the names of 17 Fifth District students appointed to the United States Service Academies. The students, nominated by Congressman Hoyer, received appointments to the Air Force Academy, the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy, and the Military Academy at West Point. All of the service academies require a nomination from an authorized nominating source.

"I am pleased to congratulate 17 students from Maryland's Fifth District for their appointments to the United States Service Academies this year," said Congressman Hoyer. "These students embody the character we expect from our men and women in uniform – a sense of duty, moral devotion, and principled conviction. I am thankful to their families for raising such bright leaders, and I join in wishing them the best of luck in their future military careers."

The following Fifth District students received appointments:

U.S. Military Academy (West Point)

- Campbell Gelineau, Anne Arundel

- Makenzie Brewer, Anne Arundel
- Mackenzie Tokar, Charles
- Chase Clark, Prince George's
- Nelson Deandrade, Prince George's

U.S. Air Force Academy

- Luke Dipietro, Anne Arundel
- Lauren Grace Compton, Charles
- Alanna Francis, Prince George's
- Chikamdi Okeakpu, Prince George's

U.S. Naval Academy

- Morgan Bujac, Anne Arundel
- Chloe Haseltine, Anne Arundel
- Michael Sohn, Anne Arundel
- Clint Newnam, Calvert
- Saunette Sanderson, Charles
- Hunter-Robins Mann, St. Mary's
- Emily Maury, St. Mary's

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

- William Clay, St. Mary's

Press Release from Office of US Rep. Steny Hoyer



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Community Violence Prevention Day Set

The St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) and St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO) are hosting Community Violence Prevention Day on June 28 at Nicolet Park from 12 to 4 p.m. This event is free and open to all community members.

Community Violence Prevention Day is family-friendly and will offer a variety of activities, including games, face painting, food trucks, music, a free pop-up grocery market, and more. Gunlocks and gun safes will also be available while supplies last.

Collaboration is encouraged; several local organizations and community leaders will attend to provide youth and families with resources and activities that inspire growth and leadership while promoting resilience within the community.

"Community Violence Prevention Day is designed to help create a safer, health-

ier, and more vibrant community for everyone," said Michelle Pottinger, SMCHD's Office (SMCSO) are hosting Community Violence, Injury, and Trauma Unit Director. "This event will be a great opportunity to strengthen connections between families, neighborhoods, and local organizations who are working to empower youth by addressing the root causes of violence."

"This is a great opportunity to come together as a community," said Lieutenant Austin Schultz. "Our partnership with the St. Mary's County Health Department continues to grow stronger, and Community Violence Prevention Day is just one example of how we're working side by side to make a lasting impact in St. Mary's County."

Joint Release from St. Mary's County Health Department and St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office

Celebrating Filipino American Culture in SoMD



Board members of the Filipino American Association of Southern Maryland at a recent gathering. Photo by Ceandra Scott.

DAR Youth Leadership Awards Announced

The Major William Thomas Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is proud to present 28 Youth Leadership Awards for elementary and middle school students and six Good Citizenship Awards for high school students, who demonstrated qualities of:

- **Honesty** (high principles, trustworthiness, loyalty, truthfulness, punctuality, moral strength and stability, cleanliness in mind and body);
- **Service** (cooperation, meritorious behavior bringing honor to school or community, kindness, unselfishness, true Americanism – individual responsibility to Home, to Country, to God);
- **Courage** (mental and physical, determination to overcome obstacles);
- **Leadership** (personality, originality, ability to lead and hold others, good sportsmanship – responsibility), and
- **Patriotism** (fundamental Americanism)

We are proud to present two JROTC Medals to students who demonstrated the above qualities along with adherence to military discipline, leadership ability and a fundamental and patriotic understanding of the importance of JROTC training.

The recipients of the JROTC awards this year were:

- Allison M. Birge, Chopticon High School
- Cadet Mentoring Officer Cadet Madison Mankowski, Great Mills High School

The high school students who exhibited the five qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership, and patriotism which are necessary to receive the Good Citizenship Medal are:

- Madison Wood, St. Mary's Ryken High School
- Emily Hepp, Chesterton Academy of St. Mary's
- Abigail Joy Brown, The Kings Christian Academy
- Benjamin Hoffman, Chopticon High School
- Talik Miles, Great Mills High School
- and Kaelin King, Leonardtown High School.

The elementary and middle students who exhibited the five qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership, and patriotism which are necessary to receive the Youth Leadership Medal are:

- Kenley Mae Mast, Benjamin Banneker Elementary School
- Jeb Johnson, Capt. Walter Francis Duke Elementary
- Samantha Francino, Chesapeake Public Charter School
- Scarlett Gass, Dynard Elementary School
- Reagan McBride, Evergreen Elementary School
- Kathleen Hinkle, Father Andrew White
- Emily Mynes, Esperanza Middle School
- Aubrey Comas, George Washington Carver Elementary School
- Jonah Hayes, Green Holly Elementary School
- Landon Hood, Greenview Knolls Elementary School
- Julian Kelly, Hollywood Elementary School
- Petra Wiest, Leonardtown Elementary School
- Emma Keever, Leonardtown Middle School
- Gabrielle Leiendecker, Lettie Marshall Dent Elementary School
- Micah Bell, Lexington Park Elementary School
- Aiden Beyer, Little Flower School
- Natalie Kyser, Margaret Brent Middle School
- Marshall Petr, Mother Catherine Academy
- Jackson Via, Oakville Elementary School
- Riley Rogers, Park Hall Elementary School
- Sophia Castaneda, Piney Point Elementary School
- Joseph "Blake" Raley, Ridge Elementary School
- Brooklyn Barrick, Spring Ridge Middle School
- Cecelia Dempsey, St. John's School
- Romeo Norris, Allison Shaffer, St. Michael's School
- Austin Phillips, Town Creek Elementary School
- Sadie Wood, White Marsh Elementary School
- Takoda Jones, Virtual Academy.

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Northern Senior Center Celebrates 20 Years of Community Support



Pat Myers



Northern Senior Center Director Marie Noelle Lautieri



Commissioner President Randy Guy observes some ladies having fun at the Northern Senior Center

By Florence Ballengee
Contributing Writer

The recent ceremony marking the 20th year since the dedication of the Northern County Senior Center was a celebration worth noting. But that was just the marking of a portion of what actually took place in order to have this vibrant and active center as an integral part of the northern county community.

The very existence of a senior center in the northern end is in itself the culmination of years and years of hard work by a dedicated group of senior volunteers who were determined to bring about a place for northern seniors to gather, to socialize and to learn. It took more than 20 years and thousands of hours of volunteer work to accomplish that goal.

The very existence of a senior center in the northern end serves as a trophy to the value of grass roots volunteerism and what it can accomplish.

The Northern Senior Center actually had its germination when Pat Myers, then Vice President of the Fifth District Homemakers went to the group and asked them to take on the sponsorship for the creation of a senior center for the north end.

Myers had just retired from the federal government and decided that she had one more project in her. She wasn't old enough at that time to use a senior center but took the lead and now all these years later, in her 80's, she looks back on all the years and all the work and says it was worth it.

To get the ball rolling, Myers and her group of volunteers developed and circulated petitions and forwarded them to the county commissioners.

It became obvious to the group that it would be a lengthy project, so they enlisted the aid of the Office on Aging to find an interim site.

They also saw the need for a group to advance the drive for a permanent center and so a council was formed in January 1999. Little did they know that the work of the council would endure for 20 years when it ended in September 2019.

The work of the council involved assisting in the day-to-day operations of the interim sites at Mt. Zion Methodist Church and then All Faith's Episcopal Church. Along with the day-to-day operations, the council continued its work trying to establish a permanent site. It took years of hard work on the part of volunteers, sometimes with objections from neighbors who didn't want a center in their neighborhood, and from others who wanted a multigenerational site. But the council persevered with their eye on the prize.

And that prize, the Northern Senior Activity Center on June 10 celebrated 20 years of serving seniors in northern St. Mary's County under the guidance and work of the Office of Aging.

When at long last the permanent center was dedicated in June 2005 the hardworking group of volunteers that made up the council began fundraising because they saw the need for some things to enhance the building and make it more user friendly. The group wanted to provide those things they saw a need for themselves, and not ask the county to fund them. Thus began the next phase of their hard work consisting of yard sales, raffles, trips, and many other fundraisers.

The end result was the purchase of three sheds for storage, the purchase of stage curtains, window treatments for every room, a steam table divider, fans, wide screen tv and stand, pool table, teak benches, patio furniture and umbrellas, shades for the social room, conference room and craft room doors, and a whole host of other items such as tables, cleaning equipment and many smaller ticket items used in the day-to-day operation of the center.

The council was able to count on friends who assisted in each fundraiser by making and selling ceramic pieces, aprons, table runners, decorative bags and many more items as well as providing hard work and support for each of the many fundraisers and vendor sales.

While all of the above work was taking place, the members spearheaded programs, a library, coordinated and conducted 20

years of senior activities and provided support in the kitchen and in the distribution of Meals on Wheels and for the attending seniors having lunch at the center.

Attendance at the center has changed since the early days. The council ended its years of intense hard work and fundraising and Myers' hope is that the community will value and maintain all the work that it

took to make such a wonderful place for the seniors in the northern county to gather.

Thus, the county celebrates the 20 years since a building was dedicated but the building stands as a testament to what can be accomplished when one person has an idea, and they are willing to work to see it through despite challenges.



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Activities for Seniors with Limited Mobility

Physical activity is a valuable tool in the fight against chronic disease and other conditions. In fact, the Cleveland Clinic highlights physical activity among its nine ways to prevent disease in an effort to live a long and rewarding life.

Children, adolescents, young adults, and even men and women in middle age may not face too many physical hurdles when they try to exercise, but seniors are not always so lucky. Aging men and women with mobility issues may wonder if they can reap the rewards of physical activity, and thankfully there are many ways to exercise even if getting up and going isn't as easy as it might have been in years past. Sometimes referred to as "aerobic exercise" or simply "cardio," cardiovascular exercise is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of physical activities that raise the heart rate and improve endurance. Seniors with mobility issues can look to various forms of cardio for inspiration as they seek to be more physically active without compromising their overall health.

- Walk your way to a healthier you. Walking is a form of cardiovascular exercise that is ideal for older adults with mobility issues because it need not be physically demanding and it's safe to walk just about anywhere. Walking in a place such as a local park can be particularly good for older adults because they can take periodic breaks on benches if aches, pains or stiffness is affecting their ability to keep moving.
- Take up swimming. Swimming might be tailor-made for seniors with mobil-

ity issues because it's a great workout and exercising in water tends to be less taxing on muscles and joints. The Cleveland Clinic notes that swimming promotes heart health, strengthens the lungs, helps to burn calories, and builds muscle, among other benefits. And many seniors find swimming is just as fun in their golden years as it was in their youth, which means aging adults might not face problems with motivation when the time comes to get in the pool.

- Use an exercise bike or portable pedal

exerciser. Cycling is a wonderful exercise but one that seniors with mobility issues may feel is no longer possible. If doctors advise against riding a traditional bike, an exercise bike or portable pedal exerciser can provide many of the benefits of cycling without as great a risk for accident or injury. A portable pedal exerciser can be carried to a park, where seniors can still spend time in the great outdoors, which is one of the most appealing reasons to get on a bike and go.

- Take beginner yoga or tai chi.

HelpGuide.org notes that gentle yoga or tai chi can help to improve flexibility and reduce stress and anxiety. Though yoga and tai chi can provide as much demanding physical activity as individuals allow, beginner classes in each discipline don't require much movement but do provide enough for seniors hoping to be less sedentary.

Even seniors with mobility issues can find safe and effective ways to be more physically active. Prior to beginning a new exercise regimen, seniors with mobility issues are urged to discuss activities with their physicians.



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Tips to Grow Wealth After Retirement



Personal finances and retirement are inextricably linked. Retirement planning services and advocates emphasize the significance of building a sizable nest egg for the days when professionals are no longer working, but many now also note the importance of building that nest egg after retiring.

The need to build wealth even after retiring reflects a trend that has seen people spend more time in retirement over the last half century than in the decades prior. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, men could expect to spend just under 13 years in retirement and women 16.6 years in retirement in 1970. By 2020, the expected retirement length had reached 18.6 years for men and 21.3 years for women. That means modern professionals will spend a half decade more in retirement than people did in 1970. Those extra five years require more money for living expenses, which is why it can be so important for modern professionals to consider various ways to grow their wealth even after they call it a career.

- Avoid early withdrawals. Withdrawals from a 401(k) are taxed like regular income because such accounts are built up with pre-tax contributions. But there are ways to minimize your tax burden, and thus save money, when withdrawing from a 401(k). Avoiding early withdrawals, which are those taken before age 59½, is one easy way to avoid a higher tax burden. Early withdrawals can trigger a 10 percent tax on top of the income taxes account holders will have to pay. By avoiding early withdrawals, retirees are building wealth by lowering their tax burden.
- Take the required minimum distribution when you must. Another way to avoid a tax burden that can diminish your wealth in retirement is to take your required minimum distribution (RMD) when you need to. The Internal Revenue Services reports that

account owners who fail to withdraw the full amount of the RMD by the due date are subject to a 25 percent excise tax on the amount not withdrawn (the tax burden is 10 percent if timely corrected within two years). The IRS notes account owners must take their first RMD for the year in which they turn 73.

- Explore new ways to invest. The increase in expected retirement length underscores the fact that many retirees may need to abandon conventional wisdom related to retirement and risk. Though it's still best for retirees to avoid particularly risky investments, they might need to accept a degree of risk that retirees did not have to take on decades ago. Simply put, longer retirements may require longer engagements with risk. Retirees can work with a financial advisor and conduct their own research to identify vehicles to grow their wealth without making themselves and their nest eggs highly vulnerable to market fluctuations.
- Embrace new income opportunities. Retirees may have more potential income streams than they realize. For example, passive income can be an effective way for retirees to earn money without going to great lengths. Retirees who travel for months each year and/or those who live in colder climates but spend winter in warmer locales can generate passive income by renting out their properties when they're not at home. Retired professionals with decades of experience in their fields also can explore consulting or teaching opportunities that won't require substantial time commitments but can still bring in money.

With expected retirement lengths on the rise, retirees are encouraged to find ways to grow their nest eggs so they can enjoy retirement to the fullest.

The Impact of Reading on Cognitive Decline



The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 6.7 million people have Alzheimer's disease in the United States. The Alzheimer Society of Canada estimates that there were 733,040 people living with dementia in the country as of January 1, 2024. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias can rob people of their memories, personalities and abilities to live satisfying, independent lives. While it may not be impossible to prevent all cognitive issues completely, there is reason to believe that reading could be an ally in cognitive care.

The American Academy of Neurology says that reading stimulates the brain and has been shown to slow down cognitive decline in old age. Reading also may help slow down memory loss.

The powers of reading were noticed more than 10 years ago when a 2013 study from researchers at Emory University measured readers' MRI scans as they read books. They found the deeper readers went into a story,

the more areas of their brains were activated. This activity remained elevated for several days after participants finished their books. The more a person reads, the stronger complex networks in the brain become.

Additional evidence that reading can help the brain was noted by researchers at the Texas A&M School of Public Health. A 2024 study suggests that older people with mild cognitive impairment who engage in high levels of activities like reading, hobbies and word games have better memory, working memory, attention, and processing speed than those who do not take part in such endeavors. Furthermore, a 2021 study published in Neurology found that high levels of cognitive activity, like reading and writing letters, can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease by five years among those age 80 and over.

Reading can keep brains functioning optimally and potentially delay age-related cognitive decline.



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How to Determine if the Time Is Right to Downsize

The phrase “bigger is better” has endured for quite some time. Though it may be impossible to pinpoint precisely who coined the phrase, its lesson that larger things tend to be more valuable than smaller alternatives is applicable in numerous situations. But no adage is applicable to every situation, and in some instances people may find that bigger is not better.

Downsizing is an approach many individuals consider after turning 50. Parents who are empty nesters and others nearing retirement may wonder if the time is right to downsize from their current homes. Though that’s a strategy millions of people have adopted over time, the decision is not always so simple. Individuals over 50 who are trying to determine if downsizing is right for them can consider a host of factors before making a decision.

- **Monthly housing expenses:** Before downsizing their homes, individuals should determine just how much they’re currently spending on housing. Individuals who have fixed rate mortgages likely know the amount of their monthly mortgage payment, but what about maintenance? Home maintenance expenses fluctuate, but a careful examination of the previous 12 months’ expenditures can give homeowners an idea of just how



much they’re spending to maintain their properties. The number may be eye-opening, as Thumbtack’s “Home Care Price Index” released in the third quarter of 2024 revealed that the average annual cost to maintain a single family home reached an all-time high of \$10,433. If such expenses are preventing homeowners from building their retirement nest eggs, then it might

be time to seek alternative housing.

- **Real estate prices:** Real estate prices have skyrocketed in recent years, which can be both good and bad for current homeowners considering downsizing. Many people who downsize look to move from a single-family home into a condominium, where maintenance tasks are typically handled by a homeowners’ association (HOA). Such com-

munities typically charge HOA fees, which can be minimal or considerable. In addition, the price of condominiums has risen in recent years, with the lender New American Funding reporting in early 2024 that the median sale price of a condo reached \$341,000. So homeowners who want to downsize their homes may end up taking most of the profit from selling their current properties and reinvesting it in a costly condo. Some may deem that worthwhile, while others may find the cost savings of downsizing in the current market are negligible.

- **Emotional attachment:** Downsizing may be considered with cost savings in mind, but it’s important to consider your emotional attachment to your current home. Many homeowners over 50 raised their families in their current homes, and letting go of a property where so many memories were made can be difficult. Homeowners who are not prepared to move on from properties that are meaningful to them and their families can consider additional ways to downsize their financial obligations.

Downsizing is something many homeowners over 50 consider. Any decision regarding downsizing is best made after considering a range of variables.



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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind



As We Get Older Together

By Shelby Opperman
Contributing Writer

Oh boy, hard crabs tonight at Seabreeze for my husband Robert's birthday. My husband is one of those guys who says, "I don't want anything for my birthday." "It's just another day." You have probably either said that yourself or heard it. But I think he will be pleased tonight with a nice dinner out on the water with the family. He is a grateful to be alive each day kind of person". As much as he's been through the last 25 years I've been with him, I'm grateful he is still alive.

Robert just keeps working hard, saying, "Pain don't hurt" as spoken by Patrick Swayze as his character James Dalton from the movie Roadhouse. I'm pretty sure this is Robert's favorite movie, and I know he probably watches Roadhouse at least twice a year. Some months it seems like it's on every channel. The "Pain don't hurt" and "I'll sleep when I'm dead" phrases seem to be my husband's mantras throughout life.

I'm not as tough or energized as Robert, but I admire him so much. Last Saturday morning when we were sitting out in the tall Adirondack chairs with his coffee and my tea, he said, "I am not doing a thing today". This was his first Saturday at home since March or April when the pool season started. Do you really think that happened? He was up out of that chair every 10 minutes raking, mulching, organizing his tools in the garage behind us, or doing a million other things. That's his way, and probably why he is still here.

Sometimes we can sit out there in companionable silence and just listen to the birds for a half hour or an hour or so, but most of the time he is fixing something. He is probably ADHD, but that kind of stuff wasn't diagnosed when we were younger. I have some form of it I think, but I tend to get paralyzed and overwhelmed with my brain running in circles and loops, afraid of starting things. I used to keep two decals on the dashboard of one of my mom-mobiles; one said, "First Things First" and the other said, "Focus Focus Focus". Those little slogans helped me so much on many days. I still say them when I start to get that feeling of being overwhelmed.

In 4 days, on the 22nd, it will be my 64th birthday and I can finally sing one of my favorite Beatles songs, "When I'm Sixty-Four". I know the lyrics are true for Robert and me except Paul McCartney and John Lennons's lyrics have it where the two people aren't together, the man is asking the woman if he could be with her. The lyrics are hopeful with all the things he would like them to do together as they get older. Robert and I already have most of that covered, though we will probably never have a cottage on the Isle of Wight, or a second home for that matter.

We are starting another year around the sun together, which is just the way I want it to be. As long as we can mix some family, friends, and fun with the hard work it makes each year sweeter. I love growing older with Robert, nothing is ever boring with him. We both love spontaneity. Last night I had everything pulled out to make tacos, and he said with a smile, "Aren't you taking me out to dinner?" So out to dinner we went to one of our favorite places, Old Line Restaurant and Pub in Charlotte Hall. It's close to home and everyone is always so pleasant there and we love the food...and drinks too.

It used to be that we had birthday week with every night being a fun party somewhere, but now we are happy with a couple nights out at our favorite places with cherished friends and family and then coming back home to our sweet Mindy Pup. That's what growing older is all about; adapting to changes together but still having fun and enjoying every minute of life...together.

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

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



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.

Frank Cameron, 88



Bernard Franklin Cameron Sr. "Frank", 88, of California, MD, passed away peacefully on June 10, 2025, in Callaway, MD. He was a loving husband,

brother, devoted father, cherished grandfather, great grandfather, and friend to many.

Born on January 12, 1937, in the house that now serves as the rectory at St. John's Catholic Church in Hollywood, MD, he was a beloved son of the late John Woodrow Cameron and Elizabeth Virginia Long Cameron. He was the loving husband of Catherine Jeanette Abell Cameron. Frank and Jeanette were married on June 6, 1959, at St. John's Catholic Church. They celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary just days before his passing.

Frank will be dearly missed by his beloved wife, Jeanette, and by his children Frank Cameron Jr. and daughter-in-law Sue Cameron, Julie Burgan and son-in-law Jim Burgan, Maria Gassie and son-in-law Ed Gassie Jr. Frank was predeceased by his son Tim Cameron. He will also be dearly missed by his grandchildren Nick Cameron and girlfriend Sheila Tayman, Kirk Cameron, Zack Cameron, Dani Walker and husband Roger Walker, Bryan Darling, Austin Darling, and Jake Darling. Frank also leaves behind his three great-grandsons, Camden Walker, Maxwell Walker and Jameson Walker, who all loved him very much.

Frank is survived by his brothers Tom Cameron with partner Mary Dean, and Phil Cameron. He was predeceased by his siblings Joan Wilson and John L. Cameron, and in-laws Dave Wilson, Barbara Mennel Cameron, and Sophia (Sissy) Bowles Cameron, and grandson Bryce Darling.

Frank was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County and graduated from Great Mills High School in 1955. After high school he enlisted in the US Navy for two years of active duty at Whiting Field NAS, continuing to serve in the Navy Reserves through 1961. Once his active duty ended, Frank returned to St. Mary's County and worked as a plumber at the Center Gardens apartments in Lexington Park until 1962. He then became a US Government Civil Servant at the Naval Propellant Plant, Indian Head, working as a pipefitter and soon moving on to Andrews AFB until 1966 when he transitioned to the Public Works department at Patuxent River, NAS. It was at Pax River that Frank found his true career footing, working his way up from pipefitter to shop foreman to a planner-estimator position and retiring in 1992 as an Inspection Branch Head. Frank was the recipient of numerous achievement and innovation awards during his storied career. Frank then went on to work at numerous Navy contractor positions at Pax River until his full retirement in 2005.

Frank was also a part-time tobacco farmer

and worked the fields alongside his father and with the help of his sons. Crops of sweet corn and sweet potatoes eventually replaced the tobacco. Frank had a true green thumb which was evident in the landscaping around his home. He was always meticulous about his yard and gardens. He planted a thriving orchard in his yard yielding apples, peaches, pears, cherries and grapes, and bountiful vegetable gardens.

Along with being a hardworking man and dedicated provider for his family, Frank also enjoyed being a weekend waterman. He received several awards from the MD Department of Natural Resources for his rockfish catches. More importantly, the time shared with his children, extended family and friends out on the water was what mattered most to him. His sharing of the subsequent bounty of fish and crabs was a great bonus for everyone involved. Even in his retirement years, Frank always stayed busy; idleness was not in his DNA.

Frank was an avid Baltimore Orioles fan and faithfully watched their games until his passing. He also enjoyed coaching baseball in his earlier years for St. Mary's County youth baseball teams. His favorite NFL team was the Washington Redskins and his late son, Tim eventually had him rooting for the Baltimore Ravens as well.

The family will receive friends on Monday, June 23, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at St. John's Catholic Church in Hollywood, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 AM with Father Ray Schmidt officiating. Interment will be private. Pallbearers will be Nick Cameron, Dani Walker, Kirk Cameron, Zack Cameron, Austin Darling, and Jake Darling. Honorary pallbearers will be Maxwell Walker, Jameson Walker, and Camden Walker.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to:

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In memory of Bernard Franklin Cameron, Sr.
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.

Karl Szlendak, 81

September 23, 1943 – June 12, 2025
Obituary will follow. The family will receive friends on Tuesday, June 24, 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 Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 10:00 AM, in Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Solomons, MD. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD.



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Sat, Jun 21

Dee of St. Mary's Dockside Tours

Calvert Marine Museum
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Step aboard the museum's skipjack for an up-close tour with crew members of her 56 ft. deck. Learn how watermen dredge for oysters, hoist the sails, and navigate the waterways of the Chesapeake. Included with museum admission.

Mud Day

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Celebrate international MUD DAY at Annmarie with a day full of muddy Earthy explorations and creative nature play. We'll learn about the importance of soil, the plants, insects, and other creatures that rely on soil and live in it, and the extraordinary importance of mud in our lives. Plus we will have fun with the creative side of things with squishy art projects, mud painting, mud pies, tree faces, a mud kitchen, and so much more.

Food vendors will be on site. Pack like you're going to the pool or the beach! Chairs, towels, sunscreen, and bug spray encouraged! Rinse-off stations will be available, but bring extra clothes and prepare for a muddy car ride home! This is a rain or shine event; all ticket sales are final; no pets, no smoking, no vaping.

www.annmariegarden.org/annmarie2/content/2nd-annual-mud-day

Combat Robotics Camp

The Hive
44010 Commerce Ave, Hollywood
10 a.m.

Focused around Termite Class Combat Robots! Competitors in grades 3-7th are able to participate in this two-day camp. Each camp will run on Saturday and Sunday, 10-3PM each day.

Camp sessions will be available for the following dates: June 21-22nd, July 19-20th, and August 16-17th 2025

To Sign up—growingstems.org/product/termite-class-combat-robot-summer-camp/

Sun, Jun 22

Quarter Auction

K.C. Hall
Ridge
Doors open 12 p.m., auction starts 1 p.m.

We will have food available for sale and a 50-50 raffle plus a small brown bag auction. Proceeds help yje Belle in their charity works through the year.

Annual June Drive-Thru Dinner

Sacred Heart Church

23080 Maddox Road, Bushwood
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Menu includes: Crab Cakes, Country Ham, Fried Chicken, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, Green Beans, Pickled Beets & Rolls. Price is \$30 per dinner (cash or check only). There will be a Bake Table with lots of homemade goodies.

Mon, Jun 23

Vacation Bible School

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
9 a.m. to 12 Noon

We are excited for a week of arts & crafts, bible stories, games, yummy snacks, singing new songs, dancing, and getting energy out during recreation time! Open to 4 yr olds to children who have completed 5th grade. Free! Optional Purchases: shirt and/or music. Register at paxpres.org/vbs. If you have any questions, please email Patsy at helopatsy@yahoo.com.

Republican Women of St Mary's County

The Pax River Ale House
46590 Corporate Dr. Lexington Park
11 a.m.

We gather socially at 11a.m. and the meeting starts at 11:30. The meeting is open to

the public.

Ongoing

Open House

Drayden African American Schoolhouse
June 19 – 21
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

For Juneteenth check out the restored schoolhouse and learn about its rich history and importance to education in St. Mary's County. Staff will be available at the school during this time to answer any questions and provide information. This is a FREE EVENT co-hosted by Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) and the St. Mary's County Museum Division. Info: www.facebook.com/events/1304609537658205

Upcoming

Maryland Dove Passenger Sail

Historic St. Mary's City
Saturday, July 19
10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Ages 5+, Step aboard the *Maryland Dove* and set sail on the serene waters of the St. Mary's River. \$60 / \$50 members. Reservations: 301-994-4372 or hsmcc.groups@maryland.gov

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library

UPCOMING EVENTS



Summer Reading for All Ages Now through August 23!

Summer Reading is for all ages and runs June 13 – August 23, 2025. Complete activities all summer long to earn badges. Badge 1: Free book! Badge 2: Choice of t-shirt or tote bag! Badges 3-5: treat/food coupons to local businesses! Earn all 5 badges to be entered in the grand prize drawings for gift cards. Grand prize drawings take place after the end of Summer Reading in August. Download the Beanstack Tracker app for Android or iOS, or visit <https://stmalib.beanstack.org> to get started!

Opera Bears

Puppets + Opera = FUN! The puppet bears Grizzelina & Grizzelino (and their human friends from Maryland Opera) sing, play, and share all the ways that opera is a delightful way to tell a story. Two sessions: Lexington Park Library

on Friday, June 20 from 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. and Leonardtown Library on Friday, June 20 from 2 - 2:45 p.m. Most seating will be on the floor- feel free to bring a blanket! Summer Performing Arts events are supported in part by a grant from the St. Mary's County Arts Council. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Butterfly Gardens and Pollinator Paths:

Healthy yards filled with native plants attract, feed, and shelter local pollinators. Learn how you can join Leonardtown's Butterfly Trail by planting a butterfly stopover in your yard. Leonardtown Library on Wednesday, June 25 from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Leonardtown's Butterfly Trail is a growing effort to support pollinators (especially birds, bees, and butterflies) by creating a landscape corridor of habitat and nutrition for them from the library to the wharf and across surrounding neigh-

borhoods. Register on www.stmalib.org.

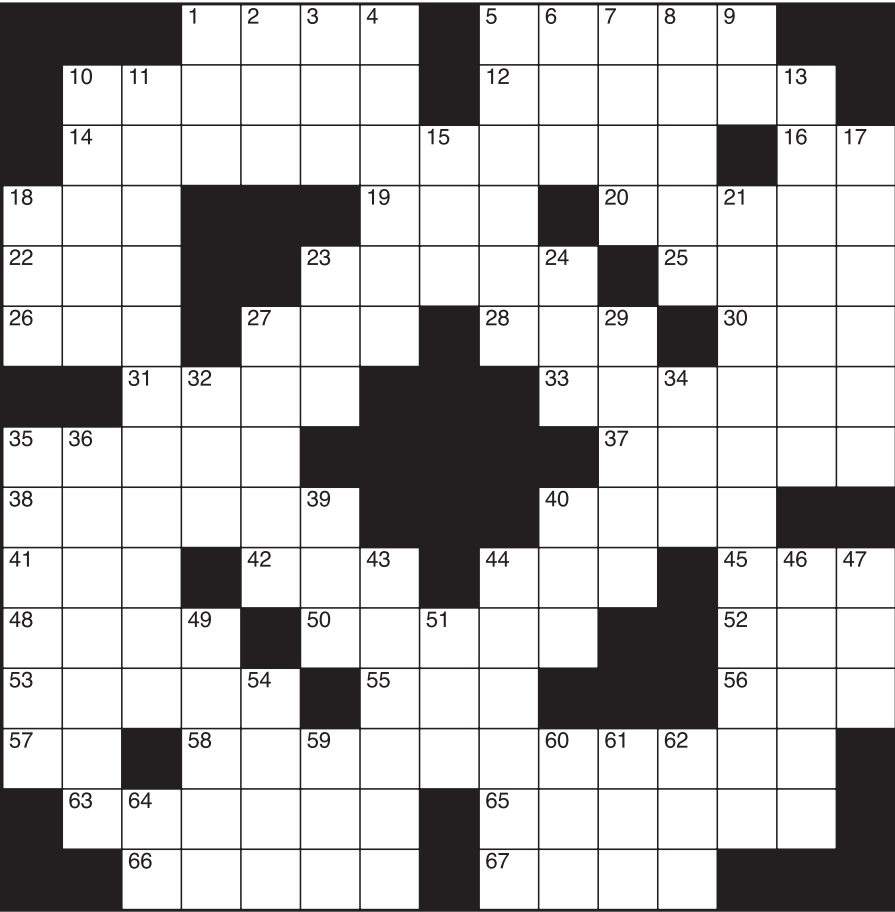
Puzzlemania! FAMILY EDITION Competition and Puzzle Swap

Want to try speed puzzling? Form a team of three or four and see how fast you can put together a 300 piece puzzle! Leonardtown Library on Saturday, June 28 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. All teams will go head-to-head to see who can complete the 300 piece puzzle first! Puzzles are all the same design and provided by the library. Prizes awarded. Teams are made up of 3-4 people of any age although at least one team member must be over 16 and at least one must be under 16. Team members do not need to be related. Registration will open at 9am on June 14 so check back then to reserve a spot for your team! Only one team member should register for the team. In addition to the competition, we'll have a puzzle swap too! Bring a complete puzzle to

give away and find a new one to take home. No registration is required for the puzzle swap, just drop in! Register on www.stmalib.org.

The Wizard of Oz by Bright Star Theatre

Follow Lenny & Mabel, comic duo from Bright Star Theatre, down the yellow brick road, and meet all your favorite Oz characters along the way! Gain courage with the Cowardly Lion, take heart with the Tin Man, and find your wits with the Scarecrow in this fun interactive retelling of the L. Frank Baum classic. Most seating will be on the floor- feel free to bring a blanket! Space may be limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Leonardtown Library: Monday, June 30, 10:30 a.m. Charlotte Hall Library: Monday, June 30, 2 p.m.



- CLUES ACROSS
- CLUES DOWN
1. Type of bread

5. Range of mountains

10. Ended

12. Musical forms with a recurring theme

14. On the nature of being

16. Law enforcement agency

18. Australian flightless bird

19. Subway rodent

20. More dried-up

22. A beaver might build one

23. Suggestive of the supernatural

25. Art ___, around 1920

26. American rocker Snider

27. Not or

28. Earliest human: ___-Magnon Man

30. Firearm

31. Tough outer skin of fruit

33. Alternative form of a gene

35. Low shrub some call "fat pork"

37. Plants in the chamomile tribe

38. Revolutionary War era spy

40. Portion of a book

41. Hoover's office

42. Title of respect

44. Tax collector

45. Cool!

48. Real estate

50. Boy's name

52. Airborne (abbr.)

53. Strongly recommends

55. Hit lightly

56. Bar bill

57. Atomic #54

58. Devotes again

63. Fish sauce

65. French stock market

66. Things that consist of two elements or parts

67. Tense
1. Retired game show host Sajak

2. Equal (prefix)

3. Israeli city ___ Aviv

4. Loved

5. A type of analyst

6. Ad ___

7. Gasteyer and de Armas are two

8. Ran without moving

9. Opposite of yes

10. Diffuse clouds of gas

11. Mentioning one by one

13. Instruments used to dilate

15. Freshwater fish

17. Remotely-manned flying objects

18. Doctor of Education

21. Renews

23. Not the start

24. Pitching stat

27. Small water buffaloes

29. Ceramic jars

32. I (German)

34. Something to toss on a fire

35. The process of flowing in

36. A series of acts at a night club

39. Egg of a louse

40. Inquire too closely

43. Travelers

44. Drink

46. Behave in a way that degrades

47. Electronic music style

49. Northern Ireland city

51. Upset

54. Stiff structure resembling a hair

59. Father

60. North Atlantic fish

61. 8th month (abbr.)

62. Make an effort

64. Commercial

	9		1				4	7
						2		
8		7	2			6		5
	3							
7	4					3		
			6	9				
5					2		9	
	6	4		7				
			5		6			4

JUNE 12 SOLUTIONS														
S	E	D	G	E		P	A	V	O		M	U	R	K
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T	H	A	N	K		S	G	I	V	I	N	G	D	A
E	A	T				P	A	L			G	O	R	A
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						S	E	B	S		C	R	I	M
A	S	A	P							S	P	C	C	A
M	A	L	I			S	L	O	T	H		E	G	A
A	C	E				S	O	A	P			R	A	D
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						N	A	V	E		S	A	C	
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B	O	S	T	O	N		V	S	N	E		W	Y	O
M	A	T	E	R	I		A	L	S			B	E	R
I	N	N	S				R	U	E			S	A	D

2	3	6	5	4	9	1	8	7
9	8	7	1	2	6	3	4	5
1	5	4	7	3	8	2	6	9
6	1	9	2	8	7	5	3	4
5	4	8	3	6	1	9	7	2
7	2	3	4	9	5	8	1	6
8	9	5	6	7	3	4	2	1
3	6	2	9	1	4	7	5	8
4	7	1	8	5	2	6	9	3

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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.

Fri, Jun 20

Dueling Pianos by Blazin' Keys Entertainment

St. Leonard VFD
200 Calvert Beach Rd, St. Leonard
8 p.m.

Tickets available online at slvfd.org.

Sat, Jun 21

Toy Boat Building

Calvert Marine Museum
1 – 4 p.m.

Make a toy boat from wood under the Corbin Nature Pavilion! Space and materials are limited. Visitors will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. For ages 5 and older. Museum admission applies; in addition, a donation of \$2 per boat is requested

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

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. Get together with other fiber crafters to learn or develop your skills. Work on projects in progress or start something new! Registration requested. BYOY! (Bring Your Own Yarn!) 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Garden Tour and Optional Hike

676 Double Oak Rd, Prince Frederick
8 – 10 a.m.

American Chestnut Land Trust's "Flower Girls" will show off the garden with an optional hike around Griffin Meadow Trail. To register: form.jotform.com/250214278698162

Pet Adoption Event

Century 21 New Millennium
874 Costley Way, Prince Fredrick
10 a.m. – 2 p.n.

Brianna Roth, Realtor and Jennifer Orban associate realtor for Century 21 New Millennium invite you to come to the back patio and meet available dogs for adoption from the Humane Society of Calvert County, show your support, hang out, win a raffle, buy a 50/50 ticket.

Mud Day

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Celebrate international MUD DAY at Annmarie with a day full of muddy Earthy explorations and creative nature play. We'll learn about the importance of soil, the plants, insects, and other creatures that rely on soil and live in it, and the extraordinary importance of mud in our lives. Plus we will have fun with the creative side of things with squishy art projects, mud painting, mud pies, tree faces, a mud kitchen, and so much more.

Food vendors will be on site. Pack like you're going to the pool or the beach! Chairs, towels, sunscreen, and bug spray encouraged! Rinse-off stations will be available, but bring extra clothes and prepare for a muddy car ride home! This is a rain or shine event; all ticket sales are final; no pets, no smoking, no vaping.

www.annmariegarden.org/annmarie2/content/2nd-annual-mud-day

Mon Jun 23

Pride Event: Exploring LGBTQIA2S+ History in Rural Maryland

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
5 – 7 p.m.

Join us as we explore the histories of queer identifying people in the rural parts of Maryland, including right here in Calvert County. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Jun 24

Dine Out Book Discussion

Heritage 485
6 – 8 p.m.

We'll meet to discuss graphic novel, "Persepolis" by Marjane Satrapi. Join us for the dinner, discussion, or both! 410-535-0291. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Jun 25

Job Seeker Resources: Skillbuilders

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

MD Labor Workforce Development Specialists, Veterans Services, Senior Community Service Employment, and Justice Involved program representatives, along with Health Department staff will be available (in person) at to meet with those seeking employment-related support and community service information. Walk-ins are welcome on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Changing Careers Workshop

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

Thinking about a new direction? Learn how to navigate the process of changing your career path. Identify your strengths and transferable skills. Learn how to begin the career-change process efficiently and effectively. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tween Summer Book Fest

Calvert Library Fairview Branch

Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
6 – 7 p.m.

Join other book lovers during this fun summer book club! Each month we will read a new book and come together to discuss, play games and do activities. Did we mention there will be snacks?! The first 10 registrants get a copy of the book to keep! Contact your library branch at 410-257-2101 to pick up your book at least one week before the event. June's book is the novel "Alebrijes" by Donna Higuera. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

On Pins & Needles

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
1 – 4 p.m.

Bring your quilting, needlework, knitting, crocheting or other project for an afternoon of conversation and shared creativity. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Upcoming

Sharkfest!

Calvert Marine Museum
Saturday, July 12
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Celebrate all things shark at the CMM! Live sharks will be featured in the Corbin Nature Pavilion, along with a full day of jaw-some fun. Get hands-on with shark-themed crafts and explore education stations with activities like shark skin exploration, a shark fin puzzle, and even a shark parasite investigation. Discover amazing "sharktoids" and examine evidence of prehistoric sharks. Food and drinks will be available for purchase on site. Please note: Strollers and carts are not permitted inside the museum during SHARKFEST. Capacity is limited—advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended for non-members.

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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

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

Fashion for a Cause Raises Big Bucks for Hospice

Style met substance on June 5 as Hospice of the Chesapeake's Fashion for a Cause returned to the U.S. Naval Academy's Fluegel Alumni Center. The high-energy fashion show smashed last year's totals, raising more than \$305,000 to support the nonprofit's community health programs, including pediatric hospice care, children's grief counseling, and family support services.

The event has become one of Annapolis's most anticipated evenings. Guests were treated to a red-carpet experience complete with bites from local restaurants, personal magic trick performances by magician Chris Dugdale and a moving celebration of compassion and community care.

Returning for his fourth year as emcee, Bryan Nehman, co-host of C4 and Bryan Nehman on WBAL NewsRadio, guided the crowd through an evening that blended entertainment with heartfelt stories of the impact Hospice of the Chesapeake has on families navigating serious illness and loss.

View the video shown at the event here: <https://vimeo.com/1093696533>.

The highlight of the evening was a runway show featuring dozens of looks from 18 Annapolis-area retailers and designers, including styles by Craig Coates Couture, whose designs have been featured at both New York and Los Angeles Fashion Week.

Professional models were joined by community members who took the stage with purpose and flair, showcasing everything from casual coastal wear to elegant evening attire.

Women's fashions were modeled by Dr. Melanie Bell, Lisa Caltabiano, Jacqueline Coche, Shekila Cole, Tara Collins, Megan



A model shows off a dress from Craig Coates Couture. Coates's designs have been featured at both New York's and Los Angeles's Fashion Week. Photo by Mike B. Photography.

Cooper, Carla Criste, Alexis Decker Dugdale, Marina Dugina, Terri Hussman, Kathleen Kryza, Kayen McNeal, Khylah Settle, Dana Smith, Tatiana Tabacek, Rose Walker, and Kristin Williams.

Men's fashions were modeled by: Mike Baldwin Jr., Jeremiah Batucan, Doug Beaver, Brian Berger, Kevin Champion, Chris Dugdale, Aaron Gaskins, John Hussman, Craig Johnson, Jay Jones IV, Josh Magariel, Jarret Simpson, Alexander Strachan, Brandon Temple, and Patrick Wergin.

Proceeds from the event directly benefit the organization's comprehensive commu-

nity care offerings, with a special emphasis on pediatric hospice and grief support services that ensure no child or family has to walk the journey of serious illness or loss alone.

The success of the evening was made possible by the support of numerous local businesses, foundations, and individuals, including the event's committee: Ashley Babaian, April Boera, Kevin Champion, Amy Castleberry, Georgie Clark, Gene Deems, Jennifer Daly, Melissa Frawley, Holly Frye-Atcherson, Dr. Parabh Gill, Mary Hyson, Mary Frances Isakov, Stacy Martin, Tim McDonough, Cary Melnyk, and Challie Samaras.

Leading sponsors included:

- **Presenting Sponsors:** John & Cathy Belcher, Brian and Patricia Giese Foundation
- **Red Carpet Sponsors:** Genesis of Annapolis, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management—Murray, McGehrin, and Shiery
- **Fashionista Sponsors:** Dragonfly Health, George W. Stone Family Foundation, Shirley Ip, Russ Jones, Medicine with a Mission, MHE Foundation/Matthew Allen Earl, The Michael Stanley Foundation, Nancy Smit & Julien Hecht, University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center, Vento Family Foundation, Laura Westervelt
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Press Release from Hospice of the Chesapeake

What's Coming to Calvert

The following list of pending Category 1 site plans was presented to the Calvert County Planning Commission at their June 18 meeting. That means that the proposals are on the list for consideration by the planning commission at a future meeting. The meeting was in a hybrid form, both virtually and in person at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center (HEBCC), 901 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick and Zoom/call-in, live stream.

1. CSPR-143112, **CCIP Lot 3R**, located at 171 Skipjack Road, Prince Frederick, Lot 3R in the Calvert County Industrial Park, zoned Light Industrial. Proposed redevelopment of a portion of the 4.5-acre lot by demolishing the existing office and constructing a new two-story office building in its place. It is further proposed to repave the southern portion of the site and to construct a storage warehouse and wall to segregate parking between the storage building yard & adjacent flex space tenants. A total of 6,524 sf of new construction with a total disturbance of 1.2-acres is proposed and the amenities will utilize public water and sewer. The concept

submittal was accepted December 20, 2023. Agent: COA Barrett.

2. SPR-143255, **Armory Pavilion**, located on the 4.86-acre parcel at 175 Armory Road in Prince Frederick, MD and is zoned Prince Frederick Town Center/New Town Sub-Area. The project consists of an approximately 13,500-sf commercial pavilion and the associated infrastructure such as designated parking areas, stormwater management systems, utility services, and other necessary site enhancements. The project proposes to utilize public water and sewer. The detailed site plan submittal was accepted December 18, 2024. Agent: COA Barrett.
3. CSPR-143253, **Cal. Gateway Business Center, Lot 12R (Town Center Place)**, located on the 4.04-acre parcel at 10380 Town Center Blvd. in Dunkirk, MD and is zoned Dunkirk Town Center. Proposed development of two shell buildings containing 18,075 sf of proposed of retail space and 15,835 sf of flex space with disturbed acreage of 2.52 acres. The project proposes to utilize private

water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted January 22, 2025. Agent: Atwell Group.

4. CSPR-143260, **Westside on Main**, located on about 3.8-acres of combined parcels at 305 & 445 Main Street in Prince Frederick, MD and is zoned Town Center. The project consists of 66,680 sf of newly constructed townhomes and office building with disturbed acreage of 3.05 acres. The project proposes to utilize public water and sewer. The concept submittal was accepted January 22, 2025. Agent: COA Barrett.
5. CSPR-143276, **Meadow Run Gun Range**, located on the 11.86-acre parcel at 7625 Meadow Run Lane in Owings, MD and is zoned Light Industrial. The project consists of an approximately 61,000 sf indoor gun range with disturbed acreage of 10 acres. The project proposes to utilize private water and septic. The concept submittal was accepted February 26, 2025. Agent: COA Barrett.

No **major subdivisions** are currently



under review for Planning Commission consideration. Please check next month's agenda for any new additions to this list

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

CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of June 2, 2025 – June 8, 2025, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 1,922 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 96
- Disorderly: 15
- Domestic: 27
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 59
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 731
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 26
- Traffic Complaints: 82
- Traffic Stops: 343
- 911 Hang Ups: 68
- ARRESTS: 45



Jamar Arsenio Brown

CDS Violation: 25-45064 On May 30, 2025, Deputy Stuart conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for a traffic violation along Rt. 4 near Sherry Lane in Prince Frederick. The driver, identified as **Jamar Arsenio**

Brown, 35 of Huntingtown, was found to be operating the vehicle with a revoked license. During the stop, K9 Atlas performed an open-air sniff around the vehicle and alerted to the presence of a controlled

dangerous substance. A subsequent search of the vehicle led to the discovery of a burnt glass pipe (commonly used for smoking crack cocaine) containing suspected crack cocaine residue. Brown was taken into custody and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center, where he was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis, CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, Driving on a Revoked License, and additional traffic-related offenses.



Martin Sylvester Woodland

Damaged

Property: 25-45325

On May 31, 2025, Deputy Blackstone responded to the Cove Point Park public restroom located at 750 Cove Point Road in Lusby for the report of property destruction. The complainant reported an unknown suspect(s) caused damage to the bathroom and destroyed a mounted soap dispenser. The estimated value of damaged property is \$550.

Theft: 25-44620 On Thursday May 29, 2025, Deputy MacWilliams responded to the 1800 block of W Mt. Harmony Road

in Owings, for the reported theft. The complainant reported an unknown suspect stole a package from the front porch of the residence containing a new iPhone. The estimated value of stolen property is \$1,270.

Trespassing: 24-44800 On May 30, 2025, Senior Deputy Idol responded to the Rod 'N Reel located at 4160 Mears Ave in Chesapeake Beach, for the reported trespassing. Upon arrival contact was made with **Martin Sylvester Woodland**, 59 of Waldorf. Woodland has been previously trespassed indefinitely from the property. Woodland was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Trespassing Private-Property.

Editor's Note: The above arrests are not an indication of guilt or innocence as the cases have not been adjudicated

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call the Sheriff's Office at (410) 535-2800 and reference the case number provided. Citizens may remain anonymous thru the 'Submit a Tip' feature on the Calvert County Sheriff's Office mobile app. To download, visit <https://apps.myocv.com/share/a39520678>. Tipsters may also email ccsotips@calvertcountymd.gov

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Former County Administrator Passes Away

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) announces with deep sadness the passing of former County Administrator James Joseph "Joe" Allman on June 11, 2025. He was 79.

Allman served Calvert County with dedication and distinction for more than 30 years, first as the county's inaugural director of Finance in 1974 and later as county administrator from 1999 until his retirement in 2005. His leadership helped guide Calvert through decades of smart growth, always with a focus on service and community well-being.

"Joe was a pillar of our county government and a trusted leader," said BOCC President Earl F. "Buddy" Hance. "His integrity and quiet strength left a lasting impression on those who worked alongside him. We are grateful for his many years of service and the legacy he leaves behind."

Born in Washington, D.C., and a long-time resident of Huntingtown, Allman was a proud U.S. Army veteran and a devoted family man. After retirement, he remained active in the community and in his church.

His legacy is marked by integrity, generosity and commitment to public service. A public viewing and funeral was



Former county administrator James Joseph "Joe" Allman

held Tuesday, June 17 at St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Prince Frederick.

The BOCC extends its heartfelt condolences to the Allman family and all who knew and loved him.

Press Release from Calvert County government

Grasso Explains Her Priorities

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Each year as the county commissioners grapple with their next year's budget, it's often an exercise on deciding against competing interests.

So, with the finalizing of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget just completed, Commissioner Catherine Grasso recently talked about how she developed her priorities.

At the commissioners' June 3 meeting, Grasso said, "I know that we have two fire departments that would like a new building. St. Leonard, they spoke to me almost from the beginning what their wants and needs were.

"Solomons has not approached me, but I have heard that they want a new building. When I drive in that area, I can see why they want a new building.

"And I know that many of you in the fire department community have heard that I am really on a push for the sheriff's department. The sheriff's department is (in a) 106-year-old building. They have mold on and off. Some deputies couldn't work in the environment there full time. They had to get away from it. The evidence room leaks repeatedly. The third floor is a soft floor. The AC and heat can be spotty. The windows are so old that you can't work all of the time in those particular offices, and people have to be sent home. They're cracks in some of the blocks in the holding cell."

She observed, "We're throwing good money after bad there. There's no secure parking lot.

"And also, the detention center needs work. The culture has changed somewhat in that we're now dealing within the com-



Commissioner Catherine Grasso

munity with mental health issues with some of these individuals that we lock up."

She said, "So, I want you to know, it's not that I'm not cognizant of the fact that we do need two more firehouses to be built, but as you can hear, the need is so tremendous for the sheriff's department and we are working as commissioners to try to satisfy the needs for all of you."

At the meeting Grasso also took time to note the completion of a new community project in Chesapeake Beach. She said, "The Ladies of Charity food pantry (is) going to have their ribbon cutting on June 5th at 10 a.m. They built that facility in seven months and their motto is 'To serve, rather than be served.' They provide such a service to the residents of Calvert County, and I'm so proud that I will be there for their ribbon cutting."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Construction Begins on Dalrymple Road

The Calvert County Department of Public Works began construction Monday, June 16, on Dalrymple Road in Chesapeake Beach.

During construction, one lane of Dalrymple Road will be closed at the intersections of Brookside Drive and Dory Brooks Road for stormwater improvements, curb and gutter work. To ensure the safety of motorists and work crews, one lane will remain closed for the duration of the project, which is expected to last approximately three weeks, weather permitting.

Traffic will be directed by flaggers while work is underway.

Drivers are advised to use caution in the area and expect minor delays.

The Department of Public Works appreci-

ates the public's patience and understanding while work is completed to enhance road safety and maintain county infrastructure.

For questions or more information, contact the Department of Public Works at 410-535-2204, or email Public.Works@CalvertCountyMd.gov.

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Press Release from Calvert County government.

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Committee to Review Schools' Grading Policy

Fifty Percent Rule to be Scrutinized

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Calvert County Public Schools' grading policy, including the controversial 50 percent rule, will be scrutinized by a new committee. The 50 percent rule says a student receives a minimum 50 percent grade even though he or she doesn't do any work or even show up for class.

The Calvert County Board of Education got a preview of the proposed committee at their June 12 board meeting.

Director of System and Instructional Performance James "Scott" McComb said the plan is to have a recommendation to the school board by next year in time to implement any changes for the following school year (26-27).

State law and the local policy guides the current situation. McComb said, "Specifically, we say that we will provide our parents and guardians with accurate and timely information on a student's progress towards achieving goals, and academic standards. We will ensure that this information is based on a variety of assessments, including both product assessments, which measure learning outcomes, and process assessments, which reflect the learning process itself. Additionally, we are committed to reporting student achievement in a consistent prescribed format, that students and parents can expect to receive at regular intervals."

McComb said, "Our grading practices recognize that learning is a process, and this is an important one. That is why we have process and product grades. Process grades are literally what they sound like. They are the kinds of assignments that you would expect students to do as they are learning new material, as they're wrestling with new content, as they're practicing new skills. And so typically process grades are like home-

work. They may be practice assignments that are going to have a lesser of a point value, and they are there to help students progress towards mastering the material."

Further, he said, "Then we have our product grades, which are those culminating types of grades, like an end of course test or end of unit test that would be a good example of a student's knowledge of the standards that they would expect at that point in time that they would have mastered. So, this balance between product and process allows us to achieve fair grades for our students."

McComb said that to make sure the grading policy is fair, "We currently do this via 50 percent floor, and this aspect is what has raised many of the calls for review."

As to the reason for the policy, he said, "Everyone here can picture a traditional grading scale, A, B, C, D, and E. And we know that an A represents 90 to a hundred, which is 11 points; B, 80 to 89; C, 70 to 79, and so on. And so each of those increments, D, C, B, A represent a 10-point difference. And then we get to failure and that can span a 60-point range, which effectively means that a failing grade can theoretically weigh six times as much as an A or B and so on."

"And so that is the purpose of the 50 percent floor; it establishes that the increment of a failing grade is no more or no less than any other grade."

He emphasized "that we as a school system have an obligation to ensure that our grading scale is fair because we currently use a hundred-point scale, that's why we end up having that situation of a 50 percent floor."

McComb said, "There are other grading models that do not operate on a hundred-point scale that may offer greater flexibility and therefore may not require a 50 percent floor."

School board member Lisa Grenis raised the concern about the system several months

ago. She said the majority of teachers oppose it.

McComb said, "What we have been actively doing is collecting the elementary, middle, and high school grading procedures from all Maryland school districts. We are developing a summary of each of those, and we will give the raw grading policies so the committee will get the binder of grading procedures, and they'll also get a summary to help them navigate through that. We're also collecting and organizing literature related to best practice and different types of grading scales, different approaches. And I must stress that we're doing this without bias or agenda."

The committee will be selected when schools reconvene in August.

The committee's role is to come up with alternatives. The committee will consist of 60 percent teachers. Additionally, it will contain administrators and principals.

He said, "The chief academic officer will appoint principals to serve on this committee. Central office directors will also appoint members of this committee. Then we will invite every teacher in the school system to submit an application to participate, because we actually expect a large response to that. We will choose those members by lottery. I will point out that... this committee is going to be tilted towards teachers."

Grenis said, "You explained about the 10 percent increment and then the 50 percent," adding, "The issue with that is that a child would receive 50 percent for missing half of a project, but a child would also receive 50 percent for not doing any of a project. That's where the issue truly lies. My concern with this process is that we're going to be using the same research that led us to the 50 percent grading policy. Is there current research that demonstrates the impact of the work ethic of a student who puts forth no effort,



Director of System and Instructional Performance James "Scott" McComb

but is still given a 50 percent?"

McComb said they would be using new data not that used when the policy was implemented early this century. "We're looking for research from 2015 to 2025 the last 10 years."

McComb said he wasn't advocating for any system, but he did use as an example a student who got four grades in the 80's and one zero. "Tell me what kind of student this is. Most people reasonably say that's a B student. If I do the math, I get a 67 with the numbers that I used."

"We want to grade students on what they produce, their ability to exhibit a certain skillset, a certain knowledge level. We really get into some tricky territory when we grade kids on effort, because that's a pretty subjective thing. But what a student produces in terms of a grade on a test or the quality of a project based on a rubric, that's tangible."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

County Announces Juneteenth Schedule

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners announces county offices will be closed on Thursday, June 19 in observance of Juneteenth. In addition:

- The Appeal Solid Waste Facility, which includes the landfill and transfer station and all county customer convenience centers will be open on Thursday, June 19, with normal operating hours.
- The Solomons Septage Receiving Facility will be open on Thursday, June 19, with normal operating hours.
- The Water & Sewerage billing and customer service office will be closed on Thursday, June 19.
- All Calvert County senior centers will be closed, and Meals on Wheels will not be delivered on Thursday, June 19. Meal delivery is scheduled to resume on Friday, June 20.
- All community centers will be closed

on Thursday, June 19.

- There will be no county bus service on Thursday, June 19. Regular service will resume on Friday, June 20.
- Calvert Library locations will be closed Thursday, June 19, and will reopen at 12 p.m. on Friday, June 20. Downloadable materials and virtual services are available 24/7 at CalvertLibrary.info.
- The Calvert Marine Museum will be closing at 3 p.m. on Thursday, June 19.
- Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center will be closing at 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 19.
- The Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter and Animal Control Division will be closed on Thursday, June 19. Animal Control officers will be available for emergencies at 410-535-3491.
- All recreation parks including Dunkirk

District Park, Ward Farm Recreation & Nature Park, Hallowing Point Park and Cove Point Park will be open with normal hours on Thursday, June 19.

- Chesapeake Hills Golf Course will be open on Thursday, June 19, with normal operating hours.
- Flag Ponds Nature Park and Kings Landing Park will be open with extended hours of operation from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Kings Landing Park pier will close at 5:30 p.m., and the last entry into both parks will be at 5 p.m. Battle Creek Cypress Swamp and trails will be open with extended summer hours from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but the nature center remains closed due to fire damage. For a full nature park schedule, visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/3641/Natural-Resources.
- Edward T. Hall Aquatic Center will be

open with normal operating hours on Thursday, June 19. Cove Point Pool will open at 11 a.m. and close at 3:45 p.m. due to a swim meet and Kings Landing Pool will be open from noon to 6 p.m. on June 19.

- Breezy Point Beach will be open with extended holiday hours Thursday, June 19, from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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Press Release from Calvert County government.

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School Board Removes Anti-Racism from Code of Conduct

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

In a perfunctory decision and without any discussion, the Calvert County Board of Education on June 12 voted to remove the school system's Anti-Racism Policy from the "Student's Rights, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct" document which is distributed online to parents at the beginning of every school year.

School Board President Jana Post did all of the talking. She said, "The code of conduct is being brought back to the board for approval today. The code was initially reviewed at the May 22nd meeting. I do want to note that with legal guidance, it was determined, this is just for the record, that the code of conduct does not require a 30-day period for public comment. Page two of the code states that this document is revised annually by a committee of CCPS students, teachers, parents, guardians, school, and district administrators, and community members. Please note that this is an internal document of Calvert County Public Schools and not a policy. Policy 1012 requires public comment be provided for approximately four weeks, but again, that is for policies only.

"That being said, at this time, I would like to make a motion that the anti-racism resolution be removed from the code of conduct."

That passed unanimously. Then she said, "The then seated board adopted an anti-racism resolution on June 11, 2020. Subsequently, on that same day, the board voted to approve the code of conduct. It should be noted that the seated board at that time did not discuss and vote to add the anti-racism resolution to the code during that particular meeting. The resolution was later incorporated into the code by staff without board directive. The board did, however, instruct staff to publish the resolution on the official website and social media platforms. Therefore, I make a motion that this resolution be removed from the CCPS website and social media platforms."

That was also approved unanimously.



Board of Education President Jana Post

Then Post said, "The meeting on June 11, 2020, was also done while schools were closed due to COVID. The board was not meeting in person at that time. This meeting was conducted via a conference call that was broadcast over a current live feed using sound only. No public speakers were permitted to participate in this meeting, and public comment was only permitted via email. I make a motion right now that the code be approved as amended by the board."

That motion also passed unanimously. Then she said, "I also make a motion that we bring back policy 1018 — Anti-racism outside of its normal review time in August for review." That was also approved unanimously.

The most controversial part of the anti-racism policy were inclusion of the words "White Privilege" and "White Supremacy" as contributors to past racism. Earlier this year the new board removed those words from the policy.

Although the decisions were referenced by several speakers during public comment period that followed, since there was no advance notice of the vote, there was no specific comment addressed to it.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

School Board Delays Budget Passage

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

In an unusual move, the Calvert County Board of Education has delayed approval of their budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 until a special meeting to be held the day before. The unanimous decision on June 19 came after the board failed to adopt the budget presented by Chief Financial Officer Scott Johnson, saying there either wasn't enough information or they had not had enough time to review it.

One of the variables impacting every school board in the state is the lack of finalization of state funding levels. Johnson told the school board at the 6 p.m. meeting: "As of 9:15 this morning, the Maryland State Department of Education had not yet released the FY '26 state aid amounts to public school districts in Maryland. Consequently, the state aid projections and the Calvert County revenue budget amounts included in the proposed FY 26 budget may require subsequent revision."

Johnson was chided for not supplying information on what had been cut from the budget to accommodate that county commissioners' cut of \$1.4 million in their final budget to conform to the state mandated Maintenance of Effort (MOE). But Johnson said that information had been included in a code in one of the budget columns. He was asked to provide clearer information so the board could understand it.

School board member Paul Harrison, who is an accountant, told Johnson, "We just got it yesterday and I know we had a lot of moving parts," adding, "I made a promise during the campaign to make sure we had SROs (School Resource Officers) at every school. And I didn't see those built in here."

Harrison asked if the declining amount from the county was due to declining enrollment. Johnson said, "Yes, but that amount has not been finalized, and it will be finalized once the state aid allocations are finalized and communicated to the school



Chief Financial Officer Scott Johnson

districts. So that number, even though the county budget does include an amount based on this MOE, that number is not finalized yet by the state."

Johnson did observe that the county did vote on their budget even though the state had not finalized the MOE.

Harrison asked if the school system's fund balance was used to offset the decrease in county funding. "I got these documents as I was driving over here, so I haven't had a lot of time to digest all this to really make an informed decision this evening, but how much of the fund balance, what was the total dollar increase?"

Johnson said, "For FY 25, we are projecting that we will use \$17 million instead of \$25 million. So that's an \$8 million improvement in the use of fund balance for FY 26. We've increased the amount of estimated fund balance use and proposed in the budget."

Still figuratively scratching their heads, the budget was unable to pass the board, and the delay was unanimously approved.

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“I GOT THESE DOCUMENTS AS I WAS DRIVING OVER HERE.”

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER PAUL HARRISON ON THE TARDINESS OF RECEIVING THEIR FINAL BUDGET



LOCAL 6
Committee to review minimum grading policy



LOCAL 7
Former County Administrator passes away



ON THE COVER 4
School board votes to remove anti-racism from code of conduct

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JUN 19	FRI, JUN 20	SAT, JUN 21	SUN, JUN 22
PM Thunderstorms Hi: 91° Lo: 66°	Sunny Hi: 86° Lo: 68°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 90° Lo: 73°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 93° Lo: 75°
MON, JUN 23	TUE, JUN 24	WED, JUN 25	THU, JUN 26
Sunny Hi: 95° Lo: 78°	Sunny Hi: 96° Lo: 78°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 94° Lo: 75°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 94° Lo: 75°



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Calvert County Times

SCHOOL BUDGET
Approval Delayed

Grasso Speaks on
Budget Priorities

Former County
Administrator Passes

SCHOOL BOARD REMOVES ANTI-RACISM POLICY