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St. Mary's County Times

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

**Former Commissioner
Passes Away**

**CodeRED Experiences
Cybersecurity Breach**

**County Supports
Mental Health Suit**



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“WE’RE NOT EQUIPPED AS A MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTION...”

WARDEN MARY ANN THOMPSON ON THE SUIT AIMED AT SOLVING THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN JAILS



LOCAL 5
Former Commissioner Shelby Guazzo passes



COMMUNITY 12
Convictions made in massive 2024 drug bust



ON THE COVER
Christmas on the Square ushers in the holiday season

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, DEC 4	FRI, DEC 5	SAT, DEC 6	SUN, DEC 7
Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 27°	Show Showers Hi: 34° Lo: 30°	AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 41° Lo: 30°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 30°
MON, DEC 8	TUE, DEC 9	WED, DEC 10	THU, DEC 11
AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 37° Lo: 22°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 39° Lo: 31°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 47° Lo: 37°	AM Showers Hi: 49° Lo: 30°



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Need for More Senior Center/Library Parking Cited



By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Petitions have been circulating for quite some time calling for more parking at the co-located Garvey Senior Center and Leonardtown Library. The lot is often full, a testament to the popularity of the facility that has become a major community gathering spot.

The situation has come to the attention of at least two county commissioners.

At their Dec. 2 meeting, Commissioner Mike Hewitt said, "It's something that needs to be addressed. It's the parking at the Leonardtown Library slash Garvey Senior Center. That was something I pushed for my first term. Commissioner Guy was here with me at the time, and we got that Leonardtown library and that Garvey Center built and it was co-located, which was a great idea. because you get one parking lot, you can utilize less land."

But Hewitt added, "The problem is there's not enough parking. Two seniors came to me yesterday and told me that they had parked on the grass over there because there was no parking."

He added, "And out of the blue, during their playing their card game that they play, people who owned that particular car were called to come out. And they came out and there was a deputy sheriff and they were like, oh my goodness, what's going on? You are parked in the wrong place. He took their licenses, he ran their licenses, he gave them warnings for parking on the grass. That's not good government."

Hewitt insisted, "We're not doing our job if we're going to build a facility that's as popular as this without having enough parking. We've brought it to the attention of the county administrator. I know he and the deputy county administrator have walked or at least drove through the parking lot. But it needs to be a priority item."

Hewitt observed, "We have a lot of land over there. We need to expand parking, and we need to get our sheriff's department to be a little bit more lenient on seniors. One person was 87 with a walker, the other lady was 83. She didn't have a walker, but both of them had to get up, go out there, show their licenses. I mean, it's not necessary."

He added, "So county government, we need to improve parking at the senior center."

Commissioner President Randy Guy wholeheartedly agreed. "I've been there several times. We need to do something about it."

Hewitt insisted, "We need to take emergency funds and do it as soon as possible."

Guy said, "I agree with you 100 percent. Alright, you guys got the word right?," looking over to County Administrator David Weiskopf.

The county administrator responded, "Yes sir."

Hewitt added, "You can make something happen over there. And don't turn it into a multiyear project. Don't turn this thing into something that's got to go out for design. Just fix it."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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County Adds Support to Lawsuit on Inmate Mental Health

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County have unanimously agreed to support a lawsuit that has been filed by the state correctional administrator's association regarding prisoners with mental health issues.

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division Warden Mary Ann Thompson explained the situation to the commissioners on Dec. 2. She said, "Local detention centers, which include the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center, have become defacto mental health institutions and are not designed, equipped, or staffed with the resources of a mental health institution.

"The Maryland Department of Health by Maryland law is mandated to accept all court ordered commitments of incarcerated individuals found incompetent to stand trial or not criminally responsible for their crimes due to a serious mental illness within 10 business days of the judge's order. This year, the average length of time to transfer an incarcerated individual to a state mental hospital from St. Mary's County is 45 days, unless due to serious crimes of violence, they're awaiting a maximum-security forensic hospital bed, which is the Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center known as Perkins. If awaiting a bed at Perkins, it often takes months to be transferred. Currently at our detention center, there are six incarcerated individuals committed to the Maryland

Department of Health or awaiting transfer to Perkins."

Thompson added, "The average waiting time is over 120 days."

Her request: "Support is sought from the commissioner's and the county attorney's office to support an amicus brief being prepared by the Anne Arundel Office of County Attorney on behalf of the Maryland Correctional Administrators Association. The brief will focus on the burden on county detention centers of housing individuals committed to the Maryland Department of Health. Ultimately, the amicus brief is not for monetary gain, but to support court ordered transfers of incarcerated individuals in accordance with the law, and most importantly, to receive mental health treatment for their psychological diagnosis."

Commissioner Eric Colvin said, "I was able to speak to the sheriff about this the other week and he impressed upon me that this is really a big problem for us because it opens us up to a lot more risk and the cost associated with it, it's a struggle. So, we are seeing these extended timeframes of holding people that the law says should be transferred to a place where they can get better care."

Thompson said, "We provide the absolute best care we can. But we're not equipped as a mental health institution and it's really an injustice to the individuals that they're not transferred to be able to get the help that they need. It is a huge burden on the detention centers throughout the state. And

it's happening all over."

She said the suit filed by the state correctional administrator also is being supported by the Maryland Sheriff's Association and they are hoping the Maryland Association of Counties will sign on.

Thompson observed, "One of the problems is really the bottleneck since COVID. With the pandemic, the mental health crisis has increased. And what would really be very, very helpful is to have additional beds in the communities. And also, the state is looking to close down some of the mental health institutions, which would only compound this issue."

Of the state facilities, she said, "They do not have the capacity at the moment. My understanding is they need additional staff. Perkins just went through getting ready to shut down one of the prisons because it was not maintained."

She was asked the percentage of individuals in the jail with mental health issues. She said, "It's approximately 72 percent that come in and that we have identified. They categorize it, and I'm not well versed, but it's between an A and a D and of those, the D is the worst. And of that 72 percent, 20 percent are rated as a D. And the really unfortunate thing is we have the six that are awaiting transfer to the state mental hospital, but I have just as many that have been deemed incompetent to stand trial, but they're in the



Warden Mary Ann Thompson

detention center. They won't even be transferred to the state mental hospital."

Thompson confirmed that the detention center is the largest mental health facility in the county.

She added, "It is very much teamwork amongst all of the detention center, with the correctional officers and the civilian staff that we have as mental health licensed social workers and our medical staff. It's truly a team."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Former Commissioner Passes Away

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Former St. Mary's County Commissioner Shelby Guazzo passed away on Nov. 24. She was 84.

Guazzo served one term as county commissioner, 1998-2002. She also served multiple years on the planning commission.

Dan Raley served with Guazzo as commissioner. "She was a wonderful commissioner," Raley said.

Guazzo was the only Republican on the board that also included Julie Randall, Joe Anderson and Tommy Mattingly. But Raley said party affiliation wasn't as important to them as it seems to be now.

"When I look at someone I don't see a Democrat or a Republican, I see an American," Raley said and that's the way Guazzo was as well.

Raley remembers fondly a trip that he and she and Mattingly took west with their spouses to Las Vegas and Hoover Dam and what great times they shared together.

Guazzo was defeated in the Republican primary by Larry Jarboe in 2002, the year that Tommy McKay was elected president. He said Guazzo was a strong supporter of his candidacy.



Shelby Guazzo

McKay said Guazzo really made her mark on the planning commission, always with tough questions demanding that developers provide the needed infrastructure.

"She was a great county commissioner and a great planning commissioner," he said.

Guazzo's full obituary can be found on page 18.

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Stroll through Downtown Leonardtown to see the nearly 100 decorated Gingerbread displays

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Felony Convictions in County's Largest Narcotics Seizure

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced on Dec. 2 that Antwan Marquis Johnson, 39, of Great Mills was convicted of multiple drug-related charges following a lengthy investigation that resulted in the seizure of approximately 47 pounds of narcotics.

On Dec. 5, 2024, detectives from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office seized 21.5 kilograms of suspected cocaine and fentanyl with an estimated street value of over \$2 million, making the seizure the largest narcotics raid in St. Mary's County history. Additionally, detectives recovered over \$75,000 of United States currency, and more than 200 individually packaged bags of controlled dangerous substances, indicating a major narcotics operation.

After a five-day trial, Johnson was convicted of the following offenses:

- Possession of a large amount of cocaine (maximum penalty, 20 years in prison);
- Possession of a large amount of fentanyl (maximum penalty, 20 years in prison);
- Possession with intent to distribute cocaine (maximum penalty, 20 years in prison);
- Possession with intent to distribute fentanyl (maximum penalty, 20 years in prison); and
- Maintaining a common nuisance for the distribution of a controlled dangerous substance (maximum penalty, 20 years in prison).

"This verdict represents one of the most significant victories for public safety in our county's history, which is a major milestone for narcotics enforcement in St. Mary's," said Sterling. "The prosecution team, together with the Sheriff's Office's Vice Narcotics



Antwan Marquis Johnson

Unit, delivered outstanding investigative and prosecutorial results. Their commitment and expertise are exactly why our community—and the entire State of Maryland—are now protected from this dangerous trafficker."

Johnson remains held without bond pending sentencing. He faces a maximum sentence of 100 years in prison.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lisa Ridge, Chief of Narcotics, prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Members of the Vice Narcotics Unit within the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office successfully investigated this case.

The Honorable Gregory Sampson presided over the case.

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

Sheriff's Office Plans Increased Patrols

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office will conduct additional patrols throughout the holiday season to deter crime, support safe roadways, and provide an increased law enforcement presence in shopping areas, neighborhoods, and major travel routes.

The expanded patrols will focus on preventing theft from vehicles, promoting responsible driving, and ensuring residents and visitors feel safe during one of the busiest times of the year. Deputies will be highly visible in commercial areas, particularly during peak shopping hours, and will continue proactive patrols in residential communities.

In addition to crime prevention efforts, traffic safety remains a priority. Deputies will be on the lookout for impaired driving, aggressive driving, and other dangerous behaviors that increase risk during this high-travel period.

The Sheriff's Office encourages community members to take simple steps to reduce their risk of becoming crime victims. Lock vehicles, hide or remove valuables, secure packages when possible, and remain aware

of your surroundings when out shopping.

Anyone who observes suspicious activity is asked to contact the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office at 301-475-8008. For emergencies, dial 911.

Tipsters can also submit tips anonymously:

- Text 847411, starting your message with "SMCSO", add a space, and then your tip.
- Online: Submit a tip through the Sheriff's Office website at www.FirstSheriff.com/tips.
- App: Send a tip directly through the SMCSO app. Download the free app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store.

For those who prefer to make a phone call, tips can also be shared through the Crime Solvers line at 301-475-3333. With Crime Solvers, you never have to give your name. You may be eligible for a cash reward if your information leads to an arrest.

Press release from SMCSO



Wentworth Nursery

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Visit with The Grinch

Saturday, December 6th & 13th —3 - 5 pm

Bring the whole family to meet this mischievous holiday guest, snap a photo together, and enjoy a cheerful afternoon filled with Christmas spirit. Warm up with a cup of hot apple cider, enjoy a sweet holiday treat, and have fun with Christmas games and activities for all ages. While you're here, browse our enchanting Christmas Shop full of ornaments, decorations, gifts, and seasonal accents, and explore our beautiful selection of fresh cut Christmas trees and holiday greens to bring the magic home.

Customer Appreciation Weekend

Friday, December 5th - Sunday, December 7th

Join us for a weekend of glowing inspiration as we showcase a stunning display of outdoor fireplaces, fire pits, and lighting features that bring beauty and comfort to any backyard. Sip on warm apple cider, and gather around the fire with friends and family. Take in the cozy outdoor ambiance and speak with our stone and hardscape experts about designing your own backyard oasis.



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CodeRED Experiences Cybersecurity Breach

The St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) Department of Emergency Services (DES) is notifying residents about a recent cybersecurity incident involving the CodeRED Emergency Notification System. CodeRED is a third-party emergency notification service used by local governments across the country to send emergency alerts.

CodeRED has informed SMCG that data associated with the legacy OnSolve CodeRED platform had been removed from their systems in a targeted cyberattack. While there is currently no indication that this data has been published online, CodeRED has advised that the data may be leaked in the future.

This cybersecurity incident was limited to systems owned and operated by the private CodeRED vendor. There is no indication that any St. Mary's County Government systems, networks, or internal databases were accessed or affected.

According to CodeRED, the impacted dataset may include contact information used in the CodeRED system, including:

- Name
- Address
- Email address
- Phone numbers
- Passwords associated with CodeRED user profiles

If you created a CodeRED account, we strongly recommend that you:

- Change your CodeRED password.
- Change the password on any other accounts (email, banking, shopping, social media, etc.) where you used the same or a similar password.
- Monitor your accounts for unusual or suspicious activity and report any concerns to your service providers.

As always, residents should be cautious

about unsolicited calls, texts, or emails, especially those requesting personal or financial information.

Out of an abundance of caution, CodeRED has permanently decommissioned the legacy OnSolve CodeRED platform previously used by St. Mary's County. To ensure continuity of service, CodeRED has accelerated our transition to its new CodeRED by Crisis24 platform. The Department of Emergency Services now has access to this updated system and can continue to send emergency notifications.

SMCG's Department of Emergency Services and Department of Information Technology are:

- Actively working with CodeRED and external partners to monitor the situation and the restoration of services.
- Reviewing the capabilities, functionality, and reliability of the new CodeRED by Crisis24 platform to ensure it meets our operational requirements.
- Evaluating internal procedures and notification protocols to maintain the highest possible level of service during this transition.
- Seeking additional information regarding historical data, including access to data current as of March 2025.

Our priority is to protect the safety, security, and privacy of St. Mary's County residents while maintaining transparent communication about incidents that may affect you.

Residents with questions or concerns about this incident or about emergency notifications in St. Mary's County may contact DES at EMA@stmaryscountymd.gov or (301)-475-4200 ext. 2125.

Press release from SMCG

Overnight Bridge Flagging Operation Planned

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration will repair aerial navigational lighting on the MD 4 Bridge over the Patuxent River (Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge) at the Calvert/St. Mary's County line starting 9 p.m. Thursday night, Dec. 4.

The overnight work will continue until 5 a.m. the following morning, weather permitting.

During the maintenance work, crews will close one lane and alternate traffic in the open lane using a flagging operation. Portable variable message signs will be placed along area state roads to make travelers aware of the lane closure.

Overnight travelers should plan extra

travel time to cross the bridge.

Drivers are asked to stay alert, stay focused, look for reduced speed limits as well as driving pattern changes, and slow down in work zones.

Customers may contact the District 5 Office at 410-841-1000 or toll-free at 1-800-331-5603 for additional information; they may also dial #77 on their mobile devices for roadside assistance.

For a list of all major State Highway Administration projects, visit Project Portal or the homepage at roads.maryland.gov. For a look at real-time traffic conditions, go to chart.maryland.gov.

Press release from MD SHA

Citizens Academy Graduates Honored



Citizens Academy graduates who appeared at the Dec. 2 commissioner meeting

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County honored on Dec. 2 the 2025 graduates of county government's Citizens Academy.

County Administrator David Weiskopf said, "These graduates successfully completed our Citizens Academy program this November. Citizens Academy provides participants with the opportunity to learn more about county government programs and services. The Academy includes eight weeks of classes that cover each of our county departments, as well as some of the work done by key partner organizations."

He added, "Thank you to each of you who gave your personal time to learn more about your local government. I hope you are encouraged to become more involved, whether by volunteering, serving on a board or commission, or even applying to work here with our amazing team."

The graduates were:

- Andrea Alston
- Stephanie Barron
- Karen Clark-Reddon
- Ian England
- Jay Hansen
- Candice Hicks
- Rhonda Hill
- Christa Hood
- Veronica Jordan
- Lawrence Ludwig
- Mary Ludwig
- LaShawnia Martin

- Curt Mason
- Lisa Owen
- Bill Pipkin
- Norma Pipkin
- Joshua Shaffer
- Doriana Ubiera
- Prescila White
- Angelica Williams
- Danielle Williams

Commissioner Mike Hewitt said, "Thank you for going through that. And I always ask them, what do you think about the program? And overwhelmingly they have said that it's a good program. They learned a lot they didn't know. So, few people did so much, and that's good to hear."

Hewitt added, "I think it's very important that people understand that we are lean and mean in the county government. We try to pay well, make it proportional to what you're going to get in other counties. But we understand that there's a lot of needs."

Hewitt said, "So thank you for being part of the Citizens Academy. I also say, look at our boards and commissions because that's something this commissioner looks at. Have you gone to the Citizens Academy? I mentioned earlier today, people get involved for things they're passionate about, whether it's recs and parks, whatever it may be. And they're better board members, better commission members, committee members, if they've had some experience with county government. So please look at that."

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CAT 239D Skid Steer
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D4GXL Bulldozer - 2800 hours
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10 tri axle Mack dump trucks 2006 & 2007 w/Md certification.
J&J steel body. 2 automatics rest are 8LL Manuals

25 Model year 2018 or newer Piickup/Utility trucks with low miles.

10 Dirt rollers. 84, 70 & 54 inch. Caterpillar & Ingersoll Rand - Low hours
 40 Heavy equipment locking mats. 12' x 8' & 3" thick

25 Late model excavators
 10 Bulldozers
 20 Mini Excavators
 20 Track skid steers late model w/low miles
 20 Electric golf carts w/lithium batteries
 4 Rubber tire backhoes
 2 Caterpillar wheel loaders
 10 Crawler Loaders

15 Tri Axle dump trucks
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 20 Heavy duty trucks
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CAT 725 Articulated Haul
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Letters to the Editor

'Known good'

Every election cycle, we're told that America is divided over policy, parties, and personalities. But that explanation no longer fits what we are seeing. The anger is too deep. The fear is too intense. The distrust is too total.

What we are actually witnessing is something far more serious: America has lost its shared "Known Good."

A "known good" is not a slogan or a theory. It is something proven trustworthy through experience—something that stabilizes human behavior over time.

In everyday life, known goods include truth, responsibility, work, family, forgiveness, law, and moral limits. In engineering, a "known good" is a verified reference point used to troubleshoot chaos. Without it, nothing can be properly calibrated.

Civilizations work the same way. For most of our history, Americans—despite deep disagreements—shared certain moral reference points: truth is objective; law is higher than power; rights come from God, not government; freedom requires self-restraint; work has dignity; guilt and forgiveness are real. These were not abstract ideas. They were lived. They shaped families, schools, courts, and communities. They gave us a shared moral language.

That shared "known good" is now fractured. Today, we no longer merely disagree about solutions—we increasingly disagree about definitions themselves. When people can't agree on what truth, justice, freedom, or even human nature mean, democracy becomes impossible. Debate turns into coercion.

Every election feels existential.

This is not only political. It is psychological. When real known goods collapse, peo-

ple instinctively attach to false ones—things that feel emotionally stabilizing but ultimately produce destruction. Ideology becomes identity. Outrage becomes meaning. The party becomes the parent. The opposing side becomes the enemy.

Once that happens, no fact can persuade, because facts no longer serve truth—only loyalty.

This also explains the rise of political rage, conspiracy movements, institutional distrust, and even violence. These are not simply the products of ignorance. They are symptoms of moral disorientation.

When the compass breaks, every direction feels justified.

History shows that civilizations rarely fall first from invasion. They fall from the internal loss of shared moral calibration.

The good news is that recovery does not begin with elections alone. Laws and leaders matter, but they are downstream of culture. Restoration begins when ordinary people reintroduce real known goods into daily life: truth telling, responsibility, fidelity, self-mastery, forgiveness, discipline, sacrifice, and mercy with accountability.

For millions of Americans, the deepest and most stabilizing "Known Good" has always been Christ—not as a political weapon, but as the living calibration point of truth, justice, mercy, authority, and love rightly ordered.

America will not be healed by silencing half the country. It will be stabilized by what we are willing to once again call good—and live as if it's true.

Mearland J. Rusaw Jr.
Mechanicsville

'Ostrow works for you'

Have you ever driven down Great Mills Road and seen the "Clean Up" signs? If so, you've seen Commissioner Scott Ostrow in action. He saw a problem and a solution. He didn't pass on the problem or look find someone else to fix it.

Scott Ostrow invited people to join him to pick up trash. Helping his district isn't always glamorous or a photo op.

Scott Ostrow meets with his neighbors (constituents) on regular town hall meetings and community involvement listening closely to everyone's concerns. He sees people as individuals, not problems.

As issues present themselves, he may not know the answer right away, but he will try to find one. It may not be what is wanted, but it's an explanation. Patience is key.

Scott Ostrow knows we need affordable housing. It's not as easy as most of us think. Not only do developers need to stay within

building regulations, commissioners need to ensure infrastructure is available for the increased population; school availability, traffic flow, water and sewer services, all needed to maintain a safe community.

While taxes are always with us, Ostrow's voting record shows a concern for us, the people of St. Mary's county. He voted to eliminate the county energy tax, decrease the Homestead Property Tax and did NOT support increasing the overall property tax. When issues involving campaign donors, individual and corporate, come up, Scott Ostrow voluntarily recuses himself to not give the perception of donors influencing his vote.

Commissioner Scott Ostrow is always available to discuss any issues you may have. Reach out. He works for you.

Terri Doughty
Lexington Park

If you would like to submit a Letter to the Editor, please include your name & town of residence.

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NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

Claus' Dec. 9 Flight Path Expands to Include More Southern Maryland Schools

Southern Maryland residents young and old should look skyward on Tuesday, Dec. 9, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. ET as Adm. Saint Nicholas takes to the air on his annual holiday readiness flight — now with an expanded route that includes additional regional schools.

Locals can catch a glimpse of Nicholas — flying under his seasonal call sign “Claus” — as he lifts off in a U.S. Navy MH-60S Seahawk helicopter, accompanied by his team of elves and holiday specialists from NAWCAD's Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (HX) 21.

“Global toy delivery requires precision planning and a touch of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance magic,” said Claus during a briefing with HX-21's rotary wing pilots and crew. “Thanks to the skilled aviation pros at NAWCAD, we've fine-tuned the sleigh plan for Christmas Eve.”

Claus and the HX-21 crew will spread holiday cheer over the following updated regional locations:

• 10 to 10:30 a.m.

- NAS Patuxent River Child Development Center
- NAS Patuxent River Golf Clubhouse

- Driftwood Beach
- Patuxent Elementary School
- Dowell Elementary School
- Solomons Island Pier
- **10:30 to 11 a.m.**
- Hollywood Elementary School
- Saint John's School
- Oakville Elementary School
- Lettie M. Dent Elementary School
- White Marsh Elementary School
- Mechanicsville Elementary School
- **11 to 11:30 a.m.**
- Benjamin Banneker Elementary School
- Dynard Elementary School
- Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary School
- Leonardtown Elementary School
- Leonardtown Wharf
- Leonardtown Middle School
- Southpoint Church
- **11:30 to 12 p.m.**
- Evergreen Elementary School
- Kennedy Krieger School
- Town Creek Elementary School
- Green Holly Elementary School
- Esperanza Middle School
- Greenview Knolls Elementary School

- Lexington Park Baptist Preschool
- Lexington Park Elementary School
- George Washington Carver Elementary School
- Chesapeake Charter Public School
- Little Flower School
- **12 to 12:30 p.m.**
- Bay Montessori School
- Park Hall Elementary School
- Spring Ridge Middle School
- St. Michael's School
- **12:30 to 1 p.m.**
- Ridge Elementary School
- NAS Patuxent River's Webster Outlying Field

Piney Point Elementary School
Children are reminded to stay on their best behavior as Claus makes final checks to his lists ahead of the big night.

With Rudolph and the reindeer crew resting up for their holiday flight, inclement weather conditions may shift Claus' mission to Dec. 10 or Dec. 16 at the same time. For the latest updates, follow the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Facebook page.

HX-21 is a component of Naval Test Wing Atlantic, the test wing at the Naval



Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division. Nicknamed the “Blackjacks,” the squadron provides developmental flight test and evaluation for all U.S. Navy and Marine Corps rotary-wing and tilt-rotor aircraft. The Blackjacks are personal favorites of Claus, who tries to visit his HX-21 friends every year. Naval Air Station Patuxent River has been home to HX-21 since 1949.

Experience the Holidays at St. Mary's County Museums

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*Museum closed for construction; store open regular hours

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

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

Museum stores open daily, 10AM – 5PM; closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Can't visit in person? Shop online 24/7! [FriendsMuseumStore.square.site](https://www.friendsmuseumstore.square.site)

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The Patuxent Partnership Hosts Defense Summit

On Wednesday, Nov. 19 an audience of more than 200 attended the 3rd Annual TPP (The Patuxent Partnership) Defense Summit, a full-day program of dynamic panels and speakers, including NAWCAD leadership.

Bonnie Green, TPP Executive Director, welcomed everyone and discussed the challenges of organizing the Defense Summit during a government shutdown. Delivering a useful, informative full-day summit, and working with speakers who could not commit until the 11th hour due to the shutdown, made for an interesting experience.

Steve Spehn, Technology Development Advisor, U.S. European Command, served as the summit moderator, giving the audience a rundown of the day's events, introducing the speakers, and providing a perspective on the topics.

The first speaker, Mieke Eoyang, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy, did an excellent job covering all things Cyber. One of the most interesting points she made related to the risks of storing security information in data centers rather than the cloud. She referred to Ukraine's decision to move its security data to the cloud to avoid the danger of losing critical data due to the Russian bombing of critical sites.

The next speaker, Jim Woolsey, former President of Defense Acquisition University, spoke about "AI Implications for the DOD Workforce and Beyond." It was a fascinat-

ing foray into customizing AI to translate "government speak," improving acquisition language and requirements, and better informing the workforce. He touched on various other ways AI can have a positive impact, including using AI to translate legislative language into understandable language. One of the first audience questions was a request for his presentation.

Russell Rumbaugh, Former Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller) and last year's TPP Defense Summit Keynote, offered some perspective on acquisition across the Navy, from shipbuilding to aviation. He spoke about the re-invention of the government acquisition, often discussed, but to date not becoming transformational.

The focus then shifted to a panel discussion on Digital Transformation with moderator Travis Methvin, CDW-G, former Deputy Chief Strategy Officer and Director of Partnerships at PEO Digital; David Meiser, SSTM, Technical Director, NAWC Systems Engineering, and Ken Senechal, KBR, serving as Senior Technical Advisor supporting the Test Resource Management Center.

The first afternoon panel was on "U.S. Shipbuilding – Requirements, Capabilities, Carriers" with Steve Wills, PhD, Navalist, Center for Maritime Strategy, and John Lehman III, former naval aviator, former U.S. Senate Staff (McCain), shipbuilding

executive. They discussed the challenges of rebuilding and reinvigorating U.S. shipyards and how to meet the Navy and Coast Guard's shipyard demands. It is not easy to upgrade or establish shipyards, and shipbuilding for the commercial maritime industry also needs to be addressed. Wills and Lehman also talked about the critical role of the aircraft carrier in national defense.

Steve Cricchi, Executive Director of NAWCAD, discussed new capabilities and the importance of building capacity, providing "The View from NAWCAD Forward."

The final panel focused on "Nontraditional Technology, Tools, Innovation, and OTAs." Rick Tarr, SOMD Tech Bridge & Director, NAWCAD Tech Transfer Office, co-moderated the panel with Kedar Pavgi, Director, Commercial Strategy and Operations at the Defense Innovation Unit. Drew Thomson, Director of Growth and Development, Anduril Industries; Todd Wesley, Senior Director, Hivemind Solutions, Strike Portfolio, Shield AI; and Garth Blakely, Director of Government Business Development and Strategy, Castelon. The panelists shared their experiences and perspectives, as well as the most significant acquisition challenges. Looking at requirements from the government perspective, and how the government can benefit from nontraditional technologies, was discussed at length. Our enemies are vigilant, and we must maintain our strategic advantage.



Mieke Eoyang, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy

Spehn made the closing remarks, and Green thanked our sponsors.

The Defense Summit sponsors were:

- Northrop Grumman Corporation, Diamond Sponsor;
- ManTech, Platinum Sponsor;
- Boeing, Lockheed Martin, COLSA, CDW-G, and GDIT, Silver Sponsors

Press Release from TPP



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CSM Team Earns Marketing, Public Relations Awards

In November the CSM Creative Services team attended the NCMPR District 1 conference in Pittsburgh, and took home six District 1 Medallion Awards:

- Gold — Career Pathways Magazine 2025
- Gold — Brand Promotional Video
- Silver — Spring 2025 Continuing Education Schedule
- Silver — Annual Report 2024
- Silver — Strengthening Our Net: CSM Workforce Development Piece
- Bronze — CSM Logo

Avis McMillon, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications, said many of these projects were new initiatives taken on by a strong and talented team to raise awareness of the college, its programs, and impact on the region.

"These awards honor the talent and dedication of a team that cares deeply about effectively communicating CSM's story," McMillon said. "Many of these recognitions come from new initiatives the team embraced this year and reflects our commitment to expanding access, highlighting opportunity, and showcasing the pathways available to students across our region. I'm incredibly proud to lead such a creative and mission-driven group of professionals."

One notable award the team earned was Gold Medallion for the Career Pathways

Magazine. The magazine highlights programs offered on the Regional Hughesville Campus, career opportunities in high-demand fields such as skilled trades and healthcare, student success stories, and academic-to-career advising. The final product brings these opportunities to life through compelling graphics, photography, testimonials, and articles.

Director of Creative Services Lisa Bernabel said it was great to see the team recognized for a project they worked so hard on.

"This project was a huge accomplishment, and I'm really proud of how hard this team worked to produce a high-quality product," Bernabel said. "Receiving this recognition from our peers all across the East coast is well deserved, and a testament to their talents and dedication."

This is the largest number of NCMPR awards CSM has earned in the last five years.

District 1 includes Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec, and United Kingdom.

Press release from CSM

St. Mary's Splash Saturday at Point Lookout State Park



The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office invites you to the coolest event in Southern Maryland, the 2025 St. Mary's Splash, on Saturday, Dec. 6 at Point Lookout State Park.

Join the fun and take the plunge to support Special Olympics Maryland – St. Mary's County, which provides year-round sports training and competition for local athletes in 15 different sports.

Whether you dive in or cheer from the shore, your participation helps create opportunities for inclusion, friendship, and achievement for individuals with intellectual disabilities right here in our

community.

Registration opens at 11 a.m., and the splash begins at 1 p.m.

You can make an even bigger impact by pre-registering, creating a team, or donating in advance. Team up with coworkers, family, or friends and take the plunge together — all for an incredible cause.

For registration details, team setup, and donation links, visit: <https://support.somd.org/event/2025-st-marys-splash/e722200>

Don't miss your chance to be freezin' for a reason, the 2025 St. Mary's Splash!

Press Release from SMCSO

Leonardtown Celebrates Christmas on the Square



Photos by Ron Bailey, courtesy of Town of Leonardtown

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MEET RUBBLE

Hi, my name is Rubble. I'm a longer-haired kitten who believes every hallway is my personal racetrack! I zoom like a NASCAR champion, then I'll immediately demand cuddles as payment for my amazing athletic performance. I'm that friendly fluffball who wants nothing more than to play, explore, and then melt right into your lap. Adopt me today. Your home (and your heart) will never be quiet again! Visit me during adoption hours-Mon thru Fri 11am-4pm and Sat 10am-3pm. To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, "like" us on Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>



MEET AVA

This gorgeous 5-year-old Lab mix is as sweet as she is chatty — she loves to "talk" and share her opinions. Ava is a total people-lover, but she has a special soft spot for the fellas! She does well with most dogs and enjoys playtime, though her confident personality can come off a little bossy. Ava is also okay with cats and is learning great manners in her foster home. She's working on sharing food and treats with other animals — she's a little protective of her goodies sometimes, but she's improving every day. If you're looking for a loyal companion with lots of love (and personality!) to give, Ava might just be your perfect match. If you are interested in meeting with Ava or learning more about her please contact Animal Relief Fund (ARF) at 301-866-0303 or visit www.animalrelieffund.org

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Friday

Leonardtown

First Friday Itinerary

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Visit the Old Jail Museum for FREE tours with extended hours for First Friday

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sales & Specials throughout Shepherds Old Field Market

5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Ride the FREE Leonardtown Trolley

5 p.m. - 7 p.m. 2nd Annual Tiny Art Show at the St. Mary's Arts Council Gallery

5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Tiny Art Activity at the St. Mary's Arts Council Gallery with Jami Faith from Elsewise Art

5 p.m. - 8 p.m. Shop Local Holiday Show at St. Mary's Arts Council Gallery & Gift Shop

5 p.m. - 8 p.m. 39th Holiday Show at North End Gallery

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Live Music with Jack Allen at Port of Leonardtown Winery

6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Free Holiday Concert at the St. Mary's Arts Council Gallery with Doc Lohn

9 p.m. - 1 a.m. DJ Keegz at Brudergarten

9 p.m. - 1 a.m. DJ Sheeby at The Rex



The Old Jail Museum



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Take a stroll through Leonardtown, enjoy the Holiday lights and do a little late-night shopping at one of these locations.

- Old Jail Museum
- St. Mary's Arts Council Gallery
- Fenwick Street Books
- Crafts N Stitches
- The Craft Guild Shop
- New View Fiberworks
- Shepherds Old Field Market
- The Griffons Court
- Quality Street Kitchen
- Kings of Cards
- Sneades Ace Hardware
- Marie & Nash
- Happy and Zen
- Method Gym



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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind



An Abundance of Happy Thanksgivings

By Shelby Opperman
Contributing Writer

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving or had a few like we did. Our Christ Church, Chaptico Thanksgiving held on Sunday, the 23rd at the parish hall was so nice. There was so much food, and so many wonderful desserts, and most of all a loving feeling of community with parishioners from both services. We have never been before because our anniversary trip is normally over that Sunday. I'm so glad we were here for it. That reminds me that I still need to find out who made some of the great food that I want the recipes for.



After the church dinner we went straight to the Leonardtown Fire Department Hall for the Clements Cuties check presentation for this year's three childhood cancer recipients and their families, which I feel was another wonderful Thanksgiving. I wouldn't have thought that we could outdo last year's amount raised of \$306,000.00, but this year we raised \$343,656.00 of which money went out for scholarships to local high school students in the names of former childhood recipients, and one adult, who have passed, a certain amount of roll-over for next year, and \$99,552.00 to each of this year's three recipients and their families. We are all volunteers, amazing volunteers as a matter of fact, and no one gets paid. I know from having a preemie in 1983 who was in the NICU in the hospital for 4 months, plus in home medical apparatus for a long time after that, that the bills (both medical and personal) can add up quickly. Great job as always Cuties! and much love and continued recovery to 3 year old Adrian Hall, 4 year old Sunny Thornton, and 6 year old Joe Bartodziej.

So, that Sunday was busy enough, but we still had two more Thanksgivings to go. One with my husband Robert's large family at his daughter Michelle's lovely home. Family came from Vermont, Florida, Virginia, and Georgia. It was quite a feast there as well. I think our nephew from Florida's pumpkin cheesecakes went pretty quickly. Everything was delicious, and there is always a lot of fun and so much laughter that goes on at any event with all of them together. I believe a family cruise is being planned for the summer of 2027 now – I can only imagine what could happen on a cruise with the family.

My family is much smaller and quieter. This past Saturday on what would have been my mother's 97th birthday, my two sons, my youngest son's girlfriend and his two young boys came over for a full, old family recipe, Thanksgiving dinner. Plus, the boys made crafts, and we did the traditional punkin' chunkin' against a big old tree in the back yard (so the deer, rabbits, and squirrels could have some pumpkin to enjoy too). We had a large bonfire in the backyard to get warm after the punkin' chunkin'. Mindy had a great Thanksgiving at both Michelle's house and ours. She sure slept good after both, probably because she was getting food slipped to her at both places.

This morning, I started pulling down the fall displays in the front yard. It always makes me a bit sad because I love fall and all the warm colors. And also, it is still fall until December 21st. But life seems to move faster these days, and Christmas décor comes out earlier in stores, and in people's yards. It makes me feel like I am behind the times, well, I probably am behind. That would be normal. Maybe this weekend I will start on Christmas decorations, maybe not. I might have to watch 24 straight hours of Christmas Vacation or Hallmark Christmas movies to fully get in Christmas mode. The Christmas spirit will hit at some point then there will be Christmas inside and outside. I hope the Christmas spirit is abundant and peaceful in your home as well over the next few weeks and beyond.

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.

Shelby Guazzo, 84



Shelby Palmer Guazzo, 84, of Chaptico, MD, passed away peacefully, Monday, November 24, 2025, at St. Mary's Hospice, in Callaway, MD, with her sons John and Dante Guazzo, and her daughter Shelby Smith Guazzo (David Mattis) with her.

Shelby was born on Governor's Island, NY, on June 7, 1941, to the late Lt. Shelby Y. Palmer, Jr. and Jean Hamilton (Smith) Palmer. She grew up in Summit, New Jersey, and graduated from Kent Place High School in 1959. After high school she took courses at the Eastern School for Physicians Aides as well as Upsala College, in New Jersey, where she met her future husband Dr. Eugene Guazzo. She and Dr. Guazzo moved and lived in North Carolina where he attended Duke Medical School and she took courses at the Duke School of Nursing. Shelby and Eugene were married in Durham, NC, on October 21, 1961. They moved to Boston for several years and eventually settled in St. Mary's County in 1968.

Shelby was a member of the Society of Clinical Pathologists and a licensed and active laboratory and radiology technician at her and Dr. Guazzo's family practice, The Maryland Infirmary, in Chaptico, MD. They opened the practice together in 1974. She established the clinical laboratory there and she was the office manager until his retirement in 2009.

During those years and beyond Shelby was active in numerous professional, political, and social organizations. She was a Judge of Elections from 1984 to 1995, a member of the Maryland Farm Bureau, the De La Brooke Foxhounds W., the St. Mary's River Yacht Club, and the St. Mary's County Historical Society. She was also a descendant of a signer to the Mayflower Compact, and a 36-year member of the Major William Thomas chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and many, many other groups. She was appointed to the Maryland State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners for two, five-year terms, and served for many years on the St. Mary's County Planning Commission. She also served on the Maryland State Board of Citizen Planners, the Maryland State Patuxent River Commission, and was a representative to the Maryland Association of Counties. In 1998, she was elected as a St. Mary's County Commissioner, representing the Third Commissioner District.

In the years after being in the medical and political arenas, Shelby enjoyed traveling to visit her children and grandchildren. She also spent many hours assisting friends and neighbors with the St. Mary's County planning and land use regulations. She continued to be fiercely independent living alone on part of Willow Glen Farm, which she and

Dr. Guazzo purchased in 1972. Her favorite pastime was playing cards and other games with friends and neighbors. She especially enjoyed and looked forward to her bi-weekly pitch games on Wednesdays with the "Pitch Ladies" at each other's homes around the County.

Shelby is survived by her children, Eugene Tai Guazzo (Cheri), John Palmer Guazzo (Caroline), Dante Edward Guazzo, II (Emine ErSalcuk), and Shelby Smith Guazzo (David Mattis), as well as her grandchildren, Samantha Lefevre and Juliette Daniele Guazzo, Leyla Grace and Indigo Rose Guazzo, Dorian John Mattis and Mila Shelby Mattis.

She was preceded in death by her husband Eugene who passed in 2018 after 56 years of marriage, and her parents, Shelby and Jean Palmer.

Family will receive friends on Thursday, December 4, 2025, from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. A funeral service will be celebrated by Father Peter Ackerman on Friday, December 5, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., at Christ Episcopal Church, 25390 Maddox Road, Chaptico, MD 20621. Interment will follow in the Church cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made in Shelby's name to MedStar Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625 Leonardtown, MD 20650 or to the Daughters of the American Revolution (the DAR), <https://www.dar.org/support-dar/giving-opportunities/donate-online>

Condolences may be left for the family at www.brinsfieldfuneral.com.

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

Jeanette Austin, 72



Jeanette Austin, 72, of Leonardtown, Maryland, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by the love and comfort of her family. Born on May 29, 1953, she was

the cherished daughter of the late Dorothy Dillard Guy and Joseph Clyde Guy of Loveville, MD.

She was preceded in death by her siblings Joseph Calvin Guy, Kenneth Clyde Guy, Sr., Margaret Louise Stickell, Dorothy "Lucy" Marie Irwin, and Walter Lawrence Guy, Sr.

Jeanette is survived by her three children: Joseph W. Austin (Jeanne) of Newport News, VA; John Christopher Austin (Natalie) of Hollywood, MD; and Michael Thomas Austin (Amber) of Hollywood, MD. She is also survived by her siblings: Charles Jerome Guy, Sr. (Cindy) of Avenue, MD; Thomas Ponton Guy (Esther) of Henderson, NC; Mary Susan Buono (Charlie) of Leonardtown, MD; and Elizabeth "Sissy" Guy Walker (Danny) of Leonardtown, MD. She leaves behind her grandchildren:

Cameron and Temperance Austin of Newport News, VA; Emma Harrell (Donovan) of Leonardtown, MD; Ashlynn, Aiden, and Aaron Austin of Hollywood, MD; Alissa and Layla Austin of Hollywood, MD; her honorary grandchildren: Katie Jo Mattingly (Jay) of Leonardtown, MD; Sydney and Brandon Currie of Leonardtown, MD; as well as two honorary great-grandchildren, Leah and Madelyn Currie of Leonardtown, MD; and many beloved nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

Jeanette's career began at the age of sixteen at the telephone company in Leonardtown, MD, where she developed lifelong values of professionalism, kindness, and dedication. She devoted 29 years to St. Mary's Hospital, serving in numerous roles and earning a reputation for reliability, compassion, and a heart of gold. Colleagues fondly remember her as someone who always knew the answer and shared it with a warm smile.

She found joy in life's simple pleasures, listening to country music, watching TLC, scrolling through Facebook, and treating herself to a bit of online shopping.

She loved to create, to grow, and to bring things to life, through her crafts, puzzles, and her cherished plants.

Above all, family was the center of Jeanette's world. She cherished every

moment spent with loved ones and found meaning in even the smallest memories. She believed that life is a path shaped by God's will, and while we cannot change it entirely, we can choose to make it easier for others and remain true to the values we were raised with. Jeanette lived this belief daily, striving to make the world kinder and brighter. Every moment spent together was a precious gift, and she would not have changed a single thing.

The family received friends on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home in Leonardtown, Maryland. A prayer service followed at 7:00 p.m. in the funeral home chapel, officiated by Chaplain Chris Whetlor. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests memorial contributions be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Serving as Honorary Pallbearers are Joseph W. "Joe" Austin, John Christopher "Chris" Austin, Michael Thomas "Mike" Austin, Brandon Michael Currie, Danny Walker, Mike Currie, and Jay Mattingly.

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.

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In Remembrance

Billy Hall, 95



William Howard Hall of Chaptico, MD, passed away on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2025, at the age of 95.

Billy was born in Hurry, MD on July 7, 1930. He was the oldest son born to the late Peter Paul Hall and Agnes Virginia Burroughs Hall.

He was the loving husband of Helen Teresa Moran, whom he married on June 2, 1956, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Bryantown, MD. They celebrated 61 years of marriage until her death on November 11, 2017.

Billy is survived by his loving and faithful children: Catherine Marie (Cathy) Oliver (Jimmy) of Bushwood, Patricia Ann (Patty) Wathen (Timmy) of California MD, William "Wayne" Hall (Eva) and Dennis Martin Hall, both of Chaptico. He is also survived by his youngest brother, John Edward "Puddin'" Hall of Chaptico and his grandchildren: Willie Oliver (Kim), Steven Oliver (Lydia), Stacey Wathen Fluharty (Matt), Karen Wathen, April Hall Brooks (Collin), Rachel Hall, Beau Hall (Alexis), Sam Hall (Anna) and his 11 great grandchildren: Kirsten, Lucas, Kyle, Ava, Bennett, Layla, Jake, Jolene, Luna, River, and Harlow. He was predeceased by his daughter in law, Barbara Earnshaw Hall and his brothers Peter Paul "Possum" Hall Jr. and James Henry "Jackson" Hall.

On March 15, 1956, he was drafted into the United State Navy. He celebrated his 26th birthday on the Panama Canal. He served aboard the USS Wisconsin and toured France, Scotland, Chili and participated in the line crossing ceremony as a Pollywog where he received a subpoena to appear before King Neptune and participated in NATO exercises in the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, and the Arctic Circle. He was honorably discharged on November 1, 1957 to return home to family and farming.

He dearly loved his wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and his brothers who formed a farming partnership as Hall Brothers before branching out on their own family farms. He also worked for Billy Guy as a dump truck driver while the beltway was being constructed and for Frankie Lacey Masonry in his later years. He loved watching baseball, rooting for the Nationals and the Orioles.

As our family historian, he would tell us stories about his childhood and our ancestors and life before electricity and indoor plumbing and his years at Sacred Heart School, graduating in 1944. He was a devoted and lifelong parishioner of Sacred Heart Church.

He would say "I haven't been lucky, I've been blessed"

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with prayers recited

at 7:00 PM, in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, December 11, 2025, at 10:00 AM in Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bushwood, MD, with Father James Oberle officiating. Interment will follow at the church cemetery. Serving as pallbearers will be his grandsons: Willie Oliver, Steven Oliver, Beau Hall, Sam Hall, and his nephews: David Hall and John Hall Jr. Honorary pallbearers will be his granddaughters.

Contributions may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bushwood and/or the Seventh District Volunteer Rescue Squad.

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.

Peter Van Ryswick, 81



Peter Van Ryswick, 81, of Leonardtown, MD, passed away on November 22, 2025, in Leonardtown, MD. Born on September 29, 1944, in Leonardtown, MD, he was the son of the late Frances Teresa Beall and the late Joseph Frances "Pete" Van Ryswick. Peter was the loving husband of Patricia "Patty" Harding Van Ryswick, whom he married on November 28, 1970, in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, Michael Van Ryswick (Mary) of Leonardtown, MD, Karen Pirchio (John) of Owings, MD, and Stephen Van Ryswick (Dorothy) of Mechanicsville, MD, his sisters, Evelyn Ryce of Leonardtown, MD and Margaret "Peggy" Wathen of Leonardtown, MD, and ten grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Joseph "Jody" Van Ryswick, Leonard "Lenny" Van Ryswick, and David Van Ryswick.

Peter was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and earned his high school diploma. He was a dedicated farmer.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, December 4, 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 Friday, December 5, 2025, at 10:00 AM, in Our Lady's Catholic Church at Medley's Neck, Leonardtown, MD, with Fr. Joseph Cwik officiating. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Michael "Mikey" Van Ryswick, Nicholas "Nick" Pirchio, Derek Van Ryswick, Matthew Van Ryswick, Michael "Micky" Ryce, and Wayne Van Ryswick. Honorary pallbearers will be Timothy "Timmy" Ryce, Leonard Wathen, Jr., and Kyle Van Ryswick.

Contributions may be made to the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau in support of the future Peter Van Ryswick Scholarship Fund. Checks can be sent to: St. Mary's County Farm Bureau, 26737 Radio Station Way, Suite G, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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.

Kathy Atlas, 77



Katherine Elizabeth Atlas, 77, of California, MD, passed away peacefully on November 28, 2025, at Hospice House of St. Mary's, surrounded by her loving family.

Born on April 27, 1948, in Leonardtown, MD, Kathy was the youngest child of the late Thomas Webster Bell Sr. and Mary Catherine Sterling Bell.

She is survived by her children: Dennis Matthew Atlas (Nicole) of Leonardtown, MD; Dana Michelle Jefferson of California, MD; Darrin Michael Atlas (Andrea) of Leonardtown, MD; and Mary Atlas Terry (Steve) of Millersville, MD. She also leaves behind her beloved grandchildren: Matthew Atlas, Dean Atlas, David Atlas, Drea Atlas, Raven Jefferson, Caleb Jefferson, and Morgan Terry; her brother Joseph Ernest Bell II (Ann) of Leonardtown, MD; and her sisters-in-law Dot Bell and Diane Bell.

Kathy is preceded in death by her son David Marlow Atlas, Jr.; her parents Thomas Webster Bell Sr. and Mary Catherine Sterling Bell; her brothers Thomas W. Bell Jr. and Frank C. Bell Sr.; and her sisters Ruth Matilda Bell Swann (Tillie) and Margaret Ann Bell.

A 1965 graduate of St. Mary's Academy, she was honored as the St. Mary's County Fair "Queen of Tolerance" that same year—an early reflection of the grace, compassion, and strength she would embody throughout her entire life. Kathy furthered her education at Princeton University, where she received her Phlebotomy Certification, dedicating her career to the medical field and served as the Hematology Manager at St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown, MD for over 20 years. Her expertise, work ethic, and kindness touched countless lives. Kathy earned her Bachelor of Science degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland, working in the fields of addiction and mental health.

A woman of faith, Kathy attended both St. Aloysius Catholic Church and Our Lady's Catholic Church in Leonardtown, MD.

Above all, Kathy was devoted to her family. She loved family gatherings on the farm, attending her grandchildren's sporting events and enthusiastically cheering on her beloved Washington Redskins (Commanders). Joe Gibbs and Sonny

Jurgensen were her all-time favorites. These were all moments she deeply treasured.

She was an avid traveler who enjoyed memorable trips to Las Vegas to see Garth Brooks, sun-filled days in Cancun, relaxing cruises, and even an adventure to Germany. She found joy in boating and spending time on the water.

Several profound experiences shaped Kathy's outlook and guided the way she moved through the world. When Kathy was 28 years old, her sister Tillie passed, and Kathy then filled the role of aunt, mother, friend and confidant to Tillie's children Patricia, Tommy, Maggie and Eleanor. This created an intense bond of love between Kathy and her nieces and nephew, and her own children. This special bond carried through to Tillie's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The love of Gamma and Aunt Kathy was the perfect instance of unconditional love, which we all received throughout her life.

When Kathy was 45, her oldest child David, died due to a senseless act of violence. This event changed Kathy and her family forever. Kathy faced her feelings of overwhelming rage and grief with courage, honesty and compassion. She believed that it is impossible to transcend grief and trauma in isolation, so she shared her experiences and helped countless others cope and heal from life's tragedies. Kathy will be remembered by many for her kindness; her willingness to pull up a chair, listen and talk; and her unwavering desire to be of service to others.

Kathy's warmth, humor, resilience, and unwavering love for her family, will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew her. She will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, December 11 from 4:00-6:00 pm, with prayers recited at 6:00 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday, December 12 at 10:00 am, at St. Aloysius Church in Leonardtown, MD. Reverend David Beaubien will be the celebrant. Interment will follow in St. Mary's Queen of Peace in Helen, MD.

Serving as pallbearers will be Kathy's grandsons and nephews: Matthew Atlas, Dean Atlas, David Atlas, Caleb Jefferson, Tommy Swann and Frank Bell Jr. Serving as honorary pallbearers are Mike Rudis, Skip Myles, Jim Knott, Claude Queen, Anthony Cole, Blaine Sommerville, Lakita Rivers and Chris Morgan.

Memorial contributions are greatly appreciated to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD, 20650; the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, P.O. Box 361, Leonardtown, MD 20650; or the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department P.O. Box 50, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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

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

St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Dec 4

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

21690 Colton Point Road; Avenue
7 p.m.

American Legion Post 221 invites all active-duty personnel and veterans to join us for our monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month. E-mail us at alpost221@aol.com or call 301-481-6625 for more information.

Fri, Dec 5

Holiday Concert

Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge
Performing Arts Center
St. Mary's College of Maryland
7 p.m.

The holiday spirit begins with a free concert by the SMCM Orchestra under the direction of Professor Jeffrey Silberschlag. Join us for a selection of holiday favorites that is sure to get you into the spirit of the season.

Sat, Dec 6

Holiday Bazaar

Margaret Brent Middle School
29675 Point Lookout Rd., Mechanicsville
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Carols and Choral Works

Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge
Performing Arts Center
St. Mary's College of Maryland
3 p.m.

The St. Mary's Singers under the direction of Assistant Professor Brittany Chanell Johnson will present a festive array of carols and choral works. They'll be joined in this free public concert by St. Maries Choral Arts-Musica.

Farm & Country Christmas Auction

Westfield Farm Arena & Auction Barn
26689 Laurel Grove Rd., Mechanicsville
9 a.m.-6 p.m.

A live, in-person auction event that offers a variety of locally-grown Poinsettias; Locally-made Evergreen Wreaths & Centerpieces; Locally-made Furniture & Crafts; New Tools, New Toys, and many other items. farrellauctionservice.com

Christmas on the Farm

Summerseat Farm
26655 Three Notch Rd., Mechanicsville
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Get ready for a magical day of holiday cheer and family fun at Summerseat Farm! Santa's making a special stop at Summerseat this Christmas season, and he can't wait to meet you! Bring your wish lists, your smiles, and

your holiday spirit for a day full of festive adventures.

Hay Rides—Bundle up and enjoy a ride around farm.

Warm Apple Cider & Cookies—Warm up with a cup of warm cider and a sweet treat. Feed the Barn Animals. Tour the Manor House—Step inside and experience the halls decked out in live greenery and vintage decorations. Holiday Crafts for Kids—Little elves can get creative and make festive decorations to take home!

Admission: A \$10 family donation is suggested to support our nonprofit farm. summerseat.org

Christmas Stroll- Free Family Event

23421 Kingston Creek Rd., California
3-5 p.m.

Live Nativity! Homemade cookies & drinks! Seasonal music, games, & so much more! Free event—bring a friend! Enjoy a festive celebration of the performing arts and Garden Club's giveaways of Blooms of Hope (paperwhite bulbs). Join us as we celebrate the coming of the Christ child!

Sun, Dec 7

Designer Purse Bingo

Mechanicsville VFD
28165 Hills Club Rd., Mechanicsville

12:30-4:30 p.m.

Come join us for an afternoon of bingo fun filled with chances to win designer purses, raffles, door prizes and more!

This is our big Holiday Designer Purse bingo. Lots of items that would make excellent Christmas presents.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Ongoing

39th Annual Holiday Show

North End Gallery, through Dec. 31

FOUR and MORE Holiday Events:

- Open late during the Christmas Tree Lighting! Friday, November 28th thru 8pm.
 - Support your local artists on Small Business Saturday. Open 11-5 p.m.
 - First Friday, Dec. 5, holiday reception, 5 until 8 p.m.
 - A Jewelry Trunk Show on Sunday, Dec. 7: featuring Mickey Kunkle, Judy Larsen, and Kennedi Milan
- Show lead contact: Bea Poulin, president.northendgallery@gmail.com

Keep your family safe this holiday season



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Dec 4

Local Heroes Appreciation Night

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
5-8 p.m.
Additional Nights: December 12,
December 18, January 1

Celebrating our local heroes with free admission for 1st Responders (police, fire, EMS, hospital staff), Active Duty Military, Veterans, and Educators. Our local heroes will enjoy free admission on the night of their choice. Reservations for local heroes are not required, just come! Please wear your ID badge to enjoy free admission. All other guests must reserve their ticket(s) in advance. Regular attendees are still welcome on these evenings. Enjoy magical lights, live music, food trucks, and festive shopping. Plan your visit at www.annmariegarden.org.

Awful Artworks: Festive Fiasco

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

Have you ever looked at an art project and thought "I could do that," but you in fact could not do that? Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! Create the most festive item you can think of! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Dec 5

Nighttime Christmas Market

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
5-8 p.m.
Additional Nights: Dec. 6, 12, 13, 19, 20

In addition to the extraordinary magic of Annmarie Garden in Lights, on select nights, we have regional artists and crafters on site for a nighttime Christmas Market. Shop unique, local, handmade finds, for that special someone on your list. Nighttime Christmas Market shoppers must hold advance tickets to Annmarie Garden

in Lights. To learn more, or plan your trip, visit www.annmariegarden.org.

Sat, Dec 6

Solomons Jingle Bell Run 5k

Tiki Bar
Solomons Island
8 a.m.-6 p.m.

5k Run/Walk event to support the Arthritis Foundation. events.arthritis.org/jbrsolomons

Breakfast with Santa and Vendor Shopping

Patuxent High School
12485 Southern Connector Blvd., Lusby
8:30 a.m.-12 Noon

The NJROTC Boosters invite you to Patuxent High School on Saturday, Dec 6th, 8:30 am to noon for Breakfast with Santa and Holiday Shopping with independent Vendors. Have a delicious breakfast with beverages before or after playing games, doing crafts, seeing Santa and shopping with the Vendors. Bring your cameras and wish list.

Adults \$10, Kids (3-12 years) \$5 and under 3 free. Max \$40 per family

Price includes breakfast, Santa letters, games and crafts.

VENDOR Table Rental: Rent a table and chair for \$25. Call Liz Kramer at 541-556-9812 or Email: PaxNJROTCBooster@gmail.com

There are 25 spaces available.

Daytime Holiday Market

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Admission to the market area is free.

A fun-filled day of holiday shopping awaits you at Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center. Outside, you'll find more than 50 vendor booths offering a wide assortment of handmade, homemade, and homegrown gifts. Jewelry, pottery, works of art, beauty products, holiday and home decor, small

batch food and drink, stocking stuffers, and more! Whether you're looking for affordable gifts for friends, or something special for a loved one, there's something for every budget. Inside the Arts Building, you will find live music, holiday exhibits, the Nature Nook—and more shopping in the Annmarie Gift Shop, the Holiday Gift Show, and the Ornament Show & Sale. There'll be something for everyone on your list! To learn more, or plan your trip, visit www.annmariegarden.org.

Annual Wreath and Greens Sale

American Chestnut Land Trust
1985 Scientists Cliffs Rd., Port Republic
11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Hand-made wreaths and greens for sale. Greens are gathered from ACLT land and surrounding areas.

Jigsaw Puzzle Swap

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
9-11 a.m.

Bring your gently used puzzles and exchange them for new-to-you challenges. It's a fun, eco-friendly way to refresh your collection and connect with fellow puzzle enthusiasts. Registration is not required but will let us know who is interested in other puzzling events! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Annual Christmas Concert

Waters Memorial UMC
5400 Mackall Road, St. Leonard
8 p.m.

Featuring: The Unclouded Day and more. Refreshments after the concert. Additional info call 410-586-1716.

Sun, Dec 7

Christmas Caroling

St. Leonard Polling House
5095 St. Leonard Road, St. Leonard

4:30 p.m.

Plan to attend this 24th annual event. Join in the Spirit of the Season with Cookies, Cocoa, and Song. Santa will make a special appearance at 5 p.m! Sponsored by the SLVG. For questions, contact Nancy W. Zinn, 410-586-0682.

Holiday Wreath Making Party

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Join us for our popular outdoor wreath-making extravaganza! Learn how to create a wreath from an assortment of local greens and fun festive decorative elements from the artLAB! Enjoy music, a cash bar, assorted treats and good company. Tables will be distanced around our paved parking area, set with individual toolkits and buckets full of assorted greens. Check out our accessory cart or bring your own festive accessories to add. Participants are encouraged to bring their own garden scissors/pruners, wire cutters, and garden gloves. Please come dressed for the weather, layers encouraged! Tables are limited. Advance registration is required. Visit www.annmariegarden.org for event details—then jump to "Classes."

Wed, Dec 10

Special Needs Night

Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
5-7 p.m.

Garden in Lights will be closed to the general public for this event. A holiday evening for our guests with disabilities and special needs; all other guests must choose another night to visit the light show. Admission for special needs guests: Free for special needs guest + one friend; Additional guests: \$5 per person; kids 2 & under free. Advance tickets are NOT required for Special Needs Night, just come! Visit www.annmariegarden.org for event details.

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

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

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



County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

SMECO Employees Raise Funds for Local Shelters

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) employees recently held a fund-raising event and donated \$63,000 to three shelters serving Southern Maryland: Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc.—Robert J. Fuller Transitional House of Charles County, Project Echo, Inc. of Calvert County, and Three Oaks Center of St. Mary's County.

"A home is more than shelter from the elements. It's a foundation for security, stability, and health," said Sonja M. Cox, SMECO president and CEO. "Our local organizations understand this and provide the services and resources essential in helping individuals move from crisis to independence. The continued growth of our annual charitable event, driven by the hard work of our employees and the generosity of our vendors, enables SMECO to support these three local shelters as they carry out their critical work in our community."

Project ECHO has served as Calvert County's only emergency homeless shelter for over 30 years.

"Project ECHO is deeply grateful to SMECO and its employees for their incredible generosity and community spirit. Their support helps us provide safe shelter, warm meals, and vital resources to individuals and families in crisis—keeping our doors open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This gift directly strengthens our mission to serve Calvert County residents experiencing homelessness and reminds us that when our community comes together, hope truly shines," said Dave Whitaker, program director for Project Echo of Calvert County.

The Robert J. Fuller Transitional House serves Charles County through the Lifestyles of Maryland Foundation.

"LifeStyles is so grateful for the generous donation from SMECO. These funds



From left Barbara Saylor, board president, Three Oaks Center of St. Mary's County; Natalie Cotton, SMECO's government and public affairs director; Sandy Washington, chief executive officer, Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc.; Kim Williams, executive assistant, Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc.; and David Whitaker, program director, Project Echo, Inc. of Calvert County.

will help with the operational needs of the Robert J. Fuller Transitional House for men by providing for supplies and materials needed to assist these gentlemen in achieving independence and self-sustainability," said Sandy Washington, MSW, CNE, chief executive officer, Lifestyles of Maryland.

Three Oaks Center provides support for unhoused individuals in St. Mary's County.

"SMECO's generous donation of \$21,000 is making a profound and immediate impact on Three Oaks Center's ability to serve our community," said Sasha Seenath, executive director, Three Oaks Center. "These funds are allowing us to fully renovate a home that deteriorated after sheltering four highly dis-

abled individuals throughout the pandemic. In just a few weeks, this restored space will reopen as the Andre Rice Emergency Men's Shelter—named in honor of our late Board President—and will once again provide safety, stability, and hope for those who need it most. At a time when potential federal funding cuts threaten essential services, having committed partners like SMECO empowers us to continue supporting our most vulnerable neighbors, including elderly individuals, veterans, and single parents. Their support truly strengthens the fabric of our community."

SMECO employees raised the money through the Annual Charity Golf Outing in

September. The event draws support from SMECO vendors, the cooperative's board and executive team, and employees who volunteer. The cooperative selects different organizations each year to benefit from its fundraising events.

Contributions, which may be tax deductible, can be made to the SMECO Charitable Foundation.

"SMECO employee fund-raisers have contributed more than \$665,000 to local organizations over the last 13 years," said Natalie Cotton, SMECO's government and public affairs director. "We are especially grateful to our business partners who generously contribute by providing donations and participating in the event. This year's Presenting Sponsors were Nokia and Wesco. Diamond Sponsors include SMCIS and Booth & Associates LLC. Platinum Sponsors include ACES, Altec, AUI Power, AV3, Beuchert Excavating, BF Joy and Larry Young, Black & Veatch, CEEUS, CMI General Contractors, ConvergeOne/Juniper Networks, Ensales/Virginia Transformer Corporation, G&S Technologies New Jersey, ICF, Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Milwaukee Tools, Mitsubishi Electric Power Products, National Transformer Sales, New River Electrical Corp, OCC Location Services, Preferred Sales, PennLine, Rodgers Consulting, Sargent & Lundy, Scheibel Construction, Schneider Electric, Sumter Utilities, Super Salvage, The Okonite Company, TRC Companies, Utility Line Construction Services, and The Wills Group/Southern Maryland Oil. We rely on Golf Tournament sponsors for their donations and we appreciate their assistance."

Press Release from SMECO

CSM Earns Marketing, Public Relations Awards

In November the CSM Creative Services team attended the NCMPR District 1 conference in Pittsburgh, and took home six District 1 Medallion Awards:

- Gold — Career Pathways Magazine 2025
- Gold — Brand Promotional Video
- Silver — Spring 2025 Continuing Education Schedule
- Silver — Annual Report 2024
- Silver — Strengthening Our Net: CSM Workforce Development Piece
- Bronze — CSM Logo

Avis McMillon, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications, said many of these projects were new initiatives

taken on by a strong and talented team to raise awareness of the college, its programs, and impact on the region.

"These awards honor the talent and dedication of a team that cares deeply about effectively communicating CSM's story," McMillon said. "Many of these recognitions come from new initiatives the team embraced this year and reflects our commitment to expanding access, highlighting opportunity, and showcasing the pathways available to students across our region. I'm incredibly proud to lead such a creative and mission-driven group of professionals."

One notable award the team earned was Gold Medallion for the Career Pathways

Magazine. The magazine highlights programs offered on the Regional Hughesville Campus, career opportunities in high-demand fields such as skilled trades and healthcare, student success stories, and academic-to-career advising. The final product brings these opportunities to life through compelling graphics, photography, testimonials, and articles.

Director of Creative Services Lisa Bernabel said it was great to see the team recognized for a project they worked so hard on.

"This project was a huge accomplishment, and I'm really proud of how hard this team worked to produce a high-quality

product," Bernabel said. "Receiving this recognition from our peers all across the East coast is well deserved, and a testament to their talents and dedication."

This is the largest number of NCMPR awards CSM has earned in the last five years.

District 1 includes Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec, and United Kingdom.

Press release from CSM

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CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of November 10, 2025 – November 16, 2025, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,422 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 49
- Disorderly: 13
- Domestic: 15
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 45
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 1198
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 35
- Traffic Complaints: 82
- Traffic Stops: 454
- 911 Hang Ups: 55
- ARRESTS: 40

CDS Violation: 25-96787 On November 16, 2025, at approximately 1:17 a.m., Cpl. Plant observed a vehicle parked off the roadway near the public hunting entrance, facing Main Street in Prince Frederick, with no lights on. Cpl. Plant made contact with the occupant, identified as **Robert Lance Hutchinson**, 53 of Prince Frederick. During the investigation, four glass smoking devices containing crack cocaine residue were discovered, and crack cocaine was located in the vehicle's cup holder. Hutchinson was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center, where he was charged with CDS: Possession - Not Cannabis and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.

Theft: 25-95530 On November 12, 2025, Deputy Grabill responded to Walmart, located at 10600 Town Center Blvd. in Dunkirk, for a reported theft. Store personnel reported that a male suspect had stolen merchandise and fled the area toward Town Center Blvd. Deputies made contact with the suspect, **Tarez Rashaad Mason**, 19 of Lothian, who admitted to stealing a

magnetic pickup tool and throwing it into the nearby woods. DFC Bowen subsequently located the magnetic pickup tool along with a 70-piece ratcheting multi-bit set still in its original packaging. The total value of the recovered stolen property was approximately \$25. Mason was issued an indefinite trespass notice from Walmart and was charged with Theft Less Than \$100 – Shoplifting.

Theft: 25-95528 On November 12, 2025, Deputy Grabill responded to the Calvert County Sheriff's Office District 1 Office, located at 10500 Southern Maryland Blvd. in Dunkirk, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised both his registration plates were stolen from the victim's vehicle while parked in the 8100 block of Jennifer Lane in Owings. The estimated value of stolen property is \$100.00.

Theft: 25-96304 On November 14, 2025, Cpl. Plant responded to the 5000 block of Long Cove Lane in Port Republic for the reported theft. The complainant advised an unknown suspect stole carpet/flooring tools that were stored under the victim's deck. The estimated value of stolen property is \$5,000.00.

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.mycv.com/share/a39520678>. Tipsters may also email ccsotips@calvertcountymd.

December is Designated Driver Month in Calvert

The Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse (CAASA) reminds residents and visitors that December is Designated Driver Month across the country, observed from Dec. 1 to Jan. 2.

As you celebrate the holidays, CAASA urges county residents to plan for a safe ride home if your celebrations involve alcohol or other substances that could affect your ability to drive safely. In addition, remember not to mix alcohol with other drugs, including prescription and recreational drugs.

Residents are encouraged to designate a sober driver, stay overnight or use a ride service to avoid driving while impaired.

Officials also warn that mixing alcohol with prescription or over-the-counter

medications can significantly increase impairment and lead to dangerous or even life-threatening consequences.

In addition, providing alcohol to anyone under 21 years old is both hazardous and illegal. Violations can result in fines of up to \$5,000 per offense.

Each year, Calvert County law enforcement officers make more than 400 impaired-driving arrests. Local agencies continue to work diligently to keep roadways safe, particularly during the busy holiday season.

Learn more about CAASA at www.CalvertCountyMD.gov/CAASA.

Press release from Calvert County Government

Three County High School Football Teams in State Championships

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

It's been a championship season to remember for Calvert County high school football teams. Three of the four teams are playing in the championship games this weekend. At least one of them is assured of being a state champion.

That's because two of the county's teams will be facing each other. No. 2

Huntingtown will face off against No. 8 Northern at 3:30 Saturday at Navy-Marine Corps Stadium for the Class 2A championship.

Hoping to repeat as state champion for the second year in a row, No. 1 Patuxent will square off against No. 3 Fort Hill at noon at Navy-Marine Corps Stadium for the Class 1A title.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Public Meeting Set for Rural Legacy Expansion

Calvert County Department of Planning & Zoning invites residents to a public meeting on Thursday, Dec. 11, to learn about a possible expansion of Maryland's Rural Legacy Areas (RLAs) in the mid-eastern area of Calvert County.

The state-run program seeks to permanently preserve large, rural, contiguous tracts of land for environmental and agricultural protection.

Property owners within RLAs may voluntarily sell conservation easements to the state.

County staff will also review additional land preservation programs available in Calvert County.

The meeting will be held at 6 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 11, at the Calvert County Administration Building, located at 150 Main St., Prince Frederick.

For more information on preservation options, including the Rural Legacy program, visit the Calvert County Land Preservation webpage at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/LandPreservation. An interactive map will soon be available to allow landowners to view their property in relation to potential RLA expansion areas.

Those who cannot attend may send letters of support, opposition or questions to Jennifer.David@calvertcountymd.gov.

Press release from Calvert County Government

Overnight Bridge Flagging Operation Planned

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration will repair aerial navigational lighting on the MD 4 Bridge over the Patuxent River (Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge) at the Calvert/St. Mary's County line starting 9 p.m. Thursday night, Dec. 4.

The overnight work will continue until 5 a.m. the following morning, weather permitting.

During the maintenance work, crews will close one lane and alternate traffic in the open lane using a flagging operation. Portable variable message signs will be placed along area state roads to make travelers aware of the lane closure.

Overnight travelers should plan extra

travel time to cross the bridge.

Drivers are asked to stay alert, stay focused, look for reduced speed limits as well as driving pattern changes, and slow down in work zones.

Customers may contact the District 5 Office at 410-841-1000 or toll-free at 1-800-331-5603 for additional information; they may also dial #77 on their mobile devices for roadside assistance.

For a list of all major State Highway Administration projects, visit Project Portal or the homepage at roads.maryland.gov. For a look at real-time traffic conditions, go to chart.maryland.gov.

Press release from MD SHA



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Citizens Log in on Town Center Planning

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Results of the most recent survey of residents in Owings, Huntingtown and St. Leonard, and local information meetings there, were shared with the planning commission at a recent meeting.

Long Range Planner Tay Harris said, "Participants or respondents of the survey (were asked) to identify certain characteristics of the town center. These characteristics include main draws, biggest challenge, biggest change, what was loved the most about the town center, the top three topics to be addressed in the master plan update and one element to be retained or enhanced."

"The last question asked respondents to indicate if they would like the town center to remain a town center or be rezoned a rural commercial district. In the Huntingtown and Owings surveys. An estimated 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to see the area rezoned or commercial district. While an estimated 40 percent indicated that they would like it to remain a town center. For St. Leonard, the response was reverse with an estimated 40 percent of residents would like to see the area be rezoned as a rural commercial district, while 60 percent indicated they would like it to remain a town center."

She said regarding town center or not, "It was clear that this information was confusing to some people. So, moving forward we'll be addressing those issues and providing more clarity."

Harris said, "The survey results for all of the town centers revealed a consistent message. Participants strongly valued the rural and small-town character and its sense of place. They also enjoyed the convenient access to local shops, dining, and essential services. They also supported local businesses."

"Respondents desired enhanced walkability, small scale amenities, and local shops and businesses without compromising the small-town scale. They value also desired improvements in appearance, safety, and vibrancy of existing commercial areas, preferring revitalization rather than introducing new large businesses."

"They also would like to see carefully managed growth at current scales, protecting green space, natural resources, landscapes, and agricultural areas. In addition, they would like to see that the community identity for each area is maintained while they express these desires and values. They also expressed concerns across the three town centers. And these concerns include intensity of traffic and congestion, especially in recent years. Limited pedestrian connectivity, vacant buildings in need of revitalization, and the potential for overdevelopment that would overtake the rural character of these existing areas."

She said the Huntingtown public input meeting occurred on Oct. 14 at the Huntingtown Fire Department with 25 attendees. She said, "Overall, there were concerns that existing businesses could be eliminated or restricted under the rural commercial district and that area residents would

lose services and be unable to attract desired businesses like gas stations. There were also questions about grandfathering in which uses remain permitted, as well as uncertainty about whether designations such as major town center versus minor town center versus rural commercial district are strict or flexible. They indicated just confusion altogether."

The Owings public input meeting occurred on Oct. 20 at Grace Brethren Church with 41 attendees. She said, "The issues of existing infrastructure and road safety have related comments, and they were generally about high speeds on MD 260, unsafe left turns on MD 260 from Old Solomons Road, shoulder driving on MD 260 and frequent accidents, as well as backups along Thomas Road. Dangerous conditions at the bus stop. Inadequate traffic control devices, worries about proposed roundabout impacts and concern that current problems on the roadways must be resolved before growth occurs."

The St. Leonard public input meeting occurred on Oct. 6 at the Crossroads Church with 40 attendees. She said there were "concerns about the differences between the rural commercial district and the town center and the permitted use density and grandfathering provisions as well as the ability to subdivide family land. There were also questions about the impact on state funding if the area were no longer designated a town center."

She said on the meetings and online surveys, "It was very clear that people were just very, very confused about the Town Center master plan update process. They also thought that these decisions were already made and we were going to come out and tell them that it had been made."

As the result of the input, she said, "We recommend, moving forward, that we would eliminate the rural commercial district option. It's going to create a lot of nonconforming uses."

One option is creating once again major and minor town centers and staff are investigating how to identify the distinction.

She said, "The county now has a chance to redefine the definition of minor town center since we're kind of recreating it. And what we're seeing is the prior older definition, we're actually trying to capture what's on the ground now," adding, "I believe it is close to, if not the same, as the older definition."

She was asked if the distinction could be whether or not there would be public water and sewer.

Harris said, "That would seem to be a good distinction. However, when you look at St. Leonard, it currently has public water," adding, "And there was discussion at the St. Leonard meeting, there were comments that people acknowledged that if they want to have a sustainable town center and they want to be able to revitalize their vacant buildings, they would need a wastewater system."

She noted, "However, they did indicate they did not want high density residential development. And so, we would be exploring a smaller package plant that would just serve the commercial area. And the use can be controlled by the zoning."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Commissioners Delay Decision on Prince Frederick Plan

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Approaching the sixth year of the process, the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners has once again delayed a decision on the update of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan. The 30-day delay came after another public hearing on the plan on Dec. 2.

Commissioners Mike Hart and Catherine Grasso led the concerns about the expansion of the town center to include land to the north that was previously an employment zone and land to the south that includes the Symphony Woods and Calvert Towne subdivisions. The concern is that expansion could in the future have the unintended consequence of opening up the land for further development.

Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley updated the status: "At a public hearing on July 16, 2025, the Planning Commission determined the draft chapters are consistent with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, as required by Title 3 of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. On August 26, 2025, P&Z presented the draft chapters to the Board of County Commissioners (board) to solicit feedback and seek permission to advertise a public hearing. On September 30, 2025, the board held a public hearing

to consider the draft chapters and receive public and department comments on impervious surface, public transit improvements, and adequate public facilities for roads. The board voted to keep the record open until P&Z addresses pending comments on the build out status of the Symphony Woods and Calvert Towne subdivisions and mitigation for adequate public facilities for roads."

The commissioners were told that the proposed expansions mirrored what was called for in the overall county comprehensive plan.

But the two commissioners continued to press staff for the reasoning for the expansions.

Long-range Planner Tay Harris said about the incorporating of the employment zone area to the north of the town center, "In the comprehensive plan, it is recommended that those go away. They never served the purpose that they were meant to serve and to be incorporated into the town centers. And so that is what that potential expansion is doing. The one on the north is just to incorporate the hospital."

Grasso asked, "So this is just to include CalvertHealth. This isn't townhouses or apartments or anything that could possibly come here. Campus expansion!"

Brinkley responded, "To be clear, the hospital has talked about building housing for interns and physicians on that property, but that's just been a proposal. We haven't seen anything, but it would be tied to that campus."



Commissioner Catherine Grasso



Commissioner Mike Hart

And it would need the four dwelling units per acre that the town center requires in any zone, he added.

Hart said, "I know I'm saying the same thing over and over. I just want to be clear, because when you get in the weeds, like Commissioner Grasso said, when you see proposed expansion, when you read that, so this is not enabling any new building or what have you or anything like this. It's just incorporating what is preexisting? Is that what we're doing here?"

Brinkley responded, "If you look at the

employment center, areas that were zoned employment center, those are vacant. But we're following the policy that's called for in the comprehensive plan to include them in the town centers. These areas, if you look at them closely, they have a lot of environmental constraints. There's not a lot of development that can occur in these areas."

But in the end the commissioners wanted to know what the development potential was there before they made a decision.

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Proposed Doubling of Treasurer's Salary Discussed

Delegate Challenges Commissioner Healthcare Benefit

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners have submitted to the county legislators the results of the work of the commission appointed to review compensation for elected officials. The recommendations include:

- Raising the Treasurer's salary from \$57,500 to \$114,000.
- Raising the commissioner president from \$50,500 to \$58,000
- Raising the county commissioners' salaries from \$48,000 to \$53,000.
- Raising the Board of Education chair from \$6,500 to \$8,500.
- Raising the board of education members from \$5,500 to \$7,500,
- No change for the sheriff, state's attorney, or judges of the orphan's court

All salaries, if approved by the legislature, would go into effect next fiscal year. There would be annual increases thereafter.

The commissioners submitted the recommendations without comment or

commendation.

The commission also did make some recommended changes for benefits, which brought some reaction from Delegate Todd Morgan (R: 29C).

He prefaced by saying, "I think they've done a very good job getting the basics and if I look at this thing in parallel to when I was a commissioner in St. Mary County (for three terms) to where we are today over here, I think some of the numbers line up pretty closely if that's a reasonable statement."

He added, "I know there's going to be a lot of consternation publicly about the raising of the treasurer salary from 57 to 115."

He observed, "You can't sit there and say the bridge separates two counties. They both have the same job. They both come to work. To me it's parallel. I don't have a dog in the fight on this one. The board of education (is) relatively close."

But then he said, "I do have a couple concerns on the proposal for healthcare for county commissioners. As you all know, I was there for 12 years, so this is not a new subject for me. First, anybody have any idea

how they came up with 10 years of service since you're elected for four-year terms? Four times three is 12 and all of a sudden a 10 comes in. Which sort of an anomaly to me."

Morgan said, "When I was commissioner and I think that you guys think pretty much in a similar manner, the backbone of your county was your county employees. No county employees, things don't get done. And in many respects, those guys don't have a voice because they work for you and they're going to be quiet. So, somebody up there is going to be their spokesperson at the end of the day."

He asked, "How many years does a county employee have to work to receive the same benefit? End of the day?"

He was told there's a rule of 80, "which means you combine years of service plus the employee's age."

Morgan said, "The way the law would be proposed is as long as you're a county commissioner for 10 years, regardless of age, you get the same benefit as the rule of 80 for a county employee." He questioned that but was told that's what the committee recommended.



Del. Todd Morgan

After presenting a total of eight items to the legislators, the commissioners invited public comment. Joseph Cormier of Owings questioned the increase of the treasurer's salary.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

County Seeks Increased Bonding Authority

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has asked the county legislative delegation to increase their bond authority by \$80 million to cover a wide variety of projects.

At a Dec. 2 joint meeting, County Attorney John Norris explained, "Of that, \$54,666,500 is General Capital Bonding authority requested. And the remaining \$26,290,580 is enterprise bond authority that has been requested. The list of projects is long and distinguished on both sides, including the Northern Middle School, Hall Aquatic Center roof and HVAC replacement, countywide paving, Prince Frederick Loop, and Southern Middle School.

There are a number of replacement apparatus under the general capital total. Then

there's the Solomon's Wastewater Treatment Plant enhanced nutrient removal upgrade, which will allow that plant to continue operation and produce fewer pollutants that are being discharged into the waters of the state.

"There are sewer collection, rehabilitation to prevent overflows and leaks, and the Appeal Landfill construction of a transfer station are some of the projects that are in the Enterprise Capital Fund."

Norris noted, "There are protections in place that the county does not borrow more money than it can afford to pay back.

Some of those include the ratio of the general fund debt service to the general fund revenue, which is capped at 9.5 percent, and the ratio of the general fund debt to assessed value of taxable real property, which is capped at 1.8 percent. Presuming that this bond authority request is passed through the general assembly and signed

by the governor, it together with the almost \$24 million of existing unutilized authority would total about \$104 million. If the \$104 million were sold next fall about a year from now at 4 percent, the county would remain well under the general fund debt service to general fund revenue cap of 9.5 percent and also under the 1.8 percent of the debt to the assessed taxable real property."

Del. Todd Morgan questioned whether it all was needed at once, considering some work might take multiple years.

"The state is in really bad financial shape. It's proven that we're \$1.4 billion in debt going into this coming fiscal year. We're \$3 billion in debt the next year. So, to me, a lot of costs are going to get passed down to the counties. My crystal ball. So, my question now becomes to you looking at all these projects here that you want to have, which are all very meaningful, I note, to Calvert,

but how many have we completed in the first couple years?"

Commissioner President Buddy Hance observed, "Northern Middle School is already under construction. This is just to finish the job. The Hall Aquatic Center is scheduled to start this spring and be completed by next fall. Countywide paving is an annual thing that we will do next year. The Loop Road has already started construction."

He added, "Southern Middle School HVAC will be done this year. Also on this list, there's a lot of fire equipment, ambulances and apparatus that'll all be purchased this year. So, it is a long list, but, if you really look through that list, you'll see a lot of those things are not big projects that are going to take a long time."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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Fisher Calls for Data Center Transparency

Delegate Chides County for Non-Disclosure Agreement

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Data centers have become a hot issue in Calvert County, with supporters citing tax and job benefits, and detractors citing environmental issues such as energy and water needs.

When the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners prepared their legislative package to give to the county's legislative delegation for consideration for the upcoming Maryland General Assembly session, item number 2 asked for a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) authority, similar to what the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant and the Cove Point LNG plant have. But when the commissioners met with the legislators on Dec. 2, that PILOT proposal had been removed.

Which led Calvert County Del. Mark Fisher (R: 27C) to observe, "To me that's kind of like the elephant in the room."

Fisher said, "Because that's been talked about for a year, I know. And lots of discussion, not necessarily just here, but across the community. Some of it is not so nice."

So, he asked, "I'm trying to figure out, have the county commissioners entered into an agreement with a data center?"

"Nope," responded Commissioner President Buddy Hance.

"Okay. Have they entered into a non-disclosure agreement?" Fisher asked.

"Yes," replied Hance.

Continuing with the dialogue, Fisher asked, "How do you enter into a non-disclosure agreement with a large user? I mean, what is it that you can't talk about? Just trying to figure out, I mean, you signed an NDA, so I guess the question is you can't talk about it. Is it correct? Is it top secret?"

"It is a binding legal agreement, though it is not with a data center company," County Attorney John Norris responded.

Fisher replied, "Okay. And is there more than one data center? Is one of them on the county property in the southern part of the county?"

"There's no proposed data centers on any county property," Hance retorted.

"Okay," Fisher said. "Have you entered into an agreement for the property in the southern part of the county in Lusby?"

"No," Hance answered.

Because that's what I'm hearing from people," Fisher insisted. "They're saying that there's agreement with Kelly Group?"

The Kelly Group, located in Pennsylvania, is listed as a financial management company.

"You hear lots of things on the street," Hance said.

"Is the county's intent to offer a tax abatement to a data center at some point?" Fisher asked.

Hance responded, "That would be a future discussion if there was an opportunity."

Fisher said, "Because we were discussing that last year. And I guess one of my con-

cerns was that we would give a tax break to one of the largest industries in the country, if not the world. At the same time, the county residents got a tax increase in property taxes and income taxes. And so, then suddenly this went away during an election year. And I just want to make sure that that's real."

Fisher added, "Because in my real job we deal with this industry a lot, so I know enough about it. And also, being on the utility committee, I know that they use a lot of electricity. So, what I'm trying to advocate for here is more transparency. Because my sense is it doesn't exist. There isn't transparency on this matter."

Fisher noted, "For example is a data center at Calvert Cliffs at the Constellation property could potentially, depending on the kinds of chips they use and its size, use as much power as all the homes in Calvert County combined. And we already have a power shortage in the state. Now, the power shortage that exists in the state is not the fault of the county commissioners to be clear. So, I want to make that very clear. But also, I don't want the county commissioners to contribute to it because beginning in January there's going to be another major increase in electricity bills, primarily in BG&E territory and Pepco, but also potentially elsewhere. So, my request is that this be more in the open and that if the county does decide to put a data center on county property, that it better darn well go through an RFP and not single sourcing with Kelly Group. He's a developer, he's not a data center company."

Fisher said, "I know your argument Buddy, is it's going to be somewhere. And we're advocating in Annapolis to require data centers to build their own power adjacent to the data center so that they have enough power that they build and pay for so that they power their own data centers. That's the right way to do it. That's what most states are doing. This state isn't because (Gov.) Wes Moore opposes it because he opposes natural gas, which is the fastest way. Obviously, you're going to say, well we have nuclear power, but 100 percent of the nuclear power at that power plant is being produced and is already on the grid and is being used and is spoken for."

He insisted he does have concerns, such as "Lack of transparency, lack of inclusion of all the county commissioners, the decision making, the cost of electricity, the fact that there isn't an RFP, the fact that the people don't know what the heck's going on. And the fact that you're asking to give these huge companies, the largest companies in the world, a tax break and that is wrong. So, I just wanted to get that out there because there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding about what my position is on it and why your Pilot bill didn't get passed. Now you know why."

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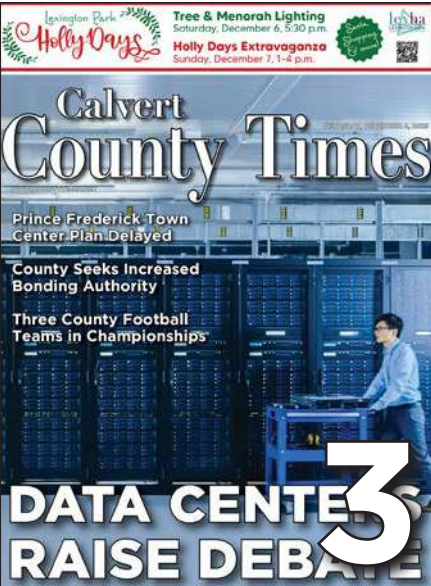
“TO ME THAT’S KIND OF LIKE THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.”
DEL. MARK FISHER ON DATA CENTERS



LOCAL 4
Commissioners propose nearly doubling county treasurer’s salary



LOCAL 6
Prince Frederick plan delayed again



ON THE COVER 3
Delegate questions non-disclosure agreement, data center possibility

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, DEC 4 Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 28°	FRI, DEC 5 Show Showers Hi: 34° Lo: 30°	SAT, DEC 6 AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 41° Lo: 31°	SUN, DEC 7 Partly Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 31°
MON, DEC 8 AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 37° Lo: 23°	TUE, DEC 9 Partly Cloudy Hi: 38° Lo: 32°	WED, DEC 10 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 37°	THU, DEC 11 Partly Cloudy Hi: 48° Lo: 30°

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Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

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**Prince Frederick Town
Center Plan Delayed**

**County Seeks Increased
Bonding Authority**

**Three County Football
Teams in Championships**

**DATA CENTERS
RAISE DEBATE**