



St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026

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**Leonardtwn Approves
Apartment Concept**

**Two Fatal Fires
Under Investigation**

**Traffic Stop Leads to
Drug Seizure, Arrest**

**ST. JOHNS TURNS
MATTRESSES
INTO MEALS**



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“THIS TOWN WAS DYING UNTIL WE STARTED GETTING APARTMENTS ABOVE SOME OF THE RESTAURANTS.”

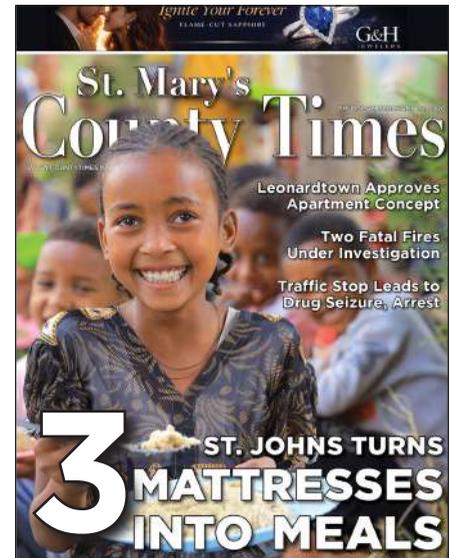
LEONARDTOWN ADMINISTRATOR LASCHELLE MCKAY ON PROPOSED APARTMENT PROJECT



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LOCAL 5
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ON THE COVER 3
St. John's school sells mattresses to feed kids in Malawi

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 26	FRI, FEB 27	SAT, FEB 28	SUN, MAR 1
 Showers Hi: 46° Lo: 32°	 Sunny Hi: 50° Lo: 32°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 58° Lo: 40°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 52° Lo: 28°
MON, MAR 2	TUE, MAR 3	WED, MAR 4	THU, MAR 5
 Snow Showers Hi: 34° Lo: 29°	 Rain/Snow Showers Hi: 41° Lo: 35°	 AM Showers Hi: 50° Lo: 37°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 51° Lo: 43°



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Get a Good Night's Sleep for a Good Cause

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

It's a way to support a good cause with a twist. You can enjoy a good night's sleep while at the same time supporting a charity.

St. John Regis School in Hollywood is hosting a one-day-only fundraiser with a twist: the school gym will transform into a full mattress showroom this Saturday, Feb. 28, from 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., featuring namebrand mattresses, bed lines and accessories, and personalized comfort consultations.

A portion of every sale supports Mary's Meals, the global school feeding charity that provides daily meals to three million children attending 5,800 schools across 16 countries, meaning each mattress purchase helps fuel lifechanging support for children facing hunger. Just \$25.20 feeds a child for an entire school year.

St. John Regis School is already making an impact: the school currently supports two schools in Malawi that feed 2,000 children, demonstrating how a local initiative can create a powerful global ripple effect—children helping children.

St. John's also sponsors a summer camp for local kids who can make a connection with their counterparts in Malawi.

At the summer program, the school's staff of high school and college students love working with the young children who are so blessed to not experience real hunger. Knowing that there are children, the same age as the campers, who go to bed hungry at night, has ignited a desire to do more – to sponsor and feed the 846 children at Chaone Primary School in Malawi for an entire year.

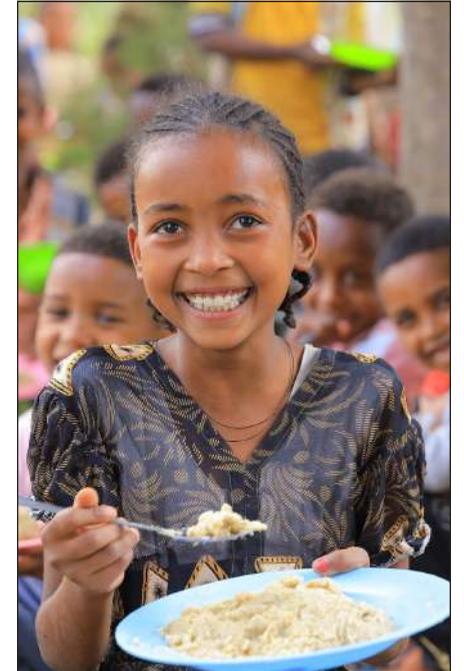
Over the last seven years, through many fundraisers and generous donors, they have raised \$243,119, enough money to feed Chaone Primary School students for eight years, plus a second school in 2020 — Glory Academy in Liberia with 353 students, and a second school in 2026 — Thava Primary School in Malawi with 615 students!

Mattress fundraiser coordinator Stephen McCarthy is with a company that since 2005 has been going all around the country doing similar mattress fundraisers. McCarthy works largely with churches, and he is delighted to be back at St. John's and hoping to smash their record of 60 mattresses sold at the inaugural event in 2023.

He said, "We predominantly work with schools, and we work with about 6,000 different programs across the United States, and we've raised about \$70 million doing this."

McCarthy explained, "Fundraising with mattresses is fundraising with a product line that has an enormous demand. Approximately 40 percent of the United States has some sort of issue with a mattress in their house, or needs replacing for one reason or another, and 10 percent go out, about 35 million beds sold every single year. But the question begs is, that if you've got 40 percent of the people that have some sort of issue or possible replacement match in their house and only 10 percent buy, why are 30 percent of the people not buying?"

He responded, "A store, for example, is very expensive. The largest mattress retailer in the United States, Mattress Firm only



sells about 10 or 12. and so they have to make a lot of money when they sell them. They're not nasty people. They just have to make a bunch of money when they sell one. If you go buy one online, you got about a 50 percent return rate because you didn't get to try it out."

He said, "There's other options. You go get them in some of the smaller box stores and stuff like that. They're really not in the mattress business, but they sell them."

"And then there's us," he said, "where the community finds out about the mattress sale, not because of some clever ad or something like that, but because a kid or a church is holding it at their school and they pass out flyers in the neighborhood or put up little signs in the yard and stuff like that. For example, a kid walks next door and says to their neighbors, you know, we're doing a fundraiser at St. John's Church. We're raising money for Mary's Meals."

"They're going to have a whole bunch of beds on display, like 30 beds and pillows and sheets, and you can save a whole bunch of money by going there. And, at the same time, you get a great deal on a mattress, and you can help raise money for our program.

So, here's a flyer if you'd like to come down and check it out. And then when you talk to enough people, there's a whole bunch of people out there looking for these things. And so, they say, 'What the heck? It's our next-door neighbors promoting it. Let's just go down to the church or go down to the school and check it out.'"

It's a formula that has proven successful because it's the proverbial "win-win" situation.

"We set up the showroom and then we do all the selling, write up all the orders, collect all the money, and have all the products custom built for the customers. And they actually did save money."

He added, "The last time I was at St. John's there, we sold 60 mattresses in seven hours. And the reason we could do that, the prices are low because we, we just don't have time to sell full retail."

"The reason it works," he said, "is people need to go buy this thing. They don't want to go to a store, suddenly they find out it's at the church a couple miles from their house, and it's raising money for the church, and this just becomes the reason to want to go get it."

What mattresses are available? McCarthy

said, "We have relationships with Simmons and Helix and Purple, which is probably the most recognized brand and mattresses right now. We have relationship with American Sleep, all these different top-notch manufacturers."

"You've never heard of American Sleep," he noted, "but it's only been around since 1893."

Don't need a mattress? St. John's asks to consider donating to the Caritas Resource Center at St. Mary's Ryken. Caritas provides vital support to individuals and families transitioning from homelessness to housing in the St. Mary's County community by offering a range of essential items, including furniture and clothing.

Here's a link to the St. John's camp page about their involvement with Mary's Meals - <https://www.stjohnsummerprogram.com/marysmeals>

Here's a link to some information about Caritas at St. Mary's Ryken and their work transitioning local homeless individuals and families to housing - <https://www.smrhs.org/campusministry/caritas-resource-center>

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Town Planners Approve Apartment Concept

Concern Expressed About Design

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Leonardtown Planning Commission has approved the concept plan for a three-story, 16-unit apartment building on Washington Street at the entrance to the downtown. The planners urged the builder to return with a revised design before the final approval is given.

The project drew concern at the Feb. 17 meeting that it was out of character with the neighborhood. The project will be on a vacant lot between two two-story, single-family residences. But the property is zoned "commercial business," which allows for apartment buildings.

The building will have one side facing Washington Street with parking on the rear and back that would be visible from Washington Street, the main entrance into downtown.

The project is called G&H Residences, and the owner is listed as Joan Harris.

According to Town Planner Mike Bailey, "The land area is 0.17 acres or 30,927 square feet. The property is located on the west side of Washington Street, just south of Church Street and across from St. Aloysius Catholic Church."

Bailey said, "All water and sewer utilities are present on site. The sanitary sewer is located on Pope Street, and the public water is located on Washington Street."

Commission Chairperson Jean Moulds set the tone for the concerns by saying, "I think we all have a lot of concerns about the size of the building that's going into that space. When we worked with Washington Street and anything around town, we tried to have everything fit in with what is on either side and there's houses on either side of this space."

She added, "I will say in the past we have been able to work with the people that were building and get something that blended into the town."

Bailey said design was done at the final approval stage, but Moulds told the property owners, "I know we're not approving that, but I would strongly encourage y'all to bring back the design that is not a big white rectangle, that it fits in more with what the town looks like, has more architectural features."

Builder Wayne Davis said, "As far as how the facade works and doing that, we can certainly work with what you're talking about, getting more in line if you want, (with) the adjacent buildings."

He said the rent for the one- and two-bedroom units would be \$1,800 to \$2,000 monthly.

"It's an entrance into Leonardtown," Moulds insisted, "and I don't want people coming to Leonardtown and that's the only thing they're going to see, rather than looking down and seeing our nice square and everything, that the eyes are drawn to this big monster building there."

Several town residents who spoke shared Moulds' concerns.

And commission member Doug Isleib said, "I think every time somebody came into town, or even when you drive down there, you might say, I wish maybe we had done some things on that building. There are some really nice things that could just make it look so much smaller."

Commission member Sean Lawson expressed traffic concerns. "I use that one light that gets us in and out of town frequently and the traffic is starting to get longer and longer, and it is pretty rough to deal with. And then when we have our town events, how does that impact it? How do we move traffic around the town events when we're letting the residents get in and out while we've shut down everything else?"

But Town Administrator Laschelle McKay emphasized, "One of the things we've worked really, really hard on over the last several years is working toward our comp plan, which some of you participated in. And parking is certainly very, very important. We have located a couple of different sites that we're looking at for a parking garage. We know where it needs to be located. We've had consultants look at it, it's just the cost of it. We just recently purchased some trams that we're hoping we'll be running around town to the various spots to help out. Now that we have so many restaurants and things like that, they're actually on site; we're put-

ting a program together for the summer."

McKay noted, "This has been an infill lot for 25, 30 years within our plans, as a commercial development. And we do push them up to the sidewalk and have certain requirements in the downtown, but it has its zoning rights and they've met all of their requirements."

She added, "As a whole, we are trying to address different issues with the parking, and I think they've done their share. They're not asking for relief or anything. It's really the commercial that is driving the parking for the most part because this site is going to have two spaces per unit. They're one- or two-bedroom units. That is more than adequate for anywhere you go."

McKay said, "I think you just really need to consider the development factor of it. This town was dying until we started getting apartments above some of the restaurants. If you look at the Seymour Town building, which is a food-based building, where Antoinette's Garden is, the PNC bank. I mean now there's activity at night. That's what you want in the downtown. And for these businesses to survive, they need to have that business. This will actually save people from driving because they live in town. They can walk to the restaurant."

"It really is fully an economic development project."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

EVENING
APPOINTMENTS
NOW AVAILABLE



INFORMATION AND
RESOURCES FOR
OLDER ADULTS

EVENING
APPOINTMENTS
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- Home-Delivered Meals
- Home & Community-Based Services
- Housing Resources
- Long-Term Care Options
- Legal Referrals
- Transportation Services & Resources
- Utility Assistance Resources



- Medicare/Medical Assistance
- Prescription Drug Coverage
- Physical Fitness/Life Enrichment Programs
- Caregiver Support
- Dementia Resources
- Financial Assistance Programs, and more

Mechanicsville Fire Claims Woman's Life



Photo courtesy of Mechanicsville VFD



Photo courtesy of OSFM

A joint investigation between the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office continues after a house fire claimed the life of a Mechanicsville woman early in the morning of Feb. 20.

At around 6:40 a.m., firefighters from the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department and surrounding departments responded to 39580 Walnut Circle for a reported house fire with possible entrapment. Firefighters arrived within minutes to find heavy fire conditions throughout the two-story residence.

Due to safety concerns, including extensive hoarding conditions within the home, firefighters were forced to conduct exterior suppression operations as portions of the structure began to collapse.

With the assistance of heavy machinery, Deputy State Fire Marshals remained on scene throughout the day and later located the sole occupant deceased within the residence.

Due to the extensive damage, the origin and

cause of the fire remain under investigation.

The victim has been preliminarily identified as Karen Krenzler, 69. Her body was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore, where positive identification and the cause of death will be determined.

"Severe hoarding conditions create an extremely dangerous environment, allowing fire to spread rapidly while blocking access for both occupants and firefighters," said Acting State Fire Marshal Jason M. Mowbray. "In situations like this, those conditions can delay rescue efforts and significantly increase the risk of serious injury or loss of life."

A joint investigation by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction is standard procedure for all fatal fire incidents.

Press release from OSFM

Fatal Barn Fire Under Investigation



A joint investigation between the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Maryland State Police continues after a barn fire claimed the life of a 62-year-old Chaptico man late Tuesday night.

On Feb. 24 just after 10 p.m. firefighters with Leonardtown, Mechanicsville, and several other nearby fire departments responded to 36111 Roosevelt Boulevard for a reported barn fire with entrapment. 911 callers advised that a barn was on fire, and a person was trapped inside.

Firefighters arrived to find a 50-by-100-foot barn nearly fully engulfed in fire. Family members on scene confirmed that one individual was still inside the structure. After the fire was brought under control, firefighters located a deceased male victim within the barn.

Deputy State Fire Marshals learned that earlier in the evening, the victim had gone into the barn to attempt to jump-start a vehicle. According to the victim, he contacted her

while working inside, requesting a fire extinguisher. When she went outside, the fire had quickly spread throughout the barn. During her attempt to reach him, she sustained burns to her hands and was transported to MedStar Washington Hospital Center for treatment.

The victim was located near a vehicle inside and was pronounced deceased at the scene by fire department personnel. He has been preliminarily identified as the 62-year-old homeowner.

The victim was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore, where positive identification and the cause of death will be determined. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

A joint investigation by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction is standard procedure for all fatal fire incidents.

Press release from OSFM

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

CASE NO: C-18-CV-26-000073

NAR Solutions, Inc.
c/o Steven Harding
PO Box 31700
Omaha, NE 68131

Plaintiff

v.

Robert E Richards
Christopher Hyson
GBIF, LLC
West 11, LLC

Defendants

and

St. Mary's County, Maryland
(for Maryland Annotated Code 14-1836(b)(1)(v) purposes only)

and

Any and all persons having or claiming to have any interest in the property and premises situate, lying and being in the County of St. Mary's described on the Tax Rolls of St. Mary's County Collector of State and County Taxes for said County known as:

48574 SMITH DR, RIDGE, MD 20680, District 1, described as follows:
28,314 SQ FT, W/S SMITH DR, NR ST INIGOES
and assessed to HYSON MARY E.

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this proceeding is to secure the foreclosure of all rights of redemption in the following property sold by the Collector of Taxes for St. Mary's County and the State of Maryland to the Plaintiff in this proceeding:

48574 SMITH DR, RIDGE, MD 20680 in St. Mary's County, Maryland,
described as:

All that lot of tract of ground, situate, lying and being in the First Election District of St. Mary's County, State of Maryland, aforesaid and described as follows, that is to say: Beginning for the same at a locust stake set on the shore of the Smith Creek and at the edge of a field, said stake marking the Westerly corner of the present lot of the grantee herein conveyed in 1957; thence leaving said Smith Creek and running with the Southeasterly line of said Hyson lot north 64 deg. 45' East 304.9 feet to a locust stake set on the Westerly line of a twenty-foot right-of-way leading from the entrance road to the residence of the grantors herein, thence with said right-of-way South 11 deg. 00' East 138.75 feet to a locust stake; thence leaving said right-of-way and running with the lands of the grantors herein South 73 deg. 17' West 169.0 feet to a locust stake and North 68 deg. 42' West 150.7 feet to the point of beginning containing 0.651 acres of land, more or less as surveyed June 19, 1958 by W.L. Bowman, Registered Land Surveyor;

and assessed to HYSON MARY E

(the "Property").

The Complaint states, among other things, that the amounts necessary for redemption have not been paid.

It is thereupon this 4th day of February, 2026, by the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, ORDERED that notice be given by the insertion of a copy of this Order in some newspaper having general circulation in St. Mary's County once a week for three (3) successive weeks, warning all persons interested in the Property to appear in this Court by the 4th day of May, 2026, and redeem the Property and answer the Complaint, or thereafter a final judgment will be entered foreclosing all rights of redemption in the Property and vesting in the Plaintiff title to the Property free and clear of all encumbrances.

Debra J. Burch
Clerk of Court for St. Mary's County

Sheriff's Office Mourns the Loss of Ralph Butler

With great sadness, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office announces the loss of one of our own, Ralph Jerome Butler, Civilian Security Specialist and retired Corrections Corporal, who died early Feb. 24 at his home.

Ralph was a treasured member of our agency, known for his steady presence and professionalism. He served as a Correctional Officer at the Detention and Rehabilitation Center for more than 23 years before retiring in March 2022 as a Corporal. Ralph returned to work as a professional staff member in June 2022, bringing his knowledge and expertise back to the Detention Center.

Sheriff Steve Hall said, "When I think about Ralph, I think about the things that I love best about the people I work with, and that is how they go about doing their work in selfless, humble ways. Ralph was never comfortable in the spotlight; the only spotlight he was interested in was making sure it was put on the people who needed help. He was always looking for people in need and helping them find ways to ease their burdens. Ralph was one of the humblest people I've ever met. His is a loss that just can't be replaced."

His absence will leave an immeasurable void in St. Mary's County. "Ralph was one of those very special people who touched our hearts," Warden Mary Ann Thompson said. "He was always kind and trustworthy, and he treated everyone with respect."



As our agency mourns this loss, our Peer Support Team, Critical Incident Team, Chaplains Corps, and Command Staff are actively supporting employees to ensure they have access to care and the resources they need.

We will share funeral arrangements and service information as they become available.

We ask our community to keep Ralph's family, friends, and colleagues in your thoughts and prayers.

Press Release from SMCSO

Traffic Stop Leads to Drug Arrest

On Saturday, Feb. 21, 2026, while conducting proactive patrol operations in Lexington Park, a deputy from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office initiated a stop for a traffic violation on a 2006 Chevrolet Tahoe and discovered a quantity of controlled substances (CDS) in the vehicle and on the driver.

Additional units, including K-9, responded to the area, and a free-air sniff of the vehicle by K-9 Kyra yielded a positive alert for possible CDS. As a result, the vehicle and driver were searched.

During the search, deputies located cash, bags of suspected cocaine, and a bag of suspected crack cocaine on the driver, identified as David Leroy Harvey, Jr., 33, of Great Mills. Additional cash and suspected CDS paraphernalia were located inside the vehicle.

Harvey was arrested and transported to the Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown, where he was charged with



David Leroy Harvey, Jr.

CDS possession and possession with intent to distribute. The suspect remains incarcerated.

Press release from SMCSO



LOCAL
COMMUNITY NEWS
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County Times
ST. MARY'S - CALVERT

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<p>6.98 lb. Certified Angus Beef Boneless Bottom Round Roast</p>  <p>Butcher's Best Boneless Bottom Round Roast 5.98 lb.</p>	<p>12.98 lb. Certified Angus Beef T-Bone Steaks</p>  <p>Butcher's Best T-Bone Steaks 9.98 lb.</p>	<p>6.98 lb.</p>  <p>Butcher's Best Boneless Beef Stew 6.98 lb.</p>	<p>2.98 lb.</p>  <p>USDA Inspected Bone-In Pork Buff Steaks 2.98 lb.</p>	<p>3.98</p>  <p>16-Oz., Mild Or Hot Swaggerly's Sausage Roll 3.98</p>
<p>6.98 lb.</p>  <p>40 To 50-Ct. Texas Gulf Shrimp 6.98 lb.</p>	<p>5.99 lb.</p>  <p>Fresh Perch Fillets 5.99 lb.</p>	<p>14.98 lb.</p>  <p>Large Snow Crab Legs 14.98 lb.</p>	<p>6.98 lb.</p>  <p>Frozen Jonah Crab Claw & Arm 6.98 lb.</p>	<p>2/\$7</p>  <p>2 To 3-Oz., Frozen Lobster Tails 2/\$7</p>

Beer, Wine and Liquor

<p>12-Oz. Bottles 12-Pack Modelo Especial 17.99</p> 	<p>12-Oz. Cans 30-Pack Coors Light 23.99</p> 	<p>12-Oz. Bottles 18-Pack Michelob Ultra 16.99</p> 	<p>12-Oz. Bottles 12-Pack Landshark Lager 13.99</p> 	<p>12-Oz. Bottles, All Flavors 6-Pack Angry Orchard 10.99</p> 	
<p>1.75L Bulleit Straight Or Rye Whiskey 48.99</p> 	<p>750mL Whistlepig 6-Year Rye 42.99</p> 	<p>1.75L, All Flavors Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey 38.99</p> 	<p>1.75L Evan Williams Black 24.99</p> 	<p>1.75L Ketel One Vodka 34.99</p> 	
<p>750mL Olmeqa Altos Repasado Or Silver Agave Tequila 26.99</p> 	<p>1.75L Beefeater London Gin 30.99</p> 	<p>750mL, All Flavors Bacardi Rum 20% OFF</p> 	<p>750mL Aperol Liqueur 24.99</p> 	<p>750mL Jagermeister Liqueurs 24.99</p> 	
<p>1.75L Jameson Irish Whiskey 45.99</p> 	<p>750mL, Selected XXL Wines 10.99</p> 	<p>750mL Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc 14.99</p> 	<p>750mL, All Flavors Barefoot Bubbly Wine 9.99</p> 	<p>1.5L, All Flavors Sutter Home Wine 9.99</p> 	
<p>1.5L Martini & Rossi Asti Spumante 18.99</p> 	<p>750mL Meiomi Chardonnay 14.99</p> 	<p>750mL Bernard Griffin Merlot 17.99</p> 	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3>Wine of the Month</h3> <p>750mL Bogle Wines 9.99</p>  </div>		
<p>750mL Boneshaker Zinfandel 18.49</p> 	<p>750mL Hahn Pinot Noir 10.99</p> 	<p>750mL Minuty Rose 21.99</p> 			<p>750mL J. Lohr Pure Paso Red 19.99</p> 

WED 25	THURS 26	FRI 27	SAT 28	SUN 1	MON 2	TUES 3
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MEET CHEETAH

Hi, I'm Cheetah! At 6 years old, I'm an elegant girl who qualifies for the Frosted Faces February promotion, which means my adoption fee is cooler than the other side of the pillow. Only \$5!

I'm a refined lady with a "by appointment only" social calendar. I enjoy my alone time, followed by exclusive lap appearances when I decide you are worthy. Teenagers? Acceptable. Tiny humans? A bit too loud for my royal ears. I prefer to be your one and only feline superstar. Dogs? Never met one and not currently accepting auditions.

If your home features peaceful vibes, fluffy blankets, and a lap available upon request, I'm ready to retire from the wild and rule your living room instead!

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>. Adoption hours: Mon-Fri 11am-4pm and Sat 10am-3pm.



MEET JAXX

Jaxx is a 2.5-year-old Pit Bull Terrier who has been waiting far too long, and we truly don't understand why. He's sweet, affectionate, eager to learn, and has that perfect mix of playful energy and snuggly charm. If you've ever wanted a dog who can make you laugh, keep you company, and love you endlessly, Jaxx is your guy. If you are interested in meeting with Jaxx or learning more about him please contact Animal Relief Fund (ARF) at 301-866-0303 or visit www.animalrelieffund.org



Leonardtown Veteran Helps Kids Get a Bed of Their Own

Leonardtown veteran Andrew Jilcott is being recognized in the VFW's Still Serving campaign for helping deliver something many children take for granted — a bed of their own.

Jilcott continues his commitment to service as delivery manager for the local chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace. The nonprofit builds and delivers beds to children in St. Mary's County who have been sleeping on floors, couches, blankets or shared mattresses.

For many of these children, it's the first time they have ever had a bed.

"The minute these kids see their very own bed for the first time is nothing short of amazing," Jilcott said.

Jilcott says growing up in a tight-knit rural community taught him the importance of showing up for neighbors in need. Today, he channels that same spirit into ensuring every child in his county has a warm, safe



Andrew Jilcott

place to sleep.

Jilcott is a member of VFW Post 2632.

Submitted article from Veterans of Foreign Wars

County Group Awarded Humanities Grant

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) has been awarded the 2026 Maryland Humanities SHINE grant!

UCAC was one of only 30 nonprofit organizations in the state to be awarded \$5,000 in general operating funding through the Hatza Memorial Grant Program SHINE (Strengthening the Humanities Investment in Nonprofits for Equity). SHINE Grant recipients include museums, historic sites, preservation & historical societies, and community & cultural organizations. Awarded organizations reside in twenty-three Maryland counties and Baltimore City.

The grant funds may be used for general operating expenses and provide full flexibil-

ity to nonprofits, allowing them to determine where funds are most needed. UCAC will utilize the grant funds to continue a number of major programs, including its oral history project, Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration, and events held in partnership with St. Mary's County museums, historical societies and public schools.

The SHINE Grant Program honors the legacy of Marilyn Hatza, Maryland Humanities' late Director of Grants and Community Engagement, and is funded by the State of Maryland via the Maryland Historical Trust.

Press Release from UCAC

Four Quilts of Valor Presented



PAX Sound of Freedom awarded four Quilts of Valor on Feb. 21 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lexington Park. Receiving their quilts (l to r) are: Donna Lynn Watson (U.S. Army, 3 years), Barry Scott Watson (U.S. Army, 32 years), Tiffany Burley (U.S. Marines, 20 years) and Andrew Delligatti (U.S. Marines (6 years).

Those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces are entitled to a Quilt of Valor. For more information about receiving a quilt or to help make them, contact Debbie Felton at 443-745-0647.

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Auction expected to be online for viewing & bidding on or about March 2, 2026.

Online auction will close on

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 beginning at 6 pm.

In-person auction preview will be Friday, March 6, 2026 from 4 – 6 pm.

www.FarrellAuctionService.com

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Unlock the full potential of your 401(k)

Your 401(k) is one of the most powerful tools for securing your financial future. The question is: Are you using it to its full potential?

Here are some strategies to help you maximize its benefits:

- **Earn your employer's match.** It's a good idea to contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) plan. (In 2026, you can put in up to \$24,500, or \$32,500 if you're 50 or older. If your plan allows, there's also a "super catch-up" contribution of \$11,250 for people aged 60 to 63, for a total contribution limit of \$35,750). At least put in enough to earn a matching contribution if one is offered. Otherwise, you're shortchanging yourself. For example: Your employer matches 50% of your contribution up to \$5,000. If put in \$8,000, your employer's 50% match is \$4,000, and you're leaving \$1,000 "on the table."
- **Give your plan a raise.** When your income increases, consider increasing contributions to your 401(k). When you get a bonus or a tax refund, you could use some or all of that to boost your retirement savings.
- **Evaluate the Roth option.** When you invest in a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, lowering your taxable income that year. Your earnings grow tax-deferred and are taxed when you withdraw. If your employer offers a Roth 401(k), you contribute after-tax dollars, so your taxable income doesn't drop that year. However, withdrawals in retirement, contributions and earnings alike, are generally tax-free. (Employer matching contributions and related earnings remain taxable.) If you expect a higher tax bracket in retirement or want to diversify tax treatment for flexibility in retirement, consider the Roth option. In 2026, the Roth option must be used for catch-up contributions if you earn more than \$150,000 and you are 50 or older. Consult your tax advisor before deciding.
- **Build an appropriate investment mix.** You may have multiple investment options in your 401(k). The driving principle early on is growth so your plan can fund a long retirement. But growth-oriented investments are naturally riskier than fixed-income vehicles. When starting your career, you may prefer a portfolio weighted toward aggressive growth, as you have years to recover from downturns. Nearing retirement, though, consider shifting to a more conservative mix. A financial advisor can help you choose an appropriate mix at different stages, based on your risk tolerance, time horizon and goals.
- **Keep your plan intact.** At times, you may feel a financial pinch that leads you to consider taking out loans or early withdrawals from your 401(k). However, this can cause you to incur taxes and penalties and will likely slow the growth needed to help reach your retirement savings goals. Taking steps to prepare for unexpected expenses, such as building an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, can help you avoid dipping into your 401(k). You may also be able to find other ways to access cash.

By following these steps, you can unlock the full potential of your 401(k) and position it as a cornerstone of your retirement income.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.

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



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Shirley Reeves, 86

Shirley Ann Reeves, 86, of Leonardtown, MD, died in her home on February 20, 2026.

Born on June 15, 1939, in Leonardtown, MD, she was the daughter of the late Emerson Taylor and Grace Norris.

Mrs. Reeves attended St. Michaels Catholic School and moved away touring the country as a Navy spouse. Returning to the county in 1990, she worked as a Fiscal Officer at Pathways, retiring in 2009.

She is survived by daughters, Lynne Molen of Leonardtown, MD and Debbie Weinrich of Leonardtown, MD; sons, Christopher Scott Reeves of Leonardtown, MD and Jerry Payton of Buffalo, IA; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; a brother, Jerry Taylor of Lusby, MD; and many nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by a brother, Larry Taylor, and a sister, Joan Aud.

Private services will be held.

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

Cloise Boyd, 66

Cloise Ann Boyd, 66, of Mechanicsville, MD, passed away on January 19 at Hospice of the Chesapeake in Charles County, surrounded by family and friends.

Born on February 28, 1959, in Beeville, Texas, she was the daughter of the late Wesley Irion and the late Elizabeth Morgan. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Robert Morgan. She is survived by her husband, James Boyd; her children, James Morgan and Elizabeth Morgan; her siblings, Kathy Day, Charles Irion, Allen Morgan, and Karen Arthur; as well as her grandchildren.

She found her greatest happiness with her children and grandchildren. Her interests included cooking, fishing and crabbing, gardening and tending her flowers—if it bloomed, she grew it—home canning and making jelly to share with others, bird-watching (especially hummingbirds), spending downtime watching her favorite soap operas, and caring for all sorts of pets.

Her home was always open to anyone in need of a place to stay, whether for a night or longer. She worked in the printing industry for more than 30 years at Printing Press, Inc. in Leonardtown, MD, alongside the late George Klear, Pritzi Ely, Kerry Klear, and Jill Klear.

Cloise made a lasting impression on all who knew her and will be deeply missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held on February 28, her birthday, for family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Hospice of the Chesapeake Foundation, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, MD 21122-4303, Attn: Gift Processing, or online at www.hospice-chesapeake.org/giving/donate-now/.

Jack Lenderman, 94

YNC Jack Erman Lenderman, USN (Ret.), age 94, of Leonardtown, MD passed away on February 23, 2026 at Hospice House of St. Mary's in Callaway, MD with his loving family at his side.

He was born on January 2, 1932 in Denison, TX to the late Clem Ritchie and Effie Lou Lenderman. His mother died when Jack was a young boy, and his maternal grandparents, the late Jack and Polly Lenderman, adopted him and raised him with love, humility, and compassion for others.

Jack graduated Denison High School and joined the United States Navy at the young age of 17. Jack served as a stenographer during the Korean War for the Panmunjom Peace Talks in 1953. Jack also served tours in Japan and Puerto Rico before being stationed at NAS Patuxent River, where he met the love of his life, Eleanor Regina "Jean" Lenderman, at a local dance. Jack loved to dance, especially the Jitterbug, and so did Jean. After three years of courtship, the two married on June 25, 1960 at Our Lady's Catholic Church – Medleys Neck. Together they celebrated over 65 wonderful years of marriage.

During his 20 years of dedicated service while in the US Navy, he and his wife were stationed in Norfolk, VA, where they welcomed their first child; then in Cartagena, Spain, where their second child was born, and lastly at Patuxent River, where they welcomed three more children. He retired on February 27, 1970 after 20 years of devoted service to his country. He then embarked on a successful 18-year career as a life insurance agent with Kansas City Life Insurance Company, consistently achieving high sales honors and being awarded amazing vacations around the world that he and Jean would forever remember, including trips to Bermuda, Hawaii and Europe. His final career led him to public service with the St. Mary's County government, working for the Health Department as an environmental health inspector for 20 years before retiring.

Jack was passionate about gardening and regularly shared his harvest with friends, neighbors, fellow softball players and church members. He took great pride in keeping an immaculate garden, growing everything from asparagus to zucchini. His wife spent many summers canning his harvest, but there was more than enough to share with everyone. He was an avid reader, hunter, softball player and sports enthusiast. He co-founded and directed the SMC Budweiser Tournament which raised funds for disabled children for over 20 years. Jack was inducted into the SMC Softball Hall of Fame. He and Jean volunteered for Meals on Wheels delivering many meals to those in need for over 5 years.

Jack was a past member of the Fleet Reserve Association, Branch 93, in Lexington Park, MD and a longtime member of St. George's Catholic Church in Valley Lee, MD.

In addition to his beloved wife, Jean, Jack is also survived by his children: Michele Lenderman of Kansas City, MO, Michael Lenderman of Leonardtown, MD, Sharon Lenderman of Los Angeles, CA, Mark Lenderman of Rehoboth Beach, DE, and Lisa Lenderman (Steven Poore)

of Glenwood, MD; grandchildren: Jaclyn Thompson (Brock Thompson) of Sydney, AUS, Erik Lenderman of Baltimore, MD, and Karly Plickebaum of Kansas City, MO; and extended family and friends.

Family will receive friends on Monday, March 2, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at St. George's Catholic Church, 19199 St. Georges Church Road, Valley Lee, MD 20692. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Reverend John Nguyen at 12:00 p.m. A Graveside Service will follow the Mass at Our Lady's Catholic Church Cemetery – Medleys Neck in Leonardtown, MD.

Serving as pallbearers will be Michael Lenderman, John Adams, Dan Adams, Bobby Bogie, Jamie Bogie, and Bob Triplett.

Memorial contributions in Jack's name may be made to Hospice House of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD and Leonardtown Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 299, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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

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

Lou Guy, 79

Lula Hammett "Lou" Guy, 79, passed away at her residence in Avenue, MD on February 19, 2026. She was born on June 8, 1946, in Leonardtown, MD, to the late Ethel

Marie Ridgell Hammett and Ignatius Abell Hammett. She was preceded in death by her husband Joe Matt's Guy, whom she married on November 6, 1965, in Holy Angels Catholic Church, Avenue, MD and who preceded her in death on December 9, 1999.

Lou is survived by her children Wayne Guy (Arlene) of Avenue, MD, Missy Oliver (Brian) of Budds Creek, MD, Tracey Wood (Frankie) of Leonardtown, MD, Nick Guy (Cathy) of Chaptico, MD, seven grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and siblings, Carney Hammett of Charlotte Hall, MD, Cecilia Atkins of California, MD, and John Hammett of Avenue, MD. She was preceded in death by her siblings, Daniel Hammett, Agnes Wathen, Evelyn Wathen, Jerome Hammett, Doris Norris, and David Hammett.

Lou was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and graduated from Margaret Brent High School in 1964.

Lou loved being with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She enjoyed watching the Washington Commanders, Hallmark movies, and playing bingo.

The family will receive friends on Monday, March 2, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 AM in Holy Angels Catholic Church, Avenue, MD with Rev. James Oberle officiating. Interment will follow at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery, Bushwood, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Glenn Dean, Jonny Oliver, Matt Guy, Travis Guy, Kenny Hammett, and Blaize Turner. Honorary pallbearers will be Hannah Oliver, Olivia Guy, Boone Guy, Jaxon Dean, Elliott Oliver, and Pearson Oliver.

Contributions may be made to the

Seventh Dist. Vol. Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 7, Avenue, MD 20609.

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.

Christine Dennis, 93

Bessie "Christine" Dennis, 93, passed away peacefully at the Hospice House of St. Mary's on February 13, 2026, with her family by her side.

Christine was born on December 2, 1932, in Bradbury Park, MD (now Suitland, MD) to the late John Henry and Bessie Mae (Cox) Hennen. On August 31, 1950, she married Howard Wendell Dennis Sr, who preceded her in death on May 20, 1992.

Throughout her life, Christine lived in many Maryland towns, as well as Washington DC, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Montana, and Florida, embracing each place she called home. No matter where life took her, she cherished time with her family and took pride in tending her plants. She was especially known for her love for hearts, hummingbirds, and teapots and for spending her days carefully documenting her life in notes that almost always included the date, time, and weather. Christine's gentle nature was a blessing to all who knew her. She offered warmth, patience, and understanding, leaving a lasting impression on every heart she touched.

She is survived by her children, Howard Dennis Jr. (Melinda) of Port Orange, FL, Nina Brown (Bob) of Hollywood, MD, and Joyce Owens, widow of F.D. "Buddy" Owens, of Leonardtown, MD; her grandchildren, Christine Adams (Richard), Jennifer Vallandingham (Tracy), Ryan Brown (Allison), and Lindsay Bradburn (Bobby); her step-grandchildren; her great-grandchildren, Hailey, Dustin, Trevor, Blaine, Brooke, Indy, and Korben; her step-great-grandchildren; her siblings, Cindy Nahrwold and Maxine Phillips; her sister-in-law, Doris Hennen; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Howard Dennis Sr; her parents John and Bessie Mae Hennen; her son-in-law, F. D. "Buddy" Owens; and her siblings, Randolph Hennen, John W. Hennen, Madeline "Maggie" Mosier, Frank Hennen, Henry "Happy" Hennen, George "Leslie" Hennen, Carrie "Lizzy" Jordan, and Wavelene McDonald.

Family will receive friends for a visitation on Friday, February 27, 2026, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm, with a Memorial Service beginning at 12:00 pm at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Interment will be held at a later time.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, PO Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650 or a charity of choice.

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

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

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Summer Camps



Summer Camps Abound in St. Mary's

By Vada Mercer
Contributing Writer

From sailing on the waterfront of St. Mary's College of Maryland to robotics, athletics and faith-based programs across the county, summer camps in St. Mary's County offer children opportunities to build skills, form friendships and grow beyond the classroom.

One option for older campers looking for adventure on the water is Brendan's Sailing Camp, hosted at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Led by U.S. Sailing certified instructors, the program offers both overnight and day sessions focused on navigation, boat safety and the "Rules of the Road."

Campers gain hands-on experience learning the parts of the boat and basic maneuvers. When off the water, team building continues through swimming, movie nights and group games designed to build confidence and camaraderie.

The overnight camp, open to ages 14 to 18 years old, runs July 12 through 18 at a cost of \$1,850 per camper. The day camp, for ages 11 to 18, will be held July 20 to 24 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for \$605. Scholarships are available for interested participants through the camp's website.

Another option for outdoorsy campers is the Greenwell Foundation, which is offering 5 themed summer programs this year. The lineup includes three-day horseback riding and horsemanship camps, as well as four-day fishing, nature, and river camps.

Located at Greenwell State Park along the Patuxent River, the programs are open to children of all abilities ages 7 to 12 and



Children start their day at St. John's with music and dance. Photo courtesy of St. John's Summer Program.

emphasize hands-on outdoor adventure and experiential learning.

In addition to youth programs, Greenwell offers a "Camp Buddy" leadership opportunity for teenagers ages 13 to 15 interested in assisting counselors and developing mentoring skills. Details about the Camp Buddy application will be posted on the foundation's summer camp webpage.

Sessions run throughout June and July from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For younger children interested in nature-based exploration, Camp Creation at Camp Maria Retreat Center offers a four-day outdoor immersion experience in Breton Bay. Situated on a 10-acre property featuring a boardwalk with canoes, an outdoor altar, firepit, swimming pool and sports courts, the program blends environmental education with faith formation.

Children ages 7 to 12 participate in activities such as crabbing, fishing, kayaking,

swimming and ecosystem awareness projects focused on bay health. With daily prayer woven into the schedule, organizers say the camp aims to help "children connect with God, the wonders of creation, and one another through hands-on interaction with nature."

Camp Creation runs June 22 to 25 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and costs \$250 per camper. All buildings on site are wheelchair accessible.

Another faith-focused option is St. John's Catholic Day Camp in Hollywood. Established in 2011, the program offers more than 80 camp options throughout the summer for children ages 4 to 14, ranging from sports and baking to robotics and technology. Organizers describe their mission as providing "a safe, healthy, and holy environment where the kids can have fun and get to know Jesus Christ in a deeper way."

Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., with before care starting at 6:30 a.m. and after care available until 5:30 p.m. Registration

opens March 1 at 1 p.m., with organizers noting that sessions often fill quickly.

At St. Mary's Ryken High School, Summer Knights Camp offers a mix of themed activity camps and specialty programs for children ages 5 to 15. Running June 15 through July 31, the program includes physical and creative activities, with weekly traditions such as Water Wednesdays, Field Day Fridays and camper talent shows.

Camp hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with before care starting at 7 a.m. and after care ending at 6 p.m. New this year, lunch is included in the cost of camp. The program also offers sibling discounts, multi-week discounts and monthly payment plans to help families manage costs.

For children interested in martial arts and structured discipline, Black Belt Academy hosts weekly summer camps from June 10 to Aug. 14. Open to ages 4 to 15, the \$250-per-week program runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with before and after care available from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at no additional cost.

Campers participate in Tae Kwon Do training, weapons classes, field trips, arts and crafts and pizza parties, combining physical training with team-building activities.

For many local families, summer camps serve a greater purpose than childcare. They provide structured environments where children can develop confidence, explore new interests and deepen their sense of community.

With programs ranging from waterfront sailing, nature immersion, Catholic day camps and martial arts, parents have no shortage of options when school lets out.



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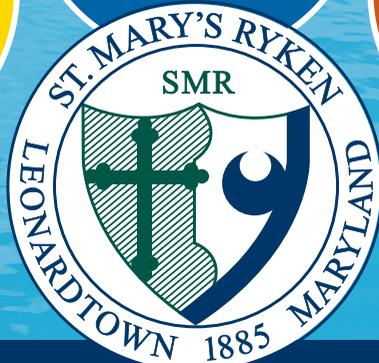
- Baking & Cooking
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St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Fri, Feb 27

Lenten Fish Fry or Steamed Shrimp

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

Lenten fish fry dinners or steamed shrimp dinners! Pancit, french fries, vegetable fritter or soup of the day. Dinners until 6:30 or sold out!

Poker at HVRS

43256 Rescue Lane, Hollywood
7 p.m.

Texas Hold'Em Bounty Tournament at Hollywood Vol Rescue Squad. \$65 buy-in for \$20k in chips. Rounds are 20 minutes each. Doors open at 6:30 pm, tournament starts at 7pm. BYOB, food and sodas will be available for purchase. Tables deal their own cards, dealers are not provided. Late Entries permitted until 1st break, approx. 8 pm cut off. No rebuys allowed.

HomeSpun CoffeeHouse Open Mic

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

Southern MD Traditional Music and Dance sponsored. Acoustic musicians of all skill levels are welcome to perform their favorite tunes or enjoy a night out listening to some local talent. Contact Chris Dudley in advance (ccdudley@rocketmail.com) to sign

up as a performer. Admission is \$8; children 17 and under (when accompanied by a paying adult) and performers are admitted free of charge. www.smtmd.org/new-events/

doxiemama1014@gmail.com

Thu, Mar 5

American Legion Post 221 Meeting

21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue
7-8 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.

Upcoming

Craft Vendor Fair

St. Mary's County Fair Grounds
42455 Fairgrounds Road, Leonardtown
March 7, 7 a.m. – 1: p.m.

Sponsored by 2nd District VFD&RS. Reserve a space for \$30.00 (each additional space \$20.00). For more information or to reserve a space/spaces contact: Diana at beaconplus@verizon.net or call 240-298-1780; or Becky at dbksk@atlanticbb.net or call 301-904-1656.

Community Yard Sale Inside

St. Mary's County Fair Grounds
42455 Fairgrounds Road, Leonardtown
March 7, 7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Reserve a space for \$20.00 (size: 8 ft. X 9 ft.); NOTE: An additional fee of \$10 will be charged for each additional table purchased for space. Danny D's Food Truck will be selling Breakfast & Lunch!; For more information or to reserve a space(s) contact: Becky at dbksk@atlanticbb.net or call 301-904-1656; or Agnes at agnes.birch54@gmail.com or call 301-904-0946.

DivorceCare Support Group

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
22375 Three Notch Rd., Lexington Park
March 8, 3-4:30 p.m.

DivorceCare offers support, answers and practical tools to help you manage the many stresses of separation and divorce and find healing. DivorceCare is a 10 week program that helps heal the pain of separation and divorce. We meet in small groups and respect your privacy. Meetings begin on Sunday. Please register by email at atthewell@ihmrc.org

"All Creatures Great and Small"

North End Gallery
Leonardtown
Month of March

Another exciting event celebrating North End Gallery's 40th year! Show runs March 3 – March 29. Opening reception First Friday, March 6th, 5-8 p.m.

Show lead contact: Bea Poulin, president.northendgallery@gmail.com

Sun, Mar 1

Quarter Auction Benefit

Knights of Columbus Hall
Ridge
1-3 p.m.

Cost: Regular bidding paddles are \$3 each, 2 for \$5, or 3 for \$7. Please bring your quarters for bidding. All in paddles will be available for \$45 each and include a bid on every program item. Enjoy a brown bag auction 50/50 raffle, and concessions on site.

For information or reservations please call 240-16-4224. Proceeds benefit Ridge Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Mon, Mar 2

Monday Night Poker

St. Mary's County Elks Lodge
45779 Fire Department Ln., California
7 p.m.

Buy-in: \$35. Blinds will start at 25-50 and progress every 20 minutes. No late entries will be accepted.

Please enter through the side of the building. For any question or additional details contact Linda Hill at 240-925-5697 or

An Amazing Community Event Awaits



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!



29th Run & Walk for Hospice Sat April 11 Leonardtown
 100% net proceeds benefit Hospice of St. Mary's in caring for the terminally ill
 Sign-Up/Sponsor at www.runforhospice.org

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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Fri, Feb 27

Maritime Performance Series: The Burnett Sisters Band

Calvert Marine Museum
7-9 p.m.

The Burnett Sisters Band—siblings Anissa, Sophia, and Anneli of Boone, North Carolina, joined by Geary Allen from Minster, England—are gifted multi-instrumentalists beloved on the traditional music circuit. To assign a genre to The Burnett Sisters Band would be to oversimplify the breadth of their musical influences—at a typical show, a driving bluegrass standard might be followed by an old-time fiddle tune, a classic Hank Williams song, a recognizable Geary Allen original, or a soaring gospel melody, all topped off with a flatfooting dance number by Anneli. Doors open at 6 p.m. with beverages available for purchase. Tickets are \$20 online up to one day in advance, and \$25 online or at the door on concert day.

Sat, Feb 28

Love Smart Summit: Navigating Teen Relationships Safely

Harriet Elizabeth Brown Community Center
901 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick
10 A.M.-2 P.M.

Registration Link: 2026uymlovesmart.eventbrite.com. Event is free to the public. Ages: teens to adults. Breakfast and lunch provided.

How to Kill a Tree

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
10-11 a.m.

Co-sponsored by the Chesapeake Beach Green Team. Speaker Ryan Cuccia will share best practices for caring for the trees in your lawn. This talk will include practical tips for selecting and caring for the best trees for your situation. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

“Grandma’s Hands” Film & Potluck

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
12 noon-2:30 p.m.

Join us for a showing of “Grandma’s Hands” and a celebration of local family favorites! Bring your favorite family recipe and the story behind it! Members of Calvert Eats Local and invited guests can bring samples to share for the potluck. We’ll watch the film at 12 p.m. and start discussion and potluck at 1p.m. If you’d like to watch the film ahead of time, you can see it here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/grandmas-hands-with-craig-sewell-wrgvxb/>. You must register to become a member of Calvert Eats Local in order to participate in the potluck (Health Department rules!). You are encouraged to bring your own plates, bowls, silverware, glassware and napkins but we will have a limited number of disposable items. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Mar 2

Book Discussion

Calvert Pines Senior Center
1-2 p.m.

Skate on over to discuss a high-stakes hockey match, small-town turmoil, and the search for light in the winter darkness. This month we’re reading “Beartown” by Frederik Backman. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Mar 4

WOW (Work on Whatever) Wednesday

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Bring your project and supplies. Whether it’s paper craft, scrapbook, quilting, origami, or whatever you’re working on. Come for the whole time or just a couple of hours. Get your projects done and make new friends! Registration is not required but you’ll get a reminder if you do. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Job Seeker Resources

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MD Labor Workforce—Veterans Services will be available in person to meet with those seeking employment-related sup-

port and community service information. This event focuses on Veterans Services, but all jobseekers are welcome to attend. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Morning Book Discussion

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
11 a.m.-12 p.m.

An instant New York Times bestseller, this is the electrifying true story of a young couple shipwrecked at sea: a mind-blowing tale of obsession, survival, and partnership stretched to its limits. “A Marriage at Sea” pairs an adrenaline-fueled high seas adventure with a gutting love story that asks why we love difficult people, and who we become under the most extreme conditions imaginable. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Chess Club

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
2-3:30 p.m.

Looking to sharpen your chess skills? Come drop in and challenge new opponents! All skill levels and ages are welcome. Please bring a chess board along if you own one. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tea and True Tales: Afternoon Book Club

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
2-3 p.m.

“The Waterman’s Widow” by Carol McCabe Booker. Who killed Captain Littleton Condiff? Into this tale of murder at the turn of the 20th century is woven the tale of the imprisonment and trial of Littleton’s wife, Bessie; the history of his Chesapeake Bay fishing village, Solomons Island; the harsh life of a waterman; and the texture of daily life in turn-of-the-century Maryland. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Alzheimer’s Caregivers Support

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
3-4 p.m.

Get tips and support from other caregivers. Facilitated by Susan Brayford and Sandra Raviv. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Dungeons & Dragons – ADULT

Calvert Library (Zoom/Roll20)
6-9:30 p.m.

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

Bilingual Conversation Hour: Spanish-English

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
6:30-7:30 p.m.

30 minutes in English and 30 minutes in Spanish! We will get to practice our English and Spanish Conversation Skills! 410-535-0291. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Upcoming

Dee of St. Mary’s Table Exhibit

Calvert Marine Museum
Saturdays, March 7 & 21
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Discover the museum’s historic skipjack at a winter tabling exhibit. Through hands-on interpretation and conversation with crew members, discover how watermen dredge for oysters, manage sails, and work on the Chesapeake Bay.

Community Workshop: American Garden Stories: People, Places, and Plants

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
Saturday, March 7
10:30am-11:45pm

Gardens are more than beautiful spaces—they are living records of culture, history, and human connection. Join Rebecca Martin of Smithsonian Gardens for an engaging talk that explores the stories behind American gardens, from those created for sustenance to those designed for beauty and joy. After the workshop, guests are invited to join Annmarie’s Horticulture team for an optional tour of the soon-to-be-awakening gardens that surround the Arts Building. Learn more at www.annmariegarden.org.

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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,

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Superintendent's Salary Set at Nearly \$300,000 Annually

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

When Dr. Marcus Newsome assumes the permanent role of Superintendent of Calvert County Public Schools on July 1, his salary will be approaching \$300,000 and is considerably higher than his predecessor.

Newsome's contract, which is available for viewing under his bio on the school board website, will be \$296,000 in the first year and will have an escalator clause in which his salary increases by two percent the second year, one percent the third year and a half percent in the fourth and final year of his contract.

The two percent increase in the second year will push his salary over \$300,000.

By contrast, former superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel made only \$215,000 yearly, with no automatic annual increase.

Townsel left the school system last July to head the Hartford, Ct. school system. Newsome came out of retirement in August to become interim superintendent.

In comparing the salaries, Newsome brought to the table considerably more experience, having been superintendent at several other school districts, while Calvert was Townsel's first.

Townsel quickly rose among the ranks of the state's superintendents to head their state organization.

Newsome said at the Feb. 19 meeting at which he signed his contract, "I'm quite humbled. When I first met you back in July,



Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marcus Newsome

I had no idea that we'd be at this place in time. I thought that at best I would be here for this year to try to serve as a bridge."

He quickly endeared himself to the board and the community.

The contract is much more than just a salary agreement. It goes on for six pages and also includes topics such as "Professional Responsibilities," and "Termination of Employment."

Newsome can terminate the agreement with 120 days' notice. The school board and superintendent can mutually terminate the agreement.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Commissioners Review Capital Budget

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on Feb. 24 got their first look at the staff recommended Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Year 2027.

The Staff-Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget totals \$86,217,635. The six-year CIP totals \$569,439,722.

Capital Improvement Projects and Grants Manager Danielle Russell, in a memo to the commissioners, wrote, "Each fiscal year, staff prepares a recommended Capital Budget and six-year Capital Improvement Plan for review by the Board of County Commissioners. The capital program identifies infrastructure, facility, technology, and enterprise investments necessary to maintain public safety, regulatory compliance, educational facilities, transportation infrastructure, and utility systems."

The CIP was presented in advance of the March 24 public hearing on the Staff Recommended Budget.

Russell added, "Recommendations were submitted by the appropriate county departments and then reviewed internally by staff from Finance & Budget and Public Works. The County Administrator then approved adjustments, which are reflected in the budget recommendations. The recommended program phases large projects across the six years to manage affordability, staff capacity, and construction sequencing. Compared to the prior CIP, staff has rephased several large construction projects, updated cost estimates to reflect current market conditions and adjusted scheduling to align with operational capacity."

Russell told the commissioners, "This is not a line-by-line project review. This presentation focuses on the overall capital framework, financing, sequencing, and policy compliance."

She added, "We are here to focus on four things. First, the FY 2027 capital request, \$86.2 million, and how this aligns with your strategic priorities. Second, the full six-year program, \$569.4 million and sequencing. Third, affordability, specifi-

cally looking at debt capacity and policy compliance. And finally, receive board direction at a high level."

Russell said, "Education and public works/transportation remain the largest drivers of the capital improvement plan. Public safety and recreation represent targeted investments. We continue working closely with the Fire and Rescue Commission to ensure service reliability throughout the county."

Funding for the CIP includes, "General fund debt is the primary source of revenue, and grants represent a huge portion, especially in the education and recreation resource projects. Right now, you'll see a \$12 million general fund contribution that may be adjusted based on the balance of closed projects as we continue to refine the budget during the process. Overall, the plan is structurally balanced for FY 2027."

She said, "The capital program aligns with the board's five strategic priorities. The emphasis is infrastructure driven, public safety, education, environmental compliance, and fiscal discipline. Those are our themes."

She noted, "The public safety investments focus on facility reliability and response capacity. That includes the detention center, medical unit, sheriff's district two facility, and fire and rescue apparatuses and station replacements. These projects address aging infrastructure, not service growth."

She added, "Education, and generational investment in education represents the largest share of the six-year program. Major drivers include the Calvert Elementary/Calvert Country co-location project and finalizing Northern Middle School. We're also continuing systemic maintenance, HVAC, roofs, and modernization. This protects existing assets and avoids larger future capital costs."

Commissioner Mike Hart called the presentation a Reader's Digest version, and the commissioners enthusiastically endorsed the way it was presented this year. They gave their blessing for it to be presented at the public hearing.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Two Killed, One Critically Injured by Falling Tree

Deputies from the Calvert County Sheriff's Office Patrol Bureau on Feb. 22 at approximately 4:44 p.m. responded to the area of North Solomons Island Road (MD Route 2) near Aspen Wood Drive in Sunderland for a reported serious motor vehicle collision.

Preliminary investigation indicates that a vehicle traveling northbound on Route 2 was struck by a falling tree that entered the roadway. The vehicle was occupied by the driver, Michael Lee Simpson, 60, of Deale; front passenger, Virginia Marie Quesenberry, 43, of Chesapeake Beach; and rear passenger, James Randall Detoto Sr., 62, of Chesapeake Beach.

Emergency medical personnel responded to the scene and located all three occupants entrapped within the vehicle. Simpson and Quesenberry were pronounced deceased at the scene. Detoto was transported to a local trauma center with critical injuries.

Anyone with information regarding this incident or events leading up to the collision is asked to contact DFC Samuel Grierson at 301-956-4488 or Samuel.Grierson@calvertcountymd.gov.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Press release from CCSO

In Remembrance

Jerry Gainey, 86



Jerome (Jerry) Gainey Sr. passed away Sunday February 8, 2026 of natural causes surrounded by his family. Jerry was born June 9, 1939 in Washington D.C.

Besides his family, Jerry's legacy is his success in the restaurant business. He, with his wife Peggy and 3 kids, opened two of the finest seafood restaurants in Maryland. His first restaurant, Jerry's Seafood, opened in 1976 in Seabrook, MD in Prince George's County where he and his family worked for 27 years until Jerry and Peggy retired.

Not ones to be idle, they opened a second restaurant, Jerry's Place, on route 4 in Prince Frederick after moving to Calvert County in 2008. Jerry was well known for his robust personality and hospitality. His customers were used to, and expected, his personal hands-on service frequently giving out samples and "treats" always living by his creed, "Hot food hot, cold food cold and served like you want to be served." He would happily invite anyone into the kitchen to show

off the kitchen's cleanliness and to introduce his staff, many of them family members. Long lines to enter his establishments were common and expected and thought to be part of "Jerry's experience".

Jerry was predeceased by Peggy, his wife of 49 years, and his brothers Billy and Tommy. He leaves behind his brother Jimmy, children Jerry Jr. (Marie), Eileen Ricker (Patrick Sr.), Debbie Nelson (Aaron), grandchildren Roddy Granzow (Bernie Sr.), Lauren Coe (Steve), Patrick Jr. (Meagan), John Gonzalez (Kelly), Dominic Gonzalez, Kirstyn Nelson, great grandchildren Bernie Jr., Jack, and Luke Granzow, Kevin, Ryan, and Kelly Coe, Reagan, Reese, and Patrick III Ricker, sister in law Bunny Marsico (Eric), and nephew Lloyd Khan (Beverly), and great niece Violet Khan.

The family received friends at St. John Vianney Roman Catholic Church 105 Vianney Lane, Prince Frederick, Maryland Monday February 16, 2026, from 11:00-12:00, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at noon. Interment followed in the church cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please donate in Jerry's memory to St. John Vianney Catholic Church or a charity of your choice.

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KNOW YOUR RISK FOR HEART

DISEASE

TALK TO YOUR PROVIDER



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Healthy Heart.**

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Chest Pain/Discomfort
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- Irregular Heartbeat
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- Trouble Sleeping

PREVENTATIVE STEPS

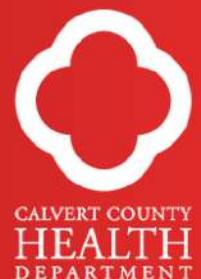
- Regular Exercise
- Maintain Health Weight
- Manage Stress
- Quit Smoking
- Regular Check-Ups

KNOW YOUR RISK

- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- High Blood pressure
- Obesity
- Family History
- Age (55+ men, 65+ women)

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Schedule an appointment today to discuss your personal risk factors. Ask about referrals to health department health education programs - Don't wait- your health matters



Rural Legacy Expansion Proposed

Would Downzone Some Properties

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A proposed expansion of the county's Rural Legacy Program to a large swath of land in the central part of the county could lead to the downzoning of property and reduction in development rights.

According to a memo from Director of Planning Jason Brinkley, "Maryland's Rural Legacy Program is a state-run program used in Calvert County to preserve large, contiguous tracts of land. Landowners' participation in the program is voluntary. Participating properties must lie within a designated Rural Legacy Area (RLA), which may be expanded by petitioning the state.

"The last expansion of Calvert County's RLAs occurred in April 2023."

Brinkley added, "Staff received interest in expanding the Rural Legacy Areas (RLAs), particularly the Calvert Creeks RLA in the county's central-eastern area between the Parkers Creek and Fishing Creek watersheds. Portions of the proposed expansion include properties currently designated as Tier III under the Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 ("Septic Law"). On Dec. 18, 2025, staff received confirmation from Debbie Herr

Cornwell of the Maryland Department of Planning that any Tier III properties included within an RLA must be redesignated as Tier IV. Absent other local or topographical restrictions, this change could affect development potential of properties in Tier III.

"With this clarification, staff are planning three informational public meetings in the northern, central, and southern areas of Calvert County to present the proposed expansion and gauge landowner interest. Additional outreach will be directed to landowners in the central-eastern area and to agricultural groups. Meetings are tentatively planned for May, June, and July after which staff will present the feedback to the Board of County Commissioners for further direction."

Rural Planner Jennifer David said the proposed area starts east of Prince Frederick and north of Dares Beach Road and runs towards Fishing Creek.

David explained the difference between Tier 3 and Tier 4. She said, "In the Tier 3, major subdivisions are permitted and can be developed with the approval of the planning commission. It's not automatic. The growth tiers are areas of the county in which future potential sewer and septic system use

is looked at."

She added, "In the Tier 4, that is not permitted at all. So that is the difference."

Commissioner Catherine Grasso, who asked the question, said, "So this would move it up to Tier 4 and that's a good thing."

David said, "It would force the density to be reduced in areas that are potentially currently Tier 3. It would move them into Tier 4."

David explained that after the public hearings "we would be bringing that information back to the Board of County Commissioners in the fall. If the direction is to move forward with whatever boundary is finally decided based on the input we get back from the public and the interest that we find, then we would work with RC&D (Resource, Conservation & Development) to develop the application for approval by the state next year. And that is due on February 1st of the following year. And then during the summertime and into the fall, they do their reviews and it would go to the Board of Public Works at the state level sometime, usually August and September. And after that, then we would just have to adopt a new map."

David said the largest parcel in the proposed area is a little more than 600 acres.

"The benefit of doing this is it provides another tool for preservation," David said.

The county's goal is to preserve 40,000 acres of which 32,000 acres has been accomplished.

Later in the meeting, responding to concerns about town center development, Commission Buddy Hance said, "The proposal is to down zone 13,000 acres. And people that don't want to see growth, like us, this is something that needs to occur to reduce potential growth in the future."

But he added, "You have to think about those landowners that are in that 13,000 acres that have owned that land and today have the ability to develop it. And, once you go through this process and if it follows through, they no longer have that opportunity. Just like the people in the town centers that own that land have the right to develop that land based on current uses and zoning.

"So, there's two sides to everything that we do. None of us wants to see traffic get any worse. None of us wants to see any more development, but there are certain individuals, just private citizens, that own property that are giving up something whenever we take away that option from them."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Revised Prince Frederick Plan Presented

Planner Set Another Public Hearing

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

After having it remanded back to them by the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners for further work, the Calvert County Planning Commission is now ready for another public hearing on the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan. The hearing will be March 18 at 7 p.m. at the county office building.

The planners were given an update on the lengthy process by Long-Range Planner Tay Harris. She said, "On September 30th, 2025, the Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing to consider the draft chapter and receive public and departmental comments regarding impervious surface updates for the North Battle Creek Watershed, the Parkers Creek Watershed, and the Hunting Creek Watershed. These are the watersheds in which the town center lies. The revisions also included information concerning Hunting Creek and its headwaters, which partially lies within the town center as well.

"The board also considered public transit improvements that encouraged the Maryland Transit Administration to establish a commuter bus route to Annapolis. New Carrollton, Greenbelt and College Park, restructure certain routes to reconnect Prince Frederick/ Dunkirk to Alexandria, Virginia and the Pentagon, and include planned improvements to Calvert County's bus system, and the Prince Frederick route. In particular, for more frequent service, timed transfers, a future dedicated transfer station, and potential new routes such as a

Prince Frederick/Hughesville connection."

Harris added, "The board voted to keep the record open until the Department of Planning and Zoning addressed pending comments regarding the build out status of Symphony Woods and Calvert Towne subdivisions and mitigation language associated with the adequate public facility for roads."

She said, "On December 2nd, 2025, the board continued the public hearing. The Department of Planning and Zoning confirmed the buildout status of the subdivisions, Symphony Woods and Calvert Towne, and also revised the draft chapter to reference the county code regarding adequate public facility for roads mitigation requirements. At this meeting, the board raised concerns about potential residential development on the employment centered zone parcels and related impacts on town center infrastructure. The employment centers and parcels were proposed for inclusion in the town center and designated suburban traditional, which allows up to four residential units per acre through transferable development rights."

On January 13th, 2026, the board continued the public hearing. She observed, "The Department of Planning and Zoning informed the board of the timeline for inclusion of employment center zone parcels into the town center. They were approved as part of the 2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan update on August 6th, 2019. They were revised and approved as part of the comprehensive plan amendment on November 22nd, 2022, and they were codified in the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance update on

February 18th, 2025. The employment centers and parcels comprise 252 acres in total, of which approximately 50 to 60 acres are developable due to steep slopes, wetlands, and streams."

She said the comprehensive plan "specifically aligns the boundaries of the town center to include employment center parcels that border the town center. It also realigned the boundaries to include Calvert Towne and Symphony Woods in the 2019 comprehensive plan update. It calls for a phase one and phase two to the realignment or expansion area." Phase two was ultimately eliminated.

She said, "The North Employment Center Zone parcel, which is associated with the CalvertHealth campus, there's no known development potential on this site, but the

most Western employment center zoned parcels...are the approximate 50 to 60 developable acres."

She explained, "On January 13th, the staff recommended establishing the Edge Commercial District corresponding to the Employment Center zone parcels. The intent of the Edge Commercial District is to allow uses that minimize infrastructure impacts while remaining consistent with the intent of the town center." The district does allow some mixed-use development (residences above stores) and group homes.

The planners asked some questions but expressed no problems with the draft that will now go to public hearing.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



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Controversy Erupts at Chesapeake Beach Town Council

Issue: Route 261 Sidewalk

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The normally collegial Chesapeake Beach Town Council erupted into contention at the Feb. 19 council meeting. Several members blasted Councilwoman Laura Blackwelder for her efforts to secure funding for a sidewalk from Chesapeake Village, where she lives, to Beach Elementary School.

With an item on the agenda to approve a cost overrun for a state contract for design and engineering for the sidewalk, Blackwelder said she had heard there was some opposition. She mustered community support to launch an email campaign towards council members, and 30 people did so. Blackwelder, the only woman on the council, strongly defended her actions.

Meanwhile, the council learned during the meeting that the awarding of the \$600,000 contract had been delayed because a subcontractor had failed to provide required information. The sidewalk, using mostly state monies, has funding set aside in the town budget for their share of the cost, which is estimated at \$6 million.

Mayor Bruce Wahl said he would seek a consensus off line, to which Blackwelder asked "Why?"

Councilman Anthony Greene initiated the criticism of Blackwelder.

He said, "We do not want to make this performative theater so that you can point a finger at somebody. We need to make sure that we have a talk about this. And especially since today we have information that we do not actually have a price yet from Rossi (the contractor)."

Greene added, "While we're here at this moment, there have been people emailing me about voting yes, and I don't have to vote tonight on this. There have been people that I have talked to that did not have all the correct information about this. We don't even have the actual numbers from Rossi to be able to go into consensus to say to move forward or not," adding, "I'll ask that people still be civil, reach out to us, have conversations with us, make sure that they can get as informed as possible, and then we can work on this together. There is no council member up here who was against that sidewalk. There may be some that have issues with how much it may cost. There may be some that have issues with the federal grant and how that sidewalk is supposed to be paid for under that initiative and how it's actually going to be used. And there are also alternative means to make sure that we can make this happen, but we have to work together to do that. And utilizing the people to come after us without the proper information is a mistake."

"I hope we learn from this and do better in the future," he said.

Blackwelder, a strong advocate for the sidewalk on Route 261, said, "I think everybody up here knows that if it came to consensus on the agenda without the public being notified, this project would've died. This town's been trying to kill this project for a long time. And there are council people who are not in favor of it."

Greene asked, "My question is this, what's the contingency plan? If SHA (State Highway Administration) says no, what's the contingency plan if we found out... having a sidewalk for Safe Route to Schools (grant) doesn't work in this instance because the students in that are outside of the mileage to actually walk to schools. What's the contingency plan?"

Greene observed, "Does the HOA (Chesapeake Village Homeowners Association) know that they can start their own 501 (non-profit) and go for that sidewalk themselves if they wanted to? Will they have all the information? And if you do not have all the information, I can't email 30 people."

"If you're going to step up and want to lead people and ask people to do things for the betterment of the community, please educate them as much as possible because now things become divisive. It takes up more time with the staff or the other council members and things are not completely thought through," he added. "And now we have to deal with misinformation and that's not fair to them nor us."

Councilman Daniel Duvall said, "I've driven by there, I've looked at the property, I've looked at the height of the hill and the backyards that would be taken from the citizens. Have you reached out and talked to the properties on the road that said that we would be taking some of their property? Have you done any legwork to talk to people? Because I think that should be at a forefront before we're pushing forward to do something to somebody's private property."

"It seems like your neighborhood would be supportive of it (an alternative) or there could be a great trail," Duvall said to Blackwelder.

"I think the resistance gives us a chance to take a broader look and help more people. It just seems like you're upset. We're just trying to look out for everybody in the town. Nobody's targeting you," he added.

Blackwelder responded, "I am not concerned about being targeted. I am concerned about this government serving its people. You all just received 30 letters, maybe not 30, quite a few letters in a matter of two days in support of this project. This project has been vetted over and over again. We were right at the doorstep of getting a grant and now we are getting yet another update. Our town has been through this for years already. Nobody thinks that this is functional gov-

ernment at this point."

That caused Greene to bristle. "Who is nobody? You got a tennis court sitting right there that's just opened up. We got a water park that's being worked on."

"In this instance," she clarified.

"It can't be both ways because you're upset about one thing," Greene responded.

Council Vice Chairman Jamey Shuls said, "I had a very good conversation and this gentleman said to me, I didn't know about this until yesterday, which means that if you are spearheading this effort, why are they just hearing about it yesterday?"

"And the reason is because you thought that the other councilmen were in the alignment with caring about them getting something. So you sent them after us. Misinformed."

Blackwelder said, "No, I didn't send anybody after anybody. There is a decision point on the agenda. It says get consensus, right? We're going to have consensus to move forward or not on a number that we were told was the number."

Shuls said, "I think my problem with this, Laurie, isn't the concept of a sidewalk from Chesapeake Village to the town. I think when you say that out loud, of course, like we want to connect everyone. I want everybody to feel connected to the community."

I think that makes complete sense. The problem is when you start peeling back the onion on this and were letting you run this project and you were doing the due diligence of making sure the town staff was doing their work. However, the problem is for the past little while I've been asking one simple question. And that question was is do we have any information regarding usage? And I asked that question for a specific reason as we started digging into this a little bit more. If this funding from the state is for Safe Routes to School? And when you look that up, it's saying that we are trying to establish an opportunity for kids to walk from their community to school. The only school that would be in range is Beach Elementary. I have a fourth grader that goes there right now. The distance from the first house inside of Chesapeake Village to the front door of Beach Elementary is 0.7 miles. There is no way that any parent that I know of is going to allow their child to walk 0.7 miles from the first house. When you go just to the first street that comes off inside of Chesapeake, though, you're at a mile. I cannot fathom that any parent will allow their elementary age student to walk alone. And to be honest, when I started doing some more research on it, the American Pediatrics Association says that you shouldn't let children who are under the age of 10 or typically in fifth grade walk alone because it's unsafe. They don't know how to maybe navigate the space. And that is a dangerous space that is



Chesapeake Beach Councilwoman Laura Blackwelder

very dangerous. The cars come flying down a grid. It's extremely dangerous."

He said the school board has a half mile requirement for sending a school bus.

Blackwelder said the ask was, "This project has been in works for 12 years and that my neighborhood wants it because we want to be connected to the town."

Shuls added, "You have not brought any additional information to this council to say that is worthy of a \$8 to \$10 million project. And I understand the impacts to the community. I get it when you say. I want to connect that neighborhood to the town. But when you start using Safe Routes to School, which is designated for an explicit program, you're not using that in the correct way."

Shuls lectured Blackwelder: "You've got to get out of your own way. You've got to stop talking down to people and you've got to learn to collaborate because that's the only way this council works and there's not division on here."

Mayor Bruce Wahl said of the email blast, "I did not appreciate that. We're not dropping this, but let's move on with the rest of the agenda and we will bring this up again."

But Blackwelder interjected, "I don't see a problem with the email blast, and I'm sorry that everybody does. I think when important issues are being discussed, it is important for the community to weigh in. And because people emailed in favor and I don't think anybody was disrespectful, not me and not anybody in my community. They asked for support of a project they have been promised by you. That's all that happened."

Wahl added, "I don't disagree with what you just said. Nothing was disrespectful. What I didn't appreciate is I have a lot of other things going on at the moment and I did not appreciate constantly receiving these emails and I just thought that that was the wrong way to try to get my support."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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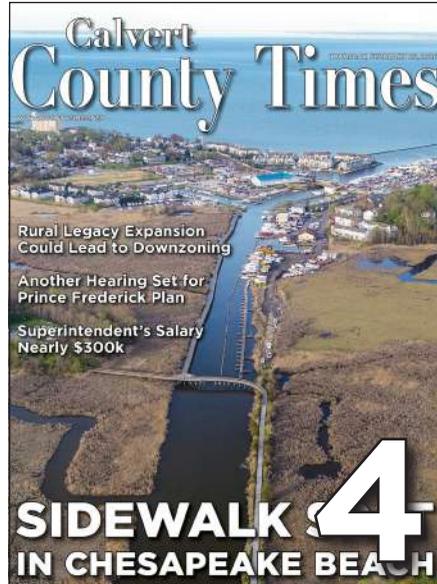
CHESAPEAKE BEACH VICE CHAIR JAMEY SHULS CRITICIZING COUNCILWOMAN LAURA BLACKWELDER ON ROUTE 261 SIDEWALK ISSUE.



LOCAL 4
Public hearing set for Prince Frederick plan revisions



LOCAL 6
Superintendent’s salary to break \$300,000 in year two.



ON THE COVER
Town Councillor raises controversy over Route 261 sidewalk

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 26 Showers Hi: 44° Lo: 31°	FRI, FEB 27 Partly Cloudy Hi: 50° Lo: 33°	SAT, FEB 28 Mostly Sunny Hi: 57° Lo: 40°	SUN, MAR 1 Partly Cloudy Hi: 50° Lo: 27°
MON, MAR 2 Snow Showers Hi: 33° Lo: 29°	TUE, MAR 3 Snow to Rain Hi: 40° Lo: 34°	WED, MAR 4 AM Showers Hi: 49° Lo: 36°	THU, MAR 5 Partly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 42°

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Nearly \$300k**

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IN CHESAPEAKE BEACH**