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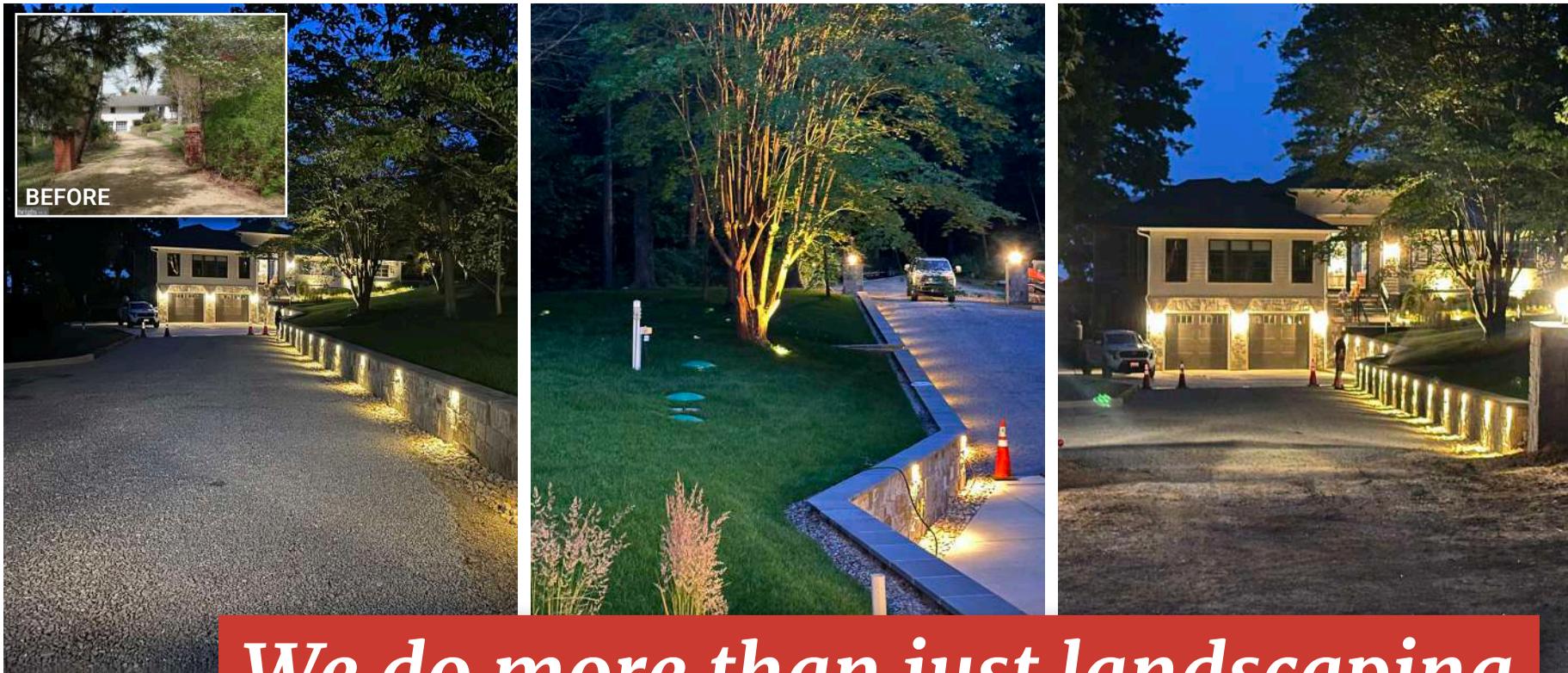
THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026

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“JUST KEEP THOSE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN YOUR PRAYERS”
 COMMISSIONER MIKE ALDERSON ON RECENT HOSTILITIES IN IRAN



LOCAL 7
 Court denies sentence reduction in 1982 murder



COMMUNITY 11
 Annual Maryland Day event paused amid museum construction



ON THE COVER
 Pilot dies in ultralight plane crash

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, MAR 5	FRI, MAR 6	SAT, MAR 7	SUN, MAR 8
 AM Fog/PM Sun Hi: 66° Lo: 47°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 55° Lo: 43°	 AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 66° Lo: 59°	 AM Showers Hi: 67° Lo: 47°
MON, MAR 9	TUE, MAR 10	WED, MAR 11	THU, MAR 12
 AM Fog/PM Sun Hi: 69° Lo: 53°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 77° Lo: 62°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 81° Lo: 59°	 Showers Hi: 62° Lo: 35°



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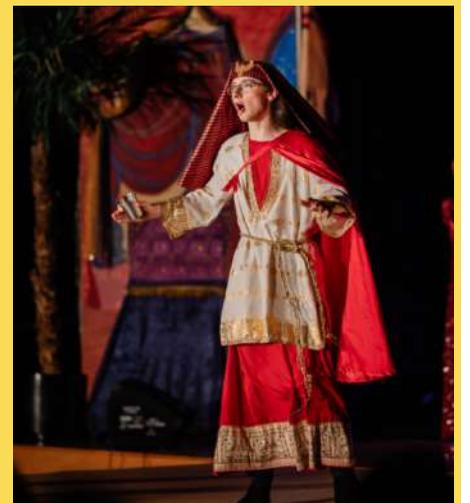
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Tall Timbers Man Dies in Small Plane Crash



Emergency responders involved in the search staged at Dorsey Memorial Park. Photo courtesy of Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department.

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

Maryland State Police (MSP) and federal aviation authorities are investigating the crash of a private ultralight airplane that resulted in the death of a Tall Timbers man.

Police identified the deceased as 74-year-old Andrew Mechling. According to MSP spokesperson Elaine Russo, Mechling was the aircraft's pilot and was the only person aboard.

A statement issued by Russo said that emergency responders received a report just after 9am on Saturday that an aircraft had possibly crashed near Dorsey Park in Hollywood. Troopers from the MSP barracks in Leonardtown, as well as St. Mary's County sheriff's deputies and local EMS squads were sent to the area to begin looking for the aircraft. Trooper 7, the state police helicopter unit stationed in St. Mary's, was also sent to search for the downed aircraft.

Mechling's plane was described by the Federal Aviation Administration as a Sonex brand ultralight experimental aircraft. The plane was reported to have departed St.

Mary's County Regional Airport shortly before it crashed. After an approximately 70-minute search, the wrecked plane was discovered in a wooded area off Cedar Lane Road. Mr. Mechling was found deceased at the scene.

County Commissioner Mike Hewitt, who was acquainted with the victim and his wife Jackie, told the St. Mary's County Times that Mechling was a retired Navy F-14 jet pilot who loved experimental aircraft. "He was a great guy," Hewitt said. "The guy was very smart, a very intelligent person." Hewitt added that the type of aircraft that Mechling was flying was of the so-called "ultralight" variety that owners build themselves. He also said that the Mechlings lived in the Solomons area for a number of years before recently moving to Tall Timbers.

The FAA and the State Police are investigating the crash. A spokesperson for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) contacted the County Times to say that his agency would not be investigating this accident, as the downed plane was experimental and not under their purview.

County Applying for Victim Services Grant

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

St. Mary's County is applying for a \$523,878 Victims of Crime grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) for Fiscal Year 2027, it was announced Tuesday in Leonardtown at the Commissioners of St. Mary's County meeting in Leonardtown. If the grant application is accepted and approved, it will mark the fourth year in a row the county has received funds through this program.

According to Jessika Hall, the Grant Coordinator for the St. Mary's County State's Attorney's Office, the money will be used to help pay salaries for personnel in the county's Victim Advocacy Division including salaries for the Director and Deputy Director.

Hall, speaking to the commissioners, also requested that the county match the grant with \$290,254 in county funding. "The county funding would go towards partial salary, as the grant will not cover all of the director's salary, and it will also go towards fringe benefits."

Hall went on to tell the commissioners that the grant has two sources of funding, one from the state and one from federal resources. "We do not know until we get the

award which one we would be receiving."

After a brief discussion between Ms. Hall and the commissioners regarding technicalities and budget timelines, Commissioner Scott Ostrow, representing Commissioner District 4, asked what he called, "...a million dollar question. What happens if you don't get the grant?"

"That's a great question," Hall replied. "We would have to really, really try to figure things out. We have a lot of great staff (that would be partially funded by the grant). That's our whole victim services. So it's a critical part of our office."

"That's the kind of downfall of grants," commented Ostrow. "Sometimes they go away."

"Absolutely," replied Hall. "And it's a competitive grant, so we have to apply every year. Even though we have successfully gotten it every year, nothing is ever guaranteed with competitive grants."

The GOCPP plans, funds, and coordinates statewide efforts to reduce crime, enhance public safety, and serve victims. As the state administering agency, it manages federal and state grants for law enforcement, juvenile justice, and victim services while developing evidence-based policies and legislation.

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Commissioners Comment on Iran War

By Tim Flaherty
Contributing Writer

"I'm still of mixed feelings of this," said County Commissioner Mike Alderson when commenting about the current U.S. military action in Iran. Alderson's once sentence summed up the feeling of the three commissioners who mentioned the new Iran war during commissioner's time at their regular Tuesday meeting in Leonardtown.

Over the weekend, U.S. forces, along with forces from Israel, launched extensive missile and drone attacks against Iranian military bases, infrastructure, and leadership facilities, killing a number of high-ranking Iranian officials. There were also dozens of civilian casualties reported. Iran responded by attacking U.S. facilities and infrastructure in neighboring Arab countries that are American allies, resulting in a widening conflict. As of Wednesday afternoon, four American service personnel have been reported killed by the retaliatory strikes.

The military operation has been dubbed "Operation Epic Fury" by military leaders.

Alderson, who noted he had served in Operation Desert Storm, went on to say, "I think I can speak for a lot of people when I say I'm weary of this, of war. I hate seeing people that are the age of my kids and younger coming home." He paused, apparently referring to those killed in combat. "I think there's only six have been killed and five or so injured, based on what I heard early this morning coming in. But, also, this Operation Epic Fury is 47 years overdue. I remember the hostages being taken in November of 1979." Alderson went on to recount the Iranian hostage crisis of that year and how it shaped his decision to later enter the military.

"Now we're taking the bureaucracy out of Iran, and we don't know what's on the back-

side as far as what kind of government we're going to be dealing with," Alderson added, expressing concern for what comes next.

"Just keep those young men and women in your prayers," he said of American service personnel in the Middle East, "and hope that we come out on the other side of this in a much better position in that whole region."

"I have mixed feelings," said Commissioner President Randy Guy, who recounted some of his memories of serving in Vietnam as an Air Force loadmaster on a C-130 aircraft. "One of the hardest parts of my job was wherever we were, you probably saw some of these soldiers carrying a bag, which looks like a small... sleeping bag on their back, but it's not a sleeping bag. It was actually their body bag.

"Part of my job was picking up those bags off the side of the runway and dragging them on my airplane and getting them back to a mortician area based in Vietnam," Guy continued. "And I carried a lot of them. One time as many as 46 bodies stacked inside the aircraft. And I can't forget that those were a bunch of young men that never lived the life that I lived. I'm grateful that I did."

Guy summed up his remarks by saying, "I hope it's a quick thing and hopefully we don't put any boots on the ground and sacrifice any of our soldiers on the ground. I think we need to be very careful about this."

Commissioner Eric Colvin referenced Commissioner Alderson, and said he "summed up a lot of my thoughts very well. I think we're weary of this. It's a really good way to put it. It's a possibly overdue action, and there's no denying the regime in Iran has not been a good government structure for its people. When we look at it, at our heart, in St. Mary's County, we are a defense community, and we will feel impacts from this. You know, we will support our community as best we can and continue to do so."

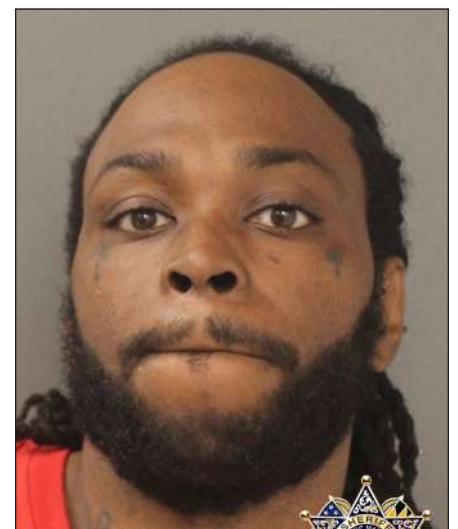
Mechanicsville Man Arrested on Drug Charges

Detectives from the Criminal Intelligence and Vice/Narcotics Units, assisted by the Emergency Services Team, arrested Kevin Benjamin Berry, 38, of Mechanicsville, following the service of a search warrant as part of an ongoing investigation.

On Friday, Feb. 20, 2026, detectives located Berry in Lexington Park and took him into custody. A search of his person revealed multiple bags of controlled dangerous substances (CDS), suspected of being cocaine and crack cocaine. Suspected CDS paraphernalia and an amount of cash were also discovered.

Berry was charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession with intent to distribute, and unlawful possession of an electronic scale used for the production of a controlled dangerous substance.

The suspect was transported to the Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown, where he is being held without bond.



Kevin Benjamin Berry

Press release from SMCSO

Court Denies Sentence Reduction in Stephanie Roper Case

Editor's Note: The following press release was received by The County Times regarding the murder of Stephanie Roper in St. Mary's County in 1982:

"In a win for victims' rights and justice, the court has rejected Jerry Beatty's request for a sentence reduction, confirming that the brutal nature of his crime against 22 year-old college student Stephanie Roper justifies his continued imprisonment.

"Beatty, who was convicted in the 1982 rape and murder of Stephanie Roper, had attempted to reduce his sentence under Maryland's Juvenile Restoration Act (JUVRA), which allows those convicted as juveniles to seek shorter sentences after serving at least 20 years in prison.

"The decision shows a commitment to holding individuals responsible for their crimes, especially when those crimes are as horrific as the abduction, rape, and murder committed by Beatty. Stephanie Roper's family has endured over 40 years of unimaginable grief, and her mother, Roberta Roper, has consistently opposed Beatty's release, stressing that the harm done to her family cannot be undone by mere rehabilitation. Stephanie Roper's family has long held to the belief that no amount of time served in prison or personal reform can erase the pain caused by Beatty's actions.

"The murder of Stephanie, which was not only brutal but also took away a young life full of potential, has left a lasting impact on her family. While recognizing that people can change, the Ropers have emphasized that justice for Stephanie must remain a priority and that the severity of Beatty's crime should prevent his early release.

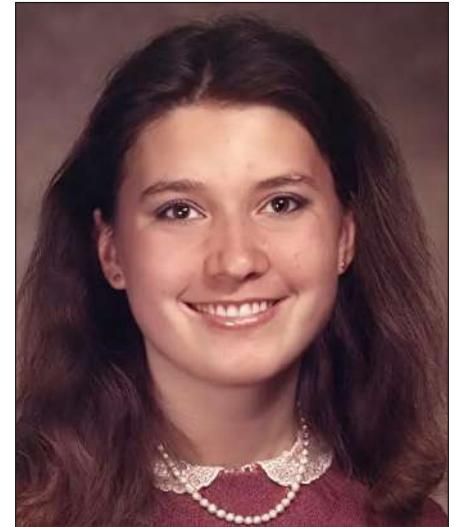
"Beatty's case highlighted a key issue in the criminal justice reform debate: the balance between second chances for juvenile offenders and the need for accountability for those who commit heinous crimes. While Beatty's defense argued that he had rehabilitated during his time in prison, the prosecution emphasized that the severity of his actions, and the ongoing trauma caused to Roper's family, made any sentence reduction unjustifiable.

"Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC) praised the ruling as a reaffirmation of the principle that serious, violent crimes must not be overlooked in the name of reform. The court's decision ensures that the brutal and senseless murder of Stephanie Roper will not be forgotten, and that the victims' rights movement continues to hold the justice system accountable to those who suffer the most.

"On behalf of her family, Roberta Roper made this statement: 'There are no words to convey my gratitude to all of you for the

privilege of knowing and working with you. I am deeply thankful for the brilliance of Victor's arguments and for the all-encompassing support each of you at MCVRC has extended to me and my family over these many years. I am very thankful for the advocacy of Jaymi Sterling, State's Attorney for St. Mary's County, and Gavin Patashnick, her Assistant State's Attorney, and the wonderful team who worked on this case. I am also so thankful for Judge Elizabeth Morris, who showed great wisdom and compassion in her decision. Having the opportunity to be the voice of Stephanie's family in a victim impact statement—and to look into the eyes of one of her killers—was a right that was finally fulfilled after 43 years. Words are inadequate. For me, there is now resolution, a sense of relief, and peace.'

Kurt Wolfgang, the Executive Director of MCVRC, who helped the Ropers during the trials in 1982, and helped found the organization stated: 'Lovers of peace and justice everywhere should celebrate this victory. Beatty committed heinous acts of torture, rape, and murder against the best and brightest of our world, Stephanie Roper. No vocational courses, no drug rehabilitation, no trustee or industrial prison duties could ever make it right, fair, or just for him to set foot on free soil. We are so grateful to our amazing attorney Victor Stone, and



Stephanie Roper

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling and her whole team, and Gavin Patashnick for fighting like tigers for justice. We only wish that so many other crime victims we represent would receive the same justice as Judge Morris could discern with great insight and empathy for those who had suffered so much at the hands of vile criminals.'

Press release from Maryland Crime Victims' Rights Center, Inc

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Maryland

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Alvey Files for Commissioner President

Roy H. Alvey has announced his candidacy for St. Mary's County Commissioner President. Alvey released the following statement:

"On February 19 I filed as a Republican candidate for President of the St. Mary's County Commissioners.

"I am a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County and my wife, Rose, and I live in Valley Lee.

"I am a veteran and served in the U.S. Army with 82nd Airborne Infantry Division. I am a member of the Veterans of Helen and American Legion Post 221 in Avenue.

"For 38 years, I was employed by Verizon Telephone Company. I worked closely with Patuxent River Naval Air Station and Webster Field installing high speed data during my time with Verizon. While working for Verizon I served on the Legislative Committee for CWA Union Local 2107 supporting bills that benefited communication employees.

"While working full time for Verizon, I also worked part time for Safeway Stores, Inc. as a night shift manager for 20 years and was a member of Local 400.

"I feel that being a County Commissioner is a full time job and I have the time and dedication to serve.

"I have always worked in direct contact with the public and have an understanding of the needs of the community. For the past 25 years I have followed the workings of the county government and have worked for numerous campaigns.

"My community service involvement includes:

- Little League Coach
- PTA Member
- Christmas in April
- St. George's Hundred
- St. Mary's County Public Schools Ethics Committee Member
- Board of Commissioners for the



Roy Alvey

Housing Authority

- Board of Commissioners for the Metropolitan Commission
- St. Mary's County Sheriff's Citizens' Academy
- St. Mary's County Government Citizens' Academy
- Republican Central Committee
- Republican Women of St. Mary's County
- Republican Club
- "When elected, my priorities will be:
 - No new taxes
 - Public safety
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Programs for youth

"We have a strong economy due to NAS and Webster Field. We need to support our local businesses and remember to protect our farmers and watermen, while protecting our rural character. Residential and commercial development must be closely monitored.

"County Commissioners must work together to make tough decisions for the citizens of our county."

Wildewood Parkway Road Work to Begin

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) will be making roadway improvements on Wildewood Parkway beginning from Smoke Hill Road extending to White Elm Court. This project will include storm drain culvert replacement across the intersection of Smoke Hill Road and across Wildewood Parkway.

The project is scheduled to begin on or about Monday, March, with completion in approximately 15 days, weather permitting.

A traffic control plan will be implemented for the duration of the project. Lane closures

will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Message boards and signage will be deployed in the area prior to and during the project to serve as a reminder. Motorists are advised to use caution and follow signage. Please remain alert to work crews, changing traffic patterns, and equipment and consider alternate travel routes to avoid delays in traffic.

Questions may be directed to Donald Bean with DPW&T at 301-475-4200, ext. 3520.

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1.75L Seagram's Extra Dry Gin

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March Madness

— MARCH 6 —

First Friday
Leonardtown

Stuffed Ham

MARKER CEREMONY & RECEPTION

Sunday, March 29

St. Clement's Island Museum Grounds

St. Mary's County has been designated as the official birthplace of stuffed ham, and a marker will be erected and dedicated to this honor!

Ceremony begins at 2pm

Reception to follow at Potomac Gardens

with samples of locally-made stuffed ham!



Friday, March 6

- 9 am - 10 am Coffee Club with David McDonough at Edward Jones
- 10 am - 7 pm Visit the Old Jail Museum for a Free tour of this historic building
- 10 am - 7 pm Shepherd's Old Field Market "Lucky Sales" weekend
- 12 pm Ribbon Cutting at The Vintage Collective
- 5 pm - 7:30 pm Free First Friday Art Activity with Jami from Elsewise Art
- 5 pm - 8 pm Opening reception "Youth Art Month" at the St. Mary's County Arts Council. Meet our local artist Tanya from Bubbles Bzzz, a pottery café located in Lexington Park
- 5 pm - 8 pm North End Gallery's March show "All Creatures Great and Small"
- 5:30 pm Enjoy live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery with Matt Guilherme and Heidi's Eats and Sages Treats food truck on site



Saturday, March 7

- 10 am - 5 pm Visit the Old Jail Museum for a Free tour of this historic building
- 10 am - 6 pm Come find retro treasures and timeless finds at the Grand Opening of The Vintage Collective
- 10 am - 7 pm Shepherd's Old Field Market "Lucky Sales" weekend
- 2 pm - 5 pm Enjoy live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery with Wildgood Duo and Cousin's Maine Lobster food truck on site
- 4 pm - 11 pm Prime Rib Saturday at Rucci's
- 8 pm Love, Hate and Mixtape show at the Rex Theatre, FREE entry, 21+

Sunday, March 8

- 10 am - 5 pm Visit the Old Jail Museum for a Free tour of this historic building
- 11 am - 3 pm Racecar Car Show at Leonardtown Ford
- 11 am - 5 pm Shepherd's Old Field Market "Lucky Sales" weekend
- 12 pm - 9 pm Sunday bucket \$5.00 off special at Olde Town Pub
- 2 pm - 5 pm Enjoy live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery with Chris Beard and Nick's DC Pizza food truck on site

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Annual Maryland Day Event Paused for 2026

Commemorative Mass Still Scheduled



St. Mary's County Government's Museum Division will not host the annual Maryland Day mainland ceremony and event in 2026 due to construction of a new St. Clement's Island Museum facility. This longstanding tradition will return in 2027 at the new, modernized museum building.

On Maryland Day 2026, the annual Mass on St. Clement's Island will still take place, commemorating the first Catholic Mass in the English New World. The commemorative Mass will be held on the island at 10 a.m. Community members are invited to attend, with water taxi service beginning at 9 a.m. and return trips provided following the Mass.

Maryland Day celebrates the first landing of the colonists on St. Clement's Island – a significant chapter in the history of the island, St. Mary's County, and the State of Maryland.

The Museum Division looks forward to welcoming the community back in 2027 to celebrate Maryland Day in the new facility.

For questions or more information, please call St. Clement's Island Museum at (301) 769-2222. For more information on museum hours of operation, programs, events, admission prices, and more, follow our museums on Facebook at:

- St. Clement's Island Museum: Facebook.com/SCIMuseum
- Old Jail Museum & Visitor Center: Facebook.com/TheOldJailMuseum
- Piney Point Lighthouse Museum: Facebook.com/1836Light
- Drayden African American Schoolhouse: Facebook.com/DraydenSchool

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

LEONARDTOWN WHARF PARK REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Ice Cream, Snack, and Non-Alcoholic Drink Vendor, 2026 Summer Season

The Commissioners of Leonardtown are accepting proposals from qualified vendors to provide ice cream, snacks, and non-alcoholic drink sales for the 2026 summer season at Leonardtown Wharf Public Park in Leonardtown, MD.

Should you be interested in submitting a proposal, please contact the Town office or visit our website at www.leonardtown.somd.com under the Government tab to access the proposal documents. You will need to submit, in duplicate, a proposal, including all required forms and supporting documentation, to the address below on or before the end of the business day at 4:30 p.m., on March 27, 2026. The award of the contract is expected at the April 13, 2026, Town Council meeting.

Beth Sandberg, Procurement Manager
Commissioners of Leonardtown
POB 1, 22670 Washington Street
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By Authority: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator



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If you're ready for a loyal companion who will stick by your side like peanut butter to toast, I'm ready to start the music and begin your happily-ever-after duet. Adoption hours: Mon-Fri 11am-4pm and Sat 10am-3pm. To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, "like" us on Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>



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Annual Open House Seeks to Introduce Locals to Sailing



Melissa Myers (left), Mary Louise Burk (middle), and Sue Hewitt, all of St. Mary's County, attended the SMSA Crew Party two years ago as brand new sailors. All three are now very active in the Solomons sailing world, and Myers' son is now also on a middle school sailing team.

"We are always on the lookout for people who want to go sailing or learn about sailing," said Southern Maryland Sailing Association (SMSA) Communication Chair Tim Flaherty, as he commented on this weekend's annual open house event at the organization's clubhouse on Solomons Island.

For 10 years, SMSA has teamed with SpinSheet Magazine, an Annapolis-based sailing publication, on throwing what they call a "Crew Party" to introduce people to the pastime of sailing. The Solomons event is one of a series of four such gatherings that SpinSheet helps organize. The others are in Annapolis, Norfolk, and Hampton.

"A lot of folks move to this area and look out on the rivers and the bay and think to themselves, 'Gee, how do I get out to enjoy this,'" Flaherty explained. "It's not as complicated as some people think. There are ways to learn to sail and to enjoy sailing, even if you don't own a boat. This area has a really nice sailing school. SMSA has learn-to-sail programs, and SpinSheet has a data-base, free to sign up for, that connects people with sailing opportunities."

Most of the opportunities come with vol-

unteering to be crew on racing sailboats. Solomons has a vibrant racing scene for nine months of the year, and many of the larger boats always need people to be crew.

"Don't be afraid to say you will go racing with somebody," Flaherty says. "It is a great way to learn how to do things on a boat and do them correctly. We have some terrific captains around here who love teaching people."

In addition to racing, there are opportunities join the sailing scene through sailing schools and local clubs, as well as just by meeting people who are eager to have company on their boats. All will have representatives at the Solomons open house.

The event, officially titled the SpinSheet Solomons Crew Party presented by Coors Banquet Beer, will begin at 4pm and will continue until 6pm at the SMSA facility on Solomons Island. The clubhouse is located on Solomons Island Road, South, opposite the boardwalk gazebo. "Just look for the gazebo on Solomons Island, then look across the street for us," Flaherty says.

Beverages will be for sale, and there will be a complimentary pizza party made possible by the event's sponsors.

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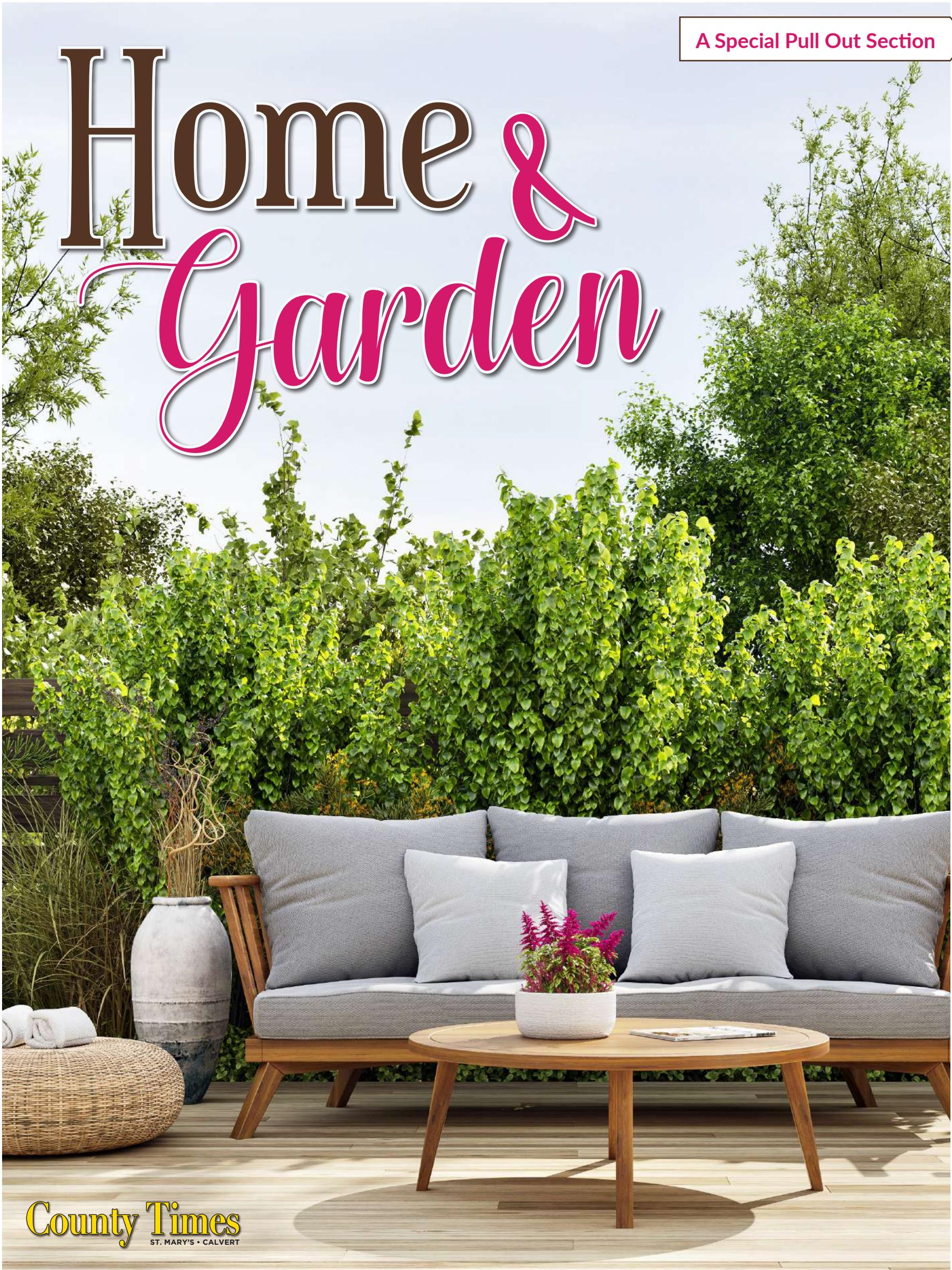
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How to Compare Contractors' Bids

Home renovation projects are significant undertakings. It is common for homeowners who may not have the time nor the expertise to do the work themselves to call in professionals to tackle these jobs.

According to the home improvement resource HomeGuide.com, for a bathroom remodel, which is one of the more popular improvement projects, installation and labor accounts for 10 to 25 percent of the total project cost. In general, many contractors pay themselves \$300 to \$500 for an hourly rate, while helpers may make \$150 per hour.

Materials used account for the other components of an overall project cost. Homeowners negotiate the best rates possible by obtaining a number of bids from contractors, spelling out both labor and material costs and determining their best option. Here's how to compare bids.



Check as many reviews as possible

Go online, ask friends for recommendations, or rely on the Better Business Bureau to find reliable contractors. A contractor who seems too good to be true will not necessarily be so, but it's still best to vet each professional thoroughly prior to signing a contract.

Cost basis vs bid basis

Certain contractors will produce an estimate based on the best guess of the cost of supplies then add on a flat fee or percentage for their services. This is called a cost basis bid. Others will create a bid that includes all their anticipated supply and labor costs, known as

a bid basis bid. Know what you're getting to make the most accurate comparison.

Create a master itemized checklist

It's easy to explain the project differently from one contractor to another when doing so verbally. That may result in a different plan and price. Rather, make a checklist of what you want done and have several copies to give to the contractors with whom you meet. This makes it easier to compare costs line by line.

Have specific materials in mind

Make sure bids are based on the same materials and tasks. For example, if you're com-

paring window replacement quotes, be sure that each quote is based on the same window material and coating. Vinyl replacement windows may not cost the same as fiberglass or wood.

It is much easier to compare pricing when contractors provide estimates reflecting the same materials.

Small versus big contracting companies

Some bids may differ based on the manpower of the company. One contractor may view a project as an easy one that can be slipped right into the schedule. Another may have to devote more time and effort if it is being undertaken by one or two people. This

can affect cost in the quote. Furthermore, a contractor who does a lot of advertising in print, television or online, or has an office or warehouse space, may have extra overhead costs that are passed on to the customer.

Doing your own demo

Figure out if the contractor will allow you to perform a portion of the tear-out, clean-up or other tasks to save on labor costs. Make sure this is included in the bid.

Comparing contractor work bids can be tricky, but it helps homeowners know they're getting the best value for their money.

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Stay safe around power lines

With the return of spring, many people are excited to head outdoors and get started on some projects around the house and yard. It's important to stay safe and be aware of overhead power lines. Look up.

- Never climb power poles or transmission towers.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- Keep equipment away from overhead lines when carrying ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning tools
- If you are doing work close to power lines—such as trimming trees, working on your roof, or doing exterior renovations—keep yourself, your ladder, and anything you are handling a safe distance from the power line.
- Contact SMECO to disconnect power if you are doing work that requires close contact with overhead lines attached to your home.
- Use a licensed electrician for all electrical work.
- Plant trees away from power lines.



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How to Create More Privacy on Your Property

An inviting backyard can serve as a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life. After a long day at the office or an exhausting day spent transporting kids to and fro, it's hard to resist the allure of a peaceful outdoor space in which to unwind.

Privacy is a key component of any backyard oasis. Some homes may be so remote that privacy isn't an issue. But many suburban homeowners recognize they might need to tweak their landscapes if they hope to create a private oasis outside.

Fencing or planting?

Most homeowners looking to create more privacy on their property will have to choose between fencing and planting. Fencing provides immediate privacy because, once it's installed, no one can see into the yard. Fencing also doesn't require watering or other immediate upkeep, which will be necessary when planting to ensure tree roots can establish themselves.

But planting has its benefits as well. Planting for privacy is essentially creating a living fence that can grow over time and provide even more privacy as trees reach maturity. Plants also tend to be less costly than fencing. The home renovation experts at BobVila.com estimate that fencing projects typically cost between \$1,667 and \$4,075. However, fencing projects can cost considerably more than \$4,000, especially for homeowners with large properties they want to enclose. Large, mature trees can be expensive, though it's unlikely they



will cost as much as fencing. In addition, fencing requires more maintenance and will potentially need to be replaced, while native trees won't require much upkeep and can last for generations.

Planting

Homeowners who choose to plant for privacy will next have to decide which type of plants to add to their properties. Evergreens provide year-round privacy because they don't shed their leaves, so these are the ones most often chosen when creating a

living fence. A number of varieties of evergreen trees can do the job, but it's important that homeowners consult with a landscape architect prior to choosing trees so they can ensure the trees will thrive when faced with the growing conditions on their properties. During such a consultation, homeowners may discuss the following popular privacy trees.

- **Leyland cypress:** The Arbor Day Foundation® notes that the Leyland cypress is popular for hedges and boundaries, likely because a typical

tree reaches a mature height of 60'-70' and can spread as wide as 25'. The Leyland cypress grows fast, which may appeal to homeowners who don't want to wait to establish privacy.

- **Green Giant Arborvitae:** There are different varieties of the arborvitae, but the Green Giant tends to be the go-to option for privacy. The ADF notes that Green Giants will grow up to three feet per year until they reach maturity, providing a fast-growing option for privacy planters. The Green Giant can spread as wide as 20 feet at maturity, which is another attribute that makes it so popular among homeowners desiring privacy.
- **Eastern White Pine:** The ADF notes that the eastern white pine, which can reach heights as high as 80 feet, is favored in spacious yards. That's likely due to its height and its potential spread, which can reach 40 feet. Homeowners who choose the eastern white pine might like it for its resemblance to a Christmas tree, and in fact it is widely used for that purpose. The privacy provided by the eastern white pine is significant, but it might be best suited to especially large properties.

Whether it's fencing or planting, homeowners have many options to consider as they seek to create more privacy on their properties.



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Shedding Some Light on Home Solar

Consumers shopping around for home improvement projects may be leaning toward overhauls that can reduce energy consumption and save them money in the long run. This is a driving factor behind a growing number of homeowners investigating solar energy for their residences.

How does solar power work?

Solar power harnesses the sun's energy and converts it into electricity that can be used in homes. Many people are familiar with photovoltaics (PV), which are the panels that absorb sunlight and create an electric field across their layers. Another solar technology, known as concentrating solar power, is primarily used in large power plants and is not appropriate for residential use, according to Energy.gov.

According to the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have been put in use across the United States since 2008.

Costs associated with solar

The upfront expense of solar panels is significant, costing anywhere from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for initial installation. However, comparatively speaking, homeowners can spend \$1,500 or more per year on electricity, so solar panels will pay for themselves over time. Keep in mind that costs may vary

depending on energy needs and how many panels will be required to service the system.

How much electricity can I expect?

The Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Advice says that the amount of power generated from a solar energy system depends on a few factors:

1. The average number of hours of direct, unshaded sunlight your roof gets each year;
2. The pitch (angle), age and condition of your roof, and the compass direction it faces;
3. The size and strength of your system; and
4. Environmental factors such as snow, dust or shade that may cover the system.

Save even more money

Consumers can contact their utility companies to find out if they provide homeowners who produce solar power with "net metering." This program pays the homeowner money or gives credit for excess power the system produces and returns to the electric grid. Individuals also may be eligible for energy tax credits or other benefits.

Homeowners may find it worthwhile to explore solar energy, particularly if they consume a high amount of electricity.

What to Know About Landscape Lighting



Home improvement trends come and go, and one trend that has become wildly popular in recent years is recognizable in yards every night. Landscape lighting has transformed how people see and enjoy their properties at night, making it one of the more sought-after upgrades among modern homeowners.

Curb appeal is often seen through the lens of how homes appear during daylight hours, but landscape lighting can make homes look better and more modern, and potentially safer, after the sun goes down. With such potential, landscape lighting is worth exploring for homeowners looking to upgrade their properties.

Are there different types of landscape lighting?

When considering landscape lighting, homeowners should know that there are various options to consider. According to the lighting experts at Lumens, spotlights project a concentrated and narrow beam of light that's usually around 45 degrees. Spotlights are often chosen to highlight specific features on a property, like a component of the landscaping. Individuals who want to cast light over wider, more general areas may consider floodlights, which Lumens notes spread light up to 120 degrees.

Inground lighting is among the more sophisticated landscape lighting options. Lumens notes that inground lighting illuminates the whole of a tree or structure, often creating a dramatic look. These circle-shaped lights also are great at illuminating walkways and driveways.

Post lights are another outdoor lighting option, and these are often used to light up long walkways and pathways so it's easier and safer to navigate dark areas at night.

How much lighting is necessary?

The amount of lighting homeowners want

to install is up to them. If the home currently has little or no landscape lighting, a consultation with a professional can help to determine how much lighting to install and where to install it. When discussing landscape lighting, homeowners may want to inquire about dimmers. Dimmers can increase or decrease lighting depending on the situation. For example, homeowners may want a little extra light during a party, but less when relaxing alone outside at night. Dimmers allow homeowners to adjust as necessary.

Is landscape lighting a job a DIYer can handle?

Many homeowners consider a do-it-yourself approach when pondering a potential home renovation, and a landscape lighting project is likely to inspire such curiosity as well. The home experts at HGTV note that the feasibility of DIY in regard to a landscape lighting project depends on the type of lighting homeowners want to install and where they want to install it. Replacing an existing electrical fixture may be well within the skill of a seasoned DIYer, but installing a new fixture is a job best left to the professionals. Homeowners whose homes currently have no or very little landscape lighting are almost certainly better off working with a professional. Solar lighting that does not require any electrical work can be installed quickly and easily by anyone, but such options may not provide the look homeowners are aiming for.

Landscape lighting is a popular home renovation trend. Homeowners considering adding landscape lighting to their property are urged to work with a skilled professional to devise and install a set-up that makes their homes more appealing at night.



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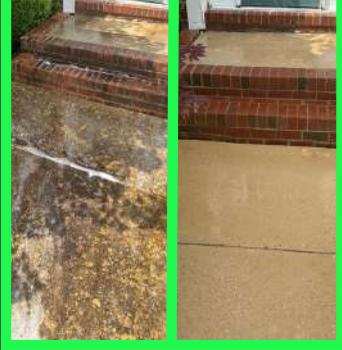


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Budget-Friendly Ways to Freshen Up Your Home's Exterior



As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an "average cost" of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.

- **Power washing:** Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

- **Furnished front porch:** A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

- **Window box installation:** Installing window box planters is another cost-effective way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

- **Replace hardware:** Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.



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A View From The BLEACHERS



Perfectly Timed

By Ronald N. Guy, Jr.
Contributing Writer

The calendar reads February 21 as these words are typed. A week after Valentine's Day and a week before (usually) the last day of the month, it is a non-descript day. For the initiated, it is hockey eve, the day before miracles have happened, and amazing things might (and did).

The hockey corollary arrived last week in some form. Radio. Television. ESPN scroll. Social media. Who knows? There's no shortage of stimuli, even for a Gen-X mind that longs for a shortage of stimuli. Nonetheless, the prompt generated nostalgia and intrigue. As the story went, should the men's Olympic hockey team reach the gold medal game, it would be played on February 22, the same day as that "Miracle on Ice" way back in 1980.

Being of a particular vintage, I missed the point. Or rather, I recognized there was no point, other than random coincidence. Yes, a significant Olympic hockey game was played 46 years ago in Lake Placid, New York. And yes, another one was played 46 years to the day later in the Milano Cortina Games. But beyond February 22 and the sport, the stories have little in common.

I dared open Netflix a few weeks ago with no particular programming in mind. You know how this typically goes: Thirty minutes of scrolling through the bottomless depths of Netflix content that generates frustration, several offerings to watch another day (or likely not) and no decision on what to consume in this moment of boredom.

This was not a typical search.

Thanks (I think?) to the powers of user monitoring, Netflix's surveillance identified my sports obsession and recommended a recently released documentary, "Miracle: The Boys of '80", the story of the 1980 Olympic men's hockey team that won a most improbable gold medal. I was sold immediately. In Jerry Maguire parlance, if Netflix said "hello", it would have had me at that moment.

There's nothing I can say in this piece to do the event proper justice. If you know, you know. If you don't, please research it. And for everyone, if you haven't already watched the documentary, do so. It's an hour and 40 minutes. Shut off the phone. Dim the lights. Pour your favorite beverage. Wrap yourself in an American flag. Whatever it takes to set the mood. And prepare to cry. I don't know if the phrase "The truth is stranger than fiction" was coined after this game, but it certainly could have been. The elements are that perfect... for a fictional story that stretches the bounds of human imagination. But it all happened. For real. A rag-tag group of American college hockey players defeated a professional Soviet Union team with several future Hall of Famers, on American soil and during the Cold War, and ultimately won the gold medal.

Fast-forward 46 years and this version of the United States' men's hockey team is comprised of NHL stars and faced off against Canada, one of our dearest global friends (that's still true, right?). While the Soviet Union is long gone, Russia didn't even participate in these Olympics, a consequence of its hostilities against Ukraine. The point is, the game and the sports stakes are similar, but the feeling is different. That's not anyone's fault. The 1980 Miracle on Ice is irrefutable: an impossible confluence of circumstances that delivered perhaps the most consequential sporting event ever.

Which segues to these final thoughts. Roam around this planet for a bit and considerable change will be experienced. Much will be progressive and amazing; some will be challenging and unwelcome. All of it was and is inevitable. At some point in one's personal lifecycle, excitement for the future and a nostalgia for the past are equal forces on the psyche. As for modern sports, the technology is grand, advanced stats are fantastic and the athleticism is amazing. But with the lack of continuity and blurred lines between amateur and professional sports, the stories aren't as good and the emotions aren't the same. If that's considered the thinking of any aging gentleman, I accept the compliment. My arrival to Earth was perfectly timed. I hope yours was as well.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

Wanderings of an Aimless Mind



Love the One You're With

By Shelby Opperman
Contributing Writer

This is the lull before pool season starts, even though we are getting plenty of calls for pool openings. I always say if you want to get those magic 3 weeks before Memorial Day that you have to call early. The winter lull is also a good time to get in as many of the doctors, eye, and dentist, and any other appointments we can. But the lull time is also for working on home projects and the dreaded filing of paperwork.

The best part of these couple months is when we get to take a few quick trips.

We had a nice trip to Gastonia, North Carolina from last Tuesday through Friday and then on to stay with friends in Bulluck, North Carolina from Friday through this past Sunday. The Gastonia portion of the trip was to a two day Dealer Days event at one of the pool liner and cover companies we work with through pool season. Gastonia is about 7ish hours away, depending on how many stops you make or the amount of traffic. We left Tuesday morning, so we weren't rushed. It was nice to get away from the snow in our yard that's for sure. And that way we had Wednesday to explore Gastonia before the dinner and live music at 5pm at the warehouse. The dinner was so good, all made by a local chef who only does catering. Every entrée from fish, chicken, to Italian, and all the sides was delicious.

After we arrived at The Hampton Inn Tuesday where everyone was staying I asked where a nice restaurant was, not a chain, to have dinner. Everyone at the front desk immediately said Webb's Custom Kitchen. I thought, well, it sounds like a diner, which we love anyway. We were really surprised when we got there for our reservation and found fairy lights all over the front and valet parking. It turns out that the restaurant is a restored 1927 movie theatre with a barrel roof and two balconies, and with a large U shaped bar on the first floor as well as seating down there. We were taken up two flights of steps (I told my husband and the hostess to go on ahead that I would catch up with them, then I found out that the bathroom was also on the first floor) to the top balcony where we could watch TCM old movies on an extra large screen. The restaurant also kept all the old projectors and memorabilia of the building's old theatre days. The manager, Jesse, came around to check on us a few times and tell us about the history of the building and of ghost sightings. I even got to go through a door next to our table that took me up more sets of steps into the projectionist's room. He said that back in the 20s and 30s the projectionist actually lived in the top room with a small bathroom and kitchen. It was old, dark, and a bit scary up there.

I hadn't expected the elegance...or the food. I ordered the filet with a side of risotto mixed with smoky bacon and spinach. Robert had their meatloaf and wonderful mashed potatoes which came underneath. I don't think either one of us opened our eyes until the chef made crème Brulee came and then we closed our eyes again. Webb's Custom Kitchen was so amazing that we went back Thursday night after all the pool industry seminars and vendors day was over. As you can tell, I love food (too much I imagine, but I always blame it on Prednisone) and I love local restaurants, here or away.

There are many times when Robert and I are driving somewhere that we listen to the old 70s songs on Sirius and hope that the other person doesn't sing in order that we can each hear the song. But then there are long road trips like to Gastonia, NC where you're on a long stretch of highway when we are both just belting out the words to a song and smiling when we know we have no idea, or don't remember, what the lyrics are anymore. It makes the ride both annoying and enjoyable at the same time. And that's when you know that you truly "love the one you're with"...no matter what.

To each new day's adventure,
Shelby

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



In Remembrance

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

Jerry Butler, 60



Ralph Jerome Butler of Lexington Park, Maryland departed his earthly home on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at home. Ralph affectionately known as "Jerry" was born on

January 28, 1966, in Leonardtown, Maryland to Ralph Ignatus Butler, Jr. and Shirley Bennett Butler. He met Jacqueline (Jackie) Barnes, the love of his life in 1988. Jerry and Jackie were married on June 20, 1992. Together they had one son, Ja'Ron Malik Butler, who became their new love.

Jerry was educated in the St. Mary's County Public School system. He graduated from Leonardtown High School in the class of 1984. He became a Corrections Corporal at the St. Mary's County Detention Center. He loved his work family and they loved him. They knew him as the humble man who was very selfless and only interested in putting the spotlight on the people who needed help.

Jerry touched the hearts of all he came in contact with. If you needed it and he could provide it, consider it done. His mom loved to see her son come to help with the gardening and watch soap operas. Jerry talked

with his son every day on his way home from work. Such deep conversations were had while in transit from work to home. He loved cutting Grass on that John Deer, watching Sanford and Son and Martin TV shows, and the movie Friday with his son. He was a man filled with love.

Jerry is preceded in death by his father, Ralph Butler, his brother Joseph Carroll Butler, grandparents Ralph I Butler Sr (Eleanor), and Henry Bennett (Estelle), uncles, Joseph Carroll, and Joseph C. Swales, godmothers Mary Davis and Grandma Peaches, sister-in-law Katina Yates, Nieces Donesha Chew, and Jady Barnes, and best friend David T. Thomas.

He is now resting easy with the Lord. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed, and always dear.

Family will receive friends on March 11, 2026 from 11:00 am to 1:00 p.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated by Rev. Christian Huebner, all at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic church, 22375 Three Notch Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653. Interment will follow at Queen of Peace Cemetery, 38888 Dr. Johnson Road, Mechanicsville, MD 20659.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral

Home, P.A., Leonardtown, MD.

Jim Burt, 70



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of James Edward Burt (Jim), beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend. Jim passed away on

February 15, 2026, following complications from heart surgery.

A proud U.S. Navy veteran, Jim served as a helicopter pilot for 20 years, earning the respect and admiration of those he worked with. After retiring from the Navy, Jim continued his service to his country in government work until his retirement in 2024.

Jim's zest for life was evident in everything he did. He cherished time spent with family, loved traveling, and was known for his incredible storytelling. He found joy in working on his boat, tirelessly fixing up his house (much to the chagrin of his wife), and always keeping busy with projects. A man of energy and action, Jim could never sit still. He was always on the go, whether it was tinkering, working, or sharing a good laugh with loved ones.

Jim's sense of humor was a larger-than-life personality and his love for life will be deeply missed by all who knew him. His family takes comfort knowing that his legacy of kindness, service, and love for adventure will live on in his children, grandchildren, and everyone whose life he touched.

Jim was the loving husband of Herdis Linda Burt, devoted father to Sabrina Burt and Tanya Tchinski, and a cherished grandfather to Justin Andrew Juron, Jason Alexander Juron, Isabella Harlow Tchinski, and Thomas James Waring. He is survived by his siblings, Michael Burt and Karen Steichen and by numerous family members in the United States, Iceland, and Australia.

A celebration of life will be held at Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home in Leonardtown, MD, on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at 11:00 AM, followed by a gathering at Tall Timbers Marina at 12:30 PM.

Jim's favorite Hawaiian shirt was always a part of his fun-loving spirit, so please feel free to wear your most colorful and funky shirt in his honor. Jim will be laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that donations be made to the Second District Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad in Valley Lee, MD in recognition of Jim's commitment to service.

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www.stmaryscountymd.gov/Aging/Health-Insurance-Program/

In Remembrance

Jim's family would like to extend heartfelt thanks to those who have supported them through this difficult time. May his memory live on in our hearts forever.

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.

Warren Gardner, 40



Warren Ray Gardner, 40, of Piney Point, MD, passed away on February 26, 2026, in Boston, MA. Born on May 30, 1985, in Leonardtown, MD, he was the son of Donna Lang Gardner and Joseph C. Gardner of Piney Point, MD. In addition to his parents, Warren is survived by his brother, Eric J. Gardner, and his sister-in-law, Emily Gardner.

Warren was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and graduated from Great Mills High School. He attended the College of Southern Maryland and was a Coastguardsman for the U.S. Coast Guard for 17 years.

In his spare time, Warren enjoyed carpentry, reading sci-fi, model building, hiking, technology, drawing, and painting.

Warren will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD, where a funeral service will be held in the funeral home chapel at 11:00 AM with Joyce Blackwell officiating. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD.

The family invites friends to the 2nd District Volunteer Fire House, Valley Lee, MD, for light refreshments following all services.

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.

James Richardson, 59



James "Jimmy" Richardson, born October 10, 1966, and a lifelong resident of Mechanicsville, Maryland, passed away peacefully on March 2, 2026, surrounded by his loving family after a courageous battle with cancer for over six years. He passed at the young age of 59.

A loving husband, father, son, brother, and friend, James shared more than 30 years with his beloved wife, Cheryl. He faced his illness with tremendous strength and with-

out fear, enduring treatment after treatment without losing his love for life.

James was known for his passion for fixing anything and took great pride in his work. One of his greatest joys was fishing on the water, where he found peace and contentment. He loved his country music and especially enjoyed karaoke gatherings, while also enjoying Maryland crabs with family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Larry Morgan, and his sister, Carolyn Buell.

James is survived by his loving wife, Cheryl; his mother, Joyce Morgan; his sister, Donna Morgan; his four children, Cassandra, Jimmy, Kenny (Krista), and Jesse; and seven grandchildren.

He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Family will receive friends on Saturday March 14, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A. at 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650, with a funeral service beginning at 11:00 a.m. officiated by Father Chip Luckett. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's, PO Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650 or Leonardtown Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 299, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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

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

Gene Wood, 83



Mearl Eugene "Gene" Wood, 83, of Hollywood, Maryland, passed away on Sunday, February 22, 2026, at St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown.

Gene was the loving husband of Karen Bishop Wood, with whom he enjoyed 60 years of marriage last August. He was the loving father to Deborah Jones (married to Joe) of Albertville, AL, David Wood (married to Joann) of Leonardtown, MD, and Rebecca Litten (married to Donnie) of Leonardtown, MD, proud grandfather to Joe Paul Jones, Jason Jones, Joshua Wood, Shelby Litten Frazier, Emily Litten, and Shannen Litten. Recently, he became great grandfather to Kelly Frazier, truly a joy for him.

Gene was born June 28, 1942 in Mechanicsburg, PA to Gladys Ann Connelly Wood and George Eugene "Chip" Wood, who predeceased him (in 2015 and 2005, respectively). Shortly after Gene's birth, the family relocated back to St. Mary's County where Gene lived his entire life. He is survived by his sister, Patsy Burger and his brother Ronald Wood (married to Gail). Gene attended Leonardtown High School, graduating in 1960. He graduated from Frostburg State Teachers' College in 1964.

Gene's career as an educator spanned 41 years. He started his career in Anne Arundel

County in 1964. Following his first year of teaching, Gene moved back to St. Mary's County where he worked as a public school teacher or administrator for 41 years.

Gene served as a physical education teacher, industrial arts teacher and assistant principal. In the later part of his career, Gene created and ran the Graphic Arts Program at the Forrest Technical Center, which later gained National Certification under his guidance.

Gene was passionate about sports and athletic performance. Gene coached football, basketball and baseball for countless Great Mills and Chopticon students. He also served as President of the Southern Maryland Athletic Conference. Gene enjoyed competing himself. He played soccer, basketball and baseball at Frostburg State. As an adult, he excelled at baseball and softball. He competed in the Senior Olympics for softball and played on a national travel softball team. He also enjoyed the fraternity of local slow pitch teams. In 2011, he was inducted into the Maryland Slow Pitch Softball Association Hall of Fame. When he finally hung up his softball glove, he spent much of his time at Breton Bay Golf Club, honing his skills at golf.

With his days filled with teaching and sports, Gene still managed time to operate a sign business, enjoy woodworking, vol-

unteer for the St. Mary's County Historical Society, attended Hollywood United Methodist Church, and was a member of the Thomas J. Shryock Masonic Lodge in Hollywood. He enjoyed life to its fullest, living by the philosophy of ten little words: If it is to be, it is up to me.

Gene leaves such a legacy of success as a teaching professional and athlete, but the greatest legacy left by Gene is the family he loved and supported. He will be missed.

Family will receive friends on Thursday, March 5, 2026 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., with prayers at 6:30 p.m., at Brinsfield Funeral Home, 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. A Funeral Service will be celebrated by Reverend Matthew Tate on Friday, March 6, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., at Hollywood United Methodist Church, 24422 Mervell Dean Road, Hollywood, MD 20636. Interment will follow at Joy Chapel Cemetery, Hollywood, MD.

Memorial contributions in Gene's name may be made to the St. Mary's County Historical Society, P.O. Box 212, Leonardtown, MD 20650 or Hollywood United Methodist Church, 24422 Mervell Dean Road, Hollywood, MD 20636.

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

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

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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, Mar 6

The Mad Ones (Musical) Opening Night

The Newtowne Players
21744 South Coral Dr., Lexington Park
8 p.m.

Mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved... Samantha Brown balances on the edge of her future, car keys in hand. As she sits in the driver's seat, she faces a choice: will she follow in her mother's footsteps, or take the dare of her impetuous best friend and chart a new path? This contemporary and compelling score immerses audiences in the complex inner life of a young woman on the brink of change.

Show Times: Thursday-Saturdays 8 p.m., Sundays 3 p.m.

Buy tickets: www.simplenetix.com/e/the-mad-ones-tickets-228777

Adults \$20; Special Discount Groups \$17; Children 6-11 \$15; Under 5 free (not recommended for young children)

Doors open 30 minutes prior to showtime.

42455 Fairgrounds Road, Leonardtown
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
7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Reserve a space for \$20 (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.

Spring Indoor Yard Sale

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
27108 Mt. Zion Church Rd.,
Mechanicsville
7 a.m. to 1 p.m.,

Bring your friends and family. Clothing, kitchenware, home decor, toys and much more. Food available for purchase. Help us fill the wagon for the Hungry Team Food Pantry, bring a canned food item. More information contact vickiefrederick1154@gmail.com

Area 52 Toastmasters Speech Contest

Lexington Park Library
21677 Franklin Delano Roosevelt Blvd,
Lexington Park
12:30- 2:30 p.m.

Join us to cheer on our contestants, support the contest team, and witness the rise of future champions.

Spring Benefit Auction

Little Flower School
Great Mills
5-10 p.m.

Step into A Night of Mystery at Little Flower's annual Spring Benefit Auction. This signature event and all the clues will be revealed. Transforming the evening into an immersive night filled with intrigue, excitement and mystery.

Guests (age 21+ only) will enjoy a Southern Maryland-style dinner prepared by Rita B. Catering, along with drink spe-

cial, silent and live auctions, and a variety of games and raffles designed to keep the mystery alive throughout the night. From the moment guests arrive, they'll be drawn into an atmosphere of suspense and delight—where bids, games, clues and prizes add a new twist to the story.

Proceeds directly support Little Flower School's commitment to nurturing the whole child.

For tickets and more information, visit www.littleflowercatholic.org/auction

Sun, Mar 8

Quarter Auction Benefit

St. Mary's County Fairgrounds
42455 Fairgrounds Rd., Leonardtown
1-3 p.m.

Doors open at noon. Auction starts at 1:00 PM. 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. Concessions available on site.

For additional information or reservations, please call 240-416-4224.

Proceeds benefit South County Patriots 4-H Club.

Sat, Mar 7

Craft Vendor Fair

St. Mary's County Fair Grounds

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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Mar 5

Song Circle

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

Whether you're a musician, singer, or just love to hum along, this event is for you. Lead or learn folk and acoustic tunes in a casual, welcoming jam session. Bring your instrument, voice, or enthusiasm. Spectators are welcome to come enjoy the music, energy, and community spirit! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Awful Artworks

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
6-7:45 p.m.

Have you ever looked at an art project and thought "I could do that," but you in fact could not do that? Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! This Awful Artworks will be all about copying a famous painting in the style of another famous artist! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sat, Mar 7

American Garden Stories: People, Places, and Plants

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
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.

Pot of Gold Bingo Bonanza

Calvert County Fairgrounds Social Hall
140 Calvert Fair Dr., Prince Frederick
1-4:30 p.m.

Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Early bird games at 1 p.m. Regular games at 1:30 p.m.

Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter and Just One More Dachshund Rescue. Prizes include: designer handbags, totes, and accessories, local experiences, outdoor gear, luxury gift baskets and "Treat Yourself" packages, electronics, cash and scratch, and much more!

Tickets are required to be in the hall, and everyone must be age 12 or above (no infants, no exceptions). Tickets:

- Regular admission ticket—\$40 each (includes one book of 20 regular games) or
- Fun Pack ticket—\$60 each (includes one book of 20 regular games, one book of 5 specials, and one book of 4 early bird games)

Tickets are only sold via a ticket order form. No tickets are sold online. To get a copy of the ticket order form, please email your request to: carnesmd20653@yahoo.com.

All pre-sale tickets include a seat reservation. For information, please call 410-474-2958.

Garden Smarter: Grafting

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10-11:30 a.m.

Grafting allows gardeners to utilize genetic components of multiple varieties in a single plant. Come learn how to graft fruit plants such as apples, tomatoes, and more, through discussion and hands-on activities. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sun, Mar 8

Identity of a Small Town: Bayside History Winter Lectures

North Beach Town Hall
1-2 p.m.

Join us to learn about local history and more from local experts. This event is presented by Vincent P. Turner, II and covers the chains of title for every property in North Beach from the founding of the town to the present. Co-sponsored by Calvert Library, Bayside History Museum and John Hanson Chapter NSDAR. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Mon, Mar 9

Resumes and Interviewing Skills

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

Offered by Maryland Department of Labor, American Job Center, this is an interactive workshop for resume and job interview help. Don't miss this free class. Registration closes 3 days before the event. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tech Help Drop-in Hour

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Learn how to troubleshoot and fix your tech problems with Calvert Library! Need help with your devices? Drop in to Calvert Library's open tech hours! We are pleased to offer personalized assistance with basic tech requests, computer and internet basics, e-Readers, Libby, Microsoft Office or Google apps, personal devices and more! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Mar 10

Social Security: Retirement Information

Calvert Library (Zoom)
1:30-2:30 p.m.

The Social Security Administration provides protection for workers and their families. Programs provide monthly income to seniors, workers with a disability, children with disabilities, and families in which a spouse or parent has died. We invite you to this virtual presentation to learn more about retirement eligibility requirements, family benefits, options, and the application process. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Astronomy Night

Calvert Library Fairview Branch
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings
7:15-8:15 p.m.

Come see what the night sky has to offer in the field behind Fairview. Learn about the equipment used to view the sky from the Astronomy Club of Southern Maryland.

All ages welcome. Outdoor only event, weather permitting. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Mar 11

Veteran Services Program

Southern Pines Senior Center
20 Appeal Lane, Lusby
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Are you a veteran or close family member looking for assistance? ServingTogether will be on hand to provide support for Calvert County service members, veterans and military families. Walk-ins are encouraged. No appointment is necessary. Write dwilliams@everymind.org for more information. To learn more about ServingTogether, visit www.everymind.org/servingtogether.

Job Seeker Resources

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MD Labor Workforce—Veterans Services will be available (in person) to meet with those seeking employment-related support and community service information. This event focuses on Veterans Services, but all jobseekers are welcome! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Upcoming

Valentine Maker's Market: Defrosted Edition

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
Saturday, March 14
9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Originally scheduled for February, but postponed due to icy conditions, yje market returns, celebrating handmade art and love in all forms – no matter the season. Shoppers can browse a wide range of products, including small-batch chocolates, jewelry, leather goods, pottery, clothing, and more, from both indoor and outdoor vendors, all featuring homemade, handmade, or homegrown items crafted with care. Food trucks will be on site. Admission to the market area is free. Well-behaved pets on short leashes are welcome outside. Learn more at www.annmariegarden.org.

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

To be considered for publication, articles and letters to the editor submitted must include the writer's full name, address and daytime phone number. Submissions must be delivered by 4 p.m. on the Monday prior to our Thursday publication to ensure placement for that week. After that deadline, the County Times will make every attempt possible to publish late content, but cannot guarantee so. Letters may be condensed/edited for clarity,

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Bestselling Author to Visit Calvert

Calvert Library is thrilled to announce that it will be hosting #1 New York Times bestselling author Kwame Alexander on Monday, March 9, 2026, at Calvert High School at 6:30 pm. He will be in conversation with beloved Mt. Harmony Elementary School librarian, Dr. Melaney Sánchez, and will also answer questions submitted by the audience.

Registrants may submit a question in advance.

Young people ages 5-19 have the opportunity to win a pair of tickets to a VIP reception with Kwame Alexander to be held before the public conversation. Students can submit a book trailer or book talk about one of his books to be entered to win.

Of Alexander's 45 books, he is perhaps best known for *The Crossover*, his Newbery Medal-winning novel turned Emmy® Award-winning Disney+ TV series. Other titles include *Why Fathers Cry at Night*, *The Mighty Macy*, *Black Star* (a Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book), *J vs. K* (an illustrated novel he penned with Jerry Craft), and *Say Yes* (the motivational primer for graduates, creatives and professionals). He is also the co-creator and executive producer of the Emmy-nominated *Acoustic Rooster* and *His Barnyard Band* and *Acoustic Rooster: Jazzy Jams*, a PBS KIDS special and series of shorts produced by GBH Kids based on his beloved children's book of the same name.

A recipient of the 2025 NAACP Image Award, Kwame is a 2026 Sine 250+ Fellow at American University and the founder of the literacy non-profit One Word at a Time.

Mahogany Books will have copies of *Mighty Macy* and other Alexander books available for purchase and signing at the event.



Kwame Alexander

Calvert Library greatly appreciates the support of Calvert County Public Schools in publicizing and providing the space for this event. The event is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through Library Services and Technology Act Funding administered by the Maryland State Library Agency through a Maryland Libraries Together grant.

Teal Level Sponsors include: Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Calvert Education Association, Concerned Black Women of Calvert County and Friends of Calvert Library.

Community Advocate Level Sponsors are Calvert County Minority Business Alliance, Calvert County NAACP and College of Southern Maryland.

If you would like more information, please contact Robyn Truslow at 410-535-0291.

Press release from Calvert Library

When Duty Calls—Even for America's Mascot

Calvert County Sheriff's Deputy Lt. Basham on Thursday, Feb. 26, at 11:49 a.m. spotted something unusual along the wood line in the Dunkirk Town Center: a bald eagle standing still on the ground.

Now, eagles are known for soaring. Not so much for loitering. Realizing something wasn't right, Lt. Basham contacted Calvert County Animal Control. ACO Bell-Bussler quickly responded, and when the eagle tried to hop into the woods but couldn't make it over a log (we've all had those days), it became clear the bird needed help.

With teamwork and care, the eagle was safely secured using a net. Upon examination, Animal Control observed an injured and infected left wing.

Thanks to our partners at Owl Moon Raptor Center, who responded to transport this very important patient to their rehabilitation center. With expert care, we're hopeful this symbol of freedom will soon be soaring high over Calvert County once again.

Press release from CCSO



Animal Control Officer Bell-Bussler with the rescued bald eagle

CSM Celebrates Opening of New Nursing Lab



(L to R) Kenneth Abell, CSM Board of Trustees; Lorraine Diana '79, MAAPC Board Member; Marie Tarleton, MAAPC Board President; Dr. Yolanda Wilson, CSM President; Samantha Freeman, Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship recipient; Beth Baldwin, MAAPC Board Member; Samantha Stratchko '18, CSM Foundation Chair; Kelli Goldsborough '03, MAAPC Board Member; Sabrina Sepulveda, MAAPC Board Member

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) unveiled the newly named Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians (MAAPC) Nursing Lab on Feb. 12 recognizing the organization's support of CSM nursing students.

In October 2025, the CSM Foundation announced MAAPC's \$57,500 gift to establish the Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship to support the next generation of health care workers in Southern Maryland.

CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson thanked MAAPC for its generous gift, remarking that the scholarship will provide a pathway for future nurses to earn their degree and follow a calling to care for the community.

"Your commitment reflects a clear understanding of both the urgency of today's healthcare workforce needs and the long-term investment required to meet them," Dr. Wilson said. "Scholarships like the Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship strengthen the healthcare workforce pipeline by removing financial barriers and allowing talented, dedicated students to focus on learning, training, and preparing for the demands of the profession."

The Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship, which is administered by the CSM Foundation, will provide two annual scholarships of \$1,250. These awards may be renewed for a second year under the condition the students retain a grade of B or higher in all nursing courses.

Established in 2005, MAAPC's mission is to serve as an advocate for Advanced Practice Clinicians and support the profession's critical role in addressing healthcare workforce shortages across the state.

MAAPC Board Member Sabrina Sepulveda spoke about the legacy of Florence Nightingale, recognized as the founder of modern nursing in whose honor the scholarship is named, and the inspiration she instills in recipients.

"By connecting educational funding to Nightingale's name, it reminds scholarship recipients that they are continuing the work of someone who proved that nursing is both a calling and a profession worthy of the highest educational standards," Sepulveda said. "Each scholarship recipient represents not just one nurse, but potentially thousands of patients who receive care throughout that nurse's career."

CSM Foundation Chair Samantha Stratchko spoke about the Foundation's commitment to providing financial support to students dedicated to their educational goals.

"We are honored to celebrate MAAPC's generous investment and partnership with CSM, uniting hands-on nursing education with the Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship to build a strong and compassionate healthcare workforce," Stratchko said.

Samantha Freeman is a first-year nursing student and a recipient of the Future Nightingales Endowed Scholarship.

Freeman first enrolled in the nursing program in 2023 but made the difficult decision to put her education on hold to address health concerns. As a mother of three children going back to school, she said the scholarship gives her the space to balance family and finances while following her dreams of becoming a nurse.

"I am now able to show my children that although setbacks can be frustrating, there are resources available to help you achieve your dreams," Freeman said. "Your investment is not only shaping my future, but also the future of the patients and communities I will one day serve."

Over the past 10 years, the CSM Foundation has raised \$12 million in scholarships and program funds and has awarded \$9.7 million in support of student success;

Press release from CSM

CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of February 9, 2026 – February 15, 2026, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,558 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 68
- Disorderly: 15
- Domestic: 16
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 52
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 1251
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 26
- Traffic Complaints: 65
- Traffic Stops: 507
- 911 Hang Ups: 65
- ARRESTS: 37



Amanda Louise Phillips

for the report of a serious motor vehicle crash. Upon arrival, deputies observed a single vehicle overturned on its roof. Deputies made contact with the driver, identified as **Amanda Louise Phillips**, 28 of Huntingtown, who displayed signs of impairment by a controlled dangerous substance. Phillips agreed to perform a series of standardized field sobriety tests, which indicated she was unable to safely operate a motor vehicle. She was subsequently placed under arrest and charged with Driving While Impaired by a Controlled Dangerous Substance. A search of Phillips' purse incident to arrest revealed six different varieties of pills for which she did not have valid prescriptions. Phillips was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis (x6), CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, Negligent Driving, Reckless Driving, and other traffic related charges.



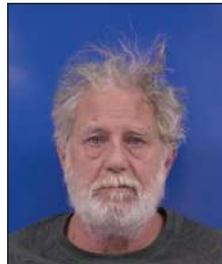
Nicholas Daniel Lokey



Christopher Michael Cable

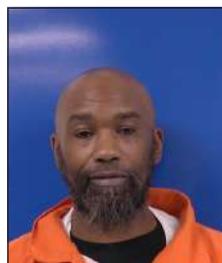
of Dameron. Both subjects initially provided false identifying information, giving each other's names in an attempt to conceal Cable's suspended license status. K9 Atlas

conducted a free-air sniff and alerted to the presence of narcotics. A search of the vehicle revealed multiple clear capsules containing white powder and residue, two cut straws with white residue, and other drug paraphernalia. Cable admitted the substance was fentanyl and stated he had used earlier in the day. Both Lokey and Cable were arrested and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center. They were charged with CDS: Possession- Not Cannabis, CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, Fraud to Avoid Prosecution, and Obstructing and Hindering.



Randal Mason Linett

erated label and ingest a pill while operating a vehicle. Deputies initiated a traffic stop at the intersection of Solomons Island Road and Federal Oaks Drive in Sunderland. Deputies made contact with the driver, identified as **Randal Mason Linett**, 66 of Prince Frederick. Linett advised deputies he had taken a pain pill from the bottle and did not have a prescription for the medication. Additional deputies responded to the scene. A search resulted in the recovery of a quantity of suspected controlled dangerous substances identified as Oxycodone Hydrochloride pills, a switchblade knife, and a large amount of U.S. currency. A total of 283.5 suspected pills were recovered, with an estimated street value of approximately \$5,477.50. Deputies also seized \$1,403 in U.S. currency. Linett was charged with Possession with Intent to Distribute, Possession of a Concealed Deadly Weapon, and CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.



Terrence David Brooks

of Emerson Road in Owings. The vehicle failed to immediately stop and continued traveling on Emerson Road at a high rate of speed, nearly striking an Amazon delivery van while attempting to pass it. The driver ultimately brought the vehicle to a stop in the 300 block of Emerson Road. The driver was identified as **Terrence David Brooks**, 44, of Baltimore. Senior Deputy Idol and his K9 partner, Benji, conducted a free-air sniff of the vehicle. K9 Benji alerted to the presence of narcotics. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed:

- Two tear-off baggies containing several Oxycodone pills
- Two tear-off baggies containing

- approximately 5 grams of cocaine
- Two zip-lock bags containing approximately 118 grams each of cannabis
- Additional empty tear-off baggies
- Two cellular phones



Donald Sheldon Strickland

in possession of a torn piece of suspected Buprenorphine (Schedule III) sublingual strip. Strickland was charged with CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis and Possession of CDS While Confined.

Fleeing and Eluding: 15018 On February 14, 2026, Deputy Morgal initiated a traffic stop after observing a vehicle traveling 98 mph westbound on W. Chesapeake Beach Road in Dunkirk. When Deputy Morgal activated his emergency equipment, the driver failed to stop and continued westbound onto Brickhouse Road at speeds reaching approximately 120 mph. The vehicle was observed traveling in the opposite lane of traffic and swerving across the roadway. The suspect vehicle attempted to turn at the intersection of Brickhouse Road and Windsor Drive, at which time the driver lost control. The vehicle left the roadway, struck an embankment, and ultimately came to rest in front of a residence on Skyvilla Drive. Deputies made contact with the driver, identified as **Irvin Danilo Avelar Arrue**, 32 of Dunkirk. A strong odor of an alcoholic beverage was detected on his breath. Avelar Arrue admitted to consuming approximately 8 to 10 beers. He was transported to a local hospital for evaluation and subsequently charged with Negligent Driving, Reckless Driving, DWI, DUI, Fleeing and Eluding, Driving without a License and several other traffic related offenses.

Property Destruction: 26-14011 On February 12, 2026, DFC Claggett responded to the 3300 block of Lancer Court in Dunkirk for the report of property destruction. The complainant advised that her vehicle had been parked in the Dunkirk Gateway Shopping Center on February 11, 2026, between approximately 4 and 5 p.m. During that time, an unknown suspect keyed the victim's vehicle. Scratches approximately two feet in length were observed on the vehicle. The estimated value damaged property is unknown at this time.

Theft: 26-13723 On February 12, 2026, F/Sgt. Morder responded to the District 3 Station, located at 11780 H.G. Trueman Road in Lusby, for a reported theft. The complainant advised that an unknown suspect stole two handicap placards from his vehicle while it was parked at the victim's residence in the 11800 block of Arrowhead

Trail in Lusby. The estimated value of the stolen property is \$100.

Theft: 26-14879 On February 14, 2026, Deputy Robey responded to the 5800 block of Long Beach Drive in St. Leonard for a reported theft. The complainant advised that two packages had been delivered to her residence and that the contents of both packages were stolen. The estimated value of the stolen property is \$520.

Theft: 26-15312 On February 15, 2026, at approximately 8:10 p.m., DFC T. Bowen responded to Walmart, located at 150 N. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick, Maryland, for the report of a theft. The complainant advised that on February 3, 2026, two unidentified males entered the store and concealed multiple Dove, Olay, and Native brand products inside a bag before exiting the store without rendering payment. The complainant further advised that the same suspects returned on February 14, 2026, and stole one Ninja blender, two air fryers, and two Shark steam mops. The suspects again exited the store without paying for the merchandise. The suspects were observed entering a gray Toyota Highlander with tinted windows. The total estimated value of the stolen property is \$846.96.



Jykiel Eugene Barnes

Frederick. Upon making contact with the driver, identified as **Jykiel Eugene Barnes**, 25 of Prince Frederick, it was determined that Barnes was operating the vehicle on a suspended license. When Barnes was advised he was under arrest, he began to resist. During the encounter, Barnes informed deputies that there was a handgun inside the vehicle. A subsequent search of the vehicle resulted in the recovery of a Glock 17 Gen 5 handgun and a loaded magazine. Further investigation revealed that Barnes did not possess a valid handgun permit. Barnes was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Driving on a Suspended License, Handgun in a Vehicle, Resisting Arrest, and was issued multiple traffic citations.

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

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

Governor Announces 2026 Green Bag Appointments



Governor Wes Moore on Feb. 20 announced the Moore-Miller Administration's 2026 Green Bag appointments, which reaffirm the administration's commitment to maintaining diverse leadership on key boards and commissions across the state.

Secretary of Appointments Mollie Byron delivered the appointments to the Maryland Senate.

Calvert County appointments include:

- Calvert County Plumbing Board — Alton Ray Chavis and Frederick M. Wyrostek
- District Court of Maryland, Fourth District — The Honorable Robyn Ennis Riddle
- State Board of Certified Interior Designers — Caitlin Molly Johnson
- Patuxent River Commission — Dr. Luke Macaulay, Dr. Scott Knoche and Ryan Kennedy St. Laurent
- College of Southern Maryland Board of Trustees — Christy Marie Lombardi and Pamela Cousins

"I want to commend the hundreds of Marylanders who have raised their hands to serve our people through leadership roles on our state's boards and commissions," said Gov. Moore. "These individuals define what it means to participate in progress. Together, we are building a stronger, more equitable government that looks like the communities it serves and leads with excellence."

The "Green Bag" is a centuries-old Maryland tradition, where officials used green cloth bags to carry important state documents. Formally required by the Maryland Constitution to be delivered by the 40th day of the legislative session, the governor submits the nominations to the State Senate for "advice and consent,"

seeking approval to fill the positions.

Under the Moore-Miller Administration, 4,616 appointments have been made to the state's boards and commissions. In 2025, the Moore-Miller Administration's appointments comprised a record 53 percent women and 54 percent people of color. Of the appointees presented today, 51 percent are women and 49 percent are people of color.

"With every appointment, we are driven by the Governor's commitment to excellence and equity in state service," said Secretary of Appointments Mollie Byron. "Our work is to ensure that no one in Maryland is left behind, and today's Green Bag is a physical reminder of our year-round efforts to make our boards more truly representative of the communities they serve. With this slate of appointments, every corner of our state will be reflected in integral work that impacts the daily lives of Marylanders."

The work of Maryland's more than 650 boards and commissions—consisting largely of dedicated volunteers—is integral to the effective operation of the State. Beyond their roles in professional licensing and industry regulation, these bodies serve as a direct link between state government and Maryland communities. By shaping policies and implementing oversight across issues from education to health care and public safety, Maryland's boards and commissions ensure government remains accountable and responsive to Marylanders.

The administration will submit additional appointments in early March.

Press release from Office of the Governor

Whole Blood Field Transfusion Program Launched

The Department of Public Safety's Career Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division and Calvert Advanced Life Support, in partnership with the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners, announced the launch of its Low-Titer Type O Positive (LTO+) Whole Blood Field Transfusion Program.

Development of the program was accelerated following a critical incident in which Deputy James Flynt of the Calvert County Sheriff's Office sustained a gunshot wound while pursuing a suspect. Flynt received whole blood after arriving at CalvertHealth Medical Center. Without the availability of whole blood at the hospital, he likely would not have survived. His survival underscores the importance of early recognition of the need for transfusion by EMS clinicians and hospital staff, and the critical role timely blood administration plays in trauma care.

With this initiative, Calvert County becomes the fifth prehospital EMS agency in Maryland and the 270th nationwide authorized to administer whole blood in the prehospital setting, bringing a lifesaving, hospital-level intervention directly to patients when every second matters.

Whole blood transfusion, long established as the standard of care in military medicine, is increasingly being adopted by civilian EMS systems.

Clinical evidence shows whole blood significantly improves survival outcomes for patients experiencing life-threatening hemorrhage, particularly in cases of severe trauma.

The LTO+ Whole Blood Program allows specially trained EMS clinicians to administer FDA-approved, low-titer Type O positive whole blood to critically injured or ill patients before they arrive at the hospital. Early administration provides valuable time for patients to reach definitive surgical care, dramatically improving survival rates.

"Delivering whole blood at the point of injury offers a critical advantage over traditional fluids," said Dave McDowell, director of the Calvert County Department of Public Safety. "This program allows us to provide advanced, lifesaving care when it is needed most. We are proud to be the first EMS system in Southern Maryland to

bring this capability to our community."

Unlike standard IV fluids, whole blood contains all essential blood components: red blood cells, plasma, and platelets, providing oxygen-carrying capacity, volume expansion and clotting factors simultaneously. The LTO+ whole blood used in the program is considered safe for patients of all blood types and ages, with minimal risk of adverse effects.

Since Nov. 15, 2025, Calvert County Career EMS supervisors have been equipped with two units of LTO+ whole blood, along with specialized equipment required for safe storage and administration.

Blood products are supplied by Inova Health System's Division of Blood Donor Services and rotated every 14 days. Any unused units are returned to Inova for hospital use, ensuring no blood products are wasted.

"This program represents a major step forward in prehospital emergency care," said Dr. Jason Finkelstein, jurisdictional medical director, who oversees the program. "By delivering whole blood at the scene, we significantly improve survival for patients suffering from severe hemorrhage. It's about bringing hospital-level care directly to the patient when every minute counts."

"This LTO+ Whole Blood Program reflects Calvert County's continued commitment to innovation, advanced training and interagency collaboration," said Todd Ireland, Calvert County commissioner president. "The county continues to strengthen its ability to provide the highest standard of prehospital care for residents and visitors alike."

To commemorate the program's launch, the Department of Public Safety will host a blood drive in honor of hometown hero Deputy Flynt in partnership with Inova on Wednesday, March 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Department of Public Safety, 110 Main St., Prince Frederick.

For additional information about the LTO+ Whole Blood Program or the blood drive, contact Dr. Jason Finkelstein at Jason.Finkelstein@calvertcountymd.gov.

Press release from Calvert County Government



**Join our home
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We are seeking a motivated, high-energy Community Organizer to act as a Partnership Liaison. In this role, you will be the face of our organization, building meaningful relationships with local healthcare providers, community leaders, and organizations. Your mission is to bridge the gap between our services and the seniors and vulnerable populations who need them most.

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Commissioners Enact Two-Year Data Center Moratorium

By Marcia Hart
Contributing Writer

Calvert County commissioners moved to freeze all large-scale data center developments Tuesday, responding to public concern over a perceived “standard of secrecy” and the potential impact on local resources. In a unanimous 4-0 vote, the board directed staff to begin the formal process of enacting a 24-month moratorium on data center approvals. The decision followed a meeting where residents and local leaders debated whether the county was being offered an economic lifeline or a potential environmental risk.

Commissioner Mike Hart, who spearheaded the push for the moratorium, framed his motion as a safeguard against repeating the county’s industrial past. Hart drew a direct parallel to the \$3.8 billion expansion of the Cove Point Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Lusby, which he cited as a cautionary tale of local frustration. He recalled a period marked by heavy construction traffic and a public sentiment that the project was a “done deal” before residents ever had a voice. Hart specifically highlighted past disruptions, recalling an instance where developers distributed car wash tokens to neighbors as a remedy for construction dust covering their vehicles.

“I’m not going to have my name on something where my residents don’t know what’s going on,” Hart said. “It’s more important to get it right than to get it fast.”

The move toward a moratorium followed recent job postings by Amazon Web Services (AWS) for construction managers in Calvert County. Becky Ford, an AWS representative, appeared as a last-minute addition to the agenda to address the resulting public discussion. Ford confirmed that while AWS has an “interest” in the county, no formal site plans or permits have been filed at this time. She characterized the job postings as standard “due diligence” rather than an official commitment to a specific project. However, the explanation did not appease a skeptical audience.

Residents criticized the board for a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) signed with the tech giant in March 2025, which they argued bypassed the public’s right to know. Resident Kenneth Lee of Huntingtown told the board that “when a county official signs an NDA, they’re making the choice for us,” adding that the community deserves a higher standard of accountability.

Proponents of the development, including Sunderland resident Dana Jones, urged the board to consider the potential for a larger economic base, noting that industrial tax-

payers like the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant have historically kept residential property taxes low. Opponents, however, highlighted potential risks to local utilities. Joe Young of Owings stated that similar facilities in Virginia demand hundreds of millions of gallons of water per day, and expressed concern that a local project could increase household electricity bills and impact the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

To address the fiscal aspect of the county’s operations, the Board moved a \$100,000 budget adjustment from the consent agenda to new business for a more detailed public review. J.R. Cosgrove, Director of Public Works, explained that the reallocation was necessary to cover unforeseen contractual obligations and emergency repairs. This included \$3,000 for the county administration annex generator and costs related to fire alarm failures at the Broomes Island storage facility following recent storms. Cosgrove noted that while overall department budgets remained unchanged, shifting funds between categories was required to maintain essential safety and fiber-optic operations through the end of the fiscal year.

While the industrial standoff dominated the afternoon, the morning session highlighted community investment through public health and education. Officials cele-

brated the launch of the Whole Blood Field Transfusion Program, which makes Calvert one of only five agencies in Maryland authorized to give blood in the field. The program was inspired by the 2022 survival of Deputy James Flint, who was shot in the line of duty. Similarly, health officials presented the “Destination Wellness” program, which reports reducing emergency room overcrowding by addressing the food and housing insecurities of frequent patients, saving the county an estimated \$1.4 million annually.

Education also saw a mix of success and struggle as Dr. Yolanda Wilson, President of the College of Southern Maryland, reported that enrollment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, she warned that state funding caps have caused a \$2.33 million loss for the college over three years. This fiscal reality underscored the board’s task of balancing the need for new revenue with the public’s demand for protection.

Looking ahead, the moratorium process will move to a formal public hearing, likely in late March. In an effort to bridge the gap in communication, commissioners also directed staff to organize a town hall meeting within the next two weeks to allow AWS subject matter experts to face public questioning directly.

New Program Aims to Save Millions in Healthcare Costs

By Marcia Hart
Contributing Writer

In a formal briefing to the Board of Health on Tuesday, local health officials detailed a new intervention strategy aimed at reducing the strain on hospital emergency departments by addressing the social barriers that lead to chronic overutilization. Calvert County Health Officer Dr. Nimfa Teneza-Mora and program manager Meka Blizzard presented an overview of “Destination Wellness,” an initiative specifically targeting “high utilizers,” defined as patients who visit the emergency department five or more times per year.

The program’s data highlights a significant disparity in healthcare delivery, noting that while these high utilizers represent only 4% to 9% of the patient population, they account for up to 28% of total emergency department visits. This trend carries a high fiscal weight, as the annual cost of caring for high utilizers can average \$1.4 million per hospital. Beyond the medical expenses, the core finding of the report is that physical health conditions are rarely the primary driver of these repeat visits. Instead, health officials found that 80% of the factors contributing to the overuse of emergency services in Calvert County are non-medical, involving social determinants such as housing and food security.

Specific barriers identified in the briefing include housing and utility instability, which affects 35% of the target population, followed by food insecurity at 25%

and transportation barriers at 20%. Health officials noted that chronic medical conditions, which make up the remaining 20% of cases, often become unmanageable because residents are forced to prioritize basic survival over medical maintenance. “People don’t put their health at priority if they don’t know where their next meal is going to come from or if they can’t keep their lights on,” Blizzard told the commissioners.

To combat these trends, the Destination Wellness team, which composed of a registered nurse case manager, a chronic disease nurse, and community health outreach workers, provides intensive care navigation and case management. This process involves home visits and coordination with partners such as the Department of Social Services and the Office on Aging to resolve the underlying crises. Dr. Teneza-Mora characterized the program as cost-effective, noting it reaches a financial break-even point by preventing just 1.5 hospital admissions, 11 emergency department visits or 21 EMS transports per month.

The initiative is currently supported by a renewable three-year grant from the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission and has seen steady growth since its launch in July 2025. While the program enrolled 41 clients in its first six months, that pace continued into the new year with 19 new clients added in January 2026 alone. This momentum is expected to lead to the eventual transition of the initiative



County Health Officer Dr. Nimfa Teneza-Mora



Meka Blizzard, Destination Wellness Program Manager, with her team in front of the Highway to Health van

into a Mobile Integrated Health model, a collaborative partnership with Calvert County Public Safety, the Health Department, and CalvertHealth to provide in-home safety evaluations and preventative care.

Jennifer Moreland, director of community resources, noted that this evolving model is designed to function as both a prevention program and a crisis intervention, filling a gap in the county’s current health services. The strategy received broad support from the commissioners, with Commissioner Mike Hart noting that reducing non-emergency 911 calls provides a significant saving for the county as it continues its transition toward a paid EMS service model.

To secure the long-term future of the initiative, health officials are seeking additional support through the Maryland Rural Health Transformation program. This separate funding source is part of a larger state-level effort that distributed approximately \$160 million to target specific healthcare needs in rural jurisdictions. Dr. Teneza-Mora explained that this funding would help sustain the program after the current three-year grant cycle concludes, allowing for the full expansion of the mobile integrated health model. The move aligns with federal healthcare goals focused on improving patient safety and preventative care in underserved regions.

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“PEOPLE DON’T PUT THEIR HEALTH AT PRIORITY IF THEY DON’T KNOW WHERE THEIR NEXT MEAL IS GOING TO COME FROM...”

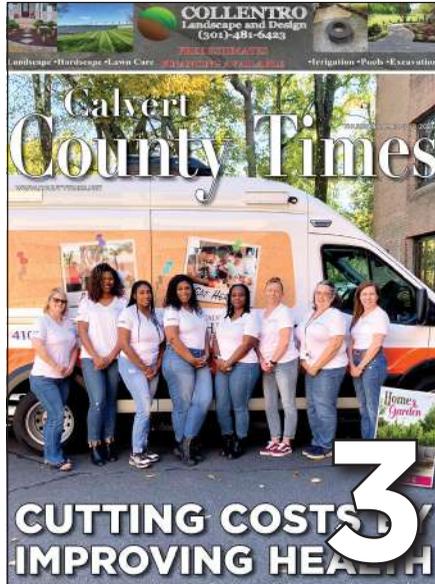
MEKA BLIZZARD ON BARRIERS TO REGULAR HEALTHCARE ACCESS



LOCAL 4
Governor announces Green Bag appointments



COMMUNITY 6
Best-selling author to visit Calvert



ON THE COVER 3
Program aims to reduce overreliance on emergency rooms

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, MAR 5	FRI, MAR 6	SAT, MAR 7	SUN, MAR 8
 AM Fog/PM Sun Hi: 62° Lo: 43°	 Cloudy Hi: 51° Lo: 42°	 AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 63° Lo: 58°	 AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 65° Lo: 45°
MON, MAR 9	TUE, MAR 10	WED, MAR 11	THU, MAR 12
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 67° Lo: 51°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 74° Lo: 61°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 79° Lo: 57°	 Showers Hi: 60° Lo: 34°

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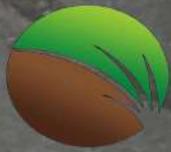
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