

Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023

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Teachers Request
More Help

Splash Pad Nixed In
Dunkirk

School Board
Quashes Audit

**SENIOR SCAMS:
Don't Be a Victim**

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WEEKLY FORECAST

<p>THU, FEB 16</p> <p>AM Showers Hi: 68° Lo: 62°</p>	<p>FRI, FEB 17</p> <p>Rain Hi: 64° Lo: 29°</p>	<p>SAT, FEB 18</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 47° Lo: 35°</p>	<p>SUN, FEB 19</p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 54° Lo: 42°</p>
<p>MON, FEB 20</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 59° Lo: 42°</p>	<p>TUE, FEB 21</p> <p>PM Showers Hi: 52° Lo: 41°</p>	<p>WED, FEB 22</p> <p>Showers Hi: 49° Lo: 38°</p>	<p>THU, FEB 23</p> <p>Showers Hi: 46° Lo: 37°</p>



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Teachers Seek More Teachers

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert Country Board of Education has been asked to include more gifted and talented teachers and more special education teachers as they build their budget for the next fiscal year. The request came from Dona Ostenso, president of the Calvert Education Association (CEA), the teachers union, at the school board's Feb. 9 meeting.

Ostenson took note of the timing of the request. She said, "I recognize the overall proposed budget is significantly more than budgets in the past, and I also understand that this increase is primarily due to meeting the requirements outlined in the law, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which requires each county to raise their overall teacher's salary by 10 percent from 2019 to 2024. The importance in providing this same Cola to our ESP (Education Support Personnel) and of course the increase in costs associated with transportation. So, you are probably thinking I could not possibly be coming before you today to ask for more, but I am, more people. I'm sure there are some who would say, how can she ask for more people when the overall enrollment is projected to be down next school year by 321 students."

She added, "Being down 321 students equates to approximately 14 teaching positions. And if all 321 students attended the same school, the math would be simple,

but we know it is not. So, I think we can all agree that the potential loss of 321 students does not change our staffing needs."

She explained her request for more teachers. "Last year I advocated for the hiring of 12 gifted and talented teachers, one for each of our elementary schools because I believe it is our responsibility as a school system to provide programs and services to accelerate, extend, or enrich instructional content so that gifted and talented students can develop to their potential. The final budget included the hiring of two gifted and talented teachers. One was placed at Plum Point Elementary School, and one was placed at Mount Harmony Elementary School. Absolutely this has been wonderful for these two schools. If you do not believe me, ask the teachers, the students, the parents who have seen how having this designated gifted and talented teacher in their building has allowed for various enrichment opportunities for the students and collaboration with classroom teachers.

"Why then does this budget not continue to increase the number of gifted and talented teachers at the elementary level? Doesn't every elementary age student who qualifies for a gifted and talented program deserve to have the educational opportunities that the students at Plum Point and Mount Harmony have? We all know the answer to this question. Of course they do. Set the bar, meet the bar, raise the bar (School Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel's motto).

As to the second request, she said, "I understand that money matters for smaller class sizes, additional instructional supports, and early childhood education outcomes. As we continue to struggle to close the achievement gap, I am concerned that there is no increase in staffing for special education. Some of you may know, some of you may not, that approximately three or four years ago, Calvert County began a transition starting with a handful of schools in changing how special education services were delivered to students in the classroom. This shift in how services are being delivered is continuing to be phased in other schools in the county.

"I am not here to discuss the merits of this model. Like with any change, you're going to hear pros and cons. But what I am here to say is, if you truly want to see this model work, then you need to hire additional staff to ensure that general education and special education teachers have a daily collaborative planning, one that is built into their contractual day training opportunities that allow for current staff to shadow inclusive program specialists for a week or more while they model what the delivery of services is supposed to look like throughout the day. Provide opportunities for the current staff to visit schools and classrooms to see what this model looks like in schools where they've been successfully managing this transition. And to talk with the educators who are providing and delivering the



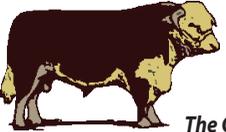
CEA President Dona Ostenson

services at these schools."

"Why is this necessary?," she asked, and answered, "Because there is a county, state and national shortage of special education teachers, because the burnout and turnover in special education is real. Because our most fragile population deserves better because as a system, we are not closing the achievement gap."

The school board is expected to put their stamp on Dr. Townsel's recommended budget during their Feb. 23 meeting.

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Townsel Talks About School Violence Cites Reduction in Numbers



School Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Calvert County School Superintendent Dr. Andrae Townsel, at the Feb. 9 school board meeting, addressed the ongoing controversy about school discipline and violence. He said, "We're constantly listening to our families, to our students, about the discipline going on in school with the fights that are taking place."

Townsel added, "I want to share with you that our school resource officers, our safety advocates, our building administrators, our teachers are working hard every single day to provide the safest learning environment possible for our young peo-

ple. I have the opportunity to pre-message with our Board of Education. I'd like to share with the community the total number of incidents that we've had this year, and also share the comparison of previous years...comparing apples to apples."

He said the numbers from August through January, were:

FY '19 there were 579 incidents
FY '20 there were 698 total incidents
FY 22 there were 489

"Currently, right now we're at 465."

Townsel concluded, "Right now, it's less than it was last year, same time, and less than it was the previous years. And I want to just acknowledge the hard work every single day by our school leadership and our teachers, our resource officers, safety advocates. They're working hard every single day. The problem is, issues are still happening."

Townsel insisted, "I do want to share that change is not an event, it's a process. And we're going through the process now, and I'm thankful for the hard work of our educators to see that we're less than with the incidents today than we were this time last year, in the previous year. So that's a testament to our hardworking school staff."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

School Board Rejects Motion for Budget Analysis



Board of Education member Lisa Grenis

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education has rejected, on a 3-2 vote, a motion by new board member Lisa Grenis for a top to

bottom cost analysis of their budget.

Grenis explained at the Feb. 9 board meeting, “I’m not well versed in football, but I’m about to throw out a Hail Mary. I know what that is. I see an increase in this budget for \$22.4 million of taxpayers’ money. In the interest of efficient spending of tax dollars, and to support a significant increase of teacher and support staff compensation, I believe we should hire a highly qualified CPA to conduct a best cost analysis. This person’s job would be to go through expenses and methods of how things are done to ensure that the taxpayer’s money is being spent in the most efficient manner possible. I see that an audit was done in 2022, but the audit may not have specifically looked for best cost or efficiency in spending. We need to ensure that every penny is a step towards getting every student a better education and a return on our investment that our citizens and students expect from Calvert County. If the CPA is able to find just one percent investment costs or efficiency savings, it could save our county millions.”

Board member Dawn Balinski ques-

tioned the initiative. She said, “I don’t think it’s a CPA. It would have to be something like a consultant that is well steeped in Maryland school district accounting. In my mind, that’s why we did a full-on search and we have a wonderful CFO (chief financial officer).”

“I don’t know if it would ever fit into our budget cycle before the board approves our own budget,” she added.

Grenis responded, “I think it would be a very large undertaking. However, I think that’s what we are faced with, given the amount of money that we’re going to ask the commissioners this year, and then really not knowing what we may have to ask for next year.”

The other new board member, Jana Post sided with Grenis. She said, “I appreciate what Mrs. Grenis just attempted to do. I think it’s really important. I think, regardless of whether that happens or not, it’s going to be an obligation, we have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the money, the tax dollars of this community are being used the most efficiently and effectively. And, sitting here today, I’m not terribly convinced that that’s the

case. And I am hoping, as things go on, that that will change.”

Grenis and Post were the only supporters of the motion. Board President Inez Claggett explained why she voted against: “It’s not that I’m necessarily opposed to consideration of a cost benefit analysis for our financial transactions. However, the motion was proposed during board comments. During board comments doesn’t allow for us to have a thorough enough discussion about pros, cons, what that analysis would look like, who would do that analysis, who would be the most appropriate person to do that analysis.”

Claggett told Grenis, “I would propose that, Ms. Grenis, you work with board leadership to possibly come up with space on a board agenda moving forward, where the board members could sit down and have a lengthy discussion, if that is a priority that you have as a member.”

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Plan Approved for Virtual Snow Make-up Days Will be Scheduled During Spring Break



By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Are we getting any snow this year? If we get enough to close school, those days will be made up virtually. At least up to three of them, according to a decision made Feb. 8 by the Calvert County Board of Education.

The current school calendar has April 3, 4 and 5, the first three days of spring break, as in-person snow make-up days. Under a plan presented to the school board at their Feb. 8 meeting by Director of System and Instructional Performance Jacquelyn Jacobs, those three make-up days will be held virtually if needed.

The plan was originally proposed by staff in November and since then public comment has been solicited. Jacobs said 55 percent of the parents responding supported the plan and 75 percent of staff.

Jacobs said the plan calls for the three makeup days to be repurposed “from in-person instruction to the use of asynchronous instruction. Students in grades three through 12 would experience asynchronous instruction where all instructional materials and assignments would be posted in Schoology to support student understanding of the posted lessons. Teachers would be available during office hours utilizing Microsoft Teams. Teachers

may also set up times during the day for virtual small group instruction using Microsoft Teams, and students would receive those team links no later than March 31st.

“Students in grades pre-kindergarten through two will experience instruction through an asynchronous packet that would be posted in Schoology and provided to students on March 31st. Teachers will create a Microsoft Teams link for students and parents to use when requesting support to ask questions and to clarify any misunderstandings or confusions regarding the lessons provided in the packet.

“Teachers will also call individual students to check and support the learning day. We know that asynchronous instruction by itself may, may not be the best fit for all learners and on any instructional day, students should have access to their teachers to support learning for these reasons.”

Jacobs added, “Prior to providing asynchronous instruction, schools would work directly with students to provide any technical support that is needed. If it is determined that a student would have difficulty during this time accessing technology one or more of the days, the student would be provided a paper packet.”

Jacobs explained the days off for snow weren’t used for virtual learning because of the late notice to prepare take home materials and for the laptops to be taken home by the students.

Board member Dawn Balinski observed, “This is during spring break. So, if we have

one day that we need to make up for snow, then you’re saying the kids at the beach will be spending four hours online?”

Jacobs responded, “That’s correct. They could, yes.” And the teachers on spring break as well, it was noted.

But Board President Inez Claggett observed the virtual plan would be less disruptive than requiring in-person make-up days during spring break. “I know that parents take advantage of spring break to take vacations. It’s easy to pack a laptop if you have one, to ensure that you try to get access to that equipment before that vacation planning. You will most likely know before you take that vacation that there will be an asynchronous day for vacations you plan a year in advance, six months in advance. So, this is something already planned. And if we have a snow day, you can’t cancel because then there goes your money unless you paid for that vacation insurance, which most likely, most people don’t do. So, for me it’s a benefit in one, but then I see the negatives also in the option. I don’t think that there is a perfect solution.”

The Maryland State Board of Education allows up to three asynchronous snow make-up days. The state board will have to approve the school board’s plan for the use of those days.

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Preying on Grandparents' Love

Scammers Steal Thousands from Elderly Couple

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

They describe it as "A Perfect Storm." Even though they had heard countless stories about scammers preying on unwitting targets, the story that unfolded was so convincing that by the time they realized what had happened, it was too late. They were out thousands of dollars of their hard-earned savings.

They were bamboozled by a new breed of polished, professional thieves. They weren't gun toting highwaymen nor robbers in the night. And the schemes now being used have been perfected so well, a preplanned, plausible response is already prepared for any question a victim may pose during the course of their daylight robbery.

The victims of our real-life Calvert County story were a well-intentioned grandfather and trusting grandmother. They asked to remain anonymous out of embarrassment and fear of reprisal but they wanted to tell their story as a warning to others who might be next.

According to the grandfather, "We were victimized by three individuals who we did not know nor never met." The victims are very well educated and experienced. Here's what happened as they relayed it to The County Times.

The events unfolded during eight hours one day recently. The sad tale began with a phone call from his "grandson" one Thursday morning. As the grandfather tells it, "The nervous voice of a young man said, 'Grandfather, this is William (name changed). I need your help as I was involved in a rear-end accident with my truck on my way to work this morning. I hit a pregnant woman who cut in front of me and suddenly stopped before I could avoid the collision. She appeared injured so I immediately notified the police myself. The police arrived along with an ambulance. She was rushed to the hospital, and I provided the police with my account of what happened. I told the cops I was reaching for my phone to check my GPS when I collided with her. I answered more questions as truthfully as I could. The police conferred with one another and after surveying the scene, they concluded that

I was at fault. They said they felt due to the immediate circumstances I would be charged with reckless driving and due to her injuries, I would also be charged with 'Driving to endanger.' They had her car towed and impounded my truck. I am now at the county detention center. I was given my one phone call, so I called my best friend whose dad is a well-known lawyer here. He came here to meet me, and this is his cell phone that he dialed your number that I gave him. His name is Mr. Walker and he wishes to talk to you now."

In the conversation with Mr. Walker, he said, "I have been asked to help your grandson William with his predicament. He has been charged with two serious offenses that are made worse by the fact a person was injured allegedly due to your grandson's negligence. I know the judge here and I have briefly discussed this incident with him. Of major concern is the fact that the victim is a well-known activist here in the county and is capable of making a lot of havoc at a hearing. The judge does not want his courtroom to become a circus, therefore he has issued a gag order on all parties involved. As a result, your grandson will only be permitted to talk with me during the course of holding the hearing. Likewise, you must only speak with me until we reach a conclusion in this matter."

Mr. Walker goes on to say, "Due to the seriousness of this incident, the judge has ordered your grandson be held until an appropriate amount of bail can be posted. Are you able to post bond for this lad?" The grandfather asks how much and he is told, "I won't know until the judge decides on the amount, but I am sure it will be several thousand dollars. I need to go speak with the judge and I will call you back"

Several minutes later the lawyer calls back and says, "I have bad news as the victim lost her baby so that will add more serious issues since there is a death to be dealt with now." The alleged lawyer then gives an amount in the thousands of dollars.

"How soon can you have the money?" he is asked and the grandfather says, "Give me an hour so I can go to the bank. Why cannot I provide a check for his bail?"

Mr. Walker says, "No, that won't work as your grandson will remain in detention

until the check clears which can be several days, especially with the upcoming weekend." So the grandfather runs to his bank and draws the cash in one-hundred dollar bills from two different accounts and returns home. At exactly one hour Mr. Walker calls and asks, "Do you have the money?" He gets the answer he was looking for. He tells the grandfather due to the fact it is after normal working hours, he will need to send his bondsman Norman to the house to collect the money. He told the grandparents to put the money in a large manilla envelop, tape it closed and write the case number on the front and to call him once the bondsman arrives so everyone can all be together to go over the situation. Mr. Walker states they will get a receipt for the money upon their grandson being released and the money will be returned once he appears in court.

Within an hour, Norman the bondsman arrives and identifies himself and receives the money and the three parties agree over the phone they all understand the arrangement. With that, Norman drives off and that's the last the grandparents see of their money.

Only then do the grandparents catch their breath and start to come to their senses. They call their lawyer who immediately recognizes a scam and tells them to get to the State Police and fill out a report as soon as possible while the details are still fresh in their minds. They comply and go to the police and fill out a four-page report with the facts in this case. The report will be filed and used to see if it compares with other fraudulent cases that have taken place recently. They know the chances of ever seeing their money again are practically nil.

There were several red flags in this case that were not recognized by these unsuspecting victims. They were intimidated by the supposed gas order imposed by the judge for they were told they could be apprehended should they discuss any of this with anyone before the hearing. Obviously, neither wanted to go to jail and this desire overrode the need to seek advice or even to inquire of their grandson or his parents. They asked good questions and received answers that sounded legitimate. The voices were convincing, and they had no real reason at first to doubt what they

were being told. They were easily fooled by the individual who impersonated their grandson as it sounded the way they thought their grandson would speak having just gone through this ordeal. The main question that is puzzling to them is how did they have enough background information about them and their grandson to make it all seem real (the red truck, the fact he was on his way to work). How did they know the grandparent's phone number and what made them feel the grandparents had sufficient money they could put their hands on with short notice?

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing," the grandfather said. They preyed on the folks becoming emotional to the extent they will do whatever for a beloved grandchild. "Our sensibilities were overridden," he said, "by the facts our grandson had recently completed his college engineering degree and was hired by the Federal Government in an important position that required a clearance. The impersonators demeanor as well as their convincing ability throughout the course of this crime gave few clues that this was a hoax. They had answers to everything including the use of non-traceable burn phones. In all likelihood, this was not their first rodeo and there are probably many more victims in their wake."

Their acting could be put to better use in a legitimate production, but they were fully aware grandparents make great targets of opportunity and are easily won over.

The couple thought it could never happen to them. Yet it happened. They are not only out of several thousand dollars of their retirement funds, but they are extremely embarrassed to have fallen prey to these evil people that live amongst us.

"Hopefully something can be gained from this hard lesson," the grandfather said. "My hope is others will learn from our mistake. I believe if it can happen to us it can happen to anyone. My advice is to stay alert and be careful. Seek advice prior to committing your hard-earned assets to any cause. As seen by what happened to us, it can be very costly."

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Splash Pad Out at Dunkirk Park



Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Nazzal

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has removed a proposed amenity at Dunkirk Regional Park – a splash pad – from the Parks and Recreation six-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Commissioner President Buddy Hance observed at the Feb. 14 BOCC meeting that the cost of the splash pad had increased

from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million in just the last four years. Hance called the proposal “a white elephant.”

Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Nazzal suggested the removal of the item during a presentation of her CIP plan. Instead Nazzal suggested reprogramming the monies for other needed projects, such as restroom improvements at that park and other items elsewhere. She said she would return with a complete list of changes.

The Recreational Facilities CIP is proposed at \$7.8 million for the next fiscal year, including that money for the splash pad, and \$95.8 million for the six years. The largest portion of that is for parks, pools, and community centers.

The six-year CIP includes \$8 million for continued development of the new Ward Farm Regional Park, or \$1.5 million each year. Nazzal said \$1 million of each year's funding will come from the state fund set up by the late Sen. Mike Miller that dedicates gaming revenue for north county recreational facilities.

Nazzal said the monies for next year will be used for a pickleball court, overlook to view the park's natural amenities and some development in the park's north sector.

The proposed CIP also includes \$1 million for planning next year for the Harriet Elizabeth Brown Park and Community Center. For Fiscal Year 2025, Nazzal said \$10 million has been set aside as a placeholder. The proposal is to phase in the proj-

ect, with the park first, in several phases, followed by the community center in later years.

The increased cost of the project to almost \$40 million has forced the commissioners to consider a phased-in approach.

Nazzal said the phasing plan would be determined during the planning and design next fiscal year. Of the \$1 million, she said \$400,000 would be with a grant with the rest from the county.

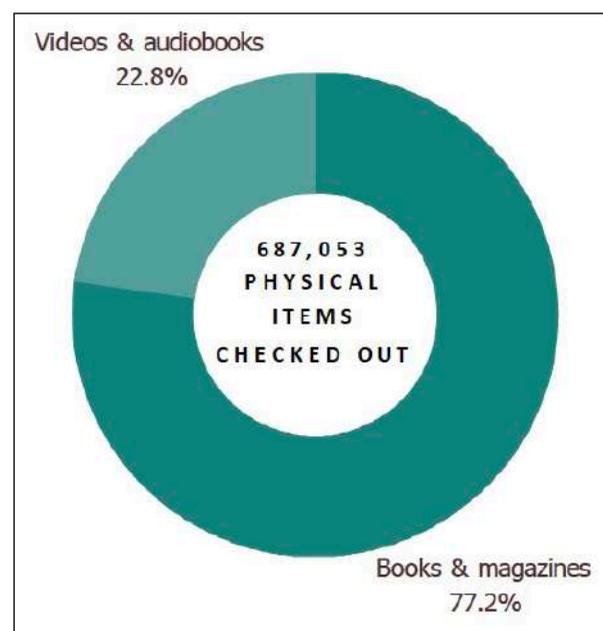
Other projects in reg CIP for next year, include:

- Park and drainage, fencing and the pump-out station at Breezy Point Park
- Master Plan implementation for Cove Point Pool
- Basketball courts at Hallowing Point Park
- Marley Run parking lot erosion control
- Chesapeake Hills course and drainage improvements
- Renovations at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp and Nature Center (victim of a recent fire)
- Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm Master Plan implementation
- Flag Ponds Nature Park boardwalks and exhibits
- Kings Landing Park trails and boardwalk

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Calvert Library Makes Annual Report

Library Cards Distribution: 55 Percent



By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Calvert Library Director Carrie Wilson presented her annual report to the county commissioners on Feb. 14 that was replete with statistics, including the fact that 55 percent of county residents have a library card.

Wilson noted the 52,110 cardholders checked out 683,053 physical items, of

which 77.2 percent were books and magazines and 22.8 percent were videos and audiobooks.

Wilson reported some of the metrics still haven't risen to above pre-pandemic levels, but some of them may be due to permanent change of circumstances. For instance, she said use of the library computers is way down. “I'm attributing that not to like fewer people having access, but to more people being able to access the internet at all. So, kudos to you for doing all that work with Comcast and other vendors.”

She added, “Some of that is that we also loan hotspots and Chromebooks, so we're both addressing the actual need for internet service, but also device usage. So, between what the schools have done, what the library has done and what's happened because of county government, I think a lot more citizens have access. You know, it's not perfect yet, but we're making progress.”

Commissioner President Buddy Hance

said the broadband rollout would be complete in a year.

“It's huge,” said Commissioner Mike Hart.

She reported that attendance at library events has gone up pre-pandemic. “We have events for preschool, for children, for teens and tweens, for adults and intergenerational.” In the last fiscal year they had 1,294 events attended by 21,000 people, the only category here where our numbers have gone up since Fiscal '19, which is kind of my pre pandemic marker.”

She added, “We've answered 60,000 more reference questions in fiscal 22 than we did in '19.”

Wilson said their collection included:

- Over 116, 441 eBooks, eAudio, eMags, graphic novels, streaming movies & TV shows available for checkout
- 65,733 physical book 12,
- 248 physical audio units
- 21,220 videos
- 211 mobile hotspots, children's tablets, laptops & other equipment
- 181 subscriptions

The library operates with a \$5.5 million budget in the current fiscal year, of which \$4.4 million comes from the county.

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The Rule of 72

from the Law Office of Lynda J. Striegel

Financial planning involves strategy. Basically, you need to plan how to get to where you want to go and how long it will take you to get there. If this involves retirement, planning should encompass both your current and your anticipated lifestyle. If this involves financing a child's college education, planning involves setting aside sufficient funds in savings to pay tuition, books and living expenses when your child needs the money.

But, how do you calculate how long it will take to get to your goals? The easiest way is to use the "Rule of 72". The Rule of 72 is a handy rule used in finance to estimate quickly the number of years it takes to double a sum of capital given an annual interest rate, or to estimate the annual interest rate it takes to double a sum of money over a given number of years.

Simply, dividing 72 by the rate of return on your investments equals the approximate number of years it will take for your money to double. Or, dividing 72 by the number of years you have until you need to use the money you have set aside equals the rate of return you need to have on your investments.

For example, David and Susan have saved \$10,000 towards their six year old child's college education. They want to know how long it will take them to double that amount. Their daughter is 6 years old. Assume she will need the money to go to college when she is 18. That's 12 years of saving. 72 divided by 12 equals a 6% rate of return on their investments. In other words, David and Susan need to obtain a six percent rate of return on their investments for 12 years to double their savings to \$20,000. That means no spending from the college account and reinvestment of all dividends and interest for the period of 12 years.

The Rule of 72 can also be used to calculate the effect of inflation. If college tuition increases at 5% per year, tuition costs will double in 72 divided by 5 or about 14.4 years. Think about it. That means David and Susan need to save much more money for college than they might at first have anticipated.

The Rule of 72 is a simple math shortcut to estimate the effect of any growth rate. The formula is "years to double equals 72 divided by interest rate." The results you achieve, a doubling of growth shows you the tremendous effect of compounding interest.

What is compound interest? For example, start with \$1 at 10% interest. At the end of one year you have \$1.10 and at the end of year 2 you have \$1.21. The dime earned in the first year starts earning money on its own (a penny). Next year add another dime that starts making pennies, along with the small amount the first penny contributes. Ben Franklin, said by some to be the inventor of the Rule of 72, apparently said: "The money that money earns, earns money."

Compound interest is deceptively small, cumulative growth that is very powerful. No wonder that Einstein is reputed to have called it one of the most powerful forces in the universe.

Don't let the rule of 72 work against you, as it does when you take on high interest debt. At an average interest rate of 18%, the credit card debt doubles in just 4 years (18 X 4 equals 72), quadruples in only 8 years, and keeps escalating with time. The first rule of your financial plan should be to pay off all high interest credit card debt and avoid it like the plague.

Using the Rule of 72 will help you figure out what you need and for how long. Compound interest will be the way you get there. These simple concepts provide the basics of financial planning. Let the Rule of 72 work for you by starting saving now. At a growth rate of 8% per annum, you would double your money in 9 years (8 X 9 equals 72), quadruple your money in 18 years and have 16 times your money in 36 years. No wonder financial planners advise 20-year olds to start a savings plan. Over time, with compound interest, even a small amount of savings consistently set aside when you are in your twenties could make you a millionaire by the time you are retired. But, even if you are older, compound interest works for you and you are never too young or too old to save.

To learn more about estate planning, join me at a free seminar on the third Wednesday of every month at 11am in our offices at 8906 Bay Avenue, North Beach. Call 301-855-2246 to reserve your space. See you then.

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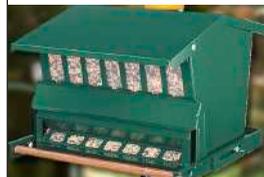
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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Feb 16

S.T.E.A.M. PUNKS

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Rd, Solomons
6-7 p.m.

Question, Discover and Explore! Experience new technology and techniques as we adventure with science, engineering, math and the arts! This month we'll be experiencing auditory phenomena. For listeners in grades K to 7. Registration required, 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

TACOS Teen Advisory Council of Students

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way, in person and online
6:30pm-7:30pm

Teens! Calvert Library needs you! We want the library to be a safe space where teens can hang out and freely access books and information. TACOS meets from September through May, to help us with our events and services planning. Join us on the third Thursday! Receive 1 Service Learning hour for each meeting attended. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Feb 17

Maritime Performance Series with Ash & Eric

Calvert Marine Museum
7 p.m.

The married couple's new album *Sure* (May 2022) is "a tale of love... [with] some heartaches and a pinch of disputation along the way." Hailing from the gritty heart of New England, the two find consolation in discovering beauty in the challenges of life. Their warm harmonies, swirling acoustic guitars, and easy stage presence have earned them a dedicated following in the emerging US folk scene, performing with folk legends like Livingston Taylor, Mark Erelli and Vance Gilbert. Performance is in the museum's Harms Gallery starting at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. with beer and wine for sale. Tickets are \$20 online at bit.ly/MaritimeConcerts and \$25 at the door.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Calvert Marine Museum
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Participate in a Citizen Science activity that provides data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Check out a pair of binoculars and a bird count tally sheet in the museum lobby to assist us with this program

on your own or on a guided walk with museum educators. For adults and children in third grade or older who are interested in assisting with research. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Included with museum admission.

On Pins & Needles

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
1-4 p.m.

Bring your quilting, needlework, knitting, crocheting or other project for an afternoon of conversation and shared creativity. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sat, Feb 18

Chili and Bake Sale

Mt. Hope UMC, 145 Dalrymple Road
Sunderland
1-4 p.m.

Carry put event only. Payment: check, cash, or Zelle. Advance tickets: \$11 for 6 oz, \$8 for 4 oz. Chili and slice of cake with purchase. At the door: day of the event, \$6 for 4 oz of chili, \$9 for chili. For bake sale: \$4 slice of cake, \$10 for 1/2 cake. Brownies \$3.50 each and Cookies 2 for \$3.

This event is to raise funds to the communication ministry for new microphones and equipment in order to reach those outside the church. Thank you in advance!

Great Backyard Bird Count

Calvert Marine Museum
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

Want to learn Mahjongg? Hope to make your Scrabble skills killer? Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Family Game Day

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Rd, Solomons
1-4 p.m.

Come play board and card games. Choose from our selection of classic and new games, or bring your own. We have Happy Salmon, Yahtzee, Doomlings, Sorry!, What Do You Meme Family?, Game of Thrones Monopoly, Jenga Giant, chess, Last Word, and more. Children, teens, and their families are all welcome! Registration not required. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sun, Feb 19

Damsels in Distress: Mermaid Mysteries

North Beach Town Hall
1:30pm- 2:30pm.

Bayside History Museum Lecture Series -- Ralph Eshelman will regale us with a history of mermaids throughout the centuries! Wear your favorite mermaid costume. For all ages! Registration not required but will get you a reminder! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Feb 20

Universal Coprolite Day Celebration

Calvert Marine Museum,
10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Join us for the second annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as coprolites. Stations featuring fossilized feces and the stories they tell will be dispersed through our galleries. This year we will also feature coprolites in the making... modern feces, some with a twist. Included with museum admission.

Dee of St. Mary's Dockside Tours

Calvert Marine Museum
1 – 4 p.m.

Step aboard the museum's sailing skipjack for an up-close tour of her 56-foot deck with crew members during the off-season. Learn how watermen dredge for oysters, hoist the sail, and navigate the waterways of the Chesapeake.

Tue, Feb 21

Black Heritage Month Book Discussion

Calvert Library Zoom, 7-8 p.m.

Black Buck by Mateo Askaripour -- Trust us, you won't want to miss this

month's discussion. It focuses on a young Black man who joins a cult-like, wildly successful startup, and transforms into a ruthless salesman, unrecognizable to all. There is a lot to think and talk about in this instant New York Times best seller! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

Wed, Feb 22

Working Wednesdays - Job Seeker Resources

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

Maryland Department of Labor, Veterans Program, Senior Community Service Employment, and Job Service representatives will be in person to meet with those seeking employment or career change. Walk ins welcome on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Reading Buddies

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
6:30-7:30 p.m.

At this event, elementary aged children will do fun activities and read aloud to teen volunteers. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sleepy Stuffies Storytime

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Rd, Solomons
6:30-7 p.m.

Wear your jammies and bring your favorite stuffed animal as we wind down from our busy day! We'll begin by getting our wiggles out and then snuggle up for stories and songs. Suggested for children 0-5. Older siblings are welcome to attend. Please register. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Thu, Feb 23

Little Minnows

Calvert Marine Museum
10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

This month's theme is The Masked Bandit is Out at Night. For preschoolers ages 3 – 5, with an adult. This program focuses on one of the museum's three themes. Join us for story time and a takeaway craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25-40 minutes. Capacity is limited. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Cost is free with admission.

FUN & GAMES

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56					57				58					
59					60					61				
62					63						64			

CLUES ACROSS

- River in Tuscany
- A way to represent
- Rocker's guitar
- Civil Rights group
- Brew
- Scratch
- W. Asian country
- The Eye Network
- Clarified butter
- Part of the Cascade Range
- Downwind
- A way to steer
- Loop
- Not ingested
- Swampy coniferous forest
- Musician
- Signing
- Containing iron
- Part of a theorem or proof
- Veterans battleground (slang)
- Of enormous proportions
- Italian city
- Come before
- Balm
- Undergarments
- Male parent
- Ropes
- Ear part
- Investment vehicle
- Dictator
- Cain and ___
- A type of code
- Border river along India and Nepal
- It's what's for dinner
- Consume
- Christian ___, designer

CLUES DOWN

- Cuckoos
- Skin issue
- City in central Japan
- Sorrels
- Twinned diamond
- Canadian province
- Monetary units
- Head honcho
- Goddess of wisdom
- Part of a play
- Get rid of
- Applicant
- Bowling alleys have many
- Explosive
- "The Say Hey Kid"
- Ultrahigh frequency
- No (Scottish)
- Make a mistake
- Credit card term
- Keyboard key
- Woman (French)
- In the middle of
- Score perfectly
- Coat a metal with an oxide coat
- Deadly disease
- A place to dock a boat (abbr.)
- Belch
- Member of U.S. Navy
- "In ___": separate from others
- Examine extensively
- Adjust
- Tattle
- Actor Pitt
- Gulls
- Within
- Exceptionally talented performer

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LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

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U	N	H									S	S	R			S	T	A	N			



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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.

Thu, Feb 16

Educational Video: John Lewis: Get in the Way

Loffler Senior Activity Center
21905 Chancellors Run Rd
Great Mills
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Cost: Free

Follow the courageous journey of John Lewis, a civil rights hero, congressional leader, and human rights champion whose unwavering fight for justice spans the past 50 years. The son of sharecroppers, Lewis grew up in the segregated South and rose from Alabama's Black Belt to the corridors of power on Capitol Hill. His humble origins have forever linked him to those whose voices often go unheard. Pre-registration is required. 16 seats available.

Sun, Feb 19

"Persistent Faith"

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
23421 Kingston Creek Road

California
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

We invite you to join us for 9:30 a.m. Sunday worship as Guest Preacher Steve Kays shares his message titled: "Persistent Faith."

To view online, visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/patuxentpresbyterianchurch

To learn more about our church, visit: www.paxpres.com.

Tue, Feb 21

Shrove Tuesday Pancake and Sausage Supper

St. John's Church
Hollywood
5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

All-you-can-eat supper will be served from 5 to 7:30 pm on Feb 21. Families and friends welcome. There will be a choice of toppings including blueberry, apple, strawberry, sausage gravy and Happy Face. Cost is \$7 for adults; \$3 under 12, with those under 6 free. Sponsored by the St. John's

Knights of Columbus.

Pancake Dinner—Leonardtown Fire Dept

22733 Lawrence Ave
Leonardtown
4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Auxiliary of the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Dept is sponsoring a Pancake Dinner on Tuesday, 21 Feb from 4:30pm—7pm inside the social hall. Dine in or grab a carryout! Dinner includes: Pancakes, Local Country Sausage, Local Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Home Fries, Applesauce, and Drinks!!! Adults \$14; Seniors \$12; Kids Under 10 \$12; Carryout \$14. fb.me/e/2qf5DZb2T

Upcoming

62nd Annual Spring Dinner

Saturday, March 4
24801 Three Notch Rd
Hollywood
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Hosted by the the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary

Takeout only: \$30 per dinner
Menu includes; stuffed ham, fried oysters, parsley potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, beets, coleslaw, chicken salad and a roll

Bake Table
Stuffed Ham by the pound \$15
Chicken salad by the pound \$8
Contact Maria Barnes 240-925-4376 for more information

Bridal Show

Join Historic St. Mary's City for their annual Bridal Show on Sunday, March 12 from 1-4pm at the Reconstructed State House and pavilion at 47418 Old State House Rd., St. Mary's City, Maryland. Visit with over 35 Wedding Professionals including caterer's, DJ's, photographers and photo booths, dessert, make-up, wedding planners, bar-serve businesses, travel and real estate agents and so much more.

The event is free to all if pre-registered by March 10. Pre-register at: <https://forms.gle/KAfoQuLTrpScyTmm6>.

Patuxent Chapter

of the

National Wild Turkey Federation

invites you to join us at

Mechanicsville Social Hall

28165 Hills Club Rd

Mechanicsville, MD 20659

As we host our

Annual Hunting Heritage Banquet



NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION
50TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, February 25th, 2023

Doors open: 4:00 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 p.m.

Your early registration will be a great help to us in planning our event. It will speed up the entry process at the door and qualify you for our

- EARLY BIRD SPECIAL -

Early registration cutoff date is Friday, Feb. 17th, 2023

Register online at <https://events.nwtf.org/203420-2023>

Sell it - Buy it at Auction

Tri County Livestock Auction

1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the Month – Auction begins at 4 PM

Located Off MD Rt. 6 West – Charlotte Hall, MD

Online Auction - Estate of Jimmy Banagan

(and few items from other estates)

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AUCTION PREVIEW LOCATION: Westfield Farm Arena

26689 Laurel Grove Rd. – Mechanicsville, MD

**Please DO NOT go to the Banagan home location!*

Yoder Auction

Public Auction for Ben & Susan Yoder

Farm/Shop Equipment/Items – Horse-Related Items – Furniture – Household Items – Over 140 Lots of Books & Magazines – Tobacco Related Memorabilia - More

Saturday – March 4, 2023 – 9 am

10200 Brookline Road – Mechanicsville, MD

Auction Registration & Preview begins at 7:30 am on Auction Day.

Lunch Stand by Amish Community School Committee.

Most Items to be sold in large building.

Terms by Ben Yoder. Cash, Checks Accepted, NO credit cards.

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Garvey Senior Activity Center, 301-475-4200, ext. 1080
Northern Senior Activity Center, 301-475-4002, ext. 3101

Unless otherwise specified, all activities are open to Senior Activity Center participants ages 50+. Please call your local Senior Activity Center or visit StMarysMD.com/aging for the most up-to-date information.

Zumba Gold

Zumba Gold meets at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Mondays at 12:30 p.m. This class is perfect for active older adults who are looking for a modified Zumba® class that recreates the original Latin-inspired dance moves at a lower-intensity. Zumba Gold's choreography focuses on balance, range of motion and coordination. Come ready to sweat and prepare to leave empowered and feeling strong. If you have never taken a Zumba Gold class at Loffler, your first class is free! After that, you can buy a fitness card for \$35 that can be used for any 10 fitness card classes at any of the three senior activity centers in St. Mary's County. No need to sign up in advance, simply stop in.

Dungeons And Dragons

Are you a fan of storytelling? Have you ever wanted to be a character in Lord of the Rings? Are you looking for something new to try out? Have you been playing D&D since the 70s and want a new group to adventure with? Join Peter Friesen to learn about D&D and play a series of one-shot campaigns! D&D will be meeting at the Garvey Senior Activity Center on Mondays, at 5 p.m.

Open Art Studio Hours

Do you want to work on an arts or crafts project but have no room to do so at home? Would you like to socialize with other

crafters and share ideas? Every Thursday we will have open studio time at the Garvey Senior Activity Center for you to come in and work on anything you would like to work on. No instructor will be present so you would be responsible for bringing in your own project. The studio hours are from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Black History Month – Film Series

Join us in the Social Room at Northern Senior Activity Center for our free film series. Netflix's 13th (1hr 40min) will be shown Friday, Feb. 17, at 12 p.m. Finally, Lilies of the Field starring Sidney Poitier (1hr 34min) will be shown Friday, Feb. 24 at 12 p.m. Space is limited for each showing. To register for these free events, click on the "View and Sign Up for Activities and Programs" button at www.stmarysmd.com/aging. Accommodations can be made for those requiring registration assistance by leaving a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

Presented by Hope & Healing

As we age life's events can often become overwhelming, both mentally as well as physically. Especially during this time it's even more important to take care of your mental wellness. We have collaborated with Hope & Healing Psychotherapy, LLC to bring you a Mental Health Series. At the Garvey Senior Activity Center, we will hear a presentation on a new topic. The

topic for Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 1 p.m. will be Trust & Relationships. Advance sign up is required and a suggested donation of \$5 for each series is requested.

Indoor Cornhole Tournament

Who doesn't love a good round of cornhole? Compete in this casual & fun tournament at Northern Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, Feb. 22, from 1-3:30 p.m. Show off your skills or try it out for the first time. Keep in mind that this game requires good dexterity, throwing, and hand-eye coordination. The winner of the tournament will win a prize. It's currently a secret. You'll have to attend to find out! To register for this free event, click on the "View and Sign Up for Activities and Programs" button at www.stmarysmd.com/aging. Accommodations can be made for those requiring registration assistance by leaving a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

Winter & Spring Well-being: A 5 Element Qigong & Yoga Workshop

The Traditional Chinese Medicine 5 Elements represent what is in Nature - Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal - and are associated with the Kidneys, Liver, Heart, Spleen, Lungs, emotions and much more. With a focus on Winter and Spring elements, Paty Massón and Judi Lyons delightfully transform the 5 Element concepts into a lovely movement practice of Qigong and Yoga, to invite more radiant health - emo-

tionally, physically, and spiritually. Join Paty & Judi at Northern Senior Activity Center on Monday, Feb. 27, from 1-3 p.m. Paty is certified in RYT® 500, CBT, and Qigong. Judi Lyons/Mindful Motions Md. is YACEP®, E-RYT® 200, EMYoga® Certified, RYT® 500 Therapeutic. To register for this event & pay the \$20 fee, click on the "View and Sign Up for Activities and Programs" button at www.stmarysmd.com/aging. Accommodations can be made for those requiring registration assistance by leaving a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

Loffler Book Club

During the month of February, the Loffler Book Club is reading American Rust by Philipp Meyer. The discussion will take place on Friday, March 3, at 2 p.m., in the Loffler Senior Activity Center.

Summary: Set in a beautiful but economically devastated Pennsylvania steel town, American Rust is a novel of the lost American dream and the desperation—as well as the acts of friendship, loyalty, and love—that arise from its loss. From local bars to trainyards to prison, it is the story of two young men, bound to the town by family, responsibility, inertia, and the beauty around them, who dream of a future beyond the factories and abandoned homes. Contact Sheila.Graziano@stmaryscountymd.gov for more information.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library



Library Closed for Presidents Day

All three St. Mary's County Library locations will be closed on Monday, February 20 to observe Presidents Day. All locations will be open regular business hours on Tuesday, February 21.

Recognizing Our Past

Join the St. Mary's County Library in welcoming author, historian, and researcher, Daryl T. Hinmon, in discussing his works and his efforts to celebrate lesser-known figures in Black History at Lexington Park Library on Tuesday, February 21 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. No registration is required. Hinmon will discuss the remarkable achievements of formerly enslaved African American ancestors and their descendants.

Anything of value is typically hidden by nature, or other people, and it takes work to unearth valuable gems that will increase your worth. True Black History is one of those gems that was hidden from our enslaved ancestors because the true knowledge of their history would have made them 'forever unfit to be slaves'. Daryl T. Hinmon is an acclaimed local author of two books: Slaves With Swag: The Negroes Your History Teacher Forgot To Mention and Black Gold: Remarkable Achievements of Formerly Enslaved African Americans & Their Descendants.

Genealogy Series - Irish Genealogy

Interested in researching your Irish roots or simply curious about your Irish ancestry? Join us for a virtual discussion on Wednesday, March 8

from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. to explore the Irish institutions and resources to utilize when researching Irish genealogy. Irish Genealogy will focus on how to research one's Irish roots and ancestry by concentrating on Irish resources. Often times, when we are researching our family history, we run into difficulty once we arrive at the point in which our ancestor arrived in America. For this session, we will look at various Irish resources, such as the National Library of Ireland, the National Archives, and others, that offer genealogical services and house records that may be of interest. We welcome anyone who is enthusiastic in their Irish ancestry, whether they are looking to continue their research or simply curious on where to begin. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Who's Nesting in My Backyard?

Join Barb Whipkey, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Lexington Park and LaPlata, as she shares information about the birds who may be nesting in our yards in a virtual discussion on Thursday, March 9 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Barb will give tips on helping to create successful nesting habitats and feeding tips for these birds. She will also put some of those old wives' tales that we have all been taught to rest. Register with an email address to receive a link to join the event online. Zoom links will be sent out the day before or day of the program. Register on www.stmalib.org.

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.

In Remembrance

Mary Catherine Smith, 93



Mary Catherine Hance Smith
March 11, 1929–
February 2, 2023

Born in Prince Frederick, Maryland, Catherine grew up in Baltimore. She graduated from Eastern Nazarene College in Wollaston, Massachusetts with a BA in English and where she met and married her late husband, Gene C. Smith. She was a teacher in St. Mary's County Public Schools from 1957-1959. Together, she and Gene served on the mission field in the Caribbean for the Church of the Nazarene for 23 years--- in Haiti, Trinidad, St. Lucia and Martinique. They retired to Bradenton, Florida in 1992 where Gene preceded her Home in 2000.

She is survived by her brother J. Harvey Hance of Bel Air, Maryland, her son Nelson G. Smith (Barbara Kessler) of Lexington Park, Maryland, her daughters Cathy J. Smith and Wendy A. Smith of Bradenton, Florida, and her grandchildren Katie Smith and Ben Smith (Ivy Ivers) of Lexington Park, Maryland.

Private family celebration of life. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries at ncmi.org.

Charles Holt, 87



Charles Leonard Holt, Jr., beloved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, and friend passed away on February 5, 2023 surrounded by his loved ones at his home. He was born on February 27, 1935 in Mechanicsville, MD to Charles Leonard and Mary Rosalie Holt.

Charles was preceded in death by his brother Raymond Holt; brother in-law, Mack McNeal and Sylvester June; and Felicia Simmons, granddaughter; Jeremy Holt and Brandon Smoot, grandsons. He is survived by his wife, Thelma Flordell Holt of Mechanicsville, MD; his brother Paul Lionel and Mary Rosetta Holt of Mechanicsville, MD, his daughter Mary Rosalie Holt of Great Mills, MD; his son, Charles Leroy Holt of Lexington Park, MD; his daughter, Thelma Elizabeth Smoot of Lexington Park, MD, his granddaughters Tamica Ann Johnson of Lexington Park, MD and Jellissa Marie Bush of Great Mills, MD; his grandsons Shaun Holt of Texas and Nathan Lamar Bush of Lexington Park, MD, his great grandson Benjamin Wesley DuBois IV of Great Mills, MD, and great granddaughter Niko Robyn K. Bush of Lexington Park, MD. Charles is also

survived by his in-laws Regina Holt, Rosemary McNeal, and Edythe June; in-laws: Shirley and Francis Curtis of Mechanicsville, MD, Elaine and Joker Young; Joe and Gloria June and Gary June brother-in-law all residing in Waldorf, MD. He has numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins too many to list, but Charles loved them just the same.

Charles received his education at Benjamin Banneker School in Loveville, MD. He retired from the Ace Plumbing Company as a Foreman. Charles was a lifelong member of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church right here in Mechanicsville, MD. He enjoyed all sports but was a football and baseball fan. He loved the Baltimore Ravens mostly.

Charles was a kind and generous man who loved his family and neighbors dearly. His beloved neighbor, Dorothy Fenwick, became like family over the years. Her grandchildren were also like an extension to our family often having dinner with us and devouring Flordell's biscuits. Charles enjoyed hunting, fishing, and observing people's habits. Most of all, he enjoyed gardening. His juicy cucumber, tomatoes, string beans, and cabbage were gifted to his neighbors and family. In his younger years Charles would provide plumbing services for neighbors, family, and friends at low or no cost. This was a service that really benefited our community, and he was well respected for that. "Love your neighbor as yourself, there is no greater commandment." That is what Charles did with his gardening and plumbing skills.

He also enjoyed walking with his stick around the neighborhood even when there wasn't a basket or bucket of vegetable to deliver. Walking was his exercise for his legs and the telephone was the exercise for his mouth. Every day he would be talking to his devoted cousins Geraldine, Beebe, and his son Charles. They would speak on every subject from the weather to sports to surprising Beebe with a new "She Shed" for her lawnmower. Charles had an infectious laugh which sometimes turned into a fit, leaving him rolling around onto the floor with laughter. Just as much as Charles loved life, he adored Flordell and his children and grandkids. On his last day we were all gathered together laughing and talking about his new life plans. I never felt so much love from him that day. Maybe Charles knew that his Father was calling him home. All I know is that his life on earth should be truly celebrated because he cared so much for others. We will always remember Charles for being such an incredible person whose legacy will remain in our hearts.

The family will receive friends on Friday, February 17, 2023 from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 AM with Father Michael Tietjen officiating. Interment will follow at Charles

Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD.

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

Esther Brown, 83



Esther Fogel Brown, 83, of Hollywood, MD formerly from Canton, OH passed away on February 1, 2023 in Callaway, MD with her family by her side. Born on May 11, 1939 in Canton,

OH she was the daughter of the late Edna Fogel and William Fogel. Esther was the loving wife of Joseph A. Brown whom she married on February 8, 1964 in McCoy AFB Orlando, FL. Esther is survived by her children Diane Dickerson of Canton, OH, Christina M. Estenson (Dale) of Las Vegas, NV, Joseph A. Brown, Jr. of Hollywood, MD, Patricia L. Pomroy (Shawn) of Rockwall, TX, Deborah A. Brown of

Tall Timbers, MD, 10 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. As well as her siblings Barbara Nysted, William Fogel, and Richard Fogel. She was preceded in death by her siblings Helen Staley, and James Fogel.

Esther graduated from Dover High School in 1957. She moved from Bedford, MA to St. Mary's County, MD in 1991. Esther was a homemaker and literacy volunteer. Her hobbies were sewing, reading, cooking, playing the organ, and listening to bluegrass music.

The family will receive friends on Monday, February 6, 2023 from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home Leonardtown, MD. Where a Funeral Services will follow at 11:00 AM in the funeral home chapel. Interment will follow in Charles Memorial Gardens Leonardtown, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Joseph Brown, Jr, Dale Estenson, Brian Estenson, Laura Estenson, Sarah Estenson, and Isaiah Kuginskie.

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

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

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Celebrate Maryland Day at St. Clements Island Museum



Celebrate the founding of Maryland at the state's birthplace at St. Clement's Island Museum with FREE admission to the museum ALL day (10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.), FREE water taxi rides, official ceremony featuring guest speakers and program - including the exchange of ceremonial gifts between the Piscataway and the English settlers (10:00 a.m.) and more. A commemorative mass on St. Clement's Island will occur shortly after the ceremony. Music will be provided by students from local Catholic schools.

Food truck (11:00 a.m.), kids' activities, free admission to the museum, free water taxi rides and more.

A copy of the original Maryland Char-

ter and a show of local art will both be on display in the museum.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Papal Nuncio, will be participating in the 10am ceremony on the mainland and will then deliver the homily at the Mass on the Island (weather dependent).

St. Mary's County Public Library will be holding its Outdoor Storytime at 1pm.

Farm.Fork.Soul food truck will be on site from 11am to 3pm.

The Cosmic Symphony Orchestra will provide 17th and 18th century music during the afternoon, on the mainland.

This year's keynote address during the ceremony will be delivered by Lucille Walker, Executive Director of the SOMD

Heritage Area. Her comments will address who we were, who we are, and who we hope to become, as part of the introduction to the National Heritage Area designation.

This event commemorates the first landing of the colonists on St. Clement's Island – a significant part of the island's, St. Mary's County's and the State of Maryland's story.

March 25, 2023

10AM – 5PM

St. Clement's Island Museum

38370 Point Breeze Road

Colton's Point, MD 20626

Phone: 301-769-2222

Facebook.com/SCIMuseum

Department of Aging & Human Services to Host Centenarian Luncheon

Do you know someone living in St. Mary's County who is 100 years of age or older? We want to honor them!

The St. Mary's County Department of Aging & Human Services is proud to host the annual Centenarian Luncheon at the St. Mary's County Elks Lodge, located at 45779 Fire Department Lane, California, MD, at 11 a.m. on Monday, April 10, 2023.

Registration is required for this event. The deadline to register is Friday, March 17, 2023.

Friends, family, and caregivers are welcome to accompany our honorees to the

Centenarian Luncheon. Due to space constraints, each honoree is limited to a maximum of three guests; please indicate the number of participants when registering. Honorees must be 100 years of age or older as of April 10, 2023.

For more information or to register, contact Sarah Miller, Community Programs & Outreach Division Manager, at 301-475-4200, ext. 1073, or Sarah.Miller@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Learn more about our Department of Aging & Human Services at: stmaryscountymd.gov/aging.

A View From The BLEACHERS



PERSPECTIVE

By Ronald N. Guy Jr.
Contributing Writer

Seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady retired again and for good (we'll see). Into the sunset, he rides with two more rings than any other NFL player, three more than fellow quarterback Joe Montana and four more than the incomparable Jerry Rice. Four-time NBA champion, four-time MVP and 19-time All Star LeBron James hit a step-back jumper last week to pass six-time NBA champion, six-time MVP and 19-time All-Star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the league's all-time leading scorer. Stanley Cup champion, three-time Hart Trophy winner (MVP), nine-time Maurice "Rocket" Richard trophy winner (top goal scorer) and 12-time All Star Alexander Ovechkin, with 812 goals as of this writing, sits just 82 goals short of four-time Cup champion, 9-time Hart Trophy winner and 15-time All Star Wayne Gretzky's all-time mark of 894. The Great Eight has The Great One in his sights.

All of this has GOAT debates raging. Which is good press for the under-appreciated goat and hikers who have braved the perilous Billy Goat Trail along the Potomac River. But it's even better for sports fans. What has fueled arguments, generated interest and connected generations of fans more than good-natured Greatest Of All Times quarrels? Think of the pints downed while comparing the merits of transcendent athletes, parents and children trading barbs about their personal GOATs, Twitter wars and endless articles written on the topic.

Jordan or LeBron? Or Kareem. Or Wilt Chamberlain? Babe Ruth or Willie Mays? Hank Aaron or Mickey Mantle? Joe DiMaggio or Ted Williams? Diana Taurasi or Tamika Catchings or Cheryl Miller? Hulk Hogan or Ric Flair? Ty Cobb or Honus Wagner? Wilma Rudolph or Florence Griffith Joyner or Jackie Joyner-Kersey? Mark Spitz or Michael Phelps? Muhammad Ali or Joe Louis or Jack Johnson or Mike Tyson? Tiger Woods or Jack Nicklaus?

Here's the beauty of those questions: There's no definitively right or wrong answer. I count two indisputable GOATs: Gretzky and Serena Williams. As Tony Kornheiser might say, "That's it, that's the list." Otherwise, it's all an endless flow of statistics, stories, arguments and rebuttals. Revisit the long, comparable scroll of personal accolades of GOAT contenders in the opening stanza: it serves only illustrate dizzying individual greatness and the impossible task of reaching a beyond-a-reasonable-doubt GOAT verdict.

Sports evolve. Rules change. How do you value longevity versus peak performance? Or championships won? Or being blessed by surrounding greatness (all team-sport GOAT candidates are)? What about the prevailing social environment? How much should the accomplishments of pre-integration white athletes be discounted? How is the racism Abdul-Jabbar endured measured against the relentless spotlight LeBron has navigated since he was 18? How to avoid recency bias? And how much does the quality of the person matter? For example, Hank Aaron was, by all accounts, a classy human. Ty Cobb? Not so much.

The undeniable subjectivity is the unspoken truth between GOAT-debaters. I ardently believe Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time. But I know there are reasonable arguments to be made for James, Abdul-Jabbar (I missed his prime) and Chamberlain (I never saw him play). Entering these debates with an open mind, and an acceptance that no absolute exists, allows for something rare to happen: a respectful exchange between two people sharing a common love, who, upon observing the same participants, reviewing the same facts and considering the same parameters, arrive at different conclusions. GOAT debates are, at their most fundamental level, a matter of perspective.

Now suppose America was the sport – the transcended, shared love (still safe to assume?). What if major political issues were the players being debated as the GOATs? What if the parties debating the political topic, whether elected officials or average citizens, approached the discussion with an open mind, a respect for the process and a firm acknowledgement that they are neither completely right nor is their opponent completely wrong. What if the parties respected their differences in age, experiences, places of origin, race, gender and economic standing. What if they listened to each other, learned from each other and exited the conversation with greater knowledge, a broader perspective and deeper love for the game (country) they cherish?

What if?

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

Housing Market Sees Prices Drop as Days on Market Spike



that buyers are getting more control in transactions comes from the average sold price to the original list price ratio. Homes sold on average for 96.8% of what they were listed for in January, which is down from roughly 99.9% in 2022. Where buyers were previously paying close to and over list price are now seeing many sellers offer concessions.

“The market over the past few years has not been sustainable, and we are starting to see some of that dial back,” SMAR 2022-23 President Michael Funk said. “We know that we have been plagued with lacking inventory and a severe shortage of housing units in Maryland for years, and it is only getting worse. Seeing buyers get back some control during the transaction after seeing their buying power weakened helps create a healthier housing market.”

As 2023 began, so did some surprising new trends in the Southern Maryland housing market. Prices began to decrease in most jurisdictions, while homes are staying on the market for longer than many recent potential buyers have seen.

Looking at the most recently available year-over-year data from the Southern Maryland Association of Realtors®, several clear trends emerged last month. Buyers are gaining more traction in the market while competing with depleted buying power, and shifts in demand have influenced the homes currently for sale.

Active listings increased roughly 94.5% from this time last year, and the total units sold saw a sharp decrease. 281 units sold last month across Southern Maryland, a decrease of 33.25% from 2022. However, more new listings came on the market last month, up 9.87% from 2022.

Additionally, homes are staying on the market for longer, and prices are starting to see slight declines for the first time in years.

Homes had spent an average of 41 days on the market in Southern Maryland last month, an increase of 21 days from 2022. Homes haven’t been on the market for this long since early-2019.

Both the median sold price and average sold price saw slight drops of 1.32% and 0.70%, respectively. Homes in Charles County still saw marginal price increases not exceeding 2% but were the only county in the region going up.

However, one of the best indicators

ing their buying power weakened helps create a healthier housing market.”

Housing market statistics from each county in the Southern Maryland region can be found below:

Calvert County

- Units Sold: 70 (-40.68%)
- Total Sales Volume: \$ 31,446,576 (-41.44%)
- Average Days On The Market: 38 (+12 Day from January 2022)
- Median Sold Price: \$392,500 (-5.99%)

St. Mary’s County

- Units Sold: 76 (-27.62%)
- Total Sales Volume: \$ 27,386,321 (-29.05%)
- Average Days On The Market: 46 (+28 Days from January 2022)
- Median Sold Price: \$342,500 (-3.52%)

Visit <https://www.southernmarylandrealtors.org/pages/housing-statistics/> every month for additional details about the housing market in Southern Maryland. A video breakdown of the local statistics for 2022 can be found on the SMAR YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqhltdfxUHM>

Statistics for this article were compiled with cooperation from Bright MLS, a leading housing market data source and a real estate listing service for Realtors® throughout the region.

Team Fly4ACure Looks To Raise Money For Blood Cancer



Student Visionaries of the Year is a philanthropic leadership development program at the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The society has a seven-week fundraising challenge, where high school students raise funds in honor of local blood cancer survivors.

Team Fly4ACure is Southern Maryland’s fundraising team with 25 students spanning across five different high schools, led by St. Mary’s Ryken sophomore Emilie Garrabrant. The high schools are Great Mills, Leonardtown, Patuxent, Rock Hill, and St. Mary’s Ryken.

On February 26, 2023, St. Mary’s Ryken High School will host a Winter Magic Show with local celebrity Reggie Rice at

the Donnie Williams Center.

Ticket sales will benefit Team Fly4ACure’s fundraiser campaign.

Tickets are on sale now online and can also be purchased at the door, though online sales are preferred so the team can collect receipts for tax purposes.

“Expect a fun afternoon with the family, there will be magic tricks, carnival games, and food,” Emilie Garrabrant said.

If any businesses or organizations would like to donate in any way, they can email the team at fly4acuresomd@gmail.com

If you would like to donate to a specific student in the program, you can visit their LinkTree at <https://linktr.ee/fly4acure>.

Pet

OF THE WEEK

MEET NEELIX

Three of the most wonderful words in the world...
I got adopted?

Hi, my name is Neelix. I may be 10 YEARS YOUNG but that just means I’m over my kitten antics. Instead, now I like to take life a little more slowly. I’ll ENJOY NAPPING in your lap, watching the laser pointer, and eating my dry cat food. I’m EXPERIENCED because I’ve seen it all! I’ve lived with KIDS, DOGS, and FEMALE CATS. That’s why my CHILL ATTITUDE makes me the PURR-FECT cat to become a LOVING part of YOUR FAMILY! I’m hoping you will come visit me during adoption hours, Monday-Saturday 12:30-3pm or email animalshelter@charlescountymd.gov. BE MY MIRACLE AND PLEASE CHOOSE ME! When you choose to adopt, you save a life.

To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, “like” us on Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or view us on our website at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>

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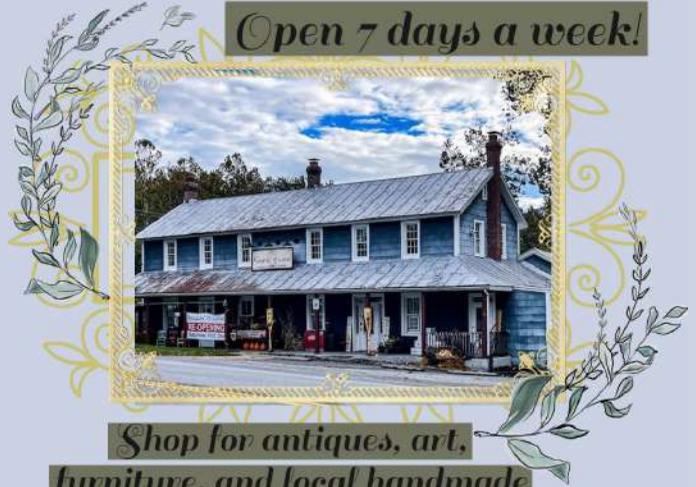
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Winter Hours
THROUGH MARCH 13, 2023

Hours of Operation

Wednesday: 10 AM - 7 PM
Thursday: 10 AM - 7 PM
Friday: 10 AM - 7 PM
Saturday: 10 AM - 7 PM
Sunday: 11 AM - 5 PM
Monday: Closed
Tuesday: Closed

Legal Notices

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel(s) has apparently been abandoned for more than 60 days on the private marina/property of: Point Lookout Marina, LLC., 16244 Millers Wharf Road, Ridge, MD 20680, 301-872-5000.

The vessels are described as:

1. MD 9394 DC
HULL # NCZ26751G874
1974 Cambridge White Hull
Name "Annie Bo"
2. MD 3966 BV
HULL # XYM37656M82E
1982 Irwin White Hull
Name "Aldebaran"

Application for title will be made in accordance with Section 8-722 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article if vessels are not claimed within 30 days of this publication date.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR SAINT MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
CASE NO: C-18-CV-21-000102

Alan C. Wetter et al.,
c/o Lucas I. Dansie, Esq.
406 5th St. NW
Washington DC 20001
Plaintiffs

v.
The Estate of Bessie Wigglesworth
c/o Raymia Henderson, PR
14302 Hampshire Hall Ct.
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

and

St. Mary's County, Maryland,

and

all unknown owners of the property described below, their heirs, devisees and personal representatives and their or any of their heirs, devisees, executors, administrators, grantees, assigns, or successors in right, title and interest and any and all persons having or claiming to have an interest in the property described as:
*Unassigned, Lot 3 Block 5, Longview Beach and also known as A/C 07-014619
Defendants

RE-ISSUED ORDER OF PUBLICATION

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

***Unassigned, Lot 3 Block 5, Longview Beach and also known as A/C 07-014619.**

The Complaint states, among other things, that the amounts necessary for redemption have not been paid. It is therefore on this 31st day of January, 2023, by the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, Maryland:

ORDERED, that notice be given by insertion of a copy of this ORDER in some newspaper having a general circulation in St. Mary's County once a week for 3 successive weeks, warning all persons interested in the property to appear in this Court by the 3rd day of March, 2023 and redeem the property and answer the Complaint, or thereafter a Final Judgment will be entered foreclosing all rights of redemption in the property, and vesting in the Plaintiff a title, free and clear of all encumbrances.

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

TOWN OF LEONARDTOWN, MD
ORDINANCE NO. 214

Notice is hereby given that on February 13, 2023, the Leonardtown Town Council passed Ordinance No. 214 (the "Ordinance").

The Ordinance authorizes and empowers The Commissioners of Leonardtown (the "Town") to issue and sell to the Community Development Administration (the "Administration"), pursuant to the authority of Sections 4-101 through 4-255 of the Housing and Community Development Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Act"), one or more series of general obligation bonds of the Town in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$9,000,000 (the "Bonds") for the purpose of financing and/or refinancing any components of the following: (i) costs of a project generally referred to as the wastewater treatment plant expansion project, (ii) funding a portion of a capital reserve fund and/or other reserves, and/or (iii) paying issuance and other costs of the Bonds; provides that the Bonds shall be issued upon the full faith and credit of the Town; provides for the disbursement of proceeds of the Bonds; provides for the levy of annual taxes upon all assessable property within the corporate limits of the Town to the extent needed for the payment of principal and interest on the Bonds; pledges and grants a lien on and a security interest to the Administration of certain payments otherwise due to the Town from the State of Maryland to secure the Town's obligations with respect to the Bonds; provides for the forms, tenor, denominations, maturity date or dates and other provisions of the Bonds; provides for the sale of the Bonds; and provides for related purposes, including, without limitation, the method of fixing the interest rate(s) to be borne by the bonds, the approval, execution and delivery of documents, agreements, certificates and instruments, and the making of or providing for the making of representations and covenants concerning the tax status of interest on the Bonds.

Pursuant to the Act, the Ordinance is effective upon its passage. The Ordinance may be petitioned to referendum in accordance with Section 211 of the Charter provided the petition is received by March 6, 2023. The Ordinance may be inspected in Town Hall between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays).

THE COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN
By: Laschelle E. McKay
Town Administrator

LEGAL NOTICE
COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN
FAIR SUMMARY OF EMERGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 215

Notice is hereby given that the Commissioners of Leonardtown have passed, and the mayor has approved, Emergency Ordinance No. 215 – Chapter 60 Critical Areas Program. A fair summary of the ordinance will follow:
Ordinance No. 215 - An ordinance for the purpose of correcting certain minor errors regarding growth allocation enacted by Ordinance No. 204.

Ordinance No. 215 became effective upon passage by the affirmative vote of four-fifths of the Councilpersons and approval by the Mayor on February 13, 2023. Full text of this ordinance may be obtained at the Town Office at 22670 Washington Street, Leonardtown, MD between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or on-line on the Town's website at www.Leonardtown.somd.com

By Authority:
Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator

ST. MARY'S SHERIFF'S CRIME BLOTTER

Chaptico Man Arrested on Gun, Ammo Charges Following Barricade



A Chaptico man was arrested on firearm and ammunition charges following a barricade that ended peacefully on Sunday morning.

At 6:07 am on Feb. 12, 2023, the St. Mary's County Emergency Communications Center was contacted regarding the welfare of a relative who was in the company of a known adult male possibly threatening the relative with a handgun.

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to the 24000 block of Hurry Road in Chaptico to investigate further, but no one at the home responded. Due to the believed first-degree assault involving a firearm and no answer at the address, a perimeter was established around the residence and a barricade was declared at 7:10 am.

Multiple attempts were made to contact the occupants of the residence with negative results. While in contact with the Maryland Gun Center, it was determined that the suspect, Austin Cameron Darling, age 28 of Chaptico, was prohibited from possessing firearms.

Just before 10 am, Darling and another occupant of the residence exited the home and were taken into custody without incident. The execution of a search warrant located a multi-colored 9-mm handgun and ammunition in Darling's room, with additional ammunition located in the kitchen.

Darling was transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown and charged with Illegal Possession of a Regulated Firearm and Illegal Possession of Ammunition by DFC Andrew Budd. Darling was released from the detention center on Sunday, Feb. 12, on personal bond.

Identity Needed for Burglary Suspect



The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is seeking the identity of the person pictured in a burglary investigation. On Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, at 2:50 am, the suspect forced entry

into Village Liquors in Chaptico by shattering the front door with a hammer and then removed the store's cash register and its contents. The suspect is believed to be a white male, between 5'5" and 5'10" tall and weighing between 150 and 180 lbs.

Anyone with information about the identity of the suspect or this incident is asked to call Deputy Anthony Cucinotta at 301-475-4200, ext. 78174 or email anthony.cucinotta@stmaryscountymd.gov. Case # 7177-23

Citizens may remain anonymous and contact the St. Mary's County Crime Solvers at 301-475-3333, or text a tip to "TIP239" plus their message to "CRIMES" (274637). Through the Crime Solvers Program tipsters are eligible for an award of up to \$1,000 for information about a crime in St. Mary's County that leads to an arrest or indictment.

Waldorf Man Arrested After Attempting to Steal Catalytic Converter



St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office deputies located and arrested a Waldorf man early Thursday morning after attempting to steal a catalytic converter from a business in Leonardtown.

Irving Maxwell Zorn, 36 of Waldorf, was charged with Malicious Destruction of Property and Theft: \$100 to under \$1,500 and was transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center.

On Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023, at 12:14 am, Deputy Blake Haas responded to the Mr. Tire business on Point Lookout Road

in Leonardtown for the report of a theft in progress of a catalytic converter from a display truck in front of the establishment.

A witness observed Zorn cutting the catalytic converter with a battery powered reciprocating saw. Zorn then ran to a 2002 gray Chevrolet Silverado truck and fled northbound on Point Lookout Road. Deputies actively patrolled the area and located Zorn in his vehicle on Point Lookout Road in Mechanicsville. Upon stopping the vehicle, a reciprocating saw was observed in plain view in the backseat, which had fresh damage to the blade consistent with the damage to the catalytic converter.

Zorn was released from the detention center on personal bond on Thursday, Feb. 9.

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COUNTY TIMES EDITORIAL

Unintended Consequences

By Thomas McKay
Publisher

Brian Crosby, the St. Mary's County Delegate from district 29B has come up with a way to make county government more equitable. Crosby has proposed legislation to reduce representation for the citizens of Lexington Park from five County Commissioners to just two County Commissioners.

Crosby is elected by only a portion of the voters in St. Mary's County, his district is largely the area around Lexington Park and south.

A large portion of the minorities in St. Mary's reside in Crosby's district, making up nearly 25% of his district.

Crosby is asking the left wing of the democratic party in Annapolis, you know, those folks from Prince Georges County, Baltimore City, Charles County, and the like, to make this change because St. Mary's County is, you got it, "racist".

When posed with the question of why not let the people of St. Mary's County decide by referendum as opposed to Baltimore and Prince Georges, Crosby says no, that too of course would be "racist".

The truth is, most people in St. Mary's County are not racist, and Crosby knows that, but for Crosby, our crime is defending equality, he wants equity.

So, Crosby has decided by taking away from everyone in St. Mary's the equal opportunity to vote for all five county commissioners, it would be more equitable representation if everyone could only vote for two.

Good intentions often lead to unintended consequences.

Crosby's plan is pervaded with unintended consequences. The most harmful of which is the segregation of our community. Crosby will isolate Lexington Park from the rest of the county.

The three commissioners elected by people not residing in Lexington Park will control both the legislative branch of government and more importantly, will have total control over the executive branch of government. And the people living in Lexington Park will have no say, no recourse, and no vote for or against the actions of the executive branch of county government.

Spend \$20 million dollars to build a YMCA in Lexington Park? "Are you crazy" will be the words of the three commissioners representing the voters of Ridge, Valley Lee, Leonardtown, Mechan-

icsville, Hollywood, California, Chaptico, Charlotte Hall, 7th District.

Those three commissioners will no longer represent the people in Lexington Park, not even the people in their own party. Three commissioners, who will control county government will run both primary and general elections only in their respective districts. Their responsibility first is to the people of the district they are elected to serve.

Does it sound short-sighted? Maybe, but ask yourself, if you live in Mechanicsville, would you want your tax dollars sent to Lexington Park? Why not build a YMCA in Mechanicsville instead?

Why give businesses in Lexington Parks millions of dollars to build new storefronts, why not give that money to businesses in Hollywood or Leonardtown, or Charlotte Hall, they need it just as much.

Today, when tax revenues are projected for the next fiscal year, those revenues are looked at in total, not by district. When Crosby's brilliance is passed in Annapolis, revenues will certainly be broken out by the district, as commissioners will do everything they can to assure their district is getting back equal or more of the tax dollars contributed by their district. It will be the "bringing home of the bacon" for county commissioners, at the expense of our poorest district, Lexington Park.

Schools, roads, parks, law enforcement, economic development, the commissioners will work to get the money their district puts into the system back out of the system, and three of the five will control the decisions, sorry Lexington Park, nothing you can do about it if Crosby has his way.

In the normal course of our American system of government structure, it is common that we vote within districts for representatives in the legislative branch, such as Delegates and Congress. This vote is balanced across the structure of government by the equal yet separate executive branch which is voted on by the entire electorate, such as the Governor.

The county commissioner form of government utilizes the county commissioners as both the legislative branch and the executive branch. Therefore, it is vital that the five commissioners who make up the executive branch of government be voted by and accountable to the entire electorate.

Brian Crosby's vision of equity will have the unintended consequence of crashing and burning his district while benefiting greatly those he never intended to help.

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Letters ^{to} the Editor

I testified virtually yesterday on HB0477. After waiting hours to get in the Q, and the Bill finally coming to the floor for testimony, Delegate Crosby testified and so did many in favor of the Bill. When those of us against the bill testified virtually, I noticed Delegate Crosby was no longer in the room. (Now We wouldn't want to hear both sides of a discussion now would we???) Please note Delegate Todd Morgan never left the room. That is what delegates are expected to do I would think. Delegate Todd Morgan, thank you for your true interest in the citizens of St. Mary's County. Both those for and against this Bill.

Also note this Bill does NOT only affect St. Mary's County but a few of the smaller Counties as well.

Also understand this is being brought up again, because of a some who feel they are under represented, and feel minorities do not have a voice. Most are referring to the 4th Commission District. Maybe some of you remember that was the District I represented. (being the FIRST woman to represent that District, women are still minorities)

It was the District that had the FIRST JEWISH Commissioner for 8 plus years (considered a Minority)

It was the District that had the FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN Commissioner for 8 years who defeated me twice in the

General Election.

We have had women elected President of the Board of Commissioners 2 times (one from each Party)

We have had women elected Commissioners from the 4th, 2nd and 5th Commissioner Districts.

Commissioners DO NOT PICK AND CHOOSE WHAT AREAS TO HELP! We do our homework, ask for public input from ALL citizens and make informed decisions, fairly and honestly.

St. Mary's County citizens, may live in one District, drive through and shop in a different District and work yet in a completely different District, So all Districts impact all Citizens!

I believe a good candidate can get elected no matter, the race, religion, sex or where they live. Please let Delegate Crosby and the others on the Ways and Means Committee know your feelings and why.

One last thought, isn't it interesting when the Democrats were in power in the County and the Republicans had few or no candidates on the ballot, they didn't think about the minority (Party) then.

Thank you
Frances P Eagan
Former County Commissioner
4th District St. Mary's County

In the 2021 session of the Maryland General Assembly, Del. Brian Crosby (D) introduced legislation (HB0655) to change the election of four of the five county commissioners in St. Mary's County from at-large to by-district. He did not reintroduce the bill in 2022 while seeking reelection, suggesting his awareness of public opposition. Now, in 2023, he has again done so in HB0447.

St. Mary's County is divided into nine election districts. The county is also divided into four commissioner districts for geographical residency purposes; otherwise, the county commissioners might reside coincidentally in one area of the county. Commissioner districts were not created for the purpose of representation. County commissioners are elected by a general/at-large vote to represent the entirety of the county – not separate districts.

According to Crosby, at-large voting discriminates against racial/ethnic minorities. If true, why was no mention made of it by the Democrats, including the NAACP, prior to 2021? Why, when for decades Democrats won local elections and controlled the county government and agencies, was at-large voting not an issue?

The actual motivation is that at-large voting has become unfavorable to Democrats in St. Mary's County. For example, the last Democrat elected as a county commissioner was in 2010 and it has been 12 years since the Democrats controlled the board. In 2012, Democrats also lost being the largest party in voter registrations in the county. So, if Democrats cannot win at-large elections, the solution is to change the election law.

Crosby employs the virtue signaling pretexts of democracy and social justice

to disguise what is simply partisan, identity-based politics. Based on minority demographics, he perceives a possibility of electing Democrats in by-district elections. Yet, in the 2022 general election, if it had been by-district, none of the Democrat's county commissioner candidates would have won.

A change to by-district county commissioner elections has the potential, over time, to instill an atmosphere of factional parochialism, negatively affecting the equitable allocation of resources to the needs of areas of the county. Elected officials might only pander to a localized constituency rather than the interests of all.

While the Democrats profess their dedication to and protection of democracy, by-district elections restrict participatory democracy. In this case, instead of voting for all five county commissioners, voters will have only the choice of two – one at-large commissioner president and one by-district commissioner. From voters having a full say in elections, they are relegated to only two-fifths.

The proposed change to by-district elections will be consequential to the county's governance. Therefore, the decision whether to make this change should be ratified or rejected by the voters in a referendum, which Crosby opposes.

In a Sep. 18, 2020, statement, Crosby said, "Voting is the fundamental principle of democracy; there is no right more precious or sacred." Yet, in HB0447, Crosby imposes voter suppression and disenfranchisement, unless a referendum decides the issue.

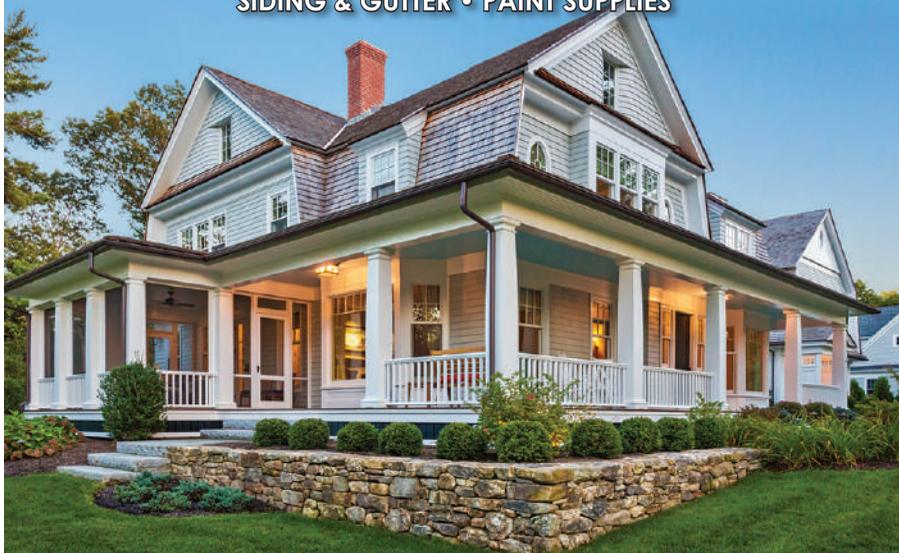
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California, MD

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

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Navy Experiments with Flight Line of the Future Tagging Technology



sion's acting chief engineer. This tagging technology uses software developed by the NAWCAD Lakehurst Digital Engineering Division's software team and a camera placed at a fixed location. The information captured autonomously registers as an aircraft taxis through the camera's field of view.

Initial experiment phases occurred in a lab setting. Through a collaboration with the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, the NAWCAD Rapid Prototyping, Experimentation and Demonstration (RPED) team conducted advanced testing phases. This real-world environment presented opportunities to test the technology with T-6 and T-38 aircraft.

"We hope for this to be the first of many NAWCAD RPED project collaborations," said Dan Bramos, NAWCAD

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) recently conducted flight line of the future experimentation with artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to independently identify and track aircraft on the flight line with tagging, commonly known as QR codes.

The technology promises to greatly improve aircraft readiness and maintenance turnaround time by providing more accurate location and status information for aircraft and related support equipment.

This experiment, designed to be representative of realistic fleet operations, is a follow-on to the 5G Identification of Support Equipment system experimentation (5GISE) completed in January 2022.

"After completing 5GISE, the engineers studied the current aircraft tracking method for departures and arrivals and devised a new approach," said Kevin Larkins, NAWCAD Lakehurst Digital Engineering Divi-

RPED Maintenance and Logistics experimentation lead.

Tagging information can be integrated into other aspects of the flight line of the future, or maintenance and operations. NAWCAD RPED's future concept involves integrating this technology into a user interface for previously experimented technologies such as a next-generation flight line tracking system.

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division is the Navy's largest warfare center, employing more than 17,000 military, civilian and contract personnel. It operates test ranges, laboratories and aircraft in support of test, evaluation, research, development and sustainment of everything flown by the Navy and Marine Corps. Based in Patuxent River, Maryland, the command also has major sites in St. Inigoes, Maryland, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and Orlando, Florida.

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California Bed Bath and Beyond Closing



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Bed Bath and Beyond store in Wil-dewood Shopping Center in California is one of roughly 400 such stores to be closing as the nationwide company files for bankruptcy, a list released by the company confirmed.

There are about 760 Bed, Bath and Beyond stores across the country.

Corporate press releases state that the company has been busy selling stock

assets to pay off debts as it restructures.

“The company will continue to execute its customer-focused turn-around plans by optimizing its store footprint, investing in inventory, and pursuing infrastructure improvements,” the press release reads. “Specifically, the company has initiated incremental store closures in its Bed Bath & Beyond banner with an ultimate operating goal of approximately 360 stores, in addition to approximately 120 buy-

buy BABY stores, across the U.S.

“In response to evolving shopping preferences today, this target store base includes the company’s most profitable locations and best geographic presence for customers that can enable an optimal omni-experience.”

According to an associate at the California store, the date of closing has not been determined.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Town Council Approves Treatment Plant Bonds

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Town of Leonardtown’s plans to expand its wastewater treatment plant took another step forward this week after the town council voted unanimously to pass an ordinance to sell bonds to finance a portion of the \$18.9 million project.

The bid for the project the town received from a building contractor was for a little over \$15 million, with the rest of the cost bound in the engineering work.

The town’s wastewater treatment plant located on Van Wert Lane currently has a capacity of about 680,000 gallons per day of treatment capacity; the upgrades to the plant would increase that capacity to one million gallons per day for treatment.

The town is seeking to borrow \$9 million, which will be paid back by collecting increased impact fees on new construction in town, elected officials have said.

This ensures that current town residents will not have to pay for the expansion, according to town Mayor Dan Burris speaking at the January town council meeting where the

ordinance for the bond was introduced.

Impact fees are monies collected on new construction in town to mitigate the increased use of public facilities such as water and sewage by more incoming town residents and businesses.

The town has the rest of the funding for the project in already-collected impact fees as well as other grant allocations, said Town Administrator Laschelle McKay.

The town council voted in October of last year to raise the impact fees associated with new development to \$18,000 per unit built.

Before that increase, the town’s impact fees had rested at \$13,000 per unit since 2007, when the town needed to pay for an enhanced nutrient removal system to be installed at the plant.

That project, despite its significant cost, did not provide any increased treatment capacity.

The town has already exceeded 80 percent of the allowable capacity at the plant with the development currently in town.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Commissioners Allocate More American Rescue Funds



Gerald Gardiner shows examples of equipment to be purchased by ARF money

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary’s County approved the expenditure of more federal American Rescue Act money this week to provide more protective equipment to first responders, a vehicle to the county health department and also to help repair a failing dam at a Leonardtown area golf course.

The requests were for \$185,000 to pay for more personal protection equipment for emergency medical personnel and \$30,000 for a mobile trailer, \$250,000 for work on a dam at Breton Bay golf course and \$45,000 for a replacement vehicle for the health department that was retired this year with a little more than 100,000 miles on it.

Kevin McCleaf, the president of the board that governs Breton Bay golf course, said the board had been struggling with trying to repair the dam on the property for about four years.

“It will get us pretty much exactly where we need to be,” McCleaf said of the benefits the money would bestow.

The project would cost \$1.2 million, McCleaf said, of which the board had about \$850,000 already at hand to spend.

County Finance Officer Jeanett Cudmore said the county had already allocated \$750,000 towards the repair project.

Sen. Jack Bailey (R-Dist. 29) was also able to provide \$100,000 from a bond bill, McCleaf said, totalling up the \$850,000 available to the golf course.

McCleaf said the dam and reservoir were critical to the golf course’s survival as it provided the water for irrigating the greens.

“Without the reservoir, the golf course would go away,” McCleaf said.

Gerald Gardiner, co-director of the Department of Emergency Services, said the gear to be purchased for EMS workers was not to be used for any kind of firefighting operations, as some had purported it might be.

“It’s for blood borne pathogens, human fluids and body parts,” Gardiner told commissioners. “It has that kind of protection.”

The mobile trailer would not be for transport to emergency scenes, Gardiner said, but would provide temporary space for employees who have outgrown the limited space at the emergency services department building.

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Bill Would Shift Balance of Power in Tri-County Council

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A bill that would increase the membership on the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland in favor of Charles County has some state-level leaders concerned that it would be better to simply allow the organization to fold rather than have such a shift in the balance of power between the three counties.

The bill, SB 539, supported by Charles County state senators, would afford one additional voting member to each county per every 45,000 residents.

Charles County, with its roughly 166,000 residents to the 113,700 in St. Marys' and just over 90,000 in Calvert would stand to gain voting members over both jurisdictions.

But, explained assistant County Attorney John Houser, Charles would still not hold a majority of voting power on the Tri-County Council.

"It would skew it slightly in favor of representation for Charles County," Houser explained to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at their Feb. 14 business meeting in Leonardtown. "It would still

amount to less than an outright majority of seats on the Tri-County Council."

The commissioners voted at the same meeting to send a letter of opposition to the Maryland General Assembly on the bill.

Commissioner Eric Colvin said the bill, which has come up in Annapolis before, was the brainchild of Charles County Delegate C.T. Wilson who believed it was a compromise between his county and St. Mary's and Calvert counties, which continue to seek as their top transportation priority the replacement of the Gov. Thomas Johnson Bridge which spans the Patuxent River.

Charles County, in contrast, wants to pursue light rail connections to the more metropolitan areas of Prince George's and the District of Columbia.

"If our voices are constantly being pushed down, why do we want to continue to play in that sandbox," Wilson said at an on-line meeting of the Southern Maryland Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly held Feb. 10.

Wilson said he did not want to see the Tri-County Council split but believed the three counties should still work together to achieve beneficial goals.

"Charles County does not feel that their

voice is always heard on the Tri-County Council," Colvin said. "The feelings of the discussion at that time [several years ago] was that Charles County wanted to pull out of the Tri-County Council.

"But this is a compromise [SB 539] that St. Mary's and Calvert don't like very well."

Del. Debra Davis of Charles County said the bill would only give Charles County two more voting members on the Tri-County Council.

"When you're talking about representing voters... it just makes sense," Davis said.

Calvert Delegate Mark Fisher opposed the bill.

"Whenever I see someone trying to rewrite the rules for something that's already working... I'm not a big fan of that," Fisher said. "Charles County can do



what it wants to do, everyone knows that.

"The question is, is it in the spirit of the region?"

Fisher continued: "If it's not then maybe it's time to dissolve the tri-county council.

"That is to say Calvert County pulling out of the council."

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VisitLeonardtownMD.com/MollDyerDay



Golden Beach Development Project Held Over

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

A plan to build a new grocery store, fast food store and restaurant that would also relocate the long-standing farmers market in Charlotte Hall went to a marathon public hearing before the county planning commission the night of Feb. 13 but the board members came to no decision on approving the concept site plan for the proposal.

After almost four hours of perusing the plan, board members continued to have questions about how the traffic flow around the development would work to avoid traffic snarls and other road improvement concerns.

Of particular concern was the Chick-Fil-A restaurant, which according to Nelson Arrocho of Bay Engineering, would have three drive-thru lanes and enough parking to mitigate backlogs of traffic there.

The Chick-fil-A restaurant in California is frequently snarled with traffic backlogs that leak back out onto access roads into the larger shopping center.

Dale Antosh, of the Golden Beach Civic Association, testified that many in the community were excited to see an additional grocery store come to the area.

There is only one currently operating now — a Food Lion.

The aging farmers market that fronts Route 5 would be relocated to make way for the new grocery store — an Aldi's — the Chick-fil-A, and other commercial projects.

Some residents testified that they were concerned over the fate of the vendors at the market, while others said the farmers market was more of an eyesore and that grocery stores were much more needful.

But concerns over traffic flow and mitigation were what caused Planning Commission Chair Howard Thompson to call for a continuation of the meeting to wait for the State Highway Administration to provide answers on what the developer could do to improve the traffic situation there, especially at Golden Beach Road and Route 5.

The planning commission will meet again on the project in March 6.

The concept site plan for Golden Beach Development, owned by Golden Beach



Properties, LLC, which is headed by developer Justin Rosemore, calls for 20,599 square foot Aldi's Supermarket and 30,000 square feet of buildings for the relocated flea market and fairgrounds.

The entire project would be situated on 48.48 acres on Three Notch Road with three distinct sites within the parcel located at 29890, 29990 and 29940 Three Notch Road, county planning documents state.

The property is considered suitable for mixed-use moderate-intensity under the county's zoning ordinance.

The traffic study included with the concept site plan states that the Chik-Fil-A

restaurant would generate 3,350 average daily trips, while the Aldi's supermarket would generate 2,160 average daily vehicle trips.

The additional retail space would raise that volume to 7,325 average trips per day, the report estimated.

County planning reports show that more than 44,000 vehicle trips per day occur at the intersections of Route 5 and Golden Beach Road, close to where the new site would be developed.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

St. Mary's County Man Arrested for Attempted Murder



week in Lexington Park.

The accused is identified as John Otha Dickens, 33, of St. Mary's County. Dickens is charged with attempted first and second-degree murder, and first- and second-degree assault. Dickens is currently being held at the St. Mary's County Detention Center waiting to be seen by a court commissioner.

The victim is not being identified at this time. She is currently receiving medical treatment at an area hospital for injuries sustained during the incident.

The preliminary investigation indicates Dickens was at the victim's residence shortly before 7:30 a.m. yesterday. The victim's residence is located in the Fleets Way area of Lexington Park, Maryland.

After receiving a 9-1-1 call reporting

Maryland State Police from the Leonardtown Barrack and the Criminal Enforcement Division Central South Region arrested a St. Mary's County man in connection with an attempted murder that occurred this

an altercation at the Lexington Park residence, police responded to the scene. Upon their arrival, troopers and EMS personnel located the victim suffering from apparent stab wounds to her neck. EMS responders rendered aid on the scene and transported her by medevac to an area hospital.

Dickens has an outstanding arrest warrant for similar violent offenses in the area and was identified as the suspect in area surveillance footage. Police subsequently began an intense search of the area. Search efforts were conducted throughout the night and into today.

Maryland State Police Criminal Enforcement Division troopers located Dickens shortly before 4:00 p.m. today. He was arrested without incident at a residence on Windsor Drive in Lexington Park.

Troopers from the Leonardtown Barrack and the Criminal Enforcement Division Central South Region responded to the scene. Assistance was provided by deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

Police ask anyone who may have witnessed events related to this incident to contact the Leonardtown Barrack at 301-475-8955 or msp.leonardtown@maryland.gov.

The investigation continues.

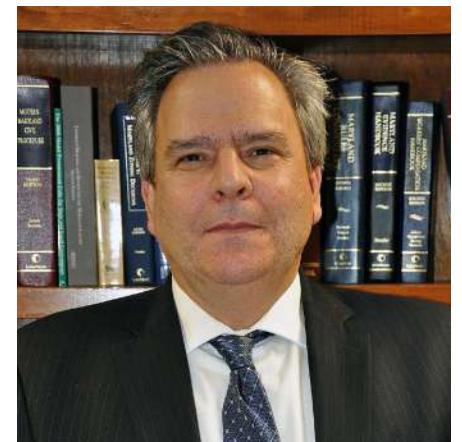
Commissioners Appoint Weiskopf County Administrator

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County are pleased to announce the appointment of David Weiskopf to the position of County Administrator.

Weiskopf served as the Deputy County Attorney from 2008-2017 and was appointed County Attorney in 2018. He has also served as Interim County Administrator since 2022, following a period of medical leave and the subsequent retirement of former County Administrator, Dr. Rebecca Bridgett.

"David has done a great job as Interim County Administrator," said Commissioner President Randy Guy. "We went through a highly competitive recruitment process for this position and are confident in his selection. We look forward to seeing continued success from the County Administrator's office."

Weiskopf has a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland and obtained his Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law. He is an active member of the St. Mary's County Bar Association and has served on many other local organizations, including the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Council, the St. Mary's County Historical Preservation Commission, the St. Mary's County Pro Bono Committee, and more. In



2020, he received the Daily Record Leadership in Law Award.

"I am thankful and humbled by the Commissioners' decision. It is a privilege to be able to work every day in service to my community," said Weiskopf. "As County Administrator, I hope to advance our organizational goals relating to employee recruitment, engagement, and retention so that we can continue to provide effective and efficient services to our residents."

For more information on St. Mary's County Government, please visit: stmaryscountymd.gov.

Crosby's District Voting Bill Takes Away Citizen Votes

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

J. Ernest Bell, an attorney with offices in Leonardtown for the last 50 years has also served his county in the Maryland General Assembly as a delegate and also helped shape the way the county elects its commissioner board.

When he was just 28 years old, he helped to run a committee that put the question to county residents as to whether they wanted to switch from a county commissioner form of government to a charter form, with an executive and legislative council.

That question failed by a significant margin, Bell, 81, a Democrat, said but it revealed a broad level of support for raising the number of commissioners from three to five.

In 1974, a bill introduced was introduced in the General Assembly that paved the way for the popular notion to become law.

A bill with intentions along those lines now proposes to fundamentally change the way county residents choose their five commissioners.

Democrat Del. Brian Crosby's bill would take away the option county voters have of casting a ballot for five commissioners of their choosing and reduce it to just two, an at-large commissioner president and the commissioner candidate residing in their district.

Bell said the bill's singular danger to the current system was it's taking away of power from individual voters.

"This proposal takes away three votes I have," Bell said. "I don't see sound reasoning for taking away one's right to vote."

Moreover, the proposal before the General Assembly makes no provision for a

referendum for the voters of St. Mary's to have a voice in whether they want to see their current local voting system changed.

Bell remembered years ago that the newly raised five county commissioners wanted to remove the restriction imposed on them by law that they be limited to three four-year terms — a rule that still stands today — and the delegation to the General Assembly obliged them; by putting forth a bill for a referendum.

The referendum failed to remove the restriction, but, Bell said, the example reinforced the importance of letting matters of such import be decided by the people it would affect most closely.

"There's precedence for having referendums at the county level... when it comes to proposals for changing the method we use to elect our officials," Bell said. "I agreed then and I agree now that the voters should vote upon it."

"The real question posed by this bill is 'Do you want to give up three of your votes?'"

If the bill passes it could serve to further divide the county more so than enfranchise certain voters, as Crosby has argued in the past.

"They'll no longer be county commissioners," Bell told The County Times. "They'll be district commissioners."

The purpose of having the county commissioner districts is to ensure representation of all county residents, but in a unified way, Bell said.

"They're supposed to represent the entire county," Bell said. "If I see any of the five commissioners, I can express my opinion on a subject or ask their support."

"What I don't want to see happen is one of them say 'Well, we don't represent

you, Mr. Bell; you have to talk to your commissioner.'"

With commissioners looking after only their own districts instead of being beholden to all county voters, Bell said, the danger existed of a "gang of three" running the commissioner board and leaving other districts that had sought more representation through the proposal finding they had less.

"That's less likely to happen under the current system," Bell said. "A commissioner now is answerable to the whole county and not just the geographical area they represent."

This bill, though originating in St. Mary's, would also affect Calvert, Queen Anne and Garrett counties.

"Why can't each county decide what it wants to do?" Bell said. "Without a referendum we have people from 22 other jurisdictions overruling what our duly elected officials want," Bell said of the opposition to the bill from the rest of the county delegation and county commissioners. "We get to a point where a single delegate — who I can't vote for because he's not in my district — introduces a proposition where I'm denied the vote on whether I should have three votes."

The bill is meeting opposition in Annapolis from counties outside St. Mary's who would be affected by it.

James Moran, the at large commissioner for Queen Anne County, testified that back in 2016 he favored the idea of moving to district voting, but a straw poll of county residents showed they did not.

Queen Anne residents voted by a 54 to 46 percent margin to keep their at-large voting method, Moran said.

"I don't know how we can marginalize voters of Queen Anne County and say



J. Ernest Bell as a St. Mary's County delegate

"You're wrong," Moran said. "Painting with one brush for all of these counties doesn't work."

Former Democrat county commissioner Thomas Mattingly, who served three terms and on two boards that were majority Democrat, also opposed the bill.

"The opportunity to serve as a county commissioner effectively requires a broad understanding of the needs of the entire county and all of its citizens," Mattingly said. "By campaigning in only one district in order to get elected the candidate will not have the full perspective of the needs of the county and the commissioner will focus only on his or her district and not have the opportunity to hear from the citizens at large."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

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



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Crosby Defends District Voting Bill



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The first hearing for a bill introduced by Del. Brian Crosby (D-Dist. 29B) to change the at-large voting plan for county commissioner elections to district-only voting took place this week in Annapolis with Crosby as its chief proponent.

Joining him were county activists as well as state NAACP representatives.

Crosby has long asserted that changing the election method in St. Mary's would provide more equity to voters who have been under represented in county government.

"It's a bulwark against voter dilution," Crosby told members of the House of Delegates' Ways and Means Committee Feb. 14. "Voters should have a say in who will represent them on the Board of County Commissioners without their voices being drowned out by the rest of the county."

The current system, he argued, where all registered voters in St. Mary's cast votes for all county commissioners from four districts and one at-large president, "leaves voters without a true advocate for the community's unique needs."

Crosby likened the current situation to non-state residents voting in Maryland elections.

"Virginians don't elect the governor of Maryland, but that's what's happening here," Crosby said.

The current at-large voting system discourages candidates from running, Crosby said, because they are well assured of the outcome before the campaign even begins.

This new bill would encourage more voter and candidate participation, he said, as well as allow a candidate to focus on their election efforts more efficiently.

"This makes campaigning a lot easier," Crosby said.

Julie Randall, head of the St. Mary's

County Democratic Central Committee, called the current system of elections here "outdated and ethically wrong."

"Opponents of this bill say [those elected under the new law] will ignore the overall good of the county," Randall said. "In effect they're saying that being elected by your community means you're unable to walk and chew gum at the same time."

"That is ridiculous."

Randall said the new bill would "ensure representation and autonomy in local government."

Thomas F. McKay, former president of the Board of County Commissioners, opposed the bill.

"Good intentions often lead to unintended consequences," McKay said. "The unintended consequence of this legislation will be to take away from 25 percent of the residents — both Democrat and Republican — it will take away representation."

Both the legislative and executive branch of government in St. Mary's were

found in the commissioner board, McKay said, and that meant that three commissioners elected by three-fourths of the county would control the executive branch of government.

"The residents left out from the district left out will have no recourse, no say, no vote," McKay said.

John Houser, assistant county attorney for St. Mary's, testified against the bill on behalf of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

The current system ensured "geographic diversity while leaving each commissioner accountable to each and every county citizen," Houser said.

Changing to a district-only form of voting could lead to citizens approaching any commissioner other than their own being "rebuffed and ignored."

"That is the ill the current system tried to avoid," Houser said.

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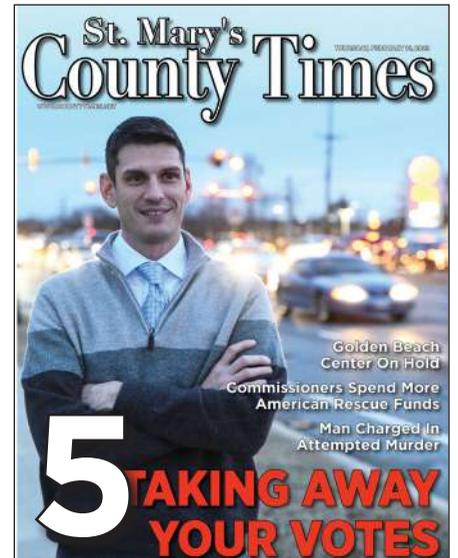
“THE RESIDENTS LEFT OUT FROM THE DISTRICT LEFT OUT WILL HAVE NO RECOURSE, NO SAY, NO VOTE.”
 THOMAS F. MCKAY ON UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF DISTRICT ONLY VOTING



LOCAL 4
Golden Beach project paused



LOCAL 5
Commissioners spend more American Rescue Funds



ON THE COVER
Debate heats up over district voting bill

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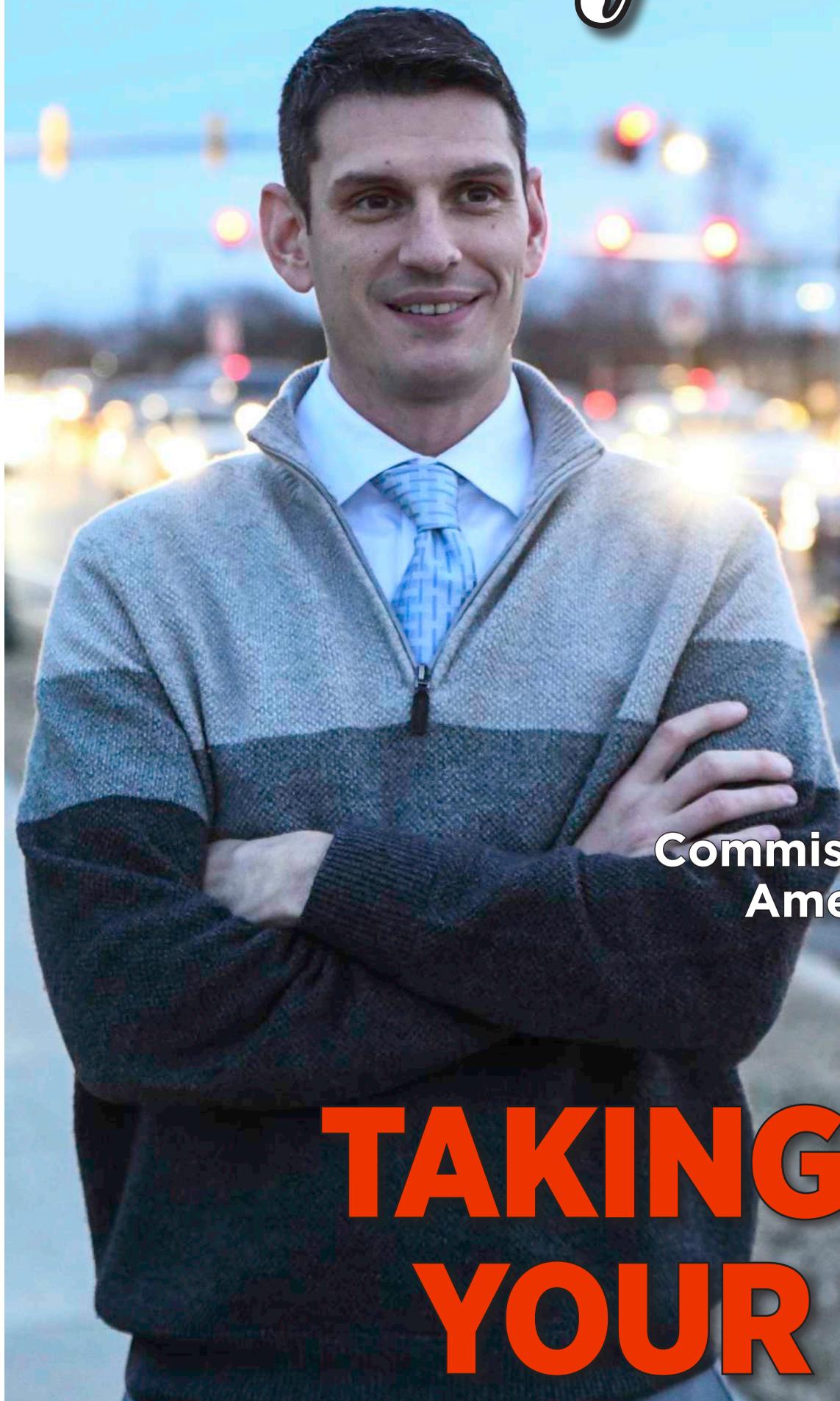
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