

# Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024

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**Split Vote on Anti-Racism Policy**

**Seven File for School Board**

**Home & Garden Guide Inside**



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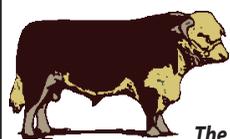
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## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, FEB 15</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 48° Lo: 37°	<b>FRI, FEB 16</b>  Mostly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 33°	<b>SAT, FEB 17</b>  AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 41° Lo: 26°	<b>SUN, FEB 18</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 46° Lo: 31°
<b>MON, FEB 19</b>  Sunny Hi: 48° Lo: 33°	<b>TUE, FEB 20</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 52° Lo: 36°	<b>WED, FEB 21</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 39°	<b>THU, FEB 22</b>  PM Showers Hi: 53° Lo: 44°



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# Anti-Racism Policy Affirmed on Split Vote

## White Supremacy, Privilege Remain In

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education, on a 3-2 vote, has affirmed its Anti-Racism Policy and added language about “white supremacy” and “white privilege.” The policy says, “to acknowledge and understand the concept of white privilege and white supremacy and its hindrances on achieving equity.”

The policy and the use of the words “white supremacy” and “white privilege” have been publicly controversial. Prior to the final vote, public forum speakers aired both pro and con arguments. During the 30-day comment period, according to Supervisor of Equity Margot Gross, “Nine comments indicated the desire to keep the policy as written, including the term ‘white supremacy’ . Five comments indicated disapproval of the policy, with four out of five wanting the entire policy removed, and one comment indicated the need to remove ‘white supremacy,’ ‘white privilege,’ and ‘systemic racism’ from the policy.”

During the discussion, board member Lisa Grenis said, “Words matter, and the words ‘white privilege’ and ‘white supremacy’ divide our community and unfairly point the racism finger at a large percentage of our students, staff and teachers. This is wrong. And according to the state’s anti-discrimination and anti-racism law, it is a racist statement. Title VII protects civil and constitutional rights by authorizing the Attorney General to institute suits, to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, and to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, including education. The disparate impact regulations ensure that public funds to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes or results in racial discrimination. Additionally, the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment states policies that classify persons based upon race are presumptive, presumptively invalid.”

Board member Dawn Balinski countered with, “The term ‘white privilege’ and ‘white supremacy’ are historical truths. They are concepts that when a dominant group is in power and is actively oppressing another group, that’s what happens. The term white privilege is not attacking white people sitting in classrooms, white people teaching in classrooms. This is just a concept that this is what happens.

“I am from Alabama. I know about how blacks were discriminated against when I was growing up. So, when you put a whole group of people 150 feet behind you in the race, you’re going to be ahead. You didn’t



School board member Lisa Grenis

do it. You know, I did not do that. But I agree that I was, when I was growing up, 150 feet ahead of some of my black friends.”

Balinski harkened back to the incident at Calvert High School, in which five graduated students were charged with racist graffiti. “It was horrible. It was a wakeup call for us.”

An amendment by member Jana Post to modify the policy to remove white supremacy and white privilege and other changes failed and then the motion to approve the policy passed with Grenis and Post opposing.

Later in the Feb. 8 meeting, Grenis added, “Racism in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in Calvert County Public Schools. We also recognize and embrace the value and power of a diverse and inclusive school system. I mentioned earlier what I don’t understand is why our anti-racism policy singles out one group of people as the problem. White privilege and white supremacy unfairly stereotypes a large percentage of our students, teachers, and staff by singling out whites as the problem. CCPS violates the state’s anti-discrimination law policy 10 18 Title VII. The law states that public schools may not discriminate against any student or teacher, or employee based on race, gender, national origin, or religion. I recommend that this policy be reviewed by the county attorney before being implemented to, to avoid any future legal actions.”

Board Vice President Inez Claggett suggested that the county attorney might be biased and that the action should instead be presented to the Maryland Attorney General for review for compliance with state law.

[dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)

# Seven Candidates Vie for Three School Board Seats

## Kelly McConkey Makes Comeback Bid

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Seven persons have filed for the three of five seats on the Calvert County Board of Education in this year’s election. Two of the three incumbents for those seats, Inez Claggett and Dawn Balinski, did not file for re-election when the Feb. 9 filing deadline passed.

Board of Education contests are non-partisan. The top two candidates in each primary election ballot race move on to the general election. Since two of the three races have just two candidates, both move on to the November general election. One race has three candidates, so only the top two vote getters move on.

The race with three candidates, Commissioner District 3, features the political comeback attempt of former commissioner Kelly McConkey, who lost a re-election bid for his commissioner seat in the 2022 Republican primary. He had formerly been on the school board and hopes to return to that position. McConkey had been a Democrat but switched to Republican prior to the commissioner election in 2018. (see separate story about McConkey’s ethics travails).

McConkey of Dunkirk will be facing Jeanette L. Flaim of Chesapeake Beach, who has been active in the Democratic Party, and Mellissa Goshorn of Owings, who has headed a parents’ group that has been critical of the previous school board, particularly over discipline issues.

Incumbent Antoine White of Prince Frederick, who is current school board president, will be facing Paul Harrison of Huntingtown in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner District school board race. Harrison was a failed candidate for county commissioner in the 2022 Republican primary.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner District race features Mike Shisler of Port Republic,



Kelly McConkey

a retired educator and long-time Beach Elementary School principal, and Joseph Marchio of St. Leonard, an unsuccessful school board candidate in the last election.

This year’s primary election is May 14 with early voting dates of May 2–9. The general election is Nov. 4.

The results of this year’s school board election could change the dynamics of the board. In the last election, two conservatives, Lisa Grenis and Jana Post, were elected and they so far have been in the minority of many 3-2 votes, most recently on the school system’s Anti-Racism Policy (see separate story). If one of the three contested seats results in election of a more conservative candidate, that could switch the majority block on the board.

The Calvert County Times will offer interviews with all of the candidates in a future edition.

[dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)

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# Commissioners Support Ethics Bill

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners has voted to supply a letter of support for the bill introduced by Calvert's Republican delegates concerning the county's ethics law.

Deputy County Attorney John Mattingly explained the bill to the commissioners at their Jan. 13 meeting before they voted to support it. Mattingly said, "House Bill 834 is titled 'Calvert County Ethics, Consequences of Conflict of Interest Violations' and is co-sponsored by the Calvert County Delegates, Mark Fisher and Todd Morgan, Districts 27 C and 29 C respectively. This legislation proposes requiring that the conflict of interest provisions enacted by Calvert County include provisions related to judicial relief for certain violations of these provisions because there's a law requiring Calvert County to enact a law or regulation to require removal of a county elected official from office for violations of certain conflict of interest provisions. The committee hearing is presently scheduled for February 22<sup>nd</sup> in front of the Environment and Transportation Committee, and staff also requests a letter of support for this item."

The bill is aimed at avoiding the legal wrangling that occurred when former commissioner Kelly McConkey voted to put two properties he owns into the Huntingtown Town Center.

Although the Calvert County Ethics

Commission ruled that McConkey had a conflict of interest in the vote, the Maryland Supreme Court denied a suit brought by Calvert Citizens United (CCU) to overturn the vote on the county's comprehensive plan that followed the town center vote, because of existing state law.

At the Feb. 13 commissioner meeting, CCU's Susan Dzurec of Huntingtown praised the commissioners for their support of the bill. She said, "The Southern Maryland legislative support of our bill is not only bipartisan, but unanimous.

"If at any time you questioned the need for this bill, let me give you a clear understanding of why the passage of HB 834 is imperative. The following quotes are from the Calvert County Ethics Commission's document titled; Findings of Fact and Conclusions, page 8 and 9. I emailed that document to you this morning.

"As you recall, during the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process, Option B referred to Commissioner McConkey's vote to include his own property into the Huntingtown Town Center and is referenced here in Ethics Commission's document.

"III Conclusion: Having found that Commissioner McConkey violated the Ethics Code as alleged, the Ethics Commission adopts the strongest course of action within its authority by issuing a Letter of Censure and ordering Commissioner McConkey to cease and desist from any further violations of Section 41-13. The Ethics Commission issues the Letter of Censure,

rather than a milder Letter of Reprimand, in light of the apparent premeditated nature of the violation. Commissioner McConkey's vote did not occur in a vacuum; instead, he participated only after his previous abstention caused Option B to fail, and despite significant public interest and criticism that his participation would violate the County's conflict of interest rules.

"At no point did Commissioner McConkey seek the Ethics Commission's guidance or approval regarding his vote. Instead, he requested a nonbinding opinion letter from the County Attorney, which Commissioner McConkey voluntarily produced to the Ethics Commission in advance of the October 14 hearing. That letter, dated one day prior to his August 6 vote to adopt Option B, makes clear that Commissioner McConkey and the County Attorney anticipated that the Ethics Commission would find a conflict of interest in the matter, as it both identifies that possibility and sets forth his best arguments in Commissioner McConkey's defense.

"In doing so, it appears that Commissioner McConkey determined to 'paper up' his vote in advance, so as to place himself in the best position possible to defend against any subsequent complaints or action by this body rather than make a good faith effort to comply with the law.

"If the Ethics Code has any meaning, it must stop elected officials from voting on matters in which they have a conflict of interest. The vote for Option B might have been the right choice from a policy perspective; it might not have been. We take no position in that regard. Our concern is that Commissioner McConkey had a conflict of interest, knew about that conflict of interest, and voted anyway. On that, our position is clear: Commissioner McConkey violated the Ethics Code by participating in



Susan Dzurec of Calvert Citizens United

that vote."

Dzurec went on to say, "It should be noted that the Maryland Court of Special Appeals upheld the ruling of the Ethics Commission, in that Commissioner McConkey committed a 'classic case of Conflict of Interest' and The Maryland Supreme Court denied and dismissed Commissioner McConkey's attempt to overturn the lower court's ruling.

"Clearly the threat of being censured was not enough to deter Commissioner McConkey from voting on his own property. What's worse is that in his attempt to dodge the consequences of his actions, the Commissioner made a conscious effort to destroy the personal and professional reputation of the Chair of the Ethics Commission to achieve his goal of self-enrichment.

"Therein lies the need for House Bill 834." McConkey was defeated in a reelection bid last year by now Commissioner Vice President Catherine Grasso. He was formerly a school board member and has filed to be returned to that position in this year's primary election (see separate story).

[dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)

## Police Warn of Phone Scam

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office wants community members to be aware of a phone scam that is currently active throughout Calvert County.

Deputies have received reports from community members who stated that callers contact them claiming to be members of the Calvert County Sheriff's Office. The law enforcement impersonator often:

- refers to the community member by name,
- tells the community member the call is being recorded, and
- tells the community member they have a civil matter that needs to be cleared up, missed a court appearance, or jury duty.

The caller states they need to send money or a warrant will be issued for their arrest or they may turn themselves in to jail. Sometimes scams such as these will include spoofing a legitimate police agency phone number and using a real name of a law enforcement officer in an attempt to gain the trust of the victim.

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office

reminds you to be aware that:

- The Calvert County Sheriff's Office or any other legitimate law enforcement agency does not call community members seeking payment for outstanding traffic citations or unpaid federal or state taxes.
  - Individuals claiming to collect debts may try to instill fear in potential victims to persuade them to forward money. No government agency of any kind takes gift cards as payment.
- Tips to help avoid becoming a victim to this scam include:
- Never give personal or financial information to an unsolicited caller or email.
  - Be suspicious of callers who demand immediate payment for any reason.

If you receive a similar call, disconnect without providing any information and contact your local law enforcement agency immediately.

Press Release from CCSO

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# Community Resource Fair

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# Twin Beaches Branch Library Announces Closing for Move

## Ribbon Cutting Set for New Library

Perhaps you noticed that the new Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch is looking close to being finished? It is! Calvert Library expects to host the ribbon-cutting at the new location on Tuesday, April 16 at 2pm and the public is encouraged to attend!

This ribbon-cutting ceremony symbolizes not only the beginning of a new chapter for the community, but also a testament to the power of the collective vision and collaboration of Calvert Library, Calvert County and the towns of Chesapeake Beach and North Beach. The land was given to Calvert County by the Town of North Beach. Capital project funds from Calvert County Government and the County Library Capital Grant Program, Maryland State Library Agency, made the building possible. A grant obtained by the Town of North Beach assisted with the design costs. Finishing touches were accomplished with funds raised by the Calvert Library Foundation through generous community donations including the Town of Chesapeake Beach as the lead donor. Mark Tuesday, April 16 on your calendar and be one of the first to see this new treasure in the Beaches!

As the Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch staff prepare to open the new building in North Beach, the current Chesapeake Beach location will be closed to the public beginning Monday, March 18. Soon



after, movers will arrive to begin relocating all library materials to the new building. During the weeks that the Branch is closed, storytimes will take place at the Northeast Community Center.

The bookdrop will also be closed during this time. If customers have library items to be returned, they may return those items to another branch location or keep their checked-out items until the new location opens. Due dates for items checked out March 9-15 from Twin Beaches Branch will be extended to April 30. Details and FAQs about the move can be found on the library website.

Twin Beaches Branch Manager Melissa

Gray is inviting Twin Beaches customers to visit the Captain's Quarters location in Chesapeake Beach before the closure. "Moving isn't just a change of address; it is a migration of memories. As we turn the page to a new chapter in North Beach, we want to embrace our time in Chesapeake Beach by sharing stories and pictures displayed in our current location. Stop by to add yours to our Memory Board; we can make copies of your treasured photos so in the future, customers can look back and remember when.... Materials displayed on the memory board will be included in a time capsule that is representative of our wonderful time here."

Once the building closes, customers are asked to visit other library locations or the Bookmobile which has stops throughout the county and will be at the Chesapeake Beach location periodically until the new building opens.

What will be happening while Twin Beaches Branch is closed? Calvert Library Twin Beaches staff will continue to work during the closure. They will coordinate the move of materials, organize the building, train on equipment and learn workflows and procedures for the opening of the new building. Gray said, "We will be the first Calvert Library location to have a Makerspace. There is a lot of new technology for us to learn and master before opening!"

Library Executive Director Carrie Willson said, "We're so excited to soon be opening such a beautiful building that offers so much to the Twin Beaches community. Just to name a few elements, we're pleased to have an ADA-accessible building, study rooms, a programming room, space designed just for teens and new technology throughout."

For more information, visit <https://calvertlibrary.info/about-us/locations/new-twin-beaches-branch/> and follow Calvert Library on Facebook for sneak peaks of the new space!

Press Release from Calvert Library

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# School Board Begins Budget Review

## Faced with State Cut, Flat from County

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education began their review of Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel's proposed \$277.1 million budget at a Feb. 13 work session. The school board is beginning the deliberations with two strikes against them — a looming \$22.5 million cut in the state's contribution and the county commissioners' assertion they are going to flat fund the budget which is asking for \$10 million more from the county.

Townsel met in closed session last week with two commissioners and two school board members and other staff (avoiding Open Meetings Law compliance) for a preliminary budget discussion. The superintendent described the meeting as including "finding avenues to advocate for being held harmless for that amount this upcoming year, but also in the event that that does not occur, having a plan to not only present a balanced budget, but also making a commitment to work collaboratively with one another, meaning whatever in our best thinking, putting together a balanced budget, cutting where we must cut and working collaboratively with our county commissioners, ensuring that we have a still top ranked school district in the state of Maryland."

Townsel added, "One thing I shared with them, not only when you look at the monies we received in the previous fiscal year, we already see the return on investment, top-five-ranked school district, highest test scores in certain areas, all students having a safe community because we also talked about how the school system contributes to a great community. As a school district achieves, the crime rate is down; school dis-

trict struggles, crime rate goes up."

Board President Antoine White said of the joint meeting, "It ended with handshakes and hugs and things like that. And later that night I had a conversation with Commissioner (President) Hance and we all understand that it's going to be tough. It's a very tough situation that we're put in, but we are going to make sure that we are working together and communicating to try to come up with the best outcome possible. All the figures and numbers and things, I know that it's a work in process that we're all trying to work through. So, we're just keeping everything crossed that we'll come out with the best possible outcome."

Townsel said he was still working with the belief that the state cuts will be restored, but when pressed he admitted if cuts were necessary, staff would be impacted. "If you think of \$22 million, you're probably talking about over 200 people. Why am I saying people? Because over 80 percent of our budget is people. So, we're potentially talking about 10 bodies per building, but also in central office as well. So, it's a reduction of people across the board, worst case scenario."

With cuts in the classroom, the pupil/teacher ratio would be impacted, which led board member Lisa Grenis to observe, "There is a man named John Hattery who wrote a book about the effects of class sizes, and he showed that it has little relevance, but I don't believe that that is accurate at the elementary level. I think we need to make a commitment, specifically in the primary grades, to keep our class sizes small."

The board spent more than two hours going over the budget line items and questioning Chief Financial Officer Scott Johnson and other department heads. There

was some questioning of anticipated spending but also some concerns about how proposed cuts would impact the quality of education. Quoting Bob Seeger in "Against the Wind," it's a question of "what to leave in, and what to leave out."

At the conclusion of the work session, board member Dawn Balinski explained her understanding of why the state is proposing the cuts. She said, "I did want to talk about the elephant in the room," adding, "from what I can understand, the state, now that the two PILOTs (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) have finalized this past summer, for the nuclear power plant, but mainly for the Cove Point natural gas facility, it allowed the state to value the Dominion facilities."

Balinski said, "We went from \$350 million utility personal property to personal and real property of \$5.7 billion," adding, "So the state from the education side, they look at wealth per pupil. And so, they looked at this massive increase in Calvert County and we also had an enrollment drop, but most of it was because of this huge increase in our valuations. So, our wealth per pupil went from where we were 12<sup>th</sup> in the state the last couple of years, around the midpoint, and now it would put us up to number eight."

She went on, "So that was purely responsible for a \$22.5 million drop, which was 20 percent of our budget. And when I spoke with the Department of Legislative Services person and I said, you know, what the heck, they said, well, yeah, we saw this huge increase in your valuation."

But the county didn't reap the financial windfall, she said. "The State Department of Assessments and Taxation did their own analysis and sent the Cove Point facility a tax bill for \$54 million based on this new



School board member Dawn Balinski

assessment, which was \$10 million less than what the county had been receiving over the past five years for the PILOT program. So not only did the county not see this massive increase that the state was saying that they should get, they got this decrease. So that's what the county has been grappling with."

Board Vice President Inez Claggett pointed out to Balinski that the county's original agreement with Dominion had them only paying 42 percent of the assessment when the PILOT ended. But Balinski said the assessment was wrong to begin with; it should have been higher.

Balinski observed, "If the state can make us whole again, that's great. We're going to assume that, and we're going to work very hard to try to get that fixed. But then we're talking about the potential of the belt tightening. So, we'll be working with the county on that as well."

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# Zoning Amendment Proposed to Add Land to Dunkirk Town Center

## To Be Used as Back-up Septic Drain Field

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has given the go-ahead for staff to proceed with a change in the designated planning category for 17.15 acres in Dunkirk. The change would allow for a reserve septic drain field for the Dunkirk Gateway Shopping Center.

A memo from Long Range Planner Tay Harris said, "A request to change a designated planning category for 17.15 acres of a 49.89-acre parcel from the Resource Conservation District to the Town Center has been received by the Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z). The property is located at 10350 Ward Road in Dunkirk (Tax Map 6, Parcel 450). The applicant proposes to utilize the land area as future septic/sewer effluent disposal fields to better serve the Dunkirk Gateway Shopping Center. The

17.15 acres currently adjoin, but are outside of, the Dunkirk Town Center, and will require an amendment to the 2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, as amended in 2022. The proposal is consistent with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan's visions to promote sustainable development, encourage a stable and enduring economic base and provide for health and safety (2019 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, as amended in 2022, p. E-S)."

Harris noted, "Since P&Z staff is updating the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan, the proposal may be submitted for consideration as part of the update."

Also, she said, "The Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan must be consistent with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan. Prior to considering the proposal as part of the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update, an amendment to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan is required. If

the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan is amended to accommodate this request, staff will then incorporate the necessary map changes to the draft Calvert County Zoning Ordinance Update and the draft Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Updates."

Several public hearings would be required along the way,

Commissioner Vice President Catherine Grasso, at the BOCC Feb 13 meeting, asked, "In theory, I think he's very smart to plan for the future. Yes. And with the land percing and to have that availability would be great. But how confident are you that we can get an ironclad agreement where we have no additional building?"

Director of Planning and Zoning Mary Beth Cook said, "We'll absolutely work with the county attorney's office on the language that goes on the record plat."

The shopping center has several unde-



Site map showing proposed land for back up drain field

veloped pad sites in the rear, and they still are approved for development. Otherwise, it's built out. But Cook said, "Every time a plan comes in, there would be an analysis whether or not the existing system could support that."

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# Solomons Optimist Club Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By Dave Spigler  
Contributing Writer

The Solomons Optimist Club celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month with a dinner and reunion of active and former members at the Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons. Established in 1974 with the support of the Optimist Club of Calvert, this group of civic-minded volunteers is one of 1336 clubs dedicated to the improvement of their communities in each of the 50 states. There are currently 26 in Maryland.

The clubs' purpose is to develop optimism as a philosophy with the intent of promoting an active interest in good government and civic affairs, to inspire respect for the law, promote "patriotism" and work for international accord and friendship among all people. Additionally, Optimists take a serious interest in the aiding and encouragement of our youth with the belief that giving of one's self in service to others will advance the well-being of community life, mankind, and with that, the world.

The first Optimist Club formed in 1911 in Buffalo, New York and the movement spread to Canada and eventually to over 25 countries. The organization is now known as Optimist International.

Each year these clubs conduct more than 65,000 community projects while raising \$78 million to finance these good works. It is estimated more than six million youth are positively affected annually by this international effort. They have become the largest worldwide volunteer non-profit organization that recognizes the values of all children. They hope to develop them to their full potential with the goal to make the world a better place "one child at a time."

The celebration dinner was enjoyed by 100 attendees from throughout Southern Maryland. Among the many guests were several Optimist International officers including District Governor Colleen Combs accompanied by member Dale Hoffert and Calvert Club President Krista Brezina. In attendance were three original club charter members, Arnold Humphreys, Ron Humphreys, and Pete Siegert. Additionally, Dee Hoofnagle, the widow of the club's very first President Kenny Hoofnagle, graced the evening with her presence.

Current President Candace Milcarzyk



L to R: lifetime members Pete Siegert, Al Fissel, and Arnold Humphreys; and club president Candace Milcarzyk

got the evening started with the National Anthem, followed by an invocation by Father Bob Kilner, pastor for Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Solomons. Dinner was provided by the 7<sup>th</sup> District Optimist Club of St. Mary's County. Guests were serenaded during the meal by the soft sounds of the "GroveSpan Trio."

Following dinner, many of the life-time members present were introduced to the audience. During the evening, Commissioner Mike Hart presented a proclamation to Solomons Club president Milcarzyk.

For the Solomons Optimist of the Year, members were given an opportunity to select their choice and provide their reasons for their selection during the days leading up to the evening celebration. Milcarzyk was announced as the recipient to great applause from those in attendance. A few of the reasons provided by the voters included, "She works the hardest to ensure the work gets done. She works the hardest to bring in the most new members and get the club back on track in accordance with the club's by-laws. She also volunteers in the community on the Solomons Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad. She is the club's biggest cheerleader." This past November, Milcarzyk was featured in a special story in the Calvert County Times about veterans who still continue to serve their community. Milcarzyk retired from the Navy following

a 24-year distinguished career.

The work of these dedicated volunteers often goes unnoticed as they are not the kind of folks that go around bragging about their achievements. As a result, many citizens believe Optimists are nothing more than "Christmas tree salesmen" that suddenly appear around the holidays. The Solomons club is much more than that. Its 34 dedicated volunteers have a full schedule of monthly special programs and projects to

plan for. Many of their more popular events include their patriotic essay and oratorial contests they conduct for middle school and high school students. They hold a Youth Appreciation Week to salute and recognize those young people who have made significant contributions for the betterment of others.

Further, they sponsor Easter celebrations that include an egg hunt at various locations in the area. They often sponsor bike rodeos, hold "Trunk or Treat" activities at Halloween, "Calvert Shop with A Cop" at Christmas, "Project Graduation" in the Spring, and a booth at the Calvert County Fair in the Fall. Each year they host a "Respect for Law" dinner to recognize several first responders who have made a difference. Additionally, they have initiated a "Junior Optimist Club" to introduce optimism to our youth to create an interest for them to become involved with their community at an early age. And, each year, the Solomons Optimists provide a \$2,000 Kenny Hoofnagle Scholarship, in memory of the club's first President, to a deserving graduating high school senior.

And yes, they are great Christmas Tree salesmen as they sold out all of their 200 trees in record time this past Christmas.

To learn more about this wonderful group of friends, email [solomonsopt@gmail.com](mailto:solomonsopt@gmail.com).

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# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Feb 15

### Local Black History: Family Highlights from the Parkers Creek Heritage Project

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

A sneak peak of ACLT's Parkers Creek Heritage Trail Project, this talk will feature the story of Calvert native and Civil War soldier, Joseph Wallace, as well as selections from recent oral histories of Yvonne Mason Wills, the late Ruth Parker Harrod, and Shawn Harrod, all with family connections to the Parkers Creek area. In partnership with American Chestnut Land Trust. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### TACOS: Teen Advisory Council of Students

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

Teens! Calvert Library needs you! We want the library to be a safe space where teens can hang out and freely access books, information, and form community. TACOS meets monthly to help us with our events and services planning. Join us every third Thursday! You can receive 1 Service Learning hour for each meeting attended. Sign up to join Calvert Library's Discord server if you would like to attend virtually. 410-535-0291. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Valentine 'Show Some Love' Unguided Hikes

American Chestnut Land Trust  
8 a.m.

Participants hunt for painted rocks with hearts on them hidden along all American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) trails. Participants are encouraged to upload a photo with caption of what they love most about ACLT—can be a selfie of them with their sweetheart, a favorite trail, bridge, stream, wildlife, etc. For information on trail locations, visit [www.acltweb.org/](http://www.acltweb.org/)

## Fri, Feb 16

### 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.

### Valentine 'Show Some Love' Unguided Hikes

American Chestnut Land Trust  
8 a.m.

Participants hunt for painted rocks with hearts on them hidden along all American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) trails. Participants are encouraged to upload a photo with caption of what they love most about ACLT—can be a selfie of them with their sweetheart, a favorite trail, bridge, stream, wildlife, etc. For information on trail locations, visit [www.acltweb.org/](http://www.acltweb.org/)

## Sat, Feb 17

### 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.

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register. Interested in reading about Mahjongg? Take a look at what the library has. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Valentine 'Show Some Love' Unguided Hikes

American Chestnut Land Trust  
8 a.m.

Participants hunt for painted rocks with hearts on them hidden along all American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) trails. Participants are encouraged to upload a photo with caption of what they love most about ACLT—can be a selfie of them with their sweetheart, a favorite trail, bridge, stream, wildlife, etc. For information on trail locations, visit [www.acltweb.org/](http://www.acltweb.org/)

## Mon, Feb 19

### Universal Coprolite Day

Calvert Marine Museum  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Join us for the third annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as coprolites. Stations featuring fossilized feces and the stories they tell will be dispersed through our galleries. The event will also feature coprolites in the making...modern feces, some with a twist and a new Scats and Tracks activity. Included with museum admission.

### Dee of St. Mary's Dockside Tour

Calvert Marine Museum  
1 - 4 p.m.

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

## Tue, Feb 20

### Book Discussion

Calvert Library (Online)  
7-8 p.m.

Join us this month to discuss "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride. Set in the 1960's, this multi-award winning book is packed with larger than life characters and tells the sometimes comic story of a Brooklyn project. Let's talk about neighborhoods, race, religion, grudges and community. Discussion starts at 7pm. Register to receive the link. 410-535-0291. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Wed, Feb 21

### Tween Book Club

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

No One Returns From the Enchanted Forest. Join other book lovers for a fun tween book club! We will be reading and discussing fabulous books. Did we mention there will be healthy snacks?! They say no one returns from the Enchanted Forest—but that won't discourage Pella. Earthquakes are destroying her village, and worst of all, they've caused the Midsummer Festival to be canceled. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Fairview Book Discussion

Calvert Library (Zoom)  
2-3:30 p.m.

Join us for a lively discussion about Crossing the Line by Kareem Rosser! Register in advance to receive the Zoom link via email. For accessibility accommodations, please contact us at least two weeks before the event. 410-535-0291. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Reading Buddies: Teen Reading

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
6-7 p.m.

At this event, elementary-aged children will do fun activities and read out loud to teen volunteers. Teen volunteers can earn one service learning hour for participating. It's a great way to socialize and build reading confidence! Want to work with elementary aged kids and help build their confidence while they read aloud? Become a Teen Reading Buddy! We will meet in the Children's area for all dates. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Thu, Feb 22

### Little Minnows

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

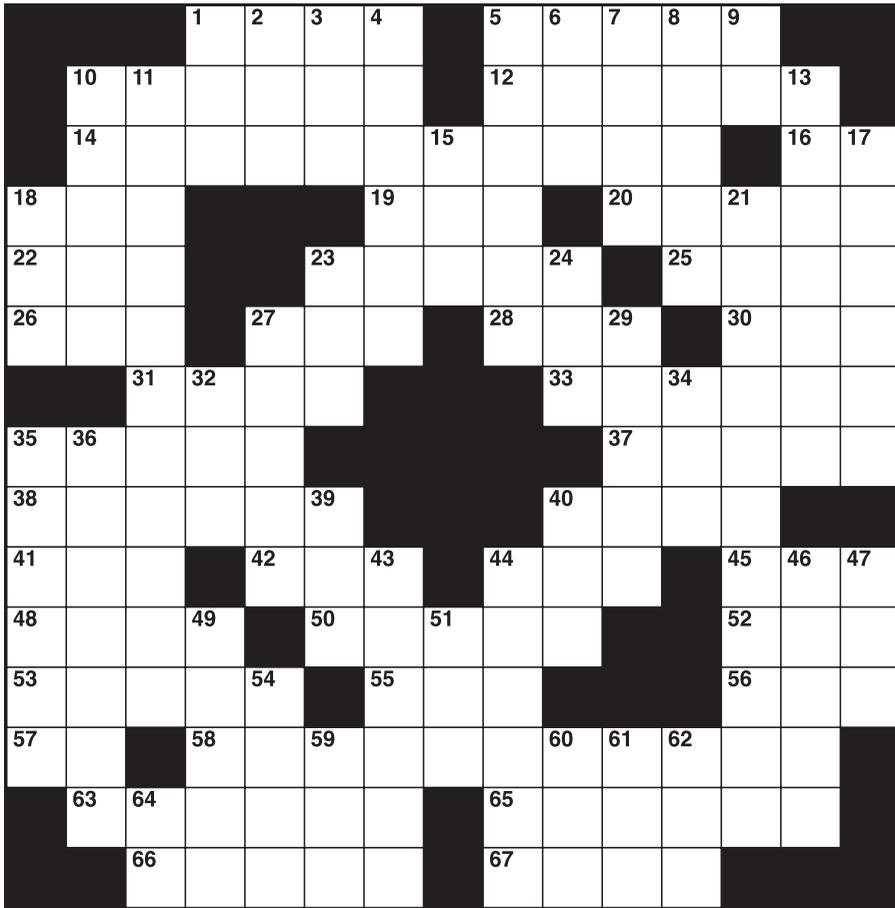
This month's theme is Chesapeake 1, 2, 3. For preschoolers ages 3 - 5, with an adult. This program focuses on one of the museum's three themes. Join us for story time and craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25 - 40 minutes. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive. Included with museum admission.

## Upcoming

### Maritime Performance Series: THE BURNETT SISTERS BAND

Calvert Marine Museum  
Friday, Feb. 23  
7 p.m.

The Burnett Sisters Band, based in Boone, North Carolina, consists of five members who create a unique blend of energetic music in the old-time, folk, classic country, and bluegrass traditions. 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, up to one day prior, at [bit.ly/MaritimeConcerts](http://bit.ly/MaritimeConcerts) and \$25 the day of the concert, online and at the door.

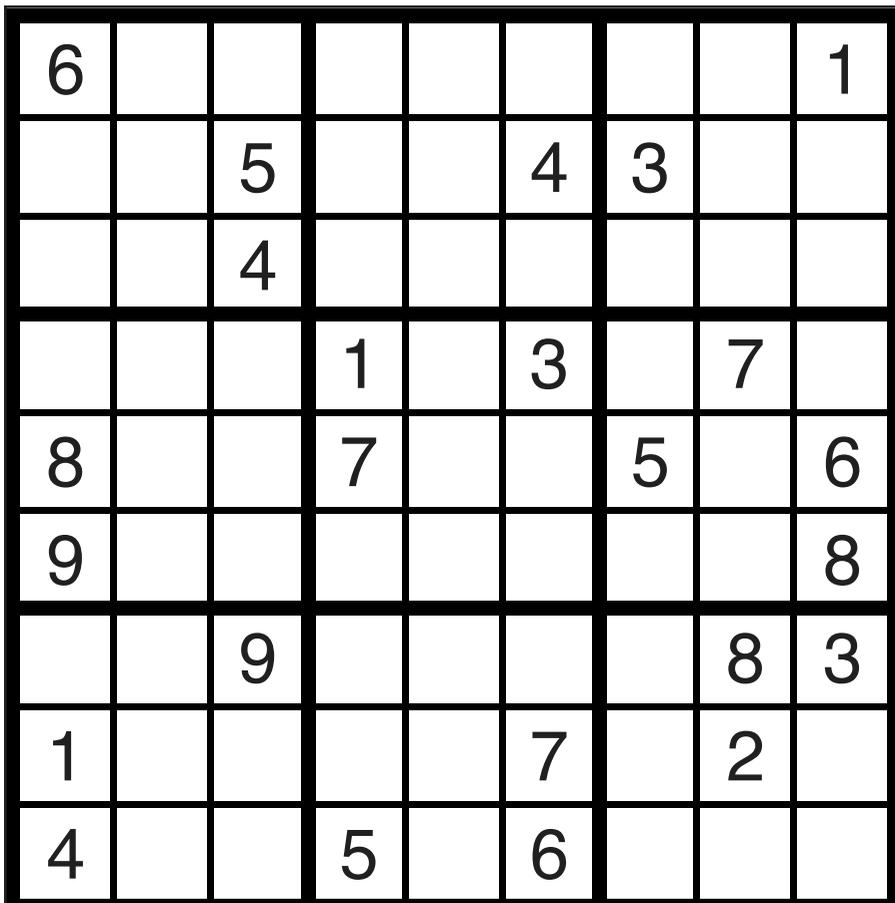


**CLUES ACROSS**

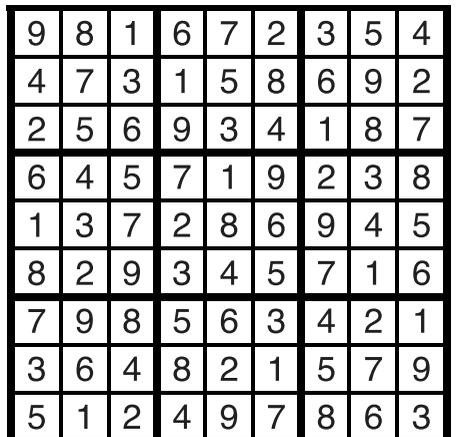
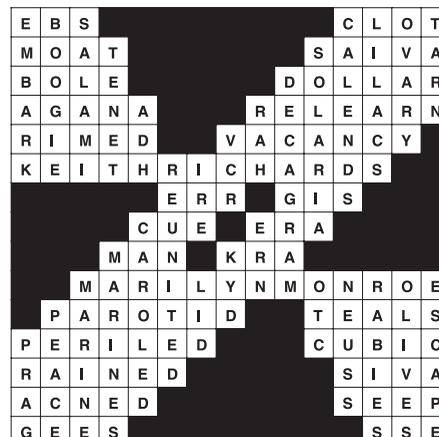
- 1. Gene type
- 5. Persian male given name
- 10. Type of protection
- 12. Cloud
- 14. One who returns to life
- 16. Gym class
- 18. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 19. Baby's dining accessory
- 20. Enchantress
- 22. Prefix denoting "in a"
- 23. Spiritual leader
- 25. Cavities
- 26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 27. Foot (Latin)
- 28. Sweet potato
- 30. Pharaoh of Lower Egypt
- 31. Land
- 33. More inquisitive
- 35. Dog breed: \_\_\_ Apso
- 37. Stood up
- 38. Direct and uninhibited
- 40. Authorless
- 41. Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
- 42. Retrospective analysis (abbr.)
- 44. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 45. Macaws
- 48. Actress Remini
- 50. Polynesian wrapped skirt
- 52. City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
- 53. Fitzgerald and Baker are two
- 55. Bowling alley must-have
- 56. A way to cool down
- 57. Ethnic group in Asia
- 58. A way to alter
- 63. Set of five
- 65. Removes from the record
- 66. Dummies
- 67. Set period in office

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. DC Comics superhero
- 2. Brew
- 3. Play
- 4. Single-celled animals
- 5. Rough to the touch
- 6. Small island (British)
- 7. Often noted alongside cons
- 8. Preparation of rootstock
- 9. Atomic #44
- 10. Egyptian unit of capacity
- 11. About secretary
- 13. Particular groups
- 15. Poke fun at
- 17. Make certain that something occurs
- 18. Financial term
- 21. Justify
- 23. Arbitrator
- 24. 007's creator
- 27. Czech name for Prague
- 29. Groans
- 32. American time
- 34. No seats available
- 35. \_\_\_ Stahl, journalist
- 36. Cleft lip
- 39. Talk incessantly
- 40. Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
- 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
- 44. Curdled milk
- 46. Running competitions
- 47. A team's best pitcher
- 49. Carthaginian explorer
- 51. World-renowned city
- 54. Most common Japanese surname
- 59. The bill in a restaurant
- 60. They \_\_\_
- 61. City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- 62. Distinctive practice
- 64. One quintillion bytes



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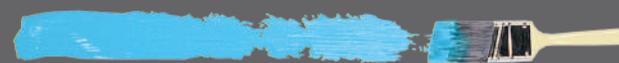
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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

## Thu, Feb 15

### Ask an Expert: Stroke

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital  
25500 Point Lookout Rd., Leonardtown  
8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Free and open to the community! Join emergency medicine providers and clinical experts at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital to learn more about stroke prevention, its signs and symptoms, the process of evaluation, and more. Participants will be invited to ask questions, too. Light breakfast will be served. No cost to participate. To learn more, call Health Connections at 301-475-6019.

## Sat, Feb 17

### Black History Month Open House— U.S. Colored Troops Center

U.S. Colored Troops Interpretive Center  
21675 S. Coral Dr., Lexington Park  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Come see the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Medal of Honor recipient exhibits at the USCT Interpretive Center in the Lexington Manor Passive Park during a free open house for all ages in honor of Black History Month.

On the trail between the Lexington Manor Passive Park and John G. Lancaster Park, you can learn about the Civil War era in St.

Mary's County and the African American troops on interpretive panels that lead to the statue of the soldier. Inside the building, you can also learn about the local Medal of Honor recipients who served in the U.S. Colored Troops and fought for the Union during the American Civil War.

There is also an exhibit about the segregated school system in the county, including information about the Drayden African American Schoolhouse, which is open by appointment and on the first Saturday of the month, April through October (11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.).

THIS EVENT IS FREE; donations accepted. Staff will be on hand to answer any questions.

## Sun, Feb 18

### Benefit Pitch Tournament — 7<sup>th</sup> District Volunteer Rescue Squad Auxiliary

Potomac Gardens  
20254 Coltons Point Rd., Coltons Point  
2:00 PM

ENTRY FEE \$25.00

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner - \$100.00

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner - \$50.00

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner - \$25.00

50/50 Raffle - \$1.00 each 6/\$5.00

Appetizers, snacks and desserts available

Contact Bobbie at 301-481-1510 for information or to make reservations.

# ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### St. Mary's County Library Presidents Day Closing

All three locations of the St. Mary's County Library will be closed on Monday, February 19 in observance of Presidents Day. All locations will be open regular business hours on Tuesday, February 20.

### Community Chess Day

Do you love chess? Play chess, eat snacks, bring your friends and find new chess-loving friends at the Charlotte Hall Library on Saturday, February 17 from 2 - 4 p.m. All ages and all skill levels are welcome to play! No registration.

### Building a Better Budget: Lunch & Learn Series

Learn the essentials of building a budget that works for YOU! Pack a lunch and join Dr. Troy Anthony Anderson, financial wellness expert, at Lexington Park Library on Tuesday, February 20 from 12 - 1 p.m. as he explains the fundamentals of the budgeting process. Learn how to create and follow your own personal budget plan based on your needs. This interactive workshop is packed with practical, family-ori-

ented exercises that will help you be the master of your own financial wellness. The Lunch & Learn series is a hybrid event. If you are planning to attend virtually, be sure to register for the event to receive a link to the online session. In-person walk-ins welcome. All registrants will receive a Zoom link before the session. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

### Ask Me Anything About Publishing with Christine Trent

St. Mary's County Author Christine Trent (Lady of Ashes, Heart of St. Mary's County) answers your questions about publishing. Enjoy a casual Q&A with the local author as she talks about topics in publishing at Charlotte Hall Library on Wednesday, February 21 from 6 - 7 p.m. Registration recommended but not required on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

### Community Garden Orientation & Gardening 101

Come hear all about Lexington Manor Passive Park's new community garden and learn the fundamentals of gardening from a Master Gardener! All are welcome! Come join us for all or just part of the morning's activities at Lexington Park Library on Saturday, February 24 from 9

a.m. - 12 p.m. We will first learn about our new community garden, opening at Lexington Manor Passive Park on March 2! After the garden orientation, there will be a Gardening 101 Class taught by a Master Gardener. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

### Fix-It Fair: Furniture

Community members are invited to bring in broken household items and learn how to repair them themselves at Lexington Park Library on Saturday, February 24 from 2 - 4 p.m. Local experts will be here to guide you through the repair process, with a different focus each month. February's focus is furniture! Is your nightstand wobbling? A dowel of a wooden chair falling out? Knob loose on a drawer? Chairs, drawers, and small tables... If it fits through the door, bring in your broken furniture items, and let's see if we can't fix it together. Tools, materials, and light refreshments will be provided. Registration is encouraged on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org); walk-ins welcome as space allows.

### Home Sales Series: Using Your VA Benefit to Buy A Home

U.S. Air Force Veteran, Aaron Oelrich, will answer your questions about using VA benefits, the associated costs, preparing

to purchase, and pitfalls to watch out for at Leonardtown Library on Tuesday, February 20 from 6 - 7 p.m. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org).

### Coal: Illuminating the Postbellum Past in Southern Maryland

Join us for this virtual presentation on Monday, February 26 from 7 - 8 p.m. with Dr. Jim Gibb, in which he'll discuss the archaeological implications of the use of coal in Southern Maryland. According to the US Census, in 1950 approximately one-half of all American households heated with coal. Prior to 1850, hardly any household used coal. Research by the SEAL Team, and particularly by Elizabeth Eckel, has explored the use of coal as a fuel in Southern Maryland; specifically, who adopted coal as a fuel and when? This presentation suggests that, although the transition from wood- to coal-burning required some investment, the answer to these questions is not wholly economic. Register on [www.stmalib.org](http://www.stmalib.org) with an email address to receive the Zoom link the day before the event.

# St. Mary's Department of Aging & Human Services

## Programs and Activities

Loffler Senior Activity Center 301-475-4200, ext. 1658  
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](http://StMarysMD.com/aging) for the most up-to-date information.

### Teen Court Program Seeking Volunteers

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity in the new year? Consider volunteering with the St. Mary's County Teen Court Program! Teen Court is designed to reduce the number of youthful offenders and educate youth in an actual court environment. Teen Court is a juvenile justice diversion program offering the first-time misdemeanor offenders, ages 11-17, and first-time traffic offenders under the age of 18, the opportunity to accept accountability for their minor crimes without having to incur a permanent criminal record or traffic court fines and points. Teen Court is a voluntary program that allows juvenile respondents to be judged by a jury of their peers.

The Teen Court Program also provides our county teens who are interested in our judicial system an opportunity to help their fellow teens and gain first-hand knowledge of the court system. Several of our teen attorneys have proceeded to utilize the experience gained through this program in their future goals and careers. Please contact the Teen Court Coordinator with any questions or to join our dedicated staff of volunteers who make this program work for the benefit of all the citizens of St. Mary's County.

For more information, visit [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/TeenCourt/](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/TeenCourt/) or contact Teen Court Coordinator Greg Jones at 301-475-4200, ext. 1852, or [TeenCourt@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:TeenCourt@stmaryscountymd.gov).

### Bereavement Support Group Meeting

The Loffler Senior Activity Center will host its monthly Bereavement Support Group meeting on Thursday, Feb. 15 at 10 a.m. Join us in a safe space to share your grief experience and learn new ways to cope while meeting friends for the journey. This group will be facilitated by the Bereavement Coordinator from Hospice of St. Marys, Dr. Patricia Watson. No need to register, drop-ins are welcome.

### Renovate, Relocate, or Reverse – Options for Older Homeowners in Retirement

The decision to downsize and move to a new neighborhood or renovate to suit your retirement needs can be complex and emotional. Adding in the cost to do either makes the decision that more vexing. Join local real estate professional Frank McKnew, a certified Senior Real Estate Specialist, and Robbie Loker, a Home Equity Strategist for seniors, at the Northern Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, February 21, from 1-2:30 p.m. for this free presentation! Explore the pros and cons to consider as homeowners shift into retirement. Register by visiting [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging) and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs." If assistance is needed, leave a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

### Drums Alive®: Golden Beats

Join us at Northern Senior Activity Center at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays from February 20-March 26 for Drums Alive®! This unique program uses drumming, music, movement, and science to make the most of health and wellness in a fun and engaging way. Golden Beats® emphasizes & enhances the fitness and lives of older adults – stimulating those young at heart. Come join the fun of drumming and dance! See how it releases endorphins, minimizes negative feelings, and promotes improved mental awareness. Program Specialist and certified trainer, Keilan Ruppert, will lead this program for a limited group over the course of 6 weeks. Cost: \$12

### Health Watch Series: Make the Most of Your Doctors Visit

Health Watch volunteers Elaine Green and Kathy Blanchette will discuss *How to Make the Most of Your Doctors Visit* at the Loffler Senior Activity Center on Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 9:30 a.m. Advance registration is required for this presentation. Go to [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging) or leave a message on our reservation line at 301-475-

4200, ext. 1660.

### Living a Poetic Life Workshop with Author Lori Joseph

This interactive poetry workshop is based on Lori Joseph's recently published book, *Seventy Five: Connectivity Through the Ages*. Ms. Joseph is joining us in-person at the Northern Senior Activity Center on Thursday, February 22, from 9-11 a.m. to provide select readings that demonstrate ways to live more attentively. Participants will be introduced to sensory exploration to heighten their own writing experience. Reference books and writing materials are supplied at no extra charge. This workshop is being offered for free through the generosity of the Maryland State Arts Council. Register by visiting [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/aging) and click "View & Sign Up for Activities & Programs." If assistance is needed, leave a message at 301-475-4200, ext. 3115.

### Loffler Book Club News

In February read *The Lighthouse Effect: How Ordinary People Can Have an Extraordinary Impact in the World* by Steve Pemberton. (Collection of memoirs)

Discuss at Loffler Senior Activity Center on March 1 at 2 p.m.

Enjoy a friendly discussion on the first Friday of every month- everyone's thoughts are appreciated. The Lexington Park Branch Library has been very helpful by holding several copies of the books for us. Contact Sheila.Graziano@stmaryscountymd.gov to learn more about joining.

### Keys to Senior Independence

Keys to Senior Independence will be held on Tuesdays, March 19-April 9, from 6-9 p.m., in Building C-Room 204 at the College of Southern Maryland in Leonardtown, MD.

This year's presentation topics are:

- *Tuesday, March 19 - Here and There: From Transportation to Medicare*  
Join us to learn about the St. Mary's Transportation System (STS) and programs offered through the Department

of Aging & Human Services' Senior Information & Assistance Division, such as Senior Rides!

- *Tuesday, March 26 - Mental Health*  
This evening will cover several facets of mental health, including a presentation on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia, Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention, and Suicide Prevention.
- *Tuesday, April 2 - Supporting Caregivers*  
Learn about the programs and services that support caregivers in our community in several aspects, including the Home & Community-Based Services Division of the Department of Aging & Human Services, St. Mary's County Hospice, and A Community that Shares (ACTS).
- *Tuesday, April 9 - Financial Health/ Identity Protection*  
Speakers this week will teach community members about scams directed toward the aging population and how to detect, avoid, and report scams, along with legal information and financial options for older adults!

Sign up for one presentation or all four! 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](mailto:Sarah.Miller@stmaryscountymd.gov).

### Community Shred & Medication Collection Day

Do you have paper documents with personal information that you'd like to purge? Or do you have unused, unwanted, or expired medications in your cabinets? This is your chance to dispose of them safely at the Community Shred & Medication Take Back Day! This event will be held on Saturday, April 13, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in the St. Mary's County Governmental Center, located at 41780 Baldrige St, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

## Vacation Rental in Nags Head

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## SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH OF MILTON DAVIS HARROD

39 y.o. Black Male  
Date of Death: 2/16/1997  
Case Number C-83-002200

Milton Davis Harrod was found deceased on February 19, 1997 in a wooded area near the end of the cul-de-sac of Parker's Creek Road in Port Republic, Calvert County, Maryland. Harrod had been last seen alive at his residence by family members around 10:45 p.m. on Sunday February 16, 1997. It is believed Harrod left the residence a short time thereafter, and was murdered at that time. The location where Harrod was found is within walking distance of his residence.

If you have any information pertaining to this case, please contact Maryland State Police Homicide at 410-996-7881. You may be entitled to a reward if your information leads to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.

To schedule an obituary in the County Times, submit text and picture to [aldailey@countytimes.net](mailto: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

## Margo Holton, 74



Margarita Quioco "Margo" Holton, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, 74, of Leonardtown, MD passed away on February 3, 2024, surrounded by her loving family.

She was born on October 17, 1949, in the Philippines (PI) to the late Bernardo Quioco and Basilisa Bayayay Quioco.

Margo was born in Bohol and raised in Cebu, PI, where she earned a bachelor's degree and began a career in phlebotomy. She married the love of her life, Michael Anthony Holton, on December 8, 1977, in the Philippines and again on February 21, 1978, in St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in San Francisco, CA. Together, they have celebrated over forty-five wonderful years of marriage. She was an avid gardener, growing her own flowers, produce, and herbs that she used in family meals. She made delicious leg of lamb, bread pudding, sticky rice, and lumpia. She took every chance to travel the world and often went back to the Philippines to visit with her family. She was amazing with needle and thread and enjoyed repairing children's clothing and making quilts for her family and friends. Her greatest treasure was spending time with her children and grandchildren, who brought her tremendous joy and love. She was a devout Catholic and an active volunteer at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church for the past 13 years.

In addition to her beloved husband, Michael, she is also survived by her children: Marie Tomas (Robert) of Kapaa, HI, Casandra Rodriguez of Manila, PI, Michael C. Holton (Karen) of Verona, NY, LtCol Edward V. Holton, USMC (Lou) of Quantico, VA and Rebecca E. Nash (Kelly) of Leonardtown, MD; her grandchildren: Gabrielle, Ethan, Caitlyn, Mark, Casandra, Josie, Vivian, Hagen, Evelyn, Harriette, Ford, Mariana, Isabella; great-granddaughter, Callie; and extended family and friends. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her brother, Antonio Quioco, Sr.

Family will receive friends for Margo's Life Celebration on Saturday, February 17, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Reverend Edward Hegnauer will celebrate a Mass of Christian Burial at 12:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 21370 Newtown Neck Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Serving as pallbearers will be Michael Campion Holton, LtCol Edward Vincent Holton, USMC, Hagen Edward Holton, Robert James Tomas, Ethan Kinohi Tomas, and Joel Kelly Nash.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Fisher House Foundation, Inc. Memorial Gift

Condolences to the family may be made

at [www.brinsfieldfuneral.com](http://www.brinsfieldfuneral.com).

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

## Roy Buñales, 87



Roy Holasca Buñales, MD, of California, MD, beloved husband of the late Frances "Connie" Finnbunales, passed away at the age of 87 on February 3, 2024, at home surrounded by his loving family (and pets).

He was born on January 11, 1937 in Barugo, Leyte, Philippines to the late Enrique P. Buñales, who served honorably in the US Army, and Maria Holasca, a teacher.

Roy graduated Valedictorian of his high school class in Barugo, Leyte, Philippines. In 1964, he graduated from the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Medicine, and went on to become the first Filipino graduate to be accepted into the general surgery internship and residency program at Michael Reese Hospital (now University of Chicago Medical Center). In 1969, he relocated and started as a Surgical Attending at Cafritz Hospital in Washington, DC (now United Medical Center). Roy's lengthy medical career included work as a highly skilled general surgeon, emergency room physician, and family practitioner. He was also actively involved with the Phi Kappa Mu Chapter of UPMASA (University of the Philippines Medical Alumni Society in America).

In his free time, Roy enjoyed racing his Porsche 914 and 911 at Summit Point Raceway, oil painting, free sketching, photography, and spending time with his cats.

Roy is survived by his children: Roy Soriano Buñales (Maria), Rose Marie Soriano Bunales, Joseph Henry Bunales (Norine), Clarissa Bunales Bigelow (Terrence), and their mother, Clarita Soriano Bunales; Kristin Louise Cramer (Matthew), and Timothy Phillip Bunales; his grandchildren: Bruce, Michael (Jessica), Matthew, Brandon, Jennifer, Spencer, Joseph, Jonathan, and Jason; his sister Eleanor H. Buñales-Garcia (Tomás); and his great grandson, Tyson. Roy is preceded in death by his wife, Connie; his parents; his brother, Victoriano; and his grandson, David.

A public viewing for Dr. Buñales will be held at 11:00 a.m. on February 9, 2024 at St. John's Parish in Hollywood, MD, followed immediately by a funeral mass at 12:00 p.m. A private graveside burial will take place at a later date.

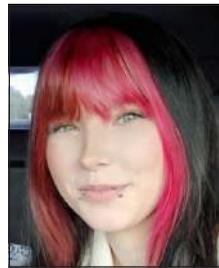
In lieu of flowers, funeral expense donations are greatly appreciated. Monetary donations can be made here via Kristin Cramer (Roy's daughter/secretary):

<https://linktr.ee/k.bunales.cramer>

Part of your contribution will be donated to UPMASA's charitable works.

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

## Kali Hughes, 21



Kali Nicole Hughes, known by some as Dakota, 21, of Hollywood, MD passed away suddenly on February 3, 2024 in Westminster, MD.

Kali was born on May 8, 2002 at Southern Maryland Hospital Center in Clinton, MD. She was baptized at LifePoint Church in Waldorf, MD and attended Leonardtown High School, Class of 2020. Most recently, she worked as a retail sales associate at Goodwill.

Kali had a passion for art in all forms, from music to drawing/painting, acting, makeup, and cosplay. She loved the beach, nature, and

spending time with family and friends.

She is survived by her parents Doug and Jenn Hughes, brother Dylan Hughes, step-sister Kayci Palmer, half-brother Dominic Hughes, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and many cousins. Also survived by her biological mother Jane Walzer, halfsiblings, and a host of other family members and friends who miss her dearly.

Please join us as we celebrate her life Monday, February 19, 2024 at LifePoint Church, 10395 Berry Road, Waldorf, MD 20603. Visitation will be from 2:00 to 2:30 pm followed by memorial service at 2:30 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Poieima Movement (<https://poieimovement.churchcenter.com/giving/to/kali-hughes-memorial-fund>) in Kali's honor to help restore women from brokenness.

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For details and to place your notice of remembrance, call the County Times at 301-373-4125.

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## Common Symptoms of Plumbing Problems

The drip of a faucet, the bang of pipes and the visible signs of a leak under the sink are some notable indicators of plumbing problems. Other, potentially serious issues may not be so evident. How can homeowners tell if they have potential plumbing problems? The following are some sights and sounds that indicate it is time to call in a plumber.

- **Banging or clanking:** Plumbers refer to these noises as water hammer. This is when a rush of water forces through the pipe and bumps into a closed valve, producing a metallic noise. Something is in the pipe that is restricting water flow. Over time, the flow of water meeting an obstacle could loosen pipe joints as the water tries to find an easier workaround.
- **Sewer smells:** Pipes need traps and vents. Traps are designed to prevent sewer gas from entering the home, while vents channel sewer odor up to the roof. If there are sewer smells, it could mean a trap has dried out or a vent line is cracked, says Family Handyman.
- **Low water pressure:** If you turn on the faucet and the water pressure is poor, it could be the result of a clog or a leak somewhere in the system. Pipes that are improperly sized for a home also can affect pressure.
- **Sluggish drains:** Clearing drains is perhaps the only plumbing problem that homeowners should address them-

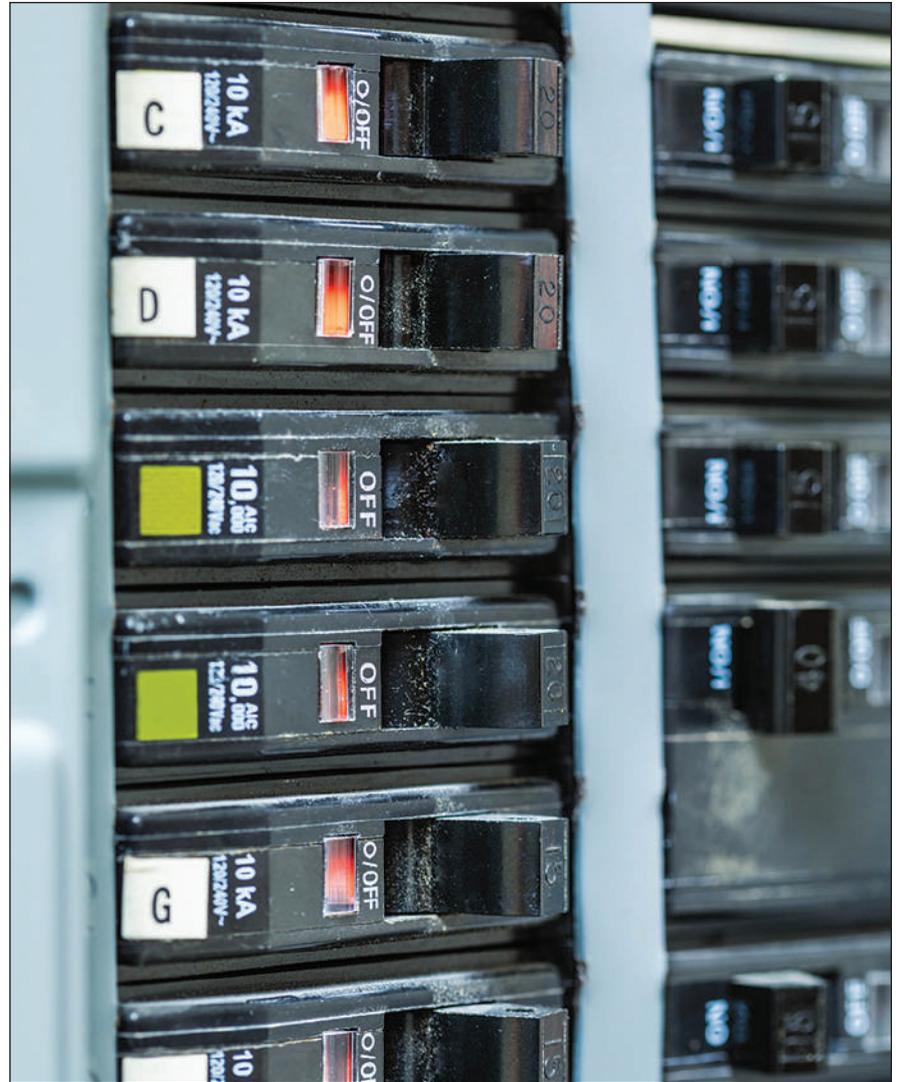


selves. More often than not, drains that fail to drain quickly have a blockage such as hair or other debris. If attempts to clear the drain do not work, it is best to bring in a professional plumber.

- **Shaking sounds:** Water can cause occasional noises, but if the sounds are frequent, the pipes are not secured firmly enough. A plumber will need to tighten the mounting straps or even completely replace them.

Plumbing issues are nothing to take lightly, as small problems can quickly escalate and cause thousands of dollars in damage.

## Don't Get Shocked by Electric Safety Issues



Electricity helps run the world, including our homes and businesses. Without electricity, we'd have no access to lighting, our interior spaces may not be heated or cooled effectively, and the computers and other devices we rely on so heavily would not run.

Even though electricity is designed to make people's lives more convenient, it's easy to take it for granted and become complacent about the safety needed to use it effectively. The Electrical Safety Foundation International says each year electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing more than 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths and \$1.4 billion in property damage. Since the average American home was built in 1977, many existing homes of this age and older simply cannot handle modern demand for electricity without modification.

The following are some warning signs that electrical issues could lead to bigger problems:

- Tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses regularly
- Dimming of lights when other devices are in use
- Buzzing sounds from outlets or switches
- Discolored outlets
- Seemingly underpowered appliances

Additional warning signs can include a tingling feeling when an electrical appliance is touched, or rubbery or burning smells.

Individuals can take certain precautions to ensure electrical safety at home and at

work. Here are nine guidelines to follow, courtesy of the National Fire Protect.

1. Have any home you are buying or renting inspected by a qualified private inspector in accordance with local requirements.
2. When electrical work is needed, hire a qualified, licensed electrician.
3. Use only one heat-producing appliance plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
4. Do not use extension cords for major appliances like ovens, washers, stoves or microwaves. They should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet.
5. Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and basements to shut off an electrical circuit when it becomes a shock hazard.
6. Extension cords should only be used temporarily. Have an electrician install more outlets if they are needed.
7. Keep the area around the electric meter clear.
8. Make sure outdoor lights and other fixtures are rated for outdoor use.
9. Label the circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in the home and know which to turn off when electrical work is being conducted.

It doesn't take much for an electrical issue to become serious and start a fire or cause shocking. Treat all electricity use in a home or business seriously.

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# What to Know About Reseeding Your Lawn



Spring marks the return of flowering plants and warm weather. And homeowners know that spring also ushers in the return of home renovation season.

Homeowners undoubtedly have an extensive list of projects on their to-do list this spring, and that may include helping their lawns and gardens recover after a long winter. Unpredictable weather, which can include drought and excessive rainfall and everything in between, can take its toll on a lawn. In certain instances, the best solution may be planting new grass. But homeowners can consider these tips before they begin the process of reseeding or replanting their lawns.

- Scarify the lawn. Scarifying a lawn can help to create a clean slate, but the timing must be right. Various lawn and garden experts, including those at BBC Gardeners' World Magazine, recommend scarifying in spring or early autumn. But don't jump the gun when scarifying in spring by scarifying before the lawn has started to grow after a dormant winter. Scarify when the soil is a little wet and the grass is once again actively growing. Scarifying can remove any lingering weeds from last season and also pull up any moss that might have taken hold over the winter. Without weeds and moss to contend with, freshly planted seeds are in better position to thrive.
- Work with a landscaping professional. Homeowners with manageable lawns can likely scarify their own lawns with a relatively inexpensive plug-in scarifier. However, scarifying can be a strenuous physical activity, particularly for homeowners with large lawns. In such instances, homeowners can benefit from working with a qualified landscaping professional. Such a

professional can scarify the lawn and subsequently reseed or replant new grass. The latter task is not so simple, as the lawn care experts at Scotts® note that choosing the correct seed is a vital part of reseeding or replanting a lawn. Choosing seed may sound simple, but it's a potentially complex decision that requires knowledge of the existing grass, including when to plant it. Certain grasses are best planted in spring or early fall, while others are best planted in summer. A qualified landscaping professional can identify the existing grass and plan the seeding or planting around this important detail.

- Prepare to water the lawn. Watering is vital to the long-term success and health of freshly planted grass seed. Scotts® urges homeowners to keep the top inch of soil consistently moist, but not soggy. That requires a daily commitment, and setting a multi-function hose nozzle or sprinkler to the mist setting once per day or more if it's hot outside can increase the chances grass will grow in thick and strong. Scotts® recommends keeping the top two inches of the soil moist until the new grass reaches a mowing height of roughly three inches. Once that benchmark has been reached, watering frequency can be cut back to about twice per week, but now the soil should be deeply soaked instead of misted. The soaking will help roots grow deep into the soil.

Spring is a great time for homeowners in various regions to reseed or replant their lawns. With the right approach, homeowners can enjoy a full and lush lawn throughout summer.

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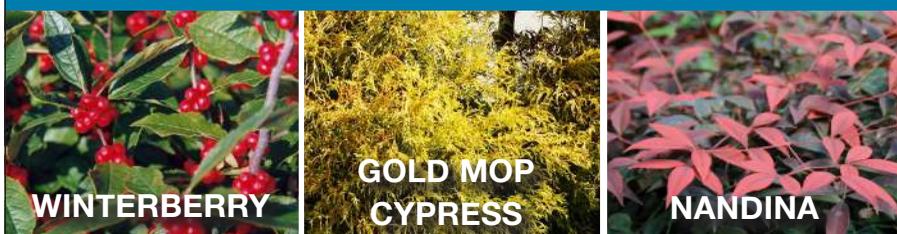
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# Storage Solutions for a Harder-Working Garage

Who doesn't have a space at home that serves as a catch-all for items that seemingly have no other home? For many, this storage wasteland where items go to be forgotten tends to be the garage. Before long, clutter can overwhelm the space and create an eyesore. Garage clutter also makes the space less functional by making it harder to park a vehicle or store equipment.

Organizing a garage takes work, but the end result can improve the appearance, free up space, make work more efficient, and make it easier to find and use tools more readily. Here are some ways to get started on organizing your garage.

## Start with cleaning and culling

One of the first steps when organizing a garage is to thoroughly analyze what is needed and what can be removed from the garage. If items belong elsewhere, such as in a shed or the basement, move these items first. Discard damaged or broken items. Next, move on to tools or gear that hasn't been used in some time. Will you use it again? If the item has been collecting dust for years, you likely already know the answer to that question.

Pile all items in the driveway so you have a clean slate with which to start. Measure the room to figure out the dimensions so you'll know how much wall space is available for storage.

## Free up floor space

The ultimate goal of a garage storage



renovation is to make floor space available, according to Stacey Schweiger of Sunshine Organizing. Lifting items off the floor makes access easier, and protects items should there be a flood or leaks.

A combination of wall shelves, overhead shelves, cabinets, and wall hooks can help homeowners create more floor area. Organization becomes easier when everything has a designated space where it can be easily returned to.

## Consider weight

When investing in shelving and racks, remember that many of the items stored in

garages tend to be heavy. It's important to ensure that shelves and hooks are heavy-duty and able to withstand the weight of pressure put on them. Verify the maximum weight so that racks will not buckle or tip over and cause issues.

## Utilize overhead space

Overhead storage can be reserved for items that aren't used frequently, such as seasonal decorations or luggage.

## Out of sight

Some items should be stored out of sight and beyond the reach of children and pets.

Cabinets and containers can be used and locked to secure materials, such as fertilizers, paints, solvents, and other chemicals.

## Additional ideas

Magnets, pegboards, organization bins and systems, and similar products can be used to corral small or errant items like hand tools, fasteners and more.

Garage organization will take some planning and time, but the end result can be well worth the effort.



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# Tips to Keep Clutter from Piling Up

Clutter has a way of taking over a home. As time goes by, items that are not stored or discarded when they've lost their utility can gradually take over a space, creating a claustrophobic, cluttered feeling that can affect how people feel in their homes.

Clutter is not something to be taken lightly. A 2010 study published in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* found that women who characterized their living spaces as cluttered or marked by unfinished projects were more likely to experience fatigue and depression than women who described their homes as restful and restorative. Though clutter is often discussed in terms of removing it, there's also many ways to prevent it in the first place.

- Schedule weekly cleaning sessions. Cleaning is a chore few look forward to, and that reluctance may be a byproduct of infrequent cleanings. The less a home is cleaned, the longer cleaning sessions take when individuals get around to it. Weekly cleaning sessions can help prevent items from stockpiling and creating a cluttered look.
- Discard items when they're no longer used. Holding on to items you no longer use will eventually contribute to the buildup of clutter. That's a lesson parents know well, as kids outgrow



toys, which can then pile up and contribute to overcrowded toy chests and play rooms. Adults also have a hard time discarding their own toys, including old devices. As kids outgrow toys, let them choose which ones to discard

before they're replaced with new items. The same goes for adults, who can wipe old devices like tablets, smartphones and laptops clean and discard them once they've purchased replacements.

- Make it easy to find stored items. Even

the most well-organized person can fall victim to clutter if stored items prove difficult to find. When revamping storage systems, choose clear, stackable plastic bins and drawers so you won't make a mess as you look for stored items you can't find. Clear, stackable plastic bins and drawers make it easier to find what you're looking for, reducing the likelihood that items will end up on the floor or strewn about. If you don't want to replace existing storage bins, label them if they're not clear to make it easier to identify what's inside.

- Donate clothing. Much like kids' toys and adults devices should be discarded when they're no longer used, old clothes can be donated to create more storage space and prevent the buildup of clutter. Clutter is often described as something visible to the naked eye, but clutter can also build up in dresser drawers and behind closet doors. Periodically go through closets and dressers and remove items you no longer wear, donating them if they're still in good shape and discarding them if they're not.

Clutter can quickly take over a home. A proactive approach that emphasizes clutter prevention can make for a more relaxing and restful home.

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# How to Keep Your Lawn Looking Green

Homeowners' fascination with a lush, green lawn is something that has developed over time and is still "growing" strong. According to a 2019 survey conducted on behalf of the National Association of Landscape Professionals, 81 percent of all Americans had lawns and 79 percent said a lawn is an important feature when buying or renting a property.

Even though lush lawns are still coveted, due to drought, the financial climate and even invading insect populations, many people are taking inventory of their landscapes and deciding if a lawn is a priority, even going so far as to reinvent their spaces with lawn alternatives. Still, there are ways to keep properties green no matter which route is taken. Here's a look at some environmentally friendly ways to address a landscape.



## Irrigate from below

There are many ways to water landscapes, but homeowners may want to take their cues from the commercial farming industry. Drip irrigation systems utilize a network of valves, pipes and tubing close to the roots of plants or under the soil. Such systems are more efficient than surface irrigation options, helping to save water and nutrients in the soil.

## Water early

Scotts Lawn Care suggests watering a lawn in the morning before 10 a.m. when it is cooler and winds tend to be calmer. This ensures water can be absorbed into the soil

and grass roots before evaporation occurs. Watering midday may cause the water droplets on the lawn blades to heat up and actually scorch the lawn.

## Plant a new grass type

Homeowners can experiment with eco-friendly grass seed blends that mix native grasses and may not require as much water nor ideal growing conditions.

## Utilize green alternatives

Rather than focusing solely on grass, some homeowners are turning to alternatives like clover and even moss, particularly if their

landscapes do not have the most pristine growing conditions. This may reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and herbicides. The result is still a green, inviting yard.

## Watch the lawn height

Mowing too frequently or at too low a height may compromise the lawn's ability to thrive. Grass cut to the proper height develops a deep root system to better locate water and nutrients in the soil. That means homeowners may not have to water as much or as frequently. Taller lawns also shade the soil and the roots, reducing some evaporation.

## Compost

Leave the clippings on the lawn to break down and further feed nutrients to the lawn, helping it look greener and thrive. Furthermore, rely on supplementation with compost to reinforce the nutrient profile in the soil. The National Resources Defense Council says composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a valuable fertilizer. It doesn't take much to nurture compost in a yard.

Green landscapes are possible with a few tips that help conserve water and maximize natural resources.



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# Exploring Different Backyard Structures

Designing an ideal backyard space requires forethought and an eye for style. Knowing which features to include in a yard often boils down to what homeowners want to achieve in the space. Will it be a relaxing oasis or a central entertaining focal point?

People often look to various structures to add height and visual interest to outdoor spaces. Homeowners will likely come across structures like arbors, gazebos, pergolas, and even trellises as they wade through the variety of features they can incorporate into backyard plans. Each of these structures can add appeal, but they also can offer shelter from the sun and privacy when enjoying the yard. There are significant differences between each structure, so here's an in-depth look at what sets them apart.

- **Arbor:** An arbor is one of the more simple garden structures. It is usually a frame that is arched or square-cornered. Most homeowners use it as an entryway to a garden or even the front of the home. Those with green thumbs may cover the arbor with climbing and trailing plants. The Spruce says arbors date back to early Egyptian and Roman gardens and were used throughout Europe by the late 16th century.
- **Pergola:** The words arbor and pergola are often used interchangeably, but to suggest the two structures are the same would not be accurate. Pergola

comes from the Italian word "pergola," which means "projection." Pergolas were once projected from exterior walls and supported on one side by pillars or columns. Today, arbors are usually freestanding units with two or four posts. Pergolas may be connected on one side to a home or another structure. Some are freestanding units supported by four posts. Pergolas tend to be larger and offer more privacy and shade than arbors.

- **Gazebo:** Gazebos are more defined garden buildings, states the contractor referral site Network. Gazebos are freestanding units that can be built in various shapes. Some are octagonal, others are square. Like a pergola, a gazebo is supported by columns and may have low railings or built-in benches. Gazebos also may have a more solid roof than arbors or pergolas, providing sun and other weather protection. The roof may have added architectural appeal, like a cupola.
- **Trellis:** A trellis is a simple structure that provides a surface for climbing plants. A trellis also may support fruit-bearing trees. Trellis work may be used in conjunction with an arbor or pergola, or be installed on fencing. Incorporating structures into backyard designs can provide functionality and appeal.

# Six Strategies to Get More Organized

When spring arrives, many people seek to reset and refresh their spaces. This time of year is a popular one to clean and organize homes and offices.

There are plenty of things that can use a little organizational attention. There's no ideal way to get organized. Whatever works is a good approach, but the following are six strategies to help individuals clear the clutter.

## 1. Utilize to-do lists

People tend to be less productive when they're storing all of their tasks in their brains. The first step to getting organized is to remove those plans from the head and put them down on paper or in some other tracking tool. A digital to-do list manager, for example, enables you to see all of your tasks, deadlines and due dates in one place so you can get things done more efficiently. Carry around a notepad or use the digital notes app on a phone to jot down thoughts and needs as they come up.

## 2. Corral your "smalls"

Smalls are keys, phones, chargers, wallets, headphones, and other accessories. When these items are grouped together, they're easier to find so you can stay on track. Invest in an attractive organizer and install it by the front door or another high-traffic area. You'll cut down on trying to find those smaller items when running errands.



## 3. Conquer clutter regularly

It's easy to be put off by cleaning and organizing when clutter has gotten out of control. Instead, by cleaning up items on a daily or weekly basis, it's much easier to keep ahead of clutter.

Treat it like a daily job, including sorting mail and tossing unnecessary items; emptying waste pails; dusting the desk; deleting emails; and putting items back where they belong.

## 4. Categorize emails

Utilize the folder creation option from popular email providers to sort your messages. Drop messages that need attention into categories of your choosing, such as school, health and receipts. Then you'll know which folder to go into when searching for what you need, eliminating the time-consuming task of scrolling through a full inbox.

## 5. Give one; toss one

When bringing new items into the home, follow the procedure of giving away or throwing out one item for each new item that is received or purchased. This can help to tame clutter.

## 6. Mise en place your life

"Mise en place" is French for "put in place." It is used in the kitchen to refer to preparing and setting out all ingredients needed in a recipe. The same concept can be used elsewhere. Lay out clothing on the dresser for the next day at work or school. Prep the foyer of a home with items you need, like an umbrella, shoes and paperwork. Organize backpacks so they're ready for the school day. Establish a to-go bag at work for items that need to be brought home.

Getting organized can be as simple as taking small steps that have lasting impact.

# Simple Ways to Improve Your Pantry

A pantry is a room or closet where food, beverages and linens or dishes are stored. Pantries can be highly useful spaces that provide ancillary storage in kitchens. Many modern homes are equipped with pantries, but older homes may require some modification to create more useful pantries. Whether starting from scratch or modifying an existing pantry, these tips can help projects go more smoothly.

- Maximize vertical storage. Utilizing vertical areas can help increase storage capacity. Build in extra nooks by investing in undershelf storage baskets. These baskets can instantly create designated areas for different types of ingredients. Homeowners also can look for ways to use the inside of cabinet doors or add extra shelves on walls or in eaves.
- Consider your needs. Figure out which items you would like to store in the pantry and then shop for corresponding storage systems. For example, storage solutions may feature wine bottle racks, baskets for potatoes and other produce, shelving for small appliances, and even pull out racks for baking pans or cutting boards.

- Use clear storage. Put ingredients in clear, airtight containers of similar dimensions so that you can easily find items you need. Transfer bulky items, like cereals and baking supplies, to storage containers for uniformity.
- Store bulk items elsewhere. Bulk shopping can be cost-efficient, but bulk items can quickly eat up real estate in the pantry. Designate another area for non-perishable bulk products, like paper goods or canned items, such as in a garage or utility room.
- Pull out drawers are convenient. Pull-out drawers can reduce the need to seek and reach for items. These drawers conveniently roll out so items in the back can be accessed without disturbing foods in the front. Drawers can be custom built for any pantry space.
- Make it accessible. Think about who will be taking items from the pantry. Put children's snacks on the bottom pantry shelf where they can reach them, and then organize other shelves for adults in the home.

A pantry remodel can add valuable storage space and make one of the busiest rooms in the house operate more efficiently.



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## Five Patio Projects to Enhance Outdoor Living



Warm weather paves the way to more opportunities to enjoy fresh air. For homeowners who have the luxury of outdoor spaces, including private patios, now is the time to start thinking about projects to enhance these gathering spots.

A patio can be considered a transitional area that links the outdoors to the inside of a home. According to the home and lifestyle resource *The Spruce*, a patio is often an oasis for lounging and entertaining. And depending on homeowners' budgets and preferences, a patio can be just as comfortable and stylish as interior spaces. The following are five patio projects that can transform these valuable spaces.

### 1. Pretty pergola

A pergola is an open-air (traditionally wood) structure that adds a measure of shade and privacy without completely blocking views of Mother Nature. Installing a pergola over the patio helps define the seating area. Hanging plants can add to the ambiance and string lights can make this a great spot to gather when the sun sets.

### 2. Patio fire pit

Build a fire pit right into the design with the same materials used to create the patio. For example, if the patio is brick or flagstone, build up to create an eye-catching fire pit. Fire pits not only look good, they also expand the time frame that the patio can be enjoyed, offering cozy spots to sit even when the weather chills.

### 3. Frame it in

Make the patio a true extension of the inside by putting up walls around three

sides of the patio if it connects to the home. Leave the last open to the yard, or consider installing screens to mimic the look of popular lanais. The walls will offer more weather protection, meaning you can invest in high-quality patio furniture to make this a fully functioning outdoor living room. Hang a television that is rated for outdoor use for movie-watching under the sun or stars.

### 4. Ooh la la

Vintage bistro tables and chairs can turn a drab patio into one that calls to mind a Parisian courtyard. Whimsical lighting and accents that you would normally think to see indoors, like a gilded mirror, can add extra appeal. Soften wrought iron and other metals on the furniture by including plenty of flowers and greenery. Don't forget the candles and a place to stash a bottle of chilling wine.

### 5. Farmhouse chic

Transform a patio into an entertaining space that caters to guests. A large farmhouse style table flanked by benches and some upholstered chairs sets the scene for a dinner amid the fresh air. Watering cans filled with wildflowers and mismatched flatware establish a casual feel for gatherings in the space. For those who plan to cook and serve outside with frequency, invest in outdoor appliances so you'll never have to miss a beat with guests.

The options for transforming patios into stylish gathering spots is only limited by the imagination.

# Create Your Native Plant Garden

Gardening is a worthwhile endeavor that not only passes the time, but can be a form of exercise and relief from the daily grind. Gardens also provide ample opportunity to experiment, as individuals can produce everything from vegetables to bountiful blooms.

Recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on eco-friendly gardening that aims to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides in an effort to protect the planet. One way to do so is to rely on native plants.

## What are native plants?

Native plants are indigenous to particular regions. The National Wildlife Federation says native plants grow in habitats without human introduction or intervention. Native plants have formed symbiotic relationships with local wildlife over thousands of years, which the NWF notes makes them the most sustainable options. Native plants help the environment and thrive with little supplemental watering or chemical nutrients.

## Natives vary by region

Native plants vary by region. In arid climates, certain succulents may be native because they don't need much rainfall to thrive. In lush wetlands, succulents might be out of place.



## Start native planting

The NWF offers native plants for 36 different states that can be shipped right to customers' doors to help replenish native varieties. In addition, gardeners can visit local gardening centers to select native plants. Small and independently owned centers often feature knowledgeable local

staff whose expertise can prove invaluable to individuals seeking native varieties.

It's important to keep in mind that native varieties may look less cultivated than more exotic blooms and foliage designed to sell for their unique appearances. Wildflowers and native grasses may be the types of native plants found in abundance, which may grow

up and out quickly. These other tips can help the process.

- Plan and prepare the site by removing weeds and turning over the soil. This will give seedlings an opportunity to take root without competition from weeds. Seedlings will give gardens a faster head-start than waiting around for seeds to germinate. However, gardeners can start seeds indoors and then move them outside once they are seedlings.
- Avoid planting native plants in rows, as that's not how they're likely to grow naturally. Vary the placement so the plants look like they sprouted up haphazardly.
- Gardeners can still exert some control over native gardens prone to growing a little wild. Borders and paths can better define the growing areas.
- Grow Native!, an initiative from the Missouri Prairie Foundation, suggests planting two to four species in broad sweeping masses or drifts. Mix grasses with flowering plants. The grasses produce dense, fibrous roots that can prevent weed growth.

Native plants should require minimal care. Keep an eye on them and supplement with water if conditions have been especially dry.

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## How to Tackle Spring Cleaning



Spring is a season of renewal. When the flowers are blooming and the trees are budding and the weather is pleasantly warm, people often feel inspired to make changes around their homes. Work may begin with culling belongings and organizing essentials.

There is debate regarding where the practice of “spring cleaning” originated. Some researchers link it to certain religious groups. It has long been an ancient Jewish custom to thoroughly clean a house in preparation for the springtime feast of Passover. The house is scoured to remove any yeast bread, or chametz, from the home. Similarly, members of the Greek Orthodox church celebrate “Clean Week,” which is a week of cleaning before Lent. In Iranian culture, families spend days cleaning prior to the Persian New Year, which begins on the spring equinox.

Spring cleaning also has some secular roots. For instance, in the 1800s, Londoners routinely cleared their homes of grime and soot that accumulated over the winter.

Spring cleaning is still a ritual for many today. As people embark on their plans to tidy up, these tips can help them along.

### Tackle one big task a day

Who hasn’t started one project only to be distracted into moving along to another room? This often occurs when people discover something out of place in one space and then move that item where it belongs, only to find a new cleaning task at hand in that space. Inefficiency can make you give up on spring cleaning prematurely. Agree to address one room/task a day. Keep a basket or box handy to store errant items until you

move on to the next room.

### Stock up on supplies

Prepare all of the cleaning supplies in advance. Put together a tool kit of sorts with the equipment you need, including mops, brooms, rags, cleansers, and the like. Organization can keep you on course.

### Harness your strengths and weaknesses

Some people clean because they are stressed or angry, others do so to avoid other tasks. Keep personality in mind when establishing a cleaning schedule. For example, clean at night if you’re a night owl, or wait until you are feeling antsy before embarking on a “calm down cleaning.”

### Tackle seasonal chores first

Some tasks need to get done to prepare for the spring and summer season. These may include cleaning the grill and sorting through outdoor furniture and decor. Spring cleaning may involve readying the pool for another year of use, or cleaning out rain gutters to prepare for spring storms. Tackle time-dependent tasks first and then move on to others that are less time-sensitive.

### Spread out the work

Some people like to devote full weekends to spring cleaning, but that can be overwhelming for others. Breaking down cleaning tasks into 15- to 30-minute intervals each day can make the job more tolerable.

Spring cleaning season has arrived, and certain tips can make the job more efficient and manageable.

# How to Prepare Soil for Spring Planting



Spring is a season of rejuvenation, and perhaps nowhere is that rebirth more noticeable than in the yard. Each spring, grass begins to grow again as inviting landscapes beckon people outdoors.

Extra sunlight and rising temperatures make spring a great time to plant flowers, grasses and trees. To ensure successful planting, homeowners must take steps to prepare the soil. Healthy soil can provide the ideal conditions for roots to take hold, helping plants establish themselves before potentially harsh summer conditions arrive. Preparing soil might seem like an extensive job, but a simple approach may be all that's necessary to create conditions that promote plant growth this spring.

- Clean up the previous months' mess. Whether homeowners live in regions marked by year-round warmth or places where winter typically features heavy snowfall, it's a good idea to clean up an area prior to spring planting. Fallen leaves, rocks, grass clippings, and other debris can contribute to compacted soil that makes it hard for plants to establish strong, healthy root systems. Clear away any debris prior to planting before taking the next step in your soil preparation routine.
- Loosen the soil. Once debris has been cleared away, loosen the soil. Depending on the size of the area where you'll be planting, you may need to invest in tools like a shovel, spade, spading fork, and/or a lawn

edger. If you're planting in a small area, such as a deck planter box that still has soil from last year's planting inside it, you can either clean the box and replace the soil entirely or dig around with a handheld trowel, cultivator and/or weeder. It's important to loosen all of the soil around where you will ultimately plant prior to planting to ensure water can reach the roots and help them establish themselves once planting is completed.

- Test and, if necessary, amend the soil. A simple pH test can help determine the acidity or alkalinity of the soil. This is an important step as soil that is too acidic or alkaline can decrease the availability of nutrients the plants will need to thrive. In addition to conducting a pH test, which can be purchased at little cost at a local home improvement store, homeowners can contact their local Cooperative Extension Service to test their soil quality. These tests will reveal soil pH, but also can shed light on the texture of the soil and other components. Once the test is conducted, the local Coop Extension Service may recommend amendments to improve the nutritional quality of the soil so new plants can thrive.

Soil conditions go a long way toward determining if new plants will thrive. Preparing the soil prior to spring planting can ensure a successful season.



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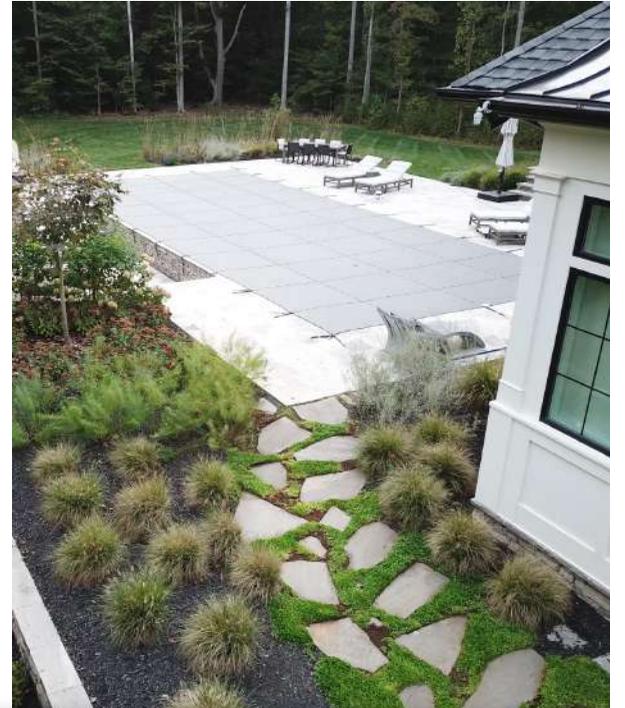
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### How will higher rates affect you?

As you know, interest rates have risen considerably over the past couple of years. But what does this mean to you, as a consumer and as an investor?

From a consumer's standpoint, it's not hard to see the effects of higher interest rates. If you want to take out a mortgage or refinance an existing one, you'll find that it's considerably more costly, in terms of the interest you'll pay, than it was a few years ago. And the same is true of car loans and credit cards. Paying these debts at higher rates can affect your cash flow, so while rates are high, you may need to make some important decisions about your overall budget and spending plans.

As an investor, though, you may find the effects of higher interest rates to be somewhat more complex. That's because higher rates can have a different impact on different types of investments, such as stocks and bonds.

When considering stocks, be aware that not all market sectors will respond the same way to higher interest rates. For example, the financial sector, which includes banks, insurance companies and brokerage firms, may benefit from higher rates. On the other hand, smaller technology companies, which still must invest heavily in their businesses, may not do as well due to rising interest rates making it more expensive for them to borrow. And other sectors will respond differently to higher rates. Keep in mind, though, that there's great variance within sectors and among companies, so when you consider purchasing stocks, evaluate each choice on its merits and make sure it fits within your risk tolerance, time horizon and need for portfolio diversification. When you diversify your investment dollars, you can reduce the risk of market volatility affecting just one type of asset, although diversification by itself can't protect against all losses.

With fixed-income investments, such as bonds, interest rate movements can have significant and direct impacts. When interest rates rise, the value of your current bonds will likely fall because new bonds can pay higher rates. However, you can also buy bonds at the new, higher rates and benefit from bigger interest payments.

Still, there's no guarantee that interest rates will stay elevated – in fact, the Federal Reserve has indicated that it might actually start cutting rates in 2024 – which is why it may be a good idea to build what's known as a “ladder” consisting of short-, intermediate- and long-term bonds. Once you have your ladder in place, you'll have some protection from interest-rate movements. So, if rates were to keep rising, you could reinvest the proceeds of your short-term bonds in the new, higher-paying ones. But if rates level off, or even fall, you'll still benefit from your longer-term bonds, which typically (but not always) pay higher rates than short-term ones.

Of course, if you hold your bonds until maturity, you will continue to get the same interest payments, regardless of where market rates go.

In any case, it's useful to be aware of what's happening with interest rates — the more you know about the factors affecting your investments, the better off you'll be.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*

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# Edward Jones®

## Wanderings of an Aimless Mind by Shelby Oppermann



### Outdoor Projects with a Bit of Spice

I am anxiously awaiting the next 70 degree day, even though I personally love this cooler weather. It is even hard for me to wear jackets when it is 40 degrees. Now when it gets 39 and below, yes it is sweatshirt weather for me. Today is the kind of day that will put a chill in me with the high winds and it will take me all day to get rid of the chilled bones feeling. The temperature is 42 degrees right now, but the real feel is 34 degrees. My joints feel a bit better after a month or so of flares and bronchitis because the humidity today is only 43%. I always feel better on low humidity days.



Last week, my husband and I took a day to do some straightening out in the yard. We cleared branches, filled the fire pit and wood pile, he fixed the fire pit area party lights, and sawed up a mess of an old Pussy Willow stump that his mother had planted many years ago. At some point an oak tree and sticker vines started to take it over. Now it is a much smaller stump with two trunk areas that look like badgers. The stump is really just a rotted mess. We are debating whether to dig the whole stump up completely or leave it be but agreed to wait and see what the limbs he left turn out to be. They may be oak limbs, or they may be the original pussy willow limbs. If we don't like what comes up, then we will probably plant another red maple tree in that spot.

Robert still yells at me if I get near dirt, so I cut down weedy mosquito plants in barrel buckets where I want pansies to grow. I am so anxious to get flowers started this year. Last year each time I went to Green Acres, I know I pestered all of them asking if it was time to plant pansies or other flowers, and they'd tell me, “No, it's a little too early yet”. I think right now I (Robert) could get some pansies in if the weather stays in these mild temperatures.

The bane of my existence at present is still the million squirrels in our yard. I do love squirrels and watching them chase each other all around and up and down in the trees, but they tear so many areas up. I can't believe all the holes in the yard where they think they have buried nuts. I have mentioned before how I have seen the squirrels lift up my plants with their tiny but deadly little paws and fling them out of the pots. I had to start putting sharp things in the pots to dissuade them. All they do is move the steel spike plates around or fling them out on the ground. When they run up and down the trees the squirrels also knock my birdhouses off and all the Raku pottery pieces with beautiful sayings I have hanging on different trees. I keep asking the squirrels, “Do you pay the mortgage on this house and land?” or, “Can you be more respectful?”

My son Ryan made me a beautiful birdhouse that he painted to look like brick and brought it over last year. It is wonderfully made and means so much that he handcrafted it, but of course he is crafty as well as a talented local photographer, and a great Dad to his boys Liam and Carson. The reason I am hoping for the 70 degree weather is that the squirrels took an intense hatred of that beautiful birdhouse and started devouring it. I don't know if they didn't like the red color, the smell of the varnish, or what, but they have eaten a good portion of it.

So, the next warm day, I am going to spray the birdhouse with varnish, and while it is still wet I am going to sprinkle hot pepper flakes and cinnamon all over it, then spray again and repeat. Now I know why they put hot stuff in bird feed. I will probably have to repaint some areas before I do that of course. But when those squirrels go to take a big bite out of my beautiful birdhouse I want to be ready to see their little beady eyed expressions. The spice war is on!!!!

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

Please send your comments or ideas to: [shelbys.wanderings@yahoo.com](mailto:shelbys.wanderings@yahoo.com) or find me on Facebook

# Maryland DNR Offers Grants for Invasive Fish Removal



Anglers show their catch of large blue catfish at the 2022 Sharptown Catfish Tournament. Maryland DNR photo.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now accepting applications for invasive fish control grants of up to \$5,000. This grant program seeks to support effective ways to remove invasive fish, particularly blue catfish and Northern snakeheads, from Maryland waters and identify sustained beneficial uses of caught fish. The application deadline is April 15, 2024, and awards will be announced in early May.

"It's imperative to remove more blue catfish and Northern snakeheads from Maryland waters to protect our ecosystem," said Branson Williams, Maryland DNR's invasive fishes program manager. "These funds will support grantees with innovative ideas for successfully taking invasive species out of the water and finding constructive uses for them."

Blue catfish and Northern snakehead pose significant threats to ecologically and economically important native species in Maryland. Proposals from community-based programs and individuals should address how their initiative will remove invasive fish for beneficial purposes and have a long-lasting impact on invasive fish control.

Interested parties can apply online through the proposal solicitation form. Projects may start July 1, 2024, and last a single or multiple days. Projects will take place with oversight by the department and should be completed by June 30, 2025. Information on invasive fishes is available on the DNR website, and applicants can direct questions about the program to Branson Williams of Maryland DNR at [branson.williams@maryland.gov](mailto:branson.williams@maryland.gov).

# St. Mary's Historic Preservation Award Nominations Open

The St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission is seeking nominations for the Annual Historic Preservation Awards. Established in 1999, these awards recognize outstanding achievement and excellence in the field of historic preservation in St. Mary's County. Recipients will be awarded in three categories:

- **Preservation Project Award:** Recognizes excellence in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, interpretation of architectural features in new construction, and reuse of historic structures.
- **Preservation Service Award:** Recognizes outstanding achievement in and support for furthering the aims of historic preservation in St. Mary's County, including education, research, development, planning advocacy, and

community leadership.

- **Lifetime Achievement Awards:** Recognizes those who have dedicated many years to historic preservation and made an impact to preservation efforts in St. Mary's County.

The St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission encourages the public to nominate individuals or groups for projects that represent excellence in historic preservation. Nominations must recognize individuals/projects from January to December of 2023.

The deadline to submit nominations is 5 p.m. on March 25, 2024; download the nomination form at: [www.stmarysmd.com/docs/Historic\\_Preservation\\_Awards\\_Nomination\\_Form.docx](http://www.stmarysmd.com/docs/Historic_Preservation_Awards_Nomination_Form.docx).

Awards will be presented by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County in May 2024.

# Historic St. Mary's City to Host Wedding Expo

Historic St. Mary's City is excited to announce they will be hosting the annual Wedding Expo on Sunday, February 25. The Expo will feature an amazing selection of wedding professionals ready to help prospective brides or grooms find the perfect outfit, reception venue, invitations, photographer, music, menu, honeymoon destination, and much more!

Whether planning a formal black-tie affair or a casual ceremony, carefully selected experts are ready to offer their services to help create timeless and treasured memories.

Those interested in attending are invited to register online at [www.hsmcdigshistory.org/events/2024-hsmc-wedding-expo/](http://www.hsmcdigshistory.org/events/2024-hsmc-wedding-expo/).

They may also contact Porzia Purves by emailing [porzia.purves@maryland.gov](mailto:porzia.purves@maryland.gov) or calling 301-994-4400.

The Wedding Expo is free for attendees who pre-register by February 21, 2024, or will be \$5 per person at the door. The event will be located at the State House on Historic St. Mary's City grounds, 47418 Old State House Road, St. Mary's City, Maryland.

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**32-Oz. Heinz Ketchup** **4.48** **FINAL PRICE 3.48**

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# NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

## Super Stallion Mission Data Team Breaks New Ground in Aviation

The CH-53E Super Stallion heavy lift helicopter is breaking new ground for naval aviation. In December 2023, H-53 Heavy Lift Helicopters Program Office (PMA-261) started installation of a first-ever fully integrated, hard-mounted commercial off-the-shelf tablet functioning as a primary mission display on a naval aircraft. In doing so, the CH-53E Mission Data Extender team provided a replacement for a legacy capability while also enhancing current operational capabilities at a fraction of the development cost and schedule of a new mission display.

"This is a huge step toward open architecture, innovative solutions to mission-data presentation," said LCDR Neil Whitesell, PMA-261 In-Service Avionics Systems project officer. "We did it at low cost, fast, and we provided a major capability improvement to the warfighter."

Currently, the CH-53E Super Stallion uses two instrument panel-mounted Smart Multi-Function Color Displays (SMFCDs) as primary mission displays. The SMFCD presents hover cueing, ownship position, threat reports, route/waypoint information, moving map, and real-time Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR). The SMFCD is currently suffering from reliability and reparability issues that reduce availability on the flight line and hinder readiness. Due to the high cost and lengthy timeline to perform a technical refresh on the existing SMFCDs, the program office required an innovative solution. The PMA-261 Avionics Integrated Project Team (IPT), in conjunction with the Tactical Mobility (TacMo) IPT at Naval Air Warfare Center, Weapons Division (NAWCWD), fleet, and industry partners, developed a cyber-resilient system of systems collectively known as the Mission Data Extender (MDE) to replace the aging SMFCD.

MDE used a novel mix of developmental and non-developmental commercial/government off-the-shelf (C/GOTS) components to provide legacy SMFCD capability, while also enhancing operational capability. The system was comprised of a GOTS avionics bus reader (MOB HUB) developed by the China Lake TacMo IPT, and the COTS Miniature Encrypted Wireless Link (MEWL) and Marine Air-Ground Tablet (MAGTAB) provided by Kranze Technology Solutions (KTS). Additionally, MAGTAB required a cockpit instrument panel mount to allow for heads up FLIR presentation in the cockpit. In close partnership with fleet users and an industry partner, Integrated Consultants Incorporated (ICI), the MDE team developed the first-ever permanent primary instrument panel mount for a COTS tablet in the naval aviation enterprise. The resulting Informant Mount pro-

vides for continuous tablet charging, quick mount/dismount of the pilots' MAGTABs, and allows for swap-in/swap-out interchangeability with legacy SMFCDs. The Informant Mount provided flexibility for the fleet operators to tailor their preferred mission display according to mission requirements and available hardware, and to utilize their MAGTAB as both an instrument panel mission display and/or a kneeboard. The same physical MAGTAB can now be used for mission planning, assault package briefing, mission execution, and section debrief without the need for removable media.

In addition to mounting provisions for the MAGTAB, the MDE system also provided much-needed permanent mounting provisions for carry-on data terminals widely used throughout the CH-53E fleet. As a result, the capability of the CH-53E mission display expanded to include a new Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) capability, as well as Mobile User Objective System (MUOS) Data connectivity via carry-on ground radios. As an additional capability enhancement, the MDE was also designed to interface seamlessly with the newly fielded Link16 and ANW2 DI system being incorporated on the CH-53E during MDE development.

Finally, MDE development required the creation of a new software application to provide the legacy hover cueing displays available in the SMFCD. The program office was able to leverage their existing Software Support Activity (SSA), Noetic Inc, to code and deliver a new application to the MAGTAB within a single design sprint. By virtue of hosting this capability on an open system tablet, mission display capability insertion can now occur on the order of months, and at a fraction of the cost of developing new proprietary software code.

"The CH-53E now has an aircraft-powered, WiFi-based mission display capable of seamless interoperability with several carry-on data terminals, and capable of walk-on/walk-off expeditionary mission planning," LCDR Whitesell said. In addition, the integration allows for rapid capability insertion through Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) concepts, he added.

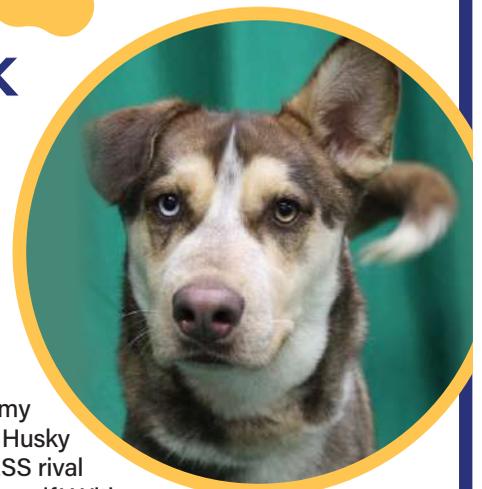
The MDE was an exemplary example of NAVAIR's capacity for organic innovation and rapid fielding. Altogether, the MDE system managed to bring all legacy SMFCD capability forward, concentrate all digital interoperability data onto a single aircrew interface, and place that interface on the pilot instrument panel as a tablet-based primary mission display. MDE represented a huge leap in capability and readiness, at less than one-third of the cost and schedule to upgrade the legacy SMFCD display.



The Mission Data Extender (MDE) is a fully integrated, hard-mounted commercial off-the-shelf tablet which functions as a primary mission display in the CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter cockpit.

## Pet OF THE WEEK

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# ST. MARY'S COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

## Deputies Arrest Man Following Armed Robbery in Lexington Park

At approximately 11:28 a.m., on Monday, February 12, 2024, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to a report of an armed robbery near 21100 Great Mills Road in Lexington Park, MD.

The witness reported being robbed at gunpoint by an unknown individual who then fled on foot into the surrounding wooded area near Great Mills High School. Deputies in the area located an individual matching the suspect's description and apprehended the male subject following a foot chase.

Delano Jurail Parham-Nash, 20, of no fixed address, was arrested and transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center to face charges including Armed Robbery, Robbery, Firearm Use in the Commission of a Violent Crime, Assault First Degree, and other related charges.

Parham-Nash was also linked to a February 1, 2024, armed robbery at a business on Great Mills Road and was served with warrants relating to that crime.

Detectives from the Criminal



Delano Jurail Parham-Nash

Investigations Division have assumed the investigation; anyone with any additional information relating to either of these incidents is asked to contact Detective Kortnie Marsch at 201-475-4200, ext. 8179, or Kortnie.Marsch@stmaryscountymd.gov.

## Man Sentenced to 78 Months for Child Sex Abuse at NAS Patuxent River

U.S. District Judge Deborah L. Boardman sentenced Delvon Lashawn Redd, age 30, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, Feb. 6 to 78 months in federal prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for abusive sexual contact with a minor. Judge Boardman also ordered that, upon his release from prison, Redd must continue to register as a sex offender in the places where he resides, where he is an employee, and where he is a student, under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act ("SORNA").

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron and Special Agent in Charge Brian T. Platt of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Washington, D.C. Field Office.

According to his guilty plea, from April 17 to May 28, 2022, Redd, a U.S. Navy service member was staying at the Navy Lodge Hotel located at the U.S. Naval Air Station Patuxent River Base in Patuxent River, Maryland. On approximately May 6, 2022, Redd began communicating on a social media platform with an 11-year-old minor female who claimed she was 18 years old. Redd asked the victim to send him pictures of herself and the victim sent a short video of herself. In their online conversations that day, Redd commented on how young the victim looked. Despite that, later that evening Redd drove to the victim's house in Lexington Park, Maryland, picked the victim up near her home and

drove her back to the Navy Lodge, where security footage shows Redd and victim entering his room at approximately 9:44 p.m. Once inside the room, Redd had sexual intercourse with the victim. The following morning, Redd drove the victim back to her house.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc). For more information about Internet safety education, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc) and click on the "Resources" tab on the left of the page.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron commended the NCIS for its work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Sarma, who prosecuted the case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit [www.justice.gov/usao-md/project-safe-childhood](http://www.justice.gov/usao-md/project-safe-childhood) and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

## Legal Notice

### COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN Fair Summary of Ordinance No. 218

Notice is hereby given that the Commissioners of Leonardtown have passed, and the Mayor has approved, Ordinance No. 218 – Leonardtown Comprehensive Zoning Map. A fair summary of the ordinance will follow:

Ordinance No. 218 - An ordinance for the purpose of amending the Comprehensive Zoning Map for the Town of Leonardtown to change the zoning classification of the parcel of real property at 22675 Cedar Lane Court from Residential Single Family to Commercial Office zoning.

Ordinance No. 218 will become effective March 4, 2024. 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](http://www.Leonardtown.somd.com)

By Authority: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator



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# A Granddaughter's Love Helped Build U.S. Colored Troops Memorial

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Idolia Shubrooks, 86, spearheaded the movement that led to the construction of the U.S. Colored Troops Memorial more than 10 years ago in Lancaster Park — and it was all for the love of a man she never met.

Shubrooks' grandfather, Alexander Armstrong, served as a private soldier in the 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the Union Army during the Civil War.

A slave who lived in St. Mary's County, Armstrong risked punishment — like many other slaves in the county — and decided to join the cause to fight against the Confederate States of America.

His name is on the monument that now sits in the heart of Lexington Park.

Shubrooks' interest in her grandfather was sparked during her childhood, she said, when her mother admonished her and her brother not to go up into the attic of their home and look at an old musket, bayonet and sword there.

"We would go up there and look at it," Shubrooks said of her slightly naughty conduct as a child, but it lit in her a fire to know more about her grandfather and his service to a country so split by war and strife.

She said it hurt her deeply to learn that her grandfather had been forced to be a slave and then enlisted with the Union and went to war against slavery.

"He was a slave and it perturbed me to hear about him being a slave," Shubrooks told The County Times a week after she had been publicly honored for her efforts to enshrine the legacy of her father and many others who served in the U.S. Colored Troops almost two centuries ago. "He'd been through all of that; I cried about it.

"I decided to do something about it." From her childhood began a lifelong quest to make known to all who would visit the monument the contribution the U.S. Colored Troops made to make other people free.

She said she and other family members fully committed to the effort when she was about 70.

They enlisted the help of Roy Dyson and John Bohanon, then state senator and delegate for District 29, who were able to



Idolia Shubrooks points out her grandfather's and great uncle's names on the US Colored Troops Memorial

get funding for the project — \$300,000, Shubrooks said — and the monument was finally ready for construction in 2012.

There were more than 6,500 slaves in St. Mary's County during the Civil War and more than 700 of them would serve in the U.S. Colored Troops.

The monument in Lancaster Park honors the U.S. Colored Troops and all the Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County who served; it pays particular honor to Pvt. William H. Barnes and Sgt. James Harris who each earned the Medal of Honor for gallantry at the Battle of New Market Heights in Virginia, which took place in 1864.

The musket and bayonet that once belonged to her grandfather were lost in a fire that destroyed her home many years ago, Shubrooks said, and the sword has long since been given away.

But Shubrooks still has a trove of original documents detailing her grandfather's life during his service in the civil war and for some years after, including bank statements, promissory notes and mustering out papers from his military service.

John Armstrong, Alexander Armstrong's brother and Shubrooks great uncle, is also memorialized on the plaque at the monument for his service in the U.S. Colored Troops.

"They went from slavery, tilling the soil, to handling a gun," she said.

Shubrooks has a large family and extended family, many of whom have served in the military, she said, noting that pride of service runs deep in her family.

Her grandfather served in Company B of the 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from 1864 to 1867; he is buried at the cemetery of Zion United Methodist Church in Lexington Park.



Shubrooks also received support for her effort from the United Committee for African American Contributions (UCAC) and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Despite being honored for her work in seeing the monument become a reality, Shubrooks is careful to insist that her efforts were for the honoring of men who had been enslaved, made free and fought for their country.

"It's not about me," Shubrooks said. "It's about them.

"Nothing but them." The U.S. Colored Troops Memorial is open to the public from sunrise to sunset and is next to an interpretive center also located in Lancaster Park.

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

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



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## School Board Briefed on Anti-Absence Efforts

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Chronic absenteeism has been identified as one of the most significant problems facing the St. Mary's County Public School System, especially negatively influencing student achievement.

School system staff are taking active measures to identify students who are out of class for 10 percent or more of school days — for any reason — finding them and reaching out to their parents to get them back to school.

Cheryl Long, Director of Student Services, and Kate Weaver Supervisor of Student Services, told the board of education at their Feb. 7 meeting that teachers and staff at schools are engaged in a campaign of encouraging students to attend — even putting up posters to see which grade levels have the highest levels of students coming to school over time.

This, combined with student and family engagement activities, designed to create a more positive school environment, the student services specialists said, to make children more amenable to attend.

"If you're present 89.9 percent of the time, you're still considered chronically absent," said Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith, relaying the strict state guidelines

the county must adhere to. "This number drives all the school reporting, school report cards.

"It is definitely something we are all vigilantly focused on."

Even students who have excused absences but are out 10 percent of days or more are chronically absent, according to the standard.

"When our teachers see students missing one or two days in a row, that's when they start checking in," said Weaver of the first-tier prevention efforts of combating absenteeism. "Just two days per month and we're jumping on that with our school teams."

Children who are absent between 10-to-19 percent of school days fall into the second tier of interventions, which includes counseling with students and families as well as working to remove barriers to attendance such as lack of transportation for students, any health concerns and even housing.

The second-tier even includes home visits by staff to families of the absent.

Third-tier interventions, which are for students absent 20 percent of days or more, includes providing more directed services and assistance to families of absentees and an intervention plan signed by students and parents and consistently monitored.

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

## Mother of Three in St. Mary's Schools Running for School Board

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Elena Brewer, a California resident, has three children in elementary, middle and high school here and is concerned about what they are learning in the classroom.

Specifically, she is worried about the sexualization of students and the proliferation of what she called socialist ideals she believes are being taught in St. Mary's public schools.

Brewer would know something about that; she grew up in the former Soviet Union — in the satellite socialist republic of Moldova — before coming to the United States and becoming a citizen.

"I want to promote excellence in education, not indoctrination," Brewer told The County Times. "I'm noting a trend in teaching socialist ideas.

"I want to stop the sexualization of children, it's being done at every level."

Brewer has spoken before to the school board in public objecting to books being available to students that she said detailed homosexual relationships and normalized them.

She said for this interview that she constantly had to check on the materials given to her children by the school system for their content.

"It's not easy," Brewer said, who noted she was concerned about the amount of learning done by computer, which was not always available for parents to monitor.

She wanted to see a return to more balance between book learning and learning



Elena Brewer

done by computer.

"And they should be able to bring these books home so their parents can see them," Brewer said.

Brewer said there was a culture of constantly talking about mental health in schools, which she said should be handled by the students' doctors and their families.

"Schools are not mental health hospitals," Brewer said. "They shouldn't be constantly pushing these mental health terms all the time."

She also wanted to ensure that the country's Christian heritage was honored and respected by the school system, Brewer said.

"We're moving away from that," Brewer said. "That's what made me fall in love with this country."

[guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)

## County Government Presidents' Day Operations

All St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) administrative offices will be closed on Monday, February 19, 2024, in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday. Offices will resume normal operating schedules on Tuesday, February 20, 2024.

The February 19 closure also includes:

- All three St. Mary's County Libraries (Charlotte Hall, Leonardtown, and Lexington Park).
- All three Senior Activity Centers (Garvey, Loffler, and Northern), and there will be no home-delivered meals.
- The St. Mary's Transit System (STS),

including ADA and SSTAP.

- St. Mary's Animal Adoption & Resource Center.

The following SMCG operations will be open with normal operations on February 19:

- The six Convenience Centers and the St. Andrews Landfill.
- Department of Recreation & Parks programs and facilities.
- St. Clements Island Museum, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum, and the Old Jail Museum.
- The Wicomico Shores Golf Course; the Riverview Restaurant (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.).

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**Online Auction Opens:** On or about FEB 12, 2024  
**Auction Preview:** TUES, FEB 20<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 pm to 5 pm  
**Auction Closes:** THURS, FEB 22<sup>nd</sup> - beginning at 6 pm  
(Purchased Items to be removed on FRI, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:30 am to 5 pm)

**Online Auction – Estate of Mary Lou (Ching) Mattei**

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41585 Yoke Court – Leonardtown, MD

**Online Auction Opens:** On or about FEB 19, 2024  
**Auction Preview:** TUES, FEB 27<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 pm to 5 pm  
**Auction Closes:** THURS, FEB 29<sup>th</sup> - beginning at 6 pm  
(Purchased Items to be removed on FRI, MAR 1<sup>st</sup> 9:30 am to 5 pm)

**Upcoming Auctions:**

**Online Auction - Family of Bubby Knott**  
Variety of Items and Collectibles from the Knott Collection  
(We expect this auction to be online for viewing/bidding in mid-March, 2024)

**Anne Arundel Co. Young Farmers – March 23, 2024 – 8 am**  
**Grocery Auction – Hughesville VFD – March 23, 2024, 5 pm**

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# CSM Professor Seeks School Board Seat

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

A former Charles County public school teacher who now teaches psychology at the College of Southern Maryland has filed to run for the at-large seat on the St. Mary's County Board of Education.

Brandie Edelen, who has a child attending Chopticon High School, said she has experience from a teacher's point of view about what issues teachers and students both face in public schools.

She said she has seen students from all over the tri-county region come to CSM and many are not prepared for the college experience.

"I tell them they have to write a paper and they do not know how to write a paper," Edelen said. "So not only do I have to teach them psychology but how to write papers as well."

She said she and other teachers were overworked in public schools and need more assistance from administrators, but often are not getting what they need.

This situation led her to leave her position in Charles County public schools, she said, a job for which she was passionate and loved.

Teachers are also too often cajoled by administrators to allow for late assignments to be turned in by students, Edelen said, which was setting them up for future failures.

"We're giving them a lot of excuses not



Brandie Edelen

to be prepared," Edelen said.

Edelen said that by working to give teachers more resources — and relieving them of undue burdens — they could perform better in the classroom and help graduate better prepared students.

"I've got the experience of being a teacher in public schools," Edelen said. "Being overworked and not having all the support from administrators we needed.

"A 40-hour work week turned into an 80-hour work week."

Solving those kinds of problems would help retain experienced teachers the school system needed, Edelen said.

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# County Seeks Support for Injured Emergency Services Personnel



"We are immensely grateful to our incredible community and partners for their swift response and unwavering support following the recent motor vehicle accident involving two members of our Department of Emergency Services team," read a county government statement about those injured in the crash — Paramedic Todd Bowman and Regional Medical Director Todd Finkelstein.

"Our team members are receiving top-notch trauma care as they continue to recover from serious injuries," the release stated "Their access to this treatment is thanks to the bravery of a citizen and two Maryland State Troopers, who rescued these critically

injured employees from a burning vehicle.

"These selfless actions truly made a difference in this emergency."

"Organizations far and wide have offered assistance and resources," the statement continued. "We greatly appreciate the outpouring of support and concern for our team members, and for the rest of our Emergency Services Department."

The St. Mary's County Volunteer Rescue Association has started a GoFundMe account to help support these first responders and their families. Anyone wishing to contribute or express their support may do so at <https://gofund.me/52262b63>



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# Commissioners Updated On Bay Ferry Proposal

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

A proposal to institute a passenger ferry to cross the Chesapeake Bay and link the Eastern and Western shores at certain stops only has two ports proposed in Southern Maryland right now — St. Mary's City and Solomons Island.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County, who received a briefing on the progress of the project at their Feb. 13 meeting, told county Department of Economic Development (DED) staff they should continue pressing for Leonardtown to be one of those stops, even though it is on the other side of the county away from the bay.

St. Mary's City is also on the same side of the St. Mary's peninsula but is much closer to the bay.

"That's our only municipality, but it's also walkable," said Commissioner President James "Randy" Guy. "That should be included as far as a stop."

Ben Cohen, the DED project facilitator who briefed the commissioners, said Leonardtown would be an expansion stop



in a further phase of the project.

"None of these stops is set in stone," Cohen said. "The beauty of this ferry is that it's flexible, it doesn't require a lot of infrastructure."

The project would also include transit operations to support the ferry to take passengers to different areas of the county, said Cohen.

Cohen said it was likely a private operator

would run the ferry if the study showed it could be economically viable for tourism.

Though, the county would have to spend some taxpayer money to keep the operation of the ferry going along with other members of the consortium, Cohen said.

Commissioner Scott Ostrow asked if there would be room for vehicles on the ferry.

"This is just for passengers but when you strengthen these ports it makes it eas-

ier to step up," Cohen said of expanding the ferry service.

The Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study is being conducted by Cambridge Systematics and supported by a consortium of counties including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and St. Mary's. The study is funded by a matching grant awarded to Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's American Rescue Plan: Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Program. In 2022, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved a \$15,000 contribution towards this study.

The vessel currently under consideration for the ferry service is a Candela 12 electrically powered hydrofoil — a vessel that raise itself on skids out of the water and effectively glide through and above it — that has range of about 50 nautical miles and a maximum speed of 25 knots.

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# Commissioners Approve Fast Food Zoning Change

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

More fast food offerings are now likely to spring up when the new owner of the former Millison Plaza in Lexington Park — now known as the Pax River Village Center — move ahead with their redevelopment project.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved a zoning text amendment that would allow fast food restaurants to be constructed in the accident potential zone (APZ) that takes up a substantial portion of the community just outside the fence line of Patuxent River Naval Air Station.

The text amendment now allows such uses in the light commercial industrial zone and in the accident potential zone No. 2, which is laid out in the compact shared between the county and U.S. Navy known as the aircraft installation compatible use zone (AICUZ).

The AICUZ acts as a guide to construction near the base that restricts building projects that would bring in too many people at risk should an aircraft accident occur or excess air operations noise.

APZ 2 is actually several different sections of land surrounding the base and moving out into the Lexington Park interior.

The commissioners voted unanimously — with one abstention — to authorize the zoning text amendment at their Feb. 13 meeting in Leonardtown.

Commissioner Scott Ostrow abstained



from the vote because he said at a prior meeting that Atlantic Realty, the developer of the project, had contributed to his political campaign fund.

The redevelopment of the site includes façade improvements, fast food restaurants, a new Aldi grocery store as well as a new Starbucks coffee shop.

Commissioner Mike Hewitt said he always believed that the AICUZ — which is not law but an advisory document issued by the Navy — held back the revitalization of Lexington Park because the county was so willing to follow its recommended restrictions on development growth for fear the base would eventually move away.

"I've always said it's essentially a taking of people's property," Hewitt said. "It's nice they [the Navy] are re-looking at their restrictions in this area."

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# Appeals Board Approves Variance for Town House Project



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

A development that would bring 40 new town houses to Lexington Park overcame a hurdle to its approval last week when the county Board of Appeals granted a variance to effectively remove the requirement for open space at the site.

The zoning ordinance requires that such housing projects have 50 percent of the acreage upon which it is built to be retained as open space but the variance granted at the Feb. 8 meeting allows for zero-percent open space at the proposed Villas of Lexwood.

The appeals board also granted a variance to reduce the requirement for town homes to be a minimum of 20 feet wide to 16 feet wide.

The project will build the town homes along Lexwood Drive and be funded by

tax credits and the state's Department of Housing and Community Development to the tune of \$19 million.

The small project is still highly anticipated as it will add to the county's dwindling stock of affordable housing.

A study submitted to the appeals board showed that the local market for affordable housing is expected to grow to 55,698 people by 2027, or roughly 20,000 households.

The project was approved in June of last year by the county Planning Commission, the vote was unanimous at 7-to-0.

The project also includes recreational facilities and a clubhouse, according to planning documents.

The entire project would be situated on just under four acres of land that currently sits in a stormwater management easement.

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SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON THE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



**LOCAL 3**  
Commissioners updated on bay ferry project



**LOCAL 3**  
Variance approved for town house project



**ON THE COVER 7**  
Granddaughter of Civil War veteran honored for safeguarding his legacy

## WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 15	FRI, FEB 16	SAT, FEB 17	SUN, FEB 18
Partly Cloudy Hi: 49° Lo: 36°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 33°	AM Clouds/PM Sun Hi: 42° Lo: 25°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 46° Lo: 31°
MON, FEB 19	TUE, FEB 20	WED, FEB 21	THU, FEB 22
Sunny Hi: 48° Lo: 32°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 35°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 54° Lo: 38°	PM Showers Hi: 55° Lo: 43°

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