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# Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

WWW.COUNTYTIMES.NET

**Former Commissioner,  
Mayor Passes Away**

**Health Department  
in Budget Vise**

**Shop Local Guide  
Free Inside**



# CALVERT SUFFERS A TRAGIC LOSS

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# CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4
CALENDAR	8

## “THAT IS AS UN-AMERICAN AS IT GETS.”

COMMISSIONER MIKE HART ON THE STATE PENALIZING CALVERT FOR ITS WEALTH



**LOCAL 5**  
Former North Beach mayor, county commissioner dies



**LOCAL 6**  
County Health Department caught in budget crisis

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# CALVERT SUFFERS A TRAGIC LOSS

**4**

**ON THE COVER**  
Calvert lost three men to the American Airlines Flight 5342 disaster

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, FEB 6</b>  AM Rain Hi: 50° Lo: 42°	<b>FRI, FEB 7</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 52° Lo: 30°	<b>SAT, FEB 8</b>  PM Rain/Snow Hi: 37° Lo: 33°	<b>SUN, FEB 9</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 30°
<b>MON, FEB 10</b>  PM Snow Showers Hi: 39° Lo: 32°	<b>TUE, FEB 11</b>  Snow Hi: 37° Lo: 32°	<b>WED, FEB 12</b>  Cloudy Hi: 39° Lo: 33°	<b>THU, FEB 13</b>  Rain/Snow Showers Hi: 39° Lo: 29°



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# County Mourns Loss of Three Plane-Helicopter Crash Victims

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

“Last week was pretty tough on Calvert County,” said Commissioner President Buddy Hance during a somber meeting on Feb. 4. He was reflecting on the loss of nine Southern Marylanders on the night of Jan. 29 in the Potomac River after the collision of American Airlines Flight 5342 with a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter while the airplane was approaching Reagan National Airport in Washington.

Three were from Calvert County. The nine were Andrew Eaves of Great Mills, Alexander Huffman of Leonardtown, Jesse Pitcher of Lusby, Charles McDaniel of Port Republic, Jonathan Boyd of Welcome, Michael Stovall of Accokeek, Robert Prewitt of Calvert County, Steve Johnson of Waldorf, and Thomas Claggett of Newburg.

Seven, including Pitcher and McDaniel, were part of a hunting party that traveled to Kansas to hunt ducks and geese, according to the Kansas City Star newspaper.

Prewitt’s daughter reported that he was on a business trip to Kansas City. Prewitt, 44, was a construction supervisor for The Industrial Company.

Prewitt’s obituary from Rausch Funeral Home said he was “rushing back to what mattered most to him – his family. He was a devoted husband, loving father, amazing son and the best brother who would always put his family first and be there when it mattered most.”

The obituary said, “Robert is survived by his wife Belinda Prewitt; his children, Dalton, Dylan, Aubrie, Daisy and Dalila; his parents, Paula and Marshall Hephner, Ronald Craven; his brothers Raymond Fields, Patrick Hephner, Eric and Jack Craven; his sister Laurie-Ann Wyse; his grandmother, Beverly Dorsey; and his extended family.

“Robert was known for his endless stories, charming ways and unwavering dedication to his work. Robert’s adventurous nature led him to embrace life and he would always end up making the most unlikely of friends. His travels often lead to the craziest and funniest stories and no matter how many times he told them they never got old but sure did get better. To know Rob was a blessing. He was a true friend who was always prepared at a moment’s notice to take a trip to anyone in need. Robert brought light into the lives of those around him. He had a sense of humor that couldn’t be matched which made him a joy to be around and a source of comfort in difficult times.

“Robert took great pride in his work as an ironworker, but his love for his family always came first, and he cherished them above all else. Fishing and watching college football were his favorite family activities. Although our hearts are heavy Robert will continue to live on in our hearts and memories. Through our tears and memories we see the blessing of knowing and loving him; a loving husband, father, son, brother and the most devoted friend.

“Robert had an affection for life and a rooted understanding of what was truly



Jesse Pitcher

important – a life of simplicity surrounded by those he loved.

“The funeral service will be held 3 o’clock, Sunday, February 9th at Shives Funeral Home, Trenholm Road Chapel, 7600 Trenholm Road Ext., Columbia, SC 29223. Visitation will precede the service at the funeral home beginning at 2 o’clock. Burial will follow in Jackson Creek Baptist Church Cemetery.

“Memorial service for Maryland friends will be held on February 11th at 6pm at Southern Calvert Baptist Church, 12140 HG Truman Road Lusby, MD 20657.”

Pitcher, 30, graduated from Patuxent High School, was recently married and had started his own business,

The New York Times quoted Pitcher’s father Jameson as saying, “He said he’d see me when he got back.”

Four of those lost in the crash were members of Local 602 of the Steamfitters Union. On their website they posted, “Now, the best way we can honor them is by coming together to support their families in every way possible. If you would like to offer financial assistance, please consider donating to: <https://ua.org/about-the-ua/charitable-trust/>”

McDaniel’s visitation will be held at Rausch Funeral Home, 4405 Broomes Island Road, Port Republic, MD 20676 on Thursday Feb. 6. Viewing times will be 2-4pm (family) and open to the public 6-9pm.

Services will be the following day Friday, Feb. 7 at New Life Church Prince Frederick, 3170 German Chapel Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Parking will be at Calvert County Fairgrounds, 140 Calvert Fair Drive, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 and a shuttle will be provided directly to the Services.

Private burial will follow directly after at Chesapeake Highlands Memorial Gardens 3270 Broomes Island Road Port Republic, MD 20676.

Everyone is invited to the Celebration of Life Reception following the services at church. This will be held at Dunkirk Firehouse, 3170 West Ward Road, Dunkirk, MD 20754. Please feel free to BYOB.

The Rausch Funeral Home obituary said



Charles McDaniel

Charles “Charlie” (AKA CMac) McDaniel, was “an amazing husband, father, son and friend.”

It went on to say, “Charlie was born and raised in Calvert County. Charlie was a self-made man who loved his family, friends, the outdoors and sports. In particular, softball was one of the greatest passions of his life. Through this sport he met his wife, coached his children and connected and developed long-lasting relationships with many in the community.

“Charlie began his career joining the local 602 union right out of high school. He began as a welder and then turned his attention to chillers and installs. He worked in the field for fifteen years and spent the last eight years in different roles, including Project Manager, Service Manager, Business Development and Director of Service Operations. He currently holds Maryland and Virginia Master HVAC Licenses. He had recently been with American Mechanical Services (AMS) for 4 years before becoming the general manager.

“Charlie is survived by his loving wife Heather and his four children Charlie Jr., Madison, Mariah and Wyatt. He is also survived by his parents, Carole and Tim Modlin and his grandmother Ella Irene McDaniel. Son-in-law to Becky and Andy Sievert, Brother of Christina Close (Anthony), Brother-in-law to Rachel Travis (Stevie), Alayna Sievert and Glenn Williams and Grandmother Bonnie Jean Turner. Uncle to Alyssa, Izzie, Anthony, Aubrey, Charlee, Cailynn, Trinity, Trenton and Brock. Lifelong friends Keith and Serenity Helwig, Rusty (Chop) and Jessica Helwig (Feb 6). Charlie was also a beloved coach, friend, co-worker, mentor, and family to many.

“In lieu of flowers, Charlie would be extremely pleased to continue his contributions to the following.

Sweet Bay Magnolia via Chesapeake Charities. Sweet Bay Magnolia is a non-profit that works together with multiple programs to provide services to children with Autism. It was a program that was near and dear to Charlie’s heart.

[www.chesapeakecharities.org](http://www.chesapeakecharities.org)  
101 Log Canoe Circle, Suite “O”  
Stevensville, MD 21666  
OR



Robert Prewitt

New Life Church (Prince Frederick)  
[www.mynlc.org](http://www.mynlc.org)  
3170 German Chapel Road  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

At the commissioner meeting the passing was noted of former county commissioner and North Beach Mayor Mark Frazier, businessperson and philanthropist Michael King and firefighter and super volunteer James D’Amico, Sr. There are numerous fundraisers available to offer support to their families in their time of need.

- Hunt Club GoFundMe for the 7 Southern Maryland Families <https://gofund.me/83c147dc>
- SOMD Strong Merchandise <https://calvertyardcards.com/pro.../somd-strong-merchandise/>
- GoFundMe for the Stovall Family <https://gofund.me/d252ccc3>
- Meal Train for the Prewitt Family <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/ymzkm>
- GoFundMe for the Prewitt Family <https://gofund.me/87f84839>
- Meal Train for the Claggett Girls <https://mealtrain.com/ddq11>
- GoFundMe for the Claggett Family <https://gofund.me/6ab181a4>
- Meal Train for the McDaniel Family <https://mealtrain.com/178273>
- GoFundMe for Reed (Kristie Baxter) <https://gofund.me/b5104461>
- GoFundMe for the Boyd Family <https://gofund.me/53c477d4>
- GoFundMe for the Johnson Family <https://gofund.me/9660e90d>
- GoFundMe for the Huffman Family <https://gofund.me/bdd819f7>
- UA Trust from Steamfitters 602 <https://ua.org/about-the-ua/charitable-trust/>
- Huntin’ with Jacob Gun Raffle to benefit the 7 Families <https://huntinwithjacob.com/product/montefeltro-shotgun/>

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

Reporter Guy Leonard also contributed to this article: [guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)



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# Former Commissioner, Mayor Passes Away



Mark Frazier

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Mark Frazer, who served two terms as Calvert County Commissioner, including a stint as its president, and four terms as Mayor of North Beach, passed away Feb. 4 at the age of 83. He was a retired dentist.

The Town of North Beach, in a posting, said, "It is with great sadness that the Town announces the passing of Mayor Mark R. Frazer earlier today. Mayor Frazer dedicated 16 years of his life to serving our town and was a well-known and beloved figure in our community. His leadership, commitment, and compassion touched countless lives, and his legacy will live on in the work he did for all of us. Please take a moment today to reflect on his legacy and keep his family and loved ones in your thoughts."

Chesapeake Beach Mayor Bruce Wahl

announced Frazier's passing during the Feb. 4 county commissioner meeting.

Frazer graduated from Georgetown University School of Dentistry and following a three-year tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force, started his practice of general dentistry in Prince Frederick. In 1979, he was appointed to a six-year term on the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners and served as its president for one year. He earned his Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry and had been elected a Fellow of the American College of Dentist.

He was first elected county commissioner in 1986 and mayor in 1998. He was a Republican. When he was first elected Democrats dominated local politics.

As of press deadline, funeral arrangements had not yet been announced.

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

## Legal Notice

Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has apparently been abandoned for 180 days on the property of: Karen Brant, 3067 Lighthouse Blvd., Lusby, MD. (410) 231-9020. The vessel is described as:

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# State Hits County with \$2.3 Million Bill for Health Department

## Hart Calls Move 'Un-American'

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Health Department is caught in a fiscal crisis as the state has reduced its funding to the county and at least one commissioner is reluctant to make up the difference.

Director of Community Resources Director Jennifer Moreland set the stage for the dilemma in a memo to the commissioners: "Each county in the State of Maryland has a unique match requirement for CORE funding allocated to their local health departments, a mandate that has been legislatively in place since 1995. The formula determining the county and state contribution percentages is based on the equalized assessed value of real and personal property subject to local taxation, designed to reflect a county's ability to fund health services. The base funding level established in 1995 aimed to ensure local health department funding following significant cuts in the 1990s. CORE funding is intended to provide annual adjustments through a percentage increase tied to a combination of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and population growth. However, there were many years when no adjustments were made because they were not considered mandatory. In fact, some years saw cuts to health department funding, even in the face of inflation.

"Calvert County's funding match percentage, which has remained consistent since 2006, is 66.628 percent, with the state covering 33.372 percent. Calvert County

has the third-highest match percentage, trailing Montgomery (75.164 percent) and Worcester (73.271 percent). In comparison, Southern Maryland neighbors St. Mary's County and Charles County have significantly lower match percentages, at 35.646 and 47.132 percent, respectively (Fiscal Year 2025 figures)."

Moreland went to report, "In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, the state resumed applying annual adjustments for the CPI and population growth. However, because these changes were approved after local budgets had already been established, the State provided a one-year grace period for implementation. In FY 2025, the state has been working on adjustments due to funding cuts, which significantly delayed the delivery of CORE match paperwork to Calvert County."

She said, "Calvert County provides \$4,527,078 in funding and in-kind support to the health department, but the state has only approved \$3,464,948 to qualify as CORE funding. Additionally, the state will not cover the costs of behavioral health services or Safe Harbor shelter funding."

So, she informed the BOOC, "For FY 2025, the State is requiring a \$5,824,152 county match for CORE funding. As such, the Board of County Commissioners approved budget is short \$2,359,204 in CORE funding to the Calvert County Health Department."

Commissioner Mike Hart was incensed. "Why are we so special? Seems like from the state all the time, they think there's nothing but millionaires running around here.

Everybody's required the same services under Maryland law, but for some reason Calvert County has to pay more."

County Administrator Mark Willis was equally incensed. He said he thought the agreement was that the extra charge would be waived for the current fiscal year and now it was being assessed in the middle of the year.

Hart said, "To make the level of income that they need to do so our folks get in a car or bus or whatever, go an hour, hour and a half, two hours, work your job, come back and get penalized because they are trying to provide a better life for the family. I've never understood that."

"There's no choice. You've got to do it," said Commissioner President Buddy Hance.

Hart said of the threat to cut services if the county doesn't pony up the money, "If that is the case, then my vote is then tell them do it because go ahead and prove that you're going to treat us differently than the other jurisdictions out here. It's like when somebody wrongs you and you don't say anything. I get accused having small man's disease. Well, absolutely, because if you let somebody walk on you and you don't say anything, they keep doing it."

"I work hard and I push myself better and I strive to do the other things. And I'm penalized for being successful. That is as un-American as it gets," Hart intoned.

Commissioner Catherine Grasso told Hart, "This is going to be a horrible year for the state of Maryland. There's a shortfall [of \$3] billion dollars. I think he's [Gov. Wes Moore]



Commissioner Mike Hart

trying to account for \$2 billion and there's going to be a billion-dollar shortfall. And he will say, 'Hey, I got rid of \$2 billion; \$1 billion, we're all in this together. Suck it up.'

Hance predicted, 'We don't agree to give them this money, they're not going to give them another dime. They're going to close the health department.'

The conversation drifted to what services will be provided if the county does give the money. Based on a motion from Commissioner Mark Cox, health department officials will come back on Feb. 13 with answers to that question. Then a public hearing will be held on Feb. 25.

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

## Deputy Injured After Motor Vehicle Collision

Units from the Calvert County Sheriff's Office Patrol Bureau responded on Feb. 3 at approximately 6:13 p.m. to assist Calvert County Fire Services with a structure fire in the 1400 block of North Solomons Island Road in Huntingtown. Fire Department personnel requested assistance to close the northbound lanes of Solomons Island Road to facilitate emergency operations.

Deputy Gavin Shuart established the road closure at the intersection of North Solomons Island Road and Buckler Road, utilizing his agency-issued, marked 2020 Ford Utility SUV with emergency equipment activated. During the road closure, a 2021 Toyota RAV4 operated by Fred Carter, 87 of Owings, was traveling northbound on Solomons Island Road when it collided with the marked Sheriff's Office vehicle occupied by Deputy Shuart. The cause of the collision remains under investigation.

Calvert County Emergency Medical

Services, along with fire and law enforcement personnel, responded to the scene to provide medical care. Due to the severity of injuries, Deputy Shuart was transported by Maryland State Police Trooper 7 to a local Trauma Center, where he is listed in critical but stable condition.

Carter was transported by ground to Capital Region Medical Center and is also listed in critical but stable condition.

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office Crash Reconstruction Team responded to the scene to investigate the incident. Master Deputy First Class Jeffrey Hardesty is leading the investigation.

Anyone with information regarding the collision is asked to contact M/DFC Hardesty at 410 535-2800 or via email at [Jeffrey.Hardesty@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Hardesty@calvertcountymd.gov).

*Press Release from CCSO.*

## St. Mary's Man Sentenced for Manslaughter

On February 3, 2025, Joshua Walter Messick, 36, of Lexington Park, was sentenced in the Circuit Court for Calvert County, to 10 years incarceration, with 1 year of active time, followed by 3 years of supervised probation, for the crime of involuntary manslaughter. The sentence was imposed by the Honorable Mark W. Carmean.

In 2024, Messick was working as a security guard at CalvertHealth Medical Center in Prince Frederick when he was

called upon to escort the victim from the lobby. Once outside the building, Messick shoved the victim to the ground, causing him to hit his head on the pavement. The victim sustained a brain injury and died.

Messick was convicted by a jury in August 2024. The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Christopher J. Monte.

*Press Release from Calvert County State's Attorney.*

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# Chesapeake Beach Officials Meet with County

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The new mayor, two council members and the new town administrator of Chesapeake Beach met with the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at their Feb. 4 meeting.

Mayor Bruce Wahl told the commissioners, “We’re still getting our feet on the ground. Our very first meeting was in December. And the previous administration just kind of packed up and left and really didn’t provide us with much information as they went out the door. So, we’re piecing things together.”

Councilwoman Laura Blackwelder said, “I have been involved with Chesapeake Beach for about seven years now. I was on the planning and zoning commission. I led a lot of the efforts in the comprehensive plan that have to do with biking and , trail projects.”

Blackwelder added, “I think that Chesapeake Beach can be a really cool

cornerstone for Calvert County and really the whole region. Its history is as a recreational destination. I feel very strongly that it should stay like that. So, when I’m asking the county commissioners for things, it’s to put us in your program open space program or to put us in your transportation trail projects. I would really like to get bones in place to make Chesapeake Beach a really special destination. That’s going to help our businesses, that’s going to help the quality of life for our residents and the greater county residents.”

Council member Anthony Greene said, “I work for the health department. I’ve done a lot of good work with you guys in the past, especially through economic development with the many different events that I do throughout the county.”

Greene added, “Right now with the council, I’m more of a goal-oriented person. Very actionable items. What is the problem? What is the solution? How do we get it done? So, you won’t get a lot of talk out of me.”

He observed, “I am definitely here to bring some balance to the council, make

sure we show empathy to our people, make sure that we’re making sure everybody is taken care of across all of the cultures or financial backgrounds and things like that.”

New Town Administrator Samelia Okpudo explained, “I’ve run a state office, the State Office of Service and Volunteerism under both governors, Hogan and Moore. And then I went into a private consulting. And so, I was able to continue working with governments, specifically the governor of New Jersey’s office as they were working to establish a mental health corps. So, I have lots of experience at state and federal levels, both running offices and administering grant programs. This is my first foray into municipal government.”

Okpudo added, “My focus is really around harmony and efficiency. So, I want to make things as efficient as possible so that the residents of Chesapeake Beach can focus on living the fullness of their lives and not have to be focused on bureaucracy or red tape or anything like that.”

Wahl talked about his career in broad-

casting and his previous time on the town council and as mayor. He said, “We want to rebuild the relationship. We want to have a great relationship with the Board of County Commissioners.”

He quipped, “We’ll issue a special passport for you. We might even send somebody down to pick you up.”

Wahl gave the commissioners an update on the status of the waterpark. He said, “The waterpark was closed last season. And it will be closed again this season, even though I made a campaign pledge to get it reopened. But then what? I had no access to the town employees or the town government. Once I did, I realized that it’s just not feasible to get it reopened this year. There’s too much work to do. But we are going to restore it. We’re not going to replace it. And the plan now, unless we hit another roadblock, is to open it next year.”

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

# Commissioners Review Public Works Capital Projects

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on Feb. 4 began their deeper duce into department proposed capital budgets with a look at the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Acting Capital and Grants Management Specialist Danielle Russell, told the BOCC, “The Enterprise Fund’s FY 2026 request is \$18,097,607, a six percent reduction from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget. Public Facilities, which includes the Calvert Marine Museum, requests \$8,571,770, a 293 percent increase from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget. DPW—Transportation has an FY 2026 request of \$18,210,000. This is a 56 percent increase from the forecasted FY 2026 request in the approved FY 2025 capital budget.”

The commissioners discussed the various projects with DPW Director JR Cosgrove and members of his department, but did not indicate any major disagreement with any part of his FY 26 or six-year plans.

The sewer and wastewater projects in the FY 26 plan are:

- Solomons WWTP ENR Upgrade: \$5,924,607.00
- Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation: \$1,000,000
- Solomons WWTP Septage Receiving Upgrade: \$1,000,000.
- Water and Sewer Maintenance Building: \$500,000.

- Countywide Pump Station Infrastructure: \$300,000.
- NEW - Tobacco Ridge WWTP Improvements: \$240,000.
- NEW - Marley Run WWP Improvements: \$95,000.

The water projects are:

- CH/DB Water Dist Repl: \$5,150,000.
- Back Creek Water Loop: \$400,000.
- Small Water Main Urgent Replacements: \$250,000.
- Cavalier Country Water Distribution System Replacement: \$100,000
- Water Station Improvements: \$100,000.
- Shores of Calvert Distribution Replacement: \$50,000.

The solid waste and recycling projects are:

- Barstow Convenience Center: \$1,000,000.
- Ball Road Convenience Center: \$750,000.
- NEW - Appeal Landfill Service Areas Paving: \$500,000.
- NEW - Stationary Compactors at Mt. Hope Customer Convenience Center: \$264,000.
- NEW - Stationary Compactors Replacement at Appeal Customer Convenience Center: \$264,000.
- Lusby Conv Center Relocation: \$150,000.
- NEW - Plum Point Customer Convenience Center Drainage System Improvements \$60,000.

The Public Facilities projects are:

- NEW - CMM Boat Shed Replacement: \$2,600,000.

- Armory Site Development: \$2,000,000.
- ADA Transition Plan: \$1,000,000.
- County Courthouse Renovations & Upgrades: \$750,000.
- (87 Main Street) Resource Hub: \$600,000.
- Solomons Boardwalk/Causeway: \$500,000.
- Election Board Expansion: \$270,000.
- 110 Main Street/Public Safety Facility: \$150,000.
- Skipjack Road Building B: \$120,000.
- Kings Landing Park: \$85,000.
- Calvert Marine Museum HVAC Replacement: \$50,000.
- Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum HVAC Replacement: \$50,000.

The Calvert Marine Museum projects are:

- CMM Land Acquisition: \$950,000.
- CMM Storage Building: \$650,000.
- CMM Paleontology Center - \$500,000.
- CMM Security Upgrades: \$500,000.
- Cove Point Lighthouse: \$255,000.
- CMM Maritime Hall Exhibit: \$226,770.
- Fabrication: \$100,000.
- CMM Otter Exhibit Renovation: \$100,000.

The transportation projects are:

- Countywide Paving: \$10,000,000.
- Barstow Salt Barn (should be “Barstow Laydown Yard”): \$1,600,000.
- Sidewalk Program: \$1,600,000.
- Storm Drainage Projects: \$1,100,000.
- Transportation Safety Projects: \$1,100,000.
- Maryland NPDES MS4: \$1,010,000.
- Stephen Reid Road: \$500,000.
- Warren Drive Bridge and Dam Main-



DPW Director JR Cosgrove

tenance Repairs: \$500,000.

- Mill Branch Road Culvert: \$300,000.
- Breezy Roundabout: \$150,000.
- Stormwater Management “Repairs”: \$100,000.
- Walton Road: \$75,000.00
- Countywide Right-of-Way Acquisition: \$50,000.

During the meeting the commissioners did ask that in future capital presentations that departments prioritize their projects.

The county is seeking input on the capital budget process at <https://calvertcountymd.gov/CIPquestions> questions and comments

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

# 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 6

### Awful Artworks: Poor-traits

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

Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! This Awful Artworks will be all about creating portraits! Join us for an exploration of art in all its forms! We will provide the art materials (if you have art supplies gathering dust, bring them to share), you provide the creativity. Each piece created will have a tag with the name of the art, the artist, and a brief description of the piece. All art will have the opportunity to be displayed in the library. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Fri, Feb 7

### First Fossil Friday!

Calvert Marine Museum  
1-4:30 p.m.

Fossil hunters, bring your fossil finds from Calvert Cliffs or other local areas to be identified! This service is provided for free; however, admission fees apply for access to CMM exhibits.

## Sat, Feb 8

### Pop-in with Poppie

Calvert Marine Museum  
1:30-2:30 p.m.

Make your Saturday afternoon memorable by coming to visit with our very own Pop Star "Poppie," our Virginia opossum. You can join the Poppie paparazzi in the museum lobby with one of our educational interpreters, learn all kinds of fun possum facts, and visit the Museum Store for possum fan gear. Since the welfare of our animals is our primary concern, Poppie's ability to visit with her adoring public may occasionally be subject to change on short notice. Included with museum admission.

## Sun, Feb 9

### Southern Maryland Bluegrass

Calvert Elks Lodge  
1015 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick  
2 p.m.

The most widely admired and most influential Bluegrass recording artist, Lonesome River Band returns once again and will headline the 5<sup>th</sup> concert in the Southern Maryland Bluegrass series at the Elks. Tickets are available at the door. Although not required, if you prefer to pay in advance you may do so by going to [www.somdbluegrass.com](http://www.somdbluegrass.com) or call 301-737-3004.

### Creature Feature

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

Come to the museum for the Monthly Mystery Creature Feature. Every second Sunday of the month, the CMM Education Team will feature an animal in the museum lobby that is not normally on display. Learn about a new animal and discover the wonderful variety of the creatures found in our local estuaries. Take-home educational coloring pages will be available! Included with museum admission.

### Bayside History Winter Lectures

North Beach Town Hall  
1-2 p.m.

Learn about local history and more from local experts. Co-sponsored by Calvert Library, Bayside History Museum and John Hanson Chapter NSDAR. The Future of Space by Colonel Frederick Gregory (Ret.) Discover the future of space exploration with renowned astronaut Colonel Frederick Gregory. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Beyond the Displays: Artifact Stories

Calvert Marine Museum  
1:30-2:30 p.m.

Join Lori for an insightful exploration of the museum's artifacts, uncovering their ori-

gins and significance. Discover the history behind the emblem from a paddle wheel boat, the tools found in the blacksmith shop, and the Gov. R. M. McLane name board. Hear captivating stories about WWII's impact on the Solomons community and uncover hidden pictures within the museum murals. It's a unique opportunity to delve into local history and see these artifacts in a new light. Learn something new every tour. Included with museum admission.

## Mon, Feb 10

### Book Discussion

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

Join us this month to discuss *How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood. The book is also available on Hoopla. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Wed, Feb 12

### Tarot Study Group: Drop-In Program

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

Come learn and practice tarot as a creative tool, for self-reflection, introspection, meditation, thoughtfulness, or as a fun hobby. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Job Seeker Resources

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

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

### Chess Club

Calvert Library Southern Branch  
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons  
5-6 p.m.

Enjoy playing chess? Looking to sharpen your chess skills? Come drop in and challenge new opponents! All skill levels and ages are welcome. Please bring a chess board along if you own one. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

## Thu, Feb 13

### Sea Squirts

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

This month's theme is Food Chain. Children 18 months to 3 years, with an adult, are invited to discover the museum together through music, stories, and special activities. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25-40 minutes. Cost is free with museum admission. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive.

## Upcoming

### Universal Coprolite Day

Calvert Marine Museum  
Monday, Feb. 17  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Join us for the fourth 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 even a chance to get an up-close look at dung beetles. Included with museum admission.

**Publisher** Thomas McKay  
**Associate Publisher** Eric McKay  
**General Manager**  
Al Dailey [aldailey@countytimes.net](mailto:aldailey@countytimes.net)  
**Advertising**  
Jen Stotler [jen@countytimes.net](mailto:jen@countytimes.net)  
**Staff Writers**  
Dick Myers [dickmyers@countytimes.net](mailto:dickmyers@countytimes.net)  
Guy Leonard [guyleonard@countytimes.net](mailto:guyleonard@countytimes.net)  
**Contributing Writers**  
Tim Flaherty, Ron Guy, Ken Lamb,  
Shelby Opperman, Dave Spigler

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

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



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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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## Thu, Feb 6

### Hands-Only CPR with American Red Cross

Northern Senior Activity Center  
29655 Charlotte Hall Rd, Charlotte Hall  
10 a.m. to 11a.m.  
Cost: Free

Many people who survive a cardiac emergency are helped by a bystander. Learning hands-only CPR (or compression-only CPR) will help you to deliver life-saving care until professional responders arrive. Staff from the American Red Cross will provide an informative presentation explaining the 8 simple steps needed for this technique.

## Sat, Feb 8

### RenFest SOMD Auditions

Lexington Park Volunteer Rescue Squad  
45945 Buck Hewitt Rd., Great Mills  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Step back in time and legend to join King Arthur's noble court or the rebellion against them, led by his estranged son, Mordred.

Auditions will consist of improv exercises and light fight choreography. These are to gauge what acting and stage fighting levels at which everyone is starting. There will be a non-fighting role for everyone who wants one, and a melee fighting role for everyone who follows the safety parameters of fight practice.

### Black History Month Open House

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.—2:00 p.m.).

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

### SMTMD Contra Dance

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

The evening starts at 7 pm with a half hour beginner's dance workshop followed by live music performed by the SOMD Open Band and dancing from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Check the website calendar for the lineup of dances and callers. Admission: \$8 for members; \$12 for non-SMTMD members; children 17 and under (when accompanied by a paying adult) and band members are free. \*See website for rescheduled or canceled events. Info: [smtmd2@gmail.com](mailto:smtmd2@gmail.com), [www.smtmd.org/new-events/](http://www.smtmd.org/new-events/)

## Sun, Feb 9

### Super Bowl Sunday PIZZA Fundraiser

Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department  
24801 Three Notch Rd., Hollywood  
Noon to 4 p.m.

Pick up inside Social Hall. Fundraiser supports the Ladies Auxiliary of the Hollywood Fire Department.

Cheese \$10, pepperoni \$12. Cash or check only. Cooked or uncooked pizzas available. Pre-orders strongly recommended.

Contact Debbie Flaherty @ 301-848-1683 (Please text or leave message by 5 PM on 02/07/25).

## Mon, Feb 10

### Red Cross Blood Drive

2nd District VFD & RS  
45245 Drayden Rd., Valley Lee  
1:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, or to schedule your life saving donation, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [www.redcrossblood.org/](http://www.redcrossblood.org/) to download the blood donor app.

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# In Remembrance

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.

## Clara Morgan, 73



Clara Mae Morgan, 73, of Leonardtown, MD joined her mother and family who preceded her in heaven on January 31, 2025 at her home surrounded by her loving family. Clara was born on July 28, 1951 to the late Clara Rosetta and Charles M. Joy of Hollywood. She was the sibling of 11 brothers and sisters; Charles Joy (Garnett), Robert Joy, John Joy (Elaine), James Joy, Larry Joy, Ronnie Joy, Connie Martin (Charlie), Patricia Joy, and Joseph "Eddie" Farrell (Tammy). Preceded in death are Joseph P. Joy and Virginia Ann Morgan.

Clara married James "Rhodie" Morgan Sr. on July 14, 1967 at Sacred Heart Church located in Maddox, MD. From their union came the Joy of Clara's life, her loving children, James "Randy" Morgan Jr. (Tracy) of Leonardtown, MD, Gene "Chris" Morgan Sr. (Shannon) of St. Inigoes, MD, Jonathan "Glenn" Morgan (Cheryl) of California, MD, Gregory "Scotty" Morgan of Leonardtown, MD and Neal "Jason" Morgan of Mechanicsville, MD.

Clara was also blessed with nine Grandchildren; Ashley McConnell, Gene Morgan Jr., Maria Caccamise, Jacob Morgan, Bryan Morgan, Sarah Morgan, Destiny Morgan, Kaytlynn Morgan, and Daniel Morgan. Then additionally blessed with two Great-grandchildren, Autumn Harding and Riley McConnell.

Clara was a lifelong St. Mary's County resident. Born in Leonardtown, MD and raised on a small farm, she learned the ways of the land by growing vegetables, planting flowers, and raising a family. She canned everything that she grew enabling her to provide for her family. Clara was a Chef in the kitchen, her famous potato and tuna salad was well known and greatly anticipated at every family event! Clara was an Artist, with the good earth as her canvas, she had that green thumb! She planted beautiful flowers that sprung forth with vibrant color that painted a picture for all to enjoy. Even if it made for some creative ways to weed around lol.

Clara was a financial wizard making what she had stretched to provide anything needed by her family. She was the nurse who tended cuts and scrapes, a round-the-clock counselor and confidant listening to hopes and dreams, and then the shoulder when things didn't go just right.

Clara served others her entire life, she did it endlessly and unselfishly, without hesitation and always with great enthusiasm. This

was Clara's core-being, as she was a faithful servant of the Lord. Clara put Family first, and her efforts were given with every fiber of her being.

Clara never complained, even in the worst of times, it was with utmost humility and determination she thrived, and she did it with unwavering strength.

Clara's dedication to serving those in need was to be her career. Clara was a skilled and successful Nursing Assistant for 30-years, providing endless devotion to the community of St. Mary's County. Clara started her career at the St. Mary's Nursing Home in Leonardtown, MD providing care and support to its patients. Clara then carried her skills onward to the Veterans Nursing home located at Charlotte Hall, MD, where she served those who served our country.

After retirement, Clara then pursued full-time her ultimate enjoyment, her family. Clara was the extra hand to all and the reliable backup helping with her grandchildren. She loved spending time with each one. Clara provided that much needed meal after a hard day's work to keep you going, or made the fire in the wood stove to warm the room before you walked in.

Clara was the Mother to those without, providing the Love and Nurturing needed, and at the same time reminded you that Education and Hard Work was key to making it within this world. She was there to remind you to do your homework, helped in getting those driver's license, got you whatever was needed for that school project, and walked side-by-side, step-by-step with each grandchild towards that grand accomplishment of Graduation.

Ultimately, it was the "Importance of Family" and "Loving with all your Heart" that was her "Definitive Happiness".

Pallbearers will be James "Randy" Morgan Jr., Gene "Chris" Morgan Sr., Jonathan "Glenn" Morgan, Neal "Jason" Morgan, Jacob Morgan, and Bryan Morgan.

Honorary Pallbearers will be Ashley McConnell, Gene Morgan Jr., Maria Caccamise, Sarah Morgan, Density Morgan, Kaytlynn Morgan, Daniel Morgan, Autumn Harding and Riley McConnell.

The family will receive friends on Monday, February 10, 2025 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. with prayers at 6:00 p.m., at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., at 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. at the funeral home. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, 26325 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Condolences to the family may be made at [www.brinsfieldfuneral.com](http://www.brinsfieldfuneral.com).

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## A View From The BLEACHERS



### MANAGING ELEPHANTS

By Ronald N. Guy  
Contributing Writer

A young rookie quarterback commands the room. The hype doesn't faze a talented freshman. One team ignores injuries and plays on; another appears unburdened in its historical pursuit. A coach trudges on despite personal catastrophe. A college athlete achieves greatness despite a heart broken by a tragedy. And a massive mammal sits in a room unnoticed.

It's a brain scramble. Where is this going? Does the writer even know (maybe?). A long time ago, I considered renaming this column "Burying the Lede", an admission of a chronic tendency to break a basic rule of good writing (and hoping readers endure until you mercifully get to the point). I probably should have gone with it; oh well, another "View From The Bleachers" will have to do.

"He's always the same." My dad and I would inevitably say it at some point during every game last fall. Win or lose. No matter the flow of the game. Regardless of the success or adversity. Other than a little touchdown dance or brief primal scream after a big play, his facial expression was calm and his nonverbals were relaxed. Was he in an epic NFL struggle or having tea on an idyllic spring afternoon? That was the Jayden Daniels experience, Washington's 24-year-old rookie quarterback with the poise of a 10-year veteran.

I hate Duke basketball; my son loves it. I don't know where I went wrong. But for the sake of our relationship, I watch Duke games with him. I must love him. Anyway, Cooper Flagg, the super-hyped, all-everything phenom who's likely top overall pick in the 2025 NBA Draft, headlined another stellar Duke recruiting class last year. My adorable offspring told me all about him. Fueled by decades of obnoxious Duke hype, I was skeptical. And wrong. He scores, drops dimes, grabs boards, gives you a block and steal here and there. He's good. Really good.

The Detroit Lions won a lot of games this year - fifteen to be exact. This despite their defense being ravaged by injury - an astonishing 13 defensive players on injured reserve by week 18. To quantify that reality, consider: the NFL roster limit is 53 with roughly 25 allocated for defense. Easy but brutal math for Detroit. Meanwhile, the Kansas City Chiefs carried the dual burden of being champions and attempting NFL history: an unprecedented third straight Super Bowl win. They shrugged at the pressure and ripped off 15 wins too.

Unfortunately, it gets serious now. Lakers head coach J.J. Reddick lost his home in the California wildfires, a tragedy of unimaginable scope. He coached on. Jack Bech caught the winning touchdown and was named MVP in last weekend's Senior Bowl; his brother was killed in the New Orleans vehicle attack on New Year's Day. Broken hearts beat strong.

When there's an elephant in the room, introduce it - sound life advice whenever there is a significant issue gnawing at a relationship or undermining a team. Hit it head on. Clear the air. Blissful ignorance is impossible and will only cause the situation to fester. So, embrace the elephant; give it center stage.

Two very different types of elephants lurk in this piece. Let's take the sports stuff first, where the giant mammals were ignored. Daniels, in all his youth and inexperience, could have been overwhelmed by the immediate franchise savior anointing. Flagg, too, would have been excused for blinking under the blinding light of Duke basketball and the hype around his arrival. Detroit and Kansas City both ignored their ready-made reasons for regression. Excuse elephants? Where?

As for Reddick and Bech, what can be said? They certainly aren't ignoring their massive elephants. How could they? Both are dealing with awful, inescapable circumstances. Instead, they compartmentalized their tragic, giant guests. Sit there and don't move, you beast. I have work to do; no interruption allowed. It's an inspirational mental victory.

In all, it left me rethinking the elephant analogy: when dealing with significant challenge - professional pressure, expectations or tragedy - sometimes the humans, buoyed by remarkable strength, are the illuminated giants, while the metaphorical beast is left cloaked in a dark corner, controlled and appropriately without introduction.

Send comments to [RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com](mailto:RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com)

## FINANCIAL FOCUS®

### You can put more into your 401(k) this year

Once you retire, you'll likely need to draw on a variety of financial sources — and one of the most important ones may be your 401(k). And for 2025, you can put even more money into your plan than ever.

You can invest in your 401(k) in one of two ways, depending on your employer's plan. With a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, which can lower your taxable income, and your money can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you can contribute after-tax dollars, which aren't deductible, but your eventual withdrawals will be tax-free if you've had your account at least five years and you're at least 59½.

For either a traditional or Roth 401(k), as well as similar plans such as a 457(b) (for government employees) or a 403(b) (for educators and employees of some nonprofit groups), the contribution limit has increased by \$500 for 2025, to \$23,500. If you're 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$7,500, for a total of \$31,000. And under the SECURE 2.0 legislation, if you are between 60 and 63, you have a higher catch-up contribution — \$11,250, instead of \$7,500, for a total of \$34,750.

If you can afford to contribute the full amount to your 401(k) or similar plan, consider doing so. Of course, not everyone is in that position. If you're a younger worker, you may well have other financial obligations, such as paying off student loans. And even if you've been in the workforce for a while, you may be putting away money for other things — such as your children's education — as well as your own retirement. But even if you can't "max out" on your 401(k), try to contribute at least enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered.

Regardless of how much you contribute to your 401(k), consider these suggestions on managing the money within your plan:

- **Create a portfolio that fits your risk tolerance.** Most 401(k) plans offer up to a dozen investment options, while some plans offer many more. You obviously want to increase your 401(k) balance as much as possible, but that doesn't necessarily mean putting all your 401(k) dollars into the most aggressive funds available. Instead, consider spreading your 401(k) contributions among a range of investments, which can help you lower your risk level while still giving you opportunities for long-term growth. Everyone's risk tolerance is different, though, so you'll want to evaluate yours when constructing your 401(k) portfolio.
- **Adjust your portfolio as needed.** It's a good idea to review your 401(k)'s investment mix at least once a year to see if it's performing as you'd hoped. But be patient — one "down" year doesn't necessarily mean you must make changes. However, as you approach retirement, you may want to lower the risk level of your 401(k) by moving some of your dollars into more conservative vehicles. Still, even when you're retired and have started drawing money from your 401(k), you might want to keep some growth potential in it to help you stay ahead of inflation.

By contributing what you can afford to your 401(k), and by carefully managing the investments within your plan, you can help maximize the value of this powerful retirement savings vehicle — and give yourself a key asset to help you enjoy your retirement years.

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

*Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

*Contributed by David McDonough*

*Financial Advisor at Edward Jones*

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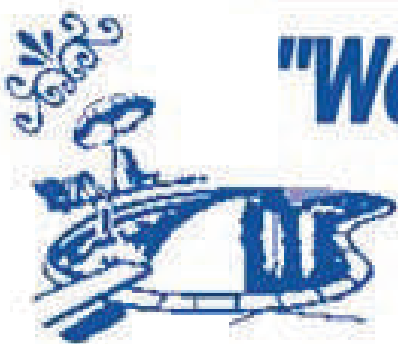
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## CONTENTS

Airport Shuttle .....	3
Art Gallery.....	3
Auto Parts .....	4
Bakery .....	4
Banking .....	4
Career Fairs.....	5
Construction.....	5
Dance Studio .....	6
Dumpster Rental .....	6
Funeral Home.....	7
Garage Doors .....	7
Garden Center .....	7
General Contractor .....	7
Hardscapes .....	8
HVAC .....	9
Insurance.....	9
Landscaping .....	9, 10
Lawyer .....	10
Powerwashing .....	10
Printer .....	11
Produce .....	11
Propane .....	12
Real Estate.....	13
Restaurant.....	13
Shopping .....	13, 14
Taxes.....	14
Transportation .....	14
Tree Service.....	15
Tutoring .....	15

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## Friday, February 7

- 9 a.m. Town Market LLC Valentines Day Sweets and Treats
- 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Visit the Old Jail Museum & Leonardtown Visitor Center for FREE tours and extended hours for First Friday
- 2 p.m. Live music at Port of Leonardtown Winery featuring Greg Floberg
- 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. Opening reception at North End Gallery 2025 Invitational featuring over 30 artists
- 5 - 8 p.m. Opening reception at the St. Mary's County Arts Council "Heart of the Arts" gallery artist's work
- 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Ride the FREE Leonardtown trolley



## Saturday, February 8

- 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Winter Balance at Spice Studio. Deepening your practice with QiGong and emotional flow
- 12 p.m. The Rex Theatre presents The McCartney Experience, a tribute to Paul McCartney

## Sunday, February 9

- 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cottage Baker Pop-up with "Home Cooking is Better" at Fenwick Street Used Books

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Whiskey

**48.99**



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# Womens Commission Seeks Nominations for Annual Awards

The St. Mary's County Commission for Women (CFW) is pleased to announce their annual Women's History Month Brunch & Awards Ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of women and girls in our community. This event will take place on Saturday, March 29, 2025, at the White Rose, located at 21030 Point Lookout Road in Callaway; doors open at 10:30 a.m.

This year's theme is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations". St. Mary's County is blessed with an abundance of women who, through their volunteer contributions, have fought long and hard to stand up for other women and girls in our community. We invite you to help us celebrate their accomplishments!

Each year four awards are presented: the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement and Hometown Shero awards (selected by CFW), and the Woman of the Year and Tomorrow's Woman awards (community nomination; selected by independent panel of judges).

We are pleased to announce that the 2025 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement award will be given to Charlottis Woodley, a longtime advocate for education and community empowerment. The 2025 Hometown Shero award will be presented to Norma Pipkin and Marta Kelsey to recognize their many years of service to the community.

Nominations are now open for the

"Woman of the Year" and "Woman of Tomorrow" awards. The deadline to submit nominations is 5 p.m. on February 17, 2025.

For event information, tickets, sponsorship opportunities, or to submit a nomination, please visit [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/cwawards](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/cwawards). For questions, please call (301) 475-4200, ext.1680.

Proceeds will support the Jane Hale-Sypher scholarship through the College of Southern Maryland, which was established to help non-traditional students further their educational goals.

### About the St. Mary's County Commission for Women

The St. Mary's County Commission for Women (CFW) champions women's issues and concerns. The CFW was created to address matters of specific concern to women in the areas of employment, education, health, public office, family, and legal rights. This very active group stays busy in our community reaching out to women in many walks of life. In addition, each year the CFW takes the time to recognize female volunteers who represent the backbone of our community. The members are appointed by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and report to them the areas of concern to women in our community. Learn more at: [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/CW](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/CW).

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To inquire, call the Mt. Zion Office at (301) 884-4132 or email Pastor Corey Sharp at [pastorcorey@mysixdays.com](mailto:pastorcorey@mysixdays.com).

If you would like to place a classified ad or legal notice, please call the County Times at 301-373-4125 or email [aldailey@countytimes.net](mailto:aldailey@countytimes.net)

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# Man Sentenced to 52 Years in Prison for Two Shootings

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced that Sidney Joseph Spry, 29, of Lexington Park, Maryland, was sentenced to 75 years in prison with 52 years of active incarceration for attempted second degree murder, first degree assault, and firearm charges.

In September 2022, Spry armed himself with two firearms and drove to his former employer's business park where he fired many rounds into the office building toward the area of his former supervisor's office. He then fled the area by car. In a separate incident several days prior, Spry fired multiple rounds at a neighboring apartment from his complex's parking lot after a lengthy history of disputes with his neighbors over noise complaints. No persons were struck; however, spent bullets were found in the bedroom near the victims' baby bassinet.

During a lengthy sentencing hearing, the Court carefully listened to arguments presented by both the State and the Defense and ultimately sentenced the Defendant to a sentence above the sentencing guideline range, as follows:

- Attempted second degree murder: 30 years in prison with 18 years of active incarceration, consecutive to all other counts and cases;
- Use of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime: 18 years in prison, consecutive to all other counts and cases;
- First degree assault: 25 years in prison with 8 years of active incarceration, consecutive to all other counts and cases; and



Sidney Joseph Spry

- Use of firearm in the commission of a violent crime: 20 years in prison with 8 years of active incarceration, consecutive to all other counts and cases.

The Maryland Sentencing Guidelines called for a sentence between 10 to 17 years. The State requested the maximum penalty of 95 years in prison. The total sentence imposed was 75 years with 52 years of active incarceration.

Sergeant Austin Schultz of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office was the lead investigator.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Alena Mosier prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The Honorable Joseph M. Staloni presided over the case.

# Suspect Arrested in Hollywood Homicide

Lee L. Richardson, 23, of no fixed address, was apprehended by the U.S. Marshall's Fugitive Task Force in Prince George's County on an arrest warrant charging him in the murder of Matthew Skye Keister.

On January 27, deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to the 25000 block of Jones Wharf Road in Hollywood, MD, for the report of a male not breathing and found a deceased victim inside a trashcan on the property.

The victim's body was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Baltimore, where an autopsy determined the cause of death to be a gunshot wound. Deputies identified the victim as Matthew Skye Keister, 19, of Hollywood.

The subsequent investigation led to the identification of Richardson, a known associate of Keister, as the suspect in the murder; a warrant was issued on January 30 for his arrest.

Richardson is charged with murder sec-



Lee Richardson

ond-degree, assault first- and second-degree, firearm use during a felony-violent crime and bury or disposal of a body in an unauthorized place. The suspect is being held at the Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown.

# School Board Sends Budget to Commissioners

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Board of Education voted unanimously to send their proposed fiscal 2026 operating budget of \$295 million to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

The budget is \$5.1 million more than the current budget; it proposes a local contribution of \$139.7 million, an increase of \$5.3 million over this year's budget.

The projected state contribution is \$147.5 million with the federal government contribution coming in at \$2.7 million.

The budget has 10 fewer employees included than the current budget, which school budget documents state will account for about \$700,000 in savings.

The budget also includes increased pay for teachers via a step increase and a two-percent cost of living adjustment, educational support staff would receive a step increase in pay as well as a one-percent cost of living adjustment, per the negotiated labor agreement between the school board and the Education Association of St. Mary's

County (EASMC).

Employees with the school administrators' union also have a negotiated agreement that affords them a step increase in the proposed new budget as well as a one-percent cost of living increase.

Contract school bus drivers would also receive a wage increase and a retention stipend; there would also be increases to offset bus operations and maintenance costs, budget documents state.

The school budget must next be transmitted to the county commissioners who will decide what changes will be made to it; they have final approval over the school system spending plan.

In all spending on instructional salaries and wages accounts for 104.7 million of the proposed fiscal 2026 budget; other major budget items include \$25.7 million for special education, \$25.7 million for student transportation, and \$22.8 million for building operations.

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

# Online Visioning Activities Launched for "St. Mary's 2050"



St. Mary's County Government's Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) is seeking input from the community on the vision, key planning themes, and goals to be considered as the county's Comprehensive Plan is updated. The "St. Mary's 2050" plan will establish a cohesive, countywide vision for land use, economic development, other quality-of-life goals, and will outline an actionable strategy to achieve this vision.

Public input is critical to ensuring St. Mary's 2050 reflects the needs and priorities of the community. LUGM is continuing to conduct in-person and virtual Community Visioning Sessions through mid-February. For those unable to attend a session, online visioning activities are now available, allowing community members to provide their valuable feedback.

Community members are encouraged

to visit [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050) to get more information and to stay involved. The online visioning activities will be available on the website through Monday, February 17, 2025; just click "Participate Now" to get started! Online visioning activities are available in over 240 languages.

### About St. Mary's 2050

St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow is an update to the County's existing Comprehensive Plan, which will guide future land use in the County through 2050 and beyond. St. Mary's 2050 will chart the course for ensuring St. Mary's County continues to be a great place to live, work, and play. Visit [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050) today to learn more, stay engaged, and add your voice in shaping the future of St. Mary's County.

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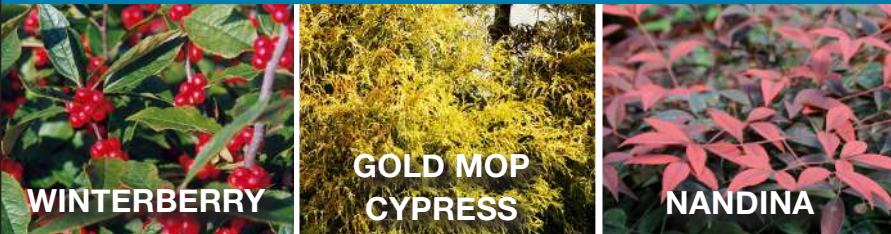
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# School Board Approves Green Holly Renovations



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Green Holly Elementary School in Lexington Park will be getting new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC) as well as a new roof after the St. Mary's County Board of Education voted to approve the project this week.

The board voted unanimously to move ahead with the plan at their Feb. 5 business meeting in Leonardtown.

The contract for the work was awarded to Scheibel Construction for \$14.5 million with a project contingency fund of \$869,670, according to school system information.

The HVAC system has been in place at the school since 1989, school planning documents stated.

"We certainly got our money's worth out of that," said Board Member Mary Washington.

The contract includes "replacing unit ventilators, fan coil units, terminal units, pack-

aged rooftop units, replacement of heating plant to include boilers, pumps, and fuel oil tank, as well as replacement of the generator on the B-side of [Green Holly]," planning documents state. "It also provides funding for the replacement of the flat roof in its entirety on the A-side and partial on the B-side of [Green Holly]."

Despite being an elementary school, Green Holly is one of the larger educational facilities in the county schools' inventory.

The A-side of Green Holly represents one whole building while the B-side is its own building but part of the larger facility complex.

The roof to be replaced has been in use since 1999, according to school planning documents.

The project also includes the installation of a new fire alarm system that has voice instructions to guide students and staff to exits.

*guyleonard@countytimes.net*

# Townhouse Project Going to Planning Commission Hearing



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The county planning commission will hold public hearing on a proposed 140-townhouse project at their upcoming Feb. 10 business meeting in Leonardtown.

The project is proposed for the already-existent Pembroke housing subdivision in Lexington Park off of Willows Road on Meadow Creek Drive.

The site upon which the project would be built is 27.83 acres, according to planning documents from the county's Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

According to the traffic study included in the planning documents of the concept site plan, the data shows the projection is 820 additional total vehicle trips per day.

*guyleonard@countytimes.net*

# Southern Maryland Supports Families of Those Lost in Potomac Crash



Andrew Eaves



Alexander Huffman



Jesse Pitcher



Charles McDaniel



Jonathan Boyd



Michael Stovall



Robert Prewitt



Steven Johnson



Thomas Clagett

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

Southern Maryland is mourning the loss of nine men who were lost in the crash of American Airlines Flight 5342 the night of Jan. 29 in the Potomac River after it collided with a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter while it was approaching Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C.

They are Andrew Eaves of Great Mills, Alexander Huffman, of Leonardtown, Jesse Pitcher, of Lusby, Charles McDaniel, of Port Republic, Jonathan Boyd, of Welcome, Michael Stovall, of Accokeek, Robert Prewitt, a Calvert County resident, Steve Johnson of Waldorf, and Thomas Clagett, of Newburg.

Eaves was a chief warrant officer onboard the army helicopter, who leaves behind a wife and children.

His wife, Carrie Eaves, asked for support for the families who had lost their loved ones but praised the outpouring of generosity from the St. Mary's community.

"We are all grieving, and need your love and support," she wrote in a social media post. "St. Mary's is an amazing community that will forever be a part of mine and Andrew's life."

"Thank you for showing us what a true

community feels like!"

Eaves was a sailor before joining the U.S. Army and becoming a helicopter pilot.

Eaves, served in the U.S. Navy from August 2007 to September 2017, then transitioned to a UH-60 pilot for the regular Army from September 2017 to present day.

He was a highly decorated service member.

"His awards include the Army Commendation Medal x3, Navy Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal x3, Navy "E" Ribbon x2, Navy Good Conduct Medal x3, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Navy & Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon and Army Aviator Badge," a statement from the Army reads.

Huffman was a member of the Local 602 Steamfitters Union based in Prince George's County.

He was returning from a hunting trip in Wichita, Kansas with most of the other men in the group from Southern Maryland who perished in the crash.

He is survived by his wife Kayla and two children.

"Words, I have none," his wife wrote in a social media post. "My heart is shattered, as a wife, as a mother. [five-and-a-half] years of love, now a lifetime of sorrow."

"The future is unknown without you in it. And I don't think I'll ever be whole again."

Pitcher's wife, Kylie Jo Pitcher, memorialized her husband on-line as well.

"[Jan. 29, 2025] is the day my WHOLE ENTIRE WORLD turned upside down," she wrote in a social media post. "Jesse, I miss you more than you could ever know."

Pitcher, a Lusby resident, was the owner of his own business — a plumbing contractor business that bore his initials.

Clagett and Stovall, both Charles County residents, were graduates of St. Mary's Ryken High School.

Prewitt leaves behind a wife and two daughters; their family were strong supporters of the Cheer Extreme Calvert gym.

There are numerous fundraising efforts available to offer support to their families in their time of need.:

- Hunt Club GoFundMe for the 7 Southern Maryland Families <https://gofund.me/83c147dc>
- SOMD Strong Merchandise <https://calvertyardcards.com/pro.../somd-strong-merchandise/>
- GoFundMe for the Stovall Family

<https://gofund.me/d252ccc3>

- Meal Train for the Prewitt Family <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/ymzkm>
- GoFundMe for the Prewitt Family <https://gofund.me/87f84839>
- Meal Train for the Clagett Girls <https://mealtrain.com/ddq111>
- GoFundMe for the Clagett Family <https://gofund.me/6ab181a4>
- Meal Train for the McDaniel Family <https://mealtrain.com/178273>
- GoFundMe for Reed (Kristie Baxter) <https://gofund.me/b5104461>
- GoFundMe for the Boyd Family <https://gofund.me/53c477d4>
- GoFundMe for the Johnson Family <https://gofund.me/9660e90d>
- GoFundMe for the Huffman Family <https://gofund.me/bdd819f7>
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- Huntin' with Jacob Gun Raffle to benefit the 7 Families <https://huntinwithjacob.com/product/montefeltro-shotgun/>

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# Junior Naval Academy Closes Its Doors

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The leadership of the Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy announced late last week that they would be closing down for the remainder of the 2024-2025 academic year after struggling to rebound from a sharp decline in enrollment over the past several years.

"[The academy] has faced several challenges over the past several years," a letter written to the parent members stated. "While the skills and qualities [the academy] builds in the teens in our community are invaluable, for [the academy] to deliver what it promises to the midshipmen certain requirements are crucial or our academy becomes ineffective."

Last year the Commissioners of St. Mary's County decided to terminate the lease they held on the county-owned building where the academy had taught classes for decades.

The county said then that the academy had not been able to complete repairs to the

aging building that they had agreed to as part of their lease; the commissioners have since decided to repurpose the building to serve as a child care center for county employees.

"Our ability to find a facility that will support not only an effective classroom setting but also the military program has been challenging and has had a direct impact on enrollment, resulting in limited financial and staffing/volunteer resources."

County Commissioner Mike Hewitt said the county had tried to accommodate the school for years.

"The county tried to help them for so many years, we kept their rent extremely low," Hewitt said. "They were down to eight students."

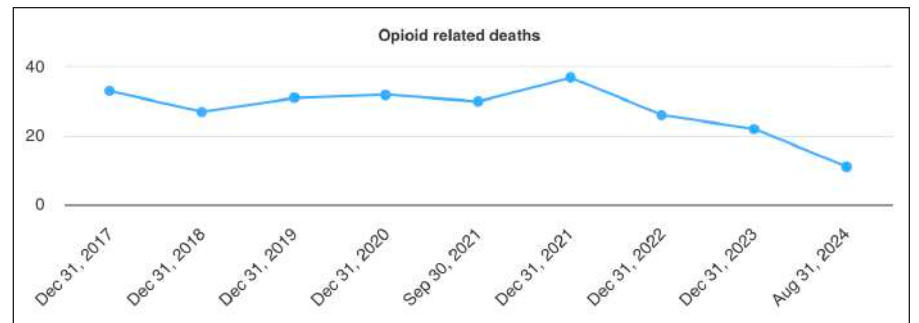
"They had a very tough time figuring out how they were going to pay going forward."

The school was aware of the repairs that were needed since 2015, Hewitt said.

"They just weren't in a position to do it," he said.

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# Fatal Overdoses Continue to Decline in St. Mary's



By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

After reaching an all-time high of 37 opioid-related overdose fatalities in 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of such deaths here continues to decline, according to the latest data from the state's Department of Health (MDH).

For the year ending 2024 there were 20 overdose deaths in St. Mary's County, the state announced this week, compared to 22 in 2023 and 26 fatalities in 2022.

The data, available on the MDH overdose data dashboard on-line, shows there were 10 fatal overdoses related directly to fentanyl, a drug many times more powerful than heroin, and manufactured relatively cheaply on the street.

By comparison the number of gun-related homicides investigated by the sheriff's office in the last seven years is 20.

Law enforcement and health officials

alike have said that virtually all illegal street drugs here are combined with fentanyl, which increases both the addictive qualities of whatever substance it is combined with as well as its potential lethality.

The release of the data was in concert with an announcement Feb. 4 by Gov. Wes Moore that opioid overdose deaths had declined significantly in the past year.

"The decrease in fatal overdoses that we're seeing in Maryland is historic, and it's proof that our investments in behavioral health and substance use care and the incredible efforts of people all around our state are paying off," said Gov. Moore. "However, we still have work to do. We are still losing far too many of our loved ones and neighbors to preventable overdoses, and we will not let up in our efforts to meet people where they are and make connections to care."

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# Sports Complex Plan Brings Excitement

By Guy Leonard  
Staff Writer

The prospect of an indoor/outdoor sports complex being built on nearly 270 acres off of St. Andrews Church Road in California brought more than 100 residents out to Leonardtown last week to give their thoughts on the prospect; a few of them were worried that its construction would bring even more traffic to roads already dangerously clogged with it.

Yet, many other residents were excited to have a dedicated place for young people to engage in sports, particularly during the winter time.

Art Rogers, the lacrosse coach at Leonardtown High School, said young people in St. Mary's had long lacked a place to play in cold weather.

"We would welcome an indoor and outdoor facility like this with open arms," Rogers said of the lacrosse community. "There is currently not a place where kids can participate, in the wintertime, indoors in lacrosse."

"We're crammed in at Leonard Hall [drill hall] right now."

In the aftermath, Commissioner Eric Colvin said that if such a project were to come to fruition, traffic improvements would be necessary to handle the extra traffic.



Location of the proposed sports complex

But there was almost no chance, he said, of the sports complex being built any time soon.

"It's very, very early in the process," Colvin said of the project, which is under the auspices of the Maryland Stadium Authority. "The estimates that... we are at with this facility is that it would cost \$100 million to build this."

"That is not something we could handle

in our budget."

The state must determine first, he said, if the sports complex could be a suitable "economic driver" before it would fund the project.

With a \$3 billion budget deficit it must tackle first this year, it was a virtual impossibility it would make such an investment anytime soon.

"It's very unlikely we'll see movement on

this for a while," Colvin during the business meeting of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County Feb. 4.

The sports complex planned would be 100,000 to 135,000 square feet in size for the indoor facility and outdoor fields would be placed on 38 acres of the wooded site.

The site would include eight to 10 "tournament quality" multipurpose fields with a minimum of four fields offering two softball/baseball diamonds each.

The plan includes bleacher seating and lighted fields for extended play time.

The planning for the complex has been ongoing for five years, with a market study coming out in October of 2020.

The indoor facility would have a minimum of eight hardwood basketball courts, which could yield double that amount in volleyball courts, according to a presentation by the county's Recreation and Parks Department.

The indoor facility would also have a lobby, locker rooms, bleacher seating and a design that could be flexible enough to allow multiple events at the same time, according to the presentation at the Jan. 29 community input meeting.

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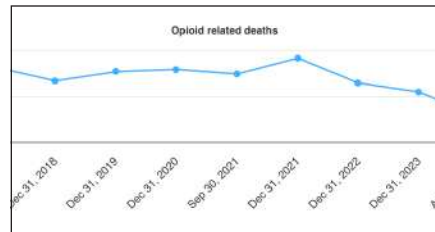
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# CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	3	OBITUARIES	14
COMMUNITY	10	CALENDARS	15
COLUMNISTS	13		

“THAT IS NOT SOMETHING WE COULD HANDLE IN OUR BUDGET.”

COMMISSIONER ERIC COLVIN ON THE SPORTS COMPLEX'S \$100M PRICE TAG



**LOCAL 4**  
Fatal overdoses continue to decline



**LOCAL 4**  
Junior Naval Academy closes for rest of school year



**ON THE COVER**  
Southern Maryland suffered disproportionately from the American Airlines Flight 5342 crash

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THU, FEB 6	FRI, FEB 7	SAT, FEB 8	SUN, FEB 9
 AM Rain Hi: 51° Lo: 43°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 54° Lo: 30°	 PM Rain Hi: 38° Lo: 40°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 30°
MON, FEB 10	TUE, FEB 11	WED, FEB 12	THU, FEB 13
 Rain/Snow Hi: 41° Lo: 32°	 Rain/Snow Hi: 37° Lo: 32°	 Cloudy Hi: 40° Lo: 34°	 Rain/Snow Showers Hi: 40° Lo: 29°

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# SOUTHERN MARYLAND MOURNS LOSSES

U.S. Coast Guard photo