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Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026

WWW.COUNTYTIMES.NET



GRASSO LOVES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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“I THINK THIS YEAR’S VERY IMPORTANT UP IN ANNAPOLIS.”

COMMISSIONER MIKE HART ON POTENTIAL STATE IMPACT ON DATA CENTERS



LOCAL 3
Zoning amendment proposals address potential data centers



LOCAL 4
County seeks state assistance for water quality projects



ON THE COVER 3
Commissioner Catherine Grasso files for reelection

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, FEB 12	FRI, FEB 13	SAT, FEB 14	SUN, FEB 15
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 40° Lo: 26°	 Sunny Hi: 41° Lo: 27°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 53° Lo: 34°	 Rain Hi: 44° Lo: 36°
MON, FEB 16	TUE, FEB 17	WED, FEB 18	THU, FEB 19
 AM Showers Hi: 50° Lo: 34°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 51° Lo: 39°	 Mostly Cloudy Hi: 53° Lo: 45°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 58° Lo: 42°

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Pints Ice Cream Cakes</p> | <p>FRESH MD CRAB MEAT
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Grasso Seeks Second Term

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

District 3 County Commissioner Catherine Grasso has filed for re-election. Her district encompasses the northern third of the county. So far she has no Republican opposition. Democrat Michael Bennett has also filed for the seat.

Grasso told The County Times on Feb. 11 about why she is seeking re-election, "Oh my goodness gracious. I tell you, I really love my job. I love making a difference within the community."

She observed, "I'm very proud of the fact that my first year, I was the one who made a motion to make within the town centers that instead of 14 dwelling units per acre, we went to seven. And then a matter of five, six months later, I made another motion to decrease dwelling units within town centers from seven dwelling units per acre to four. And I ran on what people wanted. They do not want high density."

Grasso said, "I've learned a lot. It's a big job. It's a bigger job than I had anticipated. Like this morning, I will be out and about. I have a ribbon cutting to go tonight. I'll be at a reception. Our Tuesdays start at 8:30 and yesterday it ended at almost 3:30. For me, Tuesday is a big day, but I'm a public servant at heart. And I've learned a lot. I feel like I have more to do."

She added, "I love being out with the people. I love helping to make a difference

when constituents call me and they need help. That's the best part of my job really is interacting with my constituents and helping them get through some of the struggles they have within the community."

She was asked if working with four men created difficulties. She answered cautiously, "Put it like this. Working with four men is a challenge. And that's all I'll say."

Data centers are the current hot topic. She said, "At this point, I don't have a firm opinion. Our constituents do not want high density within Calvert County. So, it's incumbent upon us to investigate what can bring more revenue in the county."

She said, "I was at a meeting a week ago with constituents, and they have a lot of concerns and a lot of questions about data centers, and I shared their concerns. I don't want their electric bills to go up. My electric bill in January doubled. I'm retired and Frank and I are on fixed incomes, and this is not a high paying job. So that's a big concern for me."

"The aquifer is a big concern for me. So, my position on data centers is I'm still learning. I'm still asking questions. Data centers seem like they can be a moving target. Once you get an answer to one thing, you have a constituent who has a concern, and then you're looking into that concern. So, I'm being educated."

"I don't have a hard firm position on data centers yet. I have a long way to go to learn the pluses and the minuses that it'll bring to

our community. And the bottom line is, do my constituents want it?"

She was asked what the biggest challenge will be over the next four years if she's re-elected. "Over the next four years my biggest challenge is going to be the fact that our governor is pushing down costs to the counties. And on a budget that has not changed, it's going to be a big challenge to incur the cost that he's pushing down to us, within all the counties in Maryland. And the big thing about that, what the cost is going to be. So, can you imagine getting your paycheck? And many of us have been through it, and it throws us for a loop, but, you know, you're plodding along, you're saving, you're trying to be a good steward of the money that you bring into your home. And then you get a whammy. Your car explodes, your heating and cooling system goes. That's what we're dealing with with this governor and the costs that are being pushed down to us. We know what lies ahead and we don't know the dollar amount. And that is very, very difficult to provide services and to do for our employees and for our constituents when we just don't know what we're up against at this point."

She was asked if she always listens to her constituents. "Definitely with the data centers. Over a week ago I went to a meeting, and I listened to concerns and I would say there were more concerns, probably more questions than anything."

She added, "Thus far, every decision I have made has been I just have a heart for



Commissioner Catherine Grasso

what we want in the county. So, people will hear me say this, when we go live. I don't hesitate to say I'm sorry, I couldn't agree with that because that's not what my constituents want. I tend to lean that way more than other ways. And it is a big challenge. It definitely is because they put you in there to make the decisions for them, but they put you in there with a clear mandate as to what they feel their biggest challenges are within the county."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Two Dozen Zoning Text Amendments Proposed Include Addressing Data Centers

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Staff of Calvert County Planning and Zoning have presented to the county commissioners two dozen proposed changes to the county zoning ordinance. Some are simply clarifications, others correct errors or omissions from the ordinance changes approved last year, and others are more substantive.

In the latter category are the proposals by Commissioners Buddy Hance and Mark Cox to put some parameters on potential data centers in the county.

As presented at a previous meeting, the proposals:

- Requires any cooling system using water to be a closed-loop system
- Prohibits well drilling to supply water for cooling purposes
- Requires the collection and reuse of rooftop stormwater runoff for cooling
- The applicant or owner shall be responsible for the full cost of all on-site and off-site public infrastructure improvements required
- All stationary generators shall be certified to meet U.S. EPA Tier 4 Final emission standards or equivalent emissions performance

But Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley says the proposal needs more

work and he plans on coming back in two weeks for further discussion.

Brinkley said, "We would like to see if we're heading in the right direction that you guys want to head, but also, especially on conditions like requiring closed loop and not allowing open loop. Our understanding is it's more fluid than that. There's not always a clear line between closed and open. There are hybrid systems out there. There are also implications that if you say it has to be closed loop, those typically often require more power. So, are you opening up another issue if you require it?"

"I think staff would like to draft a couple of examples of how to meet your goals that are maybe a little different than what is being presented today. And partially because this technology is ever changing. This is leading edge technology and having bright line rules on a changing technology may make them quickly outdated. And we want to find a way to draft this that gives you guys the maximum amount of authority over an ever-evolving technology."

Commissioner Catherine Grasso said, "I think that's a responsible way to go."

Commissioner Mike Hart related what happened with the Dominion LNG Plant with what could happen with data centers. He said he was concerned the state would dictate to the county what was required.

"I don't think we're really going to know how restrictive we're going to be able to be until we see what Maryland says this year. I think this year's very important up in Annapolis."

Commissioner Buddy Hance said, "That was my motion just trying to make sure that whether we have teeth or not, Mike, we're just trying to be prepared based on what we've hearing from the community, try to put some parameters in place."

Commissioner Mark Cox said, "I think the direction that we went last Tuesday, I think you all know our direction was sensitive of the Bay and the river in close to proximity. Anything we can do environmental wise to regulate the diesel generators, the water, anything that we can do for that, I'm in favor of."

Commissioner President Todd Ireland agreed: "As Director Brinkley said, this is cutting edge. Technology is constantly changing. And our main concerns here as Commissioner Cox just touched on, is anything that's environmentally sensitive... that's what we're looking at here. And I think we have a start by all means."

One other major change: Per BOCC directive based on public feedback for staff to revise family conveyance regulations to allow up to two family conveyance lots per eligible parcel



Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley

- With a sunset date of March 1, 2028
- After sunset date, no more than one family conveyance lot will be permitted
- Comparable with how exceptions lots were addressed

Hance suggested, based on the time it might take to complete the text amendment process, to have the sunset instead be two years after adoption of the change.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Commissioners Eliminate Appeals Board Hired Attorney

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners has ended the practice of the Board of Appeals hiring its own attorney. Instead, in the future the board will have to use someone from the County Attorney's Office.

Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley said the planning commission uses a county attorney and there have been no conflict problems with that. He said the hiring process from the appeals board attorney is cumbersome.

The Board of Appeals was the only county agency that hired its own attorney.

The decision came at a Feb. 10 commissioner meeting at which they were considering changes to the appeals board regulations. The attorney issue was not among those proposed changes.

Brinkley said, "The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) initially adopted Rules and Regulations for Calvert County

Board of Appeals on July 28, 1972, and last amended these Rules of Procedure on Feb. 1, 2024."

He explained, "During the Board of Appeals (BOA) hearings held on Nov. 6, 2025, and Dec. 4, 2025, the Board reviewed and discussed the proposed amendments and unanimously approved the document for submission to the BOCC following due public notice. Public notice was completed in November and December 2025."

The other changes were largely procedural, although Brinkley said the board voted to continue the practice of asking for the occupation of persons appearing before them.

Brinkley said other boards did not have such a practice.

During the discussion Commissioner President Todd Ireland had to recuse himself since his father Thomas is appeal board vice chairman.

dickmyers@ciuntytimes.net

County Announces President's Day Schedule

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners announces county offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, in observance of Presidents' Day. In addition:

- The Appeal Solid Waste Facility, which includes the landfill and transfer station, and all county convenience centers will be open Monday, Feb. 16, with normal operating hours.
- The Solomons Septage Receiving Facility will be open Monday, Feb. 16, with normal operating hours.
- The Water & Sewerage billing and customer service office will be closed Monday, Feb. 16.
- Calvert County senior centers will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, and Meals on Wheels will not be delivered. Meal delivery is scheduled to resume Tuesday, Feb. 17. An additional meal for home-delivered meal recipients was provided in advance of the holiday.
- All community centers will be closed Monday, Feb. 16.
- There will be no county bus service Monday, Feb. 16; service will resume Tuesday, Feb. 17.
- Calvert Library locations will be closed Monday, Feb. 16. Downloadable materials and virtual services are available 24/7 at calvertlibrary.info/.

- The Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter and Animal Control Division will be closed Monday, Feb. 16. Animal control officers will be available for emergencies at 410-535-3491.
- The Calvert Marine Museum and Museum Store will be open with normal hours Monday, Feb. 16.
- Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center will be closed Monday, Feb. 16., opening for regular hours Tuesday, Feb. 17.
- Edward T. Hall Aquatic Center will be open Monday, Feb. 16, with normal hours.
- All recreation parks including Dunkirk District Park, Ward Farm Recreation & Nature Park, Hallowing Point Park and Cove Point Park will be open with normal hours Monday, Feb. 16.
- Chesapeake Hills Golf Course is scheduled to be open with normal hours Monday, Feb. 16.
- Flag Ponds Nature Park, Kings Landing Park and Battle Creek Cypress Swamp will be open Monday, Feb. 16, with normal operating hours.
- Breezy Point Beach is closed for the season.

Press release from Calvert County Government

Commissioners Seek State Funding for Public Works Projects

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is seeking financial assistance for drinking water and water quality projects. Several major projects are included totaling \$24,764,000.

According to Public Works Director J.R. Cosgrove, Maryland Water Infrastructure Financing Administration funding is sought for the projects.

In a memo to the commissioners, he wrote, "The mission of the Maryland Water Infrastructure Financing Administration (MWIFA) is to provide state and federal assistance through low-interest loans, loan forgiveness and grant funding for eligible water quality, drinking water and storm-water management capital projects. The projects: Windy Hills (Paris Oaks Pump Station), Shores of Calvert Water Distribution Replacement, AMI Prince Frederick, Highlands Low Pressure Sewer and Chesapeake Heights/Dares Beach Water Distribution Replacement Phase 2A align with MWIFA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and MWIFA's Water Quality State Revolving Fund (WQSRF)."

Cosgrove said, "The Windy Hill Hills project demolishes and abandons the existing pump station at the Paris Oaks site and relocates water operations to the Windy Hills Elementary property at the existing standpipe. New wells and a water treatment building will be constructed to replace outdated infrastructure and improve system performance."

He said, "The Shores of Calvert Water Distribution Replacement project improves the 50-year-old water system. Planned improvements may include a new well, replacement of the distribution system and installation of additional valves to enhance future maintenance and system isolation capabilities."

Cosgrove said, "The AMI Prince Frederick



Director of Public Works J.R. Cosgrove

project replaces aging Automated Meter Reading (AMR) systems with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in the Prince Frederick water system. This enables two-way communication, allowing for automatic data transmission at set intervals."

"The Highlands Low Pressure Sewer project," he said, "replaces failing septic systems with a modern grinder pump system that discharges to a shared low-pressure force main."

"The Chesapeake Heights/Dares Beach Water Distribution Replacement Phase 2A project loops the systems of Chesapeake Heights and Dares Beach along Dares Beach Road to eliminate dead ends and reduce water stagnation."

The Highlands project is the largest, coming in at \$16.4 million. That project would require Special Taxing District approval by the community.

Commissioner Mike Hart urged significant outreach to the community to avoid problems similar to what have occurred in Chesapeake Ranch Estates.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Woman Sentenced in Veteran Fraud Scheme

On February 10, 2026, Lisa Donor, of Little River, SC, was sentenced in Calvert County Circuit Court to 10 years in prison, with all but one year suspended, for her role in a theft scheme that occurred in 2022 and 2023.

During the period of theft, Donor lived in Calvert County and worked for the National Association of State Veteran Homes (NASVH). NASVH is an organization that works to enhance the quality of life for veterans and their families in State Veteran's Homes throughout the country.

Through her employment, Donor had access to payments made to NASVH. She

used her position to divert some of these payments for her personal use.

An investigation revealed that Donor participated in over 50 fraudulent transactions valued at \$117,000.

The sentence was imposed the Honorable Mark S. Chandlee. In addition to the jail term, Judge Chandlee ordered Donor to make full restitution to NASVH.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Benjamin G. Lerner.

Press release from Calvert County State's Attorney

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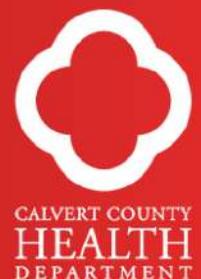
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- Manage Stress
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- Family History
- Age (55+ men, 65+ women)

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CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of January 19, 2026 – January 25, 2026, Calvert County Sheriff’s Office Deputies responded to 2,237 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 57
- Disorderly: 9
- Domestic: 27
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 38
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 1055
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 31
- Traffic Complaints: 58
- Traffic Stops: 465
- 911 Hang Ups: 53
- ARRESTS: 36

Assault: 26-007187 On January 21, 2026, at approximately 5:47 p.m., Deputy Campbell responded to the area of Hollyberry Drive and Emmanuel Church Road in Prince Frederick, for a reported road rage incident involving a firearm. Upon investigation, it was determined that the victim was traveling on Dares Beach Road when she was tailgated by a silver sedan being operated in an aggressive and erratic manner. The suspect vehicle continued to follow closely and drive aggressively. The victim reported that the suspect vehicle eventually passed her on the shoulder of Dares Beach Road and then intentionally “brake checked” her by abruptly stopping in front of her vehicle. Fearing for her safety, the victim began recording the suspect vehicle with her cellular phone. The suspect vehicle then came to a stop in the roadway on Emmanuel Church Road. At that time, the driver of the suspect vehicle leaned out of the driver’s side window and pointed a black handgun toward the victim clearly visible in the video footage. The operator of the suspect vehicle was positively identified as **Liza Sue Castles**, 59 of Huntingtown. A search warrant was subsequently executed at Castles’ residence, where a handgun matching the firearm observed in the video footage was recovered. Castles was taken into custody and charged with First-Degree Assault and Reckless Endangerment.

CDS Violation: 26-007629 On January 22, 2026, at approximately 9:21 p.m., DFC Lewis conducted a traffic stop for an equipment violation in the area of M.F. Bowen Road and Rt 4 in Huntingtown. A free-air K-9 sniff of the vehicle resulted in a positive alert for narcotics. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed a clear glass smoking device containing white powdery residue with burnt ends and a clear glass vial containing suspected PCP. Both occupants, identified as **Amy Michelle Drye**, 46, of Sunderland, and **Dontray Joseph Creek**, 31, of Prince Frederick, were taken into custody. A search of Drye’s person further revealed a glass smoking device (crack pipe) with white

powdery residue and burnt ends, a clear plastic tie-off bag containing several pills suspected to be Alprazolam, and \$120 in U.S. currency. The currency was covered in a white powdery residue. Drye and Creek were charged with CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute (PCP/LSD/Hallucinogen), CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis, and CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia.

CDS Violation: 26-008396 On January 25, 2026, at approximately 12:50 p.m., Deputy Brown responded to the area of Thunderbird Drive and Chilsholm Trail in Lusby for a welfare check on a driver who was asleep behind the wheel in the middle of an intersection, blocking snowplow operations. Multiple attempts to wake the driver were unsuccessful, and deputies used a lockout kit to open the vehicle door, at which point the driver regained consciousness. The driver was identified as **Christopher William Walls**, 36 of Lusby. While speaking with Walls, deputies detected a strong odor of alcohol emitting from the vehicle. Walls was administered standardized field sobriety tests, which he failed, and he was taken into custody without incident. A search incident to arrest revealed CDS paraphernalia with white powdery residue (suspected cocaine), a digital scale with similar residue, and a large amount of U.S. currency. Walls was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis, CDS Distribution – Narcotics, Reckless Driving, Negligent Driving, Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol, Driving While Impaired, and Driving on a Suspended License.

Theft: 26-008188 On January 24, 2026, DFC Dymond responded to the Calvert County Sheriff’s Office located at 30 Church Street in Prince Frederick, for a reported theft. The complainant advised sometime between 7 p.m. on Jan. 23 and 3:30 a.m. on Jan. 24, an unknown suspect(s) broke into a property along Potomac Lane in Prince Frederick and stole a range and a microwave from a home under construction. The estimated value of stolen property is \$1200.

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

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



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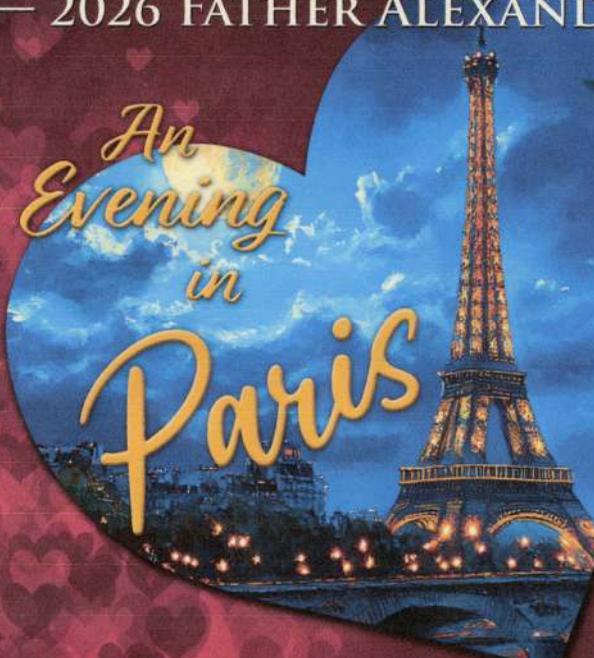
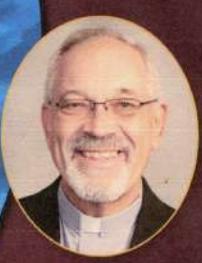
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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Fri, Feb 13

On Pins and Needles

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

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

Annamarie After Hours

Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center
5-7 p.m.

Celebratory Reception for Felicia & Friends: A Togetherness Tribute to MLK and Rhythm: Movement in Art. 21+ only Enjoy extended hours in the galleries and garden in celebration of the two exhibits. The Arts Building will be open until 7 p.m., along with the sculpture garden and walking trails. Enjoy live music, tour the new exhibits, take a walk, and appreciate an evening of art and nature. A cash bar and food trucks will be available on site. Admission is \$5/person; AMG Members free; reservations are not required. Learn more at

Sat, Feb 14

Great Backyard Bird Count

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

The museum will host this annual nationwide citizen science event celebrating the beauty and wonder of birds. Visitors can take part in hourly bird walks (binoculars provided), create a lovebird craft, and learn about local birds, bird clubs, and popular birdwatching locations in the area. Included with museum admission

Jigsaw Puzzle Swap

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
9-11 a.m.

Bring your gently used puzzles and exchange them for new-to-you challenges. It's a fun, eco-friendly way to refresh your collection and connect with fellow puzzle enthusiasts. Registration is not required but will let us know who is interested in other puzzling events! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-

1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

On Pins and Needles

Calvert Library Southern Branch
13920 H. G. Trueman Road, Solomons
2-4 p.m.

If you knit, embroider or crochet, or would like to learn, join us. Get together with other fiber crafters to learn or develop your skills. Work on projects in progress or start something new! BYOY! (Bring Your Own Yarn!) 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sun, Feb 15

Mardi Gras Guided Hike

1985 Scientists Cliffs Rd., Port Republic
10 a.m.

American Chestnut Land Trust themed hike—bring your beads and wear your purple, green & gold! South Side Trailhead Barn (arrive by 9:45 a.m.). Trail: Ridge—Flint—Laurel Trail. Note: Some inclines www.acltweb.org/guided-hikes

Southern Maryland Bluegrass Concert

Calvert Elks Lodge #2620
1015 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick
2 p.m.

The Po Ramblin' Boys. In 10 years as a band, the Po Ramblin' Boys have spread their love of Bluegrass through every corner of America and into the hearts of fans who are drawn to their hard-charging, true-blue sound.

Upcoming acts include The Country Gentlemen Show featuring Calvert County's Mike Phipps on March 22, and Special Consensus closing out the season on April 19.

Tickets for each concert are \$23.00 per person, sold at the door but available for advance purchase. For more information, visit www.somdbluegrass.com or call 301-737-3004. Food will be available for sale from Noon til 2 pm and the show starts at 2 pm. The doors open at approximately 12 p.m.

Mon, Feb 16

Universal Coprolite Day Celebration

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

Join us for the fourth annual celebration of fossilized poop, otherwise known as cop-

rolites. 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.

Tue, Feb 17

Tech Help Drop-in Hour

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

Learn how to troubleshoot and fix your tech problems! Need help with your devices? Drop-in to Calvert Library's open tech hours! We are pleased to offer personalized assistance with basic tech requests, computer and internet basics, e-Readers, Libby, Microsoft Office or Google apps, personal devices and more! While we are happy to schedule dedicated one-on-one tech trainings and offer tech help during all locations' open hours, these events are completely dedicated to you and your questions with no scheduling or appointment required. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Dine Out Discussions

Panera Bread
Prince Frederick
6-8 p.m.

Join us to discuss "The Crossover" by Kwame Alexander, as we get ready for the author to visit Calvert County on March 9th. Let's read and discuss "The Crossover" by Kwame Alexander, an award-winning book for young adults, written in verse. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Social on the Spectrum

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

Join us for a neurodivergent peer support conversation. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with peers about the joys and struggles of being a neurodivergent or autistic adult, or those exploring their identities on the spectrum. We welcome everyone 18+ regardless of ability or diagnostic status. This is a peer-led group, not therapy, and is not intended to diagnose or as medical advice. Calvert Library strives to make

all our events accessible. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Feb 18

Job Seeker Resources

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

MD Labor Workforce—Veterans Services will be available in person to meet with those seeking employment-related support and community service information. This event focuses on Veterans Services, but all jobseekers are welcome to attend. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Book Discussion

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

Join us online or in person to discuss "The Fraud" by Zadie Smith. One of the New York Times 10 Best Books of the Year and one of NPR's Best Books of the Year in 2023, this novel is a work of historical fiction about a legal trial in Victorian England. Register in advance to receive the Zoom link via email if you wish to attend virtually. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Bilingual Conversation Hour: Spanish-English

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

Come join us for a fun hour of bilingual conversation! 30 minutes in English and 30 minutes in Spanish! We will get to practice our English and Spanish Conversation Skills! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

On Pins and Needles

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
1-4 p.m.

Bring your quilting, needlework, knitting, crocheting or other project for an afternoon of conversation and shared creativity. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

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

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

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St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Sat, Feb 14

SMTMD Contra Dance

Christ Episcopal Church Parish Hall
37497 Zach Fowler Rd, Chaptico
7-9:30 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. Info: smtmd2@gmail.com, www.smtmd.org/new-events/

Tue, Feb 17

Shrove Tuesday Dinner

2nd District VFD & RS Social Hall
45245 Drayden Rd, Valley Lee
5 to 7 p.m.

Menu: Scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausage links, apple sauce, assorted juices, milk and coffee; Adults - \$13.; Children 6 to 12 - \$6;

Children 5 & under are free; For more information call: 301-904-1656 (c).

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

Our Lady of the Wayside's Loretto Hall
37575 Chaptico Rd., Chaptico
5-7 p.m.

Buffet Style Prices- Adults \$15 Children 6-12 \$10 Children 5 and under free. Menu includes pancakes, French toast, scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, sausage, bacon, coffee and juice. Carry outs available. Cash or check only. For more information contact Brenda Russell at 301-247-1871 or at rsbrsll@aol.com.

Wed, Feb 18

Ashes to Go

All Saints Episcopal Church Parking Lot
22598 Oakley Rd., Avenue
7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.

Stop by to receive ashes and a blessing, no matter where you are on your faith journey. All are welcome.

www.episcopalassetmap.org/dioceses/diocese-washington/list/all-saints-oakley

Ongoing

North End Gallery's Invitational Show

Leonardtown
Month of February

2026 launches a new quarter century full of challenges and new perceptions in the world of art. North End, entering its 40th year, showcases a wonderfully talented group of artists, and for the month of February; they will be joined by over 40 regional artists from the area in the gallery's 16th Annual Invitational Show. This show is always exciting, presenting new work in all mediums, including glass, jewelry, fiber, sculptural, clay, scratchboard, metal, wood, photography, ink and watercolor, serigraphy, oil and acrylic, and more. The show runs through Sunday March 1st.

Upcoming

COSMIC's "Symphonic Journeys"

Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge
Performing Arts Center
St. Mary's College of Maryland
47855 College Dr, St. Mary's City

Feb 22, 3 p.m.

Cosmic Symphony Orchestra presents a musical voyage that will take you through the works of Lalo, Rachmaninoff, and Dvořák! This concert will feature COSMIC's 2025 Young Artist Competition winners Henry Horst, piano (senior division) and Elizabeth Tober, violin (junior division) taking center stage with COSMIC accompaniment. As always, these concerts are presented free of charge with no tickets required, and donations are greatly appreciated.

Kids Bingo

2nd District VFD & RS Social Hall,
45245 Drayden Rd, Valley Lee
Sunday, Feb. 22

Doors open at noon, bingo starts at 1 p.m.

Bingo is for kids Age 15 years and under -p.m., \$20 per child; Prizes include \$25 gift cards to various restaurants and stores + more! Food and drinks available for purchase!

ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library UPCOMING EVENTS



Valentine Coloring Pop Up!

Choose from a variety of materials to color in a selection of small, adorable valentines. Share them with anyone you care about! Enjoy some music, mingle and chat with others who stop in, and embrace how good it feels to spread a little love. Charlotte Hall Library on Saturday, February 14 from 2 - 3 p.m. Intended for tweens and teens, no registration.

Heart Crayons

Join us for a fun and eco-friendly craft where creativity meets sustainability! In this hands-on activity, participants will learn how to recycle old or broken crayons by melting them into colorful heart-shaped molds. These vibrant creations can be used as new crayons, keepsakes, or thoughtful gifts for friends and family. Through this activity, participants will explore color mixing and the concept of reusing materials in creative ways. Other mold designs will be available as well. Lexington Park Library on Saturday,

February 14 from 1 - 3 p.m. Intended for children of all ages. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Presidents Day Holiday Hours

All locations of St. Mary's County Library will be closed on Monday, February 16 in observance of Presidents Day. All locations will be open regular business hours on Tuesday, February 17.

The Family Dance Party

DJ Oso Rock (and his hype girl Ms. Tess) present a half hour of family friendly bangers! The only rule is: you can't stop dancing! (unless you get really tired, then you can take a brief break!) Please be advised this program will include loud music, flashing lights, and a lot of movement! Leonardtown Library on Wednesday, February 18 from 10 - 10:30 a.m. No registration required, intended for toddlers through elementary aged children.

Oysters and Oyster Restoration in Southern Maryland

Oysters are not just a tasty treat - they're

a keystone species that filter water, stabilize shorelines, and make habitat for other aquatic critters! That's why local nonprofits have been working to restore the oyster population in our local waterways. Hear about the community-led efforts to revive our local oyster populations and learn about the countless benefits of a healthy oyster reef with the St. Mary's River Watershed Association and the St. Mary's College of Maryland's Coastal Community Resilience Course. Lexington Park Library, Thursday, February 19 from 4:30 - 6 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Gardening 101 & Community Garden Orientation

Get expert advice on how to make your garden a success, then learn how you can bring your skills to the Lexington Manor Passive Park Community Garden! All are welcome! Come join us for all or just part of the morning's activities. After some gardening fundamentals, stick around to learn about how to use the LMPP Community Garden! Renters, volunteers, and interested community members alike

are invited to learn about this fantastic community resource. Lexington Park Library on Saturday, February 21 from 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

STEM Fun: Blood, Bones, and Guts

Learn through play while reading, experimenting, and creating with hands-on science activities inspired by the human body! Activities will cover how powerful our brains are, how impressive our blood is, how important (and gross!) our mucus is, and more! This event is intended for children with preschool and lower-elementary aged abilities. Siblings welcome--please use the Add More People button when registering to register every child who will be participating at the event. Charlotte Hall Library on Saturday, February 21 from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

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In Remembrance

married in Compton, MD, on June 11, 1952, and who preceded her in death on October 2, 2015. She is survived by her children, Charles H. Deagle, Jr. (Pam) of Tall Timbers, MD, Thomas L. Deagle of Tall Timbers, MD, and Darlene V. McCoy (Rich), of Leonardtown, MD, her siblings Ann Mattingly of Compton, MD, Janice Deagle of Tall Timbers, MD, and Jean Reeves of Pembroke Pines, FL, two grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. In addition to her parents and husband, Vicky was preceded in death by her siblings, Julia Sievertson, Leon Higgs, Vincent Higgs, Larry Higgs, Walter Higgs, and Carroll Higgs.

Vicky was a lifelong St. Mary's County, MD resident and was a homemaker. She will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

All services will be private.

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

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

Rachael Quade, 88



Agnes Rachael Quade, 88, of Bushwood, MD, passed away on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown, MD, surrounded by family. She was

born on February 4, 1937, in Leonardtown, MD, to the late Arthur M. Wathen and Mary Effie Lacey Wathen.

Rachael is survived by her children, Delores Wong, Joseph Quade II (Rhonda), Michael Quade, David Quade (Janie), Gary Quade, Danny Quade, Mary Ellen Oliver (Johnny), Pamela Gass (Robby) and her sister, Bea Rippy. She is preceded in death by her loving husband of 63 years, Joseph Franklin Quade "Frank", her daughter, Shirley Jackson, her siblings, Edith Roehs, Marie Miller, Lawrence Wathen, Richard Wathen, Donald Wathen, and three grandchildren, Joseph "Joey" Quade III, Joshua Gass and Christopher Sheppard.

Rachael and Frank were married on November 8, 1952, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Together they had 9 children, 24 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren and 11 great-great grandchildren. They were devoted Catholics who religiously attended church and loved singing in the choir. They enjoyed cooking large meals together, especially during the holidays. In their home, everyone was welcome. There was not a day that passed when they were not surrounded by family.

Rachael was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, MD and attended Margaret Brent High School. She worked as a nurse's aide at St. Mary's Nursing Center for over 30 years. She then spent many years as a private caregiver. Rachael started playing horseshoes in 1971 and fell in love with

the sport. She became the highest average champion in 1983 and official scorekeeper of the women's league, later receiving the title of "Sportsgirl" of the year by a local newspaper. She also bowled on a women's team in a duckpin bowling league for years.

The family will receive friends on Monday, February 16, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with prayers recited at 7:00 PM at Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home in Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 10:00 AM at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, in Bushwood, MD. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. Pallbearers will be William "Billy" Quade, J.C. Oliver, Shane Gass, Quincy Quade, Ryan Quade and Tyler Gass. Honorary Pallbearers will be Gary Quade II, Derick Quade, Jason Gass, David Lee, Brandon Gass and Kyle Jackson.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the 7th District Volunteer Rescue Squad P.O. Box 7, Avenue, MD 20609.

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

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

Doug Gourley, 85



Douglas Allen Gourley Sr., 85, of Mechanicsville, Maryland (Golden Beach), passed away peacefully on January 21, 2026, in Waldorf, Maryland.

Douglas was born on February 29, 1940, in Boston, Massachusetts. He was preceded in death by his mother, Barbara Turner.

Doug is survived by his brother, Tim Turner; his beloved wife of 23 years, Patricia "Pat" Gourley; and his former wife, Beverly Zerbian, the mother of his five children: Douglas Allen (Nikki) Gourley Jr., Stephen Joseph Gourley, Sherri Ann Jelouchin, Amanda (Matt) McCracken, and Jennifer (Chris) Bishop. He is also survived by many grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Doug had a deep love for baseball and football, and he especially cherished life on the river. He enjoyed fishing, spending time on his boat, and taking in the peace of the water. One of the defining experiences of his life was serving a two-and-a-half-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Paris, France.

A funeral service will be held on February 21 at 11:00 a.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, located at 4560 Padgett Road, White Plains, Maryland.

Doug will be remembered for his love of family, his faith, and the joy he found in simple moments spent on the river.

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

Arrangements by Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, P.A., Charlotte Hall, MD.

Richard Lamb, 93



Richard Norman Lamb, 93, passed away peacefully on February 1, 2026, in Lexington Park, Maryland, with his loving family by his side. He was born on July 10, 1932, in Fort Myers, Florida, to the late Orian C. Lamb and Paula C. Altman Lamb.

Richard proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Korean War. He married Marion Powell on July 26, 1953 in Rutherford, New Jersey. He pursued higher education with dedication, earning an Industrial Management degree as well as a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from the University of Florida. He spent his professional career with Hughes Aircraft Company, where he worked as Manager of Systems Aerospace Programming.

From a young age, Richard had a love for adventure. As a child, he enjoyed sailing, and throughout his life he cherished getting in the car and driving—always eager to explore new places and travel with Marion. In 1990, he relocated from Los Angeles, California, to Maryland to be closer to his family, a decision that reflected the impor-

ance of family in his life. He was part of the Elks Lodge and the American Legion where he enjoyed spending time with friends.

Richard is survived by his children, Alan Lamb (Eulalia) of Glen Allen, Virginia, and Luanne Barosio (Luis) of Lexington Park, Maryland; his brother, Jean Lamb of Tampa, Florida; six grandchildren; sixteen great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Marian F. Lamb; his parents; his brother, Howard Orian Lamb, Sr.; and granddaughter Ursela Bell.

Family and friends are invited to celebrate Richard's life on Friday, February 20, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Brinsfield Funeral Home P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650, with a funeral service celebrated by Rev. Mark Smith at 12:00 p.m. Interment will follow at 1:15 p.m. at Evergreen Memorial Gardens and Mausoleum, 22020 Chancellors Run Road, Great Mills, MD 20634.

Serving as pallbearers are: Alan Lamb, Alannah Bell, Frank Barosio, Antonio Barosio, Luis Barosio Jr. and Joseph Barosio.

Contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's at P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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

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In Remembrance

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

Wilma Price, 75



Wilma Lee (nee: Quade) Price, 75, of Mechanicsville, MD (formerly of VA), passed away on January 27, 2026 at MedStar Washington Hospital Center with her loving daughters

at her side.

She was born on January 21, 1951 in Prince Frederick, MD to Mary Elizabeth Quade of Pasadena, MD.

She found happiness in the things that made life feel cozy and colorful—playing Bingo, going yard-saleing, painting pictures, coloring, and gardening. She especially loved picking fresh strawberries and enjoying the beauty of nature. In her younger years, she worked hard alongside her grandparents, helping them plant tobacco. Her favorite animals were cats, dogs, and rabbits, and she had a soft heart for all creatures.

In addition to her mother, Mary, Wilma is also survived by her daughters, Annette Lynn Dixon (Thomas) of Mechanicsville, MD and Theresa Dodson (Bay) of Beckley, WV; her son, Carter Byington of VA; her siblings: Robert Sommers, Shannon Sommers, Susan Sommers Thomas, Diane

Sommers, and Lisa Sommers Cullins; her grandchildren: Heather Gordon (Chris) of Ronceverte, WV, Courtney Fluhart (Tyler) of Mechanicsville, MD; Brett Dodson (Brittany) of Beckley, WV; Dalton Dodson of Beckley, WV; Rebecca Dixon of Mechanicsville, MD; and Rachel Dixon of Waldorf, MD; great-grandchildren: Christopher Jr, Brandon, Ace, Avery, Ben, Chloe, Mackenzie, Harper, Dayton, and Matlock, along with many extended family and friends. She is preceded in death by her brothers, Steven and Michael Sommers.

All services will be private.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.brinsfieldsfuneral.com (<https://www.brinsfieldsfuneral.com/>).

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, Charlotte Hall, MD.

Debbie St. Clair, 66



Debra (known lovingly as Debbie) Lynn St. Clair, 66, passed away peacefully at her residence on February 2, 2026, in Waldorf, Maryland.

Born on May 17, 1959, in Charles County, Maryland, Debbie was the daughter of the late Arthur St. Clair and Doris

(Hayden) St. Clair. She was a gentle soul who found joy in the simple pleasures of life, especially listening to music and watching television. One of her favorite shows was I Love Lucy, which brought her much happiness over the years. She always enjoyed getting her nails painted. Debbie loved attending the Spring Dell Day Program.

In addition to her parents, Debbie was preceded in death by her brother, Wayne St. Clair, and brother-in-law, Brent Simpson, both of Charlotte Hall, Maryland.

She is survived by her loving sister, Elaine Simpson, and sister-in-law, Nancy St. Clair, both of Charlotte Hall, Maryland, along with many nieces and nephews and other family members. Debbie will also be fondly remembered by her close friends and the staff, caregivers, and families of HARC/ Providence and Spring Dell, who were an important part of her life.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, February 19, 2026, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. with prayers at 7:00 p.m. at Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, 30195 Three Notch Road, Charlotte Hall, Maryland 20622.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be on Friday, February 20, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Mary's Newport Catholic Church, 11555 St. Mary's Church Road, Charlotte Hall, Maryland 20622, with Father Gregory Coan officiating. Interment will immediately follow in the church cemetery. Following inter-

ment, the family invites you to join them for a repast at the church hall.

Pallbearers will be Rodne Getgen, John Brown, Jr., Donald J. McEwan, Martin Shatzer, Glenn St. Clair, and Joseph C. May.

Memorial donations can be made to:

St. Mary's Newport Catholic Church, 11555 St. Mary's Church Road, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622.

Providence of Maryland, Inc., 79 Industrial Park Drive, Waldorf, MD 20602.

Spring Dell Center Inc., 6040 Radio Station Road, La Plata, MD 20646.

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

Arrangements by Brinsfield Funeral Home & Crematory, P.A., Charlotte Hall, MD.

Vicky Deagle, 90



Mary Victoria Deagle, "Vicky", 90, of Tall Timbers, MD, formerly of Compton, MD, passed away on February 4, 2026, at her home in Tall Timbers. Born on May 18, 1935, in

Compton, MD, she was the daughter of the late Helen Victoria Higgs and the late John Leon Higgs. Vicky was the loving wife of the late Charles H. Deagle, Sr., whom she

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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind



All the Milestones

By Shelby Opperman
Contributing Writer

Well, I know I'm coming up on another milestone in June this year, yes, my milestone will be 65. All the exciting milestones have long since passed like being legal to drink at 18 (way back when before the change to 21). I turned 18 in Frankfurt Germany where my brother was stationed at that time and turning 18 in Germany is no big deal, since I think all ages drink. Though having my 18th birthday dinner in the newly finished Frankfurt Space Needle was unique. Another reason 18 wasn't exciting is because most of us had already been changing our parents' or friend's parents' vodka slowly to water. Or trying to get Pina Colada's at The Stardust at 17, hoping the cocktail waitress wouldn't say anything. And the times I used my best friend's older sister's ID (who happen to be part Filipino) to get into The Wharf in Leonardtown... Oh, those fun, exciting times.

By 21, I was already married for a year, and by 22 my first child was born. You know how those child-rearing and working years were; yeah, they were a blur of exhaustion and activities. I loved it all though. The age of 25 was supposed to be your first discount on your car insurance. That's a little milestone, but it was much needed at the time. I turned 30 in Salt Lake City, Utah where my brother finished out his Air Force career and has lived ever since. That was a nice birthday with my sons, my brother and his wife.

My 40th birthday was interesting. I had to help my husband Robert that day cleaning pools for his weekly service customers. I was hot, sticky and in my grungiest clothes (kind of like what I still wear now). We had brought along nice clothes to stay at one of the hotels in Waldorf and then we were going to have dinner where the Prime Street Grille is now in White Plains. Keep in mind it was not the elegant Prime Street Grille back then; it was called Tailgates. When we were finished with the pools we walked into the hotel in these dirty, probably stinky clothes and were given the stink eye by the front desk clerk. An hour or so later, we magically appeared in the lobby where the clerk did a doubletake when he saw me in a floor length dark blue velvet gown with matching purse and shoes, and my husband dressed to the nines. And then we went for our first visit to Tailgates where we ate and played pool. I think we were both expecting something else, but it was a fun evening.

Turning 50 was amazing because my husband, while in the hospital very ill, and his daughter Michelle planned an over the top birthday party for me with lots of friends and family at Gilligan's Pier. I still remember how magical that evening was. And any night with a cup of their famous Swamp Water was wonderful to me. The age change to 60 brought a lovely night at Rucci's with family. I wanted a quiet 60.

But 65 is the milestone where you actually start to listen to the bazillion commercials on Medicare about checking your zip code to see if you qualify for extras. Then there's the Medicare commercial with the old heartthrob "Broadway Joe" Namath who says basically, "Sign up to get what you're entitled to". Even though I won't be 65 for a few more months the mailbox is already starting to fill with all the exciting Medicare offers from companies known and unknown. It all amounts to an impressive amount of junk mail. I have had Medicare A since I was 62 and so far and that's it, no Part B yet. Part A doesn't do too much, but if you are admitted to a hospital then it helps. The key word being "admitted". Just seeing all those Medicare, life insurance and burial insurance ads, along with all the constant barrage of mail seems overwhelming. What if you pick the wrong type, what if you don't pick at all??? I would really like to see some ads come on that say, "Hey, you made it to 65 and you are awesome. You have lots of life ahead of you yet (we hope). And we just want to say congratulations that you have reached another milestone that refutes all those people that said in your younger, wilder years, "That one won't make it to 20". Welp, here I am.

To each new day's adventure,
Shelby

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

A View From The BLEACHERS



A Little Bit Older

By Ronald N. Guy, Jr.
Contributing Writer

The cadence of time never alters. Minutes, hours, days and years pass by at equal intervals. There is no variation.

Perception of time observes no such rules. Waiting for water to boil takes an hour (five minutes, actually). Recess never seemed like the advertised 30 minutes. A week on vacation flashes by in a blink; a work week creeps along in slow-motion. The decade between ages 10 and 20 took twice as long as the one between 40 and 50. And in general, the older you get, the faster time moves.

That this lacks mathematical explanation is not consequential; perception is. Tell me I've been a parent for 22 years (chronological fact) and I won't argue. But please don't tell me I'm wrong when I say my adult kids were in kindergarten yesterday (perceived reality).

I have spent much time pondering this disconnect between actual and the mind's timekeeping. Here's the best I can come up with. The young have very little past, no concept of the passage of decades and the future offers infinite possibilities. Their minds are mostly looking forward: to the next birthday, age-related milestones (16 and 21, for example), a new school, the next significant other, the first job. The desire for time to fly causes it to crawl.

Then decade milestones are reached: ages 30, 40, 50, etc. Each arrives with less excitement; the mind's wistfulness for the past trumps its hopefulness for the future. As I sit here almost certainly having lived more days than I will, this mental journey is understandable. If you're lucky (I am), you've lived a rich life with wonderful experiences to reflect upon; the future, while still stirring hope and anticipation, doesn't have the charm it did 30 years ago. There's also the inevitable confrontation with one's own mortality. No one knows how their story ends, but with each passing day, we are closer to it.

Much has changed over the last half dozen years. A pandemic, social media's increased influence and the rise of artificial intelligence have accelerated changes to how we live, interact, collect information and process the world. Division, suspicion and individualism are up; tolerance, community and commitment to a shared American and human experience are down. The world looks the same, but it feels unfamiliar. What version is authentic and which is the imposter? Time will tell.

Between the ever-increasing distance from my date of birth and recent social changes hopped up on digital accelerants, my mind often drifts to cherished anchors from the past. There are fewer now, the reality of a weakening memory, people transitioning to the other side and places getting repurposed. There were two farewells last week.

Sonny Jurgensen, the Hall of Fame quarterback and Washington icon, passed away last Friday. He was 91. This unfortunate news arrived just days after The Washington Post gutted its news staff and terminated its famed Sports section. I never saw Jurgensen play, but his gunslinging reputation was irresistible (he was way ahead of his time) and his media work, especially gameday broadcasts with Frank Herzog and Sam Huff, were the soundtrack of the 'Skins' glory years in the 1980s. Farewell #9. Thanks for the memories.

The Post's Sports section is the only thing I faithfully read as a teenager (my dad delivered a worn and folded copy every evening after work). Great works of fiction, expertly crafted biographies and (especially) textbooks stirred little interest. The Sports page is where I absorbed the brilliance of Shirley Povich, Christine Brennan, John Feinstein, Michael Wilbon and Tony Kornheiser – the latter two being the most influential. I would have never tried writing, and this column wouldn't exist, without them.

Nothing is static in life – a lesson we all learn. Bidding adieu to Jurgensen was inevitable; having him for as long as we did was a blessing. Termination of The Post's Sports page is painful, but nothing in legacy print media should surprise. For me, and likely those of my vintage, the two farewells prompt another struggle with the relentless passage of time, and leave us feeling a little bit older now that they're gone.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

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

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

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

Plaintiff

v.

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

Defendants

and

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

and

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

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

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

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

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

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

and assessed to HYSON MARY E

(the "Property").

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

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

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

FINANCIAL FOCUS®**Why Social Security matters more for women**

When planning for retirement, Social Security isn't just another item on your financial checklist. For women especially, it's often the cornerstone of a secure retirement. The Social Security Administration reports that nearly 55% of Social Security benefit recipients are women, and for many, it's their primary source of retirement income.

Unlike investments that can lose value when the market drops, Social Security provides guaranteed income that adjusts for inflation and generally lasts as long as you live. That reliability makes it valuable for helping to address two major retirement risks: rising costs and the possibility of outliving your savings.

Life expectancy

On average, women live about five years longer than men (CDC 2023 Life Expectancy measure). That means they rely on Social Security for a longer period, making the decision of when to start benefits especially important.

Taking Social Security early reduces your monthly benefit. You can claim benefits as early as age 62, but every month you wait increases your monthly payments by two-thirds of 1%, or 8% per year, maxing out at age 70. Given women's longer life expectancy, that patience can pay off.

Building your benefit

Your Social Security benefit depends on your 35 highest-earning years. If you have years with zero or very low earnings in that calculation, it can reduce what you receive in retirement. Many women step away from work or reduce their hours to care for family members, and that trend is increasing. A 2025 University of Kansas analysis found that the share of mothers with children under age 5 leaving the workforce fell more in early 2025 than at any point in the past 40 years. The study also noted that rising return-to-office policies may continue to impact working mothers.

While staying in the workforce builds a stronger earnings history and better benefits, that isn't realistic for everyone. Those who can't may need to plan and fund alternative sources for retirement income.

Protection for married women

Marriage can provide additional Social Security options. A lower-earning spouse may receive up to 50% of their partner's full retirement-age benefit.

If your spouse dies, you can receive the higher of your own benefit or up to 100% of your deceased spouse's benefit. However, if you remarry before age 60 (age 50 for disabled widows), you lose eligibility for survivor benefits from your late spouse while the new marriage lasts.

Women divorced after at least 10 years of marriage may qualify for benefits based on an ex-spouse's record. If you remarry, you forfeit spousal benefits while the new marriage continues.

A word of wisdom: Report any name changes following marriage or divorce to the Social Security Administration to ensure your earnings and benefits are correctly credited.

Navigate carefully

Given the complexity of Social Security rules, the unique retirement challenges women face and the lasting impact of claiming decisions, working with a qualified financial advisor can be invaluable. An advisor can help you navigate questions about timing, spousal benefits and how Social Security fits into your overall retirement plan.

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

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

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Hoyer Announces St. Mary's Projects

Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-05) has issued the following statement announcing \$7,193,000 in Community Project Funding that he secured for projects in Maryland's Fifth District in the recently enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026. Three are in St. Mary's County.

They are:

- **\$975,000 for MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Workplace Violence Prevention Initiative:** This funding will help the hospital implement MedStar Health's comprehensive initiative to provide staff with training, tools, and infrastructure to prevent incidents from escalating and to resolve incidents more quickly.
- **\$850,000 for St. Mary's County Affordable Housing Acquisition and Relocation:** This funding will help the St. Mary's Housing Authority purchase and place high-quality manufactured homes to provide affordable housing for low-income families.
- **\$850,000 for YMCA Great Mills Recreation Center in Lexington Park:** This funding will help St. Mary's County construct a multi-use YMCA recreation center serving families and youth in the Lexington Park community.

The House Committee on Appropriations allowed each Member of Congress to sub-

mit up to 15 Community Funding Project requests for their districts in the Fiscal Year 2026 funding cycle. Ten of Congressman Hoyer's projects were included in the recent appropriations packages, while the other five were already enacted into law in November 2025. The combined value of all the Community Project Funding Congressman Hoyer secured for Fiscal Year 2026 is \$11,890,000.

"Throughout my time in Congress, securing funding for local projects in Maryland's Fifth District has been one of my top priorities," Congressman Hoyer said. "This year was no exception. I'm pleased that Maryland's Fifth District received \$7,193,000 for community projects in the most recent appropriations law, bringing our total for FY 2026 to nearly \$12 million. These federal funds will help expand access to clean water, improve road safety, reduce crime, build affordable housing, and more. With Maryland and America struggling under the Trump Administration's radical agenda, we need to do everything we can to help our communities weather the storm. I look forward to bringing home more crucial resources for Maryland's Fifth District during the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations cycle."

Press release from Rep. Steny Hoyer

Draft 2050 Plan Available for Review

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) has released the first draft of the St. Mary's 2050 Plan and is inviting the community to review the document and share feedback to help guide the final version.

St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow is the County's long-range Comprehensive Plan that will shape land use, growth, and preservation decisions through 2050 and beyond. Input gathered during this 45-day review period will play an important role in refining the plan to ensure it reflects shared priorities, values, and future needs of the community.

The draft plan is available online at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050. Feedback may be submitted directly through the project webpage by clicking the "Participate Now" button. This online option allows individuals to review the plan at their own pace and provide comments on key topics and recommendations.

Paper copies of the plan are also available for review at all St. Mary's County public libraries, senior centers, and the Health Hub.

In addition to online engagement, a series of in-person Open Houses will be held in

February to provide opportunities to review the draft, ask questions, and share feedback directly with the project team. Details on dates, times, and locations for February are available here: <https://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/pio/docs/2026-025NewsReleaseStMarys2050OpenHouses.pdf>. Stay tuned for more dates in March!

All feedback received—both online and in person—will be considered as the plan moves toward its final draft for consideration by the Planning Commission in late spring and the Commissioners of St. Mary's County this summer.

To review the draft plan, submit feedback, and stay informed about upcoming engagement opportunities, visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050.

St. Mary's 2050: Charting Our Tomorrow is an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan and will guide future land use and development decisions while supporting economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Continued engagement is a key component of creating a plan that reflects a shared vision for St. Mary's County's future.

Press release from St. Mary's County Government

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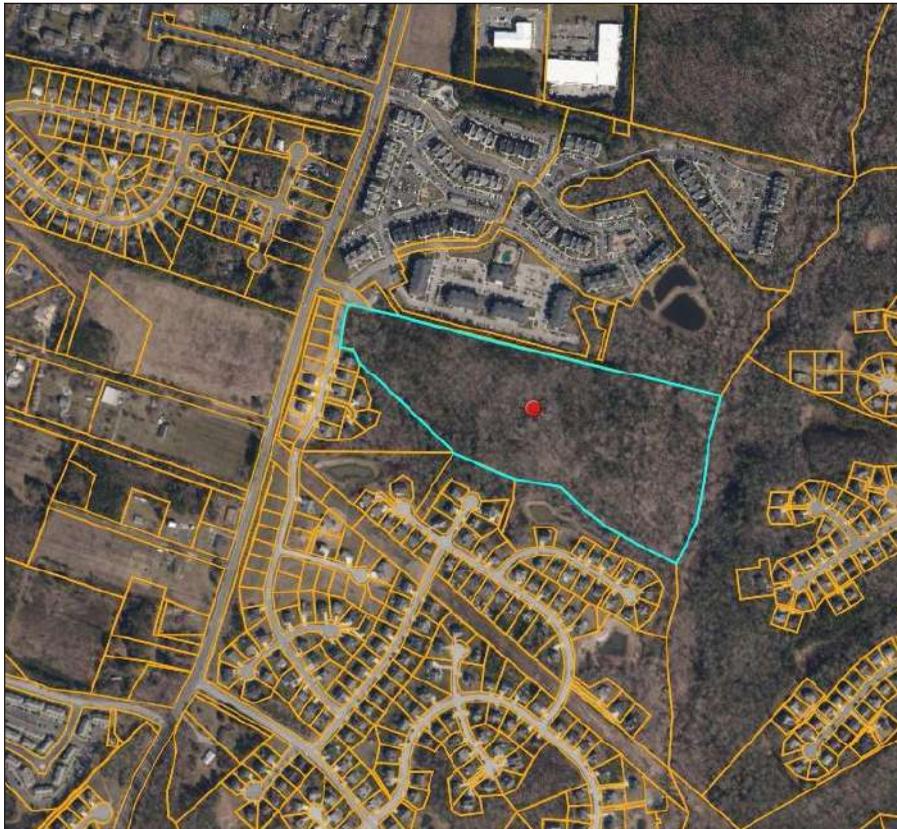
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Planning Commission Okays Another Willows Road Subdivision



Location of the newly approved development

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Planning Commission has approved another subdivision on Willows Road.

This one is called Pembroke, and it consists of 140 townhomes on 27.82 acres. It is located in the Residential Medium-Density Zone (RM) and is located within the Lexington Park Development District. The zoning is consistent with the proposed project.

According to Planner III Sianli Blasco, the staff report said, "The proposed use of the property (single-family attached dwellings, use type #14) is permitted within the RM zone and therefore, this plan is consistent with Schedule 50.4 of the St. Mary's County Zoning Ordinance. b. Schedule 32.1 entitled 'Development Standards,' indicates that the base density in the RM zone ranges from one dwelling unit per acre to five dwelling units per acre (du/a). TDRs are required for density above five dwelling units per acre up to 10 dwelling units per acre."

Although the planners did approve the project, they did express concerns during the hour-and-a-half public hearing on Feb. 10 about traffic on Willows Road and stormwater management.

A traffic consultant said a recent study

showed 820 one-way trips a day, with the largest number in rush hour. The consultant said the four closest intersections to the project all come in at Level of Service A, which is the best condition.

The planners have been consistently concerned about the Willows Road and Route 5 intersection, which is not signalized. The state so far has shown no interest in moving forward with a light there.

Commission member Judith Fillius said, "It's almost incomprehensible about 820 daily trips has no impact."

She was reminded that was only 410 people. But she added, "From a public standpoint, if I lived on Willows Road and this housing development went in at 820 and the next one down the road went in another 820. Now we're up to 1,640. I'm looking at it comprehensively."

As to stormwater management, a half a dozen of the buildings will have no stormwater control in the back. Water will run off the roofs, down the backyard grass, and into a stream. But the planners were told there isn't enough room for a stormwater structure, and the runoff will still be less than it is now.

All state regulations will be followed, the planners were told.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

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



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2026 SCHEDULE

REGULAR SEASON

DAYTONA 500

FEB 15 | 2:30PM | FOX

ECHOPARK (ATLANTA)

FEB 22 | 3PM | FOX

COTA (AUSTIN)

MAR 1 | 3:30PM | FOX

PHOENIX

MAR 8 | 3:30PM | FS1

LAS VEGAS

MAR 15 | 4PM | FS1

DARLINGTON

MAR 22 | 3PM | FS1

MARTINSVILLE

MAR 29 | 3:30PM | FS1

BRISTOL

APR 12 | 3PM | FS1

KANSAS

APR 19 | 2PM | FOX

TALLADEGA

APR 26 | 3PM | FOX

TEXAS

MAY 3 | 3:30PM | FS1

TEXAS

MAY 3 | 3:30PM | FS1

WATKINS GLEN

MAY 10 | 3PM | FS1

ALL-STAR RACE @

DOVER

MAY 17 | 3PM | FS1

CHARLOTTE

MAY 24 | 6PM | PRIME

NASHVILLE

MAY 31 | 7PM | PRIME

MICHIGAN

JUN 7 | 3PM | PRIME

POCONO

JUN 14 | 3PM | PRIME

SAN DIEGO

JUN 21 | 4PM | PRIME

SONOMA

JUN 28 | 3:30PM | TNT

CHICAGOLAND

JUL 5 | 6PM | TNT

ECHOPARK (ATLANTA)

JUL 12 | 7PM | TNT

NORTH WILKESBORO

JUL 19 | 7PM | TNT

INDIANAPOLIS

JUL 26 | 2PM | TNT

IOWA

AUG 9 | 3:30PM | USA

RICHMOND

AUG 15 | 7PM | USA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

AUG 23 | 3PM | USA

DAYTONA

AUG 29 | 7:30PM | NBC

THE CHASE

DARLINGTON

SEP 6 | 5PM | USA

WWTR (ST. LOUIS)

SEP 13 | 3PM | USA

BRISTOL

SEP 19 | 7:30PM | USA

KANSAS

SEP 27 | 3PM | USA

LAS VEGAS

OCT 4 | 5:30PM | USA

CHARLOTTE

OCT 11 | 3PM | USA

CHARLOTTE

OCT 11 | 3PM | USA

PHOENIX

OCT 18 | 3PM | USA

TALLADEGA

OCT 25 | 2PM | NBC

MARTINSVILLE

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NOV 8 | 3PM | NBC



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Town Responds to Proposed Excise Tax Amendment

The Town of Leonardtown is responding to the St. Mary's County Commissioners' recent 4-1 vote to hold a public hearing on amendments to the County's Building Excise Tax Ordinance.

The proposed amendment would clarify that the County's full excise tax applies within municipalities and would require municipalities to collect and remit the tax upon issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

Leonardtown Supports Fair Contribution

Leonardtown has long supported the principle that growth should pay for growth — particularly when it comes to school capacity. For more than two decades, the Town collected and remitted the school impact fee to support St. Mary's County Public Schools. In addition, new homebuyers in Leonardtown currently pay \$24,000 in local impact fees for water and sewer infrastructure to ensure that growth does not burden existing Town residents.

The Town remains willing to collect and remit the school portion of the excise tax — provided those funds are placed in a dedicated account reserved specifically for school capacity improvements. However, the Town has serious concerns about requiring municipal residents to pay the full excise tax for roads, recreation and parks, and public safety services that are already funded locally through Town taxes.

Leonardtown maintains more than 21 miles of Town roads and funds its own public works, parks, and supplemental public safety services. Town residents also contribute more than \$6.5 million annually in County property taxes. All Leonardtown property owners pay their full State, County, Fire, Rescue, Support and Solid Waste taxes in addition to their Town property tax. Requiring the full excise tax in addition to existing municipal infrastructure funding will create a duplicative tax for Leonardtown residents for these services.

Clarifying Annexation Misinformation

Annexations occur only at the request of property owners, not at the Town's initiative. Any and all development within the Town is driven by property owners' application and occur within all applicable County and Town zoning and regulations. Properties considered for annexation are typically:

- Located within the long-established Leonardtown Development District and Comprehensive Plan recommendations; or
- Already zoned for development under County zoning; and
- Unable to access water and sewer infrastructure necessary to develop under existing zoning.

Annexation allows property owners to access municipal infrastructure and pro-

ceed with development consistent with long-standing County planning designations as Leonardtown is one of two County Development Districts.

Commitment to Collaboration

The Town of Leonardtown is not seeking exemption from contributing to shared regional infrastructure. The Town is seeking a fair and transparent approach that:

- Recognizes municipal infrastructure already funded locally;
- Ensures school-related revenues are dedicated to school capacity; and
- Avoids unnecessary duplication of taxes/fees for Town residents

"We believe in fairness for all County residents," said Leonardtown Mayor Dan Burris. "Our position is simple: Leonardtown residents should not be required to pay twice for infrastructure services that the Town already provides."

The Town looks forward to participating in the upcoming public hearing and continuing constructive dialogue with the Commissioners.

For additional information, please contact:
The Commissioners of Leonardtown
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Press release from Town of Leonardtown

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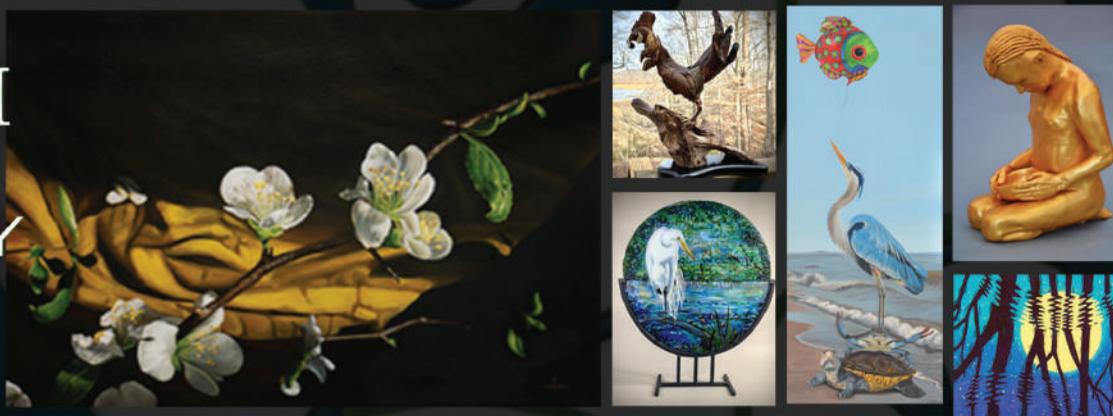
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Excise Tax Proposal Draws Controversy

Would Extend to Town of Leonardtown

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A proposal to extend the excise tax on new development to Leonardtown has drawn controversy among the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

The proposal will go to public hearing on March 10 at 6:30.

According to County Attorney Buffy Giddens, "It's important to note that this amendment does not change the tax rates. It doesn't alter the allocation formulas. It doesn't expand the policy scope. It doesn't impose new categories of taxation. And it doesn't modify the credit structure that was already in existence in the underlying ordinance."

It does, however, extend the county excise tax to Leonardtown. Giddens emphasized, "For most citizens who are just living in their homes, they'll never see anything."

But Commissioner Eric Colvin said, "I would urge the commissioners not to go down this path. This is a mistake to go down this path. One of the things that I truly believe is that cooperation is key for success in this role. And this is not a step to cooperation."

He added, "The recurring theme that I see driving the push behind this is a resentment toward any group that is showing success but not under our control. We've seen it with the treatment of the Board of Education, the Sheriff's Office, the State's Attorney, MetCom, and now we're seeing it with the town of Leonardtown. These are all our partners in governance, not our adversaries."

Colvin emphasized, "So here's the point I want to make. The residents of the town of Leonardtown already pay higher taxes than the residents of the rest of the county."

"They're paying additional property taxes that go to the town to cover the costs of their own roads and parks and services. I've heard it said that the residents of Leonardtown are driving on county roads and using county parks, and that's their reason for this excise tax change. But I would argue that they're already paying through the property tax to the county. They pay their full rate of property tax to the county."

"Some of you might be aware that my brother (Nick), a councilman in Leonardtown, recently conducted an informal online survey. Over half of the respondents were county residents who did not live in the town limits, and they were overwhelmingly supportive of the events and amenities and the direction of Leonardtown. Probably their biggest concern was a desire for easier and more parking, because people want to be going to Leonardtown."

"So, here's the real point," he punctuated. "The town has already agreed to pay the education portion of the excise tax. They recognize this is fair and that their residents are using the county schools. They're not limiting those funds to only Leonardtown schools. So, I don't know where that idea came from."

Colvin said, "A much wiser course of



Commissioner Eric Colvin

action would be to work out an MOU with the town to demonstrate a stronger partnership, not try to unilaterally impose this down on the town."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt had equally strong opinions. "I would be the first to say that we do not do things to hurt people who are doing well. And if they're doing well, we're happy for them. Now, what's happening with the town of Leonardtown, it's in my district, it doesn't make sense that the town of Leonardtown, which has a little over 5,000 people, believes that any of the money that goes towards education should go to the schools. And that was directly told to me by Dan Burris, the mayor of Leonardtown. He said that money had to be used for schools in the town of Leonardtown."

Hewitt added, "Now, the other part is they talk about having their own recreation and parks, and that's great, and we all go back and forth. I'm not trying to say there isn't room here, but it is not fair that when people in Hollywood build a house, that fee is paid. But when people in Leonardtown build a house, it's not paid."

He added, "And the other part gets to be is Leonardtown's paradigm has shifted. It's gone to BoomTown. They're building hundreds, if not thousands of homes for a small community."

Hewitt noted that town residents do get services. "But what they really get is access to Leonardtown High School, Leonardtown Middle School, Duke Elementary, and Leonardtown Elementary. And people want to be in new school districts. Let's be honest. That's why we see Leonardtown High School having the issues that's happened. Now, what's wrong with this analogy with the town of Leonardtown is that they don't have adequate public facilities."

Colvin then attempted to amend Hewitt's motion to reduce the excise tax by 50 percent countywide. That motion failed on a 3-2 vote, with Commissioner Mike Alderson supporting Hewitt.

The motion to go to public hearing on the plan then passed also by a 3-2 vote.

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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 and third Saturdays of the month, April through October (11:00 a.m. – 1:00 2:00 p.m.).



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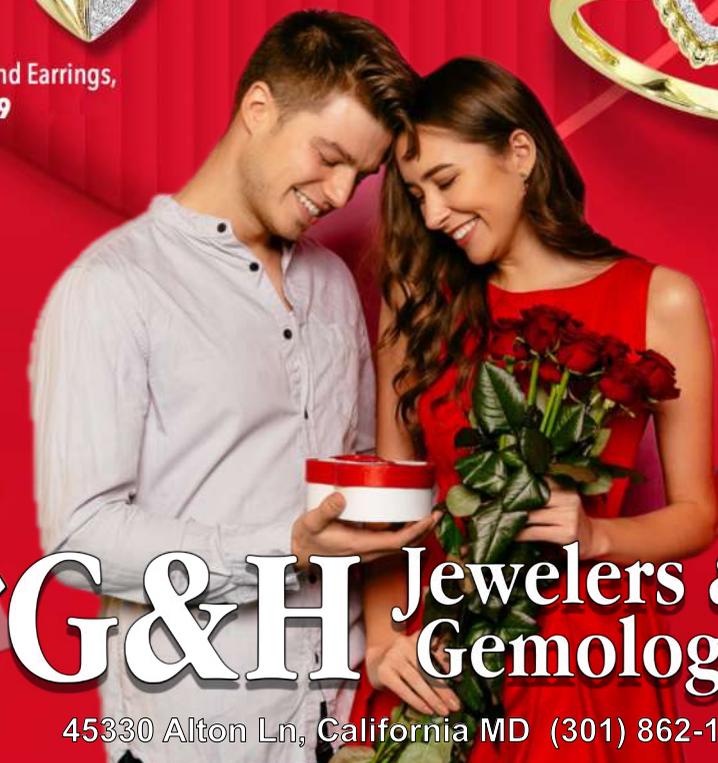
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Smith: White Marsh Closure Decision Delayed

Plan for LHS Redistricting Advances

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

St. Mary's County Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith has recommended delaying the decision on closure of White Marsh Elementary School. Smith wants at least two years to see if the trend of declining enrollment continues.

The Cannon Group, the consultant hired by the school board to guide them through the redistricting process recommended the closure process begin immediately looking towards that happening in school year 2028-29.

Smith did recommend the board proceed with moving some 8th graders originally slated to attend Leonardtown High School to either Chopticon or Great Mills to level out the three schools' enrollment. That process would begin next school year.

The school board makes the final decisions, expected next month.

Smith said at a Feb 3 work session, "My recommendation to the board, I want to be very clear with the public, is to monitor enrollment and go back and revisit why we partnered with and brought in Canon Design in the first place."

Smith explained, "If we look across our elementary schools as they currently are, we're fine. We have two schools that are over a hundred percent (Evergreen and Park Hall), both of whom have relocatables, and are operating the way they should. And Evergreen actually looks like it's going to trend down a little bit if you follow out our K and so forth."

"We were told last year when we went through the budget process by the county commissioners that we have to close a school," Smith noted. "And I stressed several times that this is not an easy thing. This is something that needs to be incredibly transparent and deliberate, and in the community, and we all need to be talking about

what we're doing, why we're doing it; you just don't close a school. And they told us that we needed to close a school because we have declining enrollment, and indeed we have had declining enrollment over the last three years."

Smith said, "If we continue to have declining enrollment, meaning we have fewer children in St. Mary's County Public Schools, that means that the school system will continue to have lower and lower and lower and lower levels of funding. We are already second from the bottom. We need everybody to understand that where we are currently being funded, we cannot maintain what we currently have in an effective and efficient manner. If enrollment continues to decline, we need to take action that will be unpopular, but it will be the right action on behalf of the school system and it will impact the entire county, St. Mary's from south to north."

Smith explained, "If we monitor for two years, that also gives us two years to truly understand what that looks like and then have an active conversation as to whether or not are we investing properly in the lives of 16,500 students. The challenge that we're talking about, White Marsh Elementary School for capital improvements, we're just talking about having the operating money to maintain operationally a building to cover the improvement, the roofs which we get the full life out of before we replace them. And HVAC, which we've heard today, we are extending five years beyond, 10 years beyond the normal capacity and use for HVAC systems."

Operational savings to close White Marsh are more than \$1 million yearly. Total renovation would cost \$17 million and the school, because of its size, would still be operationally effective, the school board has been told.

Smith said, "It has been a struggle over the last four years to get enough money to

renovate Chopticon High School. And now we're really just doing roof and HVAC. We're nowhere near doing what we had originally intended, which go in and renovate science spaces and things like this."

"My recommendation to the board," he said, "is we put out publicly that if enrollment continues to decline, we are going to have to close a school. White Marsh makes the most sense, and that every person in this county will be impacted by that decision, but we need to have time to do it."

"Any school is beloved," he noted and more than 80 percent of survey respondents favored keeping it open. "All schools are beloved. We've never actively closed a school in the history of St. Mary's County Public Schools without building a new one. This would be the first time we ever just closed a school, and it ceases to exist. That is also not a small thing to think about, especially the fact that White Marsh has been around for 70 years."

Director of Capital Planning Kimberly Howe observed that if White Marsh is closed, "Leonardtown Middle School (would be) down to 82 percent, which is where we project most of the growth occurring over the next five to 10 years with homes being built."

The school board had earlier expressed disapproval of the consultant's option to move students already at Leonardtown High School to another school. From that has evolved the plan to start the transition with 9th graders who would move from their planned school.

She said 89 students would be affected the first year, 24 of whom would go to Great Mills and 65 would go to Chopticon.

She said, "The northern portion of Leonardtown High School area would be assigned to Chopticon. The Elizabeth Hills neighborhood would be assigned to Great Mills High School, and the Breton Bay area could be assigned to Chopticon, depending

on the type of housing growth that occurs in that area."

Specific areas affected going to Chopticon would be:

- Northbound, Maryland Route 235, Three Notch Road, from the intersection of Mervill Dean Road and Airport View Road up to the intersection of Sodler, including all auxiliary roads and drives.
 - The north side of Maryland Route 245, which is Hollywood Road, from the intersection of Three Notch to and including Barnes Lane.
 - Northbound and southbound side of Route 235 from the intersection of South Sandgates to Hollywood Road.
- Going to Great Mills would be:
- Indian Bridge Road from the intersection of Maryland Route 4 to the intersection at Maryland 5, including all auxiliary roads and drives. So, this is all of Indian Bridge Road.

Howe said, "The last segment is one that we've needed to do for a while based on some changes, but it was appropriate to bring it forward at this time is from Leonardtown High School to Great Mills High School, and is the eastbound Maryland Route 4 from Patuxent Beach Road to the intersection of Maryland Route 235 to and including Oak Drive and Old Pine Court from the intersection of Maryland Route 235 and auxiliary roads, drives and courts. What happened was on Patuxent Boulevard, this community used to have an entrance and an exit onto Patuxent Beach Road. That was changed, and now the entrance to it is onto 235."

With the moves all three high schools will still be over 100 percent capacity but Leonardtown will be significantly less crowded.

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Additional Garvey/Library Parking Coming

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County are moving ahead with a project to alleviate a frustration for customers at Garvey Senior Center and Leonardtown Library – lack of parking.

The commissioners have added \$1.2 million into their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the next fiscal year to create at least 6 additional parking places. The project is moving forward at the insistence of Commissioner Mike Hewitt and unanimous approval of the rest of the board.

Director of Public Works and Transportation said the lot would be gravel because the town of Leonardtown would not approve anything less. He said the target opening is Halloween or no later than Thanksgiving.

Norris said, "We're looking at about 12 feet of cut to get down to where Hayden Farm Lane is today. So there's a large embankment on the backside of the property. To get the number of spaces we need, probably 60



spaces, 60 is what we're targeting because that lot does fill up rather quickly."

Norris said, however, the number of spaces could increase to as many as 72 depending on final design.

Gary Wipple, with DPW&Y, said, "Sixty is our target. Seventy-two is what we think will fit. Without having the grass swales in between every 10 spaces, I expect we'll probably lose a couple spaces for storm water management. So our objective is to get 60. If we can get more, that's even better.

Norris noted, "The cost represents a project that would actually extend the base. So we've not yet priced out the, going up the hill and coming around and, and doing those 72 that we're projected."

He said he has meetings with the Office on Aging and library "to discuss the layout and location. We are looking at worst case scenario, about \$600,000 of design for this year. And the \$1.2 that's shown in '27, so I don't want to surprise you just when I say \$1.9 million is the worst case scenario that

we could project for those parking spaces."

He said staff parking would be identified on the new lot because it is close to a staff entrance.

At the Feb. 10 budget work session, Director of Finance said of the FY '27 CIP, "The proposed capital projects are \$61.7 million. Capital funded with local funding is \$36.2 million. Plan debt funding is \$20.6 and projected revenue of \$10 million."

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“ANY SCHOOL IS BELOVED.”

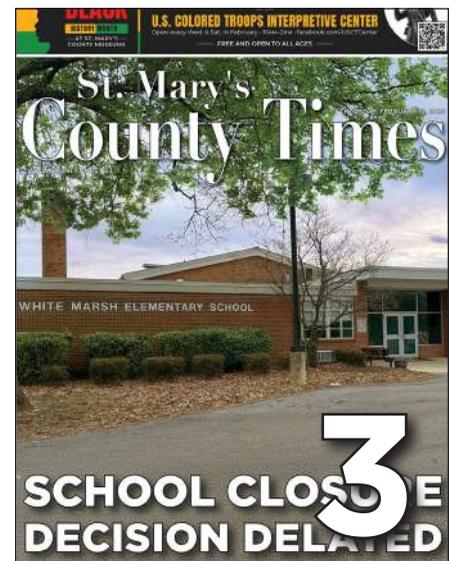
SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON ANGST OF POTENTIALLY CLOSING WHITE MARSH ELEMENTARY



LOCAL 5
Leonardtwn caught in excise tax controversy



LOCAL 9
Planning commission approves Willows Road subdivision



ON THE COVER
Superintendent expresses caution over recommendation to close White Marsh

WEEKLY FORECAST

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