

Children's Day
at St. Clement's Island Museum
FREE Day of Kid-Friendly Fun

Saturday
August
17
11AM-2PM



St. Mary's County Times

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024



**Police Make Massive
Fentanyl Bust**

**Congressman
Suffers Stroke**

**Elms Beach Center
to Be Demolished**

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IN CLASSROOMS**

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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	5	OBITUARIES	18
COMMUNITY	15	CALENDARS	20
COLUMNISTS	17		

“I KNOW WE CAN DO IT.”

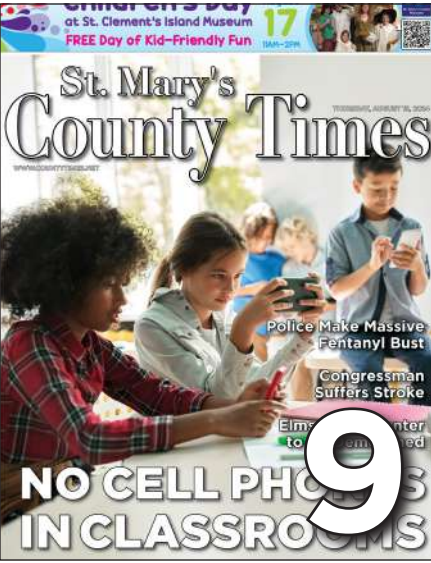
SUPERINTENDENT J. SCOTT SMITH ON OBEYING NEW CELL PHONE IN SCHOOL REGULATIONS



LOCAL 5
Deputies make historic fentanyl bust



LOCAL 11
Hoyer suffers stroke



ON THE COVER 9
Students returning to school with new restrictions on cell phones

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, AUG 15 Mostly Sunny Hi: 85° Lo: 65°	FRI, AUG 16 Mostly Sunny Hi: 86° Lo: 69°	SAT, AUG 17 AM Showers Hi: 85° Lo: 69°	SUN, AUG 18 Thunderstorms Hi: 84° Lo: 69°
MON, AUG 19 PM Showers Hi: 84° Lo: 66°	TUE, AUG 20 Mostly Sunny Hi: 80° Lo: 64°	WED, AUG 21 Mostly Sunny Hi: 80° Lo: 64°	THU, AUG 22 Partly Cloudy Hi: 81° Lo: 65°

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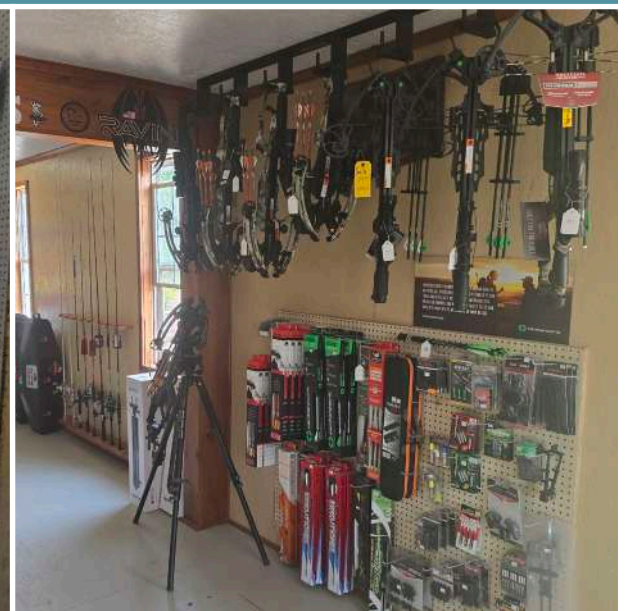
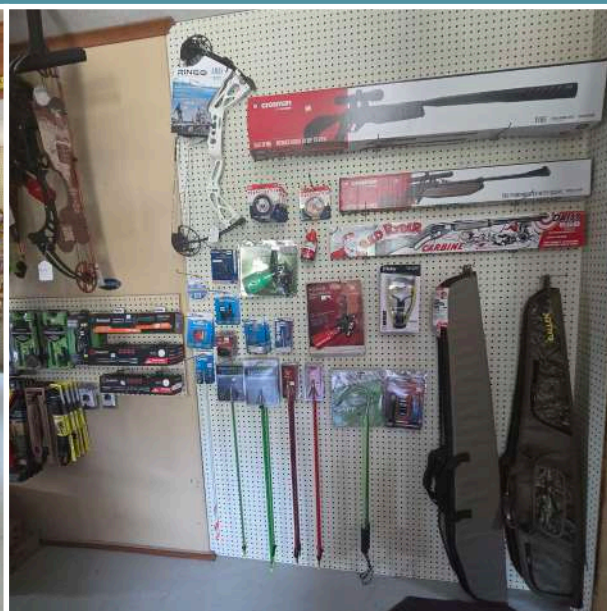
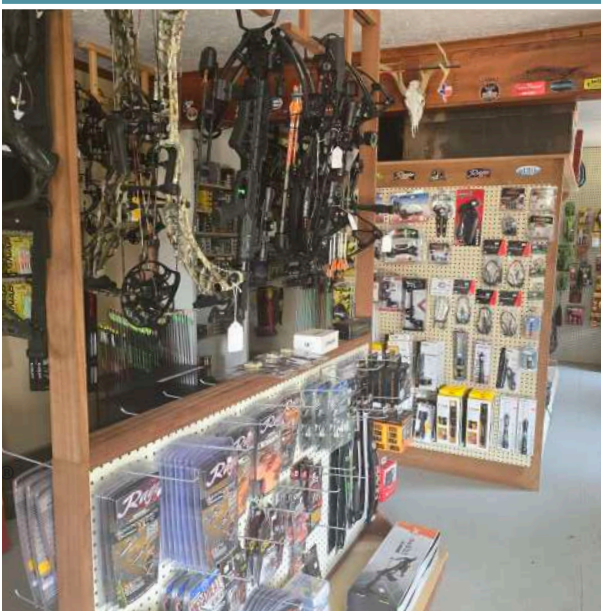


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Sheriff: Record-Breaking Fentanyl Seizure Will Save Lives

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The recent seizure of more than a kilogram — approximately two-and-a-half pounds — of fentanyl from the streets of St. Mary's by sheriff's office investigators, along with other drugs, will ensure lives will not be lost throughout the entire region, said Sheriff Steve Hall.

"The size and scope is impressive," Hall told The County Times. "But we couldn't have had this level of success without the team to put this case together, the tactical units to serve the warrants and the cooperation of our partner agencies."

The other drugs found would likely be combined with the fentanyl, Hall said, which is a dominant trend in the drug trade.

The power of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid said to be at least 50 times more powerful than heroin, means that its addition to any other narcotic can make it instantly lethal to the user.

"It's a stark reminder that you're literally playing [Russian] roulette with your life," Hall said. "You could be taking something that can kill you."

The addictiveness of the fentanyl is often enough to overcome a drug user's better judgement in taking such combined illicit substances, Hall said.

Hall admitted that the agency would



never know how many lives would be saved by the seizure.

"The measure of the truest success is what will not happen," Hall said. "We won't know the number of tragedies averted."

The seizures occurred at two residences in St. Mary's on Aug. 8, according to the sheriff's office.

The search of a residence located in the 22000 block of Toweey Ct. in Great Mills, the occupants and three seized vehicles, officers recovered a cache of drugs, includ-

ing 1,057.81 grams of fentanyl and 294.13 grams of cocaine.

Also recovered were significant quantities of methamphetamine, amphetamine, and controlled prescription medications, along with \$9,740 in US currency, a digital scale, packaging materials, a shotgun, and four cellular phones.

A concurrent search at a residence located in the 20000 block of Ridge Road in Lexington Park resulted in the recovery of US currency, a digital scale, a cellular

phone, and CDS paraphernalia.

The operation involved assistance from the SMCSO Emergency Services Team, Patrol Division, and allied partners from the Charles County Sheriff's Office, Calvert County Sheriff's Office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

James William Blackiston III, 31, Jasmine Samaria Votra, 36, and Willis Matthews Brooks, 43, all of Great Mills were arrested and charged with four counts of CDS possession — not cannabis and possession with intent to distribute. Additionally, Blackiston and Votra were charged with CDS possession of a large amount (fentanyl), while Brooks was charged with possession of a firearm with a drug trafficking crime connection.

The three suspects were transported to the Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown to await bond hearings.

Hall said the size of the drug cache seized was too big to stay in St. Mary's, it was enough to feed drug habits over several counties, perhaps into other states such as Virginia.

"This has prevented a wave of drugs in St. Mary's County," Hall said. "This has prevented a scourge from coming into this community."

guyleonard@countytimes.net



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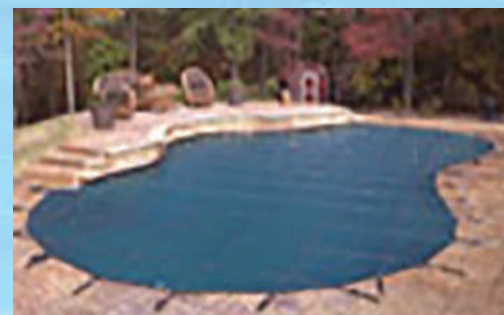
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County Addresses Medication Mix-Up

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The director of the county's Department of Emergency Services (DES) has written to patients recently cared for by county medical response personnel who should have received fentanyl but instead may have been given saline.

Jennifer Aubert-Utz said in her letter, with the name of the patient and the date of their emergency care redacted, that the saline solution administered should not normally cause a health problem.

However, the saline administered might not have been sterile, she said in her missive, and patients who received a letter from her should speak to their doctor about the issue.

"We understand that this news is concerning and have taken immediate action to investigate and address this issue," Aubert-Utz wrote. "Please know that your health and well-being are our top priorities, and our team is here to support you. "We encourage you to contact your health care provider regarding any concerns and possible follow-up care."

Aubert-Utz also said in her letter that patients who received the wrong medications and were still billed for the ambulance service would have their money refunded.

Aubert-Utz' letter comes just a few weeks after the Commissioners of St. Mary's County fired the chief of the career rescue service, Thomas Patrick Raley, after it had come to light that Raley was the prime suspect in a series of break-ins to medic boxes and the theft of fentanyl and other drugs.

Raley has yet to be charged with any crime but he was charged via a criminal summons in 2019 by a sheriff's investigator for the same incident involving a break-in at the medic box at the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department.

The records of Raley's having been charged for theft and property destruction nearly six years ago have disappeared from on-line court records.

The County Times reported on the 2019 theft and in charging documents from that year, Cpl. Dale Reppel reported that Raley had said that he had stolen the medications to satisfy a personal drug habit.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County were the ones to hire Raley for the job of career medical services chief last year and they admitted publicly that they did so with the full knowledge that Raley had been charged with stealing opioids and other drugs in 2019.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Leonard's Grant Stop Light Still Weeks Away



By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The newly constructed traffic signal situated at the intersection of Leonard's Grant Parkway and Hollywood-Leonardtown Road will have to be redesigned, Town Administrator Laschelle McKay told the Leonardtown Town Council this week, as the State Highway Administration (SHA) did not take into account critical details of its surroundings.

Those surroundings, she explained at the April 12 town council meeting, included two homes that front Hollywood-Leonardtown Road directly across from the traffic signal.

McKay said she was informed of the problem just minutes before the town council meeting began in a phone call from engineers at SHA.

"It's going to be another four months," McKay said of the time it will take before the signal can finally be activated. "They just today

signed off on the redesign; they have to order equipment, which is six-to-eight weeks out.

"I had to try three times just to get that update."

The state had begun construction on the traffic signal back in the first quarter of the year after receiving traffic safety complaints from town residents, specifically from the Leonard's Grant and Meadows at Town Run communities which sit on both sides of the intersection.

The state had completed numerous studies, town sources said at the time, and determined that the level of traffic had reached sufficient levels to warrant a signal.

The parkway serves the Leonard's Grant community but also the Leonardtown Library and Garvey Senior Center complex and the Capt. Walter Francis Duke Elementary School.

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Board of Education



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Authority: Friends of Brandie Edelen for Board of Education,
Luis Mejia Treasurer

Welcome Back to School!

Students Go Back to School with New Cell Phone Restrictions

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

In a video message to students and staff pre-viewed at this week's board of education meeting, Superintendent J. Scott Smith asked students to use their imaginations before and when they come back to school Aug. 21.

He wanted them to imagine a school day where students in middle school and high school grades kept their cell phones deactivated and tucked away during the school day — except for a brief respite during lunch for high school students — and where elementary school students, preferably just left their cell phones at home.

"It's not necessarily going to be easy to turn this off and away," Smith said while handling a cell phone he had just produced from his sport jacket during the video. "But we can do it."

It represents a serious shift in school system policy towards cell phones and other electronic devices as officials have declared that their use during the school day has become problematic, being a distraction at best and helping to foment unrest and even violence at worst.

"Imagine a school... where there isn't any texting going on, there aren't any inappropriate pictures being taken and sent all over. We're not rushing to a fight with our cell phones out and sending that video around."

Smith's talk envisioned a school day free from distractions where students simply attended their classes and socialized with their peers and their teachers.

"When you walk the halls, your heads are up, your eyes are focused and you greet other people," Smith continued. "I know we can do it."

At the board meeting on Aug. 14, members were briefed on the details of the new cell phone policy going into effect; it extends to staff and administrators as well.

Teachers may have cell phones but must refrain from using them while working with students; administrators may use them only system-supported cell phones for official business only.

Both high school and middle school students can have cell phones but they must be deactivated and put away; middle schoolers can access their cell phones at the end of the day, while high schoolers can use them during lunch.

The system will be cracking down on their use during classroom and time in the halls.

"If your phone [as a high school student] is taken away in the morning don't expect to get it back during the one lunch," said Cheryl Long, director of Student Services.

"It's gone for the entire day."

Cell phones confiscated during the day for their misuse will only be returned to a parent or guardian at the end of the day; continued violations of the new policy will result in greater disciplinary action.

During the first three days of school next week, high school students will have their cell phones returned to them as a form of grace period, Long said, or on their first and only offense.

In short, the only times students in either elementary, middle or high school can use their cell phones is before and after school and for lunch periods in high school only.

The system is also reiterating students should restrict their use of personal electronics other than cell phones to include tablets, wireless audio devices such as wireless earbuds, headsets and speakers and even smartwatches and fitness trackers.

The school system states these items could also be used to cause distractions during educational time.

School was designed, Smith said, to create independent, competent thinkers.

"These devices don't help us do that," he said.

As students return to school, many of them will return to newly refurbished and renovated buildings.

"I can't say enough about the division of Student Services and our operations and maintenance staff," Smith said, noting during fiscal 2024 they responded to almost 8,500 requests for work.

Margaret Brent Middle School has a fresh coat of paint in its gymnasium as well as a new floor.

Leonardtown and Esperanza middle schools also got new gymnasium floors, Smith said.

The school system has also regained much of the ground it lost in the past years regarding teaching and support staff.

"We're closing in on almost 100 new teachers who've been hired so far," Smith said.

There are 31 vacancies in support roles such as paraeducators, building service workers, secretaries and safety and security; there are roughly 20 teaching vacancies spread across special education, speech language pathologists, mathematics, social studies English and the like.

"This is the best shape we've been in since the middle of the pandemic," Smith said. "It's not exactly where we want to be," but the school system's human resources department had worked constantly to fill vacancies by attracting applicants.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

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Board of Ed Announces New Administrators



Renee McBride



Allison Mashburn



Virginia Gretton



Candice Berthiaume

The Board appointed Ms. Renee McBride as Assistant Principal at Greenview Knolls ES, effective July 29, 2024. She holds a Master's Degree from the Univ of Phoenix and a Bachelor's from Virginia State Univ. She previously served as an Administrative Intern at Evergreen ES.

The Board appointed Ms. Virginia Gretton as Assistant Principal at Leonardtown HS, effective July 29. Ms. Gretton holds a Master's Degree from Towson University and a Bachelor's Degree from Salisbury University. She previously served as an English Teacher/

Acting Assistant Principal, at LHS.

Ms. Allison Mashburn has been appointed as Assistant Principal at Lexington Park Elementary School, effective July 29. She holds a Master's & Bachelor's Degree from West Virginia and has served as an Inclusion Instructional Resource Teacher in the Dept of Special Education.

The Board appointed Ms. Candice Berthiaume as Principal at Greenview Knolls Elementary School, effective July 1, 2024. She holds a Master's and Bachelor's Degree from Towson University and previously served as Acting Principal at GKES.

Shoe Fund Helps Students in Need



The St. Mary's County Public Schools' shoe fund provides shoes to school age children in the public schools who are in need of shoes, and who have limited financial resources once per school year. Requests for shoes are highest at the beginning of the school year, but continue to be requested and provided throughout the school year. The shoe fund is totally supported by donations from the community. Requests for shoes are particularly high in tough economic times.

Contributions to the shoe fund are welcomed and appreciated by anyone who wishes to donate. The shoe fund is a long-standing program that exemplifies the partnerships between St. Mary's County Public Schools, parents, and the community. Pupil Personnel Workers in the Department of Student Services facilitate the referral process, record-keeping, purchasing, and delivery of shoes to schools. The shoe fund is audited yearly by St. Mary's County Public Schools' Department of Fiscal Services. One hundred percent of the con-

tributions received for this fund are used to purchase shoes for students.

You can donate online at <https://www.smcps.org/offices/student-services/shoe-fund> at any time!

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To request shoes, please submit the Shoe Request Form / Solicitud de Zapatos available at <https://www.smcps.org/offices/student-services/shoe-fund>.

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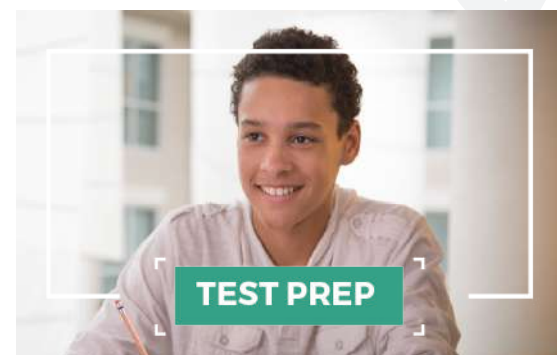
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Improvements, Tighter Rules Coming to Mobile Home Park

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The owners of Lord Calvert Mobile Home Park in Lexington Park, Cherry Cove, Inc., reassured residents there this week that it had abandoned plans to redevelop the park into a new residential community, which would have resulted in many residents losing their homes.

Since 2016 the developers had planned to completely clear and redevelop the park, explained Jacquelyn Meiser, vice president and chief legal counsel for Cherry Cove to a gathering of residents at Great Mills High School Aug. 12.

But a recent estimate of the costs to construct the mixed-use residential property was “more than double” of a 2020 estimate, she said.

“The costs are simply too high,” Meiser said.

This has led Cherry Cove to refocus on making infrastructure improvements to the park but also to “address many issues overlooked over the past few years.”

Those issues are many, she said, to include unpermitted additions to mobile homes, excess of vehicles, trash and personal items in yards.

Many of these violations against leases were ignored, she said, because of the planned closure of the park but now the management company would be pursuing

compliance with the rules.

“The park rules had fallen by the way-side,” said Meiser, noting that residents would be given 30 days to rectify violations or they could be subject to eviction.

There are many additions to the mobile homes themselves, beyond decks or sheds, that were unpermitted and would have to be removed moving forward, she said, over concerns with safety.

Cherry Cove would consider allowing decks and sheds as long as residents pursued and received permits with the county’s Department of Land Use and Growth Management but living space additions to the mobile homes could not be permitted, said Meiser.

Over the next two years the property management company would install new water and sewer lines as well as improving streets, Meiser said, which would allow more lots to be available for those seeking affordable housing. “The park will look and operate far better than it does today,” Meiser said.

Rents would continue to increase, she said, also over the next two years every six months.

By 2025 rents would increase to \$808 a month and then to \$858 a month by mid-year, Meiser said. In 2026 rents would be increased to \$908 a month.

“There will be district court filings for non-payment of rent,” she said.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Hoyer Recovering from Stroke

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, 85, one of the longest serving members of the U.S. Congress representing Maryland’s 5th District reported suffering a stroke over the weekend.

“On Sunday night, August 11, Rep. Steny Hoyer experienced a mild ischemic stroke and sought medical treatment,” a statement from his office reads. “Mr. Hoyer has responded well to treatment and has no lingering symptoms.

“He expects to resume his normal schedule next week. Mr. Hoyer’s wife and family extend their deepest thanks to his medical team.”

According to the Mayo Clinic, an ischemic stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is blocked or reduced. This prevents brain tissue from getting oxygen and nutrients.

Local elected leaders expressed concern over Hoyer’s medical issue and wished him a speedy recovery.

“I’m saddened by this news and hoping Congressman Hoyer has a fast recovery—Southern Maryland desperately needs him,” said Del. Brian Crosby (D-District 29B) in a social media post.

Hoyer is the most senior member of the House Democratic Caucus, serving the



Rep. Steny Hoyer

House of Representatives for more than 42 years. In that time, he has held various leadership positions, including Majority Leader as the second highest ranking member of Democratic House leadership. He served as House Majority Leader between 2007 and 2011 and again between 2019 and 2023. Hoyer served as House Democratic Whip first from 2003 to 2007 and later from 2013 to 2019, according to his official biography.

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Superintendent: Elms Educational Center to Be Razed



The Elms Environmental Education Center

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

After months of being closed due to its dilapidated condition and the potential health risk it poses to students and staff, the Elms Environmental Education Center in Dameron will eventually be torn down, Superintendent J. Scott Smith said this week.

The St. Mary's County Board of Education was briefed on the plan to continue environmental education for students, however, since the building must remain closed after Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) declared it must be so back in March after several assessments of the building found possible lead and asbestos that needed to be mitigated and the building improved before it could be used again.

The county leases the land, more than 400 acres, from DNR and has allowed the school system to operate there for decades; a temporary storage and office unit has been placed on the site, with toilet facilities, to ensure environmental education can continue for the upcoming school year, system staff said at the Aug. 14 meeting in Leonardtown.

The closure of the aging building has forced a reshuffling of how the environmen-

tal curriculum is taught; it will be taught in "grade bands" from kindergarten through 2nd grade, 3rd through 5th grade, middle school grades and then high school grades.

Grades two, five and seven will be able to have off-site environmental field trips.

The 2nd grade lesson will take place at the Elms site in the third and fourth quarters, while the 5th grade group will go to Historic Sotterley Plantation for canoe rides to observe the local ecosystem in the first quarter.

School Board member Cathy Allen said the Elms center was far behind other environmental centers around the state.

"Our does not, in this instance, measure up," Allen said. "It wouldn't surprise me if it was pre-1920s [construction] at the least."

"The house [used for environmental education] really can't be repaired," Smith said. "It's going to need to be demolished."

Once demolished, Smith said, a new, focused reinvestment would have to be made into the property to make it a functional environmental education center.

"These are the conversations we need to be having with the county commissioners over the next few months," Smith said.

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Man Sentenced to Prison on Drug Charges

Stashed Over Two Kilos of Cocaine in Woods

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that Laray Anthony Maddox, 42, of California, Maryland, was sentenced to 30 years in prison with 11 years and 6 months of active incarceration for drug-related charges in reference to the recovery of over two kilograms of cocaine.

Maddox was found guilty of Possession with Intent to Distribute Narcotics in relation to a 2022 incident, as well as Controlled Dangerous Substance Possession Large Amount and Controlled Dangerous Substance Proceeds in relation to a 2023 incident. The Court ordered the sentences for both incidents to run consecutively to each other.

Officers from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to a wooded area in California, Maryland, on November 2, 2022, for a report of an abandoned suspicious bag. The bag contained a box with approximately 158 grams of cocaine that was found to belong to Maddox. On July 14, 2023, officers observed Maddox enter the same wooded area, and a search after Maddox's departure revealed two kilograms of cocaine. A search warrant was subsequently executed on Maddox's residence, and a large amount of cash and other evidence of distribution were seized.

"Removing drug dealers from the streets of St. Mary's County is paramount to our community's safety and well-being," said State's Attorney Sterling. "The inherent danger of this poisonous substance was further exacerbated by the defendant when he left such a



Laray Anthony Maddox

large amount of cocaine easily accessible and thereby significantly increased the potential for harm to unsuspecting individuals, including our children and families. Thank you to the members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division, Vice/Narcotics Unit, for their thorough investigation of this case and their unwavering commitment to public safety."

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lisa Ridge, Chief of Narcotics, prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

Lieutenant Brian Fennessey of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office was the lead investigator.

The Honorable Michael J. Stamm presided over the case.

Week-Long Crime Spree Leads to 44-Year Prison Sentence

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced today that Tyler Ray Marini Sater, 22, of Stoney Beach, Maryland, was sentenced to 59 years in prison with 44 years of active incarceration for multiple criminal convictions stemming from his week-long, one-man crime spree in December 2022.

On December 13, 2022, Sater committed a robbery by knife point at the Cloud Smoke Shop in California, Maryland. On December 19, 2022, just six days later, he committed an additional series of crimes at the Wildewood Shopping Center. As a result, he was convicted of robbery, attempted armed carjacking, unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, attempted harm of a law enforcement animal, and rogue and vagabond. While pending trial, Sater fled to Charles County. He was subsequently charged and convicted of second-degree escape.

"While the Defendant was on supervised probation in several other counties for disturbingly similar crimes, he fled to our County and initiated a one-man crime spree. His deliberate actions victimized multiple community members, each suffering from the impact of his criminal conduct," said State's Attorney Sterling. "This sentence serves as



Tyler Ray Marini Sater

a critical step toward safeguarding the public and ensuring that this Defendant can no longer target the citizens in our community."

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

Detective Warren Forinash, Detective Daniel Sidorowicz, and Detective Taylore Nauman of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office were the lead investigators.

The Honorable Michael J. Stamm presided over the case.



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Send resume and three professional references to:

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POB 1, Leonardtown, MD 20650

Or email to Leonardtown.commissioners@leonardtownmd.gov.

Application deadline is August 30, 2024.

Thirty days following publication of this notice, applicant will seek title to the vessel described below unless proof of an existing ownership interest has been presented. Vessel is described as:

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Color: Blue
Registration Number: MD7311AE
Hull Identification Number: MD7311AE

Contact Nathan Faus:
(570) 930-2013
24945 Nelka Lane
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Thirty days following publication of this notice, applicant will seek title to the vessel described below unless proof of an existing ownership interest has been presented. Vessel is described as:

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Ride the Bus to Ocean City with Rec & Parks

Enjoy art, music, food, and more at Sunfest



St. Mary's County Government's Department of Recreation & Parks (R&P) is excited to announce the annual bus trip to Ocean City, Maryland for Sunfest! We'll provide the transportation, you plan your day at the beach for Saturday, October 26, 2024.

Back for its 49th year, Ocean City's Sunfest is one of the largest outdoor festivals in the region, attracting tens of thousands of attendees each year for arts, crafts, music, and food. Sunfest artists will delight your senses with their creations. The many food vendors will awaken your taste buds with delicious foods – from famous Eastern Shore delicacies to pit beef, gyros, Asian cuisine, and much more. Not to mention, attendees can enjoy free live entertainment all day long. Sunfest has something for everyone! It's your day, so you may also choose to explore Ocean City, you decide.

Registration is now open and available online with trip details provided. Tickets are available online at stmaryscountymd.gov/recreate.

gov/recreate; click "Online Registration" and then "Trips". Don't delay – we must meet a minimum enrollment to offer this trip. In-person registration is also available at the R&P main office in Leonardtown.

Ticketholders will meet to check-in at 6:30 a.m. on October 26 at the R&P main office, located at 23150 Leonard Hall Drive in Leonardtown. The bus will leave Leonardtown at 7 a.m. sharp and arrive in Ocean City at approximately 11 a.m. Evening departure is scheduled for 8 p.m. that day, returning to Leonardtown at approximately 11:45 p.m.

For questions or assistance with online registration, please contact us at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1800 or via email to webtrac@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Never miss an update! Follow R&P on social media at: www.instagram.com/stmarysrecandparks and www.facebook.com/stmarysmdrecreation.



Letters to the Editor

Thanks for sharing the road

I would like to comment on the well written article on safety around our horse and buggy transportation.

We appreciate cautious drivers and I want to thank the local first responders who turn off their siren when near a horse. Most horses are safe with extra noise, but the few that aren't can cause serious problems for the handler.

Horses do have minds of their own and as any rider can tell you, if a horse decides to "take the bit" the rider or driver has very little control.

So, we appreciate your caution, and your patience to wait behind us until it is safe to pass. We often will pull off where it is safe for us and let people go by, then proceed.

We are also human; we do make mistakes and human error is often the cause of accidents.

Sometimes an accident is our fault. Sometimes it is the motor vehicle driver's

fault, and, occasionally it's due to an unruly horse.

We have many blessings to be thankful for. Since our community here in Loveville started in the 1940s, we have had only one buggy/car fatality and that was around three years ago.

And for some trivia on "horse and buggy folks," the ones you see in the Charlotte Hall, Mechanicsville, Budds Creek areas are generally of the old order Amish faith.

In the Loveville/Leonardtown area, you will usually see old order Mennonite folks.

The main visual difference is that the Amish men wear beards and Mennonites don't. Mostly, the religious views and tenets are basically the same.

Thanks again, to whoever wrote that article and opened the conversation on road safety.

Mike Stauffer
Loveville, MD

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SEP 6	September First Friday / Art Walk Begins Various Times
SEP 7	Sidewalk Art Contest 10 am - 4 pm
SEP 7	Local Author Book Faire - LTown Alley 10 am - 5 pm

For all events & activities, visit:
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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



'Que Sera, Sera'

I am sitting outside on his blissful, low-humidity, lower temperature morning watching the butterflies gliding all over the yard, floating on the light breeze. It is so lovely, and it smells so good out here. These types of mornings are when I like to hand-write my column before heading back inside to the office. Mindy, the crazy hound dog, loves it outside too of course. Once in awhile she barks at something that human ears can't hear, and then will lay back down with a thud and a sigh.

I keep closing my eyes, or rather, my eyes keep closing of their own accord, listening to the rise and fall of the cicadas like nature's own orchestral crescendo. The sounds of other unknown insects, birds warbling bird song callbacks to one another, and the crow of the neighbor's rooster mingle with the cicadas. Naturally it is hard to write with my eyes closed so the words scrawl lopsided across the page. And with this happy, relaxed state it will be even harder still to transfer the handwritten word to a WORD document on the desktop inside.

Well, therein lies another problem. At present our neighborhood has no internet, phone, or TV service. A recent text confirmed that there is an outage until 3 pm, though most times it is restored earlier than that. We went through this yesterday as well, but the outage went from mid-morning until late afternoon. On occasion, service will pop up for a few moments and then go out again. Luckily you can still text and make phone calls via cell phones. Our large neighborhood seems to be plagued with this issue, especially since a new cable company is running their new fiber optic lines throughout the neighborhood for the last month or so. I'm sure things will be better than ever when it is all finished though. I guess the work from home people are gaining unexpected days off. As for us with our pool business, and for other small business owners, we are worried about our customers getting through to us. Or for me personally getting columns in. Anyway, it is a beautiful day, and if the column can't go in this week, then it will be in the paper another week. Now my head is filled with Doris Day singing, (*Que Sera, Sera*) *Whatever will be will be*. I love that song. As if on cue, our house phone just rang next to me. I better hurry inside to the computer.

Things weren't so quiet and peaceful here yesterday afternoon when my husband got out the new toy borrowed from a family member. He has borrowed a "flame weeder" or "weed torch" which I see as a flamethrower from the old WW11 movies. His purpose is to kill the weeds in our pebbled driveway. I was a bit concerned because I see all those "weeds" in the driveway as beautiful, especially the ones with little yellow or blue flowers, or all the clovers. I am always looking for 4-leaf clovers and my husband just wiped out a third of our clover population in an hour (we have a large driveway). What if one of those clovers had that really lucky 4-leaf clover I have been waiting for my entire life. I told him that might have been the one that held the luck to him winning on Power Ball or Mega Millions one week. The look I received told me that to him any weed should be a dead weed, in this case a fried weed.

I never know what toy he will bring home from any hardware store. Two weeks ago, it was a long handled limb cutter. I didn't even know he was balancing himself on the large stepladder out front cutting my beloved tree limbs in the firepit area for a good while (After I took a photo of him precariously standing on the ladder, I of course, went over to hold the ladder for him, but pictures first always). He is always worried that a tree limb will come crashing down on our heads. I again subscribe to the whatever will be will be philosophy and am always upset when he cuts so many limbs off. They are my privacy and shield the sun from my eyes as I sit in my chair. He also mentioned that the leaves and limbs smack him in the face when he mows. You know what I say or sing to that complaint...*Que Sera, Sera, whatever will be will be*...

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

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



FINANCIAL FOCUS®

How to be a 'seasonal' investor

As we transition from summer to autumn, change is all around us — leaves are taking on new colors, temperatures are dropping, and the days are getting shorter. But you can also experience different seasons in various aspects of your life — including when you invest. What are the seasons of an investor's life? And how should you respond to them?

The first such season may happen when you are in your 20s and just starting out in the working world. At this stage in your life, it's especially important to prioritize your financial goals. At the top of your mind may be a short-term goal, such as saving for a down payment on a house. To help achieve this goal, you'd generally want to save in "cash" accounts and invest in fixed-income vehicles that offer preservation of principal. At the same time, you don't want to disregard a longer-term goal — in particular, saving for retirement. While you may not be able to afford to put much away, every amount helps. And you'll want to invest for growth.

Now, as the seasons of your life progress, let's consider your early middle years. At this point, you've moved past the down payment on your home and you're well into paying a mortgage regularly. And you might even have retired your student loans. But now, you may have another major goal — helping build resources for your children's college education or other post-secondary training. For this objective, you could consider several options, one of which is a 529 education savings plan, which can provide federally tax-free earnings and withdrawals if the money is used for qualified educational expenses. But you're also moving closer to retirement, so, if you can afford it, you may want to increase your contributions to your IRA and your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan.

As the seasons continue to move on, and you find yourself in your later middle years, your financial situation may have changed significantly. Now, your children may be out of school, your earnings may have grown to their highest level, and you might even have paid off your mortgage. Given these factors, you may now be able to devote more of your resources toward your retirement by ramping up your IRA and 401(k) contributions even further, and possibly also considering other investment vehicles. And you may want to inject more balance into your portfolio, possibly lowering its overall risk level somewhat, especially in the years immediately preceding your retirement.

Once you move into your retirement season, you may need to continue, and possibly accelerate, the movement toward a more balanced portfolio — one that provides you with more income-producing opportunities. Some investments provide current income, while others provide it in the future, but all of them can contribute to your ability to enjoy your retirement lifestyle. However, you still need some growth-oriented investments to help keep you ahead of inflation. Plus, it's a good idea to keep at least a year's worth of living expenses in cash and another few years' worth in short-term, fixed-income investments. By doing so, you can help avoid having to sell assets in a down market.

The seasons of your life may come and go more quickly than you realize — but you can be prepared for them by making the appropriate investment moves.

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

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Contributed by David McDonough

Financial Advisor at Edward Jones

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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.

Richard Cullison, 74



Richard Wilbur Cullison, 74, of Ridge, MD and North Port, FL passed away peacefully August 8, 2024. Born August 1, 1950 in Leonardtown, MD,

he is the son of Leon "Dictator" Cullison Jr. and the late Mildred Saunders Cullison. He is survived by his son, Frank Cullison of Scranton, PA, and his two stepdaughters, Erica Al-Khatib (Danny) and Erin Knight (Kyle) of North Port, FL; his siblings Kay Carter of St. Inigo, MD, Joseph of Incline Village, NV; and David (Cathy) of California, MD; Shirley Gatton Jones of Mechanicsville, MD, whom he loved like a sister; six grandchildren; Frank Jr., Wyatt, Ameer, Grayson, Reese and River.

Richard graduated from Great Mills High School in 1969 and enlisted in the Army in 1970. In 1971, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The resulting surgery left him paralyzed on the left side of his body and unable open his right eye. That did not slow him down — he had many memorable adventures in his lifetime. Family and friends were his greatest joy and he absolutely adored his grandchildren. He was the most dedicated

and loyal friend one could have. He kept in touch with family and friends all over the country and loved to hang with lifelong friends at Buzzy's Country Store in Ridge whenever he was in MD. He had a great sense of humor and loved to tease. He was a lifelong car enthusiast and enjoyed watching drag racing. He was definitely one of a kind and if you ask anyone about him, they always have a story. He will be sorely missed.

The family will receive friends at the First Saints Community Church (First Friendship UMC) in Ridge on Sunday, Aug 18 from 1:00 to 3:00pm with the memorial service at 3:00. Interment will be private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of St. Mary's.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

Vernon Dennis, 78



Vernon Raymond Dennis, known affectionately as Vern, Dad, and Granddaddy, passed away on August 9, 2024 in Tappahannock, Virginia. Vernon was born on February

25, 1946 in Washington, D.C. to the late Milton Robert and Amelia Louise Dennis (née Marschat). Vernon, along with his best friend and late brother Robert (Lynn), sister Mary (Ken), and brother Curtis, was raised in Dillon Park, Maryland. In his youth, Vernon became an Eagle Scout, a lifeguard, and a volunteer firefighter — a pattern of service and care for others that would last a lifetime.

After graduating from Suitland High School Class of 1965, Vernon served admirably in the United States Navy for more than two decades. In the late-1960s, he deployed to the waters off Vietnam and sailed the Western Pacific. He spent many years recruiting Sailors in the Washington, D.C. area, earning distinction as Recruiter of the Year in 1974. Vernon retired from the U.S. Navy in 1986, having earned the rank of Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate. In the next chapter of his life, Vernon started Dennis Home Improvements. His work lives on in the many homes he built, repaired, and improved throughout Southern Maryland.

Vernon called Hollywood, Maryland home, having spent nearly five decades there. In the early 1980s, he forged a life on Hill Road — quite literally. Vernon worked tirelessly with his many brothers-in-law to build homes for his then-budding family and his parents. Today, these homes remain in Vernon's family and stand as a testament to his legacy.

Vernon's love of family was immeasurable. He was married to Dorothy Mary Dennis (née Finch) for many years, and the two remained close until his passing. Vern was a devoted father to Michael Robert (who preceded him in death in 1988), Christopher John (Deborah), Jason Scott (Donna), Vernon Raymond II (Shea), Helen Amelia (George "Bo"), Adam Matthew (Kimberly), and Andrew Joseph (Payten). He was also an incredible grandfather to Nichole, Ashli, Dominic, Jessie, Malia, Broderick, Danielle, Kaley, Rebecca, Madison, Katelyn, Shelby, Adam, Trace, Kaedan, Henry, Bailee, and Jace. Further, Vernon took pride in being a great-grandfather and uncle.

Vernon's love was evident in the count-

less sporting events, birthdays, and holidays — occasions where his simple presence created lifelong memories for so many. Whether at the family beach house on the Chesapeake or endless summer days at Lake Anna, Vernon found solace on the water and nothing brought more joy than the passage of time with those closest.

In addition to his family, Vernon believed deeply in a sense of community. He participated in clubs and organizations including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Patuxent Moose Lodge 2393, Companions and Buddies for Singles and Seniors, and Real Life Church in Mechanicsville, Maryland, and could often be seen at fairs, carnivals, and gatherings throughout the area.

Bill Soule; Commander Kenny Caswell, U.S. Navy; Ahmad Khogyani; Joseph King; Jeff Marquess; Pat Cosgrove; and nephew, Devon Strunk, embody the very best of Vernon and will serve as his pallbearers; Vernon's grandchildren will serve as honorary pallbearers.

Vernon's unexpected and tragic passing in a vehicle accident has left a void in all who knew him. Vernon will be remembered for his commitment to service before self — for his nation, his community, his friends, and, certainly, for his family. He lived his life with tremendous compassion and generosity; his wise advice, sound logic, impressive memory, quick wit, and never-ending humor will be dearly missed and forever cherished.

Family and friends will unite for a viewing on Tuesday, August 20, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM with funeral services beginning at 12:00 PM at Brinsfield Funeral Home in Leonardtown, Maryland. A subsequent burial will be held at Queen of Peace Cemetery in Mechanicsville, Maryland with honors rendered by the United States Navy. A Repast luncheon will follow services at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department Hall in Hollywood, Maryland.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

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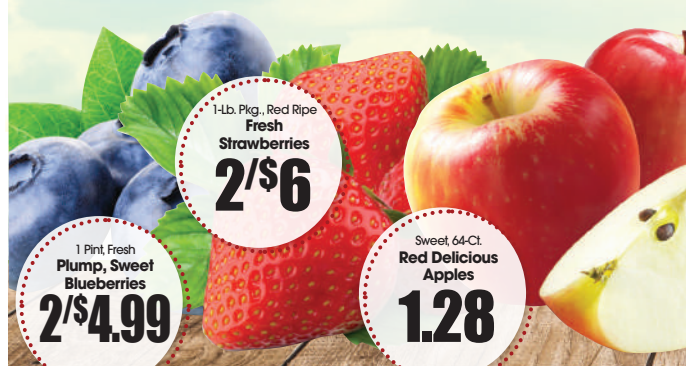
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WE ACCEPT:



St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Thu, Aug 15

Farmers Feeding St. Mary's

Bay District Volunteer Fire Department
46900 S. Shangri-La Dr., Lexington Park
1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

From local farmers to your plate! The third annual Farmers Feeding St. Mary's program will offer farm fresh produce free to the community.

A variety of fresh produce, such as corn, tomatoes, squash, and more will be available at each event! Family units will be limited to one box of produce per event. Food distribution will continue until the event's end time or until produce runs out.

For more information, call 301-475-4200, ext. 1073, or visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/FFSM.

Shakespeare in the City: "Much Ado About Nothing"

The Inn at Brome Howard

18281 Rosecroft Rd., St. Mary's City
7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Historic St. Mary's City & the New Towne Players invite you to experience the magic of Shakespeare's comedic masterpiece—a delightful journey into the heart of love, laughter, and the artful complexities of human connection.

Outdoor performances run August 15-17 at 7:30pm on the lawn of The Inn at Brome Howard, with food trucks on site. (Rain venue is Dodge Center at St. Mary's College). Visit www.newtowneplayers.org for tickets and more information.

Sat, Aug 17

Solomons Dragon Boat Festival

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church
50 Alexander Ln, Solomons
9 a.m. 3 p.m.

The annual Solomons Dragon Boat Festival

is a fun, family-oriented event featuring 20+ teams of paddlers competing for glory on the Patuxent River!

Saturday, August 17, 2024 will be a full day of dragon boat races complete with a parade of teams, entertainment, caricature artists, children's activities, vendor village and awards ceremony. Events throughout the week include a traditional Dotting of the Eye Ceremony, practice sessions and a Flash Mob. Expect all this and more in 2024! Visit www.solomonsdragonboatfestival.com

The event raises funds for Southern Maryland Community Resources (SMCR) and its members with developmental differences.

Pork Loin and Beef Sandwich Sale

American Legion Post 221
21690 Colton Point Rd., Avenue
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

American Legion Post 221 is sponsoring a pork loin and beef sandwich sale. Pork loin, sliced roast beef, and BBQ beef sandwiches

will be sold on both Saturday and Sunday at American Legion Post 221 @ 21690 Colton Point Rd (Rt. 242), in Avenue, MD. The event will be from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and sandwiches will cost \$8.00 each. For more information e-mail us at alpost221@aol.com or call 301*481*6625.

Sun, Aug 18

Blessing of the Backpacks

Patuxent Presbyterian Church
23421 Kingston Creek Rd., California
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Calling all students (of all ages)! Bring your backpack, laptop bag, etc. to our 9:30 a.m. worship on Sunday, August 18th at Patuxent Presbyterian Church to receive a special blessing as we begin another school year. More about us: www.paxpres.com.

Sell it - Buy it at Auction

Tri County Livestock Auction
1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the Month – Auction begins at 4 PM
Located Off MD Rt. 6 West – Charlotte Hall, MD

Online Auction
Over 50 Guitars – 2018 Toyota RAV4 XLE Hybrid – 2007 BMW Z4 - 12'x24' Shed – Tools – JD Mower & Other Lawn/Garden Items – Antiques & Collectibles – More
Auction will be Online for Viewing & Bidding on AUG 21, 2024
Auction Preview: FRI, AUG 23, 2024 – 3 pm to 6:00 pm
Westfield Farm, 26689 Laurel Grove Road – Mechanicsville, MD
Auction Closes: WED, AUG 28, 2024 - beginning at 6 pm

Upcoming Auctions:
Charles County 4-H Livestock Auction – SAT, SEPT 14, 2024 – 4 pm
St. Mary's Co. 4-H Cakes Auction – FRI, SEPT 20, 2024 – 6:30 pm
St. Mary's Co. 4-H Livestock Auction – SAT, SEPT 21, 2024 – 5 pm
Please note new starting time for SMC 4H Livestock Auction – 5 pm!

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Fall Harvest & Local Meats Auction – SAT, OCT 12, 2024 – 4 pm
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1.75L
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Wine of the Month



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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Aug 15

Teen Advisory Council of Students

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

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

Back to School with Horses

Freedom Hill Horse Rescue
7940 Flint Hill Rd., Owings
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Before heading back to school, come on out to the farm to enjoy an evening with our very own horses! Children can participate in several activities which will be fun and prepare them for the upcoming school year. For more information email freedom.hill.org@gmail.com.

Fri, Aug 16

On Pins & Needles

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
and Calvert Library Twin Beaches
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. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mammals at the Museum

Calvert Marine Museum
9 – 11 a.m.

The Calvert Marine Museum is home to more than fishes, reptiles, and amphibians! Come and spend the morning with your family meeting and learning about our amazing mammals and the role they play in our local environment! Family Fun Friday events at the museum are designed for families with children ages 5-12 and are a chance to enjoy the museum and a special program with activities and crafts that begin before the museum is open to the public. Fee includes museum admission: \$15 per person for non-members; \$12 per person for members.

Sat, Aug, 17

Paper Shredding

Huntingtown High School
4125 Solomons Island Rd., Huntingtown
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Calvert County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division, will host free paper shredding events for county residents and businesses. Shredding documents helps prevent identity theft by destroying confidential and/or sensitive information.

Proof of Calvert County residency or business location is required. Paperclips and staples are acceptable. Binders and binder clips are not acceptable.

Businesses are allowed up to five banker boxes of paper per business (or the equivalent volume of five banker boxes in alternate containers). There is no limit for residents. Certificates of destruction will be provided if requested.

Shredding events are held monthly. For information about other recycling events, contact the Calvert County Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division at 410-326-0210 or visit www.CalvertCountyMd.gov/Recycle.

Toy Boatbuilding

Calvert Marine Museum
1 – 4 p.m.

Make a toy boat from wood under the Corbin Nature Pavilion! Space and materials are

limited. Visitors will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. For ages 5 and up. Sponsored by the Patuxent Small Craft Guild. Museum admission applies; In addition, a donation of \$2 per boat is requested.

Bad Art Night: Copycat

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
3-4 p.m.

Have you ever looked at an art project and thought “I could do that,” but you in fact could not do that? Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! This Bad Art Night will be all about copying a famous painting as terribly as possible! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Please register. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fiber Fiends: Knitting and Crocheting

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

If you knit, embroider, or crochet, or would like to learn, join us on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Registration requested. BYOY (Bring Your Own Yarn) 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Mon, Aug 19

Brain Games: Chess, Scrabble and More

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach

10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Games are a great way to keep your brain sharp while having fun! Join us! Please register. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Aug 21

Dungeons & Dragons – ADULT

Calvert Library (Zoom/Roll20)
6-9 p.m.

Come have fun with D&D, a role-playing game for adults of all experience levels. Registration required. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Book Discussion

Calvert Library, (Zoom)
2-3 p.m.

Book Discussion about True Biz by Sara Novic. Join us for a lively discussion about True Biz by Sara Novic! Register in advance to receive the Zoom link via email. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Thu, Aug 22

Little Minnows: Boats – Manpowered

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

This month’s theme is Boats - Manpowered, for preschoolers ages 3 – 5, accompanied by an adult. This program focuses on one of the museum’s three themes. Join us for story time and a craft, available while supplies last. Sessions are 25-40 minutes. The cost is free with museum admission. Sign up at the Admissions Desk when you arrive.

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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, although care is taken to preserve the core of the writer’s argument. Copyright in material submitted to the newspaper and accepted for publication remains with the author, but the County Times and its licensees may freely reproduce it in print, electronic or other forms. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of letters. The County Times cannot guarantee that every letter or photo(s) submitted will be published, due to time or space constraints.



County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

Optimists Announce Scholarship Winners



The Optimist Club of Calvert recently awarded five college scholarships totaling \$20,000.

Sarah Davis (Calvert High) was selected as the winner of the Les Knapp Scholarship valued at \$8,000. Sarah will attend University of Maryland this fall majoring in Dietetics.

The Jim King Scholarship, valued at \$6,000, was awarded to Sarah Hurley (Northern High). Sarah will be attending Hamilton College this fall majoring in International Relations.

Kennedi Jones (Huntingtown High) was awarded the Robert L. Chaney Career/Vocational/Technical Scholarship, valued

at \$3,000. Kennedy will be attending Hood College, majoring in Computer Science.

Sara Bevard (Calvert High) was awarded the Edward V. Dorsey, Jr. Junior Optimist Scholarship, valued at \$3,000. Sara will be majoring in Biomedical Science at Liberty University.

Emma Brezina (Calvert High) was awarded the Edward V. Dorsey, Jr. Junior Optimist Scholarship, valued at \$3,000. Emma will be majoring in Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics at Stevenson University.

Press Release from Optimist Club of Calvert

Kids Learn What Cops and Their K-9s Do

The Calvert County Sheriff's Office recently spent a morning with the students and staff at Carter's Webb Learning Center in Huntingtown! The sheriff's office was thrilled to spend time sharing what they do and how they keep our community safe.

Cpl. Durner and his loving canine companion, Dougall, wowed everyone with a demonstration of some of Dougall's impressive 75 commands! Dougall was the star of the show, handing out plenty of doggie kisses and lap hugs that had everyone smiling.

Sgt. Denton from our SWAT Team gave an up-close look at the tactical gear our team uses. The students had a blast exploring the agency's Bearcat, learning about the important role it plays in our operations.

Cpl. Callison and his K9 partner, Reaper, shared insights into how K9s help keep our community safe, highlighting the incredible bond and teamwork between officers and their canine companions.

DFC R. Jones took things to new heights, literally, by flying the agency's drone overhead. He even captured a fantastic group photo from above, giving everyone a bird's-eye view of the fun!

Special guest Sheriff Ricky Cox made a surprise visit encouraging kids to be their best and have a great school year ahead.



K9 Dougall delighted the children

It was a day full of learning and laughter and we are so grateful to Carter's Web Learning Center for the opportunity to engage with their students. Thank you for having us, and we look forward to more visits in the future!

Press Release from CCSO

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Solomons Dragon Boat Festival Set for Aug. 17

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The dragons are coming. Once again this year the Patuxent River will be filled with dragons – actually dragon boats – for the annual Solomons Dragon Boat Festival. The races take place on Saturday, Aug. 17, with opening ceremonies on Friday, Aug. 16. But you may see dragons on the water earlier as they begin practice.

The annual event is a fundraiser for Southern Maryland Community Resources [SMCR]. According to their website, “SMCR promotes the inclusion of persons with developmental differences into the life of our community. We advocate for individuals with special needs, to recognize the inherent dignity that is theirs because they are members of our one human family. We promote social recreational and educational opportunities where individuals with developmental differences can contribute their unique gifts and develop their potential.

“We provide monthly programs to provide our members with social and recreational opportunities in order to enrich their lives. Members enjoy our programs at no-to-little cost through our partnerships with businesses and organizations throughout the community.”

SMCR says, “Our ‘Inclusion-Plus’ Model, along with a focus on community integration and workforce readiness, make SMCR a leader in the community.

“SMCR provides its members with programs that go beyond inclusion to incorporate persons with developmental differences into the life of the large community.

“The key is SMCR Networking. The goal is to build a bridge between SMCR members (teens and adults with developmental differences) and the community at large.

“SMCR expects all people to be lifelong learners. This educational model is the basis for finding what motivates an individual, what is important.”

This year the following teams will be competing:

- The ManTech Marauders Team
- Tekla Tsunami Dragons from Tekla Research, Inc.
- Sync or Swim from KBR
- Drag’n Butt from AMEWAS
- The Pirates of SMC-Rrrr
- GoPink!DC
- Happy Healthy Dragons: Patuxent Wellness
- Just Floating TayLOARS
- Our Tails Are Dragon Community Team

- The Mighty Crabs from SMRA
- The Personalized Therapy Pod
- The FlouRIDERS from PAX Dental
- Spring Dell Water Dragons
- Out of Sight Dragons
- PAX River Chiefs

A complete description of each boat can be found at About Solomons Dragon Boat Festival Teams (somdcr.org)

This year there are two new divisions. Community Division returns, which make up the bulk of the current boats. These are typically local businesses and special interest groups. Added are the Paradrage Division, for teams with adaptive sports needs, and the BCS Division, the official Breast Cancer Survivors division.

Saturday’s schedule is as follows:

- 8:00 a.m.: Team captains will meet with our Teams Coordinator and 22Dragons representative at the Muster area in the Solomons North parking lot. Light breakfast will be available.
- 8:30 a.m.: At the Gazebo, Presentation of Colors, Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem. Our Vendor Village is also open to the public at this time.
- 9:00 a.m.: Team Warm-Ups on the water
- 10:00 a.m.: Races begin! Food trucks available for orders.
- 10:30 a.m.: The Exhibition Race of our special needs teams will commence!
- 12:30 p.m.: Break for lunch. This timing is approximate. We recommend you check out our local restaurants (or two or three!) and sample their specialty dragon drinks just for this event.
- 1:00 p.m.: Races resume. This timing is approximate.
- 3:00 p.m.: The final champions race will take place! Don’t miss this race.
- 3:30 p.m.: Awards & Superlatives Presentations. This timing is approximate and depends upon when the day’s races finish.

The Dotting of the Eye Ceremony will take place on Friday, Aug. 16 at 6 p.m. Gather on the lawn of Our Lady Star of the Sea School in Solomons as participants paint the eyes of the dragons to awaken them and wish them well in the races to come.

The festival features vendors, teams, food trucks, local shops and restaurants... and of course exciting races on the Patuxent River.

General parking is located in the field across from the Calvert Marine Museum. Shuttles ran from this lot and made several stops on the island indicated on the map. Shuttles ran from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Presented by the Twin Beach Opioid Abuse Awareness Coalition
and Calvert County advocacy partners

Glow Vigil

Saturday, Aug. 31 • 7:30-9 p.m.

Mark R. Frazer Sunrise Garden, North Beach

Join us for the unveiling and dedication of our Overdose Awareness Memorial Sculpture in honor and memory of our beloved lost to overdose death.

International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event to raise awareness that overdose death is preventable and to reduce the stigma associated with drug-related death. This day also acknowledges the grief felt by family and friends remembering those who have died or had a permanent injury as the result of a drug overdose.

GUEST SPEAKERS

“Together We Can”

Highlighting the power of community when we all stand together

Margaret Dowell

Independent Artist, Art Educator,
Co-editor, Addiction and Art

Willie Forman

Christian Rapper and Recovering Addict
Emmanuel Church Celebrate Recovery

FREE LOCAL RESOURCES

Local prevention, treatment and recovery information will be provided by:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- CAASA
- Calvert County Health Department (Narcotics training)
- Calvert County Local Behavioral Health Authority
- Celebrate Recovery
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

OVERDOSE AWARENESS/MEMORIAL SCULPTURE PROJECT

“Their Lives Matter”

Remembering and Spreading Hope
A public art project supported by the
Maryland State Arts Council

Keith Pardieck, Chair

Twin Beach Opioid Abuse Awareness Coalition

Mark Frazer, Former Mayor of North Beach
Founder of Sunrise Garden, North Beach

Thomas Sterner, Artist
“Big Hug,” “Hug Chair” and
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Local Team Earns Trip to National Barbecue Championship

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

A trio of buddies who grew up together in Calvert County and graduated from Northern High School have a new venture that brings them together. They are competing professionally in barbecue challenges and that has led to a recent number one victory and a slot in a national championship next year.

Donnie Smith, Mike Chappell, and Josh Boutaugh are the team that will attempt to bring home the gold so to speak for the area. Smith now lives in southern Anne Arundel, but the other two still live in Calvert. Smith and Chappell work for Amtrak, and Boutaugh is a veteran of the DC police department.

Smith explained, "About 12 years ago, I just started out Go's Barbecue as a blog, like an Instagram page. And Mike and Josh and I, we kind of reunited and we got talking because we all grew up, went to school together, and hey, you know, we should, maybe try to compete in barbecue because we all liked to barbecue. And I would do little cooks and stuff for friends, but this is the kicker. We had a local event in Calver County. The Smart brothers, Chad and Kirk Smart, they own Sassafras Farms. They had a local barbecue amateur competition, and we swept the whole competition and got a grand championship."

That was two years ago and got the friends really thinking about doing more of it. Smith said, "So after that we were like,

man, we can maybe do this. Let's go professional into what they call KCBS. That's, that's an acronym for Kansas City Barbecue Society. I don't know if you know this, but barbecue is a pretty big scene nowadays. So, we joined, started competing last year. We started getting calls with some of the top teams, which was a good thing."

Smith explained, "You've got three different categories, ribs, chicken, and pork, and you travel to these big barbecue events and there's a bunch of teams there. The ultimate goal is to be that overall grand champion winner."

"And the first year we did well, we would get calls, but we never had that grand champion. Well, we just did a pretty big event this past weekend in Ashland, Virginia. It's called Americamps Barbecue Throwdown."

Of that event, he said, "It's a three day cook and the first day they call it like a one meat challenge. And we did good. But the actual barbecue throwdown is Saturday and Sunday. Saturday, we had a third-place rib, a fifth-place pork and I believe it was a 13th chicken. And we, we were fourth overall best team there. And it was super exciting because to be an overall team, there's so many good competitive teams out here, and there's a lot of teams there. To be a top 10 contender, you walk away happy."

But on Sunday it all came together. He said, "We came back stronger and ran our same programs. And we got a first-place chicken, we had a second-place rib, and we had a

fifth-place pork. And that gave us what they would call the KCBS two meet overall grand champion, and then the overall Reserve Grand Champion for the Americamps contest."

That win punched their ticket for the KCBS national championship in Tennessee next year. Smith believes they are the first local team to reach that lofty honor.

"It was a huge win for us, and it was our first grand championship," Smith exclaimed, adding, "Just three guys from Calvert. We grew up together and we all have young kids and it's just been cool."

Smith explained, "Competition barbecue is completely different from your backyard barbecue where people just throw stuff on the grill. And that's good for eating. This is a very tedious, it takes a lot of prep, a lot of practice. We have actual programs for each individual meat category."

He said, "We actually order our meat from a company in Ohio called Mr. Brisket and it's prime grade meat."

He said, "We trim and cut all of our meat for competition style barbecue."

Smith explained, "When you cook competition barbecue, you are turning in a box. You're turning in a chicken box, a rib box, and a pork box. And that judge, there's six judges to a table, and you put six pieces of meat. If you have ribs, you're putting six ribs. Some you can put eight if you want, but there's only six judges. So, each judge will get a rib and take one bite. So, they



Friends and professional barbecue competitors [l to r] Mike Chappell, Donnie Smith, and Josh Boutaugh

only get one bite. You're trying to pack as much flavor, as much punch into that one bite. They judge you on taste, tenderness, and presentation."

For the Kansas City society, he said, "You're doing sweet, however, he added, "We learned early on, we're not cooking for what we like, we're cooking for them."

The local team is sponsored by Tillman's Barbecue from Florida, and they use their products in the competition.

Also, he said, "We cook on Gateway drum smokers. They're designed by a multi world champion."

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Joan Shisler, Treasurer

School Board Debates Equity in Hiring

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

It began with a discussion of the Calvert County Board of Education's policy on discrimination.

Regarding discrimination in hiring, board member Lisa Grenis pointed out, "Right now it says the employment, retention, recruiting, and placement of persons from underrepresented groups."

She said, "I would just like to add to that, provided they are the most qualified. I said the best, most qualified and most talented candidates, that needs to be the priority."

Supervisor of Equity Margo Gross said of the current wording, "That is almost the exact verbiage from the policy regulation statement within Comar (the state code)."

Grenis responded, "I just think in Calvert County's hiring practice, we need to be careful not to sacrifice talent for diversity. We want diversity, but if we're getting diversity, it needs to be the most qualified candidates we can get. So, I think it's important to add."

But board Vice President Inez Claggett responded, "In this policy, I do not support addition of the word 'most-qualified' because I do believe that the policy mimics Comar very closely in the language. And I think that we can achieve attracting and hiring the most qualified through other means. And I think that can be done through administrative procedure, and in questions that are asked during interviews, as well as through other methods. So, I do not believe we need to add the word 'most-qualified' to the policy."

Grenis' request to add the language failed on a 3-1 vote, with board member Jana Post not in attendance at the Aug. 8 meeting. After the vote, Grenis quipped, "I am just trying to process not adding 'the most-qualified.'"

Board member Dawn Balinski said, "The reason why I said 'no' is because I felt like that's a given. Our hiring objectives are to hire the most qualified people. And so that's sort of a given. What this is trying to say is



School Board member Lisa Grenis

that we need to add diversity to that already high-quality hiring."

Balinski added, "When you're saying underrepresented groups, if you have two candidates and you just look at them on paper without having any clue as to what they look like, and you pick one candidate that maybe was extremely qualified as opposed to underqualified, and then you meet them in person and it's not the underrepresented group. This policy is stating that that's what our goal is to hire underrepresented groups. I want the most highly qualified candidate. I think it's important to clarify that."

Grenis said, "I guess I don't see it as a given, and I'm afraid that we could sacrifice a highly-talented candidate in the name of diversity. And I just like to see it clarified."

At the suggestion of Student Member of the Board Grace Minakowski, the board added persons with disabilities to the list of underrepresented groups.

The policy is being posted for 30 days for review after which the board will vote on it.

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Townsel Says Schools Prepared for Open

'The major challenge really is controlling everyone's excitement'

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

When Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) return to the classrooms later this month, School Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel will be beginning his third year at the helm of the 16,000-student school district.

During an Aug. 12 interview with The County Times, Townsel reflected back to whether the three years have been as expected. He said, "Every superintendency has its own challenges. You just have to be ready for whatever comes and just stay ready, stay prepared, stay professionally developed, personally developed and work collaboratively with people. So, it was very, very challenging. I think it was the biggest financial crisis in the history of Calvert County Public Schools, but we were able to collectively work through it. So, it was fine. It was tough, very, very hard, but we made it through."

As to whether it'll be easier in the future, he said, "It depends on our state aid. I believe if we reassigned a payment in lieu of taxes, a PILOT, then I believe we should be okay. The issue is when that PILOT expired, our community was taxed at a hundred percent, and that cut into our state aid."

Townsel advised parents about preparing for school open, "I would tell them to engage with their school principals, ensure they have our student handbook and code of conduct, ensure that they're signed in to their students' academic accounts, and just get all their contact information to school leadership to ensure that highly effective communication happens both ways."

He believes in the school open houses "100 percent. Any open house that is being offered at all of our schools, I strongly encourage our parents to attend."

Townsel noted, "I think it's important for your readers to understand that we're going into Blueprint for Maryland's Future; it is in full swing. So, it's our job as school leadership to execute the Blueprint for Maryland's Future because it's law. So, a lot of things that are new for example, this year, something like new teacher salaries, the career ladder, it's constantly engaging in workforce development for our high school students, continuously building on early childhood education, and also having a heavy focus on college and career readiness. Looking at certifications for our young people in the career tech field, while also ensuring that we have a rigorous academic program."

The workforce component geared up this past year with the hiring of staff. Townsel said, "It is going smooth. We have an excellent coordinator, Carrie Akins, who's also the principal and director of career and technical programming here. She's done a phenomenal job supporting the lead of that work."

One of the big changes this year is the new cellphone policy, that requires phones to be powered down in classrooms. Townsel said, "One thing that our team is doing, myself and our director of Student Services, we are going through every last school and giving the presentation on expectations and specifically outlining new policies such as

our electronic devices policy, and our dress code policy. So, I'll be in schools physically supporting the delivery of that message."

As to enforcement, he explained, "Everyone that works in Calvert County Public School has a responsibility to uphold the expectations of all of our young people. So, it's a collaborative team effort."

On the policy, he said, "I have support from our community, sharing that they want our young people to be as safe as they possibly can, and they understand that a part of safety is limiting access to some of these social networking sites that young people use and sometimes get in trouble with outside of school. So, they understand the safety measures that the school district is putting in place, and they truly appreciate that opportunity."

As school was ending last semester, problems surfaced about discipline at Calvert High School. Townsel said, "The leadership at Calvert High School did a phenomenal job with regards to their school improvement plan. And also, I worked very collaboratively with our local sheriff's office to do safety walks at the school prior to the end of the school year. So, we closed out on a high note this summer. We had professional development, including our summer leadership academy, and we're walking into a school year 24-25 with optimism and a lot of excitement, a lot of anticipation for great things in front of us due to the hard work we've done over the summer. So, I'm going to continue to work collaboratively with school leadership, with all outside agencies, and every high school will continue to be a high-quality high school in the state of Maryland."

Townsel praised Sheriff Ricky Cox for his collaboration with the school system. "I think Sheriff Cox is a major asset to our community, our school community. He and I have a phenomenal relationship."

Townsel was asked about the learning gap that occurred during the pandemic. He said, "We're very privileged in Calvert County to be moving forward with closing our learning gap due to Covid-19. Most recently, in our publicly released test scores, we have some of the highest test scores in the state of Maryland. We were number one for English and ranked high across a lot of categories, and we still maintain one of the highest graduation rates in the state. So, not only are we making up the loss that we have from the pandemic, our school district is continuing to outperform some of our other districts in the state."

As for one-on-one help, he said it's "always a privilege if you could pull it off, but there's a lot of resources in place. We have a multi-tiered system of support for our young people that covers students, whether it's academically, behaviorally, or with regards to their social and emotional capacities. So, we do have supports put in place to target our neediest students."

For parents who would like to volunteer in school, he said, "There's a process at every school. They can check with the school administration, but parents in our school system are a secret recipe for a lot of the success that we have. We do believe that

parents have the opportunity to reinforce the expectations that we have for our young people. So, we appreciate our parents, and we want them to continue to stay involved."

The superintendent observed, "Every school district in the state of Maryland has vacancies at the moment. We're no different, but we're over 97 percent. So we're very excited about that. I hope to get to fully staffed by the start of the school year, closing that every week."

He said of the teacher shortage, "The major issue is that the field of education is not attractive to the masses. Schools of education across the country have low enrollment. So, this is a product of a very, very small pool of talent available, compared to the demand we have in education."

Townsel has just assumed the presidency of the state superintendent's association and recruitment is an issue they'll be addressing. "My job as the president is not to only support our state superintendents, work collaboratively with the Maryland State Department of Education, but also to make the field of education look attractive. My platform is to attract people to the profession. It's an amazing profession, very rewarding. But as you could probably remember, the field of education, for as long as I can remember, has had a reputation that was negative with regards to the salaries. It just does not get the same respect as being a doctor or a lawyer." He said the Blueprint



School Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel

bolstering salaries could help.

As schools open, he said, "The major challenge really is controlling everyone's excitement. We're very, very happy to come back to school."

Townsel said, "We're going to continue to set the bar, meet the bar, exceed the bar, and raise the bar. And the goal is to continue to get better. Equal or greater value is what I expect from all of our young people and all of our educators."

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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4	CALENDAR	10
COMMUNITY	9		

“I AM JUST TRYING TO PROCESS NOT ADDING ‘THE MOST-QUALIFIED’”

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER LISA GRENIS ON VOTE ON EQUITY HIRING



LOCAL 5
School board debates equity in hiring practices



LOCAL 6
Local grillers head to national BBQ competition



ON THE COVER
Schools prepare for students' return

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, AUG 15	FRI, AUG 16	SAT, AUG 17	SUN, AUG 18
Mostly Sunny Hi: 85° Lo: 66°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 87° Lo: 70°	AM Showers Hi: 84° Lo: 70°	Thunderstorms Hi: 83° Lo: 69°
MON, AUG 19	TUE, AUG 20	WED, AUG 21	THU, AUG 22
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