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St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025

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**Governor Releases
FY2026 State Budget**

**Former EMS Chief
Sentenced in Drug Theft**

**Schools Used All
Scheduled Snow Days**

SNOW MAKES TOUGH GOING FOR PEDESTRIANS

Photo by Ceandra Scott

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“IF WE HAVE ANY MORE SNOW DAYS AFTER THAT [SNOW MAKE UP DAYS] THEY’LL BE ADDED TO THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.”

SUPERINTENDENT DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON THE COUNTY SCHOOLS USING ALL THREE OF ITS SNOW DAYS.



LOCAL 4
Former EMS head sentenced











LOCAL 5
State budget increases aid to St. Mary's



ON THE COVER
Snow still clogging county sidewalks

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 16	FRI, JAN 17	SAT, JAN 18	SUN, JAN 19
 Cloudy Hi: 37° Lo: 26°	 Sunny Hi: 43° Lo: 32°	 Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 32°	 Rain/Snow Showers Hi: 36° Lo: 19°
MON, JAN 20	TUE, JAN 21	WED, JAN 22	THU, JAN 23
 Mostly Sunny Hi: 27° Lo: 11°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 22° Lo: 10°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 21° Lo: 17°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 33° Lo: 23°





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Former EMS Chief Sentenced in Drug Pilfering Case

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Thomas Patrick Raley, former chief of emergency medical services for the county's career personnel, has been sentenced to 18 months in the local detention center after taking an Alford plea to a litany of charges against him in connection to multiple cases of prescription narcotics being stolen from county-owned medic lock boxes at rescue squads.

The sentence was part of a plea deal, court records show; Raley has already served 121 days of confinement which has been credited towards his time served.

As part of his plea deal Raley must enter the adult recovery court; Raley's Alford plea is not an admission of guilt, rather it is an acknowledgement that the prosecution had enough evidence to get a conviction beyond a reasonable doubt if his case went to trial.

In all Raley entered an Alford plea to one count of burglary but standard guilty pleas to two counts of rogue and vagabond and seven counts of drug possession.

On July 23 of last year the Commissioners of St. Mary's County moved to terminate his contract as the county rescue chief; that same day the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office named Raley as the sole suspect in a spate of tampering of county owned medic boxes that had reportedly been pilfered of narcotics and other drugs, such as fentanyl.

Almost six years ago, The County Times had reported, Raley was the same person who was charged with breaking into a medic box at the Leonardtown Volunteer Rescue Squad and taking prescription opioids to use for his own admitted addiction.



Thomas Patrick Raley

Coverage from The County Times and other local media outlets from 2019 showed that Raley had been charged with destruction of property and theft less than \$100.

A unanimous decision in 2023 by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County led to Raley being installed into his former position.

Commissioners acted with the full knowledge that he had been charged with breaking into the medic boxes in 2019 and that Raley admitted he did so in police charging documents at the time to feed a drug habit.

Raley was arrested and charged Sept. 11 for the most recent case of drug theft.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Initial School Budget Increases by \$10M

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Board of Education is starting its operating and capital budget deliberations and is already predicting the need for more money from the county.

Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith introduced his proposed fiscal 2026 budget at the school board's Jan. 9 meeting and it calls for a four-percent increase in funding from local sources; that means an additional \$5.4 million from the county which would bring the local allocation to \$139.7 million from the fiscal 2025 amount.

The budget is also projecting an additional allocation from the state of about \$4.3 million to raise that portion of their funding to \$147.7 million; the federal allocation is only expected to increase slightly by \$19,000 to \$2.7 million.

The total recommended fiscal 2026 budget is \$293.2 million — or \$10.4 mil-

lion more — than the current fiscal 2025 adopted budget.

A portion of the new budget, which has yet to be formally introduced to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, would increase teacher pay with a two-percent cost of living increase as well as a step increase; administrators would receive a one-percent cost of living increase and a step increase.

The money the school system expects from the state is based on the funding formula from the Blueprint for Education — the billion-dollar education reform package that is now state law — but there is already talk in the General Assembly of holding back on some of the funding demands of the plan to help relax the \$2.9 billion budget deficit.

The next budget work session for the board of education is scheduled for Jan. 15.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Snow Still Clogs Urban Sidewalks



Photo by Ceandra Scott

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

It's been nearly two weeks since the first snow of 2025 fell on St. Mary's and while streets may be clear on main highways, some are complaining that the sidewalks are still filled with snow, putting pedestrians in highly trafficked areas like Great Mills Road in Lexington Park in danger.

"We have an issue with pedestrians on Great Mills Road because they cannot walk down the sidewalks because they are covered in snow and ice," said Terri Doughty to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County at a Jan. 14 public forum in Leonardtown. "I hear there's an ordinance... but no one's enforcing it."

"We've got to do better."

There is an ordinance that requires property owners, either homeowners or business owners, to clear the sidewalk of snow and ice — even after the state or county has plowed snow from the main road onto the sidewalk.

Doughty said people had been engaging in the unsafe practice for years, including her, when she had to walk to work in such conditions.

"There's still people walking on the street 20 years later because of the same issue," Doughty said.

A few businesses have cleared the sidewalk portion in front of their establishments, she said, but many more have not.

She and her husband both drive for a liv-

ing, Doughty said, and she did not want to put anyone in danger inadvertently.

"We're having to dodge pedestrians," Doughty said. "It gets dark very early this time of year."

Resident Michael Brown questioned commissioners about who would be responsible if someone were injured while walking on the sidewalk.

"Who bears the liability if someone on my [section] of the sidewalk gets injured outside of my house?" Brown asked. "That shouldn't be on my end [of responsibility] at all."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt spoke about the snow and sidewalk issue earlier in the day during the regular commissioners' meeting.

"We had to physically pick it up and haul it away... that was very expensive," Hewitt said of the few times the county had to clear snow off of sidewalks before the most recent ordinance. "Back then, I voted against it because I had some constituents who were elderly who came to me and said 'I can't do it... I don't have anyone to do it.'"

The county has been lenient in enforcing the sidewalk clearing ordinance but that appears to have been a mistake; the county needed to do more to inform people of their responsibility, Hewitt said.

"Something needs to be done to get these sidewalks clean," Hewitt said. "If we won't pay for it ourselves, we need to find a way to make that happen."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

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Congratulations to the happy couples who applied for Marriage Licenses in St. Mary's County during the month of December. Best wishes to all!

T'Juan Evans, 41, Waldorf, MD
Whitney Michelle McCorkle, 36, Mount Holly, NC

Courtney Maria Motton, 36, Lexington Park, MD
Algin Hansen Works, Sr., 57, Lexington Park, MD

Antonia Leigh Myers, 27, Mechanicsville, MD
Donald Calvert Rye, 28, Mechanicsville, MD

Demarcus Antion Spears, 34, Hollywood, MD
Ebony Alexis Biscoe, 30, Great Mills, MD

Natia Amanda Hall, 39, Lexington Park, MD
Charles Anthony Clinton, 70, Lexington Park, MD

Neva Jean Haley, 63, Ocala, FL
Paul Leo Mccusker, 68, Ocala, FL

Jacob Ryan Duffie, 20, Port Charlotte, FL
Zoe Jane Cookson, 19, California, MD

Guy Alan Bohanon, 34, California, MD
Katherine Raquale Singletary, 31, California, MD

Ervin H Stauffer, 21, Leonardtown, MD
Doris Stauffer Stauffer, 20, Mechanicsville, MD

Breanna Alexis Davis, 22, Hughesville, MD
Raegan Elizabeth Alvey, 22, Hughesville, MD

Candesce Elizabeth Crofford, 21, Mechanicsville, MD
Grant Josue Fluharty, 22, Avon, IN

Zachary Seth Campbell, 32, Lexington Park, MD
Johanna Carolin Fernandez Serrudo, 36, Lexington Park, MD

Ashley Nicole Bently, 35, Southport, NC
Kenneth Otto Hutton, 38, Southport, NC

Margaret Anne Horstkamp, 28, La Plata, MD
Nicholas Anthony Gray, 29, La Plata, MD

Andrew Wayne Kardol, 21, Patuxent River, MD
Sonia Marisol Hernandez, 21, Inio, CA

Kwame Boakye Agyapong, 57, California, MD
Velma Regina Briscoe, 60, Great Mills, MD

Zanayah Donye Cunningham, 25, California, MD
Maurice La'raye Haight, 25, California, MD

Brianna Storm Burroughs, 28, Hollywood, MD
Taylor Anja Mayberry, 26, Hollywood, MD

Isaac Hashem Akbari, 21, Westminster, MD
Trinity Marie Jordan, 20, Crownsville, MD



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7bb. 14K DIAMOND RING 1/8ctw \$499
7cc. 14K DIAMOND RING 1/3ctw \$899
7dd. 14k DIAMOND RING 1/6ctw \$599



6g. 14K DIAMOND INSERT RING 1/4 CTW \$1049



7k. GOLD DIAMOND HEART RING \$699



6j. 1/5 ctw DIAMOND RING \$699



6s. 14k Diamond Ring 1/2 ctw \$2399



6m. 14K DIAMOND BANDS 1/4 ctw \$549, 1/2 ctw \$999, 3/4 ctw \$1499, 1 ctw \$1999



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Aid for St. Mary's Increases in State Budget



Gov. Wes Moore, right, speaks with county service interns and county commissioners on a visit to St. Mary's in December 2023

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

Gov. Wes Moore released his fiscal 2026 budget Jan. 15 and the overall funding package for St. Mary's County — most of which will likely go towards education — increased by just 2.5 percent, according to the latest budget documents released by the state government.

That brings the total proposed allocation to \$184.3 million, up from the current fiscal 2025 allocation of \$179.7 million.

Of the 11.4 billion that the state reallocates in tax payer funds back to the counties and Baltimore City, St. Mary's County's share represents just 1.6 percent.

"Maryland is caught in the middle of two storms," Moore said in the preamble to his budget release. "First, we know that a stark new policy direction from the federal government will have big implications for Maryland's economy.

Second, we are staring down the worst fiscal crisis in two decades."

Moore blamed increased state spending and slow economic growth for the fiscal woes but claimed "our administration did not create the budget hole."

Much of that Moore has laid at the feet of the administration of former Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, who has been quick to point out that when he left office the state had a \$5 billion budget surplus.

Moore proposes a mix of tax increases for the wealthiest in the state and cuts for most residents, as well as cuts in the corporate tax rate to bridge the current \$3 billion budget deficit and promote business growth.

Del. Matt Morgan, head of the newly formed Freedom Caucus in the Maryland General Assembly, said Moore's analysis of the state's fiscal problems were accurate but his proposed solutions would not work.

"He's going to raise taxes on about 18 percent of Marylanders," the District 29A delegate said. "I think it's [Moore's budget proposal] more double talk."

While Moore has offered both tax increases and some cuts in taxes and spending, Morgan said he did not expect that

precise formula to last once the Democrat dominated legislature got hold of the spending plan.

The legislature in Maryland now has more power than it did over the final budget that in previous years.

"I think the legislature will keep the tax increases and reverse the cuts," Morgan told The County Times. "And at the end of the session the governor will come out and say he did his best but the legislature was responsible for raising the taxes."

The current budget proposal is approximately \$67 billion, Morgan said, which is part of an increase of \$19 billion in budgeting over the last five years.

"That's unsustainable," said Morgan. "This is hurting working class people the most."

Del. Todd Morgan, of Dist. 29C, which includes part of St. Mary's and lower Calvert counties, said he did not believe Moore's plan to cut \$2 billion in spending would even pass the House of Delegates without much of its intent being stripped away.

"The House has no appetite for cutting programs and services," Todd Morgan said. "And from what I've seen in the budget so far, for my areas of St. Mary's and southern Calvert, there's nothing."

Even the project to improve the intersection at Route 5 and Great Mills Road, including widening the culvert over the St. Mary's River in the Callaway area, has been placed on temporary hold due to lack of funding, the District 29C delegate said.

"I don't like that we're raising taxes, period," he said. "It would be better if we had more structural cuts [to state government apparatus].

"You have to live within your means."

The proposed tax increase on the highest wage earners in the state would also likely backfire, Todd Morgan said, since those were the ones who could most easily afford to leave the state for more tax-friendly jurisdictions.

"The millionaire's tax didn't work before, it's not going to work now," he said.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Schools Used All Their Snow Days

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The most recent snow fall caused the St. Mary's County Public School System to use all of its allotted snow days; if the county experiences any more snow fall this winter it may have to add days onto the end of the school year.

"We've used our three snow days," said Superintendent Dr. James Scott Smith at the Jan. 9 meeting of the county school board. "We build the scheduled to have three snow days in it."

The county has the option of using two make-up snow days — either President's Day on Feb. 17 or what would normally be the last Monday on Spring Break — if there was any further snow that was significant enough to warrant closure of the schools, Smith said.

"If we have any more snow days after that [the make-up days] they'll be added to the end of the school year."

The last day of school for students is currently June 11.

Smith said there were concerns from residents that schools and their parking lots were not cleared out quickly enough, even while other roads were being plowed out.

He explained that the school system did not have its own apparatus for clearing snow and had to rely instead on contractors to do the job; those contractors had to clear backroads to communities where students lived first, before they were able to move on to clear school properties.

There were 32 separate school properties that needed attention, Smith said.

He added that snow events were not the norm for St. Mary's.

"We haven't used our three snow days since 2017; that was the last time we had a really significant snow event," Smith said. "This is really uncommon."

guyleonard@countytimes.net

Town Begins Next Phase of Downtown, Waterfront Plan

By Guy Leonard
Staff Writer

The Leonardtown Town Council voted unanimously this week to continue its contract with the consultant firm Mahan/Rykiel and Arnett Muldrow Associates to get help in formulating Phase No. 5 of its plan to revitalize the downtown area and the wharf property.

The consultants pitched a fee of \$35,000 to continue the work, \$10,000 less than what the town had budgeted, said Town Administrator Laschelle McKay at the Jan. 13 business meeting, which was a welcome cost savings.

The town has been working on improving its downtown and wharf properties in earnest since 2019 and the town wants to

work with the consultant team to ensure they have the zoning tools necessary to complete the redevelopment mission.

This is important at the town has just forwarded its comprehensive development plan for the future of the town to the state's Department of Planning for final review, which should return the plan with any changes or suggestions by the spring.

The work the consultant team has before them includes planning for the development of the Tudor Hall Farm property that is envisioned to meld with the downtown. This includes planning for parking and access to a planned amphitheater.

The team will also focus on the plans for the food hall down at the wharf property.

guyleonard@countytimes.net

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Former District Judge Passes Away

The Honorable Peter J. Messitte passed away on Saturday, January 11, 2025, after a short illness. Judge Messitte was commissioned as a U.S. District Judge on October 20, 1993. He served in the Court's Southern Division at the Greenbelt Courthouse and was on active status until September 1, 2008. Judge Messitte continued service on senior status until his death. Judge Messitte was renowned for his judicial outreach throughout the world, and especially in Latin America. In June 2017, he received the Order of the Southern Cross for his contributions to the Brazilian Judiciary. His colleagues and Court staff deeply mourn his passing.

A ceremony in remembrance of Judge Messitte will take place in the Greenbelt Courthouse this spring.



Judge Peter Messitte

Visioning Sessions Announced for "St. Mary's 2050" Plan

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

The following Community Visioning Sessions have been scheduled; please note the format for these sessions will be identical; attendees are asked to attend only one 90-minute session:

- Thursday, January 16 at 1 p.m.
Lexington Park Library
21677 FDR Blvd., Lexington Park
- Thursday, January 16 at 3:30 p.m.
Lexington Park Library
21677 FDR Blvd., Lexington Park
- Friday, January 17 at 1:30 p.m.
Charlotte Hall Library
37600 New Market Rd., Charlotte Hall
- Saturday, January 18 at 1:30 p.m.
Leonardtown Library
23630 Hayden Farm Ln.,
Leonardtown

- Wednesday, January 22 at 6 p.m.
Charlotte Hall Library
37600 New Market Rd., Charlotte Hall
- [Sesión en español]
Thursday, January 30, at 1:30 p.m.
Lexington Park Library
21677 FDR Blvd., Lexington Park
This session, along with all exhibits and activities will be conducted entirely in Spanish. [Esta sesión, junto con todas las exhibiciones y actividades, se llevará a cabo completamente en español].

"We urge all members of our community to attend one of these Community Visioning Sessions," said Commissioner President, James Randy Guy. "We are grateful to our team in LUGM for their hard work in organizing these sessions, and to the St. Mary's County Health Department for their partnership in offering one session entirely in Spanish, helping to ensure all voices in our community are heard."

Visit <https://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/StMarys2050> today to learn more, stay engaged, and add your voice in shaping the future of St. Mary's County.

County Government Operations for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) administrative offices will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2025, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Offices will resume normal operating schedules on Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

The January 20 closure also includes:

- St. Mary's County Libraries (Charlotte Hall, Leonardtown, and Lexington Park)
 - The Animal Adoption & Resources Center
 - The Senior Activity Centers (Garvey, Loffler & Northern) and no home-delivered meals
 - The St. Mary's Transit System (STS)
- The following SMCG operations will be

open on January 20:

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

For more information on SMCG operations, please visit: www.stmaryscountymd.gov or follow St. Mary's County Government on Facebook, X, and Instagram for regular updates.



Letters to the Editor

'Sour grapes do not make good Brandie'

This op ed is written in response to Brandie Edelen's letter published in the January 10th edition of Southern Maryland News (and, I understand, other sources as well). It seems that Ms. Edelen just can't stop complaining about her loss in the School Board election last November and blaming everyone else rather than taking responsibility for her own decisions during the campaign. Her recent whiny screed is aimed at blaming "local officials" and the voters themselves. Perhaps Ms. Edelen doesn't understand that this is what elections are about: voters expressing their judgement of a candidate through the ballot box. Ms. Edelen blames voters for "no interest in imposing term limits; no scrutiny of incumbents responsible for a failing school system" (yadda, yadda, yadda), which simply reinforces the observation of Phillip Wentz in his op ed letter on Aug 27, 2024, prior to the election. In that prescient letter, Mr. Wentz warned, "Be wary of voting for a candidate who 'feels entitled' to people's votes." Ms. Edelen also blames "local officials" for remaining "silent on their personal picks." So, she apparently feels

entitled to receive local officials' endorsements as well as voter's acclamation. The one person that Ms. Edelen doesn't blame for her poor performance in the election last year is herself. She doesn't take responsibility for her decision to skip the board of education candidate forum held October 9th. She doesn't take responsibility for deciding not even to provide a statement to be read at that forum. She doesn't take responsibility for her unpopular policy positions which prompted the teachers' union, EASMC, not to endorse her. She, then, turns around and blames EASMC (without evidence) for "causing 'rot in the school system.'" So, she apparently felt entitled to the EASMC endorsement also. If Ms. Edelen wants to understand why she wasn't more popular with voters and "local officials," I suggest that she do some remedial reading; specifically, Aesop's fable about "The Fox and the Grapes". Sour grapes make vinegar, but Brandie apparently thought that they would make a good whine.

Rand Eller
Mechanicsville

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USDA Inspected, Bone-In
**Center Cut
Pork Chops**
2.98 Lb.



Frozen Or Previously Frozen
**Bone-in Split
Chicken Breast**
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12-Oz. Reg. Or Thick
**Sugardale
Sliced Bacon**
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3.98



18 To 19-Oz. Selected
**Progresso
Soup**
2/\$4



16 To 24-Oz. Selected
**Ragu
Pasta Sauce**
2/\$4



24-Oz. Selected
**Newman's
Pasta Sauce**
3.28



4.1 To 5.8-Oz. Selected
**Knorr Rice
Or Noodles**
3/\$4



20-Oz. Chicken & Dumplings Or
**Dinty Moore
Beef Stew**
2/\$6



14.5 To 15-Oz. Selected
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Pasta**
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7-Oz. Selected
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To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, "like" us on Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or view us on our website at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>



Veterans Resource Expo Next Weekend

Join us for a day dedicated to supporting and celebrating service members, veterans and their families!

This empowering event will feature a variety of local providers ready to address needs: from behavioral health, to employment, housing and beyond. Attendees can:

- Explore resources to provide assistance, enrich well-being and strengthen community connections.
- Get your benefits sorted through a VA claims clinic held by DAV Chapter 26. Bring your relevant documents to get help applying for what you've earned.
- Engage in therapeutic activities designed to foster resilience and joy.
- Enjoy delicious food and great company while connecting with peers and providers. At noon, the first 200 people will be given a free lunch to take with them. We'll have coffee, water and snacks available throughout the day.
- Partake in multiple raffles for chances to win valuable products and prizes.

Vendors who will be present include: Annapolis Vet Center, Calvert County Commission for Veterans and Military Families, Calvert Crisis Response, CaptionCall, Center for Change, Charles County Commission for Veterans Affairs, Charles County Local Behavioral Health Administration, Charlie Health, College of Southern Maryland Military and Veteran Support, Comptroller of Maryland veteran liaison, Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 26, Easterseals Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program,

Footprint Foundation, Greenwell Foundation, Hospice of St. Mary's, Infinite Legacy, Invisible Wounds Therapy and Wellness, K&I Healthcare Services, LifeStyles of Maryland, Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland Department of Labor Veteran Services, Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, Maryland's Commitment to Veterans, Navy Federal Credit Union, Operation Second Chance, Pathways, PFLAG Southern Maryland, PHIL MOR FIT, Prince George's Community College, ServingTogether, Sheppard Pratt, Southern Maryland JobSource, St. Mary's County Department of Aging and Human Services, St. Mary's County Health Department, Team River Runner, Three Oaks Center, Together We Move, TRiO Veterans Upward Bound, United Healthcare, Veterans Health and Wellness Foundation, and Vets Retreat Virginia.

The event will take place on January 25 from 10 a.m. 3 p.m. at Lexington Park United Methodist Church, located at 21760 Great Mills Road in Lexington Park.

We're seeking attendees and volunteers to make this event a success! Help us spread the word and invite others in the SMVF community to join us for this enriching day! This will be a unique opportunity to take advantage of so much that will be assembled on this one day only in this part of Southern Maryland.

For vendors, we currently have a waiting list. You're welcome to still apply and be added to the waiting list. We'll contact you as soon as we're able if spots open up.

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Community Input Invited on Proposed Sports Complex

St. Mary's County Government's Department of Recreation & Parks (R&P) will host a public meeting to gather resident input on a proposed Sports Complex, on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the CSMC meeting room, located on the 1st floor of the Chesapeake Building at 41770 Baldrige Street in Leonardtown.

In February 2024, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) and the Maryland Stadium Authority, entered a Memorandum of Understanding to provide architectural and engineering services related to the potential development of a new sports complex in the California, Maryland area. This new complex is anticipated to include an indoor facility (approximately 100,000 – 135,000 square feet) and an outdoor facility on approximately 36 acres of land.

We are excited to invite the community and other interested parties to this public input gathering. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the community to engage in meaningful discussions with the design

team of Manns Woodward Studios of White Marsh Station, Maryland, and Ball architecture of Bethesda, Maryland. All community members, local organizations, and other interested parties are requested to provide their valuable input for consideration. The study is a Maryland Stadium Authority led preliminary design project.

A full Market & Economic Analysis report for a proposed new sports complex is available at: www.stmaryscountymd.gov/docs/SMCsportscomplexfinalreport2020.pdf.

Additional public input opportunities will be available online through surveys and additional meetings will be scheduled for Spring of 2025; details and locations to be announced.

Questions may be directed to R&P by contacting Christina Bishop at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1811 or via email to christina.bishop@stmaryscountymd.gov. Follow R&P on social media at: www.instagram.com/stmarysrecandparks and www.facebook.com/stmarysmdrecreation.

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22.99

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Wanderings of an Aimless Mind

by Shelby Oppermann



Trying to Enjoy the Winter Wonderland

Thank goodness I am starting to see some patches of grass (albeit brown patches since we have zoysia grass) showing through the snow. I'm also seeing some areas of our gravel driveway finally. Snow is okay for a few days, but this has been way too long for me. The first 4 or 5 days, I was taking pictures outside and from our living room bay window like everyone else.

I was so excited, yelling, "Yay, snow!!" Now, I'm like, "Oh boy, the snow is still there". I do love winter. Winter is beautiful; the stark contrasts of bare trees against a bright blue sky or bluish shadows on snow are sights I love to see... for a limited amount of time. And our house is on the shady side of the street, so our snow lasts a long time. I envy the yards on the opposite side of the street.

I could not live in a place where it snows for several months a year like where my brother and sister-in-law live in Utah. They average about 80" of snow per year. I can't say they get 80" of snow per winter season because their snow starts earlier and lasts longer. They tell me the snow is different there, much dryer, so you can just sweep it away. The snow we just had here was more of a dry snow which is not good for snowballs but great for sweeping off of vehicles.

This morning the crust of the snow in the backyard was like a sheet of glass with a bright, sparkly look which was pretty yet blinding. Poor Mindy was slipping and sliding all over the place – makes it a little difficult to take care of business. Mindy looks so cute in her pink quilted, fur-lined jacket out in the snow, in fact it's hard to get it off of her when she comes back into the house. She will roll on her back and kick her legs out to push me away, so sometimes I let her just lay in her doggie bed with it still on. You can see her little jacket in the photo where she is staring hard at the basement door because I am not getting there quickly enough to let her back inside and close to her other bed by the woodstove.

All the while I've been typing, I can hear my husband downstairs working on the woodstove pipe. He found a small leak which was letting a little smoke escape into the house. He just came upstairs and said he believes it is fixed. It's true that it seems like there is always something needing fixing in an older home. This Friday we are having our basement French doors replaced which will help keep some cold air from coming in.

I did have some winter fun with my friend Debs on Saturday the 4th. We went to Wentworth's in Oakville for their annual Christmas Shop sale. We have been doing this as an annual excursion for quite a few years. You walk into a winter wonderland of trees, ornaments, candles, soaps, food fixing's, flags, and most all of it is 70% off. We each left with a huge bag of fun things, and we are a few Christmas presents ahead now. When we finally got done in the Christmas shop then we walked over to the greenhouse where my friend Glory-Ann from 1st grade keeps all those plants looking beautiful. She has always been an amazing gardener and is an expert on African Violets. I wanted every plant there even though I am not supposed to ever play with dirt anymore.

After Wentworth's Debs and I went to Dove Point Variety off of Parsons Mill Road in Leonardtown so I could get some of my favorite spices. I was only looking for one particular spice but left with a few. We both left with a few spices. If there happens to be a young man at the register, ask him if he can break \$50 for you. And then we headed back onto 235 to end our shopping excursion with a trip to The Apple Basket, yet another magical winter wonderland. You don't even realize how much time you spend in there wandering from room to room. I did the majority of my Christmas shopping for the women in my family and for friends at The Apple Basket. There may have been a few things in the basket for me as well. The only thing I regretted not getting on the 4th at Wentworth's were some cardinals with clips for my wrought iron tree. I kept thinking about them, so my husband and I went back this past Sunday and luckily there were two packs left and still 70% off. My decorating season inside and outside the house is now in cardinal phase. And I just realized one more place I can add some of those cute cardinals...maybe two more places...

To each new day's adventure, Shelby

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



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.

Billy Vallandingham, 65



William Earl "Billy" Vallandingham, 65, of Clements, MD, died suddenly on January 5, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family.

Born December 31, 1959, in

Leonardtown, MD, Billy was the son of Joseph Wilbur Vallandingham, Sr. and Mary Mooneyen Graves Vallandingham. He was a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, MD, living on the Vallandingham Farm.

Billy is survived by his loving and devoted mother, Mary Vallandingham, and two siblings, Dana Russell (Willie) and Lisa Estevez (Steve), and, as close as a brother, Mark Allshouse (Janie). He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Vallandingham, Sr. and two siblings, Wanda Farrell (Joe; deceased) of Compton, MD and Joseph Vallandingham, Jr. (Tere) of Clements, MD.

Billy graduated from Chopticon High School and studied carpentry at the Tech Center, building homes in the local community. Billy worked hard with his family on the farm, especially while growing tobacco. His physical strength was like no other in the family; his nephews still remark about his incredible strength.

Billy was a member of the Tractor Club, attending most of the meetings and events, and assisting with the tractor pulls. He never met a stranger and was always happy. He could converse with anyone and told many jokes. Billy loved riding his gator and visiting local members of his community.

Billy's greatest love was his family. He loved family gatherings and was always concerned about the progress of planting and harvesting crops on the farm. He always enjoyed it when his great nieces would visit and watch TV with him in his room and discuss his collections of various items and family pictures. He enjoyed the Washington Nationals and Green Bay Packers, rarely missing any of their games. In his later years, he developed an interest in game shows, Law and Order, MASH, and Little House on the Prairie.

Billy was a devout Catholic. He watched the Catholic Mass daily on TV followed by the recitation of the Rosary with Sister Angelica. He had a strong faith and would always pray for anyone in need of his prayers. Billy was kind and generous, offering anything he could to always help others. We are confident in faith that upon his sudden death, God met him with open arms along with the many family members, friends, and neighbors who have gone before us in their redemption.

Family and friends are invited to attend visitation at Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Church, Chaptico, MD on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 AM officiated by Father Chip Luckett. Interment will follow in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery,

Morganza, MD.

Serving as pallbearers will be Patrick Russell, Chris Russell, Daniel Estevez, Bailey Johnson, Brian Allshouse, Kevin Allshouse, Steve Sanchez, and Josh Johnson.

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.

George Gatton, 73



George Jetson Gatton Jr., "Ole Dust", passed away at St. Mary's Hospital on January 2, 2025.

Born on November 5, 1951, in Leonardtown, MD, he was the

son of the late George Jetson Gatton, Sr., and Alma Maria Gatton. His father retired from the Coast Guard as Keeper of the Point Lookout Lighthouse after spending his career in the Lighthouse Service; therefore, George grew up at the Point Lookout Lighthouse. His mother, Alma Maria Gatton was the first Ridge Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary president. She was also the Postmaster at the Scotland Post Office.

George is survived by his sister, Maria Eisenstein (Dennis). George had three nephews, Stephen Knott (Denise), Kevin Knott (Wendy), and Richard Knott (Amy). He also had many great-nieces and great-nephews, Megan Knott, Tessa Knott, Cassidy Knott, Andrew Trump, Kaydn Knott, Kohen Knott, Carter Knott, and Nash Knott. He also had a lifelong friend and caregiver, Jean Cooper. Let's not forget his service dog and companion, Rufus, his best friend. Rufus was the luckiest, most spoiled, and most-loved dog ever.

George attended St. Michael's Catholic Elementary School and was an altar server in his youth. He attended Great Mills High School.

George spent a three-year tour in the U.S. Army as a Wireman and was deployed overseas to Germany. He received the National Defense Service Medal. George achieved the rank of SGT and received an honorable discharge in 1973. Germany was a place he always wanted to return for a visit.

He returned to St. Mary's County, MD to become a government employee at Patuxent River Naval Air Station. He began his career as a Pipefitter in the Public Works Department and retired in 2006 as a Fire Prevention Systems and Fire Extinguisher Servicer in the CO2 Shop under the NAS Fire Department. He retired in 2006 after 37 years of service.

After retirement from the government, he decided to work for the State of Maryland and became a Park Service Tech Supervisor at Point Lookout State Park, retiring again in 2019. It was close to home, and he enjoyed talking to people.

That was not enough for George. He dedicated his entire life to supporting our country, county, and community. He was a

Life Member of the Ridge Volunteer Fire Department and devoted over 50 years of service. During his service, he held the positions of Engineer, Captain, Lieutenant, Vice President, Assistant Secretary, and President. George was also a member of the Board of Directors. He was inducted into the Southern Maryland Firemen's Association Hall of Fame on May 1st, 1999, and the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA) Hall of Fame. George was on several MSFA committees and was an MSFA Parade Judge in Ocean City for five years.

He was also a life member with the Ridge Rescue Squad. He served as President, Chief, Safety Officer, and Engineer. He was also on the Board of Directors. George served on several committees, including the new building committee after a fire in 2001. George was also an EMT, providing training and guidance to the new members. On December 13, 1993, George received a letter from President Clinton commending his actions on December 5, for helping to rescue 23 people after the EL TORO II sank in the Chesapeake Bay.

George was a member of the American Legion Post 255. He served as Second Vice Commander and First Vice Commander.

As a member of the American Red Cross, he was called upon to support fires and hurricanes across the country. He supported the country again in support of 9/11 at Ground

Zero, spending the first month at the site of the World Trade Center in New York. He was devastated by this call to duty.

George was a dedicated fan of the Dallas Cowboys and was in front of his TV when they were playing. He also enjoyed watching a good Western and old game shows.

In summary, the letters of commendation, certificates, and awards cover the walls of the family home in Ridge.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Ridge Fire Department, Ridge Rescue Squad, and the American Legion Post 255.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM in St. Michael's Catholic Church, Ridge, MD, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday, January 24, 2025, at 11:00 AM, with Rev. Keith Burney officiating. Interment will follow at Maryland Veterans Cemetery, Cheltenham, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Ron Hafner, Eddie Raley, Danny Gatton, Mike Ridgell, Tony Ridgell, and Philip (Heavy) Ridgell. Honorary pallbearers will be members of the Ridge Volunteer Fire Department and Ridge Rescue Squad.

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

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



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In Remembrance

Sylvia Gainey, 76



Sylvia Marie Nelson Gainey, 76, of Clements, MD, passed away peacefully on January 12, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. Born on November 5,

1948, in Leonardtown, MD, she was the eighth of fifteen children born to the late James Andrew "Toots" Nelson and the late Beatrice Tennyson Nelson. Sylvia was the loving wife of William Henry "Bill" Gainey, whom she married on November 18, 1974, in Leonardtown, MD; together they celebrated 50 years of marriage.

In addition to her husband, Sylvia is survived by her daughters, Donna Miedzinski (Wayne) of Hollywood, MD and Billie Jo Weiland (Duane) of Clements, MD, her siblings, Joseph "Freddie" (Mary), John Ira "Dink", Thomas Allen "Sam" (Carolyn), Brenda Nelson Caywood (Charles, dec.), Kenneth "Ken" (Betty Lou), Robert "Wayne" (Gloria), Wallace "Wally" (Ellen), Rita Nelson Buckler (Robert), Rose Nelson Roth, and Tina Nelson Bowles (Tommy), as well as three grandsons, Timmy Miedzinski, Shawn Miedzinski (Stephanie), and Christopher Weiland. She was preceded in death by her siblings, James Maguire "Mop Jack" (Dorothy, dec.), Francis Leroy "Bubba" (Lori), Charles Bernard "Banjo" Nelson, and Mary Janet "Jody" Nelson Gray (Elmer, dec.).

Sylvia was part of the first graduating class of Chopticon High School in 1966. She retired from the U.S. Government after 42 years of service as a contract specialist. Sylvia returned to work as a federal contractor, until her death. She enjoyed helping her sisters with catering and working in the kitchen at the annual corn maze.

Sylvia was known for her kindness, love for life, and her smile and laughter. She was one of a kind and was well-known for sending cards for all occasions with scratch offs to all her family and friends. Sylvia loved to find treasures for everyone at yard sales every Saturday, her weekly pitch playing with family, and her love for Isabelle's cakes. She spent many years on the ball field as a catcher and learned to hit left-handed to keep the ball out of the tobacco fields at Deep Falls Farm. But, most of all, Sylvia loved spending time with her family and especially adored her three grandsons — "her babies."

The family will receive friends on Monday, January 20, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, with prayers recited at 7:00 PM, in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD, with Father Chip Luckett officiating. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, Leonardtown, MD. Serving as pallbearers will be Timmy Miedzinski, Shawn Miedzinski, Wayne Miedzinski, Duane Weiland, Bobby Buckler, and Trey

Bowles. The honorary pallbearer will be Christopher Weiland.

Contributions may be made to the Leonardtown Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 299, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

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.

Scott Colvin, 68



Scott Marshall Colvin passed on to eternal life at age 68 on January 14, 2025. He was surrounded by family and pets and was blessed to be able to spend his last years on earth in his childhood home in Valley Lee.

Scott was born on July 18, 1956 to Jerry Marshall Colvin and Alice Ritchie Colvin of Valley Lee. Scott has been married to the love of his life, Camille (Greco) Colvin, for 44 years. Together they shared a wonderful life making fun and happy memories with children, numerous pets, travel, and music. Scott was an alumnus and golden grad of Great Mills High School and a proud graduate of West Virginia University. Scott enjoyed his time as a member of the marching band of both of those schools and he enjoyed music throughout his life. Scott was an avid pilot of RC Airplanes and other models and lived the dream of owning and operating his own toy store, "Flying Circus Hobbies and Toys". He had a great career starting off working as an accountant for his father, then moving to a DoD Civilian job with Navy Audit, and proudly finishing his career in the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Postal Service. Scott was an active member of Leonardtown Baptist Church and previously served for many years as chairman of the Stewardship Committee.

In addition to his wife, Scott is survived by his five children; Eric (Joanna), Brandon (Polly Anna Olsen), Kelsey, Nick, and Carly and two grandchildren; Sidney Marshall Colvin and Blake Ritchie Colvin. He is also survived by his sister Tracy Colvin North (Jim).

A visitation will be held at Leonardtown Baptist Church on Tuesday, January 21st at 1 pm followed by a celebration of life service at 2 pm. Friends and family are invited to attend. Pallbearers will be Eric Colvin, Nick Colvin, Jim North, Adam Osborne, Jim McCue, Dan Mixson, Ryan Fields, and Alex Krasnokutsky. Honorary Pallbearers will be Charlie Reynolds and Sidney Colvin. A private interment will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to the Second District Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad in Valley Lee or the COSMIC Symphony.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

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.

Fri, Jan 17

Psychology Lecture Series presents Prof. Crystal Hoyt

St. Mary's College of Maryland
Goodpaster Hall Room 195
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The psychology department welcomes Professor Crystal Hoyt as the third speaker in its 2024-2025 lecture series: The Psychology of Leadership. She will present "Mindsets Matter for Diversifying Leadership."

Diversifying leadership is essential for fostering more inclusive and equitable institutions, while also strengthening their capacity to navigate and address complex societal issues effectively. Members of underrepresented groups are at a distinct disadvantage in leadership in part because of pervasive stereotype-based expectations that serve to challenge their legitimacy. Whereas explicit biases against women and minorities have decreased over recent years, pernicious subtle biases work to undermine the tenets of meritocracy and limit access to power. Not only do subtle gender and racial stereotypes bias who people see as "fitting" the role of leader,

these expectations of inferiority can be psychologically burdensome for those targeted. Importantly, these barriers can be bolstered or undermined by the belief systems, or mindsets, that people use to shape the meaning of these stereotypes. A greater understanding of how mindsets can undercut identity-based biases can offer a path forward in promoting greater diversity in leadership.

Sat, Jan 18

Poker at HVRS

Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad
43256 Rescue Ln., Hollywood
6 p.m. to Midnight

\$85.00 buy-in for \$20k in chips. Rounds are 20 minutes each. Doors open at 5 pm, tournament starts at 6pm. BYOB, food and sodas will be available for purchase. Chance at 50/50 included in your buy-in. Tables deal their own cards, dealers are not provided. Late Entries permitted until 1st break, approx. 7 pm cut off. No rebuys allowed.

****Please note this event is at the rescue squad, not the fire house****

Wed, Jan 22

A Dangerous Time in a Perilous Place: Uneasy Alliances in Civil War Era Southern Maryland

St. Mary's College of Maryland
Daugherty-Palmer Commons (DPC)
4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Chandra Manning, professor of history at Georgetown University, will talk about the Uneasy Alliances in Civil War Era Southern Maryland.

By the end of the Civil War, half-a-million formerly enslaved people had taken refuge with the Union Army and forged a wary alliance that won the war, ended slavery and remade citizenship for all Americans. Yet this biracial alliance between formerly enslaved people and Union authorities was especially fraught with fear and violence in Maryland. From kidnapping, to intimidation, to property destruction, to murder, this talk will explore threats that this uneasy alliance faced in southern Maryland, the strategies that Black Marylanders used to counter the threats and the ways in which the story is and is not remembered today.

Sat, Jan 25

Appraiser Fair

St. Clement's Island Museum
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

You may have a hidden treasure in your attic or garage and not even know it! Visit with expert appraisers as they determine the value of your prized possessions at St. Clement's Island Museum.

Appraisers for various types of items will be available at the museum. Only items that can be hand-carried will be appraised. Space is limited and items will be viewed on a first come, first serve basis.

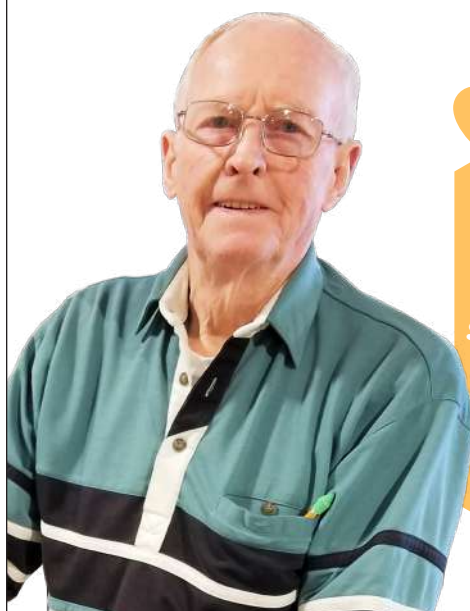
Appraisers will be available to offer oral appraisals to the public for the following categories: fine arts, dolls, jewelry, coins, and currency. The fine arts category includes ceramics, pottery, glassware, artwork/paintings, music boxes and small furniture pieces. Items in this category are limited to two items per person at a fee of \$5 per item. Other category fees are \$5 each. Cash, credit card, and check are accepted.

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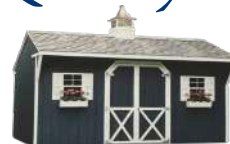
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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Jan 16

TACOS Teen Advisory Council of Students

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

Teens! Calvert Library needs you! We want the library to be a safe space where teens can hang out and freely access books and information. TACOS meets monthly to help us with our events and services planning 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Social Security: Disability Benefits

Calvert Library (Zoom)
Hosted by Prince George's County Memorial Library System
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Programs provide monthly income to seniors, workers with a disability, children with disabilities, and families in which a spouse or parent has died. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Jan 17

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>.

Sat, Jan 18

Annual Seed Swap

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Want to get a head start in your garden? Here is a free program to share and get access to FREE seeds. No registration!

Guidelines this year:

1. We are accepting old catalogs, gardening magazines and gardening books in good condition.
2. We are only accepting divided seeds; please DO NOT bring containers full of seeds, bulk seeds or large packets of seeds (25+ seeds).
3. We CANNOT accept any seeds from invasive species.
4. We are only accepting seeds harvested from 2021 – 2023.
5. Do not bring PVP (Plant Variety Protection) seeds because we are not allowed to swap by law.
6. Do not bring any GMO (genetically modified) or chemically treated seeds. (301) 855-1150
<https://extension.umd.edu/locations/calvert-county/master-gardener>.

Brain Games: Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

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

Pop-in with Poppie

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

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

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 at the Southern Branch

on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Get together with other fiber crafters to learn or develop your skills. Work on projects in progress or start something new! 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sun, Jan 19

Beyond the Displays: Artifact Stories

Calvert Marine Museum
1:30 p.m.

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

Mon, Jan 20

A Day of Service Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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

Join us as we celebrate how each of us can give back to our communities. Reflect on Dr. King’s powerful “I Have a Dream” speech and take away a memento of inspiration. Discover ideas for small acts of kindness to pay it forward in your own community. Learn about local heroes making a difference while creating a mosaic craft, and explore volunteer opportunities with nearby organizations.

Wed, Jan 22

On Pins & 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>.

Thu, Jan 23

Little Minnows

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

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

Upcoming

Maritime Performance Series: Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer with Chao Tian From China to Appalachia

Calvert Marine Museum
Friday, Jan. 24
7 p.m.

Grammy Award-winning American roots artists Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer join Chinese classical hammered dulcimer player Chao Tian in a show that blends music from China to Appalachia and beyond. The performance will be held in the museum’s Harms Gallery, starting at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m., with beer and wine available for purchase. Tickets are \$20 online (up to one day prior) and \$25 on the day of the concert and at the door.

Southern Maryland Bluegrass

Calvert Elks Lodge
1015 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick
Sunday Feb. 9
2 p.m.

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

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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

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CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of December 30, 2024 – January 5, 2025, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,016 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 55
- Disorderly: 9
- Domestic: 13
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 56
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 915
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 33
- Traffic Complaints: 60
- Traffic Stops: 510
- 911 Hang Ups: 51
- ARRESTS: 23



Joseph Jerome Young

CDS Violation: 25-001100 On January 4, 2025, Deputy Hill responded to the 500 block of Stamper Court in Prince Frederick, for the report of an assault. The complainant advised the aggressor was possibly under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance. Contact was made with **Joseph Jerome Young**, 40 of Prince Frederick. Young consented to a search that revealed multiple small white rocks of cocaine and a folded dollar bill with trace amounts of cocaine in his pants

pockets. Young was placed under arrest and transported to the Calvert County Detention Center where he was charged with CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.



Paul Lester Johnson, Jr.



Reco Ramone Johnson

continued revving the vehicle in an attempt to elude deputies. Investigation revealed K9 Rico conducted an open air sniff of the vehicle, which led to a positive alert for narcotics. Further investigation revealed cocaine scattered across the floorboard along with a strong odor of cocaine emitting from the vehicle. A total of 214 grams of cocaine was recovered. Both the driver, Paul Lester Johnson Jr., and the passenger, **Reco Ramone Johnson**, 36, also of Annapolis, were taken into custody without incident. They were transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Distribution of Narcotics, CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute Narcotics, and CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.

CDS Violation: 25-000905 On January 3, 2025, members of the Calvert County Sheriff's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) were in the vicinity of 10200 Kirksville Lane in Dunkirk when they observed a drug transaction take place inside a vehicle. Deputies initiated a felony traffic stop, but the driver attempted to flee. The driver, identified as **Paul Lester Johnson Jr.**, 43, of Annapolis, continued revving the vehicle in an attempt to elude deputies. Investigation revealed K9 Rico conducted an open air sniff of the vehicle, which led to a positive alert for narcotics. Further investigation revealed cocaine scattered across the floorboard along with a strong odor of cocaine emitting from the vehicle. A total of 214 grams of cocaine was recovered. Both the driver, Paul Lester Johnson Jr., and the passenger, **Reco Ramone Johnson**, 36, also of Annapolis, were taken into custody without incident. They were transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Distribution of Narcotics, CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute Narcotics, and CDS: Possession-Not Cannabis.

Theft: 24-101687 On December 30, 2024, DFC Huy responded to the 100 block of Ponds Wood Road in Huntingtown, for the reported theft. The complainant advised FedEx had delivered a package to the victim's residence and Ring Camera footage shows a black male wearing a black t-shirt and black shorts walk up to the door, grab the package and walk back to a white truck. The truck is described as an extended cab truck with big tires. The estimated value of stolen property is \$429.

Theft: 25-000497 On January 2, 2025, Deputy Shuart observed a male walking south on Prince Frederick Blvd. in Prince Frederick, pushing a Weis shopping cart approximately .57 miles from the Weis Market. Contact was made with the individual identified as **Brian Douglas Leshar**, 44 of Huntingtown. Leshar was unable to provide authorization for removing the Weis Markets shopping cart from Weis Markets property. Leshar was issued a criminal summons and charged with Grocery Cart Removal.

Theft: 25-000514 On January 2, 2025, Deputy Shuart observed a male walking west on Elizabeth Drive in Prince Frederick, pushing a Giant Food shopping cart approximately .58 miles from the Giant Food store located at 655 N. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick. Contact was made with the individual identified as **Sterling Willis McClendon**, 60 of Huntingtown. McClendon was unable to provide authorization for removing the Giant Food shopping cart from Giant Food property. McClendon was issued a criminal summons and charged with Grocery Cart Removal.

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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Prince Frederick Man Convicted of Animal Cruelty

On Friday, January 10, 2025, following a 2-day trial, Mark Roosevelt Fields was convicted by a Calvert County jury of aggravated animal cruelty and dangerous weapons charges.

At trial, the evidence revealed that Fields, 39, of Prince Frederick, stabbed and killed his cousin's dog following a family dispute.

Fields will be sentenced on March 14, 2025. Until that time, he will be held without bond at the Calvert County Detention Center. He is facing up to 6 years in prison.

This case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Christopher J. Monte.

Press Release from Calvert County State's Attorney.



Mark Roosevelt Fields

Commissioners Appoint New Planning and Zoning Director

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Jason Brinkley as the Director of Planning & Zoning, effective Jan. 11, 2025.

Brinkley brings over a decade of public sector leadership and legal counsel experience to his new role. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning and previously held the position of the county's first ombudsman, where he advocated for equity and fairness for residents.

Brinkley's career spans 13 years in county government, where he demonstrated his leadership by overseeing multiple departments, and 15 years of legal practice in areas such as government, business law and civil litigation. Notably, his tenure as the top administrative official in Cooke County, Texas, Brinkley implemented initiatives that contributed to fiscal savings and improved public services, showcasing his ability to support sustainable development and operational efficiency.

"Jason's dedication and service to our community, coupled with his experience in county government and legal practice, uniquely position him to lead the Department of Planning & Zoning," said BOCC President Earl F. "Buddy" Hance. "I am confident in his leadership and know he will continue to exceed our expectations in this new role, ensuring that the citizens of Calvert County are well-served."

Brinkley's background also includes experience in the private sector as a business development manager and consultant, where he managed public sector projects. Additionally, in his past role as



Jason Brinkley

Justice of the Peace for Cooke County, he upheld fairness and ethical conduct in legal proceedings.

"I am honored to continue serving the residents of Calvert County," said Brinkley. "I look forward to collaborating with the talented team in Planning & Zoning to create sustainable, transparent and forward-thinking plans that will shape the future of our community."

Brinkley holds a Juris Doctorate from Oklahoma City University School of Law, a Master's Degree in public affairs from the University of Missouri, and a Bachelor of Science in political science from Texas A&M University.

Press Release from Calvert County government

Industrial Zones Merged in Zoning Ordinance Draft

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), as part of the ongoing update of the county's zoning ordinance, has agreed to include the merger of two existing industrial zoning categories.

Acting Deputy Director of Zoning Rachel O'Shea, in a memo read at the Jan. 14 BOCC meeting, explained, "The planning commission held its public hearing regarding the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance Update on November 20, 2024 and voted to leave the record open for 30 days, allowing for additional public input until close of business on December 20, 2024. The Planning Commission held a special meeting on December 30, 2024, to consider the additional public comments and made a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the Zoning Ordinance update with the following conditions:

1. Remove the following condition in Section 18-10.A.3 (Automobile Fueling Station), which states, In Owings, Lusby, and Solomons Town Centers, fuel pumps shall be located to the rear of the building."
2. The areas proposed in the draft to be changed from Rural Community District to Residential District remain under current definition of Rural Community District.
3. The Light Industrial District (I-1) areas of Meadow Run Park be revised to Industrial Mixed-Use District (I-MU) on the draft zoning map."

O'Shea said, "The distinction between Light Industrial District and Industrial Mixed-Use District has caused confusion. Since one of the conditions from the Planning Commission involves changing the draft zoning map, staff asked for guidance on if similar changes to the map of zoning text should be considered."

New Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley explained, "To go over some of the uses that are both permitted and conditionally permitted in the I-1, the light industrial, but not in the mixed use district includes commercial fuel storage, commercial recycling facility, sanitary landfill, grain elevator and storage of machinery for excavating and contracting services. Permitted and conditionally permitted in both the light industrial and the industrial mixed use includes manufacturing or assembly, research and development facility, solar energy generating systems and onsite service, wind energy systems on that."

Brinkley said that didn't include solar farms that require more land.

Brinkley added, "To review some of the more commercial uses permitted or conditionally permitted in the industrial mixed use, but not the light industrial includes antique stores, art gallery, auction building, boat dealership, home improvement center, manufac-

ture home dealer, and markets, Permitted and conditionally permitted in both the IMU and the I-1 is agriculture machinery service and supplies. And then on the other end permitted in the I-1, but not the mixed use is warehouse and indoor wholesale."

That prompted concerns about home improvement big boxes, such as Home Depot. Brinkley assured that size would be limited to 25,000 square feet, which the commissioners seemed to agree would have minimal impact on neighborhoods.

But Commissioner Mike Hart pressed for assurance that neighborhoods would be protected while at the same time there was enough flexibility to allow a business to expand into new lines, such as some kind of hardware items.

"Usually, those types of businesses that would sell practically anything in a brick-and-mortar store would most likely go under our general retail, which is permitted in all of our town centers," Brinkley said.

Hart said, "In this ever-changing market, it's getting harder and harder for brick and mortar and I'm not a big box guy. I'm not, that's not what I'm saying. That's why I was questioning the square footage. But if there is a type of service or a type of thing that all of a sudden the community could use, do you have the latitude if it doesn't fit in there to be able to, to accommodate that business?"

O'Shea said, "We usually can figure out where they can fit, whether they fit under that use and meet that definition, or we can find something similar that we either have to find a fit for them in the uses that we do have in our table or we have to do an interpretation where we'll have to do a text amendment to add the use. But we rarely get to that point where we can't fit them in somewhere."

Regarding the merger of the two districts, Brinkley noted, "If you put them together, that would simplify things. You wouldn't get into it's grandfathered here, but it's not grandfathered there and create unnecessary, additional work for staff and confusion for the public."

Using Cove Point as an example, Hart said he wanted to make sure that citizens had a say in the decisions. "Your home's value, your way of life, because Calvert's about a way of life. People come here specifically for a way of life. If you move to Chicago, you know, it's a city, it's this and the other. But, you come to Calvert, you come for a specific reason."

But Commissioner President Buddy Hance said, "Commissioner Hart, the process that you're talking about is citizen approval of every single project," adding, "I don't think we can put in place a process whereby the citizens have control to deny or approve projects."

After the discussion, the commissioners unanimously agreed to add the combined industrial zones in the zoning ordinance update draft.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



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Mister, Former Commissioner and State Agriculture Secretary, Passes Away

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Hagner Mister, former county commissioner and state agriculture secretary, passed away Dec. 26 at the age of 90.

Calvert County Commissioner President Buddy Hance, who closely followed Mister's life path as a county commissioner and state agriculture secretary, spoke of Mister lovingly at the Jan. 14 county commissioner meeting.

Hance said, "He was a great community servant. He's one of the greatest public servants I've ever known. He served on the Board of Education when Calvert County had the worst school system in the state. And because of the revenue from the nuclear power plant, [we] went from the worst to the best. And he was part of that plan that got adopted as a member of the Board of Education. He also served as a county commissioner for two terms. He was Secretary of Agriculture in Maryland. Hagner was a great Calvert countian and what makes us what we are today. So, we are forever grateful for his efforts, his work, and we extend our sincerest condolences to his family."

Commissioner Mark Cox also noted that Mister was responsible for bringing Apple computers to Calvert High School.

"He spent his whole life working for the good of the county every single day," Hance added.

Mister's obituary from Rausch Funeral Home said,

"Hagner R. Mister passed away at home on December 26, 2024, surrounded by his loving family. Hagner was born on December 20, 1934, the oldest of eight children born to Norman and Margaret Horsmon Mister. A life-long Calvert County resident, Hagner enjoyed growing up in the village of Barstow, his home of over 83 years.

"After high school graduation, Hagner began work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service. He assisted farmers with erosion control and particularly enjoyed designing farm ponds. After retirement from the federal government, Hagner was elected to the Board of County Commissioners for two terms. He was then appointed Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture in 1998, and he served as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture from

2001 – 2003. As a lifelong farmer, Hagner was committed to the agricultural community. Whenever he was asked his occupation, he would always answer, "farmer."

"Hagner loved Calvert County and its people, as evidenced by his years of public service. He joined the Maryland National Guard in 1952 and later served in the Army Reserves. He served on the Calvert County Board of Education from 1973 to 1982, the Calvert County Democratic Central Committee from 2006 to 2022, the Prince Frederick Methodist Cemetery Corporation for 52 years, the Calvert County Historical Society, the Calvert County Land Preservation Board, Calvert County Farmland Trust, the Board of Directors of Asbury Solomons retirement community, and the Board of Directors of the Calvert Nursing Center. He was an active, lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, first joining Asbury Methodist Church as a boy and transferring to Trinity United Methodist Church when it opened in 1955.

"Hagner is survived by his high school sweetheart and loving wife of 69 years, Helen Ann; his children, Carolyn Hobbs (William), Sherri Kennedy (James, deceased), Mark



Hagner Mister

Mister(Dawn); six grandchildren, Matthew Hobbs (Susan), Katie Wingate (Jeremy), Jason DeLizio, Julie Kennedy, Jordan Mister and Cody Mister; nine great-grandchildren; two brothers, Joseph and Wayne; and many nieces and nephews."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Make-ups Announced for Snow Days

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

For Calvert County Public Schools' (CCPS) students, the snow giveth and the snow taketh away.

School Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel delivered the news at the Jan. 9 school board meeting: "In light of this week's school closure, as per the 2024-25 school calendar, the following adjustments are being made to account for the three snow days: March 31st, June 12th, and June 13th will now be student days. And the last day for 10-month staff is rescheduled to Monday, June 15th, 2025. Additional details regarding the changes to the grade reporting period will be provided in an upcoming email."

Townsel said of the snow removal effort, "I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Department of Transportation and School facilities for their dedication during the recent weather event. Their tireless effort ensured the safest possible return to school. Additionally, we'd like to give a major shoutout to our county government for their collaboration with our transportation teams' effort to get our students back safely."

Another school calendar change was made at the meeting. As their first order of business, the new school board changed the meeting dates for all meetings beginning in February. The start times will be 6 p.m. Previously, the start time for the first meeting of the month was 3:30 p.m. and the second meeting of the month at 7 p.m.

The 3:30 start was established for the



School Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel

convenience of school staff who attended the meetings. But it had become a campaign issue in the recent election, with some arguing it was inconvenient for commuters who could not make it home in time to attend meetings.

Another issue for the previous board was the number of people allowed to speak during public comment period. In reaction to some meetings in which more than 40 people spoke about discipline problems, the board limited speakers to ten, then changed it to a maximum time of one hour and then later switched to a maximum of 20 speakers. Although that number has not been exceeded in recent meetings, one public forum speaker did request the limit be revisited by the new board.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Port Republic Fire Destroys Home

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating a fire on Jan. 9 that destroyed a home in Port Republic. The blaze at 4099 Cortona Drive caused an estimated \$400,000 damage to the structure and \$150,000 to the contents.

Two adults, two children and three dogs were displaced and are being assisted by the American Red Cross. No injuries were reported.

The fire to the two-story home was reported by an occupant at 12:22 p.m. The Prince Frederick Volunteer Fire Department was the first responder. It took 50 firefighters an hour to bring the blaze under control.

According to the fire marshal the smoke alarm, "Present but did not activate until after occupant evacuation due to fire location." There was no sprinkler system.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



Photo courtesy Maryland State Fire Marshals' Office.

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New School Board Members Sworn In

Post Selected New Board President

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

There was a changing of the guard on Jan. 9 as Calvert County Clerk of the Circuit Court Kathy Smith swore in three new members of the Calvert County Board of Education, who then attended their first meeting.

Many supporters of the new members, Mellisa Goshorn, Paul Harrison and Joseph Marchio, attended the meeting and during board comments they thanked those supporters and the many citizens who voted for them. During the meeting, the new members were active in asking questions of staff.

The new board selected the two incoming members for the top leadership positions, with Jana Post to serve as president for the next year and Lisa Grenis as vice president.

Delegate Mark Fisher (R, 28C), during public comment, said, "I want to say how good it is to see that we have a board that is focused on student achievement, the most important thing with public education. I also want to say that in Calvert County there was a time when we didn't politicize public education on school boards. Unfortunately, a few years ago, that time seemed to have passed. And we heard things like, let's hire people not based on merit of the best applicant. Let's hire them for other reasons. That is uniquely un-American. It is un-American in every way imaginable. It's antithetical to the Declaration, and it is antithetical to all

the things spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. You hire the best person based on who is the best applicant, the best person to be pushed up into administration based on who is the best applicant. That also applies with students and must reward people based on merit and must recognize the salutatorian and the valedictorian at graduations, because that's what matters in education.

Fisher added, "Proof to my point, during the election, I went to, one of the polls, went to many, and there was a teacher's union operative there. And I want to separate the two, the wonderful teachers in Calvert County, with what is true from the teacher's union operatives. This teacher's union operative, I went over to her, and I asked her the question very nicely and civilly. I said, why is it the teacher's union is endorsing someone who wants to cancel the police? And she said, well, that's not true. And I said, well, we have all this information, the tweets and so forth, it's all in writing. It's in her own words. Why would you endorse such a person? And the teacher's union representative said, well, Delegate Fisher, you're just being Trumpy. What that means is that the teacher's union operative couldn't have a conversation about policy differences. When you can't have a conversation about policy differences, it means you are not a critical thinker, and you have no business in public education teaching children to be critical thinkers."

The Calvert Republican Party openly

endorsed the three new board members.

Former county commissioner, Susan Shaw, told the new members, "You are undertaking an incredible task. The hours and hours and hours, Jana and Lisa already know about that, you'll be spending at times will feel so worthless, but they are not. Our whole country is at a place where we want change, and we all supported you and are so glad to see you in those roles today because we're counting on you."

Delegate Mark Fisher (R, 28C), during public comment, said, "I want to say how good it is to see that we have a board that is focused on student achievement, the most important thing with public education. I also want to say that in Calvert County there was a time when we didn't politicize public education on school boards. Unfortunately, a few years ago, that time seemed to have passed. And we heard things like, let's hire people not based on merit of the best applicant. Let's hire them for other reasons. That is uniquely un-American. It is un-American in every way imaginable. It's antithetical to the Declaration, and it is antithetical to all the things spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. You hire the best person based on who is the best applicant, the best person to be pushed up into administration based on who is the best applicant. That also applies with students and must reward people based on merit and must recognize the salutatorian and the valedictorian at graduations, because that's what matters at education."

Fisher added, "Proof to my point, during the election, I went to, one of the polls, went to many, and there was a teacher's union operative there. And I want to separate the two, the wonderful teachers in Calvert County, with what is true from the teacher's union operatives. This teacher's union operative, I went over to her and I asked her the question very nicely and civilly. I said, why is it the teacher's union is endorsing someone who wants to cancel the police? And she said, well, that's not true. And I said, well, we have all this information, the tweets and so forth, it's all in writing. It's in her own words. Why would you endorse such a person? And the teacher's union representative said, 'Well, Delegate Fisher, you're just being Trumpy.' What that means is that the teacher's union operative couldn't have a conversation about policy differences. When you can't have a conversation about policy differences, it means you are not a critical thinker, and you have no business in public education teaching children to be



New school board president Jana Post

critical thinkers."

The Calvert Republican Party openly endorsed the three new board members.

During board comments, Grenis said of the new members, "While each will bring their own unique perspectives and points of view, we will have one common goal to help all of our students reach their full potential and to make Calvert County Public Schools the best in the state and the nation. We sit here today because we care deeply about our schools, our students, and the future of Calvert County. The voters of Calvert County have sent a strong message that change is needed. Our system must go in a new direction where we prioritize safety, discipline, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to making academic excellence in Calvert County Public Schools our number one priority. To achieve this, we need the support of all the CCPS teachers and staff, who can continue to work tirelessly to provide our students with the best learning experience possible. We are part of a movement and promise for a brighter future. It's what makes Calvert County the special place we all cherish and love."

A new President Post said, "Paul and Joe and Melissa, I look forward to working with all of you. A small piece of advice, if I may. It's an opportunity now to do a lot of listening and a lot of question asking. Lisa and I are in two years, and every day I learn something new. So, it is a wonderful opportunity. You'll have an opportunity to meet a lot of people, a lot of amazing kids, and I really look forward to working with all of you to make some much-needed improvements."

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Governor, Cabinet Visit Calvert

Commissioners Defend Bi-Partisan Effort

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

As part of a system of rotating cabinet meetings among the state's counties, Calvert was up next for a visit on Jan. 10.

Gov. Wes Moore spoke at an opening session at Chesapeake Hills Golf Club in Lusby. Then after lunch supplied by Commissioner Todd Ireland and his staff, the entourage visited Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant and then attended a briefing on revitalization projects within the Prince Frederick Town Center.

Commissioner President Buddy Hance said of the lunch, "They were very impressed, when I was on the cabinet, when we did those kind of meetings we got a box lunch from Subway. The cabinet had never seen them like that at a cabinet meeting. They were all very happy and we fed them very well."

Hance noted, "I heard that people were on social media complaining that we hosted the governor. Why would a board of Republicans host a Democratic governor? Well, my comment is that it's our job to do the best we can for Calvert County. And that means you work with everybody no matter who that is and what party they are, or where they live, to help our community. And that's why we did that that day, is to build a relationship. So, when you have an issue, you can pick up the phone and call those people. The entire cabinet was there. We got a chance to meet all of them that day. I will not apologize for hosting the governor here that day."

Commissioner Mike Hart said he heard some of the same thing. "You pay me to do everything I can to try to make the county as best as it can be. And whether you like who's in charge or not, that is who the governor is."

Hart added, "Whether I'm successful or not, why would I not try to do everything I could?"

Commissioner Mark Cox said, "We have several bills in Annapolis that he's ultimately going to have to sign. You're going to get a whole lot more out of being kind to somebody than you are, going out there and trying to create an enemy."

Commissioner Catherine Grasso said, "I may be a Republican, but I work for all of you. I represent all of you, and I want a suc-



Gov. Wes Moore, center, flanked by county commissioners

cessful county, a successful school system, a successful infrastructure. I want to fulfill what my constituents want. And we all have to work together."

One of the issues pressed was synchronized lights on Routes 2/4. Hance said, "If they don't have money today for the lights, they've been to Calvert County, they've heard us and we've spoken for all of you, and maybe they'll say, wait a minute, there's a problem on 231, we got a little extra money. Let's give it to Calvert. That's what we do."

Moore, in his opening remarks, said, "Thank you. Not only for the leadership, and for the focus to everybody within the county. The county is in remarkably good hands because you all are the ones who continue to lead them forward."

Moore highlighted the state's budget crisis and emphasized an initiative to reduce spending just announced that day. "Government modernization is not just about where we hold meetings, government modernization is about how we do our work. It's about making sure we have systems in place, making sure we can be efficient and making sure we're actually measuring things."

As an example, he said sometimes it's the simple fixes that add up, such as "iPads or laptops that we all get when we enter into state government. Here's the point," holding up a laptop. "All of you, this looks very familiar, doesn't it, our government

for the laptop."

"Because we are not streamlining processes, right? It's the same thing whether we're talking about our wonderful state vehicles that allow people to get around and just by asking simple questions and saying, what's the basic usage that we have sometimes in these vehicles?"

A press release later that day on Moore's executive order said, "This initiative aims to address inefficiencies in state government and reduce taxpayer costs. The state aims to save \$50 million in the first year through streamlined operations and cost-saving measures. Gov. Moore emphasized the importance of working with local governments, such as Calvert County, to modernize operations and reduce the budget deficit."

The release said, "The governor and his cabinet's itinerary focused on clean energy development, community services, public safety and local infrastructure improvements."

"This visit highlights the continued partnership between Governor Moore, the State of Maryland, and Calvert County, reflecting the Moore administration's commitment to collaborating with local governments to drive innovation, enhance state services and ensure that Maryland remains a place where communities can thrive," the release said.

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“OUR WHOLE COUNTRY IS
AT A PLACE WHERE WE
WANT CHANGE.”

FORMER COMMISSIONER SUSAN SHAW ON THE NEW SCHOOL BOARD



LOCAL 5
School board sworn in



LOCAL 6
Former commissioner, state agriculture secretary passes away



ON THE COVER
Gov. Wes Moore visited Calvert last week

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 16	FRI, JAN 17	SAT, JAN 18	SUN, JAN 19
Cloudy Hi: 36° Lo: 27°	Sunny Hi: 43° Lo: 32°	Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 32°	Rain/Snow Hi: 35° Lo: 19°
MON, JAN 20	TUE, JAN 21	WED, JAN 22	THU, JAN 23
Mostly Sunny Hi: 26° Lo: 10°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 21° Lo: 10°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 21° Lo: 16°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 32° Lo: 22°



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Calvert County Times

Post Elected School Board President

Former Commissioner Passes Away

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