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# St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

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## JOHN STERLING HOUSER ON LOVE FOR THE LAW

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LIBRARY DIRECTOR MICHAEL BLACKWELL



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Commissioners discuss renovations for Charlotte Hall Library



**LOCAL 5**  
County aims to support foreign visitors



**3 ON THE COVER**  
Law Day

## WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, APR 30	FRI, MAY 1	SAT, MAY 2	SUN, MAY 3
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 69° Lo: 44°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 67° Lo: 48°	 Showers Hi: 59° Lo: 45°	 Mostly Sunny Hi: 63° Lo: 45°
MON, MAY 4	TUE, MAY 5	WED, MAY 6	THU, MAY 7
 Partly Cloudy Hi: 74° Lo: 57°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 78° Lo: 57°	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 78° Lo: 61°	 Showers Hi: 73° Lo: 49°



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# Law Day: Loving the Profession

## Bar Association President Speaks Out

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Law Day is Friday, May 1, a day set aside to recognize the role attorneys play in society. In honor of Law Day, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County issued a proclamation on April 28 and delivered it to St. Mary's County Bar Association President John Sterling Houser.

Houser is no stranger to the commissioners' hearing room where the proclamation was presented. He is deputy county attorney and often makes presentations to the county commissioners in that very same room.

While at Ryken High School his mother encouraged him to join an extracurricular legal club and that got him going. He was attracted by the service aspect of law.

Houser, 31, earned his juris doctor, magna cum laude, from Washington & Lee University School of Law, where he was inducted into the Order of the Coif and received the A.H. Ross-McLeod Oral Advocacy Award. He was a winner of the school's mock trial competition and a finalist and best advocate at the National Trial Competition's 2017 Washington D.C. Regional Qualifier. He received his Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, from Washington & Lee University.

Attorney Sam Baldwin was his high school trial coach, and he interned in his

firm while at Ryken and then during college. "Once Sam brought me into his law firm, I started acquiring a lot of mentors," Houser said.

Before joining the firm, he clerked with Circuit Court Judge David Dansford and was a summer law clerk with a large Annapolis law firm.

While working for attorney Baldwin he had a life changing moment when County Administrator David Weiskopf. Also, an attorney, called and said his office had an opening "to handle cases during the backlog from COVID when things were not really functioning."

Doing that contract work, he said, "I fell in love with the county attorney's office when I started working here. Very engaging. I've always felt something, a call for public service."

"Being with attorney's office wasn't ever on my radar at all," he said. He signed up for the Citizens Academy and Weiskopf said practicing in a government office was the one pure legal job available in which all types of law are practiced.

"I felt like I had a pretty general practice area (at Baldwin, Briscoe, Steinmetz & Ohri, P.C.), but it's nothing compared to the daily county government departments," he said.

Houser has as one of his responsibilities the tracking of legislation affecting the

county and it's something he really enjoys. "It's very interesting. I think that that probably comes off when I go up and do the legislative updates. I got handed it. That was one of the first tasks coming fulltime in January."

He added of the work in Annapolis in the legislature, "Intellectually, it's also just humbling just how large the portfolio government has right now, how much comes across their desk."

The Bar Association is just two shy of Houser's goal of 100 members before he leaves the presidency.

Members are involved in a number of pro bono activities "to serve the needs of the community or just access information," he said.

Houser said Law Day has been traditionally a day of service. This year seven members will be at the county's three senior centers providing information on healthcare powers of attorney. The available slots have already been taken.

Why should a young person consider the law profession?

He said, "There's no more fulfilling profession, but if you want a profession, that's what being a lawyer is all about."

dickmyers@countytimes.net



John Sterling Houser at The Daily Record's Leaders in Law event April 20 with girlfriend Stacey LaRiviere

# Commissioners Support Charlotte Hall Library Project

## Discussions Ongoing Over Use of Building

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

As the Commissioners of St. Mary's County proceed with an almost \$6 million renovation and expansion of the Charlotte Hall Library, the lingering question is will the county ever be able to take over the space in the building now used by the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA). The answer appears to be maybe, but not any time soon.

The discussion of the future of the library came on April 28 during the approval to submit a \$1 million grant request to the state to help defray the cost.

The proposed renovation and expansion is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2028. According to a memo to the commissioners from Director of Public Works and Transportation John Norris, "The planned improvements include reconfiguration of the county spaces in the building to provide updated study spaces, improved collections areas, a modernized children's section with interactive learning elements, and the addition of a family restroom. Infrastructure improvements encompass HVAC system upgrades, roof repairs, ADA compliance improvements, and full interior finish. Renovations including lighting, ceilings, and flooring.

"The total project cost is estimated at \$5,879,450."

At the meeting Commissioners Mike



Charlotte Hall Library is currently on the left and SMRLA is on the right.

Hewitt wanted to know why the renovations in Charlotte Hall jumped ahead of the Lexington Park Library.

Library Director Michael Blackwell said, "When we had our facilities master study done, an architect from Cleveland, very prestigious, looked at all three locations, and their recommendation is that Charlotte Hall is by far in greater need of renovation. It was opened in 1986. It really hasn't received a lot of attention since then. And Lexington Park is a newer facility, and if I can use sort of a loose architectural term, Lexington Park has great bones; Charlotte Hall really needs to be restructured. The staffing areas are three separate ones. It's really not great for staff morale to have that set up. And people are just crammed in the public spaces that are really in need of a reorganization."

Blackwell said the state contributed the bulk of the cost of the 23,000-square-foot building, of which the library occupies 10,000 square feet.

Commissioner Eric Colvin asked, "Does SMRLA really need 13,000 square feet? I have no idea how many employees they have up there. And I know we had spoken as a board previously and met and I don't want to say kicking them out, but moving SMLA gently to a building up in Hughesville."

Blackwell said, "They're doing a facilities master study of their own right now that will be completed by the end of June because it's part of this fiscal year. And they're going to be assessing their needs at that time. And I know that they will be open to conversation about the use of the space."

He added, "We have been in conversa-

tion with not only SMRLA, but also the Maryland State Librarian just about the situation and what could be done about it. And is there any possibility of their moving? My understanding right now is they might not be able to get grant money of their own until 2030 to build a new facility of their own or to open a facility of their own. So, I don't think that's happening immediately, but I do think that there's room for us to expand into some of that space."

Commissioner Mike Alderson observed, "I think the next couple of years are going to be some really dicey budget issues coming from the state. And one of the organizations that's probably going to be significantly impacted is Tri-County Council. And right now, Tri-County Council rents space from SMECO in their building on Burnt Store Road in Hughesville. If there's space up there, then my proposal would be to send SMRLA up there. That'll help shield Tri-County Council a little bit and consolidate spaces."

He added, "If the state wants to burn money, they can go ahead and burn money, but I'd rather see my library in north end of the county to fill out that 23,500 square feet to give the meeting space that the people in north end of the county need."

The commissioners unanimously agreed to support the Charlotte Hall Library renovation and expansion.

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

# School Board Recognizes Month of the Military Child

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Of the 16,500 children in St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS), 5,000 are connected to the military. Since 1986, in an initiative by former defense secretary Casper Weinberger, April has been designated as the Month of the Military Child.

At their April 22 meeting, the St. Mary's County Board of Education issued a proclamation and honored the occasion.

One way the state of Maryland has chosen to recognize military children is through the Purple Star School program. For the 2025-27 school years, designated St. Mary's schools are Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary, Hollywood Elementary, Leonardtown Elementary and Leonardtown High School.

For the next two years, Captain Walter Francis Duke has been re-designated along with Park Hall Elementary and Leonardtown Middle.

Two students from Leonardtown High School have been selected to participate in the annual Operations Home Front Military Child of the Year Award, honoring scholar-

ship, volunteerism, leadership, extracurricular involvement, and other criteria.

The students are finalist Caitlin Young, a senior, and semi-finalist Cooper Canterbury, a junior.

In a video shown to the school board, Canterbury said the award "highlights military kids who are resilient... whether that's in academics, extracurriculars, or something beyond that. And for these students, something beyond that is also the resilience and adaptability to really show in moving to new schools."

Young said, "I think St. Mary's County did very well as a school system. I think it was pretty easy to get in the group of my classes."

Canterbury added, "There really is so much that you can do out here, but you can't do anything if you don't try. Another benefit to military children is seeing the world."

Young observed, "I enjoy seeing new places, and meeting new people, which is really cool. It's always hard leaving your old friends, but it's really exciting meeting new people and exploring all the new places, especially when you're moving from coast to coast. So, moving from the East coast to the

West coast, it was like a whole new world."

The resolution read by School Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Snith said, "Military connected children and youth continue to make momentous contributions to family, schools, communities, the nation, our state and St. Mary's County,"

The resolution adds, "These children are a source of pride and honor to us all, and it is only fitting that we take time to let them know they're valued and supported and recognize that military connected children serve too."

Patuxent River Naval Air Station Executive Officer Captain Robert Chandler said, "My wife and I have three daughters that grew up in the Navy. They endured each and every aspect of these unique challenges military children face from frequent moves to switching schools to dealing with a deployed family member.

Highlighting the resiliency and strength of character, these kids, on average, change schools six to nine times between kindergarten and 12th grade."

Highlighting his own family's experiences, he said, "The smooth transitions and access to quality education are key to help

ensure their growth and success," adding that their "strength and resiliency" is bolstered by support programs that serve them.

Dawn Simpson, long-time liaison between the base and the school system, said, "I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you, the Board of Education, Dr. Smith, your entire cabinet team who are on speed dial in my office, who enable me to do my job to serve those who serve our country. And I know that all of that wouldn't be possible without the dedication that your staff has day in and day out because they're the ones that are boots on the ground with our military kids offering up those soft landings and those smooth takeoffs as they come in and out of the schools throughout the year.

"The military does not follow the school system calendar. They follow the needs of the mission. And so, I know that even potentially later this month, you could have new arrivals, but I am confident that your team stands ready no matter the hour or the day to ensure that they are welcomed warmly, that they are offered a smooth transition, help to navigate the halls of SMCPS."

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

# New Initiatives Would Assist Foreign Visitors

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of foreign visitors come to St. Mary's County every year, largely to work or train at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station or one of the contractors outside the base. They often bring their families with them and have a myriad of needs from housing, schools for their children and how to navigate the twists and turns of being in an alien environment.

St. Mary's County has launched a new initiative to try to make things smoother for the visitors in hopes that when they go back home they will be doing so with a positive attitude about St. Mary's County. That's not only the right thing to do but it also may translate into a business opportunity for the county in the future.

Deputy Director of the Department of Economic Development Kellie Hinkle explained to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County during an April 21 briefing that the initiative followed the state's project to attract foreign investment.

She said from that initiative, "The Maryland Department of Commerce, specifically the Office of International Trade, brought in an Australian delegation to St. Mary's County to tour assets and private businesses in support of the state's economic memorandum of understanding with South Australia."

Through those initiatives her department connected with businessman Ron Weinberger, He said, "I worked international programs for 38 years for the Naval Air Systems Command. The last two and a half years now, I've been retired and kind of doing my own thing consulting."

He said in meeting with the department's representatives, "We talked about how the advantages are here in St. Mary's County for economic growth for international," Weinberger said.

Noting Gov. Moore's trade Mission to Asia, Weinberger said, "I felt like he could have come right down here. We have an unknown, but a pretty large international community as well."

He said the 70 internationals who are on base at any one time "come here with no support for their transition. We're close to the embassies, but too far from the embassies. So, they're on their own to figure out where to live, where to put their kids in school. So, it's quite a shock. I was a military dependent. I've moved all over the country at times, and I spoke the language, so even though it was a transition for us, it was fairly easy compared to what they go through."

For their families, he said, "This is new to them and their first time on deployment overseas is right here in St. Mary's County. So, we have a great opportunity to make that influence a positive one for them."

He said our international contingent is "the largest collection of internationals in the country, certainly within the Navy team." There're scattered around the community and even work out of their homes.

Weinberger said, "I had the honor of being the director of international programs during COVID. So, it was a little challenge to bring folks together, but toward the end, we had

what we call International Thanksgiving, where I brought all the internationals together. We held it at Breton Bay (country club). It was a huge success. The internationals were introducing themselves to one another. They didn't even know each other."

He said since he retired the program has fizzled.

He said at this year's Veteran's Day parade in Leonardtown they put together a ceremony that was well received.

He observed, "The financial growth of foreign money coming through NAVAIR for the last decade has been over 200 percent. That's \$113 billion of what's being managed out of the headquarters today. Now, most of that goes to the production OEMs like the Boeing's and Lockheed's, other naval activities for testing and training. But some of that is right here in St. Mary's County as well. The question we have here is that if their families are having a good time and they enjoy being here, that's a good statement because the foreign liaison officers who come here are the best and brightest. They're on the fast track for them. When they go back home, they're going to be in a position of influence."

He added, "So not only do we talk about 200 family members who are here shopping and buying homes and at the grocery stores, but also they directly fund 350 U.S. government employees."

A group of community members met with some internationals earlier this year. He said they asked, "What is it that we can do to help your transition moving into St. Mary's County? So, they brought up a few things in there. One of them was a driver's license. The U.S. government has agreements...that will take care of our military when they go overseas, and we will reciprocate here when they come to the U.S. That's a federal agreement. State agreements don't really follow those as much like driver's licenses, certifications for teaching. So, driver's license was one of those annoyances that it's painful."

Weinberger observed, "We have the infrastructure already set. The challenge is it's a little fragmented, which is what we're working on."

One place to start, he said, is in the schools. He observed that the International Studies program at Leonardtown could be attractive to children of the foreign visitors. Also developing intern opportunities.

He said the state has a Global Soft-Landing program for some industries, such as medical, there are no soft-landing areas here in St. Mary's County. And there is zero in defense, nothing in aviation. We can be the first. So, when you think of Pax River, you think, this is where it should be."

He said there was a group from New Zealand here that no one knew about. "We want to have that coordination with the base so that we can have that reception for them to let them know this is not only a great place to work, it's a great place to live as well. But it has to come from here. It has come from St. Mary's. It's not going to come from the state."

Weinberger will be working with the county to develop those programs.

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## Commissioners to Host Public Forum

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) will host a Public Forum on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the CSMC meeting room in the Chesapeake Building, located at 41770 Baldrige Street in Leonardtown.

Public Forums allow residents to speak directly to the Commissioners on topics of their choosing. Residents may offer appreciation, questions, or suggestions in a mutually respectful format. Those wishing to speak at the forum will receive up to three minutes to address the Commissioners.

For those unable to attend in person, feedback can also be submitted to the CSMC via:

Email to: [CSMC@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:CSMC@stmaryscountymd.gov)

Mail to: Commissioners of St. Mary's County, P.O. Box 653, Leonardtown, MD 20650

The CSMC are dedicated to ensuring equal access and participation for all resi-

dents. Individuals requiring accommodation for disabilities, special needs, or language support services are encouraged to contact the Public Information Office at (301) 475-4200 ext. 1340, at least three days in advance of the forum, so that arrangements can be made.

Public Forums are broadcast live on St. Mary's County Government (SMCG) TV Channel 95 and streamed online at [YouTube.com/@StMarysCoGov](https://www.youtube.com/@StMarysCoGov) for those wishing to watch remotely.

The commissioners encourage all community members to take advantage of these opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions and contribute to the betterment of St. Mary's County. For more information on the CSMC, visit: [www.stmaryscountymd.gov/csmc](http://www.stmaryscountymd.gov/csmc).

*Press release from SMCG*

## Identity Sought in Vandalism



The Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help in identifying the occupants and the truck shown in this image in connection with a vandalism investigation.

On Tuesday, April 21, at approximately 7:25 p.m., the truck shown in this image was captured on video surveillance intentionally spinning its tires and driving in tight circular patterns in a dirt lot owned by a local business in Chaptico, resulting in property damage.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Lieutenant Edward Evans at 301-475-4200, ext. 8018, or by email at [Edward.Evans@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:Edward.Evans@stmaryscountymd.gov). Please reference case #2026-27759.

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*Press release from SMCSO*

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## Weekend Specials

Statik Ink First Friday **Tattoo Flash Specials**  
 (discounted tattoo flash designs all weekend long)

"May the Vintage be with You" **Weekend Sale** at  
 Shepherd's Old Field Market



## Friday, May 1

**10am - 2pm** Popcorn Friday at Sneades - Grab a FREE bag of fresh popcorn while you shop

**10am - 7pm** Visit the Old Jail Museum - Open for Extended Hours for First Friday

**5pm - 5:30pm** Drum Circle with the SoMar Drummers on the lawn next to St. Mary's County Arts Council

**5pm - 7pm** Create a FREE Butterfly Craft w/ Jami Faith (Elsewhere Art Studio) at St. Mary's County Arts Council

**5pm - 8pm** Butterflies & Botany Community Art Show Opening Reception at St. Mary's County Arts Council

**5pm - 8pm** Nature & Plant Vendors + Exhibitors for the Launch of the Butterfly Trail in LTown Alley Parkette

**5pm - 8pm** "Luster & Line" Art Show Opening Reception at North End Gallery

**5pm - 10pm** Catch the FREE Leonardtown Trolley running throughout Leonardtown for First Friday

**5pm - 10pm** Spring Festival at St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

**6pm - 8pm** Live Music in the Square featuring Jack Allen

**7pm - 10pm** Music Bingo at Leonardtown Cigars

**9pm** One Big Birthday Party - Celebration Mike Rice featuring DJ C Note at the Rex Theatre

**1986 Celebrating 40 Years of Art! 2026**

**Luster and Line**  
 Parran Coltery, Sarah Houde and Kennedi Milan

Opening Reception  
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# Vintage Vibes



## Saturday, May 2

**9am - 4pm** First Saturday Vendor Market at Town Market

**9am - 4pm** Vintage Yard Sale at Town Market

**10am - 2pm** Pyrex Palooza Vendors at Whole Soul Wellness Riverside (Side Parking Lot)

**10am - 3pm** Vintage Vendor Fair at Shepherd's Old Field Market

**10am - 4pm** Vintage Vibes Market on Park Avenue in Downtown Leonardtown

**10am - 10pm** Spring Festival at St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

**11am - 3pm** Vintage Vibes Sidewalk Sale outside at St. Mary's County Arts Council

## Sunday, May 3

**10am - 6pm** Spring Festival at St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

**12pm - 9pm** Sunday Bucket Special at Olde Town Pub (\$5 off buckets of White Claw, Craft Beer, or Domestics)

**2pm - 5pm** Family Skate at Leonard Hall Recreation Center

## The Old Jail Museum



**First Friday Extended Hours 10am to 7pm**  
41625 Courthouse Dr., Leonardtown, MD • [stmarysmd.com/recreate/oldjail](http://stmarysmd.com/recreate/oldjail)



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## NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

# Pax Sailor Named Shore Enterprise Sailor of the Year

Spanning 70 installations worldwide, the Navy's Shore Enterprise serves as the critical launchpad for global fleet operations, and today, it recognized its premier enlisted leader. Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) announced Navy Counselor 1st Class Frederick L. Salazar, representing Naval District Washington as the 2025 Shore Enterprise Sailor of the Year.

Emerging from a fiercely competitive field of elite performers, Salazar presents the absolute pinnacle of dedication, operational readiness, and leadership across the Navy's foundational force. "The Shore Enterprise is the warfighting platform from which the fleet projects power," said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command. "The leaders we recognize today are the engine of that platform. They ensure our forces are ready, our families are supported, and our installations are resilient. NC1 Salazar's dedication exemplifies the excellence required to maintain our strategic edge."

Salazar was lauded for his work as the regional career counselor, overseeing the career development of over 1,000 Sailors across seven commands and establishing a first-of-its-kind testing center at Naval Air Station Patuxent River to provide critical educational opportunities for service members.

As the 2025 Sailor of the Year, he will



Sailor of the Year Award presented to Navy Counselor 1st Class Frederick L. Salazar

be meritoriously promoted to the rank of chief petty officer. "There are many people who helped me get here. My wife, daughter, and son have been my support since day one," Salazar said. "But this recognition also belongs to my mentors and the junior Sailors who pushed me to be better every single day. Now the real work starts. This is where I move forward, take the lessons I've learned, and pay it forward to develop the next generation of Navy leaders."

# Navy Dedicates Hangar to Fallen Test Pilot

The Navy dedicated one of Naval Air Station Patuxent River's newest facilities, an advanced test hangar intended for future testing of the MQ-25A Stingray, on April 10 in honor of a U.S. Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) alumnus who died in a training accident nearly 25 years ago.

The dedication ceremony honored Lt. Cmdr. Raymond O'Hare, a student test pilot who was killed alongside his classmate, Lt. Cmdr. Gareth Rietz, when their T-38A Talon crashed on July 11, 2000.

The event, held during the annual USNTPS alumni weekend, brought together O'Hare's family, distinguished visitors, and members across the aviation community to unveil a permanent memorial and officially name the facility. Naval Air Systems Command Reserve Deputy Commander Rear Adm. Shawn Denihan, a classmate of O'Hare's, presided over the ceremony.

"Dedicating this hangar is a rare honor, reserved for those like my classmate and friend, Ray O'Hare, whose charac-

ter exceeded the highest standards in the Navy," said Denihan. "It is with tremendous pride for his family that this hangar – a gateway to naval aviation's future – makes Ray's legacy part of every mission."

USNTPS alumni are also working to dedicate the future E-6 replacement program hangar to Rietz.

The newly dedicated hangar will be the hub for future testing of Stingray, the Navy's first carrier-based unmanned aircraft designed for aerial refueling. Capt. Daniel Fucito, Unmanned Carrier Aviation program manager, also spoke at the event, connecting the aircraft's future to naval aviation and the legacy of pilots like O'Hare.

O'Hare, a 1989 graduate of Harvard University and former F-14 Radar Intercept Officer, was 33 at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife and their three children who were in attendance. The permanent memorial in the hangar's foyer will serve as a reminder of O'Hare's ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of aviation excellence.

# Baltimore Mayor to Speak at SMCM Commencement

St. Mary's College of Maryland is pleased to announce that Baltimore Mayor and St. Mary's College alumnus Brandon Scott '06 will deliver the keynote address at the 2026 Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 16, on the campus' Townhouse Green.

Scott is the 52nd mayor of Baltimore. First elected mayor in 2020, Scott made history in 2024 when he became the first Baltimore mayor in 20 years to win re-election.

During his first term, Scott spearheaded historic reductions in violence through Baltimore's first-ever Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan. The city also saw an 18% decrease in vacant properties, reaching the lowest number in two decades.

This is Scott's second time addressing St. Mary's College graduates as he was the commencement speaker for the 2021 virtual ceremony.

Scott's administration has been guided by five core pillars: building public safety, prioritizing youth, clean and healthy communities, equitable neighborhood development, and responsible stewardship of city resources.

Before becoming mayor in 2020, Scott was unanimously elected president of the Baltimore City Council by his colleagues after serving on the city council for eight years, representing Baltimore's 2nd District. He was one of the youngest people ever elected to the council.

During his time at St. Mary's College of Maryland, Scott was an active member of the Black Student Union (BSU) and a leader in student government. Outside of

classroom and student leadership responsibilities, Scott would DJ events both on and off campus. "Scott was deeply engaged in the life of the college, experiences he often credits with helping him find his voice and setting him on a path toward public service," said Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations David Sushinsky '02.

Earlier this year, Scott participated in a leadership panel hosted by the College's BSU. After the event, Brandon wrote on social media, "I would not be the man or public servant I am today without my time at St. Mary's. For that reason, I will always pay it forward to the school or any Seahawk."

Scott has emerged as a political leader known for his authentic, straightforward approach. He serves as co-chair of Mayors Against Illegal Guns and as president of the African American Mayors Association.

He is often sought after as an adviser and policy expert on violence reduction strategies by organizations and other elected officials, including the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention under former President Joe Biden. He previously chaired the National League of Cities, Large Cities Council.

A proud Baltimorean and lifelong resident, Scott is a graduate of MERVO High School and St. Mary's College of Maryland. He resides in the Westfield neighborhood of Northeast Baltimore with his wife, Hana, and their children, Ceron, Charm and Camden. Visit us online for more information on the 2026 Commencement.

# New Non-Profit Supports Mental Health Care Access

The Butterfly Effect Project, Inc. (The BEP) has launched in Southern Maryland. This new non-profit provides an innovative approach to meet the need for wellness services in the community. The BEP aims to provide mental health and related services to those who face financial barriers.

To achieve this goal, The BEP has partnered with trusted, local providers of mental health services and wellness programs. These partners will accept eligible persons who are uninsured, underinsured, or facing financial hardship. In addition to mental health treatment, the spectrum of services offered includes nutrition services, trauma informed yoga, and fitness guidance.

According to testimony presented to the Maryland General Assembly, one in three Marylanders who need mental health treatment do not receive it because they can't afford it. These unmet needs affect us all.

Founder Jennifer Voorhaar, LCSW-C, has been a provider of mental health and wellness services in St. Mary's County for many years.

"Our community currently has no way to provide no-cost services for people with mental health and wellness needs," Voorhaar noted. "We have created something to fill that gap."

The BEP has initiated fundraising efforts in Southern Maryland and will hold its first annual Flutter Fest 5K Wellness Walk and Fun Run on October 4, 2026, at Baggett Park in Laurel Grove, Maryland. Registration details will be released in May through the Project's website at [thebutterflyeffectprojectinc.com](http://thebutterflyeffectprojectinc.com). Visit the site to join the mailing list and stay up to date on the ways The BEP is touching the lives of people in Southern Maryland. At the website you can apply for assistance with services for yourself or someone else, become an event sponsor, or make a donation to support this work.

The Butterfly Effect Project believes that one small act of support can change someone's entire story and welcomes your support. For additional information, please contact Jennifer Voorhaar at [jennifer@thebutterflyeffectprojectinc.com](mailto:jennifer@thebutterflyeffectprojectinc.com).

# Wanderings of an Aimless Mind



## Our Mindy Bird

By Shelby Opperman  
Contributing Writer

Years ago, I wondered why people associated cardinals with loved ones who had passed. I do believe in signs from the unknown although I feel signs have come to me in different ways since childhood. Or else, how would I explain knowing at age 8 that my grandmother (Ma) died at the old Providence Hospital in DC before even being told – she was there for months. I actually knew the night before that Ma would pass and never said anything to anyone.



The same thing happened in May of 1980, when my father passed. I knew on May 5th, the night before he died, although it didn't diminish the shock when I was called to the Queen Anne dorm's hall phone at St. Mary's College of MD at 10:30 the next morning. My friends stayed up all night with me the night before in one of our dorm rooms.

As you know, when hearing about family and close friend deaths, you remember exactly where you were when you heard the news for the rest of your life. For people with premonitions, you remember the place you were when you heard plus exactly when the lightning bolt of realization hit you that a death was about to occur. People from ancient civilizations to the present have spoken of premonitions of death or disaster. I realize a lot of this can be explained away by psychologists due to anxiety or coincidence...but there are also things we do not know.

After my mother-in-law Shirley's death in 2013, I started to believe in the theory of cardinals being a messenger of sorts from a loved one. We had a female cardinal that seemed very insistent on sitting on the front door wreath every day and staring inside and down the steps. We felt like she wanted to get back to her bedroom downstairs to check on her things. She also swooped by us repeatedly when we were outside. And about that time is when I started adding a few cardinal items for the house like table runners, and cardinal ornaments for the Christmas tree.

And of course, there are the days that I choose to believe that a male or female cardinal are there to send me a message from my mother and father, especially on the anniversaries of their deaths. This I know is a common feeling. I read about people all the time with stories of feeling the presence of a loved one when they see a cardinal. The popular quote "When a cardinal appears a loved one is near" is on Facebook quite often.

Since our dog Mindy passed in January, we have had a female cardinal that desperately tries to get in every single day, sometimes for hours. She sits on the window ledges and watches us and some days she frantically flies to the bay window and side windows nearly all day. We started calling her Mindy Bird. I have taken so many pictures of her.

It's a good thing it is only Robert and I living here, or someone would be calling 911 to take us away (Please don't call anyone). Now, it is an accepted part of our daily routine to say, "Good morning Mindy Bird!" or "There you are, you are running a little late today." After Robert leaves for work, I may add a few more conversational things. Sometimes I wonder what would happen if I opened the window and let her in...probably a lot of bombardier droppings I'm sure. On the days Mindy Bird is frantic and bossily pecking on the window, I swear she is looking for her (Mindy's old) bed, but then there are days like yesterday when she was the most frantic I have ever seen her. Again, I choose to believe that Mindy Bird is sending a sign to be careful about something, maybe driving. I don't really know. I do know her daily presence brings me a feeling of comfort. And I truly wish the same for you.

To each new day's adventure,  
Shelby

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

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I'm ready to clock in as your full-time buddy. All I need now is my forever home! Adoption hours are Mon-Fri 11am-4pm and Sat 10am-3pm. To see more of my amazing friends also available for adoption, "like" us on

Facebook @ Charles County Animal Care Center or at <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/animal-care-control/animal-care-center>.



## MEET JAXX

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



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## In Remembrance

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

### Mark Greenberg, 78



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Mark Greenberg, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend, who left this world on April 24, 2026, at the age

of 78. Mark was born on May 3, 1947, in Willimantic, Connecticut, to the late Jack and Harriett Greenberg. He was the younger brother of the late Alan Greenberg.

Mark was a proud graduate of Manchester High School, where he laid the foundation for his remarkable journey through life. In 1966, he answered the call to serve his country and joined the United States Navy. Over the course of two decades, Mark dedicated himself to his duties as a Petty Officer First Class and System Organizational Maintenance Technician, earning the respect and admiration of his fellow servicemen. His time in the Navy was marked by steadfast commitment and a tireless work ethic, traits that would define his entire life.

On July 30, 1971, Mark married the love of his life, Betty, in Leonardtown, Maryland. Together, they shared over 54 years of marriage, building a life filled with love and devotion. They were blessed with a son, Jack, who, alongside his wife Cynthia, brought

immense joy and two cherished grandsons, Nathan and Daniel, into their lives.

After retiring from the Navy in 1986, Mark continued to serve his country in a different capacity, joining the military defense sector. From 1987 until his retirement in 2015, he worked diligently as an aircraft maintenance technician and aircraft paint specialist, contributing his expertise to ensure the safety and readiness of our nation's aircraft.

Mark was a man of many passions, with a particular love for classic cars. He was a lifetime member of the Plymouth Car Club, where he found camaraderie among fellow enthusiasts. His pride and joy was his 1947 Plymouth Special Deluxe, affectionately named "The Beaver," which he lovingly restored and maintained with meticulous care.

Despite his quiet demeanor, his kindness and willingness to lend a helping hand knew no bounds, and his great smile and gentle spirit endeared him to everyone he knew.

Mark's legacy lives on in the loving memories of his wife Betty, his son Jack, daughter-in-law Cynthia, and grandsons Nathan and Daniel. Though he is no longer with us, his spirit of generosity, love, and humor will forever be cherished.

In accordance with his wishes, a private funeral ceremony will be held to honor Mark's life. The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff who provided care and comfort during his final days.

Mark Greenberg's life was a testament to the values of love, service, and dedication. He will be deeply missed, but his memory will continue to inspire all who had the privilege of knowing him.

All funeral services will be private.

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

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

### Edna Oliver, 91



Edna Marie (Burroughs) Oliver, 91, of Avenue, MD, passed away on April 26, 2026, at Discovery Commons, surrounded by her loved ones.

Edna was born on February 17, 1935, in Helen, MD, to the late George Debracy and Clara Elizabeth (Thompson) Burroughs. She graduated from Margaret Brent High School and shortly after moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). During her time there, she typed phone bills for the White House. While working, she faithfully waited for the love of her life, Joseph Everett Oliver, Sr. (affectionately known as Pappy Joe), as he served overseas in Germany, demonstrating the depth of her devotion.

Edna and Joe's romance was truly remarkable, filled with love, patience, laughter, and unwavering commitment. Upon Joe's return, they were married on July 4, 1953, beginning a lifelong partnership that formed the foundation of a strong and loving family. Together, they created a beautiful life and home on River Springs Road, a place known for its warmth, laughter, and togetherness.

A devoted family woman, Edna dedicated her life to caring for her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, often expressing immense pride in each of them. She also cherished her nephews, nieces, and siblings-in-law. Edna enjoyed boating, fishing, and crabbing with Joe and was the heart of her home—the best mother and grandmother anyone could ask for, always putting others first to ensure that everyone felt loved and welcome. Her home was a gathering place where memories were made and traditions were cherished.

Edna was especially known for her cooking, with her homemade crabcakes being legendary—famously regarded as "the best in town", and she generously shared them with family and friends. Meals around her table

were always filled with good food, stories, and love. She always kept a homemade cake on the kitchen table, ready to offer a slice to anyone who visited, knowing they would appreciate it. Sweets were her favorite treat, and she would often ask, "Is it sugar-free?" before indulging.

She had a passion for plants and flowers; she also enjoyed playing cards (especially pitch), bingo, and treasure hunting at various yard sales and shops for glassware, which she proudly displayed in her china cabinets.

Edna was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph Everett Oliver, Sr.; her parents; and her siblings: Jeanette Cooksey, Ann Davis, George Burroughs Jr., and Thomas Burroughs.

Edna is survived by her children: Joseph Oliver, Jr. (Margie) of Hollywood, MD; Randy Oliver (Bonnie) of Leonardtown, MD; and Patrick Oliver (Norie) of Hollywood, MD. She is also survived by her sister, Shirley Mattingly, of Hollywood, MD; her brother, Wally Burroughs, of Mechanicsville, MD; seven grandchildren: Heather Oliver, Nicky Oliver, Brittany Buzzeo (Jonathan), Chad Oliver (Katey), Michelle Boothe (Kenny), Amanda Davis (John), and Dale Williams (Kayla); and seven great-grandchildren: Paige Oliver, Lexi Boothe, Abby Boothe, Nick Buzzeo, Andrew Buzzeo, Emmalyn Davis, and Everett Sowers.

Family and friends are invited to attend a viewing and prayers on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Reverend Timothy Baer at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Angels Catholic Church, located at 21340 Colton Point Road, Avenue, MD 20609. Interment will follow at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery, 23080 Maddox Road, Bushwood, MD 20618.

Pallbearers will include Heather Oliver, Nicky Oliver, Brittany Buzzeo, Chad Oliver, Paige Oliver, and David Burroughs. Honorary pallbearers are Michelle Boothe, Dale Williams, Kell Davis, and Vicki Burroughs.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Seventh District Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 7, Avenue, MD 20609, or to Hospice of St. Mary's, P.O. Box 625, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

Edna Marie Oliver will be deeply missed and forever remembered as a devoted wife, exceptional mother, cherished grandmother and great-grandmother, and the true heart of her family.

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

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

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### A Tribute to the Loved One Whose Memory Lives Forever in Your Heart

Honor the memory of your cherished one by sharing the story of their life with friends, neighbors and associates in the community. For details and to place your notice of remembrance, call the County Times at 301-373-4125.

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# St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

## Sat, May 2

### Band of Veterans SOMD

Showtime Deli  
21905 Three Notch Rd., Lexington Park  
9 a.m..

PTSD/Suicide Prevention Group of So. Maryland, offers support for all Veterans in need of our services, as well as support for the local community. We provide help with VA Military Compensation Claims by appointment. Our method is derived from our military experiences when we were surrounded by others who think and dressed as needed to work together to survive. Our members are supported by text, phone or personal interaction and are available at a moment's notice. For more information call 301-481-6752.

### Community Yard Sale

All Saints Episcopal Church  
22598 Oakley Road, Avenue,  
8 a.m.

Offering neighbors a chance to browse an eclectic mix of household goods, curiosities, and bargain priced finds.

The event is part of All Saints' ongoing commitment to fostering community con-

nection and supporting parish ministries. Proceeds will benefit the church's local outreach efforts.

### Visitor Experience Center Grand Opening

Historic Sotterley  
44300 Sotterley Ln, Hollywood  
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Celebrate the Grand Opening of our brand-new Visitor Experience Center with us! The new Visitor Experience Center is located centrally on our site, giving visitors better access to our historic corridor and providing additional space for a series of rotating exhibits on local and national history. This event also marks the opening of our guided tour season, which will run through October. During the Grand Opening, visitors can enjoy family-friendly activities and museum activities including:

The "Revolutionary Maryland: Freedom of the Press Then and Now" traveling exhibit from Maryland Humanities

21660 Colton Point Road, Avenue  
9 a.m. – Noon.

The Seventh District Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary will be sponsoring the event. Primal Brew Coffee Co. will also be there with their beverage truck.

### East Coast Drifters Spring Open Car Show

Mechanicsville Moose Lodge  
27636 Mechanicsville Rd., Mechanicsville  
8 a.m.-3 p.m.

All cars, trucks & motorcycles welcomed. Top 70 and several other awards. First 100 receive dash plaques. Pre-registration \$15 by April 27. \$20 at gate. Spectators \$5 (under 12 free). Registration cut-off Noon. Information call Chuck 301-751-5602 or Rich 240-538-4266 [eastcoastdrifters.com](http://eastcoastdrifters.com) (rain date May 17)

### Designer Purse Bingo

Mechanicsville VFD  
28165 Hills Club Rd., Mechanicsville  
12:30-4:30 p.m.

Come join us for an afternoon of bingo fun filled with chances to win designer purses, raffles, door prizes and more! Food and

beverages will be available for purchase. Fundraising event to support the Southern Maryland Boot Scooters Walk to End Alzheimer's.

## Tue, May 5

### Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

The White Rose  
21030 Point Lookout Rd., Callaway  
11:30 a.m.

An Officer of the Year from each law enforcement agency will receive recognition from the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, Governor Wes Moore, the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House of Delegates, the Triad/SALT Council, and more.

This event is free and open to the public. The community is invited to stay for a complimentary lunch following the ceremony. Advance registration is appreciated but not required to attend. For more information or to register, contact DAHS Community Programs & Outreach Manager, Nicoletta Pollice at (301) 475-4200, ext. 1074 or [nicoletta.pollice@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:nicoletta.pollice@stmaryscountymd.gov).

## Sun, May 3

### Bake and Plant Sale

Seventh District VFD

# Zimmerman's Produce & Irrigation Supply

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Hours: Mon. to Fri. 7:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. • Sat. 7:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Closed Sunday



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# SoMD May Events

## Southern Maryland Spring Festival

April 30–May 3

St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

42455 Fairgrounds Rd., Leonardtown

Admission: Adults \$6, kids \$3, under 6 free

The Southern Maryland Spring Festival promises activities for every age. Highlights include carnival rides from Snyder's Attractions, children's games, live performances—including a world-renowned magician—mouthwatering food and sweets, lemonade slushies, hayrides, face painting, artisan crafts, chainsaw carver artist Joe Wenal, a flower sale, pull tabs, raffles, and one of the largest indoor yard sales in the county. Special events include a Car Show and a Tractor Pull.

Holy Face Church in Great Mills, MD is the proud sponsor of the Southern Maryland Spring Festival.

## Pride and Prejudice

May 1–17

The Newtowne Players Theater

21744 South Coral Dr., Lexington Park

Admission: Adults \$20; Seniors/Students/

Military \$17; Children (12 and under) \$15;  
Children (5 and under) free

This isn't your grandmother's Austen! Bold, surprising, boisterous, and timely, this P&P for a new era explores the absurdities and thrills of finding your perfect (or imperfect) match in life. The outspoken Lizzy Bennet is determined to never marry, despite mounting pressure from society. But can she resist love, especially when that vaguely handsome, mildly amusing, and impossibly aggravating Mr. Darcy keeps popping up at every turn?! Literature's greatest tale of latent love has never felt so theatrical, or so full of life than it does in this effervescent adaptation. Because what turns us into greater fools... than the high-stakes game of love?

Performance days and times:

- Thursday-Saturday, 8 p.m.
- Sunday, 3 p.m.

## Solomons Maritime Festival

May 2, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Calvert Marine Museum

14200 Solomons Island Rd., Solomons

Admission: Free

Event includes the Antique Boat and Marine Engine Show which features exhibits from collectors of antique and classic boats, and vintage marine outboard and inboard engines. Learn how to make traditional stuffed ham, watch demonstrations on how to make crab cakes, clean soft crabs, shuck oysters like the pros, enjoy local music, see Chesapeake Bay retrievers in action, watch model boats skim the waters of the boat basin, and talk with traditional crafts people as they demonstrate their skills. Free 30-minute cruises on the Wm. B. Tennison. For the kids, there will be toy boat building and more.

## Calvert County Master Gardeners 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Plant Sale

May 2, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

30 Duke St., Prince Frederick

Reserve your plants ahead of time by ordering online or check out all of our beautiful plants by shopping in person! The website will be live within 2 weeks of this event.

## MarylandFest

May 2, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

Historic St. Mary's City

47418 Old State House Rd., St. Mary's City

Admission: \$5

Focusing on all things Maryland, MarylandFest will have children's activities and crafts, live music, beer, food, and wine vendors, a sports zone, and craft vendors.

MarylandFest replaces the former Beerfest, but this year's event will be bigger and better than ever, with the added bonus of celebrating Maryland spring in the beautiful outdoors.

Dress in your favorite red, yellow, and black. Come for the food, stay for the fun, and celebrate the spirit of Maryland at this unforgettable event!

## RenFeast: Renaissance-Inspired Tasting Dinner & Live Performance

May 3, 5–7 p.m.

Pier450

48342 Wynne Rd., Ridge

Admission: \$75

Continued on next page



hospice of the  
chesapeake

Rooted in Calvert County



We are proud to be woven into the fabric of Calvert County. We treasure every opportunity to meet you in person and share in your stories—your hopes, your challenges, your joys, and your journeys toward healing.

## Upcoming community events:

**3rd Annual Cindy Horsmon Memorial Fun Run for Hospice**

**May 2 | 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Horsmon Farm, St. Leonard

**Boots & Bling: A Culinary Experience**

**May 8 | 6 – 10 p.m.**

Rod 'N' Reel Resort, Chesapeake Beach

**One-Day Retreat for Grievers and Caregivers**

**June 13 | 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Burnett Center for Hope & Healing, Prince Frederick

**Visit The Shoppe**  
**Our upscale thrift store**

92 Central Square Drive,  
Prince Frederick

For event details and registration, visit: [www.hospicechesapeake.org/events/](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org/events/)

Continued from previous page

Join RenFest Southern Maryland for a sneak preview event at Pier450 Restaurant, Boutique Motel & Shop on Sunday, May 3. This will be a three-course meal and a chance to see Robin Hood, Prince John, and some of the wacky cast of characters in action. With performances from Maul Dire Entertainment, LLC and The Nightingales, and a chance to take photos with royalty and peasantry alike, this event is not to be missed! Come in your RenFest finery to complete the evening.

**Cinco de Drinko Cocktail Class**

May 7, 6-7 p.m.  
Quality Street Kitchen and Catering  
41655 Park Ave., Leonardtown  
Admission: \$65

Join Mixologist Brooke Fritz of Top Shelf Mixology for a festive, hands-on cocktail class celebrating the bold flavors of Cinco de Mayo. You'll learn how to create three elevated craft cocktails inspired by tequila, citrus, spice, and fresh seasonal ingredients — perfect for entertaining or impressing at home.

- Your ticket includes:
- Guided instruction by Brooke
  - Three full-size craft cocktails
  - Light bites to complement each drink
  - Recipes to recreate everything at home

Whether you're a tequila lover or just looking for a fun night out, this interactive experience blends education, flavor, and celebration in true Cinco de Mayo style.

Sip. Shake. Celebrate.

**Annual Plant Sale**

May 9, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Summerseat Farm  
26655 Three Notch Rd., Mechanicsville

Join us for one of our favorite days of the year—our Annual Plant Sale at Summerseat Farm! This fundraiser supports our nonprofit historic farm and helps us continue caring for the animals and preserving this special place for the community.

We'll have a cheerful array of vibrant:

- Perennials & annuals
- Native plants
- Trees
- Vegetables & herbs
- Ornamental grasses
- Tropicals
- ...and so much more!

Don't miss our popular "Llama Beans" organic fertilizer—rich in essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

- 1 lb bag – \$5
- 2 lb bag – \$9

Cash, check, or credit card accepted. Breakfast and lunch will be available for purchase. Rain or shine event.

Bring your friends, your gardening wish-list, and come support the farm—we can't wait to see you there!

**Mother's Day Market**

May 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center  
13470 Dowell Road, Solomons

Celebrate Mother's Day weekend with a relaxed morning of browsing and shopping at Annmarie. This special market features a

curated selection of vendors offering hand-made, homemade, and homegrown goods, from jewelry and art to specialty foods and pantry favorites. It's an ideal place to find thoughtful gifts for the mothers in your life or simply enjoy a peaceful outing together. Food trucks will be on site. Admission to the market area is free. Market is pet-friendly (must be leashed and friendly); no smoking or vaping permitted. Learn more at [www.annmariegarden.org](http://www.annmariegarden.org).

**9th Annual Shatter the Stigma 5K**

May 9, 9 a.m.  
Chesapeake Beach Railroad Boardwalk  
3825 Gordon Stinnett Ave.,  
Chesapeake Beach  
Admission: Free

Calvert County's Health Department Presents The 9th Annual Shatter the Stigma 5K run/walk!

Event is free. Registration is required (registration closes May 1, 2026).

Participants will run/walk 5K (3.1 miles) the Chesapeake Beach Railroad boardwalk to bring awareness to help shatter the stigma against substance use and mental health disorders. In addition to the race, there will be a "Be Kind to your Mind" health fair at Kellam's Field with giveaways, games, local resources, food, and fun!

Let's bring the community together to raise awareness and help shatter the stigma!

**20th Annual Calvert Arts Festival**

May 9, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
All Saints Episcopal Church

100 Lower Marlboro Rd., Sunderland  
Admission: Free

Join us for a milestone celebration as the Calvert Arts Festival marks its 20th anniversary. Since 2006, this quality juried event has brought together southern Maryland's finest artisans, wineries, brewers, food purveyors, and entertainers for an unforgettable day of community celebration. Browse juried artisan offerings in our historic Parish Hall, enjoy children's crafts, live entertainment, and free activities, and tour the 1692 church and walk the peaceful labyrinth.

**Spring Shine Festival**

May 9, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Southern Trail Distillery  
27227 Morganza Turner Rd., Mechanicsville  
Admission: Free

Come out to our 7th Annual Spring Shine Festival! Come enjoy 40+ vendors, food trucks, music by Pork Donut, and of course the best cocktails. Make sure you bring mom to start Mother's Day weekend off right!

**Play a Chess Master for St. Jude Children's Hospital**

May 9, 3-6 p.m.  
St. Inie's Coffee  
46915 S Shangri La Dr., Lexington Park  
Admission: Donation to St. Jude's

Missed our last charity chess tournament? We've got another event coming this spring, and this one's gonna be BIG—because it involves a world-renowned professional chess player!

**Sell it - Buy it at Auction**

**St. Michael's School Variety Auction**

**Saturday, May 2, 2026 – 5 pm**  
(Doors open at 4 pm)

**Ridge VFD – Ridge, MD**  
(Proceeds to support St. Michael's School)

**Flowers:** Hanging Baskets – Combo Planters – Bedding Plants

**Meats:** Hamburger – Steaks – Pork Chops – Sausage – Bacon – Scrapple – Chicken – More

**Grocery & Snack Items:** Dry Goods – Canned Goods – Baked Goods – Variety of Chips/Snacks – Jellies & Jams - Farm Fresh Eggs – Fresh Asparagus – Produce and More

*(Many items provided by Russell Brothers' Farm)*

**Mark your calendar and consider attending this event as we work together to support our local community and enjoy fun & exciting community auction events. Be sure to bring your coolers!**

**www.FarrellAuctionService.com**  
**301.904.3402**




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**SOTTERLEY**  
CIRCA 1703

**MOTHER'S DAY AFTERNOON TEA**

**SATURDAY 9 MAY**

**1:00 PM**

- Three delicious teas + lemonade
- Sandwiches, scones, and sweets
- Special guest Maria Derisavi, Miss Maryland 2025
- Door Prizes

Ticket price includes a tour of the historic Manor House.

Buy your tickets at [go.sotterley.org/mothersdaytea](http://go.sotterley.org/mothersdaytea)

44300 Sotterley Lane, Hollywood, MD 20636



We're hosting a simultaneous chess exhibition featuring International Master Oladapo Adu, who will face 20–30 amateur players at once. He's crushed every simul he's ever played in so far... but will this be the one where someone takes him down?

His accomplishments include:

- D.C. Chess Champion
  - 2-Time D.C. Irwin Champion
  - 8-Time Olympian (representing Nigeria)
  - Nigerian National Chess Champion
- Think you can beat him?

**Speed-Friending**

May 16, 3–5 p.m.  
Mandy Lee's  
136 Main St., Prince Frederick  
Admission: \$40

A speed friending event is a social gathering where people meet multiple new people in a short amount of time through quick, timed conversations.

Participants rotate every few minutes (3–5 minutes per person), introducing themselves, chatting, and seeing if there's a connection. At the end, people can exchange contact info with those they clicked with.

It's basically speed dating—but for making friends instead of romantic connections.

Included with ticket: complimentary wine, specialty drink, small plates catered by Mike in the Kitchen. Inc. Call 410-991-5988 for ticket reservations.

**Uncorked & Unveiled: Island Edition**

May 21, 6–9 p.m.  
Port of Leonardtown Winery  
23190 Newtowne Neck Rd., Leonardtown  
Admission: \$100

Purchase your ticket soon for our fundraiser event Uncorked & Unveiled: Island Edition, in benefit of our community programs, public art projects, scholarships, and more.

A limited number of tickets are available for a donation of \$100 each. This is an all-ages event with non-alcoholic options available for the 21 and under attendees.

Enjoy live DJ music island-style by DJ Nani of Mahalo Entertainment, a silent auction, caricature drawings by Cadillac Cartoonz, chances to win a cash prize with the 50/50 raffle, delicious food catered by The Front Porch, wine from the Port of Leonardtown Winery, and more!

Event Sponsorship opportunities are available and listed at the ticket site below.

St. Mary's County Arts Council has also partnered with the Port of Leonardtown Winery for the 2nd Annual Wine Label Design Contest and new wine bottle release!

Meet contest winner Cynthia Martin-Brennan of CMB Artworks and celebrate the new Port of Leonardtown wine, all whilst supporting the St. Mary's County Arts Council! A portion of all sales (10%) of these bottles will be donated to St. Mary's County Arts Council.

**Bad Art Night: Adults-Only Fun!**

May 22, 5–8 p.m.  
Annamarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center  
13470 Dowell Road, Solomons  
Admission: \$7/person; members free

It's an outrageous night of BAD ART MAKING for adults at Annmarie Garden. Guests 21 and up are invited to be inspired

by the works in our galleries, then undertake some unconventional and unorthodox art-making. We'll have all the supplies you'll need to have at it. Finished artwork will be displayed for all and then cast your vote for "The Best of the Worst." Prizes will be awarded! It's a great night to let loose and get creative. A cash bar and entertainment will add to the fun! Grab a friend, come with a group, or just come alone and meet new people. No reservations required.

**Blueberry Festival**

May 23  
Barefoot Farms  
21851 Oakley Rd., Avenue  
Admission: \$10 Parking

Kick off blueberry season with a fun-filled day on the farm! Enjoy live music and entertainment throughout the day, plus food & treats including delicious Boone's Bagels made with Barefoot Farms blueberries. U-Pick and fresh pre-picked blueberries available for purchase.

Explore the farm, shop local vendors, and enjoy a relaxing Saturday outdoors. Fun for all ages!

**RenFest Southern Maryland**

May 23 & 24  
Brüdergarten  
22725 Duke St., Leonardtown  
Admission: \$15–\$30 per day, \$25–\$50 for both days

RenFest Southern Maryland, the region's premier renaissance faire where fantasy, history, and humor transcend both time and realm, welcoming all people and creatures to escape reality and celebrate play.

This year, we're celebrating the mischief, morality, and mayhem of the Adventures of Robin Hood. Don your most fantastical frock, or come as you are, and enjoy 4 stages of live entertainment, over 50 unique vendors, clever craft cocktails, specialty local brews, and a feast of food options fit for royal palates and tiny peasants alike. Kings and queens, noble knights, saucy wenches, and a wizard or two wander the kingdom bringing laughter, sword play and mystical mischief all throughout the land!

**Shuck Yeah! Learn to Shuck Oysters**

May 29, 6–8 p.m.  
Xella Winery  
26781 Laurel Grove Rd., Mechanicsville  
Admission: \$75

There are few things more satisfying than cracking open your first perfect oyster... and yes, you're about to be that person.

Join us for a laid-back, hands-on oyster shucking experience led by Loose Stones Oyster Company. They'll teach you everything you need to know, from how to hold the knife to what exactly you're looking at once it pops open. You'll get your own setup (and yes, you take it home) plus a dozen oysters to practice on, and a glass of wine to keep things flowing.

Then we shift from learning to eating. We'll grill your oysters to order with a lineup of toppings or serve them up raw with classic mignonettes so you can experiment and find your favorite.

It's interactive, a little messy, very delicious, and perfect whether you're a first-timer or just want to level up your oyster game.

**SUMMERSEAT FARM**

# PLANT SALE

**SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026**  
**8:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

— Our Annual Fundraiser! —

- ✓ perennials
- ✓ annuals
- ✓ vegetables
- ✓ herbs
- ✓ houseplants, more!



Proceeds support our animals, community programs, and maintaining the farm!




26655 Three Notch Rd, Mechanicsville, MD

For more information call (301) 373-6607  
or visit [www.summerseat.org](http://www.summerseat.org)



# Spring into Spring Auction

May 2 | 9am–3pm  
2026

**Loveville Produce Auction**  
40454 Bishop Road | Loveville, Maryland

Plants, Nursery Stock, Handmade Crafts,  
Lawn Furniture, Quilts, Rugs, & More

All stock will be available in small quantities for the homeowner

Kitchens will be open | Restrooms on site  
Cash or Check  
A buyer number must be obtained for all purchasing



# Calvert Community Calendar

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

## Fri, May 1

### 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>.

### JobSource Mobile Career Center

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

Stop by for your job search needs! Get job counseling and resume help, search for jobs and connect with Southern Maryland JobSource. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Sat, May 2

### Cindy Horsmon Memorial Fun Run for Hospice

Horsmon Farm  
1865 Horsmon Farm Lane, St. Leonard  
8 a.m.-1 p.m.

The 3rd annual event honors the life of Cindy Greene Horsmon, a beloved retired educator and community member who passed away in 2025 at age 59 following a courageous battle with brain cancer. Cindy Horsmon dedicated 30 years to Calvert County Public Schools and was deeply loved by students, colleagues and the community. Her strength, kindness and commitment to others continue to inspire those honoring her legacy through this annual event. The run will benefit Hospice of the Chesapeake and our Patient Family Fund.

Price:\$35. Registration ends May 2 at 9 a.m. Register at: [runsignup.com/Race/MD/SaintLeonard/CindyHorsmonMemorialFunRun](https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/SaintLeonard/CindyHorsmonMemorialFunRun)

### League of Women Voters Information Table

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
10 a.m.-noon.

Get registered to vote! A representative of the League of Women Voters will be avail-

able to help you with registration. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Brain Games - Mahjongg, Scrabble & More

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

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

## Sun, May 3

### Southern Maryland Bluegrass

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

Final Show for the Season and Going Retro! Kody Norris Show. This event was originally scheduled for Feb. 1 and was canceled due to weather but is taking place on May 3. While the reigning SPBGMA Entertainers of the Year are known for the rhinestones and fringe, they seem to resurrect the memories of times gone by.

## Mon, May 4

### Bilingual Conversation Hour: Spanish-English

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

30 minutes in English and 30 minutes in Spanish! We will get to practice our English and Spanish Conversation Skills! It will be a time for community members to help each other out with their language needs! 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Chalk the Walk

All Calvert Library Locations

Come use chalk to draw pictures and write positive messages and words of encouragement on the library sidewalks to raise awareness, reduce stigma and help encourage conversations about children's mental health and well-being. Chalk the Walk is an annual event held the first full week of May in recognition of Children's Mental Health

Awareness Week. 410-535-0291. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Book Discussion

Calvert Pines Senior Center  
1-2 p.m.

Join us to discuss McBride's bestseller, "The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store," which the New York Times Book Review calls 'A murder mystery locked inside a Great American Novel . . . Charming, smart, heart-blistering, and heart-healing.' <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Tue, May 5

### Humane Society Fundraiser

Chesapeake Grille and Deli  
10092 Southern Maryland Blvd., Dunkirk  
11a.m.-9 p.m.

Come and grab lunch and/or dinner at the Chesapeake Grille and Deli and help support the Humane Society of Calvert County.

### Tea and True Tales: Afternoon Book Club

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

Each month we will enjoy tea, have treats and discuss non-fiction titles, memoirs, biographies or fiction based on real people. This month's book club pick is "The Frozen River," a gripping historical mystery based on the real-life diary entries of Martha Ballard, an 18th-century midwife who defied the legal system and wrote herself into American history. 410-326-5289. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

## Wed, May 6

### Job Seeker Resources

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch  
4100 5th St., North Beach  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MD Labor Workforce—Veterans Services will be available in person to meet with those seeking employment-related support and community service information. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Bilingual Conversation Hour: Spanish-English

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

30 minutes in English and 30 minutes in Spanish! We will get to practice our English and Spanish Conversation Skills! It will be a time for community members to help each other out with their language needs! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>

### WOW (Work on Whatever) Wednesday

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

Bring your project and supplies. Whether it's paper craft, scrapbook, quilting, origami, or whatever you're working on. Come for the whole time or just a couple of hours. Get your projects done and make new friends! Registration is not required but you'll get a reminder if you do. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Book Discussion

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch  
4100 5th St., North Beach  
11 a.m.-12 p.m.

"All the Colors of the Dark" by Chris Whitaker is a soaring thriller and an epic love story that 'hits like a sledgehammer . . . an absolutely must-read novel.' (Gillian Flynn, author of "Gone Girl"). 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Chess Club

Calvert Library Fairview Branch  
Rt. 4 and Chaneyville Road, Owings  
2- 3:30 p.m.

Come drop in and challenge new opponents! All skill levels and ages are welcome. Please bring a chess board along if you own one. 410-257-2101. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

### Alzheimer's Caregivers Support

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch  
4100 5th St., North Beach  
3-4 p.m.

Get tips and support from other caregivers. Get tips and support from other caregivers. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

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

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

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.

## Solomons Maritime Festival This Saturday



Guests enjoying all the boat basin activities during the 2023 Solomons Maritime Festival

Celebrate Southern Maryland traditions on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at the Calvert Marine Museum's annual Solomons Maritime Festival. This free, family-friendly event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and features a full day of maritime heritage, live music, food demonstrations, hands-on activities, and on-the-water experiences.

The museum's waterfront comes alive with the sights, sounds, and flavors of the Chesapeake Bay. Guests can enjoy free 30-minute cruises aboard the Wm. B. Tennison, along with dockside tours of the Dee of St. Mary's. Visitors can also take advantage of free boat rides, try rowing and pedal boats, and even operate radio-controlled model boats in the boat basin throughout the day. Children and families will especially enjoy toy boat building and other interactive activities.

Inside the museum, visitors can explore a variety of traditional and educational experiences, including the CMM Fossil Club, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, guided bird walks, and spinning and weaving demonstrations, along with a Quilts of Valor display honoring service members.

Food traditions take center stage with live cooking demonstrations held outside the Exhibition Building. Guests can learn regional culinary techniques such as preparing soft crabs, making crab cakes, oyster shucking, and stuffing ham, presented by local experts throughout the day.

The festival also features the popular Antique Boat & Marine Engine Show, along with the Solomons Small Craft Gathering,

where enthusiasts display and discuss vintage vessels and engines. A Nautical Flea Market, hosted by the Patuxent Small Craft Guild, offers unique maritime finds and supports the guild's programming.

Animal lovers can enjoy Chesapeake Bay Retriever demonstrations, while visitors across the grounds can engage with traditional craftspeople demonstrating skills such as wood carving and maritime toolmaking.

Enjoy traditional music throughout the day at the Motto Mortgage Preferred & RE/MAX Waterside Pavilion:

- Folk Salad | 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
- Patuxent High School A Cappella Group | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
- Dance Hall Ghost | 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
- The Paulverizers | 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Admission to the festival and museum is FREE, making it an accessible and engaging way for families and visitors of all ages to experience Southern Maryland's rich maritime heritage.

The Solomons Maritime Festival is sponsored by the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners, Calvert County Watermen's Association, Calvert Marina, LLC, and the Patuxent Small Craft Guild.

For more information, please call Sherry Reid, Volunteer & Events Coordinator, at 410-326-2042 ext. 8085, or visit the Calvert Marine Museum Facebook page or website at [www.calvertmarinemuseum.com](http://www.calvertmarinemuseum.com).

*Press release from Calvert Marine Museum*

## Kitten Shower Coming to Animal Shelter

The Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter will host a Kitten Shower on Saturday, May 9, from noon to 2 p.m., to support the care of kittens and other animals in need.

The community is invited to attend this family-friendly event, which aims to increase community engagement, provide education about animal care and encourage adoption and fostering. Shelter staff will be available to answer questions about fostering kittens and adopting pets.

The event also seeks donations to help meet the needs of animals currently in the shelter's care. A list of needed items is available at [www.CalvertCountyAnimalShelter.com/KittenShower](http://www.CalvertCountyAnimalShelter.com/KittenShower).

Donations may also be dropped off to

the shelter at 5055 Hallowing Point Road in Prince Frederick. Donation hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Residents interested in fostering, adopting or supporting the shelter are encouraged to attend.

For more information about adopting from the Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter visit [www.CalvertCountyAnimalShelter.com](http://www.CalvertCountyAnimalShelter.com). Visit the Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter on Instagram at [@calvertcountyanimalshelter](https://www.instagram.com/calvertcountyanimalshelter) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyAnimalShelter](https://www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyAnimalShelter).

*Press Release from Calvert County Government*

## Local Filmmaker's Documentary Airs on Public Television

*Special Screening Scheduled for Chesapeake Beach*



Adri with her rescued dogs from *Running with the Big Dogs*

Puppy lovers and documentary fans alike are invited to an unforgettable afternoon of compassion, resilience, and second chances at "Doggy Tales: Stories of Rescue, Love, and Finding Home," a special screening of *Running with the Big Dogs* this Sunday May 2 at the Northeast Community Center in Chesapeake Beach.

Presented in partnership with the Humane Society of Calvert County, the event debuts the third film, *True North: Honest Stories of Finding Home*, the moving new documentary series from acclaimed North Beach filmmaker Suzie Galler.

*Running with the Big Dogs* tells the extraordinary story of Adri, a Baltimore-raised musician whose life changes forever after her mother suffers a stroke in Puerto Rico. Following her mother's death, Adri is left searching for meaning in the midst of grief — until she begins rescuing abandoned dogs on the island. From her home in Loíza, she creates Amigos de Los Animales, a grassroots rescue organization that has saved thousands of animals and united them with loving families.

Adri's message is simple and profound: in saving the dogs, they saved her too.

The three-part *True North* series began airing on WETA earlier this month. Filmed throughout the Mid-Atlantic region — with one emotional journey extending into Puerto Rico — the series captures deeply personal stories of people who lost their way and discovered healing, purpose, and connection in unexpected places.

Emotional, inspiring, and deeply human, *True North* shines a light on the resilience

and spirit that define this region.

"Each of the stories in this series is about people who found their true north when life forced them to change course," said Galler.

"They are powerful reminders that purpose often emerges from life's most difficult moments."

The series also includes:

- *Sailing to Salvation* — the story of Afghanistan combat veteran Michael Wood, who returns home with severe PTSD and rediscovers hope through sailing on the Chesapeake Bay. What begins as his own healing journey evolves into the Valhalla Sailing Project in Annapolis, where he and fellow veteran Jay McGinnis help other veterans rebuild confidence, camaraderie, and purpose on the water.

- *Where Music Flows Like Water* — a portrait of Sunny, an accomplished jazz vocalist who leaves life on the road to return home to Washington, DC, to raise her children. What appears to be a career pause becomes a greater calling as she helps elevate the city's jazz community and transform the DC Jazz Festival into a globally recognized celebration of the capital's rich musical heritage.

With intimate storytelling and a powerful connection to the communities it portrays, *True North: Honest Stories of Finding Home* is a documentary series audiences across Maryland and Washington will not want to miss.

*Submitted story*



# Letters to the Editor

## Data Center Finances

At a time when electrical costs are steadily rising because of the rapid growth of data centers and the U.S. war with Iran is driving up prices on gasoline and other commodities, the Calvert Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) needs to focus and report on *all* the problems that data centers could create for residents. Their current focus on environmental concerns is appropriate. However, they also need to examine the not-so-obvious financial problems that these facilities could create for Calvert residents.

Two critical considerations justify this expanded focus. The first is that a proposed new facility's power consumption could continue driving up residents' electrical rates. These increases partially subsidize data center profits.

The second is the problematic source of funds that would finance future tax or PILOT payments from new data centers: residents' checking accounts.

Increased Electricity Costs. Amazon's proposed data center near the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant is a concern because it would reportedly consume 500 megawatts of power. That would be enough power for some 400,000 homes, a community 11 times larger than Calvert County. This raises troubling questions that commissioners need to address:

- Where is the power going to come from to satisfy that large increase in demand?
- If from the nuclear plant, why is that facility not generating that power now instead of requiring Maryland to import 40 percent of its electricity from out of state?
- Given that Amazon's large power demand could also affect the PJM grid, what impact would this increased demand have on electricity rates for Calvert residents?

While Amazon reportedly would pay the costs of generating more power and upgrading high-voltage transmission lines, would commissioners also demand that Amazon pay the costs of its significantly increased power consumption, so that it, not local

residents, would pay the costs of its huge increase in power?

Source of Funds for Tax or PILOT Payments. Those who favor new data centers here cite the benefits from previous PILOTs from the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant and the Cove Point LNG Export Facility. They rightly point out that these PILOTs enabled the county to significantly upgrade its schools and upgrade services for residents. However, the funds for these payments come from traditional business profits. Currently, PILOTs from the LNG facility come from foreign entities that buy the liquified gas, not Calvert residents. However, a large portion of payments from data centers would come from a skewed business model in which regulators have diverted costs for generating additional power and upgrading high-voltage transmission lines from the data centers to residents. That distorted allocation of costs means that a portion of data center "profits" that fund PILOTs would come from residents' wallets.

So, the seeming financial benefits from data centers are largely illusory. This financial dynamic raises fundamental questions for Calvert commissioners:

What will they do to prevent residents from subsidizing a substantial portion of the payments that new data centers would provide to the county?

Will Calvert officials protect our financial as well as environmental interests?

These and other unanswered questions are bedeviling Calvert residents. Our seeming obsession with Non-Disclosure Agreements is misleading. It's not so much that we believe that commissioners have signed undisclosed NDAs, but, rather, that we do not see them addressing our concerns about serious financial problems that data centers could create. When they say that we should expect electrical rates to continue to rise, we worry that they don't intend to do anything to stop those increases – or even try.

Len Zuza,  
Solomons

## Appreciating Volunteers

It often begins with something simple—a ride to a doctor's appointment, a friendly visit, a helping hand with everyday errands. For many older adults in our community, those small moments make it possible to remain safely and comfortably at home.

Behind each of those moments is a volunteer. During National Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 19 to 25, we pause to reflect on the quiet but powerful ways volunteers support dignity, connection, and independence. At Hospice of the Chesapeake, they sit bedside, listen deeply, and offer comfort during life's most tender moments.

Through Partners In Care, they help aging neighbors navigate daily life with confidence and care. Now, with Hospice of the Chesapeake and Partners In Care united under the Chesapeake Health Partners umbrella, that impact reaches even

further. It looks like a community coming together—someone fixing a leaky faucet, running errands, or simply taking time to listen. It means more support for caregivers, more connection for those facing serious illness, and more opportunities for people to remain in the homes they love.

This work is possible because of people who choose to show up, with patience, kindness, and an open heart. To our volunteers: you are seen, you are valued, and you matter more than you know. Thank you for walking alongside our neighbors and families, and for being a steady presence when it's needed most.

Sincerely,

Becky Miller  
President and CEO  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

# Budget Set for May 12 Public Hearing

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) finalized their proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2027 at an April 28 work session. That came ahead of the public hearing on the budget scheduled for May 12 at 7 p.m. After the hearing, the commissioners will review comments and make their final decisions.

Chief Financial Officer Malena Brookshire said of the \$420.5 million operating budget, "This does reflect a balanced budget, and the cost of maintaining our core services to our residents. It also reflects policy choices made by the board that are consistent with your priorities and a clear and transparent separation of ongoing operating needs from non-operating one-time items."

She said, "The FY 27 budget was delivered over a multi-month process, not simply by adding up what departments asked for."

Brookshire added, "In October and November, the departments worked through their operating and capital needs submitted requests and met with the budget team as we built the revenue picture and started assessing those requests. What was different this year was how hands on and collaborative the review process was. For the first time, the budget team sat down face to face with every department to talk through, request challenge, assumptions, and make sure we're all working from the same understanding of priorities."

"We also gave departments clear guidance on operating, staffing, and capital requests with the expectation that all requests be well justified. And our team used actual spending trends from prior years to compare those requests against the real operating experience. So, departments were not just starting with last year's budget and building up from there. Every dollar had to be explained, whether it was an operational need, a staffing request, or a capital item."

The revenue estimates were refined. She said the subsequent decisions were based on the commissioners' priorities. "These choices focus on education, compensation, and targeted service support. County employees will be given a step and two-per-

cent COLA.

Brookshire said, "Strong schools remain the single largest commitment in the budget. Education rises about \$6.75 million over Fiscal Year 2026. And that reflects a clear board choice to continue supporting the school system and the broader educational commitment of the county."

"Second, public safety and EMS remain social service priorities. Sheriff, detention, EMS and related safety functions continue to carry significant cost pressure because they're labor intensive and they are essential."

"Third, the budget supports service, continuity, compensation, technology, facilities and infrastructure. They matter because they were what allowed the county to retain qualified, dedicated staff, keep our systems functioning and avoid service erosion."

"And finally, transfers and PayGo provide capital long-term support. So, if anyone asks what this budget delivers, the answer is...schools' safety, continuity of service, and responsible long-term support."

Budget Director Mary Andes said about property tax revenue, "In FY 24 it was budgeted extremely low, but our receipts came in quite higher. And FY 25, the budget estimate was a little too high. So, we recalibrated in FY 26 again, as I mentioned, in FY 26, the county treasurer's office did an amazing job of letting people know about credits. So, our actuals came in a little bit lower than what we were anticipating. We've recalibrated that for FY 27 and we feel solid the way it's now."

She said, "The property tax rate in FY 2010, the Calvert County's rate was 0.892 and FY 2017, it was increased to 0.92. Beginning in 2019, the board reduced that rate incrementally to FY 25 when it was increased to 0.967. This represents about a 7.5 percent increase over the last 15 years." The rate is proposed to be constant this year.

Andes added, "So for income tax, we have only included a one percent increase from FY 2025's receipts, because we want to be sure. We don't want to do a standard 3 percent escalator of last year's budget."

The budget is expected to be available online on May 5.

dickmyers@cpuntytimes.net

## Fire Damages Cove Point Beach Home



A house in Cove Point Beach community was heavily damaged by fire Thursday afternoon, April 23. Fire departments from both Calvert and St. Mary's responded to the blaze which reportedly started when a pot on a kitchen stove was left unattended. The occupants escaped unharmed, although one firefighter suffered a minor injury. He was treated at the scene.

# Grasso Blasts Education Blueprint Initiative

## Calvert Meets All State Requirements to Date

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

Even though Calvert County has met all requirements so far for the state's ambitious education Blueprint, it continues to be controversial. The main local concern is over the state pushing down to the counties the cost of implementation.

At a briefing on the Blueprint progress during the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on April 28, Commissioner Catherine Grasso strongly blasted the Blueprint effort.

Dr. Marcy Gruver, Calvert County Public Schools Blueprint and Communications Coordinator and co-chair of the Calvert County Blueprint Implementation Committee, led the presentation to the commissioners.

Gruver said, "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future passed in 2021. It's a 10-year statewide effort to transform public education into a world class system. The law was designed to significantly increase state education funding over the next decade, but it also comes with major policy and program requirements for school systems.

"The Blueprint is designed to advance all students and close existing achievement gaps. It enriches student experiences, accelerates outcomes, and ensures college and career readiness. It also strengthens Maryland's long-term economic competitiveness by investing in the workforce of tomorrow.

"The Blueprint regulations require us to review where we were in CCPS and identified what was going well, as well as what we either needed to tweak or address to ensure that our Calvert school system was on track to meet these goals.

"Implementation for the Blueprint is overseen by the Accountability and Implementation Board, or the AIB, as well as the Maryland State Department of Education or MSDE. The Blueprint is organized by five distinct policy areas, often referred to as the five pillars, with the goal of giving every Maryland child the foundation to reach their full potential. These pillars shape nearly every aspect of our

school system operations, from staffing to curriculum to financial reporting. All of the pillars need to be implemented effectively and work together to reach the Blueprint's expected outcome.

"And the aim reaches truly beyond our school system. The AIB even asserts that as education and skill levels rise, so do personal income and the quality of life. Businesses are more prosperous because they can easily recruit a workforce with the necessary talent and skills in the modern workplace."

Gruver observed, "The AIB recently commissioned an interim statewide evaluation through the University of Chicago's Newark Research Group. So, this evaluation is looking at how implementation is progressing across the state. It's identifying opportunities to refine any strategies, and it includes surveys and site visits with school systems. It is important to note that this is not a final evaluation of Blueprint and it's also not a rating of individual LEAs (Local Education Agencies), but it's just a progress check on the overall implementation of the law."

It is anticipated that the full report should be available to the public either this summer or fall.

Gruver said, "The Blueprint establishes a number of state requirements that districts must implement, and while the state does provide some additional funding, successful implementation continues to rely on a strong partnership among the state, the school system, and our local county government."

"Each year, the Accountability and Implementation Board must authorize the release of Blueprint funds for each district. For 2025, districts needed to demonstrate that they had an approved comprehensive math plan, an approved career counseling MOU, an approved teacher career ladder, that they were making sufficient progress on their Blueprint implementation plan, and that they were compliant with minimum school funding requirements. So, I'm pleased to report that Calvert County met all required criteria across the state. However, several districts did receive warnings or action letters, primarily related to their career ladder implementation."

Hearing the discussion on pre-K requirements brought Grasso out fuming. "In 2027, we will have a \$5 billion deficit in the state of Maryland. Maryland is broke. We are bankrupt. We are closed for business, and they're pushing down to the county more and more responsibility.

"And then these qualifications for the private providers. And I met with all of them that are in the county. They do such a wonderful, wonderful job, but when the state is pushing down to them, they have to pass on the cost to the parents. Their profit margin is so slim, and parents can't afford much more.

"This Blueprint is an aggravation. It's a good idea that has gone awry because the state said that they were going to help to fund it. And now we are bankrupt.

"We are doing all we can do in Calvert County. I think we're meeting our marks, thank God, but I don't know how much longer we can. I was at a meeting with county governments and...you have a county like Montgomery County that says, just raise taxes. Well, we're not going to just raise taxes in Calvert for this, at least my 20 percent. And you had grown men with virtually tears in their eyes because they are in poor counties and they can't raise taxes, and we're sending out warnings and citations. That is criminal. And I'm not getting on you, I know you're doing your job, but I am so upset with this Blueprint and how it's been handled and the piggyback effect that it's having on our citizens and on our county governments. It's criminal."

After the presentation by Gruver, Commissioner Buddy Hance wanted to know, "What's left for us to do for Blueprint?"

Gruver responded, "On the timescale, one of the biggest things for us is that that pre-K expansion, which we are working to see how that can work for us in Calvert. There're other things too that I feel like the local context is important for the state level to understand when it comes to registered apprenticeships. Again, not being a large county with lots of businesses, that's going to be something that may be a challenge for us.

"On the other side that we do have, last

year, 25 percent of our graduating class are credentialed. And that's something that we expect to continue to increase.

"So, we are making great gains in other areas despite some pieces that we continue to need to monitor."

Hance responded, "We talk about we have a great school system right now. We're third or fourth in the state, I think. And if you look at what we spend per student, we're in about the middle of the whole state. So, we're doing pretty good spending our money effectively. At least I think that's what that chart tells me.

"But as I've always said, we only get one chance to educate a child, and we need to take advantage of that. And we get criticized for giving the school system too much money and that we spoil you and give you everything you want. That's not quite true.

"But we still see challenges at the career center. We understand there's a focus for college, but not every student wants to go to college, is capable of going to college. And a lot of children are getting shortchanged today because they can't get into the career center because it's already filled to capacity. And so, they miss out on that opportunity, which I strongly believe is very important.

"But as you look ahead, the financial situation, what are we going to be able to afford to cover? And the Blueprint costs just keep going up and up. This year they're asking just increase in salaries and that's going to keep going up every year."

Hance told Gruver, "You have to pay teachers good to get the best teachers. That's how we built the school system to go from the worst to the best, which we paid more than anybody else. And teachers would fight to come here back in the day. We've lost that competitive advantage that we used to have. We don't have that anymore. So, it's a challenge. Education's expensive. And then when the state mandates things that you have to do that you don't have any control over, maybe they are benefits, but then they still mandate them that we have to cover and they don't give us any options. It's quite a challenge at the end of the day."

*dickmyers@countytimes.net*

## EPA Shifts Focus of Bay Funding

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it will award \$39.5 million in funding to signatory jurisdictions of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement – ensuring the effective and responsible use of taxpayer resources by aligning dollars with environmental outcomes.

Through a more efficient funding approach, EPA is shifting money from coordination activities to field-tested projects.

The agency will now redirect savings to Chesapeake Bay watershed states' implementation grants to support the direct implementation of restoration projects that will reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. These

efficiencies result in an increase of \$2.7 million for state implementation grants over prior annual funding levels. This means that more taxpayer dollars are now going towards actual environmental restoration work.

"Every dollar we move from overhead to action is a dollar that cleans up a local stream, strengthens a community, and restores the Chesapeake Bay," said EPA Region 3 Administrator Amy Van Blarcom-Lackey. "This funding empowers our state and District partners—along with farmers, towns, and community groups—to put proven practices in place faster. It's cooperative federalism in motion, and it advances EPA's core mission of protecting human

health and the environment."

This increased investment will accelerate on-the-ground efforts that deliver cleaner water and healthier habitats across the watershed. Jurisdictions can expand proven practices such as agricultural conservation and nutrient management, stream and wetland restoration, urban stormwater retrofits, tree plantings and riparian buffers, and wastewater and septic upgrades. These projects reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment; improve habitat for fish, oysters, and underwater grasses; bolster community resilience to flooding; and support local economies linked to the Bay.

EPA is investing a total of more than

\$57 million in implementation grants to Chesapeake Bay signatory partners this year. EPA will continue to prioritize practical, measurable work and strong accountability so that taxpayers see real environmental results.

The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure and the heart of the region's culture and economy. Today's action strengthens the partnership that is restoring the Bay—stream by stream, community by community—so that future generations inherit cleaner water, thriving fisheries and wildlife, and a more resilient watershed.

*Press release from EPA*

# SMECO Explains Data Center Energy Demands

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

If the two proposed data center campuses are built in Calvert County, they would double the electricity now supplied by Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO). But co-op officials are working towards assurance that their customers, and owners, do not bear the cost of the massive expansion.

The SMECO officials gave a briefing on April 28 to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners. SMECO Vice President of External Affairs and Communications Tom Dennison was their lead presenter.

Dennison explained that SMECO does not do its own generating but instead buys in the open marketplace through an organization operated by a consortium of cooperatives.

Dennison explained, "SMECO's rates are regulated by the Public Service Commission. And what's unique about SMECO is that we're a not-for-profit cooperative...; what we pay for power is what we charge. There's no markup in our standard offer service rates."

He noted, "The biggest issue that we're facing, just like any other utility, is that wholesale capacity prices have just exploded over the past couple of years. We unfortu-

nately in Maryland import more than 40 percent of our electricity, because many load generation facilities have been shut down over the past 10 years or so."

He added, "So Maryland is part of the PJM, the regional grid made up of 13 states."

He added, "Prices are continuing to rise. Megawatts/day for 2026 to May 2027 is an artificially capped price that was done through FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), at the urging of several governors." They included Maryland Gov. Wes Moore.

Dennison said data centers were not solely to blame for rising costs. "Other factors such as weather, energy, efficiency, labor, material, service costs, lack of new generation and population growth contribute as well. But what we have seen in the market is that there are a number of requests at PJM for more power. That demand has outstripped supply that has raised the market, and the prices have followed."

He noted, "We're required to provide service to anyone who requests a connection to the grid."

Dennison said, "Our position is...any data center to build in Southern Maryland directly pay the full cost for all electric transmission and distribution system build

out and ongoing operations and maintenance expense required for (those) data centers and provide electric service. We also believe the data center should be directly responsible for offsetting any adverse impacts on members stemming from participation in PJM power markets and locking up generation capacity resources."

"Data centers will have their own tariff," he said, "that will, determine the cost they pay to us and for their service contract."

The Maryland Public Service Commission is reviewing the proposal from the state for a large load tariff that can be imposed on data centers. A decision on that is expected in September.

"Our goal from day one has always been to keep our existing co-op membership protected." Dennison insisted. "We need to make sure that our existing customers are not subsidizing large loads." They have lobbied for that in Annapolis.

Commissioner Mark Cox said he had heard that Constellation was considering an expansion at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant. Dennison said, "I've not been told that, but we need it. We need it in the state of Maryland and particularly in Southern Maryland."

He added, "We were very concerned and we spoke out publicly when Morgantown

was closed in Charles County and when Chalk Point was closed or ramped down, the coal side of it was closed. We were concerned not only because of the jobs, but because of the localized generation in Southern Maryland. It's a big benefit to us."

There are other data center proposals in SMECO's service area in which they provide one gigawatt of service. "If we totaled up all of the numbers we'd be at like four to five gigawatts of power that have been requested. So not all of them are going forward."

"I think from an impact to the system, it would be transformational," he added.

Dennison was asked if the two proposed data center complexes moved elsewhere on the grid, such as Virginia, would it still impact Southern Maryland.

He said, "Sure. I think it impacts the PJM. And I think to the extent that they're located outside of Southern Maryland, Southern Maryland wouldn't get any benefit from it, from a rate perspective, from a subsidy perspective to our existing rate payers. I think the demand is not going away. So, the demand is whether they're located in Southern Maryland, we could potentially get benefits from them."

*dickmyers@countytimes.net*

# Appointments Made to New School System Admin Positions

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

The Calvert County Board of Education has approved the superintendent's recommendation to hire two local veteran educators to fill two new positions.

Janet Cook, with the Public Works consulting firm that prepared an efficiency report for the school board, told them, "The nearly universal complaint that we hear when we go into these central office studies is that the central office is top heavy. Nothing could be less than accurate for CCPS. A credible and defensible case can be made that your central office structure is understaffed."

"Relative to benchmark districts, the staffing gaps are the most evident in executive leadership, instructional supervision, legal services, and communication services."

Two of the recommended new positions were added to the budget by Superintendent Dr. Marcus Newsome. They are executive directors for elementary and secondary schools. They are intended to provide support to each level's school principals.

Chosen for the elementary school position is current Windy Hill Elementary School Principal Dr. Michele Schmidt.

The new secondary school executive director is current Director of Student Services Cecelia Lewis.

Newsome read Schmidt's resume before the vote on her appointment.

He said, "Currently she serves as principal of Wendy Hill Elementary. Previously she has served as an assistant principal at Huntingtown High School, core mathematics lead teacher at Huntingtown High School,

mathematics teacher at Huntingtown High School, math, and ELA teacher at Plum Point Middle School, as well as teacher at Plum Point Middle School. She has an earned master's degree in elementary education with a concentration in mathematics, a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and administration and supervision from Western Maryland College, and a doctorate degree in instructional leadership from American College of Education."

Schmidt told the board, "I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve Calvert County Public Schools in this role. This work is very personal to me, having experienced this system as a student, raising our three children here and spending the past 29 years as an educator. I care deeply about its continued success."

"I look forward to working closely with our principals and central office to ensure coherent systems that support high quality teaching and learning, strengthen student engagement, and improve outcomes for every learner. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me to continue serving our community."

Of Lewis, Dr. Newsome said, "Currently she serves as the Director for Student Services. She's also served as a supervisor for Human Resources, middle school principal, supervisor of K-12 social studies, high school assistant principal, administrative intern, instructional specialist in middle, and high school social studies teacher. She has an earned Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of North Carolina, a Master of Arts in teaching from Bowie State University and an educational



Dr. Michele Schmidt



Cecelia Lewis

leadership and school administration CER certification from McDaniel College."

Lewis said, "Thank you for investing in our leaders and entrusting me with this important work. Dr. Newsome, thank you for providing vision and hope that cultivates a community of care and expectation of growth that we all need and appreciate."

"To my boss ladies, Ms. Jacqui Jacobs and Dr. Susan Johnson, your model leadership, encouragement, and the systemic opportunities you've provided."

She added, "You all inspire me, all of my core village of supporters, my entire family. Your beliefs and sacrifices and love carried me through all the hard things and celebrated me through the wins. To my heroes, the extraordinary Department of Student Services team, I'm incredibly proud of the positive difference you make for our stu-

dents and grateful for the impact each of you have made during this part of my journey."

"And finally, to the exceptional principles of Calvert County Public Schools, who lead the important and impactful work for students every single day. This role exists to support you. I'm committed to a high support model and pouring every single ounce of my energy into our leaders, so that we can enhance their focus on pouring every single ounce of their energy into student success."

"I am excited and honored for this opportunity to build upon and expand incredible partnerships with all departments, all schools, all families in the greater Calvert County Public Schools' community. Together we will align as one team, one purpose — for student success."

*dickmyers@countytimes.net*

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“THIS BLUEPRINT IS AN AGGRAVATION.”

COMMISSIONER CATHERINE GRASSO ON EDUCATION REFORM



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**COMMUNITY** 6  
Maritime festival celebrates local traditions



**ON THE COVER**  
SMECO addresses data centers' potential impact on energy supply

## WEEKLY FORECAST

<b>THU, APR 30</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 69° Lo: 44°	<b>FRI, MAY 1</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 66° Lo: 48°	<b>SAT, MAY 2</b>  PM Showers Hi: 59° Lo: 45°	<b>SUN, MAY 3</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 63° Lo: 46°
<b>MON, MAY 4</b>  Mostly Sunny Hi: 73° Lo: 57°	<b>TUE, MAY 5</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 78° Lo: 58°	<b>WED, MAY 6</b>  Partly Cloudy Hi: 77° Lo: 61°	<b>THU, MAY 7</b>  Showers Hi: 72° Lo: 49°

## TREE STUMP REMOVAL



**LOCALLY OWNED**

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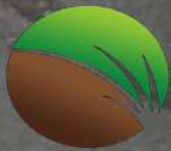
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# Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

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**Budget Scheduled  
for Public Hearing**

**School Board Approves  
Two New Directors**

**Maritime Festival  
Honors Local Traditions**

# HOW DATA CENTERS IMPACT ENERGY COSTS