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Calvert County Times

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025

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**State Road Show Visits
Prince Frederick**

**School Planetarium
Set to Reopen**

**Town Center Plan Gets
No Public Comments**



PARKS & REC DIRECTOR BRINGS PASSION FOR THE JOB

CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4	COMMUNITY	8
COPS & COURTS	7	CALENDAR	9

“IN THIS WAY, SHE COULD CONTINUE TEACHING EVEN AFTER HER DEATH.”

JACK BELL ON THE DONATION TO THE ARTHUR STORER PLANETARIUM IN HIS WIFE’S HONOR



LOCAL 4
Donation allows for planetarium reopening



LOCAL 6
School foundation awards record grants



ON THE COVER 3
Parks & Rec director shares insights into department

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, OCT 2 Partly Cloudy Hi: 70° Lo: 52°	FRI, OCT 3 Partly Cloudy Hi: 71° Lo: 52°	SAT, OCT 4 Sunny Hi: 75° Lo: 55°	SUN, OCT 5 Sunny Hi: 78° Lo: 58°
MON, OCT 6 Mostly Sunny Hi: 80° Lo: 61°	TUE, OCT 7 Partly Cloudy Hi: 81° Lo: 65°	WED, OCT 8 Showers Hi: 75° Lo: 55°	THU, OCT 9 Sunny Hi: 67° Lo: 53°



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Bob Branham: Parks and Recreation Director with a Passion for Sports

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Bob Branham had been deputy director of the Calvert County Department of Parks and Recreation when then-director Shannan Nazzari left for another position. Branham slid seamlessly into the directorship position in department in which he had a long history.

This is actually his second stint there. "I opened Northeast Community Center as the first staff in 1996. I left to work with Morale, Welfare and Recreation for the Department of Defense. And I came back to the county in 2003. So, I've been back for more than 22 years now," he explained.

He served in many roles in addition to deputy, including recreation division chief, recreation coordinator, and a recreation assistant coordinator.

He has several degrees, his first being an associate in arts from Charles County Community College, "and then I went to Towson State University. I have a bachelor's degree in physical education with a concentration in sports management and a minor in business administration. And then I went back within the last several years and I got a master's degree from Frostburg State University in Recreation and Parks Management."

He was born in DC and his family moved to Prince George's and then Charles, where he graduated from McDonough High School.

"I've been an athlete most of my life," Branham explained. "Sports was my passion. And I actually took an internship at Towson in the recreation department. I was also working with the recreation department. And, I was going to do an internship with the Washington Bullets at the time, and I had such a passion for recreational sports and working with students and individuals participating in all of our programs that I actually turned down the, the internship with the Bullets at the time, the Washington Wizard now, and stayed with recreation. Then I got employed with recreation there. And, I've stayed in the field of recreation since, so I've actually worked in recreation since 1993. I'm in my 32nd year."

What's changed? He said, "Soccer is huge for us still, and it always has been as all the traditional sports, but we see different things like the eSports that kids are interested in. We do a lot for those who are not as interested in sports. So, we have the opportunities for other things, but even within the sports realm, pickleball is wildly popular now, and it's not a fad. It's here to stay."

He added, "We see a lot of the aging demographic participating in our active sports population now, and that is a bit different than when I first started."

As director in Calvert, Branham has achieved a goal. "I don't want to sound arrogant. I always aspired to be the director of Parks and Recreation, be it Calvert County where I hoped to or somewhere else. I love Calvert County, and I love the Parks and

Recreation Department, but that was my aspiration. Now, did I know that it would come to fruition? I wasn't sure, but I tried to set myself up for success. I went back and got my master's degree, and I was nearly 50 when I did that. I went to Leadership Southern Maryland, graduated in 2020. I also went to director school. It's a two-year school through the National Recreation and Parks Association. I also got certified as a Parks and Recreation Professional through the National Parks and Recreation Association."

He added, "That was ultimately my goal to pursue this career and work with community and friends and family within the community."

How does Calvert stack up with the other departments he has been exposed to? "I'll tell you that we're accredited, we're CAPA certified, and that's through the National Recreation and Parks Association. So that lists us as the top one percent of parks and recreation agencies in this country. I think that it doesn't matter how big or how small. So, by our demographics and when we would do our reporting through NRPA, we're considered medium sized with our roughly 95,000 population."

He used the demand for pickleball as an example. "It doesn't matter where you are in parks and recreation, the demand is always greater than the fields and the court spaces. It's not a bad problem to have because that means people in your community are actively engaged. But if we built 50 more fields, we still need more fields. If we did 50 more gyms, we still need more gyms. And that's a common problem. Doesn't matter how large or how small the agencies are."

But he noted, "I'm a bit biased in that I think we're the best. And that's not because of me necessarily, that is because of the team that works with me. I'm blessed to have one of the most amazing staff and teammates in parks and recreation of anyone that I've met in my career over 32 years."

Branham said, "We do our own self-published little book that we present to our commissioners, and we put those statistics in our book and we talk about how many acres we have per citizen and how many of different types of amenities we have and how many acres of space we have. And actually, Calvert is a bit ahead of the curve for what we have for our residents. We do far more programming per person. We have far more access to recreation. So we actually do quite well in Calvert County with that."

He observed, "We're currently in the fall soccer season. We might have 1,400 children playing soccer this fall, just soccer. That doesn't speak to the litany of other programs and activities that we run."

"We definitely are ahead of the curve for most, but there's still an argument to be had that we definitely have the need to build more," he noted. And those dedicated pickleball courts are at the top of the list followed by dedicated tennis courts.

He also explained, "We have certain people in the community advocating for a syn-

thetic turf field. There are plans to develop some, but then now others are coming out saying, no, we want natural turf. We don't want synthetic. So again, in the best interest of everyone, the county is working towards ensuring we have both."

Regarding synthetic fields, he said, "Here in the Mid-Atlantic, the field temperatures can become quite high, but there's something called field canons where you can actually spray water on the fields to cool them down. So, they're trying to address those situations. Some talk about the injury aspect of synthetic. We just know that a lot of folks, especially those with competitive sports, like to see synthetic. They don't get canceled. They travel to get to a destination, and the fields are open and playable."

Fall is a busy time, but he said, "We don't slow down. We program year round and we just shift gears."

"We're working on things six months ahead of where we're currently operating out of. So, we're always chasing that down and making sure that we have all that information completed."

In the fall, he said, "We have internal county parks and recreation sponsored events and activities, but we also work with a lot of youth sport providers," adding, "the golf course during good weather now is super busy, but we're slowing down with Breezy Point because it's slowing down after summer. Summer we have summer camps. So, it just kind of depends on the season in which aspect we're busy."

Branham oversees five divisions: recreation division, natural resources division, parks and safety division, aquatics division and Special Facilities Division. "Special Facilities is unique in that it's Breezy Point Beach and Campground, all of our food and beverage operations and the golf course."

And there's also an administrative team.

He observed, "I do believe we may be the largest department in the county at certain times of the year. We have over 450 employees. Another thing to point out is we don't close. We're closed to the public one day a year. That's December 25th. But on that day, our staff still has to go in to take care of animals. So there's not a day of the year where staff do not report to work."

He was asked if there were hidden gems. He said, "We just had our grant reopening of Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Nature Center. A lot of folks don't realize that's in Parks and Recreation; they just kind of assume we're just sports. We have a therapeutic recreation division; we have aquatics in a county that is surrounded by water and a peninsula. It's so important for us to be able to offer water safety instruction. We offer the most Red Cross certified water safety instruction in the state of Maryland."

A lot of folks want more water access, he said. "We just did a paddling activity where we took kayaks out, and we cleaned the waters by way of kayak this past Saturday."

He said, "What we offer is when most people go home, we get busy. You go home



Bob Branham

and eat dinner and then come back to us for a leisure pursuit, we start working even harder then, because now we're entertaining all the guests that we've set up for the day. During COVID, a lot folks realize that we're not just play, we offer support to law enforcement and drug intervention to get people off the streets, into facilities and engaged in activities.

"We work with the hospital on committees," he said. "We talk about health and wellness and nutrition?"

What does such a busy guy do for his own recreation? He said, "I haven't had a vacation since my 25th wedding anniversary, which was six years ago," adding, "I'm very passionate about what we do. So, I actually play in an employee golf league, which is after work one day a week. So, I do like golf, but I still love sports as my passion. And I actually have two dogs. I'm an animal lover. I spend a lot of time with my dogs and my family, of course." He has two corgis.

Even though he has an administrative position and spends a lot of time in meetings, he said, "I don't miss any of our events. If we have an event, I go to it and I'm blessed in that my family supports that. In fact, they even help sometimes. So, I don't miss our events and activity, and that's still my passion. That's like a break for me when I go and see a therapeutic dance. And everybody's so genuinely engaged in having fun. It invigorates me."

Branham boasts, "I'm very blessed to be in this position and working for this county, but it's not lost on me of what the other staff in Calvert County do. And I don't mean just parks and recreation. I work with a great team internally in our department, and then it doesn't matter what the ask or the want is throughout the other departments. We're a great team and I'm just fortunate to be a part of it."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

State Road Show Pulls into Prince Frederick

Transportation Plan Includes Route 231 Projects

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The annual visit by to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) by representatives of the Maryland Department of Transportation occurred Sept. 30. Often dubbed the “road show,” this year Transportation Acting Secretary Samantha Biddle and her staff updated the commissioners on local projects.

Knowing that the timing of lights was a high priority for the commissioners and citizens, Biddle said she talked about it at the Maryland Association of Counties summer convention. “One of the things that we did discuss was the signal timing through Dunkirk and opportunities through Dunkirk and Prince Frederick to improve mobility through that corridor. And while we know that the longer-term larger infrastructure project does remain unfunded, our team at State Highway, specifically in the district office, has made some additional adjustments there on the signals. And we’re going to continue to monitor and see what we can do, moving forward.”

Commissioner President Buddy Hance

said the problem persists in Prince Frederick. He was told there had been some issues with the timing system there.

Biddle said the Moore-Miller Administration’s top three transportation priorities are “enhancing safety, maintaining our systems in working order and driving economic growth across the state. The draft CTP (Consolidated Transportation Plan) is an exciting follow-up to a very productive legislative session this past year. So, we want to thank our partners in the General Assembly, along with the governor’s leadership. Through this effort, we were able to secure approximately \$400 million in additional transportation revenues annually. With these additional dollars, the department is stretching the funding by combining it with federal resources and financing options to turn \$400 million into an additional almost \$700 million in annual transportation funding.”

The biggest funding projects over the next several years in Calvert are three intersection improvements along Route 231.

Will Pines, Maryland State Highway Administrator, explained, “We have \$32.5 million in safety projects planned at three

locations. First being at Maryland 231 and Maryland 508, a project to add a westbound Maryland 231 left turn lane that will complete design in 2026. And construction is anticipated to start in (calendar year) 2027. Also, on Maryland 231 from Toy Lane and Prince Frederick Road, a project to add a center turn lane is in design with construction anticipated to start in 2028. And then last but not least, Maryland 231 at Skipjack Road will add a left-turn lanes, bicycle lanes, and drainage upgrades. We anticipate the county’s contribution towards the ongoing design and construction is anticipated to be completed in 2028.”

Hance suggested that the project at Toy Lane be extended down to the Yardley Hills entrance. Pines said they would look at it.

While there is no money in the six-year plan for the Gov. Thomas Johnson Bridge replacement, the plan does include “continuing the ongoing underwater surveys to map the proposed replacement bridge alignment,” Pines said. “We are completing a navigation study to determine the clearances of the new bridge. We’ve received the letter from the Coast Guard inviting us to actually advance the permit and they’ve assigned



Acting MDOT Secretary Samantha Biddle

a dedicated resource for that process to be able to get that...program.”

Also in the plan is a \$88,000 grant to Tri-County Council “for Safe Streets for all efforts in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s counties.”

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Donation Allows for Planetarium Reopening

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Thanks to a generous donation from a retired educator, the Arthur Storer Planetarium at Calvert High School, which has been dormant for ten years, will be back in business this spring.

Jack Bell, who taught for 25 years in Charles County, including ten years running the planetarium at the James E. Richmond Science Center, has donated \$95,000. The monies will be used toward the purchase of a Lambda 2 projection system.

Dr. Crystal Ricks, supervisor of Gifted, Advanced Learning, Articulation, and STEM and Robotics Competition said, “The planetarium honors Arthur Storer, who was the first astronomer in the American colonies in 1682. He recorded observations of Haley’s Comet right here in Calvert County. The work was so important that Sir Isaac Newton included it in his groundbreaking writings that shaped modern day physics as well as astronomy. So, when our students step into the Arthur Storer Planetarium, they aren’t just exploring the stars, they’re stepping into a legacy that links our community to some of the greatest scientific discoveries in the world. Since opening in 1977, the planetarium has served as both an educational resource and a symbol of scientific spirit rooted right here in our county.”

She added, “Growing up, I loved visiting the Museum of Sciences in Macon, Georgia with my mother. And at that location there was a planetarium. Those experiences at the planetarium sparked my interest in STEM and also led me to the path here.”

Of the planetarium, she said, “It’s a place where lasting memories have occurred.”

Ricks said at the Sept. 25 school board meeting, “Research shows that when rural students gain access to high quality STEM opportunities, it increases their chances of going into STEM careers by nearly 30 percent. And we’ve already begun that task. So, we’ve started updating our planetarium. We’ve started removing equipment that was outdated to make sure that we’re in a full alignment with where students should be as they go into STEM paths.”

Bell explained, “My wife was a lifelong educator, and she was my inspiration for becoming a teacher. Over her career, she taught students from preschool through adults in New York, Virginia, and Maryland. She was certified in both regular and special ed. She retired from Charles County Public Schools in 2019, after 37 years in the classroom. Peggy passed away on May 1st of this year. One of her wishes was for her body to be donated for medical research. She felt that in this way, she could continue teaching even after her death.

“As to further Peggy’s teaching legacy, our children and I felt that a gift to the Arthur Storer Planetarium would not only honor her memory, but also invest in future generations of learners, allowing her impact to continue for decades to come.”

Bell said, “When I first visited the planetarium, which was about a year ago, I felt that I had walked into a time capsule. The building was in immaculate condition, although it had not been used for almost 10 years. But the equipment was from the last century, and I knew that parts and maintenance would pose a problem. So, to bring 21st century technology to the planetarium, I chose hardware and software from Digitalis Education Solutions. The Digitalis

team consists of education experts, all of whom have taught in planetariums. Their state-of-the-art system will transform the experience for every student who enters, turning lessons into breathtaking immersive journeys. Now, their totally electronic system also converts the planetarium into an immersive 360-degree theater.

“My desire for students across Calvert County, especially those who might not otherwise have this kind of access, is for them to leave the planetarium in awe and see themselves as scientists, engineers, and innovators. Every level of the next generation science standards contains one or more topics in astronomy. In the traditional classroom setting, these concepts can be difficult to present. But in the planetarium, students will have an experience geared specifically to their grade level and will participate in a related hands-on activity. Now, in most grades, this is a make and take project fostering further conversation and excitement at home.

“By the year 2030, not that long, there is projected to be a shortage of 4.3 million workers in the technology sector. Those STEM careers will be in demand for decades, and the planetarium offers a unique way to spark students’ interest, not just in astronomy, but in all areas of arts, sciences, and technology. In the planetarium, we might begin in space, but we travel throughout the curriculum.

“In addition, the planetarium will host night and weekend programs for our families and community members. These presentations will inspire parents to look to the heavens with their children and view the wonders of the night sky.”

He concluded by quoting astronomer Carl



Dr. Crystal Ricks

Sagan: “A planetarium is a celestial time machine, a portal to the universe where we can stand on the edge of the known and peer into the unknown, finding our place among the stars.”

The school board members were enthusiastic. Vice President Lisa Grenis said, “This remarkable contribution will provide our students with the opportunity to experience valuable astronomy and science education. I can personally remember going to visit a planetarium when I was in school, and it’s a lifelong memory. So, thank you so much. What a beautiful tribute to your wife.”

Ricks said the continued operation of the planetarium would require extra funding from the board and she would return with more specifics.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



CALVERT COUNTY INFORMATION & EVENTS

Calvert County Government will be responsible and accountable to all citizens of Calvert County; provide high quality, effective and efficient services; preserve Calvert County's environment, heritage and rural character; foster opportunities for responsible and sustainable residential growth and economic development; and support Calvert County's essential institutions and keep them strong.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are subject to change.
Ways to Watch: YouTube | Meetings on Demand | Comcast channel 99 or 1070 HD

Board of County Commissioners Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2025, 10 a.m.
Commissioners' Hearing Room, 175 Main Street, Prince Frederick

Boards and Commissions Meetings

Call-in information can be found on www.calvertcountymd.gov.

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board Meeting

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM
Oct. 6, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Virtual meeting held via Zoom, please see agenda for details

Administrative Charging Committee Meeting

Oct. 8, 2025, 3-4:30 p.m.

Historic District Commission Meeting

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM
Oct. 8, 2025, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Virtual meeting held via Zoom, please see agenda for details



WE ARE MOVING!

Throughout October, Calvert County Government will be moving into the new Calvert Administration Building (CAB).

For more information and details on the move please go to calvertcountymd.gov/NewCAB



DISCOVER FALL FUN AT LOCAL FARMS

For more information, visit
www.CalvertAg.com/FarmFallFun



Ghouls Just Wanna Have Homes

Adoption Promo - Oct. 21-31

There will be a spooky cauldron for the adopters to pull from - it will be waived fee, half off or a trick or treat bag of candy!
Linda L. Kelley Animal Shelter - calvertcountyanimalshelter.com



Tuesday, Oct. 7*

Walk and Support Local: Swing by the CalvertHealth farmer's market to grab fresh local goods.

Thursday, Oct. 16

Physical Activity Challenge: Set an extra goal, reset and recharge with movement!

Monday, Oct. 20

Red Ribbon Week: Walk for wellness and awareness

Wednesday, Oct. 29

Halloween Week: Wear a

**Time change on Oct. 7 only:
CalvertHealth Medical Center at the Farmers Market parking lot at 5 p.m. and Solomons Medical Center parking lot at noon.*

Noon walks:

Ward Farm Park playground, Hallowing

Point Park pavilion, Solomons Town Center

Park pavilion, King Memorial Park pavilion,
CalvertHealth Medical Center Annex parking lot.*

5 p.m. walks:

Ward Farm Park playground, Hallowing Point

Park pavilion, Solomons Town Center pavilion,

North Beach boardwalk entrance, Solomons Medical Center parking lot*



MASTER PLAN OF TOWN CENTERS

The Calvert County Department of Planning & Zoning invites you to participate in public input meetings to learn about Town Center Master Plan surveys and share your feedback.

St. Leonard Town Center Master Plan Public Input Meeting

Oct. 6, 2025, 6 p.m., 150 Ball Road, St. Leonard, MD

Huntingtown Town Center Master Plan Public Input Meeting

Oct. 14, 2025, 6 p.m., 4030 Old Town Road, Huntingtown, MD

Owings Town Center Master Plan Public Input Meeting

Oct. 20, 2025, 6 p.m., 9870 Old Solomons Island Road, Owings, MD

Questions and comments may also be submitted in advance to Tay Harris, long range planner, at 410-535-1600, ext. 2333, or Tay.Harris@calvertcountymd.gov.



HEADS UP, CALVERT COUNTY!

Starting this winter, the Parks & Recreation Activity Guide will no longer be mailed to every household. Rising printing and mailing costs have led us to make the switch, but don't worry—the guide isn't going away!

Your feedback is always welcome and you can find the latest activity guide anytime at calvertcountymd.gov/ParksAndRecreation

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Kellam's Field Survey Results Unveiled

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Results of a survey of Chesapeake Beach residents on how Kellam's Field should be revitalized were released at the Sept. 18 town meeting.

Council Vice President Jamie Shuls, who heads the revitalization committee, said almost 100 people responded.

Shuls reported the results as follows of the consensus ordering (all ranks considered)

1. Walking & Fitness Path — avg rank 2.45; Top-2 58 percent; Bottom-2 1 percent
2. Adventure Playground — avg 2.65; Top-2 63 percent; Bottom-2 6 percent
3. Exercise Stations — avg 4.31; Top-2 22 percent; Bottom-2 14 percent
4. Sports Area — avg 4.39; Top-2 13 percent; Bottom-2 10 percent
5. Outdoor Movie Screen — avg 5.01; Top-2 14 percent; Bottom-2 30 percent
6. Pickleball Courts — avg 5.25; Top-2 14 percent; Bottom-2 33 percent
7. Maintain Current Baseball Field — avg 5.91; Top-2 9 percent; Bottom-2 53 percent
8. Soccer Goals — avg 6.03; Top-2 6 percent; Bottom-2 53 percent

The previous town council voted to name the baseball field after outgoing mayor Pat Mahoney. But Shuls noted the baseball field's low ranking in the survey.

Shuls observed that 72 percent of the respondents said that they had kids at home.

He said the adventure playground earned the greatest number of first place votes. He said, "I would describe this as something similar to Dunkirk Park," adding, "While we have the smaller tot lot, how can we provide something larger for older kids and give them the same experience that you might see over in Dunkirk Park, because if you go over there at any point in time, there's at least 30 cars in the parking lot and tons of kids running around having fun."

Shuls added, "That's something that we don't have within a reasonable distance. You have to go at least 15 to 20 minutes to



Chesapeake Beach Vice President Jamie Shuls

experience that. But we have a lot of kids around here."

The second amenity chosen number one by the most respondents was the walking and fitness path around the park.

At the bottom of the ranking was soccer goals, but Shuls observed, "I still think that's something that we would actually want to put out there, because that makes a lot of sense to use the field to maximize the field usage."

Shuls said, "I think we would like to now proceed into looking at a feasibility study of what we can actually do with the space available, what's realistic, what's the timelines, and kind of start scratching out some budget numbers (for) the following year's budgets."

He noted that the previous administration wanted an amphitheater. He said, "That design had permanent seating, I think it was permanent seating, maybe removable seating, whatever it was. But ideally, an event stage of some manner that would allow us to host events, you could have music, that's where the movie screen could be."

He added, "There's a lot of opportunity for a multi-purpose use there and just events in general that we could use. And then there is the potential that that could be a revenue generator that we could put back towards the maintenance of the facility."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

State Highway to Perform Routine Bridge Maintenance

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration will perform routine maintenance on the MD 4 (Governor Thomas Johnson) Bridge at the Calvert County / St. Mary's County line starting at 6 a.m. Sunday, October 5.

One of two lanes will be closed, and the lane will open to traffic no later than 2 p.m. that afternoon, weather permitting.

Maintenance crews will clean the drainage systems and the bridge deck (driving surface). Drivers will be guided using a flagging operation. The State Highway Administration will use flaggers and portable variable message signs to guide motorists safely through the work zone.

Drivers are asked to slow down in the work zone for the safety of all drivers and the crews working to improve our roadways. Portable variable message signs will provide advanced notification of the work. Customers may contact the District 5 Office at 410-841-1000 or 1-800-331-5603 with any questions.

For a list of all major State Highway Administration projects, visit Project Portal or the homepage at roads.maryland.gov. For a look at real-time traffic conditions, go to chart.maryland.gov.

Press Release from SHA

School Foundation Awards Record Grants

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The Calvert County School Foundation has awarded a record amount of grants for projects for this school year. Foundation President Dona Ostenso announced the \$37,686.95 in grants at the Sept. 25 school board meetings and presented the awards.

The awardees, their projects and the amount received are:

- Peyton Gregory, Plum Point Elementary School — National Fishing in Schools Program - Cast a Lure, Catch a Student: \$3,000.00
- Casey Grenier, Beach Elementary School — 3D Printing for Creative Seagulls: \$1,998.00
- Angelique Loeffler, Windy Hill Elementary School — Adapted Books: \$1,044.56
- Jennifer McCulley, Patuxent High School — Government Resources" \$2,488.00
- Candice Patton, Plum Point Middle School — Book Clubs: \$3,000.00.
- Katie Davis & Katherine Banholzer, BES, WHES, & SMS — Ignite and Spark Calvert STEAM Summer Camps: \$2,184.77
- Jake Hinz, Patuxent High School — NJROTC National Association of Rocketry Level 1 Certification: \$3,000.00
- Rob James, Huntingtown High School — HHS Maryland 250 Calvert Education and Community Celebration: \$3,000.00



School Foundation President Dona Ostenso

- Kellee Shoemaker, Plum Point Elementary — 5th Grade Water Safety Program Trip: \$2,250.00
- Katie Davis, Meagan Jeffries, Tina Maslow, Jessica Meador, Bonita Mogan, & Melissa Sydnor, GATE Resource Teachers — Ignite and Spark Calvert STEAM Summer Camps: \$6,144.00
- Rebecca Jaworski, Dowell Elementary School — Empowering Educators Through the Get Your Teach on Conference Experience: \$2,377.62
- Karen Jordan, The Judy Center at Patuxent Appeal Campus — Parent Cafes: \$2,310.00
- Annette Mullen, Dowell Elementary School — Playground Communication Board: \$1,890.00

dickmyers@countytimes.net

No Public Comment at Prince Frederick Hearing

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

After more than five years of work, the update to the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan finally made it to public hearing. The result was less than spectacular, as no one showed up to speak at the public hearing. The commissioners left the record open for 10 days before rendering a decision.

The update includes an expansion of the town center boundary in three places: for CalvertHealth Medical Center to the north, for an employment zone and Calvert Towne subdivision to the south. The latter drew comment from several of the commissioners.

Commissioner Catherine Grasso said, "I can see the health campus and I can see the employment center district, but I do not like Calvert Town. And why Calvert Towne subdivision?"

Grasso was told that that subdivision is built out so no additional development could occur.

During the discussion, Commissioner

Mike Hart expressed reservations about the provision that allowed a developer to make a monetary donation to mitigate traffic impacts. He said that gave a developer with more money an advantage. He compared it to a lemonade stand competing with a root beer stand.

Director of Planning and Zoning Jason Brinkley said the provision was in the county code. "It's an understandable concern, but that would be changing the language in the county code," he said.

Hart replied, "Being here as long as I have been, we're constantly accused of being on the take."

The hearing also included a chapter in what is now called the Master Plan of Town centers that applies to all town centers.

Prior to the town center hearing the commissioners approved a variety of text amendments. They also approved a rezoning in Owings to allow for redevelopment of the Dash In gas station and convenience store.

dickmyers@countytimes.net



Community Crab Feast



Sunday, Oct. 12, 2025

Choose your time: 1-3 p.m. or 4-6 p.m.

Abner's Crab House at 3748 Harbor Road in Chesapeake Beach

A fundraiser for the Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse, Inc. (CAASA)



\$55
per person

- All-you-can-eat steamed crabs
- Basket of hushpuppies
- All you can drink water, soda and iced tea (cash bar)
- 50/50 raffle and door prize fun

Scan the QR code to purchase tickets online or visit
CAASACrabfeast2025.eventbrite.com

For more information, call 410-535-3733

Calvert County services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations please contact us at adacoordinator@calvertcountymd.gov or 410-535-1600, ext. 8802 (voice). Please call the Maryland Relay for the hearing and speech impaired at 800-735-2258.

CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of September 15, 2025 – September 21, 2025, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,018 calls for service throughout the community, including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 64
- Disorderly: 11
- Domestic: 20
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 51
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 914
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 39
- Traffic Complaints: 65
- Traffic Stops: 365
- 911 Hang Ups: 75
- ARRESTS: 43

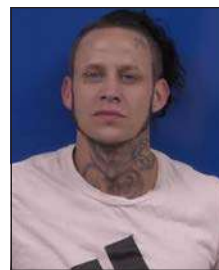
and charged with Disorderly Conduct and Intoxicated Endangerment in a Public Place.



Christopher Shaun Forde

Disorderly Conduct: 25-77185
On September 16, 2025, DFC Deinert responded to Spirit Halloween, located at 765 N. Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick, for the report of a disorderly subject.

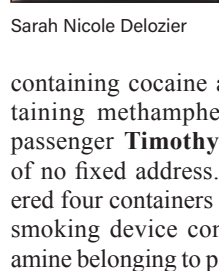
The suspect, identified as **Christopher Shaun Forde**, 43 of Prince Frederick, was reportedly aggressive toward employees and customers, creating a disturbance that disrupted business operations. Deputies attempted to take Forde into custody, but he resisted arrest. Forde was observed to be heavily intoxicated and slurring his speech, continuing to resist and failing to comply with commands. He was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Intoxicated Endangerment and Disorderly Conduct.



Timothy Patrick Hogan

CDS Violation:

25-78097 On September 19, 2025, DFC Hendrickson conducted a traffic stop on Sherry Lane in Prince Frederick for a traffic violation. Upon contact, the occupants appeared nervous, shaking uncontrollably, and attempted to mask their behavior by lighting cigarettes. K9 Atlas performed a sniff of the vehicle and alerted to the presence of narcotics. A search revealed



Sarah Nicole Delozier

a plastic baggie containing cocaine and a paper fold containing methamphetamine belonging to passenger **Timothy Patrick Hogan**, 33, of no fixed address. Deputies also recovered four containers of MDMA and a glass smoking device containing methamphetamine belonging to passenger **Sarah Nicole Delozier**, 40, of Lusby. Both Hogan and Delozier were transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis.

Theft: 25-78323 On September 20, 2025, Deputy Baxter responded to the 8700 block of D Street in Chesapeake Beach, for the reported theft. The complainant reported sometime on September 17, an unknown suspect stole a package containing a sky-blue iPad Air 16. The estimated value of stolen property is \$600.



William Michael Robinson

Trespassing: 25-77319 On September 17, 2025, Sgt. Robshaw responded to the Walmart located at 10600 Town Center Blvd in Dunkirk, for the reported trespassing. Further investigation revealed

William Michael Robinson, 63 of Owings, had previously been trespassed from the establishment. Robinson was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Trespassing: Private Property.

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

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



Barry Jeremiah Parran

Disorderly

Conduct: 25-76885 On September 15, 2025, Sgt. Naughton responded to Firehouse Subs located at 641 N. Solomons Island Rd. in Prince Frederick, for a reported fight.

Barry Jeremiah

Parran, 58, was observed intoxicated, uncooperative, and yelling profanities during the altercation. The incident briefly obstructed business access and was witnessed by several bystanders. Parran was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center

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ArtWorks@7th Presents Art Inspired by Dreams



Gallery member artist Barbara Sampson gives us a sneak peek of her artwork for the October member show "Creations of the Night".

We all dream—sometimes of magical places we wish we could stay in forever, and sometimes of strange or unsettling scenes that linger in the morning light.

The ArtWorks@7th show (Oct. 2-26) brings those dream worlds to canvas: the beautiful, the curious, and even the slightly spooky. Step inside and explore how artists transform the mystery of dreams into art.

Our guest Artist this month, Deborah Harkins, shares her background, influences, and art style, including her heritage and passion for beadwork and photography. "A lot of my influence was from my mother, now in heaven, and my sister, Sandra. She and I compared ideas for different styles and colors schemes. I run ideas through her that I like. I make Jewelry, do fused and stained glass, and love taking pictures of animals and plants."

Deborah is a member of the Calvert Artists Guild. She participates in art shows and opening receptions and also does commissioned pieces. For her jewelry, she mostly makes bracelets in an assortment of styles and colors. Her fused glass pieces are primarily dishes and platters as functional

art. She has now taken back up photography, one of her hobbies from way back, and has won a couple of first place ribbons in the Calvert Artist's Guild May shows.

Please join us on October 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. for an opening reception. Light refreshments will be served and you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with the artists.

Money spent locally stays in the local economy and continues to strengthen the economic base of the entire community. Small local businesses make indispensable contributions to communities and neighborhoods. Supporting local artists allows them the opportunity to continue to serve their communities. You will often see members of ArtWorks@7th supporting local charities and organizations by participating in art shows, teaching workshops, and donating items for fundraisers.

ArtWorks@7th is located at 8905 Chesapeake Avenue (near 2nd street) in North Beach. Our hours throughout September are Thursday through Sunday, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Press Release from ArtWorks@7th

Hospice Golf Tournament Deemed a Success



Thanks to an impressive lineup of sponsors, the dedication of volunteers and the hundreds of golfers who came out to play, Hospice of the Chesapeake's annual Golf Tournament was another great success. The event raised more than \$210,000 in support of the nonprofit's mission to care for families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties.

Held Sept. 25 at Queenstown Harbor Golf Course, the day was filled with good cheer, delicious food and generous hospitality—from a made-to-order omelet bar at breakfast by Main & Market, a grilled lunch by Buddy's Grill, and a gourmet awards banquet served by Two Rivers Steak & Fish House.

Giveaways and camaraderie made the day even brighter.

This success would not have been possible without the businesses, organizations and individuals in the community who stepped up as sponsors, including Masters sponsor, Safford Brown Auto Group; U. S. Open sponsor, Greenberg Gibbons; Augusta sponsors, First National Bank and the Michael Stanley Foundation; and Heritage sponsors, Coastal Management

Associates, LLC, Crescent Cities Charities, Inc., Flooring Partners, George W. Stone Family Foundation, Heinsohn Contracting, Inc., SMART, and Waterfront Engineering Design and Construction, Inc.

The organization also wishes to thank the event's underwriters, including breakfast by The Davies Family Foundation, lunch at the turn by University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center, beverage carts by University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center and National HME, craft beer by Flooring Partners, bourbon by WesBanco, and River Course hole-in-one by Sysco.

This event helps families experience moments of joy, dignity and connection at one of life's hardest times.

Special recognition goes to the Hospice of the Chesapeake Golf Committee, whose hard work and commitment year after year ensures this tournament is not only enjoyable but deeply impactful for the patients and families the organization serves.

Press Release from Hospice of Chesapeake

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Calvert Community Calendar

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

Thu, Oct 2

Song Circle

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

Whether you're a musician, singer, or just love to hum along, this event is for you. Lead or learn folk and acoustic tunes in a casual, welcoming jam session. Bring your instrument, voice, or enthusiasm. Spectators are welcome to come enjoy the music, energy, and community spirit! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Awful Artworks: Monster Mash

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

Have you ever looked at an art project and thought "I could do that," but you in fact could not do that? Let your creativity flow without worrying about an end product! Mash two things together to create a new and never-before-heard-of thing! We will provide the art materials (if you have art supplies gathering dust, bring them to share), you provide the creativity. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Fri, Oct 3

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

Sat, Oct 4

Buying an Affordable Home and Keeping It

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way & Zoom

10-11:30 a.m.

Hear directly from realtors, loan officers, home inspectors and financial advisors in a moderated panel designed to provide guidance and answer your questions. An informative panel sponsored by Calvert Concept (C4), Calvert Library and the Calvert NAACP. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Sun, Oct 5

Seldom Scene Concert

Calvert Elks Lodge #2620
Prince Frederick
2 p.m.,

The premier Bluegrass band, The Seldom Scene will headline the first concert of the season at the Southern Maryland Bluegrass Concert Series at the Calvert Elks in Prince Frederick. Tickets for the October 5 Seldom Scene performance are available now at \$40 per person, with advance purchase recommended as the event is expected to sell out. For more information, visit www.somdbluegrass.com or call 301-737-3004.

Haunted Water Cruise

Calvert Marine Museum
3:10-4:10 p.m.

Step aboard the *Wm. B. Tennison* for a one-hour Haunted Water Cruise. Hear tales of unmarked graves, enduring mysteries along the Patuxent River, and superstitions tied to local landmarks. Families are welcome, though some themes may not be suitable for young children. Cost is \$9 for adults and \$5 for children, infant through 12 years. For more information and to register, visit website.

Mon, Oct 6

Proven Program to Prevent or Delay Diabetes

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

Take charge of your health! Join our free, fun and supportive year-long diabetes prevention program for those at risk of diabetes or looking to lose weight. Learn how small changes in eating, activity, and mindset can lead to big results. Connect with others, build healthy habits, and reduce your risk together. Presented in partnership with the Calvert County Health Department. To register or learn more information, call 410-535-5400 x514. Registration information will be shared with the partners of this program. 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Book Discussion

Calvert Pines Senior Center
1-2 p.m.

Join us to discuss the Maryland Humanities 2025 One Maryland One Book (OMOB): "Kin: Rooted in Hope" by Carole Boston Weatherford and Jeffery Boston Weatherford. Hybrid in form, and even more expansive in what it has to say, "Kin: Rooted in Hope" is a book created by, and about, a Black family and its generations. 410-535-0291. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Tue, Oct 7

Tech Help Drop-in Hour

Calvert Library Twin Beaches Branch
4100 5th St., North Beach
2-3 p.m.

Learn how to troubleshoot and fix your individual tech problems with Calvert Library! Personalized assistance with basic tech requests! Need help with your devices? We are pleased to offer personalized assistance with basic tech requests, computer and internet basics, e-Readers, Libby, Microsoft Office or Google apps, personal devices and more! 410-257-2411. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Wed, Oct 8

Calvert County Veteran Services Program

Southern Pines Senior Center
20 Appeal Lane, Lusby
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Are you a veteran or close family member looking for assistance? The Calvert County Office on Aging is partnering with ServingTogether to provide support twice a month, every second Wednesday and fourth Friday. Walk-ins are encouraged. No appointment is necessary. Visit servingtogetherproject.org/calvert for more information.

Job Seeker Resources

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

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

JobSource Mobile Career Center

Calvert Library Prince Frederick
850 Costley Way
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. 410-535-0291 or 301-855-1862. <https://CalvertLibrary.info>.

Upcoming

Patuxent River Appreciation Day (PRAD)

Calvert Marine Museum
Saturday, Oct. 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Come celebrate the Patuxent River at the original fall event held since 1978! This event includes live music, food and drink vendors, makers of homespun goods, a petting zoo, FREE boat rides, toy boat building, displays and activities celebrating the river! Explore the museum grounds to visit dozens of nonprofit and community groups that help keep our area a wonderful place to live and play! Museum admission is FREE to all during the event

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

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



County Times

P. O. Box 250 • Hollywood, MD 20636

St. Mary's Community Calendar

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

Sat, Oct 4

Friends of the Poor Walk

Father Andrew White School
Leonardtown
9 a.m. (same day registration 7:30 a.m.)

St. Vincent de Paul Society's 18th annual walk. The event helps families and individuals in need in our community. There will be a post walk brunch, live music, silent auction and door prizes. For more information, call 301-904-7990.

Save a Life Event

Ridge Volunteer Rescue Squad
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Our Save a Life event featuring representatives from the Rescue Squad, Fire Department, MedStar St. Mary's and the St. Mary's Health Department. Fun and learning activities for the whole family! Stay the whole time or just some. Enjoy lunch(\$) and other goodies.

Join us to learn:

- Hands-Only CPR (Starts at 10:15 AM and will run every 30 minutes)
 - Fire Prevention
 - St. Mary's Health Department (Overdose Response & Naloxone Distribution, Other Harm Reduction Services, Safe Medication Disposal, Recovery & Mental Health)
 - MedStar St. Mary's Health Connections
 - Fire & EMS Volunteer Opportunities
- Fun things to do:
- Meet Sparky the Fire Dog
 - Kids Activities
 - Touch a Truck (Ambulance & Fire Truck)

There will be a drawing for the winner of a 50/50 Raffle. Tickets: \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

Pet Blessing

Christ Episcopal Church
25390 Maddox Road, Chaptico
9-10:30 a.m.

Get a Blessing. Join us as Fr. Peter blesses all God's critters. Bring your beloved pet - on a leash, in a carrier or cage. If your pet prefers to stay home, bring a photo.

Be a Blessing - Our shelters need clean gently used towels, sheets, blankets, leashes and collars you no longer use. Dry dog and cat food from Purina or Pedigree is always welcomed. They'll be collection bins for your donations as well as information on local rescue groups.

If your beloved pet is no longer with us, bring their photo for a special blessing of thanksgiving for their life.

The Band of Brothers Meeting

Flashback Restaurant
21797 Coral Dr. N Lexington Park
9a.m.

Band of Brothers, Inc. 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. For more information call 301-481-6752.

Cruisin Southern Maryland 100 Mile Car Cruise & Show

Golden Beach Park & Ride
37750 Golden Beach Rd., Charlotte Hall
9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. at the Golden Beach Park & Ride. Cruise through Southern Maryland begins at 9 a.m. and arrival at the last stop is estimated to be 2:30 p.m. at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. Registration \$30 per vehicle includes free event t-shirt first 150 vehicles. Information call 240-538-4266 or cruisinsomd.org (Rain date October 5th weather permitting)

Blind Eyes Opened Human Trafficking Documentary and Dialogue

To Tell the Truth Ministries
22345 Greenview Pkwy, Suite 4A,
Great Mills
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

This is a free community event. Documentary is rated PG 13. To register: somdblindeyesopened2025.eventbrite.com

For questions: info@unstoppableyouministriesinc.org

Drayden African American Schoolhouse Open House

Drayden African American Schoolhouse
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Visit one of the nation's best-preserved, one-room African American schoolhouses. Check out the restored schoolhouse and learn about its rich history and importance to education in St. Mary's County. Staff will be available at the school during this time to answer any questions and provide information. This is a FREE EVENT co-hosted by Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions (UCAC) and the St. Mary's County Museum Division. Info at www.facebook.com/events/1304609537658205

Thu, Oct 9

St. Mary's Chamber Golf Tournament

Wicomico Shores Golf Course
35794 Aviation Yacht Club Rd.
Ste 2962, Mechanicsville
8 a.m.

Enjoy a day golfing on the beautiful shores of the Wicomico River! Additional events include interactive holes and more.

For team tickets and sponsorship opportunities (no tickets sold at the door) and more information: smcchamber.com/2024-golf-tournament/

Ongoing

The Mousetrap by Agatha Christie

Three Notch Theatre
21744 South Coral Dr., Lexington Park
Thursdays-Saturdays 8 p.m., Sundays 3 p.m., through Oct. 12

Get your tickets to our production of the longest running play in the world at www.newtowneplayers.org/

While a murderer is loose in London, seven strangers find themselves snowed in at the remote Monkswell Manor. When a police sergeant arrives, they discover that the murderer is among their ranks. Who could it be?

Fall Yard Sale

7th District VRS Auxiliary
Rescue Squad Annex Building
21533 Colton Point Road
Oct. 4-11

Saturday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Sunday & weekdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Fill a 13-gallon size bag for \$10. Many assorted items have been donated and too many to mention by name. The Auxiliary thanks everyone for the continued support of this event.

Upcoming

Patuxent River Appreciation Day (PRAD)

Calvert Marine Museum
Saturday, Oct. 11
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Come celebrate the Patuxent River at the original fall event held since 1978! This event includes live music, food and drink vendors, makers of homespun goods, a petting zoo, FREE boat rides, toy boat building, displays and activities celebrating the river! Explore the museum grounds to visit dozens of nonprofit and community groups that help keep our area a wonderful place to live and play! Museum admission is FREE to all during the event.

Sacred Heart Church

ANNUAL OCTOBER

Drive-Thru Dinner

23080 MADDOX ROAD, BUSHWOOD, MARYLAND 20618

Sunday, October 26, 2025

11:00 a.m. 'til





Fried Oysters

Stuffed Ham

Turkey w/ Dressing

\$30.00
(Make Checks Payable to:
Sacred Heart Church)
Cash or Checks Only
(Sorry, No Credit Card Service Available)

Parsley Potatoes,
Candied Sweet
Potatoes, Green
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★ ST. MARY'S COUNTY Library

UPCOMING EVENTS



How Poetry Brings History to the Present Mind: *Kin: Rooted in Hope*

This year's One Maryland, One Book is *Kin: Rooted in Hope* written by Carole Boston Weatherford with art by Jeffery Boston Weatherford. Their book focuses on the Weatherford's own ancestors who were among the founders of Maryland and gives these individuals voice through enslavement, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. This program combines a book discussion group with a poetry writing session. Participants are invited to bring in a family photo, artifact, etc. that has multi-generational ties, and write a poem honoring that memory by adding details that breathe new life into it. Paper and writing utensils provided, no experience needed! Lexington Park Library on Thursday, October 2 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Native Plant Swap and Seed Swap at the Front Yard

This free event offers both experienced and new gardeners a chance to add native plants to their yards. In doing so, you will be creating habitat for our native birds, bees and butterflies. If you're new to gardening with native plants, this event is the place to get started! Meet and chat with native-plant enthusiasts, view native plants in the Front Yard gardens, and take home free plants and seeds! If you're an experienced native gardener, please spread the joy by bringing your favorite plants and seeds to swap and share. Leonardtown Library on Saturday, October 4 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

Read, Play, Celebrate! 75th Anniversary Jubilee!

Join us in honoring 75 years of community, learning, and imagination at our Diamond Jubilee Celebration! Whether you're a life-long library lover or visiting for the first

time, this is a celebration for everyone. We will have a special diamond scavenger hunt, photo booth and games for the entire family to enjoy! Charlotte Hall Library on Saturday, October 4 from 2:30 - 4 p.m.

Energy Efficiency Programs: Save Energy, Save Money

Learn about FREE energy efficiency programs for Maryland residents! The Department of Housing and Community Development offers multiple programs to upgrade and replace heating and cooling systems, HVAC systems, appliances, insulation, and encapsulation of basements at no cost to Maryland residents if they qualify. Renters and homeowners are both eligible for these programs, which are available for all household income levels. In addition to information on these money-saving programs, DHCD will also give tips and guides on how to save energy in the home. This is a virtual program that will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, October 8 from 6-6:30 p.m. and a second

session from 7 - 7:30 p.m. Register on www.stmalib.org.

LexiCon: Origins

LexiCon is an event for people of all ages who love comic books, science fiction, fantasy, gaming, and superheroes! Join us at Lexington Park Library on Saturday, October 11 for trivia, an obstacle course for kids, a cosplay contest, and prizes!

Schedule:

- 10 a.m.-2 p.m.: Board Games, Photo booth, VR games
- 10-11 a.m.: "Heroes in Training" Course
- 12-2 p.m.: Minifigure Painting
- 12-1 p.m.: Mask Designing with Craft N Stitch
- 1-2 p.m.: Trivia
- 2-3 p.m.: Activities and Prize Vault
- 3-4 p.m.: Cosplay Contest

Schedule subject to change. See more about LexiCon on the Library website and enter the cosplay contest!



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In Remembrance

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

Dorothy Thompson, 89



Dorothy Marie Thompson, a lifelong resident of Colton's Point, Maryland, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on September 11, 2025. Born on June 9, 1936, she was the beloved daughter of the late Byron and Mae Guy and one of eight children.

On June 23, 1956, she married the love of her life, Paul S. Thompson Sr., and together they built a beautiful life centered around faith, family, and hard work. Dorothy began her professional life as a secretary at Frank Combs' Insurance Company, where she worked for five years. However, her most cherished role was as a devoted wife and mother, raising their five children and supporting her husband's business, Thompson's Seafood Corner Market. She was the heart of the market, preparing her famous deviled crabcakes and warmly greeting every customer who walked through the door.

Dorothy was deeply involved in the Holy Angels School community during her children's school years, giving generously of her time and spirit. She had a love of simple pleasures—playing the lottery, shopping on Mondays, dancing, gardening, and canning vegetables from her garden. Her kitchen was a place of comfort and tradition, especially

when she served her homemade chicken noodle soup and grilled cheese sandwiches.

Family was the center of Dorothy's world. She never forgot a birthday and made every family member feel special with a phone call and a heartfelt rendition of the Happy Birthday song. She was especially proud of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her face lit up with every visit.

Dorothy is survived by her loving husband of 69 years, Paul S. Thompson Sr.; her children: Paul S. Thompson Jr. (Belinda), Byron "Kevin" Thompson (Barbara), Bonnie E. Vallandingham (Frank), Margaret J. Gerding (Stan), and Dorothy "Denise" Ching (Robby). She is also survived by her siblings: Paul Guy (Nancy), Raymond Guy (Susan), Juanita Chapdelaine (Mike), and Kay Hayden (Al).

She is preceded in death by her brothers Claudie E. Guy (GraceAnn) and Byron Lewis Guy, and her sister Gloria Wood (Harold).

Dorothy's legacy lives on through her grandchildren: Dale Pilkerton, Stephanie Vallandingham, Jason Vallandingham, Christy Huseman, Carl Fuller, Matthew Fuller, Shelly Anderson, Paul S. Thompson III, Chasity Estevez, David Thompson, Emily Vallandingham, and Christopher Thompson; her 16 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter and one great-great-grandson on the way.

In her final years, Dorothy was lovingly cared for by her granddaughter Stephanie Vallandingham and her devoted caretaker Thelma Woodland.

Dorothy Marie Thompson leaves behind a lifetime of cherished memories and a legacy of love, kindness, and unwavering devotion to her family and community. She will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Pallbearers: Dale Pilkerton, Jason Vallandingham, David Thompson, Christopher Thompson, Carl Fuller III, Paul S. Thompson III.

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

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

Mike Bell, 62



Michael "Mike" Philip Bell, devoted husband, proud father, beloved Papa, avid golfer, and BBQ pitmaster, went to be with his Heavenly Father on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

Mike was known for his charisma, charm, and razor sharp wit—and equally respected for his unwavering ethics, quiet integrity, and deep love of family. He lived life to the fullest, with a rare ability to make even the most ordinary moments feel extraordinary. Whether it was a quick trip to the store or a backyard cookout, Mike brought joy, spontaneity, and usually a well-timed prank.

A self-proclaimed "serial hobbyist," Mike never did anything halfway. From RC cars to virtual racing, dominoes to golf, if there was a game to be played, he dove in head-first—and his kids and grandkids were always close behind. He created fun wherever he went, but it was his steady presence and joyful spirit that drew people to him. If you spent time with Mike, chances are you laughed, learned something new, and walked away feeling a little more seen.

Mike was the heart and soul of his family. The love he shared with his wife of 42 years, Charla Bell, was the kind most only read about—beginning when they met at just 14 years old and growing into a once-in-a-lifetime bond that remained unshakable through every chapter of life. He adored her completely, and made sure she felt it every single day.

Together, Mike and Charla raised seven children—each of whom grew not only to

admire him, but to consider him their closest friend. He coached baseball, softball, and football, rotating seasons so each child had their "dad's year." His coaching went far beyond the field—it was in the way he taught by example: how to lead with humility, love deeply, and show up when it matters most.

A meticulous planner by nature, Mike was the one everyone counted on to fix what was broken—whether it was a leaky faucet or a tough situation. He had an incredible mind, an abundance of practical knowledge, and an even greater willingness to share it. His children and grandchildren grew up learning by his side—not just how to build or repair things, but how to show up, work hard, and care deeply.

Family was everything to Mike. He was the driving force behind vacations, birthday parties, murder mystery dinners, and Sunday barbecues. His legacy is not only the life he lived, but the lives he shaped—with laughter, loyalty, and unconditional love.

He is survived by his loving wife, Charla Bell; his children, Michael Bell and his wife Rayleen Bell, Christy Bell, LeAna (Bell) Felder and her husband Daryl Felder, James Bell and his wife Megan Bell, Andrea (Bell) Miller and her husband Jason Miller, Derek Bell and his wife Leanne Bell, Hilary (Bell) Gravelle and her husband Brandon Gravelle, and; Ryan and his wife Amanda Gass, and his fourteen cherished grandchildren: Joshua Bell, Malynn Bell, Nathan Bell, Faith Davis, Colton Davis, Hunter Todd, Lucas Bell, Thomas Miller, Charlotte Miller, Vivienne Bell, Lillian Bell, Wyatt Bell, Audrey Gravelle, and Jack Gravelle.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Josephine C. Lanphere; his father, Jack P. Bell; and his brother, Robert "Bob" Bell.

If there wasn't golf in heaven before, there surely is now with the reunion of brothers and lifelong best friends, Mike and Bob.

Family will receive friends on Friday, September 26, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., with a Funeral Service at 11:00 a.m., at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Interment will follow at Charles Memorial Gardens, 26325 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown, MD, 20650.

Condolences to the family may be left at bhf@brinsfieldfuneral.com.

Arrangements by Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A. Leonardtown, MD.



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*Loving you and missing you,
Dad, Susan & Tracy*



A View From The BLEACHERS



Radio Therapist

By Ronald N. Guy
Contributing Writer

Milestones in life are accompanied less by excitement and more by a sobering reality now. A few weeks ago, I was driving through Frederick on a beautiful late summer afternoon, minding my own business, not seeking wisdom or any sort of personal growth experience. Open road, radio, loud music: This was the intentional depth and complexity (i.e. neither) of my thoughts.

Then some guy started talking about something or another. With minimal mental engagement (similar to high school math class), I surmised that the talking head was about my age. Speaking about his favorite and most respected musicians, his words bounced across decades of music – The Who, The Stones, Sly and Family Stone, U2, Prince, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, A Tribe Called Quest – but never ventured to anything more recent than the nineties. The interviewer, being regrettably great at their job, identified the omission of modern music history and, assuming a generational bias, asked the dude if he simply found 21st century music inferior. This piqued my interest as I waited for the correct answer...which is, of course, "YES".

That's not what I got. Instead, the guy offered an admittedly interesting but jarring reply. Sunny day, open road, great music: The bliss was gone, replaced by undeniable fact intersecting with uncomfortable thoughts and the many grains of sand that have slipped through my hourglass.

His musical hard drive was full. That was essentially his answer. He elaborated: At some point in his life, somewhere between the end of the nineties and the new millennium, he ceased to pursue new music. He knew the latest artists and popular songs, but he wasn't buying their records or going to their concerts. They all existed in his short-term memory, casual, random acquaintances that could come and go with no lasting significance.

Unknowingly, his mind had simply decided it had fully absorbed and meticulously cataloged all the music he needed to be fulfilled for the rest of his life.

The conclusion seemed somewhat sad, although the gentlemen conveyed contentment. There may have even been a hint of relief in his voice – that he, now five decades or so into his life, felt completely comfortable letting something go. It is a busy, ever-evolving world. There's much, too much, to keep up with, frankly. There is an innate desire to keep up and stay current. But it does get harder. Deciding to disengage and intentionally letting something pass by can invited fear and guilt. That said, my initial sadness for my radio contemporary turned to happiness; he found a permanent mental rest stop for at least one thing in this crazy world.

The interview ended after a few minutes. My brain couldn't let it go. I thought about my own consumption of music. It is similar to his, but my kids have kept me current. Then I thought about sports. It was sobering contemplation. As my fellow Gen-X radio buddy is with music, so I am with sports. I can rattle off the winner of the first 30 Super Bowls as easy as the alphabet. After that it's random flashes of winners and losers with a loose adherence to chronologic order. For World Series', I'm money from the early seventies to about 1993. Then it's more scattered memories with no clear historical order. As for athletes, my favorites played decades ago. I appreciate players of more recent vintage; there's just no emotional connection. My sports consumption is still borderline obsessive (a statement made with pride), but it's comprised of what is ultimately a rolling scroll of experiences; few long-term memories are being created now.

Like my radio guy, I'm surprisingly content with this. As I watch these words flash across my computer screen, peace is the only detectable emotion. There is no frustration or concern, no embarrassment as to where I am in my relationship with Father Time. This surprised me, given it's the first time discovering this reality, much less confronting it. Maybe just hearing my radio buddy (or therapist) say it is okay to admit your age and the overwhelming complexities of life made it okay for me to do the same.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

The Tackle Box Fishing Report

By Ken Lamb
Contributing Writer

A variety of species of fish are now growing in numbers in Southern Maryland.

Rockfish are in the shallows in the salt islands mid-bay on the eastern shore side. The creek mouths are holding stripers on out-going tides. The shallows on rivers and creeks have stripers most everywhere. The Patuxent has stripers for jiggers at the Patuxent River Bridge pilings. Live spot and eels around the pilings bring plenty of strikes. The Potomac has rockfish around the stone piles at Ragged Point for lure casters. Trollers are doing well at Swan Point in the Potomac. There were some beautiful stripers trolled up at Point No Point lighthouse last Sunday on the falling tide.

Spot are everywhere. They tend to bite in the Patuxent 24/7, but the creek fishing needs a moving tide. I went to a creek off the Patuxent Sunday evening and caught spot, trout, perch, and back drum with nearly every cast using a Sabiki rig tipped with bits of bloodworm. I returned the next day at noon on dead low tide with no movement and got skunked. One must be prudent and fish when the fish want to cooperate. The spot fishing in the Patuxent is not so tide conscious, as Capt. Bernie Shea on his charter boat was in the river proper at the same time and was bailing them two at a time.

Bluefish are now in the rivers and bay. The blues in the bay are chopper size in the



7-to-8-pound range with an occasional fish ten pounds or better. The blues in the rivers and creeks are from eight inches up to three or four pounds.

Trout are in the salt islands in good numbers and some puppy drum and slot reds have shown up. The lower Potomac has some speckled trout.

White perch are elusive. A good catch here and there, but no consistency.

Blue catfish are thick in the upper Potomac. The Patuxent has catfish above the bridge at Benedict.

The storm is going out to sea, leaving us alone. The forecast is beautiful beginning Thursday and through the weekend.

Let's go fishing!!

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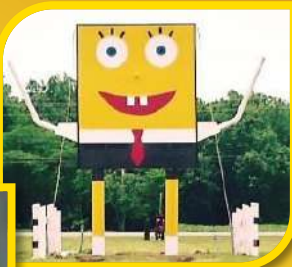
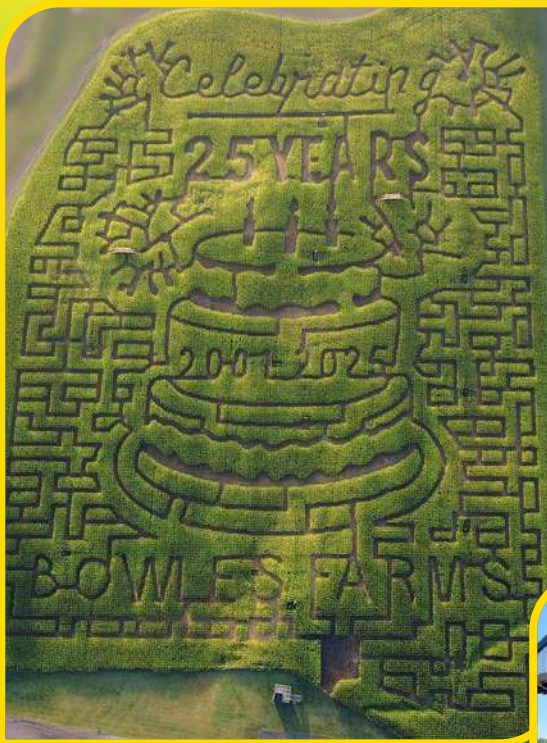
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A retiree's guide for National Retirement Security Month

If you're retired, it's easy to let your finances go on autopilot. Since October is National Retirement Security Month, it's a good time to revisit some areas that can impact your long-term financial security and help your money last a lifetime.

Consider these suggestions:

- **Manage your withdrawal rate.** You'll likely need to tap into your retirement accounts — your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. But think carefully about how much income you withdraw every year. If you take out too much, especially in the early years of your retirement, you risk outliving your resources. You have the option of withdrawing from these accounts at age 59½. Once you turn 73, you'll be required to take out at least a certain amount each year based on your age and account balance.
- **Estimate health care costs.** When you turn 65, you will be eligible for Medicare, but you may still need a Medicare supplement plan, both of which will require premium payments. You'll probably also incur a variety of other unreimbursed expenses for doctor visit copays or deductibles, prescription drugs and vision, hearing and dental care. Additionally, about 70% of adults ages 65 and older will need some form of long-term support, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. This may include a paid home health aide (average cost of \$77,792 per year), an assisted living residence (average cost of \$70,500 per year) or nursing home care (private room average cost of \$127,750 per year). (Cost estimates are from Genworth 2024 Cost of Care Survey.) Over the course of your retirement, these can add up, so be realistic when budgeting for health care expenses in retirement.
- **Consider when to take Social Security.** You can start receiving monthly Social Security checks at age 62, but your payments will generally be larger if you wait until your "full" retirement age of 66 or 67. (The size of your payments will "max out" at age 70.) If you believe you have longevity working in your favor, and you can afford to wait, you may well be better off by delaying Social Security as long as possible.
- **Avoid investing too conservatively.** Once you're retired, you might think you should take as few chances with your investments as possible — after all, you have less time for them to bounce back from a downturn than you did during your working years. Nonetheless, it's important to consider keeping a reasonable percentage of growth-oriented investments in your portfolio to help you stay ahead of inflation. Even at a low rate, inflation can erode your purchasing power over time.
- **Keep your generosity in check.** If you have grown children who need financial help, or grandchildren heading to college someday, you'd no doubt like to do what you can to assist them. However, the hard truth is that they have more time than you to find workable financial solutions, whereas if you deplete your funds through your generosity, you could put yourself in a precarious position. So, be as giving as you can afford — but try not to go beyond that. By preserving your financial independence, you'll end up benefiting your family as well.

Retirement is ideally an enjoyable time in your life, especially if you feel financially stable. So, take time to check in periodically to keep that stability on track.

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

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

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Get the Scoop on Wedding Rehearsals



There is quite the process involved in bringing a show to the stage on Broadway in New York or The West End in London. Lines and songs are tweaked, actors may be swapped out, and sets may be redesigned. Often these shows are tested out in regional theaters before they are finalized for the true opening night. "Practice makes perfect" is an adage that continues to be relevant today. Those involved in theater recognize the value of rehearsals, and it also should be an important component for couples planning their weddings.

Weddings involve a lot of moving parts, and that includes people. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicates the average wedding party contains eight people. Add in four parents, individuals doing ceremony readings, people participating in unity rituals, ushers, and others of recognition, and there may be a dozen or more people responsible for knowing their places and understanding their responsibilities. The wedding rehearsal helps to corral these individuals and tame nerves by showing everyone what is expected of them on the big day.

Who is in charge of the wedding rehearsal?

Various people may take the lead at the rehearsal. In some instances, it is the officiant who will guide everyone. More often it is the responsibility of the coordinator at the ceremony site or a wedding planner who handles the cues so that everyone enters and exits properly. Some couples will also ask an organized friend or family member to assume the role of rehearsal leader.

What do you rehearse?

According to Ceremony Officiants, Rev. Laura Cannon and Associates, the wedding rehearsal does not run through the entire ceremony, only the key spots. A rehearsal typically focuses on the "walking in and walking out" and ensuring participants know where to stand and what to do. A generalized outline of the wedding ceremony timeline will be reviewed, helping participants understand when they will be called upon to fulfill their responsibilities. Running through the processional, recessional and

other key moments in the ceremony two to three times is usually enough practice.

Who attends the rehearsal?

Only a select number of people need to attend the rehearsal. This includes the couple, their parents, the wedding party, anyone serving a special role in the ceremony (such as leading a prayer), and the wedding coordinator or the rehearsal leader.

How long does the rehearsal last?

Typically a rehearsal should not take longer than 30 minutes to one hour. It's generally held the evening before the actual wedding when everyone should be in town for the festivities.

What happens after the rehearsal?

It's traditional to attend a rehearsal dinner directly after the rehearsal itself. This intimate meal gives the key players in the wedding ceremony an opportunity to chat and mingle before the big day. It's also a chance for the couple to offer gifts to the wedding party, parents and others in appreciation of their participation in the wedding. Sometimes speeches are given, but the rehearsal dinner tends to be a low-key, low-pressure opportunity to spend time with special people.

What is the dress code?

The dress code for the rehearsal and the dinner is totally up to the couple. Many opt for business casual, but the restaurant chosen for the dinner may guide couples on what everyone should wear.

Additional tips

Couples may instruct people to bring along the shoes they will be wearing at the wedding to get a feel for them walking into the ceremony site.

While it is traditionally the groom's parents' obligation to reserve and pay for the rehearsal dinner, couples who do not want to place all of that responsibility on them can discuss contributing.

A wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner brings together the key participants in the wedding ceremony prior to the main event.

Why It Pays to Hire a Professional Makeup Artist for Your Wedding

There is no denying that weddings can be exciting, memorable and expensive. According to data from the wedding planning and registry website Zola, the average wedding in the United States in 2024 cost \$33,000. Prices for weddings will vary depending on geography and services.

In an effort to rein in spending, couples may wonder where they can cut costs, and one service that may be up for consideration is a professional makeup artist. After all, a bride and her bridesmaids may feel they already have plenty of experience applying makeup, and the plethora of online tutorials can guide them through areas where they may need some help. But before making a pilgrimage to Ulta or Sephora for supplies, savvy brides should realize there are plenty of reasons to utilize a pro when it comes to wedding makeup.

- Bridal makeup isn't like everyday makeup. A professional knows how to create a look that will remain flawless throughout the entire day. From the ceremony to the reception, makeup has to be durable, and a pro will know which products and techniques to use to ensure everything stays put, advises Shervonne Kitto, a makeup artist serving New York and New Jersey.
- You can actually save money going with a pro. Doing makeup yourself may



not result in cost savings. Remember, employees at makeup stores may do your makeup for a reduced cost initially, but they are in the business of selling products. Many consumers walk away spending more in products than they intended, and sometimes the cost in getting all new bridal makeup could actually be more than if you relied on a professional.

- Enjoy time savings. Professionals who have mastered their crafts can quickly and efficiently create a desired makeup look, saving you time compared to a do-it-yourself attempt.

- Enhance your beauty. A pro knows which techniques to use to play up certain features and minimize others. This can help present the best version of yourself on one of the most photographed days of your life.

- Create a comprehensive look. Hiring a professional makeup artist means you can coordinate how you and your bridal party look, which can serve to complement the overall wedding theme. If you go the DIY route, you might end up with a bridal party with some very different-looking makeup applications. A pro may do some photo-enhancing

minimal touches for the gentlemen in the wedding as well.

- Enjoy time to relax. Having your hair and makeup done by someone else affords you an hour or more to just sit back and be pampered, something that likely will not occur for the rest of the busy wedding day.

When considering makeup artists, each should offer a free trial and be receptive to clients' needs and requests. However, it is worthwhile to trust the makeup artist as he or she ultimately knows how to craft winning wedding day looks.

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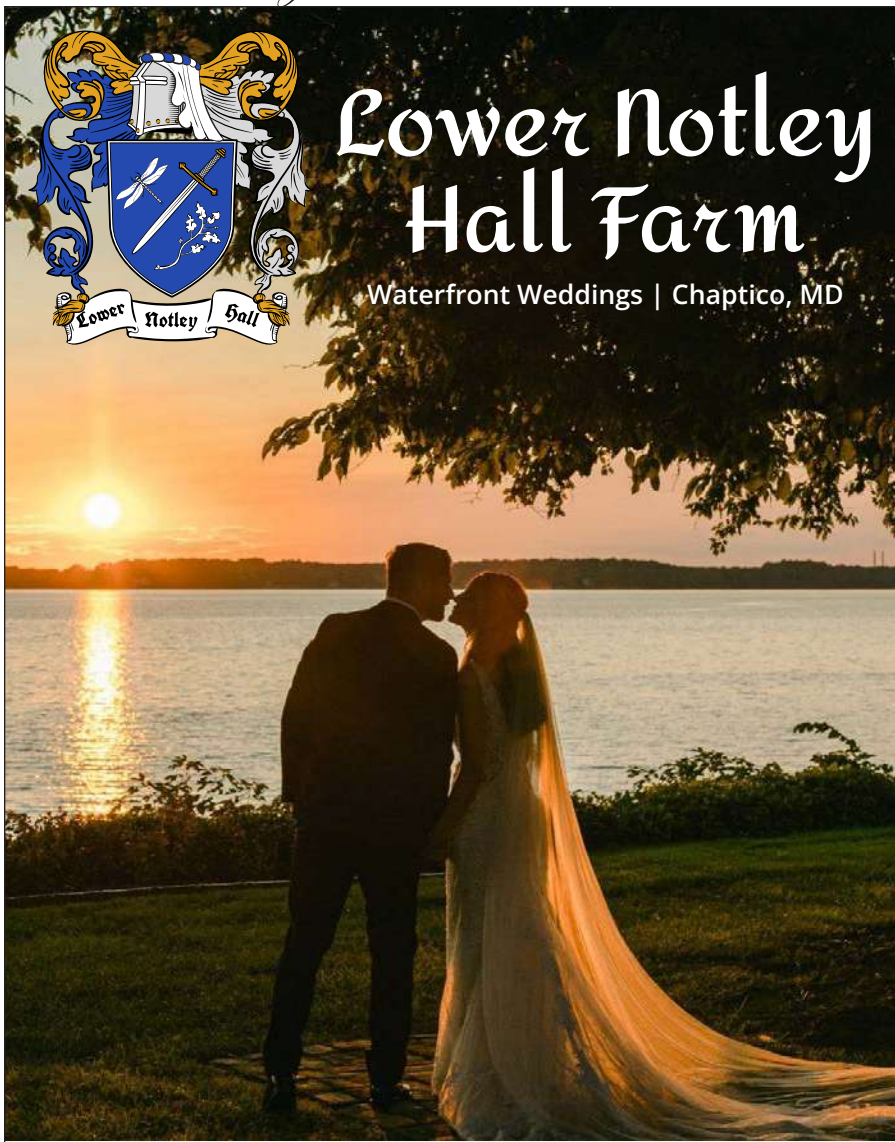
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Wedding Hair for Every Style



Weddings are one of the most-photographed and documented days in couples' lives. From the moment the question is popped to the final goodbye before setting out for the honeymoon, all eyes (and cameras) will be carefully trained on those vowing to share their lives together.

French Touch Photography says wedding photographers take an average 50 to 100 pictures per hour. That means couples ultimately may appear in 600 photos before the night is through. Is it any wonder that brides, grooms and everyone in between want to ensure they are presenting the best versions of themselves come the big day? The hairstyle chosen for a wedding can affect how couples view these photographs in the years to come. It can take some trial and error to find a wedding day hairstyle that is perfect, but these popular styles are good starting points.

- Bouncy blowout: Many brides choose to leave their hair down for the wedding, and this style looks bouncy, smooth and approachable. The blow-out can be straight, or stylists can add curled edges for a luxurious look.
- Messy bun: A messy bun is another hairstyle that appears effortless. An imperfect bun with some tendrils escaping and a decorative hair pin is both elegant and fun.
- Boho braids: Whether a hairstyle is mostly down and free-flowing or pinned back into a loose bun, adding bohemian style braids can impart whimsy to any look. This hairstyle may be best for informal weddings and to match gowns that are flowing and ethereal.
- Top knot: This style is a practical choice for warm weather weddings,

when heat and humidity can attack a polished style. The look is made by winding the hair into a bun at the crown of the head. It can be enhanced with a crown or headband.

- Half-up, half-down: Brides who want their locks down with voluminous waves but without hair in their faces often opt for a half-up, half-down style. This pulls the front portion of hair back and away from the face, which can be braided, twisted or even just loosely pinned, depending on preference.
- Side-swept: This look pulls tresses over to one side, where they cascade in waves over the shoulder. It is elegant and classic.
- Chignon: From the French chignon de cou, which means "nape of the neck," a chignon is a wrapped bun hairstyle pinned low on the head where it meets the neck.

While it's the bride's hairstyle that often draws the most attention, the groom also may want to experiment with hairstyles.

- Pompadour: This style is characterized by a voluminous top that is swept back from the face.
- Quiff: Like a pompadour, this hairstyle also features volume but with natural curls offering a full, defined look.
- Classic side part: This look is classic and polished. A clean parting that is either slightly off from the middle or even deeper on the side completes this look.
- Undercut: This hairstyle features hair buzzed on the sides and back with a longer top.

Everyone can be wedding-ready with classic or trendy hairstyles that complete a finished look.

Create a Winning Wedding Reception Seating Plan



Planning a successful wedding is a multi-layered undertaking that often stretches across many months. There are dozens of decisions to make and often thousands of dollars involved in what culminates in one day of celebration. There are many components of wedding planning, and tasks may range from entirely enjoyable to tedious. Organizing a wedding reception seating chart tends to be more the latter than the former. In fact, the wedding resource Table Top Planner identifies arranging seating plans as the most stressful part of planning a wedding.

What seems like a relatively simple concept — giving guests a seat at the party — frequently turns into a stressful situation for couples when they begin to consider all of the personalities invited to the wedding. A wedding brings together close family, distant family, friends, coworkers, parents' acquaintances, and others. These are people who may not interact on a regular basis, and plenty who have never met before. Throw in the added mix of people who are divorced, estranged or may not see eye-to-eye on hot-button topics, and the challenge escalates.

Arranging guests at tables where they will spend four to five hours together takes some effort, but it is possible. Follow these guidelines to make the process a little less cumbersome.

1. Understand the venue layout and their seating requirements. A catering manager or venue representative can provide a blueprint of how the room can be laid out and the maximum number of tables. Round tables generally are the norm at weddings because they encourage conversation and foster a more intimate atmosphere. Round tables often seat between six to 10 people.
2. Avoid skipping the seating chart for larger affairs. Couples hosting a smaller wedding may be able to forgo

a seating chart. But most wedding etiquette experts advise a chart for weddings with 50 or more guests. You'll want to save guests the stress of trying to find a seat on their own, which can lead to feelings of discomfort. Plus, having a seating chart and set table numbers facilitates organization.

3. Finalize the guest list. It may be tempting to get started on the seating chart right away, but you'll need the final guest list before beginning. Afterwards, take time to group guests based on how you know them, such as family, school friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Finding commonality can make it easier to see who might be able to sit together.
4. Blur the lines of "sides." Sometimes it seems like separating your family and friends into sides is the way to go. Your future spouse's parents and friends are on one side of the room and yours are on the other. But by blending certain guests together, the seating chart may fall into place.
5. Resist the urge for wedding day matchups. Skip the idea of a singles table where unattached friends are seated in hopes they might make a match.
6. Ask for some help. Involve parents in the process, particularly with assistance in seating people they know personally and with whom you may be unfamiliar.
7. List the seating chart alphabetically. Place the seating chart at the entrance to the reception space. You can be as creative as you'd like with the design, but just be sure to list each person's name in alphabetical order so it is easy to find the table assignment.

Arranging tables and seating for a reception is challenging, but with some trial and error couples can find spots that will please most of their guests.



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The Roles Played by Bridesmaids and the Maid of Honor in a Wedding

During a wedding, the couple tying the knot certainly gets to shine, but so, too, do other ceremony participants. From the parents of the bride or groom to the officiant to the ring bearer, there are many roles beyond bride and groom.

A bridal party typically includes a soon-to-be-bride's close friends and family. The bridesmaid tradition may trace its origins to ancient times, when bridesmaids would be selected to dress like the bride and confuse vengeful spirits or warring rival clans who might want to harm the bride. A special individual gets to enjoy a higher-level job within the bridal party, serving as maid of honor, if she is unmarried, or matron of honor if she has already walked down the aisle.

Bridesmaids lend support and provide help as needed, but it is the maid of honor who will serve as the right-hand woman to the bride. Here is a deep look at the unique rolls these women play both before and during a wedding.

Bridesmaids

A significant amount of planning goes into a wedding and bridesmaids may be called upon to help brides make various decisions. Bridesmaids also offer support to the bride, who may be feeling a tad overwhelmed. It is important for bridesmaids to calm the bride and care for her while she tackles the tasks necessary to host such a momentous occasion.



Bridesmaids can lend support and opinions when visiting with vendors like florists or musicians. A bride-to-be also may ask certain bridesmaids to come to dress appointments.

Collectively, bridesmaids will plan and help pay for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. They also can assist the mother-of-the-bride with whatever extra help she may need.

Maid of honor

The maid of honor (MOH) does all of the above and more. She will attend wedding dress shopping appointments and serve as a trusted source of honest feedback. The MOH

also may be called in to mediate any conflicts within the bridal party, as these ladies may not all know each other prior to the nuptials. She will check in with the bridesmaids to be sure they are on task and fulfilling any responsibilities in a timely manner.

The MOH will be the main point of contact for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. She will keep track of gifts so that the couple can follow up with thank you notes. She also may help assemble and mail out wedding invitations. The MOH will help the bride get dressed on the wedding day and attend to any needs she may have, including providing snacks and water. In the event the bride's gown is cumbersome, the MOH may

need to assist the bride by adjusting the dress while seated or when visiting the restroom.

During the ceremony, the MOH will hold the bride's bouquet and she will give a toast at the reception. She also may make music requests to keep the party upbeat and fun.

There is no minimum or maximum number of people who can be part of a bridal party, but it is important to choose people who can be relied upon and who will enhance the experience. The bride-to-be can discuss her expectations from bridesmaids and the maid of honor at the start of the wedding adventure to ensure that everyone can help ensure the day is a momentous occasion.

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Remember Lost Loved Ones at a Wedding

A wedding is a happy day in a couple's life together. Couples who have lost loved ones in recent years, whether it's parents, grandparents, close friends, or siblings, may find their happiness mixing with feelings of loss. It can be challenging to fully celebrate in the absence of a beloved loved one who was supposed to be there joining in the happiness.

Responding to feelings of grief and loss on a wedding day can be challenging, but there are ways couples can pay homage to late loved ones during wedding celebrations to make the loss a little easier to bear. Here are different ways to remember the special people who are there in spirit.

- Save a seat. Reserve a seat at the ceremony and reception with a small placard that reads something along the lines of "In loving memory of the mother of the bride. She is forever present in our hearts."
- Include a note. Include an In Memoriam note in the wedding program with special words about the person who is missed.
- Light a candle during the ceremony. The officiant can say a few words and invite someone to light a candle in honor of a late relative or friend.
- Carry a special memento. Whether in the bouquet or in the pocket of a tuxedo, carrying a small souvenir that represents the deceased loved one. If there is an item that belonged to the



loved one, it can be worn during the wedding. It could be a dress, a piece of jewelry, a pair of cufflinks, or even an embroidered handkerchief.

- Toast with a drink. The atmosphere at a reception is more lively than during a ceremony. Offer a toast to the person who is missed or serve their favorite food at the buffet.
- Play a special song. If the deceased loved one would be featured in a signature dance, like the father/daughter, mother/son traditions, play a song that was meaningful to that person and enlist someone to stand in for the absent person.
- Request donations. Set up a memorial table and make mention of the person's favorite charity. Ask guests to donate in the loved one's honor.

Remembering a special person who has passed on at a wedding can ensure that individual is honored and included in a couple's big day.

The Benefits to Choosing a Local Venue

Wedding planning requires coordinating a laundry list of details that ultimately come together to make for a memorable ceremony and reception. Couples tying the knot have their work cut out for them, and one of the biggest decisions they will have to make involves choosing where to hold the ceremony and reception. Religious couples often opt for ceremonies at their churches, synagogues and mosques. Secular weddings can occur just about anywhere, with couples sometimes utilizing ceremony spaces adjacent to their reception rooms.

As brides and grooms narrow down their venue options, they may want to give strong consideration to the benefits that sticking close to home can offer. Certainly there are advantages to be had hosting a wedding at venues many miles away or even in international locations, but there are unique perks to keeping festivities local. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicated six in 10 couples chose to get married in a place where they currently live; 23 percent opted for a hometown venue; and 18 percent decided on a destination wedding. Here's a look at some of the perks of staying local.

- **Convenience:** One of the biggest benefits of a local venue is convenience for both the couple and their guests. Local venues tend to be easily accessible for those who live nearby, minimizing travel time and reducing any barriers brought on by a lack of familiarity with distant locales.
- **Familiarity:** Couples who love their hometowns and close environs may want to get married in a familiar and comfortable atmosphere. Plus, they may already be familiar with venues in the area and what they offer.
- **Expertise:** Venue staff likely live in the

area or are familiar with other services close by. They can offer valuable recommendations and insights on other vendors, including what has worked before and what to avoid.

- **Familiarity with clergy:** Couples who get married in a local house of worship

likely know the religious leaders there and any support staff. This can add a particularly personal component to the ceremony.

- **Easy payments:** Many venues require some sort of payment plan that consists of a deposit at the time of booking and a series of payments culminating with the last installment upon learning the final head count. Choosing a local venue makes it easy to stop at the reception site in person and provide such payments with ease, while getting confirmation and receipts in real time.
- **Reduce delivery fees:** If florists and other vendors have to drop off items, they may not charge the same delivery fees if the reception site is close by.
- **Ease returning home:** Chances are the couple will arrive at the ceremony and reception by hired car. Once the wedding is over, they'll have to find transportation back home, especially if there is a gap in time before departing on a honeymoon. Utilizing a local venue can make it easier to get home.
- **Support of local businesses:** Choosing a local venue keeps dollars in couples' own communities, which is a great way to support businesses in the town and the people that work for them.

There are notable advantages to getting married close to home. When planning to tie the knot, couples can give ample consideration to local venues.



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MEET HEGGIE

Heggie is a handsome boy with a silky white coat. He's a little reserved at first but quickly warms up into a loving, loyal companion. Visit www.animalrelieffund.org or stop by the Well Pet Clinic in Lexington Park during adoption days—Saturdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.—to meet him!



One Maryland, One Book Brings Inspiring Author Event to County

St. Mary's County Government's Museum Division, in partnership with St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's County Library, Calvert Library, Charles County Public Library and the College of Southern Maryland, will be hosting author events this fall for "One Maryland, One Book."

The main event in St. Mary's County will take place on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center at St. Mary's College of Maryland. It is a free event, open to all, where author Carole Boston Weatherford and artist Jeffery Boston Weatherford will be on stage for an inspiring discussion about their book *Kin: Rooted in Hope*. The author talk will begin at 7 p.m., with a book signing and sales to follow.

Local historical organizations will offer exhibits in the lobby, starting at 6:30 p.m. and continuing through the conclusion of the event.

Earlier that day, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., the College of Southern Maryland will host the author and illustrators in a panel discussion at the La Plata campus. Other events will take place throughout the months of September and October in all three Southern Maryland counties, including at the libraries, historic sites, and more.

Kin: Rooted in Hope by Carole Boston Weatherford is Maryland Humanities' 2025 One Maryland One Book Selection. The poetry collection from the Maryland author includes art by Jeffery Boston Weatherford. A combination of history, art and personal genealogy depicts the author's search for her family tree, which leads her to ancestors who were some of Maryland's founders. Through art and poetic voice, Carole and Jeffery Boston Weatherford impart their family's lives and offer a view into Maryland's African American history.

Kin: Rooted in Hope is a family affair, a mother-son collaboration on a family saga dating back to colonial Maryland," says Carole Boston Weatherford.

"*Kin* conjures the past, reclaims lost

ancestral narratives and brings us to the realization that knowing your history is generational wealth," Weatherford continues. "As a Marylander, I am so proud that *Kin*'s selection as the 2025 One Maryland One Book will further amplify our ancestors' voices. Their story of bondage and freedom—a history shared by many African Americans—is the American story."

The collection weaves the personas of the Weatherfords' ancestors, from experiences on the Wye House Plantation in Talbot County through the Civil War and into the twentieth century. Maryland locations feature prominently in the book, many the subject of their own poems, including the Chesapeake Bay, the port of Oxford, Fort McHenry, and the Wye River, where the Wye House plantation sits.

Kin: Rooted in Hope is a Coretta Scott King Honor Book and a Boston Globe-Horn Book Poetry Award Winner. A selection committee consisting of Maryland teachers, scholars, librarians, writers, booksellers, and community workers chose the book for One Maryland One Book under the theme of "What We Collect / What We Tell."

"I couldn't be more excited about *Kin: Rooted in Hope* as our 2025 One Maryland One Book pick," says Lindsey Baker, CEO of Maryland Humanities. "This book does exactly what our theme asks of us — it pieces together history, memory, and loss to reclaim stories that deserve to be told. Carole Boston Weatherford and Jeffery Boston Weatherford don't just bring the past to life; they remind us why it matters today. With deep Maryland roots, *Kin* is a powerful, moving, and necessary read, and I can't wait for people across the state to experience it."

To learn more about the main events and other related programming throughout Southern Maryland, visit: <https://www.stmalib.org/events/adult-events/one-maryland-one-book>.

Press Release from St. Mary's County

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12 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Blessing of the Fleet at the Leonardtown Wharf

2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Enjoy live music at the Port of Leonardtown Winery featuring Monkey Business with Bluegrass BBQ food truck

Sunday, October 5

8 a.m. - 9 a.m. Rise + Shine Yoga at the Leonardtown Wharf

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Cars & Coffee at Town Market LLC

1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Antique Tractor & Truck Parade

2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Enjoy live music at the Port of Leonardtown Winery featuring Patrick Ward with Farm Fork Soul food truck

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The 7th Annual **Scarecrow Stroll** begins on Friday October 3rd and continues all month. Check out the scarecrows and vote for your favorite.



Friday, October 3

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Visit the Old Jail Museum for FREE tours with extended hours for First Friday

5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Ride the FREE Leonardtown Trolley

5 p.m. Creation Station for "Tiny Art Show" at the St. Mary's Arts Council

5 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Audience Participation Drum Circle on the lawn at the St. Mary's Arts Council

5:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. Youth audience participation drumline event

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Enjoy live music at the Port of Leonardtown Winery featuring Justin Alley with Nick's Pizza DC food truck

Saturday, October 4

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. St. Vincent de Paul Society 18th annual Friends of the Poor Walk

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. First Saturday at Town Market LLC

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Touch a Truck 2025 hosted by the Auxiliary of Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department



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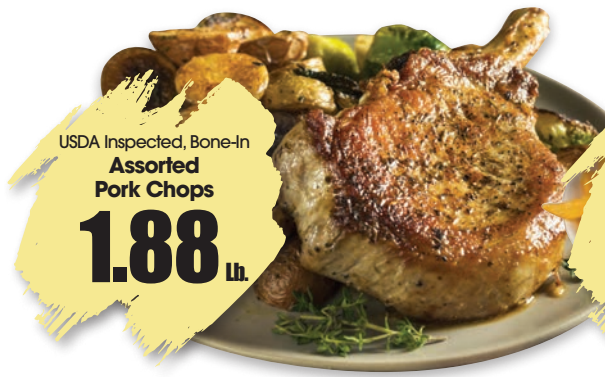
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Notice is hereby given that the following vessel has apparently been abandoned for 180 days on the property of: John Baumann, 21790 Cove Lane, Leonardtown MD, (301) 481-3911. The vessel is described as:

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Application for title will be made in accordance with Section 8-722 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article if this vessel is not claimed and removed from the above property within 30 days of this notice.

COMMISSIONERS OF LEONARDTOWN REQUEST FOR BIDS Snow and Ice Control Program

The Commissioners of Leonardtown are currently accepting bids to perform snow and ice removal services within the corporate limits of Leonardtown. Approximately 15 miles of municipal streets and parking lots will be included in the contract.

Since bidders will have different equipment, the contract will be awarded on a "best value" basis. The bid will consist of hourly rates for various pieces of equipment. The bid will be for one two-year term with two two-year options beginning December 2025.

Interested bidders should obtain a copy of the RFP by contacting Tony Wheatley, Capital Construction Coordinator, Town of Leonardtown POB 1, 22670 Washington Street, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650, or call 301-475-9791.

A pre-bid conference will be held on October 9, 2025, at 10 a.m. at the Town office conference room. A bid opening will be held on October 16, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at which time they will be publicly opened and read.

The Commissioners of Leonardtown reserve the right to reject any and all bids and proposals, and to accept any proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

By Authority of: Laschelle E. McKay, Town Administrator

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

County Times
ST. MARY'S • CALVERT

Suspect Sought in Lexington Park Stabbing

On Saturday, September 27 at around 5:17 p.m., deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to a residence in the 21000 block of Essex Drive in Lexington Park for a reported stabbing.

Upon arrival, deputies located a male victim suffering from multiple wounds to the torso. The victim was flown to an area trauma center and is listed in critical but stable condition.

The suspect fled the scene on foot before police arrived.

The preliminary investigation indicates the victim and suspect knew each other and had been involved in an ongoing dispute throughout the day that escalated into a physical altercation and stabbing. The suspected weapon used in the assault was recovered at the scene.

At this time, investigators believe the incident stemmed from that personal conflict, and it does not appear to pose a risk to the surrounding community.

Detectives from the Criminal Investigations Division assumed the case and have identified Delanta Darius Robertson, 21, of Baltimore, as the suspect. Robertson is described as a Black male with dark skin and a full dark beard, standing 5 feet 10 inches tall, weighing approximately 130 pounds, with black hair and brown eyes. He was last seen wearing black athletic pants and a black T-shirt.

A warrant has been issued for Robertson's arrest on the following charges: attempted second-degree murder and attempted first- and second-degree assault.

Anyone with information on Robertson's whereabouts is asked to call 301-475-8008.



Delanta Darius Robertson

Anyone who may have witnessed the incident or has any additional information about this case is asked to contact Detective Helen Deitrich at 301-475-4200, ext. 8066, or by email at Helen.Deitrich@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Tipsters can also call Crime Solvers 24/7 at 301-475-3333 or text Crime Solvers at 274637. In the message block, type "Tip239" and select SEND. After you get a response, continue your conversation.

Note: Tip239 is case-sensitive and must be typed in the message block as shown. With Crime Solvers, you never have to give your name. You may be eligible for a cash reward if your information leads to an arrest.

Press Release from SMCSO

Sheriff's Office Denies Social Media Reports of ICE Raids

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office is aware of social media posts circulating in the community that claim Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was conducting raids in Lexington Park neighborhoods on Sept. 29.

After confirming directly with the regional ICE office, the sheriff's office says that they can state that there are no ICE operations taking place in St. Mary's County at this time.

Some of the posts being shared include photos suggesting that Sheriff's Office deputies are assisting with immigration enforcement. This information is false, they say.

Deputies in the Lexington Park area are conducting investigative work connected to a stabbing incident that occurred on Saturday. The activities you may have seen are part of that ongoing investigation, they report (see separate story).

The sheriff's office urges residents to rely on verified information from them. They ask residents to follow their official social media channels and website for accurate updates and community safety information.

La Oficina de la Policía de condado de Saint Mary's está al tanto de las publicaciones que

andan circulando en las redes sociales, que afirman que el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE) está realizando redadas en los vecindarios en Lexington Park el día de hoy, Septiembre 29 del 2025.

Después de confirmar directamente con la oficina de El Servicio de inmigración y control de Aduanas, podemos afirmar que el (ICE) o Servicio de Inmigración y control de aduanas no esta haciendo operaciones en el Condado de Saint Marys en este momento.

Algunos de las publicaciones que se han compartido incluidas fotos sugiriendo que oficiales de la policía de este condado están asistiendo a miembros del servicio Inmigración y control de aduanas(ICE) . Esta información es totalmente falsa. Los oficiales que están en el área de Lexington Park están conduciendo un trabajo de investigación conectado con el incidente de apuñalamiento que ocurrió el día sábado. Las actividades que ustedes han visto han sido parte o relacionadas con esta investigación.

Nosotros instamos a los residentes de el condado de Saint Mary's a confiar en la información que provee la Oficina de El Sheriff de Saint Mary's.

Life Sentence Issued for Domestic Violence Homicide

State's Attorney Jaymi Sterling announced Sept. 29 that Jayson David Pressley, 39, of Lexington Park was sentenced to life in prison plus an additional five years for first-degree murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a crime of violence for a domestically related fatal shooting.

On January 3, 2025, a Maryland State Police Trooper responded to a residence in Lexington Park after receiving a 911 call reporting a shooting. Upon arrival, the Trooper found the victim in her vehicle with gunshot wounds to her head and upper body. She was pronounced deceased at the scene.

A short time later, Pressley drove to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center and confessed to the murder. Investigators recovered the loaded handgun used in the fatal shooting from Pressley's vehicle.

"This was a selfish act of domestic violence, where the defendant chose to execute a young mother, thoughtlessly ending her life, and robbing her children of a loving life with their mother. Because of his heartless actions, two young children will grow up motherless," said Sterling. "The Defendant's callous choices have left family and friends devastated, mourning the loss of a loving mother, a wonderful daughter, and a caring friend. Although this sentence cannot bring back the victim, we hope that the life sentence delivers justice for her loved ones and provides them some solace in knowing



Jayson David Pressley

the Defendant will be held accountable."

Sergeant John Wildman of the Maryland State Police Homicide Division was the lead investigator.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Donna Pettersen, Chief of the Domestic Violence Unit and Senior Assistant State's Attorney Alena Mosier prosecuted the case on behalf of the citizens of St. Mary's County.

The Honorable Amy Lorenzini presided over the case.

Press Release from St. Mary's County State's Attorney

Hollywood Woman Arrested Following Stabbing Incident

On Wednesday, Sept. 24 at around 4:30 p.m., deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of a stabbing victim in Hollywood.

Deputies located a female victim suffering from an apparent stab wound to the torso. The victim told deputies she had been involved in an altercation at a residence in the 24000 block of Morgan Road in Hollywood. She then left the residence and traveled to the 23000 block of Hollywood Road, where deputies found her. The victim was flown to an area hospital as a precaution and is listed in stable condition.

Following an investigation, deputies arrested Dayarria Qwantara Da Asia Faxon, 20, of Hollywood, and charged her with first- and second-degree assault. Faxon was transported to the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown pending a bond hearing.



Dayarria Qwantara Da Asia Faxon

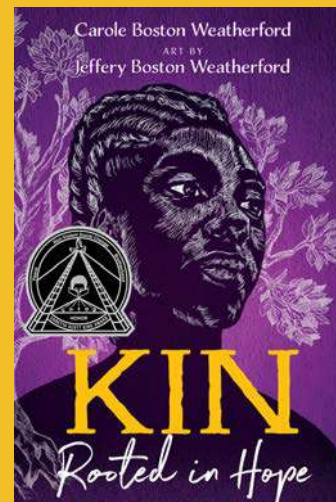
Press Release from SMCSO

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by Carole Boston Weatherford

Art by Jeffery Boston Weatherford



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Alderson Files for Reelection

On September 18, 2025, Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr. (Unaffiliated), formally filed a declaration of intent to be re-elected as County Commissioner for the 3rd District.

The 3rd Commissioner District in St. Mary's County includes Mechanicsville, Charlotte Hall, Chaptico, Colton's Point, and Golden Beach. A commissioner must reside in their district, but they are elected by all the registered voters in the county.

Commissioner Alderson has lived in Colton's Point with his family since 2006 and is a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County, having grown up in the southern portion of the county.

Commissioner Alderson is currently serving his first term as the 3rd District commissioner. During his first term, Commissioner Alderson has been a steadfast supporter of our volunteer first responders, including the support of an enhanced Length of Service Program (LOSAP+), which provides benefits for our volunteers in what is a first-in-the-state program aimed towards volunteer recruitment, retention, and retirement.

Commissioner Alderson is also currently serving as the chairman of the executive board for the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, as well as serving as a member of the Fort to 400 Committee, as appointed by Gov. Larry Hogan.

Commissioner Alderson currently holds a position in the federal government that requires him to run as an unaffiliated can-



Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr.

didate and will be required to file a petition with at least 1,000 signatures to appear on the general election ballot in November 2026.

Looking back and looking forward, Commissioner Alderson shared, "Being a county commissioner has been one of the highest honors of my life, and it is something that I take immense pride in. We are currently experiencing a growing divide in our society, but my mission as commissioner is to help navigate this divide to provide the best solutions for our county and its residents, so it remains a place where families want to plant roots, live, and thrive."

Press Release

Second Emergency Water Tank Installed Improves Access for Fire Departments

St. Mary's County Government's (SMCG) Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) has installed a second 30,000-gallon water storage tank to support local fire departments in emergency response efforts. The tank was placed on Thursday, Sept. 25 at the Ridge Firehouse carnival grounds, as part of a multiyear capital project in partnership with local fire departments.

This initiative will enhance emergency water access by installing water storage tanks and dry hydrants in more isolated regions of the county that are not served by a public water supply. In on-going partnership with SMCG and our local fire departments, the Metropolitan Commission (MetCom) will be providing the initial filling of the tanks at no cost to the project. The project aims to reduce fire risks and improve emergency response capabilities in our community.

"These water tanks and hydrants will provide a critical resource for our fire departments in areas that do not have public water service," said Jennifer Utz, Director of the St. Mary's County Department of Emergency Services. "The county is committed to supporting our emergency responders and ensuring our residents have the resources they need to stay safe. We are grateful for the support and work being done by our Department of Public Works



& Transportation to make this a reality."

The 30,000-gallon tanks, measuring 10 feet wide by 54 feet long, are being strategically placed in areas of the County where water access is limited. The first tank was installed this past March in the Porto Bello Subdivision in Callaway. The next tank will be installed at the Avenue Firehouse in the 7th District. The county worked in partnership with the local fire department planning team to identify the best sites in terms of location and ability to obtain property access.

For more information about this project, please contact the Department of Public Works & Transportation at (301) 475-4200 x3533 or by email to Benjamin.Clark@stmaryscountymd.gov.

Press Release from St. Mary's County Government

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Blessing of the Fleet Returns with Leonardtown Venue

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

In early spring of 1634, Maryland's first settlers sailed up the Potomac River on the Arc and the Doce. They were greeted by a large island in the middle of the river. They stopped there, said a Mass, and imprinted forever the importance to Maryland of that slice of land.

By the 1960s that island had shrunk to one tenth the size the settlers had encountered, the victim of the river's wind and tides.

So it was that a small group of people from that Seventh (Election) District of St. Mary's County that overlooked the island, members of the Seventh District Optimist Club and other interested citizens, gathered in a boat to inspect the island and to strategize about what could be done to save the island.

Out of that gathering emerged the idea of a festival to evoke the history and traditions of the life on the water lived by its residents.

Now for more than a half century the St. Mary's County Blessing of the Fleet has carried on that tradition. Indeed, the effort early on did save the island as the state took on the responsibility for shoring it up and the local residents took on the responsibility of being guardians of its land mass and its tradition.

After being held on the island for a few years, the festival settled into a comfortable tradition of being held on the ground of the St. Clements Island Potomac River Museum. For most of the years it has been a weekend long event. Trips to the island have been an integral part of the celebrations.

This year, however, will be a change. Work has begun on a new museum on the mainland overlooking the island. There is no room, at least until the work is complete, for the Blessing of the Fleet.

So, this year the venue has moved to the historic Leonardtown Wharf. And it will be only one day, Saturday, Oct. 4, from noon until the fireworks are over. And unfortunately no trips to the island will be available because of the distance.

But despite those circumstances, the organizers, still the Seventh District Optimist Club, have vowed to put on a family event worthy of its roots, including the traditional Blessing of the Fleet.

Dan Dozier is this year's event chairman for the Optimist Club.

He said, "When the museum's done, we certainly want to head back to our home base. When the construction is done. That might be next year. It might be the following year."

Dozier said, "We're working closely with the town of Leonardtown and the commissioners, because Leonardtown is their property. And so, we're in close contact with arrangements that they need. And we're gearing up for setting up for the Blessing this Saturday."

Dozier said, "Well obviously have a family friendly, community event, and its purpose is to celebrate the local watermen and the heritage of St. Mary's County, for those who provide us the seafood from the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay and tributaries."

Dozier explained, "So we've got kids



activities, we've got local arts and craft, we have a blessing of the waters, we will also award a Waterman of the Year from St. Mary's County, who lives the heritage and the legacy of the watermen who supply seafood for us."

Dozier said, "We've three bands throughout the day, starting at one o'clock."

Dozier said, "We've got food and beverages, and obviously a huge firework display at 9 p.m."

He further explained, "We have a lot of seafood coming out of Southern Maryland and Virginia, crabs, crab cakes, oysters, shrimp from down south. So, we've got all the seafood that you'll enjoy. We also have typical hamburgers, hot dogs, cheeseburgers, chicken tenders, fries. We also have some desserts available and pizza from Pizza Hotline."

Dozier said there will be about 25 arts and crafts vendors. "These are local craft vendors, and these are the people who create their own, product and sell them."

The Blessing of the Fleet is an important fundraiser for the Seventh District Optimist Club. Dozier said, "This our 57th year putting on the Blessing of the Fleet. It's certainly one of our biggest fundraisers of the year. And obviously the proceeds go to the donations and events that we put on for the youth in the community as well as seniors, veterans and first responders. It really helps us give back to the community."

"We're still very active," he said of the club. We have over 70 members. Not all members can help in the ways that they've helped in the past. We have been reaching out to some younger folks. I think any non-profit organization that's looking for volunteers to do hard work from time to time, it's getting harder for nonprofits these days. But we're still active and the members come out and support us, and we have the community."

Dozier has only lived in the area full-time for the last ten years and parttime for 20 years "so we're never going to be from here," he quipped.

But he said, "My parents have lived here since probably the early 1980s. And my family and I and my children were down here pretty much every weekend on my parents' farm. And we got to love it."



The area is special, he said. "It's just amazing the people that know each other and who have been here forever. As for the Seventh District Optimist Club, "I had a couple of neighbors who were members of the club. I retired recently and I was looking for a way to give back to the community. I think the next generation of our youth are where I'd like to try to make my impact."

He said of the Blessing of the Fleet, "We've got a lot of activities, a lot of entertainment throughout the day for families to



enjoy their Saturday. The weather's supposed to be beautiful and we're looking forward to that. So come on out, enjoy the sunshine, the fireworks, and contribute to Seventh District so that we can continue supporting the youth in our community."

A shuttle will be picking up passengers at the College of Southern Maryland and at points in downtown Leonardtown for the trip down to the wharf.

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School Redistricting at Starting Line

By Dick Myers
 Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Public Schools redistricting process is at the starting gate. The school board was given an update at their Sept. 24 meeting from Chief Operating Officer Michael Watson and Director Department of Capital Planning Services Kimberly Howe, chairs for the committee guiding the effort.

But it was Superintendent Dr. J. Scott Smith who set the tone. He said we live in a digital social media world where there's oftentimes misinformation.

Smith said, "No analysis or proposed plans have been developed at this point. Last year we talked about the fact that we needed to do a true front-to-back facility utilization and ultimately consider it to make sure that we are using all of our buildings and our spaces and we're being as efficient as we possibly can be."

"Because we had heard a great deal of rhetoric about closing a school or doing something drastic in the event of budget shortfalls or what have you, we said we're going to do front-to-back. We decided last year, we made sure that we had the money. We walked through that entire process very publicly at the end of the year, and made sure the money was there this summer. We identified the team; we brought in the team. We started giving them all of our student information, all the addresses, all the information about schools."

"It's an incredible amount of information that they all put into software that's very specialized for their purposes. We've had one community engagement team meeting virtually on the 17th, that was the participants in that were a staff person and a parent from every single one of our schools, as well as representatives from central office and other elements."

"We have put out press releases and information to every single school included in their S'more Weekly newsletter, home to parents for the last two weeks that we're having the community forum, exactly what redistricting is, hopefully driving them to our website and our information and, and videos."

"This is the start. Before you do anything else, you have to first of all gather all the resources that you're going to need to do a good process. Once you have all the resources, you have to organize it, which is what we've been doing. Once you organize it, you need to bring your invited people in. And this is where we are right now."

"So, if you are on a social media platform, say Facebook, and somebody starts telling you that they heard that these people are going to go to this high school, or we're going to close this elementary school, they're not telling you the truth. They don't have that information firsthand. And so, everybody just needs to really make sure that first they're engaged, that they're reading all the correspondence that comes from the schools. They're reading their Smores. Every single school, when they sent out that Smore, they identified who is the individual staff member for that school and the parent representing them so that they know that these are the two people who are representing them on



Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith

the community engagement team.

"And the community engagement team is just a group that gets together to talk about information as is being put together. They're not making any decisions. They're just making sure that we are engaging properly, and information is being disseminated out to the school. To this point, there's no information to disseminate out to schools because we haven't started meeting."

Watson said school staff and consultants Cannon have been "kind of getting ourselves in line and introducing ourselves and working through some of our processes so that the review process is well underway. We have provided Cannon with probably 50 to 60 data inquiries to start putting our data into their databases. So, they are really working through, at this point, our enrollment, our capacities, our building usage, a lot of other pieces of data. The feedback and information from the upcoming QA form will help in that process."

He insisted, "We are in the beginning phases of this. We are really looking hard at our data. We are really looking forward to engaging with the community."

Two community forums were held last week. Additional ones are scheduled for:

Community Forum #2 – Possible Options (2 sessions each night: 4 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.)

- Nov. 12 at George Washington Carver Elementary School
- Nov. 13 at Chopticon High School
- Nov. 14 at Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Technology Center

Community Survey #2 opens on Nov. 12 at <https://www.smcps.org/offices/supporting-services/redistricting/events-surveys>

Watson explained, "They're not public comment forums. They are guided activities from our contractor Canon Design. There'll be six people at each table. There'll be 32 tables," adding, "The people at those tables will go through a presentation. They'll see data and information from Canon based on what we provided them, and then they'll be taken through guided activities that will allow us to kind of get a better understanding of what's important to our community."

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Planners Approve Willows Road Townhouses



Artist's rendering of Meadows Townhouse Development

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

The St. Mary's County Planning Commission has approved a concept site plan for a 162-unit townhouse development on 32.44 acres off Willows Road in Lexington Park. It is known as the Meadows Townhouse Development. Turner Development was the applicant.

According to the staff report presented at the Sept. 29 meeting, it is "located on property that is included within the Residential Low Density Land Use and Residential Low Density (RL) zone. The property is located in Lexington Park Development District as shown on the Land Use Concept Plan incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan."

There are some steep slopes on the property, so in order to retain the forest land, there would be "clustering of the development kind of on the northern end of the property," according to consulting engineer John Oliff.

There was an illegal landfill on the site. The company environmental consultant Denise Sullivan of Urban Green Environmental told the planners, "We saw that there were materials on the site, dumped materials, predominantly very similar, brick, construction, metal. So, we went out and we did some additional testing where we collected samples of soil. And then we also recommended that all the materials be removed and we recommended... sampling post removal. We did the sampling. There was then materials removed and then we did some additional sampling."

We identified that there still does need to be a little bit of work in the area where the debris had been placed."

That work has to be completed before any occupancy permits are issued for the townhouse project.

Traffic concerns dominated the public hearing. Tammy Willen is Head of School at Bay Montessori School, which is south of and across Willows Road from the proposed development.

She said, "We have preschool to middle school. We have about 150 students at this location. And we are concerned about the increased traffic on Willows Road. That road sees a lot of traffic."

She added, "In the past six months, we've had two of our staff members rear ended

turning right in front of the school. And so, with the addition of these proposed townhomes as well as, the 140 that are going into Pembroke, I'm concerned for the safety of our staff, our students, and our parents."

Traffic consulting engineer Jackie Plott told the commission, "As early as 2006, the county started collecting funds for a future signal that may be needed at this location. So, this developer has agreed to contribute to that county fund as well." The contribution will be \$23,112.

The monies will be used toward a traffic light at Route 5 and Willows Road, although there are no specific plans from the state for that.

After a half dozen people spoke, the developer's attorney Chris Longmore said, "One thing that I don't think should be lost to this board is that they are cleaning up the site that exists there now. So, to the extent that it's causing any environmental concerns for those neighbors that are on well and septic, it's going to be cleaned up as part of this project."

"This property is in the development district, which is where we as a county have chosen to focus our development."

I know that you as a planning commission hear all the time about the need for housing in our community. Right now, there is a real critical need. This is where our zoning ordinance and our current comprehensive plan, and it appears our new one that is in the works, are all focusing development on this area because we have things like public water and sewer. We have the traffic infrastructure. It is close to Lexington Park. It allows people that work there to be close to where they work. This is where we as a county have planned for this type of development to go. It's always difficult for people that live there to deal with development that's close to them. We certainly appreciate that. But I think you have an applicant here that has followed all the rules, needs no variances of any kind for this project."

As part of the conditions of approval, the developer will construct a pad along the extra lane in front of their property for children to congregate while waiting for school buses. That condition was at the suggestion of Chairman Howard Thompson.

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New Sheriff's Office Building to Be Bid

Commissioners Approve Cost Increase

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Lacking enough bonding authority for the long-sought new sheriff's office headquarters, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County previously split the project into two – the central office and a support services building.

Now the support services building is ready to go to bid. The problem as presented at the Sept. 30 commissioners' meeting was there wasn't enough money budgeted for the \$15 million project. The commissioners were told it had been underestimated by a consultant by \$3.8 million.

After much discussion, the commissioners unanimously agreed to tap their capital budget reserve fund to fill the gap and allow the bid to proceed.

Earlier, the commissioners approved adding \$5.7 million to the capital reserve fund from savings from completed projects or from projects delayed. Savings from the final leg of FDR Boulevard was included in that.

The bid, in addition to the support services building, will include site preparation for the adjacent headquarters building.

By proceeding with the support services bid, Public Works and Transportation Director Donnie Mills said, "What we're hoping to do is attract bidders that are going to be looking at the overall picture. There's really another building that's going to follow. And what we're hoping is that we're going to attract really competitive bids here and hopefully

we'll start off under budget on this bid."

The total for the two projects is \$40 million, and Deputy County Administrator David Yingling said, "The goal is to keep it at \$40 million as a combined project."

The county legislative delegation did not approve last year the bonding authority for the entire \$40 million project.

Yingling cautioned that the inflation factor at the time that the headquarters building is bid might influence keeping that \$40 million cost in line. He said that project might have to be revised.

As to underestimating the project cost, Yingling said, "This is a very unique project in that it is two buildings separate on a less-than-ideal site. It's an adequate site for the project, but there's a big slope in the middle. So that comes in with additional costs for bringing in, (for instance) the stormwater management."

Commissioner Mike Hewitt pressed as to why it happened. Yingling responded, "It was missed. I don't have a good excuse for it."

Hewitt said, "I'm not looking for excuses. I'm just trying to understand why this thing has gotten out of hand."

Yingling noted that the size of both projects has increased. He said, "During the project design, there was a decision made by the sheriff's office at the time, sitting in a different chair, to move the crime lab from the headquarters proper building into the support services building. So, the size of that building increased because where the evidence is and where the crime lab is, there

are synergies of operations. So that building got a little bigger in scope creep."

He said, "During the analysis, we also identified some space that was not accounted for in the 2019 space study. And some choices were made. Now the good news is the site is designed and permitted for a 57,000-square-foot main headquarters. But as we go through that process, we can have conversations about the size of that program because it's already sized for perhaps a future expansion or something like that."

He added, "The priorities of the Sheriff's Office shifted from, let's say, a gym to a communication center inside of headquarters. We have opportunities to have conversations about that as the criminal Investigations division is moving into the headquarters, that leaves vacant space in District 3."

Yingling said the importance of the decision to go to bid was "so that we can begin the process of providing critical services to the sheriff, which are evidence storage, space for staff, and move this project forward."

Yingling said there were opportunities "to collaborate to ensure that we are fiduciarily responsible to our citizens but meet the needs of the men and women of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office and the public safety part of this department."

Hewitt said, "I think this board is very much looking forward to getting this project moving. Seems to me we expected it probably to be a little further along at this point than it is."

Yingling said of the building to be bid,



Deputy County Administrator David Yingling

"They will have their first specialty building outside of the jail, specifically designed for them. And to serve the people of St. Mary's County for 50 plus years. We want to maximize what we can put on that site instead of like we do in government. And that's not only St. Mary's County. That's everyone. You move into a building and realize we didn't make it big enough. We can argue about the funding, but at the end of the day, we want to do it right."

Hewitt, who moved to approve the funding, said, "We all knew that the sheriff's headquarters that they're currently in was a temporary facility that they moved into in 1989. This was something that had to move off the block."

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Featuring family entertainment, local food, art and craft vendors, waterman of the year award, blessing ceremony, concerts and fireworks

12:00 Noon
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- **Family Activities & Exhibits**
- **Food & Local Craft Vendors**

2:30 p.m.
BLESSING OF THE FLEET
AND WATERMAN OF THE YEAR

1:00 p.m.
JOEY TIPPETT AND THE
CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

4:00 p.m.
OUT OF ORDER & FRIENDS

7:00 p.m.
CHESAPEAKE SONS

9:00 p.m.
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& CAL. RAMBLERS



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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	5	OBITUARIES	20
COMMUNITY	16	CALENDARS	21
COLUMNISTS	18		

“THIS IS THE START.”

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS DR. J. SCOTT SMITH ON REDISTRICTING.



LOCAL 7
Willows Road townhome project approved



LOCAL 8
School board prepares to start redistricting



ON THE COVER 9
Blessing of the Fleet returns with a new venue

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, OCT 2	FRI, OCT 3	SAT, OCT 4	SUN, OCT 5
Partly Cloudy Hi: 70° Lo: 52°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 71° Lo: 52°	Sunny Hi: 75° Lo: 55°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 78° Lo: 58°
MON, OCT 6	TUE, OCT 7	WED, OCT 8	THU, OCT 9
Mostly Sunny Hi: 80° Lo: 61°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 81° Lo: 64°	Showers Hi: 76° Lo: 54°	Mostly Sunny Hi: 67° Lo: 53°



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NEW CENTER OPEN



Hello, my fellow Southern Marylanders and hometown community,

I, Pastor John, and The Mission leadership want to update YOU, our community and faithful supporters to let you know about a great blessing from God. For the past six years I and countless others have been working hard to finish rehabbing our 5,000 sq. ft. facility (Robert E. Myers Center), named after the late Pastor/Founder of The Mission. This massive undertaking is now complete and is now serving many local folks and their specific needs like shelter, hygiene, food, spiritual growth with Christ and His Word.

By the grace of our Lord, we opened our doors on September 15th and have been very busy meeting the needs of our community. The new Center includes: a dayroom where local St. Mary's County folks can get help and get out of the weather, furthermore they can take a shower and wash their clothing. Our food pantry is also open three days a week.

As the New Pastor, I want to stay on course and highlight The Mission's true purpose and that's spreading the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which is the true way that lives are changed, which I can testify to myself.

Please remember October is The Mission's Fundraising Month culminating with our Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on Thursday 23 Oct. Please check out the info below and come out and support The Mission with a Donation or Gift. The Mission funding comes from almost 100% from the local St. Mary's County community, we receive no state or federal funding.

To GOD be the Glory always,

Pastor John Viland
The Mission



Please consider supporting The Mission's Annual Dinner & Silent Auction.

The Mission receives 40% of our budget from this event every year.
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St. Mary's County Times

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025

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Process Set to Begin

Sheriff's Office Denies
Reports of ICE Raids



BLESSING OF THE FLEET MOVES TO LEONARDTOWN

