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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025

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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	4	COMMUNITY	7
COPS & COURTS	6		

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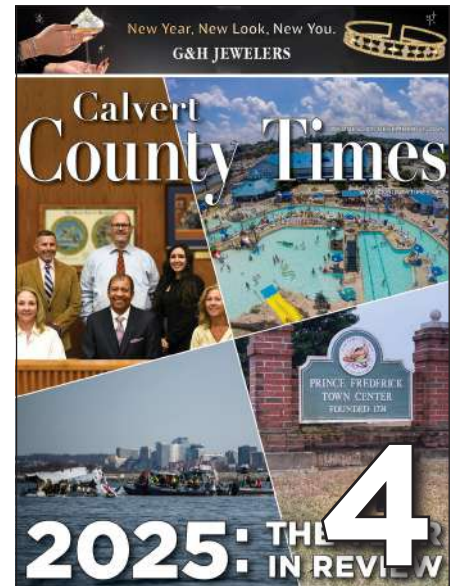
REGISTER OF WILLS MARGARET PHIPPS ON HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR



LOCAL 4
Local leaders share their hopes for 2026



COMMUNITY 7
North Beach gears up for Polar Plunge



ON THE COVER
A look back at Calvert's top stories of 2025

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 1	FRI, JAN 2	SAT, JAN 3	SUN, JAN 4
Partly Cloudy Hi: 34° Lo: 24°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 41° Lo: 28°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 37° Lo: 24°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 38° Lo: 27°
MON, JAN 5	TUE, JAN 6	WED, JAN 7	THU, JAN 8
Partly Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 35°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 44° Lo: 32°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 40° Lo: 31°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 41° Lo: 32°

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Calvert's Top Stories of 2025

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

As Donald Trump began the first year of his second term and began to leave his personal stamp on government and public policy, the three newly-elected, GOP-backed school board members likewise left their mark on the Calvert County public school system. For that reason, the school board is the top story of the Top 5 for the Year 2025 as detailed below.

Number 1: The School Board



Calvert County Board of Education

With the leftover members Jana Post and Lisa Grenis assuming the presidency and vice presidency respectively, new members Melissa Goshorn, Paul Harrison and Joseph Marchio took their seats in January and immediately left their mark. A series of decisions drew constant criticism from Democrats, teachers and students and the Black and LGBTQ+ communities.

The public policy domino effect began when Vice President Grenis led the initiative to remove

"Inclusive and Supportive School Community" from the schools' mission statement.

On March 27 Grenis advanced an alternative that read, "CCPS will raise the bar for excellence in education by empowering students with a rigorous academic foundation."

Grenis explained, "Now that we have a board that is focused on academic achievement, I think it's important that we honor our commitment to making that Calvert County's priority."

Decisions followed to remove mention of anti-racism from the Code of Conduct, "Safe Space" stickers and demonstrative flags in schools, and finally elimination the anti-racism policy altogether.

Regarding the Safe Space sticker issue, Paul Quade, president of PFLAG (Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays) Southern Maryland, said, "Let us be clear, this decision sends a dangerous message to LGBTQ students, their families, and their allies. And the rhetoric used to justify it, including the false and offensive claims, that these stickers somehow signal predatory intent, is not only baseless, it's harmful. Safe Space stickers are not tools for harm. In fact, they are supported by the State Department of Education. These stickers have histori-

cally served a simple but powerful function. They communicate to students that the educator displaying it is friendly and affirming for many young people."

Number Two: Superintendent Musical Chairs



Former Superintendent
Dr. Andraé Townsel



Interim Superintendent
Dr. Marcus Newsome

Our cover for the first issue of 2025 featured School Superintendent Dr. Andraé Townsel. As the year progressed, he appeared firmly entrenched. The likeable superintendent had risen to be president of the state school superintendent's association.

It was thus a shock that in early July Townsel announced he was leaving the county to head the Hartford, CT school system. It was later learned that he had been distributing his resume. School board critics blamed their policies on anti-racism for Townsel's departure.

In August the school board hired veteran school administrator Dr. Marcus Newsome to run the system for this school year. Newsome had recently moved to Calvert County.

Newsome seems to have endeared himself to the school board in his short time in the interim position.

Number 3: Slow Growth, Town Center Plan Delays and Data Centers



County Commissioner
Catherine Grasso



County Commissioner
Mike Hart

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has adopted a slow growth stance, especially when it comes to multi-family residential development. They say they are reflecting public sentiment, which has no stomach for more growth that means more cars on their daily commute.

That public policy was highlighted by the continued delay over adoption of the revision of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan, which started pre-Covid and

has been stymied several times. The delay for example occurred when the commissioners voted to limit density in town centers to no more than four units per acre. There had previously been the possibility of up to 15 units per acre in some parts of the county seat town center.

As the year ended, the commissioners delayed a decision once again. The 30-day delay came after another public hearing on the plan on Dec. 2.

Commissioners Mike Hart and Catherine Grasso led the concerns about the expansion of the town center to include land to the north that was previously an employment zone and land to the south that includes the Symphony Woods and Calvert Towne subdivisions. The concern is that expansion could in the future have the unintended consequence of opening up the land for further development.

At mid-year, the planning commission, while reviewing the plan, delayed a recommendation for several months out of concern that the impact of congested intersections hadn't been included in the plan.

Newly appointed commission member David Bury said the language change was needed to warn developers the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance may block a development if the nearby intersection is failing.

While the commissioners were slowing residential growth, they seemed to be willing to encourage commercial development.

Later in the year, Delegate Mark Fisher called data centers the gorilla in the room and criticized the commissioners for lack of transparency.

While noting has been officially announced, rumors were flying that a data center was preparing to come in next to the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant.

Number 4: Potomac River Plan Crash



Jesse Pitcher



Robert Prewitt

"Last week was pretty tough on Calvert County," said Commissioner President Buddy Hance during a somber meeting on Feb. 4. He was reflecting on the loss of nine Southern Marylanders on the night of Jan. 29 in the Potomac River after the collision of American Airlines Flight 5342 with a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter while the airplane was approaching Reagan National Airport in



Charles McDaniel

Washington.

Three were from Calvert County. The nine were Andrew Eaves of Great Mills, Alexander Huffman of Leonardtown, Jesse Pitcher of Lusby, Charles McDaniel of Port

Republic, Jonathan Boyd of Welcome, Michael Stovall of Accokeek, Robert Prewitt of Calvert County, Steve Johnson of Waldorf, and Thomas Clagett of Newburg.

Seven, including Pitcher and McDaniel, were part of a hunting party that traveled to Kansas to hunt ducks and geese, according to the Kansas City Star newspaper.

Prewitt's daughter reported that he was on a business trip to Kansas City. Prewitt, 44, was a construction supervisor for The Industrial Company.

Prewitt's obituary from Rausch Funeral Home said he was "rushing back to what mattered most to him – his family. He was a devoted husband, loving father, amazing son and the best brother who would always put his family first and be there when it mattered most."

Number 5: New Water Park in Chesapeake Beach



Chesapeake Beach Water Park

Calvert County's Twin Beaches (North and Chesapeake), the county's only municipalities, are not only centers for recreation and culture, they often generate news that bubbles to the top.

Such was the case in 2025 as the town of Chesapeake Beach saw a complete turnover with mayor, council and own administrator.

Early in the year, new mayor Bruce Wahl announced that he and the new town council were reversing the decision of the previous council and were moving ahead with repairing and reopening of the town's waterpark. The previous council planned to demolish it and create a new water facility.

Wahl had hoped to have the new facility would be ready to open in 2026, but it took more time to plan and deliberate for the new waterpark to be ready. The \$18 million park is slated for a spring 2027 grand opening.

dickmyers@countytimes.net

Correction

In the Dec. 18th edition of the County Times, a story about Todd Ireland being elected Calvert County Commissioner President incorrectly identified him as a St. Mary's County Commissioner. The County Times apologizes for the error.



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County Times

Calvert Leaders Look Ahead to 2026

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

What are you looking forward to in 2026? Here's how some of Calvert's leaders responded to that question.



Bob Harvey

State's Attorney Bob Harvey

Our children are the future. In 2026, let's all work together to maintain safe spaces in our homes, schools, parks, and libraries so our kids can grow to their fullest potential.



Todd Ireland

Commissioner President Todd Ireland

Let us look back fondly on the year behind us. Let us remember the happy moments shared with friends and family and reflect on the lessons learned along the way, as we look ahead to the New Year with hope, resilience and cheer.

The Board of Calvert County Commissioners wishes you and your fam-

ily peace, happiness and prosperity in 2026.



Linda Turner

County Administrator Linda Turner

I want to personally thank all Calvert County Government employees for their professionalism, dedication to public service and flexibility throughout the past year. The year 2025 was both exciting and challenging, as most county government offices relocated to the County Administration Building, creating a central and convenient location where residents can conduct business under one roof.

As we look into the year ahead, we remain committed to delivering high-quality public services to the residents of Calvert County.



Margaret Phipps

Calvert County Register of Wills Margaret Phipps

As the New Year approaches, first, I pause to count my many blessings, and then I look forward to what the new year promises. 2026 is an election

year, so I hope the people of Calvert County will allow me to continue to serve them as Register of Wills.

There is so much hatred and trouble all around us. It is my earnest hope that we can have Peace and Love in our country and in the world. I know that is a huge expectation. But, if we all follow the adage "And Let It Begin With Me", maybe, just maybe we can begin to achieve that goal.

Happy New Year to all.



Lisa Grenis

Vice President of CCPS Board of Education Lisa Grenis

As we look ahead to the New Year, I am excited to continue supporting the growth and achievement of our students as capable learners and leaders. I look forward to building on the strong foundation we have established to promote academic excellence, safety, and fiscal responsibility.

In 2026, I am dedicated to improving proficiency in math and reading across all grade levels. I am hopeful that, as we pursue these goals, we will also continue to strengthen relationships throughout our school community.



Bruce Wahl

Chesapeake Beach Mayor Bruce Wahl

As the Chesapeake Beach Town Council and I wrap up our first year of serving the citizens of the town, I am happy to report that we are making good progress on many fronts. This includes rebuilding the Chesapeake Beach Water Park, restoring the Tennis/Pickleball courts at Beach Elementary School, working with the developer to complete unfinished portions of Richfield Station, re-organizing the Town Hall staff, working with our partners in the Chesapeake Beach Water Reclamation Plant to insure fairness and reliable operation, and in general - ensuring that the needs of our citizens are met in a high quality fashion.

After an eight year hiatus, I returned to the office of Mayor one year ago. What I found was a staff that was apprehensive and uncomfortable, citizens that were being ignored, and in general, not a very good environment. We have worked hard all this past year to restore trust and accountability, while serving the citizens of the town in an open and cost-efficient manner. I am pleased to say that this town council is the absolute best I have worked with as Mayor. I expect this to continue for the remaining three years of this term. We are here to serve the citizens of Chesapeake Beach.

We have restored the good working relationship with the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners. I am also pleased to say that the trusting relationship between

Chesapeake Beach and North Beach has been restored. Mayor Mike Benton and I communicate well, and maintain the dialog between our staffs and Town Councils. An interesting side note is that North Beach Town Council Vice President Mary Healey is my son-in-law's sister. It's a small county!

I am honored to serve the citizens of Chesapeake Beach, and look forward to what we can accomplish over the remaining three years of this term. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the support of my bride Becky, who I met in the summer of 1965. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2026!



Jonathan Evans

Chesapeake Beach Councilman Jonathan Evans

I am looking forward to continuing our work on Town Council to start construction on the new Chesapeake Beach Waterpark, serving the Community

through various volunteer opportunities and spending as much time as possible with family and friends. I hope everyone has a blessed holiday and happy new year.



Jamey Shuls

Chesapeake Beach Councilman Jamey Shuls

As we enter a new year, I'm thankful for my family, friends, colleagues, and all the people in our community who show up for each other. I'm grate-

ful for the spirit of service and the shared desire to make things better. In the year ahead, I hope we keep finding ways to get involved, hear each other out, and build on the strengths that make this community special. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Mary Healey

North Beach Town Councilwoman Mary Healey

I am hoping everyone had a wonderful Holiday season filled with love, laughter, and incredible family gatherings deep rooted in your own holiday

traditions. As we enter into the New Year, I am looking forward to continuing to serve the people in town of North Beach and the surrounding communities, just as committed as I was the day I was sworn in. I look forward to working together with my fellow council members to address the needs of our residents and continue to find solutions to manage the challenges of living in a town on the Chesapeake Bay. May this year bring all of us joy, love, success, good health, and prosperity. Cheers to a year filled with these blessings and more cherished memories!



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CALVERT COUNTY POLICE BLOTTER

During the week of December 1, 2025 – December 7, 2025, Calvert County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to 2,152 calls for service throughout the community including, but not limited to:

- Check Welfare / Mental Health: 60
- Disorderly: 10
- Domestic: 27
- Motor Vehicle Crashes: 44
- Patrol Checks / School Checks: 1,102
- Suspicious Persons / Vehicles: 31
- Traffic Complaints: 55
- Traffic Stops: 245
- 911 Hang Ups: 42
- ARRESTS: 53



Daniel Lee Riggs

CDS Arrest: 25-103670 On December 6, 2025, DFC Newton observed a male urinating in the parking lot of the Dash Inn gas station, located at 136 E. Chesapeake Beach Road in Owings.

The subject was identified as **Daniel Lee Riggs**, 64 of Lothian. During contact, Riggs' pants were down, and a search of his person revealed drug paraphernalia, crack cocaine, and a large quantity of PCP. As Riggs was placed into handcuffs, he attempted to flee and actively resisted arrest, refusing commands. Additional deputies responded to

the scene, and Riggs was ultimately taken into custody. Riggs was charged with CDS: Possession with Intent to Distribute (PCP), Disorderly Conduct, Resist/Interfere with Arrest, CDS: Possession of Paraphernalia, and CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis (x2).

Theft: 25-102037 On December 1, 2025, DFC T. Bowen responded to the 5500 block of Sixes Road in Prince Frederick for the report of found property. The complainant advised she located a new-looking zero-turn lawn mower in a wooded area on her property. DFC Bowen observed a Gravely ZT/HD 60 zero-turn mower with a white service tag attached. Investigation revealed the mower had been removed from a business located at 171 Skipjack Road, Prince Frederick, while awaiting service. The mower, valued at approximately \$6,500, was photographed and returned to the business.



Avelino Tavares DaSilva, Jr.

Theft: 25-102373 On December 2, 2025, Deputy Morgal responded to the Walmart located at 10600 Town Center Blvd in Dunkirk, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported an unknown

male entered the store, grabbed multiple items before attempting to pass all points of

sale. Investigation revealed **Avelino Tavares DaSilva, Jr.**, 49 of Sao Paulo, Brazil, stolen \$103.09 worth of store merchandise. Junior was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Theft: \$100 to Under \$1500- Shoplifting.

Theft: 25-102316 On December 2, 2025, DFC R. Jones responded to the 3600 block of Howard Drive in Port Republic for a reported theft. The complainant advised a shipment of HexClad cookware was delivered in multiple boxes and several items were missing from the order. The missing items included a 6-piece Japanese Damascus steel knife set with magnetic knife block, a 4-piece Japanese Damascus steel steak knife set, a carving knife and fork set, a 4-piece Bistecca plate set, and a HexMill salt and pepper grinder set. The total value of the missing items is \$985.

Theft: 25-13210 On December 5, 2025, F/Sgt. Denton responded to Calvert County Sheriff's Office, located at 30 Church Street in Prince Frederick, for the report of a theft. The complainant reported that sometime between 1:58 p.m. and 3:06 p.m., an unknown suspect stole a wallet out of the victim's purse while shopping at the Giant, located at 655 North Solomons Island Road in Prince Frederick. The estimated value of stolen property is \$150.00.

Theft: 25-103557 On December 6, 2025, Deputy Morgal responded to the CVS



Curtis Sequan Cannon

Pharmacy located at 10095 Ward Road in Dunkirk for a reported theft. The complainant reported a male was observed concealing merchandise and walking past all points of sale without making payment. The suspect

was identified as **Curtis Sequan Cannon**, 33, of Southwest Washington, D.C. A check revealed Cannon had stolen detergent, soap, and body lotion valued at \$356.25. Cannon was transported to the Calvert County Detention Center and charged with Theft: \$100 to Under \$1,500 (Shoplifting), CDS: Possession – Not Cannabis, Possessing/Receiving CDS While Confined, and Possession of Contraband in a Place of Confinement.

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 Cylinescsotips@calvertcountymd.gov

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Hundreds Expected to Start 2026 at North Beach's Polar Plunge



Southern Maryland will ring in 2026 with one of its chilliest—and most beloved—traditions as the annual North Beach Polar Plunge returns to the town's waterfront on Thursday, January 1. The event, hosted along the town's iconic boardwalk and pier, invites residents and visitors to start the new year with a brisk dash into the Chesapeake Bay.

Organizers say the plunge has grown into one of the region's most spirited holiday gatherings, drawing families, first-timers, seasoned "plungers," and plenty of spectators who prefer to stay bundled up on shore. Registration opens at 10 a.m., with the official plunge scheduled for noon.

While the icy dip is the main attraction, the event also serves a charitable purpose. Proceeds from registration fees and merchandise sales will support local nonprofits, including Calvert County food assistance programs and youth outreach initiatives. Town officials say the plunge has become a meaningful way for the community to give back while celebrating the start of a new year.

"This event brings out the best of North

Beach—our sense of humor, our generosity, and our willingness to come together no matter the temperature," said organizers in a statement.

The town plans to create a festive atmosphere leading up to the plunge. Hot chocolate stations, food vendors, and music will line the boardwalk, giving participants a chance to warm up before and after their dash into the Bay. Many plungers arrive in costume, adding a playful flair to the morning's excitement.

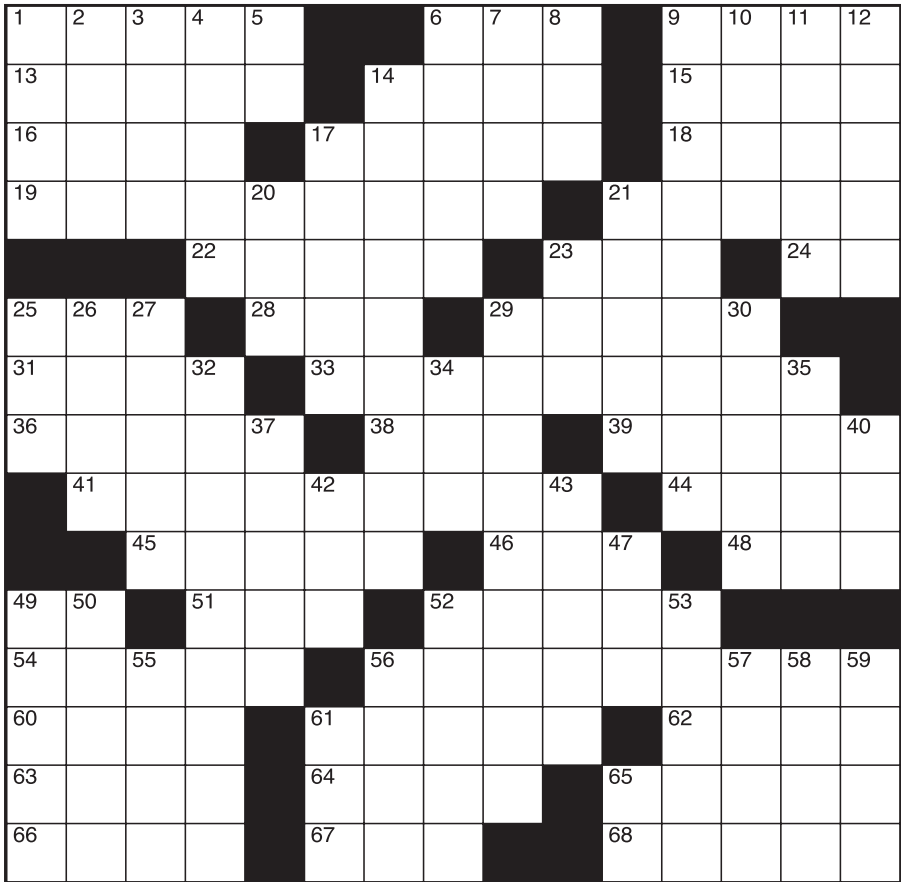
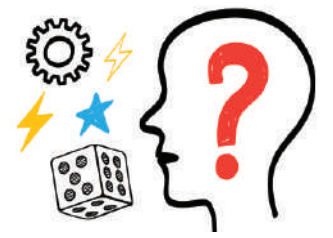
North Beach Volunteer Fire Department and Calvert County emergency personnel will be on site to ensure a safe event. Participants are encouraged to bring dry clothes, water shoes, and towels, and to avoid the plunge if they have health concerns.

For many Southern Maryland families, the Polar Plunge has become a symbolic reset—an invigorating way to wash off the old year and welcome the new one with laughter, courage, and community spirit.

Press release



FUN & GAMES

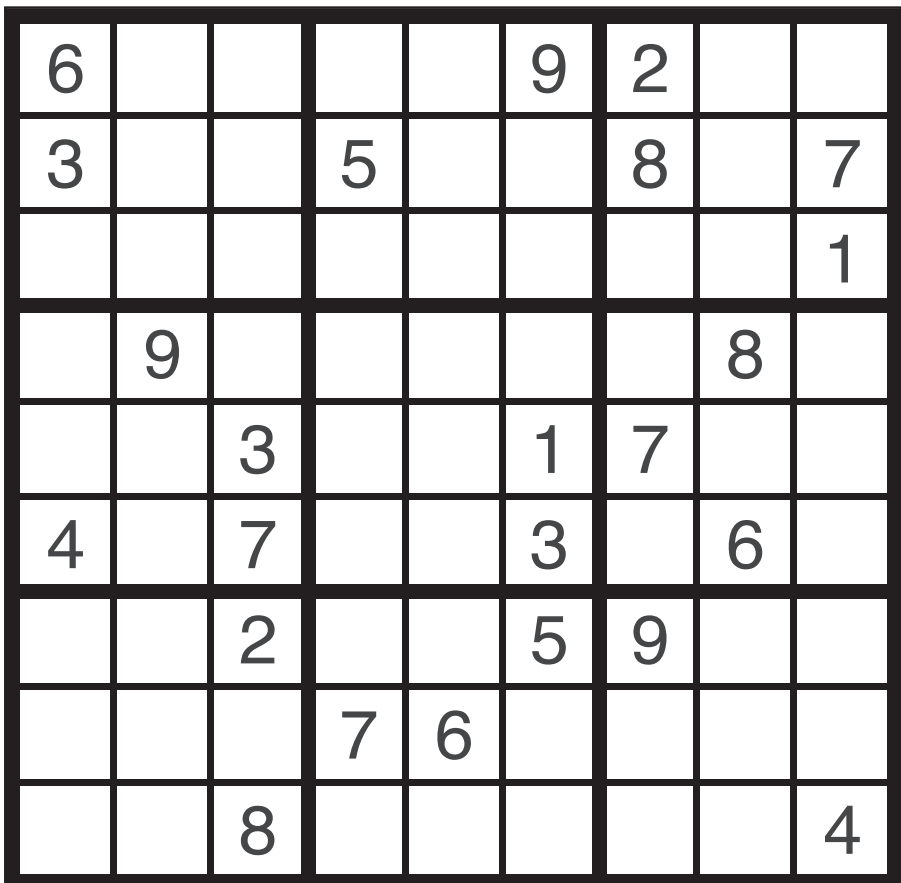


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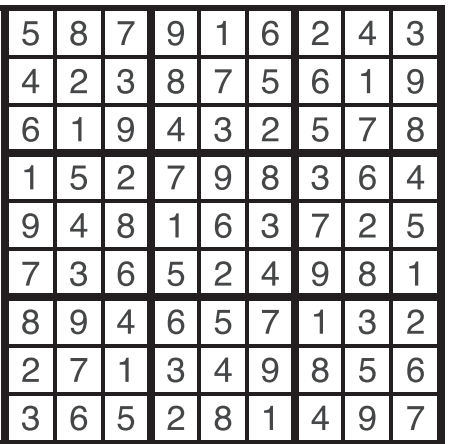
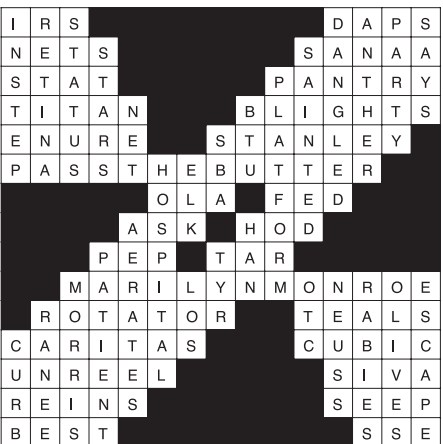
1. Bleated
6. Snakelike fish
9. Database management system
13. Russian-American violinist
14. Wendy's founder Thomas
15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
16. Negatives
17. Rescued
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
19. Assigns tasks to
21. Island nation native
22. Trade
23. Detergent brand
24. Famed NY Giant
25. Before
28. Split pulses
29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
31. Body part
33. American state
36. David ___, US playwright
38. Move one's head slightly
39. Secret rendezvous
41. Improved
44. A place to exercise
45. 18-year astronomical period
46. Automobile
48. You can take it
49. A radio band
51. Jaws of an animal
52. Short-billed rails
54. Chinese province
56. Shameless and undisguised
60. Horizontal passage into a mine
61. Adult males
62. Fail to entertain
63. Dried-up
64. City in north-central Utah
65. Southern U.S.
66. German river
67. Oxygen
68. Make law

CLUES DOWN

1. Curved segment
2. Wings
3. From pentane (Chemistry)
4. Gradually gets into
5. Commercial document (abbr.)
6. Overhang
7. Christmas and New Year's have them
8. Type of bulb
9. Lacking a plan
10. Tattle
11. Rockers like it "heavy"
12. One who's been canonized
14. Indicate time and place
17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
20. The voice of Olaf
21. Fragmented rock
23. They ___
25. Master of Philosophy
26. Backside
27. Landmark house in L.A.
29. An act of undue intimacy
30. From which a later word is derived
32. Equal to 10 meters
34. Neither
35. Computer language
37. Sacred book of Judaism
40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
42. A way to dedicate
43. Challenges
47. British Air Aces
49. Large, influential bank
50. Portended
52. Cavalry-sword
53. Vaccine developer
55. Napoleonic Wars general
56. Italian Seaport
57. Hip joint
58. ___ Clapton, musician
59. Insect repellent
61. Decorative scarf
65. Delaware



DECEMBER 18 SOLUTIONS



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In Remembrance

years together.

In his free time, Len enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his family.

Len is survived by his wife, Irene; his daughters, Tammy Labows (Chris), and Wendy Brandt (Darryl); and his five grandchildren, Lauren, Adam, Michael, Jack, and Mikayla.

Family will receive friends on Friday, January 2, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., with a funeral service at 12:00 p.m., at Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A., 22955 Hollywood Road. A private burial service will take place on Saturday, January 3, 2026 in Freeland, Maryland.

The family would like to thank the Valley Lee, Lexington Park and Leonardtown Rescue Squads and St. Mary's Hospice for their help and support in his final days. Please consider donations to these organizations in lieu of flowers.

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

Arrangements by the Brinsfield Funeral Home, P.A.

Jimmy Burroughs, 85



James Warren (Jimmy) Burroughs, 85, of Mechanicsville, Maryland, passed away peacefully on December 19, 2025, at St. Mary's Hospital with his wife by his side.

Born on December 26, 1939, Jimmy was the first son of Warren Hancock and Lydia Elizabeth Burroughs. He attended Margaret Brent High School in Helen, Maryland. While in high school, Jimmy became active in the orchestra and band playing his clarinet, singing in the Glee Club, working on the yearbook staff, and joined the Future Farmers of America. Jimmy also played several sports: baseball, basketball, and soccer.

When he turned 16 years old, he joined the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department.

This started his lifelong career as a volunteer. During his 70-year career with the fire department, he held many positions (Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, Treasurer, President, Board of Directors (Active), and LOSAP Coordinator. He also served on the Station 2 and 22 building committees, the grounds committee, the banquet committee, and as chairman of the carnival committee for many years. Jimmy was also a Life Member of the MVFD. He was very dedicated to the MVFD and always strived to do his best to make the department better.

Jimmy was also a Charter Member of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad, serving for 29 years.

Jimmy worked for Burch and Wise Candy and Tobacco Company for about 9 years as a salesman. In 1967, he was offered and accepted a job with Frito-Lay Company as a salesman. A few years later, he was promoted to District Manager. He had a very successful 30-year career with Frito-Lay Company. Jimmy liked teaching others how to do their job the right way. While with Frito-Lay, he got to teach new employees and had many stories of new employees experiencing their first day on the job.

November 2013, Jimmy married the love of his life, Mary Germaine Pope. They were together for 45 years. They worked, played, planned, and traveled together. They shared many special events with family and friends.

Jimmy was a man of faith. He was baptized as a baby in All Faith Episcopal Church and has remained a faithful member of the church his entire life.

He was a hard worker. At a young age, he learned the value of working hard. He worked with his grandfather, father, and uncle on the family tobacco farm. He quickly learned that he needed to work hard to be able to have spending money and buy the things he wanted.

Jimmy was an outdoor person. He loved to make things look nice and neat. He enjoyed getting on one of his John Deere Tractors and cutting grass or using one of his many tools

(toys) to trim shrubs, etc. He enjoyed plowing snow for the neighborhood, and as soon as the first flake fell, he was out checking his equipment to make sure it was ready to go.

Jimmy was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, great uncle. Jimmy was a gentleman, he was kind, generous, proud, a hard worker, great sense of humor, loved to tease, always had a smart answer, determined, caring, thoughtful, and a great person. He enjoyed helping family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers. He will be missed by many.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Germaine, son Glenn (Sandra), and his brother Bobby Burroughs (Phyllis) from Mechanicsville, Maryland. Additionally, he leaves behind his grandchildren: Tammy Gibson (Allen), Jamie Burroughs (Lacey), and Christopher Burroughs. He is cherished by his three great-grandchildren: Zack Gibson, Jaden Gibson, and Maddie Wood. He was predeceased by his father and mother, his sister Nancy Mueller, and his brother-in-law Kenny Mueller.

On Friday, January 2, 2026, the family will receive family and friends for visitation from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, with fireman's prayers at 7:00 PM, at the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department, 28165 Hills Club Road, Mechanicsville, MD 20659. The funeral service will be held on Saturday, January 3, 2026, at 11:00 AM at All Faith Episcopal Church, 38885 New Market

Turner Road, Mechanicsville, MD 20659, and will be officiated by Reverend Debbie Kirk. Following the service, interment will take place in the church cemetery.

Funeral Service can be viewed live in real time at 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 3, 2026, online at allfaithchurch.com by clicking on the Facebook Icon at the top of the screen. The service will be added to the allfaithchurch.com website the week after the service and can be viewed by clicking on Services on the home page.

Serving as pallbearers will be members of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department: John S. Montgomery, Jackson Miller, Harold Anderson, Paul Colonna, Ronnie Cox, and Jackson Barnes.

Honorary pallbearers are Jamie Burroughs, Christopher Burroughs, members of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department, and Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad.

In place of flowers, we kindly ask that you donate to the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department at P.O. Box 37, Mechanicsville, MD 20659, Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad at P.O. Box 15, Mechanicsville, MD 20659, or All Faith Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 24, Charlotte Hall, MD.

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

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



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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.

Didgy Royston, 85



Virginia Mae "Didgy" Royston, 85, of Valley Lee, MD passed away on December 25, 2025 at Hospice of the Chesapeake in Waldorf, MD.

She was born on January 17, 1940 in Valley Lee, MD to the late John Stephen Lynch, Sr. and Rose Helena (nee: Aud) Lynch.

Didgy is a lifelong resident of St. Mary's County. She is a 1958 graduate of St. Mary's Academy. She was a telephone operator in Valley Lee when she met her beloved husband, Joseph Earl Royston. They married on August 27, 1960 at St. George Catholic Church and shared 65 wonderful years of marriage.

Joe's Air Force career opened the door to exciting adventures, taking them to stations in Texas and sunny California, where they created cherished memories together. She had many fond memories of managing a large apartment complex while in California. Upon their return to St Mary's County, she earned her cosmetology license and spent her career as a skilled beautician. Her warm and outgoing nature made her a natural at connecting with people, and her love of being social is what inspired her to pursue a career in cosmetology, where she brought joy and confidence to countless clients over the years.

Didgy volunteered with Meals on Wheels for over 40 dedicated years. She enjoyed travelling on pilgrimages to Ireland, Rome, Italy and Fatima, Portugal, trips to Ocean City with her "Yaya Sisters", and the Shenandoah Mountains. She was a devout Catholic and lifelong member of St. George Catholic Church attending daily mass and volunteering serving church dinners for decades. Above all else, Didgy had a passion for helping people- family, friends and strangers.

In addition to her beloved husband, Joe, Didgy is also survived by her sister, Margaret Bridgwater of Leonardtown, MD, brother, Robert Lynch of Valley Lee, MD; brother-in-law, Orem Hammett of Valley Lee and her nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. She is preceded in death by her parents and her siblings, Olive Gagliano, John Lynch, Jr., Mary Anne Hammett, and Thomas Lynch.

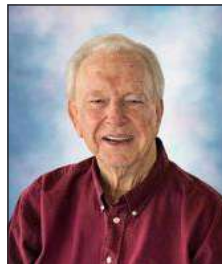
Family will receive friends on Friday, January 2, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated by Reverend John Nguyen and Reverend Paul Nguyen at 11:00 a.m.; at St. George Catholic Church, 19199 St. Georges Church Road, Valley Lee, MD 20692. Interment will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. George Catholic Church, Hospice of the Chesapeake, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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

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

Bruce Scheible, 84



Captain Bruce Robert Scheible, 84, of Ridge, Maryland, passed away peacefully on October 8, 2025, with his loving family by his side. He received many hugs, drawings, and stories from his granddaughters just the day before and left this world knowing how much he was loved.

Born in Washington, D.C., on September 18, 1941, Bruce was the son of Andrew Francis Scheible and Barbara Ellen (Hammett) Scheible. He attended St. Michael's High School in Ridge, Maryland, and later studied at the University of Maryland. Though he did not complete his degree, Bruce's passion for the Chesapeake Bay and life on the water led him to a lifetime of success and fulfillment as a charter boat captain and business owner.

Bruce married the love of his life, Sally Estelle (Taylor) Scheible in Leonardtown, Maryland on September 29, 1969, and together they built a lifetime of love and happiness (but not without the occasional spat and consistent bickering that endeared them to so many). They developed their careers and family alongside one another, pursuing a life where "work" was always something they loved and "family" always included those who worked with them. Their marriage was an equal partnership during a time when gender equality in marriage was hard to come by. Bruce worked and loved with ferocious passion, never-ending devotion, and a trademarked sense of humor that defined his historic presence in St. Mary's County.

Bruce was the proud owner and operator of Scheible's Fishing Center, Inc. and Scheible's Crab Pot Restaurant, both long-standing family businesses founded in 1946 by his father. Over the course of more than 50 years, Bruce made a name for himself as one of the most talented and well-known fishermen along the East Coast. His boats and charters were a familiar sight on the Chesapeake Bay and in the Florida Keys, where he guided countless fishing trips and shared his knowledge and love of the water with others. If you listen closely, you might still hear the familiar echo of "Fish on!"—Bruce's enthusiastic response to any rod that bent on one of his boats. He never let a child leave a boat without a fish and he never let a fisherman feel defeated.

A natural leader and mentor, Bruce served for many years on the board of the Maryland Charterboat Association and was always eager to teach and inspire the next generation of watermen. He was happiest when sharing stories over a meal of freshly caught seafood, especially his signature broiled bluefish or a fried crabcake dinner. He was particularly proud of his wife Sally's legendary "Scheible's Crabbette" recipe—created together on a road trip to the Florida Keys one winter.

Those who knew Captain Bruce will remember his charismatic and gregarious spirit. He had an open door ("Come

Aboard!") and a kind word for everyone he met. He was a loving husband, supportive and inspiring father, proud grandfather, and loyal friend whose humor and generosity left a lasting impression on all who crossed his path. He loved a strong VO on the rocks, and he never missed an opportunity to hold a meeting in his bathrobe.

Bruce was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sally Estelle (Taylor) Scheible, who passed away this past August, and his brothers Andrew Francis Scheible Jr. and Douglas William Scheible. He is survived by his daughter, Ellen Marie Scheible; son-in-law, William Joseph Selove; granddaughters, Sarah Astrid Selove and Quinn Reid Selove; nephews, Dale Scheible and Andrew Scheible III; niece, Lisa Scheible Jenkins; and his cherished cat, Gracie.

He found his greatest joy in being "Pop Pop" to his granddaughters and remained immensely proud of his daughter Ellen, his only child and his proudest accomplishment.

A peacemaker and an entrepreneur at heart, Bruce's love of life and laughter will live on in the hearts of all who were lucky enough to know him.

Family will receive friends on Monday, December 29 from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at St. Michael's Catholic Church, 16566 Three Notch Road Ridge, MD 20680. A funeral mass will be celebrated by Father Keith Burney starting at 12:00 p.m.

Memorial contributions may be made in Bruce's name to The American Legion Ridge Post 255, P. O. Box 237, 13390 Point Lookout Rd Ridge, MD 20680.

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

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

Mary Diehl, 95



Mary Evelyn Anderson Diehl left this world to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on December 27, 2025. Born on October 20, 1930, in Mechanicsville, MD, she was the daughter of the late Lloyd Henry Anderson and the late Mary Oema Herbert. She graduated from St. Mary's Academy, top of her class, in 1948. In her senior year was the Prefect of the Sodality; this is one reason why her devotion to the Blessed Mother was so great.

After graduation she married Edward Diehl in July 1948. She leaves behind to mourn her passing three children, Raymond (Julia) of Florida and David and Patrick of Mechanicsville, MD. She was predeceased by her husband of 44 years, son, Ricky, daughter, Donna, grandson Raymond, and only sibling Paul Anderson. She is survived by six grandchildren, nine great grandchildren, and longtime friends Al Francis Guy.

She worked at Village Medical Center for doctors Guyther, Berube, Guazza, Mossman, and Mulford. She left there and went with Dr. Mulford to open his business and retired in 1984. She then came out of

retirement and worked for Dr. Sarkission for seven years, then finally retiring to take care of her terminally ill husband to make the remainder of his life comfortable at home.

She was a devout Catholic spending her entire life in the Immaculate Conception Parish. After her husband's death, she began volunteering at St. Mary's Nursing Center for 20 years with Rosary and Eucharist Minister every Monday. She also coordinated Mass at SMNC twice a month. Her first devotion was to her church and family, next was time spent at the nursing center.

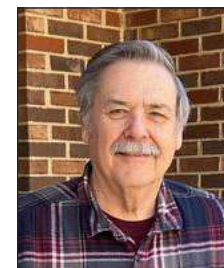
The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 8, 2026 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with prayers recited at 7:00 PM followed by recitation of the Rosary in the Mattingley-Gardiner Funeral Home, Leonardtown, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial will be Celebrated on January 9, 2026 at 10:30 AM in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD with Rev. David Wells officiating. Interment will follow in Queen of Peace Catholic Cemetery, Helen, MD. Pallbearers will be Josh Diehl, Bobby Diehl, Bobby Johnson, Mike Guy, and David Nelson.

Contributions may be made to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Mechanicsville, MD.

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

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

Len Parrish, 76



Leonard "Len" Eugene Parrish, of Lexington Park, MD, passed away peacefully on December 27, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Len was born on April 10, 1949, in York, Pennsylvania to the late Melvin Eugene Parrish and Frankie June Denton Parrish.

He attended Hereford High School before beginning his college education at Virginia Tech, where he studied engineering science and mechanics. He graduated as a member of the Class of 1972. Leonard continued his education at the United States Navy Test Pilot School, earning a specialization in flight test engineering, being named Naval Air Test Center Test Project Engineer of the Year, and graduating in 1975. He later obtained a master's degree in systems management from the University of Southern California.

Len dedicated his professional career to public service, working as an aeronautical engineer with the Civil Service Navy. He specialized in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flights where he applied his extensive education and technical expertise with pride and commitment. After his retirement from the government, he worked as associate real estate broker alongside his wife.

Len and his devoted wife, Irene Bailey Parrish were married on April 7, 1990, in Leonardtown, Maryland, and shared 35

A View From The BLEACHERS



December 23rd

By Ronald N. Guy
Contributing Writer

Adults and older children line the perimeter of the family room. The little kids run and squeal with euphoria they can't contain and parents don't bother to try to squelch. Bellies are full at this point, egg nog is flowing and ice cubes are pinging against short glasses that hold something resembling tea (although it seems to match the hue of the bottle of Crown Royal on the kitchen counter...a discovery I would make later). Conversations and laughter echo through the room. The anticipation is palatable for some, practically unbearable for anyone under 12.

An evergreen tree adorned with lights and ornaments sits in the corner; poking out in every direction from under its branches are mounds of gifts. Brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, aunts and uncles begin to distribute the treasures to intended recipients. Kids beam when their name is called; even adults smile internally when a gift lands at their feet. Everyone is under strict orders: No gift opening until all have been distributed and the signal is given. Emotionally, it takes forever, but no more than 10 minutes real time. Finally, it ends, grandma or grandpa gives the okay and complete chaos ensues. At any moment bows and wrapping paper are flying through the air, adults give thumbs up across the room to siblings for clutch gifts and children scream with glee. For a few moments, everyone's problems are forgotten, swept away in a wave of joy. The boon for the kids is the presents; the adults, wise and with some life scar tissue, are quietly grateful for everyone being present in this moment.

A similar scene repeated itself the next morning, only on a more intimate scale. Early rays of daylight would officially and thankfully end a restless night's sleep. Feet would quickly hit the floor, my door would fly open and I'd walk...maybe float...down the hall to see what the big fellow from up north left me – no coal for this always (mostly?) kind kid. More wrapping paper would fly, school's return wasn't even a thought, the smell of a king's breakfast filled the air and day of sports awaited. It was bliss, I tell you. Pure bliss.

This was my childhood experience on December 24th and 25th – a big, loving family and parents committed to making the season special. I know now how lucky I was (and am). I hope you have similar memories and are creating new ones each year.

The calendar now reads early January. But here's the thing: The sports calendar is stuck on December 23rd, the day before the day(s), a filler that stokes raging anticipation and a final barrier between ordinary life and something out of a movie. The NFL is feeding us end-of-season garbage. There's the occasional meaningful game, but much of the league is playing out the string and stars are being shut down for the year or in preparation for the playoffs. College football teased us with a few playoff games before serving up an endless buffet of unsatisfying bowls – Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, Pop-Tarts Bowl, Snoop Dog Bowl, Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl, Bush's Boca Raton Bowl of Beans and the Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl. Yes, all of those are real games.

However, it is about to get as serious as Christmas morning. By the time this paper is in your hands and your eyes are rifling through this column, the college football quarterfinals will be underway, followed the next week by the semis and the championship 10 days thereafter. The NFL's regular season has just one remaining snoozer week left (all apologies to Ravens fans who still have life) before a multi-week playoff extravaganza begins and ends in early February with the Super Bowl.

For hard-wired sports fans, everything is about to change – but not yet. For the time being, we're spinning on December 23rd, waiting patiently for Earth to complete another rotation or two. Which is fine. We can do this. We're adults, right? No need for unbecoming petulance. Besides, in hindsight, delayed gratification is what made those visits from Santa so special – a timeless life lesson for children and adults.

Send comments to RonaldGuyJr@gmail.com

FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Join the trend with these New Year resolutions

With the new year around the corner, many people are setting goals for 2026. After months of rising prices on everything from milk to mortgages, money-related resolutions are prominent.

One out of four Americans (27%) plan to make 2026 the year of their financial comeback, according to 2025 research from Edward Jones and Morning Consult. Others will continue with previous goals (21%), start from scratch (20%) or catch up on missed goals (14%).

Here are their top three financial goals and what to consider if you make one or more of these yours.

Boost your income

Get creative with your time and interests. Consider side hustles such as delivery driving, pet sitting or tutoring. Perhaps you can sell things online that you no longer need. And if you traditionally get a refund on your tax return, consider adjusting your withholdings so less is taken from your paychecks.

To indirectly increase your income, cut your expenses. Every dollar saved effectively increases the "income" side of your budget. The biggest categories Americans plan to cut are restaurants and subscriptions.

Build up savings

Whether you're planning for a vacation or creating an emergency fund, having accessible cash means you're less likely to rely on credit cards. And credit cards can incur interest charges if you don't pay the full amount due every month.

To save for something specific, calculate how much you'll need and by when. Then break it down into monthly targets to help make your goal tangible and achievable.

For an emergency fund, build toward three to six months of living expenses. And remember: an emergency fund is for true emergencies – think medical bills, major auto or furnace repairs, not a TV on sale.

Pay off debt

Every payment brings you closer to a life of financial freedom. Start by listing all your debts and their interest rates. Then choose one of these payoff strategies.

- *The Avalanche Method:* You'll pay off the debt with the highest interest rate first. With that paid, you'll move on to the next highest. This reduces the amount of interest you pay over time, which generally means a lower total cost and often a shorter payoff period.
- *The Snowball Method:* You'll pay off the card with the lowest balance first, then move to the next smallest balance. This may offer quicker gratification as the number of creditors can dwindle faster.
- *The Consolidation Method:* You may be able to bundle and refinance high interest credit card debts to a 0% bank card for 12 months or longer.

With any of these methods, don't ignore your other debts. You'll still need to pay the minimum balances due on mortgages, auto loans and other credit cards to keep interest rates and late payment fees from accruing and your credit score from dropping.

Ready to join the trend?

Across the country, millions of people are committing to improving their financial situation, and ultimately their financial future. By joining this trend, you're not just setting goals—you're shaping a life of freedom and possibility.

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

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Meet & greet at The Good Earth Natural Foods Co (meet new owner Abby & farewell to current owner Valerie!)

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Meet the local artists at North End Gallery

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County Shares Winter Weather Safety Tips



St. Mary's County is expected to experience above-average snowfall during the 2025-2026 winter season. Residents are encouraged to prepare now and follow important safety tips to protect themselves, their families, and their neighbors when winter weather occurs.

Tips during snowfall:

- **Shovel sidewalks and driveways.** The Department of Public Works & Transportation and the State Highway Administration are responsible for clearing roadways. Sidewalks and driveways remain the responsibility of property owners. Clearing these areas helps keep neighborhoods accessible and safe for pedestrians.
- **Clear snow from fire hydrants.** Residents are asked to shovel a three-foot radius around fire hydrants and ensure they are visible from the street. Clear access allows fire and rescue personnel to respond quickly during emergencies.
- **Remove all snow and ice from vehicles before driving.** Clear windows, roofs, lights, mirrors, and license plates to maintain visibility and prevent snow or ice from becoming a hazard to other drivers.
- **Don't crowd the plow!** When snow plows are operating, maintain a safe distance of approximately 200 feet.

Avoid passing plows and remain patient as crews work to make roadways safer for everyone.

- **Avoid overexertion while shoveling snow.** Cold temperatures combined with heavy lifting can put significant strain on the body. Pace yourself, lift with your legs, and stop immediately and call 9-1-1 if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, or dizziness.
- **Practice home heating safety.**
 - Keep flammable items at least three feet from all heat sources.
 - Have chimneys and furnaces inspected annually.
 - Turn off space heaters when leaving the room or going to sleep.
 - Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets, not extension cords.
 - Install working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home and be sure to inspect them and replace batteries annually.

Knowing what to do before, during, and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

Visit www.stmaryscountymd.gov/prepare for additional preparedness tips and information.

Press release from St. Mary's County

Captain Bruce Scheible Passes at 84

Captain Bruce Robert Scheible, a lifelong St. Mary's County waterman, charter captain, and owner of Scheible's Fishing Center and Scheible's Crab Pot Restaurant, passed away peacefully on October 8, 2025. A towering figure in Southern Maryland's maritime heritage, Scheible spent more than five decades shaping the charter fishing industry on the Chesapeake Bay.

Born September 18, 1941, in Washington, D.C., Scheible grew up in Ridge and attended St. Michael's High School before beginning a storied career on the water. Known for his booming "Fish on!" call,

his mentorship of young watermen, and his unwavering commitment to his customers, he became one of the most recognized captains along the East Coast.

Scheible married Sally Estelle Taylor in 1969, and together they built a family and a business legacy that became synonymous with Southern Maryland hospitality and tradition. He was also a longtime board member of the Maryland Charterboat Association and a respected voice in the fishing community.

Scheible's full obituary can be found on page 14.

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NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER *News*

NAS Patuxent River Mourns Passing of Two Commanding Officers

The Pax River community was saddened this past month by the loss of two former commanding officers, Capt. Edward V. Laney, Jr. and Capt. Roger Hill. These two remarkable aviators did much in their careers, and served NAS Patuxent River with distinction in their roles as commanding officer.

Laney was a seasoned naval aviator prior to assuming command of NAS Pax River in May of 1974. A veteran of three wars, Laney saw service in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. A noted aviator of the F8F Bearcat and the F4U Corsair, his exploits during the Korean War were featured in Life Magazine on July 6, 1953, in the story "The Bridges at Toko-Ri," and immortalized in a film by the same name. He is also written about in James Michener's book, *Forgotten Heroes of Korea*.

Laney would take his expertise to the Top Gun Whidbey Island Program where he served as Gunnery Instructor, and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in the Training Readiness and Tactics Division before being tapped to lead NAS Pax River.

His tour as Pax CO was marked by numerous achievements in naval aviation, and installation awards such as the Small

Businessman's Award, Golden Nugget Award, Work Incentive Program recognition, Navy Industrial Safety Award, and recognition by the Navy in the fields of conservation and environment.

In his farewell speech to NAS Patuxent River during the 1976 change of command, Laney summed up what drove him day to day. "My personal priorities have been: first, my god; second, my wife; third, my country; fourth, the Navy; fifth, my family; and sixth, my friends. This has made it easy to accept orders, to accept duties, and to put whatever might come before me in its proper perspective," said Laney.

Laney is a recipient of two Bronze Stars, the Distinguished Flying Cross, 11 Air Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V," the Korean Service Ribbon with five battle stars, Vietnam Service Medal with two stars, Korean Presidential Unit Citation; WW II Victory Medal, and various unit and service awards.

A well-known fixture in St. Mary's County, Hill was known not just for his tenure at NAS Patuxent River from June 1992 to January 1995, but also his commitment to the community at large, notably



Capt. Edward V. Laney, Jr.



Capt. Roger Hill

as Chief Operations Officer for St. Mary's City from 1999 – 2009. As commanding officer of NAS Patuxent River, his service was marked by the dedicated leadership of a man who had genuine affection for the base.

"Being commanding officer of a base is great; I couldn't have asked the Navy for a better job," said Hill prior to retiring from the Navy as the Pax River Commanding Officer. "You feel like you can make some positive impacts because you're in a position where you can actually make some. If I could stay as CO of the base, I would stay here until they kicked me out. Unfortunately, other people get a chance at it too, because it's such a wonderful job."

A 1970 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, his storied career included flying A-7s in VA-105 and VA-174 both at sea and ashore, serving alongside other legendary naval aviators such as Richard "Moon" Vance, Raymond "Chip" Dudderar, Carlos Johnson, Jeff "Sundance" Harrison, and John McCain. Hill attributed much of his success in the Navy to the mentorship he received and would later pass on.

"When you're in the Navy, you see a lot of leaders who you think a lot of," said Hill in 1995. "There's several who were role models for me on the way. They were people who were my heroes, made me aspire to things, and taught me things. I was very lucky that I had a lot of role models in the Navy."

Hill was selected to join Class 71 at the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in 1976, and became the Navy Weapon's Representative at Eglin Air Force base after graduation where he flew developmental weapons test missions in the F-4, RF-4, F-111, F-15, and T-38. He would go on to serve in the Tomahawk Program Office (PMA-281), TAC D&E Officer at LATWINGPAC, and chief pilot at NAS Warminster before being tapped to lead NAS Patuxent River as the installation commanding officer in 1992.

Reflecting on his time at Pax River prior to his retirement, Hill remarked on his aspira-

tions to lead at one of his favorite commands.

"I've been to every Naval Air Station in the world, but this was my first choice in terms of being commanding officer."

Hill was noted by many in his command as a leader who trusted professionals to do their jobs. Marta Bullis, Naval Air Warfare Center Protocol Officer, previously served as Hill's executive assistant, and noted his faith in his team to the job.

"Captain Hill lets you do your job," said Bullis in a 1995 interview. "It's his trust in me that makes my job enjoyable."

Hill's tenure at Pax was one of noteworthy growth. The workforce at the air station increased nearly tenfold in the mid-1990s when a round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) brought more than 20,000 military and civilian employees to Pax River as the air station it was selected to host the headquarters of Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), as well as dozens of mission partner commands. In that time, he oversaw the construction of a new commissary, VQ-4 alert facility, communications operations center, Test Pilot School academic building and runways, as well as renovations to existing structures such as the Frank Knox Building, the Navy Exchange, Bachelor Officers Quarters, hangars and labs to meet the demand of the expanded workforce.

In his change of command speech in January 1995, Hill made note of the importance of the work done at Pax and the people who do it, a sentiment that has echoed since.

"I have been in the Navy 29 years, and have been a Navy pilot almost 25 of those," said Hill as he closed out his Navy career. "In that time, I have flown the best aircraft and had the best equipment in the world. That is a direct result of the efforts of the people who work at this base, who obviously, are also the best in the world at what they do. What we do is important to the country. Take credit for it, and be proud of it."

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K-9 Teams Complete Aviation Familiarization Training



Recently, members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office K-9 team participated in specialized aviation familiarization training at the Maryland State Police Trooper 7 hangar at the St. Mary's County Regional Airport to enhance coordination and operational readiness for search-and-rescue and law-enforcement incidents.

On December 13, 2025, Deputy Joseph Senatore and Corporal Lacey Smith, along with their K-9 partners Karma and Kyra, received training focused on Trooper 7's medical and search capabilities, aviation technology used to support law enforcement operations, and guidance on when to request aviation assistance. The training also included safety procedures for operating around and inside the aircraft, as well as familiarization with the aircraft's interior and onboard medical equipment.

Both K-9 teams conducted progressive acclimation exercises with the aircraft, first with the engines off and later with the rotors spinning. The canines were walked around the exterior and inside the aircraft to become comfortable with confined spaces, noise,

and wind generated during flight operations.

Following the familiarization exercises, Corporal Smith and K-9 Kyra completed a 30-minute flight aboard Trooper 7. During the flight, the team reviewed aviation search equipment and procedures while flying over the Great Mills Road area. The aircraft later landed at St. Mary's Hospital, where K-9 Kyra safely exited the aircraft while it remained running. Positive reinforcement exercises were conducted to further acclimate the K-9 to noise and wind.

The training provided a safe, controlled environment for K-9 teams to build confidence in aviation operations and strengthen collaboration with the Maryland State Police Aviation Command. This enhanced familiarity will improve readiness for joint responses and support more efficient use of Trooper 7 during future searches and critical incidents, ultimately increasing the Sheriff's Office's ability to serve and protect the residents of St. Mary's County.

Press release from SMCSO

Deputies Respond to Barricade Incident

Deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division responded to the 45000 block of Hickory Hills Circle in California on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, at approximately 10:30 p.m. for a reported verbal altercation.

Upon arrival, a female victim advised deputies that during the altercation, Jackson McClain Chaney, 25, pointed a firearm at her. The victim was able to leave the residence unharmed.

Chaney refused to exit the residence, and deputies established a barricade. Members of the Emergency Services Team, Hostage Negotiations Team, and Criminal Investigations Division responded to assist.

After several hours, deputies obtained and served a search warrant on the residence. Chaney was taken into custody and transported to a medical facility for evaluation.

A Pistol Mitralliera Model 1963 assault rifle was recovered at the scene.

Following his release from the medical facility, Chaney was transported to the Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Leonardtown, where he was charged with first- and second-degree assault.

Chaney remains incarcerated pending a bond hearing.

Press release from SMCSO

St. Mary's Leaders Look Ahead to 2026

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

What are you looking forward to in 2026? Here are the answers from some of St. Mary's County's leaders.



Commissioner Eric Colvin

Commissioner Eric Colvin
I wish for a 2026 filled with family, friends, and community. I wish for good discussion during the upcoming elections and for peace and prosperity for our county, state, and nation. I wish for bountiful farms and waterways, engaging schools, stable jobs, and time to sit and read a good book!



Commissioner Mike Hewitt

Commissioner Mike Hewitt
May the New Year bring us together so we can build a stronger, brighter future for our county — One act of kindness and one step forward at a time.



Commissioner Scott Ostrow

Commissioner Scott Ostrow
As we head into the New Year, my hope is for a stronger, more connected St. Mary's County, one where we continue to invest in public safety, affordable housing, education, and economic opportunity, while never losing sight of compassion for our neighbors most in need. Together, I'm confident we can keep building a community where everyone feels safe, supported, and hopeful

about the future.



Captain Richard Russell

Sheriff's Office Captain Richard Russell, Commander, Special Operations Division

As I approach the end of my career, I find myself thinking, 'I may only get to do this one more time as a Deputy.' Recently, that thought came to mind as I walked in Christmas on the Square and took part in Shop with a Cop, Splash for Special Olympics, and the Torch Run. Each experience reminds me of the community service I committed to and still believe in wholeheartedly. There were years when I was less active than others, and in my younger days I did not fully recognize how meaningful and impactful these moments would be.

For the New Year, I look forward to appreciating those moments, events, and people more and continuing to make a positive impact on my family, my agency, and my community!



Raymond Bivens

Director of Recreation and Parks Raymond Bivens

In the new year, I encourage families to try something new by visiting a St. Mary's County Recreation & Parks facility for the first time. Whether it's family skate at Leonard Hall, golf lessons at Wicomico Shores, pickleball, hiking the Three Notch Trail, taking a class like Zumba at the Wellness & Aquatics Center, or climbing to new heights at the Piney Point Lighthouse, there are countless opportunities to stay active, connect, and make lasting memories together.

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YEAR IN REVIEW



As we close out 2025, we're reflecting on a year full of growth, milestones, and unforgettable memories. We're incredibly grateful for every connection and for your continued support it truly means the world.

LOOKING AHEAD



Thanks to the success of our 2025 season and the support of our community, we're excited to open a second location in Prince Frederick. Both locations will be opening March 15, 2026, and we can't wait to grow with you.

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Year in Review

Continued from page 3

- Michael Stovall, of Accokeek
- Robert Prewitt, a Calvert County resident
- Steve Johnson of Waldorf
- Thomas Claggett, of Newburg.

Eaves was a chief warrant officer onboard the army helicopter, who leaves behind a wife and children. His wife, Carrie Eaves, asked for support for the families who had lost their loved ones but praised the outpouring of generosity from the St. Mary's community. "We are all grieving, and need your love and support," she wrote in a social media post. "St. Mary's is an amazing community that will forever be a part of mine and Andrew's life. Thank you for showing us what a true community feels like!"

Eaves was a sailor before joining the U.S. Army and becoming a helicopter pilot. Eaves, served in the U.S. Navy from August 2007 to September 2017, then transitioned to a UH-60 pilot for the regular Army from September 2017 to present day. He was a highly decorated service member.

Huffman was a member of the Local 602 Steamfitters Union based in Prince George's County. He was returning from a

hunting trip in Wichita, Kansas with most of the other men in the group from Southern Maryland who perished in the crash. He is survived by his wife Kayla and two children. "Words, I have none," his wife wrote in a social media post. "My heart is shattered, as a wife, as a mother. [Five-and-a-half] years of love, now a lifetime of sorrow."

Number 5: New Judges



Circuit Court Judge Kevin Hill



Family Law Magistrate Sue Ann Armitage

Two people with deep roots in St. Mary's County were appointed to judicial positions in 2025.

Governor Wes Moore on June 6 announced the appointments of Magistrate Kevin R. Hill to the St. Mary's County Circuit Court. "The St. Mary's County and Baltimore City Circuit

Courts are gaining two remarkable stewards of the law," said Gov. Moore. "These appointees are dedicated public servants, and I am confident that they will continue their work to bring our state ever closer to the full promise of equal justice for all."

We reported, "Magistrate Kevin R. Hill has spent almost his entire legal career in public service, currently serving as the magistrate for the St. Mary's County Circuit Court. He previously served as a public defender in Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert counties, representing indigent juveniles and adults in circuit and district courts. In 2016, he was sworn in as an assistant state's attorney in St. Mary's County, where he handled civil, misdemeanor, and felony cases, and represented the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Child Support Division."

To fill the position vacated by Hill, Sue Ann Lewis Armitage was appointed Family Law Magistrate for the county. A press release listed her duty to be to preside over cases such as domestic violence, divorce, child custody and visitation, and other family law matters.

Armitage has practiced law in St. Mary's County for more than 30 years.. She has her roots dug deep in St. Mary's County. Her mother was from St. Mary's and married Armitage's Navy father.

What's Ahead

The year 2026 is an election year for all local and state-wide races, so stay tuned. That's likely to be one of our top stories of 2026.

Point of Personal Privilege



Guy Leonard

Long-time County Times reporter and staff writer Guy Leonard, Jr. passed away April 24. He was 49. Leonard joined The County Times 17 years ago and exclusively covered St. Mary's County for the paper.

He was hired by the paper's founder James Manning McKay, a former county commissioner and state delegate. When McKay passed away, his son Tommy took over the role as publisher. McKay said, "While we mourn the death of Guy Leonard, a long-time important member of our team, and the person thousands in our community trusted, we show grief of course, but the higher tribute to Guy is gratitude."

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St. Mary's Top Stories of 2025

By Dick Myers
Staff Writer

Sometimes years take on personalities. The year 2025 was not one of them locally, although nationally and globally, it could be said that it was the Year of Donald Trump, as he put his stamp on government and society.

Perhaps the most locally impactful, although in the end the impact may be blunted, was the St. Mary's County Board of Education's redistricting initiative. So, we'll give that the status of being our top story of the year as we unveil our Top 5 of 2025 below.

Number 1: School Redistricting



Superintendent of
Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith



School Board President
Karin Bailey

We reported in April: "Redistricting! Known as the 'R word,' in a not-so-lovingly way. 'That word gets everybody in this county on edge,' said veteran St. Mary's County Board of Education member Mary Washington at the April 23 board meeting as they appear to be embarking on the process."

They hired a consultant (the Cannon Group), and they embarked on an extensive outreach process with public forums and online surveys.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. J. Scott Smith said the main driver of the effort was the overcrowding at Leonardtown High School. So, when the consultant's initial recommendations (with three options) came out, all three moved a number of Leonardtown students to Chopticon. An upheaval followed from that school's students and parents. They came to a board meeting and complained about the effect of moving students from their friends and the impact on their academic performance. And a not unimportant consideration was the impact on the school's sports teams.

So, when the school board began to tackle the issue on Dec. 10, School Board President Karin Bailey said, "I'm not really a big fan of like blowing up every single elementary, middle, and high school right across the whole county, because our original intent was to look at what was happening at Leonardtown High School and spread those students out."

Bailey favored a staggered move from Leonardtown to Chopticon in which current Leonardtown students would not be disrupted.

The other potentially controversial con-

sultant's recommendation was closing White Marsh Elementary. The board wanted more information but seemed inclined to do that.

Smith said it would cost \$8.8 million to renovate the school and it still wouldn't be up to current educational specifications.

"It's a small building. It's a very small building," he said.

Number 2: Growth



Artist's rendering of Bradley Brooke, the proposed residential development off Willows Road.

The St. Mary's County Planning Commission was kept busy in 2025 revising the county comprehensive plan and dealing with a number of specific projects.

"The St. Mary's 2050 plan will establish a cohesive, countywide vision for land use, economic development, other quality-of-life goals, and will outline an actionable strategy to achieve this vision," according to the county. They are desperately seeking public input in the process.

While Leonardtown is still considered a growth hotspot, with major projects such as Tudor Hall Farm on the horizon along with additional commercial development, Lexington Park was not left out, as the base, despite some layoffs, appears to have a steady future and people are choosing to live near where they work.

A potential gorilla in the room in 2025 has been the Navy becoming more outspoken in opposition to projects abutting the AICUZ.

In July we reported, "The Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) have approved the rezoning of four parcels in the center of Lexington Park that will allow for the second phase of the redevelopment of the Pax River Village Center (formerly known as Millison Plaza) and the creation of a townhouse residential development on a vacant parking lot behind the shopping center. The decision on July 15 came on a 3-1 vote, with Commissioner Eric Colvin opposing and Commissioner Scott Ostrow abstaining. And the decision came over the objection of the Navy. The land to be rezoned lies outside the Navy's AICUZ (Air Installation Compatible Use Zone), the area of high noise and accident potential. The Patuxent River NAS Commanding Officer Capt. Douglas Burfield contended that the AICUZ was being reevaluated and could change later this year. Colvin wanted the decision delayed to give the developer and the Navy more time to try to work things out."

Colvin said, "At the end of the day, I struggle that we have a recommendation from the Navy to disapprove this. So, what I would ask for at this point in time is to delay this decision and request from the Navy some clarification and re-looking at this situation."

As the year ended the Navy logged objections to a large project on Willows Road. The planning commission continued the hearing until January to give the developer a chance to work on the Navy's concerns.

Willows Road continues to be the bullseye of development with several projects approved as people seek housing close to Pax River.

Another indication of growth is the reemergence of the long-stalled Stewart's Grant project near Great Mills Road.

We reported, "The Commissioners of St. Mary's County held a public hearing on June 24 on a proposed major amendment to the Stewart's Grant Planned Unit Development (PUD). A half dozen people spoke at the hearing, half of them from the adjacent Sanner's Lake Sportsmen's Club."

The commissioners approved the changes to the development.

One of the changes would reduce the maximum number of authorized dwelling units on the 425.23 acres, from 1,122, the current maximum to 1,084. The project would be phased in over 10 years.

Number 3: County Budget Angst



County Commissioner
Mike Hewitt

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) on May 20 approved a \$348,563,112 operating budget for the next fiscal year that included an increase in the income tax rate from 3 percent to 3.2 percent.

As income tax revenue was coming in at a higher than budgeted amount at year's end, Commissioner Mike Hewitt questioned the need for the rate increase.

We reported in early December, "The audit for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2025, shows St. Mary's County with an \$88 million fund balance, \$17 million more than the 15 percent required by county regulations."

Hewitt, at the Dec. 9 unveiling of the audit, said, "I'm always concerned about fund balances. We raised our income taxes because we're concerned about the cost of what we call the Blueprint. And it seems like we are far ahead of what the state requires for the Blueprint, but I also understand there's other things that go into running a school system more than just what the Blueprint is."

The budget was reached after considerable upset by the school board and school superin-

tendent over a shortfall in their request, which was threatening cuts and possible layoffs.

But we reported, "The Commissioners of St. Mary's County have tentatively agreed to add \$3.1 million to the amount to be budgeted for the schools. The budget presented at the April 22 hearing proposed flat funding for the schools. The extra money was added during a May 6 budget work session. It will be paid from the commissioners' fund balance and reserve fund. School Superintendent Scott Smith said "Our go/no-go number is \$3.1 million. And if we can't get there, in good conscience I have to go back to the board and say the money is not on the table to meet the negotiated agreement."

We then reported, "The (school) budget was balanced using \$7,722,231 of fund balance, as follows:

- Bus contractor retention: \$1,220,725
- CIP Transfer — Critical Building Maintenance: \$1,000,000
- Maintenance/Remediation: \$20,000
- Redistricting consulting fees: \$250,000
- Workforce Development — required carryover from FY25: \$231,506
- Technology: \$2,500,000
- Classroom Furniture: \$500,000
- OPEB: \$2,000,000 Three positions were reclassified:
- Administrative Assistant to Coordinating Administrative Assistant
- General Fund Title I Coordinator to Title I Supervisor
- Title I Director of Parent and Family Engagement I to Director of Title I and Community Engagement II

Number 4: Potomac River Plane Crash



Andrew Eaves



Alexander Huffman

At year end the United States government admitted fault for the midair collision over the Potomac River in January. The admission was in a court filing.

The collision between American Airlines Flight 5342 and U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter killed 67 people aboard both aircrafts, including nine men from Southern Maryland. They are:

- Andrew Eaves of Great Mills
- Alexander Huffman, of Leonardtown
- Jesse Pitcher, of Lusby
- Charles McDaniel, of Port Republic
- Jonathan Boyd, of Welcome

See **Year in Review**, page 5



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CONTENTS

LOCAL NEWS	3	COLUMNISTS	13
COMMUNITY	10	OBITUARIES	14

“MY HOPE IS FOR A STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED ST. MARY’S”

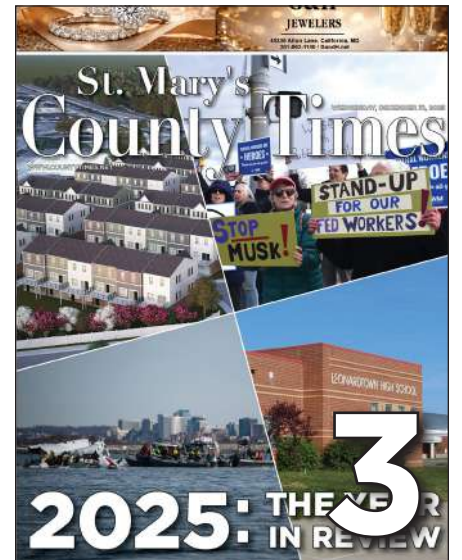
COMMISSIONER SCOTT OSTROW ON GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR



LOCAL 8
Police K-9s participate in aviation training



COMMUNITY 11
Stay safe in winter weather



ON THE COVER
A look back at St. Mary's top stories of 2025

WEEKLY FORECAST

THU, JAN 1	FRI, JAN 2	SAT, JAN 3	SUN, JAN 4
Partly Cloudy Hi: 35° Lo: 22°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 42° Lo: 28°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 39° Lo: 24°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 40° Lo: 28°
MON, JAN 5	TUE, JAN 6	WED, JAN 7	THU, JAN 8
Partly Cloudy Hi: 46° Lo: 36°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 45° Lo: 32°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 42° Lo: 31°	Partly Cloudy Hi: 42° Lo: 31°



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St. Mary's County Times

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2025: THE YEAR IN REVIEW