



STAFF PHOTO BY DARRYL KINSEY JR.

Going for distance

Concord, N.H., native Melissa Thorpe winds up during a distance throwing competition on Saturday at the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Calvert County. The cultural festival featured traditional games, food, music and more.

Imel enters guilty pleas in local cases

Sentencing on child sex offenses set for August

By MARTY MADDEN
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The state’s case against a former youth football coach on sex abuse charges is a step closer to the sentencing phase. Tuesday morning defendant Moshe Michael Imel, 53, of Owings, appeared before Calvert County Circuit Court Judge Mark Chandlee to plead guilty to three charges — one count of second-degree rape of a minor child and two counts of sex abuse of a minor.

Imel’s plea was part of an agreement made in federal court last month.

In Calvert’s case, three separate indictments against Imel were handed down by a grand jury in April 2021 with a total of

See **IMEL**
Page 13

Firefighters remark on lithium-ion battery dangers

Board expresses concerns about solar mandates

By MARTY MADDEN
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The latest fire hazard to prey on people’s minds may be in your garage or maybe even in your pocket. The proliferation of battery products, potential dangers they pose and the increasing size of items, such as battery-operated vehicles, was the subject of a presentation Tuesday made by Calvert County’s Department of Public Safety and local volunteer firefighters.

“Lithium-ion batteries pose a significant risk in fire situations due to their potential to release harmful chemicals, such as hydrogen fluoride and carbon monoxide when exposed to heat,” James W. Richardson, fire, rescue and emergency medical services division chief stated in a memo to the county commissioners. “The risk associated with lithium-ion batteries is further compounded by the fact that they are often found in consumer products such as laptops, smartphones and electric vehicles, which are widely used in our daily lives. Firefighters need to be

equipped with proper training, tools and safety gear to handle incident involving lithium-ion batteries.”

Michael Farrell, a firefighter with the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and a member of the committee researching the lithium-ion battery issue, gave the commissioners and overview of the risks the new technology poses.

Farrell stated the batteries “charge faster, last longer, are lighter” and provide “higher power density.” The risk comes from the gas and liquid within the battery. Due to demand and cost concerns, Farrell said some lithium-ion batteries are made cheaper than others, creating a “buyer beware” situation.

The batteries are used on golf carts, motorized wheelchairs, electric bikes, smartphones, tablets, power tools and toys.

The firefighter noted how the potential of “thermal runaway” can have a domino effect on other cells within the battery, sparking flames that spread rapidly and emit a noxious gas.

See **BATTERIES**
Page 13

Internet expansion project moves toward completion

Cut-off date for getting ‘free’ connections is looming

By MARTY MADDEN
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The effort to hook up Calvert residents who have not been served by Comcast continues and some final milestones are up ahead. That was the message heard Tuesday during the county commissioners’ weekly meeting.

The buildout project’s first two phases of a three-phase plan have been completed with the use of state grant money and funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. Originally, the funds needed for the project would have required charging potential customers directly for the hook-ups and using revenues from a customer fee fund.

In all, an estimated \$3.7 million was spent on the first two phases.

“How far away are we?” Commissioner Mike Hart (R) asked.

“The end of 2023,” said Ashley Staples-Reid, county government’s special projects program manager.

“I’m impressed,” Hart replied. “This was not an easy project.”

On Monday, county government announced a grant was awarded to Comcast through the state’s Connect Maryland Network Infrastructure Grant Program to expand broadband access to an additional 36 Calvert County homes and add nine miles of infrastructure. The grant for

See **COMCAST**
Page 13

Special federal inspection underway at nuclear plant

Commission sends team to Lusby facility after issue

By MARTY MADDEN
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The federal agency that handles oversight for the nation’s nuclear power plant has sent a team of inspectors to Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant in Lusby.

According to a statement released Monday by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, a special inspection is underway for the purpose of reviewing “issues associated with an emergency diesel generator at the facility. The twin-engine generator malfunctioned during recent testing and was the subject of an enforcement action last year.”

The commission’s public affairs office

missive notes the three-member inspection team “will be supplemented by the NRC resident inspectors assigned to Calvert Cliffs, who have been following plant owner Constellation Energy’s actions on-site since the mechanical failure of the generator on April 24.”

In a statement sent to Southern Maryland News, Mark Rodgers, senior manager of Constellation Energy’s generation communications, said on the day the mechanical failure occurred, “Operators shut down one of Calvert Cliffs’ five emergency diesel generators during a scheduled monthly test when they observed signs of degraded performance. Technical experts are investigating the

See **NUCLEAR**
Page 14

Officials successfully petition to rename Fishing Creek Bridge

Tribute will honor sacrifices of past, present and future first responders in Twin Beaches

By SYDNEY NAUMAN
Special to Southern Maryland News

The State Highway Administration approved a bill that will redesignate a Chesapeake Beach community bridge in honor of local first responders who died in the line of duty.

Chesapeake Beach Mayor Pat Mahoney proposed a bill to state legislators earlier this year. In a full Senate vote, the bill, known as Senate Bill 140, passed unanimously but stalled after its first reading in the House of Delegates before the legislative session ended on April 10.

However, due to an administrative process, the renaming was able to still get approval by the state’s highway administration officials.

Fishing Creek Bridge serves as part of a main roadway connecting the Chesapeake Beach and North Beach townships and other surrounding areas. The bridge will be renamed the “Fallen Heroes Fishing Creek Bridge,” recognizing the history of line-of-duty deaths of service members in the small-town community.

In a letter to the state Senate, North Beach Volunteer Fire Department Chief Chris Mills stated the bridge would

“serve as a visible reminder to the public of the first responders’ commitment to saving lives, protecting property and preserving the common good ... even at the greatest risk to their own well-being.”

Mahoney initiated SB 140 with the help of former Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs George Owings and Chief Mills on behalf of the NBVFD. The bill was first read in the state Senate on Jan. 13, and was referred to a committee with “no written opposition,” according

See **BRIDGE**
Page 14



PHOTO BY DON RAU, CHIEF OF STAFF TO SEN. JACKSON

North Beach Volunteer Fire Department Chief Chris Mills, left, Senator Michael A. Jackson (D-Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s), Chesapeake Beach Mayor Pat Mahoney and North Beach Volunteer Fire Department President Matt Weber show support for Senate Bill 140 at a Senate hearing earlier this year. Weber died April 29 after a brief illness.

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FILE PHOTO

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant is in Lusby.

NUCLEAR

From Page 12

cause and repair, inspect and test the generator before returning it to service. Calvert has multiple, redundant backup generators to maintain operation of safety-related equipment in the event power from the electric grid were unavailable.” Commission officials said the inspection team will document its findings in a report to be issued within 45 days following conclusion of the review. “Because of redundant systems, this event did not directly impact plant safety,” Raymond Lorson, the commission’s Region 1 administrator, stated in a press release. “Nevertheless, our team has been tasked with learning more about why this

problem occurred and what steps the company is taking to ensure it does not happen again.” Commission officials noted last September it finalized a “white,” or low to moderate safety significance, inspection finding for Calvert Cliffs based on a problem involving the same emergency diesel generator. The commission’s statement notes in the case of the September occurrence, “operators failed to prevent the introduction of foreign material into the generator, resulting in its automatic shutdown and failure during routine testing.” “We are looking forward to hosting the NRC inspection team to demonstrate how we are ensuring public safety,” Rodgers stated.

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BRIDGE

From Page 12

to Sen. Michael A. Jackson (D-Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s), a sponsor of the bill. According to a fiscal and policy note from the State Highway Administration, SB 140 would not require additional funding outside of existing resources, nor would it impact the finances of local governments. The renaming of the bridge is intended to be inclusive of first responders and members of military organizations. Since

1942 there have been six first responder who died in the line of duty in the area, the most recent of which occurred in 2018. “This is a simple effort that will mean a great deal to the families of those who have lost family members in the service of their country and community,” said Jackson. Even though the bill did not make it through the legislative process, Mahoney said the State Highway Administration can be petitioned in cases such as SB 140 to help get a bill passed. The State Highway Administration ultimately approved the bridge renaming through this administrative process, he said.

CALVERT BRIEFS

Pickleball courts to be added

The Calvert County Department of Parks and Recreation has begun work to create additional outdoor pickleball courts at the Harriet E. Brown Community Center, Solomons Town Center Park and Hallowing Point Park. Staff is adding lines for three pickleball courts on the basketball courts outside the Harriet E. Brown Community Center, located at 901 Dares Beach Road in Prince Frederick. The courts will be available for public use Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Availability is subject to change during public school holidays and early dismissal days. For additional information and updates, contact parks and recreation at 410-535-1600, ext. 2649

Farmers’ market season begins

May 6 marks the beginning of the Town of North Beach Farmers’ Market season. The town continues its traditional, small-town atmosphere farmers’ market for the 2023 season every Saturday through Oct. 7 from 8 to 11 a.m. in the parking lot of the North Beach Senior Center at 9010 Chesapeake Avenue. Parking is available at the town-owned parking lot that is located on Chesapeake Avenue just south of 7th Street. On-street parking is available; however, some areas are for resident parking only. Paid parking is an option in the privately-owned parking lot located at the southeast corner of Chesapeake Avenue and 5th Street. The Town of North Beach encourages all guests to help reduce waste by bringing your own bag and using the appropriate disposal containers provided at the market.

Plant sale in Prince Frederick

Calvert Master Gardeners’ annual plant sale will be held May 6 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Community Resource Building at 30 Duke Street in Prince Frederick. The master gardeners will have native plants and shrubs, heirloom tomatoes, vegetables and herbs for sale with lots to choose from. Call 301-855-1150 for more information.

Craft fair planned at high school this Saturday

The annual spring craft fair at Huntingtown High School will be held May 6 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. indoors and outdoors at the school at 4125 North Solomons Island Road. For space reservations and for information contact Cascierol@calvertnet.k12.md.us.

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