



Calendar of events

A LOOK AT THE WEEK AHEAD

Send calendar events (at least two weeks in advance, if possible) to Community, 4475 Regency Place, Suite 301, White Plains, MD 20695. Email items to community@somdnews.com. Include a contact phone number or email on all submissions.

Ongoing

The Humane Society of Charles County is now accepting reservations for its Top Dog Dinner featuring entertainment by The Fabulous Hubcaps. Dinner, dancing, silent auction and more at the Waldorf Jaycees on Friday, Feb. 23. For reservations, email TopDog@humanesocietycc.org, go to www.humanesocietycc.org or call 301-645-8181.

The James E. Richmond Science Center hosts free planetarium sky shows 7 p.m. the first Monday of every month. For more information, go to www.ccboe.com/sciencecenter.

Friday Fun Nights for children ages 5-17 will be held at various community center locations. Kids can have fun while adults enjoy a kid-free evening. Each month will feature a different theme. For a full list of dates, times and locations, go to www.charlescountyparks.com.

Platinum Senior Care Assisted Living, LLC will host Reminiscing Cafe 6-9 p.m. Mondays-Fridays and 8-11 a.m. Saturdays-Sundays at the facility, 4018 Blackbird Court, Waldorf. For seniors with dementia and Alzheimer's to relax and enjoy themselves. For information, call 301-638-3194.

VConnections will hold Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Mondays at Chick-fil-A, 107 Drury Drive, La Plata. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

Pomfret Way-of-Life Al-Anon Family Group and Alateen will meet 8 p.m. Tuesdays at St. Joseph Church, 4950 Saint Joseph Way, Pomfret. For information, go to www.marylandcc-alanon.org or call 1-800-425-2666.

VConnections will host Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month at Burger King, 30004 Three Notch Road, Charlotte Hall. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

Free Foreclosure Legal Clinic with attorneys from the Maryland Volunteer Lawyer occurs the first Wednesday of each month at Charles County Public Law Library, 200 Charles St., La Plata. These are one-on-one online sessions with an experienced attorney. The library is located in the basement of the Circuit Court for Charles County; entrance to the building is on Washington Ave. For more information or to make an appointment, call the Law Library at 301-932-3322.

Kiwanis of Waldorf meets Wednesdays 7:30-8:30 a.m. at Comfort Suites, 11765 Business Park Drive, Waldorf. For information, contact Carol Cox, 301-758-3082 or carol.cox@gmail.com.

VConnections will hold Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Chick-fil-A, 3365 Crain Highway, Waldorf. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

VConnections will hold Veterans Coffee Break 9-10:30 a.m. Thursdays at Chick-fil-A, 16003 Crain Highway, Brandywine. For information, go to www.vconnections.org.

Charles County Professional Civitan Club will meet 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesdays at Golden Corral, 2800 Crain Highway, Waldorf. For information, contact George Hawley, 240-367-6489 or planit4uevent-planning@gmail.com.

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, NARFE, Indian Head Chapter 126 will meet at noon the first Thursday of each month at Mama Stella's Pasta House Restaurant, 7075 Indian Head Highway, Bryans Road. Different topics and programs offered each month by guest speakers. For information, contact Joan Wright, 301-246-4112 or jkw1108@verizon.net.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 82 will hold bingo on Thursdays at Harry White Wilmer American Legion Post 82, 6330 Crain Highway, La Plata. Early birds begin 7 p.m. Doors open 6 p.m. For information, call 301-934-8221.

Vconnections will assist senior and elderly veterans and families 2-4 p.m. every Thursday at Clark Senior Center, 1210 Charles St., La Plata. By appointment only. For more information, go to www.vconnections.org.

See **CALENDAR** Page B8

New library series to encourage conversation of controversial topics



STAFF PHOTO BY SARA NEWMAN

The National Issues Forum discussion will take place at Charles County Public Library's P.D. Brown Memorial branch tomorrow, Jan. 13, at 2 p.m.

Events to take place throughout SoMd.

By **SARA NEWMAN**
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In an effort to encourage public discourse, understanding and sharing various points of view, the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association is hosting community discussions throughout the region this month surrounding the question, "How Should Communities Reduce Violence?"

"Any time you have an opportunity where people can come together and share their perspectives and everyone will walk away from this program with a better understanding of the issues and with what they believe to be true," Brad Gottfried, former president of the College of Southern Maryland, CSM, said of the events.

Gottfried and his wife, Linda, will moderate the discussions at three different libraries. The first discussion will take place tomorrow in Charles County at the P.D. Brown Library branch at 2 p.m. The next events will follow on Saturday, Jan. 27, at Calvert Library Prince Frederick at 9:30 a.m. and St. Mary's County Library's Lexington Park Branch at 2 p.m.

The program is the first in a series of National Issues Forum, NIF, discussions that Gottfried has had experience with prior to his tenure at CSM. NIF is a network of civic, educational (and other organizations) and individuals whose common interest is to promote public deliberation in the country. It includes civic clubs, religious organizations, libraries, schools and many other groups that meet to discuss critical public issues.

Though not specifically associated with NIF, libraries in



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Brad Gottfried, former president of College of Southern Maryland, and his wife Linda Gottfried, will moderate the first in a series of National Issues Forums at libraries throughout Southern Maryland.

Southern Maryland have hosted similar community conversations over the past year. Tisha Tyler, marketing and development manager for Charles County Public Library, said the library is committed to this format because the conversations are a "launch pad to bring about some different mindsets" and points of view that may lead to positive change.

"[This is] an opportunity for our community to feel as though they are heard and then for us to really have an opportunity to look at what some of the steps we can take to make our community better and stronger," Tyler said.

Various professionals within the community, including those from the county sheriff's office, community mediation and mentoring organizations among others, are invited to the discussions to be a resource for participants and answer

questions, though Tyler said the events will not be surrounding a panel discussion.

"The power is with individuals to share and discuss and people have to feel comfortable to share how they feel about things without being attacked by others," Gottfried said.

"We want people to understand other people's points of view without getting angry at each other," Robyn Truslow, public relations coordinator for Calvert Library, said.

In the past, Truslow said similar events have led to relationship building between adversaries and creating fresh ideas for how the community can deal with various issues.



STAFF PHOTO BY SARAH FALLIN

The National Issues Forum discussion will take place at Calvert Library Prince Frederick on Saturday, Jan. 27 at 9:30 a.m.

adding that the focus of the conversations is placed on what can be done at the local level to solve these problems.

"A self-described 'educator at heart,' Gottfried said he looked to bring this NIF discussion to the region's libraries as a way to continue to give back to the Southern Maryland community since leaving his position at CSM. He said he hopes participants continue discussing even after leaving the event.

"It really is very stimulating and gives intelligent people an opportunity to learn and share with each other and to me that's what a community is all about," Gottfried said. "I'm not so optimistic that at the end we'll all sing 'Kumbayah' and have all the answers. These are such complex issues that I'm not so certain we'll come to any closure at the end of the programs, but rather more

knowledge, thoughtful discussion and how a person really feels about [an issue when it's] grounded in thoughtfulness rather than things in the news or things someone may have told them that may not be accurate."

NIF booklets on the discussion topic of "Safety and Justice" are available to check out through all three county library systems. Additional copies will be made available on a first come, first served basis at the discussion programs.

Though the programs are free and open to the public, seating is limited. Go to SMRLA.org/NIF to register for a specific location.

For more information about the National Issues Forum, go to nifi.org. To learn more about the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, go to smrla.org or call 301-884-0436.

Twitter: @indy_community