

2018 recap--St. Mary's

Posted by [TBN Editor](#) On 12/31/2018

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Dfc. Blaine Gaskill, right, speaks with Maryland Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon at a ceremony in Annapolis at which Governor Larry Hogan presented the local school resource officer with a citation.

Lexington Park, MD - Here's a month-by-month review of the Charles County stories that made news in 2018.

January - On Jan. 9 a 3-year-old child died in a motor vehicle collision on Three Notch Road in Lexington Park. Several adults were injured in the crash. On Jan. 13, a 25-year-old Callaway man received a nine-month sentence for second-degree assault. The victim was a 3-year-old boy. Harris Corporation officials denied the company had any responsibility for the death of a local baby in October 2017. The St. Mary's County Emergency Radio System failed that morning and crews were delayed in responding to a call of a baby not breathing. Harris installed the St. Mary's system at a cost of \$34 million. On Jan. 23, a Great Mills dad was charged after five Spring Ridge Middle School students became ill from eating gummy candy laced with cannabis. The man's daughter took the candy to school and distributed it to other students. On Jan. 24 Harris Teeter opened a new store in California. *Reginia Claggett-Brown was sentenced Jan. 31 to five years in prison for the October 2016 drug overdose death of a Calvert County man.*

February - Delante Deangelo Harvey, 25 gets six years in prison for attempted second-degree murder and robbery at his Feb. 1 sentencing. The incident occurred in April 2016 in a Lexington Park neighborhood. On Feb. 10 Tyreise D. Nelson was sentenced to 10 years in state prison in connection with the overdose death of a father of two. The drug involved was carfentanil. On Feb. 9, a man who came to the Mechanicsville Burchmart with robbery in mind was subsequently detained on the ground by employees and customers. An employee was assaulted during the attempted robbery. *Police investigated an armed robbery Feb. 9 in a St. Mary's College of Maryland dorm room. Four suspects—all 18—were identified and located at the college.* On Feb. 21 rumors of violence at Great Mills High School prompted concerns by parents.

March - Two pets died in a March 3 house fire on Clarks Road in California. A neighbor discovered and reported the fire which caused \$70,000 damage. On March 9, defendant Mark Steven Garner II was acquitted on a second-degree depraved heart murder charge but is found guilty by a judge on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in connection with the opioid death of a California woman. On March 14 St. Mary's County's three public high schools participate in the National School Walkout to protest gun violence. A 51-year-old Mechanicsville man died March 19 after his pickup truck veered off Budds Creek Road and struck a tree. *On the morning of March 20, the unthinkable happened. Police and emergency responders were called to Great Mills High School for the report of a shooting. Two students were injured while an armed student turned the gun on himself. A school resource officer engaged the 17-year-old gunman during the incident. One of the victim's, 16-year-old Jaelynn Willey, died three days after the shooting. The incident led to prayer vigils, memorial gatherings and several other events that aimed to unite the community. Great Mills was closed to students for several days.*

April - A 15-year-old Virginia boy was indicted for shooting his grandmother—a St. Mary's County resident—to death at his home in McDowell Virginia. The incident happened in September 2017. On April 18 authorities responded to Park Hall Elementary School for a report of a student with a handgun. Authorities, including Navy investigators, located a loaded semiautomatic handgun in the student's bookbag. The 8-year-old was subsequently charged. That same day a 15-year-old Great Mills High student reportedly made a batch of brownies containing marijuana, brought them to school and sold them to several students. Some of the students who consumed the brownies became ill and two kids were hospitalized. The juvenile suspect was charged with CDS violations and reckless endangerment. *On April 19, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan presented Dfc. Blaine Gaskill with a citation for his brave actions during the Great Mills High shooting incident.* That same day a 29-year-old Lexington Park resident was fatally wounded by a single shotgun blast. On April 23, Christine McCauley was sentenced to 10 years in prison in connection with the overdose death of a woman in June 2017. An April 25 house fire in Great Mills injured one person and displaced three adults.

May - A May 1 single-vehicle collision in St. Mary's County critically injured a 12-year-old Lusby girl. Several days later the girl, Madison Claire Curran, died of her injuries. On May 6, a 68-year-old Washington, DC man died in a fiery crash on Budds Creek Road. The vehicle the man was driving struck another vehicle driven by a St. Mary's County woman head-on. She was flown to a trauma center with serious injuries. Convicted sex offender Steven Michael Myers received 20-year sentence May 24 in Leonardtown. "You are not getting a life sentence, your victims are," Judge Michael Stramm told Myers. *Also on May 24, four bystanders at Wildewood Shopping Center reacted quickly, saving an elderly man from his vehicle that was engulfed in flames. The man was flown to a regional burn center. One of the Samaritans suffered smoke inhalation. The blaze was sparked by fumes from a gas can.* On May 25, a crash in Mechanicsville claimed the life of a 50-year-old man.

June - *On June 8 cousins Samir Shah and Saar Shah were named the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's National Students of the Year for raising \$413,000 to fight blood cancers. The young men's big fundraising event held March 17 at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds involved kite-flying.* Geoffrey W. Uhall, 31, was sentenced June 9 on two charges—distribution and possession of drugs—related to the overdose death of a Lexington Park woman. Uhall received an 18-month sentence. The Blue Angels performance at the Pax River Airshow was cancelled due to a lightning risk. On June 24, a 24-year-old Mechanicsville man riding a dirt bike crashed into another vehicle on Golden Beach Road. The biker later died at a local hospital. In the 2018 Primary Election, Jack Bailey ousted State Senator Steve Waugh in the District 29 GOP Senate Primary. In commissioners' races, Republican Eric Colvin and Democrat Rose Frederick were among the candidates winning contested primaries. On June 29 Marcell D. Blackiston, 32, was sentenced to eight years in prison for distribution of heroin and fentanyl, which led to the overdose death of a St. Mary's County woman. A June 30 collision between a Toyota Tacoma and a box truck in Leonardtown resulted in the death of a 26-year-old Lexington Park man.

July - On July 3, motorists stopped their vehicles on the Thomas Johnson Bridge, got out and united to stop a distraught 18-year-old male from jumping off the span. On July 11, residents of a Lexington Park neighborhood united to pull an elderly motorist out of her car which had struck a 10-year-old girl who had darted out in front of it. The neighbors proceeded to assault the elderly woman. The girl's injuries were non-life-threatening. Recognition was given July 18 to workers at St. Mary's County Emergency Medical Services Communications Center for their work under pressure March 20. Commissioner John O'Connor noted many workers not scheduled that day reported to help their coworkers. On July 20, a house on Beauvue Court in Leonardtown was partially destroyed by an evening fire. There were no injuries and the family was displaced. On July 29, a 51-year-old Leonardtown man died after his motorcycle collided with a Toyota Highlander on Three Notch Road in Lexington Park. That same day a 58-year-old Leonardtown man was killed when his racing boat flipped during a regatta on Breton Bay.

On July 31, the St. Mary's Commissioners planned a public hearing regarding the awarding of oyster water column leases by placing a moratorium on any new permits for commercial piers. Towards the end of the month it was announced that the Governor's Cup Race that traditionally ends at St. Mary's College was cancelled due to storm debris in the Chesapeake Bay.

August - The death of a 43-year-old Clements man was ruled a drowning complicated by alcohol intoxication. The incident occurred in early August at McIntosh Run in Leonardtown. In another death investigation, the death of pedestrian Richard Lee Summers Jr. of Lexington Park was ruled an accident. Summers was struck by a minivan on Three Notch Road. On Aug. 16, two St. Mary's County high school students met with state political officials to advocate for school and firearm safety. The two represented "Students for a Safer Maryland." On Aug. 18, none other than Turtleman visited to Country Life Festival in Lexington Park. On Aug. 21, *California's Cheeseburger in Paradise restaurant closes its doors for good.* On Aug. 30, a woman was told to leave a Lexington Park residence for being disorderly. The situation escalated as the woman becomes hostile and exposes her breasts and buttocks to citizens and police. No injuries were reported and police discovered drugs in the woman's purse.

September - On Sept. 1 a pair of armed robbers confronted three men on Valley Drive in Lexington Park. One victim was assaulted. The perpetrators were arrested a short time later. A 20-year-old man from Alexandria, VA was found dead Sept. 8 in the water. The discovery was made two days after the man disappeared at Myrtle Point Park. On Sept. 23, a 28-year-old Charles County man lost his life when his motorcycle left Route 5 and struck a street sign, ejecting him. On Sept. 27, a 40-year-old Charlotte Hall man was arrested on sex abuse, rape and assault charges. Police reported the victims are a 13-year-old female and an adult male.

October - On Oct. 1, a 24-year-old Ridge man died when his vehicle overturned on Three Notch Road. On Oct. 4, a 47-year old woman who had two children in her vehicle led a sheriff's captain on a brief pursuit before being apprehended. She was charged with child neglect and eluding police. On Oct. 21, a motor vehicle crashed into a Mechanicsville building. The driver, veteran Animal Control Officer Tony Malaspina, died shortly after the crash. That same day, a Great Mills woman was arrested and charged with abuse of child in custody for binding and gagging a 5-year-old boy with duct tape. The woman claimed she did it due to the child's "behavioral issues." *During the weekend of Oct. 20, Floridian Brian Clark wins the U.S. Oyster Shucking Championship at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds.* It was not a happy Halloween as a Lexington Park liquor store was held up by a weapon-brandishing person wearing a Halloween mask.

November - On Nov. 3, Victoria Gellings received a five-year sentence in District Court for being the at-fault driver in an October 2016 crash that severely injured four occupants of a Nissan Frontier. Three of the injured gave lengthy testimony about the dramatic, adverse changes the injuries inflicted on their lives. Election Day brings change to the St. Mary's County Delegation to Annapolis. Democrat Brian Crosby defeated Republican incumbent Deb Rey in the District 29B Delegate's race. *Republican Jack Bailey easily won the District 29 Senate race.* On Nov. 13, an 87-year-old Great Mills man was struck and killed on Chancellors Run Road. A Nov. 15 house fire in Bushwoof claimed the lives of three dogs. The human occupant escaped without injury. A Great Mills woman died in a fiery crash Nov. 26 in Leonardtown.

December - On Dec. 5, one day after a nearby shooting, Great Mills High was placed on lockdown. The suspect, Elijah Miguel Miles, was later apprehended and put in police custody outside of St. Mary's County. He was then charged with the Dec. 4 shooting in Hickory Hills. On that same day, the FDR Boulevard extension (0.72 mile), between Frist Colony Boulevard and the roundabout at Old Rolling Road was open to motorists. In early December, a Connecticut attorney announced the Army soldiers who survived a 2017 helicopter crash in St. Mary's County are suing the chopper's manufacturer. One soldier was killed at the crash near Breton Bay. On Dec. 10, a St. Mary's County man was indicted by a federal grand jury for the theft of several guns. The heist occurred several months earlier in Lexington Park. A negligent manslaughter trial for a Virginia man in connection with a 2017 crash that killed a California woman has been delayed until February.

Contact Marty Madden at marty.madden@thebaynet.com