BAYSIDE GAZETTE MAY 21, 2020 **BERLIN • NORTH WORCESTER COUNTY• OCEAN PINES**



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

QUIET MEMORIAL

Despite postponing the Armed Forces Day dedication ceremony slated for May 16 due to the covid-19 pandemic, Ocean Pines' Flags for Heroes display was flying on Saturday at the Worcester County Veterans Memorial.

Berlin meetings stay virtual in May

Offices open to public with restrictions, as town seeks to limit number of visitors

By Morgan Pilz

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Even though Gov. Larry Hogan lifted his stay-at-home order last week, Berlin government will not have in-person public meetings for the remainder of May.

All meetings, including those by the mayor and Town Council or other boards and committees, will remain online for the rest of the month.

In a press release on Monday, Mayor Gee Williams announced Town Hall, the Planning Department, and the Berlin Welcome Center will be open for regular business hours with restric-



Jeff Fleetwood

The town will also resume regular recycling collection effective on Monday, June 1. For the time being, Stephen Decatur and Henry Parks will remain closed, as well as all public restrooms.

ment of Health.

Additionally, signs will be posted asking visitors to consider their overall health before entering. Williams added, "In keeping with the guidelines, signs will be posted advising visitors of our restrictions and requirements, including whether they are currently not

feeling well, or have not felt well in the preceding weeks, and indicating appropriate distances to maintain from other visitors."

According to Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood and Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen, meetings will remain closed to the public, as in not allowed to enter Town Hall, following the guidelines and health regulations put into effect because of the covid-19 pandemic.

"Right now, all meetings through May will be via livestream, if they are held," Fleetwood said.

The Historic District Commission and Planning Commission, which typically hold monthly meetings, will hold off assembling with residents as much as possible during the pandemic, See TOWN Page 6

OPA directors vote to retain loan from SBA

PPP rules changed after board had applied for aid

By Greg Ellison Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) After sparking criticism in April for receiving \$1.143 million through the federal Paycheck Protection Program, the OPA Board

of Directors spent an hour in open session last Tuesday debating the merits of retaining the low or no-interest loan before voting 7-0 in closed session to keep it.



Frank Dalv

Subsequent to Congress passing the

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act on April 3, an initial sum of \$349 billion in PPP funds were released through the Small Business Administration. Simultaneously, the OPA formed a workgroup to ex-See OPA Page 8

Berlin business reopening with sigh of relief

By Morgan Pilz Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) The town of Berlin is seeing several restaurants and small businesses tentatively reopen now that Gov. Larry Hogan has lifted his stayat-home order and allowed some facets of normal life to resume.

Excluding sit-down restaurants, gyms, playgrounds, theaters and large gathering events, many businesses are beginning to resume selling their merchandise with limited capacity after two months of inactivity.

See BUSINESSES Page 5



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Pines flood readiness seminar held virtually

By Greg Ellison Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) A trio of experts with the Maryland Department of the Environment took a deep dive into risk reduction measures during an OPA Flood Readiness seminar held last Tuesday via Facebook Live.

Opening the event was Dave Guignet, the Maryland coordinator for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, who said FEMA defines the Ocean Pines coastal flood area from Isle of Wright Bay that feeds Manklin Creek and the St. Martin River. "FEMA maps are not the limit of flooding that will occur," he said. "Floods do not read the maps or follow map boundaries."

To assist homeowners assess flood risks, Guignet suggested visiting the FEMA Map Service Center online at msc.fema.gov/portal.

"You're going to need a document at some point of what your property looks like ... with FEMAs mapping as a baseline layer," he said.

Property owners can obtain a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), which are legal documents accepted by insurance See FLOOD Page 10



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Maintaining unobstructed culvert pipes and drainage ditches were among a wealth of tips provided during the OPA Flood Readiness seminar held last Tuesday via Facebook Live.

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Andrew Queen General Manager







MORGAN PILZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The new natural gas engine is delivered to the Berlin Power Plant on William Street, Friday, May 15.

New natural gas generator engine delivered to Berlin

By Morgan Pilz Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) The replacement for engine two" at the Berlin Power Plant

"engine two" at the Berlin Power Plant on William Street was delivered last Friday. After nearly a year of work, the re-

placement engine, a natural gas genset (a combination engine and generator) built in Lafayette, Indiana, was brought in by Alban CAT Power Systems, now called Carter Machinery.

"This is one of the few generators of this type," Account Executive for Carter Machinery Jack McKenna said. "They are built in the United States. It's all custom built."

Last July, the second engine out of four that run the generator was taken out of commission when a piston connecting rod failed on the 16-cylinder engine at the William Street plant and knocked a hole in the side plate of the engine. The engine was at least 20 years old.

"This new engine is actually going in bay number three instead of bay number two, where the original engine failed, because it makes more sense because it's got a lot more room to it for that engine to fit," Electric Utility Director Tim Lawrence said. "Once it's installed, they've got a lot of other work to



Chesapeake Utilities will be installing a natural gas line from the street to the building. In the future, the plant plans to convert all of the engines from diesel to natural gas.

Tim Lawrence

The plant, which was established in 1956, was built to accommodate five diesel engines with a total production capacity of 10 megawatts of electricity. The oldest engine in the facility is a 1961 Fairbanks Morse motor, which is still in service.

do."

The plant allows the town to provide electric power during times of high electric demands, which allows Berlin to forego the high electric costs of the power grid.

"Normally, there's five engines in the plant," Lawrence said. "Out of those five, number one, four and five engines are all working. Number two engine failed in July, number three engine failed back in 2004 but it was never replaced."

The department conducts peakshaving events when the draw for electricity for the town is unusually high, which occurs around 10 to more than See OLD Page 11

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Businesses relieved to be back in operation

Continued from Page 1

For some businesses, like Sisters on 113 North Main Street, the news is relieving.

"We haven't had any business because of the virus [in the past two months]," owner Donna Compher said. "The scary part is recovery. When you're down two months of income, that's a big deal."

Compher, who runs a boutique that also sells wine and beer, attempted to apply for several grants, unemployment, and the PPP loan, to no avail. She reopened her store last Friday at 5 p.m., which is when the governor allowed small businesses to resume operations.

The store will now be open every day from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sisters will also be open during the Berlin Farmers Market held on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"If locals don't support us, then we won't be here," Compher said. "If they want to see the Main Street mom-andpop operations, which is about 90 percent of the country, the locals really need to come out and support us more than ever before. It's crucial at this point. I hope locals see how much we need them now."

For more information about Sisters, call 443-513-4158.

Other enterprises, like the Church

Mouse Thrift Store on 101 North Main Street, is relieved to be open so it can resume helping the community.

"The purpose of Church Mouse is to reach out to people in need in the community, so we're glad to get back up and running and see all of our clients and customers and continue do to the outreach that we have committed to over 50 years," Coordinator Helen Wiley said.

"The donations that we get ... we can turn that around and give things to organizations in need in our community such as Diakonia, the Spirit Kitchen, Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Believe in Tomorrow, all those organizations and we're just excited to be open and keep that going."

Now that the store is open again, it will be operating tentatively from Thursday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will attempt to be open during the farmers market, though hours will vary.

The store will now be limited to two people inside at any time and all customers must wear masks. Donations must be done through appointments only and can be arranged by calling Wiley at 443-513-6655 or through email at Helenbuttercup@verizon.net.

The Treasure Chest jewelry store owner Terri Sexton, is being "cautiously optimistic." "People are happy to see the businesses growing ... it's giving them something to do," she said. "We rely on our customers more than the big box stores. We also miss our customers and they miss us."

The 20 North Main Street store will remain open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and offer store hours during the farmers market from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information, call 410-641-0333.

Susan Ayres Wimbrow, who owns the Greyhound Bookstore and Fine Arts Gallery on 9 South Main Street, reopened her store on Saturday and had customers from open to close.

"It was phenomenal, patrons were here when we opened to when we closed ... we had a great day," she said. "We need to thrive again as a local, small town and only people that come in to shop will help us again. We are grateful for being open and we thank everyone for coming in to see us again."

As an 800-square-foot store, customers will be limited to 10 people and everyone must wear a mask. The bookstore will be open every day from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting after Memorial Day Weekend.

For more information, call the Greyhound Bookstore and Fine Arts



MORGAN PILZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE DiFebo's owner Jeff Osias sells pies, meatballs, sauces, breads and spice rubs during the Berlin Farmers Market on Sunday, May 17.

Gallery at 410-641-0291.

Also reopening to the public is Bruder Hill and Bruder Home on 25 Commerce Street, which encourages owner Shelley Bruder.

"People are so excited to get out and shop and it's great," Bruder said. "They're coming out with their families. Everyone has been very respectful and it's been really nice."

See RESTAURANTS Page 6



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Town livestreaming continues

Continued from Page 1 Bohlen said.

'We're not holding meetings if there's not some necessary reason to hold it," she said. "If it's something that can be pushed off, then it's getting pushed off. Anyone who has approached us wanting something to go in front of the planning commission or the historic district committee, the staff has a conversation with them about whether or not it can be pushed off.

"If it's different things that require a deadline, or that sort of thing, that's different," Bohlen added.

As of earlier this week, there has been only one other meeting that took place on livestreaming outside of the mayor and Town Council sessions – the Historic District Commission on Wednesday, May 20, at 5:30 p.m.

May 21, 2020

The William Street entrance to Town Hall will be closed and all visitors will enter via the parking lot entrance off Bay Street until further notice.

To see the full list of available committee and commission meetings in Berlin, visit https://berlinmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-andcommittees/.

Restaurants go with carryout

Continued from Page 5

Both stores will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and will be limited to 10 people at a time. Patrons must also wear masks to encourage social distancing.

For more information, call 410-629-1260.

Closer to Town Hall, Beach Gypsy on 15 William Street is looking forward to seeing new and old faces after being closed for just under two months, especially having just relocated to Berlin.

"As a store that just moved into a brand-new location and had just month, it's challenging," co-owner Christine Carpenter said. "We're really testing the waters all over again ... we have no idea when it's going to start booming again."

barely been open for a little over a

The boutique and yoga studio has postponed its classes, but is now once again reopened from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays, 12-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and also during the farmers market on Sundays.

For more information about Beach Gypsy, call 410-973-2557.

Beyond just boutiques and other small businesses, restaurants in the area are beginning to reopen as well, albeit as carryout and delivery services only.

Fins Ale House and Restaurant, which has been closed for several months, is expected to reopen tentatively on Friday with a carryout menu available.

Also reopened for business is DiFebo's Restaurant on 104 North Main Street, which will be offering contactless carryout. The restaurant has been a part of the town of Berlin for the past three years.

"Berlin is a cool little town with a great vibe and we're happy to be a part of it," Owner Jeff Osias said. "It's very dialed in to small businesses. Ivy Wells does a great job.'

Osias heard about small businesses being allowed to reopen and realized now would be a great time to get in some "muscle memory" to help keep his restaurant running.

"With to-go service, people pull up, open their trunks, we put everything in and everything is paid by credit card before they get here so it's a contactless pickup," he said. "We're happy for those that support us and can't wait for this to be behind us."

DiFebo's will be open daily for lunch and dinner from 11 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. In addition, DiFebo's will sell meatballs, tomato sauce, its spicy olive oil, breads and even some desserts outside its doors during the farmers market on Sundays.

For more information about DiFebo's, call 410-629-0550.



Mike's Flooring and Design Center open for business

(May 21, 2020) Taking into consideration the safety of his fellow citizens and employees and continuing to follow social distancing guidelines, Mike's Flooring and Design Center, previously known as Mike's Carpet Connection, is safely "open for business and here to serve you" as always.

For the past 25 years, Mike Strobel has successfully provided the Delmarva area's residential homeowners, custom home builders, contractors, as well as the Main Street commercial businesses with the quality products and services.

As the company has continued to serve the area through this unfortunate time, Strobel has also taken the time to refresh and update the inside of his showroom, continue to educate his staff in the areas of his business, and has decided to change the name of his business to "Mike's Flooring and Design Center."

Mike's has always offered more floor covering choices (ceramic/porcelain tile, hardwood, waterproof luxury vinyl planks and tiles, laminate, vinyl, custom window treatments, and interior design services) than just carpet, so Strobel saw it as a good time to make these improvements and reopen as "Mike's Flooring and Design Center."

Mike's Flooring and Design Center also provides "shop at home" service.

Staff will bring samples directly to a client's home. Or, if a customer knows what products they want, staff can safely provide them with a free estimate.

This allows clients the flexibility of not having to be at home for Mike's to do an estimate, nor the installation.

All Mike's needs to know is what areas in the home they would be working on and how they can gain access.

This service is tailored around the homeowner who needs to get their unit ready for the season or simply enhancing their residence but does not want to leave their home, or can't make it to town.

This service is not new to Mike's. He has been providing it for the past 24 years.

Contact Mike's Flooring and Design Center of Fenwick Island, Delaware, at 302-537-1899, visit www.mikesflooringanddesigncenter.com or email mike@mikesflooringanddesigncenter.com.

www.baysideoc.com



Mike Strobel, owner of Mike's Flooring and Design Center in Fenwick, Delaware, is open for business with several safety precautionary measures for the protection of his customers and employees.



MARY COOPER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Mike's Flooring and Design Center in Fenwick, Delaware, will be offering "shop at home" services that allow customers to have samples sent directly to their homes.

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Mike's Flooring and Design Center, previously known as Mike's Carpet Connection is safely "OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND HERE TO SERVE YOU" as always. For the safety of our fellow citizens and employees, we will continue to follow the social distancing guidelines set forth by the CDC. We also provide "SHOP AT HOME" service and can safely provide you with a "FREE ESTIMATE". This allows you the flexibility of not having to be at home for us to do an estimate, nor the installation. We have already been providing this service for our customers for the past 24 years. With the current situation at hand, we can continue to provide you with your Floor Covering and/or Window Treatment & Design needs

Mike's Hooring & Design Center along with the "AWESOME SERVICE YOU DESERVE, and PROFESSIONAL, QUALITY INSTALLATIONS". Please feel free to contact us at 800-298-9470, or email us at mike@mikesflooringanddesigncenter.com and we will be more than happy to assist you with your project.

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OPA directors vote to retain PPP loan in closed session

Continued from Page 1

amine the loan application process,

Qualifying as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, the OPA applied prior to the first round of federal assistance being depleted on April 16 and had funds deposited through loan processors the Bank of Ocean City on April 21. Since that time, the PPP rules were revised to exclude 501(c)(4) entities.

Under the PPP guidelines, loan amounts used for payroll costs are forgivable, as well as less than 25 percent of awarded sums for mortgage interest, rent, and utility costs incurred before Feb. 15 and paid over the eight-week period after loan receipt. Funding not qualifying for grant status becomes a two-year loan at 1 percent.

OPA President Doug Parks said the unanticipated PPP rules change prompted multiple conversations with tax attorneys with Lerch, Early & Brewer, in addition to representatives from the Bank of Ocean City who also consulted with federal officials.

"They confirmed with their contact at SBA," he said. "If you were approved, the terms and conditions that were in place are the ones that take precedent."

The closed session on May 12 was originally slated to examine ongoing economic impacts from the covid-19 pandemic and potential staffing ramifications for OPA employees.

Board member Frank Daly, who also withdrew a motion to authorize General Manager John Viola to apply for emergency aid at the county, state and federal during the current state of emergency in Maryland, expressed hesitancy to jump directly into closed session.

"I feel like the primary discussion is about the PPP loan, it's not about staffing or layoffs," he said.

Daly said OPA membership should be privy to the conversation, with board members Camilla Rogers and Tom Janasek backing that sentiment.

Taking a different slant was OPA Treasure Larry Perrone. "The discussion and decision we're going to make here are going to directly impact our employees," he said.

Perrone said OPA leadership should vet the topic privately before sharing details in public.

"I don't think it's appropriate for us to have these discussions and then let the employees wonder what, in fact, is going to happen," he said.

In agreement with Perrone was board member Dr. Colette Horn.

"It would be difficult for us to have a free-wheeling discussion in open session about the alternatives that we face and are going to undoubtedly directly impact employees," she said.

Horn said in lieu of stifling the conversation the result could be shared after closed session.

"I think transparency can come at the end of the meeting [when] we can fully disclose to the membership the decision we've made and the rationale," she said.

While expressing mixed sentiments, Daly noted revenue and expense issues should be a public matter.

"In open session we should discuss ... the reason that we applied for the loans for any shortfall that we see," he said.

Still, Daly also concurred that debating the merits of accepting the loan in closed session would allow a more robust process.

"Depending on which way we go, we might get into some personnel issues that merit a closed session," he said.

Parks, while noting Maryland HOA laws allow personnel issues to be handled in closed session, agreed that fiscal issues should be open.

"We should provide a financial update to avoid any suspicion or misinformation regarding the process," he said.

Parks also said conversations about pending personnel decisions are still hypothetical.

"The decision now is keep or return See LEGALITY Page 16





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Flood seminar preaches proactive measures

Continued from Page 3 and financial institutions.

Guignet said regional perspective is available through the Maryland DFIRM Outreach Program's Flood Risk Application available online at mdfloodmaps.net.

"FEMA's site is one size fits all for 50 states in the country," he said.

Natural resource planner for the MDE, Kevin Wagner, who manages FEMA's Community Assistance Program in Maryland, told the Facebook audience that the principal questions about flood risks related to reducing risks and insurance rates.

Wagner said the mantra of floodplain management and mitigation experts is, "know risk, reduce risk [and] insure risk."

"In Maryland, we have developed a floodplain management ordinance, which we share out to all of our communities," he said. "Worcester County has taken the ordinance and adopted nearly all of it."

Wagner said Worcester revised its floodplain management ordinance in June 2015 to meet or exceed National Flood Insurance Program minimum requirements.

To reduce the risk of flooding-related water damage, Wager offered tips for new construction or home remodeling projects.

"There are things that you can do during construction that can essentially mitigate or reduce the impacts of flooding," he said.

Wagner said builders should ideally employ flood damage-resistant materials, such as cement, brick, tile, marinegrade plywood or sprayed polyurethane foam insulation.

"Basically, anything that if it were to get wet or saturated it's not going to ... break down and fail or grow mold," he said.

Other flood mitigation measures Wagner mentioned were installing backflow prevention valves.

"If you're connected to a sewage system and there is a flood, you need a way to prevent the water from all that pressure pushing the waste back up through the pipes," he said.

Further flood preparedness steps include elevating HVAC units and utilities, along with anchoring outside fuel tanks and accessory structures to prevent them was being carried away during extreme weather.

"We've seen many times these things floating off and causing problems in culverts," he said.

Wagner also stressed the importance for property owners to obtain an elevation certification. "Oftentimes this is required during the permitting process, but if not, it's something that is really important on the flood insurance rating side," he said.

Maryland requires a licensed surveyor to approve elevation certifications for existing structures, Wager said.

To assure readiness for severe weather events, Wager said residents need to make a plan, build an emergency supply kit and stay informed of developing forecasts. Wager said preparation information is available online at ready.gov/plan

Closing the presentation was flood insurance specialist Walt McGuckin, FEMA Region III Manager.

"A flood insurance policy will allow you to at least recoup what you lost," he said. "It's not going to make you whole."

McGuckin said while homeowner's policies might cover some common types of water damage, there are limits.

"Most homeowners insurance polices exclude damage from flooding," he said. McGuckin said FEMA's flood insur-

ance is a top option available for prop-

erty owners in need of flood coverage

"The NFIP policy ... is available virtually anywhere for virtually any type of building and or its contents," he said. "Non-NFIP options may be available but you need to check with your insurance agent."

While nearly all homeowners can buy flood insurance, McGuckin said it is required for properties in high risk or, special flood hazard areas, as well as for federally backed or regulated mortgage loans.

Regardless of proximity to flood prone areas, McGuckin said all property owners should investigate related insurance coverage.

"Changing weather patterns and more intense rainfall events frequently result in damage outside of the high risk or special flood hazard area," he said. "It's no longer if, it's when."

For additional information, visit the following online resources noted during the seminar: FEMA Map Service Center at https://msc.fema.gov/portal; Maryland DFIRM Outreach Program at http://mdfloodmaps.net; and National Flood Insurance Program at www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program.



Berlin budget public comments due by Tues.

By Morgan Pilz

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Berlin residents who want to mail or email questions or concerns for next Tuesday's hearing on the town's proposed budget for next fiscal year have two options for having their comments heard.

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood and Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen reminded residents that the deadline to submit written questions for next Tuesday's hearing are Friday for regular mail and noon Tuesday for email.

During the last public hearing,



which was held on Facebook live on Monday, May 11, the public was allowed to ask questions for 15 minutes, though few actually did that.

"What we did last time for the public hearing aspect, we did allow folks to make their comments on the Facebook

page, and then we would entertain those questions," Bohlen said. "[However], if you take a look at the

comments from that meeting, 68

there's maybe two questions," Fleetwood added.

According to Fleetwood and Bohlen, few people have participated in town government's sessions since the Facebook live meetings began in April.

However, even if residents don't send in questions or comments, they will be able to ask questions during the meeting, although those questions must be pertinent to the budget draft only and can only be done during the public hearing section of the meeting.

"We will hold it the same way we

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did it the last time, during the public hearing portion of the meeting,' Bohlen said.

Meeting packets were set to be posted on the town's website by the close of the business on Wednesday. Residents can use this packet to formulate any questions they might have about the budget. The packet can be found at https://berlinmd.gov/government/council-meetings/.

Questions can be emailed to info@berlinmd.gov, and should use M&C Comments as the subject line. Comments and concerns can also be faxed to 410-641-2316.

Letters can be mailed to the Berlin Town Hall at 10 Williams St., Berlin, MD 21811 with the subject listed as "M&C Comments." Mail should be postmarked no later than the close of business on the Friday before the meeting to help ensure delivery is on time.

Old engine to be used for scraps

Continued from Page 4

20 times during the summer. The second engine had failed after running for eight consecutive days as a result of high temperatures.

Peak-shaving is a way for town ratepayers to save money because, by using the local generators, the electric utility has to purchase less power from providers. Typically, the town saves around \$550,000 per year using peak shaving.

The failure happened when the department was running peak shaving times. The engine typically runs from about 2-6 p.m.

When the engine failed, four backup generators that combined generate two megawatts, also provided by Carter Machinery, were temporarily installed to offset the loss.

The new engine will run on natural gas instead of diesel like the other three engines, he added. Diesel fuel costs \$2.30 a gallon as opposed to \$1.80 for natural gas.

"It's important to us about the emissions into the air," Lawrence said. "The Department of the Environment, they've been involved in this since the beginning. The census of power plants, which involves emissions, we contacted them to tell them we wanted to go with natural gas and get away from diesel, which they were very pleased with, and that got [greenlit] pretty quickly."

The engine that failed in July will remain in the power plant as scrap metal, Lawrence added. In the event another engine is in need of parts like wires, gears or other important pieces, working parts will be removed from the failed engine as replacements, which will save the town money in replacement part costs.

OPA treasurer looks at financial challenges

By Greg Ellison

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Following the OPA Board of Directors' unanimous vote last Tuesday to keep \$1.143 million in Payroll Protection Program funding, OPA Treasurer Larry Perrone spoke two days later about the fiscal challenges faced during the covid-19 pandemic.

Perrone said the OPA, which was notified PPP funds were deposited through the Small Business Administration on April 21, has until June 21 to spend the money.

"That money will cover salaries for full-time employees, plus the additional 25 percent we're able to use it for," he said. "The money that we received enables us to keep all of our full-time employees employed."

Of the vote last Thursday to keep the money, Perrone said, "The meeting the other night was to go back over all the information that has developed since that time and to decide if we were going to keep the money," he said. "We didn't have to take a vote, but we all agreed yes we need the money."

Perrone said the OPA also confirmed comparable entities in the region were also applying for PPP funding.

"There are other homeowner associations and condo associations that have received PPP money," he said. "We're not here on our own."

Perrone said the rationale for seeking



the PPP money, which is forgivable if used for mandated expenses, primarily salaries, was to retain staff.

"The PPP loan/grant has allowed us to move forward for the two-month period

and not have to lay anybody off," he said. "What happens after June 21 we have to wait and see."

Looking ahead, the financial picture appears bleak, he said, with significant losses anticipated in dining operations plus the OPA Golf Course and recently completed Clubhouse building.

"There were ... many banquets and weddings that were all cancelled during April, May and June because you can't have those things," he said. "On top of that, we've lost at least \$400,000 in golf packages."

Besides still awaiting roughly \$4 million of more than \$9 million in annual assessments, with the May 1 deadline extended 90 days because of the current health emergency, other fiscal uncertainties exist.

"Assessments ... is only 60 percent of the budget," he said. "The other 40 percent comes from revenue and grants that we get from the county and various places."

At this time, the board doesn't know if the OPA will receive its entire annual

operational grant from Worcester County.

"We know that our grants are already impacted and we're not going to get all of it," he said. "It may be locked into a budget but that doesn't mean you're going to get the money."

Reduced funding for road repairs covered by casino revenues is also anticipated.

"We're fully expecting that number to be reduced too because they're not doing any business over there," he said. "That doesn't effect employee salaries but that's just another example of how this whole thing is effecting revenue."

Perrone also noted that using funds in replacement and capital reserve accounts is not feasible.

"We don't have an operational reserve account," he said. "We have a replacement reserve account that is not designated for operations."

Under the OPA bylaws, the board is permitted to assign reserve account funds to offset operational deficits with a super majority vote.

Perrone estimated the replacement reserve account would end fiscal 2019/2020, which closed on April 30, at about \$3.2 million.

"During the Brett Hill era, the thing that got us in trouble is they produced a budget that was extremely optimistic and the results never happened," he said. The outcome was artificially low assessment rates based on unrealistic revenue projections.

"When that didn't happen, the next year now we had a huge deficit and we've got to make it up with the assessments."

Perrone said about \$650,000 remains of the roughly \$1.6 million deficit incurred under the leadership of Brett Hill.

The current challenge continues to be remaining abreast of the fluid fiscal situation.

"We don't know what our deficit is going to be this coming year and even with the PPP money, we are still going to have a deficit," he said.

While the precise revenue losses can't be forecast, a negative balance is a certainty.

"I can say that with 100 percent accuracy there's going to be a deficit because our big money earning period is June, July, August and we don't know what's going to happen," he said.

With talk of a covid-19 resurgence in the fall the budgetary impacts could bleed into next year, Perrone said.

"Everyone is expecting that this thing will have a two-year impact," he said. "You have to wonder if people who normally come down to Ocean City and Ocean Pines for the summer are going to say, 'wait a second, I don't want to be involved in those crowds."



May 21, 2020

Bayside Gazette

Page 13

OPA Board seeks more candidates to meet standard

By Greg Ellison

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Ocean Pines Association Vice President Steve Tuttle is sounding the siren to solicit at least one more candidate for the 2020 Ocean Pines Association Board elec-



fies the association's requirements. Tuttle, who also serves as OPA Elections Committee board liaison, said after the application

Steve Tuttle

last Monday the total fell short to match the bylaws' requirement that the race have at least two more candidates than vacant seats.

"We need one more officially," he said. "There are currently two open positions on the board so we're trying to get at least one more candidate."

OPA President Doug Parks and Director Dr. Colette Horn, both of whom were elected to their first terms in August 2017, have filed for reelection. In addition, only one other candidate, Stuart Lakernick, has joined the contest for a seat on the seven-member board.

Tuttle, however, said time remains for interested parties to materialize.

Although a candidate workshop is planned for June 12, followed by a public forum on June 17, the dropdead date to file paperwork is July 3.

Tuttle said after July 3, election data is forwarded to ABC Printing & Mailing in Berlin and sent to association members in mid-July.

According to the bylaws, if an insufficient number of candidates file by the deadline, the responsibility for fulfilling the election requirement falls to current board membership.

"The board is then charged with the responsibility of trying to solicit at least two more candidates than the open positions," he said.

See OPA Page 15









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Snapshots



BREAD SALE

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Worcester Prep teacher Jackie Knowlton and her students hosted the annual second grade Bread Sale as part of a hands-on learning lesson combining English, science, social studies (civics and community), mathematics and philanthropy. The project is modeled like a small business, with the young entrepreneurs baking bread, selling it to Lower School classmates in a "Café" and donating the proceeds to charity. This year, the class partnered with the Bad Monkey West in Ocean City where they learned how to make and bake the bread. The students made \$773.36 and donated the proceeds evenly between Atlantic General Hospital and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.



TOP TEAM

The Stephen Decatur High School Academic Team took first place in the Eastern Shore Academic Invitational Tournament on March 6. The team coasted through competition, going undefeated and outscoring opponents 995-655. Pictured, in back, are Charlotte Vit, Jacob Vanderwerff, Grayson Wolf and Advisor Belinda Sawyer, and in front, Erin Trask, Bradley Moore, Rina Dirickson and Maxwell Ewancio.



BEST POEM

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Sixth grader Adelaide Dawkins, a student in Rhonda Walsh's class at Berlin Intermediate School, was awarded first place in the grade six poetry category in the Young Authors Contest for the Eastern Shore Literacy Association. Her poem was titled "The Four Intervals."



INDUCTED

Thirteen Worcester Prep students were inducted into the school's chapter of the International Thespian Society on March 5. International Thespian Society is the Educational Theatre Association's student organization to recognize high school student achievement in theatre. Pictured, in front, from left are Natalie Foxwell, Waverly Choy, Summer Walker, Lexi Willey and Hannah Perdue; middle row, Bryn Elliott, Will Mears, Nathan Oltman, Chipper Becker and Joseph Schwartz; and in back, Upper School Dance/Drama Director Paulette DeRosa-Matrona, Cole Lamson-Reich, Daniel Chen, Teague Quillin, Middle/Upper School Music Director Christopher Buzby.



DONATION

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Free State Corvette Club donated the proceeds of its 2019 Corvette Weekend in Ocean City to Worcester County GOLD on March 13. Pictured, from left, are Jerry and Carol Apicella of the Free State Corvette Club, and Sandy Sipes and Nicholas Cranford, representing Worcester GOLD.

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Pines recreation reopening timeline remains unknown

By Greg Ellison

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Despite Gov. Larry Hogan easing Maryland into the first phase of recovery from the covid-19 health safety restrictions last week, the picture remains hazy for playgrounds and pool facilities in Ocean Pines to resume activities.

Speaking on Tuesday, Recreation and Parks Manager Debbie Donahue said in addition to consulting with General Manager John Viola this week, a meeting is scheduled on Thursday with the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association.

"Mr. Viola does not make the decisions alone," she said. "It is a joint effort of everyone that is involved with as much background information ... to do the right thing for everybody."

Donahue said after the flood of visitors to Ocean City last weekend following the lifting of short-term rental restrictions, numerous residents have questioned when playgrounds and parks would be reopened in Ocean Pines.

"That's Ocean City [and] they allowed that to happen," she said. "We are taking the precautions that we need to take to keep everybody safe."

While appreciative that parents are challenged to find activities for children with pent-up energy, Donahue noted the importance of adhering to pandemic-related health regulations since the majority of Pines residents are seniors.

"I understand that you have a child and you want to get back out there and play with them," she said. "That playground is a giant neon sign."

Precise timing and procedures adopted to reopen playgrounds, however, remain undefined, with Donahue pointing out that current state



guidelines still limit public gatherings to 10 people.

"I can not regulate seven playgrounds with 10 people at a time," she said. "Playgrounds may be in the third phase ... de-

pending on what [Hogan] decides are the numbers."

Donahue also envisions limiting exposure to contaminated surfaces on swings and slides would be problematic.

"As soon as they touch the first thing, it's contaminated so then I've got to clean it," she said. "It's not an easy decision [but] nothing right now is an easy decision."

Director of Amenities and Operational Logistics Colby Phillips said comparable challenges are involved with resuming affairs at the pool facilities.

"Our hope is to be able to start out with classes for adults and children, as well as lap swimming, following the social distancing guidelines and maximum number of occupants allowed," she said. "The [Worcester County] Health Department is keeping us closely informed, and as we find out more information we will share with the community."

Phillip said the aquatics team is working with health department officials and regional pool operators to develop reopening scenarios.

"Safety is our number one concern at the pools always, and should we be able to open, in any type of capacity, we will follow strict guidelines on sanitizing, as well as other processes put in place," she said.

Head-count restrictions on public See OP Page 17

OPA Board candidates sought

Continued from Page 13

The board is executing a twopronged approach to do that, starting with a press release penned by Tuttle posted on the OPA website and emailed to association members, followed by a direct outreach campaign.

"I know other board members have talked to a couple people they know and asked them to consider running," he said. "Beyond that, there's not a whole not you can do if people don't want to step up and run."

The hope is other qualifying association members recognize and appreciate the opportunity to contribute and perform a true community service.

"If there were a couple more that showed up that would be fine," he said. "It's always good to have additional people running." To meet board membership requirements, candidates must be OPA property owners of record on Jan. 1 of the year of the election and have no unpaid annual charges as of May 15 of that year.

Applications can be downloaded from the OPA website via this link: www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/boa rd-of-directors.

The completed form should be delivered to Senior Executive Secretary Michelle Bennett at the Administration Building, no later than the close of business on July 3. Applications can be mailed, emailed or hand delivered.

The deadline for voters to submit ballots is Aug. 5, with results compiled two days later and validated during the OPA annual meeting on Aug. 8.



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Legality to keep PPP funds not in question, Parks says

'I'm sitting here looking at ...

numbers that are based on the

could throw together.'

OPA Treasure Larry Perrone

Continued from Page 8

the money," he said. "There's a lot of what-if scenarios in there, which include staffing, [that] I will not discuss in public.³

Janasek questioned the need to examine personnel matters behind the scenes.

"There's not an employee in America that's not worried about losing their job," he said. "I thought our discussion was going to be whether we are legally bound to keep or return the money.'

Parks said, short of further changes, the legality of keeping the PPP funds is not in question.

"It's not a money grab, it's a business decision on

how we can run our operations," he said. Despite having

ture federal guidebe could lines enacted retroactively, Janasek

agreed the loan process was legitimate.

"There is no question in my mind that we did everything correct and above board," he said.

Janasek said the funding would be needed to help maintain payroll.

We may need to raise assessments next year even with the money," he said.

Horn said one criticism leveled at the OPA regarding the PPP application was the idea that reserve funds could be tapped into to cover shortfalls.

Parks said both the capital and replacement reserve accounts are designated for specific uses under the OPA bylaws.

"It's not an operational reserve, it's not a rainy day fund, [and] it's not a slush fund," he said. "We're required to carry a reserve fund to protect the assets that we have here in Ocean Pines."

Parks said although the board can decide to appropriate reserve account balances for other expenses by a super majority vote, that option is frowned upon.

"The concept of us having millions of dollars sitting in the bank ... gathering interest and waiting for a rainy day is inaccurate at best," he said.

Perrone said the replacement reserve account is projected to be \$3.2 million at the end of April to close the OPA fiscal year, while also noting some reserve funds are already being redirected to compensate for earlier deficits.

"We've been paying off a deficit of \$1.6 million over last couple years from the prior acting general manager [Brett Hill]," he said. "We still have a

deficit of about \$650,000."

Perrone said to further muddy the reservations that fu- best set of assumptions that we financial picture, after granting a 90day extension for annual assessment fees due May 1 fol-

> lowing the covid-19 pandemic, despite netting \$5.4 million to this point, about \$4 million remains unpaid.

"As of today we've received about 60 percent of assessment dollars," he said. "Our projection is that we could be looking at a deficit by July 1 of about \$500,000."

Perrone said the challenge is reaching the best educated guess regarding future lost revenue to guide the decision on retaining PPP funding.

"I'm sitting here looking at ... numbers that are based on the best set of assumptions that we could throw together," he said.

Daly, noting the budget process is typically undertaken in January and early February based on prior year numbers, said the current health emergency has thrown normalcy askew.

"We went from one of the best economies in our lifetime ... to a Depression-level economy in 90 days," he said.



Gov. Hogan vetoes Kirwan bill

Taxes to pay for education plan also knocked down; legislation could return

By Elizabeth Bonin Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) The Blueprint for America's Future, commonly known as the Kirwan bill, was vetoed by Gov. Larry Hogan on May 7, thus sparing county governments the problem of trying to find ways to pay their share of the education improvement program when revenue is looking scarce.

The bill proposed a multi-billiondollar revamp of Maryland's public education funding based on the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. Some of the highlights of the ambitious package are free preschool for 3-and-4-year-olds living at 300 percent below the poverty level, a pay raise for teachers, college- and career-readiness standards, vocational education and allocated funding for counties.

The bill passed through the General Assembly just before it adjourned early on March 18 due to the coronavirus pandemic. If Hogan had allowed the bill to pass, Worcester County would have had to make the largest financial contribution of all



Gov. Hogan

the bill during the legislative session, citing the high price tag, lack of local control and inability to address classroom environment issues.

Maryland counties

due to its high prop-

Beth Carozza (R-38)

and Delegate Wayne

Hartman (R-38 C)

had voted against

Both Sen. Mary

erty tax base.

Worcester County Commissioner Chip Bertino said he was not surprised that Hogan vetoed the education bill.

"I think the question now is whether or not his veto will be overridden by the Democratically controlled legislature," Bertino said.

Legislative leaders stated in April that they would not reconvene in May, though they could reconvene later in the year.

Hogan's veto is because the coronavirus pandemic could have a \$2.8 billion effect on the state economy.

"The state budget and county budgets are really being stressed at this point and to have the weight of the uncertainty of Kirwan on us would be very, very challenging," Bertino said.

He added that although he agreed

Chip Bertino

"It does much better than a lot of the jurisdictions across the state and I think that's demonstrated by the fact that we spend more per student than any other jurisdiction, so I think we do a very good job," Bertino said. "As I've said before, I think the state should let us our thing down here with regard to funding.'

He also thought it was sneaky of the legislature to pass the bill so close to the legislature's adjournment.

"They got it in at the 11th hour, which was I thought was a little bit taking advantage of a very difficult situation," Bertino said.

It's likely that the bill will at least return to the legislature for the 2021 session, as the Democratic Party has stated it is a priority.

Hogan also vetoed two tax bills that were created to help pay for Kirwan – a tax on digital download and streaming and another on cigarettes and vaping.

OP recreation plan remains unknown

Continued from Page 15

gatherings have also clouded the outlook to hold larger events staged in Ocean Pines parks and facilities, such as the inaugural Celtic Fest planned for this summer.

"It's such a big event we were talking about moving it to September [but] I'm not so sure [that] might be too early," she said. "The problem is not knowing when they're going to lift the numbers."

For now, Donahue said the Celtic Fest and other community gatherings remain in a holding pattern.

"We can't book things for that big of an event and then turn around and say, 'Sorry, we're not going to be able to do it now," she said.

Donahue envisions larger gatherings being among the last restrictions lifted in Maryland.

"It all depends on when [Hogan] lifts the numbers because that's a huge capacity," she said. "They had 5,000 people in a weekend when it was held at Furnace Town.'

Donahue said the community would be updated as the reopening picture comes into focus.

"Everything that we do right now lands in the hands of the governor and government to what we can do and how many people we can have at a time," she said. "I'm doing the best I can to make the right decisions for Ocean Pines."



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with numerous aspects of Kirwan, Worcester County was already fulfilling those mandates and does an exceptional job of funding the public schools.

Wor. Tech students need votes for SkillsUSA

By Elizabeth Bonin Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Although the SkillsUSA national competition has gone virtual and most events will not take place this year, one that will be held is the safety video contest.

Nine Worcester Technical High School students collaborated to create an educational video focusing on safety for auto shop and welding. The video placed in the top 12 for the national competition.

The top 12 videos were selected by judges from CareerSafe, SkillsUSA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for round one.

For the second round, the videos have been released for public voting. The final round will combine the scores from the first two rounds.

The deadline to vote is Sunday, May 31. The winner will be announced in June during the virtual competition, but an exact date has not yet been determined.

Rick Stephens, welding teacher and lead SkillsUSA advisor for Worcester Tech in Newark, said this was the first time the school has participated in the



video contest.

"It can't be any longer than two minutes," Stephens said. "It has to show some type of scenario of safety that you're promoting in your school."

The students in the video acted out several scenarios of what can happen when proper safety precautions are not taken.

"We used the example of the pressurized tank not being in good shape," Stephens said. "If you used it, it would catch fire or blow up."

He added that working on the video was an eye-opener for the students to realize that the danger is real.

"In the welding shop, kids will tell you, we're constantly going over safety," Stephens said. "All the time we talk about it because there is a lot of potential there, and we don't want anything to happen."

Tammy Hearne, assistant SkillsUSA advisor, said that since student safety is number one, the video was a good hands-on learning opportunity. "Doing what's right and what's wrong for a safety video gives them a better aspect of looking for the unexpected," Hearne said.

She said the students were excited when they found out they qualified for nationals.

"It's a little different not being in school and having to email and text and call everybody and use the Remind app to let them know that they made the top 12, but it was a nice experience for them while they were in school to create this," Hearne said.

Like all Maryland schools, Worcester Tech has been closed since March 16 as a result of the coronavirus. The students worked on the video for about two months and submitted it at the beginning of March.

Jessica Janney, a junior at Stephen Decatur High School, is a part of the geographical information systems program at Worcester Tech and filmed the video.

She was asked to film for the SkillsUSA competition after she entered a contest within the school to create a drug safety video.

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"We started filming around the school, like in the welding classroom or the auto classroom – areas that obviously can be really dangerous and require a lot of safety precautions," Janney said. "And then I used an iPad to take all the film and put it together into the app so I can have music and sound effects and to make it into a video."

Janney said she enjoyed the opportunity to work with other people and compete nationally.

"I worked with people that I've never worked with before and I got to know more people who work in Skills at Worcester Tech," Janney said.

She added that she had never made videos before.

"Now, I make videos, even small videos at my house, all the time," Janney said. "I would say to try new things because you might find a new hobby and you might end up liking it."

She will finish the geographical information systems program next year.

To vote for the Worcester students' video, go to careersafeonline.com/vote and vote for number 11. Each device can vote once.

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Updated school calendar approved amid coronavirus

By Morgan Pilz

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) A modified 2019-2020 Worcester County Public Schools' calendar was approved by the Board of Education during its teleconference monthly meeting on Tuesday.

The Maryland State Department of Education initially closed all the state's schools from March 16-27 to limit the spread of covid-19, but on March 25 extended the closure by four weeks until April 24. On April 17, State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon announced another extension to May 15. Finally, on May 7, the state decided that schools would be closed for the rest of the semester.

Since the initial closure, students have been using online learning services so they wouldn't falling behind academically. According to Worcester County schools' Chief Operating & Academic Officer, Dr. Annette Wallace, around 98 percent of Worcester County public school students have access to the online learning system either through means of their own or hotspots acquired by the school board.

Carrie Sterrs, coordinator of public relations and special programs for Worcester County Public Schools, gave the updated calendar recommended by county Superintendent of Schools Lou Taylor.

'Mr. Taylor, our superintendent, has received a response to the school system's waiver request," Sterrs said. 'Within that response, State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon agreed to waive five of the 10 days that Maryland schools were mandated to be closed in March."

In addition to the five waived school days, the board has also approved convereting April 7-9 from closure days to "continuity of learning days.'

"This has left a gap of two student instructional days, which the school system needs to address through a final modification," Sterrs said.

The school board's recommendation is to end the school year for students on Friday, June 12 and Monday, June 15. Sterrs said this was the same end date as previously approved on the original school calendar.

"We have left June 12 and 15 as early dismissal days for our students, as this will allow teachers to utilize this time to close out the school year and finalize grades for both quarter four and semester," she said.

which is why we came

up with these celebra-

tions that will happen

over the next couple

of weeks, but we need

our community and

our seniors to also

2019 - 2020 SCHOOL SYSTEM CALENDAR

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED CALENDAR MODIFICATION MAY 19, 2020 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

			MAY			25	Closed: Memorial Day		
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
31									
	JUNE					2	Closed for Students:		
S	Μ	Т	W	Th	F	S		Countywide PD Day, Primary Election Day	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	12 - 15	Early Dismissal Days for Students	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13		Students	
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PHOTO COURTESY CARRIE STERRS

This updated Worcester County Public Schools 2019-2020 calendar reflects the changes made as a result of the coronavirus pandemic closing Maryland schools for the remainder of the year.

WCPS high school graduations get creative

Board of Education and teachers plan to celebrate seniors with virtual events

By Ally Lanasa Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) With the May 6 announcement that public schools in Maryland would be closed for the remainder of the academic year, administrators at Worcester County high schools have developed new graduation schedules to honor the 2020 seniors.

Chief Operations & Academic Officer for Worcester County Public Schools (grades 9-12) and Chairperson of the Graduation Committee Dr. Annette Wallace said the district level graduation committee will recognize the seniors at the three high schools with a virtual celebration.

A local videographer and graduate of Worcester County public schools will film the Stephen Decatur, Pocomoke and Snow Hill commencement ceremonies.

All of the graduates will receive a copy of the video and it will be uploaded to social media to have a watch party at a later date.

"We have heard our seniors' voices that they want to celebrate together,



Annette Wallace

recognize that our No. 1 priority is their safety and our No. 2 priority is celebrating them," Wallace said. "We have to keep them safe first, and that's something that school administrators-regardless if we're living in a pandemic or not-the truth is, safety really is first."

In addition, each high school is planning senior activities that adhere to social distancing protocol. The high schools have their own graduation committees and have received feedback from students and parents about how to celebrate.

"The graduation events aren't just commencement, and I think we all probably get caught up in commencement because that's the biggest one, but we have our senior awards nights and each of our schools is going to be celebrating those differently," Wallace said. "Our communities partner with us to do a baccalaureate service, so each of our three high schools is going to be doing something virtually with that as well."

Stephen Decatur High School has shifted to several virtual events, including the online baccalaureate spearheaded by Pastor Dan Turing and a radio broadcast of school-based senior awards.

The Bill Baker and Jessica Show on Power 101.7 was slated to play the award ceremony with interviews and shout-outs from 6-10 a.m. on May 19.

A video of the awards ceremony will also be uploaded to Decatur's social media. "We're creating a YouTube video of all the teachers giving their awards, which I think is great for our students to be able to see their teacher they are getting the award from," Principal Thomas Sites said. "It's usually the department chairs who will give out a lot of these awards to clubs [and] to different organizations through the school.'

For the first time, Decatur will host a Boardwalk commencement parade.

"Our graduation ceremony has always been in the [Roland E. Powell] Convention Center," Sites said. "It's a great ceremony. We have them up on the platform, on the stage. We give 10 tickets per student, so there's upwards of 2,500 to 3,000 people in there, but of course with what's going on today that is not a possibility."

Seniors asked Sites to avoid a virtual commencement. The Decatur administration considered how a class of 295 students could gather while practicing social distancing.

With a Boardwalk parade, the students would remain in their cars but still be physically together to meet the students' desires.

"We've been working on this for about three weeks now, trying to figure out the best way that we could recognize our seniors and make it special for them," Sites said.

Sites was inspired by students in Florida, who are crossing the finish line in their cars at Daytona 500 and receiving their diplomas.

"I thought, 'Wow that is neat. That's neat to them because that's where the speed race is located. What's our unique thing we have around here?' We have the Boardwalk, known throughout the region and really the country, so this was our way of doing it."

With the Ocean City Boardwalk and beach reopening on May 9, Sites said "It kind of fell in place.'

A date and time for the parade is to be announced.

Although the 2020 Decatur grad-See CELEBRATION Page 22



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Celebrations include parades, ceremonies

Continued from Page 20

uating class is not having a traditional commencement ceremony, the students will receive their caps and gowns.

On Friday, May 22, regalia will be distributed to students while they stay in their cars.

Similar to Decatur, Pocomoke High School has scheduled a regalia pickup day for Thursday, May 21. Seniors will wear their caps and gowns for modified outdoor commencement ceremonies from May 26-28.

The students will participate in staggered graduations that comply with social distancing rules, such as scheduling the students 10 to 15 minutes apart, said Principal Jennifer Rayne.

Rayne and her 92 seniors have pri-

oritized upholding the school's traditions during these unprecedented times.

The soon-to-be graduates gave the Pocomoke administration a wish list of three items that would make their commencement memorable and incorporate customs.

"One was that they wanted to be able to graduate before the end of the school year, and I appreciate that. I understand that many of them want closure and that also keeps it as normal as possible," Rayne said. "The other thing that was on our seniors' wish list is that they cross the stage and have that traditional experience. And then finally, the last piece was that they wanted to celebrate together and celebrate with the community."

To fulfill the graduates' final re-

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quest a senior car parade around Pocomoke City is in the works.

"The parade, which is going to be our culminating event, is going to be the opportunity for our seniors to celebrate together, celebrate each other and for the community to recognize them," Rayne said.

The date has yet to be determined, as the Pocomoke administration awaits changes in the social distancing and stay-at-home orders.

Likewise, Snow Hill High School's car parade, coined 'A Little Pomp Under the Circumstances' for the graduation song, is pending approval.

As for its commencement, Snow Hill is planning a staggered outdoor ceremony called 'Soaring through Graduation.'

The 66 graduating students will drive to the school, exit their vehicles

to participate in a video recording inside the facility, then walk across the outdoor stage to receive their diplomas.

Families will have the opportunity to take photos, then the new graduates will turn their tassels. Then, they will be asked to return to their vehicles and exit the venue.

Students who are waiting their turn will be able to blow their horns and celebrate their classmates, said Dr. Kimberly Purvis, principal of Snow Hill.

"One of our visions was to meet the needs of our students and our families by providing a commencement exercise that would give parents and students two things and that would be a face-to-face encounter as well as recognition and celebration among some of their classmates," said Purvis.

In addition, Snow Hill planned to host a virtual senior awards ceremony on Wednesday, May 20 at 6 p.m. and a virtual baccalaureate on Wednesday, May 27 at 6 p.m., both via Zoom.

"We will have community presenters at our graduate awards night," Purvis said. "This is giving the opportunity to organizations to see the students they awarded, and the students will be able to thank those organizations for investing in them."

As the local high schools adjust their graduation plans, throughout Maryland there has been debate about the 54-page recovery plan, which State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon released on May 6, that details the possibilities for the state's schools when they reopen.

"I think that the recovery plan has caused quite a stir ... The recovery plan doesn't start in September," Wallace said. "There isn't a start date on the recovery plan, so we are very hopeful that the recovery plan is going to start this summer."

Currently, Worcester County Public Schools is developing a recovery committee, Wallace said.

'We'll have a district level team ... when it's appropriate [we'll be] bringing in some stakeholders, our parents, and probably likely some of our students to get some feedback from them about what some of our thoughts are," Wallace said. "But, certainly, as we move forward in [recovery], our most vulnerable students are at the forefront of our minds. Our struggling learners are at the forefront of our minds, and then also providing opportunities for advancement and enrichment for our high performing students, so we are committed to producing a very comprehensive recovery plan."

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Buckingham students draw 'can't wait to do' activities

By Morgan Pilz

Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) The Town of Berlin created an art project with Buckingham Elementary School for children to show what activities they look forward to once the shelter in place order is fully lifted.

The project, called "What I Can't Wait to Do" allows students from pre-K to fourth grade to draw activities or places they want to visit in the summer. Once enough drawings are collected, the pictures will be posted online at the Town of Berlin Facebook and Instagram pages.

"We reached out to art teacher Melissa Reid at Buckingham Elementary School and had her ask her students to draw a picture of what they couldn't wait to do in Berlin when the shelter in place was lifted," Economic & Community Development Director Ivy Wells said. "Those that have participated will have their drawings featured on social media next week."

Wells said she and Reid created the project as a way for the children to remain positive.

"We wanted the kids to focus on something positive, [something] to look forward to," she said. "We wanted them to express that through their art."

Reid loved the idea and all of her students are invited to participate throughout the month of May.

"The Town of Berlin and Buckingham have done some sort of drawing contests in the past," Reid said. "We've done some collaborations where Buckingham students will create different drawings based on different subjects. And then Ivy usually puts them physically on display in the windows of the Chamber of Commerce building. This is a little different, obviously, because we are doing distance learning."

Reid videotaped herself providing an art lesson for her students to observe through the school's online learning service called Schoology. She then encouraged students to send screenshots of their work to her to be used for the project.

"The response has been amazing," she said. "Every week when I have the art lessons, students are always encouraged to upload a photograph of their artwork to this class. We got so many projects back ... so many kids took photographs of their artwork and then uploaded them."

As of earlier this week, Reid estimates she has received around 30 uploads and expects to receive more as the month progresses. The most com-

Your Online Community: www.baysideoc.com mon drawing has been of children enjoying ice cream from Island Creamery.

"Some drew Main Street Deli with their snow cones, another wants to visit World of Toys," she said. "Then somebody else drew a picture of them riding their bikes at Stephen Decatur Park."

Another piece was already uploaded to Facebook, which shows a young girl looking forward to visiting Robin Tomaselli, who owns Baked Dessert Café.

Reid looks forward to seeing more of her students' works being displayed online. Due to the virus, no physical copies are being kept or displayed throughout the town.

"We're always happy to partner with the town of Berlin because again, since Buckingham is right in the middle of Berlin, it's nice that our kids understand that they are part of this larger community and that they're that their voices are valued and that their artwork is valued," Reid said. "What they're interested in and the way they are connected with the community is something that the adults want to see and hear."

The art work will be available starting next week on the town social media pages.

Frank in the set ice creating the behing the set ice creating the set ice creating

This picture created by Buckingham Elementary School first grader Casey Lynch tells a story about looking forward to ice cream in the summertime.

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Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday.

Honoring heroes who take risks for others

(Excerpted from an American Legion speech)

Every crisis has new heroes. During the 9/11 attacks, they were the first responders running into burning and crumbling buildings as others ran out. Now, during the Coronavirus pandemic, the most visible heroes are the health care professionals, who are saving others and risking their own lives while doing so.

These heroes have much in common with the people that we honor today – America's fallen veterans. They are men and women who have sacrificed their own lives so others could live. They are both elite and ordinary. They are elite in the sense of character. Giving your life so others could live is the ultimate definition of selfless.

They are ordinary in the fact that they represent the diverse fabric of our country. They are rich and poor, black and white, male and female. They come from every ethnicity and background. In short, they looked like anyone of us.

As we celebrate the selfless and untiring performances of the healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it brings to mind the military medics, doctors and nurses who sacrificed their lives while treating others on the battlefield.

Approximately one million men and women of the U.S. military have lost their lives in defense of our nation since the founding of this great republic.

Not all have died from enemy fire. Some have died from diseases that have too often festered around war zones. Often times, deaths from disease and accidents outnumbered casualties caused by enemy weapons.

Even when the enemy is an invisible virus or a microscopic germ, the sacrifices made are just as meaningful. The U.S. military has already lost servicemembers to covid-19.

This Memorial Day as we continue to honor those who fell for us in battle, let's also pause to remember those who have also sacrificed their lives while serving others.

May God bless them and may God bless you for remembering them here today.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EMS week honors today, looks forward

Editor,

In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS clinicians and the important work they do in our nation's communities.

This year, May 17-23, has been designated EMS Week; this year's theme is Ready Today. Preparing for Tomorrow.

Those words reflect what individual EMS professionals and organizations do every day as they respond to calls for help at any time and in any place. They also represent a more global meaning that encompasses the entire profession. As we enter a new decade, we also look ahead to the future of prehospital care—a future that includes dramatic improvements in patient care, thanks to advances in research, information sharing and lifechanging technology.

As the future unfolds, though, EMS will continue to be mostly about people. In 2020, we honor the young and enthusiastic EMS clinicians who are the future of the profession, and whose commitment to their education is preparing them to be tomorrow's leaders.

We also recognize the dedicated EMS veterans who have spent years serving our community but continue to work hard to ensure they're ready for what today and tomorrow might bring.

The Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department responded to 2,060 calls for service in 2019, every one of them different from the last.

We are proud of our Paramedic/Firefighter clinicians, and the outstanding care they provide 24/7 to our community.

We salute our clinicians for being ready every day and preparing for the challenges of the future. Please join me in thanking our EMS for the exceptional work they do and wishing them a Happy EMS Week!

Steven Grunewald Fire Chief

OPA financial data delayed for April

(May 21, 2020) Ocean Pines Director of Finance and Operational Logistics Steve Phillips issued the following statement earlier this week about posting of the April 2020 monthly financial report: "April's internal financials will not be available on the 13th business day, in order to allow for adequate time for accounts payable to remain open and capture all fiscal year expenditures," he said. "Internal financials will likely be available to the public approximately June 1."

General Manager John Viola added that unprecedented situations related to the covid-19 pandemic also contributed to the expected delay.

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Worcester gets broadband grant for schools

By Elizabeth Bonin Staff Writer

(May 21, 2020) Worcester County Public Schools will receive a \$32,750 Emergency Broadband Education Assistance grant from the Governor's Office of Rural Broadband and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Board of Public Works approved the grant request as Maryland schools have been distance learning since the end of March.

On May 6, it was announced that schools will be closed for the rest of the

year.

According to a press release from Sen. Mary Beth Carozza (R-38) the funding will be used for exterior wireless access points on Worcester school buildings.

"Students, teachers, and parents are facing challenges when it comes to finding new ways to learn from home and finding other accessible online sites to be utilized," Carozza said in the release. "This grant is so important to rural areas

on the Shore and ensuring that my constituents have access to broadband remains one of my top priorities."

She added that this will benefit students without internet access because they can complete work in a vehicle near an access point.

Superintendent Lou Taylor said he was grateful for the grant.

"As a rural county with broad socioeconomic dynamics, it is imperative that we can provide equitable access to reliable internet connectivity for continuity of learning," Taylor said. "We hope that these wireless access points will be able to provide another avenue of reaching those families that struggle with finding reliable connectivity."

As of the end of April, Worcester schools had a 96 percent attendance rate for online learning. The school system has also given out 600 hotspots for families with students who are in dire need of internet access.

If internet connectivity is still not available to the students, schools have been providing printed copies of the materials. Since schools will not reopen, arrangements will be made to have school materials mailed to be graded.

Assateague begins to open beaches, trails

(May 21, 2020) Following guidance from the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local public health authorities, Assateague Island National Seashore is increasing recreational access to beaches and nature trails.

The National Park Service (NPS) is working service wide with federal, state and local public health authorities to closely monitor the covid-19 pandemic and using a phased approach to gradually increase access on a park-by-park basis.

Beginning May 17, Assateague Island National Seashore restored access to recreational beaches, parking areas and restrooms at North Beach, South Beach, Ferry Landing and Bayside Peninsula, and nature trails in the Maryland District.

For the Maryland District Over Sand Vehicle Zone (OSV) valid OSV permits are required. OSV permit sales will be available at the Maryland District visitor contact/ranger station.

For more information, visit www.nps.gov/asis/planyourvisit/osv.htm. With public health in mind, the follow-

ing facilities remain closed at this time: Assateague Island National Seashore

Visitor Center in the Maryland District and the Toms Cove Visitor Center in the Virginia District, as well as all front country and backcountry campgrounds.

While most outdoor areas will be accessible for visitors to enjoy, a return to full operations will continue to be phased in and visitor services will be limited.

When recreating, the public should follow local area health orders, maximize physical distance from each other, avoid crowding in all areas, limit gatherings to less than 10 individuals and practice "Leave No Trace" principles.

The CDC has offered guidance to help people recreating in parks and open spaces to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Sick or vulnerable individuals should stay home.

Assateague staff will continue to monitor all park functions to ensure that visitors adhere to CDC guidance for mitigating risks associated with the transmission of covid-19 and take any additional steps necessary to protect public health.

For people who are still home schooling or not traveling at this time, check out the virtual tours at Find Your "Virtual" Park!

Details and updates on park operations will continue to be posted on its website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. Updates about NPS operations will be posted on www.nps.gov/coronavirus.

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Cuisine Suplee's special mustard sauce for claws

(May 21, 2020) Once again, Capt. Sonny comes through for the win! I know I write about the champions of



the sea perhaps too much, but one of my favorite parts of living down here is driving to the commercial docks for dinner.

By Paul Suplee, MBA, CEC, PC-3

dinner. Whether it is day-boat scallops, rockfish, sea bass, lobster or stone crab

claws, it is always a treat as you know it is fresh out of the ocean.

And truth be told, I had no idea that they were catching stone crabs in the Washington. You truly learn something every day.

And as the notification came in from the Skilligalee that they had the claws, I was dressed and in my truck, still half-soaked from getting ready in the morning.

After some near-death experiences on Route 50 with the construction as well as a feisty ATM machine, I was pleased to get to the docks before they ran out.

Securing my haul at an overly-reasonable rate, I met a friend from Annapolis for a small hand-off and then went home and cooked and chilled them.

I've had stone crab claws plenty of times in Florida, but I wanted to play a bit with these. I didn't steam them. I quasi-steamed them in a bath of beer, water and Old Bay.

When they were done, I served them with a mustard sauce that I think stands up to any that you may have had on the panhandle.

And if truth be told, and I think it should, I had some of my lime-cinlantro crema in the icebox from last week's carryout dinner and I just threw some yellow mustard in there. And I was in love.

And when I say in love, I mean in love. This sauce is fantastic! As we strive to open our new concept of a market (sit down, take out, prepared foods, etc.), I will definitely make this a hallmark on the new menu. And yes, I am touting it that much. As I am fond of saying, "#stayhumble."

So as you wander through the day, start following the commercial fishermen in the harbor, get their notifications and definitely support local. These men and women work harder than most of us ever will.

The beauty is that we get to stuff



ourselves with fresh, healthy and beautiful seafood in the thick of it.

Stone Crab Claws

for 5 pounds-worth

5 lb. fresh stone crab claws, cleaned 2 c. Water

1 bottle beer

Old Bay, as desired (don't shoot me, Floridians)

2 c. mustard sauce (recipe follows)

2 c. lemon brown butter (recipe follows)

Old Bay, as needed

• Scrub the claws, as they can be a bit dirty when they are fresh.

• Bring the water, beer and Old Bay to a boil in a pot large enough to easily handle the claws.

• When at a rolling boil, throw in the claws, cover and cook for 4 1/2 minutes. Don't overcook. Some people prefer steaming them, but this has always worked for me.

• Stir them occasionally, and turn off when they are cooked through. I can tell when they're done, but feel free to crack one to check. A word of warning, though. When they are hot, they can fall apart. When they are chilled they are much easier to work with.

• Chill them completely. I put mine

in the refrigerator uncovered, and some people put them in an ice bath. For me, I don't want to lose the flavor that I cooked them in.

• When they are done, simply pull the leg and knuckle from the claw and crack open with a swift crack from a crab mallet on each side.

• If possible, keep one of the pointy shells connected to the claw for dipping, and arrange on a plate with lemon.

• Serve with the mustard sauce and butter or any sides of your choosing.

Mustard Sauce, Paul-Style

makes little more than 2 cups

2 c. crème fraiche (crema fresca at any Latin market)

Juice of 1 lime

- 2 tbsp. finely minced cilantro
- 2 tbsp. Champagne vinegar
- 2 tbsp. yellow mustard

• Don't yell at me. This is how I make it, and this is how I like it.

• Mix it all up. Adjust as you see fit.

• Commence to yell at me because you've been to Florida.

Lemon Brown Butter

makes about 1 ¹/₂ cups 1 lb. whole unsalted butter

Juice and rind of 1 lemon 2 Tbsp. trimix

• Place the butter in a saucepan and heat on medium.

• Butter in a water/fat emulsion, so as you melt it, the butter will separate into several layers.

• Let the butter be. If you want to be a purist and remove the foam from the top, please feel free. I leave it there and strain it later.

• As the butter melts and the water boils, it will evaporate through the fat. This is when the fun stuff happens.

• The milk solids will start to brown once they are frying in the fat, and that is what gives the brown butter that magical essence.

• At this point, add the lemon and trimix and cook until you can smell the beautiful aroma of brown butter, lemon, pepper and garlic all in the same waft.

• Strain through the finest strainer that you have, or cheesecloth (pre-ferred).

• Keep warm until ready to serve.

 Paul G. Suplee is an Associate Professor of Culinary Arts at Wor-Wic Community College. Find his ePortfolio at www.heartofakitchen.com.

10

23

47

Puzzles

53

75

BORDER CROSSINGS **BY ADAM FROMM / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ**

Adam Fromm is a songwriter/musician from Brunswick, Me., who has been making puzzles "as far back as I can remember." His first published puzzle appeared in Games magazine in 2000. This one grew out of a geographical curiosity he noticed. Fun fact: Adam is a fan of Amazon Prime's "36-Down," which he was very happy to include in the grid. — W.S. ed. Fun fact: Adam is a hug

- ACROSS 1 "For more _
- 5 Some unwanted mail
- 9 Terse bit of advice
- 13 Half of an ice cream brand with a fake
- Danish name
- 19 Work up a sweat 20 Rent
- 21 Like tap water in a
- restaurant
- 22 Iris part 23 Wing it [Africa]
- 25 Blue
- 26 Chew out
- 27 Après-ski drink 28 Complete rip-off
- [Asia] 30 Barrel-flavored, as
- wine 31 Washington, D.C.
- legalized it in 2014 32 Wealthy king of
- legend
- 33 Recess
- 36 Charge for admission
- 37 See 101-Down **38** Ouaint contraction
- 41 Record company [Central America]
- 45 Two-time thirdparty presidential candidate
- 47 "The Walking Dead" channel
- 48 Beyond great
- 49 Baking measure
- 50 Cerebral
- 51 Take in
- Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles
- [Asia] nytimes.com/cro (\$39.95 a year). 102 Dismissed out of hand

98

- 106 Want badly shoots (salad ingredient) 107 Sit at a red light, sav 54 One of five for a dolphin **108** Biblical outcast [South America] 55 Supple leather 109 Exclamation from a 56 Proboscis, informally cheek pincher 58 What subjects and verbs must do 110 Org. behind the New Horizons project [Europe] 111 One whose job prospects go up in smoke? 62 Ancho pepper, before drying 65 Puzzled 112 Responsibility 66 Sort by urgency of need [Europe] 113 Biggest U.S. union, familiarly 70 Misgiving 114 Set of two 74 Where meditators 115 City north of Des look Moines 116 Resident of the Palazzo Ducale candy 76 Planet where the cry "Shazbot!" is said to have originated DOWN 79 Food-chain link 1 Hankering 80 Treats prepared on an 2 Manhattan open fire neighborhood west of the East Village 81 Part of O.E.D.: Abbr. 82 Organic fertilizer 3 Order 84 Hold up 4 Cranky codger 85 Male 91-Acrosses 5 "Reach for the sky!" 86 T-shirt size [South 6 Sandwich often served America] with rémoulade 90 Not to mention sauce 91 Forest ranger 7 Killer of the Night King on "Game of 92 Shapes made by thumbs and index Thrones" fingers 8 "Throw 93 Glossed over
- bone' 9 Key of Debussy's "Clair 52 Snack with a de Lune" 94 Like some toy cars 97 Sportage maker 10 Black pie-crust component

Cochran,

- Mississippi senator from 1978 to 2018 11 Lead-in to many a joke on "The Daily Show" 99 First month of the
 - year without a U.S. federal holiday 12 Senator who once served as an editor of The Harvard Law
 - Review 13 Hurt

Like New & Used Cars, Trucks & Trailers

- 14 Many Omanis 15 Group seen in gathering clouds? 16 Discovery that might
- cause a rush 17 Wellsian race of the
- future 18 Gram
- 24 Objects in one of
- Jesus' miracles 28 Singer Lisa
- 29 Top of the line
- 31 Fruit with an obovate shape
- 33 Media for scientists 34 Unit of brightness
- 35 Raw material for Cadbury
- 36 Popular Amazon Prime dramedy from
- Britain 39 Kind of column seen on the Jefferson
- Memorial 40 "Funny Girl'
- composer Jule
- 42 Copy 43 Vaper's device,
- informally 44 Nutritional snack
- from Clif 45 Trig, for calc, e.g. 46 Relaxed 50 Some wetlands
- recommended microwave time of
- just three seconds 54 Theater impresario Ziegfeld
- 55 Abbr. in a genealogical tree Strait, separator 57
- of Australia and Papua New Guinea 59 What one is in Paris?



- 77 Sensationalist newspaper
- 78 Openings under desks 81 Observance first
- celebrated in 1970 82 Big to-do
- 83 Like "Saturday Night Live"
- 91 Region around the Beltway, informally
- 102 Tricky pronoun to 95 Just for laughs 96 Put on a show 103 Wine opener? 97 Work with one's

hands

98 Poppycock

99 Classic computer

game set on an abandoned island

104 '60s dance craze that evolved from the Chicken

use

105 Join

role in "Casablanca"

104

108 Helper during taxing times?

"We Three Kings" 86 Put up with subjects su|do|ku © Puzzles by Pappocom

HARD - 46

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertica column, every horizontal row and every 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any. There is really only one solution to each puzzle.

		8	6			4		
				7				1
4	3	5						
4 5						2		
	6	7				2 9	5	
		2						3
						3	6	3 4
8				3				
		4			5	7		

Answers to last week's puzzles

6	5	7	3	1	4	8	9	2
9	4	1	8	7	2	3	5	6
3	8	2	9	5	6	1	7	4
5	6	8	4	2	1	7	3	9
1	7	3	6	9	8	4	2	5
4	2	9	7	3	5	6	8	1
8	9	4	2	6	7	5	1	3
2	1	6	5	8	3	9	4	7
7	3	5	1	4	9	2	6	8



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64 Each verse of "Deck the Halls" has 32 of them Line Is It Anyway?' 67 Dishearten 68 Scottish tradition before battle

69

63 Raises one's paddle, say 66 Host Tyler of "Whose



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Bayside Gazette

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We ask that no donations be left outside at the ReStore during the closure period.

We are still looking for Volunteers for when we open.

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