



JUNE 11, 2020

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FREE

## Crowd limits lead to delay of fireworks

They still could happen, but town celebration canceled

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Berlin's celebration scheduled for July 3, has been canceled and the fireworks display will be postponed, the mayor and Town Council decided Monday.



Ivy Wells

Economic and Community Development Coordinator Ivy Wells told the council the town wouldn't have been able to

hold the celebration in any case, because of crowd size restrictions that are in effect throughout the state.

"We cannot have our fireworks celebration due to the fire marshal not giving out any fireworks permits be-  
See FIREWORKS Page 15

## Berlin amends absentee voting to make it easier

By Ally Lanasa  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Mayor Gee Williams and the Town Council amended the ordinance for absentee voting in Berlin on Monday, to allow for voters who may be reluctant to venture out in public because of the still-present coronavirus.



Mary Bohlen

Previously, absentee voting was permitted for "any qualified voter who may be unavoidably absent from the town or who is otherwise prevented from being  
See ABSENTEE Page 15



GREG ELLISON/OCEAN CITY TODAY

### POOLSIDE

Socially-distanced patrons inhabit the Ocean Pines Yacht Club pool last Saturday after the facility was reopened the day prior following the easing of state-issued covid-19 health restrictions. See story on page 5.

## OPA closes fiscal year in black

Final months show decline in revenue, but expenses also fall to reduce losses

By Greg Ellison  
Staff Writer

(June 10, 2020) Despite a revenue slump in March and April because of facility closures, OPA General Manager John Viola reported last week the association still closed its fiscal year on April 30 with a positive variance of roughly \$571,000.

During the OPA Board meeting last Wednesday, Viola reported that the financials took a \$94,000 hit in



John Viola

April, as revenues were down about \$135,000, with part of that made up by a \$41,000 decline in expenses.

"We've been predicting over \$100,000 for the month, so we came in pretty good ... in this situation," he said.

April's budget projections anticipated revenues of \$297,612, which ended at \$161,627. At the same time, expenses were estimated at \$1,140,176 and closed at \$1,098,521 for the month.

Departments operating at a deficit during April were Recreation and Parks at roughly \$12,000, Aquatics at approximately \$10,000 and golf operations at \$70,000.

"If it wasn't for that, golf probably would have come in favorable to budget for the year, but a lot happened in April," he said.

Viola said the April figures were helped by positive numbers in the maintenance, public works and the police departments.

Looking at the unaudited fiscal 2019/2020 ending budget numbers, overall revenues of \$12.8 million  
See OPA Page 15



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# Knerr to run for Berlin office, focusing on long-term plans

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Long-time Berlin resident Jay Knerr, 62, has filed to run for the Councilmember-At-Large seat that will be left open during this year's election in October.



Jay Knerr

The seat, originally held by Thom Gulyas, will be up for election, as the six-year council member will be moving out of town.

"I have lived in Berlin for 20 years now ... this is a community I absolutely love," Knerr said. "Based on the fact that I've been involved in so many various boards and commissions throughout the county, Ocean City, Berlin, I just figured with my experience it was time to serve the people of Berlin."

Knerr, who owns the Kite Loft on the Boardwalk in Ocean City, is a member of the Berlin Board of Zoning Appeals and the Worcester County Planning Commission.

"Berlin has done so many things so well ... it's really positioned itself well as a tourist destination," he said. "It's got a ton of unique shops. It's got parks, recreation ... pretty much everything that a community needs. There are a few things that need to be addressed, but nothing out of the norm."

Knerr said his campaign will focus on long-term projects like the town's budget, addressing the management of the stormwater department and usage for Heron Park.

"Those are things that need to be addressed and those things can be addressed," Knerr said. "Things like stormwater management — you can apply for state and federal grants to help with those programs, roads need paved ... those things will always be there. We'll address those as they come along. But right now, my big concern would be stabilizing the budget."

"I have a lot of experience in look-

ing over budgets and working with budgets," he continued. "The town's budget is no different. It needs to be scrutinized over, needs to be gone through line by line so [we can] come up with a solution where we don't have to raise taxes consistently [every] year."

He also wants to focus on Heron Park, which has been a controversial purchase for the town and is currently used as a walking trail and nature park. One such option would be possibly selling the property to a private investor who could make the park into "something far greater than it is without the taxpayers footing the bill."

Knerr is one of the candidates who had been planning to run for council when a term in his district (District 4) came up for election, but when Gulyas made his announcement two weeks ago, he decided now would be the time.

"I would enjoy very much serving the people of Berlin," he said. "I'm not one who's afraid to ask questions. On the various boards I have served on, I always ask questions [and] I always get the answers. I always am willing to listen, and I think that's key to being a good council person. You have to listen to the residents, and see what they say, taking their input to make the best decisions for the town."

Up for reelection this year are Mayor Gee Williams, District 2 Councilmember Zackery Tyndall and District 3 Councilmember Elroy Brittingham.

The filing deadline for these seats would be Sept. 4, as well as a write-in candidate deadline on Sept. 29, though they will not appear on the ballot.

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is not until Sept. 4.

Should elections remain as usual, voters for Districts 1 and 2 will vote at Buckingham Presbyterian Church on 20 South Main Street. For the first time this year, voters for Districts 3 and 4 will cast their votes at the Police Department on 129 Decatur Street.



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# Weeg running for Berlin office with focus on budget

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Professional photographer and technology expert Tony Weeg, 47, is running for the at-large councilmember seat being vacated by Thom Gulyas before the Berlin election in October.



Tony Weeg

Weeg, who moved to Berlin two summers ago, said he fell in love with the town and its accessibility and school district.

He decided he wanted to run for council whenever his district would be available, but realized he had that opportunity when Gulyas announced his resignation two weeks ago.

“When Gulyas decided to put his position up for grabs for this coming election, it became very, very apparent to me [I should run], with the people around me saying, ‘Tony, go do this,’” he said. “‘This is the position you should go for.’ I was finally convinced by long-timers in Berlin who said, ‘We know you can be our voice.’”

Weeg sought advice from Councilman Troy Purnell, and said had been inspired by Gulyas’ story of how his original belief that back alley deals were being made turned out to be wrong.

“I reached out to Troy last year without any of these aspirations, just because I wanted to know answers,” Weeg said. “I wanted to know about Heron Park and how he sold that and what his company and his role in that was. I’ve reached out to these people to find out that info, and I learned that there is not much backdoor stuff going on.

“I know that there’s stuff that goes on that looks bad ... but what I know is this: the people who support me in this town can trust that when I report back to them from the council chambers, it’s going to be the real deal, because they trust me already.”

Weeg has several goals for the council, including public safety, boosting the town’s walkability score, budget plans and providing more activities for the town’s parks and recreation facilities.

“A lot of people in this town do a lot of things outdoors, and I also know that they are having a hard time finding places to do them in town,” he said. “Why don’t we use some of those places that we have to let those people exercise those freedoms? We’ve got Heron Park, where we could have a community-built outdoor BMX trail. By the same token, the skateboard community would love to build some sort of park either in the old Tyson plant or outside of it.

See WEEG Page 4

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# OPA Board approves revised lot lease deal with Seacrets

**By Greg Ellison**  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The OPA Board of Directors voted 6-0 last Wednesday to approve an annual parking lot lease with Seacrets on 49th Street across from the Beach Club.

The lease terms were approved unanimously during the board meeting on June 3, with Director Steve Tuttle not in attendance.

OPA President Doug Parks, who introduced the memorandum with Seacrets for the use of the beach side and bayside parking lots, said changes to the current year's lease fee structure were included. "As their business has been affected by the covid-19 pandemic, Seacrets ap-

proached us to ask if we would give them consideration for changes in the fee structure of the existing leases associated with the use of the OPA-owned beach-side and bayside parking lots," he said.

Negotiations to renew lease terms have been underway since the board held a closed session meeting on May 18.

Although willing to accommodate revised rates for the Beach Club parking lot lease this year due to extenuating circumstances, Parks stressed the OPA intends to keep ownership of the parcel with no designs on using it for other purposes.



Doug Parks

# Weeg wants better usage of Heron Park recreationally

Continued from Page 3

"There's so many uses we can make out there," Weeg continued. "I'd love to see a Berlin branded ultra-marathon that includes Asateague, that includes Salisbury, that includes a run."

More importantly, he said, he wants to connect the two parts of Berlin.

"Berlin's connectivity between the East and the West Side ... I know that the other side loves their side," he said. "I know that they don't necessarily want to be part of this side, but I do know this; there's beauty there and there's beauty here."

One of his solutions to get the two sides to be more connected would be to have a walkway from Flower Street to the Food Lion shopping district to encourage walkability and make it easier for people who want to exercise more. He said this could help bring the two sides of town together.

"There's nothing that links us," he said. "We don't have any sort of links for festivals or music. We have things down here and they have, I don't even know, over there. So we need to fix that."

Weeg has created a website that explains his platform and plans for Berlin at <https://elect.tonyweeg.com/berlin-maryland>.

In addition to the at-large seat, also on the ballot are candidates for reelection Mayor Gee Williams, District 2 Councilman Zackery Tyndall and District 3 Councilman Elroy Brittingham.

The filing deadline is Sept. 4, as well as a write-in candidate deadline on Sept. 29.

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is Sept. 4.

Should elections remain as usual, voters for Districts 1 and 2 will vote at Buckingham Presbyterian Church on 20 South Main Street. For the first time this year, voters for Districts 3 and 4 will cast their votes at the Police Department on 129 Decatur Street.



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# Pines pools reopening expands this Friday

By Greg Ellison  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Since opening pools at the Ocean Pines Yacht and Beach Clubs on a limited basis last weekend, plans now are to expand the list of aquatics facilities to include the Swim and Racquet Club on Friday, followed by Mumford's Landing next week. Director of Amenities and Operational Logistics Colby Phillips said people at both spots last weekend abided by the state issued health-safety mandates.

"People have been very respectful and understanding of the situation," she said.

To maintain a healthy environment at OPA pools during the covid-19 pandemic, patrons are asked to adhere to social-distancing guidelines, with masks required during check-in, while using the bathroom or approaching people outside their own group.

"We're asking patrons just because they're around other people in line to wear your mask as you check in," she said. "We have Plexiglas up to protect our team."

Masks are not required once inside the pool area or while swimming.

"If you use the restroom, because it's not a large space, please wear your mask," she said. "If you're walking up to another group of people, just out of respect, wear your mask."

Phillips said at this point access

would be limited to residents and pool members to permit accurate contact tracing while monitoring the ongoing pandemic situation.

Facility hours of operation and capacity counts are as follows: Yacht Club pool is open 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. for up to 87 people, the Beach Club pool is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. for up to 43 people, starting this Friday the Swim and Racquet Club pool will be open from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for up to 100 people.

The Mumford's Landing Pool, which is tentatively slated to open June 20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., will also have a 100 person capacity with exercise classes held prior and post closing. The Sports Core Pool reopening date remains undecided with plans to limit the facility for exercise classes and lap swimmers.

Due to health department restrictions, the splash pad will not be available at the Swim and Racquet Club pool, also when opened the Mumford's Landing baby pool will not be in use.

Phillips said the Beach Club and Swim and Racquet locations are available on a first come, first serve basis, but a reservation system has been instituted at the Yacht Club pool. The morning time slot at the Yacht Club runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a second shift running from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. The half-hour downtime is in-

tended to perform a sanitizing regimen.

"We decided to go with the two time slots at the Yacht Club because we are able to have more capacity," she said. "The Beach Club is a little different, with more walk ups, and is not as crowded in June."

The off time between shifts at the Yacht Club was also done in light of available food options.

"We want to accommodate the food service so we're not having people leave when it's prime lunch time," she said.

Phillips noted seasonable temperatures since last weekend have helped fill both reservation periods at the Yacht Club.

"We lucked out with some nice weather, so actually our two time slots at the Yacht Club have been getting completely full," she said.

Phillips said the reservation system would remain in place at the Yacht Club pending further revisions to state health mandates

"Things are always changing," she said. "We put stuff out and a week later it can change again."

To inquire about availability at the Yacht Club, pool members are advised to call Sports Core Pool the day before from 1 to 5 p.m.

The Beach Club, Swim & Racquet and Mumford's Landing pools will be

available exclusively for pool members the first hour open. Guests can call the respective facilities to confirm availability.

To maintain stringent contact tracing, all pool attendees will be asked to fill out cards with their name and contact information. Also additional guests will be allowed as people leave.

"As they leave, they'll let us know and we'll spray their table down and put the umbrella down so that we know it has been disinfected," she said. "Periodically, we will still go through and spray off the bathrooms and the ladders."

Phillips said disinfection schedules will be followed at all pools as turnover happens.

Looking at the bright side of a dark moment, Phillips said the timing was ideal last weekend for instituting stop-gap procedures to reopen pools.

"Pools are slower now because it's June and the water's not that warm yet, so it's a good time for us to go through this process," she said. "More than anything, I'm just glad that we're open because it gives a little sense of normalcy in this crazy time."

To reach Swim and Racquet call 410-641-7227, the Yacht Club can be reached at 410-936-0533, the Beach Club at 410-936-0348 and Mumford's Landing at 410-208-6005.

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# Black Lives Matter march in Berlin

By Ally Lanasa  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The public is invited to participate in a peaceful family friendly march for the Black Lives Matter movement on Thursday from 5-6 p.m. through Berlin.

Marchers will gather in Stephen Decatur Park on Tripoli Street at 4:45 p.m., then march through Main Street.

Co-owners of Healing Arts Center of the Eastern Shore Alexis Southward and Chrissy Ehrhart organized the march with The Children's Book Garden Owner Allison Barton, Mixed Greens Owner Debbi Dean-Colley and Colleen Mullen to give children a voice with the slogan "Small Voices-Big Message."

"Black lives do matter and ... things have not really evolved in the direction we'd like to see it," Dean-Colley said. "I think there's been a little regression, honestly."

The organizers were inspired to act after witnessing protests in Ocean City, Salisbury, Cambridge, Pocomoke and Easton.

"It's a peaceful protest, as they all were, but we wanted children to have a voice also," Dean-Colley said. "Children tend to not be biased with color, and ... we wanted them to speak."

Children are being asked to make signs and can read a poem or a personal "Letter to the World" about the impact of racism and why black lives matter as much as others.

There will also be a display board for children who want to post their writing for others to read.

Dean-Colley and her daughters will make extra posters for those who may not have them but would like to participate.

Dean-Colley asked 11-year-old Ruby Manos to speak. Manos attended Buckingham Elementary from kindergarten to the fourth grade, and she is currently in the fifth grade at Berlin Intermediate

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SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Inspired by local peaceful protests, a group of business owners and residents in Berlin, including Alexis Southward, Chrissy Ehrhart, Allison Barton, Colleen Mullen and Debbi Dean-Colley, have planned a family friendly march on Thursday to give children the opportunity to speak about the impact of racism and share personal stories.

School.

"She's very excited. She said she had a dream the other night that she was a speaker in a protest," Dean-Colley said.

Manos also attended the protest on the Ocean City Boardwalk on Saturday.

"She was very ambivalent and hesitant to come because she was nervous that it could be violent or destructive and then loved what she saw because it was very peaceful," Dean-Colley said.

Other children will be given an opportunity to speak before the march begins.

Then, participants will march from the park to Main Street, down to Island Creamery and World of Toys. They will circle back to finish in the park.

The march will conclude with a moment of silence and closing statement.

Marchers will be asked to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

At the Berlin Mayor and Town Council meeting on Monday, Police Chief Arnold Downing said the Berlin Police Department will assist marchers to give them enough space, which may require blocking the streets. Downing does not expect marchers to stay on the sidewalk.

In addition, marchers will not disturb any open businesses, who have already been affected by the pandemic.

"Peace has the most impact and brings forth the best change," Dean-Colley said. "They will not engage with harassers and do no harm."

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# Pines pool discussions airs subpar financial projections

By Greg Ellison  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The possibility of increasing assessment fees to offset expected operational losses, was discussed by the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors last week, as it also worked out reopening plans for the community's aquatic facilities.

During a virtual board meeting on June 3, the directors reviewed new procedures to provide limited access to pools for members and residents only, starting with the Yacht and Beach Clubs that weekend.

General Manager John Viola said department heads and staff members from various amenities had formed teams to prepare for the state's eventual rollbacks of covid-19 health-restrictions.

"As with all amenities, we had plans in place," he said. "Golf was able to open within a day."

Viola worked with Director of Amenities and Operational Logistics Colby Phillips to head a team coordinating aquatics plans, which were employed after Gov. Larry Hogan announced outdoor pools could re-launch at 25 percent normal capacity starting on May 29.

"Colby has a plan to institute reservations," he said. "Monitoring is important."

Viola said price increases are not included with pool reopening plans.

"There's no playbook [and] there's unanticipated challenges," he said. "Golf has been successful and aquatics is taking same approach."

OPA Treasurer Larry Perrone, however, said reopening pools exclusively to members and residents could raise conflicts with the association's 501c4 nonprofit tax status.

"Trying to give priority to somebody is just going to create a lot of problems for us," he said. "It should be first come, first serve."

Perrone reminded the other directors that OPA had run afoul of IRS regulators once before over maintaining 501c4 status.

"There's where we got in trouble before because we limited our amenities to the outside," he said.

Perrone also advised a conflict resolution plan should be created to stem potential enforcement issues surrounding state-issued health mandates.

"I would like to think our residents are going to play by the rules and be cooperative [but] I'm not so sure about people coming from outside or renters ... using the pool," he said. "I can anticipate there are going to be problems."

While acknowledging reopened pools at the Yacht Club and Beach Club would bolster revenue figures for associated food operations, Perrone said aquatics in general is des-

tinued for substantial operational losses this year.

"I hate to be the wet blanket ... but as the chief financial officer I want to make sure everybody understands what we're talking about dollar-wise and the impact on the assessments," he said.

Prior to the covid-19 pandemic, budget projections for fiscal 2020/2021, which opened May 1, showed aquatics losing six figures.

"We budgeted revenue of \$887,000 [and] ... expenses at about \$990,000 [so] we budgeted a loss for the pools of about \$102,000," he said.

Perrone said the previously anticipated loss was expected to add roughly \$12 to assessment rates but cautioned that figure would grow if revenues dropped off more.

"Our expenses are not going to go down," he said. "If our income for the pools is reduced to 25 percent, which is a distinct possibility, the loss goes from \$102,000 to \$768,000."

Perrone estimated if revenue were only reduced by half, the loss would be roughly \$546,000.

Perrone said assessments would need to increase about \$79 to compensate for a 75 percent reduction to pool revenues, while a 50 percent drop could add around \$52 annually.

The aquatics numbers are only part of an overall bleak fiscal picture.

"Our operational loss this year could be in the \$1.5 to \$2 million area," he said. "We certainly know it's going to be a large sum."

Perrone said to reconcile a \$1.5 million operational deficit the following year, assessment rates would have to increase \$178, while a potential \$2 million loss would raise fees by \$236.

Perrone said already troubling budget projections could be further exacerbated if pool facilities experience significant losses.

"These are not fantasy numbers," he said. "They are projections, no doubt, but these are serious numbers."

Board member Frank Daly agreed the fiscal outlook is dour.

"The losses this year will be staggering," he said. "There is no goddam way out if it."

In terms of pool facilities, Daly said besides initial capacity restrictions, public acceptance could also dampen returns.

"We have a fixed supply right now of pool spaces [but] we have no idea what the demand will be," he said. "People may want to stay away from the pools because they're afraid."

OPA President Doug Parks, while noting the importance of Perrone airing financial data, stressed that the staggering figures about are projec-

See PINES Page 8

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# Historic District approves façade after compromise

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The Berlin Historic District Commission approved some major changes to several buildings in downtown after agreeing to some compromises it believes will benefit the town’s image.

The commission looked over renovation plans for properties owned by Jack Burbage, which include storefronts on Pitts Street and Main Street.

Keith Fisher of Fisher Architecture told the commission that the developers wanted to renovate the building in a way that would “keep the town’s positive momentum.”

“We are fortunate enough to have been hired by the developers to take the reins for such an iconic project,” Fisher said. “One that we see a significance in. The legacy and the importance of this project are of high importance.”

Fisher also mentioned that he had spoken to Burbage about the company’s plans for the buildings, saying that Burbage has also endorsed the plans.

Chris Davis and Frank Willing, who are partners in the project, told the commission they have done several projects in the past with Fisher.

For the original plans, the partners wanted to remove the existing awnings and replace them with metal awnings supported by tie rods for Main Street, as well as remove the current stucco facades for the buildings located on Williams and Pitt Streets with exposed brick and vinyl windows. The project would also offer storefront and material upgrades.

The members of the commission personally approved of most of the



PHOTO COURTESY BERLIN PLANNING COMMISSION  
This rendering of the property located on Main Street in Berlin shows new exposed brick walls and updated awnings, which was approved by the Historic District Commission on Wednesday, June 3.

renovations, especially for the sections on Main Street, they also had some concerns about the appearance of the designs for the corner of Williams and Pitt Streets.

For instance, commission member Nornie Bunting felt that the corner had “too much of a modern look” for the town’s image.

“You cannot change the architectural value of the building,” he said. “If you can follow the brickwork on Pitts Street to Williams Street all the way around, following the existing roof design, that would be wonderful.”

Councilmember Laura Stearns agreed, claiming it looked a bit like a tower.

“I don’t want to take away something that would be phenomenal for this town,” she said.

Two members of the public had also sent letters to the commission about the same issue, offering some recommendations and asking for some adjustments for the height of the corner section of the building.

According to commission member Mary Moore, the structure looked like a “Barnes and Noble.”

Fisher explained the reasoning for the taller corner, which turned out to be two feet higher than the current building. The current roofline, he said, was compromised and needed a cap to secure it, which resulted in the two-foot addition.

In order to appease the public and the commission, Fisher said he could secure the roofline with just one foot of extra height rather than the two initially proposed. He said he could also add detail to the cornice to give the building more of a Victorian look.

The commission approved the designs after some additional discussion and after the developers’ agreed to decrease the height of the Pitts Street portion of the project as well as add the Victorian features.

The commission voted unanimously to approve the project provided the Pitts Street corner included as much brick as possible, was reduced one foot in height and included more cornice detail which fits the style of the town. The commission will review new signs for the buildings in once tenants are ready to move in.

# Pines Board looks ahead at finances following covid-19

Continued from Page 7  
tions subject to change.

“We made a projection of only being able to collect 25 percent of the assessments by May 1 and we exceeded that number,” he said.

Parks also said since golf operations kicked off in early May, returns have outpaced projections.

“It also presupposes that we’d want to make up that deficit in one year,” he said. “We’ve had a deficit before, and we didn’t make it up in a single year.”

Aware that the association will operate in the red this year, Parks said the focus should be minimizing potential losses.

“Rather than worry ... our best approach is to manage it under those conditions,” he said.

Perrone said airing projections was not intended to stoke fears.

“If I didn’t bring these numbers to everyone, then next January or February there’s no doubt in my mind what I would be hearing is, ‘Nobody told me,’” he said. “I’m letting everyone know now this is possible [but] I hope I’m wrong.”

Viola noted the unprecedented reservation system enacted to re-open pools is a manual process with future tweaks likely.

“This weekend we’ll learn a lot,” Viola said. “If you have a team in place who wants it to succeed, I believe it will.”

Following the Yacht Club pool opening on Friday and the Beach Club on Saturday, the aquatics team will reconvene to assess maters.

“We may get feedback [and] decide to go another way,” Viola said. “We have these amenities [and] it’s my job to open them.”



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# WHP files amendment, lawsuit continues

**By Elizabeth Bonin**  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The full-time residents of White Horse Park are exploring multiple avenues to remain there: a lawsuit, an administrative appeal and a county zoning code text amendment.

The amendment, according to attorney Hugh Cropper, would allow the 55 full-time residents of the park who have lived there since June 2018, to remain in the park until they move, sell the unit or die.

Cropper submitted a similar amendment last year, but it was rejected by the Worcester County Commissioners. This amendment is different because it specifies that it's only for the 55 residents, while last year's was a percentage of the park, Cropper said.

Although the amendment has yet to go to the planning commission, Cropper has received comments on it from various county departments.

"It [staff report] talks about the sewer adequacy of Assateague Pointe, which has nothing to do with it because we're not even saying the people at Assateague Pointe can stay," Cropper said. "We're limiting it to the people at White Horse Park that were there as of 2018."

He added that sewer adequacy shouldn't be an issue because the 55 residents won't add to the current usage.

"As a matter of fact, it's going down," Cropper said. "Since the filing of the lawsuit, some of my year-round folks have actually passed away and died, probably associated with anxiety from the county's unreasonable position."

Those 55 owners or occupants of units in the 465-unit campground community association have been fighting to stay in the seasonal park year-round. A zoning stipulation states that, from Sept. 30 to April first, they can only occupy the unit for 30 consecutive days or an aggregate of 60 days.

Most residents are older and struggle with disability or low incomes.

After failing to get a hearing on the amendment before the Worcester County Board of Zoning Appeals, Cropper filed suit in Worcester County Circuit Court in November. He also asked for a declaratory judgment and an injunction halting any action against the residents. Worcester County had said that non-compliant residents could be fined up to \$1,000 a day.

If the circuit court agrees with Cropper's arguments, the case would be sent to the county board of zoning appeals.

James W. Almand, White Horse Park Community Association's attorney, successfully petitioned the court in December to allow the association to intervene in the case.

Almand argued that the lawsuit would not just affect the current full-time residents and that the park's board of directors were obligated to maintain the seasonal nature of the park, even if previous boards had failed to do so.

Cropper said he thinks he has a 90 percent chance of winning the case, noting that the declaration that contains the seasonal zoning law also details other laws that have been largely ignored. For example, the declaration states that the park is for recreational vehicles, but most, if not all, the homes are houses or trailers on foundations.

"The declaration is outdated," Cropper said. "It's been violated for 30 years. You can't just go pick one paragraph out of the declaration and try to enforce it."

On April 16, the White Horse Park Community Association asked the court to rule that the zoning stipulation is enforceable.

In the memorandum of support, Almand argued that the association could not have known that Realtors advertised the park as full-time or that full-time residents paid mortgages and property taxes consistent with year-round occupancy, which residents have cited as reasons why they should remain.



ELIZABETH BONIN/BAYSIDE GAZETTE  
**About 55 full-time residents of White Horse Park, a seasonal campground subdivision, are seeking to remain at the park year-round via a lawsuit, administrative appeal and a text amendment.**

He also said that a manager or director encouraging people to live in the park full-time is not a valid reason for full-timers to stay.

"The occupancy limitation may not be waived by a park manager or director," Almand wrote. "It is for the benefit of all owners."

He added that less than 12 percent of the lots are occupied full-time.

"A small percentage of alleged violations cannot destroy a restriction adhered to by 89 percent of the owners," Almand said.

The lawsuit and administrative appeal were consolidated into one case last week.

Since the beginning of this year, the full-time residents cannot vote, run for the board of directors or use the park amenities because they are noncompliant with the zoning law.

"It's a violation of civil rights," Cropper said. "Can you imagine these older folks living there, veterans in their 80s and they close the laundry room?"

Sue Naplachowski, a full-time resident, said some residents do laundry in other units that had washers and dryers. Laun-

dry had also been temporarily suspended for all residents due to the pandemic.

Naplachowski said she wondered if they would be threatened with a \$1,000 a day fine again.

"They just scare the living daylights out of people," Naplachowski said. "Some people just couldn't leave and they just stayed in their house in the dark, did what they could or they stayed at other people's houses in the park."

Delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, the hearing for the White Horse Park case will take place on Aug. 25. Following that will be a trial on Dec. 8.

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# Berlin's eateries offer dining outside with limited seating

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) With Gov. Larry Hogan's decision to allow restaurants to have limited outdoor seating last week, several Berlin operators have taken advantage of the situation to ensure their businesses continue to flourish.

Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells worked with multiple residents around the town to accommodate the new limitations in various ways.

"People are excited to be outside and just being around other people and being able to support our restaurants and not having to grab your food and take it home," Wells said. "We have a variety of areas public that the public can come out and eat.

For instance, she allowed Baked Dessert Café to use chairs and tables that are typically used for events as a seating area for customers directly next to the store behind The Dusty Lamb on Bay Street.

"Mike Queen (who owns Rayne's Reef) had even before the whole virus crisis, when he initially bought that building, he had spoken with Ivy about potentially turning that into an outdoor seating area," Baked Dessert Café Owner Robin Tomaselli said.

"Then, of course, the virus happened

and taxes had went up and then when there was the talk about the first relaxing of the rules as far as outdoor dining came into play, we started thinking about it and again Ivy reached out to us and asked, if we wanted to do that, she would allow us to temporarily use the cafe tables and seating that they use at the visitors center."

The outside seating can comfortably hold around 25-30 tables, though with current regulations there are anywhere from 10-20 tables available. Tomaselli is thrilled with the idea, especially since Berlin is usually limited for outdoor seating.

"There's not many people outside of Fins in Berlin that are really designed for outdoor seating but people are adjusting," she said. "Justine Zegna from Blacksmith is making modifications to her building to increase outdoor space and the reality for a lot of people, is a lot of people are just more comfortable being outside, whether its eating outside or shopping outside. that is the comfort level right now."

Tomaselli hopes to work with Queen to be able to make the outdoor seating more permanent once the restrictions are lifted.

"Maybe if more money is made available, we can partner with Mike and the town and create a much more usable space," she said. "I'm super grateful to



MORGAN PILZ/BAYSIDE GAZETTE  
**Fins Ale House and Raw Bar in Berlin offers outside seating for up to 40 people with the six feet distance regulations in place.**

Mike Queen of Rayne's Reef and for Ivy Wells for reaching out to us to let us know that she was willing to let us borrow those tables and chairs."

Baked Dessert Café is currently open Thursdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wells was happy to provide the seating arrangement.

"A couple of years ago, we received a grant from AARP to pay for those tables to use at our events," she said. "And now that the events have been canceled, the tables and chairs are just sitting there.

"Basically, what we've created – and

this is a term that we use for downtown communities – we've created pocket parks throughout the town for public seating," Wells continued.

The Atlantic Hotel on Main Street is also taking advantage of the outdoor seating by using its large front garden space for dining.

"It's been great just to be open," General Manager Laura Stearns said. "We've had an orange crush bar and that has been particularly busy. It makes me feel like a little like New Orleans or Nashville."

See WELLS Page 11

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# Wells offers seating for public use

Continued from Page 10

The hotel has been able to seat around 22 tables safely while following the guidelines set by the governor, though Stearns admits she is looking forward to reopening the indoor facility.

“[Outdoor dining] has been great because the weather has been great,” she said. “But our fingers are crossed, because we’re waiting for indoor dining because there’s the fear of a storm coming up and these people having nowhere to go, which makes it a more dangerous situation because we have no place to put a crowd.”

Despite this, Stearns said people have been “very excited” that the Atlantic Hotel is open for business.

Also reopen for business is Fins Ale House and Raw Bar on 119 North Main Street. Fins, which has a large outside dining space, was able to immediately take full advantage of the outside seating requirements.

“We are absolutely grateful to be able to have the outdoor seating,” bartender Molly McEvoy said. “Prior to covid, we would have more, but it’s hard not to be grateful when you see more businesses that are suffering that don’t have that opportunity.”

Fins can currently seat 40 people comfortably, but knows that indoor dining would be a huge help as well.

“Outside of the six feet issue, for ex-

ample, tables are only allowed to sit for 80-minute intervals,” McEvoy said. “You hate to shorten an experience, but given the state of the times, we have to do what we have to do, but we’ve been lucky because everyone has been very receptive to us.”

McEvoy encourages residents and tourists alike to come help the local businesses and small shop owners flourish again after two or three months of inactivity.

“The big corporations are going to make it and the little guy really tries hard every day and we take the time to know your neighbors,” she said. “I will ask you about the lawnmower that you wanted to purchase months ago or how your kids are doing in school. It’s a lot more personal around here and we love being here. There’s no reason why you wouldn’t want to help the little guy.”

Fins is open Tuesdays through Sundays with hours of operations from Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 12-8 p.m. and 12-9 p.m. on Saturdays.

Also offering outdoor seating is DiFebo’s on 104 North Main Street. In addition to carryout, the Italian restaurant has four two-top tables out front and several larger tables for reservations in the back behind the restaurant in the parking lot.

“Right now, we have four two-tops in the front and we have some seating in

the back for larger reservations, we have one four-top, one seven-top and two two-tops,” server Jaden Johnstone said. “People want to return to that normalcy that was here before the quarantine happened. And outdoor seating, while not exactly the same, is still similar.”

Johnstone added that people were happy with outdoor dining, but also acknowledged that some people do prefer indoor seating.

“I think it works, but having indoor seating would help a little bit,” he said. “Some people really do just want indoor seating. They don’t want to be out in the heat even if we do have shade.”

DiFebo’s is open Mondays through Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sundays the restaurant opens at 10 a.m. for the Berlin farmers market and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. for lunch and dinner.

Wells discussed the success of the town’s outside seating accomplishments during the mayor and Town Council meeting on Monday. During that time, Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood praised Wells for her diligence.

“I want to recognize Ivy wholeheartedly for the last three and a half months during this pandemic for the amount of effort and time she’s placed into guiding and directing the merchants of this town, it’s incredible,” he said. “She’s been diligent, clear, concise and factual.”

# Historic District revisits pergola, reviews garage

## Berlin commission approve request for restaurant deck

By Ally Lanasa  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) The Berlin Historic District Commission last Thursday approved the proposed materials for the pergola roof at the Blacksmith Restaurant and Bar, located at 104 Pitts Street.

On May 20, the Historic District approved the request from restaurant owner Justine Zegna to build outdoor dining so the restaurant could serve diners according to state safety restrictions during the pandemic.

Zegna and Joe Pino, of United Restoration, were asked to return in June with details about the pergola roof.

Pino was present for the meeting on June 3 and said the roof would be made of Macrolux corrugated polycarbonate panel from Glasteel.

“The only thought that I had in regard to that material is I have been to restaurants that have that before, and in my experience, it always looks dirty,” said Councilmember Laura Stearns.

See COUNCILMEMBERS Page 13



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# The Globe outdoor seating, sign approved

Bryan, Nicole Brushmiller complete final stages of renovations for restaurant

By Ally Lanasa  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Like many restaurants that had only indoor dining before the pandemic, The Globe on Broad Street has now designated a space to serve customers outdoors.

The Globe owners Bryan and Nicole Brushmiller hope to reopen the venue with outdoor dining in July.

Upon reopening their doors, they plan to host live entertainment to honor the 100-year-old theater.

“We’re really excited to bring back arts and entertainment to Berlin,” Bryan said.

Bryan is planning a causal barbeque and smoked foods menu that is “culturally relevant to the community.”

“No one else around is really doing that in Berlin,” he added.

The Globe will also offer craft beers from his Burley Oaking Brewing Company and craft cocktails.

The Brushmillers, who own five properties in Berlin, including Burley

Oak Brewing Company, Burley Café and Viking Tree Trading Company as well as lease two other properties, bought The Globe in November 2019 and have been working on interior renovations for months that respect the history of the building.

Bryan said the project is about 80 percent complete.

Last Thursday, the Berlin Historic District Commission approved requests from the Brushmillers to restore aspects of the cultural landmark and create an outdoor dining space.

The Brushmillers plan to replace The Globe sign on the building’s entrance in likeness with a soft yellow lighting vertical sign made from natural gas lighting.

In addition, they will match the existing fence on the side of Gay Street to enclose outdoor seating that will include a bar with eight bar stools and individual tables.

The Brushmillers said the wooden fence will be six feet high and have an emergency gate for patrons as well as a larger gate for product deliveries.

The outdoor dining space will include a roof made with corrugated plastic, Bryan said.

The outdoor seating will not be visible from the street.

A walk-in cooler will be placed outside on an existing concrete pad, where a shed used to be located, to provide more space in the kitchen.

“At present we are planning on painting the walk-ins with a dark



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

On June 3, the Historic District Commission approved plans to create outdoor dining at The Globe on the side of Gay Street as owners Bryan and Nicole Brushmiller continue months-long renovations at the historic entertainment venue.

neutralizing color and adding trellis to grow natural greenery,” Nicole said.

Bryan added that they are considering roses, wisteria or a climbing vine to accompany the trellis.

After long discussion, the commission did not resolve the matter of placement and a potential enclosure

of a dumpster.

“We have been trying to figure out if there is a way we can come together and put one in a lot ... and then we could all contribute and co-share,” Nicole said.

The “passion project,” as Bryan calls The Globe, is an estimated all-in cost of \$250,000.

## OP candidate forum June 17

By Greg Ellison  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Although the OPA Board 2020 election forum set for June 17 is not open to the public because of covid-19 health restrictions, community members have until June 15 to email questions for candidates.

Elections Committee Chairman Steve Habeger said while the public cannot attend the forum, which is slated for Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Community Center’s Assateague Room, the event would be recorded for subsequent online viewing.

“Our intention, at the moment, is to be live with the candidates in the Assateague Room, but no audience,” he said.

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. At this point only one other candidate, Stuart Lakernick,

has joined the contest for a seat on the seven-member board.

The Election Committee will hold a candidate workshop this Friday at 10 a.m. in the same location, where candidates also will draw numbers to determine ballot order.

“I think it’s important that the candidates draw their own random card for ballot order,” he said.

“Both the candidate draw and the forum will be recorded and loaded onto ... YouTube.”

Habeger said to honor the state’s current 10-person limitation for public gatherings, attendance at both events will be kept to candidates, committee members and OPA staff.

“We’ve asked the candidates not to bring spouses or friends,” he said.

Habeger said the Assateague Room would provide ample space to practice proper social distancing.

To this point, a public outreach effort to solicit additional candidates to match an OPA

bylaws requirement that the race have at least two more candidates than vacant seats, has come up blank, Habeger said.

The drop-dead date 3 for new candidates to file is July 3, after which election data is forwarded to ABC Printing & Mailing in Berlin to produce ballots that are mailed to association members in mid-July.

Regardless of added candidates, Habeger highlighted the need for additional candidate questions from residents.

“What’s on people’s minds [and] what do they want to hear from the candidates?” he said. “We’ve gotten a few so far, but not a lot.”

Community members can email questions to elections@oceanpines.org, or call the Elections Committee at 410-219-8972 to leave a voice-mail with question. All inquiries submitted by Association members will be considered.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

**FLOYD VIGIL**  
The Worcester County NAACP Car Prayer Vigil for George Floyd, held on June 5, was hosted by Rev. Betty Smith of Tyree AME Church in Berlin. Pictured is NAACP President Ivory Smith and his daughter, Natasha, welcoming approximately 75 cars to the service. Eight racially-diverse religious leaders shared their message of hope and solidarity following the tragic death of George Floyd.



# Councilmembers express concern about town codes

Continued from Page 11

Pino said the material can be power washed, and it is inexpensive to repair.

“It’s only like \$40 a panel for a 10-foot panel,” Pino said.

Vice Chairman Robert Poli suggested adding a roll-out bamboo cover to provide shade for outdoor diners.

Following the approval of the Blacksmith roof plans, the commission reviewed a request to remodel an existing one-bedroom garage and guesthouse at 19 S. Main Street.

The Gaugers purchased the property with the rear garage in September 2019 with the intent to use it as a retirement home.

According to the Maryland Historical Trust under the state Department of Planning, “owners of locally designated properties must receive approval from their local Historic Preservation Commission for changes to the exterior of their properties or if they are building a new building in a local historic district.”

“When you present something to the historic commission, we ask for a sample of the windows, a sample of all materials and everything that would be used in the project,” said Councilmember Norman Bunting. “This project had started without any applications, so we don’t even know what exactly has been used there. There’s a lot of things that we need to know.”

Councilmember Mary Moore asked if the homeowners were advised that they were buying in the historic district at the time of purchase. They said they were not.

“The town does not have a code that requires the Realtors to do that,” said Planning Director David Engelhart. “I would think, in the normal performance of their duties, they would know what’s in the historic district and be professional enough to advise their clients of that.”

Moore was displeased that such information was not disclosed to the homeowners.

“I am terribly upset this doesn’t immediately change ... that something is put ... legally that people cannot be sold a property of any historic town district unless they are given a full printout of [obligations],” Moore said.

Chairwoman Carol Rose said she has been trying for nearly 10 years to have Mayor Gee Williams and the council enact a policy that advises potential homebuyers about purchasing a property in the historic district.

The commission asked the Gaugers to return for the July 1 meeting with a new packet that details the landscaping and proposed materials, which will restore the historic integrity of the garage.

# Greyhound hosts reopening event

(June 11, 2020) Months after The Greyhound Indie Bookstore and Fine Arts Gallery closed its doors to help protect customers during the covid-19 pandemic, the shop is hosting a re-opening celebration from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday, June 13.

The Greyhound will be providing sweet treats from Berlin’s Baked Dessert and wine samplings from Sisters Wine Bar.

As the small town’s economy reestablishes a new normal, The Greyhound wants to bookmark the milestone as a positive chapter in Berlin’s story.

“Merchants, patrons and community members alike—we’ve been through something unprecedented,” bookstore owner Susan Ayres Wim-brow said. “In typical Berlin fashion, we’ve all shown resiliency and support for one another, qualities which should be celebrated. I like to coin our shared experience as...together, we closed; together, we persevered.”

During the June 13 event, as well as during regular business hours, the bookstore will follow the practice of wearing face masks. Hand sanitizers will be available throughout the store and respectful social distancing is requested.

To embrace face mask fashion, a competition will be held during the June 13 event, at 1:30 p.m. for those wishing to participate.

Wimbrow, and special guest, Julia Ash, author of The ELI Chronicles series, will judge and choose the best-of-show face mask.

The winner will pick a complimentary paperback (personally signed) of one of Ash’s books in the series: “The One and Only” (published 2018), “The Tether” (2019), or “The Turning Point” (June 2020).

ELI is an acronym for Extinction Level Infection.

Several local authors will be in attendance during the reopening celebration, with Ash as the featured author since the event coincides with the release of the third and final installment, The Turning Point, in her dark-fantasy series.

“I am thrilled to be included in this celebration of community,” Ash said. “When I retired from Worcester County Public Schools to embrace my dream of becoming an author, our community supported me. I couldn’t have come this far as an author without the teachers, parents, friends and merchants—like The Greyhound—who have cheered me on.”

In addition to co-judging the face mask “parade,” Ash will be on hand to sign her books which are sold at the bookstore.

“Even though my series takes place in a post-apocalyptic world resulting from a fictitious pandemic (originating in China), my books are inspirational,” she said. “The series begins with my protagonist Ruby being the only one who was able to save humankind with her plasma and antibodies. It ends with her learning that, ultimately, humankind is saved through teamwork. There’s relevancy in that message.”

The title of Ash’s final book in the series also reflects a sign of the times.

“Most of us feel like we’re living our own turning point—from isolation to redefining what ‘community’ will look like in the future,” she said.

To hold onto as much “normal” as possible, Wimbrow stayed busy during the store’s closing.

She took inventory, had artists rehang their artwork in the gallery, arranged for future book club meetings and author signings, and deep cleaned the store.

She also started an online ordering service through the store website, [www.greyhoundindiebookstore.com](http://www.greyhoundindiebookstore.com).

The Greyhound is located in the Historic Ayres Building, which once housed her great aunt’s millinery shop.

For more information, contact Wimbrow at 410-641-0291. The Greyhound Indie Bookstore is located at 9 South Main Street in downtown Berlin.

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# Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to [editor@baysidegazette.com](mailto:editor@baysidegazette.com) by 5 p.m. Monday.

## Plan for worst, but manage to avoid it

Financial forecasting in the time of covid-19 can't be much better than rolling dice with the dots obscured: no one can tell from the tumbling in progress how things will turn out in the end.

From the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors' perspective, assuming the worst and preparing for it is the right thing to do, but that doesn't necessarily mean what is happening currently is how things will be six months or a year from now.

As everyone must know at this point, looking into the future doesn't allow for the unimaginable, as has been so terribly demonstrated by the sudden appearance of a worldwide epidemic that only a few scientists and researchers foresaw. Even then, their predictions were so general that the most accurate timeframe anyone could offer was ... someday.

That's why Ocean Pines residents shouldn't start selling off their worldly possessions just yet to build up their cash for what may or may not be a major increase in assessments next year.

Likewise, it's too early to clamor for budgetary changes in anticipation of some kind of financial calamity, the extent of which has yet to be determined.

OPA Treasurer Larry Perrone was right to alert other board members to the bleak financial circumstances the association could face at the end of this strange year, but board President Doug Parks was equally correct when he advised against overreacting.

As it stands now, the board is aware of the possibilities and appears to be ready to manage according to the circumstances as they present themselves. As stated previously, being prepared for the worst is good planning, but the best action to take once aware of that is managing to prevent the worst from happening.



*"That's cute! They named their newborn Covid because she was inside for nine months."*

## Vote Berlin Best Small-Town Shopping

Contest open until June 29, and winner announced July 10

By Morgan Pilz  
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2020) Berlin has been nominated as one of 18 candidates for "Best Small Town for Shopping" as part of the *USA Today* 10 Best Readers' Choice competition this month.

*USA Today* has selected 18 small towns from across America that have less than 25,000 residents that are known for their antique shops, boutiques and local farmers markets among other aspects.

According to Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells, this is not the first time Berlin has been nominated for this competition.

"I found out about it a couple of weeks ago when I received an e-mail from *USA Today* saying that we were in the contest," she said. "We won it a few years ago, actually, and so to be nominated again is flattering."

The town placed first the competition in 2018, and is currently ranked first again.

Residents can vote every day for Berlin to compete against 17 other small towns across the nation for the distinction.

"For those of us who know how expensive advertising is, this is a boost for our business community and for our downtown retail community," Wells said.

More importantly, this competition is happening after the country went through three months of closed or reduced business because of coronavirus health-safety restrictions.

"I think it's a boost for our downtown merchants during this time of when everyone's coming back and when people are looking to be able to come out of their houses again," Wells said. "To have this national attention brings more and more people to our to our businesses downtown."

In the past few years, Berlin has done well with online competitions. According to the town's website, in 2018 Berlin was also named Best Small Town in America by *USA Today*, Best Budget Destination in America by Budget Travel Magazine, Maryland's Most

Beautiful Small Town by House Beautiful Magazine, Best Small Towns in America for Valentine's Day, and was one of 21 of the Best Small Towns in America by Architectural Digest.

Voting will be available every day from now until Monday, June 29. The winning small towns will be announced on 10Best.com on Friday, July 10.

"We want to maintain our first-place status throughout the contest," Wells said. "I think it's important to show how the community supports our local businesses. One way that you can support them is giving them the honor to be able to say that they are located in the town that is [recognized as] one of the best small towns for shopping by *USA Today*."

Residents can vote at [www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-small-town-for-shopping/berlin-maryland/?fbclid=IwARo9dQw\\_Xsv\\_QXqNH59qB9rijHs9fwrifjIb3FVtqVUGWOfvLEsdZf7bBKO](http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-small-town-for-shopping/berlin-maryland/?fbclid=IwARo9dQw_Xsv_QXqNH59qB9rijHs9fwrifjIb3FVtqVUGWOfvLEsdZf7bBKO) or go to the town's Facebook page, or the special Facebook voting page Vote for Berlin: Best Small Town for Shopping.

BAYSIDE

GAZETTE

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# Fireworks decision deadline nears

Continued from Page 1

cause of the rule of no gatherings of 10 or more people,” she said. “I spoke to Matt Owens, the fire marshal, and he confirmed that.”

The town has a June 15 deadline set by the fireworks contractor to make a decision. Wells, however, believes that’s too soon to make the correct call, but did offer three other solutions.

“Number one, we postpone the fireworks to next year,” she said. “We lose \$2,500, but it’s a \$5,000 deposit, so we lose that but the other \$2,500 goes toward the deposit for next year, or, we could postpone them for another date this year.”

The town has until the beginning of 2021 to use the fireworks for a different event, though it would still have to pay an additional \$5,000 for the new event.

Wells also suggested doing an event to celebrate all the festivities the town had to cancel due to the

virus once restrictions have been removed, assuming it occurs this year. She calls the event the “Berlin is Back” festival.

She also warned the council that using the fireworks display for Labor Day weekend would not work, since several other municipalities were planning on holding events that day and the town’s contractor would be booked.

“Working with Tom Perlozzo in the county, one of the things he had planned was an event in the day, and have the fireworks at night,” Wells said. “The county wants to help but I don’t want to pile on too much throughout the day.”

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood supported the decision to cancel the Third of July activities based on the decision from surrounding counties.

“The knowledge that we have now about the permit, we didn’t know that yesterday,” he said. “But let’s assume

we could have gotten that permit, and gone with the July 3 date, I would not have recommended that. I would have recommended we did pull it because a number of municipalities have canceled.

“My fear from a logistical standpoint, in going to a new site, I have a fear on that,” he continued.

Mayor Gee Williams agreed, saying there were “too many moving parts” at this current time, but hopes an event can be scheduled without so many “moving parts” to get in the way.

Councilmember Thom Gulyas asked Town Attorney David Gaskill whether it would be possible to get a refund for the \$2,500 lost for the event, but Gaskill said that the options Wells suggested were the only solution.

Gulyas moved to cancel the July 3 event and postpone the fireworks display for a later date, which was voted unanimously by the council.

# OPA has net gain on year despite covid-19 closings

Continued from Page 1

topped the estimated total of \$12.5 million, while expenses closed at \$12.2 million instead of the projected figure of \$12.5 million. The sums combine for an annual positive net operating variance of \$571,912.

Viola said numerous departments closed the year ahead of budget including: Recreation and Parks by \$69,000, Public Works by \$155,000, general maintenance by \$226,000, the Yacht Club by \$202,000, the marina by \$44,000 and the Beach Club by \$22,000 with associated parking ending up by \$35,000.

OPA Treasurer Larry Perrone reviewed ending fiscal year numbers for OPA ladder investments and reserve account balances.

“The overall ladder investment rate of return on CDARS for April was approximately 1.9 percent,” he said.

Perrone said the association’s coffers ended the fiscal year on April 30 with \$12.3 million in cash and investments, including fully FDIC insured CDAR’s totaling \$6.1 million, along with roughly \$2.35 million in money markets and more than \$3.8 million for operating accounts.

Turning to reserve fund balances, Perrone said between replacement, bulkheads and roads the ending fiscal year total was roughly \$5.6 million.

This included \$3,481,457 in replacement reserves, \$1,652,979 for bulkheads and \$506,450 for roads.

Perrone said after granting homeowners a 90-day extension for annual assessment fees collected May 1, to this point about \$6.3 million of the \$9.1 million tally due has been returned.

“We received 69 percent by June 1 but still need 31 percent by Aug. 1,” he said.

# Absentee ballot eligibility expanded

Continued from Page 1

physically present to vote in person at the polls on the day of any municipal election may vote by absentee ballot.”

Under the amendment, however, voters will not have to provide a reason for their absentee ballot requests, said Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen.

“We have not required a reason on our application for the last several election cycles, but we just need to get the town code to accurately reflect the state law and our practice,” Bohlen said.

By removing part of the language from the statement to now read “any qualified voter may vote by absentee ballot,” the town is promoting a more accessible practice for all voters, especially in the aftermath of covid-19.

“I think that’s a trend that’s happening everywhere, and we certainly want to encourage people to vote by

any means that is most convenient for them,” said the mayor.

The following provisions for absentee voting remain unchanged:

The Board of Supervisors of Elections provides the printed application forms for the request of absentee ballots.

Applications for absentee ballots may be submitted not more than 30 days and not after the closure of business on the Friday before a regular or special election.

For the Oct. 6 Berlin Municipal Election, the last day to apply for an absentee ballot is Oct. 2.

The chairperson of the Board of Supervisors of Elections or the chairperson’s authorized designee will approve the applications.

After an application has been approved, an absentee ballot will be mailed to the Berlin voter.

If there are less than five days before the election, the voter will have to receive the ballot in person at the town office, up to and including one hour prior to the polls closing on election day.

An authorized agent may receive an absentee ballot for a voter who is unable to pick up the ballot in person if the agent presents a valid application and a written authorization signed by the voter.

Voters must pay the postage to return the absentee ballot.

Only those absentee ballots that are returned to the Board of Supervisors of Elections or the town office before the polls close will be counted in the election.

In addition, if an absentee ballot includes a vote for a person who is not a valid candidate in the election, it will not be counted for that candi-

date. However, such vote will not invalidate the rest of the ballot.

For more information, visit [berlinmd.gov](http://berlinmd.gov).







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# Calendar

Please send calendar items to [editor@baysidegazette.com](mailto:editor@baysidegazette.com) by 5 p.m. Monday. All community-related activities will be published at no charge.

## Thurs., June 11

**VIRTUAL STORY TIME**  
Join the group for a fun read-along. This will premier live on facebook at 10:00 AM at: [www.facebook.com/worcester-countymarylandlibrary/](https://www.facebook.com/worcester-countymarylandlibrary/).

**POCOMOKE LIBRARY: THEN & NOW**  
A look back at the Pocomoke Library Branch, 2:00 PM. The current branch officially opened on June 14, 1970, and next month will mark its 50th anniversary. The group hopes to share plans and hear input about the next 50 years of the library too. Registration closes 2 hours before the event: [https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/Virtual\\_Events/pocomokethenandnow](https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/calendar/Virtual_Events/pocomokethenandnow)

**LET'S LEARN MACRAME!**  
In Part 2 of 3, join Denise Wagner of the knot-a-long and continue making the pieces you started in Part 1, 2:00 PM. This program is for adults. Registration closes 24 hours before the event begins: <https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/event/6740884>

**PLANT CLINIC (ADULT)**  
Master Gardner Ginny Rosenkranz will answer questions, 3:30 PM. For those unable to join via Zoom, check the Zoom link for the first phone number and you can call in. Registration closes 24 hours before the event. Register: <https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/event/6778050>

**BLACK LIVES MATTER MARCH**  
A peaceful march through Main Street in Berlin, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM. This is a family friendly event meant to give children a voice. Participants are asked to be mindful not to disrupt any open businesses and to stay on the sidewalk. Meet in Stephen Decatur Park at approximately 4:45 PM.

## Fri., June 12

**CHILDREN & RAISING CHICKENS PART 2**  
Learn how children can help with chickens, 10:00 AM. This will premiere live on the Worcester County Library's Facebook page.

**TRIMPER'S GREENMARKET**  
*Fridays through Thanksgiving* - Trimper's Rides, 700 S. Atlantic Ave., 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. The market will include all types of produce including mushrooms, fruits and vegetables as well as flowers and herbs. Farms interested in participating can apply online at [www.trimperrides.com](http://www.trimperrides.com).

## Sat., June 13

**REOPENING CELEBRATION AND BOOK SIGNING**

The Greyhound Indie Bookstore and Fine Arts Gallery, 9 S. Main St., 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM. The bookstore will be providing sweet treats from Berlin's Baked Dessert and wine samplings from Sisters Wine Bar. The event will also feature a best-in-show facemask competition. Julia Ash, author of The ELI Chronicles series, will be on hand to sign her books as well as several other local authors. Susan Wimbrow, 410-641-0291

**FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET**  
*Saturdays* - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Featuring live music, chef demos, children's activities and other special events. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

## Sun., June 14

**CAPTAIN SCHOEPP RELAY**  
A classic steel rescue buoy is passed along by alumni guards and current lifeguards. The relay begins at 10:00 AM at 7th Street with a run to the end of Ocean City followed by a swim the entire length of Ocean City. The buoy is returned to the beach and run back to the starting point. The direction of the relay is contingent upon the prevailing ocean current. 410-289-7556

**THE BERLIN FARMERS MARKET**  
*Sundays through Aug. 30* - Located on Pitts Street and Main Street, 9:00 AM - 1:00 pm. Special senior shopping time from 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM. [www.berlin-mainstreet.com](http://www.berlin-mainstreet.com)

## Mon., June 15

**HOOPLA FILM GROUP: "SHORT TERM 12"**  
Join the Hoopla Film Group for a monthly discussion on a selected title available to borrow with your Library Card on Hoopla, 2:00 PM. Limited to 10 people. This event is meant for adults. Registration closes 24 hours before the event begins: <https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/event/6746263>

**TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY MEETING**  
The meeting will be held via conference call, 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM. Dial 605-472-5789, wait for voice command, then press 944874. TOPS is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and healthy lifestyle. Berlin group No. 169. Rose Campion, 410-641-0157

**FREE DRIVE-IN MOVIES**  
*Mondays through Aug. 31* - Ocean City convention center, 4001 Coastal Highway, 8:00 PM. 410-289-2800, <http://ococean.com/events>



**FOOD DONATIONS**  
Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City members, from left, Diane Denk, Diane Sparzak and Sue Wineke, are stationed at Ocean Pines Community Center on June 3 for the group's food drive to help restock Diakonia's pantry. Three vehicles were filled with non-perishables, which were immediately delivered to the shelter in West Ocean City. The next food drive collection is Wednesday June 17, from 10 a.m. to noon.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

## Wed., June 17

**FOOD COLLECTIONS**  
Ocean Pines Community Center, parking lot, 239 Ocean Parkway, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. The Kiwanis Club of Ocean Pines-Ocean City will be collecting non-perishable goods for Diakonia. Volunteers will be wearing masks.

**CANNING CONUNDRUMS**  
Ten common mistakes while starting canning. Learn about all the steps and the tools you need, 2:00 PM. Registration closes 24 hours before program begins: <https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/event/6756330>

## ONGOING EVENTS

**'LIBRARY TO GO'**  
All five Worcester County libraries are able to offer their materials currently available at each branch. There are three ways to place an order: call your local branch (9:30 AM - 4:30 PM), use the webform or select items in the library's catalog (you'll need to use the "Narrow Your Search" option on the left to limit results to your local branch). Schedule a pick-up time between 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Worcester County Library bookdrops are now open as well. [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org), [askus@worcestertlibrary.org](mailto:askus@worcestertlibrary.org)

**JESSE'S PADDLE 2020 GOES VIRTUAL**  
Participants are asked to do something fun outdoors, send a photo or video and tell how being out in the fresh air made you feel, how it improved your mental health. Hashtag your Facebook pictures/story post to #JessesVirtualPaddle2020, or send the message and the photos to [weremember@jessespaddle.org](mailto:weremember@jessespaddle.org). Tax-deductible donations can be sent payable to: "Jesse's Paddle," P.O. Box 1786, Berlin MD 21811, or click on the donate tab at the top of the [www.jessespaddle.org](http://www.jessespaddle.org) home page. Donations can be made on Facebook, or at the Jesse's Paddle 2020 crowdfunding site. The link is on [www.jessespaddle.org](http://www.jessespaddle.org). The Jesse's Paddle Silent Auction is also available on the website. Bidding opens June 18 and ends July 18. This year's raffle featuring an Old Town Vapor 12XT solo kayak is online. Visit [www.jessespaddle.org](http://www.jessespaddle.org). click on Jesse's Paddle): <https://admin.charityauctionstoday.com/np/orgs/198826/auctions> <https://www.charityauctionstoday.com/t/jkmf-kayak-affle-98fc18d4ef>

**DIAL-A-STORY**  
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# Puzzles

## WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN

BY LEWIS ROTHLEIN AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Lewis Rothlein is a yoga instructor and onetime journalist in Asheville, N.C. He teaches a popular course on "The Art of Solving Crosswords" for senior citizens at the University of North Carolina Asheville. Jeff Chen is a writer in Seattle. They exchanged over 100 emails, back and forth, just brainstorming this puzzle's theme. Lewis has had five previous puzzles in The Times, all Thursdays. Jeff is a regular contributor here. — W.S.

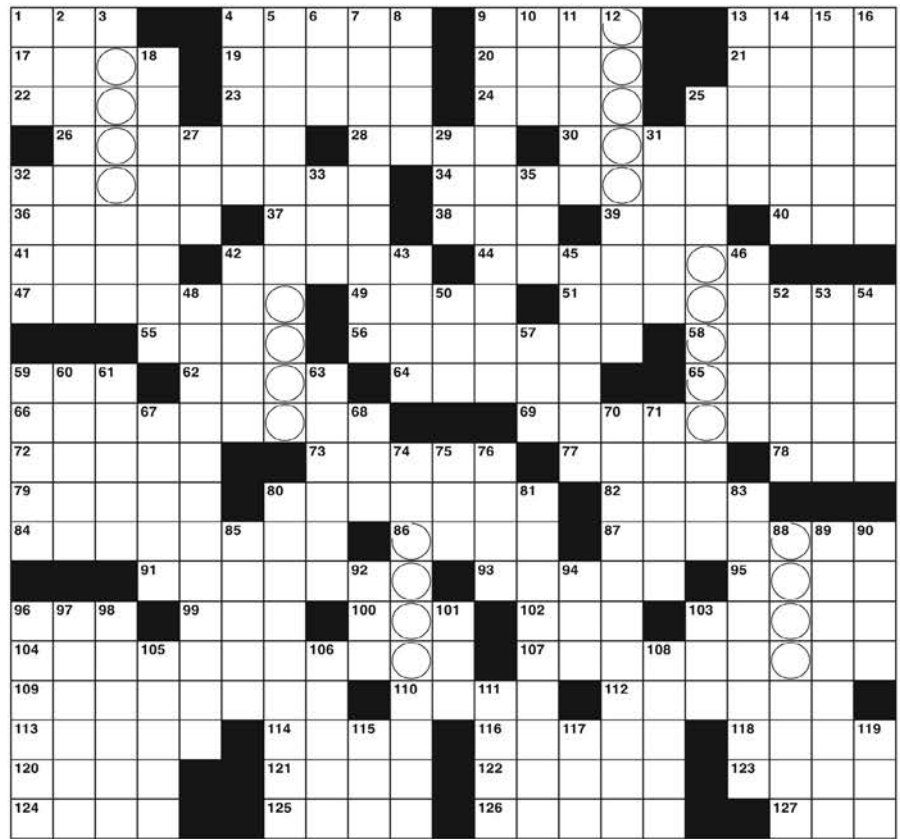
**ACROSS**  
1 ... and the rest: Abbr.  
4 Small bit  
9 Chilled  
13 Feng \_\_\_\_  
17 Takes off  
19 Word whose rise in popularity coincided with the spread of the telephone  
20 It's shorter on land than at sea  
21 Bit of change  
22 Traditional Hanukkah gift for kids  
23 Computing machine displayed in part at the Smithsonian  
24 Beachgoer's item  
25 Instrument heard in "Eleanor Rigby"  
26 Bits of regalia  
28 "Git!"  
30 Get hammered  
32 Providers of books to remote locations  
34 Unlawful activity by a minor  
36 Land of the Po (not Poland)  
37 Special \_\_\_\_  
38 \_\_\_\_-cone  
39 Home of the world's smallest country: Abbr.

**ACROSS**  
40 Alias letters  
41 Demurring words  
42 Member of the genus Helix  
44 Marcel Duchamp, e.g.  
47 Genre for the Spice Girls or Backstreet Boys  
49 Passion  
51 Bug experts, informally  
55 Breathtaking sight in the ocean?  
56 Back  
58 This and others  
59 Downed  
62 GPS's guesses  
64 Montezuma, for one  
65 Assign new functions to, as keyboard keys  
66 Some natural remedies  
69 Cabinet position once held by Herbert Hoover  
72 Give one's take  
73 Basic knowledge, with "the"  
77 Went after, in a way  
78 \_\_\_\_ admin  
79 Classic brand of candy wafers  
80 Magical teen of Archie Comics  
82 Give kudos to  
84 Pop a wheelie?  
86 "I've got that covered"  
87 Paid to play

**DOWN**  
1 Mayonnaise ingredient  
2 Directly opposed

**DOWN**  
91 Work requiring some intelligence?  
93 \_\_\_\_ Bahama (clothing label)  
95 DNA carrier  
96 Word after "so" or "go"  
99 Middle of many similes  
100 1%-er in D.C.: Abbr.  
102 '60s war zone  
103 Not reflective  
104 Untimely time  
107 Great depth  
109 Myth propagated to promote social harmony, in Plato's "Republic"  
110 Faux cough  
112 "Aw, hell!"  
113 Shady outdoor area  
114 Collection of stock  
116 4x100, e.g.  
118 Sole  
120 Put down  
121 Opposite of une adversaire  
122 Selfie taker's concern  
123 Liberal arts college in Portland, Ore.  
124 Just makes, with "out"  
125 Recipe amts.  
126 Serious-minded  
127 Cavity filler's deg.

**DOWN**  
3 Like a virgin  
4 Cut  
5 Good thing to have after work  
6 QB Manning  
7 Number of concern to a teacher  
8 Former New York City mayor with the autobiography "Mayor"  
9 Tow truck's destination  
10 Org. in "Argo"  
11 Jet set  
12 Precisely describe  
13 It's made up of lines  
14 State capital in Lewis and Clark County  
15 Crack  
16 2017 hit movie about an Olympic skater  
18 Songbird with dark, iridescent plumage  
25 What A.P. exams grant incoming freshmen  
27 Unit of hope  
29 IHOP beverages  
31 Supply  
32 Make, as money  
33 Water-safety org.  
35 U.S. broadcasting service  
42 Conductor Georg  
43 Long river of Siberia  
45 Places for hustlers?  
46 "Rent me" sign  
48 What marriage merely is, to some



- 50 Cutting tool

52 Catamounts, by another name

53 1960s counterculture figure

54 Play awards

57 Remote-control button

59 A part of

60 Plains structure

61 Order from above

63 Low-hanging clouds

67 Atahualpa's subjects
- 68 Bawl

70 Sports Illustrated named him "Sportsman of the Century" in 1999

71 Villain

74 Places for strollers

75 German article

76 Something a crab might be found in

80 Coverage in Africa?

81 Penance

83 Shin guards of old
- 85 Disinfectant brand

88 Held up

89 Like most haikus

90 Source of zest

92 Fighting Tigers' sch.

94 Evil: Fr.

96 Pilot's opposite

97 Heavy winter wear

98 Margot who played the titular role in 16-Down

101 Utmost degree
- 103 Stage \_\_\_\_

105 Moves like an elephant

106 Bustles (with)

108 Howled like a wolf

111 Museum sections, perhaps

115 Criticize in no uncertain terms

117 JFK alternative

119 Amts. "gained" or "lost"

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**HARD - 43**

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical 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.

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

**Answers to last week's puzzles**

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



# Cuisine

## Sirloin cap with potatoes and mushrooms

Summertime is here.

Ah, the season of so many weddings has seemingly come to a screeching halt, much to the chagrin of brides and grooms the world over.

For caterers, weddings are our bread and butter, and as restaurants have felt the striking blow of the pandemic,

so will caterers as our seasons come to pass us by.

It is with great hope that we keep our fingers crossed every time there is a press conference.

Until we reopen to capacity, though, I am here to maybe teach you a thing or two about cooking; stupid little tricks that can make a world of difference.

I am no Boulud or Michelle Richard, although I did work for one of them. I'm just a dude who wants to make some decent grub.

As we start to reacquaint ourselves with family members that we haven't seen in months, I think it may be time to start hosting little social-distancing parties, responsibly held of course.

And nothing says summertime party to me more than a pile of grilled foods and a bar full of crisp, cold beverages.

At most of our catered events, we offer fingerling potatoes, one of my all-time favorites, but I am about to let you in on a little secret.

This is something that I learned decades ago, and it still blows my mind that it's not done as a requirement.

Yes, we should establish Roasted Potato Purity Laws like the Germans did centuries ago, when beer had to be brewed to daunting specifications on the fear of death.

Let me backpedal on that. Perhaps this is a bit bold. The way you cook your potatoes is the way that you cook your potatoes. It doesn't bother me a bit.

So, in a nutshell, if you are roasting potatoes, whether whole, halved or diced, always blanch them in salted water and then let them steam out.

I like to cook mine until they are pretty much done and overhandling them will make them fall apart. Carefully straining them and letting the steam escape, you are left with a fluffy potato with a great bite on the out-



side. Simple yet effective.

That's it. Blanch them. Drain them. Let the steam escape. And in no time, you'll be catering weddings on your own after your friends and family eat your food and convince you to make the best career move of your life. You're welcome.

### Grilled Sirloin Cap

*serves 10*

8# Sirloin cap (aka coulotte or picanha)

Liberal amount of trimix or favorite seasoning

3# Roasted potatoes (recipe follows)

1 c. Basil puree (recipe follows)

4 c. Sautéed mushrooms (recipe follows)

1. Typically, sirloin cap is sold with a very thick fat cap which should be trimmed to a nice quarter-inch white edge.

2. By the time you trim this off, you will be at a more reasonable weight for the number of guests.

3. Season liberally and set aside for about 20 minutes while the grill is heating up.

4. Grill or spit-fire your picanha until it is to the temperature of your liking, and then remove from the fire to rest for at least 10 minutes. This gives the muscle time to relax again.

5. Slice the beef and serve it with the roasted potatoes and mushrooms and then drizzling the basil puree over anything that your little heart

desires.

### Roasted Potatoes

*serves 10*

3# Fingerling Yukon Gold potatoes

Salted water

Melted butter, unsalted

Trimix and fresh herbs, to taste

1. Bring the potatoes to a high simmer in the salted water and cook until fork tender.

2. When tender, strain and allow them to "steam out" for at least ten minutes

3. Toss in the remaining ingredients and then roast in a high oven until they are nice and toasty.

4. Remove and allow to rest for at least ten minutes and serve.

### Basil Puree

*Makes about 2 cups*

1 large bunch fresh basil

1/2 c. Fine red wine vinegar

a splash or two of sherry vinegar trimix or your own seasoning blend, to taste

EV Olive oil, as needed

1. Pick the leaves from the basil, but do not be afraid if some of the stems get in there. These tend to be more bitter, but the salt in the trimix actually helps our tongue to mask these bitter flavors. That is a little trick I learned years ago from a French food scientist.

2. Place all of the ingredients in a

high-powered blender except for the oil.

3. Blend on high, adding oil as needed until you have a lovely puree. It will be very light, as you just incorporated a great deal of air bubbles into the medium. As they rest and dissipate, you will be left with a bright little sauce.

4. Keep refrigerated until needed.

### Sautéed Mushrooms

*Serves 10*

3# Fresh mushrooms, a variety of your choosing

1/2 # Unsalted butter

1 lemon, halved

1 c. Dry white wine, or as needed

Trimix as needed

1. Clean the mushrooms and melt the butter in a pan large enough to fit them.

2. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring constantly. As mushrooms are mostly water, they will release said water and quicken the cook time.

3. As the water starts to evaporate, squeeze the lemon for the juice and add the wine.

4. Mix and adjust the flavors to your personal preferences

— Paul G. Suplee is an Associate Professor of Culinary Arts at Wor-Wic Community College. Find his ePortfolio at [www.heartofakitchen.com](http://www.heartofakitchen.com).



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