



CHARLENE SHARPE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin Council member Shaneka Nichols makes a point during Monday's council meeting while discussing a request from Burley Oak Brewing.

Burley Oak sales plea tapped out

Request to sell separately at chamber events gains no traction with town council

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) Elected officials asked for more cooperation between a local business and the town's chamber of commerce this week before taking no action on the business's request to serve alcohol at events.

The Berlin Town Council on Monday opted not to act on a request from Burley Oak Brewing Co. to sell alcohol at four town events. Currently, the chamber handles alcohol sales at the town's events.

'... Bypassing the people in charge of the event is not necessarily a good look.'

Councilwoman
Shaneka
Nichols

"Those are chamber events," Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols said. "Those are the people this conversation should be had with. Bypassing the people in charge of the event is not necessarily a good look."

Matt Burrier of Burley Oak approached the council this week with two requests. First, he said the brewery wanted to be able to provide free samples and sell its packaged products at the Berlin Farmers Market. Officials said that was actually a request that could be handled at the staff level by Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells. Wells noted that Lyon Rum and The Buzz Meadery operated similarly at the market, selling their product and offering free samples.

With no action needed from the council for that request, officials moved on to discussion of Burrier's request to have Burley Oak sell alcohol

See BREWERY Page 8

New survey initiatives considered

Communications comm. members want to inform residents of what OP offers

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 29, 2024) The Ocean Pines Association's communications advisory committee is considering new survey initiatives to spur more community involvement and feedback in Ocean Pines.

With first-time members Connie Corbett and Cindy Hoffman officially on the roster, the group met on Feb. 22 to discuss plans to foster the Ocean Pines neighborhood spirit and specifically the Ocean Pines Season Kickoff and Expo.

According to committee chair Linda Yurche, roughly 600 additional residents move into Ocean Pines each year.

The expo allows these new mem-

bers to explore the 61 clubs and organizations available, such as the Democratic Women's Club, the bowling league and the Delmarva Chorus.

The event is slated for April 20 at White Horse Park. The communications committee, which is heavily involved in its planning, wants to give new and old Ocean Pines residents a chance to browse all the community offers.

The group also discussed new proposals. In 2018, Yurche said the committee conducted a survey to determine how residents received Ocean Pines information and what community matters were of the most concern.

At the time, 62% of the 1,773 respondents indicated they obtained OPA news through the Bayside Gazette.

The communications team also determined that infrastructure, drainage, facility upkeep and dissat-

isfaction with Mediacom were top issues.

The board used this information to establish priorities. At the most recent communications meeting, the members expressed their intention to recommend an updated survey, as the world has changed significantly within the last six years.

"I think people were receptive to what we put out before," committee member Marlene Ott said.

Corbett noted the need to distinguish demographics when reviewing the results. The study would differentiate between new, long-time, year-round, and part-time residents and families, single people and couples.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee agreed to discuss the proposed assessment tool with Elaine Brady, the board liaison, and see if they wish to proceed.

"I would love to see the updated data," Yurche said.



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CHARLENE SHARPE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin Council members Jack Orris and Dean Burrell are pictured during Monday's meeting at town hall.

Berlin council OKs mixed drinks at one special event

Cocktails will be served by keg provided by town's Forgotten 50 Distillery

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) In an effort to incorporate more Berlin products into downtown events, elected officials agreed to allow liquor sales at Berlin Jazz and Blues, Wine and Brews in May.

The Berlin Town Council voted 4-1 to allow the Berlin Chamber of Commerce to sell mixed drinks made with liquor from Forgotten 50, the new distillery on Old Ocean City Boulevard, during the May event. While the chamber initially requested to sell the pre-mixed drinks at multiple events, officials said they wanted to see how the first one went before approving others.

"I'm not comfortable approving all four of these events without knowing how the first one goes," Councilman Steve Green said.

Ryan Nellans, executive director of the chamber, approached the council Monday asking for approval to add mixed drinks to the menu of beer and wine already sold by chamber representatives during Berlin Jazz and Blues, Wine and Brews, Small Town

Throw Down, Fiddlers Convention and Oktoberfest. He said that the chamber planned to buy pre-mixed drinks made by staff at Forgotten 50 with the establishment's liquor. He said this would be a way the chamber could include another Berlin business in downtown events. He said the amount of alcohol in the drinks would be less than 15%, in line with what was already served.

"I'm hearing beer wine and liquor," Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols said. "I feel like I'm almost at the club."

Councilman Dean Burrell asked if the addition of liquor was really necessary or if Nellans was doing it to include additional businesses in downtown events.

"That's the objective," Nellans said.

Green said he understood the concerns about liquor and suggested approving just the first event for now and then reviewing how it went after the fact.

"I think that's a good move forward," Councilman Jack Orris said.

Mayor Zack Tyndall asked if the public perception of Berlin would change if liquor was served at events.

"My hope is it has zero impact," Nellans said, adding that the cham-

See COUNCIL Page 4

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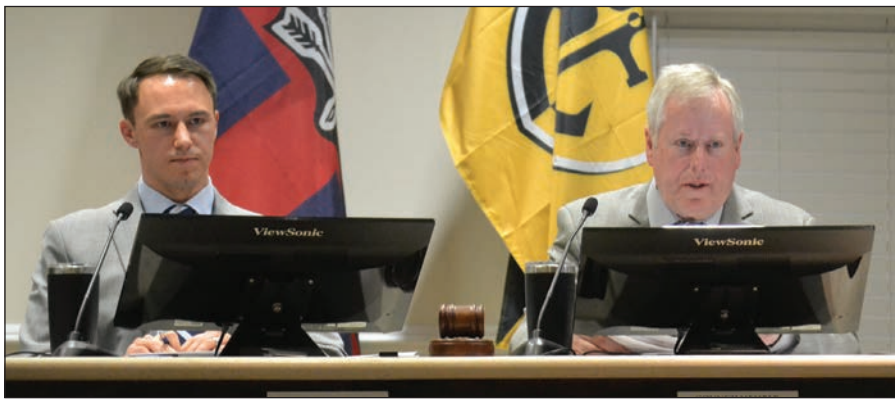
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Mayor Zack Tyndall and Councilman Jay Knerr discuss the possibility of allowing mixed drinks to be sold during chamber-sponsored events this year.

CHARLENE SHARPE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin moves strategic plan process to third, final phase

Approval granted to continue discussions with more community input

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) The town will move forward with phase three of the strategic planning process following council approval this week.

The Berlin Town Council voted unanimously on Monday to approve having Salisbury University's BEACON team move forward with the final phase of the town's strategic plan. The decision came after BEACON Director John Hickman presented the results of two community listening sessions.

"This is great, thank you," Councilman Jack Orris said.

During the last three months, BEACON gathered a variety of input from Berlin residents and staff, according to Hickman. The group met with town staff in the fall and followed that up with two community listening sessions. There was good participation from residents and Hickman's group put together findings of both to draft a vision and mission statement during a stakeholder committee meeting at the end of January. Community values, such as heritage, culture, resiliency, inclusivity, well-being and vibrancy were agreed upon and an analysis of the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was completed. While things like the town's heritage and safety were listed among its strength, opportunities for improvement included diversified town events and more affordable housing. Threats identified included affordability and overdevelopment.

Councilman Dean Burrell said he felt his neighborhood had been devel-

oped enough.

"If we're going to look to multifamily dwellings, we need to look somewhere other than my neighborhood," he said. "We also talked about ... affordability. When it comes to affordability, through the presentation I noticed affordability related to rent. Yes, I think that is an important aspect but we also need to look at affordability related to single family dwellings."

Hickman said the stakeholder committee discussed driving strategies as well as a tactical action plan. He said that if the council approved moving forward with phase three of the strategic planning process, the group would be meetings again to continue the discussion of action steps for the town. Hickman said the council would have a finalized plan to re-

view and vote on in April.

"That's something that can be in your rulings by the time next (fiscal) year starts July 1," he said.

Orris said that while he'd had a lot of questions for BEACON during the last presentation he'd been impressed by the listening sessions and stakeholder committee meetings. A motion to move forward with phase three passed unanimously.

As the council prepared to move on to the next item on the agenda, resident Gabe Purnell asked why officials weren't soliciting feedback from those in the audience, as they did with other agenda items.

"It seems like you went right by us," Purnell said. "It don't sound like you're playing a fair game in here tonight."

Mayor Zack Tyndall said that was not the intention. He said comments hadn't been requested because the item was a presentation. Tyndall apologized for the mistake.

See RESIDENT Page 5

'We've got to come together or else we're going to all perish together as Black folk. That's it!'
Gabe Purnell

Council OKs liquor at May event

Continued from Page 3

ber took the concerns mentioned as seriously as the elected officials did.

Ivy Wells, the town's economic and community development director, said that because the drinks were pre-mixed and would likely be served in a large container like a keg, the people serving it at the event would not be determining how much alcohol was included.

Cindi Krempel, president of the chamber's board of directors, said mixed drinks were already served in restaurants on Main Street. She noted that beer and wine these days also had higher alcoholic by volume (ABV).

"Wines have between 12 and 15%,"

she said. "I think this is a good opportunity for the chamber to make a little more money."

Representatives of Forgotten 50 indicated the drinks could be made with an ABV of 10%. Krempel added that chamber volunteers serving alcohol at events were trained in responsible alcoholic beverage service.

Wells made it clear the town didn't market events in a way that encouraged overdrinking.

"It's not an event that's going to be promoted as a drunk fest," she said. "All of our events, they're upscale events. Not trashy."

The council voted 4-1, with Burrell opposed, to approve liquor sales for the May jazz and blues event.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SCAM EDUCATION

Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson recently gave a presentation on preventing scams to members of the United Women in Faith at Community Church at Ocean Pines. Pictured with Robinson are Linda Baker, organization president, and member Lin Bowen.

Resident speaks out on east side region concerns

Continued from Page 4

Purnell went on to talk about a citizen-led effort to address community concerns from his neighborhood.

“We have a very serious issue going on,” he said. “Maybe some of you know it some of you don’t. We know it, the ones that live on the east side and hopefully our two representatives know it. What we need to do, I’d like to invite our two representatives to work with the committee of citizens on the east side at some point so we can be on the same page.”

He said he felt two different languages were being spoken based on what he’d heard the council say during Monday’s meeting.

“We’ve got to come together or else we’re going to all perish together as Black folk,” he said. “That’s it.”

Purnell said he needed the help of the representatives from the east side, Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols and Councilman Dean Burrell. Nichols said this was the first she’d heard of a committee. Burrell said if they were advised when to attend they’d be present.

“As a community we just can’t do nothing,” Burrell said.



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TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Members of the Worcester County Board of Education are pictured at their meeting with administration staff.

Residents stress importance of academies

Parents explain why summer programs key for northern county students

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 29, 2024) Concerned parents and community members voiced public support last week for the Worcester County Board of Education to maintain summer academy funding at area schools.

During a Feb. 13 budget meeting, Coordinator of Instruction Tamara Mills addressed the program's finan-

cial difficulties after COVID-19 relief money ran out. The move forced WCPS to request \$377,700 from the county commissioners to fund the county's northern schools' off-season sessions.

Lauren Falotico, a Showell Elementary School mother and Parent Teacher Association member, reiterated the importance of the program and urged the board to fight to support it during a meeting on Feb. 20.

"My youngest attended summer academy last summer, and it was truly a transformational experience for her," she said. "Summer academy is vital for

education. It creates well-adjusted students for the upcoming school year. It provides a structured environment and prevents academic slides. With summer academy, students can continue their education, services, and social-emotional growth."

Ocean Pines resident Laura Scharle said WCPS special education staff confirmed that if Showell and other northern schools are unable to host the summer program, per the monetary challenges, students in the area that qualify for Extended School Year services will be bussed to grant-funded academies. This would in-

clude Snow Hill Elementary. However, the concerned parent maintains that this is not enough.

"Many students that qualify for ESY, including my son, thrive on routine and familiarity," Scharle said. "Bussing these students to an unfamiliar school will be counterproductive and cause more stress than success, making their summer academy experience a waste of time."

Donna Pellingier reiterated the necessity of the summer program. Transporting northern students to the southern schools, she said, would
See BLUEPRINT Page 9



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Brewery asked to sell alcohol at four events

Continued from Page 1

at Jazz and Blues, Wine and Brews, Small Town Throw Down, Fiddlers Convention and Oktoberfest. He said rather than selling beer to the chamber for it to sell and serve, as has been done in the past, Burrier said the brewery wanted to sell the beer on its own and manage its own sales.

“What I think is being asked is go around the vendor approval process,” said Ryan Nellans, executive director of the chamber.

Burrier said the request was being made because the chamber had run out of Burley Oak beer at recent events and that made the brewery look bad. He said attendees were upset when they purchased drink tickets from the chamber and weren’t able to redeem them for Burley Oak beer and instead had to buy a domestic. He said if the

brewery sold beer at events on its own, it could provide as much as was demanded by the public.

“So you’re circumventing the authority of the chamber,” Councilman Dean Burrell said.

Nichols said that’s what it sounded like to her.

Burrier maintained that customers at events were getting mad at Burley Oak when, in fact, the chamber was the one purchasing a limited amount of beer from Burley.

“I think you need to work with the chamber,” Councilman Jay Knerr said.

Councilman Steve Green agreed and said he’d like to see a better relationship between Burley Oak and the chamber. He asked if the chamber was running out of Burley beer at every event.

Burrier said the chamber was purchasing less beer from Burley than it used to buy.

Nellans said the chamber was attempting to purchase some alcohol from a variety of vendors. He said in the past, Burley would sell beer at an event and send a bill to the chamber afterward. Now, the chamber is purchasing from a variety of vendors. He said Burley Oak had gone from being the sole provider at events, taking home between \$3,000 and \$5,000, to being one of several providers, taking \$500 to \$1,000 in. He added that people wanted choice at events, as not everyone wanted craft beer.

“Burley Oak went from being an only child to a sibling,” he said.

Officials suggested Burley Oak and the chamber work together to figure out a solution. Adam Davis of Berlin

Beer Co. said he felt the decision to allow Burley Oak to sell at events should be all or none. He said if the opportunity was provided to Burley Oak it should be provided to everyone.

“I feel we’re dealing with a slippery slope,” resident Gabe Purnell said. “Where is it going to stop?”

Councilman Dean Burrell said Burley Oak’s request was immature.

“I think it’d be inappropriate for this body to take any action on this request concerning a chamber event,” he said.

Tyndall said the two parties should find an amenable solution.

“If you two can’t work that out and this continues to be a year over year challenge we may have to explore the structure of future events,” he said. “I think you all can be adults.”

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County school board votes 6-1 for \$136M budget plan

Employees would receive one step increase, 6% cost-of-living adjustment

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) Raises for teachers highlight a \$136 million proposed budget approved by the Worcester County Board of Education last week.

The school board voted 5-1 last week to approve a proposed fiscal year 2025 budget that includes a step increase and a 6% cost-of-living adjustment for teachers. The budget includes a 6.5% COLA for support staff as well as a pay increase for bus drivers.

“Our parents come to the board and share requests for what they think is important for the board’s budget,” Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert said. “This past year it was stated over and over again by every parent that came to the table where their priorities were. They were to recruit, hire, retain high quality teachers and staff, to maintain small class sizes and to restore FY24 cuts... Our budget addresses those three priorities shared with the board by our parents and our community.”

Tolbert told the school board the proposed budget was \$136 million, with about 80%, or \$109,632,071, in county appropriations. He said about \$26 million was expected in state aid.

The fiscal year 2025 budget includes a step increase and 6% COLA

for certificated staff and a 6.5% COLA for support staff. The 6% COLA has been discussed by the school system in recent weeks as the best way for Worcester County Public Schools to work toward the \$60,000 starting teacher salary that will be mandated by the state in fiscal year 2027.

Salary increases are expected to cost \$5.9 million in the coming year. Health insurance increases are expected to exceed \$1.8 million. Tolbert noted that health insurance rates wouldn’t be finalized until March.

School board member Katie Addis asked about the possibility of zero-based budgeting, something she thought might help the school system reevaluate what was important.

Tolbert said that more than 86% of the school system’s budget was spent on staff. He added that the school system also had to increase salaries to meet the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future mandate to get starting teacher pay from around \$50,000, where it is now, to \$60,000.

“I hear what you’re saying Katie, I do, but to get where we need to be without additional funding we’re going to have to reduce positions,” Tolbert said. “That’s just the God’s honest truth.”

Addis also asked about other post-employment benefits (OPEB). Tolbert said the school system’s OPEB account was about 20% funded. He said there was not a certain funding level requirement. School board

See SCHOOL Page 10

Blueprint plan also discussed

Continued from Page 6

The mother also mentioned that kids moving on to high school must have the opportunity to learn in their home base and acquaint themselves with the building and staff for the upcoming year.

“I urge you to continue to think about how we can make summer academy happen,” she said.

Chief Academic Officer for grades Pre-K-8 Denise Shorts also gave an update on the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, the initiative to increase education funding by \$3.8 billion annually over the next ten years. The county is drafting its second implementation plan. The first portion is due to the Maryland Department of Education and the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Accountability and Implementation Board on March 15. It will address five questions concerning the blueprint’s execution in Worcester County and will be released for public viewing after it is completed and approved.

The five-pillar piece, which will use outcome data, is due May 1. The pillars, for example, look at the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results.

Superintendent Lou Taylor also announced the 2024 Worcester County’s Teacher of the Year nominees. They are listed as follows: Lisa Ballance, Pocomoke Elementary School; Caitlin Evans, Worcester Technical High School; Susan Gray, Buckingham Elementary School; Zachary Johnson, Cedar Chapel Special School; Andrea Kominos, Showell Elementary School; Jason Konyar, Snow Hill High School; Amanda Krantz, Pocomoke High School; Lisa Kristick, Ocean City Elementary School; Carrie Moore, Snow Hill Middle School; Amy Jo Mulinos, Snow Hill Elementary School; Jenna Paul, Berlin Intermediate School; Gabrielle Remington, Stephen Decatur Middle School; Kim Snyder, Pocomoke Middle School; and Marie Stevenson, Stephen Decatur High School.

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School board officials discuss fiscal data

Continued from Page 9

member Jon Andes said OPEB changes implemented by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board in 2005 required municipal governments set aside money for OPEB.

“So the taxpayers of Worcester County are putting money in a fund that only benefits the fund manager...” Andes said. “Worcester County cannot touch that money unless there is a catastrophe. I don’t think Worcester County will ever go bankrupt or financially insolvent.”

He said there was no certain level that OPEB needed to be funded.

“What do we get from it? We get nothing from it,” he said. “The only time it will ever be legally tapped into is if Worcester County becomes insolvent which I don’t see happening.”

Tolbert said Andes was correct but added that the funding could be used to pay for current retiree benefits.

Addis asked if there had been discussion during the budget process about ways to save money.

“Sure we always look at how we can save money,” Tolbert said. “One of the things we looked at was scaling back our summer programs.”

Annette Wallace, chief safety and academic officer for grades 9-12, said there was no place to make cuts significant enough to make an impact.

She said the school system had been criticized for what it spent on car washes. She said that was about \$3,000 a year.

“It’s just not going to make a significant impact,” she said. “Let alone the discussion we’re below the threshold of other county organizations in expenses like that.”

She said there had been discussions about cutting staff but that the superintendent had opted not to because parents and community members valued small class sizes.

School board member Bill Buchanan said school officials knew what they needed for their facilities to run effectively.

“We have to trust the administrative and the financial departments to make the decisions,” he said. “We can’t go line by line like some county governments do. I don’t feel like I have the expertise to do that.”

Addis said she felt the school system leadership was capable but still believed the board should do more.

“I am saying that we as the elected

board are the checks and balances and yes we should be going and having a more comprehensive budget and not striking things, but having a conversation about it...,” she said. “While we can trust the executive team, it is not our job to trust. Otherwise there’s no reason for us to be

here other than to rubberstamp a budget because we trusted them.”

Wallace said the board had held multiple budget work sessions.

Addis said the board didn’t have a comprehensive budget at that point. The board

went on to vote 5-1, with Addis opposed, to approve the budget. The proposed budget is scheduled to be discussed with county officials in April.

Weston Young, the county’s chief administrative officer, said in an interview this week that county staff would be reviewing the school system’s proposed spending plan prior to that meeting. He said he had met with the school system’s executive team regarding their budget format about a month ago. According to

Young, while there were improvements in how they displayed certain operating expenses from last year, details about revenues, positions, fixed charges, and restricted grant expenditures were missing or needed additional clarification.

“We understand they have the difficult challenge of reallocating existing resources to implement the Blueprint’s requirements, however we’re optimistic we will receive a comprehensive budget this year,” he said.

Young also addressed the relevance of OPEB and why the school system’s OPEB funding liability mattered.

“The funding of the OPEB trust for board of education employees not only guarantees their benefits in retirement, but it also impacts our credit rating and the interest rate we pay when we borrow for projects like school construction,” he said. “The board’s budget has not fully covered the cost of current retirees, let alone additional funding to grow an investment trust. The county has picked up the slack and will continue to do so to honor the entitled benefits of retirees. Until this trust is fully funded it will negatively impact our credit rating. When fully funded it will pay for the annual contribution for retirees.”

‘So the taxpayers of Worcester County are putting money in a fund that only benefits the fund manager...’

School board member

Jon Andes

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State warns education challenges looming

Chairman: ‘You’re not going to be able to fund all the things’ officials want

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) State officials said last week that the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future would require difficult decisions at the local level as officials will have to prioritize how they want to spend education funding.

In a virtual meeting on Feb. 20, the state’s Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) met with the Worcester County Commissioners and the Worcester County Board of Education to discuss implementation of the Blueprint, the state’s comprehensive education reform plan. The Blueprint will require local school systems to increase teacher salaries and expand dual enrollment offerings, among a variety of other changes meant to improve education in Maryland.

“It’s not going to be business as usual,” AIB Chairman Ike Leggett said. “You’re not going to be able to fund all the things people have wanted in the past.”

Leggett told Worcester County officials that with Maryland students ranking 40th and 43rd nationwide in reading and math, state leaders felt the need to spent years developing a plan to overhaul the state’s education system. AIB Vice Chairman Dr. Britt Kirwan, who led that effort, said a massive change was needed.

“We’re going to have our challenges,” he said.

Rachel Hise, AIB’s executive director, outlined the pillars of the Blueprint and how it was to be funded. While the county allocated \$100 million in Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding for education last year, the new local share for the Blueprint is only \$73 million. Under the Blueprint, local jurisdictions must fund the local share or MOE, whichever amount is greater.

Hise stressed that some of what

school systems funded now was not included in the Blueprint.

“There are things not in the Blueprint that communities may value,” she said.

Commissioner Chip Bertino asked if those figures indicated that \$73 million should be sufficient to cover the needs of the Blueprint. She said that figure didn’t include transportation or things like band or athletics.

Bertino asked how county government would know if the board of education was meeting Blueprint mandates and whether there was a transparent way to know they were being met from a financial standpoint.

“You don’t have that now?” Leggett asked.

Bertino said the county didn’t have the level of detail that would effectively help officials understand what was going on.

“Other county governments are experiencing the same opportunities for improvement we are,” Bertino said.

Leggett said it was the AIB’s expectation that everything associated with the Blueprint was transparent.

“We’re talking here about tax dollars the public’s paying for,” he said.

Bertino asked about zero-based budgeting, the process of starting a budget from zero rather than with the budget figure from the previous year. Leggett said the way he did it, a budget would start from ground zero and he would determine the most important priorities and allocate funding to them. If there isn’t enough funding for everything on the list, the decision has to be made to add more resources or to eliminate something on the list. Leggett said he found zero based budgeting helpful but that budgeting decisions would have to be made at the local level.

Kirwan said local school systems could get assistance from the state during Blueprint implementation through consultants AIB would be providing.

“These are individuals who can bring strategic thinking to make the

kind of adjustments you’re talking about,” he said.

According to Leggett, transparency and collaboration will be needed through the process.

“You should have access to and the ability to look at everything utilizing taxpayer dollars,” he said. “That transparency is a must.”

He acknowledged that putting the Blueprint initiatives in place would require big changes from school systems but that drastic change was needed to improve education statewide.

“The Blueprint will not do everything people may want to do at the local level,” he said. “There will be some difficult decisions.”

School board member Jon Andes, the county’s former superintendent, said Worcester County was consid-

ered a wealthy jurisdiction by the state and as a result didn’t receive sufficient funding. He said the county was set to receive \$1.4 million—about \$200 a pupil—to implement the Blueprint.

“We need more state funding to get the job done,” he said, adding that things like the salary increase the Blueprint demanded for teachers with National Board Certification cost more than the state was providing. “We need to make a cut somewhere else to pay that. In order to implement the Blueprint with fidelity, we’re going to need more state dollars.”

Andes maintained that Worcester County already supported many of the Blueprint values and was the top performing school system in the

See BLUEPRINT Page 12



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St. Paul's Episcopal Church performs first 'ashes to go'

Ministry work offered on Main Street for shoppers, Berlin residents Ash Wed.

(Feb. 29, 2024) On Feb. 14, members of St. Paul's Episcopal Berlin celebrated Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent in the Christian tradition with an "ashes to go" event.

According to a release from Cheryl Middleton, the church's communications liaison, Rev. Carl Mosley and Rev. Suz Southern set up outside of The Church Mouse at 101 N. Main Street in Berlin and administered ashes to passers-by in accordance with traditional Ash Wednesday rites.

Despite the cold temperatures, the release said many local people and out-of-towners visiting Berlin

stopped to receive ashes on their foreheads and participate in the tradition marking the start of the Lenten season, which lasts 40 days (excluding Sundays) and concludes on Easter Sunday.

Southern followed custom and made the ashes by burning palm leaves left over from last year's Palm Sunday celebration.

Anyone interested in attending Lenten or Holy Week services at St. Paul's Berlin can check the website, stpaulsberlin.org, for details about all upcoming services and events. The church is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Regular Sunday services are typically held at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. St. Paul's Episcopal Berlin is at 3 Church Street in Berlin.



(Above) Rev. Carl Mosley from St. Paul's Episcopal Berlin places ashes on the forehead of an attendee of the church's "ashes to go" event on Feb. 14 outside of The Church Mouse in Berlin. (Right) Rev. Suz Southern places ashes on another attendee of the event

PHOTOS COURTESY ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL BERLIN

Blueprint carries major impact

Continued from Page 11

state. He pointed out that the low-ranking stats Leggett shared at the beginning of the meeting were from the National Assessment of Education Progress, an assessment that isn't based on results from individual students or schools.

"It's a barometer not a census test," he said.

Hise said that in counties where the local share was less than MOE, there would be funding challenges because the money was already being spent on certain things.

"It is a challenge to rethink how you're using your resources," she said, adding that the goal would be to have local officials agree on a set of priorities. "We are going to be providing targeted technical assistance to do that deeper dive. We really would encourage Worcester County to participate."

Todd Ferrante, president of the school board, asked if the timeline for Blueprint implementation could be delayed.

"That'd be a question we'd have to take up with the General Assembly," Leggett said.

At a board of education meeting later Tuesday afternoon, Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) officials said the support services the AIB referenced during the virtual meeting were not yet available.

"This is something brand new that's getting ready to be offered," said Annette Wallace, the school system's chief safety and academic officer for grades 9-12. Other officials said the school system wouldn't be able to apply for the assistance until July 1.

"Certainly, I'm going to reach out to that consultant," Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert said.

Wallace also brought up the comments made about transparency. She said one of the entire pillars of the Blueprint was accountability and transparency.

"That seemed to be left out today when the question was asked very clearly," she said. "I did want to make that clear to the board and public. I'm not sure why that was left out when the question was asked."

She added that there was already accountability within WCPS.

"When we talk about accountability, Worcester County Public Schools now, thanks to the board's leadership and foresight, every expenditure that you all approve every single month is on our website," she said. "To make any suggestion about a lack of transparency or accountability, if I go to the bathroom and it costs me 25 cents to go to the bathroom, like in Europe when you have to pay a quarter to go in, you'd see it. It would be a 25-cent expense and it would say restroom. Everything is there everything is accounted for everything is very transparent."

School board member Katie Addis brought up Leggett's comments about zero-based budgeting and asked if that was something the school system could explore. Tolbert indicated it would be difficult for a school system to do.

"For some companies it does make sense," he said. "I don't think it makes as much sense for a school system."

Addis said maybe it was something the school system could do every five or 10 years.

"The fact you'd be doing that type of process would be beneficial to the financial department as well as the taxpayers that see things are being looked at," she said.

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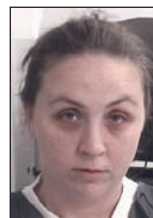
Berlin day care worker faces assault, child abuse charges

Heather Lynn Ward remains in jail without bond, more legal filings could follow

By Charlene Sharpe Associate Editor

(Feb. 23, 2024) A Berlin daycare worker is facing assault and child abuse charges after an 8-month-old baby was brought to the hospital with a broken leg.

While the investigation is ongoing and more charges are likely, on Feb. 20, Berlin resident Heather Lynn Ward, 39, was charged with 14 counts of second-degree assault and one felony count of second-degree child abuse. The charges stem from Ward's time in an infant classroom at Berlin Activities Depot/Education Station.



Heather Ward

According to charging documents, police launched an investigation in November regarding an 8-month-old female who'd been diagnosed with a broken tibia at Atlantic General Hospital. The child's mother told investigators she'd been fine prior to attending daycare at Berlin Activities Depot/Education Station Nov. 1. Investigators visited the childcare facility and met with its director as well as the child's teachers in the "Baby Buzzing Bees" classroom, which according to the Berlin Activities Depot website is for children between 21 and 40 weeks old. Staff told investigators they were unaware of an incident when the child was injured, according to court documents.

It was at that point, however, that investigators requested video surveil-

lance for any classroom the child had been in on Nov. 1. The video showed several interactions noted in court documents, including several instances when Ward hit the child. According to charging documents, at 9:47 a.m., "Ward hit (the child) with her left hand twice and then used her right hand and struck (the child) five times...."

According to court documents there were interactions with other children on the video that were concerning. When investigators met with administration at Berlin Activities Depot, they asked that Ward be removed from the classroom until the investigation was complete.

"Ward was placed on leave and eventually terminated," charging documents read.

On Nov. 14, a doctor determined the child's injury was an "impact/compression injury" referred to as a buckle fracture.

"He stated a significant amount of force was applied to her heel to cause the injury," charging documents read.

When police met with Ward and showed her the video in December, "Ward said she never intended to hurt any of the children," according to charging documents, and she did not cause the fracture to the baby's leg.

"Ward stated from what she saw in the videos that I showed her, she didn't believe she broke the 'kids' leg," charging documents read. "She was told by the staff at the Education Station that it didn't look like she broke her leg."

At that point parents of other children in Ward's classroom on Nov. 1 were shown video of their children's interactions with Ward, and in mid-January, police obtained video for the Bees classroom during Oct. 1 to Nov. 13. The charging documents go on to identify numerous interactions between Ward and the victim. An incident on Oct. 23 allegedly occurred when Ward was standing next to the victim's crib.

"(The child) moved in her crib. Ward immediately turned and pushed down on (the child's) body twice. 12:05:25— (The child) moved again, Ward pushed down on (the child's) body and then slapped her twice. Ward repositioned (the child)

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The Berlin Activities Depot/Education Station is pictured

Baby brought to hospital with broken leg

so her head was at the opposite end of the crib. 12:08:16—Ward punched (the child) on the head area two times and slapped her,” according to charging documents.

Berlin Activities Depot owner/operator Carmella Solito issued a statement Thursday night, saying, “We are deeply disturbed and horrified by the circumstances involving the recent arrest of a former employee. The accusations profoundly conflict with our core values and longstanding commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children in our care. We have zero tolerance for any abuse or mistreatment of children. Their safety and well-being are our absolute top priority.”

According to Solito, unlike alleged in the charging documents, Ward was immediately discharged once the allegations were learned. Solito said, “Upon learning of the allegations, the employee was immediately removed from the center and terminated. Since then, we have been providing law enforcement with all necessary information and support to ensure a thorough and complete investigation. ... I want everyone to know we are de-

voting our full attention to this matter and are committed to demonstrating through our actions the unwavering commitment to child safety that has always been at the core of Berlin Activities Depot.”

Solito said measures have been implemented at the center while continuing to cooperate with law enforcement’s investigation. An effort to “supplement the cameras we have in place” is underway. She said, “we are installing additional password-protected cameras throughout the facility, allowing parents to remotely view their children and our caregiving practices in real-time. This additional layer of transparency aims to further demonstrate our unwavering commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment.”

As of Thursday, Ward was being held without bond following a bail review in Worcester County District Court Thursday morning. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for March 19 in District Court.

William Hall, an attorney in Salisbury, said he’d been retained by the family of one of the victims from Berlin Education Station. Charges

have not yet been filed related to his client’s child but are expected, according to Hall.

“We’re looking for any witnesses

or anyone that can help to come forward,” he said. “It’s a serious matter. The allegations are very disturbing but there is video of these assaults.”

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Critical need for county foster care families

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(Feb. 29, 2024) Six homes.

That, according to Department of Social Services Director Roberta Baldwin, is the total number of active foster care facilities in all of Worcester County.

It's also the biggest challenge the department faces as it seeks temporary placement for the 30 children who are currently in the local foster care system.

"It's a national issue," she said recently. "We struggled before the pandemic, but certainly the pandemic has impacted, and continues to impact, our ability to recruit and maintain a large pool of homes."

While the goal of foster care is to place foster children in a permanent living arrangement, either with family members or adoptive parents, Baldwin said there is a great need for foster parents who can provide short-term care and support. She noted

that more than half of children in Worcester County's foster care system are currently living in other counties, away from their communities and the people they know.

"When children have to be separated from their families, there's trauma that's associated with that," she explained. "So if we can keep children in their communities and in their neighborhoods, connected with teachers or other important figures in their lives, it helps to reduce that

trauma and create some normalcy for that child. And it helps them live a much healthier life."

Baldwin said the foster care system is a temporary separation of children who are at risk of being hurt or maltreated in their homes. She said children who enter the system are often victims of abuse and neglect.

"In our county, we have a high incident rate of neglect," she said.

Tess Waller, resource coordinator for the local foster care system, said

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RFP # 2024 - 03

Audit Services for Existing Information Technology Contract and System

Due Date: Friday, March 15, 2024
Time: 3:00 P.M. EST

The Town of Berlin is seeking Proposals for Audit Services for the Town's existing Information Technology Contract and System. Qualified firms are encouraged to visit the Town of Berlin website at berlinmd.gov/government/request-for-proposals/ or contact Town Administrator Mary Bohlen at 410-641-4314 / mbohlen@berlinmd.gov for official RFP.

Sealed proposals will be accepted until 3:00 PM on Friday, March 15, 2024. EEO.

OCD-2/22/2t



TOWN OF BERLIN

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

2024 - 01

Facilities Design and Build Services

Due Date: Friday, March 29, 2024
Time: 3:00 P.M. EST

The Town of Berlin is seeking RFQs for Design and Build Services for three (3) facilities owned and operated by the Town: 1) Partial Renovation of Town Hall; and 2) Complete Build of a new Public Works Facility;

and 3) Complete Build of a new Community Center. Qualified firms are encouraged to visit the Town of Berlin website at berlinmd.gov/government/request-for-proposals/ for the official RFQ or contact Town Administrator Mary Bohlen at 410-641-4314 / mbohlen@berlinmd.gov for the official RFQ.

Sealed submissions will be accepted until 3:00 PM on Friday, March 29, 2024. EEO.

OCD-2/22/2t



TOWN OF BERLIN, MARYLAND

NOTICE

OF PUBLIC HEARING
ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01
MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF
BERLIN INFRASTRUCTURE
BONDS, 2024 SERIES A

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF BERLIN (THE "TOWN") PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING \$3,800,000.00 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ALL OR A PORTION OF THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR (I) FINANCING, REIMBURSING AND/OR REFINANCING COSTS OF THE PROJECTS GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS (A) ELECTRIC AMI METER SYSTEM AND (B) PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING, (II) FUNDING A PORTION OF A CAPITAL RESERVE FUND AND/OR OTHER RESERVES, AND/OR (III) PAYING OR REIMBURSING ISSUANCE AND OTHER COSTS RELATED TO THE BONDS, SUBJECT TO THE FURTHER PROVISIONS OF SUCH ORDINANCE.

The public hearing on the Ordinance will be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, March 11, 2024. The Ordinance will be introduced at the Mayor and Council's regular meeting on Monday, February 26, 2024

and may be considered for passage at the March 11, 2024 regular meeting. The public hearing and both meetings will be held at Berlin Town Hall, 10 William Street, 2nd Floor, Berlin, MD 21811, beginning at 7:00 PM.

The hearing is open to the public and public testimony is encouraged. Written comments may be submitted by no later than 12:00 PM (noon) on Monday, March 11, 2024 as described at <https://berlinmd.gov/government/council-meetings>.

The Ordinance is available for review at Berlin Town Hall during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM or on the Town website at www.berlinmd.gov.

Persons with questions regarding this matter may call 410-641-2770.

OCD-2/22/2t



TOWN OF BERLIN, MARYLAND

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01
MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF
BERLIN INFRASTRUCTURE
BONDS, 2024 SERIES A

Notice is hereby given that the Council (the "Council") of Mayor and Council of Berlin (the "Town"), will hold a public hearing to consider an Ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale to the Community Development Administration of general obligation bonds in one or more series in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$3,800,000 (the "Bonds") to be issued under the State of Maryland's Local Government Infrastructure Financing Program, pursuant to the authority of Sections 4-101 through 4-255 of the Housing and Community Development Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended (the "Act"). The purpose of the Bonds is to provide all or a portion of the funds necessary to (i) finance, reimburse and/or refinance all or a portion of the costs of two separate projects generally referred

to by the Town as the Electric AMI Meter System and the Public Works Building (which building may be occupied by other Town departments as well), (ii) fund reserves, and/or (iii) pay or reimburse costs of issuance and other related costs of the Bonds, subject to the further provisions of such Ordinance.

PLACE OF MEETING: Council Chambers (2nd Floor), Town Hall, 10 William Street, Berlin, Maryland 21811

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

DATE: Monday, March 11, 2024

All interested parties are encouraged to attend the public hearing or to submit written comments as described below.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED UNTIL 12 PM/NOON on Monday, March 11, 2024 as follows: (i) email to info@berlinmd.gov and use Meeting Comments as the email subject line, (ii) fax to 410-641-2316, (iii) drop off in either drop box at Town Hall—one is at the rear of the building behind the stair tower and the other is at the corner of Bay and William Streets on the building, or (iv) mail to Berlin Town Hall, Attn: Meeting Comments, 10 William Street, Berlin, MD 21811. The Town is not responsible for delays or delivery failures on the part of USPS or by any other delivery method.

The full text of the Ordinance is available for review at Berlin Town Hall during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM or on the Town website at www.berlinmd.gov.

This public hearing is required by the Act. The Ordinance may be passed (i) as introduced or (ii) as amended, either at the Council meeting held on the same day as and following the public hearing or at a subsequent Council meeting.

Pursuant to the Act, (i) the Ordinance will become effective upon its passage by the Council and its approval by the Mayor, and (ii) the qualified voters of the Town will have the right to petition the Ordinance to referendum within 20 days after its passage by the Council (such time period to be calculated in accordance with Maryland law).

Persons with questions concerning this matter may call 410-641-2770.

OCD-2/29/2t

Keeping children local helps reduce trauma

anyone – whether they are single, married, or an empty-nester – can be a foster parent, so long as they can complete the necessary training program and background check and provide a safe home environment. But most importantly, Waller said, is that they must love children and provide emotional support and stability.

“These children aren’t asking for much,” she said. “They just want to be part of a family.”

Alison Tinker, a Worcester County foster parent, said that is exactly why she joined the foster care system more than 20 years ago. Since that time, her family has housed countless foster children and adopted five.

“There’s always more love to go around ...,” she said. “Children can never have too many people to love them.”

Tinker said she sees the need for additional foster families within the community. She added that while there may be challenges, being a foster parent is a rewarding experience.

“It’s worth getting into, even if you don’t want to be a full-time foster parent,” she said. “Being a respite provider is just as important. Who knows, you may fall in love with them and want to keep them. We did that five times ourselves.”

Waller said she will work with prospective foster parents to determine their goals and intentions, whether it be short-term respite care, long-term care or adoption. She said families can also specify age ranges and decline any potential placements.

“Not every child will fit in their home, and it’s OK to say no,” she said. “And we understand that because the children are a priority, and we want to make sure that they’re safe and happy.”

Baldwin added that the department will also offer assistance to foster care families, no matter the time or day.

“We really are here to help and that’s a big point that we need to get across,” she said. “If you are kind enough to open your heart and home and take a child in, you’re not doing it alone, that the department is here to support you, for whatever the need may be, whether it’s getting a youth to and from medical appointments or talking through a situation that a foster parent may be having.”

Officials said there are some misconceptions about the foster care system. Baldwin said that could be one reason Worcester County is experiencing a lack of foster homes.

“Some of it may be that in our county there’s this perception that children aren’t experiencing the issues that would warrant them to be separated from their families, so there isn’t a need. But there is ...,” she said. “We do have issues where families are experiencing behavioral

health or substance use disorders that prevent them from being the best parent that they need to be. Those types of things are happening, and it’s those types of situations that are probably most prevalent for the majority of the reasons as to why children are coming into foster care.”

Baldwin added that the COVID pandemic also played a significant role in the number of families needing the foster care system.

“I do think that the pandemic has created more issues within families that they’re struggling to deal with,” she explained. “So it’s creating a greater need for this temporary separation, which means we need a larger pool of families to join our team, to support the efforts to help us work with both the child and the family that is challenged with some of these problems.”

As of Feb. 16, there were 3,804 children and older youth in Maryland’s foster care system, according to the Maryland Department of Human Services. And while the number of children entering foster care has declined by 30% in the last decade, Brian Schleter, spokesman for the state department, said officials continue to seek partners when temporary placement is necessary.

“Whenever possible, we want to make sure children and youth can safely remain with loved ones, reduce unnecessary removals and prevent children from coming into foster care in the first place ...,”

he said. “When children cannot safely remain at home and must enter foster care, we work diligently to place them in family foster homes, including kinship care, whenever possible.”

To date, there are 1,309 licensed

family foster homes in Maryland, along with 821 formal kinship providers, according to the Maryland Department of Human Services.

“In Maryland, we continuously seek to partner with people who choose to step forward to serve as foster parents,” Schleter said. “At the same time, we are actively shifting toward a kin-first culture that consistently promotes immediate kinship placements, helps children in foster care maintain connections with relatives, and tailors services and supports for kinship families. Providing stable and loving homes can make an immense difference in the lives of these children, offering them the support and nurturing environment they need to thrive.”

Officials say the Worcester County Department of Social Services is seeking families to care for children as young as four months to teens as old as 17. Waller said those interested in becoming a foster parent can call her at 410-422-9731. For additional information, contact the Worcester County Department of Social Services at 410-677-6849.

“We really want to support the youth in our community and provide what is best for them,” Baldwin said. “And being in a family is what’s best for children.”

‘When children have to be separated from their families, there’s trauma that’s associated with that. So if we can keep children in their communities and in their neighborhoods, connected with teachers or other important figures in their lives, it helps to reduce that trauma and create some normalcy for that child. And it helps them live a much healthier life.’

Department of Social Services
Director Roberta Baldwin

RETIREMENT TAX BOOTCAMP

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5:00 - 6:00 pm

Managing Taxes in Retirement

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MARCH 15

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Savvy Roth Conversion Strategies

Learn strategies to create and enhance your tax-free portfolio

MARCH 21

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Medicare Made Simple

Learn how to navigate healthcare expenses and Medicare plans



Class Instructor:

Robert S. Jeter CFP®, CRPC®
Vice President & Financial Planner

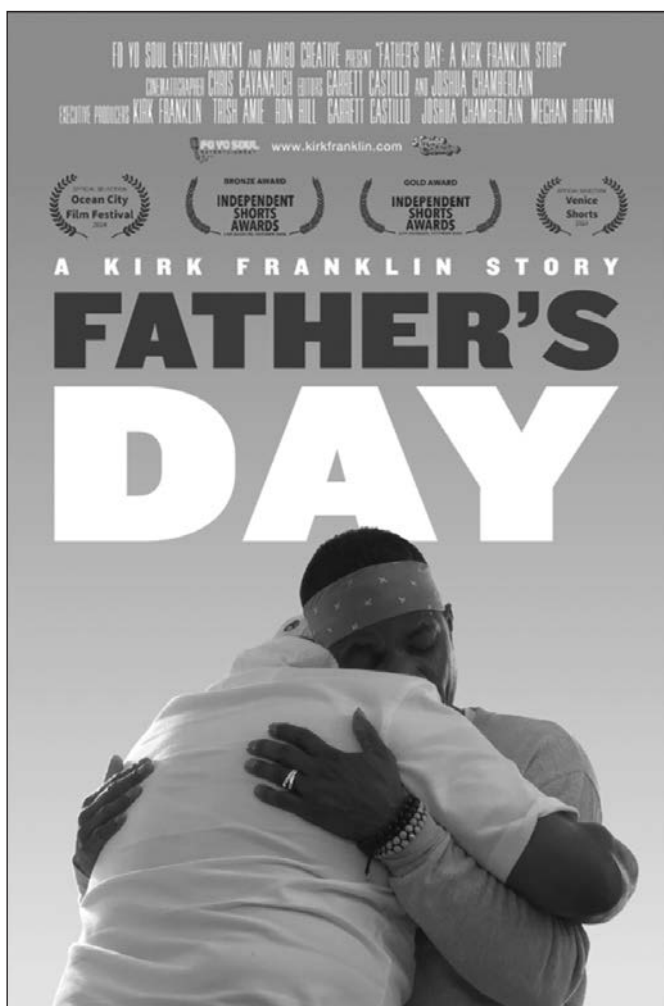
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Md. filmmakers produce 46 entries for annual OC festival



The poster for "Father's Day-a Kirk Franklin Story," a 35-minute film by Josh Chamberlain, of Berlin, about a quest to discover his true biological father.. POSTER COURTESY ART LEAGUE OF OCEAN CITY

(March 1, 2024) Of the 105 independent films showing at the 2024 Ocean City Film Festival next week, 46 were made in Maryland by Maryland directors.

The films will show during the eighth installment of the festival, set March 7-10, in Ocean City.

"I'm very excited and pleased that over 40 films screening at this year's OC Film Fest are from Maryland filmmakers," Jack Gerbes, the director of the State of Maryland Film Office, said in a news release. "I urge fans of film in the region to come and see the works of the next wave of talented Marylanders telling their stories on the big screen."

The film festival is an annual production of the nonprofit Art League of Ocean City. The films have not been rated, and some feature adult content. Viewer discretion is advised.

Listed below are the 46 Maryland-produced films, including their origin and director, and a brief synopsis. Showtimes and tickets are available at OCMDFilmFestival.com.

"Get On the Bus!" – Feature-length film by Justinian Matthew Dispenza, of Galena, about the James Taylor Justice Coalition of Chestertown.

"Mark and Mandy" – Six-minute short by Jacob Costlow, of Frederick, about a stellar first date.

"Sugar" – Seven-minute short by Nathan Shinholt and Adam Willem, of Baltimore, about a competitive lemonade salesman.

"Up and Down" – Eight-minute short by Matt Barry, of Baltimore; a slapstick comedy.

"Do You Trust Me?" – Six-minute short by Ronald James, of Severn, about virtual strangers embarking on a date.

"Gianna" – 51-minute film by Maryland native Brooke Linsalata about a young Italian-American tomboy.

"Tying the Knot" – Two-minute short by Ryan Wilton Zlatniski, of Berlin, about a string who feels overwhelmed by his tedious life.

"Jessie" – 19-minute film by Zach Ruchkin, of Baltimore, about a teen's tension with her mother.

"Pain into Passion" – 21-minute film by Brandi Hall, of Severn, about University of Maryland lineman Jordan McNair and his death at 19 after a heat stroke.

"Shark Week" – Six-minute short by Adria Branson, of Valley Lee, about a confident high school student, her period, and a crucial math quiz.

"The Echoes We See" – 10-minute short by Andrés Mejia, of Halethorpe, about a school lockdown and not feeling safe.

"The Last Epic Ride" – 11-minute short by Rick Kain, of Woodbine, about a terminally ill man who goes for one last motorcycle ride.

"What Did You Say?" – Seven-minute short by Johns Hopkins medical student Oscar Li following two people and their hearing health journeys.

"Center for the Arts" – 50-minute film by B.L. Strang-Moya, of Ocean City, about the founding and history of the Art League of Ocean City.

"Squall" – 15-minute film by Emmi Shockley, of Ocean City, about an addict's journey to reconnect with his younger brother.

"Familiar" – 18-minute film by Rebecca Mlinek, of Upperco, about a groundskeeper and a mysterious cat.

"Midnight Oil" – Nine-minute



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11036 Worcester Hwy., Berlin, MD 21811
TempleBatYam-oc.org



OPEN HOUSES

February 29 - March 7



DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENCY/AGENT
Fri-Mon, 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside	1BR/2BR/3BR/4BR+	Condos, Towns & SF	-	Nanette Pavier/Holiday Real Estate
Sat & Sun, Noon-4pm	Harbor Court, 12801 Memory Lane	3-6BR/3.5-6.5BA	Single Family	From \$849,900	Kathleen M. Clark/Monogram Realty
Sat & Sun, Noon-2pm	735 Bradley Rd #206, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$459,900	Ann Holtz/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	38331 Bluebird Lane #368, Selbyville	2BR/2BA	Single Family	\$379,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 12:30-2:30pm	36939 Creekhaven Drive, Selbyville	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$825,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11am-1pm	38331 Bluebird Lane, Selbyville, DE	2BR/2BA	Single Family	\$379,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 2-4pm	121 81st St. #706, Ocean City	3BR/3.5BA	Condo	\$815,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	12131 Pimlico Lane, Berlin	3BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$699,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-3pm	307 Purnell St., Snow Hill	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$289,000	Marlene Ott/BHHS PenFed Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	107 Convention Center Drive #117C, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$489,900	Lauren Martini/BHHS PenFed Realty



Total 105 films set to be shown

short by Trevor Taylor, of Salisbury, about a detective hunting down a mysterious killer.

“Ray of Sunshine” – 31-minute film by Tyler Jennings and Jon Kemmerer, of Owings Mills, about abused kids who have had enough.

“Red Yellow Blue” – 19-minute film by Julia E. Cooke, of Baltimore, about a girl haunted by her own demons.

“Homecoming” – 10-minute short by Alvan Obichie, of Baltimore, about a high school teacher racing home to make dinner for his wife.

“I Don’t Know What I Look Like” – 18-minute film by Rachel Lotlikar, of Severna Park, an exploration into the mind of the artist.

“Ma’s Kisses” – 10-minute short by Jimiy Dominique Anthony, of Hagerstown, about mother and daughter and their love of cooking.

“Aloha” – Four-minute short by Eli Michael Copperman, of Baltimore, a music video about bad bagel service.

“The Music From My Dreams” – 10-minute short by Joshica Kiah, of Upper Marlboro, about a struggling musician finding his true voice.

“Baltimore Screen Painting Folklife Apprenticeship” – Five-minute short by Wide Angle Youth

Media, of Baltimore, for the Maryland State Arts Council about Baltimore screen painter John Iampieri, of Wicomico County.

“Heritage Award: Waterfowl Festival” – Four-minute short by Wide Angle Youth Media, of Baltimore, for the Maryland State Arts Council about the Waterfowl Festival in Talbot County.

“HBCU Fashion is Everything!” – 34-minute film by Bridgett Clinton-Scott about college students studying fashion at a Historically Black College in Maryland.

“Roots: Maryland’s Nature to Nurture” – 27-minute film by Fiona O’Brien, Sebrena Williamson and Zoe Couloumbis, of Bishopville, exploring Maryland through dance.

“Intrusive” – Eight-minute short by Jacob Greene, of Baltimore, about facing anxiety in preparing to go on a date.

“Of One’s Own” – 13-minute film by Jack Calvin Girod, of Westminster, about an LGBTQ speed dating event.

“Father’s Day: A Kirk Franklin Story” – 35-minute film by Josh Chamberlain, of Berlin, about a quest to discover his true biological father.

“The Koda-Chrome (W)Rapper” – 24-minute film by Willy Con-

ley, of Hanover, about a deaf mother bonding with her hearing son.

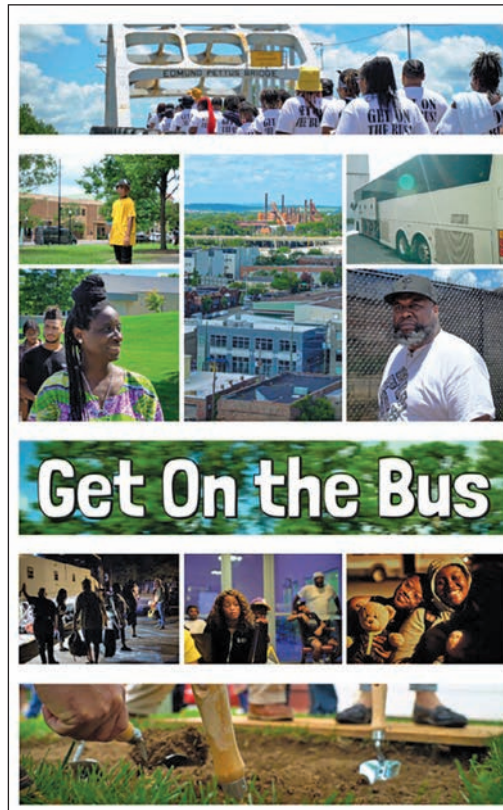
“Even the Women Must Fight” – 26-minute film by Karen Turner, of Upper Marlboro, showing rare historical footage from Northern Vietnamese combat photographers.

“Swamp Creatures” – 10-minute short by David and Tara Gladden, of Salisbury, about kitchen magnets coming to life to battle for the soul of America.

“A Stupid Grudge” – Three-minute short by Sayer Alexander Baca, of Annapolis, about two friends in an argument as they make their last film together.

“Ten from the 2023 Ocean City Film Challenge” – Ten short films, 103 minutes in total, produced locally or by Ocean City locals. Directed by Jackson Dutton, Brian Kozak, Fiona O’Brien, Will Rothermel, Davis Mears, Joe Joyce, Brian Hooks, Erin Welch, Holden Connor, Marlon Wallace, Myah Stokes and Christian Walters.

“Looking Inward” – Black History & The Arts – 30-minute film by Justinian Matthew Dispenza, of



POSTER COURTESY ART LEAGUE OF OCEAN CITY
The poster for “Get On the Bus!,” a feature-length film by Justinian Matthew Dispenza, of Galena, about the James Taylor Justice Coalition of Chestertown.

Galena, about the Kent Cultural Alliance.

More information, including a full list of all 105 films, along with links to buy tickets, is available at OCMD-FilmFestival.com, or by calling 410-524-9433.

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MARCH 2, 2024

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Snapshots



PHOTOS COURTESY WORCESTER PREPARATORY SCHOOL

WPS RING CEREMONY

Worcester Preparatory School's annual Junior Ring Ceremony was held on Feb. 8. It is tradition that seniors present the juniors with their class rings along with comments explaining why the recipients are special to them. (Left) Junior students pose for a group photo with their class sponsor after the ring ceremony. (Right) Senior Libby Becker and junior Abby Ament pose together with their rings.



Class of '92 alumnus Reid Tingle and his daughter, junior Sydney Tingle, pose with junior Jack Lynch and his father, Class of '91 alumnus Will Lynch, at the ring ceremony.



(Above) Juniors Will Wells, Briar Parsons and Frank Miller proudly display their new class rings. (Left) Senior Dylan McGovern poses with his brother, Ben McGovern, after presenting him his ring.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SAUSAGE SALE

Berlin Lions Club President Joe Andrews and Treasurer Jack Mumford cook up sandwiches during the club's recent sausage sale.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

NEW LIONS

Berlin Lions Club Membership Coordinator Grover Collins rewards Paul Chambers and Jody Palmisamo for recruiting new members. The Lions club is accepting new members. Call 410-641-1064 for inquiries.

Snapshots



PHOTOS COURTESY WORCESTER PREPARATORY SCHOOL

WELLNESS @ WORCESTER

(Left) Worcester Prep Head of Upper School Carol Evans pets therapy dog, Macey, with sophomore Max Carpenter and juniors Nathan Montague and Dillon Scopp during the school's recent Wellness @ Worcester event. (Right) Pets on Wheels volunteer Don Ashe shows Worcester Prep juniors Avery Roselle, Jayden Scopp and Angeline Todorov how to direct therapy dogs Gus and Ivy with tricks for treats.



Worcester Prep junior Lydia Schwartz and her therapy dog, Sprinkles, spend time with classmate James Haley during the wellness event. Lydia spearheaded the event in collaboration with the College Counseling program to introduce students to a holistic approach to health, emphasizing stress management, study skills, and wise lifestyle choices.



Worcester Prep juniors Danielle Carr, Nazi Unal and Emma Zajdel practice relaxation during the wellness event by indulging in some adult coloring.



Worcester Prep sophomores Catherine Cullen and Emily Patrowicz create stress balls out of balloons and rice during the wellness event to keep on hand during stressful times.



PHOTOS COURTESY WORCESTER PREPARATORY SCHOOL

WINTER SPORTS AWARDS

Worcester Preparatory School Middle School winter sports awards were recently given out to 12 members of the boys and girls basketball teams and three cheerleaders. (Left) Pictured, from left, are WPS middle school cheerleader award recipients Vivian Spraul, Addy Wisniewski and Ava Holland. (Right) Members of the seventh and eighth grade WPS middle school girls basketball team pose with their awards. Pictured, seated from left, are seventh graders Kristie Carr, Kylee Hutton and Ella Conev. Pictured, standing from the left, are eighth graders Harper Hertrich, Carolina Labin and Scarlett Shimko.



Opinion

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

School crime claims warrant skepticism

The attack on public education by Worcester County elected officials shifted into another gear Tuesday with a press conference that accused the county school system and its top two administrators of being soft on crime.

Asserting that crime in the schools is out of control and that school officials have refused to work with law enforcement and the prosecutor's office, State's Attorney Kris Heiser and Sheriff Matt Crisafulli showed videos of school fights and statistics as proof that the school system's leadership is failing miserably on matters of school safety and covering it up.

People of reasonable intelligence, however, should be able to connect the dots between this attack on the schools and the county commissioners' decision to back the schools into a corner by giving them the minimum budget the law allows.

Taken together, the timing and the aggressiveness of these challenges are reason for suspicion. In addition, the unified message from the county commissioner majority, Heiser and Crisafulli that school officials are being uncooperative implies that what they want is not cooperation, but surrender.

While it's no secret that the four-member commissioner majority seeks the ouster of school Superintendent Lou Taylor, this latest fusillade targets Chief Operating Officer Annette Wallace, whom Heiser and Crisafulli want to replace as the system's chief safety officer with a law enforcement official because Wallace has no law enforcement experience.

In that vein, it must also be asked if kids in middle school, where much of the problem is said to take place, would be better off with a cop in charge with no teaching experience?

Of course, there is crime in schools. No one is disputing that or that it might be increasing, but parents and the public should take a hard look at how this campaign against the school system is unfolding and ask themselves whether all school "crimes" truly are crimes and whether county politics might be a factor in this crusade.

Individually, these charges against the county's public schools might get a fair hearing, but when they arrive together, some serious skepticism is warranted.

Letter

School funding critical

Editor,

Since the past year when the county commissioners voted to fund the WCPS BOE at maintenance of effort (MOE), I've heard and seen a lot of statements that are often out of context, lack factual information, and often imply impropriety. These statements have been made by several Worcester County Commissioners, as a way to defend their decision to fund only MOE for fiscal year 2024. And these inflammatory statements have often been successful in creating doubt over the spending of WCPS BOE. As we near another public hearing on the BOE budget for fiscal year 2025, I worry that we will once again, only receive MOE funding for WCPS.

I will lead by letting you know, I am an accountant, so I've worked to gather facts and figures to fully understand the current issue and I will try to keep my thoughts understandable for most non-accountants since it can be overwhelming.

Continually I hear that (some) of the commissioners are concerned with the preparation of the budget by the BOE, and the fact that there are variances between the budgeted figures and actual expenditures. Since a budget by definition is "an estimate of expenditures" and "proposals for financing them," I am not surprised that there are changes between these figures. After all, I would expect our school system to have the ability to address the changing needs of the students, staff, and schools as the school year progresses. I would never think that the budgeted number of staff or any budgeted figures should be static. They must be fluid to allow for the school to address the ongoing and changing needs of students, staff and each school community, so it is reasonable to not only have changes between budget and actual, but

also having a reasonable surplus is expected and good practice.

As such, when hearing the WCPS BOE had a 1.24% surplus totaling \$1.5 million from fiscal year 2023, I'm not alarmed as that tells me the budget was within a reasonable level of the actual expenditures. However, if the budgeted figures were differing to the extent that the actual revenue was 112% more than the budgeted amount, and the net revenue was over 300% more than the budget, I would think there is a problem with the budget process not being accurate.

While this is not the case for WCPS BOE, this is the difference in the budgets versus actual for Worcester County Government. Perhaps the commissioners that would like to question the legitimacy of the WCPS BOE budget should turn that attention inward and work to better prepare a budget that is a more accurate picture of expenditures.

I am not entirely sure of the reason behind the large discrepancy in budget to actual, but it seems that approving an understated operating budget would then lead the county to make underfunded decisions. I'm concerned that I see the county's general fund balance growing since 2019, from approximately \$51 million to \$92 million at the end of fiscal year 2023. Last year alone, the net revenue for the county was \$19 million more than the budgeted figure, without a change in property tax rates. The county had, and continues to have, the funds available to fully fund the BOE budget without compromising the funding of other county agencies.

WCPS BOE employs an experienced and knowledgeable finance team. In fact, the CFO of WCPS, Vince Tolbert, previously worked in the county commissioners' office, so it tracks that he would not only have the skill set to be able to prepare a reasonable and sound WCPS BOE budget, but also has the

history within our local government that proves his expertise and trustworthiness. No one is asking for blind trust. The expectation that experienced employees can be relied upon to prepare a prudent and fiscally sound budget and school system should be implicit.

While I understand our elected officials should be providing concise, factual information with context and, particularly in the case of our educational system, without political agenda, it has often been the opposite. I urge other constituents to take pause. Another year of maintenance of effort funding will be detrimental to our children's education, our teachers' livelihoods, and ultimately, our community.

The Maryland Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) recently cautioned the county commissioners and BOE that the funding level determined by the Blueprint was not enough to meet all the needs and programs of a school district. The AIB said that additional funding would be needed to not only meet state mandated educational requirements, but all to fund the programs, services, and other aspects of the school that were priorities for the BOE, the commissioners, and our community.

Our community has spoken up to say that we value the small class sizes; that we must have a full and enriching summer academy and afterschool programs; that equity in programs is crucial so that all schools in the county can offer students access to the same opportunities; and that services for all students that are in need, whether that be mental, social, emotional, or other, are essential.

These priorities cannot be fulfilled at maintenance of effort funding. These priorities are a principal part of the WCPS. We must support our schools and we must ask our commissioners to fully fund the WCPS BOE budget.

*Kate Hulme
Bishopville*

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

11934 Ocean Gateway, Suite 6, Ocean City, Md. 21842
Phone: 410-723-6397 / Fax: 410-723-6511.

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Pines do-gooders group making difference

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 29, 2024) The Teal Bay Mitzvah Team continues to pay it forward as the Ocean Pines' good-deed group is currently collecting personal hygiene products for individuals experiencing homelessness and financial insecurity.

For the seven do-gooders, a friendship started by the common thread of dog ownership spurred into an organization that dedicates its' time to giving back to Worcester and surrounding communities.

As part of their current project, the team has partnered with Diakonia, Worcester GOLD, Hope and Life Outreach (HALO) from Salisbury, and the Samaritan Shelter in Pocomoke. Teal Bay Mitzvah will collect and donate the items directly to the associations.

The idea was inspired by member Margit Novack's volunteer shift at

the Diakonia thrift store. After speaking with staff, they identified a need for personal hygiene products, specifically shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, and toothpaste.

"The list kept getting longer," Teal Bay Mitzvah Team member Cyndy Spicknall said. "We thought about toothbrushes and then toothbrush caps. We added razors and then needed to include shaving cream. We've also asked for sewing kits and nail care."

According to Novack and Spicknall, 60 miniature toothpastes have been donated. The group has also ordered items from various hotels in the area. The duo emphasized a need for large quantities of each product.

"It's not sexy, but hygiene items are necessary," Spicknall said.

The Teal Bay Mitzvah Team has been helping the community since 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its creation, the crew has

headed several charity campaigns, including their 2021 Soles for Souls initiative, where they provided shoes for women entrepreneurs in third-world countries, explained Novack.

The team has also partnered with humane societies, hosted a sock drive, and worked with Worcester Preparatory School's Student Government Association to collect winter clothing items. This month, the group sponsored a social creativity afternoon for Valentine's Day at the Berlin Nursing Home.

"We find what the local need is," Novack said. "And then there's a lot of research, and then we publicize it."

Teal Bay Mitzvah will continue to collect hygiene donations for as long as they keep coming. They can be dropped off at 2 Riverside Court in Ocean Pines or ordered online and mailed to the address. Personal and full-sized items will be accepted.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Teal Bay Mitzvah Team has hosted aid campaigns since their founding in 2020, where they collected shoes for women in third world countries.

Rotary club uses grant to help nonprofits

Blankets, hygiene products collected to help people at Diakonia, Cricket Center

(Feb. 23, 2024) The Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club recently used a district grant to buy blankets and hygiene kits for people at two local nonprofits.

Every year, rotary clubs have the ability to apply for district grants. The

Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club current president recommends a grant, and if agreed upon by club members and approved by the district, the grant is funded in the year following the president's term.

According to a news release, clubs can request a maximum amount of \$5,000 and can receive up to 80% of funds requested. Following strict guidelines, the requests are submitted to the district grant chairman and

a committee of various district rotary members.

The release said this year's district grant chairman is the Ocean City-

Berlin Rotary Club's past president, Margaret Mudron, who abstained from the review and approval of the
See BOXES Page 25

Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club member Tom Sweeney poses with employees of The Cricket Center and several blankets club members donated to the nonprofit. PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN CITY-BERLIN ROTARY CLUB



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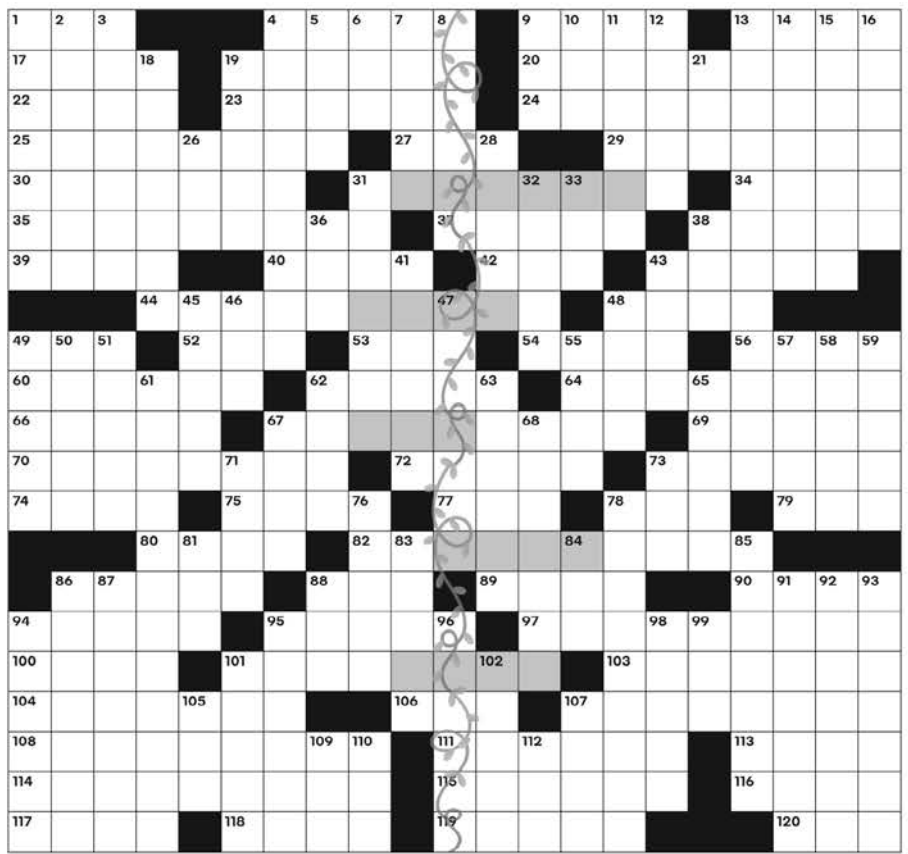
mddcpres.com/foundation

Puzzles

THE INSIDE SCOOP BY SID SIVAKUMAR / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Sid Sivakumar is an M.D./Ph.D. student at Washington University in St. Louis, training in biomedical engineering and neuroscience. This is his 17th crossword for The Times. Since the theme material appears mostly in the middle, Sid made the grid's sides — and especially the corners — quite open, giving them a themeless feel. "I was very fortunate they turned out so clean and fresh," Sid says. "I'm usually not so lucky!" — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Mess-hall patrons, in brief
 - 4 Theater backdrop
 - 9 Stressful work?
 - 13 Disorganized stack
 - 17 Home-screen array
 - 19 Port container
 - 20 Clean hands, so to speak
 - 22 Spill (over)
 - 23 Strict sales limit, informally
 - 24 Slow-cooked entrees
 - 25 Boos-y drink?
 - 27 Olympic gymnast Raisman
 - 29 Charge (with)
 - 30 Involves
 - 31 Some kennel personnel
 - 34 Only U.S. coin that does not explicitly indicate how many cents it's worth
 - 35 Eschewed pork and shellfish, say
 - 37 Arena seating sections
 - 38 Perfume ingredient
 - 39 Civil wrong
 - 40 Comedy character who once asked the U.N. secretary general if Disneyland was part of the U.N.
 - 42 Org. whose initials are aptly hidden in "foreign satellite interception"
 - 43 Really hurt
- DOWN**
- 11 Joins those on the stage
 - 12 Counterparts of eyes
 - 13 With 61-Down, like some gossip ... as represented phonetically by each set of shaded squares?
 - 14 Like a bathroom directly connected to a bedroom
 - 15 Feigns indignation
 - 16 Bug
 - 18 Address
 - 19 Barbecue-grill fill
 - 21 Camp bed
 - 26 Summer Olympics host between London and Tokyo
 - 28 Comics sound when something is snatched
 - 31 Clenched, as teeth
 - 32 Recordholder for most games played in the FIFA World Cup (26)
 - 33 Modern ____
 - 36 Trains above street level
 - 38 Delivery that can't be returned
 - 41 "Well, don't wait out here!"
 - 43 Goals
 - 45 Sun shield
 - 46 ____-conscious
 - 47 Variety commonly found in jellies and pies
 - 48 Wax figures?
 - 49 Golf-tournament division
 - 50 President who campaigned on the slogan "Our best days still lie ahead"
 - 51 Real pickle
 - 55 So ... or a word following "so"
 - 57 Fit for a king
 - 58 Sees red
 - 59 Word before dating or skating
 - 61 See 13-Down
 - 62 Dance at a luau
 - 63 More open to the elements
 - 65 Lake-house rental
 - 67 Unnerves
 - 68 Sea hawks
 - 71 Lyft request
 - 73 Lithium-____ battery
 - 76 "Don't ____ me ..."
 - 78 1994 single by Hole whose cover art depicts a miniature wedding dress and veil
 - 81 Real-time PC exchanges
 - 83 Man, woman and child, e.g.
 - 84 Little lifter
 - 85 Snore loudly
 - 86 One dropping amorous hints
 - 87 Trigonometry units
 - 88 B-ball player in Big D
 - 91 "Am I mistaken?"
 - 92 Turndowns
 - 93 Hot herbal brew
 - 94 Place to pamper pets that purr
 - 95 Some rivers have them
 - 96 Variety that shares its name with a Mideast capital
 - 98 Game with big prizes
 - 99 "I'm not working right now," in email shorthand
 - 101 Believer in Jah
 - 102 Mushroom added to ramen
 - 105 Org. with the phone number 1-800-TAX-FORM
 - 107 Cornmeal cake
 - 109 Info you might send someone when you're running late
 - 110 Liven (up)
 - 112 Stashed away



- 86 One dropping amorous hints
- 87 Trigonometry units
- 88 B-ball player in Big D
- 91 "Am I mistaken?"
- 92 Turndowns
- 93 Hot herbal brew
- 94 Place to pamper pets that purr
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© Puzzles by Pappocom
HARD - 49

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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

DOM	PAR	T	S	L	O	T	S	T	A	M	B
UNI	C	O	D	E	I	H	O	P	E	H	U
G	A	M	E	L	A	N	B	E	R	R	A
U	I	E	S	M	O	V	I	E	C	A	M
P	R	O	A	M	W	H	A	T	A	H	O
G	R	A	I	N	S	N	O	P	U	L	P
M	E	R	R	I	N	S	A	S	S	T	S
I	V	A	N	I	V	I	M	I	T	A	T
R	E	P	I	N	E	N	O	D	U	L	A
A	S	H	C	A	N	C	R	E	D	I	T
O	R	T	S	A	N	I	S	E	S	P	Y
Y	O	P	L	A	I	T	L	O	O	M	S
A	S	H	E	O	O	P	T	E	A	K	I
W	H	O	O	N	C	E	E	R	N	E	R
S	A	N	D	U	S	K	Y	S	A	S	P
O	A	R	T	O	N	O	T	T	O	A	
S	I	G	N	S	I	T	E	S	O	P	H
N	O	R	L	A	C	E	U	P	T	I	N
I	N	A	F	U	N	K	T	U	T	O	R
P	I	P	E	T	T	E	E	M	O	J	I
S	C	H	M	E	A	R	R	A	M	O	S

Boxes of products recently delivered to organizations

Continued from Page 23 club's grant application

Mudron presented her idea to club members and they agreed. Members chose two recipients for their grant — The Cricket Center in Berlin and Diakonia in West Ocean City.

Club members made 120 fleece blankets, both adult and children sizes. They also made 200 hygiene kits, which were filled with name brand products for men, women and children. Club members delivered the blankets and hygiene kits to the groups.

The release said Mudron chose blankets hoping that the children would have "blankies" of their own during stressful times in their lives and that the adults would have something that they could take with them when they move on from Diakonia. The club members also wanted to keep their donations local.

The Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club meets at 6 p.m., the first and third Wednesdays of the month, at Don's Seafood & Chop House at the South Gate of Ocean Pines. For more information, email the club at ocerlinrotary@gmail.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN CITY-BERLIN ROTARY CLUB
From left, Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club members Margaret Mudron, Cliff Berg, Nancy Bradford, Jennifer Bodnar and Steve Gragert poses at Diakonia with boxes of blankets the club donated to the nonprofit.

Obituary

WILLIAM J. MCNELIS
Ocean Pines

William J. McNelis, 94, of Ocean Pines, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024, at his home surrounded by family.



William McNelis

He was a native of Tower City, Pennsylvania. He was a patriarch of the entire family, a veteran of U.S Army, a 59-year continuous member of the American Legion with 20 years at the Ocean City Post #166, a lifetime Mason member, and a member of Holy Savior Catholic Church.

He is survived by his loving wife and our angel of grace Mary McNelis; sons Kevin and Michael McNelis; daughters Kelly Ranum and Colleen McNelis Kennedy; 20 grandchildren; and six great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Gloria McNelis; his brother, Bob McNelis; and sisters Pat Buglar and Anne Crouse.

A celebration of life ceremony will be held this spring. Date T.B.A

Memorial contributions can be made to Coastal Hospice.

Arrangements are in the care of Eastern Shore Cremation and Funeral Service, 504 Franklin Ave. in Berlin. To send condolences to the family, visit eastern-shorecremation.com.

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Calendar

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

Thurs., Feb. 29

STORY TIME 'YOU ARE AWESOME!'

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes. For ages 2-5 years. 410-632-3495

STORY TIME: 'IF YOU GIVE A PIG A PANCAKE'

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Join the group for another classic by Laura Numeroff. For children ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

AFRICAN AMERICAN ART

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. This brief introduction looks at some of the highlights of Black artists. The group will investigate an abbreviated history of people who were left out of the canons of art history. 410-957-0878

FIRESIDE CHAT

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3 p.m. Featuring books participants have read and want to share. Come and find your next great read. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

LOIS MAILOU JONES ART

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4 p.m. Celebrate Black History Month by creating art inspired by the work of Lois Mailou Jones. For ages 6-12 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

ZUMBA

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 5-6 p.m. Join Zumba instructor Joyce Landsman for an hour of movement. These classes uplift and improve mood. Registration required: 410-524-1818. www.worcesterlibrary.org

WHEEL OF FORTUNE LIVE!

Ocean City Performing Arts Center - Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, 7 p.m. America's Game® Show comes to your hometown. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets: <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/60171488/wheel-of-fortune-live-ocean-city-oc-performing-arts-center>

BEACH SINGLE 55 PLUS MEET AND GREET

Thursdays - Harpoon Hanna's, 39064 Harpoon Road, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. 302-436-9577, BeachSingles.org.

Fri., March 1

MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30

a.m. Fun morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring your own tile set. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION SESSION REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Wor-Wic Community College - Guerrieri Hall, 32000 Campus Drive, Salisbury. The Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship provides assistance to cover expenses after applying financial aid. There is no age limit. Register: Events, www.worwic.edu by March 1. Held March 5.

CELTIC ART CONTEST KICK OFF

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The meeting room will be stocked with supplies to create a piece for the Celtic Art Contest. Participants may submit a work of art anytime between March 1-15. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FIRST FRIDAY OPENING RECEPTION

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 5-7 p.m. Meet the artists and enjoy complimentary refreshments. Free and open to the public. Satellite galleries at Princess Royale and Coffee Beanery in Ocean City. <https://artleagueofoceancity.org>, 410-524-9433

Sat., March 2

MUSIC REVUE: JUST GO TO THE MOVIES!

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 7-9 p.m. Come and hear your favorite academy award winning songs performed by the Lower Shore Performing Arts Company. Tickets cost \$25. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/793212819897?aff=oddtcreator>. 410-524-9433

EARLY ST. PATRICK'S DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 8-11 a.m. Cost is \$9 for adults and free to those ages 10 years and younger. Tickets available from Kiwanis members or pay at the door. Proceeds benefit the OP Volunteer Fire Dept. www.kiwanisofopoc.org

SATURDAY WRITERS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10 a.m. Novice and established writers gather to share their writing projects. Structure includes critiques and appreciation, market leads and writing exercises. Drop ins welcome. 410-641-0650

SHIRLEY HALL YOUTH ART SHOW

Art League of Ocean City - Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Featuring artwork by Worcester County middle and high school students. Cash prizes awarded. Free event.

<https://artleagueofoceancity.org>, 410-524-9433

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN HEROES - PRESURSOR OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD: VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE BY KEEPER JAMES

Held virtually from 11 a.m. to noon. Free. Register: <https://www.ocmuseum.org/events/americas-forgotten-heroes-precursor-of-the-us-coast-guard-virtual-presentation?fbclid=IwAR3e-UQCY7p2KHjJedVXLhTHGMzH4LchCEEhNFx61nF33Ms4RcAOwqs54D4>. 410-289-4991

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT FRIED CHICKEN BUFFET

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 36540 Mount Pleasant Road, 11 a.m. Vegetables, beverages and dessert included with dine-in. Cost is \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for children and free to those ages 6 years and younger. Carry out platters available. 410-835-8340

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

Sun., March 3

50TH ANNIVERSARY OCHMRA TRADE EXPO

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Bringing together hospitality buyers and sellers. Free to hotel, motel, restaurant and attraction businesses. Registration volunteers: susan-jones@ocvisitor.com. <https://oceancitytradeexpo.com>, 410-289-6733

\MARCH BREAKFAST

American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, 2308 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 8-11 a.m. Menu includes French toast, eggs, danish, bacon, sausage, scrapple, creamed chipped beef and biscuits, coffee, orange juice and tea. Cost is \$12 for adults and free to those 3 years and younger.

SHIRLEY HALL YOUTH ART SHOW

Art League of Ocean City - Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Featuring artwork by Worcester County middle and high school students. Cash prizes awarded. Free event. <https://artleagueofoceancity.org>, 410-524-9433

MUSIC REVUE: JUST GO TO THE MOVIES!

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 2-4 p.m. Come and hear your favorite academy award winning songs performed by the Lower Shore Performing Arts Company. Tickets cost \$25. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/7932528>

29567?aff=oddtcreator. 410-524-9433

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Sundays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10 a.m. www.jw.org

Mon., March 4

50TH ANNIVERSARY OCHMRA TRADE EXPO

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Bringing together hospitality buyers and sellers. Free to hotel, motel, restaurant and attraction businesses. Registration volunteers: susan-jones@ocvisitor.com. <https://oceancitytradeexpo.com>, 410-289-6733

STORY TIME: RAINBOWS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Crafts, songs and stories. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSIONS: 'WHY WRITE?' BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. Discuss selections from the Great Books Foundation. The group is reading from Book 5 of the Great Conversations Anthology. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

WARHAMMER

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Play Warhammer, the exciting table-top miniatures game that uses strategy in an immersive setting. Use the library's armies or bring your own. All levels welcome. For ages 12-18 years. 410-641-0650

LEGO MASTERS STEM

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Create your own playground. For children ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

T.O.P.S. OF BERLIN - GROUP #169

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and living a healthy lifestyle. Rose Campion, 410-641-0157

WOMEN OF THE EASTERN SHORE

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5:30 p.m. Dr. Cindy Byrd, Director and Curator of the Purnell Museum, will present about historical women here on the shore. Celebrate Women's History

Calendar

Month by learning about these historical figures.

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 6:00-8:00 p.m. All ladies who love to sing invited. Mary, 410-629-9383 or Carol, 302-242-7062.

OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

Mondays - Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 7-8 p.m. No dues or fees. 410-459-9100

Tues., March 5

STORY TIME: 'TURTLES'

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and finger plays. For ages 2-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: TRANSPORTATION

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories. Stay after to socialize with other families. For ages 2 years and younger. 410-632-3495

OC KNITTING GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Do you love to knit or crochet? Bring whatever project you happen to be working on. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

MARYLAND ACCESS POINT

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Maryland Access Point of Worcester County will discuss how they serve as a "one stop shop" for aging adults, those with disabilities and caregivers of all income levels. 410-524-1818

ANIME CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4 p.m. Join in to celebrate anime and manga. Monthly themes will include trivia games, Japanese snacks and arts and crafts. For ages 13-16 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FREE ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING FOR VETERANS

Worcester County Economic Development, 107 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 6 p.m. This mandatory Orientation Session is a vital step in the application process for the Project Opportunity Spring 2024 program, held March 12-May 14. www.project-opportunity.com/class/registration



PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN CITY-BERLIN ROTARY CLUB

ROTARY SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club is accepting scholarship applications from Stephen Decatur High School seniors. For more information email ocberlinrotary@gmail.com Pictured are last year's scholarship recipients Natalie Canhan and Emery Busco with Rotarian Steve Gragert.

CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONS

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 6 p.m. Held Tuesday Feb. 20-March 26. A free moderated group discussion based on the works of C.S. Lewis. Everyone is welcome. Explore a great opportunity for Lenten reflection. 410-641-7052

BEACH HEROES-OC

Tuesdays - Volunteer beach clean-up group meets from 9-10 a.m., year-round. Trash bags, grippers and gloves provided. Check the Facebook page "Beach Heroes-OC" for weekly meeting locations. All are welcome.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Tuesdays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 7 p.m. www.jw.org

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

Tuesdays - Worcester County Health Department, 9730 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3:30-4:30 p.m. TOPS is a weekly support and education group promoting weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. 410-289-4725

ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE

Tuesdays - Experienced dancers and others interested in watching or learning more are welcome, 7-9:30 p.m. No partner required. Info: TangobytheBeach.com.

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

Tuesdays - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com

OC KNITTING CLUB

Tuesdays - Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m.

Wed., March 6

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Takes place the first and second Wednesday of each month. For non-surgical patients. Atlantic General Bariatric Center, 410-641-9568

FRIED CHICKEN CARRYOUT PREORDER DEADLINE

Bishopville Volunteer Fire Department, 10709 Bishopville Road, Bishopville. Preorder in advance by March 6 at 619-922-9950. Pickup on March 9 from noon to 2 p.m. Cost is \$15 and includes 1/2 chicken, French fries, Cole slaw and roll.

GRACE PARKER BREAKFAST

First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, 1301 Philadelphia Ave., 7-11 a.m. Eggs to order, pancakes (regular and buck-wheat), bacon, sausage, hash browns, ham, grits, biscuits. \$12 dine-in. \$10 take-out. 410-289-9340

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Have fun making music, singing songs and playing. For ages 0-2 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TEA PARTY STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30

a.m. Tea party story time with stories about historical women, songs and a craft. Refreshments for the tea party will also be provided. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1:30-2:30 p.m. The group provides discussion and education the topic of diabetes. Darlene Jameson, 410-208-9761, djameson@atlanticgeneral.org

SIMPLE MACHINES

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. Learn about levers, pulleys, wedges and gears. For ages 6-11 years. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

WOMEN IN SOCIETY: A VICTORIAN TEA PARTY

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2-3:30 p.m. Imagine life during the Victorian era through narratives, storytelling, journaling, crafter, wellness and more. Hosted by The Feminine Return. Registration required: 410-641-0650.

FREE SQUARE DANCE LESSONS

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 7-8:30 p.m. Pine Steps Square Dance Club welcome singles and couples. barbcroos@gmail.com, 908-229-8799, 302-222-4448

KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

Wednesdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, Assateague Room, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Third Wednesday meetings are offsite and will be updated monthly on the website and Facebook. Guests are welcome. www.kiwanisofopoc.org

ONGOING EVENTS

COMMUNITY JOURNAL: TELL HER STORY
Pocomoke library, 301 Market St., during March. Share a story about a woman who has inspired you and share your thoughts and hopes for a better future. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TEEN STEAM STATION

Berlin library, 13 Harrison Ave., during March. Each hands-on activity will focus on art, math, science, engineering or technology. Create jewelry using binary code, construct a flying glider, design your own city out of recycled material and more. Challenges will change each week. For ages 11 years and older. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CRAFTERS & VENDORS NEEDED FOR FAIR

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 10301 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, April 13. Requesting a \$20 donation per table. Deadline to reserve a spot is March 8. Linda, 443-604-8068, p.grahe@com-cast.net

Classified

MARKETPLACE

Call **410-723-6397**
by Monday 5 p.m.

Classifieds appear in **OC Today-Dispatch & Bayside Gazette** each week and online at oceancitytoday.com & baysideoc.com



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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

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If interested, you can stop at any of our locations to fill out an application, or you can email your resume to Chakira Smith at Chakira@baysiderehab.com

Full-Time Office Person
Local Family-Owned Business is looking for a **Full-Time Office Person**. Applicant should be computer savvy, have good phone skills, punctual, and willing to work in a small busy office environment. Applicants should email resume to office@fireprotectiveservices.com.



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JOB SUMMARY: Provides direct and indirect support to Town Manager, Mayor & Council in management of Town Hall office and various departments. Human resources, insurance management, administration. Visit www.snowhillmd.gov for Job Description and Employment Application.
TO APPLY: Email letter of interest & resumé with references to Town Manager Rick Pollitt at townmanager@snowhillmd.com by **FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024.**

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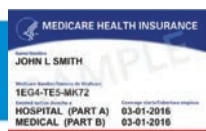
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