



PHOTO COURTESY OF OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION

An elevated perspective of the Ocean Pines Racquet Sports Center shows the array of tennis, pickleball and platform tennis courts offered to members in the community.

Nichols wins in landslide in District 3

Council incumbent returns for another term along with Jack Orris, Mayor Tyndall

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) The Berlin Town Council will remain as is.

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, some Berlin voters headed to the polls to cast their ballots for the town's only contested race, a match between District 3 incumbent Shaneka Nichols and challenger Daniel Packey.

Nichols held her District 3 seat with 62 votes to capture a second term. Packey received four votes. Nichols defeated Packey in 2020 for her first term.

Nichols is a special education teacher at Worcester County Public Schools and a mother of six. Her roots run deep in Berlin, as 10 generations of her family have lived on Flower Street. Nichols said during the 2020 election that a priority of hers was the construction of a community center. The victor currently sits on the town's steering committee to further the project.

That community center is nearing fruition, as four parcels of Flower Street property have been combined to create a recreational building through a partnership with the Berlin Community Improvement Association, SHOREUP! Inc., and the Worcester County Commissioners. The site is the former home of Flower Street School, an African American education facility that operated in the first part of the 20th century. Nichols will now get to continue aiding these efforts as she captured a second term Tuesday night.

"Thank you, Berlin, District 3, for your support," she wrote on Facebook following the announcement of the election results. "Your votes are truly appreciated, and your voices are heard."

Challenger Packey moved to Berlin in 2019. He has a background in economics and has taught the subject as a professor in the United States and Australia.

The District 3 match-up was Berlin's only contested race. District 2 Councilman Jack Orris and Mayor Zack Tyndall were unopposed this year.

Racquet sports proposes new plan

Club officials say option's lower price tag could lead to increased membership

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Officials from the Ocean Pines Racquet Sports Center are proposing a two-sport membership option.

The OPA facility offers tennis, pickleball and platform tennis.

At a Wednesday, Sept. 25 OPA Budget and Finance Committee meeting, representatives Karen Kaplan, the president of the platform tennis club, and Donna Frankowski,

the pickleball club secretary, presented their proposal for altering the racquet center's fee structure by adding two-sport membership options to be considered for next year's budget.

Currently, racquet participants may purchase a single-sport membership for either pickleball, tennis or platform tennis or an umbrella three-sport fee structure and choose the family or individual package within those options.

Players who wield their paddles for two sports have few options under this structure. They can purchase the individual combination three-sport membership for \$440 or pay for two

packages, which may be cheaper or more expensive than the umbrella deal, depending on the sports.

Ocean Pines resident membership rates for an individual in tennis are \$295, \$200 for platform, and \$200 for pickleball.

Currently, the three-sport combo option for an individual gives residents a discount of 36.6% off the total price of purchasing all three sports packages separately.

If approved, the proposed two-sport categories, which Kaplan described as pickleball plus tennis, tennis plus platform tennis, and pickleball plus platform tennis, would

See RACQUET Page 8



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GM Viola provides updates on pavilion, other projects

By Tara Fischer

Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola updated the community on neighborhood initiatives last week.

The Veterans Memorial Pavilion is on track, and the work, which just recently began, is expected to be completed by Veterans Day. The initiative's total cost is approximately \$200,000.

Viola maintained that the golf course irrigation project, which will replace a failing system, is currently in phase one. The inaugural portion of the initiative will include irrigation improvements to the pump station, the first and ninth holes, and the driving range. Officials expect the work, which began in September, to be completed by February or March.

The major line being replaced at the site was 50 years old. Viola said that the new pipe is expected to last 75 to 100 years.

"We are making the right move, and everything is good," he said.

The updated racquet sports building is also on schedule. Construction is expected to begin upon the completion of the Veterans Memorial Pavilion and will primarily include restroom enlargement and improvements. The upgrades are expected to be finalized by April and will cost approximately \$150,000.

Viola also introduced a new project during his report. The association is reviewing options for installing Jet

Ski slips at the Swim and Racquet Marina for the next summer season. The initiative is in the planning stages, and officials have yet to finalize an estimated cost.

The general manager updated the community on the planned South Station for the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department (OPVFD). In July, OPA and the OPVFD signed a Memorandum of Understanding to pave the way for the construction of the facility.

Viola said the final cost has yet to be determined, but the OPVFD has some grants to assist with it. Officials will hold more discussions about the price tag in the coming months. The project is expected to break ground in fall 2025 and expand the station 15,110 square feet.

"We have had constant meetings with the Ocean Pines Fire Department," Viola said. "I believe that at this point, we have a plan, we sketch, and we are in the planning stage."

Road paving is planned for the upcoming year at Commodore Court, Dinghy Court, Fairhaven Court, Juneway Lane, Portside Court, Riverside Court, and Weeping Willow Court, and curve safety signs will be added to Ocean Parkway.

Viola also maintained that his team had begun work on next year's budget process.

The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors will meet again on Saturday, Oct. 26, at 9 a.m. at the Clubhouse Meeting Room.

Liaisons appointed to Pines advisory board committees

By Tara Fischer

Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Ocean Pines Association advisory board committee liaisons were named last week.

Each OPA Board of Directors member is assigned an advisory committee to oversee and act as a branch between the two groups so that goals and initiatives may be accomplished.

The updated appointments were announced on Saturday, Sept. 28, the first board meeting since the election, in which Rick Farr and Jeff Heavner maintained their seats on the governing body.

Association President Stuart Laker-nick made the declaration. Laker-nick took over the leadership role formerly occupied by Farr, who now serves as the vice president.

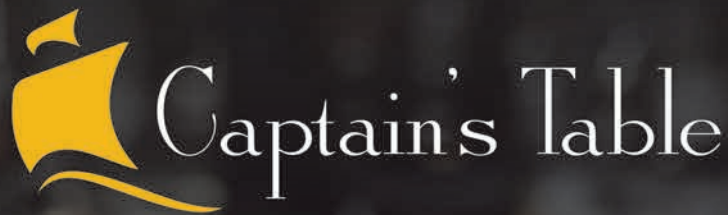
Heavner will oversee the Environmental and Natural Assets and the Parks and Recreation committees, Director Steve Jacobs was assigned to the Bylaws and Resolutions Commit-

tee, as well as the Golf Committee, Treasurer Monica Rakowski was matched with the Budget and Finance Committee, Director Elaine Brady will work with the Architectural Review and Communications committees, Secretary John Latham is with the Marine Activities and the Elections committees, and Lakernick will handle the Strategic Planning Committee.

The new president also kicked off his first board meeting by urging Ocean Pines residents to lend a helping hand.

"Volunteering is a fantastic way to get involved," he said. "You meet your neighbors, support initiatives that keep our community thriving, whether assisting with seasonal activities, contributing to neighborhood cleanups or local programs, your involvement can have a meaningful impact."

Anyone interested in volunteering in Ocean Pines may contact info@oceanpines.org.



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Chair endorses Ortt Companies despite RFP

Former OPA Board member supports current vendor while process playing out

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Ocean Pines Association Budget and Finance Committee Chair Doug Parks wants Matt Ortt Companies to continue as the community's food and beverage contractor.

The Matt Ortt Companies is the community's current food and beverage vendor for its three food service locations: the Ocean Pines Yacht Club, the Ocean Pines Beach Club, and Clubhouse Bar and Grille.

The operator signed a two-year deal with OPA to manage the community's food and beverage service

locations in March 2018, which was extended by five years in 2020. As the arrangement is set to expire next year, officials have opted to seek proposals from additional firms.

Rick Farr, the OPA Board of Directors vice president, said the decision to explore the marketplace was made per advice from the homeowner association's legal counsel, Bruce Bright of Ayres, Jenkins, Gordy, and Almand, and the community's governing documents that decree "all purchases and contracts for service for the Association shall...be made by open competitive procedures."

The Ortt group is welcome to apply and be considered once again.

At a Sept. 25 OPA Budget and Finance Committee meeting, where Parks made favorable remarks about the food provider, the group dis-

cussed the Yacht Club's financial performance.

According to net operating numbers, the facility is down \$90,000 from this time last year. However, the amenity is still plus \$284,000 on the balance sheet.

"The Yacht Club is making money," Parks said. "They are on target as far as revenue projections. Compared to last year, they are a little down, but that happens in any business, so it is not cause for concern in my perspective."

Some committee members worried about the site's lack of weddings and banquets. For the month of August, no events were held at the Yacht Club.

Parks said that he had a conversation with Ortt around nine months ago, during which the food and beverage operator mentioned that August weddings seem to be dwindling in favor of late spring or early fall.

"I know he is watching that; that is a good source of revenue for him, so I know he is spot on with his analysis," the chairperson said. "As far as finding the root cause, I am sure he is working on it."

Board treasurer and committee liaison Monica Rakowski echoed Parks' comments.

"I have a sibling in the catering business, and they are saying the

same thing across the bridge, that August weddings are down," she said. "Whether it be the heat, travel season, vacations, I don't know. It is not just here but also going on across the bridge."

Still, committee members noted that an event deposit sent from Ortt in July reveals that only six events are scheduled for the entirety of next year, beginning in April.

Parks alluded that the RFP (request for proposal) for a food and beverage vendor may yield low banquet numbers. The proposal invitation was not made public until Sept. 13.

"I suspect that..., if an RFP is out on the street, there is a chance that even as an incumbent, there's a question there," the budget committee chair said. "Personally, I will go on record saying I want to see the Matt Ortt Companies stay on as our food and beverage operations provider."

Parks served on the OPA Board of Directors for seven years, stepping down in July 2023, and was elected president four times. The agreement with Matt Ortt Companies was made during his time on the group.

Later, Parks maintained that his statements were just opinions and that the board is responsible for any decision regarding a food and beverage management team.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson called the recent discussions about a new potential cell tower site in the community "productive."

Cell tower in Ocean Pines being discussed by officials

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Ocean Pines leaders are discussing building a cell phone tower in the community to improve reception.

At the Saturday, Sept. 28, meeting of the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors, OPA Police Chief Tim Robinson said that he and General Manager John Viola have had "productive talks" with Worcester County officials about the initiative and have already identified a few potential site locations in the neighborhood. Officials are even in contact with Verizon Wireless, whom Robinson plans to meet with at the beginning of October.

OPA officials have also spoken to a

contractor who may be interested in the tower's construction.

While nothing is set, the chief said they hope to be in a "different situation" by this time next year.

Robinson maintained that the lack of speedy cell phone reception, which is primarily evident during large gatherings and holiday weekends, is a major public safety problem.

"I realized it was an issue, especially when I could not make phone calls to my wife from the grocery store on July 4 weekend," he said. "I was getting no signal. In all seriousness, what worried me the most was if someone had to call 911, which was their only opportunity, they could not get through. If there is no signal, you cannot get through."

Robinson anticipates having project updates at the next OPA Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, Oct. 26.

Road safety is also a concern for the police department, and Robinson informed the community of recent traffic activity at the Sept. 28 meeting.

Robinson said that since July, the force has made 210 traffic stops. Of those, 58 were for speeding, 40 were for stop sign violations, and one was for not stopping for a school bus with red flashing lights. The department uncovered four suspended drivers, two unregistered motor vehicles, another driving without a license, one driving without insurance, and one DUI.

"These are who, unfortunately, sometimes find themselves on the road with you here in Ocean Pines," Robinson said. "...The officers are doing their best to keep the citizens and residents here safe."

Community survey seeking to gather citizen feedback

(Oct. 3, 2024) Members of the Ocean Pines Strategic Planning Advisory Committee released a new survey designed to gather community input on top priorities for the next several years.

The goal for the survey is to capture a broad range of demographic and interest groups. The survey has 17 questions and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Committee Chairperson Rob Keesling said individual survey responses will be strictly confidential, and the overall results will be made public by the committee and shared on the Ocean Pines website. The deadline to complete the survey is Oct. 20.

To take the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024OPAsurvey.

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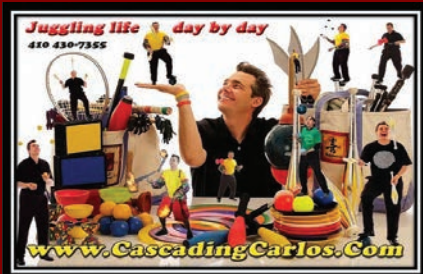
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Berlin named one of Main Street Award semifinalists

Historic town among eight jurisdictions honored in nationwide competition

(Oct. 3, 2024) Main Street America has announced Berlin Main Street as a 2025 Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) semifinalist. This prestigious award is the nation's top award recognizing communities for their excellence in comprehensive preservation-based commercial district revitalization.

A jury of professionals and leaders in the fields of community and economic development and historic preservation convened to review a nationwide pool of applicants. After thoughtful deliberation, the jury unanimously selected eight semifinalists that demonstrate exemplary use of the Main Street Approach™ to lead community-based transformation strategies in their downtowns.

Along with Berlin, the other semifinalists are from Denison, Texas, Easton, Pennsylvania, Farmington, Michigan, Jefferson, Iowa, Raton, New Mexico, Vicksburg, Mississippi and Wytheville, Virginia.

"I am honored to congratulate the eight Main Street organizations as 2025 Great American Main Street Award semifinalists and to celebrate their incredible accomplishments," said Main Street America President and CEO Erin Barnes. "This year's semifinalists demonstrate exceptional achievements in reenergizing their downtowns through inclusive, collaborative organizing and innovative economic development, arts and culture, and historic preservation initiatives."

Collectively, the 2025 GAMSA semifinalists have generated over

\$695 million in local reinvestment, helped open 975 net new businesses, facilitated the creation of 7,190 net new jobs, catalyzed the rehabilitation of 1,568 historic buildings, and leveraged 333,050 volunteer hours.

Competing for the Great American Main Street Award is a significant achievement in the Main Street Movement, and receiving the award is an esteemed honor. Since its establishment in 1995, only 112 of over 2000 Main Street programs have been acknowledged as GAMSA-winning communities.

"We couldn't be more thrilled to announce that our Main Street program has been recognized as one of the top eight in the entire country. Being a semi-finalist for this award is a testament to our businesses, volunteers and the amazing support we receive from our Mayor and Council," said Ivy Wells, Director of Economic and Community Development for Berlin.

"This recognition highlights the dedication of our Economic and Community Development team, town employees, local businesses, volunteers, and the residents who make our Main Street vibrant. Their commitment to fostering a thriving downtown is what sets Berlin apart, and this achievement belongs to all of us. Together, we've built something truly special, and it is an honor to have Berlin's hard work recognized at the national level," said Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall.

The 2025 Great American Main Street Award ceremony will be held at the opening plenary of the 2025 Main Street Now Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 7, 2025, where three semifinalists will be recognized as recipients of the coveted honor.



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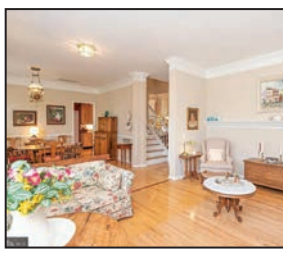
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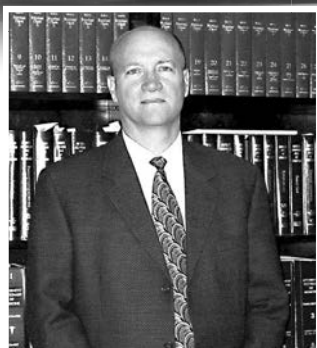
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Racquet Club member plan would be two-sport package

Continued from Page 1
offer a 25% discount.

Racquet leaders hope introducing new options at a lower price will encourage participants who focus on one sport but are interested in a second game to increase their membership.

While Budget and Finance Committee Chair Doug Parks argued that in this case, individuals may bite the bullet and purchase the three-sport deal, resulting in additional revenue for the association, Frankowski maintained that might not be financially sound for everyone.

For instance, to play pickleball and platform tennis, individuals would have to pay for the two memberships separately, at \$200 each, or get the three-sport at \$440.

The representatives argued that a discount like the three-sport combo package should be applied to two-sport rates.

"I have people that say, 'Come and join the platform tennis,' and I have not tried it yet, but I do know there are a lot of two-sport players, tennis and pickleball is one, and pickleball and platform is the other," Frankowski said. "I looked at this and thought, 'Well, if I play platform, I could get a platform membership,

and it is the same as pickleball.' I also realized that a three-sport membership is \$440. For me to play two sports, that umbrella, the three-sport, would not be an option for me because I would be paying more...If I wanted to try the platform, I would have to pay another \$200, so I would be less inclined to, but if there is an incentive, like a 25% discount, that is worth it to give it a try for a year and if I don't play all the time that is okay because I am not spending as much."

The presenters believe the two-sport options would yield more memberships than the umbrella package.

According to Kaplan, 92% of the 455 current racquet center memberships fall under the single-sport category. Only 35, or 8% of paying participants, opted for the three-sport option.

The platform president also maintained that not all of those 35 memberships are taking advantage of the full package benefits.

"I have access to the membership list and the three-sport combo membership list; at least 10 of those members or memberships are not playing three sports," she said. "They are paying for the three-sport option but only focusing on one or two sports."

She noted that adding a two-sport deal would encourage more people to scale back from the three-sport package to the middle tier or the single-game purchasers to up their membership to try out a new game. The hope is that this fee structure modification will increase the number of paying racquet participants.

During the fiscal year 2025 budget process, the OPA Board of Directors voted to do away with the single membership options and only offer the three-sport deal.

The racquet center community pushed against this move, and at a Feb. 29 special meeting, the neighborhood's governing body agreed to reinstate the individual choices and include the full package.

The racquet representatives only offered a proposal for individual two-sport memberships at the Sept. 25 meeting. However, Kaplan intends to present a similar draft for a two-sport family package to the finance committee before the budget process begins.

Parks noted the racquet center is "in the black" this year and is hesitant to change anything, as from a financial standpoint, the current fee structure is successful.

Still, the committee was receptive to the proposal. The group asked Kaplan and Frankowski to survey the racquet center members to determine if adding the two-sport memberships was feasible.

"I think it is going to be chance," Parks said. "... From an offerings perspective, I think it could be considered."

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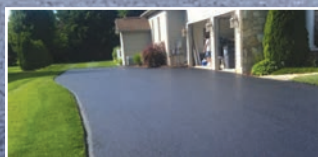


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Pines volunteer fire issues safety month reminders

President stresses smoke alarms a must for residents to have throughout homes

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) As fire prevention month kicks off, the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department offered safety tips to the community last week.

At the Saturday, Sept. 28, OPA Board of Directors meeting, OPVFD President Joe Enste reminded residents that fire prevention week is from Oct. 6 to Oct. 12. This year's theme is Smoke Alarms—Make Them Work for You.

“Smoke alarms can be the difference between life or death when it comes down to a fire,” the department president said.

In the spirit of the awareness campaign, Enste informed OPA residents of proper smoke alarm handling. The first step is to ensure the devices are securely installed in all parts of a home. The devices should be placed in every bedroom and floor, including add-ons like above-garage bonus rooms.

The alarms must be positioned correctly. Some are meant to be

placed high, while others might hang on a wall or a ceiling. Enste said that if anyone is having trouble with the technology or their installation, the department is happy to come over and help.

Alarms should be tested monthly and replaced when needed. Residents should also create and review an escape plan a couple of times a year in case of a fire emergency.

“You need to know what to do when the smoke alarm goes off,” Enste said.

For instance, having multiple exits in every area of a residence is recommended.

“In every room in your house, there should be two ways out of that room,” Enste said. “The traditional way out the door and then maybe out a window. Practice those escape plans at least twice a year, so you and your family know what to do. If you have somebody needing assistance getting out of the house, make sure you communicate that to 911 when you call.”

Enste maintains that alternative smoke alarms with features like strobing and bed shaking are available for those with hearing or other impairments.



Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department President Joe Enste reminded citizens of safety precautions to take at home.

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TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

String and Petals Nursery owner Stephanie Graves is pictured with her seasonal offerings at her new business off Route 113 in Berlin.

Owner transitions passion for gardening into business

Operator Graves says, 'My dream has been to make my everyday job plants'

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) A new plant nursery has opened in Berlin.

String and Petals Nursery, a gardening venture located at 9040 Worcester Highway (Route 113), officially welcomed flora enthusiasts on Saturday, Sept. 14. The shop will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and is closed on Mondays.

With autumn in full swing, owner Stephanie Graves said the nursery currently has fall offerings like

mums, pansies, pumpkins, perennials, plants returning each year, and pollinators.

"Perennials and pollinators are what I started with," Graves said. "I love pollinator gardens, so I was just looking for anything that attracted pollinators, like dianthus and Russian sage ... That is a lot of what I have right now, many perennials that attract pollinators. When we came out here and started working and putting everything together, there was not a pollinator in sight. I did not see a bee or a butterfly. But as soon as the truck arrived, within 30 minutes, butterflies and bees were everywhere. I want to bring that to everybody's yard."

Graves said she is considering the plant site's "grand opening" next spring. As the gardening industry slows down this time of year, she is using the lull to set everything up and iron out new business kinks so they can hit the ground running come April.

For instance, the shop's on-site building is being completed and is awaiting electricity.

"It took longer to get a building permit than I thought. Then our building was supposed to arrive a couple of weeks ago and would be late. Then it just showed up one day," Graves said. "... There are all these steps that I wanted to work through now, so everything will be done in the spring."

Strings and Petals Nursery intends to remain open through December. In the lead-up to the holiday season, the flora store will sell Christmas trees and wreaths and close as the festive supplies run out.

Inventory will grow in January, February and March on a small plot of land in Bishopville, provided by a couple Graves met at the Ocean Pines Farmers' and Artisans' Market. The nursery will then reopen for the spring in April. During this season, the owner said she would like to prioritize shade plants. She also hopes to eventually introduce a 'cut your own flower garden' where customers can come in and choose from different

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Nursery owner opens in Berlin

cup sizes to fill with the vegetation. Graves is originally from Birmingham, Alabama. She attended the University of Maryland, where she met her husband. After a few moves throughout the two states, the pair finally settled on the Eastern Shore in December 2023.

The nursery owner, who has a professional background in training and development, has been gardening for the past 10 years.

"My dream has been to make my everyday job plants," she said. "...We had moved here, and I had been saying that I wanted to open a nursery, but it seemed like such a big undertaking. It did not seem like something I could possibly do."

After striking inspiration from YouTuber the Savvy Dirt Farmer, Graves started off small. She began selling at the Ocean Pines Farmers' and Artisans' Market, the market at Windmill Creek, and a small flea market at the Uptown Emporium parking lot earlier this year.

"I could not have done this without the community," Graves said.

The owner is also excited about the connections this job will foster with other Worcester County residents and visitors.

"I have people that come in that are super experienced and teach me things, and I love learning," she said.

"And then I love teaching others. We have people that come in and say, 'I kill everything I plant.' So, then we have a conversation about the soil they have. Do they have sun? Do you have shade? Some of us underwater or overwater. I try to help them find something that works for them."

Graves said she hopes to one day launch area-wide events to unite the county.

"Right now, I am just trying to get everything started, but in a couple of years, I want to see what I can do for the community instead of what the community can do for me," she said.

Strings and Petals Nursery also sells crocheted creations, as Graves makes yarn flowers and succulents, which she said have been a big hit. The gardener will also be at the Wool and Fiber Expo at the Ocean City Convention Center the weekend of Jan. 17 to teach a few classes on the needlework activity.

The business venture was one of passion for Graves.

"I have always looked forward to the little things in life," she said. "... I do not feel like the big things in life are always the most important. The best things are the tiny moments that add up, and that is what I love about gardening. All those tiny moments, seeing things grow and change year to year as your garden changes.

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Questions swirl over compensation package

Company has offered to compensate commercial fishermen hurt by turbines

By Stewart Dobson
Editor

(Oct. 3, 2024) A discussion Sept. 24 between local commercial fishing operators and representatives of the state Department of Natural Resources about how U.S. Wind intends to compensate fishermen for wind farm-related financial losses made one thing clear: the fishing community fears for its existence.

Beyond that, the process, plan and the particulars of the commercial fishing "Compensatory Mitigation Fund" that US Wind has pledged to create remain adrift in a sea of unfinished business.

Speaking before roughly two dozen commercial operators at the Ocean Pines Library, Carrie Kennedy, of DNR's Data Management & Analysis Division, and Catherine McCall, of its Coastal and Ocean Management office, invited watermen to suggest services and forms of assistance that could be included in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be executed between the DNR and US Wind by January.

The MOU would spring from a July 8 letter of intent between the department and US Wind in which the company agrees "to provide financial compensation to eligible Maryland fishermen for mitigating direct losses/impacts to commercial and for-hire (charter) fishing from and caused by the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project

in federal waters."

The project entails planting up to 114 wind turbines in an 80,000-acre offshore tract about 11.5 miles east of Ocean City, according to the company's letter of intent and BOEM documents.

In the meantime, the department's goal, Kennedy and McCall said, is to join 10 other states, from Maine to North Carolina, in establishing one set of rules to determine the eligibility for applicants for wind farm-related

damage claims and to create a Regional Fund Administrator (RFA) to manage the process.

All this would be done within a framework that follows the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's "Fisheries Mitigation Guidance, which itself is work in progress.

"There's a lot of moving parts," Kennedy said.

Also to be determined is how much money US Wind will put into this compensation fund to help commercial harvesters recover from a loss of business because of damaged equipment or other interruptions arising as local vessels fish in and

around the spread of turbines.

Although no number is mentioned in US Wind's letter of intent, one scenario mentioned by the DNR representatives Tuesday was \$3.5 million, a figure based on the harvest reports commercial operators turn into the department.

For purposes of the compensation fund, however, the harvest totals are for species caught within the wind farm lease area and that figure is under review.

"The Letter of Intent between DNR and US Wind refers to several forms of financial compensation," McCall said in an email Wednesday.

"DNR is working to develop the final agreement based on those various forms of compensation. The \$3.5M number refers to one of those forms of compensation described in [the letter of intent] - 'Compensatory Mitigation Fund.' That figure is not referenced in the LOI as we are in the process of reviewing the fisheries data, applying BOEM's draft guidance and reflecting Maryland-specific considerations to determine the terms and number that will go in the

'The Letter of Intent between DNR and US Wind refers to several forms of financial compensation.'
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Commercial fishermen see problems with dock project

final agreement.”

While the commercial operators in the room dismissed the \$3.5 as laughably low, subsequent comments indicated that their greater concern is whether US Wind’s presence in the commercial fishing harbor in West Ocean City would eventually force them out altogether.

The company’s plan to build a maintenance facility on harborside property owned by Martin’s Seafood and Southern Connection would result in the loss of dockside loading space, the operators said.

“Where are we going to unload our fish?” asked Alexis Mumford, with fisherman Mike Coppa asking where the off-loaded catch would be packed and refrigerated.

That, the DNR representatives replied would have to be worked out. Similarly, Sonny Gwin, of Skilligalee Seafood, said he worries about whether he and other local boat owners who lease dock space in the county-owned harbor will be able to renew their contracts when the time comes. He suggested they could be outbid by U.S. Wind if it brings in more boats to service its installation.

As McCall pointed out earlier in the session, DNR can only do so

much because its actions must stay within parameters set on the federal level by BOEM.

Even then, some doubt exists about how far BOEM’s authority extends in establishing ground rules for offshore wind companies’ interactions with seafood harvesters.

Meghan Lapp, fisheries liaison for frozen seafood distributor Seafreeze Shoreside/Seafreeze Ltd. in Rhode Island, declined an invitation to participate in the RFA process because it was based on BOEM’s “incomplete and unfinalized guidance.”

Lapp said in her July letter of refusal that neither BOEM nor the states have the authority to require wind developers to compensate commercial fishing operators for anything via the RFA route.

“The RFA is purely a creation of policy with no legal authority backing it or, importantly, protecting those impacted by it,” she said. “It is clear that BOEM, developers, and the states collaborated on this approach behind closed doors from 2021 onwards, in order to fill a “gap” that legislation does not address. And since no authorizing legislation exists, there is no way to litigate if the RFA should fail commercial fisheries.”

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BOEM: No plans for turbines 3 1/2 miles out

Officials maintain feedback will be vetted before future decisions made on leases

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(Oct. 3, 2024) Hundreds of community members, joined by local and state representatives, gathered at the convention center this week to learn more about a new area in the ocean being studied for offshore wind energy development.

On Tuesday, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) hosted an informational meeting at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center to gather public feedback on a new call area in the Central Atlantic region. David MacDuffee, the chief of the Project and Coordination Branch

in the Office of Renewable Energy Projects at BOEM, said comments gathered through Oct. 21 will ultimately be used to develop draft wind energy areas off the coast.

“What we’ll do with all this information is make sure that any areas deemed not suitable for wind energy development are taken off the table and that we narrow down the area ...,” he said. “So we start very large, all the way up to the state-federal water boundary. We’re not proposing to issue wind leases that close to shore. In fact we’re not proposing anything at this point. No decisions have been made.”

Last month, BOEM announced a call area for a second offshore wind sale in the Central Atlantic. The second call area spans more than 13 million acres off the coasts of New

Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, and starts roughly three-and-a-half miles from Ocean City’s shoreline.

The announcement has since launched a 60-day comment period, during which BOEM has scheduled a series of public meetings in all five affected states. In Maryland, more than 500 individuals registered ahead of this week’s informational session at the convention center. However, not all were happy with the meeting’s “open house” format, which featured information tables, displays and an area to submit comments.

“I want to thank everyone who came out to the BOEM meeting tonight at the Convention Center,” Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan said in a social media post Tuesday. “This meeting was about a new proposed

area designed for possible wind farm leases as close as 3.5 miles off of our coast. Unfortunately, BOEM decided this meeting would be for informational purposes only and not a true public hearing. I know that this left many that attended frustrated but your presence to support the town’s position in opposition was important and thank you.”

MacDuffee said Tuesday’s meeting was the start of what will be a multi-year process of analyzing public comments and data, narrowing its focus and developing draft wind energy areas, which will initiate another round of public comments. He said information BOEM has already received from its existing lease area off Maryland’s coast will also be used in the evaluation process.

“We then issue draft wind energy areas ...,” he said. “We’ll put those out for public comment, and people can tell us if we got it right or if there is additional information to consider. So we’ll have other opportunities for the public, stakeholders, to review those draft areas before a decision is made to finalize those wind energy areas.”

From there, MacDuffee said BOEM could identify proposed lease areas.

“We may determine that it’s not suitable for leasing, and we just stop the process,” he explained.

Since the second call area was announced last month, state, county and municipal officials have gone on the record to oppose the project. Terry McGean, city manager for the Town of Ocean City, told the Mayor and Council last week he had also shared the town’s stance at a recent virtual meeting hosted by BOEM.

“I firmly stated our position opposing any visible turbines,” he said. “Many others also spoke at that task force meeting in opposition to the call area.”

BOEM’s announcement that it would be hosting a public meeting on a new call area came one week after the federal agency approved US Wind’s plans for approximately 114, 938-foot-tall wind turbines, which will be located in a lease area roughly 10 miles from Ocean City’s coastline. For that project, the city has announced its intention to sue BOEM.

“Our job is to follow the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which is the law Congress passed,” MacDuffee said this week in response to the pending litigation. “It gave the Department of the Interior jurisdiction to issue leases for energy development. So we follow that statute, as well as our regulations. We take very seriously the reviews that we do, particularly as projects are proposed and come in. The environmental analysis and the technical analysis that’s conducted is very rigorous. We just follow the process.”

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Diakonia expands homeless team effort to full-time role

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(Sept. 20, 2024) Members of Diakonia's Rapid Response Team are now working fulltime to assist homeless individuals in the tri-county area.

In April of 2023, Diakonia launched its Rapid Response Team, a pilot program in which members are dispatched as soon as law enforcement, EMTs, hospitals, or other service providers identify new homeless individuals. Earlier this month, however, the nonprofit announced the program is now fully operational in Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset counties.

"We were operating every day of the week, we just weren't able to respond to all the calls with boots on the ground," said Vance Larson, team leader. "Now, we have that capability."

For years, Diakonia has been a member of the Worcester County Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), a multi-agency effort to connect homeless individuals with local resources. While HOT members go out into the community at scheduled dates and times, staff with the Rapid Response Team are dispatched in real time.

Working alongside HOT members and local agencies, Larson, Program Coordinator Stephanie VanGasbeck, and Rapid Response Team member Rick Hamilton spend their week responding to the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and connecting them to local resources. In its first year, the program aided 319 people.

However, the efforts of the Rapid Response Team do not stop in Worcester County, as members are now responding to calls from 40 to 50 agencies across the tri-county area. When local law enforcement or first responders identify a homeless person, the Rapid Response Team is there to

help.

"When it comes to our clients and the police, we make that soft barrier between them," VanGasbeck said.

Larson agreed. He noted that in most instances, a police officer is not present when responding to a complaint or need.

"That's to our advantage, because we aren't coming in with gun and badge," he said. "We are coming to say, 'Hey, do you need a sandwich? Can we get you connected to some services? We can put you in rehab, generally the same day.'"

Rapid Response Team members say a majority of the homeless individuals they encounter are struggling with substance use and mental health disorders. Others, they add, are victims of trafficking or domestic violence, or have lost homes due to rising rent. Larson, however, said the homeless population doesn't count the "hidden homeless."

"Homelessness is very fluid," he said. "We have a lot of people that we work with, which we call the hidden homeless. These are people who are hopping from hotel to hotel, paycheck to paycheck. They sleep a night in the car, then they go to the hotel, and then they couch surf."

With outreach, however, the Rapid Response Team is able to connect with those individuals, regardless of their situation. While their work may be challenging at times, Larson said it is rewarding.

"We're passionate about this work and we care immensely about the population," he said. "We know that sometimes very bad times fall on some very good people, and some people lose their way. And that's OK. We're not about judging them. We're going to help them."

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Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

LITERACY MONTH

September was Literacy Month and members of the Republican Women of Worcester County (RWWC) took part in giving donations to the five Worcester County Libraries in appreciation for their countywide service. Pictured, from left, are RWWC President Jean Delcher, RWWC member Linda Sirianni, Ocean Pines Library Branch Manager Harry Burkett, RWWC Literacy Chair Susan Ostrowski and Worcester Library Foundation member Jennifer Ranck.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

WCDC DONATIONS

Rotary clubs of Ocean City/Berlin and Snow Hill recently provided funding for computers, monitors and installation of workstations for Worcester County Development Center. Pictured, from left, with the donations are Bob Smith, of Snow Hill Rotary; Stephanie James, executive director of WCDC; Cliff Berg, of Ocean City/Berlin Rotary, and Diana Nolte, of Snow Hill Rotary.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

NEW PARENT COFFEE

The Worcester Preparatory School Parent Association recently hosted a New Parent Coffee event to welcome families who are new to the school. Faculty and staff introduced themselves to new parents while they got to know each other over coffee and breakfast. Head of Upper School Carol Evans, right, meets with Dave and Rebecca Hagner, whose child joined WPS as a fifth grader this year.



Leigh Robinson, parent of pre-k student Flora, meet with Director of College Counseling Vickie Garner.



New parents Olga, center, and Edward Madigan, right, talk with WPS Parent Association member Melissa Nieli.



Members of Worcester Prep's Development Department team, Tonya Rayne, Alexis Absher and Maria Zeller, excitedly discussed upcoming events with new parents.



WPS parents Keith Cropper and Mera Hitchens stop to smile for the camera during the event.

State test scores reviewed for school board

Decatur Middle students had highest proficiency in math in all of Maryland

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Oct. 3, 2024) Test scores released last month reveal that Worcester County Public Schools are outperforming systems across the state.

On Tuesday, Sept. 17, Coordinator of Research and Student Information Tom Hamill gave an in-depth presentation to the Worcester County Board of Education regarding statewide performance data on English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments administered in spring 2024.

The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) scores released by the Maryland State Department of Education showed Worcester County Public Schools at the top in both content areas.

In ELA, WCPS had the highest proficiency level of all state school systems, with 69.4% of students receiving passing marks, a three or a four, in the 2024 spring exams. This is 21 percentage points higher than the state average of 48.4%.

Hamill broke the data down even further. Fourth-grade ELA saw a

10.16% increase in passing scores from 2022, when 62.5% reached proficiency, to 2024, when that figure rose to 72.69%. Sixth-grade ELA also saw a dramatic rise from two years ago, when 60.4% of the young learners reached a three or four on the assessment, to this year, when 72.59% met grade-level standards.

While most grade levels have improved, ELA eight and ten saw a nominal decrease in scores from 2022. The former fell from 69.2% to 68.32%, while the latter dipped from 71% to 70.43%.

Hamill also notes that fifth-grade ELA remains an outlier. In Worcester County, the MCAP indicated that only 56.48% of students in grade five demonstrated proficiency. The other grade levels, however, all showed nearly 70% pass rates.

“For the most part, for ELA, we are near 70% proficiency in all but grade five,” he said. “You’ll see that fifth grade is a statewide, maybe national, concern.”

In math, Worcester’s scores, 39.3% of students performing at proficiency or above on the assessments, earned them the second-place slot behind Howard County, whose pass rates came in at 41.1%. The Maryland average in this category was 24.1%.

All grade levels in this category im-

proved from 2022. For instance, math four rose from 42.4% to 57.37%, and math six increased from 23.4% to 36.72%.

Stephen Decatur Middle School had the highest math eight scores in the state out of about 800 schools, Hamill said, with nearly 56% of its eighth-grade students receiving proficient marks in the assessments.

“One thing I would like to point out is when we get into math six, seven, and eight, there is a downward trend in proficiency rates at the state level, one that we are not experiencing. One that we are overcoming,” Hamill added. “As a district, we are bouncing back from that fifth-grade inflection point.”

According to Hamill, to grade the MCAP exams, the state determines the difficulty of the questions and examines how each student performed on each one to create a scale score.

“So, in practicality, you might be looking at a test with 50 questions, a student getting 20 questions right, and that is translated into them passing, depending on how the test works out,” Hamill said. “With the MCAP, the math side, in particular, is all computer-adapted at this point. What is happening is the students answer a question; if they get it right, the next question is supposed to be a

little harder, and if they get that one right, the next one is a little bit harder, and if they get that one wrong, it goes back a little bit. It uses that to figure out where that student is in terms of a score.”

To better understand student performance, WCPS officials examine how its internal metrics, such as grades from iReady assessments, compare with the MCAP marks.

iReady is a personalized online learning program for reading and mathematics that allows teachers to determine their students’ needs. In math and ELA, kids in grades three through eight are given assessments through the platform three times a year.

“From that, we are able to get a sense for when kids are on grade level or not on grade level and may need additional support,” Hamill said.

However, math scores from the iReady and the MCAP exams deviate when compared.

Looking at the winter iReady assessment, which happens roughly a month before MCAP, the research and student information coordinator said that nearly 60% of math five students demonstrated early or mid-grade level. However, this translated into only 43% of an MCAP pass rate.

See STATE Page 19

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Opinion

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

Low voter turnouts don't make sense

Congratulations to District 3 Council member Shaneka Nichols, who won reelection walking away Tuesday by garnering 62 votes to her opponent's 4.

But wait, 62 to 4? That's it?

It's difficult to accept that of the hundreds of people who reside in that district only 66 of them thought it was important to show town government that they do care what it does to and for them.

Unfortunately, that's one aspect of the democratic process that voting-age people everywhere often fail to recognize. Aside from the essential business of the governed getting to decide who will do the governing, voting, and specifically voting totals, demonstrate how much influence a district, town, county or state can bring to bear when issues arise that might affect them.

Although it's often said that civic involvement and voting is every citizen's duty in a democratic society, the fact is voting is also an expression of self-interest, because it reflects how people wish to be treated and recognized.

Of course, election results don't always work out as hoped, but at least participating in the process does give people standing to complain.

The reality is that the low voter turnout that returned Nichols to the council for another four years is not unusual in most small towns where people seem to pay little attention to local government until they want something or are directly affected by its actions.

Two years ago, for instance, Council member Dean Burrell won reelection with 37 votes and in 2016, before Zack Tyn-dall was elected mayor, he won the District 2 council seat with just 185 votes in a fairly competitive contest.

These kinds of turnouts aren't going to make elected officials stand up and take notice or contemplate their political futures during the decision-making process. Voting totals are a show of strength. Not voting is like leaving the keys in the car and hoping whoever takes it doesn't crash it.

Letters

Body armor serves all police officers well even if safe place

Editor,

Your editorial of Sept. 27 concerning the need for OPPolice to have body armor (bulletproof vests) is spot on. To paraphrase you, this is not a knock on your editorial.

I would like to point out that the quiet and peacefulness of Ocean Pines notwithstanding, imagine - as difficult as that is - a shooting incident at one of the schools bordering OP or a quarter of a mile north on 589.

Which police department is the closest to these schools and would likely be the first to respond?

Jeff Mayne

(The writer is a retired chief investigator with the Worcester County States Attorney's Office.)

Weigh school board votes carefully since a lot at stake

Editor,

We've all heard the expression "Be careful what you wish for - you just might get it!"

This has come across my mind a few times lately when pondering the Board of Education race here in Worcester County.

Worcester is blessed with a darn good public education system (best in the state by most metrics), which is largely due to parents, the school leadership, including the superintendent and staff, and the elected Board of Education. We also receive, by far, the lowest funding from the state.

That said, do we have problems? Yes. Are some things happening that concern me and others? Yes.

The vast majority of the problems are created by overbearing state and federal "involvement" in what is, constitutionally, a local matter. The fact is that, for the last few decades, this extra-constitutional involvement has increased to the point that local school districts have very little control over much of anything, from discipline to curriculum. This involvement (a better word is, perhaps, CONTROL) has created a situation that leaves the parents out of a process and decisions that are absolutely within the parents' purview, and not the concern of the public school system. We also, unfortunately, have a great number of parents who really don't "parent", which puts the school system in a bad situation. It is difficult, if not impossible, to teach children who are undisciplined and have no respect for authority or rules.

In 2016, a search for a new superintend-

ent of schools was initiated, coordinated by the Maryland State Board of Education. The applicant pool was whittled down over time to two finalists. I volunteered to serve on the citizen committee considering the qualifications of the applicants. The MSBE's preference was Dr. Michael Martirano. We (and the other local committees) chose Lou Taylor. Thank God. Mr. Martirano later took the job of Superintendent of the Howard County school system and a couple of years later was instrumental in adopting a redistricting plan based on family wealth. Yes, I said family wealth.

I believe this is where I point out that Worcester County dodged a very large bullet.

We could very easily have been saddled with Mr. Martirano with his radical ideas and he would have had the full support of the State of Maryland. Think about that for a few minutes.

In closing, I ask - is any school system perfect? No. Is any superintendent, staff member, teacher, board member perfect? No. Are there problems? Yes. But the accusations and criticisms leveled by some county commissioners and citizens and BOE candidates against the school leadership and Board of Education members has been outrageous. I don't think some of the candidates for the Board of Education understand the delicate dance our Board members must undertake to keep from running afoul of the all-powerful state agencies.

Sometimes I wonder if these candidates understand that we live in Maryland. If you have ever run a business, tried to make a living at farming or commercial fishing, run a local government (such as a County Commission) you should understand. The state government is all-powerful and has its hands on everything. Add to that the most left-wing Federal Government we have ever had that issues executive orders like toilet paper.

For years I bragged on Worcester County because we always seemed to work together for the best interests of the residents and taxpayers. There was a cohesiveness that was really refreshing. I can't say I feel that way anymore. Some of the things that have been said to and about leaders in the school district and some board members have been painful to witness. And, in my opinion, completely uncalled for.

Voters should carefully consider their votes in November. The state and federal governments do not take kindly to being challenged, and we could find ourselves in the position of "getting what we asked for."

*Carol Frazier
Ocean Pines*

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We invite you to share your opinion, but all letters are subject to verification, so please include your name and phone number. All letters are subject to editing for space and to protect the author and this newspaper from legal action. Email letters to editor@baysidegazette.com. For questions, call 410-723-6397.

State assessment scores detailed for board

Continued from Page 17

Math six iReady scores came in at 55%, which dipped to 35.46% on the MCAP, and math seven's 52% proficiency rate on the winter preliminary assessment fell to 39.53% on the spring exam.

"This suggests that there is perhaps a disconnect between what iReady is measuring and what the state is possibly measuring," Hamill said. "It is interesting because when you look at iReady as a whole...it correlates very well to the MCAP...so it is interesting when we see these departures what is described at on grade level and yet here is what the state is telling us with regards to on grade level."

Still, Worcester County's test scores came out on top, even on a question-by-question basis. Looking at problems one through 49 of an assessment provided by the state, ranked from easiest to most difficult, Hamill presented a graph to the board that compared the percentage of students throughout Maryland and at the county level that answered

each inquiry correctly.

In almost every case, the percentage of Worcester test-takers who got each question right was higher than the state percentage.

"Even when talking about the really difficult questions...our students are still outperforming the state on those really difficult questions," Hamill said.

Hamill maintained that Worcester County is an effective school system. Simply teaching a third grader to read at grade level is expected progress, he said, but a real sign of success is taking aspects, like poverty, that are out of the educators' control and learning to mitigate them.

Based on Worcester's economically disadvantaged rate, the anticipated level of proficiency is around 50%. However, for third-grade reading, for example, more than 70% of students are at a passing rate based on MCAP scores.

Hamill references Pocomoke Elementary School, which he defines as an "extreme outlier", and compares their performance to if the Stephen

Decatur High School football team was to beat the University of Maryland Terps.

"You would expect the Terps to win," he said. "They have a lot of advantages...you would expect by nature of those advantages that they have to succeed. If SDHS could beat on the Terps, it would be noteworthy...so when I point out a school like PES, that is what I think of...somehow this county has managed to make it to that poverty is not prophecy."

WCPS Superintendent Lou Taylor said he attended a superintendent meeting shortly after the scores came out, where roughly six other school system leaders asked him about Worcester's key to success.

"The secret sauce," he maintained,

is the depth of their educational strategies, which the system continues to adapt, and the attention to the individual student. The transition from looking at the class as a whole to breaking it down to each learner, he said, began under former superintendent Dr. Jon Andes, who was appointed to the role in 1996 and served for 16 years, and currently acts on the Worcester County Board of Education.

"We are constantly looking at individual student achievement and making determinations at the classroom and school level of what services we can localize to move that student forward," Andes said. "It does not matter if the student is proficient or wherever they happen to be. We are going to work ... we are hungry to make a difference."

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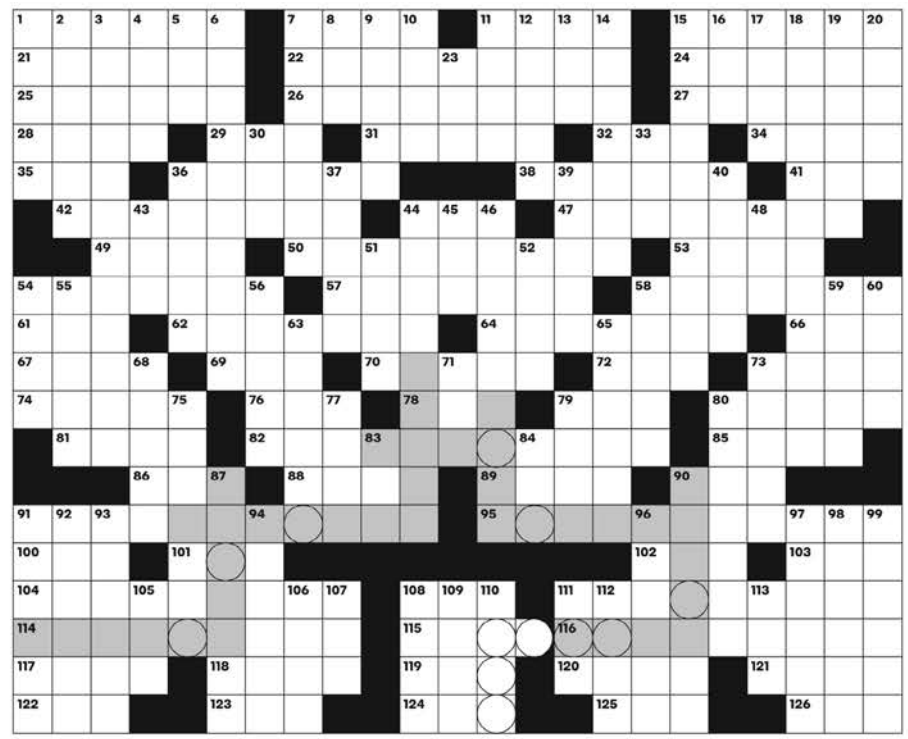
Puzzles

BREAKOUT PERFORMANCE

BY JEREMY NEWTON AND TRACY GRAY / EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

Jeremy Newton, of Austin, Texas, works as an engineering manager for a mobile-game company. Tracy Gray, of Hunt Valley, Md., recently retired from the lawn and landscaping business. They found that coming up with suitable answers to complete the interlocking shaded squares was the most satisfying part of making this puzzle, as well as the most difficult and time-consuming.

- ACROSS**
- 1 One getting into some hot water?
 - 7 Home monitors
 - 11 Data sought in phishing attempts, in brief
 - 15 Thus far
 - 21 Cry from a treehouse
 - 22 Doesn't rule out, as a possibility
 - 24 Wrinkle-free, say
 - 25 Turned on an axis
 - 26 Real no-brainer?
 - 27 Colorful ingredients in some cookie recipes
 - 28 Trash
 - 29 Reef lurker
 - 31 Ways off
 - 32 Part of H.M.S.
 - 34 Word with body or blood
 - 35 Texter's alternative to an eye-roll emoji
 - 36 Olympians on stunt bikes, informally
 - 38 Genre for Fall Out Boy
 - 41 U.S. currency: Abbr.
 - 42 Negative influence on others, metaphorically
 - 44 Expressed
 - 47 To sweeten the deal
 - 49 Declines to
 - 50 Houdini's signature feat ... or a hint to the circled squares in this puzzle
- DOWN**
- 1 Exceeds 21, in blackjack
 - 2 Poise under pressure
 - 3 With 6-Down, prison drama released on Sept. 23, 1994
 - 4 Hacks with an ax
 - 5 Ahead of, in poetry
 - 6 See 3-Down
 - 7 Instrument strummed in the Train song "Hey, Soul Sister"
 - 8 Popular gala venue, with "the"
 - 9 Sneaky ____ (sly dogs)
 - 10 Glasses, informally
 - 11 Like cashmere
 - 12 Imagine, casually
 - 13 Prefix with -lithic
 - 14 16-time gig for Steve Martin
 - 15 Portrayer of 18-Down
 - 16 "Cup ____ cone?"
 - 17 Terse admonishment
 - 18 Lead role in 3-Down/6-Down
 - 19 They're measured in beats per minute
 - 20 Famed Ford flop
 - 23 Honorific from Sanskrit
 - 30 Date on a debit card: Abbr.
 - 33 Pollution-regulating org.
 - 36 Resort town in Alberta's Rockies
 - 37 Kicks back
 - 39 "The Heart of Georgia"
 - 40 ____ Corner, section of Westminster Abbey
 - 43 "What was I thinking!?"
- ACROSS**
- 53 Basis for a feud
 - 54 Rudder found in nature
 - 57 "Bad luck, I guess. ... It was my turn, that's all. I was in the path of the ____" (quote from 18-Down)
 - 58 Became stuck
 - 61 "This is the worst!"
 - 62 Receptacle for soaking before a pedicure
 - 64 Brainy bunch
 - 66 Electronica pioneer Brian
 - 67 Bulgarian or Bosnian
 - 69 Rap group inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame
 - 70 The White House grounds have 18 of them
 - 72 Some online pings, in brief
 - 73 "Yo!" on the down-low
 - 74 Lightning-fast hedgehog of video games
 - 76 What "washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life," per Picasso
 - 78 Lane for carpoolers
 - 79 Six-foot-tall Aussie sprinter
 - 80 Grows dimmer
 - 81 "Are you ____ drive?"
 - 82 Certain online video snippet
 - 85 Downwind, to seafarers
- DOWN**
- 86 "Breaking Bad" channel
 - 88 Fastener that's one letter ahead of "U-bolt" in the dictionary
 - 89 Org. with the Artemis program
 - 90 Office-building unit: Abbr.
 - 91 What a police escort may offer
 - 95 Classic cover-ups for spies
 - 100 Fumble or bumble
 - 101 Card game with a Power Grab edition
 - 102 "Good joke!"
 - 103 Red side, in brief
 - 104 Indecency
 - 108 Female in the forest
 - 111 "Like that matters to me!"
 - 114 Stage a jailbreak à la 18-Down
 - 115 Annual May race, familiarly
 - 116 Held together in a makeshift way
 - 117 Wraps
 - 118 Sizable challenge for a mover
 - 119 Make a break for it
 - 120 Yearn (for)
 - 121 Swain
 - 122 Parts of N.F.L. highlight reels, for short
 - 123 This really blows!
 - 124 Airport monitor, for short
 - 125 Razz
 - 126 Pennzoil competitor
- Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year).



- 44 Fall accessory?
- 45 Bygone channel that launched with the two-hour pilot of "Star Trek: Voyager"
- 46 4x100 relay, for one
- 48 Org. with Student Success Grants
- 51 ____ America (quadrennial soccer championship)
- 52 Juice drinks
- 54 To-do
- 55 Yeti's commercial rival
- 56 "Ain't gonna happen!"
- 58 Overplay
- 59 Erase from one's memory, in slang
- 60 Target audience for "Peppa Pig"
- 63 Decks with cards numbered I through XXI
- 65 Apelike
- 68 Curriculum ____
- 71 Take inventory?
- 73 Prefix with -lithic
- 75 Make sense
- 77 Ingredient in a niçoise salad
- 79 Conditional coding word
- 80 "Hey, I'm walkin' here!"
- 83 Harbor helper
- 84 It might get booted
- 87 Main blvd. through N.Y.C.'s Chinatown
- 90 Treated unfairly, informally
- 91 The swans in "The Twelve Days of Christmas," e.g.
- 92 In the area
- 93 Some makeshift fans
- 94 "Already?!"
- 96 Ostentatiously stylish
- 97 Early Christian meals of love and fellowship
- 98 Unwrapped with gusto
- 99 Accelerated
- 105 Shot makers, for short
- 106 Top of a titmouse
- 107 H on a frat house
- 108 Shoveled stuff
- 109 Unwelcome obligation
- 110 Irish novelist O'Brien
- 111 Coding pioneer Lovelace
- 112 Be bad, like really bad
- 113 Kin of a zin

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HARD - 18

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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

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

Child abuse, assault case moved to Circuit

Attorney looking forward to telling public defendant's side of facts eventually

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(Oct. 3, 2024) The case against a former Berlin daycare worker accused of child abuse will be forwarded to Worcester County Circuit Court as a result of a criminal indictment filed this week.

On Sept. 23, Lionel Evans, 57, of Princess Anne, was indicted in Worcester County Circuit Court on charges of second-degree child abuse, second-degree assault and reckless endangerment. While Evans was set to appear in district court for a preliminary hearing Tuesday, his attorney, Thomas Maronick Jr., said the case will now be forwarded to the higher court. An initial appearance has been scheduled for Oct. 9.

"What happened today with Mr. Evans is the case was indicted to circuit court," he said. "What that means is they have presented his case to a grand jury, presenting just the state's information. What's important with that is that the defense has not had an evidentiary hearing. We've not had a chance to present evidence, we've not had a chance to challenge

any of the evidence ... All they've done is accuse him of a crime, and it's been forwarded to the high court."

Last month, Berlin police launched an investigation after the parent of a four-year-old attending the Berlin Activities Depot reported an incident that occurred at the facility's playground on Aug. 13. The parent told officers Evans, a gymnastics coach at the Berlin Activities Depot, had grabbed his child by the back of his neck, leaving a red mark, scratches and bruising. The parent said his child was not listening and had run away from Evans on the playground.

"Child protective services was contacted, and a forensic interview was conducted on August 14, 2024," a statement of charges reads. "The child disclosed during the interview that he had marks on his neck. The child stated that Lionel (Evans) did it while he was playing on the playground. The child stated that Lionel (Evans) put his hand around the child's neck and that it caused his neck to hurt. The child stated that afterwards, he was crying and Lionel stated to the child he was going to be in timeout for what he did."

Police report the footage obtained from the Berlin Activities Depot showed the child running toward the

playground equipment and Evans chasing after him. According to charging documents, Evans grabbed the child by the back of the neck, and the child fell to the ground. Police said Evans was also seen "forcefully grabbing the child's right upper arm and lifting him to his feet."

As a result of the investigation, Evans was arrested on one felony charge of second-degree child abuse and one misdemeanor charge of second-degree assault, and a preliminary hearing was set for Sept. 24 in Worcester County Circuit Court. Maronick said this week his client's arrest has resulted in his termination from the Berlin Activities Depot and his suspension from USA Gymnastics.

"He came here because he wanted to share that knowledge and expert-

ise and help kids to become the best that they can be," he said of his client's employment with the Berlin Activities Depot. "And these allegations have been devastating. Not only does he deny them, but the fact is he is on suspension as far as his association with USA Gymnastics now because of these charges ... Obviously he wants to get past these charges and go back to what he does really well, helping kids and helping them grow."

Evans has continued to deny the allegations, and several parents and children at the Berlin Activities Depot have voiced their support for the former gymnastics coach. Since Evans's arrest, Berlin Activities Depot owner Carmella Solito has invited parents to view video footage of the incident.

See CENTER Page 22

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Speeding motorist jailed in Berlin

Suspect fled on foot before police apprehended him with two weapons, drugs

(Oct. 3, 2024) A motorist driving three times the stated speed limit was arrested last week in Berlin for traffic violations as well as carrying a weapon as a felon.

Officers with the Berlin Police Department (BPD) observed a vehicle in the area of Route 50 and Route 346 shortly after midnight on Sept. 25 that appeared to be travelling above the posted speed limit. Officers were able to obtain a speed reading of 120 mph and attempted to stop the vehicle

using their emergency equipment.

According to the BPD press release, the vehicle disregarded the officer's attempts to stop the vehicle and engaged in numerous traffic violations throughout the Town of Berlin and into Worcester County. Officers continued to follow the vehicle until it ran off the road in the area of Ironshire Station Road and Libertytown Road. The driver of the vehicle, who was later identified as Fredrick Lewis Strobel III, 27, of Berlin, fled on foot from the vehicle.

Officers were able to locate Strobel hiding in a wooded area after a search ensued and placed him under arrest. Multiple agencies assisted in the search for Strobel including the Mary-

land State Police, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police Aviation and the Pocomoke City Police Department.

Along with 20 traffic violations, Strobel was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a rifle by a convicted felon, possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, illegal possession of a regulated firearm, possession of a rifle by a disqualified person, possession of CDS with a firearm, possession of CDS - not cannabis, possession of CDS paraphernalia and resisting arrest.

Strobel is currently being held without bond at the Worcester County Detention Center.

Maryland Safe Boating Course set for Oct. 8-10

Ocean Pines Library to host three-day certification

(Oct. 3, 2024) The next Maryland Safe Boating Course is set for 6-9 p.m., Oct. 8-10, at the Ocean Pines Library.

The course offers a Maryland boating certification, which is NASBLA approved and valid in all states, and taught by certified instructors from the Ocean City Coast Guard Auxiliary. All of the required material is covered, along with information on local waters and nautical navigation.

The Maryland Boating Safety Education Act requires that anyone born after July 1, 1972, must possess a Maryland Basic Boating Safety Certificate to operate a boat in the state of Maryland.

A fee of \$20 covers the cost of the course and materials.

Checks should be made payable to: USGCAUX 12-05 and mailed to USGCAUX 12-05, P.O. Box 1682, Berlin, Md. 21811

Payment via PayPal is also accepted.

For more information, contact Barry Cohen at 410-935-4807 or email CGAUXOC@gmail.com.

Center terminated charged man

Continued from Page 21

"Our center remains committed to providing the highest standard of care for your children," the message reads. "We are continuously evaluating and improving our practices to ensure we meet and exceed all safety and care requirements set forth by the state of Maryland for childcare."

Evans's arrest came on the heels of another child abuse investigation,

which resulted in two former daycare workers at the Berlin facility being arrested earlier this year. On Aug. 19, Worcester County Circuit Court Judge Brian Shockley found Heather Ward, 40, of Berlin, guilty of nine counts of second-degree assault on which she had tendered an Alford plea, which acknowledges that the state has enough evidence to prove Ward guilty beyond a reasonable

doubt should the case proceed to trial. The remaining 81 counts in her case, including 10 felony charges, were not prosecuted as part of Ward's plea agreement with the state. In June, a second classroom worker, Catherine Deutsch, 32, of Berlin, was arrested on 11 charges of failure to report child abuse/neglect and four charges of neglect of a minor. A trial in that case will be held next month.

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Photo by Stephen Pryce Lea

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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., Oct. 3

CPAP MASK FITTING

Atlantic General Hospital's Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin. 'Free mask fitting clinic for patients who are having trouble adjusting to their CPAP equipment. Appointments required: Robin Rohlfing, 410-641-9726.

FREE COMMUNITY FLU CLINIC

Pocomoke City Volunteer Fire Company, 1410 Market St., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Providing flu vaccinations for those ages 13 years and older. No appointment required. High-dose vaccines available and billed to Medicare or insurance for those 65 years and older. www.agh.care/flu

STORY TIME: GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE DINOSAURS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Songs, stories and crafts. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME 'BABY BEAR COUNTS ONE'

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, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CHESS CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Looking for a quiet place to meet new friends and play some chess? Bring your boards. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

DYLAN, CASH AND YOUNG: JERRY LEE ADKINS IN CONCERT

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Adkins to perform classics made famous by Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and Neil Young — three rebels who redefined modern music. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK DISCUSSION: 'WHAT STORM, WHAT THUNDER'

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. Join in for this community read. Books are available at the library's circulation desk. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BEACH SINGLE 55 PLUS MEET AND GREET

Thursdays - Harpoon Hanna's, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. 215-385-4993, BeachSingles.org

MAGIC THE GATHERING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 3:30 p.m. Battle it out with sorcery, dragons and giants. Experienced and novice players

welcome. BYOC recommended. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PILATES, BARRE, TONING

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30 p.m. Focus on strength, flexibility, breathing and full body alignment. Both are low impact. Done while standing, sitting or holding on to a chair. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

Fri., Oct. 4

COUNTRY CALLING FESTIVAL

Downtown Ocean City, 401 S. Atlantic Ave. Tickets are sold out. To join the waitlist: www.countrycallingfestival.com.

FREE COMMUNITY FLU CLINIC

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Providing flu vaccinations for those ages 13 years and older. No appointment required. High-dose vaccines available and billed to Medicare or insurance for those 65 years and older. www.agh.care/flu

MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for a fun morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring our own tile set. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

SURVIVAL SPANISH: SPORTS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Learn about the Spanish vocabulary for all things sports. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FIRST FRIDAY OPENING RECEPTION FOR OCTOBER EXHIBITS

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 5-8 p.m. Meet the artists, enjoy hors d'oeuvres, and see the new exhibits by a variety of local artists. Free event. All are welcome. Thaler Gallery: The Red Thread — Deborah Rolig, Dee Gray, Seth Apter. 410-524-9433

KIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

Fridays - Knights of Columbus, 9901 Coastal Highway, behind St. Luke's Church. Doors open at 5 p.m., bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Light snacks available before bingo and at intermission. 410-524-7994

Sat., Oct. 5

COUNTRY CALLING FESTIVAL

Downtown Ocean City, 401 S. Atlantic Ave. Tickets are sold out. To join the waitlist: www.countrycallingfestival.com.

THE PARKE GARAGE SALE

The Parke at Ocean Pines, 2 Arcadia

Court, Berlin, 7:30 a.m.-noon. Held in the driveways of residents. Maps will be available at the main entrance of the Parke at Central Parke west and south Ocean Parkway. Rain date is Oct. 6. 410-208-4994

BETHESDA UMC ANNUAL FALL BAZAAR & FESTIVAL

Bethesda United Methodist Church, 406 N. Division St., Salisbury, 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Bethesda UMC will have a Yard Sale, Silent Auction, Raffles, Cake Walk and lots and lots of Homemade Food available for purchase. 410-742-8855

FREE COMMUNITY FLU CLINIC

Gudelsky Family Medical Center (Drive-Thru), 10614 Racetrack Road, Berlin, 8 a.m.-noon. Providing flu vaccinations for those ages 13 years and older. No appointment required. High-dose vaccines available and billed to Medicare or insurance for those 65 years and older. www.agh.care/flu

WOR-WIC 5K HERO RUN

Wor-Wic Community College, 32000 Campus Drive, Salisbury, 9 a.m. Check-in and registration begin at 8 a.m. Featuring 5K Hero Run, 2-mile walk and 2024 First Responder Team Cup Challenge. Entry fee is \$25 or \$35 after Oct. 2 and \$5 for kids' event. www.worwic.edu/5K, 410-334-2965

18TH ANNUAL CRUIZERS FOR CHRIST CAR SHOW

Whaleysville United Methodist, 11716 Sheppards Crossing Road, Whaleysville, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Trophies awarded to Top 20 and Best in Show, silent auction, gospel music and food for purchase including scrapple sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs and baked goods. Entry fee is \$15.

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

CRAFTY SATURDAY: HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Create a craft and discover more about Hispanic culture. For ages 0-5 years and 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TECH CLINIC

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Stop by and ask questions related to your devices and technology services. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

GOSPEL CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF REV. CHARLES ALBERT TINDLEY, DD

New Bethel United Methodist Church, 10203 Germantown Road, Berlin, 12-3 p.m. A day dedicated to the hymns, vision and history of Rev. Tindley. Free event and all are welcome to come celebrate and sing. Hot dogs available for purchase. 410-641-0638, germantown-school@gmail.com

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m. to noon. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

Sun., Oct. 6

BLESSING OF THE PETS

Church of the Holy Spirit Episcopal - parking lot, 10001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 12 p.m. In honor of St. Francis of Assisi. Pets should be on leashes or otherwise under their owners' control. All pets welcome. Photos of departed pets and stuffed animals also welcome. 410-723-1973

ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 3 Church St., Berlin, 2 p.m. Come for a brief prayer service and then get individual blessings for your pets. Pets in photos or in person are accepted.

CRAB FEAST

Church of the Holy Spirit Episcopal, 10001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 2-5 p.m. Crabs, fried chicken, corn on the cob, hush puppies, lemonade, iced tea, soda and desserts. Carry-out available. Cost is \$45 for adults and \$20 for kids 6-10 years. Tickets: lloyd119@gmail.com. 443-235-8942

BERLIN FARMERS MARKET

Sundays through October - Pitts Street, Commerce Street and Main Street, Berlin, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. Featuring more than 50 farmers, bakers, growers, brewers, food cultivators, distillers, creators and artists. Also free kids art projects, petting zoo, face painting and live music. <https://berlinmainstreet.com/farmersmarket/>

BERLIN FLEA MARKET

Sundays - Uptown Emporium Parking Lot, 13 S. Main St., Berlin, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vendor opportunities available. Julie, 410-726-9012; Bill, 410-629-9656

THE ART OF BERLIN

Sundays through October - The Berlin Welcome Center Lot, 14 S. Main St., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Merry Haven presents A Local Makers Market.

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Calendar

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SEWING FOR A CAUSE

Sundays - Buckingham Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Main St., Berlin, 10:30 a.m. to noon. Learn how to sew while making a difference. 410-641-0234

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

Mon., Oct. 7

STORY TIME: FIRE SAFETY

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

FIESTA FLAVORS WITH PLAZA TAPATIA

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Join in for a food demonstration and some tastings. Registration required: 410-208-4014. www.worcesterlibrary.org

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. Group meets twice a month to discuss selections from the Great Books Foundation. Focusing on "On the Tranquility of the Mind" by Seneca. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4 p.m. Providing a safe place for caregivers how share similar challenges and rewards of providing care for adults who have any type of serious illness. Nicole Fry, nfry@atlanticgeneral.org, 410-641-2626

CITIZEN RESEARCH PROJECT KICK-OFF

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 3 p.m. Also held via Zoom. The program will discuss the important role of everyday citizens in identifying women of history and the resources available to them. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

WARHAMMER

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Use the library's armies or bring your own. Tutorials and demos will be available, so novices and veteran players alike are welcome. For ages 12-18 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

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

LEGO STEAM CHALLENGE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Join in for a Lego challenge event. All



PHOTO COURTESY WORCESTER COUNTY GOVERNMENT

At the Sept. 17 Worcester County Commissioners meeting, area firefighters, EMS, and police from multiple agencies were honored for their spirit of cooperation and commitment to protecting the lives of residents and visitors. Specifically, on Aug. 4, members of the Berlin Fire Department, Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, Showell Volunteer Fire Department, Ocean City Volunteer Fire Department, Maryland State Police, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Worcester County HAZMAT team, Worcester County Emergency Services D Shift, Berlin Police Department, and Ocean Pines Police Department responded to a collision on U.S. Rt. 50 near MD Rt. 589 involving a passenger car and a tanker truck, which resulted in hazardous materials spilling from the tanker and the car becoming engulfed in flames. Pictured are members of the department with the commissioners at the meeting.

materials provided. For 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

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK TED TALK

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5:30 p.m. Listen to and discuss the different TED talks about the 2010 Haitian earthquake. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BRIDGE

Mondays - Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st Street, Ocean City, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Reserve a spot: Tish, 410-804-3971. www.Worcoa.org/oceancity

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.

Tues., Oct. 8

POP-UP FARMERS MARKET

Flower St. Field across from Henry Park, 125 Flower St., Berlin, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP - WIC & seniors) checks and WIC Fruit & Vegetable checks welcome here.

STORY TIME WITH A HERO

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Story time featuring a community hero.

For ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME @ THE DELMARVA DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Delmarva Discovery Museum, 2 Market St., Pocomoke City, 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs, crafts and a visit with the animals. A different animal will be featured every month. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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

LET'S MAKE ... MODERN ART WALL HANGINGS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Your wired sculpture will be unique and fun to build. All materials provided. Call 410-641-0650 or visit www.worcesterlibrary.org to register.

CHAIR YOGA

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Certified yoga instructor, Therese O'Boyle, teaches this class that stretches and strengthens in a gentle manner. Registration required: 410-524-1818. www.worcesterlibrary.org

LEAF PRINTS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30 p.m. Create beautiful artwork using leaves. For ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

Atlantic General Neurology at the Atlantic Health Center, 9714 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3:15-4 p.m. Providing dis-

cussions and support, along with education on exercise, nutrition, coping techniques, medications and developments in treatment. Kay Kinnikin, 410-641-4765, kkinnikin@atlanticgeneral.org

SAFE BOATING COURSE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 6-9 p.m. Classes held Oct. 8, 9 and 10. Cost is \$20 for all three evenings. Register: Barry Cohen, 410-935-4807, CGAUXOC@gmail.com.

SONG CELEBRATION

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 6 p.m. Bring a song and share it with other players and writers. Originals encouraged. Listeners welcome. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BOOK CLUB: 'WHAT STORM, WHAT THUNDER' BY MYRIAM J.A. CHANCY

Tides & Vine, 106 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 6 p.m. Pick up your book at the Snow Hill Library then meet for a discussion at Tides & Vine. Must be at least 21 years of age. 410-632-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

ATLANTIC COAST SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION MEETING

American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, 2308 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 7 p.m. Guest speakers will be Bonnie Erwin and Ryan Comer from "Fallen Outdoors Maryland/Delaware." The public is invited. Food and refreshments available at 6:15 p.m.

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.

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Calendar

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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

OC KNITTING CLUB

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

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

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND WELLNESS GROUP

Tuesdays - Holy Trinity Cathedral, 11021 Worcester Highway, 2-2:45 p.m. Use the weight loss program/app/plan of your choice. Free and open to everyone. 410-641-4882, www.htcanglican.org/activities.

Wed., Oct. 9

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Meets online via Zoom the first and second Wednesdays of each month. For non-surgical patients. Atlantic General Bariatric Center, 410-641-9568

AARP MEETING

Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st St., 10 a.m. Refreshments served at 9:30 a.m. Flu shots provided by the Coastal Drug Pharmacy. Guest speaker will discuss "Aging and Alzheimer's." New members welcome. Bob McCluskey, 410-250-0980

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Songs, stories and giggles. For ages 0-2 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

MERRY MAKERS: SHELL TRINKET DISHES

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 11 a.m. This adult craft class will decoupage printed napkins onto shells to make beautiful trinket dishes. Supplies provided and space limited to 10. Register: 410-208-4014. www.worcesterlibrary.org

BOOK CLUB: "WHAT STORM, WHAT THUNDER" BY MYRIAM J.A. CHANCY

Snow Hill 50plus Center, 4767 Snow

Hill Road, 11 a.m. Stop by the Snow Hill Library or the 50plus Center for a copy of the One Maryland One Book then meet for a great discussion. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TABLE TOP ROLE PLAYING GAME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Come play a selected role-playing game for adults and teens. Limit 10. Registration required: 410-632-3495. www.worcesterlibrary.org

SEA GLASS ART

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 5 p.m. Design your own sea glass art piece. All supplies provided. Registration necessary: 410-957-0878. www.worcesterlibrary.org

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: SHAPING THE FUTURE

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 5:30 p.m. Learn about AI and its impact on the future. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

WONDERLAND PARTY OF THE YEAR

Embers @ District 224, 2305 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 6-9 p.m. Alice in Wonderland themed fundraiser. Cost is \$150. Tickets:

<https://givebutter.com/ALOCParty-oftheYear2024>. Online auction: <https://givebutter.com/c/ALOCParty-oftheYear2024/auction>. 410-524-9433

STEP INTO SALSA: BEGINNER LESSONS

Healing Arts Center, 617 Franklin Ave., Berlin, 7:30 p.m. Learn basic Salsa moves with Amanda Showell from Dancing on the Shore. Classes held Oct 9, 16, 23 and 30. Registration required: 443-783-6164. www.worcesterlibrary.org

KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

Wednesdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Third Wednesday meetings are offsite and information can be found on the website and Facebook. www.kiwanisofpoc.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

BERLIN PUMPKIN SCAVENGER HUNT

Find all of the painted pumpkins for your chance to win \$100. Pick up and return your entry form at the Berlin Welcome Center foyer. Open 24/7. Contest runs Oct. 1-30.

PRE-HOLIDAY SHOWING

Ocean Pines library, 11107 Cathell Road, Oct. 1-Dec. 31. A pre-holiday showing of original art work. 410-208-4014

OCTOBER INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., Art, photography or poetry competition for all ages. The theme for October is "Sticks and Stones." Due by Oct. 23. 410-632-3495

New Bethel church will host Tindley celebration Oct. 5

(Oct. 3, 2024) On Saturday, Oct. 5, from noon-3 p.m. the Germantown School will host a gospel celebration of the remarkable life and music of Rev. Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933) at the New Bethel United Methodist Church in Berlin.

Born in Worcester County, Tindley is credited as one of the founding fathers of gospel music, publishing 46 hymns, hymns that inspired "We Shall Overcome" and "Stand By Me." A self-taught man in music and education, Tindley rose from janitor to pastor, growing his congregation in Philadelphia from its initial 130 members to a multiracial congregation of over 10,000.

Upon his death, his church was renamed the Tindley Temple and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Throughout the 20th century, Worcester County congregations made annual trips to his church. This



Rev. Charles Albert Tindley

event recreates these trips with a day dedicated to the hymns, vision, and history of Tindley. The event is free, and all are welcome to come, celebrate, and sing. Hot dogs will be available for purchase while they last.

New Bethel United Methodist Church, the oldest African American church in Worcester County is located at 10203 Germantown Road in Berlin.

Cathy Zirkle appointed to manager position in county

(Sept. 20, 2024) The Worcester County Commissioners have appointed Cathy Zirkle to serve as the customer service manager within the county's Development Review and Permitting division.

Zirkle, who stepped into her new role Sept. 3, will replace long-time Customer Service Manager Janet Davis, who will be retiring later this year.



Cathy Zirkle

"Cathy has always been willing to go above and beyond to assist the public and her team, taking the initiative to learn new tasks and help wherever she is needed," DRP Director Jennifer Keener said in a news release. "While she has big shoes to fill following Janet's dedicated years of service, she has the knowledge and experience needed to lead customer service."

Zirkle joined DRP as a license permit clerk I in 2015 and worked her way up to DRP specialist III. She brings 20 years of leadership experience and nine years of government experience to the position. Prior to joining the department, Zirkle spent 20 years in the hospitality industry in Florida.

"I truly love living in and serving the constituents in the Delmarva area," Zirkle said in the release "I'm happy to be able to help area residents and property owners navigate the planning and permitting processes."

The customer service manager oversees all aspects of customer service and public outreach for DRP to resolve constituent issues. Duties include investigating all aspects of plan review, permitting, zoning, inspections, housing, and rental licensing, as well as reviewing permits and plans for regulatory compliance, and other regulatory functions.

Free scrap tire drops offered

(Oct. 3, 2024) The Worcester County Commissioners and the Public Works Recycling Division will host Citizens Scrap Tire Drop-Off Day on Saturday, Oct. 5, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. This event will take place at the Central Landfill in Newark.

"We're very thankful that area residents partner with the county to help assure that these old tires are recycled," Recycling Manager Bob Keenan said. "This helps to divert waste from the landfill and achieve greater rates

of recycling throughout the county."

Worcester County residents are encouraged to get rid of their old, scrap, passenger, and light truck tires free of charge, with a limit of 10 tires per household (photo ID required). Only non-commercial truck and car tires will be accepted. No agricultural tires will be accepted, and no businesses, commercial haulers of tires, or generators of scrap tires will be permitted to participate in the Citizen Scrap Tire Drop-Off.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Superintendent of Schools Lou Taylor and Sheriff Matt Crisafulli presented challenge coins to Pocomoke Middle fourth graders Reign Jackson and ReiJon Canty for their efforts to help a classmate who was choking. The students are pictured with teachers and administrators.

Students recognized for choking peer help

(Oct. 3, 2024) September 11 turned into a day of bravery and quick thinking for two Pocomoke Middle School fourth graders, Reign Jackson and ReiJon Canty, as they became true heroes during their lunch period.

In a moment of crisis, when a fellow classmate began choking, Jackson and Canty sprang into action

without hesitation. Their calm and immediate response saved their peer's life, demonstrating incredible composure and bravery in the face of an emergency.

To honor their actions, Superintendent Lou Taylor, along with Sheriff Matt Crisafulli, presented the two students with challenge coins in recognition of their heroism. Reign

and ReiJon's families proudly joined them during the ceremony, making the recognition even more special.

"We are incredibly proud of their courage and teamwork. Their actions are a powerful reminder of the importance of community, courage, and teamwork within our schools," said Taylor. "These everyday heroes serve as an inspiration to us all, highlight-

ing the value of looking out for one another. Let's take a moment to celebrate Reign and ReiJon for their extraordinary bravery, reminding us all of the importance of compassion and action in times of need. Worcester County Public Schools is proud to have students like Reign and ReiJon, who embody the kindness and care that define our community."



OPEN HOUSES

Oct. 3 - Oct. 10



DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENT/AGENCY
Fri-Mon 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside	1BR/2BR/3BR/4BR+	Condos, Towns & SF	-	Nanette Pavier/Holiday Real Estate
Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat 11am-4pm	12346 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	3BR/2BA	Single Family	starting at \$239,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat 11am-4pm	12346 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/1BA	Single Family	starting at \$179,900	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Friday 10am-Noon	1101 Edgewater Ave. #202 Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$415,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday Noon-2pm	733 Bradley Road, Ocean City	5BR/6BA/2 Half BA	Single Family	\$2,950,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 9:30-11:30am	21028 Wavecrest Ter #19, Lewes, DE	3BR/2.5BA	Townhouse	\$444,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 10am-Noon	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	18 Brandywine Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$324,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	9 Holly Court, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$434,900	Ann Holtz/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday Noon-3pm	206 Intrepid Lane, Berlin	4BR/3BA	Townhouse	\$314,900	Sonia Zaffiris/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 12:30-2:30pm	12 Garrett Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$439,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11am-1pm	409 Saint Louis Ave #67, Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$239,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Sunday Noon-2pm	722 Mooring Road, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$365,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Monday 10am-Noon	1101 Edgewater Ave. #202 Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$415,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Tuesday 10am-Noon	11602 S. Hills Drive, Berlin	5BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$1,849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Wednesday 1-3pm	12 Garrett Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$439,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Wednesday 10am-Noon	304 S. Heron Gull Ct., Ocean City	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$1,399,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Wednesday 11am-2pm	4 142nd St. # 401 A Sea Crest II, Ocean City	5BR/4B	Condo	\$1,550,000	Wayne Phillips/Coastal Life Realty
Wednesday 11am-1pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Thursday 10am-Noon	733 Bradley Road, Ocean City	5BR/6BA/2 Half BA	Single Family	\$2,950,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty

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A table of mugs and tumblers is pictured at a past Pine'eer Craft Club Holiday Craft Fair in Ocean Pines

Pine'eer holiday craft fair eyes annual return Nov. 2

(Sept. 26, 2024) The Pine'eer Craft Club will host its 13th Annual Holiday Craft Fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nov. 2, at the Ocean Pines Community Center.

The event is free and open to the public and will feature local artisans, crafters, and many members of the craft club displaying and selling their handmade creations. As a juried craft show, the event limits the number of like items to ensure a variety of unique pieces. Shoppers can expect to find a range of holiday-themed items, including jewelry, pottery, paintings, wreaths, pet products, American Girl doll clothes, stained glass, cross-stitched goods, home decor, and more.

"We encourage everyone to come early, as many of the most popular items sell out quickly," event co-chair Debbie Jiwa said in a news release. "Our bake sale, which is a favorite among attendees, is usually sold out by noon."

Along with the craft offerings, shoppers can buy unusual, one-of-a-kind items, such as fabric-decorated plates, quilted items, and gourd ornaments. The Kiwanis Club will also be in the Community Center's Marlin Room, offering breakfast and lunch items for purchase.

Proceeds from the Holiday Craft Fair will benefit the Ocean Pines community. The club, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, has donated more than \$177,000 to various local organizations, including the Ocean Pines Police and Fire departments and the Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation.

For more information about the Holiday Craft Fair, contact Jiwa at djib7855@yahoo.com.

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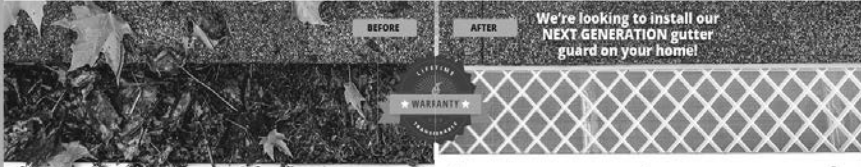
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