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OCTOBER 10, 2024

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STEVE GREEN/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

## Berlin posts full calendar for October

From IPAs to pumpkins, Halloween and cars, town has plenty to celebrate

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) Berlin's event calendar is chock-full of autumnal and Halloween ongoing this October.

Berlin's Fall Cruisers, a vintage car show, is coming up on Saturday, Oct. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration is \$10 the day of the event and free for spectators.

Attendees can sample all Berlin offers while checking out the old vehicles.

On Saturday, Oct. 19, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Berlin will welcome Worcester County residents to its annual Oktoberfest. Berlin Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells said the town partnered with Shore Craft Beer, a company dedicated to highlighting regional beers at festivals, to add more local craft breweries to the event this year.

Burley Oak Brewing Company, Berlin Beer Company, Dewey Beer Company, Burnish Beer Company, Big Oyster Brewery, Dogfish Head, Fin City Brewing Company, Heavy Seas Beer, Freedom Brewery, Calvert Beer Company and Cypress Roots Brewing Company will offer a variety of beers to try.

"Historically, our beer selection has been limited," Wells said. "We listened to what the people were saying and added on."

Beer tents will be set up, and beer trucks with various taps will be stationed on Pitts and Commerce streets. Attendees can purchase \$5 tickets from the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, take them to one of the breweries and they'll service the draft of choice.

Children's entertainment will also

See BERLIN Page 11

## FARMERS MARKET EXTENDED

Solid crowds were seen last Sunday at the Berlin Farmers Market, which was recently extended through October due to the popularity of the seasonal event.

# Andes, McComas hold forth

### School board candidates have forum to themselves with opponents absent

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) Two of the four Worcester County Board of Education candidates attended a town hall last Thursday to discuss current matters ahead of next month's election.

Sponsored by the Democratic Club of Worcester County, the town hall allowed members of the audience to ask the contestants. Incumbent Jon Andes is defending his District 3 seat

against Cheryl Middleton. Incumbent Elena McComas is facing challenger Dorothy Leslie Shelton in District 5.

Although no reason for her absence was forthcoming from the Middleton camp, Shelton wrote on Facebook last week that a scheduling conflict prevented her from attending the forum.

The absence of the challengers to Andes and McComas left them with the floor, and they used their time to give voters recaps of their backgrounds and to answer questions.

Andes, who was Worcester County Public Schools superintendent from 1996 to 2012, began as a social stud-

ies teacher from Pennsylvania. He eventually moved to Maryland, accepting a position at Havre de Grace High School in Harford County, where he worked his way up from teacher to principal.

Under his leadership, the school became the first nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in Harford. As a result, he said, he was promoted to assistant superintendent of the school system. Andes moved to Worcester County in 1996 to accept the superintendent position and served until 2012.

During his 16 years as superin-

See SCHOOL Page 19

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# County opposing potential 35-acre solar farm project

By Brian Shane  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) A proposed utility-scale solar power project on the edge of Berlin has been rejected by Worcester County leaders, though it still has a chance of being kept alive by state officials in the long run.

The developer, TurningPoint Energy, presented plans Oct. 1 for a 35-acre solar panel farm to the Worcester County Commissioners, who unanimously voted to reject the proposal.

District 3 Commissioner Eric Fiori expressed concern about putting a renewable energy project on a site already designated for future growth and residential development.

“We have very limited access to public water and sewer in many of our districts,” he said. “So, we’re moving this large parcel – which was obviously by its zoning code, you know, designated for residential – pulling it, and putting solar panels on this particular property. It’s really kind of affecting the way we’ve planned the growth of Berlin and growth of Worcester County. I think there’s a lot of better sites than this particular one.”

The 5-megawatt project slated for a triangular site off Old Ocean City Boulevard had been in the works for about 18 months. Documents provided by TurningPoint describe the site as having solar panels 15 feet tall, and about 4 by 8 feet in size. Construction would take about 6-9 months. The project would connect to Delmarva Power conduits.

The solar farm would have a life expectancy of 35-40 years. Contingency funding to cover the cost of the county’s eventual decommissioning of the solar farm at the end of its useful life is a planning requirement of the developer.

TurningPoint could have started by applying for a solar farm certification from the state’s Public Service Commission (PSC), the body that oversees such projects in Maryland. Instead, it

chose to open a line of dialogue first with county officials, according to Jennifer Keener, Worcester County’s Director of Development Permitting and Review.

Now, given officials’ rejection of the proposal, Keener said the county will prepare a letter sharing the commissioners’ views, which then will be sent to the PSC.

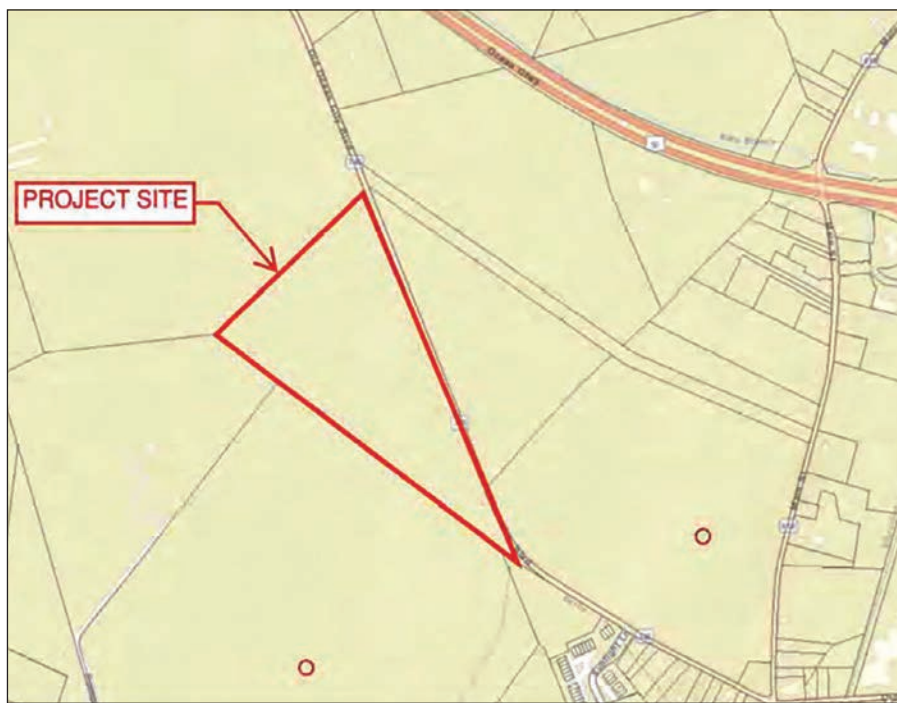
Regardless of the commissioners’ rejection, the project on its face likely faced an uphill battle anyway: Keener reported that the developer’s plans do not comport with Worcester County’s current zoning regulations – solar farms also aren’t allowed in any residential district without exception – or its comprehensive plan, which favors residential growth.

“Given the location of the property, it’s not consistent with our comprehensive plan. It’s in a growth area. I don’t find it consistent with our zoning because it’s in a zoning district that we don’t allow them in,” Keener told the commissioners Tuesday.

Despite local rejection of the proposal, the PSC could still green-light the project as it sees fit. Maryland courts held in 2019 that the PSC has final say in the siting of utility-scale projects, preempting local zoning. From there, a site plan would be subject to approval by the county’s Technical Review Committee and the Planning Commission, and would be subject to a public hearing.

TurningPoint Energy is a privately-held developer of large-scale solar farms, with eight of the company’s 25 total projects completed in Maryland. The company also has solar farms built in New Mexico, Rhode Island, Maine, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Texas.

Its largest project to date, a 200-megawatt solar farm in New Mexico, went online June 1 and the company is now making plans to expand into Illinois and Delaware, according to information on its website.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The proposed solar farm that met jeers from the Worcester County Commissioners is proposed on the west side of Berlin off Old Ocean City Boulevard.

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# Committee pleased with election revisions

## Vendor reports 28% of Pines property owners chose to vote electronically

By **Tara Fischer**  
Staff Writer

(Oct.10, 2024) The Ocean Pines Association recently reviewed this year's Board of Directors election process.

In August, OPA homeowners voted to fill the two seats on the community's governing group that were up for grabs. Then-President Rick Farr, who now acts as vice president, and Director Jeff Heavner, both incumbents, were reelected to serve three-year terms.

Since the election drew to a close, the OPA Elections Committee has reflected on what they feel went right

and wrong throughout the process. The official report is public and can be found on the official Ocean Pines website.

Residents had the option to vote online or by paper. Elections Committee Liaison John Latham said that 28% of homeowners who cast their ballots did so electronically, which he believes was a success.

The online voting method was implemented in Ocean Pines a few years ago but was tabled in 2023. The Elections Committee opted to reintroduce it in 2024.

"Our goal is to give the owners additional opportunities to cast their ballot," he said. "Some owners continue to like to cast a paper ballot and mail it in, or drop their ballot at the Police Station in the secured ballot box ... it is a best practice to allow on-

line voting ... the Elections Committee received numerous comments about the speed and ease of voting using the electronic option."

Latham said electronic voting will continue to be encouraged as it allows for speedier and more efficient ballot casting.

"With this method of voting, there is no need to interpret voter intention when ballots are not marked in a way that the scanner can read them," the liaison said. "We do intend to continue offering the electronic ballot option."

An observable count, where residents could watch MK Elections, the Pittsburgh-based contractor responsible for overseeing the process, scan the paper ballots, was encouraged by many homeowners for transparency's sake.

However, Latham said attendance was abysmal when the observable count was set up in the Clubhouse Meeting Room. Residents had the option to come in person or tune in virtually, yet the majority of those who showed up were board members and Elections Committee members.

"The Elections Committee and the board got a lot of inquiries that were loud about the observable count, so we went through it and made sure we had it," Latham said. "And then when we got there, I was one of four or five in the room, and then 10 online, and there were only a handful of actual owners...it takes several hours, and there is not a lot to observe, in my opinion. The end results are actually what the owners want to know."

Despite the low interest, the association will still consider the observable count for next year, as it offers transparency to the residents.

Latham also said that some residents may have been confused about their options to turn in their ballots.

Voters could fill them out online, mail their paper forms back to the association, or put them off in a drop-box at the Ocean Pines Police Station.

Officials found that because paper materials state "no hand-delivered ballots will be accepted," some interpreted that to mean their votes would not be accepted at the police station drop off location. As a result, less than 200 materials were collected from the drop-box.

Next year, the Elections Committee intends to announce this option ahead of time and clarify that ballots will be collected from the police station.

Election leaders also hope to send electronic materials after paper ballots have begun to be delivered to coordinate when voters receive their items, clarify voting information like drop-off locations, educate voters on the need to update OPA records for ease of ballot casting and move the drop-off deadline earlier to allow ample time for materials to be shipped to the election contractor.

Latham maintained that OPA was satisfied with vendor MK Elections, who handled the process.

"The elections committee was pleased with the services from MK Elections," he said. "They handle many other HOA elections and have deep subject matter expertise in providing election services. They were extremely responsive to any questions and concerns during the process."

According to Latham, all but one member of the Elections Committee, Steve Randsell, who now acts as the chair, was appointed during the middle of the election. The liaison acknowledged the new group's effort to execute the process with minimal hiccups. He also thanked outgoing chairman Tom Piatti for his help in creating a smooth transition.

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A rendering by Cunningham Recreation shows the various elements proposed for the new playground at Newtown Park.

# Family foundation donates \$438K for playground

By Brian Shane  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) — A six-figure gift to Worcester County’s recreation department will pay tribute to a local family while breathing new life into a public park near Pocomoke.

County officials signed off Oct. 1 on receipt of a \$438,342 donation from the Heather Leigh and Christopher Robbin Hill Foundation. Funds will go toward the purchase and installation of a new facility at Newtown Park. Worcester County officials said it will be the largest-ever county-owned playground.

“It’s a really sad story with a happy ending because we were able to make somebody’s dreams come true,” said Kathleen Palmer with the Hill Foundation.

This project comes with a one-of-a-kind theme – a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, or STEM for short. Having a playground with STEM themes and brain-teasing activities encourages children to start learning and reaching for the future at a young age, according to the foundation.

Turning this dream into a reality was the culmination of a lifelong goal of the late Leona and Bob Hill of Pocomoke City. The couple navigated their way through two deep family tragedies, the first when they lost their son Christopher at age 4 to meningitis.

His sister, their daughter Heather, graduated from Pocomoke High School and went on to work in the field of medical research, specifically to look for cancer cures. Heather lost her battle with ovarian cancer at age 34. Having a scientific theme for the playground was Heather’s idea.

Worcester County’s Recreation & Parks department worked with playground architect Cunningham Recreation to design a playground that would fit their needs, according to Deputy Director Jacob Stephens. The space will be named in honor of both Christopher and Heather Hill.

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**WPS PROGRAM CREATED**

On Tuesday, September 24, a group of WPS Upper School students traveled to WBOC as a part of the Worcester Prep WORX program. The newly created WORX program is designed to introduce students to the vast opportunities within our community and beyond. The program combines academic preparation with real-world observation to enhance students' learning and create opportunities for career exposure. The WORX program features a speaker series, site visits to area businesses, and opportunities to shadow local professionals across various industries. Last week, students learned about the news media industry by reviewing production procedures, discussing on-air responsibilities, and participating in a Q&A with the WBOC team. They were also able to practice delivering weather reports in front of the green screen. WPS WORX program students stand on set behind the WBOC news team. Back, from left, are Stephen Carullo, Grant Crothers, Marina Farlow, Livi Owens, Renata Lovitt, Rori Holland, Avery Roselle, Frankie Miller and Briar Parsons.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

# County park to get new playground, garden

Palmer said that the playground will also feature a separate "memory garden" as a place of quiet reflection to honor the Hills. Leona died in 2016 from lymphoma, and Bob died from diabetes complications in 2023.

"These people lost both their children and they managed to keep a smile on their face. They just had a lot of death in their family. They were just two remarkable people, and so the memory garden, I guess, is to honor them, for everything they went through. They keep their faith and

they just always had a smile on their face," she said.

It took almost 25 years of donations, bingo nights, and fundraising for friends and family to reach the funding amount of \$450,000. The Hills left everything they had, including the sale of their house, to the foundation.

"We suddenly had a lot of money, not just a little, but a lot," Palmer said.

Once they met their fundraising threshold, the foundation needed a

site for the playground. Palmer eventually connected with Caryn Abbott, Pocomoke's representative on Worcester County Board of Commissioners, who put the foundation in touch with the parks department.

"She said, 'We have been trying to get this done for this family for years,'" Abbott said. "Once they told me the story, I said, 'this is something that needs to get done.' It worked out perfectly.

Abbott added, "It's sad that the father died in 2023, and it's just so sad

they could not have seen it come to fruition. It's phenomenal to see the sketches that they did. It's going to be amazing."

Money raised toward the playground also will fund scholarships to graduating seniors from Pocomoke High School who wish to pursue a career in an education in STEM-related field.

Construction is set to begin this winter with the playground completed by spring, according to Stephens.

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# Berlin's Pumpkins in the Park announced

### First-year event hosted by horticulture committee around Decatur park pond

By **Tara Fischer**  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) Berlin's Halloween events continue as the Berlin Horticulture Advisory Committee gears up for its Pumpkins in the Park event.

Businesses and individuals can donate \$25 to the group, which will be used for Berlin beautification efforts. In return, they will receive a pumpkin and glow light. They may decorate the fall gourd however they desire, and it will be displayed around the pond at Stephen Decatur Park for spectators.

On Friday, Oct. 25, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., town residents and visitors can browse the decorated and carved pumpkins and vote on their favorite.

According to Berlin Economic and Community Development Administrative Assistant Allison Early, public works will go to the designated spot and cut stumps so that the pumpkins will have a place to rest when it comes time for voting.

While around 20 have already entered, pumpkins are still available for anyone interested in throwing their hat into the ring.

"We will not run out; anyone that

wants in can get in," Berlin Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells said. "The more pumpkins we have, the more interesting the walk will be."

Early said that the fundraiser idea came from the horticulture group's chair, Andrea Weeg, as a way to raise money for the committee and the town's beautification efforts.

"That group always has phenomenal ideas that they want to execute, so it's a great thing to participate in," Early said. "We wanted to make it cheap and easy. We wanted kids to do it and a way to raise money for

them...Keeping up with green spaces and buying the plants and the tools cost money."

Early said that the community is getting involved in preparing for the event. We Heart Berlin's Tony Weeg and Bay Street Blooms are buying candy for the festivities, and local glassblower Jeff Auxer has hand-crafted pumpkin trophies to be awarded to the first, second, and third-place winners in the autumnal competition.

Early said that Sisters and Little Green Witch Apothecary have already signed on to enter their deco-

rated pumpkins.

Participants and spectators are also encouraged to wear costumes.

"Events like this are more about the community," Early said. "It brings the surrounding community to Berlin rather than making it about tourism. It is something we can all do together. It is another excuse to wear a costume and see your friends."

Wells maintained the Town of Berlin can help out those interested in sponsoring a pumpkin but not in its decoration. Participants should reach out to Early at [aearly@berlinmd.gov](mailto:aearly@berlinmd.gov) by Oct. 15 to enter.

# Harbor Day returns this weekend

### Saturday's free festival celebrates local maritime history with fleet blessing

(Oct. 3, 2024) Celebrate maritime history during Harbor Day at the Docks on Saturday, Oct. 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This free, family-friendly festival will take place along Sunset Avenue in the West Ocean City commercial harbor.

Complimentary bus service will be available to shuttle patrons to and

from the OC Park n' Ride to the event parking lot.

"Harbor Day at the Docks is such a unique Maryland's Coast event," Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados said. "It allows the opportunity to not only celebrate our maritime history but to educate attendees and bring some recognition to all things marine and coastal through demonstrations, activities, vendors and the food."

Festivities kick off at 10 a.m. with the Blessing of the Fleet, followed by

live musical performances by the Funsters, and the Jimmy Charles Band will be taking the stage at noon. At 2:45pm a crab cake eating contest will take place on the main stage, and participation is available on a first-come, first-served basis where you can test your competitive eating skills against Jimmy Charles himself.

Other activities will include local fisherman displays, vendor demonstrations, nautical artisans, educational exhibits, and activities galore for children.

There will be plenty of vendors selling scrumptious foods and refreshing beverages with a special brew, Harbor Daze from Burley Oaked brewing company. The Coast Guard will provide on-site water safety information and Coast Guard boat tours.

Those seeking a unique water experience we will have opportunities to tour the harbor on the Salty Siren.

"Come out and join us for some family friendly fun, as we honor Worcester County's vibrant maritime past," Recreation and Parks Deputy Director Jacob Stephens said.

Harbor Day at the Docks is sponsored by Worcester County Recreation and Parks and other area partners.



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# Taylor House Museum hosting movie Sunday

Book festival to return on Oct. 19 with readings, new Berlin Book Award concept

By Tara Fischer  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) Berlin's Calvin B. Taylor House Museum has a busy slate of events this month.

On Sunday, Oct. 13, the facility will show the Halloween classic "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" at 7 p.m. on its lawn. The event is free, but donations to the museum are welcome. Snacks will be for sale and attendees are encouraged to bring a chair or a blanket for comfortable viewing.

Taylor House President Melissa Reid said years ago Berlin hosted movie nights in the summer throughout the town, like at Henry or Stephen Decatur parks and Jefferson Street. Reid added the museum did a miniature Berlin Film Festival about six years ago and played Tuck Everlasting, which was based in Berlin.

Berlin's movie tradition has slowed down, but the Taylor House hopes to bring it back. The summer showing of "Runaway Bride" for the 25th anniversary of the film's release was "well attended," and Reid said she has heard interest from a few residents and Berlin Mayor and Council members.

"Things like this are important because we are a museum and not just an event space," Reid said. "We want to support the idea of being a museum. 'Legend of Sleepy Hollow' is an American story that fits with our historic house."

Close to 100 folks attended the "Runaway Bride" showing last summer. While the event was special because it was the movie's 25th anniversary, Reid is hopeful the museum will get lots of families to come out on Oct. 13.

"We felt like this would be a great opportunity to utilize the lawn, which is so great," the museum president said. "People will have a safe space on the lawn."

Taylor House intends to host more movie nights on the facility's grass next summer.

The museum is also hosting a bingo night on Wednesday, Oct. 16, at 6 p.m. at the Sterling Tavern. The event is a fundraiser for the house. Attendees can purchase as many game cards as they wish for \$2 each.

The funds raised will go back to the museum's general fund for big projects like the 2026 partnership Taylor House is doing with Salisbury University to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America.

The Taylor House Museum's Octo-

ber events also include the Saturday, Oct. 19 book festival from noon to 4 p.m. Local authors and publishers will be in attendance.

"The Taylor House motto is telling the stories of Berlin, so what better way than highlighting local authors and books?" Reid noted.

The Salisbury-based Secant Publishing, Ocean Pines' Capricho Books and Berlin Greyhound Books will be present, along with authors Joe Moore of "Murder on Maryland's Eastern Shore" and Clara Smalls, who will be hosting readings.

New to the book festival this year is the Berlin Book Award. Local independent publishers were asked to submit books in categories like adult

fiction, adult nonfiction, young adult fiction, young adult nonfiction and children's. Glass blower Jeff Auxer has created a physical trophy for the award.

Charlene Sharpe and the Buzzed Word operator Mickie Meinhardt are among the judges for the book prize.

Also added to the festival this year is spoken word poetry. Poets will take the last 15 minutes of every hour of the event to perform their pieces. Food will also be available.

"We are always appreciative when people come out and support the museum," Reid said. "We hope people see that we are preserving the stories of Berlin. We live in a great small town with lots of great amazing stories."

## Downtown Pocomoke plans annual Fall Festival on Sat.

Halloween costumes are encouraged by organizers for contest, browsing

(Oct. 10, 2024) The Downtown Pocomoke Association is hosting the Annual Downtown Pocomoke Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 12, beginning at 11 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m..

There is no admission charge at this fun-filled family event. Guests can enjoy hayrides, a corn pit, pumpkin painting, petting farm, bounce house, live entertainment, food, sidewalk vendors, and much more.

Children are encouraged to wear their Halloween costumes and trick-or-treat in participating downtown businesses with the Passport to

Pocomoke Game. Children can pick up a passport and treat bag at Enchanted Florist the day of the festival to participate.

Children can also have their pictures taken in the Spooky Gazebo on the corners of Market Street and Second Street to enter the Virtual Halloween Costume Contest on the Wulfhouse Productions Facebook page. Prizes will be awarded to the top three pictures with the most likes on Facebook.

Tour local downtown museums including the Costen House, Sturgis One Room School, and the Delmarva Discovery Museum to learn more about rich Delmarva heritage.

In the event of inclement weather, the festival will be rescheduled for the following Saturday, Oct. 19.



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# Berlin activities calendar fills up through October

Continued from Page 1

be provided for free. Cascading Carlos will perform and teach the kids how to juggle, Scales-n-Tails from Assateague State Park is bringing "critters," young attendees can partake in a fall-themed craft, and face painting will be available.

Oktoberfest will provide live music to its visitors. Two stages, sponsored by Ocean City Tourism and a Maryland Main Street Improvement Grant, will be set up. The stage near the Atlantic Hotel will host The Edelweiss Band and The Dunehounds are slated to perform at the other, near the Sterling Tavern.

Local restaurants' bratwurst, gluten-free baked goods and Baked Dessert Cafe's famous pretzels will be for sale.

Wells said that Oktoberfest grows annually. While unfavorable weather conditions hurt last fall's attendance, the town sold 10,000 beer tickets the year before. Officials hope to see the same, or a higher, number this October.

Parking for the Oct. 19 event will be available at Berlin Intermediate School. Attendees can take the free shuttle into downtown, which Wells said will run on a continuous loop from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. No rain date has been set. In the case of inclement weather, the festivities will move indoors.

Berlin is also hosting a pumpkin scavenger hunt. Wells said the event has been going on for a few years and was started to "get people to walk around."

Local artist Jess Hall of Happy Now Creations painted 24 pumpkins in shop windows. Participants may pick up an entry from the Berlin Welcome Center's foyer, which is open 24/7, walk around downtown, find the autumnal decorations, and record their discoveries.

On Halloween, a random drawing of the completed forms, which can be dropped off at the Berlin Welcome Center, will occur. The winner will receive \$100 cash. Wells maintained that for a participant to have a chance at the prize, they must have found all the pumpkins.

On Oct. 25, the Berlin Horticulture Advisory Committee will hold its first Pumpkins in the Park event, from 7-9 p.m. at the Stephen Decatur Park Pond. Attendees can vote for their favorite pumpkin creations.

If you want to carve and enter a pumpkin, call or email by Oct. 15 at 410-629-1716 or [aearyl@berlinmd.gov](mailto:aearyl@berlinmd.gov).

The Town of Berlin Utilities Department, in coordination with the Berlin Police Department and other agencies, is hosting a Truck and Treat on Saturday, Oct. 26, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Stephen Decatur Park. Offi-

cial will bring emergency response vehicles and trucks and will host demonstrations.

Wells said bucket trucks, police vehicles and other town equipment will be on display. Kids can also sit in the drivers' seats and get up close and personal with Berlin's official auto machines.

"The kids just love it," Wells added.

Candy will also be passed out to make it a "Truck and Treat" and fit neatly with the town's additional Halloween/fall events.

Upcoming Berlin events are on the town's website and Facebook page.



Performers in a past Oktoberfest event in Berlin are pictured playing the alphorns for the crowd.

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# Jail contract renewed despite ongoing suit

By Brian Shane  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 10, 2024) Worcester County officials unanimously voted to renew the service contract for the medical provider at the county jail, even as that provider is a defendant named in a pending \$5 million wrongful death lawsuit.

When asked during a public comment period at their Oct. 1 meeting whether they were aware of the lawsuit, or why the commissioners supported the contract renewal, only Commissioner Joe Mitrecic responded.

“Many lawsuits are filed for different reasons,” he said. “It doesn’t mean they’re substantiated. That’s all that we can really talk about here. Just because the lawsuit was filed doesn’t mean that it was substantiated. And they have done a good job for us over the years.”

Jennifer Albero of Delmar is the plaintiff in a federal lawsuit filed earlier this year. Her son Kyle Arthur, 36, took his own life in the jail on Sept. 10, 2021, after suffering the effects of opiate withdrawal. The complaint names Worcester County, Wellpath, and other individual medical providers and jail personnel as defendants.

Albero in the suit claims her son would not have hung himself in his cell had guards kept a closer watch on him

as being suicidal. The suit also alleges that Wellpath’s medical providers did not meet the standard of care for a prisoner in custody who is coming down from opioids. She is seeking \$5 million in compensatory damages.

Kyle Arthur was on probation for prior burglary charges when he was arrested Sept. 9, 2021, for driving under the influence of drugs. Arthur was brought to the jail and did not survive 24 hours in police custody.

The lawsuit alleges that, according to video evidence, the guard who should have been making his rounds every 30 minutes instead only entered Arthur’s cell block three times during an eight-hour shift. That guard was the one who eventually found Arthur in a jail cell hanging from his bedsheets.

The lawsuit also claims when Arthur started to go into withdrawal, his heart started racing 160 beats per minute, and that medics offered only aspirin and motion sickness pills when they could have provided anti-withdrawal medication.

Defendants have responded with a motion to dismiss, saying in their rebuttal that jail workers are not liable because government employees doing their job are immune from prosecution.

The plaintiff’s most serious complaint is that Wellpath failed to provide

state-required withdrawal protocols, known as “medication-assisted treatment,” or MAT for short.

However, the defense in its most recent rebuttal is arguing that the government, not Wellpath, is responsible for funding, implementing, and overseeing MAT protocols, according to court documents.

Based in Nashville, Wellpath employs 15,000 people at more than 130 facilities in 37 states. On its website, Wellpath calls itself a “national leader in developing and offering MAT services to prevent and treat substance abuse disorder (SUD) ... We aim to treat addiction, change lives, break the cycle of recidivism, and heal communities.”

Tuesday’s contract renewal — the county has worked with Wellpath

since 2011 — was approved at the written request of Warden Tim Mulligan for \$1.8 million. Mulligan attended Tuesday’s commissioners’ meeting to present the contract renewal as an agenda item.

When Commissioner President Chip Bertino called upon the contract renewal as an agenda item to be heard, he spent exactly 20 seconds to hear motions to approve and to guide the body to pass it — all before Mulligan had even made his way to the lectern to speak.

“Let’s do this, so we can get him out of here, and he can get back to work,” Bertino said, taking a motion to approve from Commissioner Caryn Abbot and a second from Commissioner Ted Elder. No further discussion ensued. The vote was unanimous.

## County youth golf tourney fundraiser date announced

(Oct. 10, 2024) Worcester County Recreation & Parks (WCRP) will hold the 12th Annual Tee Off for Youth Golf Tournament Fundraiser at the Ocean City Golf Club on Friday, Nov. 1. Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m., with a shotgun start to follow at 11 a.m.

The cost to participate is \$90 per golfer, and all proceeds generated by this event will benefit underprivileged youth who participate in WCRP youth programs, leagues, after school activities, and summer camps. Over one-third of the children participating in WCRP’s programs are considered underprivileged, and tournament proceeds provide scholarships to assure all children can participate in recreation programs year-round.

Register a team for this year’s Tee

Off for Youth Golf Tournament and Fundraiser. Forms to register your four-man scramble are available on the WCRP website or pick one up in person at the Worcester County Recreation Center, located at 6030 Public Landing Road, Snow Hill, Md. 21863. The registration deadline is Friday, Oct. 25.

Sponsors, auction baskets, volunteers, and donations are needed to run this year’s tournament. Promote your organization by signing up to be a sponsor. Options include dinner sponsorship, lunch sponsorship, beverage cart sponsorship, tee sign(s) sponsorship, and other donations sponsorships.

“The Tee off for Youth Golf Tournament is the main fundraiser for the

See TEE Page 13

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# Hearing set on insurance problem

State administration will hold virtual meeting, gather feedback on ongoing issue

**By Bethany Hooper**  
Associate Editor

(Oct. 10, 2024) Owners of manufactured homes are encouraged to attend a virtual meeting regarding ongoing insurance issues.

On Wednesday, Oct. 23, the Maryland Insurance Administration will hold a virtual hearing to gather public input on the lack of available insurance coverage for mobile homes in Worcester County and surrounding coastal areas. As part of the meeting, the administration is inviting insurance carriers to talk about the factors contributing to the issue and present possible solutions.

"We do have this on the radar," Del. Wayne Hartman said in an interview this week.

In recent weeks, the Town of Ocean City and the Worcester County Commissioners have reached out to state representatives on behalf of local property owners struggling to secure insurance for their older manufactured homes. For some, the change has resulted in the loss of a home sale, as the buyer could not find a homeowners insurance policy re-

quired by the mortgage company. For others, it has resulted in dropped coverage.

From Ocean City's Montego Bay community to Worcester County's two campground subdivisions – White Horse Park and Assateague Pointe – officials say owners are struggling to find insurance. Hartman said the issue has since been presented to the Maryland Insurance Administration, which has agreed to hold a public hearing this month.

"We've started looking into the problem," he said. "We had one constituent case where we worked with the Maryland Insurance Administration to get them help. We're also working with the Town of Ocean City to make sure that homes classified as manufactured homes are actually that. Sometimes, they are stick-built and are classified as manufactured."

Hartman said he has also been in contact with the Maryland Joint Insurance Association (MJIA), which he said offers coverage to property owners who are unable to obtain insurance elsewhere. He noted that the MJIA's rules included a carveout for manufactured homes in Ocean City. However, the insurance association requires that the structures be built in compliance with the Southern Standard Building Code, which he said is

no longer in use.

"If the property is in Ocean City, they will insure a manufactured home ...," he said. "What I'm asking the Maryland Insurance Administration to do is to amend MJIA's policy to honor the Southern Building Code, as well as the International Building Code, which is the current code ... They are telling me they can fix this administratively."

In the meantime, the public is invited to attend Maryland Insurance Administration's virtual hearing, which will be held Oct. 23 from 10-11:30 a.m.

To access the hearing, visit <https://maryland-insurance.zoom.gov/j/1611256331>, or dial 646-828-7666 and enter the meeting identification number, 161 125 6331. Those wishing to comment during the meeting can register by emailing [listening.sessions@maryland.gov](mailto:listening.sessions@maryland.gov). Written comments will also be accepted at the same email address through Nov. 6.

"They are doing this through Zoom," Hartman said. "I asked them to come down and take public comments live ... If this is not well attended – for some it can be challenging to use Zoom – they will honor my request to hold one in person."

## Trash vendor town hall planned for Pines on Oct. 18

(Oct. 10, 2024) The Ocean Pines Association will host a town hall meeting with Republic Services on Friday, Oct. 18 at 10 a.m. in the Clubhouse Meeting Room.

The event will offer residents and homeowners the opportunity to ask questions directly to Republic personnel regarding their trash service.

For additional information, including a FAQ from Republic Services, visit the Ocean Pines Association website at [www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/faq](http://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/faq).

## Tee Off for Youth tourney Nov. 1

Continued from Page 12

Worcester County Recreation Boosters," Recreation and Parks Director Kelly Rados said. "All proceeds go directly to the Boosters so that they can assist local youth and families to participate in WCRP programs and activities."

For more information contact Ben Kirk at 410-632-2144, x2520 or [bkirk@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:bkirk@co.worcester.md.us).

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# County budgets \$587K for marketing spend

By Brian Shane  
Staff Writer

(Oct. 11, 2024) Drumming up new tourists to visit Maryland's Coast using Google and Facebook will account for a majority of advertising dollars spent by Worcester County's tourism office in 2025.

"The most targeted, effective and measurable medium is digital," wrote county tourism director Melanie Pursel in a memo to the county commissioners. She introduced the fiscal 2025 ad budget items at the board's Oct. 1 meeting in Snow Hill.

Overall, the county is budgeting \$587,481 on destination advertising in the next fiscal year, with marketing buys earmarked for digital, TV, outdoor, print, and radio platforms, according to Pursel.

One specific approach to digital advertising involves what's known as a programmatic campaign. This is a direct media buy that delivers niche messaging, either using Google ads or social media ads, to specific target markets like golfers, outdoor enthusiasts, or fishermen, for example.

The projected digital ads spend of

\$245,000 accounts for 42 percent of the budget. Television ads on local TV stations and Comcast are \$162,000 (28 percent), and marketing in print will be \$94,625 (16 percent).

Lesser campaigns will include \$54,856 for local radio spots (9 percent) and \$31,000 for billboards and outdoor displays (5 percent).

Worcester County approved \$456,000 toward the tourism advertising budget. Another \$173,396 is coming from a state tourism grant.

That brings the total advertising allocation to \$629,396 – though Pursel noted she'll hold back about \$42,000 in the budget for other spending opportunities that may arise during the fiscal year.

Some of the advertising agreements, like those with Salisbury-based television stations WMDT and WBOC, are contracted 12-month media buys. Each TV agreement is a customized plan based on seasonality, which includes saturating the airwaves with tourism ads during the spring season leading into summer.

Most of the print and outdoor advertising is aimed at local audiences (or "in-

market" to use ad jargon), to inspire overnight guests in the north end of the county to consider visiting other nearby points of interest – for instance, a family visiting Ocean City could be gently reminded of opportunities to visit a state park in Snow Hill, or a retail shop in Pocomoke City.

"This creates more interest in the region, thus extending stays or generating repeat visitation," wrote Pursel.

This month marks four years since Worcester County's tourism department rebranded as "Maryland's Coast." Pursel

said the campaign has been a success, especially among locals who are evangelizing the brand on their own social media pages.

"It's really been an opportunity for us to take it in so many different directions," she said in an Oct. 7 interview. "It creates that sense of place. We're the only place in Maryland where the Atlantic coast meets the land. We wanted to kind of own that space and identify who we are as a recognizable destination. We are tourism-based, agriculture-based, water-based – it's that sense of identity we've created."

## Annual honorees announced

(Oct. 11, 2024) The Worcester County Commission for Women has announced this year's honorees for the Gems Tea Event.

Set to be celebrated for their community contributions will be Neelam Strom, Davida Washington, Velda Henry, Carolyn Dryza, Barbara Peletier and Nancy Howard.

The event will be held Oct. 20, from

2-4 p.m., at the Worcester Technical High School at 6290 Worcester Highway, Newark, Md. 21841. Tickets are now available.

To purchase tickets, which cost \$35 each, please make checks payable to Friends of Worcester County Commission for Women and mail to Friends of WCCW, PO Box 211, Snow Hill, Md. 21863.

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**FEATURED SPEAKER**

Latrice Price of Infinite Legacy is pictured with Kiwanis Club of Ocean Pines-Ocean City President Bob Wolfing, left, and Kiwanis member Jack McLaughlin at a recent club meeting where she served as the guest speaker.

# Plea deal possible in former day care worker abuse case

By **Bethany Hooper**  
Associate Editor

(Oct. 10, 2024) Plea negotiations are underway for a former childcare worker charged with neglect and failure to report child abuse following an investigation into an infant classroom at the Berlin Activities Depot.

While a jury trial was scheduled to start Wednesday, a circuit court judge earlier this week granted a motion to postpone proceedings in the case against Catherine Deutsch, 32, of Ocean Pines, who was arrested earlier this summer on 11 charges of failure to report child abuse/neglect and four charges of neglect of a minor stemming from a child abuse investigation at the Berlin daycare center. In her motion to the court, Worcester County Assistant State's Attorney Pam Correa noted that "the parties are engaging in plea negotiations and have arranged additional proffer sessions in order to reach an agreement."

Last November, the Worcester County Sheriff's Office launched an investigation into the Berlin Activities

Depot after law enforcement and Child Protective Services were notified of an eight-month-old who had been admitted to Atlantic General Hospital with a broken tibia. The sheriff's office alleged that video footage of the infant classroom revealed Heather Ward, 40, of Berlin, had caused the child's injuries and showed other concerning interactions with several other infants under her supervision.

As a result, a grand jury in March indicted Ward on 90 charges, including 10 felony counts of child abuse and 80 misdemeanor counts of second-degree assault. And in June, Deutsch, who worked alongside Ward in the infant classroom, was arrested on 15 misdemeanor charges.

Ward now awaits sentencing after entering an Alford plea to nine misdemeanor counts of second-degree assault. In her motion this week, Correa acknowledged plea negotiations are also moving forward in Deutsch's case.

Deutsch's trial has been rescheduled to Nov. 12-13.

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# Opinion

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

## Re-elect incumbents to board of education

To get right to the point, Jon Andes, Elena McComas and Donald Smack have our endorsement in this year's Worcester County Board of Education election.

These three incumbents have done their jobs over the past four years — through some exceptionally tough times — and should be returned to serve four more.

Andes, who was the school system's superintendent for 16 years, is running in District 3, the Sinepuxent District, which encompasses the South Point/West Ocean City area and a sliver of Berlin. McComas is running in District 5, the Ocean Pines District, and Smack is running in District 2, the Central District, which stretches from Berlin to Pocomoke City.

As it happens, these same three candidates have been endorsed by the Worcester County Teachers Association, which recognizes the work these members have done during the school board's acrimonious budgeting battles with the adversarial Worcester County Commissioner majority.

Given the commissioners' nickel-and-diming of the school budget the last couple of years, their apparent lack of enthusiasm for public education in general, and their desire to dictate school spending and, to some extent, the curriculum, the last thing this county's schools need is school board members who agree with them.

Andes, McComas and Smack do not and therefore not only deserve to be reelected but should be returned to office to help protect the public school system from the commissioners' annual inquisition.

It is also worth mentioning that the challengers in these three districts did not make themselves available for interviews by the teachers association, nor did they show up at the District 3 and District 5 forum last Thursday.

We can only speculate what the reasons were for their no-shows, but we do know where this trio of incumbents stand, which is why we stand with them.

## Letter

### Generosity after a call for donations overwhelming

Editor,

On Thursday and Friday, October 4-5, a plea for help was issued to citizens of Worcester County to bring much needed supplies that were needed in North Carolina for towns that were ravaged by the remnants of hurricane Helene. Large amounts of rain, wind and horrific flooding literally wiped out small towns in the hills and valleys near Asheville, NC. Roads and bridges disappeared, homes, cars and businesses were washed away and many lives were lost in the disastrous conditions that sprang up so quickly. There was no electric, food, drinking water, wi-fi and most roads were impassible. News of the disastrous conditions were slow to come forward as there was basically very little means of communication.

As updates were reported, pleas went out for help for emergency services, rescue, utilities and basic every day needs for those who lost everything. Ocean Pines jumped in.

I am a volunteer at the Ocean Pines library

and was happy to help receive and sort donations. I cannot tell you enough about the overwhelming response from people and businesses around Ocean Pines who so very generously donated in a matter of 24 hours half of a trailer load of diapers, food, dog and cat food, bottled water, medicine and medicinal needs, paper goods, buckets, shovels, baby food, snacks, canned goods, gloves, socks, bedding, eating utensils, Depends, flashlights, gloves, bug repellent and the list goes on.

On Friday afternoon the donated materials were loaded and early Saturday morning it was on the way to the unfortunate victims of the hurricane.

People and businesses of Ocean Pines, you deserve a huge pat on the back and many accolades for your compassion, generosity, kindness and efforts. On behalf of those who are in a state of shock and despair, thank you, thank you, thank you. God bless all of you and know that someone is very thankful for your efforts and understanding.

*Jim Meckley*

*(The writer is the president of Friends of the Ocean Pines Library (FOPL))*

## Shore Autism now a partner agency

### Application approved at summer meeting of United Way Board

(Oct. 11, 2024) Lower Shore Autism Community, Inc.'s application to become a Partner Agency of United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore was approved at the July meeting of the United Way's board of directors. Highlights of this partnership include:

- Access to ALICE data and Wellness Made Easy information
- Get Connected volunteer recruitment platform
- Inclusion in various United Way activities
- Inclusion in the United Way annual campaign so donors can designate gifts of \$50 or more
- Access to funding and fundraising assistance, as well as some financial assistance

Lower Shore Autism Community, Inc. was established in 2021 as a community-

based organization serving Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties, starting primarily in Wicomico County, and has been slowly expanding into the rest of the Lower Eastern Shore service area. The organization is a 501(c)(3) organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service and the Maryland Secretary of State as a registered charity.

The nonprofit currently has seven board members with the potential to add more. A total of 51% of the board must be or have a family member on the autism spectrum.

Events include monthly family support meetings, teen and youth adult social club meetings, a First Responder Meet and Greet (Sept. 15, at Winterplace Park), and Autumn Fall Gathering, a Holiday Gathering, and an Annual Family Fun Day.

For more information, contact Clay Belgie, president, at [clay@lsautism.org](mailto:clay@lsautism.org), or call 443-523-5315, or visit

[lowershoreautism.org](http://lowershoreautism.org) or on Facebook.

United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore (headed by Pam Gregory, the president and CEO) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization serving Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. The organization is governed by a local volunteer board of directors, who represent all communities served on the Eastern Shore.

The United Way has a Community Impact Committee comprised of local volunteers who invest over 1,100 hours annually to visit and analyze each agency's application including budgets, programs, and efficiency in meeting local needs. Funds are approved by the board of directors based on annual campaign fundraising and are distributed monthly to approved partner agency programs.

For more information, contact the UWLES office at 410-742-5143, or visit [uwles.org](http://uwles.org).

## BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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# Wind farm virtual hearing on expanded project Oct. 16

Public Service Commission will accept comments on US Wind's latest revisions

By **Bethany Hooper**  
Associate Editor

(Oct. 10, 2024) A proposal from US Wind to expand its project off Maryland's coast will be the subject of a public hearing later this month.

On Wednesday, Oct. 16, the Maryland Public Service Commission will hold a virtual hearing on US Wind's request to revise and expand its offshore wind project, located in federal waters roughly 10 miles from Ocean City's shoreline.

The proposal comes five months after Gov. Wes Moore signed House Bill 1296 into law, facilitating the evaluation and approval of revised offshore wind projects.

"In its review of US Wind's application, the commission will evaluate the project's environmental, health, and economic benefits, as well as the bill's impacts to Maryland utility ratepayers," a notice reads.

Earlier this year, Danish company Ørsted announced plans to reposition its Skipjack Wind project, which was set to bring a 966-megawatt project off the Delmarva coastline.

To that end, legislation – cross-filed as House Bill 1296 and Senate Bill 1161 – was introduced during the 2024 General Assembly session, requiring the Maryland Public Service Commission to open a revised round-two proceeding and authorize certain offshore wind projects to submit revised plans for project schedules, sizes and pricing, among other things.

"Revisions outlined in House Bill 1296 seeks to streamline the approval process for revised project schedules and pricing, ensure the project is located in the authorized wind energy area, and those possessing offshore wind renewable energy credits can move forward expeditiously," Del. C.T. Wilson (D-28), the bill's sponsor, said in a hearing last winter. "Moreover, the bill does not restart the process for the projects. Merely, it allows limited alterations to already approved plans, including the adjustment to turbine placement,

generating capacity, installation dates and pricing within the existing statutory limits."

From the outset, officials with Worcester County Government and the Town of Ocean City have opposed the legislation, arguing the bill would increase the state's subsidy to US Wind and increase the cost to ratepayers. Supporters, however, said the bill would allow offshore wind developers to overcome economic challenges and meet scheduling and pricing requirements set by state law.

A virtual hearing on US Wind's revised project is now scheduled for Oct. 16, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The livestream can be found on the Maryland Public Service Commission's YouTube Channel, and those wishing to speak must email kimberly.schock@maryland.gov by noon on Friday, Oct. 11. Participants will receive an email with a link to the online platform.

"In the first two offshore wind rounds (2017 and 2021), US Wind was awarded offshore wind renewable energy credits (ORECs) to support projects of more than 1,056 MW," the notice reads. "In what is known as a Revised Round 2 proceeding, US Wind's application seeks the authority for a 1,710 MW build-out of its entire federal lease area. 840 MW is proposed for OREC Round 1 and 870 MW is proposed for OREC Round 2. This new combined project increases the total capacity of US Wind's Maryland offshore wind portfolio by more than 600 MW, and absorbs the capacity left over when, in January of this year, Skipjack Offshore Energy LLC relinquished the ORECs it had been awarded in the first two rounds."

In addition to the virtual hearing, the Maryland Public Service Commission will accept written comments, which can be sent by mail, or electronically through the commission's online portal, by Nov. 1. Mail can be addressed to Andrew Johnston, Executive Secretary, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. All comments should reference Case No. 9666.



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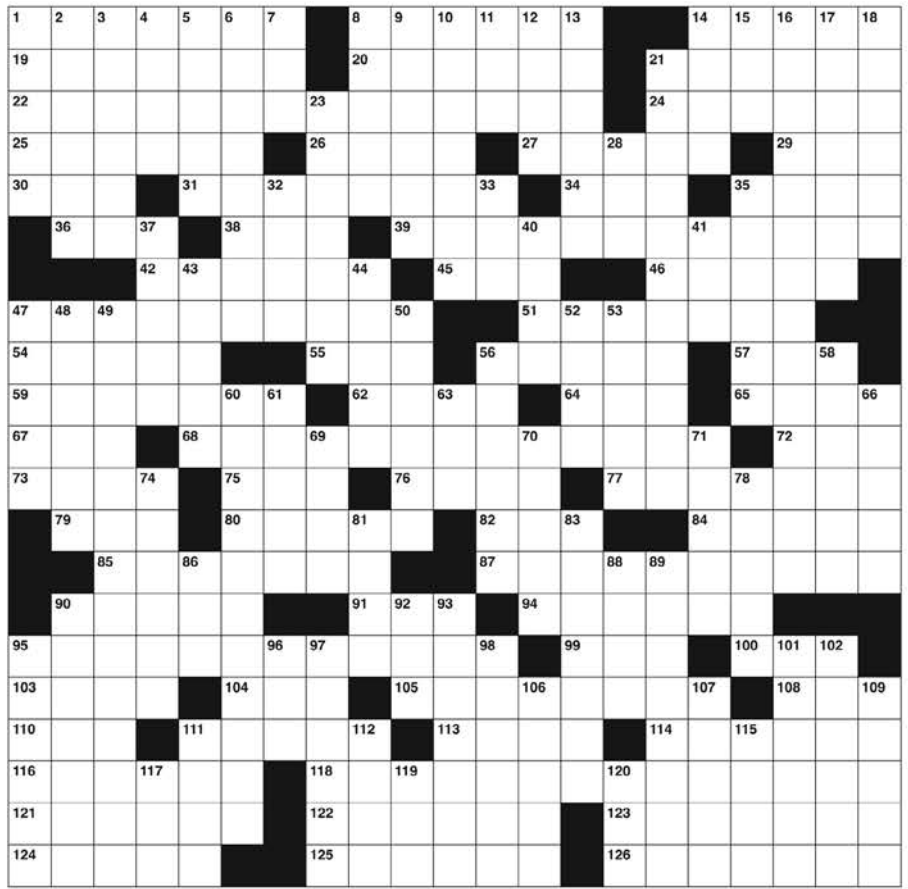


# Puzzles

THE AYES HAVE IT  
BY JOE DEENEY / EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

Joe Deeney, who lives in Melrose, Mass., just north of Boston, has spent his career in supply-chain logistics. This puzzle's theme idea has been on his list for years, but it took sorting through nearly 20,000 word transformations to find enough suitable examples. He likes starting 1-Across with a fun clue/answer pairing — it should “set the right tone for the rest of the puzzle” — and was happy to do so here.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Establishment where you might eat a muffin while petting a ragamuffin
  - 8 Let loose
  - 14 Some drink garnishes
  - 19 2019 sci-fi film whose title means “to the stars”
  - 20 Part of a series
  - 21 Fast-casual bakery chain
  - 22 Anecdotes that are more likely to elicit eye rolls?
  - 24 Open, as an envelope
  - 25 Diamond pattern
  - 26 Broke down
  - 27 Sport with “union” and “league” varieties
  - 29 Morgantown's state: Abbr.
  - 30 Small square
  - 31 Players who straddle two positions, in hoops lingo
  - 34 Cave dweller
  - 35 Spot for a rake
  - 36 Longtime NASCAR sponsor
  - 38 Investigative journalist Tarbell
  - 39 Qualities of the perfect rant?
  - 42 Where to watch the big game?
  - 45 D.C. insider
  - 46 Two for an opinion
- DOWN**
- 47 “Skinny as a beanpole” or “thin as a rail”?
  - 51 Exodus figure
  - 54 Yodel alternatives
  - 55 Scrub
  - 56 “The Liberty Bell” composer
  - 57 Old T-shirt, maybe
  - 59 Poetic foot with a “dun-dun-DUN” rhythm
  - 62 High style?
  - 64 Drug whose therapeutic value to alcoholics was advocated by A.A. co-founder Bill W.
  - 65 Made like
  - 67 Popular piercing site
  - 68 More risqué assertion?
  - 72 Ending of many designer dog-breed names
  - 73 No trouble
  - 75 \_\_\_ Lingus
  - 76 First name in country music
  - 77 Extreme pessimists
  - 79 Seasonal quaff
  - 80 Facade
  - 82 “\_\_\_ the bonnie boat was won/As we sailed into the mystic” (Van Morrison lyric)
  - 84 Watch for hours, say
  - 85 Oil catcher in the kitchen
  - 87 Reasons that commuters might prefer Uber?
  - 90 One might be spotted in the Serengeti
  - 91 Points out
  - 94 Disorderly agitation
  - 95 In-depth knowledge of the menu, perhaps?
  - 99 On the \_\_\_
  - 100 Small-screen release?
  - 103 “Mulan” adversaries
  - 104 Part of an outfit
  - 105 Became
  - 108 “That had to hurt!”
  - 110 Country whose flag features the silhouette of a double-headed eagle: Abbr.
  - 111 Fuzzy fruits
  - 113 Director Johnson
  - 114 Most-favorable conditions
  - 116 Silent-movie successor
  - 118 Ones with flexible minds and bodies?
  - 121 “If you say so”
  - 122 Acquire something through hard work
  - 123 Home to eight of the 10 fastest-growing cities in the U.S.
  - 124 Believes
  - 125 Hose
  - 126 Tightfitting suits
  - 8 Hwy. that includes a Lake Michigan ferry crossing
  - 9 Virtual-animal companion
  - 10 On which you might play I Spy
  - 11 “\_\_\_ said ...”
  - 12 Movie ending?
  - 13 Followed
  - 14 Madcap
  - 15 Nav. rank
  - 16 Let the situation play out
  - 17 Goes places
  - 18 Menu items that McDonald's no longer offers in America, as of 2020
  - 21 Popular news source
  - 23 Prepare for the stand
  - 28 “Well, I'll be!”
  - 32 Wax-coated cheese
  - 33 Sign of a hit
  - 35 Spanish title
  - 37 Campaign of mind games, in brief
  - 40 Brand for Buddy
  - 41 Antitraffic org.
  - 43 Beasts of burden
  - 44 Latin name for ancient Troy
  - 47 Splashy gambler, in lingo
  - 48 Sea between Italy and Greece
  - 49 Gershwin composition that opens with a famous clarinet glissando
  - 50 Go bad
  - 52 Ship's body
  - 53 Comparatively low
  - 56 Fruity dessert
  - 78 Sporty Mazda model
  - 81 Cranky mood
  - 83 Giving off
  - 86 Mozart's “Adagio \_\_\_ for Violin and Orchestra”
  - 88 “My time to shine!”
  - 89 Complete in a tidy manner
  - 90 Commercial transport of goods
  - 92 Really enjoy
  - 93 Jalapeño's hotter cousin
  - 95 Hypothetical
  - 96 No \_\_\_ May (pollinator-friendly movement)
  - 97 Source of a lifesaving shot
  - 98 Control
  - 101 Cool, calm and collected
  - 102 Largest of the citrus fruits
  - 106 Light units
  - 107 Put forward
  - 109 Observes Yom Kippur
  - 111 Foil-wrapped treat
  - 112 Totally crush it
  - 115 Lipstick container
  - 117 Kenan's co-star on '90s TV
  - 119 Not online, online
  - 120 Thi\_ clue'\_ mi\_ \_ing letter



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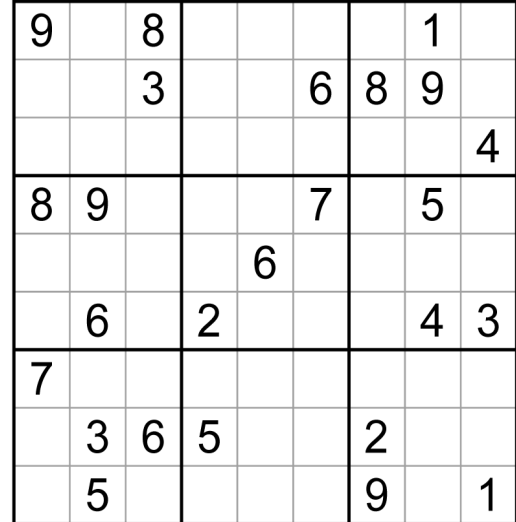
- 58 “Seinfeld” curmudgeon
- 60 Certain premarital festivities
- 61 Prepare
- 63 Land's end?
- 66 Script specifications
- 69 Diva's time to shine
- 70 200 milligrams, to a jeweler
- 71 Gas brand
- 74 Everglades denizens
- 78 Sporty Mazda model
- 81 Cranky mood
- 83 Giving off
- 86 Mozart's “Adagio \_\_\_ for Violin and Orchestra”
- 88 “My time to shine!”
- 89 Complete in a tidy manner
- 90 Commercial transport of goods
- 92 Really enjoy
- 93 Jalapeño's hotter cousin
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- 112 Totally crush it
- 115 Lipstick container
- 117 Kenan's co-star on '90s TV
- 119 Not online, online
- 120 Thi\_ clue'\_ mi\_ \_ing letter

## su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

### HARD - 17

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.



### Answers to last week's puzzles

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

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



# School bd. candidate forum draws two of four hopefuls

Continued from Page 1

Andes was involved in six capital projects, including the construction of Stephen Decatur Middle School, the expansion of Stephen Decatur High School, the building of Ocean City Elementary School and the opening of Worcester Technical High School in 2005.

At the time, he told the audience, the vocational facility offered only nine programs, The technical school now offers 26, including culinary arts, cosmetology, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR), biomedical sciences, welding, pre-engineering, and interactive media production.

Andes was also involved in Pocomoke High School's 2010 renovation and the planning process for Snow Hill High School's update, completed in 2017.

"When we go back to 1996 when I became superintendent," he told the audience, "we were 19 out of 24 in the state for student achievement," he said. "When I retired, we were number one."

Andes said the "magic formula" to make the leap from the state's number 19 school system to the first was to look at individual students, deter-

mine which kids may require remediation, hire talented faculty and staff and retain them, focus on data analysis, implement "rigorous and robust" after-school and summer academies and keep class sizes small.

Andes continues to exercise his teaching skills as a Salisbury University professor.

McComas grew up in Salisbury, graduated from Wicomico High School, received a bachelor's degree in science education from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a master's in molecular biology from Johns Hopkins. She worked in Montgomery County and California. McComas taught biology for 25 years across all grades, particularly at the high school level. While living and working in Temecula, California, McComas helped open two high schools and acted as the science chair for both. She eventually left public education and worked as a science education instructor at California State University, Long Beach.

McComas moved back to the Maryland Eastern Shore 11 years ago and settled in Ocean Pines. She said she ran for the school board to focus on and give back to the community.

See FORUM Page 22

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# Calendar

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

## Thurs., Oct. 10

### 27TH ANNUAL ENDLESS SUMMER CRUISIN'

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also held in the Ocean City Inlet Parking Lot. Admission is \$15, Thursday-Saturday and \$10, Sunday. Free to those 13 years and younger. Schedule: <https://specialeventpro.com/endless-summer-cruisin>.

### SUN RECORDS LIVE! THE CONCERT

Ocean City Performing Arts Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, 7 p.m. In honor of Sun Records and founder Sam Phillips. Prices are \$35, \$45, \$55. Tickets: <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/54142446/sun-records-live-the-official-concert-ocean-city-oc-performing-arts-center>.

### STORY TIME: LEONARDO THE TERRIBLE MONSTER

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Can Leonardo learn to be scary or become something even better? Songs, a story and a craft. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Join in for a variety of activities and toys. Play and socialize with other families. For ages 2-5 years. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### GROWING UP WILD: LOOKING AT LEAVES

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Learn all about leaves through a variety of activities. For ages 6-11 years. 410-641-0650, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://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](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### SEA GLASS ART

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Design your own sea glass art piece. All supplies provided. Call 410-632-3495 or visit [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org) to register.

### BEACH SINGLE 55 PLUS MEET AND GREET

Thursdays - Harpoon Hanna's, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. 215-385-4993, [BeachSingles.org](http://BeachSingles.org)

## Fri., Oct. 11

### 27TH ANNUAL ENDLESS SUMMER CRUISIN'

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also held in the Ocean City Inlet Parking Lot. Admission is \$15, Thursday-Saturday and \$10, Sunday. Free to those 13 years and younger. Schedule: <https://specialeventpro.com/endless-summer-cruisin>.

### OCEAN PINES OKTOBERFEST 2024 PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Ocean Pines Racquet Center, 11443 Manklin Creek Road, Oct. 11-13. Open to the public. Guaranteed more play with Round Robin Format. Registration fee \$45 plus bracket fees (\$0-\$30). <https://app.pickleballden.com/external-tournament/5282529>, 410-641-7228

### 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](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 11 a.m. Join in for STREAM activities and socialize with other homeschool families. For ages 5 years and older. 410-632-3495, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### QUILTERS BY THE SEA GUILD'S 2024 QUILT SHOW

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, noon to 7 p.m. Quilt show, boutique, fabric sale, raffle baskets, raffle quilt, and more. Free Admission.

### ALL AMERICAN & MRS ALL AMERICAN NATIONAL PAGEANTS

Grand Hotel, 2100 Baltimore Ave., Ocean City, 1-4 p.m. Honoring women of all ages, sizes and statuses for personal achievements. Cost is \$20 general admission, \$15 seniors and military and free to those 14 years and younger. 609-224-3115

### SURVIVAL SPANISH: COLORS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Join in to learn about the Spanish vocabulary for every color of the rainbow. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB: 'THE HOUSE OF SPIRITS' BY ISABEL ALLENDE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Copies of the book are available at the Ocean Pines Library's circulation desk. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### RAINBOW REVERIE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 3:30 p.m. Create some rainbow-inspired crafts to celebrate National Coming Out Day. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014, [www.worcesterlibrary.org](http://www.worcesterlibrary.org)

### MARYLAND CRAB CAKE DINNER

Stevenson United Methodist Church, 123 N. Main St., Berlin, 4-6 p.m. Cost is \$14 for one-crab cake platter, \$24 for two-crab cake platter and \$10 for crab cake sandwich only. Platters include green beans baked potato and Cole slaw. Bale sale table. Carryout or eat in.

### 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. 12

### 27TH ANNUAL ENDLESS SUMMER CRUISIN'

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also held in the Ocean City Inlet Parking Lot. Admission is \$15, Thursday-Saturday and \$10, Sunday. Free to those 13 years and younger. Schedule: <https://specialeventpro.com/endless-summer-cruisin>.

### OC BEACH CLASSIC

On the beach in Downtown Ocean City, 2 N. Atlantic Ave. Details and registration are live at <https://ocbeachultimate.com>.

### CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, 1301 Philadelphia Ave., 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Church rummage sale.

### FREE COMMUNITY FLU CLINIC

Bethany United Methodist Church, 205 Market St., Pocomoke City, 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](http://www.agh.care/flu)

### POCOMOKE HEALTH FAIR

Bethany United Methodist Church, 205 Market St., Pocomoke City, 8 a.m.-noon. Free screenings including carotid artery, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose (fasting required), bone density and more. Alyce Marzola, 410-641-9268, [amarzola@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:amarzola@atlanticgeneral.org)

### QUILTERS BY THE SEA GUILD'S 2024 QUILT SHOW

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Quilt show, boutique, fabric sale, raffle baskets,

raffle quilt and more. Free admission.

### WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN'S 23RD ANNUAL WALK FOR AWARENESS

The Centre At Salisbury, 2300 N. Salisbury Blvd., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Tickets \$30. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and walk begins at 10:30 a.m. Vendors will be set up throughout the walking route. Registration: <https://secure.frontstream.com/wsw-23rd-annual-walk-for-awareness>. 410-548-7880

### OCEAN PINES ANGLERS CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 9:30 a.m. Dave Allen will talk about the oyster restoration program, the process of growing oysters and his own experiences with it. Charter fishing opportunities, regulation updates. All welcome. 410-641-7662

### BOOK SIGNING: 'COMPASS POINTS VOL. IV' BY DR. CLARA SMALL

Germantown School Community Heritage Center, 10223 Trappe Road, Berlin, 10 a.m.-noon. Book Signing: "Compass Points Vol. IV" by Dr. Clara Small. 410-641-0638

### ALL AMERICAN & MRS ALL AMERICAN NATIONAL PAGEANTS

Grand Hotel, 2100 Baltimore Ave., Ocean City, 1-4 p.m. Honoring women of all ages, sizes and statuses for personal achievements. Cost is \$35 general admission, seniors and military and free to those 14 years and younger. 609-224-3115

### 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. 13

### 27TH ANNUAL ENDLESS SUMMER CRUISIN'

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, 809 S. Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Held at the Inlet Parking Lot only. Admission is \$10. Free to those 13 years and younger. Schedule: <https://specialeventpro.com/endless-summer-cruisin>.

### OC BEACH CLASSIC

On the beach in Downtown Ocean City, 2 N. Atlantic Ave. Details and registration are live at <https://ocbeachultimate.com>.

### 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://berlinmain->



# Calendar

street.com/farmersmarket/

## 6TH ANNUAL THE ROBERT DYE SCHOLARSHIP FUND FUNDRAISING EVENT

Tequila Mockingbird, 12919 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 1-4 p.m. Featuring 50/50 raffle, cash bar and snacks. For local nursing students at Wor-Wic Community College. Lynda, 410-430-5089

## FRIED CHICKEN CARRY OUT DINNER

Bishopville Volunteer Fire Department, 10709 Bishopville Road, 1-5 p.m. This is a fundraiser to help support the bishopville volunteer fire department new building fund. 619-922-9950

## 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.

## 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. 14

### 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 Champion, 410-641-0157

### MOVE FOR THE CURE

Pure Family Fitness W. Ocean City, 9936 Stephen Decatur Highway, 5:30-7 p.m. Advance registration is \$10 and includes goodie bag and door prize ticket. \$15 registration at the door. Contact: zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com. 410-726-2604

### 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.

### OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

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

## Tues., Oct. 15

### GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. This workshop starts with a 20-minute lesson on genealogy research, followed by Q&A. Bring a laptop, tablet or papers containing family information, if you can. Registration requested: 410-208-4014.

### 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: 'LLAMAS'

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and fingerplays. For ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### STORY TIME: APPLES

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

### BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories. Stay after to socialize with other families. For ages 0-2 years. 410-632-3495, 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

### WRITING FOR WELLNESS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1:30 p.m. Writing about stressful experiences like illness may boost health and psychological well-being. This group uses exercises to stimulate creative expression. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### 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

### KONBIT @ THE POCOMOKE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Pocomoke Community Garden, 327 Clarke Ave., Pocomoke City, 3-6 p.m. Drop by and help with fall prep at the garden while learning about one of the oldest Haitian traditions still practiced today. Weather permitting. 410-957-

0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### CHIC BOUTIQUE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 3:30 p.m. Create some relaxing spa goodies to use and share. All material provided. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### BEACH HEROES-OC

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

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

### TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

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

### 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. 16

### BUS TRIP TO SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM AND NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Picks up and drops off at the Art League of Ocean City, Oct. 16, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Cost is \$89 for members and \$110 for non-members. Register: <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/1921>.

### 2024 OCEAN CITY MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM

Carousel Oceanfront Hotel & Condos, 11700 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 6:30-8:30 p.m. A community candidate forum with the mayor and city council

candidates. Light refreshments served. Submit questions and RSVP: OC-FIREPAC24@gmail.com. In person questions also if time allows. 410-641-7228

### BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

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

### SENSORY STAY AND PLAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Learn through exploration, curiosity and creativity during the sensory stay and play. Squish, build, shake and scoop through several fun stations. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818

### BACKGAMMON CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Drop in for a game of Backgammon, weather you're an expert or want to refresh your skills. Beginners welcome. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### PUZZLE SWAP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1-5 p.m. Bring your gently used puzzles and leave with a new-to-you puzzle. Don't have a puzzle but still want one? That's OK too. All puzzles must be in their original box. 410-641-0650

### BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 1-2 p.m. For survivors and current patients battling breast cancer. Women Supporting Women, 410-548-7880

### TRIVIA WITH JIM MECKLEY: BITS AND PIECES

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 3 p.m. Prizes and refreshments provided by the Friends of the Ocean Pines Library. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### CANDY PUMPKIN CHALLENGE

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 4 p.m. STEAM activities and candy pumpkins. Are you up for the challenge? For ages 6-11 years. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

### STORYTELLERS THEATER TROUPE

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Theater troupe program with activities and instruction. For ages 6-11 years and 12-18 years. 410-632-3495, 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.kiwanisofopoc.org.



# Forum draws incumbents, not challengers

Continued from Page 19

Given her experience in learning facilities, she opted to run for the Worcester County Board of Education in 2016 and will be seeking her third term.

"I know I never taught in Worcester," she acknowledged. "But I have so many experiences having taught in other places to know exactly what works and what doesn't ... I love education. It is my passion."

Since being elected to the board, McComa said her greatest achievement remains her involvement in school safety efforts.

"I am proudest of the fact that throughout this past year, with all the turmoil, particularly about safety, that we have come out on the other side," she said.

During the last school year, the education system and the county's law enforcement were mired in a public war of words over safety within the schools, where police argued that Worcester County Public Schools was not doing enough to address a spike in violent crime.

Law enforcement claimed in February that the 2022-2023 school year was the most violent on record, with a rise in attacks, fighting, and bullying committed by students against each other and staff.

McComas said that to address these concerns, the school system started a safety task force, of which she was a member. Fellow board members Bill Gordy and Katie Addis also served, along with Sheriff Matt Crisafulli, Chief Deputy Nathaniel Passwaters and Worcester County State's Attorney Kris Heiser.

"When those frontal lobes get hit with hormones, a lot of time these kids do not think," McComas said. "You want to deal with that with consequences, so we went ahead and created a safety task force."

For a while, the team assembled each week and collected and analyzed data from the beginning of 2023. In the summer of that year, district personnel met with the sheriff's department. It revised its memorandum of understanding for how the law enforcement and school system would work together to improve safety. The updated MOU was instituted in September 2023, and McComas said that in March 2024, incidents had dropped 28%.

The MOU guidelines revised in Summer 2023 state that "children under the age of 10 are not criminally responsible for their actions and they will be referred to behavioral resources; children aged ten to 12 are only criminally responsible for crimes of violence, and firearm-related offenses; children aged 13 to 17 can be criminally charged for crimes of violence and firearm-related offenses, as well as certain misdemeanors. (Threats of mass violence, threats of

arson, violation of protective orders, etc.)"

"That is the greatest accomplishment for me," McComas said. "Are we always 100% safe? No, we will always be working towards being better, but we saw tremendous improvement."

Andes said his most significant accomplishment while on the board was securing the recent funding commitment to build a new Buckingham Elementary School.

He served on a feasibility study with fellow board members William Gordy and Donald Smack and Worcester County Commissioners Eric Fiori, Jim Bunting, and Diana Purnell to meet with BES staff and architects to design the new facility to replace the old and run-down current structure.

The process depended on the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). The IAC, or "the bank," provides state funding for projects like replacing BES. Initially, the group was steadfast in not providing the county school system with any money for the school project because neighboring schools were not crowded.

"I went ballistic," Andes said. "The kids at Buckingham and the community at Buckingham deserve a new school."

A work group was put together in May to start looking at options and meeting with IAC leadership to find a compromise. Andes said that after "a lot of talking," the IAC offered \$26 million for the BES project.

The workgroup included Andes, Gordy, and Smack representing the Worcester County Board of Education; Senator Mary Beth Carozza (R-38); Ted Elder and Fiori from the Worcester County Commissioners; Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert; and Dr. Chris Welch, principal of Buckingham Elementary School, among others.

"Moving the state from zero dollars to \$26 million for BES is my biggest accomplishment," the former superintendent said.

According to Andes, the IAC also committed \$28 million to replace or renovate Berlin Intermediate School sometime in the future.

The BES project will cost \$73 million. Of that, \$47.9 million will come from local funding, and \$25.8 million will be provided by the state.

On Oct. 15, IAC leadership, the school board, and the county commissioners will gather in an open public meeting. At that point, the IAC will detail the building plans to the commissioners. Andes hopes the county leadership will vote to move forward with the BES replacement initiative.

Former SDHS Assistant Principal Katherine Cater asked the board candidates about their priorities, particu-



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

**Incumbent Worcester County Board of Education members Elena McComas and Dr. Jon Andes are pictured at last Thursday's Town Hall hosted by the Democratic Club of Worcester County.**

larly regarding funding and teacher salaries.

"We have got to draw those teachers to this county," Cater said. "Back when I started teaching, this county was the primo county ... because of class sizes and salaries. We drew the best of the best. Not to say we don't have them right now. We are holding onto those people, but other places are getting on board with that, and they are coming up with the money."

Worcester is the wealthiest county in Maryland based on a state formula that uses property values. As a result, the school system relies on local government for around 80% of its funding. For the fiscal year 2024 budget, the county commissioners provided the school system with the maintenance of effort formula: the lowest amount of money they were legally allowed to give, and teacher salaries suffered. The county committed to more funding for the 2025 budget than in the previous year. Still, it was less than what the school system requested.

McComas said that addressing the funding and teacher salary issues requires communication, particularly with the county commissioners.

"I am excited that we ... have lines of communication open with the commissioners that probably weren't there before," she said. "Our teachers need to be compensated, no question. Yes, I want to keep smaller class sizes. How do we get the findings? That is going to be communication and elections."

Andes said that the school system's biggest challenge over the next several years is complying with Blueprint funding.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is an educational reform program that will increase state funding over the next 10 years to "transform public education in the state into a world-class education system." Individual systems will be required to raise teacher salaries and expand

learning offerings to their students to meet set standards.

A pillar of the program requires that students acquire college and career readiness (CCR) skills by the end of their 10th-grade year, which prepares them to enter entry-level college courses and "work in high-wage, high-demand industries."

According to Andes, Worcester is not receiving enough money to keep up with the program's demands.

"Unfortunately, the state is not giving us enough money to implement the Blueprint," Andes said. "... when they allocate money, they send it out in two ways. One is a wealth-based formula, and the other is a body count, which is the number of multi-language students, those qualify for free and reduced meals and special education kids. We get a specific dollar amount per student for those students, and everything else is wealth-equalized. So, the more wealth you have, the less state aid you get... Worcester County is considered to be the wealthiest county in the state of Maryland, even though 50% of the kids are eligible for free or reduced meals. That is a significant challenge. We have to rely on the county government for a significant portion of our budget. We have no choice. The state is not going to change the formula for Worcester."

Andes said that the public schools are getting \$778 per student next year to implement the most rigorous, ambitious school reform in the United States." Divided out, that comes to \$4 per student per day.

"If we have a class of 20 kids in an elementary classroom, that is \$80 to provide an additional raise to everyone in the school system, to provide funding for bus contractors, custodians, educational assistants, technology, heat, lights, and electricity," Andes said. "All those kinds of things. We cannot do that without local help, keeping that formula with small class sizes, after-school and summer



# Andes, McComas have forum to themselves

school programs, and recruiting and retaining the best we possibly can. The only choice is to have the county provide us with additional dollars. We are getting \$778 more per pupil for next year. Wicomico is getting \$1346 more per pupil in state aid. This is the way it has been in Worcester since I arrived in 1996. The total reliance on county government for funding.”

Andes said that ensuring that WCPS is properly funded comes down to telling the public the truth, including that Worcester is a top-performing school district and that sufficient money is required to maintain this level of excellence.

“You cannot deny that under the state aid formula, we are the wealthiest county in the state,” he said. “The fact is we have to rely on the county government for a significant portion of our funding. We cannot change that. We need help getting the facts out and having people understand those facts, including that we have the top performing school system in Maryland, number one in English and reading, and number two in math.”

The latest niche study gave only three school systems in Maryland a grade of A, including Howard, Montgomery, and Worcester Counties. To

continue to secure a funded budget, Andes argues that getting these truths out via social media, word of mouth, press, or podcasting is vital.

“I came here, and I decided to stay here because of the quality of life in Worcester County,” Andes added. “A major part of that quality of life in Worcester County is our public school system.”

The candidates also acknowledged campaign positions held by their opponents, which they said have created “nonsense” throughout the race.

McComas said that her challenger, Leslie, has focused on keeping boys out of the girls’ bathroom despite the fact it remains a nonissue. The incumbent maintained that the schools have private restrooms available to all students upon request, and parents are invited to meet with school officials about any concerns they may have.

Guardians can also block their child from checking out a book at the library and opt their student out of certain curricula.

“I appreciate the fact that concerned parents do have an avenue,”

McComas said. “... I want to be able to sit down and say to my opponent, ‘Let’s work this out.’ Let’s look at what is right and what is wrong. I would love to be able to sit down with my opponent and talk.”

Andes echoed the sentiments.

“Boys use boys’ bathrooms; girls use girls’ bathrooms,” he said. “When a family has a request for a child to use a private bathroom, they go in and meet with the principal and come up with a commonsense resolution to

**‘We look to the stakeholders, our parents, and our students to look at the books and make those decisions.’**  
Incumbent Elena McComas

the matter, and that common sense resolution is implemented ... we invite parents to be actively involved, and if a parent does not want their child to have access to a

book, there is a process. If they do not want them to be exposed to a particular aspect of the curriculum...there are options. There are alternatives. This is the way it has always been... We invite parents to be partners as we work through this.”

The candidates were asked about taxpayers and voters who do not have as much stake in the school system as students and parents and their role in challenging books or opposing certain curricula.

In Worcester, there is a process for a parent to have a book reviewed at the school and district levels. In other areas, like Carroll County, residents who are not parents or faculty in the educational system also have that option. McComas argued that this ability should be reserved for the stakeholders.

“We look to the stakeholders, our parents, and our students to look at the books and make those decisions,” she said. “...having someone walk off the street...I look at some counties, like Carroll, where anyone can go in and ask a book to be taken off the shelf for review, and I think they have something like 65 or 67 books they are trying to go through right now, and that is a lot. Now, do I agree with all the passages in the books that we have in the libraries? No. However, I have sat down with parents who have no problem...we have a diverse community with a lot of different ideas and belief structures. Let’s meet in the middle. Let’s give our concerned parents the ability to control what their kids see, and the other parents that have no problem, it’s okay.”

Worcester County residents living in District 3 or District 5 may cast their ballots for the board of education on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Early voting runs from Oct. 24-31.



## OPEN HOUSES

Oct. 10 - Oct. 17



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-1pm	722 Mooring Road, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$362,500	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Friday 11am-1pm	73 King Richard Rd., Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Sat & Sun 10am-Noon	8 60th St. #301 Meridian, Ocean City	4BR/3.5BA	Condo	\$899,900	Lauren Bunting/Keller Williams Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	36 Juneway Lane, Ocean Pines	5BR/4BA	Single Family	\$639,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 10am-Noon	1101 Edgewater Ave. #202 Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$415,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	23 Seagrave Lane, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$359,900	Cindy Crockett/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 12:30-2:30pm	12 Garrett Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$439,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Saturday 1-3pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Sunday 10am-Noon	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Sunday 11am-1pm	733 Bradley Road, Ocean City	5BR/6BA/2 Half BA	Single Family	\$2,950,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Sunday 1-3pm	11602 S. Hills Drive, Berlin	5BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$1,849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Sunday 1-3pm	206 Intrepid Lane, Berlin	4BR/3BA	Townhouse	\$314,900	Sonia Zaffiris/Hileman Real Estate
Monday 2-4pm	722 Mooring Road, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$362,500	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Wednesday 11am-1pm	12 Garrett Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$439,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Wednesday 2-4pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$799,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Thursday 11am-1pm	1101 Edgewater Ave. #202 Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$415,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Thursday 1-3pm	733 Bradley Road, Ocean City	5BR/6BA/2 Half BA	Single Family	\$2,950,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Real Estate





# Classified

## MARKETPLACE

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

Classifieds appear in **OC Today-Dispatch & Bayside Gazette** each week and online at [oceancitytoday.com](http://oceancitytoday.com) & [baysideoc.com](http://baysideoc.com)



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**HELP WANTED**

**HELP WANTED**

**HELP WANTED**

**RENTALS**

**RENTALS**

**Worcester County Health Department**

**OFFICE SERVICES CLERK** - Full Time, State Benefits located in Berlin, Maryland. This position performs clerical duties at the Community Dental Center while assisting the Program Coordinator in implementing clinic policies and procedures. This position requires a high level of confidentiality and is responsible for maintaining positive interactions with patients and families on the phone, in person and through other means of communication before, during and after treatment.

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**410-289-4902**  
ask for **Suzanne.**



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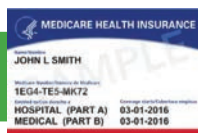
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