



PHOTO BY J.P. CATHELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Stephen Decatur senior Peyton Travers, who plays tight end on offense and middle linebacker on defense, is brought to tears after the Seahawks captured their back-to-back state titles.

Decatur wins 2nd title

The Seahawks come from behind to capture their second state championship crown over same opponent. Page 12

Thrift Mouse closing

Berlin institution will go silent on Dec. 21, after more than six decades

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Dec. 12, 2024) An over 60-year-long tradition is coming to an end in Berlin.

Town residents and visitors will have just a few more weeks to stop in St. Paul's Episcopal Church's beloved thrift shop, The Church Mouse, until the storefront closes its doors for good on Dec. 21.

The brick-and-mortar has been in business at its current location, 101 North Main Street in Berlin, since around 1985.

Before that, The Church Mouse existed in a few different capacities. Its first rendition was as an attachment of the Atlantic Hotel.

It then moved to Old Ocean City Boulevard before settling where it is today.

The store is run exclusively by volunteers and features household items like teapots, clothing pieces, jewelry, books, and more, all affordably priced. The profits support local, national, and global charities and organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, health departments, Worcester Youth and Family, various homeless shelters, and The Cricket Center.



Helen Wiley

See CHURCH Page 4



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Berlin approves Worcester's design guidelines for now

By **Bethany Hooper**
Associate Editor

(Dec. 12, 2024) The town council this week adopted the county's design guidelines and standards, a measure officials hope will steer commercial projects until a planning director can be hired to draft a Berlin-specific document.

At the recommendation of the planning commission as well as the historic district commission, the Berlin Town Council on Monday voted unanimously to adopt Worcester County's design guidelines and standards for commercial properties with minimal revisions. The plan before the town had some specific tweaks for Berlin but is largely the county's guidance.

Town Administrator Mary Bohlen and Planning Commission Chair Matt Stoehr told officials this week the document would serve as a "stop-gap" measure until the municipality could produce its own guidelines and standards.

"The intent here is to take the Worcester County design guidelines and standards and adopt them as the town's for the time being until at such time as the town will produce its own document," Bohlen said. "As you can see from looking through the Worcester County document, it's quite extensive."

At its Nov. 13 meeting, the Berlin's planning commission made a recommendation to the council to adopt the county's design guidelines and standards, giving commercial developers some guidance when submitting plans for new projects. Until now, the municipality has lacked design standards, which created some conflict earlier this year when representatives for the proposed Microtel Inn and Suites as well as the Wawa convenience store went back and forth with commission members on the respective design of the projects. While the commission criticized the concepts over their lack of historic charm, the developers argued they could not design a project without some sort of roadmap.

"We are told to return with something different, but there's no guidance or details to go by," Mark Cropper, the hotel developer's attorney, told the commission this summer. "We are trying to get there, but this is a hard arena to work in when there's nothing to work through."

To that end, commission members last month voted to support the adoption of the county's commercial design guidelines and standards with some minor wording changes. However, officials acknowledged the use of those standards would be temporary, as the town's planning director, once hired, would be tasked with drafting a document specifically for the town's use. The municipality has

been without a planning director since April, when the former director, Dave Engelhart, passed away.

"When that planning director comes on board, I bet it is six months to a year before they can even look at these guidelines," Stoehr, planning commission chair, said at the November meeting. "They are going to be inundated. We need to temper our expectations. This stopgap is going to last a lot longer than anticipated, and understandably so. There is going to be a lot of catch up."

With support from the planning commission, as well as the town's historic district commission, council members on Monday had before them a recommendation to adopt the county's guidelines and standards. Stoehr told officials the document was critical for the development of commercial projects.

"The importance of this has grown vastly over the last eight months," the commission chair said. "Our meetings have seen more lawyers involved than in the last four years ... This is a stop gap until you can produce our own set of documents."

Councilman Jack Orris, however, questioned if the document had

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Church Mouse thrift store closing on Dec. 21

Continued from Page 1

Director of the store Helen Wiley, who has managed the shop since 2007, said that St. Paul has elected to cease retail operations at the physical storefront to save money on operational expenditures and devote more of its financial resources to community outreach.

“The authority comes through St. Paul’s, and they have decided that instead of taking the money that we would be used for rent and other expenses, we could come up with different ways to raise the funds so that more could go to outreach,” she said. “When you spend that money, it takes away from what you really want to do.”

While The Church Mouse will no longer serve in its current form, St. Paul’s intends to keep the spirit of the thrift shop alive. The religious group is

forming a committee to devise ideas to raise funds for homeless shelters and charitable organizations. For instance, Wiley noted that the church may sell items like puzzles and costume jewelry and partner with other churches for philanthropic projects.

Dec. 21 is the last day shoppers can visit the shop that has served Berlin and surrounding communities for over half a century. Aside from the budget pieces and the financial support they offer to the area, Wiley said that the positive and friendly atmosphere The Church Mouse has created is just as important.

“It’s not just what we have here,” she said. “We have clothing and household items that are affordable for folks. But some people come in here and just decide that they feel comfortable. They feel happy here. They feel they can

share their stories and whatever is going on in their lives. And we listen. We listen to the folks. That is also part of our outreach mission.”

“People come from New York and other states and even other countries and say, ‘I heard I have to come to The Church Mouse,’” Wiley continued. “It’s because of the warm feeling they get when they walk in the door. We are all very emotional about [the closing]. We will miss the folks we have met over the years and the friendships we have developed, but we will cherish it and continue to reach out to those people.”

For Wiley, operating the store has been “24/7.” From getting calls about incoming donations to organizing volunteers, sorting through the pieces, and determining price and placement,

the job has been all-encompassing but rewarding.

“It takes a village to run this place,” the director said. “It’s a lot of hours beyond just our open times.”

The store must be cleared off all its merchandise by the last day of the year. Shoppers will be welcome until Dec. 21. After that, anything left will be donated to organizations like Diakonia and the Stevenson United Methodist Church’s Spirit Kitchen, a group that provides free meals to the community each week. Leftover children’s clothing may be given to Worcester County Public Schools.

For its final few weeks, The Church Mouse will be open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Design guidelines move ahead

Continued from Page 3

“enough teeth.” While acknowledging its shortcomings, officials noted the document gave the town something to provide developers.

“This gives us so much more than what we have,” he said.

After further discussion, the council voted 5-0 to adopt the county’s design guidelines and standards. The

resolution also authorizes the planning commission and historic district commission to grant waivers, so long as the design achieves the overall objectives of the document.

“It keeps things more objective, so they aren’t dealing with someone’s preference or opinion,” Council Vice President Dean Burrell said of the adopted guidelines and standards.

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OC mulls sports complex funding

New Business Investment District proposed, would require legislative action

By **Brian Shane**
Staff Writer

(Dec. 12, 2024) An ambitious new funding model might help Ocean City pay its eight-figure share of its proposed youth sports complex, one which now has an operator and an architect on board – but no place yet to put it.

A public-private partnership known as a Business Investment District (BID) could be utilized to generate revenue for the long-proposed sports complex using a special assessment. It also could supplement or replace the town's expected funding source, an existing 5 percent tax on hotel rooms.

"Rather than raising property taxes and/or some other method of attack, this is a voted-upon initiative that property owners and local businesses would decide whether they'd want to fund a certain project," said Tom Perlozzo, Ocean City's director of tourism and business development.

To get a BID going, resort officials would have to ask state legislators to write an enabling law that creates a specific area on a map, or district, inside which a project-specific fee could be charged by businesses and passed along to consumers.

And, unlike the room tax, it doesn't have to just be for hotels and could funnel down to other businesses like retailers or restaurants. For Ocean City, the district would encompass the entire town.

Perlozzo presented the idea of a Business Investment District to the resort's Sports Complex Task Force, which met Monday at the convention center. It was the group's first meeting in a year.

However, the decision of whether to pursue a Business Investment District as a revenue source for the sports complex lies with Ocean City's mayor and town council, not the Task

Force, according to Perlozzo.

"There's a special committee that would form to manage the project," he said. "The government is out of it. They collect all the money, and it goes to the special project. For this it's the sports complex but it could be any large capital improvement.

Research by Perlozzo and his team shows there are about 162 districts like this already in the United States, including New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, where their BID is for just for downtown hotels.

"The state has seen the Baltimore City (legislation), and it would be easy just to follow and get that," he said. "We've actually reviewed the bill. We've got case study after case study looking at what various towns and states have used. Again, it's a viable option."

Factors like how many years it would last and what percentage or dollar amount gets collected are variable based on need. Rates can also vary based on the business; Perlozzo said a hotel could charge users one amount, and a short-term rental like an AirBnB might charge a different amount.

"It's in its very early stages, but it's a definite opportunity to fund the sports complex," Perlozzo said. "The whole goal, it's always been, if the state funds the facility by 80 percent, we fund the other 20 percent through this mechanism. The operations that were presented will pay for themselves. This is not going to cost the taxpayers any money. It should be a win-win for everyone."

Aiming to zhuzh the resort's hos-
See TASK Page 6



BRIAN SHANE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE
Ocean City Tourism and Business Development Director Tom Perlozzo is pictured during the sports complex task force meeting Monday.

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Task force hears favorable economic report

Continued from Page 5

pitality economy by capturing a share of the thriving youth travel sports market, the sports complex has been one of Ocean City's white whales for several years. In 2019, Ocean City commissioned a market and economic analysis by the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA), one that had to be re-thought after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ocean City now has an 80/20 partnership with the MSA to fund the project. The MSA has contracted with an architectural firm, and design work is scheduled to begin early next year, according to MSA Executive Vice President Gary McGuigan. An updated cost estimate will come after environmental and logistical challenges, like easements or archaeological issues, are assessed.

The location of the sports complex remains up in the air. The MSA says its architect will evaluate the costs and infrastructure needs at three proposed locations: a 95-acre property along Route 50 next door to Stephen Decatur High School, a 150-acre parcel just west of Berlin, and a 147-acre parcel near the intersection of Routes 113 and 589. The sites were made public through the MSA's request-for-proposal process.

On an 80/20 split with the state, Ocean City's share of a possible \$150 million project could be \$30 million, an amount that would be paid for by bond financing.

To cover the annual debt service on the bond, estimated to be \$3 million, Ocean City officials had been planning to rely on revenue from its room tax. Resort officials even had

the room tax's 5 percent cap lifted by way of state legislation, pushing the revenue source to a possible 6 percent collection rate.

But there's a hiccup: in order to secure that 6 percent rate, Ocean City has to get approval from Worcester County's Board of Commissioners, and approval has to be unanimous from all seven member. If not, the 5 percent rate remains unchanged, an outcome Ocean City doesn't want.

Privately, resort officials worry they don't have the votes for unanimity at the county level, which is why the Business Investment District is being floated as another tool in the toolbox as a revenue generator for the sports complex.

"In order to move the project forward, we need to have an alternative mechanism," to the room tax, Per-

lozzo said, "and this allows that to happen."

Another step forward in the process is that Ocean City has hired an operator for the sports complex: a specialty outfit called Sports Facilities Companies (SFC). Jim Arnold with SFC presented his findings to the Task Force at Monday's meeting.

Arnold said they'll be marketing the facility for at least 18 months before it opens, by hitting major trade shows and talking to major event operators to get deals done.

"We see no reason why this complex isn't at capacity before we even open the doors," he told the task force.

The sports complex would be both indoor and outdoor. An estimated 147,000 square feet of indoor space would include space for 10 basketball courts that are convertible to 20 volleyball courts, as well as a 5,000 square foot room for community rental.

On the outdoor side, there would be fields for baseball and softball that could convert to a full-size soccer or lacrosse field, giving the complex the ability to host up to eight high school baseball games or up to 16 youth baseball or softball games. Exterior space also would include support buildings, concessions, restrooms, as well as an outdoor gathering space.

"One of the big things we're seeing in these complexes around the country is, much like that indoor space where people want to step away a bit, is some dedicated spaces to families that come from tournaments to be able to kind of – well, get away from the athletic experience and get more into kind of the bonding and family and entertainment aspects," Arnold said.

Main revenue from the sports complex would come from field rentals, while other revenue streams could include food and beverage sales, gate fees or parking, retail merchandise, on-site vendors, or sponsorships and naming rights.

He said its first year would break even, but from there on, there could be upwards of \$1 million in operational revenue. As far as economic impact, the sports complex could see \$52 million in Year 1 direct spending, growing to \$87 million by Year 5, with the potential for \$125 million over 20 years.

"I'd say this is probably one of the more exciting opportunities I've seen in quite some time in the industry just based on the market conditions," Arnold said. "The gaps that are currently there, just not a whole lot of competition in terms of size and scale around an area."

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Berlin approves vendor for electric metering project

By **Bethany Hooper**
Associate Editor

(Dec. 12, 2024) The Berlin Town Council this week awarded a \$893,000 contract to install advanced electric meters.

In June, the Town of Berlin issued a request for proposals from vendors to design, supply, install and implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). And on Monday, Electric Utilities Director Tim Lawrence came back before the council with a recommendation to award the RFP to NexGrid, one of seven vendors to bid on the project. The town's electric utility consultant reviewed the bids and chose NexGrid as the best fit.

"Our first choice would be NexGrid," he said. "NexGrid has the lowest recurring cost."

The contract, Lawrence said, totaled \$893,339, which included a 20-year prorated warranty. Additionally, the town would incur an annual cost of \$18,456 for maintenance and professional services fees once the electric metering system is deployed.

"That's basically for hosting the system on the cloud," he said. "Also for technical support, software updates, and that type of thing."

Similar to a smart water meter project

the town completed last year, the advanced electric metering project will allow the town to record energy consumption and collect data in real time, meaning that electric meters will no longer need to be read manually. Lawrence said the new AMI system would also benefit users, as they will be able to access a portal that tracks their power consumption.

"For example, when their air conditioning kicks on or their heater kicks on, they can actually see their power consumption rise," he said. "So they could actually sit at home and tweak their electric system themselves, to reduce the current consumption."

Lawrence added that the AMI system would give the department the capability to monitor outages and power usage. He said it also utilizes temperature sensing, which alerts the department of any fire hazards.

"So there are several bells and whistles that come with this system," he said, "very elaborate and very detailed so there's a lot that we can do with it."

A report from Booth & Associates, the town's consultant, shows the town received seven bids, which ranged from \$500,000 to \$1.2 million. However, Lawrence noted that not all vendors met


See COUNCIL Page 8

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School officials pleased with annual report

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Dec. 12, 2024) Worcester County Public Schools continue to yield academic success, per a report released by the Maryland State Department of Education this week.

MSDE unveiled its annual Maryland Report Card update on Tuesday, Dec. 3. The report card is a rating tool introduced by the state in 2018 to keep the school community, consisting of students, parents, teachers, and staff, up to date on a facility's performance. The scores are highlighted by how many stars one through five an individual institution receives. The number of stars a school secures is determined by the total points of possible points earned, which relies on multiple components like graduation rate, curriculum, test scores, student and educator surveys, and attendance. A

school must have at least 45 possible points to be eligible for a ranking. The highest number of potential points an educational center can have is 100.

According to a press release issued by WCPS Coordinator of Public Relations and Special Programs Carrie Sterrs, 11 schools in Worcester County were given a star rating, and nearly 91% of these facilities received four or five stars. The school system's press release maintained Worcester "has highest concentration of four- and five-star schools in latest school report card data release."

The WCPS release specified that elementary and middle schools are rated by academic achievement, including factors like the percent of students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, academic progress, progress in achieving English language proficiency, and measures of school quality and student suc-

cess, such as the percent of students not chronically absent and access to a well-rounded curriculum.

Maryland high schools are rated based on academic achievement, graduation rate, readiness for postsecondary success, progress in English language proficiency, school quality, and student success.

"All schools' calculations incorporate school composite scores on a statewide School Survey, which is based on input related to safety, community, environment, and relationships," the press release added.

Berlin Intermediate School received four stars for the 2023 to 2024 academic year, maintaining the same score from 2022 to 2023. Buckingham Elementary School also remained at four stars, as did Showell Elementary School, Snow Hill High School, Stephen Decatur Middle School, and Pocomoke High School.

Ocean City Elementary School increased its rating from four stars in 2022 to 2023 to five stars for the 2023 to 2024 calendar. Stephen Decatur High School saw a positive trend, as the facility's score rose from three to four stars in the most recent report. Pocomoke Elementary also jumped from three to four stars, as did Snow Hill Middle.

The WCPS press release indicated that Pocomoke and Ocean City Elementary Schools improved their scores due to "significant progress in reducing their chronic absenteeism."

Pocomoke Middle was the only school to see a decrease. From 2022 to 2023, the institution received four stars, but from 2023 to 2024, it only collected three. Snow Hill Elementary School, Worcester Technical High School, and Cedar Chapel Special School did not qualify to receive a star rating as they did not have the minimum of 45 or more possible points.

Still, the MSDE report revealed that WCPS has the highest concentration of four—and five-star facilities of all school systems in Maryland.

"I continue to be in awe of our schools' positive trajectory in Maryland's accountability system," Superintendent of Schools Louis H. Taylor said in the WCPS statement. "Worcester continues to outperform our counterparts across the State, and today's release is just another example of how we are delivering dividends on the investment our community has made in our educational system."

Taylor also noted that despite the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in the area's educational system, the kids continue to thrive. In Worcester County, 49% of children are eligible for free and reduced meals, meaning they live in homes at or below

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Council votes to award contract

Continued from Page 7

the town's requirements, including outage detection, advanced safety features and more.

While not the lowest bid, Lawrence said NexGrid included a 20-year warranty valued at \$130,800. He said the company was also highly rated by municipalities that had contracted with NexGrid.

Following Lawrence's presentation, the town council voted 5-0 to award the RFP to NexGrid. The project, officials noted, would be funded through a bond.

"This will do two things," Council Vice President Dean Burrell said. "It will assist our electric department to operate more effectively and efficiently, and it will provide the customer information at a moment's notice as to how they can monitor the uses of their electricity, which serves us all a lot better."

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Strategic plan survey seeks opinions from OP residents

By Steve Green
Executive Editor

(Dec. 12, 2024) An anonymous, on-line survey is now open for Ocean Pines community members as part of an outreach effort.

An email was sent out Monday from the Ocean Pines Association's Strategic Planning Advisory Committee encouraging residents to take part in a new on-line survey.

"The purpose of this periodic survey is to gather Ocean Pines property owners'/residents' input on the development and evaluation of long-range plans for Ocean Pines," the survey states. "A long-range plan will help guide the decision-making process over the next 3-5 years, and your input and opinions are critical to help establish future priorities. Importantly, your individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous."

The 17-question survey seeks to gauge what's important to community residents, what amenities are used and the level of satisfaction, whether specific new amenities should be explored if any, a rating of current Ocean Pines challenges and opportunities and whether the association is reaching expectations on a broad range of topics.

The survey also asks residents to

make one recommendation for "Ocean Pines to improve upon in the next 3-5 years."

Age range, gender and annual income range were also requested in the survey for "classification purposes."

The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024OPAsurvey>.

At the end of the survey, it's stated the results will be presented at a future Ocean Pines Town Hall meeting and be available on Ocean Pines Association website.

OC Elementary earns five stars

Continued from Page 8
the state's poverty rate.

"Research shows the number one indicator of a school's performance is its level of poverty, but here in Worcester County, our schools continue to help students rise above their circumstances to reach success," Taylor said.

The report revealed that 41% of facilities earned four or five stars across all school levels statewide, while 83% collected three or more.



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'Turnover savings' expected with retirement incentive

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Dec. 12, 2024) An early retirement incentive and new light poles for the Stephen Decatur Middle School parking lot were approved by the Worcester County Board of Education last week.

On Tuesday, Dec. 3, the school system's governing group met, and they unanimously passed an early teacher retirement incentive, as they have in prior years. Chief Operations and Human Relations Officer Dwayne Abt said the program supports recruitment efforts and yields turnover savings.

"We should be seeing some turnover savings as with our senior teachers retiring, those at the top of our scale, making the most money," Abt said. "When we do these things, we usually see turnover savings each year."

The incentive will also fuel teacher recruitment, which is done via a job fair each March. Given budget concerns and staffing questions, the operations officer noted that the school system could not take advantage of last year's fair. However, he added, "This year in March, with this incentive, we will be able to be first out of

the gate, hiring great people again."

The program incentivizes teachers to retire early by offering 10% of the employee's salary and paying up to \$25 per sick day that would have remained in the individual's bank. Board member Bill Buchanan motioned the initiative, which was seconded by member Jon Andes.

The Worcester County Board of Education also approved replacing the original 28-year-old light poles in the Stephen Decatur Middle School parking lot.

According to Maintenance and Operations Manager Sam Slacum, the existing fixtures were determined to be structurally compromised upon inspection. The old poles will be replaced with new aluminum, high-efficiency LED lighting.

Slacum said that four bids were submitted for the project. These companies include Carters Electric for \$106,500, Lywood Electric for \$92,530, Mid Atlantic Energy for \$104,000, and Adex Electric for \$77,738.

Adex Electric was chosen to complete the SDMS light replacement initiative. The Worcester County Commissioners are providing funding.



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Decatur rallies to win second championship

Seahawks comes back late to win, capping off second straight perfect season

By Steve Green
Executive Editor

(Dec. 12, 2024) Ever since last year's title game win, Stephen Decatur varsity football team had a goal – to repeat as state champions. The mission was accomplished in dramatic fashion last Saturday as the team captured its 28th straight win to become back-to-back champs.

In what turned into a game dominated by imposing defenses, Stephen Decatur's high-powered offense shined in crunch time, scoring a touchdown with under two minutes in the game to win its second consecutive MPSSAA 2A championship, 13-12.

Decatur came out strong taking the opening drive the length of the field for a touchdown against Huntingtown. Senior Nathan Tapley, who often came into play quarterback throughout the season in short yardage situations, scored on a two-yard quarterback sneak with just under six minutes left in the first quarter. Tapley scored in a similar fashion last week against Westlake.

After the initial score, the teams

exchanged punts for much of the first half, but with about nine minutes left in the second quarter Decatur had a chance to expand its lead, but a 32-yard goal was missed.

After halftime, Huntingtown came out a different team, converting multiple third downs and driving the length of the field. The drive was capped off by a two-yard run by Landon Cawley with 4:55 left on the third quarter clock. The point after kick was blocked, bringing the score to 7-6 with Decatur ahead.

Huntingtown continued to control momentum with its rushing attack, grabbing the lead on a 57-yard sprint by quarterback Dominic Hickman. A two-point conversion attempt was unsuccessful when Cawley was stopped short of the goal, but the Hurricanes held a 12-7 lead with 2:36 left on the clock.

Decatur's offense came alive on what would turn out to be its final drive of the season. Quarterback Johnny Hobgood connected with senior wideout Trybe Wish for 32 yards to extend the drive into Huntingtown's side of the field. With the ball at Huntingtown's 24-yard line, Hobgood connected in the back of the endzone with Zakhari Baker for the touchdown. With the Seahawks now leading 13-12, Decatur went for a

two-point conversion to gain a three-point lead but was unsuccessful. The drive only took 67 seconds.

Huntingtown's final drive – which began with 1:51 left on the clock – featured a few first downs before a pass on 4th down with four yards to go from the Decatur 35-yard line fell incomplete, giving Decatur its second consecutive title.

The game's box score told the story of the game, as Huntingtown dominated on the ground with 284 rushing yards on 52 attempts (5.5 yards per rush) while Decatur managed 11 yards net rushing on 23 attempts. On the flipside, Huntingtown only managed four completed passes for 50 yards while Decatur had 17 completions for 233 yards. Huntingtown recorded 334 total offensive yards compared to Decatur's 244 yards gained from scrimmage. Behind the balanced rushing game, Huntingtown won the time of possession battle with 27 minutes compared to Decatur's 21 minutes.

For Decatur, Hobgood had 17 rushing yards and 233 passing yards. Senior Davin Chandler had six receptions for 77 yards and Wish added four receptions for 47 yards. Baker had the winning touchdown catch and 78 total receiving yards.

Before the game last week, De-

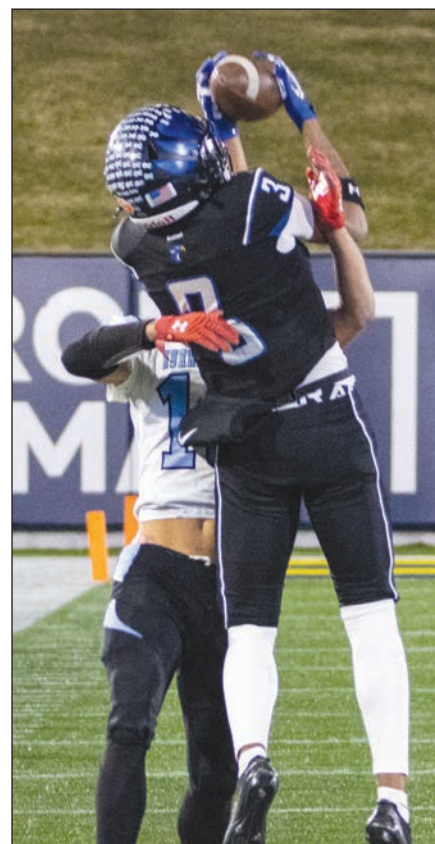


PHOTO COURTESY J.P. CATHELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Senior Trybe Wise hauls in a critical first down pass from quarterback Johnny Hobgood late in the fourth quarter. Hobgood would next connect with Zakhari Baker in the end zone.

cat Head Coach Jake Coleman called his team "battle-tested" after a couple close playoff games where the players had to overcome adversity to stave off upset bids. Coleman's description played out as it took grit and determination to overcome the late deficit to win the crown, capping off an impressive two-year run for the program.

In a post-game press conference, Coleman said ever since the team won the championship last year the focus has been on bringing home another championship. He said the team's approach was centered on repeating as state champions.

"It was 100 percent about repeating, make no mistake about it," Coleman said. "We had a very young group last year. These guys, from the time the state championship was won, we gave them Christmas break, and I'm not kidding you, we have been after it the entire time since. We had a little chip on our shoulder. My son (last year's Bayside player of the year Brycen Coleman) told me, hey dad, 'you ain't won one without me.' I said, 'hmm, okay, I whispered that into a couple guys' ears. I also told them at the beginning of the year: it's your time, you're the superstars now.' And they played like it. They took ownership of the team."

The coach's son – a freshman on Vanderbilt University's football team – was in the stands in Annapolis to watch his alma mater repeat Saturday night. Hundreds of fans traveled to Navy-Marine Corps Stadium for the game.

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Teal Bay Mitzvah supporting first responders with efforts

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Dec. 12, 2024) The Ocean Pines-based community outreach team Teal Bay Mitzvah is making the lives of local first responders easier this holiday season by collecting small but important everyday items.

The charitable group runs two philanthropic programs a year. This winter, Cindy Spicknall, one of Teal Bay Mitzvah's members, met with the Ocean Pines police, fire, and rescue heads to ask how they could support the first responders. Upon feedback, the do-gooder team has decided to collect Keurig pods, both caffeinated and decaffeinated; sugar packets, Stevia and raw sugar; Gatorade, regular and zero calories; and bottled water. After the drive, all the items will be divided up according to each department's needs. Individuals wanting to give back can purchase any of the listed articles and drop them off or ship them to 2 Riverside Court in Ocean Pines until the end of the year.

"Every campaign involves research," Margit Novack of Teal Bay Mitzvah said. "We asked if we could bring dinner, and they said no. But they said we could do things to make their lives more pleasant. Things they wouldn't spend their money on but would make their day-to-day

lives better."

Novack noted that the emergency service groups often host their own fundraisers for equipment and expansion efforts. For instance, the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department holds a yearly vehicle raffle, a bingo night, and other initiatives to pay for projects like apparatus replacement and the upcoming renovations to the South Station. As such, the more mundane but just as important items, including coffee, Gatorade, and water to stay energized and hydrated, are left to the wayside. Teal Bay Mitzvah believes that their initiative will support the groups dedicated to safeguarding the neighborhood.

"We don't always think about it, but for me, the EMTs have been to my house twice since I moved here," Novack said. "This is not in the abstract. It's how we keep ourselves safe."

Teal Bay Mitzvah hopes to secure six months' worth of items for each department. Once the drive concludes, the advocates will use the feedback to determine which emergency service group needs which products most. While the OPVFD has specified that they do not want any snacks, the police have indicated they would.

Novack said that these kinds of out-
See COLLECTION Page 19



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Opinion

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

Design standards will serve town ... for now

The Town of Berlin made a major move in a positive direction this week when the Town Council agreed to adopt Worcester County's building design guidelines and standards for commercial properties.

By doing so, town government has given contractors and developers a foundation, as it were, on which to build their visions while staying within parameters that ought to pass muster with the town's planning commission.

The council's incorporation of these standards in the planning playbook, after all, is the result of the planning commission's inability to tell developers in clear terms what it wants to see in their proposed projects.

This was painfully apparent when the commission went around and around over the designs proposed for the Microtel Inn and Suites and Wawa convenience store projects. Members didn't like what they saw but could not explain to the applicants what they wanted to see.

This "I'll know it when I see it" approach to encouraging designs that are compatible with the town's image wasn't just frustrating for developers and the council, it also added to the expense of the projects, as their paid advocates and experts had to fumble in the dark for answers.

Using the county's guidelines, however, should clear some of the fog that tends to settle over such construction proposals when the discussion turns to aesthetics.

They won't cause all the hazy admonitions and directions to disappear, because these standards were created for the county, not Berlin, which requires a more specific approach to determining architectural appearances.

That, however, will be addressed when the town fills its planning director vacancy. But in the meantime, the county's design book gives it something work with, and that's no little thing. It's a big step forward.

Letters

Offshore wind positives ignored

Editor,

On the issue of offshore wind for Ocean City, each person's viewpoint is colored by a personal agenda or individual experience. It might be the lens of business and economics, tourism, the environment and ecosystems, climate change, local livelihoods, etc. The dominant theme of local opinion has been driven by a culture of negativism and fear, so that any positive arguments have been obscured or silenced.

There is an ongoing need to highlight the many irrefutable benefits of offshore wind power that have been mainly ignored. It is time for everyone to look at the long view, not the short-sighted view — the facts, not the emotions.

There are certain truths that we need to pay attention to:

Maryland, and the Eastern Shore specifically, consumes five times the amount of power than it produces. There is a growing need to import electrical energy. Wind and solar power offer viable, sustainable options. Soon there will be a shortfall of electricity to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

The energy grid is fragile. It will need to be reinforced to accommodate expansion.

The population is steadily increasing with more housing developments and condo units popping up in proximity to highly sought beaches.

Cutting down on the use of fossil fuels will help to reduce emissions of carbon monoxide and slow the urgent threat of climate change and the resultant rise in water levels.

Coupled with those facts is some more information that has not been readily put forth by the naysayers, some of the favorable ways the offshore wind operations are regulated:

To protect whales, there are strict mitigating guidelines for wind power devel-

opers. On a construction site, safety boats patrol a radius around a construction site watching for whales. When the monopiles are initially being driven in, it is only at 5% of capacity with bubbles and sound vibrations creating a warning to whales. The pile-driving ramps up slowly so that whales have a chance to get acclimated and avoid the site.

In the construction crew, there is a safety officer on board to watch out for marine mammals and shut operations down when they are in the area.

Yes, the occasional whale or other mammal may wash up on a beach, but that has always been the case way before there was offshore wind. (Ironically, claims were made of wind turbines killing whales in the Ocean City area before any construction started!) Most whale deaths are due to collision with ships or high-speed sportfishing boats. During the migratory season from October to April, the speed limit for boats going to and from the construction site is 10 mph, while there is no limit on sportfishing boats that can cruise at over 40 knots and burn 200+ gallons of fuel per hour.

Research has showed that wind farms don't appear to harm migratory birds or fish. In fact, the Block Island platforms have created a habitat for mussels and barnacles and attract more fish (and more fishermen). Nor have they been a hazard to navigation. In Block Island, Rhode island, there are five wind generators three miles offshore. Rather than being met as a threat, harm, or eyesore, tour vans from the island stop to let their tourists view the graceful structures gently generating electricity, which supplies the whole island on average with the needed fuel. Fishing charter boats take their clients out to the reef that has formed around the construction site, now a habitat attracting fish. The wind

generators have become a tourist attraction rather than a detriment. The fact is tourism has not been hurt in Block Island or anywhere there are wind turbines. Furthermore, the island residents' fuel bills have gone down considerably.

Clearly, more clean energy is needed and fossil fuel production needs to be cut. It is disturbing that Ocean City and Worcester County officials have turned a blind eye to these facts and have capitalized on emotional fear-producing arguments that are short-sighted and ultimately destructive. We invite them to be more proactive and problem-solving and work with government officials to offer better suggestions than the "Just Say NO mentality." We need to take the long view, not the short view, to preserve our lifestyle and community. Will we be able to say that we are making the next generation proud and protected?

In the early stages of our democracy (1795) Edmund Burke gave us our motto to stand for: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Monty and Sara Lewis
Berlin

Teacher responds to concerning letters

Editor,

I am a teacher in Worcester County and I recently read some Bayside Gazette Letters to the Editor that concerned me.

Both letters were in relation to the recent Board of Education elections in Worcester County, and both letters had questionable material in it. In one letter, Susan Ostrowski says "politics is a bloodsport" while John Huber said "This election also showed the tension between Worcester County's predominantly conservative values and Maryland's broader state policies."

Recently, there was a very
Continued on Page 17

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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Museum planning events to coincide with USA's 250th

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(Dec. 12, 2024) While America's 250th anniversary is still two years away, officials with the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum are already making preparations to celebrate the semiquincentennial.

Melissa Reid, museum president, told the Berlin Town Council on Monday that the museum has plans to introduce several events in 2026, which will mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As the country celebrates its history, officials with the museum will also prepare exhibits and activities that celebrate Berlin's past.

"The Taylor House Museum for the last several years has worked to focus on events and get our name out there in the community a little more, and that has been fairly successful," Reid said. "We've definitely had some more successful events lately, but we feel like the United States' 250th anniversary gives us a chance to sort of reorient everybody back to the fact that we are a museum."

In its mission to tell the stories of Berlin, Reid said the museum will introduce an exhibit that focuses on the town's renaissance. She said photos

will show the growth and regeneration of the municipality over the decades.

"In our photo archives, we have some fascinating photographs of what it really looked like in the 70s, and some of us were here to remember that," she told the council. "But I think there are lots of people that have come to Berlin or that have grown up since then that really don't know what it looked like in the 1970s and the community effort it took to get to where we are today. And so our focus, our hope, for that exhibit is to really show some before and after photographs so that people can see what it used to look like and, again, the community work it took to get us where we are today."

Reid said the museum also has plans to introduce a multimedia walking tour in 2026. She said images from the museum's archives will be used to tell the stories of the town's various industries. For example, as participants stand at the location of Berlin's former Harrison Nurseries, the basket factory, or the railroad station, they can access photos and information from the museum's website to learn more about each industry.

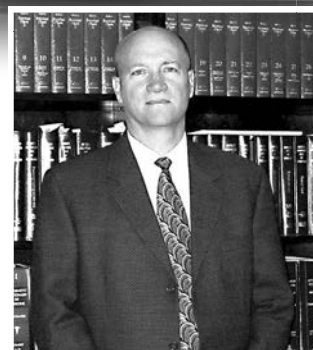
"This would move a little past the historic house tours that have been

See BERLIN Page 17

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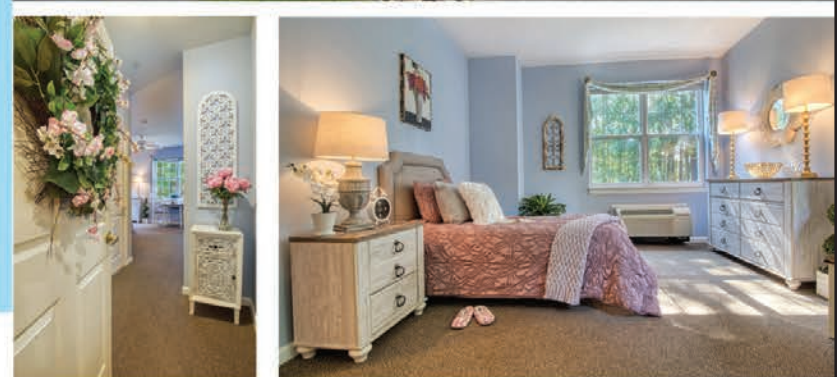
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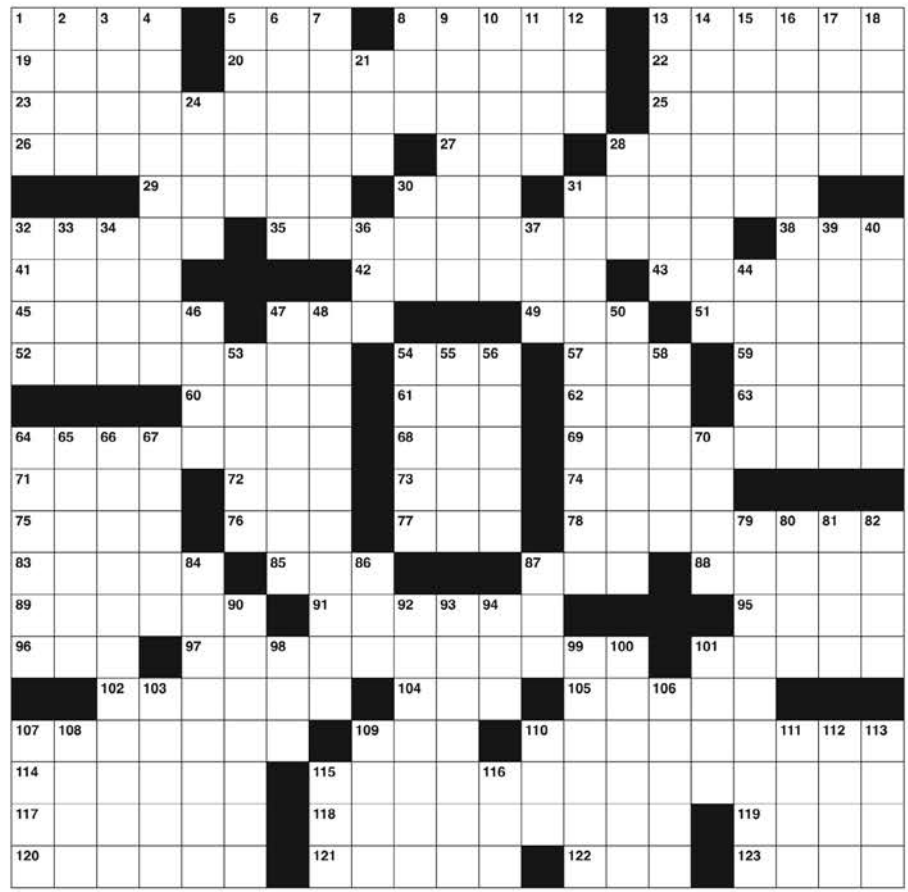
Puzzles

DRIVE AROUND THE BLOCK BY JOHN LIEB / EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

John Lieb is a high school mathematics teacher and football and baseball coach living in Boston. He is also the co-director of Boswords, a series of in-person and online crossword-puzzle tournaments. This is his first Sunday for The Times. He is particularly proud of his fresh clues for crossword staples, such as at 122-Across, 3-Down and 111-Down.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Smack
 - 5 Source of distress for a bull
 - 8 George Eliot's "___ Marner"
 - 13 Actress Barton of "The O.C."
 - 19 Home of Oberlin College
 - 20 Economist who wrote about an "invisible hand"
 - 22 Clear, in a way
 - 23 *Blemish on a vehicle
 - 25 Untroubled
 - 26 Small talks
 - 27 "___, me?"
 - 28 Things compared between Wordle solvers
 - 29 Norman Vincent ___, "The Power of Positive Thinking" author
 - 30 Joker
 - 31 Defeated
 - 32 *With 101-Across, extra level of intricacy
 - 35 *Like a weakly hit ground ball
 - 38 Lotion letters
 - 41 Clamorous
 - 42 Youth sports level
 - 43 Understand, so to speak
 - 45 "The Corsican Brothers" author, 1844
- DOWN**
- 1 Bartlett cousin
 - 2 "Not gonna fly"
 - 3 Voice heard by millions worldwide
 - 4 Play down
 - 5 Russian country house
 - 6 Things to strive for
 - 7 Lilac or lavender
 - 8 One of 15 boycotting the 1984 Summer Olympics: Abbr.
 - 9 "That's already crossed my desk"
- 47 Airer of annual "A Christmas Story" marathons
 - 49 ___ Plaines, Ill.
 - 51 Manage
 - 52 Americana symbol
 - 54 Decorate at a bakery
 - 57 Grumpy friend
 - 59 Flashes
 - 60 Once, old-style
 - 61 Clinch
 - 62 East Lansing sch.
 - 63 "Now!"
 - 64 Info provider at a crossroads
 - 68 Off, in mob slang
 - 69 Bests in a staring contest, say
 - 71 Not doing much
 - 72 Accept, as an excuse
 - 73 Rapper ___ Spice
 - 74 ___ Nationalgalerie, modern art museum in Berlin
 - 75 Diving bird
 - 76 Always, in verse
 - 77 Diamonds, informally
 - 78 Power line?
 - 83 Actor Elgort of "West Side Story"
 - 85 Ride the pine
 - 87 Address a gray area?
 - 88 Either of two wisecracking film critics in "Mystery Science Theater 3000"
 - 89 Dirty-y words?
 - 91 Co-star of 1952's "Moulin Rouge," familiarly
 - 95 Big name in travel mugs
 - 96 Summer on the Seine
 - 97 *Holding that's hard to convert to cash
 - 101 *See 32-Across
 - 102 Purveyor of lifeguard gear
 - 104 X exchanges, for short
 - 105 ___ metabolism
 - 107 Settled down for the night
 - 109 Seer's sphere
 - 110 Midwestern city where Pete Buttigieg was mayor
 - 114 Uselessly
 - 115 *1984 Sade hit
 - 117 "You pickin' up what I'm puttin' down?"
 - 118 Businessperson bringing in beaucoup bucks
 - 119 It goes with the flow
 - 120 Worked the land
 - 121 Like Sanskrit
 - 122 Digits rarely given out in a bar: Abbr.
 - 123 Exam on which Elle Woods got a 179 in "Legally Blonde"
 - 10 John of "Footloose"
 - 11 Record label for Buffalo Springfield
 - 12 "Put a sock in it!"
 - 13 Inspiration for the Camaro and Firebird
 - 14 Xenon, e.g.
 - 15 Rocky debris
 - 16 *Expectation at the start of a hotel stay
 - 17 [Stop looking at your phone! Go!]
 - 18 Matures
 - 21 Hosts
 - 24 What a par 5 has never been, on the P.G.A. Tour
 - 28 Tre + tre
 - 30 Org. for John Cena and Roman Reigns
 - 31 Operate at a heavy loss
 - 32 Emmy winner born Alphonso D'Abruzzo
 - 33 Arrange, as hair
 - 34 Jettison
 - 36 Special ___
 - 37 Took control
 - 39 Mr. Bigglesworth, to Dr. Evil
 - 40 Winter morning phenomena
 - 44 Thompson of "The Marvels"
 - 46 Trickle
 - 47 Cold comfort?
 - 48 Leader of the Pink Ladies in "Grease"
 - 50 "I was wrong ... big deal!"
 - 53 Government investigation
 - 54 Positive votes
 - 55 "___ the day!"
 - 56 Comfort
 - 58 One leaving you in stitches
 - 64 Livestock feed
 - 86 Mao ___-tung
 - 87 Courtroom figs.
 - 90 Straightened, as feathers
 - 92 Alternative to iOS
 - 93 Machine waiting to enter the middle of this grid, as suggested by the answers to the starred clues
 - 94 Bad sound to hear while biking
 - 98 Incongruous
 - 99 Volume options on an iPad?
 - 100 Gray-brown shades
 - 101 Cowardly Lion portrayer
 - 103 Song of David
 - 106 Unbending
 - 107 Musical phrase
 - 108 Fit for service
 - 109 Mideast sultanate
 - 110 ___ Na Na
 - 111 Guesses of interest in the cellphone lot
 - 112 Brilliant observation?
 - 113 "Phooey!"
 - 115 Eastern honorific
 - 116 Cable choice for film fans

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year).



- 65 "Your accusation is unfounded!"
- 66 *Quickly moves past in conversation
- 67 Tots, in Tijuana
- 70 Villainous look
- 79 "Cinderella" setting
- 80 Toe the line
- 81 Form of memorization
- 82 Brouhaha
- 84 0 to 100, maybe
- 86 Mao ___-tung
- 87 Courtroom figs.
- 90 Straightened, as feathers
- 92 Alternative to iOS
- 93 Machine waiting to enter the middle of this grid, as suggested by the answers to the starred clues
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- 112 Brilliant observation?
- 113 "Phooey!"
- 115 Eastern honorific
- 116 Cable choice for film fans

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HARD - 8

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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

REFS	FINE	MALL	OPER
UVEA	IRAN	JOLIE	BRAVA
BEEF	ADOB	ORANG	AGLET
LEMONS	C	BASKET	BALLS
DAISY	HISS	NAAN	
INN	TIER	DAS	CDDRIVE
EGG	AMNESIC	IRA	ZAPF
HEN	NOTALOT	BARKEEPER	
ALUM	IDOL	OMGYES	EEO
ROMAN	RETELLS	RID	
DUBLINER	CID	BARGESIN	
ETA	STEADED	NECCO	
ALA	ENSUES	SUSS	DIET
SUBTRACTS	FTMEADE	SHE	
KNEE	HEH	LIBELER	SOL
ADMIRE	JAM	NEIN	OLE
PRAM	EVER	EGRET	
SEALOFAPPRO	COMESAC		
TEXAN	TUDOR	CHESTBUMP	
UNITY	IMAMS	AHAS	OTTO
NYSE	CASE	RINO	RSVP

Letters

Continued from Page 14

contentious election for Board of Education seats. The three incumbents, Dr. John Andes, Mrs. Elena McComas, and Mr. Donald Smack, won re-election against opponents who wanted to push their views on Worcester County Public Schools. Board of Education positions are non-partisan, we should not care whether the candidates are conservative or liberal, we should care whether they support public schools or not. We shouldn't view our BoE candidates as politicians, we should view them as champions of public education.

The challenging candidates have painted themselves as candidates of change. They want to push their views of public education onto Worcester schools, while having very little experience, or connection to WCPS. These candidates are also endorsed and supported by the Del-

Berlin museum talks '26 efforts

Continued from Page 15

done in the past and do a little bit more of the industries," she said.

Reid added that the museum will also host an oyster roast in 2026. She said the event is tentatively slated to take place in the fall.

"Berlin has never done that," she said. "So we're hoping that that would be something that that museum is going to add to our list of events for that 2026 year, to celebrate the local seafood industry, tying back into the industries of Berlin."

While not part of the 250th celebrations, Reid said that other activities are on tap at the Taylor House Museum. She noted that museum officials are working with Maryland Historical Trust to organize an archeological dig at the museum property.

"We have uncovered some foundations of some outbuildings on the museum lawn," she said. "We know there were outbuildings. We didn't know how many we still had on our property, and we just uncovered a foundation of the smokehouse. So we're going to do an archeological dig in partnership with Maryland Historical Trust."

While the dig will take several years to plan, once complete, Reid said it will allow the museum to better tell the stories of the people who lived on the Taylor House property.

"So that is a little farther down the road," she told the council, "but we just wanted to keep you guys up to date."

Reid added that the museum continues to look for, and accept, any photos people may have of Berlin and its various aspects of life. She said those interested in sharing their photos can call the museum, or email info@taylorhousemuseum.org.

marva Parent Teacher Coalition, which is a group that frequently pushes anti-public school rhetoric. DPTC paints all public schools as evil, and even hosts workshops that encourage parents to remove their children from public schools. They do not want to create a "coalition" between parents and teachers, they wish to create a competition between parents and teachers.

The candidates put forth by DPTC do not care about the success of Worcester schools, they only want to sow division and distrust. Not once did these candidates celebrate the achievements of schools throughout the county. Not once did they mention that Ocean City Elementary is ranked as the 2nd best elementary school in the state of Maryland. Not once did they mention that Worcester County Public School students had the highest proficiency on the math and ELA standardized tests in the entire state. Not once did they mention that Stephen Decatur Middle School is ranked as the 9th best middle school in Maryland while Berlin Intermediate is ranked as the 25th best middle school in the entire state.

Not once have they ever celebrated any WCPS student who has achieved success in art, music, academics, sports, or good citizenship. Not once did they mention Stephen Decatur High School Football Team being the

first state champions in football from the Eastern Shore in 25+ years. Not once did they mention that the Pocomoke High School field hockey team has won the state championship 3 times in the last 4 years. Not once have they ever said anything positive about the school system, their only comments are negative and degrading.

Beware of the people who run on the position that our schools are doing an awful job, especially when those people have no connection to the schools. As a WCPS teacher, I would invite any parent, teacher, school board candidate, or stakeholder to visit my classroom. I have

immense pride in my job and my school system, and would love to share that with the community.

In the future, I implore all Worcester County residents to support school board candidates, and county commissioner candidates that actually support public schools, rather than those candidates that want to tear them down. Worcester County Public Schools is among the best school systems in Maryland, let's keep it that way by voting for champions, not by voting for detractors.

*Kyle Wheatley
Worcester County Public Schools
Teacher*



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Calendar

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

Thurs., Dec. 12

'JINGLE ALL THE WAY' GAME WEEK

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Join in anytime from Dec. 9-14 to play the Jingle All the Way scavenger hunt and games. Complete the scavenger hunt to enter for a change to win a prize. For ages 6-18 years. 410-957-0878

DICKENS WEEK

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Take a trip back in time to Victorian England. Do a Victorian themed craft and scavenger hunt, and Dickens trivia throughout the branch. Family event. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: HANUKKAH

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. A variety of activities and toys. Play and socialize with other families. For ages 0-5 years. 410-632-3495

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON & ANNUAL MEETING

Saltwater 75, 115 75th St., Ocean City, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tickets \$45. Members & future members of the Art League of Ocean City are cordially invited. Tickets are \$45 and include your meal, a non-alcoholic beverage and all gratuity. Plus, a special gift. Please RSVP by Dec. 5th: 410-524-9433.

LET'S MAKE ... DOOR DECORATIONS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Make handmade decorations from dollar store finds. All material provided. Register: 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org.

QUIT SMOKING & VAPING CLASSES

Gudelsky Family Medical Center, 10614 Racetrack Road, Ocean Pines, 5-6 p.m. Participants receive one-on-one support, group support, weekly prizes and quit resources. Register: 410-632-1100, Ext. 1102, www.worcesterhealth.org.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL ESCAPE ROOM

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Escape Scrooge's home with the help of the three ghosts before your time runs out. For ages 6-18 years. Registration required: 410-632-3495. www.worcesterlibrary.org

Fri., Dec. 13

HARP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: KARA DAHL RUSSELL & STUDENTS RECITAL

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 7-8:30 p.m. Free music for all ages. Sing along on some of the carols. 443-373-2375, dahlrussell@yahoo.com, <https://www.ococean.com/event/harp-for-the-holidays%3a-kara-dahl-russell-%26-students-recital/2146/>

COOKIE DECORATING FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 6-8 p.m. Kids ages 3-12 years can make Santa the best cookies ever. Materials and instruction provided. Cost is \$8 per child. Register: 410-641-7052.

'JINGLE ALL THE WAY' GAME WEEK

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Join in anytime from Dec. 9-14 to play the Jingle All the Way scavenger hunt and games. Complete the scavenger hunt to enter for a change to win a prize. For ages 6-18 years. 410-957-0878

DICKENS WEEK

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Take a trip back in time to Victorian England. Do a Victorian themed craft and scavenger hunt, and Dickens trivia throughout the branch. Family event. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes, fingerplays and stories. For ages 0-2 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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 your own tile set. 410-524-1818, 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 6-11 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB: 'EVERY HEART A DOORWAY' BY SEANAN MCGUIRE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Copies of the book are available at the Ocean Pines Library circulation desk. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

MERRY OR MACABRE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 3 p.m. Victorian Christmas cards ranged from sweet to downright scary. Learn about these and make your own merry or macabre cards. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

NIGHT AT THE GALLERY - KID'S EVENT

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 6-9 p.m. Featuring pizza, gingerbread houses, crafts and holiday karaoke. Cost is \$30 for members and \$36 for non-members. Advance registration is required: <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/1988>. 410-524-9433

KIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

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

Sat., Dec. 14

OCEAN CITY COMIC CON

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Compete in cosplay contest, shop vendors, entertaining panels, anime screenings, video games and events. \$1 off with canned good. \$1 off in costume. oceancitycomiccon.com

A ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS - TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF JOHN DENVER STARRING JIM CURRY

Ocean City Performing Arts Center - Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, 7 p.m. Jim Curry has dedicated himself to preserving John Denver's legacy. Cost is \$35-\$45. Tickets: <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/81028695>.

MEET SANTA

Kringle Kottage on Artisan's Green, 124 N. Main St., Berlin, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. www.berlinmainstreet.com

SANTACON AT CRAWL STREET TAVERN

Crawl St. Tavern, 19 Wicomico St., Ocean City, 8 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Don your best Santa garb and enjoy a jolly time of music and holiday cheer. Donations for Kenille's Cupboard Pet Pantry will be collected. <https://crawlstreet.com/event/santaccon-2024/>, 443-373-2756

'JINGLE ALL THE WAY' GAME WEEK

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Join in anytime from Dec. 9-14 to play the Jingle All the Way scavenger hunt

and games. Complete the scavenger hunt to enter for a change to win a prize. For ages 6-18 years. 410-957-0878

DICKENS WEEK

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Take a trip back in time to Victorian England. Do a Victorian themed craft and scavenger hunt, ad Dickens trivia throughout the branch. Family event. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA BENEFIT

Residence Inn Ocean City, 300 Seabay Lane, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Hot breakfast, craft room, baked goods and more. Seatings at 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Advance tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/breakfast-with-santa-benefit-tickets-1087627165129?aff=oddtcreator>. Info: 443-664-7043.

OCEAN PINES ANGLERS CLUB MEETING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 9:30 a.m. The speakers will be four time cash winners in the White Marlin Open, Captains Ken and Adam Thompson, owners of the OpporTunity fleet of charter vessels. All are welcome. Jack Barnes, 410-641-7662

FRIED CHICKEN & FRIED FISH PLATTER SALE

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405 Flower St., Berlin, 11 a.m. Fried chicken platter, \$10; fried fish platter, \$12; combo platter, \$15; fried chicken sandwich, \$5; and fried fish sandwich, \$7. Platters include two greens, potato salad, fried potatoes and onion.

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., Dec. 15

OCEAN CITY COMIC CON

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Compete in cosplay contest, shop vendors, entertaining panels, anime screenings, video games and events. \$1 off with canned good. \$1 off in costume. oceancitycomiccon.com

FREE CARRIAGE RIDES

Historic Downtown Berlin, 124 N. Main St., Berlin, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. www.berlinmainstreet.com

MEET SANTA

Kringle Kottage on Artisan's Green, 124

Continued on Page 19

Calendar

Continued from Page 18
 N. Main St., Berlin, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.,
 www.berlinmainstreet.com

SUNDAY SERVICE
 New Hope United Methodist Church,
 7348 New Hope Road, Willards, 11 a.m.
 If you do not have a church family of
 your own, please come join in.

BLUE HOLIDAY SERVICE
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 3 Church
 St., Berlin, 4 p.m. An interfaith service
 for those who are remembering or
 honoring loved ones during the holi-
 days, facilitated by the All Faith
 Friendship Association. All are wel-
 come.

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

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 Jeho-
 vah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10
 a.m. www.jw.org

Mon., Dec. 16

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

**REVEREND CHARLES A. TINDLEY
 PORTRAIT**
 Worcester County Library - Berlin
 Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Patrick
 Henry will present his portrait of The
 Grandfather of Gospel Music, Reverend
 Charles A. Tindley. The portrait is a gift
 to the people of Worcester County. 410-
 641-0650

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION
 Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines
 Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m.
 Currently the group is reading from
 Book 6 of the Great Conversations Antho-
 logy. The focus will be on "The Lifted
 Veil" by George Eliot. 410-208-4014,
 www.worcesterlibrary.org

LEGO MASTERS CHALLENGE
 Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines
 Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m.
 Join in for a Lego challenge event. All
 materials provided. For ages 6-11 years.
 Continued on Page 20



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Members of the Teal Bay Mitzvah group are pictured sorting through donated items as part of the ongoing collection work in the community.

Collection effort led by group

Continued from Page 13
 reach programs require research. Ques-
 tions must be asked to collect the most
 usable items rather than assuming what
 someone may want. In one instance,
 when the advocacy group ran their pet
 supply drive a few years back, they were
 surprised to learn that humane societies
 were particular about the type of dog
 food they could receive. Animals are ac-
 customed to a specific diet, and con-
 stantly switching brands, flavors, and
 ingredients can create many issues that
 the average person may not think about.

"It's not just an idea," Novack said. "It
 takes in-person research with local or-
 ganizations to determine their specific
 needs."

The charity group member said that
 the holiday season is the perfect time to
 get people thinking about how they can
 give back. Offering support to groups
 that protect citizens and visitors is just
 one small thing residents can do.

"All the projects we do, we do with
 the hope of increasing awareness
 among the community of things to be
 grateful for," Novack said. "... The whole
 community benefits when we are more
 mindful of what we have and see the
 whole community as one that cares for
 one another and how we interact with
 the people who support us. We all ben-
 efit, not just the police or the fire depart-
 ment ... It has ripple effects on how we
 feel about one another and how we are
 a community that takes care of itself."



OPEN HOUSES

Dec. 12 - 19



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 1-3pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	261 Charleston Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	39 Admiral Ave, Ocean Pines	3BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$459,000	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 1-3pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 1-3pm	36 Juneway Lane, Ocean Pines	5BR/4BA	Single Family	\$599,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 1:30-3:30pm	202 S. Heron Dr. Unit 204C, Heron Harbour, OC	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$539,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11am-1pm	261 Charleston Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11:30am-1:30pm	25 Starfish Lane, Unit 25 PH, Ocean Pines	3BR/3BA	Townhome	\$625,000	Hoffy Hoffman/BHHS PenFed Realty
Sunday Noon-2pm	9 46th St., Unit 6 Old Wharf Condos, Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$295,995	Steve Green/Coastal Life Realty Group
Sunday 1-3pm	73 King Richard Road, Berlin	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$749,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty

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To Advertise Your Real Estate Listings in the New Year's/January 2025
Coastal Association of Realtors Real Estate Guide
Contact Renee Kelly 677.288.1233 or renee@oceancitytoday.net



Calendar

Continued from Page 19

410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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

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

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., Dec. 17

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

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

STORY TIME: CHRISTMAS PARTY

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

STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Story time featuring seasonal themes designed to support early literacy skills with stories, songs and fingerplays. Geared to ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, 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

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

NAILED IT! GINGERBREAD COOKIES EDITION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4 p.m. Time to test your cookie baking skills. Mix, decorate, enjoy. For ages 6-18 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

HOLIDAY HORRORS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 5:30 p.m. Talk about Cramps, Gryla, Frau Perchta and Pére Fouettard, all character created to keep children in line during the holiday season. 410-524-1818, 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.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

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

ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE

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

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

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

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., Dec. 18

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Held via Zoom call the third and fourth Wednesday of each month. For surgical patients. Atlantic General Bariatric Center, 410-641-9568

EASTERN SHORE SEWISTS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10 a.m. Promoting the needle arts through sewing education, activities and textile crafts. For artisans of all skill levels. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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. Get ready to squish, build, splash, shake and scoop through several 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 strategy, whether 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 puzzles. Don't have a puzzle but still want one? That's OK too. All puzzles must be 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

COFFEE & CRAFTS - FABRIC BOOKMARKS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Save your page with fun fabric bookmarks you can sew, glue or paint. Limit 30. First come, first serve. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4 p.m. The goal of the support group is to provide participants with hope for the future. Gail Mansell, 410-641-9725, gmansell@atlanticgeneral.org

STORYTELLERS THEATER TROUPE

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Theater activities like improv, memorization, public speaking and learning about theater. For ages 6-18 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CHILDREN'S TOURS

Calvin B. Taylor House, 208 N. Main St., Berlin, 5 p.m. Tours start at 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. www.taylorhousemuseum.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.

ONGOING EVENTS

LIVING NATIVITY

Bluebird Farms, 11207 Racetrack Road, Berlin, Saturdays and Sundays until Christmas, noon to 6 p.m. Complimentary hot chocolate, music, petting and photo op with mini cow, donkey, goat

and sheep. Donations benefiting Coastal Hospice, Diakonia, Local Troop #621 B.S.A. and Saltwater Mini Farm.

LIGHT UP THE PINES

Register between Nov. 18 and Dec. 13 to be entered into the drawing to win one of three \$50 bill credits from Choptank Electric Cooperative. First 25 homes will receive Choptank Electric goodies. Residents may sign up after Dec. 13 and throughout the holiday season to have their homes added to the online map. Submit name, address and phone number via email to info@oceanpines.org or call 410-641-7717, Ext. 3014. Visit oceanpines.org for a map of participating homes.

SEND LETTERS TO SANTA

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, Nov. 25 through Dec. 20. Children of all ages are welcome to drop off their written letters to Santa at the red mailbox. Make sure that letters have child's name and address so Santa can respond.

OCEAN PINES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RAFFLE

Win a 2024 F-150 4X4 Supercrew 5.0L V8. Tickets cost \$100. All registration, sale, etc. expenses covered by O.P.V.F.D. Drawing will take place on Dec. 21. For more information: www.opvfd.com/f-150.

WINTER TRAIN GARDEN

Ocean City library, 10003 Coastal Highway, December through Jan. 4. Visitors of all ages will delight in interacting with buttons that activate accessories and sounds. A scavenger hunt for young patrons will also be available. 410-524-1818

TEENY ART

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during December. A themed craft program available in the teen section all month long. December Teeny Art is "Trees." For ages 12-18 years. 410-632-3495

DECEMBER INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St. Art, photography or poetry competition for all ages. Pieces will be displayed in the library for viewing and voting by age bracket. The theme is "Envy." Due by Dec. 20. 410-632-3495

WINTERFEST OF LIGHTS

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30-9:30 p.m. Open Wednesday through Sunday, Nov. 21 through Dec. 22. Open daily Dec. 23-31. Cost is \$6 for adults and free to those 11 years and younger. Tour through thousands of sparkling lights and animated Christmas scenes. Pets welcome on Wednesdays. Scooter rentals (\$10/two hours) and wheel chairs available on site: Scooters-4-Rent.com, 302-280-6203. For more info: 410-289-2800, <https://www.ococean.com/winterfest/>. Weather cancellation hotline: 410-250-2124.

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