



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

STUDENTS TESTIFY

Two Stephen Decatur High School student-athletes testified March 5 in Annapolis in support of Senate Bill 588, also known as the Fairness in Girls Sports Act that requires only biological females participate in girls athletics. Above, Decatur student April Bondurant testifies alongside James Crawford, 36-year volleyball and soccer referee; Senator Mary Beth Carozza; and Decatur student Brooke Berquist.

Yacht Club's new vendor begins Tues.

Rather than wait until lease ends April 30, parties agree to prepare now for season

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 14, 2025) Touch of Italy will take over the Ocean Pines Association's food and beverage services at the Yacht Club, the Beach Club in Ocean City, and the Clubhouse Bar and Grille earlier than originally planned.

Instead of assuming control of the operations on May 1, after the agreement with the previous vendor, Matt Ortt Companies, expires, Touch of Italy will take over at the beginning of next week.

'I have signed a personal guarantee on that lease, which means that if I don't live up to my obligations, you have recourse to come after me for the rent. I believe right now, since we signed that, you will always be in the black at this point.'

Bob Ciprietti

News of the accelerated schedule came in a press release last week from Josh Davis, OPA's director of public relations and marketing.

The restaurant group was named the association's food and beverage operator in January. Founded in 2010 by Bob Ciprietti, the company owns and operates Italian restaurants in Ocean City, Rehoboth Beach and Lewes, Delaware, along with the Sunset Island Bar and Grille in Ocean City, and Royal Prime Steakhouse at Bally's in Dover, Delaware.

Association officials later revealed at a town hall session that Ortt would remain in charge until its contract's expiration on April 30.

As it stands now, Ortt and Touch of Italy will work together to create a

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Microtel plan stirs opponents

Petition seeks signatures to show support for claims hotel could be safety hazard

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Opponents of the Microtel Inn and Suites by Wyndham, planned for the east side of Route 113 near Franklin Avenue in Berlin, are collecting signatures on a petition to bolster their claim that the project would create a safety hazard.

The hotel, a planned four-story, 78-unit Microtel Inn and Suites, is to be built in front of the early learning center Bundles of Joy University and the Healing Arts Center of the Eastern Shore, a spot that opponents say could lead to child safety risks, increased crime, exacerbated parking and traffic problems and more noise.

"Our primary concern is the safety, well-being and optimal learning environment for the young children who attend Bundles of Joy University and the individuals who attend the Healing Arts Center of the Eastern Shore," reads a change.org petition Bundles of Joy Preschool Center Director Megan Smith started last week.



A rendering of the proposed Microtel Inn and Suites is pictured.

The online petition as of Wednesday afternoon had 330 signatures.

The petition argues motels bring "transient populations" to an area through their construction. The increase of these "unfamiliar individuals" could create security risks for the children and staff at Bundles of Joy University.

The petition cites the structure's size, along with a rise

See MICROTTEL Page 6

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Marketing materials, such as the social media image above, were recently distributed to announce the grassroots campaign to create postcard designs.

Berlin seeks three postcard designs highlighting town

By **Tara Fischer**
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Berlin visitors and residents will soon be able to secure a memento of the charming historic town with three unique postcard designs, which will be available this summer.

A Facebook post last week by the Town of Berlin Main Street and Arts and Entertainment District said that the municipality is seeking three local artists to create “unique, eye-catching designs that capture the charm and character” of the area.

“Whether you are a painter, photographer, illustrator, or mixed-media artist, we want to see how you envision the spirit of Downtown Berlin,” the social media post continues.

Ivy Wells, Berlin’s economic and community development director, said the town used to have postcards “decades ago.” The thought to bring back the souvenirs came from the Berlin Arts and Entertainment Advisory Board and was inspired when Berlin Welcome Center volunteers were often asked if these types of cards were available.

“That was what sparked this idea,” Wells said.

Each of the three selected artists will create their own designs from which visitors and residents can

choose. The economic and community development director maintained that the town seeks distinct products. Besides the still sought creators, a younger craftsperson is already slated to offer their services.

“We are looking for three completely different designs; plus, Opal Hambury, our board youth member, will also be creating her own design from the perspective of a teenager,” Wells said.

Each selected artist will receive a \$100 stipend for their design. Artists interested in the project can email Economic & Community Development Assistant Allison Early at aearly@berlin.gov by Monday, March 31, with five JPEG images of artwork for consideration.

An initial print of the postcards, to be 4” x 6”, will take place, and then the slips will be reprinted as the supply dwindles. The mementos will be available sometime this summer at the Berlin Welcome Center for a suggested donation.

The Berlin Arts and Entertainment District and the Maryland State Arts Council are sponsoring the initiative. The project will aid the municipality’s efforts to capture the town’s historical aesthetics and prioritize artistry.

“Postcards showcase the unique charm here in Berlin and create a sense of pride,” Wells said.

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Touch of Italy takes over clubs next Tuesday

Continued from Page 1
smooth handoff of leadership, and the introduction of Touch of Italy's yacht club menu, which will include chicken, fish, lobster rolls, burgers, fajitas, egg rolls, and Italian options.

Representatives of Touch of Italy were quoted in the press release thanking Matt Ortt for "this generous and gracious gesture of mutual respect to help Ocean Pines and Touch of Italy have extra time to prepare for a successful launch of operations."

"We are excited to have the opportunity to serve the Ocean Pines community and continue offering great dining experiences," the Touch of Italy representatives continued.

Touch of Italy and OPA officials inked their five-year operating agreement on Jan. 8. Later that month, residents, restaurant group officials

and OPA representatives gathered at the neighborhood's community center to discuss what to expect from the new operator.

"Ocean Pines will become our landlord," Ciprietti said at the January town hall. "I have signed a personal guarantee on that lease, which means that if I don't live up to my obligations, you have recourse to come after me for the rent. I believe right now, since we signed that, you will always be in the black at this point."

Per the agreement, the restaurant group will pay OPA rent equal to the combined depreciation of the food and beverage facilities. This amount will increase by 3% annually. OPA General Manager John Viola said the association will also receive 6.5% of the operation's gross, non-alcohol revenue.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Touch of Italy owner Bob Ciprietti is pictured addressing attendees at a town hall meeting in Ocean Pines in January.

"The depreciation of the food and beverage facilities is about \$384,000 a year," Rick Lawrence, the restaurant group's financial manager said in January. "That is a minimum return that Ocean Pines is guaranteed now with the lease arrangement they made."

"On top of that," he continued, "so that the community actually is benefiting from the food and beverage operations, they get what is known as a rent-kicker, and they participate in a percentage of the adjusted gross."

The contract confirms that Touch of Italy will be responsible for most replacement and maintenance expenses. The new food and beverage operator will bear the cost if equipment breaks in the first few years of its useful life. However, OPA may take on repair burdens if a device breaks down around when expected, per its lifespan. Furthermore, any potential facility changes by the new operators require approval from Ocean Pines leadership.

"If [the restaurant company] wants to make any changes, everything has to be approved by the Ocean Pines management and the board," Viola said at the town hall. "If there is anything they want to do to the buildings, we own the buildings, and they are renting ... they have to get approval from the Ocean Pines management team and the board depending on what they are going to do."

The Ortt Companies, meanwhile, are expanding their offerings in Ocean City. They already operate Coastal Salt and the Ocean City Rum Shack on the 16th Street Boardwalk and are taking over the Tony's Pizza property on the Boardwalk and North Division Street.

The arrival of Ortt in Ocean Pines

in March 2018 had a significant impact on the association's restaurants, which had been doing poorly. The Ortt operation turned the struggling venues around and made them profitable.

That success led the board and Ortt to agree to a five-year extension in 2020 with a \$200,000 management fee per year plus 50% of the profits if goals were reached minus depreciation expenses for the buildings.

Although Ortt could have pushed through until the April 30 expiration of its agreement with the OPA, Ortt agreed to step aside early to allow Touch of Italy to establish itself in time for the spring and summer seasons.

"I would like to thank the association, including the general manager and management team, board of directors, and especially the residents who have supported us over the last seven years," Ortt said in last week's announcement.

Viola echoed Ortt's sentiments: "Thank you to Matt Ortt for his service to Ocean Pines and his coordination during this process. We wish his company the best in their future endeavors."

The switch to a new vendor has been received well by Ocean Pines citizens.

On Facebook, resident Mark Thomas wrote, "Great job getting the new guy in place before the summer starts. Going to miss MOC, but good things come to an end."

Joe Reynolds, an OPA homeowner and the moderator of a neighborhood forum, also expressed a positive outlook on the decision to move up Touch of Italy's start date.

"All in all, this looks like the best decision for all involved," he said.

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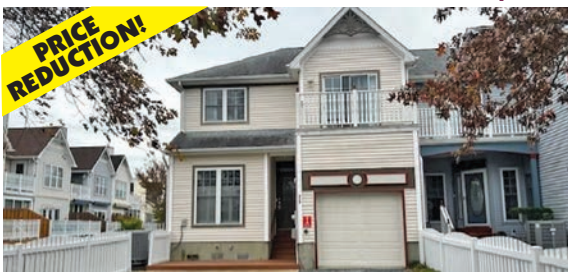
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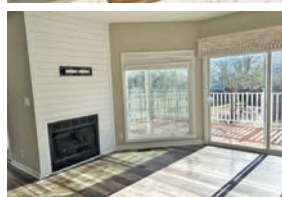
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Microtel opponents begin petition campaign

Continued from Page 1

in vehicle activity from Microtel staff, guests and deliveries, may also lead to car congestion, making it difficult for the families of the learning center's students during pick-up and drop-off times. It also states that the hotel's 24-hour operations would "disrupt the peaceful learning environment crucial for early childhood education."

Critics of the Microtel claim motels are often linked to illegal activities like human trafficking and drug use.

"The proximity of such activity to a preschool is an unacceptable risk to our students," the petition says.

Additionally, the online appeal expresses worry over increased waste and pollution associated with these kinds of buildings, which may negatively impact the surrounding neigh-

borhood, including facilities like Berlin Intermediate School, located directly across the planned site, and Bundles of Joy.

Business performance was also listed as a potential casualty of the new hotel.

"Parents may feel uncomfortable sending their children to a preschool located directly behind a motel due to the ... safety concerns, which could result in a decline in enrollment and affect Bundle of Joy University's ability to operate successfully as it has for over the past 26 years," the petition says.

The request formally asks officials to reconsider the placement of the proposed Microtel. The form writes that should construction move forward, it could set the precedent for future nonchild-friendly commercial



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

A rendering of the new Microtel Inn and Suites off Route 113 is pictured from the vantage point of Franklin Avenue in Berlin.

development in the area. The opponents maintain that this act could ultimately risk changing the character of the neighborhood.

"We urge local officials to reconsider the zoning and placement of this motel and prioritize the well-being of our children and community," the petition concludes. "Instead, we advocate for thoughtful development that aligns with the needs of families and preserves the integrity of our neighborhood."

Smith said that she started the petition as a way to foster support for her mission, particularly for those unable to speak for themselves.

"I started the petition to give the voiceless a voice and advocate for the ones who need it the most, which is the students at my center," she said. "I had been going back and forth with ideas of how to make our voices heard, and when they put up an updated sign last week advertising for the hotel, it was time. In less than two hours, I had over 100 signatures."

Smith continued, arguing that the unknown guests checking into the hotel are a main concern. The potential for dangerous individuals so close to two facilities that serve juveniles, she said, is worrisome.

"My job is to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in my center," Smith noted. "How am I supposed to do that with the potential of unknown threats this hotel will pose? What if a sex offender checks into the hotel? They have to be certain feet from a school at all times, and there is a school in front and a preschool behind."

Since its proposal last March, the Microtel development has been the subject of ample controversy. While town leaders admit that Berlin needs a new hotel for travelers, residents and officials expressed concerns with the proposed location and the structure's aesthetics.

At a meeting last March, where the proposal was initially presented, at-

tendees struggled to accept the project presented to the planning commission.

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols, who said she lived close to the suggested structure, resisted the Route 113 location.

"I just don't think that location is a safe spot," she said at the time.

Others worried that sex traffickers and predators could make up a portion of the hotel's guests.

Chrissy Ehrhart, a Berlin resident who also operates Zenna Wellness near the proposed location, argued that potential 28-day stays permitted at the hotel could create a path for these types of unsafe situations.

Project representatives maintained that training and room checks would be completed often to ensure illicit or dangerous activities were not occurring.

The hotel's exterior look was also heavily questioned during meetings last year. Berlin planning officials repeatedly criticized the drawings, arguing that the proposals were too standard and did not match the historical aesthetic of the community's downtown.

Developers came before the planning committee in July, where the outlines were shot down, despite the addition of bricks at the facility's entrance, an enclosure for the pool, cornices, Victorian-style lights, and mature trees to align with Berlin's charm. These changes were labeled as insufficient.

However, in October, the Berlin Planning Commission and the Microtel Inn and Suites by Wyndham developers reached an agreement.

The revised outline included an authentic brick exterior, mature trees around the pool, cornices, plate glass storefronts, and other elements similar to the Victorian downtown area. More adjustments were made following the fall meeting, and with modifications, the elevations were approved

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Town renews agreement for tech services

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) The Town of Berlin's information technology management contract was awarded to incumbent TechMD after a third-party review.

TechMD was recommended by third-party vendor Bulletproof IT Security Services, which was selected to handle Berlin's information technology audit last year. The recommendation comes after Bulletproof created a Request For Proposals (RFP). Bulletproof endorsed TechMD to be hired once again to handle the town's IT services, which have a monthly cost of \$4,734.

"Based on our evaluation of the responses, using price, services, and company stabilities as the primary factors, we feel that the risk and potential disruption of service resulting from switching vendors are not justified," Bulletproof's official suggestion reads. "We recommend continuing with the current provider, TechMD."

Mike Steinsdoerfer, TechMD's technical account manager, said the town's agreement with the company includes a range of services including having "tools on your actual devices that are monitoring anomalous behavior," he said.

However, Steinsdoerfer added that TechMD does not have these same tools within Berlin's Microsoft 365 ecosystem. Instead, the town has an integer CORE contract to monitor suspicious behavior inside the Microsoft 365 environment. Integer is a separate department of TechMD that offers optional services to clients.

"Integer specifically monitors for anomalous behavior [in Microsoft 365] because your Microsoft 365 environment can be accessed from anywhere in the world," Steinsdoerfer said. "As long as someone has some

sort of device, they get ahold of your credentials ... they can get in. You guys have a very robust security posture by having both TechMD and Integer."

At this week's meeting of the Berlin Mayor and Council, where TechMD representatives were on site to answer questions, Councilmember Jay Knerr inquired about the company's policy of recommending computer replacement every three years when the warranty expires.

"Computers have a warranty life and a useful life, and typically computers can go years beyond warranty life," said Knerr, who owns The Kite Loft in Ocean City. "Why is it so important when you can replace a hard drive or a power supply? Why do we need to replace equipment every three years?"

Steinsdoerfer said the company's proposal recommends every three years because when year four hits, the devices start to experience usage issues. He noted that since the late 2000s, the company has suggested a replacement every three years, will run through year four if need be, and at year five, lets their clients know that it's time to upgrade.

"The primary reason is that after three years, warranty expires, and yes, the useful life goes beyond that, but we do start to see around year four there is some breakdown of equipment as far as hardware and whatnot," Steinsdoerfer said.

He continued, emphasizing that the issues only continue to worsen.

"Around year five, manufacturers typically stop sending out driver updates, firmware updates, and you see

security issues become prevalent," Steinsdoerfer said. "It's really about efficiency of the devices themselves and the security of the devices."

Knerr noted that he "hates to see the town spend money unnecessarily."

Steinsdoerfer added that if the town extended their devices beyond three years, they would still receive company support. The three-year deadline is simply a recommendation, albeit a strong one.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said the town typically runs the devices through year three and tries to replace during the computer's fourth fiscal year.

"The idea there is that there is a security element to that, but computers typically in that period of time start

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Microtel subject of petition drive

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by the municipality's advisory group at a later gathering on Nov. 13.

Still, despite moves from developers and the Town of Berlin pushing the Microtel project along, some residents seek to halt the development. The petition had acquired 329 signatures as of Tuesday, March 11.

Smith maintained that she is not against this kind of facility. However, where her concern lies is with the location.

"Overall, I'm not opposed to a hotel," she said. "I'm opposed to putting any of my students and their families' safety at risk, which is what will happen if this hotel gets built in that location."

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Town adds request fee to annexation process

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) The Town of Berlin formally established an annexation request fee of \$515 in the municipality's planning and general fee schedule.

Officials said that previously, no fee was specified when a property owner submitted a request for annexation. Per the Berlin Town Council's approval, the price of \$515 will now be added to the fee schedule, which is the same as the 'Zoning Change/Rezoning Hearing.'

Town Administration Mary Bohlen said that the lack of an explicit fee was simply an "oversight," as "it's not often that a property owner comes to the town seeking annexation." As such, the rate was never included, but now, those who come forward with such a request will be required to pay the rate in addition to their application.

The payment covers costs associated with the administration review of the ask, staff time, and materials. The price will be reviewed in the next few months when the fee schedule is reviewed for inflationary adjustments.

Furthermore, Bohlen added that she is in the process of implementing a more formal application process for these kinds of inquiries, as currently,

the petitions are simply letters of interest.

"I am in the process of developing a more formal process so that it's clearer to everyone, the town, the staff, as well as the applicant what the process is," she said.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall added that the town's work to onboard Ryan Hardesty, the municipality's new planning director who assumed the role last month, taught them the

process starts with the letter of interest but requires the council to refer it to the planning commission.

Councilmember Shaneka Nichols stressed that just because this rate is in place, simply paying it is not the same as approval. Bohlen maintained that the fee is for merely processing the annexation application.

"If someone jumped to that conclusion, they would be very wrong," Tyndall said. "There are a number of

things that have to happen."

Bohlen noted that language has been added to some request forms stating, "submission of this application is not approval." This will likely be included in the formal annexation appeal.

The council unanimously approved the inclusion of the annexation request rate in the Town of Berlin Planning and General Fee Schedule at its Monday, March 10 meeting.

Tech provider given new contract

Continued from Page 7

to slow down and start to lose efficiency, and you may not see it on your budget sheet, but you're going to start to see those things slow down," Steinsdoerfer said. "Manufacturers have it timed. Like cars, right around 100k miles, they start to break a lot; you start to see that with computers as well."

Councilmember Steve Green asked the TechMD representatives about their role in the new Maryland laws that require municipalities to adopt security frameworks and standards. The company officials said that these guidelines, which relate to

processes, documentation, people, and how they are assigned to certain responsibilities to avoid security breaches, are outside the scope of their agreement with the town.

"[The State of Maryland] is really looking for towns and municipalities to do it on their side," Steinsdoerfer said.

However, TechMD recommends the Town of Berlin sign on with the Integer ONE Solution, a full Managed Security Service Provider that would create a team to help Berlin align with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) framework now required by Mary-

land.

Steinsdoerfer noted that the new guidelines are in place to protect municipalities from security risks. He said that his team is beginning to see a need for these protections to ensure that government groups are not at risk.

"This isn't an arbitrary thing," he said. "We are seeing government agencies targeted by the bad guys. I think what the state is doing is a good thing. It's real and out there, and we see it."

The council unanimously voted to retain TechMD as the local government's IT service provider.

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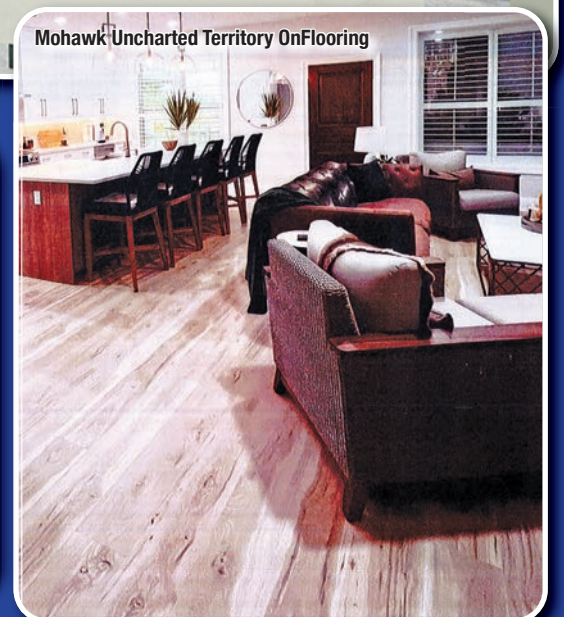
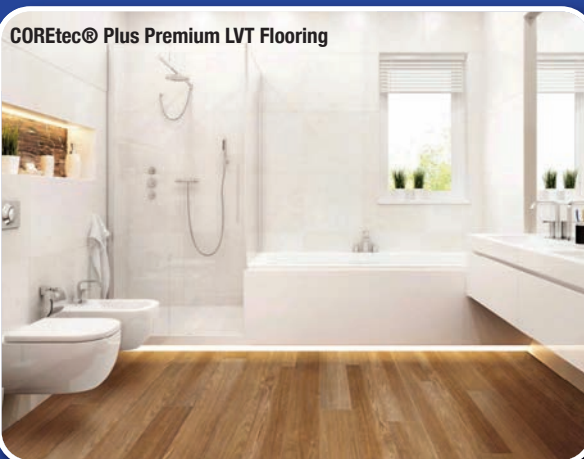
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'Fun bill' eyes Orange Crush as Md. cocktail

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) A Lower Shore lawmaker is raising a toast to the iconic Orange Crush, with a bill pending in Annapolis that would designate it as the state's official cocktail.

Del. Wayne Hartman (R-38C, Worcester) introduced the legislation in response to Delaware's summer 2024 declaration that the Orange Crush was the First State's official adult beverage.

"The fact that there was all the fanfare, nobody stood up to say, 'hey, this belongs to Maryland.' There's a lot of talk already about it, a lot of excitement. This is one of those things we have fun with, show our Maryland pride, and set the record straight," Hartman said Wednesday. "This is the right bill to pass this year."

Hartman's bill has the support of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, a trade association for all sectors of the tourism industry. Executive Director Ruth Toomey said if the bill passes, she'll make the Orange Crush the group's signature drink during summer conferences.

"It's a fun bill. We've had a really crazy fast-moving session, so we're looking forward to having the Orange Crush bill presented," she said. "It's an opportunity for all the bars and liquor distributors to really have fun with it, some fun marketing campaigns to attract visitors and tourists, not just to Ocean City but around the state."

Hartman wants everyone to know the history behind the heralded highball and hopes to make the Orange Crush as synonymous with Maryland as the crabcake.

He's even written into the language of the bill how bartenders at Harborside Bar & Grill in West Ocean City dreamed up the concoction in 1995.

"It's historical," remarked Harborside co-founder Chris Wall. "It's nice to be acknowledged for your accomplishments, especially among your peers and the people. It's quite an honor. (Co-founder) Lloyd (Whitehead) and I are more on the humble side, but things like this, it's pretty amazing."

Wall said the recent crush craze began when The Starboard, a destination bar in Dewey Beach, Delaware, audaciously claimed it had perfected the Orange Crush.

The rivalry went viral and even picked up steam in Washington, where Senators from both states – Chris Coons from Delaware and Ben Cardin from Maryland – playfully faced off with a crush-making competition ahead of a summer recess. Team Maryland won.

"Starboard never showed up to help Coons. I kind of felt bad for him, because they did not set him up at all," said Wall, who was there with Sen. Cardin's team. "The Washington Post had us on the front page. It was quite an event. It was nice to see everybody having a little fun."

Wall and Whitehead opened Harbor-

side in 1993. Two years later, the Orange Crush emerged during a chilly off-season, when Wall decided to keep his bartenders warm and busy outside by experimenting with a potent potable that had just come to market: orange flavored vodka.

"It was before we enclosed the outside bar before winter, and we left it open too late. The bartender, she was freezing her butt off out there, in a parka. Another guy, I said to him, we have a Stoli O machine outside that we can't put back in the bottle," Wall recalled, referencing a device that keeps chilled booze in a reservoir, pourable by spigot.

"Legally," he added, "we can't put it back in the bottle. So, we went out there to watch football and we already had the juicers in '94. Stoli O came out in '95. I said, let's just mix things up – we have the fruit, we got the juicer, we got the vodka. And the Orange Crush just took off."

The name, of course, was a no-brainer. "We're crushing the fruit, crushing the drink. Orange Crush. Common sense," Wall said.

With a practiced spin of the venerable Hamilton Beach 932 – the "best juicer in the world," Wall noted – bartenders at Harborside make crushes fresh to order: juice an orange into an ice-filled glass, add Smirnoff orange vodka, a splash of triple sec, shake it up, top with a spritz of lemon-lime soda.

Harborside keeps about 50 cases of oranges on hand, either of the Florida or California variety, going into any summer weekend, Wall said. "Florida oranges, the uglier on the outside, the better it is," he said.

Does it bother Wall that every bar around town, starting in West Ocean City, soon started making their own version of

See STATE Page 10

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Berlin approves expense to upgrade largest water well

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Berlin's largest well, located at Powellton Avenue, is set to undergo replacement. The Town Council unanimously approved awarding the project work to East Coast Contracting for approximately \$409,955.

The motion to proceed with the well upgrade was agreed upon at the municipality's March 10 Mayor and Council meeting. Officials said they hope the replacement will be completed by August or September. The bid of \$409,955 is under the project's budgeted amount of nearly \$450,000.

Water Resources Director Jamey Latchum said that after factoring in the cost of a new AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure), the initiative will have a contingency of about \$20,000 to \$25,000. Leftover American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and general water use funds are being used to finance the work.

The scope of the project includes demolition work of the current well building and the construction of a new facility, including chemical storage tanks, chemical feed systems, interior and exterior water main installation, interior and exterior electrical, control, and mechanical work, interior water and sewer plumbing, exterior yard hydrants, and more to ensure the upgrades are up to current standards.

Latchum noted the building is decades old, and these repairs have been

a long time coming. The director added the town and his team have been trying to get the project funded for the past eight years, but issues like budget constraints have always halted the project before it could get done.

The rebuild will also help the town's water operations align with a planned switch from powder chemicals to liquid chemicals. "We've put enough Band-Aids on [the well building], and the band aids need to be taken off and torn down and rebuilt," he said.

The well is the largest in town. In comparison, the facility — known as well one — pumps around 900 gallons a minute, while well two pumps about 300 gallons a minute and well three roughly 600 gallons a minute. As such, Latchum maintained that well one would be as active as possible during this process to ensure the town had no water supply gaps. Staff also ensured that the equipment at wells two and three would guarantee Berlin's water utilities remained on track as a contingency.

"I don't want anyone to worry," Latchum said. "We have done a lot of work to our wells to be able to take this building down ... We made sure all of our ducks were in a row to ensure we could work on this well."

The motion to move forward with awarding the project to East Coast Contracting was passed unanimously by the Berlin Town Council.

State bill pending in Annapolis

Continued from Page 9

the Orange Crush? Not at all, he said. "Imitation is the highest form of flattery. Knock yourself out. That's just free advertisement for us. It never hurt my feelings, because most bartenders know us and our staff around town — it started at Harborside. You gotta remember, the Bloody Mary, the Margarita, they all started somewhere," Wall said.

Hartman's House Bill 1001 and its companion in the Senate are scheduled for a hearing March 13 in Annapolis. If they

don't die in committee, they have a halfway decent chance at passing; Hartman says he's been told Gov. Wes Moore's administration is supportive of the measure.

The Orange Crush could then join a long list of beloved Maryland state symbols, like the state drink (milk), state spirit (rye whiskey), and state dog (Chesapeake Bay retriever), to name just a few. Maryland's Eastern Shore has already contributed an official state treat in 2008 when lawmakers made Smith Island Cake the official state dessert.



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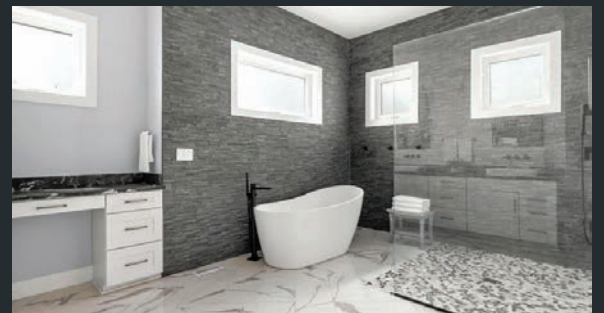


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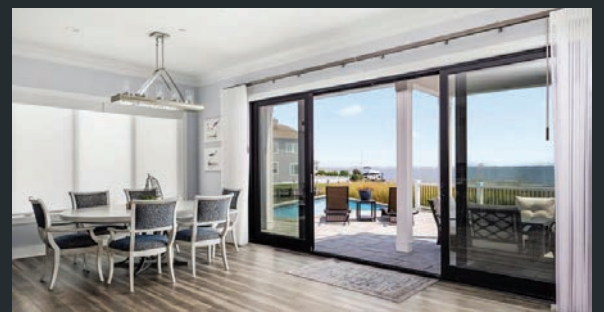
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Sheriff looks to raise starting pay

Crisafulli unsure how much higher budget request will be for commissioners

By **Brian Shane**
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Worcester County Sheriff Matt Crisafulli said he had but one thought last week when he saw neighboring Rehoboth Beach increased its starting salary for police officers to \$78,000.

“How in the hell are we going to compete with that?” he said.

Leadership at the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office said starting pay for deputies needs to increase sharply, as the agency faces recruiting competition from other law enforcement agencies offering bigger salaries and five-digit signing bonuses.

The \$55,037 starting salary for a Worcester County sheriff’s deputy is not competitive and should be increased to attract new recruits and lateral transfers, Crisafulli and his senior leadership team said in an interview with *OC Today-Dispatch*.

By how much, though, is something Crisafulli is still figuring out with county leaders. Worcester County’s annual budget process kicked off last week, with county de-

partments and municipalities submitting funding requests. The fiscal year 2026 budget will be finalized in June.

“We’re certainly taking a hard look at this budget cycle to improve. We want to be competitive. You have surrounding agencies – Delaware State Police, Maryland State Police, your Virginia Beach departments – they’re just ratcheting up the pay,” Crisafulli said.

The sheriff’s office staffs 95 sworn deputies. They have two full-time openings, and two part-time openings, not to mention three deputies who just completed a six-month stint at the police academy with another recruit soon to graduate.

But with more and more training requirements from the state, it means deputies are spending less time in their job, and more time on training. Some roles require monthly or bi-weekly training. Then there’s vacation, personal time, even sick time means less time clocked into their job.

“Some of them, we’re lucky to get them for 1,500 hours a year,” Crisafulli said. “It’s getting to the point, it’s taking two to three deputies to make one.”

In the last five years, the sheriff’s office received a total of 151 applica-

tions for entry-level deputies, including 7 this year. A decade ago, however, there would have been three to five times as many applications, according to Chief Deputy Nate Passwaters, second in command at the sheriff’s office.

He said Worcester’s recruiting struggles are microcosm of a nationwide trend: police agencies started to see a decline in applications during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21. At the same time, rhetoric around police reform hampered some departments’ abilities to get qualified applicants, he said.

It’s led some agencies to up the ante – like in Hagerstown, he noted, where the police department is offering recruits a \$40,000 bonus.

“You can go on the Internet right now and look at 20 different police departments and you’re going to see sign-on bonuses and significant increases in salaries,” Passwaters said. “We’re all struggling to get the same applicants. It’s important for us to do everything we can on our end, working with our county administration and commissioners, to make it enticing.”

It’s not just rookie hires that are drying up. For deputy positions that cover the court system – the primary duty of the sheriff’s office, Sheriff

POLICE STARTING PAY AFTER GRADUATING FROM ACADEMY	
Snow Hill Police	\$48,073
City of Virginia Beach Police	\$49,790
Pocomoke City Police	\$52,826
Berlin Police	\$54,560
Salisbury Police	\$55,000
Worcester County Sheriff	\$55,037
Wicomico County Sheriff	\$57,200
Ocean City Police	\$57,947
Ocean Pines Police	\$63,500
Maryland State Police	\$68,673
Rehoboth Beach Police	\$78,809
Delaware State Police	\$86,919

Crisafulli notes – applications for years had easily been sourced from retired cops looking to downshift in their career. From 2020 to 2022, the office saw 26 applications for part-time hires.

But since 2023, total applications fell to 2. It’s forced the sheriff to convert as many as 15 to 18 part-timers into full-time deputy positions. Passwaters said to get out from under that staffing imbalance would require bringing another 12 to 15 more deputies on board.

“When people retired, they would come over, be able to wear the uniform, work the courts, and remain a law enforcement officer,” Crisafulli
See STARTING Page 13

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County failed to follow state meeting rule

Violation should have been posted on meeting agenda first, then acknowledged

By **Brian Shane**
Staff Writer

(March 14, 2025) Late last year, when the Worcester County Commissioners left a meeting item off their agenda, they were deemed to have violated the state's Open Meetings Act. But then, when they didn't properly disclose that violation, it created a whole new violation. That's the conclusion from the state's Open Meetings Compliance Board, who published their opinion

March 5. "We conclude the Board violated (the act) by failing to note of the agenda of its December 3, 2024, meeting that it would be announcing a prior violation of the Act," the board wrote.

According to the Maryland Open Meetings Act, adopted in 1977, a public body must tell citizens ahead of time about any items scheduled to be discussed, by including the item on a published meeting agenda. However, if officials end up discuss something that wasn't on the agenda, it then becomes a violation of the Act.

Violations are complaint driven. The arm of state government han-

dling complaints is the Maryland Open Meetings Compliance Board. This board, acting on a complaint, found that the Worcester County Board of Commissioners committed a violation during its Sept. 17 meeting.

The violation was for failing to include on the agenda a discussion of funds earmarked for Pocomoke City, the compliance board wrote in a Nov. 25 opinion.

When an Open Meetings Act violation occurs, it doesn't just end with the citation. The Act then requires officials to publicly disclose that violation at their very next meeting. For the commissioners, they next met on Dec. 3.

Here's where the second violation happened: Again, any topic of discussion, including the disclosure of an Open Meetings Act violation, still must be included as a topic of discussion on the meeting agenda. But when the commissioners made their disclosure, they did it at the wrong time.

They should have included discussion of the Open Meetings Act violation as an agenda item. That didn't happen. Instead, Commissioners President Ted Elder mentioned it at the end of the Dec. 3 meeting, during a period typically reserved for open

comments by the commissioners. "At the September 17, 2024 meeting, the commissioners heard an item related to the repurposing of a grant that was inadvertently not included in that meeting's agenda..." Elder said. "Although the item was omitted form the agenda, the materials for the item had been included in the public available packet of materials for that meeting."

The complainant on both occasions was Chip Choquette, a county resident who also hosts his own Facebook news aggregation page that he calls the Pocomoke City Arrowhead. When reached for comment, county officials noted that the requirement to disclose violations during the agenda portion of a meeting is not expressly contained in the Open Meeting Act statute, and that it's the first time the issue had been raised.

"The county has always striven for compliance with all Open Meetings Act requirements," Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young said in a statement. "Since I have joined County Administration, the commissioners have conducted over 100 public, open meetings. These two recent technical complaints are the only ones that we've received in that time. In short, I am proud of our Open Meetings Act record."

Starting salary hurting county

Continued from Page 12 said. "It's an open line in the budget, but you can't fill it, because people are not staying in this profession. They're taking their pension and they're saying enough is enough."

Many police agencies put new hires on a three- to five-year contract, something that Crisafulli himself did 30 years ago when his police career started in Pocomoke City. Historically, this has not been the practice of the Worcester County Sheriff's Office -- but that could change.

"We're strongly considering that option in the next couple of years," Crisafulli said. "You're doing it to protect your investment so that the deputy doesn't get three weeks into field training, and wake up and say, 'wow, I could make \$10,000 more in the neighboring county.'"

Competition is coming not only from Lower Shore counties in Maryland, but Delaware, where the State Police have bold billboards advertising a \$86,919 starting salary -- "and that's really all you need" to see, said Sgt. Mike Valerio of the sheriff's office.

Valerio also represents his colleagues in blue as the vice president of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge

#50. He noted that, unlike other police unions that use collective bargaining to agree on a contract and wages, his lodge will sit down face-to-face with county leaders to discuss wages.

"We're reasonable and don't expect the deciders of salary to give our members blank checks. But we gotta stay competitive," he said. "We gotta ensure our members have the ability to live a comfortable life and provide for their family while still doing this job, because they can go make more money doing other things."

Valerio also mentioned how the ever-shrinking candidate pool isn't just entry-level college kids or candidates exiting the military. It's also lateral transfers, or mid-career cops who leave other agencies for the sheriff's office. And he'd know -- Valerio left the Ocean City Police Department in 2016 to join the Worcester team in Snow Hill.

The sheriff's office is also facing even more competition, from an unlikely source: the local housing market, where inventory is low and list prices are rising.

"They want to live in Worcester," Valerio says of his lodge brothers and sisters. "They just can't afford it."

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Local officials pitch annual budget requests

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Pocomoke needs money for firefighter overtime. Berlin wants a grant to go toward a new community center. Snow Hill asked for help paying for sidewalks for school-children, and Ocean City wants money to help paying for a batch of new police officers.

Local leaders jokingly call it the “beg-a-thon” – when municipalities descend on the Worcester County Government Center in Snow Hill and bring forth their respective funding requests to the County Commissioners at the start of another season of budget planning. This year’s budget requests came at the commissioner’s meeting on March 4.

Ocean Pines

To maintain its 82 miles of roads and 387 drainage ditches, Ocean Pines requested \$150,000 toward infrastructure maintenance and repairs, as well as \$223,071 toward general street grants. The in-person request came from Ocean Pines Association vice president Rick Farr and general manager John Viola.

Citing an increasing demand on their emergency services, Farr also asked for a \$75,000 grant toward for police and \$46,000 toward fire services.

He also mentioned that, because the Ocean Pines is technically a homeowner’s association and not formally a municipality, they don’t participate in a pension system for police but have their own 401(k) program.

Ocean Pines also put in a request for a \$40,000 grant for its recreation and parks department, which Farr said is operated seven days a week, year-round. Money would go toward maintenance and operational costs for amenities like concerts in the park, holiday events, soccer fields, basketball courts, and walking trails, he said.

Berlin

Berlin Mayor Zackery Tyndall sought a 7.5% grant increase, totaling \$537,000, which he said would be used to offset municipal services like fire/EMS and police.

Tyndall also asked for \$150,000 to assist with site work on a new community center on Flower Street. Funding will also come from federal community development block grants to assist with architectural and design work.

Tyndall said the town has set aside \$370,000 for the project, much of which came from fundraising with the sales of lawn-sized Town of Berlin flags. The community center site also would be the future home of the non-profit community group Shore Up!

“I want to thank the commissioners

for the transfer of property that you did on Flower Street, for that rear parcel that’s largely offline wetlands – not really a whole lot of use, but it is going to add some green space to the future community center,” Tyndall said.

Snow Hill

Snow Hill grant requests totaled \$1.13 million. Town Manager Rick Pollitt mentioned a promenade project on Bank Street, which requires \$72,000 in stormwater management expenses to make up for a federal funding shortfall.

Other Snow Hill requests included \$12,600 for sidewalks for pedestrian safety in the vicinity of schools, \$49,338 toward street infrastructure needs, and \$66,518 for deteriorating basketball courts.

Pollitt also said Snow Hill is seeking \$171,185 in support toward flooding remediation at Byrd Park, a 15-acre site along the Pocomoke River.

“We’ve tried to make the case that Byrd Park is more than just a town park,” he said. “People come from miles around to launch their boats there, have picnics, family gatherings. We’re hoping the county will see that as a regional resource that’s worthy of your attention.”

Ocean City

Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan

and City Manager Terry McGean spoke at the meeting. The resort’s request includes \$2.8 million in unrestricted grant funding, \$50,000 toward the convention bureau, a \$100,000 recreation grant, and \$400,000 toward tourism marketing.

Meehan asked for \$1.13 million in police funding, to offset half the cost of recruiting and hiring 10 new full-time officers, as well as providing them with police vehicles. That manpower is needed, the mayor said, since Ocean City was forced to end its 125-year program of hiring summertime cops.

“The seasonal officer program was really our farm team – they were our AAA team,” Meehan said. “Over 90% of our current officers serving as full-time officers started as seasonal officers. We no longer have that program, which is making it very difficult for us to recruit.”

Ocean City also requested \$1,247,495 to offset the town’s spending on emergency services to West Ocean City, where Meehan says the resort handles about 21% of all fire/EMS calls.

Pocomoke City

Pocomoke City’s fiscal year 2026 request totals \$1.8 million. This in- See MUNICIPAL Page 18

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Obituaries

DONNA MARIE LEINER
Ocean City

Donna Marie Leiner, age 70, passed away on March 8, 2025 after a courageous five-year battle with lymphoma.



Donna Leiner

She is survived by her husband, Mark Leiner; five children, Whitney Rothschild (husband Phil Rothschild), Alison Leiner, Chelsea Rafinski (husband Bartosz Rafinski), Jake Leiner (fiancée Rachel Harris) and, Melanie Leiner; and six beloved grandchildren, Ben (14), Evelyn (12), Nora (10), Charlie (9), Will (7), and Henry (3). Her seventh grandchild, Gabriel, is due to arrive any day.

Donna was born in Randallstown on June 7, 1954 to Joan and Leo Wenker. Raised by her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, she knew love and strength from generations of strong women. She shared a special bond with her siblings, Wendy and Phil and sister-in-law, Chris. This bond was evident in their frequent lunches, canning days, and love for chatting about what each grandchild was accomplishing.

During childhood, Donna cherished family vacations at the beach. She graduated from Salisbury University and worked at The Bonfire Restaurant where she met and fell in love with her husband, Mark Leiner. The walls of the Bonfire hold countless memories that impacted Donna's life. There, she worked as a waitress, married, made life-long friendships, and worked hard to ensure it was a well-run business.

She cared about each employee as if they were her own child.

Donna and Mark married in October 1984. They raised five children and built a life filled with love, adventure, and devotion to their family and friends. Their home was always open to loved ones and was full of energy, laughter, and endless memories.

Donna enjoyed staying active. She loved to play tennis, read, volunteer at her church's thrift store, and cook and bake for her loved ones. She was a genuine loyal friend, with a gift for making those around her feel seen.

Above all, being a mother was Donna's greatest source of pride. She devoted herself unconditionally to her family, ensuring that each of her children were supported and encouraged to pursue their interests. She never missed a game, horse show, dance recital, or call for advice.

Donna's grandchildren were the light of her life and brought her immeasurable pride and joy. Games of basketball, evening swims in the pool and cookouts, cheers from the sidelines, vacations, and ice cream dates were treasured not only by Donna and Mark, but also by their grandchildren. They were given these experiences by someone who wanted to know them and share in their lives. To them, she was their "Baba," always present with open arms and an even bigger heart.

Throughout her courageous battle with lymphoma, Donna leaned on Melanie, her rock and devoted caregiver. Donna never lost her will to fight, her faith in God's love for her, or her ability to see the best in people.

Donna's memory will shine on every beach day, Sunday dinner, Christmas morning, and snuggle with her dog, Pink. Her passing is an immeasurable loss — she was the pillar of her family, and her love will continue to shine through those who were lucky enough

to know her. May her memory be eternal.

A service will be held at Atlantic United Methodist Church, 105 4th St. Ocean City, Md. 21842, on Friday, March 14 at 1 p.m. Visitation will be offered from noon-1 p.m.

RICHARD G. JONES

Berlin

Richard G. "Rick" Jones, age 62, of Berlin, died Monday, March 3, 2025 at Macky & Pam Stansell House in Ocean



Richard Jones

Pines. He was born in Salisbury and was the son of the late Richard Jones and Peggy W. (Wainwright) Jones.

He was a farmer most of his life and had worked for the Worcester County

Public Roads for a long time. He was a member of Sons of the American Legion and a former member of the Berlin Vol Fire Co. Rick loved horses, motorcycles, hunting, tractors, fishing, spending time in the outdoors and farming with his family.

Rick is survived by his daughter, Kaitlyn J. Osowiecki and husband Ryan of Berlin, MD; two sons, Chris McDonald and wife Megan of Canton, GA and Travis McDonald and wife Jessica of UT; five grandchildren, Alyvia McDonald, Collin McDonald, Grayson McDonald, Arlee McDonald and Hanna McDonald. He is also survived by many cousins.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday March 15, 2025 at Buckingham Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Main Street in Berlin.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Berlin Vol. Fire Co., C/O Taylor Bank, P.O. Box 5, Berlin, Md. 21811.

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DAVID BRYAN CROUSE

Ocean City

David Bryan Crouse of Ocean City passed away peacefully with his brother and sister-in-law by his side on Feb. 26, 2025.



David Crouse

David was born in Baltimore. He was the loving husband of the past Lorraine M. Crouse. David is survived by his father, James Everett Crouse; his brother Paul Crouse (Janet); sister in law Mary; and his four nieces, Anne Marie Crouse, Michele Corso (Ryan), Jennifer and Jessica Bohn. He is also survived by Lorraine's daughters, Sharon, Karen and Nicole and their families.

David took pleasure being out with his friends talking and enjoying a beverage. He enjoyed fishing and boating. Known by many as "Cap'n Dave" he participated in many fishing tourna-

ments.

Obituaries

ments including the White Marlin Open. He was an avid Maryland sports fan. He followed The Ravens, Orioles and UMD football. He also enjoyed many styles of music and played guitar. Growing up he had a passion for muscle cars and motorcycles and was a collector of assorted vehicles. David was a graduate of Overlea High School, Baltimore.

David is predeceased by his wife, Lorraine Crouse; his mother, Eleanora K. Crouse; and his brother Michael S. Crouse. He will be missed by his family and many friends in Ocean City and beyond.

Cremation followed his death. Honoring David's wishes, no formal services are planned. A private gathering to celebrate David's life will be planned at a future date.

HAROLD EDWARD TEWELL

Ocean Pines

Harold Edward Tewell, 85 years old, of Ocean Pines, passed away peacefully at Coastal Hospice on the Lake, Salisbury on March 6, 2025.



Harold Tewell

Eddie, as he was known to everyone was born in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 28, 1939 to Evelyn A. Pike and Emmert R. Tewell. Eddie graduated from Eastern High School, NE, Washington, DC in 1957. He married Rita Fitzgerald on November 29, 1958 at St. Dominic's Catholic Church. They cherished an amazing sixty-six years together and raised five children, Harold, Jr., Thomas, Lynn, Lora and Gregory.

Eddie started his career right out of school for Western Electric. He became an insulator in 1959 and worked for 35 years at various companies associated with the Asbestos Workers Local 24 Union. During visits to the district, he would always say "I build this or I built that." He served as foreman for many large jobs and even served as the Recording Secretary of the Union for several years. For those who knew him and were astonished with his spelling

skills, were all interested in seeing the notes he took from union meetings. He was an accomplished horse-shoe player and took home many awards.

Eddie, Rita and their kids were avid campers and went camping almost every weekend during the summer months when the kids were young. They began with tents and sleeping bags and eventually graduated to a pop-up camper. The camping trips were some of the fondest family memories.

Eddie enjoyed woodworking and made each great-grandchild their own personalized rocker, after he made Joseph the "original" rocker. They moved to The Parke at Ocean Pines in 2001 where they made many lifelong friends. Eddie was one of the original residents assigned to create the by-laws of The Parke. They enjoyed traveling domestically and traveled internationally to

Ireland, Germany, Italy, Panama and Canada. They were also avid cruisers, both domestically and internationally.

Eddie attended mass regularly with the family and in early Spring 2012 decided to convert to Catholicism by attending Right of Christian Initiation for Adults classes and was converted on April 7, 2012.

Eddie could always be counted on and available for any card game with his favorite being pinochle. He also looked forward to Bingo at the Knights of Columbus and the Ocean City Senior Center. He was referred to as The Parke "tool" man because he was known to own and lend what he had to neighbors.

He was preceded in death by his parents Evelyn and Emmert Tewell, his grandson Brian Tewell and his son-in-law Ronald Henrion.

Eddie is survived by his wife of 66

years, Rita Tewell; their three sons Harold, Jr. (Susan), Thomas, and Gregory (Marlene); two daughters Lynn Henrion and Lora Savoy (Kevin); 13 grandchildren Jason Tewell, Monica Halloran, Chad Tewell, Angela Reid, Jennifer Brown, Jordan Tewell, Thomas Tewell, Jr., Megan Rodgers, Travis Tewell, Kristi Tewell, Alison Howard, Katrina Spriggs and Joseph Tewell; 16 great grandchildren; one brother Emmert Tewell, Jr. (Claudia); and two sisters Janice Owens (Albert) and Joyce Tewell, and a host of other nieces, nephews and relatives as well as loving friends and wonderful neighbors.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be sent to Coastal Hospice, 1113 Healthway Drive, Salisbury, Maryland 21804, or online at coastalhospice.org.



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Commissioners will weigh property tax rate decrease

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Could a tax break be coming to Worcester County property owners? Elected leaders say they want to explore the possibility.

“Because we are having increased revenue coming into the county, that doesn’t mean we should spend it,” said County Commissioner Chip Bertino at the March 4 Board of Commissioners meeting. “Quite honestly, as we all know up here, it’s not our money. I’d very much like us to see money given back to the people who are paying it, because costs are going up and up and up.”

For now, property taxes for Worcester County are set to 84.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value. Based on that level of taxation, the county could expect to receive an additional \$18 million in property tax revenue for fiscal year 2026, according to preliminary estimates released in December.

However, if the tax rate generated the exact same revenue as last year – the term for this is constant yield – then the county’s tax rate would drop to about 77 cents. Every penny on the tax rate brings about \$1.8 to \$2 million in revenue, according to Bertino.

Looking ahead, given the expected property tax windfall for fiscal 2026, Bertino (District 5, Ocean Pines) on Tuesday asked county staffers to prepare a report demonstrating projections if the tax rate were dropped by 2, 3, 4 or 5 cents – or even if it fell 7 cents, to the constant yield. The commissioners approved his motion unanimously.

Bertino also said he’s heard the scuttlebutt around the county, that a projected revenue increase would mean more spending – but that’s not a done deal.

“If we can push back money, yeah, I think we should,” he said. “How much does government need to increase? At some point, enough is enough. If you’re on a fixed income, as many people are in the Ocean Pines area, it means something to them. I just feel very strongly about it, espe-

cially since I’m seeing these (property) assessments increasing considerably.”

Bertino was quick to say that while he supports a property tax reduction, he’s not necessarily advocating for it – yet. That’s because, given the state of Maryland’s projected \$3 billion revenue shortfall, state lawmakers may shift the burden of some services onto individual counties.

It means the near future is unclear because Worcester and the state’s other 22 counties may be forced to pay for things it never did before, like some community college funding, state property assessments, and the register of wills office.

“We’re getting hit with increased costs from state decisions,” Bertino said. “The legislature is going to force county jurisdictions to pay for their shortfalls.”

Other elected county leaders said Tuesday they support a potential property tax decrease.

“The taxpayers fund everything and they’re the last person that we think about a lot of times. They’re also getting hit with these enormous electric bills, and everything else. I fully support giving anything we can back to them,” said Commissioner Caryn Abbott (District 1, Southern).

“I do think that it’s time” to consider a lower tax rate, said Commissioner Jim Bunting. “Ocean City talks about a tax differential every year, and a reduction to residents of Ocean City, and the nonresidents. It would go a long way to meet that goal.”

Worcester County also is projecting another \$6 million from income tax revenue for fiscal 2026. But, between that money and new property tax revenue, it won’t all get spent: the county as a matter of policy sets aside 15% of revenue in reserves, as well as 22.2% of income tax revenue toward employee pensions.

Budget meetings in Snow Hill will continue through the spring, and the county’s fiscal 2026 budget is scheduled for adoption at a June 3 meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Municipal budget needs heard

Continued from Page 14

Pocomoke City is up against fire/EMS staffing shortages and needs that money for overtime, on-call compensation, and possible out-of-town calls for service. He also requested a \$49,338 infrastructure grant, for security upgrades to government buildings.

City Manager John Barkley said that money would support operational upgrades to public works, police, water and wastewater, and economic development. He called the grants “critical” in the face of rising costs for materials, equipment, fuel and energy, vehicles and supplies.

To help fund for firefighting and emergency medical services, Barkley asked for a \$72,000 grant. He said

“We appreciate the funding and support that Worcester County has provided to the city in past years, and we look forward to continuing to work with the county on matters of common interest in the coming fiscal year,” Barkley said.

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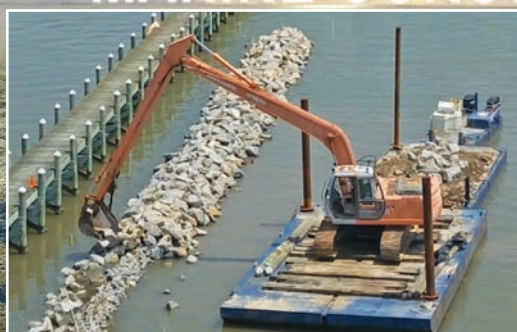
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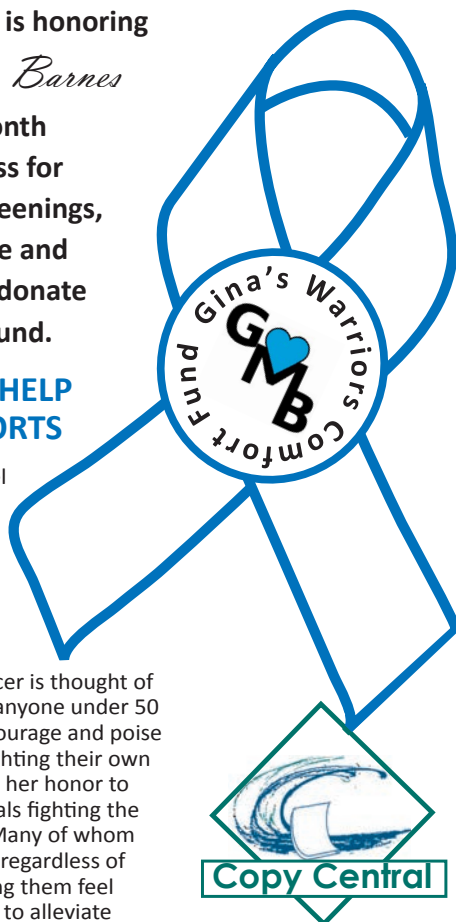


Gina Maria Barnes

memory this month raising awareness for colon cancer screenings, collecting change and raising funds to donate to the comfort fund.

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Opinion

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

Ortt did great work, so will Touch of Italy

What a difference eight years make.

Plagued by rotating management, declining patronage, big plans and grand failures, the Ocean Pines Yacht Club and Beach Club had pretty much bottomed out in Fiscal Year 2018, missing their budget by somewhere around a million dollars.

Revenue projections were off by more than \$850,000, and personnel expenses were more than \$100,000 over budget, contributing mightily to the \$1.6 million loss the Ocean Pines Association realized that budget year.

And then everything changed, following the board of directors' decision in April 2018 to outsource food and beverage operations to the Matt Ortt Companies.

The turnaround was immediate, and those operations have not looked back since, producing as they did positive results year after year.

For that, Ocean Pines owes a debt of gratitude to the Ortt organization as it moves on to pursue opportunities in Ocean City, and a new company arrives Tuesday to take over Ocean Pines' food and beverage opportunities.

That company, the Touch of Italy Group, will undoubtedly keep up the good work. It is a professional operator that has been proving itself in this area for the past 15 years with its highly successful restaurants in Ocean City and on the Delaware coast, among others.

Led by its confident and outgoing owner Bob Ciprietti and finance man Rick Lawrence, who could find a decimal point in a haystack, the company isn't kidding when it says Ocean Pines residents and customers of its restaurants can believe it when Ciprietti says he and his staff will deliver an outstanding product.

To the Matt Ortt Companies, it's goodbye, thanks for everything, and best of luck on your new venture on Ocean City's Boardwalk, and to Touch of Italy it's welcome aboard and thanks for stepping up to the plate(s). We look forward to your success.

Library youth director's work praised

By **Tara Fischer**
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Friends of the Ocean Pines library recognized the branch's youth director this week as the "Staff Member of the Year."

Angie DiMarco received the award at a March 11 luncheon following two weeks of voting by library staff members. Jim Meckley, the president of the library support group, said that this process "means a lot to the winners and shows the respect of a 'job well done' by their peers."

He said this recognition is based on a staff member's performance throughout the year, the presentation of programs, helping to run the library smoothly, and, "above all, how easy and helpful they are to work with on a daily basis."

DiMarco's name will be placed on a plaque and she will be given a gift certificate from the Friends of the Ocean Pines Library.

"[DiMarco] is extremely popular and brings in new records of attendants on many of her creative and interesting programs," Meckley said.

While DiMarco, who began her position at the Ocean Pines facility in December of 2023, could not attend due to unforeseen circumstances, colleagues only had glowing remarks about her work at the library.

"She has not been here that long, but she has made such a big impact with the youth programs here," Harry Burkett, the library's branch manager, said. "The numbers have risen since she's been here. She is very high energy. Her story times are very entertaining. She is always trying to think of something new and creative and really knocks herself out to get the kids excited."

DiMarco also facilitates STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) programs for the older children.

Burkett added that her spirit is most captivating to the Ocean Pines community,

particularly to the youth whom she serves.

"What [DiMarco] doesn't realize is that they're coming for her," the manager said. "Her energy and her kindness is infectious. On a typical story time, it's not unusual to have, if you count the parents, 70 people in our large meeting room. She will have activities planned. She knows how to control a crowd that big by keeping them busy with activity stations. She has like five plates spinning at the same time."

Burkett said that DiMarco's commitment never seems to slow down. This was evident during the area's most recent snowstorm, which saw five consecutive days off for Worcester County Public School children. On the Thursday afternoon that week, around 4:30 p.m., when word got out of another closure the following day, the manager said that DiMarco noted, "Wouldn't it be neat to have a kids' day off program tomorrow?"

According to Burkett, DiMarco advertised the event on Facebook and other social media channels, and the next day, over 90 people showed up.

"She got people excited," the library branch manager said. "Above and beyond, she doesn't resist a workload on herself to make it a great and special experience for the kids."

Burkett said the Staff Member of the Year award began in 2009.

"[The staff's] selections are so mature and unbiased," the manager said. "I feel each year they choose the person who deserves it."

The recipient is honored by the Friends of the Ocean Pines Library group.

The Friends of the Ocean Pines Library is a volunteer team that raises money to benefit the branch and its services and acts as advocates for the facility. According to the organization's website, the group's goal is to "maintain an association of persons interested in books and libraries, assist the library in



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE
OP library employee Angie DiMarco dresses the part for a 'Royal Tea Party' hosted at the OP facility.

developing programs to meet current community needs, assist in promoting knowledge of and participation in library programs, aid in providing funds to meet special library needs, provide a channel for individuals and organizations to express ideas and make suggestions for library use and services, and stimulate gifts of books, magazines, desirable collections, endowments, and bequests."

The Staff Member of the Year Award highlights just some of the good that is being done at the library.

Meckley maintained that through the work of employees and volunteers, the spot not only issues books, DVDs, audio books, and CDs but is also a resource for periodicals, the use of copiers and printers, technical assistance, and a quiet place to read or study. Additionally, the facility offers venue space for meetings and events.

The Friends of the Ocean Pines Library boasts upcoming programs as it continues its mission of supporting the community resource. These include trivia contests on March 19 and April 9, a First Aid course in the spring, a Volunteer of the Year Award on April 15, the annual book sale at the end of July, and the constantly restocked free books always available in the lobby.

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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The Bayside Gazette is published weekly by FLAG Publications, Inc.
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The Bayside Gazette is available by subscription at \$90/year or \$45/6 mos.
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Food drive to help supply Pocomoke pantry

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(March 13, 2025) Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, located in Berlin, is collecting food and toiletry donations for the Helping Hands Pantry in Pocomoke City.

Worcester Youth and Family is looking for products like toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, bandages, chapstick, diapers, and baby wipes to offer the distribution center. The organization is also asking Worcester County residents to donate food. Suggested items include easy-to-open cans of soup, beans, tuna, and chicken pouches or cans, protein bars, peanut butter, shelf-stable milk, juice boxes, mixed nuts, and instant or regular oatmeal.

“There is a need for toiletries and food,” said Christine Felix, a coordinator at Worcester Youth and Family. “Toiletries are not covered by food stamps, and with the increased cost of living, people struggle a lot with affording all of those items. So food, hygiene products, and cleaning products are all encouraged.”

Felix added that donations can be dropped off at boxes located at the Worcester County library branches and the Worcester Youth and Family’s Berlin office at 124 North Main Street, Suite C.

According to the coordinator, she was inspired to facilitate the food drive when

she went to the Pocomoke pantry to pick up some food for a local family and discovered they had less than what she expected.

“[Helping Hands] hardly had anything,” she said. “They had pancake mix and maybe some rice. It was not a lot at all.”

According to Felix, these types of facilities are necessary for the community.

“Families really do rely on food pantries as supplemental help,” she noted. “It’s not only families. It’s also for single adults and elderly people. They often don’t get as many food benefits, so they rely on pantries. There is a need, so

I figured we could raise a little bit of awareness and try to contribute.”

Helping Hands Outreach Ministry is located on 1101 Market Street in Pocomoke and is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WYFCS is a nonprofit group that serves vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in Worcester County. Its programs center on mental well-being and remediation of financial hardship to reach those who need help the most.

“Through programs that include comprehensive Mental Health Counseling, Youth Mentoring, Family Resource

Navigation, and Youth Camps and Groups, WYFCS is increasing awareness about mental health, providing community resources and education, and truly making a difference in the lives of the people in the community,” the organization’s website reads.

Worcester Youth and Family helps these individuals by working with them on budgeting, establishing self-sufficiency and referring them to additional resources.

Felix said that items for the food and toiletry drive will be collected through April 15.

Art competition opens in Berlin

(March 13, 2025) The Worcester County Arts Council has announced the opening of its latest juried art competition and exhibit, themed “Peace.” The exhibition will launch with a public reception on Friday, March 14 from 4-6 p.m., featuring an awards presentation at 5 p.m.

The competition provided a platform for artists to explore and interpret the concept of peace in their work, showcasing the many ways this universal yet deeply personal ideal can be represented through visual art. The exhibit aims to

spark meaningful conversations and inspire a shared vision of harmony through creative expression.

“Artists were encouraged to submit pieces reflecting various dimensions of peace,” said Anna Mullis, executive director, “whether through the tranquility of nature, the resilience of communities, or the personal journey toward inner calm.”

The diverse collection of works featured in the exhibit showcases interpretations of peace in its many forms, offering visitors an opportunity to reflect,

connect, and be inspired.

The juried competition was open to artists of all backgrounds, working in a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, digital art, and mixed media. Emerging and established artists were encouraged to participate, ensuring a dynamic and inclusive showcase.

The event will provide an opportunity to meet the artists, view the stunning interpretations of peace, and recognize the competition winners during the 5 p.m. awards presentation.

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Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat 11am-3pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Friday 2-4pm	5603 Atlantic Ave. #301, Ocean City	3BR/3.5BA	Condo	\$1,499,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 2-4pm	10300 Coastal Hwy. Unit 1802, Ocean City	Studio	Condo	\$269,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 3-5pm	9402 Coastal Highway Unit 204, Ocean City	1BR/1.5BA	Condo	\$449,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Friday 3-5pm	155 Jamestown Rd, Unit 104, Ocean City	1BR/1.5BA	Condo	\$279,900	Katie Landon/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 3-5pm	11605 Seaward Rd., Unit E, Ocean City	2BR/2A	Condo	\$399,900	Katie Landon/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-1pm	11421 Manklin Creek Rd., Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$297,500	Jeffrey Messick/BHHS PenFed Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	27035 Bay Bluff Rd. Bayside, Selbyville	6BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$1,150,000	Michele Pompa/Coldwell Banker Realty
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Saturday 11am-1pm	13 91st St. #305 Tahitian Sun, Ocean City	2BR	Loft Condo	\$399,900	Terry Miller/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-2pm	3801 Atlantic Ave Unit 411, Ocean City	1BR/1.5BA	Condo	\$440,000	Kim Bounds/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-2pm	8 60th St. #502 Meridian, Ocean City	3BR/3BA	Condo	\$899,900	Monica McNamara/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	13 91st St. #305 Tahitian Sun, Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$399,900	Terry Miller/Coldwell Banker Realty
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Sunday 11am-1pm	10300 Coastal Hwy. Unit 1802, Ocean City	Studio	Condo	\$269,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday 11am-2pm	149 Captains Quarters Rd., Unit 101, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$315,000	Team Bouse House/ReMax Advantage Realty
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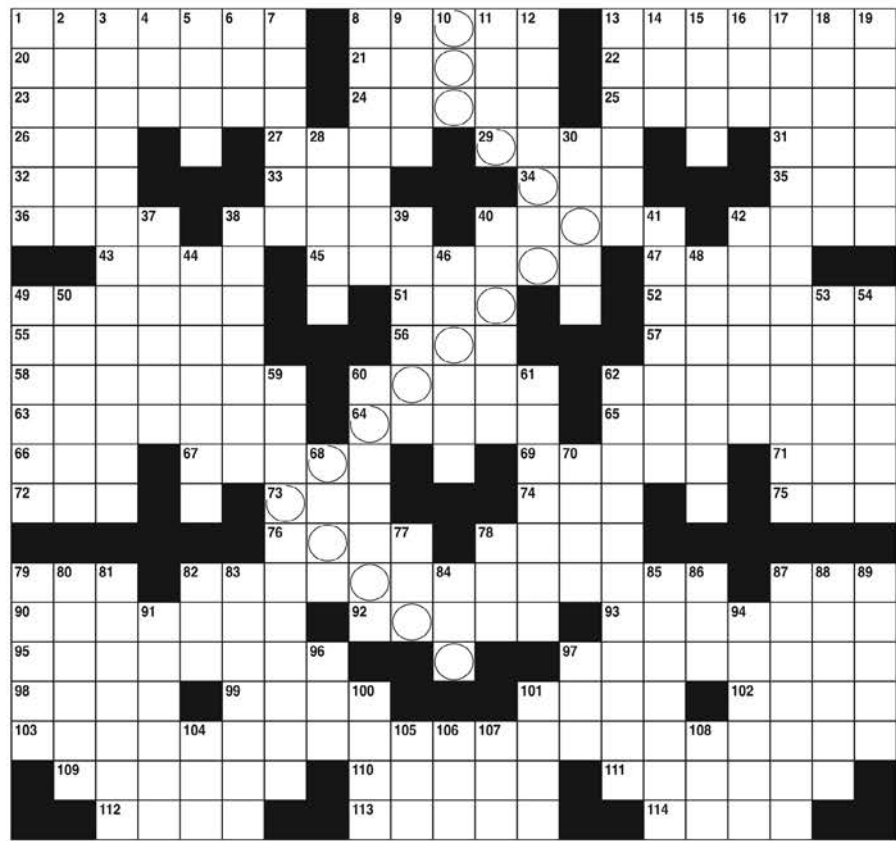
PARLOR TRICK

BY MATTHEW STOCK AND WILL NEDIGER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Matthew Stock works for a math-education nonprofit in East St. Louis, Ill. Will Nediger, of London, Ontario, is a professional crossword constructor. As fans of each other's work, they connected via the online "puzzleverse." They still have not met or even spoken together over video. The original idea for this puzzle was Matthew's. Together they developed the theme via Twitter direct messages, then exchanged grids back and forth until they got one they were both happy with. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Bon ____!"
 - 8 "See ya later!"
 - 13 It covers more than 30 percent of the earth's surface
 - 20 Donna ____, member of Bill Clinton's cabinet
 - 21 Klein who wrote the best seller "This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate"
 - 22 Desert whose soil has been compared with that of Mars
 - 23 Biting writings
 - 24 Breakfast treat
 - 25 Persuades a customer to pay more
 - 26 "Or so"
 - 27 Much of a delivery person's income
 - 29 Makes a choice
 - 31 Hoppin'
 - 32 Prearranged
 - 33 Suffix with official
 - 34 Nickel found in a pocket, say
 - 35 Actor Barinholtz of "The Mindy Project"
 - 36 Classic Camaro
 - 38 ____ K. Smith, poet who won a Pulitzer for "Life on Mars"
- DOWN**
- 40 Cosmetic that can be applied with a brush
 - 42 Neighbors of exclamation marks
 - 43 "La Dolce ____"
 - 45 Stuffed one's face
 - 47 Bump on a frog
 - 49 Question regarding a mic
 - 51 Hubbub
 - 52 One of the Blues Brothers
 - 55 Above criticism
 - 56 Question from the befuddled
 - 57 Syrian city with a historic citadel
 - 58 What "10" can mean
 - 60 Extra
 - 62 Rolled one's r's, say
 - 63 Linguistic unit
 - 64 Giraffe's closest living relative
 - 65 Deb ____, secretary of the interior starting in 2021
 - 66 Opposite of 'neath
 - 67 Regarding
 - 69 Exams for some future clerks: Abbr.
 - 71 Cold open?
 - 72 Hang out on a line
 - 73 U.K. award bestowed by the queen
 - 74 West Coast news inits.
 - 75 Blunder
 - 76 They cast lots
 - 78 "Love covers a multitude of ____": I Peter 4:8
 - 79 Lawn material
 - 82 Something's essential aspect ... or what's spelled out by letters in this puzzle's eight "cups"
 - 87 Comedian Margaret
 - 90 2011 film for which Octavia Spencer won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar
 - 92 It takes blades to blades
 - 93 Deal
 - 95 Like the consonants "t" and "d"
 - 97 Eject forcefully
 - 98 Records request inits.
 - 99 ____ history
 - 101 Utah's state flower
 - 102 Org. that sets permissible exposure limits
 - 103 Karaoke instruction ... or what to do starting at 10-Down
 - 109 P.R. consultant on "Ted Lasso"
 - 110 Start playing for pay
 - 111 Into really small pieces
 - 112 Scott who sued for his freedom
 - 113 Afford, casually
 - 114 Add salt to, say
 - 4 Name that's 6-Down backward
 - 5 Save it for a rainy day!
 - 6 La Corse, par exemple
 - 7 Brewery employee
 - 8 Comb through
 - 9 Bubs
 - 10 Worker's "on vacation" inits.
 - 11 "Actually, I disagree"
 - 12 Rococo painter of "Allegory of the Planets and Continents"
 - 13 They might be pregnant
 - 14 Organic energy compound, for short
 - 15 "Mi ____ es su ____"
 - 16 Part of a cold compress
 - 17 Become clear ... or make like the object represented by the circled letters
 - 18 "So then my response was ..."
 - 19 Hereditary divisions
 - 28 Physicist Newton
 - 30 Loyalty that's pledged
 - 37 Lemonlike fruit
 - 38 Big rigs
 - 39 "Well, fine then"
 - 40 Age beautifully, informally
 - 41 Cuss out
 - 42 Big Brother's creator
 - 44 Pink pad on a paw, in slang
 - 46 The Lord, in the Hebrew Bible
 - 48 Start of a simple request
 - 49 Roly-poly, scientifically
 - 50 ____ torte (Austrian cake)
 - 53 Warm-up act
 - 54 Move shakily
 - 59 Ross Perot founded it in 1995
 - 60 Lack of engagement
 - 61 More wacky
 - 62 "You're just assuming"
 - 68 It's blown in the winds
 - 70 Showed off one's pipes
 - 77 Airport with a Harvey Milk terminal: Abbr.
 - 78 Harry Styles tune about a woman who "lives in daydreams"
 - 79 Lines of notes
 - 80 Sight line?
 - 81 Cooked with hot seasoning
 - 82 Prefix with -lithic
 - 83 Not against the rules
 - 84 It's under @ on a keyboard
 - 85 ____ lodge
 - 86 Rowing machine, informally
 - 87 Event for moving vehicles
 - 88 Super
 - 89 Actress Tatum
 - 91 Folk medicine practitioner
 - 94 Foolish sort
 - 96 Sports fan's cheer
 - 97 Universal Human Rights Mo.
 - 100 Ability to sustain long-term interest
 - 101 Kiss, in Kent
 - 104 Sports fan's cheer
 - 105 Gift wrapper's final touch
 - 106 Nail-polish brand
 - 107 Buffet table item
 - 108 Zoo animal whose name rhymes with "zoo"

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



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HARD - 95

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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

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

WILD WINE WEEK

March 15-22

Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc Citrus and tropical fruits backed by characteristic herbaceous notes. An exuberant wine brimming with flavors of pineapple and stone fruit with a hint of herbaceousness on the palate. Reg. ~~\$16.00~~ **\$12.80**

Oyster Bay Pinot Gris Delicately scented pear and nectarine with a crisp apple freshness and a hint of spice. It's floral, fruity and equally enjoyable as an aperitif or matched with food. Reg. ~~\$13.00~~ **\$10.40**

Meiomi Pinot Noir Soft berry nose; spicy, rich, and long. A crisp, clean blend from three important appellations (Monterey, Santa Barbara, and Sonoma), each of which imparts a special character. Reg. ~~\$20.00~~ **\$16.00**

Bread & Butter Chardonnay Opens with rich notes of vanilla bean and almond, balanced by a soft minerality and a hint of tropical fruit. Those creamy notes linger and join with savory oak, then lead to a long, smooth finish. Reg. ~~\$14.00~~ **\$11.20**

San Bonifacio Pinot Grigio Amazingly refreshing and perfectly balanced Pinot Grigio has primary fruit notes of pear, white nectarine, apple and lime. Reg. ~~\$11.00~~ **\$8.80**

Bogle Phantom Red Deeply luscious and succulent blackberries ignite this vintage of our rich ruby apparition. Aromas of anise and sweet fig are embraced by touches of black pepper. Reg. ~~\$20.00~~ **\$16.00**

Whispering Angel Rose This is full of mouth watering flavor with a lovely texture. Light fruit flavors with a clean finish. Reg. ~~\$24.00~~ **\$19.20**

La Crema Cabernet Sauvignon Notes of dark berries, black cherry, mocha, and subtle oak and spice. Reg. ~~\$42.00~~ **\$33.60**

Crowded House Sauvignon Blanc Vibrant, fresh and cleansing with a lovely precise framework carrying the fruit flavours to a long, pure and mouth watering finish. Reg. ~~\$17.00~~ **\$13.60**

Matanzas Creek Sauvignon Blanc Notes of white and yellow peaches, apricot and quince. The palate is light to medium-bodied, gregarious and energetic full of flavor. Reg. ~~\$20.00~~ **\$16.00**

Kith & Kin Cabernet Sauvignon The complex structure of bold fruit, firm tannins and just-a-hint of eucalyptus round out this exciting young wine. Reg. ~~\$50.00~~ **\$40.00**

Siduri Santa Barbara Pinot Noir Fresh raspberry, black plum and blueberry followed by a smooth, broad texture with medium acidity. Reg. ~~\$24.00~~ **\$19.20**

Alexander Valley Vineyards Rose Rich and full bodied with big flavors of strawberry, watermelon, raspberry and mint. Reg. ~~\$17.00~~ **\$13.60**

Alexander Valley Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Lush flavors of cherry, cassis, blackberry and chocolate. Reg. ~~\$25.00~~ **\$20.00**

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Sonoma Cutrer Sonoma County Chardonnay Green-apple skin aromas and golden apple flavors are shaded with hints of caramel and pineapple in this flavorful and full-bodied wine. Reg. ~~\$25.00~~ **\$20.00**

14 Hands "Hot to Trot" Red Blend A full body of mature berry and plum notes gives way to a spicy finish—the perfect beginning to your night. Reg. ~~\$13.00~~ **\$10.40**

A to Z Pinot Noir Red and black cherries, and spice, the wine opens in the mouth with rich, red and blue fruits, dark spice and dusty tannins. Reg. ~~\$20.00~~ **\$16.00**

Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon Red berry fruits with hints of blackcurrant, along with savory champignon and forest floor notes. Reg. ~~\$23.00~~ **\$18.40**

Conundrum White Blend Flavors of apricot and pear. Notes of pineapple and mandarin orange. Reg. ~~\$16.00~~ **\$12.80**

Cedrick Bardin Pouilly Fume Light-to-medium-bodied with crisp acidity, bright citrus flavours and flinty minerality. Reg. ~~\$29.00~~ **\$23.20**

Domaine Pichot Vouvray Aromas are honeydew, peach and a hint of spice. The palate is juicy, fresh and long, and the acidity balances the fruitiness. Reg. ~~\$19.00~~ **\$15.20**



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Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

VALENTINE VISIT

Cliff Berg, Mike Simcock and Margaret Mudron of the Ocean City-Berlin Rotary Club visited their adopted PreK-3 classes at Showell, Ocean City and Buckingham Elementary to decorate Valentine cookies with the students. The club meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at Don's Seafood at the South Gate of Ocean Pines.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

DISTRICT GOVERNOR VISIT

The Ocean City Lioness Lions and Ocean City Lions joined together to welcome District Governor Bijoy Mahanti. Both are a part of Lions International, the world's largest service club organization with 1.4 million members in over 200 countries. Pictured are OC Lioness President Beverly Topfer, District Governor Bijoy, and OC Lions President Scott Stark.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

ANNUAL MEETING

Eight members of the Worcester County Garden Club recently attended the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland District I Annual Meeting at The Fountains in Salisbury. The club received an award for its yearbook and certificates of appreciation were presented to members Glenda Clarke and Jackie Davies for chairing the District I Fundraising Committee. Pictured, front from left, are Jackie Davies, Glenda Clarke, Mary Ellen Jefferson and Suzy Young; back, from left, Pat Arata, Sandy Buchanan, Rebecca Galyon and Martha Bennett.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

WORX SEMINAR

On Tuesday, February 18, a group of Worcester Preparatory School (WPS) students attended a WORX (Work, Observe, Research, Experience) seminar featuring Judge Brian Shockley and attorney Meegan Kennedy as guest speakers, both of whom are WPS alumni. Shockley has served on the Worcester County Circuit Court since August 2017. Kennedy recently worked as a Law Clerk for Judge Shockley in the Circuit Court for Worcester County and previously served in the Office of the Public Defender in Worcester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Dorchester counties before joining a private law firm. The WORX program at WPS aims to introduce students to the vast opportunities available within the community and beyond. Pictured with the guest speakers are students Gavin Mann, Dexter Feldman, Liam Crowley, Isha Garg, Gabriella Damouni, Lena Parker, Sydney Parker, Emma Nordstrom, Elena Gjoni, Hayden Wagner, WPS Director of Student Life Megan Wallace, Carolina Labin, Darren Lockard, Nate Friedman and Ronen Poddar.

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., March 13

STORY TIME: ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Join in for an Irish story. There will be songs, dancing and crafts. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: 'CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM'

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

PRESSED FLOWER LANTERNS

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. For all skill levels. Supplies included. Registration required: 410-957-0878. www.worcesterlibrary.org

MOVIE MATINEE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Come see a movie you might have missed in the theaters. Light refreshments provided. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BINGO

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Join in for a lively game of bingo and win fun prizes. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CHEMICAL FALLOUT: RACHEL CARSON'S 'SILENT SPRING'

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Environmental historian Dr. Ralph Lutts will review historical events, news stories and popular films that led to this book's success in shaping public opinion. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TEEN CRAFT LAB

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 3:30 p.m. Chill, create and decorate a statement tote bag that is uniquely you. All supplies included. For ages 12-18 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

QUIT SMOKING & VAPING CLASS

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. 1103 or www.worcesterhealth.org.

Fri., March 14

ST. PATRICK'S SOCCER TOURNAMENT

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City. Adult Men's and Women's and Co-

Rec Divisions, March 14-16. Price is \$400 per team. Register: <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/>.

3RD ANNUAL BERLIN LEPRACON BAR CRAWL

Have your passports stamped at participating Berlin locations. Complete your passport for a chance to win. March 14-17. Passports: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/3rd-annual-berlin-lepracon>.

CHARTING THE COURSE: CO-CREATING A SHARED VISION FOR OCEAN CITY'S TOMORROW

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Help design practical steps to co-create Ocean City's future. Free workshop. Register: <https://www.ococean.com/events/150-days-of-celebrations/rachel-druckenmiller-workshop/>.

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. A great opportunity for babies (0-2 years) and their caregivers to socialize, play, read and explore in a bright play space. Drop by and make some friends. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

OC MAHJONG CLUB

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

HOMESCHOOL HANGOUT

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Join in for STREAM activities and socialize with other homeschool families. For ages 6-11 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TASTE OF OCEAN PINES

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Help celebrate Restaurant Week in Ocean Pines with this cooking class, where Pines Cafe will be sharing some culinary secrets. Registration required: 410-208-4014. www.worcesterlibrary.org

BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB: 'THE EMPRESS AND THE ENGLISH DOCTOR' BY LUCY WARD

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

SUN CATCHERS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Get ready for spring sunshine with a colorful

suncatcher made with glass beads. For teens ages 12-18 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

NECROMUNDA

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Come play a selected role-playing game for adults only after hours. Registration required: 410-632-3495

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., March 15

ST. PATRICK'S PARADE AND IRISH FESTIVAL

45th Street & Coastal Highway, Ocean City. The parade begins at noon on Coastal Highway at 57th Street and marches south to the 45th Street Shopping Center. The Irish festival runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. <https://www.delmar-vairish.org>

ST. PATRICK'S SOCCER TOURNAMENT

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City. Adult Men's and Women's and Co-Rec Divisions, March 14-16. Price is \$400 per team. Register: <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/>.

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COMMUNITY SHRED DAY

Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department N. Station, 249 Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m.-noon. Shred outdated documents. Suggested cash donation per box. All proceeds benefit O.P.V.F.D. No batteries, heavy metal or electronic devices. 410-641-8272

WALK WITH A DOC

Southgate Pond, Race Track Road, Ocean Pines, 9-10 a.m. Join Dr. Jeremy Gill for an educational discussion about Alzheimer's and other dementias. Then walk around the park's trail. First 10 participants receive a \$10 WalMart gift card. Alyce Marzola, 410-641-9268

LEPRECHAUN TRAPS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Are you crafty enough to build a trap that can catch a leprechaun? Bring your

imagination, roll up your sleeves and get busy. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CRAFTY SATURDAY: ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Join in for some green crafts as the group celebrates this holiday with leprechauns and rainbows. For ages 0-11 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FORMAL GOWN SALE!

The Crab Bag Shopping Center, 13005 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 1-3 p.m. Formal, bridal and cocktail dresses sold at 75%-80% off. All dresses must go. Proceeds supporting Athletic Center Building Fund.

HOBBY FAIR

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1-3 p.m. Dive into a world of creativity and discovery as you connect with passionate hobbyists from diverse clubs, groups and service providers. 443-783-6164

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., March 16

ST. PATRICK'S SOCCER TOURNAMENT

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

Calendar

Continued from Page 25

Mon., March 17

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<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/3rd-annual-berlin-lepracon>.

STORY TIME: ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. Group meets twice a month to discuss selections from the Great Books Foundation. Today's focus will be on "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" by Katherine Mansfield. 410-208-4014

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

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

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., March 18

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., follow by Q&A. Bring a laptop, tablet or papers containing family information. Registration requested: 410-208-4014.

STORY TIME: TRANSPORTATION

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, stories and crafts. 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.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

RED SCARF DAY

Senator Mary Beth Carozza is pictured after meeting with her associate members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women (MFRW) during Red Scarf Day in Annapolis where members from all across the state met with legislators to discuss important issues facing Maryland.

Story time geared for ages 0-5 years featuring seasonal themes designed to support early literacy skills with stories, songs and fingerplays. 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

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

ST. PATRICK'S DAY BATH BOMB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Create your own festive bath bomb in this DIY craft. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

SURGICAL CLASSES

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6 p.m. Learn about what to expect when having surgery. No RSVP required. Atlantic General Hospital's Pre-Admission Testing Department, 410-641-9814

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

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

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., March 19

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Online Zoom call held 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

HOLT 2025 ANNUAL SPRING SHOW

Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Register: holtpaper.com/expo.

SENSORY STAY AND PLAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Learn through exploration, curiosity and creativity. Get ready to squish, build, splash, shake and scoop through several fun stations. For ages 0-5 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BACKGAMMON CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Drop in for a game of Backgammon, 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 swap for 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

'HIT OR MISS' TRIVIA

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 3 p.m. Featuring general knowledge questions, prizes and refreshments. Admission is free. No registration necessary. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

Calendar

KICKSTART KINDERGARTEN

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30 p.m. Six session series built to help preschoolers get ready for Kindergarten. Families will also receive a light snack and tips for continuing Kindergarten preparedness at. home. Ages 3-5. 410-641-0650

STORYTELLERS THEATER

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. Games and activities to introduce theater, improv and public speaking. Best for ages 6-11 years. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

OCEAN PINES KIWANIS BINGO & CASH PRIZES

Ocean Downs Casino, Event Room, 10218 Racetrack Road, Berlin, 6 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. Cost is \$40 and includes 19 games; \$100 cash prize/game. Special 20th Jackpot Game, 50/50 tickets and pull tabs. Tickets: https://kiwanisofopoc.org/bingo. Alcohol prohibited. 410-208-3115

KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

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

fopoc.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

'LUCKY LEPRECHAUNS LOOSE IN THE LIBRARY' GAME WEEK

Pocomoke library, 301 Market St., March 17-22. Drop by anytime during the week to complete the games and receive a St. Paddy's Day surprise. For ages 6-18 years. 410-957-0878

PINOCHLE

Meets the first and third Thursday of each month at Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 12:15-3:15 p.m. Established Pinochle group welcoming new members. Carrie, 410-251-8207

MARCH INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during March. Art, photography or poetry competition for all ages. Pieces will be displayed in the library for viewing. The theme is "Stormy." Due by March 26. 410-632-3495

COMMUNITY JOURNAL: TELL HER STORY

Pocomoke library, 301 Market St. Drop in anytime during March and write a story in the community journal about a woman who has inspired you and share your thoughts and hopes for a better future. 410-957-0878



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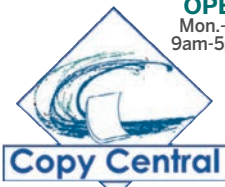
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