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Former GM Brett Hill guilty of not paying payroll taxes

By Bethany Hooper
Associate Editor

(April 17, 2025) Former Ocean Pines director and interim general manager Brett Hill was found guilty this week of failing to collect and pay employment taxes.

On Monday, a federal jury convicted Hill, of Parkton and Berlin, on

16 counts of failing to collect and pay payroll taxes as chief executive officer of two telecommunications companies.

The ruling comes nearly three years after the former association employee was indicted on federal charges.

See JURY Page 7

Berlin closes deal on eyesore parcel with sale to Gillis

Council votes to authorize sale of chicken plant land for major redevelopment

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Local developers officially purchased a portion of the property at Berlin's Heron Park, home to a former chicken processing building, following a 3-1 council vote this week.

At a regularly scheduled Berlin Town Council meeting on Monday, April 14, the town's governing group authorized the contract for the sale of parcel 57, consisting of approximately 9.35 acres of land area, for \$1,200,000 to developers Palmer and Sandy Gillis of Coastal Ventures Properties.

The buyers agreed to a deposit of \$100,000, with \$50,000 to be held as post-closing security to ensure the buyers' development of the property.

Per the agreement, the purchase price includes the allocation of 15 sewer Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) to the property.

Gillis also committed to constructing at least one office or retail building on parcel 57 within 24 months of closing as part of the redevelopment plans. The developers are responsible for the re-engineering costs associated with the space.

The agreement restricts potential uses of the property. Under the contract, parcel 57's development prohibits pawn shops, gun shops, tanning salons, massage parlors, adult video and bookshops, adult en-

See GILLISES Page 6

OPA seeks support for water fee fight

Officials call on residents to email commissioners, ask for equitable treatment

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) The Ocean Pines Association continues to seek support from community members in its fight against a proposed county wastewater/water budget presented last month.

In an attempt to dissuade the Worcester County Commissioners from adopting a budget that would

require ratepayers in the Ocean Pines water/wastewater service area to incur additional, "unfair" costs, the Ocean Pines Board of Directors has asked residents to do their part by voicing concerns with the potential spending plan.

A press release issued by OPA this week asks Ocean Pines citizens to get involved by emailing commissioners@co.worcester.md.us to ask the commissioners to maintain equitable practices, attend a town hall to be hosted by commissioners Chip Bertino and Jim Bunting on Wednesday.

See OPA Page 3

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OPA directors asks citizens to oppose water fee budget

Continued from Page 1
day, April 23 at 6 p.m. at the Ocean Pines Library, and participate in the commissioners' public hearing at the Worcester County Government Center in Snow Hill on May 6 at 6 p.m. Neighborhood officials also encourage Ocean Pines ratepayers to send letters to the commissioners at 1 West Market Street, Room 1103, Snow Hill, Md. 21863.

The advocacy efforts come after a March 18 Worcester County Commissioners meeting when the fiscal year 2026 Water/Wastewater Enterprise Funds budget was presented. If implemented, the proposed plan to make up a \$2.1 million deficit for fiscal year 2026 could require Ocean Pines ratepayers and those in 10 other service areas to pay an increase of around \$32 in their quarterly bills.

Bertino, who adamantly opposes the budget, maintained at a special meeting with the OPA board last month that the community is responsible for only \$116,699 of the shortfall.

The OPA press release from this week maintains that the \$2.1 million deficit is "the result of increased operational costs, and the county did not adjust the payer rates to adequately fund the service." The announcement continues, noting that 95% of the shortfall should be the responsibility of Riddle Farm, Mystic Harbor, The Landings, and the Assateague Point sanitary service areas. However, the proposed plan has all 11 service areas paying into the debt equally.

"A majority of the Commissioners (except for Bertino and Bunting) want all sanitary service areas to pay this deficit, regardless of deficit contribution," the release reads. "Ocean Pines represents 55.6% of the ratepayers in the 11 sanitary service areas."

Officials argue that the budget violates the county code. Currently, guidelines state that each enterprise fund, or the sanitary service areas, are to operate independently. The debt accumulated by each area is to be the sole responsibility of that individual service area.

If the budget passes, the same model, with all 11 enterprise funds equally paying back the \$2.1 million shortfall for fiscal year 2026, is likely to be used to address a looming \$6 million deficit, despite Ocean Pines, as well as other service areas, having a minimal impact on the losses.

Officials claim that financial mis-

management has led to the monetary challenges.

According to Bertino, in February 2024, the county budget office and deputy chief administrative officer were implementing new procedures when they discovered "financial inconsistencies within the Enterprise Fund operations." It was later learned that the finance department neglected to bring attention to inappropriate transfers that would see the enterprise funds running out of money in the near future. To offset the crisis, the commissioners approved a \$9 million transfer from the general fund to the enterprise funds that needs to be paid back over 10 years beginning in 2027.

Of the \$9 million, \$2.7 million was designated as a grant to the Riddle Farm Service area, while the remaining \$6.3 million was designated a loan with an interest rate of about 5%.

"This debt is the result of a loan made by the Worcester County Commissioners to fund years for inappropriate transfers to Riddle Farms = \$3,339,010, Mystic Harbor = \$1,730,000, the Landings = \$790,000, Edgewater Acres = \$242,000 and Newark = \$200,000 sanitary service areas," the OPA-issued press release states. "The Ocean Pines sanitary service area has funded its own expenses and received 0 dollars of this loan debt."

The announcement adds that the Worcester County Commissioners, "excluding Bertino and Bunting," want to financially combine the 11 sanitary service areas despite the consideration receiving zero public debate.

"The County Commissioners want to flatten future operational expenses over all the county ratepayers," said the release. "The county will only be flattening the Ocean Pines rate payer pocketbooks and wallets. Since Ocean Pines ratepayers are a county majority, Ocean Pines will pay more than its fair share forever."

The community asks that residents stay informed. The officials' priority has been spreading and accumulating information, which includes consulting with legal counsel, providing press releases, writing a position letter to county commissioners, and designing a community email campaign.

OPA staff ask homeowners to do their part by contacting the local government decision-makers with their concerns.



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Berlin to host Spring Celebration Saturday

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) As spring heats up in Berlin, the town gears up to host a day of fun-filled events in honor of Easter and the warm-weather season.

The Berlin Chamber of Commerce is hosting its 29th Annual Spring Celebration on Saturday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fun games and activities will be held, including an Easter egg hunt, a parade, breakfast with the Easter bunny, and other kid-friendly festivities.

According to Berlin Chamber of Commerce President Garrett Neville, the day will kick off with Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at the Berlin Beer Company from 9 a.m. to noon, while games on Main Street will run all day until 5 p.m. These games are free, but donations to the Berlin Chamber are encouraged.

Festivities will continue with a Bonnet Parade at 10 a.m. The walk will start at World of Toys. Parade contest categories include Most Colorful, Most Eco-Friendly, Best Adult, Most Springtastic, and Best Overall.

An Easter egg hunt at the Calvin B. Taylor House will follow at 11 a.m. Neville said that the museum's lawn will be divided into different age groups: three and below, four to six, and seven and older. Lollipop the

Clown is scheduled to arrive on Main Street at noon and will administer face painting and spring-themed entertainment. Furthermore, Shake It Up Jam has performances scheduled at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

"We will also have art vendors, with kid-friendly items set up all day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.," the chamber president said.

Neville adds that attendees can stop into Rayne's Reef and Berlin Beer Company for breakfast or pop over to Cafe Berlin or 2nd Wave for a caffeine boost or sweet treat. Additionally, during the Spring Celebration, food vendors like Sessa Hot Dogs, Street Kitchen, and Cousins Lobster will be onsite, as will cotton candy, kettle corn, and Kona Ice.

The chamber president said planning for the Spring Celebration begins early. An event committee, headed by Ashley Harrison and the Chamber Board, kick-off preparation efforts at the start of the year.

As part of spring activities, the chamber also hosts an Easter egg scavenger hunt. Participants can grab a form at the foyer of the organization's office at 14 South Main Street and look for eggs in the windows of local businesses. Completed forms must be submitted back to the foyer for a chance to win a prize during a



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Participants in the bonnet parade during last year's Berlin Spring Celebration are pictured.

drawing on Monday, April 21.

"A lot of work behind the scenes goes into this free event for our community's kids," he said.

In addition to the Spring Celebration, the chamber hosts various events throughout the year and is always looking for volunteers to help out. Anyone interested in lending a hand can find more information on how to get involved at <https://berlin-chamber.org/events/>.

Neville maintained that the April

19 event is a great way to inspire togetherness in the Town of Berlin.

"[The event] strengthens the sense of community by bringing residents together to celebrate, socialize, and enjoy shared experiences," he said. "The event also brings an economic boost. Local businesses, vendors, and artists benefit from the increased foot traffic ... It also brings joy to the children in our community. Getting to celebrate Spring in Berlin is lots of fun for all ages."

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Gillises, Berlin comes to terms on park land

Continued from Page 1

tainment facilities, check cashing facilities, gambling facilities, tattoo parlors, or liquor stores.

“It’s been a long process,” Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said. “... It’s been a long mission of ours to revitalize that property.”

Tyndall added that the hope was to prioritize mixed-use projects for parcel 57’s redevelopment. However, residential structures are prohibited on the site.

“I know some people have talked about wanting mixed-use on this site and other sites that make up Heron Park,” the mayor said. “The important takeaway is you can’t put residential there. It is deed restricted; no residences can go there from when the town purchased the property. The best we can do is maximize the

commercial uses for this parcel that fronts Old Ocean City Boulevard.”

Additionally, the property requires rezoning, which the mayor maintained will now be a “key priority” of the town’s planning staff.

The purchase passed in a 3-1 vote by the Berlin Town Council, with Councilmembers Jack Orris, Steve Green and Jay Knerr approving the sale and Vice President Dean Burrell opposing it. Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols was absent from Monday night’s meeting.

The contract outlines the work to be completed on the site, including the stipulation that at least one office or retail building must be created within two years.

The document reads, “As an inducement to the Town’s entering into this agreement, the developer



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Development of the two existing buildings on Parcel 57 at Heron Park will begin with the north side of the property in phase one.

has agreed to activate the property upon its purchase of the property through the construction of at least one office or retail building on the property within 24 months of closing.”

The agreement also informs that Gillis plans to construct an office building on the rear end of the property, denoted as “Phase I,” and a re-

tail space along Old Ocean City Boulevard, designated as “Phase II.”

The agreement continues, “It is understood that the developer intends, but is not obligated to, construct the buildings in two phases, with Phase I building (likely a professional office building) on rear area ... and Phase II building (likely

See BERLIN Page 7

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Jury finds Hill withheld taxes, but didn't pay

Continued from Page 1

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Hill owned and operated two telecommunications companies and was responsible for collecting and paying federal income, Social Security and Medicare taxes from his employees' wages and filing tax returns.

A jury this week found that from the second quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2018, Hill withheld taxes from his employees' wages at one or both of his companies but did



Brett Hill

not file tax returns or pay those taxes over to the government.

Hill did not pay over his companies' share either. Instead of paying the taxes he withheld from his employees' paychecks, Hill paid himself a salary and paid other expenses.

In total, Hill caused a tax loss to the United States of over \$1 million, ac-

cording to the Justice Department.

Now convicted, Hill faces a maximum penalty of five years for each count of failing to collect and pay taxes. He will be sentenced at a later date.

"A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors," a news release reads.

Hill served as a board director in Ocean Pines from August of 2016 to

September of 2017, during a period of financial risk taking, employee resignations and overall distrust in association leadership. It was during this same time period that the board fired general manager Bob Thompson and asked Hill to take his place in an acting capacity.

He resigned from both jobs after his financial administration resulted in losses of \$1.6 million over two years, according to a September 2022 article from Ocean City Today.

Berlin, developers resurrect park land deal

Continued from Page 6

a retail, such as a restaurant) on the portion of the property directly adjacent to Ocean City Boulevard ... If the developer elects to commence develop of only Phase I, the developer has agreed to visually enhance the Phase II area with landscaping, lighting, or other activating features pending the construction of a building on Phase II."

The developers are also required to present and obtain the requisite approval of the structure's designs and uses per the town code's permitting process.

While supportive of the sale and excited the town will be putting the property back on the tax rolls, Green asked Gillis why the redevelopment efforts started with the property's north end. The buyer maintained that it is because there is already a possible office space tenant.

"We have a serious prospect as an office for the north side," he said.

The majority of the Berlin Town Council said that they were happy to see the sale proceed.

"I'm relieved we're here," Green said. "... This has been a long process."

This recent stint of discussions with Coastal Ventures Properties, which finally resulted in a sale this week, is the second round of negotiations for both parties. In August

2023, conversations with the Gillis developers ended in a 3-2 council vote.

At that time, Knerr, Burrell, and Nichols cast their votes in opposition to a contract with the local developers, while Green and Orris favored continuing talks with CVP.

Negotiations were terminated due to concerns about EDUs being transferred with the sale as well as concerns from some council members it should become residential.

Re-consideration to sell parcel 57 once again began last summer, and the town agreed to enter into extended negotiations with Gillis in July.

Those conversations have since been realized, as the contract for sale was approved this week.

"It was 2021-2022 when this started; 2022 was the year I was elected, but these discussions were well underway at that point," Green said, addressing the local developers.

"Then, in 2023, everything fell apart, but we're back today. I think that's a sign of how much you truly want to develop this property. That's the one thing that stuck out to me. It was your desire to do it, not a need to do it. You clearly want to revitalize this property, and I support that."

There was one public speaker at the meeting who criticized the coun-

cil. Resident Nicholas Rigopoulos chastised the council, claiming the property should not be sold and

using state funds to demolish the dilapidated sections of the buildings was inappropriate.

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Red Hat Society Day recognized by Berlin

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) This week, the Town of Berlin declared April 25 as Red Hat Society Day in honor of the international women’s organization.

At a regularly scheduled council meeting, Zack Tyndall, the town’s mayor, honored the group’s anniversary with an official proclamation. The Red Hat Society is a global organization founded on April 25, 1998, to encourage women “on their quest to get the most out of life,” according to its website.

“We support women in the pursuit of fun, friendship, freedom, fitness, and the fulfillment of lifelong dreams,” the webpage continues.

According to Mable Jarmon, the Berlin chapter’s “queen ambassador,” as part of the group’s rules, women 50 and older wear red hats and purple attire and those younger are adorned in pink hats and lavender attire. Members are to choose purple hats on their birthdays. The local group boasts around 30 members, and while the international organization is celebrating its 27th anniversary, Berlin’s team is observing its 17th.

“We have a lot of fun,” Jarmon said. “We enjoy ourselves. We meet a lot of people, and we enjoy that. It’s a



Members of the local chapter of the Red Hat Society came to Berlin Town Hall on Monday night to receive a proclamation and rounds of applause from officials and residents.

wonderful organization to belong to.”

The proclamation was given while Berlin’s Red Hat Society members were present, dressed in stylish pieces to match the organization’s fashion rules.

The document, read aloud by the mayor, reads, “whereas the mission [of the Red Hat Society] is to connect like-minded women, encourage them to have fun together as they strengthen relationships and whereas

the Red Hat Society is dedicated to sharing a bond of affection throughout Maryland and around the globe.”

The proclamation adds that on April 25, the women conduct a social tea on Red Hat Society Day, wearing red hats and purple dresses.

The international chapter describes itself as a “playground” for women to relieve the stress associated with life’s challenges.

“Most women give their all to family, career, and community and forget

to take time for themselves,” the organization’s website says. “Over 20 years ago, the Red Hat Society discovered that all of us need an occasional recess from the cares and duties of everyday life for no other purpose than to have fun with like-minded women. From under our signature brims, we create true, lasting friendships online and in person.”

Jarmon said that local women can join the Berlin chapter by contacting any of its members.

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Neighbors voice concerns over railbike business

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) A railbike excursion business in Berlin has negatively impacted residents with a rise in public indecency, drug use, parking issues, and an unsightly property, town citizens claimed during the public comments portion of a meeting this week.

The Berlin Mayor and Council held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, April 14, where business owners and residents came forward with complaints about Tracks and Yaks. This railbike company operates on Broad Street via a lease agreement with the Maryland and Delaware Railroad. The town locals cited public urination, drug use, an unkempt yard, parking violations, loitering, and stress on other companies within the municipality limits as their concerns.

Adam Davis, owner of the Berlin Beer Company on Broad Street, was among the residents who spoke at Monday night's meeting. His concerns centered on the impact Tracks and Yaks was having on his business. According to Davis, the railbike property does not have restrooms for staff or guests, which has led to individuals using his business's facilities.

"We have had issues with them

coming in and using our facilities, whether that's to come in and ask for water or using our bathrooms," Lauren Georgevich, also of Berlin Beer Company, noted. "That is putting undue stress on our staff, so there's more cleaning and more utilities."

Baker Street residents and Councilman Steve Green echoed these remarks, adding that employees and guests have resorted to public urination in the surrounding tree lines and yards due to a lack of proper restrooms. Last summer a port-o-potty was available on site. Concerns from residents about having to look at a portable toilet from their homes were heard, leading the town to realize the john was not permitted by code for long periods of time.

Tracks and Yaks have also negatively affected parking, as many of the railbike business's customers have taken to using spots designated for Berlin Beer Company. According to the town's economic and community development director, Ivy Wells, beginning in mid-May, people who buy tickets for the rail excursion will be given an address for West Ocean City off Route 50, where the business will operate the kayak portion of its model, then a shuttle will transport them to Berlin.

Georgevich argued that this plan



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE
The grounds of the Tracks and Yaks operation is located on Baker Street near Harrison Avenue. Above, a pop-up tent that was used to shield a port-o-potty on the site is pictured blown across the railroad tracks last summer.

was unrealistic. "I think that is a fantastic pipe dream," she said. "The reality of that, I don't see it happening. If you're coming from Bethany or Rehoboth, you're not going to drive to Ocean City to get bussed into Ocean City."

This plan would also impact any potential tourism benefits. Instead of customers coming for Tracks and Yaks and spending money at other Berlin establishments, they are in-

stead taken directly back into West Ocean City. Additionally, while Georgevich said that this could alleviate some parking concerns, the business's impact extends into other aspects of Berlin life.

"[Tracks and Yaks] yard area is very disheveled," she said. "There's trash out there, there's upturned chairs. It's derelict looking ... it's not becoming for the town of Berlin."

Georgevich noted that she does see some ecotourism value in Tracks and

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Council agrees to send letters

Yaks but does not believe the location is suitable. Wells maintained that conversations have been had to relocate the business, but these discussions ultimately fell through. Tracks and Yaks currently has a lease agreement with the railroad owner.

Residents from Baker Street also spoke out against the business.

Citizen Sara Simon said the employees are often seen smoking marijuana in their cars, loitering on the streets, and using residences and other businesses as their own personal access points.

“[Tracks and Yaks] has a business model that does not support their guests or their employees,” Simon said. “I appreciate the effort to shuttle them into town. Shuttling them into town does not help the employee who doesn’t have a restroom, a source of water, or any type of electricity. They seek the neighbors. They come into our yards, empty their bladders, use our hoses, use our trash cans ... Understand that parking is one component. There is a much larger problem occurring that a shuttle will not solve.”

Davis added that the owner of the operation lives in Frostburg, which has been another point of contention, as there is no manager on duty to oversee that responsible procedures are taken.

The Berlin Mayor and Council agreed that Tracks and Yaks is having an unfortunate effect on the town.

“I am frustrated,” said Councilman Steve Green, who lives nearby. “There were seven cars parked there today, jammed in there. It looks like total trash. We, up here, should not tolerate it. Whatever we have to do, whether it’s sending a letter to the railroad company or Tracks and Yaks, we can’t continue to tell these folks, ‘You have to live with it.’ That is not fair of us to ask ... they shouldn’t be there ... I think it’s time for the business to move out of Berlin.”

In the meantime, Councilman Dean Burrell, along with other officials, asked the residents to call the police so the reports can be documented. Burrell also questioned whether the town could regard the business as a “public nuisance,” a point town attorney David Gaskill will research.

Green added there is likely specific language in the lease arrangement between the Maryland Delaware Railroad and Tracks and Yaks the town does not have access to, as it is a private contract, that would place the railbike company in violation.

Ultimately, town officials voted to summarize the residents’ concerns, send a letter to Tracks and Yaks, copy the Maryland and Delaware Railroad, and send a separate letter to the Maryland and Delaware Railroad to address the issues raised this week.



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Paving projects announced

(April 17, 2025) Several roads in and around Ocean Pines are slated for resurfacing next week.

Contractors for Ocean Pines are milling and patching on several streets in Ocean Pines, beginning April 21, weather permitting.

Affected streets include Canal Road, Commodore Court, Dinghy Court, Fairhaven Court, Juneway Lane, Portside Court, Riverside Drive and Weeping Willow Court.

Senior Director of Public Works Eddie Wells said flaggers will help direct traffic, and plans are to always keep one lane open on each street.

For roadwork updates, visit oceanpines.org.

Additionally, contractors for Worcester County Public Works will be milling and paving Manklin Creek Road and Cathell Road, schedule to begin April 21 (weather permitting).

Allan Myers Contractor plans to begin the milling and paving of Manklin Creek Road beginning April 21. During this time, it is recommended to use Cathell Road as an alternative route. Road paving will take five to seven days to complete.

On April 28, crews will begin milling and paving Cathell Road. During this time, it is recommended to use Manklin Creek Road as an alternative route. Road paving of Cathell Road will take seven to ten days to complete.

Work will take place between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Travelers should expect to encounter lane closures and delays.

Extended pool hours viewed as positive for Ocean Pines

Later hours on weekend planned for community's Swim and Racquet Pool

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) This summer, Ocean Pines' Swim and Racquet Pool will be open a few more hours a week than in years past.

Beginning May 24, the Swim and Racquet Pool will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. In a deviation from previous years, the hours are extended until 8 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

In 2024, Swim and Racquet closed at either 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. daily. The Ocean Pines Association's Aquatics Advisory Committee hopes the new hours will give residents more time to enjoy the amenities. Still, they said they intend to push for additional weekday hours next year.

Committee Chair Gary Miller said they were hoping for at least one of the pool hours to be stretched on a weekday rather than just the weekends. The community's summer 2025 activities guide, recently published, revealed that this suggestion had not been met. Instead, Swim and Racquet will close at 8 p.m. Fridays through Sundays but shut down operations at the usual 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.

In a charging document sent to the board, the aquatics committee asked that per "numerous verbal requests from residents who would like to be able to use the pools in the evenings when they get home from work," at least one of the pools' shut-down time is extended a few hours on a weekday night.

The request form emphasized that OP demographics have gotten younger. As such, more and more community members are still working and would like additional time to access the summertime amenity. While Swim and Racquet will be open a few more hours on the weekends, OPA did

not grant the weekday ask.

"This is something that is going to remain an issue with a lot of the people who are still working," Miller said at an April 10 aquatics committee meeting.

The team maintained that while the request was not accepted for this summer, they plan to recommend later weekday hours in the future.

"It's something that I think we will bring up again," the aquatics committee chair continued. "Since everything is already set for this season, it doesn't make sense to bug the board anymore this year, but I think toward the end of this year, when they start looking at the budget process again, that would be a good time for us to resubmit a charging document suggesting that one of the pools be open during the week a little bit later."

The Beach Club and the Mumford's Landing Pool will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Yacht Club Pool will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays through Sundays. The pools officially open for the warm-weather season on Saturday, May 24.

Also on the aquatics docket this summer is a new outdoor evening water aerobics class. The sessions are set for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. from July 1 to August 21 at the Mumford's Landing Pool. No instructor has been designated yet, but staff said at an executive meeting last month that a teacher may be assigned should the class yield enough interest. Currently, the sessions are to act as self-taught and group-led.

Prices for the aerobic class are \$48 for swim members, \$60 for Ocean Pines residents, and \$77 for non-residents. The drop-in costs are \$7 for swim members, \$8 for OP residents, and \$9 for non-residents.

The summer 2025 activity guide on the community's official website provides more information on the upcoming aquatics and other neighborhood programs.



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Partnership creates Coastal Critter Crawl

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Berlin and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program are teaming up to host a week-long environmental education project later this month as a part of Take Pride in Berlin Week.

For Take Pride in Berlin Week, Berlin Main Street is partnering with the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to debut a “Coastal Critter Crawl” from April 19 to April 26. The program boasts posters on storefronts, created by Buckingham Elementary School students, featuring 23 local animals found in the Coastal Bays watershed.

Berlin residents and visitors can participate in the “crawl” portion of the project by picking up a worksheet at the Berlin Welcome Center, scouring the downtown windows to collect the animal facts and names, and then returning the form to be included in a drawing for the chance to win a stuffed critter.

The program’s mission is to promote learning. The Critter Crawl aims to reach audiences that don’t often seek out or are aware of the environmental group’s educational projects.

“It would be remiss of our organization to think that all our community members are able to make it out to one of our programs or even know

who we are and what we do,” MCBP Education Coordinator Liz Wist said. “Providing the Coastal Critter Crawl allows us to reach whoever may be strolling through Berlin, resident or visitor alike. This is a great example of passive interpretation; anyone who encounters one of the 23 critter images and posters can absorb the information any way they want.”

Wist added that to strengthen the goal of increasing the community’s knowledge of the coastal bays, bookmarks depicting the local creatures have also been created and will be available at the town’s visitor center upon the completion of their hunt.

“We hope [the bookmarks] will promote further learning and program engagement,” she said.

The project integrates seamlessly into Take Pride in Berlin Week. Wist noted the town is dedicated to supporting local initiatives and protecting “the place where we live.” The crawl highlights animals native to the Eastern Shore area that residents may have seen but do not know much about, fostering education in a subject vital to preserving Berlin and its surrounding waterways.

“We hope this project broadens people’s knowledge and understanding of our local ecology,” Wist said. “It provides more than knowledge about specific animals. It is also a fun

opportunity for friends or families to involve themselves. It encourages outdoor time, movement, and familiarization to a historic downtown.”

The education coordinator said the idea for the Coastal Critter Crawl was developed in the fall, but moves were made in January. MCBP and the Town of Berlin met a few times during that month. Melissa Reid, an art teacher at BES, was then brought on to facilitate the students’ poster creation.

In February, the animals were chosen, and “fast fact” cards were made to familiarize the Buckingham artists with their coastal creatures. Berlin recruited businesses to participate in the event and offer their windows, and the town and MCBP worked together to market the endeavor.

Ivy Wells, Berlin’s economic and

community development director, noted that Wist reached out with the idea to collaborate on a scavenger hunt-style project.

“The Critter Crawl is a fun way for families to explore downtown and learn about local wildlife during Take Pride in Berlin Week,” Wells said. “We love collaborations and working with our awesome partners at Maryland Coastal Bays.”

Wist added the Buckingham art students’ efforts made the program possible.

“The real stars of the show are the art students from BES who took time and energy to create the beautiful posters of the twenty-three animals found around the watershed,” she said. “They have really brought the animals to life with their clever depictions.”



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‘Prevention Walk for Kids’ planned April 26

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Child abuse prevention and protection is the mission of the Worcester County Child Advocacy Center’s 12 Annual Pirates for Prevention Walk for Kids scheduled later this month.

On April 26, the Berlin-based youth support team, or CAC, will host its yearly Pirates for Prevention Walk for Kids. The event will kick off at noon from the Cabanas Beach Bar and Grille on the Ocean City Boardwalk, where participants will trek the one-mile route to foster attention for Child Abuse Protection Month.

“[The walk] is a family-friendly, pirate-themed event that benefits the Worcester County Child Advocacy Center and highlights the importance of child abuse prevention during the month of April,” CAC Executive Director Lauren Cooper said. “Community members of all ages are invited to join the one-mile fun walk, which is a scenic half mile up the boardwalk and back while helping raise awareness and funds for services that directly support child victims of abuse.”

Cooper added that a “treasure chest” of pirate-themed activities will be held before and after the walk, including a pirate costume contest, face painting, a Captain Hook Ring Toss, Cannon Ball Cornhole, and a treasure hunt from Cabanas to 8th Street. Participation in the games is open to children and adults with a suggested donation.

Attendees are also invited to join the CAC team in planting pinwheels in the sand, the national symbol for child abuse protection, before the noon start time.

“We want to bring the community together in a visible display of support for happy, healthy childhoods,” Cooper said. “...This event is our way of celebrating

kids while also bringing attention to the important work that our team does.”

Individuals and businesses are encouraged to sign on as sponsors. Sponsorship levels include the “Captain’s Circle” for \$2,500, “First Mate’s Fleet” for \$1,000, “Treasure Hunter” for \$500, “Buccaneer Benefactor” for \$250, and “Private Partner” for \$100. The center is also accepting donations from businesses, such as raffle items like gift cards or merchandise.

Cooper maintained that sponsorship opportunities are still available. “Local businesses and individuals can

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become event sponsors and help make a difference in the lives of children while receiving recognition on event signage, social media, and promotional materials," the executive director noted. "All donations are tax-deductible, and every dollar helps us continue offering vital services to children and families in crisis."

The walk typically yields around 100 participants annually, and Cooper said they hope to match or exceed that number this time around. All proceeds and sponsorships benefit the Worcester County CAC and its goal of offering a "safe, child-focused environment

where children can share their stories, receive support, and begin to heal."

The Worcester County Child Advocacy Center was formerly known as The CRICKET Center. Earlier this year, the organization rolled out a rebrand complete with a new name, a fresh logo featuring waves and a surfboard to capture Worcester's coastal aesthetic, and an updated website. The goal of the adjustments was for the center to strengthen its ties in the community and present a clearer idea of its mission and goals.

The center works as a resource for child victims and their families. Pro-

grams include forensic interviews for children to share their stories in a supportive environment, advocating for legal action against child abuse perpetrators, mental health services, collaboration with agencies that aid child victims and their families during investigations, and, aligned with the April 26 walk, child abuse protection.

CAC's website includes its impact in 2024. Last year alone, the center conducted 96 forensic interviews, identified 184 perpetrators, participated in 157 hours of court accompaniment, and was involved in 124 joint investi-

gations. The webpage also adds that since its founding in 2009, the organization has served 1,673 child victims.

The pirate-themed walk slated for later this month is just one effort of the group to aid the Eastern Shore community.

"April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and this walk is one of the most meaningful ways we bring our community together to celebrate kids," Cooper said. "Each step we take raises awareness and shows our commitment to building a safer, healthier future for children in our community."

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Worcester superintendent finalists named

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Worcester County Public Schools is narrowing its superintendent search. Two finalists, one of whom would be an internal hire, were announced by the educational system last week.

The next Worcester County superintendent of schools has come down to two candidates: Annette Wallace, a current Worcester employee, and Monique Wheatley-Phillip of Baltimore County. According to a press release issued by the school system, the finalists will participate in a “Day in the District” next week, where they will meet with local officials, interview with panels of central office leaders, principals, teachers, support staff, business leaders, parents, and community leaders, have lunch with students, and eat dinner and talk with the board of education.

The release adds that the board hopes to choose the next superintendent this month. A vote to appoint the hiree will likely occur in May, and the new position holder would begin on July 1.

Wallace is a graduate of WCPS, a former principal of Pocomoke High School from 2012 to 2018, and currently serves as the chief safety officer and academic officer for grades nine through 12 in Worcester County.

According to the school system’s announcement, Wallace doubled AP (advanced placement) enrollment “while significantly improving student pass rates” as PHS principal and created Project 100 to improve access to post-secondary education. The educator was named chief operating officer in 2018.

“Since her appointment to chief operating officer, Wallace has demonstrated leadership in school construction, food services, technology, special education, all academic content areas, human resources, and student services,” the press release reads. “She holds degrees in mathematics, school leadership, and educational leadership, is actively involved in her community, and has presented as a thought leader at local, state, and national education conferences.”

Wheatley-Phillip has also been named a finalist for the WCPS superintendent job. She is a former Baltimore County Public Schools Division Chief of Research, Accountability, and Assessment, where she supervised the “development of the eight-year strategic plan, which identified annual goals and specific targets for the system.”

“A strategic thinker and planner

who understands the importance of collaboration and gaining consensus, Wheatley-Phillip’s expertise in the use of evidence-based instructional practices and data analytics narrowed achievement gaps and increased performance across student groups,” the county’s announcement said.

Currently, the candidate works as a consulting administrator of school operations. In this role, Wheatley-Phillip supports schools by managing the utilization of \$11 million of extracurricular and co-curricular activity funds. She also handles \$7 million in Title II grant funds to support educator development.

Wheatley-Phillip’s educational experience spans over 30 years. During that time, she spent 17 years in Title I schools as a classroom and special education resource teacher. Additionally, the finalist holds degrees in education and certificates in leadership and reading.

In 2018, Wheatley-Phillip was named one of three finalists to replace the outgoing superintendent of Cecil County Public Schools. An article from Cecil Whig at that time noted that the candidate’s experience included working as a Spanish teacher, a K-6 general educator, and a middle school English/language arts teacher.

She also served as a principal for a decade in three different assignments in Harford County and as an assistant superintendent and executive director for Baltimore County Public Schools.

The candidate selected to take over as superintendent of WCPS will be announced later this spring.

“The search process to find a new educational leader in Worcester County has been a top priority for this board,” WCPS Board of Education President Todd Ferrante said in the press release. “We are pleased with our progress in the search so far, and we are excited to announce our two highly qualified finalists...We look

forward to making a final decision soon and helping our new superintendent create a vision and plan for transitioning into this leadership role.”

The search for a new school system leader follows current position holder Lou Taylor’s retirement announcement in January. Taylor opted not to seek a renewed four-year term and instead ended his 41-year career in education. He remarked at the board of education meeting where he announced his retirement that his “entire life has been intertwined with [WCPS].”

Taylor grew up in the county, was a physical education teacher at Berlin Middle School, now known as Berlin Intermediate School, and was promoted to assistant principal before moving to Stephen Decatur High School as an assistant principal. He eventually took over as principal for SDHS. After 17 years leading the high school, Taylor served as a chief operating officer. He was named superintendent in 2016 and signed a new four-year contract in 2021 at an annual salary of \$210,000.

Following Taylor’s retirement decision, which will be effective June 30, the board of education enlisted help from the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) to conduct the new superintendent search process.

The press release notes that public input was gathered to aid the efforts in February. Participants were asked to describe the characteristics they sought in a new superintendent, which included being an ethical and decisive leader, an effective communicator, a consensus builder, and an experienced instructional and operational leader.

The job posting listed a minimum salary of \$195,000.

“The finalists will participate in extensive interviews on April 22 and 23 with various stakeholder groups,” the WCPS press release said. “These groups will provide input to the board as it prepares to choose a new superintendent.”



Annette Wallace



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School officials outline budget requests

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Raising teacher salaries to meet a state legislative mandate is a key focus of the Worcester County Board of Education’s proposed fiscal 2026 budget, which was presented this week before county leaders.

The school board’s proposed operating budget of \$145 million includes a county appropriation of about \$116 million and aligns with the county’s expectation of receiving millions of dollars in new revenue from property and income taxes.

Speaking Tuesday before the Worcester County Commissioners, Superintendent Lou Taylor said the budget reflects a hard-won agreement between the Board of Education and the Worcester County Education Association. It fulfils both a \$4,000 pay raise for teachers and makes progress toward implementing a state-mandated starting salary.

Salaries are the largest portion of this year’s budget, totaling roughly \$57 million, or 40% of spending.

Other budget priorities included maintaining staffing levels, holding to smaller class sizes, offering cutting-edge technological tools, and making investments in special education and multi-lingual resources, Taylor said.

“Funding these mandates is the No. 1 priority within our budget request, and it has to be,” he said. “Our school system is not immune to the nationwide shortage of quality educators and support professionals. Our ability to provide a competitive compensation package is the key to being able to recruit, hire, and most importantly, retain the best of the best for our students.”

The school board is working toward compliance with the state’s landmark educational legislation, known as the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. It says new teachers statewide must be paid a minimum \$60,000 by the 2027-28 school year.

First-year teachers in Worcester County are now paid \$52,789. Tolbert said this year’s budget puts the 2025-26 year starting salary at \$56,789. That

would increase by \$4,000 in each of the next two years to be in compliance with the Blueprint’s minimums.

The school system will be turning over 43 certified teacher positions, whose replacements would mostly earn that new starting salary, according to human resources director Dwayne Abt.

“And then next year, it’ll happen again, because we usually have about 40 or 50 certified teachers turning over,” Abt told the commissioners Tuesday. “The savings we find, hopefully, is when folks are retiring.”

Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert said the county’s \$116 million share of the school budget – an amount that represents about 44% of all county spending – comes in at \$200,000 less than had been requested in recent weeks, the result of the school system winning a grant to cover after school and summer school programs.

Proposed revenue includes \$27.4 million in state funding, a \$1.5 million increase over last year, as well as out-of-district tuition (\$130,000), interest (\$200,000), cell tower leases (\$145,000).

Other revenue requests of the county include \$43,000 toward new GPS software for school buses, \$180,000 in school construction, and \$930,000 in retirement expenses. Also included in the revenue projection \$567,011 carrying over from the prior year’s budget.

Commissioner Joe Mitrecic (District 7, Ocean City) asked Tolbert about the possibility that federal government funding would be withheld this year. Tolbert confirmed this, saying the school system was notified that last week it won’t receive \$512,000 in federal funds – which might eat up the \$567,011 expected to carry over from the prior year’s budget.

To this, Taylor spoke up, saying he learned in a conference call Monday with other state school superintendents that federal funding may not be gone after all. “There’s things in place that – that’s not definite 100% for sure yet,” he said.

“Well, you know,” Mitrecic re-



BRIAN SHANE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE
Superintendent of Schools Lou Taylor and Board of Education President Todd Ferrante listen during last week’s budget presentation before the Worcester County Commissioners.

sponded, “I’m a half empty type of guy, so I’m gonna tell ya, it’s not coming.”

Other budget major categories include fixed charges like medical care and payroll tax (\$33.6 million), special education (\$14.6 million), instructional support services (\$10 million) as well as transportation (\$8 million) and physical operations (\$9.9 million).

Tolbert also said that there was some talk that, in the future, the state might shift the burden of the local share of teacher pensions onto counties, which he said could come from the Board of Education budget and not necessarily the county’s general fund.

For Worcester, that amount would be approximately \$672,000, Tolbert said.

Legal costs in this budget are \$30,000 more than last year, which led Commissioner Chip Bertino (District 5, Ocean Pines) to ask why.

Tolbert replied that higher-than-expected legal fees were incurred last year when schools consulted heavily with attorneys on matters of school safety, prompting a higher line item for this year. Attorneys also are consulted on an ongoing basis about policy changes coming down from the state and federal level, he said.

See ABBOTT Page 21

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Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST

The Ocean City Berlin Optimist Club was proud to once again sponsor the 2025 Optimist International Oratorical Contest. Pictured are the five finalists who competed for top Club Level placements at Stephen Decatur Middle School (SDMS) on Thursday, March 27. Pictured, from left, are Oratorical Chairman Sharon Sorrentino, SDMS student Kala James, first place Worchester Preparatory School student Jude Damouni, third place SDMS student Evelyn Chaney, SDMS student Anissa Demo, second place Snow Hill Middle School student Elliott Larsen and Optimist Treasurer Cindy Malament. Damouni and Larsen will move onto the District Competition to be held in Ocean City on Saturday, April 26 at the Grand Hotel.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

HARRY K DONATION

On Worchester Wednesday, March 26, Worchester Preparatory School (WPS) collected donations to support the Harry K Foundation. Each month, WPS students submit the names of foundations to be supported in that month's Worchester Wednesday. For March, both 10th grader Gabriella Damouni and 6th grader Serena Jaoude submitted the name of the Harry K Foundation. In exchange for a \$5 donation to the foundation, students and faculty were allowed to dress casually, and approximately \$2,300 was raised. Pictured, from left, are WPS 10th grader Gabriella Damouni, Harry K Foundation Executive Director Laura Annan Glascoe and sixth grader Serena Jaoude.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

WOR-WIC DONATION

The Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce (SACC) Foundation recently contributed funds to Wor-Wic Community College for its endowed scholarship, which annually supports Worchester, Wicomico or Somerset County students attending Wor-Wic. The chamber raises funds throughout the year at its Business After Hours events. Pictured, from left, are Stefanie K. Rider, executive director of the Wor-Wic Community College Foundation and development; Karri B. Todd, co-chair of the SACC Foundation and member of the SACC executive committee; Stephanie Willey, co-chair of the SACC Foundation and member of the SACC voting council; Deborah Casey, Ph.D., president of Wor-Wic; and Bill Chambers, president and CEO of the SACC.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

OP GARDEN CLUB ARBOR DAY

The Ocean Pines Garden Club's Arbor Day Memorial Tree Planting Ceremony was held April 10 at Pintail Park in Ocean Pines. A tree is planted each year in memory of those who have passed in the previous year. Pictured, from left, are OPGC co-president Lilanie Geiger; Worchester County Commissioner Chip Bertino; OPGC Arbor Day Committee Chair Ann Shockley; OPA Board of Directors President Dr. Stuart Lakernick; and OPGC Co-President Nancy Mulligan.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

RAVENS ROOST DONATION

A check for \$11,222 was presented to officials from Atlantic General Hospital Foundation by the Ocean City Ravens Roost 44, representing funds raised through this year's annual Penguin Swim event. The Roost had 15 individual team members that braved the frigid Atlantic Ocean by participating in the swim. The Roost has had a team in the Penguin Swim for the past 17 years, raising a total of \$184,000.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

TOUCH OF ITALY SPEAKER

Touch of Italy owner Bob Ciprietti, pictured with Kiwanis Club President Tom Southwell, visited the Kiwanis Club as the guest speaker on April 9. Touch of Italy in Ocean Pines will manage the operations at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club, Golf Club and the Beach Club. The yacht club and golf club will be formally opened on May 1. He shared that significant investments were made to update the facilities and ambiance.

Abbott questions DEI practices

Continued from Page 19

When presented with a \$1.5 million line item for budgeted health services, Commissioner Caryn Abbott (District 1, Southern) wanted more detail. “Under the medical, what are we buying that costs that much? I mean, are we talking school nurses?” asked Abbott, a nurse by trade. “Are you including, like, the trainer?”

Tolbert replied that medical costs may include nursing supplies or state-mandated epinephrine pens, among others. Bandages, gauze, and athletic tape also may factor into medical costs, said Annette Wallace, chief safety officer, who noted that athletic supplies are not part of insurance billing.

Not only that, but sports teams bus-ing to away games have to bring a full medical kit that also includes the opioid reversal drug Narcan, noted human re-sources director Dwayne Abt, saying “our costs over time have really in-creased in those areas.”

Commissioners President Ted Elder (District 4, Western) wanted to know how WCPS was going to pay for GPS tracking software for school buses, under the brand name Zonar. Tolbert said they’d applied for a grant to cover all or part of the estimated \$42,098 cost but hasn’t heard back. Abt said the software is a preferred product because it interfaces well with WCPS software.

Commissioner Eric Fiori (District 3, Sinepuxent) thanked school leaders for

their diligent budget preparation. “As someone that was really, really critical of the budget process over the last couple years, your changes, your improvements – it reflects. I can tell how much work that is, and I really appreciate it. Going through this year’s budget was tremendously easier. I had a lot less questions,” he said.

The budget presentation ended with a question by Commissioner Abbott, who asked school leaders what their plan was for complying with President Donald Trump’s executive order that pushes so-called DEI initiatives out of public education.

“I think that we can get results if we just get back to just teaching – get all the political agendas out of our schools,” said Abbott (District 1, Southern).

Wallace responded by saying any federal mandates would pass down to Worcester County through the Mary-land State Department of Education, or MSDE.

“They will adjust what they need to adjust, and we follow state law. That will work its way through the levels of government and then we’ll follow what the law says,” she said.

Overall, the county’s \$284.6 million operating budget comes in at \$22.6 million more than last year, or a 9% in-crease. Higher statewide property tax assessments created about \$18 million in expected new revenue for the county.

Date announced for annual Bay Day in Ocean Pines

(April 17, 2025) The 6th Annual Bay Day event returns to White Horse Park in Ocean Pines on Sunday, May 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Bay Day is a collaborative conser-vation effort between the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) and the Ocean Pines Association aimed to help improve the health of the water-ways that shoulder the residential shores of Ocean Pines. This free, fam-ily-friendly event caters to all age groups through hands-on activities, boat tours, live music, food trucks, live animal exhibits, and more.

“The Maryland Coastal Bays Pro-gram relies on our communities to help us protect the resources and ecol-ogy of our Coastal Bays. Events like Bay Day are important to communi-cate relevant and current environ-mental information to interested citizens and provide a basis of support to help keep our waterways clean and beautiful”, says MCBP Executive Di-rector Kevin Smith.

“People should feel welcome to come and stay all day,” Liz Wist, MCBP Education Coordinator says. “We are thrilled to be adding a few new elements this year- there will be a

storybook walk, a sensory area for lit-tles, and a scavenger hunt for all ages. The idea behind Bay Day is to provide something for everyone and we hope that our application of feedback from previous years will make this year the best yet.”

The event this year will feature more than 30 conservation partners, includ-ing the Assateague State Park, Del-marva Discovery Museum, the National Aquarium, the Art League of Ocean City, and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, and more. There will be live music from Schizophrenic Boogiemens, bay boat tours on the OC Bay Hopper, and food from The Street Kitchen, and Kona Ice. The first 200 attendees will receive a canvas bag, hand-painted by students from Worcester County Public Schools.

The recycling station will be back this year. Community members can bring their alkaline batteries, old phones and more to drop off for recy-cling. Go Green OC will also collect compost.

For more information on the com-post and recycling program, and for weekly Bay Day updates, visit the “Bay Day in Ocean Pines” event on Face-book at <https://fb.me/e/4fjR7lO3Z>.

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Opinion

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

Finally, deal is done

It took over three years to get the deal done, but the town’s sale of one of the uglier pieces of the Heron Park property to developers Palmer and Sandy Gillis should prove to be worth the wait. Sooner would have been better, but you take what you can get and be happy about it.

The Gillises, who will be developing the property under the company name of Coastal Ventures Properties, should be commended for hanging in there after their proposal to convert the old chicken processing plant property collapsed in 2023 over a dispute involving sewer and water services.

The Town Council also deserves some applause for recognizing that the sale of the 9.35-acre parcel to Coastal Ventures is its best chance to clean up what continues to be a major eyesore: the remnants of the abandoned Tyson poultry processing plant that sits along Old Ocean City Boulevard.

Getting to that stage of redevelopment will take time but considering that Tyson closed the doors on the operation more than two decades ago, the future of the property is suddenly much brighter.

Hill verdict reaction

The spectacular rise and fall of former Ocean Pines Association General Manager Brett Hill is the subject of numerous conversations this week, following his conviction in federal court on 16 counts of withholding payroll taxes but not paying it to the IRS.

Hill became interim general manager in 2016 and resigned in 2017 after a tumultuous year that included “historic debt,” employee accusations of a “toxic” work environment and extreme political battles between his defenders and critics on the board of directors.

That’s all over now, but the events of the time remain unforgettable by participants and witnesses, some of whom are undoubtedly saying, “I told you so.”

Letters

Support for full funding of WCPS

Editor,

Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) consistently ranks among the top-performing school districts in Maryland. This success is a direct result of our dedicated educators, small class sizes, and a community that values education. Yet, despite these achievements, WCPS teachers remain the lowest-paid in the entire state. It’s time to be fair to the County’s largest group of employees—the very people who make our schools great.

Small class sizes are not

just a nice-to-have; they are a proven factor in student achievement and a cornerstone of WCPS’s success. Maintaining these class sizes requires proper staffing, which means we must offer competitive salaries to attract and retain quality teachers.

Let’s also not forget: good schools are the number one reason families and businesses choose to relocate to Worcester County.

Our schools are an investment in the future of this community—not just for students, but for economic growth and quality of life.

The school administra-

tion has crafted a reasonable, transparent budget that reflects the real needs of the district, and it has received unanimous support from all school board members. This is not a wish list—it’s a responsible plan for sustaining excellence.

I sincerely hope you will vote for full funding this year. Doing so will help our schools focus on educating children instead of constantly trying to recover from past shortfalls.

Our students, our teachers, and our community deserve no less.

Joan Roache
Ocean City

Judge Kent retiring from Worcester

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 17, 2025) Judge Peggy Kent, Worcester County’s first and only woman to serve as a circuit court judge, has formally retired from service after seven years on the bench.

“It was a wonderful honor when the governor first appointed me and I was mindful that it was a milestone of sorts,” Kent said last Tuesday. “Now we have Judge (Cathi) Coates on the District Court bench and there are women judges in Wicomico (County), too. But for Worcester, it was a wonderful step forward, in my opinion.”

Maryland judges are required to retire at age 70, a milestone Kent hit last month. However, she’ll continue to sit cases in Snow Hill as a substitute, and setting her own schedule, until her replacement is named.

“I am gladly sitting as a senior judge, and am scheduled most days here in Worcester County. I’m trying to keep my retirement as low-key as possible, and truly, I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to keep working,” she said.

Kent said she’s excited by the prospect of spending



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE
Worcester Clerk of Court Susan Braniecki, right, is pictured administering Judge Peggy Kent’s oath of office in 2018.

time with her grown daughters and her first grandchild in retirement.

“I keep thinking I’ll pick up a golf club again,” she said with a laugh. “We’ll see. I’m still feeling my way. The whole idea of retirement feels a little surreal, but it’s coming. The actual leaving part, leaving my office and cleaning out my office, that’ll be interesting. Probably a little emotional.”

“It’s been the best job in the world,” she added. “Very, very grateful to have had this opportunity.”

Gov. Larry Hogan promoted Kent to the bench in 2018. Before that, she served as a magistrate in family court for almost 22 years.

In Maryland’s court sys-

tem, a magistrate is not a judge but is vested with the authority to conduct hearings, make findings of fact, and offer recommendations to a circuit court judge.

Kent said working family law cases as a magistrate, at the intersection of sociology and psychology and justice, meshed well with what she loved to do.

“I don’t think anybody can doubt that it’s a critical part of the law, dealing with families,” she said. “Families in crisis. Children who may be in need of the court’s assistance, children who may have committed crimes. Families who are divorcing and there’s questions as to custody, and invariably, a lot

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BAYSIDE

GAZETTE

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The Bayside Gazette is published weekly by FLAG Publications, Inc.

11934 Ocean Gateway, Suite 6, Ocean City, Md. 21842.

The Bayside Gazette is available by subscription at \$90/year or \$45/6 mos.

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Md. slow to form selection group

Continued from Page 22 of emotion.”

Kent’s replacement can only be named by Maryland’s governor – but that could take months.

Gov. Wes Moore has not yet convened a judicial nominating committee. Those committees typically don’t convene, either, when the General Assembly is in session from January to early April, which just ended.

A judicial nominating committee first must accept applications and narrow down the candidates. Then, the committee holds one-on-one roundtable interviews, before eventually giving a shortlist to the governor for review. Applicants’ names are a matter of public record.

Kent’s retirement marks the second long-term judicial vacancy on the Eastern Shore. District Court Judge Gerald Purnell retired last summer after 18 years on the bench and has still not been replaced.

In fact, Maryland’s governor hasn’t appointed a new District Court judge for the Eastern Shore since 2022, when Hogan named Judge Coates to fill the opening created by the retirement of Judge Daniel Mumford. Coates is the first woman to ever serve on the District Court bench in Worcester County.

Obituaries

JAMES RUSSELL BARRETT
Berlin

James Russell Barrett (Russ), 61, of Berlin, a true life of the party and vibrant spirit, passed away on April 13, 2025.



James Barrett

Russ was known for his contagious laugh, kindness, generosity and unwavering ability to turn any gathering into a celebration.

Russ was born on January 19, 1964 to the late James G. Barrett and Nancy (White) Barrett. He grew up on Burley Street living life to the fullest, always seeking adventure and truly never met a stranger.

After attending Dealer Son School in Detroit, Michigan, Russ joined his father and uncle at Barrett Chevrolet Chrysler Dodge Jeep. He served as president of the corporation from 2004 until his retirement in 2015.

He loved cooking breakfast for anyone who wanted a delicious scrap-ple, egg and cheese sandwich. Russ enjoyed fishing, boating, rooting for the Ravens and family time at his mom’s pool on Sundays. He was a true grill master and could have beaten Bobby Flay cooking brisket and smoked tuna dip. And no, sorry, we don’t have the recipes.

His legacy lives on through his wife, Karen (Regiec); daughter, Jamie; and granddaughters, Pearce and Edie. He will be missed immensely by his mother, Nancy; his sister, Ellen Abbott (Riley); brothers John Barrett (Barbie) and Stephen Barrett (Dawn); sister-in-law Julie Bower (Bill); and his beloved nieces and nephews Alex Abbott, Lauren Barrett, Wil Barrett, Taylor Barrett, Kate Abbott, James Barrett, and Zach Bower.

In addition to the many ways Russ gave his time to the community, he was a member and past president of the Berlin Lions Club, a former member of the Board of Directors of Atlantic General Hospital and the United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore. Russ embraced everyone with love and served as a mentor to countless individuals as a wonderful example of a family man and business leader.

What does heaven look like for Russ? A couple of cold Natural Lights on a calm boat day.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, May 4, 2025 at the Ocean City Golf Club from 4-6 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations in Russ’s name may be made to Coastal Hospice P.O. Box 1733, Salisbury, Md. 21802, and the United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore 803 N. Salisbury Blvd. #2100,

Salisbury, Md. 21801.

KATHLEEN GRAHAM MALONEY
Berlin

Kathleen Graham Maloney, 67 of Berlin, passed away on April 07, 2025 from an illness. Born February 12, 1958, in Baltimore. She was the youngest of three children of the late George and Patricia Maloney.

Kathy graduated from Francis Scott Key High School, Union Bridge, Md., in 1976. She graduated from Towson State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education. Then, she graduated from Hood College of Frederick, MD, with a Master’s Degree in Special Education in 1985. In 1990 she took the Real Estate licensing course and passed the test because she and Chris were interested in investing in real estate.

She worked as the center director and teacher for Frederick County Head Start program. Kathy then worked for Frederick County Public Schools with special needs children. She then joined the family company, Maloney Contracting Company, Inc., trading as Maloney Electrical Service.

Continued on Page 25



K. Maloney

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Puzzles

COURSE CORRECTION

BY KAREEM AYAS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Kareem Ayas is a high school teacher of English literature in Harlem. He grew up in Syria and Lebanon, where he attended Arabic schools until the fifth grade. He says he learned English from watching “The Simpsons” (“when my mom wasn’t looking”) and from reading and rereading the “Goosebumps” novels. His favorite part of this puzzle is 102-Down, his favorite food, which, amazingly, has never been an answer in a Times puzzle before. — W.S.

ACROSS
1 At bay, say?
6 One directive in preparing a turkey
11 Onetime Volvo competitor
15 Actress Gadot
18 ““Oh, what’s the point?”
19 Alternative
20 Mexican dish with ahi
22 Look (like)
23 Hears, in a way
24 Tripe
25 Light, short-sleeved, collared garment
28 Ringing endorsements?
29 Pointy parts of a Batman costume
30 Uses one’s employee badge to enter, say
32 Get straight
34 ____-Tiles (kids’ building toy)
35 ____ favor
36 Tourney sponsor since 1939
38 *Voids
39 Nails
40 Iowa college town
42 Break before college
44 Counterpart of “thx”
45 Like some mindless entertainment
48 Wait
50 Dirtball
53 Descendants

DOWN
1 What cuteness tends to evoke
2 “That’s all ____ wrote”
3 Ophthalmologist’s work
4 Madison Avenue exec
5 Genre of the 2024 film “Bob Marley: One Love”
6 Greedy person’s “choice”

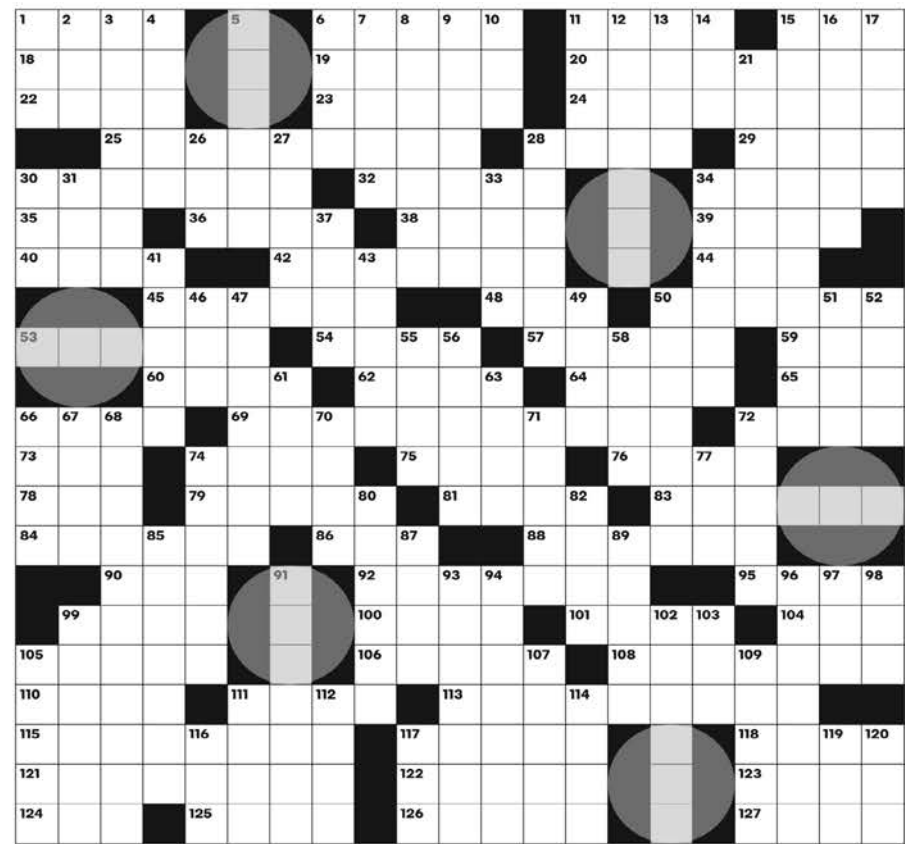
ACROSS
54 It’s an affront
57 Bit of curling equipment
59 Young fellow
60 Bit of casino equipment
62 Words of remembrance
64 Parts of one’s history, say
65 Binding agent in baking
66 Amazon Handmade competitor
69 Intense cycling sessions ... or what you must do to complete the answers to this puzzle’s starred clues
72 “My word!”
73 1980s TV star in the W.W.E. Hall of Fame
74 Work hard
75 Star turn, often
76 Word before milk or over
78 Member of la familia
79 Throws, informally
81 Beach bird
83 Bestow, as a quality
84 Adware detection program
86 Nickname that drops -ney
88 You might walk on this at night
90 Lincoln or Ford
92 Brown beer
95 What “.” might mean
99 *Number with 18 zeros

DOWN
100 Animal in the Premier League logo
101 Chinese two-stringed fiddle
104 Satisfied
105 Built like the Hulk
106 Colorado’s ____ Park
108 Canine teeth
110 Legend has it
111 Word before rain or wash
113 Toy with one’s food, perhaps?
115 Made nutritious choices
117 Gave support
118 Blue, in a way
121 Language from which we get “cashmere”
122 *Recap
123 Nursery rhyme name that’s said twice in a row
124 Superlative finish
125 Like 1-2-3
126 Historic Vegas casino where the Rat Pack performed
127 Affliction treated with a hot compress

ACROSS
7 Pieces of the heart
8 ____ Chisholm, first Black woman elected to Congress
9 Caddie’s appointment
10 Sounds of hesitation
11 Wall support
12 Post-mortem order
13 Tiny exemplars of collaboration
14 Honey
15 Events for bargain hunters
16 Stereotypical squirrel’s stash
17 Plenty o’
21 Cloying sentimentality
26 ____ Explorer, classic web browser
27 Gets caught (on)
28 They’re just for openers
30 Masseur’s employer
31 *Part of the funnies page
33 Student transcript figs.
34 Sources of some syrup
37 Sounds in massage parlors
41 Floor
43 Traffic marker
46 Retrovirus molecule
47 Invites to a movie, say
49 A/C capacity
50 “Wayne’s World” or “MacGruber,” informally
51 *Like restaurants in a famed dining guide
52 Testing humor’s boundaries

DOWN
55 Preschool basics
56 Trial program
58 Chromite and hematite
61 Grandiloquent
63 Account
66 First responders, for short
67 Set off, as an alarm
68 Be up on the latest news
70 Types
71 Cousin of kinda
72 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame architect
74 Like some stems and situations
77 Texter’s qualification
80 Moved like a crab
82 Shade of green
85 Ones suddenly canceling plans
87 Roast rostrum
89 “____ Jackson & the Olympians” (fantasy series)
91 Chinese fruits with leathery rinds
93 Tax-advantaged savings plan
94 Incorporate before shaping and baking, say
96 Find amusing
97 Poet Hughes
98 Tense parts of games, for short
99 Allotments
102 Pita dip made from chickpeas and tahini
103 Bring into play
105 Apathetic
107 Distance ÷ time
109 Chiromancers read them
111 Historic Indian city
112 ____-bitty
114 Many email attachments
116 Kyle’s little brother on “South Park”
117 Hard core features, informally
119 Like some humor
120 Turn to ash, perhaps

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



ACROSS
55 Preschool basics
56 Trial program
58 Chromite and hematite
61 Grandiloquent
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116 Kyle’s little brother on “South Park”
117 Hard core features, informally
119 Like some humor
120 Turn to ash, perhaps

DOWN
1 What cuteness tends to evoke
2 “That’s all ____ wrote”
3 Ophthalmologist’s work
4 Madison Avenue exec
5 Genre of the 2024 film “Bob Marley: One Love”
6 Greedy person’s “choice”
7 Pieces of the heart
8 ____ Chisholm, first Black woman elected to Congress
9 Caddie’s appointment
10 Sounds of hesitation
11 Wall support
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su | do | ku

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HARD - 90

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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

PASS	TRAP	OBVS	CALMS
ALTO	AUGER	RAIL	ORIEL
ROOF	BLADE	ANNA	PENNY
THATS	BESIDE	THE	POINT
BATS	SUITS	ATOM	PETRA
PREHISTORIC	PERIODS		
ECHOES	KEN	AIDS	LSU
BRAT	SAY	JARS	CLAM
BUYS	BYTHE	POUND	NOHELP
REAM	RUSK	COHERE	
WRITTEN	INTHE	STARS	
LOONIE	COCA	TIER	
SERVES	DINES	SAND	DASHES
TALE	DISS	BAE	POSH
END	ACNE	ORE	DRENCH
POSTGRADUATE	DEGREE		
NEHRU	SLOP	NOS	DIVE
READ	BETWEEN	THE	LINES
GRIND	ASIA	AEIOU	EDIT
OBES	GAMY	TERMS	SINE
VISAS	SUES	DEES	TAYE

Obituaries

Continued from Page 23

She worked with her late father George, Master Electrician, brothers Mike and Jack, and several other employees. Their commercial jobs included work at the Pentagon, Navy Yard, National Security Administration, and Marine Reserve Base. Kathy earned her apprentice electrician license. She deeply enjoyed working closely with her father and brothers.

She then married Christopher Wayne Protos, “Pee Wee,” in 1988. They were blessed with the birth of their son Nickolas Graham Protos in October of 1988.

Surviving is beloved brother John Patrick Maloney of Westminster. Preceded in death by her loving parents George and Patricia in 2011 and 2012. Sadly, Chris and Kathy lost their precious son Nick in 2007. She also lost her dear brother Robert Michael Maloney in 2018.

She will forever be grateful to her parents for raising the family in the peaceful Carroll County, Md. on a horse farm. Kathy was a member of Paddock Pals 4-H Club and showed her four horses at the Carroll County Ag Center. She most enjoyed riding with friends in the countryside. She attended the Linwood Brethren Church during her childhood near Union Bridge and visited many others in her adulthood. Her favorite was

the Eyler Valley Chapel in Sabillasville of the Catoctin Mountains, which was a stone church with no electricity. She was an adventurous outdoor girl who could be found on a horse, bicycle or up a tree reading a book.

As an adult she loved reading poetry, mountain hiking, swimming, camping, music, concerts, road trips and motorcycle riding including riding her own 1969 Triumph Trophy 650. She liked going to events such as Antique Motorcycle Club of America meets with her friends who also own antique bikes.

She enjoyed Substitute teaching for 31 years in Frederick, Montgomery, and Worcester County Public Schools with all ages and subjects which allowed her to raise her son and care for her sick, aging parents. She also volunteered over 1,000 hours at her son’s elementary school in Urbana. She was the volunteer coordinator for 250 volunteers. She earned a P.T.A. Life Membership Award for her work. She loved going on every field trip with the kids.

Kathy loved meeting new people from all walks of life. Her motto in life was “if it wasn’t fun she wasn’t interested.” She was grateful to God for the gift of life. During her final illness, the Lord was her source of strength and peace.

Though no longer married, Kathy and Chris remain like family and best friends, along with his wife, Christine, with whom Kathy shares a close friendship. Their unwavering love and support through out her illness was beyond selfless. Kathy was grateful, as were friends and loved ones.

All are welcome to attend her gravesite service on July 12, 2025 at 10 a.m. at Lovettsville Union Cemetery, 12930 Lutheran Church, Lovettsville, Va. 20180. Reception to follow at 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Fraternal Order of Eagles, 401 Central Ave., Brunswick, Md. 21716 (pot luck and cash bar)

A special thank you to Nick’s friend Chase Ramsburg and the Fraternal Order of Eagles Riding Club for providing their Hall for Kathy’s Celebration of Life.

MARGARET MARY KRACH
Ocean City

In loving memory of Margaret Mary Krach (nee Stafford) who passed away on April 6, 2025, after a long battle with Alzheimers.

Margaret was born in Baltimore on July 20,1939 and graduated from the Institute of Notre Dame in 1957. She is survived by her loving husband of 64 years, Thomas Krach of Ocean City.

Margaret was the devoted mother of Joanne Bennetti (Michael) and son






Margaret Krach






James Krach (Kathleen). She is also survived by four loving granddaughters, Ashley Devine, Haley Bennetti, Gabrielle Bennetti and Cassidy Bennetti. She was blessed with boys when her great grandsons came along, James and Luke Devine.

Margaret spent her life caring, nurturing, loving and volunteering to help others. When they retired and moved to Ocean City in 1996, Margaret continued her life of selflessness and joined: St Luke’s Catholic Church, The Ladies Auxiliary of The O.C. Elks, The Delmarva Irish American Club and The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. Margaret’s pride in her Irish Heritage was always shining and passed along from her father, James Stafford, a Baltimore City Police Officer. She walked annually in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and both Margaret & Tom were honored by being selected as the parade’s Grand Marshalls.

She will be buried at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens at a date to be determined. Anyone wishing to make a contribution in her honor, can donate to Stansell House-Coastal Hospice 1500 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines Md. 21811




OPEN HOUSES



April 17 - 24

DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENT/AGENCY
Fri-Mon 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside	1BR/2BR/3BR/4BR+	Condos, Towns & SF	-	Nanette Pavier/Holiday Real Estate
Mon-Fri 9am-4pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Friday 2-4pm	14000 Coastal Hwy #505 Avalon, Ocean City	3BR/3BA	Condo	\$685,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 3-5pm	8500 Coastal Hwy #805, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$699,900	Rosemarie Leonard/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	5 Cresthaven Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$364,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 10am-Noon	8500 Coastal Hwy #805, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$699,900	Rosemarie Leonard/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	12301 Jamaica Ave #C209 Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$309,900	Rosemarie Leonard/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	10300 Coastal Hwy #1802 Atlantis, Ocean City	Studio	Condo	\$269,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10am-2pm	5901 Atlantic Ave. #206 Adagio, Ocean City	3BR/3BA	Condo	\$705,000	Claudia Gausepohl/Coastal Life Realty
Saturday 11am-1:30pm	106 120th St. #603, Marlin Cove, Ocean City	2BR/2.5BA	Condo	\$404,900	Monica McNamara/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 12:30-2:30pm	13000 Marina View Lane #19, West Ocean City	4BR/4BA	Townhome	\$1,599,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-3pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd, West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Saturday Noon-2pm	11605 Seaward Road Unit E Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$399,900	Katie Landon/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 1-3pm	5603 Atlantic Ave. Unit 301, Ocean City	3BR/3.5BA	Condo	\$1,399,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 1-3pm	10000 Coastal Hwy. #1208 English Towers, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$775,000	Claudia Gausepohl/Coastal Life Realty
Saturday 3-5pm	14000 Coastal Hwy #505 Avalon, Ocean City	3BR/3BA	Condo	\$685,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2:30-4pm	155 Jamestown Road Unit 104, Ocean City	1BR/1.5BA	Condo	\$279,900	Katie Landon/Coldwell Banker Realty

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Calendar

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

Thurs., April 17

MAUNDY THURSDAY MEAL IN UPPER ROOM
Bethany United Methodist Church, 8648 Stephen Decatur Highway, Berlin, 5:30 p.m. A worship service recalling the events of the meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper including readings, hymns and prayers. Sign up: 410-641-2186 or Bethany 21811@gmail.com.

MAUNDY THURSDAY
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3 Church St., Berlin, 6 p.m. Light dinner then service.

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

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

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

NATURE LOVERS CRAFTING
Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 1 p.m. Nature themed craft projects for adults. April: Pressed flower bookmarks. 410-632-3495, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TILE ART
Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. Color subway tiles and then spray them with alcohol to let the creativity flow. Registration required: 410-957-0878. www.worcesterlibrary.org

BOOK FOR THE MONTH CLUB: ‘THE TRUTH OF YOU’ BY IAIN S. THOMAS
Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

EASTER EGG COCOA BOMB
Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Enjoy learning how to make an Easter Egg Cocoa Bomb. For ages 12-18 years.

410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

POP CUTURE BOOK CLUB: ‘WASTELAND’ BY OLIVER FRANKLIN-WALLIS
Game Theory Board Games & Coffee, 1822 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 5 p.m. Join the Ocean City Library with Game Theory Cafe for an afternoon of popular culture nonfiction. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

Fri., April 18

HOME, CONDO AND OUTDOOR SHOW & ARTS AND CRAFT FAIR
Ocean City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 4001 Coastal Highway, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tons of ideas for your home. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for seniors (60+) and kids ages 4-18 years and includes admission to the Easter Kids Fun Fair. <https://oceanpromotions.info>, 410-213-8090

EASTER KIDS FUN FAIR
Ocean City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 4001 Coastal Highway, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for seniors (60+) and kids ages 4-18 years and includes admission to the Home Show with Arts and Crafts. Show and egg hunt schedules: <https://oceanpromotions.info>. 410-213-8090

GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS AND GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3 Church St., Berlin, 11:30 a.m. Good Friday Stations of the Cross starts at 11:30 a.m. and Good Friday Service begins at 6 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY CROSS WALK
Son’Spot Ministries Inc, 12 Worcester St., Ocean City, 12 p.m. Meet at The Son’Spot on Worcester Street and walk along the boardwalk to conclude at the Atlantic United Methodist Church on 4th Street. 410-289-7430

FRIED FLOUNDER DINNER
Bowen Fellowship Church, 8421 Newark Road, Newark, 4:30 p.m. Includes green beans, mac & cheese, cornbread, dessert and beverage. Carryouts available for \$10.

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

SPRING NIGHT AT THE GALLERY
Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 5-8 p.m. Dinner, art and activities for kids. Cost is \$30 for members and \$36 for non-members. Designed for ages 6-

12 years. Tickets: 410-524-9433, <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/2232>.

KNIGHTS 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., April 19

HOME, CONDO AND OUTDOOR SHOW & ARTS AND CRAFT FAIR
Ocean City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 4001 Coastal Highway, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tons of ideas for your home. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for seniors (60+) and kids ages 4-18 years and includes admission to the Easter Kids Fun Fair. <https://oceanpromotions.info>, 410-213-8090

EASTER KIDS FUN FAIR
Ocean City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 4001 Coastal Highway, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 for seniors (60+) and kids ages 4-18 years and includes admission to the Home Show with Arts and Crafts. Show and egg hunt schedules: <https://oceanpromotions.info>. 410-213-8090

EASTER EGG HUNT
Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 11 a.m. Class egg hunt, carnival games, visits with the Easter Bunny. Cost is \$6 for OC residents and \$8 for non-residents. For kids age 2-10 years. <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/>, 410-250-0125

BERLIN SPRING CELEBRATION
Calvin B. Taylor House, 208 N. Main St., Berlin, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Featuring Breakfast with the Easter Bunny, Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Bonnet Parade, local artisan vendors and free family activities. Schedule: <https://berlinchamber.org/event/spring-celebration/>.

EASTER VIGIL
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3 Church St., Berlin, 7 p.m. Easter Vigil.

WALK WITH A DOC
Southgate Pond, Race Track Road, Ocean Pines, 9-10 a.m. An AGH representative will speak on a topic of their expertise, then the group will walk around the pond. First 10 participants receive a \$10 Wal-Mart gift card. Alyce Marzola, 410-641-9268

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., April 20

EASTER SUNRISE WORSHIP
Assateague State Park, 6915 Stephen Decatur Highway, Berlin, 6 a.m. Free breakfast after service at Bethany United Methodist Church (7 a.m.) Inclement weather updates will be posted at: www.facebook.com/BethanyUMCBerlin/. 410-641-2186, bethany21811@gmail.com

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
Ocean City Boardwalk Arch, 1 N. Division St., 6 a.m. Bleachers and a limited number of chairs provided. You may want to bring a blanket. In case of rain, the service will relocate to Atlantic United Methodist Church on 4th Street. 410-289-7430

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3 Church St., Berlin. Services held at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES MEETING
Sundays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10 a.m. www.jw.org

Mon., April 21

STORY TIME: EGGS
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

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

QIGONG & TAI CHI FORMS
Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. A five-week course that is great for beginners. Safe, slow moves to improve balance and dexterity. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION
Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. The group is reading from Book 6 of the Great Conversations Anthology. The focus will be on “My Confession” by Mary McCarthy. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

ECO-SPROUTS
Worcester County Library - Berlin

Calendar

Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3 p.m. Celebrate Earth Day by starting a garden in unique, upcycled containers. All materials provided. For ages 6-11 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

MAKE YOUR OWN POETRY ZINE
Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4 p.m. Bring/write your own poem or pick from the library's selection before following a demonstration on how to make a zine. For ages 12-18 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

T.O.P.S. OF BERLIN - GROUP #169
Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and living a healthy lifestyle. Rose Campion, 410-641-0157

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., April 22

EARTH DAY CLEANUP
White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Join Beach Heroes-OC and your Ocean Pines neighbors to clean up the grounds at White Horse Park. Gloves, bags and grippers provided. Also drop off old athletic shoes for recycling.

SPRING CELEBRATION
Coastal Wilds, 34215 Peppers Corner Road, Frankford, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Cost is \$25 and includes Kangaroo walkabout, animal encounters, meet and greet with Bluey, live music, games, crafts and more. Tickets: <https://book.singenuity.com/469/activity/details/2288/rates>. 302-829-1549

STORY TIME AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN
Corner Sanctuary - Pocomoke Community Garden, Willow Street, 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and crafts. For ages 0-5 years. Weather permitting. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME
Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Story time featuring seasonal themes designed to support early literacy skills

with stories, songs and fingerplays. For ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

HOMESCHOOL HISTORY
Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 12 p.m. Learn facts about different historical time periods through reading, writing and games. For ages 6-11 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

LET'S MAKE ... UPCYCLED ORGANIZERS
Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1 p.m. Join in as the group upcycles instead of adding to the landfill. All materials provided. Registration required: 410-641-0650. www.worcesterlibrary.org

EARTH DAY AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN
Corner Sanctuary - Pocomoke Community Garden, Willow Street, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Do you enjoy gardening? Do you need service learning hours for school? Come out and help with gardening tasks. Bring gloves and tools is desired. For ages 12-18 years. Weather permitting. 410-957-0878

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

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

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

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

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

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

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND WELLNESS GROUP
Tuesdays - Holy Trinity Cathedral, 11021 Worcester Highway, 2-2:45 p.m. Use the weight loss program/app/plan of your choice. Free and open to everyone. 410-641-4882,

www.htcanglican.org/activities.

Wed., April 23

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

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

COFFEE & CRAFTS: DECOUPAGE BOXES
Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in every month for a new crafts. Materials provided. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

LIFE IN THE PAST LANE: COUNTRY ROADS
Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. This program explores the character, ambiance and history of some of the lesser-traveled roads of Delaware. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

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

ALA UNIT 166 SIP-N-SHOP
American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, 2308 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 5-9 p.m. Come out and enjoy a beverage and some appetizers while enjoying exclusive access to a variety of vendors. A \$10 donation at the door will help to support Veteran and local community programs.

HERBAL SUPPORT FOR PERIMENOPAUSE
Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 5:30 p.m. A discussion on the herbs and holistic protocols to support the natural transition of perimenopause. Explore different teas and participate in honest conversation. Registration required: 410-641-0650.

FREE VIRTUAL POETRY READING BY ADA LIMÓN
Free virtual poetry reading by Ada Limón, U.S. poet laureate, as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of Worcester Community College, via Zoom, 6:30 p.m. Visit the events section of WorcesterWic.edu for more info.

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.kiwanisofopoc.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

LOUIS PARSONS III MEMORIAL PHOTO CONTEST OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS
OC Life-Saving Station Museum, 813 S. Atlantic Ave., April 1-Sept. 1. Entry fee is \$5 per entry. Category winners will be announced on Nov. 1. <https://www.gogophotocontest.com/oceancitymuseumsociety>, 410-289-4991, emma@ocmuseum.org

BOOKMARK DESIGN CONTEST
Held throughout all of Worcester County library branches, during April. Design a custom bookmark. Pick up an entry form and template at your local library branch. Submit your design by April 30 for a chance to be featured. Winners will be announced on May 12. For ages 6-18 years. 410-632-5622

APRIL INSPIRATION CHALLENGE
Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., during April. Art, photography or poetry challenge for all ages. Pieces will be displayed in the library for viewing. The theme is "Crystal Clear." Due by April 30. 410-632-3495

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

QUEEN OF HEARTS
Weekly virtual drawings on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. Winner receives 60 percent of jackpot. www.opvfd.com/queen-of-hearts. Sponsored by the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.

2025 KIWANIS LOTTERY TICKETS ON SALE
On sale every Saturday morning at the Ocean Pines Farmers Market from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. One \$20 ticket is good for all 365 drawings in 2025. Benefits the youth of the community.

OCEAN CITY-BERLIN ROTARY CLUB
Meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at Don's Seafood & Chop House at the South Gate of Ocean Pines, 6 p.m. ocberlinrotary@gmail.com

OCEAN CITY CHAPTER OF THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ITALY
Meets every month (except July and August) at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 9901 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Membership is open to individuals of Italian descent and their spouses. www.sonsofitaly-oceancity.com

POLISH AMERICAN CLUB OF DELMARVA
Meets the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 9901 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 2-4 p.m. A social organization of men and women of Polish or Slavic descent.

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