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BAYSIDE GAZETTE

FEBRUARY 5, 2026 **BERLIN • NORTH WORCESTER COUNTY • OCEAN PINES** **FREE**

At 107, he really has seen it all

WWII veteran wounded 82 years ago at Anzio soldiers on in Ocean Pines

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) Later this month, Ocean Pines resident, World War II veteran and Purple Heart recipient John Edward Romm Jr. will do something only a very few people have done: celebrate his 107th birthday.

Romm, now closing in on a decade since he passed the century mark, remains one of the few American World War II veterans still around to remember the days of service.

And he now resides here in Ocean Pines with his grandson.

Romm, who was born on Feb. 16, 1919 in Southwest Baltimore, describes his childhood as “damn rough.” He was 10 years old when the stock market crashed and the country went into the decade-long Great Depression.

And then, just as America’s financial strain had loosened up, Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States formally joined World War II in 1941.

Romm, who was 21 when he was drafted into the US Army and, found himself driving a tank in the 1st Armored Division, the first American armored unit to see combat in WWII.

Romm was discharged in 1944 after being wounded during the division’s landings on Anzio Beach, south of Rome, in late 1943.

Romm said the Allied forces had little success with a surprise assault against Axis powers, and his team was left with just a small piece of ground surrounded by Germans, who secured the area with landmines.

During an operation, Romm’s tank struck one of those mines, blowing off its track. As the crew attempted to tow the damaged vehicle, another

See WHAT Page 3



John Edward Romm Jr., Ocean Pines resident, World War II Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient, turns 107 years old on Feb. 16.

TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Accused coach acquitted

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) Bryon Johnson, a local high school basketball coach accused of sexual offenses against a minor, has been acquitted of all charges.

Investigators uncovered “reliable digital forensic evidence” that contradicted earlier accusations leaving prosecutors with insufficient proof to pro-

ceed with criminal charges, according to Worcester County State’s Attorney Kristin Heiser.

“Consistent with our ethical obligations, the State entered a nolle prosequi on all criminal charges against Mr. Johnson this morning. The State will not be prosecuting this matter,” Heiser said in a statement Friday to OC Today-Dispatch.

See COACH Page 12



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AT OUTLETS OCEAN CITY

'What good's a Purple Heart'

Continued from Page 1

nearby mine detonated, and Romm was thrown from the tank into the air, leaving him with facial injuries. The veteran recalled looking in a mirror after, noting, "it was just all blood."

"That's how I got my Purple Heart," he added. "I wouldn't take it. I said, 'I don't want no Purple Heart, what good's a Purple Heart?'"

During his time with the 1st Armored Division, Romm saw combat throughout North Africa, including intense battles in Tunisia. They then made their way to Italy, including Anzio Beach, where Romm was injured. After the incident, Romm was sent home to the United States before World War II ended in 1945.

"It's hard to believe, you go through all that, and here I am now talking about it," he said in an interview last week with OC Today-Dispatch.

Despite Romm already being back in the US at the conclusion of WWII, he emphasized how relieved he felt upon hearing the war was over and that years of fighting had finally ended.

"Oh man, it was wonderful," he said.

In the years following the war, Romm began a career as a truck driver and got married. He had known his wife, who later worked for the National Security Agency, since childhood in Baltimore.

The couple made their home in a house off the Magothy River in Pasadena, Maryland. Once they retired, they decided to travel the world.

Romm said that one of his favorite trips was to Nova Scotia, which they returned to on multiple occasions. Other destinations were Hawaii, as well as an Alaskan cruise.

A notable vacation was to Europe. According to Romm's grandson, John Joseph Romm, he accompanied his grandparents to Munich and London when he was in his early teens.

Germany included a memorable beer garden. Then, at a dinner in England, the family dined with Queen Elizabeth's guards.

there were some characters," Joseph Romm said. "They partied, it was unbelievable ... They loved their beer. It was so interesting. You see them standing like statues and then to see them out at a pub ... they were a riot."

"We were eating, and who came in to sit down, but the guards," Romm added. "Oh, they were a rough bunch."

In addition to leisure travel, Romm would, for many years, attend annual reunions of the 1st Armored Division, each held in a different state. Joseph Romm said he would often join his grandparents, but the get-togethers have since stopped.

"He's outlived them," Joseph Romm said. "They stopped doing that some time ago just because everybody has passed away."

In 2010, Romm's wife passed away at the age of 89, leaving him alone in his Pasadena home for a few years. As time went on, he was physically doing well, but when he was forced to forfeit his driver's license at 101 due to eyesight concerns, and after observing structural issues with the house, his grandson decided to help.

The Anne Arundel residence was sold, and the pair moved to the Eastern Shore.

Joseph Romm said that he has learned a lot throughout the years from his grandfather, particularly his devotion to work. Joseph Romm noted that his own career in the home improvement business, for instance, was inspired in part by his grandfather's building expertise.

"He could fix anything, build anything," Joseph Romm said. "I learned from when I was a kid watching him, working with him ... I can build a lot of things, do a lot of plumbing, electrical, drywall, framing, windows, doors, you name it ... A lot of that stuff, I learned from him when I was a kid."

He added that his grandfather never fails to fascinate those around him. Doctors often note that Romm is one of the last soldiers alive who remembers the war. In fact, according to the US Department of Veterans Affairs statistics, only 45,000 of the 16.4

See PINES Page 8



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OPA's public works building to host fire trucks for now

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) All equipment from the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department's South Station has been relocated to the community's Public Works building as construction on the new facility nears.

A press release issued by the Ocean Pines Association last week indicated that firefighting devices stored in the soon-to-be-replaced firehouse at 911 Ocean Parkway have been moved to OPA's Public Works space, 1 Firehouse Lane. The rearrangement comes just as construction teams prepare to break ground on the project to rebuild the outdated and deteriorating South Station firehouse.

Officials said the decision to transfer fire equipment to OPA's Public Works was to guarantee that emergency response times are not compromised. The site of the current South Station and the Public Works building are a mere two minutes apart, ensuring that fire personnel's actions remain speedy in urgent situations.

"Public Works is happy to accommodate the fire department during the construction of their new building," said Public Works Director

Eddie Wells in the announcement. "We had to make some adjustments, but this move will allow the fire department to maintain the same emergency response times for the south side of Ocean Pines."

Joe Enste, OPVFD's president, echoed Wells' sentiment.

"Through our partnership with the Public Works Division, we can continue providing uninterrupted, centralized service to this great community and the citizens we are honored to serve," he said.

At a board meeting in January, the OPA Board of Directors unanimously approved the construction contract with Delaware-based The Whayland Company. The vote was unanimous, with director Stuart Lakernick absent. Development will kick off later this month, and the initiative is expected to take about 60 weeks.

The project will see the complete remodel of the current firehouse. Officials have said that the revamp is vital to maintaining quality service within Ocean Pines and has long been a priority for the OPVFD, with initial plans for the construction project dating back to 2001.

The South Station was built in
See FIRE Page 6

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Fire equipment relocated to PW

Continued from Page 4

1981, with a few additions made all before 1990. Since then, the only modifications to the facility have been minor, such as painting. The building has struggled with drainage issues, mold concerns, and leaks. Additionally, the space is insufficient to accommodate modern firefighting requirements.

The project will cost about \$6 million. Per a referendum passed during last summer's Ocean Pines Board of Directors' election, the association is responsible for up to \$3.4 million. The fire department will pay the rest. Enste said at a June public hearing that the OPVFD has secured \$1.7 million in grants and bonds, plus an additional \$750,000 from fundraising and savings, to be allocated to the



The fire apparatus previously housed at the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department South Station has been relocated to the OPA's Public Works building.

new building.

An official groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for later this month to celebrate the new fire station. Details and a date are still to be determined.

OPA General Manager John Viola expressed his excitement for the proj-

ect in the press release and acknowledged the community members who made it happen.

"This new fire station on the south side of Ocean Pines is much needed, and I'm proud of the team and the hard work they put into making this a reality," he said.

Pines resident to mark 107th

Continued from Page 3

million Americans who served in World War II were alive as of 2025.

"He's like a living encyclopedia," Joseph Romm said. "People talk to me about some things about the history and the war, and I say I live with it, I get it firsthand.

Despite his age and two quadruple bypasses (one in the 1980s and the other in the early 2000s), Romm's get-up-and-go attitude remains. Over the fall, he raked the leaves out of the yard nearly every day, and when the weather was warm enough, he walked the Ocean Pines streets.

"It's unbelievable," his grandson said.

When asked his secret to a long life, Romm said, "just eating and breathing."

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Berlin seeks resident input on Route 113 reconnection

Citizens asked to attend a public session regarding pedestrian bridge project

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) The Town of Berlin is inviting residents to public input sessions to gather feedback on a long-discussed project to improve safety and connectivity along U.S. Route 113.

Berlin will begin planning efforts for a potential bike and pedestrian bridge over Route 113. The goal of the project is to explore options for a safe crossing that would better connect neighborhoods long since divided by the highway.

Two public input sessions are scheduled, and citizens are encouraged to attend either. The information shared will largely remain consistent at both meetings. The discussions are scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 6 p.m. at St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405 Flower St., and Thursday, Feb. 12, at 9 a.m. at the Berlin Library, 13 Harrison Avenue.

Town officials will review and discuss possible bridge locations, including Old Ocean City Boulevard, Bay Street, and Germantown Road. Community members can RSVP by emailing Berlin Mayor Zack Tyn-dall at MayorZack@berlinmd.gov, and questions can be directed to executive assistant Sara Gorfinkel at SGorfinkel@berlinmd.gov. Berlin resident and founder of the nonprofit We Heart Berlin, Tony Weeg said he plans to present a broader concept at the Feb. 11 meeting, one that reimagines Route 113 as a more pedestrian-friendly corridor rather than focusing solely on a single bridge.

“[My] design envisions Route 113 as a human-sized pedestrian corridor rather than a highway,” Weeg wrote on Facebook. “It was created to divide, and it’s high time we fix that and give folks the safety and dignity they deserve while walking up and down the road.”

Weeg’s proposal includes features such as bollards at intersections, audible and visual crossing indicators, and “monumental” trees lining the roadway. He said the improvements should extend from Burley Street to the hospital.

“Long gone should be the days of grandparents walking with baby carriages in the turn lane to get to Food Lion,” Weeg said. “We can do better than this.”

In August 2025, Berlin announced that nearly \$1 million in federal funding for its original Connecting Neighborhoods initiative had been rescinded. While Berlin received the first \$250,000, Congress eliminated the remaining \$950,000 in a budget reconciliation bill passed in July.

Those federal funds were intended to support the project’s design and planning phases. The highway, installed in the 1950s, created an east-west divide through Berlin that has since limited safe pedestrian access to schools, parks, healthcare facilities, downtown, and the town’s only grocery store.

Following the federal cuts, Berlin began working with the Maryland Department of Transportation to identify alternative funding. MDOT later notified the town that it had located \$643,000 in unspent earmarked federal funds that could be redirected to the Route 113 project. However, the town was required to provide a 20% local match to accept the money.

While MDOT gave Berlin two years to complete the match, town officials said at the time that they were given only 48 hours to decide whether to claim the funds.

At the same time, Worcester County had already awarded Berlin \$113,000 for a separate Rails and Trails project, but those funds were restricted to that purpose. To meet the match requirement, Berlin formally asked the Worcester County Commissioners to repurpose that funding for the Route 113 effort.

Gorfinkel raised the issue before the commissioners at the end of last summer. Ultimately, the commissioners voted 6-1 to reallocate \$24,000 from the Rails and Trails funds toward the Route 113 project. Commissioner Jim Bunting voted against the motion.

Combined with \$104,000 already available, the \$24,000 brought Berlin to its minimum 20% match of \$128,000.

The Town of Berlin is now seeking public input on the issue. The municipality encourages residents to attend one of the two sessions scheduled for next week.

‘Long gone should be the days of grandparents walking with baby carriages in the turn lane to get to Food Lion. We can do better than this.’

Tony Weeg



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Community Ctr. dreams get boost with federal grant

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Jan. 30, 2026) Berlin officials announced this week that the Berlin Community Center project has received a \$1.4 million federal grant, paving a path for the endeavor's initial phase to get off the ground.

Town of Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall took to Facebook on Wednesday, Jan. 28, to announce that the community center initiative was awarded funds through the Fiscal Year 2026 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The bill became law late last year, and about \$25 million has been obtained for use across Maryland. The funds will be allocated to mental health services, first responders, workforce development, agricultural research, and significant infrastructure projects. And now Berlin is getting a slice of the pie.

Tyndall said that the federal funding was requested and secured by U.S. Senators Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks (both D-Md.) and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. The \$1.4 million will cover the early stage of the community center undertaking, including site preparation, project design, and "future construction related to SHORE UP, Inc. programming and facilities."

"Once the multigenerational facility is complete, it will house SHORE UP! Inc's Head Start Center, programs for children and families, computer labs, recreational spaces, and a museum highlighting the history of the site and neighborhood," the mayor's Facebook post reads.

A community center has been a longstanding dream for Berlin residents and officials. That wish has been nearing reality over the past few years, particularly when four parcels of property on Flower Street were combined to be the site of the structure through a partnership between the Town of Berlin, the Berlin Community Improvement Association (BCIA), SHOREUP! Inc., and the Worcester County Commissioners.

Since then, additional efforts have been made to advance the project.

Last summer, Daniele Haley of Haley Architecture presented a community center feasibility study conducted by the firm. The evaluation revealed that if the proposed space incorporates every resident's wish, it would be a \$30 million-plus endeavor. Additionally, the town would need to hire around 15 new employees to run it.

Desired for the community center is a recreational pool to hold high school competitive swim meets, les-
See FEDERAL Page 12

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Obituaries

DEBORAH WOOTEN

Bishopville

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Deborah Carl Wooten, of Bishopville, who departed life on January 16, 2026, at the age of 77.



Deborah Wooten

Born February 25, 1948, in Takoma Park, she was the middle child of seven siblings and the beloved daughter of the late Howard Frederick Carl and Dorthea Naomi (Fisher) Carl.

Debi devoted her life to education as a dedicated teacher and media specialist at Buckingham Elementary School for 45 years, impacting the lives of many students throughout her career. Guided by compassion and service, Debi spent countless hours advocating for those affected by cancer, raising funds to support research, treatment, and the families who needed it most; proudly serving as a Relay for Life team leader for 25 years.

A cherished member of the Stevenson United Methodist Church, Debi embodied kindness and generosity, serving her community with unwavering grace and love. She was a beloved wife, mother, sister, aunt,

grandmother and great grandmother.

She is survived by her devoted husband, Ralf Thomas Wooten; her children, Amanda Kaye Wooten, Cassandra Dee Wooten, and Ralf Frederick Wooten; her granddaughters Kaylyn Naomi Cobb and Morgan Cari Thomas; and her beloved great-granddaughter, Brayleigh Gianna Kayte Combs.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, February 28, 2026, from 1-4 p.m. at Stevenson United Methodist Church, 123 North Main Street, Berlin, MD 21811.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Debi's Storybook Garden: Relay for Life – North Worcester or The Spirit Kitchen of Stevenson United Methodist Church.

PEGGY A. JANIS

Berlin

Peggy Ann (Herzog) Janis passed away on Friday, January 23, 2026 in Annapolis, Maryland, with her daughter, Jennifer, by her side. She was eighty-three years old.

Peggy embodied love and gentleness in everything she touched and built a life of courageous devotion. Her five kids learned from her steady hands and capable heart. She was a registered nurse, company bookkeeper, and built a family that, while



Peggy Janis

moving for work, always returned to the ocean.

After Sacred Heart Academy in Tampa, Florida, and a nursing degree from Florida State University, she worked at University of Florida's Shands Teaching Hospital and served as President of the Student Nurses Association. As a registered nurse, she worked for the National Institute of Health, Salisbury General and Atlantic General Hospitals. She was calm and efficient when patients needed her most and often handled tough situations that made novice nurses turn away.

She met her husband, Al Janis, in Rehoboth Beach. He showed up with fresh flounder from the morning's catch, which she cooked for her parents who were in town. That started a partnership that would span decades and state lines.

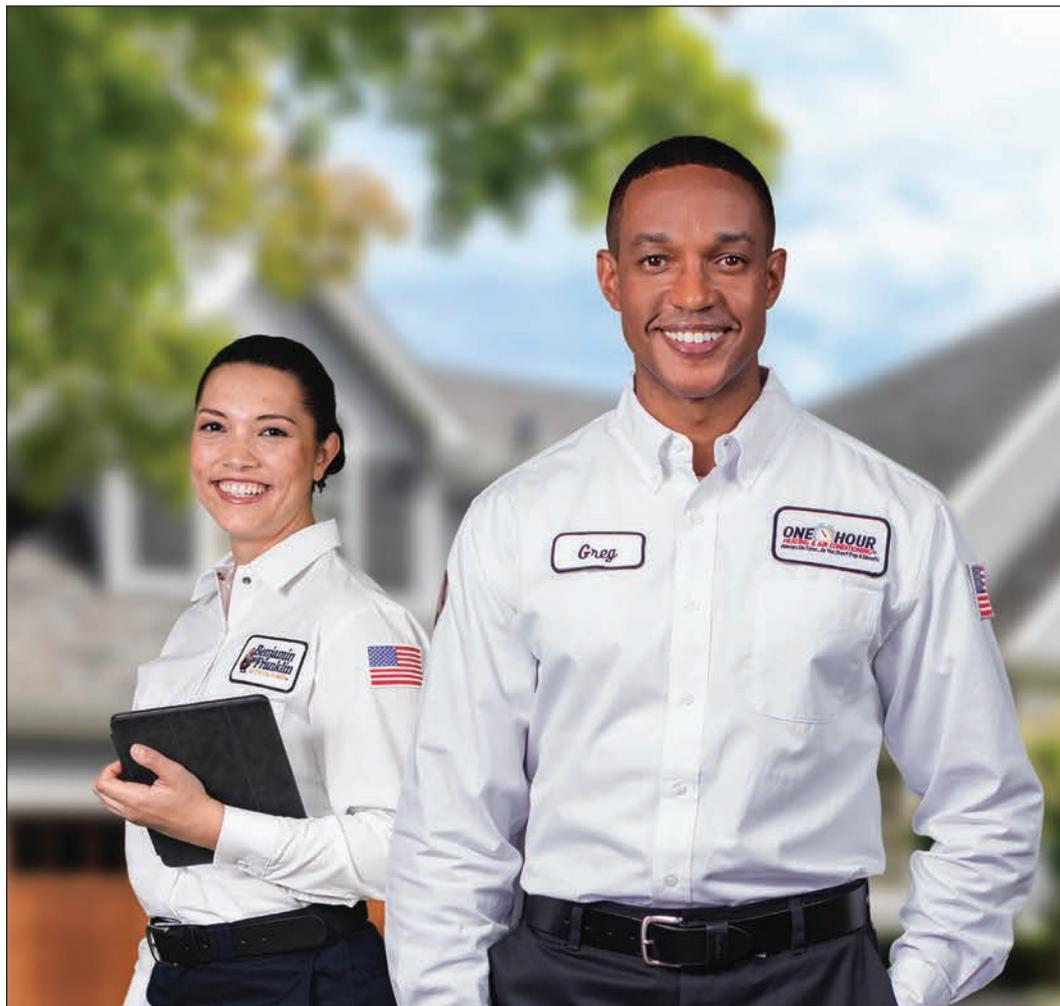
The work and the family grew together: Raising five kids while moving across New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland as the work demanded, they eventually built and owned three golf courses and Peggy managed accounting and business operations when needed. When winter slowed construction, she picked up nursing shifts at local hospitals.

They were road warriors, traveled up and down the East Coast and across the country by car and RV with kids and dogs along for the ride. Peggy was a natural caretaker and made sure everyone was fed with home-cooked meals, cozy with comforting blankets, and happy campers. She was the mother holding a warm towel at the water's edge, waiting for her kids to come out of the cold ocean. She shuttled kids to swim team, camps, church, and school, no matter where they landed, and welcomed the parade of cats, dogs, hamsters, birds, fish and ferrets her kids brought home. Fishing and beach time became their reprieve, a way to catch their breath between work and the constant motion.

Peggy and Al always found their way back to the ocean. They raised their kids near Ocean City and spent winters escaping to Chokoloskee Island deep in the Everglades, where the quaint community offered a break from tourism and a return to small-town life. In later years, they settled near Chincoteague Island, Virginia, where Peggy enjoyed the quiet dune grass beaches, world-class bird watching, and the annual pony roundup.

She was creative and remarkably resourceful. Her handmade Hal-

Continued on Page 13



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Federal grant to fund comm. center efforts

Continued from Page 8

sons, and water aerobics classes, a multipurpose gymnasium for public events and indoor sports, a functional fitness room for group fitness classes, an indoor walking track, a health services office for physicals, vision, and hearing exams, a historical display, a small video viewing room, rooms for special events, a technology lab, a community/demonstration kitchen, Head Start program classrooms, and Head Start support spaces, kitchen, and offices.

Outdoor space for the center could include athletic fields, a walking trail, a community garden, an outdoor classroom, a playground, and patios and gathering spaces.

The feasibility study's plan presented last year envisions a community space of approximately 45,000 square feet and a construction cost of

up to \$35 million. Ongoing operational expenses would also be incurred.

At the time, Haley noted that the final product would likely be scaled back from the ambitious wishlist but would still meet the needs of the Town of Berlin and its residents and visitors. With the \$1.4 million, the initiative is closer to realization than before.

While federal funds will get the project's first phase underway, the hunt for cash continues. Last summer, Berlin's retired speed limit, stop, and road signs were available online for bidding to raise money for the community center. The auction, spearheaded by Sara Gorfinkel, Tyndall's executive assistant, secured over \$10,000 in revenue.

Following the success of the street sign sale, the Town of Berlin hosted another auction, this time offering 11

prime parking spots for the ultra-crowded Christmas Parade. The bidding contest raised just under \$1,000 for the community project.

The town is now excited about the federal funds to advance the municipality's community center vision further.

"Our community is working hard to preserve the site of the historic Flower Street School and create a community center that meets the needs of residents of all ages," Tyndall said in his announcement. "I sincerely thank Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks for supporting Berlin's request for funding for this vital project in our community. This investment allows us to take meaningful steps forward toward making our community's vision a reality."

Tyndall's Facebook post also recognized the work of Gorfinkel, who co-

ordinated the submission of the grant with the senators' teams.

In a town-issued press release, Alsobrooks expressed her belief in the value of a community center for Berlin.

"Our communities need spaces where people can go to learn, socialize, and better their community," she said. "The Community Center on Flower Street in Berlin will soon become a space of fellowship, friendship, history, and advocacy where children and seniors alike can grow. I am proud that the funding Senator Van Hollen and I worked to secure will launch this terrific project."

The announcement noted that the municipality will continue working with its community partners and the USDA Rural Development team to create the center. As milestones are reached, updates will be provided.

Coach Johnson acquitted of all charges

Continued from Page 1

Johnson, 59, has been employed since 2000 by Worcester County Public Schools. His job is to oversee the in-school suspension program at Stephen Decatur High School. He's also been the boys' basketball coach, where he's affectionally known as Coach BJ.

The unproven accusations were not connected to any students under his care.

About two dozen people sat in solidarity with Johnson, 50, in the District Court gallery in Snow Hill for Friday's preliminary hearing. He was dressed in the same blue blazer he often wears on the sidelines of basketball games.

Johnson's case was the first called to the docket. Assistant State's Attorney Tori Rinaldi moved for the charges to be dropped, and Judge Michael Farlow announced that the case would be dismissed. Johnson did not address the court.

After the quick verdict, the vibe was one of somber relief as Johnson's supporters filed out of the courtroom and into the parking lot outside. "Hallelujah!" one man was heard to exclaim to a bailiff in the courthouse lobby.

Then, outside in the 20-degree cold, the group joined hands in a circle as Johnson's childhood friend, Pastor Keith Ellison, led them in prayer. "We got the victory," he told them.

"When this happened, when we heard about this – we know his character. We know who he is, you know? I knew this wasn't true," Ellison told OC Today-Dispatch.

"But unfortunately, things like this happen to us in life, and we have to face these things," he added. "We just

thank God, that God prevailed, and the truth is always gonna stand. Lies won't."

Johnson thanked his supporters before tearfully embracing a few of his adult children.

"My mother, they didn't raise no animal," he told the group. "What they tried to put on me – I been working with kids for 36 years. It's definitely not in my character. That's not who I am. I love kids."

Added Johnson, to a reporter: "They know I couldn't possibly do anything like what I was accused of."

Ocean Pines Police charged Johnson on Jan. 7 with third- and fourth-degree sex offenses and one count second-degree assault. He was arrested the next day.

Court documents show police had responded to an Ocean Pines home the day before to meet with a woman identified as Johnson's former girlfriend.

In a statement to police, the woman alleged that she had left her minor children at the home on Jan. 6 while she went to work in Salisbury.

She further alleged that, upon her return, her 8-year-old daughter reported being touched inappropriately by Johnson in her absence. The child allegedly corroborated that testimony with social services, court documents show.

When police interviewed Johnson on Jan. 7, he denied being at his ex-girlfriend's home on the date in question and denied any inappropriate contact with the minor, court documents show.

After being taken into custody Jan. 8, Johnson spent 19 days in jail. He was released Jan. 27 with the state's consent. Johnson also was placed on administrative leave at SDHS.



BRIAN SHANE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

BJ Johnson, center, head coach of Stephen Decatur's basketball team as well as a teacher at the school, is pictured in a prayer circle after charges were dropped against him last Friday.

"I knew from day one that man was innocent," Johnson's attorney Ryan Bodley told OC Today-Dispatch.

Not only had Johnson attended a high school basketball game that night before heading straight home, Bodley said, but cell phone tracking data and eyewitness testimony examined by police "unequivocally exonerated" his client.

"It is a grave miscarriage of justice that the full investigation was not undertaken until after Mr. Johnson was arrested, held without bond, and had his reputation tarnished," Bodley said in a statement.

"The rush to judgment in this case has harmed an innocent man's stellar reputation in the community and brought pain and suffering to an innocent man and his family."

Johnson is now focused on repairing his reputation and returning to his normal life, he added.

"We are hopeful that those responsible for these false allegations will be

investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Bodley's statement concluded.

In a later statement provided by his attorney, Johnson expressed appreciation to his friends and family, and said he's dedicated himself to helping young people better their lives.

"I never would have anticipated facing the challenge of proving my innocence against such horrible lies. This experience has revealed significant flaws within the justice system and heightened my awareness of the reality that many innocent individuals are incarcerated. The conditions within these facilities are often inadequate, and enduring confinement for extended periods of time is particularly difficult, especially for those who are innocent," Johnson wrote.

Looking ahead, Johnson said he'll volunteer with organizations The Innocence Project that advocate to fight wrongful convictions.

Obituaries

Continued from Page 10

loeven costumes were sometimes worn year-round. Cooking with intuition rather than recipes, her Maryland crab cakes were better than any restaurants, and somehow, simple lasagna tasted better than anywhere else on the planet. All of her children and grandchildren inherited her love of cooking, each with their own specialties.

Peggy is survived by her husband, Al Janis; daughters Jennifer, Jolyn, and Jacquelyn; sons Alyn Jr. and James; sisters Ellen Ficarotta, Catherine Perez, and Nancy Eckert; brothers Edward Herzog and David Herzog; and grandchildren Charlotte, Rocco, and Oliver. She was predeceased by her parents, Lawrence Martin Herzog and Sarah Louise Coleman Herzog.

A viewing will be held on Friday February 6, 2026 at the Burbage Funeral Home in Berlin, from 4-7 p.m. A mass will be held the following day, Saturday Feb. 7, 2026 at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church in Ocean City at 10 a.m. A burial will follow the mass at Sunset Memorial Park in Berlin, Maryland. Letters of condolence may be sent to the family via www.burbagefuneralhome.com. Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home – Berlin.

JOANN KATHERINE (HESSE) WENGERT
Ocean Pines

Joann Wengert passed away on January 17, 2026, at the age of 77.

Born on Oct. 25, 1948, She was the compassionate and caring wife of George "Tom" Wengert for 58 years; a loving mother to two sons, Chris Wengert and Josh Wengert (Stacia); an affectionate grandmother to Morgan, Drew, and Carleigh Wengert, and William and Brett Dryden; and a cherished great-grandmother to Justin "JJ" Jess, Jr. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ferdinand and Catherine Mongeon, and her brothers, Patrick and Michael Mongeon. Joann was also affectionately bonded to her faithful canine companion, Miley.

Joann was the heartbeat and foundation of her loved ones - a woman of quiet strength whose greatest joys were her family, her country, and her unwavering faith in God. She lived a life guided by strong values, integrity, and conviction; her love was constant, selfless, and sincere, touching all who knew her.

After graduating from Seton High School, where her character and faith were first shaped, Joann married her childhood sweetheart on April 1, 1967. Their story began as teenagers



Joann Wengert

and blossomed into a lifelong partnership built on devotion, loyalty, and shared religious faith. Their marriage stood as a testament to enduring commitment and unconditional love.

A proud patriot, Joann dedicated her professional life to public service through a distinguished career with the Department of Defense spanning multiple decades. During her tenure, she earned numerous prestigious awards in recognition of her exceptional contributions. She retired her badge in 2007, leaving a legacy of professionalism, dedication, and love of country.

Joann was a long-standing parishioner of Saint Rose of Lima in Baltimore, a place where her faith was nurtured and strengthened. After retirement and relocating to Ocean Pines, she continued her devotion as a parishioner of Saint John Neumann Church, remaining an active and cherished member of the community.

Though her absence is deeply felt, there is comfort in knowing that Joann rests in God's eternal presence. She will be deeply missed, forever loved, and joyfully remembered.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

— Matthew 5:8.

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Opinion

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

At age 107, he's seen it all and then some

The question isn't what you would give a 107-year-old person for his birthday, but what someone of that age might be able to give you. And the answer is: Perspective.

It's impossible to imagine the things Ocean Pines resident John Edward Romm Jr. has seen in more than a century on this planet, but his time here gives him a viewpoint on our current condition that only a handful of people can appreciate it.

When Mr. Romm was born on Feb. 16, 1919, women did not have the right to vote, the first commercial radio broadcast was still about 21 months away (KDKA in Pittsburgh on Nov. 2., 1920), experimental flu vaccines were being developed, and the Nazi Party in Germany was a little more than a month old.

Over the course of Mr. Romm's lifetime, this country has endured or witnessed the Great Depression, the rise of Adolf Hitler, World War II, the creation of the United Nations, the launch of the first space satellite, men walking on the moon, the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall and the climb and collapse of the Soviet Union.

He has seen the creation of personal computers, cell phones and the internet, Facebook, the comings and goings of 19 U.S presidents, the covid-19 pandemic and the advent of self-driving cars.

As it says in the Good Book, "For everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

Given all that Mr. Romm has seen, experienced, or has heard about during his long, long life, it would be safe to say he could attest to that, and that no matter how bad or good we think things are today, he's seen worse and he's seen better ... depending on one's perspective.

Ocean Pines plans events over winter

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) The Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department is rolling out a variety of activities this winter into spring, offering residents opportunities to stay active, socialize, and enjoy family-friendly entertainment.

One of the highlights is the Men's 4-on-4 Basketball League, which kicks off on March 19. Games will be held on Thursday nights from 6 to 10 p.m. Teams may have a maximum of eight players, and the cost to register is \$400 per team. Space is limited, and registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis. A mandatory coaches meeting is scheduled for March 12 at 6 p.m.

Maintaining that athletic

theme, Ocean Pines will offer an alternative way for residents to stay active.

For those looking for a high-energy fitness class, the recreation department is offering Pound Rockout Workout sessions at the Community Center. Classes will run on Mondays from 9:15 to 10 a.m., from February 23 through March 30. The cost is \$50 for residents and \$55 for non-residents, with drop-ins available for \$10. The workout is described as a cardio jam session blending cardio, strength training, and yoga- and Pilates-inspired movements. The class is open to all fitness levels, and participants are encouraged to bring an exercise mat.

Several special events are also planned this winter. The

P.E.P. Club Valentine's Party will take place on Friday, Feb. 13, from 5 to 7 p.m. The evening will include food, music, and dancing, providing a festive way for community members to celebrate the holiday.

Families are also invited to attend Coastal Winds Bingo Family Fun Night on March 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. In addition to bingo, Coastal Wilds from Frankford, Delaware, will bring live animals for guests to see and learn about. Hot dogs, chips, and drinks will be available, and ice cream will be sold. Admission is \$15 per player, and the event is open to the public.

More Ocean Pines recreational activities can be found on the community's official website.

V-Day, Black History Month in Berlin

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) Along with its icy winter chill, February in Berlin will bring Valentine's Day festivities and Black History Month recognition.

On Saturday, Feb. 14, the town will indulge the Valentine's Day spirit by offering free carriage rides, taking guests throughout Berlin. Trips will be available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the pickup spot on the corner of Main and Pitts Street. Reservations are not required.

Berlin Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells said the Valentine's Day carriage rides are provided when there's a cancellation of one of the trips scheduled in December as part of the town's holiday season lineup. During the 2025 program, the planned excursions were called off on Dec. 14 due to anticipated inclement weather.

"Whenever we end up needing a make-up day during the holiday season, we try to land it on Valentine's Day if we can," Wells said.

Wells added that the municipality funds the rides during the Christmas season. The

horses used for the carriages are rescues cared for by Randy Davis of R & D Ranch. Given that the Valentine's Day event is rescheduled from a previously booked day of trips, the town incurs no extra cost.

The carriage rides are a staple in Berlin during the lead-up to Christmas. Wells noted that if the event must be postponed, the February holiday is the perfect substitute.

"Carriage rides and Valentine's Day just go together," she said. "...It adds a little extra charm to downtown, and the rides really help set that tone."

Black History Month is also being celebrated in Berlin during February, particularly by the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum. According to a Facebook post by facility president Melissa Reid, the museum will share local Black historical stories on social media over the next few weeks.

"The Black community had played an integral part in the life of Berlin," she said in her post. "So, we are proud to be sharing some of these stories."

This week's focus included Briddletown, a historically

African American community on Berlin's east side.

According to Reid, land records indicate that the history of Briddletown dates back to 1866. At this time, a few Black families purchased land on the east side of Berlin.

"This land formed part of what became Briddletown, a community of African American landowners," Reid added.

There were originally 13 individual property titles. The parcels ranged in size from one to four acres and lined the road now known as Flower Street.

Reid's Facebook presentation included photos of Briddell family members, including George and Martha Briddell, some of the original owners of Briddletown, along with their sons. The facility representative added that some of the property initially purchased remains in the hands of direct descendants.

Additionally, two of the sons worked on the construction of St. Paul United Methodist, an early African American church in Berlin, located on Flower Street.

In 2018, Worcester County's tourism team in- See MUSEUM Page 15

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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Tree City USA designation a possibility for Town of Berlin

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) During a meeting last month, the Berlin Parks Commission discussed pursuing Tree City USA recognition, a program that encourages communities to prioritize planting and caring for trees.

The discussion followed a presentation by Greg Eastman of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service.

During the meeting, Eastman outlined the Tree City USA program and how it could benefit the Town of Berlin through recognition, technical assistance, and potential funding opportunities for tree planting and care.

Eastman said that as a Snow Hill native with an environmental science background, he took quick notice of Berlin's potential as a candidate for the program.

"Berlin jumped to the top of the list," Eastman said. "A lot of this is already in place for you guys. It shouldn't be a hard lift."

For instance, last year, the Town of Berlin's Horticultural Committee led a "Keep Berlin Cool" program, funded by the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, to increase the town's urban tree canopy and reduce stormwater runoff. The project included planting native trees on public and private properties.

Tree City USA is a national recognition program administered by the Arbor Day Foundation to acknowledge communities for their urban forestry efforts. Municipalities must meet four standards to qualify.

The first guideline is having a designated tree board or department responsible for overseeing tree-related matters. Eastman noted that this need not be a formal entity and could include public works, planning, a horticultural group, or another town body.

"It's up for you guys to decide," Eastman told the parks commission.

The second requirement is to adopt a public tree care ordinance that defines responsibilities for tree maintenance, protection, and related issues. Parks Commission staff liaison and Town of Berlin Special Projects Ad-

ministrator Kate Daub noted that Berlin currently lacks a tree care ordinance, which would need to be drafted and approved by the Berlin Town Council.

Eastman said model ordinances are available from the Arbor Day Foundation and can be customized by the town, provided they meet minimum standards.

The third mandate to qualify for the designation is an annual per-capita investment of at least \$2 in tree care. Based on Berlin's population of roughly 5,000, that would amount to about \$10,000 per year. Eastman explained that eligible expenses include tree planting and maintenance, public works labor, leaf and brush pickup, administrative time, and even volunteer hours.

The final requirement is holding an annual Arbor Day event. The DNR representative said this can range from a small tree-planting to a larger community celebration. The event must be documented with photos and include a proclamation from the mayor.

Eastman added that all documentation for initial recognition would be due by Dec. 31, 2026, giving the town ample time to prepare.

"I would say wintertime, that's board oversight, reviewing the model ordinances and trying to get it passed by this spring, and then once you get through the Arbor Day celebration, it's really just budget and activity tracking and then submitting it," he said. "So, you'll be busy in the spring and then continue to do what you normally do."

Berlin is not a stranger to environmental recognition. In 2018, the town was officially designated as a Bee City through the Bee City USA program.

According to the Town of Berlin's website, the project's purpose is to "raise awareness of the role pollinators play in our communities, encourage healthy habitats, and celebrate achievements."

Daub said that she believes the Tree City USA designation would be valuable recognition for the Town of Berlin.

"It would be a missed opportunity for us not to pursue it," she said.

Museum shares Black stories

Continued from Page 14

stalled a historic interpretative sign intended to educate the community about the history of the Briddell family and Briddletown. This sign is currently located on Stephen Decatur Middle School's property.

Reid noted that the Briddell family continues to influence Berlin. For instance, in the early 2000s, the Briddell Family Foundation was created to prioritize literacy. The group works with Buckingham Elementary School, hosts

events, and occasionally distributes free books to BES students.

The Taylor House president pointed out that Shaneka Nichols, who serves on the Berlin Town Council, is a direct descendant of the Briddell family.

Reid said that the museum will continue to share local Black stories throughout the month. She added that an exhibit on Briddelltown is viewable at the Calvin B. Taylor House, including a map of the original properties and several photographs of the family.

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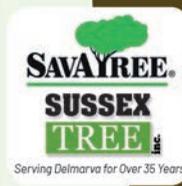


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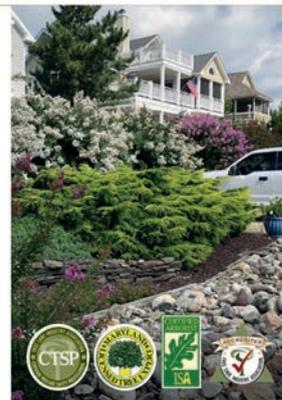
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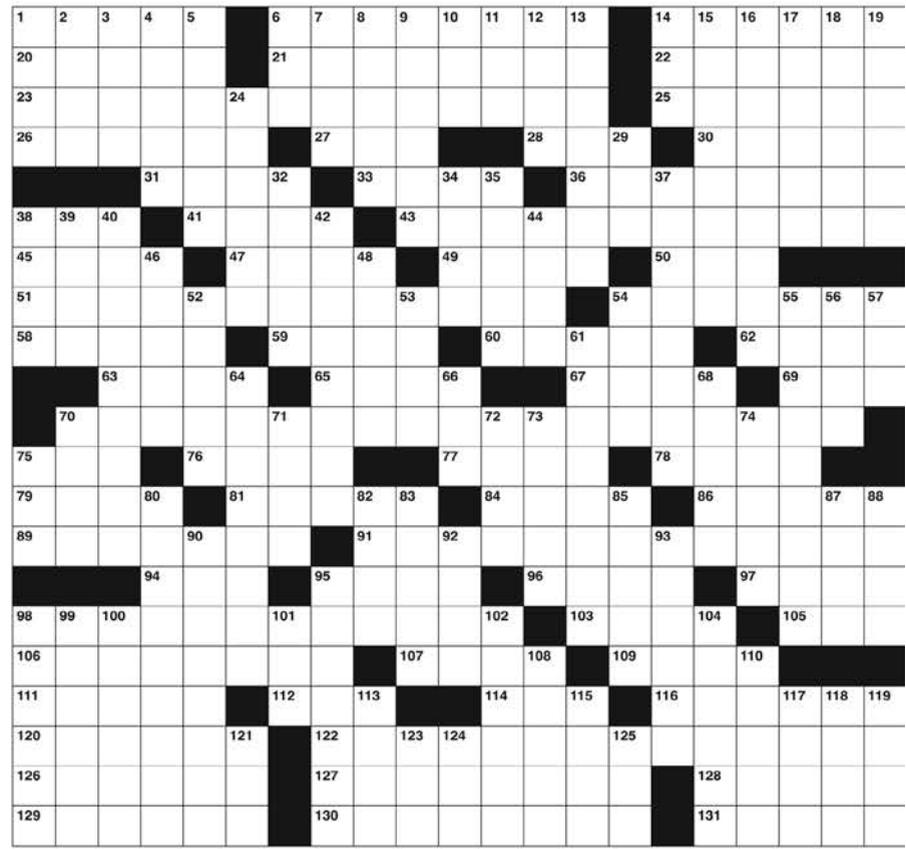
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Puzzles

ALERT! ALERT!
BY MARK MACLACHLAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Mark MacLachlan is a professor of chemistry and the dean of science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. For his research he creates new iridescent materials that mimic the structures of beetle shells — and can be used for sensing and coloration. He's been a crossword fan since his days as a postdoctoral student at M.I.T. This is his fifth construction for The Times. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Baggage accessory
 - 6 Apple TV comedy that received 20 Emmy nominations for its first season
 - 14 In which baby spiders develop
 - 20 Home of Diego Velázquez's "Las Meninas"
 - 21 "I want to hear about that!"
 - 22 Makeshift replacement for a Kleenex
 - 23 "That cabinet with plates looks awfully full"
 - 25 Triangular sail
 - 26 Food court pizzeria
 - 27 Some M.I.T. grads, for short
 - 28 Resort amenity
 - 30 Bob who hosted "America's Funniest Home Videos"
 - 31 A noble gas
 - 33 It's good for the long haul
 - 36 Sphere of creativity
 - 38 Private investigator, informally
 - 41 Cheese in a wax coating
 - 43 "It's saying you completed the marathon in under two hours, which can't be right"
 - 45 Persian Gulf nation
- DOWN**
- 47 Sneaker brand that popularized cantilever heels
 - 49 Mix up
 - 50 Actress Edebiri of "The Bear"
 - 51 "Is that a cough I hear?"
 - 54 Event for V.I.P. customers
 - 58 The planets in our solar system, e.g.
 - 59 Sci-fi princess
 - 60 Stretchy material
 - 62 Freight barge
 - 63 Not fantastical
 - 65 La Città Eterna
 - 67 Haunted house sound
 - 69 Something to use on your break?
 - 70 "Sorry, we'll have to put the old panes back in"
 - 75 Group of humpbacks
 - 76 _____ Bora (embattled Afghan region)
 - 77 Tel _____
 - 78 Designer Saint Laurent
 - 79 Little bits of energy
 - 81 New Zealanders, familiarly
 - 84 Color of undyed linen
 - 86 Course that doesn't require much studying
 - 89 "Gimme, gimme!"
 - 91 "Those pancakes are piled way too high!"
 - 94 Boxy transport
 - 95 Part of a bouquet, in Bogotá
 - 96 Like close-fitting clothes
 - 97 It's just under a foot
 - 98 "Your emery board will never fit in this tiny toiletry bag"
 - 103 Undesirable roommate
 - 105 Word found in all but four state constitutions, but not the U.S. Constitution
 - 106 Part of M.O.
 - 107 Symbol of transformation in "The Silence of the Lambs"
 - 109 Isn't feeling great
 - 111 Large flightless birds
 - 112 National Poetry Mo.
 - 114 "That ship _____ sailed"
 - 116 Beverage brewed outside using natural heat
 - 120 _____ beef
 - 122 "Your waiter's nowhere to be seen!"
 - 126 Passes
 - 127 Chips may go into it
 - 128 Jane who received a Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award
 - 129 Have no stomach for
 - 130 Doesn't care for
 - 131 Unexpected jerk
 - 1 Major N.Y.S.E. events
 - 2 Beat handily
 - 3 "See ya later!"
 - 4 Deck out
 - 5 Walk
 - 6 Cable co. that was purchased by AT&T in 1999
 - 7 "What _____?"
 - 8 William, Edward and Harry, e.g.
 - 9 To a _____ degree
 - 10 Stage booster
 - 11 Domain for salty dogs
 - 12 Urges to attack, with "on"
 - 13 What this hand has: AAKQ6
 - 14 Fluency-building subj.
 - 15 Prosthetic facial feature of Peter Falk
 - 16 Convey
 - 17 Pete who co-wrote "If I Had a Hammer"
 - 18 Skin care company
 - 19 Football snapper
 - 24 Thingamabob
 - 29 Either side of a cheerleader's "A"
 - 32 Kind of orange
 - 34 It's not optional
 - 35 Silicon Valley giant
 - 37 Easily detached
 - 38 Pioneering DVR brand
 - 39 George Orwell's first name at birth
 - 40 Purchase for the Atari 2600
 - 42 One cutting corners
 - 44 Neat
 - 46 One of Adolf Anderssen's sacrifices in the "Immortal Game" against Lionel Kieseritzky
 - 48 "Trade discount" quintet
 - 52 German for "city"
 - 53 Something to pitch
 - 54 Univ. worker
 - 55 Site-seeing list?
 - 56 Forte
 - 57 Animal whose name sounds like a pronoun



- 61 V-shaped designs
- 64 Visit, as for a safety check
- 66 Mathematician Lovelace
- 68 Human organ with the ability to regenerate itself
- 70 Frayed
- 71 Court order
- 72 With, in Oise
- 73 Exam marks
- 74 N.H.L. team with the longest Stanley Cup drought, familiarly
- 75 Smallest Canadian prov.
- 80 Canning package?
- 82 Mallorca, por ejemplo
- 83 Reason for turbulence
- 85 Anatomical appendage that only humans and gorillas have
- 87 Modern "seize the day"
- 88 Stunned
- 90 Computer model inputs
- 92 Ship that transported the Golden Fleece
- 93 Hardly a team player
- 95 Betrays, in a way
- 98 Like an unnatural smile
- 99 Tech debut of 2007
- 100 Examine creepily
- 101 _____ Mae Brown (Whoopi's role in "Ghost")
- 102 World's most-produced organic compound
- 104 Puts up a false front
- 108 Property of curium, but not cerium
- 110 Eavesdrop, e.g.
- 113 Surrealist Magritte
- 115 Fit of irritation
- 117 Fish in niçoise salad
- 118 Cuts off
- 119 Actor Brody of "The O.C."
- 121 "Spring forward" hrs.
- 123 Illegally interfere with, as an election
- 124 Remote abbr.
- 125 Special _____

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© Puzzles by Pappocom
HARD - 48

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical column, every horizontal row and every 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any. There is really only one solution to each puzzle.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

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



PHOTO COURTESY OF WCPS

SDMS STUDENT WINS BOOKMARK CONTEST, AGAIN

Loralei Donoway, an eighth grader at Stephen Decatur Middle School, was surprised Monday morning with being selected as the Delmarva Shorebirds Hit the Books Bookmark Contest winner. The student's art entry was also selected two years ago for the bookmark design. Donoway was surprised by representatives from the Delmarva Shorebirds, including Sherman, The Brace Place, and her family to celebrate her achievement. Her bookmark design will be distributed to 55,000 students across the Delmarva Peninsula, and she has been invited to throw out the first pitch during SDMS designated Shorebirds night in May. She is pictured above with Sherman receiving a congratulatory hug.

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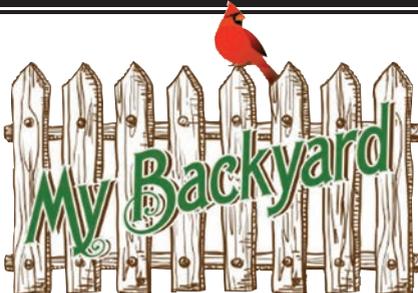
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 My Backyard continues to collect non-perishable food items for our local food bank. Bring in a donation and be entered to win a prize. Drawing will be held once a month. You can enter each time you bring in a donation. Thank you.

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410-208-1479



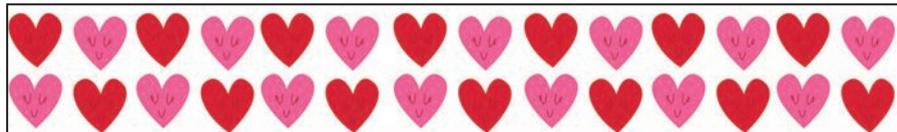
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DRAFT EIS PUBLIC HEARINGS Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study TIER 2 NEPA

In coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) is following the federally mandated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to study alternatives that address existing and future transportation capacity needs across the Chesapeake Bay, and along the US 50/301 approaches to the William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial (Bay) Bridge from the MD 2/MD 450 Interchange near Arnold to the US 50/301 split near Grasonville.

One virtual and two in-person public hearings will be held in February, where the public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 NEPA (Tier 2 Study), and the MDTA-Recommended Preferred Alternative, Alternative C. The MDTA-Recommended Preferred Alternative would replace the two existing Chesapeake Bay Bridge spans with two new four-lane bridge spans with full shoulders across the Chesapeake Bay. This alternative best fulfills the Study's purpose and need while having the lowest cost and least environmental impacts to natural, socio-economic, and cultural resources.

The Draft EIS is available online for review at baycrossingstudy.com. Printed copies are also available for review at select public locations listed on the website.

To provide either public or private testimony, please pre-register by 5 p.m. the day before the hearing at baycrossingstudy.com or call 667-203-5408. Same-day registration will also be available at the event.

If the hearing locations are closed due to inclement weather, please visit baycrossingstudy.com for new hearing dates.

Public Hearing Virtual Information

The public hearing materials are available for review in the Virtual Information Room (VIR) on baycrossingstudy.com. The public is encouraged to review these materials and provide comments. If you are unable to access the materials via the website or if additional assistance is required, please call 667-203-5408 or email the Study team at info@baycrossingstudy.com.

In the VIR, attendees will have the opportunity to:

- Review information on the Tier 2 Draft EIS and the MDTA-Recommended Preferred Alternative.
- Register to provide public or private testimony.
- Learn how to submit and provide written comment.

Public Hearings

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

6 - 8 p.m.: Presentation and Testimony

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9
baycrossingstudy.com

IN-PERSON PUBLIC HEARINGS

5 - 6 p.m.: Open House
6 - 8 p.m.: Presentation and Testimony

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10
Anne Arundel County Broadneck High School
1265 Green Holly Dr., Annapolis, MD 21409

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12
Queen Anne's County Kent Island High School
900 Love Point Rd., Stevensville, MD 21666

Comments may be submitted through March 9, 2026, via mail, email, project website, public or private testimony and by phone 667-203-5408. All comments received will be given equal consideration.

Individuals who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the MDTA at 410-537-1000 (711 for MD Relay) no later than five (5) business days before the public hearings they would like to attend.



OPEN HOUSES

Feb. 5 - 12



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	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm	204 S. Heron Drive #202G, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$575,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm	2819 Plover Drive Unit 4305, Ocean City	1BR/1.5BA	Townhome	\$405,000	Taylor Fowlkes/BHHS PenFed Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	12048 Pimlico Lane, Berlin	3BR 2.5BA	Single Family	\$949,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	424 Bayshore Dr #4101, Ocean City	2BR/1BA	Condo	\$295,999	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	124 Camelot Circle, Ocean Pines	4BR/2BA	Single Family	\$414,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Sat & Sun Noon-2pm	11500 Coastal Hwy #1614, Sea Watch, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$579,900	Lauren Bunting/Keller Williams Realty
Saturday 1-3 pm	205 125th Street #208B2, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$499,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	100 White Horse Drive, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$399,999	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Sunday 11am-1pm	205 125th Street #208B2, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$499,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty

Don't forget to check out the February Coastal Association of Realtors Real Estate Guide in OC Today-Dispatch's February 13th Issue for sale & rent listings, appraisals, reserve studies, title & mortgage company opportunities & relevant articles about the real estate industry.

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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., Feb. 5

OC CHESS CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Enjoy a relaxing game of chess at the library. 410-524-1818, 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, worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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

POCOMOKE BRANCH BOOK CLUB: 'DEACON KING KONG' BY JAMES MCBRIDE

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 2 p.m. Join in for a lively discussion each month. Stop by the Pocomoke Branch to pick up a copy in advance. 410-957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

MOON LIGHTS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3:30 p.m. Celebrate the Apollo 14 Mission to the Moon by making a glowing moon (or earth) luminary. All materials provided. For ages 6-11 years. Registration required: 410-641-0650, worcesterlibrary.org

DRY PANTRY

Thursdays - St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405 Flower Street, Berlin, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. For those in need of resources such as paper products, laundry products, baby items, and personal care items. Limits apply. 410-641-0270

Fri., Feb. 6

OCEAN CITY FUTSAL CLASSIC

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City. Cost is \$275 per team, 12 player roster. For youth ages 10-18 years. <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/soccer-tournament/>, 410-250-0125

SIP AND SHOP

Ocean Pines Golf Shop, 100 Clubhouse Drive, 5-7 p.m. Meet the new Ocean Pines Golf Pro, Matt Ruggiere. Enjoy wine and appetizers while shopping. Featuring 50% off all golf clothing.

OC MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City

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

CURRENTLY READING BOOK CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Drop in to this club to discuss what you are currently reading and share it with the group. Get great ideas on what to read next. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

FIRST FRIDAY OPENING RECEPTION

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 5-7 p.m. Meet the artists, enjoy hors d'oeuvres and see the new exhibits. All are welcome. Also held at the Princess Royale and the Coffee Beanery. <https://artleagueofoceancity.org>, 410-524-9433

KIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

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

Sat., Feb. 7

OCEAN CITY FUTSAL CLASSIC

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City. Cost is \$275 per team, 12 player roster. For youth ages 10-18 years. <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/soccer-tournament/>, 410-250-0125

SATURDAY WRITERS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10 a.m. Novice and established writers gather to share their writing projects. Structure includes critiques and appreciation, market leads and writing exercises. Drop-ins welcome. 410-641-0650

OCEAN PINES 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. Also featuring family-friendly activities, music and unique shopping experiences. Open to the public, year round. 410-641-7052, <https://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/farmers-artisans-market>

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT FRIED CHICKEN BUFFET

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 36540 Mount Pleasant Road, Willards, 11 a.m. Vegetables, beverages and desserts included. Dine in: \$17 for adults, \$8.50 for children and free to those 5 years and younger. Carry outs:

\$15. 410-835-8340

6TH ANNUAL MAC & CHEESE COOKOFF BENEFIT

Residence Inn by Marriott Ocean City, 300 Seabay Lane, 12-3 p.m. Cost is \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door and free to those 12 years and younger. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-mac-cheese-cookoff-benefit-tickets-1979543651349?aff=oddtcreator>. 443-664-7043

HAPPY HOUR & PIZZA PARTY

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 5:30-7:30 p.m. For Ocean Pines Golf members, friends and prospective members. Cost is \$12 at the door which covers pizza and salad. BYOB and soft drinks. RSVP: david.b.mcgregor@gmail.com.

Sun., Feb. 8

OCEAN CITY FUTSAL CLASSIC

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City. Cost is \$275 per team, 12 player roster. For youth ages 10-18 years. <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/recreation-parks/soccer-tournament/>, 410-250-0125

THE BIG GAME SCRAMBLE

Ocean Pines Golf Club, 100 Clubhouse Drive, 10 a.m. Shotgun start at 10 a.m. 2 player team scramble. \$20 for members and \$35 for non-members. Includes range balls, prize pool, hot dog and a beer. Registration: 410-641-6057.

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY

New Bethel United Methodist Church, 10203 Germantown Road, Berlin. Morning speaker: Dr. Clara Small, Professor Emeritus of History.

ANNUAL WOMEN'S DAY

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405 Flower St., Berlin, 10 a.m. Rev. Janice Herman, guest preacher, "Victorious Women: Rising, Reigning, Renewed." All are welcome. 410-641-0270

SEWING FOR A CAUSE

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

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

Mon., Feb. 9

COLONIAL ERA BRAIN GAMES

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., Pocomoke City, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Test your wits 1700s-style

with a series of puzzles and riddles inspired by 18th century Colonial life. Finish the puzzles and be entered into the drawing for a prize. 410-957-0878

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Songs, stories and giggles. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: CATS VS. DOGS

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, worcesterlibrary.org

WRITING FOR WELLNESS

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

HERBAL HEALTH

Maryland's Coast - Worcester County Tourism & Economic Development, 107 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 2 p.m. Fun and informative discussion on the therapeutic and medicinal properties of herbs. Attendees will receive a specialty curated tea to enjoy at home. Registration required: 443-783-6164.

COLONIAL GAMES

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Learn about colonial-era toys and games, then try them out for yourself in this hands-on program full of old-fashioned fun. For ages 6-11 years. 410-641-0650

VALENTINE COOKIES AND CARDS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Create some festive cookies and design Valentines for our friends at the 50 Plus center or someone special. All materials provided. For families. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

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

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

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. Elissa, 410-641-8050; on social media; or delmarvachorus.org.

Calendar

Continued from Page 19

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

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., Feb. 10

COLONIAL ERA BRAIN GAMES

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Test your wits 1700s-style with a series of puzzles and riddles inspired by 18th century Colonial life. Finish the puzzles and be entered into the drawing for a prize. 410-957-0878

BABY TIME

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

OC KNITTING GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Bring whatever project you happen to be working on. 410-524-1818, worcestertlibrary.org

STORY TIME @ THE DELMARVA DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Delmarva Discovery Museum, 2 Market St., Pocomoke City, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Stories, songs and crafts that feature one of the museum's special animals. For ages 0-5 years. Registration required: 410-957-0878. worcestertlibrary.org

STORY TIME

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

STORY TIME AT THE MUSEUM

Delmarva Discovery Museum, 2 Market St., Pocomoke City, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Join us for stories, songs and crafts that feature one of the museum's special animals. Registration required. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, <https://worcestertlibrary.libcal.com/event/15667083?hs=a>

MOVIE MATINEE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Come see a movie you may have missed in theaters. 410-208-4014, worcestertlibrary.org

TEEN VISION BOARDS

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4:30

p.m. What are you manifesting for 2026? Make a vision board and enjoy light refreshments. For ages 12-18 years. 410-524-1818, worcestertlibrary.org

BOOK CLUB @ TIDES & VINES: "EVERY HEART A DOORWAY" BY SEANAN MCGUIRE

Tides & Vine, 106 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 6 p.m. An evening of books and wine. Stop by the Snow Hill Library to pick up your book, then meet for a great discussion at Tides & Vine. Must be at least 21 years of age. 410-632-3495, worcestertlibrary.org

ATLANTIC COAST SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION MEETING

American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, 2308 Philadelphia Ave., Ocean City, 7 p.m. Dinner and drinks available for purchase after 6:15 p.m. Captain Kerry Harrington from Sea Born Seafood will demonstrate how to best handle a fish from catch to fillet to table. All are welcome.

CROSS FARMS POP-UP FARMERS MARKET

Tuesdays - Flower Street Field across from Henry Park, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Accepting Maryland Department of Agriculture FMNP (WIC & Seniors) Checks and Maryland WIC Fruit & Vegetable Checks. Also offering a "Produce Bucks" program, which doubles purchases for eligible residents. <https://www.facebook.com/theberlinfarmersmarket>.

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., Feb. 11

COLONIAL ERA BRAIN GAMES

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Test your wits 1700s-style with a series of puzzles and riddles inspired by 18th century Colonial life. Finish the puzzles and be entered into the drawing for a prize. 410-957-0878

AARP MEETING

Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st St., 10 a.m. Social and refreshments begin at 9:30 a.m. The guest speaker will discuss downsizing and moving options for seniors. Upcoming travel opportunities and more provided. All welcome. 410-250-0980

VALENTINE'S DAY CARD MAKING

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Make cards for friends and loved ones. For families. 410-957-0878

MAKING SENSE OF THE CENSUS AT 50PLUS CENTER

Snow Hill 50plus Center, 4767 Snow Hill Road, 11 a.m. Come to hear a presentation from our local history librarian about using census records for family history research. 410-632-3495, worcestertlibrary.org

PUZZLE SWAP

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 1-7 p.m. Bring your gently used puzzles and leave with new-to-you puzzles. Don't have a puzzle to exchange but still want one? That's OK too. All puzzles must be complete in their original box. 410-641-0650

'SCORCHY'S CORNER: WANDERING OUR DELMARVALOUS LAND' VIDEO SERIES

Museum of Ocean City, 217 S. Baltimore Ave., 2-3 p.m. Held Wednesdays, Feb. 4-March 4. Offering audiences a nostalgic journey across Delmarva with host Scorchy Tawes. Preregister: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1978305907223?aff=oddtcreator>.

MARbled MEMOS EXPERIMENT

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Design your own (Valentine) card by creating a marbled paper with shaving cream and food dye. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014, worcestertlibrary.org

OC LIONS MEETING

Ocean City Lions Club, 12534 Airport Road. Social gathering at 6 p.m., followed by dinner meeting at 7 p.m. Open to all

who are interested in serving the OC community. Reservations: 443-880-8729.

PAJAMA STORY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 6:30 p.m. Wear your pajamas and bring your favorite stuffie to snuggle while you enjoy stories and songs to wind down to bedtime. For ages 0-5 years. 410-641-0650, worcestertlibrary.org

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.

CASH BINGO

Wednesdays - Ocean City Elks Lodge 2645, 13708 Sinepuxent Ave. Door open at 5 p.m., bingo starts at 6:30 p.m. Food available before bingo and at intermission. Open to the public. 443-605-5028

ONGOING EVENTS

FREE TAX PREP

AARP is offering free tax preparations to the public. AARP Foundation Tax Aides will be available at the following libraries: Mondays in Ocean Pines; Wednesdays, Berlin; Fridays, Pocomoke City; and Saturdays, Ocean City. By appointment only: 443-584-5661, aarp-foundation.org/taxaide.

MARYLAND FIREFIGHTER 50/50 FUNDRAISER

Drawings are held every Thursday at 8 p.m. Ticket sales open Thursdays at 8:05 p.m. and close the following Thursday at 7:59 p.m. One winner takes home 50% of the total jackpot and the remainder supports the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department. Tickets: <https://md.5050raffle.org/give/mdfire/50-50-raffles/md5050/charities/ocean-pines/checkout>

HISTORY-TO-GO

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., throughout February. Pick up a History-to-Go kit and learn about ciphers and codes used throughout history. Supplies provided to make your own cipher disk. Pick up between December and February. 410-632-3495

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

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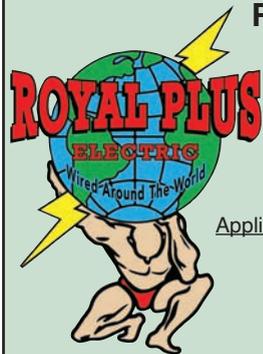
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Local artist's work featured at Berlin library

Mixed media creator will welcome community at meet and greet next week

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 5, 2026) The Worcester County Arts Council (WCAC) is featuring the work of local artist Kathryn Redden in an exhibit that has just opened at the Berlin Library Gallery. A meet the artist reception is planned for Feb. 10 from 4-6 p.m. for the public.

Redden, an Eastern Shore resident who has lived in the area since 1991, describes herself as a mixed media artist.

The Berlin Library exhibit includes selections from several of Redden's ongoing series, including Broken Vessels, Remnants, and her twig cross artwork. Redden said that the works explore themes of resilience, healing, faith, and reimagination.

The Broken Vessels series features abstract compositions filled with movement, shape, and color. Redden said the series is intentionally open to interpretation.

"You and I could both be looking at the broken vessel piece at the library and we could have a great chat about it and what it means," she said. "Life has twists and turns. Some of them are really happy and exciting;

some are difficult. And sometimes you look at yourself and say, 'What do I do next?' I call it reimagining. You reimagine yourself as a broken vessel. And the bottom-line message of a broken vessel is that you're not broken enough to not be used or to not be able to help others. You're probably better than before."

Redden noted that nature plays a strong role in her work, even when her paintings lean abstract. The artist said that she enjoys living in rural areas and often draws inspiration from farmland and flowers.

Another featured work at the Berlin showcase, the Remnants series, reflects on what remains after significant life events or societal changes. The series began during Redden's cancer diagnosis, with the first piece, Healing Tears, representing survival through a life challenge.

The exhibit also includes Redden's twig cross art, created from cross-shaped twigs she has stumbled upon in nature.

"I would actually find little twigs on the ground in the shape of a cross," she said. "It would be like I'm walking around, having a bad day, and there's this twig cross in front of me. So, I just save them, and I incorporate them in my art."

The artist adds that this series, which began in 2019 during her battle with cancer, places her faith at the

center.

"These twig crosses are His reminders to me," Redden's biography reads. "When I started my health challenge...I often prayed for His reassurance, comfort and guidance. There were days when my faith was feeling shaky or being tested...Many days, I would walk and pray on our farm. He would place these twig crosses for me to find in my path. I kept them as I found them and have incorporated them into my art."

Redden said that one of the newer works on display, I Hear the Brush of Angels' Wings, is a three-panel mixed media piece featuring an angel flanked by wings, incorporating natural and mixed media elements.

Redden said that her artistic journey began at age 12, when she used babysitting money to study oil painting with a neighbor in New Jersey. She graduated from James Madison University and spent her career working in various corporate spaces.

She moved to the Eastern Shore after falling in love with a farmer on a Pennsylvania ski trip, and continued her working life in different roles, one of which was at Salisbury University, where she designed adult leadership classes, and another in training development at Perdue Farms. She also worked at Wallops for a defense contractor, handling human re-

sources.

Art has stayed with her, having moved from oils to acrylics and, most recently, to mixed media in 2019.

"I'd always go foraging on the farm, collecting...I would make arrangements for people, dried flowers, and other things. That's what had me dive into more of the mixed media," she said.

Redden added that she's also learning watercolor from a few other local artists.

Now retired from corporate work, Redden is committed to community engagement and serves as president of the Lower Shore Performing Arts Company. Her paintings and mixed-media work have been exhibited in galleries and churches.

Redden said that she hopes her art brings peace and joy to those who find it.

"I think art is intentional," she said. "I feel so good when I look at it. It could be a bad day, and I feel good when I look at art. It touches me. It could be a seascape, a mountain scape, or an abstract of the sun's rays. If that can lift someone up at any given time, it's wonderful. I have art on my walls, and I look at it and smile every time."

Redden's exhibit is on display at the Berlin Library Gallery through WCAC. The gallery is open to the public during regular library hours.

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