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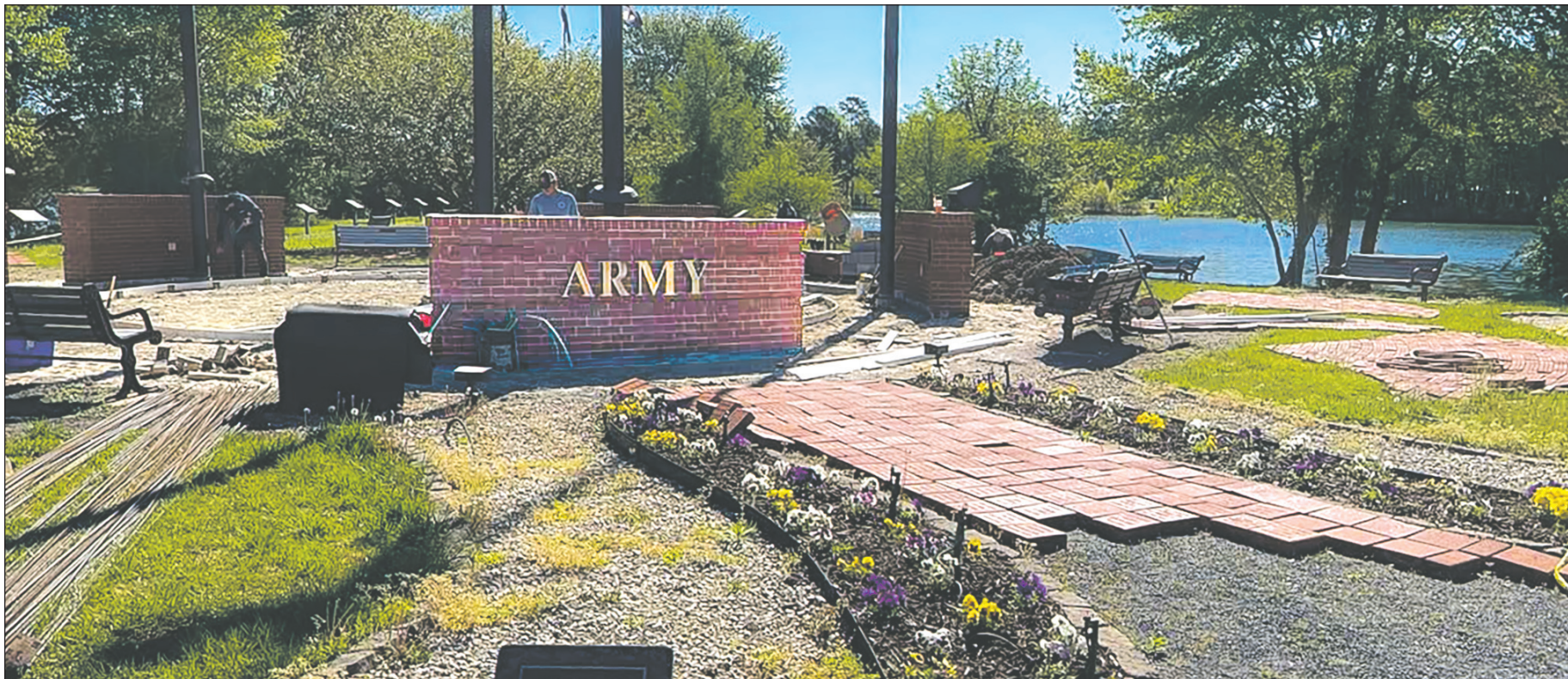


PHOTO COURTESY OF WORCESTER COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL AT OCEAN PINES

REFRESH BEFORE HOLIDAY

Contractors have been busy overhauling the hardscaping at the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines. The site work is pictured and will include new plantings as well as the new Space Force surface.

OP sewer bills will be reduced

County reserve fund gives officials flexibility, as other operating costs increase

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) Ocean Pines sewer customers will see one part of their quarterly bill cut in half, as Worcester County moves to pay down some long-term debt.

The county plans to reduce the sewer district's debt service fee from \$36 to \$18 per quarter, a change that would affect roughly 10,000 users in Ocean Pines.

Officials say the savings are the result of a growing reserve fund, built

up over the past few years through a combination of debt payoff and higher investment returns.

By using that money to retire older obligations early, the county can reduce the amount it needs to collect from ratepayers.

"The reality is that we're faced with higher costs from a regulatory standpoint, inspection standpoint, chemicals, maintenance," said Commissioner Chip Bertino (District 5, Ocean Pines). "So, it's nice to get a win for the ratepayers on this one."

For commercial businesses in Ocean Pines with more than one EDU, they will also see a savings of \$18 per EDU, Bertino added.

The county realized about

\$972,000 in savings and interest after retiring a 2019 bond, according to an April 15 internal memo.

At the same time, the county benefited from rising interest rates through the Maryland Local Government Investment Pool, where it holds public funds.

Account returns there climbed from 1.5% in 2022 to 3.7%, generating an additional \$784,000 in interest income.

The combined surplus totals about \$1.76 million. The county will use \$1.46 million of that to pay off two remaining bonds from 2014 and 2015.

"We're trying to find ways of lowering the bill," said County Adminis-

See OCEAN Page 8

Berlin finds \$389K it can cut in budget

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Berlin Town Council proposed cutting approximately \$389,000 from its proposed budget for next year to help cure a revenue shortfall of roughly \$400,000 against expenses and to avoid a tax increase.

At Monday night's meeting of the Berlin mayor and council, the group reviewed the proposed operating budget, considering items that could

See TOWN Page 3

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Town trims budget by \$389K

Continued from Page 1

be eliminated to address a spending plan that would be \$408,000 more than revenue projected for FY27.

Items considered for removal include replacement vehicles, playground work, an additional cost-of-living adjustment, a Independence Day celebration, and a planning legal consultant.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall maintained that despite public chatter, the town is not operating in a deficit. Berlin is required to adopt a balanced budget — expenditures must equal revenues — before the fiscal year begins on July 1. At the time of Monday's meeting, the draft budget reflected more than \$400,000 in costs exceeding expected income.

"I just want to be clear, we're not operating in a deficit," Tyndall said. "What happens is the town adopts a balanced budget...There is no deficit at the start of the year. On a rolling basis, with our finance team, the town administrator, me, and the council, we review those expenditures to make sure our budget is in line with our revenues and can keep pace...So, with that, what we are looking at is the cost of things and services the town provides, and all the activities we do for the community; those are projected to come in higher than our revenues. This is not uncommon."

To address the gap, the Berlin Town Council whittled away at the financial plan, with cuts including \$245,000 from public works for vehicles, \$18,000 from a proposed half-percent cost-of-living (COLA) increase for town staff in addition to the 2% included in the budget, \$45,000 for an economic development Ford Maverick, \$20,000 for a new playground climber, \$11,900 for fireworks, and \$50,000 for the planning legal consultant.

Town workers still will receive a step increase (2.5%) and a 2% COLA under the current budget plan.

From public works, the council is looking to cut a CAT skid loader for \$20,000, a Ford F550 for \$115,000, a Ford F250 to replace an aging F150 for \$65,000, a salt-and-brine attachment for \$25,000, and a zero-turn mower for \$20,000.

Town officials added that they would also like to see the elimination of emergency preparedness radios at \$10,500 for the police department. Tyndall, however, was hesitant to do away with the devices. Instead, the \$10,500 will likely be used as a contingency in the budget, and if it's not used, will be returned to the radios.

Council members also provided justification for the proposed cuts. Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols, for instance, said that for the vehicles, she would like to "slash them all."

"I think we cut any additional because with the 80 employees and 55 vehicles, I don't think we need any

right now...when your boot straps are tight at home, you make cuts, when your boot straps are tight in the town that you're running, you have to make cuts...I remember my mother always saying, 'before you buy a new car, if you can't handle your debts and bills, then you drive that car until the wheels fall off.' And I know that we've been in that place many times with vehicles in the past...I don't think right now with the budget that we're in and the state of the economy and world right now, I think we need to pause right now on vehicles."

Town of Berlin Finance Director Natalie Saleh added that the budgeted trucks are to replace aging vehicles. Nichols, however, maintained that with the shortfall, FY27 is not the time to obtain any costly cars.

Additionally, Councilman Jack Orris would like to see \$50,000 from the budget removed for the town's planning legal consultant. The council supported the move.

Tyndall cautioned against this action. He said the move could have financial and legal repercussions for the municipality.

"Some of [the cuts] I think we need to evaluate together, like the direction we want to go in, particularly for the planning department," he said. "I see we cut the legal fees, which is fine. I hear the group. But we also need to make sure we have a plan for addressing that, because we've had years without legal support in the planning office...We enacted a contract to be able to have those services take place in the planning office and in many respects it has saved the Town of Berlin substantial costs associated with legal challenges that may have arisen from previous decisions... I understand there are votes to pull that but I think that is a poor, short-sighted decision by this body."

The July 3 fireworks were also discussed as a potential cut, getting the deficit down to just under \$50,000. The \$50,000 includes about \$30,000 in operating increases for the Berlin Fire Company.

At Monday's meeting, Tyndall introduced an increased tax rate at 84 cents per \$100 of assessed value. This is a penny and a quarter of a penny more than the town's current tax rate of \$0.8275 per \$100 of assessed value, and would generate \$5.3 million in revenue for the town, or an increase of about \$80,000.

The mayor added that this rate hike could be lowered to a penny due to the cuts debated this week. An additional penny on the tax rate would yield \$64,000 more than current tax projections.

Council members Nichols, Steve Green, Jay Knerr, and Orris said they were against any tax rate increase at this time and would like to see the current rate retained for the third consecutive year.

See TAX Page 8



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Club's new outdoor kitchen will open soon

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Ocean Pines Yacht Club's new outdoor kitchen will be operational by summer, Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola announced Saturday along with updates on community maintenance work.

Appearing before the OPA Board of Directors Saturday, Viola also reported that the new south side fire station remains on track to be completed in 55 to 60 weeks.

Viola said the new south side firehouse maintains a "green" status and should be ready for the volunteer and career firefighting staff to move into in about a year, as projected. However, the general manager added that an unexpected groundworks-related interruption has hit the initiative.

"During the site work and some of the review, something did come up... they felt that some of the soil in special areas was maybe more organic than they would like to see," Viola said.

Organic soil can compromise a building's structural integrity due to its weak composition and tendency to decompose over time. To address the concern, Viola said the overly organic soil will be removed and replaced with fill dirt or a sand-and-clay mix. The work should be completed within the next

two weeks.

Viola noted that the soil replacement effort will take around 20 loads of dirt. He added that the community's public works team will likely jump in and help to cut down on additional expenses.

"If you have been passing by and you haven't seen a building yet... Things happen, it's not a major thing, and we'll certainly take care of it, but you will see a little bit of a delay there," the general manager said.

He also reported that the new building's final plans will be submitted to the county in the first week of May to secure the project's foundation permit officially.

"It'll take 55 to 60 weeks once we get that foundation in," Viola maintained.

The original and severely outdated south side fire station—built in the 1980s—was demolished in February. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in mid-March to recognize the beginning of the long-awaited construction of a new, more modern firefighting facility. The replacement building will be located where the old one was, at 911 Ocean Parkway.

Viola also updated the OPA board and homeowners on a few food and beverage initiatives. An outdoor kitchen at the Yacht Club, for instance, will be ready to serve patio and poolside patrons by the start of summer.

Construction on the tiki kitchen has already begun, and a metal roof was to be installed this week. Viola reminded the community that the project is a hybrid effort between restaurant operator Touch of Italy and OPA. Touch of Italy is responsible financially for the interior work, like the kitchen equipment, while Ocean Pines is paying for the structure itself.

Viola added that the outside kitchen will accommodate only patio and pool customers, not the inside section of the Yacht Club restaurant. Additionally, patrons may order from wait staff rather than going up to the galley's window. Servers will come around to drop off the food.

"Food will be ordered through wait staff," Viola said. "The way it will work, I, as a homeowner, the customer, I won't go to the window. The waiters will go there and deliver the food to you, whether you're at the pool or the patio."

The goal of the new kitchen is to ensure that food for outside customers remains hot and fresh. Touch of Italy owner Bob Ciprietti said last summer that the high volume of patrons made it difficult for staff to maintain the highest quality for patio and pool diners.

"I think it's a good move. Credit to TOI to realize that we need another kitchen to truly handle the pool and the patio," Viola said.

However, not all food and beverage initiatives are moving ahead this season. The general manager said that a proposed pavilion with a small kitchen at the Clubhouse—intended to provide golfers with a convenient place to grab a quick bite to eat—is on hold. The project will be reviewed again this fall.

"We did get approval to plan it, but stay tuned in the fall," Viola said. "As of now, nothing will be built there in the summer... nor am I saying it will definitely be built in the fall. We're still reviewing it."

Ongoing maintenance was also discussed at Saturday's meeting. At the golf course fairway bathrooms, a new roof, freshly painted doors, and fixture replacements will be finalized by the beginning of summer.

The Swim and Racquet pool restrooms will be updated with partitions and fresh mats.

Additionally, according to Viola, the community's public works crew began cutting the grass in medians and common areas on April 20.

He said the association will not be responsible for grass cutting on easements and ditches, as the money set aside for that purpose was reallocated to address snow and debris cleanup left by February's blizzard. Owners are now to arrange for grass cutting in front of their own homes.

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July 3 fireworks on chopping block during budget meeting

Berlin Town Council seeks ways to eliminate \$400K shortfall in FY27 budget

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Berlin Town Council discussed eliminating the community's Independence Day fireworks celebration next summer as part of a broader effort to reduce a \$400,000 shortfall in the drafted fiscal year 2027 spending plan.

At a Berlin mayor and council meeting this week, the governing body debated ways to fix the \$408,000 gap between projected revenues and expenditures in the work-in-progress FY27 budget.

The extensive discussion resulted in about \$389,000 being eliminated from the draft plan, approximately \$11,000 of which would come from canceling the annual July 3 fireworks.

Berlin Finance Director Natalie Saleh said that she heard from Town Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells, who was not in attendance at Monday night's meeting.

Wells suggested that, considering the municipality's gap in the financial

plan, the fireworks display would be the easiest to cut.

In an email to OC Today-Dispatch Tuesday, Wells said "the entertainment and activities people enjoy at the town's sponsored events are almost entirely paid for through grants, sponsorships, or vendor fees. The town's primary costs, whether it's the town's events or partner events, are tied to setup, staffing during the event, and cleanup."

She added that the town's grant, donation and sponsorship funding can be found in the budget under "Mainstreet Tourism" and currently contains \$128,904.72.

However, the July 3 celebration, along with the Christmas Parade, are the only festivities not fully offset by outside help. The fireworks have a few sponsors to contribute to the \$12,000 total but yield a higher direct expense for the town than other community events.

Wells noted that she would like to see the summer celebration continue but suggested to municipal officials that it made the most sense to do away with in light of the FY27 budget shortfall.

"I want to be clear: I'm not advocating to cut fireworks," Wells said.

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Residents share desires to make town budget cuts

“My role is to lay out the numbers and options so the mayor and council can make informed decisions. Given the conversation last night, it was simply the most straightforward place to point when discussing potential cost reductions, because it’s the largest direct expense tied to an event.”

The council on Monday agreed that the fireworks could be removed from the new budget.

“We need to make these cuts,” Councilman Steve Green said. “In this certain situation, do I watch the fireworks? Yes. Do I feel like there’s a mass economic impact for the Town of Berlin? Probably not for all. We can say, ‘let’s remove the July 3 fireworks from the budget.’ But if we do get stopped in the grocery store about how much it will be missed, I think we should revisit that.”

Councilmember Shaneka Nichols agreed, but added that not every Berlin resident enjoys the fireworks.

“I get just as many comments asking why we still do this with the number of people who have PTSD ... Many people do not appreciate the fireworks. We hear it both ways, no doubt,” she said.

Members of the audience on Monday night said they wanted to see more cuts, specifically citing town events.

Resident Carol Rose noted that Ocean City and Ocean Pines host fireworks displays, so kids and families will not miss out on the summertime event if Berlin opts to forgo it this year.


“It’s hard decisions, we’re all living this way,” she said.

Citizen Ron Cascio agreed. He added that the town hosts an abundance of celebrations, and that not all of them may be necessary.

“These are events meant to promote the town,” he said. “... I don’t believe we need to promote the Town of Berlin. I think we have enough promotion done. Everyone knows who we are and where we are. Times are tough; we’re not taking a vacation or doing anything else this year.”


“Maybe this year it’s time to say, ‘folks, it’s tough.’ These events are kind of easy to cut, at least from what I can see. We just have to tighten our belts this year, but people need to understand...I’m sure they’re cutting things; it’s time for us to cut things. Maybe temporarily.”

An introduction of the FY27 budget is slated for May 26, followed by adoption by the Town Council on June 8.



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Ocean Pines gets sewer rate cut

Continued from Page 1

trator Weston Young. "That's where it makes sense to pay off the debt so that there isn't the quarterly charge" tied to older obligations.

The rate cut comes as county officials are also dealing with a separate billing issue that could result in additional savings for some customers.

The commissioners recently learned that a flaw in the county's water and sewer billing system may have pushed some users into higher rate tiers sooner than intended, potentially leading to overcharges.

County staff are now working to identify affected accounts and determine how bills would have differed

under a corrected system. Officials are expected to return with options for issuing credits or refunds, though no timeline has been set.

The proposed changes are part of the county's fiscal year 2027 budget. It includes a 5% increase in base rates for 10 of the county's 11 water and sewer service areas, along with more than \$1.1 million in general fund subsidies to support districts that continue to operate at a deficit.

If the commissioners approve credits for some water-sewer accounts, "that will mean significant savings for businesses, not just in Ocean Pines, but other services areas," Bertino said.

Tax rate hearing set for May 11

Continued from Page 3

As she does each year, Saleh argued for a modest increase would be financially responsible.

"I have advocated for an incremental tax increase every single year," she said. "...Cutting the projects, deleting the capital, not replacing the vehicles that are old and dilapidated ... we are repeating the histories of the past. We have had many years without a rate increase, and we will jump high, damaging households with the payments. A

penny and a quarter [of a penny] is \$60 for the year. That is significant for some, but if you divide it into 12 months ... it is not financially sustainable to delay projects."

A public hearing on the proposed tax rate will be held on May 11 during the mayor and council meeting at the Berlin Library.

The first reading of the FY27 budget is set for May 26, and a public hearing on the budget and adoption by the council is scheduled for June 8.

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Examiners to provide safety checks, free instructions for correcting boat deficiencies

(April 30, 2026) With National Safe Boating Week beginning May 16, the Ocean City Power Squadron is ready to help owners and operators stay safe on the water by ensuring that they are complying with federal and state boating laws.

To that end, the organization is providing free vessel safety examination for anyone who wants it.

All of the examiners are certified and will perform a free safety check. There is no penalty should the vessel fail the exam. Instructions are given to the boat owner on how to correct any deficiencies for re-exam.

“Most of us have clientele from previous years, but we also respond to new requests from individuals for vessel safety examinations whenever possible,” said Bela Gulyas, who chairs the vessel safety examination for the local squadron.

“If we receive a request from, let us say, 10 to 12 individuals in a close-knit community, we would [try] to go out and do vessel examinations at a designated time that is agreeable for all parties involved,” Gulyas added.

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BRIAN SHANE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Open space off N. Main Street between Routes 50 and 113 could soon be home to a large solar farm property.

Council adjusts plan review fee called 'little excessive'

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Berlin Town Council voted this week to significantly reduce a planning review fee for a large-scale solar project, explaining that the current rate schedule was created with smaller development initiatives in mind.

Town Planning Director Ryan Hardesty told officials at the Town Council meeting on Monday that representatives from Vista Design, speaking on behalf of New Jersey-based developer Soltage, had requested a reduction from the town's standard commercial site plan review fee. Under Berlin's current schedule, projects are charged 25 cents per square foot, with a minimum of \$800.

Applied to the roughly 113-acre site—totaling more than 4.9 million square feet—the fee would exceed \$1.2 million.

"That's a little excessive," said Steve Engel, representing the applicant.

He added that his team was comfortable with the staff recommendation of lowering the fee to \$4,700. However, while council members agreed to decrease the amount owed, they outlined a different fee structure. Councilman Jack Orris proposed a \$1,000 base charge plus \$60 per acre for a total of \$7,780.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall agreed the original calculation was more than just unreasonable.

"\$1.2 million is astronomical," he said.

The council approved the motion

in a 3-2 vote, with councilmembers Steve Green, Orris and Dean Burrell in favor, and Councilmembers Jay Knerr and Shaneka Nichols opposed.

Nichols said that she struggled to say yes because of the possibility of the representatives returning with additional fee reduction requests.

Town staff noted that impact fees—imposed by local governments to account for the additional services incurred by new developments—are next up for the project.

Impact fees in Berlin are currently based at \$1 per square foot of building. However, Hardesty maintained that the solar devices are not buildings, but structures. Tyndall also said the town would not be responsible for providing municipal services to the site.

Engel told the council the project is expected to generate about \$8 million in property tax revenue over 25 years, along with more than \$200,000 in construction permit fees.

Council Vice President Dean Burrell stressed the need to update the town's fee structure to better address similar projects.

"If this is a one-off project, we need to make allowances for these, so we know what we're doing when someone comes in with a project of this nature," he said.

The solar project is proposed for land near Routes 50 and 113 and is currently undergoing state review through Maryland's Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity process.

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Berlin looks to refine ready-to-serve policy

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Berlin Town Council will take steps to strengthen enforcement of long-overdue utility payments by giving staff more time to warn residents that these bills must be paid or the homeowner will have to forfeit their water and wastewater allocations (equivalent dwelling units).

During a Town Council meeting on Monday, officials presented a first reading of an amendment to the town's Ready to Serve ordinance, which regulates fees tied to equivalent dwelling units (EDUs). Under the current standards, property owners who fail to pay these fees for three consecutive months risk forfeiting their reserved EDUs.

The proposed change would extend that window to six months.

Town Attorney David Gaskill said the adjustment is intended to help staff better manage the enforcement, as the rule has historically been ignored.

"This ordinance has never been enforced," Gaskill said. "We have people who owe thousands and thousands of dollars, and we never formally forfeited their EDU. So, what staff wants to do is send out letters to people who are behind, letting them know that if they do not pay their thousands of dollars that they owe, we're going to take the EDU back."

Under the revision, the town would begin notifying delinquent property owners of their outstanding balances and caution that failure to pay could result in losing their EDU allocation. If forfeited, property owners would have to repurchase an EDU at current rates before moving forward with development.

Town Administrator Mary Bohlen said the extension to six months is meant to lessen the burden town staff will incur by the change.

"Three months is just too quick a turn around," she said. "[Six months] is just more realistic. It hasn't been enforced for quite some time. We're going to start enforcing it."

Tyndall noted the town has already begun taking a more aggressive approach on unpaid balances, particularly for larger debts.

"What we have done internally is start a policy that at \$5,000, we start to evaluate that and then try and seek judgment against folks that owe over

\$5,000 because it's not right to carry a bill more than that," he said.

"We have seen bills high as \$100,000. We are going through and saying, 'Hey look, that's not right.' We're going to take judgements on these things and pull back those ready to serve EDUs if you're not paying for them."

This week's discussion on the Ready to Serve amendment was a first reading only. The modification will be on the agenda for public hearing at the Berlin Town Council's May 11 meeting.

Worcester library to host art exhibit

(April 30, 2026) During the months of May and June, the Worcester County Library in Berlin will host one of two exhibitions of paintings about the horse, to honor the Chinese "Year of the Horse". The other show of horses will be at the Art League of Ocean City during the same months. Both shows feature paintings by Joanne Guilfoil and Lynn Yockelson.

The shows will spotlight the legendary "Man o' War," the American thoroughbred racehorse widely regarded as one of the greatest racehorses of all time. He was the 1920 unofficial American Horse of the Year and in 2017

was inducted into the national Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame.

"Man o' War" was foaled in 1917 near Lexington, Kentucky, but trained right in Berlin by owner Samuel D. Riddle at what is now known as Glen Riddle.

The horse was named "Man o' War" in honor of August Belmont Jr. by his wife, when he entered World War I at age 65. In 1921 he was retired to stud and became a leading sire of champions including Triple Crown winner "War Admiral", who also trained at Glen Riddle farm near Berlin. Father and son are both buried at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky.

Also featured will be "Secretariat," also known as "Big Red." He us the standalone in this group of boys as he was awarded Horse of the Year twice ('72, '73) and became the ninth winner of the American Triple Crown. Then in 1973 he was retired to stud producing over 600 live foals. It's said the 19 horses that ran in the 2025 Kentucky Derby, each was a descendent of Secretariat

Also at the Library in Berlin, you will see a depiction of the (current "Airdrie Stud") farm, the believed location, where the horse "Lexington" lived, and briefly trained. The story of this Civil War era racehorse was depicted in the book.

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Election signage timeframe could be extended in Pines

Change to increase display of political signs from 30 days to 45 days, officials say

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The timeframe for allowing election signs to be posted in Ocean Pines is likely to be extended, association officials said this week, assuming that Gov. Wes Moore signs the recently passed Senate Bill 758 into law.

At a meeting of the Ocean Pines Association's Board of Directors on Saturday, board member Elaine Brady presented a first reading of potential changes to OPA's architectural guidelines, specifically requirements pertaining to political candidate and referendum signs.

Under the adjustments, displaying political signs would be permitted 45 days before early voting, rather than OPA's existing 30-day window.

"A key change under this new law is that signs may now be permitted to be posted 45 days prior to the beginning of early voting, not just election day," said association attorney Bruce Bright. "That's a key change to the existing statutory situation."

The amendment comes by way of Maryland Senate Bill 758, titled "Common Ownership Communities - Candidate or Proposition Signs - Display Period."

The legislation was introduced during the 2026 session of the Maryland General Assembly and applies to homeowner associations, condominiums, and cooperatives.

The bill synopsis reads, "Altering to 45 days before voting and early voting for a primary election, general election, or vote on a proposition, the time period during which a common

ownership community may restrict the display of candidate or proposition signs."

Sign removal is required within seven days after the primary election, general election, or vote on a proposition.

While the bill limits an HOA's right to restrict when signs may be posted, it allows these communities to retain ownership of rules governing sign placement in common areas.

Brady noted that in OPA, political signs are only permitted on private property.

"I would like to add that when signs are being put up by politicians, they need to make sure that they're on the homeowner's property," she said. "That means from the ditch to the street and along the medians are not allowed. Just want to make sure when you're giving your signs out to people that they are aware of where they can put them."

SB758 was cross-filed with House Bill 855 as an emergency measure to coincide with the June 2026 primary election, and was marked as passed on April 9. Brady maintained that the changes presented this week to OPA's architectural guidelines—to reflect the statewide regulation—were a first reading only.

A second reading will be voted on at a later date, provided that Moore signs the bill into law.

"This will happen if Gov. Moore signs the bill," Brady said. "We just want to be proactive on that, and we expect him to do so."

OPA Board of Directors President John Latham added that once the governor signs the legislation, the board will likely hold a special meeting or conduct an email vote to advance the architectural guideline changes.

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County scraps project along Gum Point Road

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Worcester County Commissioners this week walked back a plan to install speed humps on a road just off Route 589 near Ocean Pines, drawing sharp backlash from a local couple who helped drive the project.

Concerns from Gum Point Road residents Laura and Dennis Parker led the commissioners last year to pursue a pilot program for speed humps after a traffic study found most drivers exceeded the 30-mph limit.

But last Tuesday, commissioners quietly abandoned the effort, folding the decision into their consent agenda, where it passed without discussion.

An April 15 internal memo said written opposition from “numerous” other Gum Point Road residents – who feared speed humps could delay emergency responses, pose a danger to vehicles, and hurt property values – led county officials to cancel a planned May 5 public hearing.

During the public comment period, Laura Parker expressed surprise that the commissioners might drop the speed hump project, especially since she had been in contact with county roads staff about next steps.

“You all had made the decision to do a pilot program, and I think the

pilot program needs to be done. If it doesn’t work out, then we have to say it didn’t work out,” she said. “I just feel like it’s something that shouldn’t just get shut down.”

Dennis Parker spoke next and was more forceful with his comments.

Visibly frustrated, he accused county officials of ignoring his requests to meet. He called Gum Point Road a “racetrack” and “a drag strip.”

“Everybody knows it’s a problem, but nobody wants to come up with a solution – this is a solution. It’s a speed hump, not a speed bump,” he said. “We’ve been the loudest voice on the speed on Gum Point Road for eight years now. You’ve known about it for a decade, and you still want to kick the can down the road. I’m not happy about that.”

Facing opposition, the Parkers canvassed the street and collected 27 signatures from neighbors on Gum Point Road – “not by the gated community in the back where we’re not allowed to go,” he said, referring to Bay Point Plantation – who support speed humps. He held high a clipboard as proof.

When his two-minute window to speak expired, Parker raised his voice in protest and his wife called out his name in a scold from the gallery.

The conversation spilled into a mo-

mentary but tense public exchange with Commissioner Jim Bunting, who isn’t running for reelection.

“I’m supposed to be somewhere else, okay?” Parker said.

“Why don’t you get there, then,” Bunting replied dryly, “because your time is up.”

“Oh, so you gonna give me some lip, huh?” Parker shouted back. “You’re just a lame duck.”

Sheriff Matt Crisafulli – on hand for a separate budgeting discussion – sprung up from his seat in the gallery and stood on guard near Parker.

“If you would communicate with us, return a phone call, return an email, you wouldn’t get the blunt end of my grievances,” Parker bellowed.

Parker paced near the lectern before walking away as the sheriff held nearby with his hands open at arm’s length.

Despite the heated exchange, commissioners did not revisit the decision last Tuesday in open session.

Several letters to county officials by Gum Point residents, which are public record and were reviewed by OC Today-Dispatch, mostly expressed concerns with how speed humps could interact with vehicular tow attachments like boats, trailers, or campers.

Bobby Kitchens, a 40-year Gum

Point Road resident, said in an April 14 email that he’s never seen any situations dire enough to warrant speed humps, and wondered if the commissioners were “seeking a solution to a non-existent concern.”

“Baffling enough is the need for the ‘speed limit warning signs’ recently installed, and the very recent reduction in speed limit to 25 mph. Is the ultimate goal to turn Gum Point Road into a walking trail or park?” he wrote.

Last year, Laura Parker had raised the issue with commissioners, saying at an October meeting that traffic on Gum Point had “quadrupled” in recent years. She said reckless drivers were putting lives at risk.

The commissioners then approved a five-month speed study, the results of which showed hundreds of Gum Point Road drivers in both directions regularly drove 10 to 15 mph over the limit. That study came at no cost because radar-based speed-tracking signage was already in place and available to reference.

Plans also would have included a follow-up study to determine the speed humps’ effectiveness and decide whether to keep them, according to Public Works Director Dallas Baker. Each of the seven proposed speed humps would have cost \$2,500 to install.

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Snapshots



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DONUTS WITH GROWNUPS

As part of the week-long Scholastic Book Fair taking place in the Guerrieri Library, Worcester Prep Lower School students shopped with special guests at "Donuts with Grownups" on Friday, March 27. Guests enjoyed Dunkin' Donuts breakfast and coffee, compliments of the Nistazos family, while purchasing books together. Siblings Elsie Booth and Lainie Booth browsed the annual Spring Book Fair with their mom, Sara Booth, and classmate, Camila Prosser.



At this year's WPS Donuts with Grownups, parent and teacher Abby Harrison enjoyed breakfast with her children, Carter Harrison and Anna Harrison.



First-grade student Isabel Betz browsed the annual Spring Book Fair at WPS with her mom, Laura, and brother.



WPS 2nd grader Mia Bunting enjoys time with her mom, Angie Bunting, while shopping at the annual Book Fair.



WPS siblings Parker Moreland (right) and Landon Moreland (left) enjoy donuts and shopping with their dad, Kevin Moreland (center), at the annual Scholastic Book Fair.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

INDUCTION CEREMONY

Twenty-one Wor-Wic Community College students participated in an induction ceremony for the Alpha Nu Omicron chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at the college campus in Salisbury. Students from Worcester County recently inducted into the Alpha Nu Omicron chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Wor-Wic Community College are shown, from left, Morelia Comacho-Arriola of Berlin, Chloe Paddack of Bishopville and Diana Walsh of Snow Hill.



CASUAL DAY BENEFIT

February, students and faculty at Worcester Preparatory School (WPS) came together to support First Tee - Delaware by students and faculty participating in an all-school red, white, and blue dress-down day. Worcester Prep proudly supported First Tee - Delaware, a non-profit youth development organization that positively impacts more than 25,000 kids and teens each year through school, community, and on-the-course programs. By integrating the game of golf with a life skills curriculum, First Tee - Delaware builds inner strength, confidence, and resilience while teaching nine core values: Honesty, Integrity, Sportsmanship, Respect, Responsibility, Confidence, Courtesy, Judgment, and Perseverance. Pictured is Worcester Prep's Head of School Dr. Betsy Hornung, and student sponsor Chase Thompson presenting Scott Allen, First Tee Senior Southern Delaware Coordinator, with a check of the funds raised on February's Worcester Wednesday at WPS.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE



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Opinion

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

Room tax set aside symbolic gesture

With the Town of Berlin facing \$1 million in repairs and maintenance of the publicly available parking areas, it's easy to favor taking a 10% slice of the room tax proceeds to help pay for it. The problem, of course, is this is more of a symbolic gesture than it is anything else.

What the council is proposing to do is to solve a million-dollar problem by setting aside somewhere between \$10,000 and \$11,000 each year toward that goal. In the meantime, inflation and rising energy costs will be pushing today's million-dollar problem ever higher.

To be sure, town government is in good financial shape today because officials made some some difficult decisions a few years back, when they cured the chasmic deficits in its water and sewer enterprise funds.

They have been good stewards of the public's money, but at some point, they will have to take that difficult path again to deal with the parking infrastructure problem. After all, it's not "free" parking when taxpayers are covering the cost.

Clearly the town is being backed into a financial corner. Given its budget discussions to date, Finance Director Natalie Saleh isn't wrong when she recommends a modest increase in the property tax rate, but this isn't the time for that and elected officials know that. They live there, of course.

The mayor and council members also know, however, that nothing stays the same price forever and that their options for providing well maintained parking are limited.

It's inevitable that one day they, or their successors, will have to do one of three things to cover the rising costs of parking infrastructure maintenance and repair: increase property taxes to cover it, take almost all of the room tax proceeds, or institute paid parking downtown like most other towns have done ... and survived.

Room tax funds set aside for parking

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) The Town of Berlin is pursuing the possibility of paying for parking improvements in public and quasi-public lots with a slice of local room tax revenue.

At the Town Council meeting Monday, council members approved a proposal by Councilman Jack Orris that will allocate 10% of the town's room tax revenue to parking-related expenses, with the remaining 90% directed to the general fund.

The plan reflects conversations held during last week's budget work session, where officials revisited how to best use increased hotel tax revenue.

Last year, Worcester County agreed to allow municipalities to charge up to 6% in tax (up from 5%) on short-term rentals of four months or less. That action went into effect on January 1.

Now, Berlin leaders have found a way to distribute the additional revenue in a way that's beneficial for the town's finances.

This week, the council approved to allocate some of the

room tax revenue to parking lot repairs. The municipality has reported for some time that they need \$1 million for infrastructure work at public lots and privately owned lots used by the public.

"This is reflective of the discussion at the budget work session," explained Town Administrator Mary Bohlen Monday night. "Based on the increase in the room tax percentage, we are allocating 10% of the total revenue to parking."

Mayor Zack Tyndall asked whether the change would create a dedicated parking fund. Finance Director Natalie Saleh clarified that the allocation would instead appear as a separate line item in the budget, rather than a formal fund, which would require additional administrative costs and staffing.

"At the end of the fiscal year, we will take 10% from room tax and set it aside," she said. "We are going to open a new savings account in the bank, but it is not a fund."

Councilman Jay Knerr asked why a formal fund was not being established, but

Saleh maintained that the money would still be tracked.

Councilman Steve Green described the move as a "baby step" toward addressing long-standing parking and infrastructure needs. He noted that previous discussions about implementing paid parking met resistance from local business owners.

"We had half a dozen or so meetings with businesses where paid parking was floated as an opportunity to try to fund some of the repairs that were needed in our infrastructure at public lots and quasi-public lots that are used publicly but privately owned," he said.

"We were not getting anywhere with paid parking. It scared a lot of business owners. Some of us feel like it's needed, but this is just setting aside an opportunity for tourism to pay for tourism. It's going to take us quite a while for it to matter ... we have \$1 million of expenses. But it's something, it's a start."

The Town Council agreed to establish the new parking line item at its meeting this week.

Worcester adopts road safety plan

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) Worcester County has identified several high-risk roadway corridors, including areas along Route 50 near Ocean City, in a new study aimed at eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2045.

County officials this week unveiled a Local Roadway Safety Plan that identifies corridors where drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians face the greatest risk. It analyzes crash data and lays out a long-term strategy to reduce crashes that result in injury or death.

Adopting the plan isn't just a safety exercise. By voting to move forward with it at Tuesday's meeting, the Worcester County Commissioners made the county eligible for state and federal highway infrastructure funding.

From 2019 to 2024, the report shows 604 crashes on state and county roads that resulted in injuries or deaths, including 54 fatalities and more than 140 serious injuries. Municipal roadways and roads in Ocean Pines were excluded from the study.

The causes of deadly crashes are familiar. Roadway departures, or vehicles leaving the travel lanes, are the No. 1 identified cause, followed by driving under the influence and distracted driving. Animal-related crashes in the fall during peak deer activity are also listed as a leading cause.

Driver behavior, including DUI and distraction, is a factor in roughly 40% of all fatal and severe injury incidents. Distraction was the leading cause of all 3,547 reported crashes analyzed in the report.

Several high-risk corridors

were identified. They include stretches of Sinepuxent Road in West Ocean City, St. Martins Neck Road in the Bishopville area, and Sheppards Crossing Road outside Whaleyville, among others.

Overall, 45% of all fatal and serious injury crashes were concentrated on just 20 miles of county roads, representing 5% of total county road mileage, the study shows.

The plan calls for Worcester County to pursue a goal of zero roadway deaths by 2045 through improving road design in areas where serious crashes are most likely and reducing high-risk driving behaviors.

Proposed safety improvements include reducing speed limits on some rural roads, adding signs and pavement markings to improve visibility,

See HIGH-RISK Page 19

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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Commissioners support BIS study

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(April 30, 2026) Worcester County officials this week gave the green light to advance Berlin Intermediate School's replacement project to the state level.

The Worcester County Commissioners on Tuesday unanimously approved a feasibility study that recommends demolishing and rebuilding the 55-year-old facility, rather than renovating or adding onto it.

The proposal now heads to the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction, which must sign off before the project can move into the design phase.

The Worcester County Board of Education already endorsed the replacement option on March 17 after reviewing the same feasibility study.

If approved by the state, officials are targeting a spring 2029 groundbreaking and a fall 2031 opening, following the replacement of Buckingham Elementary School.

With an estimated construction cost of \$84.9 million – up from earlier projections closer to \$80 million – school officials said a full replacement would be the least expensive option.

Replacement also offers a shorter construction timeline and less disruption to students and staff. Under the proposal, construction would take about 28 months, compared to 42 months for a full renovation.

According to an analysis by the firm Becker Morgan Group, the existing

structure has outlived its useful life.

Its electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems are outdated. Its kitchen and cafeteria are undersized. The gymnasium has no ventilation. The library has no windows. There are too few toilets. It problematic safety issues include an unsecured lobby, and an open floor plan where classrooms have no doors.

Issues persist outside, too, where traffic flow on Franklin Avenue is a problem during pickup and drop-off with cars backing onto southbound Route 113. Playground equipment and lighting also fall short of current standards.

The proposal calls for a longer drop-off loop and more parking on the existing site. Access to the bus loop would move off Franklin Avenue to the south and onto Graham Avenue on the west side. The replacement building also would be a two-story structure to fit within the proposed footprint.

The rebuild also shrinks the school's square footage from 101,000 to 94,220 – a cap tied to state funding formulas included in the county's agreement with school construction officials. Planners said a more efficient layout would better meet modern educational needs.

Another 3,000 square feet of the building must be dedicated to commu-

nity cooperative-use space, also a requirement tied to state funding.

Funding comes in part from a record \$50 million allocation from the state for both the BIS and Buckingham replacement projects, part of an October 2024 agreement between the state commission, the county, and the school board.

The last time the state contributed to a school replacement, it gave \$8.2 million toward the \$33.5 million Showell Elementary rebuild, which opened in 2021.

County officials say BIS is one of several aging WCPS buildings that will require major capital investment. At least eight of 14 schools are expected to need significant upgrades or replacement over the next two decades.

While commissioners advanced the project, they also stressed that county oversight will be required as it moves forward.

Officials on Tuesday pointed to a prior agreement requiring a county procurement officer be involved in planning. They said that expectation hadn't been fully met and, moving forward, the school system would comply.

"It's not a question of asking what they want to do. It's a condition of getting the funding," said Commissioner Chip Bertino (District 5, Ocean Pines).

The Pretend Gardening Column

by Stephanie Graves,
Owner, String and Petals Nursery

When investing your marketing dollars as a small business owner, there are countless choices to make. Over the past year, I've spent countless hours designing ads while nurturing our little plant nursery, always wishing there were more opportunities to share something truly meaningful with you. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, but sometimes even beautiful images aren't enough to ignite that spark of inspiration.

Recently, I connected with a wonderful group of fellow small business owners who generously shared their wisdom. Among their many ideas, one suggestion stood out: why not use this paid space to write something heartfelt—something that could inspire and uplift? Though I have no formal training as a writer, let alone a columnist, I believe that genuine passion and a willingness to try something new can plant the seeds of greatness.

That's why I'm redefining this space—not simply as an ad, but as a monthly source of inspiration, guidance, and encouragement. I want to help you nurture your garden and your spirit, and to remind you that beauty and possibility can be found in every handful of soil and with every new beginning.

I'm not sure yet whether this will take the form of a Q&A, a monthly list of gardening chores, or simply a story from my gardening journey, but my goal is to create a space that helps your love for gardening thrive. May this be where we both find the courage to grow and the joy of nurturing something beautiful—together. I hope you find this space useful and look forward to reading what is shared here during the first week of the month, no matter where you shop. If my words inspire you to visit my little nursery, know that you are always welcome.

Happy planting!
~Stephanie

String and Petals Nursery
Located at 9040 Worcester Hwy
In the Historic Town of Berlin
(410) 861-0084
Stringandpetals.com

High-risk county corridors named

Continued from Page 18 and coordinating targeted police enforcement in areas with higher crash rates. Public education campaigns focused on impaired and distracted driving are also part of the strategy.

The study also integrates socioeconomic data with crash statistics. It prioritizes outreach and safety improvements in some areas of Pocomoke City where elevated rates of serious crashes coincide with higher poverty levels.

The plan outlines a phased rollout, beginning with identifying priority projects and seeking grant funding through programs such as the federal Safe Streets for All initiative.

The report also calls for tracking crash data over time and issuing periodic updates to measure whether safety improvements are reducing serious injuries and fatalities.

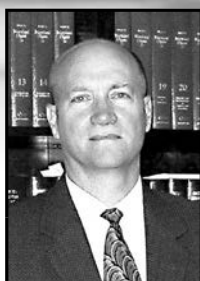
The commissioners moved to adopt the plan while voting to approve a batch of agenda items and did not vote on nor discuss the plan independently at Tuesday's meeting.

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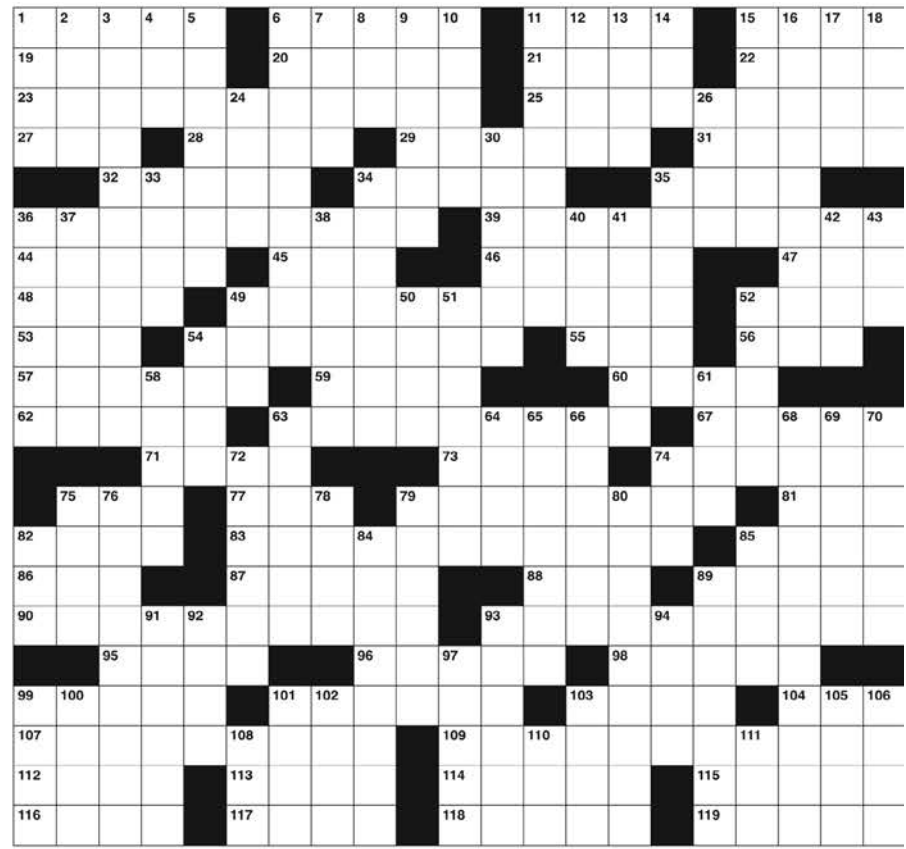
Puzzles

NUCLEAR FUSION

BY MICHAEL LIEBERMAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Michael Lieberman, of Washington, is an attorney at Fairmark Partners, an antitrust firm. Before constructing this puzzle, he found a crossword with related wordplay that had appeared in The Times in 2015. So Mike thought of longer examples and interlocked each one twice. Good puzzlemakers are always pushing boundaries. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Not noteworthy
 - 6 What might be found at the end of a rainbow
 - 11 Exchange
 - 15 Contents of Lago de Maracaibo
 - 19 Emerged
 - 20 ___ pasta (rhyming fusion dish)
 - 21 Chinese gooseberry, by another name
 - 22 Shredded
 - 23 Traveled from Syros to Naxos to Mykonos, say
 - 25 "That was rejuvenating!"
 - 27 Pop artist Lichtenstein
 - 28 Fill-in
 - 29 Sold for some quick cash, say
 - 31 Path for a bride
 - 32 Penny-pinching
 - 34 ["Unbe-frickin-lievable!"]
 - 35 Title in old St. Petersburg
 - 36 Wasn't messing around, say
 - 39 Cabal's schemes
 - 44 Smooths, in a way
 - 45 Dooley Wilson's role in "Casablanca"
 - 46 Abstract Expressionist Frankenthaler
 - 47 Understand
- DOWN**
- 48 Target for salicylic acid
 - 49 They've got no complaints
 - 52 Solstice time
 - 53 Constellation feline
 - 54 Defensive fortification
 - 55 Winged beings of folklore
 - 56 Multivolume ref. work
 - 57 Style that's short on the sides and long in the back
 - 59 Fatty tuna, at a sushi bar
 - 60 Where something irksome might stick
 - 62 Canned sales pitch
 - 63 Masonry unit
 - 67 What lovers often overlook
 - 71 Almost any word that ends in "-ize"
 - 73 It's verboten
 - 74 Have eyes for
 - 75 Long-running CBS forensic drama
 - 77 Old name for Tokyo
 - 79 Beef bourguignon or chicken paprikash
 - 81 Singer Carly ___ Jepsen
 - 82 Some ranch sounds
 - 83 Listings on a band T-shirt
 - 85 Keep it up when feeling down
 - 86 Half of a candy duo
 - 87 Ranks
 - 88 Was in charge of
 - 89 Caribbean nation whose name means "land of high mountains"
 - 90 Popular poker variant
 - 93 Baby book datum
 - 95 Many a "good buddy"
 - 96 Public transit system
 - 98 "For we walk by ___, not by sight": 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - 99 Big name in power tools
 - 101 S, in the NATO alphabet
 - 103 Some cameras, for short
 - 104 ___ Schwarz
 - 107 How a misfit might feel
 - 109 Inbox zero targets
 - 112 Mega-
 - 113 Like an eager beaver
 - 114 One place for a massage
 - 115 Heavy metal instrument in Verdi's "Il Trovatore"
 - 116 Wine list heading
 - 117 !
 - 118 Small-plate servings
 - 119 Grandchild of an abuelo
 - 10 Palindromic title
 - 11 Superficial
 - 12 One who said "I do"
 - 13 Knocked for a loop
 - 14 Pizza ___
 - 15 Relating to part of the heart
 - 16 Doesn't stick to the plan
 - 17 River through Orsk
 - 18 Get in on a deal
 - 24 Race that's too close to call
 - 26 Desperate final effort
 - 30 Words traced on a dirty car
 - 33 Evil counterpart in an 1886 novella
 - 34 Flanders neighbor
 - 35 More fraught
 - 36 Book before Proverbs
 - 37 Get ready to skate
 - 38 Elk
 - 40 Roman à ___
 - 41 Request in billiards or beer pong
 - 42 Watch over
 - 43 Office building abbr.
 - 49 Milliner's handiwork
 - 50 Mowing, mulching, raking, etc.
 - 51 Decorator
 - 52 Basset hounds have big ones
 - 54 One-named sports legend
 - 58 Some jeans
 - 61 Three or four, say
 - 63 Extract said to promote relaxation
 - 64 Ton of cargo
 - 65 It contains all of (and all the letters of) Toronto
 - 66 One who's screen-sharing
 - 68 Congrats from across the room
 - 69 Ghostly being
 - 70 Dismissive response on movie night
 - 72 Parish leader
 - 74 Bouvier ___ Flandres (Belgian dog breed)
 - 75 Crown and ___ (alliterative bar order)
 - 76 "Can't wait!"
 - 78 Linear, for short
 - 79 Eponymous hypnotist
 - 80 Entrances and exits of camp dwellings
 - 82 Alma mater for Marvel's Tony Stark and DC Comics's Lex Luthor, in brief
 - 84 Cadbury confection
 - 85 Nickname that omits "-iin"
 - 89 Prestigious trophy name
 - 91 Loathes
 - 92 Where "The Four Agreements" and "The Five Love Languages" may be shelved
 - 93 Fernet-___ (Italian digestif brand)
 - 94 Most merchandise at Ace and True Value
 - 97 Rely on
 - 99 Ill-humored
 - 100 Fallopian conduit
 - 101 Really long yarn
 - 102 The New York Times's "T," on a phone screen
 - 103 Actress Ward
 - 105 Landed
 - 106 World capital that's home to the Kon-Tiki Museum
 - 108 Slang term for a recording studio
 - 110 Genre for Cypress Hill or the Sugarhill Gang
 - 111 Alex and ___ (jewelry company)



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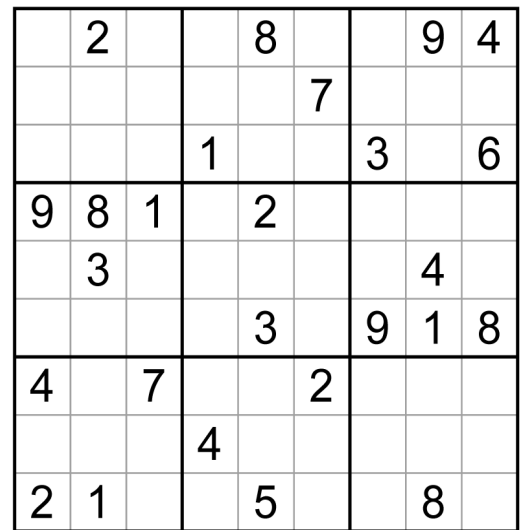
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(Located on Rt. 113 - 1 min. North of Racetrack Road)

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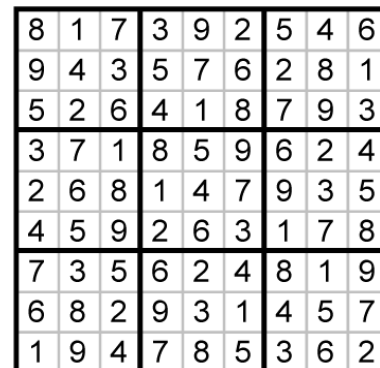
© Puzzles by Pappocom

HARD - 36

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



Answers to last week's puzzles



Obituaries

WILLIAM T. DORMAN, JR.
Berlin

William Thomas (Tom) Dorman Jr, age 89, passed away April 20, 2026, in Berlin. Born Sept. 15, 1936, he was the son of the late William T. Dorman Sr. and Elva Mae (Owens) Dorman of Quantico.



W. Dorman, Jr.

As a child, Tom hunted and fished with his father and grandfather, learning to love the Eastern Shore way of life. He pitched for the WiHi baseball team and later at Salisbury State Teachers College where he met Nancy and many of his lifelong friends. Tom worked at Acme while attending high school and for summers afterwards while teaching. Tom was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was a lifetime member of the Berlin Lions Club.

Tom loved boating, duck hunting and fishing with friends. He especially loved Ward Brothers decoys, and art featuring the Eastern Shore. Tom also loved seafood. He loved oyster fritters at St. Philip's Church in Quantico, raw oysters, soft crab sandwiches, steamed crabs, and a cold beer with friends. Tom and Nancy were married for almost 68 years. Together they enjoyed traveling and spending time with family and friends. Tom's favorite trips were to Africa and New Zealand.

Tom was a proud employee of Worcester County Public Schools for 37 years, advancing from science teacher at Pocomoke High School, vice principal at Snow Hill High School, principal at Berlin Middle School, to assistant superintendent of Schools.

Tom was inducted into the Worcester County Public Schools Hall of Fame in September 2025. His professionalism, wisdom, and unwavering commitment left an indelible mark on Worcester County Public Schools and continues to serve as a model for future educators and leaders.

After retirement, he continued to support public education by establishing the Dorman Family Teachers Scholarship Fund to encourage students to become teachers.

Tom is survived by his beloved wife – Nancy Horsman Dorman; his children – Ellen Masters (Andrew) and Amy Cox (Christopher); his niece – Susan Jordan (John); and his grandchildren – Nicholas Masters and Elizabeth Finecey (Lukas).

A viewing will be held at The Burbage Funeral Home in Berlin on Friday, May 8, 2026, from 10-11 a.m. A funeral service will follow, beginning at 11 a.m. Friends and family are invited to join us at The Atlantic Hotel after the service for a luncheon in memory of Tom.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the "Dorman Family Teachers Scholarship Fund" at <https://bit.ly/DormanSchol>

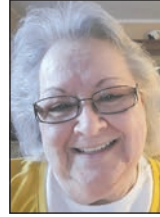
arship or mailed to Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, 1324 Belmont Ave. Ste. 401, Salisbury, MD 21804.

Letters of condolence may be sent to the family via www.burbagefuneral-home.com. Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home – Berlin, MD.

ELLEN F. LURZ
Berlin

Ellen F. Lurz (Cramer) passed away peacefully at home early Friday morning April 24, 2026 surrounded by her family.

Ellen was born in Baltimore, Jan. 14, 1952 to Russell Cramer and Sarah Marian Lindell.



Ellen Lurz

She is survived by her loving husband Raymond Lurz, son Paul Lurz, daughter-in-law Michelle Lurz, granddaughters Darian and Hailey Lurz, and sister Barbara Watkins. Ellen enjoyed painting and scrapbooking her photos of her family and friends. She was a Registration Specialist for 12 yrs at Atlantic General Hospital and also a caretaker for several years.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.



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\$20 for Non-Members
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Calendar

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

Thurs., April 30

36TH ANNUAL CRUISIN OCEAN CITY

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, 809 S. Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also at the Ocean City Convention Center. Vendors, live music, boardwalk parades. Admission cost is \$15 for adults and free to kids 13 years and younger. <https://specialeventpro.com/cruisin-ocean-city>, 410-798-6304

THE FAB FOUR: HELP!

Ocean City Performing Arts Center, 4001 Coastal Highway, 7 p.m. Featuring a live Beatles experience that feels straight from the 1960s. Tickets: <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/46954308/the-fab-fourhelp-ocean-city-oc-performing-arts-center>.

CHAIR YOGA

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10 a.m. Join Tidal Health Community Health Educator Bobbi McDonald for a morning of stretching and relaxation. Registration required: 410-957-0878

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. 410-632-5622

STORY TIME: 'I BELIEVE IN ME'

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, worcesterialibrary.org

1920S POETRY: DOROTHY PARKER

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Join poet Nancy Mitchell to learn more about the life and times of Dorothy Parker, a native New Yorker whose witty, urbane poems, essays and screenplays helped define The Roaring Twenties. 410-208-4014

FIRESIDE CHAT

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 3 p.m. A popular and entertaining book discussion featuring books you have read and want to share. Come find your next great read. 410-641-0650, worcesterialibrary.org

JELLY BEAN TASTE TESTING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Taste test jelly beans of all flavors. For ages 12-18 years. Registration required: 410-208-4014. worcesterialibrary.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., May 1

36TH ANNUAL CRUISIN OCEAN CITY

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, 809 S. Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also at the Ocean City Convention Center. Vendors, live music, boardwalk parades. Admission cost is \$15 for adults and free to kids 13 years and younger. <https://specialeventpro.com/cruisin-ocean-city>, 410-798-6304

FAMILY FUN NIGHT BINGO NIGHT

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 6-8 p.m. Parents are requested to play the games with their children. Food and drinks welcome. Ice Cream for sale. Admission cost is \$5. Prize donations accepted. 410-641-7052

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Join in for imaginative play and social interaction. For ages 0-5 years. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

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, worcesterialibrary.org

SURVIVAL SPANISH: FOOD

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Now's your chance to learn another language. Learn food vocabulary. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

CURRENTLY READING BOOK CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1 p.m. Drop into this club to discuss what you are currently reading and share it with the group. Here's the best way to get some great ideas on what to read next. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

FIRST FRIDAY OPENING EXHIBITION: MAY 2026

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 5-7 p.m. Meet the artists, mingle, and enjoy free refreshments at this opening art exhibition, open to the public. 410-524-9433, <https://artleagueofoceancity.org/event/first-friday-opening-reception-10/>.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BINGO

Columbus Hall, 9901 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. At least \$1,000 in payouts and a

chance for a \$1,000 big jackpot at the end of the evening. Light snacks sold. 410-524-7994

Sat., May 2

36TH ANNUAL CRUISIN OCEAN CITY

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, 809 S. Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Also at the Ocean City Convention Center. Vendors, live music, boardwalk parades. Admission cost is \$15 for adults and free to kids 13 years and younger. <https://specialeventpro.com/cruisin-ocean-city>, 410-798-6304

BERLIN SPRING CRUISIN

Historic Downtown Berlin, 124 N. Main St., 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration from 7-10 a.m. or until spaces fill up. Entry fee is \$15. Award presentations and 50/50 drawing at 1:30 p.m. info@berlinchamber.org

CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, 1301 Philadelphia Ave., 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Raindate is May 9th.

FLEA MARKET, CRAFTER AND BAKE SALE

Bethany United Methodist Church, 8648 Stephen Decatur Highway, Berlin, 8-11 a.m. Breakfast for sale, children's craft table, live music and visit from Worcester County Pup. Event is held outside. Vendors, to reserve space: 410-382-2661, marym8346@comcast.net.

CANCER AWARENESS WORKSHOP

TidalHealth John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Cancer Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Learn more: 410-641-2626, nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org.

SEMI ANNUAL CRAFT SHOW

Elks Lodge #2645, 13708 Sinepuxent Ave., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Kitchen will be serving breakfast sandwiches, coffee and baked goods. ocelks.secretary@comcast.net

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

FRIED & BAKED CHICKEN/FRIED FISH DINNERS TO GO

Calvary United Methodist Church, 8607 Ironshire Station Road, Berlin, 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$15 per platter. Platters come with two sides and a roll. Sides include pasta salad, string beans, mac salad, greens, cake, cornbread, etc. Soda and water for sale.

CRAFTY SATURDAY: MOTHER'S DAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Celebrate all mothers by creating a special craft. For families. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

OC RAVENS ROOST #44 FUNDRAISER

ACE Hardware, 6807 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Grab a grilled hot dog and a bag of chips while shopping. Learn about the benefits of being a member of the Baltimore Ravens Fan Club.

MY TECH CLINIC

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Stop by and ask questions related to your devices and technology services. 410-208-4014, worcesterialibrary.org

WELLNESS WALK

Pocomoke River State Park: Milburn Landing, 3036 Nassawango Road, Pocomoke City, 2 p.m. Join in for a mindful walk in the woods and explore simple practices to engage your senses and restore wellness. Registration required: 410-957-0878. worcesterialibrary.org

OCEAN PINES FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. 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>

Sun., May 3

36TH ANNUAL CRUISIN OCEAN CITY

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, 809 S. Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Also at the Ocean City Convention Center. Vendors, live music, boardwalk parades. Admission cost is \$15 for adults and free to kids 13 years and younger. <https://specialeventpro.com/cruisin-ocean-city>, 410-798-6304

BERLIN FARMERS MARKET OPENING DAY

Historic Downtown Berlin, 124 N. Main St., 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Producers only market, held every Sunday, May-October. Featuring 50+ farmers, food creators, brewers, meat, seafood, live music, petting farm, kids art station and more. TheBerlinFarmersMarket.com

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

Calendar

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

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

Mon., May 4

MOVIE MATINEE: STAR WARS EPISODES IV-VI

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Come catch a classic trilogy you may have missed in theaters. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

THESE AREN'T THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Go about your business and move along through the library to find the missing droids through a series of puzzles and activities. 410-957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME: UNICORNS

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

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. Meet once a month to discuss selections from the Great Books Foundation. Currently reading "Bartleby the Scrivener" by Herman Melville. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

TidalHealth John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Cancer Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4 p.m. Meets the first Monday of each month. Learn more: 410-641-2626, nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org.

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

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

BRIDGE

Mondays - Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st Street, Ocean City, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Reserve a spot: Tish, 410-804-3971. www.Worcoa.org/oceancity

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 6:00-8:00 p.m. All ladies who love to sing invited. Elissa, 410-641-8050; on social media; or delmarvachorus.org.

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., May 5

FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP

TidalHealth Atlantic Chapel, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 10-11 a.m. Held the first Tuesday of each month in person or via Zoom meeting. Learn more: 410-641-9725, gail.mansell@tidalhealth.org.

STORY TIME: SEEDS

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10:30 a.m. Crafts, songs and stories. For ages 0-5 years. 410-957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Songs, rhymes and stories. Stay after to socialize with other families. For ages 0-2 years. 410-632-5622, worcesterlibrary.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

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

MASTER GARDENERS PLANT CLINIC

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1-4 p.m. Bring any questions you have and feel free to show your plants as well. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY: AN INTRODUCTION TO JEWELRY MAKING

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Hands-on workshop for beginners. Learn the foundational techniques of creating your own wearable art. Registration required: 410-524-1818. worcesterlibrary.org

CINCO DE MAYO WITH CASITA LINDA

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Learn how to make a Hispanic dish with Michelle from Casita Linda. Registration required: 410-208-4014. worcesterlibrary.org

CINCO DE MAYO

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Learn about Cinco de Mayo, create a maraca and make a delicious hispanic dish with Casita Linda. For ages 8 years and older. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

OCEAN CITY LIONESS LIONS CLUB MEETING

Ocean City Lions Club, 12534 Airport

Road, Berlin, 6 p.m. This community service organization meets the first Tuesday of each month. Any lady desiring to help those in need is welcome. 410-251-5824

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., May 6

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

CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Learn basic calligraphy from White House trained Calligrapher Anne Taylor. Registration required: 410-208-4014. worcesterlibrary.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

OCEAN CITY RESTAURANT WEEK

Explore participating restaurants offering special Restaurant Week menus, April 26-May 9. <https://oceancityrestaurantweek.com>, 410-289-6733, susanjones@ocvisitor.com

HISTORY-TO-GO

Snow Hill library, 307 N. Washington St., throughout May. Pick up a History-to-Go kit about Colonial gardening. Includes info sheets, recommended activities, supplies and more. Available at the Snow Hill Branch. 410-632-5622

HISTORY HUNTERS BEANSTACK CHALLENGE

Throughout May, pick up a field guide and your paper mascot from any Worcester County library branch, visit historic sites, read books and snap pictures of your adventures along the way. Return your field guide when you're finished or log your activities online on beanstack to enter the drawing for a prize. For families. 443-235-5597

OC READS: 'ISOLA' BY ALLEGRA GOODMAN

Ocean City library, 10003 Coastal Highway, May 1-31. Pick up a copy of this month's read. Come in by May 30 to share your impressions and enter into the drawing to win free books. 410-524-1818

STAR WARS SCAVENGER HUNT

Ocean Pines library, 11107 Cathell Road, May 4-22. May the force be with you as you hunt down all the rebels and discover the clues to the riddle. For ages 6-11 years. 410-208-4014

TEEN TIME: DINOSAUR EYES

Ocean Pines library, 11107 Cathell Road, May 4-29, 3:30 p.m. Create your own dinosaur eye using glass eyes and air clay. For ages 12-18 years. 410-208-4014

Classified

MARKETPLACE

Call **410-723-6397** or email classifieds@octodaydispatch.com
by Monday, 5 p.m.

Classifieds appear in **OC Today-Dispatch & Bayside Gazette** each week & online at octodaydispatch.com & baysideoc.com



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OPEN HOUSES

April 30 - May 7



DAY/TIME	ADDRESS	BR/BA	STYLE	PRICE	AGENT/AGENCY
Fri-Mon 11am-4pm	Heron Harbour, 120th St., Bayside, Ocean City	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 11am-1pm	30847 E Annie Lank Ave. Unit 1203, Milton, DE	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$449,900	Katie Landon/ Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 2-4pm	13307 Wight Street #101, Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$435,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Friday 3-5pm	37033 Barrington Pkwy, Millville, DE	4BR/3.5BA	Townhome	\$614,900	Katie Landon/ Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm	10300 Coastal Hwy # 1808, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$435,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sat & Sun, 11am-3pm	12430 Old Bridge Rd., West OC	2BR/2BA	Single Family	from \$284,750	Shelly Wilson/Salt Life Community
Saturday 11am-1pm	11964 W War Dancer Ln #107, Glen Riddle	4BR/4BA	Single Family	\$469,000	Rob & Anne-Marie Bouse/ReMAX Advantage Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	7710 Yacht Club Drive, Ocean Pines	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$445,900	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	9701 Village Lane #5, West Ocean City	3BR/2.5BA	Townhome	\$372,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 11am-1pm	8715 Old Ocean City Rd, Berlin	4BR/2BA	Single Family	\$439,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday 1-4pm	6201 Coastal Hwy #806, Ocean City	4BR/3BA	Condo	\$1,800,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2-4pm	71 Hingham Lane, Ocean Pines	4BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$599,990	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
Sunday 11am-1pm	32 Gatehouse Trail, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$369,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Sunday 11:30am-1:30pm	11324 River Run Lane, Berlin	3BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$627,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday Noon-2pm	5 129th Street, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Townhome	\$765,000	The Real McCoy Group/Coldwell Banker Realty

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