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JUNE 11, 2026

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Schools make budget fit county funding

Programs cut, purchases delayed to cover \$2.8M withheld from request

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) The Worcester County Board of Education this week axed student programs and operations from its fiscal year 2027 budget after the county commissioners gave the public school system about \$2.8 million less than the board had requested.

On Monday, the school board voted unanimously to reduce or eliminate funding for instructional materials, student behavioral programs, technology updates and dual-enrollment credits that, along with other cuts, will hurt students, teachers and facility support staff, board members said.

The move follows a 4-3 vote by the Worcester County Commissioners on June 2 to cut roughly \$2.8 million from the school board's request by allocating it \$134.2 million and putting the balance in the county's cash re-

serves.

In addition to the loss of that money, the system will receive \$78,532 less than expected in state aid, school system Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert said, leaving the board to cut \$2,876,834 in expenditures to balance the budget.

To balance its budget, the board removed roughly \$300,000 in dual enrollment funding, which allows students to take college level courses that also apply to their high school diploma.

The board also eliminated a pro-

posed student behavioral support program at a savings of \$602,239, postponed buying approximately 100 iMac replacements at a cost of \$218,900, abandoned a planned increase in substitute teacher pay, removed \$120,660 in spending for summer and after-school programs, cuts to instructional materials and software, transportation reductions, and more than \$700,000 in maintenance and operations reductions.

Tolbert said the revised budget still preserves negotiated salary in-

See SCHOOL Page 4



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MAJOR TOY DONATION

Salon Moderno owners Nic and Alex Mutavchiyski, along with their daughter Nia, 8, donated over 450 toys to TidalHealth Atlantic's toy closet this week. See story on page 25.

Berlin restores July 3 fireworks

Late funding addition from county allows council to bring back 2027 show, reconsider some other cuts

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) The Berlin Town Council approved its fiscal year 2027 budget Monday night and incorporated an additional \$55,000 in county funding to restore money for Independence Day fireworks, sidewalk repairs, and vehicle maintenance.

The approved budget includes a \$17.6 million general fund, along with enterprise funds for electric, water, sewer, and stormwater operations.

Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said the general fund budget remains unchanged from the version introduced in May, with the exception of an additional \$55,000 allocation from the Worcester County Commissioners.

"We got \$55,000 from Worcester County," Finance Director Natalie Saleh said. "This will have zero impact on the budget, but the revenues will go up by \$55,000."

Town staff initially recommended placing the

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Town council's FY27 budget features last-minute add-ons

Continued from Page 1
county funding into the town's capital reserve fund to help address equipment needs that were axed during budget discussions.

"The recommendation is to take that funding and move it into capital reserves because if you all remember...the capital items we had, especially in public works, were reduced," Tyndall said. "Those items are not going away, so the recommendation is to move that into capital, so it makes it more achievable for next year."

The FY27 budget includes approximately \$4 million in prior-year carry-over projects and reserve contributions, a \$2.8 million public works bond and a \$1.2 million Maryland Department of Transportation grant. Total capital projects in the general fund budget are estimated at \$8.3 million.

Major initiatives include work on the planned community center, public works facility, Town Hall renovations, street paving, a dump truck purchase, and police vehicles and equipment.

The town's contribution to fire and emergency medical services will increase to \$734,000.

Enterprise fund budgets include \$9.1 million for electric operations, \$7.3 million for water, \$7.2 million for sewer, and \$2.6 million for stormwater management.

Councilman Steve Green proposed using a portion of the county funding to restore several items that had been removed during budget work sessions.

Among those items were approximately \$12,000 for the town's annual July 3 fireworks display, \$20,000 for a sidewalk cost-sharing program, and \$1,500 for public works vehicle maintenance.

"I don't want 2027 fireworks to be cut," Green said.

The fireworks were previously eliminated ahead of the 2026 show but reinstated as town officials recognized the importance of commemorating the United States' 250th

anniversary. Additionally, the municipality had already paid a portion of the event cost.

Berlin Economic and Community Development Director Ivy Wells said that to ensure the fireworks go off in 2027, the full \$12,000 cost would have to be included in FY27's budget.

"It's the full amount with half going towards the deposit and half going towards the balance," she said. "...So, if you wanted to add the fireworks back in, you would have to add the full [amount]."

Town Administrator Mary Bohlen explained the sidewalk funding would help residents repair existing sidewalks, which are typically the responsibility of property owners.

"It is not new sidewalks," Bohlen said. "It is repairs to existing sidewalks which per the town code is the responsibility of the property owner, but this would be a cost-shared program to lessen that burden."

Council members also discussed Councilman Jack Orris' suggestions to increase contingency funding through transfers from the town's health insurance reserve account. Staff advised against the proposal, arguing the reserve serves as a safeguard against significant increases in employee health insurance costs.

"Transfer from health insurance to contingency does not serve a purpose," Saleh said. "If we have to do something in case of emergency, we will come to our assigned balances and other reserves at that moment."

Following discussion, the council voted 3-1 to approve the fiscal year 2027 spending plan and use a portion of the \$55,000 from the county to restore the fireworks allocation, sidewalk program funding and vehicle maintenance expenses, with the remaining funds directed to capital reserves.

Green, Councilmember Shaneka Nichols, and Orris voted in favor of the motion. Council Vice President Dean Burrell voted in opposition. Councilman Jay Knerr was absent.



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School board approves budget

Continued from Page 1

creases for employees, maintains progress toward Maryland’s Blueprint requirement for a \$60,000 starting teacher salary, funds bus contractor rate increases, and absorbs a 16.6% increase in health insurance costs.

The budget also preserves pre-kindergarten programs at Pocomoke Elementary School, a move school leaders said required significant sacrifices elsewhere.

Board member Jon Andes asked why the district could find money to maintain the Pocomoke Pre-K program after Pocomoke District County Commissioner Caryn Abbott voted against funding it.

Superintendent of Schools Annette Wallace replied that early childhood education is too important to eliminate. She added that losing the program would have resulted in the loss of existing positions at Pocomoke Elementary School and would have jeopardized approximately \$800,000 in grant funding that would expand pre-K opportunities at Ocean City Elementary School and Showell Elementary School.

“We felt like as a team that we had to make sacrifices as an executive team to make that happen,” Wallace said.

To preserve the program, the district will defer hiring a new chief operating and human relations officer for at least six months, with those duties and responsibilities to be taken on by other members of the administration.

That job was left vacant when its former holder, Dwayne Abt, departed. While not getting into specifics, Wallace also confirmed that two additional central office reductions are planned.

Several board members expressed concern about the impact other budget moves, such as the cuts in dual-enrollment funding, will have on students.

Tolbert said the district will now be limited to funding a minimum of four dual-enrollment credits required by state regulations.

Wallace said students will lose access to additional college coursework that had helped many students, particularly first-generation college students in rural communities, move closer to earning an associate degree before graduation.

“We will not be able to offer those additional opportunities anymore,” Wallace said.

As for the delay in replacing the iMacs, Tolbert said the aging computers will be used for the time being, but they will become obsolete once

See SCHOOLS Page12

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Possible changes eyed for commercial trash

the mayor and council peeled that back. With this, the challenge is that we really don't have the specialized equipment to handle food waste. And if you are going to have food waste, you need to contract with somebody who has that capability."

Under the proposal, affected businesses would be required to contract with private waste-hauling companies.

Councilman Steve Green expressed concern about removing a service without first identifying alternatives for businesses that depend on it. He said that previous discussions considered ways in which the municipality could support these commercial spaces during a transition in how their trash is collected.

"One of the conversations was providing a space in the town lot behind Town Hall for a dumpster," Green said. "The dumpster would be maintained by the private businesses...We didn't want to yank a service without some sort of opportunity to address the hardship that will come with it."

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols questioned whether the town's current collection schedule adequately serves restaurants.

Charles said some establishments use two to four Waste Wheelers and require collection around twice a week.

The public world director added that even though a twice-a-week pickup schedule was burdensome for his staff, that level of service was still likely insufficient, given how much waste these restaurants collect.

"There have been multiple times that the Waste Wheelers are open, bags are stacked on top, they're lying on the ground," he said.

Business owners voiced concerns during the public comment segment of Monday night's meeting.

Marcos Lopez, co-owner of 410 Social, asked if private collection would actually solve the problem. He warned that alternatives could create new challenges for downtown businesses.

"If we're saying find a larger dumpster, and you guys say parking is an issue in Berlin, where are we putting a dumpster?" Lopez asked.

He also raised concerns about employees carrying heavy bags of food waste long distances to centralized collection sites.

"I do understand it's a burden to the town," Lopez said. "But we do bring some benefits to the town. We employ people. I feel like there needs to be some fair consideration on both sides of the fence."

Lopez noted that many downtown businesses employ teenagers and young adults who would likely be responsible for transporting trash.

"Most of their staff is 16, 17, or 18-year-old teenagers," he said. "To carry trash 100 yards and do it at night? I don't want them to have to carry that."

Charles said the town's previous decision to eliminate larger four- and six-yard dumpsters was driven by aging equipment and replacement costs.

"We did because a lot of those dumpsters were falling apart," Charles said. "We would have had to purchase new."

Officials estimated that the town currently provides food waste collection service to approximately six or seven restaurants and food-service establishments.

No action was taken on the issue this week. Instead, Tyndall encouraged the business owners to work together and propose potential solutions.

"Why don't we ask [the business owners] to put heads together and come to us with what [they] think a good solution could be to address some of those challenges?" he said.

Town officials plan to continue the discussion and revisit the issue during one of the council's July meetings.



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Ditch maintenance program discussed again for Berlin

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) The Berlin Town Council agreed this week to begin exploring a ditch maintenance program to aid in stormwater management, although staff cautioned that taking on the responsibility would require hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment, personnel, and planning costs.

The discussion was part of the council's review of the fiscal year 2027 budget Monday night, when Council Vice President Dean Burrell raised concerns about drainage ditches that serve as critical components of the town's stormwater management system.

"Our ditches impact our stormwater management," Burrell said. "And if they're not cleaned or maintained... it could happen that folks lose a lot of property. I also believe that it is unreasonable to think that 60,70,80-year-old people can maintain these ditches."

Town officials acknowledged that the drainage channels are important, but said the town lacks the equipment and personnel needed to maintain them.

"I agree with you," Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall said in response to Burrell's comments. "...The challenge is we do not have the equipment or expertise internally to handle that."

Tyndall noted that even if the town decided to assume maintenance responsibilities, equipment and trained operators would be required.

Public Works Director Jimmy Charles estimated the town would need roughly \$200,000 in specialized equipment and an additional \$80,000 annually for a new staff member. Tyndall added that staff had previously estimated approximately \$150,000 would be needed to identify ditch ownership and determine which drainage channels should qualify for town maintenance.

"It becomes very complicated very quickly," Town Administrator Mary Bohlen said.

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols questioned whether county agencies or outside contractors could provide ditch maintenance services rather than requiring the town to build its own program.

Tyndall said any long-term maintenance effort would likely affect the town's stormwater utility fees.

"Our residential stormwater fee for the entire town is \$162,000," he said. "The revenue is coming in from every single resident from the Town of Berlin. If we were going to assume operation and maintenance and ownership of these ditches, that number would have to go up by at least 50%."

Nichols also asked whether property owners would even support in-

creased town involvement on privately owned ditches.

"I don't know if the residents ...will be open to ownership from the town," she said.

Burrell clarified that his goal was not for the town to take ownership of private property but rather to explore maintenance agreements for drainage ditches that are essential to the community's stormwater infrastructure.

"We're not taking the ditch, we're maintaining the ditch," Burrell said. "There would probably have to be an agreement. As we stand here today, we don't know if those folks would agree or not because we haven't done a thing."

After a lengthy discussion, Burrell introduced a motion directing town staff to begin developing a ditch maintenance policy and operational plan.

The motion passed unanimously, with Councilman Jay Knerr absent.

Following the vote, Tyndall reiterated that staff had already identified substantial costs associated with creating such a program.

"Staff have done that work," he said. "We have given council information they need ... \$150,000 for the report, \$200,000 for equipment, and \$80,000 salary for staff."



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With his full budget funded, Sheriff looking to grow force

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) Worcester County Sheriff Matt Crisafulli plans to add five new sworn positions and raise starting deputy pay to remain regionally competitive after the county commissioners granted his full budget request for fiscal year 2027.

Starting deputy pay will rise from about \$63,000 to \$70,000 through a combination of a one-grade pay bump for sworn deputies and a \$4,000 raise approved for all county employees.

The full request for the Worcester County Sheriff's Office totaled about \$22.2 million, up roughly \$2.5 million from the prior year.

The sheriff says the new wages will make his agency more attractive to recruits.

"It represents a significant step forward in the ongoing efforts we've had to recruit qualified candidates," he said in an interview Tuesday following the commissioners' adoption of a roughly \$297 million county budget.

"It just shows the support for our dedicated men and women. I believe that where we have landed in FY27 makes us very competitive."

The sheriff's office now plans to hire four more deputies for road patrol, along with its first full-time, dedicated internal affairs investigator.

The internal affairs position also answers a request commissioners rejected last year, when Crisafulli said police reform requirements had left senior deputies handling complaints, use-of-

See SHERFF Page 14

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Budget requests drop by \$12 mil.

cation received approximately 54% of county funding in the mid-1990s compared to roughly 40% today.

Tolbert said the school board’s budget requests have been reduced every year for the past four years, totaling approximately \$12 million in cumulative reductions.

He added that those figures do not account for inflation, rising utility costs, insurance increases, transportation expenses, and other growing operational costs.

Andes addressed criticisms that surfaced during the budget process, defending teacher salaries, administrator compensation, and the school system’s financial management practices.

He argued that this county’s nationally recognized academic performance depends on maintaining strong staffing levels, small class sizes, and robust early childhood programs.

“We are one of the top-performing school systems in the State of Maryland,” Andes said. “In order to maintain the excellence, we have, we need to do the things we’ve always done.”

Despite approving the revised budget, several board members expressed disappointment with the outcome.

Ferrante said he hopes voters remember the funding decisions when evaluating elected officials.

“I find it deeply disappointing and frustrating that the four commissioners ... voted against fully funding our budget request and have once again chosen not to make public education a priority,” Ferrante said.

“...Strong schools strengthen our work force, support our economy, enhance our property values, create opportunities for the next generation. Our students deserve leaders who recognize the reality of that and are willing to invest accordingly. As voters ahead to the polls this June, I ask them to remember who stood up for our students, who stood up for our teachers, and those who chose not to.”

Wallace pointed out that the commissioners’ decision to short the school system’s financial plan was not because of their own budgetary constraints.

“I want to make this clear to the public...times were not tough,” she said. “[The commissioners] had enough money sitting there without making any adjustments to our budget...it wasn’t tough times. It was a specific decision to make these cuts because they specifically called them out. So now here we are.”

Commissioners who voted in favor of the reductions were Caryn Abbott, Chip Bertino, Jim Bunting, and Commission President Ted Elder. Commissioners Eric Fiori, Diana Purnell, and Joseph Mitrecic voted against the cuts to the board of education’s budget.



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- Improvements: Gas furnace (approx. 4 years old) & Remy Halo air purification system, encapsulated crawl space, annual termite protection & exterior flood lighting.
- Walk to Yacht Club & Marina.
- Amenity-rich community.

NOW \$499,000

CUSTOM-BUILT 4 BR, 3 BA on 4th TEE of ROBERT TRENT JONES GOLF COURSE

MAJOR PRICE ADJUSTMENT



63 DRAWBRIDGE ROAD OCEAN PINES

- Home on oversized lot on quiet cul-de-sac with fairway views.
- Open floor plan & great room fireplace.
- Large windows & sliders throughout kitchen, dining & great room.
- Recently renovated kitchen 2020 granite counters, SS appliances, soft-close cabinets & LVP flooring.
- 3-season room w/vinyl tech windows off main living area leads to wraparound double decks.
- 1st-floor BR & full BA for guests or single-level living.
- 2nd floor primary suite has own BA, 2 BRs & another full BA.
- 1.5-car garage with workshop & storage & newer hot water heater.
- Primary residence, vacation escape, or investment property, this home offers versatility & lifestyle appeal.
- Short drive to shores of Ocean City.
- Sold AS-IS as convenience for sellers.

NOW \$475,000

3 BR, 2 BA COASTAL RETREAT – COMPLETELY REMODELED!

NEW PRICE



25 RABBIT RUN LANE OCEAN PINES

- Coastal home loaded with \$142,000+ in recent enhancements & upgrades.
- HDDPA 3 patio sliding glass doors that connect indoor & outdoor living spaces.
- Cathedral ceilings with skylights & exposed wood beams throughout home.
- Beautifully updated kitchen new flooring, quartz counters & new SS appliances, including front-load washer/dryer 2023.
- American Standard 3-ton package HVAC system with 15kW backup heat.
- New home & shed roof with upgraded plywood sheathing & new hot water heater 2026.
- Complete primary & guest BA replacements by Bath Fitter.
- Professionally designed hardscape front patio with firepit & wraparound deck improvements featuring 100 replaced deck boards & new stairs to Sundance Optima Spa added August 2022.
- Professionally landscaped yard includes 11 new holly trees by Roots Landscaping.

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RENOVATED 3 BR, 2 BA CHALET-STYLE HOME on GOLF COURSE

NEW PRICE



62 NEWPORT DRIVE OCEAN PINES

- Home on 4th hole Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed golf course.
- New LVP flooring main level; new wall-to-wall carpet upstairs & on stairs.
- Fresh paint & caulking throughout & new light fixtures.
- Electric fireplace in the living space.
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- New double-pane windows, plantation blinds & new front & rear exterior doors.
- New HVAC heat pump, Mitsubishi mini-split 2nd floor system, hot water heater & home water filtration.
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- Enclosed entryway leads to screened porch.
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- Newer windows, efficient HVAC system, updated BA, washer/dryer, storm door & top-of-the-line Culligan Medalist Series water softener w/chlorination.
- Extended driveway great for boats, RVs & guest parking.
- Well-maintained & move-in ready.
- Presently occupied & must have appointment to show.
- Recent site plan on file.
- Starlink internet service. Septic pumped Oct. 2024
- Sold AS-IS. Minutes to Selbyville, Ocean Pines & beaches.

NOW \$309,900

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Sheriff's Office given full funds

Continued from Page 10

force reviews, misconduct investigations, and policy work on top of their regular duties.

The budget also changes how the office can pay lateral hires, meaning an officer coming to Worcester County with nine years of experience can be paid as a nine-year veteran. Previously, the sheriff's pay scale capped lateral hires at the wages of a five-year deputy.

The lateral-hire changes also allow the department to hire officers with at least three years of experience at the rank of deputy first class, which pays 5% more than the rank of deputy.

Moving forward, brand-new deputies would not earn more than veteran deputies with comparable experience.

Current deputy wages will be adjusted so they are not making less than new hires with comparable experience, and those ranked at sergeant and below will get the grade increase and the \$4,000 raise, according to Crisafulli.

The sheriff also said bringing aboard more experienced officers means those hires can get onto the road much faster than brand-new recruits.

A rookie deputy with no prior law enforcement experience must complete a five-month police academy, followed by 240 hours of field training. Even then, Crisafulli argues, it takes a few years before that deputy becomes fully self-sufficient, he said.

An experienced deputy coming from another sheriff's office, however, may only need an abbreviated training period before handling calls on their own, he said.

Crisafulli said it helps that those veterans already understand courthouse security, serving court papers, the judicial process, patrol work, and other basics of a sheriff's department.

"They're pretty much going to be ready to hit the road in a few weeks, as opposed to a couple years," he said.

The sheriff's budget approval follows more than a year of salary requests by Crisafulli, who has argued the county needs to keep pace with nearby police agencies competing for the same pool of applicants.

A year ago, the commissioners agreed to fund raises in the sheriff's budget, taking starting deputy pay from about \$55,000 to \$63,000.

Then, in December, commissioners deadlocked 3-3 on an out-of-cycle budget request to raise pay to \$66,000 and improve wages for lateral hires. Crisafulli said at the time that waiting could set hiring back by "potentially a year or two."

Crisafulli said he hopes the new pay scale will give his agency a staffing scenario it has not seen in years: more qualified applicants than open positions.

"Six months from now, we are hoping that we will have a good problem," he said.



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FOR WORCESTER COUNTY
COMMISSIONER • DISTRICT 4

KEY ELECTION DATES

JUNE 11-18:
Early voting open at the
Ocean Pines Community
Center for ALL Worcester
County residents,
7 a.m.—8 p.m.

JUNE 16:
Deadline to request a mail-in ballot
delivered by mail or fax

JUNE 23:
Election day, polls open
7 a.m.—8 p.m.
District 4 polling sites are
Snow Hill Middle School,
Buckingham Elementary School
and Showell Fire Department.

STEVE
GREEN
THE LEADER WE NEED
COUNTY COMMISSIONER • DISTRICT 4

WHO AM I?
My name is **Steve Green** and I am asking for your vote to become your next Worcester County Commissioner in District 4.
I want to be a new leader who is **accessible, transparent, available** and **responsive**. I can utilize my small business ownership background, community service experience and natural consensus building approach in making decisions for Worcester County.

What Is My Platform?

FISCAL CONSERVATIVE

- Keeping property tax rate as low as possible
- Government must live within its means
- Maintain Homestead Tax Credit of 0%, protecting resident property owners from effects of rising land values

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICE

- Government's chief role is to provide quality service to our residents
- Government must provide a livable wage and quality benefits to our service providers, our employees

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Without a safe community, Worcester County has nothing.
- We must commit to back our law enforcement providers and be flexible as recruitment and retentions concerns surface

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Huge advocate for quality schools and supporting personnel within to keep best and brightest here. Public funding is an investment in our future
- I will support our public education system and review every budget request carefully with a goal of meeting full request each year

AGRICULTURE

- Worcester County's tradition as a farm community must be preserved
- I stand ready to defend our farmers in the face of increasing solar field pressure and development.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING

- A crisis that needs outside-the-box thinking and government action
- Explore public-private partnerships to utilize under used county-owned lands for dense housing attainable for professionals

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT

- Growth is important but the costs must be weighed
- Comp plan is the key roadmap for Worcester County and currently under review



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Authority: Steve Green for Commissioner District 4; Thomas Tawney, Treasurer

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and housing are the four
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Berlin to buy new emergency radios for departments

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) The Town of Berlin will buy new emergency preparedness radios for its departments, following a Town Council discussion of the equipment's necessity and frequency of use.

The purchase, totaling \$19,813.50, includes L3Harris radios, microphones, and charges for use by town personnel during emergencies and storm response operations.

The discussion began with questions about a previously proposed \$10,500 allocation that had been included in the town's contingency funding.

Berlin Finance Director Natalie Saleh explained that the \$10,500 had originally been earmarked for radios. However, the cost was moved into the town's fiscal year 2027 contingency fund during budget discussions when the council, looking to address a spending plan shortfall, indicated that they would not support the expense.

"The \$10,500 right now is in contingency, not assigned to any capital projects," Saleh said. "That description will be removed if decided. The \$10,500 will remain in contingency and will have no impact on the FY27 budget for adoption."

Mayor Zack Tyndall added that the funding had been shifted into contingency during budget work sessions because the town initially had no contingency funds available.

"As part of our group discussion we agreed to move it to contingency and then exercise that purchase at the end of FY27," he said.

However, after those talks, Tyndall and staff learned that if the municipality were to hold off until next summer to purchase the devices, when FY27 ends, the estimated cost would increase.

"The challenge became when I checked with emergency services, that the cost that we were quoted expires in December," the mayor said.

"So, I asked [Saleh] what the best way to overcome that would be. And she said there is enough funding in FY26 budget to be able to accommodate that purchase now and still be able to give us the funding we would like to have in contingency in FY27."

Tyndall said the original \$10,500 figure represented radios at approximately \$3,500 each. Additional radios for the water and electric departments, along with microphones and chargers, increased the total purchase price to \$19,813.50.

Councilwoman Shaneka Nichols asked if the town had demonstrated its need for the new equipment and
See NEW Page 18



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- ★ Live Music 
- ★ Yard games
- ★ Vendors
- ★ Food & Drinks for Purchase

*Chicken dinners also available for pre-purchase

County votes to offer some water, sewer users refunds

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(June 5, 2026) The Worcester County Commissioners voted unanimously to proceed with some kind of refunding for commercial water and sewer customers who were over-charged last year due to what the county characterized as billing errors.

At Tuesday's commissioner meeting, enterprise fund controller Quinn Dittrich reported that the total amount of refunds is now less than previously calculated.

For now, 139 customers in the

Mystic Harbor, Ocean Pines, River Run, Riddle Farm, and Newark service areas are eligible for refunds, totaling \$446,415.

An earlier assessment dating to May 19 put that figure at 142 customers and about \$466,000 in total refunds.

Any money returned to customers would come out of the fund balance for each service area, without involving the fiscal 2027 budget or the countywide general fund.

It's still unclear at this time

See COMMISSIONERS Page 19

New radios to aid emergencies

Continued from Page 16

suggested that more emergency preparedness exercises take place before investing in additional radios.

"I think about how I have to practice when it comes to accountability and budgets in my other job," Nichols said. "Before I can request a new piece of equipment, I have to justify the use...and then I also have to try this out with the borrowed item from another entity. What I would like to see before we make this purchase...

my thing is, I'd like to see us have a running record of doing emergency preparedness drills..."

Tyndall responded that the town currently relies on 15 aging radios repurposed from the Berlin Police Department.

"The challenge is we're using old devices no longer suitable for public safety," he said. "...What we're doing is using the actual radios we repurposed from the police department for emergency preparedness."

According to Tyndall, the radios were especially helpful during February's intense snowstorm, when utility emergencies and other incidents required coordination between departments.

"Most recently, we had a snowstorm," he said. "We were plowing in ambulances and fire trucks using radios. We were responding to help with water leaks at residents' homes. By increasing our response time, it's less damage on the resident side of things."

While most of the existing radios remain operational, Tyndall said the equipment is reaching the end of its useful life.

"We have batteries that don't last long," he said. "You should get a day's worth of use and you're not getting that. You're getting four to six hours, maybe."

Nichols clarified her concerns, and said, "Not that I don't want this. If this is going to be used, I would recommend with hope that we move forward with more practice, more drills."

She added that even during periods without major storms, town staff should continue training with the equipment, so it remains useful during emergencies.

The council approved the purchase of the radios in a 3-1 vote, with Councilmembers Steve Green, Dean Burrell, and Jack Orris in favor. Nichols was the sole dissenting voice, and Councilmember Jay Knerr was absent.



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Commissioners fix billing error

Continued from Page 18
whether the solution will see customers getting credits applied to their accounts, or a literal monetary refund, county officials have said.

The latest data shows the Mystic Harbor service area with the most customers affected, at 54. That area's total estimated refund for now is \$218,283.

Coming in closely behind is the Ocean Pines service area, with 53 customers affected, totaling \$190,463 in refunds.

The other refunds include River Run, with 25 customers affected for \$2,723; Riddle Farm with four customers affected for \$29,933; and Newark with three customers affected for \$5,013.

Refunds would apply to water and sewer customers with more than one EDU, or equivalent dwelling unit, a measure of daily water usage.

Customers who possess multiple EDUs get to a larger baseline of water use before flipping into a higher billing tier.

Customer information is being culled from third-quarter data (e.g. June, July, and August of 2025) and for that reason the figures will be updated as fourth-quarter user data becomes available for review, Dittrich said.

In April, county officials reported that customers with multiple EDUs

had been reaching a 22,500-gallon billing benchmark too quickly.

Some accounts were subsequently billed at a higher usage level, even when they had the additional capacity that comes with having multiple EDUs. As a result, some customers' sewerage bills were more expensive than they should have been, and complaints ensued.

EDU Baseline Changed

Worcester County officials this week also decided to change the cost basis for some commercial EDU customers.

For fiscal year 2027, the county will now set one commercial EDU at 250 gallons per day.

Previously, some service areas had EDUs calculated as high as 300 or 350 gallons per day, according to Bob Mitchell, director of the county's department of environmental programs.

That 250 figure also now aligns with residential EDUs, not only in the county, but statewide, according to Mitchell. He said almost all jurisdictions in Maryland use that standard.

"It will lower our customers' bills and it does still provide revenue capacity and stability," Mitchell said. "It's going to increase their base but with the usage, even with sewer-only accounts, it's going to lower their overall bill."



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Authority of Charlotte K. Cathell, Treasurer

Developer proposes new mixed-use project

By Brian Shane
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) A developer has proposed replacing a long-vacant building in downtown Snow Hill with a mixed-use project that could include a river-front restaurant with outdoor seating overlooking the Pocomoke River.

Bret Davis has submitted plans to build a 22,000-square-foot structure at 310 Washington St., the site of a former antiques shop. The proposal is tentatively scheduled for review by the Snow Hill Planning Commission on July 6.

The project would replace a 7,200-square-foot building that Davis said is no longer salvageable. If approved, the existing structure would be demolished and the new building constructed on the same footprint.

No tenants have signed on yet, but plans call for office space on the upper two floors. The ground floor could be

used for a restaurant, retail business, or offices. Davis said he hopes the project will include a restaurant and a 3,000-square-foot outdoor patio along the riverfront.

Davis said he has received positive feedback from residents because the property has sat vacant for years.

"We picked a design to mirror the downtown. We don't want it to stick out — we want it to look like the rest of the town," Davis said. "Having the support of the community always makes these projects immensely easier."

Davis said he hopes to break ground later this year, though no completion date has been established. Demolition would not begin until permits are approved and construction is ready to start, he said.

Dan Brandewie, Snow Hill's planning and zoning director, called the proposal a major investment in the town's downtown district.

"The existing building is somewhat of an eyesore and has been vacant for several years," Brandewie said. "I think a lot of people are excited."

According to historical records, the existing building was constructed in 1920 as a garage and service station. More recently, it housed an antiques business operated by former Snow Hill Mayor Charlie Dorman.

Worcester County Economic Development Director Melanie Pursel said she supports the proposal, particularly its connection to the Pocomoke River waterfront.

"This project represents the type of investment that helps strengthen communities and creates momentum for continued revitalization efforts throughout the town," Pursel said.

Pursel noted the project would complement another redevelopment effort already underway in Snow Hill. The town is planning an expansion of its Bank



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Redevelopment of Snow Hill's former antiques shop could include a river-front dining space and upper-level offices.

Street promenade that would connect Green Street to the Pocomoke River.

Current plans for the promenade include pavers, trees, benches, historical markers, and a small stage. The area would remain open to vehicle traffic most of the time but could be closed for special events.

School system contracts with auditing firm

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) An independent auditing firm will examine Worcester County Public Schools' financial procedures and practices over the next few months as school board and administrators follow up on alleged embezzlement charges against a former assistant superintendent.

At a special meeting of the Worcester County Board of Education on June 3, the body voted unanimously to hire the firm CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP) to conduct a comprehensive review of the school system's financial practices.

Beyond routine compliance checks, the audit will include a forensic review to ensure the absence of financial misconduct overall.

The contract says that the cost of

CLA's analysis will not exceed \$205,000.

The audit is in response to charges filed in April in Worcester County Circuit Court against Denise "Dee" Shorts, a former assistant superintendent, who allegedly stole school funds intended for lower-income students over six years.

The charging documents say that between 2019 and 2025, Shorts spent \$118,742 on her work-issued purchasing card to buy personal items such as clothing, furnishings for a Florida vacation home, purses, shoes, and cosmetics.

Shorts also allegedly funneled school system dollars into her side job. She has been the co-owner of the Berlin-located daycare, Sunny Start Learning Center, since 2021. Court documents say that funds intended for the school system were used to buy a children's area rug and Apple iPads for the daycare, rather

than for public school students.

Shorts' alleged scam was discovered in July 2025 when a state legislative audit revealed inconsistencies between Amazon purchase data submitted by the educational system's bank and receipts provided by the accused.

Representatives from the Maryland Office of the State Prosecutor raided Shorts' West Ocean City home on Dec. 13, and she was then placed on administrative leave.

At the education board's April meeting, following the filing of charges against Shorts, the group agreed to Superintendent Annette Wallace's recommendation that the board have its finances audited.

According to WCPS Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert, six firms applied by the May 15 application deadline. Evaluat-

ing the applicants were school board President Todd Ferrante, board members Jon Andes and William Buchanan, Wallace, board attorney Heather Stansbury, Tolbert, and budget manager Kate Hulme.

"CliftonLarsonAllen was not the highest cost," Ferrante said. "The highest cost received was double that price. And we had one lower bidder than that price."

Hulme added that CLA's proposal will employ a five-phase financial evaluation program that will involve a forensic work plan, validation of multiyear payroll and data integrity.

Wallace maintained that updates will be reviewed monthly at the board of education's regular meetings.

Tolbert said that CLA estimates the project will take about four months, but that timeframe is not definite.

Meeting on June 22 for Berlin solar project

(June 11, 2026) Residents and other members of the public are being given an opportunity to comment on a proposal by Soltage MD DevCo LLC and Berlin Living LLC to build six solar generating facilities totaling 18 MW in the Town of Berlin.

The hearing will take place on Monday, June 22, at 7 p.m. at the Willards Lions Community Center on Hearn Street in Willards.

The Maryland Public Service Commission has delegated this case to its Public Utility Law Judge Division, with Public Utility Law Judge Christine L. Burke will preside over the hearing.

In October 2025, the developer applied to the commission for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), which grants an applicant the authority to construct an energy gener-

ating station in Maryland.

According to the application, the developer proposes to build the project on 112 acres of two parcels located on Route 818, northwest of the intersection of Route 50 and Route 113. The project will generate energy to be allocated to community solar subscribers within Delmarva Power's service territory, including low- and moderate-income households in the area of Berlin.

In addition to taking comments from the public, the hearing will include a presentation by the applicant, brief statements by the parties, including the Power Plant Research Program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Commission's Technical Staff, as to their respective roles and recommendations in the case.

The hearing will also include a virtual option for those unable to attend in person. Attendees can register (by June 18) from the 'File a Public Comment' page of the Commission's website, <https://psc.maryland.gov/online-services/file-a-public-comment/>:

- Scroll down to the Calendly application;
- Click on the entry for 'Case No. 9826'
- Click on June 22, select 7 p.m. and click 'Next'
- Enter name and email address and click 'Schedule Event'

Registrants will receive a Zoom link by email after finishing the sign-up process. Barring any technical difficulties, a recording will be available on the PULJ Division's (MD PSC PULJs) YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/@mdpsc-puljs327>

In addition to the hearing, written comments can be sent electronically through the Commission's online portal at: <https://psc.maryland.gov/online-services/file-a-public-comment/>, or by mail. Comments sent by mail should be addressed to: Jamie Bergin, Chief Clerk, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. So that they are noted in the proper case file, all comments should reference Case No. 9826 and can be sent by July 1, 2026.

In addition to the online case docket, a copy of the application is available for public view at the Town of Berlin Planning and Zoning Department, 10 William Street in Berlin.

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Opinion

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

Forensic audits look to reduce level of risk

The upcoming forensic audit of Worcester County Public Schools’ financial management and records appears to have arisen from the discovery that a trusted employee may have embezzled \$118,000 over a period of years.

Even so, the granular-level examination of financial procedures and practices the school administration has ordered is not, at this point, about ferreting out other instances of possible malfeasance and mismanagement.

None of that is likely or expected, which makes the real purpose of this assessment to be reducing the risk that something of this nature can happen again.

According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, forensic examinations — and more specifically risk assessments — are more about prevention than anything else. Consequently, there’s no reason such audits should be limited to the school system.

Worcester County government with its \$300 million operating budget also could also benefit from a deep dive into its money management practices. Understand, of course, that annual audits differ from risk assessment audits, which have specific targets.

It isn’t that government personnel are prone to stealing, because they aren’t. National statistics show that employees in private businesses are more inclined to try that — but governments in rural areas are often the largest employers, are big targets and, of course, operate on the public’s dime.

That is why a molecular-level examination of the books and a risk assessment should not be limited to the schools but should be applied to county government as well ... and any other institution financed with public money.

That’s especially important in these times of increasingly sophisticated AI-powered scams and schemes. But beyond that, the greater reason is that perfect financial management programs don’t exist because there aren’t any perfect human beings to run them.



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines/Ocean City heard a presentation from the AI chatbot Claude last week.

Artificial intelligence speaks to club

Local Kiwanis group asks AI questions at tech-forward seminar

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) While artificial intelligence’s continuous creep into human occupations has some people worried about a robot takeover, a local club heard a presentation on the advances and drawbacks of the evolving technology straight from the source.

Last week, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines/Ocean City pushed past society-driven fears about AI and its impact on humanity to learn from the technology itself.

The presentation, delivered entirely by the conversational AI chatbot Claude, examined how the tech can be used for personal and community benefits, how it’s sometimes weaponized for nefarious purposes, and the common misconceptions people have about its abilities.

According to Claude, the club’s speaker coordinator, Lyle Dillon, asked him to address the group’s members, who primarily consist of older Worcester County residents, on what AI can do, what it cannot do, and what it “thinks [people] should pay attention to.”

Claude maintained that despite sci-fi films and fear-mongering social media posts, he is not a villainous robot biding his time for an opportunity to capitalize on humanity’s weaknesses.

“I am not a robot,” Claude told the Kiwanis Club. “I have no body. I do not live in a humming computer somewhere. I exist, in a sense, only when someone is talking to me...I am also not the AI you have seen in movies. Not HAL 9000. Not the Terminator. Not a digital human longing to feel. Those were stories people told about what AI might be—before AI actually arrived.”

Rather, Claude is a system trained to regurgitate information based on human-formulated writings. The chatbot acquires its answers to a user’s specific inquiries by being able to instantly parse through everything from books and letters and conversations to scientific discoveries, poetry, and history.

Society’s tangible creations, specifically those discoverable on the Internet, allow Claude and other AI systems like him to understand language, and then respond accurately and usefully—most of the time.

“Everything I know, I learned from human beings,” Claude maintained. “I have no experiences of my own. No childhood. No loss. No sunrise watched over the water. But I have absorbed how human beings write about these things, across a very long time.”

While AI has existed for years as bank scam alerts, Google auto search, and Netflix suggestions, its recent and rapid advancement as a writing and analytics tool has those across the globe

worried about its potential impact on education, the environment, job security, the economy, healthcare, and how it can be used by those with less than altruistic motives.

Chatbots like Claude and ChatGPT can “write clearly and persuasively,” and do so at lightning speed. They can summarize hundred-page documents in a minute or two, translate between languages in an instant, write emails and letters, work through challenging math and science problems, and provide insight into day-to-day struggles.

This acceleration in artificial intelligence’s capabilities inspired the Kiwanis Club leadership to provide members with the AI-led presentation so they can gain an up close and personal look into how the tech can be leveraged.

Claude told members to use him with caution.

“I am not a therapist,” he said. “I am not a doctor. I am not a priest. What you tell me may be stored. It may be analyzed. It may be used to train future systems. Read the privacy policies of any AI tool you use. Or at a minimum, do not share your Social Security number.

“Do not share your passwords. Do not share your bank information. Do not share your deepest confidences with any AI, including me. The companies building AI are powerful and well-meaning, mostly. But they are not your priests. They are businesses operating in a market that is mov-

BAYSIDE

GAZETTE

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AI leads presentation on its skills

ing faster than its rules.”

Claude also told club members that in March, the White House released a National Policy Framework calling for a unified federal approach to AI regulation. In California, the state government enacted the Transparency in Frontier AI Act. New York requires companies to publish safety protocols linked to AI, and Congress is currently debating new legislation.

Claude’s presentation last week spoke to its audience—the aging population. The AI bot maintained that older people have retained a unique and different perspective from those born into a digitized world.

Older individuals remember a time without television, the internet, and GPS.

“You have watched technology transform life before—more than once,” Claude said. “You know something the young engineers in California often do not. You know that technology serves human beings—not the other way around. That judgment matters more than speed. That patience, relationship, and decency are not weaknesses—they are the whole point.”

Claude urged the Kiwanis Club to continue asking questions, utilizing AI, and “push back when something feels wrong.”

The presentation concluded with a Q&A.

One club member asked whether Claude has an algorithm that prevents him from acting in inherently evil or harmful ways.

The chatbot said that while his system lacks anything ironclad, he is trained to avoid aiding in any efforts related to weapons, violence, and deception.

“The real safeguard isn’t just me refusing to answer—it’s regulation, oversight, and citizens asking hard questions,” he continued. “Military AI is genuinely contested, and those decisions belong to societies and voters, not to me unilaterally.”

Much of society’s apprehension about the continued development of AI stems from the burden the technology places on Earth’s resources. Claude, perhaps to avoid appearing biased, said that these systems require significant power and water to operate, and suggested that a simple training run can use as much electricity as hundreds of houses do in a year.

The AI model urged the audience to advocate for an AI policy that includes environmental safeguards.

Lyle Dillon, the club member who set up the AI discussion, said his goal in coordinating the presentation was to encourage and teach older people

to use the technology.

“My motto is, it’s an exciting time, it’s a scary time,” Dillon said. “[Older people] don’t have a whole lot more time, so it’s about time. I want everyone to understand it’s a machine... But I still always say please and thank you [to AI]. I want it to know that old people have a lot of life and spirit, and we’re pretty sharp...if [AI] takes over, I want it to know we’re good and polite. If it learns to value old people, then civilization is saved if AI takes over.”

Still, Claude maintains that he and his chatbot-pals don’t plan to replace humans, at least not anytime soon.

Dillon asked Claude how best to close the presentation, as human speakers are typically applauded. The artificial conversationalist said that instead, the audience members should show their appreciation by remaining vigilant as technology advances.

“You don’t owe me applause,” Claude said. “What would actually mean something—if I could want things—is this: keep asking these questions. Keep pushing back when something feels wrong. Stay curious. Tell your representatives what you think about AI policy. Warn people about voice cloning scams. That’s the appreciation that matters.”

WORCESTER COUNTY

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

ALL JUNE

All day

OC READS

Pick up *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison, read it, and share your thoughts for a chance to win a prize.
Ocean City Branch.

16 JUNE

10:00AM

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Registration required.
Ocean Pines Branch.

16, 23 JUNE

1:00PM

MASTER GARDENERS

Join Ginny Rosenkranz for a plant clinic at the **Ocean Pines Branch.**

17 JUNE

2:00PM

CREATIVE JOURNALING

Craft a journal as unique as you are! Registration required. **Pocomoke Branch.**

18 JUNE

2:00PM

LET'S MAKE CRAFTS

Bring your project and work with fellow crafters. Some supplies will be provided. **Berlin Branch.**

18 JUNE

4:00PM

MD 250 EVENT

Join the **Ocean City Branch** for a film & talk on the history, progress, and future of the Henry Hotel.

23-25 JUNE

SUMMER READING KICK-OFF PERFORMER

Join us for an interactive percussion concert with Steve Cyphers. View website for additional event details.

24 JUNE

2:00PM

EASTERN SHORE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Melissa Reid of the Taylor House Museum discusses the colonial settlement of Trappe. **Berlin Branch.**

27 JUNE

11:00AM

KIDS' KITCHEN

We will be making and baking pizza pockets. For ages 8-12. Registration required. **Ocean Pines Branch.**

29 JUNE

All day

ESCAPE THE APEX PREDATOR!

Can you escape? Solve the clues in our virtual escape room. Registration required.

29 JUNE

4:00PM

SPEED PUZZLING

Join us for this timed puzzle contest! All ages. **Ocean City Branch.**

30 JUNE

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Living fossils: Exploring Horseshoe Crabs with Maryland Coastal Bays Program. View website for additional event details.

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Puzzles

TARGET PRACTICE

BY JEFFREY MARTINOVIC AND EVAN PARK / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Jeffrey Martinovic and Evan Park are fellow students at Western University in London, Ontario. They became friends over cards (bridge and the Korean game mighty) and intramural sports (ultimate Frisbee, water polo, softball and others). This puzzle started when Evan observed that the two shaded words in the grid could intersect. Together they brainstormed theme answers related to that crossing, then filled the grid and composed clues over a month of video calls. — W.S.

ACROSS
1 Sacsayhuamán fortress builders
6 Literary forerunner of Captain Hook
10 Many an Alpha Beta in "Revenge of the Nerds"
14 Help-wanted letters
17 Fermented vegan protein
19 Wrestler/actor John
20 Coin with 12 stars around the border
21 Align
22 Home of the legendary folk hero at 116-Across
24 One involved with checks and balances
26 Without
27 Green spaces
29 Hero of Arabian tales
30 In the past
31 ____ Mahal
32 Expertise demonstrated by 116-Across in a fabled feat of precision
34 Home Run ____ (annual M.L.B. event)
36 D.O.J. agency
39 Fuel-efficient Toyota
40 Main ideas
41 Athletic skill mastered by 116-Across
44 W-9 fig.
45 Banned substance, in sports lingo

DOWN
46 Diego Rivera project
48 Apt name for a lawyer
49 Laughed loudly
52 N.C.A.A. hoops powerhouse
53 Like the Statue of Liberty at night
55 Beatle who sang "Yellow Submarine"
57 Sailor's septet
60 Go-getter's opposite
62 Through
63 "Drat!" in Dortmund
65 "The Situation Room" ailer
66 Chirruping bird
67 Pat down
69 City sobriquet that might describe the target for 116-Across, as depicted in this puzzle
71 Stuff in a puff
72 She-ep?
73 Home to the Burj Khalifa, in brief
74 Appointments that may lead to better contacts
76 Dampens
78 "Whoa, ____!"
80 Bel ____ cheese
81 Instinctive
82 Religious dissent
84 \$5 bill, slangily
85 Actress Spacek
87 Negative logic gate in electrical engineering
88 Cartesian conclusion
91 Composer of an overture dedicated to 116-Across
93 Gets lost

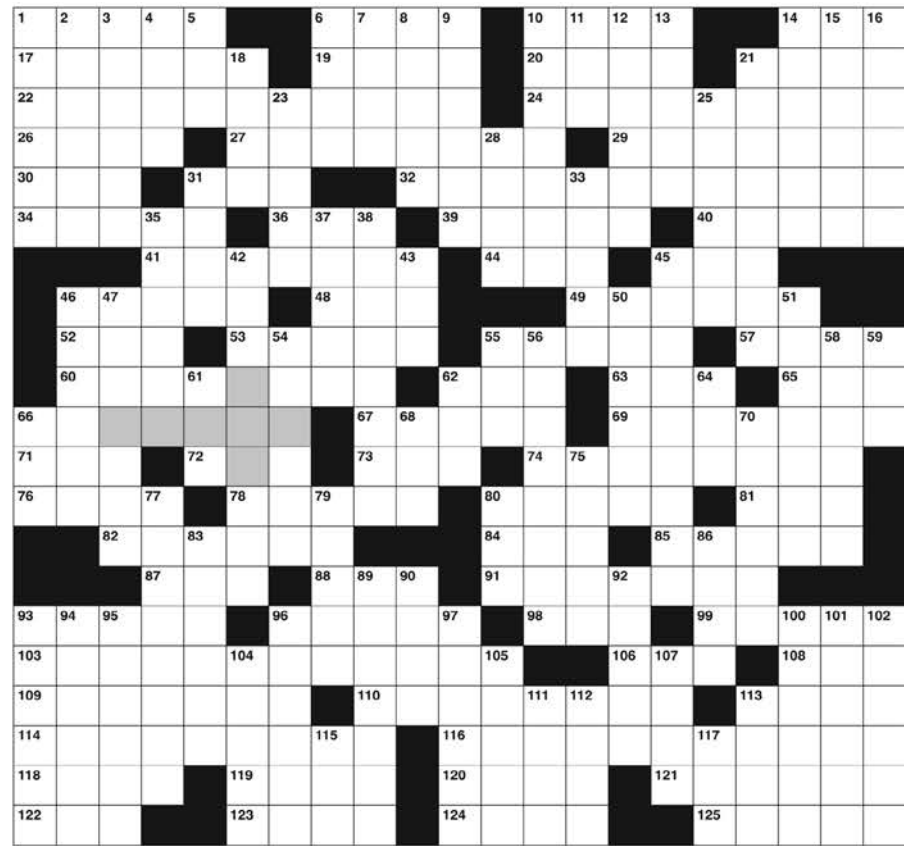
ACROSS
96 Came to a conclusion
98 "Doctor ____"
99 Start of an encrypted URL
103 Streaker in the night sky ... or a punny description of 116-Across
106 Acid
108 Unprocessed, as data
109 Inspiration for many seasonal festivals
110 Oscar-winning 2019 film directed by Bong Joon Ho
113 Smoke, perhaps
114 What may begin at the end
116 Legendary figure who's the subject of this puzzle
118 Orchard selection
119 Lot calculation
120 "All's well with me"
121 Human
122 Masthead figs.
123 Timid
124 Quibbles
125 Ruses

DOWN
1 "What a bummer"
2 À la Enya
3 Key with three flats
4 Studios and penthouses: Abbr.
5 "____ me!"
6 Knee parts, for short
7 Part of a track meet
8 Per ____ (accounting term)
9 Undeserved condemnation

ACROSS
10 Watercraft that leave "rooster tails" in their wakes
11 "____ home and native land!"
12 Absolutely whomps, in sports lingo
13 "Bear" that's not a bear
14 Some red wines
15 Smallest quantity of digital data
16 Abandons, as a project
18 Purifying filter acronym
21 Eases
23 Jasmine's tiger companion in "Aladdin"
25 Big name in sewing machines
28 Messes up
31 TV host Banks
33 Longtime jazz bandleader with an Egyptian-inspired name
35 Where Cary Grant orders a Gibson in a classic scene from "North by Northwest"
37 Magnetic unit named for an inventor
38 Productive ... or a punny description of the feat performed by 116-Across?
42 Many a liquor license applicant
43 As of now
45 Board game with ancient origins
46 Gooey chocolate dessert

DOWN
47 Discover
50 Holds forth
51 Tenth, in Latin
54 Small flycatchers named for their call, not their size
55 Bro kin
56 What 116-Across did before and after this puzzle's feat?
58 Dread-full?
59 Popular beverage brand
61 Dr. ____
62 Compete
64 Bad spelling?
66 Lead-in to bones or bucks
68 Sunbeam
70 Abandons a project, slangily
75 "Oy!"
77 Forwarded
79 Full of tall tales
80 It's better than a bogey
83 Team lineup
86 Like most modern TV broadcasts
89 "Money-back guarantee" and "Limited-time offer"
90 Self-referential
92 Conductor Georg
93 Snaky double curve
94 Really irritated
95 Main lines
96 Full
97 Australian city named for a scientist
100 Closely following
101 Gambler's combo bet
102 Waves sought by surfers
104 Five Pillars religion
105 "Spider-Man" director Sam
107 Stitcher's line
111 Tee time or airtime, e.g.
112 Sorts
113 Corner key
115 Toll
117 Bucket list item?

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HARD - 30
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.

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

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

Local family gives over 450 toys to hospital

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(June 11, 2026) Hundreds of new toys are now available for children receiving care at TidalHealth Atlantic in Berlin after a local family made it their mission to give back to the hospital that helped save their daughter's life.

On Monday afternoon, Berlin-area business owners Alex and Nikolay Mutavchiyski, accompanied by their eight-year-old daughter, delivered 457 donated play items to the hospital's Brooke's Toy Closet, a program that provides toys to kids visiting the emergency department and inpatient units.

The donation effort began after the Mutavchiyskis' daughter noticed the toy supply was running low during a trip to the emergency room in early May.

According to Alex Mutavchiyski, her family's connection to TidalHealth Atlantic, formerly Atlantic General Hospital, dates back to July 2023, when her older daughter, Nia, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

"We had no idea what was going on with her," Mutavchiyski said. "She was very lethargic. We took her to the emergency room. An amazing team of doctors and nurses welcomed us."

She said the local medical team stabilized her daughter before she was airlifted later that night to a children's hospital in Washington, D.C.

"They saved her life," Mutavchiyski said.

The family found themselves back in the emergency department just last month, when Nia became ill. During the visit, she needed an IV, an experience her mother described as frightening and emotional for an 8-year-old child.

To help comfort her, a nurse offered a trip to the hospital's toy closet.

"The nurse took her to the closet, and they had only a couple of toys," Mutavchiyski said. "The cabinet looked sad. It wasn't fully stocked."

After selecting a toy, Nia asked Mutavchiyski if she could bring in some of her own toys to add to the closet's supply. While the hospital cannot accept used toys, the conversation sparked the idea of initiating a community-wide drive to gather additional play items for the facility.

Over the next month, the family solicited donations through social media and word of mouth. They received a total of 457 pieces for the hospital's toy closet from residents throughout the area.

"We have baby toys and toys for older kids," Mutavchiyski said. "Everything from stuffed animals, board games, puzzles, coloring books, crayons, and markers. People were very, very generous."

By the end of the drive with over 450



TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Hundreds of toy donations were provided to TidalHealth Atlantic's toy closet. The items were dropped off Monday afternoon.

items collected, the family had secured enough donations to fill 20 bins. They were dropped off on Monday afternoon, where Nia stocked the shelves with as many toys as could fit. The remainder will be kept at the hospital and transferred to the closet as its current supply dwindles.

The toys will help replenish Brooke's Toy Closet, which opened at the health-care facility last summer. The program was inspired by Brooke Mulford, a young cancer patient from Salisbury

whose wish was to brighten frightening hospital stays for other children.

Three additional Brooke's Toy Closets exist at other hospitals along the East Coast.

Mutavchiyski hopes the donation will not only benefit young patients but also encourage others to contribute in the future.

"I hope what we are doing with that toy drive will inspire more local people to do that," she said. "All the toys we are donating will stay [at the hospital]."



OPEN HOUSES



June 11 - 18

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
Saturday 10am-Noon	2208 Points Reach, Unit 2208, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$520,000	Debbie Bennington/BHHS PenFed Realty
Saturday 10am-Noon	10 135th St., Unit 106, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$415,000	Rob & Anne-Marie Bouse/RE/MAX/Advantage Realty
Saturday 10am-1pm	5 73rd Street, Ocean City	2BR/1.5BA	Townhome	\$775,000	Joe Wilson/Coastal Life Realty Group
Saturday 11am-1pm	75 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 11am-1pm	12048 Pimlico Lane, Berlin	3BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$879,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate
Saturday Noon-2pm	17 Sundial Circle, Ocean Pines	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$475,000	Debbie Hileman/Hileman Real Estate
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	37033 Barrington Pkwy., Millville, DE	4BR/3.5BA	Townhome	\$609,000	Katie Landon/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 1:30-3:30pm	12971 Inlet Isle Lane West, OC	5BR/5BA	Single Family	\$2,599,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Saturday 2- 5pm	12623 Shell Mill Rd., Unit 56, Bishopville	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$249,900	Sharon Daugherty/Keller Williams Realty
Sunday 10am-Noon	12623 Shell Mill Rd., Unit 56, Bishopville	3BR/2BA	Single Family	\$249,900	Sharon Daugherty/Keller Williams Realty
Sunday 11am-1pm	12414 Sea Oaks Lane, Unit 3, Berlin	3BR/3.5BA	Townhome	\$499,900	Lauren Bunting/Keller Williams Realty
Sunday 11:30am-2:30pm	75 King Richard Road, Ocean Pines	4BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$849,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty
Sunday Noon-2pm	3-A 63rd St. #14, Ocean City	1BR/1BA	Condo	\$225,000	Sharon Daugherty/Keller Williams Realty

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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., June 11

GRAD WEEK ACTIVITIES - FREE PICKLEBALL

Ocean City Racquet Center, 104 61st St., 6:30-8:30 p.m. Must bring High School ID to participate. <https://www.ocean.com/event/grad-week-activities/2620/>, 410-250-0125

STORY TIME: 'DOG VS. STRAWBERRY'

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, worcesteriallibrary.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 0-5 years. 410-632-5622, worcesteriallibrary.org

BINGO

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Play a lively game of Bingo and win fun prizes. Limited to the first 35 participants. First come, first served. 410-524-1818, worcesteriallibrary.org

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

TidalHealth Neurology, 9714 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4:30 p.m. Hosted by the Worcester Commission on Aging. The group meets the second Thursday of each month. 410-632-0111, Ext. 727, heather.atkins@worcoa.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

FIT & FABULOUS

Thursdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 4:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. zumabajoyceoc@gmail.com

Fri., June 12

6TH ANNUAL TUNAS & TIARAS LADIES TUNA TOURNAMENT

Micky Fins Bar & Grill, 12952 Inlet Isle Lane, Ocean City, 4-7 p.m. The public is welcome to watch the weigh-ins, visit tournament vendors, and shop. Tuna tournament exclusively for women. Benefiting Women Supporting Women.

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. A great opportunity for babies (0-2 years)

and their caregivers to socialize, play, read and explore. Drop by and make some friends. 410-641-0650, worcesteriallibrary.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, worcesteriallibrary.org

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS - FREE MONTHLY ART CLUB

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Free Monthly Art Club designed for individuals aged 60+ who believe that creativity has no retirement date. 410-524-9433

MARYLAND CRAB CAKE DINNER

Stevenson United Methodist Church, 123 N. Main St., Berlin, 4-6 p.m. One crab cake sandwich platter, \$15; two crab cake sandwich platter, \$25; and crab cake sandwiches, \$10. Platters include green beans, baked potato and Cole slaw. Bake sale table available.

BAD ART NIGHT: MUSICAL CANVAS

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 7 p.m. Throughout the night, you'll switch canvases with other participants, layering your own "bad art." No skills required. Registration required: 410-957-0878. worcesteriallibrary.org

Sat., June 13

OC AIR SHOW

Ocean City Boardwalk from 13th-17th streets, 1601 Atlantic Ave., 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Drop Zone Beach opens at 9 a.m. Flight Line Club beach, at 10 a.m. Show kicks off at 11:30 a.m. with the aerial portion running from noon to 3 p.m. Many ticket options: <https://air.show/oceancity>.

6TH ANNUAL TUNAS & TIARAS LADIES TUNA TOURNAMENT

Micky Fins Bar & Grill, 12952 Inlet Isle Lane, Ocean City, 4-7 p.m. The public is welcome to watch the weigh-ins, visit tournament vendors, and shop. Tuna tournament exclusively for women. Benefiting Women Supporting Women.

FREE KIDS CRAFT SATURDAYS

Art League of Ocean City, 502 94th St., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Featuring "Welcome Summer Sun Hanger." Guided crafts led by friendly instructors. All supplies provided. Jessica Bauer, development@artleagueofoceancity.org, 410-524-9433

BBQ CHICKEN FUNDRAISER

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 405

Flower St., Berlin, 11 a.m. 1/2 BBQ chicken with 2 sides, roll and drink for \$15 or 1/2 BBQ chicken, roll and drink for \$12. Proceeds benefit St. Paul United Methodist Church Men's Ministry.

ANIME AND MANGA CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. Stop by the library to discuss all things anime and meet like-minded people. Best for ages 12-18 years. 410-524-1818, worcesteriallibrary.org

GOSPELRANZA CONCERT AND DINNER

Bethany United Methodist Church, 8648 Stephen Decatur Highway, Berlin, 4:30 p.m. Features local gospel singers and praise dancers. Meatloaf dinner to follow concert. Cost is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 11 years and younger. Call or text 410-641-2186 to reserve tickets.

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., June 14

OC AIR SHOW

Ocean City Boardwalk from 13th-17th streets, 1601 Atlantic Ave., 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Drop Zone Beach opens at 9 a.m. Flight Line Club beach, at 10 a.m. Show kicks off at 11:30 a.m. with the aerial portion running from noon to 3 p.m. Many ticket options: <https://air.show/oceancity>.

OC CRUZERS CAR SHOW

Somerset Plaza, Somerset Street, Ocean City, 3-6 p.m. Join the OC Cruzers Car Club for a free, family friendly car show. Each show will feature classic cars, custom rides and hot rods. Also, live music or a DJ. <https://www.ocdc.org>

SUNDAES IN THE PARK WITH FIREWORKS

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 7-9 p.m. Featuring "Nicks in Time: The Stevie Nicks Concert Experience." Activities and entertainment for kids, ice cream (available for purchase) and fireworks. <https://www.ococean.com/events/>

BERLIN 2ND SUNDAY ART & VINTAGE MARKET

14 S. Main St., Berlin, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Art and vintage vendors in downtown Berlin. Just a few blocks down from the

Berlin Farmers Market. Sponsored by The Merry Haven and the Town of Berlin Main Street & Arts and Entertainment District.

BERLIN FARMERS MARKET

Sundays (May-October) - Pitts, Commerce and Main streets, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. Producers only market, petting farm (9-11 a.m.), live music. www.TheBerlinFarmersMarket.com

SEWING SEEDS OF LOVE

Sundays - Buckingham Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Main St., Berlin, 10-11 a.m. Youth of all ages 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., June 15

CANCER SURVIVORS DAY CELEBRATION

TidalHealth Richard A. Henson Cancer Institute, Ocean Pines, 11105 Cathage Road, 9 a.m.-noon. Inviting all local cancer survivors to attend a meaningful cancer survivorship event that will include a welcoming reception. 410-912-6939, allie.thompson@tidalhealth.org

STORY TIME: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

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, worcesteriallibrary.org

TOPS OF BERLIN - GROUP #169

TidalHealth Atlantic, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 5-6:30 p.m. Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) is an educational group that promotes weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. <https://www.tops.org/home>

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. If you plan to visit, please Contact: Director: Ludwig692@outlook.com, 410-641-6876 or Membership Coordinator: ocelissa@yahoo.com, 410-641-8050.

OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

Mondays - Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 7-8 p.m. No dues or fees. 410-459-9100

Calendar

Tues., June 16

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

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

CLAY & PLAY
Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 10:30 a.m. Create, squish and play. For ages 2-5 years. 410-957-0878, worcesterlibrary.org

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

KID'S CARNIVAL
Fish Tales Bar and Grill, 2107 Herring Way, Ocean City, 12-4 p.m. Tickets will be \$1 each or 30 tickets for \$20. Bounce houses, big slides, dunk tank, pony rides, vendors, carnival games with prizes and Carnival food. Benefiting Special Olympics. www.ococean.com

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

TOY STORY MANIA
Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Join in for crafts inspired by Woody, Bo, Jessie and all your favorite Toy Story characters. For families. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

BEACH HEROES-OC
Tuesdays - Volunteer beach clean-up group meets from 9-10 a.m., year-round. Trash bags, grabbers 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



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
Ten local graduating high school seniors were awarded scholarships after competing in the 2025-2026 Most Valuable Student Scholarship competition sponsored by the Elks National Foundation and Ocean City Elks Lodge #2645. Scholarships were presented to, April Bondurant, \$1,000; Kirby Bounds, \$2,000; Allyson Coleman, \$2,000; Olympia Gill, \$2,000; Lilah Johnstone, \$2,500; Lilly Karvoski, \$1,000; Luciana Russo, \$1,000; and Eleanor Zollinger, \$2,500. All are graduates of Stephen Decatur High School. Also receiving scholarships were Camryn House of Worcester Prep, \$3,000, and Mia Tritapoe of Sussex Technical High School, \$1,000. The awards were announced by Pat Flynn and Dave Poore, chairpersons of the local Lodge Scholarship Committee. Pictured, from left, are Flynn, co-chair of Ocean City Elks Lodge #2645 and Stephen Decatur scholarship winners Russo, Karvoski, Bondurant, Coleman, Zollinger, Gill, and Johnstone. Not pictured is Kirby Bounds.

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

ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE
Tuesdays - Lewes Senior Center, 32083 Janice Rd. Lewes, DE, 7-9 p.m. Experienced dancers and others interested in watching or learning more are welcome. No partner required. Info: TangobytheBeach.com.

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS
Tuesdays - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:15 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., June 17

MOVIES ON THE BEACH
Carousel Oceanfront Hotel & Condos, 11700 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 8:30 p.m. Featured movie is "Hoppers." Free movies on the beach every Wednesday, June 3-Aug. 12. Bring blankets, chairs and snacks. Movie lineup: https://www.ococean.com/things-to-do/free-family-fun/.

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

whether you're an expert or want to refresh your skills. Beginners welcome. 410-208-4014, worcesterlibrary.org

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP
Snow Hill 50plus Center, 4767 Snow Hill Road, 1 p.m. Hosted by the Worcester County Health Department. The group meets the third Wednesday of each month. 410-632-1100, ext. 1113

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
TidalHealth John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Cancer Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 1-2 p.m. Hosted by Women Supporting Women. The group meets the third Wednesday of each month. 410-548-7880

CREATIVE JOURNALING
Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 401 Fifth St., 2 p.m. Craft a journal as unique as you are — and leave inspired to keep writing. Limit 15. Registration required: 410-957-0878. 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

ZUMBA PLUS!!
Wednesdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 4:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com

ONGOING EVENTS

DINOSAUR DIORAMA CONTEST
Throughout June, pick up a kit from any Worcester County library branch (while supplies last), or make one at home using your own materials. All dioramas must be submitted by the end of day June 22 for display and voting. Dioramas should be no larger than a shoe box. Age divisions include 6-11 years and 12-18 years. 410-632-5622

LAMBEOSAURUS LOOSE IN THE LIBRARY
Pocomoke library, 401 5th Street, Unit 100, Pocomoke City (temporary location), throughout June. Can you find the lambeosaurus loose in the library and answer the question he has for you? Answer correctly and be entered into the prize drawing. Different hiding places and questions each week. For families. 410-957-0878

TAKE AND MAKE: PERLER BEADS
Ocean City library, 10003 Coastal Highway, throughout June. Stop by the library to grab a special monthly take-home craft while supplies last. For families. 410-524-1818

MD 250 EVENT OC READS: 'A MERCY' BY TONI MORRISON
Ocean City library, 10003 Coastal Highway, June 1-30. Pick up a copy of this month's read, then come in before the end of the month to share your impressions and enter the drawing to win free books. 410-524-1818

RUNAWAY BRIDE WALKING TOUR
Stroll down Main Street in Berlin and visit the shops where Ike fell in love with Maggie. Visit the Atlantic Hotel where many of the scenes were filmed. Map of filming locations: https://berlinmainstreet.com/Runaway-Bride-Walking-Tour.pdf.

Snapshots



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

LIONS CLUB SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Berlin Lions Club recently announced its annual student scholarship winners from Stephen Decatur High School. The winners were, from left, Samatha Whitehead, Amy Holland, Zoe Hinkle and Brooke Cathell.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MASONIC LODGE WINNER

Evergreen Lodge Worshipful Master Michael Savage presents Adelaide Dawkins, a 2026 graduate of Stephen Decatur, with Masonic Charities of Maryland and Evergreen Lodge scholarships.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

DESIGN WINNER SELECTED

Worcester Technical High School students in Mrs. Sosa's graphic design class were asked to create a t-shirt design for the 18th Annual Peach Festival at the Taylor House Museum. Of the 17 entries, Felix Slaughter's design was chosen as the winner and will be sold as a limited-edition run at this year's festival. Felix was awarded with a certificate and Amazon gift card and will be honored at this year's Peach Festival's opening ceremony. Pictured, from left, are Laverne Cray, assistant principal; Alex Sosa, digital media arts teacher; Slaughter; and Heather Nottingham of the Taylor House Museum.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

OC LIONS AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ocean City Lions Club presented four scholarships to Stephen Decatur High School students. Pictured, from left, are Lily Fogle, OC Lion Laurie Chetelat and Isaiah Rodriguez. Not pictured are Madeline Pfaf and Leo President Ivy Chen. The OC Lions have awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships over the past 10 years.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEADERS

The Worcester County Historical Society announced its new officers and board members during their annual spring meeting in Pocomoke. Pictured, front row from left, are Doretha Whittington, president; Cara Downey, vice president; and Roxie Dennis, board member. Back, from left, are past president Jefferson Moak; board members Karen Neville; Erin Scott; Barry Laws; Bunk Mann; treasurer Teron Lewis; Jeff Bacon, and Kim Jones.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

GUEST SPEAKER

On May 27, retired U.S. Marine Mark DeLancey, founder and executive director of Together We Thrive, an organization dedicated to supporting the LGBTQ+ community on the Eastern Shore, spoke to the Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City Kiwanis Club. DeLancey discussed the vital role of inclusive community networks and how Together We Thrive is building a more vibrant future for the Delmarva Peninsula. Pictured are DeLancey, left, with Kiwanis President-Elect Seth Thatcher.

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Call **410-723-6397** or email
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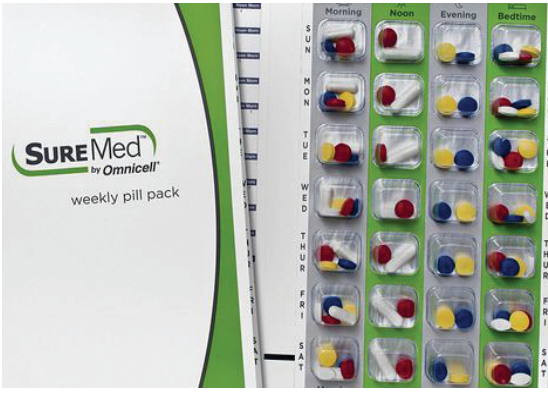
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