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Austin Purnell appointed to planning com.

Audience cries foul during raucous council meeting

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Awkward. That's the only way to describe one of the more rancorous Berlin Mayor and Council meetings to be held in some time, as residents gathered Monday night to challenge the appointment of Austin Purnell to the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, and At-large Councilmember Thom Gulyas argued vigorously with the opponents.



Austin Purnell

Purnell, a Realtor in the coastal area, is the son of Troy Purnell, the District 1 councilman and a real estate developer.

Purnell, 31, was sworn in as the planning commission member after
See WILLIAMS Page 2

Board updated on work in progress

Viola says admin. pursuing reimbursement from SBA on virus-related expenses

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) OPA General Manager John Viola this week provided updates on a number of projects and processes that are underway.

Viola said Accounting Manager Julia Johnson is documenting expenses related to coronavirus that would be reimbursed through the Small Business Administration.

"Anything specific to covid would go against this grant up to \$171,000," he said. "We're not going to get anywhere near there."

Covered expenses would include items such as hand-sanitizing stations, fees to contract covid-related cleaning companies and related costs



The former craft club building near White Horse Park is slated for demolition this month.

for amenities.

Viola said the grant funds are separate from Paycheck Protection Program the OPA was previously awarded.

"The type of expenses covered are any administration expenses, testing and contract tracing or economic

support with anything pertaining to cost incurred to manage covid," he said.

Viola said roughly \$40,000 in expenses is documented to this point.

"We're working to qualify the expenses we've incurred so far, as well
See OPA Page 6

Berlin voters will decide on mayor, council next Tues.

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Berlin voters will choose a mayor and three councilmembers to fill the District 2, District 3 and at-large council seats next Tuesday.

In one of the largest races in town's history, five mayoral candidates: incumbent Gee Williams, Councilman Zackery Tyndall, Ron Bireley, Jennifer Allen and William "Bill" Todd, two District 3 candidates: Shaneka Nichols and Dan Packey, two at-large candidates: Jay Knerr and Tony Weeg, and one District 2
See BERLIN Page 7

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Williams says Purnell only one to submit letter

Continued from Page 1

the Town Council's 3-1 vote in favor of his appointment, despite complaints from the crowd about possible conflicts of interest involving him as a commission member and his father as a council member.

Troy Purnell recused himself from the discussion of his son's appointment and the subsequent vote.

"I'm very grateful for the mayor and council," Purnell said after the meeting.

After the much "spirited debate," Purnell added that he is excited to serve the town as a planning commission member at the next meeting on Oct. 14.

Among the leading critics of the move Monday night, James Meckley of Buckingham Road condemned the council for the "blatant choice that is in very much conflict with what the Planning Board and the Zoning Board and the Town Council do together."

"I just feel that it would be a conflict of interest for him to be on a [commission] that deals with annexations and building and so forth while his father is still on Town Council, which will make the ultimate decision," Meckley continued.

Purnell said he anticipated some backlash to his nomination because of his business with his father.

"Yes, I do work with my father. I work for my father. I work for the family business," Purnell said. "And I am in the last couple years starting to assist him and play an integral role in our development projects more than I had in the past years."

He added that his family is not the only one developing in Berlin.

Before the meeting, Purnell called the mayor and four council members for support. All said yes, but one.

"I've been a member of this council for a while now, and I have never been

contacted by a candidate for a commission prior to Mr. Purnell," said Councilman Dean Burrell. "He brings expertise to this commission."

Councilman Elroy Brittingham also said Purnell is the only candidate he has ever endorsed for a commission.

"It meant a lot," Purnell said. "I'd say it was kind of validating in a way given all the criticism."

Five ethics complaints were filed with the Ethics Commission regarding Purnell's nomination for Planning and Zoning Commission by Sept. 25.

Meckley asked for Purnell's name to be resigned or to table his appointment until after the Ethics Commission reviewed the complaints on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

Mayor Gee Williams countered that there were no ethical conflicts regarding Purnell's appointment.

"If you have to basically know no one or have no affiliations, then I question if you're really suited to make decisions on behalf of the community," Williams said.

Williams added that following John Barrett's resignation from the planning commission, he asked those interested in serving on the commission to submit a letter about their experience and thoughts about Berlin. After several months, Williams received only one letter – from Purnell.

Kim Holloway of Davis Court filed one of the ethics complaints.

"I just feel like out of all the people, possibilities that could be approached, to sit on this commission to make a selection – and I don't need to go through the history – of a son of a builder and developer, who work together in business, who live in this town, who have many projects on the horizon, who can ethically sit on a commission," Holloway said. "I don't care how many times you say you're going to recuse yourself and you're

going to be impartial ... at the end of the day, ethically, it stinks."

Meckley and Holloway said they spoke to many Berlin residents and business owners, who also opposed Purnell's appointment.

Although Gulyas is a business owner in Berlin, Holloway did not ask for his opinion because of his "arrogance," she said.

"You're the same way. You and your husband," Gulyas said. "I put up with you people for six damn years. I'm sick and tired of it ... this is my meeting, not yours. Not yours. Not yours. Not yours."

Monday was Gulyas' last meeting as at-large councilman as he is moving outside of the town limits. Tony Weeg and Jay Knerr are running to fill his seat.

"You know, Kim, every damn time you've come to these meetings, all you want to do is bitch and complain," Gulyas said. "You've been here three times."

Bob Palladino of Buckingham Road stated his ethical concerns of Purnell's appointment as well.

Councilman Zackery Tyndall moved for the council to table the nomination until after the municipal election.

"I think that we should wait until the second meeting of October to let the new council take office and evaluate the candidate," Tyndall said. "I don't think this is something that we should be voting on when there's a whole new council that's going to be coming in."

The vote was 3-1 for postponing Purnell's appointment.

"Frankly, I'm excited about Berlin and Berlin's future," Purnell said.

He has lived in Berlin since he was 8 years old, saying he has witnessed the positive impact of dedicated local business owners on the town's prosperity.

In addition, Purnell was a volunteer firefighter in the Berlin Fire Company from 2010 to 2016.

"That was the first way I served the town. This to me, I just look at [it] as a second way in this season of my life," Purnell said.

Update:

The Berlin Ethics Commission met on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. in closed session to deliberate the five ethics complaints filed by Sept. 25 about Austin Purnell's nomination to the town's Planning and Zoning Commission.

According to the ethics provisions of the town code, the commission had no authority to reverse Purnell's appointment.

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood said the commission did not discover an ethical breach in Purnell's appointment in regard to his relation to Councilman Troy Purnell or his involvement in their family business.

As a commission member, Purnell will submit a financial disclosure statement, including any conflicts of interest, next year, said Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen.

Berlin will seek FEMA grants for stormwater work

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Berlin is seeking grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for future stormwater projects at Nelson Street, Franklin Avenue and Pine Street as well as West Street and Abbey Lane.

Darl Kolar, the project manager at EA Engineering, Science, and Technology Inc., presented the phased implementation approach for both projects to the Berlin Mayor and Council.

"This kind of phased approach is, I believe, like lack of funding," Kolar said. "If we don't get funding from FEMA, then let's, in funding that we have on an annual basis, chip off to phases."

The project at Nelson Street, Franklin Avenue and Pine Street would involve increasing the size of the stormwater pipe, Kolar said.

At this time, the design is substantially complete.

The total cost for construction, permitting and other fees is estimated at \$850,000 based on the completion of the design.

The town has submitted a notice of intent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for \$500,000.

"If the [notice of intent] is accepted, the town will proceed with an application, which is due here in, I think, in No-

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Town seeks FEMA aid for stormwater projects

Continued from Page 2
 vember,” Kolar said. “Again, we’ve applied for this one as well as the West and Abbey, and that funding is based on the expectation that it’s a 25 percent match.”

Kolar said he will also contact the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to split that cost, so the town would only have to match 12.5 percent of the expense.

The funding is targeted for nuisance flooding, not water quality projects, he added.

“You have to demonstrate impact by

cost,” Kolar said. “So, we got to go back and track insurance claims, we got to knock on some doors and get real receipts.”

He said one of the next phases is to contact Verizon about the fiber optic in a concrete duct bank on Pine Street.

“It’s a lift to get that relocated,” Kolar added. “We do not have a firm quote in hand, but we know that has to be done.”

Some sanitary system improvements also have to be made on Pine Street.

The estimated costs for the stormwater projects are based on installing reinforced concrete piping.

“We can consider instead of the concrete pipe to go with galvanized, and as an engineer, I would be okay with that as long as that piping really isn’t exposed to the air,” Kolar said.

The galvanized pipe will rust if it is oxidized, but the concrete pipe will not.

As for the West Street and Abbey Lane project, the estimated total cost is \$1.8 million.

The amount of roadwork, utility work and length and size of concrete pipe increase the cost, Kolar said.

That project has yet to be designed. Therefore, the assessment has been

based on the concept layout.

Kolar said the town is applying for design services in the notice of intent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for \$500,000.

“My thoughts for the design are, we have a small area that I think we can do some water quality improvements,” Kolar said.

If the Federal Emergency Management Agency accepts both notices of intent, Kolar said the town will have to make a decision to pursue both or one project based on the funding it will have to match.



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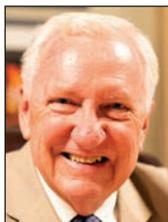
Mayoral candidates address town plans

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) With the Berlin municipal election taking place next Tuesday, the five mayoral candidates provided their opinions and plans about town issues, specifically regarding finances and growth in the area.

What is your professional background and your connection to Berlin?

Geewilliams: I was born and raised in Berlin. My wife, Betsy, and I have lived in the town of Berlin for 46 years. I have spent most of my life here except for the years I attended college and immediately after serving in the U.S. Army Reserve, where I obtained the rank of staff sergeant.



I received my associate degree at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, and then earned my bachelor of science degree in business and journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park.

For 30 years, I enjoyed a career as a local newspaper journalist serving as a reporter, editor and later publisher. Since that time — I served the Maryland State Highway Administration as the community relations director for the nine counties of the Eastern Shore. I also worked a number of years as the marketing and development director for the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore.

For the past 12 years, I have devoted my lifetime of experience to serving as the mayor of Berlin. Prior to that I was on the Berlin Town Council for four years.

I started covering the Berlin Mayor and Council as a reporter and editor in 1971. I have spent a majority of the Monday nights of my life in Town Hall, first reporting on the town of Berlin, and in recent years serving as a town councilman and mayor.

Zackery Tyndall: I was born and

raised in the town of Berlin. I am a homeowner, husband and father. Sixteen years ago, I began a career in public service with the town of Berlin as a cadet in the Berlin Fire Company. Throughout the years, I held positions, including firefighter, EMS lieutenant and paramedic.



I have represented Berlin's residents and business owners as a town councilmember for the past four years. In this capacity, I have taken a fiscally conservative approach regarding spending on services and infrastructure. I have argued against increased property taxes and annexation. I have also worked to improve financial and management accountability.

Other priorities as a councilmember include improved public safety, equity of services throughout the town of Berlin, and greater support of the business community. I hold a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor of science in management and finance from Salisbury University.

Additional education includes receiving a certificate in managing local governance from the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. Through this program, I obtained additional training on municipal management, budgeting, ethics and policy. I am currently the acting assistant director of the Richard A. Henson Medical Simulation Center at Salisbury University.

Ronald Bireley: I was born and raised in the Berlin area and graduated from Stephen Decatur High School. After graduation, I found employment in a local grocery store. I remained with that organization for several years and then enlisted in the United States Army.



I served on active duty for eight

and a half years, of which two years found me deployed in the Republic of South Vietnam. [During my] first tour, my unit was assigned to Dong Ha, just south of the demilitarized zone at what was called the Marine Quadrangle.

On my return to Southeast Asia, I was assigned to the Regional Forces and Popular Forces as an adviser. After I returned to the United States, I received my discharge. At that time, I had attained the rank of captain. I returned to Berlin and secured a position with the same supermarket that I had worked with before my enlistment.

I remained with that firm for a year and then enrolled at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, where I obtained my bachelor of science degree. I then enrolled at the University of Salisbury and obtained my master's degree in education.

Shortly thereafter, I was hired as administrative director for the Town of Berlin. The staff was small at that time, and I was responsible for planning and finance as well. Five and a half years later, I became employed with the Town of Ocean City as the director of finance. I then ran for the council of the town of Berlin to fill the remaining term of the councilmember who moved from the area. I then ran for mayor of the town and was successful in attaining that position. I ran for reelection but was defeated at the polls.

The individual who became mayor shortly thereafter relocated from the area. I was subsequently voted in to the mayor's position by the Town Council to fill the remaining portion of that term. At the conclusion of that term, I was hired by the town to serve as the director of finance.

Jennifer Allen: My husband and I purchased our home in 2015. We became full-time residents in 2016, when we retired. I have 33 years of federal service within the [U.S. Department of Defense]. I was the only civilian department head (head nurse) at the National Naval Medical Center from 1990 to 2009 prior to

changing my position to within hospital administration.

At the time of my retirement, I was the deputy assistant chief of staff at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Besides my 46 years as a registered nurse, I have a [bachelor of science degree] in health care management and a [masters] in quality systems management. The [master's degree] focused on process improvement/redesign, Six Sigma, and project management. With this experience, I was able to work in the transition process of merging an Army and Navy hospital into a Department of Defense facility



The definition of quality is "listening to the voice of the customer." In the case of Berlin, the customer is its citizens. This is where I think the mayor and the council have fallen short. The citizens are speaking, but the mayor and council are not always listening or trying to come up with a compromise that fits everyone.

By attending council meetings (in person/online) I saw a need for a fresh set of eyes and a new voice in Town Hall. Many people tell me about the good old boy network and how some are treated differently than others. I am indebted to no one! I am running for ALL Berlin citizens!

William "Bill" Todd: My connection to Berlin, I guess, started when I was a child. My earliest memory of Berlin is going to work with my dad, when he was glassing surfboards in the early nineties in a little shop right off Main Street. Growing up in this area, I've always loved Berlin for its charm.



I moved here officially about 10 years ago. Professionally, I've worked doing many different things. I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty. I've also been a radio talk show personality, lead guitarist, but as of recently I've been working with Burley Oak Brewing Company and The Globe Gastro Theatre as entertainment director and whatever else needs to be done.

How will you keep taxes stable without growth in town?

Williams: I believe in measured, incremental and sustainable growth for the town of Berlin. Without responsible growth, the citizens of Berlin will face two disturbing alternatives. One would be no increase in taxes ever, which will only guarantee a steady decline in the quality and

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MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 4

availability of town services for all citizens, businesses and property owners. Over time, the cost of services goes up, but does not remain stable or go down.

Or, the second alternative if there is no growth in the supply of homes and apartments availability will stagnate while the demand for those places to live in Berlin will naturally continue to grow.

This will result in an ever-increasing demand for existing residences and the property values and prices of buying homes in our town will become affordable only to the well-to-do. In Berlin, some folks have limited financial means and there also are a few families doing very well financially. Berlin has been, and I trust will continue to be, an overwhelmingly

middle-income town. I would never want our Berlin to be a place only for high income residents and lose our desirability as a classic American small town.

Tyndall: If growth is defined as using vacant land within the existing town limits or rezoning properties, I am not opposed. However, I am opposed to growth and development at the expense of the taxpayers of Berlin. As mayor, I will work with all departments, boards, commissions and organizations like the Berlin Fire Company and Worcester County Public Schools to understand the real impact and cost of our community's growth opportunities.

As a councilmember, I have become increasingly concerned that our property tax base has grown faster

than the personal income of many of our residents. During the proposed 20 percent tax increase, I realized that a change this large would be detrimental to many of our residents and businesses.

Therefore, I presented a path forward that did not involve raising taxes while maintaining services and not cutting jobs. As your next mayor, it is important to keep a close eye on the town's expenses while evaluating alternative revenue opportunities to reduce our town's dependency on property taxes.

One example of an alternative revenue-producing opportunity can be found in one of our neighboring municipalities where a one percent food and beverage tax has been implemented to help offset the cost of Economic and Community Development. I would like to see similar opportunities evaluated by the mayor and council moving forward.

Bireley: I find it desirable to have modest growth in the community. However if commercial or industrial firms were interested in locating in the town, I am of the opinion we should welcome this type of venture. These type of projects provide employment opportunities as well as a lucrative amount of taxes. Obviously, this would also offset the need to raise taxes.

Allen: Why do you think there will be no growth? We have several annexed properties within town that have yet to be developed. What is stopping the owners from developing? One post-annexation property has a "for sale" sign. Development of these properties will bring in revenue, during the building process, subsequent purchase and finally residence.

For example, there is the large area between Old Ocean City Boulevard and Broad Street where there are plans for apartments, townhomes and single-family homes. Another area is the commercial development planned on North Main Street and Route 50 with a proposed hotel and gas station/convenience store. Development of currently annexed properties will ultimately bring growth and tax dollars.

Todd: My approach would be to take a look at where we may be able to cut costs first. Whoever gets elected this year needs to take a very thorough look through all of the contracts the town currently has and every department's expenditures. If there is a dollar to be saved, we need to go that route.

The last thing anybody wants is higher taxes, and I sure would not

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OPA looks at virus-related costs

Continued from Page 1

as any additional expenses," he said. "We think we're going to be able to substantiate \$60,000-\$70,000."

Other items qualifying for reimbursement are Plexiglas partitions, facemasks and other personal protection equipment.

"That is in addition to the PPP, which we fully utilized," he said.

Viola said Public Works and CPI Director Eddie Wells is overseeing the removal of the former craft building in White Horse Park.

"We are going to be taking down the old craft building," he said. "Eddie and his team at public works have been prepping that building and getting ready for the demolition."

Viola said the demolition work should be completed by mid-October contingent on permit approval from Worcester County.

"Eddie has been working with the county as far as the paving and we'll get extra parking spots," he said.

Public works is also preparing to launch autumn leaf removal work beginning next month through years end.

"They'll be starting to pickup bags of loose leaves on the 23 of November," he said. "We'll be opening our yard at that time for leaves and yard

debris."

Viola said pickup of bagged leaves should be completed by Dec. 18

"The pickup of loose leaves with the vacuum truck will continue until we have been through twice," he said. "We're working on an agreement for the truck with Ocean City."

Viola also noted the succession planning process for the general manager and direct report positions are underway after an initial application date of Sept. 18.

"That wasn't a deadline [but] more of the initial date," he said.

Viola said the OPA Board of Directors is on the verge of vetting feedback on succession planning paperwork from Sibson Consulting, which is a subsidiary of the Segal Group,

"Right now they're in draft form and we have asked for the consulting firm to give them guidance," he said. "The board just needs to act on that now and will probably review this week."

Viola said to this point one internal candidate has applied with two others expressing interest.

"Anybody that wants to from our team can apply," he said. "I definitely have had one person put in, but it's not closed out, if anything it's just starting."

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 6
 want to do that either. It also seems that you'd be hard pressed to find anybody wanting much more growth to our town. It's a delicate position to be in for sure. I think tourism does great things for us and with some changes in the way things are done now in regard to short term rentals, I think that could really blossom and everyone could benefit from it.

Would you support any annexations into town? If so, what?

Williams: I have supported annexations into Berlin in the past and will continue to do so when it means putting the right things in the right places. Berlin needs both responsible residential and commercial development. I do not believe annexing property into our town limits should allow anything to be put anywhere.

I believe strategic annexations along Berlin's three major growth corridors are right for our community. I consider our town's corridors for future growth to be U.S. Route 50, U.S. Route 113 and state Route 346 (Old Ocean City Blvd) that runs east to west between both of these major highways. All three of these roads already are enveloped by existing town borders and are prime for appropriately placed commercial or residential growth.

Regardless of who serves as our county commissioners, now or in the future, if Berlin does not annex these immediately contiguous areas then Worcester County is not likely to turn down the development and corresponding property tax revenue they would receive, for potential growth that is contiguous to our current town borders.

If the town of Berlin does not take

responsibility for the type and extent of growth that we believe is good for our residents and property owners, then those decisions legally default to the Worcester County Commissioners. I would much rather that Berlin's appointed and elected officials continue to make those judgments to annex, or not, any property into our town.

Tyndall: As an elected official, it is my responsibility to represent the interests of the people of Berlin. With Berlin's current financial position, many of my constituents have voiced their concerns about the impact of annexation on town services.

Without a clear understanding of the cost associated with each annexation and the concerns of those I represent, I have voted against every annexation brought before the mayor and council.

As mayor, I will evaluate each annexation request to determine if there is a better path forward for the people of Berlin. For example, the Town Code allows us to extend water and sewer services to properties without annexation. This will allow the Town of Berlin to charge developers a premium for tapping into our water and sewer services while eliminating the cost of providing other services to these properties.

As your next mayor, I will also work with our planning commission to evaluate our infill growth potential and look at up-zoning/rezoning properties already in town limits. If we move forward with annexation, we must provide a full analysis of services provided to these new properties. We also need to involve the Berlin Fire Company and Worcester County Public Schools to better understand each new annexation's po-

tential impact.

Bireley: The town does not have an abundance of undeveloped land within the corporate limits and, therefore, is forced to look at properties bordering on the community for larger ventures.

Even if there is no developer currently seeking to locate at this time, it would be prudent for the town to consider annexation in order to be able to control what would eventually locate on that site.

If a property owner would like to develop one of these properties, he could develop the property under Worcester County guidelines and the town would have little control of what type of business could locate there. However, when I was mayor, I was almost successful in securing a hotel to

be located on the town boundary.

Such a facility would not be unattractive but would also provide a tidy sum in the amount of taxes rendered to the community. In addition, this type of facility would provide a form of revenue called Room Tax. A very nice addition to the tax base. Even today, this type of business would be desirable.

Allen: Before I can support further annexations, I need to have several questions answered. First, we need a full review of the water and sewerage capacity. We do not currently have the funds to increase the size of the wastewater facility. Next, we need the town people to have more say and not be dictated by the local good old boys' network and the

See MAYORAL Page 8

Berlin voters go to polls Tues.

Continued from Page 1
 candidate, Jack Orris, will appear on the ballot.

The town did not receive any write-in candidates by the 5 p.m. deadline on Tuesday.

Amid coronavirus concerns, town officials are encouraging absentee voting for the municipal election.

"Voters wishing to vote absentee do not have to provide a reason such as illness or travel. They only need to submit an application and then will be sent a ballot when their application is approved," said Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen.

Voters have until Friday at 5 p.m. to submit applications for absentee voting in person at Town Hall, 10 William Street.

Polling places will be open on election day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Voters in Districts 1 and 2 will vote

at Buckingham Presbyterian Church at 20 S. Main Street and Voters in Districts 3 and 4 will vote at the Berlin Police Department at 129 Decatur Street.

According to Bohlen, at a minimum face coverings and social distancing will be required at polling places.

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MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 7
county.

I agree with [Ron] Cascio's comments in the recent Dispatch and [Bayside] Gazette articles that the town needs to have a proper discussion regarding growth. And I quote, "It is true that we have the water, power and sewer, but we also have some power."

If we are unable to do this in a public forum, perhaps we can survey the community members. I would also like to investigate what properties are available within the town that have yet to be developed before we go out and annex more. We should look to develop areas where we already have water and sewer lines. Annexation should benefit the town, not just the developer.

Todd: This is something that I'd take on a case-by-case basis. I know that nobody wants any annexation, but I think it's important to understand that sometimes it's not such an ugly thing. Especially if it means protecting what you have. It's certainly something that we need to make a concerted effort to discuss with the residents and make sure everyone understands the advantages and disadvantages. That being said, I'm a man of the people. If the people don't want annexation, it won't happen.

How are you educating yourself about the town's current financial situation before the election? What is your plan to correct the town's financial situation, with or without a tax increase?

Williams: The mayor and council took the decisive and hard action last year to increase the property tax rate and the water and sewer rates to correct the town's financial situation.

The idea that the town of Berlin is in some sort of financial crisis is simply balderdash. The actions to increase Berlin taxes and water/wastewater fees were taken to stop the drain on the town's general fund reserves.

Berlin has practiced the policy for the past several years to set aside reserve funds in two ways. Assigned general funds and restricted funds so the money is available when it is needed for town projects and improvements or to meet financial obligations.

The purpose is to transfer appropriate funding for major projects and community needs so that money is available for public projects when it is needed. The current balance of both assigned general funds and restricted funds is \$5.6 million.

Berlin also has accounts for re-

stricted slot revenues, impact fees, health care and disaster recovery and annual debt reduction that totals an additional \$1.8 million. The mayor and council began discussions this summer to establish a debt reduction schedule of about \$300,000 per year.

This fall, the next step is for the mayor and council to decide on a reserve policy that would repay the money the town borrowed from itself from the general fund. This internal borrowing was to support the sewer fund in past years, but that stopped last year with the passage of our current sewer and water rates. The general fund reserve balance will grow, not diminish, in the current budget year.

Tyndall: The mayor's responsibility is to work with department heads to create a balanced budget and set the tax rate. It is then the council's job to review, recommend any changes and ultimately approve or disapprove the budget.

Over the past four years as a councilmember, it has been my job to actively participate in the town's budgeting process. I have recommended cost-saving measures without cutting town services or jobs.

Using my firsthand experience with the town's finances and my educational background in business and

finance, I can help lead the town in a financially responsible way. As mayor, I will use a modified version of zero-based budgeting to help identify cost-saving measures and build a cost management culture across all town departments. At this time, I do not see a need to increase taxes.

Bireley: Most of my knowledge as to the current financial situation of the town of Berlin has been obtained from local newspaper articles. However, my previous experience causes me to believe there exists a good deal of fat in the current budget that could be eliminated and would help to defer the need for a tax increase. In fact, I am so sure of this opinion that I have promised the people of Berlin a tax reduction.

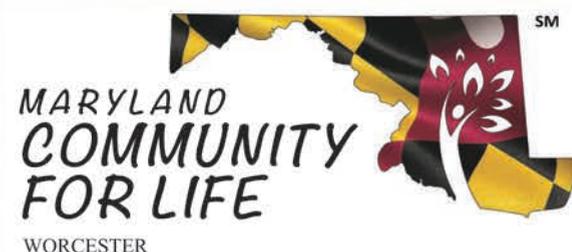
Allen: Part 1: Reviewing the 2020 work sessions/council minutes/draft budget online and following up with reading news articles on these topics.

Part 2: I have been asked by many citizens where I think the "money has gone." I think the town wants information and may not know how to get it. I will be doing an extensive review of the 2021 budget to determine what is allocated and if there are items that can be eliminated or reduced.

I plan to have a basic monthly report sent to all citizens on town ex-

See MAYORAL Page 25

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- People are asking, "Where are all the tax \$\$ going?"
- IT IS TIME to do a full financial review!
- How were the \$\$ spent for the past 12 years?
- There needs to be transparency from Town Hall.
- I CAN BE YOUR EYES AND VOICE IN THIS PROCESS!

WHO WAS WATCHING THE BUDGET
 WHEN THE SEWER FUND NEEDED
 ADDITIONAL MONEY TO MEET EXPENSES?



Photo of seal taken at the Town of Berlin Treated Effluent Irrigation Facility, Pineset Crossing Road.

Sewer fund balance borrowed from the general fund ending FY June 30, 2019:¹

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Prior balance | \$ 1,176,861 |
| Borrowed during FY 2015 | 526,608 |
| Borrowed during FY 2016 | 208,773 |
| Borrowed during FY 2017 | 859,078 |
| Borrowed during FY 2018 | 612,241 |
| Total at end of FY 2019 | \$ 3,383,561 |

Reference:
 1: Information from Berlin Town Council Agends, July 27, 2020, agenda item 5 labeled Memo from Finance Director.

- ⇒ Why weren't the sewer fees adjusted when this was happening, rather than draining our general fund?
- ⇒ Do you think interim budget reports and action by the Mayor/Council were indicated in this situation?

Berlin council candidates discuss goals

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) The candidates running for Berlin Town Council provide their opinions and plans to improve the town's finances and transparency with the community before the Oct. 6 election.

Can you briefly provide your professional background and your connection to Berlin?

Jay Knerr for at-large council seat: My name is Jay Knerr and I am running for the Berlin Town Council at-large seat in the upcoming election on Oct. 6.

I have called Berlin my home for the last 20 years. From the moment I came to this area, I knew that this was the place I wanted to raise my family. I currently own The Kite Loft in Ocean City along with my wife, Mary Lynn. We raised our daughter, Casey, here and recently she graduated with high honors from Georgetown University.

I have been a very involved member of our community serving as president of the Ocean City Chamber

of Commerce, president of the Ocean City Development Corporation, Berlin Board of Zoning Appeals, Ocean City Paramedic Foundation, Atlantic General Hospital Board of Trustees, Finance Committee for the AGH Hospital and chairman of the Worcester County Planning Commission.

This experience has more than prepared me for a seat on the Berlin Town Council. I understand budgets, I understand the complexities of town government, and I believe my leadership skills will be invaluable on the council.

I sincerely hope that you will consider voting for me on Oct. 6. My record of experience, leadership skills and ability to problem solve will serve this town well. To request a yard sign or to make a donation to my campaign please visit www.jayknerr.com.

If you would like to discuss issues pertaining to Berlin, please call me at 410-726-2309. I would be happy to hear your concerns or ideas on how we can move Berlin forward.

Tony Weeg for at-large council seat: My full name is Anthony Tobias "Tony" Weeg. I am a retired web programmer, and currently, a photographer and cinematographer who shoots locally, but also travels

the world capturing all sorts of projects from weddings to commercials.

I have lived on the Eastern Shore for 38 years. I am the son of a father who is a (Ret.) Lt. colonel in the Army, and a mother who is a technology coach and lifelong educator. I was raised with a strong moral compass and a diehard sense of compassion and goodwill for everyone.



I am a perpetual student and read incessantly. I am a traveler and an adventurer who has never met a stranger, and I always love a good conversation about deep topics.

I have enjoyed Berlin's coming of age as a frequent visitor over the last two decades and finally found the perfect spot to raise our family and eventually retire on Bay Street over two and a half years ago. My connections to Berlin are almost as long as my time here on the shore — almost.

Many of the townspeople have my signs in their yard — including many lifers, and they have welcomed my family and me with open arms and hearts since day one. And since then we've met many more amazing people — further solidifying our choice to

move not only to Berlin but to Bay Street. Our neighbors and neighborhood on Bay Street are something special to us, just like many other little pockets of this place.

Jack Orris for District 2 council seat: My professional background includes work in customer service, operations and office management. All of those jobs have given me skills in public speaking, management and working with people of all backgrounds and experiences. I've also been a resident of Berlin for 14 years.



Shaneka Nichols for District 3 council seat: I am native of Berlin. My family has lived in Briddeltown since the 1860s. After graduating college with a degree in English and a minor in communications, I married and did one year of service with Americorps. After which, my husband and I returned to Berlin to raise a family.



I have worked in the commercial insurance industry and maintained my license [as well as] owned a small business in the town of Berlin for over four years. I am currently employed with Worcester County Public Schools and have worked in education for a more than 13 years.

Dr. Dan Packey for District 3 council seat: I am a casual employee (sessional lecturer) of Curtin University and The University of Chile. I was the Head of Department and the Director for the Master of Science in Mineral and Energy Economics at Curtin University (Australia).

I was the Head of the Economics and Finance Department for the Gulf University for Science and Technology (Kuwait). I worked as the Director of Market Research and Market Intelligence for the International Copper Association (whose members comprised 80 percent of the world's copper) and managed the research for 29 internationally located offices around the world.

I have consulted/or worked for the World Bank (Sub Saharan Africa Program), Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Kenyan Ministers Mineral Information Program), OXFAM (Mozambique Energy Economics Program), U.S. National Renewable Energy Labora-



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TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

tory, the U.S. Oakridge National Laboratory, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy and was their Program Manager for the Countries Studies Program – Green House Gas Mitigation Strategy, District of Columbia Public Service Commission (Sr. Energy Economist for Integrated Resource Planning).

I have published in the areas of integrated resource planning, regional economic multiplier impacts, the proper evaluation of renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, rare earths market structure, hydroelectric combined cycle technology, unconventional hydrocarbon economics, the optimization between mitigation and adaptation in climate change strategies and unconventional risk issues.

I have taught and/or conducted educational seminars and executive training in the Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Chile, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Mexico, Mozambique, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand and the U.S.

I made our last move (and retired sort of) to Berlin so that I and my wife could live close to our daughters and grandchildren and enjoy the area. One of my better ideas.

How are you educating yourself about the town's current financial situation before the election? What is your plan to correct the town's financial situation, with or without a tax increase?

Knerr: I have thoroughly reviewed the town's budget in detail. I have worked with extremely large budgets in both my business and in the various boards I have served on, so I have a clear understanding of the budget process. In addition, I have spoken with some members of the town's council, the mayor, and the town administrator regarding Berlin's financial situation.

Budgeting takes careful planning to avoid large tax increases like the one we received in 2019. It was that tax increase which prompted me to run for this council seat. Like so many of you, I was extremely upset as to how it was handled.

Budgeting is all about planning and keeping the town's spending in check. We certainly need to look at any cost-cutting measures we can apply to the various departments but more importantly we need to plan out five years in advance.

A long-term budget plan is simply a tool that will help us take Berlin to the next level. My commitment to the residents of Berlin is that I will read it line by line and make appropriate recommendations to hold the line on our tax rate. Large increases like the one we had in 2019 are simply unac-

ceptable.

Weeg: First of all, I have an extensive business background having grown two of my own successful businesses and been a part of many start-ups over the last 20 years. I understand how to balance a budget and how to ensure that expenses don't exceed revenue, but most importantly, how to make efficient dollars. I have also pored over Berlin's budget and, like most of us, have discovered some things I would like to look further into.

Additionally, I have spoken with some knowledgeable individuals in Berlin with a keen eye on the budget, as well as opened dialogues with current council members and committee members to learn as much as I can about what goes on behind the scenes.

Those conversations have led to hard questions, tough answers and things I was not expecting, like the fact that council members are given only annual financial reports and that Berlin does not have a reserve policy.

One shocking thing I heard was this: another tax hike is "inevitable" and "just a matter of time." I like to think that nothing is inevitable and that we just need to get creative. As a councilman, it will be my job to help the town get past the financial mistakes of our past and start proceeding cautiously with an eye toward economic and financial efficiency and stability. We must establish a prudent reserve policy that follows the best accounting practices. We need to stop kicking the can down the road for our children to fix.

Orris: I've been attending [mayor and council] meetings regularly for the past five years and have continually asked questions of our town administrator(s) regarding the budget process and details within — I've also in the past emailed suggested ideas for possible opportunities to save money to the [mayor and council].

With me on the council, you will have someone who scrutinizes the budget line by line and will always look for opportunities to save first throughout the budget process. My plan is to first look at the budget process itself, then dive right into the "nitty gritty" and see the what, where, who, and why. I do not feel at this point a tax increase is necessary.

Nichols: I have spent some time going over the annual fiscal budgets and comparing them [with] the annual audit fiscal budgets and asked questions of several current council members along with a few residents with some background in finance for better understanding.

I would like to start actively shopping the city contract bids and take a
See TOWN COUNCIL Page 12

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TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 11
 close look at the budget for areas within that could be cut. We should also limit the town's spending and continue to search out applicable grants to offset costs.

Packey: I am pouring through current and past issue of newspapers, internet articles and social media content. I am responsibly talking with town residents, whose opinions I respect.

I think that we first look at the current budget and try to make it as efficient as possible, trim it as best we can. Then, we look at how contracts are managed and the bidding mechanism. This is done in an effort to have the same level of services we are used to but at the lowest cost.

We should look and examine the available government grants and take advantage of them, where they make sense. Lastly, if necessary, we review the budget for items that could be spread out over longer periods. That way, we still engage the need but do it over a longer time period with less costs incurred for each time period.

Would you support any annexations into town? If so, what?

Knerr: Growth in any community

takes smart planning. We need to decide as a community, do we want to annex more land area. Should we advocate for more infill development into lands within the Berlin town limits? When any annexation request comes before the mayor and Town Council we need to ask questions like: Do we have enough water and sewer capacity? Will the increase place a heavy burden on existing services like fire, EMS, trash removal and electric? Will the town benefit from acquiring the additional land area?

We all know that annexation can bring in additional tax dollars to the town. That said, Berlin has a great deal of land within the town limits that could easily be developed without having to increase services. That should be encouraged before we continually annex the surrounding lands and lose the charm that currently Berlin offers.

Any annexation should be on a case-by-case policy. It must be a viable project that makes sense for the town and not just because a developer wants it. The [Berlin Planning Commission] could poll the Berlin residents as to how they envision the future of Berlin. Show them what is at stake and the cost associated with growth. We are all stakeholders in this community. So, it is up to us to

determine what the Berlin of the future will look like.

Weeg: Any annexation must first demonstrate how it fits into the town as a whole with an honest assessment of how that annexation will affect the town, not just in the next year, but in the next five years, and 10 years, and 20 years, including the financial costs associated with how annexation will affect all town departments and services, from fire and EMS to road maintenance and trash collection. This data needs to come from the town, not from the developer.

We need to have public hearings so that the townspeople can ask questions about a potential annexation. Additionally, every annexation should go to a referendum paid for by the developer. In this way, the decision to increase not only the size of the town, but also its population, can be made by the people of Berlin, and not by less than a handful of elected officials.

This also brings up a very important point and that is we need to rethink our comprehensive plan and bring it up to speed rather than just changing the date on it and moving forward. We need to inventory what we can grow inside the town limits first, plan our green spaces well and

work with farmers and landowners to protect our agricultural and woodland buffers.

Orris: I support reasonable and responsible growth for our town — which is why we need to refer to the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is a living document and we should really look at it annually — maybe not with a full overhaul—but we should accept constructive review any time. As we approach the next review, I think that is going to be a great opportunity to look at what we have, where are opportunities for reasonable and responsible growth and how do we want our town to look moving forward.

Nichols: I would suggest that before annexing new properties we look at locations within the town that could be developed to meet the growing needs of the community.

Packey: It would depend on the nature and quality of the proposed annexation. Taking into consideration any additional costs to electric, sewer and water utilities as a result of the annexation, I think if an annexation was cost-effective, looked profitable and maintained the spirit and quality of Berlin, I would consider it. What we don't want is: growth for



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TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

growth sake and [to] damage the special nature of Berlin, both to the residents and tourists.

Do you believe communication and transparency with the public, especially regarding finances, should be improved? If you do, how would you do it?

Knerr: We need to do a better job of communicating the decisions we make as a council to the citizens of Berlin. Hidden agendas have no place in a town such as ours. I am a huge proponent of using technology to improve communication and transparency.

We can start by having a video system to record all the council meetings. One that can show any documents presented during the meetings. Facebook Live was a good start, but it is simply not good enough. Taking advantage of all social media outlets will go a long way to keeping citizens informed. Social media information should be reviewed and screened for accuracy prior to it being sent out.

Forums [should be held] outside of the council meetings on key topics that we face in Berlin to gather public input. One such forum could be a detailed explanation of how money flows thru the various departments or an information session on explaining the town's budget in advanced of it being approved. The key here is to always allow for two-way communication. It would clearly demonstrate we are listening as a council and value the residents' input. Making information quick and easy to find on our website is a top priority. Transparency and communication are paramount in a government setting.

Weeg: Communication and transparency with the public are highly important. And there [is] media available for us to facilitate the transfer of this information from live-streaming all council and committee meetings to sharing documents live via teleconference.

I am not saying that the current administration has not made things publicly available, but I believe we can do more. We can do more by making sure that all people have access to this public information, not just the ones with access via the internet. Too many townspeople feel like decisions are always on them like a tidal wave, and they feel they have no say early on. My goal is to open those lines of communication in ways we've never seen.

I am very well-versed in all things "tech" and, therefore, look very much forward to helping the town's intrinsic capabilities with regard to communication and transparency, specifically through technology. I know I can do this because I can do it

myself. I can also help the town review technology-based contracts as well as marketing contracts. This is the world I live in daily.

With regard to financial reports, I believe the townspeople should be privy to the same information the [mayor and council] would receive on a new quarterly basis if not more frequently. There's no need for a surprise expense to hurt us. A reserve can prevent this. There's also no need to purchase large items without a lot more scrutiny than in times past.

Orris: I do. That's why I always ask questions to make sure I have all the pertinent information in front of me before I make a decision. As far as improved communication, one thing the administration is working on is a quarterly report for the council. Not only would I hope to see a monthly report, I'd love to review those reports and then develop a mechanism that gives a "snapshot" of the budget throughout the budget year, perhaps through a newsletter or electronic means for the residents.

Nichols: Communications is key in running any organization and transparency is necessary. We should have all meetings held in council chambers broadcast publicly for the residents to access even if they are not able attend. The town website should also be updated and more user-friendly, so residents can easily locate documents that have been discussed during the meetings.

Packey: Yes. I would continue the use of the newspapers, social media, town website, increase the amount of Zoom meetings and hold special information exchange meetings — especially during the times of major expenditures. The town has the right to know how its money is being spent.

What level of the unrestricted fund balance, or the reserves, do you believe should be maintained in the general fund for generally accepted accounting purposes (GAAP) and budgetary purposes? What is your plan to increase the reserves fund to that amount?

Knerr: Establishing a reserve fund is simply smart planning. Currently, the Berlin Town Council is reviewing a reserve fund policy. Establishing a policy of two to three months is ideal, and it is recommended by [Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)]. This is a goal we certainly need to work toward.

These emergency reserves are just that, for emergency use only, when some unforeseen situation arises. Issues such as road repair from storm

See TOWN COUNCIL Page 22

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On-Line Only Auction – Millville, DE!

Personal Property located at: 35013 Tybee Street, Millville, DE 19967
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Personal Property Preview: Monday October 12th from 5 PM – 7 PM

On-Line Only Auction – Eden, MD!

Personal Property located at: 3733 Gardendale Drive, Eden, MD 21822
Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Wed. Oct. 14th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM!

Auction conducted online at www.AMAuctions.com.
2019 JOHN DEERE Z TRAC ZERO TURN MOWER, 2014 JOHN DEERE
3038E TRACTOR, 2008 HARLEY DAVIDSON MDL 883 & 2005 HD
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Personal Property Preview: Monday October 12th from 4 PM – 7 PM

On-Line Only Auction – Ocean Pines, MD!

Personal Property located at: 2 Long Point Court, Ocean Pines, MD 21811
Auction Held Online Only w/Bidding ending Thur. October 15th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM!

Auction conducted online at www.AMAuctions.com.
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Personal Property Preview: Tuesday October 13th from 5 PM – 7 PM

On-Line Only Auction – Ocean City, MD!

Personal Property located at: 13037 Drum Point Road, Ocean City, MD 21842
Auction Held Online Only w/Bidding ending Wed. October 21st, 2020 Starting at 5 PM!

Auction conducted online at www.AMAuctions.com.
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TOOLS, GLASSWARE, HOUSEWARES & MORE!
Personal Property Preview: TUESDAY October 20th from 4 PM – 6 PM

(8) Upcoming Onsite Online Only Auctions to Include: Oct. 7th, 2020 - On-Line Only Auction – Delmar, DE. Personal Property located at: 300 N. 8th Street, Delmar, DE 19940. Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Wed. Oct. 7th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! Antique & Modern Furniture, Glassware, Housewares & more! Oct. 20th, 2020 - On-Line Only Auction – Salisbury, MD! Personal Property located at: 5437 Nithsdale Drive, Salisbury, MD 21801. Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Tue. October 20th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! Auction conducted online at www.AMAuctions.com. 2016 Cadillac CT6 Platinum Edition, Browning Gun Safe, Tools, Home Décor & more! Oct. 28th, 2020 - On-Line Only Auction – Accomac, VA! Personal Property located at: 23246 Courthouse Ave., Accomac, VA. Auction Held Online Only w/Bidding ending: Wed. October 28th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! VAAR#29080003829. Antique and Modern Furniture, Collectables, Tools & more! Nov. 17th, 2020 - Online Only Estate Auction – Cambridge, MD! Personal Property located on Algonquin Rd., Cambridge, MD. Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Tue. November 17th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! Exquisite Selection of Eastern Shore Primitives, Decoys, Stoneware, Local Advertising, Artwork, Antique and Modern Furniture, Moped & more! Nov. 18th, 2020 - Online Only Estate Auction – Crisfield, MD! Personal Property located at 125 Hall Highway, Crisfield, MD. Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Wed. November 18th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! Nov. 19th, 2020 - Online Only Auction – Bethany Beach, DE! Property located at 101 Parkwood St., Bethany Beach, DE. Auction Held Online Only with Bidding ending Thur. November 19th, 2020 Starting at 5 PM! Large Selection of Musical Instruments, Sterling Silver, Asian Arts, Antique and Modern Furniture and more!
(4) Upcoming Auctions at 8000 Esham Rd, Parsonsburg, MD: Oct. 29th, 2020 - Jewelry/Coin Online Only Timed Auction – Parsonsburg, MD! Selling for the Estate of John E. Whittington, Jr of Salisbury MD w/select additions! Auction Held Online Only w/Bidding ending: October 29th, 2020 Starting @ 5PM. Auction conducted online at www.AMAuctions.com via Proxibid. Dec. 2nd, 2020 - On-Line Only Personal Property Auction Sale – Parsonsburg, MD! Personal Property located at: The A&M Auction Facility – 8000 Esham Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849. Auction Held Online Only w/Bidding ending: Wednesday December 2nd, 2020 Starting @ 5PM. Selection of Primitives, Antique and Modern Furniture, Silver, Stoneware, Tools, Jewelry, Electronics, Appliances & more! Jan 16th, 2021 - Winter 2021 Decoy & Wildfowl Arts Auction. Personal Property located at: The A&M Auction Facility – 8000 Esham Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849. Live Auction/Live Webcast Bidding – Fri. Jan. 16th @ 5:03 PM (400 Lots). 400+ Lots including over 300 Decoys, Original Artwork, Primitives, Shotgun Boxes & more! Feb. 5th, 2021 - 15th Annual Firearm & Men's Night Out Auction. Will feature a selection of Estate Firearms including: Rifles, Handguns & Shotguns.

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McMullen, Underkoffler work to bolster OP racquet sports

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Since partnering late last year to manage the Manklin Meadows Racquet Sports Complex, Tim McMullen and Terry Underkoffler have championed proposed court expansions and last week began attracting nationally ranked tennis tournaments to Ocean Pines.

Underkoffler, a licensed U.S. Tennis Association instructor, said the complex hosted its first ever points tournament on Saturday.

"We've never held USTA tournaments previous to Saturday," he said. "Tim and I, this is our first time running this place [and] we wanted to bring in new programming and really pay attention to the courts."

The NTRP Tournament last weekend attracted a slew of USTA-member players to the Racquet Sports Complex from across Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and even a competitor from Morgantown, West Virginia.

"That blew me away," he said. "I thought it would be only locals."

Underkoffler has also organized a subsequent USTA event, the Ocean Pines Beach Doubles Tournament, which is scheduled on Oct. 10.

"What's unique about the NTRP Tournament is that these players are playing for points to qualify for USTA Mid-Atlantic sectionals," he said.

While Underkoffler is networking through the USTA to attract more play, McMullen, who serves as racquet center facilities manager, is overseeing a proposed court expansion for tennis and pickleball under consideration for inclusion in the next fiscal year operating budget.

McMullen said Worcester County has granted approval to launch the permit process to build four additional pickleball courts and a "Net Generation" tennis court used for instruction.

"We have a great yacht club [and] golf course [so] why not take this facility here and make it the best ... on the whole Eastern Shore," he said. "That's what we want to do."

Underkoffler said the need for additional pickleball courts is pressing.

"Pickleball is exploding and we get over 100 people a day that come here to play," he said.

While pickleball demographics are gradually skewing younger, the appeal is also significant for racquet players experiencing knee issues.

"They can play 2-3 hours of pickle-



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Terry Underkoffler, left, and Tim McMullen are leading the charge to promote facility expansions and wider marketing potential at the Manklin Meadows Racquet Sports Complex in Ocean Pines.

ball and it's not torturing their legs and they're still getting that competitiveness," he said. "It's a highly desirable sport."

Already the only Eastern Shore racquet sports facility offering platform tennis, pickleball and tennis, site expansion plans could add another wrinkle with wheelchair accessibility.

"We're looking at bringing in tennis for children with disabilities," he said.

Underkoffler said the intent is to train staff members how to conduct handicap or wheelchair tennis programs.

"I got the idea from the Tennis Channel," he said.

Underkoffler said the highly competitive sport has been gaining in popularity.

"If you're a kid in a wheelchair, what are your options for a sports activity?" he asked. "We're giving back to our area in a way that's unique."

Underkoffler is making plans to pursue related training through the Professional Tennis Registry.

"They have a class on how to instruct and promote wheelchair tennis," he said. "They put us in the chairs and you get to experience what they're doing."

The proposed facility expansion is also a response to market demand.

"We're looking to expand our pickleball resources to have another full court because the numbers just dictate the fact that they need more space to play," he said.

Underkoffler said besides reducing wait times, the additional courts would heighten marketing capabilities.

"We feel if we add one more court of four permanent pickleball courts, we can pickup big tournaments like we have going on with tennis right now," he said. "That would help pay for our facility and help with costs."

OP Sports Core Pool plans for expansion moves closer

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Plans are firming up for a frequently discussed room addition at the Ocean Pines Sports Core Pool.

Ocean Pines Director of Amenities and Operational Logistics Colby Phillips said the concept of building an adjacent area separated from the pool deck has been batted around for the past four years.

"The original idea for the room was because we've outgrown our space," she said.

Various incarnations of the project caught fire and subsequently fizzled prior to the OPA creating a new capital reserve fund last fall.

Earmarked out of the \$167,000 initial allotment for the new reserve fund approved for the current fiscal 2020/2021 budget is \$100,000 intended as partial funding to construct

a room addition onto the Sports Core facility.

"Last year when the board approved doing this fund, the room addition, because it had been off and on

... for the last four years, it came back up again as one of the first projects," she said.

Although final plans have yet to be approved by the board of directors with additional fund-

ing likely required next budget year, the current proposal involves building a 30-by-30-foot enclosed area to accommodate current needs and permit expanded marketing potential for private affairs.

"We have instructors that do CPR, AAD [Appropriate Athlete Develop-

See ADDITIONAL Page 15



Colby Phillips



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Additional room comes into view

Continued from Page 14

ment] and lifeguard certifications," she said. "We have a lot of people on staff that can teach these types of classes that need a room to teach in."

In addition to offering space to book private parties and provide expanded training areas the proposal would include office space.

"It would be temperature-controlled separate from the pool deck," she said.

Previously considered childcare ventures are not included with the current plan.

"We're not looking to do an after-school program," she said. "We've taken that off the table."

The inclusion of a fitness room has been put on the backburner for now but Phillips said the idea continues to be talked about in the community, she said.

Phillips said Sports Core Pool project cost estimates are currently being sought with a status update scheduled for the OPA Budget and Finance Committee meeting in November.

"The team has a lot of new capital ideas across the board that we've brought up and looked at over the years," she said. "It's great that we're setting aside funds to do those projects."

Pines Golf Course work underway

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Aiming for immediate and long-term turf improvements at the Ocean Pines Golf Course, maintenance crews are executing a multi-point plan expected to be completed later this month.

General Manager of Golf Operations John Malinowski said ground condition issues did arise over the summer.

"We had a bad spot on some of the greens," he said.

In recent weeks the cause of spotty greens was identified.

"Below the surface about two inches down, there's a black layer that formed," he said. "It's a really thick thatch layer" of compressed organic material.

"In the summertime, it's a very thick layer and prevents roots from going down and busting through it so that the root layer is really shallow," he said.

When root systems fail to extend far underground, the result is water stagnating on the surface.

To exacerbate the situation, Mother Nature recently dealt out roughly a half foot of precipitation followed by high heat and humidity.

"That's where it kind of got us," he said.

To resolve the problem, grounds crews are employing specialized aerating tools.

"They're very small — in fact, they call them Ninja Tines because you can (use) it and it doesn't look like you're doing anything," he said.



John Malinowski



John Viola

The proprietary item, which was introduced in 2017 specifically for "non-disruptive aerification" of golf greens, measures a bit over four inches in length and just over a quarter inch in diameter.

"It goes in and pulls the thatch out and we just blow it off with a blower and it's gone," he said. "It doesn't rip the greens up [or] make a huge mess like when we do our big aeration in the spring and fall."

The aerating apparatus removes minute plugs of soil without affecting play.

"You can go and putt right over it and you don't even know that the holes are there," he said. "It takes 10-15 minutes to do a green and then we just move on."

The greens improvement regimen also includes adding a light layer of sand as top dressing.

"By removing the thatch layer and getting this little bit of sand mixed in, it helps with the drainage, helps keep the roots moving down and helps the grass stand up straight," he said. "It's just healthier."

Malinowski said the maintenance crew is motivated and has a big list of things it expects to accomplish.

"Between our maintenance ... and public works crew, we're working hard on the plan and good things are coming."

The workload covers greens, fairways, sand traps and trees.

"We have some areas where we need to take out some trees because things are really thick and it doesn't allow air movement or sunlight," he said. "We're not clear cutting."

OPA General Manager John Viola said feedback from golfers indicate the course improvement work has been well received.

"I've been down there and spoken to the outside players," he said. "They always mention that it's a challenging course."

Viola said the golfers he polled noted greens work was occurring but largely appreciated the importance.

See OP Page 16

BERLIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS: EXPERIENCE MATTERS

-  Establishment of Berlin Stormwater Utility and an initial \$2.5 million investment to significantly reduce flooding in town neighborhoods.
-  Most extensive upgrades and improvements in Berlin's history to town streets and sidewalks, including Broad Street, making all of our downtown ADA Compliant.
-  First town/city in Maryland to earn Certification as a Sustainable Community for Berlin's ongoing work in environmental stewardship.
-  Major reorganization transferring oversight of Berlin Electric Utility to Mayor & Council resulting in going from highest electric bills on the Mid-Atlantic and East Coast, to the lowest.
-  Conversion started of Berlin Power Plant from diesel generated electricity to natural gas generation.
-  Significant expansion and attendance to town sponsored or endorsed public events in Berlin.
-  Berlin's first Economic and Community Development Department was established and funded to organize and provide town events, attract new businesses and open and operate the Berlin Welcome Center.
-  Setting up downtown Wayfinding signs for services, shopping, restrooms, etc. and establishing strategically placed bicycle racks.
-  Purchase and major clean-up of Heron Park property to begin conversion into economic and environmental community asset. Next step procuring a grant to demolish the former chicken processing plant building.
-  Completion of negotiations for transfer of BCIA (Berlin Community Improvement Association) property on Flower Street to Town of Berlin for development of a publicly owned and operated community center.
-  Town property purchase, planning and development of a new state-of-the-art Berlin Police Station.

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Berlin history chronicled in photos at Main St. museum

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Berlin residents are invited to be volunteer curators at the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum this month.

By identifying people in photographs that have been donated to the museum over the years, community members can help preserve the town's history.

"We usually are the ones presenting the information out to the community in our exhibits," said Melissa Reid, the president of the museum. "But this is a way we feel like it gives the community the chance to be involved in sharing their knowledge with the museum. We think that's important. We want all the stories of Berlin to be told, and it's with the community that can do that."

Throughout October, the photographs will be displayed in the Harrison Room at the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum on North Main Street in Berlin.

"Because the museum is sort of the receptacle or the repository of a lot of Berlin history, usually people donate [photographs] to us in different sets," Reid said. "We have them sort of grouped by theme. Like, we have a whole set of The Atlantic Hotel

restoration."

She added that the museum has collections of photographs from "Run-away Bride" and "Tuck Everlasting" as well.

The photographs at the museum date from the birth of photography to the early 2000s.

"We have a photograph that was one of the original photographs that [Eastman Kodak] did actually," Reid said.

Recently, Reid and Susan Taylor, the museum curator, were looking through photo albums to answer inquiries about town history.

"We did have somebody contact the museum asking about the fence that goes around the front of The Atlantic Hotel, that wrought iron fence," Reid said. "When [Taylor] was researching through The Atlantic Hotel file, she came across this whole batch of photographs."

Reid said the discovery of the photographs of the hotel led to a bigger discussion about who was captured in the old images.

"We realize that as people are passing away in our community, we have large groups of photographs that we don't know who the people are," Reid said. "We thought what a wonderful



PHOTO COURTESY CALVIN B. TAYLOR HOUSE MUSEUM

Local residents are invited to visit the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum on North Main Street in Berlin throughout October to help identify townspeople in old photographs.

opportunity as part of the outreach to the town through the museum to actually have people come in ... and if they recognize anybody to put a sticky note on it, which would allow us as we work toward digitizing our collection, we would have a written description to go with the photograph."

Reid also expressed gratitude for the town of Berlin and community members who shared the museum's social media post about identifying the photographs.

"We're hoping that all of those

views and shares translate into people actually coming and helping us make sure that as many photographs can be identified as possible, so we're not losing that aspect of the history of Berlin," Reid said.

The museum is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Appointments are not necessary, but the museum staff requests community members follow the same protocols for tours to view the photographs during the novel coronavirus pandemic. To schedule a time, call 410-641-1019 or email taylor-housemuseum@verizon.net.

Currently, six people are permitted inside the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum at one time.

For more information, visit taylor-housemuseum.org or the Calvin B. Taylor House Museum Facebook page.

OP golf conditions being improved

Continued from Page 15

"They said we're moving in the right direction," he said. "The part I heard more often ... they said it is a very good value."

Malinowski said maintaining optimal course conditions has become increasingly challenging over the life of the amenity.

"What people don't realize is the golf course was built 50 years ago when there were hardly any homes around it and the trees were really small," he said.

The Ocean Pines Golf Course,

which broke ground in 1968, was opened in June 1972.

"We're continually working on drainage issues here," he said.

Over the last half-century, areas adjacent to the course gradually filled in with residences.

"As they build more and more homes, it changes how the water runs off," he said.

The land use changes have tended to steer excessive water flow onto the course and taxed drainage systems.

"The original infrastructure didn't handle all that because it was just flat

open land," he said. "For a long time they didn't have to worry about water running off because it just kind of ran into the woods."

Viola said the bulk of course tweaks should be done by the end of October.

"We have a work plan in place over the next several weeks," he said. "We have solutions."

Malinowski shared the forward-looking positivity.

"From the first tee to the 18th green we're working on a little bit of everything," he said.

Correction

To clarify last week's Golf Advisory Committee article, while the Ocean Pines Association Bylaws do specify the president appoints advisory chairpersons, board consent is required.

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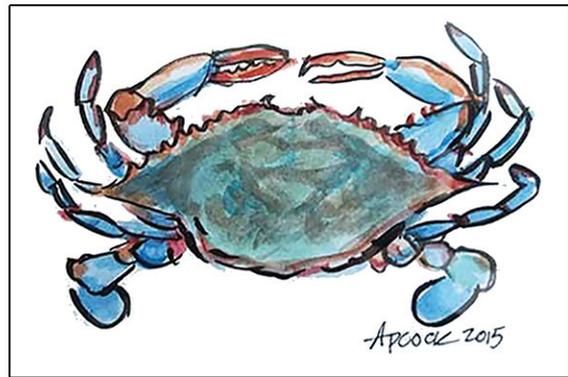
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Students participate in pageants

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Aminah White and MaryAnn Catherine Rutzler strive to bring positive change in their Worcester County communities as they participate in national pageants.

Aminah White, of Germantown Road in Berlin, will compete in the junior pre-teen category of the National American Miss Pageant in November in Orlando, Florida.

White, 9, is excited to represent Berlin and Worcester County in her first year of competition.

“It makes me feel like I can have some control making girls be brave,” White said. “It makes me feel like I’ll just be doing good for my community.”

For the state pageant in Virginia on Sept. 19-20, White was judged on formal wear, a personal introduction, a resume and an interview as well as a community service project.

White donated books and school supplies as part of her community service project in her neighborhood for four hours.

She also competed in optional events, such as acting and casual wear, at the state pageant.

“What I’m preparing to do to go to nationals is doing community service,” White said. “I’m practicing my walk because that also gives off points. I’m practicing my pretty feet.”

She added that she is improving her public speaking skills as well.

“To win nationals would be a dream come true,” White said. “If I won, I would definitely try to work as hard as I could. I would just be going out to do speeches, and I would like to give girls braveness, and I would like to give girls ... just that confidence, so they know that they can do anything anywhere that they want.”

White has been homeschooled for four years, and currently she is in the fourth grade. She is involved with library groups and activities such as Cyber Streets, a stem/coding program, as well as a reading literacy program called PAWS.

In addition, White is a dancer for Xtreme Dance Studio in Laurel, Delaware.

“As far as I’m concerned with the pageant, I was really excited as a parent that it wasn’t like catty or just about how the girls looked,” said Ashley Cuffee, White’s mother. “Everyone was really nice, very helpful, [and] very supportive of everybody.”

Cuffee said she was impressed with how the National American Miss Pageant focuses on building the girls’ life skills and confidence.

MaryAnn Catherine Rutzler, of Newark, was named the first runner-up nationally for the Young Miss title in the 2020 Pure International Pageants National pageant in Columbus, Ohio, over Labor Day Weekend.

“There’s a lot of different emotions that accompany that title,” Rutzler said. “I feel very accomplished to have made it that far and have that title as first runner up, but there’s also a little bit of sadness in there because I really wanted to represent Pure International on a national level, not just as



PHOTO COURTESY COLLEEN RUTZLER

MaryAnn Catherine Rutzler, a 13-year-old Newark resident, was named the first runner-up nationally for the Young Miss title in the 2020 Pure International Pageants National Pageant over Labor Day Weekend. Rutzler currently represents Maryland, Delaware and Virginia as Young Miss Eastern Shore.

Young Miss Eastern Shore.”

As the current Young Miss Eastern Shore, Rutzler competed in the required modeling state wear, formal wear and personal interview for the in the junior teen category for ages 13 to

See GIRLS Page 18



PHOTO COURTESY ASHLEY CUFFEE

Aminah White, 9, will represent Berlin and Worcester County at the National American Miss Pageant in November in Orlando, Florida, after competing in the state pageant on Sept. 19-20.



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- Berlin Board of Zoning Appeals
- Ocean City Paramedic Foundation
- Atlantic General Hospital Board of Trustees

Chairman of the Worcester County Planning Commission.

Keeping Dream Alive military donation drive

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Renamed but not repurposed, the “Keeping the Dream Alive” donation drive for active military personnel that takes place in Ocean Pines on Wednesdays during October continues the nearly two decade holiday-season tradition established by the late Carl and Anna Foultz.

Larry Walton, Ocean Pines AARP Chapter 4507 president, said the newly named venture is a revamped version of the former Star Charities annual “Holiday Gifts for Soldiers” collection championed by Anna Foultz after her husband launched it in 2003.

“This year, AARP and Kiwanis have stepped up to carry it on,” he said.

Walton said the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines and Ocean City members have jumped on board to maintain the mission to extend care and comfort to U.S. Armed Forces members stationed overseas

“Nonperishables you can box up,” he



Volunteers gathered, last year, to turn donations over to Operation We Care, who packaged and mailed them to U.S. Military men and women serving overseas.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

said, of the kinds of donations the organizations are seeking.

Teaming with Walton on the venture are fellow past Star Charities members Barbara Peletier and Sue Walter, as well as Chris Wanzer from AARP.

Unlike in past years when black or

orange five-gallon collection buckets were stationed at various locations throughout Ocean Pines, coronavirus safety precautions this year dictate that donations for “Keeping the Dream Alive” should be dropped off to volunteers on Wednesday mornings in Octo-

ber from 9 a.m. to noon outside the Ocean Pines Community Center’s Assateague Room.

“They can drive up and even stay in the car,” he said. “Pop the trunk and we’ll have people with gloves and vol-
See STAR Page 19

Girls hope to impact Wor. Co. communities

Continued from Page 17

15. She also competed in optional events, such as print modeling, runway modeling, photogenic, portfolio and craftwork.

She was awarded first place in several categories, including state costume, formal gown, artwork and print model.

Rutzler, 13, represented the Eastern Shore in the national pageant.

“I love where I’m from and to be able to represent it with such an amazing organization is one of the best feelings in the world for me,” Rutzler said.

Her state costume, which was designed by her mother, featured flags of Maryland, Delaware and Virginia and her blue overskirt had hand-placed rhinestones in ocean blues. She held a Fishers popcorn bucket adorned with the agricultural and seafood industries of the Eastern Shore: peaches, corn, chicken, blue crab, watermelon and

strawberries.

Rutzler’s mother also incorporated the state flowers of Maryland, Delaware and Virginia as well as the Assateague and Chincoteague ponies, a rhinestone crab mallet, Dolle’s salt-water taffy and Old Bay Seasoning to the costume. In addition, Colleen constructed the iconic Ocean City Boardwalk welcome arch with lights and a personalized Maryland license plate on the back of the archway.

Rutzler said she has been competing in Pure International Pageants for two years after learning about them from one of her pageant directors, April Meilhammer Brilliant.

Brilliant founded Mysic Productions Pageants in 1993.

With a focus on faith, family and community service, Rutzler said Pure International Pageants aligns with her values.

“There’s a national project through

Pure International, which is called Be the Impact,” said Colleen, Rutzler’s mother. “They promote community service no matter how small or how large the service is, knowing that you’re making an impact not only for yourself but on your community and your fellow person.”

During the 2019-20 academic year, Rutzler spearheaded an initiative for the seventh graders to honor the eighth graders while engaged in virtual learning.

Currently, Rutzler is in the eighth grade at Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School on Racetrack Road in Berlin.

She is involved with Worcester County 4-H Voyagers, One Year to Empowerment and Girl Scouts.

She has been a Conference, Regional and National All-American Scholar for Pop Warner Berlin Seahawks for three years.

In addition, Rutzler has served as a caregiver for her mother, who is an acute myeloid leukemia survivor, and her godmother who died from metastatic breast cancer after a 14-year battle. Through her experience as a caregiver, Rutzler developed a passion for the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life of North Worcester County. She has a team called Royalty for Relay.

“The American Cancer Society and Relay for Life is my platform,” said Rutzler, who is part of the youth advisory for the local Relay for Life committee. “It’s what I base everything I do on.”

Rutzler will compete in gown modeling, headshot and interview in a “Hocus Pocus” themed virtual Mystic Productions pageant. Submissions are due by Oct. 30. A panel of judges will critique the submissions, and title holders will be crowned in November.



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Grant sought to demolish building

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Berlin could be looking at no cost to demolish the buildings at Heron Park on Old Ocean City Boulevard.

“Potentially, there’s \$500,000 in grant money out there for demolition, and where I’m talking specifically, would be the old processing building at the Tyson plant,” Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood told the mayor and Town Council Monday night.

Fleetwood said he has received quotes of up to \$600,000 to eradicate the existing structures.

“Three years ago, I had quoted \$0,” he said. “And I’ve seen it as high as \$600,000.”

Ivy Wells, the town’s economic and community development director, has

been working with Worcester County’s grant writer to apply for the Strategic Demolition Grant Fund.

According to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development’s website, the limited funds are awarded to projects “that can have a high economic and revitalization impact in their existing communities.”



Jeff Fleetwood

The purpose of the fund is also to enhance the financial possibilities of “grey field development.”

In addition, Wells is applying for \$100,000 in grant funding to continue the façade grant program to the downtown commercial district and to purchase historic streetlamps for Pitts Street.

“Every year, I’ve applied for the Community Legacy Grant to help fund our façade grant improvement program that we offer to the downtown businesses in our Main Street district,” Wells said.



Ivy Wells

There is no financial match required for either grant. Wells added that she applies for grants from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development annually.

The mayor and council gave Wells permission to apply for grants for the 2021 fiscal year that are due on Oct. 15.

If the town receives the grants, Wells said the projects will go through the request for proposal process.

Star Charities tradition maintained

Continued from Page 18

unteers wearing masks ... to take it out.”

Sought-after nonperishables run the gamut from clothing to snacks, such as gum, hard candy, hot chocolate packets, beef jerky, sunflower seeds, powdered drinks, trail mix, socks, books, playing cards, board games, puzzle books, Kleenex, lip balm, dental hygiene items, razors, non-aerosol deodorant, baby wipes, body wash and shampoo.

To widen the scope, flu shots can also be scheduled during the initial drop off date on Oct. 7.

“They need to call ahead if they want a flu shot,” he said. “That’s the first Wednesday only.”

Walton said “Keeping the Dream Alive” is a new effort that echoes past drives sponsored by Star Charities, which was dissolved by Anna Foults’s family members after she died last Sep-

tember.

Anna credited her husband, Carl, who died in 2010 at the age of 86 for envisioning the charity collection for military members stationed abroad.

Carl Foults, who served in WWII in the Army’s Communication Service 3363rd Battalion, reportedly recalled how difficult obtaining supplies was during wartime. He then suggested starting what became an annual tradition for 16-years that has spawned a spin-off inaugural drive this year.

The final “Holiday Gifts For Soldiers” drive in 2019 was launched mere days after Anna Foults died and netted a record haul of donations that were collected last November by Jeff Merritt, president and co-founder of Operation We Care in Salisbury.

Merritt, who launched Operation We Care in 2007 with his wife, Diana,

conducts charitable drives in May and November.

Operation We Care is once again scheduled to receive donations this November to package and mail to soldiers serving overseas.

Besides organizing mass mailings of care packages twice annually, funds collected by Operation We Care also support local Veterans Administration programs in Pocomoke and Cambridge.

Last year, Merritt estimated the non-profit spent more than \$40,000 on postage for the two rounds of care packages.

In addition to sundry items for soldiers, financial contributions to finance postage are also welcome.

Checks should be made out to Operation We Care. For questions of further details contact Peletier at 443-896-4914 or email barbpeletier@gmail.com.



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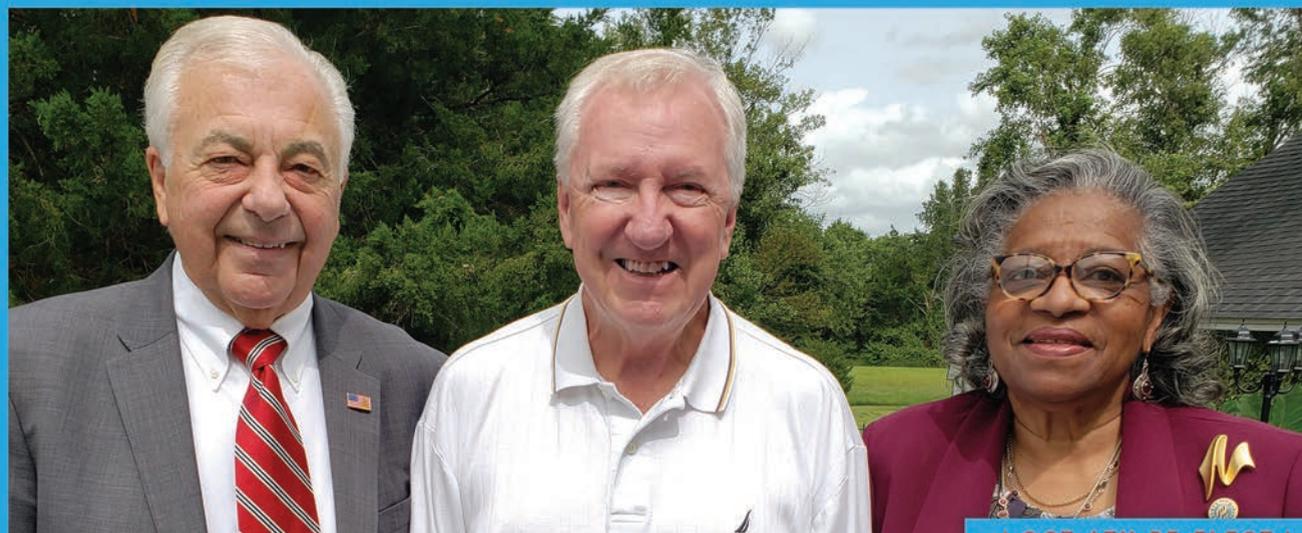
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Relay for Life luminaria celebration in Berlin

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) Like most events, the annual Relay for Life of North Worcester County has been significantly affected by covid-19 concerns.

This year, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of North Worcester County is hosting a drive-through luminaria celebration on Saturday from 7-9 p.m. in downtown Berlin.

"This is the event that is normally an outdoor overnight camping event at Frontier Town [the Friday before Mother's Day]," said Dawn Hodge, the volunteer chair of the Relay for Life North Worcester County committee. "Of course, with the pandemic we weren't allowed to do that kind of gathering."

Jessie Parsons, who is a luminaria co-chair with Theresa Laviola for the county committee and a Relay for Life team leader at Community Church and Little Lambs Learning Center in Ocean Pines, said the luminaria ceremony is usually only one part of the Relay for Life event.

"Normally, what my role and Theresa's role was, was to collect all the luminaria sales, make sure that the luminaria and lanterns are labeled in honor of or in memory of people that want the names put on the bags," Parsons said. "Then, we would set them up according to teams."

She added that the luminaria ceremony is traditionally scheduled at dusk with silent laps to observe the names of those being honored or remembered.

"This year, we couldn't do the regular ceremony because of covid restrictions and also the American Cancer Society doesn't want gatherings because we have a lot of survivors and people in treatment who normally attend our events," Parsons said.

Instead, luminaria bags and lanterns will light up Main Street in

Berlin on Saturday, honoring and remembering loved ones who have been afflicted by cancer. Each light will represent a life that has been taken by cancer, a survivor of cancer or a support for a person still fighting the disease.

Luminaria bags cost \$10 and the lanterns cost \$25 with all proceeds benefiting the American Cancer Society. Participants who donate \$25 for the lantern are able to keep it, Hodge added.

"Those can be purchased online or from any relayer that you know," Hodge said.

Luminaria sales close on the website Thursday, but donations can be made to the American Cancer Society at any time.

Participants can either drive down Main Street or walk from the intersection of Stevenson Lane and Main Street to the intersection of Main Street and Jefferson Street on Saturday to see the luminaria bags and lanterns.

"You don't have to be any Relay for Life participant in the past. This is for everyone to come and enjoy," Hodge said.

Registration is not required to join the relay.

"We would like survivors to register because we do intend to recognize survivors," Hodge said. "In the past, that's been with a dinner and the first lap has always been a survivor's lap ... What we plan to do is make a big sign that says 'Honk if you're a survivor.'"

Also, the organizers will be stationed at the church at the beginning of the event to distribute items for survivors, such as the annual survivor pin.

Hodge said that this is the first time a Relay for Life luminaria display will take place in downtown Berlin.

"It's a smaller event this year. Obviously, we still need to raise money for



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Jessie Parsons, left, and Theresa Laviola, the luminaria co-chairs of the Relay for Life of North Worcester County, collect lantern and luminaria sales at Windmill Creek Vineyard and Winery in Berlin on Friday for the upcoming drive-through luminaria celebration this Saturday.

the American Cancer Society because research can't stop," Parsons added. "A lot of different research gets money from the American Cancer Society. The American Cancer Society also offers services like Road to Recovery, and also we have a network of volunteers that offers rides to treatments. We have the Hope Lodge in Baltimore, where people that live far from those great hospitals, like [Johns] Hopkins and the University of Maryland, can stay there for free during their treatment."

Parsons said there is a 24-hour hotline as well for people to call and ask questions about cancer and treatment.

Typically, the local Relay for Life raises \$170,000 for the American Cancer Society from the event at Frontier Town and the holiday wrapping fashion show at the Ronald E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Hodge said. She added that the organizers are planning to host a virtual luncheon with an auction amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"We actually are very happy that we've been able to raise anything," Hodge said.

As of Monday morning, \$30,525.52 has been raised.

"We don't want people to forget about how important it is to fundraise

for the cancer society's research and patient services," Hodge said. "Especially right now, people with covid are having such a hard time getting to their treatment ... We don't want our community to forget about that."

Berlin Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood said traffic will be one way going south on Main Street to Jefferson Street between 7-9 p.m. on Saturday. Parking will not be allowed on Main Street during the event.

Hodge advises those who plan to walk to park in the public lots and walk to Stevenson United Methodist Church.

"We definitely based this entire event for those folks who are not comfortable being out in a crowd because of covid, and a lot of our people coming are going to be survivors or susceptible," Hodge said.

She added that most participants are survivors or caregivers.

Hodge said the organizers are taking precautions to ensure the safety and comfort of all participants.

Although it is an outdoor event, face coverings will be enforced when social distancing cannot be maintained walking downtown.

For more information, visit relayforlife.org/northworcestermd.

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Hazmat team summoned to Ocean Pines

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Oct. 1, 2020) What began as a welfare check at a residence in Ocean Pines on Sunday afternoon grew into a three-hour response involving multiple agencies, including the Worcester County Hazmat team.

Police Chief Leo Ehrisman said the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department was alerted for a medical emergency just after 4 p.m. on Sunday.

"It was basically a check welfare because of a subject that wasn't acting quite right," he said. "It started really simple and then got really complex."

Paramedics arrived first to the scene in north Ocean Pines to assess the patient's condition, while a police officer began investigating the emergency scene.

"Both the person and my officer felt ill so then it becomes an issue of has there been exposure to something," he said.

With uncertainties arising at the scene, Ocean Pines Assistant Fire

Chief Joe Widgeon requested a full fire and hazmat response. Also arriving at the location were Worcester County Sheriff's officers.

"Then when the fire department thought it may be a contamination or chemical exposure, it became an environmental issue for public safety," he said.

After emergency responders deemed the scene a potential hazmat incident, nearby residences were evacuated.

"The rest was done for precautions to confirm nothing toxic is outside or inside the residence," he said. "That all has to be done by hazmat and environmental control."

After hazmat responders concluded no health threats were involved, the Ocean Pines Police and Worcester County Sheriff's office assumed control of the investigation.

"It is a mental health issue, so it's protected," he said. "He was transported for examination at Peninsula Regional and my officer was transported to AGH for an examination and was released."



PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN PINES VOL. FIRE DEPT.

Ocean Pines firefighters assist Worcester County Hazmat team members during an hours-long medical emergency response where environmental contamination concerns arose on Sunday in North Ocean Pines.

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TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 13

damage, building damage, failing infrastructure, excessive flooding and chemical spills can be extremely costly to correct.

Going to the bank and borrowing funds for unplanned issues or continually allocating money from the general fund is extremely bad policy. Currently, we have a general fund budget of \$5.9 million. A three-month reserve fund would be approximately \$1.5 million; however, it will take time for Berlin to get to that level.

Each year, we will need to budget a portion of funds until we reach the \$1.5 million target. Down the road we will need to look at setting reserves for all departments. Budget planning five years in advance will help us achieve these goals that much sooner. Once elected, I certainly look forward to working with the council and passing this much needed and long overdue reserve policy.

Weeg: I side with some of the other members of the candidate pool, and that is we should maintain at least 16.7 percent of our budget in a reserve, and we should also very explicitly in that policy explain what and what not it cannot be used for. It should not be used for anything that is not [mayor and council] approved as things have sometimes been in times past with other sources of finances.

To fund this, we will have to be diligent in scouring the budget for efficiencies that are not being thought of. At the present time, we have yearly revenue just north of \$15 million, and I have to believe that there's some fat in there we can begin to fund the reserve with.

At the same time, since we stopped paying ourselves back half of the debt we owed ourselves we should be able to find some extra resources there to begin more funding options for the reserve.

Orris: The policy currently being drafted is a great opportunity to es-

tablish a path forward financially as well as the fact it's a reserve. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) suggests two to three months of reserve. As we continue in this process in the future, I would like to look at building a six-month reserve.

I believe this can be done over time and after evaluating our budget(s) we currently adopt. With all the borrowing and paying ourselves back, surely, we can reallocate money into this reserve. I'm looking forward to having an active role as that policy develops and working with the new council.

Nichols: I believe that there should be at least enough funds to cover three months of expenses in the reserve account, by making budget cuts, obtaining grant funds for other budget items and limiting spending we should be able to begin to build a reverse account.

Packey: The standard best accepted account practice is three months of town expenditure – or in our case approximately \$1.5 million. We have \$16,000. I think we should not try to increase the reserve all at one time. In essence, we should not cannibalize our current programs. Instead we need to make the adjustments necessary to free up some funds and gradually and systematically increase the reserves until we meet the desired levels.

How will you work to unite the diverse population of Berlin as a councilmember?

Knerr: Berlin is definitely a very diverse community and a very welcoming community at that. We are fortunate that we live in a town where you feel safe walking the streets day or night. We are also fortunate to have a multitude of special events in Berlin that everyone can enjoy.

A first step to strengthen the community bonds is to redevelop the multipurpose building on Flower

Street into a state-of-the-art community center. This project is long overdue. A new community center could be used for multicultural events, education classes, kids' afterschool programs and local area club activities. The point being it provides a centralized area to bring people together.

Another step-in fostering community relationships would be to work with the Berlin Chamber of Commerce to hold a Heritage Festival. You bring music, art, craft and people from all walks of life together in a celebratory manor. This could be held at Stephen Decatur Park, Henry Park or utilize the land area at Heron Park.

Next, I believe it is time that the mayor and Berlin Council request that the state install proper crosswalks with time indicators at the intersection of [U.S. Route] 113 and Old Ocean City Boulevard. A great number of residents cross that intersection every day, and it is extremely dangerous. As a community, we need to make it safe and easy for residents to travel from one area to another. Berlin is about all of us.

Weeg: For my diversity plan, I will do what I always do, and that is to help all people understand that everyone is just a person no matter what color their skin is, who they vote for or who they choose to love. I love to do this with "edge" situations and getting people of different backgrounds into situations where they have to interact. Please Google what the "the edge effect" is – it's beautiful in nature as well as in human interactivity.

I will also reach out to the State Highway Administration to get a crosswalk box at Old Ocean City Road and [U.S.]Route 113. I think it's time for something this basic. It's been too long, too many administrations.

I'll reach back out to Mr. Andrade at Maxima 95.3 (the Latino music station) and work on a Latino music festival in Berlin for the spring of 2021 or some other time in the future. There's nothing more unifying than music and food, and Hispanic

people do both of those things very well!

I'll work on town-sponsored events on Flower Street. I will work on planting the seeds to establish a Saturday morning "Flower Street Flower Market."

I'll work on embellishing our parks, with things that attract people of all types. Imagine these: a pump-track, a set of outdoor ping-pong tables, or bocce ball courts, and chess tables – all simple things we can do, and each brings diversity to the proverbial table in and of itself. And then eventually with funding, a skate park and more uses for Heron Park!

Orris: I feel that one of the best ways to unite our population is through a community center. I'm looking forward to working with the council on ways to, a), finance such an idea – whether it's fixing up the multipurpose building on Flower Street or a new facility in the future through grants and partnerships and, b), work with the community on the type of programming that facility would offer to not only our children but our elderly population and everyone in between of all races and backgrounds.

I've always felt Berlin has been welcoming, and that's due to mutual respect and our collective charm. Before the facility, I feel we can work with our [Economic and Community Development Department], the Berlin Community Improvement Association, our chamber of commerce and other partners to find ways to diversify events and bring the entirety of our Berlin community together.

Nichols: Building a community center that would serve the entire town could be the one of the biggest ways to unite the town. Our children would be working and playing together in enrichment programs that would foster bonds that cross the racial/economical divide.

Until the community center is established, we could start on a smaller

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TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

scale with community gardens and neighborhood morals, which could pair up our youth with older residents of the town to help build a sense of ownership and bonds between the generations. These projects can be located on the eastern side of [U.S. Route] 113 as well as the main areas of town, which again will strengthen the connections throughout the entire community.

Packey: We have to maintain and expand our policy of inclusion. Make a deliberate effort to let the diverse population know that they are part of Berlin and that their opinions matter. Communicate with the residents and see what they would like in terms of special events.

Moreover, the tangible efforts need to be worthwhile and cost effective. Examples could include, opening a youth center utilizing the available facility, holding a Latin Music festival and perhaps a crab-cake/crab soup competition all held in District 3. That way the diverse population enjoyably increase their participation with all of Berlin and would have visible proof that they are a valued part of the community.

What are some of your objectives to increase the town's resilience and sustainability amid climate change?

Knerr: The good news for the residents of Berlin is that town officials began working on a resilience element in 2019. They received a \$20,000 grant and worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to draft a plan which will be included in the [comprehensive plan] by the end of 2020.

The resilience plan is a long-term initiative that will guide us through any major disaster, whether it is climate or human related. Berlin is not prone to coastal flooding, but we do get severe rains that cause major flooding on many of the low-lying areas in Berlin.

Unfortunately, correcting this flooding will take several million dollars and a lot of these flooding issues have yet to be addressed. We also know that in the next century we will experience rising sea levels, increased water temps and higher air temps throughout our area.

This will have a major impact on our health, air quality, power usage and water availability. Going forward Berlin needs to have our Storm Water Management Plan updated to make sure we are applying the best and most cost-effective corrective actions necessary. We need to be extremely diligent about applying for grant funding. I would recommend we adopt green infrastructure when it comes to new development. Education of our residents would also be one of my objectives. The Berlin re-

silience element is an excellent guide for outlining a long-term vision for resilience and sustainability.

Weeg: I will work with experts to devise plans to handle flooding, [which is] our chief concern in this area. I will look for solutions that are not short-sighted, that are not grandiose, but that are pragmatic. Starting with small things that make big changes and working our way up to long-term goals with good data are the only ways forward. I would also like to see the town put more resources into renewable energy electricity production as opposed to continuing to rely on non-renewable fossil fuels.

Orris: Through continued development of the reserve policy and updating our comprehensive plan, I think we will be better able to prepare as best we can for any future event. My number one objective will always be the safety of life and property of the residents, businesses and visitors of the town.

Nichols: No comment was provided.

Packey: First, we need to make sure our first responders are adequately funded and properly taken

care of. They are on the front line. Second, we need to identify our strengths and weaknesses. For example, is heat the problem or water damage, perhaps wind? What is the threat? We need to prioritize the threats. We need to identify exactly what we are facing using the best available data. Third, do we need to do something completely new or would strengthening our existing system be the most beneficial and cost effective?

Finally, what is the best approach – mitigation or adaptation? I think we need to approach climate change efficiently to optimize out long run benefit. Because, climate change is real and a long-term problem. If you are curious, I have co-authored two journal articles on this subject. I believe they are on-line. If not, I can make them available to you.

Assuming no one supports an increase in the tax rate next year, do you believe that same rate can be maintained during your four-year term? If yes, what would you do to assure that?

Knerr: Holding the line on the current tax rate will require us to thoroughly look at all spending control options without cutting services and explore new ways to generate

revenue that will not place the burden on our taxpayers.

We all know that infrastructure and equipment costs add up. With paving projects and repairs on the horizon, it will be a challenge to keep the budget balanced in the future. However, I do believe with careful planning we can stand firm on our current tax rate in the next four years.

Rather than plan from one year to the next, we need to look five years out and project our revenue and expenses, so we are prepared for what comes next. We need to make sure that all projects are put out to bid rather than select a single source contractor.

We need to thoroughly review each [request for proposal] we put out for bid to make sure we have covered all the necessary contingencies, so we don't get hit with after the fact change orders. I have direct experience working with \$120 million budgets on down, from the many boards I have served on.

Being in business for the past 36 years provided a solid lesson on how to plan and budget my company's finances that allowed me to grow the operation from one year to the next. This experience will be invaluable while serving on the Berlin Town Council.

See TOWN COUNCIL Page 29

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Opinion

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

Berlin 2020 election largest race in awhile

Berlin has yet another advantage that other jurisdictions can only wish they had: an abundance of qualified candidates for local office.

Whereas other communities have struggled at times to produce full fields of worthy office-seekers, Berlin has so many this year that voters will have some difficult choices to make in next Tuesday's election.

This is an intelligent bunch of people, any one of whom could do a capable job for the town. That's not just a rarity, that's almost unheard of at any political level.

What, then, is the deciding factor in our endorsements? Time in grade, as in years of service to the community either in government or other civic pursuits, and community involvement overall.

It's for that reason that we are endorsing Gee Williams for mayor. He's certainly not infallible and has made mistakes, but who hasn't? More importantly, however, is that his vision for what Berlin could become has helped lead the economic and cultural resurgence that has made Berlin the envy of small towns up and down the Eastern Shore.

If he's reelected, this probably will be his last term, thus keeping open the opportunity for one of his younger challengers to advance to that post in the next election cycle.

In the Town Council contest, Jack Orris in District 2 has no competition, but the race is on in two other districts.

Our endorsement for the at-large council seat goes to long-time resident and public service veteran Jay Knerr. He has the business background and experience in government through his service on the town's Board of Zoning Appeals and the Worcester County Planning Commission.

For the council seat for District 3, we are endorsing Shaneka Nichols, whose family ties to Berlin go back more than a century, and who is employed in town at Berlin Intermediate School. Through these ties to the community, she knows the lay of the land, so to speak, as well as the needs of the town and her district.



Letters to the editor

Appointment opposed

Editor,

I do not know Austin [Purnell] personally and do not want to have this statement taken as slander about his personal life, demeanor or qualifications as a businessman. However, I do object to his appointment as a member of the town of Berlin's Planning and Zoning Board.

Mayor [Gee] Williams' nomination of Mr. Purnell is a gross violation of the Maryland and Berlin Code of Ethics in that an appointment to the Planning & Zoning Board of Berlin is a direct conflict of interest to any or all decisions made by the committees and subsequently the Town Council for two reasons.

1. Austin Purnell is the son of a current Town Council member, Troy Purnell who inevitably makes decisions of issues that are presented to the Town Council

by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Yes, Troy could recuse himself from voting on such issues but the influence of Austin on the Planning/Zoning Boards and Troy on the Town Council is detrimental to honest and unbiased voting and decision making through personal influence and impairment of decision making which could jeopardize the integrity of the planning and zoning board.

2. Austin Purnell is a well-established Realtor, builder, developer and entrepreneur of many holdings within and surrounding the town of Berlin and would be inclined to present building plans, variances or inclusions through annexation to the planning and zoning boards that if approved would benefit him, his holdings and his business.

It is a well-known fact that Mr. Troy Purnell and Mayor Williams hold a certain amount of camaraderie in the town of Berlin through

the sale of the Heron Park property and many developments and annexations approved throughout the town limits that have benefited the Purnell Holdings.

Upon speaking with numerous town residents about this appointment, all were appalled and questioned the reasoning behind this blatant display of favoritism, political wrangling and apathy towards the residents of Berlin.

It is also a fact that multiple Code of Ethics violations were submitted regarding this appointment.

Mr. Williams emphatically said in the Mayor's Forum that there was no such thing as "the Good Old Boys Club" and that favoritism was not an issue in his decision making.

Mr. Williams, I'm going to let the residents of Berlin decide if that is a true or false statement. Voting takes place on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

James Meckley
Berlin

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 8
penditures. I will be doing a 12-year review and plan to send out reports on where the funds were spent each year. I will be requesting a salary review and compare to other towns of comparable size and amenities. We also will need to have a full equipment and vehicle review, department assigned, purchase price and date, as well as estimated dates for replacement.

I plan a full process review of every department where I will be looking for inefficiencies that can be corrected and ultimately save money. I will spend time in each department with the work crews to see where they are spending their time and garner information on what we could do to increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, rework and contract usage. I will be asking the question "Why do we do it that way?"

There is a need for a full contract review. If it is something we can do, why are we contracting it out? We also need to advertise all upcoming contracts to get a better pricing. We need to cancel those that are no longer needed. Just renewing contracts is not acceptable.

We also need to determine if our grant writers are adequately trained to get the most out of future requests.

We should write for as many grants as possible, taking advantage of state and federal funds. Please remember that we need a specific amount of money to put against grant requests.

Todd: I wish I could sit here and tell you that I had the answers to fixing the town's financial situation. The fact of the matter is we are living in a time that is more uncertain than it's ever been so it's more important than ever to have our finances in order.

I'm looking over the budget, educating myself through watching Town Hall meetings, reading every article I can find with the words "Berlin" and "budget" in it. I cannot sit here and tell you though with a good conscience that I have all the answers to that question. All I can say is I'm not afraid to ask any question. I'll work tirelessly to do whatever it takes to get things on track and transparent. I look forward to working with everyone involved to get the citizens of Berlin their money's worth.

What level of the unrestricted fund balance, or the reserves, do you believe should be maintained in the general fund for generally accepted accounting purposes (GAAP) and budgetary purposes? What is your plan to increase the reserves fund to

that amount?

Williams: I fully support the town's Finance Department's recommendation to maintain a general fund reserve equal to three months of general fund expenses, or about \$1.5 million. I also support the proposed policy that designates targeted balances for the general fund of three-months equivalent of operating expenses; a capital reserve of \$100,000; a debt reduction reserve to pay principal and interest on all long-term debt for one year; and a disaster response and recovery reserve of \$250,000.

The policy to be adopted this fall would determine what amount of the borrowing the town should forgive to itself, and what amount should be paid back to the general fund over time, about 10 to 15 years. The proposed policy recommended by the Finance Department is to build-up the general fund reserves to cover three months of annual general fund expenses, or about \$1.5 million.

Here's the interesting thing, the town already has millions in reserve funds, but would be setting a standard for general fund reserves going forward and also setting specific minimums for the other reserve funds. The action that was necessary to

make all this work was taken during the formulation and passage of last year's FY 20 budget.

The town is now operating in the FY 21 budget and in the process of fine-tuning policies for these reserve accounts and establishing a minimum for the general fund reserves and should move forward in establishing a reserve policy for these various funds.

Tyndall: Over the past four years as a councilmember, I have worked to put the town on better fiscal footing by addressing budgetary borrowing and eliminating excessive spending. The answer to establishing an adequate reserve fund relates to the management of public funds and the adoption of reserve goals.

I believe it is important for the mayor to provide regular reporting of the reserve fund balance and notify the council any time money is taken out of this account. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that municipal governments have three months of operating expenses in a reserve fund for emergency purposes.

In the town of Berlin, this would be approximately \$1.5 million. Currently, the Town of Berlin only has
See MAYORAL Page 26

OPEN HOUSES OCT. 2 - OCT. 8

| DAY/TIME | ADDRESS | BR/BA | STYLE | PRICE | AGENCY/AGENT |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---|
| Friday 11-3, Sat-Sun 10-4 | 1200 St. Louis Ave., Island Time – OC | 3BR/3.5BA | Townhomes | \$399,900 | Dan Clayland/Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage |
| Saturday 10-1 | 10 Granby La., Ocean Pines | 4BR/2.5BA | Single Family | \$295,000 | Power of Two/Hileman Real Estate |



MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 25

\$16,000 in their emergency fund. As mayor, I will adopt the GFOA's recommendations to ensure that the town of Berlin is adequately prepared for unanticipated expenses that may arise. I will work to reduce unnecessary spending and find revenue-generating opportunities for Heron Park, which will alleviate \$200,000 of debt service on the general fund.

Bireley: I am not sure of the need for a reserve fund. Proper budgeting would not cause this to be necessary. But not only that, but why is a slush fund of this nature necessary if it is only going to be used in the case of an emergency. But currently it seems this fund could be raided at any time at the whim of the mayor. And if such a fund were created and funded where would the revenue come from to establish this fund? TAXES!!!!!!

Allen: Part 1: Establishing a reserve policy is considered a best practice. The purpose of the Berlin Reserve Policy is to provide budgeting for the unexpected. The question is how much should be kept in reserve? The Government Finance Officers Association recommends that there should be a formal policy on the level of fund balance to be maintained. They also recommend a minimum level of 16.7 percent of the general fund revenues or two months operating expenses. Other sites recommend from eight percent to 50 percent.

I think we should work towards increasing our reserve fund to at least three months' operating expenses, this would equate to 25 percent. My rationale is that if we had a major problem with sewage treatment plant, we would have funds available without impacting our general fund.

Part 2: Following an extensive budget review, I plan to have the council agree to move a small percentage of the operating funds into the reserve fund each month to slowly build up the reserves. Until the review can be accomplished, I cannot

be specific on the exact amount. I also plan to look at current work processes, identify areas that can be improved and/or redesigned, and save money that can be added.

Todd: I'd like to make sure that this is something that is definitely discussed further once anyone is elected. I just found out through the last question and answer session that the mayor and council do not agree on the reserve amount that they have now.

Reserves are for emergency purposes only, in my opinion, and the fact that we do not understand how much money we currently have is beyond me. If this year has taught us anything, it's that it never hurts to have some money backed up. I'd like to see that we could sustain ourselves for three months. That may be a lofty ambition, but it's a good goal to have. I think a good start is to understand exactly what is going on with the reserve policy that we may or may not have in place now. Then we can go from there.

How will you approach the issue of the Berlin Fire Company EMS being understaffed? Do you believe it is the town's or the county's responsibility to provide the Berlin Fire Company EMS with sufficient financial support?

Williams: Berlin does not have a problem with funding firefighting services to protect our town. We do have serious concerns with the growing accelerated cost for Emergency Medical Services. Berlin in the 21st Century has provided more annual funding for Fire/EMS than any other town in Worcester County — with the exception of Ocean City.

In the past four years, Berlin's grant to the [Berlin Fire Company] for firefighting and EMS services has totaled \$1,950,000. This is an average of \$487,500 per year. This is a larger average annual grant from any incorporated community in Worcester County, except Ocean City.

During this same time period — grants from Snow Hill are \$110,000 per year; Pocomoke \$150,000; and Ocean Pines (which has a year-round population of just over 12,000) averages \$400,000 per year.

The Berlin Fire Company says they need an additional \$200,000 each year to provide two additional paid EMS staff. The town's position is that a significant percentage of EMS calls in Berlin result from transient traffic on U.S. Route 50 and U.S. Route 113 which both intersect our town's borders. The additional demand for these EMS services should not be paid for by Berliners. The town of Berlin should not be expected to put up an additional \$200,000 for EMS.

The growing cost of EMS in Berlin and other local mainland communities should be the responsibility of Worcester County.

Tyndall: The Town of Berlin and the Berlin Fire Company share a common goal of protecting the people, businesses and visitors of Berlin. More now than ever, our fire company is called upon to provide a wide range of emergency medical and fire services.

Our fire company has struggled to contain costs without sacrificing services for several years. Currently, the [Berlin Fire Company] provides fire and EMS services to both the town and the county. I believe that it the responsibility of both the town of Berlin and Worcester County to help offset some of the [fire company's] funding needs.

With the demand for increased services, the fire company needs to add capacity by recruiting additional volunteers and adding career staff. This is important in order to prepare for emerging threats to public health and safety, such as the current covid-19 pandemic.

As the next mayor, I will continue to be a strong advocate for the fire company and work closely with them to seek alternative funding and revenue-producing opportunities.

Bireley: Where did this data orig-

inate that claimed that the EMS is understaffed? We cannot drain blood from the taxpayers to create a perfect world. We must seek advice from everyone in the community and listen to their input on how to solve this problem, if, in fact, it is a problem.

However, I am of the opinion that the county should fund all EMS units in Worcester County. They do have sufficient tax base to support such a proposal and they would ensure all citizens in the county are equally protected and provided for. I am told Sussex County funds their EMS programs.

Allen: Part 1: We need to resolve the funding issue between the town and [the Berlin Fire Company]. During the April 13 work session, Mayor Williams informed the [Berlin Fire Company] that the town would be cutting the annual funding for the [fiscal year].

(See information in the Bayside Gazette March 20 and July 30 and the Dispatch on April 16 and July 30 issues). Until this can be done, the [Berlin Fire Company] will need to support the 3 FTE EMS members with a volunteer EMS member. Until I can get into the books and determine where we are and what we have, I do not know where or how we can replace the funds previously designated to the [fire company].

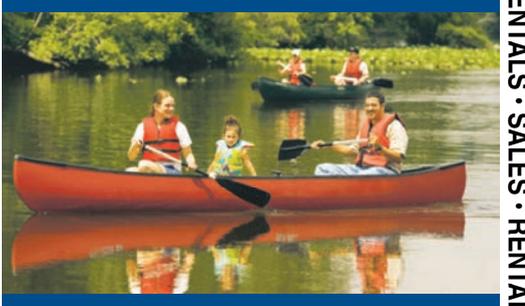
Part 2: According to the Report for Fire and Emergency Medical Services Funding Study dated April 5, 2018, the funding of the [Berlin Fire Company] is a shared expense between the town and the county.

In the world of quality, you bring all the stakeholders together. You sit at the table and discuss all the issues and identify the broad direction you wish to go. This is followed with meetings to discuss goals and objectives. These form the vital link between direction setting and deployment. Goals cover the organizations' broad intent by defining what is to be attained over the long term. Objectives specify what is to be achieved in a scheduled period to

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MAYORAL CANDIDATES

progress to the goal.

As of now, we appear to be at an impasse. The county, town, and fire company need to meet and discuss where we are and come to a consensus of where we want to be. When Berlin votes in the new mayor, this may bring a new perspective to the table and a resolution can be worked out. (Note, this is a countywide issue with several towns and there was a request for subsequent meetings.)

Todd: If I am elected, I will do everything I can to make sure that the Berlin Fire Company is sufficiently funded. I will continue to do so as long as I am in office. Fire and EMS are some of the first people there in the worst situations in your life.

The least we could do is stop playing games and support them adequately. I think it's absolutely the town's responsibility to do so. Berlin needs to be as safe as it is cool. If we are going to bring people to town, we need to make sure that we can keep them safe.

What are some of your objectives to increase the town's resilience and sustainability amid climate change?

Williams: I have led the way in Berlin to address two areas that are meaningful in reducing the negative impacts of climate change. Those areas are mitigating stormwater flooding and starting the conversion of our town electric power generation to a more environmentally responsible and financially beneficial alternative, natural gas.

In Berlin, as with much of the Mid-Atlantic region, shorter winters, earlier and much rainier springs, followed by summers dominated by longer and more severe heat waves is already becoming a norm. For the past two decades, this has resulted in unprecedented flooding in some residential neighborhoods in our town.

As mayor, I led the effort that resulted in creating a Berlin Stormwater Utility. I also made a top priority [of] mitigating and significantly reducing the damage caused to homes and property in Berlin resulting from heavy rainstorms. In 2012, the town of Berlin was the first municipality in Maryland to earn certification as a Sustainable Community and since that time has been recertified.

It is my pledge to all, that our town continue to lead by example and continue to qualify for recertification going forward. This requires ongoing investments to significantly reduce stormwater flooding in those neighborhoods where it remains a threat.

Since 2016, the town of Berlin has invested over \$2.5 million in eliminating stormwater east of Main Street. The next challenge is to attack stormwater flooding that still plagues neighborhoods along and bordering West Street. I am fully

committed to that goal.

Tyndall: Local government has an obligation to inform residents about climate change issues and why building resilience to climate change is important to our community. By doing so, people, their property and their livelihoods will be better protected.

As the next mayor, one of my goals is to collaborate and coordinate with county and state agencies to help Berlin respond to extreme weather events such as intensified rainfall, hurricanes, and fires that may have a damaging environmental impact.

During my tenure as a councilmember, I participated in developing the draft Comprehensive Climate Change Resilience Plan. This was the initial effort to brainstorm how best

to prepare Berlin to respond to climate change events.

As the town moves forward in developing its resilience plan, it's imperative that it include initiatives related to public health, such as emissions from power plants, quality drinking water and an efficient wastewater management system. The plan should also have a public information campaign to promote recycling in every home and business.

Bireley: After the second World War, many oil companies drilled off the Atlantic seashore. They apparently did not find a lot of oil, but they did learn there is substantial warm water underground.

When I was serving as administrative director, I was fortunate in obtaining a grant to study this geothermal energy. The study re-

vealed that as you moved inland away from the coast, the amount of warm water declined. The study also revealed at that time there were sufficient homes in the town that used warm water to heat their homes, that this would make such a system profitable. And add in the need to require all newly constructed homes to use water to heat their homes would only make the project more desirable.

As mayor, I established a recycling program for municipal waste. The program is still being used; however, not everyone is utilizing it. Simply follow the recycling truck on its route and note the number of homes with no pickup. An education program is needed to convince the citizens of the need to recycle and the benefits from such a program.

See MAYORAL Page 29



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[BelieveInTomorrow.org/BeachBash](https://www.believetomorrow.org/BeachBash)

Snapshots



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

BRUNCH

Berlin residents and visitors enjoy the cooler weather during Sunday brunch at the Atlantic Hotel on South Main Street.



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

JAM SESSION

A crowd enjoys live music by Severna Park, Maryland resident Mark O'Dell at Windmill Creek Vineyard and Winery in Berlin on Friday.



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

PLAY TIME

Children put swings and slides to the test, under the watchful eye of elders on Sunday at White Horse Park in Ocean Pines.



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

RECOGNITION

Mayor Gee Williams recognized At-large Councilman Thom Gulyas, left, and District 3 Councilman Elroy Brittingham for their service to Berlin as elected officials during their last meeting on Monday.



CRAFTER

Carolyn Tosti was named the Ocean Pines Pine'eer Craft Club's crafter of the month for September.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/
BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 27

I am aware that in recent years a company contracted with the county to construct wells at the county landfill to extract methane to be used as fuel to generate electricity. The project has since been abandoned. I was told the failure was because the landfill was too new, and the methane had not yet developed. We have a much older landfill near Berlin that may contain sufficient gas to make such a

possibility a reality. I find this possibility intriguing.

Allen: I would recommend that homeowners and businesses purchase and install solar panels to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel. We have installed solar panels on our home and have a net zero use of electricity.

To assist the townspeople, I recommend that we provide anyone who purchases and installs panels a four

percent Berlin tax credit for one year. This will make up the difference of the original federal tax credit from 30 percent to 26 percent.

I would also like to obtain grant funding to convert the remaining diesel generators to natural gas and increase the size of the units.

Todd: I think I may have been one of two candidates that did not say that they would want to sell parts of Her-

ron Park or the whole thing. I love green space, and I think it's vitally important to keep as much of it as we can. That space could be beneficial for stormwater, wind farms [or] anything of the sort. I'm a firm believer in alternative energy sources, and I'd love to embrace that as much as possible.

www.baysideoc.com

TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 23

Weeg: I believe the challenge for Berlin's finances lies in our expenses, not in our revenues. Last year, the town had revenues in excess of \$15 million, and I believe Berlin can continue to offer the same level of services it offers its residents, without increasing taxes, by improving the efficiency of our operations.

Additionally, we can look at increasing revenue by adjusting the cost of developing commercial and multi-residential projects. We need to strengthen our financial situation and make adjustments to both expenses and other revenue sources be-

fore we look at increasing revenue through tax increases.

At the same time, we may want to look at taxing multi-unit properties by the unit, rather than by the single property if we are not already.

I look forward to your vote on Oct. 6. I am running for the at-large position which means any registered voter from any of our four districts can vote for me! Thank you again, to everyone in Berlin. Your support has been amazing, and I look forward to making you proud.

Orris: No one can predict what will happen in the future, but what I can promise is that I will always look

for opportunities to save first with every budget that the mayor presents to the council every year for the four-year term.

Nichols: I believe that tax rates don't necessarily have to increase in the immediate future. If we grow the town smarter, we should be able to manage tax rates better.

Packey: To be honest, that depends on how and when we get out of the covid problem and minimize its damage on our tourist industry. Other issues that need to be addressed are: Can we review the budget and make the necessary

changes that result in increasing our available cash flow so we can build up our reserves and have a stable budget? How do we treat the sewer loan issue?

If we move aggressively and efficiently, I think we can. I will act and vote in way that encourages those actions. One issue that remains is – what do we do with Heron Park? I think if we can act in a way that reduces the financial obligations associated with the park (either by selling off part of it or by turning part of it into a revenue generating venue), it will contribute to our ability to keep that current tax rate without the need for increases.

NOW PLAYING



LAUREN GLICK BAND

Coconuts Beach Bar & Grill: Sunday, Oct. 4, 4-8 p.m.

CAPTAIN'S TABLE

15th St. & Baltimore Ave., Ocean City
410-289-7192 / www.captainstableoc.com
Every Friday & Saturday:
Phil Perdue on piano, 5-9 p.m.

COCONUTS BEACH BAR & GRILL

In the Castle in the Sand Hotel
37th Street Oceanfront, Ocean City
410-289-6846 / www.castleintheland.com
Oct. 2: Marcella Peters Duo, noon to 3 p.m.;
Monkee Paw, 4-8 p.m.
Oct. 3: The Time Police, noon to 3 p.m.;
Lime Green Band, 4-8 p.m.
Oct. 4: Wes Davis Duo, noon to 3 p.m.;
Lauren Glick Band, 4-8 p.m.

Oct. 8: Kevin Poole & Joe Mama, 4-8 p.m.

OCEAN CLUB NIGHTCLUB

101st Street, Ocean City
In the Horizons Restaurant, in the Clarion
Fontainebleau Hotel
410-524-3535 / www.clarionoc.com
Oct. 2-3: First Class, 7 p.m. to midnight

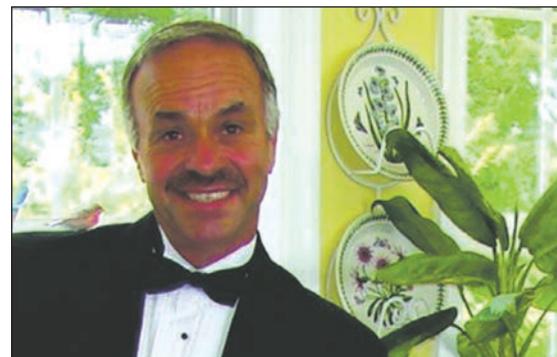
SECRETS

49th Street and the bay, Ocean City
410-524-4900 / www.secrets.com
Oct. 2: John McNutt Duo, 4-8 p.m.;
Shake Shake Shake Duo, 8-11:30 p.m.
Oct. 3: Full Circle, 5-9 p.m.;
Kono Nation Duo, 8-11:30 p.m.
Oct. 8: Opposite Directions, 4-8 p.m.



FIRST CLASS

Ocean Club Nightclub: Friday & Saturday, Oct. 2-3, 7 p.m. to midnight



PHIL PERDUE ON PIANO

Captain's Table:
Saturday & Sunday,
Oct. 3 & 4, 5-9 p.m.

Cuisine

Don't be shy with seasoning, Suplee says

I love it when friends stop by the restaurant to visit. In our business, we consider many of our guests to be friends, so suffice it to say that we see a lot of friends throughout the week.

But it's the old friends — good folks visiting from the other side of the 'crick,' as we say — who are al-



By Paul Suplee,
MBA, CEC, PC-3

ways a pleasure to see.

This past weekend, a buddy of mine decided to take a detour on his way to Dewey Beach and swung through Pittsville for some early afternoon grub.

We fished together for a couple of years before I defected to a new team, and we have stayed in touch. An Army veteran, we get along splendidly, jovially ripping each other apart in text threads and in person. It's a veteran thing, I guess.

So when Sasha came in to town and brought his family, he pretty much told me just to send stuff out. And of course, he wanted to try all the barbecued goods, and I was certainly not going to disappoint.

Preparing a glorious tray of our world-famous pulled pork, brisket and our crazy-delicious ribs, I added some of our sides and, of course, all of our homemade sauces.

Of course, after splitting two orders of deviled eggs, a fried green tomato with crab dip, a brisket grilled cheese and a few beers, this massive platter of smoked goods was more than they could handle. I sat in awe watching them do a great deal of damage on the platter, but, alas, they came to a screeching halt, seemingly at the same time.

I joined them in a round of beers, introducing them to Weedline (my hands-down favorite session IPA, and a local to boot). We laughed, Sasha reminded me of being a traitor to the team and we laughed a little more. And that is what kicked off a great Saturday for me.

When people come to eat with us, we often get asked for our recipes, and while they aren't published, I really do not have any issues with sharing them.

As I have said for years, if this is the best that I can do, then shame on me. Plus, I had the great fortune of working for some world-class chefs in different parts of the country, and it did



not matter who it was.

They all shared their recipes. They all shared their secrets, and they all shared their love of the game.

Now that it is my turn to try to share some of this joie de vivre in an ugly, ugly business, and now that we have pushed through the first wave of this blasted virus, every day becomes a bit brighter as we move forward.

I'm not sure about you, but this year definitely took a toll on my state of mind.

It has been rough, but my team has fought through and luckily no one on the crew has tested positive for the dastardly beast.

Now that we are back in quasi full-swing, we are just trying to recreate the vibe that we have always had in the building and she is slowly coming back to life.

And even though we have been opened for over two years, we still get guests daily from Ocean City, Southern Delaware and Salisbury who attest to it being their first visit, even though they have read about us or saw us on TV.

Many have friends who are regulars and they rave about everything, but

"this is the first time that we could make it out here." That is a common theme.

But that is just fine, as with new guests we make new friends. And with new friends we get to play around with the food and make said friends happy beyond belief. That is what it's all about, isn't it?

Pulled Pork Barbecue

per butt

1 pork butt, bone-in
BBQ Pork Dry Rub, as needed
(recipe follows)
Hickory for the smoker

1. Pat the pork butt dry and rub the entire surface with the dry rub.

2. Don't be shy with the seasoning here, as this is a large cut of meat, and the seasoning will only remain on the outside. As you break it up the flavors will mix in. If you do not use enough dry rub, the end result will be bland.

3. Set the smoker to 215 F and, using the hickory logs (or chunks or chips depending on the type of smoker), let it rip for anywhere from 12-14 hours. A lot depends on the temperature outside the smoker, humidity

(hot summer day or rain), so you have to realize that all situations will be different.

4. You will know that the butt is done when there is a nice, dark crust on the meat, and also when a fork goes right through the meat with ease.

5. Pull the pork until it is cool enough to handle and pull it.

6. Keep it hot for service.

BBQ Pork Dry Rub

1/4 c. Kosher salt, big flake
1/2 c. Dark brown sugar
1/4 c. Good quality cocoa powder
1/4 c. Paprika
2 Tbsp. Dark chili powder
2 Tbsp. Ground black pepper
1/4 c. Granulated garlic
2 Tbsp. Onion powder
1 Tbsp. ground thyme

1. Combine all ingredients and store in an airtight container until needed.

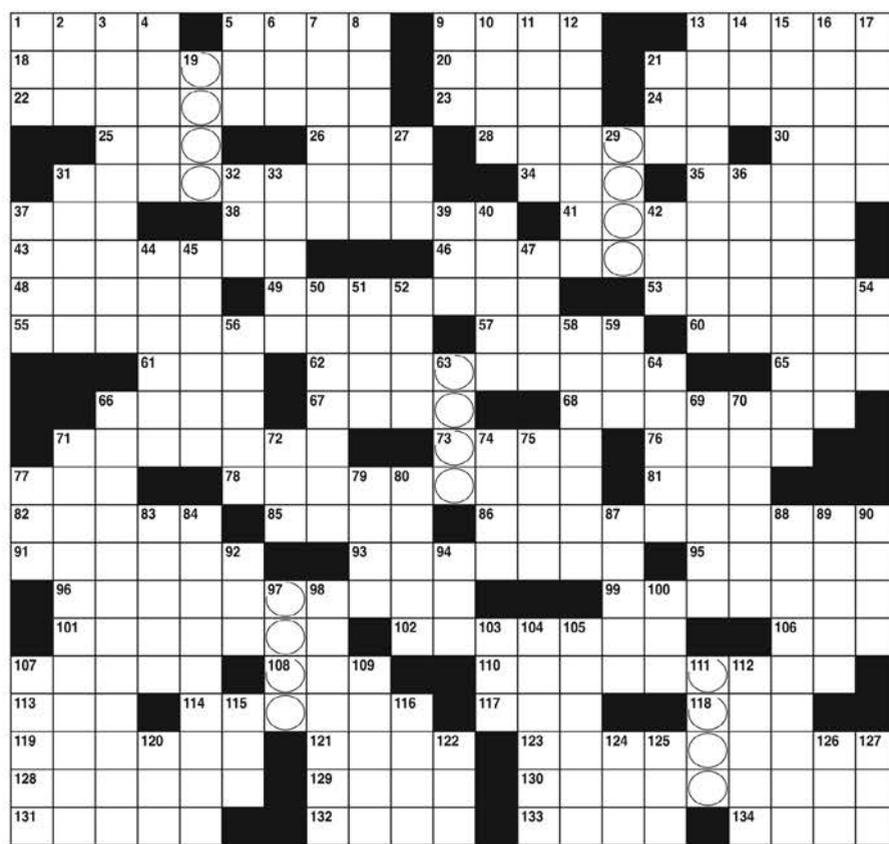
— Paul G. Suplee is an Associate Professor of Culinary Arts at Wor-Wic Community College. Find his ePortfolio at www.heartofakitchen.com.

Puzzles

WORD LADDERS BY SAM TRABUCCO / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Sam Trabucco is an American cryptocurrency trader based in Hong Kong. When he's not working, he enjoys playing board and card games, especially Magic: The Gathering and poker. Sam says one of his top priorities as a crossword constructor is to make his puzzle relatable to younger solvers. "I want this hobby to remain relevant forever!" This is his 25th puzzle for The Times. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Something blurred to avoid trademark infringement
 - 5 "Well, that's ridiculous!"
 - 9 One method of coffee-making
 - 13 Fully intends to
 - 18 Reason for people to hide
 - 20 Bit of ancient text
 - 21 Home of Roma
 - 22 Expert on nutrition
 - 23 Bantering remark
 - 24 Feature of Captain Ahab
 - 25 Many M.I.T. grads: Abbr.
 - 26 End of many a name on the periodic table
 - 28 Doctor's hand covering
 - 30 Tokyo, before it was Tokyo
 - 31 Not wanted
 - 34 Pop star Grande, to fans
 - 35 French movie theaters
 - 37 "Ki-i-i-inda"
 - 38 "You're on!"
 - 41 Black-market, say
 - 43 Occasion for male bonding, in modern lingo
 - 46 Pressing need when on the go?
 - 48 Part of a media-sales team, informally
- DOWN**
- 49 "Agreed"
 - 53 Philosopher who tutored Nero
 - 55 Message made with cutout letters, stereotypically
 - 57 Chowder ingredient
 - 60 Game in which each player starts with a score of 501
 - 61 West Bank grp.
 - 62 Social-media avatar, for short
 - 65 Thing given as a concession
 - 66 Castle defense
 - 67 Nobel winner Morrison
 - 68 One who has a lot to offer?
 - 71 Yellow variety of quartz
 - 73 Norse troublemaker
 - 76 Spotted
 - 77 Fenway team, familiarly
 - 78 "However hard I try ..."
 - 81 Child-care expert LeShan
 - 82 Parts of ziggurats
 - 85 Twin of Jacob in the Bible
 - 86 Lifetime-achievement ceremonies, e.g.
 - 91 Bequeaths
 - 93 Difference between dark and light, in a way
 - 95 Bacterium in some raw meat
 - 96 Center of a cobbler
 - 99 Clorox cleanser
 - 101 Leaves alone
 - 102 Uses a modern engine
 - 106 Kenan's partner on an old sitcom
 - 107 The "L" of B.L.M.
 - 108 "Geaux Tigers!" sch.
 - 110 Love of money, per 1 Timothy 6:10
 - 113 Brand of nail polish
 - 114 Appeasing
 - 117 School closing?
 - 118 One of the former Big Three information services, along with CompuServe and Prodigy
 - 119 Words from a present giver
 - 121 Sweetheart, in Rome
 - 123 "That one's mine!"
 - 128 Word often confused with "least"
 - 129 Frenzied
 - 130 Sweet Mexican dessert
 - 131 Backsides, to Brits
 - 132 Certain sneak
 - 133 Caesar's accusation
 - 134 Like a fox
 - 11 Photo-sharing app, familiarly
 - 12 14th-century king of Aragon
 - 13 Written using an outline
 - 14 Witch
 - 15 Basketball star nicknamed "The Answer"
 - 16 Kind of test with unproven accuracy
 - 17 Largest city of Nigeria
 - 19 Word ladder, Part 1
 - 21 Big milestone for a start-up
 - 27 Slangy "I messed up"
 - 29 Word ladder, Part 2
 - 31 Old food-label std.
 - 32 Where an auto racer retires?
 - 33 Enjoyed home cooking, say
 - 36 "I Love It" duo — Pop
 - 37 Letter-shaped beam
 - 39 When repeated, king of Siam's refrain in "The King and I"
 - 40 Result of peace talks
 - 42 Some smartphones
 - 44 Oppressive ruler
 - 45 Lacking + or -, electrically
 - 47 "___ and Janis" (comic)
 - 50 Whirlybirds
 - 51 Óscar's "other"
 - 52 Gas that's lighter than air
 - 54 Nile danger
 - 56 Fire in "Jane Eyre," e.g.
 - 58 Like most lions
 - 59 Mrs., abroad
 - 63 Word ladder, Part 3
 - 64 Subsidized
 - 66 ★, ★★★ and ★★★★★, say
 - 69 Where to find some cliffhangers?
 - 70 Unpopular legislation of 1773
 - 71 N.F.L. referee, at the start of overtime
 - 72 ___ Valley (San Francisco area)
 - 74 Gem that's also a name
 - 75 New Zealander
 - 77 Start of some Quebec place names: Abbr.
 - 79 French filmmaker Jacques
 - 80 Celebrity chef Eddie
 - 83 Way to go
 - 84 Hot-cocoa brand
 - 87 Sublease
 - 88 "Be sharp!"
 - 89 Frequent tabloid cover subject
 - 90 Spot for a houseplant
 - 92 Letters on a Cardinal's cap
 - 94 Greenpeace or the W.W.F., for short
 - 97 Word ladder, Part 4
 - 98 Optimistic assertion
 - 100 "___ Beso," Paul Anka hit
 - 103 Prospector's find
 - 104 Start streaming, e.g.
 - 105 Internet meme with grammatically incorrect captions
 - 107 Shower scrubber
 - 109 Eel, on a sushi menu
 - 111 Word ladder, Part 5
 - 112 Prospectors' finds
 - 115 Mel of baseball
 - 116 Understand, informally
 - 120 Clarifying word on a school-reunion name tag
 - 122 Tinder bio info
 - 124 Amazon worker
 - 125 "Kill Bill" co-star Lucy
 - 126 Jazz composer Beiderbecke
 - 127 Like a fox



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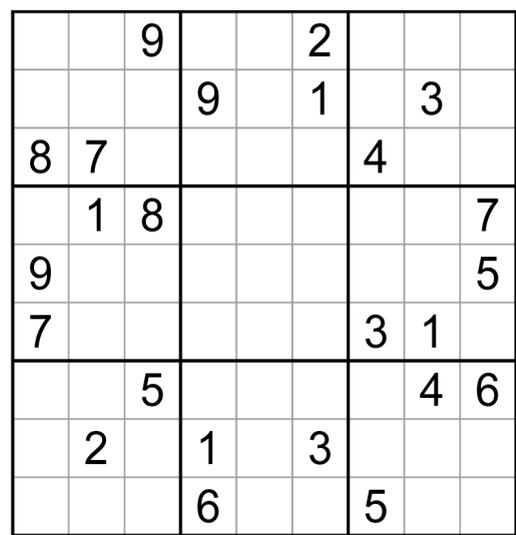


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HARD - 27

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

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



CALENDAR

Thurs., Oct. 1

CPAP MASK FITTING

Atlantic General Hospital Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center, 9733 Healthway Drive. Free mask fitting clinic for patients who are having trouble adjusting to their CPAP equipment. By appointment only: Robin Rohlfling, 410-641-9726.

SUNFEST KITE FESTIVAL

Ocean City Beach, 4th - 6th streets. See master kite flyers from around the world showcase their aerial displays of art, kite-making workshops and kite battles. All events are wind and weather permitting. 410-289-7855, <https://kite loft.com>

MERRY MAKERS - BOOK PUMPKINS

Meeting via Zoom, 10:30 AM. Materials needed: old book (any size); scissors; paint brush or sponge; orange pint; twig or cork; hot glue gun; construction paper and crafting wire or artificial leaves, ribbons to embellish the top.
<http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY WITH ANTI-BULLYING MESSAGE

Beginning at 3:00 PM. The purpose of the assembly is to speak out against bullying as well as to motivate and inspire kids to succeed. It also serves as a pathway to reach kids who need a mentor through Worcester Connects, a mentor program through Worcester Youth and Family Counseling in Berlin. The event will feature Bubba Almony, celebrity bodyguard and Ambassador for Bodyguards Against Bullying. The event is for high school students. Registration is required. Info: Debbie Smullen, dsmullen@gowoyo.org or 410-641-4598.

Fri., Oct. 2

DEADLINE TO REGISTER FOR INAUGURAL MARINE DEBRIS PLUNDER

Plunder the bays in search of marine debris Saturday, Oct. 10, from 8:20 a.m. to 4 p.m. Boaters and Land Lubbers alike are encouraged to pick up debris that has been discarded in our bays, beaches and streets, and bring your loot to the West Ocean City Harbor for a weigh-in. Preregister at www.md-coastalbays.org by Oct. 2.
mcbp@mdcoastalbays.org

SUNFEST KITE FESTIVAL

Ocean City Beach, 4th - 6th streets. See master kite flyers from around the world showcase their aerial displays of art, kite-making workshops and kite battles. All events are wind and weather permitting. 410-289-7855, <https://kite loft.com>

WITTY FIBER FRIENDS

Meeting via Zoom, 10:00 AM. Bring your lap work and join the group as they knit, crochet and embroider. All are welcome.
<http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

SUNFUNOC

Trimper's Rides of Ocean City, 700 S. Atlantic Ave., 12:00 PM. Featuring food, music, arts and crafts vendors and \$2 all games and rides for the kids. Playland will

have half off all video games. There will be a sidewalk sale at the Inlet Village and Nana's Hot Chicken, located in the center of the outdoor rides, will offer specials.

YOUNG ADULT WRITERS LIVE!

Meeting via Zoom, 5:00 PM. A Hispanic Heritage edition featuring Taylor Kay Mejia, author of "We Set the Dark on Fire" her debut novel. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org. <http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

VOTER REGISTRATION TABLE

Worcester County NAACP will host a registration table at the Snow Hill Arts Council's Arts on the River First Friday event, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM. Ivory Smith, 443-944-6701

FIRST FRIDAY OPENING RECEPTION

Ocean City Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Meet the artists, enjoy hors d'oeuvres and refreshments and see the new exhibits featuring a variety of local artists. Open to the public. Free admission. 410-524-9433, <https://artleagueofoceancity.org>

GREEN MARKET

Fridays through Nov. 27 - Trimper Rides under the Ferris Wheel, 600 S. Atlantic Ave., 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Local Farmers Market featuring fresh everything and more from our local farmers. The market is agriculture based only. There will be live music and weekly drawings. Sally Kneavel, Sally@Trimperrides.com, 410-289-8617, <http://TrimperRides.com>

Sat., Oct. 3

SUNFEST KITE FESTIVAL

Ocean City Beach, 4th - 6th streets. See master kite flyers from around the world showcase their aerial displays of art, kite-making workshops and kite battles. All events are wind and weather permitting. 410-289-7855, <https://kite loft.com>

DRIVE-THRU FRIED CHICKEN DINNER

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 36536 Mount Pleasant Road, 11:00 AM. Menu includes four-piece fried chicken (breast, wing, thigh and drumsticks), greens, mashed potatoes, gravy, coleslaw, apple sauce, roll and cupcake. Cost is \$14. Stay in your car and use the east driveway. 410-835-8340

SUNFUNOC

Trimper's Rides of Ocean City, 700 S. Atlantic Ave., 12:00 PM. Featuring food, music, arts and crafts vendors and \$2 all games and rides for the kids. Playland will have half off all video games. There will be a sidewalk sale at the Inlet Village and Nana's Hot Chicken, located in the center of the outdoor rides, will offer specials.

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

Sun., Oct. 4

SUNFEST KITE FESTIVAL

Ocean City Beach, 4th - 6th streets. See

master kite flyers from around the world showcase their aerial displays of art, kite-making workshops and kite battles. All events are wind and weather permitting. 410-289-7855, <https://kite loft.com>

KofC ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST

Knights of Columbus Hall, 9901 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD, 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM. 410-524-7994

EMPTY BOWL PROJECT - BOWL MAKING

OC Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. Bowl-making session using raw clay where you can shape and imprint your own design. No experience is necessary, and all materials are included in a \$25 fee. Proceeds benefit the Diakonia food bank and the programs of the Ocean City Art League.

SUNFUNOC

Trimper's Rides of Ocean City, 700 S. Atlantic Ave., 12:00 PM. Featuring food, music, arts and crafts vendors and \$2 all games and rides for the kids. Playland will have half off all video games. There will be a sidewalk sale at the Inlet Village and Nana's Hot Chicken, located in the center of the outdoor rides, will offer specials.

EMPTY BOWL PROJECT - BOWL DECORATING

OC Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Decorating session where you embellish an already-made bowl hand-produced on the wheel by Robbie Johnson. No experience is necessary, and all materials are included in a \$25 fee. Proceeds benefit the Diakonia food bank and the programs of the Ocean City Art League.

ROCK AND RIDE ORIGINAL LIVE MUSIC

Trimper Rides, 700 S. Atlantic Ave, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM, every Sunday. Jessica Bauer, Jessica@Trimperrides.com, 410-289-8617, <http://TrimperRides.com>

Mon., Oct. 5

TRAVEL THROUGH BOOKS WITH KIKI AND FIFI

Meeting via Facebook, 2:00 PM. Travel the world using the hottest genres in books, locales and the best bad guys. Plot your course to your next great read with this laugh-out-load presentation.
<http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY MEETING

The meeting will be held via conference call, 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM. Dial 605-472-5789, wait for voice command, then press 944874. TOPS is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and healthy lifestyle. Berlin group No. 169. Rose Champion, 410-641-0157

AGH DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

The meeting will be held via conference call, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Dial 978-990-5451, wait for voice command, then press 3753651. Open to the public and meets the first Monday of each month. Discussion and education related to diabetes is provided. AGH Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services, 410-208-9761

OPIOID PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Meeting via Zoom, 6:00 PM. Gain an in-depth understanding of what is occurring, how we arrived here and contributions/risk factors. Learn to recognize signs of an opioid overdose and how the reversal drug Naloxone works. <http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

Tues., Oct. 6

FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP

The meeting will be held via video call, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Join the Faith Partnership: A cooperative effort for local Worship Centers and Atlantic General Hospital & Health System to increase health awareness, education and healthy living incentives. Gail Mansell, gmansell@atlanticgeneral.org, 410-641-9725

FLU VACCINE CLINIC

Snow Hill Senior Center, 4767 Snow Hill Road, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. This drive-through clinic is for ages 13 and older. The high dose flu vaccine, which is for individuals age 65 and older will also be available. The flu vaccine is considered preventative care and is covered by most insurances. An appointment is required: 410-632-1100, Ext. 1119. Atlantic General Hospital, 410-641-9FLU (9358)

WINDOW ART AND SCIENCE

Meeting via Zoom, 10:30 AM. Create a collage using a window, while exploring how different materials interact with light. Ages 3-10 years. Register and get materials list: www.worcesterlibrary.org

ONLINE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Meeting via video call, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM. An informal gathering of people whose lives are affected by the caregiving needs of another. An opportunity to share in the wisdom, insight and humor of fellow caregivers. Gail Mansell, gmansell@atlanticgeneral.org, 410-641-9725

Wed., Oct. 7

KEEPING ANNA'S DREAM ALIVE

Ocean Pines Community Center parking lot, 239 Ocean Parkway, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Volunteers from AARP and Kiwanis will be collecting donations for our military. Items needed include baby wipes, body wash/shampoo, dental hygiene products, razors, deodorant (non-aerosol), gum, granola bars, small bags of peanuts, packs of hot chocolate, instant oatmeal, 5 oz. cans Chef Boyardee pasta, powdered drinks, trail mix, beef jerky, Ramen noodle bricks, sunflower seeds, lip balm, Kleenex, pens, cards and puzzle books. To donate just drive up, stay in your car, pop the trunk and someone will pick up your donations.

AGH DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

The meeting will be held via conference call, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM. Dial 978-990-5451, wait for voice command, then press 3753651. Open to the public and meets the first Wednesday of each month. Discussion and education related to diabetes. AGH Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services, 410-208-9761

CALL
410-723-6397
BY MONDAY
5 P.M.



CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE

Classifieds now appear in Ocean City Today & the Bayside Gazette each week and online at oceancitytoday.com and baysideoc.com.

HELP WANTED

DANCE and MUSICAL THEATER TEACHERS WANTED (part time)
 New private studio located in Assateague area.
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 The Worcester County Humane Society is seeking full or part-time Animal Care help. Position includes cage/kennel cleaning, feeding, medicating, grooming, exercising, and monitoring behavior/ health. Prior cat and/or dog care experience preferred. Veterinary assistant experience a plus. Persons applying need to follow established rules & protocols, display a positive attitude, and believe in our mission & no kill philosophy. New employees are evaluated after a 90-day probationary period.
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YARD SALE

Waterfront Garage/Yard/Moving Sale - Household, garden, kitchen, & sports items. 7am-10am, Saturday, October 3rd. Located at 415 Bluewater Ct, Ocean Pines, 21811 in The Point (End of South Side Ocean Pines - Second left once in community). **EVERYTHING MUST GO!**

COMMUNITY YARD SALE - Berlin, Decatur Farm, Off Route 113 across from Stephen Decatur Park - Saturday, October 3rd, 7am to 11am. Don't forget to wear your mask!

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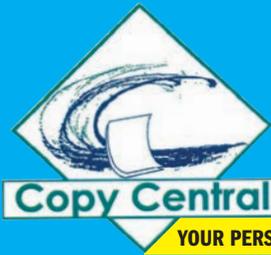
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