



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin leaders lobby for help on utility regs

Meeting with legislators concentrates on savings

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Berlin Mayor and Council held a work session virtually with District 38 legislators last Thursday to discuss the electric utility's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards, the multi-purpose building on Flower Street and covid-19 funding and resources to the town.

Berlin's electric utility, which has 10 employees, is one of five municipal electric utilities in the state.

"The way that we operate is a peak-shaving plant, so when times of electricity rates are high, we generate locally rated off of William St., and that saves the taxpayers and our customers about \$550,000 a year," said Mayor Zackery Tyndall.

Tyndall added that the department is consistently recognized by American Municipal Power for low outage times and prompt customer service.

In the past fiscal year, the town has made infrastructure improvements of
See BERLIN Page 4

HO HO HELLO

Santa and Mrs. Claus tour the west side of Berlin on Saturday afternoon with help from the Berlin Fire Company.

OP pending budget outlook unclear

With so many variables, it's tough to know how year will end, and how future looks

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Handicapping potential assessment increases in the Ocean Pines Association's budget for next year would be challenging as it is, but the absence of covid-19 relief funds makes it worse.

General Manager John Viola shared projected forecasts to close the current fiscal year, while also reviewing work on the pending fiscal 2021-

22 budget during the Ocean Pines Association Board meeting on Saturday. "There's a lot going on this year," he said.



John Viola

Viola said although making fiscal 20-21 projections has been difficult because of the pandemic, a closing forecast was prepared in response to a board request.

"During the pandemic it wasn't easy without a playbook," he said.

The ending fiscal year forecast included budget projections with and

without pandemic relief funds.

Viola said after factoring out more than \$1.4 million in federal Payroll Protection Program funding awarded to Ocean Pines, the current budget is forecast to lose roughly \$900,000.

Viola said in addition to \$1.143 million in PPP funds that Ocean Pines received directly, food and beverage contractor the Matt Ortt Companies was awarded \$275,000, while the Affordable Care Act also accounted for \$125,000 of budget favorability.

Director Frank Daly said an assessment increase of roughly \$108 would be required the following year to re-

See UNCERTAIN Page 8

County students start winter break with eye on Jan.

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Students in Worcester County are getting their winter break before returning to school in person or online in the new year.

Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School on Racetrack Road in Berlin is following the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington's direction to return virtually after winter break from Jan. 4-8, 2021.

See SAFE Page 11

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SHA requests Rt. 376 sections be deeded from town

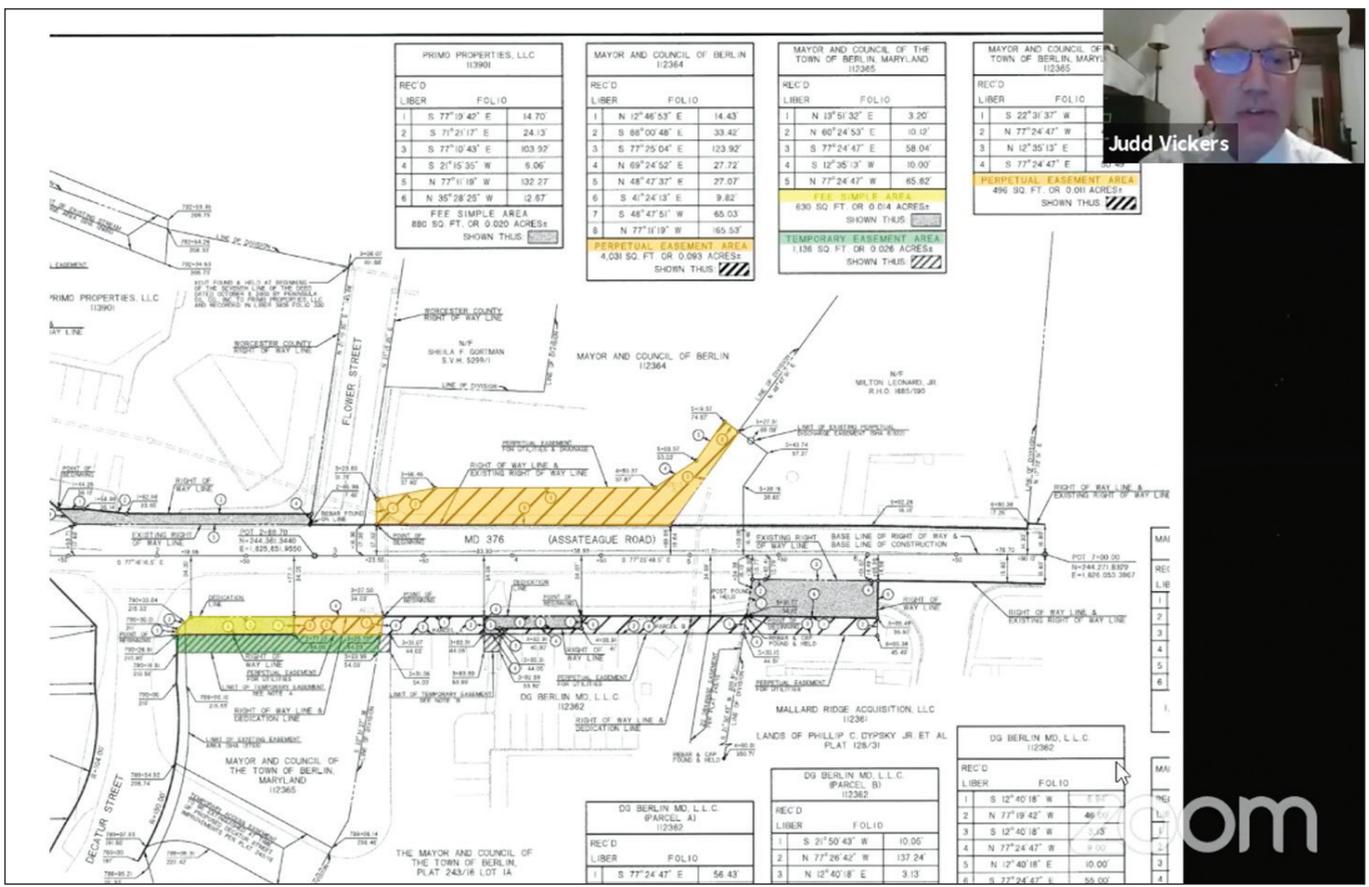
By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Berlin Mayor and Council met virtually with State Highway Administration (SHA) officials on Dec. 17 to discuss widening Route 376 from Route 113 to Flower Street for safety improvements.

“We’re widening this section so that there will be more room for people to take that left or go straight and still allow traffic to bypass that queue and take the right onto 113,” said SHA Assistant District Engineer Dallas Baker.

Judd Vickers, real property supervisor at SHA, said SHA is asking the town to transfer a 630-square-foot parcel of property for road improvements on the corner of Route 376 and Decatur Street in Berlin.

“Just to the east or the right of that, you’ll see an area highlighted in orange as well as an area highlighted in orange on the north side of 376. Those areas are what we call perpetual easement areas,” Vickers said. “In those types of areas, the town retains ownership of the property but would give State Highway a perpetual easement to make drainage improvements as well as run utilities along those corridors.”



The Berlin Mayor and Council met virtually with State Highway Administration (SHA) officials on Dec. 17 to discuss transferring property along Route 376 to widen it from Route 113 to Flower Street for safety improvements.

Doug Sommers, a real property manager at SHA, said a large drainage structure will be installed on that property.

On the south side of Route 376, SHA requested a temporary easement of a 1,136-square-foot parcel to

be used by SHA during the construction period for equipment staging and grading, Vickers said.

The potential transfer may be formally approved after public advertising.

Sommers said the transfer would

improve the flow of traffic at that intersection. In addition, the transfer would not interfere with the town’s paused plans to align Decatur and Flower streets for enhanced safety.

Planning Director Dave Engelhart
See WIDENING Page 3

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OPA Briefs

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Ocean Pines Board of Directors received updates on year-to-date financial reports, record-setting rainfall totals, delinquent account collections and reforming the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee during its virtual meeting on Saturday.

Financials

General Manager John Viola presented a flash report for current fiscal year operating balances through November.

Net revenues, which were budgeted at \$262,000, closed at \$290,000 for a favorability of \$28,000.

Expenses during November, which were budgeted at \$975,000, closed at \$915,000, for a favorability of

\$60,000.

Viola said despite the totals combining for a positive variance of \$88,000 over projections, the remaining handful of months in fiscal 20-21 is likely to trend in the opposite direction.

"Despite the favorability losses are coming," he said.

Racquet sports

Director Camilla Rogers moved to reform the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee

"Racquet sports are growing at a rapid pace," she said. "There are lots of new tennis and Pickleball players."

Rogers said the goal is to attract people involved with tennis, platform tennis or pickleball to help identify facility requirements.

Rogers said the reconstituted advisory

committee would present future proposals for improving racquet sports facilities to the board.

"Participants from all forms of racquet sports will have the opportunity to participate in the committee," she said.

The board voted unanimously to reinstate the previously suspended committee.

Rainfall

Viola said a deluge of calls were received from residents about flooding during an extreme downpour on Dec. 5.

"We got a lot of calls," he said.

Following the heavy rain on that Saturday, Viola on Monday conferred with Public Works and CPI Director Eddie Wells who shared the potentially record breaking totals.

"We received 5.7 inches of rain on Sat. Dec. 5," he said.

Viola said annual precipitation

numbers have eclipsed previous yearly totals.

"A lot of people said it was the worst they've ever seen," he said.

Delinquent accounts

Director Doug Parks, per a request last month from OPA President Larry Perrone, presented a report on delinquent assessment payments.

"As of July 31 this year there were 1,071 delinquent accounts for \$1.665 million," he said.

During the intervening months the outstanding balances have dropped significantly.

"As of Nov. 30 we were down to 490 delinquent accounts for \$974,000," he said. "We will continue a concerted effort to reduce it anyway possible."

Parks said the board would receive a formal report on assessment fee collections in February, per bylaw requirements.

Widening Route 376 for safety

Continued from Page 2

said town staff, including Stormwater and Wastewater Superintendent Jamey Latchum and Electric Utility Director Tim Lawrence, have met with SHA officials for four years about the alignment. Town engineers designed a plan to represent the new alignment, and the SHA representatives agreed on a conceptual level that it would work.

Engelhart added that the proposed widening of Route 376 takes into account the potential future alignment of Decatur and Flower streets.

"It's not often that I get the chance to say this, but we're being proactive to the community of Berlin," Sommers said, regarding the installation of new sidewalks, utilities and road improvements.

Baker added that the widening of the road would limit the traffic pile-up on Route 376.

When Mayor Zackery Tyndall asked if the council wants to proceed with public advertising of the transfer so that it could be voted on at a meeting in January, Dean Burrell, vice

president of the Town Council, said he did not want to move forward with the deeding without further discussing it among the council.

"The advertising doesn't commit us to anything," Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood clarified.

Councilmember Shaneka Nichols said she struggled to visualize the proposed improvements and asked for additional information.

"It doesn't really sit well with me because my mind is still thinking about how congested and crazy that spot already is," Nichols said.

Baker said a more detailed rendering could be provided.

Councilmember Troy Purnell suggested the existing town's plans for the alignment of Decatur and Flower streets be provided to the newly elected council members.

Tyndall added that when the proposed transfer is formally considered in January, more information can be presented as well.

"It won't be hard for us to send you kind of a before and after sketch," Baker replied.



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BAYSIDE GAZETTE www.baysideoc.com

Berlin officials ask for help with utility regs

Continued from Page 1

the electricity utility, including the purchase and installation of a CAT G3520 Genset natural gas generator for \$2.5 million to replace a diesel generator and applying for a grant through Maryland Energy Administration for a 48 kWh rooftop solar system on the electric substation on Schoolfield Street.

"We have five generators total, so we're looking at some ways we can possibly replace those moving forward," Tyndall said.

As for the current Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards, Tyndall said "municipal electric utilities are forced to purchase an increased percentage of renewable energy credits, or RECs, annually."

"For the five municipal electric utilities, we only equal a little over one percent of the state's entire electric usage and customer base," he said. "This places us at a disadvantage when we're out on the market, competing against larger co-ops and for-profit companies for these renewable energy credits on the open market, and those are passed along in the form of higher costs to our customers."

The Town Council agreed in November to support Senate Bill 0677 and House Bill 1392 and provide a financial share for a lobbyist to help pass legislation to cap the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards for the five municipal electric utilities.

"There's similar caps already in place for some of the larger co-ops in the state," Tyndall said. "If we were successful with this cap on the [Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards], we're looking for the taxpayers of Berlin and our electric utility customers at a little over \$2 million in savings from 2021-2030, and that translates to about \$200,000 a year in savings that we can pass along to our customer base."

With last year's General Assembly session cut short because of covid-19, the bill never made it to the Senate, but was passed in the House.

For the 2021 legislative session, Tyndall asked Delegate Charles Otto

(R-38A), Delegate Wayne Hartman (R-38C) and Maryland State Sen. Mary Beth Carozza (R-38) to support the bill for the town's benefit.

Town Attorney David Gaskill also explained to the council and the District 38 delegation that Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards were passed, targeting private, for-profit electric companies.

"For some reason, the co-ops got opted out to pay less, but the five municipality electric companies did not," Gaskill said. "So, we're being treated like we're BGE."

Berlin's electric utility is not operated as a for-profit business.

Then, Tyndall shared the goals for the Berlin Community Center Project at the Multipurpose Building on Flower Street.

"We are looking to partner with the Berlin Community Improvement Association and SHORE UP! that currently occupy the site, and hopefully bring a new life to the once vibrant community center that used to be here, and that's still here, but in some disrepair," Tyndall said.

The Berlin Multipurpose Building is the historic site of the Flower Street School and is in walking distance to Dr. William Henry Park.

"Our town really lacks an area where you can have indoor recreation space and community gathering space," Tyndall said.

He added that the town also owns a three-acre parcel nearby, which is normally used for overflow parking during events.

"The building really needs some improvements on the inside, and we need to have a good community discussion about where we want to go next with the property," Tyndall said.

Responding to Otto, Tyndall said the current owner of the property is the Berlin Community Improvement Association.

"For years, the town of Berlin helped fund the Berlin Community Improvement Association (BCIA) to help maintain the building and keep it in good repair," Tyndall replied to Carozza's question about the existing



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The Berlin Mayor and Council discussed long-term plans for transforming the Berlin Multipurpose Building into a community center with District 38 legislators last Thursday.

partnership. "We're talking about a building that's far surpassed its useful life. We're at a point now where we have to have a discussion about what the future of that building looks like and whether that's going to be new construction or a complete remodel."

Dean Burrell, vice president of the council, added that the Berlin Multipurpose Building has functioned as a polling place for municipal elections as well as a meeting place for town community meetings over the years.

Lastly, Tyndall stressed the impact of covid-19 on town employees, residents and the businesspeople in the small town.

Berlin is also home to five schools – Buckingham Elementary School, Stephen Decatur Middle School, Berlin Intermediate School, Stephen Decatur High School and Worcester Preparatory School – nursing homes and assisted living facilities, Atlantic General Hospital and other medical providers within the incorporated town limits.

"We just ask that as you go to Annapolis, as you're out and about representing your districts and our town, that you keep us in the forefront of your mind," Tyndall said. "If there is some supplemental financial support that does come along, that you could advocate for the municipal level, that would be great."

Hartman added that Peninsula Regional Medical Center received its first allotment of the covid-19 vaccinations.

Atlantic General received vaccinations last Friday.

"We can expect covid-19 recovery to be front and center during the legislative session," Carozza said. "We want to continue to prioritize those that have been hardest hit. As you look from March to where we are today, we have obviously seen our hospitality industries, specifically the restaurants, extremely hard hit by covid-19, so there has been a focus during this interim period to work with the small businesses first on providing the immediate assistance they needed just to survive being closed, and then working with them on the phased-in opening."

Carozza added that with events being canceled, the District 38 representative will make an extra effort to communicate regularly with Berlin officials.

Additional financial assistance is being distributed to hospitality industries in the state, Carozza shared, following Hogan's press conference last Thursday at 5 p.m.

"We'll be working as we have done on these other relief announcements that have come through to make sure that as it flows from the federal government to the state to the counties that we make sure our locals have access to that relief," she said.

No public or press comments were submitted, so before the work session adjourned Tyndall discussed the old Tyson chicken plant at Heron Park.

See GRANT Page 8

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Ocean Pines seeking Jenkins Point funding

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) After receiving no comment from community members, Ocean Pines will continue to work with the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to request Department of Natural Resources funding for restoring migratory bird nesting habitats at Jenkins and Osprey Points.

Ocean Pines Association President Larry Perrone said the decision to proceed with the application process initiated in August was contingent on the community understanding the project's benefits and impacts.

"It must be vetted through the community for the state to consider fund-

ing," he said. "We've given the community the opportunity to make comments and there were none."

Restore America's Estuaries administers the funding stream provided by the Environmental Protection Agency for the National Estuary Program.



Larry Perrone

Perrone said grant application guidelines also require the board to discuss the matter in a public meeting.

"Coastal Bays is looking to apply for a grant to have engineering work done to restore the Jenkins Point Island," he said.

In recent years, a precipitous decline has been observed in migrating bird species traditionally spotted on the Eastern Shore.

The long-term proposal would restore the coastal bay islands for use by colonial nesting birds, such as herons, swallows and sea gulls, which typically shelter in locations devoid of ground predators.

The grant program is intended to protect and restore water quality and ecological conditions of 28 estuaries nationally.

The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust fund landowner project agreement for water quality improvements and habitat management involves an agreement to not destroy

property in perpetuity.

Perrone said the funding would the engineering work that would precede a restoration project.

The agreement would also grant land access for project-related work, such as surveying, monitoring and planting vegetation.

Perrone said the board's next step would involve sending Coastal Bays Executive Director Kevin Smith an authorization letter and affidavit from the board.

"After today's meeting, we will get the affidavit form filled out and mailed," he said.

Notification of grant awards is anticipated to begin in early 2021.

Environment cmt. ruminates water quality

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Along with updating efforts to address the continuing presence of resident Canada geese at area ponds, the Ocean Pines Environment and Natural Assets Committee also discussed research about establishing clam beds to reduce pollutants in the St. Martin River during its meeting last Wednesday.

Committee member Karen Krun Detter presented data regarding the water filtering capabilities of clams during the group's meeting on Dec. 16.

Committee Chairman Ken Wolf has been focused on obtaining a stronger understanding of potential options for reducing water pollution in the St. Martin River stemming from effluent discharge and nutrient runoff tied to extreme rain.

Committee member Marty Clarke said the research unearthed by Detter was eye opening.

"We were told that clams have a lot more filtering ability than we thought," he said.

Although oysters provide a higher degree of filtration for tidal waters, establishing self-perpetuating popu-

lations has proven challenging in recent years.

As an alternative, the environment committee is beginning to investigate the feasibility of deploying clams to the same end.

"We were surprised to learn that they were as good at filtering as they are," Clarke said.

The committee also delved into continuing efforts to reduce the presence of resident geese populations at two ponds in the north and the South Gate pond.

Clarke made a motion to ask the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors to consider permitting natural vegetation and grasses to become established around the North Gate and memorial ponds.

Ideally, when undergrowth blocks pathways from ponds or other water bodies it increase the possibility of hidden predators, which tends to discourage grazing by geese flocks.

Committee members have suggested by refraining from manicuring

grass and bushes located just offshore a buffer zone under 10 feet could be created to keep waterfowl from exploring the shoreline.

Canada geese, nests and eggs, are protected under federal law by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits capturing or killing except during legal hunting seasons.

In related news, the committee reported results from water quality

tests at the three Pines ponds in question are still forthcoming.

Committee member Sharon Santacroce also presented a first draft for an upcoming "Green Street" article in the Ocean Pines quarterly newsletter, which will be submitted after minor revisions are completed.

The next Environment and Natural Assets Committee meeting is scheduled on Jan. 27 at 9 a.m.



Marty Clarke

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Pines Board updates work groups' progress

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Ocean Pines Directors Frank Daly, Dr. Colette Horn and Doug Parks updated other members of the association's board on an assortment of work groups during a virtual meeting on Saturday.

Daly provided a snapshot of progress achieved by the short-term rental work group.

"We have met with [Ocean Pines] police chief, [Worcester County] fire marshal, Worcester County Zoning officials and our attorneys," he said.

The various discussions have resulted in an addendum to Architectural Review Committee (ARC) guidelines.

"As a result, we have added to ARC guidelines a clause to regulate short-term rentals," he said. "We have a semi-final document we gave to the board and ARC chair yesterday."

Daly said contingent on an initial review by the ARC Committee, the proposed short-term rental clause would next be examined by legal counsel.

"They would have to agree and send it to the attorney for final review and



Frank Daly

then back to ARC for voting," he said. "Then the board votes and incorporate in the [ARC] guidelines."

The issue would be revisited during the board meeting in January or February at the latest, Daly said.

Horn reviewed the progress of several work groups, beginning starting with succession planning.

Horn is assisting Daly and Director Camilla Rogers on work with the Segal Group to create a process to vet future general manager candidates. The firm previously completed a compensation study for Ocean Pines Association employees.

Horn said the goal is to develop ways to determine the qualities required for the position and a process for vetting employees who submit their names for consideration.

"At this point, a 360-degree evaluation process has been developed," she said. "Those have been sent out to employees who will be completing them for

the one candidate that has come forward for consideration."

The process should be completed by next month with more details anticipated at the board meeting in January.

Horn also provided a status report on efforts by the Communications Committee to install electronic messaging signs in the community.

Horn said the dozen-plus existing marquee signs are not permitted under Worcester County zoning regulations.

"The current signs are grandfathered in but we want to replace them with electronic signs," she said.

Horn said a zoning amendment to authorize electronic signs within residential communities is nearly finalized.

"The text amendment has been written and reviewed by the Worcester County Planning Commission," she said. "They agreed to send it to the Worcester County Commissioners for consideration."

After an administrative review next month, the county commissioners are expected to vote on the amendment the following month.

Horn said plans call for retaining

three existing manually updated message boards and installing three electronic signs at key points in the community.

Parks gave a status report for the Bainbridge drainage project work group and pending receipt of a more than half million dollar grant though the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

"We are waiting to hear back from the state regarding the final distribution of the grant," he said.

Parks said the OPA would continue working closely with Worcester County, the Maryland Coastal Bays program and Vista Engineering to move forward with the storm water upgrades.

Parks also highlighted the newly convened bylaws and resolutions review work group.

Joining the effort is Rogers, Communication Committee Chair Jenny Cropper Rines and Bylaws and Resolutions Committee Chair Jim Trummel.

"Our next meeting is Jan. 4 and we met for the first time last week," he said. "We have a soft target of the annual meeting to look at as a target to have something for consideration."

Ocean Pines amends employee HR policies

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Ocean Pines updated its policies on use of vacation time and severance packages for association employees, while continuing to mull sick time limitations during the board of directors' meeting on Saturday.

OPA Vice President Dr. Colette Horn said the proposals would become effective on Jan. 1.

Horn said one of the updates needed to the association's human resource policies is establishing severance package guidelines.

"The OPA severance package provides for one week's pay for each year of employment to a maximum of 13 weeks," she said.

Horn said severance pay is available



Colette Horn

for terminations due to workforce reductions or position eliminations.

By contrast, severance packages are not provided for other reasons, including voluntary departures, retirements, termination for cause, temporary layoffs or expired medical leave.

Horn said one week of medical coverage for each year of employment for a maximum of 13 weeks is also included with severance packages.

Horn said if other employment is secured during the severance period, the medical coverage expires but the pay compensation continues for the maximum time permitted.

OPA severance packages are not offered to staff covered by individual employment contracts.

Horn said the updates are also intended to establish a policy for employee vacation time.

"Vacation can be used for a maximum of 40 consecutive work hours unless a department head approves more," she said.

While in agreement with updates to severance and vacation options, the board held off on addressing sick time limits.

Horn said the recommended changes would limit carrying over all unused sick time from the year before to 48 hours and prohibit giving hours to other employees.

"Currently there is no sick time carryover limit," she said.

Horn said the proposals were recommended by a recently formed Ocean Pines HR Policy work group and based on research into policies of neighboring communities and industry.

OPA President Larry Perrone suggested the sick time policy updates would likely require further study based on research into comparable entities.

"There's a few more working pieces," he said.

The board voted unanimously to remove the sick time changes to reconsider during the next board meeting in January, while also approving the severance package and vacation revisions.

"Hopefully in January we can have another motion about sick time policy," he said.

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Hundreds of people participate in the 26th annual New Year's Day Penguin Swim, held at the beach on 91st Street on Jan. 1, 2020. The swim benefits Atlantic General Hospital and its various programs.

Penguin Swim modified for covid

By Josh Kim

Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Join the Atlantic General Hospital Foundation for an icy dip in the Atlantic Ocean on New Year's Day for the foundation's 27th annual Penguin Swim fundraiser event.

"It's a great opportunity for everyone to wash away 2020, while honoring and supporting the healthcare heroes in our community," event co-chair Michael Cyle said.

The Penguin Swim came to life almost three decades ago under the direction of Atlantic General Hospital emergency room physician Dr. Daniel Carlin.

The inaugural event took place at the beach behind the Carousel Hotel on 118th Street, and participants raised more than \$10,000.

"People that raised \$100 were presented with a terry cloth robe with the Penguin Swim logo provided by Mr. John Howard Burbage, owner of the Style Guide in Berlin, [and] they were officially inducted into the Penguin Club," Cyle said.

While the robes have long since been discontinued, Cyle said the foundation is considering bringing the prize back in the future.

Proceeds raised during the event help fund essential services, hospital programs, equipment and staff at Atlantic General Hospital.

"The event has continued to grow since then," Cyle said, adding that it relocated to the Princess Royale Oceanfront Resort on 91st Street in 1997.

Last year, 713 "penguins" or participants joined the chilly charitable festivities and raised more than \$89,000.

As of Monday morning, 173 participants have registered and have already raised \$37,210 of an \$80,000 goal.

This brings the total amount raised since the event's inception to approximately \$1.5 million.

"The Penguin Swim is very much a community event," Cyle said. "We know this year has been extremely hard on everybody so everybody that has given even the smallest amount, a penny, we have been extremely thankful for because every bit helps."

This year's Penguin Swim will look a bit different because of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Traditionally, the event takes place both indoors and outdoors at the Princess Royale, but all indoor com-

ponents have been eliminated this year.

Additionally, facemasks will be required at all times, save for those who plan to fully emerge themselves in the water. Once they are out of the water, however, masks must go back on.

The event's footprint has expanded, as well, and encompasses the beach from 91st to 94th streets.

"Once people drop off their money that they've raised at any of our [drop off] locations — 91st, 92nd, 93rd and 94th [streets] — then they will get their T-shirts and wristbands, which will enable them to cross the dune and go to one of 200 cones that we'll have set up on the beach."

There is no registration deadline, and participants may pre-register online or on-site. Registration costs \$25 per swimmer.

Advanced check-in, both online and on-site, will begin on New Year's Eve from 1-5 p.m., at the Princess Royale.

On New Year's, check-in will begin at 10 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m., again at the Princess Royale, and the swim will begin at 1 p.m.

A virtual award ceremony is in the works, with special recognition

See PROCEEDS Page 9



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Uncertain times mean uncertain forecasting

Continued from Page 1

couple a \$900,000 operating loss.

Viola said, by contrast, the forecast based on actualities is estimated closing favorable to budget by \$650,000.

That figure represents about half the current \$1.2 million net operating budget favorability recorded through October.

"There's a lot of decisions, variables, options and challenges that we need to address this year," he said.

Looking at the next fiscal budget, Viola said, besides a wealth of unknowns from the continuing pandemic, other rising costs include employee salaries and benefits.

"There's no playbook and there are a lot of unknowns but for this budget we need to quantify everything," he said. "There will have to be decisions made on all levels but there are op-

tions."

Viola said fiscal 21-22 proposed numbers were distributed this week in advance of a multi-day departmental presentation before the Budget and Finance Committee scheduled from Jan. 6-8.

"The budget binders were completed yesterday for Budget and Finance and board," he said.

Viola said the preliminary proposed budget was prepared after receiving guidance from the Budget and Finance Committee starting in September and then more recent information from department heads.

While pending budget allocations are still in the discussion phases, Viola said numerous items that could require assessment increases.

"We still have two to three months to see where we're coming in," he said.

The top initiative for 2021 is the soon-to-launch Bainbridge drainage project, which includes current budget allocations of \$300,000 in matching funds for a state grant, plus more than \$350,000 for Ocean Pines Public Works to complete comparable storm water pipe upgrades.

"We still needed to fund the pipes we said we're going to do separate from Bainbridge," he said. "We allocated from the public works budget for that and we're good for this year, but now in 21-22 we don't have any money in drainage."

With prior drainage reserves soon to dry up, replenishing the funding during the next fiscal cycle could involve raising assessments.

"That alone would be an increase to budget of \$44," he said.

Viola said costs for employee

salaries and medical benefits, as well as the association's liability insurance premiums are certain to rise next year, which could require boosting assessment fees another \$50.

"That's a \$94 possible increase to last year's budget," he said.

Subpar revenues from Ocean Pines pool facilities and parking charges at the Beach Club in Ocean City, which should trend upward at some point during 2021, also threaten to affect assessments.

"If it is true that people won't come back as quick, that's \$32," he said.

Viola said the final call on assessment increases falls to the board of directors, while noting fiscal 21-22 budget proposals are far from finalized.

"It's still open for discussion over the next couple of weeks," he said. "If you tell me to give you a budget with zero assessment increases, I can do it."

Worcester County govt. offices will close for holidays

(Dec. 24, 2020) Worcester County Government offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25, 2020, and Friday, Jan. 1, 2021, in observance of the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays.

They include: Worcester County Government Center and Cape Isle of Wight satellite offices, Worcester County Recreation Center, the County Library, Central Landfill in Newark, and the Home Owner Convenience Centers in Berlin, Pocomoke and Snow Hill.

In addition, library branches will be open by appointment on Saturday, Dec. 26 and Saturday, Jan. 2, and will close at noon on Dec. 31.

The Shore Spirits Retail Liquor Store in Pocomoke will be open Dec. 24 and closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

For more information on WCG hours of operation, contact Kim Moses, public information officer, at 410-632-1194.

Grant sought for plant demolition

Continued from Page 4

The town has applied for \$578,630 through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to demolish the 65,000 square-foot building.

The building is a blighted property and in complete disrepair in some parts of it, Tyndall said.

"Other portions we've been able to make into some dry storage and try and get some revenue-producing potential from the property," he added.

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County in WHP lawsuit after motion withdrawn last week

By Elizabeth Bonin
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The motion to dismiss Worcester County from the lawsuit regarding the full-time residents of White Horse Park and the White Horse Park Association has been dropped.



Hugh Cropper

Attorney Hugh Cropper, representing the full-time residents, withdrew the motion last week. A hearing had been scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 15.

Worcester County had opposed the motion to dismiss, contending that it had already spent time and resources on the case, and that the county law would still apply even if the full-time residents win the lawsuit over the association.

“If Worcester County wants to fight in court, then we’ll go fight them in court,” Cropper said.

He said he thought that the county would want out of the lawsuit, given that it has spent at least \$50,000 on the case.

“Given the fact that we’re down to 37 people out of 465, which is about 8 percent, so 92 percent is in compliance, I assume that Worcester County would no longer have an interest in spending taxpayer money,” Cropper said.

The full-time residents of the park have been fighting to stay at the seasonal park for the past several years. Out of the 465 residents in the park, there are 37 full-timers out of the original 55.

“I contend that when you’ve got 465 people, if they [Worcester County] root out my remaining 37, there will be a couple more. It’ll go on forever,” Cropper said.

A settlement conference was held on Wednesday, Dec. 16, but an agreement was not reached, according to Cropper.

An announcement from the White Horse Park Association states that during the settlement conference, the county attorneys indicated that the Worcester County Commissioners were unlikely to agree to allow the residents to remain in the park until they move, sell the property or die in order to give them time to find alternative housing.

It further reads that Cropper agreed to share the age, financial condition and health of the full-time residents via a confidentiality agreement to assess the situation and facilitate future discussions.

The trial date was rescheduled for Tuesday, May 18 and Wednesday, May 19. It was originally scheduled for last week, but was rescheduled because of Cropper’s request to delay, citing the coronavirus pandemic.

The zoning code for White Horse Park states that from Sept. 30 to April first, residents can only occupy their unit for 30 consecutive days or an aggregate of 60 days. Many residents are older and struggle with disability or low incomes.

Melissa Peters, acting president of the White Horse Park Association Board of Directors, has said that most of the full-time residents are actually younger than 80, with some as young as 40.

The full-time residents have claimed that they were either not properly informed of the zoning code or encouraged to live at the park full time, while the county and association claim that the zoning code has been available to view and that the park’s infrastructure was not built for full-time residents.

The residents have attempted both a zoning amendment and an appeal to allow them to stay in the park until they sell the property, move or die. Both the amendment and appeal were rejected last year.

Worcester County did not respond to a request for comment.

Proceeds benefit AGH programs

Continued from Page 7

awards for oldest and youngest swimmers, as well as first, second and third place trophies for those who raise the most money in each sponsorship division.

As of Monday morning, the top fundraisers in the business, community group or organization, youth/family and celebrity challenge divisions were: Bull on the Beach on 94th Street (\$2,255); OC Ravens Roost #44 (\$4,120); Team Jedi and The Br-r-r-r-r-r-rng Kirbys (\$500); and the Glen-Riddle Golf Club (\$2,625), respectively.

Individual participants who raise more than \$100 will be eligible to win

an official 2021 Penguin Swim long-sleeve T-shirt, while supplies last.

Participants quarantined because of the virus, or those who feel uncomfortable attending the event, may still participate by registering and fundraising online and uploading online a photo or video of themselves diving into the icy Atlantic using the hashtag OCPenguinSwim.

“We all look forward to embracing a much healthier and better 2021,” Cylc said.

For more information, call 410-6419671, visit www.aghpenguinswim.org or find the event on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Almony gets humanitarian award

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Professional bodyguard Adriano “Bubba” Almony was named 2020 Humanitarian of the Year by LV Magazine for his charitable efforts on the Eastern Shore and around the world.

Almony, 26, grew up in Ocean City and graduated from Stephen Decatur High School in 2012.

In June, Almony was on the cover of LV Magazine. This month, he received the 2020 Humanitarian of the Year award.

“It really hasn’t fully sunken in yet, but this award obviously means a lot to me,” Almony said. “This has been a lifetime commitment since I was 17. So, going on a decade, I’ve done philanthropy and mentorship and coaching and humanitarian work not just in our

local communities but across the nation and parts of the globe as well.”

Almony’s efforts include feeding local first responders and medical professionals, sending tens of thousands of medical supplies to people in need in Worcester and Wicomico counties during the pandemic, sending personal protective equipment (PPE) to people across the country and providing meals for thousands of families in India.

Almony believes it is important to give back to the communities that provided opportunities for him growing up.

Through the Bodyguards Against Bullying organization, which Almony heads, he and his team donated bodyguard services to youth in the Berlin and Ocean City areas, who have experienced serious or consistent bullying.

On Dec. 10, he was featured on a billboard with members of the Berlin Heat

Dance Team in Times Square. The photo was taken about a year ago during a community event with the dance team in Snow Hill.

“[I] just let them know in life, even though we might be from a small town of the Berlin, Snow Hill surrounding areas, that it’s not where you’re from in life, it’s what you’re made of,” Almony said, recalling the event. “You can be anything you put your mind to in life.”

Lakina Hayward, the coach of the Berlin Heat Dance Team, said Almony motivated the dancers to work hard.

“Some of the young ladies were asking questions to see if women as well could do what he does, and he reassured them that they could,” she said.

Hayward and her team were overwhelmed with excitement about the billboard in Times Square, with one dancer joking that she was famous now.

“They work really hard, so it was good for them to see that their hard work paid off in some type of way and to know that, again, as long as you work hard anything is always possible,” Hayward said.

The team members range from ages 6 to 14 and do hip hop, lyrical and Christian praise dances.

Almony encourages youth in Worcester and Wicomico counties to work hard, have faith and make good investments in themselves, he said.

“We all have the same 24 hours in the day as Oprah, as President Obama, as all these great people that have done great things ... and the only limitations in life are what we will put on ourselves,” Almony added.

Almony, who has a martial arts background, became involved in security through the Dew Tour in Ocean City at 17 years old.

“Just right away I was truly blessed to discover it was my passion, purpose and true divine calling in life,” he said.

Over the years, his clients have included Vinny Guadagnino from “The Jersey Shore,” P. Diddy’s family, motivational speaker Demarjay Smith and eyewear designer Corey Woods.

He added that the process of becoming a bodyguard consists of extensive training, such as medical and firearm training. He also learned about firearm laws, de-escalation strategies and emergency and defensive driving maneuvers.

“You need a guard’s license, you need an armed guard’s license, you need a bodyguard’s license,” Almony said.

In addition, he emphasized the necessity of building trust with clients as a bodyguard.

“You have to have a critical soft skillset: your integrity, your character, your respect, your discipline, your presentation. — all those things are crucial,” he said.

Bodyguards also follow a “flight over fight” mantra.

“That’s what we try to get across to kids, especially with the Bodyguards Against Bullying,” Almony said. “You don’t want to do a decision you may re-



PHOTO COURTESY ADRIANO “BUBBA” ALMONY

Professional bodyguard Adriano “Bubba” Almony, who was named the 2020 Humanitarian of the Year by LV Magazine, was featured on a billboard in Times Square with members of the Berlin Heat Dance Team on Dec. 10.

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Safe return to in-person instruction urged

Continued from Page 1

The private school had a half-day last Friday, as students entered a two-week winter break.

Amanda Evans, director of admissions and advancement at Most Blessed Sacrament, added that the academic calendar originally called for school days on Monday and Tuesday, but students were provided with two extra days to self-isolate before any holiday travel or celebration with relatives.

Worcester Preparatory School on South Main Street in Berlin began winter break last Friday.



John McDonald

“We were supposed to have a half-day,” said Dr. John McDonald, head of school. “Normally, we have a ... holiday celebration, and we couldn’t do it, so we felt we’ll cancel our half day and start our break.”

Students are scheduled to return for in-person instruction on Jan. 4.

“We’re going to be doing another deep cleaning during the break, and we’re going to maintain all the protocols that we’ve had since September, which have been very effective,” McDonald said. “We’ve been complimented by the Worcester County Department of Health on our protocols, so we’re just going to maintain what we’re doing.”

McDonald admitted that he and his Worcester Preparatory faculty and staff are concerned about the rise of covid cases in the county and across the state.

“We just hope people will practice the guidance from the governor and from the department of health and the CDC,” he said.

McDonald added that the school uses desk and teacher dividers, facial coverings and air scrubbers. Students and teachers also maintain a safe distance of six feet apart for in-person instruction.

“Whenever the CDC makes a different recommendation and the Worcester County Department of Health accepts that recommendation, then we communicate that to our families and to our staff,” he said.

In addition, McDonald is proud that Worcester Preparatory has been practicing in-person instruction since September.



Lou Taylor

“We’ve had very few disruptions. No schoolwide disruptions,” he said of covid cases among the school’s population.

As for Worcester County Public Schools, Superintendent Lou Taylor said at this time about 20 percent of the school population is expected to return to in-person instruction on Jan. 4, 2021.

“We’re going to continue to monitor it on a regular basis over the holidays,” he said. “We’ll continue to watch it. The metrics are one segment of our information to bring kids back.”

Public school students in the county engaged in distance learning until winter break began this Wednesday.

“I strongly believe that we have got to get our kids back in school, but it has to be in a safe environment,” Taylor said. “We want our teachers to be safe. We want our kids to be safe, but I am a strong advocate for our kids being back in the schools, and I think most of our community is saying the same thing.”

For families who are uncomfortable having their students participate in in-person instruction can opt to continue distance learning.

“That’s the unique thing about this,” Taylor added. “We can serve all our kids who either want to be there or don’t want to be there.”

Throughout December and early January, teachers have received almost daily covid-19 training.

“The purpose of the training is to give our educators more information on proper social distancing, on mask wearing, on hand washing – all the protocols that we have in place,” Taylor said. “We want to make sure we review all those protocols with our staff and answer any questions they may have as they prepare for Jan. 4. We just want to make sure we try to keep everyone as safe as possible, share any information that would allow teachers and other personnel to make good decisions as we bring our young people back into our schools.”

In addition, Worcester County Public Schools has received a \$218,492 Safe to Learn Grant that can be used to purchase additional PPE and sanitizing materials.

Dr. Abt, the chief safety and human relations officer for the school system, said the notice of the grant award was for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020. It has been extended twice because of covid-19. He added that the first extension was Dec. 31, 2020, but



Karen Salmon

it has now been extended to June 30, 2021.

“The committee had not officially requested the grant amendment but has discussed items that would be most beneficial to the district,” Abt said. “Purchasing additional electrostatic sprayers for disinfecting schools and equipment was the consensus of the group.”

On Dec. 15, Maryland Schools Superintendent Dr. Karen B. Salmon asked the Maryland Department of Health to include teachers, school staff and early childcare professionals as the first priority in the plan to start covid-19 vaccinations for essential employees in the state.

In a letter addressed to Dr. Jinlene Chan, Maryland Department of Health Acting Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services, Salmon wrote “the safety and education of our children demand immediate attention.”

“It is essential that we return to full or hybrid instructional models for the overall well-being and success of our pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students. Prolonged school closures have resulted in our children experiencing diminished academic achievement and social-emotional distress,”

she wrote. “We care about all of our education and childcare professionals, many of whom have continued to work on the frontline throughout the pandemic, and we are requesting that they be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine in the earliest stages of distribution to essential employees.”

Clarence C. Crawford, president of the Maryland State Board of Education, added that “continued school closings impact all of our children, especially those in underserved communities and vulnerable to abuse. Prioritizing distribution of this vaccine to our teachers and school staff will help expedite the return of full in-person instruction for our students.”

The request includes early childcare workers who are providing critical education and care services.

“Childcare professionals have played a crucial role in the state’s frontline pandemic response and recovery efforts,” Salmon wrote. “The safety of these programs must be maintained to protect childcare staff and the families they serve.”

The Maryland Department of Health submitted its Covid-19 Vaccination Plan to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Oct. 16. The plan includes workers deemed essential in critical industries, including education.

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Berlin mural part of Ten Thousand Flowers Project

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Berlin Art and Entertainment Committee joined artist Tim Gibson to create a community mural inside the Berlin branch of the Worcester County Library as part of the Ten Thousand Flowers Project.

Gibson, 25, established the Ten Thousand Flowers Project in 2018 in his hometown of Perkasie, Pennsylvania.

Before founding the project, Gibson made a few murals in Perkasie. The local bureau requested a community-involved mural, so he pitched essentially a paint-by-number project.

"Through making that, I realized it's so simplistic that I could implement it anywhere around the country," he said.

From there, he had a vision to interconnect murals across the U.S.

"The Ten Thousand Flowers Project is basically an ongoing mural that connects a series of flowers that are painted by community members," said John Donato, a local collaborative teaching artist and muralist.

The beginning of the 24-foot flowers project in the Berlin library is a continuation of a mural at the Worcester County Developmental Center in Newark, said Gibson. The end of the project then connects to a mural somewhere else in the country.

Gibson travels the country for the



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN DONATO

The completed Ten Thousand Flowers Project mural has been installed in the foyer of the Berlin library, 13 Harrison Avenue.

Ten Thousand Flowers Project in a renovated bus.

To this day, Gibson has made about 35 murals in the U.S. with the help of volunteers.

"The way the tour worked I kind of just picked a destination on the map, drove to it and then tried to find a place that week," Gibson said.

He discovered Berlin, America's Coolest Small Town, after doing an internet search of "cool places in Maryland."

Robin Tomaselli, vice president of the Berlin Arts and Entertainment Committee and owner of Baked Dessert Café, met Gibson at her bakery.

"[He] just happened to discuss the Ten Thousand Flowers Project briefly with me, and he was so excited about it," Tomaselli said. "Once he showed me some of the photographs of the places and the projects that were involved, I absolutely fell in love with it, too, and knew that it would be something that would be spectacular for the arts and entertainment committee to support and for Berlin as a whole."

The location of the mural was determined by a poll on social media.

"The library was the overwhelming winner of that poll," Tomaselli said. "John [Donato] and I both met with the powers that be at the library. We looked at all kinds of different locations, both outside and inside, and we basically allowed the library to kind of dictate where they thought it would be best for their application."

The library staff members chose the foyer area for the mural location because they believed it would have a greater impact on those that utilize the library, she said.

"It would be easily seen, and it looked really good where they put it," Donato added.

Tomaselli said there is a Ten Thousand Flowers Project mural also at the Worcester County Developmental Center.

"It started there to give the people that are served at the developmental center a therapeutic experience involving art," she said.

Tomaselli said the installation of the



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN DONATO

John Donato, a local collaborative teaching artist and muralist, assists a volunteer from the Worcester County Developmental Center with painting the Ten Thousand Flowers Project mural for the Berlin branch of the Worcester County Library, 13 Harrison Avenue.

mural at the center transformed a space used by individuals daily.

"It was just absolutely stunning, beautiful, uplifting," she said. "Looking at it just made you happy."

When the walls were selected and prepped at the center and the library, Gibson sketched in each unique mural.

He said he prepared the Ten Thousand Flowers Project mural at the library for two days before a day of painting with nearly 25 volunteers.

"This project was pretty special," Donato said. "I actually got to work with somebody blind, completely blind, and they were able to paint on the project."

He added that the success of a community project is determined by inclusion during the process.

After the painting is complete, Gibson returns the next day to touch up the mural and outline the flowers.

Gibson donated his time and design for the murals in the Berlin branch of the Worcester County Library and Worcester County Developmental Center.

"The only thing that the arts and entertainment committee had to provide support for was the installation," Tomaselli said.

Donato conducted the installation in coordination with contractors at the library.

"[The arts and entertainment committee] brought me in to work with [Gibson] to sort of guide him on the process of creating artwork on an installation [and] working with at-risk adults — people that have specific challenges — in creating artwork," Donato said.

According to an invoice, the total installation cost was \$2,275.

"It was recently installed," Tomaselli said. "It was supposed to be installed last spring but because of the pandemic, the library closed."

Tomaselli hopes a public unveiling of the mural at the library can take place when the covid-19 positivity rate in Worcester County declines.

Furthermore, the Ten Thousand Flowers Project has paused because of covid-19, but Gibson hopes to go back out on a modified tour in spring 2021.

Bodyguard speaks to Worcester youth and donates food

Continued from Page 10

gret or may come with a consequence, so we just instill that into them as best as we can."

This year, Almony launched "Bubba's Bodyguard Podcast," which is available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts, to highlight "great people doing great things," he said.

Episodes feature conversations with former Berlin Mayor Gee Williams, three-term White House Chef Andre Rush and Olympic gold medalist Carmelita Jeter.

Almony is hosting a celebrity charity basketball game in Snow Hill on Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021.

"It will be to make a big impact of raising awareness and proceeds with cancer and bullying," he said.

Currently, Superbowl Champion Jacoby Jones, Chef Andre Rush, Ravens players and Harlem Globe Trotters are expected to attend. Special guests will be announced in the future.

For more information, visit bubbaalmony.com.

WCPS calendar proposals to be voted on in Feb.

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Worcester County Board of Education has two academic calendar proposals to consider for 2021-22, with both of them allowing for the possibility of attending school from home.

The school system's traditional calendar committee was not able to convene for a work session because of covid-19 restrictions, but Carrie Sterrs, coordinator of public relations and special programs, gave the board proposals that address what subcommittees would typically focus on, she said.

The proposals differ in length for vacation or breaks, marking periods and professional days, but both contain three inclement weather days built into the end of the year.

Beyond those three inclement weather days, the 14 public schools will switch to distance learning rather than close.

Sterrs said the first proposal shows an early end to the school year with students starting summer break on June 14.

"This proposal includes a winter break beginning on Thursday, Dec. 23, and students returning on Monday, Jan. 3," she said.

The school system extended spring

2021 - 2022 SCHOOL SYSTEM CALENDAR		CALENDAR PROPOSAL #1: EARLY RELEASE	
AUGUST 18-28 New Teacher Orientation 30-31 Teacher Preparation & In-Service Activities		FEBRUARY 18 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 21 Closed: President's Day	
SEPTEMBER 1-2 Teacher Preparation & In-Service Activities 4 Closed: Labor Day 7 First Day of School		MARCH 31 End of Third Marking Period (43 Days)	
OCTOBER 14 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 18 Closed: MSEA Convention		APRIL 1 Closed for Students Professional Day 4 Closed for Students Countywide PD Day 14-18 Closed: Spring Break	
NOVEMBER 4 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development End of First Marking Period (42 Days) 9 Closed for Students Professional Day 24-28 Closed: Thanksgiving Break		MAY 30 Closed: Memorial Day	
DECEMBER 14 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 17 Closed: MIA Day 20-27 Early Dismissal for Students, High School exams 27 End of Second Marking Period (48 Days)		JUNE 13-14 Early Dismissal for Students, High School exams 15 End of Fourth Marking Period (47 Days), Summer last Day of School	
JANUARY 20-27 Early Dismissal for Students, High School exams 27 End of Second Marking Period (48 Days)		CALENDAR LEGEND Yellow - New Teacher Orientation Red - Schools/Offices Closed Blue - Early Dismissal for Students Green - Schools Closed for Students Orange - Inclement Weather Make-Up Days (if needed) End of a Marking Period	

2021 - 2022 SCHOOL SYSTEM CALENDAR		CALENDAR PROPOSAL #2: LONGER/MORE FREQUENT BREAKS	
AUGUST 18-28 New Teacher Orientation 30-31 Teacher Preparation & In-Service Activities		FEBRUARY 2-3 Early Dismissal for Students, High School exams 3 End of 2nd Marking Period (42 Days) 4 Closed for Students Professional Day 21 Closed: President's Day	
SEPTEMBER 1-2 Teacher Preparation & In-Service Activities 4 Closed: Labor Day 7 First Day of School		MARCH 11 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development	
OCTOBER 13 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 14-15 Closed: MSEA Convention		APRIL 12 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 13 Closed for Students Professional Day 14-19 Closed: Spring Break	
NOVEMBER 10 End of First Marking Period (41 Days) 11 Closed for Students Professional Day 13 Closed for Students Countywide PD Day 24-28 Closed: Thanksgiving Break		MAY 30 Closed: Memorial Day	
DECEMBER 14 Early Dismissal for Students Professional Development 17 Closed: MIA Day		JUNE 20-31 Early Dismissal for Students, High School exams 31 End of Third Marking Period (44 Days), Summer last Day of School	
JANUARY 17 Closed: MIA Day		CALENDAR LEGEND Yellow - New Teacher Orientation Red - Schools/Offices Closed Blue - Early Dismissal for Students Green - Schools Closed for Students Orange - Inclement Weather Make-Up Days (if needed) End of a Marking Period	

PHOTO COURTESY WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Worcester County Board of Education has two academic calendar proposals to consider for 2021-22. The first proposal features an early release in June, while the second proposal has more frequent and longer breaks, resulting in the extended summer break starting on June 21.

break by one day to the state mandated holidays.

The second proposal features more frequent and longer breaks, resulting in the extended summer break starting on June 21.

"You'll see a full two-week break for winter, beginning Monday, Dec.

20, with students returning Jan. 3," Sterrs said. "Spring break has also been extended for families, with an early dismissal on April 12, followed by a professional day on [April 13]

and a full closure from Thursday, April 14 through Tuesday, April 19."

In January 2021, a calendar proposal survey will take place to collect See CALENDAR Page 15

Wor. offers Christmas tree recycling through mid-Jan.

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Solid Waste Division of Worcester County will host its annual collection of Christmas trees through Jan. 15.

Area residents can drop off Christmas trees at the Central Landfill in Newark and the Berlin, Pocomoke, and Snow Hill Homeowners Convenience Centers at no cost.

Businesses and organizations that

sold trees will not be permitted to drop off trees at the convenience centers, but may take them to the Central Landfill where applicable tipping fees will be assessed.

The trees will be ground into mulch for use at the Central Landfill. For more info, contact Recycling Manager Mike McClung at 410-632-3177.

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Holland retires from Berlin PD after 14 years

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Senior Officer Claude Holland was honored during a small retirement ceremony at Town Hall on William Street in Berlin on Dec. 18 along with the swearing in of Officer Jason Odegaard.

“It was very humbling,” Holland said. “It was a very emotional day for me as well as my family, I think. I didn’t know that my wife and son were going to be there and that was a surprise. It had actually been in the works for almost half a month, and I can’t believe that nobody slipped up and told me about it.”

Holland officially retires Jan. 1, 2021, but his last workday was Dec. 18.

“My son’s home from Afghanistan and was able to get home for Christmas, so I wanted to spend the last two weeks with him,” he said. “I missed a lot of time when he was growing up because of my job.”

Holland grew up in Somerset County. He joined the Coast Guard after school and served for 21 years.

Then, he went on to have a 30-year police career between the Wicomico County Sheriff’s Office and the Berlin Police Department. He worked for the Wicomico County Sheriff’s Office from 1990 to 2004.

Holland was hired at the Berlin Police Department as an officer in 2006 then was promoted to patrolman first class before becoming a senior officer.

“Chief Downing was basically the best person I’ve ever worked for,” he said. “He doesn’t get enough credit.”

During his service, Holland organized the town’s annual National Night Out.

“National Night Out was typically on the first Tuesday of August of every year,” he said. “I would actually start working on it around March just to set everything up.”

The event aims to inform Berlin residents about crime prevention and develop community relations with the police.

Holland will continue to do contract work with the Berlin Police Department on voice stress examinations — lie detector tests. He also plans to spend his retirement fishing, hunting, traveling and spending time with his family.

Within the next few years, he and his wife plan to move south.

Odegaard joins the Berlin Police Department after graduating from the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy.

He completed 970 hours of field training to become an officer.

“During the academy, we trained



PHOTO COURTESY BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT
Jason Odegaard, who recently graduated from the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy, was sworn in as an officer of the Berlin Police Department on Dec. 18. Pictured, from left, are Odegaard, Mayor Zackery Tyndall and Berlin Police Chief Arnold Downing.

in multiple different scenarios doing everything from mock vehicle pursuits to traffic stops as well as building searches and domestic disputes,” said Odegaard, who is from Snow Hill. “There is an entire two-week period that is dedicated to practical exercises.”

He had his first shift with the department on Wednesday.

Odegaard added that he hopes to make a difference in the community through his service.



PHOTO COURTESY BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT
Senior Officer Claude Holland was honored with a proclamation for his service to Berlin during a small retirement ceremony at Town Hall on William Street on Dec. 18.

Students report outreach activities in Dec.

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Worcester County public school student representatives updated the board of education on Dec. 15 about how the schools have conducted their community outreach activities while also contending with covid-19 public health safety regulations.

Dasia Conner, a senior at Pocomoke High School, said school administration has visited more than 250 families to deliver a holiday card

and treats to every student throughout December.

In addition, families in need received holiday feasts on Dec. 21.

Pocomoke area schools are participating in a program to ensure families receive hot meals and food bags over winter break. Conner added that Pocomoke Middle School has maintained a food bank to serve the community.

Eric Cropper Jr., a senior at Stephen Decatur High School, said the National Honor Society is run-

ning a canned food drive for Diakonia and the Key Club is preparing goodie bags for local shelters.

Riley Leonard, a senior at Snow Hill High School, said educators delivered holiday snack packages to all 339 students on Dec. 10.

The Rotary Club of Snow Hill is adopting seven public school students and providing them with \$100 Walmart gift cards for holiday shopping.

Snow Hill High School has also joined with the Maryland Food Bank and received an anonymous donation

of \$1,300 to launch the Eagle’s Bounty Food Pantry.

“The Eagle’s Bounty Food Pantry at Snow Hill High School provides students with supplemental food and items to make sure they are fed throughout the evenings and weekends, especially the long weekends when students are without the two meals they are provided with during the school hours,” Leonard said.

On Dec. 21, Snow Hill area schools distributed over 50 boxes of food to local families in need.

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The Worcester County Board of Education agreed to recommend a proposal to the county commissioners to repair Stephen Decatur Middle School's roof after it was damaged on Aug. 4 by Tropical Storm Isaias. ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

School board recommends new roof at SDMS

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Stephen Decatur Middle School's roof has been leaking since Tropical Storm Isaias passed by on Aug. 4 and damaged enough shingles that it's going to cost \$240,987 to fix it.

That was the low bid the Worcester County Board of Education agreed to recommend to the county commissioners on Dec. 15 after listening to an assessment of the situation from the school system's roofing consult-

ant Garland Industries.

Even though Garland Industries asserted that the roof needs to be replaced, the school system's insurer will cover just a portion of that, and installing a standing metal roof would be prohibitively expensive at \$1.5 million.

Faced with an unbudgeted project, the board picked low bidder Raintree Services, one of five companies to bid, to take on the project.

Sam Slacum, the maintenance and operations manager for Worcester

County Public Schools recommended that the board approve Raintree Services' proposal, which will now be sent to the county commissioners for funding consideration.

According to the board agenda packet, the project will entail removing all the shingles, tar paper and ice and water shield from one section of the roof at a time and replace it with new material.

Then, synthetic underlayment will be installed over the roof, ice and water shield will be installed at

all eaves, rakes and valleys, starter shingles will be installed on the perimeter edge and HD architectural shingles will be installed over the entire proposed area to resolve the issues.

Raintree Services' proposal includes a workmanship warranty of two years. A lifetime warranty on the shingles will be provided as well.

The project is expected to take two to three weeks, weather permitting, with minimal disruption to those in the building.

Media center provides 'maker space' at PMS

By Ally Lanasa
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2020) Worcester County Public Schools are giving students opportunities to grow educationally through modern library programs, Jennifer Beach, the media specialist at Pocomoke Middle School, told the Worcester County Board of Education last week.

Beach said media specialists transform a traditional library program by encouraging students to use educational technology and hands-on skills.

In connection with the county school system's "Flip2FutureReady" initiative, this multi-faceted library program supports literacy and creativity through technology as well as hands-on development of their creations, she said.

The media center at Pocomoke Middle School has a designated "maker" space for students to create during and after school hours.

Students engage in making friendship bracelets, 3Doodler 3-D printing pens, a rubber band loom, origami, Legos and Makey Makey invention kits.

"We have a 10-by-10 Lego wall in our

school," Beach said. "We have contests that are theme-based, and they get to create on that."

One of the favorable student activities

is called "Food Truck Entrepreneurs."

"They get to create their own food truck business," Beach said. "They interview a food truck owner to find out what

it really takes."

Then, students create 3-D renderings of their food trucks.

See BOOKS Page 17

Calendar survey seeks feedback

Continued from Page 13
additional comments from students, staff, parents and the community.

Sterrs said she will present the survey results to the school board in February as well as Superintendent Lou Taylor's recommendation for the calendar for the board members to approve.

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Opinion

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

We could use a large helping of merry and bright right about now, not to mention a major serving of good will among men and women, as this year, one of the most remarkable in living memory, is stumbling to a close and opening up prospects for 12 months of healing ahead.

This promise of a better time and a return to kinder territory is our present to ourselves today and the host of tomorrows to follow.

The past will become inert, its edges rounded off, edited and rearranged by memory over time, while not forgotten will be the friends and supporters who helped us and each other along the way.

We, at Bayside Gazette and Ocean City Today, thank our readers, customers, friends and businesses for their support and encouragement over the course of this trying year and wish them the merriest of Christmases.

We will see you next year, and the year after that and the year after that, for as long as we may be of service.

We also wish a Merry Christmas and happy holidays to everyone who did their best to help someone else and to the people who continued to deliver goods and services we might have taken for granted in the past, but will never do so again.

Best wishes and thank you.

Elaine Brady, Christine Brown, Kelly Brown, Lisa Capitelli, Mary Cooper, Ed Dalton, Stewart Dobson, Greg Ellison, Ally Lanasa, Nancy MacCubbin, Susan Parks, Vicki Shrier, Gini Tufts.



Assateague Beach Walk canceled

(Dec. 24, 2020) After several meetings and discussions with Assateague State Park personnel, Assateague Coastal Trust has made the decision to cancel the New Year's Day Iliah Fehrer-Judy Johnson Memorial Beach Walk.

Instead, Assateague Coastal Trust is encouraging people to spend the new year's weekend outside with family or for a solo hike, walk, paddle, or even simply finding a quiet bench along a trail.

"On Jan. 1, and everyday for that matter, I strongly encourage you to take to the

trail, or off the trail, get in the woods, get on the water, take time to reflect and remember what is important," said ACT's Billy Weiland. "Turn off the news, leave the phone at home, and find what Judy Johnson loved best about Assateague Island – nature at its most 'genuine.' Because the genuine nature of the outdoors is and will always be solace for the human race, regardless of current events."

He suggests finding elements that speak to you and document them with a journal entry or a photograph.

Photographs, videos, or stories people want to share

about their time outdoors can be emailed to Weiland at billy@actforbays.org, or tag the photos with #actforbays and #4Judy.

The annual beach walk has been a longstanding tradition for Assateague Coastal Trust. Since the first walk in 1980, members from the local community and afar have gathered with the organization to celebrate a new year on the National Seashore and State Park, Assateague Island.

The first Assateague Beach Walk, held on Jan. 1, 1980, was hosted by ACT's founding member Iliah Fehrer.

Wor. recreation programs suspended

(Dec. 24, 2020) Throughout this pandemic, Worcester County Recreation & Parks has continued to follow the protocols and advisories from Gov. Larry Hogan and local health department officials.

In the most recent address, Gov. Hogan issued an advisory, refraining Marylanders from attending indoor gatherings of more than 10 individuals at one location. With this, WCRP will sus-

pend all recreation programming through Jan. 8, 2021.

This will include all adult drop-in classes, fitness classes and the open ice skating that was scheduled to begin next week.

WCRP will continue to keep the fitness room open and allow walkers to utilize the indoor track at the Worcester County Recreation Center in Snow Hill.

Through Jan. 8, the recreation center will close at 6

p.m. instead of 9 p.m.

Registration will be opening for winter 2021 programs, including fitness classes, youth clinics and adult leagues, which are scheduled to start the week of Jan. 18.

As WCRP winter programs resume, staff's priority will remain the health and well-being of community members. WCRP staff will continue to work closely with

See WCRP Page 17

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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The Bayside Gazette is published weekly by FLAG Publications, Inc. at 8200 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Md. 21842. The Bayside Gazette is available by subscription at \$75/year or \$40/6 mos. Visit us on the Web at www.baysideoc.com. Copyright 2020

Believe In Tomorrow matching grant in Dec.

(Dec. 24, 2020) The Robert I. Schattner Foundation has provided the Believe In Tomorrow Children's House By The Sea with a \$10,000 matching grant to promote "growth through giving" throughout the month of December.

All new donors who contribute to the Believe In Tomorrow Children's House By The Sea's pediatric respite program, will have their contributions doubled by this grant.

"This is a wonderful growth opportunity that will have a direct and very positive impact on the families that we serve here in Ocean City," said Believe In Tomorrow's Founder Brian Morrison.

The matching grant will begin on Dec. 1 and continue through the month of December until the full amount of the grant is utilized. All funds raised will go directly to Believe In Tomorrow's

Ocean City respite program.

This grant was made possible through the direction of Sidney Bresler, the president and chairman of the Robert I. Schattner Foundation, who read an article about the Believe In Tomorrow Children's House By The Sea in a local newspaper last summer.

Bresler, a Bethesda, Maryland resident who owns a home in Ocean City, recently toured the Children's House By The Sea with his wife Phyllis.

"We are honored to help the many families who stay at the Believe In Tomorrow Foundation's Ocean City respite housing find relief, particularly during these very difficult times with the added stress of covid-19," Bresler said. "Our goal at the Robert I. Schattner Foundation is to make grants where they will do the most good and where our gifts will make a difference in

the quality of people's lives."

Dr. Schattner was a renowned dentist who used his knowledge of chemistry to launch a highly successful career as a national-level entrepreneur.

He was the inventor of Chloraseptic and Sporidicin and used his success with these products to fund the foundation and its charitable endeavors.

He served on many corporate boards and for 15 years served on the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine Board of Overseers.

The Robert I. Schattner Foundation is a private charitable foundation established in 1992 by Dr. Robert I. Schattner. Although Dr. Schattner passed away in 2017, his legacy of giving lives on through the Robert I. Schattner Foundation.

In 1986, Believe In Tomorrow created the first pediatric respite program

in the United States in Ocean City. Today, the Believe In Tomorrow Children's Foundation is a national leader in the area of pediatric respite and hospital housing, and has provided over 900,000 overnight accommodations to critically ill children and their families.

Believe In Tomorrow's flagship beach respite location is on 66th Street in Ocean City, across from the beachfront Holiday Inn. All donations will go toward a respite expansion being planned for a property on 65th Street.

Anyone interested in contributing can do so by going to the Believe In Tomorrow website, <https://believeintomorrow.org>, and designating the Children's House By The Sea in their online contribution, or by calling the Believe In Tomorrow office at 410-744-1032 or 410-723-2842 and designating TCHBTS.

WCRP programs to resume Jan. 8

Continued from Page 16

state and local officials and follow any advisories set by Gov. Hogan and local health department officials.

For more information, contact WCRP at 410-6632-2144.

Books, coding programs offered too

Continued from Page 15

Students can also learn coding through programs and exercises such as Ozobot robot coding and Girls Who Code programs. In addition, career and college-ready research resources are available, including Gale, World Book

and SIRS.

With a focus on literacy, the Pocomoke Middle School media center has book initiatives, such as the Maryland Association of School Libraries' Black Eyed Susan Books as well as over 300 graphic novels.

"We make it a point to buy award-winning books," Beach said.

She also tries to make her "purchasing more deliberate, buying books that mirror my school's population."

Beach added that student requests of books are fulfilled almost immediately.



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Snapshots



PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION

MEAL DISTRIBUTION

Over a five-hour period on Thanksgiving Day, the Ocean Pines Yacht Club sent 1,280 meals to local people through delivery and carryout. That amounts to more than 1,500 pounds of turkey, 1,500 pounds of stuffing, 2,000 pounds of mashed potatoes and 50 gallons of gravy, according to Ralph DeAngelus, co-founder of the Matt Ortt Companies that manages the Yacht Club.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MONTHLY CRAFTER

The Pine'eer Craft Club of Ocean Pines chose Robyn Baker as the December crafter of the month. She has always enjoyed creating crafts and just recently began to upcycle wine and liquor bottles. She loves giving them character and a new purpose. See Baker's creations and that of other artisans at the Artisan Gift Shop in White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway in Ocean Pines. It is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. as well as Fridays in December from 4:30-7:30 p.m.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

LEMONADE STAND

After a recent visit and presentation from Showell and Ocean Pines fire departments, Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School collected donations from students, teachers and staff to support the first responders. Pictured are third grader Bryn Wanner and her sister, Kate, a fifth grader, with their lemonade stand.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

BOOK DONATION

The General Levin Winder Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution recently concluded a project to promote literacy skills in the very young and enable them to succeed as future readers. Members either enrolled in a Kellogg's-sponsored Feeding Reading program during the summer that offered credits redeemable for free books with the purchase of participating products, or contributed books they purchased. Combined, a total of 32 books were donated to the Worcester County Judy Center during American Education Week on Nov. 18 in memory of member Beatrice Batchelder Frank, an avid reader who passed away in February 2020. Pictured, from left, are General Levin Winder Chapter member Pat Arata and Regent Gail Weldin delivering books to Judy Center Secretary Suzanne Truitt.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

INDUCTEES

The Charles R. Jenkins Chapter of the National Honor Society at Worcester Preparatory School recently inducted 42 new members on Nov.12. Inductees are: Kate Abbott, Austin Airey, Grace Baeurle, Lily Baeurle, Ayush Batra, Myranda Beebe, Hannah Brasure, AnnaMarie Buas, Alex Bunting, Austin Cannon, Anna Carpenter, Charlotte Catapano, Hugh Thomas Cropper, Brooke Emeigh, Ethan Griffith, Nick Hearne, Aria Islam, Sydney Lamson-Reich, Carter McCabe, Graham McCabe, Anna McDonald, Marshall Mumford, Ava Nally, Nathan Oltman, Hayes Peterson, Vincent Petrera, Brooke Phillips, Camden Rayne, Brice Richins, Ashlyn Roselle, Riley Schoch, Sumira Sehgal, Jarett Sofronski, Anders Taylor, Bennett Tinkler, Jack Tucker, Chelsea vanVonno, Megan Waller, Michael Wehberg, Tristan Weinstein, Morgan White and Anna Williams.

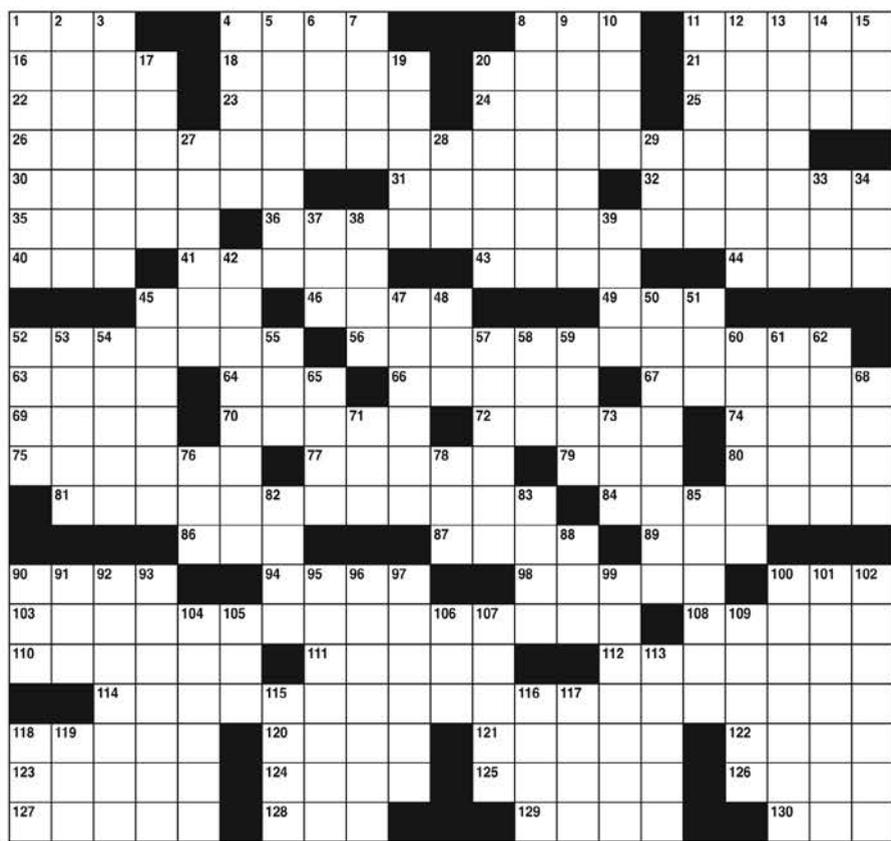
Puzzles

CINÉMA VÉRITÉ

BY DAN MARGOLIS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Dan Margolis, of Westfield, N.J., is a semiretired software applications trainer. In his spare time, he referees high school basketball games and plays keyboard in a "dad-rock band," Landing Party — so named because all the members are "Star Trek" fans. Dan has been solving puzzles since he was a teenager. The first ones he constructed were on graph paper back in the day. This is his fourth crossword for The Times and his first Sunday. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Advice columnist Savage
 - 4 Out of tune ... or bubbles
 - 8 Saturn or Mercury, once
 - 11 ___ fever
 - 16 Prayer leader
 - 18 Opening opening?
 - 20 Yeats or Keats
 - 21 Pliocene, e.g.
 - 22 Something to build on
 - 23 Ancient Aegean land
 - 24 The fly in fly-fishing, e.g.
 - 25 Turn
 - 26 Indy film? (1981)
 - 30 Render unnecessary
 - 31 Female deer
 - 32 Classic sci-fi anthology whose first story is titled "Robbie"
 - 35 Sound from a flock
 - 36 Road movie? (1950)
 - 40 Some M.I.T. grads: Abbr.
 - 41 Bizarre
 - 43 React to a stubbed toe, maybe
 - 44 Confident juggler's props
 - 45 Film director's cry
- DOWN**
- 46 Blood work locales
 - 49 Sound of relief
 - 52 Cannoli ingredient
 - 56 PG movie? (1992)
 - 63 Anthem opening
 - 64 A little bit of work
 - 66 Brush off
 - 67 Draw out
 - 69 One whose range goes from about F3 to F5, musically
 - 70 Hilarious folks
 - 72 World capital with the Gangnam district
 - 74 Challenge
 - 75 Hummingbird-feeder filler
 - 77 Blatant
 - 79 N.Y. engineering sch.
 - 80 Actress de Matteo of "Sons of Anarchy"
 - 81 Family film? (1972)
 - 84 Barely contain anger
 - 86 ___ glance
 - 87 Thor : Thursday :: ___ : Wednesday
 - 89 Suffix with hero
 - 90 Oration station
 - 94 Cleverly self-referential
 - 98 Social stratum
 - 100 Common 99¢ purchase
 - 103 Dock-udrama? (1954)
 - 108 Spendthrift's opposite
 - 110 ___ Palace, Indian tourist attraction
 - 111 Perfectly timed
 - 112 Pilot, e.g.
 - 114 Short film? (1989)
 - 118 Where Minos ruled
 - 120 Safe, on board
 - 121 Violet variety
 - 122 Wait in neutral
 - 123 Jack rabbits, but not rabbits
 - 124 Saturnus or Mercurius
 - 125 Part of a sewing kit
 - 126 Nair rival, once
 - 127 Not so moving?
 - 128 Nile reptile
 - 129 Its name is derived from the Greek for "I burn"
 - 130 OB/GYNs, e.g.
- DOWN**
- 1 Wear off?
 - 2 Easygoing
 - 3 Hometowners
 - 4 Toy (with), as an idea
 - 5 Least strict
 - 6 ___ mundi
 - 7 Popular ABC programming block of the '90s
 - 8 "Perhaps"
 - 9 Fine spray
 - 10 66 and others: Abbr.
 - 11 One of the Borgias
 - 12 Rubber-stamp, say
 - 13 Kids use it for texts
 - 14 "Vous êtes ___" (French map notation)
 - 15 Grp. with the Vezina Trophy
 - 17 Pastels and charcoal, for two
 - 19 Swear words?
 - 20 More than enough
 - 27 Enjoy some dishes without doing dishes, perhaps
 - 28 Hasten
 - 29 ___ Tuesday (Aimee Mann's band)
 - 33 Dot follower
 - 34 Some ESPN highlights, for short
 - 37 Something often underlined and blue
 - 38 Half-moon tide
 - 39 ___ the crack of dawn
 - 42 Balderdash
 - 45 Trickster of Shoshone mythology
 - 47 Short-legged hound
 - 48 Fuel additive brand
 - 50 17, for an R-rated movie
 - 51 Director Ashby
 - 52 Dappled horse
 - 53 Key
 - 54 Hidden downside
 - 55 Man's name that's another man's name backward
 - 57 In poor condition, as old machinery
 - 58 Cholera
 - 59 ___ about (approximately)
 - 60 Undesirable plane seat
 - 61 Often-animated greeting
 - 62 Yes or no follower
 - 65 Flub
 - 68 Eye drop
 - 71 New Deal program, in brief
 - 73 Co. with brown trucks
 - 76 Palindromic title
 - 78 See 118-Down
 - 82 Lady of Spain
 - 83 Anti-mob law, for short
 - 85 Baby shower gift
 - 88 Photographer Goldin
 - 90 ___ Pérignon
 - 91 ___ given Sunday
 - 92 "My package arrived!"
 - 93 Alcoholic drink consumed in one gulp
 - 95 French stars
 - 96 Clench
 - 97 Utah national park
 - 99 Bit of ranch dressing?
 - 100 Got around
 - 101 Street vendor
 - 102 Radio buttons
 - 104 First name of a literary "Papa"
 - 105 Diminutive
 - 106 Cat's pajamas?
 - 107 Extends a tour
 - 109 Invite to enter
 - 113 Parts of kingdoms
 - 115 When repeated, a "Seinfeld" expression
 - 116 Scruff
 - 117 Masseur's target
 - 118 With 78-Down, Greek letters that together sound like a world capital
 - 119 Dashed



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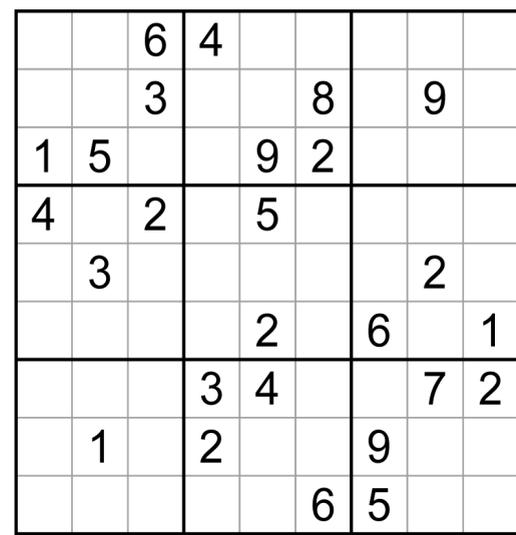
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- '14 HONDA CIVIC • '14 FORD ESCAPE • '11 JEEP LIBERTY
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- '12 FORD TAURUS • '08 TOYOTA AVALON

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HARD - 15

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

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

Answers to last week's puzzles

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

Calendar



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

CARRIAGE RIDE

Although the temperature was nearly freezing, families enjoyed carriage rides by R&B Horse Ranch on Saturday afternoon.



LISA CAPITELLI/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

MINI VILLAGES

Walking around the Ocean Pines South Gate Pond, visitors will see little villages at the base of some of the trees in the wooded area.

Thurs., Dec. 24

N.O.E.L. COMMUNITY DINNER

St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 302 Baltimore Ave., 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. The church will distribute bags of non-perishable foods filled with some traditional food items to prepare at home. There is a special bag available for those who are not able to prepare food. All those picking up are asked to wear a mask. Donations are always appreciated and can be mailed to: The N.O.E.L. Community c/o St. Paul's by the Sea, 302 N. Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842. 410-289-3453

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Church of the Holy Spirit, 10001 Coastal Highway, 6:00 PM. Masks and social distancing are required. 410-723-1973

Mon., Dec. 28

STORY TIME - HIBERNATION AND MIGRATION

Meeting via Facebook, 10:30 AM. Learn the answers to hibernation and migration questions in this program for children ages 6-10 years. <http://www.worcesterlibrary.org>

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY MEETING

Meeting 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 Campion, 410-641-0157

Tues., Dec. 29

LIGHT UP A SNOWMAN STEM CRAFT KIT MEET UP

Meeting via Zoom, 10:30 AM. Pick up your kit at any Worcester County library (while supplies last). Join in on Zoom to show off what you made, or to ask questions about the kit. Suggested for ages 7-11 years. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org.

Wed., Dec. 30

HOLIDAY SCAVENGER HUNT

Meeting via Zoom, 10:30 AM. It's a race to find holiday items around your home. Look for Hanukkah, Kawanazas and Christmas items and learn about holiday symbols. Suggested for ages 5-11 years. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org.

ONGOING EVENTS

WINTER READING CHALLENGE

Beginning Dec. 1, log your books, attend virtual programs and explore activities to earn badges and chances to win the grand prizes. Sign up for free at <https://worcesterlibrary.beanstack.org>.

KIWANIS 2021 LOTTERY RAFFLE

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City is selling tickets for its 2021 Lottery Raffle. All sales must be completed by Dec. 31 to be eligible. All Kiwanis members have tickets to sell and the club will also be selling tickets at the Ocean Pines Farmer's Market every Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon in White Horse Park. For \$20 a ticket, the purchasers get 365 chances to win. Proceeds support local scholarships and youth programs. www.kiwanisofopoc.org, [Facebook.com/Kiwanis Club of Ocean Pines/Ocean City](https://www.facebook.com/KiwanisClubofOceanPines/OceanCity).



ALLY LANASA/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

LIVE NATIVITY

Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School students wished visitors a Merry Christmas as they presented a drive-through live Nativity scene with stable animals on Dec. 18 in Berlin.



OUTREACH

Berlin residents are invited to take what they need and leave what they can at the blessing box on SonRise Church's Berlin campus, 10026 Main St.

ALLY LANASA/
BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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