



PHOTO COURTESY WORCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROGRESS

Joe Price, the facilities planner for Worcester County Public Schools, gave school board members a quick update on the 25,000-square-foot expansion being built at Stephen Decatur Middle School on Feb. 15, saying the crews are ahead of schedule despite slowdowns created by recent snow storms. See story on page 11.

Berlin delays park land sale to review value

Heron Park property price awaits update of appraisal

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Based on concerns aired by a host of residents, the Berlin Town Council voted on Monday to seek updated appraisals for several Heron Park parcels before considering two offers to buy them.

After issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for parcels 57 and 410 in November, with parcel 191 added in December, Berlin has received development proposals from Gillis Gilkerson and Natelli Communities.

While the Gillis Gilkerson pitch would include commercial and passive uses, the plan from Natelli Communities focused principally on housing.

Both million dollar-plus offers would fall short of clearing the more than \$2 million dollar debt service Berlin wants to eliminate.

Berlin bought the land, which was the site of the former Tyson poultry plant on Old Ocean City Boulevard, for roughly \$2.5 million in 2016 from Berlin Properties North, which counts Councilman Troy Purnell among its ownership.

Berlin is paying \$200,000 annu-
See PARK Page 4

OP budget passes with big assessment drop

FY2022 surplus lets board cut \$100 off last year's bill for non-waterfront property

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Eclipsing a fiscal high note reached only once before, the Ocean Pines Board of Directors last week approved the association's FY23 budget cut assessments by



Colette Horn

\$100 for non-waterfront properties.

Speaking during the board meeting last Wednesday, Association President Colette Horn said assessment fees were cut to a lesser degree

in 2014.

"The last time our assessment was reduced was in 2014 in the amount of

a \$5 reduction," she said.

Horn said the approved budget represents a rare occurrence in the history of the Pines.

"Today is going to go down in history..." she said. "We are looking at taking ... the base assessment back to the amount that it was in pre-2015."

Assessment fees for FY23 were set at \$896 for non-waterfront lots, down from \$996 this year.

Also, waterfront rates were set at

\$1,511, non-water estate rates at \$1,344, water estate rates at \$2,267 and water non-bulkhead at \$986.

Revenue projections for FY23 are \$13.9 million, compared to revenue estimates of \$14.1 million for the current budget year.

Total expenses projected for the same \$13.9 million in FY23 represent a slight uptick from the \$13 million estimate for FY22.

See COSTS Page 5



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OP Communications Cmte. talks next steps for signage

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) The Ocean Pines Communications Committee continued to discuss the installation of electronic message boards and how to catalog historical community items, and previewed two town halls slated for March during its meeting last Wednesday.



Cheryl Jacobs

Committee Chair Cheryl Jacobs said board of directors discussions last month about upgrading existing marquees with electronic message boards put the proposal in doubt.

Discussions on the topic during the board meeting on Jan. 22 revealed that Worcester Development, Review and Planning Deputy Director Jennifer Keener reportedly stated that installing any electronic signs would require removal of all existing marquees.

"I don't recall that being a requirement," Jacobs said.

Jacobs said earlier conversations did not involve an agreement to remove old signs.

"It was never, 'you put in electronic and they all have to go,'" she said. "We need to pursue that further."

Committee member Jenny Cropper Rines said that during initial talks on the matter removing existing signage was a goal but not a requirement.

"During the process, we thought the language was ambiguous enough that we should be able to have eight signs period," she said.

Jacobs said she recently spoke with former Worcester County Planning Commission member Mike Diffendal, who failed to recollect the all-or-nothing aspect being included as a condition when a favorable recommendation was given in Dec. 2020.

"We need to pursue this with [Commissioners Chip] Bertino and [Jim] Bunting," she said.

Rines recalled earlier conversations about removing existing signs.

"In terms of the language of the law, it wasn't part of it, I don't believe," she said.

In February 2021, the county commissioners approved a related amendment to zoning regulations to permit Ocean Pines eight signs in the community.

Committee member Marlene Ott also recalled that the commissioners' approval would have allowed up to eight signs.

Ott also concurred with Jacobs' suggestion to contact Bertino and Bunting.

Rines noted electronic signs would allow the association to post real-time emergency information, including Amber Alerts.

Jacobs agreed, but said those perks were not the primary motivation to install newer technology.

"We're not saying spend this kind of money just so we can have emergency alerts," she said.

Ott agreed to contact Keener to confirm details on sign counts, with Jacobs on board to contact Bertino and Bunting.

"It didn't make it to this year's budget, so we've got plenty of time to work on this," she said.

In other business, Rines provided an update on plans to contact officials at the Nabb Research Center located at Salisbury University regarding preservation of historical Pines items.

"They do have climate control," she said.

Despite the HVAC advantage, Rines said doubts surfaced after learning more about the NABB Center's mission.

"I don't think that's the direction we're moving in," she said.

Jacobs said if the NABB Center was not a viable option another avenue to catalog and preserve historical items would need to be pursued.

"It would be lovely if we could get some sponsors to build us an annex to the craft center," she said.

Jacobs said the site could serve as a "historical museum" to display relics for the community to inspect.

Rines agreed with the concept but questioned the timing.

"I like the idea, but it sounds like a future goal," she said.

In the meantime, Rines suggested finding volunteers to unpack boxes of Pines historical items.

"I've never seen it all out of the box at once," she said. "We can certainly aim for a location to display it, but we've got to really know what we've got."

Jacobs suggested recruiting high school students living in Ocean Pines to assist with the effort.

"It would work for community service obligations," she said.

Rines said organization is a crucial element.

"The first step is going through and storing it better," she said.

Jacobs also previewed a pair of town halls scheduled in March.

Communications Committee members are assisting the Strategic Planning Committee during a town hall meeting on March 2 to recap results from the recent property owners' survey.

Also on March 19 at 9 a.m. a town hall is being held to review proposed bylaw changes.

Both town halls will be held virtually, with the March 19 meeting held at the Golf Clubhouse.

The next Communications Committee meeting is scheduled on March 17 at 10 a.m.

OP Chamber launches new Restaurant Week, March 6

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) With hopes of establishing a new tradition for area foodies, the Ocean Pines Chamber of Commerce is launching its inaugural Restaurant Week from March 6-12.

Chamber Executive Director Kerrie Bunting said the fresh venture was planned in conjunction with the

ERA Martin Associates Shamrock Division on Racetrack Road.

"It's the first time," she said.

Bunting said about a dozen Pines-based food establishments will be participating, including; A bagel And, Abi's Diner, Lenovo's Trattoria, Hunan Garden, Ocean Pines Country Club and Yacht Club, Paul & Vinnies, Pines Public House, Plaza Tapatia, Southgate Grill, Taylor's and the Hungry Donut.

"We wanted to highlight the diverse gastronomic opportunities Ocean Pines provides the entire region," she said.

Bunting said prospective diners could obtain food cards to get stamps from participating restaurants.

Three stamps are required to be entered into a raffle drawing held on St. Patrick's Day.

Food cards can be obtained from participating restaurants, the Ocean Pines Visitors Center at 11047 Race Track Road or the ERA Martin Associates Shamrock Division office at 11049 Racetrack Road.

Taylor's Restaurant owner Craig Davis, who applauded the concept promoted by the chamber, said patrons could look forward to some fresh menu entries.

"We're offering three additional chef's specials," he said.

Davis said to supplement normal weekly specials, a surf and turf dish is being added for \$26, a Mediterranean shrimp dish for \$22 and a veggie tofu pita for \$16.

DeNovo's Trattoria co-owner Kelli Beck offered kudos to Bunting for en-



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Taylor's Neighborhood Restaurant staff, Ailee Ewing, left, and Emily Vaughan, are ready to welcome patrons during the Ocean Pines Restaurant Week, which begins on March 6.

visioning the Ocean Pines Restaurant Week event.

"We're super excited to be a part of it," she said.

Beck said Restaurant Week patrons could anticipate added menu selections, including \$9.50 pizza on Monday, \$8 large salads on Tuesday, pasta night on Wednesday and comfort food night on Thursday.

"We will have bar specials all week," she said.

Matt Ortt Companies CEO Ralph DeAngelus said patrons could select from an array of weekly specials at both the Yacht Club and Clubhouse

Bar and Grille.

"We look forward to participating," he said.

DeAngelus highlighted the prime rib special on Saturday as a popular option for regular patrons.

Bunting said after diners get three stamps food cards should be returned to the ERA Martin Associates Shamrock office on or before March 16.

"They'll be entered into a raffle on March 17," she said.

The raffle drawing will be live streamed on the Chamber's Facebook page with prizes awarded afterwards.

"We will call winners," she said.

Tri-County area to receive \$10 million in rural grants

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Worcester County will be sharing \$10 million from the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund with Wicomico and Somerset Counties following a Feb. 18 announcement by Gov. Larry Hogan.

The purpose of the funding is to "boost economic development activity, stimulate private sector investment, and grow jobs in the state's rural regions," according to a press release from the governor's office.

The money, once approved by the General Assembly, will be given to five rural regional councils — the lower, middle and upper Eastern Shore areas, western Maryland and

Southern Maryland.

"We are taking the next important step forward in our efforts to help rural Maryland come back better and stronger than ever before," Hogan stated. "This unprecedented \$50 million investment will help us put even more 'open for business' signs in the windows in our small towns, it will create thousands of new jobs in rural communities, and it will literally transform neighborhoods and communities for the better all across our state."

According to the press release, the grant program is designed to be flexible and allow each rural council to determine the best use of funds, within the program's guidelines and

See RURAL Page 6

Park parcel sale awaits reappraisal results

Continued from Page 1

ally through 2045 to clear that debt.

Gillis Gilkerson is offering to pay \$1.5 million for the trio of parcels, with plans calling for an array of businesses, including eateries, offices and a garden center.

Gilkerson also accounts for parking and includes multi-purpose fields and a dog-friendly park area.

Lastly, Gilkerson has pledged to earmark at least two acres for Berlin to develop an amphitheater on site.

By contrast, Natelli Communities is proposing a housing development with 78 single-family homes and a 50,000 square foot commercial building at the front of the property.

Natelli Communities is offering \$1.6 million for parcels 57 and 410, while also proposing to transfer five parcels it owns adjacent to Stephen Decatur Park valued at roughly \$444,000.

Town Council mulled both offers on Monday during a public hearing that was initially slated for closed session.

Among the residents on hand was Gina Velong who asked if community access to open areas in Heron Park would be affected.

Tony Weeg, who opposed the housing plans, said Gillis Gilkerson has a strong track record for adaptive

re-use projects.

"I think the project has the right spirit," he said.

Ann Hillyer said other avenues should be explored before accepting either offer.

"There are options that would be good for a lot of people in town," she said. "There is grant ... and other money out there."

Hillyer also noted the Natelli Communities offer would require the town to cover costs to remove existing structures above the \$500,000 demolition grant it was awarded by Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

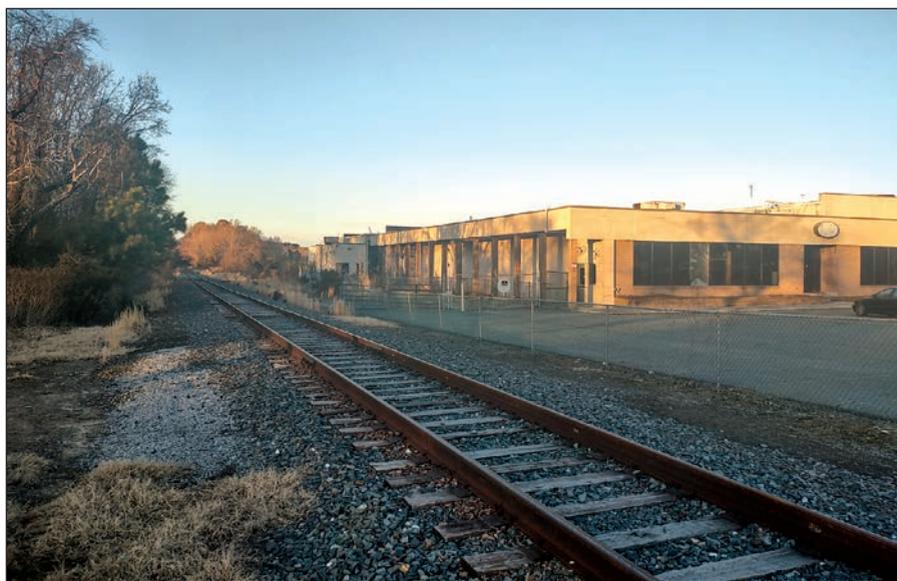
"Which proposal puts more burden on the town's resources that will cost us money?" she asked.

Based on the current offers, Hillyer supported the Gilkerson plan.

"It would put less burden on town's infrastructure, and they aren't charging for demolition," she said.

Town Administrator Jeff Fleetwood said both proposals were graded on metrics drafted in conjunction with Planning Director Dave Engelhart, Deputy Town Administrator Mary Bohlen and Public Works Director Jimmy Charles.

"The money offers were close," he said. "We went back and forth on use and redevelopment [as] both had



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Berlin Town Council voted on Monday to seek current appraisals for several parcels in Heron Park prior to considering two recent development proposals.

added incentives."

Fleetwood highlighted the two-plus acres for a proposed amphitheater in the Gilkerson deal and the parcels near Stephen Decatur Park offered by Natelli Communities.

Kate Patton, who previously served on the Heron Park Advisory Committee, questioned potential future costs for the town.

"Just because the town has received proposals does not mean you have to accept either project at this time," she said.

Patton said increased traffic would result if the housing plans were to proceed.

Berlin Planning Commission Vice-Chairman Ron Cascio said both the commercial and housing plans undervalue the property.

"The whole goal here is to get out of debt and neither one of these proposals do that," he said.

Council member Jay Knerr also touched on debt service concerns.

"People think selling it will eliminate our debt," he said.

Knerr said Berlin is on the hook for \$2.4 million for the Heron Park property, with both proposals falling nearly a million dollars short of that figure.

Knerr said an additional sum of up to \$500,000 could be added to debt service if existing structures used on site were replicated elsewhere.

"We also have to factor in the two buildings, one on 410 and one on 191, which would have to be rebuilt.

The buildings are currently used to house town-owned maintenance equipment, parts and machinery.

"That debt would be there for several years, it's not just going to go away," he said.

Cascio stressed the need to examine zoning at the site. At present, some of the land is zoned R-1 residential and some is zoned B-2 shopping districts.

"To just throw it out there to the public ... without doing our homework and finding what the value of the property is to the town of Berlin, we would be remiss not to do that," he said.

Cascio advised against accepting either offer at the moment.

"We should just tap the brakes and downshift a little," he said. "Look at what both of those offer and see if we can come up with something a little better for the people of Berlin."

In response to the comments from the council and the audience, both

See BERLIN Page 5

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Costs cut, assessments too

Continued from Page 1

Funding of \$1.1 million for bulkhead, drainage and replacement reserves, plus capital expenses of \$1.3 million, are also included in FY23 budget numbers.

Horn praised General Manager John Viola and association team members for their work to cut costs for residents.

"I want to thank this board and the previous board for providing the leadership and support that made those improvements possible," she said.

For his part, Viola said the one-time assessment reduction introduced this year, could be repeated in subsequent budget cycles based on profitability.

"That line item ... that one-time assessment reduction from current surplus, I've recommended that we continue this line each year," he said.

Breaking down the \$100 figure,

Viola said now fully realized operating surplus from FY21 totaling \$650,000 accounted for \$77 of that sum.

Also higher revenues from amenities, including golf, aquatics, racquet sports, beach parking and recreation and parks, chopped another \$66 from assessment rates.

Further cost cuts were tied to decreased contributions to general replacements, lowered bad debts, changes in food and beverage income and decreased legal fees that in total took \$36 off assessment rates.

Tipping the scale in the other direction, increased Fire Department funding adds \$38, association salary raises adds \$32, while property and liability insurance rate hikes add \$7 and \$2 to cover costs for a potential referendum vote.

On a related note, board members also approved retaining the 6 percent interest rate for delinquent payments in FY23.

Berlin delays sale of park lots

Continued from Page 4

developers, Palmer Gillis and Tom Natelli, addressed all those present.

Gillis, who noted the proposals are "dramatically different," said development plans have been in the works since last summer.

Gillis professed hesitation over demolishing existing structures on site. "As a local builder, we did a lot of the construction work at that building," he said.

"I don't want to tear a lot of it down [because] there is so much value there that can repurposed, recycled and reused."

Natelli said feedback was welcomed to determine what plans best suit the community.

"What we're putting forward is a conceptual site plan," he said. "It's not set in stone."

While acknowledging new housing would impact town services, Natelli said his goal is to retain Heron Park as a community asset.

"We are mainly residential master planners," he said. "We put forward what we thought was a concept base on what our company thrives at."

Gillis, who said his company's plan would retain 40 acres of the roughly 60 acre site for park areas, also noted land values are relative.

"Market value is what someone is willing to pay," he said.

Council member Troy Purnell recommended obtaining up-to-date appraisals for parcels 57,410 and 191, with a subsequent suggestion from Gillis to also include the remaining 40-odd acres.

Fleetwood said although property appraisals typically take up to two months to be completed, that time might be significantly reduced since the town had the site recently valued.

Mayor Zack Tyndall said discussions could be revisited during the Town Council meeting on March 28.

"We do need to settle in on some kind of decision," he said.

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OP Board Briefs

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) The Ocean Pines Board of Directors last week delayed decisions on proposed governance document revisions, signed off on a grant application to improve nature trails and voted on advisory committee appointments, with all but one approved.

M-09 revisions

Due to uncertainties on time-frames, Association President Colette Horn withdrew second readings for changes to resolution M-09 concerning board candidate applications and Search Committee duties.

Horn said the intent was revamping the candidate verification procedures. "We want to add language that the due date [for candidate applications] can't extend past May 31," she said.

Director Larry Perrone said if the association secretary, who is tasked with reviewing candidate applications, has related questions any issues should be addressed directly.

"I don't think we can give the secretary the authority to extend the due date," he said.

Director Doug Parks said some degree of flexibility should be granted if additional information requested from candidates is not delivered within prescribed time frames.

"There is some ambiguity there," he said.

Perrone said any clarity required for candidate applications should be provided before the due date.

"Judges pick apart the wording," he said. "We could find ourselves in a situation where if we are not specific on what we're doing it could be a problem down the road."

Horn recommended board members approve a new candidate application form for consideration during the groups next meeting on March 23.

"We need to be prepared to approve changes," she said.

Electronic voting

Potentially swapping election methods from paper balloting to online voting was put on the back burner until at least next year.

Elections Committee Chair Carol Ludwig said current procedures include mailing ballots with return en-

velopes, which are scanned after collection.

Ludwig said tight time frames for mailing and receiving ballots has increased the number of late returns from 182 in 2020 to 289 in 2021.

Additionally, Ludwig said scanning ballots is a painstaking process taking upwards of six hours, along with time-intensive labor to identify duplicate submissions.

"We cannot identify eligible voters until 35 days before the deadline," she said.

Under the proposed online approach, property owners would be given a random number to log on the association website and vote.

"Votes are entered via the website with reminders sent to those who give emails," she said. "Voting is open until the day of the deadline."

Among the benefits of online voting, Ludwig noted, were cost reductions for postage and return envelopes.

"It all goes through our contractor," she said. "It would save on paper and storage needs."

To accommodate residents without online access, a phone-in option would be included.

Ludwig said online voting has already been embraced by the Parke neighborhood.

"It did increase the percent of returns," she said. "Voting online is easier than ordering something on Amazon."

Current costs for annual elections are roughly \$15,000, with price estimates from four online vendors ranging from \$3,000 to \$13,000.

"There should be a related cost savings," she said.

Director Amy Peck said 64.7 percent of respondents in the recent property owners survey favored electronic voting.

Horn proposed adopting a hybrid approach initially, with both online and paper ballot options, to avoid confusion during the upcoming board election.

Perrone balked at the suggestion. "Cost-wise it would defeat the whole purpose," he said.

Director Frank Daly asked if switching to online voting would require updating bylaw language.

"There is a line stating ballots must be mailed," he said.

Bylaws and Resolutions Committee Chair Jim Trummel agreed that bylaw section 5.03C would need amending.

"You may need bylaws amended if going for this across the board," he said.

Perrone said risks outweigh advantages in terms of enacting electronic voting for the board election this year.

"We're not ready," he said.

AARP grant

Based on a request from the
Continued on Page 7

Town of Berlin Public Notices

OCD-2/24/2t



NOTICE of a Public Hearing

Pursuant to The Town of Berlin, MD Code Sections 108-214 and 108-215, the Berlin Mayor & Council will hold a Public Hearing to hear the request for a Text Amendment to the Town Code at their next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Monday, March 14, 2022, at 7:00 PM in the second floor Council Chambers of Berlin Town Hall, 10 William Street, Berlin, MD.

The proposed Text Amendment reads as follows:

Proposed Text Amendments for Authorization of Crematorium as Conditional Use on M-1A Industrial Property

- "Sec. 108-5. - Definitions Crematorium defined: a building containing furnace(s) for cremating dead human bodies"
- "Sec 108-163. - Conditional uses, variances and special exceptions. (c) Within any M-1A Industrial District, a crematorium as defined in Section 108-5."
- (d) the old (c) will then become the new (d)
- "Sec. 108-518. - Conditional uses. (4) In any M-1A Industrial District, a crematorium as defined in Section 108-5."



NOTICE of a Public Hearing

Pursuant to the Town of Berlin, MD Code Sections 108-214 and 108-215, the Berlin Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing to hear the request for a Text Amendment to the Town Code at their next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022, at 5:30 PM in the second floor Council Chambers of Berlin Town Hall, 10 William Street, Berlin, MD.

The proposed Text Amendment reads as follows:

Proposed Text Amendment I hereby propose to amend Section 108-403 of the Berlin code to allow fee simple townhouse dwellings with the following lot and area requirements:

1. Minimum lot size - 2,000 square feet;
2. Minimum lot width - 18 feet;
3. Front yard setback - 20 feet;
4. Rear yard setback -25 feet;
5. Side yard setback - 0 feet along party wall and 8 feet on the end units.

If a townhouse project is developed as allowed herein, the density shall remain calculated as set forth for "All Dwellings" (Minimum Lot Area (square feet) is 5,000).

OCD-2/24/2t

Rural funds total \$10 million

Continued from Page 3 in coordination with the counties they represent.

Eligible uses of the funds include developing infrastructure such as utilities, transportation, and broadband to support the attraction, retention, or expansion of businesses, as well as infrastructure related to specific industry sector development including manufacturing, cyber security, and the life sciences, the press release said.

Grant applications to the regional tri-county council will open in May,

said Joseph Parker, Worcester County's deputy chief administrative officer, in an email.

"Broad uses for applications can be a regional collaborative project or individual county grant request for projects or programs which can include Infrastructure, Industry, talent attraction, Workforce Development and/or Planning and Feasibility Studies," Parker wrote. "We are excited to pursue grant applications which serve the citizens of Worcester County."



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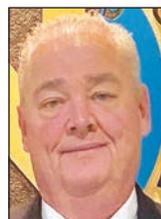
County geared up for sports complex search

Long-awaited project in FY23 general bonds means funding available this year

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Nothing is imminent and nothing is set in stone. But with funds for an eventual athletic complex earmarked in the county general obligation bonds to be issued this year, the means to set this long-awaited project in motion are in place.

The Worcester County Commissioners voted 4-3 on Feb. 15 to include \$11.2 million from that bond



Joe Mitrecic

issue for the athletic complex. Assigning its funding to the general obligation bonds indicates that the county feels that the athletic complex is a venture that will bring in a revenue stream that effectively

pays for itself.

But mum's the word on specifics beyond that.

"We've identified a couple pieces of property for a sports complex," Commissioner President Joe Mitrecic said. "We needed to have the money put in there so that if we do something, it's part of the bond. If we can

come to an agreement with one of the property owners, we can move forward."

"You can't really have a marketing program and fixed costs on everything that this sports complex might cost unless you have a piece of property."

Once a property is under contract, a public hearing can be held and, if the county proceeds after that, the administration will get to work on drafting a master plan that will indicate exactly how the property can be used, what can be built on it, what it'll look like and other specifications.

Regarding the two properties under consideration, Mitrecic wouldn't commit to a timeline but acknowledged that he'd like to see progress soon.

"The sooner, the better. But we're

not going to rush anything," he said. "We're going to do our due diligence and keep moving it forward. There is no timeline or drop-dead date ... We're going to make sure it's the right thing for the county and make sure we do it right the first time."

Mitrecic made a point to throw his support behind what the sports complex could mean for the citizens of Worcester County, saying it's more than just a potential economic boon.

"It's going to allow kids that may never be able to travel to a tournament to play in a tournament atmosphere, possibly get noticed by a college coach or just enjoy the type of athletic participation and competition that comes with these tournaments," he said. "Some of our kids are never going to have that opportunity if we don't have this in our backyard."

OP Board Briefs

Continued from Page 6

Recreation and Parks Committee, the board voted unanimously in favor of applying for a Community Challenge Grant through the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Recreation and Parks Committee Chair Patti Stevens said the grant of approximately \$10,000 would be intended for improvements on the Robin Hood and Route 90 trails.

These would include installing crowd counters at trail heads.

Stevens said further criteria for grant qualification includes sponsoring recurring community walks.

"Part of what AARPs focus is to build community engagement and connected communities," she said. "We think walking together is a really great way to do that."

Peck said the recent property owners' survey revealed walking trails are used by 66 percent of the community. "The community survey also showed that the number one response was for improving walking trails and bike trails," she said.

Committee appointments

In a change from past form, Horn announced the board would vote to approve individual committee appointments, as opposed to signing off on a list of names.

"The chairperson present to us their recommendations," she said.

After approving two new members for the Aquatics Committee and three for the Golf Committee, the board split on approving Stuart Lakernick for the Strategic Planning Committee.

Voting in favor were Directors Rick Farr, Parks and Peck.

Parks recommended the board outline reasoning for rejecting a committee application to enlighten future candidates.

"One thing you don't do is turn down a volunteer," he said.

Horn asked if any members would like to share their reasoning for rejection, which solicited no answers.

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Berlin apartment fire on Monday morning solicits multiple area responders

(March 3, 2022) The Worcester County Fire Marshal's Office investigated a Monday morning fire in a high-occupancy apartment complex in Berlin.

Just before 5:30 a.m. Berlin Volunteer Fire Company was alerted for a fire at the Ocean's East Luxury Apartment Homes complex at 9892 Shore Break Lane in Berlin.

Upon arrival, crews discovered fire and smoke on a third-floor balcony.

Prior to firefighters gaining access to the unit, an adjacent neighbor deployed a portable fire extinguisher to knock down the majority of the fire.

Berlin was assisted by the Ocean Pines, Ocean City and Showell Volunteer Fire departments.

Worcester County Fire Marshal's Office said the cause of the fire was determined to be improperly discarded smoking materials.

Fire Marshal Jeffrey McMahan reminded the public to properly dispose of smoking materials in non-combustible containers with a lid and to make sure they are completely out before leaving the area.

No injuries were reported.



PHOTOS COURTESY OCEAN PINES FIRE DEPARTMENT

Several area fire companies responded on Monday morning for a fire at Ocean's East Luxury Apartment Homes on Shore Break Lane in Berlin that was attributed to improperly discarded smoking materials.

Berlin Council Briefs

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Berlin Mayor Zack Tyndall and Town Council discussed an upcoming community bike ride, along with ordinances tied to zoning for crema-

toriums, short-term rental regulations and establishing an abatement fund during its meeting on Monday.

Community bike ride

Economic & Community Development Director Ivy Wells requested approval to stage a community bike ride in Berlin on May 20 at 7 p.m.

Wells told the council May is National Bike Month, which provides an annual opportunity to showcase health and wellness aspects related to the pastime.

Wells said last year the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition hosted several inaugural rides in local communities, with another round scheduled this spring.

"In 2022 community bike rides will be held on May 14 in Snow Hill and Pocomoke City and May 21 in Ocean Pines," she said.

Police Chief Arnold Downing assisted Wells to plot routes for the ride that starts and ends at Heron Park.

Further assistance has been offered by Worcester County Bike and Pedes-

trian Coalition member Patti Stevens, who agreed to provide volunteers for the Berlin event.

"Tom Simon, whose business is helping promote bike safety, will also be in attendance that evening," she said.

Tyndall asked if the ride path could be expanded to include other neighborhoods in Berlin.

"Could we extend the bike route across the highway and go through Decatur Farms in future years?" he said. Downing highlighted safety concerns related to highway crossings.

"They could do a separate ride actually in Decatur Farms," he said.



Ivy Wells

Crematorium

Council held a first reading to establish crematoriums as a conditional use in M-1A industrial districts.

Town Attorney Dave Gaskill said a public hearing on the proposed zoning code amendment is slated for March 14.

Continued on Page 10



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Viola updates OP projects, budget

Current year financials continue to trend positive, general manager reports

By Greg Ellison
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Ocean Pines' financials and progress reports on other projects were updated by General Manager John Viola at the Board of Directors' meeting last Wednesday.

Looking at ending numbers from this January, revenues were favorable by \$56,000, offset by expenses tracking \$19,000 over estimates, for a net operating favorability of \$37,000.

Finance Director Steve Phillips reported year-to-date totals through January, which closed one week earlier.

To end January, year-to-date revenues beat the budget by \$1.3 million, with expenses coming in \$139,000 less than projected for a total surplus of \$1.4 million.

With three months remaining in FY22, Viola cautioned that financial bottom line figures could ratchet up or down depending on weather patterns.

"Last year we were in a similar situation and ... we didn't touch it," he

said. "I said, 'wait until it's realized.'"

By contrast, Viola outlined proposed allocations for the now fully realized \$1.19 million surplus from FY21.



John Viola

In addition to earmarking \$700,000 for a one-time assessment reduction, \$350,000 would be directed to replenish road reserves and \$60,000 would be used to buy floating

T-docks.

"I reviewed all this with the Budget and Finance [Committee] yesterday," he said.

Among a number of updates on pending initiatives, Viola said progress on addressing mailbox clusters is anticipated in March.

Public Works Office Manager Linda Martin said 10 high priority locations have been identified, with 100 pedestals on order.

"We're waiting on delivery to begin replacement," she said.

Martin said the association would coordinate dates with the Postal Service to work on the mailbox clusters.

Also, Martin said a bid request for \$75 was received to clean each mailbox section, which would total \$4,125 for 55 total spots.

"We will do a test site in March," she said.

Completion dates remain vague to install four new pickleball courts at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center.

Viola said bid requests were sent on Jan. 21 to more than a handful of contractors with only one response received ahead of a Feb. 18 deadline.

"The bid was only for the courts," he said. "We requested to have site work also."

Since that point, association officials have consulted with several contractors, with additional bids anticipated.

Further renovations are slated at the North Gate Bridge following the removal of the long-abandoned guard shack on Feb. 8.

"We removed it in-house at a cost of \$2,500," he said.

Viola said upcoming plans include extending guard rails and potentially adding a third lane.

Bids for replacement lights estimate material costs at \$45,000 and \$10,000 for labor charges.

"The estimated time to receive materials is 12 weeks," he said.

Viola said bids for light poles are also forthcoming.

"There will be six lights on poles on each side," he said. "We are trying to get two other bids."



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SCAN CODE TO APPLY ONLINE

Berlin Council Briefs

Continued from Page 8

"We would amend zoning code to include a definition for a crematorium as a building or facility containing furnaces for cremating dead human bodies," he said.

Gaskill noted conditional use requests require approval from the Board of Appeals.

Short-term rentals

Council also reviewed tweaks to proposed short-term rental regulations ahead of a public hearing on March 28.

In September, Planning Director Dave Engelhart presented a draft ordinance developed during a council work session in June. The issue was initially examined in 2018 when no action was taken.

"We've had some different versions of this," he said. "We've simplified it quite a bit."

Among the recent changes are including eligible zoning for short-term rentals to include R1-4 residential districts and B1-3 business districts.

Engelhart said short-term rental ordinance licensing fees include an initial \$350 charge with annual renewal costing \$125.

To be licensed, owners would need to have properties inspected for fire safety, egress and other quality of life issues.

"There would be an inside and out-

side placard listing the license number," he said.

Licensing rules would also require the inclusion of a property agent available to contact 24 hours seven day a week.

"They must be capable of responding and be located within 30 miles of Berlin," he said.

Also, one additional off-street parking space, beyond normal zoning requirements, would be needed for each bedroom rented for stays under 28 days.

"Those were the only items that were not really accomplished in the last draft," he said.

Tyndall asked about related violation charges for short-term rentals.

Engelhart said renting without licensing would warrant a recurring \$600 fine for every 30 days in operation.

Civil violations start at \$100 for the first occurrence, which jumps to \$200 for repeat offenses, along with the potential for license revocation for recurring problems.

Engelhart said licensing compliance would be largely voluntary for property owners, while enforcement of violations would be complaint driven.

Council member Jay Knerr asked why a provision requiring short-term rentals to be owner's primary residence was deleted.

Engelhart said the change was based on the negative response from residents in attendance during the coun-

cil discussion in September.

"People at the past hearing said that would prevent them from renting," he said.

Tyndall said following the September meeting council members sought means to address concerns aired.

"The council was divided with some for allowing people to not own and still have short-term rentals, while others felt it was necessary," he said.

Gaskill said the ordinance could be further amended in the future.

"We will have to have a public hearing," he said. "After that you could propose amendments and if not happy you could vote against."

Abatement fund

Council approved establishing a local abatement fund to qualify to receive payouts from a recent national settlement reached with opioid manufacturers.

Gaskill said Maryland has entered into a state-subdivision agreement as part of a national settlement reached with Johnson & Johnson, Amerisource Bergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson.

"We're required to do this to receive any funds from the state," he said.

While time frames and amounts remain unknown, the funding would be distributed through the Maryland Department of Health.

"We are required my March 22 to pass a resolution and establish that fund," he said.

Gaskill said the funds would be primarily for prevention and treatment for opioid abuse.

"The state legislature is in the process of passing a bill to allow us to do this," he said. "We need to have this separate bank account because it's going to be audited where money goes."

Unspent funds would be returned to pharmaceutical companies.

County school board green lights \$124 million budget

By Greg Wehner
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) The Worcester County Board of Education unanimously approved the school system's

Fiscal Year 2023 proposed operating budget of \$124 million during a board meeting on Feb. 15.

District officials began working on the budget in September, when each principal was asked to submit a list of budget priorities for their schools.

The final product was presented to the school board on Feb. 15 and showed a nearly \$6 million increase from the FY22 approved budget of \$118 million.

Vince Tolbert, the school system's chief financial officer, presented the budget and said it includes over \$101 million of county appropriations and is dependent on the Worcester County Commissioners.

Over \$22 million of the budget is funded by state aid and includes nearly \$800,000 in additional revenue largely made up of \$567,000 of fund balance that was forwarded from last year.

The budget represents \$4 million
See BUDGET Page 11

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School expansion on track for end of 2022 completion

By Greg Wehner
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Despite a string of snowstorms that moved through the area since the first of the year, progress on a 25,000 square foot expansion of Stephen Decatur Middle School is ahead of schedule.

Joe Price, the facilities planner for Worcester County Public Schools provided on Feb. 15 an update to school board members on the addition, which broke ground in November,

Price provides the board with monthly updates, and since January, crews have completed the perimeter foundations as well as the underground electrical and mechanical work.

The crews are also preparing to pour concrete slabs and will be working on masonry for interior and exterior walls.

Over the next 30 days, Price added, the storm pipe structures will be put in place.

Whiting Turner is providing the

work for the project, and Superintendent Lou Taylor asked Price how things were going with the company.

Price said he was very satisfied with the progress being made by Whiting Turner, adding that he has a great rapport with the contractors.

As far as whether the weather put a damper on progress, Price said after each snow storm, crews were able to clear the snow and continue their work the next day.

If anything, he added, the project is "a little bit ahead" of schedule.

Once completed, the new addition will include 12 new classrooms, four science laboratories, meeting areas, and storage space.

Taylor previously stated the storage can be used for the school's growing band program. The addition will also improve safety, as it will eliminate nine portable classrooms currently being used.

Although the expansion has taken 20 years to get to where it is currently, work is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.



GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

BLOOMING

Tracy Jones surveys ground conditions on Sunday at the Ocean Pines Community Gardens. To get on the waiting list for a garden plot or learn more information, call 215-990-1537.

Budget request goes to county

Continued from Page 10

in salary increases next year, which means a 4 percent increase to cover costs of living for certificated staff members, and 4.5 percent for support staff.

At the time of the meeting, the health insurance rate was holding steady from the current year, though rates won't be finalized until sometime in March.

Outside the classroom, bus contractors will see an hourly rate increase from \$22.58 per hour to \$25, as well as a two-cent boost in mileage reimbursement, taking the current rate of \$1.60 to \$1.62 per mile.

Although the Worcester County Bus Contractors asked for more, Tolbert told the board the changes he proposed amount to about \$250,000

in the budget. If the bus contractors got their way, he explained, it would be roughly \$500,000 on top of that.

Tolbert went on to say the budget will incrementally increase to help get the bus contractors where they need to be.

The school board's unanimous budget approval last week is just the first step on the road to getting the budget fully approved.

The county commissioners are expected to review the full budget with the school piece included on March 22. Then, a budget hearing will be held on May 3, the county will choose whether to adopt the budget on June 7, and the board will have one more chance to see the operating financials for the next school year on June 21 before adopting it.

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Bus contractors make plea for more money

By Greg Wehner
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) Members of the Worcester County Board of Bus Contractors made a final plea last month to the county board of education to increase its drivers' wages and benefits, but unfortunately for them, the request fell flat.

Lorie Thompson, the acting secretary for the board of bus contractors told school board members on Feb. 15 that she and others had met with Vincent Tolbert, the school district's chief financial officer at least three times to discuss a proposal to increase the hourly wages of bus contractors, along with the mileage reimbursement rate and an allotment from the district to the contractors based on the number of buses.

Tolbert has worked to tidy up the school district's budget, and that day the board was expected to vote on its adoption.

Under Tolbert's proposal, the hourly rate for bus contractors would increase from \$22.58 to \$25, the mileage reim-

bursement would go up two cents from \$1.60 per mile to \$1.62, and the total allotment per vehicle would be set at \$20,920.

Thompson asked the board to consider providing more money to the contractors. Under the proposal, she asked that the hourly wage be set to \$26.29 and the mileage reimbursement to \$1.80 per mile. The allotment would remain at \$20,920 per bus.

"We are not asking you for what we want," she told school board members. "We are begging you for what we need to stay safely on the road."

Thompson attributed the need for the increases to rising labor and parts costs, as well as a supply chain that is in "turmoil."

Under the current conditions, she said, bus contractors are forced to take out unsecured loans to pay for some repairs, as the rate to have a bus serviced at a dealership is close to breaching the \$200 per hour mark.

"Our community needs us," Thompson said, adding that the drivers deliver

the students to games and field trips while working late into the night to get the students home from after-school programs. "We protect them as if they are our own."

The Worcester County Board of Bus Contractors represents over 40 contractors, and Thompson said they are grateful the district was able to continue paying them when schools were crippled by the pandemic.

Worcester County Schools continued to pay the contractors, as the county was only one of three in the state to boast no interruptions to student transportation, according to Thompson.

But when the school board came to the business of adopting the FY23 budget, Tolbert was asked whether the changes requested by Thompson and the bus contractors could be made afterward.

"To do what they requested – I just did a quick total when I was sitting there during their presentation – would require the board to include an additional \$500,000 in our budget ...," Tolbert

said. "So right now, we have about \$250,000 for an increase in bus contractors next year. Their request a few minutes ago would require another \$500,000 on top of that, be included in our request to the county commissioners."

Though the contractors would not get everything they wanted, their request was not falling on deaf ears.

Tolbert said this year the bus contractors would get a portion of what they requested and over the next few years, the school board would work to get them to where the contractors want to be.

Compared to other school districts in the area, Wicomico pays contractors nearly \$64,000 and Somerset pays contractors approximately \$60,000. The new proposal in the budget increases the contract amount in Worcester County from \$72,737 to just over \$76,000.

When put to a vote, school board members approved the budget with Tolbert's original proposal.

AGH officials talk progress and challenges

By Jack Chavez
Staff Writer

(March 3, 2022) After another year of covid-19, officials from Atlantic General Hospital in Berlin are acknowledging that the year was challenging, but are looking toward a bright future.

Board of Trustees Chairman Greg Shockley was joined by AGH co-interim President and CEO Dr. Sally Dowling, Director of Emergency Services Andi West-McCabe and others to brief the Worcester County Commissioners on Feb. 15 on how the year went and what's in store for the near future.

One of the first points Shockley addressed was the search for the hospital's next permanent chief executive officer, which he said was at the "halfway point" as they gear up to conduct the first wave of interviews this week.

"I think we have a good group of people to choose from," Shockley said. "Our goal was to get somebody into that seat as soon as possible, so we're looking at 60 to 90 days after we make our deci-

sion to have somebody seated and be the new president of (AGH)."

The hospital also expects to start "moving dirt" on the 53,000 square-foot Gudelsky Family Medical Center in Ocean Pines within a "month or so," Shockley said.

"We've had some technical accounting problems moving forward with our developer so hopefully within the next month we'll start that process," he said.

Dowling added that on Jan. 31 the hospital opened the Atlantic General Behavioral Crisis Center, which provides urgent care for behavioral health issues – including addiction – five days a week.

She also touted achievements such as an improved "mobile patient experience" and adding technology that will help "bring more care to the area."

"But this has not been without challenges this year," Dowling conceded.

"You've heard regularly about the national nursing shortage and that has hit AGH as it has any health care organization. The omicron (covid-19 variant) surge has been very difficult to manage ... Physician recruitment continues to be challenging. Our community presents its own challenges (with an older population)."

AGH saw record inpatient numbers at times over the last year, including periods in which patients had to be held over in the emergency department and elective surgeries had to be postponed twice to allow that staff to help with the influx of omicron patients.

"We struggle with health equity issues and we're working hard to address those," Dowling continued. "But we're very proud of our organization. We're proud of our relationship with the Worcester County Health Department."

See AGH Page 13



Greg Shockley



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SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Worcester Prep fourth graders, from left, Teaghan Weinstein, Alessia Ziman, Emma Mealy, Keller Hoch, Estelle Damouni, Elena Kappes and Taj Sands show off their completed blankets to be donated to Project Linus. (Left) Also displaying the blankets they made, from left, are Cullen Giardina, Jack Hornung, CJ Labin, Landon Carmean and Nick Cipollone.

Wor. Prep students craft blankets for Project Linus

(March 3, 2022) Worcester Preparatory School's fourth grade class took advantage of Valentine's Day party down time on Feb. 11, to craft blankets to be donated to Project Linus.

The idea came to fourth grade teachers Kimberley Jankowski and Erin Shimko by homeroom mom, Sara Gorfinkel, supported by the remainder of the homeroom moms, Wendy Caba-Labin, Kimberly Kappes and Jenna Hoch.

Gorfinkel, along with her daughters, Raia (fourth grade) and Nora (sixth grade), pre-cut all the blankets for the students to complete.

"Through volunteer work students gain real-world experience, it teaches appreciation, builds empathy and encourages cooperation," Jankowski said. "It made my heart smile to see how involved the kids were, some of them asking to work on more than one blanket knowing that they were doing something good for someone in need."

Project Linus provides love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need

through the gift of a new, handmade blanket lovingly created by volunteer "blanketeers."

The local chapter, Project Linus of Lower Delmarva, is celebrating over 18 years of service to children of Delmarva, and over 13,000 huggable handmade blankets donated.

While it is easy for students to exchange treats with each other for Valentine's Day, it is not so simple to share compassion for those we don't know, Shimko said.

"Making the blankets was a concrete way for our students to pass along the love that they experience here at WPS," she said. "The students were able to create an item that will comfort and convey love long after the party is over. Our blankets became a Valentine for those in need, and I am incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, energy, and effort they put into showing others they are loved."

For more information on Project Linus, visit www.projectlinus.org, or to become involved with Project Linus of Lower Delmarva, contact Donna Clarke at greatoaks@juno.com.

AGH updates commissioners

Continued from Page 12
We work closely with them to reduce their team's burden and improve community healthcare."

A part of the equity remedy is the Chesapeake Housing Initiative, which gives eligible Worcester residents much-needed upgrades to their homes, such as a wheelchair ramp.

"The purpose of that is to help keep people safe in their homes — help prevent falls, improve the health of our community and it's been an exciting initiative," Dowling said.

West-McCabe spoke more in-depth on the hospital's experience with shortages, which included medications.

"It's been quite a challenging year," she said. "Everyone wanted to make sure that they were safe for the holidays to see their family members, but our busiest day (during the holidays) we swabbed 100 people in a single day ... Though the challenges were there, the

team did an amazing job of working together. I can't tell you how innovative it's been working with the different departments in the hospital."

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Manole chosen as new Grace Center executive director

(March 3, 2022) Joann Manole has been named the new executive director of the Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health in Berlin.

"I am humbled and honored to be working for such an amazing nonprofit organization," Manole said.

She took over the leadership reigns at the center following the January board meeting.

In addition to her over 33 years of experience in health care management, she has also served on the board and steering committees for several nonprofit organizations in northern New Jersey and New York.

Manole and her husband recently relocated to Sussex County from New Jersey. She holds a B.S. in Art Therapy from Long Island University, a Therapist Track Certificate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine and has done Masters course work in addictions counseling, cognitive rehabilitation and recreation therapy.

With her strong business and health care background, Manole has much to offer the Grace Center. She has established several goals for herself as she begins what she hopes will be a long and mutually rewarding tenure as the executive director.

She aspires to increase community awareness of services offered, facilitate the growth of the organization's donor base, tap into other resources for funding and develop a strategic plan for how Grace Center will continue to thrive and meet the community needs.

The Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health is a nonprofit organization located in Berlin. Assistance is provided on many levels including, but not limited to: prenatal and postpartum education, parenting and relationship skills building, limited ultrasound examinations, support groups for women with addictions, post-postpartum depression and pregnancy loss counseling, job training and placement as well as an avenue to earn a Maryland high school diploma.



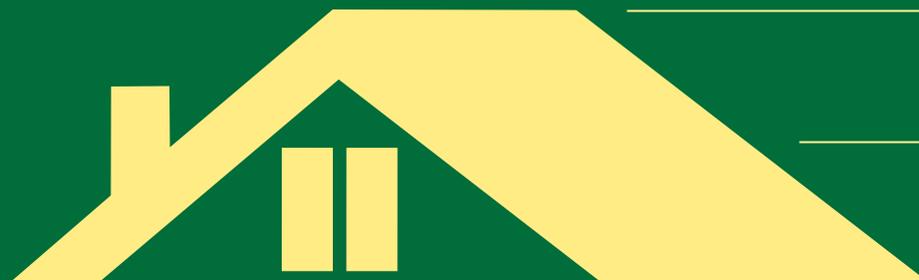
Joann Manole



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

NEW MEMBERS

The Coastal Association of Realtors (Coastal) welcomed 24 new members during New Member Orientation on Nov. 4. Pictured, in back, from left, are Tim Arnett of ERA Martin, Christian Bonebrake of Atlantic Shores Sotheby's, Ryan Basch of Coldwell Banker, Lisa Jackson of Engel & Volker, Cassie Stuart of Sheppard Realty, President of the Coastal Association of Realtors Grace Masten, Kasey Riddle of Keller Williams, Lisa Lebow of Engel & Volker, Ron Harris of Atlantic Shores Sotheby's, Amanda Manning of Coldwell Banker, Ryan Finnegan of SVN Miller, Jenny Catron of Engel & Volker, James Briddell of ERA Martin; and in front, Brandon Green of Engel & Volker, Brent Esham of Esham Real Estate, Gailynn Mullins of Keller Williams, Bethany Alaniz of Coldwell Banker, Barbara Derrickson of Coldwell Banker, Lila Goodwin of Keller Williams, Amy Coy of Berkshire Hathaway, Shelly Kingsbury of Charis Realty. (Not Pictured) Logan Burke of Keller Williams, David Capobianco of ERA Martin, Andrea Laurenzano of Keller Williams, Craig Lynch of Atlantic Shores Sotheby's.



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Decatur students win 'Stock Market Game'

(March 3, 2022) A team of students at Stephen Decatur High School used thoughtful investing and strong financial literacy skills to win the Maryland Southern Region High School Championship of the Fall Stock Market Game competition, organized by the Maryland Council on Economic Education (MCEE).

The Stock Market Game gives teams of students from across Maryland an imaginary \$100,000 to invest over 10 weeks on the New York, American and NASDAQ markets.

More than 713 teams competed in the Stock Market Game this fall. The Stephen Decatur team of William Mehan, Tristyn Wolf and Koree Cooper achieved the highest return on their portfolio for high school teams in the region - approximately 64 percent - to earn the title.

The team used theories and skills taught in classes and was guided by Stephen Decatur High School educators and advisor Kurt Marx.

The Maryland Council on Economic Education offers the Stock Market Game to students and teachers throughout Maryland each spring and fall to provide education about stock markets, the American economic system and the global economy. Participants develop skills in math, language arts, research and critical thinking, while building and maintaining a stock portfolio.

The unique competition gives students real-world experience in investing, requiring them to make decisions about the direction of markets, buying or selling stocks and completing transactions online. With real-time portfolio statement updates, teams are able to see how their team ranks compared to others, as well as the current value of their stocks.

The Stephen Decatur High School team will be celebrated at the Maryland Council on Economic Education's Annual Student Achievement and Awards Program this spring.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

It was a banner performance by the Stephen Decatur High School trio of William Mehan, Tristyn Wolf and Koree Cooper in the Maryland Council on Economic Education Fall Stock Market Game. The team of three earned a whopping 63 percent return on a virtual \$100,000 investment and first place in the region. They are pictured with Principal Tom Sites, left, and Business and Economics teacher Kurt Marx.

County housing rehab aid available

(March 3, 2022) Worcester County is currently accepting applications from low to moderate income individuals and families who may be eligible for general home rehabilitation assistance through the Worcester County Housing Rehabilitation Program.

This program provides grant and loan funding to owner-occupied properties for general rehabilitation and lead abatement services.

"The goal of this program is to mitigate unsuitable living conditions and increase the quality of living for the citizens of Worcester County," Housing Rehabilitation Program Coordinator Davida Washington said. "Since Worcester County began administering the housing rehabilitation program in 1987, we have rehabilitated nearly 10-12 houses per year."

Eligible homes may be located in either a rural area or in an incorporated township of Worcester County. Priority is given to dwellings having health or safety hazards, disabled homeowners, homeowners over the age of 62, and households of extremely low income.

Eligibility requirements include

but are not limited to the following:

- Property owners must be current on property taxes through FY21.
- The family must be of low to moderate income.
- The homeowner must have property insurance.
- The homeowner must have acceptable credit or be willing to set up payment plans on any non-medical

accounts in collections. Judgments must be paid in full.

Those interested in receiving more information about the Housing Rehabilitation Program or need assistance filling out the application forms, contact Washington at 410-632-1200, ext. 1171 or visit <https://www.co.worcester.md.us/departments/drp/rehab>.

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Breathtaking views of the Tangier Sound with this rare end unit condo. Offering 3BR/2BA, this home has been freshly painted throughout and has brand new carpet as well. The kitchen has a lg island w/a breakfast bar. Ceramic tile through the entryway and into the kitchen creates easy maintenance for both areas. The dining area leads into both the kitchen and the living room giving you an open concept w/the backdrop of the beautiful water. The primary bedroom features a large master suite w/separate shower, soaking tub, and walk-in closet. Both the living room and the primary bedroom have large patio doors that lead to the expansive balcony which has panoramic bay views and perfect for those amazing sunsets all year long. Two additional bedrooms are bright w/windows and ample room for guests. Deep water boat slip #7 is included in the sale (14' W x 34.37' L). So much to enjoy w/this unit by the bay!! See for yourself!! Call for your tour today!

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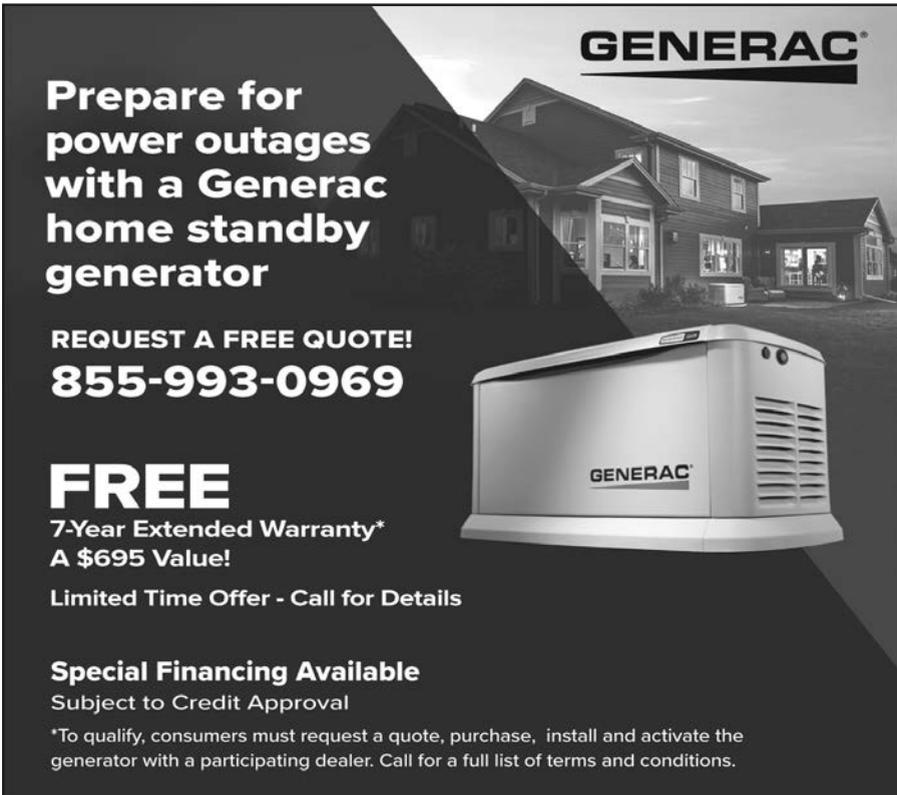
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DONATION
Delmarva Dancing recently donated \$1,000 to the Selbyville Elks Lodge 2173, Veterans Fund in Bishopville. Pictured, from left, are Debbie Littlefield, treasurer, Delmarva Dancing; Charles Derrickson, exalted ruler, Selbyville Elks Lodge; Kim Lynch, treasurer; Eileen Smith, president; Diane Denk, secretary; and Charlie Bell, first vice president, Delmarva Dancing.

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6208-0721



TOP PRIZE
Cathy Redden from Bethany Beach was one of the winners of \$500 in gift cards from local businesses in the recent gift card raffle done by the Ocean City Lioness Lions Club. There were also two other winners of \$500 and \$1,000 in gift cards. All monies raised by this raffle are funneled back into the community. Pictured are Ocean City Lioness Lions Club President Bev Topfer, left, and Redden.
PHOTO COURTESY DONNA GREENWOOD

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REAL ESTATE TIP: Have you considered a 1031 Exchange?

If you are planning to sell real estate investment property and would like to defer potential capital gains and tax, you may want to consider some of the benefits of participating in a tax-deferred 1031 exchange. This must be structured correctly with the use of a qualified intermediary. As an affiliated real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Realty, I have access to an experienced team of qualified intermediaries. Contact me today to learn more!

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"We had the pleasure of working with Tammy in selling our Ocean City property. Having bought and sold over 10 homes during the past 40 years, we have not encountered ANY Real Estate professional who comes close to Tammy. She is extremely thorough with great attention to details. Her understanding of the local market was outstanding. She was diligent about completing necessary steps quickly and completely. Her communication with us was impeccable throughout the process. She delivered good news with speed and issues even faster! We cannot say enough great things about the quality and level of service that she provided!"

Tammy Medlock
Sales Associate, REALTOR®, RSPS
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HOLIDAY TIDINGS

Members of the Ocean Pines Garden Club gathered on the Monday following Thanksgiving to create and hang holiday decorations during their annual "Decorating the Pines" event. The Ocean Pines Garden Club generally meets the second Thursday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Ocean Pines Community Center. For information, contact Patti Lookner at 410-973-1243 or Plookner@gmail.com.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/
BAYSIDE GAZETTE



FIGHT HUNGER

Worcester County employees in February collected nonperishable foods to donate to the Snow Hill Food Bank to help fight hunger. To kick off the food drive on Feb. 1, the Worcester County commissioners presented a proclamation recognizing February as National Canned Food Month to Snow Hill Food Bank representatives Nick Carter and Rosalee Mason and county employees serving on the Worcester County Wellness Committee.

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Opinion

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

Reappraisal depends on land use outlook

The Town of Berlin's cautious quest for the right balance between growth, prosperity and the preservation of its small-town charm has placed it in more than one unusual situation in recent years.

Now, it occupies that same territory as it endeavors to free itself of the debt incurred by its purchase of the Heron Park property in 2016 by selling portions of the property.

At odds with the mayor and Town Council's desire to get the highest price they can for these parcels is their wary approach to what they should allow to be built on them.

That wariness is understandable, given the concerns of elected officials and residents about the problems and benefits that growth and development could bring.

Obviously, land prices are tied to value, which depends on how the property may be used. In other words, the critical issue is what kind of return the buyer is likely to receive on the money spent. That's where Planning Commission member Ron Cascio was on the money, so to speak, when he advised the mayor and council on Monday to have these parcels reappraised.

A part of that process has to include providing the appraiser some idea of what town officials are willing to allow to take place on the property once it changes hands. In the meantime, no developer is going to gamble an excessive amount of money on an uncertain outcome.

That puts the mayor and council in a difficult situation. They need the money to relieve the town of a hefty debt service burden, yet also are obligated by their constituencies to keep a leash on development.

Among the things an appraiser will want to ascertain before issuing an opinion is a property's use potential, which in this instance might not be dictated by zoning alone, since that can change.

At some point before bidding on the land resumes, the mayor and council will need to establish to the appraiser's satisfaction what degree and what kind of development they will support. Only then can a fair price be established.



'One Pill Can Kill' town hall meetings

(March 3, 2022) Worcester Goes Purple will be holding a series of community town halls to talk about "One Pill Can Kill."

What does that mean and who needs to hear the message? Young people who may experiment with what they think may be a prescription Xanax, Adderall, Percocet or other pills are getting "fake pills." These pills are manufactured in garages and basements of drug dealers making and pressing their own mix of ingredients to look exactly like the prescription brand of that pill.

Fentanyl is the drug that is most widely used in the

mix. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine and an amount as small as a few grains of salt can kill a person.

Parents, educators and those working with young people need to be aware of this growing epidemic. A bad decision should be a lesson, not a death sentence.

Community town halls scheduled:

Monday, March 7 - 6 p.m. Pocomoke First Baptist Church

Wednesday, March 9 - 6 p.m. Old Fire House, Snow Hill

Thursday, March 10 - 6 p.m. Ocean Pines Commu-

nity Center

Monday, March 14 - 6 p.m. Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Berlin

Lt. Bob Trautman, Jr. from the Worcester County Sheriff's Office will be joining Worcester Goes Purple staff as the lead for school resource officers. Registration is available online at <https://forms.gle/Dhxc8uFMd5EokAMY8>

There will be a raffle drawing for a set of custom cornhole boards from all participants registered.

Contact Debbie Smullen at 410-860-5161 or wgpwarriors2021@gmail.com with any questions.

Coast Guard boat safety, March 8-10

(March 3, 2022) The US Coast Guard Auxiliary is offering the Maryland Basic Boating Safety Course, virtually, March 8-10 from 6-9 p.m.

This online course is taught by the same US Coast Guard Auxiliary instructors as the in-person class.

The Maryland Boating Safety Education Act requires that anyone born after July 1,

1972 must possess a Maryland Basic Boating Safety Certificate to operate a boat in the state of Maryland.

Those attending the class, and passing the test will receive a Maryland Boating Certificate, which is NASBLA approved and valid in all states.

The cost is \$20 for all three evenings. All the required material is covered along with

time for questions.

Checks should be made payable to: USGCAUX 12-05, and mailed to: USGCAUX 12-05, P.O. Box 1682, Berlin, Maryland 21811. Payment via PayPal is also accepted.

Register or get more information by calling Barry Cohen at 410-935-4807, or email CGAUXOC@gmail.com.

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

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Ocean Pines offers no-cost platform tennis instruction

Lessons on Saturdays at Racquet Center complex

(March 3, 2022) The Ocean Pines Platform Tennis Association is offering free lessons at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center on 11443 Manklin Creek Road.

“Platform tennis is a fun outdoor racquet sport, played on a fenced-in court that’s one third of the size of a tennis court,” Platform Tennis Association Board member Karen Kaplan said. “Also known as ‘paddle tennis,’ the sport is played with a wooden platform paddle and a dense, bouncy ball. Paddle has elements of tennis in strokes and scoring, and it’s like racquetball in that you can play the ball off the fence.”

Free lessons are available every Saturday at 9:30 a.m. To make an appointment for another time, email Kaplan at oppaddle2020@gmail.com. All abilities are welcome, and equipment will be provided.

Along with free lessons, Kaplan said the Platform Tennis Association also hosts men’s, women’s and co-ed groups, as well as daytime play, and nighttime play under the lights.

“Platform tennis is played year-round,” she said. “There are numerous drop-ins, reserved-court play, and lots of social events including happy hours, barbecues, bonfires, and Chili Day, to name just a few.”

For more information about platform tennis in Ocean Pines, visit www.oceanpines.org/platform-tennis, or search “OP Platform Tennis” on Facebook.

For more information, contact Ocean Pines Association Director of Public Relations and Marketing Josh Davis at 443-366-1844 or jdavis@oceanpines.org.

Chorus to start rehearsals March 3

(March 3, 2022) The Pine Tones Chorus will begin its weekly spring rehearsals on Thursday, March 3, at 1 p.m., at the Ocean Pines Community Center.

The group welcomes potential new members to come and join the singing. Both ladies and gentlemen of all parts, soprano, alto, tenor and bass, are invited.

The chorus musical style can be described as “easy listening.” Songs

from movies, Broadway shows, and traditional tunes from Irving Berlin and Cole Porter are styles typically included in the Pine Tones programs.

The Pine Tones have been presenting concerts in the spring and in December for more than 35 years. This year’s spring concert is scheduled for Sunday, June 5.

The chorus also sings at various community events such as cere-

monies at the Worcester Veterans Memorial. For additional information, call Karen McClure, 703-727-0528, or June Todd, 443-880-3922.

Funding for chorus activities comes from patrons as well as the Worcester County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. These organizations are dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

Expungement clinic held March 8

(March 3, 2022) The Worcester County Library is offering a free expungement clinic in partnership with Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Services, March 8, from 4-6 p.m. at the Ocean City Library, 10003 Coastal Highway.

The event will give those who qualify the opportunity to expunge their criminal record in the state of Maryland with the assistance of an attorney. Clients must qualify for services by meeting income, case type and geographic guidelines.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive early and to bring with them the following: income information for all members of the household; the value of house and car (if own either); and the amounts in checking, savings, and/or investment accounts. Once the required forms are complete, a paralegal and an attorney will guide attendees through the expungement process.

“The library is pleased to offer an event that removes a barrier to employment and job advancement while opening opportunities for a greater array of work choices,” said Adult Program Manager Elena Coelho.

“People who have participated tell us that this event relieved stress about work and they feel more confident when applying for jobs.”

Space is limited to 12 individuals. Register at WorcesterLibrary.org under “Events,” or call for assistance.

For more information on this event, contact Coelho at 443-783-6164 or ecoelho@worcesterialibrary.org, or call the Ocean City branch at 410-524-1818.

The mission of the Worcester County Library is to promote reading, thinking, learning, and the enjoyment of the arts.

Birckhead-Morton wins VFW ‘Voice of Democracy’ award

(March 3, 2022) Lindsay Birckhead-Morton, a senior at Snow Hill High School, represented District 16, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in its Voice of Democracy Contest 2021-2022.

She was the winner at the local Memorial VFW Post 10159 in Salisbury and District 16 and went on to compete at the Maryland Department’s Voice of Democracy contest. See BIRCKHEAD Page 20



Lindsay Birckhead-Morton

COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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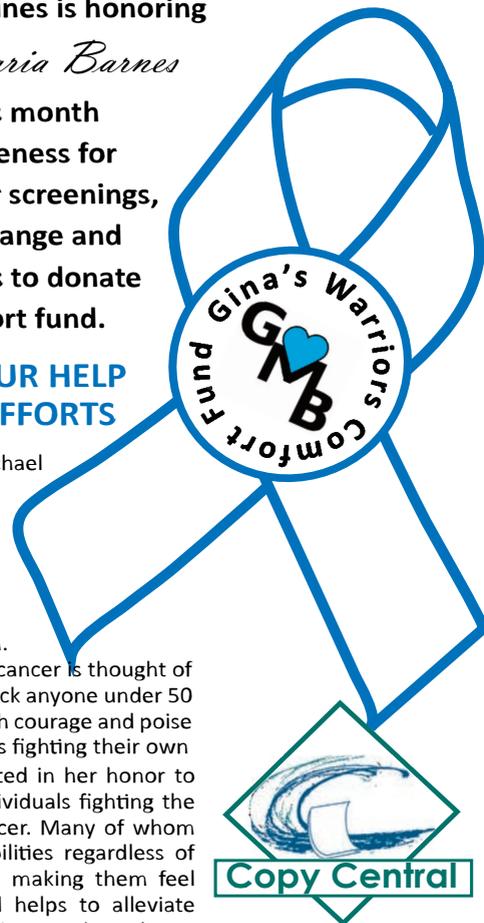


Gina Maria Barnes
memory this month raising awareness for colon cancer screenings, collecting change and raising funds to donate to the comfort fund.

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Owners of Copy Central, Linda and Michael Dearing lost their daughter Gina to colon cancer in 2014. Gina Barnes was just 37 years old when she was diagnosed with colon cancer. A wife and mother of three children she was too busy to make time for herself even when she noticed there was a problem.

There is the misconception that colon cancer is thought of as an older person’s disease. It can attack anyone under 50 years of age. Gina fought her battle with courage and poise while serving as a role model for others fighting their own battle. Gina’s Comfort Fund was created in her honor to provide comfort and resources to individuals fighting the battle. Every day individuals fight cancer. Many of whom have families, jobs and life responsibilities regardless of how the disease and treatments are making them feel physically and emotionally. The fund helps to alleviate some of the stress and financial barriers to those brave individuals battling Colon Cancer. Stop in to Copy Central Monday-Friday 9 to 5 if you would like to contribute. You will be entered into a drawing for a 16x20 canvas with a \$5.00 donation.



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Calendar

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

Thurs., March 3

PINE TONES CHORUS INVITES NEW SINGERS

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 1 p.m. Welcoming potential new members to join the singing. Both ladies and gentlemen of all parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass). Spring concert is June 5. Karen, 703-727-0528

or June, 443-880-3922

STORY TIME 'LIONS & LAMBS'

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

CPAP MASK FITTING

Atlantic General Hospital, 9733 Health-

way Drive, Berlin. For patients who are having trouble adjusting to their CPAP equipment. Free service, but requires an appointment: Robin Rohlfling, 410-641-9726.

OUTDOOR GROUP PLAY

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Join the group for some fun group games outside. Run, hop and get some energy

out. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

MERRY MAKERS - DIY STAMPING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. The group will be using cookie cutters to stamp cloth napkins. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events" or call 410-208-4014.

Continued on Page 22

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GREG ELLISON/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

HOOPS

Agile youths break for the net while pounding the courts at Henry Park in Berlin on Sunday.

Birckhead-Morton wins VFW contest

Continued from Page 19

The Jan. 23 formal awards ceremony was held at the Baltimore War Memorial at North Gay Street, in Baltimore. During the formal ceremony, Birckhead-Morton was presented with checks from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Maryland Department and the VFW Auxiliary along with a certificate for her entry.

In December, the posts and auxiliaries in Department of Maryland District 16 of Veterans of Foreign Wars hosted their annual awards

banquet for the winners of the 2021-2022 Voice of Democracy Contest at the Salisbury Memorial VFW Post 10159.

Birckhead-Morton of Snow Hill, will attend college in the fall majoring in communications and journalism.

This annual contest promotes patriotism and investing in future generations. Established in 1947, the Voice of Democracy audio-essay program provides high school students an opportunity to compete for educational scholarships and incentives.

March 2-March 5
SOFA SALE
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Phillips Crab House, 2022
Limited Edition 11" x 14" Giclee Print from an ink and watercolor by Delmarva artist Jim Adcock. \$45 unmatted. Signed and numbered. Available at The Framing Corner and on [Etsy.com/shop/JimAdcockArtStudio](https://etsy.com/shop/JimAdcockArtStudio)

JIM ADCOCK ART STUDIO

Cuisine

Suplee perfects pizza crust after 40 yrs.

I did it. I finally did it.

After almost 40 years of trying, I actually made a good pizza crust. And not just good, but nigh perfect.

Of course, I cannot take credit for this, but rather fell across a pizza madman on YouTube named Vito Iacobelli. I highly recommend



By Paul Suplee,
MBA, CEC, PC-3

that you check him out if making pizza is a passion of yours.

Pizza and a good fried chicken have been my nemeses for as long as I can remember. I have the chicken down pat, and now I can rest easy, knowing that pizza is in the bag as well. And it is so simple, that I could kick myself for not perfecting it earlier.

I made this dough with a poolish, which is a preferment that I teach for breadmaking. In fact, I have taught and used poolish for years, yet never thought about using it in pizza dough. Sometimes we truly can't see the forest for the trees.

So what is poolish? It is a soft and goey mess that is rich in yeast and that nice, sour smell and flavor. Make sure that you make it a day ahead, as it needs time to ferment in the icebox. That is a critical part of this recipe.

And when the dust (or flour in this case) settles and you make this dough right, the crust will rise, and upon exiting the oven will be at once crispy on the crust and tender in the crumb. It is truly the perfect crust.

One point of interest is how wet and loose this dough is. I have never made a dough this sloppy before, and damn if it doesn't come together as advertised.

Once you have those beautiful dough balls, they become works of art as you stretch them out and top with your favorite flavors.

One of the tricks that I learned in Chicago a few years ago is to add some white cheddar cheese to your pizza blend.

This helps with the 'cheese pull', that magnificent long string of molten goodness that just happens as you pull two pieces of pizza apart. It also adds another note of sour to the pie, complementing the sweet tomato sauce.

In my blend, I use Mozzarella, Parmesan, Provolone, Grana Padano and white cheddar. You don't want



enough cheddar so that it stands out, but just the right amount. But hey, it's your pizza, so you do you.

It is fascinating working with this dough, as again it is so soft and pliable. It was surprising to me that you really don't need to throw this dough, and simply pressing the dough flat and outwards from the center, leaving the crust full of air, negates the use of the dough docker.

I went classic cheese tonight, but one of the pizzas in another video is the Fiocho, which I will definitely make soon.

Made with a thick crema or cream, thinly sliced prosciutto, cheese, boiled and riced Yukon gold potatoes and drizzled olive oil, it had me drooling as I watched it come to fruition. I feel like I'm back in school, and that is a good place to be.

A goal of mine is to open another restaurant that is bread-centric, as I have found a taste in baking breads over the last few years.

Next on the docket is a pizza dough made with a biga, like the poolish but a solid dough. Instead of leavening, the purpose of the biga is to undergo fermentation over the day or two in the refrigerator. The flavors added to the finished product are

supposed to be magnificent.

But, I almost don't want to make the next batch with the biga. As I don't want to sully my newfound doughy love. I will, though, as I want to compare the two. I will keep you posted.

Pizza Dough

makes 4 dough balls

1 batch poolish preferment (recipe follows)

400 ml water

700 g. 00 flour

25 g. Salt

10 g. EV Olive oil

- When the poolish is ready to rock & roll, gather remaining ingredients.

- Combine in a stand mixer. This dough is an incredibly wet one, so do not be surprised.

- Work it until there are no lumps visible. It will still look a mess, but stick with me.

- Cover it and let it rest for one hour. The yeast in the preferment will start to do its magic, and you will see a bit of a rise.

- Knead the dough, or "slap" it on the counter to start developing the gluten

- Eventually the dough will start to

resemble, well, pizza dough.

Let it rest for another hour.

- Do a final kneading until the dough is smooth and soft. Divide into four dough balls and cover until ready to use. At this point, you can refrigerate or freeze the dough.

- Reference the videos from Vito Iacobelli for everything from shaping to execution of the finished product. The man is a pizza genius.

Poolish

makes 1 batch

300 ml water

300 g. Fine or 00 flour

6 g. dry yeast

5 g. Granulated sugar

- Combine all ingredients thoroughly
- Let sit at room temperature for an hour or until it has doubled or tripled.

- Place in the refrigerator for 16-24 hours.

- Pull it out one hour before use

—Paul Suplee is a Professor of Culinary Arts at Wor-Wic Community College and owner of *boxcar40* and *boxcar on main*. Visit him at www.boxcar40.com; www.boxcaronmain.com

Calendar

Continued from Page 20

POCOMOKE BOOK OF THE MONTH: 'ABUNDANCE' BY SENA JETER NASLUND

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. Marie Antoinette was sent from her family and country at the age of 14 to become the wife of the future King of France. Facilitated by Cindy Hanagud. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

6TH ANNUAL OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL

Featuring 100 independent films at several locations. All-access passes cost \$99, day passes start at \$20 and party passes start at \$25. Tickets and scheduling: OCMDFilmFestival.com or 410-524-9433.

ZUMBA FOR ALL LEVELS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4:30 p.m. Join certified Zumba instructor Joyce Landsman for an hour of movement. These classes uplift and improve mood. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events." 410-632-2600

BEACH SINGLES

Thursdays - Join us 55 plus at Harpoon Hanna's, 39064 Harpoon Road, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. Info: 302-436-9577 or BeachSingles.org

Fri., March 4

6TH ANNUAL OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL

Featuring 100 independent films at several locations. All-access passes cost \$99, day passes start at \$20 and party passes start at \$25. Tickets and scheduling: OCMDFilmFestival.com or 410-524-9433.

SURVIVAL SPANISH: 'GREETINGS'

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2-3 p.m. The library will hold four classes that focus on conversational Spanish. The first class will be about greetings. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

FIRST FRIDAY PARTY

Ocean City Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 5-7 p.m. Art exhibit opening as well as a reception for the Ocean City Film Festival. All are welcome to this free event. There will be hors d'oeuvres and beverages. www.ArtLeagueofOceanCity.org, 410-524-9433

Sat., March 5

AARP TAXAIDE

Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. AARP Foundation Tax Aide is offering tax preparation free of charge to the citizens of the lower shore. The group is IRS certified Tax Preparers. Appointments: 443-373-2667 or www.aarp.org/taxaide.

CRAFTY SATURDAY: FEELING LUCKY!

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Make some fun crafts that symbolize good luck around the world. For ages 4 years and older. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

TRADITION OF HEALING IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Germantown School Community Heritage Center, 10223 Trappe Road, Berlin, 10 a.m.-noon. Part of a series of lectures that highlight African American perspectives of 20th century Worcester County's past. Register: germantownschool@gmail.com or Karen Prengaman, 443-235-9803.

DRIVE-THRU FRIED CHICKEN DINNER

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 36540 Mount Pleasant Road, Willards, 11 a.m. Cost is \$14 and includes four piece fried chicken (breast, wing, thigh and drumstick), string beans, mashed potatoes, gravy, coleslaw, applesauce, roll and cupcake. Stay in car and use east driveway.

6TH ANNUAL OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL

Featuring 100 independent films at several locations. All-access passes cost \$99, day passes start at \$20 and party passes start at \$25. Tickets and scheduling: OCMDFilmFestival.com or 410-524-9433.

CHIP BERTINO CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 1 p.m. Commissioner Chip Bertino launches his reelection bid. Light refreshments served. All are welcome.

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

FREE PLATFORM TENNIS LESSONS

Saturdays - Ocean Pines Racquet Center, 11443 Manklin Creek Road, 9:30 a.m. All abilities welcome and equipment will be provided. To make an appointment for another time, email Karen Kaplan, oppaddle2020@gmail.com. www.oceanpines.org/platform-tennis

Sun., March 6

6TH ANNUAL OCEAN CITY FILM FESTIVAL

Featuring 100 independent films at several locations. All-access passes cost \$99, day passes start at \$20 and party passes start at \$25. Tickets and scheduling: OCMDFilmFestival.com or 410-524-9433.

Mon., March 7

AARP TAXAIDE

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m.-2

p.m. AARP Foundation Tax Aide is offering tax preparation free of charge to the citizens of the lower shore. The group is IRS certified Tax Preparers. Appointments: 443-373-2667 or www.aarp.org/taxaide.

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2:30 p.m. Focusing on the play "The Playtboy of the Western World" by John M. Synge. The group meets twice a month and is currently reading selections in Book 2 of Great Conversations. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

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

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

TOWN HALL SERIES: ONE PILL CAN KILL

First Baptist Church, 204 Fourth St., Pocomoke City, 6 p.m. Learn about "fake pills." Designed for parents and those who work with youth. Register: <https://forms.gle/Dhxc8uFMd5EokAMY> 8. Worcester Goes Purple, 410-870-5161, wgpwarriors2021@gmail.com.

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 7:00-9:00 p.m. All ladies that love to sing invited. Contact Mary, 410-629-9383 or Carol Ludwig, 302-242-7062.

Tues., March 8

STORY TIME 'OUR COLORFUL WORLD'

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and crafts about the color spectrum and mixing colors. Have fun playing with the color light board. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org

STORY TIME 'CLIFFORD THE BIG RED DOG'

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and fingerplays. Take-home activity included. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

BABY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 11 a.m. Babies, under 2 years old, and their caregivers are welcome to join the group for songs, rhymes and stories. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

FREE EXPUNGEMENT CLINIC

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 4-6 p.m. Giving those who qualify the opportunity to expunge their criminal record in the state of Maryland with the assistance of an attorney. Register: www.worcesterlibrary.org under "Events." 443-783-6164

MARYLAND BASIC BOATING SAFETY COURSE

Held virtually, March 8-1, 6-9 p.m. Cost is \$20. Register: Barry Cohen, 410-935-4807, OGAUXOC@gmail.com.

ATLANTIC COAST SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION MEETING

American Legion #123, 10111 Old Ocean City Blvd., Berlin. 7:30 p.m. Erik Zlokovitz, from DNR, will be speaking about citation fish. Guests are welcome to attend. John O'Dell, ridgegrass@hotmail.com.

DELMARVA DANCING

Tuesdays - Selbyville Elks Lodge 2173, 13324 Worcester Highway, Bishopville, 5:30-9 p.m. Dance to the sounds of the '50s and '60s. A \$5 donation to benefit Veterans. Participants show proof of vaccination or wear a mask. delmarvahand-dance@gmail.com, 410-208-1151

Wed., March 9

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Non-Surgical patients meet via Zoom. Contact the Bariatric office at 410-641-9568.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Holy Trinity Cathedral (Anglican), 11021 Worcester Highway, Berlin. Checks for risk of cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and more. Special package pricing starts at \$159. Pre-registration is encouraged: www.lifelinescreening.com or 877-237-1354.

STORY TIME: 'DRAGONS'

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and rhymes all about dragons. For ages 2-5 years. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

OCEAN CITY BOOK OF THE MONTH: 'THE RADIUM GIRLS' BY KATE MOORE

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 2 p.m. During WWI, radium made headlines across the nation as a beauty products and wonder drug. Meanwhile, hundreds of girls toil amidst the dust of the radium-dial factories. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 3-5 p.m. Drop in to receive one-on-one guidance from library staff to strengthen your resume and help with your job search. www.worcesterlibrary.org, 410-632-2600

TOWN HALL SERIES: ONE PILL CAN KILL

Old Firehouse, 212 W. Green St., Snow Hill, 6 p.m. Learn about "fake pills." Designed for parents and those who work with youth. Register: <https://forms.gle/Dhxc8uFMd5EokAMY> 8. Worcester Goes Purple, 410-870-5161, wgpwarriors2021@gmail.com.

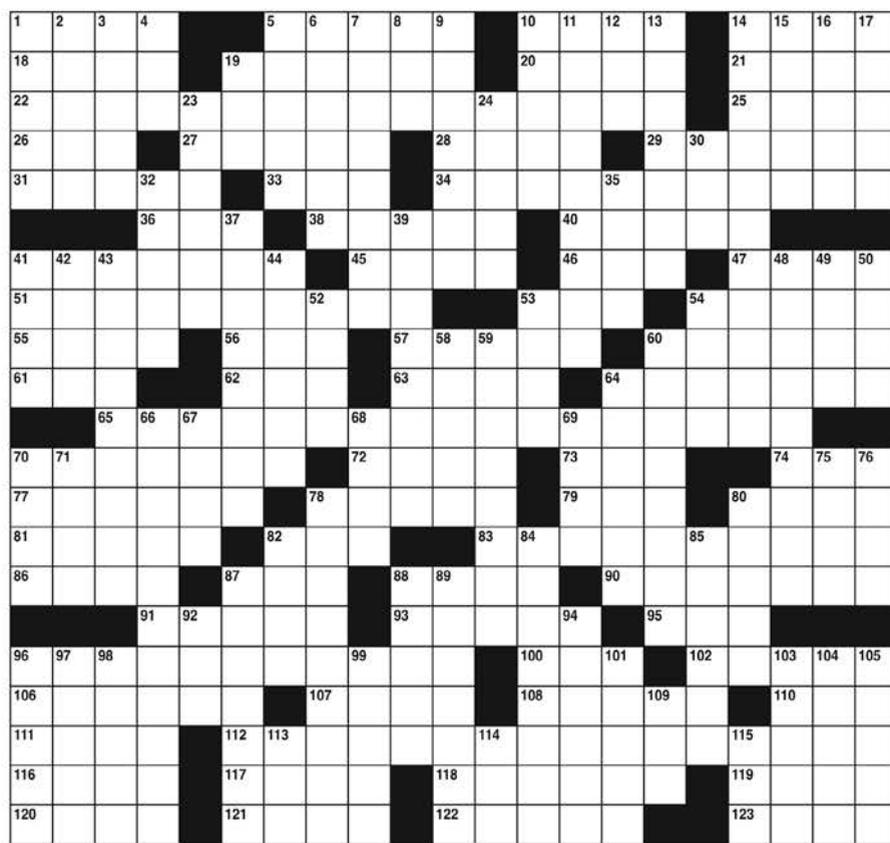
Puzzles

PARDON MY FRENCH BY VICTOR BAROCAS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Victor Barocas is a professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Minnesota. He's a longtime member of the National Puzzlers' League and contributes puzzles to its monthly publication, The Enigma. Victor loves all things related to language and wordplay. Contrary to the title of this puzzle, though, he does not speak French. — W.S.

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| ACROSS | 46 Peroxide ____ | 91 Announcement on National Coming Out Day | 4 "Time ____" |
| 1 Tobacco plug | 47 It's an affront | 93 Inappropriate | 5 Big name in jelly |
| 5 Manipulate | 51 Where Rapunzel let down her hair? | 95 Early bird? | 6 Like mosaic tiles |
| 10 Graduates of Quantico, informally | 53 Quarrel | 96 Spilled milk? | 7 Lose possession? |
| 14 Taller roommate of 15-Down | 54 It matures quickly, in brief | 100 Front of a semi | 8 One of the books of the Torah: Abbr. |
| 18 Showgirl in the 1978 hit "Copacabana" | 55 Angled to get attention: Abbr. | 102 Ubiquitous advertiser with an acronymic name | 9 Where Wagner's "Tannhäuser" was first performed |
| 19 Boomer's kid, maybe | 56 Suffix with serpent or opal | 106 Seeing as | 10 Prima ____ |
| 20 Declare | 57 Offed | 107 Weight of an empty container | 11 Word that becomes more dramatic when you add an "R" in front |
| 21 Snack item with approximately 53 calories | 60 Reach quickly, as a conclusion | 108 What's clothed in summer and naked in winter, per an old riddle | 12 Caribbean land, at the Olympics |
| 22 Positive thinker's motto? | 61 Perhaps | 110 China's largest ethnic group | 13 Administer an oath to |
| 25 Textbook section | 62 Doc. to ensure secrecy | 111 What BankAmericard became in 1976 | 14 Echoes |
| 26 FireWire alternative | 63 A pupil may grow in it | 112 The queen with her pets? | 15 Shorter roommate of 14-Across |
| 27 Letter between November and Papa in the NATO alphabet | 64 United group, e.g. | 116 School where some of "Shakespeare in Love" was filmed | 16 Control, metaphorically |
| 28 It might be set at sea | 65 Holy water? | 117 Annual Memorial Day race, informally | 17 Completely, in slang |
| 29 When a prime-time drama might air | 70 Excites | 118 Red Sox' div. | 19 Pedal on the right |
| 31 Reason-based belief in God | 72 "Salus populi suprema lex ____" (motto of Missouri) | 119 Bit of sports equipment that may be electrified | 23 Man of La Mancha |
| 33 Repeated sound that's hard to get rid of | 73 Charade | 120 Casino tool | 24 Late-night trips to the fridge, e.g. |
| 34 Means of becoming a god? | 74 One of 17 in Monopoly: Abbr. | 121 Philippine money | 30 Shirt or blouse |
| 36 "Call the Midwife" network | 77 One with pressing work | 122 Fleas and flies | 32 Bit of magic |
| 38 Had something nice | 78 Feed the guests, maybe | 123 What's left on a map? | 35 Projecting front |
| 40 Nonsense | 79 Dish that's cooked underground | | 37 Temporarily replace |
| 41 Place in danger | 80 Feb. 14 | | 39 Most likely to win at Trivia Night, maybe |
| 45 Ernst and Young, e.g.: Abbr. | 81 673 parts of the Louvre Pyramid | | 41 Long-billed wader |
| | 82 "Old man" | | 42 Parent company of Facebook |
| | 83 Answer to "What is Roquefort or Brie?" | | 43 Game starter |
| | 86 Offed | | 44 Home for Holmes |
| | 87 Go the wrong way | | 48 One who sees what you're saying? |
| | 88 Green-lit | | 49 Berliner's "old" |
| | 90 Like drunken speech | | 50 Sight on winter roads |
| | | DOWN | |
| | | 1 Obscure | |
| | | 2 Windsor, e.g. | |
| | | 3 A criminal's may be unbelievable | |

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year).



- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 52 Sign of overuse | 70 List in "The Idiot's Guide to ..." | 87 A narcissist may go on one | 99 Panasonic subsidiary |
| 53 "All ____!" | 71 Neighbor of Siberia, in Risk | 88 Shockingly bizarre | 101 Orchestra section |
| 54 Prefix that's mega mega? | 75 Common still-life prop | 89 What the quadriceps muscle connects to | 103 "If my luck holds out ..." |
| 58 Not merely annoyed | 76 Looked at | 92 N.Y.C. commuting inits. | 104 Pens |
| 59 Split | 78 Architectural columns in the form of sculpted female figures | 94 Bugs | 105 Beginning |
| 60 BuzzFeed staple | 80 Threshold | 96 Where bile is produced | 109 Rhinitis treat, in brief |
| 64 Wide ties | 82 Gunslinger's command | 97 Loos who wrote "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" | 113 Phoenix-to-Albuquerque dir. |
| 66 Netflix series set at Green Gables | 84 Schools | 114 Bottle labeled "XXX" in the comics | 115 "Do the ____" (soft drink slogan) |
| 67 Manipulates | 85 Held tight | | |
| 68 Place to go on a ship | | | |
| 69 Them's the breaks! | | | |

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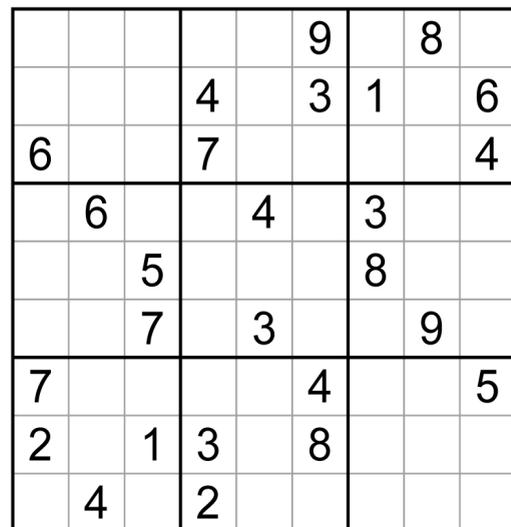
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© Puzzles by Pappocom
HARD - 53

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

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



CLASSIFIED Marketplace

Call **410-723-6397**
by Monday 5 p.m.



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

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Rental Office Manager
Needed
Full-time Position
Year Round

We have two busy rental offices. We are looking for someone who can train for a Office Management position in our Ocean City office. Vacation Rentals and some Year-Round Property Management.

- Real Estate License Required
- References Required
- Professional/Friendly
- Must be willing to travel to meet with prospective owners and inspect properties as needed
- Must work most weekends as needed
- Administrative skills needed
- Special Sales commission opportunities

Please fax resumes, letters and references to
or inquiries to
Hileman Real Estate, Inc.
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Hilemanre@aol.com



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CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

We are currently looking to hire a **Curriculum Coordinator** for Worcester Preparatory School.

The Curriculum Coordinator provides leadership for Worcester Preparatory School's curriculum and teacher development across all grade levels. This includes working with the administration and faculty to plan and design comprehensive, school-wide curriculum and foster instructional best practices which meet the college preparatory mission of the school. This position works with the administration and faculty to coordinate and articulate curriculum throughout the school while providing input on the selection of textbooks and digital/learning materials, as well as coordinating professional development opportunities and instructional resources.

The Curriculum Coordinator will focus on maintaining the present high-quality curriculum, while helping to adjust the program accordingly to meet the future needs of students.

Master's degree or higher preferably in administration/supervision/curriculum. Minimum of 5 years teaching experience (preferably in independent school education).

Employee must be legally qualified to work in the United States. Employee must pass a background check conducted by a neutral third party. References will be contacted and all information provided will be verified.



Please contact
Linda Watson 410-641-3575 or
lwatson@worcesterprep.org

Year Round - Full Time
HELP WANTED

Central Reservations is a busy vacation rental company seeking a **rental agent**. Must be dependable, professional and have great customer service skills. Weekends are required.

Great salary and benefits, including health insurance.

Please email resume to robbeh@centraloc.com



is now hiring an
ASSISTANT DISTILLER

Full Time, Year Round position with benefits. Responsible for the production and bottling of Seacrets Spirits. Knowledge of distillation preferred, but not necessary. Apply in person or online at seacrets.com

Classifieds 410-723-6397

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Ocean Area Tire now has an opening for a **FULL-TIME TOW TRUCK DRIVER** to join our team. Experience preferred but will train the right person. Must have a clean driving record, pass DOT physical and a minor background check. Bi-weekly salary along with a generous percentage of after hour calls. Apply in person at any one of our three locations - Ocean View, DE; Millsboro, DE; or Ocean Pines, MD - or call our Tow Manager, Lee at 443-878-5362 to schedule an on-the-spot interview.



The Castle in the Sand Hotel & Barefoot Mailman Hotel

are currently seeking applicants for the following positions for the 2022 season:

Castle in the Sand

- Front desk agents

Please contact **Bob** at **410-289-6846** for further information or to schedule an interview.

Coconuts Beach Bar & Grill

- Back of House • Kitchen Help

Please contact **Jeff** at **410-289-6846** for further information or to schedule an interview.

Experienced applicants are preferred, but not required. We require a satisfactory pre-employment background check by all applicants.



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29th Street & Coastal Hwy.
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• Waitstaff
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