

Real estate sells well amid pandemic

By **Morgan Pilz**

Buying a home in the Worcester County area has become very competitive, especially in the Berlin, Ocean City and Ocean Pines area despite the novel coronavirus.

The market has been determined as a seller's market, which means that houses are selling quickly and, potentially, at higher or around the seller's asking price.

Pam Wadler, a former president of the Coastal Association of Realtors and current Vice President and Associate Broker for Shamrock Realty Group in Ocean Pines, believes the virus is actually responsible for the real estate business being so successful lately.

"Nobody is crazy about getting on a plane right now or getting on a ship right now," she said. "The last thing you want to do is get on a cruise. So, if you're in the Washington metropolitan area, the Philadelphia area or even New York and New Jersey, a lot of people come down here to get away from what's going on."

John Talbott, of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services PenFed Realty based in Ocean Pines, agrees with the sentiment.

"Maybe your average citizen who was thinking about buying something possibly in Hawaii or California or Arizona or maybe in Europe or the Caribbean, has decided that they don't like the distance factor as much as they did before," Talbott said. "They want to be closer to home."

Wadler said that at first, real estate sales came to grinding halt as a result of the quarantine put in place in March, but as soon as the order was lifted, she said she saw sales begin as early as the end of March into April, and they haven't slowed down since, except when there are no houses left on the market.

"When the quarantine happened ... things just died," she said. "People pulled their listings. And then all of a sudden, what was on the market – the people that did decide to stay on the market – were selling. Our inventory is so low, people are getting multiple offers and they're going pretty quickly."

Talbott also saw sales returning at the end of March, though his real estate operation company saw stronger numbers from May through July. This is likely because Berkshire Hathaway covers a broad area spanning the entire county up to Salisbury.

Both Talbott and Wadler agree about one thing both companies need: more houses for listings.

*please see **real estate** on page 15*



Herzog is Crafter of the Month

The Pine'er Craft Club of Ocean Pines announced that **Barbara Herzog** is the Crafter of the Month for August.

Originally from Anne Arundel County, Barbara acquired her love for sewing from her mother, who made many of her outfits when she was growing up. The fun of crafting was home grown.

Barbara was an assistant manager of the Fabrics Department at Montgomery Ward in Laurel, MD during the 1970s and made outfits for her husband and son. She's been sewing ever since.

Her endless source of joy is making little girl's dresses and outfits by exploring her creative ability and altering patterns achieving an unexpected look by mixing fabrics, prints and colors. It's made with the love of a grandmother.

Barbara's most recent project is making face masks for the Ocean Pines Artisan Gift Shop. When you stop in to see all her cute little girl fashions, you can also see the rest of the gift shop with all unique, one-of-a-kind, handmade items.

The Artisan Gift Shop located at White Horse Park is open Saturday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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Ocean Pines announces COVID-19 precautions for Annual Meeting

Because of precautions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be a two-step sign-in process for the Ocean Pines Annual Meeting of Membership.

The meeting is scheduled Saturday, August 8, at 9 a.m. at the Worcester County Veterans Memorial in Ocean Pines.

To attend, homeowners must first supply proof of identification to confirm their voting status. A quorum of at least 100 properties represented by homeowners or proxies is required to officially conduct the Annual Meeting. According to Ocean Pines bylaws, "A member shall be entitled to one vote for each numbered residential lot, condominium unit, or single-family attached dwelling in the Subdivision that is owned by the member, or as otherwise provided in the Declarations of Restrictions or Charter."

Second, each person attending the meeting must fill out a form to help with contact tracing efforts, in case of a COVID-19 outbreak related to the event. The form will include questions

about symptoms, recent COVID-19 testing, and possible exposure to COVID-19 cases.

Those attending the event must also follow guidelines from the CDC and Maryland Department of Health, including:

Facial coverings must be worn at all times.

Chairs will be set up six feet apart and cannot be moved by attendees.

Pre- or post-event social gatherings on the grounds will not be permitted.

Anyone who currently has COVID-19, has a close family member who recently tested positive for COVID-19, or recently has experienced symptoms of COVID-19 may not attend. Those who may be at risk are encouraged to not attend.

The Annual Meeting will include validation of the Board of Directors election by the Ocean Pines Elections Committee, as well as the presentation of the Sam Wilkinson Award by Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue, and annual presentations by

*please see **meeting** on page 4*

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Worcester GOLD collecting supplies for students

By **Morgan Pilz**

Worcester County GOLD (Giving Other Lives Dignity) is searching for donors and sponsors for its 21st annual School Supplies for Students program.

Executive Director Nicholas Cranford encourages everyone to help contribute supplies for students in need, especially if Covid-19 forces schools to be taught at home once more.

"We know that students are going to be back to learning in some fashion, whether it's at the kitchen table or in the classroom, so we're doing what we normally do and we're gathering school supplies for students who are in need," Cranford said. "The way that we operate is that all of our recipients are referred to us by our community partners."

These partners include the Worcester County Board of Education as well as the Department of Social Services. These organizations help find families with children who have the most need, who typically are below the poverty line.

At the time of publication, Cranford said the organization has around 15 sponsors and hopes to have 20-30 by the end of the summer.

Sponsors are matched with specific

families and given a list that has the child's name, age, gender and grade as well as the exact list of supplies that child needs.

To become a sponsor, go to <http://worcestergold.org> and select how many children you would like to sponsor.

In the past, the sponsors would be able to hand the supplies directly to the recipient, but given the current global situation, school supplies will be dropped off at the Child Support Office at 424 W Market Street, Snow Hill.

Collections can be dropped off Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. until Friday, August 21. These days will also be the time for recipients to come and collect their school supplies.

Last year, Worcester GOLD gave out 451 backpacks, Cranford said, and he believes the number of children in need will rise this year, though he is not sure by how many.

"It's difficult to say how many kids will have submitted this year," he said. "And it's [also] difficult to say how many people will be willing to sponsor because so many people are worried about kids going back to school."

The program is even more impor-

tant this year, especially given the high possibility that learning will have to take place at home, which could be a challenge for many students.

"A study was recently done in Worcester County to see what kind of broadband connectivity households had, and they found that there were about 6,400 households without access to broadband Internet in Worcester County," Cranford said. "So, while some kids will be able to do online learning in the fall, there's a lot of kids that don't have that option."

"My daughter is one of those kids," he continued. "We live in Newark and we don't have Internet access. At the end of the school year, we were getting packets in the mail. We know that there's going to be plenty of kids in the area who are in need of regular school supplies, such as backpacks, paper, scissors, binders, and other educational tools. We know kids are still going to need [supplies] come the fall, regardless of where they'll be learning."

In addition, the organization also held its first of three food distributions on June 19 and gave out 111 food bags containing kid-friendly nutritious items valued at \$30 each. The most re-

cent one, held on July 24, gave away another 111 food bags. The last Summer Food Distribution for Children Program of the summer will be on August 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 424 W Market Street, Snow Hill.

"We received a grant from the Worcester County Commissioners to supplement food for school aged children during the summer months when they're not in school," Cranford said.

Cranford also said this year the organization will be able to give out free books for students, courtesy of the Worcester County Snow Hill Library Branch.

"They were planning on doing a summer reading program, and they weren't able to because of building access," he said. "So, they donated books to us [last week], I picked them up and it was a whole bunch of age appropriate books, so along with the backpacks, kids are going to receive brand new books and they also included some summer activities."

For more information or to sign up, visit <http://worcestergold.org> for a list of school supplies and the sponsor form, or call 410-677-6969 or email at WorcesterCountyGOLD@gmail.com.



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Carozza calls for keeping MSP aviation units on Shore

Senator Mary Beth Carozza sent a letter to Maryland State Police Superintendent Colonel Woodrow W. “Jerry” Jones III on behalf of the District 38 Delegation in strong support of the continued full operation of the Maryland State Police Aviation Command on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, specifically to ensure the full operation of Trooper 4 and Trooper 6 Medivac emergency services.

“As the State Senator representing all of Worcester, Somerset including Smith Island, and half of Wicomico County, I am well aware of the superior emergency life-saving airborne medical services that have been provided over the years by Trooper 4 in Salisbury and Trooper 6 in Easton,” Senator Carozza penned in her letter. “The possible budget cuts to the Eastern Shore’s MSP Medivac services truly would have a life-threatening negative impact to my constituents and other Shore residents, especially

those living in remote, rural areas on the Shore.”

In response to the financial impact of COVID-19, the State of Maryland is considering spending cuts, including the Maryland State Police budget.

“I understand in the current fiscal COVID-19 environment that cuts to Maryland’s budget are inevitable... However, I understand that there are other professional analyses that have identified alternative savings rather than making detrimental, life-threatening cuts to the critical services provided by Trooper 4 and Trooper 6 on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.”

“On behalf of my constituents and in strong support of overall public safety, I urge you to reject any budget cuts or proposals that would threaten the life-saving services of MSP’s Aviation services on the Shore.”

meeting
from page 2

Association President Doug Parks, General Manager John Viola, attorney Jeremy Tucker, and Ocean Pines’ auditing firm.

To download a copy of the agenda, visit <https://www.oceanpines.org/documents/10184/53744/8-8-20+Annual+Meeting+AGENDA.docx>.

Seating for the Annual Meeting will

be outdoors, without cover, in the field next to the Veterans Memorial. In the event of rain, the Annual Meeting will be canceled.

The Worcester County Veterans Memorial is accessible from the Sports Core Pool entrance on 11144 Cathell Road, in Ocean Pines. Parking will be available onsite, as well as at the adjacent Worcester County Library branch.

For questions, email info@oceanpines.org.

Golf Members’ Council continues fundraising for scholarship awards

The Ocean Pines Golf Members’ Council (OPGMC) continues its fundraising efforts for its annual scholarships, despite having to cancel its signature event, the Ocean Pines/Taylor Bank Scramble scheduled for July, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event, last year, raised \$11,000 for scholarships for local high school students.

Instead, OPGMC Scholarship Committee Chairman Bob Long said much of the money received this year has come from small donations from Ocean Pines golf groups.

Long credited Scotty Wheatley, chairman of the annual golf tournament, with helping to raise a record amount last year. The organization awarded scholarships of \$4,000 in 2017, \$5,000 in 2018 and \$7,000 in 2019.

“In early March, Scotty was full of optimism about our 2021 fund and was hoping we would again have a big increase. A week later, we all were under some form of quarantine and that optimism faded,” Long said.

This year, Long said the OPGMC decided to award \$6,000 in scholarships to five graduating students, representing about half of the scholarship fund balance. “The remaining money would remain in the fund to ensure we had something to award in 2021,” he said.

After canceling the golf tournament, Long said the Scholarship Committee began looking for new ways to raise money.

“Our members have been very supportive and generous. Things are not looking as bleak as they did a couple of months ago,” Long said. To date this year, he said the Members’ Council has raised \$6,600.

“We are still short of the \$10,000-plus goal Scotty was working on, but we can feel good about what we have done up to this point, given the current circumstances,” he continued. “This \$6,600 has come from a variety of sources, including members of the Ocean Pines Men’s Golf Association and of the Ocean Pines Ladies’ Golf Association contributing a few dollars every week when they play.”

Long said other funds have included \$550 in individual donations, \$2,000 from Taylor Bank for their title sponsorship, and \$500 from Deeley Insurance Group who has been a Gold Level sponsor the past two years.

“Going forward, we will also be selling tee box signs that will be on display at the OPMGA Senior Championship in August,” Long said. “Thank you to everyone who has chipped in a few bucks during our weekly play. Our Ocean Pines Golf members are doing good things, and we should all be proud of what we have done and will do.”

For information about the Ocean Pines Golf Members’ Council or to make a donation, contact Long at rmlong@aol.com.

Courier Almanac

On August 5, 1981, President Ronald Reagan began firing 11,359 air-traffic controllers striking in violation of his order for them to return to work. The executive action, regarded as extreme by many, significantly slowed air travel for months.

Two days earlier, on August 3, almost 13,000 air-traffic controllers went on strike after negotiations with the federal government to raise their pay and shorten their workweek proved fruitless. The controllers complained of difficult working conditions and a lack of recognition of the pressures they face. Across the country, some 7,000 flights were canceled. The same day, President Reagan called the strike illegal and threatened to fire any controller who had not returned to work within 48 hours. Robert Poli, president of the Professional Air-Traffic Controllers Association (PATCO), was found in contempt by a federal judge and ordered to pay \$1,000 a day in fines.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 8.8 million young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 report having a mental illness. Among those who reported such illnesses, 42 percent indicated their illness went untreated. Substance abuse disorders also are more common among 18- to 25-year-olds than many people may think. SAMHSA notes that 5.1 million young adults report having a substance abuse disorder, and 87 percent of those with disorders are not treated. More information about mental health and substance abuse, including how to find treatment, is available at www.samhsa.gov.



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Sing, sing a song

My grandchildren spent several weeks at our home this summer. It was enjoyable but not without its distractions.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

My studio, where I spend much of my time working, is above the garage, just a dozen steps or so from the back door. Through the window near my desk I can see the sliding glass door. At least a dozen times throughout the day the kids could be seen leaving the house to make their way toward the side door of the garage which I would then hear opening. Footsteps on the stairs and chit chat among the two heralded their arrival through the studio door. It could sometimes be challenging to concentrate when they burst in but I certainly didn't mind. Time spent with my grandchildren is infrequent so their invasion of my workspace was just fine and very much enjoyed.

After they asked how I was doing and whether I needed anything, they would pull a chair up to the desk or flop on the sofa to color or write in the handmade "books" they fashioned by folding and then stapling sheets of copy paper. Each would tell me about what they were writing or drawing. My granddaughter worked on her literary masterpiece, "The Snail's Christmas."

For the umpteenth time one late afternoon my granddaughter made her way upstairs. I was listening to music which prompted her to list the songs

she liked to sing, mostly scores from Disney movies like "Frozen" and "Frozen 2." She asked if I knew them. Feeling very much as if I had tumbled into the generation gap chasm, I admitted that aside from "Let it Go" which she has sung many times for many years, I had no clue. I went on YouTube to search for the karaoke version of one of the songs she named. She gushed when the music came up after I hit play and I requested she sing, which she did. For the next 45 minutes, she sat on my lap asking me to find one karaoke song after another including "You're Welcome" from "Moana" and "Hakuna Matata" from "Lion King."

The music and my granddaughter were cranked up loud. Every once and a while I'd chime in, loud and a little off key which elicited granddaughter giggles. A couple times I pulled up songs from my childhood like "Candyman," the Sammy Davis, Jr. classic. I did my best to impress my granddaughter but I think my performance was wanting. That didn't stop me though. Oh no, it didn't stop me.

In time my grandson joined us, sitting on my other knee. His vocalizations were better than mine. He kept the beat by drumming his hands on the desk. Gene Krupa could have done no better.

Anyone watching our impromptu concert would have been highly amused by the spirited singing and discombobulated dancing. Passion eclipsed precision. So what? We were enjoying ourselves.

Many, many years ago, I was for a time one of the vocalists with the Len Gray Orchestra, singing several num-

bers from the Great American Songbook. In the interest of full disclosure, they didn't sound all that great when I belted them out. With the orchestra at my back I stood on stage before the microphone and the audience attempting to do justice to the lyrics of Cole Porter and Sammy Cahn and others. I should have been brought up on charges. During one performance the words to "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" escaped me. I forgot what I left and where I left it. My embarrassment was amplified knowing I had let down the professional musicians behind me and the audience in front of me which included the anniversary couple who requested the song in the first place. At that moment, had lightning struck me down, it would have been welcomed. During intermission, I went to the bar to get a drink. As was the custom, the performers got free drinks and boy did

I need one. When the bartender set the glass in front of me, he said, "that'll be two dollars." I reminded him I was with the orchestra to which he responded, "I saw you up there. Two bucks!" To this day when I hear Tony Bennett a part of me cringes just a little bit.

I relate that reminiscence to share this. Singing and dancing with my grandchildren in my studio was a much



more satisfying experience than performing on stage at the Sunset Lounge. This time around the audience enjoyed my performance and I didn't care when I forgot the lyrics. Hakuna Matata



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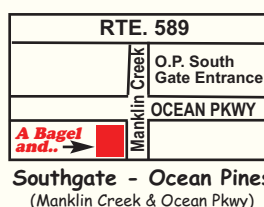
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NEWS, LIFE AND POLITICS

Ocean Pines, Maryland

Public schools to begin Responsible Return Model

At a press conference this last Thursday, Worcester County Public Schools Superintendent Lou Taylor announced the school system's plans for students to begin the 2020-2021 school year in Stage One of the Responsible Return mode, meaning students will be engaged in distance learning.

Flanked by officials from Worcester County's Board of Education, Health Department, Teachers Association, Educational Support Personnel Association, and the Worcester County Commissioners, Taylor began his remarks by thanking these organizations for their partnership and guidance as the school system crafted the Responsible Return model and determined the in which learning stage students would begin this school year.

Taylor also acknowledged the incredible amount of input the school system received from families, staff and the Worcester County community.

"We have received an enormous amount of input from our families, faculty, and staff," he said, referring to the thousands of survey responses, emails, messages and more the school system has received over the last several weeks. "I am confident that today's decision is the right one for our community."

The Responsible Return model outlines four stages of learning. Visit www.worcesterk12.org to view the entire draft model, including details about each stage. The model will be finalized by the state's deadline of August 14.

Taylor also acknowledged the need to bring students back into the school environment as quickly as health and safety conditions allow.

"We recognize the significant challenges that distance learning

poses for many of our students' academic and social-emotional development, which is why we intend to re-evaluate conditions every two weeks," he said. "As those conditions allow, we hope to move into Stage



Superintendent of Schools **Lou Taylor** announcing plans for new school year. Photo by Chip Bertino

Two by Monday, September 28, which will welcome back into our buildings small groups of identified students for face-to-face instruction."

The stage two model builds upon the success the school system has had in bringing small groups of students back into classrooms through our summer academy programs currently underway at all schools.

Once again referencing the feedback received from stakeholders, Taylor also announced that families could choose to keep their child in distance learning when students are able to return to the classroom.

"We recognize the fear that many families have at this tenuous time, so to ease those fears, Worcester County Public Schools will continue to offer a choice of distance learning for any families that do not wish to physically send their child back to school," he said. "Parents will be able to exercise this option as schools reach out to invite their child back to the classroom."



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New Police Chief Ehrisman promoted from within

Ocean Pines Police Lt. Leo Ehrisman is about to become Chief Ehrisman.

The veteran officer on August 1 officially succeeded retiring Police Chief David Massey. Ehrisman is the first homegrown officer to climb the ranks all the way to the top.



Leo Ehrisman

Ehrisman was born in the Pittsville area in neighboring Wicomico County. He began his policing career as a patrol officer in 1986 but, first, he was a professional musician who toured all over the U.S.

"I was actually on the road when my daughter was born," he said. "When she was born, we knew something was wrong, but we didn't know what. And it turned out to be cerebral palsy. So, my traveling days were done. I got on a plane and came home, left everything I owned on a bus, and I had to find a job."

Starting out small, and moving up

Ehrisman started as a part-time dispatcher, filling in while another worker was on maternity leave. He never left.

"I was hired here by Chief [Rod] Murray in 1986 and he sent me to forensic school and to CSI school. I became a forensics investigator and a crime scene investigator," he said. "Through the years I was promoted from patrolman to PFC [private first class], to corporal to sergeant to lieutenant, to running the criminal investigation side" of the Ocean Pines Police

Department.

Ehrisman, more recently, also took over operations of the department as Massey's expected successor.

His extensive police training also includes the "FBI-LEEDA Trilogy," which refers to completion of the FBI-LEEDA's Supervisor Leadership Institute, Command Leadership Institute, and Executive Leadership Institute – a first for an Ocean Pines officer.

Ehrisman said the transition from drummer to police officer wasn't too awkward, largely because of his prior experience as a firefighter.

"Some cops can say, 'My uncle was a police officer, my grandfather was a police officer, my dad was an officer' – I didn't have any of that," Ehrisman said. "All my family were fire and EMS. I've been in fire service since I was a cadet at 13 and went in to be a medic, and then went directly into the department at 18."

He put in 30 years as a volunteer in Pittsville, before moving to Ocean Pines about nine years ago. He now volunteers for the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.

"Nowadays, there's a lot of cross training. A lot of cops are firefighters and there are a lot of firefighters that leave and go into law enforcement," Ehrisman said. "You get used to working on an accident scene."

Policework in Ocean Pines, according to Ehrisman, often includes residential crimes against people and property.

"It's very unique being in Ocean Pines, because it's 99% residential – we don't have businesses, we don't have bars, we don't have hotels. So, most of our crimes are against residential properties or the common domestic disturbance," he said.

Because of the resort nature of the community, police also deal with a healthy population of tourists.

"Criminals like to go on vacation too," Ehrisman said. "It's nothing for us to pull someone over on a traffic stop because they have a headlight out, to find they're wanted in Montgomery County or Pennsylvania or New Jersey. We get a lot of that," he said.

Cooperation and collaboration

In his current role, Ehrisman also



Luncheon - The Republican Women of Worcester County (RWWC) held their annual Red, White and Blue luncheon on Thursday, July 23 at the Carousel Hotel in Ocean City. Guest speakers were left to right, State Delegate **Wayne Hartman**, RWWC President **Beth Rodier**, Maryland Federation of Republican Women President **Diana Waterman** and State Senator **Mary Beth Carozza**.

County departments reopen to the public

Worcester County Environmental Programs (WCEP) and Development Review and Permitting (DRP) has reopened to the public by appointment only.

Appointments will take place in the first-floor board room in the Worcester County Government Center (WCGC) in Snow Hill. Safety protocols are in place in the building, which include requiring health screenings upon entry, practicing social distancing, making sanitizing stations available, and requiring employees and visitors to wear face coverings. These enhanced measures have been implemented to protect public health due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To schedule an appointment with WCEP, call (410) 632-1220.

To schedule an appointment with DRP, contact (410) 632-1200.

All other WCGC offices, though closed to the public at this time, are maintaining standard operating hours. Those seeking county services may visit www.co.worcester.md.us for a list of departmental phone numbers and deposit essential documents in drop-off boxes in the WCGC first floor atrium and at the Isle of Wight office building. Those seeking WCEP and/or

DRP services who prefer to continue depositing essential documents in the WCGC atrium and the outside drop box at the Isle of Wight office building may continue to do so.

Solid Waste Division operations, including the Central Landfill in Newark, and the Homeowner Convenience Centers throughout the county, are open during standard hours of operation.

For additional information, contact Public Information Officer Kim Moses at (410) 632-1194.

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please see **chief** on page 12

'Fresh Conversations' comes to virtual venue

"Fresh Conversations," a free University of Maryland Extension nutrition education program for people ages 50 years and older will be offered online. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person program has been delayed until further notice.

Extension Educators Beverly Jackey, MS, RDN and Cheryl Bush, MS, RDN, will be presenting Fresh Conversations to residents in Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties.

The program officially began, July 29 and includes eight sessions focusing on nutrition topics of interest for older adults, but anyone can attend.

Topics for the 2020 "Fresh Conversations" online program include:

August 21 Lower Your Stroke Risk

August 26 Go with Your Gut Bacteria

September 9 Dairy Case Dilemma: Is It Really Milk?

September 23 Heart-Healthy Fat Facts

October 7 Sugar: Sinfully Sweet

October 21 Ancient Grains Make

a Come Back

November 4 Eating Out and Eating Healthy-Just Got Easier

After attending each session, participants will receive a free copy of the Seasoned Newsletter which includes recipes, food preparation tips and other activities.

To review the complete Fresh Conversations webinar schedule, description of each session or to register for the upcoming sessions, go to:

<https://extension.umd.edu/queen-anne-county/family-consumer-sciences/fresh-conversations> or

<https://extension.umd.edu/cecil-county/family-consumer-sciences/fresh-conversations>

Fresh Conversations will be offered by other Extension educators throughout the state on different dates. To find out when you can attend other online programs, visit you county's Extension website or go to the University of Maryland's Fresh Conversations page and click on the counties on the bottom of the page at <https://extension.umd.edu/fresh-conversations>.

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Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



Exoplanet is “mirror image” of Earth

The topic for August is the recent detection of a new extrasolar planet. Only weeks ago, on June 4, astronomers from the Max Planck Institute, Göttingen, Germany, announced finding the new exoplanet which has been named “KOI-456.04.” In various ways the pairing of this new exoplanet with its star has been described as the closest “mirror image” of the Earth-sun system yet to be discovered.

A key factor for measuring Earth-like exoplanets is based upon whether they reside in their host star’s “zone of habitability” which is a region within the “right distance” so that liquid water can exist. KOI-456.04 meets this criterion, and orbits its host star in about 378 days. Its radius is about 1.9 times that of

tee of life, but at least it holds out the possibility.

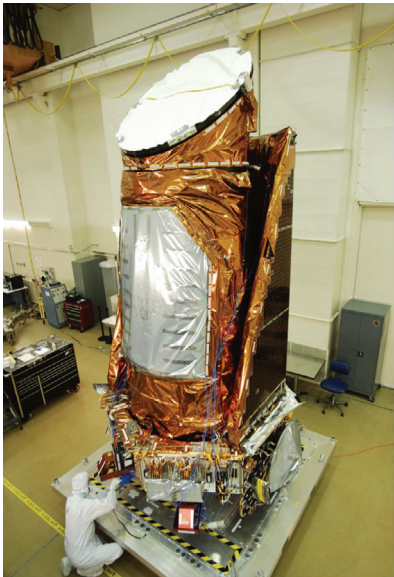
Historically, the first exoplanet discovery came in October, 1995, by a pair of Swiss astronomers Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz of the University of Geneva. Mayor and Queloz were honored as winners of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2019.

During the 1990’s astronomers began searching for exoplanets by analyzing the dynamic movements of their host stars. If a given star is observed to “wobble,” i.e., to move with some particular frequency, astronomers can deduce properties of its exoplanet orbiting the star and causing the wobble.

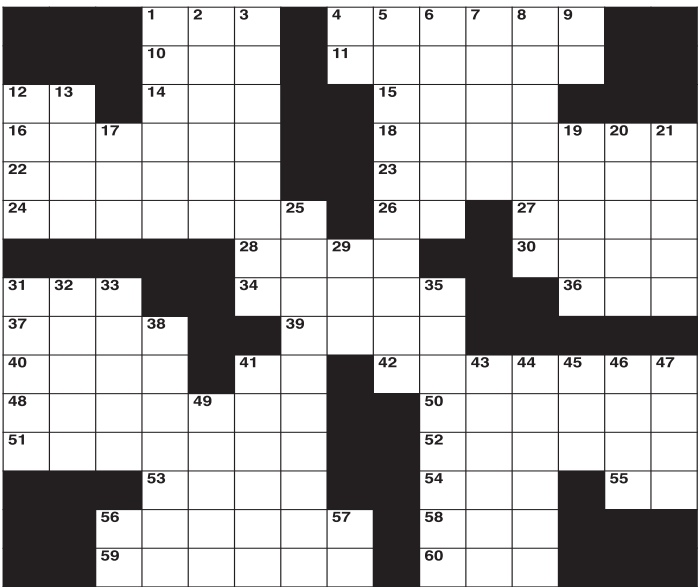
Next came the development of a technique known as the “transit method.” Transits occur when an exoplanet traverses a star, blocking part of its light from view, an eclipse-like pattern, somewhat similar to what takes place when the moon eclipses the sun.

In 2009 NASA launched its Kepler Space Telescope, an instrument capable of detecting exoplanets of any size including those as small as Earth. Kepler operates by keeping its field of view fixed upon a region of the Milky Way containing about 150,000 stars. Its photometric instrument monitors the brightness of each star in this field, being alert to small variations that may occur. Astronomers can then analyze these variations or trails, left by transiting exoplanets.

During its nine-year lifetime, from 2009 to 2018, Kepler observed



Construction Phase of the Kepler Space Telescope

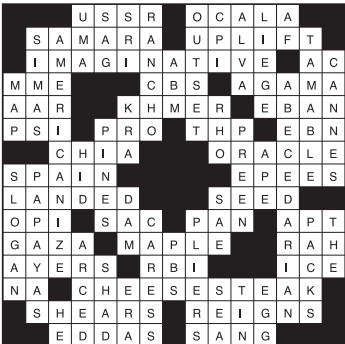


CLUES ACROSS

1. Opposite of on
4. Creator
10. No seats available
11. About springtime
12. Flagship ESPN show (abbr.)
14. Automobile
15. A matchup
16. Porous volcanic rock
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Not written in any key
23. Revolved
24. Archrival
26. Within
27. Smoker’s accessory
28. Disfigure
30. Primordial matter
31. Thrust horse power (abbr.)
34. Kisses
36. Some is iced
37. A way to derive
39. Unaccompanied by others
40. Discontinued Google app
41. Tony B. left his heart there
42. Condiment
48. Ancient Italian city
50. One who distributes payoff money
51. Guarantees
52. Highly decorative
53. A hair on top of the eye
54. Pie ___ mode
55. Spanish be
56. Glued
58. A way to drench
59. Part of the body
60. Changes the color

CLUES DOWN

1. Passerine birds
2. Noisy quarrel
3. The front arm or leg of an animal
4. Early multimedia
5. Golden years
6. Large mollusk
7. Small arm of the sea
8. Persian jurisdiction
9. Atomic #81
12. From end to end
13. Adorable
17. Ma
19. Nearly falling
20. Portable conical tent
21. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
25. Fish with high dorsal fins
29. Equal (prefix)
31. Aquatic plant genus
32. Choppers
33. Hand parts
35. Region bordering the sea
38. Well-liked
41. Nap
43. It’s used to make beer
44. Related on the father’s side
45. Senior officer
46. Delicacy (archaic)
47. Figures
49. A way to take away
56. Beloved sandwich ___&J
57. Symptom typical of withdrawal (abbr.)



Answers for July 22

All these “coincidences” raise the interest of astronomers seeking exoplanets that might host life. Since Earth has produced a variety of living things, comparable exoplanets could do the same. Similarity is no guaran-

Wor-Wic's spring dean's list announced

A total of 482 Wor-Wic Community College students have been recognized for superior performance by being named to the dean's list for the recently-completed spring term.

Area students who maintained a grade point average of 3.5 or higher while taking six or more credit hours during the spring term include the following Worcester County students.

Berlin: Jamie Adams, Alexander Apodaca, Matthew Bagrowski, Hanna Beck, Cole Bennett, Grace Brosch, Zachary Buckley, Robert Calabrese, Cameron Campbell, Connor Carpenter, Judith Celozzi, Zachary Conway, Robert Cook II, Tyler Cook, Sierra Dacre, Ashley Davis, Gionna Depasquale, Macy Dietrich, Kevin Ellington, Marissa Fatzinger, Hannah Fisher, Alec Foote, Jonathan Franklin, Sandra Garcia-Moreno, Jamie Gelfo, Anna Gisriel, Charletta Henry, Kayla Higgins, Sarah Hyatt, Mahreen Ishfaq, Sarah Jenkins, Allison Johnston, Kaitlyn Jones, Salina Kc, Christine Komlos, Caroline Kurtz, Samantha Lokey, Brooke

Mask, Randi Milbourne, Alexis Milion, Robert Mitchell, Alexandra Orf, Lisa Pachkoski, Candice Palmer, Nicholas Pappas, Corey Pavinski, Mihaela Petrovski, Colin Porter, Avery Pruitt, Lindsey Richardson, Brianna Romersa, Noah Shaffer, Michael Sidell, Hunter Smith, Alivia Spagnola, Amy Stephan, Mallory Sterrett, Michal Szczesny, Michael Todd, Jillian Trauth, Austin White, Ainsley Wissler, Michael Yandle, John Znamirovski and Luke Zolenski.

Bishopville: Emily Bebee, Thelma Gault Godinez, Sophia Kokkinos, Alora Lockhart, Mackenzie Merson, Natalie Shaffer, Rachel Travers, Jamie Walsh, Courtney Williams and Christiana Zell.

Eden: Wafa Siddiqui and Kayla Wolf.

Girdletree: Kellyann Belka and Cortney Smith.

Newark: Mazie Brinker, Mohammad Nawaz and Kelsey Riordan.

Ocean City: Jillian Alascio, Sarah Babel, Westin Blake, Courtney Burrs, Jacelyn Clapsadle, Jagger Clapsadle, Aaron Cohen, Monica

Garcia, Alexis Gausepohl, Sara Hetherington, Rachel Hreshko, Christopher Kenny, Devon Kramer, Paige Kreppel, Kara Mihavetz, Samuel Rakowski, Ilona Randolph, Josie Richardson, Alexandria Russell, Christopher Rutlin, Yasmeen Sbih, Sierra Stevens, Hannah Stolba, Amanda Strayer and Catherine Zannino.

Pocomoke City: Samantha Baysinger, Katie Bodley, John Carson, Meaghan Collins, Tuan Doan, Patrick Giordano, Kerra Harris, Olivia Holland, Zachary Hurley, Kiera Jubilee, Kaliyah Lunsford, Marvin Mason, Kylie Mohler, Shane Musgrave, Shania Trent, Kyle Webb, Nikyah Whitehead and Amanda Wright.

Snow Hill: Taylor Armstrong, Ashley Brown, Marissa Feters, Julie Fisher, Drew Harper, Tesman Morris, Kayla Purnell, Justin Smith and Marlin Yoder.

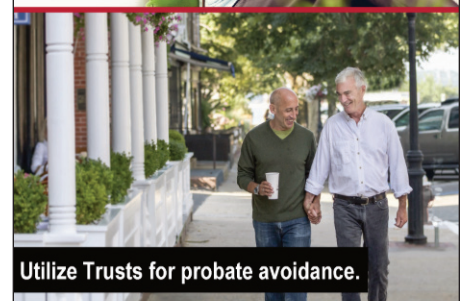
Stockton: Brittany Burkhead and Brock Payne.

Whaleyville: Jenna Bradford and Lynnie Lewis.

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chief

from page 8

serves as a coordinator with multi-jurisdictional task forces from county, state and even federal law enforcement agencies. Those partnerships benefit Ocean Pines by helping to fill in gaps missing from the Association police force.

"This county is really developed on multiple-agency task forces," he said. "The county has a drug task force, for example, that is made up of detectives

from all over the county. Ocean Pines doesn't have the type of resources to have its own SWAT team, or to have a strictly narcotics division or a robbery division or computer crimes division, so it's easier for us to join that multi-jurisdictional task force.

"To be able to have a relationship with outside agencies is really beneficial," he continued. "We have a great relationship with the state police, with the sheriff's office, with Ocean City – with all the neighboring agencies. We're very much a part of that multi-

jurisdictional partnership."

Ocean Pines Police will help if, for example, there's a bad accident on Route 589 or Route 90. But the partnerships also go both ways.

"If I only have one officer working and he's tied up on a call and we get a second call – guess who we're going to for help? We're calling the county and we're calling the state," Ehrisman said. "We have to stay tight with that relationship, and that starts at the top with the commander of the Berlin barracks, the sheriff's office, the administration from the Ocean City Police Department, all of those things."

Ehrisman said the frequent "safest city" honors given to Ocean Pines – although technically not a city – are both because of favorable demographics and because of the vigilance of Ocean Pines Police. It's no accident, he said, that people pulling into the south gate often notice a police presence.

"People say all the time, 'Boy, if you come into Ocean Pines, you're going to see a police car' – that's on purpose," he said. "If you see that car when you come into the south gate, you're not going to hang a left and go 60 miles an hour.

"I think a lot of it is the fact of trying to retain officers here for longevity, because then they become familiar with the citizens and you get that personal relationship with your community. And our community, as a whole, really supports our police department," Ehrisman added.

As a leader, Ehrisman said he stresses the importance of community policing.

"I don't let my guys go out there and be G.I. Joe – I don't want them out there with combat gear and Kevlar and night vision goggles. When Mr. Jones calls and he wants a police officer, he expects to see a uniformed police officer come and assist him – he doesn't want a soldier coming to his front door," he said. "I think that means a lot."

To new officers, Ehrisman says, "Don't come in here and tell me how many tickets you've written – don't come in here and tell me what you've done, unless you can tell me you helped Mrs. Smith when she was locked out of her car."

Helping someone with a ride, or moving their trash can when they're not able, is what community policing is all about, Ehrisman said.

"That's what the residents remember and that's what is so important

here," he said.

Big swings for community service

Along with policing and service with the fire department, Ehrisman also has been involved with the community in other ways, including through Little League Baseball. He is currently both the District 8 Administrator and the Maryland State Director for Little League International Baseball/Softball in the Eastern Region.

"This is what happens when you don't go to a meeting that your wife goes to," he said with a laugh. "I got volun-told!"

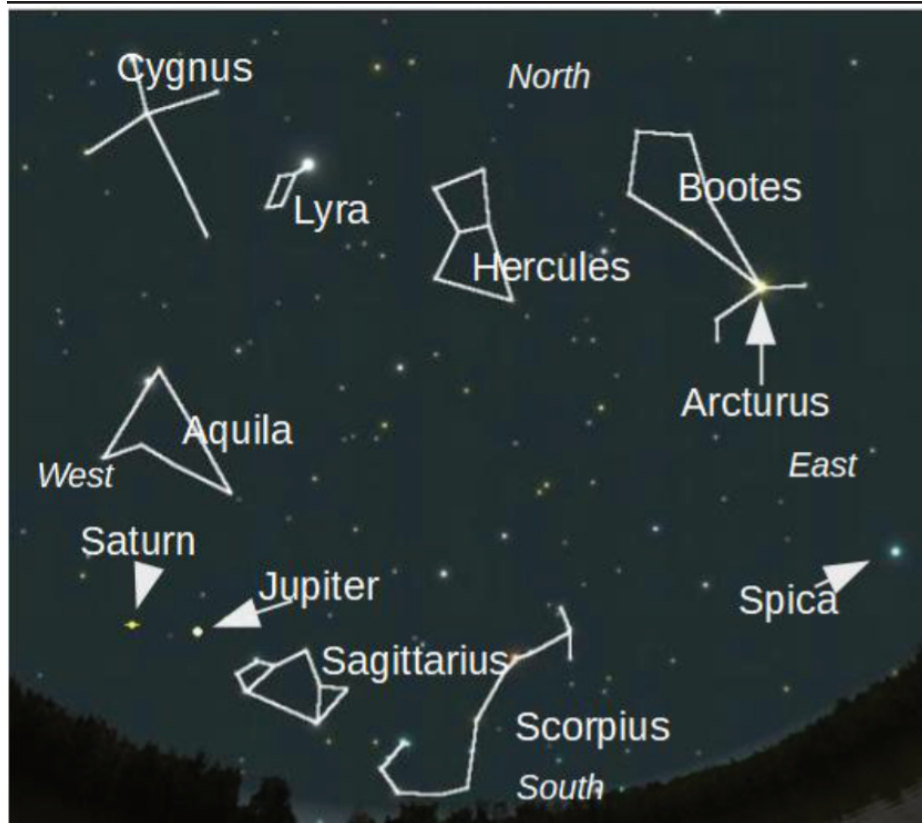
Ehrisman volunteered as a coach when his children were younger, and later served on the local Little League board and became president of the league. That led to work with the district and state divisions.

His involvement has been especially rewarding during the last several years, Ehrisman said, as Berlin Little League all-star teams have often advanced to regional tournaments, and even the Little League World Series finals in 2014.

Two years ago, it literally took a perfect game from a 12-year-old Staten Island pitcher to prevent a return to the Little League World Series by a Berlin squad. Still, the small town fielded two state championship teams, both in baseball and softball. Many local people watched those games play out on national television, but Ehrisman has been there in person for nearly all of the games. In fact, he's there for most Maryland state championship teams.

"It's really hard to sit home and watch them because, nine times out of ten, I'm there with them. When they're on television playing for that championship in Bristol [Connecticut], I'm in that press booth," he said. "Last year, at one time, I had 11/12-year-olds in Bristol, I had 9/10-year-olds in Cranston, Rhode Island, and I had 13/14-year-olds in Freehold, New Jersey. I spent a week going from a 9 a.m. game in Bristol to a 4 p.m. in Rhode Island to a 10 o'clock game the next morning in New Jersey.

"I know a lot of those kids – I've seen them since they were 9. And now they've graduated high school and gone to college, and some of them are still playing ball. That is so rewarding. That is the best of the best, right there," he added.

**planet**

from page 10

500,000 stars and has confirmed the existence of 2,740 exoplanets. Today's astronomers are able to "mine the data" from the massive Kepler archive, searching for the presence of yet more exoplanets.

Two astronomers Rene Heller and Michael Hippke at the Max Planck Institute developed a new powerful "search algorithm" leading to the discovery of KOI-456.04. The terminology KOI is shorthand for "Kepler Object of Interest." Currently the data analysis shows an 85% confidence level and thus the discovery is classified as a planet "candidate." Additional observations will be needed to reach the 99% confidence to call this a "confirmed" exoplanet.

Astronomy and space fans may look forward to NASA's James Webb Space Telescope scheduled to launch

in 2021 for possible validating data.

During August the full vista of stars arrives at about 9:15 PM. Cygnus the Swan (the Northern Cross) will be flying high overhead. Scorpius the Scorpion and Sagittarius the Archer, both appear above the southern horizon. Sagittarius displays a "teapot" shape. After about 9:45 p.m., one can clearly see Saturn and Jupiter east of Sagittarius.

From August 9th to 14th late night stargazers can watch for the Perseid meteor shower. The meteors will appear about halfway between the northeast horizon and the zenith. The shower reaches its peak on the night of August 11 between the hours of 2:30 a.m. and 5 a.m. (technically the morning of August 12.) Although the third quarter moon is present, this might not entirely spoil the show.

Wishing clear skies and good luck to all stargazers.

Free online education classes for parents offered

The Worcester County Health Department has announced free online parenting education classes designed to provide parents and guardians with resources and tools to enhance communication and help their children make healthy life choices for a brighter future. All classes are taught by a master trainer, are evidence based and have been found effective in helping parents handle their own stress and emotions while also understanding their children's growth and development.

Beginning August 6, "*Guiding Good Choices*" will be offered virtually with group discussions occurring on Thursdays at 5 p.m. Classes are designed for parents/guardians of middle school students. Through participation in the course,

parents/guardians will increase their knowledge about drugs and alcohol, signs of use, and be able to arm their children with drug resistance skills. It will be an interactive class with great discussions on current events and the effects on kids.

"During this time of social distancing we are continuing to provide parents and guardians with the tools and education needed to help raise healthy and successful children," said Mimi Dean, Director of Prevention Services for the Worcester County Health Department. "Using an online format to provide these classes makes these learning tools convenient and accessible."

Please call 410-632-1100 ext. 1106 to register.

Cancer support groups and classes go virtual

To better protect and support patients going through cancer treatments or recovering from treatment in the age of COVID-19, the Richard A. Henson Cancer Institute has started offering many groups, workshops and classes in a virtual format. Offerings include:

Cancer Patient, Survivor and Caregiver Group

Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Conference call 410-677-1000, Access code 0190452#

Yoga for Cancer Survivors

Every Wednesday, 1:30p.m.

Conference call 410-677-1000, Access code 0190452#

PRMC reopens heart, vascular institute entrance

Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC) continues to explore and implement opportunities to safely assist patients by reopening select clinical care access points.

It announced last week that the Guerrieri Heart & Vascular Institute entrance on East Carroll Street would reopen on Monday, August 3 for outpatients who have scheduled cardiac-related procedures or appointments. Only those patients will be allowed entry there and granted permission to park in the Guerrieri Heart & Vascular Institute lot on East Carroll. Valet services will be available at the door.

All other PRMC patients with scheduled procedures or appointments need to report to the Hanna Outpatient Center for entry. All patients, required medical or personal escorts and support persons will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms. Peninsula Regional staff will decide what precautionary or preventive action is required if there is concern following the screening process.

The Guerrieri entrance on East Carroll Street will be open for limited hours from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Guerrieri Heart & Vascular Institute patients with questions may call 410-543-7063 for additional information.

Via
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83877931863 -

+1 301 715 8592, Meeting ID: 838 7793 1863#, Participant ID: #

Look Good, Feel Better

A beauty workshop to help patients deal with appearance-related side effects of cancer treatments. Live, interactive video chat allows a licensed beauty professional to guide participants through two sessions: skin care and cosmetics; and how to manage hair loss, including wigs, hats and scarf tying. Visit lookgoodfeelbetter.org/alliance-partner-virtual-workshops and register at least two weeks in advance.

Cancer: Thriving and Surviving

This Zoom virtual workshop for cancer survivors and caregivers runs for six weeks, once a week, and helps build skills and tools for people to take an active role in addressing the challenges of cancer while growing confidence and support. To register, contact Robin Ritchie at MAC Inc. at 410-742-0505 x170, or rjr@macinc.org.

New physician joins PRMC Ocean Pines campus

The Peninsula Regional Medical Group (PRMG) of Peninsula Regional Health System announced that Jacques Conaway, MD has joined the physician network.



Jacques Conaway

Dr. Conaway, a pulmonologist, will provide care at both Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC) and primarily at the

Peninsula Regional Family Medicine office on the Ocean Pines campus.

Dr. Conaway joins PRMG from Pulmonary & Critical Care Associates of Baltimore, where he has been employed since 1999. Dr. Conaway is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. He completed an internship, residency and fellowship in internal, pulmonary and critical care medicine at NYU Medical Center/Bellevue Hospital Center. He also completed a research fellowship in sleep medicine at the NYU Medical Center Sleep Disorders Center.

Dr. Conaway is board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in sleep medicine, critical care medicine and pulmonary disease, and has taught at both the New York University School of Medicine and the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

He has been published a number of times and recognized with four research fellowship awards.

Dr. Conaway will be based at the Peninsula Regional Family Medicine Ocean Pines office and seeing patients there five days a week. Every fifth week, however, he will be working with patients at PRMC in Salisbury.

People with questions or those wishing to learn more about the services being provided in Ocean Pines by Dr. Conaway may call 410-912-6825. Based on their insurance, they may need to be referred by their primary care provider.

Voter registration event scheduled

Worcester County NAACP and St. Paul's United Methodist Church will host a Voter's Registration Sign Up on Friday, August 7 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Located at 405 Flower Street in Berlin, this event will be held outdoors on the church premises. Remember that in Maryland, if you have been convicted of a felony and have completed serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment, you are eligible to register to vote. For questions call NAACP President Ivory Smith at 443-944-6701.

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Maryland Safe Boating Course offered

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions the US Coast Guard Auxiliary will be offering the Maryland Safe Boating Class on-line for the first time. This will be an interactive class taught by certified instructions with student participation. The three-evening course will run August 18 through August 20 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.



All mandated material and information on local waters will be included. Time is provided for questions and discussions. Everyone is welcome!

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.

A fee of \$20.00 is required to cover the cost of the course and materials. Checks should be made payable to: "USGCAUX 12-05" and mailed to: USGCAUX 12-05, PO Box 1682, Berlin, MD 21811

Payment via PayPal is also accepted.

For more information or to register please contact: Barry Cohen at 410-935-4807 or E mail CGAUXOC@Gmail.com or on Facebook at uscgaux12-05.

K of C offers seafood events

Each Tuesday through September 1, the Knights of Columbus will hold Seafood Nights. Call 410-524-7994 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday to place your take away order of steamed crabs, steamed shrimp and a number of items. This year only only take-out is offered. Orders can be picked up at 9901 Coastal Highway behind St. Luke's Church.

chief
from page 12

Becoming the Chief

Ehrisman said he and Massey first spoke about the possibility of a further promotion about four years ago, when Massey asked what his intentions were.

"I've got over 30 years here and, I'll be honest, I wasn't pulling any punches. I really wasn't ready to work for another new chief and to spend two or three years teaching another person about the area," he said. "When Massey came here, I was not prepared to be a chief, but he has made it his mission to prepare me for his chair before he left."

Ehrisman also did plenty of his own legwork, including becoming a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. He is the only person in Ocean Pines other than Massey to ever achieve that title.

"You have to be sponsored in, so that's huge," he said. "But Massey made it his goal to prepare me for it, and by him being a teacher and a professor at the college, that's what he does – he's a teacher. He set out

that goal that he would prepare me for the position, but it was my job to strive to get it. So, I think he put the goal out there to give me the opportunity and I took advantage of him teaching and of learning from him."

Because of all that work – decades of preparation, studying, coursework, fieldwork and collaboration – Ehrisman will soon get the rare distinction of being a brand-new chief with a brand-new building. It's been a long time coming.

"I told my wife when I went home, 'I've got good news and bad news: The good is, I got the job ... and the bad news is, I got the job!'" he said with a laugh.

Ehrisman said Massey made his mark as a teacher and educator. Where he hopes to make his mark is by further modernizing the Ocean Pines Police Department.

In the old days, he said, police would obtain a search warrant for a suspect's house. Today, if they are pursuing a suspected child predator, police would need separate search warrants for the home, the computer, various emails, online and cellphone accounts, and more.

"That all has to be applied for

New Enterprise Fund Controller hired

The Worcester County Commissioners named Michelle Carmean as the new enterprise fund controller. She joined the Worcester County Treasurer's Office on June 1.

Carmean brings 15 years of accounting experience to this position. Prior to joining Worcester County Government (WCG), she was an accounting supervisor at Perdue Farms in Salisbury. Carmean, a former member of the Institute of Management Accountants Delmarva Chapter (IMA), earned a Bachelor of Science in Business and Finance, with a minor in Information Technology and Accounting, from Salisbury University in 2006, and a Master of Business Administration from Frostburg University in 2015.



Michelle Carmean

"I would like to thank the County Commissioners for this exciting opportunity to serve as the new enterprise fund controller," Carmean said. "I look forward to gaining governmental accounting experience in my new role and working with Worcester County associates."

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Carmean was raised in Wicomico County and currently resides in Worcester County with her husband, Michael, and daughter, Makayla.

Carmean took over for former Enterprise Fund Controller Jessica Wilson who accepted the position of assistant finance officer with Worcester County.

In her role with Worcester County Government, Carmean will help develop policies and operating procedures, including the oversight, organization and direction of county enterprise funds, which include the Solid Waste and Water and Wastewater Divisions of Public Works and the Department of Liquor Control.

Tides for Ocean City Inlet			
Day		High /Low	Tide Time
Th 6	6	Low	4:23 AM
	6	High	10:32 AM
	6	Low	4:23 PM
	6	High	10:55 PM
F 7	7	Low	5:01 AM
	7	High	11:14 AM
	7	Low	5:07 PM
	7	High	11:34 PM
Sa 8	8	Low	5:39 AM
	8	High	11:56 AM
	8	Low	5:53 PM
Su 9	9	High	12:15 AM
	9	Low	6:19 AM
	9	High	12:40 PM
	9	Low	6:42 PM
M 10	10	High	12:57 AM
	10	Low	7:00 AM
	10	High	1:27 PM
	10	Low	7:33 PM
Tu 11	11	High	1:43 AM
	11	Low	7:44 AM
	11	High	2:18 PM
	11	Low	8:27 PM
W 12	12	High	2:34 AM
	12	Low	8:31 AM
	12	High	3:14 PM
	12	Low	9:23 PM

real estate
from page 1

Maryland Tax-Free Week starts Sunday

"I would say it's a healthy list right now, but there's a need for more for the simple reason that the list diminishes as they get sold," Talbott said. "It's a never-ending struggle."

"Right now, in Ocean Pines, there are 49 houses listed [as of Friday afternoon]," Wadler said. "We're used to having an inventory of around 200 and our inventory right now ... I was shocked when it was up to 60."

Both realtors encourage home owners and prospective house buyers to consider buying and selling, even amid the virus.

In addition to the greater need for vacation homes or new houses altogether, it is also a good market for buyers, because rates are the lowest they have ever been in years, and even decades for some properties.

"I know that there's a lot of first time Maryland home buyers ... the rates are so low that you can qualify easier, especially when the rates are lower," Wadler said.

"We've taken that for granted that the rates are the greatest they've been in ages," Talbott said. "If you compare to what we experienced in the past, there were many, many years where someone's been thinking of buying. Now is the time."

In a year that has been anything but normal, Comptroller Peter Franchot reminds Marylanders that one thing remains the same: Shop Maryland Tax-Free Week begins Sunday, August 9 with big savings for customers, scholarship opportunities for college and trade school students and a catalyst to spur sales for retailers.

"This is one of my favorite weeks of the year because it's a win for shoppers and businesses, while jolting Maryland's economy during the slow summer months," said Comptroller Franchot. "This year more than ever, it's critical to shop local to support the small retailers who are going above and beyond to continue paying employees, creating a safe environment for customers and finding new ways to sell their products during a global pandemic."

From August 9 through 15, any single qualifying article of clothing or footwear priced \$100 or less, regardless of how many items are purchased at the same time, will be exempt from the state's six percent sales tax. The first \$40 of any backpack purchase is also tax free.

Although commonly associated with back-to-school shopping, Comp-

troller Franchot reminds Marylanders that the tax-free savings apply to shoppers of all ages.

Additionally, the Maryland Retailers Association (MRA) is once again offering scholarships to two students attending a Maryland university, college or trade school (\$1,000 for first place and \$500 for second place) by explaining how they helped a Maryland business keep the lights on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples might include helping to build or improve a company website, creating unique content for a social media account or going above and beyond as a store employee to fulfill online orders.

Entries may be submitted via email to shopmdtaxfree@marylandtaxes.gov or they can be posted on the tax-free week's social media pages: Shop Maryland Tax Free on Facebook and @shopmdtaxfree on Twitter and Instagram. Business owners, parents, colleagues and friends are encouraged to submit a nomination. Students may also self-nominate.

"Small businesses depend on their community to survive unexpected and long-lasting economic downturns," said Cailey Locklair, president of the

Maryland Retailers Association. "We want to hear about the young people who have stepped up during this global pandemic to support their local retailers. They deserve our appreciation and we're happy to provide these scholarships to two worthy recipients."

The University System of Maryland has agreed to match the \$1,000 scholarship award if a student attending one of their universities is selected as the first-place winner. Administrators at Stevenson University, Hood College and the Maryland Institute for College Art (MICA) have also agreed to match the \$1,000 first place prize if one of their students is selected.

MRA, which is providing the scholarship money, will select the two entries that best exhibit a young Marylander supporting a small business during these challenging times.

For more information about Shop Maryland Tax-Free Week, visit www.marylandtaxes.gov, hover over the "News" tab and click on Comptroller Initiatives. There, you can find a list of tax-exempt items, a list of frequently asked questions and some helpful facts for shoppers and merchants.

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