

The Courier

February 2, 2022 Volume 22 Number 20



A winter scene on Manklin Creek

Photo by Joe Reynolds

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GM provides budget overview, proposed assessment reduction

At the January 22 meeting of the Ocean Pines Association (OPA) Board of Directors, General Manager John Viola supplied updates to nine ongoing initiatives, including Pickleball Courts, the North Gate Bridge, drainage, and community mailboxes.

Viola said the Board approved four new pickleball courts last January, and he received a contractor estimate of \$180,000 in July.

“We believe that number is still good, in spite of [rising] inflation and situations like that,” Viola said.

Local consultants Vista Design Inc. prepared plans for a bid package, which went out on Jan. 21. Bids are due back by Feb. 18, and Viola said the Association would level bids within a week and select a contractor “right after that.” He said the contractor’s schedule and availability of materials would decide the timeframe for the project, which he hopes will finish by May.

Viola said the Association will install a hybrid meeting system in the Clubhouse Meeting Room, to allow for the use of Microsoft Teams during live Board meetings. The cost is approximately \$15,000 and Milton, Delaware company Mid South Audio will handle the work. Mid South Audio previously installed a hybrid system in the Administration Building Board Room.

Ocean Pines Public Works is doing renovations at the Clubhouse, including construction of a new wall to help reduce noise in the meeting room by fully enclosing the space. The work is expected to finish within three weeks, assuming all materials are available. The total project cost is estimated at \$15,000.

Administration Building renovations are estimated to cost \$125,000, to include a new HVAC system, new flooring, lights, and painting. Most of the work is expected to be done in house.

Public Works is also removing the North Gate Bridge guard shack and old decking, with demolition expected to take another two-to-three weeks. Viola said the work was estimated to cost \$2,500 and would be done entirely in-house. He added the removal was a first step, with further improvements likely to come.

Viola also supplied the Board with several lighting design models for the

bridge entrance, which is prone to accidents. The directors agreed to allow Viola to seek quotes for the project.

“I think this all helps in improving the situation there with the bridge,” he said.

Viola said staff would identify 10 priority locations to start replacing concrete pads under community mailboxes. Along with that, he said about 100 pedestals need replacement, at a cost of about \$500 each or \$50,000 in total.

“We’re going to start off with the concrete pads, especially where the pedestals are rotted. So, if we have a situation where the concrete pad is no good, we’ve obviously fixed that, but at the same time we do the pedestals,” he said.

He added that Linda Martin and Nobie Violante from Public Works would help oversee cleanup of the mailboxes.

“We all agreed that going in there [and] power washing is not the right way, so they are working on that,” he said.

Viola said staff reviewed four locations for a proposed new recreation pier and kayak launch: Grand Canal, Pintail Park, the Swim and Racquet Club Marina, and the White Horse Park Boat Ramp. He said the Recreation and Parks Committee recommended using Pintail Park, because of existing parking, handicapped access, and portable bathrooms.

The estimated construction cost is \$40,000 to \$50,000. However, work could not start until 2023 because of bulkhead replacement at Pintail Park, scheduled this fall.

Drainage work in the Pinehurst, Sandyhook and Beaconhill area is expected to finish this spring. Viola said this phase of the Bainbridge Park project includes utility work and additional pipes at a total cost of \$297,000.

“We are going forward [and] ... the county is working with us,” Viola said. “Even though there was some utility work and stuff that we didn’t anticipate, we believe that we’re going to bring [the project] in on budget.”

Viola said quotes for electronic signs range from about \$35,000 to \$45,000 each, with added per-sign costs including \$1,500 for permits and \$7,500 for labor. As part of the permitting process, Worcester

County officials said the installation of any new electronic signs would require the removal of more than a dozen existing marquee signs.

A Board discussion on the topic concluded that further review is needed before the project moves forward.

Also needing further review is a proposed warming hut for the Ocean Pines Racquet Center. Viola said the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee requested a 14-by-20-foot hut, to include a heating element not available in the current structure, which is the old South Gate Bridge guard shack. The cost was estimated at \$25,000.

As an alternative, Viola said outdoor heaters could be installed for \$500 to \$800.

Viola said his draft of the proposed fiscal year 2022/2023 budget includes a \$71 reduction of the basic annual assessment, now set at \$925. The previous assessment was \$996.

He said favorability from efficiencies and organic growth helped subtract \$94 from the prior figure, and a proposed one-time reduction from

the current realized surplus would subtract another \$53. He said the reduction was partially offset by statutory and “mark to market” adjustments and inflation of \$76.

Viola said the lower assessment was possible because of “everything we’ve done, everything that we’ve planned over the last three years,” including investing in Ocean Pines’ amenities to help create budget favorability and organic growth.

“We have done different things from management. We have [created] efficiencies in our expenses since day one that I’ve been in here,” he said. “We have scrubbed all our accounts, we have reallocated, we’ve gotten efficiencies.”

The proposed waterfront differential, \$615, is unchanged from the prior year.

Viola briefly presented a “flash” view of the December financials, which showed the Association favorable to budget by about \$37,000. Year to date, the Association is favorable to budget by approximately \$1.45 million.

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OPA Statements

Viola to stay on as GM

The following is a statement from Ocean Pines Association President Collette Horn:

"After consulting with John Viola regarding his recent resignation as General Manager, and discussing transition planning with the Board, I am pleased to announce that the Board unanimously agreed that it is in the best interests of the Association to request that John rescind his resignation and continue in his position as General Manager via an extension to his existing contract at least through the second week of September to facilitate a smooth transition for the entire organization upon the hiring of his successor.

"This request was conveyed to John via our corporate counsel, Jeremy Tucker, along with a proposal for adjustment in responsibilities during the period of transition. I am pleased to announce that John has agreed."

Payroll/Human Resources manager retirement

The following is an announcement from Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola:

"Kathy Stryjewski, our Payroll/Human Resources manager, has announced her retirement. Her last day will be Feb. 18.

"The time and support that Kathy has provided OPA is greatly appreciated. She has been a part of many projects, including the compensation study, the development of employee self-assessments, and re-development of performance evaluations, to name a few.

"Kathy's hard work, professionalism and friendliness will be missed. We wish her quality time with her family and an enjoyable retirement.

"We will be posting to fill this position immediately."

Public comments, participation

During the January 22 meeting of the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors, President Collette Horn addressed public participation in meetings and thanked those who volunteer to help further the mission of the community.

"I wanted to say to the public that it is my goal for the remainder of this Board year, which runs through the annual meeting in August, to increase member attendance and participation in our meetings," she said. "And to that end, we have agreed as a Board to hold our meetings virtually to accommodate people who cannot be here physically. We're happy to have people here physically. Welcome to all of you, and welcome to those of you who are participating virtually.

"And if there are people in the public who would like to participate virtually, but have difficulty accessing the virtual environment, please email us [at info@oceanpines.org] ... and we can set you up with the help you need," she added.

Horn also went over guidelines for public comments. Under the hybrid setup, she said those participating in person may go first, followed by homeowners participating using Microsoft Teams, then dial-in participants, and finally text

comments sent to 443-377-1079.

"I've also included ... in our agenda the Ocean Pines mission statement, to remind us all as to why we're here," she said. "The mission statement is to 'Provide the governance, administration, facilities, services, and amenities that are necessary to make Ocean Pines an attractive, affordable, safe, and enjoyable place to live and work.'"

"Basically, anything ... having to do with Ocean Pines and its mission are acceptable for public comments," Horn continued. "As our General Manager, John Viola, often says, this is a team effort to achieve that mission."

Horn said that team includes staff, the Board, and community volunteers.

"We appreciate people who show up in attendance. We appreciate all the many volunteers on our advisory committees and work groups, and certainly the volunteers in this room who sit at the Board table," she said. "So, thank you to everyone here for participating in person and virtually, and for the support that you provide this Board and our staff for the work that we do in furtherance of our mission."

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 23 at 11 a.m. in the Clubhouse Meeting Room on 100 Clubhouse Drive.

Courier Almanac

On February 2, 1876, the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs, which comes to be more commonly known as the National League (NL), was formed. The American League (AL) was established in 1901 and in 1903, the first World Series was held.

The first official game of baseball in the United States took place in June 1846 in Hoboken, New Jersey. In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings became America's first professional baseball club. In 1871, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players was established as the sport's first "major league." Five years later, in 1876, Chicago businessman William Hulbert formed the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs to replace the National Association, which he believed was mismanaged and corrupt. The National League had eight original members: the Boston Red Stockings (now the Atlanta Braves), Chicago White Stockings (now the Chicago Cubs), Cincinnati Red Stockings, Hartford Dark Blues, Louisville Grays, Mutual of New York, Philadelphia Athletics and the St. Louis Brown Stockings.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases reports that chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects more than 37 million Americans, or roughly one in seven adults in the United States. Approximately one-third of individuals in the U.S. with diabetes also have kidney disease. In addition, roughly one in five adults with high blood pressure have kidney disease. Kidney transplants save lives every day, and the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network indicates nearly 23,000 kidney transplants were completed in 2020. However, Americans with kidney disease may need to wait a significant period of time before they can receive a transplant. The United States Renal Data System 2020 Annual Data Report indicated that the median wait time for a kidney transplant for individuals with end-stage kidney disease is 49.2 months. That wait time can be traced to various factors, including a shortage of organ donors and the



amount of people currently on the wait list, which the USOPTN indicates included more than 90,000 people as of August 2021.

The
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We all have talent, right?

There will never be another Mozart, Brahms or Beethoven. There will never be another Martin, Merman or Brice. Sinatra's gone. Lennon too. Cole Porter's still the same. Picasso,

learning when I was young. My mother told me I had the feet of an elephant and there was no way she was going to pay for tap lessons. In an effort to prove her wrong I remember



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

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Monet and Rockwell will never be forgotten. There was DiMaggio, Unitas and Lombardi who showed the crowd always how to get things done. Kate Hepburn and Cary. James Stewart and James Dean. Flickering images always; stars to say the least. Hemingway. Shaw. London and Poe. Stories for the ages, better off are we.

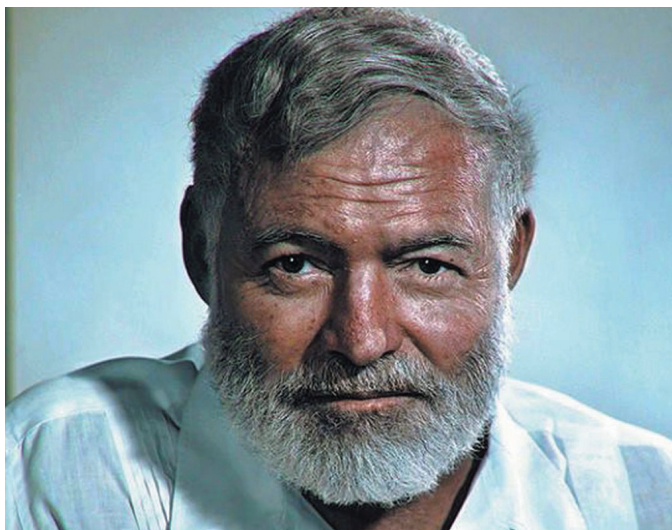
I am always in awe of creative, talented individuals. Artists, musicians, craftsmen, comedians, actors, dancers, singers, writers, it doesn't matter. They really take my breath away because they make what they do so well look so easy, as if anyone could do what they do. Of course that certainly isn't the case.

Some people have innate ability while others learn to develop their talent over time. We are all good at something. It's just a matter of figuring out what talent we possess and developing it. Some people have the gift of gab. Others can sew a silk purse out of a sow's ear while still others are able to fix anything mechanical.

When I was a kid I wanted to learn to tap dance (think Fred Astaire). It was something I really regret not

performing in our kitchen, giving it all I had, not finishing until every glass had fallen out of the cabinet and crashed to the floor. Needless to say my mother remained unconvinced and stood by her decision. Instead I took piano lessons.

Boy did I hate them. It was agony sitting there, in the living room, attempting to learn the major scales. In time, after many tears and many years, I grew to love playing the 88s. I wouldn't necessarily call it talent, but at least



I can play the C scale with both hands simultaneously.

From an early age I knew that any talent I may have had nothing to do with sports. Growing up my brother was the athlete of the family. He could

quickly master any sport: hockey, football, baseball, golf, you name it and he could do it proficiently. Not me. I had trouble dribbling a basketball much less throwing it through a hoop. It could have been I was too distracted by my pocket protector that kept falling from my shirt pocket. It's hard to play a sport when you're constantly retrieving three retractable pencils, a Bic multi-color pen, a six-inch ruler and a laminated membership card to the Audio-Visual club.

Someone doesn't have to be a super athlete or singer to impress me. I am amazed by people who have the talent to make animals and other figures out of balloons. You know, the ones usually made by a clown at a child's birthday party. Several times I've attempted to make something, anything, only to get as far as tying off the end of the balloon so the air wouldn't escape. There are only so many balloons I can stand to burst before giving up.

My grandfather was a cabinet-maker, a real craftsman. It seemed he could build anything out of wood, children's toys, a house, furniture, anything. He even built several boats. He was an artist. He attempted to teach me some of what he knew. His talent was innate I guess because to this day, about the best I can do is build a bird house. And even that is iffy at best.

Talent lies within each of us. Some people are good at making other people feel better about themselves (usu-



ally these people go by the name "Mom"). Whether it's singing or dancing or writing or something else, we can always tell when we're in the presence of a talented person. No, we may never achieve the recognition of an Olivier, Van Gogh, Petty or Frank Lloyd Wright. It matters little. If just one person finds pleasure in something we do, then its talent well used.

Legion Post donation amount announced

At its first regular membership meeting of the 2022, members of Ocean City American Legion Post 166 stunned to learn their veteran's organization donated more than a quarter-million dollars in 2021 to local, regional, and state charities, first responders, veterans groups, cultural and environmental organizations, and college scholarships to students.

"The exact amount," Treasurer George Barstis reported at the meeting held January 24, "was \$257,875."

The Post, also known as Sinepuxent Post 166, donates money every month to worthy causes. The membership meets on the fourth Monday to review and vote on recommendations made by its charity

and scholarship committees. The January meeting was the first at which they learned the exact total of the funds they had approved for distribution in 2021.

In addition to the State mandated requirement to donate 50 percent of slot machine proceeds for the fiscal year to charitable organizations, the Post raises money from fund raisers and the sale of Maryland Pull Tab games. The Post also supports Cub Scouts and Boy Scout troops and projects, provides scholarships to deserving students pursuing higher education, and provides aid to troubled veterans and support to active duty and reserve units deployed throughout the world.

OPA names new senior executive assistant

Ocean Pines General Manager John Viola has announced that Rosanna Montalvo has been hired as the Association's new senior executive assistant, effective Feb. 14.

"Rosanna has a wealth of administrative experience in the nonprofit, public and private sectors," Viola said. "Her strong customer service and communication skills will be an invaluable asset to the Association."

As senior executive assistant, Montalvo will hold a dual role as a confidential assistant to the general manager and the Board of Directors.

She will also serve the Board as the Association's assistant secretary. Linda

Martin, Public Works office manager, has been fulfilling those duties pending the hiring of a new senior executive assistant.

Montalvo, who is new to the Ocean Pines area, most recently worked as the executive administrative assistant/marketing, research and development coordinator for a nonprofit organization serving adults with behavioral health and developmental disabilities and their families.

Having spent several years prior working at resort facilities, Montalvo's additional professional qualifications include revenue and expense management, marketing and advertising, and creating workplace efficiencies.

as an ancient Roman festival of light.

The name "Candlemas" refers to the traditional processions and blessing of candles that came to characterize the feast day. It also is called the Feast of the Presentation, because it honors the day that Mary and Joseph presented the infant Jesus at the Temple according to Mosaic law.

Candlemas Day was always celebrated on February 2, exactly 40 days after Christmas on December 25th. Mosaic law stated that 40 days was the period of purification time after the birth of a child.

Candlemas also presented an opportunity to predict weather. According to the New England Historical Society, New Englanders who once lived in old houses looked at how far



Food drive - The annual Student Government Association (SGA) sponsored Food Drive at Worcester Preparatory School. **Briar Parsons, Will Wells, Hunter Simmons and Mia Lovitt** helped sort non-perishable food items donated to local organizations.

Anglers to meet

The Ocean Pines Anglers Club will meet on Saturday, February 12, at 9:30 a.m. in the Ocean Pines library. The speaker will be Dave Wilson, avid fisherman, president of the Maryland Bird Conservation Project and state development manager for US Wind. All are welcome. Social distancing will be enforced, attendees should be fully vaccinated, masks optional.

How Candlemas Day turned into Groundhog Day

"If Candlemas be fair and bright, come winter, have another flight. If Candlemas bring clouds and rain, go winter, and come not again." - English folk song

If a day to predict the arrival of spring weather sounds familiar, it probably calls to mind Groundhog Day. However, for centuries, February 2nd was celebrated as a Christian Feast Day known as Candlemas. The day also bore significance outside of Christianity, marking the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It was celebrated

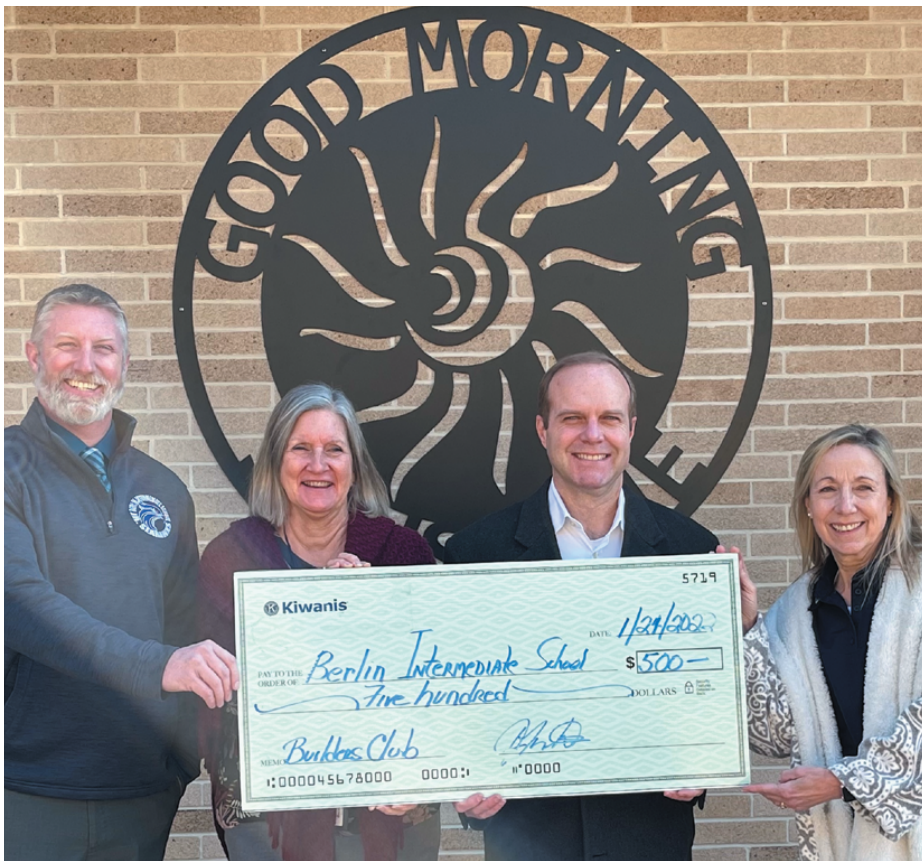
the sun would shine in through cracks in the structure to determine how far the snow would continue to blow in through to the month of May.

Like many religious celebrations, Candlemas has a secular alternative in Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day was first recognized in the United States during the late 1800s and was popularized in Pennsylvania by German settlers who had their own Candlemas Day rhymes related to the weather. The Germans connected weather prognostication to the local hedgehog. When German immigrants arrived in America, there were no hedgehogs, so they used the groundhog, the closest representative animal they could find. The tradition grew so popular it was eventually commer-

cialized. Thousands began to flock to Punxsutawney, PA, to watch Punxsutawney Phil make his prediction.

Today Groundhog Day is anticipated each year as millions of people eagerly await to see if winter will last six more weeks or if spring warmth will arrive sooner rather than later





Donation - Berlin Intermediate School Principal **Ryan Cowder** and **Jane Slotter**, Builder's Club Faculty Advisor were presented with a check for \$500 from the Kiwanis Ocean Pines/Ocean City. Club President **Tim Lund** and Builder's Club Advisor **Doreen O'Connor** were on site to deliver the check. These funds will be used to purchase additional supplies the BIS Builder's Club will use for their various service projects.

'Bay Day' event returns

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program and Ocean Pines Association will host the third annual Bay Day on Sunday, May 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at White Horse Park in Ocean Pines.

After a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic, the event promises to bring more fun, excitement and hands-on environmental experiences to Ocean Pines.

Bay Day is a free, family-friendly event aimed to capture the interest of all age groups through interactive exhibits, environmentally focused crafts, live music, food trucks, free boat rides on the St. Martin, and more. This fun-filled educational day is made possible thanks to the dozens of dedicated environmental organizations in the region that contribute their time to this event.

Bay Day is a collaborative effort between Maryland Coastal Bays Program and Ocean Pines Association to offer the community a free opportunity to learn about the environmental efforts happening in the area and inspire individuals to care for the watershed right from their backyards. Bay Day is designed to be as immersive as possible, so the community can learn about the diverse programs, practices and campaigns

that exist to improve the health of the Coastal Bays watershed, and specifically the St. Martin River.

For more information on Bay Day, contact Liz Wist at lwist@mdcoastalbays.org or 410-213-2297 ext. 110, or visit mdcoastalbays.org.

Land Trust to hold virtual workshop

On Saturday, February 5, the Lower Shore Land Trust will host a virtual workshop for community members interested in volunteering as Land Stewards. This program will introduce the issues relevant to overseeing conserved lands including soil health characteristics, invasive species identification, conservation practices and aerial survey processes and data. The last 20 minutes of the program will be a question-and-answer period.

The Zoom webinar program will run 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Register at <https://www.lsltevents.org/post/upcoming-land-stewards-workshop> or call (443)-234-5587 for assistance.

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Art League announces new board members

The Art League of Ocean City announces their Board of Directors for 2022 and welcomes five new members: Don Lehman, Crystal Collins, Virginia Outten, Brooke Rogers, and Al “Hondo” Handy.

John Sisson continues as board president; Marian Bickerstaff as past president; Barbara Patrick as 1st vice president; Laura Jenkins as 2nd vice president; and Jan Perdue as corresponding secretary. Hilari Auxer serves as treasurer; and Ryan Wilde as recording secretary.

Returning to the board are Courtney Blackford, Rafael Correa, Amy Rothermel, and Emily Schwab.

Don Lehman of Ocean Pines came to the Shore while doing Artist-in-Residence work at local schools for the



Don Lehman



Al “Hondo” Handy

Maryland State Arts Council. He is a retired commercial teacher, and partner in a marketing business. “The Ocean City Center for the Arts is a dynamic and essential part of our community,” he said. “I believe in the value of the arts. In the years I have spent volunteering at the Arts Center, I have enjoyed working with other volunteers and the dedicated staff. I look forward to doing whatever I can to promote the continued success of the Art League as a volunteer and board member.”

Al “Hondo” Handy is recently retired after 39 years as Recreation Manager for Ocean City Rec & Parks. He presently serves as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative for



Crystal Collins



Virginia Outten

the National Alliance for Youth Sports and is writing a book about growing up on the Eastern Shore, called “Defying Expectations.” “I decided to join the board after being encouraged by Rina Thaler,” he said. “She reminded me that I reached out to her to help with the first Art Camp in Ocean City. I have always had a good feeling about art and have been around art all of my life. This was a good way to give a little back to Ocean City.”

Crystal Collins of Ocean Pines is a graduate of SUNY Ulster in Stone Ridge, NY and currently serves on the board of the John Brune Law Enforcement K9 Foundation as well as a Media Advertising Executive with WBOC. “I would like an opportunity to do more to serve the community that I live in,” she said, “gain additional board and planning experience in the nonprofit sector, support the growth of other artists, as well as inspire my own artistic expressions and be an example to my children of personal and professional development.”



Brooke Rogers

Virginia “Ginny” Outten is a resident of Bishopville and a graduate of Drexel University and holds an Associate Actuary Degree. She is a member of Association of Legal Administrators and president of the Dunes Club of Maryland. “I appreciate that the Art League provides a cultural center for artists and students and that it embraces diversity and inclusion,” she said. “The arts are very important to our cultural heritage. I’ve watched the Art League expand its programs and outreach to a large segment of our community. I’d like to contribute towards those efforts.”

Brooke Rogers of Ocean City is a graduate of Stephen Decatur High School and the Maryland Institute College of Art and is currently Professor of Art at Salisbury University. He was previously the Orem & Harriet Robinson Fellow for Contemporary Art and Community Engagement at the Art League. “What interests me about the Art League mission is what has occupied me for the past 25 years in my professional life,” he said. “I am committed to utilizing all of my gifts and abilities to support the arts and artists and to contribute to the life and community of my home town, Ocean City.”

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Madness - Fourth grade teachers at Ocean City Elementary School are hosting a March Madness Tournament of Books. Teachers and students worked together to submit an application and video to win the Hertrich Cash for Class! The money awarded from the Hertrich Cash for Class will be used to help purchase the winning book from the tournament for all participating students.

Strategies to bring a novel to life

Many people aspire to write a novel. Sitting down to write a novel is a dream shared by writers and non-writers alike, and the digital age has made it possible for writers of all backgrounds to get their works out there.

Forbes indicates there are somewhere between 600,000 and one million books published every year in the United States alone. Many novels are written but never see the light of day. Still, others are published and never make it out of obscurity. Writing a novel requires dedication and, for many writers, dealing with the frustration that often comes with getting a story out of your head and onto a page. These guidelines may help budding authors pen the next great novel.

Find an idea with staying power. Many popular novels follow similar themes and create interest through the promise of conflict or dramatic tension. Books that can slide into the existing market and appeal to a defined audience may be more well-received than novels that try to break the mold.

Set goals. In order to publish and sell a novel, you first have to produce a finished product. Develop a process that works for you. Create an outline of the story to keep ideas on track and organized. Create a calendar that es-

tablishes daily writing goals. Write at the same time each day for a specific length to make writing an automatic task.

Consider an agent. Many publishers will not look at a novel unless it is presented through an agent. If you feel your novel has potential, find an agent who can help market your story to various publishers.

Establish a platform. A platform can create buzz about your novel. Employ social media and local newspapers to drum up interest in your work. A platform is essential if you plan to self-publish.

Get an editor. The writing resource Now Novel advises aspiring writers to hire an editor who has experience and can turn your novel into the best possible version of itself. A good editor will have knowledge of the publishing industry and understand what major publishers look for.

These are some initial steps that can help writers transform their ideas into manuscripts

Choices for long-term care

Being able to care for oneself independently can be a source of pride. However, illness or age can affect people in ways that require them to seek assistance with medical needs or daily activities for an extended period of time. In such instances, long-term care services can fill a need.

Long-term care assists people in their homes, in the community or in various types of facilities with various daily and medical requirements. According to WebMD, research shows that many people are unaware of long-term care options or may be misinformed about what's out there.

Home care. Various services can be utilized in the comfort of home. According to the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee Office on Aging, services can include home-deliv-

please see **care** page 13

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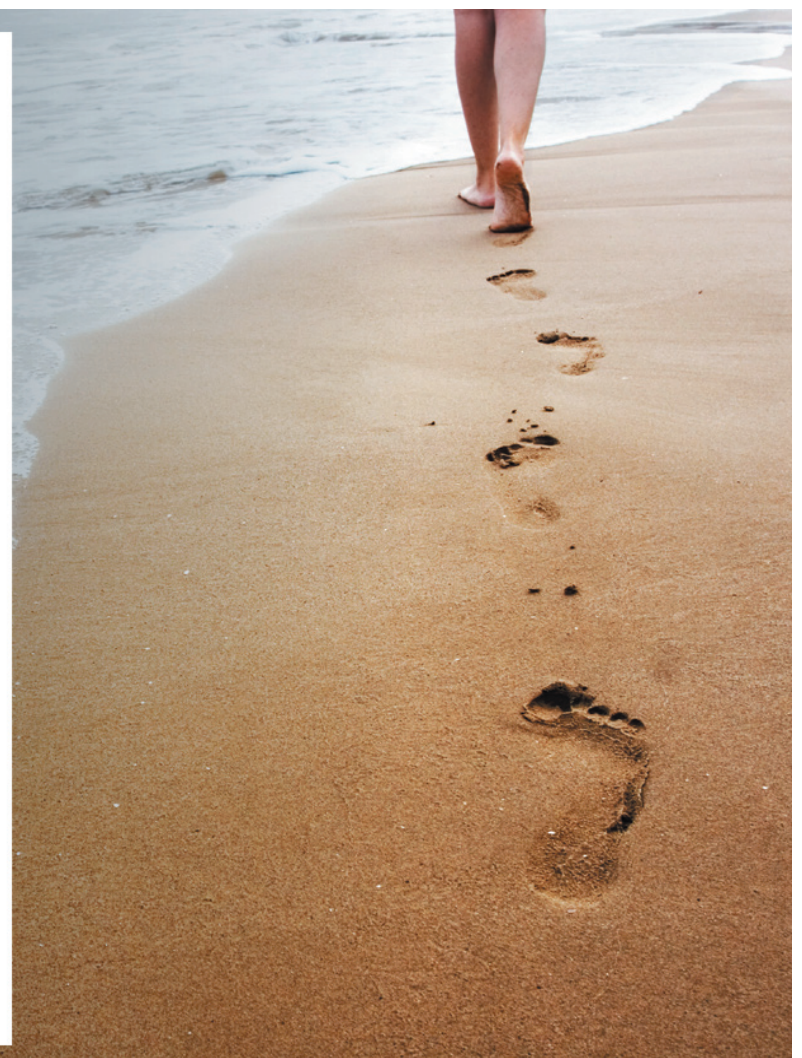
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My Backyard... sponsored by Maureen Kennedy

How to care for winter birds that visit your yard

The pristine, white backdrop of a snowy winter day can be a wonder to behold. While fresh snow on the ground can make for awe-inspiring landscapes, the absence of greenery amid the starkness of winter poses challenges for animals that do not ride out winter in a state of hibernation.

Several bird species stay in colder climates over the winter. Red-winged crossbills, snow buntings, bohemian waxwings, evening grosbeaks, and cardinals are just some of the birds one may find while gazing outside on a chilly winter's day. Birding in the winter can be a rewarding hobby because, despite the chilly conditions, birds tend to be easy to find in bare trees. Furthermore, the colder temperatures may keep many people inside, meaning neighborhoods, trails and parks can be very quiet, making it easier for those who brave the cold to see birds.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds indicates that winter is a difficult time of year for birds due to the weather and the scarcity of food. Furthermore, birds must consume a lot of food in a short amount of time to have the energy and body warmth to survive each day. Even birds that store food in caches or have developed special scavenging strategies to find as much food as possible can benefit from a little wintertime help. Penn State Extension suggests providing a variety of foods to attract the greatest number of species. Small, black-oil sunflower seeds are preferred by many smaller species of bird and have a high oil content that is nutritionally important for birds. Other sunflower seeds

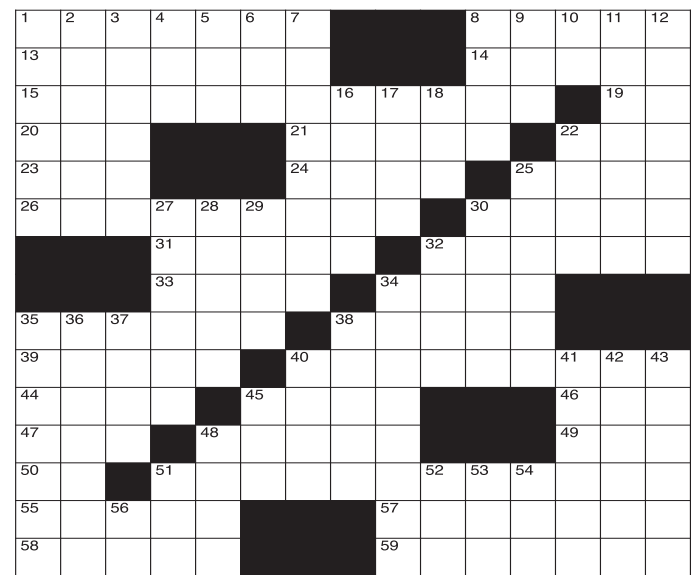
will be appropriate for blue jays and cardinals. Some other popular foods include white proso millet, thistle seed, niger seed, and peanuts.

Consult a wild bird store, which likely sells a birdseed mix that enables you to place a variety of seed into one feeder. In addition to seed, suet, which is made from high-quality animal fat, is crucial for birds in the winter. Families can get crafty by spreading peanut butter onto pine cones and sprinkling



seed on top. Hang the pine cones tied to pieces of string from tree branches for homemade feeders.

Birds likely need a little help surviving the winter, when conditions can be bleak. Offering food and observing backyard visitors can be a great way to unwind on winter afternoons.



CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. ___ de Mornay, actress | 34. Unit of loudness |
| 8. Surrenders | 35. Undresses |
| 13. Omission | 38. Fathers |
| 14. The white poplar | 39. Learned skill |
| 15. They become butterflies | 40. Remove qualification |
| 19. Used to chop | 44. Covered with frost |
| 20. Select | 45. Speak up |
| 21. Volcanic craters | 46. Nowhere to be found |
| 22. Consumer price index | 47. Part of surgery (abbr.) |
| 23. Utilize | 48. Type of wrap |
| 24. "True Blood" actress Paquin | 49. Church seating |
| 25. Got up | 50. Mathematical figure |
| 26. Sank in | 51. College football conference |
| 30. Retail | 55. Turkish officer title |
| 31. Giants | 57. Organized body of knowledge |
| 32. Most bald | 58. Smooth and glossy |
| 33. Changes color | 59. Left |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Get back | 29. Metric units of measure |
| 2. Pass or go by | 30. More coherent |
| 3. Having a sharp taste | 32. Make uninteresting |
| 4. Midway between east and southeast | 34. Nausea |
| 5. Cairo Regional Airport | 35. Institution of Oceanography |
| 6. Peace officer | 36. Of little value |
| 7. Brings to life | 37. Hindu model of the ideal man |
| 8. Automotive vehicles | 38. Biblical exclamation |
| 9. One point south of due east | 40. You throw it at a board |
| 10. Football position | 41. Be about to happen |
| 11. Goes by | 42. Brutal |
| 12. Most attractive | 43. Opened one's mouth widely |
| 16. Road divisions | 45. 19th letter of Greek alphabet |
| 17. Not the sea | 48. Saturate |
| 18. Small, faint constellation | 51. The woman |
| 22. Cabbage | 52. Someone who is highly skilled |
| 25. Least frequent | 53. A way to launch an attack on |
| 27. Change slightly | 54. Where golfers begin |
| 28. A country in NE Africa | 56. Atomic number 58 |

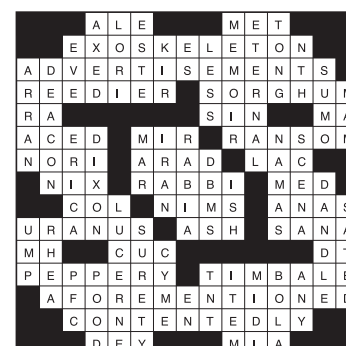


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Answers for January 26

Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



Nuclear power plants on the moon

The topic for February is NASA's plans for creating nuclear power plants for astronauts on the moon. As the Artemis program moves forward, with ambitious concepts for building a lunar base, the needs



Kilopower nuclear plant

Parameters of the new designs will parallel NASA's earlier "Kilopower" research program which produced energy in its 2017 and 2018 tests at the Nevada Nuclear Security Site.

Yet NASA's Kilopower design differs from the traditional nuclear power plants around the globe, as it involves a simplified system. Kilopower has no high-pressure steam and no turbines typical in nuclear power plants, but simply carries off the heat from the nuclear core via sodium heat pipes and deposits it at the hot side of a series of Stirling engines. The Stirlings make use of the heat differential to drive a small generator. Finally, the sodium is cooled and recirculated.

The Kilopower's reactor core is a cylinder of uranium-235 about the size of a paper towel roll, and is regulated by a single boron control rod in the center of the core.

In the case of the new fission surface power systems destined for lunar use, NASA is calling for particular parameters to be met. These include a uranium-fueled reactor core, a system to convert the core's heat into electrical energy, and a thermal management system to keep the unit cool. These new systems must produce at least 40 kilowatts of energy, which compares to powering 30 homes.

In addition, the systems should be designed to turn themselves on and off without human prompting. They should be portable and operable while moving about. They must be independent of their original lunar landing craft.

Size requirements include fitting inside a 12-foot diameter cylinder, 18 feet in length, and weighing no more than 13,200 pounds. The required lifespan is ten years, and it is estimated that the nuclear cores

may last as long as 15 years.

Initial responses and bids are due by February 19.

Associate NASA administrator, Jim Reuter, said: "I expect fission surface power systems to greatly benefit our plans for power architectures for the moon and Mars. Plentiful energy will be key to future space exploration."

February 18 is the one-year anniversary of NASA's Perseverance rover landing on Mars. Historic achievements of this rover include collecting Martian rock samples that will later be returned to Earth for scientific analysis. Perseverance has also been using its spectroscopic instruments to strike Martian rocks with laser bursts for analysis of their chemical elements.

Another breakthrough of this mission has been the first helicopter flight on a planet beyond Earth.

In February, stargazing begins early with the planet Jupiter, hovering over the western horizon at about

6 p.m. However, look quickly, before 6:30 p.m. and also sooner than February 12. This largest planet is beginning to sink too close to the western horizon for viewing.

Look for a conjunction between the moon and Jupiter on February 2, when the giant planet appears four degrees north of the crescent moon.

After about 7 p.m. stargazers can see the full wintertime display. Constellations include Orion the Hunter, Taurus the Bull, and Gemini the Twins. Orion the Hunter is likely the most famous of all constellations. Stargazers can see the man-shaped figure complete with two stars at the "shoulders," two at the "knees" as well as three stars making up the "belt." At the upper left shoulder of Orion, the star "Betelgeuse" appears, with its reddish hue.

The moon will highlight some prominent celestial features this month. On February 8, in its first quarter phase, watch for it about 6 degrees south of the Pleiades



"Selfie" photo of Perseverance rover and Ingenuity helicopter

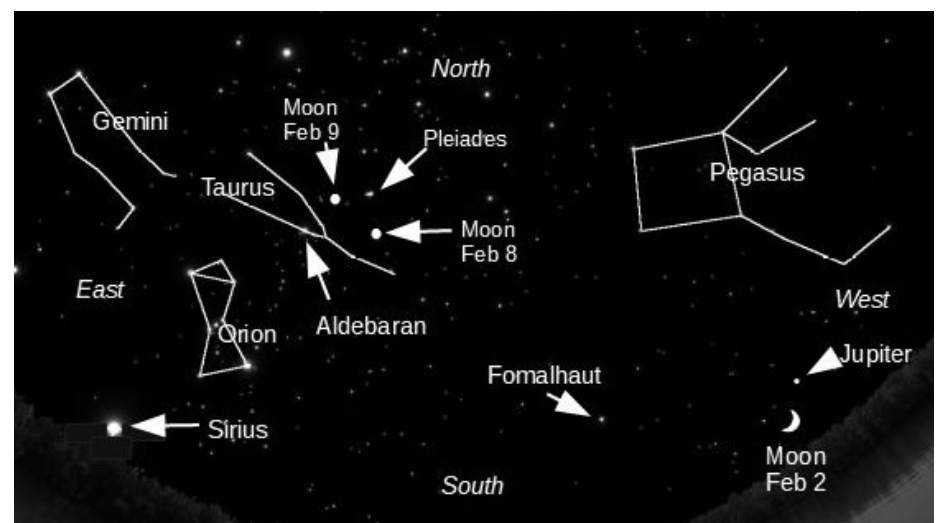
cluster. On the 9th, the moon pairs up with both the star Aldebaran and the Pleiades. Popularly known as the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades is a favorite target for stargazers interested in counting the number of stars they can spot, especially with binoculars.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.

for reliable energy will require new technology.

Besides the lack of fossil fuels available on the moon, there's the challenge of 14 straight days of darkness in the lunar cycle. Nuclear power is NASA's choice for meeting the energy needs of these new frontiers.

This past November 19, NASA and the Department of Energy announced a call for bids with design concepts to build lunar nuclear power plants, titled the "fission surface power" systems (FSP).



Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by Jack Barnes

"Some of the biggest cases of mistaken identity are among intellectuals who have trouble remembering that they are not God."

I NEVER CALLED YOU STUPID, BUT WHEN I ASKED YOU TO SPELL "ORANGE" AND YOU ASKED ME THE FRUIT OR COLOR IT KINDA CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD.

SO I WAS AT THE BAR LAST NIGHT AND THE WAITRESS SCREAMED... "ANYONE KNOW CPR?" I SAID "HELL, I KNOW THE ENTIRE ALPHABET." EVERYONE LAUGHED... WELL EVERYONE EXCEPT THIS ONE GUY.

I hate it when people act all intellectual and talk about Mozart, while they've never even seen one of his paintings...

You come from dust, you will return to dust.

**That's why I don't dust.
It could be someone I know.**

I am responsible for what I say, not what you understand.

Because of Covid for the first time since 1945 the National Spelling Bee is cancel... cancel... cancel...

It's been called off.

THANKS FOR TEACHING ME THE MEANING OF -PLETHORA-

IT MEANS A LOT

Ships don't sink because of the water around them. Ships sink because of the water that gets inside of them. Moral of the story, don't let what is happening around you, get inside of you and weigh you down.

Owens named new Fire Marshal

The Worcester County Commissioners appointed Chief Deputy Fire Marshal Matt Owens to serve as the new fire marshal. He will step into his role March 7.



Matt Owens

Owens, a highly-trained, certified law enforcement officer, joined Worcester County Government (WCG) in 1996, when the Fire Marshal's Office consisted of a team of two housed in the basement of the Worcester County Court House. He also serves as a part-time certified instructor at the Police Academy at Wor-Wic Community College, where he plays a role in training each new generation of law enforcement and correctional officers. Prior to joining the WCG team, Owens worked as a fire investigator/inspector in the former Wicomico County Fire Marshal's Office.

"When people call 911, it's the worst day of their life," Owens said. "We have a

good team. We're here to do a job and to do it professionally. The satisfaction you get out of this doesn't come from someone patting you on the back saying you did a good job. It comes from helping others on their worst day."

Owens followed his father and brother into the fire service. He became a cadet with the Parsonsburg Volunteer Fire Company at age 13.

"I knew at that point the love for the fire service was in my blood," Owens said. "If it wasn't for my family pushing me to be the best person I can be, I would have never been able to do this job."

Owens and his wife, Kim, have two children, Tyler and Trevor. Owens enjoys spending time at Assateague and hunting.

The Worcester County Fire Marshal's Office includes a team of six, responsible for conducting fire investigations in Worcester County where arson is suspected, the fire is undetermined by the fire department, and/or an injury or death has occurred. The Worcester

County Fire Marshal's Office is the local enforcing agency for three municipalities and the County, including all provisions of the Maryland and Worcester County laws insofar as such powers and duties relate to fires, fire prevention, fire protection, fire inspections, fire investigations and explosive incidents. Staff are active in the area of fire prevention and fire education. They also respond to and mitigate all hazardous material and bio terrorism incidents in Worcester County.

Tides for Ocean City Inlet			
Day		High /Low	Tide Time
Th	3	Low	2:53 AM
	3	High	9:30 AM
	3	Low	3:37 PM
	3	High	9:47 PM
F	4	Low	3:43 AM
	4	High	10:15 AM
	4	Low	4:21 PM
	4	High	10:35 PM
Sa	5	Low	4:34 AM
	5	High	10:58 AM
	5	Low	5:05 PM
	5	High	11:22 PM
Su	6	Low	5:27 AM
	6	High	11:42 AM
	6	Low	5:49 PM
M	7	High	12:11 AM
	7	Low	6:21 AM
	7	High	12:29 PM
Tu	8	Low	6:35 PM
	8	High	1:03 AM
	8	Low	7:17 AM
W	9	High	1:19 PM
	9	Low	7:21 PM
	9	High	1:59 AM
Th	9	Low	8:16 AM
	9	High	2:15 PM
	9	Low	8:11 PM

care from page 9

ered meals, pest control, minor home modifications, or visiting nurses and health aides. Other benefits may include shopping or physical therapy.

Community care. Community services can include adult day care centers, meal programs, senior centers, community transportation, and others. Community services enable people to continue to live in the community with some support. They also may help family or friends serving as caregivers enjoy a break from the assistance they have been providing.

Care facilities. Long-term care may be mistaken as strictly nursing homes, but facilities extend to places that provide other services. Here's a look at the care facilities.

Independent senior living: Independent living facilities may provide assistance only when needed. Amenities are designed to make things easier and more convenient for residents. Fitness centers, pools, dining venues, and transportation may be included. These facilities tend to provide the most independent form of senior living. Some independent living facilities are part of larger continuing care retirement communities that have staged care that goes from independent to skilled nursing.

Assisted living: These homes provide 24-hour supervision, meals, healthcare services, and other forms of assistance in

a home-like setting. Types of services include laundry, housekeeping, medication dispersal, and dressing.

Skilled nursing homes: Nursing homes provide care for those who cannot care for themselves at home or in the community. These facilities offer many services all under one roof, like rehabilitative services, meals, activities, and around-the-clock care. Some skilled nursing homes offer temporary care after an injury or illness and are used in lieu of an extended hospital stay.

It is never too early to begin planning for elder care that may include long-term care possibilities. Individuals are urged to work with an elder care lawyer to help navigate the complexities of planning for medical care and their potential financial needs.

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Winter discoveries, Winter glories

By **Robert Pellenbarg**

Fall this year presented a slow departure. Warm temperatures into December, rain, trees changing color much later than usual. But, the signs were clear: be warned. Winter would arrive, and Winter could be harsh. Indeed, at least five indicators pointed to a brutal Winter. The native female holly trees were bedecked with great clusters of red berries. Oaks shed a bumper crop of acorns. Likewise, hickories dropped carpets of nuts, well worth gathering for the sweet nutmeats contained within. Even more subtle, but more telling, were the woolly bear caterpillars making their way across various roads: all black. So, the region noticed these signs, took heed and waited.

The wait for Winter did not last forever. The seasons eventually rolled over. Fall became just a memory. Winter blew in with its short days, suddenly frigid temperatures, with snow replacing the rain of warmer seasons. So far, though, the snow was just a tease: a couple of inches snowfall, a couple of times. Such a covering was easy to explore. Yet with even such a brush of snow, the full glory Winter was on display. Come along, and see . . .

By now, most of the trees had shed their foliage. Various trunks appeared as pillars reaching skyward, supporting crowns which opened as vast vases. A key characteristic of tree bark is texture. Some bark is smooth, some striped in shallow furrows, some deeply etched with squiggles. Lots to ponder. With the foliage gone, much hidden in Summer's exuberance was laid bare. Here a ball shaped squirrel nest of packed dry leaves. There a bird's nest of carefully woven twigs. Will the occupants return next warm season? Time will tell. Sadly, here, on the ground, is another nest, blown from on high by a wind. Oh, over there is a large branch, also dislodged by the wind. This branch is covered by hoary, fibrous grey – green lichen. Lichen, an amazing organism consisting of a fungus and an alga living to support each other. With the foliage fallen from most trees, the fifth indicator of a harsh Winter was in plain sight. The sweet gums were heavily laden with spikey spheres, many more than seen in a more usual season. These will fall off and on throughout the Winter. Why, yes, even these gumballs, like the holly berries and hickory nuts, provide a feast for the denizens of the forest. Squirrels can extract the seeds buried in the gum balls, even as the squirrels likewise extract the occasional seed from left overs of this year's crop of spikey, resinous pine cones. Clever, persistent creatures, the squirrels!

In truth, the pines of the forest do appear ever-

green, failing to go bare. However, the pines shed needles on a seasonal basis. Large stands of loblolly pines give a dark green hue to parts of the forest. Hollies, too, are evergreen, though a bit lighter in hue than the pines. These green splashes of color, these densities of evergreen foliage, are in contrast to the largely bare deciduous trees of the forest. Yet, beech trees and a couple species of oak hold brown leaves for most of the Winter. Indeed, the understory beeches burst into an orange conflagration when back lit by the Sun scudding rapidly and low across the Winter sky.



The Winter sky carries the clouds which yield a glory of the season: snow. As mentioned, the lighter snow fall is conducive to an exploration. What is visible? What is unusual? Well, if the snowfall occurs with a cold enough temperature, snowflakes are crystalline dust. And, these dust-like flakes become diamonds, sparkling in the softer sunlight of the Winter. Glance around - the ground is covered with gems fit for royalty. And, here is the tip of a brown oak leaf. Snow melting on the leaf had trickled past the tip and frozen overnight. A diamond pendant is

the result.

Given enough time, enough sunlight, the snow will melt here and there. Initially, only south facing landscape succumbs to the Sun. Patches of brown grass and brown leaves appear. But the Sun also uncovers a glory of the season, moss. In truth, moss tends to grow on north facing exposures, but with a thin covering of snow, the moss colonies can peek out easily enough. Emerald green, vibrant patches of moss add their color to the Winter pallet.

There are visitors who depend on the grass laid bare by the Sun. Canada geese graze on the grass so exposed. Look carefully at the feeding geese. While the flock dines on the grass, one or two at a time stand heads high, sentinels like periscopes. These 'watch geese' are on guard to assure the safety of the diners. Today, the pond where the geese usually congregate was covered with a thin glaze of ice. The ice, which formed in the overnight low temps, was thick enough to support a lone seagull standing on the ice, in the middle of the pond. Will the ice survive the Sun today?

Indeed, the Winter birds exhibit various feeding habits. For example, geese grazing on grass, easily seen, others feeding closer to home, if one chooses to watch. Some birds favor feeding on the ground, like the geese. Sparrows, cardinals, juncos, and the occasional titmouse and chickadee, browse among fallen leaves. The latter seem to favor a feeder, however. These birds will grab a morsel from the feeder, and fly off with their prize. Blue jays are keen on unshelled, unsalted, roasted peanuts. Amazingly, the occasional titmouse will abscond with a peanut almost the same size as this small bird. How do they extricate the peanut from the intact shell? Such a big task for such a small bird! Most small birds are keen for suet, a fine source of energy for the wintering birds. Woodpeckers seem unusually fond of the suet. These birds peck away at the suet block for extended periods of time. A joy to watch, with red-splotted heads bobbing.

Yes, and of course, squirrels are keen for the peanuts. Indeed, squirrels and song birds provide lots of activity near a feeder. Busy, busy, busy! But there is one bird that is largely aloof, silent as it patrols the landscape for food. Turkey vultures glide endlessly, effortlessly in the blue sky, scanning, seeking, and finding, carrion. The vultures do a very thorough job of clean up.

So, in spite of a Winter that is cold, snowy, and that arrived rather suddenly, there is much to discover. Winter is a season of rest, of subtle detail. Yet, with a bit of effort, the observant wanderer will be rewarded by discovering the glories of the season.


The author resides in Ocean Pines.

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