

# The Courier

March 2, 2022 Volume 22 Number 24



**Presentation** - At a recent meeting of the Bishopville Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD), Ladies Auxiliary members **Tina Rogers** and **Krista Radena** presented a check for \$15,000 to **Gary McCabe**, the BVFD's current treasurer. These funds were collected during fundraisers that the Ladies Auxiliary held during 2021. If you would like to assist the Auxiliary in their fundraising efforts, you can call 619-922-9950 to volunteer.

# Help *Reelect* Commissioner **CHIP BERTINO**

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## *Campaign Kick-off*



*Commissioner Chip Bertino*

Worcester County Commissioner Chip Bertino has twice been elected to represent Ocean Pines District 5. He is a steadfast advocate for our community. He is an effective, accessible and responsive county representative working to ensure county government is fiscally responsible and that it operates in the best interests of taxpayers.

***Come support Chip when he  
officially kicks off his  
campaign for reelection!***

**Saturday, March 5, 2022 1 p.m.**

Light Refreshments

**Assateague Room**

Ocean Pines Community Center

*Authority: Bertino for Commissioner; Susan Bertino, Treasurer*

# Board approves budget, sets record assessment decrease

The Ocean Pines Board on Wednesday unanimously approved the fiscal year 2022/2023 budget, setting the basic annual assessment at \$896, a \$100 decrease from the prior year.

Association President Colette Horn said the decrease was just the second in Association history. It is also the largest.

"Today is going to go down in history as a day that our Board is, for the second time ... voting on a budget that that will result in a reduction in our assessment," she said.

Horn said the last time the assessment was reduced from the prior year was in 2014, when it dropped \$5.

"I just want to thank [General Manager] John [Viola] and ... his team for the work that has allowed us to make this adjustment. And I want to thank this Board and the preceding Board for providing the leadership and support that made those changes, those improvements possible," she

said.

"And I want to thank the membership, because the organic growth in revenue has to do with membership utilization of our amenities," Horn continued. "So, the improvements that took place as a result of the administrative team and the Board approvals accounts for perhaps some of the increased usage, but the members' dollars, certainly, have helped this as well."

Viola said factors contributing to the lower assessment included a one-time assessment reduction from the current fiscal year surplus (\$77) and total increased revenues from Ocean Pines amenities (\$66). Other positive factors were a general replacement contribution decrease based on the DMA reserve study (\$14), a bad debt expense decrease (\$12), a total food and beverage change in operating income (\$9) and a decrease in legal fees (\$1).

Factors offsetting those reductions

included a \$38 increase in Fire Department funding, \$32 for wages and salaries, \$7 for property/liability insurance increases, and \$2 to cover a potential referendum.

"That line item ... that one-time assessment reduction from current surplus, I've recommended that we continue this line each year," Viola said. "And that's something that we'd look at [during] each budget process, based upon the prior year or where we are with our retained earnings. And that could be a plus or minus."

Viola went on to say positive revenue figures were helped by "the management of expenses, organic growth, and the maintenance and capital investments that this Association has made to them, specifically Golf and Racquet Sports. It's certainly showing the benefit there."

Association Treasurer Larry Perrone introduced the formal motion to approve the budget, setting total revenues of \$13,951,508, operating expenses of \$13,951,508, bulkhead, drainage and replacement expenses of \$1,169,921, and Capital Expenditures

of \$1,302,255.

The motion also set assessment rates as follows:

- Non-water: \$896
- Non-water estate: \$1,344
- Water: \$1,511
- Water estate: \$2,267
- Water non-bulkhead: \$986
- Water non-bulkhead estate: \$1,479

The bulkhead differential was set at \$650, which is unchanged from the prior year.

"The budget has gone through a thorough review by the GM and his team, by the Budget and Finance committee and by the Board of Directors," Perrone said. "The budget was posted on the OPA website for review by the membership. A public meeting was held on Feb. 1, 2022 to present the budget to the membership and have an open discussion with the membership to address any questions or concerns."

To view the approved budget, visit <https://www.oceanpines.org/documents/10184/1863602/20220217163801431.pdf>.

## Board meeting briefs

The Ocean Pines Board of Directors discussed the following items during a regular meeting on Feb. 23:

### Second readings postponed

Association President Colette Horn withdrew a pair of second readings to amend Resolution M-09 and its "Attachment B," related to the Search Committee and Board candidate applications. Horn said the purpose of the M-09 change was to "move forward in the effort to improve our candidate verification process for our Board of Directors elections."

However, there were some questions about the Association secretary's timeframe to investigate concerns about candidate applications. Horn said there are only five days between when applications are due and when the Search Committee must submit a list of candidates to the secretary, based on M-09.

*please see **briefs** on page 14*

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# Commentary

## Disgraceful vote on Lakernick

Commentary by **Joe Reynolds**  
*OceanPinesForum.com*



Ocean Pines Association member Stuart Lakernick applied to become a member of the Strategic Planning Committee. His desire to serve was rejected during the February 23rd board meeting on a disgraceful 3-2 vote. Doug Parks and Rick Farr voted to approve Lakernick's appointment. Frank Daly, Josette Wheatley, and Larry Perrone voted against.

Amy Peck and Collette Horn did not vote. Had they voted for Lakernick, he would have been appointed to the committee. Amy Peck is the liaison to the Strategic Planning Committee. Lakernick's application came to the board with the endorsement of the committee chairman and the endorsement of board member Amy Peck. How could Peck not vote while signing an application document endorsing Lakernick's appointment?

Horn's decision not to vote was especially troubling. As president, the bylaws charge Horn with making committee appointments. To quote the bylaws: "Chairpersons and members

shall be members of the Association eligible to vote and shall be appointed or reappointed by the President, with the consent of the Board of Directors." How could she appoint Lakernick, and then vote against him? Answer - she never complied with the bylaws to appoint Lakernick. The entire episode is a disgrace, no matter how viewed.

Those voting against Lakernick, and even those not voting, can say it was not a revenge vote until the cows come home. No one will believe them. Lakernick and Farr ran more or less as a team in the last board election. Farr prevailed in court when his candidacy was rejected. After the dust settled, Farr was an election winner and now sits on the board. Lakernick lost rather narrowly to Frank Daly. Now Daly votes to not appoint Lakernick, an eligible association member, to the committee. Daly said his reason for voting against Lakernick was due to Lakernick's comments about the chairman of the Election Committee last year. No other board members explained their votes during the meeting.

Association member Ed Moran wrote, "Why is it that this board cannot wean itself from controversy? This is a committee assignment, for god's sake. This board and prior boards

have demonstrated their ability to ignore the work product of committee members to the point that I wonder why anyone would volunteer. So, it is clearly a political statement and a juvenile one, as well. Schoolyard."

Horn seemed uncomfortable when it came to the committee appointment votes. She took them one at a time rather than the traditional vote on all appointments. She obviously knew in advance there were votes against Lakernick. Parks and Farr made little complaint about the vote result. They are biding their time until August when they expect to be in the majority, with Horn and Daly on the outside looking in with no influence. Three open board seats will be filled this year.

The current majority appears oblivious to the fact that they may be helping Parks and Farr take control. The board majority should have approved Lakernick. Instead, they turned Lakernick into a cause célèbre. Rejecting this qualified association member was disgraceful. Association members should be outraged, whether they support Lakernick or not. Expect to see Lakernick's name on the board election ballot later this year. He may have the last laugh.

## Courier Almanac

Theodor Geisel, better known to the world as Dr. Seuss, the author and illustrator of such children's books as "The Cat in the Hat" and "Green Eggs and Ham," was born in Springfield, Massachusetts on March 2, 1904. Geisel, who used his middle name (which was also his mother's maiden name) as his pen name, wrote 48 books, including some for adults, that have sold well over 200 million copies and been translated into multiple languages. Dr. Seuss books are known for their whimsical rhymes and quirky characters, which have names like the Lorax and the Sneetches and live in places like Whoville.



## Arts Council offers grants

The Worcester County Arts Council is seeking applicants for local art events and projects to be held in Worcester County between July 1 and December 31.

Organizations holding art projects and activities year-round or in both of the 6-month periods (July 1 – December 31 and January 1 – June 30) may request grants which cover the entire fiscal year of July 2023 through the following June of 2023.

The deadline for applications to be received is April 15.

The event or activity must be open to the public. The applicant organization must be a non-profit group, and the amount requested must be matched one-for-one by organization funds.

Grant application and guidelines are available on the Arts Council's web-

site: [www.worcestercountyartsCouncil.org](http://www.worcestercountyartsCouncil.org)

During the fiscal year 2022, the Worcester County Arts Council has awarded \$46,906.00 in the Community Arts Development Grants program to 23 art projects to be presented by local non-profit organizations.

The Worcester County Arts Council's Community Arts Development Grants program is designed to assist local community-based groups to produce and present arts activities in Worcester County and is funded and supported by the Maryland State Arts Council.

For further information or assistance, please call Anna Mullis, Executive Director of WCAC at: 410-641-0809 or e-mail: [anna@worcestercountyartsCouncil.org](mailto:anna@worcestercountyartsCouncil.org)



The New Orleans Musicians Clinic reports that listening to jazz music can expand blood vessels by up to 30 percent. Widening of blood vessels increases blood flow and lowers blood pressure. Maintaining a healthy blood pressure is important, as the Mayo Clinic notes that unchecked high blood pressure can lead to complications such as heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and/or dementia.

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# Proud lefty

Throw me a ball and I'll catch it with my left hand. Yet, take me golfing and I use right-handed clubs. I write left-handed, always have. The world in which I live discriminates against me and those like me because I'm left handed.

Right-handed people don't appre-



## It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

ciate that the world we share is by default right-hand biased. We lefties have to adapt to items like right-handed scissors, right-handed copybooks, right-handed lawn mower pull starts and laptop touch pads comfortably situated for right-handers.

That I recall, I was one of the few left-handed children at St. Albert the Great grade school. Despite hearing horror stories of nuns forcing lefties to write with their right hands, that was not something I experienced. However, I still struggled because I had no place to rest my elbow when writing. I had to learn to keep it level with the desk without the support afforded my right-handed classmates who sat in desks perfectly crafted for their situation.

At the turn of the century, the last century, the nuns manipulated my naturally born left-handed paternal grandfather, forcing him to learn penmanship with his right hand. Other than him, I was the only lefty in my family, until my granddaughter came along. She's a lefty as well, taking after both her grandfathers. That's why she's my favorite granddaughter.

Interestingly, each of my wife's married siblings married a lefty, exemplifying the adage that opposites attract.

I recently read research indicating that lefthanded people possess more developed right brain hemispheres thus making us more creative and better able to grasp abstract thoughts. It's also believed we're independent thinkers, and don't as easily subscribe to "group think." I rather like that conclusion.

Several presidents have been left-handed including Gerald Ford, George

W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barak Obama. And if that's not enough to impress you, so were Albert Einstein and Ben Franklin.

When I was learning scales on the piano, it took time for me to coordinate my right hand. On those occasions when I was picked to play ball in the school yard, no one had a glove I could borrow because they were all righties. When I got my own glove, no one asked to borrow it because, well, there were no other lefties on the team.

As a kid, I had an old Evinrude five horsepower outboard on the back of my rowboat. Because of the way the steering arm was positioned (for a right-handed person), I had to adapt, sitting in an uncomfortable position so as not to capsize the boat. In time, it became second nature and I thought no more about it.

Like most, if not all lefties, I've learned to get along in a world that discriminates against me. So accustomed have I become in this right-handed universe of ours that doing some things lefthanded is now uncomfortable. Many years after learning to golf with righthanded clubs, I attempted to play lefthanded using a friend's clubs. I couldn't get the hang of it. I'd like to say my game was impaired, but in that regard, I'm ambidextrous.

When I go down a list to check off completed tasks, my check marks look to some to be backwards. They are not. When sitting at a dining table among all righties, I've learned to bring my left elbow in when eating so as not to bump the rightie eating next to me. Many times, I try to sit at the end of the table so there's plenty of elbow room.

Years ago, when I learned to drive stick shift, my learning curve was two-fold. I had to learn to coordinate the depression of the clutch with the movement of the gear shift. On top of that there was learning to "think" with my right arm. The sensation was uncomfortable and unnatural but I eventually got the hang of it.

As a representative of South Paws hither and yon, I am reminded of a quote I once read: "God created a few perfect people, and the rest will just have to live being right handed."

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By Authority of Beverly Bigler, Treasurer

## School mask mandate rescinded

Last Friday the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) voted to rescind the emergency regulation requiring face coverings in school settings statewide. Per federal transportation orders, face coverings are still required to be worn in all Worcester County Public School (WCPS) transportation vehicles.

Below are statements from Superintendent of Schools Lou Taylor and Board of Education President Elena McComas.

**Taylor:** *In light of today's action by the AELR, effective February 28, 2022, Worcester County Public Schools will no longer require face coverings in our school facilities. However, WCPS still strongly recommends the wearing of face coverings for both our students and staff, especially as current guidance regarding quarantine and exclusion remain unchanged. As the State Board of Education mentioned at their meeting earlier this week, we also look forward to receiving updated guidance from federal and state health officials soon to assist school systems like ours with our goal of keeping our students in the classroom, where we know they learn best.*

**McComas:** *Once again, the Wor-*

*cester County Board of Education is very pleased that the AELR voted to support the State Board of Education's action earlier this week to place decision making back into the hands of local school system leaders. We are thankful for the Committee's action today, as it is time for our local leaders to now take the reins and make decisions that are in the best interest of our communities.*

## Bertino to hold campaign kick-off event

Commissioner Chip Bertino will host a Campaign Kick-Off to launch his reelection bid. The event will take place Saturday, March 5 at 1 p.m. in the Assateague Room of the Ocean Pines Community Center. Light refreshments will be served.

Bertino has twice been elected a Worcester County Commissioner to represent Ocean Pines District 5. He has been an effective, accessible and responsive county representative working to ensure county government is fiscally responsible and that it operates in the best interests of taxpayers.

All are welcome to the event.



## St. Joseph's Festival set to return

*In less than a month, Ocean City's largest Italian-American festival will reopen its doors for the first time in two years. Inside, the aroma of homecooked Italian foods will greet visitors, from minestrone soup to pasta and meatballs and sausages, fried dough specialties, and baked goods, breads, cakes, muffins and more. All from the kitchens and recipes of local Italian-American home cooks.*

*Mark the date, March 19, in St. Andrew's Hall, Sinepuxent Avenue and 144th St., from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. The festival is sponsored by the Ocean City Lodge of the Sons and Daughters of Italy. Proceeds are used to fund scholarships and charitable causes.*

*Food may be the essence of this annual celebration, but it is not the only attraction. As in past years, the St. Joseph's Festival will feature raffles for over-stuffed gift baskets, silent auctions with local bargains from restaurants, local stores and grocery stores, the sale of specialty Italian items, and St. Joseph articles for sale. Also available to bid on will be tickets from area professional sports teams, as well as team-themed gift baskets. All of this will come with a backdrop of Italian music provided by Baltimore's Mario Mondaldi band.*

## GM reports on bridge, courts, bulkheads and finances

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola and his staff on Wednesday supplied updates to several ongoing initiatives, including new pickleball courts, the North Gate Bridge, bulkheads, and community mailboxes.

Finance Director Steve Phillips also touted the Association's latest financial report, which shows continued favorability to budget.

On the four new pickleball courts, Viola said the Association sent bid packets for the project on Jan. 21, but "we only received one bid back."

"We've reached out to several

other companies to see ... where they're at. Two companies did tell us they are going to bid [and] we are working with them right now," Viola said.

Viola said removal of the North Gate Bridge guard shack finished on Feb. 8 and cost \$2,500.

He said one bid for new North Gate Bridge lights estimates the cost at \$45,707.35, plus \$10,000 for labor. He said there would be six light poles on each side of the bridge, as well as lights on taller poles on the bridge's four outer corners.

"We are trying to get two other bids," he said. "We're excited about it. Hopefully, we're able to go forward with [the new lights]," Viola said.

Also proposed is an extension of the bridge's guard rails.

"We are working with ... the state with that. As soon as we get more information, we'll let you know," Viola said.

Installation of a new wall and door for the Clubhouse Meeting Room is estimated to cost \$12,000-\$15,000, Viola said. He added the decision to enclose the space was based on feedback from people holding banquets and meetings who said, "the flow of traffic through there to the grill was noisy."

Additionally, a hybrid audio system is projected to cost \$14,000 and should be portable, allowing for future hybrid meetings either in the Clubhouse or community center. Viola said staff would extensively test the system prior to any use.

Public Works Office Manager

Linda Martin said Bulkhead repairs that started in September have finished. Those included nearly two dozen homes on Pintail Drive, as well as 10 houses on Crab Cay Court. She said the Association budgeted \$919,125 for bulkhead work in the coming fiscal year, to include homes on Pintail Drive North, Ebb Tide Court, and Pintail Park.

Martin said staff targeted 10 high-priority mailbox locations for renovation, and the Association ordered 100 new mailbox pedestals. One bid to clean 55 locations of mailboxes came in at \$4,125.

Phillips reported that January was another positive month to budget, with the Association ahead \$37,000 for the month. Year to date, Ocean Pines is favorable to budget by \$1.484 million.

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# Moons of Jupiter, Saturn include oceans

Four centuries ago in 1610, when Galileo discovered the first four of Jupiter's moons, no one could foresee the amazing, modern-day detection of oceans within those moons.

their moons. Studies found some moons with icy coverings, and evidence of possible interior oceans, as well as oscillations or wobbling during their orbital paths.

those geysers have been floating outwards and augmenting one of Saturn's rings. Enceladus' inner ocean is estimated to be 16 to 19 miles deep, and encased by layers of surface ice about 20 miles thick.

tem, but also for the exoplanets throughout the Milky Way.

In addition to Enceladus, Europa, and Mimas, a number of other planetary moons have displayed evidence of interior oceans: Jupiter's Callisto and Ganymede, Saturn's Titan, and Neptune's Triton. Some astronomers suggest that several moons of Uranus may be IWOWs.

Astronomers refer to these special moons using the term Interior Water Ocean Worlds (IWOWs).

The most recent potential IWOW is Saturn's small moon Mimas. According to a January 6 paper in the planetary journal "Icarus," Mimas shows evidence of an interior ocean. Certain vibrational motions or "librations" of this moon point to the existence of an underwater ocean beneath the moon's frozen crust.

In mid-March another major step in testing NASA's Artemis Program is scheduled to occur. The Wet Dress Rehearsal (WDR) will be

*please see moons on page 14*

## Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



Nor were there any clues about internal oceans in 1789 when William Herschel discovered Enceladus, one of Saturn's major moons. Today, with detailed results from NASA probes and the Hubble telescope, astronomers have conclusive evidence that these solar system bodies have much more to them than meets the eye.

The most irrefutable evidence of interior water oceans has been the geyser eruptions seen on some of the moons. The earliest such discovery occurred in 2005 when the Cassini space probe was observing Saturn's moon, Enceladus. In 2012 and again in 2013 the Hubble Space Telescope observed water geysers blasting into space from Jupiter's moon Europa.

During the 1960s and early 70s NASA had been interested mainly in probes to the inner planets, Venus and Mars. This changed with the launch of several probes in the late 70s including Voyager-1 and 2 which visited the outer planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. These probes not only offered new insights into the planets, but they also generated great interest in

Studies of the Enceladus geysers show they are powered by tidal forces of Saturn's gravity interacting with the moon's interior ocean as it orbits the planet. The resulting heat and pressure push the eruptions out through surface cracks. In this moon's southern region, about 100 geysers have been photographed by Cassini. Lighter components within

The new findings regarding Mimas reveal characteristics not previously seen. Dr. Alyssa Rhoden, a principal author of the Icarus paper, described the small moon Mimas as a "stealth IWOW." Its surface contains heavily cratered ice, thus differing from the smoother conditions often seen when interior oceans are present. Mimas features a huge crater 80 miles across, clearly visible to the Cassini probe.

The reason for so much interest in the Interior Water Ocean Worlds is that they expand the possibilities for life. No longer do we think that surface oceans like the Earth's are needed. IWOWs with their underground waters might offer an entirely new way for life to take hold. And this is true not just for our own solar sys-



Mimas with Saturn's Rings



Mimas alone. Note its giant crater "Herschel"



SLS Rocket on launchpad



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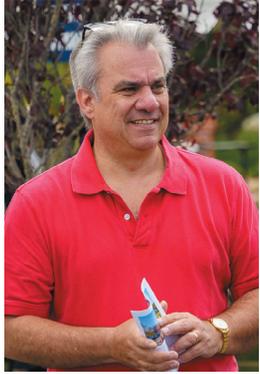
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**TheCourierofOceanPines**

# Bertino to seek another term

Having served as a Worcester County Commissioner for nearly eight years, Chip Bertino recently announced his re-election bid to continue to represent the Ocean Pines district.



**Chip Bertino**

Bertino has been a strong conservative voice on the commission. He is known for asking tough questions during meetings to help protect

taxpayer dollars, and for being an effective and accessible representative.

Originally from Northeast Philadelphia, Bertino earned an English Communications degree from Holy Family University. He met his wife, Susan, in college, and they moved to Ocean Pines in 1991 when Bertino took a job with Atlantic Publications.

“On Feb. 2, 1991, we moved down here with no money, two kids and a dog,” Bertino said. “We eventually built a house, which we’re still in, and we never looked back. Once the kids started participating in various activities and we became more involved, we realized this is a wonderful community.”

The family welcomed a third child while living in Ocean Pines. Then in 2000, Bertino started his own newspaper, *The Courier*.

Bertino started covering the Worcester County Commissioners for *The Courier* in 2009. When Commissioner Judy Boggs announced her retirement almost five years later, he first considered running for office.

“I found myself fascinated by the machinations of government while I was covering the Commissioners. I had thought about running over the years, but when Judy announced she was retiring, it pushed the idea to the forefront,” he said. “By then I had been watching and reporting on county government for five years, so I thought I had an understanding of what the issues were.”

To further prepare himself, Bertino held “popcorn meetings” in his studio, inviting various people from around

the community as well as Boggs and Commissioner Jim Bunting. Sen. Mary Beth Carozza, who at the time had just announced her own bid for the House of Delegates, also joined the meetings.

“I invited people of varying backgrounds and perspectives whose opinions I respected, and we’d sit in my studio for a few hours talking about issues over a bowl of popcorn or two,” he said. “I learned a lot from those very frank conversations.”

Bertino won the Republican primary in 2014, and then went on to win nearly 70% of the general election vote, something he accomplished again in 2018.

Among his proudest accomplishments, he said, was helping to reign in the cost of the new Showell Elementary School, which at one point was estimated to cost more than \$61 million. Because of his efforts, Bertino helped save county taxpayers more than \$13 million.

“Just before being sworn into office the first time, I told then School Superintendent Jerry Wilson, flat out,

there was no way that I was going to vote for a \$61 million-dollar-plus school,” Bertino said.

Bunting was the Commission president at the time, and he and Bertino toured the state to look at other schools under construction to help set a benchmark by which to measure Showell Elementary.

“We also had numerous conversations with state officials and other school districts. We stood our ground with the board of education (BOE),” he said. “We were able to do that because myself, Jimmy, and two other Commissioners hung together for more than two years on every construction-related issue that came up, and were able to really push through a change in philosophy that saved taxpayers millions of dollars.

“At the end of the day, that school cost us about \$48 million,” Bertino continued. “I’m very proud of the fact that I was one of the leaders on that. Every time I pass that new school, I’m reminded of what all of us did. It was a group effort that included the Commissioners, former BOE presidents

Jonathon Cook and Bill Gordy, the late Eric Cropper, and members of the leadership team for the board and the current School Superintendent, Lou Taylor.

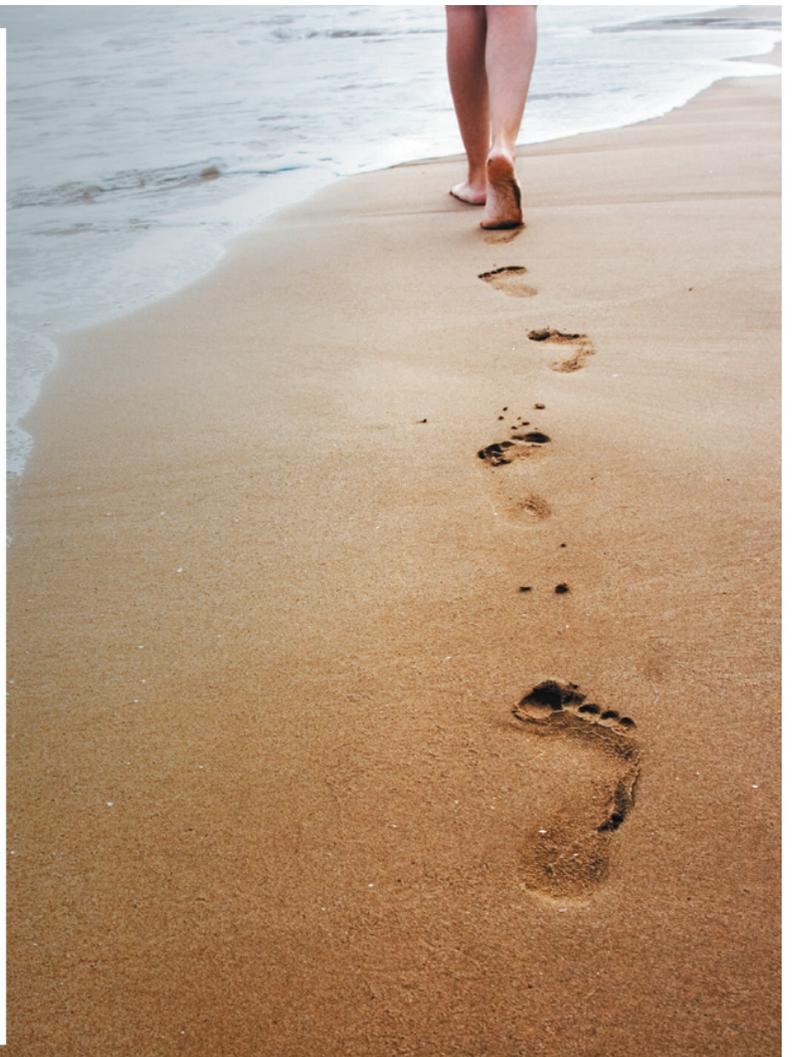
Since then, Bertino said the elevation of Taylor to superintendent, along with increased lines of communication, has greatly improved the relationship between the county and the school board.

“There’s a much higher level of trust now among the key players,” he said. “As a result, a few months before the pandemic hit, Mr. Taylor and his staff made a presentation to the Commissioners asking for a mid-budget cycle request of \$3.5 million to order computer tablets for every Worcester County student to enhance learning. We trusted him and recognized the value in the request, so we approved the purchase. Little did we know that just a few months later our students would be learning remotely and relying on new technology as a result of the pandemic. Because of the trust be-

*please see bertino page 13*

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**My Backyard...** sponsored by Maureen Kennedy

# Identify winter birds in backyards

Birds flittering around the neighborhood are a common sight during spring and summer, and these welcome guests can be enjoyable to observe as they nest, feed and interact. When the weather cools in fall and winter, many birds seek out warmer climates, but a good number of these feathered friends stick around.

**Certain birds can be found all winter long across regions of North America.** The Great American Bird Count is a program that is run by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Its purpose is to seek the help of volunteer bird-watchers across North America to observe and count all the birds seen in a 15-minute interval during a four-day data collection period. This program helps identify birds that are most commonly seen in cold temperatures and study the composition and distribution of the winter bird populations across North America. Birds seen during this time may change from year to year, though certain species are more likely to be around in the winter months.

**Northern cardinals:** One of the more iconic winter birds, the bright red cardinals are around much of the year but perhaps most noticeable against the snowy, stark landscape of a winter's day. Cardinals use their bright, powerful bills to crack open seeds and cut through sugary fruits to help them survive the winter.

**Tree sparrows:** Tree sparrows are large-bodied and long-tailed sparrows with gray and reddish-brown streaking along the edges of their feathers. They also wear a bright chestnut colored cap. Despite their name, tree sparrows spend much of their time on the ground feeding. The bird count has

unveiled a greater number of tree swallows in recent years. These birds are insectivorous, so milder winters may be contributing to their increased presence.

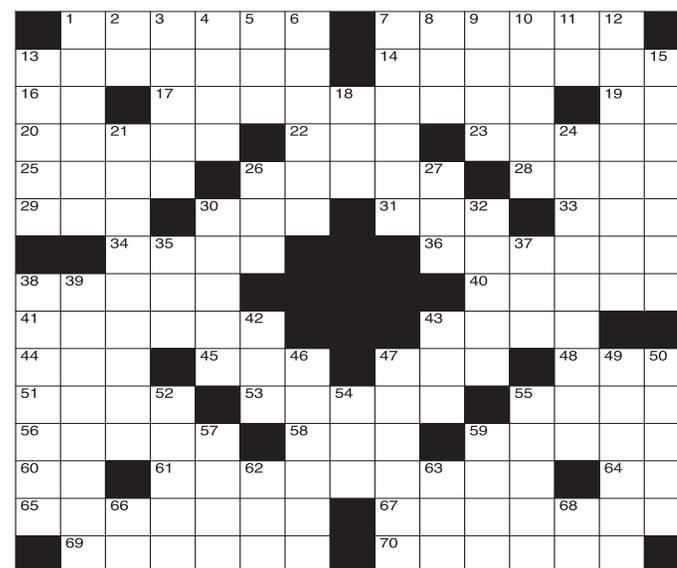
**Tufted titmice:** Tufted titmice resemble cardinals in body and head shape, albeit on a smaller scale, but they are pale gray in coloring. These are bold birds who defend territory with scolding calls.

**Blue jays:** These common, vibrant birds are well known to many people. They are large-crested songbirds with broad, round tails. They have white or light gray feathering on the underside of their bodies with various shades of blue, black and white on the top. A favorite food is acorns, and these birds are often found on forest edges. Their calls are loud and carry long distances.

**Mourning doves:** Many people hear mourning doves before they actually see them, as their soft cooing often comes from roof rafters and tree branches. These birds have plump bodies and long, tapered necks, with a head that looks particularly small in comparison. They tend to be brown to buff color. When the birds take off for flight, their wings make sharp whistling or whinnying sounds.

**American goldfinches:** These birds are sometimes called the "wild canary" of the Americas. They have distinctive yellow plumage that fades in winter to a palette of buff, brown and gray. They're small seed-eating birds that often travel in flocks.

Birds may need a little help surviving in the winter. Keep fresh, unfrozen water around and supplement food scavenged with peanut butter, suet and nuts. Brush piles, roost boxes or birdhouses can provide needed shelter.



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Neckwear
- 7. Fish parts
- 13. Cooking
- 14. Quality
- 16. Rural delivery
- 17. Popular superhero
- 19. Partner to Pa
- 20. Shivering fits
- 22. Wrath
- 23. Linguistics pioneer
- 25. Large integers
- 26. A way to prepare food
- 28. Group of badgers
- 29. Peyton's little brother
- 30. Rock out
- 31. Danish krone
- 33. Take from with force
- 34. Baroque musical instrument
- 36. Zodiac sign
- 38. Hebrew alphabet letter
- 40. Independent member of a clone
- 41. Type of garment
- 43. Satisfy
- 44. One point south of due east
- 45. A way to wipe out
- 47. Moved quickly on foot
- 48. Bar bill
- 51. An idiot
- 53. Performed with the voice silent
- 55. Body fluids
- 56. Rhythmic patterns
- 58. "\_\_\_ my i's"
- 59. Type of wrap
- 60. It shows who you are
- 61. Carousel
- 64. Type of college degree
- 65. Molding
- 67. Closes again
- 69. Verses
- 70. Surface

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Short, thick stick
- 2. Rhode Island
- 3. Animals of the horse family
- 4. Very important persons
- 5. Folk singer Di Franco
- 6. Boredom
- 7. Long speech
- 8. Footballer Newton
- 9. Expression of sorrow or pity
- 10. Linear accelerator
- 11. One quintillion bytes
- 12. Smallest interval in Western music
- 13. Box
- 15. Cheese dish
- 18. Make a mistake
- 21. Done by all people or things
- 24. Circumference
- 26. Chum
- 27. Electrocardiogram
- 30. Sandwich chain Jimmy \_\_\_
- 32. Showed old movie
- 35. Important event on Wall St.
- 37. Where wrestlers work
- 38. Free from contamination
- 39. Eastern Canada coastal region
- 42. Slang for gun
- 43. High schoolers' test
- 46. Fathers
- 47. Call it a career
- 49. Productive
- 50. Musical groups
- 52. Yellowish-brown
- 54. Lowest point of a ridge
- 55. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
- 57. Fill up
- 59. Cardinal number that's the sum of 5 and 1
- 62. Frost
- 63. Jewel
- 66. Atomic #45
- 68. Top lawyer

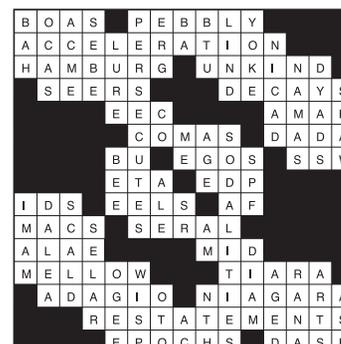


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Answers for February 23

# Nominations sought for the Debbie Goeller award

The Debbie Goeller Public Health Excellence Award was created to recognize exceptional performance by individuals identified by their peers for having excelled in public health with integrity and a strong commitment to the community and population health of Worcester County.

Debbie Goeller was Worcester County's Health Officer and trusted public health leader for over 25 years. Her vision and what she accomplished over her years of service, continue to shape the future of the Worcester County Health Department. Her persistent and focused leadership paved the way for new programs and specialty services that continue to be offered by the health department. She was a champion for public health services and her dedication to the citizens of Worcester County was unwavering.

Any current member of the Worcester County Health Department staff or community member can submit nominations. Self-nominations will be accepted and all nominations will be

confidential. Nominations will be forwarded to the Office of the Health Officer and will be reviewed by the Excellence Award Review Committee.

The Excellence in Public Health Award recipient will have made a significant impact on public health in Worcester County through outstanding dedication, competence, exceptional performance, and excellent service. The nominee will have made important and/or significant contributions in public health, contributes and/or demonstrates a commitment to public health, demonstrates exceptional ability to foster collaboration, communication, and cooperation between the public/private sector, and/or consistently seeks to improve the quality of public health services.

Nominations will be accepted through March 10. All nominations must be submitted to [worcester.health@maryland.gov](mailto:worcester.health@maryland.gov).

The award will be presented to one recipient during National Public Health Week, April 4-10, 2022.

# Answering questions about Lent

Before the joyous Easter celebration comes the solemn and prayerful Lenten season. Even the devoutly religious may not know all there is to know about this penitential season. The following are some questions and answers about Lent.

When does Lent occur? Lent is a period of 40 days preceding Easter Sunday. Since 1969, Lent has begun on Ash Wednesday and has ended on the evening of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Since Sundays are not calculated in that time frame, Lent actually lasts 46 days.

When did Lent begin? The first Christians approached each Sunday as a celebration of Easter, and each day of the week was considered a time to prepare for the Sunday celebration. Beginning in the fourth century in Europe, dates began to be established for Christmas and other religious dates of significance. The pattern of 40 days of preparation and penance started to emerge around this time. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the first mention of the term "tessarakoste," meaning "40" in Greek, could be found in the early years of the fourth century.

As Greek gave way to Latin in liturgies, tessarakoste was replaced with "quadragesima," meaning 40 days. Christians started the tradition of Lent around the year 325 during the Council of Nicea.

Why 40 days? The Compass News says the 40 days of Lent refer to Christ's 40 days spent in the desert after His baptism. Just as Jesus prayed and fasted, so, too, did the church and its faithful.

Why is it called Lent? Scholars suggest the word "Lent" is derived from "lengten," an Anglo-Saxon word for spring, which also is related to the German word "lenz," meaning spring. By the 11th century, the Oxford English Dictionary notes that "Lent" had taken on the Christian usage it has today, and the generic term for spring-time disappeared.

Where do Ash Wednesday's ashes come from? Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when ashes are spread on the foreheads of followers in the sign of the cross to signal their repentance to God. The ashes are derived from burning the palm fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

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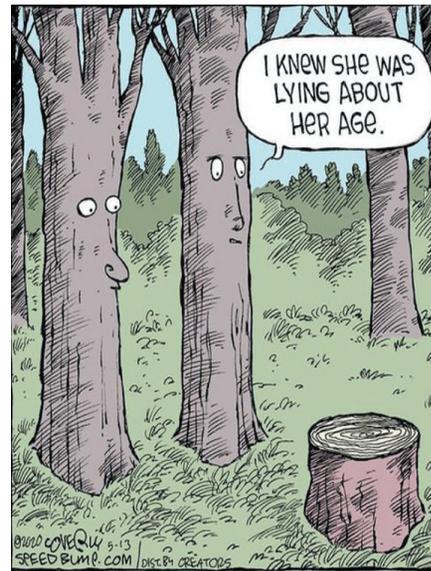
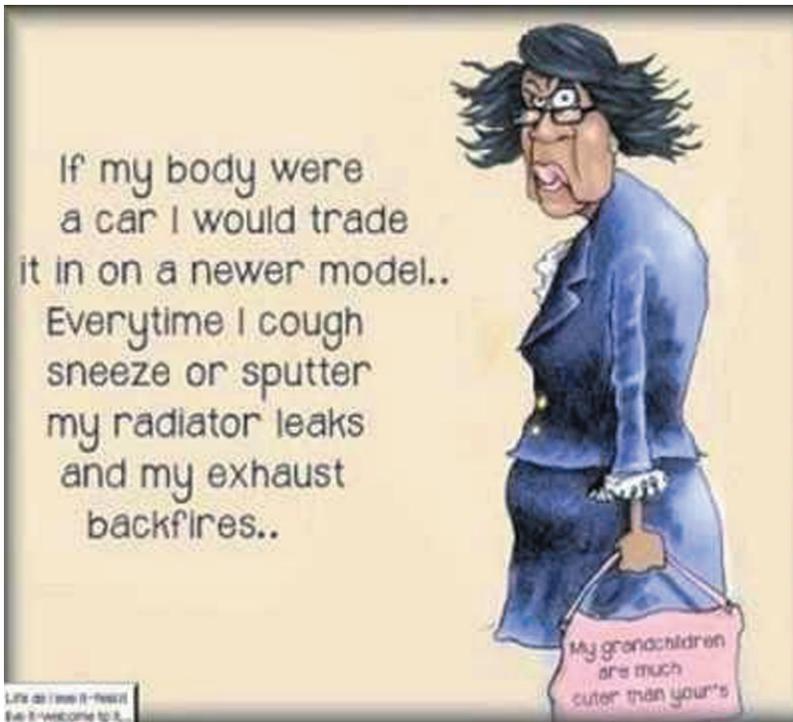
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*Dine in or take out from 3 or more of our participating businesses and you will be entered to win great prizes to be awarded March 17! Cards can be picked up from any participating restaurant, the ERA Martin office, or Ocean Pines Visitors Center. Winners will be announced on The Ocean Pines Chambers Facebook page live on March 17 at Noon.*

# Some things to think about

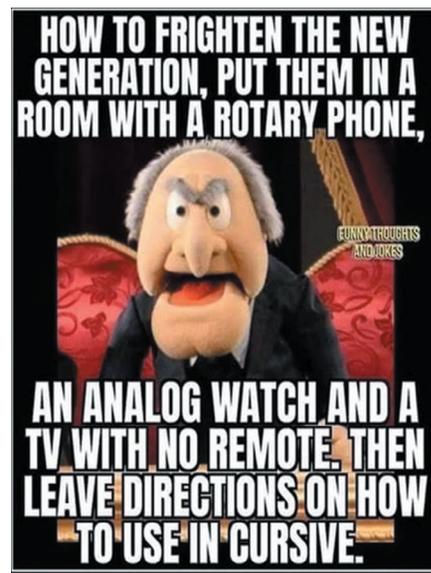
Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**



**I like to make lists.**

**I also like to leave them laying on the kitchen counter and then guess what's on the list while at the store.**

**Fun game.**



**AS YOU GET OLDER YOU'VE GOT TO STAY POSITIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE OTHER DAY I FELL DOWN THE STAIRS... INSTEAD OF GETTING UPSET I JUST THOUGHT, "WOW, THAT'S THE FASTEST I'VE MOVED IN YEARS."**

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Can I get half my money back on this bikini? I don't really need the top part.



**AT MY AGE, A TRAIL OF CLOTHES LEADING TO THE BEDROOM MEANS I DROPPED THEM ON THE WAY FROM THE DRYER.**

**bertino**  
from page 9

tween the Commissioners and the BOE, our students and teachers benefitted during very difficult times.”

During the last four years, Bertino has focused on getting every house and business in Worcester County connected to high-speed internet.

“That’s a big one. We still have a way to go, but we’re really taking the lead over other jurisdictions around the state, and I’m proud of that,” he said. “Broadband connectivity is infrastructure and, as such, having it available throughout the county stimulates economic development. We must do this.”

Another key issue is normalizing funding for county fire and EMS services.

“We started a dialog with the fire companies and EMS during my first term, and that is something that has gained traction,” he said. “There is improved communication between the fire companies and the Commissioners, and we’re working proactively to solve funding challenges.”

Bertino said improved communication has been central to his first two terms.

“I spend a lot of time building relationships,” he said. “When I was covering the meetings, I saw maybe 20% of what a Commissioner does. There’s so much more that goes on behind the scenes, and a lot of it has to do with building one-on-one relationships with different folks – not just agencies, but individuals.

“During a school security summit held many years ago, one of the guest speakers commented that during an emergency is not the time to introduce yourself to other agencies. That statement resonated with me,” he continued. “The relationships I’ve cultivated with leaders and other elected officials around the county and state have made me more effective for my district and this county.”

Bertino often uses his reporting background to ask tough, probing questions during county meetings and budget hearings, to help safeguard taxpayer dollars.

“As a reporter, I would get the meeting packet, and I’d be sitting in the audience with questions the Commissioners would not ask. It was so frustrating. What I’ve come to learn since getting elected is, asking questions as a Commissioner provides in-

sight into an issue enabling me to vote accordingly,” he said.

“I really enjoy that part of the job, but it takes a lot of work because there’s a lot of reading material. If something doesn’t add up or I don’t understand something, I start asking questions,” he added.

Bertino said running a business makes him keenly aware of the value of a dollar, and he’s kept that in mind while serving the county.

“Owning a small business hardened my belief that every tax dollar spent had better have a good reason. When you own a business, you really have a frugal mindset,” he said. “The other thing I feel very strongly about is it’s not my money – it’s taxpayer money. Taxpayers are customers, and they have expectations for certain things including an excellent school system and capable and well-equipped law enforcement as well as maintained infrastructure and parks and recreation. That’s what we’re there to do.”

If reelected to a third term, Bertino said continuing the push for fast, reliable internet countywide would be a central priority, as would the fiscally responsible expansion of Stephen Decatur Middle School and replacement of Buckingham Elementary School.

“I also think recalculating the fire companies’ funding formula is going to be a huge part of the discussion over the next four years,” he said. “We also have the law enforcement mandates for body cameras coming down from the state, and that’s going to be a huge number in our budgets, in the many millions of dollars.

“The other issue is the proposed sports complex. I don’t think government should be in business in general, and I think the sports complex, the way it’s currently being discussed, would put us in the sports promotion business. It will cost county taxpayers tens of millions of dollars in construction, maintenance, personnel and marketing with little, if any, expectation of being self-supporting,” Bertino added.

His eight years of experience, he said, will help him continue to serve the community and provide effective constituent services.

“There are a lot of moving parts to being in office, and it takes a lot of time, dedication, research and experience to become proficient in advocating for not just for my district of

Ocean Pines, but for the county as a whole,” he said. “I believe that I’ve developed a good understanding of how all the pieces fit together and how it can benefit county taxpayers, because that’s who I work for.

“That’s why I hold regular town meetings,” he continued. “It helps me better understand what’s on the minds of the people I represent. The meetings also provide constituents the opportunity to ask questions of me and the other government officials I invite to the meetings.”

Bertino said it’s an honor representing the community of Ocean Pines, and Worcester County.

“It is humbling to be the recipient of the gift that Ocean Pines gave me, to represent them at the county level,” he said. “That they trusted me enough to represent them, when I think about it, it takes my breath away. Every day I work hard to show my gratitude.

“I take that responsibility very seriously,” Bertino continued. “Whether it’s hosting town meetings, working with constituents, speaking before different organizations or testifying in Annapolis, whether it’s asking penetrating questions during

Commissioners’ meetings, it’s a great honor to be involved, and I just do my best every day to say, ‘thank you.’”

Bertino and his wife, Susan, have three children and two grandchildren.

Bertino will host a Campaign Kick-off event Saturday, March 5 at 1 p.m. in the Assateague Room of the Ocean Pines Community Center. The event will be open to the public.

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**moons**  
from page 8

conducted on the launch pad. All of the launch routines will be tested, including loading the super-cold propellants into the SLS rocket. However, the tests stop short of igniting the rocket itself. An unmanned Artemis-I flight will likely occur this May, and in 2024 Artemis-II could be flying astronauts for a jaunt around the moon. Finally, in 2025 Artemis-III aims to land a crew on the lunar surface.

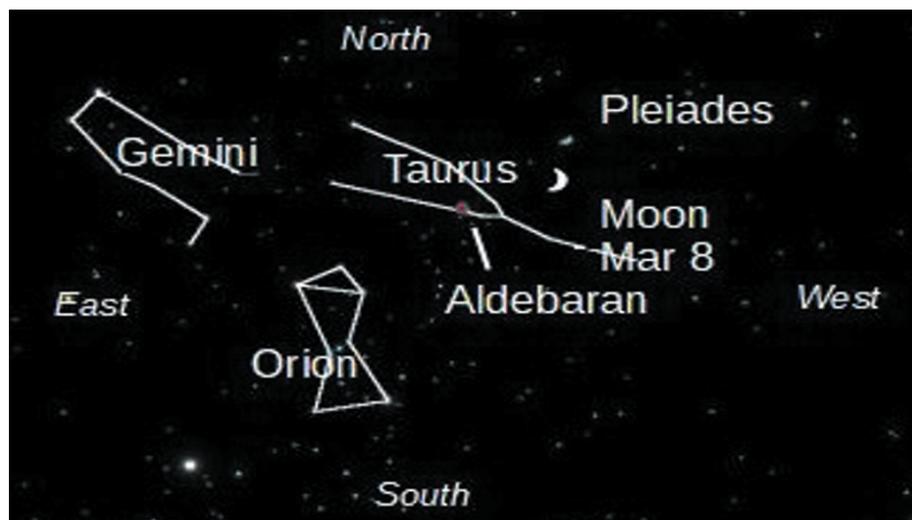
As the March sky grows dark, at about 7 p.m., Orion the Hunter appears well above the southern horizon. Northwards

are the constellations Gemini the Twins and Taurus the Bull. As the evening progresses, Leo the Lion can be seen over the eastern horizon.

Look for a celestial grouping on March 8, when the crescent moon floats between the Pleiades cluster and the star Aldebaran.

Daylight saving time begins on Sunday March 13, and this changes the stargazing times. Clocks should be set forward one hour, so that the times for celestial observations will “jump” forward by one hour.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.



**Tides for Ocean City Inlet**

Day	High /Low	Tide Time
Th 3	Low	1:49 AM
3	High	8:21 AM
3	Low	2:24 PM
3	High	8:36 PM
F 4	Low	2:36 AM
4	High	9:04 AM
4	Low	3:03 PM
4	High	9:21 PM
Sa 5	Low	3:22 AM
5	High	9:45 AM
5	Low	3:42 PM
5	High	10:03 PM
Su 6	Low	4:08 AM
6	High	10:26 AM
6	Low	4:22 PM
6	High	10:46 PM
M 7	Low	4:56 AM
7	High	11:07 AM
7	Low	5:03 PM
7	High	11:30 PM
Tu 8	Low	5:45 AM
8	High	11:50 AM
8	Low	5:47 PM
W 9	High	12:18 AM
9	Low	6:37 AM
9	High	12:37 PM
9	Low	6:34 PM

**briefs**  
from page 3

“That’s not a lot of time for the secretary to work with somebody to gather information,” she said.

Horn agreed to withdraw her motion to revise M-09, as well as the attachment. She encouraged Board members to approve a new candidate application by the next scheduled meeting, next month.

“I think we ought to go back to discussing this, looking at this, and in the March 23 meeting we need to be prepared to approve changes,” she said.

**Delinquent interest rate set**

Board members voted 7-0 to set a 6% interest rate for delinquent payments of the fiscal year 2022/2023 assessment. The rate is unchanged from the prior year.

Director Larry Perrone, in his formal motion, said the Association’s Declarations of Restrictions require the rate to be set.

“This action should be required on an annual basis, for our governing documents,” he said.

**Grant application**

Board members voted unanimously to approve a \$10,271.75 AARP grant application for upgrades of several walking trails.

Director Rick Farr said the funds would help “to make improvements to the Library Trail and the Robin Hood Trail in leveling the surfaces, improve drainage and safety, trail signage with distances and arrows, and larger informational signs with maps for the trail entrances.”

Recreation and Parks Committee Chairperson Patti Stevens said one condition of the grant is hosting

monthly community walks, after the improvements have been made.

“We’re going to request that part of the funding is for trail counters that could be installed at the head of the Route 90 Trail and the Robinhood Trail, so we can keep track of how many people are actually using those trails,” she said. “Part of what AARP’s focus is, is to build community engagement and connected communities, and we think walking together is a really great way to do that, but we need to make the trails safer and more easy to find.”

General Manager John Viola added the grant fits well with current Association plans.

“We definitely welcome this,” he said.

**Electronic voting discussed**

Elections Committee Chairperson Carol Ludwig said concerns with the current process of using paper ballots include a tight timeframe to mail and receive ballots, which is affected by postal delays and has resulted in an increased number of invalidated votes. She said the ballot scanning process is also slow and averages five-to-six hours.

In a proposed switch to online voting, Ludwig said each lot owner would receive a letter with a unique ID number that would allow them to vote online. She also advocated a “phone-in option,” to allow homeowners to use their ID number to vote by phone.

According to Ludwig, online voting could reduce costs, enhance security, and eliminate some factors that cause voter disenfranchisement. She added recent Association surveys favored a switch to online voting.

However, moving to online voting

could require a change in Ocean Pines bylaws, which currently have references to printing ballots and mailing election materials. Board members said including that change in the March 12 Bylaws Changes Town Hall Meeting/Hearing was not feasible, because notice and a summary of those proposed changes had already been mailed. Because of that, the Directors agreed a change was unlikely before the election this year.

Using online voting for the upcoming short-term rental referendum was also discussed, and a work group including Ludwig, Bylaws and Resolutions Committee Chairperson Jim Trummel, Association Vice President Frank Daly, and Director Doug Parks will explore the issue further.

**Committee appointments**

Board members unanimously approved nine committee appointments and reappointments:

- Maria Campione-Lawrence – 1st Term – Aquatics Committee
- Monica Rakowski – 1st Term – Aquatics Committee
- Kevin Middleton – 1st Term – Architectural Review Committee
- Frank Brown – 1st Term – Golf Committee
- Robert Long – 2nd Term – Golf Committee
- Donald McMullen – 2nd Term – Golf Committee
- Andie Davis – 2nd Term – Search Committee
- Thomas Piatti – 2nd Term – Search Committee
- Frank Brown – 1st Term – Strategic Planning

Board members also voted 4-3 against appointing Stuart Lakernick to the Strategic Planning Committee. Horn said Parks, Farr and Director Amy Peck voted in favor.

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# Get Connected *Virtually*



We're **STILL HERE** to help you get a health plan that works for your life and your budget. **Local experts are standing by.**

## Need Health Insurance!?

Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester county residents can receive free over-the-phone assistance with enrollment into Health Insurance by calling The Lower Shore Health Insurance Assistance Program at **1(855)445-5540**

**Call Us!**

**Monday-Friday**

**8:00am-5:00pm**



## Get Ready to Enroll! You'll need:

- Photo ID
- Social security number
- Immigration/citizenship documents (for some residents)
- Pay stubs or W-2 wage and tax statement (if employed)
- Policy numbers for any other insurance