

The Courier

April 26, 2023 Volume 23 Number 28

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Edition*



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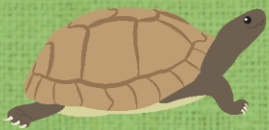
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GM provides monthly operations updates

General Manager John Viola provided updates on the following items during his monthly report to the Ocean Pines Board of Directors on April 15.

Police hiring

Viola said the Association implemented a new process for police testing, which was held on March 25. He said eight candidates attended, and six tested and passed.

The top three candidates were presented to Ocean Pines Police Lt. Shakhan Toppin and submitted for police academy training in July.

“I’m excited about this. I know everybody in the Police Department as well as the Board” is excited, Viola said, adding police hiring is the “best I’ve seen” during the five years he’s been GM.

Viola said Ocean Pines is now competitive with neighboring agencies in terms of police compensation, benefits, and take-home vehicles.

For more information on open positions, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/work-here.

Update on lifeguards

Viola said OPA has increased lifeguard pay and offered to pay for training, to try and hire more guards for the Association’s outdoor pools this summer.

Additional efforts have included outreach by Aquatics staff; multiple ads in local newspapers and through local high schools; press releases to local media; coverage on TV news; multiple job fairs; flyers and banners at the Sports Core Pool; and articles and flyers on the OPA website and social media, and in the weekly e-blast, quarterly newsletter, and biannual activity guide.

“I believe we’re moving in the right direction,” Viola said. “Our goal is to keep these pools open, and we’ll do our best on that with the resources we have.”

In case of closings, Viola said there would be a robust communication plan in place to broadcast pool operating hours.

For more information on open positions, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/work-here.

New Racquet Center manager

Last week, Ocean Pines announced the hiring of Tim Johnson as the new Racquet Center manager.

Viola said a job description was created with input from the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee, and six applicants were interviewed for the position.

Johnson is a former Ocean Pines Racquet Sports member and has three decades of coaching experience. He previously served as the tennis supervisor for the Town of Ocean City.

“He’s going to give lessons and brings a wealth of professional experience to the position,” Viola said.

New Racquet Center design

Viola unveiled two sets of plans, for a new one or two-story Racquet Center building.

Plans were drafted by former Board member and veteran contractor Frank Brown, based on input from the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee.

Viola said the drawings would be posted at the Racquet Center and sent to the advisory committee for further comment.

“This is high level and designed to be a working document,” Viola said, adding the Association previously had success working with Brown and using a similar approach to the new Golf Clubhouse building.

Free play questions

Recent changes to the Platform Tennis program eliminated free court time, but added two free clinics on April 22 and May 20.

Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue, who oversees Racquet Sports, said the changes were made to bring Platform Tennis in line with other amenity programs.

“No other amenity really gives away anything for free,” Donahue said.

For more information on Racquet Sports programs and events, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/racquet-sports.

Matt Ortt Companies update

Viola said performance triggers in the Matt Ortt Companies contract to manage Ocean Pines’ food and beverage.

please see update on page 14



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Maintenance continues to be top OPA priority

Upkeep of the Ocean Pines community and its facilities has been a major theme of the Association's efforts during the last several years.

General Manager John Viola said the focus on maintenance has been a top priority for the GM, the team, and the Board. Those efforts keep the Association's facilities in top working order and help get the amenities ready for the busy summer season.

Recent efforts have included the installation of a new C-Dock and fuel lines at the Ocean Pines Marina. This was partially mandated by new state environmental requirements, and Viola said work remains on schedule, weather permitting, for an opening prior to Memorial Day.

The Aquatics Department saw the installation of a new roof at the Swim and Racquet Club in March. The building was one of the first Ocean Pines amenities and remains popular with residents.

Work at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center has included landscaping, power washing, court maintenance, and repainting of the lounge and pro shop. A new ice machine is on order, and new rollers, squeegees and brushes are now hanging from the court fences.

Viola also unveiled two possible designs for a new Racquet Center building during the last Ocean Pines Board meeting.

Springtime landscaping efforts have occurred communitywide, including at Pintail Park prior to the recent Arbor Day ceremony, and at the veteran's memorial, Sports Core Pool, and Beach Club.

Public Works has done maintenance at virtually every Ocean Pines park, and cleanup efforts have begun on several of the community trails.

Many entrance signs have been refreshed, and additional cherry blossom trees have been ordered for the North Gate Pond. Last fall, 2,000 tulips were planted and are now blooming across the community.

A mailbox replacement initiative begun in 2022 has included power washing and repairs, along with the installation of new pedestals and mailboxes.

Ocean Pines' Compliance, Per-

mit, and Inspections (CPI) Department continues to enforce violations including lack of permits, trash, dangerous trees, and unregistered or junk vehicles.

CPI also responded to 86 work orders in March alone, for general maintenance, roads, bulkheads, drainage, and other concerns.

Additionally, the Administration Building underwent a major renovation that included the installation of a new HVAC system, as well as a reorganization of the building's interior, with new flooring installed and a fresh coat of paint on every wall.

Viola said Ocean Pines has used a fully engaged team along with help from outside contractors to get the job done.

"We're committed to maintenance and have listened to requests from the Board, our committees, and our homeowners," he said. "Public Works does an outstanding job and, with the help of our local contractors, everything on our list is getting done."

Public Works Director Eddie Wells said he's able to cover a lot of ground because of the diverse expertise of his department.

"We continue to utilize the professionals that we have on staff, including experts in the HVAC, electrical and carpentry fields, as well as several people who are familiar with local permitting requirements," Wells said. "Because of our experience, even with a labor shortage we're able to work on several major projects at once and produce strong results."

Grass cutting started early

Because of warmer than usual weather this spring, Ocean Pines Public Works moved up its grass cutting program by several weeks.

Public Works Director Eddie Wells said grass cutting of common areas in front of homes in Ocean Pines started two weeks ago, in Section 10 in south Ocean Pines.

Public Works will continue to cut grass in common areas, through the spring and summer seasons.

For questions, contact info@oceanpines.org or call 410-641-7717.

A greening thumb of sorts

Last October I planted tulip bulbs around the garden and forgot about them. I never marked where they were planted so when they sprouted

as I might, success has eluded me. I keep trying because I like seeing red azaleas in bloom. Historically they'll last a season or two but usually don't make it to a third. There's hope on the horizon this year because a red azalea in which I've placed great hope is starting to green up. Fingers crossed.

Several years ago, I purchased on clearance about a half dozen different plants and shrubs. I could spin a tale about how these plants were exactly what I was searching for and were just right for the area of the garden that had full sun six hours a day and how their colors complemented the vision I had for the garden. I could spin that tale but it wouldn't ring true. The truth of the matter was they were cheap and they were available. Fed up with the inability to grow grass in my backyard for more than 20 years, and tired of looking at plain old dirt, I haphazardly planted these discounted bushes expecting them to wither and die by the end of the season. Amazingly just the opposite occurred. They took hold and by their second season were thriving. Go figure! This turn of events encouraged me to sculpt a garden around what I thought would be dead-in-a-single-season greenery.

Since then, this unexpected backyard garden has evolved into a kaleidoscope of beauty when in full bloom. At least I believe this to be so. It is now home to among other things several rose bushes, mums, lilies, coral bells, black olive coral bells, black eyed Susans, shasta daisies, geraniums, marigolds, a bird bath and two concrete turtles, one big, one small. To better define the garden, several years ago, my wife and I constructed a walkway so we can walk through the garden. I must admit, at twilight during the summer, there are occasions when I enjoy sitting out back with a cigar in one hand and an adult beverage in the other, just gazing at the flowers that attract hummingbirds and bees and the occasional robin that will splash around in the bird bath.

A green thumb I have not. But, I'm not the Grim Reaper either so I'm encouraged – a little bit.



It's All About...

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

from the ground over a month ago, I was quite surprised and pleased to see the first "greens" speckling the dirt of winter drab.

Not long after, the day lilies started awakening. Yellow day lilies have been a mainstay in the garden seemingly forever. They were prominent in my mother's garden when I was growing up. Not long after my wife and I moved into our first house, she arrived with a bunch of lilies pulled from her garden and wrapped in a plastic trash bag. They are hardy plants, having endured multiple transplantings through the years. Many times they've been split so they could be spread around the garden. I have started giving some to my daughter for her garden.

The older I get the more interested I am about the garden, taking a keen view of what pops out of the ground and when. I've begun concentrating on bloom cycles attempting to arrange plants with different bloom times in such a way that it will appear the garden is constantly in bloom between spring and fall. This is an evolving plan that still needs a lot of work. It would help if I learned the names of plants and didn't refer to them by their colors. "I like red ones over there. I need something white over here." A scientific approach it is not.

When they were young, the kids gave my wife a hydrangea for Mother's Day. It resides in the front of our house, each year getting larger. Every once in a while, it won't bloom. But when it does, it's sort of a blueish color. I've been told that manipulating soil conditions can change the flower color. That's a skillset yet to be mastered.

Through the years I've had lousy luck getting azaleas to take root. Try

GOP Central Committee to host author

The Worcester County Republican Central Committee presents "Character Matters" with guest speaker former USMC Lt. Col. Stuart Sheller, who served in Afghanistan, and is the author of "Crisis of Command: How We Lost Trust and Confidence in America's Generals and Politicians." The event will be held Saturday, April 29, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the Ocean City Golf Club located at 11401 Country Club Drive in Berlin. Tickets are \$50 and includes a Happy Hour Buffet/Cash Bar. Tickets will be sold for a Two-day Concealed Carry training raffle, a \$1500 value. Seating is limited. Send checks to WCRCC, P.O. Box 1432, Berlin, MD 21811. Or contact WorCoRcc@gmail.com or 443-668-8864.

Arts Council exhibit set for library

The Worcester County Arts Council announced its new exhibition at the Gallery located at the Berlin Library branch showcasing a photography display by two local artists, Mourad Shalaby and Jeanne Woodward. The public is invited to the opening Meet and Greet artist reception on Saturday, April 29 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Library Gallery (second floor) located at 13 Harrison Avenue in Berlin. The exhibit will be on display between April 5 and July 4.

Stop by the Gallery during the library business hours to view the work on display. The artwork is available for purchase.

OPA pools earn top honors from county

Four of Ocean Pines' pools recently received a "Certificate in Excellence in Pool Operation" award from the Worcester County Health Department.

A fifth pool was excluded because of a notice related to pool phone lines, which was remedied that day.

Aquatics Director Kathleen Cook said the honors recognize a spotless safety record and are not easy to come by.

"We follow stringent guidelines set by the county and the state, and these awards are a reflection of the job that we're doing and how we're presenting the amenities," Cook said. "These recognize that we operated through the season without having any critical or major violations recognized by the health department."

She said Ocean Pines pools have earned safety awards regularly over the last decade.

Ocean Pines' outdoor pools will reopen for the season on May 27.

For more information on Ocean Pines Aquatics, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/aquatics.

Local group collecting items for summer camp scholarship participants

Ocean Pines Get Involved and Worcester County GOLD are teaming up to help collect supplies for local at-risk children attending summer camps on scholarship.

Worcester County GOLD is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing emergency financial assistance and basic needs items for Worcester County residents living with low income.

This year, the nonprofit will supply scholarships for around 100 children to attend summer camps.

They are asking for donations of the following items:

- Cinch bags or backpacks
- Beach towels
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Socks, sizes 1Y – 7Y
- Flip-flops or sandals, sizes 1Y – 7Y

Items may be dropped off in a donation box in the Ocean Pines Administration Building lobby on 235 Ocean Parkway.

For more information on the donation drive, contact organizer Esther Diller at esmatt4@aol.com.

Summer camp scholarships are available to Worcester County residents living on a low income. For more information, email contact@worcester-gold.org.

The Prothonotary Birding Trail

By **Ralph Ferrusi**

The Prothonotary (it's taken me a year to spell it right) Birding Trail alongside the Nassawango Creek in the Nature Conservancy's 10,000-acre Nassawango Creek Preserve down by

Catholic Church. The prothonotary warbler is the only member of the genus *Protonotaria* and the only eastern warbler that nests in natural or artificial cavities."

Got that? Plainly speaking, it's a cute little yellow migratory bird, that sometimes hangs around creeks like the Nassawango. Kath and I once had two of them pointed out to us, we were thrilled, while on a guided canoe trip on the Nassawango.

The Prothonotary has a lot to offer. Most of the Eastern Shore

trails we walk are pancake flat. What makes the Prothonotary unique is it dips gently up and down, bobbing and weaving, enticing you along through mature eastern deciduous hardwood forests. There are benches spaced along the trail, and, a lot of numbered bird houses. Much of the footpath edges wetlands, packed with bald cypress "knees." The trail is mostly well marked by diamond-shaped yellow/green plastic TRAIL signs, and often by unique, small, circular, wooden signs. And, at times it takes you right out to hard-to-resist photo

ops on the banks of the eminently canoe-able Nassawango Creek.

The trail is accessible at three points along Creek Road. The first is on the right, just after turning off Nassawango Road (Route 364), marked by a hard-to-miss "Prothonotary Birding Trail" sign. A short distance down the road there's a big green Nature Conservancy sign, also on the right. Farther down the road there is another, unmarked, hard-to-spot access.

Heading north at the first sign/access, the trail swings around to the left, soon making the first of four gentle ups and downs, woods rising to the left and wetlands on the right. It soon passes a bench on the left, across from birdhouse #36. Beware: on the fourth dip there are several cypress knees on the trail, often hidden by leaves.

Eventually there will be a right branch off the main trail, leading to creek overlooks, one with a bench. Swinging left, back to the main trail, there's a narrow boardwalk that is sometimes floating after wet weather.

Straight ahead the trail leads

across a mowed path in a meadow to the second parking area. Turning right it heads over longer gentle ups and downs, soon crossing a 100-foot narrow bridge/boardwalk. It appears to end at a short old fence, but keep going: it continues quite a ways beyond.

At a "T" junction, the Prothonotary becomes the Francis M. Uhler Nature Trail. Going right, out to the creek, there's a sign dedicated to Francis, and three benches. Back to the junction, straight ahead leads to the third access on Creek Road. Going right loops back around to the junction, where another right takes you back the way you came along the Prothonotary.

Enjoy the very nice walk in the woods back to your car, on this now-familiar trail. Maybe you'll see a little yellow bird or two.

Note: I prefer to wear hiking boots: better traction and, support, and use aluminum trekking poles. And, we hike November through March: cooler weather, and, without chiggers, mosquitoes, flies, and gnats.



Snow Hill is one of our favorites. It's a very nice bang-for-the-buck hike, and we've walked it many times. But, never on a spectacular 50-degree clear-blue-sky day in the third week of January. What a day it was!

First, what the heck is "Prothonotary?" Brace yourself.

According to Wikipedia, "The prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) is a small songbird of the New World warbler family. It is named for its plumage which resembles the yellow robes once worn by papal clerks (named prothonotaries) in the Roman

Courier Almanac

On April 26, 1865, John Wilkes Booth was killed when Union soldiers track him down to a Virginia farm 12 days after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln.

Twenty-six-year-old Booth was one of the most famous actors in the country when he shot Lincoln during a performance at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., on the night of April 14. Booth was a Maryland native and a strong supporter of the Confederacy. As the war entered its final stages, Booth hatched a conspiracy to kidnap the president. He enlisted the aid of several associates, but the opportunity never presented itself. After the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Confederate army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, Booth changed the plan to a simultaneous assassination of Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State William Seward. Only Lincoln was actually killed, however. Seward was stabbed by Lewis Paine but survived, while the man assigned to kill Johnson did not carry out his assignment.

The beverages individuals drink could affect their skin cancer risk. According to World Cancer Research Fund International, drinking coffee could reduce a woman's risk for malignant melanoma and might decrease both men's and women's risk for basal cell carcinoma. Though WCRFI notes the exact biological mechanisms linking coffee consumption to malignant melanoma and basal cell carcinoma are uncertain, drinking coffee exposes people to various biologically active compounds. According to the WCRFI, some of those compounds have been studied in animal and in vitro studies and been found to boast antioxidant and anti-tumorigenic (anti-tumor) properties. But it's not all good news regarding beverages and skin cancer risk. The WCRFI also notes that consuming alcohol could increase the risk of malignant melanoma and basal cell carcinoma.



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The Courier

Signs you may need a new HVAC system

There's no place like home, especially when that home is a comfortable and safe haven. One of the ways residents find comfort in their homes is by maintaining the right indoor temperatures, which fluctuate along with the seasons. While there is much to be said about opening windows and doors to let Mother Nature do her thing, indoor comfort is often maintained with an HVAC system.

HVAC stands for heating, ventilation and air conditioning. It can include heat pumps, furnaces and air conditioning units. It is an automated system that works by adjusting a thermostat to regulate air temperature, and sometimes humidity, in the home. According to Enviguard, a commercial contracting provider, HVAC systems also may be used to improve indoor air quality through filtra-

tion and oxygen replacement.

As with any mechanical device, an HVAC system has a life span that must be considered. Should any of the following conditions be present, it is likely time to consult with an HVAC technician to see if repairs or replacement of the entire system is warranted.

Age. If the HVAC system is more than 10 years old, it could be time to begin budgeting for a new unit. Many modern, efficient systems may last 12 to 14 years with routine maintenance. But it's good to keep an HVAC system's age in mind so you can readily recognize when it might start to fail.

Longer or constant running times. An efficient, properly working system will quickly heat or cool the home and then turn off. A system that is turning on repeatedly or having to run for a while be-

fore the set temperature is reached could be nearing the end of its utility.

Strange noises. Groaning, banging or loud humming noises should be addressed. While these noises may indicate that certain components need maintenance or replacement, they also could be symptoms of age and a system nearing failure.

Frequent repair visits. Knowing the HVAC company's repair person by name is a sign that the system has required too much work in recent months. Repeated issues and repairs are probably signs that it's time to consider a system replacement.

Higher bills. Sticker shock when receiving electricity or gas bills likely mean



the HVAC system isn't working efficiently and might need to be replaced.

Poor indoor air quality. If the home is dusty or humid or even if allergies seem to have cropped up out of nowhere, this could indicate a poorly functioning HVAC system.

HVAC systems are vital to keeping indoor environments comfortable and safe. Such systems may exhibit certain signs that indicate they need to be replaced.

County issues outdoor burning ban

All outdoor burning will be banned for an indefinite period of time in Worcester County. Worcester County Fire Marshal Matthew Owens issued the burn ban.

"Due to the county's current dry conditions, the burn ban is effective starting April 24," Fire Marshal Owens said. "This ban should reduce the number of out-of-control, outside fires, which cause safety concerns for area residents, visitors, and especially responding fire personnel."

The ban applies to all outdoor ignition sources, with the following exceptions:

- Proper use of gas and charcoal grills
- Campfires at the county's commercial properties
- State and federal campgrounds
- Permitted official Ocean City bonfires
- Private property recreational campfires, which are limited to a fire area of two feet, with a height of three feet
- Public fireworks displays
- Volunteer fire company training exercises

The ban will remain in effect until the dry conditions dissipate.

In addition, all existing outdoor burn permits have been rescinded.

"Our water tables are extremely low, and this is confirmed by county and USGS monitoring well networks," Environmental Programs Director Bob Mitchell said. "We have ex-

tremely low precipitation totals, and the U.S. Drought Monitor has the county under a moderate drought category."

For further information, contact Fire Marshal Owens at 410-632-5666.



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Minor exterior upgrades that can help sell a home

The home improvement industry has been booming for years, but forecasters are projecting a deceleration in 2023 and perhaps beyond. Estimates from the Home Improvement Research Institute, which is the leading market research resource for the home and building products industry, indicate that growth in the home improvement products market is expected to decelerate from 7.2 percent in 2022 to 1.5 percent in 2023. Inflation continues to affect consumer spending, and homeowners may be looking to spend less on renovations in the year ahead.

Minor upgrades that aren't as costly as larger projects can still make a big difference, especially among prospective buyers. When looking for minor upgrades that can help sell a home, homeowners can rely on Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report. That report analyzes costs for an assortment of remodeling projects and determines the value of those projects at resale. Though resale value depends on a host of variables, including location, the following are some relatively minor exterior upgrades that impress buyers and provide a strong return for home-

owners.

Garage door replacement: Garage doors matter more than sellers may recognize, as various real estate professionals note that buyers appreciate homes with updated garage doors. That's good news for homeowners, as the 2022 Cost vs. Value Report indicated homeowners recoup roughly 93 percent of their garage door replacement investment at resale. The average cost of such a job is right around \$4,000, making this a budget-friendly remodeling project.

Window replacement: The cost of new windows will depend on just how many windows must be replaced. But there's no denying buyers like the idea

of low emissivity (low-E) windows, which can cut energy bills by a significant amount over time. The Office of Energy

new low-E windows can emphasize those savings in home listings. The '2022 Cost vs. Value Report' indicates that homeowners recoup roughly two-thirds of their investment in new windows at resale.

Landscaping: Well-maintained landscaping is another home exterior component that can make a strong first impression on buyers. A recent survey of nearly 7,000 realtors conducted by the National Association of Realtors found that upgrading a landscape recouped roughly 83 percent of homeowners' initial investment at resale. In addition, 11 percent of realtors surveyed indicated that an upgraded landscape was the decisive factor that closed the deal for the house.

Updating a home's exterior doesn't have to bust homeowners' budgets. Many affordable projects also provide a substantial return at resale.



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How to pick the right trees for your property

Trees benefit a landscape by serving both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. A home surrounded by healthy green trees can be a sight to behold, and those same trees can benefit surrounding plants and wildlife at the same time.

As appealing as trees are, not all trees and landscapes make for the perfect match. The Arbor Day Foundation notes the importance of planning when

tree sizing guide can be accessed at <https://www.arborday.org/trees/right-TreeAndPlace/size.cfm> and serves as an invaluable resource for homeowners who want to plant new trees around their properties.

Canopy spread: Trees grow out as well as up, so it's important to consider their potential width at maturity as well. The ADF sizing guide can help homeowners get an idea of how wide a tree is likely to be at maturity. Trees that spread out quite a bit don't necessarily need to be avoided, but it's important that they're planted far enough apart so they don't adversely affect surrounding plants. In addition, wide trees that are planted too close together can make the landscape appear crowded, taking something away from its aesthetic appeal.

Growth rate: Growth rate is an important variable because it can affect how quickly homeowners will see changes in their landscapes. Homeowners who want to plant for privacy can consider trees with quick growth rates or purchase more mature trees that are already near full growth. Those who are not in need of instant transformation can try trees with slower growth rates, which the ADF notes typi-

cally live longer than fast-growing species.

Requirements: Different trees require different amounts of sun and moisture and different soil components to thrive. Homeowners can have their soil tested to determine which trees will thrive in it. Local garden centers can be

a great resource for homeowners who want insight as to which trees will thrive in their local climates.

Trees serve many functions on a property. Choosing the right trees for a landscape requires careful consideration of a host of variables.



designing a landscape. Planning ensures the trees homeowners ultimately choose for their properties will grow well in the soil and moisture present in their yards.

Careful consideration of a handful of variables can help homeowners determine which trees will make the best fit for their properties.

Height: Homeowners must consider the projected height of a tree before planting it. Avoid trees that will bump into anything when fully grown, as that can adversely affect surrounding greenery and pose a safety hazard. The ADF's

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Harvest happiness, not accidents

By **Nick Burak**, PTA
Hamilton Physical Therapy



Nick Burak

With the weather getting nicer out, this spring is a perfect time to start thinking about your summer garden. While gardening can stimulate our creativity and transform our diet, this hobby involves a variety of physical activities, such as digging, planting, weeding, and carrying heavy objects.

These activities require the use of various muscle groups and can put a strain on your body, particularly your back, shoulders, and knees. In this article, we'll explore some tips for safe gardening during this busy time of year.

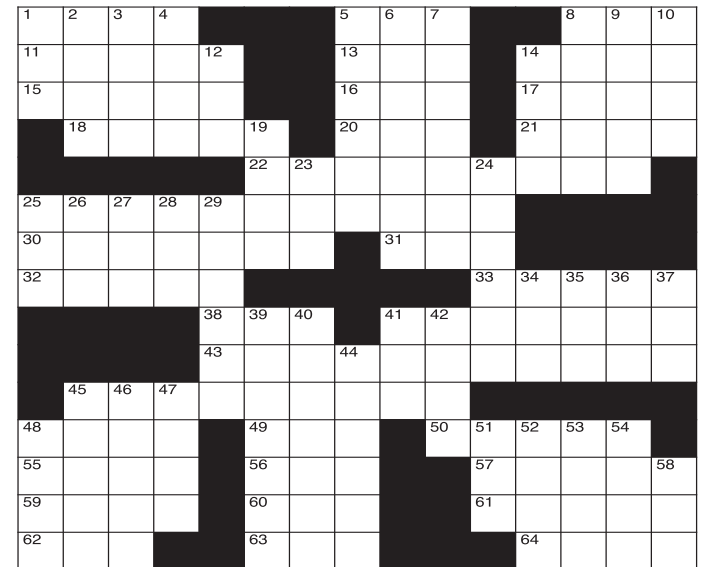
Before you get to work in your garden, it is essential to warm up your muscles and practice proper body mechanics. Take a few minutes to do some light stretching exercises such as shoulder rolls, leg swings, and gentle twists. When you're bending, kneeling or reaching while gardening, be sure to use good form. It is important to use proper lifting, squatting and reaching techniques as these can help to prevent injury. Bend from your hips, not your back, when picking objects up from the ground. If you're not using a raised garden bed, consider using knee pads or a cushion when kneeling to protect your knees. Avoid prolonged, awkward positions that can strain your muscles or joints.

Once you're all warmed up, grab the proper tools for the job. Choose

tools that are ergonomically designed and comfortable to hold. Look for tools with padded handles, as these can reduce the strain on your hands and wrists. Use tools that are the right size for you. Using tools that are too large or too small can cause additional strain and discomfort. Proper attire is important to consider, such as wide-brimmed hats, gloves, long sleeves shirts and pants, and work boots to protect you from the sun and other hazards. Also, read safety instructions and warning labels on all tools, equipment, and chemicals before using them to prevent injury! Slow and steady wins the race.

Gardening can be a lot of work, and it's important to pace yourself to avoid overexertion. When gardening, it's important to be aware of your surroundings. Look out for uneven ground, obstacles, and tripping hazards. Take frequent breaks to stretch, rest, and hydrate. If you feel tired or uncomfortable, take a break and come back to your gardening later. Don't try to do too much at once, especially if you're just starting out.

Remember, safety should be your top priority while gardening. By following these basic safety tips, you can enjoy your gardening activities while reducing the risk of injuries and promoting overall well-being. If you are feeling limited, whether it is because of poor balance, lack of strength in your core and extremities, or need a "tune-up", you may want to schedule a visit with your physical therapist for personalized guidance. Remember, Direct Access allows you to be evaluated by your physical therapist without a doctor's referral.

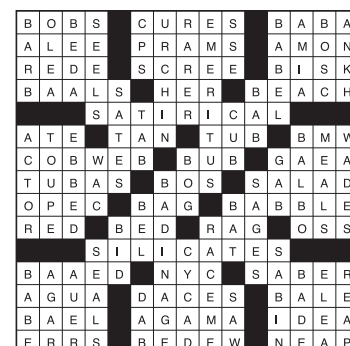


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. It's all over the beach
- 5. A cirque
- 8. Corpuscle count (abbr.)
- 11. Influential report author
- 13. Satisfaction
- 14. Recurring only at long intervals
- 15. Islamic calendar month
- 16. Neither
- 17. Gelatinous substance
- 18. American electronic music producer
- 20. Old computer system
- 21. Professional organization
- 22. Malaria mosquitoes
- 25. Not composed of matter
- 30. It's in the ocean
- 31. Peyton's little brother
- 32. French commune
- 33. Eyelashes
- 38. Equal (prefix)
- 41. Quality of little or no rain
- 43. One who beholds
- 45. Sung to
- 48. Influential punk artist
- 49. Amount of time
- 50. Polio vaccine developer
- 55. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 56. Job
- 57. Flat-bottomed sailboat
- 59. Japanese wooden clog
- 60. Folk singer DiFranco
- 61. FL city
- 62. Naturally occurring solid
- 63. Language of indigenous Asian people
- 64. Dark brown

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 2. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 3. Venomous snake genus
- 4. Uninteresting
- 5. Straightforwardness
- 6. Expression of wild excitement
- 7. Arrange in order
- 8. East Indian cereal grass
- 9. Hillsides
- 10. Bird beak covering
- 12. Baseball stat
- 14. Edge of a surfboard
- 19. Wrapping accessory
- 23. Express approval
- 24. Deduce
- 25. Similar
- 26. Born of
- 27. Automobile
- 28. Obligated to repay
- 29. Live in
- 34. Influential journalist Tarbell
- 35. Set aflame
- 36. OJ trial judge
- 37. Scottish town
- 39. African nation
- 40. Egg-shaped wind instrument
- 41. Mimic
- 42. Frees
- 44. In slow tempo
- 45. Sword
- 46. Related on the mother's side
- 47. Mars crater
- 48. Plant of the lily family
- 51. Suitable in the circumstances
- 52. Hillside
- 53. Metrical foot
- 54. Amazon river tributary
- 58. Adult male human



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How to create a sunroom

As fall inches closer to winter, it's not uncommon for people to look to the coming cold with a degree of lament. Spring, summer and fall provide ample opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors, but such chances are few and far between once the winter freeze settles in. Though winter might compel the masses to huddle up inside, there's still a way to take in the great outdoors on cold winter days and nights.

It might not prove an exact substitute for summer nights around the firepit, but a sunroom affords homeowners a chance to marvel at snowy winter landscapes without venturing out into the cold. Sometimes referred to as all-sea-

ing the warm weather? Or do homeowners want to turn their sunrooms into reading rooms? Though it's possible to make sunrooms multipurpose spaces, it may be hard to create a relaxing vibe in rooms that are too crowded with furnishings or too busy. Defining how the space will be used also makes it easier when shopping for furnishings.

Define when the room will be used. In addition to defining how the room will be used, homeowners should give ample consideration to when the room will be used. A year-round sunroom will need to be heated, while a three-season sunroom likely won't require heating. Cooling might be a concern on hot summer afternoons, but many homeowners will likely spend such days outside anyway, so cooling the room may be as simple as installing a ceiling fan and ensuring windows can be opened to let fresh air in. Homeowners who want a year-round sunroom should install insulated glass to keep the room even warmer when the mercury dips.

Opt for bright colors. Bright colors can make sunrooms feel all the more inviting and make for a perfect match with all the natural light already in the room. The renovation experts at HGTV note that white walls and ceilings can maximize the warm illumination of the natural light that will be pouring in from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Better Homes & Gardens adds that brightly colored cushions, pillows and area

rugs with similarly hued colors and patterns can add visual interest and texture to a sunroom.

Make use of a view. Homeowners needn't direct too much of their focus on decor if their sunrooms come with a view. Art on the walls and other decorative items around the room are less important if a sunroom affords a view of the ocean or a lake or dense woods that attract local wildlife. In rooms with a view, arrange furniture so residents and guests can comfortably look outward and take in all the surround landscape has to offer.

Sunrooms are a great place to take in nature no matter the weather.



son rooms, sunrooms can make for a great retreat on quiet summer mornings or crisp autumn afternoons. Sunrooms can be treated as blank canvasses, which makes decorating them more fun. But a few tricks of the trade can help homeowners turn their blank canvasses into welcoming spaces to take in all that nature has to offer throughout the year.

Define the purpose. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend homeowners decide how they want to use the sunroom before they begin decorating it. When the weather gets too chilly to dine outside, will the sunroom serve as an alternative dining space in the same way patios and decks do dur-

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27	High	2:20 PM
27	Low	8:14 PM
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28	Low	9:16 AM
28	High	3:22 PM
28	Low	9:13 PM
Sa 29	High	3:56 AM
29	Low	10:06 AM
29	High	4:21 PM
29	Low	10:11 PM
Su 30	High	4:50 AM
30	Low	10:52 AM
30	High	5:13 PM
30	Low	11:06 PM
M 1	High	5:37 AM
1	Low	11:35 AM
1	High	5:58 PM
1	Low	11:57 PM
Tu 2	High	6:20 AM
2	Low	12:15 PM
2	High	6:40 PM
W 3	Low	12:45 AM
3	High	7:02 AM
3	Low	12:54 PM
3	High	7:22 PM

DIY projects that can conserve energy around the house

Home renovation projects can pay numerous dividends. Renovations can have a positive effect on resale value, make homes more livable for residents and, in some ways, make homes more affordable.

Renovation projects that aim to conserve energy can save homeowners substantial amounts of money.

Such projects don't often require considerable effort or even sizable financial investments, which can make homeowners skeptical as to just how much they can save after completing the project. But the scale of a project may have little to do with how much homeowners will save. For example, the U.S.

Department of Energy notes that a relatively effortless task like turning back a thermostat between 7° and 10° F for eight hours per day can save homeowners as much as \$83 per year. A more labor-intensive task like planting shade trees saves homeowners an average of between \$35 and \$119 per year.

When looking for ways to conserve energy around the house and save money, homeowners need not necessarily commit to expensive projects. The DOE notes that the following are some

energy-saving projects and details what homeowners can expect to save after completing them. While each individual project may not result in jaw-dropping savings, homeowners who follow many of these recommendations may end up saving more than \$1,000 per year.

Project: Install exterior low-e storm windows. What is it? Low-e windows reflect infrared heat back into a home. Such windows are coated with an ultra-thin layer of metal that improves the window's insulation ability.

How much can I save? Homeowners who install low-e windows can save between 12 and 33 percent on their annual heating and cooling costs.

Project: Seal uncontrolled air leaks. What is it? Air leaks let cool air in during winter and warm air in during summer. Caulking, sealing and weather stripping all cracks and large openings can cut back on air leaks that are costing you money. The DOE recommends hiring a contractor to seal any leaks on heating and cooling ducts.

How much can I save? Homeowners who seal uncontrolled air leaks can save between 10 and 20 percent on their annual heating and cooling bills.

Project: Plant shade trees. What is it? If you plant a deciduous tree between six and eight feet tall near your home, it will begin to shade your windows within a year of being planted. Depending on the species of the tree and the home, the shade tree will begin shading the roof within five to 10 years. The DOE notes that shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce air conditioning costs.

How much can I save? Properly

planted shade trees can reduce air conditioning costs by anywhere from 15 to 50 percent.

Project: Insulate the water heater



tank. What is it? New water tanks are likely already insulated. But homeowners with older hot water tanks can insulate their tanks with a water heater insulating blanket kit.

How much can I save? Insulating a water heater tank can save homeowners as much as 16 percent on their annual water heating bills.

Even the smallest DIY projects can produce big savings. More information about energy-saving home improvement projects can be found at www.energy.gov.

House powerwashing tips

Powerwashing, also known as pressure-washing, utilizes a high-velocity water spray to remove dirt and residue from the exterior surfaces of a home. It is frequently used on vinyl siding, concrete and sometimes wood decks to treat mildew and other growth that accumulates over time.

Powerwashing can be a great way to remove grime without having to scrub by hand. But it requires a delicate touch to get it right. Sometimes it is best to leave the job to professionals. But homeowners willing to give it a go can try powerwashing themselves, as various stores rent power washers.



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tips
from page 12

The home improvement website ImproveNet says that, until very recently, pressure washers were almost exclusively commercial machines sold to professionals or rented to do-it-yourselfers. Lately manufacturers have targeted homeowners looking to buy with lightweight options. For those who see powerwashing as a routine venture, purchasing a unit may be worth the investment.

It is important to exercise caution when operating a powerwashing machine. The high-velocity spray can tear through skin. It is key to get a feel for the washer, and try less pressure first to get a handle on the magnitude of the tool.

Don safety gear prior to using a pressure washer. Gloves, eye protection and ear protection can be handy. Most units will connect to a standard garden hose. Choose old clothing and expect to get wet. Never point a powerwasher hose at anyone and do not attempt to rinse feet or hands in the spray.

The renovation resource The Family Handyman suggests starting with a

wide-degree nozzle to test out the spray on the surface that needs to be cleaned. A 15- or 25-degree nozzle is usually the wand for general cleaning and paint stripping without damaging the surface of the home. Experiment with an optimal distance of the washer wand to get the desired cleaning effects without causing any damage.

Work using a horizontal and slightly downward angle to avoid driving water up under the siding of a home.

Avoid spraying any electric wires or components on the home. Also, try not to spray upward, and angle the spray away from doors, windows and vents.

Some washers have reservoirs that will hold a detergent solution. Choose the right detergent for the job. Keep in mind that cleansers containing bleach can damage surrounding plants, so they may need to be covered while the washing takes place.

Avoid the use of ladders when operating a powerwasher. The push-back from the wand can cause falls. Instead, opt for an extension wand to address the upper reaches of a home.

Powerwashing a home is an effective way to remove stubborn grime and refresh the look of a home's exterior.

Bluebird FARMs

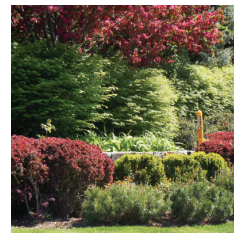


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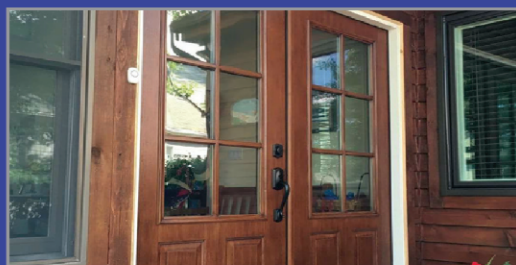
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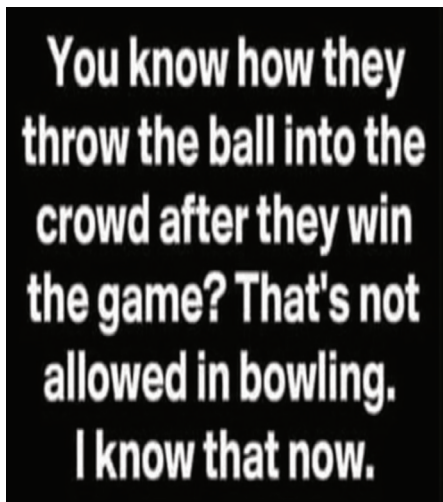
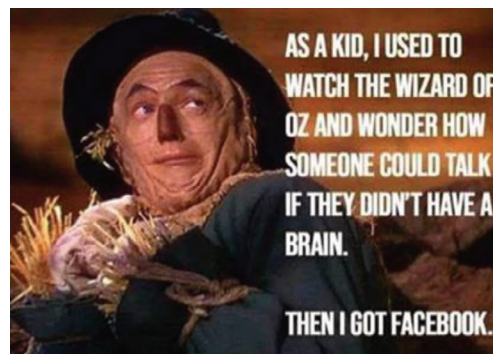
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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**



update from page 3

age operations went into effect, adding a fourth and fifth year to the agreement, which now runs through fiscal year 2024-2025.

He said the original contract was executed in August 2019, and Matt Ortt Companies met or exceeded combined operating profit targets of \$130,000, \$175,000, and \$190,000 in consecutive years.

For more information on Food and Beverage programs and events, visit www.opyachtclub.com.

Marina update

Viola said installation of new pipes and gas lines are in progress at the Yacht Club Marina, along with installation of an entirely new C-Dock.

Changes were necessary because of new federal environmental standards.

"We're on track to be done May 1," Viola said. "The total project is about \$500,000, and at the end we will have all new pipes [and other equipment] all in regulation ... it's something that needed to be done and it's on track."

For more information on Marina programs and events, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/marina-water-sports.

Golf programs

Several new programs are finding

a home at the Ocean Pines Golf Club. That includes the Matt Ruggiere Golf Academy at Ocean Pines, offering private lessons and adult and junior golf instruction, as well as programs created by local community groups.

The Putters Club of the Ocean Pines Ladies Golf Association meets every other Tuesday at the general practice area to work on their short game. The Ocean Pines Scoring Club also began meeting on April 4 to work on putting and pitching skills.

The amenity hosted a Resident Golf Day on Sunday, April 9 and drew about 65 players.

Bob Beckelman, Brian Davis and John O'Connor led the event, and OPLGA, OPMGA and OPA membership were represented. The day included a "closest to the pin" challenge on hole #7 on the indoor simulator, plus pitching and putting contests on the practice greens, and driving range tips.

Viola said the course is in the best shape it's been in two decades. He added revenues were up about 15% during the "Bob Beckelman" era over the last six months, and the Clubhouse Grille is also doing well financially.

For information on upcoming Golf programs and events, visit www.oceanpinesgolf.org.

Recreation programs

Viola said 2023 summer camps offered through the Recreation and Parks Department are full, with 170 campers booked.

A recent youth basketball league was a big success and drew 130 participants, and spring softball started on April 10.

Easter events included "Breakfast with the Easter Bunny" on April 1, and the Spring Celebration and Easter egg hunt on April 8.

For information on upcoming Recreation programs and events, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/recreation-parks.

Spring landscaping

Public Works and outside contractors have been busy with landscaping efforts at local parks and facilities, and along the roadsides throughout Ocean Pines.

That includes the Racquet Center, Pintail Park in preparation of Arbor Day ceremonies, and at the Veterans Memorial, and Sports Core Pool.

New plants were ordered for the Golf Club, new mulch was applied at the Dog Park, and additional cherry trees were planted at the North Gate Pond.

Viola said 2,000 tulips planted last fall are now in bloom throughout the community.

Mailbox repairs

New mailboxes and pedestals were recently ordered, and Viola said the Association is working with the U.S. Postmaster to schedule installation dates.

The replacement program started in 2022 and has included power washing, repairs, and replacement of mailbox structures. Viola said three additional parcel boxes and seven pedestals were installed over the last month or so.

Financial update

Viola said an early report for March shows revenues were roughly \$70,000 favorable to budget and expenses were over budget by about \$71,000.

"We're pretty much flat for the month," he said.

Viola expects the fiscal year to close in April with the Association around \$1.2 million favorable to budget.

For more information on OPA financial reports, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/finance.

Other questions

For additional questions, email info@oceanpines.org any time or call 410-641-7717 during normal business hours.

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