

# The Courier

January 10, 2024 Volume 24 Number 16



**Celebration** - Ocean City Elementary held its annual Holiday Spirit Day on December 20. Students, faculty and staff dressed up in their favorite festive attire and enjoyed a school-wide holiday sing-along.



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Meet the Team

# Tony Howard is an innovator

Driving around Ocean Pines, it's hard to miss the handiwork of Landscape Supervisor Tony Howard. His efforts include revitalization of several major entranceways, cleanup and caretaking of the parks, and an innovative aquatic planter.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Howard spent two decades as a landscaper and ran a deli and pizzeria before moving to Maryland in 2016.

In Ocean Pines, he was initially hired by the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department, but later transferred to work for Public Works Director Eddie Wells.

"I saw there was an open position over there, so I kept on bugging Eddie," Howard said with a laugh.

On an average day, Howard could be assigned anything from digging holes and trimming bushes, to coordinating with a community group, or spearheading any number of restoration projects assigned by General Manager John Viola.

"We do all the landscaping and take care of all the grounds," he said, which is no small feat in a large residential community of 8,500 homes. Howard currently works with a three-person crew that includes Mike Pow-

North Gate was pruning up all the holly bushes and cleaning all that up, and we planted mums and kale for the season," he said. "You can see that along the fencing on both sides."

His crew also helped restore the iconic sails and signage at the Yacht Club entrance, collaborated again with the Garden Club for Pintail Park plantings, and even pitched in with the Recreation and Parks Department's annual Haunted House.

Howard previously restored the large "OP" sign at the North Gate and redid the islands all over the Administration and Community Center parking lot.

During the holiday season, Howard and his crew were tasked with doubling down on previous light and decoration displays. They started by building seven large artificial trees that each have 2,500 lights.

"We came up with the idea of building the trees, and then we put one at the Yacht Club and one at the North Gate," he said, adding additional trees were also placed at the South Gate and Cathell Road entranceways. "We built the first few at Public Works, and then for the ones that are out on the lawns we put poles up and built them there



**Don Chalk, Mike Powell and Tony Howard**

Howard continued. "That stuff is always nice to hear."

Once that was done, the crew immediately moved onto the next project.

"The next thing we're going to start is at the four-way stop [on Manklin Creek Road]. We're going to cut down a lot of that growth, clean it up, and put in new lighting because there's not much on that end," he said. "We're going to do something a little better than what's there now."

Howard said he and his team keep getting assignments because their work has been so well received, and because they have proven themselves to be so dependable.

"Whenever we do stuff they like, we get more work!" he said with a laugh. "They'll say, 'Oh that looks good! Let's do more.' And we just get to work and do it."

Next spring, Howard hopes to bring back the floating planter boxes at the North Gate. He said the planters benefit the pond and local wildlife and provide an aesthetic pop to the landscape.

"That was put on hold after last year because we didn't have enough help, but I'm probably going to try and put in new planters there, next season," he said. "I came up with a different design that should just look like an island out there within a couple of years, once it grows out."

Howard said the planters help fil-

ter the water by pulling nutrients out of the pond through their roots.

"With the algae growing, and feces from the ducks and geese contaminating the water, this will help to clean some of that out," he said. "And they create a habitat and a refuge, providing structure and cover for small fish, tadpoles, frogs and turtles."

The planters also help beautify the landscape.

"There's an extra added bonus with the color, and they attract pollinators and birds, so it's its own little ecosystem and habitat," Howard said.

Looking at other future projects, Howard also wants to build a retaining wall and raise the flowerbeds at the Yacht Club entrance on Mumford's Landing Road.

"We come up with new ideas all the time, just driving around the community and looking at what's there," he said. "It's just a matter of finding the time."

Doing the landscaping and taking care of the grounds takes a lot of effort for a community of 8,500 homes.

ell and Don Chalk.

"We take care of all of Ocean Pines, including the Veterans Memorial grounds," he said. "That includes a couple thousand yards of mulch, each and every year.

"During the mowing season, we do all the weed whacking in the morning and all the mowing during the afternoon, because the grass is too wet in the morning," he continued. "We also do the maintenance of the mowers ourselves, and we each have our own mowers and tools that we keep track of."

Howard's recent beatification projects include a collaboration with the Ocean Pines Garden Club to plant perennials and seasonal greenery at the North Gate. That means putting in palm trees during the summer, and pine trees during the holidays.

"The newest thing we did at the

onsite."

Howard's team also hung-up new holiday banners, along with roughly 25,000 Christmas lights around the community.

"I think it turned out well," he said.

A Facebook post about the holiday displays reached more than 5,000 people, with 250 positive impressions and 50 comments – all universally complimentary.

"It makes you feel a little better when you see that," he said. "You're out there and you're freezing, and you might complain a little bit while you're doing it, but then you look and you see people writing all those nice comments, and it makes you feel pretty good.

"Especially at the North Gate, people will stop and tell us while we're putting them up that they're happy and they like it, and good job,"

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## ***Pine'eer Craft Club unveils new leadership***

On December 15, the Pine'eer Craft Club installed new officers, presented thousands in annual donations, and looked ahead to the club's 50th anniversary in 2024.

Sharon Puser will continue as club president, and the luncheon served as a platform for Puser to reflect on the club's accomplishments throughout the year and offer a glimpse into 2024.

Also among the highlights, club treasurer Jane Wolnik presented a heartfelt token of appreciation on behalf of the club to Puser for her unwavering commitment and efforts.



The full list of officers named during the event were:

- Sharon Puser, President
- Kelly Shoaf Davis, 1st Vice President and Publicity
- Linda Brindley, Recording Secretary
- Michelle Winemiller, Corresponding Secretary
- Jane Wolnik, Treasurer
- Debbie Jiwa and Barbara Herzog, Co-Shop Managers and Holiday Craft Festival Chairs
- Carol Quinto and Lois Schultz, Shop Treasurers
- Bill Lobecker, Advisor and Meet the Artisan Chair
- Linda Sirianni, Advisor

The executive board members are complemented by dedicated individuals in various pivotal roles:

- Tina Celia and Alison Webb Schweiger for shop display
- Diane Denk, Desserts in the Park
- Skip Flanagan, Historian
- Jackie Choate, Hospitality
- Sherry Waskey, Membership

- Candy Foreman, Programs
- Lynn Gabeler, Bake Sales

Since forming in 1974, the Craft Club has donated almost \$200,000 to the Ocean Pines community. The club once again demonstrated its commitment to community support this year by generously contributing \$7,000 in charitable donations:

- \$1,800 to the Ocean Pines Police Department
- \$2,000 to the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department
- \$1,800 to Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks
- \$500 to Ocean Pines Public Works
- \$300 to the Ocean Pines Public Library
- \$500 to the Worcester County Veteran's Memorial Foundation
- \$100 to Jim Hamlin from Neighborhood Watch

Many of the groups listed above had representatives at the luncheon; they included Chief Timothy Robinson and new fire department President Joe Entse. Looking ahead, the Craft Club extends an open invitation to former members to reconnect and take part in the upcoming special events celebrating the 50th anniversary throughout the year. For more information, contact Puser at [opcrafterclub@aol.com](mailto:opcrafterclub@aol.com).

## **Sportfishing Association to meet**

The monthly meeting of the Atlantic Coast Sportfishing Association will be held on Tuesday, January 9 at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 23rd and Ocean Highway in Ocean City. The special guest speaker will be Scott Lenox of "Fish in OC." The topic will be flounder fishing. The public is cordially invited. Food and refreshments available from 6:15 p.m.



## **Benjamin is Crafter of the Month**

The Pine'eer Craft Club announced recently that club member Erna Benjamin is the first Crafter of the month for 2024. The year 2024 is the fiftieth anniversary of the club which will host special events all year long. While Mrs. Benjamin only joined the club last year, she has been a long-time crafter. She specializes in needlework including sewing, cross stitch, quilting, crocheting and knitting. Her colorful rope bowls are very popular in the craft shop.

Erna learned how to sew and crochet from her mother. Knitting came along in eighth grade Home Economics class. And quilting a bit later than that. While there have been pauses in crafting time due to work and family, it has remained a creative outlet for nearly her entire life.

"I do purchase plenty of yarns and fabrics, but I also repurpose clothing into memory keepsakes," Erna said. "I learned how to repurpose scraps after finding the idea online. Now I make Scottie dogs, pillows, quilts, rope bowls, trivets and ornaments that are recycled yet meaningful."

While Erna joined the craft club in late summer last year, she has lived in Ocean Pines part time since 2005 when she and her husband purchased a home in the Parke. Although she spends most of her time with her husband in Rockville,

she loves coming to Ocean Pines to relax and unwind. It was a visit to the Farmer's Market where she spotted the shop, stopped in and learned more about the Pine'eer Craft Club.

Erna was raised and married in Pennsylvania. Following her husband's graduation from medical school, the Benjamins moved to the Bethesda area. "Our sons were born at Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1977 and 1979," said Erna. "We have four grandchildren. My granddaughters have sat with me to knit, crochet and sew just like I did with my mother. I hope they find pleasure in crafting throughout their lives."

In her spare time, Erna enjoys reading, bridge and a leisurely walk. She also knits hats, sweaters, and premie baby blankets for charity. Her latest request is "fidget-sensory" mats.

To shop Erna's rope bowls, Scottie dogs, crocheted shawls and more, the Pine'eer Artisan Gift Shop is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., except holidays. The Pine'eer Craft Club is always seeking new crafters and meetings are open to the public. They are held the third Thursday of the month in the community center. The club is celebrating their golden anniversary of hand crafting in Ocean Pines since 1974.



## An enjoyable holiday

Christmas this year, or more accurately last year, was stress free for our family. The holiday stretched over multiple days and venues allowing my wife and me to enjoy our family and the various gatherings in stages and without the pressure often felt when we've had to be somewhere else by a certain time.



### *It's All About. . .*

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

Getting together with friends the week before Christmas ensured the season kicked off to a wonderful start. As we have for many years, we gathered at the home of a dear friend who pulls out all the stops to ensure we eat, drink and laugh well. Typically, the womenfolk congregate together while the menfolk do the same – this year sitting around the table. We're not too far apart and within earshot, allowing one or another husband to call into the other room to ask his wife, "what's the name of that place we went to several years ago?"

On Christmas Eve, since the kids have left the roost, my wife and I traditionally have a quiet, candlelit dinner including a menu to which we look forward: prime rib, mashed potato casserole, a vegetable and dinner rolls. We often chat about our kids and grandchildren which is really no different than any other dinner.

This year our dinner tradition was interrupted (in a good way) when our son and his family joined us. We had no candles but we did have our 15-month grandson. The dinner and conversation were enjoyable. There's just something about coming together for a holiday meal that makes it so much more than just a meal. Following dinner, we exchanged gifts. Our grandson made out like a bandit.

The following morning, my wife and I awakened at a comfortable hour, sitting beside the Christmas tree to exchange gifts. Regardless of my age, I enjoy the gift exchange but not the same way I did when I was a child waking with my brother before dawn to race down the hallway to tear into what Santa left. Now, I savor watching the reactions of others as they open their gifts. This is most certainly the case with my wife as

she opens my gifts to her. Although there was much to savor, admittedly I still enjoyed tearing into my gifts.

We dined at the home of our daughter-in-law's parents. It's one of the few places I enjoy a well-prepared ham. Now before anyone thinks I'm dissing my wife's cooking you should know that she is the first to admit that ham preparation is not her forte. It should be further noted that everything else she prepares is tasty and exceptional.

The following evening, we gathered at the home of our son-in-law's parents to celebrate the arrival of our daughter and her family following a 14-hour drive from their Kentucky home. Hugs, laughter and food. It gets no better than that.

The next morning, I picked my mother up from the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal. She arrived with a wagon brimming with gifts for the family and her little dog too. When we arrived home, we had a large gift exchange with my grandchildren, daughter and son-in-law. Memories of past Christmases returned as we attempted to unwrap my mother's gifts. She ties ribbon knots tighter than a sailor and tapes packages that has kept Scotch profitable for years.

Later that afternoon, the entire family gathered at our home for a buffet feast (no ham). Good food and drink, many laughs and memories made. It's my hope that many years from now, my grandchildren will remember warmly these family gatherings in our home.

The following night, we went ice skating. Well, not all of us. Some of us watched from the sidelines as grandchildren rocketed by.

New Year's Eve morning I made an impromptu breakfast that included my daughter and her family. The hit of the meal was scrapple, something not available in Kentucky.

We ended our holiday season much the same way we started it – at a friend's home sitting around the dining room table – a table where I've sat many New Year's Eves the past twenty-plus years. Good food, good conversation, good friends and many laughs.

In the interest of full disclosure, gone are the years when my wife and I ring in the new year in real time. This year like many before, we were home in bed when the clock ticked in 2024.

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# Commentary

By Joe Reynolds  
OceanPinesForum.com

## Miracle on Clubhouse Drive

Hollywood is doing a modern take on an old film but with a new name and a new twist. Titled “Miracle on Clubhouse Drive,” the film’s story takes place in Ocean Pines, Maryland. OPA General Manager John Viola will play the primary role of Kris Kringle, originally portrayed by British actor Edmund Gwenn in “Miracle on 34th Street” from 1947. Filming is underway and release is scheduled for Thanksgiving 2024.

There can be no doubt - the miracle on Clubhouse Drive is a far greater miracle than what transpired on 34th

surprise ending, but rest assured the remake sticks to the original plot of a judge declaring John Viola really is Santa Claus.

Santa’s miracle in the remake takes place on Clubhouse Drive at the Ocean Pines golf course. To fully understand the miracle, one must do some mundane research into what were decades of disastrous financial results in the OPA golf course operation. Even a board member or two suggested selling the entire golf course, lock, stock, and barrel, for as little as \$1 million. Two different nationally recognized

were called in to perform a financial rescue. Both failed. There was a constant refrain from association members footing the financial losses – “Not even a miracle can make this course profitable.” How wrong they were.

Let’s take a stroll down the memory lane of golf losses. Not all that long ago, in 2019, the Ocean Pines Association audited financial report had homeowners in turmoil over a total loss on the golf operation exceeding \$500,000. To be clear, \$500,000 of your assessment payments went into keeping the golf course operating. The operational loss was around \$100,000 and depreciation costs, included in the assessment, were around \$400,000. Looking at it in another way, the golf course operation alone added \$60 to your assessment to cover the loss. Nor was 2019 all that unusual. Similar losses went back a decade or so.

The real corker? A combined operational and depreciation golf loss of nearly \$1 million in fiscal 2013!!!!

Fast forward to the present. Golf operations are now the most profitable amenity in all of OPA-land, on track to potentially surpass even the once thought untouchable standard of profit derived from the Beach Club Parking operation, an amenity with zero depreciation! The current fiscal year may end with a Beach Club Parking operational profit of around \$490,000. Golf operational profit last year was \$320,000.

This year’s golf projections are for a \$390,000 operational profit and depreciation of \$369,000, producing a NET profit for golf of around \$21,000. When compared to the NET golf loss of \$400,000 just five years ago, it is truly miraculous - with an assist by lowered depreciation, but most importantly an increase of operational profit from minus \$100,000 to plus \$390,000 over the five-year period!

Some association members apparently pine for the “good old days,” complaining about OPA doing needed golf course irrigation system replacement in stages as allowed by the by-laws, and demanding a referendum to approve the project even though it is

under \$1 million. Viola and various boards faced headwinds from a few association members during the years-long path to the “Miracle on Clubhouse Drive.” There was opposition to building a new clubhouse and cart barn, including demands for a referendum. Those referendum demands were not met but did morph into a successful association-member petition drive and a passed referendum that now limits single-project expenditures without a referendum to \$1 million.

Had the current referendum trigger of \$1 million been in place when the golf clubhouse was replaced, it would have required a referendum and we might still be wasting dollars trying to maintain that old structure and losing money. Association members voted in large numbers to impose the new \$1 million limit. In retrospect, was that a mistake? Historically the limit was 20% of assessment collections, perhaps \$1.8 million today.

With an excellent Viola-assembled staff, headed up by PGA Director of Golf Bob Beckelman and Director of Golf Maintenance Justin Hartshorne, Kris Kringle expressed confidence in a continuation of good financial results. Stay tuned for the premier date of “Miracle on Clubhouse Drive” coming to a theater near you.

## Sports Complex not feasible

*Publisher’s Note: The letter was sent to Governor Wes Moore and shared with The Courier.*

### Dear Governor Moore,

Enclosed you will find a letter which I wrote in opposition to the proposed Sports Complex which is being planned for the vicinity of Ocean City, Maryland. The project is estimated to cost at least \$166,900,000 or more.



*please see letter on page 15*

## Courier Almanac

On January 10, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson asked Congress for more money to support the Vietnam War. Lyndon’s War, a war Johnson actually inherited from President John F. Kennedy, had achieved nothing by 1967. The North Vietnamese use of guerrilla warfare tactics resulted in approximately 14,000 American troops killed in action by early 1967. Hundreds of U.S. planes had been shot down, leaving Air Force personnel in enemy POW camps. Although the enemy also suffered heavy casualties, they did not show any signs of giving up.

A more active, engaged brain could help delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease in aging individuals by a significant amount of time. A study published in the journal *Neurology* in 2021 found that high levels of cognitive activity can delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease in individuals 80 or older by five years. Reading was among the cognitive activities researchers associated with that delay. In addition, a separate study found that more passive cognitive activities could be linked to an increase in dementia risk. That study, published in the journal *PNAS* in 2022, linked activities such as watching television with an increased risk for dementia.



# The Courier

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# GM opening remarks on FY24-25 proposed budget

General Manager John Viola made the following opening remarks during the annual budget review by the Budget and Finance Committee on January 3:

*Per our governing documents, this was a “bottoms-up” preparation of a budget. All the departments and everybody else was included. It was a process over three months.*

*I was very happy with the way it transpired, with everybody. We have been updating the Budget and Finance [Committee]. We did look at last year’s budget when we did this [and] compared it also with the forecast, to see where we’re at.*

*We are not only giving you a budget assessment ... but we also looked at a balance sheet. We know there’s new regulations on homeowners’ associations ... that within five years we should have some type of outside study. I believe we’re ahead of all homeowners’ associations.*

*What we’ve done in the past, and credit to Budget and Finance*

*and everybody else, we are planning and we’re setting up a meeting with the outside vendor on that – what we call the “DMA light” – so that we can get updates.*

*But my point here is this: When we did the budget by the departments for the assessment, we focused on the balance sheet, which we’ve been doing [and] which this committee has told me ... that we should be doing that. So, we did do that, and we’ll show you that today. So, that’s a big part of this.*

*Also, when you look at the analysis we have in the front of the budget binder, there’s a great analysis where we compare last year’s budget forecast and then obviously this year’s budget.*

*But the point I want to make is ... when I look at it, the total revenues are up over last year’s budget in this budget – what we’re projecting. Total expenditures by this Association, by our departments, are higher than the last budget. Our replacement costs are higher – and the assessment decreased \$36.*

*Obviously, for that to happen, we’re operating on all cylinders. I’ve said this before and that’s across the board ... but Golf – what I’m seeing, what we’re all seeing and what we’re projecting – Golf has been the economic engine driving this budget. But, it’s across the board. Let me make that clear.*

The Ocean Pines Board is scheduled to review the proposed budget during a public meeting on Jan. 11.

Note: Virginia based DMA Re-

serves, Inc. were originally commissioned to do a replacement reserves study in 2015. That study was updated in 2021 and dubbed “DMA light.” Viola said the Association would do a review of the “DMA light” study within the next budget cycle, followed by a full review during the following year. Currently, OPA reserves are 25.7% of fully funded, with that number trending up over the next five years, based on budget projections.

## AGH Aux. to hold volunteer open house

Atlantic General Hospital Auxiliary will host a Volunteer Open House, in which those who are interested in volunteering at AGH can learn about the many available opportunities. The event is to be held January 23, 2024, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in Atlantic General Hospital’s cafeteria.

The Auxiliary is in need of volunteers to help in all areas of the hospital and health system, including the new Gudelsky Family Medical Center and AGH Thrift Shop. Volunteers greet visitors, run errands for staff, process and sort mail, visit patients, work at the information desk, help with administrative tasks, staff the Thrift Shop and more.

For more information and to apply online, please visit [www.atlantic-general.org/volunteer](http://www.atlantic-general.org/volunteer).

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## New Year, new name, same quality care

Billy and Jenn Hamilton, owners of Hamilton Physical Therapy PA have announced that they are rebranding from Hamilton Physical Therapy PA to Hamilton Hand to Shoulder.



**Billy and Jenn Hamilton**

Billy and Jenn graduated from University of Maryland Eastern Shore with their Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees in 2006. For the first few years they served the lower Eastern Shore communities in Pocomoke, Salisbury and Ocean Pines. Jenn and Billy both knew they held a special interest in hand therapy, so in 2012 Jenn became a Certified Hand Therapist. Billy got his certification a year later in 2013. So, what exactly is hand therapy? Hand therapy is the art and science of rehabilitation of the upper limb which includes the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, and shoulder girdle. A Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) is a Physical or Occupational Therapist that has at least 3 years of clinical experience in their field, at least 4,000 hours of patient care in the upper limb, and has passed a rigorous test of advanced clinical skills and theory in rehabilitation of the upper extremity.

In 2019, Billy and Jenn decided it was time to branch out and opened Hamilton Physical Therapy PA in Berlin at the South Gate of Ocean Pines. In 2021, they added a second location in Salisbury. They have enjoyed serving these communities and helping to improve the quality of life of their patients.

In their years of practicing as PTs/CHTs, Billy and Jenn realized that many still didn't understand what their specialty meant - as hand therapist still gives people the impression that we only specialize in the hand. Since Jenn and Billy are the only PT/CHTs on Maryland's Eastern Shore from Ocean City to Kent Island, the idea to re-brand was born. With the CHT specialty being indicative of the entire upper limb, they decided to spell that out in their name - Hamilton Hand to Shoulder.

While this new name highlights their specialty, it doesn't change how they operate day to day. The same specialized care will be available for the entire communities. In Ocean Pines, you will still be greeted by our Practice Manager Dani Hines, and will receive care from Billy Hamilton Jr, DPT/CHT, Lynn Martin, PTA and Erin Smith, DPT. In Salisbury, Patient Care Coordinator Debbie Yeadt will make you feel at home as you receive care from Jenn Hamilton, DPT/CHT, Nick Burak, PTA and Erin Smith, DPT.

The care team at each location will continue to offer the same treatment options they always have - joint replacements, falls prevention, low back pain or neck pain, or any other orthopedic or neurological conditions. This of course is in addition to the specialized treatment of the upper extremity.

## Carozza supports grant for hotel preservation

The Maryland Board of Public Works approved a \$250,000 grant to the historic Henry's Hotel in Ocean City through the African American Heritage Preservation Program on Wednesday. This grant funding will be used to rehabilitate Henry's Hotel and turn it into a museum and learning center focusing on African American contributions to Ocean City, the Eastern Shore, and the State of Maryland.

Senator Mary Beth Carozza has been a strong supporter of the preservation and rehabilitation of Henry's Hotel, along with the former Governor Larry Hogan Administration and current Governor Wes Moore Administration.

"Henry's Hotel is an important historic site not only for the African American community on the Eastern Shore and Ocean City, but all of Maryland. Great acts like Duke Ellington, Willie Harmon, and other talented black musicians stayed at Henry's Hotel during segregation, and I personally have seen the great interest in the story and history of Henry's Hotel after taking visitors by the site on Ocean City tours," said Carozza, who represents Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset counties.

Henry's Hotel, formerly known as

*Henry's Colored Hotel*, was the last hotel that allowed African Americans access to the beach during the Jim Crow era when State and local laws often enforced racial segregation. Charles and Louisa Henry purchased the 20-room hotel in 1926 and provided amenities to visiting African American tourists and entertainers that were not available to them elsewhere. Several black entertainers would perform at various venues across Ocean City but always stayed at Henry's Hotel where they could be treated as guests.

During the Board of Public Works meeting, Governor Wes Moore took a moment to speak about the importance of Henry's Hotel. "[This grant] will support efforts to turn the building into not just a hotel and refurbished building, but into a museum, into a learning center, a place where people can learn about the history of African Americans on the Shore and all throughout the State... and despite years and decades and generations of discrimination, it's helping to tell the story of 'despite it all, still I rise.'"

A total of \$5 million in grants was awarded to the African American Heritage Preservation Program to support 24 projects across the State of Maryland.

## OPA honors staff during annual ceremony

The Ocean Pines Association on December 21 honored five employees for their combined 70 years of service.

The brief recognition ceremony occurred during the annual staff holiday party at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club.

General Manager John Viola said recognizing staff is one of his favorite parts of the job.

"Ocean Pines is saying thank you, I certainly am saying thank you, and I know all the Department heads are very appreciative of the work that you do," he said. "Everybody has done a really good job, and we are having a good year because of what you do for the team, day in and day out."



From left to right: **Steve Phillips, Kenneth "Butch" Kennedy, Kevin Goldberg, Ventrel Moore and Jonathan Brown**

Those honored were:  
 -Ventrel Moore – five years  
 -Steve Phillips – five years  
 -Jonathan Brown – 10 years  
 -Kenneth "Butch" Kennedy – 20 years  
 -Kevin Goldberg – 30 years



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## Kiwanis wraps holiday donation season with successful coat and toy drives

For decades, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines / Ocean City have made their mark through volunteer work and charitable giving.

Globally, Kiwanis are a dedicated service organization of men and women who share the challenge of community and world improvement. Formed in 1915, the nonprofit group boasts more than 7,000 adult clubs and 8,300 youth clubs in 85 nations and geographic areas, with over 600,000 active members.

Locally, the Kiwanis have been active since 1980. The nonprofit sponsors five youth leadership programs throughout Worcester County Schools and engages in fundraising activities that generate roughly \$40,000 each year for local programs and people in need.

On any given day, Kiwanis members can be seen collecting clothing donations for local shelters, cooking breakfast for Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks events, or raising money for scholarships.

David Landis, the area marketing and media chairperson, first became involved in the Kiwanis in 2004. He previously worked in marketing and sales in the Baltimore, Washington, DC and Philadelphia areas and moved to Ocean Pines upon his retirement in 2003.

“To me, it’s all about service, and the main thing that interested me from the start was helping kids,” he said. “We have advisors that go to all these different school clubs, and they go to their meetings, help them to see how we do community service, and try to give them examples so that they’re ready for something like that when they get older. And we can do that all the way from elementary school up through high school.”

Education is also a part of regular Kiwanis Club meetings. Landis said they often have guest speakers and representatives from groups including the Worcester County Developmental Center, Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

Guests help educate club members on local programs that benefit the community, and their organizations generally become the beneficiaries of Kiwanis charitable giving.

Club members are actively involved

in community fundraising and engagement throughout the year, but Landis said the Kiwanis are especially active during the holiday season.

In November, Kiwanis membership collected more than 300 coats for local charities during a five-week donation drive at the Ocean Pines Community Center. A related toy drive helped gather three SUV loads for Worcester G.O.L.D., a nonprofit that provides emergency financial assistance and basic needs for Worcester County residents living with low incomes.

Kiwanis also pitched in during the Recreation and Park Department’s annual “Breakfast with the Grinch” event on December 2, cooking pancakes, scrambled eggs, and sausages.

“We all love to volunteer for community stuff. It’s just fun,” Landis said, adding that he’s been mixing pancakes for the Kiwanis since 2004. “They put me on it right away, and they complimented me the first time I ever did it

*please see **donations** on page 12*

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## Toilets

The year 2023 is in the history books and my pontoon boat is another season older. It's a little grimmer with a new squeak here and there and a couple new scratches but it all fit under the shrink wrap cover whose installation cost was adjusted upward for inflation.

One part of my boat that hasn't suffered from inflation is the head. My boat's toilet has had a very forgettable life. Born in 2017, it has stood, or rather sat, ready to serve all in need; but after seven seasons, the unpacking instructions are still attached. Apparently the dehydration from hot summer days and the very claustrophobic confines of a popup canvass tent can cause boaters to wait until they return to shore.

That's quite a bit different than back home where the bathroom is bright and cheery with fresh towels and even a magazine rack. At home the in-house facility definitely gets more wear than the pristine pontoon boat head. In fact, I have worn out a couple domestic toilet seats over the years.

I do not profess to be an expert toilet seat replacer but necessity drafts even the reluctant. The first time I had this joyful experience was about 15 years ago – somewhere between post 911 and pre-pandemic. On that blessed occasion, I naively set out for the big box store to buy a replacement only to be confronted by more than fifty toilet seats ranging in price from \$8.88 to \$52.

Aghast, I thought all toilet seats were held on by two bolts with standard dimensions and they are. I also thought that the seating diameter was also pretty standard in that all derrieres - despite personal opinions – seem to hover comfortably over the ergonomically appealing aperture.

Despite the basic reality that all fifty-two replacement seats would get 'er done, the panacea of options was intoxicating. They were thin. They were thick. They were pink, blue, grey, green, cream colored and, oh yes, white. They were made of wood or

plastic and some were cushioned.

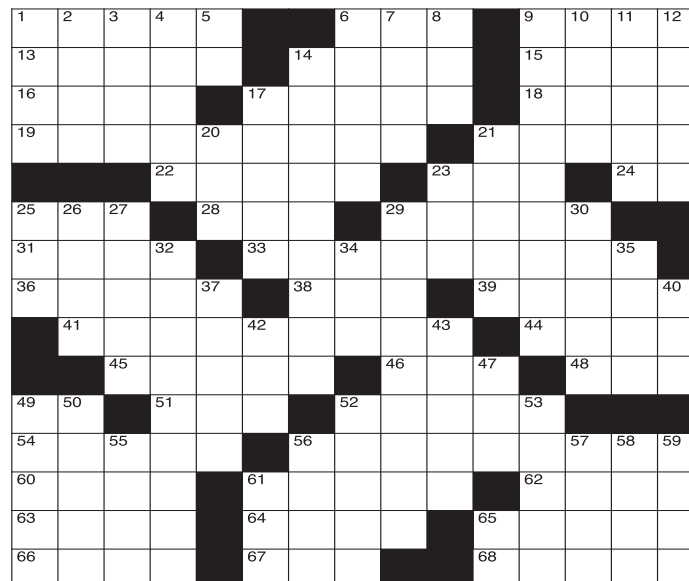
The marketers had turned a simple maintenance decision into a daunting domestic conundrum whose potential consequences could be a stigma for decades. Even the ergonomics of squatting proved to be yet another opportunity for product differentiation. The aperture could be round, oval, U-shaped, and elevated! Perspiration abound, my stomach tightened. Thank god for cell phones. I called home and let Nancy make the decision.

I recently had to replace yet another toilet seat and to my surprise, there are now 'new and improved' models. How could that be? Isn't enough, enough? Well, I reminded myself of the infamous statement attributed to Charles Duell, the Commissioner of the US Patent Office in 1899. He allegedly said that everything that could be invented has been invented and his office would be closed by 1910. The lad obviously underestimated the toilet seat designers' unbounded imagination and pursuit of profit.

The newest models have spring loaded seat covers with shock absorbers to allow the cover to gently come down without making a stink (sic). I suspect that the next time I need a replacement, I'll be confronted with a voice activated password protected flushing mechanism, drone delivered toilet paper, a laser guided bidet and AI monitoring of 'ring around the collar' but that's for another day.

Now if you think domestic bathroom fixtures are a challenge, let's talk about marine toilets. Unlike the domestic fifty shades of gray toilet seats, the marine head demands serious thinking and engineering tradeoffs to meet the maritime challenge.

Like everything on a vessel, space must be carefully allocated and resources and capacities must be budgeted. While domestic bathrooms have indoor plumbing with an unlimited supply of water to flush the system



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snakelike fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David \_\_, US playwright
- 38. Move one's head slightly
- 39. Secret rendezvous
- 41. Improved
- 44. A place to exercise
- 45. 18-year astronomical period
- 46. Automobile
- 48. You can take it
- 49. A radio band
- 51. Jaws of an animal
- 52. Short-billed rails
- 54. Chinese province
- 56. Shameless and undisguised
- 60. Horizontal passage into a mine
- 61. Adult males
- 62. Fail to entertain
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. City in north-central Utah
- 65. Southern U.S.
- 66. German river
- 67. Oxygen
- 68. Make law

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into
- 5. Commercial document (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They \_\_
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. \_\_ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware



Answers for December 20



# Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



## Surprises from Jupiter's volcanic moon Io

In the early history of astronomy, when Galileo was breaking new ground in the study of planets and stars, one of his most fascinating discoveries came in 1610, when he spotted Jupiter's four largest moons. Galileo's careful records showed that the quartet of satellites circle the giant planet in regular orbital motions. The astronomy community now calls them the "Galilean" moons in honor of this great scientist, and they are named Ganymede, Callisto, Europa, and "Io." Four centuries later, those four moons have become the beloved targets of astronomy hobbyists as well as professional astronomers.

Although the brightest of the planets is Venus, many sky watchers

have enjoyed targeting the second brightest, Jupiter, and seeing its four eye-catching Galilean moons. A telescope is not needed for this: most binoculars are able to reveal these captivating satellites.

Not only are the Galilean moons easy to spot, but they are also known for their lively movements, as they orbit their giant host in a matter of days. Callisto, the outermost, takes 17 days for one circuit about Jupiter, Ganymede circles within seven days, Europa in three-and-a-half days. Io, which is the innermost, speeds around in just 1.77 days.

Ganymede is the largest moon in the solar system, at 3,200-mile diameter and is larger than the planet

Mercury's 3,000-mile size. Callisto is just slightly smaller than Ganymede. The smallest two, Io and Europa are very close to the size of Earth's moon, 2,160 mile-diameter.

While NASA has been flying by the planets since 1962, their explorations took an amazing new twist in March 1979, as the Voyager-1 spacecraft approached Jupiter's moon Io. When this small world was photographed, an active and erupting volcano appeared in the shot. Then in July of that year, Voyager-2 captured additional images and more scientific data regarding Io's volcanic activity.

The extreme level of volcanic activity on the small world is due to the enormous effect of Jupiter's gravitational force through what is known as tidal heating. Volcanic plumes from these eruptions have risen as high as 300 miles above the surface.

Since those 1979 discoveries, hundreds of further Io eruptions have been seen by NASA probes such as Galileo, Cassini and New Horizons, as well as the Hubble Space Telescope. The latest exciting studies of this

*please see moon page 12*

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*moon*  
from page 11

phenomenon have been performed by the Juno space probe.

The Juno spacecraft was launched in 2011 and arrived at the giant planet in 2016. This probe is tracing out a unique orbit about Jupiter, passing over the poles of the planet on each circuit. It is this orbit that allowed the probe to examine Io's polar regions as well. Juno's next close flyby of Io is expected to occur February 3.

The results from the Juno explorations were published in November 2023 in the *Journal Nature*.

The study's lead author Ashley Davies said: "For the very first time, we have a global view of Io's ongoing volcanic activity, a massive leap forward in our understanding of volcanism on Io." As part of their analysis, researchers at NASA's Jet

Propulsion Laboratory have created a map which displays 266 of Io's active volcanoes.

These findings have given astronomers new insight into Io's volcanic processes. Using the detailed information gathered by Juno, they concluded that Io probably has an underground magma ocean lurking beneath its surface.

As NASA probes our solar system in ever more detail, there are bound to be more intriguing findings to come.

During January the full stellar vista appears at about 5:45 p.m., and the planet Jupiter will be a prominent, central feature. Due to its brightness, Jupiter might be visible earlier at about 5 p.m. in the eastern sky. Binocular viewers seeking the Galilean moons might check online guides, such as "Sky and Telescope," to learn the positions of each moon for the night they are viewing.

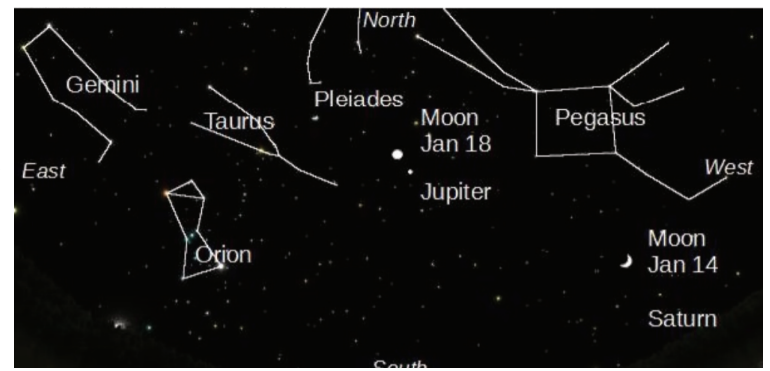
Nearby to Jupiter is Taurus the

Bull, a constellation well known for its distinctive V-shaped set of stars.

Taurus also features the "Pleiades" cluster, a small faint patch north of the V.

Towards the western horizon the planet Saturn is also visible, but stay aware that Saturn will be setting after about 9 p.m.

Two lunar conjunctions will occur in January, as Saturn dances with the crescent moon January 14 and then



Jupiter on the January 18 rendezvous with the waxing gibbous.

After 9 p.m., some of the classic winter constellations will be available, including Orion the Hunter above the southern horizon.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.

*donations*  
from page 9

that it never ran out."

Throughout the year, there are also regular clothing and canned good drives, blood drives, and concessions for countless events. Kiwanis members cook hamburgers and hotdogs during events like Bay Day, and the weekly Concerts in the Park series each summer, with proceeds going toward scholarships and other charitable endeavors.

Keeping up with those activities requires the help of many volunteers, which Landis said can sometimes be an issue. He said the local Kiwanis previously had as many as 135 members, but now there are just over 50.

"If we lose people that moved or passed away, we might replace them with new people, so our numbers have been fairly steady. But finding good volunteers has been a problem for groups all over the Eastern Shore," he said.

Landis encouraged anyone who might be interested in joining the club to stop by one of the regular meetings.

"We're generally pretty quiet from January through March, so it's a great time to stop by, learn about the club and see if you're interested in getting involved," he said.

For those interested in pitching in, Landis said the rewards are great.

"It's a lot of satisfaction, and it's a good feeling of having done some good in this community," he said. "And I'm really proud to say that this community is very supportive of us. We couldn't do what we

do without them. We can offer raffle tickets, make pancakes and hotdogs, and bring our cars out to collect donations, but it's up to the community to respond – and they always do."

Landis said an Ocean Pines woman came by during the coat and toy drives and stopped for a few minutes to talk. Her husband recently passed away and she wanted to donate some of his things, and she also brought a cash donation.

"She said, 'I really love what your club does,' and I told her, if you're looking for something to do, why don't you come by after the New Year to one of our meetings?" Landis said. "I'll tell anyone, come and see what we're all about, and there's no obligation," he continued. "Give it a chance and see if it's for you.

"We've been around for 43 years and hopefully we'll be around a lot longer," he continued. "But it's going to take membership to keep us alive and we would really appreciate people just checking us out and seeing if it's a fit for them."

The Kiwanis Club meets in the Ocean Pines Community Center on 235 Ocean Parkway every Wednesday at 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and coffee and donuts are available. Members pay \$3 toward food, and a 50/50 raffle is available for an additional \$3. Attendance is free for prospective new members.

For more information on the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines / Ocean City, visit [www.kiwanisofopoc.org](http://www.kiwanisofopoc.org) or [www.facebook.com/servingthechildrenoftheworld](http://www.facebook.com/servingthechildrenoftheworld).

*knots*  
from page 10

and a public sewage system to accept your personal contributions, the marine head isn't so fortunate. It has to be capable of containing and processing the output because, unlike bears in the woods, boaters are not permitted to dump raw stuff into the open water within three miles of shore and never on inland waters.

Therefore, some kind of a holding capacity or waste neutralization mechanism is needed and since the boat can pitch, roll and yawl, the need to contain the goodies in the slushing bowl and the holding tank is problematic. The industry has come up with some pretty cool solutions that keep our waterways protected from the residuals of last night's dinner.

The first and simplest (short of hanging over the leeward side gunwale) is the Porta-Potty. It's a small, self-contained unit that has an integral water supply and a holding tank. There is no extra plumbing so you need to detach the holding tank portion, carry it ashore and properly dispose of its contents; but fear not, if you forget to empty the holding tank, the natural aromas will remind you. Typically, these are the preferred solution for day trippers who can make emptying the head and replenishing its water supply part of their end of the day ritual to secure the boat.

The second is the manual or electric pump head system. These systems are more prevalent on larger boats that are designed for overnight anchorages or long voyages. They are permanently installed fixtures and use pumps and hoses and valves to route waste to the holding tanks. The electric pump version can also be equipped with a macerating function that liquefies everything to minimize clogging.

Although they are more homey and convenient than the Porta-Pottys, they come with a price. The holding tank needs to be emptied at a pump-out station, usually found in a full service marina. Also, routine cleaning is more awkward because of the very tight space compared to dockside washing the Porta-Potty with a garden hose.

The third type is the 'vacuflush' head. It uses a vacuum to suck the outbound stuff into the holding tank. The advantage is that this uses much less water and reduces the chance of an odor issue. Like the manual and electrical pump systems, the holding tank will still need to be emptied at an appropriate facility.

One last note of caution: Many permanently installed holding tanks have piping and valves to allow optional dumping overboard. This is illegal in most US waters and most marine environmental regulations mandate a permanent lock on the overboard discharge valve while in US waters. Don't use it unless you are more than three miles off shore.

The newest innovation is the composting head. It's an integral (no piping) system like the Porta-Potty but rather than a holding tank, this system has a removable composting tank. My guess is that these are more appealing to the recreational boaters who grow their own strawberries.

With that said, Happy New Year.

Stay safe. Stay dry.

Dan Collins can be reached for comment at [dancollins.oceanpines@gmail.com](mailto:dancollins.oceanpines@gmail.com)



# Thinking of Volunteering?



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Health Watch

# Stay one step ahead of upper respiratory infections

**Dr. Ellen Rowe**

*Board-Certified Family Medicine Provider*

As winter continues, so do those pesky upper respiratory infections! One of the most common reasons patients visit urgent cares and ERs during the winter months is for symptoms of cough, congestion and sore throat. It is important to recognize what symptoms warrant the need for evaluation by a medical provider, and what can be treated at home. It is also important to recognize that not all illnesses require an antibiotic. In fact, most of your symptoms are likely the result of a virus.

According to studies, the average incidence of the common cold in preschool aged children is five to seven episodes per year. The average incidence in adults is two to three episodes per year.

Both bacterial and viral infections can cause symptoms of fatigue, joint pain, fever (temperature of 100.4 F or above), sore throat, nasal congestion, sinus pressure and cough. Both viral and bacterial infections can cause increased production of nasal mucus and sputum.

If that is the case, then how do you know when to seek medical attention? If your symptoms are mild, you can help manage your illness at home with things such as Tylenol or Motrin for fever and aches, over the counter cough medications such as Robitussin, and throat lozenges or

hot tea with honey for sore throats. It is important to make sure that you are also drinking plenty of fluids. Most people do not drink enough water in general, but when you are sick, your body needs fluids to prevent dehydration. The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine recommend approximately 2.7 liters of water a day for women and 3.7 liters a day for men.

**You should be evaluated by a medical professional if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- Unable to drink water and start showing signs of dehydration, such as low urine output, dry mucus membranes, lethargy and confusion.

- Shortness of breath

- Wheezing (if you have chronic lung disease and you are using your rescue inhaler more often or your symptoms are not responding to your rescue inhaler in general)

- High fever that is not responding to fever-reducing medication or fever that lasts more than 5 days

- Sore throat that is causing the inability to swallow

- You have a cough that is not getting better on its own

- You have a rash that you are unsure what it is

- You have chronic lung disease, such as COPD, and you are having increased sputum production, using your rescue inhaler or nebulizer more often, or have an increased oxygen requirement.

- You have a child with symptoms

that are not responding to over the counter regimens or your child has decreased wet diapers, poor oral intake or seems lethargic.

- You are worried about your symptoms and have questions about how to treat them

**Where should you go?**

- In general, if you are ill and you are well enough to drive yourself or have someone drive you, hold a conversation, and are showing no signs of respiratory distress, you should call your primary care provider to make an appointment. Primary care providers are capable of listening to your lungs, looking in your ears, examining your throat and testing you for certain illnesses such as influenza, Covid-19, strep throat, and RSV.

- If you are experiencing difficulty breathing or your level of consciousness is altered, you should go to the Emergency room or call 911 as you may need a higher level of care.

Urgent cares are a great option for evaluation if your primary care provider's office is closed and you feel that your symptoms are severe enough that you cannot wait until they open the next business day.

**What tests will my provider do?**

- Physical exam

- Potentially a nasal or throat swab

- Potentially a chest x-ray if your lung exam has concerning findings

- Potentially blood work if your clinical picture is worrisome or your

provider thinks your illness is impacting multiple organ systems

**Will I get an antibiotic?**

- Most common illnesses such as upper respiratory infections, sinus infections and bronchitis are actually viral infections and do not require an antibiotic.

- If you have a sore throat and test positive for strep you will be treated with an antibiotic.

- If you have pneumonia, it could be viral or bacterial, so seeing your doctor to further evaluate is best.

- If you test positive for influenza, Covid-19 or RSV, you will not need an antibiotic since these are viruses.

**What are some steps I can take to help protect myself this season?**

Proper handwashing

- Using gloves or sanitize wipes prior to using a gas pump or shopping cart

- Wearing a mask, especially if you have an immunocompromising condition or are traveling on a plane

- Getting proper sleep

- Staying well hydrated and eating a healthy diet

- Getting fresh air and exercising

- Staying up to date on wellness checks with your primary care provider

- Getting your flu vaccine and covid booster

- Getting your pneumococcal and RSV vaccines if you qualify

If you have any questions or concerns about your health, please reach out to your primary care provider. We are here to keep you safe and healthy this season!

*Dr. Ellen Rowe is a board-certified family medicine provider at Atlantic General Primary Care in West Fenwick, Delaware. Dr. Rowe is currently accepting new patients, and appointments can be made by calling 302-564-0004.*

## Anglers to meet

The Ocean Pines Anglers Club will meet on Saturday, January 13, at 9:30 a.m. in the Ocean Pines library. The speaker will be Donna McElroy from the Ocean Pines Marine Activities Committee. She will speak about upcoming plans and projects. Angler members will provide updates on fishing tournaments and charter fishing opportunities. All are welcome.

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letters  
from page 6

The Town of Ocean City intends to fund 20% of the cost, and wants the State of Maryland via the Maryland Stadium Authority to fund 80%. A copy of my enclosed letter was sent to every member of a Task Force which was convened by Mayor Rick Meehan of Ocean City to study the issue.

In 2022, I was asked to chair a Ballot Initiative Committee identified as People For Fiscal Responsibility and organized under the rules established by law under the Maryland State Board of Elections. The committee was formed to place a bond bill in the amount of \$11.2 million dollars before the voters of Worcester County, Maryland. In the Spring of 2022, by a slim majority, the Commissioners of Worcester County voted to go to the bond market for the initial funding to build a Sports Complex in the County.

Over seventy volunteers gathered sufficient signatures to place the bill on the ballot in November, 2022. The

voters of Worcester County rejected the bond bill in a referendum vote. Not satisfied with the outcome of that vote, the Mayor & City Council of Ocean City began discussions to pursue the matter on their own initiative requesting support and funding from the Stadium Authority.

I have studied this project since 2019, and I am convinced that it is not financially feasible, and it will require ongoing subsidy by local and state government, in a similar way the Ocean City Convention Center operates. I request that you review my letter to the Task Force for a detailed explanation of my opposition.

Upon review of this matter, if and only if, you feel that Maryland needs such a Sports Complex, I submit that it may be more feasible in another area of our State. However, I firmly believe that taxpayer dollars can be better spent on more worthwhile projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

**Vincent dePaul Gisriel, Jr.**

## Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet  
by **Jack Barnes**

There are times when my greatest accomplishment is just keeping my mouth shut.

They had to get a translator in at the benefits office today. Somebody came in speaking English. 😊

SHARE IF YOU LAUGHED!

Got tasered picking up my friend from the airport today. Apparently security doesn't like it when you shout, "Hi Jack!"

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