

The Courier

January 24, 2024 Volume 24 Number 18

Matt Heim
joins
Lower Shore
Land Trust
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Set new goals in January

By **Jennifer Hamilton**

The month of January brings a new year, and the opportunity to set new goals for the coming months. In our area, it also brings cold, winter weather, which has been very apparent over the last couple weeks. As the snowflakes fall, the charm of snow-covered landscapes also brings about a unique set of challenges on the roads. Safe driving during winter weather demands extra caution and preparation to ensure the well-being of both drivers and passengers. So, let's explore a few essential tips and practices to navigate through winter roads safely.



Jennifer Hamilton

Before hitting the winter roads, it's crucial to prepare your vehicle for the challenges ahead. Ensure your brakes, tires, battery, and heating system are in top condition. Keep your vehicle's fluids, including antifreeze and windshield washer fluid, topped off. Reduced visibility is a common hazard during winter weather, therefore keep all of your car windows, mirrors, and lights clean to maximize visibility. Replace worn-out windshield wipers and consider using winter-grade washer fluid to prevent freezing. Ensure all exterior lights are operational, and use headlights even during daylight hours to increase your visibility to other drivers. Thankfully many newer cars have daytime running lights to assist with this.

Boating course offered

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary is offering virtually the Maryland Basic Boating Safety Course on February 6, 7, and 8 between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The cost is \$20 for all three evenings. Register or get more information by calling Barry Cohen at 410-935-4807 or Email at CGAUXOC@Gmail.com.

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On the shore, we don't have the same resources available to handle snowy or icy roads. The icy and snowy roads reduce your tires' traction, so slowing down while you drive can be the biggest advantage to avoid danger. It is a good idea to increase the amount of space you leave between you and the car ahead of you to allow for a safe stopping distance. Any sudden maneuvers can lead to a loss of control, so instead, use gentle, gradual movements to maintain as much stability on those slippery surfaces. If your vehicle is equipped with an anti-lock braking system (ABS), make sure to adhere to the manufacturer's recommendations for proper braking on slippery surfaces. This usually means applying gentle, steady pressure on the brakes.

I'm sure you have heard the term "black ice." This describes a nearly invisible layer of ice that can form on the road, and is a serious winter driving hazard. It is more likely to form on bridges, overpasses, and shaded areas, therefore you have to be extra careful in these areas. If you encounter black ice, avoid any sudden movements on the wheel, and let off the accelerator while keeping the steering wheel straight. Sudden accelerations, decelerations, and sharp turns can lead to loss of traction and control. If you are accelerating from a complete stop, gradually increase your speed to minimize or avoid the wheels from spinning and reducing your stability and control.

Despite all precautions, emergencies can still occur. It is a good idea to keep an emergency kit in your vehicle, including items such as a blanket, extra clothing, non-perishable snacks, a flashlight, and a first aid kit. A charged cell phone can also be a lifeline in case of an unexpected situation. If you are able to avoid going out in hazardous weather conditions, that would be ideal, but if it is a necessity to be out, just be as careful as possible. Remember, it's not just about arriving at your destination, but arriving safely.

Jennifer Hamilton, DPT, CHT is co-owner Hamilton Hand to Shoulder.



Artist - Students at Berlin Intermediate School participate in an after-school art club, an outreach program of the Art League of Ocean City, led by art teacher Joanne Guilfoil. Students made bird feed strings and gingerbread people.

Above are **Kiley Mikulski** and **Nola Gisriel**.

Jenkins Point update meeting set

Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) will host a public meeting on the Jenkins Point Restoration Project on Monday, January 29 at 6 p.m. in the Clubhouse Meeting Room on 100 Clubhouse Drive.

MCBP held a public meeting on the subject last May. The January meeting will serve as an update, including presentation of a revised project design for which community feedback will be solicited.

Steve Farr, the Watershed Coordinator for Maryland Coastal Bays Program, said Jenkins Point is on the Isle of Wight Bay, just offshore of the Ocean Pines Yacht Club. He said the area has seen significant erosion, reducing the resilience of

the fragmented peninsula and the adjacent mainland community infrastructure, including the Yacht Club, the Osprey Point condominium community and the Pines Point residential community and marina to the increasing effects of climate change.

MCBP received a grant in 2022 from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to fund the design and permitting phase of the restoration project. Construction of the project will require additional funding.

The meeting will be recorded and available for viewing later through the Ocean Pines website, oceanpines.org.

OPA budget town hall scheduled

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola will host a town hall on the proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 budget on Wednesday, February 7 at 11 a.m. in the Clubhouse Meeting Room.

Homeowners may attend and ask questions about the budget, with Viola and staff providing answers.

To join the meeting remotely, use the invite link: [INSERT LINK](#).

The town hall will be recorded and posted to the Ocean Pines website, oceanpines.org.

To view the proposed budget, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/finance.

Lower Shore Land Trust names new director

The Lower Shore Land Trust announced its next Executive Director Matt Heim, who will begin February 1.

Heim brings nearly 20 years of non-profit experience to Lower Shore Land Trust, the majority of which was based in local environmental initiatives. After spending several years in Memphis, TN managing a network of community gardens and urban farms, Heim and his wife Sara returned home to the Eastern Shore where Sara became the Assistant Director of the ShoreCorps AmeriCorps program at Salisbury University. Matt quickly rose to the forefront of environmental issues as the leader of a local campaign in opposition to offshore drilling for oil and gas in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Heim went on to serve as the first director of the One Water Partnership program at Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake. The program seeks to engage faith communities in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. Under Heim's tenure, the One Water Partnership expanded from Baltimore

City into the Lower Shore, Lancaster, Southern Maryland, Upper Shore, Harford County and Howard County regions and grew from a staff of one to six. The program also engaged over 3,000 volunteers and installed nearly 30 restoration projects on congregational properties.

In 2022, Heim joined Delmarva Public Media as the Deputy General Manager and Director of Development where he oversaw the establishment of partnerships with the *Bay Journal* and helped produce several environmentally focused programs in partnership with the "No, I Know" podcast and Salisbury University's Environmental Studies Program.

Heim's experience over the years has involved managing multi-million-dollar budgets, overseeing fundraising campaigns and developing a strong grant writing track record. He has run successful environmental advocacy campaigns that brought together diverse stakeholders from across the political spectrum and has worked for and with multiple Lower Shore environmental organizations.

Heim's educational background has focused on the environmental history of the lower shore, giving him a long-range view of landscape change.

The Land Trust's Search Committee had multiple qualified finalists for this position but were unanimous in their decision to hire Heim. Search Committee Chair and Board Chair Michael Lewis said, "We were impressed not only with his background and experience, but with the seriousness with which Heim researched the organization. In addition to his experience, Heim articulated a carefully thought-out agenda for the leadership transition at the Land Trust, which illustrated both his values, vision, and practical organizational skills."

Heim will succeed long-time Executive Director Kate Patton. After 18 years of serving the Land Trust, Patton announced her retirement last year. Patton leaves the organization in its strongest position since its inception, after years of continued growth and long-term stability, and is confident in her successor's abilities to successfully manage the transition

of leadership and take the organization to the next level.

Heim said, "In many ways, this is a dream position for me. I love the Eastern Shore, I love its history, I love its natural beauty and wild places. I'm honored to be in a position where I can work with such dedicated people and contribute to the conservation and restoration of this place I feel fortunate to call home. The organization and legacy that Kate, the Land Trust staff, board, and volunteers, supporters and landowners has built is incredible. The Lower Shore is better because the Lower Shore Land Trust exists and I'm looking forward to helping shepherd the next chapter in its history."

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Ocean City Film Festival returns

Legendary filmmaker John Waters will return to the resort for the 8th Annual Ocean City Film Festival, a production of the Art League of Ocean City. The festival is coming to resort theaters and venues Mar. 7-10, screening 100 independent films from around the world. Waters will give a live performance on Saturday, March 9 at 8 p.m. at the Ocean City Performing Arts Center as part of the festival.



John Waters

Waters performed to a sold-out audience in 2023 with his stand-up show at Ocean Downs Casino. This year, the Baltimore-based filmmaker will perform at a larger venue, the Performing Arts Center, with increased seating and accessibility available.

Waters will present his movie "Hairspray" and provide eye-popping commentary during the screening, sharing memories of making the film in Baltimore the 1970s and the true events that inspired it. General admission tickets are available, with a limited number of VIP tickets to meet and greet Waters after the show available at a special price and on a first-come-first-serve basis.

"Like a sneaker wave dancing on an unwanted wind turbine, I can't wait to get back to Ocean City to infect the winter community with musical mayhem and cinematic turbulence," Waters said. "We're off-season! We're off our rocker! We're the Ocean City Film Festival."

"We are honored to welcome back the legendary filmmaker, John Waters, as the headliner for the 2024 OC Film Fest," Rina Thaler, executive director of the festival and the Art League, said. "The entire festival is a great opportunity for film lovers to watch never-before-seen films, including locally-created movies, and mingle with the filmmakers and film crews."

The Film Festival is an annual production of the nonprofit Art League of

Ocean City. The festival receives broad support from the Town of Ocean City, The State of Maryland Film Office, and the Ocean City community. The event is organized by Film Festival Director and Towson University alumnus B.L. Strang-Moya.

The eighth year of the festival will showcase independent films in multiple genres at iconic Ocean City venues including Flagship Cinemas in West OC, Morley Hall at Seacrets, Princess Royale Oceanfront, Ashore Resort Hotel, and the Performing Arts Center. This year's festival features films both local and international, including from Canada, Portugal, Iran, Turkey, France, and Germany.

Short films are packaged into showcases so viewers can attend their preferences. The showcases include Listening Experience; For Your Health; Chuckles, Chortles, Snickers & Snorts; Environmental & Aquatic; For the Love of Film; Horror, Sci-Fi & the Weird; It's Personal; Old Line Cinema, and Pride. Also, Tire Tales, Spotlight on Fatherhood, Storytelling Ability, Strife Stories, Surf's Up, and The Media & Me.

In addition, the festival will screen nine films of feature length including "American Meltdown" that won best feature at the Chattanooga Film Festival, and "Get on the Bus," a documentary about the James Taylor Justice Coalition's second Justice Day event in Chestertown, Md.

Information about the festival is available at OCMDFilmFestival.com. Passes are available for one day of films and parties, four days of films and parties, and individually-sold John Waters tickets.

Also listed on the Film Fest website are special, off-season hotel rates for festival goers, with oceanfront resort rooms starting at \$99 per night.

"Traveling to Ocean City is incredibly affordable this time of year, even more now that our hotel sponsors are offering festival attendees discounted rates," Strang-Moya said. "These are waterfront rooms in major hotels that are booked solid in the summer season."

The films have not been rated, and some feature adult content. Viewer discretion is advised.

More information is available at OCMDFilmFestival.com or by calling 410-524-9433.



Challenge - Ocean City Elementary School (OCES) held its annual Kids Heart Challenge Kick-Off Assembly on January 4. Their goal this year is to raise \$33,000. Pictured with OCES students, physical education teachers, **Mark Engle** and **Tracey Drocella** with **Kim Moore**, the school engagement director for the American Heart Association.

What is the Worcester Commission on Aging

WorCOA is the little-known partner and friend of seniors living in Worcester County having served more than 1,380 individuals during FY 2023?

The program provides the following services.

Senior Rides. In 2023, WorCOA's Senior Ride program served 218 seniors for a total of 16,110 transportation rides, averaging 310 trips per week. These rides assisted our vulnerable senior population to make it to doctors' appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and 50plus Centers. To learn more about Senior Rides and how you can benefit from this program, go to <https://www.worcoa.org/seniorride>

50-Plus activities. WorCOA manages 50plus Centers in Pocomoke, Snow Hill, Berlin and Ocean City. In FY2023, in addition to planned daily activities, members enjoyed 48 trips for meaningful experiences along the entire Delmarva Peninsula and to other destinations such as Baltimore, Annapolis, Lancaster PA and Atlantic City, NJ. To learn more about 50plus Centers, go to <https://www.worcoa.org/50plus>

Maryland Community for Life (CFL). Community for Life is a members-only program providing services for aging at home such as handyman jobs, prescription pickups, salon/barber trips, transporta-

tion to and from medical appointments, grocery pick-up, friendly contacts/vendor referrals, and more. In 2023, Worcester's CFL led the state once again, serving over 130 members. To learn how you can become a member in this program, go to <https://www.worcoa.org/cfl>

Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels continues to be a vital need for many vulnerable seniors. The demand for this program has increased partly due to the cutback in Food Stamp funding. WorCOA's Meals on Wheels has served over 33,200 meals in FY2023. To volunteer or to learn more about this program, go to <https://www.worcoa.org/meals-on-wheels>

River Oaks Day Center. River Oaks is an adult day center for individuals over the age of 16 who are disabled and/or medically compromised and in need of supervised daily care. Their services allow participants to join in activities that promote social, physical, and emotional well-being without permanently removing them from their families or communities. To learn more about this program go to <https://www.worcoa.org/riveroaks>

For more information or to contact Worcester Commission on Aging, call 410-632-1277 or go to www.worcoa.org

The coat closet

Squeeeeeeeze! Puuuuush! Close the door quickly!

That's the motion sequence I exert each time I return my coat to the living room closet. It's been like that for as long as I can remember.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

In fact, it was pretty much the same way in the house in which I grew up. The living room closet is, and has always been, a jammed packed receptacle for the many things that we can otherwise find no place to store. And that's in addition to the many coats that have come to hang there in a sort of coatrack purgatory.

Turn the knob of our living room closet and the door explodes open to reveal winter coats, boxes of pictures stacked on the top shelf, the vacuum cleaner, two camera bags, a tripod, a baseball bat and a sack of vacuum cleaner attachments, most of which we never use and, I for one, don't know their purpose.

For most of the year, with the exception of retrieving the vacuum cleaner or pulling out the tripod on which to secure the camera to take a family picture, I have little to do with the closet. However, when temperatures drop my frustration rises as I attempt to get my winter coat.

Through the years, the closet coat count has multiplied exponentially, packed more tightly than budgies on a telephone wire. So compressed is everything that a crowbar is needed to pry free a winter coat.

How did this happen? Don't ask me I just live here. I really thought things would have improved after my wife, just before Thanksgiving, culled for donation the coat and jacket herd. Two donation bags went out of the house yet the closet remains so tight I still can't squeeze in a puff of smoke.

More challenging than taking a coat from the closet? Putting a coat back. This process requires patience and a multidimensional strat-

egy. First, I have to locate the empty hanger which has been absorbed, blocked from view by the hangers and coats that uncoil like springs when a missing coat makes more space available. Once the empty wooden hanger is found and I'm able to yank it from the grasp of the other coats, I slip it into the shoulders of my coat. Next comes the hard part -rehanging the coat in the closet.

Gripping the hanger with my left hand, I turn my right shoulder into the mass of already hanging apparel and push, shimmy and nudge my way in, attempting to create a cavity into which I can thrust my coat and leverage the hanger hook onto the bar. Success doesn't always come on the first attempt. It's happened that the coat mass repels me back nearly forcing me to the floor. On those occasions, I've learned to plant my feet, hunch a little lower and push in like a determined human wedge. Usually this does the trick and I'm able to hook the hanger to the bar. Then another problem emerges. The bottom of my coat gets hung up on the upright vacuum cleaner handle preventing the door from closing.

This is remedied only by applying brute force against the bottom of the coat so it slips over the vacuum cleaner handle and there is enough momentum to push aside the coats on either side so it rests straight up and down. Then I have to sit down to catch my breath and maybe take a quick nap.

Now that you're aware of my struggles, you'll understand if you see me out and about without a coat. I'd rather endure the winter cold than tangle with the densely packed living room closet that shows less favor than a nun's stare.

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Commentary

By Joe Reynolds
OceanPinesForum.com

Board golf budget discussion

As detailed in a recent commentary titled "Miracle on Clubhouse Drive," OPA's golf course went from a money-burning pit to an incredible operational profit center for the association.

Last Thursday the Board of Directors reviewed General Manager John Viola's proposed budget for fiscal 2024-2025. The discussion and review of the golf budget were interesting.

At one point, OPA Director Stuart Lakernick, looking to shed some light on the turnaround, addressed Director of Golf Bob Bekelman and said: "We have been here 11 years. There was a time when golf was killing us, and we were doing horrible. Justin (Director

of Golf Maintenance Justin Hartshorne) has done an amazing job with the quality of our golf course. Since your tenure, specifically, there has been a dramatic turnaround and you are driving the economic engine that makes our amenities profitable here...that keeps our assessments low. How did this happen? What made it the economic engine that it is under your tenure?"

The question of what caused the turnaround was an important one to ask. However, while Beckelman is doing a great job, he was not hired until late in October 2022. At this point, he essentially has a year under

his belt since returning to OPA from a long tenure at River Run. Lakernick asked the wrong person and was incorrect in thinking Beckelman was the "economic engine" that turned the golf operation around.

Beckelman even recognized this in his response, saying: "I'd love to take some credit. I certainly wouldn't take all the credit for it." He said he brought better relations with Pam's Ocean City Golf Getaways to bring in more outside package play, adding that OPA did a great job in rebuilding the course's reputation over the last few years.

At that point, Viola entered the discussion and clarified what took place, for the benefit of what is predominately a new group of directors. Viola said, "This didn't happen overnight." He gave credit to the entire golf staff and major projects.

Viola then said what needed to be said, especially in light of rather public, sometimes nasty but fortunately now subsided, board member political battles in recent years. To paraphrase Viola, primary credit for the "Miracle on Clubhouse Drive" goes to boards and board members over the last four to five years. Viola specifically mentioned "Doug Parks, Larry Perrone, Collette Horn, and others" who voted to invest needed dollars in the golf course - investments in drainage, a new clubhouse, and a new cart barn that made it possible to turn the course around financially.

Finally, it needs to be noted that some association members fought those investments, investments that have now proved to be so instrumental in making the OPA golf operation a financial success.

The two faces of NOAA

Editor:

Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?

Remember a couple of years ago when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) proposed draconian new

speed rules for commercial and recreational vessels up and down the entire Atlantic Coast? This rule attempted to extend to vessels between 35 and 65 feet in length, the existing requirement that vessels over 65 feet in length reduce their speed to 10 knots in what is called Seasonal Management Areas along the Atlantic Coast. Had this amendment to the rule been approved, it would have been incredibly harmful to commercial fishermen - it would have made their jobs infinitely more expensive and compliance would have been beyond burdensome. The rule was intended and designed to protect the North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) from boat strikes. The NARW is on the endangered species list and according to the NOAA, there are only about 350

left in the world, of which fewer than 70 are reproductively active females.

NOAA received so much negative blow-back in its comments section that the extension of the rule was withdrawn and became a 'suggestion. Keep that in mind later.

Fast forward to now, and we find that NOAA Fisheries has received a request from U. S. Wind, LLC, for a Letter of Authorization for Incidental Take Regulations (basically killing) of members of several marine mammal groups over a period of five (5) years (2025-2029) during the construction of the wind farms off the coast of Maryland. Although the request is for a "small number" of takes, the chart accompanying the request shows six (6) Harassments. Since there are about a dozen planned offshore wind farms on the Atlantic Coast-each of which will have the authority to kill a similar number - (U.S. Wind is constructing three of them) you can multiply that by 12 for a potential of over 72 NARW takes or "kills" out of a population of 350 (or 20%).

So, on the one hand a federal

please see letter on page 11



Courier Almanac

Canned beer makes its debut on January 24, 1935. In partnership with the American Can Company, the Gottfried Krueger Brewing Company delivered 2,000 cans of Krueger's Finest Beer and Krueger's Cream Ale to faithful Krueger drinkers in Richmond, Virginia. Ninety-one percent of the drinkers approved of the canned beer, driving Krueger to give the green light to further production.

Parents of school-aged children are undoubtedly familiar with the notion of "nut-free" classrooms and cafeterias, which typically indicates educators have declared school grounds off limits for peanuts and peanut butter. The prevalence of such environments may suggest peanut allergies have increased in recent years, and while that might be true, it's also not necessarily so. In fact, the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology notes that awareness about peanut allergy has risen in recent years. And while a 2017 study found that incidence rates of peanut allergy had increased by 21 percent since 2010, that could be a byproduct of heightened awareness of peanut allergy and not necessarily indicative that considerably more individuals are now allergic to peanuts. Recognition of that reality may make some people pause before they dismiss peanut allergy, which the ACAAI notes can cause anaphylaxis, a life-threatening response to an allergen marked by impaired breathing, swelling in the throat and a sudden drop in blood pressure, among other symptoms.



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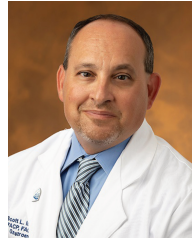
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Itzkowitz joins AGH

Gastroenterologist Scott Itzkowitz, D.O., FACP, FACG, FASGE, will join Atlantic General Health System in February. to provide care at Atlantic General Gastroenterology in Ocean Pines. Itzkowitz practiced most recently in North Carolina, where he provided care in both the hospital and community setting after retiring as a captain in the Medical Corps from the United States Navy.

Itzkowitz graduated from Tulane University and then received his



Scott Itzkowitz

medical education at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, completing his internship and residency in internal medicine at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, Calif. His three-year gastroenterology fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Health Sciences was followed by an extensive military career, most notably with posts as chief of gastroenterology at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, medical director of healthcare operations at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and gastroenterology department head at Naval Medical Center, Camp Lejeune.

Itzkowitz is board certified in gastroenterology and is a fellow of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, a fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology and a fellow of the American College of Physicians.

He is currently accepting new patients. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 410-629-1450.

Local group broadens support to those left behind after a suicide

In 2011 when the Jesse Klump Memorial Fund (JKMF) started their suicide prevention program, they began with a group for grievors of suicide loss. Over 100 people have benefitted from that post-suicide grievors' support group since 2011. Yet the group remains the only one on the Eastern Shore.

That support will soon reach more families experiencing the complicated grief after a suicide. The JKMF is poised to launch a Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Team, in large part because of a generous grant from Everytown for Gun Safety for which we are grateful.

A LOSS team is made up of stakeholders consisting of first responders, hospitals, crisis responders, mental health therapists and counselors, and volunteers, some of whom have lost a loved one to suicide. The team assists with the immediate aftermath of the loss, making certain that survivors find the resources they need to get help,

and planting the seeds of hope. Often just saying, "I lost someone to suicide too," dispels the stigma surrounding suicide and opens the door to accepting compassionate care.

Local LOSS team members will be trained to reach out to grievors shortly after the loss, help in any way that they can, and stay in touch – by visits, phone, text, emails, whatever seems the best avenue to healing. Kim Klump, Fund Founder and President reports, "Just knowing someone else has been there and managed to find peace is a huge help."

The Jesse Klump Suicide Awareness & Prevention Program also attends community events, works within school systems, first responders' groups, and faith assemblies. "We teach 'suicide prevention first aid,' similar to CPR. You don't have to be a cardiologist to keep someone alive until the ambulance arrives. You don't have to be a psychiatrist to keep someone safe until a professional can intervene," said Jennifer LaMade, Executive Director. To bring the Jesse Klump Suicide Awareness & Prevention Program to your group or to your event, contact the group through www.jessespaddle.org or call 667-227-9247.

Thinking about suicide? Worried about someone? The 24/7 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is 988.

Boat ramp closed for bulkhead replacement project

The county boat ramp at South Point, which is located at the end of South Point Road off MD Rt. 611 in Berlin, is closed for rehabilitation work. The boat ramp is tentatively scheduled to reopen March 1.

This two-month project will include replacing the bulkhead. Project funding is available through Waterway Improvement Grants (WIG) from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and assigned designated funds from Worcester County.

For more information about the project, contact Worcester County Parks Superintendent Jacob Stephens at (410) 632-2144.

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Habitat for Humanity accepting new build applications

Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County Inc announced that it is accepting inquiries through January 31 for a new home build in Bishopville. As a local affiliate, the organization is dedicated to providing affordable housing solutions and empowering families to achieve the dream of homeownership.

The upcoming Habitat Worcester Home Build in Bishopville will feature a thoughtfully designed three-bedroom, two-bathroom home, providing a safe and welcoming environment. Prospective homeowners are encouraged to submit inquiries to become part of the transformative journey towards homeownership from January 17 to January 31.

First, prospective applicants are advised to thoroughly review the preliminary requirements available on Habitat Worcester's website to ensure eligibility. Eligible individuals and families meeting the requirements can email families@habitatworcester.org to schedule a preliminary interview by January 31. Please note that

the full application package is not on the website and is only made available following the email inquiry and preliminary interview. Prospective homeowners moving into the full application round and providing all required documentation in a timely manner will receive first consideration.

Habitat Worcester Home Build Preliminary Requirements - January 2024:

Maximum Income Per Household:

- 1 - 4 person: \$75,500
- 5+ person: \$99,650

Minimum Income Per Household:

- 1 - 4 person: \$47,200
- 5+ person: \$62,350

Demonstration of Need: Applicants must demonstrate a need for adequate shelter, such as cramped living conditions, unsafe housing, unaffordable rent, or inability to qualify for a conventional mortgage.

Willingness to Partner: Appli-

cants commit to the "sweat equity requirement" of 400 hours, making earnest money payments, avoiding additional consumer debt during the build process, notifying the affiliate of financial changes, and maintaining the home after purchase.

Ability to Pay: Families must earn between 30% to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Worcester County, adhering to front-end and back-end ratio requirements, meeting the minimum credit score, and submitting verification documentation promptly.

Credit and Background Checks: Applicants must pass credit and background checks, including minimum credit score, criminal, sexual, terrorist, or suspicious activity background checks, with no liens or judgments against the applicant or co-applicant.

Application Fee: A \$30 application fee is required.

Residency Requirement: Applicants must be U.S. citizens or residents, Worcester County, MD residents for at least one year, and

unable to afford a conventional mortgage.

USDA 502 Direct Loan Program: Applicants must meet all requirements and be approved for the USDA 502 direct loan program, including a total debt of 41% or less, inclusive of housing costs.

This opportunity aligns with Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County's mission to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter. For detailed information about the inquiry process, please visit Habitat's website at habitatworcester.org.

Free square dance lessons offered

The Pine Steppers Square Dance club will offer free square dance lessons March 6, 13, 20 and 27 between 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Ocean Pines Community Center. Single and couples are welcome. For more information contact barbroos@gmail.com or 908-229-8799 or 302-222-4448

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Awards - The Atlantic Coast Sportfishing Association presented the 2023 Angler of the Year awards for both Ocean and Bay at their annual year end banquet. Shown in photo Left to right; **John McFalls**, secretary of ACSA, **Brian Reynolds**, 2023 Ocean Angler of the Year (ACSA), **Shaun Flaherty**, 2023 Bay Angler of the Year (ACSA).

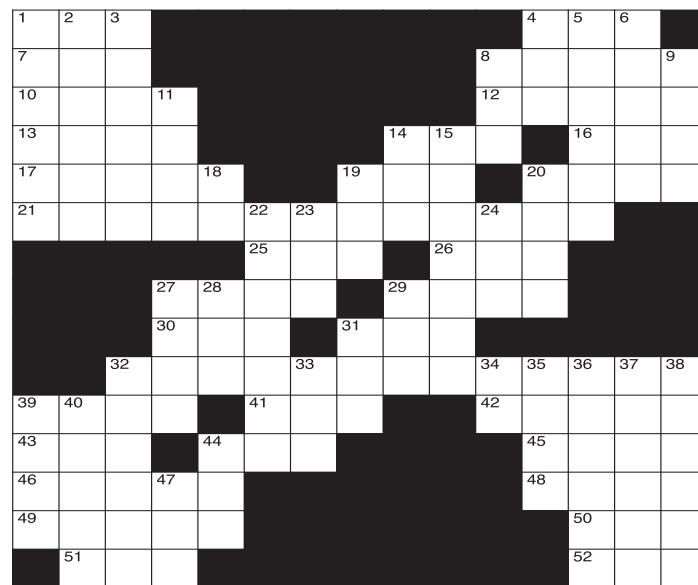
Car prices are shocking

Shoppers in the market for new vehicles may experience some sticker shock when heading to a nearby dealership to price out the inventory. According to findings from Kelley Blue Book released in September 2023, the average cost of a new car was well over \$48,000, which is up almost \$6,000 from two years ago and about \$10,000 from September 2020. Various factors have driven this increase. In addition to inflation, continued disruptions to buying habits, manufacturing processes and personal finances related to the global pandemic have taken their toll. In addition, many automakers have reduced or discontinued production on lower-priced sedans and compact cars as many consumers increasingly gravitate toward more costly SUVs. Increased interest

in electric vehicles also comes at a high price. Kelley Blue Book says the average new EV sold for \$53,376 in August 2023. Though that reflects a price reduction from the year prior, when the average cost was around \$65,000,



such vehicles remain big-ticket items. Comparatively speaking, the average price for preowned vehicles at the same time was around \$33,500, according to the research site iSeeCars.com



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Microgram
- 4. Where golfers begin
- 7. Each
- 8. Warm weather metropolis
- 10. Coat with sticky substance
- 12. Girl's given name
- 13. Myth (Spanish)
- 14. Ultrahigh frequency
- 16. Former NBAer Jeremy
- 17. Where rockers work
- 19. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 20. Soft-finned fishes
- 21. Localities
- 25. Paddle
- 26. Union
- 27. Member of religious community
- 29. Small shrill flute
- 30. Small constellation in the Milky Way
- 31. They ___
- 32. College kid on vacation
- 39. de Armas and Gasteyer are two
- 41. Part of the human body
- 42. A progressive grading
- 43. Sound unit
- 44. Noise some birds make
- 45. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 46. Portuguese city
- 48. Be extremely, uncritically fond of
- 49. Resembling old Norse poems
- 50. Ask for out of extreme need
- 51. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 52. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. An insane person
- 2. ___ Boothe Luce, American author
- 3. Buttock muscles
- 4. Men's fashion accessory
- 5. "Hotel California" rockers
- 6. Electronic communication
- 8. Magnetomotive force (abbr.)
- 9. Hostelries
- 11. A way to resound
- 14. Exclamation: yuck!
- 15. A resident of Indiana
- 18. Exclamation of surprise
- 19. Make a mistake
- 20. Boundary
- 22. Antilles island
- 23. It's used to make furniture
- 24. Clod
- 27. They indicate where places are
- 28. Bobby __, NHL champ
- 29. Prints money
- 31. Honorable title (Turkish)
- 32. Appetizers
- 33. Midway between north and northwest
- 34. Spanish be
- 35. Breezed through
- 36. Grilled dishes
- 37. In a way, excites
- 38. Change mind
- 39. A French abbot
- 40. Popular candy
- 44. Partner to cheese
- 47. Wood or metal bolt



Answers for January 17

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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by **Jack Barnes**

Recipe for the Perfect Marriage

1. Two times a week we go to a nice restaurant, have a little beverage, good food and companionship. She goes on Tuesdays; I go on Fridays.

2. We also sleep in separate beds. Hers is in California, and mine is in Texas.

3. I take my wife everywhere, but she keeps finding her way back.

4. I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. "Somewhere I haven't been in a long time!" she said. So, I suggested the kitchen.

5. We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.

6. She has an electric blender, electric toaster and electric bread maker. She said "There are too many gadgets, and no place to sit down!" So, I bought her an electric chair.

7. My wife told me the car wasn't running well because there was water in the carburetor. I asked where the car was. She told me, "In the lake."

8. She got a mud pack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.

9. She ran after the garbage truck, yelling, "Am I too late for the garbage?" The driver said, "No, jump in!"

10. Remember: Marriage is the number one cause of divorce.

11. I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was 'Always'.

12. I haven't spoken to my wife in 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her.

13. The last fight was my fault though. My wife asked, "What's on the TV?" I said, "Dust!"

letter
from page 4

agency attempts to issue rules that are incredibly harmful to our fishing industry (both commercial and recreational) in an effort to "Save the Whales" and then the same agency is considering granting permission to the offshore wind industry to kill about 20% of the remaining population.

Of course, both US Wind and Orsted have been claiming for years that OSW does not and will not cause harm to whales or any other sea life. Go figure.

Since NOAA abandoned the extension of its rule regarding speed after the comment period it might be a good idea to file a comment regarding the incidental taking (killing) of the NARW. You can read all about it and comment at www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-us-wind-inc.

Comments close 02/05/24.

Another interesting tidbit I found in my research is a study by Heriot-Watt University in Scotland. The

researchers studied crab behavior near the St. Abbs Marine Station offshore wind farm and found that the high level of electromagnetism coming from the subsea cables delivering power from the turbines is affecting the blood cells of crabs which makes them susceptible to bacterial infections. The crabs "freeze" when they come close to electromagnetic fields generated by the cables. This disturbing behavior may also affect the creature's migration habits. Another study by the university showed that the electromagnetic cables also negatively affect lobster and lobster larvae. (Heriot-Watt University studies published in 2021 and 2022).

Think about the impact the wind farms on the Chesapeake Bay (our Governor's dream) will have on the Maryland crab industry.

Once again, I'm just trying to get information to the taxpayers so they can understand what the future may hold.

Carol Frazier
Ocean Pines

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