

The Courier

January 31, 2024 Volume 24 Number 19



American Legion Post donates to SDHS football team

On the heels of its first statewide high school football championship, the Stephen Decatur football team has received another welcome reward, \$2,000 from Ocean City American Legion Post 166 to purchase another five state-of-the-art football helmets designed to improve cushioning and reduce the impact of head strikes.

The presentation of \$2,000 to championship head coach Jay Coleman was the second made by the veterans' group to the players. Another \$2,000 was presented to the school's boosters in 2023, bringing to 10 the number of new helmets provided by the Legion in recent months. The boosters have been

*please see **legion** page 4*

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GM provides updates to board

General Manager John Viola's monthly report to the Board on Jan. 20 included updates on the new budget, reserve study, beautification efforts, and an updated reserve study.

Budget updates

The Ocean Pines Board held a public review of the proposed fiscal 2024-2025 budget on January 11, and Viola said he and staff have received and reviewed Board input based on that meeting.

He said Finance Director Steve Phillips is working on implementing those changes.

A town hall on the new budget is set for Wednesday, February 7 at 11 a.m. in the Clubhouse Meeting Room.

"We'll be there, [and] we'll go through the whole budget and answer questions," Viola said.

He said the recommended assessment is still \$850, which represents a \$36 decrease over the prior year.

To put it all into perspective, it's a lower assessment, the budget has increased spending, we're increasing our reserves ... and the balance sheet is stronger," he said.

For the current fiscal year, Viola said December financials were \$121,000 favorable to budget. Year-to-date favorability is roughly \$833,000.

Reserve study update

Viola said the Association will start work with DMA Reserves on a new reserve study at the end of this year. OPA has worked with DMA since 2018, and an update of the study was last done in 2021.

"We're going to have them come in at the end of November," Viola said. "We will go through this over the next several months, looking at everything and updating it, to make sure what we give [DMA] is all up to date. So, it's a big process ... [but] I'm confident that we are positioned well, going into this," Viola said.

Ocean Pines will also be part of a beta program to help cut down costs for the study.

Viola said the previously approved reserve range was 24-28% of replacement costs for Ocean Pines' fixed Assets.

"We are there," Viola said, adding he would like to be near 30% heading into the reserve study review.

Viola later added the Association

would host an interactive town hall with DMA officials, once the new reserve study is ready to be shared.

South Gate Pond rehab

Among the newer initiatives, Viola said Association staff is working on a soft shoreline project at the South Gate Pond.

OPA will receive \$150,000 in federal funding for the project thanks to assistance from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

Viola said the Association will continue to work with Coastal Bays, and initial funding will go toward development of a site plan for the entire pond area, plus plantings to help stabilize the shore and protect from erosion.

"The main thing on this is to stop erosion and filter the water," he said. "This looks promising. I'm excited."

Viola said the idea originally came from one of the advisory committees.

"I'm on it and we're on it," he said, also adding that fishing areas around the pond would be preserved, and indigenous turtles would be protected.

Yacht Club updates

Viola said the Yacht Club entranceway was further enhanced when Public Works installed a new "Yacht Club" sign. The sign is nearly identical to the original that dates to the opening of the Yacht Club nearly 50 years ago.

Ocean Pines Public Works and an independent contractor recently worked to refurbish the iconic sail at the entranceway, and Viola said this is the last piece of that puzzle.

He added that beautification efforts often focus on "recapturing some of the old history here."

"[Public Works] did a great job," Viola said. "[The sign] will be placed ... basically where it was 40 or 50 years ago. I think that's going to be neat!"

Additionally, he said the Yacht Club tiki bar expansion is well underway. Plans from Vista Design will go to Worcester County this week for review, and the goal is to finish the project before Memorial Day.

"Hopefully, we get approval soon," he said. "I'm already talking to the contractor. So far, so good."

Seasonal banners

Viola said the Association received a lot of positive feedback on "Season's Greetings" banners hung at the North

Gate over the holidays.

Because of that, he asked the Public Relations Department to create a year-round plan for additional banners to be hung at the North and South gates. Marketing Coordinator Nancy MacCubbin led that effort and designed new banners to highlight OPA's amenities.

According to the plan, OPA will promote the Golf amenity in spring; summer amenities including the Yacht Club, Beach Club, Marina, and Aquatics from Memorial Day to Labor Day; and Golf and Racquet Sports during the fall. Other banners will showcase Ocean Pines as one of the safest communities in the U.S.

"I'm excited about this," Viola said. "You'll see different banners at different times of the year. They have it all mapped out."

The total cost is estimated at roughly \$5,000.

Racquet Sports updates

Viola said there was water damage to the Racquet Center pro shop after one of the recent storms. He and Pub-

lic Works inspected the area, and a temporary fix was applied to divert water away from the building.

Viola said renovation plans for the pro shop would include measures to prevent future flooding damage. He expects the renovation to be finished before Memorial Day.

Dog Park updates

Senior Executive Office Manager Linda Martin said Public Works recently ordered and installed two pieces of agility equipment for the Ocean Pines Dog Park.

"Thanks to George Alston and Jack Levering ... for their input in regards to the equipment and the placement in the dog park," she said.

Maintenance updates

Martin said Public Works, as part of ongoing maintenance efforts, recently did repairs at the Beach Club and Yacht Club.

That included sanding down and re-staining damaged counters at the

please see updates on page 4

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St. Joseph's Day Festival returns

It doesn't take a village, but still it takes a lot of people to plan Ocean City's popular St. Joseph's Day Festival that brings family style Italian food and fun to the resort city. Planning for the 2024 edition began in 2023 and continued into January this year as the Italian/American social and cultural group, the Sons and Daughters of Italy of Ocean City, look to build on last year's record-setting turnout.

The 12th annual Festival will be held on Saturday, March 23, at its usual location, St. Andrews Hall, Synepuxent and 144th street in Ocean City. As always, admission is free. Once inside the doors, festival goers will experience home-style Italian foods, breads, baked goods, pastries, and desserts, accompanied by Italian music throughout the day.

Italian-themed merchandise will be available for sale. Stuffed gift baskets and baskets of joy filled with wine and spirits will be raffled off. Silent auctions will be held for a variety of packages, including sports packages and leisure activities. For the more adventurous, the Pick Six

Wheel game will return, and tickets can be purchased for the 50/50 drawing.

The Ocean City chapter of the Sons and Daughters of Italy was started in 1980 and today has almost 200 members. Its mission includes increasing awareness of the Italian culture and contributions of Italian Americans to the United States, helping the community with scholarships for high school students and a tradition of charitable giving to support local organizations.

Pancake breakfast supports OPVFD

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City will hold a Pancake Breakfast on Saturday March 2 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Ocean Pines Community Center. The theme is an early St. Patrick's Day and the net proceeds will be donated to the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department (OPVFD). Cost is \$9 per person and children under 10 are free. Tickets are available from Kiwanis members or pay at the door. Cash, check or credit card accepted. See www.kiwanisofopoc.org for more information.

legion

from page 1

engaged in a program to obtain the new but expensive helmets and with this latest donation every varsity player has one, and nearly all of the junior varsity players.

Coach Coleman was on hand at the Post to receive the ceremonial check, and in doing so he provided the Legionnaires with an insider's look at the tactics used by the Seahawks to defeat what he said was a team with much bigger players who were as talented as his players.

One of the key elements of the victory, he said, was emphasis placed on players communicating with each other on the field. When their opponent, Huntington High School, began substituting players and lineups quicker than the Decatur coaches could send in changes, the players on the field began making the adjustments themselves as they were trained to do during practices. Coach Coleman also said that his smaller players were able to overcome their bigger opponents by their quickness.

updates

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Beach Club, and floor and drywall repairs at the Yacht Club.

Viola said some of that work is related to checklists from Matt Ortt.

"Everything's being checked off, so he'll be ready when he reopens," he said.

New signage

Martin said the Recreation and Parks Committee recommended several new signs for Ocean Pines' parks. Those include directional signs, walking trail signs, adopt-a-park signs, posted playground rules, and "curb your dog" signs.

Martin said that work is well underway, with Josh Vickers from the CPI office designing and installing all the signs.

"The majority has been done or should be done by the end of next week," she said.



Grand opening - On January 25, Atlantic General Hospital and Health System hosted a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Gudelsky Family Medical Center.

In attendance were local elected officials, chambers of commerce, community members, Atlantic General providers and staff, along with the Gudelsky family and other donors whose support helped make the new facility a reality.

The nearly 50,000 square-foot healthcare center, conveniently located on Racetrack Road in Ocean Pines, is the new home of Atlantic General Diabetes and Endocrinology Center, Atlantic General Primary Care, Atlantic General Pediatrics, Atlantic General Gastroenterology and a second location of Atlantic General Outpatient Center, which offers walk-in lab and X-ray services. An additional AGHRx RediScripts Pharmacy location will open in the facility in the spring.

The grand opening and ribbon cutting celebration garnered a significant crowd, who eagerly commemorated this much-needed expansion of healthcare services in the Ocean Pines area.

New trash contract

Martin said the Board recently approved a three-year contract with Republic Services for trash collection in the community. New trash containers should arrive within the next few months and will replace the current trash cans.

Martin added special leaf collections would be scheduled on Nov. 9, Nov. 16, Nov. 23, Dec. 7, Dec. 14 and Dec. 21. Those dates are in addition to the normal trash collection schedule that includes bagged leaf pickup.

Martin said leaves must be in paper bags to be picked up, but there is no limit on the number of bags. She said bags can be bought from Ocean Pines Public Works, or from retailers such as Home Depot.

Viola praised Martin for her work on the new Republic Services contract.

"Linda did a great job on this," he said.

CPI and customer service updates

Martin said the Compliance, Permit and Inspections (CPI) Department issued 61 new violations in December, including 25 for leaves. During the month, 55 violations were brought into compliance and 144 remain open.

Martin said CPI has a small staff, but they're doing their best to address any issues. She asked homeowners to report potential violations through info@oceanpines.org.

"We'll be more than happy to address them," she said.

Martin said the customer service team fielded 61 emails in December, including 30 general questions, 13 for Public Works, 10 for CPI, seven about amenity concerns, and one on drainage.

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

Finding the key

The key to the city. The key to success. Key to your heart. Key Lime Pie. Typewriter key. The Florida Keys. Keystone Kops. The Keystone State. Keys, keys everywhere - not one the one I seek.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

memory on a recent Saturday morning while searching for the key to the side door of our garage. In a dedicated kitchen drawer – best described as a junk drawer - we keep all sorts of items - several screwdrivers, magic markers, random binder and paper clips, an eye glass repair kit, assorted pencils (all with broken points), a pair of pliers and a nest of key rings containing many keys of different colors and sizes. Some are car keys. But clinging to a good many of the rings are keys for locks forgotten long ago.

While attending St. Albert the Great grade school, Walt the janitor was a quiet presence who engaged his tasks efficiently and almost without notice save for the jingle jangle of the gaggle of keys clipped to his belt that echoed in the hallway, aided acoustically by well-polished speckled floors and gloss-painted cinder block walls. How many keys? No idea. Though there were enough of them that Walt leaned right when walking.

I was reminded of this childhood

Some keys appear to be old house keys for our house or belong to the locks of family member houses. But which keys for which houses? Who knows? A couple rings had copies of the same key which led me to believe that at some point multiple keys were cut for the front, back or shed doors and not distributed. Becoming more interested in solving this key puzzle, I spread each of the rings and several loose keys on the dining room table segregating to one

side the familiar keys. Remaining were many yet-to-be identified orphans. I felt a little like Captain Queeg hunting for the freezer key to solve the pilfered quart of strawberry ice cream caper in “The Caine Mutiny.”

First separating the keys by type - Schlage, Kwikset, Master and little keys with no identification - I then started deducing what each key could unlock. I got lucky on a few Kwikset keys. They worked the studio door lock. I was able to identify two Schlage keys for the front door. But that was about it. The other keys were a mystery. It's possible one or more of them is for a relative's front door lock. I can't wait to roll up to meet a relative locked out of her house on a dark and rainy night with a quart-size Zip-Loc bag filled with random keys, dumping them on the front step and testing each one by one.

Not all locks require keys. My first bicycle anti-theft device was a combination lock chain which I wrapped around the sissy bar. When I first got it, I used it regularly. When I went to the playground or a friend's house, I locked my bike believing I was being responsible. After a while though locking and unlocking the bike slowed me down especially when my friends jumped on their

bikes and were halfway down the block while I was still turning the dial to RIGHT 29. Eventually I stopped using the lock. About a year later I needed to replace a punctured back tire that required removing the chain from the sissy bar. And not unlike the situation on that recent Saturday of not knowing which key I needed for the garage door, I found myself staring blankly at the lock unable to remember the number combination. I know you're thinking I should have kept safe the combination number on a piece of paper. I didn't. The solution was to use my grandfather's hack saw to cut through the chain. I never replaced the chain or used a bike lock again. I don't believe I ever used another combination lock, preferring keyed locks. The irony is not lost on me that I now stare blankly at dozens of unidentified keys like I once stared at that bike lock.

Like so many other once ubiquitous items, I predict that traditional keys will eventually be quaint as time passes, becoming part of museum displays that include rotary telephones, television rabbit ears and S&H Green Stamps. But until then, there are locks in the universe whose keys reside in my kitchen drawer. What to do?

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Commentary

By Joe Reynolds
OceanPinesForum.com

An OPA Fairy Tale

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away called OPA-Land, one of its leaders had a website on Facebook.

One day the leader posted a cryptic message. Those reading it were baffled as to the meaning. It read, "Information should not be weaponized and used to keep good people from being involved."

Another leading citizen of the realm "liked" the cryptic post. What was to "like," many readers wondered.

Then, on another Facebook page, there came some additional tidbits of information, likely leader-leaked information. On that page outright accusations were made - accusations of

some terrible thing described as doxing. Some wicked person or persons were attacking one of the most wonderful people in all of OPA-Land. Was this some sort of a treasure hunt? Would more future posts on Facebook sites ultimately reveal the perpetrators of this heinous act?

One fearless individual was brave enough to follow the yellow brick road and seek out facts from the Wizard. Parts of the story are too harrowing to relate in polite company, but what follows should suffice the cat-curiosity adage of "satisfaction brought it back."

Seems this individual viewed as one of the most wonderful people in

OPA-Land was appointed to an OPA Committee. There were issues, political issues. An employee resigned. The individual resigned from the committee. Newspapers jumped on the story.

The individual was appointed to another committee.

Now - back to the cryptic Facebook post of: "Information should not be weaponized and used to keep good people from being involved."

Someone wrote to the Board of Directors and claimed the one-of-the-most-wonderful people in OPA-Land was not a property owner in OPA. The individual previously claimed publicly to have owned property in OPA-Land for many years. Shades of the Rick Farr case where Farr prevailed in court and is now doing a good job as OPA president.

Fairy tales aside, there have been past instances where boards appointed ineligible people to committees. The bylaws state: "Chairpersons

and members shall be members of the Association eligible to vote and shall be appointed or reappointed by the President, with the consent of the Board of Directors."

Why would any OPA-Land leaders want to make a public Facebook issue over being informed privately that some committee member is not eligible? Perhaps more importantly, how does OPA vet an individual's association member status before appointing someone to a committee?

Finally, this issue should not have been brought to public attention on Facebook for petty political purposes by any OPA-Land leader, even if only by leaving breadcrumbs to follow. If the information provided privately to the Board of Directors was correct, the individual should have been quietly informed of the problem. Cryptic, child-like Facebook posts of this nature should remain the purview of those still reading real fairy tales.

Courier Almanac

On January 31, 1988, in San Diego, California, Doug Williams of the Washington Redskins - now known as the Washington Commanders - becomes the first African American quarterback to play in a Super Bowl, scoring four of Washington's five touchdowns in an upset 42-10 victory over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXII.



Drivers can thank the military for the introduction of sport utility vehicles to the mainstream market. Predecessors to modern SUVs date back to military models from the late 1930s, and four-wheel-drive station wagons and other vehicles that were introduced in the late 1940s. However, many car enthusiasts feel the 1984 Jeep Cherokee was the first SUV in the modern style. In 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency reported that SUVs made up 44.67 percent of all light-duty vehicles produced that year, compared to 25.69 percent of market share for sedans and wagons. In fact, as of 2023, many major automakers had announced plans to phase out many of their popular sedans. General Motors dropped nearly all passenger cars from its North American portfolio. Dodge dropped the Challenger and Charger; Acura removed the ILX model; the Chrysler 300 is no more; and Nissan no longer offers the Maxima. These are just some of the effects of the popularity of SUVs and also part of a larger shift toward the production of electric vehicles.

Carozza:

Offshore wind industrialization threatens coast

Senator Carozza testified during the January 20 Congressional hearing in Ocean City that "the impact of offshore wind industrialization on the local economy and tourism, and the negative effects on marine life, fishing, and the military, taken together, are unacceptable and unaffordable risks to my constituents."

"I first expressed my concerns about offshore wind energy development off Ocean City during a Maryland Public Service Commission's public meeting in 2017. This was before the offshore wind developers dramatically expanded the number and size of the turbines," said Senator Mary Beth Carozza, who represents Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset counties.

Maryland Congressmen Andy Harris (MD-1), Chris Smith (NJ-4), and Jeff Van Drew (NJ-2) heard from experts presenting documented information on the negative impact on the local economy, marine life, fishing,

and the military.

"The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's own Environmental Impact Study further convinced me that the potential negative impacts of offshore wind industrialization off Maryland's Coast outweigh the many promised benefits by European-based offshore wind developers," said Carozza.

The Environmental Impact Study validated many of the growing concerns of Ocean City residents, including:

- High-impact hydraulic hammers pounding the seafloor during the three years of construction of the 123 structures;

- Increased risks of accidents due to changes in navigational patterns resulting in gear loss, personal injury, damage to boats, and possible oil spills;

- Substantial negative impact on commercial and recreational fishing

please see wind on page 7



Book club - On January 9, the Republican Women of Worcester County held their bi-monthly Red Show Book Club meeting at the Ocean Pines library. Books are selected through the Mamie Eisenhower Library Project list. In January they read "Killing Reagan" by Bill O'Reilly.

Women's Club to award scholarships

The Women's Club of Ocean Pines (WCOP) will award scholarships in June to promising students who are full-time residents of Ocean Pines. These students must graduate from high school in good standing with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and plan to attend an accredited institution for further education. These awards may be used by the recipient to help defray post-high school expenses at any approved degree, certificate-granting college or university, technical or vocational school.

The WCOP Scholarship committee will consider the applicant's needs,

goals, scholarship, citizenship, community service, extra-curricular activities and motivation. The club adheres to a non-discrimination policy on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin or family status.

Applications for these scholarships may be found on the Naviance website. All completed applications must be returned to a senior counselor at Stephen Decatur High School by March 15. Qualifying applicants who do not attend Stephen Decatur High School are asked to call 410-641-8046 for information and/or an application.

Learn how to do business with local government agencies

Contractors, entrepreneurs, and commercial entities interested in doing business with local government agencies are invited to participate in the Reverse Trade Show at Wor-Wic Community College from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on March 6.

"There is no fee to attend, and no registration required," Worcester County Procurement Officer Nick Rice said. "Reverse Trade Show will take place in Guerrieri Technology Center lobby on the Wor-Wic campus. You're Invited, and we hope to see you there."

Participants will have a chance to meet and interact with procurement representatives from Salisbury University, Wor-Wic, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Wicomico County Public Schools, City of Salisbury, Worcester County Government, Wicomico County Government, and the Town of Ocean City.

The Reverse Trade Show is being hosted by Worcester County's procurement officer, along with procurement representatives from other local government agencies.

Lower Shore Land Trust announces stewardship training opportunity

The Lower Shore Land Trust is offering free Stewardship Training to people interested in learning more about the Land Steward Program and what's involved in stewarding conservation lands. The Introductory Session will take place on February 1st at 9 a.m. at the Lower Shore Land Trust office on 100 River Street, Snow Hill, followed by field trainings on March 1 and 2.

Attendees will learn about the conservation priorities the Land Trust conserves and protects and what's involved in the long-term stewardship of these properties. They will learn basic understanding of the Lower Shore resource-based economies, habitat, and natural heritage. Participants will learn about the Lower Shore Land Trust, how to be a volunteer land steward, and what to expect when volunteering out in the field.

The Lower Shore Land Trust has conserved over 24,000 acres of working farms, wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes. They rely on dedicated volunteers to assist the organization on the critical stewardship of conservation properties, as well as assisting on other activities, such as fundraisers, tabling at events, and administrative support. If you are

interested in learning more about the Lower Shore Land Trust and how to get involved, register today for the Stewardship training on February 10.

Refreshments will be provided. Registration is required and you can do so by visiting www.lowershorelandtrust.org and click on the registration button. You may also contact Stewardship Coordinator Frank Deuter by phone at (443) 234-5587 or email at: fdeuter@lowershorelandtrust.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.

wind
from page 6

that would be "detectable, measurable, of severe intensity, and long-lasting or permanent;

Additionally, the Pentagon expressed major objections to four of six draft offshore wind lease areas in the Atlantic off Ocean City due to interference with military exercises and military communications. "With my prior work experience at the Pentagon and on the U.S. Senator Homeland Security Committee, I especially am sensitive to the security and safety concerns raised by the Department of Defense, including the detrimental effect of wind turbines on existing radar systems by false alarms and missed detection of real targets," said Carozza.

Pat Schrawder, former owner of a marine electronics store in Ocean City and current District Representative to Senator Carozza, served as a community advocate on the panel. Pat

Schrawder specifically was requested in order to present her expertise on a variety of different, complex issues involved in offshore wind and the comments she has received from the public in the course of her work with the Senator.

Recent results from other offshore wind projects have revealed that the business model for these projects has fallen short of projections to the degree that those wind developers are either halting construction or asking the government for additional subsidies to make up for projected cost increases. The State of Maryland is currently facing financial shortfalls and difficult budget challenges with a \$322 million structural gap in the FY25 budget, ballooning to a \$2.1 billion deficit in FY29. Federal COVID-19 relief money has been exhausted. "Maryland cannot afford more government subsidies to prop up these offshore wind energy developers," said Carozza.

ReStore relocating to Ocean Pines

Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County announced the relocation of its ReStore to a new and more accessible location in Manklin Station in Ocean Pines. The move marks a significant step forward for the organization as it continues to grow and expand its impact on the local community.

The Habitat for Humanity ReStore is a vital component of the organization's mission to provide affordable housing solutions for families in need. By offering donated new and gently used home improvement items, furniture, appliances, and building materials at a fraction of the retail price, the ReStore generates funds to support Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County's operations.

The new location in Manklin Station, situated at 11307 Manklin Creek Road near the south gate of Ocean Pines, provides greater visibility and convenience for shoppers, donors, and volunteers, in addition to an increase of over 2,000 square feet. The move aims to enhance the overall shopping experience and facilitate increased community engagement with the ReStore.

"We are thrilled about the new location and the opportunities it brings for us to better serve our community," said Andrea Bowland, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County. "This move is a testament to the value of our organization to Worcester County and the generosity of our supporters who contribute to our mission of building strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter."

The first day operating in the new space will be on March 1, 2024, which coincides with the ReStore's grand opening. Shoppers can expect a diverse selection of quality home goods, furniture, appliances, and more, all at affordable prices.

The store will operate during the following hours:

-Tuesday to Friday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

-Saturday: 10 p.m. to 2 p.m.

-Sunday and Monday: Closed

Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County invites the public to join them on March 1, for the grand opening

*please see **restore** on page 11*



Kiwanians of the Month recognized

Often members of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City contribute efforts that deserve recognition. On Wednesday January 24 five members were given Appreciation Awards from Kiwanis Club President Bob Wolfing. (L-R) **Mike Castoro** (who arrives every Wednesday at 6:30 am, before the meeting, to brew coffee, make hot water for tea, set up the podium and hang the club banner), **Jim Ulman** (who organized and was part of the Christmas Luncheon entertainment), **Jackie Dubin** (who organized the Christmas Luncheon), **Tom Southwell** (who mans the check-in table and sells the weekly 50-50 tickets to members), and **Mary Page** (who created and handles "Sign Up Genius" which serves as the mechanism on line used for members to sign up for any and all of the Kiwanis events all year long).



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Goeller Public Health Excellence Award nominees sought

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

Debbie Goeller was Worcester County's Health Officer and trusted public health leader for over 25 years. Her vision and what she accomplished over her years of service, continue to shape the future of the Worcester County Health Department. Her persistent and focused leadership paved the way for new programs and specialty

services that continue to be offered by the health department. She was a champion for public health services and her dedication to the citizens of Worcester County was unwavering.

Any current member of the Worcester County Health Department staff or community member can submit nominations. Self-nominations will be accepted and all nominations will be confidential. Nominations will be forwarded to the Office of the Health Officer and will be reviewed by the Excellence Award Review Committee.

The Excellence in Public Health Award recipient will have made a significant impact on public health

in Worcester County through outstanding dedication, competence, exceptional performance, and excellent service. The nominee will have made important and/or significant contributions in public health, contributes and/or demonstrates a commitment to public health, demonstrates exceptional ability to foster collaboration, communication, and cooperation between the public/private sector, and/or consistently seeks to

improve the quality of public health services.

Nominations will be accepted from January 29, 2024 - March 10. All nominations must be submitted to worcester.health@maryland.gov. The Debbie Goeller Excellence in Public Health Award will be presented to one recipient during National Public Health Week, April 2-5, 2024. For questions or more information, please call 410-632-1100 ext. 1120.

New contact person for tree removal in Ocean Pines

Starting on February 1, all application requests for tree removal in Ocean Pines will be processed by Michelle Lane-Ross, the Administrative Assistant for the General Manager's Office.

Tree removal applications will no longer be accepted at the Public Works Building.

For more information, contact Lane-Ross at mross@oceanpines.org.

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New Year's financial resolutions

Submitted by **John Bennish**
Financial Advisor, Edward Jones



John Bennish

Now that we've reached 2024, you might be thinking about your goals and hopes for the new year. But in addition to whatever personal resolutions you might make — volunteering, going to the gym more, learning a new language and others — why not make some *financial* resolutions, too?

Here are a few to consider:

- **Boost your retirement savings.** If you can afford it, try to increase your contributions to your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. The more you put away in these accounts, the greater your chances of reaching your retirement goals. At a minimum, contribute enough to your 401(k) to earn your employer's match, if one is offered. And whenever your salary goes up, consider raising the amount you put in to your 401(k).

- **Reduce your debts.** It's not always easy to reduce your debts — but it's worth the effort. The lower your debt load, the greater your monthly cash flow. So, look for ways to consolidate debts or find other, possibly more productive, ways of using credit. And if you truly can't afford something that's nonessential, don't go into debt for it. "Live within your means" is an old piece of advice, but it's just as valid now as ever.

- **Build an emergency fund.** If you suddenly needed a major home or car repair, or received a large medical bill not fully covered by insurance, would you have the funds available? If not, you might be forced to dip into your retirement accounts or other long-term investments. To avoid this possibility, try to build an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account that's separate from the ones you use to meet your daily expenses. It can take a while to build such a fund, but if you make it a priority and contribute regular amounts each month, you can

make good progress.

- **Avoid emotional decisions.** Too many people overreact to events in the financial markets because they let their emotions get the better of them. If the market is temporarily down, it doesn't mean you need to sell investments to "cut your losses" — especially if these investments still have good fundamentals and are still appropriate for your portfolio. It can be hard to ignore market volatility, but you'll be better off if you focus on the long term and continue following an investment strategy that's designed to meet your needs.

- **Review your goals.** Over time, your goals may have changed. For example, while you once might have wanted to retire early, and planned for it, you may now find that you'd like to work a few more years. If that's the case, you may also need to adjust your financial and investment strategies.

- **Revisit your estate plans.** If you've married, divorced, remarried or added children to your family within the past few years, you may need to review the account titling and beneficiary designations on your 401(k) and other retirement assets, along with your estate-planning documents, such

as your will or living trust. You might also need to revise these documents in other ways.

Of course, you may not be able to tackle all these resolutions at one time, but if you can work at them throughout the year, you can potentially brighten your financial outlook in 2024 — and beyond.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor John Bennish, Ocean Pines. He can be reached at 410-208-9083. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.



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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by *Jack Barnes*

REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN GRANDMOTHERS LOOKED LIKE THIS?



4-H fundraiser scheduled

On Friday, February 2, Saturday, February 3 and Sunday, February 4 the Worcester County 4-H Program will hold a fundraiser at the annual Wool and Fiber Expo being held at the Ocean City Convention Center. Please bring any yarn or craft supplies that you no longer want or need to the 'destash' bin that will be located at the Fiber Expo. The proceeds from the 'destash' bin help fund local 4-H projects and furnish yarn and craft supplies for new projects. Hours are Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission to the event is \$4 per person. For information go to <http://www.woolandfiber.com> or call 443-235-2926.

restore
from page 8

celebration at the new location in Manklin Station. Attendees can look forward to the first "look" at the new store and inventory, exclusive discounts, light refreshments, a ribbon cutting, and the chance to support a worthy cause while shopping for home improvement needs.

The current ReStore location at 9026 Worcester Highway in Berlin will close on Saturday, February 17. The final day for any donation drop-offs to the 9026 Worcester Highway location will be Saturday, February 10. Donations will be accepted at the new Manklin Station location beginning on Tuesday, February 27. As always, donations to the ReStore must be approved and scheduled by emailing pictures to donations@habitatworcester.org to ensure that the potential donation aligns with ReStore requirements.

For more information about the Habitat for Humanity ReStore and the grand opening event, please visit habitatworcester.org.

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