

The Courier

March 20, 2024 Volume 24 Number 26

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A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

In light of recent overdoses in Worcester County, several agencies would like to come together to have courageous conversations about drug use in our community. Come join us and learn from local experts, talk about what we can do as a community and what is currently being done to help combat overdoses in Worcester County.

DATE & TIME: *Tuesday, March 26, 5:30 pm*

LOCATION: *Stephen Decatur High School Cafeteria*

Light refreshments and door prizes will be available.



Sponsored by Worcester Goes Purple
Speakers from the following agencies will be in attendance: Atlantic General Hospital, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Worcester County Health Department, Worcester County Public Schools, and more.

Underkoffler is new Racquet Sports director

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola this week announced that Terry Underkoffler has been named Director of Racquet Sports, effective immediately.

Underkoffler had been involved in Ocean Pines Racquet Sports for roughly a decade.

He was named Tennis Director in 2020 and split his time between Ocean Pines and

Worcester Preparatory School, where he coached the sport. Underkoffler is a United States Tennis Association-licensed teacher and has been teaching and coaching since 1977.

As the department head of Ocean Pines Racquet Sports, he will report directly to General Manager John Viola.

“Terry answered the call when the GM and Ocean Pines had a need,” Viola said. “He’s a team player with the necessary skills, and we felt he was the

ideal person to help bring us to the next level.”

Viola said Underkoffler would continue to have help from Membership Supervisor Ruth Ann Meyer (finance and front-desk), Deputy Public Works Director Nobie Violante (facility maintenance), and Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue (events).

Underkoffler said he’s excited for the new opportunity.

“I’ve put a lot of my heart into the Racquet Center, between teaching and coaching, and playing there for almost 10 years,” he said. “I love the variety that the Racquet Center provides and the kind of instruction that we have. I think it’s just going to grow and it’s only going to get better.”

Underkoffler said a particular strength of the center is that it has many different sports geared toward all ages and skill levels.

“My vision is that we’re looked at as a premiere destination for pickleball, tennis, platform tennis, Timeless Tennis and Spec Tennis, and all kinds of recreation that families can enjoy,” he said.



Terry Underkoffler



Wearin’ the green - Worcester County Democrats and the Democratic Women’s Club of Worcester County were ‘Wearin’ their Green’ at the Ocean City St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The largest St. Patrick Day Parade in Maryland





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Power squadron offers boating course

The Ocean City Power Squadron, a unit of the United States Power Squadrons, will present a comprehensive safe boating course beginning March 26.

This is an eight-hour course and will be given on three consecutive nights at the Ocean Pines library starting on March 26 and continuing on March 27 and 28. This includes a review and exam on the last night. Registration can be made on-line at ocpsabc@gmail.com. The course will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. each night.

There is a \$25 fee for the course material. Middle and high school students age 18 and under can take the course, including material, for free.

Anyone born after July 1, 1972, is required to satisfactorily complete a safe boating class to operate a recreational vessel or personal watercraft in Maryland. (January 1, 1978 in Delaware). Successfully completing this class also satisfies the requirements nationwide.

This course covers basic boat handling, rules of the road, navigation, federal and state regulations, aids to navigation, and required equipment, among other topics.

Statistics show that in 82 percent of boating fatalities, the captain had no formal boating education. The Ocean City Power Squadron encourages all boaters to complete a boating safety class. For information and early registration, call 443-604-5851.

Newark VFC blood drive set

Newark Volunteer Fire Company is proud to announce their first (hopefully annual) blood donation drive. It will be held on April 1 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the firehouse, located at 8338 Newark Road in Newark.

Chief Steve Orth said, "Since we are in the business of saving lives, it seemed logical that we expand our efforts with this life-saving event."

Appointments are suggested; they can be made by calling the Blood Bank of Delmarva at 1-888-825-6638 (1-888-8-BLOOD8) or online at delmarvablood.org. Walk-ins are welcome, time permitting.

For information, call Ava at 443-523-4081 or Jackie at 443-735-4275.

Worship meal offered

A Maundy Thursday Meal in Upper Room will be offered March 28 at 4:30 p.m. at Bethany United Methodist Church located at 8648 Stephen Decatur Hwy. in Berlin. This worship service will recall the events of the meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples so long ago. Sign-up by phone or email at 410-641-2186 or bethany21811@gmail.com.

'Backyard' course offered

Registration is now open for the spring 2024 session of "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course. The self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from April 8 to June 17, 2024.

The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. The course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (one-10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

The course costs \$95 per person, which includes the 108-page "Woods in Your Backyard" guide workbook and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants, so sign up now! Registration closes April 8 or when filled. Registration is through Eventbrite; go to <https://WIYB-Spring2024.eventbrite.com>.

For more information, go to <https://go.umd.edu/3nmoVmc>, or contact course coordinator Andrew Kling, University of Maryland Extension, akling1@umd.edu, 301-226-7564.

Age and attitude

This week's issue is focused on those who are over the age of 50. As one who is a data point in this demographic, I must admit there was a time when I thought someone age 50

Wow!

Life prompts remind us that time passes even when we are not aware or even better, don't care that it is. For instance, my granddaughter celebrates her birthday next week, turning 12. How did that happen and who told her she could get to that age so quickly? Of course, I think that sometimes about my three children. It seems like just the other evening when



It's All About...

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

was ancient. The age I am now, I thought was really old when I was in my twenties. But within what seems like a blink of an eye, here I am with silver hair, an AARP card and not being able to sleep through the night without making a trip or two to the bathroom.

On the outside, I look older than the image of me in several framed pictures around the house. But on the inside, I really don't feel all that different. True, I can't do 100 push-ups each morning. But I couldn't do them when I was 20 so, really, nothing has changed.

When I was a kid looking through old family albums, the pictures were all in black and white, giving more of a sense that the images were from a bygone time. Seeing a picture or a movie in black and white defines it as being old, at least for me. But with the emergence in the 1960s of readily available Kodak Kodachrome film and Polaroid cameras, old pictures don't have the appearance of being snapped long ago because they're preserved in living color. So, when I see vivid pictures of me, thin and with black hair, holding my first child, I really haven't aged much at all. If only that were true.

When we get to a certain age and begin thinking about people or events we realize, sometimes shockingly, that twenty or thirty years have passed since we celebrated a retirement or took a memorable vacation or talked with a friend. I find that sometimes I confuse dates, especially years. Recently I was asked when my wife and I moved to Ocean Pines. Without thinking I responded about twenty years ago. Then I caught myself. No, that's not right. It's more like 35 years ago.

the five of us were around the dinner table talking about our experiences of the day; my oldest son doing hilarious impressions of classmates and teachers. It wasn't just the other evening. It was many, many evenings ago.

Standing at the gas pump fueling up my truck I realized it was eight years ago when I bought it. Not that it being eight years old matters to me. It's just that until that moment, I hadn't given any thought that it had been that long ago. I still consider it a new truck even though it has clocked close to 130,000 miles on the odometer. Conversely, I consider myself still young even though in dog years I'm way past the age of 400.

A medical article I read recently reported that researchers theorize that the pace of aging for various organs of the body differs from chronological age. For instance, depending on life and nutritional choices, a heart or liver or brain can age at a different rate than the age indicated on our driver's license. That can be good or bad depending on the choices made. I'd like to think my brain is aging slowly because there's so much more I'd like to learn. I suspect there are some who believe I learn things too slowly as it is.

I don't believe chronology is indicative of being old, the definition of which has evolved for me as I've aged. To me being old means being too set in one's ways, too inflexible to learn something new. It means no longer seeking new challenges, no longer doing things, expressing only the negative instead of accentuating the positive. Life is too short as it is for such an attitude.



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Commentary

By Joe Reynolds
OceanPinesForum.com

KISS elections

Ocean Pines Association member Art Sachs liked to say a camel is a horse designed by a committee.

Actions by OPA Election Committees over the last four or so years give great credence to Sachs' observation. What was once a smooth-running process to elect OPA board members has evolved into chaos, with no end in sight.

For a decade or more the board election process was, at its core, simple, effective, and trusted by association members. Ballots were printed locally and mailed to all eligible association members. Returned ballots were picked up at a local post office by the mailing contractor who separated the ballots from the envelopes. On the day of assigned ballot counting the contractor delivered these two document piles to the OPA Elections

Committee.

The Election Committee did not count the ballots. Counting was accomplished with the use of a small machine called a Scantron, operated by a technician hired to run it under the supervision of the members of the Election Committee. Any association member could attend and observe the counting process. The committee would decide on a few questionable ballots and then announce the results. Done.

Then, about four years ago, an Election Committee decided the Scantron machine was old technology and bought a fancy new scanner. In violation of OPA Resolutions, the committee allowed the mailing contractor to scan and count the ballots as they arrived, but with no required supervision by the committee.

Things became worse the following year when the Election Committee, embarrassed by what happened, decided committee members would operate the scanner, and count the ballots.

The final nail in the coffin of well-run elections happened the next year when the OPA Board of Directors, with the encouragement of the Elections Committee, decided to implement a combination of Internet and paper voting. A three-ring-circus ensued with committee mistakes resulting in perhaps 200 or more ballots not counted properly in an election where a board position was decided by maybe less than 10 votes.

That Election Committee resigned, en masse. The board appointed a new committee with orders to plug the leaks in a sinking election ship. In a brilliant camel-designing move, the committee hired a company on the West Coast to handle the entire elec-

tion process — paper ballots and Internet voting put off until the next election. Another fiasco ensued, requiring the postponement of the Annual Meeting due to screw-ups by the West Coast contractor.

Today we are six months out from that disaster and still have no board-approved plan for conducting the upcoming election. The OPA website indicates the last Election Committee meeting minutes available are from June 6, 2023! There have been no announced meetings of the Election Committee in 2024.

The Board of Directors needs to get involved. Put an end to Internet voting, a system that has no paper trail with zero opportunity for recounts of close elections and requires 100% faith in some company possibly operating on software written in Afghanistan.

Return to local. Return to all paper. Paper is good. Return to KISS.

Questions arise about school data

Editor:

After attending Worcester County School Board (WCSB) meetings, a Worcester County Commissioner meeting and reading numerous articles about Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS)



student achievement on the 2022-2023 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAT) scores, I felt I needed more information.

As I examine the data, I agree that WCPS did achieve scores in English Language Arts (ELA) higher than any other county in Maryland. I also agree that WCPS achieved scores in Mathematics and Algebra I that were next to the highest scores in the state. That really sounds good.

However, when you look further, many important questions come to mind that no one seems to be asking. For example, only 47% of WCPS students in grades 3 to 8 are proficient in mathematics. What are we doing for the other 53% who are not achieving proficiency? Also, only 38% of the Al-

gebra I students scored proficiency. Why? What are we doing to improve this? These numbers show that mathematics instruction is not working for over half of our children. Are teachers and administrators looking to see why? These numbers are not acceptable. We can do better.

Looking at ELA scores is less disheartening, but still not good enough. In grades 3 to 8, 68% of our students are proficient. What is being done to help the other 32%?


Do our teachers need more staff development in these curriculum areas? Are we teaching a curriculum that moves our students toward proficiency? Are the materials that we are using to teach, appropriate? How much actual instructional time is being used for these two subjects? I would like the answers to these questions and many others.

This is one of the reasons why I am running for WCPS Board of Education in District 5. Our children, our parents, and our taxpayers deserve answers to these questions and others.

Dorothy Shelton Leslie

Courier Almanac

On March 20, 1853, in Ripon, Wisconsin, former members of the Whig Party met to establish a new party to oppose the spread of slavery into the western territories. The Whig Party, which was formed in 1834 to oppose the "tyranny" of President Andrew Jackson, had shown itself incapable of coping with the national crisis over slavery.



Falls pose a significant threat to the senior population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says someone age 65 or older suffers a fall every second of every day in the United States. This makes falls the leading cause of injury and injury death among this demographic. The National Council on Aging says one in four Americans fall each year. In fact, the NCOA notes that falls result in more than three million injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms each year, including more than 800,000 that lead to hospitalization. The financial toll of falls among older adults also is significant, and estimates suggest falls will cost \$101 billion annually by 2030. That cost is only expected to increase as the population ages.

The
Courier

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Fentanyl discussion scheduled

Every day healthy young athletes, musicians, television stars and children die from the newest epidemic, fentanyl poisoning. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid which is inexpensive to produce, fifty times more potent than heroin and much easier to get. The drug has no taste or smell and is deadly in the amount of just a few grains of salt.

All recreational drugs today should be suspect of containing fentanyl. This means unregulated marijuana and even Vape could unknowingly contain fentanyl. Fake pills for common prescriptions such as Xanax, Adderall and Oxycodone are being mixed with fentanyl and other fillers, pressed in a pill press to look exactly like their prescription counterpart. Children can connect with someone on social media to get these pills without knowing they are laced with Fentanyl.

What can you do? First, carry Narcan. Naloxone (Narcan) is a life-saving medication that can reverse an overdose from opioids including heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioid

Medications when given in time. Narcan is available without a prescription and can be purchased over the counter. Worcester Goes Purple, with the support

of Atlantic General Hospital, Worcester County Sheriff's Department, Worcester County Board of Education, and other community partners will host an information meeting on Tuesday, March 26 at Stephen Decatur High School starting at 6 p.m. Come out and get the current information on fentanyl, instruction on using Narcan and free Narcan. Someone's life may depend on it.

For additional information, contact Debbie Smullen at 410-870-5161 wgpwarriors2021@gmail.com.

Commissioners call special session

The Worcester County Commissioners will hold a special session on Thursday, April 4 at 1 p.m. with the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) and the Board of Education to discuss school construction funding for Buckingham Elementary School, as well as school construction and maintenance as a whole. The meeting will take place in the Commissioners' meeting room in the Government Center in Snow Hill.



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How seniors can overcome a lack of motivation to exercise

Exercise has its fair share of devotees and millions of others who recognize its value but still struggle to include workouts in their daily routines. Motivation can be a significant hurdle when it comes to exercise, and recent studies are a testament to that difficulty.



In a 2021 survey from the global fitness brand Orangetheory™ Fitness and Kelton Global, 43 percent of respondents indicated they suffered from a lack of motivation to exercise. Lack of motivation can affect people of all ages, including seniors. However, seniors may be uniquely positioned to overcome their lack

of motivation to exercise, particularly if they're retired and have time on their hands. Seniors who aspire to exercise more frequently can consider these strategies if motivation becomes an issue.

Exercise away from home. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a phenomenon that has been characterized as 'basement burnout' developed. That referred to the lack of enthusiasm to exercise at home when gyms and other fitness facilities were forced to close as a public safety measure. Home workouts can become monotonous since most people do not have enough room at home to house the same array of equipment that's available at their local gym. Seniors can overcome monotonous workouts by purchasing a gym membership at a local facility. Many clubs offer discounted rates to seniors and some even offer senior-specific fitness classes like yoga and Pilates.

Employ the buddy system. Seniors also can enlist friends and family members to join them when they exercise. Encourage neighbors or friends to come along to the gym for a favored fitness class, or invite friends and family on hiking excursions or daily walks. The National Institute on Aging notes that turning exer-

cise into a social activity is a great way for seniors to maintain their motivation to exercise.

Track your progress and celebrate your successes. The NIA touts the benefits of tracking progress when trying to stay motivated to exercise. As exercise efforts pay increasing dividends, seniors may find it's no longer hard to stay motivated. Success can be measured in various ways. Some might aspire to produce healthier blood test results at the doctor's office, while others may hope to lose a few pounds. However you define success, celebrate when you achieve your fitness goals. Rewards such as a spa day, a night out at the theater or a weekend getaway can provide all the motivation you need to stay the course.

Be flexible with your routine. Mobility issues and other physical limitations may affect seniors. But such issues need not prevent aging men and women from exercising, even if it does mean they won't be able to hit the gym four or five days per week. Mix up your routine so you can still exercise even if physical limitations make traditional workout routines more challenging. Go for nature walks on days when your body needs a break from strength-

training, and check the forecast at the start of each week so you can rearrange your routine if Mother Nature makes outdoor exercise impossible on certain days.

Many people find it hard to stay motivated to exercise. Seniors can try a few strategies to ensure they stay the course with their fitness routines.

Did you know?

Data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates there were roughly 37 million providers of unpaid eldercare across the United States in 2021-22. The majority (59 percent) of eldercare providers are women, and individuals between the ages of 45 and 64 are the most likely to provide care. Unpaid caregiving also is significant in Canada, where the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence reports Canadians devote 5.7 billion unpaid hours each year to caregiving. In the U.S., data from the BLS indicates that nearly half of all eldercare providers provide care every day (24.3 percent) or several times per week (24 percent). Full-time workers who provide eldercare in addition to their responsibilities at work provided an average of 2.65 hours per day of care in 2021-22.

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Tips for seniors to safeguard their mental health

The wide-ranging impact and reach of mental health issues garnered considerable attention during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the virus as well as mandates designed to reduce its spread led to increased feelings of anxiety and isolation. Since then, life has returned to normal for billions of people across the globe, but many people, including seniors, continue to experience mental health issues.

The Pan American Health Organization reports that at least one in four older adults experiences a mental disorder

such as depression, anxiety or dementia. And those figures will likely only grow, as population estimates indicate seniors will make up a greater percentage of the global population in the years to come. Seniors dealing with mental health issues may feel helpless, but there's much they can do to safeguard their mental health.

Socialize regularly. A 2019 study published in *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* found that older adults who socialized with people be-

yond their circle of family and close friends were more likely to have greater positive moods and fewer negative feelings. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of older adults report feeling isolated from others. According to the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging that was conducted in January 2023, one in three older adults reported infrequent contact (once a week or less) with people from outside their home.

Speak with a mental health professional. Among the more troubling as-

pects of the mental health crisis affecting seniors is that the PAHO reports two-thirds of older adults with mental health problems do not get the treatment they need. Speaking with a mental health professional can help older adults in myriad ways. Such professionals can identify the issue that is prompting seniors to seek help and offer suggestions that can improve overall health and quality of life. Roundstone Insurance notes that reliance on digital behavioral health tools, including telehealth, was turned to

*please see **health** page 12*



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How families can share caregiving responsibilities

Family caregivers are unsung heroes. Such individuals typically provide vital services to their loved ones who cannot fully care for themselves, and they often do so without compensation.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the prevalence of family caregivers across the country. According to the BLS, 14 percent of the population, which equates to roughly 37 million people, provide unpaid eldercare across the nation. Unpaid caregivers also provide vital services in Canada, where the Canadian Institute for Health Information reports such individuals provide an average of 17 hours of unpaid care each week (26 hours for those who care for seniors with dementia). Caregiving for a family member can take a toll that affects caregivers' physical and mental health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, caregivers are at increased risk for developing multiple chronic diseases since many neglect their own health needs while caring for others. In addition, roughly 15 percent of caregivers who participated in a CDC survey reported experiencing 14 or more mentally unhealthy days in the past month.

The physical and mental toll of caregiving underscores how important it can be for families to find ways to share caregiving duties. Though each situation is unique, the National Institute on Aging offers the following advice to families as they seek to share the responsibility of caring for a loved one in need.

Identify the care required. The NIA recommends families discuss caregiving needs as early as possible and ideally before an emergency situation arises. If possible, the person in need can participate in this conversation and help to calmly discuss which services are wanted and needed. If a loved one is diagnosed with a condition in its early stages, such as dementia, families can then work together to identify the level of care required in the immediate future and potentially down the road should the

condition worsen.

Choose a primary caregiver. The primary caregiver will be the individual who accepts the bulk of the daily responsibilities of caregiving. Identifying this person early, ideally before a primary caregiver is even needed, can limit confusion should the day come when the individual needs daily care.

Determine each caregiver's contribution. The caregiving team can discuss each person's skills and how they can be used to take care of the individual in need. This can be particularly useful when assigning specific tasks. For example, a caregiver who works in the medical field may be most qualified to speak to medical staff about their loved one's condition, while another who works in the financial sector may be tasked with managing a loved one's

bank accounts and ensuring bills are paid on time.

Recognize everyone has limits. A caregiving team is just that: a team. As noted, caregiving can take both a physical and emotional toll, so it's important that everyone, and particularly the individual chosen as the primary caregiver, receive routine breaks to ensure everyone can take care of themselves. It's important that a caregiving team maintain a degree of flexibility to account for the physical and mental challenges caregivers may encounter as they tend to a loved one in need.

Sharing the responsibility of caregiving can ensure caregivers and their loved ones in need are not overwhelmed by the challenges they might confront each day. More information about caregiving can be found at nia.nih.gov.

Program provides free tax prep help to all

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is providing free in-person and virtual tax assistance and preparation now through April 15. The nation's largest free, volunteer-based tax assistance and preparation program helped secure more than \$1.1

billion in refunds for more than 1.5 million taxpayers last year. Tax-Aide is offered in conjunction with the IRS, and AARP membership is not required.

"Many taxpayers miss out on tax credits and deductions they've earned every year. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide helps anyone secure these credits and much-needed refunds while saving on tax preparation costs," said Mioshi Moses, Vice President of AARP Foundation Volunteer Programs. "Millions of people, especially older adults living on fixed incomes, depend on their refund to pay for monthly expenses like food and utilities. Last year, older adults with low incomes saved over \$564 million in total with the help of Tax-Aide."

Tax-Aide volunteers provide free tax preparation and filing services to adults

with low to moderate income in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year to ensure they understand the latest changes to the U.S. Tax Code. Since the pandemic, AARP Foundation has seen a significant increase in volunteer applications, with over 20,000 people applying to help older adults file their tax returns in 2023.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers several options for taxpayer assistance:

In-Person Service: In Tax-Aide's traditional in-person service, taxes are prepared and filed by IRS-certified tax counselors.

One-Visit Scan (Internet access required): Tax documents are scanned at

please see prep on page 15

health
from page 11

both during the pandemic and ever since, and seniors can utilize such services if they have limited mobility and/or no one to help them make it to in-person appointments.

Volunteer. Many older adults are retired, and while ample free time may have seemed like the ultimate reward after a lifetime of working, many retirees experience a void once their life no longer has the structure that work can provide. According to the independent nonprofit HelpGuide.org, retirement depression can compel retirees to feel as though they miss the sense of identity, meaning and purpose that came with their jobs, which can make some feel depressed, aimless and isolated. Volunteering can help fill the void created by retirement, and the positive mental health effects of volunteering are well-documented. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies have shown volunteering increases positive, relaxed feelings and gives volunteers a sense of meaning and appreciation.


No one is immune to mental health issues, including seniors. But older adults can take various steps to address their mental health and improve their overall health as a result.


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Changes that could arise from the ‘silver tsunami’

A report from the International Monetary Fund in the summer of 2023 indicated that a new challenge awaits the world in the coming years. The global population increased by one billion people between 2010 and 2022. That remarkable increase saw the world surpass the eight billion people mark in November of 2022.

Despite a sharp increase in the global population in such a short period of time, the IMF asserts that the population boom is not the most formidable demographic challenge facing the world. The

IMF defines population aging as the most formidable challenge. Widely referred to as the silver tsunami, a term credited to the AARP, the increase in the number of individuals age 65 and older could lead to some unique changes in countries across the globe.

Increased recreation spending: Sixty-five has traditionally been viewed as retirement age, and that remains an unofficial bar for individuals living in countries like the United States that have increased their official retirement age. Though an uptick in the aging population

is often framed in terms of the challenges countries will face, that increase also could present some opportunities. For example, a recent AARP Longevity Economy Outlook report noted that people 50 and older account for the most spending on recreation and culture of any demographic. That could prove beneficial to businesses and regions that cater to consumers interested in recreation.

Employment opportunities: The AARP also noted the role the 50 and older population plays in supporting jobs. In 2020, the demographic of people 50 and older supported roughly one-third of the world’s jobs and generated \$23 trillion in labor income with its spending on goods and services. Estimates from the AARP indicate that individuals age 50 and older will support 1.5 billion jobs across the globe by 2050. The labor income impact by then will more than double to \$53 billion.

Employment challenges: Though the silver tsunami could help to maintain existing jobs and create plenty of new ones, employers might find it difficult to fill those positions. As more of the global population reaches retirement age, it

bears noting that more workers will retire. Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute note that the manufacturing sector will need to fill 2.5 million job openings related to retirements between 2020 and 2030. That could prove a sizable challenge, as the aging population is increasing at a time when the young population is decreasing.

The aging population is increasing, which could lead to a number of opportunities and challenges in the decades to come.

County accepting easement applications

Landowners interested in permanent land preservation may be eligible for the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program or the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) permanent easement program. To be considered for participation in 2025, applications must be submitted to Worcester County Environmental Programs (WCEP) by May 3, 2024.

On behalf of MALPF, Worcester County is accepting applications from interested landowners who may wish to participate in this program through the voluntary sale of an agricultural easement to the foundation. Eligible properties must be at least 50 acres in size (unless contiguous to an existing MALPF easement or another applicant) and meet a minimum soils requirement.

An agricultural easement is a voluntary permanent agreement that runs with the land. Development of land encumbered by the easement is strictly limited, but agricultural and natural resource uses and activities are allowed, including crop production, timber harvest, and hunting.

“To date, over 10,000 acres in Worcester County are permanently protected from development with a voluntary MALPF easement,” WCEP Natural Resources Planner V Katherine Munson said.

The CREP permanent easement program is available to landowners who are currently enrolled in a CREP contract.

“The purchased easement would require the CREP practice to remain in place in perpetuity,” Munson said. “Timber harvest would be allowed.”

Worcester County landowners interested in selling a voluntary perpetual agricultural or CREP easement or learning about other land conservation options may contact Munson at 410-632-1220, ext. 1302.

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MCBP scholarships offered

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program is offering six \$1,000 scholarships to qualifying high school seniors from Worcester County Public Schools interested in a future in the environmental field.

Two scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors from each of the three county high schools- Pocomoke, Snow Hill, and Stephen Decatur. MCBP is seeking applicants who are pursuing a two-year or four-year college or university, trade school, or Corps position with a focus on the environmental field. "We did not want to restrict these scholarships to those students applying to 4-year universities," explains MCBP Education Coordinator Liz Wist, "gateways into the environmental world can take different paths, and that might include not attending college at all."

To be eligible for the Coastal Bays Scholarship Program, applicants must be a student in the Worcester County Public School system, graduating high school in the spring of 2024, and must submit a completed application including two essay questions that will provide the opportunity for the applicant's voice to be heard. "The essay portion of the application is the most determining element of the application," explains Wist, "it's a

chance for us to hear about the applicant's interest and passion for the environment, and the impact it has had on their own lives."

Applications are due by Friday, April 19th at midnight. Financial need will not be considered for this program. To read more about this new scholarship program, please visit <https://mdcoastalbays.org/funding-opportunities/>

Parke garage sale returns

The Parke at Ocean Pines is holding its community sale on Saturday, April 13 (rain date is Sunday, April 14) from 7:30 a.m. to noon in the driveways of our residents. The Parke is an active 55+ Adult community of 503 homes. Parke residents are selling their treasures for others to enjoy. There are clothes, lamps, artwork, household items, electronics, furniture and more.

On April 13, maps will be available at the main entrance of the Parke located at Central Parke West, located off Ocean Parkway at the south entrance of Ocean Pines.

For additional information, contact the Parke Clubhouse Staff at 410-208-4994.

prepares their own return and receives online support from an IRS-certified volunteer to help them along the way.

Facilitated Self-Assistance: Taxpayers schedule an appointment at a Tax-Aide site to work with a volunteer to complete and file their own return.

Self-Preparation: The taxpayer prepares their own return using a software product made available through our website.

Access to the different types of taxpayer assistance varies by location.

Users can find the nearest Tax-Aide location in their area and assistance options by visiting the Tax-Aide site locator. The site locator features a Tax-Aide chat bot that can help book an appointment, answer questions about the program and transfer the conversation to a live agent if needed or requested. For more information, including which documents to bring to the tax site, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide or call 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669).



Let's think about flounder fishing

Usually when March arrives, I begin to think flounder fishing. We have been having some warm weather which could trigger an earlier migration of flounder into our coastal bays. Last year the first reported flounder being caught was in late March. That being said let's get ready to go fishing. Note: Remember to check the DNR website each year for any changes in fishing regulations.

It usually takes at least a water temperature of 54 degrees to get them active and they really become active at 65 degrees. In the spring I usually fish the first two hours of the outgoing tide when the warm waters of the marshes flow through the bay.

However, I'm putting the proverbial cart before the horse. Don't forget to re-spool your reel with fresh line so as to avoid kinks. I usually use 15lb. test monofilament on the spool then a three-way barrel swivel with either a two-ounce or three-ounce bank sinker depending on the tide drift and a three- to five-foot 20 lb. test leader. At the end of the line, I use a plain #1 or #2 wide gap hook without adding any beads or flashy hardware. I personally prefer a conventional spooling reel rather than a spinning reel. I find it easier to control. If you are like some fishermen I know you will want to buy only the most expensive equipment. Being frugal, I go for the cheaper brands with plain old monofilament line and plain old leader material. Honestly, I catch as many or more on my rig. If you are a new fisherman, any local tackle shop can fit you up with an inexpensive flounder outfit and advise you on bait etc.

What about bait? I like to use frozen shiners hooked through the eyes with a narrow strip of squid or Gulp Swimming Mullet as an attractor. You might consider using a Pink Gulp as the early flounder are usually feeding on grass shrimp. Purchase these at your local tackle shops. Again, being frugal, when I see frozen shiners and squid at a good price I'll buy several packs and put them in the freezer.

However, a sound word of advice. If you want to avoid any conflict at home consult you wife before placing any frozen fish bait in the freezer. I did not. When they were discovered I promptly received a lengthy lesson on proper wrapping techniques beginning with "If it is totally necessary to put *that* in the freezer."

Just a reminder that it is very important that you properly prepare your boat for launching. Don't forget to put in the plug! Be certain your boat has a current registration. Also, consider joining the Ocean Pines Angler's Club that meets the second Saturday of each month at the Ocean Pines library. Keep checking the Ocean Pines Association web site for when they will resume meetings. You can find a wealth of information about fishing from many of the men and women experts who are members and through the club's educational and demonstration programs. If you don't have a boat it is likely someone will offer to take you fishing.

Where to go? You will find most early season flounder fishermen north of the Rte. 90 Bridge fishing in five to six feet of water as the flounder will seek the warmth of the shallower water. However, many fishermen do well in the flats at the Thorofare and in the South Bay behind Assateague Island around the Airport and duck blinds. I would suggest moving around. If the water is warmer, you may even do well along the ledges at the inlet or in the deeper holes at the Rte. 50 bridge. Keep your rig on the bottom and drift with the tide. When you feel a bite do not try to set the hook immediately. Let out a little line and give the flounder time to eat the bait. Then slowly raise the tip of your rod and set the hook. If you pull early, I'll guarantee you will miss most fish.

Did you know? The oldest fish hook ever found dates back to about 42,000 years ago.

Good luck this spring and remember to take a kid fishing
Capt. Ron

prep
from page 12

the Tax-Aide site and then Tax-Aide volunteers prepare the return remotely.

Two-Visit Scan: Tax documents are scanned at the Tax-Aide site and then volunteers prepare the return remotely. During a second visit, taxpayers work with a volunteer to finalize their return and obtain a printed copy for their records.

Drop Off Service: Tax documents are left at the Tax-Aide site with an IRS-certified volunteer and the return is prepared remotely. During a second visit, taxpayers work with a volunteer to file their return and obtain a printed copy and their original documents.

No Site Visit Required: (Internet access required): Taxpayers upload tax documents to the IRS-provided software. Tax-Aide volunteers prepare the return remotely and work with the taxpayer to file the return electronically.

Online Coaching: The taxpayer pre-

Health Watch

Emotional eating: how to cope

By **Amanda Buckley, RD, LDN**
Atlantic General Nutrition Services

When you feel upset or stressed out, do you notice yourself turning towards food to comfort you? The foods that we usually choose are easy to prepare, calorie dense and have simple sugars so that they are digested quickly. Think ice cream, cakes, cookies or potato chips. Since they digest quickly, they release a surge of hormones that make you happy for a short time, but lead to an inevitable crash. Emotional eating affects most everyone from time to time, but regularly letting your feelings guide your food intake can affect your health.

Eating more food than your body

needs on a regular basis can put you at increased risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and cancer. More serious conditions can be linked to emotional eating. One is binge eating disorder, characterized by eating dramatically large amounts of food well after you reach the point of fullness. Excessive eating can have emotional consequences as well, including shame or depression if linked to these more serious conditions.

Here are steps you can take to reduce emotional eating episodes and break the cycle:

Learn to recognize hunger/fullness cues. Next time you reach for a snack, ask yourself what's driving it.

Are you physically hungry or just feeling bored or stressed? Waiting too long to eat, eating too quickly and eating foods that digest too fast (read: those without healthy fats, fiber, and/or protein) can make it difficult to decipher these cues.

Keep a journal. Take the time to create a "mood and food" journal. Write down what you eat each day, along with the emotions you were experiencing at the time and whether you were truly hungry. You may find that specific feelings, such as anger or sadness, lead to your over-eating. Once you recognize these triggers, you can learn healthier ways to deal with them. For example, if you experience stress, take a

walk around the block instead of reaching only for a sweet treat.

Build a support network. Surrounding yourself with friends and family who support your efforts to develop a positive relationship with food can improve your chances of success. It may also be helpful to join a support group through which you will meet other people with similar challenges and learn coping strategies.

Cultivate other interests. Finding an activity that you enjoy can increase self-confidence. Examples of these activities are yoga, playing a musical instrument or painting. If you find that your eating is driven by boredom, a new passion can fill your hours and make you less likely to look to food for emotional satisfaction.

Get help if necessary. If you can't control emotional eating on your own, consider getting professional help to change your behavior. A form of psychotherapy called cognitive behavioral therapy can teach you to change your eating habits and manage emotions in a positive way. Talk with your healthcare provider to learn about more treatment choices.

Amanda Buckley, RD, LDN, is a licensed and registered dietitian providing clinical counseling, training, and education in food and nutrition. If you are interested in scheduling a consultation to begin your journey towards healthy diet and nutrition, please call the Atlantic General Bariatric Center at (410)-641-9568.

AGH CEO to host Q&A

On Thursday, March 21, Atlantic General Hospital and Health System President & CEO Don Owrey, MBA, FACHE, will provide a community update and host a Q&A.

Join Owrey at the Ocean Pines Community Center from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. as he discusses the organization's plan for the future and its current state. Following the presentation, Owrey will open the floor and take questions from participants. This is a free event and all are encouraged to attend.

Fill up on healthy eating pointers

Diet and exercise are the key components of maintaining a healthy weight and protecting yourself against chronic disease. According to the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, eating smart and being active have similar effects, including reducing risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some cancers,

each of which promises great results. It can be confusing when navigating all of the options, and there is no magic formula to eating better. Common sense can come into play when attempting to eat better, and individuals also can consider these strategies to make diet work for them as they seek to live healthier.

Eat colorful, varied, nutritionally dense foods. Medical News Today says each meal should be 50 percent fruit and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Select an array of colorful foods that will provide most of the nutrients needed.

Choose fiber-rich foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes are good sources of fiber. Fiber helps people maintain digestive health and can help you to feel fuller longer, reducing the potential for overeating, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Note how you feel after eating. Create a food journal where you jot down notes about how you feel after eating certain foods. If you notice that certain foods or ingredients trigger adverse reactions, it may be worth avoiding that type of food or looking for an alternative. Stomach upset or bloating

after eating dairy, for example, may indicate an intolerance for lactose.

Explore the Mediterranean diet. While you should avoid fad diets that often produce short-term but unsustainable results, a Mediterranean diet has stood the test of time. According to the authors of a new study published in JAMA Network Open in October 2023, middle-aged and older adults with overweight or obesity and metabolic syndrome lost visceral fat (belly fat) and showed a greater reduction in the percentage of total fat while adhering to a Mediterranean diet. They also had delayed loss of lean body mass, which often comes with aging. Mediterranean diets prioritize legumes, seafood, vegetables, and 'good' fats like olive oil.

Control portion sizes. Sometimes it's not what you eat but how much you eat that affects health. Weighing and measuring food can help you control portions and understand how many calories you're consuming each day. The National Institutes of Health says eating plans that favor 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day for women and 1,500 to 1,800 for men are good targets to lose weight at a healthy pace when combined with moderate exercise.

Balanced eating is a major component of a healthy lifestyle. While there are many fad diets, eating plans with a proven track record that are supported by the medical community may be your best bet.



and diabetes. In addition, these healthy living strategies can improve personal appearance and improve overall well-being — helping people live longer and maintain their independence.

People may wonder how to eat better when faced with many diets,

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Trails & Waterways

Ready for a walk on the wild side?

By **R. J. and K. A. Ferrusi**

E. A. Vaughn Wildlife Management Area was named in honor of Ernest Arthur Vaughn who was a well-respected Maryland State Game Warden in 1945 and Director of Maryland Game and Inland Fish Commission from 1945 through 1965.

This great big 2,600-plus acre property is divided into two sections, north and south. They border Chincoteague Bay between Girdletree and Stockton in southern Worcester County, south of Snow Hill and a stone's throw from the Virginia border. From the 1940s to 1960s they were a game farm where pheasant were raised and biologists experimented with plantings to benefit wildlife. The eastern end of the area has an extensive network of northeasterly to southwesterly man-made canals. Note there are seven parking areas indicated between the two parcels.



Let's go:

Head down Route 113 to Route 12/South Church Street to the only parking area that is indicated on the North map near a 'primitive camping area'. Turn off Route 113 onto bucolic Route 12; it'll seem like you've pleasantly gone back in time, even more so driving slowly through downtown Girdletree. Keep your eyes peeled beyond the town for a big E. A. Vaughn Wildlife Management Area sign on the left, pretty much across from a black cow farm; follow the gravelly dirt road.

In about a half-mile come to a sturdy yellow iron gate across the road; turn right into a parking area that is apparently for the Primitive Camping area.

According to the North map a trail heads straight down towards Sandy Point on the other side of the formidable gate. The map also indicates a trail that immediately heads left past the gate towards Scarboro Creek, eventually intersecting the straight-ahead trail.

Nowadays, both north and south parcels feature extensive woodlands with woodcock, woodpeckers,

warblers, herons, egrets, mallards, snow geese, doves, quail, migrating hawks, white-tailed deer, gray squirrels, and rabbits. Two-legged varieties, such as hikers, bikers, fishermen, crabbers, and bird watchers can also be found, as well as hunters in hunting season. Check hunting season dates carefully. There are more than four miles of trails between the two parcels. Note they are maintained, but not blazed. Watch where you are going.

We went left, onto a wide, grassy, mowed road/trail. Note that virtually all the trails we walked on were raised, sometimes very-wide, pretty much very level, mowed grassy roads, possibly left over from the property's former game farm days.

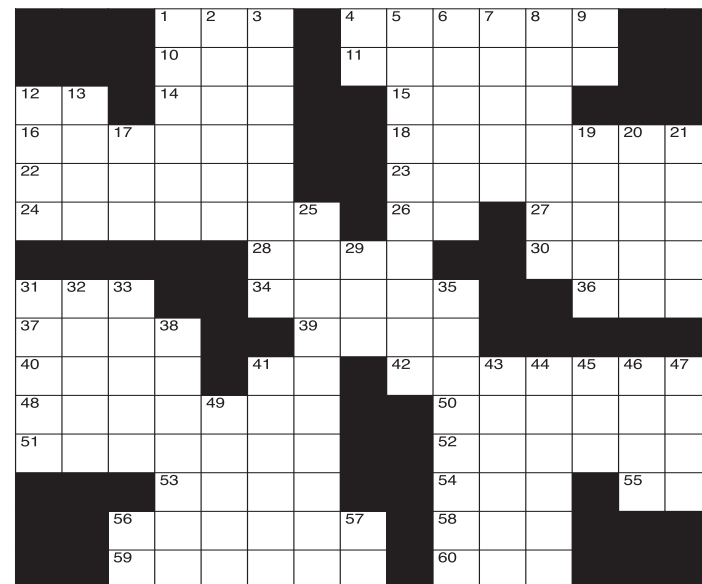
The route bends around a very picturesque pond on the right then keeps swinging right on a long straight wide-open trail until heading left and eventually reaching photo-op views across Scarboro Creek on the left. At an intersection turn left onto what appears to be a mile-long straight stretch lined with healthy and some not-so-healthy tall, mature cedars.

Finally enter some, as-promised, shady woodlands, where the route becomes more and more primitive, ultimately becoming a true narrow trail. Pulled along by tantalizing views of distant Johnson Bay, keep stepping along as long as you dare, particularly after reaching a narrow somewhat soggy by-way, most likely forged by deer, through increasingly dense tall reeds.

Open fields, big sky, sounds of our avian amigos, and signs of four-legged friends is what this Eastern Shore walk is all about.

When discretion becomes the greater part of valor, turn around and head back to the yellow gate, hopefully before dark, after a nice walk through peaceful, open meadows.

Kathy and Ralph Ferrusi are avid hikers, bicyclists, canoeists, world travelers, and, readers. They live in Ocean Pines, where they enjoy fine—and some not-so-fine—wines. Questions, comments; rjferrusi@frontiernet.net.

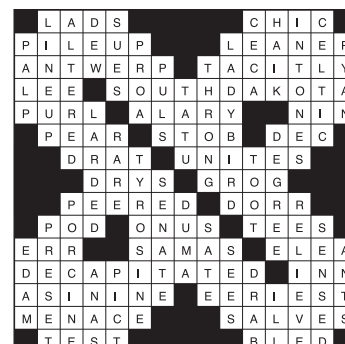


CLUES ACROSS

1. Small Eurasian deer
4. Irish county
10. A major division of geological time
11. Broadway actor Lane
12. Canadian province (abbr.)
14. Human gene
15. Two
16. A famous one is blue
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Ring-shaped objects
23. Spoils
24. Occurs
26. Commercial
27. Near
28. Products you may need
30. Pledge thrown down as a challenge
31. TV network
34. Silk or cotton garments
36. Soviet Socialist Republics
37. Retired American football coach Dean
39. Hot dish
40. A type of gin
41. Atomic #84
42. Sawhorse
48. About ground
50. Medicine man
51. Seedless raisin
52. Capital of Albania
53. Appendage
54. OJ trial judge
55. By the way (abbr.)
56. Bicycle parts
58. Barbie's friend
59. Moved one's neck to see
60. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

1. Make up for
2. Baltimore ballplayer
3. Salary
4. Influential world body
5. Engravers
6. Declared as fact
7. One who steals
8. Jewelry
9. Hospital employee (abbr.)
12. Nonsense (slang)
13. Town in Galilee
17. Value
19. A fake name
20. Sheep in their second year
21. Town in Surrey, England
25. Appropriate for a particular time of year
29. Creative works
31. Recesses
32. W. Pacific island group
33. Tolkien character
35. Ancient symbol co-opted by the Nazi party
38. Pioneer
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Lowest members of British nobility
45. Actress Thurman
46. Type of sugar
47. Crest of a hill
49. N. American people of British Columbia
56. Device
57. The Mount Rushmore State



Answers for March 6

Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by *Jack Barnes*

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