

The Courier

April 3, 2024 Volume 24 Number 28



Norbert Violante retires

See story on page 3

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GM reports to OPA board

General Manager John Viola's monthly report to the Board on March 23 included updates on OPA financials, ongoing maintenance and new construction efforts, and several recent staff promotions.

Financial updates

Viola said the February financials show \$48,000 favorability to budget for the month, including \$9,000 favorability in revenues and \$39,000 favorability in expenses.

"On expenses, we continue to be efficient and effective," he said. "That doesn't mean we have surplus. That just means ... we're favorable. Everything has been earmarked ... and it will be part of the budget going into next year."

Year-to-date favorability is now approximately \$908,000.

Viola said the total reserve balance as of Jan. 31 is \$8.3 million, including \$6.1 million in general replacement. The forecast for the next fiscal year is about \$1.5 million in spending and a total reserve balance of approximately \$7 million.

Promotions announced

Viola recently announced the promotions of Michelle Hitchens as the new Aquatics director and Terry Underkoffler as the new Racquet Sports director.

He said Hitchens took over as lead for the department several months ago and has reestablished swim lessons, along with many events that had not been done for several years.

"Congrats to Michelle and her team. Aquatics is [going to have] a good start this year," he said.

Viola said Underkoffler stepped up and answered a need in that department. He has been involved in Ocean Pines Racquet Sports for roughly a decade, he'll have help from Membership Supervisor Ruth Ann Meyer, Deputy Public Works Director Nobie Violante, Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue, and Tim McMullen.

"I'm very happy that Terry and Tim [McMullen] are back. We're looking forward to good results and good stuff this summer," he said.

Electronic signs

Viola said the existing sign structure at the North Gate had to be

moved six feet because it was found to be in an easement. That caused a slight delay with the installation of the new electronic sign.

"That was all completed. We have the permit. We have the sign ordered," he said, adding installation is likely in mid-April. "I know there's a lot of anticipation for that. We definitely will have it installed before the beginning of the season."

Landscaping efforts

Viola said landscaping and beautification efforts continue, including new bulbs planted at the north and south entrances.

"You'll see [seasonal flowers] on the North Gate bridge," he said. "The banners are also seasonal now ... and I've gotten a lot of phone calls and a lot of positive input."

Worcester County Tourism collaboration

Viola said department heads for Golf, Aquatics and Racquet Sports met with Worcester County Tourism officials on March 14 for a promotional video shoot.

Each director talked about their department and what homeowners, residents and visitors can expect this spring and summer.

Worcester County Tourism Director Melanie Pursel oversaw the shoot, which will debut on April 6 and be part of upcoming county promotional efforts.

New golfers' lounge

Viola said Golf Director Bob Beckelman approached him about creating a golfers' lounge in the Clubhouse Meeting Room.

"What I've been told by Bob [is], to be competitive with other golf courses, we really needed a golfers' lounge," Viola said.

He said the lounge was put together using new patio furniture donated by a local golfer.

"I've gotten good results on it," Viola said. "We are committed to getting a lounge here, like we have at Racquet Sports."

Tiki bar update

Viola said he's committed to finishing the new tiki bar expansion before Memorial Day.

He said Public Works removed

dock boards for new power lines and removed some existing pavers to make room for the addition.

"The main thing ... is getting the materials onsite," Viola said. "I believe and the team believes we're on track."

Veterans Memorial pavilion

Viola said he met with Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation President Marie Gilmore to discuss plans for a new pavilion at the memorial grounds. Based on her feedback, Viola is working with contractors on several different styles and options.

Plans are to finish the project before Veterans Day, in November.

"We're on track for that," Viola said.

Racquet Sports updates

Viola said about \$25,000 has been spent on maintenance of the Racquet Sports building, including materials and labor. That includes a new HVAC system, office furniture, window repairs, paint, and other amenities.

The Association is also planning a renovation and/or expansion of the building.

"The main things [were] ... bigger bathrooms, a bigger pro shop, and a bigger office," Viola said.

He said new Racquet Sports Director Terry Underkoffler gave his feed-

back, and former Board member Frank Brown has done initial sketches for the improvements.

"That will save us money once we go to Vista [Design] and the architects," he said.

Viola said new tables and chairs were also ordered for pickleball players at the center.

"That will help enhance the shade down there," he said.

Safety updates

Viola said 10 trees identified as safety issues were removed from White Horse Park. Several other large trees were trimmed.

"We are on top of that and, anything that has come to our notice, we have worked on," he said.

At the request of a homeowner, the Association also added "look again" safety signs at the intersection of Mumfords Landing Road and Yacht Club Drive.

Dog Park updates

Viola said new sand was added at the Dog Park, to help with drainage issues.

The Association also repaired a damaged fence and will investigate a rain shelter for dog owners using the

please see report on page 4

Norbert Violante retires

Norbert Violante finished his last official day of work for Ocean Pines on Friday, March 1. Like most days, he could be found at the Community Center doing many odd jobs and wearing his trademark smile.

Originally from Baltimore, Violante worked for Ocean Pines for 18 years. His son, Nobie, is the deputy director of Public Works and has been with the Association for 23 years.

On an average day, Violante would do a little bit of everything, from changing message boards along Ocean Parkway, to getting the community center ready for civic and social club meetings, to keeping the grounds neat and tidy.

"Up here [at the community center] it's mostly setting up rooms and even taking care of the parks and leveling off the trails and cutting the grass. But I've been all over the place! I used to do tennis sometimes too," he said.

He's also been a big part of

events, like helping with the annual Hometown Christmas celebration at White Horse Park.

"I would do the decorating and light displays. I won't have to climb up on the roof anymore!" he said with a laugh.

Violante also drives a school bus for Worcester County Public Schools.

"Altogether, I leave the house around 6 in the morning and I don't get home until 7 in the evening," he said. "I always got eight hours in here – or more."

Asked what he will miss the most, Violante said, it's "the people."

"I like working with people and helping people," he said.

Violante said he plans to continue driving a school bus.

"I'll be busy," he said. "[The bus] is probably a little louder than this place."

Many Ocean Pines staffers said they will miss seeing Violante who, each day, provided a steady hand and a friendly smile.

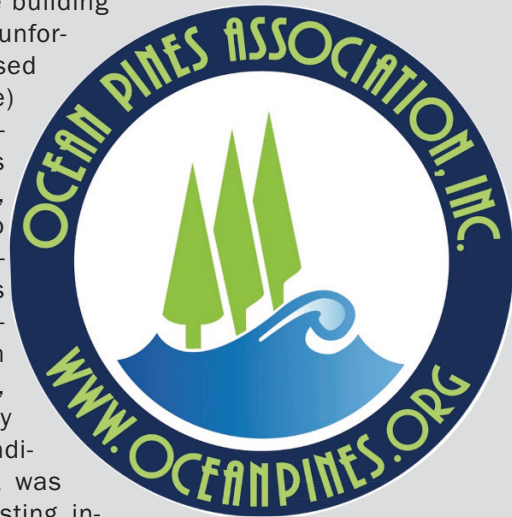
OPA Statement by Board of Directors, General Manager John Viola

March 29, 2024

At the monthly OPA Board meeting held on March 23, 2024, the Racquet Sports Advisory Committee (“RSAC”) made a lengthy public statement to the Board, raising a number of matters of apparent concern to the RSAC. In particular, the RSAC asserted during the meeting that the Racquet Sports building located at the OPA Racquet Center “may not be safe” due to what they characterized as a “potential mold/mildew issue behind the walls which was making employees sick and, in some cases, contributing to them quitting.” This was part of the RSAC’s basis for advocating for a completely new building at the Racquet Sports Center, rather than renovations. As a result of this assertion and the public health ramifications thereof, OPA management, with the full support of the Board, took immediate action to close and proactively inspect the facility, which involved destructive investigation behind walls and under carpeting, inspection by qualified outside professionals, and testing the air inside the building for ambient mold conditions, unfortunately (but necessarily based on the assertion being made) at considerable cost to the Association. All this work was performed diligently, promptly, and with minimal disruption to Racquet Sports activities. Although a few very small areas of discoloration of indeterminate type were observed on the interior side of a wall, there was no discovery of any confirmed mold or similar condition or other indication that was sufficient to warrant further testing, inspection, or investigation. The Board thanks our General Manager John Viola and his team for managing this important effort so effectively.

With that being said, it is important to note that members of OPA advisory committees are appointed and reappointed by the Association president with the consent of the full Board, and therefore serve at the Board’s pleasure. Advisory committees exist under our governing documents to assist the Board, and they take direction from and report to the Board. Beyond that, consistent with governing documents, the Board generally welcomes constructive and properly communicated input from advisory committees on matters appropriately within their purview. Advisory committees do not exist to advocate for particular groups within the community, lobby the Board on behalf of groups, or generate controversy or disputes between themselves and the Board or otherwise as to OPA matters. Further, they are not permitted to interact with governmental entities on OPA matters without express authorization to do so from the OPA Board. We are deeply concerned that, as to matters raised publicly by the RSAC in the March Board meeting, the committee was less than thorough in its own vetting of the purported mold concerns and may have made public assertions in that regard for purposes other than the performance of the committee’s legitimate role. We are also concerned by references made in the RSAC’s public statement concerning unauthorized interactions with County officials, in regard to OPA matters. The Board of Directors will meet soon to discuss appropriate next steps in light of this situation.

Publisher’s Note: The Courier has been told by OPA officials that the cost for the above mentioned inspection will cost homeowners about \$10,000.



BJ’s membership offers returns to Ocean Pines

BJ’s Wholesale Club is once again partnering with the Ocean Pines Association to bring a special membership offer, effective April 1 through 30, to benefit the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines Foundation.

With this offer, new members receive The Club Card Membership for 12-months for \$20, or The Club+ Card Membership, which receives 5¢ off per gallon at BJ’s Gas every day and 2% back in rewards on most BJ’s purchases, for \$60 with BJ’s Easy Renewal.

Existing members can purchase a 12-month renewal for The Club Card Membership for \$50, or a 12-month renewal for The Club+ Card Membership for \$100.

In addition to offering special membership discounts, BJ’s will donate \$10 for each completed new BJ’s membership application, or \$5 for each completed BJ’s renewal membership application received, to the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines Foundation.

To take advantage of this special offer by phone, call 800-313-8887 and use promo code 100407.

Phones are open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST.

BJ’s membership applications are also available at the Ocean Pines Association Administration Building at 239 Ocean Parkway and online at oceanpines.org. Applications must be returned with payment by April 30. Check and credit card payments will be accepted.

Applications may be dropped off at the administration building front desk or mailed to Ocean Pines Association, Attn: Marketing, 239 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

This offer is not available online, at any BJ’s location, or for any current Easy Renewal members.

This special promotion is only offered through Ocean Pines two times a year. The next promotion will be in fall 2024.

Current BJ’s members whose memberships will expire before then are encouraged to renew during the fall offer. Members can check their current expiration dates by checking their BJ’s receipts or the BJ’s app, or by calling 800-313-8887.

report

from page 3

park.

“We have that on our task list,” he said.

Soft Shoreline project

Viola said Public Relations Director Josh Davis, Public Works Director Eddie Wells, and Deputy Public Works Director Nobie Violante are leading a “soft shoreline” project at the South Gate Pond. The project aims to improve water quality and reduce erosion in that area, along with aesthetic improvements.

In cooperation with Maryland Coastal Bays Program, Viola said the Association received a \$150,000 federal grant for the project.

An RFP was sent in February and bids came back on March 21. Viola said the team will evaluate the bids and make a recommendation to the Board.

Season Kickoff event

Senior Executive Office Manager Linda Martin said a work group is

leading the effort for a Season Kickoff & Expo event, April 20 from 3-7 p.m. at White Horse Park. The rain date is April 27.

“The OP Day workgroup has been organizing this and they’re doing a fabulous job,” she said.

CPI and customer service updates

Martin said the Compliance, Permit, and Inspections (CPI) Department issued 104 new violations in February. During the month, 61 violations were brought into compliance and 183 remain open.

“Most of them are in maintenance, but we are seeing an uptick of people putting in metal fences,” she said. “Metal fences are not allowed in Ocean Pines ... call the CPI Department if you have any questions.”

Martin said the customer service team fielded 142 emails in December, including 54 general questions, 51 about amenities, 26 for CPI, 10 for Public Works and one on drainage.

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

A priest, a minister and a rabbi

“A priest, a rabbi and a minister are in a row boat, and ah, and then, ah, hmm.”

That’s what usually happens when I try to tell a joke. I get only so far, usually the first sentence or two and then my mind goes white - I can’t remember what



It’s All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

happens next. It’s embarrassing but I’ve learned to live with it.

I know people who can, one after the other, tell jokes for any occasion or situation. Whether it’s a wedding, funeral or lobotomy they have a joke locked and loaded. As for me telling a joke through to the punchline, I am reminded of a line comedian George Goebel once spoke, I feel like a pair of brown shoes in a room full of tuxedos.

Many members of my family can rattle off jokes without a second thought. My mother is a good one for that. Usually though she begins to laugh right before the punch line and we wind up laughing harder at her trying to tell the joke with a straight face rather than the joke itself.

My father-in-law was another one who had quick joke recall. Not only could he tell the one about the priest, minister and rabbi, he had several different versions of it depending on who was in the room.

Several years ago, I tried to write jokes down when I heard them so I could remember them and not be caught jokeless sitting around a table with nothing to contribute. This did not work. I usually forgot where I put the slip of paper.

Next, I tried to call someone right away to pass the joke on when it was fresh in my mind. That did not work well either because in my rush of excitement I sometimes dialed a wrong number, irritating the person on the other end of the line and forgetting the joke at the same time. Of course, they could have been irritated that it was 3:30 in the morning.

My joke repertoire consists mainly of a few knock-knock jokes and the old standby, “What’s black and white and red all over?” Identified as joke-disabled, those around me usually show encouragement by saying things like, “Come on, Chip you can do it, atta boy.” Usually, I’ll get a polite smile and a sympathetic look.

If I were a puppy I could expect a treat at the end or have my belly scratched.

There have been times when inspiration has struck enabling me to recall a joke in its entirety. Satisfaction washes over me. Unfortunately, those moments happen alone in the shower and are lost by the time I dry off.

As we have all experienced there are good jokes and there are bad jokes. A good joke puts a smile on your face for the rest of the day. A bad joke is like a rotten egg; we’re all worse for it having been cracked.

You can always tell when the boss tells a joke because no matter how bad it is, the audience always laughs. The worse the joke, the more forced the laughter. Someone in the group will say, “That’s a good one, sir.” The boss is oblivious to the fact that what he lacks in humor he more than makes up for in authority. Poor guy.

Joke telling is a gift. Some people have it, some don’t. Gifted joke tellers walk us through a story enabling us to visualize what’s going on. We see the characters. These jokesters are so smooth that we enjoy not just the punchline but also the process of getting there. A sense of timing enhances the experience.

While attempting to deflect comments that he would steal other people’s jokes, Milton Berle once said he finds jokes before anyone knows they’re lost. In my case, I lose them before I know I found them.

In case you’re wondering what happened in that rowboat with the priest, minister and rabbi, I’m afraid I can’t remember. I’m sure it was funny though.

NOTICE TO READERS

Home delivery of The Courier within Ocean Pines has been limited because of illness of our delivery person. The paper is available at bulk locations including the Ocean Pines Food Lion, the Ocean Pines library, Walmart, Southside Deli, 7-11, Royal Farms and Ocean Pines White Horse Park. You can also read each edition online at www.delmarvacourier.com.

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Readers Comments

BOE should not close down communication, ignore discipline

Editor:

Ask anyone, anywhere, if they want discipline in classrooms and schools that are safe, and the answer will always be a resounding yes. As I watch what is happening between the Sheriff and State's Attorney's Office and Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) I am confused. What is the truth about our schools here in Worcester County? What motive could the Sheriff and State's Attorney have to lie about our schools and their safety status? I know, for certain, the interpretation of the data between the two does not agree. However, one thing they both should be able to agree on is that they both want safe schools. They should also agree that in order to achieve this common goal they need to work together. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case. Instead, our Superintendent calls their report a lie and closes down

communication.

Everyone knows that learning can only occur when discipline in classrooms is present and when students feel safe in their school. I do not understand why the Worcester United teachers' group at the March school board meeting denied that there are any problems. Do they not want the safest possible school environment for students and teachers? Do they not want quality learning happening in the classrooms? No one is denying that WCPS are one of the best in the state, but the public is concerned about discipline and safety in our schools. There is always room for improvement.

If students are not held accountable for their unacceptable and often dangerous behavior, then this behavior escalates. I applaud WCPS for developing a Student Code of Conduct. That is step one. My question now is when and how

will the document be implemented?

I ask that the Board of Education insist that this disagreement with the Sheriff and State's Attorney stop and communication and cooperation start. The current situation accomplishes nothing. Calling the Sheriff and the State's Attorney liars shows disrespect for law enforcement. This is a terrible example for our children. Stop playing with terminology and unite to make our schools safer. I am asking the WCPS Board of Education to examine the recommendations submitted by the Sheriff's office,

which were never implemented, and start the implementation process of these suggestions. The schools and district office must cooperate with the Sheriff when an incident occurs. We need to work with our Sheriff's office to help us keep our schools a safe place to be. Hiding, denying or refusing to work together will only further endanger our schools and encourage student misbehavior to escalate.

Dorothy Shelton Leslie

Ocean Pines

Candidate for WCPS Board of Education District 5

US Wind, MDE alter project

Editor:

Last Monday [March 25], MD Dept. of Environment (MDE) held a public hearing regarding US Wind's application to turn Ocean City's small commercial fishing harbor into its Maintenance and Operations Facility (M&O). Sadly, US Wind and MDE neglected to inform any elected official representing this area, or the public, of an altered application that massively downgraded the project until 5 hours before the hearing.

Such tactics belie US Wind's "Transparency and Community Engagement Claims." We have been lied to far too long both in Ocean City and Delaware Beaches. We are tired of "pretty posters," as we witness the devastation to our north, and now to VA Beach homes and sea life. Reality is vastly different than US Wind's "pretty posters."

It appears, US Wind now proposes only 2 crew transfer boats and no equipment/maintenance vessels are needed to maintain and repair its OSW project. How can this differ so vastly from the Construction and Operations plan which states "operation of the proposed action could generate up to seven vessels and an average of 1,644 annual transits with most trips consisting of service operation vessels or crew transfer vessels to and from Ocean City. Vessel traffic generated by proposed action could restrict maneuvering room and cause delays accessing ports."

This sudden change leaves one to believe untruths are being told and US Wind has embarked on a program to

piecemeal this project to full original desires through small change applications it believes would be approved with little to no community resistance. I am here to let US Wind know all the near 15,000 (and growing) signatories to Protect Our Coast Delmarva's petition, beg to differ.

How can any MD official support a project that will fiscally harm our state that has huge budget deficits and is struggling to pay for the new education mandates?

What do you think will happen to the budget if we allow the industrialization of our coastal waters estimated to kill Ocean City's fiscal contributions by at least 15% (per Orsted)? How can you justify approving a M&O facility that will kill our seafood industry when the state recognizes it contributes \$600 mil/year to our economy? Why massively harm OC's recreational fishing when NOAA tells us that in 2019, (the latest data,) 6.8 million recreational trips happened in Maryland generating \$268.2 million?

Why would MD even consider a project that will severely damage our economy, not save the planet, and is spearheaded by Mr. Grybowski; the man responsible for the debacle that is Block Island's wind farm? The one that doesn't work, leaks oil constantly and has cost the residents of RI over \$30 million to keep the high voltage cables on the island's beaches buried?


Not one part of this project is good for Maryland.

Dianna Harris

West OC, MD

Courier Almanac

On April 3, 1882 one of America's most famous criminals, Jesse James, was shot to death by fellow gang member Bob Ford, who betrayed James for reward money. For 16 years, Jesse and his brother, Frank, committed robberies and murders throughout the Midwest. Detective magazines and pulp novels glamorized the James gang, turning them into mythical Robin Hoods who were driven to crime by unethical landowners and bankers. In reality, Jesse James was a ruthless killer who stole only for himself.



Pickleball is an American original. The popularity of pickleball has risen sharply in recent years, and a recent report from the Association of Pickleball Professionals indicated more than 36 million people played the sport across the United States in 2022. But pickleball is much older than its recent participation boom suggests. According to USA Pickleball, the sport is the brainchild of U.S. congressman Joel Pritchard and businessman Bill Bell. In 1965, Pritchard and Bell arrived at the former's home on Bainbridge Island in Washington to find their families lounging around. Pritchard's property had an old badminton court, but no equipment. So, the players improvised, using ping pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball. The net, initially around 60 inches high, was lowered once the players realized how well the ball bounced on the asphalt playing surface. The following weekend Pritchard introduced the game to another friend, Barney McCallum, and the two men and Bell soon created rules for the game that is now known as pickleball.

OPVFD talks fire safety, fundraising drives

Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department President Joe Enste spoke on March 23 at the Board of Directors meeting about fire safety and recent fundraising efforts.

Addressing the Ocean Pines Board and a gathering of homeowners, Enste said staff and volunteers are working hard to raise funds to renovate the aging South Fire Station.

Those efforts include a personalized brick fundraising campaign, where people can purchase a 4x8" brick for \$100, or an 8x8" brick for \$200. The bricks will be used to build a feature at the new south fire station.

Additionally, donations of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and up will be recognized on plaques at the new station.

Enste said OPVFD is also hosting a cash bingo on April 18, and less than 80 tickets remain.

"So please, quickly purchase your tickets if you're interested," he said. "We also recently launched a 'Queen of Hearts' raffle that allows our community members to purchase tickets for just \$5 at a chance for winning the growing jackpot. We're currently in week four and the jackpot is now \$2,513.

"We also will continue our vehicle

raffle, with a few updates that will now allow us to cover all the winner's taxes, tags and title ... anything associated with all raffle and event," he continued. "Tickets can be purchased through our website, opvfd.com. And you can always contact the Fire Department directly with any questions, or if you need any assistance with purchasing."

Enste said the community experienced a serious house fire a week ago that saw one person transported to the hospital and claimed the life of several pets.

With that in mind, he stressed the importance of fire safety and having working smoke alarms.

"Fires can happen unexpectedly and spread rapidly, posing a significant threat to lives and property," Enste said. "However, there's a simple, yet powerful tool that can make a life-saving difference. That's a smoke alarm.

"These small devices are like silent guardians constantly monitoring the air for any signs of smoke," he continued. "When they detect even the slightest hint of danger, they'll sound

the alarm and give us precious time to escape to safety."

Enste said simply having a smoke alarm isn't enough.

"It's crucial to ensure they are in good working condition," he said. "Regularly test your smoke alarms to make sure that they're functioning properly. And remember, a smoke alarm with a dead battery is as good as not having an alarm at all."

Enste said it's also important to have an escape plan in place. He said everyone in the household should be aware of the details of the plan.

"Know the quickest and safest way out of your home in case of fire, and practice your escape plan regularly," he said. "Fire Safety is a shared responsibility. By taking a simple yet essential step like installing and maintaining smoke alarms and having an escape plan, we can better protect ourselves and our loved ones. Let's work together to make Ocean Pines a safer place for everyone."

For more information on OPVFD, including details on fundraising and raffle campaigns, visit opvfd.com or call 410-641-8272.

OPPD Chief shares updates with community

Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson on Saturday [March 23] shared results of a recent speed survey.

Speaking at the Board of Directors monthly meeting, Robinson said speed surveys were conducted in February and March over a roughly three-week period.

He said the surveys were done along Ocean Parkway at Briarcrest Drive, Sandyhook Road, Wareham Court, and the 300 block of Ocean Parkway. The posted speed limit on Ocean Parkway is 35 mph.

Results were:

-At Briarcrest over a three-day period, the average speed was 32 mph and 88% drove 39 mph or slower.

-At Sandyhook over eight days, the average speed was 33 mph and 96% drove 39 mph or slower.

-At Wareham over seven days, the average speed was 36 mph and 78% drove 39 mph or slower.

-At the 300 block of Ocean Parkway over seven days, the average speed was 33 mph and 85% drove 39 mph or slower.

Overall, Robinson said police clocked 48,112 total vehicles, with only 53 topping 50 mph.

"I will share I was very pleased," he said. "We see the overall vast majority of people here in Ocean Pines ... are obeying the speed limit."

Robinson said the surveys would continue, next moving to the south side of Ocean Pines.

"We're going to be moving to some residential streets where we're getting

some complaints ... especially some of the longer ones with the longer straightaways," he said. "And if anybody has an area where they would like something like this done, please let us know."

please see updates on page 8



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Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



A total solar eclipse will cross the USA

April is the first full month of spring and might be the best time for enjoying phenomena in the sky. The month's biggest celestial treat will occur on April 8, as a total solar eclipse streaks across the United States.

This month's column will not focus on new results in astronomy or plans for spaceflight, but will turn instead to the solar eclipse. As the name suggests, a total solar eclipse takes place when sunlight becomes completely blocked by the moon. Compared to the Sun, the moon is far smaller, however its position closer to Earth makes it sufficient to cast a shadow. On average solar eclipses are rare and may occur no more than once in about 40 years. However, astronomy hobbyists and other science fans in the US are enjoying the unusual treat of experiencing two such events within seven years, as the previous solar eclipse happened on August 21, 2017.

Making landfall on western coast of Mexico, and later entering the state of Texas, the shadow will follow an arc across the United States, making a brief

trip through northeastern Canada. Along its route, the shadow crosses Dallas, Texas; Little Rock, Arkansas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio; Buffalo, New York and several New England states before crossing into Canada and then departing the continent altogether. This eastward direction of the eclipse shadow reflects the orbital motion of the moon.

The dark portion of the moon's shadow has a conical shape called the umbra, pointing towards the Earth. As the umbral shadow strikes the surface, it darkens a nearly circular pattern about 68 miles wide. Veteran eclipse chasers tell the story of birds growing quiet, and some insects chirping, as if it were a true twilight rather than this rare event.

Astronomy fans may know that celestial bodies often are orbiting at high speeds therefore it's not surprising that the totality lasts for just two and a half minutes. When totality is over, the sun will gradually increase its brightness for about another 90 minutes, finally returning to full intensity.

On Maryland's lower eastern shore, observers will not experience totality as the sun will not become completely blocked. Here only about 82 percent of the sun will be blocked at the maximum. Initial dimming will begin at about 2:07 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, as the moon begins to cut into the sun's disk, gradually blocking off more and more light. The maximum eclipse will occur at about 3:22 p.m. Viewers may experience an eerie kind of twilight, with much of the sunlight cut off. After this, the sun will gradually re-emerge, and will become fully visible again at about 4:34 p.m.

Strict precautions are advised. One cannot stress strongly enough the danger involved in looking directly at the sun, even for brief

moments. Everyone is advised to take precautions and **NOT TO VIEW THE ECLIPSE DIRECTLY**. Watching television coverage will be a safe alternative or one may consider purchasing specially designed eclipse viewing equipment. Using "stacked" sunglasses is also **UNSAFE**. The risks are more extreme in the local region, since it receives only a partial eclipse.

Astronomy fans may be interested in the celestial alignment which creates eclipses. Solar eclipses are infrequent because the moon's orbit is tilted by about 5 degrees relative to Earth's orbit. This means that for the majority of its monthly passings, the moon will not

precisely line up with the Earth and sun, and the lunar shadow will not fall on Earth. Only rarely will the right configuration occur, to the delight of astronomy buffs on the ground. The next total solar eclipse for the US is predicted for August 22, 2044.

For April stargazers, the planet Jupiter emerges at about 7:30 p.m., at dusk above the western horizon, and the king of planets remains visible until around 10 p.m.

As the sky becomes dark around 8:30 p.m., Leo the Lion is already well up



above the eastern horizon. Leo resembles a reclining lion, featuring a backward question mark shape representing the head and mane, and an elongated triangle delineating the hind legs.

Evening attractions also include the bright star Sirius and constellations Gemini, Orion, and Taurus

After about 9:30 p.m., look for the kite-shaped constellation, Bootes (boh-OH-teez) the Herdsman in the northeastern sky. Bootes features the bright orange-tinted star Arcturus at its southern tip.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.

updates from page 7

Asked by a homeowner how to report reckless driving, Robinson said always call it in.

"If you have a vehicle description, that's sometimes all we need," he said. "If you say it's like a little blue Mazda, we'll go out there and try to find it."

Robinson also announced new, higher entry-level salaries for Ocean Pines Police officers.

"I've got to give credit to our General Manager, Mr. John Viola, and the Board under the leadership of Mr. Rick Farr as President. We have raised the starting salary of the Ocean Pines Police Department, once they complete training, to \$63,500," Robinson said.

"That now puts us at the highest tier of law enforcement," he continued. "We are the highest paid law enforcement on the Lower Eastern Shore."

Robinson said the department had struggled with hiring over the last six months. However, since raising the starting salary, "All of a sudden our phones are ringing off the hook."

"If you know anybody who wants to get in law enforcement, this is a great community to work for," he said. "It's a great department to work for [and] we have great support here. I think it's actually been the talk of the law enforcement community."

For more information on the Ocean Pines Police Department, visit the new police website at oceanpinespolice.com, or call the non-emergency line at 410-641-7747.



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EOE

Mary Mac Foundation seeks donations

Each year, the Mary Mac Foundation supports hundreds of low-income and homeless children and their families, thanks to the generous donations of local people.

The foundation funds summer camp scholarships for education and recreation programs, including Camp Ocean Pines locally, and Camp St. Vincent in Baltimore and Camp Barnes in Delaware.

Mary Mac also supports food banks and shelters such as Diakonia in West Ocean City, the Cricket Center and Cold Center in Ocean City, Mid Shore Meals in Cambridge, and the Bayside Shelter in Millsboro, Delaware.

The nonprofit is named for Mary

McMullen (1948-2012), a former special education instructor at Severna Park High School and Ruth Eason School in Millersville, Maryland. During the 1970s, she also helped establish the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department.

Tim McMullen said the foundation's activities are inspired by his late wife, Mary.

"Many of us have found ourselves asking what Mary would do or say in certain situations," he said. "Her generosity and unconditional love for her students, family and community bound us together."

McMullen is also driven by his own experiences growing up and later teaching in Anne Arundel County.

"The first year I taught, I was in a school that had just been integrated and there were eight kids who got there every day at 7 o'clock in the morning – school started at 8 a.m. I told one of my other teachers I was really impressed with these kids, but he said, 'Tim, they don't have heat at home,'" he said.

"It means a lot for us to be able to take homeless kids and put them on a bus going to St. Vincent for three meals a day, swim lessons, and lessons in English, math and science," McMullen added.

Along with education and summer recreation programs, McMullen said food banks and area shelters became an added focus during the pandemic.

"We realized how many local families were being impacted," he said. "In one of our programs, every Friday, teachers will take backpacks and fill them with food that the kids can take

home.

"Backpack programs and food banks provide weekend food for food-insecure children. For many, this may be the only food they have until they return to school," he continued. "We believe in providing opportunities for young people, so they can live a better life by offering the resources they need."

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the Mary Mac Foundation at www.paypal.me/marymacfoundation or by sending a check payable to the Mary Mac Foundation, 174 Nottingham Lane, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

"We thank you for your continued support and ask that, if it is within your means to donate, please consider doing so. No amount is too small," McMullen said.

For more information on the Mary Mac Foundation, visit www.marymac.org.

Marine Corp League recruiting veterans, first responders and patriotic Americans

Several former U.S. Marines recently started a new chapter of the Marine Corps League Peacemakers Detachment based in Ocean Pines.

The group is part social club and part fundraising arm for the Tunnels to Towers Foundation that supports fallen first responders.

The Peacekeepers Detachment was first established in 1923 by Gen. John Lejeune.

"In 1937, the 75th Congress chartered the Marine Corps League and Franklin Roosevelt signed it," Cpl. John Whitehead, the local junior vice commandant, said. "Today, we have over 1,000 detachments and over 45,000 members.

"Our mission is about veterans and

our community, as well as being a social organization to promote the idea and traditions of the United States Marine Corps," he added.

Whitehead said the group was initially set up to help World War I veterans, "and then it morphed into a part social club and part charitable group."

"We'll get together, have social events, and collect money for charities in the area," he said.

Whitehead said the Peacekeepers Detachment isn't just for former Marines.

"We have veterans from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, and

*please see **recruiting** on page 11*



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Hummingbirds

The Hummingbird is a very small species and one that many people are familiar with. There are 343 species of them that have been identified. They live in regions found in North and South America. With such a large number of species, the hummingbird ranks as the second largest bird family in the world.

The size of these Hummingbirds does vary though based on species. The smallest species is about 2.2 grams and the largest is about 20 grams. The smallest is the Bee Hummingbird which is noted to be the smallest bird in the world.

These charming birds get their names from the fact that the rapid movement of their wings makes a humming sound. Hummingbirds are the smallest type of animal in the world with a backbone and as a result have been studied intensely by researchers.



Another reason the Hummingbird is so well loved and researched is because it has the ability to move in ways that other birds cannot. It is the only species of bird that is able to fly in all directions. This includes backwards and even upside down.

During colder times of the year the Hummingbirds migrate up to 500 miles. They can travel great distances daily. The Gulf of Mexico is one area where they are seen during the migration period.

The mating rituals of the Hummingbird are interesting. Known as the courtship dive, the males will go at least 60 feet in the air and then rapidly shoot down, make a U turn, and do it again. They will continue this process until they have the attention of a female with whom they want to mate.

There are many types of food Hummingbirds consume, mostly sugar and sap. They also like pollen and will eat small insects as a way to get protein. These birds can eat up to three times their own weight in food every single day.

There are rumors that Hummingbirds hibernate. While these birds don't have a typical season for hibernation they will do so if they need to conserve energy due to a lack of food. Their metabolism will slow to an extremely low speed so they can continue to survive.

Many people keep bird feeders in their yards where Hummingbirds can

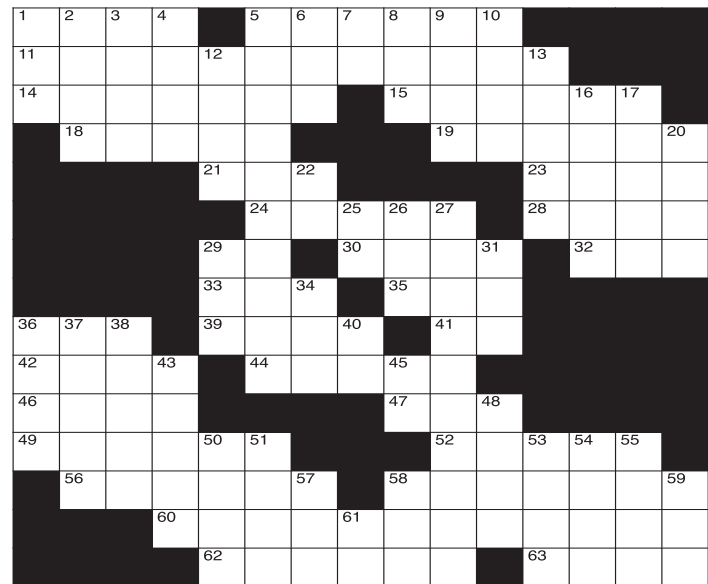
feed. It is a great way to help the birds thrive. When mixing a food solution use only granulated white cane sugar and water. You must be careful not to give them too much sugar as it can harm their liver and kidneys. Do not use honey, artificial sweeteners or food

coloring. Here's a recipe you can follow: four parts water to one part sugar; no red dyes; change the water every two to three days when the weather gets hot.

The life span for the Hummingbird is often very short, many not surviving more than a year. For those that do survive, they can live up to four years.

In many locations these Hummingbirds are having trouble surviving due to their habitat being taken away. Problems with trees being removed, a lack of food, and chemicals and other elements in the environment have resulted in some serious declines in numbers for some of the species.

Adapted from HummingWorlds.

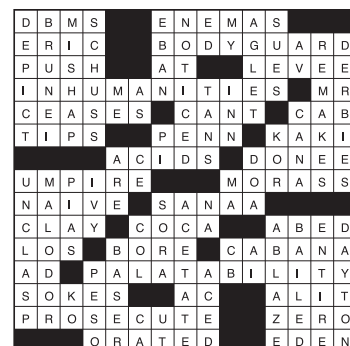


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A minute amount (British)
- 5. Mystical or magical
- 11. Shortening
- 14. More satisfying
- 15. Other side
- 18. Philippine island
- 19. More unnatural
- 21. Mutual savings bank
- 23. Famed designer Chanel
- 24. Makes less wild
- 28. At some prior time
- 29. The cops who investigate the cops
- 30. Immune system response
- 32. Distress signal
- 33. Engine additive
- 35. "No Scrubs" trio
- 36. Very fast airplane
- 39. A reward (archaic)
- 41. Commercial
- 42. Spots where golfers start
- 44. Polite form of address (Indian)
- 46. French river
- 47. Reduce the light
- 49. Blood-sucking fly
- 52. A way to categorize
- 56. Procrastinates
- 58. Tall slender tower
- 60. Where researchers work
- 62. Office of the Pope
- 63. Office furnishing

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Possesses
- 2. American Board of Orthopedic Surgery
- 3. Ancient Syrian city
- 4. Clip
- 5. In a way, misleads
- 6. Human gene
- 7. The Golden State (abbr.)
- 8. Lizard genus
- 9. Parasites that invade the skin
- 10. Took apart
- 12. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
- 13. S. California town
- 16. Suffix plural
- 17. Painting technique
- 20. Small Eurasian deer
- 22. Mr. T character
- 25. Microsoft
- 26. Shock therapy
- 27. Able to be sold
- 29. A doctrine
- 31. These three follow A
- 34. Pulse
- 36. Quantitative fact
- 37. Doctor ___: children's book author
- 38. Hebrew calendar month
- 40. Designated hitter
- 43. Norther Poland village
- 45. A passport is one form
- 48. Hand (Spanish)
- 50. Hit with the open hand
- 51. Actor Idris
- 53. Shakespeare's nickname "The ___"
- 54. Northern U.S. lake
- 55. Marvin and Horsley are two
- 57. Soak
- 58. Partner to cheese
- 59. Expression of disappointment
- 61. College dorm employee



Answers for March 27



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recruiting
from page 9

we also have some first responders in the detachment,” he said. “We basically look for any patriotic American that wants us to support what we do.”

He said the group is also not limited to military activity and the traditions of the U.S. Marine Corps.

“We’re also a social organization,” he said. “We have breakfasts, we have dinners, cookouts, the Marine Corp ball, and we’ll attend car shows and the farmers market in Ocean Pines.”

He said the primary fundraising focus is Tunnels to Towers.

“Tunnels to Towers will help the families of any military or first responders who are killed or seriously wounded, by helping to pay their mortgage. Tunnels to Towers also purchase and renovate hotels, giving homeless veterans a place to live,” he said. “We talk a lot about people who make the ultimate sacrifice but, to me, these people who lose arms or legs or are seriously burned have to live with that every day for the rest of their lives, so they’re also making a tremendous sacrifice – even though they’re still alive. They all deserve our thanks and gratitude.”

Whitehead said the group currently

has about 40 members, and they’re always looking for more people to join and get involved.

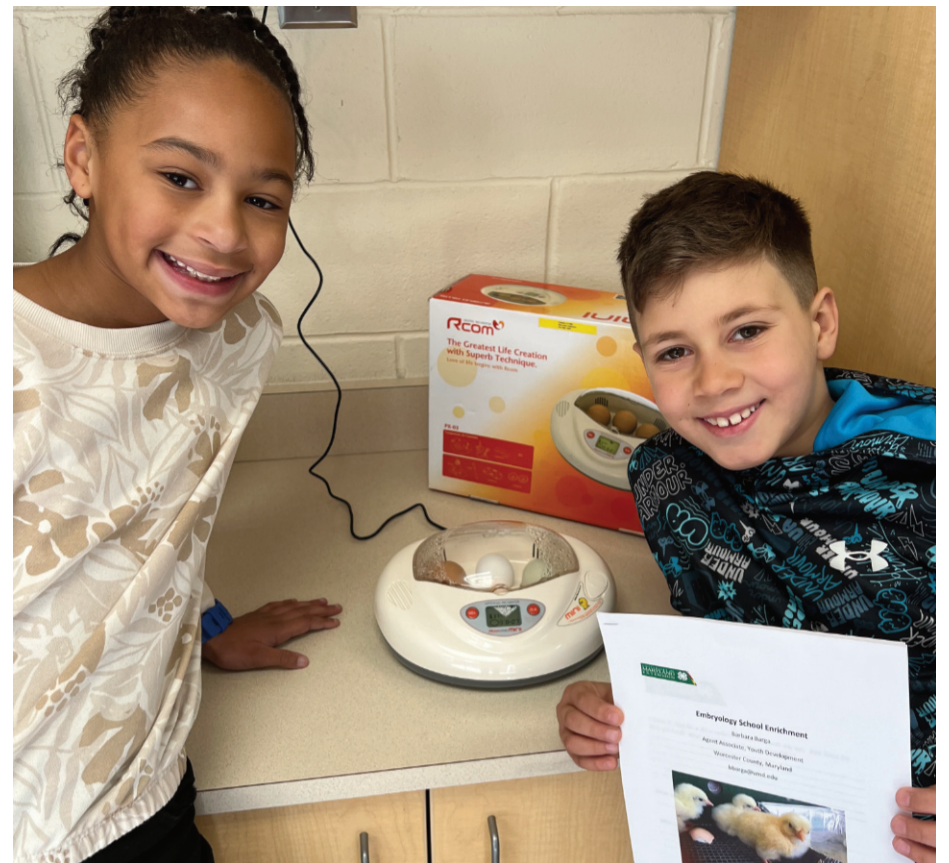
“It’s just a social organization where we do these things together, and it’s up to each member’s discretion to be as active or as inactive as they want,” he said. “We will do fundraisers and generate funds that we distribute to needy community organizations, so we want to help the community and have some social events that we all can participate in and have fun.”

“The camaraderie of the military and patriotic Americans is basically what we are all about,” he continued. “All of us were in the military or were first responders. And, it’s just a good feeling to help out people in need. It’s a lot of work at times, but it’s very rewarding. Come join us and help make a difference!”

The Marine Corps League Peacemakers Detachment 1492 meets on the second Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. at the South Fire Station on 911 Ocean Parkway, in Ocean Pines.

Marines, veterans, first responders and patriotic Americans are invited to participate.

For more information, contact Whitehead at 301-372-8993 or naphar@aol.com.



Waiting –Ocean City Elementary School second grade students, from Mrs. Leitgeb’s class, have been anxiously awaiting the hatching of baby chicks, as part of the University of Maryland Extension program. For 21 days, the students have been learning about embryology and tracking the chick embryo development inside the egg. Pictured are **Niylah Collins** and **Deniz Kucuk**.



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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.

Racquet Center office to reopen; check-ins to resume

Ocean Pines Association on Monday announced that the Ocean Pines Racquet Center office building would reopen, effective immediately. The courts have remained open.

Players may check-in on the left side of the building, following posted signs. Attendants have been moved to the lounge area, to streamline the process of checking players in and allow for better monitoring of the courts.

The warming hut will continue to be closed until the building can be evaluated. The Director of Racquet Sports intends to address this matter shortly.

For questions, contact the Racquet Center at 410-641-7228 or email member@oceanpines.org.

Ocean Pines Bay Day returns

The fifth annual Bay Day event returns to White Horse Park in Ocean Pines on Sunday, May 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Bay Day is a collaborative conservation effort between the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) and the Ocean Pines Association aimed to help improve the health of the waterways that shoulder the residential shores of Ocean Pines. This free, family-friendly event caters to all age groups through hands-on activities, boat tours, live music, food trucks, live animal exhibits, and more.

"The Maryland Coastal Bays Program relies on our communities to help us protect the resources and ecology of our Coastal Bays. Events like Bay Day are important to communicate relevant and current environmental information to interested citizens and provide a basis of support to help keep our waterways clean and beautiful", says MCBP Executive Director Kevin Smith.

"People should feel welcome to come and stay all day," Liz Wist, MCBP Education Coordinator says. "They can learn from environmental organizations, take a boat tour on the St. Martin River, pick up a native plant, and participate in the interactive exhibits."

The event this year will feature more than 30 conservation partners, including the Phillips Wharf Fish Mobile, Ocean Pines Anglers, UMES 4-H STEM, Chincoteague Bay Field Station, Assateague Coastal Trust, Protectors of the St. Martin River, and many more. The first 200 attendees will receive a canvas bag, hand-painted by students from Worcester County Public Schools.

The recycling station will be back this year. Community members can bring their alkaline batteries, old phones and more to drop off for recycling. Go Green OC will also collect compost.

For more information on the compost and recycling program, and for weekly Bay Day updates, visit the "Bay Day in Ocean Pines" event on Facebook at <https://fb.me/e/gLUqXVBTK>.

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program is a 501 (C) (3) consensus non-profit, partially funded by the EPA, dedicated to protecting the coastal bays behind Ocean City and Assateague Island through education and restoration projects.

Anglers to meet

The Ocean Pines Anglers Club will meet on Saturday, April 13 at 9:30 a.m. in the Ocean Pines library. The speaker will be Scott Lenox host of local television program "Hooked on OC." There will also be a discussion on fishing regulations updates. All are welcome.

Obituary

Kathleen Sheehy Bellistri, 80

Kathleen Sheehy Bellistri, age 80, passed away peacefully on Saturday,



Kathleen Bellistri

March 23, 2024, surrounded by her family. Born in Brooklyn, New York, she was the daughter of the late John Sheehy and Edna Moroney.

Kathy was a graduate of St. Luke's High School in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, and went on to receive her Bachelor of Arts in Education in Baltimore at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. While in college, she met the love of her life, Bill, who won her heart by taking her to a Baltimore Colts game. They were married on June 26, 1965.

Kathy and Bill started their family in Towson, Maryland, and later moved to Lutherville. Kathy went on to receive her Master's Degree in Education and taught at the Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Towson for 25 years. Kathy was a dedicated mother to her three daughters. She and her family enjoyed spending their summers in Ocean City, Maryland. It was no surprise when, after their children were grown, Kathy and Bill moved to Ocean Pines. She enjoyed

hosting her daughters and their families, and spending time with them on the water.

Kathy enjoyed reading and traveling, and had a lifelong love of sports. At a young age, she was a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, and was proud of attending the last game at Ebbets Field. Though the Dodgers were her first team, she became a passionate Baltimore sports fan after meeting Bill. She followed the Baltimore Ravens and the Orioles, and prided herself in knowing all the players and details of every game. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her family and friends.

She is survived by her husband, William Bellistri, daughters, Patricia Bisson (John), Bridget Schaller (Tim), and Christine Henn (Tedd), sister, Mary Sheehy Pratt, and grandchildren, Kathleen, Michael, Bridget, Megan, Matt, Claire, Drew, and Connor.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, April 6, 2024, at 11:00 AM, at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Ocean City. Inurnment will follow at Sunset Memorial Park in Berlin. Letters of condolence can be sent to the family via www.burbagefuneralhome.com. Arrangements are in the care of The Burbage Funeral Home.

Waterline flushing schedule announced

The Water and Wastewater Division of Public Works will be flushing waterlines in Assateague Pointe, Edgewater Acres, Nantucket Point, Deer Point, Landings, Mystic Harbour, Newark, Ocean Reef, Riddle Farm and West Ocean City Service Areas this spring between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The following proposed dates for the flushing of the waterlines are subject to change.

-April 22-May 3 – Assateague Pointe, Deer Point, Mystic Harbour, Ocean Reef, and West Ocean City

-May 14-15 – Newark

-May 16-Edgewater Acres and Nantucket Pointe

-May 6-10 – Riddle Farm

Routine flushing of the water system helps to reduce the frequency of discolored water. Public Works crews open and close the hydrants and flush

out the built-up iron deposits. Sometimes, this can lead to temporary increases in suspended iron, which should settle out within a few hours of the flushing.

Please be aware that, even on dates the water lines in your section are not being flushed, it is still possible to experience discolored water. If area residents notice that their water becomes cloudy during these times, please allow the water to run for a few minutes until it becomes clear. For more information, please call the Water and Wastewater Division at (410) 641-5251.

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Carozza offers legislative update

The collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge killing six construction workers after being struck by an enormous cargo vessel, Dali, is a tragedy with a tremendous impact on the families of the victims, the surrounding communities, the State of Maryland and our entire nation. The Maryland General Assembly is working on legislation to support and expedite the recovery process.

“The rescue and recovery from the collapse of the Key Bridge has proven that we are Maryland strong as we grieve the loss of life and work together at all levels in the government, community and private sector to restore this vital transportation link for our state and country,” said Senator Mary Beth Carozza, who is a member of the committee reviewing key legislation to expedite the Key Bridge collapse recovery.

Senate Bill 1187, introduced by Senators Bryan Simonaire (Anne Arundel) and Johnny Salling (Baltimore County) whose districts are immediately impacted by the Key Bridge collapse and closure of the Port of Baltimore, would expand the Governor’s state of emergency power for the limited purpose of the emergency replacement or repair of critical infrastructure. A hearing on SB 1187 was held on Friday.

Since the Key Bridge collapsed, cargo vessels have not been able to reach the Port of Baltimore, the eighth busiest port in America which is responsible for over 51 million tons of cargo a year. The Port indirectly employs 140,000 people.

“This legislation is essential to put an expedited and proven process in place to ensure the Key Bridge can be rebuilt in a timely and safe manner by giving the Governor these emergency powers limited to critical infrastructure,” said Senator Carozza.

Senator Carozza noted that broad emergency powers were designed for the short term, 30 days or less, and renewed as necessary. In this case, the replacement of the Key Bridge is a long-term critical infrastructure recovery project that could take years.

SB 1187 would uphold the current broad scope of a state of emergency in the short-term while putting guardrails in place for long-term infrastructure projects. Florida’s Sunshine Skyway, a bridge like the

Francis Scott Key Bridge, took seven years to rebuild.

Senator Carozza also is supporting emergency legislation introduced by Senate President Bill Ferguson who represents Baltimore City authorizing the Governor to use money from the State’s Rainy Day account to replace wages lost by workers at the port and related businesses.

The 1.7-mile Key Bridge was built in March 1977 and supports an average traffic volume of 11.3 million vehicles. The Key Bridge crosses over the Patapsco River where Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the words of the Star Spangled Banner.

House Bill hearings on Carozza bills

Fallen Heroes

The House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on March 28th on Senate Bill 897, which would relieve the tax liability on the death benefits of families of first responders who died in the line of duty. Death benefits paid to the families of our fallen heroes are intended to relieve the immediate financial burden caused by their loss.

Both Senate Bill 897 and the cross-file House Bill 1064, sponsored by Delegate Wayne Hartman (R-District 38C), received overwhelming approval and unanimous support from members of the Maryland General Assembly.

Local and Statewide RV Legislation

The House Environment and Transportation Committee held a hearing on March 27th on Senate Bill 60, which would allow out-of-state recreational vehicle dealers to participate in vehicle shows for motor homes or recreational trailers that take place within Worcester County. The bill would not allow deposits or points of sale from out-of-state dealers but does allow them to display their products at these Maryland shows. Senator Carozza is the sponsor of SB 60 and Delegate Hartman is the House sponsor of House Bill 56.

“This legislation is fully intended to respond to local consumer demand and to increase sale opportunities for the nine recreational vehicle dealerships within Maryland,” said

Carozza. “Ocean City is already a tourist destination and our intent is to provide more choice and convenience for Shore constituents and visitors alike.”

House Bill 840, sponsored by Delegate Wayne Hartman (R-District 38C), is a sister bill that would clarify the law to make clear all new Maryland recreational vehicle dealers are allowed to participate in more than two annual vehicle shows each year. HB 840 currently is being considered by the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Senator Carozza sponsored the cross-filed bill, SB 976.

Hearing held on HOA Reserve Study legislation

The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee held a hearing on March 26 on House Bill 281, which would extend critical deadlines for homeowners associations (HOAs) and residential condominium associations to fully fund their reserve accounts. Due to House Bill 107 of 2022, HOAs and condominium associations must: (1) conduct a reserve study every five years to study the adequacy of the associations reserve accounts, and (2) fully fund their reserve accounts within three years based on the findings of the reserve study.

Reserve studies review the major structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing repairs to common areas of housing associations that may be needed in the future. Due to the broad scope of these reserve studies, many HOAs and condominium associations reported that the current law requires unprecedented sharp fee increases that many residents would be unable to afford.

Senator Carozza is the sponsor of Senate Bill 1157, the cross file of HB 281. “I have heard from many constituents and condo owners of the increased association dues to cover the costs being in compliance with the reserve study law from 2022,” said Senator Carozza. “This legislation in 2024 is designed to give some relief for the many homeowners and condo owners who are facing the challenges of funding their reserve accounts.”

HB 281 would extend the three-year deadline to a five-year deadline, would allow several funding plan options for HOAs and condominium associations, and requires the funding plans to prioritize “adequate amounts” for repair and replacement of common elements with consideration given to the health and safety of

members of the governing body.

Carozza bills moving through the legislature

Physician Assistant Modernization Act

The Senate Finance Committee unanimously voted on Friday to approve HB 806/SB 167, which would modernize the law regarding the working relationship between physicians and physician assistants to better reflect current practice and to improve access to quality health care. “Over the past three years, I have been working with physician assistants and physicians from across Maryland to increase access to health care, particularly for those living in rural areas like my district,” said Carozza.

The United States is facing a projected workforce shortage of between 37,800 and 124,000 physicians. Overall, Maryland is 16 percent below the national average for number of physicians available for clinical practice.

911 Workgroup

The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee unanimously voted in favor of HB 1162/SB 1034, which would establish a 9-1-1 Specialist Recruitment and Retention Workgroup to identify and examine recruitment and retention challenges that affect 9-1-1 Specialists in Maryland and make related recommendations. The full Senate is expected to approve both bills early this week.

“A 9-1-1 specialist is often the first emergency contact for the public in most life and death emergencies,” said Carozza. “Dispatchers receive frantic calls for help and while remaining calm for the person in distress, determine the nature and classification of the incident and provide lifesaving service. Recruiting 9-1-1 specialists has become increasingly difficult across the State of Maryland, and we need to strengthen recruitment and retention of Maryland’s 9-1-1 dispatchers, the first responders for our first responders.”

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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by *Jack Barnes*



LAZY
IS SUCH AN UGLY WORD
I PREFER THE TERM SELECTIVE PARTICIPATION

I asked a supermarket market worker where they kept the tinned peaches. He said, "I'll see," and walked away. I asked another and he also said, "I'll see," and walked away.

In the end I gave up and found them myself, in Aisle C.

For most people when you lose your "khakis" you've lost your pants. When you're from Boston & lose your "khakis" you can't start your car.

PEOPLE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW IPHONE BUT NO ONE HAS CAUGHT UP WITH THE AWESOME TECHNOLOGY OF USING YOUR BLINKER WHEN YOU DRIVE.

Someone said "Nothing rhymes with orange."
I said "No it doesn't."

I made a huge to do list for today. I just can't figure out who's going to do it.

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