

The Courier



November 27, 2024 Volume 25 Number 12



Kiwanis fundraiser success

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City annual Fall-Holiday Pancake Breakfast on Saturday November 16 was a success. It raised enough money, over \$1,000, to help fund another scholarship to be awarded next June to a deserving graduating senior student in Worcester County. It was accomplished thanks to the efforts of chair Candy Foreman, Kiwanis Club members and volunteers from the Kiwanis student leadership clubs, namely the Stephen Decatur Middle School Builders Club and the Stephen Decatur High School Key Club. As always, it was the community that supported the event while enjoying great food and the holiday spirit of the occasion.

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Mary Mac Foundation donates to support OPA summer camps

The Mary Mac Foundation last week donated \$1,200 to the Ocean Pines Association Recreation and Parks Department to help cover the cost of t-shirts for summer camp participants and counselors.

McMullen said the money was raised through a grant from Choptank Electric Cooperative.

“Fifty years ago, Mary and I started the summer camp here at Ocean Pines, so it’s of great significance for us,” he said. “I think when we have meaningful programs for our young people, they become very attached to Ocean Pines and will become better citizens when they’re adults.”



Tim McMullen and Debbie Donahue

The donation continues a tradition of support from the nonprofit organization, founded by Tim McMullen in honor of his late wife, Mary. Together, the couple launched the Ocean Pines summer camp program in the 1970s.

“Summer-time for young people should be a period of growth, and I think these camps allow them to meet other like-minded people in our community of the same age. We also have excellent counselors, and it’s just a great way to spend your summer,” McMullen added.

Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue expressed her gratitude for the donation.

“Tim and Mary originally started summer camps, and each year they continue to help us,” Donahue said. “It really means a lot, and we appreciate tremendously the donation from Choptank going through the Mary Mac Foundation.”

Ocean Pines summer camps offer fun, educational, and social opportunities for children and teens in the community. Camp signups will re-

sume in March 2025.

The Mary Mac Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting low-income and homeless children. Each year, the Foundation funds local and regional youth programs in honor of Mary McMullen (1948-2012).

For more information about the Mary Mac Foundation, or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.marymac.org, or mail a check to 174 Nottingham Lane, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

New community art space focuses on healing and well-being

The Worcester County Arts Council announced the grand opening of Art for the Heart Little Free Gallery - a unique new community space dedicated to the transformative power of art in promoting healing, creativity, and emotional well-being. The gallery space, located at the front of the Arts Council building, will open its doors on Friday, November 29 and will serve as a free, accessible space for

both viewing and sharing art.

This initiative is especially meaningful as the gallery itself was built by a World War II veteran, Mr. James Panzetta, whose personal journey of healing through craftsmanship and creativity led him to construct the gallery space. For Mr. Panzetta, working on this project was not only an act of creating a community asset, but also

please see space on page 22

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Jolly Roger Parks Black Friday sale returns

The Black Friday tradition continues in 2024 at Jolly Roger Amusement Parks. at the SpeedWorld Building on 30th Street on November 29, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., for unbeatable holiday deals—50% off all 2025 park passes and select merchandise! It's the perfect way to kick off your holiday shopping.

“Black Friday is one of the highlights of the year for our team and my family,” says Steve Pastusak, vice president of Jolly Roger Amusement Parks. “There’s nothing better than seeing locals, visitors, and friends all enjoying 50% off and knowing that their summer will be full of making amazing memories at Jolly Roger.”

Get in on the excitement with discounted passes for Jolly Roger’s Pier and 30th Street locations, including SpeedWorld, Splash Mountain Water Park, 30th Street Amusement Park, and Mini Golf! Choose from The BIG Ticket, 2-Hour Armbands, Unlimited Daytime, or Unlimited Nighttime Armbands—all at 50% off. Give the gift of adventure with a Splash Mountain Season Pass, perfect for all summer long.

New for 2024, there will be additional registers and self-serve kiosks throughout the SpeedWorld building to help make your shopping quicker and more efficient.

In addition, there will be live music by Otto Grundman outside by the firepits for those waiting in line, or keeping warm while enjoying the day. Enjoy live music and local radio coverage from Froggy 99.9 and Ocean 98, along with free hot chocolate.

Plus, Jolly Roger Amusement Parks is offering a free tote bag to guests who spend \$200 or more!

For more information, please visit: <https://jollyrogerpark.com/black-friday>.

Arts Council raises funds

In efforts to raise funds to support the Arts Scholarship program for local students, the Worcester County Arts Council presents a Scholarship Silent Auction offering a variety of original artwork, generously donated by talented local artists. With the holiday season just around the corner, all items are unique and available at very reasonable prices for all your gift-giving needs.

The auction includes 26 pieces of artwork that are featured on display at the Worcester County Arts Council’s Gallery, until December 31 and may be purchased at “Buy Now” prices. The Gallery is located at 6 Jefferson Street in Berlin and is open to the public Tuesday - Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Auction items may also be viewed on Friday, November 29, from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. during the Ice, Ice Berlin & Tree Lighting celebration.

In June 2024, the Arts Council awarded a total of \$10,500 to six talented Worcester County students to support their artistic goals.

For more information about the Arts Scholarship program visit: www.worcestercountyartscouncil.org.

Computer studies info night scheduled

Wor-Wic Community College is offering a free computer studies information night for anyone interested in learning more about degree, transfer and career opportunities in the computer field. The event will be held on Monday, December 9, at 6 p.m., in Room 200 of the Maner Technology Center at the college campus at the corner of Route 50 and Walston Switch Road.

Instructors from the technology department will be on hand to answer questions about the college’s computer studies majors, which include associate degree programs in cybersecurity, game development, information systems, computer & network support technology and full stack web development, as well as certificate programs in computer information security, desktop support technician, front-end web development and full stack web development. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn about the program as well as the many career options in the field.

Visit the events section of worwic.edu for more information.



Birthday - The United States Marine Corps observed its 249th birthday November 10, and as is tradition Marines around the world observed the occasion. In Ocean City, the Leathernecks of Post 166 held their birthday celebration at the Atlantic Hotel in Berlin with the traditional cake cutting and presentation of slices to the oldest and youngest Marines in attendance. The youngest was **William Hoover (l)**, assistant Steward of Post 166, and the oldest was retired Master Gunnery Sergeant **Jim Wright (r)**.

Pine Tones Chorus announces new Christmas concert venue

On Friday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m., the Pine Tones Chorus will present its Christmas Concert at a new location, the Community Church at Ocean Pines on Racetrack Road.

Admission is free and an offering will be received. At the conclusion of the concert, free holiday packets of homemade cookies, candy canes, etc. will be given out to adults. In addition, the packets for children will include several small toys.

The concert is titled Christmas Memories and will feature spirited and syncopated selections as well as familiar holiday melodies.

Among the light-hearted, popular selections are “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,” “Silver and Gold” from Burl Ives and “Run Rudolph Run,” a Chuck Berry favorite.

Fans of the movie “Home Alone 2” will recall the flowing melody of the song “My Christmas Tree.”

Traditional Christmas favorites will include: “Oh Holy Night,” “Do You Hear What I Hear” and “Good King Wenceslas.”

This year marks the 40th anniversary since the Pine Tones Chorus began entertaining local audiences in the Ocean Pines and Ocean City areas.

The chorus is under the direction of Jenny Anderson and includes about 40 singers from Ocean Pines, Ocean City and nearby areas.

For additional information, call the Chorus President, Dave Holloway, 1-610-213-7472, or Jenny Anderson, 443-655-5636.

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Commentary

By Joe Reynolds
OceanPinesForum.com

Rakowski credit card motion

The agenda for the 11/23/2024 OPA Board of Directors meeting includes a motion by Monica Rakowski for a first reading of some Resolution change for OPA to stop collecting a convenience fee from association members who pay their assessment via credit card. Word is this is related to some court case. What court case? Board members refuse to say. Top secret. "Double probationary top secret," as former Director Marty Clarke might say.

Rakowski's motion, if passed after a second reading, would not just eliminate the credit card "convenience" fee but also add any such charges absorbed by OPA as an operational expense! With the elimination of the convenience fee, the number of people paying via credit card is likely to explode as people can gain CC points without paying a CC fee.

Seems like it would be foolish not to pay by credit card if the Rakowski motion passes. Association member Amy Peck wrote, "If a 3% fee isn't charged, I will use my credit card and get the points." Association member Ken Koroknay replied to her, "You and 8,499 others."

If 8000 owners decide to pay via CC then the potential operational expense is around \$240,000!

That means the budgeted assessment rate would increase by adding an expense of \$240,000. Regardless of the amount, OPA would actually collect the "convenience" fee, and then add it to the budget/assessment.

This makes no sense. Without the ability to collect a convenience fee, OPA should simply not allow assessment payments via credit cards. Essentially, eliminating the convenience fee forces all associations members who pay via check/cash to pay the convenience fees of those who pay via credit card.

Responding to an inquiry on *OceanPinesForum.com*, OPA attorney Bruce

Bright cleared up the issue of this motion being related to some court case. Apparently that is not the case, despite several board members who seem to think otherwise.

Bright wrote, "The Board and management, after consultation with my office, believe the simpler and more administratively effective way to cover the cost of providing the electronic payment option to the members (and account for it), is by incorporating the projected aggregate cost into the operating budget, rather than through a per transaction 'convenience' fee/charge." Bright said OPA retains the right to charge a convenience fee as stated in the Maryland HOA Act, despite several board members who apparently believe otherwise.

Interestingly, sources tell *OceanPinesForum.com* that contrary to what Bright wrote, staff would prefer to continue the existing policy of charging the convenience fee to each lot owner who pays the assessment via credit card, rather than the process proposed by Rakowski. What OPA should do is keep the current policy, but allow payment of the assessment via a debit card with no convenience fee charge.

Rakowski's motion will impact all association members but there has been zero advanced discussion of the issue. While board members will say association members have an opportunity to comment prior to a second reading, that never happens as a practical matter. At the very least, this should be the topic of a Town Hall meeting before any such motion is made. The motion should be withdrawn until association members are informed on the issue and made fully aware of any and all options.

Editor's Note: At Saturday's OPA Board meeting, the credit card motion was pulled from the agenda.

Readers Comments

BOE District 5 Election

Editor:

The Worcester County Board of Education District 5 race demonstrated our community's dedication and commitment to education. Elena McComas, reelected with 54% of the vote,

demonstrated her strong connection to the community and her track record of leadership on the board. Her campaign highlighted her experience, her understanding of state and federal mandates, and her ability to articulate the board's role effectively.

Dorothy Shelton-Leslie's campaign, while falling short, cannot be overlooked. She received 45% of the vote. Her message resonated with voters and brought issues like school safety, library materials, and gender identity policies into the spotlight. These are not easy challenges, but they reflect gen-

uine community concerns that demand careful and open discussion.

This election also showed the tension between Worcester County's predominantly conservative values and Maryland's broader state policies. Balancing these dynamics is a difficult task for the school board, but transparency and proactive communication are crucial.


Congratulations to both candidates for running campaigns that brought important issues to the forefront. As the board moves forward, addressing these concerns constructively and openly will be vital to maintaining trust from the community.

John Huber
Ocean Pines

More Letters on Page 8

Courier Almanac

On November 27, 1942 guitar legend Jimi Hendrix is born in Seattle. Hendrix grew up playing guitar, inspired by blues greats like Muddy Waters as well as early rockers. He joined the army in 1959 and became a paratrooper but was honorably discharged in 1961 after an injury that exempted him from duty in Vietnam. In the early 1960s, Hendrix worked as a pickup guitarist, backing musicians including Little Richard, B.B. King, Ike and Tina Turner, and Sam Cooke. In 1964, he moved to New York and played in coffeehouses, where bassist Chas Chandler of the British group the Animals heard him. Chandler arranged to manage Hendrix and brought him to London in 1966, where they created the Jimi Hendrix Experience with bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell. The band's first single, "Hey Joe," hit No. 6 on the British pop charts, and the band became an instant sensation.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90 percent of vision loss from diabetes can be prevented. Despite that, a significant number of people with diabetes are not getting routine eye exams that could protect their vision. A collaborative study between the CDC and researchers at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia found that more than half of diabetes patients skip their recommended annual dilated eye exams. Such exams are vital for diabetes patients, as various conditions collectively referred to as diabetic eye disease pose a significant threat to patients' vision. Annual dilated eye exams are highly effective. In fact, the American Academy of Ophthalmology reports that such exams can prevent 95 percent of diabetes-related vision loss.

Thanksgiving memories

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. A wonderful holiday if ever there was one. Good food. Good company. Good conversation. But as good as it is, and for me it's the best, Thanksgiving is more than food, company and

“Don't talk with your mouth full.” “Don't chew with your mouth open.” “Take your plate into the kitchen.” “Help your sister clean up the kitchen.” “Help Your Sister Clean Up The Kitchen.” “*HELP YOUR SISTER CLEAN UP THE KITCHEN!!*” Those were special times that I would love to relive.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

conversation. It is a reminder of change.

Time does what it does best, moves on. So, it only follows that the holiday too would evolve despite our sometime wish that it wouldn't. The table may be set as it has been in the past with a golden crisp turkey, dressing and mash potato casserole, a favorite family recipe. But the faces around that table change and even the number of faces crowding around the table ebbs and flows. We get older. Our children grow up. Grandchildren are born. Family and friends move or pass away. The aroma of food being prepared remains but the sweet aroma of pipe smoke wafting in the living room is no more.



Two of my grandchildren live in Kentucky so they'll not be home for the holiday. We'll Facetime at some point during the day which is nice to be sure but just isn't the same as having one or both of them on my lap or watching one of them sneaking a finger into the cheese cake resting on the counter.

Fortunately, my other two grandchildren live nearby and will be sitting at the table. Well one of them is only 20 days old so she'll most likely be in someone's arms.

Where did the time go? It seemed like the times of getting our three kids rounded up to the Thanksgiving dinner table would go on forever. “Did you wash your hands?” “No toys at the table.” “Hold your fork correctly.”

Our youngest son lives in the South now. He's doing very well and we're very happy for him. He'll be doing his own thing on the holiday, working mostly. At some point during the day we'll talk. But it won't be the same as having him sitting across from the table making faces, teasing his older brother and sister and performing unique antics that traditionally gets his mother laughing uncontrollably. Truthfully, there were times when he would do or say things at the table that drove me to distraction. My dissatisfaction fueled his irreverence. It was a lost cause when his brother joined in. I was a goner and they knew it. At the time those situations were frustrating but the memories of those times make me smile.

Some images and voices from Thanksgiving past: My brother and I watching on television (WCAU Channel 10) the Gimbel's parade waiting for Santa Claus to appear; my grandfather picking either my brother or me to help break the wishbone; my mother putting the turkey in the oven at six in the morning and taking it out when it was “ready” at 4 p.m.; my wife's grandmother asking each of us repeatedly throughout the meal whether we felt the draft; deciding who sat at the kids' table; complaining when I was seated at the kids' table; never eating the cranberry gel that came from a can (no one ever ate it but it was on the table every year); and, falling asleep not long after the dishes were cleared from the table.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours!

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All opinions are welcome. However the forum message board is "G" rated - no vulgarity, no personal attacks.

OceanPinesForum.com is not Facebook. It is a place for serious discussion of issues within the OPA HOA.

"The Forum," as many call it, also contains a vast collection of OPA related images, going back to 2004 when forum moderator Joe Reynolds, a 35-year full-time resident of Ocean Pines, first created the site. Back then it was Dick Brady, a former OPA Board of Directors President and father of current board member Elaine Brady, who posted the first response to a message by Reynolds.

Today, the message board contains 323,413 posts on 24,558 individual topics - a virtual history of OPA issues for over 20 years.

In 2006, Reynolds and OceanPinesForum.com were honored with the **Business of the Year Award** by the Ocean Pines Chamber of Commerce and received a special commendation from the Worcester County Commissioners. This was primarily the result of OceanPinesForum.com providing the first online videos of OPA meetings beginning with the Annual Meeting of 2004.

Go to OceanPinesForum.com to join and see the ongoing discussions, and add your own two-cents. Forum members also have the option of receiving occasional emailed commentary by Joe Reynolds on various issues as they arise.

OceanPinesForum.com
News, Life and Politics in Ocean Pines, Maryland



Readers Comments

Congratulations to McComas watching for results

Congratulations to Elena McComas on her successful run for the Worcester County school board. She ran a campaign supported by at least three strong political clubs, committees and unions backing her along with two local newspapers. Elena is a friend of mine. While we both enjoy a shared organization striving for the same excellence, we differ in school board policies.

On Election Day, our Republican tent and table, supporting Dorothy Shelton Leslie, campaigned to keep public school boys out of girls bathrooms and sports, and to give stakeholders a voice. Four times, while sitting at my table, I was harrassed by a McComas sign holding, female, public school parent campaigning for her belief in liberal policies. While approaching my table at our tent, in a shrill voice, she called us liars, was embarrassed because she had to explain to her young son about 'keeping boys out of girls bathrooms.' She called me by name promising to call elected officials to "tell on me." She taunted me saying, "you've got no children in public schools." Myself, being a stakeholder, a Worcester County taxpayer, with no young children, I definitely believe I have a voice. She asked me, "what is a stakeholder?" I was in awe at her question.

Politics is a blood sport; using dirty harassing politics isn't kosher. Elena won fair and square, amiss of a few tactics used by other campaigners, of which I'm sure she had no knowledge. One of the McComas supporters is facing a judge Dec 10

for his alleged illegal tactics while campaigning for another candidate in lower Worcester County.

Again, congratulations to Elena. I mean that as a friend and fellow Worcester County Citizen. But the school board has to know we are monitoring them and that we stakeholders, (whether current public school parents or not), are watching closely. We don't like certain policies, rules and laws and will be monitoring carefully their multiple lunchtime meetings as well as the two promised evening meetings.

Susan Ostrowski
Worcester County Republican
Central Committee member



The Courier welcomes letters for publication. Preference is given to letters addressing community and county topics and have not appeared in another publication.

Letters must be signed and include a phone number where the author can be reached to verify authenticity. Letters are not corrected for spelling or grammar and can be no more than 300 words.

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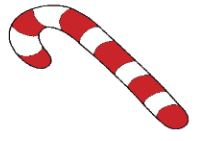
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Arts Council awards grants to local organizations

The Worcester County Arts Council announced the recipients of its latest round of the Community Arts Development Grant Program awarding a total of \$22,000 to support innovative art events and projects across the community in the upcoming granting cycle beginning January 1. This funding aims to empower local organizations in their efforts to create impactful and accessible art experiences, fostering creativity, inclusion, and cultural enrichment throughout Worcester County.

The awarded grants will support a wide range of creative projects, including public art installations, art festivals, community workshops, performances, and youth art programs. Each of these initiatives brings unique opportunities for community members to engage with art, celebrate local culture, and experience the arts as a vital part of everyday life.

"This year's grant recipients represent the incredible diversity and talent within our community," said Anna Mullis, executive director. "We are

proud to support these organizations as they bring their visions to life, offering accessible spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect through the power of art."

Grants were awarded to the following organizations and projects:

-*Art League of Ocean City* - After School Art Club and Ocean City Film Festival 2025

-*Berlin Intermediate School* - 5th and 6th Grade Musical Theatre

-*Freetown Education, Research, and Cultural Center* - Juneteenth Walk & Celebration

-*Lower Shore Performing Arts Company* - My Curiosity Staged Reading

-*Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra* - 2025 Spring Concerts

-*Pine Tones Chorus* - Spring Concert: Sounds of the Seventies

-*Pocomoke High School Drama Club* - "Lion King" Musical

-*Pocomoke Elementary School* - Teachers Appreciation Week Mural

please see **grants** page 22



Donation - Three days before Veterans Day, members of the American Legion Post 166, with State Senator Mart Beth Carozza, presented a \$1,000 Donation to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in St. Mary's County. Charlotte Hall is the only home in Maryland serving veterans, offering continuous care in a 126-bed assisted living home, and a 318-bed skilled nursing home program. It opened in 1985.

Above (l-r) **Col. John Lombardi**, U.S. Army (Ret), Director of Charlotte Hall; **Don Coffin**, vice commander, and **Ed Pinto**, commander, Leathernecks; **Tony Carozza**, former Marine and father of State Senator Carozza; State Senator **Mary Beth Carozza**, and **Mike Rogers**, House Chair of the Maryland Veterans Caucus.

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Why do the Detroit Lions always play on Thanksgiving?

Households have their own unique Thanksgiving traditions, but one custom common in many homes come Turkey Day involves watching football. Each year on Thanksgiving, the National Football League hosts a handful of games, and it's customary in many households to gather around the television with friends and family and take in some of the action on the gridiron, excitement that always features the Detroit Lions. This unique tradition has endured for decades, but when did it start? According to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the tradition of the Lions playing on Thanksgiving can be traced to George A. Richards, who purchased the franchise in 1933 when they were the Portsmouth (Ohio) Spartans. Richards felt competing in a game on Thanksgiving Day would attract Motor City fans who were more devoted to the Detroit Tigers, the city's baseball team. Fans who attended the Lions' first Thanksgiving Day game in 1934 were treated to a nail-biter, with the hometown Lions falling 19-16 to the Chicago Bears at the University of Detroit Stadium. The Bears had won the league

championship the previous year. In a quirk unique to the game in 1934, the two teams locked horns again just three days later, with the Bears once more emerging victorious in another close contest that ended with a 10-7 score. In the modern era of the NFL, the teams that play on Thanksgiving Day do not play on the following Sunday.

The basics of Advent

The month of December can be a busy time of year. Social engagements related to the holiday season can run the gamut from office parties to school pageants to dinners with extended family. Despite the hectic pace of the holiday season, millions of people still find time to celebrate their faith. For adherents to Catholicism, that includes celebrating the season of Advent.

What is Advent? The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reports that Advent is a time of preparation for practicing Catholics, who use the four-week season to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ and for the cele-

*please see **advent** on page 16*

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Wild Blue Yonder

Meet Sweet and Lovely

By **Ralph Ferrusi**

I've been fascinated by World War II warplanes, particular P-51D/K Mustangs, for as long as I can remember. A while back my "P-51-nut" friend Wayne in Indiana E-mailed me a photo of the P-51 *Sweet and Lovely* and its human "Sweet and Lovely." The photo was taken September 28, 2007 at the Gathering of Mustangs & Legends held in Columbus, OH at Rickenbacker Air Force Base, where, astonishingly, there were 77 Mustangs in attendance.

Since receiving the photo of the very pretty young woman sitting on the wing of a very-highly-polished P-51,

polishing it, I've been trying to describe the effect it had had on me. I've seen zillions and zillions of photos of WWII warbirds, often with people in the pictures. A lot are pretty good, most are pretty average. This one stopped me in my tracks.



Eventually what made this photograph truly exceptional finally hit me: it, more than any other photo I've ever seen it perfectly combines the human being in the photo with the Mustang, and, its name perfectly.

I'm familiar with a lot of Mustangs, having seen them at air shows, sat in them, seen pictures of them, or read about them. *Moonbeam McSwine*, *Alabama Rammer Jammer*, *Jersey Jerk*, *Ferocious Frankie*, *Fragile but Agile*, *Toulouse Nuts*, Captain Don Gentile's *Shangri-La*, Major "Ratsy" Preddie's *Cripes A' Mighty*, Captain "Kit" Carson's *Nooky Booky IV* come to mind, but I'd never heard of the *Sweet and Lovely*.

First things first, I googled "Mustangs", and, lo and behold, quickly discovered the *Sweet and Lovely*, with a brief description of its history, and about 50 photos. Next, I googled "P-51 Sweet and Lovely" and came up with mega-tons of information about the current *Sweet and Lovely* and the "real" *Sweet and Lovely* of the 487th Fighter Squadron, 352nd Fighter Group, the Blue Nosed Bastards From Bodney, "Ratsy" Preddie's outfit I had suspected the *Sweet and Lovely* was from the 352nd from what I could see of its blue nose.

Next, just out of curiosity, I googled

"How many P-51 Mustangs are still flying." There are some P-51As, Bs, Cs, and Hs, but mostly P-51Ds and Ks, classified as airworthy, on display, or under restoration in the United States, Australia, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. It would take years to go through all this information to come up with numbers summarizing it, so let's just summarize the *Sweet and Lovely's* current and real histories:

N451D, P-51D-25-NA 44-73279 was built at North American Aviation, Inglewood, California in 1944, and was acquired as a collection of parts by Bob Baker in 2000.

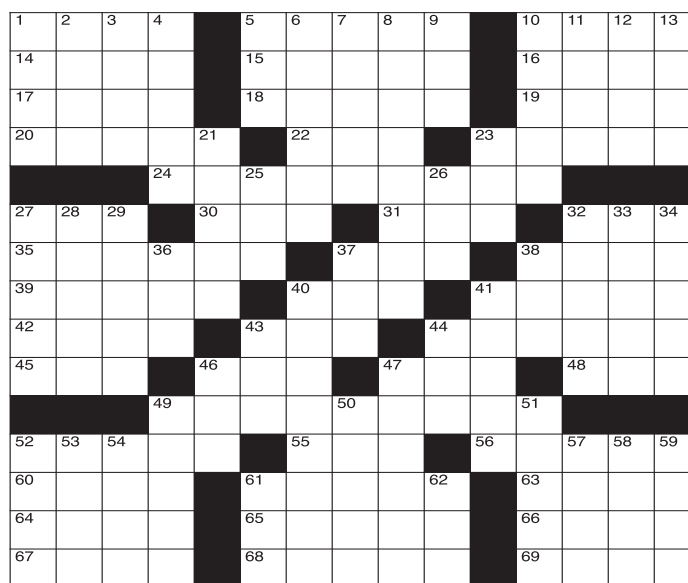
Baker devoted 7,000 to 8,000 hours over a four-year period to restoring this P-51 to the *Sweet and Lovely*. He wanted a paint scheme that hadn't been done before, and wanted it to be of a plane whose pilot was still alive at the time, so he could introduce it to him, and, maybe take him for a ride.

He ultimately contacted Lieutenant Cuthbert A. "Bill" Patillo - who shot down an ME-262 - of the 487th Fighter Squadron, 352nd Fighter Group: the "Blue Nosed Bastards of Bodney." Patillo's P-51K Mustang was the *Sweet and Lovely*.

At the 2007 Gathering of Mustangs & Legends Bill was reunited with Baker's P-51 restored in the *Sweet and Lovely* colors, and signed his name on the rudder. Bill later flew with the USAF Thunderbirds.

Baker ultimately acquired another P-51 and restored it in the *Little Rebel* colors of Bill's twin brother Buck, who flew in the 486th Fighter Squadron, 352nd Fighter Group.

Ralph Ferrusi is a World War II aviation enthusiast. His all-time favorite aircraft is the North American P-51D Mustang. He has actually flown in a P-51D, and, a B-17G and B-25H. Born and raised in New York, he and his wife currently reside in Ocean Pines. Questions, comments; rjferrusi@frontiernet.net.

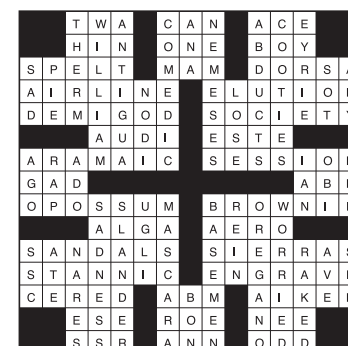


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Long piece of squared timber
- 5. Emaciation
- 10. "Bewitched" boss Larry
- 14. Combining form meaning "different"
- 15. Current unit equal to 10 amperes
- 16. Older
- 17. Large, stocky lizard
- 18. Ringworm
- 19. Actor Pitt
- 20. Indian hand clash cymbals
- 22. Data at rest
- 23. Jeweled headdress
- 24. Indicators of when stories were written
- 27. Check
- 30. Cigarette (slang)
- 31. Arctic explorers (abbr.)
- 32. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 35. Delivered a speech
- 37. A place to bathe
- 38. Postmen deliver it
- 39. Surface in geometry
- 40. More (Spanish)
- 41. ___ and Venzetti
- 42. Exclamation at the end of a prayer
- 43. Hawaiian dish
- 44. Aggressively proud men
- 45. Fellow
- 46. Mark Wahlberg comedy
- 47. Mock
- 48. When you expect to get somewhere
- 49. Songs
- 52. Pair of small hand drums
- 55. Play
- 56. Sword
- 60. Evergreens and shrubs genus
- 61. Filmed
- 63. Italian Seaport
- 64. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 65. Pores in a leaf
- 66. U. of Miami mascot is one
- 67. Snakelike fishes
- 68. Pretended to be
- 69. Body part

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Piece of felted material
- 2. Ancient Greek City
- 3. Aquatic plant
- 4. Potentially harmful fungus (Brit. sp.)
- 5. Body art (slang)
- 6. One who follows the rules
- 7. Ordinary
- 8. Honorably retired from assigned duties and retaining one's title
- 9. Relaxing space
- 10. Japanese socks
- 11. Indian city
- 12. Rip
- 13. Icelandic book
- 21. Satisfies
- 23. Where golfers begin
- 25. Small amount
- 26. Snag
- 27. Determine the sum of
- 28. A distinctive smell
- 29. Exposed to view
- 32. Stain or blemish
- 33. Small loop in embroidery
- 34. River herring genus
- 36. Large beer
- 37. Deep, red-brown sea bream
- 38. Partner to cheese
- 40. At a deliberate pace
- 41. Gurus
- 43. Of each
- 44. Angry
- 46. Popular beverage
- 47. Flower cluster
- 49. Blocks
- 50. Those who benefitted from efforts of relatives (slang)
- 51. Polio vaccine developer
- 52. A (usually) large and scholarly book
- 53. Popular soap ingredient
- 54. NBAer Bradley
- 57. Popular movie about a pig
- 58. Musician Clapton
- 59. Not a sure thing
- 61. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 62. Father



Answers for November 20

Rediscover Life: From Neuropathy to Freedom

Neuropathy Success!

Meet Anna, an active grandmother who was once confined to her home due to the debilitating effects of peripheral neuropathy. "I saw Dr. Adams' ad in the local paper and thought, 'What do I have to lose?'" she recalls, reflecting on her decision to seek help. After years of battling intense pain and feeling like a shadow of her former self, Anna was desperate for a solution.

A Painful Reality

For Anna, the struggle was real. "I used to love gardening and taking long walks with my grandkids, but the pain in my feet made it nearly impossible," she shares. Simple tasks, like walking up the steps from her garage, filled her with anxiety. "I was terrified of falling. I felt like my body was betraying me." After countless visits to doctors who only prescribed medications without offering real solutions, Anna felt hopeless. "They just kept telling me to get used to it. I wasn't ready to give up on my life."

A New Hope

That's when Anna discovered DelMarVa Acupuncture & Wellness Center. "The moment I walked through the door, I felt a sense of relief. Dr. Adams and her staff really listened to me," she says. Dr. Ashley Adams, known for her innovative approach to treating neuropathy, combines acupuncture with ATP Resonance BioTherapy™—a game-changer in nerve health.



"From my very first treatment, I felt hopeful," Anna explains. "The staff was so supportive; it felt like being with family.

Each session was not just a treatment but a step toward reclaiming my life."

The Transformation

Anna began to notice remarkable changes. "My balance improved, and I could walk longer distances without pain. I even started gardening again!" she exclaims, her eyes lighting up with joy. "And just recently, I walked along the beach, feeling the sand between my toes—a moment I thought I'd never experience again."

"I can't believe how far I've come. I'm not just surviving; I'm thriving!" she shares with gratitude. "Dr. Adams and her team have truly changed my life."

A Message of Hope

Anna's journey serves as a beacon of hope for others suffering from

peripheral neuropathy. "Don't let anyone tell you there's no solution. If I can get my life back, so can you!" If you or a loved one are facing similar struggles, DelMarVa Acupuncture & Wellness Center is here to help. With compassionate care and proven treatments, they specialize in helping patients reclaim their lives from neuropathy.

Start Your Journey Today

Visit [DMVACU.com](https://www.dmvacu.com) to learn more about our innovative treatments and hear inspiring success stories. Call 302-265-2751 to schedule your consultation. Don't wait—your transformation is just a phone call away!

**DELMARVA ACUPUNCTURE
& WELLNESS CENTER**

RESTORING BODY & MIND



Tips to pick the perfect Christmas tree

Christmas trees are among the most recognizable symbols of the holiday season, and the popularity of trees is undeniable. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States each year. Christmas trees also are big business in Canada, where Statistics Canada notes cash receipts from Canadian Christmas tree producers totaled nearly \$163.5 million in 2022.

Annual spending on Christmas trees underscores how important they are to holiday decor. Christmas trees serve as the centerpiece in millions of holiday home decor schemes, so it's important to pick a tree that can shine in that role. This holiday season, celebrants can consider these tips as they look for the perfect Christmas tree.

Measure the area where the tree will

advent
from page 12

be placed. A large tree can be awe-inspiring, but also can stick out like a sore thumb if it takes up too much space. There should be enough room around the tree for families and their guests to sit around it. The home interior experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend leaving a minimum of six inches between the top of the tree and the ceiling. If a tree topper will be added, make sure the top of the tree is at least 12 inches from the ceiling. Measure the area before leaving to buy a tree so it can fit nicely into the room and the surrounding decor.

Try the shake test. Anyone who has purchased a fresh-cut Christmas tree is undoubtedly familiar with the shake test, which remains an effective way to measure the dryness of the tree. A slight shake will produce some fallen needles. If the needles are brown and few and far

between, then the tree likely is not overly dry. However, a lot of falling green needles indicates the tree is already drying out, which means it could shed quite a bit and lose its looks before Christmas Day.

Pick a tree with a symmetrical look. Trees are living things, so it's unlikely that buyers will find a perfectly symmetrical tree. However, a tree that's misshapen or already has some sagging branches won't make for an awe-inspiring addition to a home decor scheme.

Find the trunk (if you can). A trunk that's visible through the branches indicates the tree does not have dense branches, which will be necessary if homeowners want to dress the tree with ornaments. If it's hard to find the trunk because of all the thick branches and green needles, then the tree is likely

pretty healthy. Test the needles. The home improvement experts at Lowe's note that needles should be flexible but still snap when bent sharply. Avoid trees with needles that are already losing their color and can easily be pulled off.

A Christmas tree garners a lot of attention come the holiday season, which only underscores the significance of finding a tree worthy of being the centerpiece of holiday decor.

When did Christmas lights become so popular?

When did Christmas lights become so popular?

Holiday lights are now everywhere come the holiday season. Private homeowners tend to hang the holiday lights outside their homes around Thanksgiving weekend and keep them up through New Year's Day. Though it might seem like a tradition without a deep history, decorating a Christmas tree with electric lights can be traced all the way back to the nineteenth century. In 1882, Edward Johnson, who was a friend and colleague of the man who invented light bulbs, Thomas Edison, replaced candles, which had traditionally been used to briefly light Christmas trees, with light bulbs. But at the time of Johnson's innovation, the high cost and relative infancy of light bulbs ensured the idea did not catch on. And though United States President Grover Cleveland used electric lights to illuminate a Christmas tree in the White House in 1895, it would be another eight years before General Electric would begin selling Christmas light kits. Those kits cost \$12 in 1903, which equates to several hundred dollars today. The first outdoor Christmas light shows started to become popular in the 1920s, and this is the same time when commercial sales of Christmas lights

picked up. In the 1960s, GE's decision to begin manufacturing Christmas lights overseas helped reduce the price of outdoor lights even further, thus paving the way for the tradition of decorating home exteriors with string lights during the holiday season to take a firm hold. And that tradition remains wildly popular today.



bration of the birth of Christ, which is commemorated on Christmas Day.

What is the significance of Advent wreaths? The Catholic News Agency notes that Advent wreaths have been in use since the Middle Ages. The evergreen wreaths remind Catholics of the eternal life in Jesus Christ. Each Sunday during Advent, one of the four candles on the Advent wreath is lit.

Why is one Advent wreath candle a different color than the others? Three of the four candles on an Advent wreath are purple. The candle lit on the third Sunday of Advent is pink, and priests even wear pink vestments on this day. The USCCB notes that the third Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete Sunday." The word "Gaudete" means "rejoice," and the unique color of the candle lit on Gaudete Sunday commemorates that the season of Advent is halfway through.

What is the significance of the Advent calendar? Advent calendars are among the more notable symbols of the holiday season for Catholics, and Christianity.com notes this tradition can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. Advent calendars typically feature 24 doors or boxes to open (one for each day between December 1 and Christmas Eve), and they are used by families counting down the days until the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Many families with small children utilize Advent calendars to teach youngsters about their faith, which can help to redirect adults' and children's focus to the true meaning of the season during a period when it's easy to grow distracted by other things.

Advent is a season of celebration for millions of individuals who want to emphasize their faith during a joyous time of year.



Be mindful of pets during the holiday season

The magic and wonder of the holiday season can be enthralling for people of all ages. There is so much to see and do during the holiday season, making it



easy to forge lasting memories.

With so much to do in December, life at home can sometimes feel a little hectic, especially for the family pet. Although the holidays can be exciting, the season can induce anxiety in pets. Pets like cats and dogs often thrive on routine and fa-

Add seasonal bazaars to your list of holiday shopping locations

There is no shortage of options to find every item on your holiday shopping list. Shopping malls, online retailers and mom and pop stores along Main Street can be great spots to grab holiday deals, but shoppers also can find great gifts at holiday fairs and bazaars.

Bazaars are found all over the world, but are notable to Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Bazaars are marketplaces that feature several small shops or vendor stalls. In some countries, bazaars are outdoors and covered by tents, while in others they feature several stalls set up in large rooms.

Holiday bazaars often pop up during the holiday season and mimic international marketplaces. They may be hosted by cities or towns, schools or places of worship. Sometimes they are fundraising opportunities, with nonprofit organizations charging a stall- or table-renting fee for bazaar participants. Holiday fairs and bazaars often bring together an array of different retailers, many of whom are small businesses selling interesting wares.

Shoppers should take advantage of every opportunity to visit these holiday bazaars because they will only be around for a short time. Here's a look at some of the benefits of bazaar shopping for the holidays.

Patronize small businesses. Holiday

miliarity. Switch up that routine and various behavioral issues can arise, including having accidents in the home. Pets also may become more destructive, chewing or clawing at items to release pent-up tension and anxiety. Pet owners who want the season to be festive for their pets can consider the following strategies.

Gradually introduce new items. Gradually decorate living spaces so pets can grow acclimated to their newly decorated environs. Add a few pieces to rooms each day until you finally have all of your decorations out for display. This way pets can sniff around the decorations and realize they do not pose a threat.

Keep familiar pet belongings. Try not to upset the apple cart too much in regard to pets' cherished possessions. For example, do not move the dog bed from the living room and place the Christmas tree in its place. Pets need that familiarity and having some of their items with

bazaars often bring together small businesses that may not normally have storefronts. This allows shoppers to meet the individuals behind businesses they already patronize or discover new firms they were previously unacquainted with.

Shop unique wares. Holiday bazaars may showcase items not easily found elsewhere, from handcrafted jewelry to unique soaps to custom woodworking items.

Develop new relationships. Shopping at holiday bazaars enables you to meet and interact with new people. This can expand your social circles and may even expand your professional network.

Enjoy the shopping experience. Shopping away from the bustle of larger, busier retail stores gives you a break from the harried shopping experience many experience during the holiday season. Rather, holiday fairs and bazaars typically are less crowded and engage at a slower pace. Plus, they may have a more homespun decorating design that can have you feeling like you're shopping in a Christmas village.

Take advantage of food vendors. Food vendors likely will be mixed within the offerings of the holiday bazaar. That gives you opportunity to take the day off from cooking and enjoy some savory and sweet bites while grabbing gifts.

Holiday shopping bazaars are great places to shop for the holidays.

familiar smells can make for a smooth adjustment to holiday decorations.

Designate a pet-safe zone. If you will be inviting people over during the holidays, set aside a room for pets so they can be in relative quiet away from boisterous crowds. Locking pets away also helps prevent their escape from the home as guests come and go.

Secure the tree and other decorations. Pets are often curious about new things, and they may climb or paw at items to try to understand them better. Decorative items may end up being knocked over by curious pets. Secure the tree using a string and an anchor to the ceiling or wall like you might secure a large screen TV to prevent it from tip-

Black Friday shopping tips

Retail holidays now dot the consumer landscape throughout much of the year. That shift has made a day like Black Friday somewhat less unique than it was in years past. However, Black Friday remains the unofficial kickoff to the holiday shopping season, and it's still a major day for retailers big and small.

According to Adobe Analytics, in 2022 consumers spent \$9.12 billion while online shopping on Black Friday. A separate report from the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics indicated just under 200 million consumers shopped online and in store between Thanksgiving Day and Cyber Monday, which is the Monday following Black Friday. Such figures indicate that holiday shopping on the weekend of Thanksgiving might have changed, but it's still wildly popular. This Black Friday, shoppers can consider these tips to ensure they find the right gifts at the right price.

Do some research before the big day. The spirit of competition is alive and well on Black Friday. Consumers once flocked en masse to store parking lots in the wee hours of the morning in order to get sale items before shelves emptied. Some still do, so shoppers may need to be willing to compete to find the best deals. But some pre-Black Friday research might prove the best way to land the best deals, and it may not require waking up in the middle of the night. Much like shoppers compete with one another to grab sale items, retailers also

ping over. Keep breakable ornaments and other trinkets behind display cases or beyond the reach of pets.

Discourage pets from using decorations as toys. Reprimand pets or move them away from holiday decor so they don't get the idea that these items are now their toys.

Be careful with holiday foods. Holiday foods and desserts are rich and full of ingredients that may not be healthy for pets. Keep a secure lid on trash pails and remind holiday guests that pets should not be fed table scraps.

Pets may need some time to adjust to the changes that come with holiday decorating and celebrating to keep them happy and safe.

compete to get shoppers in store or on their websites. As a result, it's not uncommon for retailers big and small to advertise Black Friday sales weeks in advance. Shoppers can research these sales and plan when to visit certain stores in order to land the best deal.

Wake up early. Shoppers may not need to get out of bed at 3 a.m. to land the best Black Friday deals, but the early bird still gets the worm on the day after Thanksgiving. Plan to shop early in the morning, which increases the chances of finding the right gift at the right price. If

an item you've earmarked is part of a doorbuster deal, plan to get to the store or onto the website as early as possible.

Establish a budget. It's easy to go overboard when shopping

deals on Black Friday. However, busting the budget on the first day of the holiday shopping season sets a bad precedent for the weeks to come. A holiday debt survey from LendingTree found that 35 percent of shoppers took on debt to pay for their holiday purchases in 2022, with the average consumer accumulating more than \$1,500 in debt. Savvy shoppers devise a budget prior to shopping and stick to that budget.

Black Friday remains a wildly popular retail holiday. A little research, a willingness to get up early and some determination to stay on budget is a formula for a successful Black Friday.



Get creative with holiday decor

The end of the year is upon us and that often involves decorating a home in its holiday finest. According to Today's Homeowner, nearly 70 percent of Americans plan to display outdoor holiday decorations. Among those



choosing to decorate, 34 percent will do so before Thanksgiving.

Everyone has a different vision of a well-appointed holiday home, but there's always room to make things more unique and creative. These ideas can add a little extra to holiday displays.

Decorate other rooms. Who says holiday decorating is exclusive to living and dining areas? Think about decorating unexpected places, like swapping out everyday towels and shower

curtains with something festive. Swags of greenery wrapped in lights can be added to bed frames.

Coordinate the ornaments. Identify a color theme and then showcase it with ornaments. Think about matching the ornaments to the presents wrapped under the tree as well. Purchase white package paper and color or paint the paper to be the same hues as the ornaments on the tree boughs.

It's hip to be square. While round wreaths are traditional, make your own wreaths in a different geometric shape by using wire or another material as the frame. Square wreaths may be unexpected, and you also can turn the square on its side for a diamond shape.

Add a spot of color. Certain holidays are known for their particular color palettes, such as red and green for Christmas. But you also can do something unexpected. Whether using a lighter shade of the same color family or adding an accent color like purple or blue, you can change things up in a cre-

ative way.

Make an unexpected bouquet. Swap flowers for pine cones, berries and greenery in unique vessels. For example, arrange your centerpiece in a tall fountain glass or even a cocktail shaker.

Try a different accent tree. Use a styrofoam cone as the base of a tree for a centerpiece or sideboard. Attach poinsettia branches for a vibrant red tree, or stacked lemons or oranges filled with greenery for a fresh-smelling citrus creation.

Suspend belief. Instead of attaching

Real or artificial? The Christmas tree debate continues

People are passionate about the things they love. Through the years there have been many debates over a wide range of topics, from which cola brand to back to which book/movie character was more deserving of a lead character's heart.

The holiday season features a classic example of taking sides. The debate surrounding artificial Christmas trees and their natural alternatives will pick back up this holiday season. As with any debate, there are two sides to every story. Those on the fence as to whether to go real or fake this year can consider these pros and cons of each.

Real tree. Pros: One of the biggest advantages of a real tree is its pleasing aroma. The fresh pine smell of a natural tree can trigger memories of Christmases gone by and make a home feel cozy and holiday-ready. It takes many years for a Christmas tree to grow large enough to be harvested, and as it grows it provides a habitat for animals and benefits the planet by absorbing carbon and providing oxygen, according to Megan Quinn, coordinator of conservation biology at the Nature Conservancy of Canada. When trees are cut down, two or three may be planted in their place. Buying a real tree from a business nearby also supports the local economy.

Cons: Real trees can be messy and require upkeep like daily watering. Cutting down a tree oneself and bringing it home can help guarantee freshness, but there is really no way to know when trees at Christmas tree lots were cut down. This means that needles can begin falling the moment the tree is placed in the living room. Another thing to note is that live trees can't be placed just anywhere. They shouldn't be next to fireplaces or heat sources,

a tree topper to the tallest bough, hang one from the ceiling just above the tree to add even more whimsy.

Mix and match. When it comes to a holiday table, mix and match table settings for an eclectic tableau.

Shift into neutral. Instead of a large holiday display in familiar colors, rely on neutral, wintry tones that will blend in with the home but add a festive touch. Natural wood, whites and creams, and muted greens can fill spaces.

Unique holiday decorations and schemes can be a great way to add new life to a home this December.

where they can dry out prematurely and pose a fire risk. A real tree also might have unwelcome bugs or animals hiding within its branches. According to Penn State Extension, anything from spotted lanternflies to spiders to aphids to bark beetles or lice may be on a real tree.

Artificial tree. Pros: Artificial trees can be convenient because they are easy to assemble, disassemble and store. Plus, you don't have to venture out each year to get one. Unlike real trees, artificial trees do not require watering or vacuuming to manage fallen needles. Since artificial trees can be reused for numerous seasons, they may be more cost-effective than real trees. Artificial trees can last anywhere from six to 10 years, but that life span depends on the quality of the tree and how well it is maintained. Artificial trees also guarantee a uniform, pleasing look year after year.

Cons: Artificial trees are made from polyvinyl chloride and other plastics, and environmentalists attest that those ingredients make them bad for the environment. According to an assessment study of artificial versus natural trees published in 2009 by Ellipso, a Montreal-based sustainable development consulting firm, an artificial tree emits 8.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year, compared to 3.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide emitted by a real tree in a given year. In addition, the chemicals used in manufacture may have adverse effects on human health and often are non-recyclable. Artificial trees also take up room in homes year-round since they need to be stored. Plus, they don't emit a pleasing aroma.

The debate over a real or artificial Christmas tree is sure to rage on year after year, so it's up to holiday celebrants to make their pick.

Families can create their own Advent calendars

Advent is observed in most Christian denominations as a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas as well as the return of Jesus at the Second Coming. On the liturgical calendar, Advent falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and begins roughly four weeks prior to December 25 each year. Although the Bible doesn't say anything about observing the tradition of Advent, it has existed within the Christian church for centuries. Key symbols of Advent include lighting the Advent wreath at Mass each Sunday and counting down to Christmas with an Advent calendar.

Families that partake in the Advent countdown look to Advent calendars to help them stay on track. Advent calendars run the gamut from the simple to the elaborate. Although calendars can be purchased from various retailers, it can be a thoughtful and family-oriented

project to make one at home for all to enjoy. The following are some ideas for crafty Advent calendars.

Psalms and scripture. Craft a simple Advent calendar that contains a series of cards that, when turned over, reveal a particular passage of scripture to read or a psalm that can be recited or sung. Choose passages that directly relate to the birth of Jesus if you'd like.

Good deeds. Use Advent to focus on being a better person in preparation for the joy of Christmas. Behind each calendar date, children and adults can affix certain tasks that can help them strengthen their faith. Ideas can include volunteering at a charity, donating time at church, attending a special event featuring traditional Christmas carols, or making a meal and bringing it to an elderly neighbor.

*please see **calendars** page 19*

Consider these year-end financial moves

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

As we enter the holiday season, your life may well become busier. Still, you might want to take the time to consider some financial moves before we turn the calendar to 2025.



John Bennish

Here are a few suggestions:
Review your investment portfolio.

As you look at your portfolio, ask these questions: *Has its performance met my expectations this year? Does it still reflect my goals, risk tolerance and time horizon? Do I need to rebalance?* You might find that working with a financial professional can help you answer these and other questions you may have about your investments.

Add to your 401(k) and HSA. If you can afford it, and your employer allows it, consider putting more money into your 401(k) before the year ends — including “catch-up” contributions if you’re 50 or older. You might also want

to add to your health savings account (HSA) by the tax-filing deadline in April.

Use your FSA dollars. Unlike an HSA, a flexible spending account (FSA) works on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis, meaning you lose any unspent funds at the end of the year. So, if you still have funds left in your account, try to use them up in 2024. (Employers may grant a 2½ month extension, so check with your human resources area to see if this is the case where you work.)

Contribute to a 529 plan. If you haven’t opened a 529 education savings plan for your children, think about doing so this year. With a 529 plan, your earnings can grow tax deferred, and your withdrawals are federally tax free when used for qualified education expenses — tuition, fees, books and so on. And if you invest in your own state’s 529 plan, you might be able to deduct your contributions from your state income tax or receive a state tax credit.

Build your emergency fund. It’s generally a good idea to keep up to six months’ worth of living expenses in an

emergency fund, with the money held in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund in place, you might be forced to dip into your retirement funds to pay for short-term needs, such as a major car or home repair.

Review your estate plans. If you’ve experienced any changes in your family situation this year, such as marriage, remarriage or the birth of a child, you may want to update your estate-planning documents to reflect your new situation. It’s also important to look at the beneficiary designations on your investment accounts, retirement plans, IRAs and insurance policies, as these designations can sometimes even supersede the instructions you’ve left in your will. And if you haven’t started estate planning, there’s no time like the present.

Take your RMDs. If you’re 73 or older, you will likely need to take withdrawals — called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA. If you don’t take these withdrawals each year, you could be subject to

penalties.

These aren’t the only moves you can make, but they may prove helpful not only for 2024 but in the years to come.

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

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calendars
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Craft for youngsters. Very young children may not understand the significance of Advent, but they can still participate in the countdown to Christmas. One idea is to get a large, Christmas-related picture and attach it to a piece of poster board. Then cut out shapes from construction paper that relate to the image that will be attached over the image to conceal it. For example, a Christmas tree image can be covered by birds, ornaments, pine cones, and other shapes. Each day of Advent, kids can remove one of these coverings. By the time Christmas has arrived, the underlying image will be fully revealed.

Food focused. Many store-bought Advent calendars are cardboard creations with small doors that hide chocolates behind them. Often that chocolate is not very tasty. Families that love to spend time in the kitchen can have a living Advent calendar where each day is a new food adventure to whip up or purchase.

Advent calendars help people remain mindful of the time leading up to Christmas through meaningful reflection and time spent together.



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Computer studies info night scheduled

Wor-Wic Community College is offering a free computer studies information night for anyone interested in learning more about degree, transfer and career opportunities in the computer field. The event will be held on Monday, December 9, at 6 p.m., in Room 200 of the Maner Technology Center at the college campus at the corner of Route 50 and Walston Switch Road.

Instructors from the technology department will be on hand to answer questions about the college's computer studies majors, which include associate degree programs in cybersecurity, game development, information systems, computer & network support technology and full stack web development, as well as certificate programs in computer information security, desktop support technician, front-end web development and full stack web development. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn about the program as well as the many career options in the field.

Visit the events section of worwic.edu for more information.

Register now for spring classes at Wor-Wic

Wor-Wic Community College is currently accepting registrations for credit classes that are being offered during the spring term, which begins on Wednesday, January 22. Early registration is encouraged for the best selection of classes.

Admission, financial aid, career exploration, enrollment coaching, academic advising and registration services are available Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Student services are also available on select Saturdays; check the events calendar at www.worwic.edu for dates and times.

Wor-Wic offers several different credit class formats, including on-campus and online. Visit www.worwic.edu for more information and to register. New students who need help should call 410-334-2895 or email admissions@worwic.edu and include their name and a phone number where they can be reached.

AGH welcomes Nance



Gena Nance

Atlantic General Health System recently announced that Gena Nance, FNP-C has joined their network of provider practices to provide care at Atlantic General Gastroenterology.

Nance has strong ties to the Lower Shore and earned both her bachelor's degree and her master's degree in family nurse practitioner studies at Salisbury University. Upon graduation in 2012, she worked in primary care in the region and transitioned to the gastroenterology specialty in 2017. She is board certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and is a member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the Delaware Coalition of Nurse Practitioners, the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland, and the American Gastroenterological Association.

Nance is currently accepting new patients at Atlantic General Gastroenterology, located within the Gudelsky Family Medical Center at 10614 Racetrack Road, in Ocean Pines. To schedule an appointment, individuals can call 410-629-1450.

AGH achieves Most Wired Distinction for 2024

Atlantic General Hospital and Health System (AGH) has achieved Level 8 Most Wired distinction for both acute and ambulatory care for 2024, after analysis of the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives' (CHIME) Digital Health Most Wired Survey for the 2024 data collection period.

Among the almost 48,000 facilities represented, AGH ranked above peers in critical categories such as analytics and data management, population health, infrastructure, and patient engagement. The survey evaluates the adoption, integration, and impact of technologies across health care organizations, from early-stage adopters to industry leaders.

System interoperability and reliable data sharing that is secure and efficient are among the IT priorities at AGH.

Most recently, a multidisciplinary team stood up integrated diagnostic order entry within the electronic medical record (EMR) shared by the hospital and the health system's network of primary care providers and specialists for laboratory and x-ray services. By the end of this week, when a patient of the health system walks into one of AGH's imaging or lab facilities, the staff will be able to immediately pull up the order for the test the patient's provider requested in the EMR. Over the coming months orders for surgical procedures will be integrated, which will help shorten the scheduling process.

Additionally, AGH has invested in a new Pure storage area network (SAN), which will improve the performance of complex software applications and increase the speed of access to data, bringing the information clinicians need to their fingertips even more quickly. Plus, the SAN's built in data protection features will further strengthen the organization's data security and disaster recovery capabilities.

"Achieving Most Wired distinction is a collaborative effort," said Jonathan Bauer, vice president of information services at AGH. "Receiving this annual award for the eighth time points to a sustained organization-wide prioritization of digital health excellence, and I couldn't be more proud."

In the face of escalating

challenges like increasing cybersecurity threats, evolving care models, staffing shortages, and budget constraints, the urgency for revolutionizing health care through technology continues to grow. The next 30 years will bring profound changes, driven by emerging technologies. We anticipate that advancements in digital health—facilitated by fully interoperable data, artificial intelligence, and secure platforms—will significantly transform the landscape of care. A strategic roadmap will be essential to navigate these changes.

"To aid future planning, we have designed the Digital Health Most Wired program to provide insights into best practices, HIT adoption patterns, and digital health market trends," CHIME President and CEO Russ Branzell said.

'Angels' needed for holiday giving program

The Ocean Pines Aquatics Department is looking for "angels" to help support local children and families this holiday season.

The department started the Angel Tree program in 2014. Each year, a Christmas tree in the Sports Core Pool lobby is decorated with angel ornaments that represent a local person or family in need.

The ornaments include a short list of needed items, such as winter clothes for a newborn, stem toys for a 10-year-old boy, and Playdough for a four-year-old girl.

Aquatics Manager Michelle Hitchens said the department this year worked with Worcester GOLD and two local churches to identify potential beneficiaries of the Angel Tree program.

"People can come to the Sports Core, pick out a numbered ornament, write their name and phone number in our book, and then sponsor a local person or family with Christmas gifts for the holiday season," she said. "It's just our way of giving back and trying to spread a little Christmas cheer."

The deadline to return gifts is December 16.

For more information, call the Sports Core Pool at 410-641-5255.

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The impact of Daylight Saving Time on overall health

By **Erin Smith**, DPT, PT

Daylight Saving Time (DST) may seem like a minor adjustment to the clock, but it can have significant effects on our mental health. The practice, which shifts the clock forward in spring and back in fall, disrupts our internal body clock, or circadian rhythm, leading to changes in mood, sleep, and overall well-being. While many people look forward to the extra daylight in the evening, the transition into and out of DST can trigger psychological and physiological effects that impact mental health.



Erin Smith

Disruption of the circadian rhythm

The human body operates on a natural circadian rhythm, aligning sleep-wake cycles and hormone production with the day-night cycle. When DST begins in the spring and clocks “spring forward,” people are required to wake up earlier than their bodies are accustomed to, disrupting their natural sleep patterns. This sudden shift can lead to sleep deprivation, fatigue, and irritability. Studies show that

sleep quality and duration are compromised in the days following the transition, leading to decreased cognitive performance and difficulty focusing.

The “fall back” in autumn might seem easier, as we gain an extra hour of sleep, but it still has psychological effects. The decreasing daylight hours in the evening can contribute to feelings of sadness, fatigue, and a lack of motivation which can limit individuals’ ability to exercise as religiously as they should. The reduced daylight also limits the physical activity able to be performed outside safely such as walking or bike riding after work hours. The loss of daylight in the evening hours can also lead to a sense of isolation and reduced social engagement, which in turn can negatively impact mental health.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that occurs in certain seasons, particularly during the fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. For many individuals with SAD, the abrupt time changes caused by DST exacerbate the symptoms. The transition into shorter days and longer nights can lead to a drop in serotonin levels, a neurotransmitter associated with mood

regulation. This reduction in serotonin is linked to feelings of depression, anxiety, and irritability.

In addition, the disruption of the circadian rhythm further exacerbates these symptoms. People with SAD may find the time shift especially challenging, as their internal clocks struggle to adjust, worsening their mood and energy levels. The lack of natural sunlight, which is important for regulating serotonin production, can make it harder to cope with everyday stresses.

Increased risk of depression and anxiety

DST has also been linked to an increased risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. The disruption to sleep patterns caused by the time change can trigger or worsen symptoms in people who are already susceptible to mood disorders. Sleep deprivation, which is common during the time change, is a known risk factor for both depression and anxiety, as it can impair the brain’s ability to regulate emotions and stress.

The spring transition, when clocks are set forward, can be particularly difficult. Studies have shown an uptick in depressive symptoms, irritability, and anxiety in the days following the shift. For some individuals, the stress of adjusting to a new schedule can lead to longer-term emotional challenges, especially when combined with the darker, shorter days of winter.

Coping strategies

Although the effects of DST can be challenging, there are steps you can take to mitigate its impact on your mental health:

Gradually adjust your sleep schedule: Start adjusting your bedtime 15 minutes earlier each night before the time

change to help your body adapt more smoothly.

Get morning sunlight: Exposure to natural light in the morning can help reset your circadian rhythm and boost your mood. Try to spend time outdoors or near a window as soon as you wake up.

Exercise anyway: Physical activity naturally produces endorphins that reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Try to walk in the mornings versus the evenings or go to the gym to exercise safely indoors.

Prioritize sleep hygiene: Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, avoiding caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime, and reducing screen time can help improve sleep quality.

Seek support if needed: If you’re experiencing persistent feelings of sadness, fatigue, or anxiety during the time change, consider seeking professional help. Therapy and light therapy are effective treatments for those affected by SAD or mood changes related to DST.

Daylight Saving Time disrupts our circadian rhythms, affecting sleep patterns and contributing to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and Seasonal Affective Disorder. While it’s difficult to avoid the effects of DST entirely, adjusting sleep schedules, getting more sunlight and exercises, and practicing good sleep hygiene can help mitigate its impact. Understanding the mental health implications of DST is crucial, as it allows individuals to take proactive steps to protect their well-being during these seasonal shifts. Please feel free to contact Hamilton Hand to Shoulder for further details.

Erin Smith, DPT, PT is with Hamilton Hand to Shoulder and can be reached at 410.208.3300 or Info@HamiltonHand.com.

space

from page 3

a deeply therapeutic process of personal healing, helping him find peace through building something meaningful and lasting.

The Art for the Heart Little Free Gallery is designed to be a space where individuals can not only enjoy original works of art but also experience the healing potential that art provides for mental health and emotional well-being. The gallery will feature a range of works from local artists and also include materials to inspire reflection, foster connection, and provide a sense of peace and comfort to visitors. In addition to displaying art, the gallery encourages community members to participate by donating their own creations, contributing to a growing collection that will continue to inspire and uplift.

“We believe that art has the power to heal and connect us in profound ways,” says Anna Mullis, the Executive Director of the Worcester County Arts Council. “This space is for everyone—whether you’re an artist, someone seeking solace, or simply someone who appreciates the beauty and therapeutic effects of creativity. We want

this to be a place of community, comfort, and inspiration.”

The gallery is open to everyone and admission is free. It will also serve as a safe space for individuals to reflect, meditate, and engage in creative expression as a form of healing. Whether visitors are looking for inspiration, personal reflection, or simply an escape from their day-to-day lives, Art for the Heart is designed to be a sanctuary of peace and creative energy.

The grand opening will be held in conjunction with the Holiday Open House hosted at the Worcester County Arts Council Gallery on November 29 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. This special event will feature an exhibition of local artwork, light refreshments, and opportunities to learn more about the Art for the Heart Gallery’s mission. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own artwork to contribute, making this a truly community-driven space.

“We hope that the Art for the Heart Little Free Gallery will become a place where people can come together to share and experience the joy and healing that art brings,” says Anna Mullis. “Whether you’re creating, sharing, or simply appreciating, there’s something for everyone here.”

grants

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-Town of Berlin/Berlin Main Street - Farmers Market Live Music
-Ward Foundation, Inc. - Ward World Championship Wildfowl Carving Competition

-Worcester County Recreation & Parks Department - Art in the Park Mural
Each grant will support the execution of these projects over the coming months, with public events and installations that will be open for all to enjoy. Community members are encouraged to attend and participate in these events to support local artists and celebrate the creativity that defines Worcester County.

In FY 2025, the Worcester County Arts Council awarded \$49,000 to local non-profit organizations through this program which is funded and supported by the Maryland States Arts Council.

For more information on the grants, programs, and upcoming art events, please visit www.worcestercountyartscouncil.org or contact Anna Mullis, Executive Director: anna@worcestercountyartscouncil.org.

Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**

Hey, that was us

A little house with three bedrooms, one bathroom and one car on the street. A mower that you had to push to make the grass look neat.

In the kitchen on the wall we only had one phone and no need for recording things, someone was always home.

We only had a living room where we would congregate, unless it was at meal-time in the kitchen where we ate.

We had no need for family rooms or extra rooms to dine. When meeting as a family those two rooms would work out fine.

We only had one TV set and channels maybe two, But always there was one of them with something worth the

view.

For snacks we had potato chips that tasted like a chip. And if you wanted flavor there was Lipton's onion dip.

Store-bought snacks were rare because my mother liked to cook and nothing can compare to snacks in Betty Crocker's book.

Weekends were for family trips or staying home to play. We all did things together — even go to church to pray.

When we did our weekend trips depending on the weather, no one stayed at home because we liked to be together.

Sometimes we would separate to do things on our own, but we knew where the others were without our own cell phone.

Then there were the movies with your favorite movie star, and nothing can compare to watching movies in your car.

Then there were the picnics at the peak of summer season, pack a lunch and find some trees and never need a reason.

Get a baseball game together with all the friends you know, have real action

playing ball — and no game video.

Remember when the doctor used to be the family friend, and didn't need insurance or a lawyer to defend? The way that he took care of you or what he had to do, because he took an oath and strived to do the best for you.

Remember going to the store and shopping casually, and when you went to pay for it you used your own money? Nothing that you had to swipe or punch in some amount, and remember when the cashier person had to really count?

The milkman used to go from door to door, and it was just a few cents more than going to the store.

There was a time when mailed letters came right to your door, without a lot of junk mail ads sent out by every store.

The mailman knew each house by name and knew where it was sent; there were not loads of mail addressed to "present occupant."

There was a time when just one glance was all that it would take, and you would know the kind of car, the model and the make. They didn't look like turtles trying to squeeze out

every mile; they were streamlined, white walls, fins and really had some style.

One time the music that you played whenever you would jive, was from a vinyl, big-holed record called a forty-five. The record player had a post to keep them all in line and then the records would drop down and play one at a time.

Oh sure, we had our problems then, just like we do today and always we were striving, trying for a better way.

Oh, the simple life we lived still seems like so much fun, how can you explain a game, just kick the can and run?

And why would boys put baseball cards between bicycle spokes and for a nickel, red machines had little bottled Cokes?

This life seemed so much easier and slower in some ways. I love the new technology but I sure do miss those days.



So, time moves on and so do we and nothing stays the same, but I sure love to reminisce and walk down memory lane.

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