

The Courier

December 18, 2024 Volume 25 Number 15



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Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year

Marlene Ott
Associate Broker, CRS

Ocean Pines 'Angel Tree' program to support two local families

The Ocean Pines Administration team is asking the community to help spread holiday cheer for two local families in need this season through the "Angel Tree" program.

The "Angel Tree" is on display in the Administration Building lobby, adorned with ornaments representing requested items for the families. Community members are invited to stop by, select an ornament, and return new, wrapped gifts by Friday, December 20.

Director of Business Administration Linda Martin said the team partnered with the Berlin Crisis Center to identify two families requiring assistance this year.

Gifts requested by the families include clothing and toys for children, ranging from toddlers to teenagers. The full list of items is available on the Angel Tree in the lobby.

For more information, contact the Ocean Pines Administration team at info@oceanpines.org.



Healthy recipes sought

Holiday traditions often include favorite dishes and delights. As you pull out your recipes this season, Worcester Health encourages you to submit one of your favorites to be selected for their Heart Month Recipe Makeover Challenge. The Worcester Health Nutritionist will review all submissions and select one to be featured in February's *What's Cooking in Worcester* episode. The recipe's author will win a cookbook and be invited to be a guest chef featured in the February 2025 episode. All those who submit a recipe will receive a special thank you gift.

Please email your recipe, along with your name and contact information to worcester.health@maryland.gov by January 10. Recipes can also be mailed to Kelly Williams, Worcester County Health Department, 6040 Public Landing Road, Snow Hill, Maryland 21863.

For more information about the Heart Month Recipe Challenge, *What's Cooking in Worcester*, or Nutrition Services provided by the Worcester County Health Department, please visit worcesterhealth.org or call us at 410-632-1100 extension 1113.

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I believe because

Never have I glimpsed Santa's sleigh riding across a darkened sky. Yet, in this crazy, topsy-turvy world much can be gained if we allow ourselves to believe in the spirit embodied in a bright red suit and adorned with

yet to be held. And I believe in the charity of the man who rides in a red sleigh sharing joy.

I believe a child's smile, and ours as well, becomes more vibrant in the presence of Santa Claus. The spirit embodied by the twinkle in his eye is more powerful than a skeptic's glance. It's a spirit that soars upon the unfettered wings of who we'd like to be; it nourishes our souls, giving us strength to become our very best.

I believe much is gained when we unfurl our imaginations, let go of despair and allow a little "Ho, ho, ho" to resonate in our hearts.

Santa Claus is alive and well. During this time of year, he goes about his business as he has for centuries. Trends and fads concern him not, because what he has to offer is pure and unadulterated for those willing to believe. For you see the passage of time cannot alter or dull that which is timeless: the pure, honest emotions we feel when we embrace the ones we love, when we toast the health of those around us and remember those who are not. Opening our minds to what we don't fully understand but nonetheless believe is a lasting gift.

The good cheer Santa Claus spreads is worn handsomely by those who believe. It is as comfortable as a well warm sweater. For those who have faith it can protect the soul from sadness, heal scars of despair and wipe away tears shed of pain. For inasmuch as some would like

to believe otherwise the spirit of Santa Claus doesn't have to be left behind in childhood. It can stay with us, although sometimes it is buried beneath the weight of everyday living. But it's there. We just need to look. We just need to believe.

When we allow ourselves to believe in the spirit of Santa Claus we reveal the part of our soul that glows most brilliantly, most warmly and most honestly. It's the very best gift we can give to those around us.

I believe.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

whiskers white as snow. Hope and warmth is found when we keep ourselves open to a presence that embraces the best of who we are. Simply, I believe in Santa Claus and the older I get, the more I need to believe.



There's something wonderful about fairy tales, four leaf clovers and the magic of watching a child sit on Santa's knee for the first time. There's a lot of joy and happiness that can be shared by simply believing.

I believe in the attraction of mistletoe, the magic of a first snow and the whimsy of making a wish beside a well. I believe in these things and more, just because.

I believe in good cheer and good times and good friends. I believe in wonder and hope and fond memories

Join

OceanPinesForum.com

Join the thousands of other OPA members who enjoy the lively discussion and commentary on OceanPinesForum.com, your source of accurate information about OPA.

Discuss Ocean Pines issues with other association members. Some members of the Board of Directors participate on the forum message board, as well as OPA counsel Bruce Bright.

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

A child's question captivates the imagination; the answer resonates throughout history

By **Chip Bertino**

During the 19th century, newspapers were the predominant news media. Newspapers published numerous editions each day that were sold by scores of newsboys hawking them on street corners. Newspapers played a critical role in forming public opinion. The power of newspapers across the United States was unsurpassed as they held sway over politicians and readers alike. So, it was in 1897, when the *New York Sun* received a rather unique letter from a young reader, Virginia O'Hanlon, wanting to know whether or not there was a Santa Claus.

The letter ended up on the desk of veteran editor, Francis P. Church. Mr. Church was the son of a Baptist min-

ister. He had covered the Civil War for the *New York Times* and had worked for the *New York Sun* for 20 years becoming the paper's anonymous editorial writer. Mr. Church realized neither he nor the paper could ignore the child's question. He must answer it and answer it truthfully. His response became one of the most memorable editorials in newspaper history.

Editor:

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in The Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon.

Virginia,

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have not enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus,

but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God he lives and lives forever. A thousand

years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Mr. Church's editorial was an immediate sensation and was published every year until the paper folded in 1949. Mr. Church married shortly after the editorial appeared. He died in April 1906, leaving no children.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree at the age of 21. The following year she received a Master's degree from Columbia. In 1912 she began teaching in the New York school system and later became a principal. After 47 years as an educator she retired. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglass died in 1971 at the age of 81 in a nursing home in Valatie, NY.



Courier Almanac

On December 18, 1972, following the breakdown of peace talks with North Vietnam just a few days earlier, President Richard Nixon announces the beginning of a massive bombing campaign to break the stalemate. For nearly two weeks, American bombers pounded North Vietnam.

Boxing Day is celebrated between Christmas and New Year's Day. It is an official public holiday when banks, offices and schools are closed. When Boxing Day happens to be on a Saturday or Sunday, the holiday is observed on the following Monday. Some believe the name is derived from the tradition of opening alms boxes that were placed in churches to gather donations for the poor. Others theorize the name comes from boxes of gifts given to employees on the day after Christmas, seeing as servants traditionally had to work on Christmas and December 26th was their day to enjoy time off with family. Although Boxing Day is known across the United Kingdom and British Commonwealth nations like Canada, it is not observed in the United States. Activities like shopping Boxing Day sales, participating in polar plunges, watching sporting events, and gathering with friends are customary on Boxing Day.



The Courier

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Ticket stuffing - The Ocean City Berlin Optimist Club members stuffed 2,500 envelopes with Seaside Boat Show \$10,000 raffle tickets. Tickets will be available for purchase at the show. The money raised from the raffle goes to College Scholarships for graduating seniors.

Pictured (l-r) are Optimists **Larry Campbell, Ron Ferger, Doug Thumser, Candy Thumser, Bob Grimm, Sharon O'Hare, Eddie Fooks, Carole Spurrier, George Solyak, Donna Smith, Roger Pacella, Margie Givarz, Patty Campbell, Bill Hickey and Ron Frew.**

Empower your family to live healthy

Bring your family closer while adopting a healthier, happier lifestyle with Healthy Worcester Families. The Worcester County Health Department's nine-week program combines fun activities, meaningful learning, and quality family time aimed at improving communication, building healthier habits, and strengthening your bonds. The program invites families with youth ages seven to 17 to attend together, engaging in hands-on activities and group discussions that promote better connections and healthier living.

Healthy Worcester Families offers a free family dinner at the start of each weekly session. Every week, families will dive into topics such as communication skills, healthy behaviors, financial literacy, and other skills to strengthen the family connection. Families have the opportunity to receive prizes and other incentives as they progress through the program.

As a result of participating in this program, past participants said their families would continue to "Grow and improve communication and respect for each other," and "Not make food a subject of a power

struggle. Offer healthy options and encourage good choices."

The session begins Wednesday, January 15, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Worcester County Health Department located at 6040 Public Landing Road in Snow Hill.

To register your family, visit surveymonkey.com or call Lynn Suarez at (410) 632-1100 x1109.

NOTICE TO READERS



The Courier will be on hiatus December 25 and January 1. We will return January 8.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Merry Christmas

May the Christmas Season bring only happiness and joy to you and your family

Wayne Hartman

Maryland Delegate District 38 C

Authority: Friends of Wayne Hartman; Jay Knerr, Treasurer

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Lesser known Chanukah traditions

Chanukah is a relatively modern holiday in regard to the Hebrew calendar. Unlike Yom Kippur or Passover, which are steeped in rich traditions, there are few Chanukah customs.

Chanukah celebrants still participate in various customs each year, some of which are customized according to family preferences. While some traditions, such as the lighting of the Chanukah menorah, are familiar, others may not be as widely known, especially to those outside of the faith. Here's a look at a select few.

Saying the Shehecheyanu blessing: Traditionally, there are two blessings that some people say each night while lighting the candles. The first is recited while holding the lit shamash, and the second is said while lighting the candles. Another blessing, known as the "Shehecheyanu," is said the first night. According to 18Doors, a resource on the Jewish faith, it's the same blessing traditionally said on the first night of all Jewish holidays and other special occasions.

Display or use of the shofar: A shofar is a type of instrument made from a ram's horn. It is a symbol of the ram that Abraham offered as a sacrifice in place of his son Isaac, exemplifying heroic faith

of the fathers of the Jewish people. The shofar also serves as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and calls people to strive for Israel's renewal and fellowship with God.

Singing "Ma'oz Tzur" Chanukah songs may not be as numerous or as widely sung as Christmas carols during the holiday season, but there are a select few that are part of the festivities. "Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah" and "The Dreidl Song" are some of the most widely known songs, but some people also follow the custom of singing "Ma'oz Tzur (Rock of Ages)" around the menorah. The words were composed in the 13th century, and the song summarizes historical challenges faced by the Jewish people that were overcome with God's help.

Use of oil in Chanukah feasts: It's well known that latkes, or fried potato pancakes, are served around Chanukah. The reason is due to the oil used to fry them, which traditionally is olive oil. Fried foods call to mind a specific Chanukah miracle. After the Greeks destroyed the sanctuary and defiled what was thought to be all of the oil, one jug sealed with

please see traditions on page 15



Recognition - Rina Thaler, executive director of the Art League of Ocean City, presented a special award designed by Berlin artist Jeffrey Auxer to outgoing president **John Sisson** honoring his six years of service and his continuing support of the arts in Ocean City. The presentation was at the Art League's holiday luncheon at Saltwater 75 on December 12.

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Artist passes her tapestry of talents to her daughters

By **Elaine Bean**

Debbi Dean is a prolific artist. She's there selling her artistic creations at farmers markets and artisan fairs around the region, and currently has her artwork on display at the Ocean City Center for the Arts through December.

The Art League exhibit also displays the artwork of her daughters – Damiana Colley and Kaya Dean. Entitled "Threads of Connection: A Mother-Daughter Tapestry," the exhibit invites the viewer to explore the intertwined stories of mothers and daughters, reflecting on the delicate strands of life woven through shared experiences, emotions, and nature.

"Each piece serves as a visual diary, capturing our journeys, fears, and loves," Debbi Dean said. "Inspired by the beauty of the natural world, we draw parallels between its cycles and our own transformations. The vibrant hues symbolize joy, while the muted tones evoke nostalgia. Together, our creations celebrate the resilience found in shared storytelling."

Their shared history began in Pittsburgh, where Debbi Dean was born and

raised surrounded by the arts. She moved to the Shore 24 years ago and lives in Berlin with her daughters.

"The coastal community offered me a vibrant beauty and a fresh start and a chance to grow my skills in a dynamic environment, which ultimately fueled my passion for the beauty industry," Debbi Dean said. She spent years in the beauty industry, creating hairstyles and owning two full-service salons. Besides producing an astonishing amount of art, she currently works in the environmental sector for a local nonprofit, focusing on sustainability and conservation.

Art is her passion, and mixed media is her expression. "By combining various materials —paint, fabric, paper, and found objects — I can create rich, layered compositions that evoke different emotions and experiences ... My approach to creating art is intuitive and exploratory. I start with inspiration from my surroundings and emotions, allowing these elements to guide me ... This hands-on process encourages spontaneity and often leads to unexpected outcomes."

Daughter Damiana Colley was in-



Damiana Colley and Debbi Dean

spired by watching and joining her mother in making art in their Berlin home. "I work mostly at home in our shared space, which has become a creative sanctuary for me, my mom, and my sister," she said.

"It's a place filled with art supplies scattered around, colorful experiments, and half-finished projects that remind us that creation is a process ... Every night, we sit in the living room together, taking time to create our own pieces, sharing space but creating room for personal reflection. Being a family, we have a deep, unspoken connection that fuels our creativity. We support each other through challenges and encourage each other to take creative leaps. This close bond allows us to create not only as artists but as a team, blending our individual voices into a collective expression of love, resilience, and creativity."

Colley graduated from Worcester Prep and the University of Maryland College Park with a B.A. in psychology and criminology. She currently works as a crisis specialist for Healthport in Princess Anne, Md., with a long-term goal of earning a PhD in Clinical Psychology. She often accompanies her mother to local markets and artisan fairs.

"Portraits are at the heart of my work," she said, "but I love twisting them into something unexpected, blending the rawness of portraits with the whimsy of vibrant, surreal designs. Each piece feels like a little adventure, a reflection of the beauty I see in the unconventional and the imperfect. What keeps me passionate is the joy of discovering new ways to express myself and the sense of calm I find in the creative process. Art for me isn't just about the final product."

Sister Kaya Dean is the third mem-

ber of the creative team. A graduate of Stephen Decatur High School, she carries on her mother's passion for the beauty business and is currently a stylist at a Berlin salon. Her nature-inspired artwork is very detailed and she describes it as "therapeutic."

All three are inspired by the beauty of the Eastern Shore, reflected in their artwork. "The supportive and vibrant spirit of the Eastern Shore continues to motivate me to contribute to my community and honor its charm through my work," Colley said.

Debbi Dean agrees. "What inspires me about the Eastern Shore is its stunning natural beauty and tranquility ... and the rich cultural heritage and close-knit communities. The stories and traditions of local artisans connect me to the past and highlight the importance of preserving our roots."

And all agree that art inspires their lives. "Art matters because it serves as a powerful means of expression and communication," Debbi Dean said, "allowing us to convey complex emotions that words often cannot capture ... Moreover, art fosters connection and community, creating shared experiences that remind us we are not alone in our struggles ... Ultimately, art nurtures emotional well-being, facilitates personal growth, and strengthens connections, making it an essential part of the human experience."

Colley continued, "Art matters because it is a universal language that transcends boundaries, allowing people to express emotions, tell stories, and connect on a deeper level ... It can serve as a form of personal expression or collective activism, helping individuals and groups navigate complex emotions, celebrate their identities, and find common ground. Art is found in everything!"

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Celebrating the Epiphany

The holiday season is full of faith and celebration. Even though people may believe this important time begins at the start of December, for millions of

the Epiphany on January 6.

The Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day, is a Christian feast day that “celebrates the revelation of God in His Son as human in Jesus Christ,” says The National Shrine of Saint Jude. The Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 each year and gets its name from the Greek word meaning “to reveal, or manifestation,” a nod to the idea that this was the day Jesus was revealed to the world.



the Christians, the Twelve Days of Christmas begin with the birth of Baby Jesus on December 25 and continue through

On the Epiphany, three Magi visited the Christ child to pay homage. These wise men were the first to greet Jesus after his parents. The Magi followed a star to

Bethlehem, having faith that the Child’s location would be accurate. The unlikely royal visitors bestowed gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These herbs are typically used in burial ceremonies, and their offering may have potentially foreshadowed Jesus’ destiny.

According to Father Hezekias Carnazzo, a Melkite Catholic priest and founding executive director of the Virginia-based Institute of Catholic Culture, the Feast of the Epiphany is one of the earliest feasts and actually predates the celebration of Christmas.

Although the Epiphany is an important date for Christians and many celebrate it, celebrants in Spain and Latin America consider it as important as Christmas Day. Within these nations D’a de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) is a time for serving Rosca de Reyes, an oval-shaped treat that has a small doll inside to represent Baby Jesus. The figurine symbolizes the hiding of the infant Jesus from King Herod’s troops. Children also receive the majority of their gifts on Three Kings Day. It is customary for kids to place their old shoes with a wish list on them for the Three Kings. On the

morning of January 6, the shoes are filled with toys and gifts.

The Epiphany is celebrated in various ways around the world. In the Czech Republic, people swim in the freezing cold Vltava River and men dress up as the Magi before riding camels through Prague’s city center. Three Kings Bread, similar to the Rosca de Reyes and called Dreikönigskuchen, is prepared and consumed in Germany and Switzerland.

Christmas fanfare does not cease when the calendar turns from December 25 to 26. The Epiphany on January 6 also is an important day of celebration.

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

As we celebrate our Christmas and holiday traditions with our family and friends, let us also remember and honor those who are not with us today. Blessings to you and your family during this special time of year.

**Senator
Mary Beth Carozza**

District 38
Worcester Wicomico Somerset

*Friends of Mary Beth Carozza,
James R. Bergey, Jr, CPA, Treasurer*



A Special Christmas poem

*T'was the night before Christmas and the stockings weren't hung,
The presents weren't wrapped and the cookies weren't done.
The floor was all covered with paper and tape,
A swath of destruction was left in the wake.*

*The lights weren't working and the tree took a lean,
There was so much to do I just wanted to scream.
Christmas was coming, of that I was sure,
But I wondered if I'd have the strength to endure.*

*And just as my spirit had sunk to a low,
The tree lights blinked on and it started to snow.
As I gazed through the window came a sight so serene,
For out on the lawn was a small manger scene.*

*I came to my senses as I took in the sight,
And I remembered the reason for this most holy night.
Decorations and presents and turkeys and hams,
Cannot hold a candle to God's gift to man.*

*I remembered the story of that first Christmas night,
The birthday of Jesus and the star that shone bright.
The gifts of the Magi, and a poor Shepherd boy,
And instead of despair, my heart filled with joy.*

*I stood there a moment and gave it some thought,
That the meaning of Christmas is easily lost.*

*How Santa and reindeer and presents of toys,
Overpower the true reason for Christmas joy.*

*I knew at that moment that all was all right,
I'd finish my chores and get through that night.
My list was long; I knew that was true,
But to it I added one more thing to do.*

*There was one more present I still had to send,
A prayer for peace and good will to all men.
And a special prayer on this Christmas day,
For those who defend us in lands far away.*

-Bob Lassahn



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Home Instead informs Kiwanis Club

Have you ever wondered what having a little extra help could do for you or a loved one? The information the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City heard from Home Care Consultant Crystal Heiser of Home Instead would be of interest.

They serve Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset counties, providing personal service including bathing, dressing and mobility. They are a source of companionship. They offer meal preparation, housekeeping and also provide transportation for doctor's appointments, prescription pickups, grocery shopping and more. They offer hospice support for loved ones and respite for family members. For more information see their website at HomeInstead.com/734.

Pictured are (L-R) **Crystal Heiser** and Kiwanis Club President **Tom Southwell**.

Holiday songs with storied pasts

The holiday season is not complete without music. Holiday hits play in shopping malls, and families often trim the tree to their favorite albums.

Even if Elvis' "Blue Christmas" or Johnny Mathis' "Do You Hear What I Hear" reign supreme in your household, it can be interesting to learn about some of the other songs made famous this time of year.

Modern classics. Classic carols may be the first Christmas songs that come to mind. However, less than a quarter century ago a pop singer managed to contribute to the holiday music pantheon. Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You," released in 1994, is considered to be the most popular modern Christmas standard. With global sales exceeding 16 million copies, the song is one of Carey's biggest hits.

Sad Origins. "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," with its warning to children to be nice since Santa is keeping tabs on kids' behavior, has helped children tow the line for decades. Songwriter James "Haven" Gillespie was asked to pen the tune during one of the darker times in his life. Gillespie was jobless and poor and his brother had just passed away, hardly inspiration for a Christmas tune. However, after thinking about the memories he shared with his brother, Gillespie was able to pull together an upbeat

and catchy classic, changing his life for the good.

Bestseller. Even though "Silent Night" is the most recorded Christmas song in history, another tune holds the title of the best-selling holiday standard of all time. "White Christmas" was written in 1942 and reminisces about an old-fashioned Christmas celebration. The version recorded by Bing Crosby has estimated sales in excess of 100 million copies worldwide, according to "The Guinness Book of World Records." There are various accounts as to when and where Irving Berlin wrote the song. Some state he did so at a hotel in Hollywood, while others say it was the Arizona Biltmore. Wherever Berlin happened to be when writing the tune, there is no doubt he was pinning for the quintessential white Christmas.

The song was written for the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn," starring Crosby and Fred Astaire. It became an instant classic and remains Crosby's best-selling recording. Some of the most recent versions of the song have been recorded by Pentatonix, Sara McLachlan and Laura Puzini.

Christmas songs remain near and dear to people's hearts, and a few of these beloved songs have interesting back stories.

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Trails & Waterways

Kick off 2025 with a first day hike

By **Laura Scharle**

The new year always seems like a time to start fresh, set some new goals, and get active. And what better way to celebrate the new year than with a brisk hike on a nearby trail? First Day Hikes were designed as a national movement started by the National Association of State Park Directors to inspire people to reconnect with their state parks and get outside. There are ranger-led hikes happening all over the region.

Delaware

Killens Pond State Park

Felton, Delaware

1 p.m.

Meet at Pavilion 1 at the Sports Complex Area. We will be hiking a 1.5-mile portion of the Cross Country Trail.

Cape Henlopen State Park

Lewes, Delaware

9:30 a.m.

Take in the scenic beauty of the Point and walk around the Point on

this recreational hike. For ages five and older with an adult. No pets. Parking is limited so please carpool.

Cape Henlopen State Park: Fort Miles

Lewes, Delaware

10 a.m.

Start the New Year off right with a history hike! Join our guided hike to learn more about some of the farther-flung elements of Fort Miles. For ages 7 and older with an adult.

Holts Landing State Park

Dagsboro, Delaware

Walk the Sea Hawk Trail, 1.3-mile trail meanders through hardwood forest, meadow, salt marsh, and freshwater bog habitats.

Maryland

Martinak State Park

Denton, Maryland

2:30 p.m.

137 Deep Shore Road, Denton, MD
Stroll along the 1-mile paved trail, take the opportunity to try the animal fitness stations, or look for different

bird species, a great trail for the whole family to start the year off on the right foot!

Harriet Tubman UGRR State Park

Church Creek, Maryland

10 a.m.

Join Park Rangers at the Visitor Center to begin a flat and paved hike into the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on their Wildlife Drive. Walk along the Blackwater River and immerse yourself in the beautiful landscape that helped shape Harriet Tubman. No pets.

Janes Island State Park & Irish Grove

Crisfield, Maryland

10 a.m.

Join Janes Island State Park Rangers and volunteers for a flat, two mile hike that will teach you the basics of birding. This hike will take place at Irish Grove, a nature preserve on the Pocomoke Sound that is owned by the Maryland Ornithological Society. We will meet in the Camper Check-In Parking Lot at Janes Island and then

caravan to Irish Grove.

Janes Island State Park

Crisfield, Maryland

4 p.m.

Join Janes Island Park staff for a guided family friendly hike through our whitetail trail that ends along the Daugherty Creek canal for a Janes Island sunset. This is a flat, forested trail that can be muddy at times depending on weather.

Assateague State Park

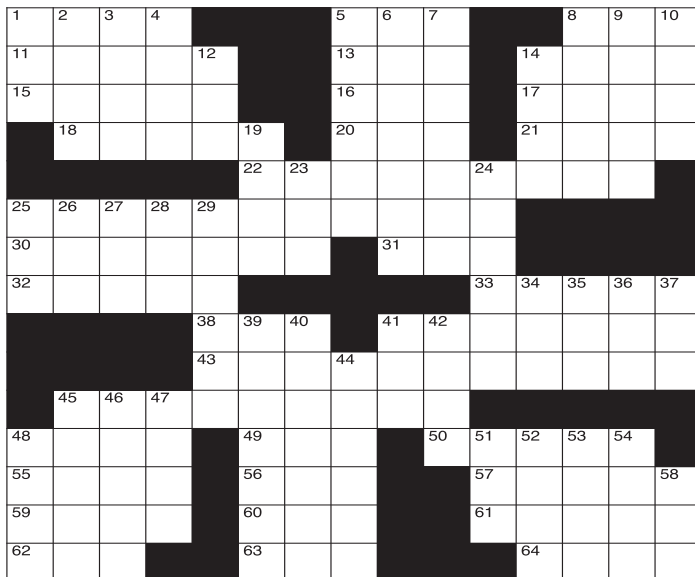
Berlin, Maryland

10 or 11 a.m.

Join Assateague staff at 10 or 11 am for a guided family friendly beach walk, meet at the Assateague State Park Day Use Boardwalk. Stop by the Day-Use boardwalk for a fireside chat with park staff, share stories, ask questions and make a connection. State Park Staff will be available 10am-12pm.

please see hike on page 18





CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bar bills
- 5. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 8. Swiss river
- 11. Czech Republic capital
- 13. "Officially known as"
- 14. A French abbot
- 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
- 16. Local area network
- 17. Data transmission speed measure
- 18. Embarrass
- 20. When you hope to get there
- 21. This (Spanish)
- 22. Gives up
- 25. Churchgoer
- 30. Current
- 31. Slang for gun
- 32. Small drum
- 33. Vanished union bigwig
- 38. Rocker's tool of the trade
- 41. Dearth
- 43. 2024 Olympics host
- 45. Excess blood in the vessels
- 48. Afrikaans
- 49. Agreement between provider and customer
- 50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 55. Ancient Syrian city
- 56. Witch
- 57. Celebrations
- 59. Long period of time
- 60. A team's best pitcher
- 61. Current unit
- 62. One-time aerospace company
- 63. French/Belgian river
- 64. Swedish rock group

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 2. Genus of clams
- 3. Remark
- 4. Actor LaBeouf
- 5. Ohio town
- 6. Olympic sport
- 7. Cure
- 8. Behave in a way that belittles
- 9. Shares a boundary with
- 10. Give advice
- 12. Promotional materials
- 14. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing
- 19. "Agatha All Along" actress Kathryn
- 23. Small piece
- 24. King of Camelot
- 25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- 26. Small Milky Way constellation
- 27. One who challenges authority (abbr.)
- 28. Equal (prefix)
- 29. Shawl
- 34. S. American wood sorrel relative
- 35. The end
- 36. Supervises interstate commerce
- 37. Yes vote
- 39. Officer of high rank
- 40. Church office
- 41. Tire pressure measurement
- 42. From a distance
- 44. Photographs
- 45. Industrial process
- 46. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- 47. Map out
- 48. Mammary gland part of female mammal
- 51. Honorable title (Turkish)
- 52. Spongelike cake leavened with yeast
- 53. Speak incessantly
- 54. Poetry term
- 58. Relaxing space



Answers for December 10

Inflation-fighting strategies for retirees

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



John Bennish

At different times, inflation may be high or low, but, except in those rare periods of deflation, it's always with us. During your working years, when you may receive boosts in your salary, you at least have the potential to keep up with inflation — but what happens when you retire? As a retiree, what can you do to cope with the rising cost of living?

Here are a few suggestions:

Keep some growth potential in your investment portfolio. During your retirement years, you may want to move your portfolio toward a somewhat more conservative approach by owning investments that offer significant protection of principal. However, these same investments offer little in the way of growth, which means they are susceptible to inflation. Consequently, you'll also need to own a reasonable amount in growth-oriented investments, such as stocks and stock-based securities. Of course, these investments will fluctuate in value as the financial markets move up and down, but by owning some more conservative investments, you can reduce the overall impact of market volatility on your portfolio.

Consider inflation-adjusted bonds. You might want to consider Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS), which are indexed to the Consumer Price Index, so the principal increases with inflation (and decreases with deflation). Another inflation-adjusted Treasury security is the I bond, which differs from TIPS in that the principal doesn't change but the interest rate does, every six months, based on a combination of a fixed interest rate and the inflation rate. Like all investments, though, TIPS and I bonds have various features and risks of which you should be aware before investing.

Delay taking Social Security. You can start collecting Social Security benefits at 62, but your monthly checks will be much bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, likely

between 66 and 67. You would receive the maximum amount if you waited until 70 before collecting. Of course, if you need the money to help support your retirement, you may not be able to afford to wait, but if you can, your bigger checks can be a big help against inflation.

Don't hold too much cash. During your working years, it's a good idea to have an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses in liquid, low-risk accounts. And when you're retired, you might want to have up to year's-worth of expenses in such a fund. But be careful about holding too much cash, as it will lose purchasing power each year due to inflation. Instead, when keeping cash, seek the "Goldilocks" solution — not too little, not too much, but just the right amount.

Think about extending your employment. If you like what you do, you might want to consider working a few years longer than you had originally intended. Not only will you be bringing in more income, but you could also continue to contribute to retirement accounts, including your IRA and 401(k). Even if you don't want to continue working full time, you could do some part-time work or consulting. Any earned income you bring in can help in your fight against inflation.

You can't control the cost of living, but by making some of the moves described above, you can help yourself mount a defense against the effects of inflation during your retirement years.

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.

traditions
from page 8

the imprint of the High Priest was found. That one jug managed to keep the Temple's menorah lit for eight days, despite it being insufficient to handle this task. This was considered a miracle and celebrated in subsequent years.

Chanukah is a relatively modern holiday with few traditions. However, the customs associated with this holiday are held dear.

HEALTH WATCH

How to honor your grief

By **Chaplain Gail Mansell**
 Director, Supportive Care and
 Pastoral Care Services
 Atlantic General Hospital

Things tend to slow down in the winter. The holiday bustle wraps up in a flurry and in settles the cold, quiet calm of winter. In grief, the season can bring mixed feelings. For some, the quiet season of winter is a relief after spending those first holidays without a loved one. For others, the stillness comes with a deeper sadness and grief as family and friends go back to their everyday routines. The WINTER acronym provides some ideas for how to honor your grief and care for yourself during the winter months:

Warmth - The harsh weather of winter often leads to more time indoors

and can sometimes feel dreary. Add extra warmth and coziness to your space during this time. Leave out extra throw blankets, light candles, or add twinkle lights to make the space warm and cozy. Some people like to keep out something soft from their loved one, such as a clothing item or blanket.

Introspection - The quiet of winter, when some of the deeper feelings of grief might emerge, can be a time for deeper introspection. You may want explore your grief emotions through one-on-one counseling, groups or journaling. Allow yourself to express some of the more difficult feelings in grief.

Newness - Winter is often characterized as a lack of growth or newness, but you may want to take time to create newness in your own life. As parties,

events and time with family slow down following the holidays, this can create more free time. This can be a great time to do something new. Sign up for a new class, attend a grief workshop or visit somewhere new.

Time - Allow yourself time to grieve and heal, knowing that the grief process takes time and cannot be rushed. In this slower season, give yourself extra time to do and accomplish things. Slow your pace.

Empathy - Be extra gentle with yourself, acknowledging that grief impacts many aspects of the self. Know that it's okay to not "keep up the same pace" as you did before.

Rest - Embrace the slower pace of winter. Give yourself time to rest, allowing your body and mind to heal from the

stress that grief can bring. Perhaps sleep in a little longer than usual, get a massage or watch a funny movie in your pajamas.

While your loss may be fresh or months or years in the past, the intensity of emotions can feel very personal. You may experience various physical effects of loss or grief, including prolonged sadness or crying, difficulty falling asleep and/or sleeping through the night, nightmares, a lack of appetite, depression, disinterest in preferred activities (apathy) and anxiety. Attending a local support group can help you work through stages of grief:

Denial. Your mind wants to deny that the death of a loved one has happened. By not acknowledging the loss, your mind can block the emotions that naturally follow.

Anger. The loss was beyond your control. You move quickly from emotions such as frustration and powerlessness to anger. You don't want to feel these strong emotions, and you wish you could take back what happened. Death is permanent.

Bargaining. This is when you mull over what happened and move through different scenarios in your mind regarding how life would have been different if the death had not occurred.

Depression. You face bouts of crying and sadness. They can strike at any time, even making it hard to get up for work or take care of your loved one who needs your attention.

Acceptance. You're able to accept that the death is irrevocable. You can begin to reshape your life without your special person, even though the sadness will continue for some time. It's a dull ache that fades when you least expect it.

Above all, remember to honor yourself and your needs. Check in with yourself regularly to make sure that what you are doing is what you are needing in the moment. Remember that seasons of the earth change, as do seasons of grief. Notice the changing seasons within yourself, and adjust how to tend to yourself accordingly.

Every month, Atlantic General Hospital holds a monthly Grief Support Group called Life After Loss in Conference Room #1 of the hospital. The goal of the support group is to provide participants with hope for the future. For more information, please contact Chaplain Gail Mansell at gmansell@atlanticgeneral.org.

AGH, Tidal Health look to combine efforts

The respective boards of Atlantic General Hospital (AGH) and TidalHealth announced last week that they have signed a non-binding Letter of Intent (LOI) to combine organizations. Together, both organizations are committed to providing the best possible care for the region.



Right to left: **Donald Owrey**, FACHE, President and CEO, Atlantic General Hospital; and **Dr. Steven Leonard**, Chief Executive Officer, TidalHealth and President, TidalHealth Peninsula Regional.

Earlier this year, the AGH Board of Trustees announced the launch of a strategic partnership exploration process to consider all options to enhance healthcare in the region. After thoughtful consideration, the board chose to affiliate with TidalHealth as both organizations are well aligned in their missions and share a deep commitment to serving the healthcare needs of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware.

"The board was delighted to find a potential partner that shares our exciting vision of serving our local commu-

nity," said Doug Cook, chair of the AGH Board of Trustees. "Together, we can make advancements in recruiting and retaining top physicians, as well as invest in the infrastructure and technology that will improve our care delivery. This is an important step forward for our community."

"TidalHealth recognizes AGH's longstanding commitment and service to the community and looks forward to the opportunity to combine our shared objectives and missions and develop a strategic relationship that will further enhance the services we provide to the citizens of Delmarva," said Steve Leonard, Ph.D., MBA, FACHE, President/CEO of TidalHealth, Inc. "TidalHealth has great respect for AGH's historic contribution to the healthcare needs of its community, and we are honored to have been chosen. We are confident that we can further enhance their strength in the region with AGH becoming part of the robust health system that has been providing high-quality care since 1897. Our Board of Directors, physicians, and our entire healthcare team are looking forward to welcoming Atlantic General to the TidalHealth family."

The proposed partnership between TidalHealth and Atlantic General Hospital will:

- Provide access to an integrated electronic medical record through Epic;

- Improve the coordination of services and access to care for patients;

- Provide capital funding to expand services;

- Strengthen the hospital's ability to retain and attract a high-quality workforce.

The two health systems hope to finalize an agreement in spring of 2025, pending further board approvals and regulatory review.

"This partnership is a win for our patients, our associates and the communities we serve," said Don Owrey, President and CEO of AGH. "By affiliating with TidalHealth, we have the opportunity to combine the strengths of our two organizations to fundamentally improve the availability of high-quality healthcare close to home."

"We are excited about the opportunity to combine and bring together two strong organizations, each with outstanding reputations for the patient experience and quality of care," said Memo Diriker, Ph.D., Chairperson, TidalHealth Board of Directors, Inc. "This partnership brings an incredible opportunity to unite and enhance care delivery in our region."

As the two organizations continue to work through the comprehensive due diligence period to determine the details of a final agreement, they commit that the proposed combination will not impact either health system's daily operations, and nothing changes today for patients or associates.

To learn more, please visit aghforward.org.

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Bertino installed on MACo Board of Directors

On Thursday evening, December 12, the Governor of Maryland, Wes Moore, installed the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Board of Directors for 2025. The installation took place at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Hotel in Cambridge, Maryland, during the MACo Winter Conference Inaugural Banquet.

Commissioner Chip Bertino was installed along with his peers as a 2025 MACo Board Member. Commissioner Bertino begins his first term on MACo's Board, having been elected to that position by the MACo membership, which encompasses elected officials from all 23 counties and Baltimore City.

"The opportunity to serve at this level is a tremendous honor. It's humbling to have earned the confidence of my colleagues across the state to fill this position. I look forward to representing and advocating for Worcester County and MACo members with government officials and leaders throughout the state," said Bertino.

The MACo Board of Directors is made up of 16 county elected officials. These county leaders are selected by the MACo membership to serve the interests of the Association, oversee its management and strategic direction, and maintain and develop relationships with other parties with whom MACo and counties regularly interact. The Board works collaboratively with the MACo Legislative Committee, which sets policy positions for the Association and directs its legislative ad-

vocacy priorities.

Commissioner Bertino is serving his third term representing Ocean Pines District 5. He has been a member of the MACo Legislative Committee for eleven years and currently chairs the Legislative subcommittee. He completed his term as president of the county commissioners earlier this month.

MACo is the non-profit, non-partisan voice of all 24 Maryland counties, promoting effective, efficient government through advocacy, education, and collaboration. The Association's membership consists of county elected officials and representatives from Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City. MACo's members determine Association policy and positions on executive and legislative proposals through an elected Board of Directors and a Legislative Committee.

Through MACo's advocacy, training, educational programs, and annual conferences, members are provided with endless opportunities to improve their capacity to serve their residents.

Get your relatives speaking to one another again by sending a heartfelt Christmas card with a picture of your family with an extra child nobody knows.

hike
from page 14

Virginia

Kiptopeke State Park

Cape Charles, Virginia
Anytime (self-guided)

This scavenger hunt will take you all over the park and show you spots you never knew existed. Copies of the Kiptopeke Scavenger Hunt will be available at the brochure holders at the contact station, park office and trail head.

Learn more about the First Day Hikes online:

<https://www.destateparks.com/first-day-hikes/>
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/firstdayhikes.aspx>
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/firstdayhikes>

Laura Scharle enjoys all things outdoors and is an avid kayaker. She resides in Ocean Pines with her husband and son. During the pandemic, Laura developed www.DelmarvaTrailsandWaterways.com to connect people with trails, beaches, piers, and public lands across the peninsula.

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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**



What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? It's Christmas, Eve!




How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?

Nothing. It was on the house.



If your grandma got run over by a reindeer



SMILES HAPPEN
you may be entitled to compensation

One-liners

Why did Santa go to the podiatrist? He had mistletoes.

What do you call a snowman who works out? An ab-dominal snowman.

Why don't Santa's elves like to share? They're elfish.

What kind of bug hates Christmas? A bah humbug.

What do you give your parents for Christmas? A list of everything you want.

Why do reindeer wear bells? Their horns don't work.

What did one of Santa's helpers say to the other? Let's take an elfie.

What did Santa and Mrs. Claus name their daughter? Mary Christmas.

Did you hear about Rudolph's rollercoaster ride? He held on for deer life.

What did one Christmas tree say to the other? I'm feelin' pine.






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The mission of The Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines Foundation is to create and maintain, in perpetuity, a suitable memorial to honor and preserve the unselfish contributions to the security and freedom of our country by the men and women of our military services.

The Memorial benefits greatly from the financial donations of individuals and businesses. Additionally many individuals volunteer countless hours throughout the year to assist in the numerous programs like student visitations and events such as the Memorial and Veterans day celebrations.

Our community is indebted to the men and women who have and are currently serving our country.

Our Memorial is indebted to our community and those it honors.

Thank you to the businesses and individuals that have supported the Memorial during this year.

May the blessings of the season touch all those who support our service men and women.



**Help illuminiate the legacy of our men and women who have served our country.
Become a Foundation member for just \$25 per year.**

To learn how to join, make a donation to the Memorial or to purchase a brick or paver go to www.WOCOVETS.org.