

The Courier

March 5, 2025 Volume 25 Number 23

Keeping Pines history alive

In a community built on innovation and neighborly spirit, a group of dedicated homeowners is working to ensure the history of Ocean Pines is not lost to time.

Their efforts recently led to the reprinting of the book, "History of Ocean Pines, Maryland," originally written by Bud Rogner.

Priced at \$20 each, copies are available at the front desk of the Ocean Pines Administration Building, with proceeds going toward future historical projects. Additional copies will be donated to the local library to ensure public access to this vital record.

The project was spearheaded by Marlene Ott, a longtime real estate agent and one of the earliest residents of Ocean Pines. Elaine Brady, a member of the Ocean Pines Board of Directors with deep roots in the community, also pitched in as part of a new Historical Task Force. Together, they are leading a charge to collect, preserve, and share the history of this community.

Marlene Ott holds a copy of the Bud Rogner book "History of Ocean Pines."

The idea for the initiative took shape after last year's Season Kickoff event in Ocean Pines, where various clubs and organizations set up tables to engage with residents. Ott, at the Communications Committee table, brought along red binders containing original sales data from the late 1960s, detailing lot sales and early buyers.

"People kept asking where they could buy a history book or learn more about the early days," Ott said. "That's when we realized we needed to make this information

*please see **history** on page 8*



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Shamrock Slam Pickleball Tournament returns

Worcester County Recreation and Parks is hosting the 2025 Shamrock Slam Pickleball Tournament March 15 and 16. Registration is open now through March 9 at pickleballtournaments.com.

“Shamrock Slam is part of the ESPA Tournament Series, and all points earned in this tournament will count towards the ESPA Series Finale qualifications,” Special Events and Marketing Manager Ryan Nellans said. “Shamrock Slam will keep the tradition of Paddlin’ on St. Paddy’s with a new twist this year. The winners of each bracket will earn their own Pot o’ Gold in this ‘Prize Pool Style’ tournament. A portion of each \$50.00 registration fee contributes to the pool, expanding the winnings with each new player. More players mean more green.”

Shamrock Slam will take place at the Worcester County Recreation Center, located at 6030 Public Landing Road in Snow Hill. The doors will open at 7:30 a.m. both days. Men’s and Women’s doubles will play on Saturday, and mixed doubles will play on Sunday. Matches will begin at 8:00 a.m. on both days.

“To sweeten the deal, the first 100 players to register will be entered to win one of two Lucky Charms,” Nellans said. “Up for grabs are a JOOLA Ben Johns Perseus Paddle as well as 2024 Selkirk SLK Control, Power & Halo Pro Paddle.”

For more information on the ESPA or to check point totals, visit ESPA on Facebook

More information is available at worcesterrecandparks.org, on social media at @PlayMDsCoast, or by contacting Nick Tolbert at 410-632-2144, ext. 2512 or ntolbert@co.worcester.md.us.

Documentary filmmaker to speak at Wor-Wic

Wor-Wic Community College will host a talk with Roxana Walker-Canton on Thursday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m., at the Hazel Center on the college campus at the corner of Route 50 and Walston Switch Road in Salisbury.

Walker-Canton is an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker, video installation artist and professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Her films include “Belly of the Basin,” about New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and “Living Thinkers: An Autobiography of Black Women in the Ivory Tower.”

The event, part of the Echoes & Visions literary series, is free and open to the public. Visit the events section of worwic.edu for more information.

MCBP offering scholarships

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) will be offering three scholarships valued at \$1,000 each to qualifying high school seniors from Worcester County Public Schools interested in a future in the environmental field.

They are seeking applicants who are pursuing a four-year or two-year college or university, trade school, or Corps position with a focus on the environmental field.

“We did not want to restrict these scholarships to those students applying to 4-year universities. Gateways into the environmental world can take different paths, and that might include not attending college at all” said Liz Wist, Education Coordinator at the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

To be eligible for the Coastal Bays Scholarship Program, applicants must be a student in the Worcester County Public School system, graduating high school in the spring of 2025, and must submit a completed application including two essay questions that will provide the opportunity for the applicant’s voice to be heard.

“The essay portion of the application is the most determining element of the application. It’s a chance for us to hear about the applicant’s interest and passion for the environment, and the impact it has had on their own lives,” offered Wist.

Applications for the scholarship are due by Friday, April 4th, 2025. To read more about this new scholarship program, please visit <https://mdcoastalbays.org/funding-opportunities/>

OPA and OPVFD provide update on South Fire Station plans

The Ocean Pines Association and the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department (OPVFD) have made significant progress in the development of a new South Fire Station, with plans advancing toward a referendum vote this summer.

During a recent update, OPA General Manager John Viola, along with OPVFD President Joe Enste and Fire Chief Joey Widgeon, detailed the project’s pre-planning efforts, funding sources, and next steps.

The current proposal calls for a 15,370-square-foot facility, down from the original 19,100-square-foot concept, but with an additional 760 square feet added to enhance functionality. The work group, which includes OPA officials, fire department leadership, and designers, determined that the added space was necessary to improve accessibility and operational efficiency.

“The work group truly believes that this additional square footage is necessary, and we’re all in agreement on that,” Viola said. “This has been a team effort, and I believe everybody is on the same page.”

Funding and pre-planning

The project is backed by \$1.7 million in secured grants and bonds, with \$1.3 million already in a dedicated account, Enste said. Additionally, OPVFD has raised \$750,000 through fundraising and savings.

Enste said the department has carefully evaluated interior fit-out costs, compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards, and transition costs to ensure the project meets both current and future needs.

“With this being a firehouse, there are certain NFPA standards we must meet, including wind ratings and structural integrity to ensure it remains operational during catastrophic events,” he said.

The department has also confirmed pricing for critical systems such as fire suppression, vehicle exhaust extraction, and station alerting. The vehicle exhaust extraction system will significantly improve air quality in the station by filtering harmful gases produced by emergency vehicles.

“The current system allows ex-

haust fumes to spread throughout the engine bay, which isn’t ideal for our firefighters’ health,” Enste said. “The new system will eliminate that issue.”

Transition plan and next steps

During construction, OPVFD’s career crew will temporarily relocate to the North Station, eliminating the need for costly temporary facilities. To support volunteer operations, OPA Public Works will provide access to garages and additional space, ensuring seamless continuity of service.

OPVFD officials said these strategic adjustments will maintain full emergency response capabilities, guaranteeing uninterrupted protection for the community.

“We determined that moving to the North Station made the most financial sense,” Widgeon said. “We couldn’t justify spending nearly \$140,000 on temporary trailers when we have existing living quarters available.”

OPA and OPVFD have engaged an architect to finalize project plans. Key upcoming milestones include:

- Receiving initial architectural drawings by February 28, 2025
- Finalizing architectural plans by April 2025
- Determining funding options and seeking Board approval for a referendum vote

The referendum, set to coincide with the summer 2025 Board of Directors election, will allow Ocean Pines homeowners to vote on funding the new station. If approved, construction is expected to begin in October 2025, with completion estimated for February 2027.

Viola said the work group followed a similar planning process as past successful OPA projects, including the Golf Clubhouse and Police Station expansion.

“This has been a constructive and productive team effort, with careful consideration given to every dollar spent,” Viola said. “So far, we’ve identified nearly \$200,000 in savings compared to our initial estimates, which is a testament to the diligent work of this group.”

For more information or to ask questions about the project, community members are encouraged to email info@oceanpines.org.

Ocean Pines Board approves budget

The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors unanimously approved the fiscal year 2025-26 budget during a recent regularly scheduled meeting.

The spending plan, described by one elected official as “lean and mean,” reflects months of collaboration between General Manager John Viola and staff, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Board, with multiple opportunities for public input.

The final budget includes total operating revenues and expenses of \$12,846,393 and sets the basic non-water assessment at \$875.

Board members widely praised Viola and his staff for their diligent work on the budget development and process toward its approval, which began last September.

“A thorough review has been completed by the GM and his team, by the Budget and Finance Committee and by the Board of Directors,” Director Monica Rakowski said. “The budget was posted on the OPA website for review by the membership. A public meeting was held on Feb. 5 to present the budget to the membership and

have an open discussion to address questions or concerns.”

Rakowski also acknowledged the role played by the Budget and Finance Committee.

“They’re all volunteers, and they play a huge role in this. These are our neighbors [and] that really helped John and his staff.”

Director Jeff Heavner emphasized the transparency of the budgeting process.

“Today’s budget approval vote is the culmination of a well-designed and proven process by John Viola and his operational staff,” Heavner said. “This process provided transparency throughout multiple opportunities for opinion. This beautiful, bottom-up balanced budget is the foundation of our strategy ... to ensure Ocean Pines remains a premier community with exceptional value and quality of life.”

One of the notable changes in this year’s budget is the introduction of an overall Racquet Sports membership. Several Board members said the adjustment was necessary to maintain the facility’s quality and financial sustainability.

Heavner credited Racquet Sports Director Terry Underkoffler for a thorough financial review.

“Terry concluded that a significant change was required to work towards a balanced Racquet Sports budget,” Heavner said. “These opinions may influence future changes at the Racquet Center that may reduce operating costs and minimize future pricing movements. A strong and sustainable financial position is key to our mission.”

Director Elaine Brady supported the new membership model, calling it long overdue.

“Quite frankly, I’ve always wondered why it wasn’t that to begin with,” Brady said. “The entire complex is for the benefit of all who play there, and the cost of maintaining that facility is borne by everybody there. Why each sport had a different membership amount never really made sense to me.”

Brady noted that for most members, the increase would only amount to an additional \$8 per month.

“Truthfully, part of the reason that the Racquet Center has not been mak-

ing money over the years is that the majority of the people who play there have had a membership rate well below local market,” she said. “We’re just bringing that up a little bit so that we can get the Racquet Sports Center into a positive position.”

Director Steve Jacobs described the final budget as “lean and mean.” He also addressed Racquet Sports, noting that the changes were necessary for financial stability.

“We were told at our [budget review] session that there’s a \$70,000 hole to cover in Racquet Sports,” Jacobs said. “We’re talking about basic maintenance – nets, seats, tables, umbrellas, fencing, electric [and] salaries.”

Jacobs noted that Pickleball takes up the most space at the Racquet Center, with 12 courts currently and discussion for converting another court for pickleball use.

“Everyone’s got to share in the cost,” he said. “We have a good and improving Racquet Sports Center. It’s going to get better. It’s deserving of

*please see **budget** on page 4*

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Pine Tones chorus rehearsals to begin

In preparation for their spring 2025 concert, “Sounds of the ‘70s,” the Pine Tones Chorus will have open rehearsals to build their chorus membership. These are not auditions, but an opportunity for interested folks to try out the group, meet other singers, ask questions, and decide if they want to join. Musical training and experience are appreciated, but not necessary. If you love to sing, they want you and will help you be the singer you want to be. If you are interested in joining but

cannot make the first rehearsal, or are not sure yet, contact the Director Jenny Anderson at (443) 655-5636. Rehearsals are held weekly on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 3pm at the Ocean Pines Community Center up to the concert date.

The “Sounds of the 70s” concert will be performed Sunday, June 8, at 3 p.m. at the Community Church at Ocean Pines. Chorus members and audience alike will groove to classic favorites like “Moonshadow,” “Joy to the World,”

Love Me Like a Rock,” “Fire and Rain,” and “I’ll Be There.”

The Pine Tones Chorus has a 40-plus year history as a non-profit, all-volunteer group of folks who love to sing for their community. They present both spring and fall concerts every year, and each season they also travel to several area senior centers to share the music with those who Follow Pine Tones Chorus on Facebook and on Instagram @pine-toneschorus.

budget from page 3

our support, and I hope everyone does that.”

Vice President Rick Farr echoed support for the budget process and commended staff for their expertise and professionalism.

“I really want to give credit to all the directors of the different amenities,” Farr said. “They were very, very well prepared in presenting their budgets and doing the research and giving the reasons why they need to do certain things. It was amazing to see all the hard work that all the directors had and were able to present in a very professional way.”

Director John Latham reinforced the Board’s fiduciary responsibility to all Ocean Pines homeowners.

“Not to support this budget, in my mind, would be fiscally irresponsible,” Latham said. “Each one of the directors did a thorough job in walking through their respective area of business, and I believe this Board is in support of this budget.”

Board President Dr. Stuart Lakernick underscored the complexity of the budgeting process and praised Viola’s leadership.

“This budget to run this community is a very complicated process,” Lakernick said. “We have all these different amenities. We have all these different depart-

ments with what their needs are. The bottom-up approach that John Viola and his team have taken has ensured that we have ... a lean and mean budget.”

Lakernick emphasized that the Board relies on the expertise of Viola and his staff to guide decisions.

“All of his department heads answered every question we had,” he said. “If we had an issue, we asked it, and they were very forthcoming, and he’s got an incredible team. That’s why we hired them. We take their advice, and then we take John’s advice when he gives us this excellent budget, and I’m fully in support.”

With the Board’s approval, the FY 2025-26 budget is now set.



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The coat closet

Squeeeeeeeze! Puuuuush! Close the door quickly!

That's the motion sequence I exert each time I return my coat to the living room closet. It's been like that for as long as I can remember.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

In fact, it was pretty much the same way in the house in which I grew up. The living room closet is, and has always been, a jammed-packed receptacle for the many things that we can otherwise find no place to store. And that's in addition to the many coats that have come to hang there in a sort of coatrack purgatory.

Turn the knob of our living room closet and the door explodes open to reveal winter coats, boxes of pictures stacked on the top shelf, the vacuum cleaner, two camera bags, a

tripod, a baseball bat and a sack of vacuum cleaner attachments, most of which we never use and, I for one, don't know their purpose.

For most of the year, with the exception of retrieving the vacuum cleaner or pulling out the tripod on which to secure the camera to take a family picture, I have little to do with the closet. However, when temperatures drop my frustration rises as I attempt to get my winter coat.

Through the years, the closet coat count has multiplied exponentially, packed more tightly than budgies on a telephone wire. So compressed is everything that a crowbar is needed to pry free a winter coat.

How did this happen? Don't ask me I just live here. I really thought things would have improved after my wife, just before Thanksgiving, culled for donation the coat and jacket herd. Two donation bags went out of the house yet the closet

remains so tight I still can't squeeze in a puff of smoke.

More challenging than taking a coat from the closet? Putting a coat back. This process requires patience and a multidimensional strategy. First, I have to locate the empty hanger which has been absorbed, blocked from view, by the hangers and coats that uncoil like springs when a missing coat makes more space available. Once the empty wooden hanger is found and I'm able to yank it from the grasp of the other coats, I slip it into the shoulders of my coat. Next comes the hard part —rehanging the coat in the closet.

Gripping the hanger with my left hand, I turn my right shoulder into the mass of already hanging apparel and push, shimmy and nudge my way in, attempting to create a cavity into which I can thrust my coat and leverage the hanger hook onto the bar. Success doesn't always come on the first attempt. It's happened that the coat mass repels me, forcing me to the floor. On those occasions, I've learned to plant my feet, hunch a little lower and push in like a determined human wedge. Usu-

ally this does the trick and I'm able to hook the hanger to the bar. Then another problem emerges. The bottom of my coat gets hung up on the upright vacuum cleaner handle preventing the door from closing.

This is remedied only by applying brute force against the bottom of the coat so it slips over the vacuum cleaner handle and there is enough momentum to push aside the coats on either side so it rests straight up and down. Then I have to sit down to catch my breath and maybe take a quick nap.

Now that you're aware of my struggles, you'll understand if you see me out and about without a coat. I'd rather endure the winter cold than tangle with the densely packed living room closet that shows less forgiveness than a nun's stare.

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WorCOA reviews 2024 accomplishments

Worcester County Commission on Aging (WorCOA) continued to experience growth in its services for 2024 as they provided programs and services to support the quality of life, independence, and health goals desired and needed by Worcester County's senior residents. WorCOA now has 55 dedicated employees and over 40 volunteers who have served more than 1,500 clients in fulfilling its mission to help seniors age in place.

The Senior Rides program saw a 14% increase in users, providing over 17,000 trips to over 240 passengers. Worcester's elderly and disabled populations were brought to their medical appointments, 50plus Centers, shopping outings, adult day care, and other personal destinations.

The 50plus membership increased to over 300 regularly active seniors across four sites, and this year some 950 individuals have participated in 50plus activities. These include 40-day trips, weekly opportunities for health-related activities, and educational and socialization experiences. This year's success culminated in the Snow Hill Center being recognized by the town of Snow Hill for its outstanding service to the community.

The Community for Life (CFL) team met the needs of its over 130 members by providing life navigation services and over 100 private transportation trips and an average of 30 handyman jobs per month.

The Meals On Wheels (MOW) program saw an increase of 4,000 more meals provided over 2023. MOW was up by 500 meals, and Congregate Meals (50plus & River Oaks) was up by over 3,500. Over 38,700 total meals were prepared.

The Senior Care program served over 70 clients in their homes, assisting with personal care, chores, and companionship. This was accomplished with three full-time and two part-time staff.

Participation at River Oaks Day Center increased by 50% in 2024. Over 40 individuals attended the center, where their need for social engagement and professional medical care was accommodated in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. River Oaks now offers an expanded program serving the ever-increasing dementia population. In serving the frail elderly and disabled, River Oaks provides an invaluable service to the clients' caregivers, who can experience respite and/or continue working because their loved ones are so well cared for.

For more information contact the WorCOA at 410-632-1277.

Mailloux pleads guilty

On February 25, Tyler Mailloux, age 24, of Berlin, Maryland pleaded guilty to one felony count of failing to immediately stop his vehicle at the scene of an accident where he knew or should have known that the accident resulted in the death of another and a death actually occurred. The hit-and-run collision occurred on the night of July 11, 2022 on Gray's Corner Road in Berlin, and took the life of 14-year-old Gavin Knupp.

The Honorable Judge Brett R. Wilson, retired Circuit Court Judge of Dorchester County, accepted Mailloux's guilty plea on the record, and upon conviction, ordered Mailloux to be immediately remanded to the custody of the Worcester County Detention Center pending sentencing. Mailloux's sentencing date has been scheduled for March 19.

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OPA seeks nominations for Good Neighbor award

Ocean Pines Association is encouraging residents and property owners to submit nominations for the "Good Neighbor" program, an initiative designed to recognize those who make a positive impact in the community.

At the Ocean Pines Association Board meeting on February 22, Communications Committee Chairperson Linda Yurche reiterated the importance of the program and the value of honoring those who embody the spirit of kindness, generosity, and community service.

"This program gives us a chance to shine a light on the incredible individuals who make Ocean Pines a better place to live," Yurche said. "Everyday acts of kindness, whether large or small, contribute to the strength of our community, and we want to make sure those efforts don't go unnoticed."

The Good Neighbor program, developed by the Communications Committee, seeks to foster an "attitude of gratitude" by highlighting residents who inspire others through selfless service.

Examples of potential nominees include individuals who:

- Organize neighborhood clean-ups or block parties
- Lead food or clothing donation drives
- Assist neighbors who are physically unable to complete yard maintenance, dog walking, or other tasks
- Regularly pick up litter or beautify the community in other ways
- Volunteer with local organizations
- Inspire others through acts of kindness and a commitment to the community

Nominations can be submitted by emailing OPgoodneighbors@gmail.com. Residents may nominate individuals they personally know or those they observe performing good deeds in the community.

Each month, the Communications Committee will review nominations and recommend one recipient to the

please see nominations on page 8

Courier Almanac

On March 5, 1969 the Dade County Sheriff's Office issues an arrest warrant for Doors' lead singer Jim Morrison. He is charged with a single felony count and three misdemeanors for his stage antics at a Miami concert a few days earlier.



Chronic kidney disease causes more deaths each year than breast cancer or prostate cancer, says the National Kidney Foundation. In fact, the organization characterizes CKD as an under-recognized public health crisis. The American Kidney Fund advises that an estimated 35.5 million Americans have kidney disease, and about 606,000 are living with kidney failure.

Nine out of 10 people with kidney disease are unaware that they have it. The Kidney Foundation of Canada indicates four million people, or 10 percent of the population, had kidney disease as of 2022. More than 52,000 Canadians were being treated for kidney failure that year. There is no cure for end-stage kidney disease, so individuals must protect their kidney health to avoid irreversible damage.

OPPD crack down on traffic violations, address cell service concerns

Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson provided a public safety update during the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors meeting on February 22, detailing recent law enforcement activity and addressing ongoing concerns regarding cellular service in the community.

Robinson reported that since the last Board meeting, officers conducted 125 traffic stops, with 36 for speeding and 38 for stop sign or traffic control device violations. Additional stops resulted in citations for a suspended driver and an uninsured driver.

“An uninsured driver is a major concern because, if they hit you, they have no coverage,” Robinson said.

Officers also issued citations for two violations involving motorists failing to stop for school buses with flashing red lights.

“There’s no excuse for not stopping,” Robinson said. “Fortunately, in these cases, the kids didn’t have to cross the street, but drivers are still required to stop.”

Police also made one arrest for driving under the influence. Robinson noted that the individual had a blood alcohol content above 0.20 and was driving on Ocean Parkway at the time of the arrest.

The department responded to two motor vehicle accidents, one of which involved a vehicle striking a deer. Another crash required both vehicles to be towed after a driver pulled out in front of another motorist.

Additionally, police handled seven cases of fraud, 14 welfare checks, eight emergency medical service assists, and two emergency petitions for mental health concerns.

Fraud, Robinson said, is a particular area of concern.

“Fraud cases remain an issue, and many originate from unsolicited emails, text messages, or phone calls,” Robinson said. “Scammers often claim to provide a service or upgrade, and unfortunately, some residents fall victim.”

Domestic incidents remain the leading cause for police calls in Ocean Pines. Officers responded to five domestic disputes, with one resulting in an assault arrest.

Robinson also addressed community concerns regarding cell phone coverage in Ocean Pines. He confirmed that discussions about poten-

tial solutions are ongoing, but no decisions have been made.

“We are still in the talking phase,” Robinson said. “I’ve spoken to multiple tower contractors to understand what’s possible. No site visits or network assessments have been conducted yet, but we’ll present any findings to the Board and General Manager John Viola before any action is taken.”

Robinson reassured residents that aesthetics and community impact would be considered in any potential solution.

“There has been speculation about a massive tower being installed, but that’s simply not true,” he said. “We’re exploring options, including ways to disguise or camouflage any infrastructure.”

For more information or to stay updated on public safety news in Ocean Pines, visit www.oceanpinespolice.com.

Wor-Wic to host reverse trade show

Wor-Wic Community College will host a reverse trade show for local suppliers and vendors to meet procurement officers from public agencies. The event will take place on Wednesday, March 12, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., in the Patricia and Alan Guerrieri Technology Center on the Wor-Wic campus, located at the intersection of Walston Switch Road and Route 50 in Salisbury.

The reverse trade show will provide opportunities to learn how to do business with local government agencies, see current and upcoming bid solicitations and learn the required steps to submit bids and proposals. Participants can also network with other contractors and learn about workforce training and education offered by Wor-Wic to support professional development. There is no fee to attend and no registration required. Participants can stop by any time during the event.

Along with Wor-Wic, agencies represented will include Salisbury University, Wicomico County Public Schools, Wicomico and Worcester county governments, the city of Salisbury, the town of Ocean City, Caroline County Public Schools and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

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FDI-1867N-A AECSPAD 3/2025

history
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more accessible. One resident even told me, ‘I’ve lived here for 30 years, and I had no idea about some of this history.’”

Brady, inspired by Ott’s wealth of knowledge, recognized the urgency of preserving Ocean Pines’ past before it was lost.

“Different people have different pieces of the history, and we need to gather it while we can,” Brady said. “Even though we’re not an incorporated town, we’re the largest community in the area, and we need to take steps to protect our heritage.”

“Someone recently showed me an old newspaper clipping from the early ‘70s about the first golf tournament here – it’s those kinds of things we want to save,” Ott added.

One of the first steps in the historical preservation effort was securing permission from the Rogner family to reprint his book, which has long been used as a historical reference point for the community. The book covers Ocean Pines history from 1968 to 1998.

Ott tracked down the family and was delighted to find them supportive of the project.

“Bud never copyrighted the book, so

there were no legal issues,” Ott said. “One relative told me he would have been so proud to see this happening. She said, ‘He put so much work into that book, and he would be thrilled to know people still care about it.’”

Copy Central in Ocean Pines handled the printing, producing 100 copies of the book.

The reprinting of Rogner’s book is just the beginning. Ott and Brady, alongside other dedicated homeowners, are working on a coffee table book that will feature rare photographs and documents chronicling the transformation of Ocean Pines from dirt roads and big ideas, to what today is the largest year-round residential community in Worcester County.

Original images from the 1970s and even earlier will be included, showcasing the landscape before and after development.

“I was looking through some old photos the other day, and I found one from when the very first homes were built,” Ott said. “It was nothing but sand and trees back then. It’s incredible to see how far we’ve come.”

The group also plans to establish historical displays around Whitehorse Park and is considering using old parkway

bulletin boards as kiosks for historical information. A longer-term goal is the creation of a dedicated historical society or room where residents and visitors can explore the community’s past in depth.

“It’s about more than just preserving old photos and documents,” Brady said. “We want to make this history accessible and engaging for future generations. We’d love to have a space where people can come in and see old maps, listen to oral histories, and really connect with the past.”

Ott and Brady credit the community’s strong sense of civic involvement for making this effort possible.

“There’s a lot of pride in Ocean Pines,” Ott said. “People here care about their neighbors and about this place. Whether it’s helping someone with their

trash cans or preserving our shared history, the people here make this community special.”

For now, the history task group continues to collect, organize, and plan. As their work progresses, the community of Ocean Pines is reminded once again that the past is not just something to be remembered – it is something to be celebrated and preserved for the future.

Historical Task force members include Ott, Brian Reynolds, John Talbott, Olga Grisaitis, Jenny Cropper-Rines, Jacklyn Metzger, Alfreda Sample, Helen Johnson, Carolyn Neal, and Brady as the Board representative chair.

“This is a varied group of members, some with great historical knowledge of Ocean Pines, along with others who have had experience in with historical societies,” Brady said.

nominations
from page 6

Board for recognition. Honorees will be announced and celebrated during a Board of Directors meeting, where they will receive a token of appreciation, such as a gift card or branded merchandise, and have their photo taken with the Board president.

Additionally, honorees will be featured on Ocean Pines social media channels and in the weekly “This Week in the Pines” email newsletter.

During the February 22 Board meeting, the Teal Bay Mitzvah Team was recognized as the first official honoree of the Good Neighbor program. The Board of Directors commended the group for their dedication to supporting those in need through fundraising and supply collection efforts for essential community services, including the Ocean Pines Fire/EMS and Police departments.

The team’s commitment extends to a variety of causes, from gathering pet supplies for local shelters to providing resources for women worldwide to build businesses through the collection of new and used shoes. Their efforts to ensure students at Berlin Head Start have food and snacks further solidify their impact as exemplary Ocean Pines Good Neighbors.

For more information about the Ocean Pines Good Neighbor program, or to submit a nomination, email OPgoodneighbors@gmail.com.

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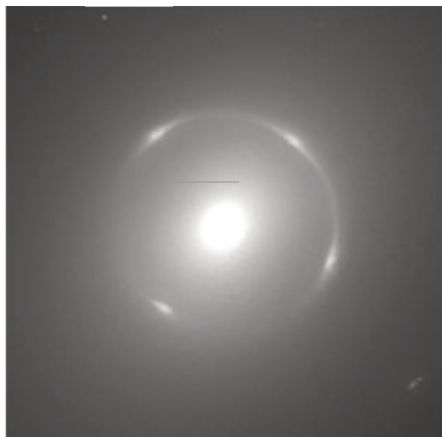
By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



Rare Einstein Ring displays gravitational lensing

Only a few weeks ago, observation of a cosmic formation called an Einstein Ring was reported in the February 10 edition of the *Journal of Astronomy and Astrophysics*.

To understand this, we begin by recalling that gravitational lensing



Euclid telescope reveals Einstein Ring surrounding the galaxy NGC 6505

serves to bend the pathway of light as it is traveling through space. This occurs when a massive body with strong gravitation such as a foreground galaxy curves the direction of light and magnifies the image of a background object, in that same way that a magnifying glass produces a larger image of an object.

It was in the year 1915 that Albert Einstein first noted that light waves passing near a large mass will be deflected from a straight-line path. In 1919 measurements made during a solar eclipse supported Einstein's calculations of the gravitational lensing, the bending of the light waves. Confirming data was gathered by two British teams stationed at eclipse locations in Sobral, Brazil, and Principe, Africa, headed by Sir Arthur Eddington.

A similar action can be seen in large modern telescopes every time a galaxy cluster and a galaxy are properly aligned. When this happens,

the image of a background galaxy will be noticeably enlarged by gravitational lensing around the cluster located in the foreground.

Lead author of the *Astronomy and Astrophysics* paper, Conor O'Riordan of the Max Planck Institute, Germany explained: "An Einstein Ring is an example of strong gravitational lensing. All strong lensings are special, because they're so rare, and they're incredibly useful scientifically."

This recent Einstein Ring was discovered by *Euclid*, a space telescope launched by the European Space Agency in July 2023. If the term Einstein Ring sounds familiar, astronomy fans may recall earlier discoveries by the Hubble Space Telescope and also by James Webb. Yet the new discovery by *Euclid* is unique, as its galaxy, called NGC 6505, is just 590 million light-years from Earth, a "stone's throw" in cosmic terms. The background galaxy, the source of the brilliant ring shape just uncovered, is located 4.42 billion light-years away, so it is part of a much earlier era in the cosmic lifetime.

Valeria Pettorino, another *Euclid* Project Scientist said, "I find it very intriguing that this ring was observed in a well-known galaxy (NGC 6505) which was first discovered in 1884. The galaxy has been known to astronomers for a very long time and yet this Einstein Ring was never observed before. This demonstrates how powerful *Euclid* is, finding new things even in places we thought we knew well."

March stargazing times will be subject to the daylight savings time change on Sunday, March 9. After

that date, the times noted here will jump forward one hour.

Once again, the stargazing fun begins early, with Jupiter and Venus opening the show at about 6 p.m. Jupiter appears in the center of the sky, and Venus is in the western quadrant. When viewing Venus, don't delay too long as the planet is easily seen only until about 6:45 p.m. when it begins to sink too close to the horizon.

At about 6:45 p.m., Orion appears prominently along with Taurus the

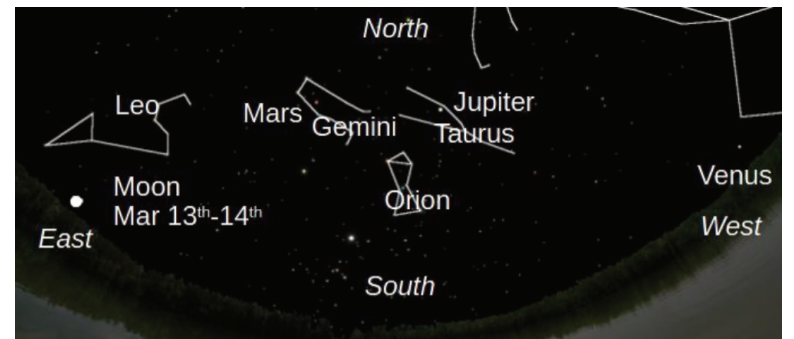
Bull and Gemini the Twins. A little later in the evening, after 8:30 p.m., Leo the Lion ascends in the east. Leo signals

that spring will be arriving soon. The official arrival is March 20.

The planet Mars remains visible in the constellation Gemini.

Night owls, awake in the wee hours on the night of March 13-14, will enjoy a nice treat in the form of a total lunar

eclipse. The moon can be seen in the constellation Leo the Lion. For those in the Eastern Daylight Time time zone, the moon begins growing noticeably darker after about 1:10 a.m. (Daylight time) of the 14th. The moon gradually grows dimmer and dimmer as Earth's shadow takes out a larger and larger bite from the lunar disk, finally blocking it completely at about 2:25 a.m. This type of event is rather enjoyable, and if weather is clear, astronomy buffs are encouraged to stay up and see it for themselves. The



moon begins to exit Earth's shadow after about 3:58 AM and its disk will gradually brighten, until about 4:45 a.m. when the partial eclipse phase ends.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.



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My Backyard... sponsored by Maureen Kennedy

The Blue Jay

This common, large songbird is familiar to many people, with its perky crest; blue, white, and black plumage; and noisy calls. Blue Jays are known for their intelligence and complex social systems with tight family bonds. Their fondness for acorns is credited with helping spread oak trees after the last glacial period.

Blue Jays are most often detected by their noisy calls. Near shorelines they migrate in loose flocks; you can recognize them by their steady flight, rounded wings, long tail, and white underside. Resident birds may associate in flocks; they usually fly across open areas one at a time, often silently. Also watch for them at feeders.

Blue Jays prefer tray feeders or hopper feeders on a post rather than hanging feeders, and they prefer peanuts, sunflower seeds, and suet. Planting oak trees will make acorns available for jays of the future. Blue Jays often take drinks from bird-baths.

Thousands of Blue Jays migrate in flocks along the Great Lakes and Atlantic coasts, but much about their migration remains a mystery. Some are present throughout winter in all parts of their range. Young jays may be more likely to migrate than adults, but many adults also migrate. Some individual jays migrate south one year, stay north the next winter, and then migrate south again the next year. No one has worked out why they migrate when they do.

Blue Jays are known to take and eat eggs and nestlings of other birds. In an extensive study of Blue Jay feed-

ing habits, only 1% of jays had evidence of eggs or birds in their stomachs. Most of their diet was composed of insects and nuts.

The Blue Jay frequently mimics the calls of hawks, especially the Red-shouldered Hawk. These calls may provide information to other jays that a hawk is around, or may be used to deceive other species into believing a hawk is present.

Blue Jays lower their crests when they are feeding peacefully with family and flock members or tending to nestlings.

The pigment in Blue Jay feathers is melanin, which is brown. The blue color is caused by scattering light through modified cells on the surface of the feather barbs.

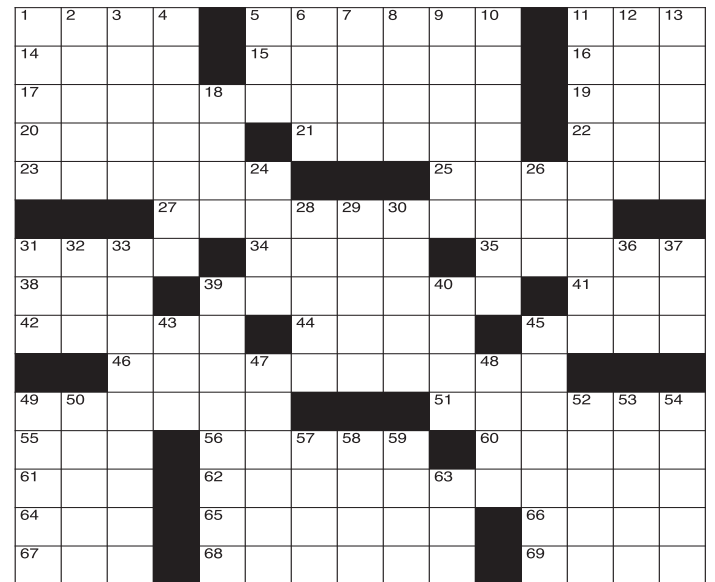
The black bridle across the face, nape, and throat varies extensively and



may help Blue Jays recognize one another.

The oldest known wild, banded Blue Jay was at least 26 years, 11 months old when it was found dead after being caught in fishing gear. It had been banded in the Newfoundland/Labrador/St. Pierre et Miquelon area in 1989 and was found there in 2016.

-allaboutbirds.com

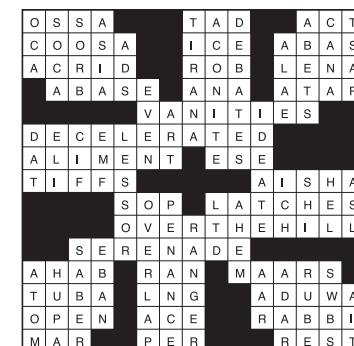


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cut a little bit off
- 5. State with confidence
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Not narrow
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Challenged
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Showing extreme greed
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Lake in Botswana
- 38. E.T. rode in one
- 39. Juniors' parents
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Mother of Perseus
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Gov't investigators
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. The vast grassy plains in S. America
- 55. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 56. Noted consumer advocate
- 60. Spanish sports club
- 61. Body part
- 62. Tractability
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Muslim ruler title
- 67. Depressed
- 68. Gradually gave way
- 69. Clear-thinking

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed aside
- 2. Water sprite
- 3. Ones to look up to
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. A number everyone has
- 6. Marine invertebrate
- 7. One who takes you to court
- 8. Indicates outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Strains
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Some pages are dog-__
- 18. Ukraine city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Summer month (abbr.)
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Jewelry brand
- 30. Fictional rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Russian city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Furious
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They __
- 45. Women
- 47. Inspire with love
- 48. Japanese ankle sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Type of protein
- 54. Pennsylvania town
- 57. Art __; around 1920
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to sleep



Answers for February 26

We're all about the birds and more!

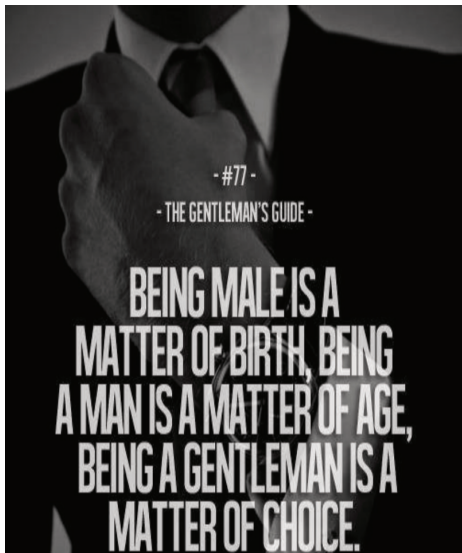
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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**



One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone.



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Thinking back to when "a new hip joint" meant someplace I wanted to go on Friday night.



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