

# The Courier

August 6, 2025 Volume 25 Number 41



**All aboard** - Nearly three-year-old **Rhys Anthony** enjoys a cruise aboard his parents' boat on a recent weekend.

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# Illuminated memory

My wife and I enjoy from time to time an excursion to area antique shops. And it was during one of these outings that I found a small item that triggered memories from

mother was no shrinking violet in these encounters. She held her ground for a nickel. Regardless whether she won or lost, it was always great theater. I learned from



## It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

four decades ago. The item? A small kerosene lantern; painted green with a green lens. It was perched on a shelf in the corner of a really interesting store in Onancock, VA. For reasons that I cannot explain, I have a fascination with lanterns, especially those associated with the railroads.

This particular lantern stands about eight inches tall. Discovering this little treasure took me back to a time long ago.

During the 1970s and early 1980s flea markets and yard sales were a big part of my life. My mom, brother and I were either visiting them or selling at them. There were two markets of particular interest to us: one at an old drive in theater in Langhorne, PA which if memory serves, was open Wednesdays and Saturdays and one located on Roosevelt Blvd. in the Roosevelt Mall parking lot. This one I think was open just Sundays. The drive-in market was larger.

When we were selling, we took turns manning our table so that each of us could explore and maybe find a treasure or two or three.

Many an hour I scavenged around these markets finding all sorts of junk or treasure depending on one's perspective. I was most interested in tools, stereos, car parts and anything related to boats. I always walked passed vendors selling clothes and doll items. I still do.

It was during these flea market experiences that I learned the art of negotiation. It was a real education to listen to and participate in the back and forth dickering to find agreement on the selling/purchase price of an old set of dishes or a painted iron dog or something else. Although a petite woman, whether she was the seller or the buyer, my

her that sometimes the best way to negotiate is to determine everything you want and then throw out an offer for the entire lot. Say the individual items had a total asking price of \$10; you offer \$5 with the likelihood you'd settle on seven or seven fifty. I also learned that sometimes you just have to walk away. And there were many times when that occurred.

Getting back to the lantern. During one of my explorations at the drive-in market, I found in a dilapidated cardboard box an old lantern. It had a red lens and its black paint was flaking. I don't think I paid more than a dollar or two for it. What did a 13-year-old need with an old lantern? No need really. My brother thought it was a stupid purchase. For many years it sat on a shelf in the garage never illuminated. When I got married it moved with me to again sit on a shelf. Finally, about ten years ago or so, I retrieved it, cleaned it up, replaced the wick and filled the reservoir with kerosene. Its warm glow is now a regular feature during evenings when we're in the backyard.

Through the years I've searched for other lanterns. Many that I've found are priced much higher than I'm willing to pay. So, during that trip when I discovered the little green lantern, I was excited and didn't think twice about purchasing it. And, employing a tactic I learned from my mother years ago, I negotiated with the clerk on a bulk purchase that included the lantern and an interesting old jug that my wife wanted. The negotiations were a success.

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# Commentary

By Joe Reynolds  
*OceanPinesForum.com*

## ARC/ECC nonsense

Looks like yet another Ocean Pines Association (OPA) committee, Architectural Review Committee (ARC), may have violated the Maryland HOA Act.

First some background.

No Ocean Pines Association committee impacts association members more than the Environmental Control Committee (ECC), as it is called in all the original Declarations of Restrictions (DRs) put in place by Boise Cascade when it created OPA. Later sections added to OPA reference the committee as ARC. OPA now just references ARC, regardless of what an association member's DRs may say.

To say ARC is controversial is a major understatement. Currently, ARC deals mainly with what you can and can't do on your property. There is also the perhaps even more controversial Compliance, Permits and In-

spections (CPI) department within OPA. It operates under the General Manager's office, with OPA employee staff inspectors.

CPI employees are the inspectors who send DR violation notices to association members. A difficult, mostly thankless, job, at best. Association members need to treat CPI inspectors with respect. Problem? Contact the General Manager's office. Unfortunately, some association members even threaten inspectors with physical violence if the owner sees an inspector around their property. Disgusting.

CPI initiated violation notices not corrected in some time frame are forwarded to the General Manager's office, and then brought before the OPA Board of Directors for action at a public board meeting, possibly including a decision to take the offending association member to court.

In addition to the DRs enforcement, there are Guidelines, prepared by ARC but needing approval of the board. The Guidelines attempt to describe what is allowed under the DRs, including, in some cases, allowing blanket exceptions to things prohibited in the DRs. For example, the DRs forbid open burning of wood. The board approved Guidelines allowing open burning of wood because board members wanted to burn wood in fire-pits.

So, back to the HOA Act violation and the latest flap over the ARC desire to change the Guidelines to mandate every person selling their home in Ocean Pines may have to pay for a lot survey by a professional land surveyor prior to selling their property to obtain an OPA exit permit. Perhaps up to \$2000.

On the morning of 7/21/2025 ARC met at 9:30 a.m. It was on the OPA calendar. Did not say meeting location. Turns out it was held in the small conference room off the Administration Building lobby. Eight or more real estate agents were waiting in the lobby. They are hopping mad over this, for some reason. The door to the meeting room was closed.

ARC Committee board liaison Elaine Brady (God bless her for even taking the assignment) was in the lobby. Asked why the committee was meeting behind closed doors while people were waiting, she replied, "The committee is not meeting." Interesting. The ARC Committee is in an OPA meeting room behind closed doors, but the committee is not meeting.

You can't make this stuff up.

Another observation - ARC published no agenda for its meetings. ARC meetings are not recorded.

How about enforcement of sign regulations? ARC submitted revised Guidelines to the board and the board approved them back in April of 2024. Perhaps approved is not quite accurate. Actually, the board rubber-stamped them. Unknowingly, the new guidelines allow only one sign on any lot in addition to a house number. Prior Guidelines allowed one sign per each OPA Board of Directors candi-

date during an OPA election.

Should it be one sign per board candidate? Perhaps a better policy to just follow the DRs and allow NO board candidate signs. Board members pay too little attention to the details, and the devil is always in the details.

Then we have the Cindy Hoffman July 2025 *Ocean Pines Progress* article titled "Confusion reigns during Elections Committee meeting."

As a sidebar, related to an HOA Act violation by the Elections Committee, Hoffman, quite correctly, points out the committee likely violated the Maryland HOA Act when it went into closed session - with the support of board parliamentarian Doug Parks! Interviewed by Hoffman after the meeting, Parks dissembled. Parks did not fool Hoffman. She wrote that Parks' agreement with Ransdell "could be interpreted as Parks supporting Ransdell's move to closed session in violation of the HOA Act."

Returning to signs, Hoffman also wrote, "Additionally, a discussion on campaign signage left candidates confused. While the rules advise one sign per lot, Ransdell (committee chair) suggested allowing one per candidate per lot. In a follow-up email, he said, 'As for sign regulations, I would suggest you contact the ARC or CPI folks. The Elections Committee does not set or enforce signage.'"

OPA's board liaison to the Elections Committee then quite incorrectly tells Hoffman the Guidelines allow one sign per each candidate.

This is exactly the sort of misinformation, lack of understanding of our governing documents, nonsense, hypocrisy, double standard, or whatever, that makes many association members angry about Guidelines enforcement.

Do as we say, not as we do?

Sadly, the board was well aware of this issue and had the time to change the Guidelines to reflect allowing one sign per each candidate. It refused to do so. Revisions are in the works, but will have no impact on current elec-

*please see commentary on page 16*

## Courier Almanac

On August 6, 1911, Lucille Desiree Ball, one of America's most famous redheads and beloved comic actresses, is born near Jamestown, New York.

Patios continue to be more popular than decks. According to a tabulation of data from HUD/Census Bureau Survey of Construction from the



National Association of Home Builders, the share of new homes with patios is on the rise while the share with decks remains low. The NAHB tabulation found that the percentage of new homes with decks was 17.6 percent in 2023, while the percentage of new homes with patios reached a record high of 63.7 percent in that same year. Though some homes feature both a deck and patio, the NAHB

notes that's the case in just 6 percent of properties. However, decks have remained a go-to choice in certain regions of the United States. For example, the NAHB reports that 76 percent of new homes in New England featured decks while just 17 percent featured patios. Decks (42 percent) also proved more popular than patios (20 percent) in the mid-Atlantic region.

The  
**Courier**

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## OPLGA to celebrate anniversary

The Ocean Pines Ladies Golf Association is celebrating their 50th anniversary this year with a Sadie Hawkins Golf Tournament on August 24 at the Ocean Pines Golf Club.

The 18-hole two-person scramble tournament features a western theme, and ladies are asked to invite a gentleman. The tournament will use handicaps to determine the winners. If a player doesn't have an established handicap, their gross score will be used.

Registration is \$45 per player, including lunch and prizes. Additional greens fees of \$45 for non-members and \$25 for members without a cart will apply. There are no greens fees for members with carts.

Those interested in registering should do so by August 8. Checks can be made out to OPLGA-9 and dropped off in the Pro Shop with the completed registration form or submitted to Treasurer Colette Horn. For questions, contact OPLGA President Denise Stevens

## Land Trust to host community meeting

The Lower Shore Land Trust invites the community to attend an upcoming community connector event. This meeting will invite community members to join the volunteer opportunities regarding trail maintenance, educational events, bird walks, dog hiking, bike trail naming and other projects.

The meeting will be held at the Berlin branch of the Worcester County Public Library on Thursday, August 14 at 6 p.m.

Updates on the Restoration Projects, including meadow preparation and wetland construction will be discussed.

-Restoration Projects: Ongoing and planned restoration efforts led by MD DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Lower Shore Land Trust.

-Citizen Engagement: Opportunities for community involvement in conservation, habitat restoration, and stewardship.

For more information, please contact the Lower Shore Land Trust at 443-234-5587 or visit the website at [www.LowerShoreLandTrust.org](http://www.LowerShoreLandTrust.org).



**Damage** - A portion of the overhang at the Ocean Pines Golf Club was damaged after a food delivery truck hit it last Wednesday afternoon.

The incident took place just after 1 p.m. The Ocean Pines Police Department responded and are conducting a police report.

Public Works Director Eddie Wells says that after assessing the damage, it was determined that the damage was only cosmetic. No structural damage occurred.

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# OC native inspired to paint outdoors

By **Elaine Bean**

What does it take to compel an artist to leave the comfort of an air-conditioned studio and head outdoors into the brutal heat, humidity and wind of August to create a landscape painting? It all comes down to a passion for the art of painting “en plein air.” (That’s loosely French for “in the open air.”)

For David Simpson, part of that

area has to offer an artist.”

This year, Simpson will once again participate in the “Artists Paint OC Festival,” the local plein air event now celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an annual program of the Art League of Ocean City. He’ll be outdoors in the August heat painting in his favorite scenic spots from Wednesday August 13 through Saturday, August 16. “Embracing the environment.

enjoy representing the home team.”

The home team Simpson enjoys representing – Ocean City – is celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1875. To honor that legacy, the Art League has published a poster featuring eight paintings created by the festival’s plein air artists over the years. Simpson’s sunset view of the Ocean City skyline was selected as one of the featured paintings on the poster, available for purchase at the 94<sup>th</sup> St. Arts Center, on their website, and around town at various shops.

Plein air painting can be a challenge for an artist, even one as experienced as Simpson. “The greatest challenge is battling the elements like wind or temperature. Perhaps the greatest challenge is how light changes over time while painting. The greatest reward is capturing the essence of the subject and the experience all while crystalizing said moment in time on canvas.”

The local scenery continues to inspire Simpson as a subject for his work. “Creativity itself inspires me as does the local environment. For example, as an artist, I live for simple moments such as the textures in the sky, light falling upon the water, or how textures and the movement of water translates to oil paint.”

Simpson is primarily an oil painter, but also draws extensively in pencil and charcoal, techniques he teaches for the Art League. “I fell into oils via my experience as a painter at Salisbury University,” he said. “I really enjoy the creaminess of the material and the ability to push and pull the paint around. In addition, the art of color mixing in oils is legendary. As for pencil and charcoal, there is a fundamental pureness to the experience of sketching and drawing.”

In his plein air paintings, Simpson draws on local experiences and moments in time as foundations to his artwork. “Given that I have lived my life primarily on the Eastern Shore, most paintings have intrinsic meaning to me,” he said. “These paintings may be of places I surf, fish, or locations I spent as a child or even now. For example, I have painted numerous pieces at the end of Old Bridge Rd. overlooking downtown and of the inlet area.

“Life consists of relationships and, in comparison, art is parallel to this idea. In each piece there stands a dialogue of some kind, between the subject and myself. In end, I hope the viewers can connect to the painting in a similar manner.”

In the cold weather, Simpson paints in his home studio, referencing photographs and his own visual memory. In the summer, when he’s not teaching visual arts at Crisfield High School, he returns to painting plein air. He has also been a resident artist in Studio E at the 94<sup>th</sup> St. Arts Center for the past 13 years, a place he continues to exhibit his paintings.

Teaching others to make art continues to be a passion of Simpson’s and an area of personal pride. “My students at Crisfield High School participate in numerous art shows, competitions, and events every year. We had students participate in 12-14 shows outside of school this year, and they claimed 20 awards, including a few best-in-shows and a few state-level awards.”

Simpson’s own education is extensive, holding undergraduate degrees in Philosophy and Painting from Salisbury University and a Master’s in the Art of Teaching from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. And he continues to champion for the arts.

“The fact - literally - is that EARTH is just ‘EH’ without ART,” he said. “Since the beginning of humanity, art and music are two aspects of the human experience that have culturally helped define our existence. Art is a part of our creative and spiritual identity.”



**David Simpson**

inspiration came from being a kid on Old Bridge Rd. in West Ocean City, near the commercial fishing harbor. “Growing up on Old Bridge Rd. was awesome,” he said. “It was an epic environment for a kid to roam and

Facing the challenges of the elements. Painting in improvisation,” he said.

That Saturday evening, August 16, the artist will put away his brushes, change out of his paint-spattered clothing, and head to the Ocean City Center for the Arts on 94<sup>th</sup> St. to show and sell what he just painted to the public. The free event runs from 5-7 p.m.

This is the thirteenth year Simpson has painted in the Artists Paint OC Festival, and he has won four awards for his work. “My first plein air painting was in this event in 2011,” he remembered. “I knew if I started painting in plein air, I would loosen up as an artist and improve over time. Painting in the moment is a spectacular experience. Being an Ocean City native and a painter, I



play. Those experiences have transcended into painting experiences, especially in plein air. My collection of experiences over time at the beach, parks, and docks have led me to live and breathe the local scenes the

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# New Rubin Telescope takes first images

## Astronomy & Spaceflight

By Douglas Hemmick, Ph.D.



Astronomers anticipate a treasure trove of new discoveries, as the powerful new Vera C. Rubin telescope begins operations. On June 23 the first official images were released from the long-anticipated observatory in the Andes mountains in Chile.

Already the high-resolution images have showcased glowing nebulae and countless galaxies.

Rubin observatory's main telescope, the Simonyi Survey Telescope, has a primary mirror with a diameter of more than 27 feet. Attached to this is a remarkable and mind bogglingly powerful digital camera capable of recording 32,000-megapixel images. Every three nights, the amazing digital camera will

complete a new survey the entire sky, creating an ultra-wide, ultra-high-definition time-lapse record of the universe,

"It's a really unique telescope," said University of Washington Astronomy Professor James Davenport. "It provides a wide-angle lens that surveys the night sky once every three nights from Chile and performs this over a 10-year survey. So, we're gonna get — not just this map, not just a beautiful image— but a movie of the night's sky over a decade."

During this ten-year time period, Rubin is expected to capture images at the breathtaking rate of more than 100 per second which amounts to millions each day. Over the course of time,

astronomers expect to see about 17 million new stars and 20 billion new galaxies, thus greatly expanding our astronomical knowledge.

Among the new images initially displayed are those taken of the Virgo cluster of galaxies. This cluster draws attention from both astronomy hobbyists as well as the professionals. Just as gravity binds the stars into galaxies, so the galaxies themselves are drawn into groupings astronomers call clusters.

Virgo cluster contains about 2,000 member galaxies, including the spirals like the Milky Way as well as the ellipticals, which are considered to be the result of galaxy-on-galaxy collisions. The new images reveal just such merging and colliding of the galaxies.

One of Rubin's staff astronomers, Christian Aganze of Stanford University said, "The Virgo Cluster images are breathtaking. The level of detail, from the large-scale merging galaxies to details in the spiral structure of individual galaxies, more distant galaxies in the background,

foreground Milky Way stars, all in one image, is transformative!"

Among the most important of the new observatory's efforts will be to further explore "dark matter" in the universe. The telescope is named for Dr. Vera C. Rubin who is well known



**Vera C. Rubin Observatory**

as the astronomer to establish the invisible presence of dark matter.

When Rubin and her colleague studied more than 60 galaxies they found that the stars at the outer edges were moving just as fast as those

*please see **images** page 17*



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**County Fair starts Friday with new events**

The Worcester County Fair returns to John Walter Smith Park in Snow Hill August 8 to 10. Entrance is free, and fair hours are Friday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

“We are excited to host the County Fair for the second consecutive year and to honor the agricultural heritage that means so much to the people of Worcester County” Recreation and Parks Deputy Director Jacob Stephens said.

This year’s fair will pack in livestock, 4-H cooking, robot and drone demos, concerts, tournaments, and a pipeline eating contest. There will also be catfish races, a cake auction, car, Jeep, and dog shows, local foods and brews, and a host of family friendly games and entertainment. Here’s a quick guide to what’s on tap at this year’s fair:

Nashville and American Idol headliners, along with other fan favorites, will dominate the main stage all weekend long. Nashville artist Drayton Farley will kick off the music scene Friday evening with his resonate blend of Americana, country, rock, and folk storytelling. Per-

formances will follow throughout the weekend from Philadelphia Freedom-Elton John Tribute band, Matthew Street Band, Tribe Band, Schizophrenic Boogiemen, and Season 21 American Idol Runner up Megan Danielle. All concerts are free.

“New this year are the Worcester County Fair Catfish Races,” Stephens said. “For a \$5 entry fee, each participant can pick a catfish and watch it race to the end!”

The participant with the fastest catfish at the end of the weekend will win \$1,000 in cash.

Over 50 vendors will feature hand-crafted items, local services, food trucks, and local breweries.

To view the full fair schedule and stay updated visit [www.worcestercounty-fair.org](http://www.worcestercounty-fair.org) or Facebook at WorcesterCountyFair.

The fairgrounds are located at 6022 Public Landing Road, adjacent to the recreation center. To learn more about this year’s fair, contact Stephens at [jstephens@worcestermid.gov](mailto:jstephens@worcestermid.gov) or 410-632-2144, ext. 2521.

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## Nonprofit needs assistance with school supplies

Worcester County GOLD (Giving Other Lives Dignity), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has been running its School Supplies for Students program since 1997, providing backpacks filled with grade-appropriate supplies to Worcester County students in need.

Each year, GOLD receives 300+ student school supply requests from the caseworkers employed with their fourteen partnering agencies who work directly with families in need in Worcester County, Maryland.

GOLD believes every child deserves to fit in with their peers by starting the school year prepared to succeed, regardless of their family's financial situation. GOLD encourages the community to help by shopping for a student or donating. Even a small donation can go a long way in helping them reach their goal of providing every child with the supplies they need.

If you're interested in shopping for a student, donating, or learning more about the program, visit GOLD's website, <https://worcestergold.org/school->

profit organization improving the quality of life for Worcester County residents living in low-income circumstances by providing emergency financial assistance and items to meet basic needs. Founded in 1997, GOLD is committed to helping individuals and families facing financial crises relieve stress and achieve self-sufficiency.

## Ocean Pines library to close for lot repaving

The Ocean Pines Branch Library parking lot will be milled and repaved August 7 to 12. To accommodate this improvement project, the library will be closed on the following days:

-Thursday, August 7 – Library will close at 1 p.m.

-Friday, August 8 through Monday, August 11 – Library will be closed all day

-Tuesday, August 12 – Library will reopen at 1 p.m.

Please note that this schedule is weather dependent and subject to change. If the contractor is unable to complete the work as planned, construction may continue on subsequent days while the library remains open. In such cases, traffic control measures will be in place.

For up-to-date information regarding library hours during the paving project, please contact the Ocean Pines branch library at (410) 208-4014.



**Bocce Queens** — Sunday, July 20 was a momentous day in the ever-unfolding history of the Ocean Pines Association. A spectacular battle between opposing bocce ball teams played out on the new bocce ball courts at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club. Team "Girls Friday" demonstrated what the sport is all about, even though it was Sunday, not Friday.

Above are Friday Girls (left to right): **Camille Viola, Evi Parks, Amy Oristian and Elaine Brady.** Photo by Joe Reynolds

## Summer concert returns

The summer concert at the Ocean Pines library will return this year on Wednesday, August 20 at 6:30 p.m.

"Classical Concert with a Twist" will feature three vocalists with piano accompaniment, two piano soloists, a flute solo, a piano duet, a string trio and a flute duet. Along with classical selections there will be a hint of ragtime, jazz, Latin, Broadway and popular. All the musicians have college degrees in music education or performance and are from the surrounding area of Berlin and Salisbury. The performers are all active or retired public and/or parochial school music teachers, private instructors, orchestra

and/or choir members, church cantors, organists and /or choir directors.

Due to the size of the library meeting room, there will only be 100 people allowed in the room. Registration is suggested by calling the Ocean Pines library at 410 208-4014 or you can register on line through the Worcester Library website. There is no cost for the performance but there will be a free will offering at the end of the concert.

If the weather is favorable, the concert may be held outside in the new learning center to the right of the main entrance. If that is the case, bring a lawn chair.



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## Gone but not forgotten

One of Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City outstanding members unfortunately passed away earlier this year, Pat Winkemayer. Two of Pat's close friends, who were also Kiwanis members at one time, organized putting a bench in Pat's name at the South Gate Pond near the Veteran's Memorial.

Pictured are Kiwanis members and friends who went to the bench on July 23 to honor Pat, share remembrances and say goodbye. Her favorite daisy flowers were set on the bench which has a plaque stating, "In Memory of a Fellow Friend & Kiwanian, Pat Winkemayer, An Elegant, Strong Caring Lady."



**Completed** – New mailboxes were installed at the cluster between Wood Duck I and Wood Duck II on July 24. The mailboxes were removed the week of July 9 for replacement.

## Art League announces fundraising raffle

The Art League of Ocean City, a nonprofit organization, announces a fundraising raffle where the winner receives \$5,000 towards travel or cash. The raffle supports the many community programs of the Art League.

Raffle tickets are \$100 each or six for \$500, and only 350 tickets will be sold. The Art League will announce the winner at their annual "pARTy of the Year" on October 9. Ticket holders do not need to be present to win.

The sale of the raffle tickets helps the Art League keep the doors of the Ocean City Center for the Arts open and free to all and supports outreach programs. "It allows us to go into our community's schools with enriching art programs, assist those with disabilities in expressing themselves through art, and provide a safe and nurturing space for everyone to express their creative sides," Thaler continued.

Raffle tickets may be purchased at OCart.org, by calling the Art League at 410-524-9433, or by purchasing them in person at the front desk of the Ocean City Center for the Arts, 502 94<sup>th</sup> St. bayside, Ocean City.

## New state mark for species set just eight days after 30-year-old record fell

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has officially recognized Jack Dorman of Mt. Airy as the new state record holder for false albacore in the Atlantic Division. Dorman's 26.0-pound catch surpasses the previous record of 23.5 pounds that was just set earlier this month.

Dorman, 22, was fishing offshore near the Jackspot and the 20-Fathom Line on July 20 aboard the charter boat *Game On*, captained by Scott Stapleford of Ocean City. It was Dorman's first offshore fishing trip, and he was hoping to catch a yellowfin tuna. The record-setting false albacore was the first fish caught that day.

They were trolling a skirted ballyhoo when the false albacore hit.

"At first I thought it was a small yellowfin, but it turned out to be the biggest false albacore I've ever seen," said Captain Stapleford. The fishing party did land three yellowfin later in the trip.

The false albacore was weighed on a certified scale at Sunset Marina in Ocean City.

Dorman, who recently graduated from Salisbury University, has spent recent summers fishing the back bays behind Ocean City and surf fishing at Assateague Island with his father. After this experience, Dorman said he's now hooked on offshore fishing and can't wait for their next trip in August.

Word of the catch spread quickly in Ocean City's fishing community. Kurt Howell, the captain who guided angler Timothy Saarda to the state record false albacore on July 12, called and congratulated all involved. Howell noted that the world record for false albacore is 36 pounds, caught in the same general area by an angler fishing out of a New Jersey port in 2006.

False albacore have many nicknames including Albie, Little Tunny, turkeys, and Fat Alberts and are one of the most common tuna species in the western Atlantic Ocean. Their range extends from Massachusetts to Brazil.

In recent years, false albacore have become light tackle favorites for catch-and-release fishing along the East Coast. Many anglers strive to catch them along the inshore waters of the East Coast during the fall months. They are a very hard-fighting fish and a challenge on light tackle.



Jack Dorman broke the Maryland state record for false albacore on July 20, 2025. Photo courtesy of Jack Dorman, used with permission by Maryland DNR.

The Department of Natural Resources maintains state records for sport fish in four divisions: Atlantic, Chesapeake, Nontidal, and Invasive. Anglers who believe they have caught a potential record-setting fish should complete the state record application and call 410-991-0748. The department recommends keeping the fish immersed in ice water to preserve its weight until it can be verified and certified.

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# Reader Letters

## Thoughts after the cell tower 'town meeting'

### Editor:

I watched the "town meeting" last night and found it interesting and highly educational. Thanks to OPA management for arranging the broadcast.

I found the presentation confusing. Firstly, the tower dude was trying to present a lot of network information while the Verizon reps were on the sidelines until they were called in. When the Verizon reps spoke, I thought they were ill-prepared.

If that was supposed to be a technical briefing, it provided lots of data and not much information. If it was supposed to be a sales pitch (which I think was the intention), they presented confusing and barely legible graphics.

Heat maps for antenna patterns are used by technical people as a basis for analysis. Showing an illegible heat map to the general public is unhelpful and confusing. At least the presenters were candid when they said that the heat map cannot be correlated to "bars" on a cell phone. One has to wonder why the heat maps were presented in this forum at all.

I was glad to see the presenters address the two challenges of cell networks:

Capacity – how many simultaneous

"conversations" can a cell nexus support, and

Connectivity – the likelihood of connecting when desired and the quality of the connections.

Notwithstanding advertising claims, a cellular network is a probabilistic domain. Given adequate signal strength between a cell transceiver and a phone or tablet, a quality connection is probable but not certain. When the signal is degraded by factors like distance, foliage, steel objects, etc., the probability of a solid connection is decreased.

It appears to me that Verizon's primary objective in this effort is to increase the network capacity on Route 90. Connectivity benefits to OPA residents are desirable but secondary to the main objective.

Here are my conclusions from the presentation:

Verizon has a HUGE interest in improving cell network capacity and connectivity on Route 90, especially when the road is loaded with traffic. This interest explains why their first proposal was the water treatment facility location and why the admin/community center location disappeared rapidly. The Golf

course location looks like their last shot at a good (not perfect, but good enough) location for a tower in OP-land.

If the tower is built, a number of OPA residents will enjoy some benefits, but the benefits are uncertain. OPA is a Verizon second priority to Route 90 coverage.

Several asides came to me as I watched the presentation:

Network operations are complex and challenging to describe to the general public succinctly. It seems many people would benefit from a "cell phone 101" class. The local library and Wor-Wic Community College have offered such courses in the past, but I don't know if they are still available.

Given the critical use of cell phones these days (the sole voice communication in many houses), I would encourage people to learn how to use cell phones well. It sounds to me that many people are simply unaware of the value and vulnerabilities cell phones have. A cell phone is not a one-for-one substitute for a wired "land line."

I was stunned to hear several "technical" people throw out some wacky numbers without a semblance of thought or analysis to support them. One person, towards the end of the brief, said that "85% of OPA residents" would benefit from the tower. I hope he's right, but I'm

from Missouri on this point.

My takeaway from the whole event is that Verizon wants to build the tower to improve capacity on Route 90, get it operating, and then see what happens.

This all may be moot when they (whoever "they" are) apply for permitting from Worcester County.

I think the objective of the OPA effort is to improve the capacity and connectivity of cellular networks for all Ocean Pines residents. I would support this cell tower project. It's better than nothing and might, over time, lead to better service, but that assumes facts not in evidence. I think it is important to recognize that this is a Verizon project, not an OPA project. Verizon is paying the bill; OPA is not.

If this tower is built and operational, in the winter, when the "visitors" have departed and the deciduous trees are bare, cell coverage may be improved in OP-land, but quantification of that improvement would be challenging and transient. On a 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, most OPA residents may see little difference from today's situation.

It is essential to recognize that Verizon and OPA have similar yet different objectives. The objectives are not in conflict, but they are different.

**Steve Habeger**  
Ocean Pines

## Thrilled about the One Big Beautiful Bill

### Editor:

I, and many others here on the Shore, are very excited about the many benefits for us and all Americans in the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) recently passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump.

First and foremost is the provision which makes the tax cuts passed during President Trump's first term permanent, and prevents a four trillion dollar tax increase on ALL Americans. That tax increase would absolutely wreck our economy (even worse than it was wrecked over the last four years). I know that my husband and I breathed a huge sigh of relief over this.

The OB BB also eliminates taxes on overtime and tips - can you just imagine the benefit to our local hard-working employees?

Another huge benefit is that the OB BB includes the largest ever investment in the U.S. Coast Guard. This is kind of important here in Ocean City - right?

Funds for modernization of our air

traffic control system are included. Secretary of Transportation Duffy was stunned to find out when he assumed office that, despite a huge budget presumably for that very purpose, very little was spent or accomplished in that regard over the previous four years.

I personally am thrilled about the Federal School Choice Program which will help parents who are dissatisfied with their local public schools to make another choice that works better for their families. We are blessed to have a good school system here, but that is certainly not the case everywhere. In Baltimore, as an absolutely tragic example, a huge percentage of students cannot read or do math on grade level. To allow this to continue is just evil.

I hope people will take the opportunity to educate themselves about these and other provisions of the OB BB and also be patient and give time for these policies to work.

**Carol Frazier**  
Ocean Pines

**commentary**  
from page 6

tion.

The corker? Even if the one sign rule is enforced, or even if the Guidelines are changed to allow one sign per candidate, any sign regulation for board candidates is absolutely useless. Lot owners just play the timeline for enforcement. If OPA cannot immediately remove signs in violation, the election is over before any enforcement can happen! Happening right now on a lot on Ocean Parkway. Two candidate signs in violation of existing Guidelines.

Kinda like the ridiculous tree removal violation penalty. Cut down a large tree without a permit? Penalty? Replace with a two-inch tree. Two-inch trees may be cut down without a permit.

All petty stuff? Perhaps so. However, association members facing what they may see as petty violations expect the petty stuff to be enforced uniformly, not ignored when it benefits board members or board candidates.

Petty or not, uniform enforcement is

imperative for association members, or board members, or board candidates.

Finally, whew! Look at violations sent to the board for action at the last board meeting. With all the board talk about "beautification," and DR enforcement violations that destroy property values have obviously been around for years. ARC has actually approved fences that violate the DRs so a lot owner with a nice home doesn't have to constantly see the dump next door. That makes sense?

Only in OPA-Land.

Major revisions to the Guidelines are in the works. A number of them are for the better, but some wording remains questionable in a few areas. The board needs to carefully study the changes, discuss them at length, and absolutely avoid rubber-stamping the proposed changes. ARC committee members are volunteers who are devoting time and energy to this project. However, these Guidelines are super important and impact EVERY association member.

Guidelines approvals have been rubber-stamped by boards in the past. That has to stop.





**Day of angling** - The Ocean Pines Anglers Club hosted a record 97 young anglers at the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Art Hansen Memorial Youth Fishing Contest held July 19 at the South Gate Pond at Veterans Park in Ocean Pines. The contest was divided into three age groups: 4-7, 8-11, 12-16 with trophies awarded for biggest fish in each age group and special awards for the top three anglers and most fish.

Over 100 fish were caught. All registrants received a gift bag compliments of the Anglers Club and the Ocean City/Berlin Optimist Club.

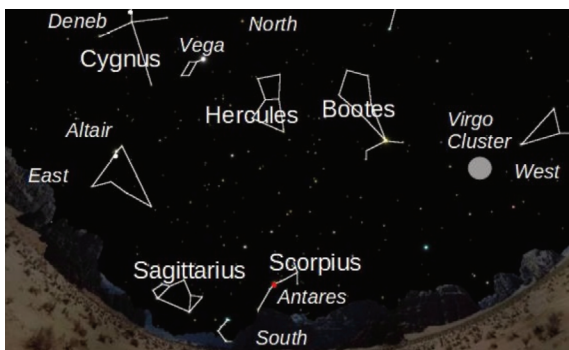
Above (L to R) Front row age 4-7: **Tayde Brown** (most fish), **Carson Newton** (third place, largest), **Veronica Steele** (second place, largest), **Dasey Koons** (first place, largest). Age 8-11: **Reid Landis**, **Lorenzo Torrz** (tie for most fish). **Tyler Musser** (third place, largest), **Zoe Ducan** (second place, largest), **Reid Landis** (first place, largest).

Back row (L to R) ages 12-16: **Carma Jean Valdez** (most fish). **Lincoln Towers** (largest, third place), **Lorenzo Gargiard** (second place, largest), **Daniel Baer** (first place, largest). Photo by Jack Barnes.

images  
from page 11

towards the center thus there had to be some invisible mass (the dark matter) holding the galaxies together, causing them to rotate at these high speeds.

Rubin's confirmation of this mysterious material in the 1970s has greatly expanded studies in that field. Scientists now estimate that the universe contains more than four times more dark matter as ordinary matter.



As the Rubin performs its full-sky survey, watching the ever-changing pattern of galaxies and dark matter, the dynamic movie it finds will help illuminate another mystery. This cosmic motion is attributed to dark energy and astronomers hope to learn a great deal about this strange and puzzling force.

During the month of August, the full stellar vista arrives at about 9:15 p.m., including Scorpius the Scorpion near the southern horizon, with its bright red star Antares. To the east appears Sagittarius the Archer with its "teapot" shape. High overhead are Bootes (boh OH teez) and Hercules the Hero.

The galaxy cluster Virgo (mentioned above) is in the south western area, and is a challenging target for skywatchers with telescopes. Observers will have just a short window of time to search, because the cluster skirts close to the horizon after about 9:45 p.m.

The summer triangle appears in the western sky and includes Deneb, Vega and Altair.

August features the Perseid meteor shower. The shower's peak activity occurs on the night of August 11 from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. (technically the

morning of August 12). Unfortunately, the waxing gibbous moon will reduce the visibility of the meteors, so that in a cloudless sky just a few per hour might be seen. Look halfway between the northeastern horizon and the zenith.

Wishing good luck and clear skies to all stargazers.

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# The Hawk

Hawks have a near worldwide distribution. They are members of the same family as kites and eagles. Falcons, ospreys, and vultures are close relatives.

The color of their plumages ranges from grey or reddish brown on top and pale whitish below. Often, they have dark spots or streaks on the back, chest and legs, and dark wing and tail bars. In most cases, the bills are black, the feathered legs and feet are yellow, and the talons (claws) black.

Their weight ranges from as little as 4 ounces up to 3.25 lbs. Females tend to be larger than males.

One of the largest varieties is the Rough-legged Hawk with a wingspan of more than 55 inches and a length of about 22 inches.

The smallest hawk in North America is the Sharp-shinned Hawk.

In February 2005, the Canadian scientist Dr Louis Lefebvre announced a method of measuring avian IQ in terms of their innovation in feeding habits. Hawks were named among the most intelligent birds based on this scale.

Hawks are said to have a vision that is about eight times more acute than humans with good eyesight (as good as 20/20). This is because of many photoreceptors in the retina (up to 1,000,000 per square mm, against 200,000 for humans), a very high number of nerves connecting the re-

ceptors to the brain, a second set of eye muscles not found in other animals and an indented fovea which magnifies the central part of the visual field.

Their keen eyesight, muscular legs, powerful, sharp claws and sharply hooked bills are perfect adaptations for hunting, capturing their prey and

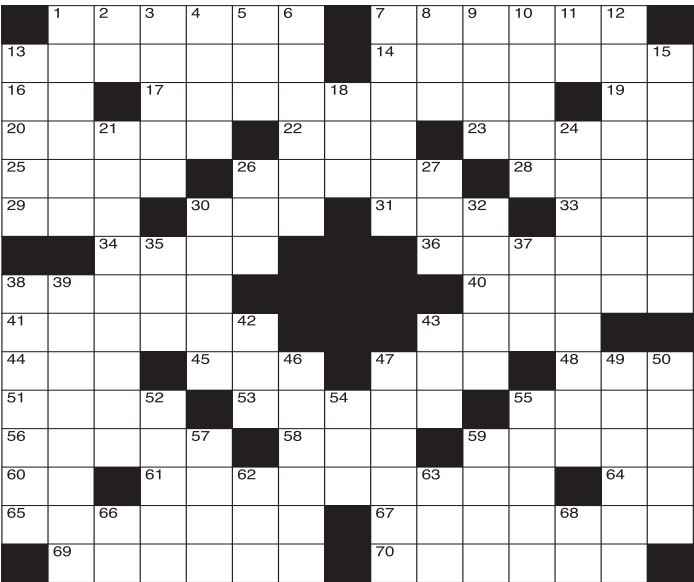


tearing flesh to a manageable size for eating.

These strong hunters catch their prey even during flight, typically using a swift, “swooping” technique. Some of them attain speeds of over 150 mph particularly during dives. These powerful fliers can soar for long periods.

Migratory species travel over thousand miles each year to and from their breeding territories.

-BeautyofBirds.com



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Spiritual leaders

7. Salt

13. Fortified wine

14. Edible mollusk

16. They precede C

17. A way to compare

19. State lawyer

20. “Game of Thrones” actor Ciaran

22. Eighth month (abbr.)

23. Very willing

25. \_\_\_ ex machina

26. Satisfies

28. Mountain in New Zealand

29. A doctrine

30. Popular Dodge truck model

31. Dekagram

33. Naturally occurring solid

34. Company officer

36. Villains

38. Cricket frogs
40. One of the founders of modern psychology

41. Endured

43. A female domestic

44. You can get stuck in one

45. Partner to feather

47. Passive optical network

48. French ballet dynasty

51. Employee stock ownership plan

53. Bottom layer

55. Sound

56. Yankee great Judge

58. Dickens character

59. Late beloved TNT sportscaster

60. South Dakota

61. Exposing human vice or folly to ridicule

64. Gold

65. Longtime Braves hurler Julio

67. Humor

69. Shawl

70. Hospital unit

### CLUES DOWN

1. Animal disease

2. Commercial

3. Necklace materials

4. Containers

5. Investment account

6. Colorado Heisman Trophy winner

7. Dipped down

8. Head injury category (abbr.)

9. Lay about

10. Intestinal

11. Not yes

12. Caused to be loved

13. Muslim spiritual leader

15. Showing sincere conviction

18. Not in

21. Number above the line in a fraction

24. Lawn pest

26. Pouch

27. Ancient language in India (abbr.)

30. Start over
32. Wild white flower

35. Fourteen

37. Visual way to interact with computer (abbr.)

38. Side by side and facing the same way

39. Religious conflicts

42. Touch lightly

43. “Boardwalk Empire” actress Gretchen

46. Violent seizure of property

47. One who supports the pope

49. Malaise

50. Body fluid

52. Inauthentic person

54. Title of respect

55. Chilean city

57. Japanese city

59. Silk garment

62. Draw from

63. Automobile

66. The man

68. Top government lawyer



Answers for July 23



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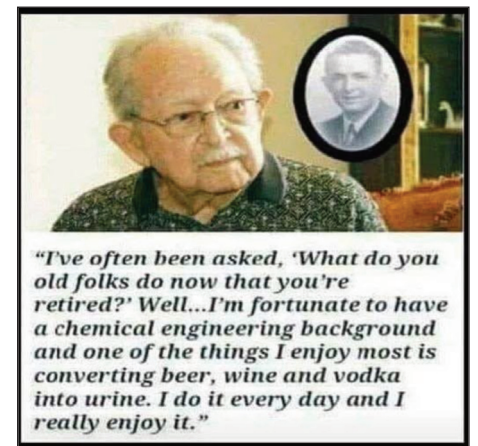
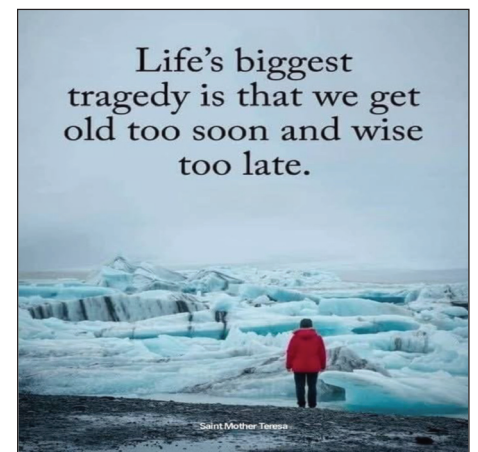
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