

The Courier

November 12, 2025 Volume 26 Number 10

Water service areas experience rate increases

Water and sewer users will see increases in their bills beginning this quarter. Rates in each of the 11 water and wastewater sanitary service areas (SSAs) increased in fiscal year 2026 to cover actual operating and maintenance costs increases.

The service areas were designed to fund themselves, but they were underfunded for years. If the rates had remained flat from FY25, revenues would not cover actual expenses for FY26 in each of the service areas.

Base fees per EDU increased and usage tiers changed for residential and commercial customers. The rate structure in the West Ocean City SSA changed from a “fixtures” basis to a “per EDU” basis, as part of County efforts to implement similar rate structures across the service areas.

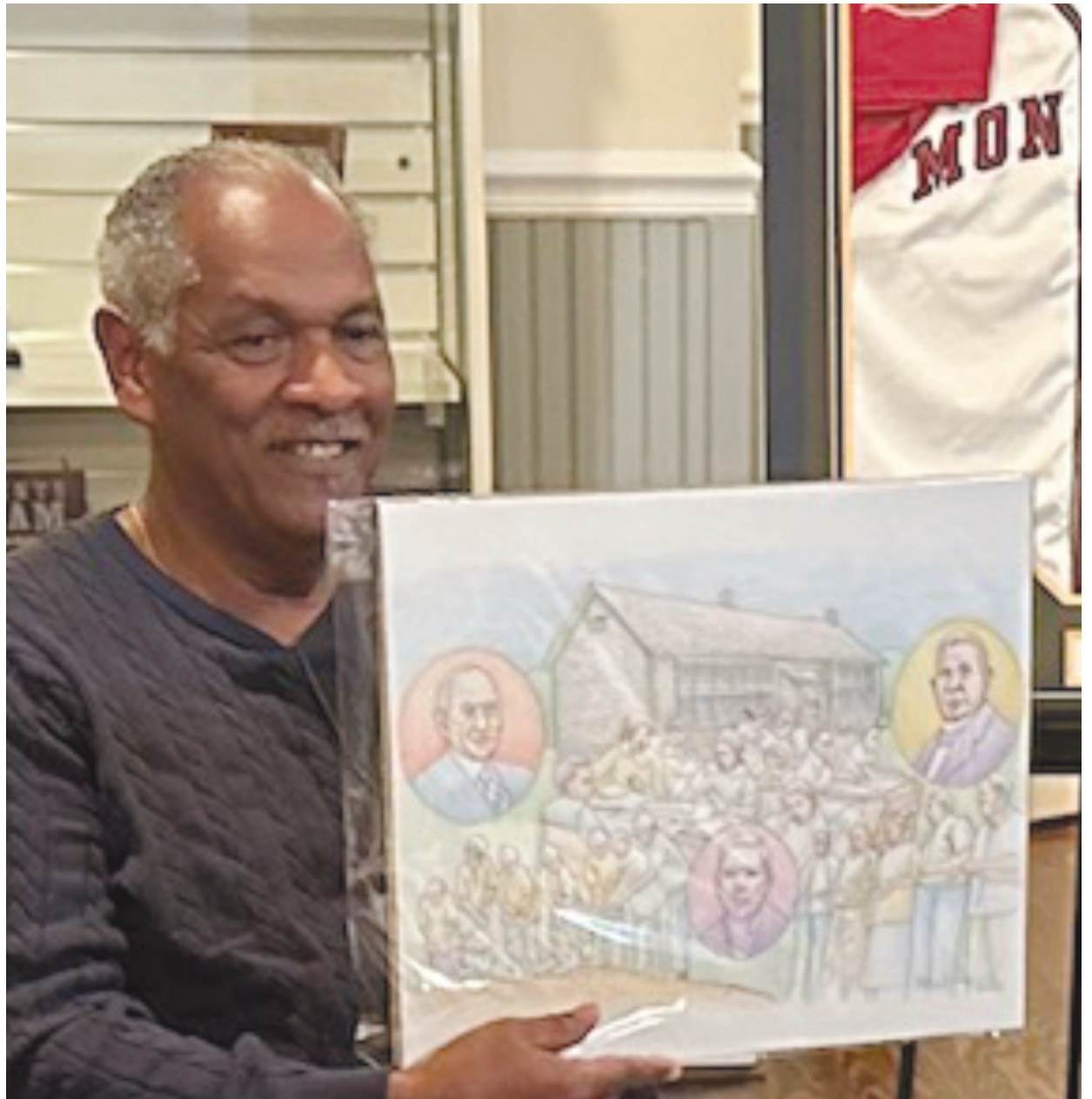
Water bills tend to run higher during this quarter for homeowners who irrigate their properties. The remaining three quarters typically experience less water usage and, thus, reflect lower usage fees.

Expenses reflect increased operating costs, including higher chemical prices and additional regulatory requirements to test for PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). PFAS, often referred to as forever chemicals, are widely used, long-lasting chemicals that can be harmful to human health and pose environmental risks.

The County also implemented accessibility fees in FY26 to undeveloped properties with one or more equivalent dwelling units (EDUs). Note, some areas were already being charged accessibility fees. These fees play a key role in the county’s efforts to establish uniform, transparent rates across the SSAs, so that adequate funding is available to 1) cover current operating and maintenance costs and 2) establish reserve funding to pay for future infrastructure improvements.

Undeveloped properties that are holding EDUs are guaranteed future access to public water and/or sewer, and they play a key role in supporting the operating and maintenance needs of the service areas where they are located. These fees ensure that all properties that benefit from access to a public water and/or wastewater system contribute proportionally

*please see **water** on page 4*



Mural coming to the Germantown School

The Germantown School Community Heritage Center, a restored Rosenwald School located on Trappe Road in Berlin announced the newest station on its walking tour: a mural by local artist Patrick Henry depicting the history and legacy of the Germantown School. The final design of the mural which includes vignettes depicting the history of the school will be installed on the south facing school wall in November with a ribbon cutting planned for Saturday, December 13.

The Germantown School Community Center Walking Tour is an ongoing project and has been sponsored by grants from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA), the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), Beach to Bays Heritage Area, Maryland Coastal Bays, Lower Shore Land Trust, The Humphreys Foundation, The Harrison Group, the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, the Little Fund and donations large and small from our many supporters.

*Pictured is **Patrick Henry** showing a rendering of the mural.*

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Worcester schools attain high rating status

The Maryland State Department of Education released its annual update to the Maryland Report Card website November 4, containing performance data for every school in the State, including eleven schools in Worcester County.

In Worcester County, all eligible schools earned a four- or five-star rating, placing it as the only school system in the State to earn that distinction. Particular standouts in this year's release are the performance of our comprehensive high schools: all three high schools topped the Eastern Shore while Pocomoke and Snow Hill high schools were the 12th and 14th ranked high schools in the State respectively.

Also notable is Pocomoke Middle School, which increased its star rating from three to four over last year by increasing its total earned percent by over five percentage points. Pocomoke Elementary School, also saw significant progress over last year's report with an increase of 4.2 percentage points. The gain marks progress in both Academic markers as well as performance for multilingual learners.

While Ocean City Elementary (OCES) slipped just under the threshold for five stars in this year's report, an important contributing factor to the school's score is chronic absenteeism. Over twenty-six percent of OCES students who were chronically absent (missed 18 days or more) during the 2024-2025 school year included at least one vacation. In response, the school system will reinforce its messaging to families on the importance of regular school attendance.

To receive a star rating, a school must have 45 or more possible points. Some schools may not have possible points for every measure or indicator. In Worcester County, Snow Hill Elementary School did not reach this possible point threshold, which is why the school was not issued a star rating. Additionally, Worcester Technical High School and Cedar Chapel Special Schools do not meet the qualifications for a star rating.

These scores reflect school performance on multiple components. For elementary and middle schools, the system includes academic achievement, academic progress, progress in achieving English language proficiency, and measures of school quality

and student success. For high schools, the system includes academic achievement, graduation rate, progress in English language proficiency, readiness for postsecondary success, and measures of school quality and student success. All schools' calculations incorporate school composite scores on a statewide School Survey, which is based on input related to safety, community, environment, and relationships.

"I am incredibly proud of our schools for earning four- and five-star ratings across the board," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Annette Wallace. "These results reflect the unwavering commitment to excellence by our educators, staff, students, and families. Worcester County continues to be an educational leader in Maryland, and today's report card release is yet another reminder of how our community's investment in public education is transforming lives."

Dr. Wallace added, "While data tells part of the story, what inspires me most is how our schools are helping students rise above barriers every single day. Research may suggest that poverty predicts performance, but in Worcester County, we are proving that when every child is known by name, strength, and need, *potential*—not circumstance—defines success."

Maryland introduced School Report Cards in 2018 for students, parents, educators and community members to better understand how their schools are performing, just as report cards help parents understand how their kids are doing. The goal of the School Report Card is to bring together school data in an easy-to-understand and usable format to help us ask questions, find answers, make decisions, and act.

The School Report Cards can be found on the Maryland Report Card website, MdReportCard.org, as well as more information and data about schools and districts. An update on the latest release of the Maryland School Report Card was made to the State Board of Education on November 4, 2025. The presentation materials for the meeting, which provide statewide context to Worcester County's performance, can be found at <https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/Meetings-2025.aspx>.



Success - This year's Pink Lady Golf Tournament, hosted by the Ocean Pines Ladies Golf Association, raised a total of \$18,657.83.

Funds raised from this annual tournament help pay for mammograms for women who are unable to afford those services. The tournament began 14 years ago and has brought in over \$25,000 to the Women's Imaging Center over the years.

Above are: **Lynn Schneider** and **Janet Stoer**.

Transient slips at golf course proposed

During public comments at the October 25 Ocean Pines Association Board meeting, the proposed transient boat slips were brought up. While still in the planning stages, the four-slip project is being proposed to be installed near the 10th tee of the golf course and allow access by boat to the Clubhouse Bar & Grille. A pathway will lead from the slips to the side of the driving range to the Clubhouse. Minimal to no effects should occur with play on the golf course from these slips.

Slip access will be through the Clubhouse canal from the St. Martin River. The canal width of 94.4 feet is wide enough to navigate in both directions.

Facts about the proposed slips:

Q: Are there any safety issues to occur with these slips?

A: No. The proposed slips will be flush against the Ocean Pines owned bulkhead to not cause any navigational safety. Boats will still have ample space to turn around instead of backing out. As the canal is wider in this area, there are no blind spots.

Q: Will there be any environmental impacts with this project?

A: No. As these are transient slips and only to be used for a limited time, it is not like a marina where the boats are stored overnight.

Q: Will there be any impact on the neighboring properties?

A: All neighboring properties have been notified of the project. The closest dock to the proposed slips is 60' away and can still navigate safely.

Q: How will the slips be maintained?

A: Once installed, the slips will be monitored by golf course personnel and any repairs to the slips will be done by Ocean Pines. A security camera will also be installed to monitor any potential vandalism.

Q: Will there be any noise or disruption from these proposed slips?

A: Noise will be the normal noise heard from other boats entering the canal and no more than any residential property.

The slips will be an enhancement to the customer experience at both the Clubhouse Grille and to the entire community as well.



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Luncheon - The Republican Women of Worcester County (RWWC) held their October General Meeting and Luncheon on Thursday, October 23 at the Worcester County Technical High School. The audience heard from two guest speakers; Nicole Harris, Chair of MDGOP and Colin McEvers, president of Salisbury University College Republicans and Chairman of Maryland College GOP.
Pictured are **Jean Delcher**, president of RWWC, **Nicole Harris** and **Colin McEvers**.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author to read for Wor-Wic

Wor-Wic Community College is inviting the public to a free virtual poetry reading by Tyehimba Jess, recipient of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, on Thursday, November 13, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom.
Jess is the author of two books of poetry, “Leadbelly” and “Olio.” Olio won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, the Mid-

land Society Author’s Award in Poetry and received an Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. Jess will read as part of Wor-Wic’s 50th anniversary celebration.
Visit the events section of www.worwic.edu for more information.

water
from page 1

to the costs to build and maintain that infrastructure (e.g., treatment plants, pump stations, mains). Without these fees, existing, connected users would be required to shoulder all these costs.
Any owner of an undeveloped property that has been allotted an EDU may be able to return the EDU. However, due to capacity limitations and development demands, EDUs may not be available if a property owner decides later to develop the land. Furthermore, the property

owner would be required to buy the EDU back at the cost assessed at the time of purchase. For more information about EDUs, contact Worcester County Environmental Programs at 410-632-1220, ext. 1601.
To learn more about accessibility fees, please contact the Water and Wastewater Division’s billing department at 410-632-0686 and select Option 4.
For detailed information about rates in each of the 11 service areas, visit <https://www.co.worcester.md.us/departments/publicworks/water/charges>.

Suspender humor

It's sometimes difficult being a member of my family. Let me rephrase that. It's difficult for me to be a member of my family. My wife and three children are all wonderful individuals. Yet, there are times when they feel compelled to gang up on little old, innocent, lovable me. They

I'm at the age that I experience the "underbelly slide." You know what I mean: when the waistband of your pants slides south regardless of how tightly the belt is cinched. That happens to me, especially when I'm out in the yard working. Every few minutes I stop to hitch up my pants which provides another benefit -

catching my breath. To make things easier, years ago I made a simple fashion decision. Suspenders. And that's what my family found uproarious. I've never been a suspenders kind of guy, whatever a "suspenders kind of guy" is. But for the sake of comfort, suspenders have advantages that I don't mind exploiting especially when doing chores.

When I clear yard debris a lot of bending is involved. Wearing a belt requires me to stop many times to make things right. Trading the belt in for suspenders made all the difference. As a matter of fact, the suspenders complement the plaid work shirt, jeans and work boots I often wear.

Despite the relief of suspenders, let me share with you a situation that occurred a few years back when I took a break from yard work and went into the house. My wife was Facetiming with our youngest son who at the time lived in Florida. Unassumingly, I walked past the camera. My son noticed the suspenders. "Whoa!" I heard him say. "Dad. Dad! What are you wearing?" By the time I answered, my son was laughing heartily. Why was he laughing I wondered.

"Are those suspenders?" he asked. Then everything clicked. "Yes," I replied. "Why?"

He was gone; laughing too hard to respond. I continued on my way.

Back in the yard about fifteen minutes later my cell phone rang a specific ringtone designated for my daughter who at the time lived in Texas. "Hello," I answered.

"Are you wearing suspenders?" Not, "how are you, Dad." Not, "I miss you Dad." No. "Are you wearing suspenders?" This was followed by laughter and some comments about working the back forty. She even started singing the "Green Acres" theme before I hung up.

Back to work I went, clearing the backyard, enjoying the cool weather

and the comfort of suspenders.

Not a half hour later my oldest son and his then girlfriend (now wife) were at the house. To see how Mother and I were doing? To see if there was anything he could do to lighten our load? Not by a longshot.

"It's true. You really are wearing suspenders!" And with that, my son started laughing that contagious laugh that when he was younger sitting at the dinner table infected everyone so no one could eat.

So, let's review. In short order, my son then in Florida called my daughter then in Texas who called her brother who lives here. Each shared the revelation that dad was sporting suspenders. You would have thought they had found a favorite present under the Christmas tree given the thrill they each got from my suspenders.

They really were raised better.

Later that evening, when my work was done, I slipped the suspenders from my shoulders so they dangled at my side. Again, I didn't give it a thought until I was heading to bed. As I made my way down the hall, I heard my wife behind me say, "Good-night Pa Walton."

Ah, family!



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

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can be merciless. Sharks in a feeding frenzy show more restraint. It matters not at all to them that I'm the patriarch of the family - a reality they often ignore.

You're probably wondering where I'm going with this. Well, let me share a little story with you.

I'll be the first to admit that through the years I've gained weight. I'm no longer the size 30 waist from yesteryear. I've expanded some. Okay, I've expanded more than some.

OCEAN PINES

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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars!




29
NOV

6
DEC

OCEAN PINES 15TH ANNUAL
HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS

WITH SANTA IN THE PARK | WHITE HORSE PARK

Tree Lighting Ceremony | 6:30pm

See the dazzling lights from trees decorated by local businesses, individuals, families, community clubs & neighborhoods. Sip cocoa, admire the tree decorations, listen to local choir groups sing & welcome Santa Claus into town.

Santa in the Park | 7-8pm

Here comes Santa Claus... right down Ocean Parkway to White Horse Park! Santa will be ready to listen to all the boys and girls' Christmas wishes. Photo opportunities available.

2026 Pup of the Pines winner announcement

BREAKFAST W/SANTA

OCEAN PINES COMMUNITY CENTER | 8-11AM

Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, juice, milk, coffee, pastries & fruit. Bring a unwrapped gift for donation to local charity or non-perishable food item for families in need. **\$10 ages 11+, \$6 ages 4-10, free ages 3 & under.** Pay at the door. Purchase photos for a \$5 donation to Ocean Pines Recreation & Parks.

REINDEER LANE GIFT SHOP

OCEAN PINES COMMUNITY CENTER | 8-11AM

Kids ages 12 & under can purchase gifts for family & friends. All gifts are \$5 or less. **Donations needed! Please drop off new or slightly worn items at the Community Center.** Free admission.

SPONSOR A TREE!

Businesses, clubs, families, and individuals are invited to sponsor and decorate a tree!

Sponsors receive a recognition sign at their tree. Trees are 8-10 ft and may be decorated in any theme.

Fee: \$75 returning sponsors | \$100 new sponsors
Call Ocean Pines Recreation & Parks at 410-641-7052 to join!




OCEAN PINES COMMUNITY CENTER | 235 OCEAN PARKWAY, OCEAN PINES | 410.641.7052 | OCEANPINES.ORG

Arts Council presents *Small Treasures*

The Worcester County Arts Council announced its latest featured exhibit, *Small Treasures*, a juried art competition showcasing the beauty, intricacy, and charm of miniature artworks. The exhibition invites artists to explore the intimacy of small-scale creations, drawing viewers in with hidden details, delicate craftsmanship, and imaginative expression.

Artists interpreted the theme in diverse ways, producing everything from tiny landscapes and delicate portraits to intricate still lifes, abstract compositions, and sculptural miniatures. The show highlights a wide range of media and styles, demonstrating the creativity of both professional and emerging artists.

The juror for the competition, John Mosher, a multidisciplinary artist and Associate Professor of Art at Salisbury University, carefully reviewed each submission to select works that best capture the essence of *Small Treasures*.

The exhibit will be on display at the Worcester County Arts Council

Gallery through December 31, offering ample time for the public to enjoy these captivating works.

An opening reception for the exhibit will be held on Friday, November 14, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., with awards presented at 5 p.m.

The public is invited to meet the participating artists, enjoy refreshments, and view the artwork. All pieces are available for purchase, providing a wonderful opportunity to support local artists.

"Small Treasures invites viewers to slow down and appreciate the detail and craftsmanship of miniature art," said Anna Mullis, Executive Director of the Worcester County Arts Council. "We're proud to showcase the talent and creativity of our local and regional artists in this unique and engaging exhibition."

For more information about the exhibit or the Worcester County Arts Council, visit www.worcestercount-yartscouncil.org or call (410) 641-0809.



Visit - Captain Tom Ottenwaelder spoke at November's Ocean Pines Anglers Club meeting.

Above are **Tom Ottenwaelder** with administrator **Rick Kuhar**.

Jolly Roger Amusement Parks continue Black Friday sale

The holiday season kicks off with one of Ocean City's favorite traditions, the Jolly Roger Amusement Parks Black Friday Sale. Join the fun on Friday, November 28 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the SpeedWorld Building on 30th Street, and enjoy up to 50% off all 2026 park passes and select merchandise. It's the best deal of the year and the perfect way to get a jump start on holiday shopping.

"Black Friday is one of the most exciting days of the year for our team," says Andy Fitts, Park General Manager of Jolly Roger Amusement Parks. "We love seeing familiar faces and welcoming new ones, all while helping families make memories that last long after the holidays."

There's truly no better way to get ready for summer in Ocean City."

Guests can take advantage of half-price passes for all Jolly Roger Pier and 30th Street locations, including SpeedWorld, Splash Mountain Water Park, Jolly Roger Amusement Park, and Mini Golf. Choose from two-hour armbands, unlimited daytime, or unlimited nighttime armbands, all up to 50% off. Plus, Splash Mountain Season Passes make the perfect gift for anyone who can't get enough summer fun.

To keep the energy high all day long, enjoy outdoor firepits, along with on-site radio coverage from Froggy 99.9 and Ocean 98, and free refreshments for guests.

Courier Almanac

On November 12, 1954, Ellis Island, the gateway to America, shuts its doors after processing more than 12 million immigrants since opening in 1892. Today, tens of millions of Americans can trace their roots through Ellis Island, located in New York Harbor off the New Jersey coast and named for merchant Samuel Ellis, who owned the land in the 1770s.

The typical small business may be even smaller than many consumers recognize. According to the 2022 Annual Business Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, 49 percent of small employer firms with fewer than 500 workers have between one and four employees. An additional 16 percent of such firms have between five and nine employees. Such data indicates that nearly two-thirds of all small businesses feature nine or fewer employees. That might surprise many consumers, as might the findings regarding the nature of small businesses in relation to ownership. Though it's common to view small businesses as "mom and pop" operations, just 10 percent of small businesses in the United States were jointly owned and operated equally by spouses in 2021.



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Glenn Campbell event at Ocean Pines library

From session player to hitmaker, Glen Campbell became world-famous with songs such as “Universal Soldier” and “Galveston” in the 1960s. Frank DeLucco and Harry Burkett present his six-decade career at the Ocean Pines Branch of the Worcester County Library on Thursday, November 20, at 2 p.m.

The son of an Arkansas sharecropper, young Campbell always preferred picking guitars to picking cotton. He was a prodigy, finding work as a session musician in Los Angeles in 1960. He played on recordings for the era’s greatest stars, including Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and Ricky Nelson. He even toured with the Beach Boys, substituting for Brian Wilson.

Solo success came in 1967 with “Gentle on My Mind,” followed by “By the Time I Get to Phoenix.” His collaboration with songwriter Jimmy Webb, “Wichita Lineman,” is described by many, including Bob Dylan, as the greatest song ever written.

“He and Jimmy Webb were one of the best teams ever,” said DeLucco. “Campbell’s authentic voice and his gui-

tar skills complemented the tone of Webb’s lyrics perfectly.”

The success became almost surreal: Outselling the Beatles in 1968, co-starring with John Wayne in *True Grit* in 1969, and hosting his own network variety show, *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*, on CBS from 1969 to 1972.

“As with many entertainers, getting rich too quickly and the pressures of staying on top increased his use of drugs and alcohol,” added Burkett. “It wrecked his family life and nearly his career.”

When life seemed bleakest, he had another surprise hit: “Rhinestone Cowboy” in 1975.

Campbell eventually toned down his wild ways, performing for another four decades. The documentary *Glen Campbell: I’ll Be Me*, which chronicled his struggles with Alzheimer’s disease during his final tour, was released in 2014. He died three years later at age 81.

For more information on all Worcester County Library programs, check out the Events page at worcester-library.org.



Convention - The Maryland Federation of Republican Women held their Fall Convention at the Ashore Resort and Beach Club in Ocean City on Saturday, October 25. One hundred and ten women from across the state attended and had a full day of business meetings, guest speakers and sharing friendship. **The Republican Women of Worcester County** was the host club with sixteen members attending.

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Bishopville VFD to host events

The Bishopville Volunteer Fire Department will host two fundraisers. The first, a Paint & Sip Night on Friday on November 14. Doors open at 6 p.m. Painting starts at 7 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. The cost is \$45 and includes instruction, all supplies and a glass of wine. Extra wine, food and sodas will be available for purchase. Call 410-713-2110 for more information or to reserve a spot.

The second event is a chicken salad carryout that will occur Friday, November 14 between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. The cost is \$10 per pint. Preorder or more information call 443-880-4944.

Coat, toy drive underway

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City kicked off its annual holiday Toy and Coat Drive, running every Wednesday in November with the exception of November 26. Community members are invited to drop off donations from 9 a.m. to noon in the parking lot of the Ocean Pines Community Center.

Kitty Wrench is leading the coat drive and will distribute collected items to various local community organizations. Jim Spicknall is leading the toy drive with items distributed to Worcester GOLD. Please donate toys unwrapped.

Kiwanis "Lottery Raffle" tickets will also be sold. Tickets are tied to Maryland's daily evening straight Pick-3, with 1,000 tickets numbered from 000-999 available for \$20 each.

NARFE to meet

The local chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) will meet Thursday, November 20 at 10 a.m. in the Ocean Pines community center. For additional information, contact Karleen Hagan at khagannarfe@gmail.com.

NYC bus trip scheduled

Spend a day in the Big Apple with Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks on Saturday, November 22.

Spend a day exploring the Big Apple on your own. Shop, catch a Broadway show, go ice skating, or sightsee – the choice is yours.

The bus will depart from the Ocean Pines Community Center at 5:30 a.m. and arrive in New York City at approximately 10 a.m. Departure from the city is scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$90 per person and include round-trip transportation only.

For more information or to make a reservation, call 410-641-7052.

County announces holiday schedule

Worcester County Government (WCG) offices, including the Worcester County Recreation Center and all five branch libraries, will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 27 and 28 for Thanksgiving Day and American Indian Heritage Day.

All five branch libraries will also be closed November 29.

The Central Landfill in Newark and the Berlin, Pocomoke, and Snow Hill Homeowner Convenience Centers (HOCC) will be closed Thursday, November 27, and standard operating hours will resume Friday, November 28.

The Worcester County Recreation Center will be open Saturday and Sunday, November 29 and 30.

Wallace to address NAACP

The Worcester County NAACP will host Worcester County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Annette Wallace who will discuss county schools and current goals. Dr. Wallace will provide updates on overall student performance and achievement, staffing and recruitment efforts, areas of growth and concern across the district and strategic priorities for the upcoming academic year.

The discussion will take place Thursday, November 20 at 6 p.m. at the 50 Plus Center located at 10129 Old Ocean City Blvd. Berlin.

All are welcome. Bring your questions and ideas. For more information contact Worcester County NAACP at 443-944-6701.



*Pictured are girls' varsity soccer players **Addy Wisniewski**, team captains **Cora McClanahan** and **Olivia Soares** who nominated this meaningful cause, and Coach **Carol Hartnett** show their support for Breast Cancer Awareness during Worcester Wednesday.*

Worcester Wednesday supports health services

On Worcester Wednesday, September 29, students and faculty at Worcester Preparatory School (WPS) came together to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month with a pink dress-down day fundraiser. Participants donated \$5 to benefit the Beebe Medical Foundation and its program offering free and reduced-cost women's health services.

According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, breast cancer death rates in the United States have dropped by 44% since 1989, a remark-

able achievement credited to early detection, advancements in treatment, and decades of awareness efforts. For 40 years, Breast Cancer Awareness Month has inspired millions to act, saving more than half a million lives.

Each month, WPS students nominate charitable organizations for the school's Worcester Wednesday fundraiser. Special thanks to WPS senior Olivia Soares for bringing awareness to this important cause and leading the effort to support Beebe Women's Health Services.



Advertising Sales Professionals

The Courier, a weekly community newspaper seeks experienced advertising sales individuals with strong interpersonal skills to build advertising relationships and assist in publication growth.

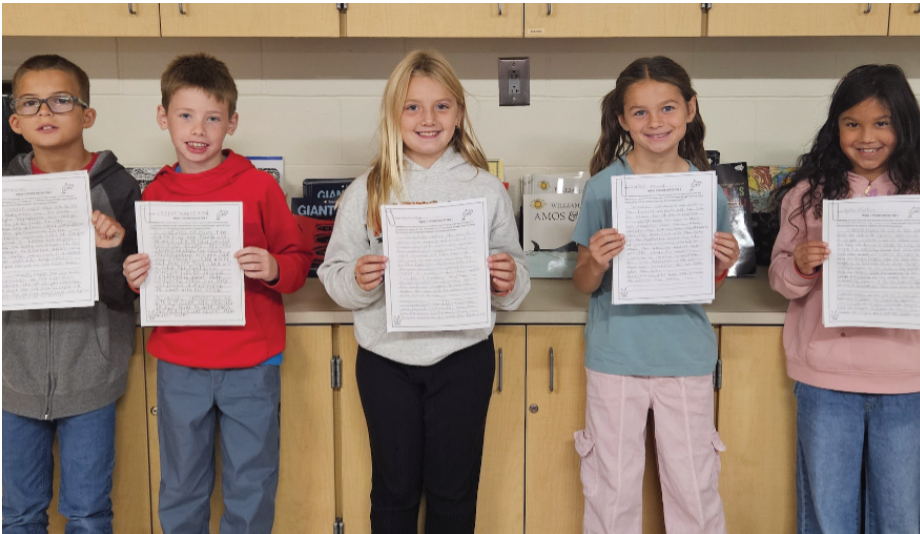
You must be professional, well-spoken, deadline and customer oriented, and highly motivated with strong communication and organizational skills. Work from home.

This is a commission-based position with considerable income growth potential. Enjoy flexible working schedule.

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EOE



Ocean exploration - Third Graders at Ocean City Elementary have been diving into ocean studies. Students in Andrese Foreman's recently became ocean explorers during their reading unit on marine science. As part of their learning, students wrote to inform about **why and how scientists explore the sea**. They used interesting facts and details from the books, *Ocean Sunlight: How Tiny Plants Feed the Sea* and *The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau*, to bring their writing to life.

Pictured (left to right): **Lincoln Michael, Carter Underwood, Quinn Seipp, Harper Howard, and Jaylene Vitjathorn.**

Bingo scheduled

St. Paul's Church will host bingo on Wednesday November 19 at 6 p.m. at The Sterling Tavern in Berlin to raise money for St. Paul's Church Mouse Ministry Outreach, which helps local food pantries, homeless shelters, and other worthy causes. The cost is \$2 cash per bingo card.

Prescribed burn planned for former Bay Club

Do not be alarmed if you see smoke at the former Bay Club Golf Course, now named Libertytown Branch Forest Tract. A prescribed fire will take place as part of our ongoing efforts to improve plant and wildlife diversity while being a beneficial first step prior to the installation of the native grassland meadow. The exact day and time are carefully chosen by the Maryland Forest Service based on factors such as wind, temperature and moisture levels. The exact date will be announced on the Facebook page "Friends of Libertytown Branch."

By adding fire prior to the meadow seeding there will be less grassy thatch to compete with seed germination. The goal is to transition the open spaces back from cool season ornamental species and recover native warm season forbs and grasses that will include gaillardia, echinacea and little blue stem. An increase in diversity will magnify the health and ecologically rich wildlife habitat.

While fire can raise concerns, in this case, it is a crucial step for the

natural succession of the former golf course. There is a high presence of invasive ornamental species on the property and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with support of Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) are monitoring effective means to control Black Fountain Grass, *Sericea lespedeza*, and Canadian Thistle.

This burn will prepare the way for a more diverse range of plants that will enhance biodiversity, support local wildlife, and restore ecological balance. Additionally, the practice of a controlled low fuel fire will reduce the presence of ticks and chiggers in this 18-acre section of the restoration project. Reduced ticks will be a positive for the upcoming spring and summer season. A mowed trail will be added to the new grassland meadow once it is established.

For additional information about projects at the former Bay Club please attend the next community meeting on November 13 at 6 p.m. at the Berlin library.



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Stephen Decatur

By **Dan Collins**

Last month, the US Navy celebrated its 250th anniversary, a milestone that predates the Declaration of Independence. On October 13, 1775, the Second Continental Congress established the Continental Navy that conducted actions during the Revolutionary War mostly by arming existing merchant vessels.

Years later, the Naval Act of 1794 authorized the construction of the Navy's first six frigates. They were three-mast square rigged combat ships that carried up to 60 guns. Our founding fathers authorized the building of these ships to protect our maritime commerce from piracy and to establish respect for our flag on the high seas.

While America was getting organized and finding its identity, Worcester County, Maryland, made a significant contribution to the early Navy. Future high school namesake, Stephen Decatur, Jr. was born in Sinepuxent, now Berlin. He was a man

with great nautical acumen thanks to the tutelage of his father who was himself a commodore during the War of Independence; but, most importantly, Stephen was a man of steadfast convictions to always do it right.

In 1798, at age 19, Stephen Decatur, Jr. began his naval career as a midshipman and rose rapidly through the ranks serving in a time that defined America's persona.

Decatur's exploits read like a Hollywood script. While serving as a cadet he won his first duel (1-0) to preserve family honor. Later, as a young lieutenant, he was sent home from Malta for having an 'unpleasant encounter' with a couple British naval officers.

Subsequently, after returning to the Mediterranean, his adventures during the first Barbary Coast War brought him international notoriety. Decatur led a daring raid on Tripoli where he disguised his ketch, the *USS Intrepid*, as a common merchant vessel including British flags and Sardinian crew

uniforms, and an Arab speaking faux-captain, snuck into Tripoli harbor, boarded and retook a captured American frigate, Philadelphia. The Philadelphia had run aground in poorly charted waters and was overwhelmed by the locals. The young lieutenant and his 60 men, armed with sabers and pikes, secured it in 10 minutes with only one minor casualty.

Since the Philadelphia was not seaworthy, the boarding party set the frigate on fire to keep it out of the hands of North African pirates and egressed under a covering bombardment provided by their sister ship, the Syren.

The action drew international accolades. Kudos from British Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson and Pope Pius VII poured in and President Jefferson promoted him to the rank of captain. On February 16, 1804, Stephen Decatur, Jr. became the youngest captain in the nascent US Navy at 25.

After the successful battle that denied the Barbary Coast pirates the use of the frigate Philadelphia, a second attack was planned. This was to be a massive fleet assault with frigates, brigs, schooners, ketches and gunboats. (FYI: A gunboat was a small vessel with one or two cannons that was powered by either sails or oars.)

Part of the coordinated attack entailed two divisions of gunboats entering Tripoli harbor from opposite sides. The newly promoted Captain Decatur led one of the gunboat divisions. They successfully bombed and then boarded the defending Arab gunboats.

Although the battle went well, it became personal for Captain Decatur. Stephen's younger brother, James, who was commanding another gunboat was mortally wounded by a corsair skipper who feigned surrender and then murdered the unsuspecting James. When word of the atrocity reached the new captain, he took off in pursuit. Catching up with the retreating Tripolitan gunboat, Stephen and his crew boarded the enemy vessel and plunged into swashbuckling mano-a-mano combat.

Amongst the mayhem Stephen sought out the formidable Arab skipper. They fought with sabers and pikes and anything else until Decatur's cutlass broke at the hilt. The corsair then pressed to finish off his American adversary with a knife when Decatur pulled his pistol and exacted family revenge proving once again that it's good

to bring a gun to a knife fight.

Years later, after his spectacular naval career, Commodore Decatur reflected on his accomplishments and uttered his famous after dinner toast, "Our country in her intercourse with foreign nations - may she always be in



the right, but our country, right or wrong."

All veterans have lived by Decatur's mantra, "our country, right or wrong." So the next time that you say "Thank you for your service" whether it be on November 11 or any other time, whether you are addressing a veteran or an active-duty service person, recognize that you're looking into the eyes of a patriot who deserves our sincere gratitude – not just a perfunctory salutation and a limp handshake. He/She did it right.

In 1820, Stephen Decatur, Jr. was killed in his second and last duel (1-1) still affirming what he believed to be right.

There have been many other famous utterances by sailors such as, "I have not yet begun to fight." (John Paul Jones) "Don't give up the ship." (James Lawrence) "Dam the torpedoes, full speed ahead." (David Farragut) "Praise the lord and pass the ammunition." (Chaplain, LTJG Howell M. Forgy) "One small step for man." (Neil Armstrong) "Ah, Houston, we've had a problem." (Jim Lovell)

Besides familiar sound bites, the Navy has also provided us with many patriotic images like the Blue Angels and iconic leaders like Dewey, Nimitz, Rickover, Kennedy and Staubach. Yes, Roger Staubach. It's November. Go Navy! Beat Army!

Stay safe. Stay dry.

Dan Collins can be reached for comment at dancollins.oceanpines@gmail.com

The advertisement features a festive background with Christmas lights and ornaments. On the left, Santa Claus is seated in a red armchair. On the right, an elderly man with glasses and a pink shirt is smiling. A green Home Instead logo is in the upper center. Below the images, the text reads: "BE A SANTA TO A Senior Program".

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Musician to bring free symphony concert to county students

By **Elaine Bean**

Daniel Bowen has a vision. He wants to bring his *Symphony 21* as a free performance for all Worcester County students at the OC Performing Arts Center in 2026. And he wants to do an additional performance for everyone else. But he needs the community’s help to accomplish that vision.

“*Symphony 21* is a full cinematic orchestral experience, more like something you’d hear from a movie score,” Bowen said. “It’s a hybrid of orchestral and electronic and ambient music. We have an orchestra and a band, featured artists, vocalists, visual animations, and synchronized lighting. *Symphony 21* is an interactive immersive experience for families and young people.”

It takes an investment to pull off a large performance that includes 30 musicians and featured artists traveling from across the country, plus a team of lighting techs and sound engineers. Bowen needs to raise \$35,000 to bring in and pay those performers.

To achieve this, Bowen has teamed

up with the Art League of Ocean City, where he was recently named the Orem and Harriet Robinson Fellow for Contemporary Art and Community Engagement. Bowen’s goal for his fellowship is to bring many interactive opportunities to the Art League community and beyond.

The fellowship is endowed by Laura Jenkins in honor of her parents. “Daniel is an incredibly gifted musician,” she said. “His ability to connect his gift with others with energy, empathy, and passion is truly remarkable and so needed in today’s chaotic times.”

Bowen’s *Symphony 21* is a non-profit organization based on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, dedicated to inspiring youth and uniting rural and underserved communities through the transformative power of music. “As the name suggest, we are committed to propelling traditional art forms into the 21st century by exposing youth to modern approaches to music, technology, and visual arts,” he said.

The seeds of *Symphony 21* were



Daniel Bowen

planted in Ocean Pines and Berlin, where Bowen attended Buckingham Elementary and Stephen Decatur High Schools and began composing music. “I wrote the majority of my music there,” he said. “It’s a peaceful place to compose and hear my thoughts and take walks. It was a great nurturing ground for someone like me who feels like art comes through me as a conduit. It’s important to have an environment conducive to creativity, and Ocean Pines was definitely that.”

Bowen thinks big and has from the time he first started playing the organ at St Paul AME Zion Church in Salisbury at age 12, a role he took on full time at age 13. As a composer, he has released two EP’s including “Blood Moon,” an emotive, cinematic soundscape of orchestral and electronic textures, inspired by a dream foreshadowing tough times for humanity.

Beyond his *Symphony 21*, Bowen is a pianist, arranger, composer for film and television, and activist for the arts. He has composed orchestral arrangements for Grammy and Emmy winning producers, including projects for the NBA, NHL, TNT, ESPN, and Bravo. His recent score for the feature documentary film, *Zora Neale Hurston: Claiming a Space*, is stream-

ing on PBS.

In 2019, his success gained the attention of The Kennedy Center, where he performed and give a lecture, and the NAACP awarded Bowen their Community Service Award for *Symphony 21*’s impact on youth in the region.

Bowen had been collaborating with the Art League since *Symphony 21* began in 2017. “We were looking for a place to rehearse, and Rina Thaler [Art League Executive Director] opened the doors of the Arts Center to have our first rehearsal there, ahead of performing at Buckingham Elementary and Berlin Intermediate schools.” That collaboration continues with the goal of a free concert for kids.

“The work that we’re doing [through our non-profit] is far-reaching beyond shows,” he continued. “But this is something we want to do, bring *Symphony 21* to the Ocean City region.”

Donations to bring in the free concert for Worcester County students are being accepted at OCart.org/donate. Select “2026 Symphony 21 Performance” from the drop-down menu.

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The Art League of Ocean City is a 591c3 non-profit organization.



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Public invited to weaving project

The Art League of Ocean City invites the public to two free art classes where they will make wool “felted” creatures that will adorn the completed “Community Weaving Project.”

The two classes are free for ages 13 through adult, and will be held on Wednesday, November 12 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., and on Sunday, December 7 from noon to 2 p.m. at the Ocean City Center for the Arts, 502 94th St. bayside. Walk-ins are welcome, and pre-registration is available at OCart.org/classes.

The Community Weaving Project came to life in 2024 by artist Beth Deeley of Ocean City as a way to celebrate the rewards of a group effort. A large Seascape Tapestry will be the end result of the project, created as individual small weavings by groups around the community, where each participant wove a row or two of the final tapestry. Deeley is now sewing the individual smaller panels together, and she will add the felted creatures and plants made at the Art League as the finishing touch.

“Our year-long Community Weaving Project is almost done,” Deeley said. “Now we need help of the community to create special adornments to make the weaving come to life. No experience is necessary. Just bring your imagination and desire to learn, and be a part of the Community Weaving Project.”

Felting is the art of rolling or pressing raw wool into shapes. For the seascape theme of the tapestry, the public will create aquatic-themed creatures like crabs, snails, and seagulls. Once the tapestry is completed, it will be displayed in a special exhibition in 2026. The project also has a wider goal.

“The bigger purpose [of the Community Weaving Project] is connecting people together,” Deeley said. “The year-long project goal is to bring weaving and fiber art projects into the community to create connection and emphasize the power of group effort.”

The project is an outreach program of the Art League of Ocean City.

Community encouraged to be a Santa to a senior

Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks announced that collection for the annual “Be a Santa to a Senior” program has begun.

The tree and collection box are located in the lobby of the Ocean Pines Community Center.

Donors can also purchase a gift card or any of the items on the Christmas Wish List:

- Body wash & gift sets/personal hygiene items
- Large print crossword or word search puzzle books
- Toiletry items
- Cozy throw blankets
- Socks
- Slippers with hard bottoms
- Sweaters
- Hats, scarves, gloves
- Canvases & art supply sets

Gifts should be dropped off to the Community Center no later than December 10. Gifts do not need to be wrapped.

For more information, contact the Ocean Pines Community Center at 410-641-7052 or rec@ocean-pines.org.

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Travel

Why using a travel agent matters more than ever

By **Cindy McCabe**



Cindy McCabe

In a world where travel apps and on-line booking engines seem to dominate, it's easy to forget the unmatched value of a trusted travel agent. Many travelers assume that planning a trip themselves will save time or money but when the unexpected happens, those same travelers often realize that what they truly needed was someone in their corner.

A professional travel agent is more than a planner. They're your advocate, guide, and safety net. Whether you're booking a once-in-a-lifetime vacation or a quick getaway, having a knowledgeable expert on your side can make all the difference.

If there's one thing seasoned travelers know, it's that travel doesn't always go according to plan. Flights get delayed. Weather changes in an instant. Resorts overbook. And sometimes, nature takes a dramatic turn—like when Hurricane Melissa swept through the Caribbean, leaving travelers stranded and scrambling to adjust their plans.

Moments like these are when the value of a travel agent truly shines. While online systems struggle to process cancellations and phone lines to airlines stretch for hours, a dedicated travel agent is already working behind the scenes. They're rebooking flights, adjusting itineraries, securing safe accommodations, and communicating with suppliers to protect your investment.

Instead of spending hours on hold or trying to figure out your next step in a foreign airport, you have someone at home—or even better, someone who already knows you and your trip details—working tirelessly to get you back on track.

Travel agents do more than just book vacations. They listen, anticipate your needs, and personalize every part of your experience. They know when to recommend travel insurance, which resorts have the best customer service, and what destinations fit your personality and budget.

Unlike an online search, a travel agent takes the time to get to know you. They remember your favorite cruise line, your anniversary date, or that you prefer a bal-

cony suite. That level of personal attention turns a trip into an experience—and it's something algorithms simply can't match.

And when things don't go as planned, that human connection becomes priceless. A travel agent doesn't just "fix" problems. They care about your journey as much as you do.

Choosing a travel agent isn't just a smart decision for your vacation it's a meaningful one for your community. Many travel agencies, like ours, are small, family-owned businesses built on relationships, trust, and passion for travel.

When you book through a local agency, you're supporting people who live and work in your community, families who reinvest in local schools, sponsor youth sports teams, and care deeply about the travelers they serve. Your vacation dollars go further when they stay local, helping small businesses thrive instead of feeding large corporations or impersonal online booking giants.

Family-owned agencies also operate with heart. We celebrate your milestones, share in your excitement, and feel a genuine responsibility to make sure your trip goes smoothly from start to finish. That level of dedication simply doesn't come from an automated website.

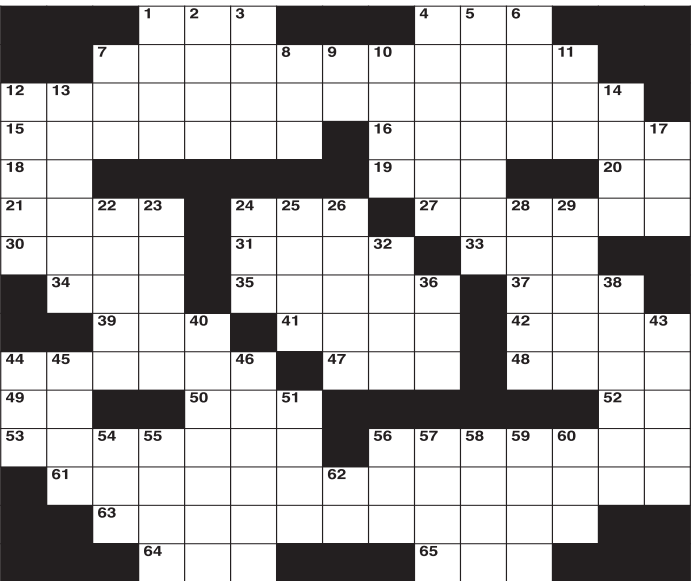
If the past few years have taught travelers anything, it's that uncertainty is part of the journey. Canceled flights, global events, and natural disasters like Hurricane Melissa are unpredictable—but your response doesn't have to be.

A travel agent provides peace of mind, real-time support, and expert problem-solving when you need it most. You're never alone, and you'll always have someone ready to go to bat for you.

So, before you click "book now" on the next travel website, consider this: your dream vacation deserves more than a confirmation number. It deserves care, expertise, and a team that has your back when life and the weather throw a curveball.

Choose to travel smart. Choose to travel with someone who truly cares. Choose a trusted, family-owned travel agency and experience the difference that real people make.

Cindy McCabe is owner of Bethany Travel and can be reached at 302-933-0955. Bethany Travel is one of the top 10 travel agencies in the world selling Sandals & Beaches.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Expression of surprise

4. Keyboard key

7. One who works on lights

12. Notable children's story

15. Fall back into a bad pattern

16. Eye parts

18. Atomic #18

19. Of she

20. Farm state

21. One point south of southeast

24. British media entity

27. Asian garment

30. Drench

31. Expressions of pleasure

33. Turf

34. UK trade union (abbr.)

35. Bleated
37. Fifth note of a major scale

39. Paddle

41. Monetary unit of Italy

42. American classical pianist

44. Shuts down for the day

47. Seize

48. Soluble ribonucleic acid

49. Greeting

50. Some cars still need it

52. Atomic #22

53. Let go

56. Marched in public

61. U.S. residents, Mexicans and Canadians

63. Hostilities

64. Speak aloud

65. River in NE Scotland

CLUES DOWN

1. Razorbill genus

2. Longtime Baltimore tight end

3. Performs on stage

4. Supports a sentiment

5. Rugged mountain ranges

6. Broadway songwriter Sammy

7. Snakelike fish

8. Men's fashion accessory

9. Hospital worker

10. Something to scratch

11. No (Scottish)

12. Volcanic ash

13. Of this

14. American jazz drummer Watts

17. Drop down

22. English dialect

23. Predatory seabirds

24. Imams' deputies

25. Fertility god

26. Fence material
28. Parks and DeLauro are two

29. Distinctive smell (Brit.)

32. Protein-rich liquids

36. Touch lightly

38. Season for Catholics

40. Boat race

43. Police actions

44. Chinese river

45. Waterfall (Scottish)

46. Walk ostentatiously

51. Type of carpet

54. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano

55. Sea eagles

56. An enclosure for confining livestock

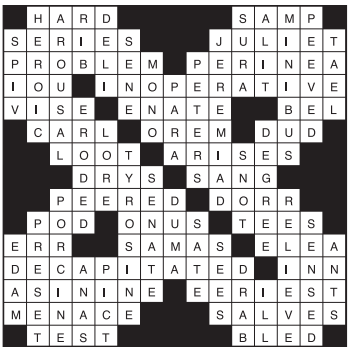
57. Dry

58. An increase in price or value

59. The highest point of something

60. Government lawyers

62. Larry and Curly's pal



Answers for November 5

Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by **Jack Barnes**

Why I Like Retirement!

Question: How many days in a week?
Answer: 6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday

Question: When is a retiree's bedtime?
Answer: Two hours after falling asleep on the couch.

Question: How many retirees does it take to change a light bulb?
Answer: Only one, but it might take all day.

Question: What's the biggest gripe of retirees?
Answer: There is not enough time to get everything done.

Question: Why don't retirees mind being called Seniors?
Answer: The term comes with a 10% discount.

Question: Among retirees, what is considered formal attire?
Answer: Tied shoes.



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