

The Courier

December 3, 2025 Volume 27 Number 13

Viola highlights ongoing initiatives

At the November 22 Regular Board Meeting, Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola shared updates on projects, financial performance, and ongoing beautification efforts throughout Ocean Pines.

Construction on the new South Firehouse remains on track to begin this winter, likely in January or February. OPA is currently obtaining bids, which will be presented to the Board as a recommendation at the December meeting.

Preparations for Phase II of the Golf Course Irrigation Project are underway, with Irrigation Services Inc. staging equipment and materials on-site. Work will take place from November through March on holes 4–8. Golf Maintenance is also preparing the 19th green for use during the project.

The proposal for four transient slips at the 10th tee of the Clubhouse is still in development.

Viola also addressed the recent increase in water and wastewater rates outlined by Worcester County Commissioner Chip Bertino on November 10. The County-approved rate hike will result in average quarterly bills nearly tripling compared to the previous quarter. Viola emphasized the impact on both residents and OPA facilities.

In terms of amenities, Public Works is installing a replacement HVAC unit at the Community Center, totaling \$14,155.54. Additionally, the paver installation at the Bocce Courts is almost complete.

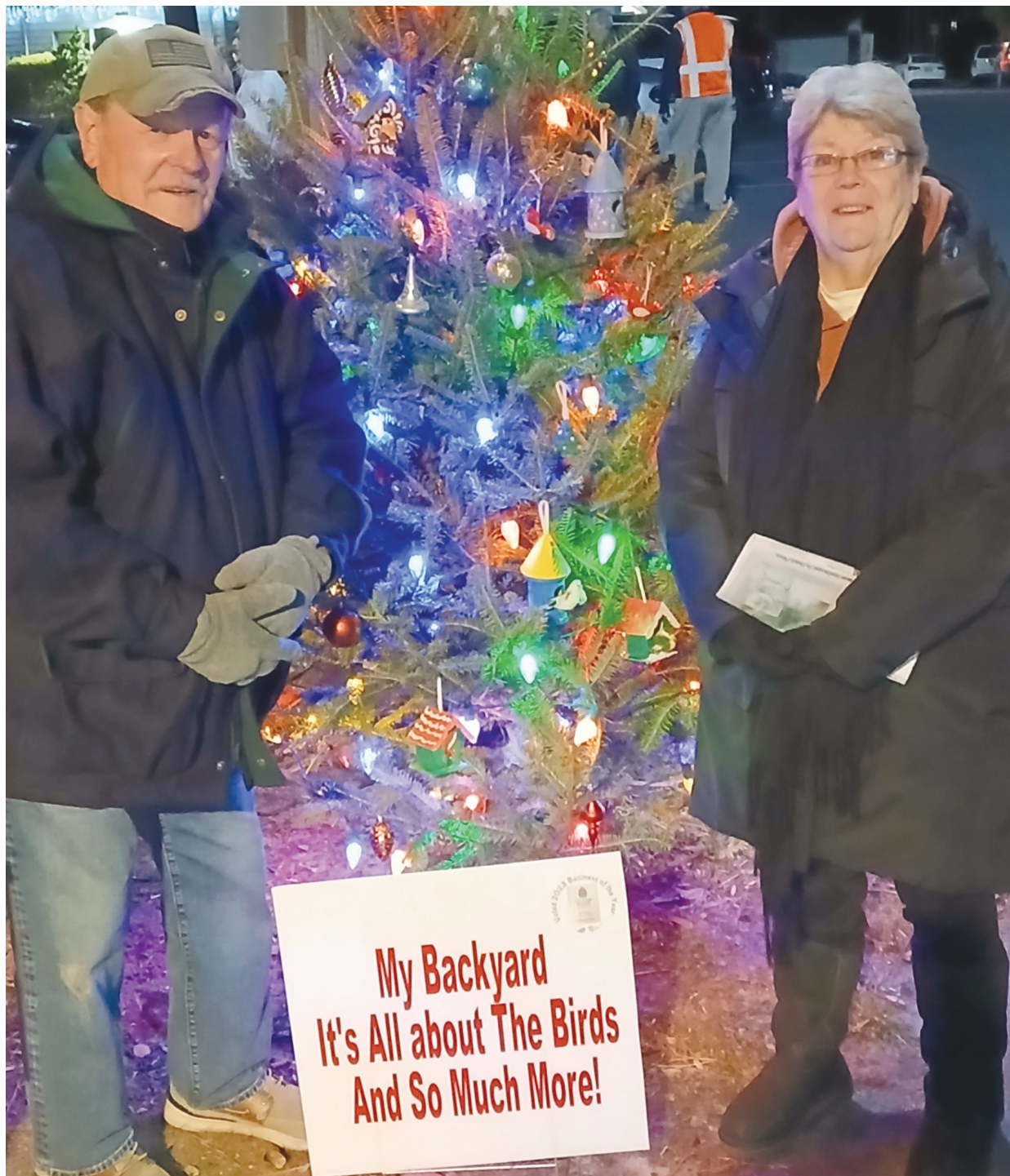
Viola also credited the Public Works team for their hard work in the ongoing holiday beautification efforts. Decorations are being placed throughout Ocean Pines, as well as in the medians on Ocean Parkway.

A Capital Request was proposed at the meeting by Viola to purchase a 2025 Ford Bronco in the amount of \$40,039 to replace the Ford Escape currently used by CPI staff. This request was approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.

OPA also announced that the Ocean Pines App is now live on the App Store and Google Play. The app allows residents to make payments, book tee times, access news, receive notifications, and more.

Work continues on the Fiscal Year 2026–27

please see **report** on page 6





Hometown Christmas - Ocean Pines hosted its annual Hometown Christmas event on Saturday evening. Trees decorated by local sponsors were officially lit during the festivities. Santa arrived at the event courtesy of the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.




Above: **Butch and Maureen Kennedy** flank the tree they decorated for their business, My Backyard. Photo by Chip Bertino

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Dinner - The Worcester County Republican Central Committee's (WCRCC) hosted its Lincoln Day Dinner with guest speaker China expert Gordon Chang.

Pictured are WCRCC members **Linda Moran, Bev Bigler**, guest speaker **Gordon Chang, Harry Wimbrow, Tom Babcock, Carl Smith** and **Susan Ostrowski** (chair).

Vote for 'Trees for the Arts'

The Art League of Ocean City invites the public to tour and vote for their favorite decorated trees at "Trees for the Arts" at Northside Park during Winterfest of Lights. The winning tree wins the \$1,000 grand prize, sponsored by the Town of Ocean City.

Votes are \$1 each, and proceeds from Trees for the Arts votes will benefit the youth outreach programs of the Art League. Votes can be cast in-person at Winterfest. The public can also view the trees online and vote at jotform.com/form/252385123413147.

Trees for the Arts is an indoor pathway at Winterfest of Lights through 16 trees decorated by local individuals, businesses, and groups. The teams of decorators used their creativity and imaginations to turn artificial trees into pieces of holiday art with themes reflecting the group's interests and missions.

"Come stroll through our gallery

of trees decorated so beautifully and creatively by teams made up of our local friends and neighbors," Rina Thaler, executive director of the Art League, said. "Then vote for your favorite trees and support the arts in Ocean City. We'll use the proceeds to reach out and inspire the youth of our community. The tree of the winning organization receives \$1,000 to help fund their mission."

The participating individuals, businesses, and groups are: In Memory of Emilia Rose Carnucci, The Love Blanket Project, Jane Collacchi and Hilary Bronder Hofmann, the Ocean City Beach Patrol, Alley Opps, Old Pro Golf, The Glaze Garden, Hunter's Hope, Princess Royale, and Most Blessed Sacrament School. Also Dinkers & Drinkers, Common Ground Hospitality Group, Happy Jack Pancake House, Park Place Hotel, Fenwick Shores by Hilton, and Wicked Expert of the Eastern Shore.

Winterfest of Lights is open through December 31.

If your organization has an event to promote, send your press release to *The Courier* at thecourier@delmarvacourier.com



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Virtual reality helps prepare future nurses at Wor-Wic

New nurses must be able to handle crises, but even with a range of experiences in clinical rotations, rare emergency cases aren't known for showing up at convenient times. Enter virtual reality, the newest tool for students in the nursing program at Wor-Wic Community College.

Using Meta Quest headsets, students enter elaborate clinical scenarios controlled by their instructors. The experience is immersive and realistic: They can speak with the virtual patient, call a doctor, administer medications, rifle through bedside drawers, adjust the bed and take vital signs.

"You can feel the pulse in the hand controls and listen to breathing sounds through the headset," said Amanda Harding, who earned her nursing degree in August.

As someone who worked as emergency room tech on her way to becoming an ER nurse, Harding says the virtual scenarios held up to real-life experiences and let her practice in a safe way so she would be ready to han-

dle whatever medical challenges her flesh-and-blood patients present. "We've had chest tube scenarios and code blues," she said.

Kari Abubakker, an instructor of nursing at Wor-Wic, says it is a useful tool that gives students extra knowledge alongside their hands-on clinical rotations and classroom experience. "It has gotten rave reviews from faculty," she said. "The instructors can alter the scenarios to see how students react to changes in the patient's status."

While part of the class interacts through the headset, their classmates can observe on a screen in the room and take notes for their turn with a virtual patient.

Instructors in the nursing program can use the tool to give beginning nursing students confidence and experience before encountering real patients, or give experienced students those rare cases so they're ready to step into a job after graduation.

"It is a great tool to have for our students," Abubakker said.



Honor

On Veterans Day, Worcester Prep's Lower School came together in a musical performance to celebrate veterans.

Pictures are WPS fifth grader **Hadley Hagner** with her parents, and guest speakers, Marine Major **Rebecca Hagner** and Marine Captain **David Hagner**.

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Transformation

It will soon look a lot like... the last day of store close-out sale around my house with partially empty boxes and bags strewn here and there as our home transitions into a Christmas wonderland. No less than four trees, each themed decorated, will eventually accent rooms of the house. That's not

cacies of Operation Christmas have multiplied commensurate with the accumulation of decorations through the years. Did I mention the nativity scenes?

Just a side note, when we discussed plans with the contractor who built our house 30 years ago, an often returned-to-discussion-point with my wife was Christmas tree placement. A living room corner was identified and with the exception of one or two holidays, that's where the tree has stood. I mention this only to underscore my wife's focus on holiday decorating.

To give even a quick, oversimplified review of the decorating process in my house would require more words than this space allows. So just a few highpoints. Many framed pictures and

knickknacks, including my collection of elephants and Mopar models, will be gathered up and set aside, eventually to be packed up in the boxes retrieved from the attic that will be emptied of

decorations. Furniture will be moved – a little to the right, a little to the left, a little to the right again. Strings of Christmas lights put away neatly the year before will inevitably require untangling. The main tree will be put up in the living room followed by the “bell” tree in the family room followed by the “travel” tree in the sunroom. Speaking of the sunroom, this space metamorphizes into an intimate Christmas destination all its own making it my favorite holiday hideaway. But I digress.

My role in the decorating process – honed over many years of practice and drill – involves me moving or reaching for items out of reach for my five-foot-two tall wife, fetching whatever is needed – quickly, and remaining quiet and out of the way all other times.

Once the process starts, it takes about three to four days to complete. And I will admit, that when finished, I look around the house, take in how wonderful it all looks and lament that in about 30 days the house will again be in disarray as all of it is again packed away.

It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com



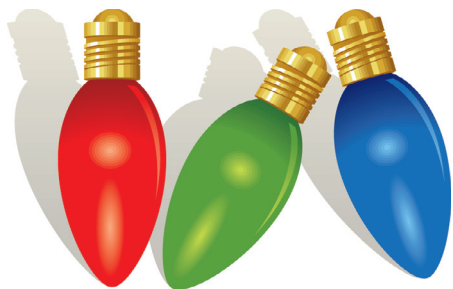
including the trees that will grace the front porch, the back porch and most likely the Piazza. And as if that were not enough, a multitude of nativity scenes of varying sizes and composition will outnumber the forest of trees.

There are displays made of wood, ceramic, pewter, clay, resin and I think brass. One has bears playing all the major characters. In total, there are eight, no nine sets.

That doesn't sound quite right. Let's call it an even baker's dozen just to be safe.

It seems not long ago when my wife and I packed away the decorations from last Christmas, a scene that has played out many times through the years – me standing at the base of the pull-down attic steps handing up boxes and bags to my wife who has over the years developed a system, known only to her, of how things should be handed up. The most challenging items are the elongated, unwieldy plastic Christmas tree boxes which I usually first manhandle by hand up the narrow attic steps until I have to hold on to the handrails. Then I rest the box on my head, akin to an African tribal woman transporting a basket, propelling the box upward, all the while my wife is calling down, “just a little more.”

This is the thirty-eighth year my wife and I – mostly my wife – have decorated our home for Christmas. During the early years, the effort was simple – very few decorations. Not anymore. The complexities and intri-



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Carozza responds to AG offshore wind reply

Senate Republican Leadership criticized Attorney General Anthony Brown for issuing an “evasive and unacceptable” reply to their inquiry about why Maryland is spending taxpayer resources to defend US Wind — a foreign-owned offshore wind developer that relies on state-mandated ratepayer subsidies.



Mary Beth Carozza

In their original letter, Republican leaders asked the Attorney General to justify the use of public funds, outline the costs to rate-

payers, and explain why his office is prioritizing litigation to protect a private corporation’s project. The Attorney General’s response did not address those questions.

“It’s unacceptable that the Attorney General is devoting public resources to defend a foreign-owned wind developer while ignoring the disastrous impacts these projects pose to Maryland’s Coast. Industrializing our ocean threatens coastal tourism, commercial fishing, and the livelihoods of families who depend on both. His weak, non-response is an insult to the communities that will bear the economic consequences,” said Senator Mary Beth Carozza.



Dig - Third grade students in Mrs. Mason-Burt’s class at Ocean City Elementary School had fun digging up, identifying, and assembling “fossil” dinosaur bones in their Science unit, “Animals Changing Through Time.”

Pictured left to right are **Marie Voicu**, **Mohammad Owies** and **Logan To**.

Courier Almanac

On December 3, 1979, the last Pacer rolls off the assembly line at the American Motors Corporation (AMC) factory in Kenosha, Wisconsin.



When the car first came on the market in 1975, it was a sensation, hailed as the car of the future. “When you buy any other car,” ads said, “all you end up with is today’s car. When you get a Pacer, you get a piece of tomorrow.” By 1979, however, sales had faded considerably. Today, polls and experts agree: The Pacer was one of the worst cars of all time.



Saving for retirement ensures people can navigate their golden years with enough money to comfortably say goodbye to working full-time. The earlier one begins to set aside savings for retirement, the more money accumulates. Mass Mutual says a saver at age 22 with a goal to retire at age 65 can achieve total savings of \$2,255,844 before taxes and inflation when putting away \$500 a month for retirement. Waiting until age 32 to start saving the same amount monthly drops the total savings down to \$972,542, while waiting until age 42 shaves it down to \$395,866. When a person starts saving at age 22, the rate of savings increases because of compounding interest over time. The earlier a person starts, the easier it is to end up with a nest egg that can ensure a comfortable retirement. While it may be challenging to think about retirement when just starting out in a career, keeping an eye on the future with smart saving strategies can set people up for financial security later in life.

Advance care planning webinar set

TidalHealth will hold a free advance care planning webinar at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9.

What care would you want if you had an unexpected illness? Who would you want to make decisions for your care? Have you talked about your wishes with your loved ones if you are unable to speak for yourself? Learn about advance care planning, which can help you answer these questions.

Advance care planning refers to making decisions about your healthcare in the future, if, due to injury or illness,

you cannot express these wishes yourself. It is important for adults of all ages to plan for future medical needs now because a serious accident or illness can happen at any age.

To register, please contact Tina Basel at 410-463-9964 or tina.basel@tidalhealth.org; Gigi Pierce at 410-912-6734 or georgette.pierce@tidalhealth.org; or John Tyler at 410-543-7202 or john.tyler@tidalhealth.org. The webinar link will be provided when you register.

report
from page 1

Budget. OPA expects to receive the DMA draft study at the end of November, which will guide finalization. Budget and Finance, followed by Board Review, will take place in December.

Financially, October 2025 results were nearly flat, showing approximately \$6,000 favorability to budget. Viola noted the organization was not expecting the substantial water/wastewater increase, calling it a “high and tight fastball,” but acknowledged that such challenges are part of normal business operations.

Year-to-date financials as of October show a \$335,000 favorable position against budget.

The
Courier

Chip Bertino Publisher/Editor

Mary Adair Comptroller

Linda Knight Advertising Representative

Contributors

Jack Barnes, Elaine Bean Dan Collins, Douglas Hemmick

Robert B. Adair 1938-2007

98 Nottingham Lane Ocean Pines, MD 21811
410-629-5906

thecourier@delmarvacourier.com

www.delmarvacourier.com

facebook.com/TheCourierofOceanPines

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First Friday features art openings

First Friday, December 5 celebrates the holidays at the Ocean City Center for the Arts with two group shows, a small works exhibit, an artisan fair, and special events. The First Friday reception is free and runs from 5-7 p.m. The Arts Center, home of the Art League of Ocean City, is located at 502 94th St. bay-side.

Students from the culinary arts program at Worcester Technical High School under the tutelage of Phil Cropper, the Worcester County Teacher of the Year, will provide complimentary holiday bites. PKS Investments is sponsoring complimentary beverages.

The Thaler Gallery at the Arts Center features the Annual Members Juried Group Show featuring artwork in all media by members of the Art League. Jinchul Kim, artist and Professor of Art at Salisbury University, juried the exhibition and selected the winners, who will be awarded cash prizes.

The Sisson Galleria features the Best of 2025, artwork that won

awards during Arts Center exhibits during the past year. Studio E features Small Works, small in size and affordable in price for holiday giving.

Angela Pierce is showing her still life paintings in the Spotlight Gallery in December. Rich with influences gleaned from extensive travels and study of art history, Pierce's work bridges rigorous technique and contemporary sensibility.

Glass artist Penny Amici displays her creations in the Felber Artisan Showcase. She has been creating uniquely decorated crystal cocktail stemware under the name Vineyard Road since 2001 and also creates with beveled and stained glass.

The Burbage Staircase Gallery at the Arts Center continues a show by Aria Islam.

The annual Artisan Fair fills the Arts Center for two days with hand-crafted items made by local and regional artists. The artists will display their creations during the First Friday art opening from 5-7 p.m. and also on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4

p.m.

Participating artisans include Savitri Khalsa who will be offering her pottery and mosaic jewelry; Theresa Alo, handmade pottery and painted wood; Lisa Guerriero, bottle stoppers, friendship bracelets, and holiday ornaments; and Tia and Tuve Tuve, small metal sculptures.

Also, Joyce Rose, Christmas wreaths and centerpieces; Steven Siorta, hand-crafted wire art; Svetlana McCoy-Rusanova, handmade jewelry; Jason Giusti, blown glass vessels and paperweights; Charlene Wilner, handmade pottery; and Edward Kelleher, handmade ceramics.

On Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the fair continues with the artisans, and adds a homemade bake sale, a make-your-own holiday card craft, and a raffle for an artistically-filled gift basket. The Octaphouse Sweet Eats With a Twist food truck from Twisted Taphouse will be outside. Ocean City Christmas parade-goers are invited to stop by the Arts Center for a free cup of hot cocoa

from a cocoa bar donated by Happy Jack Pancake House.

The art exhibits continue at two Art League satellite galleries in North Ocean City. The main lobby at the Princess Royale Oceanfront, 9110 Coastal Hwy. continues an exhibit by Anabela Ferguson. A second satellite gallery on 94th St. at the Coffee Beanery continues a show of artwork by Gail Stern.

All shows will be on display until Dec. 27. More information is available at www.OCart.org or by calling 410-524-9433.

Concert scheduled

A Christmas concert will be held Saturday, December 13 at 3p.m., at Bethany United Methodist Church located at 8648 Stephen Decatur Highway in Berlin. The second annual concert will present carols, hymns, and traditions to celebrate the Christmas season. All are welcome. Refreshments will follow. For information contact 410-641-2186 or email bethany21911@gmail.com.

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Facts about Pearl Harbor

December 7 is a solemn day marked by remembrance of an event that lives on in the minds of many people,

particularly those who are old enough to remember the ravages of World War II. On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, resulting in more than 3,500 American troops and civilians being wounded or killed. The Japanese attack brought the war much closer to home, shocking the country and the world.

In honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, here's a look at some interesting and surprising details about the attack and Pearl Harbor in general.

1. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor as part of a strategy to expand its empire into Southeast Asia for oil and other vital resources. Japan was threatened by U.S. opposition and the oil embargo placed on the nation by the United States.

2. Pearl Harbor is an American lagoon harbor on the island of Oahu, which is west of Honolulu. It often was visited by the Naval fleet of the United States.

3. Pearl Harbor lies approximately 3,800 to 4,000 miles from Tokyo, Japan. It is much closer to the U.S., at roughly 2,600 miles from Los Angeles, despite Hawaii often being described as centrally located in the Pacific.

4. To catch the Americans by surprise, Japanese ships maintained strict radio silence throughout their trek from Hitokappu Bay to a predetermined launch sector 230 miles north of the Hawaiian island of Oahu, according to the National World War II Museum. Planes lifted off at 6 a.m., followed by a second wave an hour later.

5. The first wave of planes arrived shortly before 8 a.m. that Sunday morning, with hundreds of Japanese fighters descending on the base.

6. Pearl Harbor Tours says many people do not know that Americans fired the first shot the morning of December 7. The Wickes-class destroyer *USS Ward* attacked and sank a Kohyoteki-class midget submarine near the entrance to Pearl Harbor. It was

the first shot fired on that day.

7. Japan's plan was to destroy America's Pacific Fleet so the Americans would not be able to fight back. Radio silence only was broken once Captain Mitsuo Fuchida was perched above the American ships and shouted, "Tora! Tora! Tora! (Tiger!, Tiger! Tiger!)," the coded message informing the Japanese fleet that Americans were caught by surprise.

8. All nine battleships in Pearl Harbor sustained significant damage. All but the *USS Arizona*, *USS Oklahoma* and the *USS Utah* were eventually salvaged and repaired.

9. Half of the 2,403 U.S. personnel who perished at Pearl Harbor were aboard the *USS Arizona*. The sunken battleship serves as a memorial to all who died in the attack.



10. The Japanese suffered casualties during the attack. One hundred twenty-nine Japanese soldiers were killed.

11. The attack on Pearl Harbor was the catalyst for the U.S. to enter World War Two. On December 8, 1941, Congress approved President Roosevelt's declaration of war on Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy (Japan's allies) declared war against the United States.

12. Japan misjudged the American resolve and resilience, as well as the Americans' capacity to wage a protracted war. Nearly four years later, World War II would come to a close after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 7 and August 9. More than 100,000 Japanese were killed and thousands more injured by radiation sickness.

The attack on Pearl Harbor is a day that has lived in infamy, marking not only a reason for the U.S. to get involved in World War II, but showing the world that Americans would not be bullied into submission.



Garden Club decorates State House holiday tree

Four Worcester County Garden Club (WCGC) members recently traveled to Annapolis and joined other Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland as they placed decorated holiday trees or wreaths in the Rotunda of the Maryland State House. The theme for the Worcester County tree was "Let It Sow! Let It Sow! Let It Sow!" and was decorated with seed ornaments made by members during its October meeting. Maryland First Lady Dawn Moore viewed the tree and presented a certificate of appreciation to the club from the Office of the Governor. The holiday display is on view through January 1, 2026.

Pictured are (l to r) WCGC members **Shirley Kelly**, **Sue Ann Hudson**, **Pat Lohmeyer Bell** and **Jan King**, First Lady **Dawn Moore**.



Honored - Preservation Maryland selected the board of the Germantown School Community Heritage Center for its 2025 Best of Maryland George T Harrison Outstanding town Volunteer Award.

The award, Preservation Maryland's oldest award, recognizes outstanding volunteer contributions to historic preservation in Maryland. In describing their selection, Preservation Maryland recognized the board's "tireless efforts in the restoration and interpretation of the Rosenwald School in Berlin, Maryland" noting that those efforts have "ensured that this important story of African American Education endures."

The award was presented at the annual Preservation Maryland Phoenix Rising Award dinner.

Pictured are **Nicholas Redding**, (president, Preservation Maryland), **Karen Pregarman**, (secretary, Germantown School Community Heritage Center Board), **Barbara Purnell** (president, Germantown School Community Heritage Center Board), **Dr. Clara Small** (Historian Germantown School Community Heritage Center; Professor Emerita Salisbury University).

Real or artificial? The Christmas tree debate continues

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

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

Real tree

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

or three may be planted in their place. Buying a real tree from a business nearby also supports the local economy.

Cons: Real trees can be messy and require upkeep like daily watering. Cutting down a tree and bringing it home can help guarantee freshness, but there is really no way to know when trees at Christmas tree lots were cut down. This means that needles can begin falling the moment the tree is placed in the living room. Another thing to note is that live trees can't be placed just anywhere. They shouldn't be next to fireplaces or heat sources, where they can dry out prematurely and pose a fire risk. A real tree also might have unwelcome bugs or animals hiding within its branches. According to Penn State Extension, anything from spotted lanternflies to spiders to aphids to bark beetles or lice may be on a real tree.

Artificial tree

Pros: Artificial trees can be convenient because they are easy to assemble, disassemble and store. Plus, you don't have to venture out each year to get one. Unlike real trees, artificial trees do not require watering or vacuuming to manage fallen needles. Since artificial

trees can be reused for numerous seasons, they may be more cost-effective than real trees. Artificial trees can last anywhere from six to 10 years, but that life span depends on the quality of the tree and how well it is maintained. Artificial trees also guarantee a uniform, pleasing look year after year.

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

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



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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

The month of December has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in December 1925.

The Farmer-Labour Party is dissolved just two hours after its formation in Japan on December 1. The dissolution was ordered by the Japanese government, which accused the party of harboring a secret communist agenda.

The border delineating Northern Ireland and Ireland is established on December 3 when representatives of both countries sign the Northern Irish Border Agreement.

The George Gershwin composition "Concerto in F" is performed for the first time on December 3. The performance in New York's Carnegie Hall is conducted by Walter Damrosch and features Gershwin on piano.

A counterfeiting scheme is uncovered by the Banco de Portugal on December 4. An alert bank teller tips off the bank, which ultimately discovers that wealthy entrepreneur Arthur Virg'lio Alves Reis is the mastermind behind the scheme. Reis was eventually sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The Pottsville Maroons defeat the Chicago Cardinals in front of 6,000 fans on December 6 in a game the press depicted as the championship of the National Football League.

Russian Orthodox bishop Peter of Krutitsy is arrested on December 9. Peter is charged with conspiring with Russian emigres in the west. Peter is ultimately executed by shooting on October 10, 1937.

George Bernard Shaw is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on December 10.

Karam Chand and Kartari Chand tie the knot in India on December 11. The Chand's marriage lasts 90 years and 291 days, and is the longest marriage recorded. Karam Chand passed away in 2016 and Kartari in 2019.

Communist politician Benjamin Gitlow is pardoned by New York Governor Al Smith on December 11. Gitlow was convicted for publishing a manifesto calling for the overthrow of the U.S. government, which Governor

Smith characterized as a "political crime" upon issuing his pardon.

The Qaja dynasty, which had ruled Iran since 1789, comes to an end on December 12 when the country's Parliament declares General Reza Khan Pahlavi Prime Minister and installs him as Shah of Iran.

The Fascist government in Italy signs a secret pact with Britain on December 14. The pact is designed to reinforce Italian dominance in Ethiopia.

The national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega is founded at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania on December 16.

U.S. Army Colonel Billy Mitchell is convicted on eight charges of insubordination on December 17. Mitchell was critical of military leaders for investing in battleships and had argued for greater investment in air-based defenses.

Reichstag President Paul Lšbe speaks out in favor of partial prohibition in Germany on December 19.

George Edwin Taylor passes away on December 23 at the age of 68. Taylor was the first African American presidential candidate, running for the highest office in the United States as nominee of the National Negro Liberty Party in 1904.

Law No. 2263 is passed by the Italian parliament on December 24. The law states that the decisions of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and his government were not subject to legislative review and could only be overruled by order of King Victor Emmanuel III.

A Christmas story published in the London newspaper The Evening News on December 24 identifies a children's character as "Winnie-the-Pooh" for the first time. The character had previously been referred to as "Edward" in a poem published in Punch magazine in 1924.

The Turkish government passes a law identifying the Gregorian calendar as the official calendar for all government affairs on December 26. The use of the Islamic calendar in government affairs also is banned.

The Japan Sumo Association is

please see **century** page 12



Duty - In honor of Veterans Day, Ocean City Elementary School second grade students from Melanie Coleman's class enjoyed a live zoom from Lieutenant Colonel Will Oles, the Director of Operations at MCAS Miramar. Oles is a relative of Melanie Coleman. Lieutenant Col. Oles taught students all about his duties as a Marine, including flying Osprey for three deployments and now a part of the air traffic control at Miramar Marine Corps Base, in San Diego, CA.



Giving thanks - In celebration of Thanksgiving, students and faculty members at Ocean City Elementary decorated feathers and wrote about the many things for which they are grateful. The feathers were then added to a very plump and thankful turkey.

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Hometown holiday marketplace at Farmers & Artisans Market

It's the most wonderful time of the year, as the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is preparing for its annual Hometown Holiday Marketplace at White Horse Park.

This year's market takes place December 6, 13, and 20, from 9 a.m. to noon each day. Enjoy the sound of holiday tunes while visiting.

At the bakery shops, the sweet aroma of fresh-baked cookies and dinner rolls wafts through the air, making everyone's mouth water. "Our talented bakers are working overtime to create the most scrupulous treats for Santa Claus himself!" says David Bean, market manager. "From classic sugar cookies to gingerbread men, they've got the holiday baking scene covered." Bean adds.

The farm stand at Stag Run Farm and pop-up greengrocer shop of D.J. David are bursting with colorful fruits and veggies, perfect for creating any bountiful holiday feast. "Our fresh cranberries add a pop of color to our shop displays, and the selection of fresh herbs like sage and rosemary will make your holiday meal sing!" David Joseph Deacon, co-owner of D.J. David Greengrocer.

As shoppers venture through the market, the scent of spices and herbs is sure to bring shoppers to JABBS Seasonings. Janice and Bill Curtis offer up their spice blends, infused oils, and vinegars with holiday magic. "Add a pinch of this, a dash of that," Janice Curtis says. "Your holiday meals will be pure perfection!"

Meanwhile, Longridge Gardens and Stone Cottage Flower Farm have conjured up stunning centerpieces, wreaths, and garlands, featuring fresh greens, seasonal florals, and all things

shiny and bright.

And make sure to keep an eye out for Ms. Claus herself, as she loves to make surprise visits to the Marketplace with her mischievous elves!

Laughter and holiday music fill the air as you shop and savor the flavors of the season. Come one, come all, and let the holiday magic of Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market warm your heart!

For more information, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/farmers-artisans-market.

Dr. O'Hare joins TidalHealth Urogynecology

TidalHealth welcomed board-certified urogynecologist Peter G. O'Hare III, MD, to TidalHealth Urogynecology in Ocean Pines. He is the Director of the Division of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at TidalHealth.



Peter O'Hare III

In his busy clinical practice, Dr. O'Hare works with women of all ages to diagnose, manage and treat their pelvic floor disorders, such as prolapse and incontinence. He offers a wide variety of treatment options that cater to the individual needs of his patients and is an expert surgeon trained in minimally invasive surgery and the Da Vinci® robotic surgery system.

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please see *ohare* page 12

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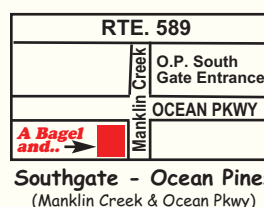
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Significant traditions of popular December holidays

December is a festive time of year, and that jovial atmosphere is thanks in no small part to the many holidays that dot the calendar over the twelfth and final month of the year. December holidays are unique from one another, and each boasts its own meaningful traditions that can make celebrations even more special.

Chanukah: The eight-day Festival of Lights is steeped in tradition. Oil plays a prominent role in the miracle at the center of the holiday, so one Chanukah tradition involves eating foods prepared in oil, including latkes (potato pancakes). The lighting of a different candle of the menorah each night during the festival is a symbolic tradition, and many adherents to the Jewish faith place their menorahs in a prominent location in their homes, such as a front bay window. Children may play with a dreidel at various times during the festival of Chanukah, and gift exchanges are a common tradition as well.

Christmas: Many families have their own unique Christmas traditions, but there’s also many that transcend family ties. Christmas trees are a focal point of holiday decor, and many families make it a point to choose a live tree together each year and then return home and decorate the tree in each other’s company. Families who prefer artificial trees also may decorate their trees together. And just like a menorah may be displayed in a front bay window, many Christmas celebrants place their Christmas trees in a spot where the evergreen, artificial or not, can be seen from the street. Baking to-

gether as a family, writing letters to Santa Claus, using Advent calendars to count down to the birthday of Jesus Christ, and gift exchanges with loved ones are some other notable Christmas traditions.

Kwanzaa: A celebration of African American culture and heritage, Kwanzaa is a weeklong commemoration that features many meaningful traditions. Each day during Kwanzaa, celebrants light a candle in the Kinara, a candleholder unique to the holiday. Each candle symbolizes one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa, which the National Museum of African American History & Culture notes include Umoja (Unity), Ujima (collective work and responsibility) and Ujamaa (cooperative economics). Decorating is a popular holiday season tradition, and celebrants of Kwanzaa engage with this custom by decorating their homes with African and African American works of art and by displaying a Ghanaian textile known as kente.

New Year’s Eve: The month of December ends with a celebration of the previous 12 months and excitement for the year ahead. New Year’s Eve traditions include staying up late until midnight and counting down the final seconds of the year. Some do so publicly at bars and restaurants or in notable locales like Times Square, where revelers count down to the new year as the famed ball begins its descent over the final 60 seconds of the year. Champagne for adult celebrants and sparkling cider for youngsters may be often hoisted in a toast to the year past and in celebration of what’s to come.



For the arts - The inaugural “Color Run for the Arts” took place on November 15, at Veteran’s Memorial Park in Ocean Pines. The event included a 5K race, a children’s run, a two-mile walk, artisans, and food trucks. The event was a fundraiser for the non-profit Art League of Ocean City.
Pictured: **Courtney Blackford** finishes the first leg of the 5K race.

Fire Marshal Report

West Ocean City residential fire

At approximately 4:28 p.m. on November 24, 2025, the Ocean City Fire Department, along with mutual-aid units from Berlin and Ocean Pines were dispatched to a reported residential structure fire at 12704 Old Bridge Road in West Ocean City.

Responders arrived to find smoke conditions inside a single-story residential cottage. Firefighters made rapid entry and located an adult occupant inside the home who was unable to evacuate. The individual was removed from the structure and immediately provided medical care. Due to the severity of injuries sustained, the patient was transported by the Maryland State Police Aviation Command to a Baltimore-area hospital for advanced treatment.

An investigation by the Worcester

County Fire Marshal’s Office determined the cause of the fire to be careless smoking in bed.

“Ocean City firefighters acted swiftly and decisively in challenging conditions,” said Fire Marshal Matthew Owens. “Their rapid intervention gave this individual a fighting chance.”

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founded on December 28.

The first attempt at a global New Year’s celebration is made via international radio on December 31. Musical entertainment and greetings from various consuls general from an assortment of foreign countries are sent from New York.

ohare
from page 11

pelvic surgery, Dr. O’Hare is an accomplished researcher whose research interests include overactive bladder syndrome, pelvic organ prolapse, stress urinary incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction.

Dr. O’Hare is board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology, as well as urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery. He earned his undergraduate degree in neuroscience from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, and his medical degree from the American University of Integrative Sciences. He completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology, followed by a three-year subspecialty fellowship in urogynecology and

reconstructive pelvic surgery at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia.

After completing his training, Dr. O’Hare joined MedStar Health and served on the faculty at Georgetown University School of Medicine. He has also worked in private practice with Capital Women’s Care and trained OB/GYN residents at George Washington University.

Dr. O’Hare is originally from New Jersey. He is married and has three children. Outside of medicine, he enjoys spending time with his family and two dogs, participating in a variety of outdoor activities and sports, and traveling.

TidalHealth Urogynecology is located at 11107 Cathage Road, Suite 103, Berlin, MD 21811. To schedule an appointment, call 410-912-5674.

Chief Arnold Downing announces retirement

The Town of Berlin announced the upcoming retirement of Chief of Police Arnold Downing after over three decades of service to the Berlin community. Chief Downing began his career with the Berlin Police Department (BPD) on August 26, 1991, and was appointed Acting Chief of Police on February 17, 2000. He was officially appointed Chief of Police on December 1, 2002, becoming both the first African American administrator and the first African American Chief of Police in the department's history.

Throughout his career, Chief Downing championed the development of specialized units within the BPD. Under his leadership, the department strengthened its operational capacity through SWAT, which assisted with the Baltimore riots in April 2015 and completed more than fifty successful missions. In addition, during Chief Downing's tenure, the department added a traffic reconstruction unit, five K9 units, a drone Unit, a Defensive Tactics Instruction Team, a Firearms Training Unit, expanded peer support and well-

ness initiatives, and implemented a speed camera program. Chief Downing also advocated for enhanced officer benefits, including enrollment in the Law Enforcement Officer Pension System (LEOPS), the Take-Home Car Program, specialized pay for technical and investigative roles, and additional pay incentives such as shift differential, inclement weather pay, special holiday pay, and compensation for fluency in Spanish. One of the most significant accomplishments during his administration was the opening of the new Berlin Police Station in 2018, a major investment in modernizing public safety infrastructure and preparing the department for future growth.

In addition to his departmental leadership, Chief Downing has been a tireless advocate for vulnerable children and families. He is a founding member of the Worcester County Child Advocacy Center (CAC), formerly known as the C.R.I.C.K.E.T. Center, which has achieved national accreditation and continues to serve as a vital resource for abused and neglected children. His service with the CAC, including roles as President and Vice President, earned him recognition as the 2009 Heroes of Child Protection Community Partner of the Year Award. He has also served as a board

member of the Lower Shore CASA
(Court Appointed Special Advocates)
and a board member of the

Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, including terms as President and Treasurer, helping guide key initiatives that support youth and families across the county.

Reflecting on his career, Chief Downing shared, “I’m proud of the advocacy work for abused and neglected children in Worcester County that I have been allowed to assist in accomplishing. The development of a community policing approach that fostered partnerships and mutual respect was highlighted annually with the Tri-County’s best National Night Out. I am also proud to have assisted with obtaining a crosswalk at US Route 113 and Bay Street and helping to change the light sequence to create a safer intersection.”

During his tenure, Chief Downing served on the Maryland Municipal League Police Executive Police Association Executive Board in leadership roles including President, Vice President, Secretary, and Sergeant of Arms. Additionally, he previously served on the Maryland Municipal League Board of Directors, Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, Worcester County Bureau of Investigation,

and Wor-Wic Community College Criminal Justice Program Advisory Committee. Chief Downing's distinguished service has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Alcohol and Other Drug Task Force Award in 1993, the "Charitable Soul" honor from The Dispatch's Shore Stars Awards in 2012, the Sun Award from Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services in 2014, the Coastal Style Magazine Public Safety Official of the Year Award in 2020, and the Tri-County Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition Worcester County Award in 2023.

Mayor Zack Tyndall expressed the Town's gratitude for Chief Downing's decades of service, stating, "Chief Arnold Downing has dedicated his career to protecting and uplifting the people of Berlin. His commitment to community-centered policing, officer wellness, youth advocacy, and public safety has left a lasting mark on our town. We are a stronger, safer, and more connected community because of his leadership. On behalf of the Town of Berlin, I want to express our deepest appreciation for Chief Downing's decades of service and his unwavering dedication to our citizens and officers. We wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement."



**Chief
Arnold Downing**

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Doves

Doves are a group of birds in the Columbidae family. They are closely related to pigeons, which also share the same family. Technically speaking, people often refer to some pigeons as “doves” and vice versa.

Usually, doves are smaller members of the family, while pigeons are larger. There are over 300 different species of pigeons and doves.

Most doves have relatively stout bodies, with short legs and short beaks. They all have a similar shape, though their plumage varies drastically from species to species. Some doves are uniform in color, while others have many different colors and patterns.

Their coloration also varies drastically in brightness. For example, the African collared dove is a uniform tan color, while the pink-headed fruit dove has a bright pink head and neck, a white collar, and a green body.

Doves live in a wide variety of different habitats, from tropical rainforests to deserts. Different species usually live in different ecosystems. Some species live only in the rainforests of Brazil, while others live across meadows and grasslands of North America.

These birds inhabit nearly every landmass on Earth, with the exception of Antarctica, some areas of the Sahara Desert, and the northernmost reaches of the Arctic Circle. They are a varied and diverse group of birds.

Some species live across massive expanses of land, while others inhabit a tiny area of an island or group of islands. There are dove species through-

out North, Central, and South America, as well as Eurasia, Africa, Australia, and the surrounding islands.

Most dove species are herbivores, and eat primarily plant matter. Their exact diet varies based on the species and region that they live in. Some doves eat primarily fruits and berries, while others eat seeds and grains.

Those that feed on grains and seeds usually forage on the ground, while

those that eat fruit typically forage in the trees and bushes. Some species also eat insects and other invertebrates, like spiders, flies, moths, snails, and more.

Human impact on these birds varies drastically from

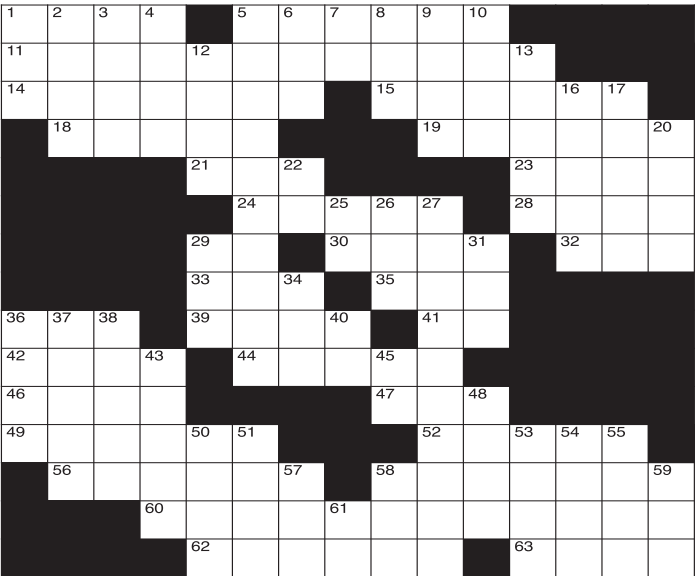
species to species. Several dove species thrive in human-disturbed areas, like cities, parks, gardens, and farmland. Other species do not do so well with human interaction.

Human activity has driven several species to extinction. Doves living on islands are at an exceptional risk to human disturbance. Their primary threats are habitat destruction, hunting, invasive/introduced species like rats and cats, and more.

Humans have domesticated some species of doves, including the diamond dove and the ringneck dove.

Some doves make good pets. Domesticated species are friendly and make good companions, but you should not keep wild species as pets. In most places, it is illegal to keep wild dove species as pets.

-animals.com



CLUES ACROSS

1. Dough made from corn flour

5. Rise

11. Gratitude

14. A low wall

15. Kidnap

18. A cup golfers want to win

19. Outgoing

21. “Partner” to flow

23. Former Michigan coach Brady

24. Proverb

28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two

29. Helps a body recover

30. Baseball Cy Young winner

32. Very fast airplane

33. Offensive baseball stat
35. Body of water

36. Record of one’s heartbeat

39. Signs a contract

41. Atomic #24

42. Bind securely

44. French Jesuit theologian

46. Fragrant brown balsam

47. Post office box

49. Sells tickets at inflated prices

52. Places to hang coats

56. Jewish salutation

58. Yellow fruits

60. Poorly educated

62. Microorganism

63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

1. A way to plan

2. Three-banded armadillo

3. Mobile

4. Romanian city

5. Making sour

6. Take a seat

7. “The Golden State”

8. When you hope to arrive

9. Pointed ends of pens

10. Extinct flightless bird

12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword

13. Nape of neck

16. Problems (Spanish slang)

17. Narrow carpet

20. To avoid the risk of

22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)

25. Equally

26. Traditional cars still need it

27. Eligible voters
29. Greek alphabet letter

31. Body part

34. Referee-declared outcome

36. Means to moving money

37. Popular footwear brand

38. Cockatoo

40. NFL’s big game

43. Botswana currencies

45. News-reporting organization

48. Batman villain

50. Urgent request

51. Not all

53. Hallmark’s specialty

54. Knot in a tree

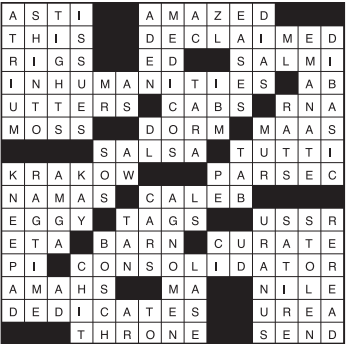
55. Satisfy

57. Notable space station

58. Baby’s dining accessory

59. Stitch clothing

61. ___ and behold



Answers for November 26



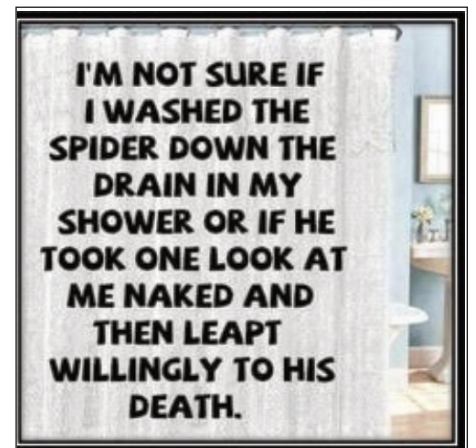
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