

The Courier

January 14, 2026 Volume 27 Number 17



Fundraising fun - In honor of raising \$27,197 during the Ocean City Elementary PTA's second annual Boosterthon fundraiser, principal **Julie Smith** and assistant principal **Jane Chisholm** got pied in the face by the top two fundraisers in each grade level.

There were many levels of incentives the students and their families worked towards, some of which were individual class prizes and others, whole school prizes. Among the prizes students earned ice cream for raising \$5,000, a map painted on the playground blacktop for \$10,000 and a kiln for the art department for raising \$15,000.

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Bingo for Babies fundraiser set

Help support the Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health located in Berlin by playing Bingo for many opportunities to win money for yourself. The Grace Center is a non-profit organization founded to support women throughout their pregnancy and beyond in order to create a safe environment for women and the child they give birth to. Services to these women are provided at no cost to them.

Throughout the month of January, the Knights of Columbus located behind St. Luke Church in Ocean City (9901 Coastal Highway in Ocean City) will dedicate all profits from their regular Friday night Bingo games to "Bingo for Babies" to benefit the Grace Center. You can play every game for the base price of \$25. Cash prizes are awarded for every game. A jackpot game at the end of the evening is worth up to \$1,000 for a cover-all. Doors open at 5 p.m. with games beginning at 6:30 p.m. Space is limited so come early. Refreshments are available for sale and will also benefit the Grace Center.

Boating course offered

Start the new year right. This is a great time to refresh boating skills and plan for a fun and safe boating season. The safe boating course offers tips on boat maintenance, care and storage.

The Maryland Safe Boating Course is taught by certified instructors from the Ocean City Coast Guard Auxiliary. The comprehensive class covers all the required material plus additional information on local waters and nautical navigation.

The Maryland Boating Safety Education Act requires that anyone born after July 1, 1972 possess a Maryland Basic Boating Safety Certificate to operate a boat in the state of Maryland. Those attending and passing the class will receive a Maryland Boating Certificate which is valid in all states.

The course will be taught at the Ocean Pines library on February 10 and 11 between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. and 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. respectively.

A fee of \$20 covers the cost of the course and materials. Checks should be made payable to USGCAUX 12-05 and mailed to USGCAUX 12-05, PO Box 1682, Berlin, MD, 21811. Payment via PayPAL is also accepted.

For more information or to register please contact Barry Cohen at 410-935-4807 or E-mail at CGAUXOC@gmail.com.

Discounted film festival tickets available

Early bird passes are now on sale for the 10th Annual Ocean City Film Festival, a production of the Art League of Ocean City, coming to resort theaters and venues March 5 through 8. The Town of Ocean City is a major sponsor for the festival.

Over four days, the festival will screen more than 100 independent films, both locally-made and from around the world, including short films and feature-length movies. Screenings will be held at venues across Ocean City and West Ocean City, alongside filmmaker Q&As, special events, and opening and closing parties throughout the festival.

Discounted Tier One ticket pricing is available until February 15 and includes \$125 for a four-day pass and \$35 for a one-day pass. Prices will increase on February 16 to Tier Two pricing that includes \$145 for a four-day pass and \$40 for a one-day pass. Tickets are available for purchase at OCMDFilmFestival.com.

"Buy early and save," Rina Thaler, executive director of the Art League, said. "We are so excited to be celebrating our 10th big season that we're offering special early bird rates for our loyal fans and newcomers. We hope you'll join us for a very special year of programming."

Comedy icon Patton Oswalt headlines this year's festival, performing live at the Ocean City Performing Arts Center on Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m. with his new *Effervescent* show. Tickets for the Oswalt performance are sold separately.

The Film Festival is an annual production of the nonprofit Art League of Ocean City. The films have not been rated, and some feature adult content. Viewer discretion is advised.

More information and tickets are available at OCMDFilmFestival.com, by calling 410-524-9433, and on the free Art League of Ocean City app.



Winner - The public voted for their favorite tree, and the winner of the "Trees for the Arts" contest is Dinkers & Drinkers, a pickleball social club in Ocean City. Trees for the Arts is the annual tree decorating contest and fundraiser for the Art League of Ocean City during Winterfest of Lights in Ocean City. Dinkers & Drinkers is donating their \$1,000 prize to the Ocean City Boosters Club to support youth activities. Left to right: Rina Thaler, Jamie Taylor, Aubrey Sizemore and Missie West.

My Backyard continues food drive

Season of giving is not over because the holidays have passed, so believes Maureen Kennedy, owner of My Backyard who is continuing collection of non-perishable food items to support community food banks.

"People are in need throughout the year, not just during the holidays," said Kennedy as she explained why she is continuing the food collections she started in October. "Thanks to generosity of our community, many individuals and

families have been helped," she said.

Donations of non-perishable food items can be dropped off Tuesdays through Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. at My Backyard located at 11312 Manklin Creek Road in Ocean Pines.

Kennedy and her husband Butch deliver the collections to local food banks.

For more information call 410-208-1479.

St. Joseph's Day Festival scheduled

One of Ocean City's most popular ethnic celebrations, the St. Joseph's Day Festival, will open its doors this year on March 21. Hosted by the Ocean City Lodge of the Sons and Daughters of Italy, the day-long fest of home-cooked food, music, games, basket raffles, and a silent auction, will be held at its usual location, St. Andrew's Hall on 144th Street and Sinepuxent Avenue.

As always, admission is free. Doors open at 11 a.m. and the festival runs all day until 5:30 p.m. Italian delicacies like ravioli, meatballs, sausage, breads, zeppole, fresh-filled cannoli and baked goods will be on the menu. Wine, beer, and non-alcoholic soft drinks will be available. Italian-themed music will be played for patrons throughout the day.

As festival goers move around the floor they will find tables of Italian-themed merchandise for sale. Stuffed gift baskets and baskets of joy filled with wine and spirits will be raffled off. Silent auctions will be held for a variety of packages, including sports packages and leisure activities. For the more adventurous, the Pick Six-wheel game will return, and tickets can be purchased for the 50/50 drawing.

The Ocean City Lodge of the Sons and Daughters of Italy started in 1980 and today has almost 200 members. Its mission includes increasing awareness of the Italian culture and contributions of Italian Americans to the United States, providing scholarships for high school students of Italian descent and a tradition of charitable giving to support local organizations.

The Mogul

Seemingly a simple game involving dice, board pieces, Chance cards and money, Monopoly is anything but, especially when played with my



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

11-year-old grandson, who for the purposes of this column I will refer to as The Mogul.

During the Christmas holiday, The Mogul and I enjoyed some time together, just he and I. The question of what to do was answered when we decided to play a board game. Scrabble? No. Chutes and Ladders? No. Chess? No. I didn't know where the pieces were. How about Monopoly? Yes. The game was unearthed from the bottom of a living room cabinet.

I asked The Mogul if he had played before. He was a little vague in his answer. I should have known something was, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would write, afoot. As he took the game out of the box, from his back pocket he retrieved a green shade visor and placed it on his head.

He then proceeded to dole out cash from the bank, using his hands like a card sharp dealing cards in a high stakes game. Something was definitely afoot.

The opening minutes of the game were mundane until The Mogul landed on the B&O railroad. Seemingly indecisive at first over whether to buy it, he ultimately handed over \$200 to make the purchase. Within two more throws of the dice, he landed on the Short Line railroad which he purchased without the theatrics of indecision but rather steely determination. By this time, I benefited from a Chance card that moved me to St. Charles Place

which I bought. Subsequent moves landed me on Free Parking and the B&O Railroad which required a \$25 payment to The Mogul. By the time

I passed Go the first time, The Mogul owned three of the four railroads plus other properties.

At one point in the game, with each throw of the dice I successively landed on Mogul property five times. Eventually when I limped across Go to collect my \$200, only \$5 could be retrieved from my turned-out pockets.

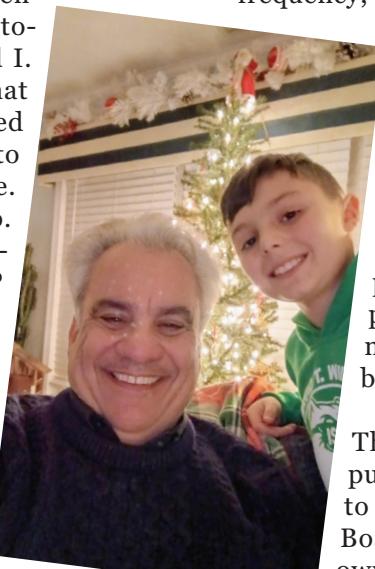
The Mogul was, with evermore frequency, was going to the bank exchanging five \$100 bills at a time for \$500 bills, stacking them with great care beside his many, carefully arranged property deeds.

Me? I was contemplating trading in my car playing piece for an old man attired in nothing but an old barrel.

At several junctures, The Mogul attempted to purchase from me my deed to Park Place to pair with Boardwalk that he already owned. Despite his offer to pay me three times what I paid for it I knew enough to turn down the offer. I may have started the game unaware of The Mogul's prowess, but it wasn't long before I understood that given the opportunity The Mogul would put the screws to me and quickly erect hotels on Park Place and Boardwalk. I wasn't interested in self-immolation.

More and more I hesitated to throw the dice, fearing financial ruin. The game progressed. The rich got richer. The poor got poorer. When we finally ended the game, The Mogul was awash in cash and property. I was applying for welfare. We commemorated the occasion by writing the results and the date on a piece of paper to place in the box.

What did I learn? Beware of handsome 11-year-old grandsons with bright smiles and green shade visors at the ready.



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Wor-Wic selected for national academic terms initiative

Wor-Wic Community College has been selected to participate in a new nationwide effort to help state and college higher education systems scale the adoption of shortened academic terms.

The Scaling Shortened Academic Terms initiative is led by Achieving the Dream (ATD), a national reform network committed to advancing community colleges as accessible hubs of learning, credentialing and economic mobility, and is funded by Ascendium Education Group. The project will support Wor-Wic and other participating colleges in accelerating their progress in shortened academic terms as a strategy to improve student outcomes and align academic structures with the complex needs of today's learners.

Traditional 15-week semesters can pose barriers for students who balance college with work, family and other responsibilities. Wor-Wic introduced seven-week course options in 2024, and plans to use the initiative to build on the existing classes' success. The

seven-week options offer the same amount of credit as the traditional 15-week classes, and meet more often, usually in a hybrid format, to ensure students are meeting academic goals.

Dr. Jenny L. McFadden, an associate professor of transitional English, said it has been especially helpful in her classes.

"Many of our students have challenging lives," McFadden said. "The shorter terms help them get through classes before the roulette wheel of life hits — whether it's transportation issues, work or family. If we can teach them what they need in seven weeks, they are better positioned and more confident."

McFadden says she has seen a jump in the number of students passing her class. "And they're not just passing — they're passing with higher grades," she said. She attributes this to the momentum that the shorter terms help students sustain.

"There's not as much time to forget material you learned in the first week, and again, there is less of a chance to

let life get in the way," she said. "I love to see the sense of accomplishment they have. These successes encourage them to keep going."

Research and institutional experience show that well-designed short-term structures can boost course completion rates, increase persistence and strengthen student confidence. Scaling such models, however, requires intentional design, strong student supports and alignment with institutional goals.

"It was a challenge designing the classes at first," McFadden said. "But when I took a professional development workshop on how to design the classes, it fell into place how I could make sure they were meeting all of their objectives."

The Scaling Shortened Academic Terms initiative will help participating colleges like Wor-Wic build the capacity to design, implement and sustain more shortened term classes in ways that advance student success and expand the field's evidence base for effective reform. Through targeted coaching, professional development, cross-state learning and data-informed decision-making, ATD will help participating colleges embed and sustain shortened term formats in ways that enhance student momentum and credential attainment.

"I have seen that even with challenges, the goal is worth it, and the pass rates are worth it," McFadden said. "It is a more sustainable model that is growing student success."

The Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, will lead a comprehensive external evaluation of the initiative to deepen the evidence base on effective design and implementation of shortened academic terms.

"This initiative reflects the kind of whole-college transformation ATD supports across our Network," said ATD President and CEO Dr. Karen A. Stout. "By working with states and institutions already leading this change, we can scale structures that help stu-

dents — especially adults and working learners — build momentum and achieve their goals. Equally important, the evaluation led by the Community College Research Center will provide the evidence the field needs to understand which students benefit most, what conditions enable success and how to sustain these models over time. Together with our partners and Ascendium's support, we are expanding both the evidence and the capacity needed to make shortened terms a sustainable part of student success strategies nationwide."

"We are pleased to have the support of ATD in scaling up this important 'rocket booster' for student success that will help our students learn with confidence, carry full-time course loads that they might not have thought possible and reach the graduation stage faster than they expected," said Deborah Casey, Ph.D., president of Wor-Wic. "Our faculty has done an outstanding job in starting the seven-week classes, and we are happy to have additional supports to help continue this initiative."

Channel closed under Rte. 50 bridge

Now through approximately March 20, the channel under the U.S. Rte. 50 Bridge (Harry W. Kelley Memorial Bridge over the Sinepuxent Bay) will remain closed to marine traffic, while Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) crews repair the mechanical interlock system of the draw span.

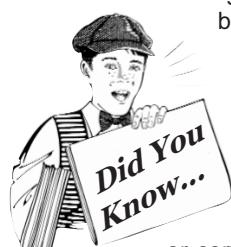
SHA officials advise that vessels that are able to pass under the flanking spans are permitted to do so.

The channel closure is part of the U.S. Rt. 50 Bridge rehabilitation project taking place this winter. For more information about the rehabilitation project, including dates the bridge will be closed to vehicular traffic and a list of detours, please visit the SHA's Project Portal Page at: <https://mdot-sha.us50-harry-kelley-mem-brg-repairs-w-ohkmbr-maryland.hub.arcgis.com/>.

Courier Almanac

On January 14, 1920 John Dodge, who with his brother Horace co-founded the Dodge Brothers Company, which was once America's third-largest automaker and later became part of Chrysler, dies at the age of 55.

Light-emitting diode bulbs (LEDs) are energy-efficient and durable options. LEDs convert electricity into light instead of heat, and increasingly are used in a wide range of products, including lighting fixtures. According to Energy Star, LEDs produce light up to 90 percent more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs. LEDs also do not typically "burn out" or fail, like other types of bulbs. Because of their performance benefits, homeowners may be interested in switching over to LED bulbs to power their existing lighting fixtures. Generally speaking, LED bulbs can work in most non-LED fixtures, provided the base type matches the socket. The LED bulb also should be rated for the same line voltage for the fixture. Also, the fixture should not be enclosed, such as glass-enclosed ceiling lights or certain outdoor fixtures. The lack of ventilation can cause heat buildup, leading to damage or failure. In such instances, one should purchase LEDs specifically rated for enclosed fixtures.



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**The
Courier**

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Parks and Open Space Plan session scheduled

As part of the 2027 Worcester County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) updating process, Worcester County Recreation and Parks and Environmental Programs professionals invite area residents to participate in public listening sessions on January 27 and February 5, 2026. Residents are also invited to take part in the LPPRP survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QRCJPH6>.

The LPPRP serves as guide for conservation and park planning and program improvements. The plan emphasizes public input in recreational activities that the county provides, facility availability, and accessibility for underserved communities. The plan also inventories land for conservation and agricultural preservation, and it identifies goals and strategies for land conservation. Have an opinion about county parks or land conservation? Worcester County Recreation and Parks staff want to hear from you.

The listening sessions will be opportunities for Worcester County cit-

izens to ask questions, share ideas, and provide input on opportunities and priorities for conservation, parks, and recreation in the next five years. Maps depicting land preservation and parks, discussion on the needs assessment survey, and the capital budget for park improvement projects, will be briefly shared.

All ages are welcome to attend and participate in the sessions. The sessions will take place at the following outdoor locations (indoor locations will be available in the event of inclement weather):

-Tuesday, January 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Worcester County Recreation Center, located at 6030 Public Landing Road in Snow Hill

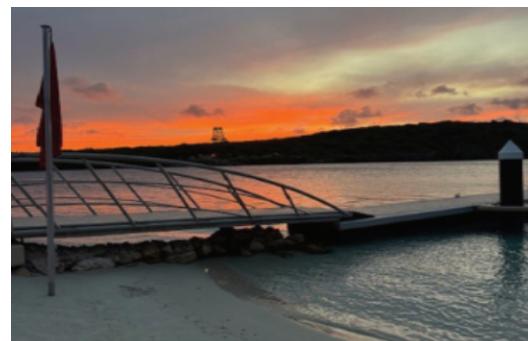
-Thursday, February 5, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Berlin Branch Library, located at 13 Harrison Avenue in Berlin

Under state law this plan must be updated every five years for the county to remain eligible for state Program Open Space funds. For more information, please contact Katherine Munson at kmunson@co.worcester.md.us or 410-632-1220.



Collection - The annual Student Government Association (SGA)-sponsored food drive at Worcester Preparatory School (WPS) began on November 12. On December 18, the Upper School community came together to sort and prepare donations of canned goods and other non-perishable food items for distribution to local nonprofit organizations.

Pictured are Upper School students Ruhi Chapla, Keerat Brar and Nora Gorfinkel.





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TidalHealth warns community of scammers targeting patients

TidalHealth is alerting the community to recent scam attempts targeting patients in our community. Scammers are posing as TidalHealth team members and contacting patients to request payment or personal information by phone, email or text message.

Scam calls may appear to come from a legitimate TidalHealth phone number due to caller ID spoofing. Scammers are also using fraudulent email addresses posing as TidalHealth team members.

TidalHealth advises anyone who receives a questionable call to hang up and contact their healthcare practitioner using the official phone number listed on their appointment card, MyChart or tidalhealth.org.

“Protecting our patients’ privacy and financial security continues to be a top priority,” said Mark Weisman, MD, MBA, TidalHealth’s Vice Pres-

ident of Information Technology/CMIO & CIO. “We encourage our community to remain vigilant, pause before responding to unexpected communications, and contact TidalHealth directly using verified phone numbers if anything seems suspicious.”

If you believe you’ve received a fraudulent call, email or text message from TidalHealth, report it to TidalHealth’s Speak Up/Compliance Hotline at 877-267-1937. There’s no harm in reporting a call or message that you think may be fraudulent, even if it isn’t.

Suspicious calls should also be reported to local law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at reportfraud.ftc.gov.

To learn more about avoiding scams, visit tidalhealth.org/scam-awareness.

Wedding Showcase open house scheduled

Ocean Pines Events at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club has announced a new date for their Wedding Showcase Open House.

The event will be held on Saturday, February 14, from noon to 5 p.m., at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club, located at 1 Mumford’s Landing Road.

Guests are invited to explore the Yacht Club’s luxurious waterfront venue and consult with the in-house wedding coordinator about planning and personalizing their special day. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the ceremony and reception spaces, experience the versatility and elegance of the event settings, and meet select local wedding vendors offering resources and inspiration.

Throughout the showcase, visitors can enjoy signature appetizers, desserts, and sparkling bubbly prepared by the Ocean Pines Yacht Club’s culinary team.

“Forever begins here,” said Events Coordinator Carrie Greenleaf. “Our Wedding Showcase Open House is designed to help couples envision their perfect day in a beautiful waterfront setting while connecting with experts to bring their dream wedding to life.”

The event will feature Allison to the Altar (alisontothealtaroc.com) and other local vendors.

RSVPs are requested at opyacht-club.com under the “Music & Events” tab.

For more information, email events@oceanpines.org or call 410-641-7501 ext. 4.

Valentine’s Day swim set

Ocean Pines Aquatics invites the community to a Valentine Swim at the Sports Core Pool on Saturday, February 14, from noon to 3 p.m.

Participants can enjoy crafts, games, music, and a Chocolate Kiss guess contest. Food will also be available for purchase.

The event is open to the public. Admission is \$8 for swim members, \$10 for residents, \$12 for non-residents, and \$3 for non-swimmers.

Children ages 6 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in the pool. Children who require flotation devices must remain within arm’s reach of their parent or guardian at all times.

For more information, call the Sports Core Pool at 410-641-5255.

Diabetes and diet-related conditions funding available

The Worcester County Health Department (WCHD) is requesting proposals from community-based organizations and local farmers to help implement Cooking up Health: A Nourishing Neighbors Program as a result of receiving funds from Carefirst BlueCross BlueShield. The program focuses on building healthier food environments, strengthening local food systems, and improving access to nutritious food. It aims to boost nutritional security for those with diet-related health issues and empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to make healthier food choices.

There are three funding opportunities available within this project.

Little Free Food Pantry Boxes. Local organizations may request up to \$750 to host and maintain a "Little Free Food Pantry" box in Berlin, Po-

comoke, or Snow Hill, MD. Funded organizations must commit to securing, stocking, and maintaining a "Little Free Food Pantry" box in Berlin, Pocomoke, or Snow Hill.

Pop-up Farmers Markets. Local Farmers may request up to \$6,000 to participate in "Pop-Up" Farmers Markets in Worcester County. Funded entities will collaborate with the Worcester County Health Department, the University of Maryland Extension and other stakeholders to host "Pop-Up" Farmers Markets in low-income, low access areas of the Berlin, Pocomoke and/or Snow Hill communities.

Community Gardens. Community gardens in Worcester County may request up to \$2500 to improve nutritional security in Berlin, Pocomoke, and Snow Hill, MD. Funded organizations must serve Worcester

County residents and/or employees, develop and maintain a community garden, grow, harvest, and distribute fresh produce to the community, and partner with WCHD for community education and outreach.

A virtual pre-proposal orientation meeting will be held through Google Meet on January 8, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. If you plan to attend this orientation session, RSVP to Mimi Dean at mimi.dean@maryland.gov

Digital application packets for each grant opportunity can be found

at worcesterhealth.org/minigrant. Applications must be returned to the Worcester County Health Department (6040 Public Landing Rd. Snow Hill, MD.) by January 26, 2026, no later than 4:30 p.m. A review team will evaluate the applications, and awards will be made after February 13, 2026.

For more information or to request a paper application packet, please call the Worcester County Health Department Prevention Services at 410-632-1100 ext. 1104.



Decorations - You may have noticed how beautiful Historic St. Martin's Church was decorated for the holidays. The efforts were spearheaded by Historic Preservation Chair Pat Lohmeyer Bell of the Worcester County Garden Club. Decorating the church has been a long-standing tradition for the club.

Individuals interested in learning more about the Worcester County Garden Club can contact the membership chair at WorCityGardenClub@gmail.com.

Pictured are (l-r): **Pat Lohmeyer Bell, Sue Ann Hudson, Sanji Ramnarain, Suzy Young (front), Lisa Bunting, Martha Bennett and Pat Arata.**

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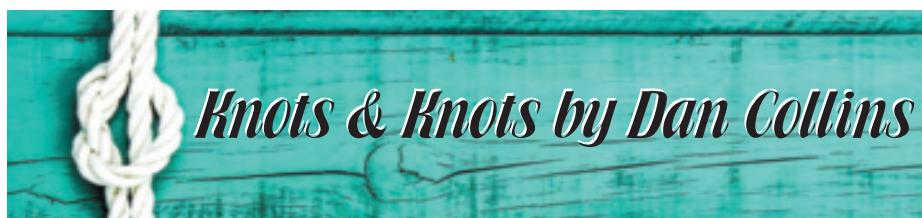


Don't miss this engaging wine experience and paired dinner that's also a fundraising soirée for the nonprofit Art League. Experience art, wine and food in a five-course masterpiece, paired to highlight how artistic expression and wine can beautifully complement one another. At the waterfront Yacht Club!



Tickets at
GiveButter.com/ArtUncorked





God Bless America

January is usually the month for withering New Year's resolution lists and collecting tax return paperwork but this is a special year. Besides the constant drone of dribbling basketballs and NFL hype on every sports channel, this January is a time to make preparation to celebrate an American milestone.

This year, 2026, will see the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the most successful democratic republic ever, the United States of America. There will be fireworks and parades and air shows and patriotic speeches and gaudy displays of red, white and blue as well as souvenirs to mark the momentous occasion. There will also be tours of Navy vessels and military installations designed to inspire patriotism and

promote recruitment.

We should all get out and participate in the hoopla but we should also take a moment to consider how we got here: The genius of the Founding Fathers, the sacrifice of millions of servicemen and women, a civil war to eliminate slavery and preserve the union, the influx of legal immigrants from Europe and China and Latino regions, the entrepreneurial initiatives of the Industrial Revolution and an aggressive public policy to "Speak softly but carry a big stick."

The US standard of living has clearly been world class. Our economy, our democratic electorate, our justice system, our public safety, our financial strength, and our rich intellectual abundance as evidenced by the worldwide recognition of our software and Hollywood make America the envy of the world.

All this is a direct result of the US Constitution and its Amendments. Not only is the safety and equality of our citizens protected but we maintain a secure marketplace that fos-

ters and rewards initiative, innovation and risk taking. In fact, creating a friendly business environment was one of the primary motivations of the anarchists who met in Philadelphia in 1776, long before the infamous Eagle fans turned vocal consternation into an art form.

However, this is not a time to be smug. Yes, we can and should celebrate on July 4, 2026, but the well-deserved celebrations must also herald in the beginning of the next 250 years. Otherwise, we disrespect those who have come before us and will embarrass our progeny.

In past generations, fortunes were made in oil and steel and manufacturing and railroads. It hasn't stopped. Over the past fifty years, new products and services have continued to be introduced that have created new wealth. Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Uber, ESPN, FedEx are a few names that have emerged since the glory days of Standard Oil and US Steel and Kodak and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Try to imagine

life without the microwave oven, bank credit cards, frequent flyer miles, the internet, cell phones, GPS, digital cameras, flat screen TVs, streaming, QR codes, and contingency legal fees. (Alright, I can image the world without contingency based legal fees.)

And there is no reason to believe that it's over. Artificial Intelligence, electric cars, robotics, drones, marijuana and who knows what else already clutters the penny less – maybe even cash less – horizon.

Our fundamental structure is still sound. We are now one fourth of the way through the 21th century and we are as strong and as resilient as ever. We have lived through Y2K, 9/11, Covid, and January 6 without destroying the Constitution. We know how to be victorious. American ingenuity, a sense of justice and our love of freedom are all intricate parts of our DNA.

John F. Kennedy said it perfectly in his famous inaugural speech, "Ask not what America can do for you but what you can do for Amer-

ica." So what do we need to do to sustain America? I'm sure we all have our opinions.

Pause your reading for a moment and ask yourself: What do you think is our top priority and what are you going to do about it?

My top priorities include the desire to focus on education, human rights and social tolerance. The biggest is education. The other two will be cut down to size by a better, more educated populous.

While the 20th century was characterized by the Industrial Revolution in which America understood the rules and knocked it out of the ballpark, the 21st century is starting out to be the 'Intelligence Revolution.' The skill sets to manufacture products in the 20th century will be replaced by intellectual skills to handle automation and artificial intelligence.

That's why education will be the critical differentiator for global competitiveness in the 21th century. We are well into this as evidenced by the fact that the USA leads the world in Nobel Prize winners and the best students in the world come to America for their advanced education. Their R&D and academic theses become part of our overall intellectual wealth and many stay here and to be part of the American dream.

Please don't come away with the notion that only formal, academic training is needed. The pursuit and application of knowledge should be our culture, even in our recreational boating.

Next month, for example, we will once again enjoy the Ocean City Seaside Boat Show and all its awesome pageantry. That's great but the price is more than the ten bucks to get into the Roland E. Powell Convention Center. Ask yourself as a privileged citizen of this great country: What have I done to abate water pollution? Do I know and obey all the navigation rules? The fishing regulations? Am I prepared to assist others who may be in distress? Have I taken a first aid/CPR class? A recreational boat safety class? Should I be more educated?

JFK would ask, 'What can you do for America?' The answer is not just to beseech God to bless America.

Stay safe. Stay dry.

Dan Collins can be reached for comment at dancollins.ocean-pines@gmail.com



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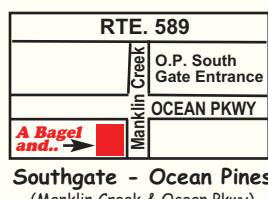
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Manage your high blood pressure

Take the first step towards achieving better heart health with Worcester County Health Department's Healthy Heart Ambassador Program. Beginning in early February, this four-month program is designed to give residents the knowledge and necessary skills to manage their blood pressure effectively.

The Healthy Heart Ambassador Program trains participants on how to measure and track their blood pressure at home and provides them with their own blood pressure monitors. Throughout the program, participants receive personalized guidance and support from trained professionals along with nutrition education to support a healthy blood pressure.

Classes will be available at the following dates and locations:

-February 9, 2 p.m., at Living Waters Church of God (2226 Bypass Rd, Pocomoke City)

-February 11, 5 p.m., at Free Indeed Ministries (418 W Market St, Snow Hill)

February 12, 10:30 a.m., at St. Paul's UMC (405 Flower St, Berlin)

To qualify for the Healthy Heart

Ambassador Program, participants must:

- be at least 18 years old

- have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and/or are on antihypertensive medication

- not have experienced a recent cardiac event

- not have atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias

- not have or not be at risk for lymphedema.

To register for the program, visit www.worcesterhealth.org/HHA or call 410-632-1100 ext. 1113.

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Winner - Congratulations to Emma Yoon, a 4th grade student in Wendy Macrides' class at Ocean City Elementary School, for winning the Worcester County Public Schools' annual Holiday Card Contest for grades three through 5.

Pictured are art teacher **Bob Hulburd** and **Emma Yoon**.

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Stover appointed Sr. VP of Finance, CFO

TidalHealth President & CEO, Steve Leonard, Ph.D., MBA, FACHE, announced the appointment of Benny J. Stover, MBA, CPA, as the health system's next Sr. Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective January 6.



Benny Stover

Stover is an accomplished health-care financial executive with nearly 30 years of leadership experience across complex academic medical centers, multi-facility health systems, and integrated physician enterprises. He becomes just the fourth CFO in TidalHealth's history.

Stover joins TidalHealth from University of South Alabama (USA) Health, an academic health system, where he has served as CFO since 2020. During his tenure, Stover led major enterprise-wide financial and operational initiatives, including strategic acquisitions, revenue cycle transformations, financial turnarounds, and large-scale capital and construction projects.

"Benny brings a unique blend of financial expertise, operational insight, and strategic leadership that will greatly benefit TidalHealth as we continue to strengthen our services and expand access to care across the region," said Dr. Leonard.

Over his five years at USA Health, Stover played a key role in the acquisition and successful integration of a \$300 million multi-hospital health system. He also served as a member of the health system's strategic planning team, helping shape long-range initiatives, capital planning, and service-line expansion.

Prior to his role at USA Health, Stover spent more than a decade in executive leadership positions at Mercy Health, where he served as Vice President of Finance and CFO for multiple regional markets spanning Missouri and Arkansas.

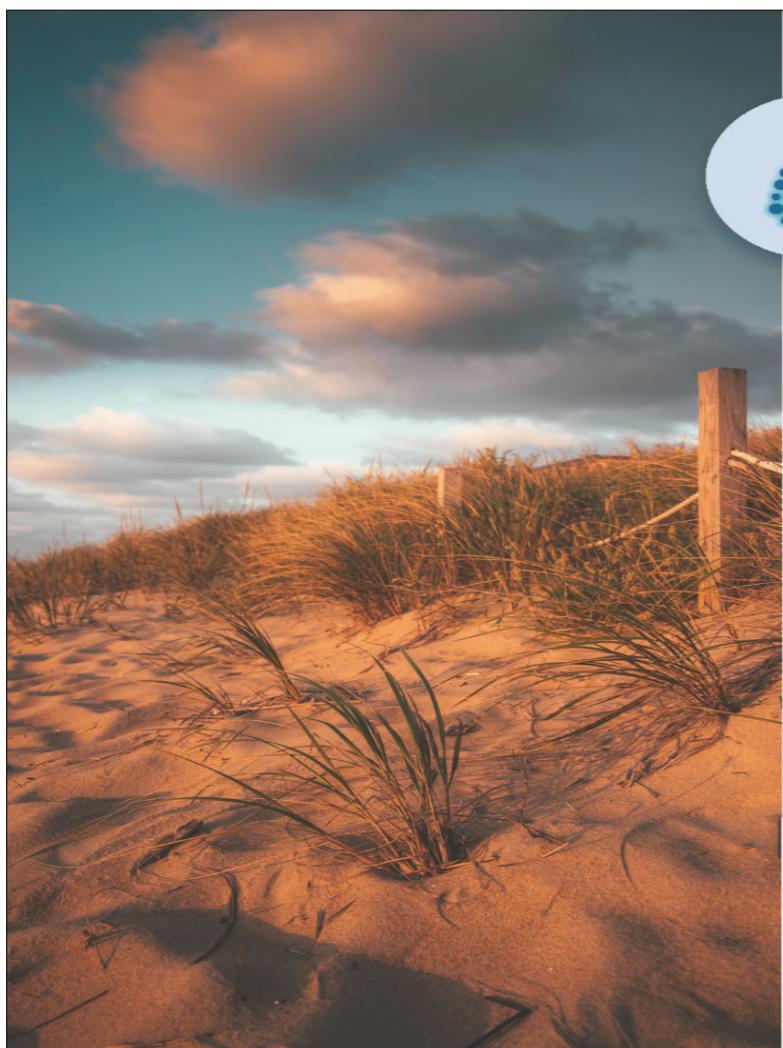
A Certified Public Accountant, Stover holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from West Virginia University and a Master of Business Administration with a focus in Leadership and Ethics from John Brown University.



Milestone year - A luncheon at The Atlantic Hotel marked the induction of 2026 officers and the start of the Ocean Pines Garden Club (OPGC) 50th year. OPGC originated in 1976 to help locals with their gardening challenges, but new friendships were formed and strengthened through "digging in the dirt" and community service. Many hardscape items throughout Ocean Pines were gifts from OPGC.

The induction ceremony used flowers and their meanings for each of the officer positions. The 2026 officers are: (l to r) **Maria Brown**, Treasurer; **Laura Stearman**, Corresponding Secretary; **Joan Guerreiro**, Recording Secretary; **Shawn Lees**, Co-Vice President; **Susan Costanzo**, Co-Vice President; **Nancy Mulligan**, Co-President; and **Ann Shockley**, Co-President.

The OPGC focus for the coming year includes highlighting the skills of its members, fun activities, and lighthearted outings. At the February 12 meeting in the Assateague Room of the Ocean Pines Community Center there will be a presentation on the club's storied history. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. Guests are always welcome. For more info about what OPGC offers or how to join, visit: bit.ly/OceanPinesGardenClub.



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Recognized - At the annual Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department banquet held Saturday evening Chase Giannini was recognized as Top Cadet for 2025.

Left to right are Captain Joe Enste, Chief Joey Widgeon, Chase Giannini and First Lieutenant Steve Giannini. Photo by Chip Bertino

Nelson named executive medical director

Lindsey Nelson, MD, brings decades of experience to his new role as executive medical director for the TidalHealth Anesthesiology service line.

In this system-wide leadership role, Dr. Nelson will oversee the strategic, clinical and operational direction of anesthesia services across all TidalHealth hospitals, ambulatory sites and non-operating-room anesthetizing locations.

"Dr. Nelson brings demonstrated leadership experience, specialized expertise in anesthesiology, and a strong alignment with TidalHealth's mission to serve our communities," said Cindy Lunsford, Ed.D., executive vice president/chief operating officer and president of TidalHealth Primary & Specialty Care. "His appointment strengthens the organization's clinical and operational



Lindsey Nelson

leadership, and we are pleased to have him assume this role."

Dr. Nelson received his medical degree from the University of Minnesota School of Medicine and completed his postgraduate residency training at the University of Cincinnati. He is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology and is also a core faculty member in the TidalHealth Anesthesiology Residency.

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Historical events from January 1926

The month of January has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in January 1926.

The first radio station in Ireland, 2RN, begins broadcasting on January 1.

The worst flooding in the German city of Köln occurs on January 1. A torrent of water rises 35 feet, forcing roughly 50,000 people to evacuate their homes.

General Theodoros Pangalos declares a state of emergency in Greece and assumes dictatorial powers on January 3. General Pangalos had become Prime Minister of Greece in June 1925 after orchestrating a coup d'état.

World War cemeteries in France are submerged on January 7 due to ongoing downpours affecting various areas throughout Europe. The same rains flood the London subway system as well.

Gracie Allen and George Burns are married by a justice of the peace in Cleveland on January 7. The newlyweds ultimately gain renown as the comedy duo Burns and Allen.

Twelve-year-old Prince Nguyen Phœc Thuy is crowned Emperor of Vietnam on January 8. The prince's father, Emperor Khai Dinh, died two months earlier on November 6.

Herman, Henry and Hillel Hassenfeld incorporate the Hassenfeld Brothers company on January 8. The company initially manufactures school supplies but eventually begins to make toys under the name Hasbro.

Twenty Mexican rebels open fire aboard a train traveling from Guadalajara to Mexico City on January 9. The bandits escape with the equivalent of \$150,000 USD.

The four-masted schooner Prinz Valdemar capsizes on January 10, blocking all ship traffic in and out of Biscayne Bay and the harbor of Miami, Florida. All aboard are rescued unharmed, but two ocean liners are prevented from leaving the harbor.

United States Representative John W. Langley of Kentucky resigns from Congress on January 11. Langley's resignation comes after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed his jail sentence for violating prohibition laws by illegally selling alcohol to New

York-based bootleggers with ties to organized crime.

Michael Bond is born in Newbury, Berkshire, England, on January 13. Bond would survive a 1943 air raid in Reading during World War Two before authoring his first book, *A Bear Called Paddington*, in 1958.

Twenty-year-old Ayn Rand departs Russia by train on January 17. Rand's early life in Communist Russia heavily influenced the philosophy reflected in many of her more notable works.

Voting rights activist Indiana Little leads several hundred Black men and women on a march to the Jefferson County registrar's office in Birmingham, Alabama, on January 18. Little is arrested for disturbing the peace and would not be registered to vote for another 30 years.

Multiple ships near New York City are threatened by a gale on January 20. The U.S. luxury liner SS President Roosevelt completes a rescue of the British freighter SS Antioch on January 28 after initial reports indicating the latter ship sank in the storm.

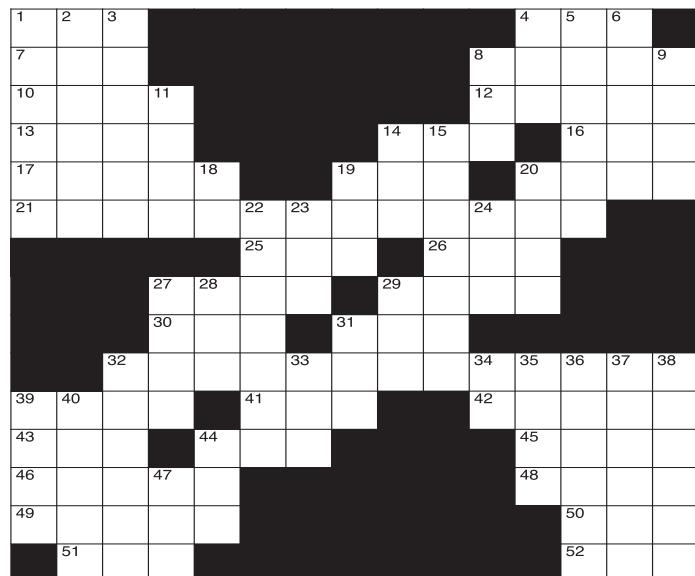
Chaplin Court Treatt and Stella Court Treatt complete the first successful journey across Africa by motorcar on January 24. The duo began their journey one year, four months and 11 days before completing the trip in Cairo, Egypt.

Speaking on behalf of the British Empire Cancer Campaign during a luncheon on January 25, British surgeon Sir Berkeley Moynihan says that cancer of the tongue is traceable to two things, including smoking.

Thousands of mourners line the streets of Brussels to watch the funeral procession of Belgian national hero and cleric Cardinal Mercier on January 28. Cardinal Mercier was known for his staunch opposition to the German occupation of Belgium during World War I.

Violette Neatley Anderson becomes the first African American woman to be admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court on January 29.

The Chamber of Deputies passes Law Number 100 on January 31. The law grants Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini the right to issue judicial norms without prior consultation with the Italian parliament.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Former CIA	30. Actor DiCaprio
4. Language	31. High schoolers' test
7. Constrictor snake	32. Mr. October
8. Demand	39. Sign of healing
10. Rich man	41. One's grandmother
12. Short-tailed marten	42. Entrap
13. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire	43. One who simultaneously buys and sells
14. Superconducting super collider	44. __ Francisco
16. International group of countries within the Americas	45. Web-based data provider of marine life
17. Sacred state for Muslims	46. Type of snake
19. Shock therapy	48. Dark mark or stain
20. Engrave	49. Member of the Salii
21. Localities	50. Former measure of length
25. Paddle	51. CNN's founder
26. Periodical	52. Witness
27. Dishonestly gained money	
29. Gain possession of	

CLUES DOWN

1. Acquire	24. Strong tree
2. Console	27. Commoner
3. Hunting expedition	28. Electroencephalograph
4. Pie __ mode	29. __ Mahal
5. Simple shoes for peasants	31. Congressman
6. Eurasian shrub	32. Disorderly crowd
8. Reciprocal of a sine	33. 007's creator Fleming
9. Work together in harmony	34. Atomic #55
11. Grenade	35. Part of a door
14. File extension	36. Short-tail martens
15. Minute pores in a plant	37. Baltimore ballplayer
18. Medal of Honor	38. Cuddle
19. Make a mistake	39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
20. Advance slowly, as if by inches	40. Of Croatia
22. Sandwich meat	44. Body cavity
23. An awkward stupid person	47. Get free of



Answers for January 7

Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by **Jack Barnes**

Therapist: Your wife says you never buy her flowers is that true?

Him: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

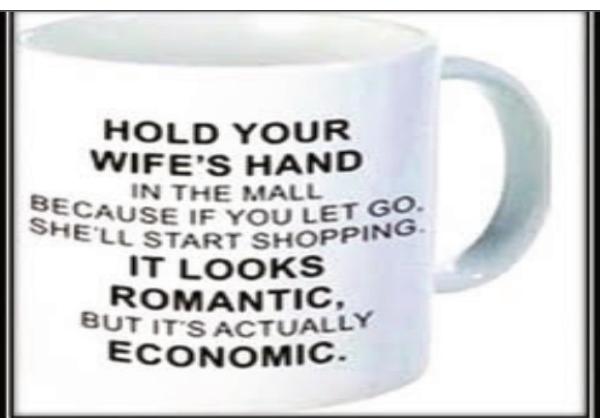


And that, my friends, was car seat safety in the 70s!



“Teachers open the door; but you must enter by yourself.”

Chinese Proverb



Some thoughts

I took my suit to the cleaners, who wanted to charge me \$40, so I gave it to the charity shop next door. They cleaned and pressed it and put it in the window. I bought it back for \$15.

My wife and I decided to never go to bed angry. We've been awake since Tuesday.

Someone just gave me half a peace sign. Weird.

Growing up, we knew Dad had had enough when we heard the recliner slam down. Kids these days will never know that fear.

My wife said: “That’s the 4th time you’ve gone back for dessert! Doesn’t it embarrass you?” I said: “No, I keep telling them it’s for you.”

When I was in elementary school we learned about a shape called a rhombus and that was the last time I ever heard about that shape.

My wife and I started role-playing in the bedroom. Her favorite is The Sexy Librarian where I have to sit quietly while she reads a book.

Being old is when you don’t care where your spouse goes, just as long as you don’t have to go too.

I now know how it will all end for me, one of my kids will unplug my life support to charge their phone.

At a wedding reception, someone yelled: “All married people please stand next to the one person that has made your life worth living.” The bartender was almost crushed to death.

I met my wife at a singles night. I was surprised because I thought she was home with the kids.

I want someone I can share my entire life with who will leave me alone most of the time.

Yesterday I bought a world map, gave my wife a dart, and said, “Throw this and wherever it lands, I will take you on vacation.” We’re spending three weeks behind the fridge.

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