

The Courier

February 4, 2026 Volume 27 Number 20

Mural brings history to Germantown School

By Elaine Bean

Take a drive along Trappe Road in Berlin these days, and you'll see a shock of bright colors among the barren grey winter trees. A mural depicting the history of the once all African-American Germantown School, recently installed on the front of the building, brings colorful art and important heritage to the Berlin community.

Patrick Henry of Berlin created the mural, with the goal of honoring the site's history as a Rosenwald School, depicting its founding, students, and community reclamation, and serving as an educational tribute to the school's legacy. The mural was dedicated in December.

The mural depicts former and recent moments at the school. The center of the mural shows the school building with children engaged with their books at their desks. Three ovals honor those who contributed to the school's existence – Julius Rosenwald, who originally helped fund its construction; Booker T. Washington, who partnered with Rosenwald to create the Rosenwald School Building Program; and Isacc Henry, who donated the land for the school.

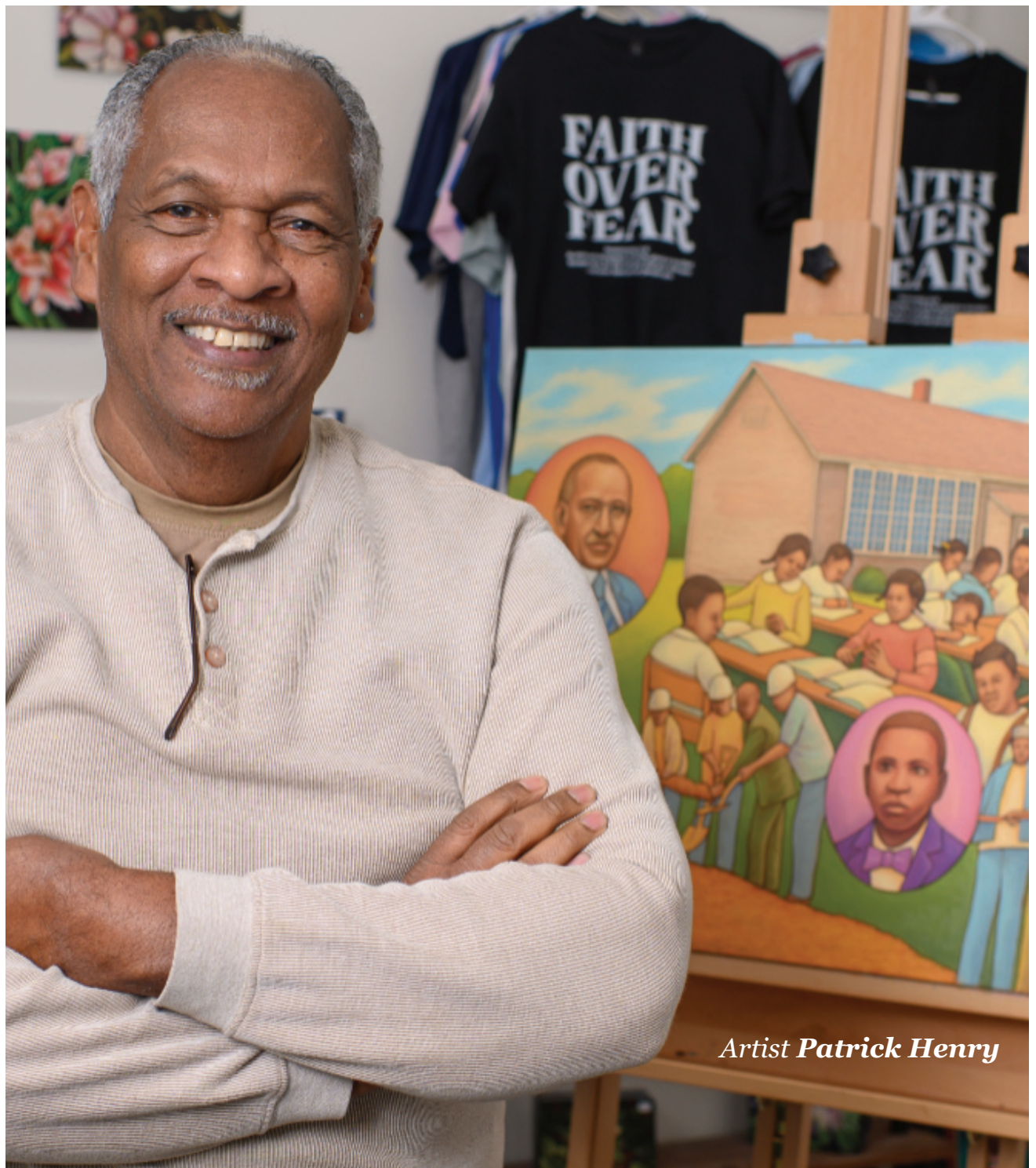
To the left and right in the mural are figures representing the community members who came forward to reclaim the building and give it new life as the Germantown School Community Heritage Center.

Germantown board president Barbara Purnell believes the mural is educational to those who see it. "It's telling the history of the Germantown School from the beginning up to the present," she said.

Henry, whose brother attended the school, titled the mural "Collaboration – Education – Community." "The title encompasses the story of how a community answered the call... twice... to come together for a worthy cause," the artist said. "And that was what inspired me, as a visual artist, to do my part in showcasing the story.

"My first connection with the school was in

please see mural on page 8



Artist *Patrick Henry*

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GM report highlights budget, positive financials

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola highlighted the Fiscal Year 2026–27 recommended budget, strong financials, and ongoing initiatives in his monthly report on January 24.

Viola reviewed the Fiscal Year 2026–27 recommended budget, which was unanimously approved by the Board at the meeting. Key priorities in this year’s budget include pub-

lic safety, maintenance, capital initiatives, and infrastructure improvements. The budget includes a \$915 assessment, with a \$665 bulkhead differential.

Progress continues on the South Fire Station Building initiative, with the Board unanimously approving the construction contract at the meeting. Construction is scheduled to begin next month, with an estimated com-

pletion timeline of 60 weeks.

The Golf Course Irrigation project is continuing, with Phase II having begun in December. Crews are currently working on hole #4 and marking all new irrigation heads on holes #7 and #8.

Several Food and Beverage initiatives remain on track, including improvements at the Clubhouse Pavilion, Yacht Club Kitchen, and Beach Club. Next steps include construction bids and seeking Board approval. Touch of Italy will also be investing funds into these projects.

Additional facility improvements were also noted, including the replacement of the Community Center kitchen floor by DCH Enterprise at a cost of \$3,850.

Financially, December 2025 closed with a favorable variance of \$25,000 to budget, while year-to-date financials are \$391,000 favorable to budget.

“It’s all about delivering results,” Viola said. “The whole idea of the presentation is showing what residents are getting for their assessment.”

South Fire Station equipment relocated to Public Works

All equipment from the Ocean Pines South Fire Station has been relocated to the Public Works Building in preparation for construction on the new station.

The Ocean Pines Board of Directors approved the construction contract at the January 24 regular board meeting, awarding the project to The Whayland Company. Construction is slated to begin in February, with an official groundbreaking ceremony to be announced.

Works Building will ensure emergency response times remain unchanged during construction.

“Public Works is happy to accommodate the fire department during the construction of their new building,” Wells said. “We had to make some adjustments, but this move will allow the fire department to maintain the same emergency response times for the south side of Ocean Pines.”

General Manager John Viola said the project marks an important step forward for the community and thanked those involved in bringing the contract together.

“This new fire station on the south side of Ocean Pines is much needed, and I’m proud of the team and the hard work they put into making this a reality,” Viola said. He also expressed gratitude to the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, and the Board of Directors for their support and approval of the project.

Public Works Director Eddie Wells said relocating the fire department’s equipment to the Public

Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department President Joe Enste echoed that sentiment, emphasizing the continued collaboration between departments.

“Through our partnership with the Public Works Division, we are able to continue providing uninterrupted, centralized service to this great community and the citizens we are honored to serve,” Enste said.

Board President John Latham credited Viola and his team for their work on the contract, as well as the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, specifically Joe Enste and Joey Widgeon, for their contributions to the project.

Good Neighbor Awards presented at board meeting

Several Ocean Pines residents were recognized with the Good Neighbor Award at the January 24 regular board meeting.

The Ocean Pines Garden Club nominated Mr. and Mrs. Neal Hoffman for their generous donation of

dedication to maintaining her cul-de-sac. Her efforts include weeding, sweeping, and gathering leaves, pine cones, and needles; removing mud that collects near curbs after rainfall; assisting part-time residents with yard maintenance; and mowing common areas and a vacant lot within the cul-de-sac.

If you would like to nominate a resident for the Good Neighbor Program, email info@oceanpines.org with a short story describing what your neighbor does to make Ocean Pines a great place to live.



Bob and Kathy Hess receiving their Good Neighbor Award from Director **Elaine Brady**.

Fire station contract approved

Board of Directors members unanimously approved the construction contract for the new South Fire Station at the January 24 meeting.

The awarded bidder for the project was The Whayland Company. Construction is slated to begin in February, with an estimated 60 weeks to completion.

Board President John Latham credited John Viola and his team for their hard work.

“This board wants to thank John Viola, Linda, the entire team,” Latham said. “This has been a lot of work for the team and we’re very happy to get to put ink on this contract.”

Latham additionally thanked the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, specifically Joe Enste and Joey Widgeon, for their hard work in helping finalize the contract.

A groundbreaking ceremony will be held in February, with an exact date to be determined.

shrubs, roses, and other plants from their yard, which were planted in Pintail Park in October 2025. The donation totaled more than \$700 in plants.

Bob and Kathy Hess were nominated for their ongoing cleanup and volunteer efforts throughout the community. During their daily five-mile walks, the couple carries trash bags and picks up litter along both sides of Ocean Parkway near the South Gate. They also collect trash on the beach each week and volunteer their time with several programs, including Meals on Wheels.

Pat Kroger was nominated for her

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Winter malaise

I feel as barren as the oak tree beside my house this time of year. Cold weather and early nightfall deny me the pleasure of putzing around in the

month ago.*

This is the perfect time of year to clean out and organize several closets and drawers. Yet, they remain cluttered and disorganized, likely to remain that way for some time to come. The other morning, I attempted to retrieve a sweater from a shelf in our walk-in closet. My sweater shelf is a mess. Picture strings of tangled Christmas light times ten and you'll begin to visualize the scene. There's no one to blame but me. Inevitably, I toss, not place nicely, my sweaters onto the shelf when I'm done with them. In short order the sweaters are entangled so that when I attempt to retrieve one, two others tumble



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

garden or going out on my boat. For as long as I can remember indoor confinement has made me feel at times blue, other times stir crazy and sometimes both. If I had the means and the time, I'd certainly be a Snowbird, evacuating to a warmer destination like Florida as so many others do.

January and February especially are challenging months for me to find activities to occupy my "down" time. I've pursued various and sundry endeavors that usually lose my interest quickly. Far too often I wind up watching television – too much television. I try reading books but because I read a lot during the day, my interest is often sapped.

A couple years ago, in an effort to keep at bay the winter doldrums, I spent time working on a couple thousand-piece jigsaw puzzles on a work table in the garage kept warm by a kerosene heater. It took me about a month or so to complete both puzzles which I glued to foam board backings and hung in my studio as a testament to my perseverance. My enthusiasm eventually reached a tipping point. When I connected about half the border pieces of a third puzzle, the experience felt more chore-like than an enjoyable escape. The pieces were swept back into the box which hasn't been opened since.

Looking around my house there are several indoor projects of varying complexities that could, nay should, be tackled during this down time. My best intentions though are often overwhelmed by underwhelming motivation. For example, there are many family pictures that need to be placed and hung around the house. In total, the project may take 45 minutes to an hour to complete. But undone the task remains. Each time I walk through the family room, I hear whispered disdain hissed from the framed pictures piled on the coffee table, set there about a



down. Habitually, I scoop them up and throw them back on the shelf hoping they'll stick the landing and not fall again. Often, they don't.

It wouldn't take long at all to straighten this mess. But there's a problem. When I think about the process involved, I lose interest. I'd have to retrieve the step ladder from the kitchen. Then I'd have to neatly fold the sweaters before organizing them on the shelf. Yes, I know it sounds simple. Yet, I also know that before long the sweaters will again be a tangled mess. So, why exert the effort in the first place? I'll just watch television.

**After I wrote this column, my wife, frustrated with my lethargy to hang the pictures, took on the task herself. She did a great job. I told her so during a commercial.*

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Reader Letter

State legislation needs support

Editor:

We are into the third week of the 2026 Maryland Legislative Session and there are many issues that need the attention of the voters.

One such issue is Senate Bill 222, which is a priority child protection bill sponsored by our own Senator Mary Beth Carozza. This bill would help ensure the safety of children involved in child custody disputes by requiring that all court professionals involved in custody proceedings are properly trained (including custody evaluators), since they advise the court and make decisions that would affect custody in cases involving abuse and neglect. We need to support this legislation.

Another bill that needs urgent support, also sponsored by Senator Carozza, is Senate Bill 50 - known as the Fairness in Girls' Sports Act. I simply do not understand how anyone can think it is fair and proper for biological boys to compete against girls. It is dangerous for the girls and it has caused girls to lose scholarship opportunities.

I am sure that the vast majority of Marylanders believe that only U.S. citizens should be able to vote in our elections. Delegate Wayne Hartman has sponsored a bill (HB454) that would require the State Administrator of Elections to enroll the state in the federal Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlement (SAVE) Program to verify U.S. citizenship for those applying to or who have registered to vote.

If you agree these are good bills, please tell the committee members of the legislative committees which will be voting on the legislation to please support. The committees are: SB222 - Senate Judicial Proceedings; SB50 - Senate Education, Energy and Environment; and HB454 - House Government, Labor and Elections. Contact information can be found at mgaleg.maryland.gov.

I hope people will pay attention and show support for good legislation.

Carol Frazier
Ocean Pines

Courier Almanac

"See for yourself what the genius of Walt Disney has created in his first full length feature production," proclaimed the original trailer for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, released on February 4,

The phenomenon known as "dog breath" is widely recognized by dog owners. When a beloved dog comes over for cuddle time and begins to pant in contentment, owners may be subjected to a foul, warm odor emanating from the animal's mouth. Unlike halitosis that affects humans, which is often linked to the foods one might

eat or habits like smoking, dog breath typically can be traced to poor oral hygiene. The American Kennel Club says the simplest way to prevent bad dog breath is to clean a dog's teeth on a regular basis. Teeth brushing will reduce plaque and promote better oral hygiene. Providing plenty of chew toys and dental treats also can prevent plaque formation and tartar build-up. Left untreated, poor dental hygiene can lead to inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) and infection below the gum line. Stuck food also can rot in a dog's mouth and result in bad breath. Persistent bad breath in dogs should be addressed by a veterinarian, as it also can be a sign of an infection or another underlying health issue.



Board approves budget

The Ocean Pines Board of Directors unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget at the January 24 Regular Board Meeting.

Treasurer Monica Rakowski presented the motion to approve the budget, which includes total operating revenue and expenses of \$13,441,823 and an assessment of \$915 for non-water lots, and a bulkhead differential of \$665.

Board members commended General Manager John Viola and his staff for their extensive work on the budget.

"John, you and your team have done a yeoman's job with this budget," Secretary Jeff Heavner said. "This proposed budget is yet another example of your exemplary work. Job well done."

Director Steve Jacobs echoed those sentiments, adding, "John and the staff really deserve a lot of credit for putting together a strong and thorough document. They've done very well."

Viola explained that this year's budget was developed using a "bot-

tom-up" approach, with input from Ocean Pines Association department heads, the Budget & Finance Committee, and the Board of Directors. A DMA study and working session were also conducted in October as part of the process.

"The team delivered one of the largest bodies of work during this process, at least based on what I've seen in the 20-plus years I've been here," Viola said.

Viola also noted that the last time the assessment was lower was in fiscal year 2013-14, and the bulkhead differential has only increased twice over the past six years.

The first proposed budget was posted to the Ocean Pines Association website on December 16, 2025, followed by a Budget & Finance Committee presentation on December 18 and a Board review on December 19. A recommended version was posted on January 9, with a town hall meeting held on January 15.

New conservation easement protects land, waterways in Newport Bay Watershed

Queponco Farms, a 186-acre mix of cropland and woodland off Basket Switch Road, is the latest agricultural easement purchased through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) in Worcester County, and the first project to be completed in Newport Bay watershed since establishment of the Partnership for Newport Bay.

The Partnership includes Worcester County, Maryland Coastal Bays Program, the Lower Shore Land Trust, Assateague Coastal Trust, and the Town of Berlin. This unique partnership of local government and non-profit organizations will manage a \$20 million grant through the Whole Watershed Act for water quality improvement projects in the Newport Bay watershed over the next five years.

"Protecting this property, owned by Queponco Farms, is important be-

cause it is a large property, with extensive road frontage, contains over 80% prime agricultural soils and is adjacent to a block of already protected forest," Katherine Munson, planner for Worcester County Government, said. "Land protection has lagged in the Newport Bay watershed compared to other areas of the county, so we are thrilled to work with this landowner and MALPF to protect this property."

The easement will prevent subdivision and non-agricultural uses in perpetuity, increasing a contiguous block of permanently protected land to over 747 acres. A tributary of Marshall Creek runs through the property. Its woodland provides a riparian buffer, habitat, and water quality benefits for the Newport Bay watershed.

"By placing an easement on our farm, we've not only protected our

please see **watershed** on page 8

**The
Courier**

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Ways to address cyberbullying

The new year is a chance to reset, reflect and renew the ways children are supported. Jesse's Paddle, The Jesse Klump Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program, focuses on cyberbullying and practical ways to prevent it. During the winter months, many children will spend more time inside on their phones and other devices.

The program outlines how to know if a child is being cyberbullied:

- He or she creates false "illnesses" to avoid going to school.

- The child uses multiple social media accounts.

- The child switches screens or shuts down devices when you are nearby.

- The child avoids discussions of social media and is angry when access to devices is denied.

- He or she is obviously nervous and upset when receiving a new text message or social media message.

If you witness or experience these

signs in a child, the following recommendations are offered:

- Tell the child that it is not his or her fault, and certainly don't blow it off as a youthful stunt.

- Don't grab the phone and respond to the bully - it will just egg them on.

- Don't confront the bully's parents. They may have taught their kid the art of bullying.

- Don't immediately threaten to take the device away. They may miss out on positive experiences without their phone.

- Document the bullying with screenshots and report it to the ap, the game, or to a trained professional. If the bullying is school-based, report it to the school counselor.

- Be familiar with every platform the bully may be using and block the bully's account and number.

For severe threats (threats of violence, encouraging self-harm or even suicide, and sexual exploitation) alert law en-

forcement and cybercrime reporting platforms. In Maryland the cybercrime reporting system can be accessed at <https://doit.maryland.gov/services/cybersecurity/Pages/ReportaCybersecurityIncident.aspx>.

The national suicide prevention hotline can be reached by dialing 988.

The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation serving the Maryland lower Eastern Shore, exists to end the tragedy of suicide, to provide a place of healing for those who have lost loved ones to suicide, to financially support those with entrepreneurial ideas to address unmet community needs, and to provide grants for training for healthcare and education professionals dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health.

Donations are tax deductible, and may be made at our secure website, or by mailing a check payable to

"Jesse's Paddle" and mailed to The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 1786, Berlin, MD 21811

More information can be found at www.jessespaddle.org or by emailing weremember@jessespaddle.org.

-Chip Bertino



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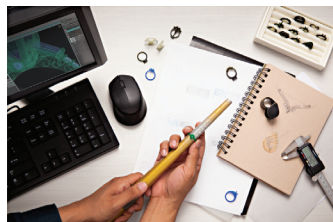
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Drug and Alcohol Council seeks nominations

The Worcester County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council is seeking nominations of individual adults, youth, and groups who have made outstanding contributions to drug and alcohol prevention and treatment. Nominations are being requested for those who have provided exceptional service in the areas of prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and fire/emergency services. The awardees will be honored by Worcester County residents, elected officials, and Council members at the 35th Annual Drug and Alcohol Awards Reception. This event will be held on April 7 at the Worcester Technical High School beginning at 6 p.m.

Nominations of individuals or

groups who have performed commendably, and beyond the call of duty are currently being accepted by the Worcester County Health Department. Criteria for selection of honorees include: program impact on community, appropriateness of approach, and personal contribution to the program. Anyone who received an award in the past three years is not eligible.

Kiwanis breakfast returns

Kiwanis Pancake Day is coming up on Saturday, March 7, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. All profit goes back into our community benefiting the children of Worcester County!

It will be held at the Ocean Pines

Nominations should be submitted to the Worcester County Health Department by February 27 at 5 p.m., and can be submitted digitally at <https://forms.office.com/r/76uZgVJoyT>. To download a copy, visit worcesterhealth.org. To receive a physical copy of the nomination form, please call 410-632-1100 ext. 1119 or email Regina.Mason@maryland.gov.

Community Center in the Assateague Room.

Tickets are \$10 per person, children under 10 eat free. You can purchase tickets at the door or from any Kiwanian in our club in advance.

watershed
from page 6

land but also contributed to the larger ecosystem of our watershed," Mike Sirman, Queponco Farms owner, said. "As landowners in this watershed, we have a unique opportunity to influence the future of our region. I encourage fellow farmers and landowners to consider the benefits of MALPF and similar programs. These initiatives offer financial incentives and technical support, making it easier to protect our agricultural heritage. By working together, we can foster a community that prioritizes sustainable practices and conservation."

With this purchase, over 11,000 acres of farmland and forest county-wide are now permanently protected by MALPF easements. MALPF aims to protect agricultural land, curb urban sprawl, and conserve open space, wildlife habitat, and improve water quality in Maryland. Landowners who sell an easement to MALPF continue to own and farm their land but are restricted from future development, though they may retain some limited development rights.

The Whole Watershed Fund pools resources from multiple state sources, including the Maryland Cost Share Program (MACS), Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), the Bay Restoration Fund, the Clean Water Commerce Act, the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, and the Waterway Improvement Fund.

The Whole Watershed Act provides implementation grants for up to 50% of the program cost, and each watershed program has been asked to secure additional funding from other state, federal, local, and private sources.

The funding will support long-term environmental restoration efforts in Newport Bay, where water quality and habitat conditions have declined in recent years. Working alongside local communities, the Partnership for Newport Bay will lead projects aimed at improving water quality, restoring natural habitats, and strengthening the overall health of the watershed for the future.

Properties with subdivision potential, over 50 acres and at least 50% prime agricultural soils are eligible to apply to sell an easement to MALPF. Applications will be accepted starting in January 2026. Contact Katherine Munson 410-632-1220 ext. 1302 for details.

mural
from page 1

2019 when I had my first exhibit of historic photographs that I had guardianship of, entitled Untold Stories," he continued. Henry had several more exhibits of historic photographs there and said, "I'm an unofficial member of the Germantown School committee."

After a board meeting at the school and using money from community support and a grant from the Maryland Historic Trust, Germantown board member Karen Prengaman called Henry last spring and told him, "They wanted a mural, and they don't want anyone else to do it," he related.

"From the street, you can't really tell what the building is," Prengaman said. "And that was a Rosenwald design. The school had to be east-facing so when the sun rose in the morning, it powered the school that had no electricity. So, a mural from Patrick Henry would be amazing, I thought. You know his

work. It will just blow you away ... The community is so proud of it."

Henry was reluctant to paint a large mural in the weather up on a ladder. The group came up with Plan B. Henry painted a 24"x36" painting of what would become the mural, and

Sign Tech brought his bucket truck to install the mural panels on the school building.

While Henry was initially anxious about how all of this was going to work, at the mural's installation, that anxiety turned to joy. He shared, "I was like a little kid. I hadn't felt that type of giddiness in quite a while."

Henry's original painting is on permanent exhibit inside of the center.

The Germantown School Community Heritage Center was once a two-room school dedicated to improving education for black students. The school was funded by Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), a Jewish-American businessman, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., and a transformative philanthropist who used his fortune to build over 5,000 schools for Black children in the segregated South.

The Germantown School educated students from 1922 through the 1950s, and around 100 African-American children attended there every year. After the school closed, it was converted into a county garage but eventually abandoned again. Community members received the deed to the school in 2000 and worked together to restore the school building and reaffirm its mission of education and community enrichment.

The Germantown School Community Heritage Center is located at 10223 Trappe Rd. in Berlin. Information is available at 410-641-0638 or on their website www.thegermantownschool.org.

Tony Weeg photographed the painting and turned it into a digital file. David and Susun Lane of Sun Signs output the mural on aluminum panels clad with vinyl that are weather and fade resistant. Nathaniel Cullen of



Astronomy & Spaceflight

Origin of planets and the moon

By **Douglass Hemmick, Ph.D.**

The NASA Artemis program is set to return human beings to the lunar surface within the next few years, with a preliminary mission planned for this February. This month we again focus on Earth's orbiting cosmic companion. For professional astronomers, as well as hobbyists, one of the most fascinating questions is how the moon was formed.



Doug Hemmick

The process begins with birth of stars and planetary systems within nebula, as vast formations of gas and dust are drawn together by gravity. This results in super-heating and the powerful luminosity of the stars. Such nebula have also been called star cradles.

The subject of star birth drew much attention in the 1990s when the Hubble Space Telescope captured stunning images of the famous star cradle Pillars of Creation. These structures are located in the Eagle Nebula, also known as M16. Every major large telescope has since taken a look, offering new details.

New images were taken of the Pillars of Creation by the James Webb Space Telescope in 2022, penetrating much further into these clouds and allowing more young stars to be seen.

Carl Sagan in his classic series "Cosmos" described the process of star birth, as follows: "Stars and their accompanying planets are born in the gravitational collapse of a cloud of interstellar gas and dust... Stars like the sun are born in batches, in great compressed cloud complexes such as the Orion Nebula... Later, the stars wandered out of their nursery to seek their fortunes in the Milky Way, stellar adolescents still surrounded by tufts of glowing nebulosity."

Our own solar system began about 4.5 billion years in the past. A contracting nebula produced not only our familiar sun, but also the planets, as the gas and dust assembled together to form large accumulations of material.

The gravitational force acted to mold the planets into their spherical forms and smoothed over surface distortions. Over the course of hundreds of millions of years, the sun began its process of nuclear fusion and generation of light, and the planets took the familiar shapes we see today.

The planets obtained moons mainly from "near miss collisions" (gravitational captures) of large asteroids floating through the galaxy. In this way, Mars collected its two small satellites Phobos and Deimos and Jupiter its gigantic moons IO, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto. Saturn has 274 moons and Jupiter has 94, in total.

When examining our own moon, we found something unique. Our moon dwarfs the Martian satellites, and is on the same scale as the giant satellites of Jupiter. This presents the enigma: how did the Earth, with its relatively weak gravitation, capture a moon almost as large as those of Jupiter?

Astronomers debated this for decades, finally coming to a consensus in 1984. As Carl Sagan describes it: "The most satisfactory explanation of the origin of our own moon, based on chemistry (as revealed by soil samples returned from the Apollo missions), is

that it was formed almost 4.5 billion years ago, when a world the size of Mars struck the Earth."

Further evidence that the moon began its existence with such violence is the existence of an early layer of magma under its crust. Today there are large dark areas on the moon called "maria" and analysis shows that they are the volcanic type of rock.

Saturday January 17 was an important day as a powerful rocket was rolled out to its launch pad at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. This is the system that will carry the Artemis-2 astronauts on their historic mission around the moon. NASA officials are hoping that the mission could launch as soon as this week.

A wet dress rehearsal was scheduled as early as Saturday January 31 with the two day operation for the loading of super cold propellants including liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen into the rocket, and other countdown testing.

The Artemis-2 mission will fly three NASA astronauts, Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen on a 10-day trip around the moon. It will launch no sooner than February 6.



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Lovebirds

Valentine’s Day will be celebrated in a couple weeks so it seemed an appropriate time to discuss the Lovebird.

The Lovebird is a small group of the parrot family. Of the nine species in the genus, all are native to the African continent, with the grey-headed Lovebird being native to the African island of Madagascar. In August 2024, scientists discovered a new extinct species of Lovebird that lived 2.5 million years ago.

Social and affectionate, the name comes from the parrots’ strong, monogamous pair bonding and the long periods which paired birds spend sitting together. Lovebirds live in small flocks and eat fruit, vegetables, grasses, and seeds. Some species are kept as pets. The average lifespan is 10 to 12 years.

Lovebirds are five to seven inches in length, up to nine inches in wingspan and about 2 ounces in weight.

They are among the smallest parrots, characterized by a stocky build,

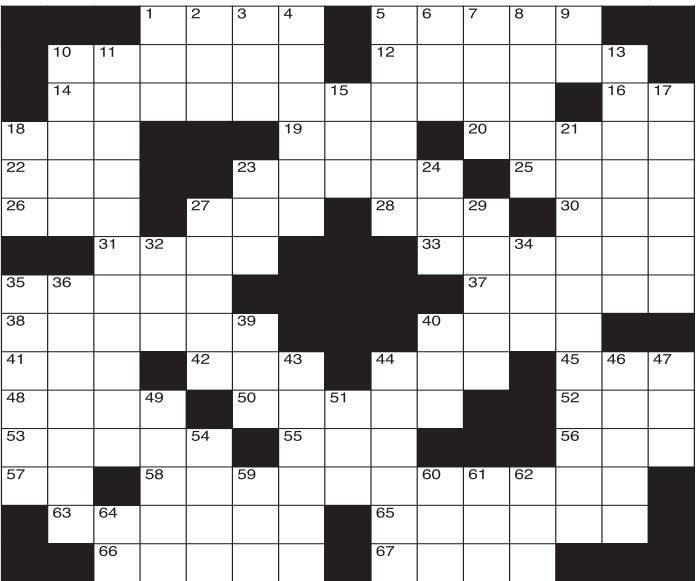
a short blunt tail, and a relatively large, sharp beak. Wildtype Lovebirds are mostly green with a variety of colors on their upper body, depending on the species.

The Fischer’s Lovebird, black-cheeked Lovebird, and the masked Lovebird have a prominent white ring around their eyes.

There is a notable feral colony in Arizona, consisting of mostly Rosy-faced Lovebirds. They originated from birds that escaped the pet trade, and were first seen in the state during the 1980s. The first breeding pair in Arizona was discovered in 1998.

Depending on the species of Lovebird, the female will carry nesting material into the nest in various ways. The peach-faced Lovebird, for example, tucks nesting material in the feathers of its rump.

Parrots are generally vegetarian species. Lovebirds forage for their food. In the wild, their diet mainly consists of seeds, grains, and leaves from trees, shrubs, and tall grass.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Native American group of N. California

5. Geological times (Brit. sp.)

10. Tool to remove

12. Rods

14. One who renews

16. They precede C

18. Chatter incessantly

19. ___ King Cole, musician

20. Insect parts

22. One from Utah

23. The world of the dead

25. Singer Redding

26. NBA legend Nelson

27. Indicates wrongly

28. Unhappy

30. Anger

31. Dark brown

33. Some are in kitchens

35. Made a mistake

37. Damp
38. Type of fuel

40. Actor Damon

41. What thespians do

42. One’s mother

44. Disallow

45. Swiss river

48. A banana has one

50. Philippines lake and volcano are two

52. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)

53. Agave

55. Journalist Tarbell

56. One-time tech giant

57. Indicates upon

58. Intestinal bacteria

63. Loose sheaths around the spinal cord

65. It goes with nook

66. A fashion

67. Very eager to hear or see

CLUES DOWN

1. Witch

2. Utilize

3. Writing utensil

4. Where rockers go to work

5. Subsides

6. Consume

7. Greek mythological figures

8. California mountain town

9. Tin

10. Muse of lyric and love poetry

11. Animates anew

13. Humorous criticisms

15. Cool!

17. Worst

18. Wet dirt

21. Designed to be useful

23. Hebrew unit of liquid capacity

24. High schoolers’ test

27. Computer device

29. Indian territory ___ and Diu
32. A place to sleep

34. AI tool

35. Pass or go by

36. Indicates a purchase

39. A digital tape recording of sound

40. More (Spanish)

43. Disfigured

44. White (Spanish)

46. Church building

47. Georgia rockers

49. Type of surgery

51. Much ___ about nothing

54. Make by braiding

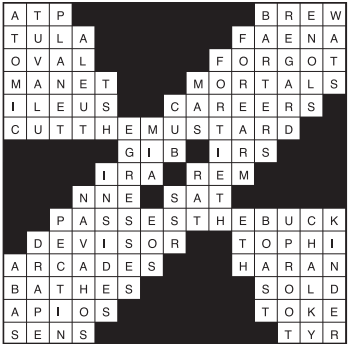
59. Local area network

60. Unit of work or energy

61. Member of indigenous people of Thailand

62. Liquefied natural gas

64. Distance to top



Answers for January 28

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Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by **Jack Barnes**



Senior Wisdom

The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but the ability to keep your mouth shut in any language is priceless.

Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision.

Happiness is not having to set the alarm clock.

When I get a headache, I take two aspirin and keep away from children just like the bottle says.

Just once, I want the prompt for username and password to say, "Close enough."

Becoming an adult is the dumbest thing I've ever done.

If you see me talking to myself, just move along. I'm self-employed. We're having a meeting.

"Your call is very important to us. Please enjoy this 40-minute flute solo."

Does anyone else have a plastic bag full of plastic bags, or is it just me?

I hate it when I can't figure out how to operate the iPad and my tech support guy is asleep. He's 5 and it's past his bedtime.

Today's 3-year-olds can switch on laptops and open their favorite apps. When I was 3, I ate mud.

Tip for a successful marriage: Don't ask your wife when dinner will be ready while she's mowing the

lawn.

So, you drive across town to a gym to walk on a treadmill?

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row.

I decided to stop calling the bathroom "John" and renamed it the "Jim." I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

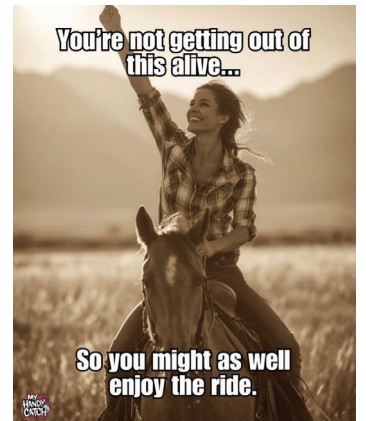
Old age is coming at a really bad time.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Now, I'm wondering... did I send this to you, did you send it to me or have I only sent one copy?



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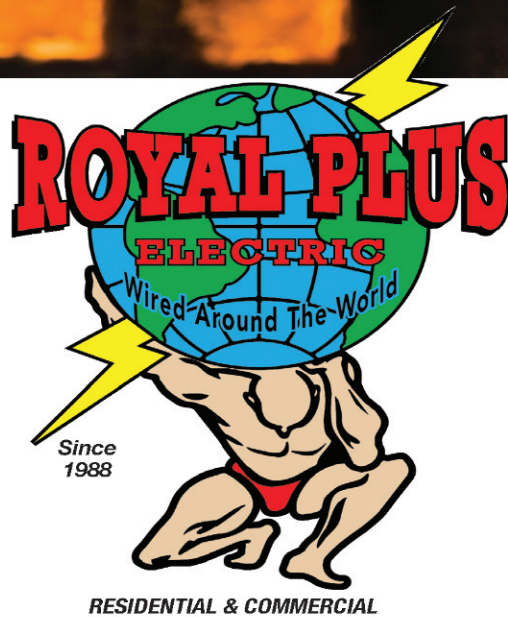
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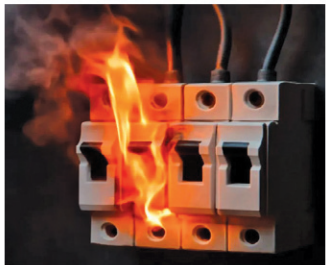
Every year in the United States, about
2,500 people die in home fires...
Most of these deaths occurred in homes
that didn't have a working smoke alarm.



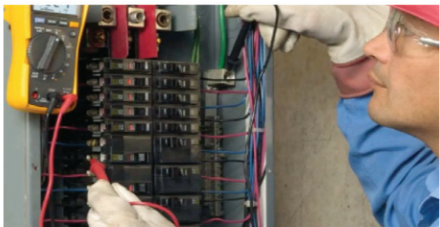
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