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**The ReStore
repurposes to
build homes for
local families**

By Elaine Bean

Habitat for Humanity is an international, nongovernmental, nonprofit organization founded in 1976 devoted to building decent and affordable housing. "Habitat for Humanity was founded on the conviction that every man, woman, and child should have a simple, durable place to live in dignity and safety, and that decent shelter in decent communities should be a matter of conscience and action for all," their mission states.

The ReStore in Ocean Pines supports that mission by reselling donated furniture and household items that were well-loved and have plenty of life left in them. The store generates funds to support Habitat for Humanity of Worcester County that has been assisting local families with housing needs since 1995.

Habitat's website states: "We help to provide the dream of first-time homeownership to hardworking families in our community, and provide critical home repairs for existing homeowners. Families always pay back the cost to build or repair their homes. Habitat provides the opportunity and helps them to do so affordably."

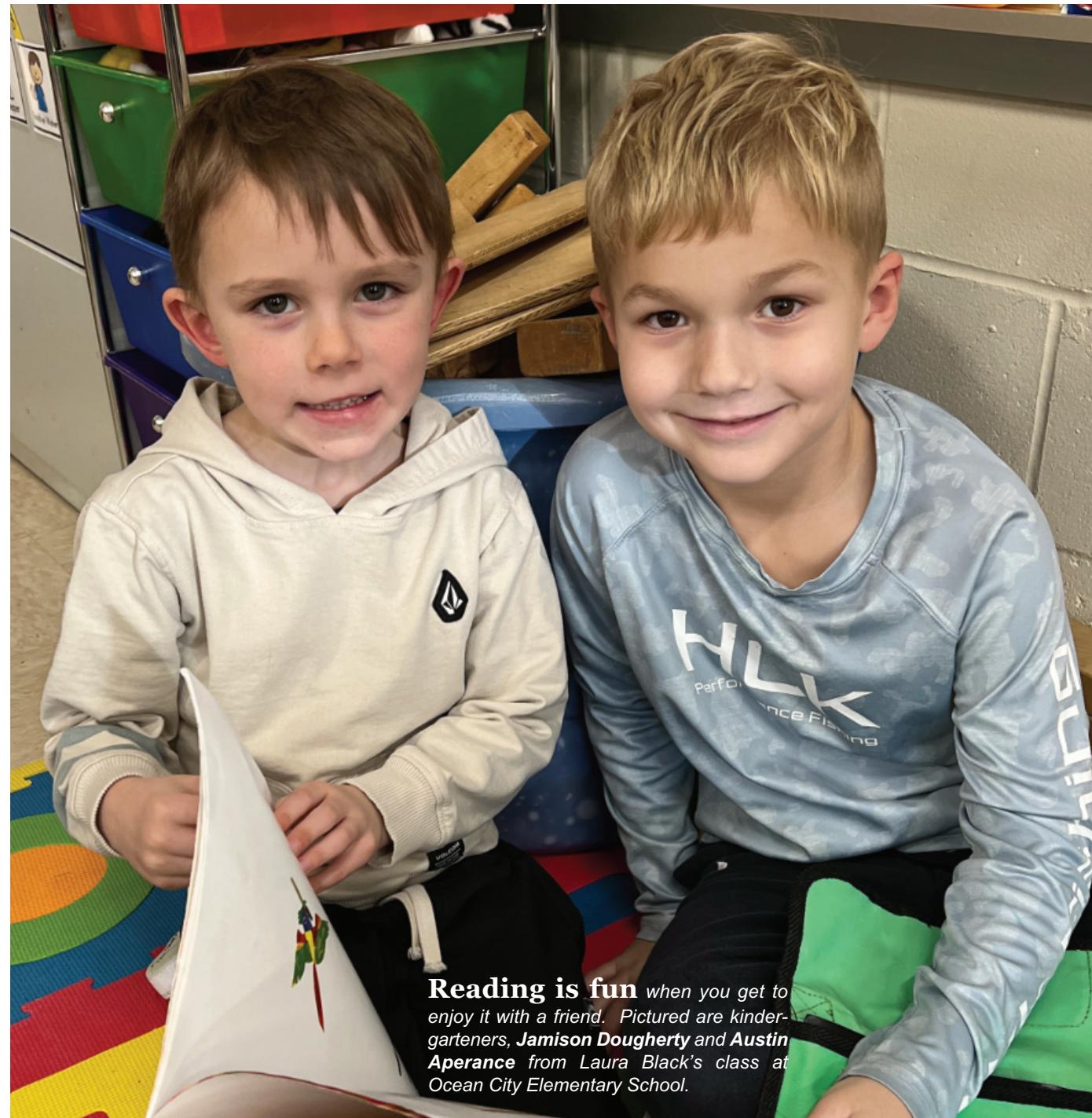
The ReStore helps fund those housing opportunities and receives positive reviews while doing so. Annette MacCauley posted on social media: "If you need anything for your home, go here first. They have a lot of nice furniture from donations, and the warehouse is clean. If you're looking to donate, they are accepting most things for a home, and the staff is very friendly and helps when you drop off."

Recent offerings at The ReStore include dozens of sofas and chairs and living room tables, including a mint

please see **restore** on page 4

Boat Show is this Weekend

February 11, 2026 Volume 27 Number 21



Reading is fun when you get to enjoy it with a friend. Pictured are kindergarteners, **Jamison Dougherty** and **Austin Aperance** from Laura Black's class at Ocean City Elementary School.

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Volunteers **Ray Airey, Deonhya Purnell, and Ashley Elizabeth**; store manager **Terry Ferguson**, and volunteer and Habitat past president **Vicki Harmon**. Habitat is currently building a home for Purnell.

restore
from page 1

condition sectional, in an abundance of styles and colors. Also, on the floor are dining room tables and chairs, working appliances, decorative items, bookcases, framed art, mirrors, headboards, and bunkbeds. Tucked in the back room are building materials, dishes, glassware, vinyl records, lighting, and knickknacks. A selection of antique and vintage items, current popular trends in decorating, are mixed in, as well as unusual items like pianos and fireplaces as they come in. The inventory changes daily.

The ReStore moved to Ocean Pines in 2024 from Rte. 113 south of Berlin into the large 10,000-sq. ft. space. The move has turned out to be beneficial for the nonprofit organization.

“The move to Ocean Pines has been a move in a positive direction,” Andrea Bowland, executive director, said. “There’s been an uptick in customer traffic and donations, which in turn has increased revenue. The space is larger than the previous location, and a bigger footprint increases capacity for inventory, which can also affect sales.”

One hundred percent of proceeds from The ReStore contribute to Habitat’s mission, operating as a business underneath the umbrella of Habitat for Humanity. The retail store requires the same business expenses as a brick-and-mortar location with lease payments, utilities, and staffing. A difference from a traditional business is that all of its inventory is donated.

The ReStore benefits the community by helping to keep items out of the landfill and offering an affordable

shopping experience to customers. “We accept gently used furniture, appliances, building materials, home décor, and household items that are clean, safe, and in working condition,” Fawn Mete, marketing coordinator said. “For safety and resale reasons, we cannot accept items such as mattresses, damaged furniture, recalled items, certain electronics, etc.”

Donation guidelines are available on their website. The organization bases prices for their resales on several factors, including original retail value, item condition, demand, and resale market standards. “Our goal is to offer affordable prices to shoppers while generating revenue that supports Habitat’s affordable housing mission,” Mete said.

The ReStore also provides an opportunity for community members to give back, offering regular weekly hours to volunteers or those needing community service hours, to high school students volunteering for graduation requirements, and to businesses for team-building days.

Volunteers contribute thousands of hours to The ReStore annually, according to Mete. “The ReStore operates with a combination of dedicated volunteers and paid part-time staff,” she said. “Staff members manage daily operations, scheduling, and logistics, while volunteers support customer service, sorting donations, merchandising, and other store functions.”

“I jokingly refer to my work at The ReStore as my ‘jobby’,” Terry Ferguson, merchandising coordinator, said. “It allows me to be creative when designing our displays and photographing our online items. I get to work with

please see **restore** on page 12

Penny and some thoughts

You may have read that at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show held last week, the Best in Show winner was Penny, a Doberman Pinscher.



It's All About. . .

By **Chip Bertino**

chipbertino@delmarvacourier.com

She is only the fifth Doberman in the club's history to be so recognized.

I was pleased to learn of Penny's accomplishment as I am partial to Dobermans, black and rust especially.

During the late 60s, 70s and 80s several dogs were part of our family. Cricket was a chihuahua that my grandparents had. Somewhere in a forgotten family photo album are pictures of Cricket sitting next to me when I was a baby. I'm told she liked to play with me though I was too young at the time to remember.

The first dog I do remember was a collie mix named Sammy, a playful puppy with boundless energy. When she grew to full size, she was a menace – a playful menace but a menace nonetheless. My most vivid memory of Sammy was her jumping from our moving car on our way to the shore. We were slowing at a stop sign so fortunately not moving fast when she dove out the open rear window of our 1960 Oldsmobile 88. She was a little less rambunctious when she returned to the car but not much.

In time, Sammy's antics became more than my parents could handle and she eventually found another home. I was a devasted five-year-old crying uncontrollably in my grandparents' kitchen when I was told the news.

Several years later at my grandparent's shore home, on a hot summer's night, our grandmother awakened my brother and me. Rubbing sleep from our eyes, we made our way to the living room where a puppy sat beside the fireplace hearth. She looked like a plush toy with big eyes. My father and grandfather drove from Philadelphia midweek to surprise us, which we certainly were.

Her name was Cupcake – don't ask me why, I have no recollection how that name was chosen. Maybe because she was a miniature apricot poo-

dle. As you might expect, my brother and I were ecstatic.

In time though, it was apparent Cupcake was no peach. She was rather nasty, except toward our mother whom she adored. Looking back, maybe a miniature poodle wasn't the best companion for two boys. Maybe a Labrador or something similar would have been better.

Cupcake did give us a memorable experience when she birthed three, or was it four, I can't remember now, puppies sired by Charlie Brown, a neighbor's poodle.

My lasting memory of Cupcake is a faded scar on the back of my left hand from when she bit me.

Many years later, a *Philadelphia Inquirer* classified ad for a Doberman Pinscher caught my attention. My brother and I were teenagers when we jumped in our mother's Volkswagen 411 and headed to Drexel Hill to see this dog. Blackjack was a large, fully trained 18-month-old black and rust Doberman. Using money I earned from mowing lawns, I gave the seller \$200. Once we were all in the car – me in the driver's seat, my brother riding shotgun and the dog taking up the entire back seat, we realized we now had to inform our mother of the new addition. Full disclosure – we never told her what we planned to do.

Although we were excited, the 45-minute drive to my mother's office was somewhat subdued.

Pulling into the parking lot, the time had come to fess up. The three of us walked up to the entrance; Blackjack was the most calm. I went inside while my brother and BJ waited outside.

My mother was surprised to see me and became wary when I asked her to come outside. We headed out. The moment of truth had arrived. How would Mom react?

How did she react? Fortunately, she was just as excited as we were. I do remember she made a point to check his teeth. Blackjack must have sensed that a major hurdle had been cleared because he took to my mother like white on rice.

During the ensuing years, my wife and I have welcomed several wonderful dogs into our family though a Doberman has not been among them.

But there's still time.

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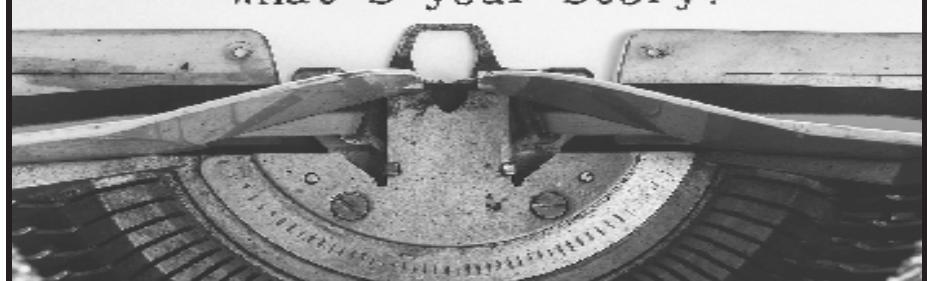
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Reader Letter

Taxpayers need to stay focused

Editor:

Needless to say, all Maryland tax payers need to be paying close attention to the budget process going on now in the Maryland legislature. Recent history is not comforting. We went from a \$5 billion surplus in early 2023 to a \$3 billion deficit in 2025 and we are all suffering through the rate and fee increases passed by the legislature last year to try to deal with this. Well, hang onto your hats - we have an "acknowledged" deficit of 1.5 billion dollars this year, which does not include recently discovered (by state auditors) "shortfalls" and "unaccounted for money" in various state agencies. So far, these "shortfalls" appear to total about \$2 billion, which means the real deficit for 2026 may equal or exceed last year's. At some point the question "What happened?" needs to be asked and answered. And no, it is not Trump's fault.

A recent investigative report by Spotlight on Maryland and reported by Maryland Matters brings to light additional significant budget challenges facing Maryland tax payers.

Every year, the Office of Legislative Audits takes a close look at how state agencies handle their money. Apparently the same problems keep surfacing, raising concerns that millions of dollars in state expenditures that should be reimbursed by the federal government have not been reimbursed and little effort is being made to obtain the reimbursements. During the 2025 OLA review of eight state agencies, auditors flagged

\$3.42 Billion in unsupported federal accruals. That means Maryland spent state money expecting reim-

bursement from the federal government, but these agencies could not provide enough documentation to guarantee the funds would come. This does not necessarily mean the state has lost the money, but it is extremely sloppy accounting and who knows when or if the reimbursements will happen?

The same audit flagged \$888 million in potential unfunded liabilities and \$67 million in known unfunded liabilities.

A review of OLA reports from fiscal years 2020-2025 found a persistent

pattern: millions and sometimes billions of dollars tied up in unsupported revenue entries and liabilities across multiple state agencies.

I believe we can certainly expect better from our state government and the very well-paid heads of these state agencies.

I hope people will pay attention to what's going on - a good way to keep abreast of these issues is to follow "Spotlight on Maryland", because if any state needs a spotlight-it's Maryland.

Linda A. Moran
Berlin

Invitation to join

Editor:

Hey, Independent, Libertarian and Unaffiliated voters! It's unfair that you have no voice in our gubernatorial election on Tuesday June 23, 2026. You are locked out. 22% of Marylanders, one million people, have no affiliation with either the Republican or Democrat party. As the polarization of both parties grows, so does the number of unaffiliated voters. You

have no voice.

With our Worcester County local elections approaching, we implore you to become more active! Our gubernatorial ballot will vote for a Governor candidate, a state Senator, district Delegates, Commissioners, many county and municipal officers.

The Worcester County Republican Central Committee wants to extend an open invitation for you to consider joining our party and switch your voter registration to Republican. Maryland has a closed primary election but by joining the Republican Party, you will be able to vote in this primary, voting for the causes and candidates that you support, and that mean the most to you.

While Republicans and unaffiliated voters do not agree on everything, we agree on most issues:

Smaller, more efficient government, lower taxes, and less interference in our churches, schools & families.

Until our election laws change, by shutting out your largely unrepresented base, we invite you to join us Republicans on June 23, 2026. Vote!

Susan Ostrowski
Worcester County
Republican Central Committee
Chair



Valentine's Day is a celebration of relationships and love for people across the globe. Although Valentine's Day is widely celebrated across North America and Europe, the holiday also is celebrated in parts of Asia and Latin America. The Philippines is famous for mass weddings on Valentine's Day. Days devoted to love also are celebrated outside of February in different countries. Brazil celebrates D'a dos Namorados (Lover's Day) in June, while Colombia celebrates D'a del Amor y la Amistad (Day of Love and Friendship) in September.

The Courier

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Robert B. Adair 1938-2007

The Courier is published Wednesday morning by CMN Communications, Inc. Contents copyright 2025. News release items and calendar entries should reach us Friday noon prior to publication date. The advertising deadline is Friday at 5 p.m. Read **The Courier** online at delmarvacourier.com,

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Commentary

Less Moore. More democracy.

By Chip Bertino

Last week the Maryland House passed a new set of Congressional maps that effectively wipe out Maryland's First District as currently configured and represented by a Republican, Andy Harris, who was duly elected by voters.

The Maryland Legislature is overwhelmingly controlled by Democrats so the action of the Maryland House is not surprising.

Following the vote, the Governor said the House's action was an "important step to strengthen our democracy and ensure Maryland's representation reflects the will of the people."

His assertion that the House action is a victory would be humorous if it were not so seriously offensive to Marylanders across the state, especially in District One, and a brutal attack on democracy. The governor's actions and those of the House reflect their will to deny representation of any political group or partisan perspective not aligned with their own.

That's not democracy. That's despotism.

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Scholarships applications sought

The Women's Club of Ocean Pines (WCOP) will award scholarships in June to promising students who are full-time residents of Ocean Pines. These students must graduate from high school in good standing with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and plan to attend an accredited institution for further education. These awards may be used by the recipient to help defray post-high school expenses at any approved degree, certificate-granting college or university, technical or vocational school.

The WCOP Scholarship committee will consider the applicant's needs,

goals, scholarship, community service, extra-curricular activities and motivation. The club adheres to a non-discrimination policy on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin or family status.

Stephen Decatur High School students can obtain applications through their SchooLinks account. All completed applications must be returned to a senior counselor at Stephen Decatur High School by March 25. Qualifying applicants who do not attend Stephen Decatur High School are asked to call 410-641-8046 for information and/or an application.



Law enforcement class graduates

Twenty law enforcement officers from Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Talbot, Caroline and Queen Anne's counties graduated in the 95th entrance-level class of the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy (ESCJA) operated by Wor-Wic Community College.

Worcester County law enforcement officers who graduated are shown, in the front row, from left, **Charles Foy, Alessia Matha, Haley Schafer and Drake Swanger** of the Ocean City Police Department. In the back row, from left, are **Connor Wisniewski and Shaakira White** of the Ocean City Police Department; **Damian Paul** of the Pocomoke City Police Department; and **Josie Burkhead** of the Worcester County Sheriff's Office.

Pool to close for cleaning

The Ocean Pines Sports Core Pool will close for its bi-annual cleaning from March 2 through 6.

The pool is scheduled to reopen on Saturday, March 7, barring any unforeseen issues.

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

Anglers to meet

The Ocean Pines Anglers Club will meet on Saturday, February 14 at 9:30 a.m. in the Ocean Pines library. Come and enjoy complimentary coffee and donuts, check out the members-only free tackle bin and join in the discussion of all things fishing. All are welcome.

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Chorus recruits new members

Twice a year, the Pine Tones Chorus (PTC) performs an engaging local concert combining old favorites and fresh material alike. On Thursday, March 5, PTC will hold a first rehearsal to prepare for its spring concert, Pine Tones Goes to the Movies. The variety of musical selections include "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," "42nd

Street," "Moon River," and "When You Wish Upon a Star." The chorus consists of musically proficient amateurs with a professional sound. They combine commitment and fun to produce musically high-quality shows.

The first rehearsal is an opportunity for interested folks to try out the

please see members on page 10



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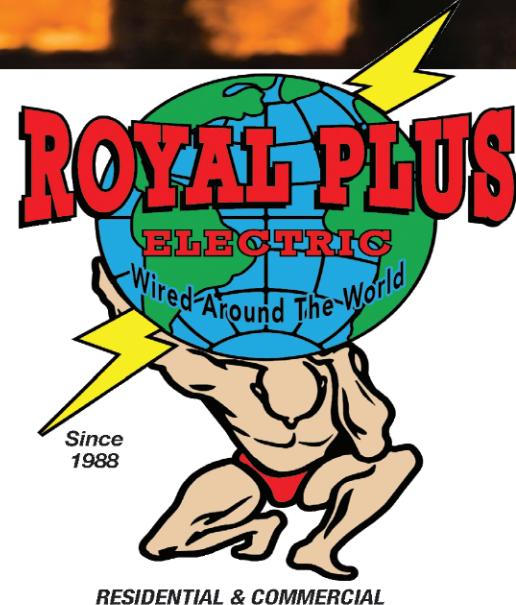
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Veterans Memorial Foundation seeks new members

The Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation is inviting individuals and businesses to become members and help preserve a place of honor for those who have served our country.

Memberships and donations directly support the foundation's Educational Outreach Program, which provides every fifth-grade class in Worcester County the opportunity to participate in a field trip to the Veterans Memorial in Ocean Pines. During the visit, students rotate through three

educational stations, where they learn about the memorial and veterans' stories, proper flag folding and etiquette, and the Patriots Pathway.



In addition to the Educational Outreach Program, memberships and donations also help fund the ongoing maintenance, programs, and future enhancements of the memorial.

Membership levels include: Annual at \$25, Life Member at \$150, Corporate Annual at \$100 and Corporate Life Member at \$300.

Checks should be made payable to WCVMF and sent to Membership, Worcester County Veterans Memorial, P.O. Box 1576, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

For more information, contact Suzie Pantone at Suziepan123@gmail.com.

To learn more about the Worcester County Veterans Memorial, visit www.wocovets.org.

The Courier

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Solidarity - On Saturday, January 30 on Route 589, members of the Democratic Women's Club of Worcester County stood in solidarity with Minnesota, in spite of bone-chilling weather.

members
from page 8

group, meet other singers, ask questions, and decide if it's a good fit. Musical training and experience are highly valued, but not necessary. If you love to sing, they welcome you and will help you become the singer you want to be.

There will be fourteen rehearsals in preparation for the June 5 performance of Pine Tones Goes to the Movies. As a service to the community, PTC prides itself on performing at assisted living and senior centers throughout Worcester County in the weeks before the concert.

Contact Jenny Anderson at (443) 655-5636 or Dave Holloway at (610) 213-7472 with any questions. Email: pinetoneschorus@gmail.com. Follow PTC on Facebook or @pinetoneschorus.

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Nalesnik joins TidalHealth Urogynecology

TidalHealth has welcomed Logan Nalesnik, APRN, FNP-C, to TidalHealth Urogynecology in Berlin.



Logan Nalesnik

Nalesnik earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Wingate University in Wingate, North Carolina. She went on to receive her master's degree in nursing from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Nalesnik is certified by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) and the American Heart Association in basic life support (BLS), and she is a neonatal resuscitation provider (NRP). She is also a member of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. She has years of clinical experience and previously worked at TidalHealth as a labor and delivery nurse.

In her free time, Nalesnik enjoys spending time outdoors, going to the beach or fishing on the boat with her husband and three young children.

She loves the farmers market in Berlin on Sundays and spends much of her free time reading or doing advocacy work for congenital heart disease (CHD), in honor of her oldest son.

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

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 systemwide 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



Lindsey Nelson

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 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.

McGovern named director for children’s services

Longtime TidalHealth pediatric hospitalist Lauren McGovern, MD, is now the medical director for children’s services. Dr. McGovern, who has been with TidalHealth for 16 years, most recently served as medical director of TidalHealth Pediatric Hospitalists and will continue in that role while assuming her expanded responsibilities.

In this capacity, Dr. McGovern will provide systemwide clinical and

strategic leadership for pediatric and neonatology services across TidalHealth, encompassing all three hospitals as well as outpatient ambulatory general pediatrics and pediatric subspecialty services.

She will work closely with Nemours, TidalHealth’s children’s hospital partner, to ensure seamless care coordination, service integration and the highest standards of pediatric care delivery. Dr. McGovern will also play a key role in the continued strategic development of the emerging women’s health service line.

“Dr. McGovern has consistently demonstrated effective physician leadership as medical director of the pediatric hospitalist program,” said Cindy Lunsford, Ed.D., executive vice president/chief operating officer for TidalHealth and president of TidalHealth Primary & Specialty Care. “Her experience, clinical credibility and commitment to high-quality pediatric care

please see **business** on page 13

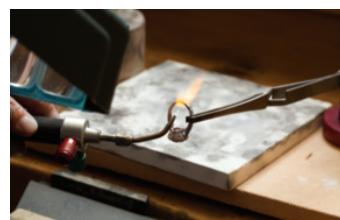
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Redden featured in new exhibition

The Worcester County Arts Council announced a new exhibition featuring works by local artist Kathryn Redden, on display through March 3 at the Berlin Library Gallery (second floor, 13 Harrison Avenue in Berlin).

A "Let's Talk Art" - Meet the Artist reception will be held on February 10 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Berlin Library Gallery, allowing the public to meet Kathryn Redden, learn about her creative process, and engage in conversation about her work. The reception is free and open to the public, with light refreshments provided.

Kathryn Redden's art reflects resilience, hope, and transformation, inspired by a personal health journey that became a turning point in her life. Her renewed creative purpose is rooted in faith, af-

firmation, perseverance, and joy, inviting viewers to pause, reflect, and find encouragement along their own life paths.

Working in oils, pastels, acrylics, photography, and mixed media, Redden embraces improvisation and creative freedom. Influenced by Monet, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Van Gogh, her work celebrates color, light, and expressive texture.

An active member of the regional arts community, Redden exhibits widely throughout the Eastern Shore, including the Worcester County Arts Council Gallery and numerous partner galleries and cultural spaces. She also serves as Artistic Director and Performer with the Lower Shore Performing Arts Company.

For more information, visit: www.worcestercountycouncil.org

restore
from page 4

a great group of volunteers that have become like family to me."

"I believe in the mission of Habitat for Humanity, and working at the ReStore enables Habitat to provide affordable housing and a path to homeownership," Vicki Harmon, long-time volunteer and past president of Habitat, added.

The ReStore hosts weekly promotions and special sales events to engage shoppers, often themed to holidays and current inventory. These events create a fun, interactive shopping experience while encouraging community members to support Habitat's mission through purchases and donations.

As a convenience and to encourage donations, The ReStore offers pickup service for large items that meet their donation guidelines. They also partner with other local services for pickup and deliveries at reasonable fees. Donations should be approved beforehand by emailing photos to donations@habitat-worcester.org.

The Habitat ReStore is located in Manklin Station, 11307 Manklin Creek Rd., Ocean Pines. Showroom hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The phone number is 410-208-4440. More information and a preview of what's in their showroom is available at www.habitatworcester.org.



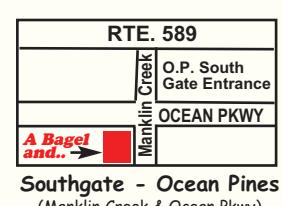
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business
from page 11

position her well to succeed in this expanded leadership role."

Dr. McGovern also became Medical Staff president at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional this month. She earned her medical degree from SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine and completed her internship and residency in pediatrics at the Mayo Clinic.

Doutt appointed county Deputy Finance Officer

The Worcester County Commissioners named Steven Doutt as the new deputy finance officer. Doutt brings over a decade of experience in government, nonprofit, and public-sector financial management.


Steven Doutt
Prior to joining Worcester County, Doutt served as the deputy treasurer for the City of Fruitland, overseeing operations within the finance department, including revenue billing, accounts

payable, budget preparation, reporting, and annual audit preparation, and acting as a liaison to the city council on financial matters. Prior to joining the City of Fruitland in 2022, he served as the finance manager with Delmarva Community Services, where he directed accounting, fiscal reporting, compliance with government regulations, and preparation for single audits. He also developed annual budgets, managed debt and cash flow, and provided financial projections and recommendations to their Board of Directors.

"I am excited to serve the residents of Worcester County and honored to join such a dedicated and talented team," Doutt said. "I look forward to working collaboratively to support strong financial stewardship for the County."

Beyond his professional work, Doutt is actively involved in the government finance community and committed to advancing best practices in public-sector financial management. He is a member of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), where he served as a panelist and moderator during a recent GFOA Annual Conference and volunteered as a

Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award (PAFR) judge. He also contributed as a commission member for Wicomico County's Compensation and Allowance Commission.

Doutt earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

The deputy finance officer assists the finance officer in planning, organizing, coordinating, and directing the functions and activities of the Treasurer's Office.

Welch is new county Procurement Officer

The Worcester County Commissioners appointed Edward Welch to serve as the procurement officer with Worcester County Government (WCG). Welch, a military veteran, brings more than three decades of experience from his 32-year career with Perdue.

"Ed will be a tremendous asset to the County,"

Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young said. "This role is central to our responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, and Ed brings the professionalism, discipline, and real-world experience needed to ensure the County consistently receives the best value—from routine operational purchases to complex, multi-million-dollar capital projects. His background, leadership, and private-sector mindset will strengthen our procurement practices and support smart, efficient government for our residents."

Prior to joining Worcester County, Welch served for 11 years as Perdue's sourcing manager-CapEx.

Welch moved to the Eastern Shore as a teenager. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business from Salisbury University and an MBA from Wilmington University, and he served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army from 1987 to 1993, where he led logistics units of over 300 soldiers both nationally and internationally.

"It is an honor and privilege to serve the residents of Worcester County," Welch said.

Welch will work closely with the County Commissioners and staff.



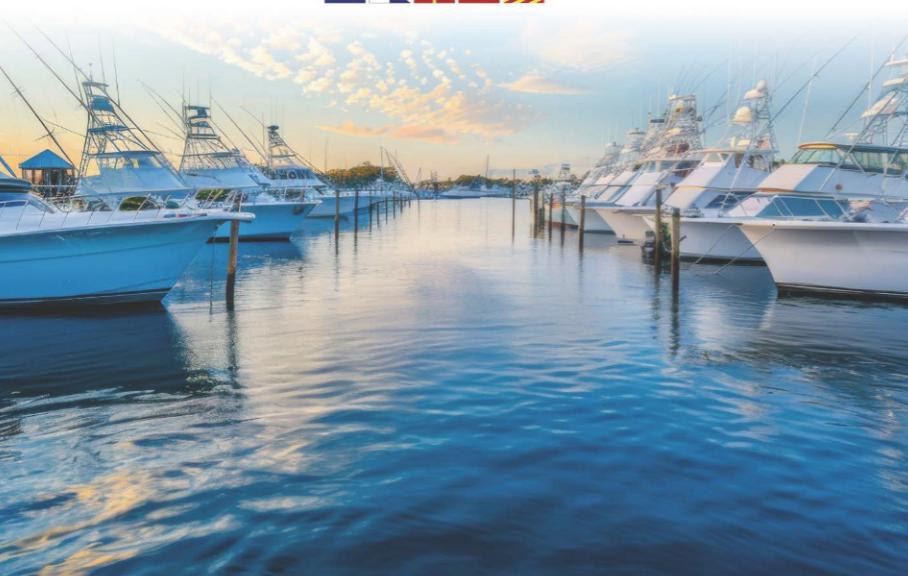
GROUP TRIPS **2026**

SEPTEMBER 1	ITALIAN SOJOURN - ROME TO VENICE PRESENTED BY VIKING OCEAN CRUISE	
SEPTEMBER 5	AMERICAN NATIONAL PARKS PRESENTED BY COLLETTE	
SEPTEMBER 22	GREECE ISLAND HOPPER LOCATION: ATHENS, MYKONOS AND SANTORINI	
OCTOBER 10	FRIENDS GETAWAY! LOCATION: SANDALS DUNN'S RIVER	
NOVEMBER 14	GOLF TRIP TO SANDALS CURACAO HOSTED BY SANDALS ROYAL CURACAO	
NOVEMBER 22	CARNIVAL THANKSGIVING CRUISE LOCATION: NORFOLK, VA PORT	

GROUP TRIPS **2027**

FEBRUARY 4	FIRE & SUNSET SOIRES - MIAMI, KEYWEST, BIMINI, MIAMI PRESENTED BY VIRGIN VOYAGE CRUISE	
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Seaside boat show returns

The Ocean City/Berlin Optimist Club is sponsoring the 43rd Seaside Boat Show Friday through Saturday. The event at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City historically attracts thousands of water and boating enthusiasts during the President's Day weekend.

With the recent expansion of the convention center, there will be more than 350 boats, 150 exhibitors and 50 boat dealers. They will display the newest and most popular models and water-related items. The large number of boats sold each year make it one of the most popular shows on the East Coast.

Visitors will be treated to an array of sport cruisers, sport fishing, perform-

ance and super boats. The show will also include marine electronics, boat trailer, canvas product, motor, jewelry, art, financing and insurance vendors.

One of the main reasons for the success of the show is the door prize donated each year by Scott and Mary McCurdy, owners of North Bay Marina. Each person who purchases a show admission has a chance to win a pontoon boat and motor.

Show times are Friday, February 13, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and, Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$1 for kids. A weekend pass is available for \$15.

The show's proceeds go toward providing funds for local youth programs.

MTAM works to improve Maryland boating industry

You may not have heard of them, but if you are one of the over 167,100 recreational boat owners in Maryland, you have benefited from the advocacy and engagement of the Marine Trades Association of Maryland (MTAM), an organization that has made a positive impact on the state's boating experience for more than half a century.

Founded in 1975, the MTAM represents an industry that generates over \$4.2 billion annually for the state's economy. The Maryland boating industry employs directly and indirectly more than 16,870 workers in just over 1,080 marine related businesses throughout the state.

Focused on strengthening the recreational boating industry through advocacy, workforce development and member engagement, MTAM remains

steadfast in its mission to "advocate for recreational boating in the state legislature, growing the workforce, expanding stewardship initiatives, bolstering safety seminars and creating opportunities for networking and business," according to MTAM President James Jordan.

The organization developed a robust education curriculum that is training new professionals for a career in marine industry sectors including service technicians, customer service and marketing representatives.

Through its Workforce Development Program, nearly 200 young people have either entered the marine trades or acquired new skills to advance their careers since 2014. Between 2024 and 2025, MTAM matched more than 45 interns with marine businesses across the

please see mtam on page 17



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Boating safety requires practice

By Dan Collins

Once again, the Ocean City Seaside Boat Show is upon us. For three exciting days, February 13 to 15, the Roland Convention Center will be chock full of dreams. Factory fresh boats without a scratch or stain – just eye-popping price tags – will mesmerize you while you fantasize about owning a kayak, a windsurfer, a jet ski, a sail boat or a power boat.

Surrounding the nautical 'field of dreams' will be the many peripheral vendors who can quench your urge to buy something that doesn't require a home equity loan. There will be sunglasses, fishing poles, anchors, boat hooks, lines, motors, electronics, plus insurance agents, dock builders and custom canvas fabricators and, of course, hot dogs.

But the most important ancillary item is often overlooked. It's the life jacket or as they say in legalese, the personal floatation device (PFD). Recreational boating is fun and exciting but not care free. Regardless of how you want to play with the water, safety has to be the most

boaters do not wear a PFD while underway. In fact, in most recent data (2024), the average wear rate was only 21.9% and it has been declining since 2021.

This is a very alarming statistic since 75% of boating-related fatalities were from drowning and 87% of those victims were not wearing life jackets. As a result, the National Safe Boating Council, the US Coast Guard and the US Power Squadron will be putting an emphasis on wearing life jackets this year.

The importance of boat safety can sometimes be very hard to fully appreciate because it is too easy to make the mental leap from automobile driving to power boat handling. Whereas the average car driver puts in over 300 hours per year behind the wheel, the average recreational boater logs under 60 hours at the helm. The issue is that the comfort zone surrounding driving a car does not translate into on-the-water behavior.

These hundreds of automobile hours build muscle memory and lull us into unconscious complacency. We hone our driving skills to the point that rote driv-

dergo professional training and certification and conduct themselves to prescribed protocols and aircraft are subjected to rigorous maintenance schedules as well as pre-flight inspections because a mishap in the air is catastrophic. There are no service stations or roadside pullovers when flying at 10,000 feet.

Boating is not as dangerous but it's similar. There are no service stations out at sea and you can still get into trouble and sink. That's why we need to think and behave more like pilots than drivers. It takes more preparation, more attention to details, and more situational awareness to operate a boat than to drive a car to the local supermarket.

We can learn a lot from the disciplines of aviation. No one protests when the pilot announces, "Fasten your safety belt." And no one is offended when the flight attendant walks down the aisle and checks your compliance. That seat belt is the equivalent of your life jacket.

As the recreational boat operator you can say and insist, "Put on your life jacket."

The nemesis of safety on the water is complacency. I am always amazed when I am called on to provide assistance to a distressed boat and the passengers have not donned their life jackets even though it's an atypical situation that may require unpracticed boat handling and there's a better than average chance of someone falling overboard.

Practice good boatmanship. Make sure your vessel is seaworthy before leaving the dock. Focus on situational awareness and insist that passengers wear a life jacket while underway. It could be the difference between a safe enjoyable day and a costly incident.

Stay safe. Stay dry.

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

Understand cost of ownership before boat purchase

If you've spent time on a family or friend's boat, or enjoyed a few weekends with a boat rental, you may have decided that you want a boat of your own. But what type of boat should you buy? What would you use it for? What is a best fit for you and your family? Where would you store it when you are not using it? And of course, what may be the toughest question: how much boat can you afford? Getting organized and proactively answering these kinds questions before you buy is the best way to limit uncertainty and successfully move forward in the boat buying process.

Here are some costs to consider when buying, besides the cost of the boat.

Trailer. If you need a trailer to transport and store, this could add to the purchase price; sometimes it can be included as part of the package deal (it pays to bargain.). This is common practice at dealerships, boat shows and especially seasonal dealer sales events; when the trailer may mean making the sale for the dealer, it is often included.

In terms of maintenance, a trailer will need basic upkeep as well; tires, brakes, and general maintenance, plus monthly storage fees if you cannot keep it on your property when your boat is in the water.

Boat Insurance. You will need at least liability coverage, and likely dam-

age coverage, especially if it is a newer vessel. Often lenders will require comprehensive coverage on a financed purchase. It's smart money in the long run, in case of accident or theft that your boat is covered.

Storage options and costs. You may want a cover, a top, or maybe even consider renting inside storage if you cannot keep the boat at your home or on your property. Summer and winter storage are two very different necessities in parts of the country where the climate is colder. Winter storage in colder climates typically involves winterization prep for engine and boat, as well as durable coverage where snow, rain and winter winds have potential for damage.

Regarding cost, for outside storage, boats are typically shrink wrapped at a cost of roughly \$10 to \$15 per foot, so a 21-foot boat might cost \$200 to \$300 to cover and make ready for winter. Inside rack storage costs more, as the boat is inside and better protected from the elements. Figure on roughly \$50 per foot for inside storage, so that same 21-footer would cost about \$1,000 for the winter season.

Costs for in-season storage range by region and waterway, but as a general guideline, in-water dock space can range



critical concern – even over cost – and the PFD is the number one piece of safety equipment.

Coast Guard and Maryland regulations mandate that there is a properly sized PFD on board and readily available for every passenger. The problem is that wearing a life jacket is optional in most situations. Regulations only require that they are worn in certain conditions – i.e. jet skiers, water skiers, children under 13 on boats under 23 feet in length and specially designed infant life jackets for children under four years of age.

As a result of under regulation and in the permissive spirit of unbridled freedom on the water, most recreational

is almost thoughtless allowing ourselves to be distracted by the radio, the cell phone or just daydreaming; and, if we do make a mistake, our automobiles have enough legally mandated safety apparatus such as seat belts and air bags and five mph bumpers to mitigate most hiccups.

Likewise, we seldom worry about the machine itself. Rarely do we check fluid levels, or tire pressures, or windshield wipers, or brake pads before putting it into gear. If the car starts and there's gas in the tank, then we are good to go.

In reality, recreational boating is closer to airplane flying than it is to our automotive comfort zone. Pilots un-

please see **ownership** on page 16

Boat values and prices: negotiating your purchase

Understanding boat values and boat pricing is a critical part of buying a new or used boat. Buying a boat is a substantial purchase, so naturally, you want to be sure you're not overpaying. But pricing for the very same model can vary quite a bit depending on options, engine, and rigging. So, how can you be sure the price is right?

Start by following these simple steps:

Find and work with a boat dealer you can trust.

Visit the manufacturer's website.

Google is your friend. Spend some time searching out listed pricing.

Check NADA guides and BUC values.

Find a boat dealer you can trust. You will run across some dealers who are in the business of selling boats because they have a passion for boating, and others whose main interest is making a profit. Fortunately, there are a lot of boat nuts out there and accordingly, there are a lot of dealers and salespeople who truly enjoy matching a person up with

ownership

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from \$1,000 to more than \$5,000 per season. Indoor rack dry storage costs more, typically 1-1/2 times as much as in-water dock space, but many say it is well worth it to have the boat stored safely inside a building, ready at the dock when it is needed, then washed and stored again when finished.

Marina Fees. If you keep the boat at a marina, you will incur monthly costs for those months of storage; fees will vary depending on inside or outside storage, how often you use the boat, and whether or not the marina includes cleaning and maintenance charges.

Maintenance costs. Like a car, a boat purchase also carries yearly maintenance costs, and these can vary based on the type of boat, how often it is used, whether it is used in fresh or saltwater, and whether it begins its life with you as new or used.

A new boat will cost less to maintain than a used one, at least for the first few years. With cars, you have cleaning, oil changes, tire and brake service, cleaning, perhaps a battery replacement, and maybe an alignment. With a boat, you have all the same engine maintenance costs, and cleaning, but add hull maintenance, storage, winterizing (when you don't use the boat year-round), haul-out (if not keeping in the water year-round),

the boat they are going to love. Yes, they still need to make a living and they will want to make a profit. But when you find a dealer you can trust, look them in the eye, and ask them to give you the bottom-line best price, you are likely to get an honest answer.

A good place to start is making sure you are buying from a Marine Industry Certified Dealership.

Visit the boat manufacturer's website. Some boat manufacturers offer a "builder tool" on their website, and many include pricing. Some will offer to email you a quote after you complete a "virtual build." These often allow you to price different features and options and can be very helpful in determining the value of the package you're looking at.

Trust, but verify. Naturally, you do want to verify that you are being quoted a realistic value for any boat you are looking at. Google can be quite helpful in this regard. While the marine industry has not yet quite come around to the same level of MSRP disclosure as the automotive industry, it is getting better

and spring make-ready and launch.

Costs for these services can vary widely; some of the determining factors will be the boat and engine size, the local area, fresh or salt water, and the type of storage (inside a building or outside, covered, rack storage, etc.). Likewise, costs increase with boat and engine size. For example, cost to service and winterize a four-stroke outboard engine of 150 horsepower might be \$250, plus cleaning and winterizing the boat may be another \$250.

Also keep in mind that using the boat in freshwater will keep maintenance and cleaning costs down considerably. Saltwater, on the other hand, is definitely harsher on a boat and engine than freshwater.

Equipment and accessories. Safety gear (such as life jackets, paddles, horn, signal flares, etc.) should always be considered during any boat purchase. For additional accessories, no need to buy everything you can think of all at once; a good plan is to "treat your boat" every spring and fall to a new accessory or upgrade with accessories like stereos, lighting, watersports towing equipment and more. Spend wisely and you'll enjoy your boat and all the summer fun it brings.

Education and boating licenses. Most states require some type of boaters' safety course and operator's license.

and better all the time. Just remember that, as with everything on the internet, you should look for multiple sources and take everything you see with a grain of salt.

Check NADA boat guides and BUC values. These guides can only show history and don not include current pricing, so they are most helpful for determining the value of used boats. However, even when you're shopping new they can help put the value of a boat into context—pay particularly close attention to the outlined NADA boat values.

Boat pricing is variable. As you check on pricing, it is important to remember that boat value is subject to a lot of variables. Along with power choices and features, geography will play a role because dealerships have different levels of expenses depending on where they are located. And when it comes to used boats there is obviously a huge range of factors to take into account, ranging from the boat's condition, to how much use it's had, to where and how it's been used, to what (if any) warranties it may still carry.

Negotiating your boat purchase. Before you even begin to negotiate a final deal, make sure you have already gone through all the above research and come to the table armed with solid background knowledge. Boat dealers know that today's buyers are savvy, can research boat prices, and have probably already talked with their competition.

Boat passenger etiquette

Whether you're taking a sailboat out for a day trip or going on a cabin cruiser for the weekend, it's crucial to follow some basic boat rules and etiquette as a boat passenger. Following these guidelines will help keep everyone safe, give a more enjoyable experience, and ensure you'll be invited back again.

Always listen to your boat captain. The vessel's captain is in charge and has the final say on all decisions regarding safety and navigation. As a boat passenger, you must listen to the captain's instructions and heed their advice. By complying with their instructions, you'll

They know just what their overhead costs are and what level of profit they need to make to stay in business. Ask an honest dealer what the bottom-line price is, and you are likely to get a straight answer.

That does not mean, however, that



you cannot make some special requests. Dealers can sometimes add an extended warranty or an option or two to sweeten the deal, without taking too much of a hit. And remember, you'll often be able to get a better deal if you:

-Buy a boat during the off-season or at the very end of the boating season, when dealers really want to move their inventory.

-Buy a leftover model year boat, which the dealer wants to move to make way for the next model year.

-Buy at a boat show, where the dealer may offer special incentives or reductions.

-Order a boat as opposed to buying off the lot, so the dealer does not have to pay floor plan (remember, though, you may be in for a wait while the boat's being built).

make their job easier, which is to keep passengers safe!

Respect the boat. As a boat passenger, it is important to treat the boat (and the water) respectfully. Never litter in the water or throw loose items around the boat; dispose of trash properly in bins where available.

Know the "right" way to be sick. Unfortunately, some boat passengers are prone to sea sickness. Let your boat captain and other passengers know if you're feeling queasy. Seasickness symptoms can worsen if left untreated, so be sure

please see passenger on page 17

passenger
from page 16

to communicate any discomfort immediately. Your boat captain may have sea sickness medicine on board, which can help alleviate symptoms.

If you feel seasick, sit down, and stay up on deck near fresh air as much as possible, especially away from areas prone to high wave activity. Focus on looking at the horizon instead of your feet, which may worsen symptoms.

Wear your Coast Guard approved life jacket. This goes without saying: life

mtam
from page 14

state, helping to offset the cost of wages for participating employers while giving new workers hands-on experience. It created Maryland's first registered apprenticeship program for marine technicians. The program establishes a recognized career path and formalizes the education and experience needed to sustain a highly skilled workforce necessary ever increasing job opportunities.

MTAM is a recognized advocate for the Maryland boating industry. John Stefancik, MTAM executive director, stated recently that the goal of the organization

jackets save lives. Even if you are an experienced swimmer, always wear a Cost Guard Approved life jacket, especially if you plan to be exposed to the water.

Know where and when to sit. Sitting in the appropriate spot is an important aspect of being a responsible boat passenger. This means occupying your designated seat on the boat and refraining from sitting anywhere the captain prohibits.

It is particularly imperative to avoid sitting on the bow of the boat; bow riding can be hazardous, particularly on pontoon boats.

is to "ensure Maryland's boating industry remains strong, innovative, and an essential part of our state's economy and culture."

MTAM points to recent accomplishments that have benefited the industry. They helped change state provisions to more easily authorize the removal of abandoned boats. It has recycled more than 50 tons of shrink wrap for members in the last two years. Additionally, it worked with state legislators to preserve State Waterway Improvement Fund subsidies in the Maryland FY 26 budget.

To learn more about MTAM, go to MTAM.org.

-Chip Bertino

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Travel

Have you used a travel advisor

By Cindy McCabe

In today's world of online booking engines, travel apps, and endless "deals" at your fingertips, it's easy to assume that planning a trip is simple enough to handle on your own. With just a few clicks, flights, hotels, and excursions can be booked in minutes. So why

use a travel advisor? The truth is, you often don't think you need one until you really do.

Travel advisors are more than just people who book trips. They are professionals who bring expertise, advocacy, and peace of mind to an experience that should be exciting, not stressful. While online tools are convenient, they can't replace human insight, experience, and problem-solving especially when things don't go as planned.

And in travel, things don't always go as planned.

Flight delays, cancellations, missed connections, weather disruptions, airline strikes, overbooked hotels, cruise itinerary changes many of these issues are completely out of your control. When you've booked everything yourself online, you're often left navigating customer service lines, chatbots, and automated systems on your own. That's usually when travelers realize the value of having a trusted advisor in their corner.

A travel advisor acts as your advocate. If your flight is canceled due to weather, your advisor can work on rebooking while you're dealing with the immediate situation. If a hotel is oversold, a travel advisor can leverage relationships and industry connections to help secure alternatives. When unexpected issues arise, you're not just another confirmation number you're a client with someone actively looking out for you.

Beyond problem-solving, travel advisors also provide expert guidance. They know destinations deeply, understand the best times to travel, and can recommend experiences that match your interests, travel style, and budget. A travel advisor might suggest a hotel you hadn't considered, a quieter destination that delivers the same



Cindy McCabe

experience, or a better routing that saves time and stress. These insights aren't always obvious from online reviews or search results.

Another important benefit is time savings. Planning a trip can take hours sometimes days of research. Comparing options, reading reviews, checking policies, and coordinating details can quickly become overwhelming. A travel advisor does that work for you, narrowing down the best choices and presenting options that actually make sense. You get clarity without the chaos.

There's also value in personalization. Travel advisors don't just book trips; they craft experiences. Whether it's a honeymoon, family vacation, milestone celebration, or bucket-list journey, an advisor considers the small details that make a trip special. From dietary needs and accessibility considerations to preferred seating and meaningful experiences, those personal touches matter.

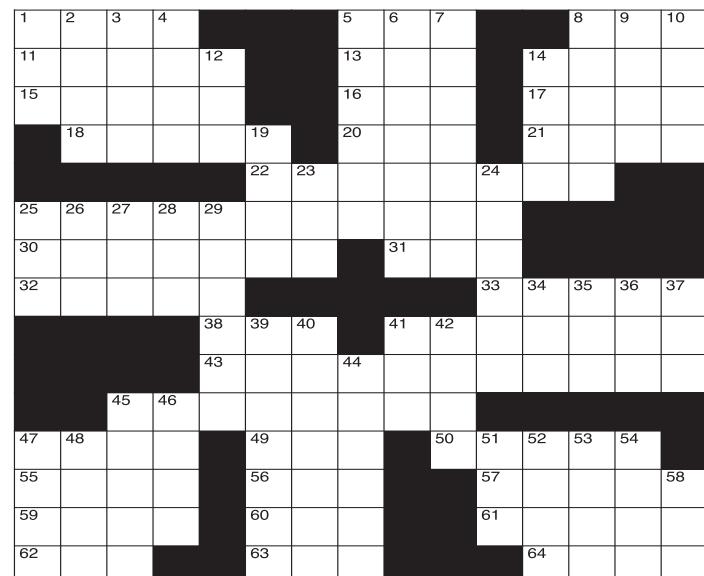
Many travelers are surprised to learn that using a travel advisor doesn't necessarily cost more. In many cases, advisors have access to exclusive perks, added amenities, or preferred pricing that isn't available online. Even when prices are the same, the added support and expertise provide value far beyond the booking itself.

Ultimately, travel is an investment of money, time, and memories. A travel advisor helps protect that investment. You may not think you need one when everything goes smoothly, but when plans change unexpectedly, having an expert by your side can make all the difference.

For your next trip, consider partnering with a travel advisor. Because travel should be about enjoying the journey not stressing over what could go wrong.

Cindy McCabe is owner of Bethany Travel and can be reached at 302-362-0955.

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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Breezed through
5. Consumer protection agency
8. Criminal syndicate
11. Moves back from
13. Satisfaction
14. Feel concern or interest
15. Monetary units
16. Congressman (abbr.)
17. Israeli city
18. Restaurants
20. 2,000 lbs.
21. Grandmother
22. North, South and Central
25. In an early way
30. Foes
31. Social networking platform
32. Early term for basketball player
33. Another name for sesame plant
38. Disallow
41. Provide greater detail
43. Inaccessible
45. Evoke emotions
47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
49. Celtic punk rockers
50. A fencing sword
55. Actor Idris
56. Affirmative (slang)
57. Afflicted in mind or body
59. One point north of northeast
60. Born of
61. Social media hand gesture
62. Hong Kong food stall ___ pai dong
63. Opposite of beginning
64. Email function

CLUES DOWN

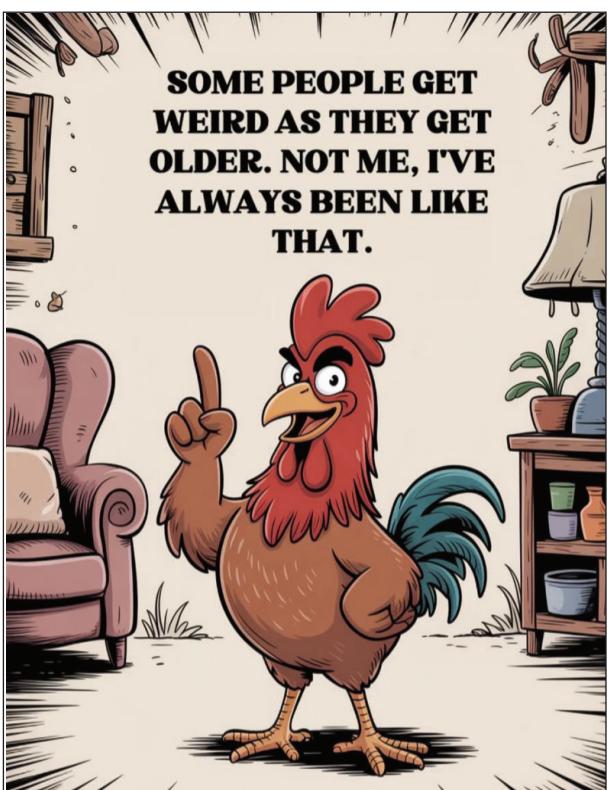
1. Sign language
2. Fashionable
3. Borough in Helsinki
4. Inability to hear
5. More quickly
6. An idea accepted as a demonstrable truth
7. Shrewdly
8. Rooney and Kate are two
9. Mediterranean port
10. Benedictine monk
12. Midway between south and southeast
14. Town in Galilee
19. Satisfy
23. Mice genus
24. Brass instrument
25. Chest muscle (slang)
26. Transmits genetic information from DNA
27. Records electric currents generated by the brain
28. Woman (French)
29. Short route aircraft
34. Pitching statistic
35. Pointed end of a pen
36. Popular sports league
37. Body part
39. Inoffensive
40. Yellowish cotton cloth
41. Feline
42. Does not tell the truth
44. Seduced
45. Spiritual leader
46. Abba __, Israeli politician
47. Repair
48. Olive genus
51. Swiss river
52. Prejudice
53. C. European river
54. Keep under control
58. Father



Answers for February 4

Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet
by **Jack Barnes**



The obstinate blonde

A plane is on its way to Toronto, when a blonde in economy class gets up and moves to the first-class section and sits down.

The flight attendant watches her do this and asks to see her ticket. She then tells the blonde that she paid for economy class and that she will have to sit in the back.

The blonde replies, "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to Toronto and I'm staying right here."

The flight attendant goes into the cockpit and tells the pilot and the co-pilot that there is a blonde

bimbo sitting in first class, that belongs in economy and won't move back to her seat.

The co-pilot goes back to the blonde and tries to explain that because she only paid for economy she will have to leave and return to her seat.

The blonde replies, "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to Toronto and I'm staying right here."

The co-pilot tells the pilot that he probably should have the police waiting when they land to arrest this blonde woman who won't listen to reason.

The pilot says, "You say she is a blonde? I'll handle this, I'm married to a blonde. I speak blonde."

He goes back to the blonde and whispers in her ear, and she says, "oh, I'm sorry" and gets up and goes back to her seat in economy.

The flight attendant and co-pilot are amazed and asked him what he said to make her move without any fuss.

The pilot said, "I told her, 'First class isn't going to Toronto.'"



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