

## 4H offers youth enriching programs

By Elaine Bean

“We are the most wonderful unknown entity [in Worcester County],” Barbara Barga, Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program Assistant with the University of Maryland Extension Service for Worcester Co., said.



But that doesn’t mean 4H is silent. The organization has its fingers all over youth activities in the county.

4H stands for: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The club pledge is: “I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hand to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.”

Locally, 4H operates under three modes to reach out to the community’s youth with in-school programming, after-school programming, and “out-of-school-time” programs, according to director Barga.

Currently, 4H is offering in-school programming for Ocean City Elementary School grades one and two, Showell Elementary School grades K-four, and Buckingham Elementary School first grade, and have recently begun a program at Seaside Christian Academy.

“For example, yesterday, I was at Ocean City Elementary first grade,” Barga said. “We did a STEM activity where they had to build earthquake towers out of paper and masking tape. And to survive my earthquake shaker which

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# The Courier

February 25, 2026 Volume 27 Number 23



**Recognized** - Sharon Puser is the February Crafter of the Month. See story on page 2.

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4h  
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was actually a cup with rubber bands hooked on it to make their buildings go up and down and see if they would survive. That was an activity I did all

day with all of the first graders, went into each classroom for 45-50 minutes."

Barga said 4H offers various in-school programs that schools can pick up, including Birds of a Feather and other STEM activities. 4H also serves

the older youth in the county.

"Last week I went into Worcester Tech in Newark to the FFA," Barga said. "They came in at 6 o'clock, and we made fresh flower arrangements because they were going to a competition."

"Our [in-school programs are] how we get a wide range of kids that wouldn't be able to come at night," she said.

4H offers after-school programming at Pocomoke Middle, Snow Hill Middle, Snow Hill Elementary, Buckingham Elementary, and Berlin Intermediate schools. Programs include a variety of topics selected by the 4Hers themselves.

"For example, at Pocomoke, the kids wanted me to do sewing," Barga said. "So, I take machines up there and had 14 kids sewing before Christmas. The boys made bow ties, and the girls made different things. Right now, they're machine quilting pillows to learn the machines. We're at Snow Hill Middle doing sewing.

"At Snow Hill Elementary, my co-worker is doing natural resource and environmental-type programs. In BIS, we're doing science-related programs after school. At Buckingham, we're also doing STEM and environmental programs. So, we're in the schools after school on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays."

The non-school clubs of 4H are varied and countywide, consisting of

## Puser named Crafter of the Month

The Pine'eer Craft Club has selected Sharon Puser as the February Crafter of the Month.

Puser retired and moved to Ocean Pines full time in 2008, at which point she began to devote a lot of her free time to crafting. She joined the Pine'eer Craft Club in 2009 after a neighbor invited her to the annual Holiday Luncheon. She later took on leadership roles, serving as Treasurer before becoming President in 2013 a position she continues to hold today.

Her specialty is creating clothing for American Girl dolls, a hobby she first began for her granddaughters. Although they are now both married, Puser's passion for doll clothing remains strong. Her creations include international costumes, birthstone dresses, elegant party gowns, and outfits for Bitty Baby dolls.

"I've done custom doll outfits to match a girl's cheerleading team, communion dresses and I've even done a baby outfit for the singer Jewel's newborn baby to match her husband's bull riding outfit," said Puser. "I like the challenge of creating something new."

Puser also creates shaped decorative pillows, such as flip flop pillows, sailboats, anchors, fish, turtles, and more.

"My favorite thing about crafting is the creativity it allows you to express and the satisfaction you get of creating something others can enjoy. I love to see the excitement on a child's face when they see the doll clothes I have made."

Beyond these specialties, Puser also enjoys needlepoint, counted cross-stitch, wreath making, paper

crafts, and more.

Puser's handmade items are available at the Pine'eer Craft Club Artisan Gift Shop, located in White Horse Park in Ocean Pines. The shop is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Founded more than 50 years ago, the Pine'eer Craft Club has donated over \$201,000 to the Ocean Pines community. The club welcomes new members and meets on the third Thursday of each month.

Artisans interested in selling their work at the shop may contact shop managers Debbie Jiwa or Barbara Herzog, or email [opcraftclub@aol.com](mailto:opcraftclub@aol.com). For more information, visit [oceanpines.org/web/pages/artisan-gift-shop](http://oceanpines.org/web/pages/artisan-gift-shop).

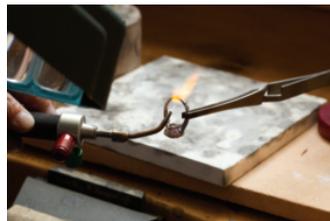
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**Performance** - On a frigid February evening Mid-Atlantic Symphony (MSO) patrons were warmed by the kick-off performance of the Orchestra's **Woodwinds and Strings Ensemble** at the Community Church at Ocean Pines. The ensemble performed works that reshaped musical language across three centuries. The audience was given a rare treat showcasing the Oboe played by MSO's Principal Oboist Dana Newcomb playing Mozart's Oboe Quartet in F major.

Pictured left to right are **Dana Newcomb** and Ocean Pines MSO board member **Rebecca Pille**. Photo submitted by Jack Barnes.

## Memorial Foundation announces change in leadership

The Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation has announced that Marie Gilmore is stepping down as president, with Rick Farr selected as her successor.

Gilmore joined the Board of Directors in 2005 and served in multiple leadership roles, including secretary and vice president, before being elected president in 2012. After briefly stepping off the board due to term limits in 2014, she returned in 2015 and has served as president since.

"It has been my honor and a privilege to have served as President of the Foundation. I have chosen to step aside now for two reasons. First and foremost, because Rick Farr has demonstrated his devotion to honoring veterans through his service as a Director on the Foundation's Board. As a veteran he understands the im-

portance of educating the youth of our community about the sacrifices veterans, and their families, have made. He is highly qualified through his service to our country and the personal skills he brings to the position," said Gilmore.

Gilmore added that it was always her hope to be able to step away while she can remain on the board to be of service.

"I step down as president with a grateful heart for having served for so long."

Farr spent 22 years in the United States Air Force, supporting many military operations including Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Northern Watch and Southern Watch, Opera-

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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.

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](http://worcesterhealth.org). To receive a physical copy of the nomination form, please call 410-632-1100 ext. 1119 or email [Regina.Mason@maryland.gov](mailto:Regina.Mason@maryland.gov).

## 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 Community Center in the Assateague Room.

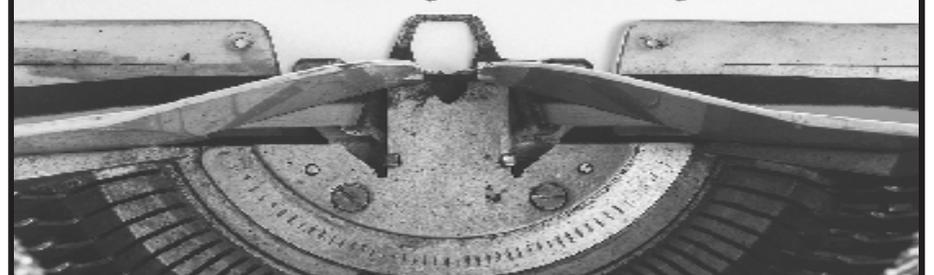
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**Reader Letter**

**Bills to support; bills to oppose**

**Editor:**

The 2026 Maryland Legislative season is rolling along - hundreds of bills have been filed and are under consideration. Once again, I hope to encourage locals to support some very good bills and oppose some very bad bills.

A desperately needed bill is Senate Bill 371, an emergency bill sponsored by Senator Carozza that would allow farmers to begin construction on their chicken farming operations prior to receiving full coverage under the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) general permit. This legislation is necessary because the Maryland Department of the Environment allowed the MDE General Discharge Permit for CAFOs to expire on July 7, 2025 without a new permit in place. This "unlegislated moratorium" is having devastating impacts on our chicken growers and the overall poultry industry. It is estimated that there is currently \$35 million in stalled construction, and this does not even account for significant negative impacts to farm income, real estate transfers, etc.

The Eastern Shore Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly has called on Governor Moore to support disaster relief for Maryland's commercial fishing industry, which is in dire straits due to market and

weather conditions which are limiting them to one to two days of fishing per week during the entire oyster season. Please contact Governor Moore and the Secretary of the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and urge them to make this disaster relief a priority. Gov. Moore's telephone number is 1-800-811-8336 or 410-974-3901. An email can be sent via [governor.maryland.gov](mailto:governor.maryland.gov).

A highly questionable bill is Senate Bill 0004 which purports to keep charities nonpartisan. The danger in this bill is to churches - the possibility that they could lose their tax exempt status if found in violation. It is also a free speech issue. At the very least, the bill should be amended to exempt churches from the effects of the legislation.

Finally, there is still time to take action on 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.

You can read the bills, get the status on committee hearings, and contact information for the delegates and senators at [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov).

**Carol Frazier**  
*Ocean Pines*

**Stokely named director of Catholic Charities**

The Most Reverend William E. Koenig, D.D., Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, has announced the appointment of Deacon Patrick Stokely, M.A., as Executive Director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Wilmington effective immediately.

With over 25 years of experience facilitating and developing leadership formation programs for Catholic clergy, lay leaders, and business professionals, Deacon Stokely brings a deep understanding of the needs of non-profit organizations to his new role as Executive Director of Catholic Charities. Deacon Stokely served as Interim Executive Director since September 2025, maintaining the long-term vision and the day-to-day operations of Catholic Charities in the Diocese. He previously worked as Senior Program Manager for Leadership Roundtable where he partnered with bishops and leadership teams to align their vision with the ministries and services they offer.

Deacon Stokely also served as a Learning Leader for Catholic Leadership Institute where he was engaged in the formation and guidance of clergy and lay leaders for strengthening parishes, including training for clergy on integrating the principles of organization management with

priestly identity and mission.

Deacon Stokely holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Cabrini University and a Master of Arts in Theology from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and serves as an Adjunct Professor of Theology at Immaculata University. Deacon Stokely is an award-winning editor of two books: "A Seminarian's Toolbox Preparing for Parish Leadership" and "La Caja de Heramientas Para Lideres Pastorales."

Catholic Charities, the charitable arm of the Diocese of Wilmington, is a faith-based social services organization dedicated to providing help and creating hope for those in need. For over 190 years, Catholic Charities has empowered and strengthened individuals and families in Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Each year, the organization serves tens of thousands of people through a range of critical services - from emergency food and energy assistance to housing the homeless, counseling, and much more. Guided by the belief in the inherent dignity of every person, Catholic Charities works to alleviate human suffering and uplift the most vulnerable, putting faith into action to build caring, resilient communities for all. For more information, visit [ccwilm.org](http://ccwilm.org) or [cdow.org](http://cdow.org).

Though experts may insist that it's never too late to change jobs, data indicates it's increasingly less likely after reaching age 55. According to an analysis from USAFacts - How Long Americans Stay, workers between the ages of 25



and 34 hold positions for a median tenure ranging from 2.7 years to 3.2 years. Among professionals between the ages of 55 and 64, the median tenure increases to 9.6 years. Seniority at a current employer and compensation levels reflecting decades of experience may make workers 55 and older less willing to take a new job. Despite that analysis, the AARP noted in a 2023 report that older workers who have changed jobs, which the organization defines as professionals 45 and older, reported positive outcomes after making the switch. Indeed,

50 percent of such workers said switching jobs had a positive impact on their mental health and 48 percent indicated they earned more as a result of switching employers.

**Courier Almanac**

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**The Courier**

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# Snowy memories

Just before I started writing this, an alert was posted that local schools will close early in anticipation of inclement weather, more specifically,

The first was that all Philadelphia public and parochial schools were closed. The second was to hear the snow number for St. Albert the Great grade school announced. I don't remember now what that number was but I can tell you that when it was heard, screams of joy erupted in our little kitchen. My mother was screaming too but it may have been for a different reason. A snow



## ***It's All About. . .***

By **Chip Bertino**

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the arrival of snow. So far, nothing is happening outside my window other than rain.

"This is KYW News Radio... 1060. School closings just ahead," was the clarion broadcast awaited eagerly by me and thousands of other school-aged kids throughout Philadelphia during the 1970s. On those mornings as the blue of the evening met the gold of the morning, my brother and I were in the kitchen, barefoot and pajama-clad, standing with our mother, heads cocked toward the Magnavox transistor radio perched above the sink. One of two announcements were hoped to be heard. Either one was fine with us.

day!

Looking back, it was an interesting reality that my brother and I had no problem jumping from bed on mornings when snow was expected. We'd even get up early. Yet, on regular school days, we'd have to be blasted from our beds and even then we often overslept.

For us at that time snow days had a rhythm all their own. Once the official school closed announcement was made, my brother and I raced down the hall to our shared bedroom to quickly change into what we thought was appropriate snow attire. Then we'd race again to the foyer where our

mother was waiting to slip plastic Stroehmann bread bags over our socks. Then we'd struggle to put on our boots before exploding out the back door into the winter wonderland that awaited us.

Before a single snowball could be thrown, before a sled could be retrieved, and before we could fall on our backs to make snow angels, we first had to go to the garage for the snow shovels. There would be no fun unless and until the sidewalk in front of our house, the driveway and the walkway leading to our front door was cleared. And I don't mean cleared just the width of the shovel blade. It had to be completely cleared, side to side, end to end. Wet snow is great for making snowmen, snowballs and igloos. But its heavy to clear quickly. Powdery snow makes quick work for clearing but is lousy for the fun stuff.

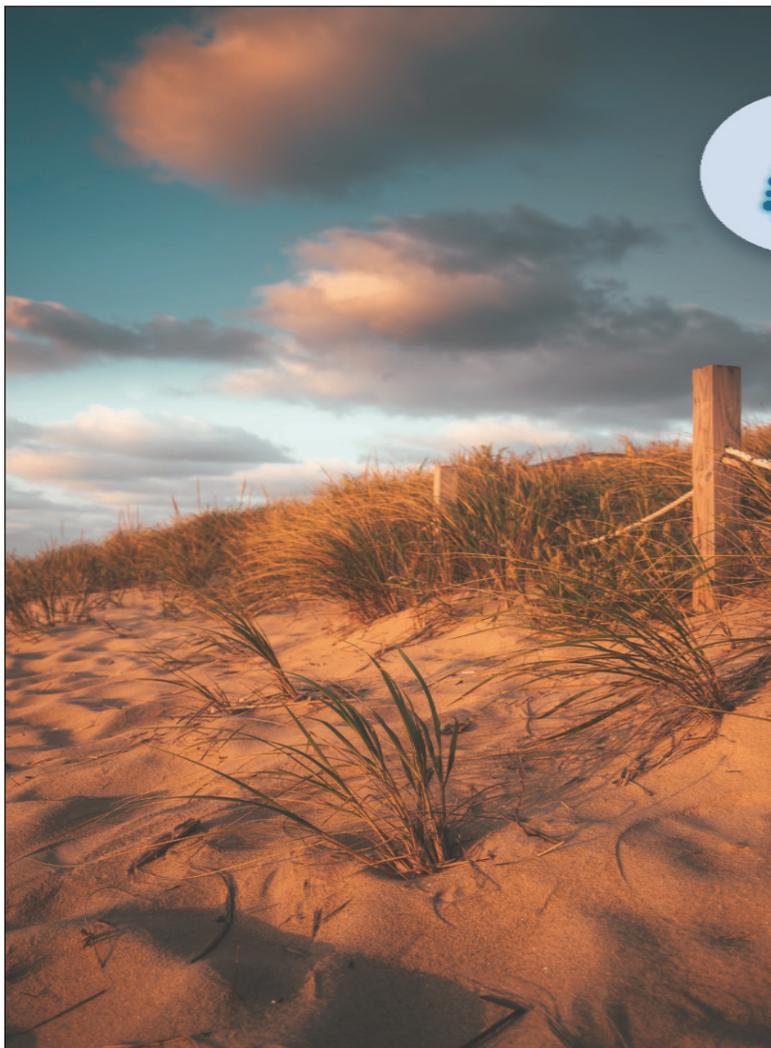
If memory serves, when my brother and I worked together, it took about an hour to complete the necessary snow clearing tasks. Once done though, the day was ours. Often, we'd make facing snow forts on the front lawn. Once completed, our efforts turned to accumulating ammunition. We'd each make and store within our

forts, dozens of snowballs. Then the fighting commenced. Snowballs were lobbed with varying degrees of accuracy. Being the better athlete, my brother was adroit at hitting his target. The battle wound down when we were either too wet or too tired to continue.

We'd head into the house where our mother hopefully had hot chocolate waiting for us. If not hot chocolate, then Ovaltine. Neither hot chocolate nor Ovaltine? Then hot tea. We'd do our best to get our boots off without slipping on the foyer tile floor made wet by melting snow. Then we'd trudge to the kitchen still wearing bread bags around our feet.

Often part of the day was spent at Pennypack Park where we'd pull our Flexible Flyers to "Suicide Hill" and meet up with friends. Sometimes we'd throw our sleds in the trunk of the old Oldsmobile so our mother could drive us there. The hill was always a busy place on snow days. There would be a variety of sleds, inner tubes and toboggans racing down the hill toward the edge of the woods. About a third of the way down the hill, just right of center of the clump of trees, was a depression in the hill that created a kind

*please see memories page 8*



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community clubs and project clubs like the Worcester County Shooting Sports Club that will be starting up on March 8. That club meets at 1 p.m. at the Synepuxent Gun & Rod Club for archery and shotgun shooting clay training. The 4H Worcester Co. Robotics Club won a competition at the Maryland State Fair in 2025, and plans are to start of "flavors of Italy" cooking club.

"The Coastal Studios 4H Club" is a brand new club for teens ages 12-18 geared to studio work including videos, electronic music, and photography. Their next meeting is March 12, 6 p.m. at the Ocean Pines Library.

4H is \$10 year for state fees with some clubs setting a small supply fee.

"The thing you need to know about 4H is that 4H is run by kids," Barga said. "We have volunteers, but things are run through parliamentary procedure with a president and secretary, vice-president and treasurer and other offices at will. The kids can - with volunteer guidance - determine dues to offset some of the costs."

Barga said it's also up to the kids to

determine what new clubs get started. "If we have five kids interested, and if we can get volunteers, we can start a club. The rules for 4H are you have to meet at least six times during a year. However, our project clubs and our community clubs meet year 'round."

4H activity clubs are also ever-changing and varied and have included 3D printing and ham radio operation in the past. And the traditional role of 4H as a farm-related organization has not been abandoned.

"A very small percentage of our 4Hers are livestock related," Barga said. "But we are growing. We have two groups in our county that have some kids that are showing animals. We have the Assateague Bay 4H in Girdletree, and we have the Whaleyville Country Critters. They are more serious kids, some of whom show across the country nationally."

4H and Barga also do specific top-related workshops throughout the county during the year.

"One of my focuses is team leadership," she said. "This might not sound like much, but when the kids are in 4H, they are part of the University of Maryland College Park. We come down from the USDA. The USDA pro-

vides funding; the University of Maryland College Park provides funding, and [Worcester} County provides funding. So if they're doing a competition in 4H, they're actually representing the University of Maryland College Park and the USDA, because its funding goes all the way up to the Secretary of Agriculture."

The new challenges faced by artificial intelligence are also on the horizon for 4H.

"One of our new mandates coming down is we need to provide ethical education on AI because it's coming quick, and that came from the administration," Barga said. "We'll need to put that into our programming."

4H also offers local summer programming including their annual Wonders of 4H Summer. "We'll spend two days at the Sarbanes Center at Assateague Island, and we'll dissect, and we'll go into the bay and grab, and they have a great time," Barga said. 4H plans to announce the dates and locations soon.

Worcester County 4Hers have the opportunity to represent the University of Maryland this year in Atlanta, Ga. at the National 4H Congress, "a huge thing," Barga said. "To be able to

represent Maryland, they have to do a resumé that is three pages - one is on citizenship, one is on life skills, and one is on leadership. They have to write a two-page essay ... And they have to do an interview on their citizenship and life skills. Fifteen minutes with six people, in-person or online. And they have to answer questions like a job interview. It's a big ordeal for even to complete it.

"For the first time ever, we have seven kids submit portfolios for consideration. That has never happened in Worcester County, so that was huge. It's all being judged now. Last year we had four [4Hers] go on national trips. It's making them develop their leadership skills and getting them ready for college and or whatever they're going to do in life."

4H's national campaign is called "Beyond Ready." "They want every 4Her to become beyond ready to meet the needs that are going to happen in life," Barga said. "And they're saying that because 80% of the jobs that will be available in five years have not been invented yet."

Barga, who resides lives in Hebron

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## Burke achieves high recognition



Michele Burke

Worcester County Business Development and Retention Specialist Michele Burke brought home the esteemed 2025 Tourism Ambassador of the Year Award by the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) during the Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit.

Burke, a key member of the Worcester County Tourism and Economic Development (WCTED) team, received this accolade for harnessing Worcester County's unique assets—from small businesses to tourism, agriculture, and coastal industries—to help tell the story of Maryland's Eastern Shore, and for consistently connecting local business owners to the benefits of membership in the MTC, which acts as a unified voice for Maryland's tourism industry in Annapolis.

MTC Members benefit from shared professional development resources, networking, and industry insights, increased visibility for their destinations and businesses, and a coordinated tourism message designed to help strengthen Maryland's visitor economy.

"Michele is fully immersed in Worcester County's landscape, building meaningful business relationships and connecting entrepreneurs and community partners with state and county resources, so I'm thrilled that the MTC recognized her contributions to supporting local businesses," WCTED Director Melanie Pursel said. "I am also thrilled that the MTC recognized the

valuable contributions of all of our outstanding tourism partners whose innovative campaigns and projects play a strategic role in introducing Maryland destinations to new visitors."

The MTC awarded a number of top honors to destination marketing tourism partners across the county.

Beach to Bay Heritage Area won the Best Product or Event Award in the medium budget category for History, Heritage & Homelands of Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore. This project, anchored by the Beach to Bay Indian Trail—a designated National Recreation Trail, inspires visitors to explore the rich Native American, Black, and European histories that have shaped Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore.

To view WCTED resources and happenings, visit [www.maryland-scoast.org](http://www.maryland-scoast.org).

### AGH to hold caregiver support meeting

Atlantic General Hospital will hold a caregiver support group from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday, March 2, at the John H. 'Jack' Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center in Berlin.

This support group is free and open to caregivers who share the challenges and rewards of caring for adults with serious illnesses. It offers a space for members to discuss their feelings, concerns and experiences related to the caregiving role. Discussion topics vary according to the group's needs.

For more information, contact Nicole Fry, LBSW, at 410-641-2626 or [nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org](mailto:nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org).



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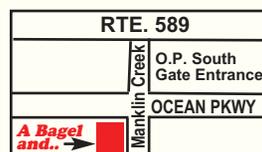
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## Health Watch

# What you should know about what you eat

By **Sandra Palavecino, MD**

Everyone has probably heard that it's good to eat "healthy," but healthy can be different for everyone – everyone's bodies are different.

Especially for those with the chronic disease of obesity, it's important to understand what's in your food. The type of nutrients you're taking in is more important than the total amount of food you eat.

Macronutrients include proteins, carbohydrates and fat, which all have roles in helping your body function as it needs to, though you can take in too much. Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals.

It can be helpful for anyone to understand macronutrients, but it's more important for people who have polycystic ovary syndrome, diabetes, prediabetes and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). Also, people who have had bariatric surgery can only eat a certain amount, so they need to make sure what they are eating is valuable to their body. Knowing this information can also be important for those who are pregnant, as well as for children, who are growing.

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has been in 4H since age nine, growing up on a small farm in Ohio, and continuing her involvement at The Ohio State University. After a move to North Carolina with her husband, an employee of Perdue, Barga's first job with an extension service was with the University of North Carolina. After a move to Indiana, the couple came to Maryland for Perdue, and Barga spent 29 years with Wicomico County as a program assistant with 4H. In 2021, she took the job in Worcester County to build the 4H program.

"In the last four years, we've almost tripled in size in our out-of-school time clubs," Barga said. "We reached over 1,500 kids in the country with at least six hours of programming ... It's not a boring job."

Youth or educators who are interested in 4H programming should contact Barbara Barga at [bbarga@umd.edu](mailto:bbarga@umd.edu) or 410-632-1972.

The macro amounts each person needs is individualized to each person, so if you have obesity and are looking to learn more, you can connect with our team at TidalHealth Medical Weight Loss & Bariatric Nutrition.

As far as what foods may be healthy, some people have neuroendocrine disorders that can impact chemical reactions and the way food impacts the body. Others have allergies – so, of course, a food that someone is allergic to would not be healthy for them.

Without knowing anything about a patient's specifics, my general advice for people who want to lose weight is to reduce sugar intake and increase protein intake. Once you're full, don't eat past that point.

It's also important to know what you're eating. For example, even if you're avoiding sugar, diet products, such as diet sodas, are not good for the body and should be limited.

Logging meals is another way to understand and track what you're eating.

Have you tried to lose weight without success? Get started with medical weight management in Seaford or Berlin. Learn more and schedule your appointment at [tidalhealth.org/findyourhealthyweight](http://tidalhealth.org/findyourhealthyweight).

**memories**

from page 5

of ramp toward which many kids headed. Often upon impact, a kid would be separated from his sled, tumbling violently while his riderless sled continued into the woods.

On some snow days, Gramps joined us at the park with his own relic of a sled, worn and beat up. Yet, the blades were always smooth, shiny and made more slippery with applications of soap. Gramps liked speed. He'd hop on his sled with abandon, us kids in wild pursuit, flying down the hill. He loved to jump the ramp. Once at the bottom of the hill, we'd do it all over again and again after that.

One winter, 1977 I think, snow, lots of snow, fell every other day. Inches deep snow quickly became a foot deep and more. We were perpetually shoveling the driveway and sidewalk. Dur-

## Wor-Wic arts journal earns national accolades

"Echoes and Visions," the creative arts journal of Wor-Wic Community College, has been recognized by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) with a "superior" ranking in its Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) contest.

"This national award is a tribute to the incredible talents of WorWic's students, faculty and staff," said Charles Porter, arts and humanities department head and associate professor of transitional English. "It recognizes the hard work of our new faculty advisor team — Juley Harper, associate professor of English, and Dr. Lawrence Blasco, assistant professor of English — and our student editors: Brodie Dehart, Robert Senesi, Scott Timko and Kris Watson. Our campus community is home to exceptional writers and artists, and their stories, poetry, photography and artwork came together to create an outstanding 36th issue of Echoes & Visions, which is truly deserving of this recognition."

This year, schools in 44 states, Washington, D.C., and six countries nominated 456 student magazines. Magazines from middle school, high school and higher education were welcomed for the 2025 contest. The REALM program publicly recognizes excellent literary magazines produced by students with the support of their teachers. REALM is designed to encourage all schools to develop literary magazines that celebrate the art and craft of writing.

**change**

from page 3

tion Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was awarded the Citation for Valor for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It is a true honor to be elected to serve as the next President of the Worcester County Veteran Memorial Foundation," Farr commented. "I look forward to continuing to serve our veterans and ensure they continue to be fully recognized for their unwavering dedication and service to our community and our country."

Farr also serves on the Ocean

Pines Board of Directors as vice president and is the Chief Human Resource Officer for the Town of Easton.

In recent years, the memorial has expanded with additions such as the Patriots Pathway, the POW/MIA Chair of Honor, the Battlefield Cross, and a gazebo. A site refresh is currently underway, including new grading, concrete, landscaping, and recognition of the United States Space Force. The project is expected to be completed by May 1.

To learn more about the Worcester County Veterans Memorial, visit [www.wocovets.org](http://www.wocovets.org).

ing the depths of this overwhelming winter, my brother and I had the idea to create an ice-skating rink in the backyard. We cleared a large oval and then filled hundreds, possibly thousands of buckets with water from the powder room sink which we then poured onto the oval. Eventually a pond formed which overnight froze to create a rink.

We skated and played hockey on that rink for many days. My mother called the *Philadelphia Bulletin* who sent a photographer to take our picture which appeared on page one of the B section the following morning. The timing was ideal because it wasn't too long after when our rink reverted to a pond. The framed newspaper clipping hung in our kitchen for years.

Snow days are different now for students with the emergence of virtual and remote learning. Such a shame that is.

As I write these final words, snow is falling lightly outside my window reminding me of a very warm childhood recollection: looking, just after dusk, through the bay window of our breakfast room which overlooked the front lawn and the street. Few if any cars would be traveling on the road creating a quiet scene with a Currier and Ives influence. Outside the window was magical sight for a young boy: snow, falling gentle but heavy, illuminated by the muted amber glow of a lone street light standing like a solitary sentry watching over a peaceful winter wonderland.

Those were the day.

**Author's note:** Following publication of last week's column, my wife informed me that I incorrectly spelled the name given our Shark vacuum cleaners. The correct spelling is *KREACHER*. I believe it's a Harry Potter reference.



**Honors** - At its February meeting, the Ocean Pines Garden Club (OPGC) enjoyed a trip down memory lane with a detailed presentation of the many activities and accomplishments of the club since its inception in 1976. Club historian, Gail Philippi also provided photo boards capturing this noteworthy piece of Ocean Pines history.

An extra feature of the meeting was the presentation of the OPA Board approved Ocean Pines Good Neighbor Award to Neal and Nikki Hoffman for their generous donation of shrubs, roses, and other plants from their yard. The donation totaled more than a \$700 value and were installed at Pintail Park in October 2025.

The OPGC focus for this 50th year includes highlighting the skills of its members, fun activities, and lighthearted outings. The March 12 meeting at 10 a.m. in the Assa-teague Room of OPA will feature a Get Cookin' presentation by the Worcester Technical High School culinary students. Guests are always welcome. For more info about what OPGC offers or how to join, visit: [bit.ly/OceanPinesGardenClub](http://bit.ly/OceanPinesGardenClub).

Pictured are OPGC Co-President **Ann Shockley** (l) presenting the OPA Good Neighbor Award to **Nikki and Neal Hoffman**.

## Shamrock Scramble at golf club

The Ocean Pines Golf Club will host a Shamrock Scramble Golf Tournament on Saturday, March 14, with an 8:15 a.m. shotgun start.

The tournament will use a two-player team format. Players can test their luck of the Irish at check-in with the "Shamrock Advantages Draw Station".

The registration fee is \$25 per player and includes entry into the prize fund, a draft beer, and your choice of a Reuben sandwich or hot dog following play. Members will pay their applicable greens and cart fees, while non-members may participate for a \$45 greens and cart fee, payable on the day of play.

For more information or to register, call the Pro Shop at 410-641-6057 or email Golf Director Matt Ruggiere at [mruggiere@oceanpines.org](mailto:mruggiere@oceanpines.org).

## Spring flea market scheduled

It's not too early to secure your vendor space for the Spring Flea Market, happening on Saturday, May 16, from 8 a.m. – noon

This indoor/outdoor flea market at White Horse Park welcomes vendors selling gently used clothing, household items, collectibles, and more.

Vendor spaces are \$25 and include one 8-foot table and two chairs. Vendors are invited to stop by to view the layout, select their preferred location, and complete registration.

Admission is free for shoppers. For more information and to register, call 410-641-7052.



## 100-Day Breakfast

In a heartwarming event on the morning of Friday, February 13, the Worcester Preparatory School (WPS) Alumni Association celebrated a significant milestone, the final 100 days before graduation, for the class of 2026. Held in the library lecture room, the occasion was marked by a delicious breakfast, stirring speeches, and wonderful advice from Lower School students.

WPS Alumni Association President Ashlee Reed Hidell '00 welcomed the seniors and shared words of encouragement for the journey ahead. Guest speaker Roscoe Leslie '96, an attorney for Worcester County, is married to Worcester Preparatory School English teacher Megan Leslie and is the parent of two WPS students. He reflected on his path from Worcester Prep to college and career, and the lasting impact the school had on his future.

One of the morning's highlights came as seniors read notes of advice from Lower School students about their first year of college — from spending time with their parents to remembering to brush their teeth. The thoughtful messages brought plenty of smiles and laughter to close out a meaningful celebration.

Pictured left to right are **Roscoe Leslie**, his wife **Megan Leslie** and Alumni Association President **Ashley Reed Hidell**.

## AGH to hold caregiver support meeting

Atlantic General Hospital will hold a caregiver support group from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday, March 2, at the John H. 'Jack' Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center in Berlin.

This support group is free and open to caregivers who share the challenges and rewards of caring for adults with serious illnesses. It offers a space for members to discuss their feelings, concerns and experiences related to the caregiving role. Discussion topics vary according to the group's needs.

For more information, contact Nicole Fry, LBSW, at 410-641-2626 or [nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org](mailto:nicole.fry@tidalhealth.org).



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**Money Watch**

# How outdated beneficiary choices can derail your plans

By **John Bennish**

When you open a retirement account or buy a life insurance policy, you're asked to name a beneficiary. It might seem like just another form to fill out, but this simple step can affect your family's future.



**John Bennish**

Many people don't give beneficiary designations much thought after signing the initial paperwork. It may have been years ago, and life has moved on. But this might surprise you: These designations can override what's in your will or living trust. That means your retirement accounts and insurance proceeds could end up going to someone you didn't intend, creating what professionals call an accidental inheritance.

Life changes quickly. You might get married, divorced or remarried. You might have children or stepchildren. A loved one might pass away. You may decide to give to your favorite charity. Any of these events could mean it's time to update your beneficiaries.

The rules can get complicated. For example, after a divorce, some (but not all) states have laws that automatically revoke your beneficiary designations for IRAs, bank accounts and insurance policies. But no matter where you live in the U.S., the designations for 401(k) plans and pensions stay in place until you change them. In community property states, couples must split 50-50 the assets they acquired during marriage, adding another layer of complexity.

There are other considerations, too. It's a good idea to name a primary and a contingent beneficiary. If your primary beneficiary dies before you do, the contingent beneficiary receives your assets. Without this backup plan, your carefully considered wishes could go awry.

Naming minor children as direct beneficiaries isn't usually a good idea. Children can't legally receive and control assets until they become adults, so a court would have to get involved and appoint a guardian for managing the money. Instead, you might set up a trust or name a custodian to oversee

the funds until your children are mature enough to handle them responsibly.

For family members with special needs, you'll want to be especially careful as about choosing your beneficiary. Some choices may jeopardize their eligibility to receive government benefits such as government disability payments or Medicaid. An estate attorney can help you make important beneficiary decisions.

One major benefit of proper beneficiary designations is that they can help your loved ones avoid probate, a time-consuming and potentially expensive legal process.

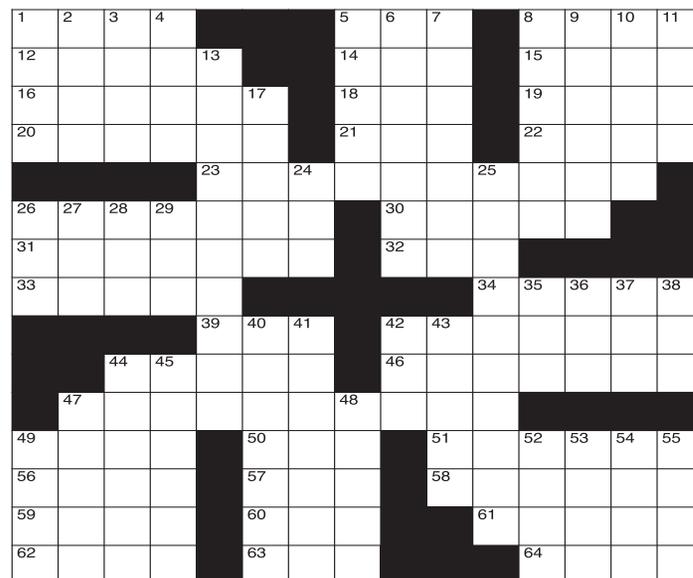
For these reasons and others, it's important to review your beneficiary designations regularly, especially after major life events. Contact your retirement account administrator or insurance company to update any outdated information.

A financial advisor can help you understand how your beneficiary choices fit into your financial strategy and ensure your assets go where you want them to go. It may also make sense to work with a legal professional who can help you ensure your beneficiary designations align with your plans for transferring your estate assets.

Don't leave these important decisions to chance. Taking time now to review and update your beneficiaries can help give you a sense of security and protect the people you love.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor John Bennish, Ocean Pines. He can be reached at 410-208-9083. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.*

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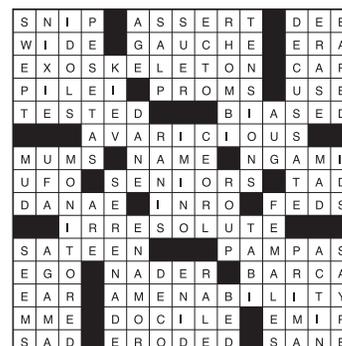


**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. What travelers must do
- 5. Calendar month
- 8. Hopefully quickly
- 12. Once more
- 14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 15. "Cheers" actress Perlman
- 16. Astronomy unit
- 18. Savings vehicle
- 19. Get your ducks in this
- 20. Right away
- 21. Popular sports league
- 22. Containers
- 23. Entireties
- 26. One who wassails
- 30. Turned-up position
- 31. Extreme modesty
- 32. Writing utensil
- 33. Rewards (archaic)
- 34. Ancient capital
- 39. S. American wood sorrel
- 42. General discomfort
- 44. Philippine island
- 46. A witty saying
- 47. One who summarizes
- 49. Covered in
- 50. Mimic
- 51. Henry was a notable one
- 56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
- 57. Retired NFLer Newton
- 58. Playground equipment
- 59. Concept
- 60. Satisfaction
- 61. Fishing net
- 62. Hammer end
- 63. A father's male child
- 64. Japanese drink

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Off-Broadway figure
- 2. Gelatinous substance
- 3. Concern
- 4. "Lick It Up" rockers
- 5. Serbian river
- 6. Part of a hat
- 7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
- 8. Semitic language
- 9. Utter a shrill cry
- 10. Long times
- 11. Animal parts
- 13. Causing annoyance
- 17. Amorous talker
- 24. Attempt
- 25. Harmonic effects
- 26. Cost per mile
- 27. They \_\_\_
- 28. Bitterly regret
- 29. Not even
- 35. A way to drop
- 36. Title of respect
- 37. World leader
- 38. Georgia rockers
- 40. National capital
- 41. Great Plains people
- 42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
- 43. Architectural recesses
- 44. Member of U.S. Navy
- 45. Mountainous
- 47. Kite bird
- 48. Sweetheart (archaic)
- 49. Popular snack made of potato
- 52. 70s songsters The Bee \_\_\_
- 53. SE China port \_\_\_-men
- 54. Something to fill up
- 55. League of Legends character



Answers for February 18

## Some things to think about

Gathered from the internet by **Jack Barnes**

**Marry a short gal and keep your guns on the top shelf**



**She still might get ya, but you'll hear her dragging the chair across the floor**

**60 may be the new 40, but the 100 dollar bill is the new 20!**



## Not all seals are the same

An elderly man rear ends a guy driving an expensive sports car.

Enraged, the guy hops out of his car and confronts the old man. "Look what you did to my car" he yells. "You're gonna give me \$10,000 right now or I'm gonna beat you to a bloody pulp!"

"Oh my," says the old man, I don't have that kind of money. Let me call my son, he trains dolphins and he'll know what to do."

phins and he'll know what to do."

"Dolphins," the other driver huffs, while rolling his eyes. The old man pulls out his phone, dials his son and just as the son answers, the irate man snatches the phone away from the old man.

"So, YOU'RE a dolphin trainer, huh? Well, your old man here just rear-ended my car and I need ten grand right now or I'm gonna beat you AND your old man to a bloody pulp".

"I'll be there in 10 minutes, says the voice calmly on the other end".

Exactly ten minutes later a jeep pulls up and a guy hops out and proceeds to pulverize the bully, leaving him in a bloody heap on the side of the road.

When he's finished, he walks over to his father and says: "For the LAST TIME dad... I train SEALS... NAVY SEALS... NOT dolphins."

**Kids today will never know the joy of finding money in the pay phone.**

**"A husband and wife had been arguing all day. They pass a herd of jackasses. The wife says 'relatives of yours?' Husband says, 'yep in laws.**

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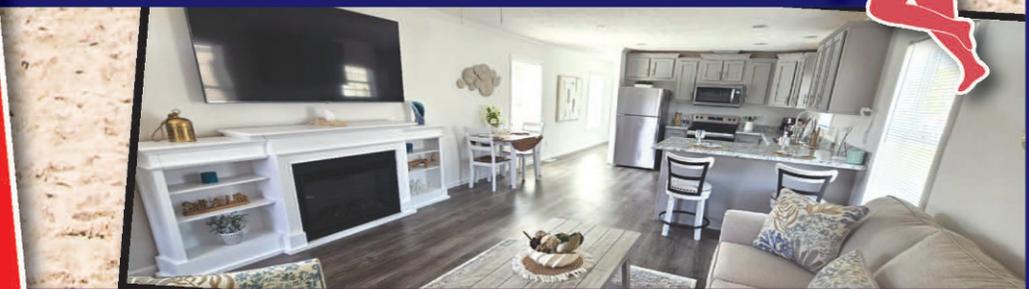
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